

Northway Church Educational Decisions Primer

This resource serves as an introductory guide for families making educational choices for their children. The term "primer" helps understand both its scope and its limit: it is a resource designed to give parents a basic yet biblical understanding of a complex topic. Neither exhaustive nor expository on any "one size fits all" approach to education options, the goal of this resource is to move families from fear or ignorance in their decision making to stewardship rooted in faith and wisdom.

Scope:

This primer aims to help families begin their decision making process by:

- Providing a biblical foundation for education and decision making
- Outlining major education options by highlighting their pros and cons
- Providing contextual resources for each education option
- Anticipating and responding to FAQs

The educational options covered include:

- **Public Schooling** - Taxpayer funded, tuition-free and open enrollment schools that must adhere to a state's school district standards.
- **Private Schooling** - An independently funded school that is not operated by a government entity. As a result, there is much autonomy in regards to curriculum and academic standards.
- **Home Schooling** - Generally defined as a form of private schooling where parents are completely responsible for their child's education. As a result, they are exempt from state regulation, save for some basic requirements.

Biblical Foundations:

Education: At Northway, we believe that parents are the primary disciple makers of their children. This is not only true as it relates to discipleship in the local church, but extends to children's education outside of it. While they may or may not be the primary teacher for school subjects, a parent's focus and end goal of education should be moving a child from immaturity to flourishing.¹ The biblical evidence of such flourishing is not solely measured by transferable job-skills, perfect attendance or high grade marks, but by affections shaped and conformed into the image of Christ.²

¹ Pennington, Jonathan and Wilkin, Jen. "Should Christians Send Their Kids to Public School?" Good Faith Debates, The Gospel Coalition.

² Rom. 8:29, 1 Thess. 4:3, 1 Jn. 2:6

Regardless of educational choice, there are clear foundations a parent can set that shape an *environment of education* towards truth, goodness and beauty. Perhaps the most foundational element a parent should understand and teach is that the manifold wisdom of God is expressed in His plan of redemption, and revealed to us through His Word: both in Scripture, and as the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ.

This is the filter by which *all* education happens, whether spiritual or academic. Anything learned is compared against the standard of what the Maker has said is true, good, and beautiful. This discipleship anchor alleviates the burden that educational choice is not meant to carry.

In fact, we believe Scripture places the non-transferable *command* for discipleship upon the parents, not the church, institution, or state.³ You may outsource academic instruction to an institution, but not your child's spiritual formation.

That said, we also believe and affirm that salvation belongs to the Lord.⁴ Parents must be reminded that while they have the power to bring up their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord, they have no power for regenerative heart change. The hope of the gospel is that we are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. This is great news when it comes to our educational decision making! The saving faith of our child does not hang in the balance of our educational choices. *"Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ."*⁵ There are endless opportunities and environments to narrate the gospel into the everyday lives of our children. This certainly can include their academic instruction, but it is not limited to it.

Therefore, we believe it both unhelpful and unbiblical to designate one particular educational option as the "biblically faithful" or the "Christian" choice.

Rather, we acknowledge the biblical mandate to proclaim the truth, goodness, and beauty of Jesus to our children as parents, and help them discern that *any* academic instruction they receive, whether public, private, or at home, should always be compared with God's standard of what is true, good, and beautiful as revealed in His Word.⁶

Decision Making:⁷

Having filtered education through biblical wisdom, parents should also filter their decision making process through biblical wisdom. The following questions serve as starting points to answer as you move through the information presented in each educational option:

³ Deut. 6:5–7, Eph. 6:4

⁴ Ps. 3:8, Rev. 7:10

⁵ Rom. 10:17

⁶ Jn. 17:17, 2 Tim. 3:16-17, 1 Jn. 4:1

⁷ Adapted from Holmes, Blake, *10 Biblical Principles for Decision Making*, Watermark Community Church.

