

TRENDS

1. Customization & Alternative Learning Preferences

- Many families opt for homeschooling due to the ability to tailor education to their child's specific needs, learning styles, and pace.
- Parents of neurodivergent or highly independent learners often feel traditional school structures don't support their children effectively.
- Some families blend multiple approaches, such as private schooling, co-ops, online courses, and experiential learning.

✓ Solution:

Micro-Schooling & Personalized Learning Tracks – Ashland Schools could explore **micro-school models** (small, flexible learning communities) or personalized curriculum options, allowing students to customize their education while still being connected to the public school system. Schools nationwide are adopting **competency-based education (CBE)**, where students progress based on mastery rather than age or grade level.

2. Dissatisfaction with Past Experiences in Public Schooling

- Many respondents had children in Ashland Schools before transitioning to home-schooling, often citing unmet needs, rigid structures, or social-emotional concerns.
- A key reason for leaving was that students felt "lost" in the system or struggled with traditional classroom learning.
- Some parents who worked in public schools have mixed feelings, recognizing both strengths and challenges.

✓ Solution:

Restorative Community-Building & Flexible Re-Entry – Schools should actively **rebuild trust with former families** through open dialogue sessions, personalized re-enrollment plans, and dedicated **family liaisons** who help navigate public school transitions. **Restorative justice programs**, already proving successful in districts nationwide, could also improve the social-emotional experience for students who felt unsupported.

3. Interest in Hybrid & Alternative Learning Options

- Some parents are open to partial public school participation (e.g., online courses, extracurricular activities, or specific classes).
- Programs like **ORCA (Oregon Charter Academy)** and **Global Online Academy (GOA)** are drawing interest, showing a demand for high-quality online and hybrid options.

- Families are not opposed to public education but want more flexibility in how it is delivered.

✔ **Solution:**

Hybrid & Flex Enrollment Models – Nationwide, districts are launching **hybrid schooling models** that allow students to mix in-person, online, and independent study. For example:

- **"A La Carte" Course Enrollment:** Students can enroll in select Ashland School District (ASD) courses while maintaining a homeschool curriculum.
 - **Virtual Learning Hubs:** Schools in states like Colorado and Florida are offering public school courses remotely, supported by school resources.
 - **Mentorship & Project-Based Learning:** Incorporating **student-led passion projects** into public school curricula could re-engage families who seek individualized learning.
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4. Strong Desire for Socialization Opportunities

- Even homeschooling families recognize the importance of peer interactions, and some parents are considering public school re-enrollment **primarily for social opportunities** rather than academics.
- **Sports, clubs, and community engagement** are key factors in whether families stay connected to public schools.

✔ **Solution:**

Expanded Extracurricular Access & Peer Networks – Schools could create a **"Community Learners"** program where non-full-time students can:

- Join **sports teams, clubs, and events** (some already do, but increasing awareness and removing enrollment barriers would help).
 - Participate in **service learning projects** or social groups designed for flexible learners.
 - Develop **multi-age peer mentorship programs**, pairing hybrid/homeschooled students with those in traditional school settings.
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OPPORTUNITIES

1. Bridging the Gap Between Homeschool & Public Education

- Some families left Ashland Schools but still value **public education in principle** and might return under the right conditions.
- Many parents believe schools could better accommodate different learning styles **without requiring full-time enrollment**.

✔ **Solution:**

Ashland Learning Partnerships (ALP) Model – Similar to districts in California and Washington, Ashland could develop:

- **An official “Learning Partner” program** where homeschooling families get access to district resources (e.g., libraries, labs, tutoring).
 - **Co-enrollment options**, allowing students to split their time between home learning and structured school programs.
 - **Parent-Educator Collaborations**, where teachers support families in designing hybrid learning plans.
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2. Re-Engaging Families Who Left Due to School Fit Issues

- Some parents left ASD due to class sizes, rigid curriculum structures, or social-emotional concerns but **would return if improvements were clear**.
- The concern that students “get lost” in large school settings was a recurring theme.

✔ **Solution:**

Small Learning Communities (SLCs) – Nationally, schools are adopting **small learning hubs within larger schools** to create more personalized experiences.

- Ashland could introduce **interest-based academies**, where students engage in hands-on, real-world learning within a smaller cohort.
 - Schools in Oregon, Washington, and California have piloted **teacher-student advisory programs**, where students have **one consistent mentor teacher throughout their school years** to create deeper connections.
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3. Building Awareness of Ashland’s New & Evolving Programs

- Some parents may not be aware of updates or changes to Ashland Schools that address their concerns.
- Without active outreach, they may assume past issues persist.

✔ **Solution:**

Targeted Outreach & Reconnection Campaigns – Schools could launch:

- **“Revisit Ashland” Open Houses** where families who left can learn about new opportunities.
 - **Personalized follow-ups with past families**, highlighting how their concerns have been addressed.
 - **Parent & Student Ambassadors** who share positive experiences with skeptical families.
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THREATS

1. Competition from Charter & Online Schools

- ORCA, Global Online Academy, and other charter models are drawing students away with more **flexible, high-quality online learning experiences**.
- Public schools may struggle to retain students if they cannot offer similar flexibility.

✔ Solution:

Public School-Led Hybrid Learning Programs – Ashland could create its own **public online learning option**, offering:

- Local teacher support and check-ins.
 - Customizable online/in-person blends.
 - Project-based courses tailored to individual interests.
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2. Overcoming Negative Perceptions of Public Schooling

- Parents with prior negative experiences may assume nothing has changed.
- If public schools don't **actively demonstrate change**, they risk losing families permanently.

✔ Solution:

Storytelling & Parent Engagement Initiatives – Schools could:

- **Highlight success stories** from families who returned and found a great fit.
 - **Create parent advisory boards** to keep families involved in shaping school improvements.
 - **Offer trial periods**, where homeschoolers can test public school programs before committing.
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CONCLUSION

Ashland Schools have a significant **opportunity to re-engage families** by focusing on **flexibility, customization, and strong social connections**. Schools across the country are adapting by introducing **hybrid models, project-based learning, and community partnerships**—all of which could be implemented in Ashland to address current concerns and bring families back into the system.