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AN INVESTIGATION OF HOME SCHOOLING IN ILLINOIS

MORRIS

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AN INVESTIGATION OF HOME SCHOOLING IN ILLINOIS

(TITLE)

BY

STEVE MORRIS

Field Study
~~THESIS~~

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

Specialist in Education

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1996

YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING
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October 4, 1996
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Ronald W. Smitley
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October 7, 1996
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Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to survey the 45 Regional Offices of Education in Illinois, excluding Chicago, to determine the relationship between the increasing participation in home schooling and the legislative mandates. This information should serve as an aid to decision makers in determining if changes are needed in the current legislative mandates and laws.

The representatives of the Regional Offices of Education were asked to respond to survey questions designed to provide information regarding the number of children being home schooled in Illinois. It included the choices they make when deciding on a curriculum, the reasons for choosing home schooling as an alternate form of education, and the number of home schooled students who return to the public schools.

An analysis of the survey results indicated that a majority of the parents/legal guardians chose home schooling for religious reasons and believe this choice is their constitutional right.

The information from this study indicated that there is a relationship between increasing participation in home schooling and the passage of legislative mandates. It is recommended that this information be shared with the appropriate decision makers.

Chapter 1

Overview

Statement of the Problem

There existed a need to investigate the legislative mandates and laws that relate to the home schooling of students who reside in the state of Illinois. This investigation was conducted to determine what methods are being used by personnel of the Regional Office of Education to monitor the attendance of children being home schooled.

Background and Significance of the Study

Disputes about home schooling have escalated in recent years. In order for the author of the study to better understand the issues, trends, and problems, an investigation of past and current legislative mandates and laws was necessary.

There are many reasons parents choose to teach their children at home. It has been estimated that as many as 50% do so for religious reasons or because they object to the political or cultural values found in the public schools (Chan, 1993). Some are dissatisfied with the education provided by the public schools and feel they could do a better job teaching their children at home. Other parents do not like the instructional methods used in the public schools and want to spend more time with their children. As Patricia Lines (1987) stated, "Home schoolers appear to share at least one thing: the firm belief that parents can and should be deeply involved in the education of their children" (p. 510).

It has been estimated that home schooling has grown from about 15,000 in the seventies to well over 250,000 today (Knowles, 1994). Patricia Lines, a

policy analyst with the U.S. Department of Education, has conducted research determining estimations of the number of children being taught at home. She has listed several providers of curriculum for home schools and how many children they serve (see Appendix A). She also estimates that 50% to 75% of all parents engaged in home schooling design their own curricula. She, therefore, concludes that as many as 250,000 children may be taught in home schools. When considering the number of parents who do not report that they are teaching their children at home, the total may be even larger.

The goal of this study was to reveal if there is a relationship between past and current legislative mandates and the growth of home schooling from 15,000 in the seventies to over 250,000 in the nineties. This topic is controversial and difficult to monitor. It is controversial because of the differences in attitudes toward home schooling. Some parents believe it is their constitutional right to choose what educational avenue is best suited to meet their children's needs. A number of district superintendents view home schooling as an easy way for parents to keep their children home for reasons other than educational ones. Regional superintendents are in the middle since the only tool they have at their disposal to monitor home schooling is the compulsory attendance law.

This author surveyed the 45 Regional Offices of Education in Illinois to determine what methods they are now using to monitor parents of home schooled children and to ensure that these parents are meeting the minimum guidelines set forth by the Illinois State Board of Education. The information that was gathered during this study should provide district superintendents, regional

superintendents, and parents of the home schooled children information that will allow them to communicate in a more positive manner. By developing better communication, all children of Illinois should be presented a more positive educational setting in which to learn.

Specific Study Objectives

This study was designed to accomplish the following objectives:

1. To determine the number of students reported by the Regional Offices of Education as being home schooled in the state of Illinois.
2. To identify the reasons that Illinois parents/legal guardians give for home schooling their children.
3. To determine what percent of parents/legal guardians complete the Non-public Registration, Enrollment, and Staff Report.
4. To identify where parents/legal guardians obtain curriculum materials for their home schools.
5. To determine what the Illinois Regional Offices of Education do to ensure that compulsory attendance mandates are being met through the home schooling process.

Operational Definitions, Assumptions, Delimitations

Compulsory Attendance - Whoever has custody or control of any child between the ages of 7 and 16 years shall cause such child to attend some public school in the district wherein the child resides the entire time it is in session during the regular school term. The following children shall not be required to attend public schools. Any child attending a private or parochial school where children are

taught branches of education taught to children of corresponding age and grade in the public schools, and where the instruction of a child in the branches of education is in the English language (Article 26 and 26-1, 1994 Illinois School Code).

Home Schooling - An educational program, taught in the home by a child's parent or legal guardian. Standard academic subjects are taught in a systematic fashion using either local public or private school curricula, a correspondence curriculum or a curriculum developed by the parents.

Private School - A place where instruction is imparted to the young ... the number of persons being taught does not determine whether a place is a school.

Regional Office of Education - The office that is responsible for ensuring that all children receive educational services in compliance with the Illinois compulsory attendance law.

Statement of Assurance - This statement, developed by the State Board of Education in 1984, requests that the parents provide information about the education their children are receiving at home.

