



**Barbara Mitchell Centre**  
FOR IMPROVEMENT IN EDUCATION

# Home Schooling in Canada:

THE CURRENT PICTURE - 2015 EDITION

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## Executive Summary

Modern-day home schooling in Canada is 40 years old. In this alternative method of education, parents are in charge and responsible for their children's education and learning primarily takes place outside of an institutional setting. Although always legal, it has not always been understood. *Home Schooling: The Current Picture—2015 Edition* updates the second edition, *Home Schooling: From the Extreme to the Mainstream* (2007) in two ways. First, it surveys the academic literature for recent contributions on home-school research and, second, it updates the status of home schooling in Canada.

The story of home schooling in Canada, particularly since the last edition of this paper, is a story of growth: growth in the research, growth in regulation, and growth in enrolments.

Consider the research. Shifts are evident in why families home school, how they approach it, and the impact on adult life. Where once it was ideologically or pedagogically driven, more families are now choosing it simply because it is possible and practical. Curriculum and organizational supports are widely available. Home schooling offers flexibility for increasingly diverse family lifestyles. Research points towards forms of home education associated with higher academic achievement (academic motivation and more structure). It was found to have a dampening effect on characteristics sometimes associated with lower academic performance (lower income, lower parental education, gender, race, and special needs). Generally, home-schooling parents lack teaching certification and yet one recent US study of 11,739 home-school students found average percentile scores at 84 (language and math) and 89 (reading). Home-schooled students were found to have significantly higher final grades in post-secondary calculus than all peer groups. Several studies show that home-educated students were more likely than their peers to have secondary school as their highest level of education, yet in Canada they were also more likely to complete a doctorate or professional degree and to hold a professional or managerial occupation.

Next consider the regulation. Recent expansions of the regulation are evident in at least five Canadian provinces, with regulation ranging from low to moderate to high. All provinces require that parents notify authorities of their home schooling but six of the ten also require some reporting of student



progress or submission of an educational plan. The three high-regulation provinces (Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Quebec) require official approval of the education plan and/or of the student progress. Funding is available directly to parents in Alberta and in some school districts of Saskatchewan, and a modest amount is available in indirect support in British Columbia.

Finally, consider enrolments. While home schooling has grown to about 3% or 4% of the US student population, it represents less than one-half percent of the Canadian student population. It is quite possible that this under-represents the actual extent of home schooling because researchers have found that some families do not register their home school with local authorities. Even so, although the overall official enrolments are modest (0.4% of the public-school student population), in the five-year period immediately following the last edition of this paper (2006/07–2011/12), official enrolment in home schools has grown by 29% in Canada. For the same period, enrolments in public schools, aggregated for Canada, declined by 2.5%. Average annual growth in home-school enrolment, again for all of Canada, is 5%. By province, average annual growth in enrolments ranged from 3.9% in Alberta to 13.8% in Newfoundland & Labrador. Only British Columbia had an average annual decline of 5% in home-school enrolments but, when increases in enrolments in distributed learning were included, then the growth was, on average, 14.4% per year. Furthermore, based on official enrolments and conservative calculations, in 2011/12 home-schooling families saved Canadians \$256.4 million, \$95 million of which was in Alberta and \$60 million in Ontario.

The expansions of the research, regulation, and enrolment in home schooling in Canada should not be overlooked by policy makers, parents and professionals as innovations and efficiencies are sought for the next era of learning and teaching in this country and beyond.

## Introduction

Since our country’s founding, and even long before, Canada’s landscape of educational choice has included a place for home schooling. Yet, similar to the experience of many western countries, during the rise of modern-era public schooling, education at home increasingly was displaced by classroom-based education. In the years following Canada’s confederation, schooling became funded and regulated by provincial ministries of education and delivered largely through local school districts. Only in the late 1970s and 1980s did home-based schooling reassert itself and again become a practiced approach to K-12 education, adopted particularly by parents who recognized they could have a larger role and responsibility in the education of their children. Yet despite growth in numbers and evidence of increasing popularity, for the first several decades of its contemporary history this practice remained “poorly understood” (Basham, 2001:3).

Two of the most frequently viewed occasional papers published by the Fraser Institute in the last 40 years, were the first and second editions of *Home Schooling: From the Extreme to the Mainstream* (Basham, 2001; Basham, Merrifield, and Hepburn, 2007). Both sought to increase basic understanding and knowledge about home schooling in Canada and the United States, and reviewed its history, enrolments, the socio-demographic characteristics of practitioners, and academic and social outcomes. Furthermore, both discussed the policy implications of this experiment in independent education, with the second edition concluding that it merits the respect of policy makers and further attention by researchers.

The second edition was published about 25 years into contemporary practice of home schooling and reported that there was indeed a “rise” in home schooling, that its popularity was “widespread”, and concluded that it was “a relatively inexpensive and successful educational alternative” (Basham, Merrifield, and Hepburn, 2007: 18, 5, 19). Almost a decade later, it is important to take another look at home schooling in Canada. As provinces across Canada grapple with balancing provincial budgets, and education stakeholders—parents, employers, and ministries of education, to name a few—continue to seek, to develop, and to invest in effective forms of education, it is

timely to investigate whether researchers have given increased emphasis to studying the impacts and outcomes of home schooling, whether home school enrolments continue to grow, and whether attention by policy makers has expanded.

In the last decade, education has been increasingly less constrained by time and place. Opportunities provided by technology and possibilities afforded through changing perspectives on teaching and learning combine to create new conditions and prospects for educational delivery in the twenty-first century. Since home schooling is an approach to education that inherently offers its practitioners flexibility in use of time and space, this education sector may have some policy lessons to share with classroom-based schooling as it adapts to future opportunities. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to review the recent literature on home schooling and to update the state of home schooling in Canada.

This third edition, *Home Schooling in Canada: The Current Picture—2015 Edition*, begins with a definition of home schooling and an overview of the recent findings from the academic literature on home schooling, with particular emphasis paid to Canadian contributions. It continues with a discussion of the extent of home schooling in Canada; a brief review of home-schooling regulations and policies; a look at changes in enrolment from 2006/07 to 2011/12; and a calculation of the fiscal impact of home schooling in Canada.<sup>1</sup> The study concludes with lessons from recent experience with home schooling for policy makers looking to address emerging forms of twenty-first century education.

## Home schooling defined

According to Statistics Canada, “home schooling is an alternative method of learning that takes place outside the public or private school environment. Parents choosing homeschooling have the primary responsibility of managing, delivering, and supervising their children’s courses and program of learning, which can vary from a very structured curriculum to free-form learning” (2013). Donnelly defined home schooling as the

elective practice whereby children are educated directly under the personal oversight of their parents, often, though not exclusively, by their parents and usually in a home setting. Advocates, practitioners, and researchers alike grapple with terminology of this new and innovative form of education. Depending on the philosophical [or pedagogical]

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1. Data series for most analysis and calculations in this paper begin in 2006/07, picking up where the last edition left off.



orientation, country of origin, and other factors, homeschooling is also known as home-based education, home education, unschooling, home-centered learning, home instruction, deschooling, autonomous learning, and child-centred learning. (2012: 200)

According to Donnelly, “while there may be certain state controls present in an actual homeschooling environment, the bottom line is that the parent, not the state, is in charge and responsible for providing the child’s education” (2012: 201).

Basham, Merrifield, and Hepburn also specified that parents who choose to home school “have not delegated to a single educational provider responsibility for the majority of their children’s education, preferring to direct and manage that education personally” (2007: 6). Lagos, after extensive consideration of various definitions concludes: “If one were to posit a single comprehensive definition of homeschooling, it might run as follows: homeschooling is the result of parents’ preference to bypass the institutional school and educate their children themselves, that is, to exercise their role as educators directly and not through the vehicle of the traditional school environment” (2012: 432).

Thus, recent definitions cohere with earlier ones and all highlight that parents take responsibility for the education of their children rather than accept, or defer to, the responsibility of others whether those others are agents of the state or independent educational organizations. For the purposes of this paper, home schooling is defined as the approach to education where parents take final responsibility for the selection, management, provision, and supervision of their child’s education program and that education occurs largely outside of an institutional setting.<sup>2</sup>

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2. One final point about nomenclature should be made. Much of the literature, especially the more recent literature, uses the term “homeschooling”. For sake of consistency with the two earlier editions of this paper, unless the text is quoted from another source, the two-word term “home schooling” will continue to be used in this paper.

# Research: Overview of Literature on Home Schooling since the Second Edition

The last edition of this paper (2007) argued that home schooling merits the attention of researchers. It is indeed the case that scholarly research and academic publications on home schooling have continued to proliferate since 2007. Since this is an important point in understanding the broader theme of growth in home schooling, the first section will discuss some of the evidence of this scholarly expansion. Then the findings in the recent literature in the following areas will be addressed: motivations and demographics of parents; approaches to homeschooling; academic achievement; post-secondary and graduate outcomes; and international variations and changing legal perspectives.

## Growth of research into home schooling

Contemporary academic research on home schooling is expanding and shifting. A wider diversity of scholars in more established academic institutions are designing studies around an increasing array of focused topics. The newer emphasis on smaller-scale, robustly controlled, studies may be a response to the critique that earlier large-scale studies of home-educated students, despite the sample sizes involved, were not representative of the entire population of home-educated students (see, for example, Kunzman, 2009a: 98). Studies, particularly those from the 1990s and early 2000s that pointed to findings for the average home-schooled students or their families, are critiqued as increasingly insufficient for an understanding of the perspectives, practices, and impacts of the diversity that characterizes home schooling.

A strong voice in these developments is the International Center for Home Education Research (ICHER) established in 2012 that, according to its website, “aims to synthesize the best of what homeschooling scholarship has revealed thus far, to examine new scholarship as it emerges, and to foster future work of the highest quality” (ICHER, 2015: About). Indeed ICHER’s

comprehensive bibliography of academic and popular writings on home education contains (at the time of writing) more than 1,800 entries. For example, it includes dissertations written on aspects of home education from 1978 to 2014—the era of modern home-based education—more than 68% of which were produced in the second half of the period and almost 27% in the last eight years (calculations by author).

The presence of this international centre whose board members are all university professors, enlarges the landscape of scholarship in this area and expands upon the space previously occupied almost solely by the National Home Education Research Institute (NHERI; [www.nheri.org](http://www.nheri.org)) established in 1990 during an earlier era of home education and in response to different environmental conditions. Indeed NHERI's early accomplishments included advocating for the legitimacy of home education as a valid educational practice both in the United States and abroad. Gaither reminds us that a "1985 Gallup poll found that 70 percent of Americans thought homeschooling should not be legal"; however, a decade later Gallup found a shift in the perception of Americans with "70 percent supporting home schooling as a valid educational alternative" (2008: 198).

In contrast to NHERI's locus of origin, which involved contributing to the increased legitimization of home schooling, ICHER is positioned to contribute to a synthesis and stimulation of continued international research towards more nuanced understanding and improvement of an approach to education that is now widely recognized through legislation and policy as valid and reasonable. Their comprehensive catalogue contributes to awareness of recent expansions in the literature. A scan of that list shows no fewer than 28 books on home-school research have been published in the last eight years alone. Indeed, as this is more than 30% of the research books on home schooling published since 1923, it affirms recent growth in academic interest in home education (calculations based on ICHER's catalogue).

Several of the latest books written by scholars provide accessible yet comprehensive overviews of home schooling. Included are *Homeschool: An American History* (Gaither, 2008) and *Homeschooling in America: Capturing and Assessing the Movement* (Murphy, 2012), as well as in-depth analyses such as Kunzman's (2009b) *Write These Laws on Your Children*, somewhat comparable in method and style to Mitchell Steven's (2001) persistently respected *Kingdom of Children*.

A robust contribution to international analysis and discussion of home schooling also can be found in the four-volume series, *Balancing Freedom, Autonomy and Accountability in Education*, edited by Glenn and De Groof (2012), which gives, in the voice of more than four dozen academics, an overview of home schooling (and other forms of education delivery) in more than 50 countries worldwide.

The most recent academic book, *International Perspectives on Home Education: Do We Still Need Schools?* (Rothermel, 2015) is an edited collection of articles by recognized and established international home-schooling researchers. It addresses enduring themes in education and moves beyond such standard home-school research topics as social integration and standardized testing and outcomes, and addresses a wider diversity of social, cognitive, political, and cultural aspects of home schooling. An updated edition of Cooper's (2005) *Home Schooling in Full View* is also in production, and it too will provide an additional collection of scholarly voices on home schooling.

In terms of journal publications, the new *Journal of Unschooling and Alternative Learning* founded a decade ago by Carlo Ricci, a professor in a school of education in Canada (Nipissing University), has added another vehicle for prompting research and publication on aspects of home education. Also, a rather thorough contribution to overviews of the home-school literature is Kunzman and Gaither's (2013) concise journal article in which they present the "most reliable data and conclusions" from the entire body of home-schooling literature to date. Finally, higher tier journals such as those by the Canadian Psychological Association and by the Routledge Taylor and Francis Group are now publishing studies of home schooling (see, for example, Martin-Chang, Gould, and Meuse, 2011; Murphy, 2014).

Recently the landscape of home-schooling policy in Canada as well as baseline numbers of home-schooled students in this country have been addressed by Allison and Van Pelt (2012), Allison (2014), and Clemens, Paclacios, Loyer, and Fathers (2014). Each paper notes, or infers, that home schooling is legal and provision continues to be made for it in the regulatory environment of all Canadian provinces.