- **Are biblical principles informing my decision making?**
 - What does the Bible have to say about the education and formation of children?
 - Who can help me better understand what God has said in His Word about the education and formation of children?
 - Have I prayed to the Lord to provide wisdom and insight into my educational decision making?
 - *Trust in the Lord with all of your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make straight your paths. (Proverbs 3:5-6)*
 - *You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. (James 4:2-3)*
 - *The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:5-7)*
- **Do I have factual information informing my decision making?**
 - Are my concerns based on headlines or hearsay when it comes to educational options?
 - Do I have firsthand knowledge of what is actually happening in my state, local district, or local public or private schools?
 - *If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame. (Proverbs 18:13)*
 - *Desire without knowledge is not good, and whoever makes haste with his feet misses his way. (Proverbs 19:2)*
 - *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. (James 1:5)*
- **What heart motives are informing my decision making?:**
 - Am I making this education choice out of a desire for prestige, fear of man, or a desire to maintain my own comfort?
 - *All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the spirit. (Proverbs 16:2)*
 - *Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting! (Psalm 139:23-24)*
- **To what extent is community informing my decision making?:**
 - Am I assuming an education option for my children in a vacuum?
 - Am I seeking input from my spouse, or trusted community that understands my family's capacities and convictions?
 - Am I "selling" my educational choices or "sharing" my educational choices in my community?
 - Am I having too many or too little conversations around my educational decision making?

- *Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety. (Proverbs 11:14)*
- *Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. (Galatians 6:2)*
- *Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. (Ephesians 5:15–17)*
- **Are my family's stewardship abilities accurately informing my decision making?**
 - Have I earnestly and accurately evaluated the time and energy requirements for my education choices?
 - Have I earnestly and accurately evaluated the financial requirements for my education choices?
 - Have I earnestly and accurately considered the mental, emotional, and spiritual capacities of my child?
 - Have I humbly considered that these stewardship abilities above may change throughout the life of my family?
 - *For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, "This man began to build and was not able to finish." (Luke 14:28–30).*
 - *Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit" yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." (James 4:13–15)*
 - *As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace. (1 Peter 4:10)*

Educational Options:⁸

As we've established, there is no "one size fits all" or "biblically faithful" education option. With that in mind, this section seeks to outline three main education options available by giving an overview of each, evaluating pros and cons, dispelling common myths, providing questions to consider, and giving next-step resources.

A. Public Schooling

- **Overview:** Generally defined as a publicly funded, tuition-free, open-enrollment school. They operate under the oversight of a state's school districts and are governed by a local school district board. They are mandated by state and federal law to provide free

⁸ **Note:** the overviews outlined here are intended for general information purposes and do not constitute legal advice. For further information, visit the [Texas Education Agency](#).

instruction that meets state-curriculum standards for all resident inhabitants of their districts. These are the most common schooling options in the U.S. (~83%).⁹

- **Charter schools** operate independently of traditional school districts but are publicly funded, and *thus best categorized under public schooling*. Most are open-enrollment and tuition-free, and because they operate with a charter contract (legal agreement), they have certain flexibility and freedom apart from districts. However, in exchange for operational freedom, they must meet strict state and federal standards (academic and financial) laid out in their charters. If they do not meet these standards, their charter can be revoked.
- **Pros:**
 - **Community Engagement:**
 - Exposes children to the socioeconomic, ethnic, and cognitive realities of their local communities.
 - Gives parents and children *early and consistent* opportunities on how to navigate a pluralistic world. Necessitates parents to disciple children to live as “aliens and strangers” amongst their peers; a lifelong way of following Jesus.¹⁰
 - Gives families *early and consistent* opportunities to “seek the welfare of their cities”¹¹ by directly engaging local administration, teachers and families represented in their communities with hospitality, generosity, and the hope of the gospel.
 - **Specialized Resources:**
 - Often provides specialized resources, dedicated programs, and learning accommodations for children with learning differences, high needs, or giftedness.
 - Many districts offer specialized resources and dedicated programs to parents or guardians with varying language or socioeconomic barriers, i.e. language learning, local partnerships for after school programs, and financial aid.
 - Many districts have an array of career and extracurricular opportunities that stair step as a child progresses through their education, i.e. Athletics, S.T.E.M., Fine Arts, Dual Credit programs, etc.
 - **Financial Stewardship:**
 - Free of tuition, families can direct funds towards teachers, classrooms, or other family/kingdom priorities.
 - Many districts offer meal programs at no cost regardless of family income.
 - Many after school programs and local recreation centers offer discounts for enrolled students.

