



A Thursday Noon Webinar Series May 6, 2021-June 17, 2021

Moderators: Paul E. Peterson, Director, Program on Education Policy and Governance, Harvard University

Daniel Hamlin, Professor, University of Oklahoma

Homeschooling has been undergoing a transformation in recent years. The expansion of online educational tools and materials has dramatically changed access to educational content for many homeschoolers. Homeschool cooperatives, dual enrollment programs, and national homeschool organizations are reshaping the nature of homeschooling. The homeschooling population may also be experiencing a demographic shift as larger numbers of Hispanic, Black, and Asian families report homeschooling their children than in years past. Many non-traditional homeschoolers are arriving on the scene as well, ranging from unschoolers to families seeking to preserve cultural identities through homeschooling.

In the wake of COVID-19, early evidence indicates that the pandemic may have amplified the many changes to homeschooling that were already underway. Millions of parents turned to homeschooling during recent school closures. Although schools have begun returning to in-person learning as well as strengthening remote learning platforms, many families are choosing to continue homeschooling their children. Estimates suggest that the homeschooling population may have doubled in some US states. It remains unclear whether these new homeschoolers will carry on with the practice once the pandemic has subsided.

As homeschooling evolves, there remain many important questions about the practice. Are homeschooling laws in need of revision so that regulatory safeguards can be put in place to protect homeschooled children? Are homeschooled children more likely to be abused and socially isolated than their peers attending brick-and-mortar schools? Are homeschooling families able to prepare their children for success in college and beyond? Empirical evidence that can shed light on these questions is not always easy to find. It can be a challenge for researchers not only to identify homeschoolers, but also to perform analyses that are able to make general claims about such a highly diverse group.

The purpose of this conference is to improve our understanding of critical topics in homeschooling through empirical research, expert analysis, and parents' experiences with homeschooling. We will begin the conference by exploring current homeschool law with four panelists who will discuss whether law in the United States on homeschooling needs revision and what restrictions on homeschooling are appropriate. In subsequent sessions, we will explore empirical research on diversity and growth in homeschooling; academic preparation and life outcomes; social isolation; child abuse; and international trends in homeschooling. We will conclude the conference with a panel of parents who report varying rationales for deciding to homeschool their children. The conference agenda below provides more details on each session.



HARVARD Kennedy School

Program on Education Policy
and Governance

Post-Pandemic Future
of
Homeschooling
Conference

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Harvard University

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Advance registration is required:

https://harvard.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_9vVEmF_jTQeUsK5eKDCI7Q

May 6 12:00 – 1:00 PM ET

Is it time for a change to Homeschool law?

Does the law on homeschooling need to be revised? What are appropriate restrictions on homeschooling? What rights should homeschoolers have?

Panelists

Elizabeth Bartholet, Professor, Harvard Law School

Michael Donnelly, Senior Counsel, Homeschool Legal Defense Association

Eric Wearne, Professor, Kennesaw State University

James Dwyer, Professor, College of William and Mary



May 13 12:00 – 1:00 PM ET

Growth and Diversity in Post-Pandemic Homeschooling

What is homeschooling? Who homeschools their children? Has COVID-19 altered the homeschooling landscape?

Panelists

Sarah Grady, Statistician, US Department of Education

Brian Ray, President, National Home Education Research Institute

Commentator

Cheryl Fields Smith, Professor, University of Georgia

May 20 12:00 – 1:00 PM ET

Are Homeschoolers prepared for life?

Academic preparation and Life Outcomes of Homeschoolers

Panelists

Christian Wilkens, Professor, State University of New York

Jennifer Jolly, Professor, University of Alabama

Commentator

Robert Kunzman, Professor, University of Indiana

May 27 12:00 – 1:00 PM ET

Are Homeschoolers socially isolated?

Are homeschooled children socially isolated? How involved are they in their local communities?

Panelists

Daniel Hamlin, Professor, University of Oklahoma

David Sikink, Professor University of Notre Dame

Commentator

Michael McShane, Director of National Research, EdChoice

June 3 12:00 – 1:00 PM ET

Is child abuse greater at school or homeschool?

What do we know about the incidence of child and sexual abuse that occurs in schools and in homeschool households?

Panelists

Charol Shakeshaft, Professor, Virginia Commonwealth University

Angela Dills, Professor, Western Carolina University

Commentator

Martin West, Professor, Harvard University



June 10 12:00 – 1:00 PM ET

Is homeschooling an international movement?

What trends in homeschooling are occurring internationally?

Panelists

Ari Neuman & Oz Guterman, Professors, Western Galilee College

Philippe Bongrand, Professor, CY Cergy Paris University

Christine Brabant, Professor, University of Montreal

Commentator

Albert Cheng, Professor, University of Arkansas

June 17 12:00 – 1:15 PM ET

Parents' experiences with homeschooling.

What is it like to homeschool? What are the reasons? Has Covid-19 changed the homeschooling experience?

Lead Panelist

Michael Horn, Co-Founder, Clayton Christensen Institute and Homeschooling Parent

Parent Panelists: TBD

About PEPG

Established in 1996 under the direction of Paul E. Peterson, the Program on Education Policy and Governance (PEPG) has distinguished itself as a significant contributor to the systematic analysis of education policy and governing arrangements. Located within Harvard University's Government Department and the Kennedy School of Government's Taubman Center for State and Local Government, PEPG continues to fulfill its core missions:

- Provide high-level scientific training for young scholars who can make independent contributions to scholarly research
- Foster a national community of reform-minded scientific researchers
- Produce path-breaking studies that provide a scientific basis for school reform policy

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