Thus, while the first and second editions of this paper (Basham, 2001; Basham, Hepburn, and Merrifield, 2007) noted the increasing popularity of the practice of home schooling, the evidence now suggests an increase in the popularity of the rigorous, scholarly study of home schooling. Once an area of research entered into only by a few, and even fewer with positions in faculties of education,<sup>3</sup> it is now an increasingly conventional topic for scholarly inquiry, attracting a diversity of researchers ranging from psychologists to sociologists, and historians to lawyers.

Trends in the growth of the practice of home education in the United States, for example, while preceding the growth in international academic attention directed towards it, are worth briefly noting. Murphy claims that "growth of homeschooling in the United States has been nothing short of remarkable, even using the most conservative estimates available ... [from] 10,000–15,000 children ... in the 1970s ... [to] somewhere in the neighborhood

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3. For example, see the work of Gary Knowles at the University of Toronto in the 1980s

of 2 million students [in 2010]” (2012: 10). By the early 2000s, in the United States home schooling was growing year to year at a rate of anywhere from 11% to 40% annually (Wilhelm and Firmin, 2009: 303). Cooper and Sureau also claim that “it is a vital and expanding form of private education and a political force in U.S. society” (2007: 110).

These growth trends over the last four decades, first in the practice of home schooling and then in the study of home schooling, raise the question of why this growth has occurred. Studies considering the reasons parents choose to educate their children in home schools offer some insight into this. We turn to that question shortly but first briefly consider what the recent literature reports on the practice of home schooling.

## Approaches to home schooling

In their comprehensive survey of the research, Kunzman and Gaither (2013) reviewed the literature on curricula and practice in home schooling. Although they note that it is “difficult to study the actual practice of homeschooling [because of] ... the sheer variety of practices [and] ... the difficulty researchers have had in obtaining access to the homes of actual homeschooling families” (2013: 13), they nevertheless report some themes. First, with respect to curriculum they find that “as homeschooling has grown and matured, curricular options have proliferated wildly ... Amidst the increasing options, two that have garnered scholarly attention are the so-called ‘classical’ curriculum, whose organizing principle is an adaptation of the medieval Latin trivium, and the ‘Charlotte Mason Method’ which seeks to engage the whole child through nature study and great ‘living’ books” (2013: 15). Second, with respect to approaches, they state that there is an extensive reliance on “networks of like-minded” home schoolers (2013: 15), networks that researchers have categorized along a continuum of increasing formality, as follows.

Most informal are the “support groups” that meet in homes, on playgrounds, and/or online for mutual encouragement and information-swapping. Slightly more formal are “timetabled groups” that pool resources in a common space open to all members. Approaching institutional formality are “mom schools” where a homeschooling mother offers her instructional expertise to children of other families and, finally and more popularly, “co-op groups” that replicate traditional schooling in many ways. In co-ops homeschooling families typically meet together in a rented space to have the children take classes in groups taught by the parents or even occasionally by hired experts. (Kunzman and Gaither, 2013: 15; see also Gaither, 2008; Safran, 2009; Anthony, 2015)



Kunzman and Gaither also note that home schoolers often “rely heavily on information-rich resources like libraries and the internet” (2013: 15) and point out that Furness (2008) found a “remarkable over-representation of home-schooling families among regular library patrons” (2015: 15). They also note the work of Hanna, who found that as home school students grow older, “their homeschooling experience is increasingly characterized by reliance on networks outside the home, especially co-ops and internet resources” (2011: 16). Anthony also found that home schooling families became increasingly reliant on support groups and that home schools “are evolving and developing institutions that look something like schools” (2015: 1).

While more research on the emerging curricular preferences and approaches as well as the institutions and collaborations parents and families are designing in Canada is needed, it is clear that these aspects of home schooling, and the research about them, continue to mature and develop.

### **Motivation: Why do families home school?**

The literature on why families choose to home school suggests two eras of motivation for home schooling.<sup>4</sup> Originally, reasons for twentieth-century home schooling were more ideological and polarized. Analysis of motivations for US home schooling in the 1970s and 1980s and into the 1990s claims two main motivators or orientations. Gaither refers to them as the “leftist counterculture [and] Christian fundamentalism” (2008: 202) and posits John Holt and Raymond Moore as leaders of the alternate sides. Murphy (2012) uses “liberal left” and “conservative Christian right” to describe this divide. Van Galen (1991) calls the groups “pedagogues” and “ideologues” and Stevens (2001) uses “inclusives” and “believers” as labels.

The 2003 National Household Education Survey (see Isenberg, 2007: 401), which gathered parents’ reasons for choosing to educate their children at home, pointed to an increasing diversity of motivations for home schooling in the United States. It found that 48% had educational reasons, 30% had religious reasons, 14% were looking to help children with behavioural problems or special needs, and fully 9% had other reasons. Several studies in Canada at the same time confirmed an emerging emphasis on students rather than ideology. Van Pelt (2003), in her study of over 1,600 Canadian home-schooling families, found that their reasons could be categorized as achieving, avoiding, or special needs. The achievers were aiming for moral, social, or academic goals and the avoiders were removing themselves from negative, frustrating, or concerning situations in other educational contexts.

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4. Most literature is confined to explaining the motivation for home schooling in the United States.

Special needs included behavioral and learning, for both gifted and challenged children. Davies and Aurini in their Canadian study found “accommodating children’s uniqueness is emerging as a common denominator for the choice movement, and is uniting homeschoolers, who were historically split between Protestant fundamentalists and Holt-inspired rebels” (2003: 71).

Shortly after, in the United States, Green and Hoover-Dempsey (2007) found that beliefs (moral and religious), curricular and pedagogical opportunities (academic emphasis), and ability to deal with special needs accurately described the motivations of parents with a

partnership-focused role ... but did not appear to contribute substantially to many [other] parents’ decision to homeschool. Parents who held a strong parent-focused role appeared to be motivated to homeschool more by their strong beliefs about their parental role, their efficacy for helping their child learn, and their beliefs about the personal resources available to help them educate their children. (2007: 282)

Not only were motivations for home schooling in the United States becoming more diverse but Gaither notes further that, based on 2007 data from the National Center for Education Statistics, more than 23% of homeschoolers were minorities including “African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, Orthodox Jews, conservative Catholics, Mormons and Muslims ... with support groups and resources ...[multiplying] to meet their needs” (2009: 342). Other research on the demographics of those educating their children at home also points to the spread of the practice to an increasingly diverse range of families.

Such shifts in motivations for home schooling in the United States led Gaither to conclude that

as homeschooling has become less controversial and more familiar, more and more people, all kinds of people, are turning to it as an option for their children ... more and more people are choosing this path not out of frustration with secularism or numbing bureaucracy or inflexible curriculum or age segregation but simply because it makes sense for the time being given family circumstances ... using the home to educate for pragmatic rather than ideological reasons. (2009: 342)

Gaither identifies at least three practical circumstances: families with children involved in time-consuming activities such as music, sports, or acting; families with children who have special needs ranging from learning to health care; and “creative class” families who “integrate education into the telecommuting, globetrotting lives they lead” (2009: 343).

On the specific point of education for special needs, in the case of gifted children, Winstanley (2009) concludes that

the families of able pupils do not seem to be pursuing homeschooling as some kind of statement. They are not supporting the movement as a way of expressing an “abandonment of a belief in the efficacy of common schooling” ... they are instead, making a pragmatic response to the situation they are in where schools cannot cope with their unusual children. (2009: 360)

Thus, what was once fringe, according to Gaither, is now fashionable. What was once an ideological statement, according to Winstanley, is now pragmatic.

Spiegler’s (2010) recent analysis of the research on parental motivation for home education cautions that methodological design and social context have influenced the diversity of results found in various studies on this topic. Nevertheless, it is clear that the reasons for home schooling in the United States, especially in recent years, have multiplied. Parents are choosing this approach to education because it is practical and it is possible. Research in Canada from a decade ago affirms a tendency for the choice of home schooling to be motivated by the educational opportunities it provides for students but more study is needed to understand current motivations in Canada.

### **Academic achievement: How do home schooled students perform?**

Early studies on the academic effects of home schooling, including empirical research by Ray (1990, 1994, 1997, 2010), Rudner (1999), and Van Pelt (2003), consistently found higher percentile scores for home-educated students in the United States and Canada than for public-school students on standardized tests in reading, writing, and mathematics. The most recent study to compare the achievement of home-schooled students against national norms is Ray’s US nationwide study (2010) where he found national percentile mean scores for home-schooled students were 89 in reading ( $n = 11,586$ ), 84 in language ( $n = 11,388$ ), and 84 in math ( $n = 11,587$ ), while the national percentile mean was 50 for all students nationwide in all subject areas.<sup>5</sup>

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5. Also note that, in this study, Ray found a minority of parents were certified teachers: “Of the students’ 23,182 parents, 89.4% had never been certified teachers. Some 15.8% of the homeschool mothers had ever been certified teachers; 5.3% of fathers had ever been certified” (2010: 14).

Yet critiques of such studies, by both critics and often the authors themselves, note that, despite the sample size of participants (Rudner 1999, more than 20,000; Ray 2010, 11,739), the home-school participants (unlike the public-school students who wrote the standardized tests) were recruited and self-selected to participate. Thus, claims cannot be made about the representativeness of the samples in such studies to the entire population of home-educated students. Furthermore, such studies do not control for confounding variables, that is, they do not isolate the effect of home schooling from other possible explanations for differences in scores, and thus differences could well be explained by items like parental IQ, parental involvement, type of home and family life, or any of many other differences that may often be found in home-schooling households. In other words, these studies simply observe higher percentile scores for home-schooled students compared to other students but cannot in any meaningful way ascribe such results to the fact that they were home schooled.

Still, studies that compare within the home-school sector and across other sectors, while not definitive, do uncover relevant and suggestive findings about home schooling that may be related to higher measures of academic outcomes. In her study, which included 763 home-schooled students in Canada from grades 1 through 8 who completed the Canadian Achievement Test, Van Pelt (2003) found statistically significant higher percentile scores in reading, writing, and mathematics for elementary student participants whose parents reported academic motivations for home schooling than for those home-schooled students in the study whose parents reported other motivations.

Another more recent study, also by researchers in Canada, has found a relationship between academic achievement and approach to home schooling. In direct response to the weaknesses in earlier studies, Martin-Chang, Gould, and Meuse (2011) designed a study that involved students aged 5 to 10, 37 of whom were home-schooled and 37 who attended public schools; they further divided the home-schooled participants into two types. They also collected and acknowledged differences in parental demographics, differences that would have pointed to an income and educational advantage for the publicly schooled students. For example, more than 43% of the publicly schooled students lived in households with incomes above \$60,000 while less than 19% of the home-schooled students did. Also, more than 29% of the publicly school children had a mother with more education than an undergraduate degree (that is, had a professional or master's degree or a Ph.D.) while less than 11% of home-schooled students had mothers with more than an undergraduate degree. In fact, almost a quarter of home-schooled students had mothers without any type of university degree while only 16.2% of public-school students had mothers with only high school or some post-secondary education.

Yet, home-school students who were taught with structured curriculums<sup>6</sup> (n = 25) had higher results than public-school students on all (seven) subtests of a standardized test of educational achievement. Martin-Chang, Gould and Meuse also found

that the unstructured homeschooled children generally scored below their expected grade level on the standardized text, and that even with this small sample, performance differences are relatively substantial. What is more, our exploratory analyses strongly suggest that the children who are being taught at home in a structured environment score significantly higher than the children receiving unstructured home schooling. (2011: 200)

Furthermore, in both comparisons (students given structured home schooling to public-school students and students given structured home schooling to students given unstructured home schooling) the researchers found that the differences between groups were not simply the result of either the family's income or the mother's educational attainment. Other studies have shown that "low-income children in homeschools often achieve at or above national norms while low-income children in public schools on average score considerably below national norms" and that "homeschooling appears to damp down the negative effects of low levels of parental education on student performance" (Murphy, 2014: 256).

Low income and low levels of parental education are not the only contextual issues that have been shown to be diminished in their effects. Murphy also notes that "preliminary evidence suggests that homeschooling depresses the negative effects of race visible in the public schools" (2014: 257). Ray's (2015) study of African American students controlled for background independent variables (type of schooling, socio-economic status, and gender) and found that "the Black homeschool students in this study [were] performing academically above the national average in general and well above Black public school students in particular" (2015: 90) in reading, language, and math scores. Murphy reports that "investigators also have shown that widely seen gender differences in public school achievement scores may be muted by homeschooling" (2014: 257).

Earlier Duvall and his colleagues (1997, 2004) found higher achievement for home-schooled students with special needs. In their small-scale

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6. Structured curriculum, for this study, meant that "parents/teachers set out clear educational goals for their children and offered structured lessons in the form of either purchased curricula or self-made lesson plans (often some combination of both)" (Martin-Chang, Gould, and Meuse, 2011: 197).



and exploratory studies, they found that such students educated in home-schools had higher levels of active academic engagement and achievement than similarly affected students in the public schools who were getting special education services.

Thus, recent research on academic achievement, despite cautions by analysts, including Murphy who calls for “more rigorous research designs that control for selection bias” (2014: 258), continues to find advantages for home-educated students. Not only do studies continue to show higher academic percentile scores for home-schooled students but research points to the dampening of the effects of usually disadvantaging family socioeconomic variables such as race (in the United States), lower household income, and parents with lower levels of education. Earlier and more recent small-scale, exploratory studies find that the disadvantages stemming from gender and special needs tend to be ameliorated by home schooling and, most recently, an exploratory study indicates that a structured approach to home schooling is related to higher achievement.