Assumptions

This study focused on the responses of the 45 regional superintendents who represent their particular areas. It was assumed that their responses were honest in nature. Also, it was assumed that the measuring instrument accurately measured the methods used by the regional superintendents to monitor home schooling as it related to the compulsory attendance law. The survey involved the 45 regional offices that cover all of Illinois except Chicago and can be generalized

to apply to the children who live in the areas covered by the 45 offices.

Delimitations

This study had several delimitations. It was possible for the statements on the survey to be interpreted differently by the regional superintendents. No sampling was made of home school parents or district superintendents. The study also did not include the city of Chicago, since it does not fall under the jurisdiction of the Regional Offices of Education.

Limitations

This study contained some limitations. The population of the study included only the 45 regional superintendents and did not involve any parents of home schooled children in the state of Illinois since they are not required to report home schooling to the State Board of Education.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

As previously stated, home schooling can be defined as an educational program taught in the home by the parents or legal guardian. Standard academic subjects are taught in a systematic fashion using either local public or private school curricula, a correspondence curriculum or a curriculum developed by the parents.

Simmons (1994) has indicated that there are four ways for parents to arrange home schooling for their children. First, the parents could work out an agreement with the local public schools. Second, they could register their own home as a private school. Third, the parents could make their home a satellite of an existing private school. Fourth, the parents could teach their children at home and not tell anyone they are doing so.

According to Natale (1992), the major concerns of the public schools with regard to home schooling are academic equivalency and socialization. Some of the factors that create concern among educators about the equivalency question are curriculum, teacher competency, and the amount of time spent on school work. Several home schoolers use external providers for their curricula while others develop their own curricula. As one can imagine, there is no continuity in what is being taught. Therefore, there is no guarantee that the subjects, values, or ideals that our democratic society feel are important are being taught. Public schools require some type of certification for teachers. Parents who teach their children at home might lack the knowledge or pedagogical techniques necessary

to accomplish this task. As for the amount of time spent on schoolwork, there is no magic number. However, most states require the public schools to spend an appropriate amount of time on programs they deem important. Even though there is a lack of control of monitoring home schooling, some feel that home schools are academically equivalent or better than the public schools. Natale (1992) said, "Children average 30% above the national mean on standardized tests" (p. 26). According to Lines (1987), "Scattered testing data suggest that successes are more numerous than failures in home schools" (p. 515).

With regard to the socialization concern, Superintendent Joseph Casagrande summed up most public educator's feelings when he stated that "part of the whole schooling process is learning to live in society and communicating with others ... people who are home schooled miss out on that" (Ramsey, 1992, p. 20). Home school proponents, on the other hand, feel that socialization is actually superior. Many home schooled children engage in frequent group and community activities. Chan (1993) stated, "The child who has been taught at home, who feels needed and wanted, who knows he is depended on at home -- sharing responsibilities and chores -- is much more likely to develop a sense of self-worth and a stable value system which is the basic ingredient for positive socialization" (p. 30).

The home schooling movement is not without organization. The Home-School Legal Defense Association is a parent-advocacy group with two primary functions. The first is membership, and the second is lobbying and advocacy services. A person may join the association for an annual fee of \$100.00.

Members receive complete legal protection and legal advice. It is estimated that the Home-School Legal Defense Association currently serves about 3,000 families (Knowles, 1994).

Another major concern of educators is monitoring the attendance of home schooled children. At this time all states require parents to educate their children, and 38 states make attendance at "school" compulsory (Bray & Lines, 1987). Compulsory attendance in educational institutions as a valid governmental interest has been consistently upheld (Litcher & Smith, 1991). There is no doubt that the government has an interest in protecting its young people from exploitation and also promoting the values and citizenship of our democratic society.

Since education in general is left to the state, conflicts with the compulsory attendance law must involve a statute or regulation. The United States Supreme Court has ruled against the state in three important compulsory attendance cases in the past 70 years. The Supreme Court struck down an Oregon compulsory attendance law that required attendance at only public schools (Pierce v. Society of Sisters, 1925). In 1923 the Supreme Court invalidated a Nebraska law that prohibited instruction in modern foreign languages and required teaching only in English (Meyer v. Nebraska). In Wisconsin v. Yoder, 1972, the Supreme Court refused to require Amish children to attend school past the eighth grade. Despite these three adverse rulings, there is a general reluctance to prohibit application of the compulsory attendance laws in specific cases. This reluctance can be attributed to the importance of formal education, the acceptance of the regulating authority of governmental agencies, and the uncertainty regarding

exceptions that should be permitted to legitimate governmental interests (Mawdsley, 1986).

There are three types of compulsory attendance statutes. The first, the no-exception type, requires attendance between certain ages at public or private schools only. The second, the implied-exception type, provides other alternatives and uses broad language that implies that equivalent instruction elsewhere is permissible. The third type, express-exception, typically imposes some standards for home schooling (Zirkel, 1986). Eleven states have no-exception statutes, 20 states have implied-exception statutes and 19 states express-exception statutes (Zirkel, 1986). Since decisions concerning education are left up to the 50 states and the states are divided among the three types of compulsory attendance statutes, it is obvious that various types of problems and challenges to those statutes will exist.

