

Home Schooling

An Informational Fact Sheet

In July of 1989, the State Board of Education adopted Rules for Excuses from Compulsory Attendance for Home Education. Over the past several years, a number of questions have been raised by parents concerning home education. The following questions and answers are offered to assist parents considering home education.

Q: *In Mahoning County, who approves home schooling applications?*

A: The Mahoning County Superintendent of the Educational Service Center has the authority to excuse students from compulsory attendance laws if they are residents of one of the local school districts. Residents of city districts (Youngstown, Struthers, Campbell) are supervised directly through that district.

Q: *If a parent has questions regarding home schooling, who should he/she contact?*

A: A good person to start with is the child's building principal or the district superintendent's office. Eventually, the parent will be directed to call the Mahoning County Educational Service Center. The county superintendent or his designee reviews the applications, maintains records, and communicates with the school district of residence regarding home schooled students.

Q: *Are there time requirements for home education?*

A: Parents have the obligation to provide 900 hours of home education instruction per year over a full range of content areas including the following subjects: (1) Language, reading, spelling, and writing; (2) Geography, history of the United States and Ohio and national, state, and local government; (3) Mathematics; (4) Science; (5) Health; (6) Physical education; (7) Fine arts, including music; and (8) First aid, safety and fire prevention.

Q: *What about textbooks and instructional materials?*

A: It is the parent's choice as to what materials are used in home schooling, and it is the parent's responsibility to provide all textbooks and other instructional materials that will be used. Parents should call the building principal or the Educational Service Center if they need assistance.

Q: *Are there other requirements or things someone should know about when considering home schooling?*

A:

- (1) The teacher of record (may or may not be the parent) must have a high school diploma or its equivalence.
- (2) The teacher or parent needs to submit an instructional curriculum plan with the Notification Form that includes a list of textbooks and teaching materials.
- (3) The parent is required to submit an end of the year academic assessment report of the child's progress for the previous school year.

Q: *Must a parent provide the notification on a form provided by the State Department of Education?*

A: No, the standards say that a parent **may** use a form supplied by the State Department of Education. Parents may use their own form, or may simply notify by a narrative document. A copy of the Mahoning County Educational Service Center Home Education Notification form is enclosed.

Q: *What is the timeline for the Mahoning County Superintendent to respond to the parent notification for home schooling?*

A: The standards require that the superintendent respond to the home education notification within 14 days.

Q: *Do parents have the right to keep their child(ren) out of school while awaiting approval for home schooling?*

A: No. Compulsory attendance laws require a child between ages six and eighteen to attend school. Until the notification request is approved, the child must attend school.

Q: *Does the word "may" in reference to attending part-time mean that a school district can refuse to take home educated students on a part-time basis?*

A: Yes. Rule 3301-34-03(G) states *"At the request of a parent, a child who has been excused from compulsory school attendance for the purpose of home education may be enrolled in a chartered public school in the school district of residence...on a part-time basis."* The option to enroll the student on a part-time basis is the right of the school district. There are two exceptions. It is the position of the Ohio Department of Education that school districts shall allow home educated students to enroll in driver's education programs. In addition, those students who qualify cannot be denied special education services.

Q: *May home educated students participate in sports and other co-curricular activities?*

A: Participation in sports must follow the policies and by-laws of the Ohio High School Athletic Association. The Ohio High School Athletic Association requires that a student be enrolled (an ADM pupil) in the school to be eligible for athletic participation. Participation in other extra-curricular activities would follow local board policy.

Q: *How are high school credits awarded to students entering public schools during the high school years?*

A: When a parent enrolls a student in one of the top four grade levels, the district might review the most recent home schooling assessment report, might require the student to take any standardized achievement tests that were given to other students of similar age during the time this student was on home education, and might use interviews with the student or parent, as well as, other evaluative methods. The superintendent of the school district of residence will determine the student's level upon entering school.

Q: *Can home educated students receive a local high school diploma?*

A: Not as long as they remain on home schooling. ORC 3313-61 states that a diploma shall be granted to students who have *"successfully completed the curriculum of any high school."* This would not describe home schooled students. Also, no child in Ohio may be awarded a diploma without passing the 9th grade proficiency test, which is typically administered only to students in public and chartered non-public schools. (ORC 33301.0710,0711).