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Is homeschool cool? Current trends in American homeschooling

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ABSTRACT

Homeschooling in America enjoyed significant and dependable growth for decades. However, federal estimates of homeschool participation failed to show statistically significant growth for the first time in 2012. Many dismissed this as measurement error and awaited the next round of federal estimates. In the fall of 2017 those estimates were released, and homeschooling once again not only failed to grow; rather it declined, significantly. This was an historic and important first for the pioneer of American school choice. What caused homeschooling to cool? Or is it just as hot as ever? This article uses data from 22 state departments of education to examine official reports of homeschool participation instead of using more readily available and commonly referenced survey estimates, and these numbers tell a very different story. Based on the available data, homeschooling actually appears to continue its growth.

KEYWORDS

home education; homeschool; NCES; school choice

Introduction

American homeschooling enjoyed significant and dependable growth for decades. However, federal estimates of homeschool participation failed to show statistically significant growth for the first time in 2012 (Redford, Battle, & Bielick, 2016). Many dismissed this as measurement error and awaited the next round of federal estimates. In the fall of 2017 those estimates were released, and homeschooling once again had not only failed to grow, it had declined, significantly (McQuiggan, Megra, & Grady, 2017). This was an historic and important first for the pioneer of American school choice. What caused homeschooling to cool? Or is it just as hot as ever? This article uses data from 22 state departments of education (DOEs) to examine official reports of homeschool participation instead of using more readily available survey estimates, and the numbers tell a different story. I examine the state of homeschooling in America today, focusing on the empirical evidence of homeschooling at the elementary and secondary level, identifying states as homeschool hot if they show an overall

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trend of growth in market share, and homeschool cool if there is an overall or recent decline in market share. The goal of this article is to contribute to the broader understanding of homeschooling and examine the current state of homeschooling in America. I contribute to the literature by analyzing officially reported counts of homeschool participation at the state level for almost half of the states in America. This data has been publicly available at some individual state DOEs but has not previously been compiled and compared to National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) homeschool estimates.[1]

Whether homeschool growth has cooled or not, it continues to be an important avenue of school choice for many American families. With millions of families choosing to homeschool, it is no longer the fringe movement of the past (Anthony & Burroughs, 2010). A better understanding of the changes that are occurring in the homeschool movement, why families from different social, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds choose homeschool, and how that choice is affecting educational outcomes for their children is increasingly important in the school choice policy arena.

American homeschool

Homeschooling, outlawed in many states until 1996, has long since made a comeback (Bell & Kaplan, 2016). From the 1870s to the 1960s, compulsory school attendance and instruction from trained professional educators was the norm in North America (Dumas, Gates, & Schwarzer, 2010). However, in the 1960s, amidst social questioning of public schooling and the emergence of Deschooling ideas by authors such as John Holt, more parents returned to homeschooling (Somerville, n.d.). Numbers of homeschooling families across America continued to increase well into the 2000s (Cheng, Tuchman, & Wolf, 2016). NCES estimated that 1.1 million students were homeschooled in 2003, and 1.5 million or 3% of school-aged children in the United States were educated at home in the 2011–2012 academic year. Similarly, the National Home Education Research Institute (NHERI), a homeschool advocacy group, estimated that the homeschool number during the same timeframe was closer to 2 million (Ray, 2011). While both estimates outpaced enrollment in charter schools during those years, discussion, study, and understanding of homeschooling remains limited (Wilkens, Wade, Sonnert, & Sadler, 2016).

Common empirical limitations

A major limitation to causal research on the effects of homeschooling is that homeschoolers self-select into this education model for a variety of reasons. Those reasons alone might be enough to make homeschool children different from their traditional public school peers regardless of differences in the educational model or pedagogy. The selection bias inherent to

homeschooling makes empirical analyses attempting to determine causal relationships nearly impossible (Lubienski, Puckett, & Brewer, 2013). The very thing that makes a family choose homeschool could also be the thing that causes homeschool students to outperform their traditional public school peers. Similarly, it is possible that some parents are motivated to choose homeschooling from a desire for less education and less oversight for their children. In this case, parents may not voluntarily submit to reporting, testing, or surveys. Therefore, they might not appear in available homeschool data. Nevertheless, education researchers and advocates on both sides of the issue have done their best to isolate the effects of homeschooling from other moderating variables. The majority of homeschool research is largely qualitative in nature despite proponent's claims of implied causation (Kunzman & Gaither, 2013).

Further exacerbating this empirical dilemma is the combative political history surrounding homeschooling (Dumas et al., 2010). Many homeschooling parents resent attempts at measuring or otherwise controlling homeschooling, and rebut attempts towards mandatory testing or reporting that would facilitate better empirical measurement strategies. In fact, even calculating the actual numbers of homeschoolers in the United States is difficult because many states do not require homeschool parents to register with the state.

For these reasons, available datasets containing information on homeschool students comes from students who volunteer information, switch between homeschooling and public schooling for whom data is captured in the public school setting, or who later enter college and declare that they were homeschooled students. None of these are representative of the population of homeschoolers, nor are they comparable to the broader traditionally schooled population.

Homeschool advocacy

The homeschool movement is remarkable in that parents and homeschool advocates from all walks of life, and along all points on the political and religious spectrum, have managed to organize, wielding an impressive political power with the ability to block major legislative reforms at both the state and national level.

In terms of brokering political power through organization and advocacy, two major organizations must be mentioned when discussing the homeschooling political advocacy arena. The first is the Homeschool Legal Defense Association (HSLDA), a national organization advocating for homeschooling through lobbying, and offering legal assistance to homeschool parents. The second is NHERI headed by Dr. Brian D. Ray, a former homeschool parent and science teacher. NHERI provides research data and advocacy information to stakeholders such as policy makers and homeschool parents.

Thanks in large part to the organization and efforts of these and other advocacy and support groups, homeschooling is now legal in every state (Isenberg, 2007). The homeschooling lobby is so powerful that it managed to ensure that homeschoolers were completely excluded from any of the requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the more recent Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA; Estrada, 2015; Isenberg, 2007).

Who homeschools?

Parents who choose homeschooling for their children are a select group. In 2009, estimates reported by HSLDA state that approximately 98% of homeschool parents graduated from high school, compared to a national graduation rate of approximately 82%. Further, half of homeschool parents had a bachelor's degree or better, compared to 42% of the general K–12 parent population (Kunzman & Gaither, 2013).

Intact family structure and large family size were also a prevalent in homeschool families, with between 89% and 97.9% of homeschool families reporting being married and having an average of 3.5 children (Kunzman & Gaither, 2013; Homeschool Legal Defense Association, 2009). Nationally, 73% of families are intact and have 2.1 children (Kunzman & Gaither, 2013). Median family income for homeschool families was close to the national average of $79,000. Finally, only 19.4% of homeschool mothers reported working for pay, and, of those, nearly 85% reported only working part time, rates well below national averages (HSLDA, 2009). According to the NCES's Homeschooling in the United States 2012 report, 41% of homeschool students live in rural areas, 83% are White, and there is no significant difference by gender. Only about 10% of homeschoolers are considered poor.

As homeschooling has expanded in numbers, so has it expanded in discipleship, adding new and diverse demographic subpopulations to the homeschool following (Bell & Kaplan, 2016). An increasing number of African American and Hispanic families choose to homeschool their children.

Why homeschooling?

As homeschool numbers increase, it is evident that families choose homeschooling for their children for a variety of reasons and those reasons appear to be changing over time (Bell & Kaplan, 2016; Lubienski et al., 2013). Further, with the expansion of homeschooling and the changing demographic underpinning, the impact of advocacy is also changing, which could lead to important regulatory changes (Bell & Kaplan, 2016; Gloeckner & Jones, 2013).

Homeschoolers have traditionally been divided into two groups, those who chose to homeschool out of ideologies, usually religious, and those who

simply sought a more academically rigorous education (Taylor-Hough, 2010; Knowles, Marlow, & Muchmore, 1992). However, as the homeschool movement has grown and the number of homeschoolers has increased, so too has it diversified. With that diversification of homeschool participants has also come a diversification in the stated reasons for homeschooling. According to NCES's report Homeschooling in the United States: 2012, 91% of parents report concern about "safety, drugs, or negative peer pressure" as a motivation for homeschooling, followed by 77% concerned with "providing moral instruction," 74% report "dissatisfaction with academic instruction," and 64% want to provide "religious instruction." When asked to declare their most important reason for homeschooling, concern about safety was cited most often. This was a change from the historically most reported reasons of desiring moral and religious instruction, and could be evidence of a changing public school, political, or social climate. The finding also could be evidence of the shifting makeup and motivations of the homeschool population, all important considerations when looking at potential decline in participation rates.

