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ISSUE ANALYSIS

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HOMESCHOOLED STUDENTS EXCEL IN COLLEGE

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Are cumbersome technicalities keeping well-rounded, talented, and even gifted students out of colleges or universities? For several years, the Home School Legal Defense Association has been working on state and federal issues to improve admission procedures for homeschoolers at colleges and universities across the country. The Home School Legal Defense Association is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting the rights of homeschoolers since its inception in 1983. In addition to working with individual colleges, HSLDA is dialoguing with organizations such as the American Council of Education, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, and the National Association of College Admissions Counselors to help develop guidelines for colleges to deal with homeschoolers seeking admission.

Homeschooling Works

Standardized test results for 16,000 home educated children, grades K–12, were analyzed in 1994 by researcher Dr. Brian Ray. He found the nationwide grand mean in reading for homeschoolers was at the 79th percentile; for language and math, the 73rd percentile. This ranking means home educated students performed better than approximately 77% of the sample population on whom the test was normed. Nearly 80% of homeschooled children achieved individual scores above the national average and 54.7% of the 16,000 homeschoolers achieved individual scores in the top quarter of the population, more than double the number of conventional school students who score in the top quarter.¹

Current estimates place the number of home educated students in the United States at 2 million and growing. Homeschooling is now a legal option for parents in all 50 states. Every year a significant portion of these students seek higher education. Individualized training with its multiple and varied alternative approaches cannot be measured accurately by traditional transcripts. Some parents feel that grades are unnecessary and class rank is irrelevant. So how should admissions officers deal with these unusual cases?

Survey of Admissions Personnel

In 1997, Dr. Irene Prue, Assistant Director of Admission of Georgia Southern University, released a nationwide survey of admissions personnel's knowledge, attitudes and experiences with home educated applicants. In general, a total of 210 (out of the 1,289 surveyed) respondents to the study reported:

- Homeschoolers are academically, emotionally, and socially prepared to succeed at college.
- Parental motivations and involvement are in the best interest of their children.
- While documentation and evaluation of homeschooled applicants is problematic, it is not insurmountable.

Survey of Admission Policies

In 1996 the National Center for Home Education, a division of HSLDA, conducted a nationwide college survey: a sampling of the homeschool admission policies in all 50 states. National Center's liberal definition of "policy" includes colleges that take into account homeschoolers' unique capabilities and circumstances. Only 44% of the responding colleges had verbal or written policies for homeschool applicants. Course descriptions or portfolios are accepted in lieu of an accredited diploma or GED by 93% of the schools polled. Nevertheless, 96% of the colleges polled had at least one and sometimes over 200 home educated students enrolled at their college. Several colleges had homeschoolers excelling in their honors programs.

The *Wall Street Journal* confirms that many colleges are adjusting their admissions policies to homeschoolers:

Many colleges now routinely accept homeschooled students, who typically present "portfolios" of their work instead of transcripts. Each year **Harvard University** takes up to 10 applicants who have had some homeschooling. "In general, those kids do just fine," says David Illingsworth, senior admissions officer. He adds that the number of applications and inquiries from homeschoolers is "definitely increasing."²

Although homeschoolers are being admitted, many still face problems due to a lack of clear criteria and minimal flexibility in current admission procedures.

A Positive College Experience

Since the 1996 survey of over 60 colleges and universities in all 50 states conducted by the National Center for Home Education, we have collected the following anecdotal accounts of homeschoolers in college:

A **Harvard University** (MA) admissions officer said most of their home educated students "have done very well. They usually are very motivated in what they do." Results of the SAT and SAT II, an essay, an interview, and a letter of recommendation are the main requirements for home educated applicants. "[Transcripts are] irrelevant because a transcript is basically a comparison to other students in the school."

In addition to Harvard, prominent schools like **Yale** (CT), **Princeton** (NJ), **Texas A&M**, **Brown University** (RI), the **Carnegie Mellon Institute** (PA), the Universities of **Arizona**, **Maryland**, **Virginia**, **Hawaii** and many others all have flexible transcript criteria, accept parental

evaluations, and do not require any accreditation or a General Equivalency Diploma (GED). At **Kansas State University** and others like **Lipscomb University** and **Middlebury College** (VT), transcripts are optional.

