



Kansas Legislative Research Department

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To: 2021 Special Committee on Education

From: Norma Volkmer, Fiscal Analyst

Re: Home School Trends

HOME SCHOOLING IN KANSAS AND NATIONWIDE

Home Schooling in Kansas

The option of home schooling is not set forth in any Kansas statute; however, [KSA 72-4345 through 72-4347](#) provide for non-accredited private schools (NAPS). All home schools are considered NAPS in Kansas. KSA 72-4345 defines private elementary or secondary school to mean an organization that regularly offers education, satisfies state attendance laws (at least 186 days of at least 6 hours or 1,116 hours per year), and is not accredited by the State Board of Education (State Board). KSA 72-4346 requires the official custodian of the private school to register the name and address of the school with the State Board. KSA 72-4347 states the purpose of this requirement is to make available that information, upon request, for transferring students.

NAPS do not include private schools that are accredited by the State Board; these schools are generally referred to as accredited nonpublic schools. Certain programs, such as the Tax Credit for Low Income Students Scholarship Program, may allow both accredited nonpublic schools and nonpublic schools accredited by outside organizations to participate. NAPS would not be included in such a program, unless explicitly included in the definition of school for that program.

Per the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE), NAPS teachers do not need to be licensed, but courses must be taught by competent instructors. KSDE recommends the following graduation requirements for NAPS: 4 units of English language arts, 3 units of history and government, 3 units of science, 3 units of mathematics, 1 unit of physical education, 1 unit of fine arts, and 6 units of electives. Accredited schools are not required to accept the transfer of any credits from NAPS and may evaluate the student to determine course placement.

Recent Trends

The percent of home schooled students nationally doubled from 1999 to 2012 according to data from the National Center for Education Statistics, with a stagnation around 3.3 percent in 2016. However, it appears the COVID-19 pandemic may have led to a new boom in home schooled students. According to data compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau, as part of the experimental Household Pulse Survey, about 5.4 percent of household reported home schooling in the April 23 to May 5, 2021, survey. This increased to 11.1 percent reported in the September 30 - October 12, 2021, survey.

Other sources show similar shifts. According to a survey of parents by the EdWeek Research Center, 9.0 percent of parents who did not home school their children in the prior year said they would be home schooling their children at least some of the time during the 2020-2021 school year.¹ Per an EdChoice survey in October 2020, home schooling increased from 7.0 percent to 16.0 percent.² The graph below shows the shifts in student education:

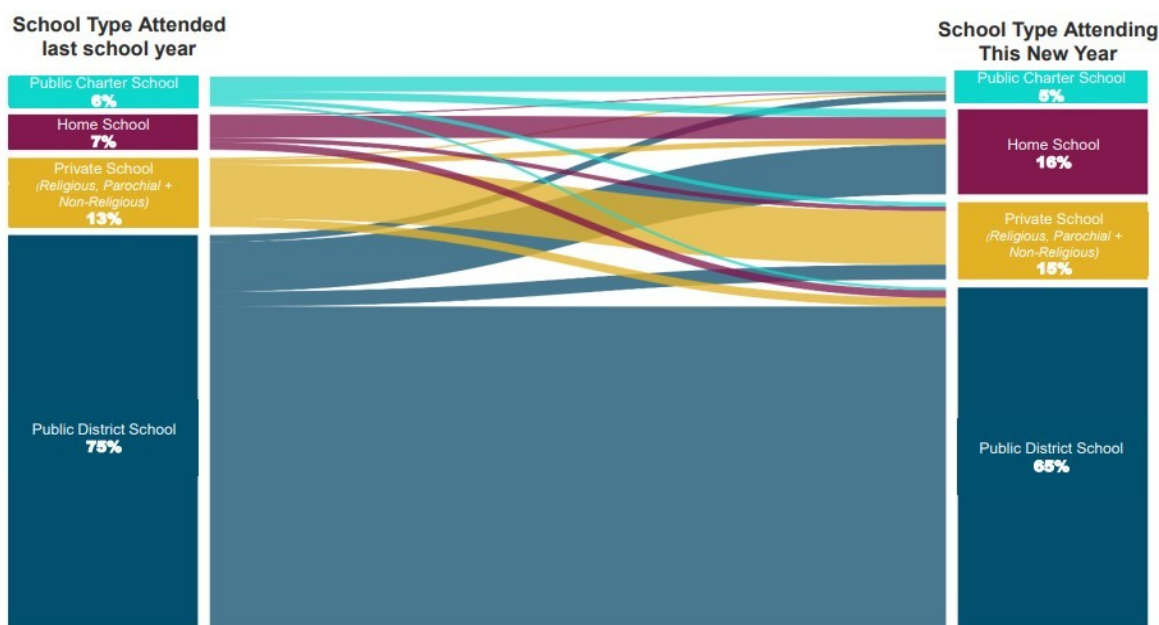


Chart created and published by EdChoice on October 2020.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also led to new methods of instruction, such as “pandemic pods” or “co-ops.” These are small groups of maybe three or four families that come together to teach all the children in a single home, with instruction provided by the parents, tutors, or hired teachers. According to an EdChoice survey, 31.0 percent of respondents said they were participating in a pod.³ However, only 15.0 percent of those families considered the pod as a substitute for regular or virtual/remote learning.⁴ This equates to roughly 5.0% of respondents using pods as a school.

1 Arianna Prothero & Christina A. Samuels, “Home Schooling Is Way Up With COVID-19. Will It Last?,” EdWeek, Nov. 9, 2020, <https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/home-schooling-is-way-up-with-covid-19-will-it-last/2020/11>. It is not clear what definition for home school was provided in the survey.

2 Mike McShane, “How Popular Are Pandemic Pods After All?,” Forbes, Nov. 11, 2020, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/mikemcshane/2020/11/11/how-popular-are-pandemic-pods-after-all/?sh=5624aba46f51>.

3 *Id.*

4 *Id.*