



## Far Star Action Fund: Homeschooling overview

The target outcome of this project is to better understand the homeschool landscape to develop an informed plan to reach homeschool students

**Foundational questions:**

What does homeschool look like today?

What can Far Star Action Fund offer/provide to homeschool students?

How can Far Star most effectively reach these communities?



**Goals:**

Define homeschooling and characterize the current dynamics, participants and trends

Understand the broad educational desires of homeschool families/children

Evaluate the best distribution channels for amplifying the message of Far Star films amongst homeschooled communities

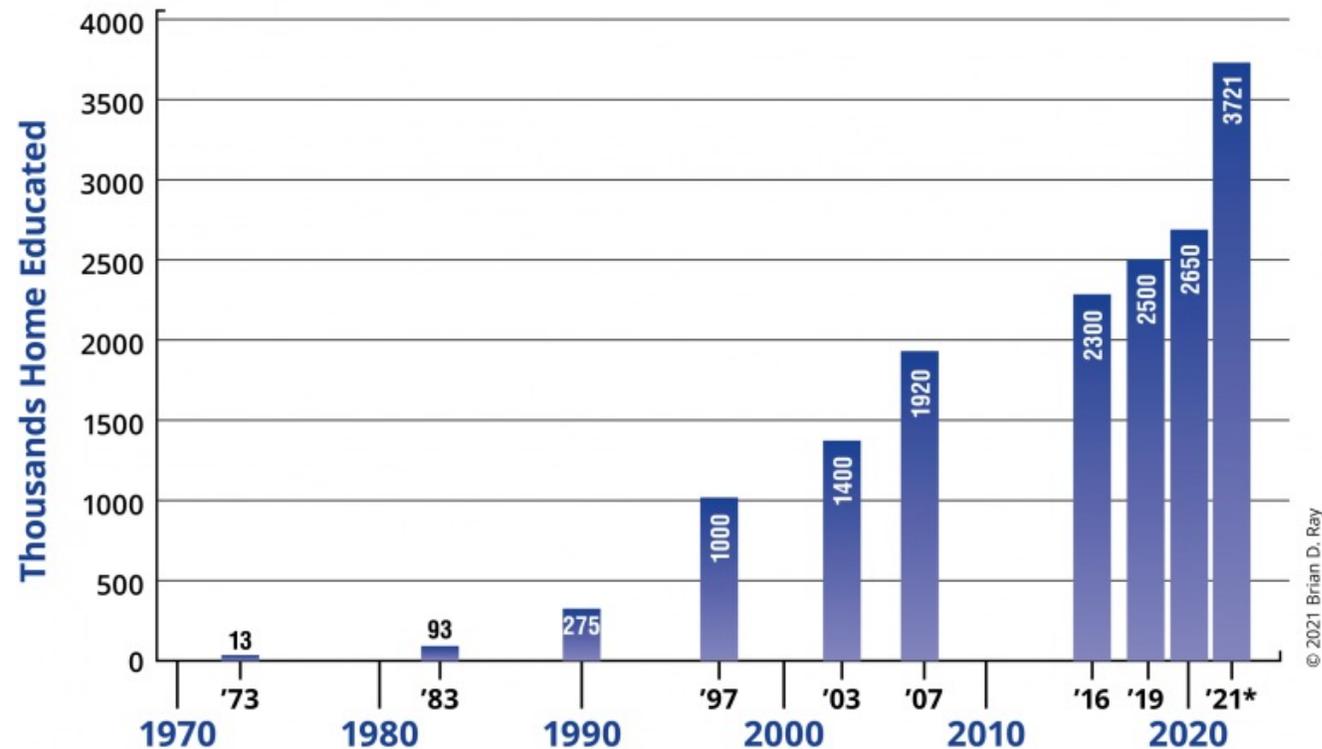
# Agenda

- Homeschooling overview: “What does homeschool look like today?”
  - History
  - Growth
  - Requirements
  - School types
- Homeschool organizations: “What types of groups or organizations do homeschooled families most commonly interact with?”
  - Types of organizations
  - Pathways to partnership

# Following its legalization in the 1970s, the rate of homeschooling has grown steadily among U.S. families, spiking in 2020 due to the pandemic

- 1970s: Homeschooling movement begins driven by parent's desire for greater control over educational content and quality
- 1972: Supreme Court upholds parents right to homeschool children given religious motivations
  - For many years, religious motivations were the primary driver of homeschooling
- 1993: Homeschooling is legalized in all 50 states
- 1990 – 2000: Growth in homeschooled students fuels development of advocacy networks and growing lobbying power
- 2020: COVID pandemic disrupts traditional schooling methods for millions, pushing many parents to explore alternative education paths