In 1996, **Birmingham-Southern College** (AL) had only one homeschool applicant, but the admissions officer said the college “would be glad to have many more just like him!”

Roughly 50 homeschoolers attended the **University of Montana**. “The homeschoolers in this state seem to be up to date and well organized. We even have homeschoolers in our honors programs. I know of one student for sure. She is one of our top students,” remarked one admissions official.

Bruce Walker at the **University of Delaware** said one home educated student who “had an exceptional SAT score was invited to be considered for a full scholarship!”

“Homeschooling is becoming more and more prevalent,” said Mark Wheeler of **Boise State University** (ID). “We’re all trying to work together.”

Pennsylvania State University had 20 homeschool applicants in 1995, double the previous year. They prefer a portfolio with as much information as possible, including extra curricular activities that demonstrate leadership. “Homeschoolers show strongly in that,” said the admissions officer for Penn State.

Lewis and Clark College (OR) has a method of application called the “Portfolio Path” where a student can bypass standardized tests and instead be “reviewed on a myriad of things that would point to, and measure academic performance.” The Universities of **Minnesota** and **Mississippi** also look at the all-around abilities demonstrated in a homeschooler’s portfolio. **University of Kentucky** homeschool applicants “have to provide a portfolio of what they have done throughout their high school years” that is “creative and informative.” A UK admissions officer also said, “Our homeschoolers (about 50) tend to be very bright, and have scored very high on standardized tests.”

The **Dartmouth College** (NH) admissions officer explained, “The applications I’ve come across are outstanding. Homeschoolers have a distinct advantage because of the individualized instruction they have received.”

University of Alaska/Fairbanks has had over 300 home educated students in the last few years, several of which were in their honors program. The program director, Mary Diccico commented, “They have been wonderful students on the whole!”

Staff from **Geneva College** (PA) and **Belhaven College** (MS) are actively recruiting homeschoolers by going to homeschool conferences and book fairs to talk to parents and students about admissions.

“Homeschoolers have to work harder thereby increasing student productivity,” Jeff Lantis said of the 75–90 homeschoolers at **Hillsdale College** (MI). “Homeschoolers are consistently among our top students, in fact homeschoolers have won our distinct Honors Program the last three years in a row. We tend to look very favorably upon homeschoolers applying to our college.”

USA TODAY reported on October 28, 1996, that the **University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill's** dean of admissions, James Walters, has enrolled about 20 home educated students, all of which "are performing above average academically."

A letter sent in 1991 to homeschool leaders in Massachusetts from Thomas M. Rajala, Director of Admissions at **Boston University** is another example of the recognition institutions of higher learning are showing homeschoolers' academic achievements:

Boston University welcomes applications from homeschooled students. We believe students educated at home possess the passion for knowledge, the independence, and the self-reliance that enable them to excel in our intellectually challenging programs of study.

Wheaton College (IL) Director of Admissions Dan Crabtree says that "Nearly ten percent of our current freshmen were homeschooled at one point, and about a dozen were homeschooled through high school." Wheaton's 1999–2000 freshman class had 104 (out of 550) students who had been homeschooled at least one year.

The following comment, made by Jon Reider, Stanford's senior associate director of admissions concerning the success of homeschoolers, was reported in a recent article in the *Wall Street Journal*: "Homeschoolers bring certain skills – motivation, curiosity, the capacity to be responsible for their education – that high schools don't induce very well."³

A report on the accomplishments of homeschool students has been published in **Brown University's** (RI) January/February, 2002, edition of its alumni magazine. In an article titled, "Homeschooling Comes of Age," Dean Joyce Reed states, "Homeschoolers are the epitome of Brown students. They are self-directed, they take risks, and they don't back off."

In 2002, an employee of **Ball State University** reported that "eighty percent of first time freshman who were homeschooled were admitted to one of our upper levels of admission, with 67% being admitted to Honors College — our highest level of admission. They tend to be very involved socially on campus, especially in groups relating to their academic major and in student religious groups."

