Multnomah Education Service District

Homeschool Survey Summary Report

Summer 2022

Background

Homeschooling is an educational option in Oregon. Families may choose to homeschool their child at any time during the year by providing them with parent-directed schooling in their home.

Families who choose to homeschool must notify their Education Service District (ESD) in accordance with ORS 339.010, OAR 581-021-0026(4). Multnomah ESD provides homeschooling registration for students that live in Multnomah County. As of June 1, 2022 there were approximately 3,700 students registered for homeschooling in Multnomah County. This number is based on parent reported homeschooling and may not be completely accurate. Oregon law requires families to notify MESD when they begin homeschooling, but not when they discontinue. Some families update their registration and some do not, which could result in an overestimated number.

MESD surveyed homeschooling families in Multnomah County to learn more about their experiences, reasons for homeschooling and resources that they find useful. In April 2022, 2,686 families were invited to take the survey, 680 families participated, resulting in a 25.3% response rate.

Purpose

Schools and districts need to know who is opting into homeschool and why in order to improve existing programs or develop new options to better support students and families, including families who continue to homeschool. One of the primary intents of the survey was to help illuminate some of the driving factors in homeschool enrollment among families in Multnomah County.

The purpose of the MESD Homeschool Survey was to learn more about the experiences of homeschooling families, their reasons for choosing to homeschool and what resources they find useful.

Intended Use

MESD will use the information from the survey to improve how we support students and families in our region. In Fall 2022, we will be doing interviews with homeschooling families to help us learn more about what resources and program improvements families want and need.

Multnomah ESD currently offers quick and easy online access and registration for homeschooling families.

For more information, please visit multnomahesd.org.

Questions?

Homeschooling Registration and Resources: Contact Administrative Assistant Melinee Steck at msteck@mesd.k12.or.us or (503) 257-1651.
MESD Homeschool Survey: Contact Sr. Research and Data Administrator/Analyst Amanda Shannahan at ashannaha@mesd.k12.or.us

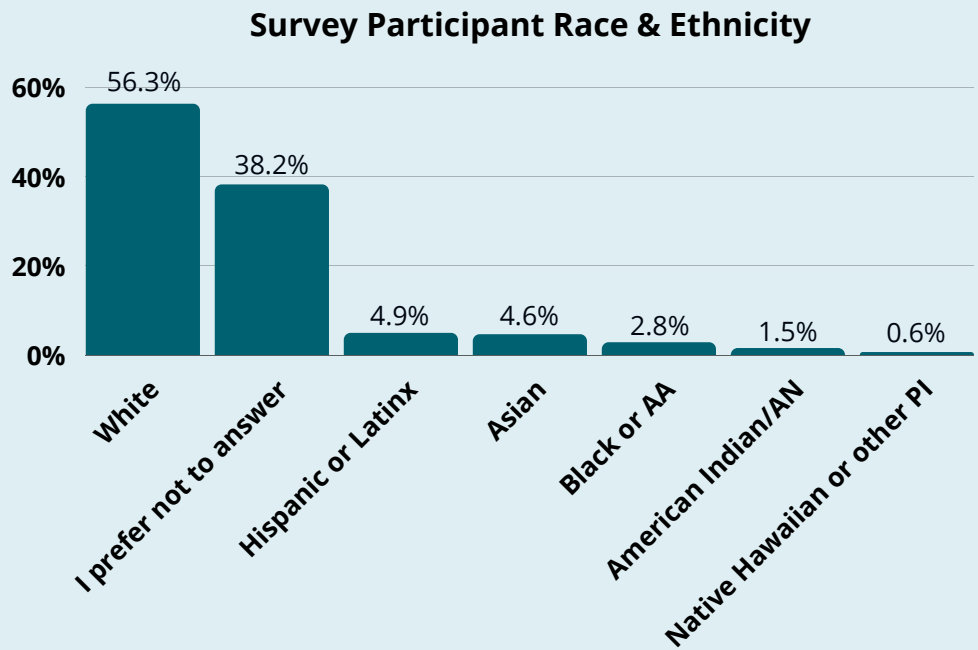
Survey Participant Data

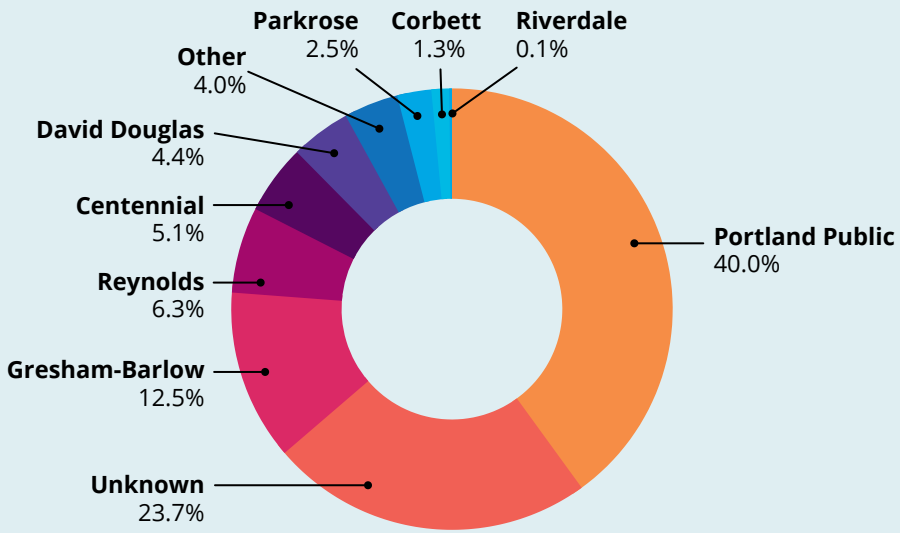
Families from all eight districts in Multnomah County participated in the survey.

