

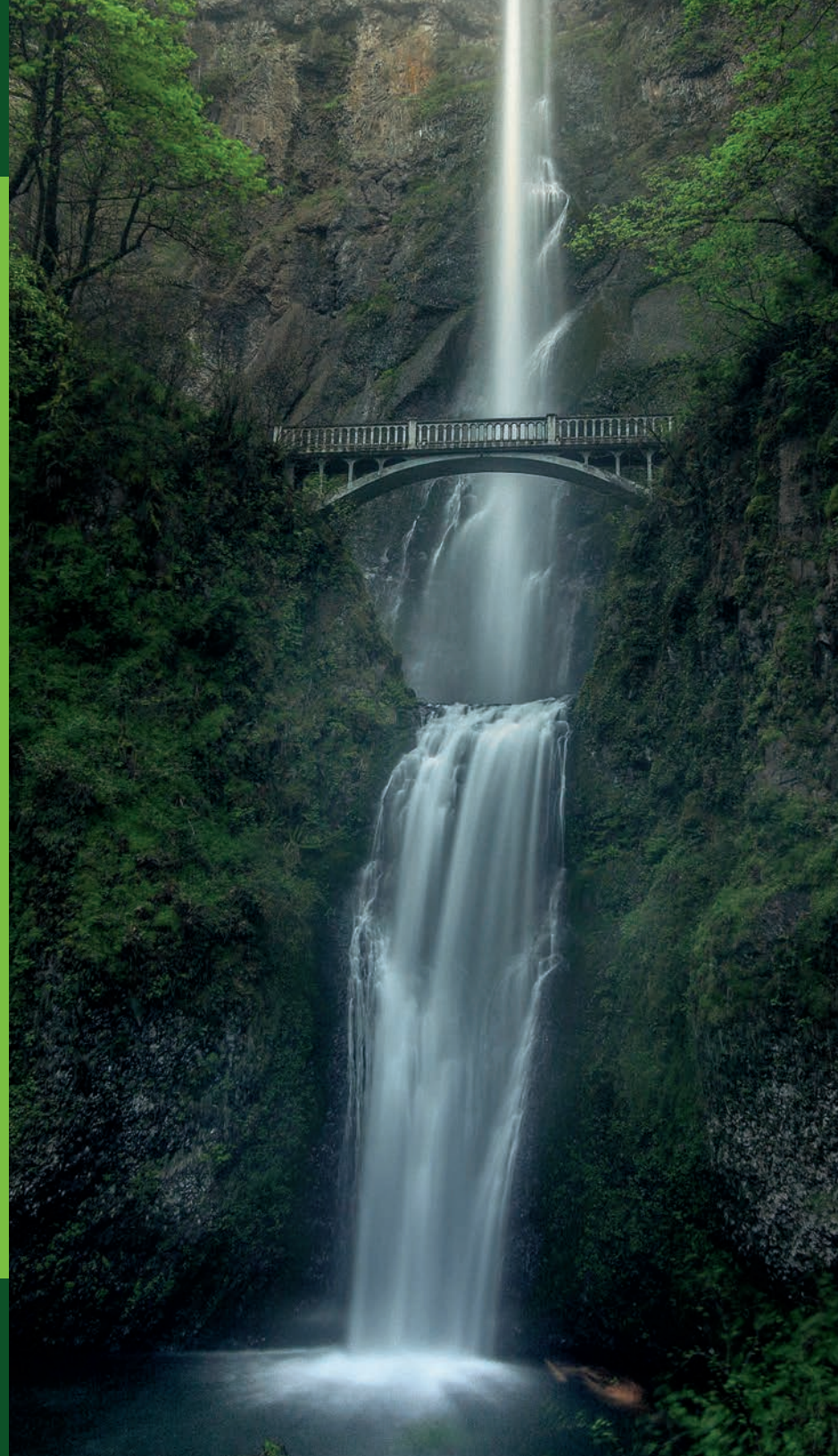


Multnomah Education Service District

EDUCATE • INSPIRE • EMPOWER

Homeschool Survey Summary Report

Summer 2024





Background

Homeschooling is an educational option in Oregon. Families may choose to homeschool their child at any time during the year and for any duration. Families who choose to homeschool are required to notify their local Education Service Districts (ESD) upon withdrawing from public or private school, in accordance with ORS 339.010 and OAR 581-021-0026(4). Multnomah ESD provides homeschooling registration for students who live in Multnomah County.

