



NEBRASKA
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

A REPORT ON PARTICIPANTS IN NEBRASKA EXEMPT SCHOOLS 2017/18 School Year

Nebraska Department of Education
Exempt School Program Office
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	
Background	1
Descriptors/Definitions	1
General Information	1
 DATA REVIEWED	
Students, Family Units, and Attendance Centers	2
Dual Enrollment	2
Students and Family Units by County	2
Exempt School Students Compared to Total Census	3
Students by Age.....	3
Discontinuing Enrollment at the Exempt School	4
 APPENDICES	
Appendix A - Exempt Students, Family Units, and Attendance Centers School Year 2017/18, Reporting Period July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018.....	A - 1
Appendix B - Historical Summary of Exempt Students, Family Units, Attendance Centers, and Counties of Residence, School Years 1985/86 through 2017/18	B - 1 & B - 2
Appendix C - Number of Students and Families by County, School Year 2017/18, Reporting Period July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018.....	C - 1, C - 2, & C - 3
Appendix D - Percentage of Exempt School Participants to Total Census Count, School Years 1985/86, 1990/91, 1995/96, 2000/01 – 2017/18	D - 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

On April 10, 1984, legislation was enacted that allowed parents to provide educational opportunities for their children outside of approved or accredited public or non-public schools (State Statute Section 79-1601). Parents, through a parent representative, were allowed to file for exempt status based on sincerely held religious beliefs. The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) was given the responsibility for establishing rules and regulations governing procedures and standards for parents filing for an exemption. Rule 13 was developed in response to the statutory directive and became effective on August 22, 1984, and subsequently revised, with a current effective date of May 21, 2016.

In March 1999, a revision was made to the original State Statute. This revision gave parents or legal guardians the option to exempt their schools because the requirements for approval and accreditation required by law interfere with the decisions of the parents or legal guardians in directing their child's education. The Department then implemented a new rule (in addition to Rule 13) entitled Rule 12: "Regulations and Procedures for Exempting Schools for Which Parents Elect Not To Meet Legal Requirements for State Approval and Accreditation for Other Than Religious Reasons," with an effective date of August 4, 1999. The repeal of Rule 12 in May 2016 was the result of combining the two exempt school regulations into one rule.

On an annual basis, families that choose to be exempt from approval and accreditation requirements or "home school," file under Rule 13 indicating these requirements either 1) interfere with the decisions of the parents or legal guardians in directing their child's education; or 2) violates sincerely held religious beliefs. Rule 13 describes the procedure and forms that are to be used in the filing process for those seeking exempt status. It was from the forms submitted by those filing for exempt status for the 2017/18 school year that the data in this report was compiled.

Descriptors/Definitions

The following descriptors and their definitions are used in this report.

- **Exempt status** defines those parents who file to exempt themselves from approval and accreditation regulations, and receive official notification from the Commissioner of Education acknowledging their election to do so.
- **Exempt schools** is the term used in Nebraska for "home schools."
- **Exempt students** refers to the children attending exempt schools.
- A **family unit** is a single family comprised of parent(s) or legal guardian(s) and child(ren).
- A **single family attendance center** refers to a site occupied by students belonging to one family who have received exempt status.
- A **multi-family attendance center** refers to a site occupied by a group of children from two or more families who have received exempt status.

General Information

Rule 13, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), and related information and forms can be accessed from the Exempt School Program website at <https://www.education.ne.gov/fos/exempt-schools/>.

DATA REVIEWED

Beginning with the 2017/18 school year, the data presented reflects counts taken at the end of the school year; which were all active exemptions as of June 30, 2018, the last reporting day for the 2017/18 school year. Prior to the 2017/18 school year, the data presented reflected counts collected by January of each school year.

Students, Family Units, and Attendance Centers

The total number of students at the end of the 2017/18 school year was 8,919. Appendix A contains statistics for the 2017/18 school year regarding students, family units and attendance centers. A historical summary for school years 1985/86 through 2017/18 can be found in Appendix B.