In particular, challenges to home schooling have attacked the compulsory attendance in three main ways. The three types of constitutional challenges are those based on free exercise of religion, those based on non-religious grounds (liberty, privacy, equal protection, etc.), and those based on vagueness (Cona, 1989). After examining cases of the first type, it can be concluded that the free exercise of religion right to home schooling is limited. Only in extreme cases like Wisconsin v. Yoder will religious groups such as the Amish be exempted from compulsory attendance laws and allowed home schooling. Cases of the second type have also been unsuccessful. There is no fundamental non-religious right to home schooling. The third type of challenges, those based on vagueness, have

been more successful for home schoolers. A law must be clear enough to allow a person to determine what is and what is not lawful. It cannot "trap" a person by not providing fair warning of prohibited behavior. Vagueness challenges to the term "private school" have had limited success in all three types of statutes concerning compulsory attendance. Vagueness challenges to the term "equivalent" have had more success in states that have implied-exception statutes. States have moved slowly toward considering the equivalency exception on a case-by-case basis (Zirkel, 1986).

Illinois is considered a state that has a no-exception type of statute for compulsory attendance. The School Code of Illinois, 1994 states:

Whoever has control or custody of any child between the ages of 7 and 16 shall cause such child to attend some public school in the district wherein the child resides the entire time it is in session during the regular school term the following school children shall not be required to attend public schools:

Any child attending a private or parochial school where children are taught the branches of education taught to children of corresponding age and grade in the public schools, and where the instruction of the child in the branches of education is in the English language (p. 293).

It is clear that students must attend public, private, or parochial schools.

The main question is whether or not home schools fall into one of these categories and are therefore legal in Illinois. To answer this question, and to clarify related issues, one must examine Illinois court cases that have set precedents in the areas

of home schooling.

In 1950, the Illinois Supreme Court made a landmark ruling considering home schooling in People v. Levinsen. The court ruled that where a seven year-old girl received regular instruction for five hours a day from her mother, who had two years of college and some training in pedagogy and educational psychology, and the girl showed proficiency comparable with average third grade students, the girl was attending a "private school," hence the parents were not guilty of violating the compulsory attendance law (404 Ill. 574, 90 N.E. 2nd 213, 1950).

In People v. Levinsen, the Illinois Supreme Court also mentioned other issues related to home schooling. It indicated that the object of the compulsory attendance law is that children be educated, and not that they be educated in a particular manner or place. It contended that a "school" is a place where instruction is imparted to the young, that the number of persons being taught does not matter, and that parents have the burden of showing that they have in good faith provided an adequate course of instruction in the prescribed branches of learning. Also, that by receiving home instruction with similar subjects, in a similar manner, and at a quality equal or better to the instruction a child received in a public school, the child would be considered to be attending a private school.

Another important case in regard to home schooling was Scoma v. Chicago Board of Education, 1974. The Illinois Supreme Court held that parents may not replace state educational requirements with their own views of what knowledge a child needs to be a productive and happy member of society. It also held that compulsory attendance statutes are valid under the state's police power

to require that all children attend some school (391 F. Supp. 452, N.D. Ill., 1974).

☞ The Levinsen case clearly established that home schooling is legal in Illinois. The Scoma case established that not all home schools meet the compulsory attendance law and can be considered private schools. Problems arise concerning the criteria to be used for determining if a home school can be classified as a private school (and meets the compulsory attendance law) and who is to determine if the home school meets the criteria. The School Code of Illinois states that the State Board of Education “shall be responsible for the educational policies and guidelines for public and private schools” (Chapter 122, Article 1A, Section 4, 1994).

The Illinois State Board of Education has established “Policies and Guidelines For Registration and Recognition of Non Public Elementary and Secondary Schools.” These policies and guidelines are advisory and request what is considered to be desirable action. The Illinois State Board of Education has guidelines determining how a non-public school can register and be recognized by the state (see Appendix B). Until 1984 home schools could register as private schools using this form. However, in 1984 home schools were removed from the application form and not allowed to be registered as non-public schools.

A “Statement of Assurance for Parent-taught Home Instruction” was developed by the State Board of Education in 1984 (see Appendix C). This statement requests that the parents provide information about the education their children are receiving at home. With the information from the statements, one can compare the requirements of the home school to the requirements of the

public schools. However, the state has no legal authority to make a home schooler complete the "Statement of Assurance." Completion of the "Statement of Assurance" that indicates the home school teaches the branches of education taught in public schools in the English language mean the home school meets the compulsory attendance law.

If the parents refuse to complete the "Statement of Assurance," the regional superintendent of schools has the authority to decide if their children are in compliance with the compulsory attendance law (Ryder, 1990). The regional superintendent must make a case-by-case determination to decide if a child is truant, and according to the Levinsen case, the burden of proof lies with the parents. There are two main guidelines a regional superintendent has to follow - the Levinsen case that says a home school may be a private school, and the compulsory attendance law that says a private school must be taught in the English language.

