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State Homeschool Policies: A patchwork of provisions

Knowing that states regulate homeschooling in a wide variety of ways, policymakers can better inform their decisions by understanding what others around the country are doing or have done to address the topic.

In a [new report](#), Education Commission of the States reviewed state homeschooling policies for all 50 states plus the District of Columbia in the following seven areas:

1. Notification of intent to homeschool.
2. Instructor qualifications.
3. Subjects required to be taught.
4. Attendance.
5. Assessment requirements.
6. Participation in extracurricular activities and academics at local public schools.
7. Online schools participation.

There are many reasons why parents choose to homeschool -- some may desire more rigorous academics while others seek to provide their children with religious education. Homeschool policies are equally varied from one state to the next and the homeschooling experience will differ depending on where a student lives.

"Though the number of students being homeschooled in the United States is relatively small, it a diverse and growing population," said Micah Ann Wixom, a policy analyst for Education Commission of the States. "While researching this topic we found that homeschooled students are increasingly accessing online education opportunities, but few states have policies to address the presence of these students in state-sponsored online programs."

Some important takeaways from this report:

- Just 13 states plus the District of Columbia require homeschool instructors to have qualifications, usually requiring a high school diploma.
- An increasing number of homeschooled students are participating in online education through state online schools, virtual charter schools or other distance education programs.
- Fewer than half of states require homeschooled students to be assessed.

For questions, contact Education Commission of the States Communications Specialist Brady Delander at bdelander@ecs.org or (303) 299.3622.