

Determinants of Proficiency for Homeschooled Students:
The College Admissions Process and Its Relationship to Homeschooling

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Abstract

This Capstone project explores the relationship between homeschooled students and the college admission process. Specifically, this essay is designed to answer the following question: Are homeschooled learners being adequately prepared to meet the challenges of the college admissions process now and into the foreseeable future? Peer-reviewed, scholarly articles and research data provide the basis for understanding homeschooling considerations and rationales from the perspective of homeschooled students and their families. In addition, this paper uses in-person and telephone interviews with undergraduate admissions personnel at five representative American universities of varying degrees of admissions selectivity to conclude that there exists a separate and distinct methodology to the college admissions process for homeschooled students. In particular, research indicates that there exists a substantial disconnect between achievements and aspirations of homeschooled students and their perception and treatment by college admission departments in United States institutions of higher learning. This paper examines the rationales behind the growth of homeschooling in America since the 1960s by delving into the following: 1-exploration of the research done regarding current homeschooled learner profiles, 2-examining homeschooling in the context of college “readiness” and the admissions process through the lens of achievement and success criteria, 3- examining the impact, acceptance and variants of homeschool curricula and 4- indicating the relationships of homeschooler secondary school graduation G.P.A. data and the role of standardized college entrance examination scores and other measures of achievement in the college admittance process. This homeschool learner and learning profile will be synthesized with the admission department interview data to yield a clear picture of where homeschooled students fit into established admissions policies and procedures at five representative institutions of varying degrees of undergraduate selectivity in

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the United States. Lastly, the implications for both homeschooled students and for future accommodations of homeschooled students in the admissions process at the collegiate level will indicate important points of discussion for continued development and investigation.

Keywords: homeschooled, assessment, college admissions, achievements, “college readiness”

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Ironwood Academy is a Christ-centered, non-denominational, college-preparatory middle and high school tutorial program for home-school students. We believe that parents are ultimately responsible for educating their children. We believe that parents have a God-given mandate, as well as the legal right, to ensure that their children receive excellent instruction in academic subjects.

-Ironwood Homeschool Academy, 2015 internet site mission statement

This essay addresses what constitutes success in academic achievement in terms of the college admissions process by students who choose homeschooling as an alternative to traditional educational pathways. Current research (Pell, 2013; Cogan, 2010; Ray, 2011; Aurini and Davies, 2005; Collum, 2005) indicates that the vast majority of families who choose homeschooling for their children do so with the intention of preparing them for college admission upon completion of a high school program. This paper examines the rationales behind the growth of homeschooling in America since the 1960s by delving into the following: 1- exploration of the research done regarding current homeschooled learner profiles, 2- examining homeschooling in the context of college “readiness” and the admissions process through the lens of achievement and success criteria, 3- examining the impact, acceptance and variants of homeschool curricula and 4- indicating the relationships of homeschooler secondary school graduation G.P.A. data and the role of standardized college entrance examination scores and other measures of achievement in the college admittance process. This homeschool learner and learning profile will be synthesized with the admission department interview data to yield a clear picture of where homeschooled students fit into established admissions policies and procedures at five representative institutions of varying degrees of undergraduate selectivity in the United States.

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Applied in an educational context, The United States Department of Education (D.O.E.) has deemed secondary school educational success as having prepared students to be “college and/or career ready” (Abrevaya, 2009). The release of the first official draft of the college-and-career readiness standards for English language arts and mathematics occurred in 2009. Arne Duncan, the United States’ ninth Secretary of Education, noted that college and career readiness is a defining issue for the country to face in the future when he stated: “there is no work more important than preparing our students to compete and succeed in a global economy...” (Abrevaya, 2009). Noted homeschooling researcher Dr. Brian Ray has, since the early 1990s, explored home school education extensively with a specific focus on home school achievement and the success criteria. Ray notes that for the majority of homeschooled students the ultimate goal of their secondary school education is, as Secretary Duncan has stated, to be “college ready” (Abrevaya, 2009) (Ray, 2004).

