



To: **Minnesota School Superintendents**

From: **Elia Bruggeman, Assistant Commissioner**

Date: **November 3, 2011**

Subjects: **Electronic reporting required on counts of nonpublic and homeschooled students in your districts**
Enter data now through December 31.

Plus -- New Frequently Asked Questions Document on Homeschooling in Minnesota

Minnesota Statutes, sections, 120A.22-120A.26, related to Compulsory Instruction, require school superintendents to report annually to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) on the numbers of students, by age, who reside in each district and attend nonpublic schools or homeschools. This data must be further broken down by the numbers of students whose school situation is considered by the superintendent to be in compliance with the Minnesota Compulsory Instruction law versus those considered not in compliance.

As with last year's report, this year's report must be submitted electronically. A tutorial for establishing an account is included with this letter. The tutorial explains where and how to submit data on the Minnesota Department of Education website in the "Data Submissions" area.

The information presented in this report provides essential planning and public interest data. Only when all school districts report accurately, as required by law, does the Minnesota Department of Education have the ability to compile and provide to interested parties, including the Minnesota Legislature:

- statewide annual data on the numbers and ages of students educated in traditional nonpublic schools;
- data on the prevalence of homeschools, their geographic concentrations and most typical ages for this school choice option; and
- data on students considered to be in educational situations that do not meet the minimal standards set by the State of Minnesota's Compulsory Instruction Law.

Districts have asked MDE to provide examples which would lead to a student's count being recorded in the column labeled "not in compliance" with the Compulsory Instruction law. Please note that the Compulsory Instruction law changed significantly during the 2011 Special Legislative Session. For example, quarterly report cards are no longer required of homeschool families. **(More information about the law and other issues facing homeschooling families is found in the enclosed, new Frequently Asked Questions document.)**

Situations where the district is in formal communication with the family and/or county prosecutors about compliance issues are clear examples of student situations that would be counted as “noncompliant.” However, other examples of some situations when a student’s school situation would fall into the noncompliant category include, but are not limited to:

- *Situations where students are ages 7-16 and 1) have been homeschooled for at least one year and are not exempt from testing requirement, but 2) in the past twelve months the instructor has not come to agreement with the superintendent on a nationally-normed achievement test and/or not followed through with agreed-upon test. For example, families may have indicated that this was to be determined later but have not come to agreement with the district or had the student tested.*
- *Situations where people who are not the student’s legal guardian or parent (such as a grandparent, step-parent or other homeschool parent) are schooling the child informally in a home setting but without baccalaureate degrees or direct supervision of a licensed teacher.*
- *Situations where traditional nonpublic schools that are not accredited by state-recognized accrediting agencies are not reporting to you that they are educating resident students, the students’ names and ages, testing information and other requirements. (A list of state-recognized accrediting agencies is attached. Only schools directly accredited by one of these organizations have some – not all – reporting requirements reduced.)*

The information in your district’s data report is not intended to be punitive against any family’s individual situation. Instead, it contributes to a composite picture of the extent of compliance and noncompliance issues districts face with Minnesota’s Compulsory Instruction law that governs truancy, nonpublic education and homeschools.

Data entered on MDE’s Data Submissions site should reflect compulsory instruction compliance in your district on October 1, 2011. **You may enter the counts now; your district must enter data no later than December 31.** Please note that the report concerns all private and homeschooled students who live within your district borders. It **does not** count students who may attend a private school within your district borders but live elsewhere; likewise, it **does** count private school students who live within your district borders but may attend a private school located out of the district.

If you have questions on counting nonpublic and homeschooled students, please feel free to contact Cindy Jackson at 651.582.8572 or cindy.s.jackson@state.mn.us. The enclosed tutorial walks you through how to file data electronically. If you have trouble with the electronic aspect, be in touch with Valarie Cochran at valarie.cochran@state.mn.us or 651-582-8280.

Thank you for submitting this important data.

Enc: Minnesota State Recognized Accrediting Agencies for Nonpublic Schools
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ): Homeschooling in Minnesota
Tutorial on setting up account registration

**Nonpublic School Accrediting Organizations
Recognized by the Commissioner of Education or the
Minnesota Nonpublic Education Council
for purposes of Minnesota’s Compulsory Instruction Law**

Minnesota nonpublic schools (traditional private schools or homeschools) that are directly accredited by any of these organizations are eligible for the reduced reporting requirements to the school superintendents of the districts where their students reside, as outlined in Minnesota Statutes, section 120A.22, the Minnesota Compulsory Instruction law, because their accrediting organization has been recognized by the Minnesota Nonpublic Education Council or the Commissioner of Education.

