

# Good News: Covid Is Driving More Parents to Homeschool

There might not be a lot to cheer about in 2020. With rioting, looting, and draconian lockdowns, America seems to be on the precipice of social unraveling thanks to misguided policy decisions and the culture of divisiveness fomented by political elites and the media class.

But in any moment of crisis, there are always new avenues for innovation that make people better off. Yes, private individuals can take advantage of precarious situations and turn them around for good purposes. Just look at homeschooling.

In a [previous article](#), I noted that Americans should use the current lockdown mania to explore distinct educational options as opposed to clamoring for schools to be reopened. Americans might actually be getting the memo.

According to [certain estimates](#) from Gallup, the percentage of children participating in homeschooling is expected to double based on figures from 2019 to 2020. Further, public schooling has witnessed a concomitant drop in enrollment, with enrollment rates going from 83 percent in 2019 down to 76 percent in 2020.

Parents have every reason to pull their children out of public schools. These institutions are not exactly [safe learning environments](#), nor are they run on a fiscally sound basis. A study from the Manhattan Institute [found](#) U.S. per pupil spending has surged in the last fifty years, going from \$4,720 in 1966 to \$13,847 (in 2018 dollars) in 2016.

Private education is usually viewed as a luxury for the rich. While posh private options such as the Exeter Academy exist, many religious schools provide budget alternatives for

families disenchanted with the current school system. The average Catholic school only charges about [\\$8,000](#) per student, while private schools of other religious denominations charge roughly [\\$10,000](#). Just like any service available in the private sector, there are diverse choices for families of all economic standings. The same cannot be said about one-size-fits-all public schools, which continue to have money thrown at them regardless of performance.

The education preferences of Americans vary from family to family. Not all parents will turn to private schooling, so many pursue the homeschooling route. Nevertheless, the reasons parents decide to exit the public school system tend to be similar irrespective of which alternative education model they choose. Some parents are sick of the political indoctrination their children receive at public schools. Others have become concerned about the viability of virtual education in addition to the uncertainty of school schedules. For many parents, jumping into the homeschooling realm seems like a risk, but it's perhaps well worth it after weighing other options.

While the chaotic nature of the current lockdowns and the social unrest across the nation will make many Americans shudder, trying times are when entrepreneurs begin to shine. We must remember that nothing in our world is static. No matter the obstacles that the government and other institutions place in front of us, history has repeatedly shown that enterprising individuals find ways to satisfy the desires of the masses and improve their living standards. Change is the natural order, and the state does an excellent job of propping up moribund institutions that are in need of a facelift.

In one of his more underrated works, *Bureaucracy*, economist Ludwig von Mises [acknowledged](#) the inexorability of change and observed why it's important for societies to embrace it if they desire to make economic progress:

*The actual world is a world of permanent change. Population figures, tastes, and wants, the supply of factors of production and technological methods are in a ceaseless flux. In such a state of affairs there is need for a continuous adjustment of production to the change in conditions.*

Public schools have functioned as taxpayer-subsidized daycares where parents can take the easy way and drop their kids off for eight hours a day to receive a subpar education. Nowadays, you can add in a large dose of cultural radicalism thanks to the introduction of the [1619 Project](#) historical revisionism to numerous schools' curricula. The public schooling skeptics, who have insisted for years that public schools serve as indoctrination centers, don't look so crazy once people become aware of how ensconced [political correctness](#) is in schools. Handing young people over to the state was always a risky proposition. Countless families are starting to see firsthand how far the radicalization rabbit hole has gone. A good portion likely doesn't want to take the risk of having their children completely brainwashed and will pull them out of modern-day indoctrination centers. Better to do so late than never.

A pivot to non-state education is not a radical concept by any stretch of the imagination. There are strong residual instincts for alternative education methods among Americans. It's usually forgotten that compulsory public education has not always dominated American education. Private schooling, homeschooling, and localized forms of public education have been used by Americans [throughout their history](#). It wasn't until mass public education entered the picture during the [Progressive Era](#) – the very period that gave birth to the [administrative state](#) – that mass compulsory education began its viral spread nationwide.

The current pandemic environment has opened up new approaches to schooling such as co-ops, learning pods, and unschooling.

Despite what [critics say](#), homeschooling is not as uniform as advertised. Parents have lots of choices at their disposal during a time when public schooling is becoming exceedingly cumbersome (as if it weren't so in the first place).

There is reason to believe the recent wave of first-time homeschoolers may not be a temporary development but rather a budding sign of an educational realignment that is unfolding before our very eyes. The path toward any semblance of economic sanity or limited government is not going to be linear, frankly. When we look at the way markets work, it involves humans recognizing problems and muddling through with solutions that satisfy people's desires. Oftentimes it takes external shocks to the system to effect change.

Given how the modern-day administrative state has rendered most political elections nothing more than political theater, the very act of exiting the public school system is a much more decisive expression of political action. Forget casting ballots – which will usually end up favoring candidates who do nothing of substance to roll back public administration – the fact that more Americans are looking for other education options could yield much larger pro-freedom results than conventional politics.

It's still up in the air whether Americans will completely follow through with their public school exodus. But if there's a high-yield form of political activity that can be undertaken now, it's getting children out of the public education system altogether. Doing so is a much more effective way of bringing about political change than punching a ballot every four years in what's constantly marketed "as the most important election of our lifetime."

Perhaps what's more important for Americans is to focus more of their time and energy on activities they can actually control, namely taking charge of children's education and not handing them over to the state for [roughly seven hours a day](#),

or even [ten hours a day](#), if Kamala Harris had her way. Much more could be achieved by giving public education the cold shoulder than by putting all the eggs in the electoral politics basket.

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