



# **A REPORT ON PARTICIPANTS IN NEBRASKA EXEMPT SCHOOLS**

**2019/20 School Year**

Nebraska Department of Education  
Exempt School Program Office  
October 2021

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# 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 submissions by those filing for exempt status for the 2019/20 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 (June 30, the last reporting day for the school year); which were all active exemptions as of that date. 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 2019/20 school year was 9,452. Appendix A contains statistics for the 2019/20 school year regarding students, family units and attendance centers. A historical summary for school years 1985/86 through 2019/20 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 9,452 students, 286 were marked as dual enrolled for the 2019/20 school year. This information is not verified against school enrollment records.

### **Students and Family Units by County**

For the 2019/20 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	2,341
2)	Lancaster	1,518
3)	Sarpy	1,137
4)	Cass	239
5)	Buffalo	222
6)	Lincoln	202
7)	Scotts Bluff	202
8)	Washington	196
9)	Platte	193
10)	Hall	154

Douglas, Lancaster, and Sarpy Counties accounted for nearly 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 2019/20 was 2.87 percent.

### **Students by Age**

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

Age	Number of Exempt Students
5	270
6	918
7	848
8	885
9	858
10	803
11	807
12	797
13	772
14	681
15	681
16	639
17	493
Total	9,452

**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).

<b>Reason For Discontinuing Enrollment at the Exempt School During the 2018/19 School Year</b>	<b>Number of Students Impacted</b>
The child has reached the age of 16, and is below age 18, and withdrew before graduation (Form C).	16
The child is below age 18 and has completed the program of instruction (Form D).	57

## Appendix A

### Exempt Students, Family Units, and Attendance Centers School Year 2019/20 Reporting period July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020

<b>STUDENTS</b>	
Single Family	8,616
Multi Family	836
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,452</b>

<b>STUDENTS</b>	
Other Than Religious	3,316
Religious	6,136
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,452</b>

<b>FAMILY UNITS</b>	
Other Than Religious	1,988
Religious	2,848
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,836</b>

<b>ATTENDANCE CENTERS</b>			
	<b>Other Than Religious</b>	<b>Religious</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Single Family</b>	1,934	2,452	4,386
<b>Multi Family</b>	10	20	30
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,944</b>	<b>2,472</b>	<b>4,416</b>

## Appendix B

### Historical Summary of Exempt Students, Family Units, Attendance Centers, and Counties of Residence School Years 1985/86 through 2019/20

School Year	Number of Students			Family Units	School Attendance Centers			Counties Containing Exempt Students
	Single Family	Multi Family	Total		Single Family	Multi Family	Total	
2019/20	8,616	836	9,452	4,836	4,386	30	4,416	93
2018/19	8,252	778	9,030	4,651	4,224	27	4,251	93
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

**NOTE:**

- For school years 1985/86 through 2016/17, statistics reflect data collected by January of each school year; for school years 2017/18 and after, 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 2016/17 school year.



## Appendix B

### Historical Summary of Exempt Students, Family Units, Attendance Centers, and Counties of Residence School Years 1985/86 through 2019/20

School Year	Number of Students			Family Units	School Attendance Centers			Counties Containing Exempt Students
	Single Family	Multi Family	Total		Single Family	Multi Family	Total	
1994/95	3,061	762	3,823	2,110	1,679	38	1,717	86
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 years 2017/18 and after, 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 2016/17 school year.

Appendix C

Number Of Students And Families By County  
 School Year 2019/20  
 Reporting period July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020

County	Students					Family Units				
	Other Than Religious	Religious	Multi	Single	Total	Other Than Religious	Religious	Multi	Single	Total
ADAMS	49	86	6	129	135	31	49	5	75	80
ANTELOPE	16	21		37	37	8	8		16	16
ARTHUR	2	3		5	5	2	2		4	4
BANNER		16		16	16		5		5	5
BLAINE		5		5	5		2		2	2
BOONE	5	7		12	12	2	3		5	5
BOX BUTTE	18	33		51	51	17	19		36	36
BOYD	1	6		7	7	1	3		4	4
BROWN	19	30		49	49	12	15		27	27
BUFFALO	86	136	2	220	222	55	67	2	120	122
BURT	13	26		39	39	8	12		20	20
BUTLER	7	39		46	46	4	12		16	16
CASS	65	174	46	193	239	36	81	27	90	117
CEDAR	4	28		32	32	4	10		14	14
CHASE	8	11		19	19	4	7		11	11
CHERRY	15	20	4	31	35	12	9	3	18	21
CHEYENNE	14	40		54	54	9	21		30	30
CLAY	18	23		41	41	10	11		21	21
COLFAX	9	19		28	28	5	7		12	12
CUMING	6			6	6	5			5	5
CUSTER	30	69	8	91	99	16	32	5	43	48
DAKOTA	11	34		45	45	5	14		19	19
DAWES	27	36		63	63	16	14		30	30
DAWSON	7	44	14	37	51	7	24	8	23	31
DEUEL	3	7		10	10	3	6		9	9
DIXON	1	22		23	23	1	10		11	11
DODGE	62	83	1	144	145	41	36	1	76	77
DOUGLAS	866	1,475	311	2,030	2,341	513	709	172	1,050	1,222
DUNDY	2			2	2	2			2	2
FILLMORE	5	6		11	11	2	5		7	7
FRANKLIN	8	17		25	25	5	5		10	10
FRONTIER		15		15	15		6		6	6
FURNAS	8	14		22	22	5	7		12	12
GAGE	24	49	1	72	73	17	26	1	42	43
GARDEN	2	10		12	12	1	4		5	5
GARFIELD	3	7		10	10	2	3		5	5
GOSPER	6	4		10	10	3	1		4	4
GRANT	3	2		5	5	2	1		3	3