Note, however, that for purposes of Minnesota Statutes, section 120A.22, Minnesota’s Compulsory Instruction law, these accreditation organizations listed below cannot grant Minnesota recognition to other accrediting organizations with which they may have agreements or reciprocity. The Minnesota Department of Education and the Minnesota Nonpublic Education Council has recognized these organizations only for the direct accreditation review and recognition they provide to their own schools and/or instructors. Agreements some accrediting organizations have with one another do not imply or transfer Minnesota recognition or reporting exemptions to any organization that has not directly requested and received recognition by the Minnesota Department of Education or the Minnesota Nonpublic Education Council. *In short, if the organization is not listed here, it is not recognized by the state of Minnesota for reduced reporting requirements. Likewise, local school districts may not modify state reporting requirements by creating local standards that add or delete organizations from this list.*

Even with exemption from some specific reporting requirements, schools directly accredited by the following recognized accrediting organizations are still required by Minnesota state law to report by October 1 of each year the name, birth date and address of each child receiving instruction to the superintendent of the district in which the child resides.

Nonpublic School Accrediting Organization	Address	Other Contact Information	Expires July 1
Accrediting Association of Seventh Day Adventist Schools, Colleges and Universities	Minnesota Conference 7384 Kirkwood Court Maple Grove, MN 55369	Connie McCormick Call: 763-424-8923 E-mail: mnconf@ucollege.edu www.mnsda.com	2013
AdvancED (formerly Minnesota North Central Association)	2600 23 rd St. S. St. Cloud, MN 56301	Gayla Holmgren-Hoeller, Director Call: 320-290-3911 gholmgren@ncacasi.org or Julie.heine@usd.edu	2016
American Association of Christian Schools	602 Belvoir Avenue East Ridge, TN 37412	Dr. Jeff Walton Call: 423-629.4280 E-mail: jwalton@aacs.org www.aacs.org	2013

Nonpublic School Accrediting Organization	Address	Other Contact Information	Expires July 1
Association of Christian Schools International	4216 Maray Dr., Suite B-2 Rockford, IL 61107	Dr. Sam Barfell ACSI Mid-America Regional Director Call: 815-226-0438 www.acsi.org	2013
Home Based Educators Accrediting Association, Inc.	4240 Redding Ridge Drive Minnetonka, MN 55345	Ardis Skoglund Call: 952-935-9234 E-mail: hbeaaoffice@gmail.com www.hbeaa.org	2013
Independent Schools Association of the Central States	1165 North Clark St., Suite 11 Chicago, IL 60610	Kevin M. Rooney Coordinator of Accreditation Services Call: 312-255-1244 E-mail: kevin@isacs.org www.isacs.org	2012
International Christian Accrediting Association (ICAA)	2448 E. 81st Tulsa, OK 74137	Dr. Donnie Peal, Director Call: 918-493-8880 E-mail: don.peal@oru.edu or icaa@oru.edu www.icaa.us	2015
Minnesota Nonpublic Schools Accrediting Association	475 University Ave. W. St. Paul, MN 55103-1959	Sarah Mueller, Executive Director Call: 651-256-7588 E-mail: smueller@mnsaa.org www.mnsaa.org	2012
National Lutheran School Accreditation – The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod	International Center 1333 S. Kirkwood Rd. St. Louis, MO 63122-7295	Terry Schmidt, Assoc. Director Phone: 314-996-1292 E-mail: terry.schmidt@lcms.org or kathy.fangmann@lcms.org www.lcms.org/pages/internal.asp?NavID=1741	2013

Nonpublic School Accrediting Organization	Address	Other Contact Information	Expires July 1
Teaching Effective Academics and Character at Home (TEACH)	10250 Jody Ave. N. Stillwater, MN 55082	Robert Newhouse, Director Phone: 651-762-5600 E-mail: teach@mcg.net www.teachinstitute.org	2013



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ): Homeschooling in Minnesota

Decision to Homeschool

1. What might parents/guardians want to think about when considering whether homeschooling is the best option for their children's education?

Homeschool parent/guardians do everything that traditional private school administrators and teachers do but in the context of their home. This means planning what students learn, keeping all current and future records, managing costs, and assuring the quality and scope of their student's education for college recruiters and employers. Students graduate from homeschools with homeschool diplomas and homeschool transcripts, just as they would from other private schools. Neither the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) nor local school districts validate or certify this homeschool education, transcripts or diploma –and do not do so for regular private schools.

Homeschooling is one opportunity to tailor education to a family's values and a child's needs. After thinking through advantages and disadvantages carefully, Minnesota families decide for themselves whether this is the best option for their children.

Considerations may include:

- Opportunity to tailor education.
- Opportunity to build in family experiences like world travel to a curriculum.