Indeed, African American and Hispanic families are opting into homeschooling in greater numbers (Ray, 2015). Estimates indicate that approximately 10% of current homeschoolers are African American (Ray, 2015). Many African Americans, particularly in urban areas, appear to choose to homeschool their children to keep them physically and emotionally safe from violence and racism (Mazama & Lundy, 2012; Musumunu & Mazama, 2014).

How many?

When considering the state of homeschooling, it is a logical first step to determine exactly how many homeschool students there are. However, even this simple question is nearly impossible to answer. While homeschooling is legal in all states, state policies regarding tracking homeschool students vary. Some states require parents to register students as homeschoolers with the state, through local districts, or through private umbrella schools (Kunzman & Gaither, 2013). It is unknown how many parents obey those requirements. Because of the adversarial relationship between some homeschool families and the government, some families are hesitant to provide information, whether required or not (Kunzman & Gaither, 2013). Homeschool advocacy groups claim that national estimates of homeschool numbers fail to take this into account, stating that many families prefer to educate their children off the grid. Known as "homeschooling under your constitutional rights," undeclared or underground homeschooling is legally considered truancy but in practice usually goes unpunished (Isenberg, 2007). Similarly, some states allow for families to homeschool by technically enrolling under the umbrella

of charter or private schools; therefore, these families might be undercounted (Finn, Manno, & Vanourek, 2000).

Further, and most important when considering the overall impact of homeschooling, it appears that homeschooling is not an all or nothing proposition. Many, if not most, homeschooling families, particularly those not stating their main impetus for homeschool choice as religious, move freely in and out of traditional schooling and homeschooling to meet the varying needs of their children over time (Isenberg, 2006). Only 63% of new homeschool students continue homeschooling into their second year (Isenberg, 2006); and it is common for families to homeschool some of their children while others attend traditional schools. Single point in time estimates of the numbers of homeschool students do not fully capture the influence of homeschooling. While estimates indicate that around 3% of American K–12 students are homeschooled at a single point in time, the percentage of American students who have *ever* been homeschooled is estimated at between 6 and 12% (Isenberg, 2007).

Since 1999, NCES has issued the National Household Education Surveys Program (NHES) to survey a representative sample of American households (Bielick, Chandler & Broughman, 2001). This data has been used to determine the official federal estimate of the total number of American families who homeschool (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009). In 1999, NCES estimated that there were 850,000 homeschool students in the United States (Redford et al., 2016). However, some homeschool insiders argue that these estimates, based on the NCES survey, are low. In 2005, homeschool advocacy groups estimated that the population of United States students being schooled at home had reached 2.5 million (Ray, 2006). By 2007, the NCES estimated that approximately 1.5 million children were being homeschooled in the United States, a 36% increase from their 2003 estimate of 1.1 million (Kunzman & Gaither, 2013). Although increases occurred from 2007 to 2012, the growth was not statistically significant and suggested slowed homeschool growth in increasingly school choice rich environments (Redford et al., 2016). In 2017, the latest NCES report indicated an actual recession in homeschooling (McQuiggan et al., 2017). The following sections of this article will examine this finding using state level data on reported homeschool participation

Data

Hard data, not data threshed from surveys of a sampling of the population, is rare in homeschool research. Therefore, while incomplete, this dataset (DeAngelis & Dills, 2018) offers a unique look at homeschooling

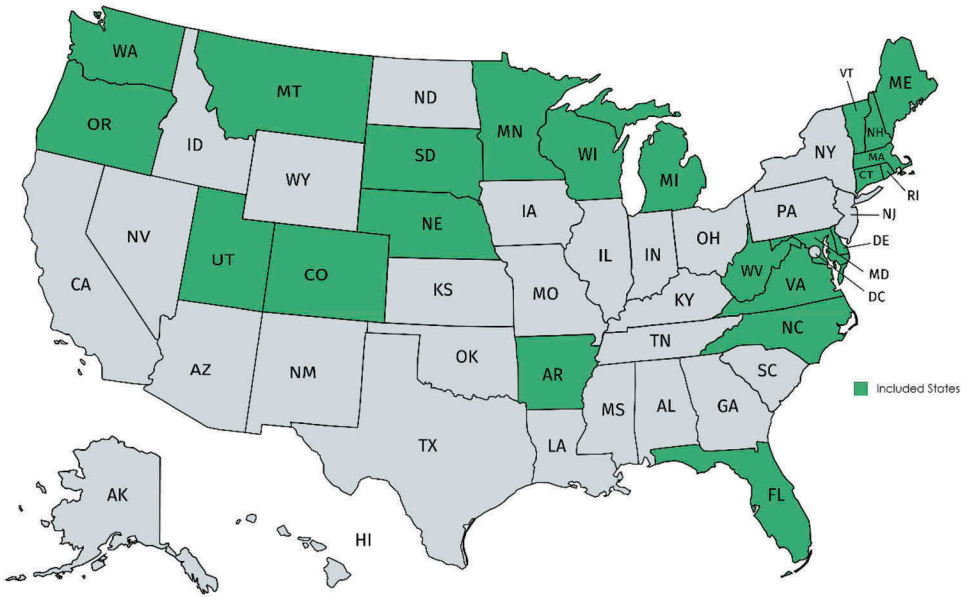

Figure 1. Map of included states.

at the state level, and the findings are an important addition to homeschool research. I included all relevant available data in an effort to shed light on an area of education research that remains largely in the shadows due to limited, imprecise data. I use data collected from 22 state DOEs which reported homeschool participation from 2000 to 2015 as seen in Figure 1. While the dataset did contain data for some states for earlier years, I choose the years for which the majority of states had useable data for the best comparison. A few states in this sample have incomplete data for a variety of reasons. I have included those data in state reports because, with so little available homeschool data, even incomplete data may be of value. However, states with highly limited data are not included in aggregate calculations or reporting. When calculating market share, only public (including charter) and homeschool students are included. The methods used here are simple. I report the total number of homeschool participants, and then divide that number by the total number of public school and homeschool students to calculate market share. Some states report private school participation numbers, but this data is missing from half of the states in this sample and is, therefore, not comprehensive enough to include in this analysis. In the following section, I report participation rates and market share by state alphabetically.

There are notable limitations with this dataset. Importantly, the data is gathered by state DOEs and may not account for parents who do not report

their children as homeschooled. This would, therefore, downwardly bias the calculations if there were no policy changes during the years under examination. However, if state reporting policies became more homeschool friendly, parents who had homeschooled "off the grid" previously might begin reporting the homeschool activity. This would look like an actual increase in homeschooling when in reality it is simply an increase in reporting. The policy context with reporting requirements, ease of reporting, government oversight of homeschool regulation, and standardized testing requirements could all affect the propensity of a homeschool family to report. Further, the requirements within states for how and when homeschool families must report varies widely and has likely changed during the years examined here. This article does not examine relevant state policy changes or assess the potential for correlating homeschool reporting changes. While this would be valuable information for broader homeschool policy discussions, it is outside the scope of this article.