The lack of precise laws concerning home schooling in Illinois has brought about many problems. There are 45 regional superintendents and as many different approaches for dealing with home schooling. There is no indication that stricter or more precise legislation concerning home schooling will be adopted in the near future. On the other hand, there is no indication the State Board of Education and regional superintendents will ignore the minimum standards required for home schools to meet the compulsory attendance law. It appears Illinois will remain a no-exception state that requires children to attend either a public or private school, and that home schools may be considered private

schools. If all home schools would verify that they meet the requirements of the compulsory attendance law, it would be possible for public schools and home schools to co-exist in a more cooperative manner. With thousands of children receiving home schooling, this co-existence is necessary to benefit our educational system.

Chapter 3

Design of the Study

General Design of the Study

As previously indicated, the purpose of this study was to survey the 45 regional superintendents to determine what methods they are now using to monitor parents of home schooled children and to ensure that these parents are meeting the minimum guidelines set forth by the Illinois State Board of Education. From this survey, information was collected to determine the number of parents that report they are home schooling their children and if they are meeting the minimum guidelines set forth by the Illinois State Board of Education.

Data were collected from 44 of the 45 Regional Offices of Education in the state of Illinois. A survey instrument was developed by the researcher to identify the number of children being home schooled in each of the 45 regions and why parents chose to home school their children.

The lack of precise laws concerning home schooling has caused great concern in Illinois among school district and regional superintendents. Statewide research on home schooling exists in the form of "A Statement of Assurance for Parent-taught Home Instruction" developed by the State Board of Education in 1984 (see Appendix C). Parents, however, are not required to complete this in order to home school their children. Consequently, it is very difficult to determine the precise number of children being home schooled in Illinois.

Sample and Population

The population for the study consisted of the 45 Regional Offices of Education which cover all of the state of Illinois except the city of Chicago.

Data Collection and Instrument

The survey was designed by the researcher of this study. The instrument utilized information from numerous sources. During the course of developing the instrument, information was collected from the research of available materials and personal interviews with selected district superintendents and regional superintendents.

The final draft of the survey instrument was developed to seek information on the number of parents of home schooled who chose to report, through the "Statement of Assurance" form, that they were home schooling their children (see Appendix D).

The survey was moderate in length and could be completed within five minutes. Statistical validity and reliability are not available because this survey was designed specifically for this study.

The researcher sent copies of the survey to each of the 45 regional superintendents in a self-addressed stamped envelope. The purpose of the study was briefly explained. A request was made by the researcher for the respondents to be honest and accurate with their responses. The respondents were asked to complete the survey and instructed on what to do with the survey when they were finished. The survey was first mailed to the 45 Regional Offices of Education on March 11, 1996. The requested return date was to be no later than March 22,

1996. As of March 22, 1996, 43 of the 45 Regional Offices of Education had returned their surveys to the researcher. One additional survey was returned after the requested return date, bringing the total number of surveys returned to 44.

Data Analysis

The completed survey responses were tallied according to the frequency and number of each response. The gathered information was then analyzed to reveal the number of parents who reported, using the "Statement of Assurance" form, to the regional superintendent that they were home schooling their children. Also, conclusions were drawn from the results of the survey as to the reasons that parents chose to home school their children.

Chapter 4

Results

General Information

The results of this study are presented in six tables. Together, these tables provide the necessary data to determine the effectiveness of the Regional Office of Education in monitoring the home schooling of students and the relationship between increasing participation in home schooling and the legislative mandates.

The purpose of this study was to seek information from the 45 Regional Superintendents in Illinois and their ability to monitor the home schooling of students in Illinois. Surveys were distributed to all 45 Regional Superintendents. Each Regional Superintendent was asked to complete the survey. The survey was conducted during the second week of March, 1996. Of the 45 Regional Superintendents in the state of Illinois, 44 (98%) agreed to participate by completing a survey instrument.

The following data were derived from survey information based on those Regional Offices of Education that were represented in the study and is provided to supply the reader with additional data about the home schooling process in Illinois. Table 1 illustrates the total number of students enrolled in public schools in the 44 regions completing this survey and the children identified as being home schooled. The total number of students enrolled in the public schools of the 44 regions responding to the survey instrument was 1,144,976 students. The total number of students identified as being home schooled in the 44 regions responding to the survey instrument was 1,134 with 932 of those students being

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elementary (K-8) age children and 202 being secondary (9-12) age children.

Table 1

Total Number of Students Served By Each Regional Office of Education and the Identified Number of Students Being Home Schooled in

Each Region

Question

What is the total number of students served by your ROE and the number of students identified as being home schooled?