Dual Enrollment

Dual enrollment is when a student takes some courses at the local public or private school while also being home schooled. Of the total 8,919 students, 408 were marked as dual enrolled for the 2017/18 school year. This information is not verified against school enrollment records.

Students and Family Units by County

For the 2017/18 school year, exempt students resided in all ninety-three Nebraska counties. The 10 counties with the greatest number of exempt students were as follows:

1) Douglas	2,195
2) Lancaster	1,414
3) Sarpy	1,079
4) Cass	233
5) Lincoln	208
6) Scotts Bluff	202
7) Buffalo	198
8) Platte	190
9) Seward	163
10) Hall	162

Douglas, Lancaster, and Sarpy Counties accounted for over 53 percent of the State's total number of exempt children.

Appendix C lists statistical information on families and students, in single family and multi-family attendance centers, by county.

Exempt School Students Compared to Total Census

The mandatory school attendance law (Section 79-201 R.R.S.) states that a child is of mandatory attendance age if the child will reach 6 years of age prior to January 1 of the then-current school year and has not reached 18 years of age.

Prior to the July 16, 2004 change in law, compulsory school attendance law was age 7 up to age 16.

Appendix D shows the percentage of exempt school students to the total census count. For school years 1985/86 through 2003/04, the total of exempt students each year was divided by the total census count within age 7 through age 15 range to derive a percentage figure. For school year 2004/05, the total of exempt students was divided by the total census count within age 7 through age 16 range to derive a percentage figure. From school year 2005/06 and after, the total of exempt students was divided by the total census count within age 6 through age 17 range to derive a percentage figure. The percent of students attending exempt schools compared to the total census count of Nebraska children for 2017/18 was 2.73 percent.

Students by Age

Listed below are the numbers of exempt students, by age.

Age	Number of Exempt Students
5	279
6	829
7	820
8	830
9	792
10	787
11	765
12	739
13	746
14	658
15	631
16	572
17	471
Total	8,919

Discontinuing Enrollment at the Exempt School

For a child who is of mandatory attendance age, attendance at the exempt school may be discontinued in the following two cases:

- ❑ In accordance with Section 79-202(6) R.R.S., a person who has legal or actual charge or control of a child who is at least sixteen years of age but less than eighteen years of age may withdraw such a child before graduation and be exempt from the mandatory attendance requirements by filing a “Withdrawal of a Child(ren) From the Exempt School” form (Form C) (see Section 010.01 and Appendix C of Rule 13).
- ❑ If the child is below 18 and has completed the program of instruction offered by the exempt school, then each parent or legal guardian shall sign a “Report of Completion of Program” form (Form D) (See Section 010.02 and Appendix D of Rule 13).

Reason For Discontinuing Enrollment at the Exempt School During the 2017/18 School Year	Number of Students Impacted
The child has reached the age of 16, and is below age 18, and withdrew before graduation (Form C).	9
The child is below age 18 and has completed the program of instruction (Form D).	46

Appendix A

Exempt Students, Family Units, and Attendance Centers School Year 2017/18 Reporting period July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018

STUDENTS	
Single Family	8,177
Multi Family	742
TOTAL	8,919

STUDENTS	
Other Than Religious	3,144
Religious	5,775
TOTAL	8,919

FAMILY UNITS	
Other Than Religious	1,777
Religious	2,727
TOTAL	4,504

ATTENDANCE CENTERS			
	Other Than Religious	Religious	TOTAL
Single Family	1,654	2,440	4,094
Multi Family	18	17	35
TOTAL	1,672	2,457	4,129

Appendix B

Historical Summary of Exempt Students, Family Units, Attendance Centers, and Counties of Residence School Years 1985/86 through 2017/18