Arkansas

The homeschool participation numbers from Arkansas shows a relatively consistent increase over the 16 years under examination as seen in Figure 2. In 2000, there were approximately 12,000 homeschool students reported in Arkansas which accounted for 2.5% of students. By 2015, that number had grown to just over 19,000 homeschooler students and a market share of almost 4%. Arkansas currently has one of the highest percentages of

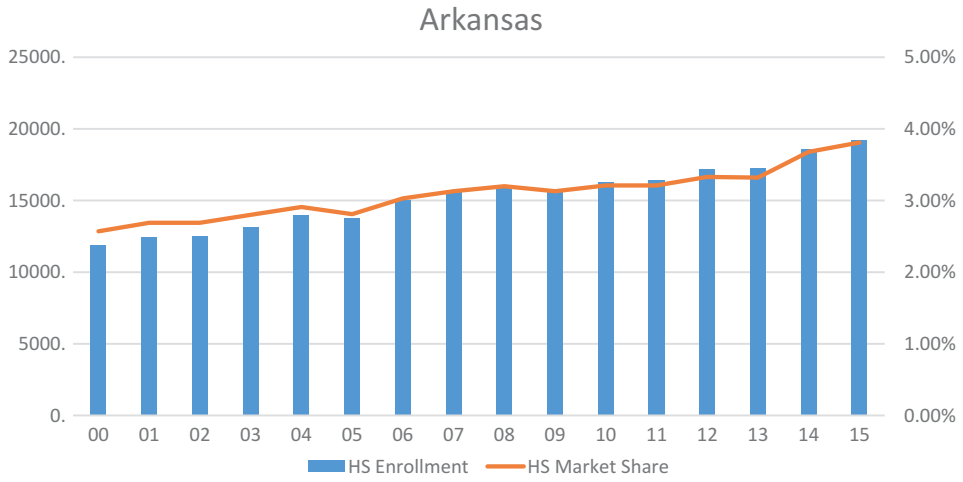

Figure 2. Arkansas homeschool 2000–2015.

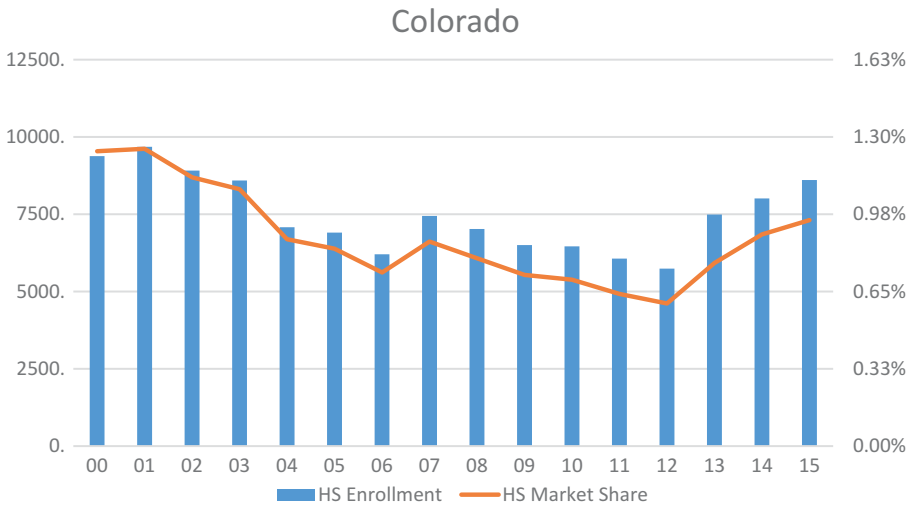

Figure 3. Colorado homeschool 2000–2015.

homeschool students in our sample, a hot zone for homeschool with participation growth of 35% since 2000, and 10% since 2012.

Colorado

Homeschool participation in Colorado has been volatile over the last 16 years with distinct lows in 2006 and 2012 as seen in Figure 3. With just under 10,000 homeschoolers in 2000, and a low of approximately 5,000 students in 2012, homeschooling has increased in recent years with steep increases in both participation and market share. However, homeschoolers account for less than 1% of students in Colorado. Colorado is homeschool hot with an 8% decline in participation since 2000, but a 33% increase since 2012.

Connecticut

Connecticut has had declining homeschool participation for the last decade, with participation rates fluctuating between 1,800 and 2,400 homeschool students (see Figure 4). However, with 3 years of missing data in most recent years, it is impossible to know if there has been any sort of rebound as seen in other states in these postrecession years. For that reason, I must say that this state is homeschool cool with a 19% decline in participation since 2000.

Delaware

Delaware is a small state with a small homeschool population that has remained fairly stable the last dozen years. However, there was a steep

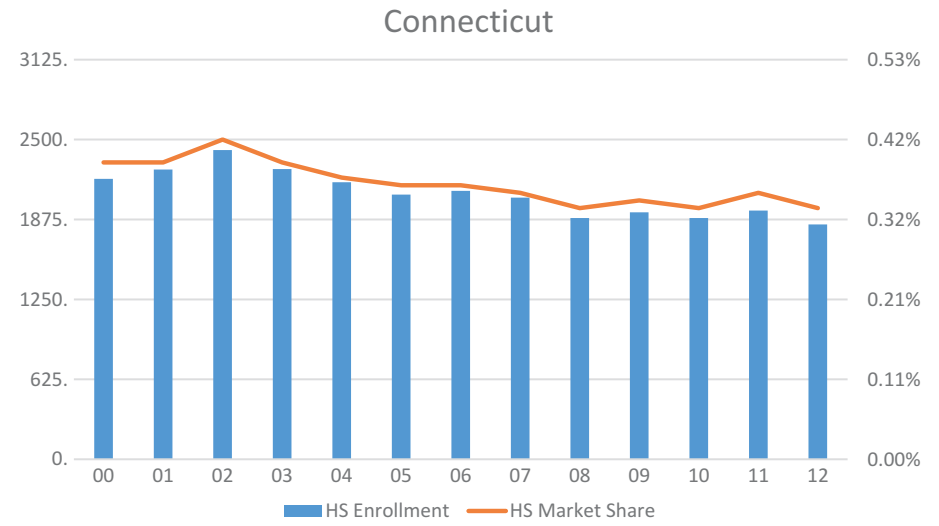

Figure 4. Connecticut homeschool 2000–2012.

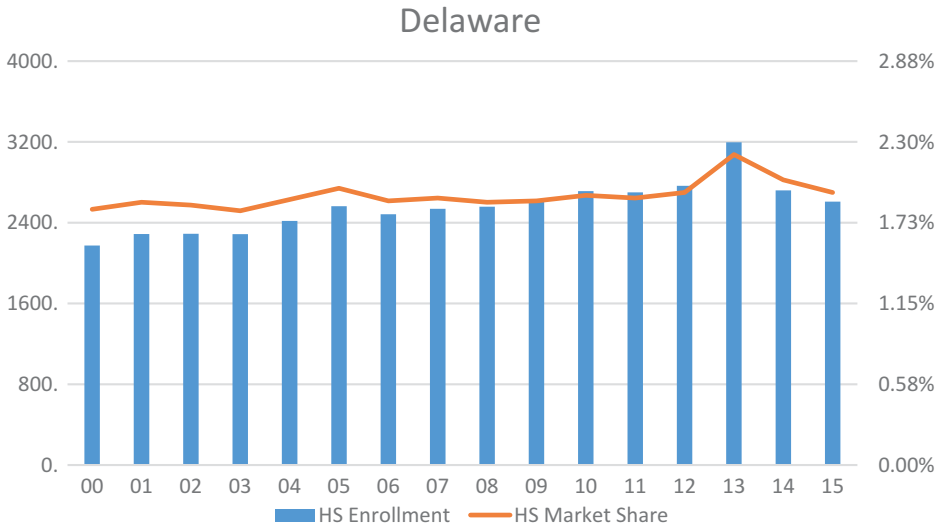

Figure 5. Delaware homeschool 2000–2015.

spike in reports of homeschool participation in 2013 followed by a decided decline. Despite their 1.75% market share, Delaware appears to be cool to homeschool with a 16% increase in participation since 2000 but a 6% decline in the most recent years as seen in Figure 5.

