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Partnering with homeschoolers: Collaborations between homeschoolers and public schools

Sharon Gerst

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Abstract

This research paper focuses on the interactions between homeschoolers and public schools. A modified case study approach, the constant comparative method, was used to examine the rationale and interaction patterns of five different families. The families were interviewed as to their rationale for homeschooling, the impact homeschooling had on their families, current collaborations they had with their local public schools, the impact of these collaborations on the family and their children's academic and social development, and interests these families may have had in additional collaborations with their local public school. The families were most interested in collaborations in which they could see an academic benefit for their children. The study demonstrated a connection between the rationales families held for homeschooling and the type of interactions in which they were involved with their public schools. The findings of this study show that interactions between public schools and homeschoolers benefit homeschooled students by providing them with broader experiences and deepening their academic knowledge.

PARTNERING WITH HOMESCHOOLERS: COLLABORATIONS BETWEEN
HOMESCHOOLERS AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A Graduate Research Paper

Submitted to the

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By

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

Description of topic

Historically, homeschoolers and public schools have had considerable tensions between one another related to the differing beliefs, among other issues, about values and parental rights (Knowles, 1989). Consequently, the developing relations between homeschooling and public schooling in the United States have only recently included the idea of public schools collaborating with homeschoolers (Carper, 2000; Knowles, 1989; Knowles, Marlow, & Muchmore, 1992). Some public schools are suspicious of homeschoolers because they do not believe they can monitor the quality of education provided for these students, nor do public school administrators believe homeschooled students are being properly socialized (Boothe, Bradley, Flick, & Kirk, 1997; Fairchild, 2002). However, other public schools want to collaborate with homeschoolers because it can benefit their districts financially and collaborating with homeschoolers can create more positive views of their district within the community (Eley, 2002; Lines, 2000). Some states are encouraging districts to create collaborations with their homeschool families by providing state funding for districts that have students enrolled in a public school homeschool assistance program. For some districts that have created programs for homeschoolers, state funding per student has exceeded the costs of the programs. Homeschool assistance programs vary in the number of services offered and whether the services are mandatory for homeschoolers. Some district leaders think programs for homeschool families provide an opportunity to evaluate the education provided homeschool students without homeschool parents' objections (Boothe et al., 1997; Fairchild, 2002; Lines, 2000; Peavie, 1999).

Researchers have identified evidence of clear rationales families have for homeschooling their children (Knowles, 1991; National Center for Education Statistics, NCES, 2004; Van Galen, 1987, Wartes, 1989) and possible connections between these rationales and the collaborations families seek with their public schools (Golding, 1995; Knowles, 1989; Lines, 2000; Peavie, 1999). This paper will discuss several examples of current collaborations between various school districts and homeschoolers and investigate the impact of these collaborations upon homeschooling families. This study seeks to identify the possible connection between the rationales families have for homeschooling and the types of collaborations they seek with their public schools through a tiered interview process with selected homeschooling families.

Rationale

The significance of this study is demonstrated by the importance for public schools of trying to serve all people in their communities, including homeschooling families, by providing programming that partners schools with homeschooling families to deliver adequate education experiences. Public schools educate future citizens. Presently, the majority of school districts only serve those students who attend their schools full-time. However, there are several districts across the United States that are beginning to reach out to families who choose to educate their children at home by providing academic support as well as extracurricular activities to homeschooled children (Dahm, 1996; Eley, 2002; Lines, 2000; Terpestra, 1994). Knowles (1989) encourages public schools to be respectful of parents' beliefs and goals instead of attacking the very reasons they offer for educating their children at home (Knowles, 1989). Although not all homeschooling families want interactions with public schools, some families make use of the services

that these public school districts provide. This research seeks to discern types of collaborations that have been successful between public schools and homeschoolers as well as what types of collaborations homeschooling families desire to have with their public schools.

Significance

Interactions between public schools and homeschool families are complex and differ depending on the beliefs held by both the families and the public school staff. The literature review provides a context for exploring how the rationales families hold for homeschooling influence the interactions they seek from their public schools. Previous research on homeschoolers' interactions with public schools has mostly employed more quantitative research techniques typically involving analysis of survey responses (Adams, 1992; Boothe, et al., 1997; Fairchild, 2002; Golding, 1995; Peavie, 1999; Yeager, 1999). Other research has described programs public schools provide for their homeschooling families (Dahm, 1996; Dailey, 1999; Eley, 2002; Lines, 2000; Terpestra, 1994). These researchers chose to determine what interactions were currently available for homeschoolers and analyze the programs being offered.

This study will take a more qualitative approach by implementing a case studies approach in order to provide a more in depth look at the beliefs and experiences of homeschooling families. The results of this study may be helpful to school districts as they create or refine the assistance they provide homeschooling families. It may be beneficial for school districts to be informed about the types of collaborations considered successful by other schools and what types of assistance their local homeschooling families are likely to seek. School districts may also be better prepared to serve

homeschooling families if they are informed about the perceived positive and negative consequences these collaborations have on homeschooling families. Finally, this paper may also inform homeschoolers of what types of assistance school districts might currently be offering to homeschooling families and possible impacts collaborations have on homeschooling families depending on their particular homeschooling rationales.

Also, because homeschooling is a growing movement in the United States, more school districts will need to be informed about the ways collaborations with homeschoolers can be successful as they reach out to these families (Dahm, 1996).

Although some homeschoolers prefer limited contact with public schools, other homeschooling families are open to collaborations with public schools if they can see a benefit for their children (Adams, 1992; Golding, 1995; Peavie, 1999; Yeager, 1999).

Homeschoolers may also learn how they can have a voice in the type of collaborations with their public schools and come to understand the benefit of advocating their public schools to respect homeschooling families' differing values in the types of collaborations created.

Research Questions

To facilitate positive interactions between homeschoolers and the public schools, it may be useful for each party to better understand the other and have some sense of what seems to encourage positive communication. This research seeks to clarify issues related to collaborations between these two entities. The primary research question then is as follows: is there a relationship between parents' rationales for homeschooling and the types of interactions they seek with their public school? To determine the answer to

this question it is necessary to know about existing relations. Consequently, the secondary research questions are as follows:

1. What are the typical or most common forms of collaborations that currently exist between homeschoolers and public school districts?
2. What are the benefits of these collaborations for homeschoolers?
3. What are the consequences of these collaborations for homeschoolers?
4. What other types of collaborations would homeschoolers like to have with their public schools?

Terminology

Homeschooling: for the purpose of this paper homeschooling will be defined as being educated at home instead of in a “public or private school for at least part of their education and if their part-time enrollment in public or private schools did not exceed 25 hours a week” (p. 1, National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2004). Students who are schooled at home because of a temporary illness will not be defined as being homeschooled.

Collaborations: any academic and social interactions homeschoolers have with private or public schools. The types of interactions could include, but are not limited to, instructional support, participation in school classes, access to school facilities, extracurricular activities, field trips, and academic evaluations.

Academic rationale for homeschooling: any reasons families give for homeschooling that are about the education of their children

Strengthening the family unit rationale for homeschooling: any reasons for homeschooling that would attempt to draw the family closer in their relationship with each other.

Special learning needs of their children rationale for homeschooling: any motivation families have for homeschooling because their child/children have learning needs they think they can better accommodate in the home setting. These special learning needs could include, but are not limited to, a learning disability, attention deficit disorder, or a physical disability.

Moral rationale for homeschooling: motivations families have to homeschool in order to teach their children the beliefs they hold as to what is right or wrong.

Religious rationale for homeschooling: motivations by families to homeschool in order to teach their religious views to their children.

CHAPTER II: Literature Review

Background of Homeschooling

To be informed partners with homeschoolers, public schools are better served if they understand what home schooling is, some current data on the number of children homeschooled, why parents choose to homeschool, the academic achievement of homeschoolers, and concerns of homeschoolers (Dahm, 1996). Determining how many students are being educated at home, instead of in a public or private school, can be a difficult task, because there are no consistent requirements across states for reporting homeschoolers (National Center for Education Statistic [NCES], 2001). The NCES conducted a sample survey of the civilian, non-institutionalized household population in the 50 states and the District of Columbia as part of the National Household Education Surveys Program (NHES), using telephone survey data. First, a screening interview was conducted to determine whether the household had age appropriate children. If so, at least one parent was interviewed about the care and education of their child/children. The NCES homeschool report is based on a subset of the total sample from the NHES. The NCES report concluded that there were approximately 850,000 students homeschooled in the spring of 1999. This amounted to 1.7 percent of students nationwide in kindergarten through twelfth grade. NCES (2004) subsequently reported results of another parent survey from 2003 that found an increase in the number of homeschooled students in the United States since the 1999 survey. The new estimated number was 1.1 million homeschooled students, representing 2.2 percent of the school age population and suggesting the homeschooling movement is growing.

Reasons Parents Homeschool

The NCES survey (2004) also sought to determine rationales for homeschooling. In the 2003 survey, findings indicated 31 % of homeschooling families homeschooled because they were concerned about the public and private school environments, 30 % of families homeschooled for religious and moral reasons, 16 % homeschooled because they were concerned with the quality of the academic institutions available, 9% homeschooled for other reasons which included items such as family unity and individualized teaching, 7% homeschooled because their child had a physical or mental health problem, and 7% homeschooled because their child had other special needs. This study suggested the school environment was a larger reason for homeschooling than religious or pedagogical reasons. These findings differ from previous studies such as Wartes (1989), Van Galen (1987), and Knowles (1991). Wartes found in his research of Washington state homeschool families that the primary reasons families homeschooled were for religious concerns (21.5%), differing educational philosophies than institutional schools (16.2%), creating smaller learning environments for their children (14.5%) and helping their children develop higher self esteems (13.2%). Wartes sent out a questionnaire to the families that utilized testing centers in Washington State. He asked these families to 1) rank 22 reasons for homeschooling on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being high and 2) choose 3 reasons that best described their rationale for homeschooling. Van Galen's work is among the most cited research on reasons parents homeschool (Knowles et al., 1992; Medlin, 2000). Her study took place over a period of eighteen months. During this time, Van Galen attended 16 homeschool group meetings at the local, state, and national level as well as analyzed 4 additional state meetings that took place before she began to attend

and study meetings of homeschoolers. She interviewed 23 homeschool parents and held interviews with 10 state and local educational officials concerned with homeschooling, lawyers involved in homeschooling cases, and representatives from public education lobbying groups. In her work, she categorized homeschoolers into three major rationale types: 1) strengthening the family (STF), 2) ideologues, and, 3) pedagogues. Parents with the STF rationale homeschooled their children because they wanted to strengthen their family's relationship with each other. They saw schools taking over responsibilities for raising their children that they believed were parental responsibilities. These parents also did not want their children to view teachers as a higher authority than the parents themselves. The ideologues homeschooled their children because they wanted to teach their children religious and moral values they perceived to differ from public school values. Ideologues believed public school attendance would be detrimental to their children learning the values and beliefs they considered important. They also wanted to protect their children from peer pressure until they were grounded in values the parents believed important. The pedagogues homeschooled their children because they believed they could provide better academic environments for their children. The parents did not necessarily believe that the schools were the cause of their children's learning issues; instead they thought that the children's needs would be hard to meet in a traditional school. They believed they could be the best teacher for their children because they knew their children better than anyone.

Another researcher, Knowles (1991), approached parents' rationales for homeschooling differently. Knowles investigated parents' motivations to homeschool, but his study did not use a survey/questionnaire approach to gathering data. Instead, he

extensively interviewed 23 families in Utah to learn their life histories. He found four major rationale categories parents gave for homeschooling: 1) family experiences in childhood, 2) school experiences in childhood, 3) perceptions of conflicts with public schools, and, 4) a philosophical perspective that home was a better environment for children's learning than public schools. For the first rationale, family experiences in childhood, all the families interviewed, except one, had at least one parent that came from a dysfunctional family background. The second rationale, school experiences in childhood, was expressed by several parents. They report having negative experiences when they attended school. Many of these parents thought their learning styles were different from the instructional approach used in school. Others had social difficulties with their peers, such as bullying and teasing. Some of these parents also believed their learning did not come from their time spent in school, but rather was gained from their own initiative. These families wanted to compensate for their negative experiences by protecting their children from possible bad experiences in a public school environment. The third rationale, perception of conflicts with public schools, was expressed by some parents. Here parents considered the values they were teaching their children to be in conflict with the values they perceived the public schools to be teaching. The final reason that Knowles stated for parents choosing to homeschool was that they saw the home as a more stimulating learning environment for both high academic progress and remedial learning. Knowles' results differ with respect to the reasons parents home schooled their children than other studies reviewed here (NCES, 2004; Van Galen, 1987; Wartes, 1989). It is not known if Knowles' results (1991) can be generalized to a larger population, because the sample came only from families in Utah. Families from other states, such as

Wartes 1989 study in Washington state, did not perceive their rationales for homeschooling similarly. If the results from this study were replicated in other areas of the country, more confident conclusions could be made about the possibility of parents' negative experiences in school influencing them to choose to homeschool their children as a way to protect them from encountering negative public school experiences.

Although other studies have been single state design as well (Wartes, 1989; Van Galen, 1987), they support the findings of the NCES survey conducted in 2003. These studies suggest the primary reasons parents homeschooled was not to compensate for their own negative childhood experiences but, rather, for religious convictions, moral concerns, and to provide better learning environments for their children.

Socialization of Homeschool Students

Critics of homeschooling often ask whether homeschool students are well socialized (Boothe et al., 1997; Fairchild, 2002; Medlin, 2000; Peavie, 1999; Romanowski, 2006; Shyers, 1992). Opponents of home schooling state that homeschooled students are socially disadvantaged, because they do not have as many interactions with peers when compared to public schooled children. Further, they believe that homeschooled children do not develop friendships, communicate well with others, nor are they able to work cooperatively with other people. Fairchild (2002) researched rural superintendents' opinions of homeschoolers in Iowa and found that the superintendents did not agree with current research on socialization of homeschool students. Superintendents worried about the type of citizens homeschool students would be. However, if superintendents had contact with homeschooling families, they were not as concerned about the socialization of homeschooled students. Superintendents held

neutral to positive views of the impact of homeschooling if they had contact with homeschooling families. If superintendents had personal contacts with homeschooling families, they were more understanding and tolerant of homeschooling. However, superintendents who had little to no contact with homeschooling families held neutral to negative perceptions of homeschooling, (Fairchild, 2002).