As of November 1, 2023, there were approximately 3,117 students registered for homeschooling in Multnomah County.

The number of registered students is based on the total number of registered homeschool students and may not be completely accurate. By Oregon law, families are required to notify MESD when they start homeschooling, but they are not required to notify MESD when they discontinue homeschooling. Not all homeschool families may be aware of the homeschool notification rules, and so there is a potential that the registration numbers are not reflective of all the youth being served by homeschooling. Additionally, while some families update their homeschool registration when their homeschool status changes, some families may not, which may result in an overcount of homeschooling youth in our region.

Purpose

The purpose of the survey was to better understand who is opting into homeschooling in Multnomah County, why they are doing so, and what resources they find useful. This information is important for schools and districts to know in order to improve existing programs and to develop new options to better support students and families, including families who continue to homeschool.

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. Program Administrator, Research and Evaluation Amanda Shannahan at ashannaha@mesd.k12.or.us

General Questions About Homeschooling: Contact Senior Instructional Services Administrator Christine Otto at cotto@mesd.k12.or.us



Methods

The Homeschool Survey was administered in March 2024. All families who were currently registered for homeschooling through MESD's homeschool notification system were invited to participate in the survey by email and mail, when addresses were available.

A paper survey was mailed to all families, along with a self-addressed and stamped envelope. Families who provided email addresses upon notifying MESD of their decision to homeschool were also sent an electronic version of the survey. The survey instrument can be found in Appendix of the full **2024 Homeschool Survey Report**.

In total, 1,925 families were invited to participate in the survey. Families homeschooling more than one child received only one invitation to participate. 1,847 families received both paper and electronic surveys and 78 families received just paper surveys (no email address was available). A total of 320 responses were collected (178 electronically and 142 by mail), resulting in a 17% response rate.

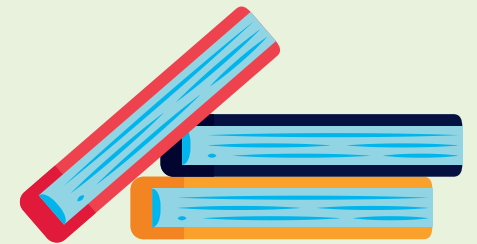
Intended Use

The results of the survey will be used in the following ways. They will:

- Be shared with Multnomah County districts and schools to inform their practices;
- Be used to improve and/or expand homeschool supports provided by MESD;
- Provide guidance for further inquiry; and offer insights for families and community members interested in localized homeschool data.

Multnomah ESD currently offers quick and easy online access and registration for homeschooling families as well as some testing and curriculum resources.

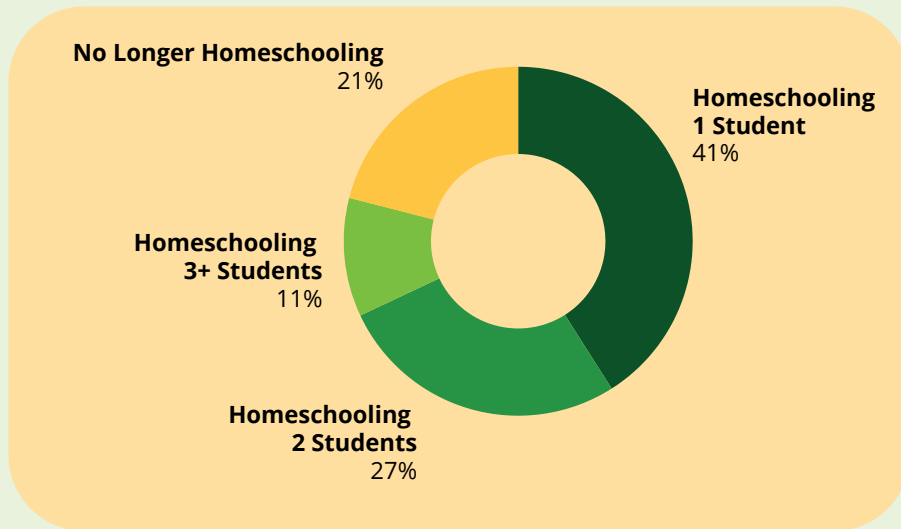
For more information, please visit multnomahesd.org.



