

Parent and Administrator Perceptions of Hybrid Homeschools

Eric Wearne

This article reports the results of a series of interviews with “hybrid homeschool” parents and administrators. “Hybrid homeschools” are entities which generally operate as formal schools two to three days per week, with teachers, enrolled students, and brick and mortar buildings. The balance of the week, students learn as homeschoolers. Previous research into hybrid homeschools has consisted mainly of electronic surveys asking families why they choose this schooling model, what they value in education for their children, and demographic questions. The purpose of this study is to build on these surveys by conducting longer-form qualitative interviews with hybrid homeschool parents, teachers, and administrators. This study reports the results of a series of semi-structured interviews conducted with seven participants from four schools in two states over the course of the 2017–2018 school year. The results of these interviews support some of the broad suggestions made in previous electronic survey results, while also adding to what parents value in these schools, and why they choose them.

INTRODUCTION

A “hybrid homeschool” is a school in which students attend school on a campus for (typically) two to three days per week, and work at home the rest of the week. Previous research into hybrid homeschools has explored the reasons why parents might choose such schools for their children. Such reasons typically include smaller class sizes, a desire for religious education, a different learning environment, or a flexible schedule, allowing more time together as a family (Wearne 2017, 2016). While previous work has begun to outline a picture of the types of reasons families value these schools, that work has not explored second-level questions about these schools. Research is beginning to show what families value in these schools, but not why they value them. This study includes the results of interviews with several parents and administrators at hybrid homeschools to seek a better sense of why those stakeholders value this schooling model. The questions this study focuses on are:

1. What reasons do these participants give for why people choose hybrid homeschools?
2. How do these participants describe the academics at their hybrid homeschools?
3. How do these participants describe their facilities and other practical matters at their hybrid homeschools?
4. What additional struggles, challenges, or advantages to these participants see in their hybrid homeschools?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Homeschooling

The U.S. Department of Education (USED) defines various types of study outside of a conventional school setting (“Home Schooling,” “Home Instruction,” and “Home Study”). USED defines “Home Schooling” as the “provision of compulsory education in the home as an alternative to traditional public/private schooling—often motivated by parental desire to exclude their children from the traditional school environment” (Education Resources Information Center 1982). This definition most closely approaches the educational model explored in this study, and helps justify calling these entities hybrid “homeschools.” Part of these students’ time is spent in classroom settings, but that is also the case for any full-time homeschoolers who participate in a cooperative group. For comparison, USED defines “Home Instruction” as “instruction provided in the home, by educational personnel, for children with special needs (usually home-bound or preschool) or their parents” (Education Resources Information Center 1966a). It may be the case that instruction like this occurs, but this is not a definitional aspect of this model. USED defines “Home Study” as “studying done at home outside school hours, including work on school assignments, community projects, or individual problems” (Education Resources Information Center 1966b). This superficially bears some relation to the concept of hybrid homeschools, but still does not describe these schools’ intentions as well as the definition of “Home Schooling.”

B. D. Ray (2016, 2011) has catalogued the recent growth in homeschooling, putting recent totals at over two million students nationwide. Beck (2012) and Murphy (2012) both categorize homeschoolers into four broad but different groups. Beck’s groups include “Structured” homeschoolers, or “Home educators, who are frequently religious, conservative, well-educated middle-class parents”; “Unschoolers,” or “Home educators who are frequently well educated middle class parents, anti-establishment, with radical political and cultural viewpoints”; “Pragmatic” homeschool-

ers,” or those who are “Often rural, working class home educators. The parents have limited formal education”; and A group of “Unknowns,” who consist of “Different groups of home educators which more or less are all not registered with the authorities or known: This could consist of radical unschoolers; gypsies (romanis); unknown immigrants; socially troubled families who sometimes have substance abuse problems; and extreme fundamentalist religious families” (Beck 2012: 74).

Murphy’s (2012) four “frameworks” for homeschoolers describe sets of issues that push or pull families into choosing to homeschool, and include (1) Religion; (2) Academic deficiencies in the assigned public school; (3) Social/environmental problems in the assigned public school; and (4) Other family-based motivations.