Some research on homeschooled children's socialization also has found positive results with respect to socialization of homeschooled students (Medlin, 2000; Ray, 2003). Medlin (2000) has extensively reviewed the research literature of homeschoolers with respect to socialization. He found that homeschooled children had many contacts with people outside the home. The contacts they had were not just with peers, but also with people of all ages. The homeschooled children were involved in diverse social experiences in the community, including activities such as "organized sports, scouts and 4-H clubs, paid jobs, volunteer work, church activities, music and dance lessons, hobby groups, playing with friends, and more" (p. 111). Romanowski (2006) also agrees that traditional schools are not the only place where social interactions happen. Homeschooling can also provide social experiences that teach life skills of interacting with others. Ray (2003) found that adults who had been homeschooled as children were active and involved citizens in their communities. They were also involved in civic affairs and had a higher voting percentage than the general population of the United States, offering a counter to the Iowa superintendent concerns. According to Ray (2003), 76% of the home educated adults, ages 18-24, voted within the last five years compared to 29% of the general population in the same age range. Homeschooled adults in the older age categories who voted in the last five years were even higher. Of the adults ages 25-39

years, 95% who were homeschooled had voted versus 40% of the general population. Of the adults ages 40-52 years, 96% who were homeschooled had voted versus 53% of the general population.

Homeschooled children had fewer behavior problems than other children (Medlin, 2000). Medlin cited Shyers' (1992) study as a significant study of the social adjustment of homeschooled children. Shyers systematically observed children from homeschools and children from conventional schools. Shyers organized small groups of children who had the same type of schooling and had independent observers rate the behaviors of children as they played together. The raters used the Direct Observation Form of the Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1983). To assure objective results, the two observers of each playgroup did not know what type of schooling the children were receiving. Shyers found that children from traditional schools had more behavior problems than homeschooled children. The conventionally schooled children scored eight times higher on the mean problem behavior score than children from the homeschooled group. The problem behaviors included arguing, bragging or boasting, short attention span, crying, disturbing other children, isolating themselves from other children, being shy or timid, and showing off. The homeschooled children played in more positive, friendly ways. Overall, Medlin found homeschool students to be well socialized and capable of interacting cooperatively with others.

Academic Achievement of Homeschool Students

Another criticism of homeschooling is that homeschool students did not do as well academically as public and private school students (Boothe, et al., 1997; Fairchild, 2002; Peavie, 1999; Ray, 2000; Romanowski, 2006; Wartes, 1989; Yeager, 1999).

Because homeschooled children were not always taught by certified teachers, many were afraid they would suffer academically. Overall, research to date shows that homeschooled students do at least as well if not better than their public school peers academically (Ray, 2000). Ray (2000) cites several studies (Delahooke, 1986; Rakestraw, 1987, 1988; Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1985) that found homeschooled students not scoring above the national average on standardized tests. The findings of these studies found homeschooled students either performing at the national average on the standardized tests or slightly below the national average. However, the majority of research studies, and especially the most current studies on homeschool achievement, have found that homeschooled students did better on academic achievement tests than did their respective public schooled peers (Ray, 2000, 2003; Rudner, 1999; Wartes, 1989). In Ray's (2000) review of studies on the academic achievement of homeschoolers, he cites numerous studies (Alaska Department of Education, 1984, 1985, 1986; Falle, 1986; Home School Legal Defense Association, 1994-1995; Oregon Department of Education, 1990, 1998; Ray, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1995, 1997, 1998; Richman, Girtten, & Snyder, 1990; Tennessee Department of Education, 1988) that found homeschooled students to be performing above the national average on standardized tests.

Both Rudner (1999) and Ray (2000) conducted nationwide studies on the academic achievement of homeschoolers. Wartes (1989) conducted his study in Washington State. Rudner (1999) gathered data on achievement test scores of homeschool students in the spring of 1998. He used the test scores from students who utilized the Bob Jones University Press Testing and Evaluation Service. These results should be interpreted with some caution, because Bob Jones University is involved in

providing homeschoolers with curriculum and advocates homeschooling as a positive alternative to public schooling. The question may arise as to whether the results of this study would differ if it included results from all homeschoolers who took standardized tests, not just those who utilized the Bob Jones University Press Testing and Evaluation Service. The students in this study were homeschool students from every state, with the highest percentages from Ohio, Georgia, and Virginia. Children in kindergarten through eighth grade took the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and children in ninth grade through twelfth grade took the Tests of Achievement and Proficiency (TAP). Ray sent out surveys to homeschooling families across the United States and asked parents to report on their students' academic achievement on standardized tests. The tests most parents reported results for were the ITBS (37.3%). Other tests parents reported scores for included: Stanford Achievement Test (29.8%), California Achievement Test (15.6%), Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (6.7%), Metropolitan Achievement Test (2.7%), Tests of Achievement and Proficiency (0.2%), and a variety of other tests (7.9%). Of the responses Ray received, 77% also submitted copies of the test results from the test publisher or administrator. Because Ray's study only involved the results that parents were willing to send in, the question may arise as to whether the results could have differed if all families who utilized the testing service provided tests scores. Wartes (1989) was able to collect a full representation of the homeschoolers in Washington State. He utilized Washington State homeschoolers' test scores from 1986 and 1987. Since Washington State requires homeschoolers to take the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT), his study represented 100% of the homeschool sample there. He also sent out a

questionnaire to the families that utilized testing services throughout the state to determine parents' education and family income levels.

All three studies (Ray, 2000; Rudner, 1999; Wartes, 1989) reported that the achievement test scores of homeschoolers were much higher than the national norms. Wartes found in 1986, of the 424 students who took the test, the median score was in the 68th percentile on national norms. Similarly, in 1987 the median score of 873 students was in the 65th to 66th percentile on national norms. Rudner found the median scores typically fell in the 70th to 80th percentile. Ray stated that the homeschooled students scored in the 80th percentile or higher on all parts of the standardized tests. Ray and Rudner found students who had been homeschooled their entire lives scored better than those students who had been homeschooled for a short time. Rudner stated if students were homeschooled for only a few years, they were between two to ten percentages below their peers in the same grade who were homeschooled their entire lives. Both Ray (2000) and Rudner (1999) found there were no differences in whether parents were certified teachers. Wartes (1989) did not find a correlation between academic achievement and parents' education level. However, both Ray and Rudner found parents' education level to be a significant variable in homeschooled students' scores on standardized tests. Ray stated the strongest predictor he found in his results was the father's education level. The father's education level was positively related to higher test scores on all four analyses of the standardized test (reading total, language total, math total, and complete battery total). The maximum amount of variance that could be attributed to the father's education level on the complete battery scores was 5.0%. However, the mother's education level was a weaker predictor of homeschooled students'

academic achievement. The mother's education level was positively related to higher test scores on three of the four analyses (language total, math total, and complete battery total). Rudner reported family income as a significant variable in test scores. Higher family incomes or parents' education levels correlated with higher student test scores. However, Ray and Wartes found family incomes to have no correlation to academic success. According to Coleman & Hoffer (1987), Coleman, Hoffer, & Kilgore, (1982) and Snow, Barnes, Chandler, Goodman, & Hemphill (1991) family income is a better predictor of academic achievement for public school students than it is for homeschooled students. Across the three studies of homeschooled students' achievement (Ray, 2000; Rudner, 1999; Wartes, 1989) the main indicators of academic achievement for homeschooled students were years being homeschooled and parents' education level, particularly the father's education level.

Various explanations can be given for the academic success of homeschoolers (Ray, 2000; Zitterkopf, 2000). Ray states there are certain features of homeschooling that have also been documented to be features of effective conventional schools. When parents teach their children at home they are able to provide them with many of the features that conventional schools see as keys to academic success. These features include 1) value consistency, 2) class size and tutoring, 3) individualization and flexibility, 4) academic learning time and academic engaged time, 4) positive social interactions and age integration, 5) expectations for students' achievement, and, 6) parental involvement. Homeschooled students are typically provided with a consistent value system. The class size in a homeschooling environment would be low. In fact, homeschooling would be similar to private tutoring, which provides a more

encompassing education for a child. Homeschoolers often choose their curriculum based on the needs of the child. This provides individualized and flexible instruction. Students at home may experience more academic learning time that is engaged than their public schooled peers. Homeschoolers are able to better ensure their children have positive social interactions and are mixed with other age groups. Because one of the reasons some parents choose to homeschool is for academic success, they generally have high expectations for their children. Also key to academic success is parental involvement (Zitterkopf, 2000). Zitterkopf and Ray both mention that for parents to homeschool their children, they must be actively involved in the education of their children. This in turn has a definite positive effect on the academic success of their children. Looking at all these features for academic success that can be involved in homeschooling, Ray concludes the success of homeschooling is most likely a combination of many of the factors that make for effective schooling, regardless of setting.

A more recent study shows that academic achievement of homeschooled students continues into adulthood (Ray, 2003). Ray surveyed over 7,300 adults who had been homeschooled. Of these participants, more than 5,000 (over 68%) had been homeschooled at least seven years. He then compared the results to the 2003 U.S. Census Bureau Report and found that over 74% of homeschooled adults ages 18-24 had taken college-level courses compared to 46% of the general United States population of the same age. A comparison of attainment of college degrees between homeschooled adults ages 18-24 and adults 18-24 of the general population revealed that 50.2% of homeschooled adults had taken some college but currently did not have a degree compared to 34% of the general population, 8.7% of homeschooled adults received an

associates degree compared to 4.1% of the general population, and 11.8% of homeschooled adults received a bachelor's degree compared to 7.6% of the general population. However, some caution should be taken when interpreting these results because Ray's sample only compared adults ages 18-24. He reported that nearly half (49%) of his study's sample were still full-time students and many of them had not yet received their degrees. Because he compared his sample to the U.S. Census Bureau sample of adults 18-24, it is possible that many of the general population were also still full-time college students. Ray's study did not compare adults older than 25. However, the percentages of adults older than 25 gaining secondary education degrees might be significantly higher. In the U.S. Census Bureau sample of adults 25 years and older, 26.7% of the population had attained a bachelor's degree or higher. The question arises if homeschooled adults ages 25 and older would have higher percentages of attainment of college degrees than adults from the general population. Overall, the homeschooled adults thought their homeschooling had not hindered their educational opportunities or career choices.

History of Collaboration Between Public Schools and Homeschools

Perhaps in light of the current research on homeschooling, the public has become more accepting of homeschooling as a form of education (Beato, 2005; Knowles, 1989; Knowles, et al., 1992). Knowles (1989) has done autobiographical life histories and interviews of homeschool parents and has been a participant observer in several homeschools. He described five phases of the interactions between homeschoolers and the public schools: 1) contention, 2) confrontation, 3) cooperation, 4) consolidation, and, 5) compartmentalization. In the first phase (contention), parents were dissatisfied with

public schools and many parents, at the time of the study, were influenced by the publicity of educational reformers such as John Holt, Ivan Illich, and Jonathan Kozol. Parents believed their children would be harmed in some way by attending public schools and believed they could provide a better learning experience for their children. As parents began to homeschool, the public schools questioned the legality of homeschooling and often took parents to court (phase two: confrontation with public schools). Knowles (1989) found current homeschool parents believed there was less confrontation with school officials and they were actively working to collaborate with public schools, suggesting that public schools are beginning to reach out to homeschool families. Moving beyond phase two to phase three (public schools cooperating with homeschools) had been encouraged in part by state legislatures mandating some changes that have encouraged cooperation. For example, homeschoolers were allowed access to more public school services and resources. The fourth phase (consolidation) developed from homeschoolers networking and lobbying at the state level. As homeschoolers created support groups and networks (consolidation), they were also joining with groups that fit their rationales and motivations for homeschooling (phase five: compartmentalization). The positive change in the public's view of homeschooling has aided collaborations between public schools and homeschools.

As relations between homeschoolers and public schools have grown less confrontational (Knowles, et al., 1992), homeschoolers have become more interested in working with public schools (Golding, 1995; Lines, 2000; Peavie, 1999). However, homeschoolers have found that although it was legal to homeschool in every state, it could be hard to gain access to public school activities and resources (Dailey, 1999;

Prather, 2000). In the case of *Swanson v. Guthrie Independent*, the court ruled that parents have the right to homeschool, but their right does not extend to having their children enrolled in public school part-time and select specific classes to attend (Prather, 2000).

Parents have been more effective at the state legislature level than in the courts (Dailey, 1999). The degree to which homeschoolers can utilize the courses, activities, and services of public schools varies across different states. Not all states and school districts have come to the third or fourth stages that Knowles talks about (1989). Several states allow homeschoolers to access public school classes and activities (Dahm, 1996; Dailey, 1999; Eley, 2002; Lines, 2000; Terpstra, 1994). Some of these states allow homeschoolers to participate in academic courses and extracurricular activities.

Washington state passed a law that allows homeschooled students to enroll in public school courses part-time or full-time while still not being expected to be on the school campus for most of the time (Lines, 2000). Iowa's dual enrollment law, passed in 1991 allows homeschoolers to enroll in academic programs, participate in extracurricular activities, and use services from their local area education agencies (Terpstra, 1994).

Oregon also allows homeschoolers to participate in public school programs and activities on a part-time basis, provided the students follow the same rules that public school students are held accountable for (Dailey, 1999). Florida requires their homeschoolers to follow the same rules as public school students in order to participate in extracurricular activities. However, Florida also requires their homeschooled students to demonstrate educational progress by earning at least the minimum score on a standardized test. Other states have passed laws that allow homeschooled students to participate in activities at

public school based on approval of the local school districts. For example, Maine requires the approval of the local superintendent before homeschooled students can be involved in public school programs or activities. However, Dailey states the superintendent cannot withhold the approval unreasonably.

Barriers to Successful Collaborations

A barrier to collaboration between homeschoolers and public schools can be the attitudes and opinions of school administration (Romanowski, 2001). Looking at recent studies (Boothe, et al., 1997; Fairchild, 2002; Peavie, 1999) and comparing them to Knowles's (1989) stages of collaborations between public schools and homeschoolers, the majority of public school administrators would still be in stage two (confrontation). Public school administrators are still questioning homeschooling as a beneficial educational option for students. Boothe, et al. conducted a nationwide survey of school administrators and found that none of the administrators thought students could benefit from homeschooling and 55% of the sample thought homeschool students did not meet the academic requirements of their states. Most administrators thought there should be more academic requirements of homeschoolers in their district, yet more than two thirds did not have someone in their district to mentor homeschoolers. Although 58% said homeschoolers could use public school services in their district, 52% of the superintendents and 64% of the high school principals opposed activities on a part-time basis. Boothe, et. al reported that overall the school administrators showed ignorance of state and district policies involving home schooling. Of the superintendents interviewed, 77% did not have an administrator assigned to work with homeschool families. Even though the numbers of students homeschooled in their district might have grown, most

districts believed they could not spare staff to monitor homeschooled students. Fairchild (2002) also describes negative opinions of superintendents towards homeschoolers. The superintendents worried about the types of citizens homeschooled students would turn out to be and many of the superintendents did not see homeschooled students benefiting their district in any way. However, Fairchild also states that the more contact superintendents had with homeschool families, the more positive their perceptions were of homeschoolers. If superintendents had personally met with homeschooling families, they were more understanding and had more tolerance for homeschooling. The superintendents were neutral to positive about homeschoolers if they had contact with homeschooling families. If the superintendents had little to no contact with homeschooling families, their perceptions of homeschoolers were neutral to negative.