- Peer group interactions.
- Time, commitment and lost wages of parent/guardian.
- Whether all parents/guardians of the students fully support this choice.
- Whether a combination of homeschooling and public programs like Postsecondary Enrollment Options, Special Education or Shared Time might provide the right mix.
- Whether the organizational skills and stamina exist to design and run a homeschool.
- Whether another public school choice or traditional private school better meets needs.
- New beginnings.

Minnesota offers expansive school choice that includes both public and private educational options. Public options include choices within the family's own resident district, open enrollment across district lines, magnet schools, charter schools, certified public online learning, and alternative education. Private options include traditional private schools (some of which may have financial aid programs), tutors, private online learning and homeschools.

October 1 Deadline

Minnesota Statutes, Section 120A.24

2. Did Minnesota law change during the 2011 Special Legislative session to eliminate October 1 reporting by homeschools to local resident school superintendents?

No. Homeschools still have annual reporting requirements to local superintendents. However, the extent of information required to be provided has been reduced so that homeschool instructors do not need to repeatedly report information that has not changed from what the superintendent was informed in a previous report. Depending on the homeschool's situation, the homeschool instructor is required to submit either:

- **Full Report** or
 - **Letter of Intent to Continue Homeschooling** that updates the superintendent on changes, if any, to what was previously reported.
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Full Report

Minnesota Statutes, Sections 120A.24, 120A.22, 121A.15

3. **When must homeschool instructors make a full report of homeschooling information to their local resident school superintendent?**

Homeschools must do a full report of information in three situations:

- By October 1 in the first year that they homeschool in Minnesota;
- Within 15 days of withdrawing a child from public school in order to homeschool.

- Within 15 days of moving out of a district (to the old school district), and by October 1 to the superintendent when new residence is established.
(Families sometimes have questions about which district is the resident district. Minnesota law defines school district of residence for a student as the school district where the residence of the parent/guardians is located. “Open enrollment” for purposes of homeschool registration does not exist in Minnesota law.)

4. What is a full report?

A full report is written information provided to the school superintendent on the Minnesota Department of Education Home School Full Report or another format, including electronic, that includes the following information:

- **Name, birthdate and address of each student ages 7-16;**
- **Name of primary instructor and secondary instructor (if any);**
 - Evidence of compliance with **Minnesota Statutes, Section 120A.22, subd. 10** (instructor requirements). This means submitting evidence of compliance with one of the following provisions in the law:
 - Instructor holds current Minnesota teaching license for field and grade level taught. (Attach copy of license.)
 - Instructor is directly supervised by such a person. (Attach name and copy of license.)
 - Instructor has successfully completed teacher competency exam. (Minnesota does not currently have an exam that meets this requirement so homeschool instructors currently cannot use this scenario. PRAXIS does not meet this requirement.)
 - Instructor holds baccalaureate degree. (Attach a copy of diploma/degree.) Or:
 - Instructor is the parent or legal guardian of the child. (Note that this means that unless a grandparent or stepparent is a licensed teacher or holds a bachelor’s degree or is under the direct supervision of a Minnesota licensed teacher for each grade level and area, they are not able to homeschool the student(s) in situations where the parent/legal guardian would be able to do so.)
- **Immunization records or a notarized conscientious objection statement.**
Homeschool families must comply with important state immunizations law related to safeguarding public health. Minnesota Statutes, Section 121A.15, requires that parents/guardians submit the Minnesota immunization statement or a notarized statement regarding conscientiously held belief to their resident school district. Immunization forms are available from school districts. Districts must forward any conscientiously held belief exemptions on immunizations to the Minnesota Commissioner of Health.
- **Testing Information:** Homeschool instructors must inform their local school superintendent of the nationally normed achievement test they would like during the upcoming school year(s) for each student. Minnesota Statutes, Section 120A.22, Subdivision 11, requires that superintendents must be in mutual agreement with the

homeschool instructor on the test, administration of it and location. If the local superintendent does not agree with the parent/guardian's initial suggestion on a testing plan, the school district will contact the homeschool instructor to discuss and come to mutual agreement on a testing plan.

Letter of Intent to Continue Homeschooling

Minnesota Statutes, Sections 120A.24, 121A.15, 120A.22

5. What is a Letter of Intent to Continue Homeschooling?

A Letter of Intent to Continue Homeschooling is written information on an MDE form or other format provided to the local resident school superintendent by October 1 of each year after the instructor has previously provided the same district with a Full Report. It communicates:

- That the family is still homeschooling in the district.
- Changes related to the names and birthdates of the students receiving instruction.
- Changes to the annual nationally normed achievement testing plan.
- Changes to the instructor name or qualifications.
- Changes related to the school's accreditation status.
- Updates to immunization record required by law at age 12 (7th grade).

(Note that an address change to a new school district requires a full report.)