| <u>ROE</u> | <u>Students Served</u> | <u>Students Identified As Being Home Schooled</u> | <u>ROE</u> | <u>Students Served</u> | <u>Students Identified As Being Home Schooled</u> |
|------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | 14,608 | 15 | 31 | 80,326 | 53 |
| 2 | 11,549 | 31 | 32 | 23,841 | 26 |
| 3 | 11,955 | 24 | 33 | 8,897 | 12 |
| 4 | 48,245 | 56 | 34 | 99,596 | 71 |
| 8 | 15,404 | 18 | 35 | 17,062 | 22 |
| 9 | 25,968 | 26 | 38 | 10,531 | 15 |
| 10 | 11,365 | 13 | 39 | 23,629 | 27 |
| 11 | 26,588 | 31 | 40 | 16,664 | 20 |
| 12 | 17,358 | 20 | 41 | 42,842 | 38 |
| 13 | 16,788 | 22 | 43 | 10,478 | 12 |
| 16 | 13,443 | 16 | 44 | 35,114 | 29 |
| 17 | 32,178 | 37 | 45 | 9,139 | 13 |
| 19 | 134,156 | 69 | 46 | 10,205 | 11 |
| 20 | 16,908 | 38 | 47 | 15,484 | 21 |
| 21 | 16,497 | 31 | 48 | 28,791 | 22 |
| 22 | 9,130 | 11 | 49 | 25,995 | 23 |
| 24 | 15,930 | 21 | 50 | 47,735 | 38 |
| 25 | 8,516 | 18 | 51 | 28,287 | 29 |
| 26 | 8,875 | 9 | 53 | 20,729 | 24 |
| 27 | 6,609 | 10 | 54 | 15,677 | 18 |
| 28 | 18,019 | 21 | 55 | 10,966 | 8 |
| 30 | 19,361 | 21 | 56 | 63,538 | 44 |

Of the parents /legal guardians who completed the "Statement of Assurance", 366 or 32% did not give reasons for home schooling their children as indicated in Table 2. Another 768 parents/legal guardians responded with one or more reasons why they preferred to home school their children rather than have

Table 2

Reasons Parents/Guardians Give For Home Schooling Their Children

Question

Which of the following reasons did the parents/guardians of the 1,134 children give for choosing to home school their children? (There could be more than one response per family)

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Religious | 714 |
| Poor Social Climate/Discipline in the Local District | 622 |
| Insufficient Instruction in the Local District | 435 |
| Better One-On-One Instruction at Home | 297 |
| No Reasons Given by the Parent/Guardian | 366 |
| Other Reasons Than Those Listed Above | 103 |

their children attend a public school. Of those 768, 93% or 714 chose religious reasons for home schooling their children. Also, 103 of the parents/legal guardians listed other reasons for home schooling their children. Some of these included being upset with a staff member(s), unhappy with the board of education/administration, and general mistrust of the public school system as a whole.

Completion of the "Non-public Registration, Enrollment and Staff Report" was very difficult to monitor because parents/legal guardians are not required to complete this form. The 22% total throughout the state came from a compilation of inquiries about home schooling that was made by parents/legal guardians to their local ROE. The researcher then divided the total number of inquiries by the actual number of students being home schooled to arrive at the 22% statewide total, which is an approximate number.

Table 3

Parents/Legal Guardians Completing the Non-public Registration, Enrollment and Staff Report
Question

Approximately what percent of the parents/legal guardians home schooling children in your region complete the Non-public Registration, Enrollment and Staff Report?

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Percent Completing the Report Throughout the State | 22% |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----|

Of the 1134 parents/legal guardians who chose to home school their children, Table 4 illustrates 41% purchased the curriculum materials from professional organizations, 38% received assistance in gaining curriculum materials from the local district, and 21% provided their own materials. Many local school districts are not readily willing to provide information or materials to parents who desire to home school their children. There were no responses to the "Other" category.

Table 4

Where Parents/Legal Guardians Get Curriculum Materials For Their Home SchoolQuestion

Where do parents/legal guardians get curriculum related materials for their home school?

| | |
|-----------------------------------------|-----|
| Professional Home School Organizations | 461 |
| Local School District | 440 |
| Parents Provide Instructional Materials | 233 |
| Other | 0 |

Of the Regional Offices of Education, 11 of the 44 responding indicated they did not monitor the attendance of home schooled children as illustrated in

Table 5

Measures Taken by the Regional Office of Education to Ensure the Compulsory AttendanceMandates Were MetQuestion

What does the Regional Office of Education do to ensure that the compulsory attendance mandates were being met?

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Confirmation by the parents/legal guardians that the student(s) are in compliance | 31 |
| Compulsory attendance confirmation by ROE personnel | 26 |
| No monitoring of attendance by the ROE | 11 |
| Other | 0 |

Table 5. The other 75% of the ROE's used more than one method of monitoring attendance. Of this 75% the most used method of monitoring the attendance of home schooled children was by visiting the home. This visit is usually conducted by the Truant Officer and provides personnel of the Regional Office of Education with verification that the compulsory attendance requirements are being fulfilled.

Table 6 indicates the statewide number of students being home schooled that returned to the public schools was 302. This number represented 27% of the 1,134 students whose parents/legal guardians completed the "Non-public Registration, Enrollment and Staff Report."