⁹ Schaeffer, Katherine, *U.S. Public, Private and Charter Schools In 5 Charts*, Pew Research Center.

¹⁰ Eph. 2:19, Heb. 11:13, 1 Pet. 2:11

¹¹ Jer. 29:7

- **Cons:**
 - **Cultural Narratives:**
 - The curriculum and environment are secular and will contradict truth, goodness, and beauty *early and consistently*, particularly around the areas of science, history, ethics, and language arts, i.e. creation, origin, questionable content, etc.
 - The cultural narratives of what is true, good, and beautiful have shifted from *ideas* to *commitments*, many of which are not neutral, but anti-gospel.¹²
 - Many teachers, peers, and districts assume or teach these commitments. They included but are not limited to:
 - The purpose and goal of education as attendance, test, or career based.
 - Elevation of self-expression in regards to human nature, sexuality, and college or career path.
 - The normalization of a godless environment. No appeal either in thought, word, or deed to God at any time during instruction.
 - **High-Vigilance Parenting Required:**
 - Parents must be *highly engaged* to discern, discuss, and counter the cultural narratives from teachers and peers *early and consistently*.
 - Parents must be prepared to engage with safety and peer influence, as public schools are statistically more likely to struggle with bullying, violence, and disrespect.¹³
 - Parents must be prepared to discern, supplement, and engage academic gaps in their child's education, as public schools lack the ability for individualized attention due to class sizes and mixed-ability classrooms. Public school classrooms also have a high emphasis on technology based learning, so parents will have to help their child navigate healthy relationships with tablets, PCs, and access to the internet *early and consistently*.
 - **Negative Outlook for Teachers:**
 - Public school teachers express lower job satisfaction than U.S. workers overall, citing pay, development opportunities, and benefits as "not at all" satisfied.¹⁴
 - Most teachers describe their job as stressful and overwhelming, and about 3 in 10 teachers are actively looking for a new job during their school year.¹⁵

¹² Piper, John, "Public, Private, Online, Homeschool?", Desiring God.

¹³ Schaeffer, Katherine, *Key Facts About Public School Teachers in the U.S.*, Pew Research Center.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

- Teachers rate their own students relatively low across a spectrum of academic performance and classroom behavior, i.e. little to no interest in learning, being distracted, and being disrespectful.
 - This information is intended to prepare parents in public school settings to be ready to support, engage, and encourage their child's teacher *early and consistently*.
- **Common Myths:**
 - **Myth 1: "Public schools are entirely broken and hopeless."**
 - The public education system is dark, but not overcome. Many public schools are filled with administrators, teachers, and families that follow Jesus, are engaged in their local churches and communities, and desire the light of the gospel to shine in their schools.
 - **Myth 2: "Public school will actively destroy my child's faith."**
 - While certain states and districts may adopt questionable practices that have become publicly sensationalized, the vast majority of teachers are exhaustedly aiming to help their child meet their goals in academic subjects, not radicalize them to a government agenda.
 - **Myth 3: "Public school children are missionaries."**
 - While we affirm the biblical mandate to be salt and light in the city and give a reason for the hope that is in us, parents should not put the sole purpose of proselytization as the reason for putting their children in public school. We never want to assume belief in the lives of our children, and they cannot export what has not been imported into their hearts.
- **Questions to Consider:** If you are thoughtfully determining if public school is right for you, here's a few diagnostic questions to discuss with your family:
 - **Am I prepared to be a high-vigilance parent?**
 - Am I ready to actively initiate early and consistent conversations around difficult subjects?
 - Am I ready to be composed when my child communicates something shocking that they heard, saw, or experienced? Can I engage in healthy, open-ended questions as we talk through these experiences?
 - **How will I cultivate a biblical worldview at home?**
 - Am I prepared to disciple my child in history, science, and ethics through the lens of Scripture?
 - Am I prepared to seek out the curriculum, scope, and sequence that my child will be taught both in the classroom and in extracurriculars or specials?