Noncompliance with Compulsory Instruction Law

Minnesota Statutes, Section 120A.24, 121A.15, 120A.22, 626.556

6. What are the consequences for noncompliance with Compulsory Instruction laws?

Local school superintendents notify homeschool families when they believe they are **out of compliance with reporting or assessment requirements** in the Compulsory Instruction Law in an effort to resolve situations. If this does not succeed, Minnesota Statutes, Section 120A.26, requires them to contact the Minnesota Department of Education for mediation of the issue. The Department of Education will contact the homeschool by certified mail. If this does not succeed in addressing compliance issues related to reporting and assessment, the superintendent must refer the matter to the county attorney.

If noncompliance with the Compulsory Instruction law concerns **educational neglect of a child**, any person – not just a superintendent – may make a report to the family's county social services office. Superintendents and other educators are mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect.

Documentation Required by State Law

Minnesota Statutes, Sections 120A.24, subd. 2-3; 120A.22, subd. 11; 120A.26, subd.5; chapter 260C, 260A.

7. What documentation is required by state law to be maintained?

Documentation must be maintained indicating that the subjects required in Minnesota Statutes, Section 120A.22, subdivision 9, are being taught, and proof that the tests under section 120A.22, subdivision 11, have been administered. This documentation must, by law, include class schedules, copies of material used for instruction and descriptions of the methods used to assess student achievement.

8. What documentation must by law be submitted to schools or county attorneys?

At the point that a parents/guardians enroll a student in public school after having been homeschooled, the parent/guardian must provide the enrolling school the child scores on any tests administered under Minnesota Statutes 120A.22, Subd. 11 (which covers annual nationally normed testing, supplemental testing in content areas and further mandatory testing of students who score low on the national achievement test) and any other education-related documents the enrolling school or district requires to determine where the child is placed in school and what course requirements apply. This state law does not apply to students who are continuing to be homeschooled who are not seeking public diplomas and only enrolling in public courses on a shared-time basis.

All of the information that state law requires to be maintained must also be submitted to county attorneys when a case is commenced under section 120A.26, subdivision 5; chapter 260C; or diverted under chapter 260A.

Note that Minnesota law exempts homeschools accredited by the Home Based Accrediting Agency from this provision because it is a state recognized accrediting agency.

Regardless of its accreditation, any homeschool that has accepted any state Nonpublic Pupil Aids must also transfer the student's educational records to any newly enrolling school that requests them.

9. May local policies of school districts or organizational policies of employers, military or higher education require further documentation, portfolio review or testing than specified as a minimum in state law?

Yes. However, Minnesota law treats homeschools as it does other regular nonpublic schools. Therefore, review of unaccredited homeschool work should be similar to review of work in other unaccredited regular nonpublic schools.

For example, a local school or organizational evaluation process may include:

- Administration of tests;
- Interviews or conferences with the student;
- Conferences with the parent/guardian;
- Review of the student's curricula;
- Review of the student's record of achievement at the homeschool; and
- Review of the work of the student completed in the homeschool.

An important exception to local control exists related to Post Secondary Enrollment Options credits. These credits must be allowed on the public school transcript with the grades earned at the higher education institution if the student transfers to become a public school student.

10. Does the Department of Education maintain records of students who graduated from homeschools or validate that they were homeschooled according to the law?

No. The Minnesota Department of Education does not have records of past or current homeschooled students. The Minnesota Department of Education does not validate for families, employers or the military that a homeschool operated in accordance with the law.

Required Subject Areas in Homeschool Curriculum

Minnesota Statutes, Section 120A.22

11. What does the state of Minnesota require of homeschool curriculum?

State law requires the following subject areas:

- basic communication skills including reading and writing, literature, and fine arts;
- mathematics and science;
- social studies including history, geography and government; and
- health and physical education.

12. Does the Minnesota Department of Education provide guidance on selecting a curriculum for these subjects or putting together a learning plan for each grade level?

No. Homeschools are private schools, and, as such, do this work independent of state government. However, Minnesota has a public school option where students learn at home, often with significant help from a parent/guardian who acts as a learning coach under the supervision of licensed teachers. This is called certified public online learning.

13. Does homeschool curriculum meet state curriculum standards?

State curriculum standards are established for public schools. The state standards do not apply to private schools, including homeschools.