Yet, in terms of homeschooled students, success can mean something very different. To the parents of homeschooled students the premise of being “college ready” was already firmly established in their minds as the reason for undertaking the path of educating their children in a homeschooled environment. Ray (2010) (2004) has been a leader in the efforts to bring homeschooling into the mainstream conversation as a viable option for educating students of all ages. Ray’s work, following on the lead of Rudner (1999) and others, synthesized comprehensive homeschooled student demographic and achievement data and concluded that homeschool students, on the whole, performed quantitatively better than their traditionally schooled counterparts in post-secondary (i.e. college) educational measurements. Cogan (2010) and Jones and Gloeckner (2004) separately researched more than seven thousand homeschooled students at various colleges across the United States and determined that homeschooled students perform up

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to ten percent better than their traditionally schooled peers in first year college grade point averages (G.P.A.) and were fifty percent more likely to graduate from college than across-the-board statistics reveal for traditionally schooled students of a similar admission years.

In actuality, given the data that supports this high level of effectiveness of academic preparation in homeschooled environments, success for home schooled families in the current era has been marked by greater awareness, acceptance and recognition of homeschooling at all levels of local, state and federal government. Education policies and programs are trending towards even greater acceptance in mainstream educational spheres and the increase in applications by homeschooled students is causing collegiate admission departments to accommodate homeschooled students as part of a normalized admissions process. Ray (2004) has indicated that homeschooled students should be considered worthy of consideration across the spectrum of selectivity at all institutions of higher learning in America and notes that homeschooled students have been admitted and are now alumnus from every Ivy League school, Stanford, M.I.T. and the California Institute of Technology in the past two decades.

The Case for College Readiness: Tracing the Historical Path of Homeschooling

Spatial constraints and limitations of the scope of this capstone preclude an in-depth historical summary but it is important to note important historical homeschooling milestones. Between 1910 and the late 1950s college graduation rates never rose above ten percent of the populous who were of college age (The U.S. Department of the Census, 2012). Scientific and engineering advances, driven by the automotive, military and space industries from late 1958 onwards, created a demand for a more educated populous than ever before. In the absence of a high degree of technological sophistication many Americans prospered despite a lack of high school diplomas or advanced college degrees. Higher education, which was generally considered

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the sole domain of the wealthy, privileged or exceptional persons before 1945, experienced a great awakening as a result of the introduction of post-World War Two educational policies which guaranteed educational rights to returning service veterans.

The introduction of the G.I. Bill changed the American cultural landscape by increasing both growth and demand for higher education. While it took almost a generation of this new found educational opportunity to embed itself in the American psyche, education as a fundamental right of all Americans became de rigueur by the 1960s. Education is seen as the engine driving this period of unprecedented American prosperity. In his 1953 study of the educational aspirations and attainment of “common man” sons, Joseph Kahl wrote: “He blamed his failure on insufficient education, and was determined that his son would do better” (Kahl 1957, p. 287). The resolve of American parents to see children graduate high school and move into higher education resulted in steep rises in high school graduation rates as more American children became academically qualified to attend college or university degreed programming.

Financial prosperity from the widespread availability of assembly line and menial work during the post-1945 period allowed parents to save for their children’s future college education. The introduction of governmental policies that gave financial tax incentives for those who contributed to college savings plans made the cost of attending college a key fiscal planning point for many American families. The research of Cooper (2004) makes clear the history and policies surrounding the establishment and extension of fiscal policies at the Federal and state levels. Cooper (2004) writes: “for over a half-century, discussions of educational barriers have figured prominently on the national agenda.” Starting in the post-1945 era, President Harry Truman articulated the nation’s commitment to “eliminate the barriers of equality of educational opportunity.” The Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA) was enacted with the primary goal of

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“ensuring that no academically qualified student who desires an education is denied access because of the lack of financial resources (Cooper, 2004)”.

Cooper (2004) and Callaway (2004) indicate that by 1997 soaring attendance rates caused a dramatic rise in tuition rates; in response President William J. Clinton enacted the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997. This legislation marked a new era of federal support for equalizing educational opportunity, which occurred coincidentally with a sudden demand in the workforce for better educated workers. The dramatic rise in college attendance of the so-called “baby boom generation” can be traced to the implementation of economic policies that created favorable educational conditions between 1960 and 1997.

The change in American cultural expectations pertaining to educational outcomes for high school students during the post-World War Two period is significant because these new expectations created increasing pressures on the entire post-secondary education process. By 2008, the focus of secondary school education programming shifted from simply graduating students to a newly created vision that high schools should be viewed as “college preparatory” incubators of knowledge and that their primary mission was to prepare all students for higher levels of education. At the same time a very different discussion ensued; a discussion that called into question the quality of high school education in a rapidly expanding public school environment.