- **Am I ready to help my child navigate diversity?**
 - Am I prepared for discussions on varying socioeconomic, ethnic, religious, and cognitive realities my child will experience?
 - Am I attuned to the default cultural narratives my child may encounter, and how the Scriptures contradict those narratives?
- **How can my family bless the school and community?**
 - Am I prepared to maintain a supportive, encouraging presence in an uphill environment?
 - Do I have other families that are willing to commit to elementary, middle, or high school years for the good of our children, the school and community?
- **Resources:**
 - [Find A School](#)
 - [State of Texas Curriculum Standards](#)
 - [State Reproduction and Sexual Health Education Standards*](#)
 - **May vary by district*
 - [DISD Calendar](#)

B. Private Schooling

- **Overview:** In the state of Texas, generally defined as a school that offers instruction for students in one or more grades from prekindergarten-12th, that is not operated by a governmental entity. These schools are independently funded, primarily through tuition and charitable donations. Independent funding allows these schools to largely operate freely from state mandates, and accreditation is voluntary.
 - Though voluntary, many private schools seek a form of **accreditation**: a third-party review that verifies the school meets standards for education quality, adherence to philosophy of education and/or religious worldview standards, as well as faculty or safety standards of that accrediting entity.
 - Some common accreditations include, but are not limited to:
 - [TEPSAC](#)
 - [ACCS](#)
 - [ACSI](#)
 - Some benefits of accreditation include smoother college admissions, credit transfers between private/public, and overall quality assurance¹⁶
 - The pros and cons below have in mind private Christian schools. It's important to note here that not all private schools are Christian, and not all private Christian schools operate with the same biblical lens or gospel-centered approach to education. Parents are encouraged to seek out their school's curriculum and statement of faith (if applicable) to aid in their decision making.

¹⁶ ["Accreditation Status"](#), Texas Education Agency

- **Pros:**
 - **Worldview Integration:**
 - Private Christian schools have the ability to teach *every* academic subject through a biblical lens, giving children cohesion between family discipleship and academic instruction.
 - The school often acts as a partner with home, reinforcing adherence to biblical wisdom and principles in social/emotional development and discipline scenarios.
 - Many private Christian school's student bodies are represented by local churches, creating even further cohesion between family discipleship, academic instruction, and church membership.
 - **Power to Choose:**
 - Since private schools have autonomy in their philosophy of education, parents have greater flexibility in choosing their family's preferred education method, i.e.:
 - **Classical:** centuries old method that emphasizes teaching children how to learn rather than what to learn, through stages of grammar, logic, and rhetoric.
 - **Montessori:** a student-led approach where a teacher acts as a guide and the student self-directs their hands-on learning in a mixed-age environment.
 - **University-Approach:** hybrid approach that mixes homeschooling days with classroom instruction; provides student independence that simulates college experience.
 - **Positive Class Environments:**
 - Private schools typically have smaller teacher-to-student ratios, enabling teachers to give greater supervision and attention to students.
 - Private schools can set specific behavioral expectations and are legally permitted to expel or deny admission to students who violate their codes of conduct.
 - Private school teachers report higher rates of job satisfaction due to manageable classroom ratios, parental support, and school resources.¹⁷
- **Cons:**
 - **Financial Strain:**
 - The cost of tuition can be prohibitive, create financial stress or result in debt.

¹⁷ National Center for Education Statistics, *Characteristics of Traditional Public, Public Charter, and Private School Teachers*.

- The average cost of tuition for private schools in North Texas is ~\$14,000 per year, though tuition rates range from ~\$9,000 all the way to ~\$30,000+ depending on the institution.¹⁸
- As middle-income family enrollment rates decline, private schools increasingly serve students from high-income families.¹⁹ The implications suggest that private schools in North Dallas are densely-packed into high-income neighborhoods, reinforcing the residential divide of private/public.²⁰
 - **Note:** Not *all* private schools have prohibitive costs, and parents should explore financial aid, scholarships, and voucher programs offered by their institutions.
- **Homogenous Environment:**
 - Students may become isolated from different socioeconomic, ethnic, and cognitive realities of their communities.
 - With the integration of faith into academics, parents may be tempted to release the burden of spiritual formation to the institution.
 - Parents may develop a false sense of security and assume belief or common practice with other families or peers, being disrupted or dismayed when sin abounds. Children may also incorrectly equate the sinful behavior of peers or teachers who use the “Christian” label with the faith itself, potentially leading to disillusionment.
- **Disabilities or Learning Differences:**
 - Private schools in the state of Texas can set their own admissions policies, and private schools with religious affiliations are not legally required to admit or accommodate students with disabilities.
 - Private schools are not legally required to develop/maintain Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or 504 plans²¹ for students with academic/behavioral differences or mental/physical impairments.
 - IEPs offer special instruction (measureable goals or corrective services).
 - 504s offer special accommodations (behavior support, or medical/physical accommodations).
- **Common Myths**
 - **Myth 1: “Private school families are foregoing the Great Commission.”**
 - Similar to the misnomer of public school children as missionaries, private school families can unfairly have their education equated with