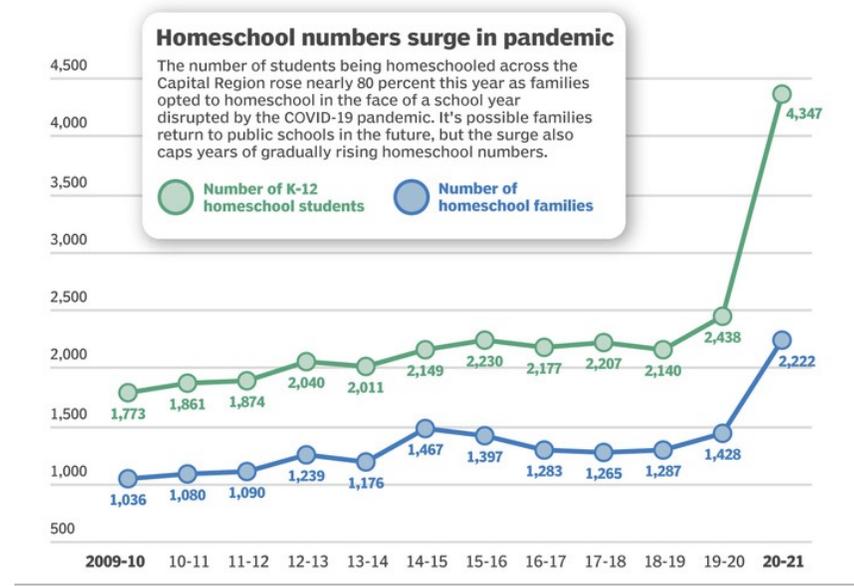
## GROWTH OF HOMESCHOOLING IN THE UNITED STATES



\* Governments restricted schools during the past year. The X-axis is not to scale for 2016 to 2021.

# The pandemic significantly accelerated a shift towards homeschooling, particularly among certain demographics

- The pandemic fueled a shift to home education as parents sought alternatives to online education
  - From Spring 2020 to Fall 2020 homeschooled students grew from **3% to 11% of the population**
  - The longevity of this shift remains unclear, but experts anticipate **continued use of digital or hybrid learning options**
- Demographics: This shift to homeschooling was **most pronounced in Black and Hispanic families**, who cited pervasive racism and discrimination as a primary driver of adoption
  - However, even prior to the pandemic 41% of homeschooling students were non-white (e.g., Black, Asian, Hispanic)^
- Geography\*: Certain geographies saw outsized growth of homeschooling with 5 states seeing growth over 11% (AL, FL, MI, OK, VT, WV)



SOURCE: State Education Department Children Instructed at Home data file (Schenectady, Albany, Saratoga, Fulton, Montgomery, Schoharie and Rensselaer counties)

GRAPHIC: Kathryn Hume & Zachary Matson/The Daily Gazette

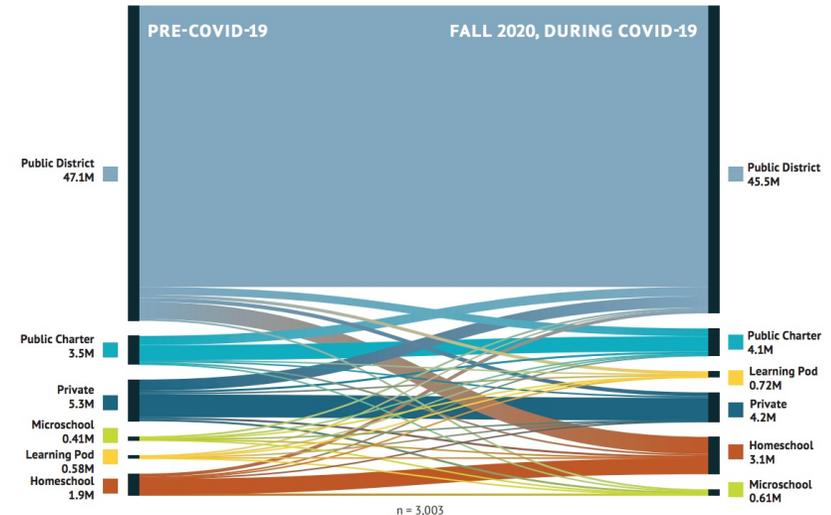
RACE/ETHNICITY	RATE OF HOMESCHOOLING, U.S. HOUSEHOLDS		CHANGE IN HOMESCHOOLING RATE, SPRING 2020 TO FALL 2020
	SPRING 2020	FALL 2020	
White (non-Hispanic)	5.7%	9.7%	+4.0 percentage points
Black	3.3%	16.1%	+12.8 percentage points
Hispanic	6.2%	12.1%	+5.9 percentage points
Asian	4.9%	8.8%	+3.9 percentage points