During a fall 2004 interview, Phil Caffrey, **Iowa State University's** (ISU) director of admissions, stated that "home school students, on average, have higher grade-point-averages" than the student body as a whole. Because of this, Caffrey stated that ISU is considering actively recruiting homeschool students at college fairs.⁴

Columbia College (NY) purchased mailing lists and held special recruiting sessions targeting homeschoolers. One homeschooler reported that Columbia College did not question her homeschool program at all and readily accepted transcripts from her parents. According to Regina Morin, the Admissions Director at Columbia College, "Home-schooled students - whose numbers in this country range from an estimated 1.1 million to as high as 2 million - often come to college equipped with the skills necessary to succeed in higher education. Such assets include intellectual curiosity, independent study habits and critical thinking skills. It's one of the fastest-growing college pools in the nation, and they tend to be some of the best prepared."

Associate Executive Director of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, Barmark Nassirian, stated that, "After years of skepticism, even mistrust, many college officials now realize it's in their best interest to seek out homeschoolers.

One of the political science professors at Columbia, Terry Smith, homeschooled some of his children and saw them go on to graduate from college and earn master's degrees. His experience was so successful that he states, "All of my professional work has been influenced by this family schooling experience, we're all teachers and learners. They're just the apprentices, and we're the master learners." ⁵

Stanford University (CA) has now become a beacon for homeschoolers as evidenced by their admissions office's website:

"The central issue for us is the manner in which you have gone about the learning process, not how many hurdles you have jumped. We look for a clear sense of intellectual growth and a quest for knowledge in all of our applicants."

Former senior associate admissions director at Stanford, Jon Reider, even went so far as to say that the "school's pursuit of home-schoolers fits its academic and social mission." Reider said, "Part of it is driven by demographics. There's a surplus of college spaces."⁶

How Are Homeschoolers Scoring on College Entrance Exams?

Research has shown that homeschoolers on average do better than the national average on standardized achievement tests for the elementary and secondary grade levels. Statistics demonstrate that homeschoolers tend to score above the national average on both their SAT and ACT scores.

For example, the 2219 students reporting their homeschool status on the SAT in 1999 scored an average of 1083 (verbal 548, math 535), 67 points above the national average of 1016. In 2004, the 7858 homeschool students taking the ACT scored an average of 22.6, compared to the national average of 20.9. The 2005 average ACT composite score for students who indicated that they were home-schooled was 22.5 compared to the national average of 20.9. The 2006 average ACT composite score for home-schooled students was 22.4 compared to the national average composite of 21.1

According to the 1998 ACT High School Profile Report, 2610 graduating homeschoolers took the ACT and scored an average of 22.8 out of a possible 36 points. This score is slightly higher than the 1997 report released on the results of 1926 homeschool graduates and founding homeschoolers maintained the average of 22.5. This is higher than the national average, which was 21.0 in both 1997 and 1998.

The 1996 ACT results showed that in English, homeschoolers scored 22.5 compared to the national average of 20.3. In math, homeschoolers scored 19.2 compared to the national average of 20.2. In reading, homeschoolers outshone their public school counterparts 24.1 to 21.3. In science, homeschoolers scored 21.9 compared to 21.1.

Iowa State University's admissions department data shows that homeschoolers had a 26.1 mean

ACT composite score as compared to a 24.6 mean score for all entering freshmen beginning fall 2003. The University of Iowa and the University of Northern Iowa (UNI) have also seen higher ACT and SAT averages from homeschoolers in comparison to the total school population. The cumulative admissions data from UNI reveals that the average ACT score for homeschoolers was 2 points higher than that of regular freshmen: 25 versus 23.⁷

Homeschoolers at College: How are they doing?

As early as December 1991, *U.S. News & World Report* recognized that an “estimated 50 percent of homeschooled students attend college, about the same rate as their public-school counterparts.” According to a nationwide study published by Dr. Brian Ray in 1997, homeschool graduates continue to pursue either post-secondary education or employment at similar rates to public school graduates.⁸

■ ***Bob Jones University Study***

At Bob Jones University in South Carolina, Drs. Paulo de Oliveira, Timothy Watson, and Joe Sutton studied 789 students who graduated from public, private, and homeschools. They concluded that overall, homeschoolers perform “as well as, if not better than, their conventionally educated counterparts.”

