

POLICY BRIEF: **Educational Assessments for Homeschooled Children**

BACKGROUND

Educational neglect remains a great unknown in larger child welfare conversations, having not yet achieved the same level of study or recognition as other forms of child abuse, maltreatment, and neglect¹. The limited data that exists relies on measurements that homeschooled children do not have regular access to, leaving a unique challenge in supporting their right to an education. Coupled with homeschooling's rapid increases in numbers and diversity of motivations², lawmakers have an opportunity to both support and create systems that provide assessment opportunities for homeschooled children to help facilitate their steps into secondary education, and also prevent educational neglect.

When states have no requirements for educational assessments for homeschooled children, there is an opportunity for intentional or unintentional educational neglect, as well as lack of resource access and basic accountability for homeschooling parents. Anecdotally, homeschool alumni have consistently reported to CRHE that assessments would have made them feel more prepared for post-secondary education, as they frequently lacked a robust network of peers in the same age and education brackets to self-measure their progress. They also identified the opportunity these checkpoints have in providing additional connections, like speech therapy, to children outside of the traditional school system.

There is a policy gap in ensuring that all children within a legislator's state have confidence and ability to pursue an open future, and culturally sensitive, flexible and child-centered educational assessments can support that.

¹ *What is Educational Neglect?* (ChildUSA, 2024) <https://childusa.org/educational-neglect/>

² Angela Watson. *Homeschool Growth: 2024-2025* (Johns Hopkins Homeschool Hub, 2025) <https://education.jhu.edu/edpolicy/policy-research-initiatives/homeschool-hub/homeschool-growth-2024-2025/>

RECOMMENDATION

CRHE recommends that legislators include in-person educational assessment requirements for families homeschooling in their state. This recommendation is twofold. First, it provides an amount of accountability for parents to ensure children are progressing, a mechanism for intervention if additional resources and support are needed, and a critical interception point before the circumstance can be deemed educational neglect. Second, it also ensures that children have at least yearly access to a safe adult³ outside the home.

We recommend annual academic assessments that take into account the flexible and innovative nature of homeschooling, and provide choice to parents. Recommended options include standardized testing and portfolio reviews; priority in policy should be to facilitate portfolio reviews with trained, neutral evaluators in PBA system⁴ as standardized testing can be especially limiting for homeschooled children. Prior to launch, systems of intervention for educational neglect also need to be defined.

We strongly recommend legislators require these assessments to be in-person as a safety measure for homeschooled children. Video calls are insufficient; CRHE's [Homeschoolings Invisible Children](#) database has tragic cases like Mimi Torres Garcia⁵ where lack of in-person contact led to delayed response and fatal outcomes for homeschooled students.

³ *Safe adults*. (Monique Burr Foundation, 2022). <https://mbfpreventioneducation.org/safe-adults/>

⁴ Cindy Long. *Standardized testing is still failing students*. (NEA, 2023). <https://www.nea.org/nea-today/all-news-articles/standardized-testing-still-failing-students>

⁵ *Former DCF Worker: Video call in Mimi Torres-Garcia case violated protocol*. (NBC Connecticut, 2026) <https://www.nbcconnecticut.com/news/local/former-dcf-worker-video-call-in-mimi-torres-garcia-case-violated-protocol/3698910/>

ANALYSIS

Under current law: Only three states consistently assess homeschooled children's academic progress.

Under the Make Homeschool Safe Act⁶: Home educators must provide a portfolio or test scores showing the homeschooled child's academic progress each year, including an in-person assessment of the child's progress by a professional.

Why it matters: A portfolio review is the best way to evaluate a homeschool, as portfolios can reflect a much wider variety of educational styles and methods, but test scores can also demonstrate basic academic progress. The in-person assessment means that the child has at least annual access to a mandatory reporter. It also offers reassurance that the child is the one actually completing the work, and an opportunity for families and school districts to address the child's educational or developmental needs.

taken from <https://crhe.org/make-homeschool-safe-act/>

CURRENT LEGISLATIVE OPPORTUNITIES

- HAWAII - [SB 3193](#)

This bill requires home schooled students to participate in certain annual in person tests at the public school that the student would otherwise be required to attend. Hawaii's bill does not have any provision for portfolio review or alternative assessments. We encourage lawmakers to explore an additional assessment mechanism for flexibility in HI SB 3193, but support this bill.

⁶ CRHE (2024), *Make Homeschool Safe Act (MHSA)*, (2022 Rev.). Coalition for Responsible Home Education. <https://crhe.org/make-homeschool-safe-act/>

- WEST VIRGINIA - [HB 4136](#)

The purpose of WV HB 4136 is to require that certified teachers who review portfolios of samples of a home instructed child's work receive training in specific areas, understanding that a homeschooled student's progress may manifest differently than traditionally schooled peers. It also requires that teachers be certified "within the corresponding age group of the student whose portfolio is being reviewed". These legislative guidelines will support better portfolio review practices for homeschoolers, and we support this bill.

- NEW JERSEY- [A. 3394](#)

Introduced just last month, NJ A.3394 defines the qualified evaluator for portfolio reviews in various professional education and adjacent roles, and specifies that the "evaluator shall not be the student's parent or guardian". The bill additionally says that this evaluation "shall certify whether an appropriate education is occurring in the home education program", supporting the foundation for further conversations. We're excited to support this bill, alongside [A. 1886](#) and [A. 1341](#) in New Jersey this season.

CONCLUSION

Educational assessments should be a welcome resource for responsible homeschooling, and ultimately create a better foundation for children who will be accessing an open future. By understanding the unique circumstances under which homeschooling can thrive, lawmakers can create systems where educational progress is not only measured, but celebrated, and opportunities to intervene for homeschooled children under duress are present.

Educational assessments will have the secondary effect of supporting more robust transcripts for students who want to pursue secondary education, especially in the current state of inconsistent oversight. Until better data exists to understand homeschool outcomes, legislators should prioritize assessments for constituents in their state to ensure open futures.