School Year	Number of Students			Family Units	School Attendance Centers			Counties Containing Exempt Students
	Single Family	Multi Family	Total		Single Family	Multi Family	Total	
2017/18	8,182	737	8,919	4,504	4,094	35	4,129	93
2016/17	7,931	667	8,598	4,293	3,930	37	3,967	92
2015/16	7,678	612	8,290	4,122	3,801	30	3,831	93
2014/15	7,486	609	8,095	3,970	3,664	29	3,693	92
2013/14	7,092	582	7,674	3,749	3,457	25	3,482	92
2012/13	6,608	592	7,200	3,470	3,179	28	3,207	93
2011/12	6,273	536	6,809	3,293	3,018	28	3,046	91
2010/11	5,994	546	6,540	3,144	2,863	31	2,894	90
2009/10	5,823	472	6,295	3,024	2,769	28	2,797	91
2008/09	5,659	475	6,134	2,957	2,704	31	2,735	90
2007/08	5,536	526	6,062	2,955	2,681	35	2,716	90
2006/07	5,415	541	5,956	2,921	2,635	32	2,667	89
2005/06	5,134	482	5,616	2,852	2,587	29	2,616	89
2004/05	4,499	477	4,976	2,642	2,363	33	2,396	87
2003/04	4,448	481	4,929	2,634	2,348	32	2,380	87
2002/03	4,524	562	5,086	2,690	2,366	36	2,402	90
2001/02	4,427	573	5,000	2,628	2,310	39	2,349	90
2000/01	4,071	588	4,659	2,507	2,180	35	2,215	89
1999/00	4,125	581	4,706	2,591	2,252	39	2,291	91
1998/99	4,135	675	4,810	2,666	2,274	38	2,312	90
1997/98	4,045	716	4,761	2,603	2,200	36	2,236	92
1996/97	3,682	725	4,407	2,394	1,988	33	2,021	89
1995/96	3,340	797	4,137	2,220	1,770	33	1,803	90
1994/95	3,061	762	3,823	2,110	1,679	38	1,717	86

NOTE:

- For school years 1985/86 through 2016/17, statistics reflect data collected by January of each school year; for school year 2017/18, statistics reflect data collected at the end of the school year (June 30).
- All statistics reported before the 1999/00 school year were Rule 13 (religious) exemption only. The first year for Rule 12 exemption (other than religious) was 1999/00. Rule 12 was merged into Rule 13 effective with the 2106/17 school year.

Appendix B

Historical Summary of Exempt Students, Family Units, Attendance Centers, and Counties of Residence School Years 1985/86 through 2017/18

School Year	Number of Students			Family Units	School Attendance Centers			Counties Containing Exempt Students
	Single Family	Multi Family	Total		Single Family	Multi Family	Total	
1993/94	2,633	690	3,323	1,819	1,436	29	1,465	88
1992/93	2,296	635	2,931	1,623	1,264	32	1,296	87
1991/92	2,030	574	2,604	1,443	1,122	28	1,150	83
1990/91	1,559	588	2,147	1,221	876	30	906	81
1989/90	1,341	566	1,907	1,106	755	53	808	80
1988/89	1,155	553	1,708	946	618	29	647	76
1987/88	977	660	1,637	873	509	33	542	70
1986/87	830	546	1,376	753	517	26	543	66
1985/86	492	447	939	518	262	20	282	N/A

NOTE:

- For school years 1985/86 through 2016/17, statistics reflect data collected by January of each school year; for school year 2017/18, statistics reflect data collected at the end of the school year (June 30).
- All statistics reported before the 1999/00 school year were Rule 13 (religious) exemption only. The first year for Rule 12 exemption (other than religious) was 1999/00. Rule 12 was merged into Rule 13 effective with the 2106/17 school year.

Appendix C

Number Of Students And Families By County School Year 2017/18 Reporting period July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018