Table 6

Percent of Home Schooled Children That Return to the Public School Setting

Question

Approximately what percent of home schooled students in each region return to the public schools?

| <u>ROE</u> | <u>Students</u> | <u>Percent</u> | <u>ROE</u> | <u>Students</u> | <u>Percent</u> |
|------------|------------------|----------------|------------|------------------|----------------|
| | <u>Returning</u> | | | <u>Returning</u> | |
| 1 | 5/15 | 33 | 19 | 17/69 | 25 |
| 2 | 8/31 | 25 | 20 | 4/38 | 11 |
| 3 | 6/24 | 25 | 21 | 15/31 | 48 |
| 4 | 19/56 | 33 | 22 | 2/11 | 18 |
| 8 | 6/18 | 33 | 24 | 4/21 | 19 |
| 9 | 13/26 | 50 | 25 | 4/18 | 22 |
| 10 | 4/13 | 31 | 26 | 1/9 | 11 |
| 11 | 6/31 | 19 | 27 | 1/10 | 10 |
| 12 | 2/20 | 10 | 28 | 4/21 | 19 |
| 13 | 5/22 | 23 | 30 | 10/21 | 48 |
| 16 | 4/16 | 25 | 31 | 11/53 | 21 |
| 17 | 4/37 | 11 | 32 | 3/26 | 10 |

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| <u>ROE</u> | <u>Students</u> | <u>Percent</u> | <u>ROE</u> | <u>Students</u> | <u>Percent</u> |
|------------|------------------|----------------|------------|------------------|----------------|
| | <u>Returning</u> | | | <u>Returning</u> | |
| 33 | 3/12 | 25 | 46 | 2/11 | 18 |
| 34 | 21/71 | 30 | 47 | 7/21 | 33 |
| 35 | 3/22 | 14 | 48 | 11/22 | 50 |
| 38 | 5/15 | 33 | 49 | 8/23 | 35 |
| 39 | 9/27 | 33 | 50 | 4/38 | 11 |
| 40 | 8/20 | 40 | 51 | 4/29 | 15 |
| 41 | 13/38 | 34 | 53 | 5/24 | 21 |
| 43 | 3/12 | 25 | 54 | 9/18 | 50 |
| 44 | 3/29 | 10 | 55 | 0/8 | 0 |
| 45 | 4/13 | 31 | 56 | 22/44 | 50 |

Chapter 5

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary

This study surveyed the Regional Offices of Education to determine the number of parents/legal guardians who register with these offices that they are home schooling their children. These parents/legal guardians used the "Statement of Assurance" or the "Non-public Registration, Enrollment and Staff Report" to complete this registration process.

The survey instrument was designed to determine the number of children participating in home schooling in the state of Illinois. The necessary data were generated by surveying all of the Regional Offices of Education in Illinois except Chicago, which is not served by a Regional Office.

The completed survey responses were tallied according to individual responses of the representatives from the Regional Offices of Education. The information gathered was then analyzed to reveal the number of parents/legal guardians that register their home school with each Regional Office of Education. The results of this analysis should assist administrators, parents, and the Regional Office of Education in recognizing the difficulty involved in monitoring attendance at a home school.

Conclusions

This study was developed to determine the relationship between the increasing participation in home schooling and the legislative mandates which regulate this alternate form of education. As previously stated, there are many

reasons parents have chosen to teach their children at home. It has been estimated that 50% do so for religious reasons or because they object to the political or cultural values found in the public schools (Chan, 1993). This study revealed that 93%, 714 of 768, parents/legal guardians in Illinois chose to home school their children for religious reasons. Also, the study indicated that 81%, 622 of 768, stated that the social climate and discipline of the local school district were poor and insufficient.

The study revealed that 32%, 366 of 1134, chose not to give the reasons they home school their children. This information seems to indicate that parents/legal guardians have increased knowledge that they are not required to complete any legal document that permits their children to be home schooled. Also, it was determined, as a result of the survey, that only a small number of parents/legal guardians, 22%, complete any type of registration stating that they are home schooling their children. This low percentage would indicate that parents have increased awareness of the lack of legislative mandates which require them to report they are home schooling their children.

Finally, there is no effective way for the Regional Offices of Education to monitor the attendance of home schooled students without requiring the parents/legal guardians to complete either the "Statement of Assurance" or the "Non-public Registration, Enrollment and Staff Report." The survey results indicated that 25%, 11 of 44, of the Regional Offices of Education do not make any attempts to monitor compulsory attendance of home schooled children. The other 75%, 33 of 44, use two methods to monitor attendance of home schooled

children. These methods are confirmation by parents/legal guardians that the student(s) are in compliance and compulsory attendance confirmation by ROE personnel. If the parents refuse to complete the "Statement of Assurance" or the "Non-public Registration, Enrollment and Staff Report," the Regional Superintendent of Schools has the authority to decide if the children involved are in compliance with compulsory attendance law (Ryder, 1990). The Regional Superintendent must make a case-by-case determination to decide if a child is truant. There are two primary guidelines a Regional Superintendent has to follow. The Levinsen case states a home school may be a private school, and the compulsory attendance law states a private school must be taught in the English language. There is no indication that more strict or precise legislation concerning home schooling will be adopted in the near future.

Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to provide information regarding the relationship between the increased participation in home schooling and the legislative mandates. The information collected resulted in showing a significant number of parents that chose to home school their children did so for religious reasons. For this reason, it is recommended that the results of this study be shared with all parties that might be interested or would benefit from such information which aid lawmakers, administrators, and Regional Superintendents in making the necessary changes in the current legislative mandates.

Another recommendation would be to change the current legislation that does not require parents/legal guardians to register their home school with any

governmental agency. A change in this legislative mandate would force all parents/legal guardians to document they are in compliance with the compulsory attendance laws.