Sources: ^ <https://www.nheri.org/research-facts-on-homeschooling>; \*<https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2021/03/homeschooling-on-the-rise-during-covid-19-pandemic.html>; Bellweather Education Fund; The Daily Gazette

# The shift towards homeschooling was fueled by a shift out of both public and private schools, and primarily driven by middle-and-lower-income families

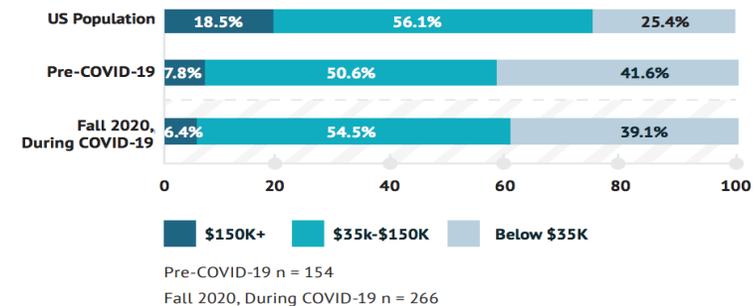
- Both **public and private schools saw significant decreases** in enrollment during the pandemic
  - Parents primarily cited the attractiveness of alternative learning formats (e.g., mixed, online, or in-person) and better ability to meet a child’s well-being and mental health as reasons for shift to homeschooling
  - Lower-income parents cited learning format (e.g, online or in-person) as the primary cause of switching
- **Middle-and low-income parents were the fastest growing segment in homeschooling** during the pandemic
  - However, lower-income families generally perceived homeschooling as “free” and did not spend money to support it, suggesting educational quality may have suffered in the shift
- Similarly, **families in rural areas saw greater shift towards homeschooling** than urban or suburban zones
  - These areas are often lower-income and may speak to parents limited options to pursue more costly alternatives like private education or learning pods