Testing Required By Law of Homeschool Students

Minnesota Statutes, Section 120A.22

14. What testing is required by state law?

- **Annual nationally normed achievement test:** Unless the homeschool is accredited by a state-recognized accrediting agency, all students must be assessed annually on a nationally normed achievement test. The selected test, administration and location must be a mutual agreement between the homeschool instructor and the resident school superintendent.
- **Supplemental testing in required curricular areas:** To the extent that the chosen nationally normed achievement exam does not cover all required subject areas, parent/guardians must supplement this annual test with additional assessments. These supplemental assessments may be given at home and need not be nationally normed.
- **Additional evaluation depending on scores:** If annual testing (and any required supplemental testing) indicates that the student's performance is at or below 30th percentile or one grade level below performance level for students of the same age, additional evaluation is required. Exemption: Families are exempt from this additional testing if the instructor holds a valid Minnesota teaching license for that grade level or has passed teacher competency exam (no exam currently exists that fills this requirement) or is directly supervised by a licensed Minnesota teacher in the field and grade level or whose homeschool is accredited by a state recognized accrediting organization.

By law, homeschools must maintain records and evidence that all legally required testing (not just the annual nationally normed test) occurred as planned each year and of the scores. You will need to submit them to the public school district or school if your student ever transfers to a public option. You will also need them if your homeschool is ever subject to prosecution by a county attorney's office for violation of the Compulsory Instruction law or educational neglect.

15. Can the Minnesota Department of Education verify whether any particular test meets the requirement of a nationally normed achievement test?

No. MDE's assessment office works with state tests that public school students take that are not nationally normed. Before a family or school superintendent suggests an exam, they should have evidence that it is both an achievement exam and nationally normed.

16. Can the Minnesota Department of Education suggest any tests that fulfill the requirements of a nationally normed achievement test?

Yes. MDE suggests, but does not require, that homeschools and school superintendents consider the following:

- Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) Grades K-2
- Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) Grades 3-8
- Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITED) Grades 9-12
- Stanford Achievement Test (SAT), Grades K-2
- Stanford Achievement Test (SAT), Grades 3-8
- Stanford Achievement Test (SAT), Grades 9-12

These nationally normed achievement tests are readily available through the Home School Service of the Minnesota Statewide Testing Program at the University of Minnesota, 879 29th Avenue S.E. Room 103, Minneapolis, MN 55414, phone (612) 626-1803.

State of Minnesota Standardized Exams

Minnesota Rule 3501.1030

17. May homeschool students elect to take the Minnesota standardized assessments that public school students are required to take?

Yes. However, these tests are not nationally normed so they do not fulfill the annual homeschool testing requirement. Districts are charged a small fee to give the exam to nonpublic students and usually pass this fee along to homeschool families; much higher fees apply for late testing or rescored exams. (Paying attention to the dates public school students are testing may help save on costs.)

Note that when home educated students are ultimately planning on graduating from a public high school in Minnesota, all graduation-required state exams (GRAD) must be passed prior to graduation, regardless of whether the student was being homeschooled during the year that the exam is normally administered to public students.

Homeschool instructors may contact the student's resident school district to request participation in any of the state standardized exams that public school students take such as the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments, the GRAD tests (a component of the MCAs), or the Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (an alternative assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities).

College Level Examination Program (CLEP)

Minnesota Statutes, Section 120B.131

18. How can homeschoolers obtain college credit through examination?

The College-Level Examination Program® (CLEP) gives homeschool families the opportunity to receive college credit for what homeschoolers already know by earning qualifying scores on any of 34 examinations. The program means homeschoolers can gain college credit for knowledge acquired through independent study, prior course work, on-the-job training, professional development, cultural pursuits, or internships.

CLEP exams are administered throughout the year at over 1,400 colleges and universities in the United States and abroad. Once homeschoolers have identified convenient test centers, they contact that site directly for information about registration, scheduling, and fees. In addition to the exam fee, most test centers charge a nonrefundable administration fee directly payable to the institution. For more information see the CLEP website at:

<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/clep/credit.html>.

Shared Time Opportunities for Homeschooled Students to Take Public Classes

Minnesota Statutes, Section 126C.19

19. Are homeschooled students eligible for special education services or enrollment in some public school classes?

Special Education: State and federal law protects the right of homeschooled students to receive special education services from the student's resident public district.

Coursework that fulfills core requirements in the public district: Local school districts may establish policies that allow homeschool students who live in their districts to take public school courses that fulfill graduation requirements of the district. Local policy determines which classes are eligible, capacity issues and other factors affecting eligibility to enroll. However, Minnesota Statutes, Section 126C.19, Subd. 4, blocks participation in public online learning courses. The shared-time law relates to the resident public school district, not to courses in other school districts or at charter schools.

School districts receive state tax support for the portion of the day that a shared-time student enrolls.

20. Does the “shared-time” provision work in the other direction – to allow public school students to homeschool just a course or two?

The law does not work that way. The public school student would need to completely withdraw from the public system, register as a homeschool student, maintain the transcript as a homeschooler, and then access every public school class they want to keep in their schedule as a shared-time student, subject to local policy allowing shared-time. MDE suggests, in these situations, public school students consider a supplemental public online learning course or independent study course that may be able set up through their local school district subject to local policy.