Collom’s (2005) survey of homeschoolers finds that the families he surveyed displayed “differing motivations do not translate neatly into distinct groups of home educators,” and that “This is a heterogeneous population with varying and overlapping motivations” (Collom 2005: 331). The hybrid homeschool families in this study variously fit into one or more of Murphy’s frameworks, and they are likely all among Beck’s “Structured” grouping of homeschoolers, though, as Collom finds, their motivations are often difficult to categorize as a group.

Hybrid Homeschooling

The closest analogy in the research to hybrid homeschools is homeschool co-ops, in which full time homeschooling families join together for particular subjects or activities (Carpenter and Gann 2015; Muldowney 2011). Previous research, specifically with hybrid homeschool families, consists of looking at students’ academic achievement (Brobst 2013), or online surveys in various contexts describing broad values families see in hybrid homeschools (Wearne 2017, 2016). These surveys of parents in private religious hybrid homeschools (the majority of this type of schooling in the U.S.) find that parents in these schools value schedule flexibility, family time and influence, and control of the curriculum, and also have religious and political reasons for homeschooling their children. A survey of a charter school version of hybrid homeschools finds similar but distinct values, including formal academics, safety and order, the desire for some aspects of homeschooling, and overall issues with the school environment. These surveys provide respondents with the ability to select reasons for why they choose the hybrid homeschool option for their children. Though these surveys also allow respondents to add “other” reasons which the surveys did not list, they do not allow for a depth of discussion about what families valued in these schools. While the literature is beginning to provide a full-

er picture of “what” families value in these schools, there is no research on “why” they value these things. This paper is an attempt to answer this question of “why” more deeply.

Educational Choice

Other than the surveys noted above, the literature has not focused specifically on hybrid homeschool families. In the broader school choice literature, when asked about why families choose a particular school or school model, families tend to report a focus on measures other than standardized test scores or other typical accountability measures. These reasons might include safety, proximity, or potential student peers (Abdulkadiroglu et al. 2017; Harris and Larsen 2015; Stewart and Wolf 2014; Schneider et al. 2002). Kelly and Scafidi (2013), on which previous hybrid homeschool survey work has been based, find in their survey of parents participating in a tax credit scholarship program that parents’ stated values include items such as safety and smaller class sizes more than academic measures.

DATA AND METHODS

Participants

The data for this study consist of semi-structured interviews with seven individuals involved with four different hybrid homeschools in two states conducted during the 2017–2018 school year. Participants were recruited based on a desire for a range of roles and school types. I sent a letter of inquiry to the respective schools’ leaders, seeking administrators and parents. Potential participants of both types were identified by school leaders, and through another letter of inquiry, they had the option of participating in the study. One participant is a co-founder of one of the schools; others are employees or parents (or both) at various schools. Some participants were located in the southeastern U.S., and others in southern California. Two of the schools are Protestant, one is Catholic, and one is secular (a charter school). Four of the interviews were conducted in person, and the other three were conducted over the telephone.

The interviews were semi-structured conversations. Similar questions were posed to all of the participants; the interview guide allowed for spontaneous discovery while also maintaining a general structure. Initial questions were based on gaps suggested by this author’s findings (2017). Interviews lasted from thirty minutes to just over one hour; the interview protocol is included in the Appendix. Interview sessions were recorded and digitally transcribed. To analyze the resulting transcript data, early interviews were coded using an a priori code list, based on the popular

reasons identified in previous quantitative surveys of hybrid homeschool parents. Upon completing the interviews, transcripts were re-coded, with additional emergent codes added and some a priori codes collapsed into others (Miles and Huberman 1994).

