

## Virtual Schools – Do Your Research

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Last Updated Saturday, 10 September 2005

Over the spring and summer of each year, some Kansas public schools use the Freedom of Information Act to obtain the mailing list of all registered homeschools (unaccredited private schools) in Kansas.

They then use that list to lobby homeschoolers to enroll in their public school programs and in particular to the ever increasing number of virtual schools. Before you are tempted to take the tax dollars of other hardworking Kansans for programs offered by these schools, consider what you -- and all of us -- might be losing.

Below is a list of resources from veterans of various states that have been fighting this battle between public virtual charter schools and homeschooling since the early 1990s. These schools have wounded homeschooling in Alaska, California, Washington, and Ohio. A recent news story from Wisconsin states that the number of homeschoolers in that state has declined for the first time. According to the story, it is due to an expanding virtual school. Virtual schools are starting to inflict wounds in Kansas. At a recent CHECK support group leaders meeting, some of the smaller support groups noted that they had lost members to the virtual schools. As support groups thrive on the participation of such members, this is an important loss.

As charter schools expand, private home education loses. If we want an educational free market that allows us to have the freedom to choose independent homeschooling, we have to say no to these charter schools. If we want to support a home school movement that aims at discipling our children in our Christian faith, it will only be as we work together independent of government control.

Below are links to the experiences and thoughts of some long-time and prominent, nationally known veterans in homeschooling who share some perspectives.

Chris Cardiff, California  
Homeschool Network and contributor to the Foundation for Economic Education (with a forward by Janice Hedin from Washington state), &ldquo;The Seduction of Homeschooling Families.&rdquo;

Jim Farthing, Kansas homeschool veteran from Wichita, &ldquo;Free Lunch Alert!&rdquo;

J. Michael Smith, President of HSLDA, &ldquo;The Problem with Home-based Charter Schools.&rdquo;

Mary Schofield, author of *The High School Handbook: A Guide to Home Educating Junior and Senior High School Students* (read these two in order) *Charter Schools*; and *An Updated Look at Charter Schools*.

Cathy Duffy, author of *100 Top Picks for Homeschool Curriculum* (new) and *Christian Home Educator's Curriculum Manual* (interview transcript, scroll down for her comments on charter schools such as LVS).

*We Stand for Homeschooling* (an eclectic coalition of homeschoolers and support groups).

Larry and Susan Kaseman, *Home Education Magazine*, *'Let's Not Let Cyber Charter Schools Do In Homeschooling'*;

Chris Cardiff, *California Homeschool Network* and contributor to the *Foundation for Economic Education*, *'Toward an Educational Renaissance'* (about protecting our fragile educational free market).