Other barriers to homeschools collaborating with public schools come from the homeschoolers themselves (Adams, 1992; Romanowski, 2001; Yeager, 1999). Adams and Yeager's studies found that homeschool families had not moved to what Knowles (1989) describes as stage three (cooperation). Instead, they still seemed to be in stage two (confrontation) because they were afraid of interactions with public schools and were unaware of possible support public schools could give them.. Adams (1992) surveyed five hundred homeschool families in Maricopa County, Arizona. He found that the homeschoolers were suspicious of cooperating with public schools and viewed any collaboration as a threat to their autonomy. He also found that many homeschoolers did not know about resources the public school offered and some were afraid to ask for support for fear that they would be rejected. He found that less than one half of the respondents had an interest in public school resources. Yeager (1999) surveyed

homeschool parents in Texas and found that homeschoolers preferred education services from private schools over public schools. They consistently opposed any programs or services that public schools offered, except for band and choir activities. The homeschool parents were more interested in private schools providing extracurricular activities, achievement testing, and part-time enrollment in courses offered by the private schools. Although Yeager and Adams found homeschoolers opposed most collaborations with public schools, other researchers have found opposite results (Golding, 1995; Peavie, 1999).

Keys to Successful Collaborations

Studies in Virginia and Kentucky have shown that homeschoolers welcomed collaborations with public schools if they could see benefits for their children (Golding, 1995; Peavie, 1999). Golding found that most homeschooling families in southwest Virginia would have liked training on teaching methods, use of facilities and materials, and access to courses at public schools for their children. Peavie also found willingness from both superintendents and homeschoolers to cooperate with one another. Peavie surveyed Kentucky superintendents and homeschool educators. She found that although superintendents had low opinions of homeschools, they provided limited support to home educators and were willing to cooperate with homeschoolers. The homeschoolers would have liked support from public schools and access to services and facilities. Of the homeschool parents surveyed, 53% wanted extracurricular activities, 47% wanted use of the public school facilities and materials, and 45% wanted academic classes part-time, 73% of homeschooling parents did not want assistance of a certified teacher, and 67% did not want guidance on effective teaching methods. Overall, Peavie found homeschoolers

would have liked increased access to public school services and facilities, but they did not want increased monitoring. Peavie's results connect to the reasons parents choose to homeschool. Because they wanted to control the content of what their students were taught for academic and religious reasons (Knowles, 1991; NCES, 2003; Van Galen, 1987, Wartes, 1989), it is understandable why parents do not want more monitoring of how they are homeschooling their children. Results differed by geographic location as to how much support homeschool parents wanted from public schools. Support from school administrators was also location specific.

A concern of many public school administrators was that collaborations with homeschoolers would be financially detrimental for the district (Boothe, et al., 1997). Most homeschoolers did not have to pay for the use of the public school services and facilities. However, many states did not reimburse districts for homeschoolers. Not surprisingly, the current research on public school programs for homeschoolers comes from states that reimbursed their public school districts (Fairchild, 2002; Dahm, 1996; Lines, 2000; Terpestra, 1994). These states include Washington State, Iowa, and Arizona. In Washington, Lines (2000) reports that if homeschooled students are enrolled in the public schools, the school districts can receive state funds. The students can be enrolled full-time and still be off campus most of the time, yet the district can receive 100% of the full time equivalent (FTE) amount for these students. Virginia passed a law in 1997 allowing schools to be reimbursed for any homeschooled students that are enrolled in core courses (math, science, English, social science, or foreign language courses) (Pawlas, 2001). The financial aid is distributed under a formula similar to the formula Virginia uses for full-time students. Arizona provides their districts with 25% of the FTE

for the services they provide to homeschoolers (Eley, 2002). Iowa also provides school districts with money for the homeschool students through the dual enrollment law (Terpestra, 1994). The districts do not receive 100% FTE for the homeschool students, and Terpestra states that the districts may not receive enough state aid if the homeschool students take advantage of many school services. Boothe et al. (1997) also bring this concern forth when they found that most states do not pay districts for services provided to homeschoolers. At least 58% of the administrators say they receive no state funds to pay for programs they offer to homeschoolers. Only 22% of administrators say they are reimbursed for providing services to homeschoolers. The remaining percent did not know whether or not their state policy would reimburse them for homeschoolers participating in public school programs. Knowles (1989) recommends states provide funding based on how many services and how much involvement the homeschool families have with the public school districts. When districts are properly funded, Fairchild (2002) found partnerships between public schools and homeschools not only benefited homeschoolers, but also benefited public schools. The funding brought in by the enrollment of homeschoolers in the district home school programs exceeded the cost of the homeschool programs. Thus, the districts benefited financially by the homeschool programs.

Not only can homeschool programs be financially beneficial for districts, these programs can also provide districts with a chance to evaluate how homeschoolers are doing academically (Fairchild, 2002). Many superintendents wanted more academic accountability for their homeschoolers (Boothe et. al, 1997; Fairchild, 2002). Fairchild found that if the school districts were involved with their homeschool students, their programs were a way to provide accountability of the academic progress of

homeschoolers. Although not all homeschool families participated in the programs, there were still enough families who wanted to be involved that made the programs work.

Pawlas (2001) discusses how these programs can be a win-win for homeschoolers and public schools. Public schools can learn from homeschoolers the features that contribute to the success of homeschooled students and integrate these factors into the public schools (Zitterkopf, 2000). The public schools also benefit in terms of community relations. As homeschoolers interact with public schools in positive ways, they can more fully appreciate and support the public schools (Romanowski, 2001).

Examples of Successful Collaboration Programs

Current research describes many examples throughout the United States of successful homeschool and public school collaborations (Eley, 2002; Dahm, 1996; Lines, 2000; Terpestra, 1994). There were basically two types of homeschool programs (Lines, 2000). One type emphasized the parents providing homeschooling independently. The parents were teaching the curriculum and evaluating student progress. The second program type was similar to an independent study program. With this approach, the parents delivered the instruction for their students' learning, but the public school chose the curriculum and evaluated student progress.

The first type of homeschooler program involved more support for homeschooling families rather than the public schools actually being responsible for schooling the students (Lines, 2000). Washington State, Arizona, and Iowa all offered this type of program (Dahm, 1996; Eley, 2002; Lines, 2000; Terpestra, 1994).

Homeschoolers are enrolling in these programs because they offer enrichment classes, field trips, access to materials provided by the district, and consultations with parents.

Lines (2000) described several different public school programs for homeschoolers in Washington State. The South Whidbey School District offered enrichment classes for homeschool students and they could enroll in academic or extracurricular activities at their local public schools. The homeschool program coordinator also helped parents find curricular materials and design their home education programs. The Bainbridge Island School District Program supported homeschoolers by offering courses for homeschool students; writing, art, book and drama clubs; a workroom where parents could work with their children and use materials the center owned; field trips; consultations with parents; and assessments of students. Eley described Arizona's Kyrene School District program for homeschoolers. Community Assisted Schooling Alternatives (CASA) Vida Homeschool Enrichment Center offered enrichment classes, specials classes (art, physical education, and music), library access, and cafeteria services to the homeschoolers. At first many homeschooling families were skeptical of the CASA Vida (Eley, 2002), but once they visited the program the homeschooling families were eager to be involved. The program also benefited the district by creating trust between the district and its homeschoolers.

Dahm (1996) described the Des Moines Public School District Home Instruction Program in Iowa. The program benefited the district by increasing enrollment and providing an opportunity to assess whether their homeschool students were making acceptable academic progress. The parents had several choices in the program concerning curriculum, level of assistance from teachers, type of evaluation, and whether their child would attend local school part-time through dual enrollment. The teachers met with their families once every two weeks at home or another location per parent preference. The

teachers only offered and did not force services on parents, because they respected the parents' control of their children's education. The assessment choices the parents could choose from included the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS); a portfolio that the program teacher used to assess progress; and the program teacher's evaluation of several methods including informal evaluation, direct instruction, reviews of student work, reports, and projects. Terpestra (1994) also described a successful Iowa homeschool program. Ames Community School District's Home Based Education Program allowed students to participate in specials classes and other academic classes, involvement in sports and extracurricular activities, access to school textbooks and libraries, enrichment classes just for dual-enrolled students, field trips, and free standardized testing. The program also supported homeschool families by offering presentations on educational topics, consultations with certified teachers, and networking experienced homeschool families with less experienced homeschool families.

Overall, these various programs supported families in three different states and were successful for both the homeschoolers and the school districts (Dahm, 1996; Eley, 2002; Lines, 2000; Terpestra, 1994). The homeschool families appreciated the extracurricular and academic activities for their children. The children were able to participate in activities that involved larger groups of children or groups of children with same-age peers. The families were able to use curriculum resource libraries and consult staff members on teaching strategies. The homeschool families also had opportunities to connect with other homeschooling families and discuss concerns or joys they may both share. For school districts, the support of the community is critical and connecting with homeschooling families was one way some of these districts built that community

support. The homeschoolers who were involved in these programs tended to feel more connected to their public schools and some of these parents volunteered in the public school classrooms (Terpstra, 1994). Some school districts have benefited financially from the programs and many of these programs have experienced growth (Dahm, 1996; Eley, 2002; Lines, 2000). Some programs are sufficiently popular; there are waiting lists for families that want to enroll (Lines, 2000).

Lines (2000) discovered that over time most programs in the state of Washington moved towards full-enrollment options for increased state funding of their programs. One district combined the two basic types of homeschool programs in their Home Link Technology Center. They offered technology classes, field trips, and a contract-based high school program that resulted in a diploma. However, they also offered full-time enrollment choices that required some on-campus attendance. The mix of services offered by Home Link was popular with their homeschool families. This program grew dramatically and in 1999 there were 37 classrooms and offices in the district. In the Central Kitsap District, homeschoolers requested their superintendent develop a program for their homeschooling children. In the Central Kitsap Off-Campus Program, students were required to have at least six hours of instructional contact time a month with one of the program's teachers. They also administered tests in reading and math at the request of parents. The program encouraged on-campus enrollment and independent study options.

Recommendations for Successful Programs

Analyses of these successful programs offer insights for districts seeking to cooperate with homeschoolers and for homeschoolers seeking collaborations with their public schools (Adams, 1992; Dahm, 1996; Knowles, 1989; Lines, 2000; Pawlas, 2001;

Romanowski, 2001, 2006; Wartes, 1988). Knowles thought it would be helpful for school districts to consider what collaboration stage their homeschooling families were in when creating programs. Some homeschoolers are still in the contention stage and do not want help from public schools. Districts should be respectful of parents' beliefs and wishes. Because homeschoolers were wary of more regulations and requirements, it is more helpful if districts become knowledgeable of homeschooling and the benefits of homeschooling, rather than impose more regulations on homeschoolers than are already in place (Adams, 1992). According to Ray and Wartes, policies governing homeschoolers in the areas of contact with certified teachers, curriculum structure, parents' education level, and numbers of hours of schooling per day would not be beneficial as there was no relationship between these factors and the academic success of homeschool students. It may also be more effective to work closely with homeschool support groups rather than with homeschoolers individually (Adams, 1992).

Romanowski (2001) recommends for homeschoolers to collaborate successfully with their public schools, they must begin to move from negative views of public schools to perceiving the important role public schools play in our nation's public education. Romanowski's recommendations correlate with Knowles' (1989) stages of collaboration. Romanowski's suggestions for homeschoolers would move them from contention and confrontation stages to the cooperation stage. Romanowski asserts homeschoolers need to begin to move from viewing themselves as self-contained entities to a part of the larger educational system that deserves their support. He believes it is important for homeschoolers to become involved in their public schools, because homeschoolers who

are connected to their schools can support them more fully. This understanding and support is needed because all citizens benefit from public education.

Teachers are often the key to successful partnering with homeschoolers (Dahm, 1996; Lines, 2000). Teachers best serve the partnership when they are flexible and willing to share decision-making with parents. They can offer families support, counseling, and ideas. However, Romanowski (2006) adds, teachers must remember that is important for them to offer assistance, not force their opinions on parents, as homeschooling parents are ultimately in control of their children's education. Dahm states that it is respectful if the teachers schedule their visits in advance and do not arrive unannounced. When parents thought the teachers listened to their views and let them make choices, they were appreciative of the assistance from the program. "The most important requirements for teachers in this program are flexibility and tolerance of different values. The growth of the program is proof that the concept has worked for the mutual benefit of all stakeholders" (Dahm, 1996, p. 71).

Family support can also be provided through other means besides teachers providing individual support (Terpestra, 1994). Presentations on educational topics and homeschooling strategies are also of interest to homeschoolers (Dahm, 1996; Terpestra, 1994) as is connecting experienced homeschooling families with families who are beginning to homeschool.

When planning activities for homeschool children, two main areas of interest surface: experiential learning activities and large group or team activities (Knowles, 1989). Experiential learning activities may include music, art, science labs, or vocational classes. Homeschooling families often request activities or classes that require teachers

with special training or facilities the families cannot practically provide. Large group or team activities include team sports, music groups such as band or chorus, and other extracurricular activities. When parents see a benefit for their children in some activity or academic class, they are more motivated to participate in the programs offered by public schools (Golding, 1995; Peavie, 1999).

Another consideration for public schools when organizing classes or activities is scheduling. Schedules that are flexible better serve homeschool families efforts to participate in the events (Knowles, 1989). However, as Terpstra (1994) notes, state funding provided to school districts for their homeschooled students may not always be sufficient to cover district's expenses. This may make it difficult for school districts to provide flexible scheduling for homeschooling families to participate in courses and other activities. Providing open access to school libraries and curriculum centers can make these resources more available to a variety of family schedules (Eley, 2002).

Conclusion

Homeschooling is a growing movement in the United States (NCES, 2004) and the rationales parents hold for homeschooling range from academic to religious (Knowles, 1991; NCES, 2004; Van Galen, 1987; Wartes, 1989). As parents have chosen to homeschool their children, public schools have had a complex issue to resolve (Knowles, 1989). Many public school administrators have expressed concern about how homeschooled children will do academically and socially as they grow into adults (Boothe, et al., 1997; Fairchild, 2002; Medlin, 2000; Peavie, 1999; Romanowski, 2006; Shyers, 1992; Wartes, 1989; Yeager, 1999). The research analyzed in this paper found that homeschoolers are doing as well, if not better, than their public school peers in both

academic and social areas (Medlin, 2000; Ray, 2000, 2003; Rudner, 1999; Shyers, 1992; Wartes, 1988).

In light of the current research on homeschooling, the public has become more accepting of homeschooling (Beato, 2005; Knowles, 1989; Knowles et al., 1992).

Knowles (1989) describes the phases of interactions between homeschoolers and public schools and believes that although the level of interaction may vary, homeschoolers now have access to many more public school services and resources. In the past there was considerable tension between public school staff and homeschoolers (Knowles, 1989); however, the research reviewed here points to more cooperation between public schools and homeschoolers (Dahm, 1996; Eley, 2002; Golding, 1995; Lines, 2000; Peavie, 1999; Terpestra, 1994).