¹⁸ Bloomberg Wire, *Average Price of Private Schools in U.S. Nears \$50,000 a Year*, Dallas Morning News.

¹⁹ Murnane, Reardon, Mbekeani, Lamb, *Who Goes to Private School?*, [Education Next](#)

²⁰ *Multiple luxury property groups in North Dallas have dubbed this area the “Private School Corridor.”*

²¹ Schultz, Sharon, *Differences Between a 504 Plan and an Individualized Education Program (IEP)*, [National Education Association](#)

evangelization. Once again, we do not want to assume belief or spiritual maturity in the lives of our children. In fact, certain private schools may be oriented towards gospel-centered service projects, and a university-approach can still enable families to participate in meaningful ways in their unreached communities.²²

- **Myth 2: “Private school students won’t know how to handle the ‘real world.’”**
 - Parents of private school children still live in the real world, and can integrate their socioeconomic, ethnic, and cognitive experiences into their family discipleship. Additionally, a strong theological education can/should train children to identify, analyze, and critique unbiblical worldviews charitably and faithfully.²³
- **Myth 3: “If I’m serious about my child’s faith, I’ll find a way to afford private school.”**
 - It is not a biblical expectation that a faithful Christian parent unwisely steward their finances just to fund a private education. Private school will never be a widespread solution for all believers, especially considering single parents/unique family dynamics, or families with disabilities or learning differences.²⁴
- **Questions to Consider:** If you are thoughtfully determining if private school is right for you, here’s a few diagnostic questions to discuss with your family:
 - **Am I prepared for a lengthy admissions and application process (12-18 months)?**
 - Have I inquired from schools about their admissions process well in advance of my child starting?
 - Is my family ready to facilitate open-houses/tours, admission interviews, lengthy applications, character or church references, and application deadlines?
 - Is my family prepared for being waitlisted or denied admissions?
 - **Are we able to financially steward private school tuition?**
 - Have we sought accurate pricing information, including admissions/application fees, educational materials, uniforms, extracurriculars, field trips/travel?
 - Have we considered multiple siblings attending in the future, the possibility of some being admitted and not others, or length of schooling offered by an institution? (K-12, or only elementary, middle, or high school offerings)

²² Piper, “Public, Private, Online, Homeschool?”, Desiring God.

²³ Wax, Trevin, “Educating Our Kids: Exploring the Options”, The Gospel Coalition

²⁴ Pennington, Wilkin, “Should Christians Send Their Kids to Public School?” The Gospel Coalition.

- **Does my child have unique or specialized educational needs?**
 - What support, resources, or expertise does my institution offer for children with disabilities, learning differences, or medical interventions or attentions?
- **Am I prepared to diligently disciple my child in step with their education?**
 - How will my family faithfully interact with different socioeconomic, ethnic, and cognitive realities of our community?
 - Have I accepted that private Christian school does not guarantee faith, nor replace my responsibility of family discipleship?
- **Resources:**
 - [Find A School](#)
 - [Texas State Regulations of Private and Home Schools](#)
 - [Admissions Timeline and Process \(General\)](#)
 - [Texas Education Freedom Accounts \(TEFA\)](#) *(discussed further in FAQ's)*