In particular, these researchers discovered that college freshmen who had completed their entire high school education in a homeschool had a “slightly higher overall . . . critical thinking score” than students educated in public or private schools. This offers a strong validation that home education is a viable and effective educational alternative.⁹

■ ***Oral Roberts University Study***

Many Christian colleges are eager to obtain more homeschool applicants because they find the homeschooled student generally has a strong Christian foundation and excels academically. For instance, in the fall of 1994, **Oral Roberts University** (ORU) Dean of Enrollment Management Mike Mitchell found that 212 homeschool students were enrolled, comprising about 10% of the student body. The average homeschooler had an ACT score of 24 and an SAT score of 1005, consistent with the average score for all ORU students, but higher than the national average. Mitchell’s report also found that the average ORU homeschooler’s GPA was 3.02, while the overall average ORU student’s GPA was 2.76.

Mitchell reported that 88% of ORU homeschooled students were involved in one or more outreach ministries. Many served as chaplains in the dorms and virtually all embraced the ORU honor code as an already adopted way of life. In addition, over 90% of ORU homeschoolers participated in intramural sports and nearly 80% in various campus clubs and organizations. Homeschoolers were active in all areas of college life, debunking the myth that homeschoolers are largely unsocialized.

■ ***Galloway/Sutton Study***

On October 10, 1997, Drs. Rhonda Galloway and Joe Sutton released the results of a four-year study to find out how homeschoolers fared in the college setting as compared to Christian and public school graduates. The study tracked 180 students, 60 graduates each from homeschools,

public schools, and Christian schools. Five success indicators were used in the study: Academic, Cognitive, Spiritual, Affective-Social, and Psychomotor.

Galloway and Sutton found that in every success category except psychomotor, the homeschool graduates excelled above the other students. Out of 12 academic indicators, the homeschoolers ranked first in 10. Out of 11 spiritual indicators, homeschoolers ranked first in seven. In cognitive skills, homeschoolers ranked first in 17 of the 23 indicators. Out of 63 total indicators, homeschoolers ranked first in 42.

In analyzing college aptitude, Galloway and Sutton found that “homeschooled students demonstrate similar academic preparedness [and] achievement in college as students who have attended conventional schools.” They concluded that, consistent with the success of homeschoolers at the elementary and secondary levels, “homeschooled students can perform adequately in the different, and more advanced, academic setting of college-level study.”¹⁰

■ *Findings Reported in the Wall Street Journal*

Formerly homeschooled students enrolled at Boston University in the past four years have a 3.3 grade-point average (out of a possible 4.0) giving a good indicator of their overall success. Similarly, at Georgia’s Kennesaw State University, homeschooled students had higher-than-average GPAs as freshmen.¹¹

■ *Homeschool Scholarships and Grants*

As a result of the Oral Roberts study, the University created a unique Homeschool College Preparatory Program for homeschooled students to earn a semester of college credit at home in advance and established a \$6,000 scholarship especially for homeschool graduates, above and beyond all other financial aid.

Eager to attract these bright young students, other colleges are developing homeschool scholarships. **Belhaven College** (MS) grants \$1,000 a year to qualified home educated students. **Nyack College** (NY) says their “experience with homeschoolers has been a positive one” and awards up to \$12,000 to homeschoolers. **College of the Southwest** (NM), which awards up to \$3,150 a year per homeschool student, says that the general rule for homeschool students at the college is that they are “very involved in campus life in addition to doing well academically.”

■ *Home Educated Athletes*

The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics and the National Christian College Athletic Association both have guidelines for homeschoolers. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) has “guidelines to help standardize eligibility for homeschooled athletes. According to the guidelines, homeschooled athletes who have sufficiently high standardized-test scores and proof that they took at least 13 courses that meet the association’s core-course standards may be automatically awarded freshman eligibility.” An NCAA spokeswoman said that from 1988 to 1993, as many as 10 home-taught athletes applied for waivers each year. “In each of the past three years [1994–1996],” she said, “that number has grown to more than 20.” The number is now as high as 75 students a year. This year spokesman John Morris said that, during the 1998–99 school year, all 49 homeschooled waiver applicants for Division I and all 20 for Division II were approved.