Studies cited here on collaborations between homeschoolers and public schools (Adams, 1992; Golding 1995; Knowles, 1989; Lines, 2000; Peavie, 1999; Yeager, 1999) found that when public schools took the time to create programs that homeschool parents wanted, the results were successful collaborations. Districts that created programs in which homeschoolers could see the benefit for their children (Golding, 1995; Peavie, 1999) were successful at getting participation from homeschool families. This took insight from the public school administrators and teaching staff as to what activities families wanted to participate in when creating homeschool assistance programs (Dahm, 1996). However, the research on collaborations between homeschools and public schools is broad. The studies included here examined a large sample of homeschoolers to see what types of collaborations homeschoolers would like from their public schools. None of these studies took a more in-depth look at how homeschoolers view the potential

impact the collaborations with their public schools may have on their families, their academic programs, or their basic belief systems. Several research studies have examined rationales of homeschoolers (Knowles, 1991; NCES, 2004; Van Galen, 1987; Wartes, 1989). However, no studies have analyzed parents' rationales for homeschooling relative to the types of collaborations they seek from public schools. Understanding the link between rationale type and collaboration sought, may assist districts as they attempt to support homeschoolers. It would also be helpful for program coordinators to know what types of assistance homeschool families believe would support their home instruction. These are the questions this research study will attempt to address.

CHAPTER III: Methods

Research Design

As the purpose of this research was to determine the types of interactions homeschool families have with their public schools and the effects these interactions have on these families relative to: 1) their rationale for homeschooling and the interaction between their rationale and relation type, and, 2) their attitudes toward home/school relations, it was necessary to employ a design that would allow the principal investigator (PI) to become familiar with the participants' beliefs and experiences. Yin (2003) in his discussion of case study research, suggests the case study offers a means of answering "how" and "why" questions when the investigator has little control over the events and when the research focus is on current phenomenon within a real-life setting. This research did not attempt to control any events. Instead, its purpose was to explore and describe the rich and complex interactions between public schools and homeschool families. Using a case study design helped the PI select a representative sample of the population small enough to allow opportunity for more in-depth conversations with participants.

A multiple-case study design was employed here to provide a variance of viewpoints of homeschooling parents. Yin (2003) describes multiple-case study designs as a way to use the idea of replication logic used in multiple experiments. Once the researcher has uncovered a significant finding, the researcher seeks to replicate this finding in future cases. This study implemented the replication method by using two baseline studies to determine the types of interactions families participated in with their public school and to assess whether there was a connection between these interactions and parents' rationales for homeschooling. The baseline group's data was used to create a

more refined interview for the three subsequent case studies. These three subsequent case studies will be called the replication group in this report. The following three subsequent case studies were completed to determine if initial findings in the areas of collaborations and the connection between the parents' rationales for homeschooling and the types of interactions they sought from their public schools could be replicated.

Although case studies do not provide the researcher the opportunity to report generalizable claims, the depth and duration of the interviews with the families in this study provided opportunity to identify and then begin to theorize about some of the relationships between rationales for homeschooling and the influences they might have on the interactions these families have with the public schools. These findings would most likely have remained largely hidden in a large-scale quantitative approach (Yin, 2003).

Settings

This research was conducted in eastern Iowa. The interviews took place in the participants' homes. When the participants were recruited, the PI asked the participants if they were comfortable with the interview being done in their home in order for it to be more convenient for them. The PI then went to each participant's home and allowed the participant to decide in which room the interview would take place. The interviews each took approximately one to one and one half hour.

Materials

The PI used a prepared interview schedule (included in Appendix A) for the baseline interviews. The data from the baseline interview was analyzed and used to prepare the interview schedule for the replication interviews (included in Appendix B). A

tape recorder was used to record the interviews for later data analysis. A locked file box was used to store the interview notes, interview transcripts, tape recordings, and consent forms.

Procedure

The PI recruited participants who represented a range of different perspectives on rationales for homeschooling, differing levels of involvement with their public schools, and differing ages of children. The PI sent an invitation letter to five families known to be homeschooling. Of these five families, three families were willing to participate in the study. The PI asked these families for recommendations of other homeschooling families to contact. Of these recommendations, the researcher contacted four additional families. Of these four families, two families responded positively.

Once the five participant families were recruited, the PI selected two families to serve as the baseline group. These two families were selected because the PI perceived from initial phone conversations and emails that these two families had differing rationales for homeschooling and differing levels of involvement with their public schools. These two interviews were used as the pilot studies for the three following cases. This allowed the PI to explore the perspectives of homeschooling families from two differing standpoints and enabled refinement of the interview questions for the final three interviews.

After the two baseline interviews were completed, the transcripts were analyzed for themes and patterns. The constant comparative analysis method as described by Maykut and Morehouse (1994) was used. Response statements were created for each interview question. The statements were written in the form of sentences that answered

the interview questions. The response statements provided both perspectives of homeschooling and their implications on interactions with public schools. Results of the analysis of the baseline group indicated these two families represented two of Van Galen's (1987) categories for homeschoolers: idealogues and pedagogues. The PI prepared an interview schedule based on Maykut and Morehouse's (1994) layout of an interview schedule. The interviews, although open-ended, were structured around the research questions created at the start of the study.

The PI then sought to replicate the findings from the baseline group through subsequent interviews with the three participating homeschooling families in the replication group (Yin, 2003). In these three final cases, participants were provided the interview question in advance, giving them time to think about their responses prior to responding to the answer statements written from the baseline group results. After reflecting on their response, participants were given the answer statements from the initial baseline interviews. The participants were asked to respond to these statements and explain why they agreed or disagreed with the statement.

Data Collection

The central data collection strategy used in this study was semi-structured interviews based on the work of Maykut & Morehouse (1994). The first two interviews were used as initial probings into possible connections between rationales for homeschooling and interactions with public schools. The three final cases were used as more focused interviews for more in-depth analysis and to crosscheck the findings from the initial interviews. The PI took notes during the interviews to keep track of the process of the interviews and also to record the main thoughts and ideas of the participants. A

recording made of the interview was later transcribed. This helped the PI more accurately capture the participants' words, beliefs, and experiences.

Participants

The participants were five homeschooling families currently homeschooling their children. The families each had several children (ranging from three to nine). The various ages of the children in the families ranged from age 3 to late 20s. These families were all involved to some extent in collaborations with their public school. The interviews were conducted with the parent/s who served as the children's primary teachers. A description of each family is provided below. All names used are pseudonyms chosen by the participants.

Fred and Sue's family.

This family had four children who are in the middle school grades and the high school grades. All of their children are homeschooled. Both parents share the responsibility of teaching their children, although Sue seemed to be the primary teacher. Both parents participated in the interview and they responded equally. Fred elaborated more, but both parents provided input for each question. The interview went smoothly and these participants offered more assistance if needed in the future.

Ann's family.

The nine children in this family range from elementary school students to high school graduates. The mother homeschools the children from elementary through middle school and the children attend the public high school when they enter the ninth grade. Currently she is homeschooling three children, two children attend public high school and four children have graduated from high school. The mother is the primary teacher in

this family and was the participant in this interview. Ann responded to all of the interview questions and shared her experiences freely. The interview went smoothly, except for a couple of occasions when some of the younger children needed Ann's attention for a few minutes.

Mary Smith's family.

This family had three children that ranged from middle school to high school. The two middle school children were homeschooled through elementary school but currently attended public school. The high school child was currently being homeschooled. The mother is the primary teacher of the family and was the participant in this interview. Mary answered all of the interview questions in relation to the responses from the baseline group and shared her family's homeschooling experiences.

Marie's family.

The six children in this family ranged from middle school to graduated from high school. Two children were currently homeschooling, one in middle school and one in high school. The other four children were graduated from high school. The mother is the primary teacher in this family and participated in the interview. The interview went well and she freely answered all of the interview questions in relation to the response statements from the baseline group.

Betty's family.

The family had six children ranging from elementary school to high school. Two children are preschool age, one elementary age child attends public school part-time, one middle school age child is homeschooled full-time, one high school age child attends public school part-time, and one high school age child attends public school and is

homeschooled. The mother is the primary teacher for this family and was the participant in this interview. The interview went well except for a few minor interruptions by some of the younger children who needed their mother's attention for a few minutes. Betty freely answered the interview questions in relation to the response statements from the baseline group.

Data Analysis

The analysis method used in this study was the constant comparative method as described by Maykut and Morehouse (1994). This method involved an in-depth analysis of the data collected in order to understand the phenomenon being studied more clearly. The purpose is to describe what is learned with only a limited amount of interpretation. The researcher develops propositions based on the data collected that are closely tied to the research participants' ideas, beliefs, and experiences. Once the data is prepared for analysis, the researcher selects words and phrases that are meaningful to the research focus. Maykut and Morehouse call this process "unitizing" (p. 128). As each new thought and piece of information is being analyzed, the researcher determines if this piece of data is similar to another unit of meaning, or if a new category needs to be formed. The constant comparing of data provides the researcher the flexibility to discover new relationships among the data. Once all the meaningful "chunks" of data have been coded and sorted within the research questions, the researcher culls the data for recurring words, phrases, and ideas. A propositional statement is formed for each data set to tentatively propose a statement of fact based on the data in the category. The data are again analyzed to determine if they fit within the categories and align with the propositional statement proposed for the category. These propositional statements are then analyzed for patterns

and relationships and outcome propositions are created. For example, Maykut and Morehouse (1994) describe a research study in which the focus was how instructors form an impression of students and how these impressions influence expectations and interactions. The categories that emerged from analyzing the data in meaningful chunks included 'I do (or do not) Want to Learn' Behaviors and Early Course Performance. A propositional statement that came out of the behaviors category was: "Instructors form impressions of students based on many verbal and nonverbal behaviors of students that say to them, in effect, 'I do (or do not) want to learn'" (p. 140). The researcher can also validate these propositions by returning to the field and seeking participants' responses on the outcome statements.

This study used the constant comparative method (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994) to analyze the initial interview responses and create propositional statements for the three final interviews. The PI transcribed the baseline interviews, analyzed participants' responses for each question, and compiled the responses for both interviews on one sheet under each interview question (included in Appendix C). These responses were analyzed for differences and similarities. Responses statements were created for the questions based on all perspectives given by the initial interview participants. These response statements were used in the three interviews in the replication group. The participants were asked to give their reaction to the response statements for each question. These final interviews provided a means of validating these propositions for the conclusions of this study using participants from the field. These interviews were also transcribed for ease of analyzing the data. The constant comparative method was used to analyze each case separately and then to examine across the three cases for similarities and differences that

stood out in the data. This within-case analysis and cross-case analysis allowed the PI to more clearly examine each case and then explore patterns that emerged across the cases for a greater validity of conclusion statements.

CHAPTER IV: Results

Across case and within-case analysis (Yin, 2003) of each subject family is presented in this section. First, the meta-case analysis is presented for each research question. The primary research question is as follows: is there a relationship between parents' rationales for homeschooling and the types of interactions they seek with their public school? The secondary questions are the following:

1. What are the typical or most common forms of collaborations that currently exist between homeschoolers and public school districts?
2. What are the benefits of these collaborations for homeschoolers?
3. What are the consequences of these collaborations for homeschoolers?
4. What other types of collaborations would homeschoolers like to have with their public schools?

Family 1 (FS) and Family 2 (A) on the charts are the two baseline participants and Families 3, 4, and 5 are the replication group participants. After the across case analysis is presented for each research question, within-case analysis of each research question is described in more detail for each family.

Is there a relationship between parents' rationales for homeschooling and the types of interactions they seek with their public school?

In each of the five cases, some connections can be made between the parents' rationales for homeschooling and the types of interactions they sought from their public schools. The correlation was stronger for some families than others. When looking for a reciprocal relationship between academic rationales for homeschooling and collaborations of an academic nature, the relationship is more obvious. Of the five families, one family chose to homeschool for primarily academic reasons. This family's

collaborations with their public school was mainly academic. Two families chose to homeschool for academic and moral reasons. In these two families, the activities they participated in with their public school were both academic and social events. Chart 1 (below) shows the rationales and collaboration type for each family.

Chart 1

<i>Chart 1: Connections of Rationales and Collaborations</i>	FAMILY 1 (FS)	FAMILY 2 (A)	FAMILY 3 (MS)	FAMILY 4 (M)	FAMILY 5 (B)
PRIMARY RATIONALE	Academic	Values	Values	Values	Academic
SECONDARY RATIONALES	Values		Strengthen Family Unit	Academic	Values
COLLABORATION TYPE	High level of involvement; Academic and social activities in home and at the public school	Limited level of involvement; Academic activities in home	Limited level of involvement; Academic activities in home and testing at school	High level of involvement; Academic and some social activities in home and at public school	High level of involvement; Academic and social activities in home and at public school

Drawing a connection between the ideological rationale for homeschooling and the collaborations with public schools requires the data to be analyzed in a way that points out what collaborations the family chose not to participate in with their public school. One family chose to homeschool primarily to be able to teach their children the values they held as important. This family’s collaborations with their public school was academic in nature. The children were enrolled in the public school once they began high school. There is a correlation between the rationale and the collaborations if one looks at the location where the interactions took place. The interactions took place in the family’s home and the parents did not choose to put their children into any collaborations at the

public school that were social in nature. This points to the rationale they constructed of being the primary teachers of values to their children. They limited the interactions they had with their public school to those in which their children would not be as likely to be exposed to a differing set of values. Once they thought their children were old enough to be exposed to a differing set of values, then the children were enrolled in the public high school.

Another family chose to homeschool for primarily moral reasons, but also because they were determined to be the primary influence in their children's formative years. Some of their children attended the public school, once they entered middle school. This family's collaborations with their public school were limited to academic purposes. The interactions took place in the home for teacher visits and at the school for standardized testing. The family did not choose to participate in any social activities or interactions at the school that would have provided social interactions with public school children. They used other homeschooling families and their church to provide social activities for their children. Because this family chose to limit their activities with the public school and because of the nature of the interactions, one can see the correlation between their rationale for being the primary influence in their children's early years and the collaborations they had with their public school.

Looking across these five cases, all of the families had a connection between the rationale they held for homeschooling and the interactions they sought with their public schools. Some of the connections are between the types of activities the families chose to participate in with their public schools. Of most noteworthy interest is the fact that the families who had an academic rationale for homeschooling were the ones who had the

high levels of involvement with their public schools (see Chart 1). Other connections are seen in how the families chose to limit the types of collaborations in which their children were involved and the location of these interactions with the public schools. The families who only had a values or strengthen the family unit rationale for homeschooling had a lower level of involvement with their public schools (see Chart 1).

What are the typical or most common forms of collaborations that currently exist between homeschoolers and public school districts?

Overall, the collaborations most mentioned by the families were centered on academics. The families most often participated in interactions with their public schools when they anticipated an academic benefit. Also, some collaborations involved social interactions with other homeschooling families or other children. The collaborations mentioned from the homeschooling families varied from just a few collaborations (1-2) to many collaborations per family (7-12) per school year. Chart 2 (below) shows the categories of collaborations in which families were involved with their public school. The activities were both conducted at the public school and in the homeschooling families' homes.