Professor James P. Spencer of Rutgers University indicates that the growth of suburban, college-like high school campuses was occurring in suburban Philadelphia, as it was nationwide, when he wrote: “...suburban high schools, such as Harriton High School in Lower Merion (1958), tended to have a more pronounced focus on college-preparatory academics, and they set a new standard and style in school design (Spencer, 2013).” This change in cultural expectations

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for college preparation and the opportunity to attend college resulted in a doubling of the number of college graduates between the years 1960 to 1990 from ten percent to twenty percent of eligible Americans who were of ages twenty five years and older. Further data indicates that the rate increased to thirty percent in the period from 1990 to 2009 (The U.S. Department of the Census, 2012).

There has been exhaustive academic studies and research done on the multitude of factors contributing to this rise in college participation and graduation rates in America 1960-2009. Yet, it is important to note that these cultural pressures also helped to create conditions which lead to increased competition for limited admission opportunities at favored universities and colleges all across America. Collom's 2005 research work on parental motivations in homeschooled families reveal serious concerns over the quality and substance of public school education programming during this same period. The work of Collom (2005) and Ray (2004) indicates that there is no singularly typical profile of home school learners but that their motivations remain firmly fixed in the pursuit of college admission and attendance.

Learners and Learning Profiles in Homeschooled Students and Parents

In 1968, Sewell and Shah authored a study in The American Sociological Association Journal which detailed the important correlations between parental and student higher educational aspirations and achievements. Shah and Sewell (1968) concluded that the greater the aspiration on the part of the parents the greater likelihood that students would ultimately graduate from a post-secondary programming; important because in 1968, the number of parents who had completed post-secondary education programs was still less than ten percent of the total United States population (The U.S. Department of the Census, 2012).

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Barwegen, et al. (2004) defines homeschooled students as “educated under the supervision of parents instead of school teachers.” Students who make up the majority of attendees in homeschooled programs generally fit into one of five distinct learner profiles: children who live in a strictly parochial home environment, children who have difficulty fitting into large class cohorts (generally found in public school systems), students with special needs or emotional difficulties, students who have special artistic or athletic talents that preclude attendance in regularly scheduled school programs and students whose parents firmly believe that the school system in their locale is failing to provide a quality education or whose district school policies mandate that they attend a “failing school” (Ray, 2004). The majority of students who fit these profiles require an environment that will nurture their expressed desire to attend a college or university after completion of their high school studies.

Current available data also suggests that a shift away from these traditionally motivating rationales for parents who home school their children is occurring. While research still indicates that a prime reason for homeschooling children is based on parochial grounds there are other compelling reasons for homeschooling: Ice & Hoover-Dempsey (2011) and Collom (2005) discuss the “ins and outs” and rationales of parents who determine that homeschooling will offer a better opportunity for higher student achievement outcomes. Ice and Hoover Dempsey (2011) in particular note that parental involvement is beginning to actively engage with pedagogical theories of learning cognitive and situative learning practices in order to formulate stronger associations with this “hands on” approach to their children’s learning. Aurini & Davies (2005) suggest that homeschooling may be considered a substitute for private education in the absence of the ability to afford such an alternative; Comer (1984) details how the relationship between

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home and school has an effect on special needs learning requirements and for students who are involved in highly competitive sports or extra-curricular programs.

More recently, Ray (2010) and Morgan (2004) indicate an equally predominant and compelling argument presented by parents which involves a perceived fundamental right to choose where and how children are educated; concerns that stem from a greater focus on the quality of public education available in virtually every school district in America. Ultimately, parental interviewing data suggests that a great deal of the focus revolves around ensuring that students receive educational support that will allow them to graduate and go on to college or other forms of higher educational programming (Ray, 2004; Morgan, 2003). Ray (2010) also suggests that a new and strong distaste for federally sanctioned standardized testing in the public school environments has created a new impetus for homeschooling.

Since 2009, there has been a surge in homeschooled student profile research conducted by Beverly Pell (2013) and others indicating that the demographics of homeschool learner profiles are still predominantly white, politically and socially conservative Christian families (92%). Pell (2013) notes, as does Murphy (2012), that this trend is rapidly changing and now families of all faiths, races and nationalities are participating in home school activities. Parents, who are themselves college educated, seek the benefits of homeschooled programs for their children and Ray (2010) indicates that homeschooling is currently experiencing similar growth rates in virtually all other Western nations; growth that is rising at seven to fifteen percent per year and is estimated to be in excess of three million students worldwide.