ESTIMATED ENROLLMENT BY SCHOOL TYPE, PRE-COVID-19 VS. FALL 2020, DURING COVID-19



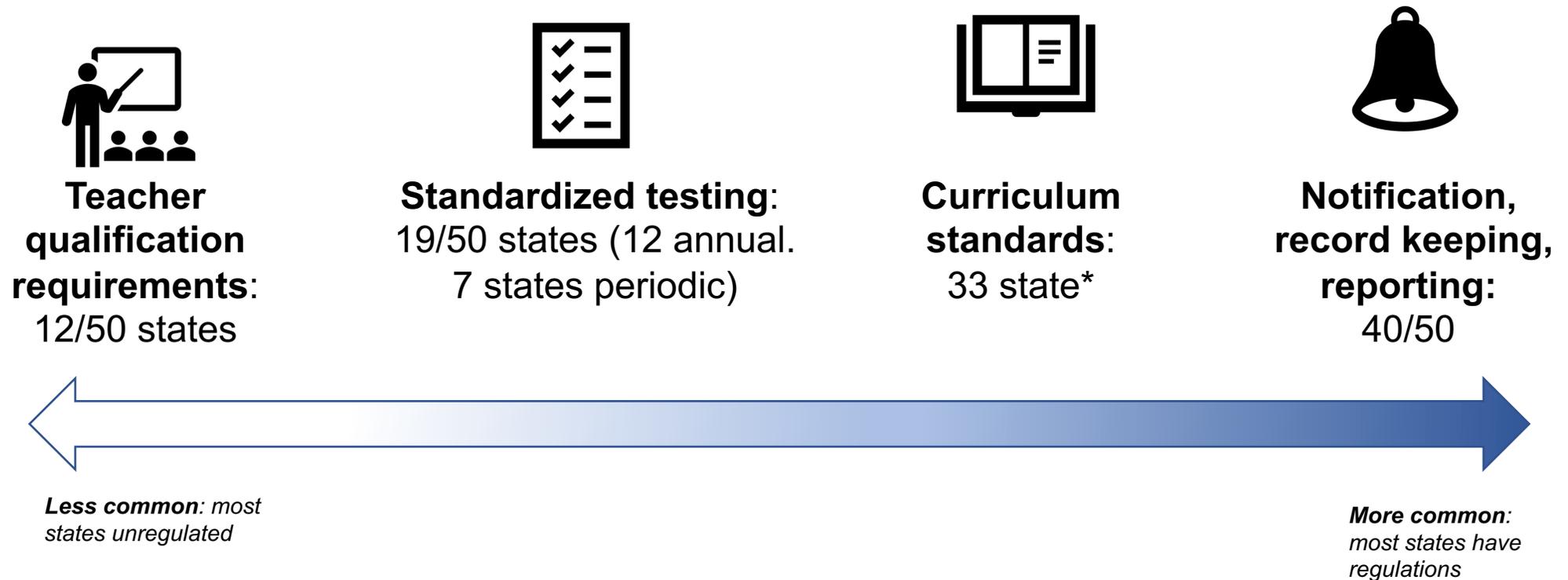
## Homeschool

ENROLLMENT DISTRIBUTION BY INCOME



# Homeschool requirements vary significantly by state; most require notification and record keeping while few require teacher certification

- The level of homeschool regulation usually varies across 4 categories in control and standards:



Notes: \*Few states with curriculum control in place have means or systems to check curriculum is being taught

Sources: Mercato Foundation; <https://kidskonnnect.com/articles/a-full-breakdown-of-the-homeschool-laws-by-state-what-do-you-need-to-be-aware-of/>

# Most homeschooling is conducted under 4 models: Virtual charter schools, micro-schools, learning pods, or individual instruction



## Public virtual charter school:



## Micro-schools:



## Learning pods:



## Individual (family) instruction:

### Definition:

For-profit online or blended schools which function as alternatives to traditional public education

Small, independent schools characterized by size and structure; often facilitated by for-profit micro-school networks

Small groups of school-age children learning in tandem; may be used as a supplement to traditional school

Children receive primary instruction at home usually led by a parent or caretaker

### Funding:

- Receive government funding
- Est. \$10,000 per student

- Commonly funded by families, certain states have provided public funding
- Est. \$5,000 per student

Funded by families

Funded by families

### Curriculum sources:

Developed internally

- Internally developed
- Leverage online learning resources (e.g., Khan Academy)

- Common to utilize online resources or curricula providers (e.g., Khan Academy, ABCMouse)

- Online
- Self-developed
- Sourced from religious or cultural organization

### Teaching agents:

Blend of self-teaching and support from on-staff 'guides/coaches'