County	Students					Family Units				
	Other Than Religious	Religious	Multi	Single	Total	Other Than Religious	Religious	Multi	Single	Total
ADAMS	34	103	4	133	137	17	55	2	70	72
ANTELOPE	11	18	0	29	29	7	7	0	14	14
ARTHUR	0	5	0	5	5	0	3	0	3	3
BANNER	0	7	0	7	7	0	2	0	2	2
BLAINE	0	7	0	7	7	0	3	0	3	3
BOONE	4	12	0	16	16	1	5	0	6	6
BOX BUTTE	21	38	3	56	59	16	14	2	28	30
BOYD	0	3	0	3	3	0	2	0	2	2
BROWN	14	29	2	41	43	9	13	2	20	22
BUFFALO	76	122	0	198	198	45	59	0	104	104
BURT	12	25	0	37	37	7	11	0	18	18
BUTLER	5	33	0	38	38	2	11	0	13	13
CASS	92	141	41	192	233	41	76	24	93	117
CEDAR	5	18	0	23	23	5	9	0	14	14
CHASE	5	11	0	16	16	5	6	0	11	11
CHERRY	15	23	7	31	38	13	11	6	18	24
CHEYENNE	15	29	0	44	44	10	14	0	24	24
CLAY	15	23	0	38	38	7	12	0	19	19
COLFAX	10	15	0	25	25	5	6	0	11	11
CUMING	4	4	0	8	8	4	2	0	6	6
CUSTER	17	73	8	82	90	10	36	7	39	46
DAKOTA	17	22	0	39	39	8	12	0	20	20
DAWES	16	40	0	56	56	9	18	0	27	27
DAWSON	23	34	19	38	57	12	18	9	21	30
DEUEL	4	15	0	19	19	2	8	0	10	10
DIXON	3	19	3	19	22	2	7	1	8	9
DODGE	46	84	3	127	130	33	42	2	73	75
DOUGLAS	873	1,322	243	1,952	2,195	452	672	136	988	1,124
DUNDY	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1
FILLMORE	5	9	0	14	14	3	5	0	8	8
FRANKLIN	0	16	0	16	16	0	6	0	6	6
FRONTIER	3	14	0	17	17	2	6	0	8	8
FURNAS	8	20	0	28	28	6	8	0	14	14
GAGE	12	43	0	55	55	12	24	0	36	36
GARDEN	6	8	0	14	14	4	4	0	8	8
GARFIELD	2	10	0	12	12	1	3	0	4	4
GOSPER	2	6	0	8	8	2	2	0	4	4
GRANT	0	2	0	2	2	0	1	0	1	1

Appendix C

Number Of Students And Families By County School Year 2017/18 Reporting period July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018

County	Students					Family Units				
	Other Than Religious	Religious	Multi	Single	Total	Other Than Religious	Religious	Multi	Single	Total
GREELEY	4	31	22	13	35	3	14	12	5	17
HALL	54	108	0	162	162	34	43	0	77	77
HAMILTON	24	48	0	72	72	10	20	0	30	30
HARLAN	5	20	0	25	25	3	7	0	10	10
HAYES	0	4	0	4	4	0	1	0	1	1
HITCHCOCK	5	20	0	25	25	3	8	0	11	11
HOLT	10	33	0	43	43	5	16	0	21	21
HOOKER	2	3	0	5	5	1	1	0	2	2
HOWARD	7	7	0	14	14	4	5	0	9	9
JEFFERSON	9	10	0	19	19	6	5	0	11	11
JOHNSON	13	20	0	33	33	5	8	0	13	13
KEARNEY	9	47	0	56	56	5	22	0	27	27
KEITH	31	15	19	27	46	23	7	12	18	30
KEYA PAHA	0	19	0	19	19	0	8	0	8	8
KIMBALL	17	15	0	32	32	10	10	0	20	20
KNOX	14	24	0	38	38	5	11	0	16	16
LANCASTER	486	928	66	1,348	1,414	284	419	41	662	703
LINCOLN	61	147	6	202	208	45	72	2	115	117
LOGAN	2	18	1	19	20	1	5	1	5	6
LOUP	0	5	0	5	5	0	3	0	3	3
MADISON	35	79	1	113	114	18	36	1	53	54
MCPHERSON	3	5	0	8	8	1	2	0	3	3
MERRICK	7	17	0	24	24	6	10	0	16	16
MORRILL	21	20	0	41	41	11	11	0	22	22
NANCE	4	5	0	9	9	3	3	0	6	6
NEMAHA	14	32	0	46	46	9	11	0	20	20
NUCKOLLS	14	18	0	32	32	7	9	0	16	16
OTOE	32	63	5	90	95	22	30	3	49	52
PAWNEE	1	3	1	3	4	1	1	0	2	2
PERKINS	72	8	65	15	80	39	6	36	9	45
PHELPS	18	18	0	36	36	11	11	0	22	22
PIERCE	9	14	0	23	23	4	7	0	11	11
PLATTE	31	159	120	70	190	16	70	50	36	86
POLK	7	17	0	24	24	4	8	0	12	12
RED WILLOW	23	14	0	37	37	16	4	0	20	20
RICHARDSON	15	28	0	43	43	10	13	0	23	23
ROCK	2	4	0	6	6	1	3	0	4	4
SALINE	4	23	1	26	27	3	12	1	14	15