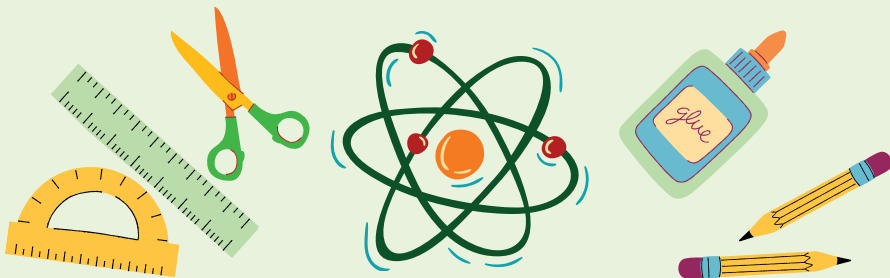


Survey Participant Data

Number of Homeschooled Children

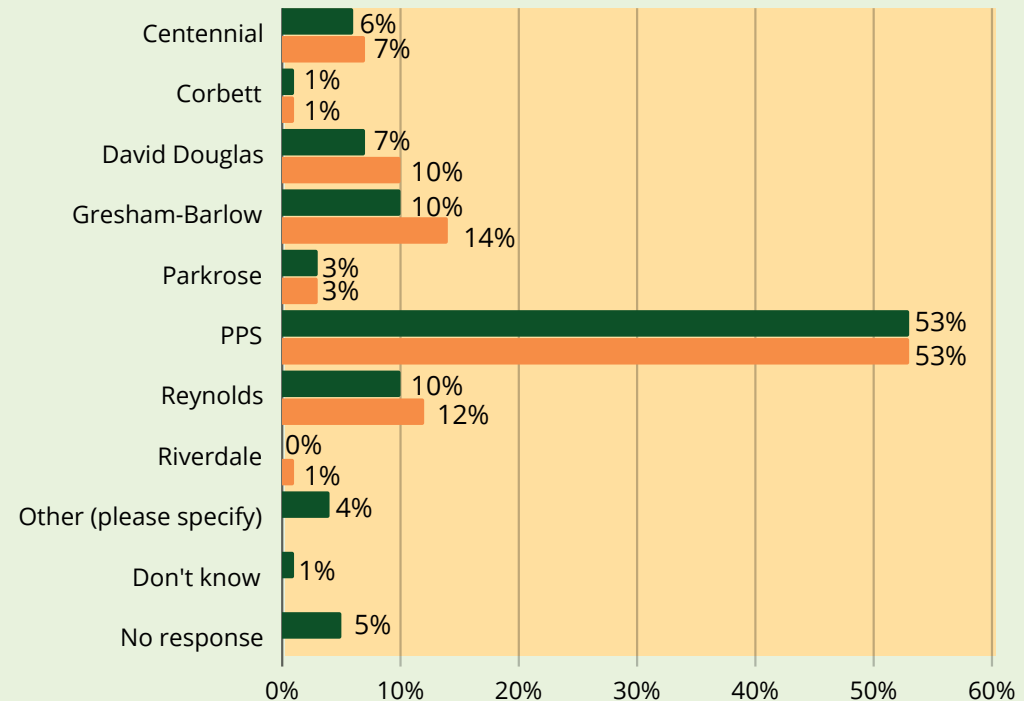


41% of participants said they are currently homeschool one student; 27% homeschool two students, 11% homeschool three or more students, and 21% indicated that they do not currently homeschool any children.



Resident District

The distribution of survey participants by school district is similar to that of the overall enrollment of Multnomah County school districts: 53% live within the enrollment boundaries of Portland Public Schools; 10% live in Reynolds School District, 10% live in Gresham-Barlow School District; 7% live in David Douglas School District; 6% live in Centennial School District; 1% live in Corbett School District or were unsure of which district they lived in. 4% selected 'Other' and indicated that they no longer live in Multnomah County or did not specify which district they live in.