Blend of self-teaching and instruction from professional teachers

- Parents
- Hired professional tutors, teachers, coaches

- Parents

### Example orgs:

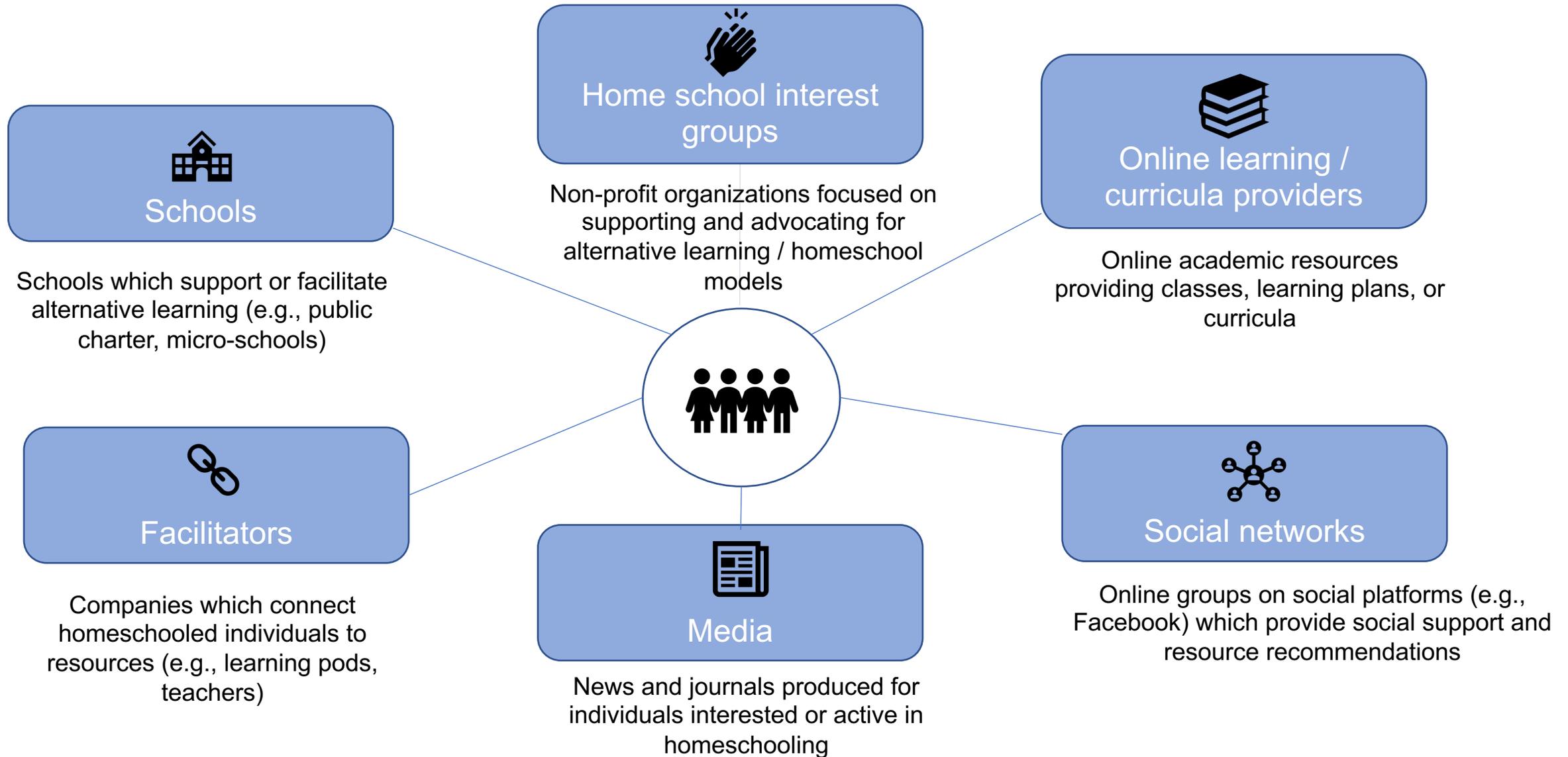
- K12, Inc (Stride)
- Connections Academy by Pearson

- Prenda Learning
- My Hightech
- Acta Academy
- Wildflower Schools

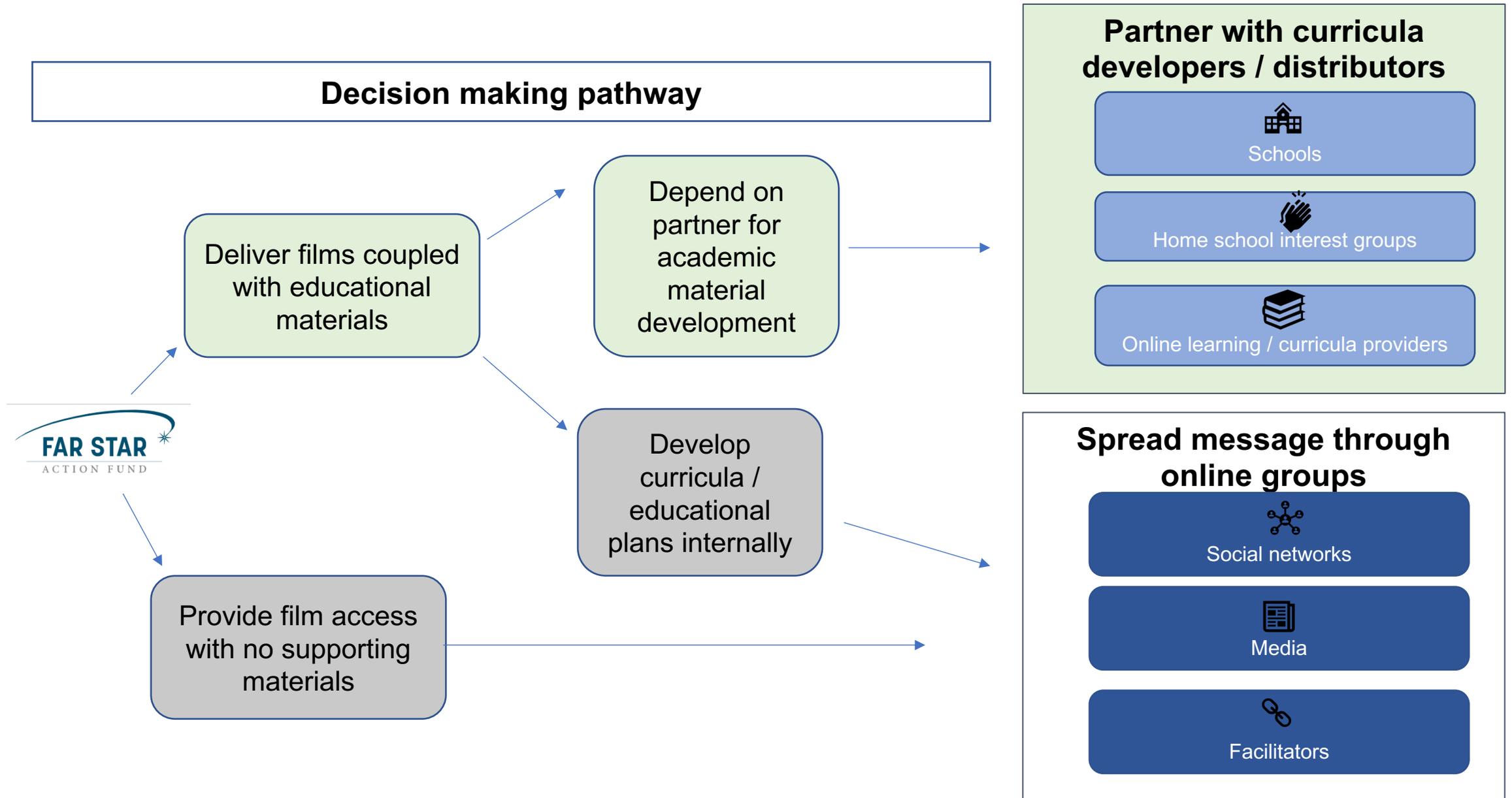
- Facilitators:
- Get Selected
  - Facebook groups