C. Homeschooling

- **Overview:** Generally defined as a form of private schooling where parents are completely responsible for their child's education. As a result, they are exempt from state regulation, save for three basic requirements:²⁵
 - **Bona Fide Instruction:** Education must be conducted in "good faith" and not as a means to avoid compulsory attendance in public schools.
 - **Visual Curriculum:** Instruction must utilize a written curriculum.
 - **Mandatory Subjects:** The curriculum must cover reading, spelling, grammar, math, and good citizenship.
- **Pros:**
 - **Deep Discipleship:**
 - Offers the highest volume of time for parent-child bonding and spiritual formation.
 - Centers responsibility of education on the home, enabling parents as primary instructors to weave education and faith into every day rhythms and routines.
 - Strong family bonds contribute to homeschooled children generally exhibiting better overall mental/emotional health and positive academic outcomes than their traditionally schooled peers.²⁶
 - **Maximum Customization:**
 - Curriculum and pace can be adapted exactly to the child's learning style, gifts, disabilities or special needs.

²⁵ Home Schooling, [Texas Education Agency](#).

²⁶ Higham, Emily (2026) "Academic and Mental Health Outcomes in Homeschoolers," Family Perspectives: Vol. 8: Iss. 1, Article 4.

- Allows families to avoid pressure of standardized testing and focus on mastery of subject matter.
- Allows time for incorporating real-world experiences into education through apprenticeships, travel, or career interests.
- **Maximum Flexibility:**
 - Families can embrace travel, non-traditional schedules, and real-world experiences into curriculum; ideal for families with extensive work travel, global ministry, third-culture children, etc.²⁷
 - Students develop strong self-directed learning skills, enabling ownership of individualized education as they progress into secondary schooling.
 - Parents have the ability to determine requirements for graduation. When a child has completed what parents determine to be their home's requirements, parents may graduate children and award a diploma when ready.²⁸
- **Cons:**
 - **Capacity Limitations:**
 - Requires an immense investment of parental time and energy. Parent(s) take on dual roles of instructor and caretaker throughout developmental stages of children, managing lesson planning, instruction, record keeping, alongside household responsibilities.
 - For longevity and success, many families find they must rely on a single income, requiring one spouse to sacrifice a career to stay home. Financial burden of curriculum, materials, meals, etc. fall solely on the family of a single income household.
 - In addition to everyday curriculum and materials, families also face challenges in access or finances to extracurricular activities, advanced courses, or specialized resources for their children.
 - **Social Isolation:**
 - While homeschooled children exhibit positive outcomes in mental/emotional health, some research indicates that homeschooled adults have expressed struggles socializing, namely finding larger social settings difficult to navigate than their traditionally-schooled adult peers.²⁹
 - Similarly to private school, students may become isolated from different socioeconomic, ethnic, and cognitive realities of their communities.
 - Parents will have to intentionally seek out community groups, co-ops, and extracurriculars that may or may not be able to align with all family values.

²⁷ U.S. sociologist Ruth Hill Useem coined the term "third culture kid" in the 1950s to describe children who do not assimilate with their birth culture but have adopted a blend of cultures from places where they have lived and were raised.; Harmon, Angela, "Third culture kid (TCK)", EBSCO.

²⁸ *Finishing Strong: How to Graduate Your Homeschool Student*, [Texas Home School Coalition](#)

²⁹ Higham, "Academic and Mental Health Outcomes in Homeschoolers," Family Perspectives.

- **Academic Limitations:**
 - Parents may lack the expertise to teach advanced or complex subjects, particularly in secondary school.
 - Studies show a math gap between homeschooled students and their traditionally schooled counterparts, with homeschooled students performing lower, especially in unstructured learning environments.³⁰ Parents will need to seek a structured curriculum to close this gap.
 - Parents may face challenges finding specialized educational support services if their children have particularly high needs or extreme learning differences.³¹
- **Common Myths:**
 - **Myth 1: “Homeschooled students won’t be prepared for college.”**
 - Statistically, homeschool graduates perform as well or better both in college admissions rates and college graduation rates compared to public school graduates.³² Additionally, the independent nature of homeschooling can prepare students for self-directed and independent learning, and a flexible schedule may connect them earlier to career and practical adult skill opportunities.³³ Most importantly, a strong theological education can prepare them for critically thinking about and responding to unbiblical worldviews.
 - **Myth 2: “Homeschooled children are socially awkward.”**
 - While larger social settings will be an area for parents to focus on growing their homeschooled children, research suggests that homeschooled students are less likely to experience or witness bullying, greatly impacting their ability to both empathize with their peers and regulate social anxiety.³⁴ Co-ops are also much more common for modern day homeschool families, and create spaces for learned social skills.
 - **Myth 3: “Homeschooling is the greatest guarantee of my child’s spiritual faith.”**
 - While many parents may be tempted to believe that the high volume of family discipleship will *ensure* their child adopts a Christian faith, we remind parents that salvation belongs to the Lord, and there are no guarantees corroborated in Scripture, or statistically, that children educated at home will follow Jesus.³⁵