■ *Findings Reported in Education Week*

The number of homeschooled students taking Advanced Placement tests has more than tripled in the past five years. In the year 2000, only 410 homeschooled students took Advanced Placement tests, as opposed to 2005 where 1,282 homeschooled students took Advanced Placement tests. These are courses that are available online that provide rigorous study in various subject areas, like history, language, and literature. If the student scores well on the exam, it will enable the homeschool student to obtain scholarships from the university the student is seeking admission to.¹²

How Are Colleges Recruiting Homeschoolers?

- Attending state homeschool conventions and making specialized presentations.
- Developing college preparatory programs targeted at homeschoolers.
- Sponsoring on-campus recruitment activities and visitation opportunities.
- Communicating regularly with state-wide homeschool organizations.
- Joining homeschool radio network broadcasts.
- Conducting workshops for homeschoolers and their parents to help them plan for college admission (like Pennsylvania State's Homeschooling High Schoolers Conference).
- Offering special scholarships and grants.
- Advertising in brochures and homeschool publications like *Teaching Home*, *Practical Homeschooling*, *Homeschooling Today*, and other magazines.

Federal Financial Aid

In times past, colleges and universities have often—and unnecessarily—insisted that homeschoolers obtain a General Equivalency Diploma (GED) for financial aid. Because this requirement was usually based on the institution's concerns about federal funding regulations, HSLDA addressed the situation at its root. The Association drafted federal legislation to place homeschool college applicants for admissions and financial aid on the same footing as traditional applicants.

This language was included in The Higher Education Act Amendments of 1998 (Pub. L. No. 105-244). Although these amendments, enacted in early October 1998, changed what post-secondary schools could require of homeschool applicants, these new guidelines have only slowly reached local financial aid offices. Additional confusion was caused by the 2001-2002 Federal Financial Aid Handbook, which indicated that colleges would lose their institutional eligibility if they admitted homeschool students. Not wanting any institution or student to be caught uninformed, HSLDA has put together the following information for financial aid officers and applicants.

Once accepted by a university, a homeschooled student may be eligible for financial aid or an academic scholarship. When a college receives federal funds, its financial aid and scholarship programs are subject to federal regulations. In the past, these colleges instructed that, pursuant to federal law, homeschoolers must take a GED exam or an ability-to-benefit test to qualify for federal aid.

However, this has all changed. The law now simply states that, in lieu of an accredited high school diploma or GED, a student is eligible for federal financial aid if “the student has completed a secondary school education in a homeschool setting that is treated as a homeschool or a private school under state law.” [Pub. L. No. 105-244, amending 20 U.S.C. § 1091(d)]. **Nothing else is required.** Homeschoolers do not have to produce a GED or take an ability-to-benefit test any longer. Neither must their homeschool diploma be officially recognized by the state. This is affirmed by a recent revision in the 2007-2008 Federal Financial Aid Handbook which now states that a homeschool diploma is self-certifying, thus establishing that colleges can accept homeschoolers and still maintain institutional eligibility.

Admissions Discrimination

There are several further developments in Congress which should motivate colleges to adopt non-discriminatory admissions policies for homeschoolers. United States House of Representatives and Senate Committee Reports accompanying Pub. L. No. 105-244 (Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act) encourage colleges and universities receiving federal funding to discontinue their discrimination against homeschoolers. The House Report specifically recommends that colleges and universities change any admissions policies which force homeschooled students to take additional tests beyond what is required of traditionally schooled students, including the GED and the SAT II exams:

The Committee is aware that many colleges and universities now require applicants from non-public, private, or non-traditional secondary programs (including homeschools) to submit scores from additional standardized tests . . . (GED or . . . SAT-II) in lieu of a transcript/diploma from an accredited high school. Historically . . . [the] SAT II was not designed for, and until recently was not used to determine college admissions. Given that standardized test scores (ACT or SAT) and portfolio or performance-based assessments may also provide a sound basis for an admission decision regarding these students, the Committee recommends that colleges and universities consider using these assessments for applicants educated in non-public, private, and non-traditional programs rather than requiring them to undergo additional types of standardized testing. Requiring additional testing only of students educated in these settings could reasonably be seen as discriminatory. . . .