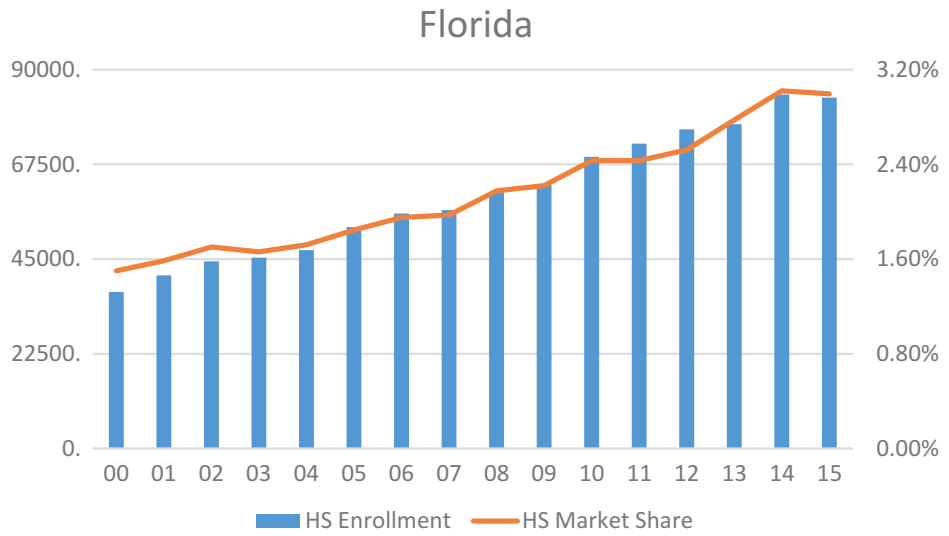

Figure 6. Florida homeschool 2000–2015.

Florida

Florida has a robust school choice market and homeschooling does not appear to be an exception. Homeschool participation has grown steadily over the last 16 years, with just under 40,000 students in 2000, and over 80,000 in 2015 (see Figure 6). Further, this is one of the top states for homeschool market share, with about 3% of Florida's students being homeschooled at a single point in time. Florida is clearly homeschool hot with a 55% increase in participation since 2000 and a 10% increase since 2012.

Maine

Maine is home to a volatile homeschool market with distinct dips in 2002, 2004, and 2011. Nevertheless, homeschool participation has been on the rise since 2011 and nearly 3% of their students were homeschooled in 2015 as seen in Figure 7. Maine is homeschool hot with 20% increased participation since 2000 and an 8% increase since 2012.

Maryland

Maryland also has a robust homeschool community with steady increases in all years except immediately following the Great Recession in 2009. Further, Maryland is one of the top states in this sample when it comes to market share (see Figure 8). Just over 3% of Maryland's K–12 students are

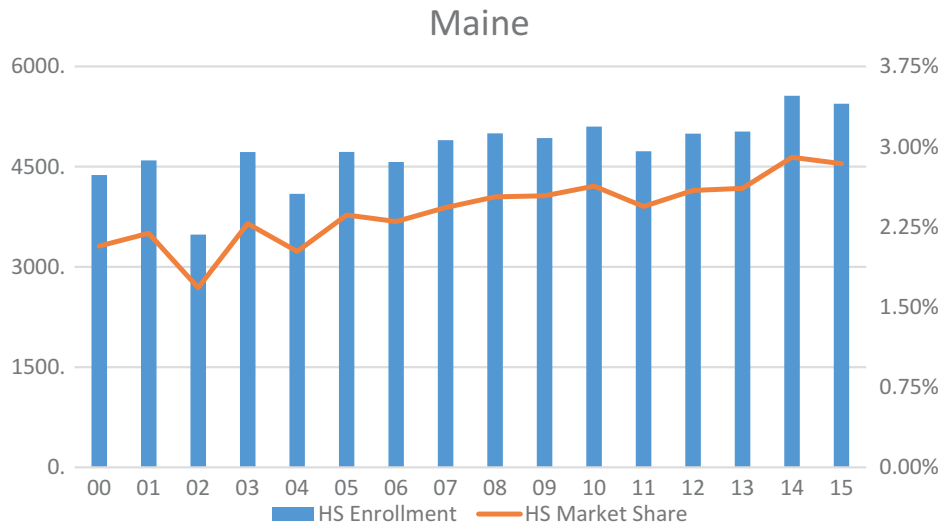

Figure 7. Maine homeschool 2000–2015.

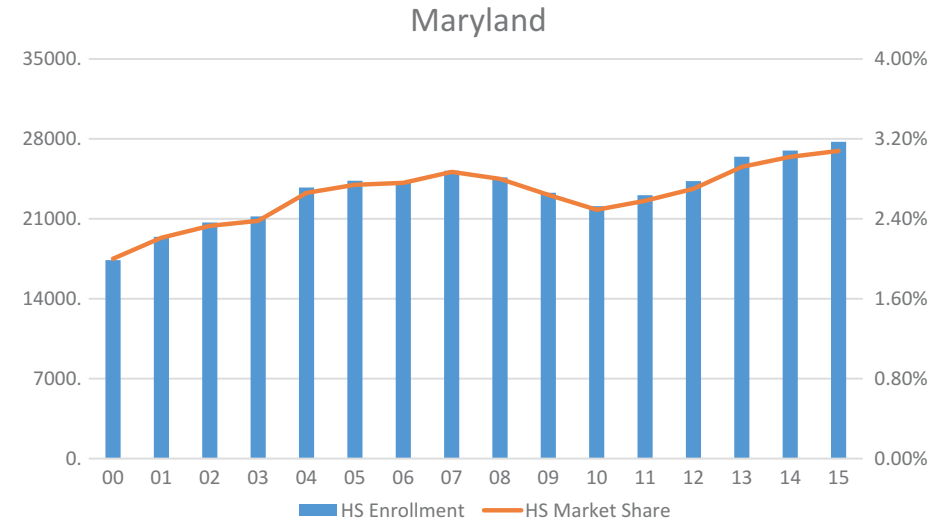

Figure 8. Maryland homeschool 2000–2015.

homeschooled. Maryland is homeschool hot with a 37% participation increase since 2000 and 12% increase since 2012.

Massachusetts

While there is clearly a significant amount of missing data for Massachusetts, what is available indicates that homeschool is on the rise. However, the homeschool market share is tiny, with around 900,000 public school students

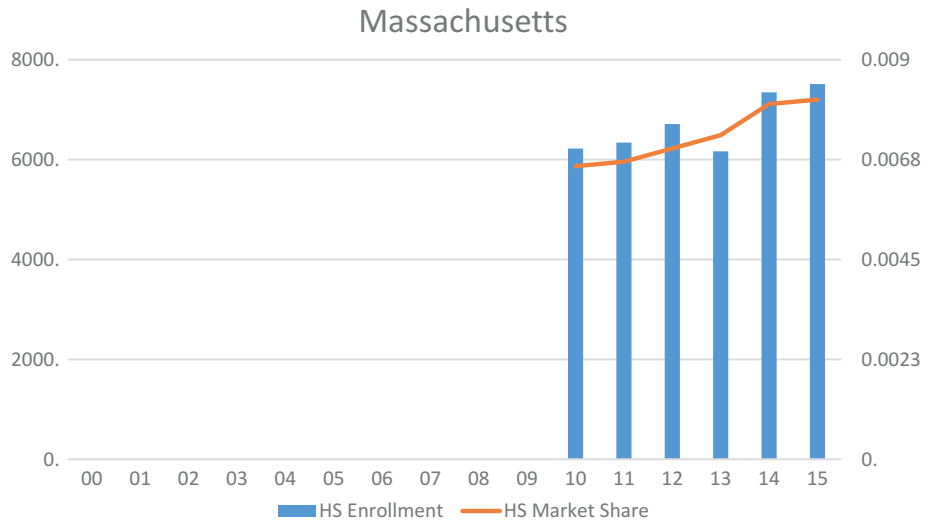

Figure 9. Massachusetts homeschool 2010–2015.

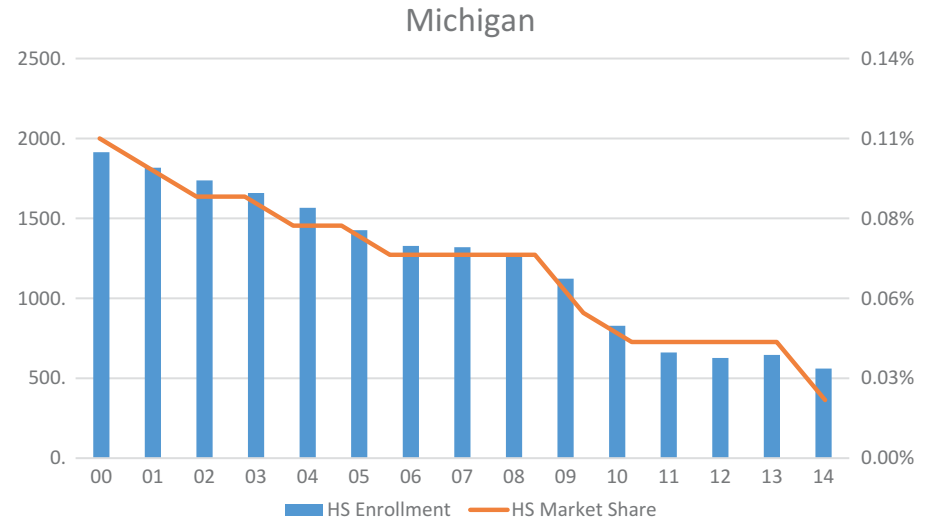

Figure 10. Michigan homeschool 2000–2014.

and just over 7,000 homeschool students reported in 2015. Despite consistent growth over 5 of the last 6 years, I am going to call Massachusetts homeschool hot given its 11% increase since 2012 as seen in Figure 9.