- N / A

There are a variety of institutions which regularly interface with homeschool families; Far Star could potentially partner with any of these organizations



The choice of a homeschool-affiliated partner institution will likely be influenced by the type of educational experience Far Star looks to provide



# It may be valuable to partner with institutions which develop curriculum to reach a broad audience of homeschooled children



## Schools



## Online learning / curricula providers



## Home school interest groups

<b>Definition:</b>	Small groups of school-age children learning in tandem; may be used as a supplement to traditional school	Online class providers, many are specialized for certain grade levels, learning styles, or interests (e.g., religious, cultural)	Non-profit organizations focused on supporting, creating educational resources for, and advocating for alternative learning / homeschool models
<b>Examples:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- K12, Inc.</li> <li>- Connections Academy (Pearson)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Khan Academy</li> <li>- ABCMouse</li> <li>- Emile School</li> <li>- Outschool</li> <li>- Tinkergarten</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Seton Home Study<sup>^</sup> School</li> <li>- Sonlight<sup>^</sup></li> <li>- Black Home educators Fund*</li> <li>- Environmental Scouts*</li> <li>- Bellweather Foundation</li> <li>- Legal Aid Funds (e.g., HomeSchool Legal Defense Fund)</li> <li>- Lobbyist groups</li> </ul>
<b>Volume / reach:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- K12, Inc: <b>170,000</b></li> <li>- Connections Academy (Pearson): <b>100,000</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Khan Academy: <b>48 million</b></li> <li>- Outschool: <b>300,000</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Seton Home Study<sup>^</sup>: <b>20,000</b></li> <li>- Black Home Educators Fund*: <b>35,000</b></li> </ul>

### Partnership potential:

Partner with large curriculum developing organizations to access broad network and put Far Star Films into more online / homeschooled curriculums

Note : <sup>^</sup>Indicates religious focus \*Indicates cultural focus

# Partnering with existing online networks and resource distributors may be ideal if Far Star films is looking to amplify its message in these communities



## Facilitators



## Media



## Social networks

### Definition:

Organizations which provide structure or facilitate connection for parents operating homeschools

Online class providers, many are specialized for certain grade levels, learning styles, or interests (e.g., religious, cultural)

Online resources which provide social support and resource recommendations (e.g., Facebook groups) for parents and teachers

### Examples:

- Wonderschool
- Swing Education

- Newsletters: Growing without Schooling, Seattle Homeschool Group
- News: Education Week, Chalkbeat, eSchool News

- Pandemic pod Facebook group

### Volume / reach:

- Not available

- Not available

- Pandemic pod: **40,000**

### Partnership potential:

Use social networks or HS focused-media orgs. to advertise Far Star films to homeschooled families