Post-Secondary Enrollment Options Program

Minnesota Statutes, Section 124D.09

21. May homeschoolers participate in the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Program, which allows 11th- and 12th-graders to take college coursework for homeschool credit?

Yes. Homeschools do this by contacting the participating public and private colleges and making application to them for the program. Students must meet admissions criteria of the higher education institution. (Colleges may or may not transfer in the credits at the college level after homeschool graduation and admittance to their higher education institution.)

Extracurricular Activities

Minnesota Statutes Section 123B.49

22. May homeschooled students participate in public school extracurricular activities?

Homeschooled students in homeschools of five or fewer students may participate in their own local, resident school districts extracurricular activities that meet the characteristics of extracurricular activities detailed in law. Minnesota Statutes, Section 123B.49, only allows homeschoolers access to these activities in their resident district. It does not provide access to, for example, extra-curricular activities in another public school district where the student may have been previously “open enrolled” or at charter schools. If homeschoolers are interested in participating extracurriculars in other school districts or charter schools, students may possibly be able to do so for grades 10-12 by joining the Minnesota High School League and entering into an agreement with that district. High School League policies of note for these kinds of arrangements are Bylaws 104 and 403. Contact: **Minnesota High School League**, 2100 Freeway Boulevard, Brooklyn Center, MN 55430-1735; or (763) 560-2262, phone; (763) 569-0499, fax, for further information.

Online Learning

Minnesota Statutes, Section 124D.095

23. What is the difference between homeschooling and certified public online learning?

Homeschools provide curriculum determined by parents/guardians. Parents /guardians are teachers, administrators and curriculum directors. Homeschools are private education where parents/guardians bear almost all costs, just as with traditional private school. Homeschools provide their own diplomas and transcripts.

Public online learning is a free public education that occurs in private homes, usually with parent/guardian involvement. These learning options provide public school curriculum, public school mandated tests, direct instruction and supervision by licensed Minnesota public school teachers, and public school diplomas. These programs offer free curriculum. Participants must be Minnesota residents. Numerous programs exist and differ in the resources and support provided families.

Public Students Who Are Below Grade Level

Minnesota Statutes, Section 124D.68-69

24. If a student is behind in credits to graduate from a public school, could the family homeschool as a catch-up strategy for a public diploma?

Homeschooling may be a possible route – but not a guaranteed one for rapidly making up credits for students to later enroll again in public school and “graduate on time” or “walk with the class.” Options need to be carefully considered by all involved.

Before accepting homeschool credits for transfer back into their public system, school districts may verify that the content of coursework in a homeschool fits with the district’s graduation requirements. This may especially occur if the homeschool is not accredited by a state-recognized accrediting agency. A student must meet the district’s requirements in order to receive its diploma. If a homeschool is unaccredited, the district may require testing to verify mastery of key subject areas or portfolios to better understand what the student has learned at home before accepting credit transfers for purposes of their diploma.

Public diplomas require students pass Minnesota public school standardized tests. Before receiving a Minnesota public high school diploma, all Minnesota students – including students

previously homeschooled during the school grade when the test is normally given – must take and pass all graduation-required state exams.

Other options to help students in situations like these might include negotiating an independent study plan with a district, a public online learning program, a public summer school program, hiring a private tutor, or an alternative education program. Parents and students may be able to creatively negotiate with a high school guidance counselor or school principal for a good plan for a student’s situation.

Drivers Education

Minnesota Statutes, Section 168.012

25. What homeschool options exist for classroom driver’s education?

The Minnesota Department of Public Safety offers special options for Homeschool Driver Education. See website: www.dps.mn.gov.

Financial Considerations

Minnesota Statutes, Sections 123B.41, 290.0674

26. Is there any aid from state government to help with the costs of homeschooling?

Limited aid may be available. Just as other private-school options require financial sacrifice on the part of parents, homeschooling does too in order to provide materials, field trips, and most importantly, the time of the parents who are the instructors and administrators of the school they create for their children or teens.

Aids to Nonpublic Students are one way to cut a small portion of the costs incurred when starting a nonpublic homeschool. Families should be sure to meet the September 15 annual deadline so they are not “timed-out” of this important source of aid.

Aids to Nonpublic Students Timeline

September 15: No later than **September 15**, families request forms related to Aids to Nonpublic Students from their resident school district’s home school liaison if they wish to access aids for textbooks, pupil health services and secondary guidance/counseling services.

October 1: Families return **Student Report for Nonpublic Aids by October 1** to their resident district. This is also their deadline to a full report or Letter of Intent to Continue Homeschooling with their resident school district. (See Questions 2-5.)