Michigan

There is no need to discuss homeschool participation in Michigan. Homeschooling has steadily declined almost without exception over the last

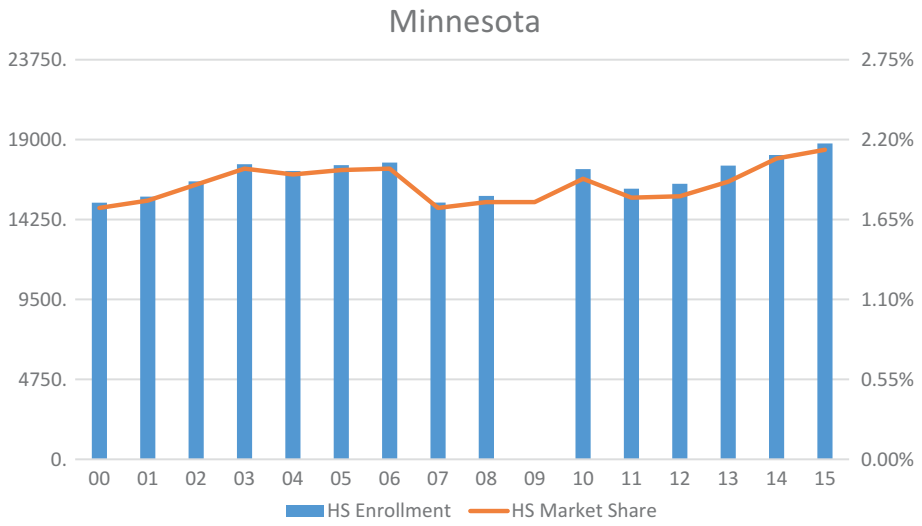

Figure 11. Minnesota homeschool 2000–2015.

16 years as seen in Figure 10. The slope of the decline is sharpest post-Great-Recession. Michigan is homeschool cool.

Minnesota

Even with one year of missing data for homeschool participation in Minnesota, it is clear that homeschooling has recently risen, and enjoys a respectable 2% market share. Minnesota is homeschool hot with a 19% increase in participation since 2000, 13% increase since 2012 (see Figure 11).

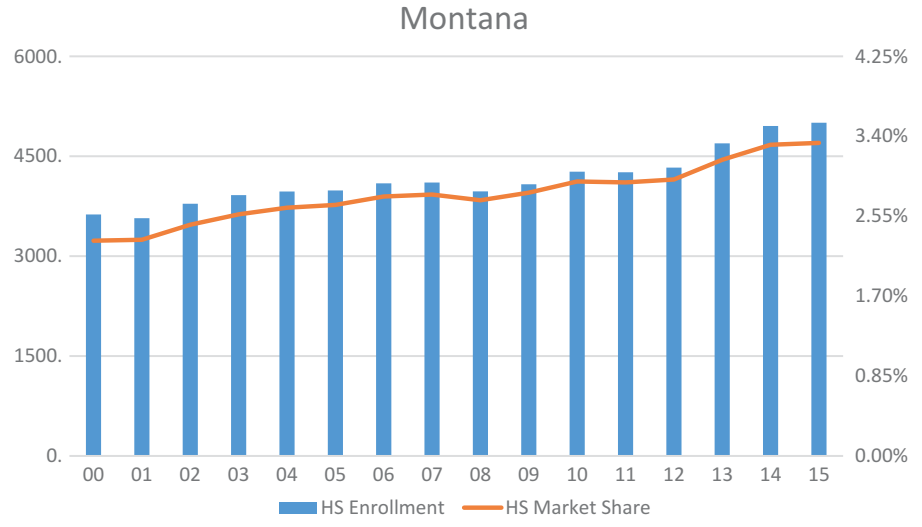

Figure 12. Montana homeschool 2000–2015.

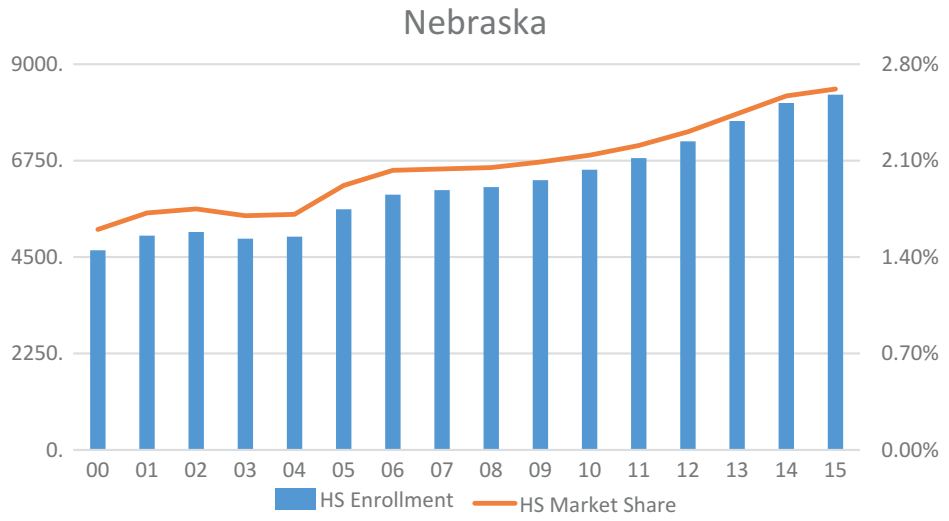

Figure 13. Nebraska homeschool 2000–2015.

Montana

Homeschooling in Montana has been consistently growing, and with well over 3% market share, it is a top homeschool state in this sample. Montana is definitely homeschool hot with a 27% participation increase since 2000 and a 13% increase since 2012 as seen in Figure 12.

Nebraska

Nebraska has also seen a steady increase in homeschoolers for the last 16 years with the exception of a stable 2004 (see Figure 13). They also have a high homeschool market share, 2.6%. Nebraska has a long history of being homeschool hot with 44% participation increase since 2000 and a 13% increase since 2012.

New Hampshire

New Hampshire is missing data for homeschool participation numbers for 2014 and 2015. Nevertheless, it certainly seems homeschool friendly, with steady growth from 2000–2013 and a hearty market share of almost 3% as seen in Figure 14. Even considering the missing data, it seems fair to call New Hampshire homeschool hot with a 34% participation increase since 2000.

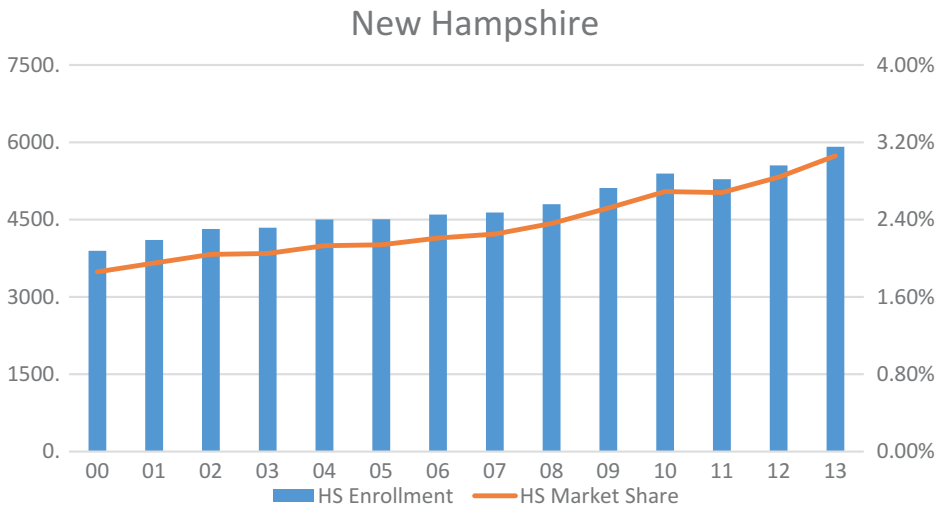

Figure 14. New Hampshire homeschool 2000–2013.