Chart 2

Chart 2: Collaboration Categories	FAMILY 1 (FS)	FAMILY 2 (A)	FAMILY 3 (MS)	FAMILY 4 (M)	FAMILY 5 (B)
Teacher Visits	X	X	X	X	X
Standardized Testing	X	X	X	X	X
Classes through a Home School Assistance Program	X			X	X
Classes at the Public School	X			X	X
Post Secondary Enrollment Option	X			X	
Extracurricular Activities at the Public School (i.e. Sports, Music, Honor Societies)	X			X	X
Field Trips	X			X	X
Advice from Public School Staff for Instruction of Children	X		X		
Advice from Public School Staff for Applying to Colleges	X			X	X

Two types of collaborations were mentioned by all of the families. They were 1) teacher visits and 2) testing. The first related to public school teachers who visited homeschoolers on site. Teacher visits in four cases were a result of the district’s homeschool assistance program. Teacher visits included enrichment activities the teachers brought to enhance the home curriculum. For two families, the public school teacher provided physical education classes. For one family, the public school teacher provided Spanish instruction.

The second collaboration mentioned by all of the homeschooling families related to standardized testing. All of the families said the public school staff administered standardized testing to their children annually. In one case, the family utilized the support of their homeschool assistance program teacher to help analyze test results. In three of the cases the children were administered the test at a special location with other homeschoolers, in one of the cases the children were administered the tests privately at the public school, and in another case the children were administered the tests privately in their home.

In addition to teacher visits, four families also mentioned other activities they participated in with the homeschool assistance program provided by their district. Of the three families that currently participated in the homeschool assistance program, they mentioned several activities that were provided through the program. These families went on field trips organized by the staff for homeschooling families, participated in enrichment courses for homeschoolers at the public school, joined in academic competitions, utilized the public school and homeschool assistance program libraries, participated in a homeschooling honor society, and participated in learning fairs. One family mentioned a homeschool assistance program was offered in their district for only a few years and then the district stopped providing the program for homeschooling families.

Three families also mentioned taking part in the open enrollment option. Some of the children enrolled in courses provided at the public school. The courses mentioned were math and science classes. Some children also participated in extracurricular activities at the public school, such as music and sports. Three families mentioned using

the post secondary enrollment option in which their children were able to enroll in college classes for free. The public high schools paid for the college classes and the children were able to receive both high school and college credits for the classes they took at a college.

Four families mentioned they utilized the advice of public school staff to make education decisions. One family discussed asked the public school for help with instructional techniques for a child with a learning disability. Three families mentioned using the counselors at the public high schools for advice on applying to colleges.

What are the benefits of these collaborations for homeschoolers?

The families mentioned both academic and social benefits for their children as a result of their collaborations with their public school. Chart 3 (below) shows the benefits the families expressed they received as a result of their collaborations with their public schools.

Chart 3

Chart 3: Benefits of Collaborations	FAMILY 1 (FS)	FAMILY 2 (A)	FAMILY 3 (MS)	FAMILY 4 (M)	FAMILY 5 (B)
Academic	X	X	X	X	X
Social Peer Interactions	X			X	X
Broadens Experiences and Knowledge	X			X	X
Provides Classes Parents Could Not Teach	X	X	X		X
Learn Classroom Skills to Prepare for College	X				X
College Credit				X	
Advice is Helpful for Applying to Colleges	X			X	X
Advice is Helpful for Instructional Techniques	X		X		

All five families saw classes the school provided either at the school or through teacher visits as helpful. Three families mentioned these classes as opportunities to broaden their children’s experiences and knowledge. Four families believed the public school provided classes they would not have been able to provide at home. One family indicated that although they could have provided these classes at home, it was easier for their children to take some of these classes at the public school. This family also mentioned the post secondary enrollment option as a benefit. Two families mentioned the benefit to their children of learning classroom skills they would need for college by attending public school classes. These two families also thought it was beneficial for their children to have opportunities to interact with others outside of their family and with children their own age. Three families mentioned they considered the support they received from public

school counselors in giving advice for college was important. One family considered the support they received from the school for instructional techniques they used to teach their learning disabled child as a benefit.

What are the consequences of these collaborations for homeschoolers?

The negative consequences these families saw as a result of their collaborations with the public school were generally not related to the collaborations themselves. Chart 4 (below) delineates the negative consequences the families perceived were a result of their collaborations with their public schools.

Chart 4

<i>Chart 4: Negative Consequences of Collaborations</i>	FAMILY 1 (FS)	FAMILY 2 (A)	FAMILY 3 (MS)	FAMILY 4 (M)	FAMILY 5 (B)
Travel Time	X			X	X
Disappointing Peer Interactions				X	

Of the three families that participated in collaborations at the public school, all three families saw the travel time spent in the car as a negative consequence. The travel time took away from the time the children were able to complete schoolwork and the families were able to complete household duties. All three families agreed it was unavoidable if they wanted their children to participate in the activities the public school provided and the benefit they received from these collaborations made the time spent traveling in the car worth it. One family even mentioned their children used the travel time in the car to complete schoolwork. The two families that participated in collaborations with their public school that took place in their homes thought there were no negative consequences as a result of these collaborations. One of these families mentioned the reason they chose

not to participate in the collaborations provided at the public school was to avoid the negative consequence of time spent traveling in the car. One family who participated in activities at the public school thought there were times in which the interactions with other homeschoolers were not beneficial to their children socially. They were disappointed with these interactions; however this family did not believe every occurrence in which their children interacted with other homeschoolers was negative.

Overall, the families interviewed in this study considered the collaborations with their public schools to be mainly positive and beneficial. They considered their collaborations with the public schools helpful to their children and supportive of their home instruction. Two families mentioned having both positive and negative experiences when collaborating. One of these families felt some animosity from their local school district, but when they enrolled in a nearby district's homeschool assistance program they believed the collaborations there to be excellent. The other family that encountered some negative experiences discussed times when they did not agree with the public school as to how the school was educating their children. However, both sides agreed to disagree and the interactions were considered polite. After analyzing both the negative consequences and the benefits homeschooling families perceived as a result of collaborations with their public school, the positive consequences outnumber the negative consequences.

What other types of collaborations would homeschoolers like to have with their public schools?

The homeschooling families had several suggestions for additional collaborations they would like from their public schools. The additional collaborations families would like to receive pertained to options for 1) taking classes at the college, 2) taking classes through the post secondary enrollment option, and, 3) teacher visit time. However, there

was not agreement amongst the homeschooling families as to the same types of collaborations they desire. One family suggested the option to be able to pick and choose classes at the public school; however other families reported they already had this option through open enrollment. This family also mentioned the desire to have specialized classes just for homeschoolers, but the other families thought it was unnecessary to have classes just for homeschoolers since the classes were already being offered at the public school. A family also mentioned the idea of choosing classes more freely; however this homeschooling mother was referring to the post secondary enrollment option. She wanted to be able to have her children choose college classes to take at the college, even if the class was being offered at the public high school. One family expressed the desire to have her district reinstate the homeschool assistance program they had provided for several years and then discontinued. She mentioned the teacher visit time had been helpful for her children. Another homeschooling mother mentioned more teacher visit time beyond what they were currently receiving as positive as well. However, two of the families in the replication group did not think more teacher time was necessary or would be helpful for their family.

The homeschooling families in this study also had other areas of advice they would give public schools in developing relationships with homeschooling families. Chart 5 (below) covers the suggestions given by these families.

Chart 5

Chart 5: Advice to Public Schools	FAMILY 1 (FS)	FAMILY 2 (A)	FAMILY 3 (MS)	FAMILY 4 (M)	FAMILY 5 (B)
Teacher Visit Time Model Using Support, Not Critique	X		X	X	X
Public Schools Flexible with Homeschoolers	X	X	X	X	X
More Home School Assistance Program Teachers					X
Physical Space for Home School Assistance Program	X			X (but need to be patient)	X (but need to be patient)
Provide Interpretation of Standardized Test Scores	X				

Homeschoolers also appreciated the support they received from the homeschool assistance program staff. All of the families appreciated the teacher visit time provided by their homeschool assistance program. One family in the baseline group said they liked the model their homeschool assistance program teacher used during their visits. The teacher came to support the instruction the children were receiving. She did not come to critique the work they were doing at home. The three families in the replication group also agreed with this statement. One of the families in the baseline group mentioned the homeschool assistance program teacher reviewing their children’s standardized test scores with them. They appreciated this teacher’s insights and suggestions. However, all three families in the replication group did not believe it was necessary for them to receive help from the public school to interpret standardized test scores. Another support from the homeschool

assistance program mentioned as important was field trips. One family wanted the homeschool assistance program to continue to provide this service.

One of the families from the baseline group also stated the public school needed to create more physical space set aside for the homeschool assistance program. Two of the families in the replication group also thought this was important, but they believed homeschooling families needed to be patient with their public school district. One of these families thought it was more important for the district to put their resources into hiring more staff for the homeschool assistance program. She believed the resource teachers had too large a caseload and needed other teachers to help work with the homeschooling families.

Another suggestion given to public schools was to be flexible with homeschooling families, because each family is a little different. This statement was made by one of the families in the baseline group and all three families from the replication group agreed with this statement. They thought if the homeschooling situation was not being done properly, the public school could support as needed, however one homeschooling family was cautious about this statement. This mother thought the school should not interfere with homeschooling families, but instead should offer help. She mentioned it was most important for homeschool assistance programs to provide a support system in which homeschoolers could network with one another.

Within-Case Analysis of Each Family

This section will describe in more detail the data for each family pertaining to each research question. The two baseline groups were FS and A. The three replication groups were MS, M, and B.

Fred and Sue's family.

Fred and Sue (FS) homeschooled all four of their children and have done so since the beginning of their children's schooling. Their children ranged from middle school through high school. They have been involved with their public school's homeschool assistance program in various activities. FS were one of the baseline families. FS's responses to the interview questions were analyzed using approach outcome analysis (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994) of their reactions to the interview process and their responses are described below. The categories that emerged from their responses were: 1) rationales for homeschooling, 2) Knowles (1989) phases of relations between homeschoolers and public schools, 3) types of collaborations with their public school, 4) impact of these collaborations on their family, 5) additional collaborations they wanted from their public school, and, 6) the relation between their rationale for homeschooling and the interactions the family had with their public school and will be discussed in this order.

FS freely discussed their rationale for homeschooling and their interactions with their local school district. F's description of how they chose to homeschool exhibited an "academic enlightenment" perspective for their children including tailoring the education experience to each child's individual interests and needs. He reported that he was taking a graduate class at the time they decided to homeschool. The professor's thoughts and the class discussion prompted him to lean towards homeschooling. He said, "it was a time when the national educational survey *A Nation at Risk* came out. We chatted about it a little bit and discussed it in our seminar class. Some remark about the public school he [professor] made, 'of course what would you expect from a system that advances

lockstep at the pace of the slowest learner?’” (Fred, personal communication, October 2, 2006). S also mentioned a homeschooling book that described how to homeschool and a friend’s advice as influential in their decision to homeschool. She also mentioned they discovered other reasons to continue to homeschool, as they have homeschooled for 12 years, including the avoidance of negative peer socialization. Initially the responses from FS suggest the primary reasons the FS family chose to homeschool was for pedagogical purposes, but as they continued homeschooling they also saw other reasons that were more ideological in nature.

Knowles (1989) phases of relations between homeschoolers and public schools guided the interview process. Those phases include: 1) contentions about public schools, 2) confrontations with public schools, 3) public schools cooperating with homeschoolers, 4) consolidation of homeschool families as they network with one another, and, 5) compartmentalization of homeschooling families as they join with groups that fit their rationales and motivations for homeschooling. FS chose the cooperation phase as most fitting their present interactions with their public schools. They did not report confrontations with their public schools and they can see it is ideal for them to work with their public school in some areas. They enjoyed the freedom of being able to choose what works for them and not feeling compelled to take part in anything in which they would not want to be involved. For example, FS’s family was involved in their public school’s homeschool assistance program and believed it was beneficial.

Other collaborations they had with their public school included the children participating in classes at the public school, academic competitions, orchestra, and standardized testing. A certified supervising teacher came to their home for enrichment

activities to highlight what the children were studying. They mentioned the helpfulness of the public school teachers in watching out for their children when they were taking classes at the public school and giving advice for applying to colleges.

The impact FS felt these collaborations had on their family was mostly beneficial. Their children were given opportunities to participate in courses or educational activities that broadened their experiences and knowledge. Some of the public school classes the children participated in were classes the parents believed they could not provide at home, e.g. lab courses. The children were also able to interact with others beyond their own family and learned classroom skills that prepared them for college.

FS did not particularly agree on what other additional types of collaborations or support they would like from their public school. F mentioned the option to pick and choose classes similar to a college model, although S said they already had that option with the dual enrollment provision in Iowa law. S also said that public schools have legal requirements they must meet and being flexible like a college might be difficult for them.

Overall, FS considered their interactions with their public schools to represent an excellent collaboration model and a positive experience for them and their children. The advice they would give to their public schools would be to provide enough physical space designated for the homeschool assistance program. They thought their local district did not have enough space to meet with families and provide the classes for homeschooled children. They also thought some more specialized courses for homeschool students that would be at the same caliber as the public school students were receiving would be beneficial. In particular, they mentioned that the preferred model of public school staff interaction with homeschool families was asking homeschool parents how they could

help them rather than critiquing their work. FS appreciated when the homeschool assistance teachers came to bring activities that supplemented their curriculum, such as an art project or writing ideas. They also mentioned if the homeschool assistance program teacher thought he/she needed to ask to look at the curriculum after interacting with their children, then they should be able to do so. Another suggestion they would give to public schools would be to provide the option for homeschooling parents to go over their children's standardized testing scores with a homeschool assistance program teacher in order to determine what academic areas might need additional attention and get suggestions for what they could do to improve those areas.

In reviewing the information FS gave in their interview about the rationale they held for homeschooling and the activities they had their students participate in at their public school, both areas were primarily about the academic achievement of their children. They homeschooled because they wanted to provide the best academic experience for their children and their children participated in activities at the public school that were mainly academic in nature or honored high academic achievement, e.g. enrichment and science classes at the school, academic competitions, and honor societies.

Ann's family.

Ann (A) and her husband homeschooled all of their nine children in their elementary and middle school years. They had four children who had graduated from high school, two children in high school who attended the public school, one child in middle school who was homeschooled, and two children in elementary school who were homeschooled. They began homeschooling when their oldest daughter was in first grade.