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Appendix A

Number of K-8 Children in Home Instruction (1985-86)

| Provider | N |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Abbott Loop Christian Center, Anchorage, Als. | 67 |
| Accelerated Christian Education, Lewisville, Tex. | 3,600 |
| Alpha Omega Publications, Tempe, Ariz. | 2,700 |
| American Christian Academy, Colleyville, Tex. | 700 |
| American Heritage Christian Academy, Sacramento, Calif. | 150 |
| Baldwin Park Christian School, Baldwin Park, Calif. | 75 |
| Calvert School, Baltimore, Md. | 4,168 |
| Christian Liberty Academy, Arlington Heights, Ill. | 21,000 |
| Clonlara School, Ann Arbor, Mich. | 1,560 |
| Discovery Christian School, Concord, Calif. | 240 |
| Evangelistic & Faith Enterprises of America, Inc. Oliver Springs, Tenn. | 300 |
| Family Centered Learning Alternatives, Arlington, Wash. | 150 |
| Hewitt-Moore Child Development Center, Washougal, Wash. | 4,000 |
| Home Study International, Takoma Park, Md. | 1,509 |
| International Institute, Park Ridge, Ill. | 1,000 |
| Learning at Home, Honaunau, Hi. | 800 |
| Our Lady of Victory, Mission Hills, Calif. | 600 |
| National Academy of Christian Education, Columbus, O. | 1,050 |
| Pensacola Christian School, Pensacola, Fla. | 1,870 |
| Pilgrim Schools, Porterville and three other sites in Calif. | 200 |
| Pilgrim Christian School, Maywood, Calif. | 80 |
| Santa Fe Community School, Santa Fe, N.M. | 200 |
| School of Home Learning, Escondido, Calif. | 80 |
| Seton School Home Study, Front Royal, Va. | 500 |
| Summit Christian Academy, Dallas, Tex. | 1,800 |
| Sycamore Tree, Costa Mesa, Calif. | 175 |
| State Department of Education, Juneau, Alas. | 800 |
| 15 organizations with fewer than 50 children in 1985-86 | 123 |
| Subtotal | 49,497 |
| Estimate of number whose parents prepare own curriculum | 50,000-150,000 |
| | 100,000-200,000 |

Home Schooling 34

Appendix B

PART 1: ADDRESS CORRECTION
 If information below is incorrect, please note changes.

Attendance Center No.
 Administrator's Name
 School Name
 Street Address
 City, State, Zip Code
 Telephone

ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
 Policy, Planning and Research
 100 North First Street
 Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001
 If you have any questions concerning this report,
 call 217/782-3950.
 1995-1996
**NONPUBLIC REGISTRATION,
 ENROLLMENT AND STAFF REPORT**

FOR ISBE USE ONLY

Attendance Center No.
 Administrator's Name
 School Name
 Street Address
 City, State, Zip Code
 Telephone

PART 2: PURPOSE

These data are collected for informational purposes only. The State Board of Education is required to make an annual report to the Governor and General Assembly on education in the state. Completion of this form does not constitute approval or disapproval of a program or school.

PART 3: ASSURANCES

3.1 Does your school have an academic term of at least 176 days with 5 hours of instruction or 880 clock hours?
 Yes No
 3.2 Does your school comply with federal and state laws regarding nondiscrimination?
 Yes No
 3.3 Does your school comply with prevailing state or local fire safety requirements?
 Yes No
 3.4 The school will complete the Immunization Survey Form (ISBE 70-11 as of 10-14-95 and send to the above address by 10-28-95 as prescribed in Section 122.27-8.1 of the School Code.

PART 4: AREAS OF EDUCATION TAUGHT

4.1 Indicate subject areas taught:
 A. Language Arts D. Social Sciences G. Other (specify) _____
 B. Mathematics E. Fine Arts _____
 C. Biological and Physical Sciences F. Physical Development and Health H. Other (specify) _____

4.2 Yes No Is instruction given in the English language?

PART 6: AFFILIATION

21 Amish 06 Lutheran
 26 Association of Christian Schools International (of Colorado) 719/528-6906 22 Mennonite
 02 Baptist 07 Methodist
 03 Christian Schools International (of Michigan) 16 Montessori School
 27 Christian Schools of Illinois 25 Pentecostal
 17 Greek Orthodox 08 Presbyterian
 20 Illinois Association of Christian Schools 09 Protestant Episcopal
 01 Independent-Regular (Not Religious Affiliated) (Non-Parent-Operated) 10 Roman Catholic
 19 Independent-Special Education (Not Religious Affiliated) (Non-Parent-Operated) 11 Seventh-Day Adventist
 23 Islamic/Muslim 14 Other Religious Affiliation Please Specify _____
 05 Jewish 15 Home Schooling Parent-Operated

PART 7: FULL-TIME EQUIVALENCY OF STAFF ON SEPTEMBER 29, 1995

| Do Not Include Volunteer Help | ENROLLMENT BY GRADE | | STAFF DEMAND DATA | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| | 7th Grade | TOTAL ENROLLMENT | 7.11 Beginning | 7.12 Reassigning | 7.13 Staff Turnover |
| 7.1 | | | | | |
| 7.2 | | | | | |
| 7.3 | | | | | |
| 7.4 | | | | | |
| 7.5 | | | | | |
| 7.6 | | | | | |
| 7.7 | | | | | |
| 7.8 | | | | | |
| 7.9 | | | | | |
| 7.10 | | | | | |
| TOTAL STAFF | | | | | |