Limitations

In previous work on the subject of hybrid homeschools, this author conducted larger-scale online surveys. The purpose of those surveys was to explore surface-level characteristics of hybrid homeschools families on a wide array of topics. The number of interviewed respondents in this new study was much smaller than would be the case with online or in-person surveys. The intent here is to look at a few aspects of hybrid homeschools much more closely, and with individuals who are very involved with these institutions. As with any research of this type, the extent to which generalizations are possible may be an issue. The resulting data may be situated to these particular schools and people at a particular time. The researcher attempted to address this limitation by speaking with multiple respondents from a variety of backgrounds, and asking similar questions to each, following from previous research on the topic. Participants in this study come from Catholic, Protestant, and charter hybrid homeschools, and cover a variety of curricular approaches and geographic locations. A second limitation of the process is that a single coder was involved, though the coder used multiple, iterative passes, informed by previous research on hybrid homeschool parents' values and the contextual information provided by the interviews themselves.

FINDINGS

In this study, participants come from a variety of perspectives/contexts and settings: parents or teachers/administrators, from Catholic, non-denominational Protestant, and secular (public charter) schools. Though the interviews were semi-structured, participants' responses reflect these various perspectives and settings; sometimes they overlap and sometimes they disagree or are unique. See Table 1 for a summary of the aspects mentioned by participants in the interviews.

Why Do Families Choose Hybrid Homeschools?

The first set of interview questions were intended to help understand the reasons why participants chose their hybrid homeschools, and/or the perceptions of why others chose them. Building on this author's (2017, 2016) online surveys conducted of hybrid homeschool parents, the purpose of

Table 1. Aspects of Hybrid Homeschools Noted by Participants

Participant Perspectives/ Contexts	Elements Within the Contexts Noted by Participants	Data Examples
Parents Administrators Catholic Schools Protestant Schools Secular (charter) Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability to protect/increase time with family• Flexibility for sports, travel, etc.• Individual attention for students• Desire to obtain/avoid religious instruction• Specific academic curricula• Specific teachers• Preparation for college• Aspects of the physical plant• School and class size• Parental involvement	<p>“I feel like I never get to see my kids and this allows us that option.”</p> <p>“For some [parents], it’s all about the flexible schedule. Their kid is an elite tennis player, ranked in the state and their number one goal is to get a division one college scholarship for their kid. And so they are here just because they only have to come to class twice a week.”</p> <p>“For Christian families who want to maintain that Christian identity, we’re a good option.”</p> <p>“[O]ur focus is to get everybody to go to college.”</p> <p>“I did not want to do a traditional public school. . . . [W]ith 3,000 kids in a school, that’s just too many.”</p>

this line of questioning was to explore families’ reasons for choosing hybrid homeschools at a deeper level. For example, previous surveys have shown that parents highly value “a better learning environment,” or “religious education,” or schedule flexibility, or other issues without explicitly defining those values. The same previous surveys also suggest that families place some value on many things in making their decisions, but some items weigh much more heavily than others.

Family and Flexibility

In many ways, respondents interviewed for this study reflected similar values to other hybrid homeschool parents. When asked to discuss specifically why they chose a hybrid homeschool, or why they thought other families would, these respondents most often spoke about issues related to the possibility of increased family time, or a generally flexible schedule.

Related to family time and influence, for example, an administrator responded the hybrid homeschool model is “helpful for family time,” and that students “get to work at their own pace and they get more time with mom and dad and siblings, interacting in a less structured environment.” Some parents, this administrator reported, have said, “I feel like I never get to see my kids and this allows us that option.” Another participant said,

“I think it’s important to warn people that this kind of education has the indirect consequence of strengthening families.”

The idea of a flexible schedule was also appealing, most often in the context of freeing up time for competitive sports. One respondent noted that, “[My daughter] ended up being a competitive gymnast, which has ended up being a good thing. But the main point was that [she said] she could get [her schoolwork at the hybrid homeschool] done faster, and I totally agreed. . . . She was in the gym twenty plus hours a week. Being on a hybrid homeschool schedule, there was no other way.” This same parent stated that “[O]ne of the things that has been really good for [my daughter] is she can work when she wants to work and for her, she’s not a morning person so she prefers to sleep in. . . . She’ll often work in the evening and that’s when she’s most awake. . . . I’m the most positive about the time, the amount of time that it is that she’s home. I love it. She loves it. We’re not wasting any time. She’s not bored. She’s working when she wants to and when she’s most sharp.”