The Committee believes that college admissions should be determined based on academic ability of the student and not the accreditation status of the school in which he or she received a secondary education.¹³

Home School Legal Defense Association also met with both the American Council on Education (ACE) and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) and negotiated for them to contact their member colleges and request these colleges change their policies regarding homeschoolers. As a result, the ACE and the AASCU both sent letters to their members, encouraging them to consider portfolio and performance based assessments of homeschoolers. U.S. Representative Bill Goodling (R-PA), Chairman of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, wrote a letter to the ACE, urging them to carry out their agreement.

Stanley Ikenberry, president of the ACE, states in his letter:

The General Educational Development (GED) and Scholastic Aptitude Test subject area (SAT-II) examinations . . . have been criticized by some in the homeschool community as discriminatory and unnecessarily burdensome.

I urge you and admissions personnel at your institution to engage in a dialogue with providers of non-public, non-traditional programs in forming admissions policies regarding their graduates.

The AASCU letter to its Council of State Representatives said:

AASCU's view is that the setting of college and university admission standards is a responsibility that belongs with the institutions themselves and their governing entities. At the same time we urge colleges and universities to address this issue if they have not already done so . . .

The policies by which these [homeschooled] students are admitted must balance the need for accurate assessment of their academic preparation with a sensitivity to their special circumstances and attributes.

In another positive development, on January 29, 1999, U.S. Senator Paul Coverdell (R-GA) wrote to Stephen Portch, Chancellor of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, requesting that they amend their policy requiring home educated students take SAT-II tests to qualify for admissions to Georgia state colleges and universities. The Board of Regents proceeded to make this amendment in October of 2001, allowing homeschoolers to substitute a portfolio review for the SAT II tests.

State Policies

Some state legislatures and departments of education, recognizing the abilities and achievements of most home educated students, have written laws or regulations addressing the problems a homeschooler may face at college entrance.

A New Mexico statute, which passed in 1997, reads:

In determining the standard of requirements for admission to their respective institutions, boards of regents [for institutions of higher education] shall not require a student who has completed the requirements of a home-based or non-public school educational program and who has submitted test scores that otherwise qualify him for admission to that institution, to obtain or submit proof of having obtained a general education development certificate. In determining requirements for admission, boards of regents shall evaluate and treat applicants from home-based education programs or non-public school fairly and in a nondiscriminatory manner.¹⁴

North Carolina House Bill 746 (1997), which was passed by the General Assembly and signed into law by the Governor, directed the University of North Carolina Board of Governors to review the University's admissions procedures, practices and requirements regarding applicants from homeschools in compliance with North Carolina law. It states that the new policy must "not arbitrarily differentiate between applicants based upon whether the applicant attended a public or a lawfully operated nonpublic school."

The South Dakota Board of Regents policy referring to home educated students allows a composite score of 18 on the ACT test as the only academic requirement of admission. In a letter to the University & Community College System of Nevada, the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education says that it “does not require any additional methods of assessment for home-schooled students applying to colleges or universities.”

The Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education amended the requirements for admission to four-year colleges in the Montana University System. Students who have not graduated from high school and students who completed their secondary education through homeschooling may fulfill the requirement of high school graduation by either obtaining a General Educational Development (GED) equivalency diploma or achieving a satisfactory score on the American College Test (ACT) or Computerized Adaptive Placement Assessment and Support System (COMPASS) examinations.

In 1999, the Governor of Illinois signed H.B. 1522 (enrolled as Public Act 91-0374), requiring all public colleges and universities to admit students who have graduated from non-recognized schools if their SAT or ACT scores are acceptable.