PART 5: ENROLLMENT ON SEPTEMBER 29, 1995

| GRADE LEVEL | ENROLLMENT | GRADE LEVEL | ENROLLMENT |
|-----------------------------------|------------|------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Pre-K | | 8th Grade | |
| Pre-K Special Education (Age 3-4) | | Ungraded Elementary (K-8) (Age 5-13) | |
| Kindergarten | | Special Education Elementary (K-8) (Age 5-13) | |
| 1st Grade | | 9th Grade | |
| 2nd Grade | | 10th Grade | |
| 3rd Grade | | 11th Grade | |
| 4th Grade | | 12th Grade | |
| 5th Grade | | Ungraded Secondary (9-12) (Age 14-21) | |
| 6th Grade | | Special Education Secondary (9-12) (Age 14-21) | |
| 7th Grade | | TOTAL ENROLLMENT | |

5.2 AGE RANGE SERVED _____ Social Education _____ Ungraded

5.3 ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PUPILS FROM LOW INCOME FAMILIES _____

5.4 NUMBER OF 12th GRADE GRADUATES FOR 1994-1995 _____ Male _____ Female

5.5 THE STUDENT BODY IS COMPOSED OF (Please ✓)
 Males Only Females Only Males and Females

5.6 THE STUDENTS ARE (Please ✓)
 Days Students Resident Only Mixed Day and Resident

PART 8: NAME OF PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT IN WHICH YOUR SCHOOL IS LOCATED

DISTRICT NUMBER _____

PART 9:

Check here if you would like to receive copies of reports on nonpublic schools.

PART 10: NAME OF PERSON COMPLETING FORM

PHONE NUMBER _____ (Area Code) _____
 Date _____ Signature of Administrator _____

PART 11:

Date _____ Signature of Regional Superintendent _____

PART 12:

Date _____ Signature of Regional Superintendent _____

DO NOT INCLUDE VOLUNTEER HELP

STATE OF ILLINOIS

COUNTY OF _____

} 33

Appendix C

_____ states as follows:
(Parent or Guardian)

1. I am the parent/legal guardian of _____
(Child's Name)
2. I am a legal resident of _____ County in Illinois.
3. I reside at _____
(Address)
within the boundaries of _____
(Public School District)
4. I have custody and control of _____ who resides with me at this address.
(Child's Name)
5. _____ birthdate is _____
(Child's Name) (Birthdate)
6. I am aware of the provisions of state law which require that children who are between the ages of seven and sixteen years of age must attend school. I have elected to provide my child instructional services in my home during the 19__ / 19__ school term.
7. I shall offer instructional services approximately _____ hours per week between _____
(Month)
and _____
(Month)
8. The instructional services to be provided shall include instruction in the English language in social studies, science, mathematics, and language arts.
9. The instructional services shall be offered by instructor(s) _____
(check one or more) Parent Relative (Instructor's Name)
 Friend Employee _____
(Instructor's Name)
 Other _____
10. The highest level of education attained by the instructor is: _____
(Degrees or Training)
11. The course materials which will be used are _____
(List titles or general references to curricula to be used or attach additional explanatory material to this card.)
12. I understand that if I decide at a later date to enroll my child in a public or private school, my child's grade placement will be within the authority of the officials of that school.

(Parent's Signature)

Subscribed and sworn before me, a Notary Public of _____ County, Illinois, by this

_____ day of _____, 19__

(Notary Public)

Appendix D

Survey of Home Schooling procedures used by the Regional Offices of Education

Home schooling can be defined as an educational program taught in the home by the parents or legal guardian. Standard academic subjects are taught in a systematic fashion using either local public or private school curricula, a correspondence curriculum or a curriculum developed by the parents.

Please answer the following questions about home schooling in your region.

1. What is the total number of students enrolled in the schools served by your ROE?

2. What is the number of students being home schooled in your region?

3. Of the total number of students being home schooled in your region, what number is:

_____ in elementary grades (K-8) _____ in secondary grades (9-12)

4. Which of the following reasons do parents/guardians give for home schooling their children? (Check the appropriate response(s)).

_____ religious

_____ poor social climate/discipline in the local district

_____ insufficient instruction in the local district

_____ better one-on-one instruction in the home school

_____ no reasons given by the parent/legal guardian

_____ other reasons (briefly explain) _____

5. Approximately what percent of the parents/legal guardians home schooling children in your region complete the Non-public Registration, Enrollment and Staff Report?

_____ percent completing the report

6. Where do parents get curriculum related materials for their home school?

_____ professional home school organizations

_____ local school district

_____ parent provides instructional materials

_____ other (briefly explain) _____

7. What does your Regional Office of Education do to ensure that the compulsory attendance mandates are being met?

_____ confirmation by the parents/legal guardian that the student(s) are in compliance.

_____ compulsory attendance confirmation by ROE personnel.

_____ no monitoring of compulsory attendance by the ROE.

_____ other (briefly explain) _____

8. Approximately what percent of home school students in your region return to the public schools?

_____ percent of students returning to public schools.