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lum fair where various publishers had materials for curriculums set out and I selected one for each subject."

"We have a certain time for each subject and a certain length of time for each subject. She's done with school by noon," Norland said. "One reason to home school is that we want a Godly-based education. She's getting an education that fits her personally, daily. She's getting a wholesome education."

Putnam said she decided to home school out of desperation after negative experiences with both private and public schools.

"We live in Lowell district," Putnam said. "Things were very bad there — worse for David than Shannon (two of her children). Her teachers said she was a sweet, average child. To her, that meant she could be lazy, so she did. She didn't learn to read."

"In our school district, it's a small school, but I don't think that's an excuse for being inferior," she said. "We could not afford to send them into St. Paul's or O'Hara, because we'd have to pay out of parish tuition. There was really no place to go."

After making numerous phone calls and reaching several dead ends, Putnam began home schooling with the Accelerated Christian Education correspondence courses.

But shortly after the Putnams began home schooling, they received threatening letters from the school superintendent and a visit from truant officers.

"A truant officer appeared at the door, and he said the girls had to be in school the next day or we'd be taken to court," Putnam said. "I said fine, see 'ya there. And we heard nothing more for three years."

In 1985 changes in the Oregon statute on home schooling made home schooling contingent upon achievement test scores.

"Right now, we have to notify the local education district that we are going to home school; we don't ask permis-

sion, we just notify them. We notify the education service district each year, and then we turn in the test scores, which are administered by a certified third party — mainly whoever can legally get a hold of the tests — and turn them in by October," Putnam said. "They have to maintain a 15 percentile or above."

"If they're in the tenth percentile, and the next year they're in the ninth percentile, then the ESD can order them back to school," Putnam said. "The laws have been working very well. Home school kids score in the 70 percentile — that's an average."

Robert Taylor, director of institutional services for Lane ESD, however, said he is less pleased with the current law.

"The guidelines are really a farce," Taylor said. "There are

it. "But some are working very earnestly and providing the education they feel their child should have... and they're doing a good job at it," he said. "If a parent chooses to spend six or seven hours a day working one on one with their children, no public system can compare with that contact."

One of the advantages of home schooling is the freedom it allows for the students to pursue other activities. Sean Putnam, 14, is active in the Navy League Sea Cadets. His sister Beth, 16, has worked as a model.

Such freedom, however, sometimes carries a price tag in the form of negative attitudes from their peers in public schools.

"Mostly the question is 'why?'" Sean Putnam said. "I

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— Pat Putnam

no grounds for ordering somebody back to school."

Taylor explained that even if a student dropped from a 50 percentile to a 17 percentile, the student can still be home schooled. Unless the score drops below the 16 percentile, indicating 84 out of every 100 students at that grade level scored above them, the ESD cannot order the student back to school.

Some parents declare they will home school to avoid hassles with the school district over truancy, Taylor said.

"The problem is not with the home school law, but with compulsory attendance," Taylor said. "The school refers the child to my agency for not attending class, and we go to court. If the parent specifies that the child is not under their control, they are not hassled for

just say, 'If you had a school district like Lowell...'" Mainly, it's 'what's wrong with the school?' Home schooling makes it easier to do things — just grab your courses and go on."

Scott said her children have also experienced problems with their public schooled peers. Parents and teachers, too, are sometimes negative in their attitude toward home schoolers.

"Sometimes they're defensive, and they put pressure on our kids often. Some reactions are that it's too bad we don't have a school that's acceptable," Pat Putnam said. "Home schooling was a last choice. I wish it had been a first choice."

Parents and children alike, however, find support from

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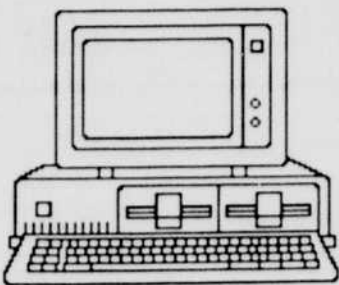


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