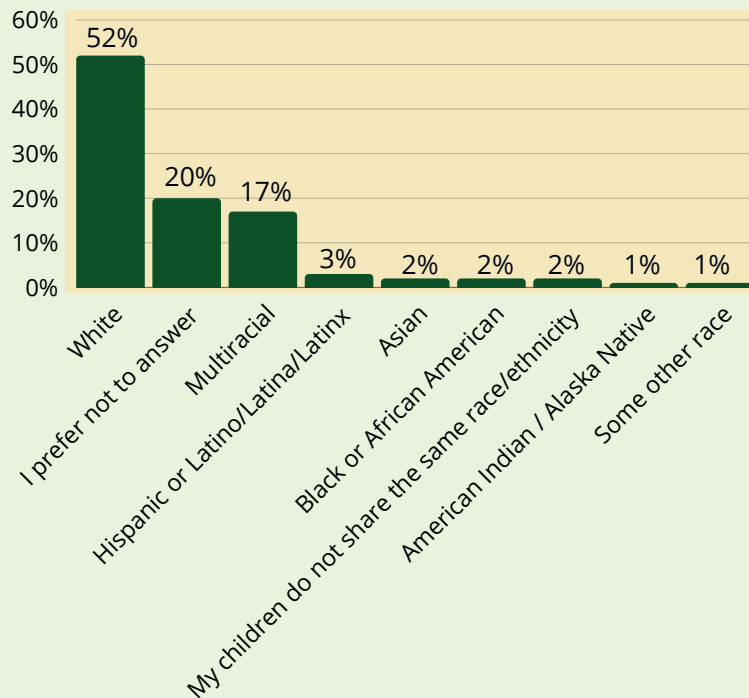
Participant Responses
2023-24 SY Student Enrollment Data



Race & Ethnicity of Participants Children

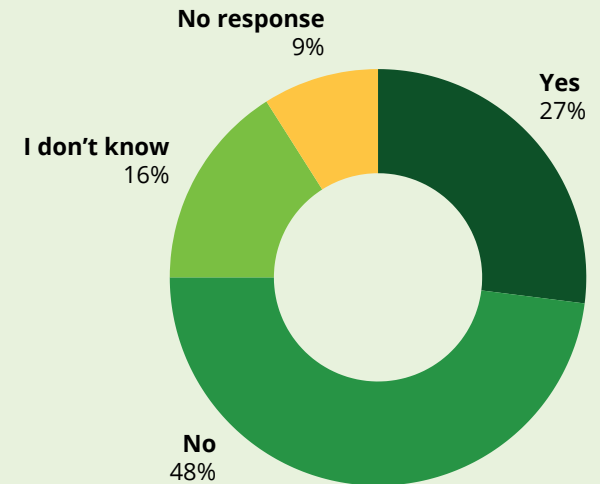
53% of participants said their homeschooled child is White; 17% identified as Multiracial, 3% identified as Hispanic or Latino/Latina/Latinx, 2% identified as Asian, 2% identified as Black or African American, 1% identified as American Indian/Alaska Native, and 1% identified as some other race or ethnicity.

2% of participants said that their homeschooled children did not share the same racial and ethnic backgrounds.



Homeschooled Children of Survey Participants Eligible for Special Education Services

27% of participants indicated that their homeschooled child is eligible for special education services; 48% said that their child is not eligible for these services; 16% were unsure and 9% did not respond to this question.

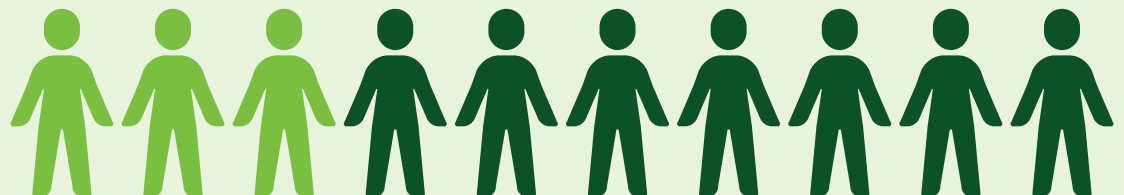


Survey Participants with School Aged Students Who Are Not Homeschooling

66% of participants indicated that all of their children are homeschooled; 34% said they also have school-aged children who are not homeschooled.

34% also have children who are not homeschooled

66% homeschool all of their children





Reasons For Homeschooling

Participants were provided a list of response options based on open-ended data from the **2022 Homeschool Survey** and asked to select the primary reason they decided to start homeschooling. They were also asked to share any additional reasons that contributed to their decision.

The top reasons for enrolling in homeschooling were to better meet the needs of their child, align their child's education with their family's beliefs and views, and better support their family's lifestyle.