Lastly, research indicates that there are several consistent traits that indicates proficiency in homeschooled students. Meuse and Martin-Chang (2011), Ray (2010) and Welner and Welner (1999) studies show that demographics and testing verification are less important factors in

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determining home school student achievement success than are the allocation of educational resources and the amount of parental involvement in the ongoing school process (Barwegen, Falaciani, Putnam, Reamer, & Stair, 2004). Isenberg (2007) indicates that the fragmentation and scarcity of data from large-scale, home school studies also contributes in the creation of myths surrounding home school student achievements from a college admissions departmental perspective. As intensive research into all aspects of homeschooling continues, the conclusions first made by Welner and Welner in 1999 continue to be echoed. The Welner study suggested that the notion that homeschooled students are a single, homogeneous and religiously monolithic group are patently false. Homeschoolers are, in fact, a rapidly growing, diverse and representative sub-set of the American cultural landscape and as such, should be given careful consideration in the process of applying for college admissions.

The Learning Context and Socialization Concerns

Setting aside questions surrounding parental motivations for home schooling their children, the conversation then shifts to a central, critical question: Does homeschooling alleviate the very problems that parents are fleeing? Parents who are critical of social and societal issues which negatively impact student learning are increasingly seeking remedy in the form of homeschooling. Ray (2010) indicates that parental motivations to control student learning contexts and learning environments confirms the work of Ensign (1998), who identifies patterns in academic and social development of homeschooled, special needs students. Ensign (1998) identifies gifted and learning disabled children that required one-on-one learning approaches in addition to noting the specific needs of gifted learners who might otherwise encounter difficulties in the general public school setting. In both instances Ray and Ensign note that

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student achievement dramatically improved for students who received instruction in the homeschool environment.

Critics of homeschooling argue that an inherent weakness of homeschooling programs lies in a perception that homeschooled students do not have a complete educational package to offer university admissions departments. Specifically, non-empirical measurements such as “socialization” or “sociability” factors of homeschooled students are areas of concern to admissions departments. Ray (2010) studied the widest range of homeschooled students and determined that these concerns were not only unfounded, but that homeschooled students actually achieved higher levels of social interaction than did their traditionally schooled counterparts. Ray attributes this effect to a “wider range of experiences and interests enjoyed by and encouraged of home schooled students and their families” (Ray 2004).

There are more choices and contexts for homeschooled students today than ever before. The rapid growth in attendance in home school programs has also fueled a companion growth in tools and materials offered by educational resource companies which make the facilitation of home school programs and curriculums easier. A search of shared, on-line resources for home school parents indicates that materials are available in a sort of cooperative network of providers. While this may ease the problematic conditions of filling in course outlines with content, there is an unintended series of consequences that may lead parents to materials which are neither based on sound pedagogical foundations nor are scholarly or educationally peer reviewed. Naturally, a potential problem exists when unverified content is easily shared between unknowing or unsuspecting parents who are “teaching” their children.

Pedagogical concerns are evident Collum (2005). Collum indicates that the lack of pedagogical knowledge by parent-teachers may create conditions that inhibit student growth.

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While this argument does appear to have some validity, critics point to research that details high levels of achievement by home school students on college admissions tests as proof that these concerns are generally unfounded. Jones and Gloeckner (2013) most recent survey of college admissions counselors' reveals socialization and pedagogical instruction remain high on the list of concerns that application reviewers have.

The rise in home school options to some degree indicate that parents and students are acutely aware that there are significant issues to address and overcome during the college admissions process. Parents seem to realize that children need to engage with friends and peers on a regular basis. This realization has fueled the growth in hybrid or cooperative homeschool consortiums. Often formed and led by active and engaged parents, these organized learning groups are the fastest growing segment of the homeschooling network.

There are numerous advantages for parents who form and organize these groups. These "tutorials" can mimic instructional tutoring sessions and address issues of teacher expertise and pedagogical knowledge, children's socialization and parental concerns regarding control of student associations. Terry Morris, the head of the board of directors at Brentwood Tennessee's Ironwood Academy states that the growth in home school associations is an attempt by parents to provide a "tightly controlled" learning environment for homeschooled students. Morris also states that the founding parental group at Ironwood demanded an organization that continues to reinforce the "spiritual teachings of Ironwood's Christian mission" (Morris, 2015). Ray (2010) also indicates that future growth in homeschooling networks reflects a "real world" vision that parents have for their children. In many instances this engagement is based deliberate choices made which surrounds homeschooled students with a cohort of peers who share common beliefs and social inclinations.