Administrators echoed these views, and also spoke about what parents told them they liked about the schools. One administrator reported that “[F]or some [parents], it’s all about the flexible schedule. Their kid is an elite tennis player, ranked in the state and their number one goal is to get a division one college scholarship for their kid. And so they are here just because they only have to come to class twice a week.” Another administrator said that parents wanted accountability and a bit of structure along with their flexibility: “Parents started saying, ‘You guys do all the planning, you guys do all the [grade] recording and then just tell me what I better make sure they get done at home.’”

One participant, whose children had previously attended five-day public and private schools, combined these two reasons (family and flexibility), and noted the benefits of being able to travel: “That has really been the most positive thing, just the flexibility of the schedule. [The school] understands that life happens, and travel, you might want to take a day and go see grandma, and you’re not penalized. It just makes life a little nicer. I can’t even say it enough. That has been life changing for us.”

Individualized Attention, Curriculum, and Religion

A desire for more individual attention for their children was another common theme, though less common than the two described above. One parent noted, for example, “It’s different attention. It’s not that it is better [than public schools] I think, but they just get the individualized attention that they need.” Another said, “My son could get his work done without

needing help, wasn't a behavior problem and therefore flew under the radar [at his previous school]."

Responses about religion and curriculum were also important themes. Of the schools represented in this study, three are explicitly religious, and the other is explicitly secular. In this author's previous surveys (Wearne 2017, 2016), schools' religiosity has made a difference in parental responses. Families sending their children to religious schools tend to state that they value religion more often than families who send their students to secular hybrid homeschools. However, even though the religious schools may make their faith a selling point, a little more than 80 percent of families at any of these schools rate religion as an important factor in their decision to send their children there, and typically less than 20 percent list it as the "most important" reason. This point merited questioning in this study, and the interviews elicited a range of opinions.

To this point, several participants in this study mentioned faith as an integral factor in their schools' educational plan. One administrator said, "For Christian families who want to maintain that Christian identity, we're a good option. You know, they're not getting some of the things that they would get in a public school that might undermine that." A parent said, "We wanted to stay with a private Christian [school], at least through the middle school years. . . . The middle school was huge for us." One participant, who had previously worked at a five day private school, said:

I like having a community that is reinforcing the values and the lessons that we want to teach at home. . . . I think, as a parent, my primary responsibility is to raise my children and to educate them to the best of my ability and we're doing that in the home, but to be plugged into a community which is reinforcing what we're doing at home is just furthering what we're trying to accomplish as parents. . . . It's about the primary mission and that's what unites the families. At my other environment, much of the conversation was about facilities or what facilities they have down the road, and oftentimes families were drawn to those different schools because of the facilities, whereas in this environment, I think it's the mission that draws the families.

Others mentioned faith, but only to note it as a characteristic of their schools. One participant stated that she chose her (secular) hybrid homeschool over other private options explicitly because it was not faith-based.

Finally, though they did appear in participant responses both in this study and in previous surveys, political issues were not common themes, garnering only minor, passing mentions as reasons that played into a family choosing a hybrid homeschool.

Academics at Hybrid Homeschools

Various aspects of academics were mentioned often by participants—especially teachers. Comments about the teachers at these various hybrid homeschools were the most common item mentioned, and these mentions were universally positive.