Reasons	%
To better meet the needs of my child	33%
Desire to align my child's education with our family's beliefs and views	12%
Homeschooling is better for our family's lifestyle	12%
Disruptive or undesirable school environment	9%
COVID-19 Pandemic: concerns with distance learning	8%
COVID-19 Pandemic: health and safety concerns	8%
Concerns about the school system (staff, class sizes, limited options, testing)	8%
Desire to control how and what my child learns	4%
Something else (please specify):	7%

Additional Reasons

About half of participants also shared more about their primary reason for homeschooling or provided additional reasons for doing so. Their responses highlighted parents' concerns with the school system; emphasized the importance of recognizing the complexity of deciding to homeschool; or expanded on their experiences with schools that were unable to meet the needs of their child.

Concerns with the school system

“

I didn't want my kids participating in active shooter/lockdown drills. My elementary school was using an outdated Lucy Calkins curriculum. My school had lead pipes and other problems related to age needing to be repaired. The school is right next to the freeway and the outdoor area is largely pavement.

”

Complex and multifaceted decision

“

Really, a combo of most of the above, both kids had high anxiety and really struggle with executive functioning skills. The school environment was excruciating for them no matter how great some of the adults etc. were. We just had to find a different path for the sake of everyone's health.

”

Not meeting child's needs

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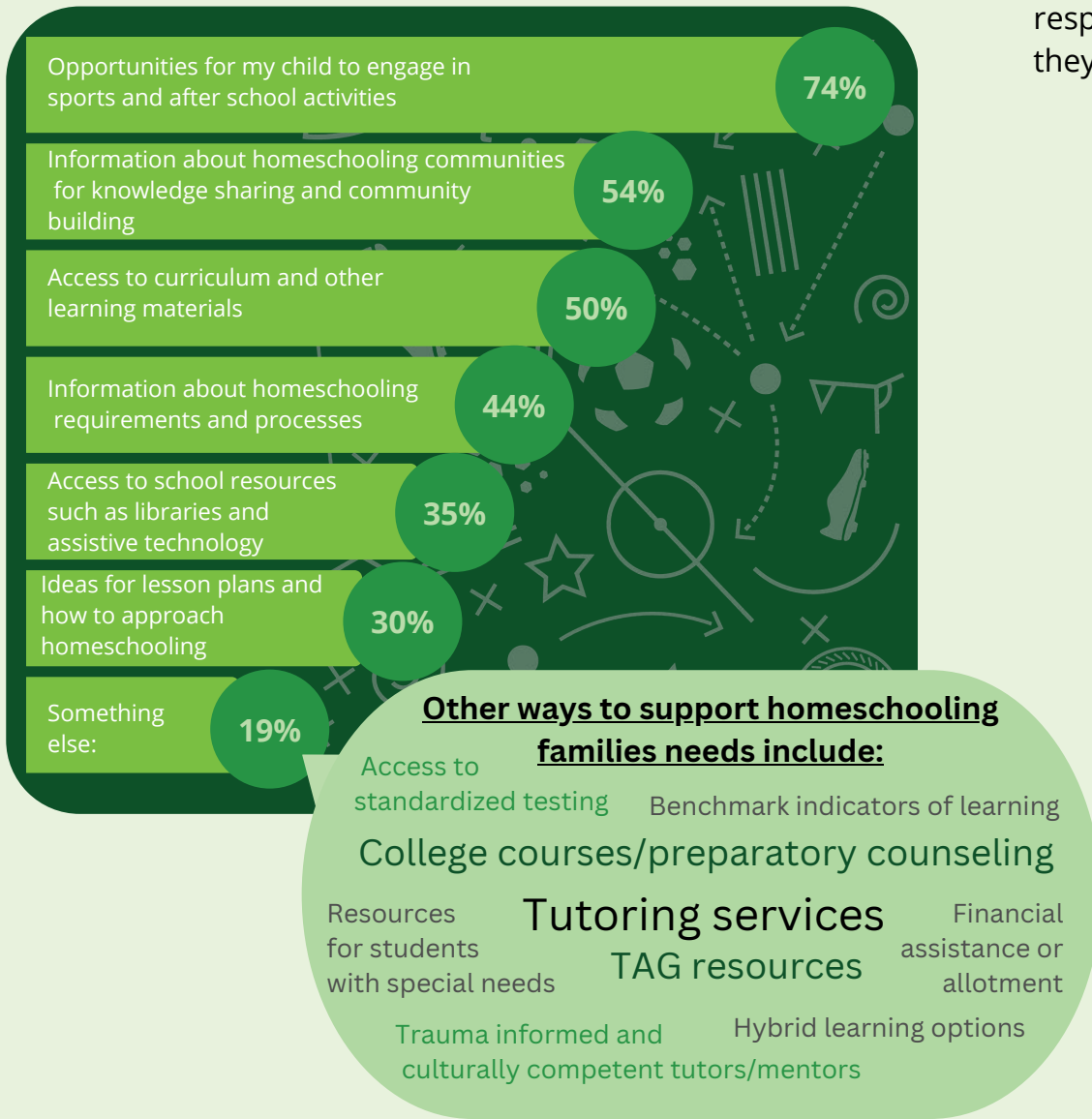
I have a child with sensory issues, and the current public school system would not be able to support his needs.