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Curriculum, Instructional Strategies and Assessments

Homeschooling attendance figures are on the rise and the appearance of variants of the home school concept belie the notion that there is one all-encompassing definition by which collegiate admissions officers can define a homeschooled student. Gloeckner and Jones (2004) survey of fifty five admissions departments at a cross section of universities in the United States reveals that one quarter or thirteen of the fifty five offices did not have any policy or policies pertaining to homeschool students applications. Recent interviews for this paper indicate that three out of the five colleges questioned (of varying degrees of admissions selectivity) did not have a dedicated person to handle incoming applications from homeschooled students and did not have an official or written policy pertaining to the treatment of homeschool applicants (Gaines, 2015; McKinney, 2015; Emblidge, 2015; Owens, 2014 and Emblidge, 2014).

This lack of specialty amongst admissions personnel may indicate a continuing area of improvement for admissions departments as the number of homeschool applications continue to rise. Brown University spokeswoman Jennifer Sutton recognizes that homeschooled students not only possess qualities that are aligned with the Brown mission (self-direction, tenacity and risk-taking) and that all indicators point to the highest degree of confidence that homeschooled students will succeed at Brown both academically and socially (Ray 2004). Gaines (2015) and McGuire (2015) indicate that the policy at Vanderbilt University does not require or include a specific list of course content or materials used by homeschool students. Gaines (2015) indicated that if a specific homeschooled student's requests advanced college standing for coursework achieved then further review of supporting documents and syllabi would be required at the departmental level after successful admission to the Vanderbilt undergraduate program.

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Cogan's (2010) research indicates that homeschooled students achieve far superior results when compared with other multivariate groups. Cogan reports that incoming homeschooled students present high school GPAs, ACTs (the most commonly submitted college entrance score), community college transfer credit and transfer GPAs that are statistically superior to other public, parochial and privately schooled high school applicants. In turn, first year academic and persistence/retention statistics also are far superior when compared to their traditionally schooled counterparts.

Rudner (1999) and Ray (2004) began the initial work heightening awareness of the needs of homeschooled students as they attempted to apply for university admission. However, Parylo's 2012 study, *Evaluation of educational administration: A decade of review and research (2001-2010)* points to a lack of significant evaluative measures specifically pertaining to homeschooling admissions research. Pell (2013) states that as of 2004 homeschooling was legal in every jurisdiction in the United States, yet during this period Callaway (2004) details ongoing and problematic disconnects between college admissions departments, the United States Department of Education and the governing bodies who execute the compliance orders for federal student loans and financial aid and homeschooled families.

Callaway's work in particular implies that homeschooling is now servicing the entire range of high school learners, including traditionally economically disadvantaged minority learners. Callaway (2004) notes that changes in the ways that states require compliance with federally mandated financial aid programs has significant impact on applications originating from homeschooled students. Because college finances play a significant role in the decisions students and parents make in terms of school choice, synergy between local, state and federal regulatory agencies continues to be of paramount importance to the college admissions process.

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Synthesis of Theory and Practice

The term “holistic” is commonly used to describe the collegiate admissions process at almost every college in America. Rigol (1999) contributed to The College Board organization’s attempt to define the taxonomy or classification methodologies of the admissions process; initiated as a direct result of legal challenges surrounding fair admissions policies in the United States Supreme Court. The College Board white paper titled *Toward a Taxonomy of the Admissions Decision-Making Process (1999)* began the conversation in academia as to how admissions departments at all levels of selectivity would handle vastly more complex issues of heterogeneity in secondary school graduating applicants. Three years later, the same College Board published a companion study which was eponymously named *Best Practices in Admissions Decisions (2002)*. While these studies were designed to identify discriminatory trends in college admission process a review of these documents reveals that home school data was conspicuously absent.

Critics of the treatment of homeschooled students by college admissions departments point to recent research by McCulloch, Savage and Schmal (2013); research that clearly indicates that more work is needed to correct problems in homeschooled student’s college application processes. McCulloch et al. indicate significant biases that exist; biases that are corroborated by Sorey and Duggan (2008) and Jones and Gloeckner (2004). In each study the authors detail problematic conditions relating to perceived inabilities of homeschooled students to cope with the socialization aspects of college life. Since the admissions process at most colleges is deemed to be holistic, any negative biases that exist in the minds of the admissions counselors at colleges are bound to affect college entry for home school students. In all of these studies, the counselors polled indicated that three quarters of them believed that homeschooled students compared more

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than favorably with traditionally schooled counterparts in terms of academic proficiency but less than forty percent believed that the same students possessed equal or greater degrees of socialization skills.