³⁰ Jacob-Pinson, Elka, *Public School vs. Homeschool Statistics: A Comprehensive Analysis*, Crown Counseling.

³¹ “*Public School vs. Homeschooling: Weighing the Pros and Cons*,” Optimus Learning School.

³² Jacob-Pinson, *Public School vs. Homeschool Statistics: A Comprehensive Analysis*, Crown Counseling.

³³ Pennington, Wilkin, “*Should Christians Send Their Kids to Public School?*” The Gospel Coalition.

³⁴ Higham, “*Academic and Mental Health Outcomes in Homeschoolers*,” Family Perspectives.

³⁵ Gear, J.D., *Greatest Hits: Public school, Private School, or Homeschool?*, Ask the Pastor.

- **Questions to Consider:** If you are thoughtfully determining if homeschooling is right for you, here's a few diagnostic questions to discuss with your family:
 - **Have I honestly assessed my capacity and limitations for homeschooling?**
 - Do I have adequate time, organizational structure, and physical/emotional energy for the daily demands of homeschool?
 - Am I prepared to help my family navigate the dynamic of my relationship as both "parent" and "teacher?"
 - Am I willing to become a lifelong learner of elements necessary for my child's education, particularly in the secondary years?
 - **Am I prepared to be highly proactive in the socialization of my child?**
 - Am I willing to lead by example by prioritizing local church membership, mutli-family or diverse peer group co-ops, or other social activities?
 - Am I committed to teaching and training healthy social skills and interactions in my child?
 - **Have I researched the necessary requirements for state expectations as it relates to homeschooling?**
 - Have I explored curriculum requirements, and am I prepared to put a plan to paper?
 - Have I considered graduation, and do I understand the steps between graduation and college admissions for my homeschooled child if that is our next step?
 - **Am I prepared for the flexibility that may be required of my family's finite resources?**
 - Can we sustain a single income household?
 - Have I accurately calculated the cost per child annually as it relates to curriculum, supplies, and social activities?
 - Am I prepared to pivot education options if our family's current vocational or relational dynamics change?
- **Resources:**
 - [Homeschooling in Texas \(Texas Home School Coalition\)](#)
 - [Homeschool Co-ops Explained](#)
 - [Co-op Finder](#)
 - [Texas Homeschool Laws](#)³⁶
 - [Graduating Your Senior](#)

³⁶ This resource is intended for general information and does not constitute legal advice.

Conclusion:

The hope of this document is to provide biblical principles and wisdom parents can employ as they make educational decisions for their children. Remember, there is no single option that constitutes the "biblically right" way, and academic instruction is not the end goal; formation is. Ultimately, the formation of an immature child into a flourishing adult is God's design, and He has placed you as a steward of active, loving engagement in the spiritual formation of your child. As you weigh options of where academic instruction fits into this broader category of family discipleship, remember these encouragements:

1. **Have no fear.** The command, "fear not," or "do not be afraid," appears hundreds of times in the Bible, and it is always rooted in the personal presence of God.³⁷ God cares about the formation, well-being, and salvation of your child more than you do! Moreover, He's the only one who has the power and wisdom to do something about it, and that's exactly what He's done: *"He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?"*³⁸ No matter the educational choice you make, God is *with* you and your children. His grace and mercy are new every morning, His presence sustains beyond any success or suffering, and in your weakness and inability to get education "right," He is stronger. Have no fear; God is with you.
2. **Be gracious to others.** With the many options available to families in our particular context, many bible-honoring, Christ-loving families will come to different conclusions on their educational choices. It's paramount we approach one another's educational decisions with gracious humility, understanding God alone is omniscient in the affairs of His people. Assume the best, and don't let educational preferences become a source of division in your community. *"For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding."*³⁹ Never malign or belittle a family because of their educational choice, but let love lead you to a better way. As J.D. Gear wisely notes, "unity with you is more important than us having a uniformity of opinion."⁴⁰
3. **Be ready for change.** Educational choice is not a permanent decision. What works well for one child may not be possible for another. Middle school and high school years may present unique challenges or opportunities that bring you and your family back to the decision making process. Hold your educational choices and preferences with open hands. Be flexible to the real needs of your child, spouse, or community. Continue to seek the Holy Spirit's guidance every school year, casting all your cares upon Him who cares for you.⁴¹ What a wonderful model to our children; though they may make their

³⁷ Jsh. 1:9, Is. 41:10, Jn. 14:27

³⁸ Rm. 8:32

³⁹ Rm. 14:17-19

⁴⁰ Gear, *Greatest Hits: Public school, Private School, or Homeschool?*, Ask the Pastor.

⁴¹ 1 Pt. 5:7

future plans, the Lord will ultimately direct their steps.⁴² Even if their mode of academic instruction changes, you can continue to faithfully bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

FAQs:

1. Does my child *have* to go to school?

Yes, but that doesn't mean they have to attend public school. According to Texas State Law, all children ages 6-19 must attend school (compulsory attendance).⁴³ In public schools, *truancy* is a term used for repeated, unexcused absences in schools. Individual districts and schools communicate these attendance requirements to parents and enact truancy prevention measures in accordance with their state/district mandates. Private schools set their own attendance policies, and typically communicate these via student/parent handbook. Homeschool families do not have to notify or register with the state if they have never enrolled in a public school, but do have to [formally withdraw](#) their student if switching from public to homeschool, and still must meet the state's basic requirements.

2. Can my child attend a public school outside of our neighborhood's zone?

Typically yes, most districts offer open enrollment, meaning you can apply to enroll your student in different schools in your district, or sometimes even an adjacent district. Enrollment options depend on space, lottery systems (if in place), and transportation requirements. Contact your local school district office for information on their enrollment or transfer policies.

3. Where do I start for home school curriculum?

[Texas Home School Coalition](#) has a great starter guide, but a few highlights are: meeting the state's minimum requirements, and understanding scope and sequence. A scope and sequence is a master outline of *what* you'll teach (scope) and the order of *when* you'll teach it (sequence). Any good curriculum you explore should include this, or you can make your own with the necessary subject requirements. There are many faith-based options out there, but parents should do their due diligence in understanding where they'll need to adapt or supplement biblically faithful instruction before a lesson. Additionally, there are placement tests you can easily find online to understand where your student should start, and the THSC guide above has accompanying links.

4. What financial aid is available for private/home school families?

According to [congress.gov](#), some out-of-pocket costs for private school can be covered by 529 plans. They note additional financial support for private school choice may also be available through voucher or scholarship programs, tax

⁴² Prov. 16:9

⁴³ Dallas ISD, [Truancy](#).

credits or deductions, or education savings accounts (ESAs). As of 2025, Texas has ratified a state-funded ESA called [Texas Education Freedom Accounts, or TEFA](#): According to their site, “Through this program, parents who choose to enroll their children outside of the public school system – including a private school or homeschool – and are accepted into the program can use their child’s TEFA funds to pay for approved education-related expenses.” Certain prioritization and eligibility criteria must be met. Additionally, talk with your private school’s admissions or finance office on available scholarship or financial aid offerings.

5. **When should we start preparing for college in our educational option?**

Preparation should generally begin in the early high school years (9th or 10th grade).

- **Public/Private Schools:** The school often provides guidance counselors to help families understand the graduation and college admissions process, manage transcripts, and advise on standardized testing options and dates.
- **Homeschooling:** Parents determine graduation requirements and are responsible for compiling the transcript and diploma. Proactively research your prospective college’s admissions requirements. While Texas does not mandate standardized testing for homeschooled students, some colleges may strongly prefer or require SAT/ACT scores to validate transcripts.