Appendix C

Number Of Students And Families By County School Year 2017/18 Reporting period July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018

County	Students					Family Units				
	Other Than Religious	Religious	Multi	Single	Total	Other Than Religious	Religious	Multi	Single	Total
SARPY	425	654	70	1,009	1,079	234	310	41	503	544
SAUNDERS	36	72	3	105	108	19	34	3	50	53
SCOTTS BLUFF	90	112	0	202	202	52	51	0	103	103
SEWARD	37	126	25	138	163	22	58	13	67	80
SHERIDAN	17	19	0	36	36	8	9	0	17	17
SHERMAN	1	14	0	15	15	1	5	0	6	6
SIOUX	4	7	0	11	11	2	3	0	5	5
STANTON	2	21	0	23	23	1	8	0	9	9
THAYER	8	28	0	36	36	5	9	0	14	14
THOMAS	6	2	0	8	8	2	1	0	3	3
THURSTON	4	8	0	12	12	3	3	0	6	6
VALLEY	6	33	2	37	39	3	14	1	16	17
WASHINGTON	36	121	1	156	157	24	53	1	76	77
WAYNE	11	20	1	30	31	6	7	1	12	13
WEBSTER	6	33	0	39	39	3	12	0	15	15
WHEELER	1	4	0	5	5	1	1	0	2	2
YORK	13	49	0	62	62	9	24	0	33	33
STATEWIDE	3,144	5,775	742	8,177	8,919	1,777	2,727	410	4,094	4,504

Appendix D

Percentage Of Exempt School Participants To Total Census Count School Years 1985/86, 1990/91, 1995/96, 2000/01 - 2017/18

School Year	Total Census Count	Exempt Student Count	Percent Of Exempt Students In Total Census Count
1985/86	214,998	939	.44
1990/91	227,895	2,147	.94
1995/96	235,193	4,137	1.76
2000/01	233,014	4,659	2.00
2001/02	230,140	5,000	2.17
2002/03	227,935	5,086	2.23
2003/04	229,095	4,929	2.15
2004/05	253,919	4,976	1.96
2005/06	302,191	5,616	1.86
2006/07	299,990	5,956	1.99
2007/08	298,928	6,062	2.03
2008/09	298,039	6,134	2.06
2009/10	300,079	6,295	2.10
2010/11	300,344	6,540	2.18
2011/12	302,007	6,809	2.25
2012/13	306,135	7,200	2.35
2013/14	308,886	7,674	2.48
2014/15	313,985	8,095	2.58
2015/16	320,952	8,290	2.58
2016/17	321,867	8,598	2.67
2017/18	327,039	8,919	2.73

- *Data for schools years prior to 2000/01 is shown in 5-year increments for space.*
- *School Years 1985/86 & 1990/91: Statistics And Facts About Nebraska Schools, Nebraska Department of Education, 1985 & 1990; Ages 7 through 15.*
- *School Year 1995/96: Statistics And Facts About Nebraska Schools, Nebraska Department of Education, 1995/96; Ages 7 through 15.*
- *School Years 2000/01 through 2003/04: School District/System Census Report, 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003; Ages 7 through 15.*
- *School Year 2004/05: School District/System Census Report, 2004; Ages 7 through 16.*
- *School Years 2005/06 through 2017/18: School District/System Census Reports, 2005 through 2017; Ages 6 through 17.*