

PA Homeschoolers Score Well on 1999 SAT's

From Howard Richman

[This article first appeared in Issue 69 (Winter 1999-2000) of the *PA Homeschoolers* newsletter.]

According to statistics reported to Pennsylvania Homeschoolers by The College Board, homeschooled students in our diploma program who were college-bound seniors in the spring of 1999 are scoring well above Pennsylvania's school-educated students. The following graphs display these statistics. The average score for the 104 homeschooled seniors was 602 Verbal and 550 Math. The average score for the 92,767 school-educated seniors was 498 Verbal and 495 Math. This result marks one of the first independent confirmations that homeschoolers are succeeding well at the high school level.

The graph shows the distribution of scores for homeschoolers (on the left) and school students (on the right). For example, on the verbal section of the SAT, the largest group of homeschoolers (almost 30%) scored between 600 and 649, while the largest group of school students (almost 20%) scored between 450 and 499.

This result echoes statistics that have been collected within the homeschooling community for many years which show again and again that homeschooled students are scoring well above their school educated counterparts.

For example, this fall Susan and I again tested homeschooled students using a standardized test called the CTBS/4 (Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills, 4th Edition). We tested 986 students, mostly 3rd, 5th, and 8th graders. The median homeschooled student score was the 85th National Percentile in reading and the 80th National Percentile in Math. These are almost exactly the same as the 85th percentile in reading and 79th percentile in math that we reported in 1994 (Issue #49 of this newsletter).

Of course, these positive results do not necessarily mean that homeschooling is more effective than school-education. Most homeschooling families are 2-parent families where mother stays home with the children. We attend church or synagogue at a higher rate than the general population. Homeschooling parents (averaging about 2 years of college) are also better educated than the general population. If school-educated children came from such stable families with such high parental-education background, school-educated students would probably score much better as well.

Also, these statistics may not reflect the entire homeschooling community. After all they just cover the homeschoolers who are part of the PA Homeschoolers support network.

Nevertheless, all of these results are a continuing strong indication that Pennsylvania homeschoolers are succeeding quite well.

Fifteen years ago, at the beginning of our legislative effort to legalize homeschooling in Pennsylvania, legislators and the general public wondered if homeschoolers would be able

to teach their children to read. Now we have ten years of statistics which prove that homeschooled children are not only learning to read, but learning to read well.

More recently, various educators and psychologists have expressed doubts that homeschoolers could succeed with high school. The statistics collected by the College Board show that the answer is an emphatic "Yes!"