Teachers

An administrator stated, “We do have real teachers who really teach and give real grades and it’s not just like a mom says I did pretty good math today, so I get an A.” Several participants noted that the teachers at these schools have a variety of backgrounds—retirees, people in other professional fields who want to teach part time, and others. An administrator described the teachers at his school this way: “The majority of our teachers are our parents, many of whom have come from professional careers, not necessarily teaching careers, but professional ones. So we have science teachers who were former pharmacists and biology researchers, I could go on, or lawyers, so they’ve come from practical fields into the educational environment, which is enriching, I think, to the educational experience.” One parent characterized the teachers at her school somewhat differently: “I imagine that we get people that are a little younger, a little fresher, greener, but also maybe people that really like the hybrid. They really like having the kids only four out of five days because maybe that works best for their family. . . . [I]t definitely takes a special teacher to want to do this because maybe they don’t have all the bells and whistles that a full time public school with all the stuff and the unions have . . . but we’ve had some amazing teachers and I believe that they all really love the kids.” This parent went on: “[My daughter’s] teachers have a personal interest in her. . . . [T]he teachers are really enthusiastic. . . . They seem to love what they’re teaching. I mean my daughter thinks they’re good teachers, and she’s a good student.” One administrator who had previously worked at a five day per week private school characterized the relationship between parents and teachers at the hybrid school as much more positive compared to that at the five day private school: “The attitude at the five day school was more along the lines of parents don’t know what they’re doing. They need to be informed by the educational experts. In the hybrid community, I think there’s a much more favorable attitude toward parents and their place in their children’s education rather than seeing them as obstacles to overcome. It’s a pretty meaningful difference I think.”

Test Prep

While the comments on teachers were positive, several of the participants without prompting brought up the idea of standardized test preparation.

Comments on this topic were all either indifferent or negative. According to one administrator, “There is an Iowa test that they take each year. And that’s mainly connected to the desire to be accredited. Those scores are shared with families to use and interpret and then do with as they want.” A parent said she had grown tired of the testing regime in her children’s previous public school: “I got tired of that. It was all like, ‘This is going to be on the test, this is going to be on the test.’ You can’t learn this because it’s interesting and you have to learn that because it’s going to be on the test. I was so tired of that.” Even the school in this study which is held accountable by its state for test scores minimized explicit test prep. A parent at that school said:

That’s what [the public school is] teaching your kids all day. All they care about is test scores, testing, testing, and we care about taking tests and score of course. But it’s not about that. . . . It causes so much stress. . . . [W]e had to have so much and we did get . . . the percentage that was needed. But it’s like we care about their scores, but it’s not like if they fail the school is going to fail. I’ve never heard that. I’ve never heard anyone saying that. . . . I’ve never heard the word “fail.”

College Prep

The participants were prompted to talk about the goals of their respective schools—how much value did the schools place on getting students into prestigious colleges? The respondents were split on this question. A participant from one school talked about college goals for the students this way:

Here it’s a classical curriculum, so there’s more of an emphasis on the formation of the human person, improving the human person as a human person of virtue rather than improving the person to better enable them to get a job, or even college admissions. The point here is to train the mind to form the soul for sanctity . . . so it’s a much more far-reaching goal rather than worldly ends.

This participant went on: “I think the students are getting into the colleges that they want to get into. I do notice that there’s a different kind of college that is typically applied to from here. I think the colleges have seemed to be less prestigious, not ranked as highly as some of the other institutions that parents or students are aspiring to.”

Participants from other schools had almost an opposite response; they felt that the purpose of their schools was explicitly to prepare students to get into highly-rated colleges. One administrator said,

That’s our focus . . . to get everybody to go to college. . . . We had a student that graduated last year who’s at the Military Academy, so that’s awesome. . . . [W]e have a student at Duke and that was a big deal to get a student into Duke, and another student at TCU in Fort Worth. . . . We

have a good number that just kind of stay close to home for whatever reason but every year we get some students into UGA or Georgia Tech.

One parent observed: “I know some people who have [graduated from a hybrid homeschool] and have gone to college and the colleges have said they liked these kinds of students because they’re more able. They’re better able to manage their time, or at least it’s easier for them initially. That it’s going to be a much easier transition for them.”

This divergence of opinion on the goals of these schools also shows up in their constituents’ perceptions of their structures and purposes, which will be discussed in the final section.