All, but the oldest daughter, were homeschooled for all of their elementary and middle school years. Once their children started high school, they attended the local public school. They had been involved with their public school's homeschool assistance program on a limited basis. A was one of the baseline families. A's responses to the interview questions were analyzed using approach outcome analysis (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994) of her reactions to the interview process and her responses are described below. The categories that emerged from her responses were: 1) rationales for homeschooling, 2) Knowles (1989) phases of relations between homeschoolers and public schools, 3) types of collaborations with their public school, 4) impact of these collaborations on their family, 5) additional collaborations they wanted from their public school, and, 6) the relation between their rationale for homeschooling and the interactions the family had with their public school and will be discussed in this order.

A related her experience of choosing to homeschool in a way that showed her determination to not only shape her children's academic abilities but also to shape their moral attitudes and character. She believed her first child's behavior changed after her first year at public school in kindergarten and before the next school year started, she thought she had been able to "get her old daughter back" (Ann, personal communication, October 7, 2006). She wanted to teach her children the values she and her husband saw as important and she also had a conviction from God to start homeschooling. She mentioned that in the beginning of their homeschooling, she often had to defend her reasons for homeschooling to both family and friends.

In discussion of Knowles (1989) phases of interactions between public schools and homeschoolers, A thought phase three best described her family's experiences. Their

public school had been cooperative with them and they received assistance from their public school when they requested support. A certified teacher came to give her children standardized tests every fall and also came regularly to do activities with her children, such as physical education, music, and Spanish.

The types of collaborations A and her children participated in with their public school included teacher visits and standardized testing. She mentioned that she could also participate in field trips, music, sports, or classes at the public school. However, she had not chosen to place her children in these activities until they attended the public high school. She believed the collaborations were beneficial for her family, because they provided classes she would not have been able to teach herself. A did not think there were any negative outcomes to these collaborations. Other additional types of collaborations mentioned as potentially helpful for her children would have been more teacher visit time to teach difficult subjects, such as Spanish. Overall, she reported the interactions with the public school as positive and helpful.

The advice she would give to public schools was to be flexible with homeschooling families, because each family's needs and interests are different. She suggests the public school should be open to whatever a homeschooling family's program is, as long as they are diligent in teaching their children. "I think if a homeschooling family is diligent in their efforts... I think a public school is usually open to whatever their program is. But, if the situation is different, if the homeschooling situation is pretty lax and the children are not learning, that is when I think the public school gets a little defensive. To me that's a fair game, you know. I always felt like if I chose to

homeschool, that had to be my priority, otherwise I was actually cheating my children.”
(Ann, personal communication, October 7, 2006).

Comparing the activities A participated in and her rationale for homeschooling, a values-based approach was of primary importance. She mentioned the desire to teach her children values and be able to shape their character. The interactions she chose to participate in were limited to teacher visits and standardized testing, both of which occurred in the home. The children did not attend the public school until they were older. By then, she thought they were old enough to not be changed by the attitudes of peers around them. Because A limited the interactions with the public school to those in which there would not be negative peer socialization, a connection can be made between her rationale for homeschooling her children and the types of interactions she sought from her public school.

Mary Smith's family.

Mary Smith (MS) and her husband homeschooled all of their children through elementary school and some of their children attended public school at the time of the interview. Their high school daughter was continuing to be schooled at home and their boys in middle school were attending the public school. Thus, they were involved with their public school on a limited basis. The public school administered the standardized tests to their daughter and in the past the family was involved for a few years in a homeschool assistance program the district provided. MS was one of the replication group families. MS's responses to the interview questions were analyzed using approach outcome analysis (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994) of her reactions to the interview process and her responses are described below. The categories that emerged from her responses

were: 1) rationales for homeschooling, 2) Knowles (1989) phases of relations between homeschoolers and public schools, 3) types of collaborations with their public school, 4) impact of these collaborations on their family, 5) additional collaborations they wanted from their public school, and, 6) the relation between their rationale for homeschooling and the interactions the family had with their public school and will be discussed in this order.

MS responded to the statements from the two baseline interviews. She stated the main reason they chose to homeschool was to teach their children the values they held important and wanted to avoid negative peer socialization. She also believed the best time to teach her children was in their younger years. "...I guess, I just felt like while they're young, I liked to have an influence on them. I know as they get older, they'll have a lot of influences they'll have to get used to. But I felt like those were the formative years" (Mary Smith, personal communication, November 6, 2006). When she was given the statement about choosing to homeschool to tailor the instruction to her individual children's needs, she stated that this was not the primary reason they chose to homeschool. In fact, MS's rationale of teaching values was further emphasized when Mary reiterated, "But, I personally, as a mother, do not feel that academics are as important as learning the moral values. And you can pick up academics anytime. Maybe, it would take longer. But, I think the moral values taught in the home during those younger years are extremely important and will play a big role in that child's life. In the working world even" (Mary Smith, personal communication, November 6, 2006).

When discussing the phases of interactions between public schools and homeschoolers (Knowles 1989), MS agreed that phase three most closely explained their

family's experiences. They had never been unhappy with the involvement of their public schools and the assistance they received. They were able to choose the activities they wanted to participate in at the public school and received helpful support from the public school teachers.

The interactions her family participated in with the public school changed depending upon what was available from their district. They participated in the homeschool assistance program when their district provided one. The teacher came every two weeks and MS considered it beneficial, however the district stopped providing this option after a few years. MS also mentioned her children participated in standardized testing and the school district provided her helpful support for how to teach her learning disabled child. She was glad to know the public school was willing to offer help and she could turn to them if she needed assistance. "And I know one time I was really struggling with my son with a learning disability and they were very kind to call a meeting together of several teachers and professionals in our area and they helped me brainstorm different ways to help our son. And that to me was very kind of them and I felt a lot of confidence in both homeschooling and having them help" (Mary Smith, personal communication, November 6, 2006). MS reported that her family did not participate in academic or extracurricular activities because they had social activities with their church group. For negative consequences from the interactions with their public school, MS reported they did not have any negative encounters. She said they did not participate in activities at the public school in order to avoid spending time in the car driving the children back and forth.

For additional collaborations with their public school, she thought it would be beneficial to have the homeschool assistance program continued and more teacher visit time to provide classes such as physical education, keyboarding, or computer skills. She appreciated the interactions they had with their public school and said they were positive. She liked the public school engagement model of primarily offering help rather than coming to critique their schooling. She agreed that public schools should be flexible with homeschooling families and families should be diligent to provide a quality education for their children. MS made the following statement about families not homeschooling diligently: “Well, I don’t think that is really fair. If you are going to homeschool, then you need to keep up with the average level. If you can’t do that, then maybe you need to think of another alternative. If that is your commitment, than you better meet your commitment” (Mary Smith, personal communication, November 6, 2006).

MS’s primary rationale for homeschooling was to shape the values of their children and be the main influence in the early schooling years of their children’s lives. The interactions they had with their public school during the early years of their children’s schooling involved standardized testing, teacher visits, and suggestions for teaching her child with a learning disability. As some of her children went to middle school, they started to attend the public school. The rationale of teaching values was also reflected in the responses she gave about interactions with their public school. Their children did not participate in any social or academic activities at the public school, but instead participated in social activities through their church group. Once she considered them beyond the formative years for teaching values, she sent the boys to the public school to reinforce the value of obedience to authority. Because the focus of the

interactions they took part in with their public school were limited in order to be able to teach values in the home in the children's formative years, there is a correlation between the rationales she and her husband held for homeschooling and the interactions they were involved in with their public school.

Marie's family.

Marie (M) and her husband homeschooled their six children for several years. Their four older children were in public school for several years before they started homeschooling and these children had graduated from high school. They were currently homeschooling the two youngest children who were in middle and high school at the time of the interview. M's family had some interactions with their local public school, but had then enrolled in a nearby school district that provided more support through a homeschool assistance program. M was one of the replication group families. M's responses to the interview questions were analyzed using approach outcome analysis (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994) of her reactions to the interview process and her responses are described below. The categories that emerged from her responses were: 1) rationales for homeschooling, 2) Knowles (1989) phases of relations between homeschoolers and public schools, 3) types of collaborations with their public school, 4) impact of these collaborations on their family, 5) additional collaborations they wanted from their public school, and, 6) the relation between their rationale for homeschooling and the interactions the family had with their public school and will be discussed in this order.

M responded to the statements created from the baseline group's interview answers. M explained that she and her husband chose to homeschool to avoid some of the curriculum being used by the public school that did not agree with their religious beliefs.

She added being able to individually plan their children's education was a side benefit of homeschooling for their family. She agreed with the statement that they chose to homeschool in order to teach their children the values they held important and to avoid negative peer socialization.

When reviewing Knowles (1989) stages of interactions between homeschoolers and public schools, M agreed that the third phase of cooperation best suited their family's experiences. They received assistance from a public school, yet they were able to choose what activities and resources to be involved in. She felt Knowles' third phase of cooperation did not fully define the assistance her public school provided in the homeschool assistance program, and thought that should have been more clearly defined in another phase. She thought they had experienced some tensions more similar to phase two of Knowles' phases between themselves and their local public school district. "We did have a little issue with phase two. With our oldest child, not that it was a legality, well I guess it was somewhat of a legality problem, with the diploma. It was resolved, but we did not feel it was a friendly situation" (Marie, personal communication, November 6, 2006).

M's family was involved in a homeschool assistance program in a nearby public school district, because their local public school district did not provide as many collaborations with homeschoolers as they wanted. Their two youngest children were involved in field trips with the homeschool assistance program, enrichment courses at the public school under the homeschool assistance program, a homeschool honor society, and teacher visits. Their older children were involved in extracurricular music activities at their local school district and open enrolled in classes at the public school. Their children

participated in standardized testing provided by the public schools, sought counselors' advice for applying to colleges, and participated in the post secondary enrollment option through the public schools.

The benefits M described for her children as a result of their collaborations with their public schools were the ability to gain more opportunities and to take classes for college credit. She thought the interactions with other children were at times beneficial and other times were a disappointment. Although she thought the classes provided some opportunities for lab courses that were difficult to provide at home, she also thought they had learned they could provide some of the lab experience at home if they chose. "We found out that we could provide enough of the lab experience here at home, if we chose to. It was mainly we were using the public school system, once we got into those courses, the higher courses, we were using them for college courses, which we could not teach here at home and get college credit for the children" (Marie, personal communication, November 6, 2006). The negative consequences she believed resulted from the collaborations with public schools was the time spent traveling in the car. Although this was a challenge for her family, she considered it worth the effort and her family did look at ways to overcome this difficulty by completing some of their schoolwork in the car. Overall, she considered their interactions with their local public school to be not entirely positive, because they had faced some animosity with their local public school administrators. However, when they open enrolled to a nearby public school district to participate in their homeschool assistance program, M believed it worked out well for her family.

As far as additional collaborations with their public schools, she would liked to have had more freedom choosing the college classes her children could take through the post secondary enrollment option. If the college courses were being offered at the high school, they were not able to take the same class at the college even if they desired to do so. She did not believe it was necessary for homeschool assistance programs to provide specialized classes just for homeschoolers. She thought it was not fair to expect the public school system to provide the same class to homeschool students that was already provided to the students enrolled in the public school. She stated that homeschooling families needed to be careful to not become too demanding of their public schools. “We made a choice that we wanted to educate our children differently, and I don’t think we can expect to receive exactly the same benefits and opportunities that is available to every public school child because they are in the public school system all day long” (Marie, personal communication, November 6, 2006).

In giving advice to public schools that are creating or refining their existing homeschool assistance programs, she thought that although physical space was important for a homeschool assistance program, homeschool parents needed to be flexible and patient for the public school district to work on addressing this issue. She agreed that the model of a homeschool supervising teacher coming to support the curriculum being taught to homeschool students was better than a homeschool supervising teacher coming to critique the education being provided to the students at home. M did not report a need for the homeschool assistance program teachers to interpret her children’s standardized testing scores. M also agreed with the statement that public schools should be flexible when working with homeschooling families, because each family has different needs. M

also believes that if a homeschooling family is diligent in teaching their children, then the public schools should be understanding. However, if the homeschooling family is not diligent, then the public schools should assist them as needed.

Looking at both M's rationales for homeschooling and the activities they chose to be involved in with their public school, some connection can be made between her rationale and the family's interactions with their public school. M and her husband chose to homeschool for primarily religious and moral reasons. They considered important the opportunity to individualize the education they provided their children to fit each child's interests and abilities. The activities in which they were involved with their public school were primarily educational in nature. The children also were involved in some social interactions with other homeschooling children or students at the public school, however M mentioned her misgivings about some of these interactions. From some of M's comments, one could also conclude that she and her husband made decisions carefully about what types of events their children were involved in with the public school by the benefits they would receive from these. For example, she mentioned they chose to be involved in a homeschool assistance program at a nearby public school system when they believed it would benefit their children to engage in social activities with other children. However, they were currently not involved in as many enrichment classes at the public school, as their interactions with other homeschooling children outside of the homeschool assistance program had increased. She also mentioned there were times they saw the interaction with homeschool children in the public school setting as beneficial and at other times disappointing. This correlates to the rationale for choosing to homeschool their children for religious and moral reasons.

Betty's family.

Betty (B) and her husband homeschooled some of their six children who were in the grade range of preschool to high school. Some of their children attended public school depending on the needs or desires of the individual children. Two children were preschool age, one child was elementary age and attended public school full-time, one child was middle school age and was homeschooled full-time, and two children were high school age. One of the high school children attended public school full-time. The other high school child attended public school part-time and was homeschooled part-time. B's family was involved with their public school's homeschool assistance program in various activities. B was one of the replication group families. B's responses to the interview questions were analyzed using approach outcome analysis (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994) of her reactions to the interview process and her responses are described below. The categories that emerged from her responses were: 1) rationales for homeschooling, 2) Knowles (1989) phases of relations between homeschoolers and public schools, 3) types of collaborations with their public school, 4) impact of these collaborations on their family, 5) additional collaborations they wanted from their public school, and, 6) the relation between their rationale for homeschooling and the interactions the family had with their public school and will be discussed in this order.

B related the story of how she and her husband reached the decision to homeschool their children. They began to homeschool when their oldest son was going to be transitioning into the middle school and his fifth grade teacher told them she was concerned about how shy he was when speaking in front of his class. They thought middle school would be overwhelming for him and decided homeschooling would be the

best alternative option. Their son remained in homeschooling until he reached high school and he currently attended public school. The rationale B and her husband made was based more on individual learning needs of their children. However, B also agreed with the sentiment regarding choosing to homeschool in order to teach their children the values they held important and to avoid negative peer socialization.

When we discussed the phases of interactions between homeschoolers and public schools (Knowles, 1989), B agreed that the third phase of cooperation best fit their experiences. She said they did not have confrontations with public schools and they had access to public school services and resources through the homeschool assistance program. B mentioned they have had disagreements with their public school regarding how the public school was instructing one of their sons. However, because they had the option of homeschooling, they were able to provide this to him and the problem was resolved. She said, "...we weren't upset with them, it wasn't a shouting match or anything" (Betty, personal communication, November 21, 2006). They simply disagreed and found homeschooling to be a better solution for their son.