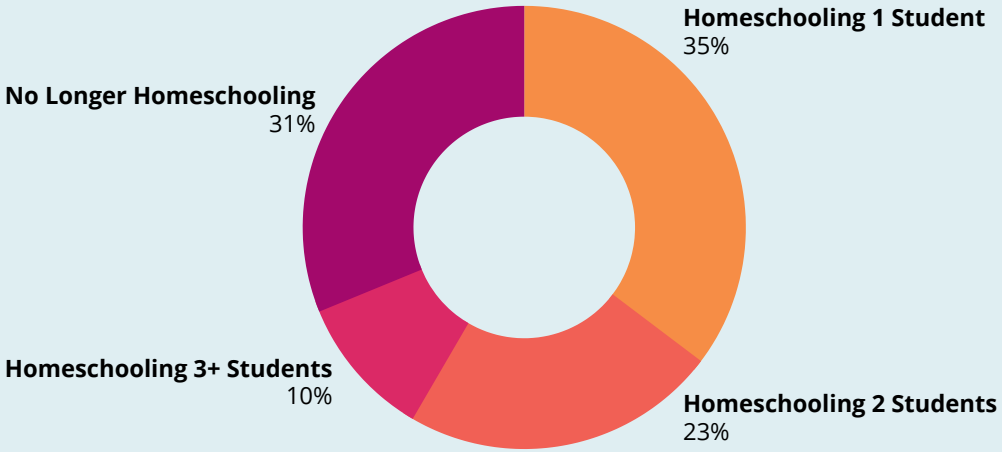
40% of survey respondents were from Portland Public, 23.7% were Unknown, 12.5% were from Gresham-Barlow, 6.3% were from Reynolds, 5.1% were from Centennial, 4.4% from David Douglas, 2.5% were from Parkrose, 1.3% were from Corbett, 0.1% from Riverdale, and 4.0% were Other.

Of respondents, 35% were homeschooling one student, 23% were homeschooling two students, 10% were homeschooling three or more students and 31% were no longer homeschooling.

56.3% identified as White, 38.2% preferred not to answer, 4.9% identified at Hispanic, Latino/Latina/Latinx, 4.6% identified as Asian, 2.8% identified as Black or African American, 1.5% identified as American Indian/Alaskan Native and 0.6% identified as Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. Participants were able to select more than one race or ethnicity.







Reasons For Homeschooling

Families' reasons for choosing to homeschool varied and could be grouped into eight main categories:

- Covid19 Pandemic/Comprehensive Distance Learning (CDL) (37%)
- Special Needs of the Child (20%)
- Pedagogical Approach (16%)
- Family Lifestyle (12%)
- School Climate (11%)
- Curriculum Content (11%)
- Values, Religion, Politics (6%)
- School Systems (6%)

Participant responses could be classified under more than one category. The three most common reasons offered by families were: COVID-19, the special needs of their child and a desire for more control over how their child is taught.

Top 3 Reasons for Home Schooling

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic was a driving factor for many families to start homeschooling. About 37% of participants said that the pandemic and related impacts (distance learning, mask requirements, etc.) were a primary reason for choosing to homeschool. Nearly half (49%) of these families are still homeschooling.

Special Needs of the Child

Nearly one out of ten families said that their child's disability or health condition was a primary factor in their decision to homeschool.

Pedagogical Approach

Some homeschooling families also want more of a say in how their child is taught. About 12% of families mentioned being able to provide more individualized learning opportunities for their child and allowing their child to advance at their own pace as reasons for homeschooling.

> *My children didn't speak English, so it was hard for them to study online. Therefore, we transferred them to homeschooling and took lessons from an English teacher.*

> *My daughter has an intellectual disability and her needs were not being met. When the pandemic shut down schools, we just decided not to send her back and to homeschool her.*

> *She loves learning and exploring. She is able to work at her own pace and at challenging levels, in many topics of interest.*

Participant's Top 10 Homeschooling Resources

Survey participants were asked to share what homeschool resources they found useful – here are the top ten most frequently reported 'useful' homeschooling resources:

1. The Public Library
2. Khan Academy
3. The Good and the Beautiful
4. OMSI/Oregon Homeschool Science Club
5. Outschool
6. Abeka
7. Online School/Other online classes
8. Singapore Math
9. Facebook Groups/Online parent support groups
10. Village Home Education Resource Center

Common Reasons for Ending Homeschooling

A majority of the reasons provided by families for ending homeschooling were related to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as vaccines being available for youth and cases being down in the community. Other reasons for ending homeschooling included:

- Enrollment in an Alternative Educational Option (charter school, private school, etc.)
- Curriculum and Instruction: not able to keep up with creating meaningful curriculum, challenges with behavior management at home
- Special Needs of Child: need for socialization, supportive services related to a disability
- Family Lifestyle: parent or guardian needing to work, moved locations

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