### **Post-secondary education and other graduate outcomes: What happens in adult life?**

Research of post-secondary education and the adult outcomes of home-schooled students has also expanded since the last edition of this paper. Recently, several lines of research have sought to answer the question of what the longer-term effects of home schooling might be. A survey of adults, referred to as “first generation Canadian graduates of home-based education” (Van Pelt, Allison, and Allison, 2009: 2), who had participated as elementary or secondary students in a study on home schooling 15 years earlier (Ray, 1994), found a variety of positive academic, civic, occupational, and social outcomes for the 226 respondents when compared to findings from Statistics Canada for their adult peers. Generalization of these positive effects over the wider population of formerly home-educated students is not possible, and yet the study does present some instructive accolades and cautions about home education as described by the former students themselves.

Several studies consider differences among post-secondary students, based on their school-type background, within single post-secondary institutions and noted positive results for formerly home-schooled students when compared with their peers (at the same post-secondary institution) who were educated in independent schools or public schools. Cogan (2010), for example, found that home-schooled students at a “medium-size doctoral institution [a university] located in the Midwest” had higher scores on a standardized entry examination (ACT), higher grade-point averages in first and fourth year,

and higher graduation rates compared with their peers who had a classroom-based education. When various demographics and other characteristics were controlled, GPAs remained higher. Cheng (2014) found that

among a relatively homogenous group of undergraduates, all of whom attend an evangelical Christian university, those with more exposure to [that is, more years of] homeschooling relative to public schooling tend to be more politically tolerant ... in other words, members of the very group for which public schooling is believed to be most essential for inculcating political tolerance (i.e. those who are more strongly committed to a particular worldview and value system) actually exhibit at least as much or more tolerance when they were exposed to less public schooling. (2014: 64)

Thus, at one particular post-secondary institution, the formerly home schooled were found to be more politically tolerant than their peers from classroom-based schools.

Wilkins, Wade, Sonnert, and Sadler (2015) addressed the question “are homeschoolers prepared for college calculus?” using national-level data for students (n = 8,999) from the national-level Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics study, *Factors Influencing College Success in Mathematics*. They found that “among first-time calculus students who had not taken college pre-calculus, students who [had] homeschooled earned significantly higher final grades [in university calculus] than students who attended all other school types” (2015: 44).

Two recent studies by a team of researchers based at Notre Dame University compared outcomes for adults from 23 to 39 years, by secondary school attended, on various academic, religious and cultural indicators. The first study, in 2011, surveyed a representative sample of adults in the United States, while the second, in 2012, surveyed adults in Canada. In neither study were survey respondents aware that their responses would be analyzed based on the type of secondary schooling they had completed. Both studies controlled for numerous variables including parental and family demographics such that school effects could be isolated. The researchers found that US students educated at home were more likely than their public-school peers to have high school as their highest diploma (Pennings, Seel, Van Pelt, Sikkink, and Weins, 2011). While the US religious home-school graduates were less likely to complete a graduate degree than their public-school counterparts, the second study in the series (of adults in Canada) found bimodal results for educational attainment. While home-schooled students were more likely than high-school graduates of any other sector (public or independent schooling) to have high school as their highest diploma, they were also more likely than any other group to complete a doctorate or a professional degree (Pennings,

Sikkink, Van Pelt, Van Brummelen, and von Heyking, 2012: 44). The Canadian home-school graduates, after controlling for family demographics and other such variables, were also more likely than their peers to hold a professional or managerial occupation. These findings, determined through a methodology different from, and arguably more robust than, previous studies of school effects, extend the findings of earlier studies of home-schooled adults.

## Legal perspectives—a balance of rights

Expansion in the literature that considers home education from a legal perspective has also occurred since the last edition of this paper. Donnelly offered a brief, accessible overview of international legal recognition of home schooling, claiming that “in countries where homeschooling is growing, it is generally recognized as a viable education option within the framework of the nation’s laws” (2012: 209). His classification of national or subnational jurisdictions by amount of regulation provides a brief international overview of approaches to regulation. His frame has five categories: no regulation, low regulation, moderate regulation, high regulation, and homeschooling not permitted.

According to Donnelly, “no regulations” jurisdictions do not require a parent to initiate contact with a governing authority and include such places as England, Finland, Georgia, India, Mexico, Peru, and various American states. “Low regulation” jurisdictions require parents to notify authorities and provide minimal information and include such places as various Canadian provinces, Indonesia, Philippines, Russia, and various US states. Jurisdictions with “moderate regulation” require parents to notify authorities and complete a number of additional requirements such as regular evaluations of student performance and record-keeping requirements; these include Austria, Belgium, Chile, Ireland, Qatar, and various US states. “High regulation” jurisdictions, in addition to the moderate regulation requirements, also require parents to apply for and receive approval before home schooling; they include Albania, Belarus, Quebec, Czech Republic, France, Israel, New Zealand, Poland, South Africa, Sweden, and various US states. Donnelly also included Alberta in this category not because initial approval is required by because he found “the requirement that home educators host visitations with teachers from the school board or an associated private school [to be] fairly restrictive” (2012: 217). Finally, Donnelly reported that home schooling is not permitted in Brazil, Bulgaria, China, Cuba, Germany, Greece, and Spain.

An important and recent contribution to the legal understanding of home schooling was made by Lagos (2012) in his detailed paper (based on his doctoral dissertation), *Parental Education Rights in Canada: Canon and Civil Law Approaches to Homeschooling*. It contributes richly to the legal analysis of Canadian jurisprudence with relevance to home schooling, especially as it

relates to parental rights. His claim that “today ... parental authority is meant to be exercised, not over the child, but on behalf of the child” (2012: 457) is a helpful perspective in the emerging discussion about parental rights with respect to home schooling.

Yuracko, as well, in dealing with the constitutional constraints on home schooling is particularly concerned that “states have a social and economic interest in ensuring that all children receive an adequate education ... that states’ ability to withstand pressure from [those] ... seeking to gain [for] parents unfettered control over their children’s education” (2008: 184) must be bolstered. She argues for “appropriate limitations on parental control over children’s education ... [to] ensure that the most extreme forms of illiberal homeschooling are simply and appropriately taken off the table and out of the political debate” (2008: 184).

Ross moves even further by arguing “that the state’s interest in educating children for life in a pluralist democracy trumps any asserted parental liberty interest in controlling their children’s education” (2010: 991). Yet, Montgomery holds a competing view, that home schooling is the ultimate test of democracy. He argues that “the philosophy that the State has an equal or superior claim to the education of children stands in stark contrast with modern international human rights norms as articulated by landmark human rights conventions” (2013: 43).

Glenn takes a moderating perspective, arguing for the importance of balancing the interests of the state and of citizens, that accountability to government by parents for home schooling should be required only “for the outcomes of academic instruction” (2015: 149). Kunzman (2009a, 2012) contributes in further detail to the discussion on parents’ rights, children’s rights, and improved approaches to regulating home schooling. In short, he recommends “moderate levels of regulation such as basic skills testing [every year or two]” so that “poor homeschooling situations [do not] slip through the cracks” (Kunzman, 2009a: 326). Kunzman’s concern, from a regulatory perspective, is more about what “constitutes an acceptable (rather than ideal) education” (2012: 88).

In sum, since the last edition of this paper, contributions have been made in understanding the differences in degree of regulation in various international jurisdictions. Furthermore the discussion on the rights of children, of parents, and of the state with respect to home schooling continues to be addressed by an increasingly large group of legal experts and academics across the world.

In the next section, we move from taking an international perspective on home schooling—as viewed through the recent findings in the academic literature—to an update of home schooling in Canada. We review the changes in regulation and in enrolments since the last edition of this paper (2007) and give a snapshot for one year of the fiscal impact of home schooling in Canada.

# Update on Home Schooling in Canada: Regulation, Enrolments and Fiscal Impact

## Regulation

Since the last edition of this paper (2007), at least five Canadian provinces have updated or expanded the regulations or policies within which home schooling functions. The current policy, regulation, and legislation in each Canadian province are listed on [table 1](#).

More details on selected aspects of home-schooling regulation and policy as well as an analysis of the degree of regulation by province are provided in [table 2](#) (pp. 20-21). Further descriptive detail of the content of the regulation and policy by province is provided in [Appendix A](#) (p. 34). As table 2 shows, all provinces require that home-school parents register or notify the authorities of their home schooling. The four provinces with low regulation, those that in ordinary circumstances require little more than notification of home schooling, are British Columbia, Ontario, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland & Labrador. Those with moderate regulation, where some reporting of student progress or submission of education program plan is required, are Manitoba, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island. The provinces with high regulation are those that require submission of an educational plan, periodic evidence of student progress, and some form of approval for the program and/or the progress of the home-schooled student. These provinces are Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Quebec.

## Distributed Learning

Expansions in distributed learning in British Columbia should be noted. The main distinction between distributed learning<sup>7</sup> and home schooling in this province is that, while home schooling is the responsibility of the parent, the distributed-learning program, although it takes place in the home, enrolls the student in a public or independent distributed-learning school, is directed

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7. More specific details of distributed learning are given in Appendix A under the discussion of regulation in British Columbia.



**Table 1: Home School Regulation and Policy in Canada**

	Act	Regulation	Policy	Handbook/Other
British Columbia	School Act, 1996 Section 12, Home Education	School Regulation, 2014, Section 3, Home Education.  Independent School Regulation, 2014, Section 6, Home Schooled Children”	Homeschooling Policy (4 pages)  Distributed  Learning Policy for Homeschoolers (3 pages)	
Alberta	Education Act, 2012 Section 20,, Home Education	Home Education Regulation, 2015 (10 pages)		<i>Home Education Handbook, 2010</i> (39 pages)
Saskatchewan	Education Act, 1995, Section 157	The Home-Based Education Program Regulations, 2013 (14 pages)	Saskatchewan Home- based Education Policy Manual, 3rd edition, April 2014 (107 pages)	
Manitoba	Public Schools Act, 1987, Section 260, 262			Homeschooling Notification Package
Ontario	Education Act, 1990, Section 21			Policy Program Memorandum No. 131, 2002 (15 pages)
Quebec	Education Act, 1988, Section 15		Home Schooling Policy Framework, 2010 (15 pages)	
Nova Scotia	Education Act, 1996, Sections 128-129, Home Education	Regulations under the Education Act, Home Education, Sections 39-43		
New Brunswick	Education Act, 1997, Section 16(2)			<i>Home Schooling in New Brunswick: Become Familiar with the Roles and Responsibilities</i> (n.d.) (2 page pamphlet)
Prince Edward Island	School Act, 1988, Section 139, Home Education	Private Schools and Home Education Regulation, 1995/2010, Sections 19, 21, 22, 23		
Newfoundland & Labrador	Schools Act, 1997, Sections 5(c), 6, 7			

Sources: BC Home Learner’s Association (2014); see ‘Government Sources’, pp. 52–57.

and supervised a teacher certified by British Columbia's Teacher Regulation Branch, and meets the provincial standards for education. This popular approach to education at home in British Columbia is distinct in Canada, not because it does not occur under other names in other provinces (see for example, Alberta Distance Learning, 2014), but because this is the only province with a Distributed Learning Policy distinctly for home-schooled students. It also stands out as unique because British Columbia reports dramatic increases in numbers enrolled in this approach to education (BC Home Learner's Association, 2014; British Columbia, Ministry of Education, 2009-2014). It may well point to a blurring of the distinction between home schooling and classroom-based schooling. As delivery of education begins to take advantage of the possibilities for distribution offered by technology, the line between the two is becoming less defined. Certainly, when parents choose a blended approach of using some online Distributed Learning courses to support the rest of the home schooling, the definition becomes less defined. More study of such trends in home schooling in Canada should be undertaken.

### Saskatchewan

The most notable recent changes in regulation are the expansions in Saskatchewan. Donnelly (2012) in his analysis claimed that Saskatchewan was a low-regulation province. Given the recent changes, the province, according to the classification used here, would now be ranked as having high regulation with respect to home schooling. It is important to note that the increases have been accompanied by access to funding in some Saskatchewan boards, an aspect of regulation discussed in the next section.

### Funding

Public funding towards home schooling is available in three Canadian provinces, although the funding structure is very different in each. In British Columbia, the Grant for Home School Children Order (British Columbia, Ministry of Education, 2003) declares that a group 1 or group 2 independent school that registers a child who is being educated at home will receive \$175 for that child. Also in that province, the *Distributed Learning Policy for Homeschoolers* (British Columbia, Ministry of Education, 2012) makes \$600 available to reimburse third-party educational providers for educational resources and services for those home-schooled students in grades 10 to 12 who are enrolled in at least one distributed learning course.

In Alberta, parents (at the time of writing) are eligible to receive not less than \$820 per child, which is half of the funding independent school authorities receive from Alberta Education for each homeschooled registered in their school (Alberta, Alberta Education, 2013).

**Table 2: Selected Home-Schooling Regulations and Policy Details, by Province**

	Registration or notification required	Detailed written program plan required	Program monitored by school board or private school	Program inspected or certified
British Columbia	Yes	No	No	No
Alberta	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Saskatchewan	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Manitoba	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Ontario	Yes	No	No	No
Quebec	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nova Scotia	Yes	No	No	Yes
New Brunswick	Yes	No	No	No
Prince Edward Island	Yes	Yes	No (2)	No
Newfoundland & Labrador	Yes	No	No	No

(1) These classifications follow Donnelly's (2012), explained earlier in this paper. Given the recent regulatory and policy changes, I have not categorized all provinces as Donnelly did. Those that are different (Saskatchewan, Prince Edward Island) have been moved to higher regulation categories. He did not label Nova Scotia or Newfoundland & Labrador, and I have put them into a low regulation category.