Appendix C

Number Of Students And Families By County  
 School Year 2019/20  
 Reporting period July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020

County	Students					Family Units				
	Other Than Religious	Religious	Multi	Single	Total	Other Than Religious	Religious	Multi	Single	Total
GREELEY	1	32	22	11	33	1	18	14	5	19
HALL	61	93		154	154	44	34		78	78
HAMILTON	19	54		73	73	10	21		31	31
HARLAN	6	14		20	20	4	6		10	10
HAYES		5		5	5		1		1	1
HITCHCOCK	6	27		33	33	4	9		13	13
HOLT	12	33		45	45	7	13		20	20
HOOKER		4		4	4		1		1	1
HOWARD	8	13		21	21	5	6		11	11
JEFFERSON	8	12	2	18	20	8	7	2	13	15
JOHNSON	17	19		36	36	6	6		12	12
KEARNEY	8	51	2	57	59	6	22	2	26	28
KEITH	40	16	23	33	56	24	8	12	20	32
KEYA PAHA		21		21	21		8		8	8
KIMBALL	22	22		44	44	14	12		26	26
KNOX	17	29		46	46	6	11		17	17
LANCASTER	527	991	45	1,473	1,518	317	438	31	724	755
LINCOLN	58	144	2	200	202	41	68	1	108	109
LOGAN	1	12		13	13	1	3		4	4
LOUP	1	3		4	4	1	2		3	3
MADISON	39	78		117	117	23	37		60	60
MCPHERSON		3		3	3		2		2	2
MERRICK	9	28		37	37	6	17		23	23
MORRILL	21	26		47	47	12	12		24	24
NANCE	6	4		10	10	4	2		6	6
NEMAHA	17	29		46	46	9	12		21	21
NUCKOLLS	6	10		16	16	3	6		9	9
OTOE	25	77	8	94	102	16	36	3	49	52
PAWNEE	1	5	1	5	6	1	3		4	4
PERKINS	74	10	68	16	84	42	5	37	10	47
PHELPS	21	15		36	36	14	9		23	23
PIERCE	14	16		30	30	7	11		18	18
PLATTE	38	155	117	76	193	20	67	47	40	87
POLK	6	15		21	21	3	10		13	13
RED WILLOW	32	13		45	45	17	7		24	24
RICHARDSON	5	31		36	36	5	14		19	19
ROCK	5	6		11	11	4	3		7	7
SALINE	12	23		35	35	8	12		20	20

Appendix C

Number Of Students And Families By County  
 School Year 2019/20  
 Reporting period July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020

County	Students					Family Units				
	Other Than Religious	Religious	Multi	Single	Total	Other Than Religious	Religious	Multi	Single	Total
SARPY	401	736	124	1,013	1,137	240	342	66	516	582
SAUNDERS	35	77	3	109	112	20	31	2	49	51
SCOTTS BLUFF	85	117		202	202	53	58		111	111
SEWARD	36	115	23	128	151	19	52	7	64	71
SHERIDAN	15	24		39	39	9	12		21	21
SHERMAN	2	12		14	14	2	6		8	8
SIOUX	6	6		12	12	3	3		6	6
STANTON	5	19		24	24	4	8		12	12
THAYER	18	20		38	38	9	7		16	16
THOMAS	7	1		8	8	3	1		4	4
THURSTON	4	10		14	14	3	5		8	8
VALLEY	9	39	2	46	48	6	16	1	21	22
WASHINGTON	58	138	1	195	196	34	60	1	93	94
WAYNE	14	17		31	31	9	5		14	14
WEBSTER	7	29		36	36	4	12		16	16
WHEELER		3		3	3		1		1	1
YORK	17	48		65	65	11	24		35	35
<b>STATEWIDE</b>	<b>3,285</b>	<b>6,167</b>	<b>836</b>	<b>8,616</b>	<b>9,452</b>	<b>1,988</b>	<b>2,848</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>4,386</b>	<b>4,836</b>

## Appendix D

### Percentage Of Exempt School Participants To Total Census Count School Years 1985/86, 1990/91, 1995/96, 2000/01 – 2019/20

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
2018/19	327,932	9,030	2.75
<b>2019/20</b>	<b>329,447</b>	<b>9,452</b>	<b>2.87</b>

- 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 2019/20: *School District/System Census Reports, 2005 through 2019; Ages 6 through 17.*