”



Homeschooling Resources

Participants were given a list of supports that could be offered to them and were asked to select the resources that they find useful. Here's what they indicated as most useful:



Homeschool Organizations

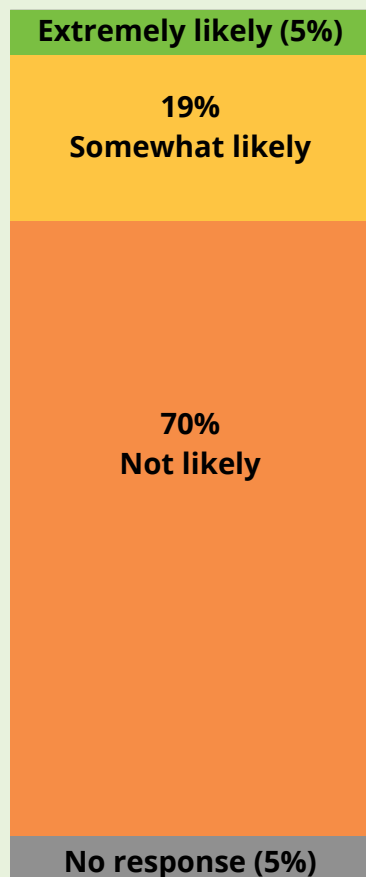
Participants were asked to share the names of any homeschool organizations they are engaged with. Open-ended responses were coded to identify commonalities across participants. The responses below represent participants who indicated that they are homeschooling one or more children (n=166).

In-person/hybrid resources and programs	First Class Charter School, Alder Commons, Alliance Charter, Teach NW Charter Schools, Village Home
Community groups	Facebook groups, book clubs, small/informal co-ops, social and sports clubs
Outdoor/science groups	OHSC OMSI, Rewild Homeschool Program, Trackers, informal nature co-op
Online programs/resources	Fossil Distance Learning Program, Oregon Home Education Network, Baker Web Academy, First Class
Values based programs/communities	Church homeschooling support groups and co-ops, OCEANetwork, Abeka, Classical Conversations



Likelihood of Ending Homeschooling

Participants were asked to indicate how likely they were to send their homeschooled children to their previous school or a new school. They also had the option to explain their response.



Reasons for Returning

Extremely Likely

- Their child wants to experience public schools or have more social interactions.

Somewhat Likely

- They are actively searching for alternative schools or hybrid options.
- They are honoring their child's choice for schooling and are open to continuing homeschooling if it fits their child's needs.
- They would re-enroll their children so they have more opportunities to socialize or to experience high school with others.

Not Likely

- Their family enjoys homeschooling,
- They have distrust with the school system
- They believe that homeschooling is the best option for their child's needs
- They want to wait until high school to consider public schooling,
- Their children are already finishing school.

Common Reasons for Ending Homeschooling

Participants who were no longer homeschooling their children (n=68) were asked to share their reasons for ending homeschooling. The most commonly shared reasons reflect a desire for parents to support their child's decision to return to school; increase the amount of social interactions for their child; or have their child experience high school outside of the home.

Other reasons for ending homeschooling included:

- Changes in rules and restrictions implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Changes in their family's life
- Challenges they faced with homeschooling
- Successfully identifying programs and schools that were a better fit for their children



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