(2) Parents are expected to identify a "Teacher Advisor" (Prince Edward Island, 2009).

Examinations or assessments	Required to meet provincial curriculum standards	Other	Low, Moderate or High Regulation (1)
Optional, but no graduation certificate awarded	No		Low
Student progress periodically reviewed and assessed, based on outcomes, by teacher of board or private school	Yes and, if does not follow Alberta Program of Study, program plan must be accepted by supervising board or school	High school credits are possible if course of study follows Alberta Program of Study	High
Student progress periodically reviewed and assessed; must maintain portfolio of student work	Required standard equivalent to that provided in government school	Access to Driver Education; every board required to make own policies; board may provide for students to earn secondary school credits through challenging department examinations or other means of evaluation by school staff.	High
Student progress periodically reviewed and assessed by field representative			Moderate
No	No		Low
Student progress periodically evaluated by school board	Must be equivalent to what is provided at school		High
Student progress periodically reviewed and assessed			Moderate
No	Official school exemption must be received from Minister		Low
No			Moderate
No	Approval must be granted by Director of Education		Low

Sources: BC Home Learner's Association (2014); see 'Government Sources', pp. 52-57.

In Saskatchewan, parents' voices and communal action combined with a new ethos of responsiveness in the province and focus on student achievement have resulted in district boards offering increasing amounts for home-schooled students within their jurisdictions. Parents, for example, who register their children in the largest school board in the province are eligible to receive up to \$1,000 per home-schooled student (Saskatoon Public Schools, 2007; 2015). Only these three Canadian provinces offer funding to parents, schools, or school districts for the provision of home schooling. **Table 3** summarizes the funding opportunities.

Thus, in all of Alberta and some districts of Saskatchewan, funding is available directly to parents for home education, with more than \$800 per student in Alberta and up to \$1,000 per student in the jurisdiction of select boards in Saskatchewan. In British Columbia, some reimbursement to third-party education providers is available for some home educated students. At this point, while resources may occasionally, on a case by case basis, be loaned to parents for the home education programs of their children, there is no additional evidence that funding or reimbursements are available for home schooled students in any other provinces in Canada. Thus expansions (since the last edition of this paper) in funding and regulation are noted in some provinces, mostly in Saskatchewan (Saskatoon Public Schools, 2007). The next section considers whether enrolments have increase since 2007.

## Enrolments

Home school enrolments, or more specifically numbers of students registered with their provincial or board authorities as home schooled, are reported in this section. The following analysis uses enrolments recently provided to the Fraser Institute, upon our request, by each provincial ministry (or department) of education in Canada. Home-school enrolments in Canada from 2006/07 to 2011/12 (the most recent period for which data were made available from each province) have increased by over 29% (**table 4**). In every province except British Columbia, home-school enrolments have increased and in British Columbia, if enrolments in Distributed Learning are included, enrolments have almost doubled in the period.

Home-schooling enrolments in Canada have shown growth of over 5% annually from 2006/07 to 2011/12. **Table 5** and **figure 1** show the average annual percentage change in the growth of home-school enrolment by province for the period.

As home-school enrolments increased for the period by more than 29%, total enrolments in government schools aggregated for all of Canada decreased by 2.5%. **Figure 2** shows the year-to-year change in enrolments in home schooling compared to total enrolments in government schools in



**Table 3: Provision for Funding for Home Schooling**

	Provision for funding to parents or providers	Provision for funding to schools
British Columbia	Students in grades 10-12 who are registered as home schooling and are enrolled in at least one distributed learning course are eligible to have educational expenses up to \$600 per student paid directly to the provider	\$175 per student
Alberta	Parents may receive up to 50% of the \$1,641.27 per student funding that is directed to the schools (that is, \$820.64 per student)	\$1,641.27 (but up to 50% of it may go to parent) Also 50% of cost for distance learning courses (grades 7-12) up to \$1,641.27 per student
Saskatchewan	Parents receive up to \$1,000 per student, but this varies by board.	

Sources: British Columbia, 2003, 2012; Alberta, 2013; Saskatoon Public Schools, 2015.

**Table 4: Home Schooling, Enrolment by Province, and as National Aggregate, 2006/07-2011/12; and as Share of Public School Enrolment, 2011/12**

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	Change 2006/07-2011/12	Share of public-school enrolment (%)
British Columbia (H-S only <sup>1</sup> )	2,711	2,789	2,722	2,463	2,228	2,084	-23.1%	0.4%
(H-S + D-L <sup>2</sup> )	14,449	18,598	20,395	24,942	29,765	27,370	89.4%	5.0%
Alberta	6,633	7,291	7,658	8,097	7,856	8,000	20.6%	1.4%
Saskatchewan	1,222	1,790	1,790	1,923	1,949	2,044	67.3%	1.2%
Manitoba	1,175	1,235	1,289	1,677	1,639	1,816	54.6%	1.0%
Ontario	3,584	3,711	3,502	3,584	4,745	4,948	38.1%	0.2%
Quebec	148	788	937	1,012	1,057	1,037	31.6% <sup>3</sup>	0.1%
New Brunswick	515	532	499	537	551	662	28.5%	0.6%
Nova Scotia	665	731	753	754	937	855	28.6%	0.7%
Prince Edward Island	46	54	59	55	68	81	76.1%	0.4%
Newfoundland & Labrador	74	107	107	112	124	135	82.4%	0.2%
Canada <sup>4</sup>	16,773	19,028	19,316	20,214	21,154	21,662	29.1%	0.4%

Notes: This analysis includes only students that are enrolled with a local school district or ministry or department of education in their province as home schooled. Students registered in Distributed Learning and Distance Learning are excluded (except in the one calculation for British Columbia). During this period, the number of students registered in Distributed Learning or Distance Learning increased in all four provinces for which such data were available to us (Newfoundland & Labrador, Ontario, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia). In British Columbia, distributed learning student enrolment increased most dramatically.

(1) Includes only home-school students. (2) Includes both home-schooled students and distributed-learning students. (3) The percentage change for Quebec is calculated from 2007/08 because of an anomalous data point for 2006/07. (4) Education is a provincially responsibility in Canada so the national number is an aggregate of provincial enrolments. All enrolment statistics provided by e-mail from official sources within each province's ministry or department of education (see 'Government Sources', pp. 52-57).

**Table 5: Home Schooling, Growth Rate (%) Year to Year**

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	Average annual growth rate, 2006/07–2011/12
British Columbia (H-S only <sup>1</sup> )	2.9%	-2.4%	-9.5%	-9.5%	-6.5%	-5.0%
(H-S + D-L <sup>2</sup> )	28.7%	9.7%	22.3%	19.3%	-8.0%	14.4%
Alberta	9.9%	5.0%	5.7%	-3.0%	1.8%	3.9%
Saskatchewan	46.5%	0.0%	7.4%	1.4%	4.9%	12.0%
Manitoba	5.1%	4.4%	30.1%	-2.3%	10.8%	9.6%
Ontario	3.5%	-5.6%	2.3%	32.4%	4.3%	7.4%
Quebec		18.9%	8.0%	4.4%	-1.9%	7.4% <sup>3</sup>
New Brunswick	3.3%	-6.2%	7.6%	2.6%	20.1%	5.5%
Nova Scotia	9.9%	3.0%	0.1%	24.3%	-8.8%	5.7%
Prince Edward Island	17.4%	9.3%	-6.8%	23.6%	19.1%	12.5%
Newfoundland & Labrador	44.6%	0.0%	4.7%	10.7%	8.9%	13.8%
Canada <sup>4</sup>	13.4%	1.5%	4.6%	4.7%	2.4%	5.3%

Notes: This analysis includes only students that are enrolled with a local school district or ministry or department of education in their province as home schooled. Students registered in Distributed Learning and Distance Learning are excluded (except in the one calculation for British Columbia). During this period, the number of students registered in Distributed Learning or Distance Learning increased in all four provinces for which such data were available to us (Newfoundland & Labrador, Ontario, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia). In British Columbia, distributed learning student enrolment increased most dramatically.

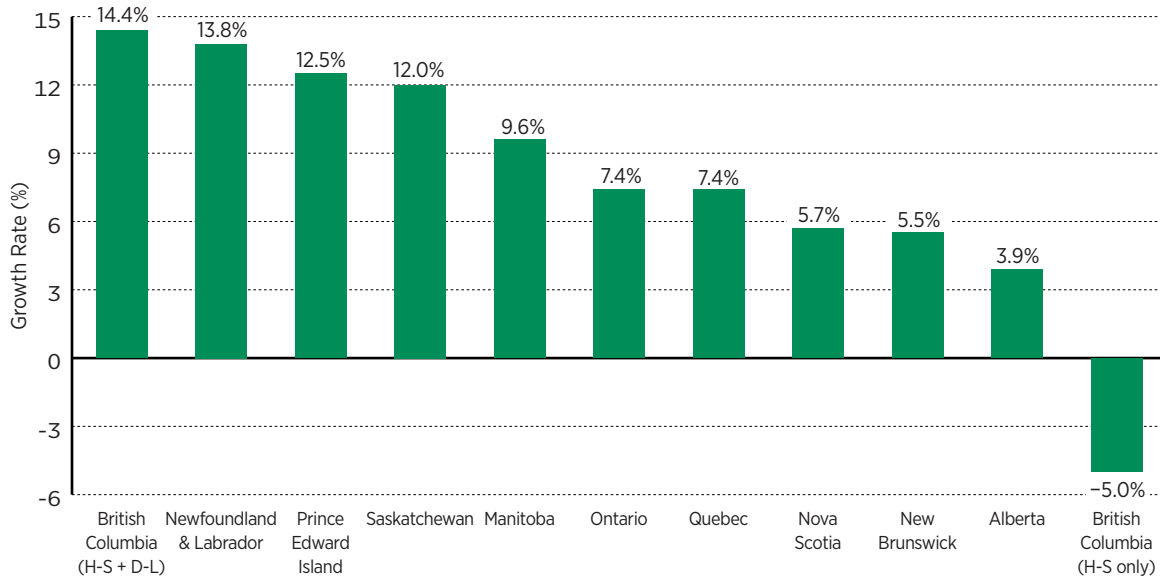
(1) Includes only home-school students. (2) Includes both home-school students and distributed-learning students. (3) The percentage change for Quebec is calculated from 2007/08 because of an anomalous data point for 2006/07. (4) Education is a provincially responsibility in Canada so the national number is an aggregate of provincial enrolments. All enrolment statistics provided by e-mail from official sources within each province's ministry or department of education (see "Government Sources", pp. 52–57).

Canada indexed to 2006/07. Figures 2.1 to 2.11 (found in [Appendix B](#), p. 41) show the change in enrolments in home schools and government schools province by province, indexed to 2006/07. The growth in enrolment for the nine provinces with increased home-school enrolments ranged from about 20% in Alberta to more than 80% in Newfoundland & Labrador, as shown in the second-last column of table 4.

Home-school enrolments declined in British Columbia during that period by about a quarter. Even so, during that same period, as alluded to earlier, the number of students in British Columbia enrolled as distributed-learning students increased by 147%.<sup>8</sup> A substitution of distributed learning

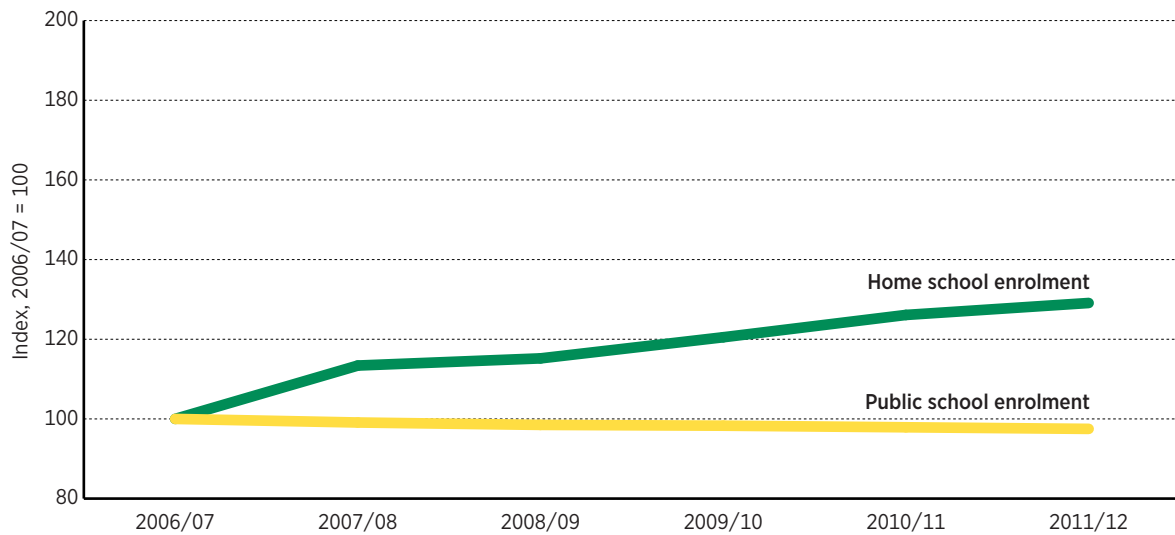
8. During this period, the number of students registered in Distance Learning also increased in three other provinces for which such data were made available to us (Newfoundland, Ontario, and Saskatchewan).