October 15: Deadline for your school district to forward your family's form that you submitted by October 1 to the Minnesota Department of Education Finance Division. These state aid options help your family access up to:

- **\$81.40** per eligible pupil for textbooks, standardized tests and individual instructional materials on a loan basis. Materials must be nonsectarian and appropriate for potential use in a public school setting. The materials purchased under this provision are property of the public school district.
- **\$58.29** per eligible pupil for Pupil Health Services.
- **\$203.65** for Secondary Pupil Guidance and Counseling Services.

27. Can this aid be obtained before age seven (7) when reporting requirements begin to apply?

This aid may be obtained starting when the student is age five (5) by September 1, pro-rated in half for the kindergarten year, then at full funding for first grade.

28. Apart from the textbook loan funding in the Aids to Nonpublic Students program, do homeschoolers have a legal right to borrow textbooks and other materials from the resident school district?

No. Homeschools are private schools, so just as the public school district would not be obligated to provide other textbooks on loan to all the regular private or parochial students in a districts, neither must they do this for a homeschool.

29. How can homeschools obtain sales tax exemption?

Contact the Minnesota Department of Revenue with questions about sales tax exemption for homeschools. Homeschools may complete the Department of Revenue's Application for Nonprofit Exempt Status – Sales Tax. See Department of Revenue website at: www.taxes.state.mn.us.

30. What tax breaks might help with the cost of homeschooling?

Explore Minnesota's K-12 education tax credit and subtraction to determine whether some costs or tax liability may be reduced. Department of Revenue Fact Sheet 8 explains the tax breaks in depth. Download it at: www.taxes.state.mn.us.

Community Resources & Accreditation

Minnesota Statutes, Sections 123B.445, 120A.24; 120A.22

31. What community resources exist for parents/guardians who are home educators?

Part of what makes homeschooling fun and a great educational option is the opportunity to learn from and form friendships with other homeschool families. Many local and statewide groups exist. Even more virtual communities exist. Internet listings abound where families swap curriculum resources or sell them inexpensively. Families can look around for an in-person homeschool support network that works for their values and style.

Here are a few well-known groups but they are by no means the only ones! **These groups are independent of the Minnesota Department of Education.** Listing them here is provided as a helpful way to help homeschools begin networking, not as an endorsement of the organizations' beliefs or resources:

Minnesota Homeschoolers Alliance. Statewide conference for this nonsectarian group is held in September. Phone: 612-288-9662. E-mail: mha@homeschoolers.org.

Minnesota Association of Christian Home Educators. Statewide conference is in April. Phone: 763-717-9070 in the Twin Cities; 866-717-9070, toll-free. E-mail: info@make.org.

Minnesota Catholic Home Education Conference. Annual conference is held in May. E-mail: info@mnconference.org.

Public libraries have much to contribute to the richness of your homeschool experience. Some college and university libraries also have “community loan” options for materials.

32. What is the Minnesota Nonpublic Education Council?

The Minnesota Nonpublic Education Council is a link between private education and the Department of Education. The council is established in Minnesota Statutes, Section 123B.445, and appointed by the Commissioner of Education. The council's work includes recognizing traditional private school and homeschool accrediting agencies for purposes of allowing an exemption to some reporting requirements in Minnesota's Compulsory Instruction law. The Council also hears appeals from homeschools when disagreements arise concerning Aids to Nonpublic Students.

Further, the Council is a forum for discussion of how Minnesota laws and policies impact nonpublic education. The council generally meets four times a year. Members are appointed by the Commissioner of Education. Meetings are open to the public.

33. What are the benefits of accreditation?

Accreditation provides accountability for the quality of a school. It often also makes transferring credits into other schools easier. In Minnesota, accrediting organizations that go further to seek and obtain state recognition have the legal requirement to have annual nationally normed achievement test waived. See the homeschool section on the MDE website for a current list of state-recognized accrediting agencies: www.education.state.mn.us.

34. How can a homeschool accrediting organization become state-recognized?

New or existing accrediting organizations apply to the Minnesota Nonpublic Council for review and recognition. The Nonpublic Education Council provides no recognition of curriculum programs that individual homeschools may purchase to use in the context of their own schools. Materials explaining how accrediting associations of nonpublic schools, including homeschools are reviewed and recognized can be found on the Minnesota Department of Education website's Nonpublic Education landing page: www.education.state.mn.us.

Crisis Situations

Minnesota Statutes, Section 626.556

35. What if a person believes a family is claiming to homeschool but actually the students are neglected, educationally or otherwise?

If a person believes a student is in immediate danger, the person should call the police. If they believe the student is neglected, including educational neglect, the person should contact county human services in the county where the student resides.