B mentioned several different types of interactions her family had with the public school district. Her family was involved in the homeschool assistance program provided by the district. They attended classes provided by the homeschool assistance program, such as physical education, art, and music. They participated in field trips and utilized the public school library. The homeschool assistance program teachers provided visits to their home to work with their children in academic and enrichment activities. Her children were also involved in extracurricular activities such as music and sports. They also utilized school counselors' advice for their children when applying for colleges.

Their family was involved in learning fairs during which their children have the opportunity to speak in front of a supportive audience.

B believed these public school collaborations gave her family opportunities for courses or activities they would not have been a part of otherwise. These experiences also broadened her children's socialization by providing them opportunities to socialize with their peers. By being able to take classes at the public school in addition to homeschooling, her children were able to learn appropriate classroom skills they needed for college later. She also identified the benefit of her children participating in classes she had difficulty providing at home. She shared how their resource teacher from the homeschool assistance program provided some dissecting experiences for her daughter who enjoyed biology and dissecting in particular. The negative consequence, B mentioned, as a result of the interactions with the public school related to travel time in the car to various activities. She said there was not really anything different that could be done to avoid the time spent in the car. "They [public school] offer the classes, which is awesome, and it's wonderful, and the kids love them, and they learn a lot. But yeah, then you're in the car driving to them. Finding that balance" (Betty, personal communication, November 21, 2006). B also mentioned housework didn't always get done as a result of the time spent driving her children to the various activities. Overall, B described her family's interactions with their public school as being both positive and negative. "We have had positive experiences, but we have also had our disagreements...we've had good and bad, the positive and the negative" (Betty, personal communication, November 21, 2006). B said that although they had their disagreements about the type of instruction for one of her sons, they agreed to disagree politely.

For additional collaborations with their public school, B did not agree with the statements of needing more classes to pick and choose from or having more teacher visit time to teach difficult subjects. B said she believed their children could already pick and choose classes to take at the public school through the open enroll option. Her daughter had taken some classes at the high school, biology for example. She could take as many as four classes at the public school and still be enrolled in the homeschool assistance program. B did not see a need for specialized classes only for homeschoolers at the high school, because her children would just open enroll into the classes being held for children attending the public high school nor did B see having more visit time from a homeschool assistance program teacher as beneficial because they already had difficulty finding the time in their busy schedule for the resource teacher to visit with their children. B did not suggest any additional collaborations she thought would be helpful beyond what they were already currently involved in with their public school.

In giving advice to public schools that are creating or refining their existing homeschool assistance programs, B believed their school district needed to hire more resource teachers to cover the workload. "...I think our resource teachers are extremely busy and I can see how it would be easy to get burnt out. They have twenty families per resource teacher, they are in charge of visiting each family each month, and they are in charge of field trips, and they teach classes, and it's got to be incredible. And it's not just during the day, they come in the evenings sometimes and do learning fairs and so forth, honor society meetings. I'd like to see them hire more teachers, so it is not such a heavy burden on the ones we have" (Betty, personal communication, November 21, 2006). She did not see it necessary for the homeschool assistance teacher to explain her children's

standardized test scores, because she believed she understood them herself. B agreed that public schools should be flexible with each homeschooling family, but she also acknowledged how difficult it is for a teacher to please all of the different families. She appreciated when the teachers came with a helpful attitude and wanted to support what she was teaching her children, instead of coming to critique their education at home. She also thought it was the job of the public schools to offer help to homeschooling families, but they should not interfere in what the homeschooling families were doing. B commented later in the interview that she thought homeschooling parents are able to provide a better learning environment for their kids than a public school system, because parents love their children and have more motivation or incentive to provide the best learning environment for their children. B commented there would always be a few parents who did not homeschool their children to provide a better learning environment than the public schools, but these parents were rare. B indicated the most important step a public school can do for homeschoolers is to provide a support system for the homeschooling families in which the parents visit with each other and share ideas. She also suggested field trips were an important service provided by the public schools.

When comparing the rationales B and her family had for homeschooling with the activities they were involved in with their public schools, some similarities can be noted. B and her husband chose to homeschool some of their children for academic reasons as well as moral reasons. Throughout the interview, B related how the individual learning needs of each of their children was a factor in whether they chose to homeschool them or enroll them in the public school. The types of activities their homeschooled children participated in with the public school included the following academic

collaborations: classes at the public school, enrichment activities, honor societies, and field trips. Several of the collaborations could be seen as both an academic and social opportunity. For example, field trips, honor societies, classes at the public schools, learning fairs, and extracurricular activities could serve both purposes. B did not discuss limiting the involvement of their children in activities at school because of concerns of negative interactions with peers or the curriculum being taught. She talked about these interactions as ways to broaden her children's experiences and to provide enrichment activities for them. There is a correlation between providing the best learning environment for each child and seeking out interactions with their public schools that benefited each child in B's responses to the interview questions and statements.

CHAPTER V: Conclusions

This section will discuss conclusions drawn from the data gathered in response to the primary research question guiding this study. This research question sought to determine whether there is a relationship between parents' rationales for homeschooling and the types of interactions they seek to have with their public school. The secondary questions include:

1. What are the typical or most common forms of collaborations that currently exist between homeschoolers and public school districts?
2. What are the benefits of these collaborations for homeschoolers?
3. What are the consequences of these collaborations for homeschoolers?
4. What other types of collaborations would homeschoolers like to have with their public schools?

This section will also address the limitations of this study and future implications for practice.

Is there a relationship between parents' rationales for homeschooling and the types of interactions they seek with their public school?

This study seeks to determine whether there is a connection between the rationale families hold for homeschooling and the types of interactions they seek with their public schools. Evidence from this study suggests that families who have an academic rationale for homeschooling are more likely to have higher levels of involvement with their public schools. They tend to choose to be involved in activities that enhance their children's education in ways they see more difficult to provide at home. Families with rationales for homeschooling that are centered on values or strengthening the family unit tend to have lower levels of involvement with their public schools. They tend to limit these

interactions to ones that occur at home or are required by law (e.g. standardized testing).

These findings substantiate the belief that there is indeed a complex and somewhat robust link between rationale for homeschooling and the types of interactions sought with public schools by homeschoolers.

What are the typical or most common forms of collaborations that currently exist between homeschoolers and public school districts?

The results in this study replicate the findings found from previous research on public schools collaborating with homeschoolers (Lines, 2000). Looking at all of the collaborations between public schools and homeschoolers, there are a wide variety of collaborations being provided for homeschoolers. The collaborations include classes at public schools, activities with other homeschoolers, extracurricular activities, teacher visits, and standardized tests. Public schools are supporting homeschoolers by providing opportunities for families to enrich their children's education. Homeschooling families are able to choose the number and type of activities to be involved in with their public schools. Because this study was done in Iowa, one might reasonably conclude the funding provided by the state to public schools for homeschoolers enrolled in an assistance program has encouraged the districts to provide services to their homeschooling families (Dahm, 1996; Terpestra, 1994).

The types of collaborations families participated in with their public schools presented in the findings from this study support the research presented on overcoming barriers to successful collaborations. One of the barriers presented in the research is the reluctance of school administrators to collaborate with homeschoolers (Boothe et al., 1997; Fairchild, 2002; Peavie, 1999; Romanowski, 2001). However, in this study the data demonstrates that a majority of the families in this study reported good relations with

their public schools, thus this barrier does not seem to be as large of an issue for homeschoolers in Iowa. Another barrier presented by past research has been the homeschoolers perceiving collaborations with public schools as a threat to their autonomy (Adams, 1992; Yeager, 1999). However, the families who participated in this study were interested in collaborations with their public school if they saw a benefit for their children's education and they did not believe the collaborations would detract from the motives in which they had for homeschooling. This finding supports the work of Golding (1995) and Peavie (1999). Homeschooling families want access to public school services and facilities, but they do not want increased monitoring.

Overall, the collaborations presented in this study demonstrate a good rapport between public schools and homeschoolers. Public schools are providing collaborations for families, yet many of these collaborations are voluntary for homeschooling families. The collaborations homeschoolers participate in most often with their public schools are those in which they perceive an academic benefit for their children.

What are the benefits of these collaborations for homeschoolers?

The benefits mentioned by the families in this study varied, depending on the interactions they chose to participate in with their public schools. However, the benefits most often mentioned by these homeschooling families were centered on academics. This study points to the collaborations between homeschooling families and public schools benefiting the children involved by enriching and extending their knowledge and experiences.

What are the consequences of these collaborations for homeschoolers?

The only consequence for homeschoolers as a result of collaborations with their public schools that can be drawn from this study's findings is the travel time families may spend transporting their children to various classes and activities at the public school. This study did not find homeschooling families to perceive a loss of their autonomy as earlier research by Adams (1992) and Yeager (1999) suggests can happen as a result of collaborations with public schools. Perhaps because homeschooling families had the choice as to what activities to be involved in with their public school, the negative consequences they perceived as a result of these collaborations were minimal.

What other types of collaborations would homeschoolers like to have with their public schools?

No additional collaborations received consensus from all the homeschooling families in this study. None of the families expressed a desire for increased monitoring from their public schools, which is consistent with research by Golding (1995) and Peavie (1999). The data of this study point to general consensus among the participants on advice to give public schools that works with homeschoolers. Flexibility and support were the two main components homeschoolers desired in the interactions they participated in with their public schools.

Limitations

Of main concern to most readers of case study research is the ability to generalize the results to other similar populations (Yin, 2003). The research methods in this study attempted to address this issue by using more than one case in order to see if the results from the baseline group could be replicated. The conclusions reached from this study were drawn by analyzing the results across all of the cases and thus present stronger

evidence than one case could by itself. Although the results from this study could not be generalized to other homeschooling families in other locations, they do present a framework for viewing how collaborations are affecting homeschooling families and how the rationales these families have for homeschooling correspond to the collaborations they seek out with their public schools. The research done in this study adds to other studies done by researchers in the area of collaborations between homeschoolers and public schools (Adams, 1992; Golding, 1995; Lines, 2000; Peavie, 1999; Yeager, 1999). What this research adds, through a more qualitative examination of homeschoolers, is a richer conceptualization of information not available through surveys (Adams, 1992; Peavie, 1999; Yeager, 1999). Future research could be conducted that uses similar research techniques in other locales to determine if these findings are replicable in other locations.

Implications for Future Practice

This research provides public schools programmatic information to assist them when creating or continuing to refine their homeschool assistance programs. Public schools should seek to become acquainted with the homeschooling families they serve in order to provide the types of collaborations their homeschooling families will want. Because this research study found a correlation between the rationales homeschoolers had for homeschooling and the collaborations they had with their public schools, it would be of particular benefit for public schools to discover the rationales of their homeschooling families. Another implication of this research for public schools is that homeschoolers appreciate the model of teachers coming to support the instruction the children are receiving at home, not coming to critique the homeschool instruction.

Homeschooling families liked it when their homeschool assistance program staff asked what they could do to enrich the learning the children were doing and what the family would like them to do on their visits in their homes. They believed the teachers could ask to see more about the instruction if they wanted after they had interacted with their children in the home. However, the homeschooling families all believed it was important for public schools to be flexible with homeschoolers because each homeschooling family can be quite different.

One of the key recommendations public schools can gain from the findings of this research is to respect homeschooling families' beliefs and ideas (Dahm, 1996; Knowles, 1989; Romanowski, 2001, 2006). Summarizing the views of Dahm, Knowles, and Romanowski, they suggest that public schools need to get beyond the "us vs. them" competitive view in order to build working relationships with homeschoolers. Public schools can show homeschoolers respect by looking beyond stereotypes and be willing to work with others who think differently about education for the common good of the children. Educators and community members need to respect parents' choices and work with homeschooling families for the educational benefit of the children. Being knowledgeable about motives and belief systems of homeschoolers seems to be the key to creating beneficial partnerships.

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Appendix A

Baseline Interview Schedule Partnering with Homeschoolers: Collaborations Between Homeschoolers and Public Schools Research for Masters in Literacy Instruction and Curriculum University of Northern Iowa, Fall 2006

Introduction

- Researcher introduction
Introduce self to participant: include personal experience with homeschooling and being a graduate student at UNI.
- Purpose of the study
Share the purpose of the study with the participant:
The purpose of this study is to learn more about the relationships homeschoolers have with their public schools, the benefits they experience from these collaborations, the consequences that might come as a result of these collaborations, and other types of assistance homeschooling families may desire from their public schools. Homeschoolers need to have a voice in the creation of collaborations with public schools in order to feel respected. The findings of this research could be shared with public schools to help them as they create or continue to refine the support they offer their homeschooling families.
- Why the participant was chosen to be interviewed and the benefit they will receive from being part of this study
You were asked to participate in this project because you are homeschooling your children. There are four other homeschooling families who will also be interviewed. As a thank you for participating in this study, I am willing to pay the registration fee for you to attend a homeschooling conference in the state of Iowa.
- Confidentiality, tape recording, and note-taking
Ask the participant if you can tape record the interview. Let them know that it is important for you to capture their words and ideas, and using the tape recorder will allow you to do this. Also let them know that you may take some notes while you are conducting the interview, so that you can keep track of the interview as it progresses.
Inform the participant that nothing they say will ever be identified to them personally, and that they will not be identified by name as a study participant. Have them choose a code name for names and places. Tell them the interview notes and tapes will be destroyed after the research paper is completed. Let them know that the interviews from the five participants will be analyzed for common themes, opinions, and experiences to draw some conclusions on collaborations between homeschoolers and public schools.

- Questions
Ask participant if there are any questions they would like to ask before you get started.

TURN ON THE TAPE RECORDER AND TEST IT. On the tape ask the participant if it is ok to tape record the interview. Record their verbally state permission. Then rewind and check to be sure that the recording is satisfactory. If necessary, ask participant to speak louder or adjust the volume.

IF THE PARTICIPANT REFUSES PERMISSION TO TAPE RECORD, take copious notes while the interview proceeds, and immediately after the interview reconstruct as much of it as you can – their actual words and also your observations.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

A. General Questions on Their Homeschooling Experience

- A1. To begin our interview, I'd like to start off with hearing about how you chose to homeschool your children.
- A2. Describe how homeschooling has affected your family and your children.
- A3. What do you think is most beneficial about homeschooling?
- A4. What do you think is least beneficial about homeschooling?

B. General Questions about Interactions with Public Schools

B1. Share with participants the phases that Knowles (1989) describes for relationships between homeschoolers and public schools:

1. Contentions about public schools: Parents were dissatisfied with public schools. Many parents believed that their children would be harmed in some way by attending public schools and felt they could provide a better learning experience for their children.
2. Confrontation with public schools: Public schools questioned the legality of homeschooling and often took parents to court.
3. Public schools cooperating with homeschools: This phase has been encouraged in part by state legislatures mandating some changes that have encouraged cooperation. Homeschoolers have been allowed access to more public school services and resources.
4. Consolidation: This phase has developed from homeschoolers networking and lobbying at the state level.
5. Consolidation: Homeschoolers were joining with groups that fit their rationales and motivations for homeschooling.