Facilities and Operational Issues at Hybrid Homeschools

Facilities and Extracurricular Activities

In terms of physical structure, respondents typically noted that either they knew they were in locations that differed from neighboring schools (three of the four schools were, at one point, operated out of church buildings, and one still is), or that they knew that their facilities were less equipped than nearby public schools, but that they valued other aspects more highly. One participant stated:

[W]hen we first got to [the school] we were in a church planting a church space, and we were in a gym with partitions. It was not ideal. There was no actual big outdoor play space. They played on a field, they had a little area for the littler kids to play. It was not your typical brick and mortar situation. And I had to kind of get past that in my head and think ‘well, what’s important here? Is it super important for [my daughter] to have a giant blacktop to be able to play handball on?’ No, not for her.

This idea of physical space is also related to the schools’ ability to host extracurricular activities. One respondent talked about ways her school tries to use social activities to bring their students together, hosting bowling activities, beach days, prom, and grad nights. While all of these schools do offer some forms of extracurriculars (sports, dances, etc.), all respondents who spoke to this topic noted that it was a minor consideration to them. Speaking of extracurricular activities, one participant said, “That’s part of the reason we didn’t put my oldest son there because he plays sports like soccer and football and wanted to be at a school where he could participate or go watch or whatever. Now my daughter, she doesn’t care. She doesn’t miss it.”

School and Class Size

Other participants placed value on the schools having smaller class sizes, compared with the schools they previously used. This comports with previous survey data; many hybrid homeschool parents say they value small-

er class sizes, though that is not a dispositive reason for choosing such a school. Participants said, for example, “I did not want to do a traditional public school. . . . I think with 3,000 kids in a school, that’s just too many.” This participant later went on:

[My daughter] is kind of shy and a little bit timid, so we were just nervous of sending her into a giant public school. . . . [T]here were just so many kids in the classroom [at the local public school]. . . . I just felt like she was going to get lost in the shuffle there.

In describing this student’s current hybrid homeschool, the same parent went on: “[T]he small class size, more eyes on her, the academics, it was all worth it.”

Additional Challenges and Advantages of Hybrid Homeschools

Homeschooling

A question that continues to arise about hybrid homeschools is: “Are hybrid homeschools actually examples of homeschooling at all?” Participants responded to questions meant to probe their disagreement, and their responses show that they disagreed with each other on the answer. Three of the four schools involved follow a weekly structure of two or three days on campus (depending on grade level), and the rest of the week at home. (The fourth school has several campuses; some campuses follow this weekly schedule, while others have either more or fewer days on campus). Two of the schools in particular stand out: they both hold classes three days per week, with two days at home, and they both operate in the same state (and so have the same sets of laws and regulations applying to them). Yet administrators from the two schools disagree completely on whether they could be considered “homeschoolers.”

School A’s administrator described the nature of that school this way: “We try to avoid the homeschool label. . . . [W]e really are a structured private school. We have grades, we do dual enrollment for college classes. . . . We lean more towards the structured environment with more time at home.”

School B, which, again, operates in the same regulatory environment as School A, and followed the same weekly structure, had a participant who described School B this way: “I think [our families] would describe themselves as homeschooling families that enroll with [the school] to be assisted. I think we consider ourselves primarily homeschoolers, but [the school] provides a means for us to be successful in homeschooling.”

There may be a correct legal answer where the schools are located, though as one participant put it, “State regulators just don’t know what to do with us.”

Related to this question of how to characterize hybrid homeschools, a large amount of participant commentary was about the relationship between families and the schools, and the necessity of parents working with the school to make their students successful. For example, an administrator reported that

if a student is not disciplined, then somebody has got to be disciplined in the home to make sure that the student does [homework], which can cause friction at home. Also, it depends on the subject. So getting math for two days a week for just an hour at a time with a teacher might not be enough. So then parents have to do a little more.

An administrator at another school stated, “[In conventional schools], parents kind of say ‘It’s your job to teach, not mine as the parent.’ That’s what it feels like. [In my current hybrid homeschool], I’m in much greater communication just naturally with the parents than I ever was with five day education.”