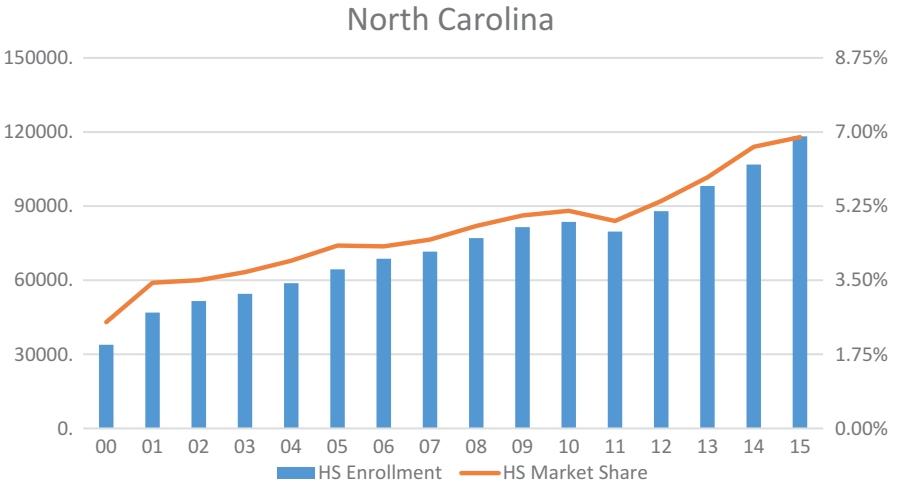

Figure 15. North Carolina homeschool 2000–2015.

North Carolina

North Carolina is homeschool friendly. In 2000 they had 1.3 million public school students (not including charter students) and almost 34,000 homeschool students with a market share of 2.5% as seen in Figure 15. There was a decline in participation in 2011, which rebounded in following years. In 2015, North Carolina reported 1.7 million public school students and just over 118,000 homeschoolers, 6.88% market share. North Carolina has the most homeschoolers and by far the highest market share of any state in this

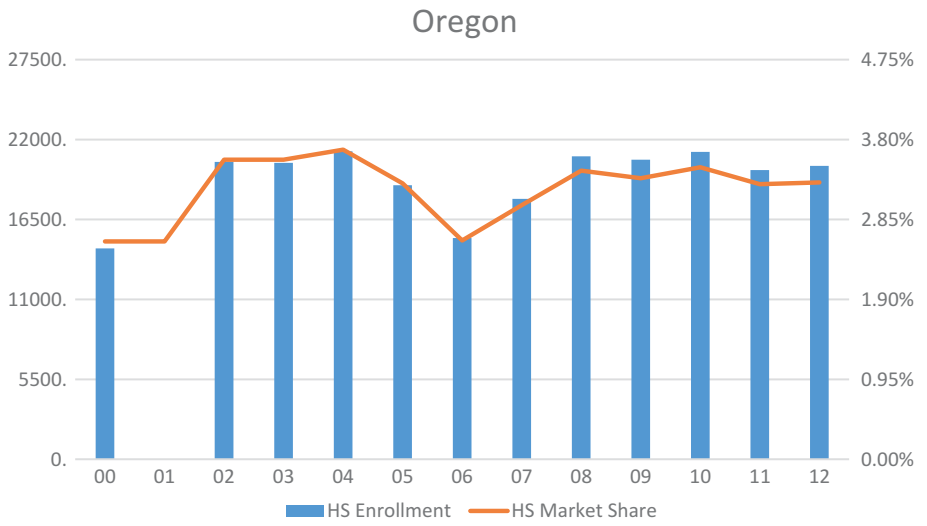

Figure 16. Oregon homeschool 2000–2012.

sample. North Carolina is homeschool hot with a 71% increase in participation since 2000, 25% increase since 2012.

Oregon

Oregon is missing homeschool reporting data in 2001, as well as for 2013–2015. Further, as seen in Figure 16, the state appears to have an inconsistent homeschooling market share, with lows, highs, and apparent stability in 2011 and 2012. I still consider Oregon homeschool hot because of its high homeschool market share of over 3%. Even at its lowest, Oregon had

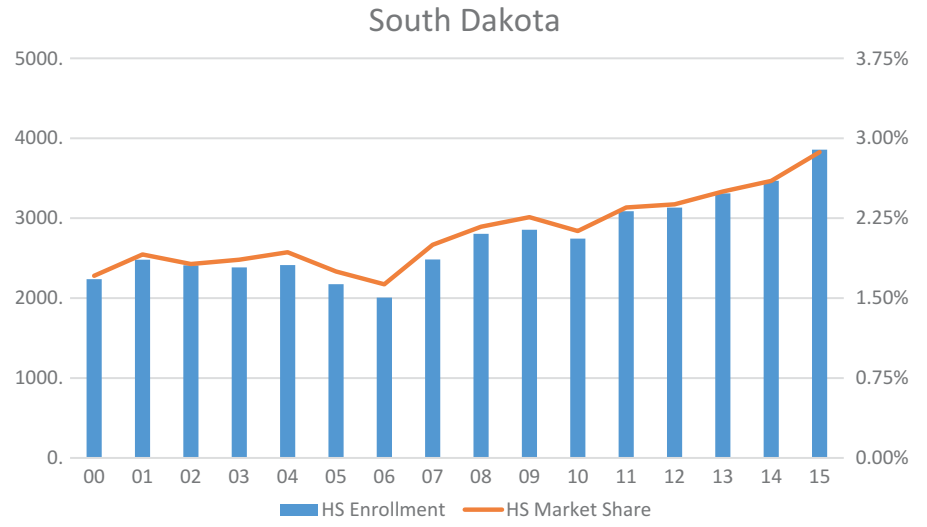

Figure 17. South Dakota homeschool 2000–2015.

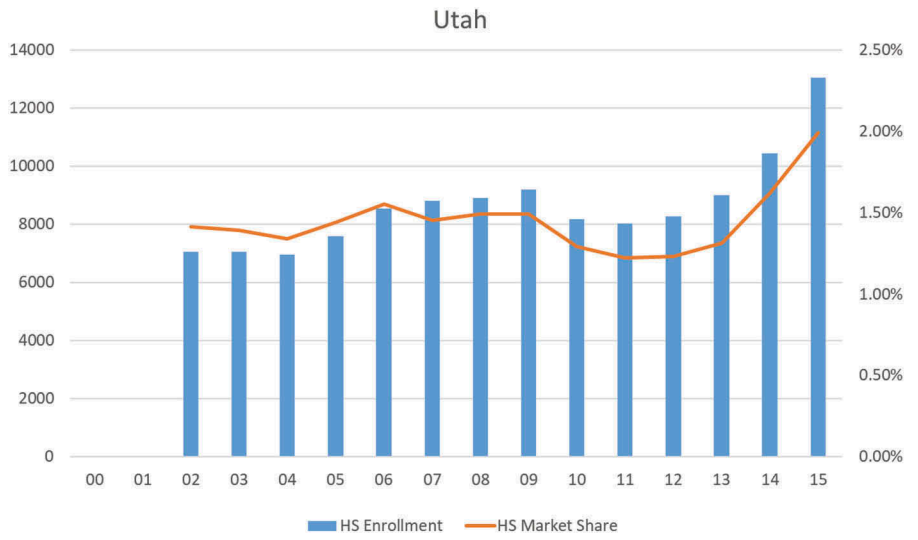

Figure 18. Utah homeschool 2002–2015.

a homeschool market share of 2%, and an increase in participation of 28% since 2000.

South Dakota

South Dakota has a choppy, but positively sloped history with homeschooling. There were years when homeschool popularity waned, 2005–2006 and 2010 (postrecession), but homeschooling has grown overall from just over 2,000 students in the year 2000 to almost double that in 2015; a homeschool market share of 2.87% (see Figure 17). South Dakota is homeschool hot with increased participation of 40% since 2000 and 12% since 2012.