36. What if homeschool instructors thought this was a good route to go but are now in over their heads?

The instructors may need better support from one of the many community based networking associations of homeschool families. Some families try homeschooling for a time, and then choose other options. The Minnesota Department of Education can help families learn about the full range of school choice options to help parents/guardians make their own decisions on the best course of action for this point in time.

2011 Legislative Changes

Minnesota Statutes, Sections 120A.24, 120A.22, 121A.15

37. What homeschooling requirements were eliminated in the 2011 Minnesota Legislature Special Session and what requirements continued?

Superintendents no longer request an annual meeting with homeschoolers to review curriculum or have homeschool instructors submit curriculum information, school calendars or quarterly report cards until such time as the students may seek enrollment in public schools. At the point that public school enrollment is sought, this information is submitted along with scores from all legally required testing. Superintendents still monitor full and updated reporting requirements on students, and come to annual mutual agreement on nationally normed achievement testing. They still must refer non-reporting issues and noncompliance with testing agreement to MDE for mediation and, if unresolved, must refer matters to the county attorney. As mandated reporters, they also must refer suspected educational neglect to county human services. See Questions 3-9 for further information on annual reporting requirements and testing.

Laws

38. How can a person read the full text of the laws cited in this Q&A?

Visit the Minnesota Office of Revisor of Statutes website at: <https://www.revisor.mn.gov>.

Further questions

39. Where can people turn with further questions?

Homeschool instructors' key contact on **reporting and assessment issues, as well as filing for Nonpublic Pupil Aids, is their local resident school superintendent's office.** Districts often designate a specific staff person as a homeschool liaison.

Persons concerned about **educational neglect** of a child should contact county social services in the county where the student lives. **If the student is in immediate danger, call the police.**

Contacts at the Minnesota Department of Education:

Home School Policy, Cindy Jackson, cindy.s.jackson@state.mn.us, 651-582-8572.

Aids to Nonpublic Students, Greg Sogaard, greg.sogaard@state.mn.us, 651-582-8858.

Post-Secondary Enrollment Options, Jessica Espinosa, jessica.espinosa@state.mn.us, 651-582-8512.

Special Education, Robyn Widley, robyn.widley@state.mn.us, 651-582-1143.

Minnesota Identity Management System (MIDMS) Single Sign-in Approach Tutorial

What is MIDMS?

- MIDMS is the name of the MDE security system that authorizes use of our secured websites.
- Compulsory Instruction requires user authorization by the system administrator through MIDMS.
- Cindy Jackson is the administrator for Compulsory Instruction.
- If you already have an MIDMS login and password you can use that information to request access to Compulsory Instruction.

Start on the MDE home page (<http://education.state.mn.us>) to navigate to the link for Compulsory Instruction.

- Drop down the Data menu.
- Select Data Submissions.

Scroll down the alphabetical list of submission systems to find Compulsory Instruction Compliance Data Reporting.

Select the link for Compulsory Instruction Compliance Data Reporting

The security access screen will display. Always use this route to your system. **Do not bookmark any of the security pages.**

If you already have an MIDMS User ID and Password, you can login.

If you do not have an MIDMS User ID and password, you need to create them by setting up a new account.

Read Use Agreement.

Accept Use Agreement.

Select “I Accept” to continue.

Complete Account Information.

Required fields have an asterisk (*).

Blue text provides formatting hints.

Name fields do not accept spaces.

Full Name auto-completes as you type.

E-mail must contain @ symbol and . (dot/period).

Do not use symbols or spaces in telephone number.

Create an eight character User ID of your choice; you can use your Compulsory Use Compliance User ID from last year if it meets the requirements.

Create an eight character password with one upper case letter; you can use your Compulsory Compliance password from last year if it meets the requirements.

Keep your User ID and password in a safe place for later use.

Select security question from list.

Note that the answer for the security question is case sensitive.

Select save to complete account setup.

Select save to continue.

Select your role.

Select your district(s). You are requesting permission to enter data for the selected districts.

Select one district by highlighting the district name.

Highlight district name.

Select the right-facing double arrow to save your choice to the box on the right.

Click arrow to save selection.

You can select more than one district. Hold down the “Ctrl” key to highlight the districts you want to select.

Use the right-facing double arrow to save your districts to the box on the right.

Deselect a district from the right side box by highlighting it and clicking on the left-facing arrow.

Select District(s).

Click left arrow.

Click Submit after you have selected your district(s).

Now you need to wait until you receive your authorization e-mail from MDE.

After you receive your authorization e-mail, return to the link in data downloads and select it.

The security login screen will appear.

Enter the MIDMS User ID and password you just created and select Login.

Successful login will take you to Compulsory Instruction Compliance Data Reporting.

If you need additional information, please contact:

Valarie Cochran

Minnesota Department of Education

valarie.cochran@state.mn.us

651-582-8280

Thank you!