Parent participants were generally positive about the logistical issues they faced, though they acknowledged some potential issues they or others might encounter. One said, “I, me personally, I haven’t had much trouble. I know some other friends and families at the school have had a harder time, but I think it depends on the kid and it depends on the parent. . . . So it definitely takes a little getting used to, but I will say it’s way easier with child number two than it was with child number one because I’m pretty seasoned now.” Another parent stated, “I really liked the idea of being a participant in [my daughter’s] schooling and I don’t think I could do full time homeschool.” Other parent participants were completely positive about the experience, echoing one parent’s statement that, “It’s been great to be able to say that I’m part of this, her educational upbringing. It’s a great privilege actually to be able to do that.”

Advantages and Challenges

A final set of questions was related to specific challenges or advantages of hybrid homeschooling compared to full time homeschooling, or full time public/private schooling. Several respondents made comments along the lines of “it’s the best of both worlds,” which was also a common response in past online surveys. For example, an administrator said, “We do kind of get the best of both worlds of both sides of things that were not a home-school, but students are at home for half the week or more.”

Several participants, however, also cautioned that this model was “not for everyone.” An administrator gave a common description of this idea: “Like I said, it works for some; for others it doesn’t. A lot of it is the parent and if the parent isn’t supportive, or if the parent wants it but the kid

doesn't, it makes it very hard to work. So it's just a special type of program, but it's a choice that should be out there for parents and kids."

CONCLUSION

Given ever-changing technology and a growing desire for individualized attention and services, the types of "schooling" that exist in the U.S. are going to continue to diversify. State and local regulatory policy environments try to keep up with the pace of change, but are often, as participants noted above, a few paces behind the actual institutions and experiences educational entrepreneurs are creating. Hybrid homeschooling is a perfect example of a changing educational setting, which policymakers struggle to identify, and which even the people who use it disagree on how to define it.

Still, the participants in this study have helped to provide more context for the information hinted at in previous surveys of hybrid homeschool families. Their descriptions of their schools in an interview setting largely accords with what other groups of participants have stated they value in online surveys. But these participants added depth to our understanding of hybrid homeschools in several ways. These participants all seemed to be very happy with the teachers, though the teachers are almost all part-time employees, and many are not certified in any formal way. Previously surveyed families showed little (or no) interest in test scores as a reason for choosing a hybrid homeschool, but participants in this study evince antipathy toward standardized test prep activities. Their responses suggested that it may be the case that not only do they not care about a hybrid homeschool's effect on their students' test scores, but that the amount of time and effort expended on test prep activities at other schools actually help drive parents to move their children into hybrid homeschools. At least for these particular children, participants seemed to believe that the individualized attention and flexibility of home study outweighs their hybrid homeschools' relative lack of expensive facilities or ability to offer comprehensive extracurricular activities. Several of these respondents were willing to make different schooling decisions for the various children living in their homes, based on needs and interests. Finally, both the parents and administrators who participated in this study noted the great benefits of schedule flexibility, increased family time, and individualized attention for students, while at the same time acknowledging the potential difficulties families can face with keeping up with students' work at home, learning self-regulation, and negotiating the relationship between the school administration and the family dynamic.

APPENDIX: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Reasons for Choosing a Hybrid Homeschool

- Can you describe your hybrid homeschool?
- Why did you choose to start or work for [Administrator]/send your children to [Parent] a hybrid homeschool?
- If Administrator/teacher: What is your educational background/professional path to this school?
- Have you ever sent one of your children to a different type of school? (If Yes, probe type).

Academics

- How does your school approach academics? Please explain.
- How does your school approach standardized testing? Please explain.
- What are your school's goals for students upon graduation?
- If parent: how would you describe the teachers at your school? How would you compare them to teachers at previous schools (if applicable)?
- If administrator: how would you describe the teachers at your school? How do you recruit them?

Facilities

- How would you describe the physical facilities at your school? How do they compare to other school's you have used (if applicable)?
- What sorts of extracurricular activities does your school offer? Do you wish it offered more?
- Are there other organizational characteristics of the school that you either value or see as challenges? Please explain.

Unique Advantages/Challenges

- Would you say there are unique advantages to this schooling model? Please explain.
- Would you say there are any unique challenges to this model? Please explain.
- What other comments do you have about your experiences with the hybrid homeschool model?

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