Utah

Utah has had a turbulent history of participation in homeschooling, with a dip in participation around 2010. However, in recent years there has been a steeply sloping increase in participation. Further, Utah's homeschool market share topped out at almost 2% in 2015. Utah is homeschool hot with a 46% participation increase since 2002, 36% increase since 2012 as seen in Figure 18.

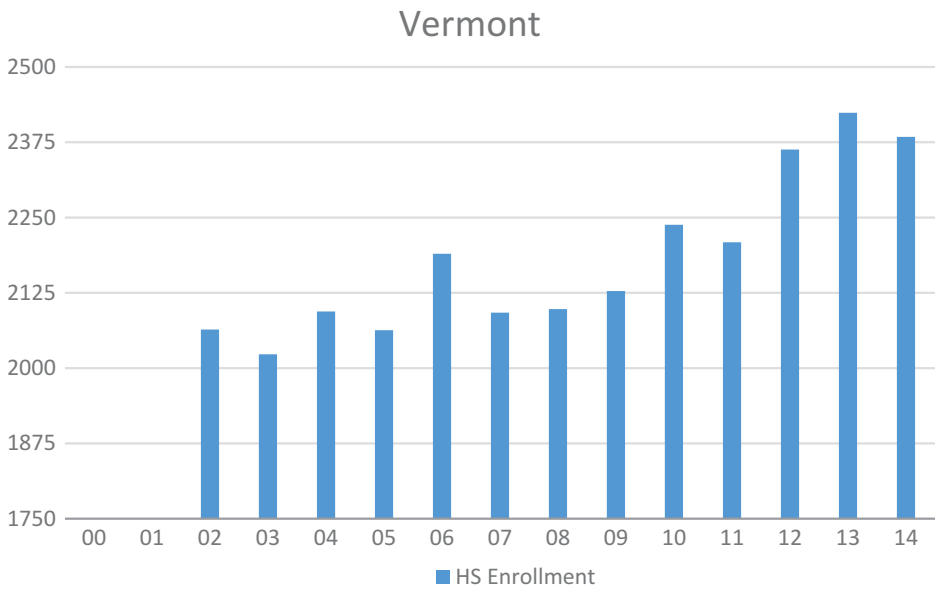

Figure 19. Vermont homeschool 2002–2014.

Vermont

The data available for Vermont does not include public school participation numbers; therefore, I cannot calculate homeschool market share. Further, homeschool participation fluctuates year to year as seen in Figure 19. Nevertheless, homeschooling does appear to grow overall despite evidence of a dip from 2013–2014. More information is needed

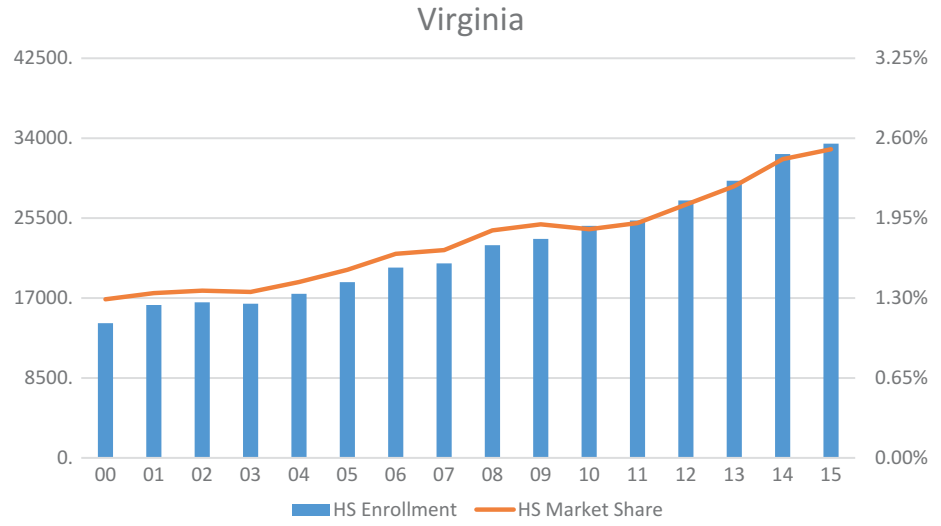

Figure 20. Virginia homeschool 2000–2015.

to categorize Vermont. I will tentatively call Vermont homeschool hot based on its 13% increase in participation since 2002, but without market share data this is tentative.

Virginia

Virginia has a healthy homeschool following with a steady increase in both participation and market share for a decade and a half. In 2000, Virginia had almost 15,000 homeschool students, and a market share of nearly 1% (see Figure 20). By 2015, those numbers had increased to over 30,000 homeschool students and a market share of 2.25%. Virginia is homeschool hot with a 57% increase in participation since 2000, 18% since 2012 as seen in Figure 18.

Washington

Homeschool participation data for Washington shows an interesting pattern of a high in 2000 followed by dips around the recessions on 2003–2004 and 2009. In 2000, they had just over 20,000 homeschool students and a 2% market share. Despite several years of significant decline as shown in Figure 21, homeschooling does appear to have risen since 2012, recouping prior losses and surpassing previous highs in participation. Washington appears to be homeschool hot with a 2% participation increase since 2000, 20% since 2012.

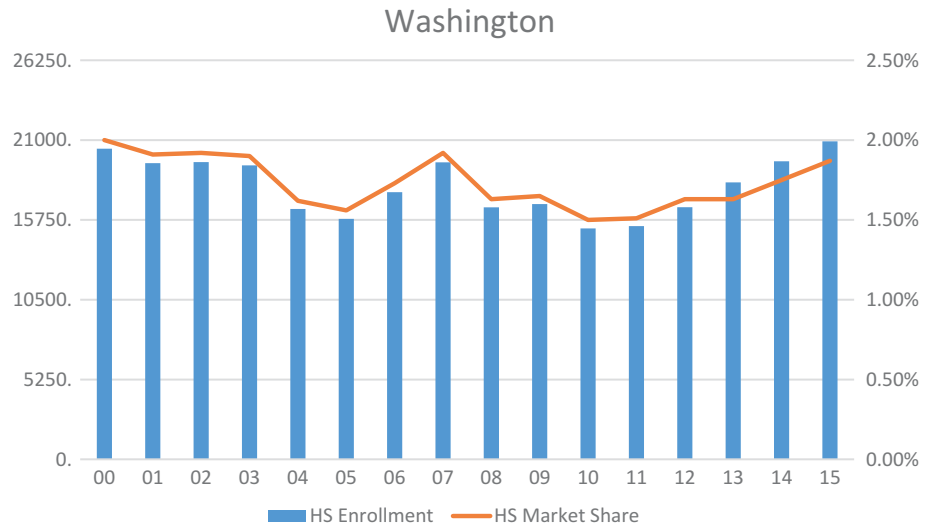

Figure 21. Washington homeschool 2000–2015.

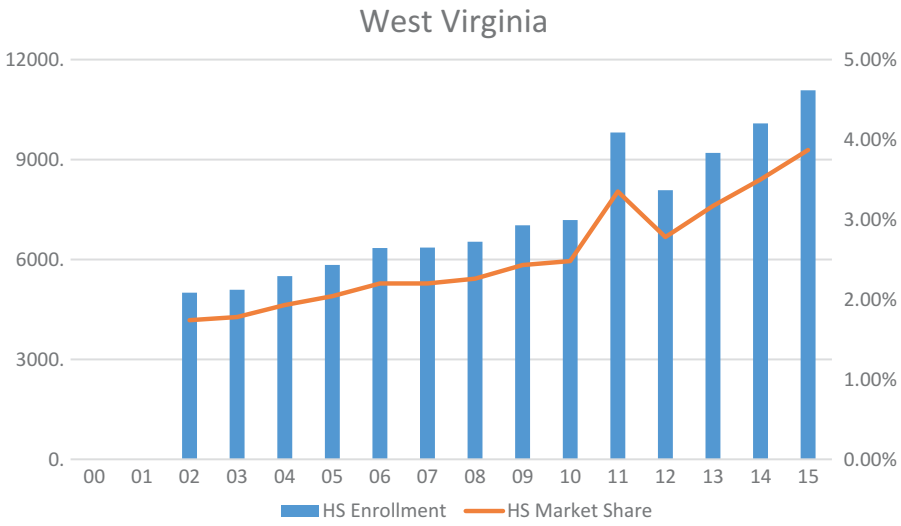

Figure 22. West Virginia homeschool 2002–2015.