**Figure 1: Enrolment in Home Schools, Average Annual Growth Rate, 2006/07-2011/12**



Notes: (1) This analysis includes only students who are enrolled with a local school district or ministry or department of education in their province as home schooled. Students registered in Distributed Learning and Distance Learning are excluded, except in the one calculation for British Columbia (H-S + D-L). (2) Quebec: Data for 2006/07 was excluded because of an abnormal increase in home-school students. In 2005/06, the number of home-school students in the province was 608. This number dropped dramatically in 2006/07 to 148 students, to increase again in 2007/08 to 788 students. Sources: enrolment in home schools from provincial ministries and departments of education; enrolment in government schools from Statistics Canada, 2013, 2014 (see "Government Sources", pp. 52-57); calculations by author.

**Figure 2: Canada—Change in Total Enrolment in Public Schools and Home Schools, 2006/07-2011/12, indexed to 2006/07**



Sources: enrolment in home schools from provincial ministries and departments of education; enrolment in government schools from Statistics Canada, 2013, 2014 (see "Government Sources", pp. 52-57); calculations by author.

for home schooling may be taking place as many of these students and their families would consider their experience to be not unlike that of home-schooled students although they use government curricula rather than programs arranged by their parents; and ultimate responsibility for their education is with the provincial authorities, not with their parents.

Nevertheless, despite the continued growth in enrolments, official home-school enrolments in Canada in 2011/12 were about 0.4% of total government school enrolments. Just over 5 million students were enrolled in public schools in Canada while 21,662 students were registered with provincial authorities as home schooled. As the last column of table 4 shows, the provinces with the largest home-school enrolments as a share of public-school enrolments are Alberta and Saskatchewan. These are also the two provinces that offer some reimbursement directly to parents for expenses associated with home schooling.

Compare this to home-school enrolments in the United States. Murphy claims that in the United States between 3% and 4% of students are home schooled and that anywhere from 6% to 12% (of US students) will have been home educated at some point in their lives (2012: 11). Ray (2011) found 2.04 million home-school students in the United States in 2010. Thus, while proportionately more US students are enrolled as home schooled, the dramatic growth in home schooling experienced in the United States from the 1970s to the early 2000s, “may have peaked and even [be] declining a bit” (Gaither, 2008: 204).<sup>9</sup> Murphy also finds evidence that the rate at which home schooling grew between 1980 and 2000 “may be slowing down” (2012: 11).

Determining trends in the prevalence of home schooling in Canada is not entirely straightforward. Others (see, for example, Bielick, 2008; Ray, 2011) have claimed that official enrolment statistics may not represent real home-schooling statistics accurately, as some home-schooling parents do not enroll their children with the local or provincial authorities. Nevertheless, even if the numbers presented here underrepresent the actual number of home-schooled students in Canada, it is clear that home-school enrolments in Canada are continuing to increase.

Thus, analysis of change in enrolments, since the last edition of this paper, indicates that home schooling enrolment in Canada continues to grow and this is occurring while, for the same period, public school enrolments continue to decline in the country. Growth is also apparent in other forms

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9. “The most likely explanation for the declines ... is the increased use of home-based public charter schools, often called ‘cybercharters’ because of their extensive use of online curricula. Many families taking advantage of this educational choice had previously been homeschooling independently” (Gaither, 2008: 204). Murphy claims that the pool of parents willing and of sufficient resources to home school is not limitless, and makes the point that the “recent economic downturn might put pressure on parents to select employment over homeschooling” (2012: 11).

of non-school-based education with Distributed Learning and Distance Learning attracting (as in the case of British Columbia and in other provinces) increased numbers of students.

## Fiscal Impact of Home Schooling in Canada

Because the majority of costs associated with home schooling are born by the parents, home schooling results in a net financial saving to provincial governments. The average spending per public-school K-12 pupil in Canada in 2011/12 was \$11,835 (table 6). With a total of 21,662 students enrolled as home schooled in Canada that year, the families educating their children at home saved Canadians \$256.4 million in 2011/12. Of course, education spending is incurred at the provincial level so a national savings number is

**Table 6: Fiscal Impact of Home Schooling in Canada, by Province, 2011/12**

	Number of public-school students	Number of home-school students	Public schools education spending (\$ millions)	Spending per pupil (\$)	Cost per home-school student (\$)	Net savings from home schooling (\$ millions)	Annual saving per public student (\$)	Net savings from home schooling as percentage of total K-12 spending
British Columbia	550,747	2,084	6,289	11,418		23.8	43.2	0.4%
Alberta	577,761	8,000	7,798	13,497	1,625	95.0	164.4	1.2%
Saskatchewan	170,408	2,044	2,206	12,948	1,000	24.4	143.3	1.1%
Manitoba	178,920	1,816	2,174	12,150		22.1	123.3	1.0%
Ontario	2,043,117	4,948	24,757	12,117		60.0	29.3	0.2%
Quebec	1,172,003	1,037	11,956	10,201		10.6	9.0	0.1%
New Brunswick	102,579	662	1,352	13,181		8.7	85.1	0.6%
Nova Scotia	125,540	855	1,510	12,031		10.3	81.9	0.7%
Prince Edward Island	20,832	81	236	11,317		0.9	44.0	0.4%
Newfoundland & Labrador	67,830	135	865	12,754		1.7	25.4	0.2%
Canada	5,032,183	21,662	59,558	11,835		256.4	50.9	0.4%

Notes (1) This analysis include only students that are home-schooled. Distributed learners are excluded. (3) Alberta: In 2011-12, the funding rate per eligible home school student was \$1,625.02, only part of which went to the parents. Saskatchewan: Some boards reimburse parents up to \$1000 per home school student for expenses incurred. To ensure conservative estimates of the savings realized, it is assumed that all Saskatchewan home school students received this amount.

Sources: Van Pelt and Emes, 2015; BC Home Learner's Association, 2014; 2015; provincial ministries and departments of education (see "Government Sources", pp. 52-57); calculations by author.

simply conceptual in nature. Broken down by province, and using provincially specific per-pupil education spending for that year, home-schooling families saved Albertans, for example, \$95 million dollars and Ontarians, \$60 million dollars.

The net savings from home schooling can be calculated as a percentage of total spending on public elementary and secondary schooling. For Canada in 2011/12, the net savings was 0.4% of total spending on public elementary and secondary schooling ([figure 3](#)). The province with the highest percentage savings from home schooling in that year was Alberta, with savings from home schooling at 1.2% of spending on public elementary and secondary education. Saskatchewan, at 1.1%, and Manitoba, at 1.0%, were not far behind ([figure 3](#)).

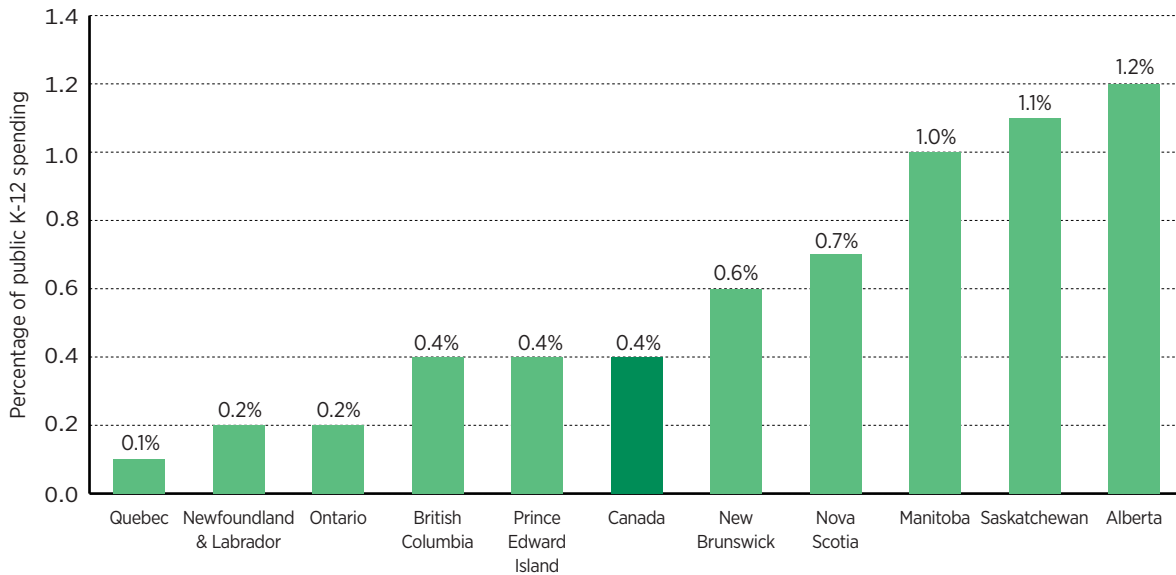
The average annual savings for Canada on a per-public-school-pupil basis was \$51 ([figure 4](#)). Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba led the provinces in realizing savings from home schooling of \$164, \$143, and \$123, respectively, per elementary or secondary public-school student. In other words, if the home-educated students attended public school, the per-pupil spending would increase by the amount indicated per student. In brief, the net savings from home schooling as a percentage of total spending on K-12 public schools was 0.4%.<sup>10</sup>

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10. This is a conservative calculation. First, students in only some Saskatchewan districts are eligible for the reimbursement of up to \$1000 but we applied it to all Saskatchewan home-schooled students. Second, as mentioned earlier, it is possible that not all home-schooled students in Canada are registered with their provincial or local authorities and thus their numbers have not been included in the savings calculation. Finally, as noted earlier, many parents home school because of the special needs of their child. These calculations do not include the additional per-pupil funding that educating these students would require, and thus further underestimates the savings to provincial governments.



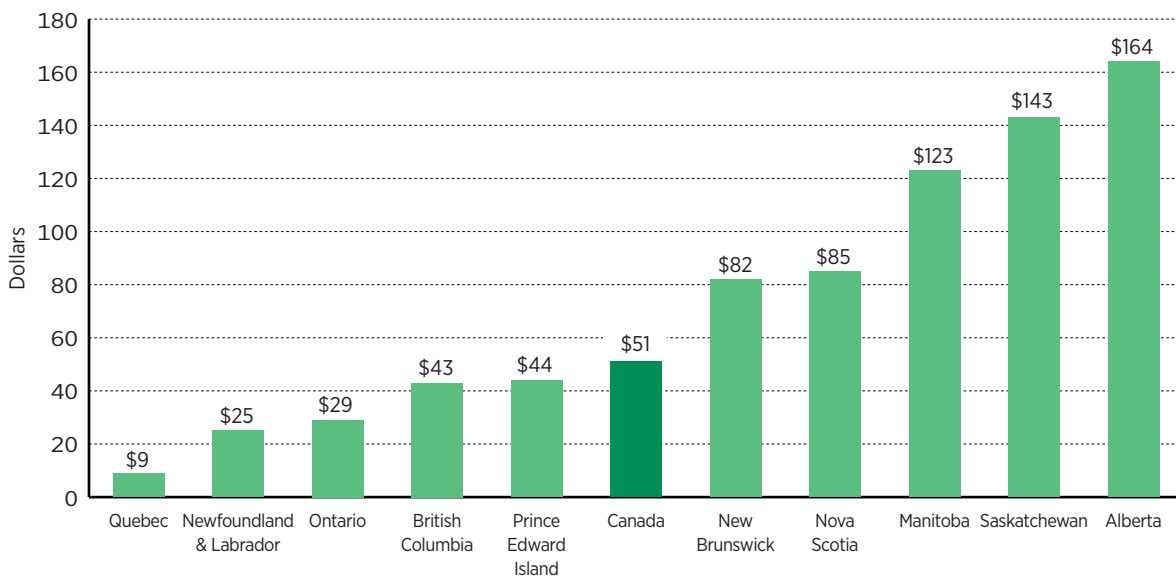
**Figure 3: Savings from Home Schooling, as a Percentage of Total Public School Spending, 2011/12**



Note: This analysis includes only students who are enrolled with a local school district or ministry or department of education in their province as home schooled. Students registered in Distributed Learning and Distance Learning are excluded.

Sources: Van Pelt and Emes, 2015; BC Home Learner's Association, 2014; provincial ministries and departments of education (see "Government Sources", pp. 52–57); calculations by author.

**Figure 4: Annual Savings (\$) from Home Schooling per Public K-12 Student, 2011/12**



Note: This analysis includes only students who are enrolled with a local school district or ministry or department of education in their province as home schooled. Students registered in Distributed Learning and Distance Learning are excluded.

Sources: Van Pelt and Emes, 2015; BC Home Learner's Association, 2014; provincial ministries and departments of education (see "Government Sources", pp. 52–57); calculations by author.

## Conclusions

Since the last edition of this paper in 2007, enrolment in home schooling has continued to expand, more attention has been given to analysis of home schooling in the academic literature and, in Canada, it has received ongoing and increased attention from regulators. The literature on home schooling indicates that motivations for home schooling are increasingly blurring and appear to be less radical and more practical, less an act of resistance and more an act of pursuing the possible. Although research continues to be required, more is known about successful practices and outcomes than ever before. Studies of academic outcomes of home schooling suggest that certain approaches to home schooling, especially those motivated by academic purposes and using structured approaches, lead to higher achievement than other forms of education. Studies continue to point to the possibility that home schooling can reduce the negative impact upon education that often accompanies lower income and lower parental education, as well as those disadvantages sometimes associated with race, gender, and special needs. Studies also continue to affirm positive adult outcomes and show that home schooling provides preparation for university and for employment as good as, or better than, that provided by public schools.