Research interviews conducted for this paper asked detailed questions about the holistic nature of the admissions process at each institution. Gaines and McGuire (Gaines, 2015) (McGuire, 2015) noted that the holistic nature of the admissions process at Vanderbilt for home schooled applicants differed slightly when compared with traditionally schooled students. Specifically, the admissions policies at Vanderbilt require that applications from homeschooled students be sent for application reading to a dedicated homeschool application counselor. Director of Undergraduate Admissions John Gaines noted that applicants to Vanderbilt fall into a very narrow range of standardized test scores and that the range of scores on both the SAT and ACT is narrow enough to warrant closer inspection of other supporting documentation. Reference letters, entry essays and personal interviews and high school GPS scores are weighted accordingly in the cases of traditionally schooled applicants.

Homeschooled students either self-report their secondary school GPAs or are not required to report a GPA score depending on their location. Vanderbilt receives applications from every state, with each state having unique characteristics in home school achievement reporting requirements. The process in place at Vanderbilt uses a unique weighting system, specifically designed for home school students and it is the view of Director Gaines that this process reflects a fair and impartial application review process given the reputation of Vanderbilt as an institution which is amongst the group of most selective colleges in America.

Implications and Future Considerations: Change in Practices, Solutions, Contributing support and developmental tools

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It is important to note that the prevalence of homeschooled students in American education is growing quickly. College applications from homeschool students have sharply risen in the past two admittance years. 2015 incoming freshman applications from homeschooled students at Vanderbilt University, the University of Rochester, the Rochester Institute of Technology and Stanford University make up less than three percent of all submissions but in real number terms the three percent figure has required each of these institutions to dedicate a specific admissions reviewer to handle incoming homeschooled student applications.

Additionally this sharp rise in the visibility of homeschool applications has also caused admissions departments at many colleges and universities to examine and develop homeschool-specific policies to accommodate homeschool applicants and the nuances of their applications.

An internet search of available curriculum materials and tools designed specifically for use in a home school environment reveals more than seven hundred thousand entries. Perhaps the best validation of the growth in homeschool validity is the entrance of education publishing companies such as Pearson Learning (2015) who offers comprehensive learning programs for homeschool parents, educators and administrators (Pearson Homeschool Curriculum Support, 2015).

Conclusion

This paper has shown that there is an important connection between the verified, scholarly research regarding academic success of homeschooled students, the stated goal of attending an institution of higher learning after graduation and the college admissions process. This essay has clearly noted the historical factors that have driven the definition of secondary school educational success to a place that essentially demands that all high school students be scholastically capable of attending a college or university program post-graduation. We have

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also seen that there are significant cultural and legacy pressures that exist which influence the decisions families make to homeschool a student, decisions which are most often made by parents who perceive some deficiency in the availability of traditional, high quality college preparatory high school pathways. As we have seen in Ray (2010) we note that in many cases there are empirical measurements and data that suggest homeschooled students fare better than their traditionally schooled counterparts in entrance measurements and also in retention and graduations data at the post-secondary level. Yet, in spite of this empirical data, homeschool students are still stigmatized as having received a sub-standard quality of high school education; a stigma that, in some cases, prejudices or hampers efforts to gain entry into the highest levels of post-secondary institutions. This skepticism of home school achievement, while slowly changing for the better, still exists at the collegiate level. This essay suggests and research shows that significant differences in the treatment of homeschool students during the college application process is unwarranted; that college measures of retention and graduation rates are actually better among homeschooled students.

This capstone essay has revealed that homeschool students will remain a growing segment of the pre-secondary and secondary school educational population. As such, the high levels of academic achievements by home school students are considered to be meritorious and warrant serious consideration by all admissions departments at American colleges and universities. We also note that there still exists some degree of skepticism and misinformation regarding the homeschool process and the perception of how to evaluate proficiency in homeschool students by some college admissions departments. Research also indicates that in a form of “educational Darwinism” that as proficiency and achievement rates of homeschooled students continues to outpace the average achievements of traditionally schooled students that

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the policies and procedures of admissions departments at American universities will continue to evolve in sophistication pertaining to the treatment of homeschooled student applications.

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