West Virginia

West Virginia clearly has an affinity for homeschooling. Since 2002, homeschool participation has grown steadily almost without exception as seen in Figure 22. The large spike in growth in 2011 may have resulted in the subsequent decline in 2012. Further, they have a robust market share topping out at almost 4% of K–12 students in the state. West Virginia is homeschool hot with a 55% increase in participation since 2002, 27% since 2012.

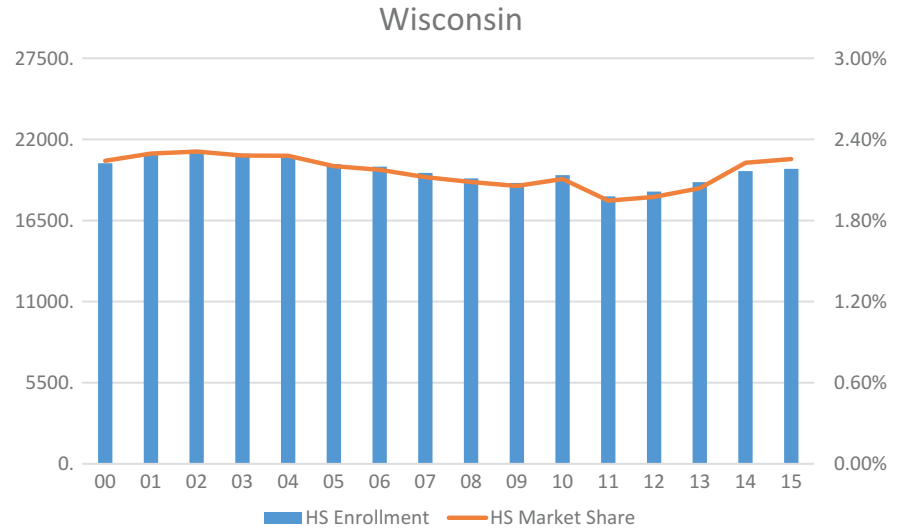

Figure 23. Wisconsin homeschool 2000–2015.

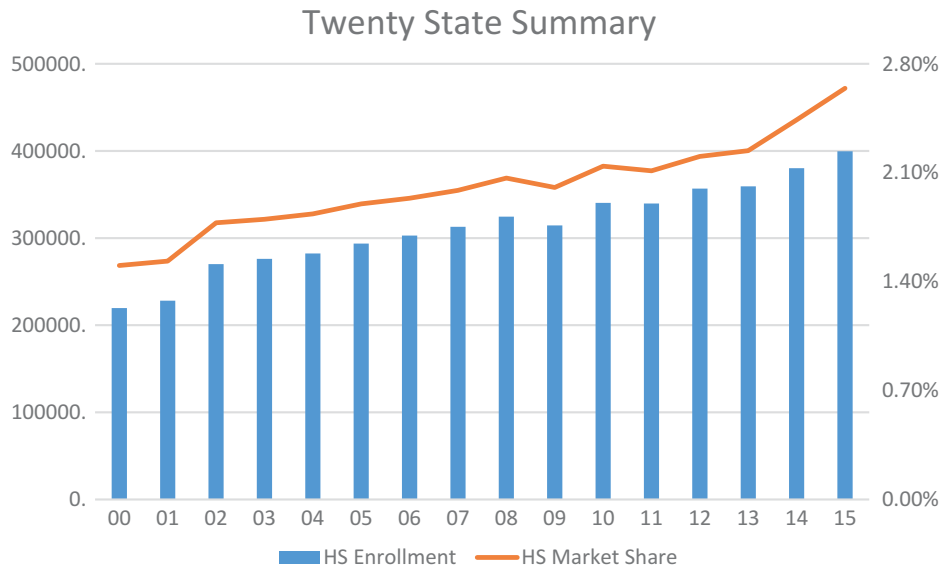

Figure 24. Twenty state homeschool summary 2000–2015.

Wisconsin

Homeschooling has enjoyed considerable stability in Wisconsin for years. Both participation and market share have a gently negative slope for some years, but stasis for most years in our data. Further, the slope is positive in the most recent years, recouping previous losses in both participation and market share. Overall, Wisconsin appears to be homeschool hot with a 2% decline in participation since 2000 but a 7% increase since 2012 and a market share of 2.4% (see Figure 23).

Twenty state summary

Combining data on participation and market share from the 20 states for which I have the most complete data for the years 2000 to 2015 (excluding Massachusetts and Vermont), there is a consistent trend of growth in homeschool participation. In these 20 states, homeschooling grew from almost 220,000 students and a market share of 1.87% in 2000, to almost 400,000 homeschool students and a market share of 2.64% in 2015 as seen in Figure 24. Clearly these 20 states are homeschool hot with a 45% increase in participation since 2000, 11% since 2012.

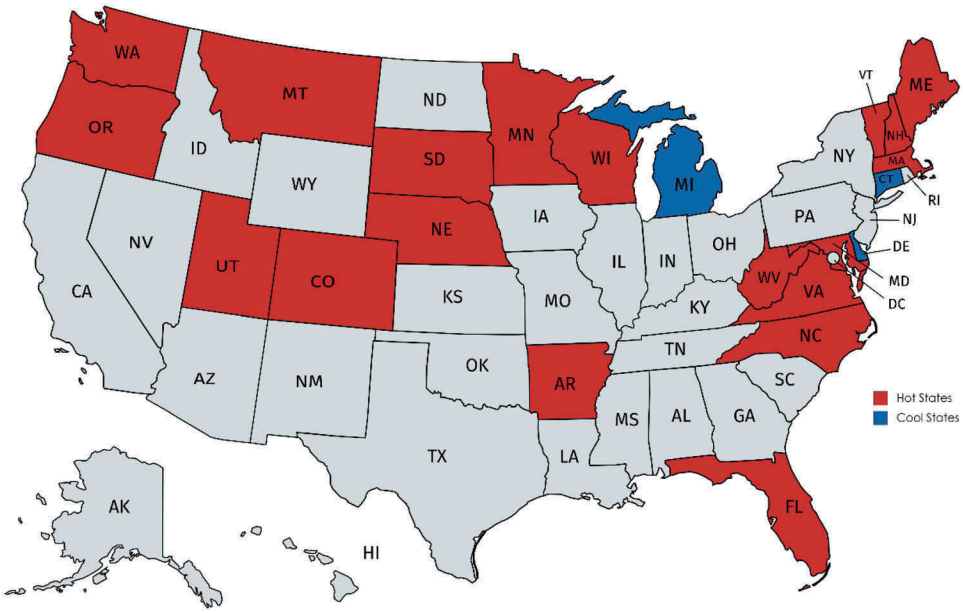

Figure 25. Hot and cool homeschool States.

Conclusion

According to official national estimates, America's long history of homeschool growth cooled in recent years. If true, this is an important and historic first for one of the most insulated and widespread forms of school choice. However, data from state DOEs in 22 states calls national estimates into question. If 19 of the 22 states in this sample show growth in both homeschool participation and market share (see Figure 25), then it seems logical to wonder whether this trend might also hold for the missing states.

In some scenarios both the data presented here and the NCES estimates could prove accurate. For instance, could states with a higher percentage of rural populations, with fewer school choice options, possibly have stronger homeschool growth? However, according to this logic, missing states in the center of the nation might be more likely to be hot than cool. Is it possible that homeschool friendly states are more likely to collect and report homeschool participation? This is possible, but equally possible is that states with more regulation, and, therefore, potentially *less* friendly to homeschoolers, collect and report data on homeschool participation. Only more data can offer answers. As usual, more research is needed.

Future research includes plans to collect data from missing states and to examine state funding and school choice legislative changes to see if these might be potential mediators of homeschool participation and reporting.

Note

1. NCES homeschool estimates in the 2016 report are based on responses from 552 surveys from homeschool respondents out of a total of 14,075 completed surveys.

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