Ask the participant to explain which phase most closely fits their perception of homeschooling today for their family and why they chose this phase.

[Seek specific examples. Tell me about some experiences that would illustrate this phase in your family's homeschooling experience.]

B2. If you were to categorize the phases of homeschooling, what additional or different phases would you use? Please explain each phase.

B3. Do you feel that throughout your family's homeschooling experience, you have experienced different phases?

[If participant says yes, ask: Could you please explain this more and give examples?]

B4. What future changes or directions do you see for homeschooling in general?

C. Their Perceptions and Experiences of Collaborations with Public Schools

C1. What types of collaborations with your public school have you been involved in?

C2. How do you feel these collaborations have benefited your children and/family?

C3. Do you feel there were consequences for your children and/family as a result of these collaborations?

[If participant says yes, ask: Could you tell what types of consequences and how they have affected your children and your family?]

C4. If you could have other types of collaborations or support from your public school, what would they be?

[Why would you want these other types of collaborations or support from your public school?]

C5. Overall, how would you describe your interactions with your public school?

C6. If you could give advice to public schools that are creating or continuing to refine their homeschool assistance programs, what would you say?

D. Closing questions

D1. Is there anything else you would like to share about your homeschooling experience or your interactions with your public school that we have not talked about so far?

Closing

- Thank the participant for sharing about their homeschooling experience.
- Assure them again that any information they have shared will never be connected to them personally and their identity will be protected by the use of code names.
- Remind them of the thank you gift for participating in the study of a paid registration fee for a homeschooling conference in the state of Iowa. Ask them if there is a conference they usually attend or would be interested in attending. If they do not have a conference in mind, share with them the NICHE conference in June 2007. Tell them that when they register for a conference, they should contact you to receive the money for the registration fee.

Appendix B

Replication Interview Schedule Partnering with Homeschoolers: Collaborations Between Homeschoolers and Public Schools Research for Masters in Literacy Instruction and Curriculum University of Northern Iowa, Fall 2006

Introduction

- Researcher introduction
Introduce self to participant: include personal experience with homeschooling and being a graduate student at UNI.
- Purpose of the study
Share the purpose of the study with the participant:
The purpose of this study is to learn more about the relationships homeschoolers have with their public schools, the benefits they experience from these collaborations, the consequences that might come as a result of these collaborations, and other types of assistance homeschooling families may desire from their public schools. Homeschoolers need to have a voice in the creation of collaborations with public schools in order to feel respected. The findings of this research could be shared with public schools to help them as they create or continue to refine the support they offer their homeschooling families.
- Why the participant was chose to be interviewed and the benefit they will receive from being part of this study
You were asked to participate in this project because you are homeschooling your children. There are four other homeschooling families who will also be interviewed. As a thank you for participating in this study, I am willing to pay the registration fee for you to attend a homeschooling conference in the state of Iowa.
- Confidentiality, tape recording, and note-taking
Ask the participant if you can tape record the interview. Let them know that it is important for you to capture their words and ideas, and using the tape recorder will allow you to do this. Also let them know that you may take some notes while you are conducting the interview, so that you can keep track of the interview as it progresses.
Inform the participant that nothing they say will ever be identified to them personally, and that they will not be identified by name as a study participant. Have them choose a code name for names and places. Tell them the interview notes and tapes will be destroyed after the research paper is completed. Let them know that the interviews from the five participants will be analyzed for common themes, opinions, and experiences to draw some conclusions on collaborations between homeschoolers and public schools.
- Questions

Ask participant if there are any questions they would like to ask before you get started.

TURN ON THE TAPE RECORDER AND TEST IT. On the tape ask the participant if it is ok to tape record the interview. Record their verbally state permission. Then rewind and check to be sure that the recording is satisfactory. If necessary, ask participant to speak louder or adjust the volume.

IF THE PARTICIPANT REFUSES PERMISSION TO TAPE RECORD, take copious notes while the interview proceeds, and immediately after the interview reconstruct as much of it as you can – their actual words and also your observations.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Tell Participant the purpose of their interview is to crosscheck the findings from previous interviews. For each question they should first think of how they would respond to the question. Then, when they are ready, answer statements will be given and they will be asked to share their reaction to the answer statements.

A. General Questions on Their Homeschooling Experience

A1. To begin our interview, I'd like to start off with hearing about how you chose to homeschool your children.

We chose to homeschool because we wanted to tailor the instruction to our children's pace, interests, and abilities.

We wanted to teach our children the values we have and wanted to avoid negative peer socialization.

Our friends suggested we homeschool.

We felt a conviction from God to homeschool our children.

A2. Describe how homeschooling has affected your family and your children.

Homeschooling has made our family's schedule very busy. Especially the mother, housework doesn't always get done.

Our family sees life as a learning process and the learning we do is very natural.

Individual children are affected by strengths and weaknesses of our family. They may not always get the chance to develop certain skills other than those we have.

I feel like we have a better relationship with our children.

A3. What do you think is most beneficial about homeschooling?

We can tailor our teaching to the pace, interests, and abilities of our children.

We can schedule schooling when it is convenient for our family. We do some schooling year round and learning is more continuous for our children than if they were in public school.

We know what our children are learning.

We can teach our children our values.

A4. What do you think is least beneficial about homeschooling?

Our weaknesses are transferred to our children. It is difficult to teach subjects that we are not good at ourselves.

Mother's schedule is very busy, because she plays the roles of mother and teacher. The children might resent this.

At times it is hard to motivate my own children.

B. General Questions about Interactions with Public Schools

B1. Share with participants the phases that Knowles (1989) describes for relationships between homeschoolers and public schools:

- 6.** Contentions about public schools: Parents were dissatisfied with public schools. Many parents believed that their children would be harmed in some way by attending public schools and felt they could provide a better learning experience for their children.
- 7.** Confrontation with public schools: Public schools questioned the legality of homeschooling and often took parents to court.
- 8.** Public schools cooperating with homeschools: This phase has been encouraged in part by state legislatures mandating some changes that have encouraged cooperation. Homeschoolers have been allowed access to more public school services and resources.
- 9.** Consolidation: This phase has developed from homeschoolers networking and lobbying at the state level.
- 10.** Compartmentalization: Homeschoolers were joining with groups that fit their rationales and motivations for homeschooling.

Ask the participant to explain which phase most closely fits their perception of homeschooling today for their family and why they chose this phase.

The third phase (cooperation) fits most closely with our experiences. We receive assistance from our public school, yet we can choose what resources to be involved in. We can see usefulness of receiving help from our public school, yet we appreciate being able to make our choices.

[Seek specific examples. Tell me about some experiences that would illustrate this phase in your family's homeschooling experience.]

B2. If you were to categorize the phases of homeschooling, what additional or different phases would you use? Please explain each phase.

We think the Knowles' phases cover it well. We don't see other phases, but there may be some overlap in the phases.

B3. Do you feel that throughout your family's homeschooling experience, you have experienced different phases?

We have only experienced phase three, but we have seen other phases in other states.

[If participant says yes, ask: Could you please explain this more and give examples?]

B4. What future changes or directions do you see for homeschooling in general?

There will be constant tension between varying interests and groups – 1. coop with them, sweep them back into public schools; 2. do not cooperate with them, they should do it on their own; 3. make homeschoolers favored people of the land.

We will need to constantly watch laws and proposed laws relating to homeschooling.

People are fairly satisfied with how it is going, but this system has a risk of being derailed.

Homeschoolers in larger cities may lean towards more compartmentalization.

C. Their Perceptions and Experiences of Collaborations with Public Schools

C1. What types of collaborations with your public school have you been involved in?

We participate or utilize the following opportunities:

Extracurricular activities – music, sports

Homeschool assistance program – classes, teacher visits

Academic competitions

Field trips

Open enroll in classes at public school

Teacher visits from hsap – academic activities and enrichment activities

Standardized testing

Counselors give advice for applying for colleges

Post secondary enrollment option

C2. How do you feel these collaborations have benefited your children and/family?

Our collaborations with public schools have given us opportunities for courses or activities we would not have been aware of otherwise.

These experiences have broadened our children's experiences. They interact with others besides their own family.

By having the opportunity to take some classes at the public school, our children learn the classroom skills they will need for college.

The public schools provide classes we would have difficulty doing at home – ex. lab courses or foreign lang. or p.e.

C3. Do you feel there were consequences for your children and/family as a result of these collaborations?

The consequence we have noticed is being in the car a lot driving children to activities. Because of this, the housework doesn't always get done.

C4. If you could have other types of collaborations or support from your public school, what would they be?

I would like for our children to be able to pick and choose more classes, like the college model.

I would like to have more teacher visit time to teach difficult subjects – ex foreign lang.

C5. Overall, how would you describe your interactions with your public school?

Our collaborations with our public school have been very positive. We have had excellent collaboration and the staff has been very helpful.

C6. If you could give advice to public schools that are creating or continuing to refine their homeschool assistance programs, what would you say?

The home school assistance program needs to have sufficient physical space designated for home school assistance program.

It would be nice if the hsap would provide specialized classes just for homeschoolers, but at same caliber as the classes in local area for public school students.

When the teacher makes visits, we like the model of asking, "how can we help you", not having them come to critique. It is nice when they bring activities that can supplement our curriculum, ex. art project, writing idea. Then, if they feel the need to, they can ask to look at our curriculum.

It is helpful when the teachers go over our children's standardized testing scores and help us interpret the results. We like it when they suggest areas to work on and give us ideas of what to do.

Public schools should be flexible with homeschooling families; each family is a little different.

If a homeschooling family is diligent, the public schools should be open. However, if it is otherwise and the homeschooling situation is lax, then the public schools should help as needed.

D. Closing questions

D1. Is there anything else you would like to share about your homeschooling experience or your interactions with your public school that we have not talked about so far?

Closing

- Thank the participant for sharing about **his or her** homeschooling experience.
- Assure them again that any information they have shared will never be connected to them personally and their identity will be protected by the use of code names.
- Remind them of the thank you gift for participating in the study of a paid registration fee for a homeschooling conference in the state of Iowa. Ask them if there is a conference they usually attend or would be interested in attending. If they do not have a conference in mind, share with them the NICHE conference in June 2007. Tell them that when they register for a conference, they should contact you to receive the money for the registration fee.

Appendix C

Baseline Interview Responses

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

A. General Questions on Their Homeschooling Experience

A1. To begin our interview, I'd like to start off with hearing about how you chose to homeschool your children.

Tailor learning to child's pace, interests, and ability
Advice from friends
Wanted to avoid negative peer socialization
Teach children values
Felt a conviction from God to homeschool

A2. Describe how homeschooling has affected your family and your children.

Made schedule very busy – of mother
Housework doesn't always get done
Family sees life as a learning process, natural learning
Individuals affected by strengths of family and weaknesses of parents – may not always get the chance to develop certain skills other than families'
Better relationship with children

A3. What do you think is most beneficial about homeschooling?

Tailor learning – pace, content, ability
Schedule when convenient for family – year round, learning more continuous
Know what children are learning
Can teach children their values

A4. What do you think is least beneficial about homeschooling?

Parents' weaknesses are transferred to children – hard to teach subjects to children that they are not good at themselves
Mother's schedule is busy – roles of mother and teacher, children might resent this
Hard to motivate own children

B. General Questions about Interactions with Public Schools

B1. Share with participants the phases that Knowles (1989) describes for relationships between homeschoolers and public schools:

- 11.** Contentions about public schools: Parents were dissatisfied with public schools. Many parents believed that their children would be harmed in some way by attending public schools and felt they could provide a better learning experience for their children.
- 12.** Confrontation with public schools: Public schools questioned the legality of homeschooling and often took parents to court.
- 13.** Public schools cooperating with homeschools: This phase has been encouraged in part by state legislatures mandating some changes that have encouraged cooperation. Homeschoolers have been allowed access to more public school services and resources.
- 14.** Consolidation: This phase has developed from homeschoolers networking and lobbying at the state level.
- 15.** Consolidation: Homeschoolers were joining with groups that fit their rationales and motivations for homeschooling.

Ask the participant to explain which phase most closely fits their perception of homeschooling today for their family and why they chose this phase.

3rd phase – cooperation, receive assistance from public school, yet can choose what resources to be involved in. Can see usefulness of help from public school, yet appreciate the choice.

[Seek specific examples. Tell me about some experiences that would illustrate this phase in your family's homeschooling experience.]

B2. If you were to categorize the phases of homeschooling, what additional or different phases would you use? Please explain each phase.

Covers it well – don't see other phases, some overlap in the phases

B3. Do you feel that throughout your family's homeschooling experience, you have experienced different phases?

Have only experienced phase three, have seen other phases in other states

[If participant says yes, ask: Could you please explain this more and give examples?]

B4. What future changes or directions do you see for homeschooling in general?

Will have constant tension between varying interests and groups – 1. coop them, sweep them back into public schools; 2. not cooperate with them, do it on their own; 3. make homeschoolers favored people of the land

Will need to constantly watch laws and proposed laws relating to homeschooling
People are fairly satisfied with how it is going, but has a risk of being derailed
Homeschoolers in larger cities may lean towards more compartmentalization

C. Their Perceptions and Experiences of Collaborations with Public Schools

C1. What types of collaborations with your public school have you been involved in?

Extracurricular activities – music, sports
Homeschool assistance program – classes, teacher visits
Academic competitions
Field trips
Open enroll in classes at public school
Teacher visits from hsap – academic activities and enrichment activities
Standardized testing
Counselors give advice for applying for colleges
Post secondary enrollment option
Teachers watch out for students in classes - helpful

C2. How do you feel these collaborations have benefited your children and/family?

Opportunities for courses or activities would not have been aware of
Broadens children's experiences, interact with others besides family
Learn classroom skills will need for college
Provide classes couldn't do at home – ex. lab courses or foreign lang. or p.e.

C3. Do you feel there were consequences for your children and/family as a result of these collaborations?

In the car a lot driving children to activities
Housework doesn't get done

[If participant says yes, ask: Could you tell what types of consequences and how they have affected your children and your family?]

C4. If you could have other types of collaborations or support from your public school, what would they be?

Pick and choose more classes – college model
More teacher visit time to teach difficult subjects – ex foreign lang.

[Why would you want these other types of collaborations or support from your public school?]

C5. Overall, how would you describe your interactions with your public school?

Positive – excellent collaboration, helpful

C6. If you could give advice to public schools that are creating or continuing to refine their homeschool assistance programs, what would you say?

Need physical space designated for home school assistance program

Provide specialized classes just for homeschoolers – but at same caliber as the classes in local area for public school students

Teacher visits – model of asking “how can we help you”, not coming to critique, bring activities that can supplement their curriculum, ex. art project, writing idea; if feel need to, can ask to look at curriculum

Standardized testing – help homeschoolers interpret results, suggest areas to work on and give ideas of what to do

Be flexible with families – each family is a little different

If homeschooling family is diligent, be open; otherwise if homeschooling situation is lax, help as needed