Provincial legislation continues to allow for home schooling, and more detailed regulations or policies were recently prepared in at least five provinces with several provinces now offering parents funding, funding that is universally accessible and not means-tested (that is, it is not income-based).

Enrolments have increased in nine of ten provinces (in all but British Columbia). But, even in British Columbia dramatic expansions are occurring in enrolments in distributed learning. While the definition of home schooling has not changed and the emphasis remains on parental responsibility, hints exist—in increased enrolment in distributed learning and in the growth of formal home-school co-operatives—that a blurring between home schooling and classroom-based schooling may be underway.

Thus, in summary, home schooling is no longer the realm of a radical few parents and researchers. It is embracing new educational possibilities and adapting to new educational opportunities. It matches changing lifestyles

and employs opportunities technology provides. It is efficient for some parents and is a cost savings measure from which all taxpayers benefit, saving Canadians more than 250 million dollars annually.

Since the last edition of this paper, home schooling has indeed continued to expand in Canada. Research has matured and multiplied, enrolments have grown, and regulation—in some jurisdictions with funding recognizing the practice—has expanded. The second edition of this paper encouraged scholars, parents, and policy makers to give increased respect and attention to home schooling. This third edition has not only found evidence that this has occurred but it also affirms this conclusion: home schooling has proven itself to be a successful educational alternative. As such, it continues to merit both the respect of policy makers and the further attention of researchers.

## Lessons and implications

As K-12 graduates are increasingly challenged to prepare to compete and contribute globally, parents and policy makers cannot afford to overlook any legitimately promising approaches to education. The continued and even accelerated, although still modest, attention given to home schooling in Canada, offers several lessons for all education stakeholders.

- 1 Home schooling is continuing to grow modestly in Canada. Enrolments, regulation, and research are all expanding. It should not be ignored for the promise it offers on the educational landscape in terms of parental choice, flexibility in learning, and fiscal efficiencies. For example, the impact on education spending should be noted. Canadian taxpayers are spared the expense of more than a quarter-billion dollars each year because of the educational activities of home-schooling parents.
- 2 Policy can be sufficiently detailed, while still respecting the local providers and the best interest of the student. For example, Saskatchewan has the most detailed policy but district-level voice and collective action by parents informs policy on funding, which varies from district to district in this province.
- 3 Modest funding amounts show some evidence of being related to increases in enrolments in home schooling. For example, Alberta and Saskatchewan, where funding is available, show the highest ratio of home-schooled students to public-school students in Canada.
- 4 The distinction between classroom-based schooling and home schooling may be blurring. The growth in distributed learning provides evidence of this and may provide an appealing and promising way forward. For example, the

dramatic increase in British Columbia (and in other provinces as well) in distributed-learning enrolments suggests parents and students appreciate the autonomy, the flexibility, the pacing, and the opportunities of home-based learning combined with some of the benefits of incorporating technology, external supervision, assessment and accountability, and access to a ready-to-use provincial curriculum (including recognition through credits and diplomas) into the home schooling experience.

- 5 Research demonstrates that some approaches to home schooling are associated with higher academic achievement than classroom-based schooling. For example, students of parents motivated by academic purposes and offering a more structured home-schooling approach have been found to have stronger academic outcomes. Several studies affirm that home-educated students are prepared for post-secondary education and may even be considered high achievers.

As technology removes the dichotomy in our lives between home and work, it is possible that it will begin increasingly to remove the distinctions between home and school. Klein and Poplin in their study of virtual charter schools found that, as families integrate work in the home, this distributed form of learning

actually harkens back to preindustrial revolution education when families, their work, values, and religious beliefs, and their education were more unified ... could it be [they ask] that our technological culture, born of the industrial revolution, has come full circle and offers again the opportunity to renew this integration of family, work values, and schooling that was initially torn apart by the industrial revolution? (2008: 392)

As noted through the experience in Canada with dramatic expansions of distributed learning, “the increasing hybridization of schooling and the blurring of lines between public and private are becoming prominent themes ... the role of technology and distance education will most surely re-shape the nature of schooling, and indeed the process is already underway” (Kunzman, 2010: 26).

Home schooling in Canada—with its growth in numbers and expansion in legitimacy and effectiveness—suggests that the new phase of education that we are entering need not be viewed with suspicion and hesitation. As we have learned from the growing body of research on home schooling (in Canada and beyond), education that is less constrained by time (the typical 9-to-3 school day) and place (the typical school building) is possible and practical. It is appealing to some and can be very successful. Parents, pupils, and policy makers have demonstrated that the challenges of home schooling can be addressed. Although more research is needed on successful and effective

approaches to home education and more needs to be studied about the long-term effects of home education, the last decade has brought improvements in research methodology and expansions in the aspects of home education that are studied.

Home schooling seems poised to respond to the needs and opportunities of our current society. Certainly, with the opportunities technology offers and the excellence our global economies demand, we are positioned to embrace more fully new possibilities for education less encumbered by the constraints of time and space. Expansions and growth in home schooling suggest that the way forward may not be as daunting as it once seemed.

If we consider the lessons that might be learned from recent, small-scale, independent, innovative approaches to education experienced within our own educational jurisdictions, we will be better positioned to approach the opportunities for improved academic, social, and cultural outcomes that digital technology and other insights of our era offer to students and societies. The cautions, successes, and expansions of home education in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries should not be overlooked as education is redesigned for a new era of learning and teaching.

## Appendix A: Detailed Description of Regulation and Policy, by Province

### British Columbia

The School Act's section 12, titled "Home education" states that "a parent of a child who is required to enroll in an educational program under section 3(a) may educate the child at home or elsewhere in accordance with this Division, and must provide that child with an educational program". British Columbia is one of three provinces that mentions some version of "at home or elsewhere" as the accepted alternative to attendance at a government school. British Columbia's Ministry of Education in defining "homeschooled children" notes that "children may be taught at home without the supervision of a certified teacher, but are required to be registered with a public, francophone, distributed learning or independent school" (2015: 33).

The recently released School Regulation and the Independent School Regulation (British Columbia, Ministry of Education, 2014a, 2014b) give further details about distinctions between home schooling and Distributed Learning, especially with respect to registration and enrolment. Home-schooling students are to be registered with a public school, a francophone school, or an independent school but if, while in grades 1 through 9, they enroll in any school program (including distributed learning), they are no longer registered as home schooled and are considered enrolled school students. Only in grades 10 to 12 are registered home-schooled students permitted also to enroll in distributed-learning courses. The regulations also confirm access of home-schooled students to the usual evaluations and assessments that occur in the school in which they are registered as well as access to, and loan of, materials and resources.

Two additional policies and additional description on the Ministry of Education's website give further detail, including the distinction between "Distributed Learning Students" and "Homeschooled Children" (British Columbia, Ministry of Education, 2012, 2015b, n.d.). Distributed learning students are enrolled in a public or independent school distributed-learning program where the majority of the learning takes place at a distance. The program is the responsibility of the public or independent school, is directed and supervised by a teacher certified in British Columbia (parents may assist in the learning process, but are not the teachers); and must meet provincial standards as outlined in the School Act or Independent School Act (British Columbia, Ministry of Education, 2015b; see also British Columbia, Ministry of Education, 2012). In contrast, home-schooled children are registered at a



school (public, francophone, or independent) in the province by September 30 each year but their educational program is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to provide and supervise the educational program. The educational program does not have to meet provincial standards, is not inspected by the Ministry of Education, and home-schoolers in Grades 10 to 12 have the option to write provincial examinations but do not receive a British Columbia Dogwood graduation certificate (British Columbia, Ministry of Education, 2015b; see also British Columbia, Ministry of Education, n.d.). The website also explains annual per-pupil funding available to school districts and independent schools enrolling students in distributing learning programs.

### **Alberta**

This province is one of four that mentions “home education” (or some equivalent label) by name in its education act. Section 20, titled “Home education programs” states:

- (1) a parent of a student may provide, at home or elsewhere, a home education program for the student if the program (a) meets the requirements of the regulations, and (b) is under the supervision of a board or the person responsible for the operation of a private school accredited under section 29(2).
- (2) If a parent resides in unorganized territory, the Minister shall act as a board for the purposes of this section.
- (3) The Minister may make regulations respecting home education.

Furthermore Alberta is one of five provinces that also has related regulation animated by the Act. The Home Education Regulation released in 2015 replaces the 2006 Home Education Regulation and it will expire on August 31, 2025. Alberta’s approach to home education regulation is distinct from other provinces because it lists in a Schedule in the regulation more than 20 “Learning Outcomes for Students Receiving Home Education Programs that Do Not Follow the Alberta Programs of Study”. Not only are parents who do not follow an Alberta Program of study required to develop and submit a plan design to achieve the outcomes, parents and students are expected to regularly be available to meet with a representative of the supervising board or independent school with whom they are registered to assess progress of the student.

### **Saskatchewan**

Section 157 of the Education Act, 1995, Chapter E-0.2, under the title “Exceptions to school attendance” reads as follows: “(1) A pupil may be exempted from attendance at a school where: ... (c) the pupil is receiving instruction in a registered home-based education program”. Home-based education is briefly noted more than 16 times in the Act. Saskatchewan is

noteworthy for its extensive recent revisions with respect to home education and independent schooling. The Home-Based Education Program regulation specifies that registering authorities (school districts) will monitor compliance and assess progress of home-based learner in relation to the written educational plan.

The recent regulation and policy attest to rather dramatic expansions in the regulatory environment surrounding non-public forms of education in this province. The Speech from the Throne at the opening of the recent legislative assembly touches on the new emphasis in the Saskatchewan Student First framework, which it claims is based on a European model and gives special priority to students and student achievement.

In the area of education, our priority is putting students first. The Student First approach will build on successes that are already being achieved in school divisions throughout the province ... The goal of Student First is to identify and replicate these successes. An important step in the development of Student First will be a wide-ranging consultation with teachers, administrators, parents and students. (Legislative Assembly, Speech from the Throne, October 23, 2013: 3).

Hence, the tone is collaborative and students rather than the status quo of the system, the priority.

Saskatchewan is distinct from all other provinces in the extent of its home-based education policy (Saskatchewan, Ministry of Education, 2014). The more than 100-page document offers a lengthy history to home schooling including the constitutional and legal context for home schooling, and is organized under a “responsibility” framework, with roughly half of it dealing with responsibilities of registering authorities and the next half with responsibilities of the home-based educator. Saskatchewan extends an opportunity to all registered home-schooled students to participate in Driver Education, stating in the policy (A.3.2) that this “consistent access to driver education for all pupils in the province who are eligible is equitable”. Saskatchewan is distinct from other provinces in its concern for equitable access to programs for all students regardless of the system of education in which the student is enrolled.

### **Manitoba**

The Public Schools Act, in sections 260 and 262, addresses the home school option. “Notification to the minister” in section 260 states:

- (1) The parent or guardian of a child who is a pupil in a home school shall, in a form approved by the minister, notify the minister of the establishment of the home school;
- (2) The parent or guardian shall, in

a form approved by the minister, notify the minister about the home school when it is first established and on or before September 1 in each year; (3) Within 30 days after a home school is first established and on or before September 1 in each year, the parent or guardian shall provide the minister with the following information: (a) the name and birth date of each pupil in the school; (b) the name of the school or school division each pupil would otherwise attend; and (c) an outline of the education program and grade level for each pupil; and (4) The parent or guardian shall provide the minister with periodic progress reports on each pupil in the home school. The reports must contain the information and be provided according to a schedule determined by the minister.

Furthermore, section 262 states:

No person is guilty of an offence under subsection 260(2) for failing or refusing to ensure that his or her child attends school if (b) the field representative certifies that in his opinion the child is currently receiving a standard of education at home or elsewhere equivalent to that provided in a public school. (Manitoba, Ministry of Education and Advanced Learning, 2015)

While no other regulation or policy is enacted under the legislation, the ministry website gives direction on curriculum options for home schooling. Parents may select from one of three or create a combination of the three: child-centred instruction, Christian-based curriculum, and independent study option, which for grades 1 to 8 is administered through the Alberta Distance Learning Centre and for grades 9 to 12 through the Manitoba Education Distance Learning Unit. Still, the level of ideological specification and the requirement for progress reporting belies its brevity and points to a structured approach more similar to the other three western provinces than may be evident at first glance.

### **Ontario**

In contrast to the four western provinces, Ontario's policy on home education is sparse and has remained unchanged for more than a dozen years. Section 21 (2) of the Education Act reads as follows: "A person is excused from attendance at school if, (a) the person is receiving satisfactory instruction at home or elsewhere." As in most other provinces, this is part of the compulsory attendance section of the legislation. No further regulation exists and Policy/Program Memorandum No. 131 enacted in 2002 continues to guide the process for informing and reporting on home schooling in Ontario. Since its implementation a dozen years ago, the approach by ministry and boards

to home schooling across the province are much more consistent than in the previous decades. Assumptions of satisfactory instruction prevail and this has “warmed” the atmosphere around the provision of home schooling. Still, Ontario has been described as having a “chilly” climate towards non-public forms of education (Allison, 2014) and yet the atmosphere around home schooling has improved in the recent decade or so.