In 2003, HSLDA was successful in lobbying the Texas Legislature to pass H.B. 944, which requires colleges and universities to admit graduates of a homeschool program according to the same standards that are applied to graduates from public high school programs.

Home School Legal Defense Association’s Recommended College Admission Policies¹⁵

As studies consistently demonstrate, home educated high school graduates offer an academically successful and socially diverse background. Homeschoolers’ strong work ethic and high moral values contribute to their success in college. More and more colleges and universities are recognizing their unique capabilities and circumstances. In light of the proven success of home education at the elementary, secondary, and post-secondary levels, HSLDA recommends that colleges adopt specific written homeschool admission policies which reflect the following:

1. Home educated applicants should not be required to submit an accredited diploma or GED. Accreditation does nothing to measure a student’s knowledge or what he was taught, it only reflects *where* he was taught. In addition, a GED carries with it the stigma of being a high school drop-out. Homeschoolers are not drop-outs, but talented, conscientious students who have completed their high school education. They should not be treated as drop-outs by being required to obtain a GED.
2. If a transcript is required, colleges should have flexible guidelines for records and documentation of the basic credit hours for high school completion. Some colleges supply homeschoolers with a “Homeschool Credit Evaluation Form” that may be completed in lieu of a transcript.
3. As the primary instructors, parents should be recognized as capable of evaluating their student’s academic competence in letters of recommendation. Schools frequently ask for an additional evaluation from someone outside the home.
4. SAT/ACT scores and portfolios or performance-based assessments provide schools with a solid basis for admission. Like most colleges, the **University of Missouri-Columbia** relies heavily on test results and the dozen or so homeschoolers they have in every freshman class “tend to have excellent test

score results.” In addition, UMC emphasized that a GPA is “not a factor in admitting homeschoolers.”

5. Mandatory SAT II testing in specific subjects is an unnecessary roadblock. Requiring only homeschool students to take these tests, in addition to the SAT, is discriminatory. Colleges will discourage homeschoolers from seeking admission by holding them to this unreasonable standard. SAT/ACT testing is more than enough to indicate the academic proficiency of the student.
6. A bibliography of high school literature and an essay are two admission criteria, which accurately evaluate a student’s life experience and thinking skills. “These homeschoolers write fabulous essays!” said **Emory University (GA)**, “Very creative!”
7. Interviews and a review of extracurricular activities are two ways to determine overall student proficiency and leadership qualities.

HSLDA hopes that it assists college admission offices in adopting reasonable policies for homeschool applicants, taking into account their unique circumstances and talents. “We look at them in their own individual situations,” was the welcoming attitude expressed by a director of admissions in New Jersey. “We just try to be open minded.”

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Endnotes:

1. *Homeschoolers Score Significantly Above National Average*, National Center for Home Education Press Release, December 7, 1994.

2. *The Wall Street Journal*, May 10, 1994

3. February 11, 2000, *The Wall Street Journal*, article by Daniel Golden

4. December 14, 2004, “Home-schooled do well at Iowa’s universities,” *Des Moines Register*, by Dawn Sagario

⁵ Alan Scher Zagier, *Colleges Covet Home-Schooled Students*, Associated Press Writer, October 1, 2006

⁶ Alan Scher Zagier, *Colleges Covet Home-Schooled Students*, Associated Press Writer, October 1, 2006

7 *Ibid.*

8. Ray, Dr. Brian, *Home Education Across the United States*, Copyright 1997, p.11

9. National Home Education Research Institute’s (Salem, OR), *Homeschool Researcher*, Vol.10, No.4, 1995, p. 6.

10. *Ibid.* Vol. 11, No. 1, 1995, p. 7.

11. February 11, 2000, *The Wall Street Journal*, article by Daniel Golden

¹² *Education Week*, April 26, 2006 (Source: *The College Board*)

13. 105TH CONGRESS, *2d Session*, House of Representatives, REPORT 105-481, Higher Education Amendments of 1998, April 17, 1998, p.147

14. *New Mexico Statutes Annotated* § 21-1-1(B)

15. The National Center's Recommendations for College Admission Policies appeared in the Spring 1997 edition of *The Journal of College Admission* (Alexandria, VA)