

Educational Options in Pennsylvania

Adapted with permission from CHEC of Colorado 2/2007 (CHAP revision March 2009)

	Public School	Charter School	Public at Home/Cyber Charter	Part-time Public School	Private School	Independent Homeschool
Policy	It is the right of the state of Pennsylvania to choose the proper education and training for the children under its care and supervision.	It is the right of the state of Pennsylvania, along with some input from a parental board, to choose the proper education and training for the children under its care and supervision.	It is the right of the state of Pennsylvania to choose the proper education and training for the children under its care and supervision.	It is the right of the state of Pennsylvania to choose the proper education and training for the children under its care and supervision.	It is the right of the private school's board (in some cases, along with the parent) to choose the proper education and training for the children under its care and supervision.	It is the primary right and obligation of the parent to choose the proper education and training for the children under their care and supervision.
Parent's Time Required	Parents are asked to help in classrooms plus may need to help child with homework. May also need to deliver and pick up children.	Parents may be required to help in school plus may need to help child with homework. May also need to deliver and pick up children.	Parents act as coach, overseeing student classwork according to program schedule. Various amounts of grading and record keeping are also included. May be more class hours than homeschooling.	Parents act as coach, overseeing student classwork according to program schedule. Various amounts of grading and record keeping are also included. May be more class hours than homeschooling.	Parents may be required to help in school plus may need to help child with homework. May also need to deliver and pick up children.	Teaching time plus planning, grading and recordkeeping. (The number of hours/week spent planning depends on the curriculum.)
Child's Time Required	6-7 hr per day, plus 1 to 4 hr of homework/day	6-7 hr per day, plus 1 to 4 hr of homework/day	About 6-7 hr per day plus additional time if needed.	Public school hours plus homework assignments and homeschool hours.	6-7 hr per day, plus 1 to 4 hr of homework/day	Child must receive instructional contact 180 days or 900 hr/year (lower grades) and 990 hr/year (upper grades)
Parental Control Over Schedule	Lowest: government/school board sets all aspects of schedule.	Lowest: government/school board sets all aspects of schedule.	Medium; assignments must be done on time but parent can decide daily schedule.	Medium low; parent must plan day around public school hours to fit in home teaching.	Low; private schools have differing policies but it is still set by the school.	Highest; outside of the number of days and hours the child must work, parent is in full control of the schedule.
Costs Per Child*	School collects an average of \$10,000 for each child from public taxes	School collects an average of \$10,000 for each child from public taxes	School collects an average of \$10,000 for each child from public taxes. Families may receive on loan computers, internet access, free material, and/or reimbursement for some expenses.	Amount school gets will vary. If child is in school more than 50% of day, school gets an average of \$10,000.	\$1,000-\$10,000 per year, per child, paid by parent.	Average \$450 per year, per child, paid by parent.
Safety of Child	Low; most incidents of violence against school age children have happened in or around public schools.	Low to Medium; most charter schools have fewer incidents of crimes than public schools.	Highest; children are with parents during the day, if parents supervise.	Mixed; low while child is at public school; high while at home. (See public school safety.)	Low to Medium; most private schools have fewer incidents of crimes than public schools.	Highest; children are with parents during the day.
Testing & Advancement	The state mandates that the PSSA (assessment test) is given to each child. Advancement is determined by teacher.	The state mandates that the PSSA (assessment test) is given to each child. Other standardized tests may be added. Advancement is determined by teacher.	The state mandates that the PSSA (assessment test) is given to each child. Other standardized tests may be added. Advancement is determined by teacher.	The state mandates that the PSSA (assessment test) is given to each child. Other standardized tests may be added. Advancement is determined by teacher.	Testing is subject to each school and state law. Advancement determined by each teacher and/or board.	Annual evaluation by evaluator based on interview and portfolio. Standardized tests given in grades 3, 5, 8 and results submitted with annual portfolio to satisfy state requirements. Parent decides the pace and advancement for each child.
Parental Control over Curriculum	None; all aspects are controlled by school board, local, state, and federal government.	Very Low; parents may be a part of charter school board to help select curriculum, but school is under government control and subject to charter.	Very Low; curriculum choice limited to options offered through chosen school.	Medium; parent may be able to select classes for their child of the ones offered. All home curriculum is same as homeschool.	Medium; varies with chosen school. Private school board chooses curriculum.	Highest; parents may choose material as long as certain subjects are covered.
Freedom from Government Control over Curriculum	None; all aspects are controlled by school board, local, state, and federal government.	Low; local, state, and federal governments have full control, but allow more input from parents and school board.	Low; curriculum is packaged with full government school board approval, but it may be added to. Individual school districts may change requirements and control.	Mixed; Low for classes at the public school; High for classes at home.	High; private schools have a great deal of flexibility in what and how they teach.	Highest; parent have the most freedom from government control when they teach their own children.
Religious Content/Worldview	No Biblical worldview teaching allowed, however other beliefs are brought in through school material, teachers and other children.	No Biblical worldview teaching allowed, however other beliefs are brought in through school material, teachers and other children.	No Biblical worldview teaching allowed, however other beliefs are brought in through school material. Parents may add their own religious material after hours but may not remove any material in lesson plan.	No Biblical worldview teaching allowed in public school. Other beliefs are brought in through school material, teachers and other children. Parents may add their own religious material.	Varied; depends on the school chosen. The school controls the religious content.	Greatest Freedom; parent may incorporate their own Biblical worldview. Bible may be made the center of curriculum.
Family Involvement	Low; parents may be involved in the classroom but teacher/school controls involvement. In most cases no other family members are included.	Low; parents may be involved in the classroom but teacher/school controls involvement. In most cases no other family members are included.	Mixed; whole family can learn together and some classes can be taught together, if parents get involved beyond the cyber curriculum.	Mixed; depending on the number of hours in the public school. (See public school and Independent Private Homeschool boxes.)	Low; parents may be involved in the classroom but the teacher/school controls the involvement. In most cases, no other family members are included.	Highest; classes can be set up for whole family. Older children can help work with younger children and extended family members can be included.

* Taken from Public Education Finances 2005, issued April 2007, from the Annual Survey of Government Finances conducted by the United States Census Bureau.