### Quebec

Section 15, under the Compulsory School Attendance section of the Education Act, states: “The following students are exempt from compulsory school attendance: ... (4) a student who receives home schooling and benefits from an educational experience which, according to an evaluation made by or for the school board, are equivalent to what is provided at school” (Quebec, n.d.). While the details of what an evaluation would include and what equivalency would mean are unclear, and thus results in differences in interpretation board by board across the province, in 2010 the ministry released *Home Schooling: Policy Framework* (Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisiret du Sport, 2010) intended apparently to reduce some of this uncertainty. Nevertheless, the regulatory environment surrounding home schooling in this province continues to vary by board, provoking one legal analyst to claim “in practice ... the provincial government [of Quebec] exercises a statist policy of control and supervision regarding private schools and homeschooling. Perhaps for this reason, homeschooling in Quebec is miniscule and faces bureaucratic and socio-cultural obstacles” (Lagos, 2012: 439).

### Nova Scotia

A portion of Nova Scotia's Education Act is titled “Home Education” (Nova Scotia, 1996a, 1996b). Sections 128 and 129 address the right of parents to educate their children at home and their responsibility to register and report progress; and specifies that the minister may require that evidence of educational progress be submitted and, where evidence of progress or of meeting requirements is not presented, may terminate the home education. The regulations under the Act in sections 39–43 further specify details of registration, assessment, and provision of evidence of progress in the program.

### New Brunswick

Again as in other Canadian provinces, under the section listing exemptions to compulsory school attendance requirements, the Education Act of New Brunswick, in section 16(2) states: “The Minister shall, on application of the parent of a child, exempt in writing the child from attending school where the Minister is satisfied that the child is under effective instruction elsewhere” (New Brunswick, 1997). No further regulation or policy exists although an undated two-page pamphlet on the province's website offers steps for parents,

beginning with assessing if home schooling is appropriate for the family, and then addresses applying for the exemption, planning for the instruction, evaluating and keeping records of program, and planning for return to public school, post-secondary education, or the work world (New Brunswick, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, n.d.).

### **Prince Edward Island**

Section 139 of the School Act is titled “Home Education” and is under the heading Miscellaneous Provisions, which covers such items as private schools and youth programs. It states that parents who intend to home school must notify the minister and provide a copy of the proposed home education program (Prince Edward Island, 1988). A regulation dating back to 1995 (with revisions in 2005 and 2010) titled Private Schools and Home Education Regulation deals with Home Education in sections 19, 21, 22, and 23. These sections give more detail on the information parents are to provide regarding the program and the child, and on access to school programs and school resources (Prince Edward Island, 2010). A Minister’s Directive also states that parents of a student who participated in an approved home education program are responsible for keeping records and that the placement of such a student shall be decided by the school board based on achievement tests and other assessments if the student enrolls in a public school (Prince Edward Island, Department of Education, Early Learning and Culture, 2001). It is curious that the Ministry’s webpage on home schooling requires that parents intending to home school must have a Teacher Advisor in place to provide direction on the home education program (Prince Edward Island, Department of Education, Early Learning and Culture, 2009) but that such a requirement does not appear to be mentioned in any of the province’s statute or official policy.

### **Newfoundland & Labrador**

The provincial website’s page on Home Schooling states that “parents have the right to home-school their child. Approval must be granted by the director of education with the school district, and approval must be renewed each year. The child will be registered at his or her local school and textbooks provided free-of-charge” (Newfoundland & Labrador, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2014). The Schools Act section 5(c) excuses school attendance “with the prior written approval of the director, [where the student] is under instruction satisfactory to the director, at home or elsewhere, for a period specified by the director”(Newfoundland and Labrador, 1997). Section 6 of the Act, Home Instruction, and section 7, Home Instruction Approval, state that a parent may provide instruction, at home or elsewhere, and that approval must be renewed each year. Section 18 indicates that any person who has reason to believe that “a child who is receiving instruction

under section 6 is not receiving instruction in accordance with this Act” has a duty to report the matter to the director. It does not appear that other regulations or policies regarding home schooling are in place in this province.

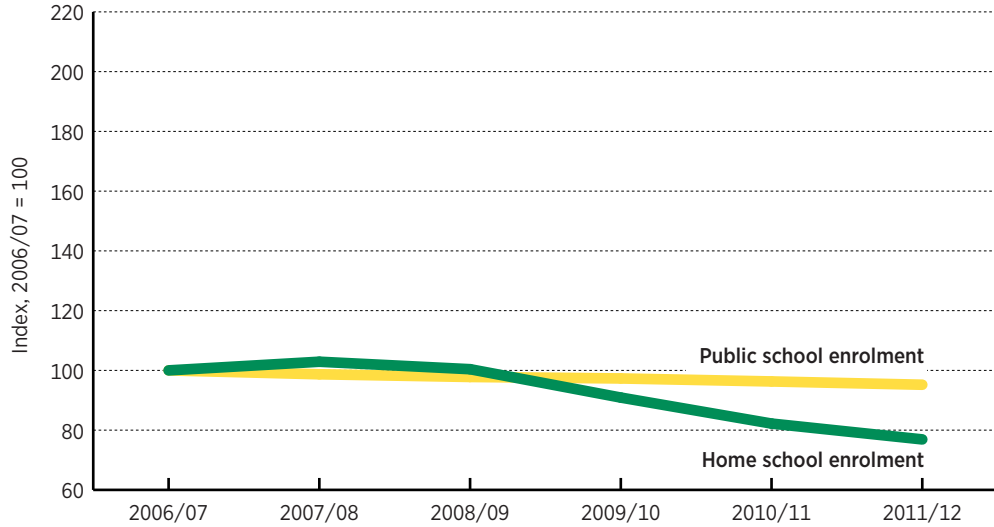
## Summary

The four western provinces and Quebec have the most extensive, recent, and detailed provision for home schooling. British Columbia should be noted for its newer policy in Distributed Learning and Saskatchewan for its especially extensive proactive consideration of home schooling. Manitoba might rightly be categorized with Ontario and the rest of the eastern provinces in their maintenance of the status quo with respect to homeschooling policy and regulation for the last decade or even two. Although Prince Edward Island has updated its regulation, arguably it has done so because it is routine to do so, and not because of a proactive shift towards home schooling. Still, even though the regulations and directives for home schooling in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island are brief, their requirements for approval and/or regular progress reporting establishes a more structured regulatory environment for home schooling and less autonomy for parents than, for example, parents in Ontario. It is important to note that the provinces with the most recent, dramatic changes to home-school regulation were also the ones to offer some funding towards its practice.



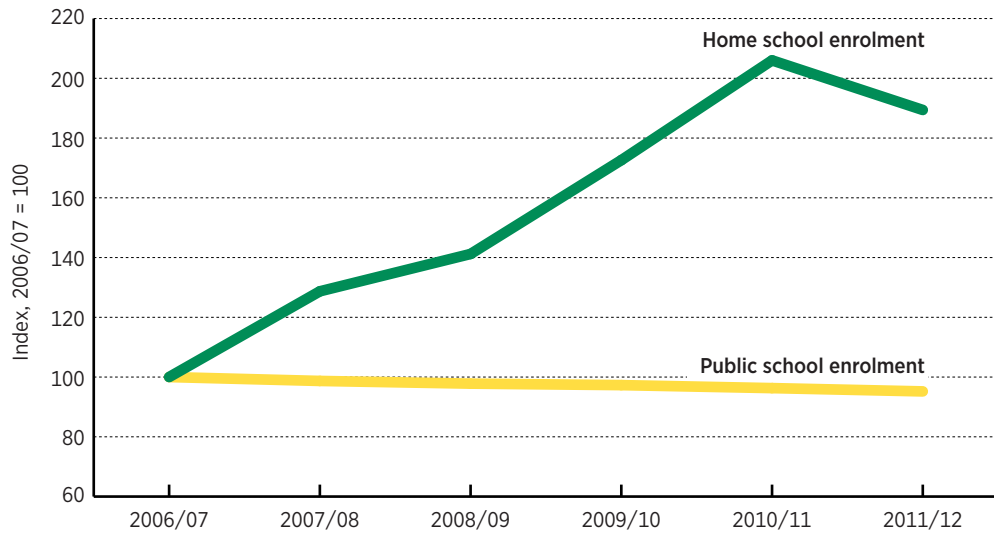
## Appendix B: Change in Enrolments in Home Schools and Public Schools, by Province, Indexed to 2006/07

**Figure 2.1a: British Columbia—Change in Total Enrolment in Public Schools and Home Schools, 2006/07–2011/12, indexed to 2006/07**



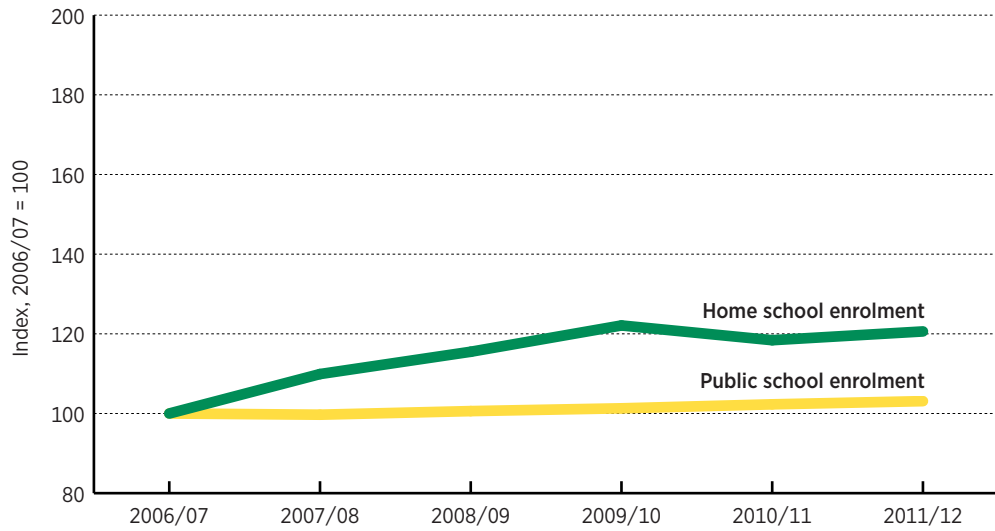
Sources: BC Home Learner's Association, 2014; provincial ministries and departments of education (see "Government Sources", pp. 52–57); calculations by author.

**Figure 2.1b: British Columbia—Change in Total Enrolment in Public Schools and Home Schools + Distributed Learning, 2006/07–2011/12, indexed to 2006/07**



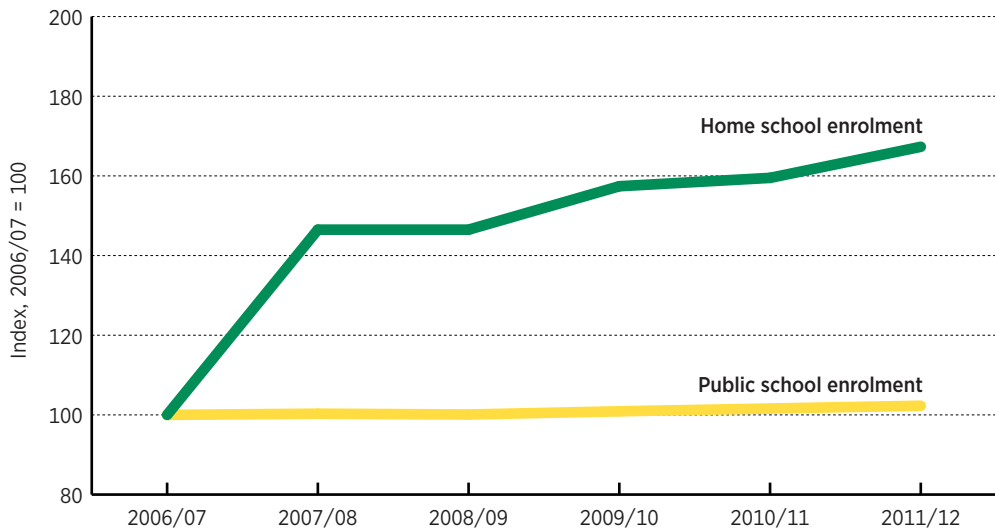
Sources: BC Home Learner's Association, 2014; provincial ministries and departments of education (see "Government Sources", pp. 52–57); calculations by author.

**Figure 2.2: Alberta—Change in Total Enrolment in Public Schools and Home Schools, 2006/07–2011/12, indexed to 2006/07**



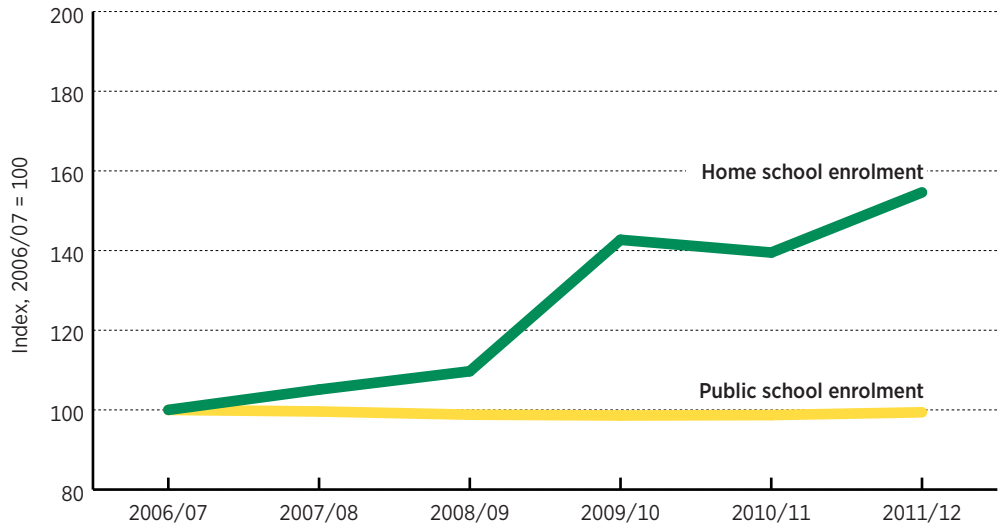
Sources: BC Home Learner’s Association, 2014; provincial ministries and departments of education (see “Government Sources”, pp. 52–57); calculations by author.

**Figure 2.3: Saskatchewan—Change in Total Enrolment in Public Schools and Home Schools, 2006/07–2011/12, indexed to 2006/07**



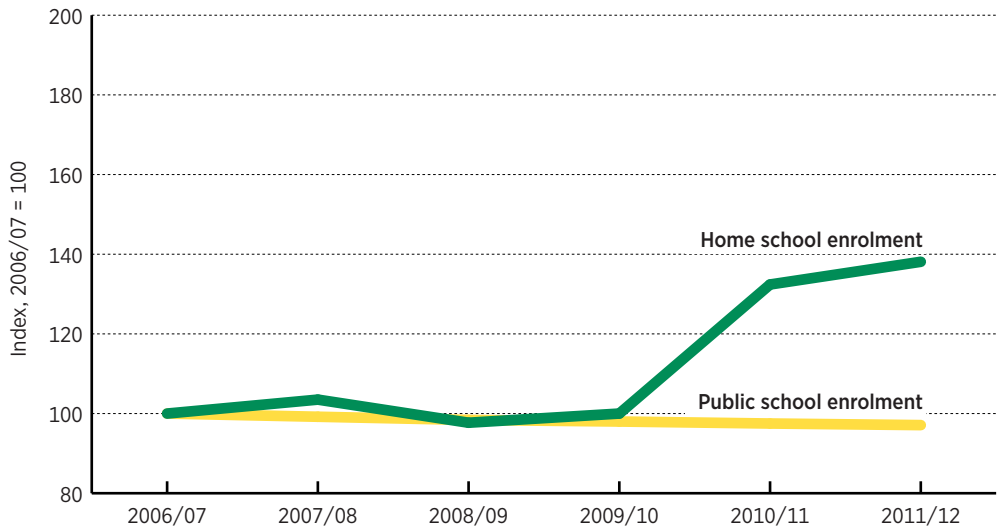
Sources: BC Home Learner’s Association, 2014; provincial ministries and departments of education (see “Government Sources”, pp. 52–57); calculations by author.

**Figure 2.4: Manitoba—Change in Total Enrolment in Public Schools and Home Schools, 2006/07–2011/12, indexed to 2006/07**



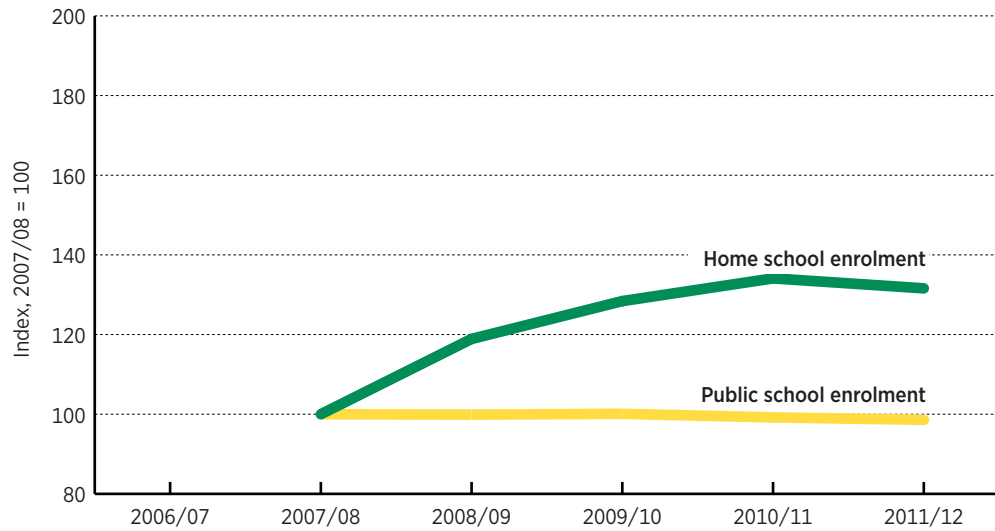
Sources: BC Home Learner’s Association, 2014; provincial ministries and departments of education (see “Government Sources”, pp. 52–57); calculations by author.

**Figure 2.5: Ontario—Change in Total Enrolment in Public Schools and Home Schools, 2006/07–2011/12, indexed to 2006/07**



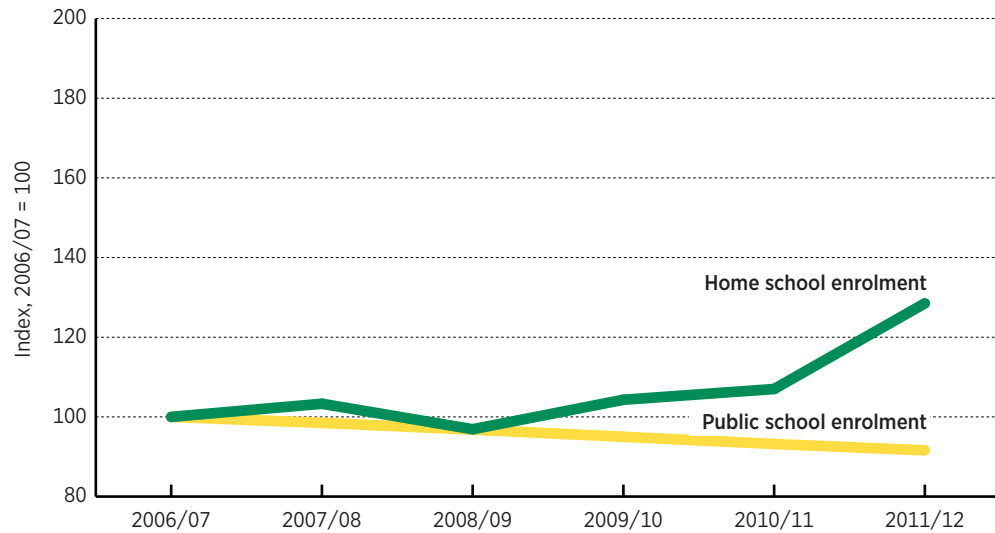
Sources: BC Home Learner’s Association, 2014; provincial ministries and departments of education (see “Government Sources”, pp. 52–57); calculations by author.

**Figure 2.6: Quebec—Change in Total Enrolment in Public Schools and Home Schools, 2007/08–2011/12, indexed to 2007/08**



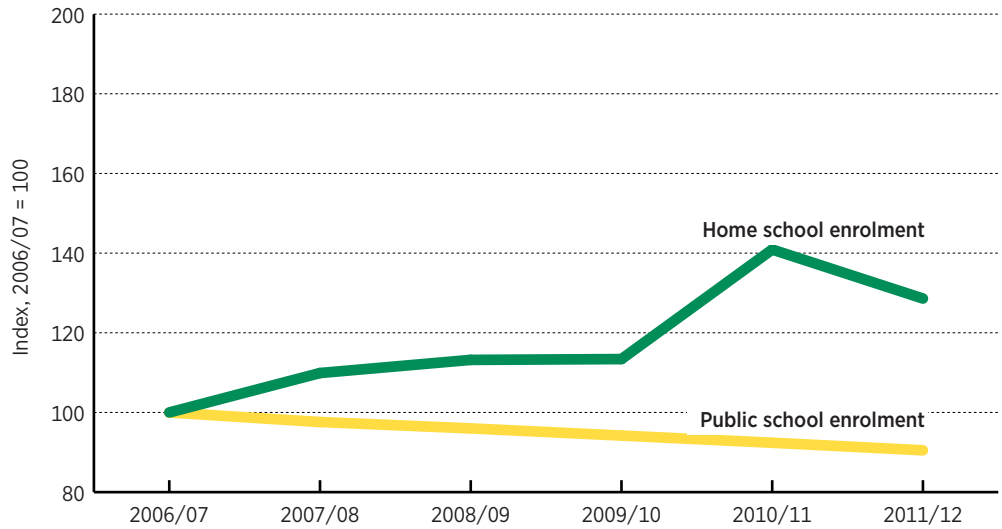
Sources: BC Home Learner’s Association, 2014; provincial ministries and departments of education (see “Government Sources”, pp. 52–57); calculations by author.

**Figure 2.7: New Brunswick—Change in Total Enrolment in Public Schools and Home Schools, 2006/07–2011/12, indexed to 2006/07**



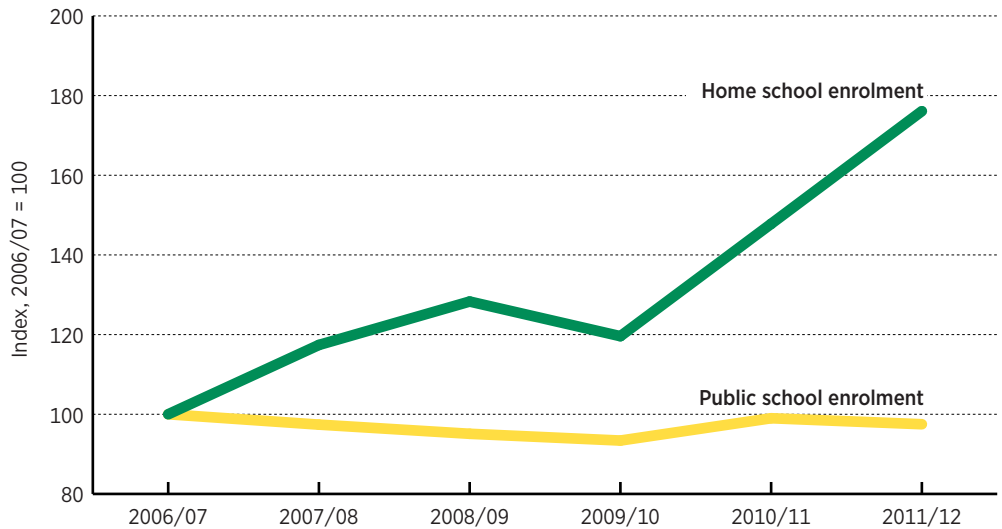
Sources: BC Home Learner’s Association, 2014; provincial ministries and departments of education (see “Government Sources”, pp. 52–57); calculations by author.

**Figure 2.8: Nova Scotia—Change in Total Enrolment in Public Schools and Home Schools, 2006/07–2011/12, indexed to 2006/07**



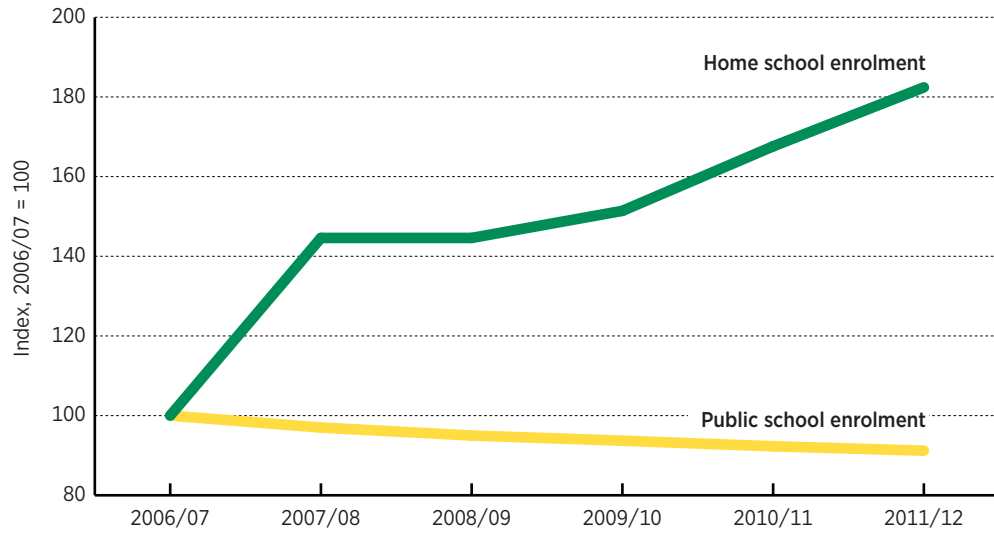
Sources: BC Home Learner’s Association, 2014; provincial ministries and departments of education (see “Government Sources”, pp. 52–57); calculations by author.

**Figure 2.9: Prince Edward Island—Change in Total Enrolment in Public Schools and Home Schools, 2006/07–2011/12, indexed to 2006/07**



Sources: BC Home Learner’s Association, 2014; provincial ministries and departments of education (see “Government Sources”, pp. 52–57); calculations by author.

**Figure 2.10: Newfoundland & Labrador—Change in Total Enrolment in Public Schools and Home Schools, 2006/07–2011/12, indexed to 2006/07**



Sources: BC Home Learner's Association, 2014; provincial ministries and departments of education (see "Government Sources", pp. 52–57); calculations by author.



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