

## IOWA

- Compulsory Attendance Ages:** Age 6 as of September 15 and less than 16. If a child turns 16 on or after Sept. 15 while enrolled (might include dual-enrolled) in a public or accredited private school, he is of compulsory attendance age until the end of the school year. If a five-year-old is enrolled in public school, he becomes subject to compulsory attendance immediately unless the parents notify the school district in writing of their intent to remove the child from public school enrollment. Iowa Code Ann. § 299.1A.
- Required Days of Instruction:** 148 days total, 37 per school quarter for Options 2-5; none under Option 1.
- Required Subjects:** Under Option 1, Reading-language arts, math, science, social studies. None for Options 2-5.

**Home School Statute:** Iowa Code Ann. § 299A.1–299A.10; Iowa Admin. Code §§ 281-31.1 to -31.10. The Iowa Dept. of Education’s “Competent Private Instruction Handbook” is a useful reference, but it sometimes contains errors.

### Option 1: Independent Private Instruction (IPI)

1. Under this simple option, the family only needs to provide instruction in math, reading and language arts, science and social studies. There is no requirement to notify the school system or administer a year-end assessment.
2. If a school district superintendent or the head of the state department of education submits a request to the family in writing, the family must send a report identifying the (a) primary instructor, (b) name and location of the authority responsible for the independent private instruction, and (c) names of the students enrolled.
3. IPI is defined as not being accredited; not enrolling more than four unrelated students; and not charging tuition or fees. *See* Reg. 31.1(2)b. If the homeschool program *itself* has any of these features, it does not qualify as IPI. Note, however, that IPI students can be involved in classes, activities, etc., that do not meet these stipulations.
4. IPI student can access public school driver education programs and free testing through the public school. If a public high school has contractually arranged to provide certain free or low-cost community college classes to its own students (this is called “concurrent enrollment”), IPI students have access to those classes as well.

### Option 2: Private Instruction (PI)

1. Under this option, the only requirement is to provide instruction using a plan or course of study in a setting other than a public or organized accredited nonpublic school for 148 days per year and 37 days per school quarter. *See Reg. 31.1(2)c.*
2. Access to programs. PI homeschoolers have access to driver education programs at the local public school, including free testing at the public school. If a public high school has contractually arranged to provide certain free or low-cost community college classes to its own students (this is called “concurrent enrollment”), IPI students have access to those classes as well. *See Iowa Code 261E.8.2.*

They can participate in parent-taught driver education if they were under any option OTHER than IPI during the previous year.

PI homeschoolers do not have access to dual enrollment in the public school (for classes or extracurricular activities), or low-cost college classes through the post-secondary enrollment program. To access these programs, a PI homeschooler must file a Form A, dual enroll by the deadline of September 15, and satisfy the supervising teacher requirement, the year-end assessment requirement, or participate in a Home School Assistance Program. This effectively converts the PI student into a student under Option 3 (supervising teacher) or Option 4 (annual assessment), or Option 5 (HSAP).

### **Option 3: Supervising Teacher (ST)**

1. Under this option, the family hires a qualified supervising teacher (ST) of their choice and files a Form A (*See “Form A” below*). No year-end assessment is required. The ST must contact the student twice each 45 days of instruction, one of which must be face to face. *See Reg. 31.3(3)a*
2. The ST must provide formal and informal assessments and keep a record of contacts and assistance provided. *See Reg. 31.3(3)c.*
3. Supervising Teacher qualifications. With an elementary classroom license, an ST can supervise for students in grades K-6. With a middle school license, an ST can supervise for students 5-8. With a secondary license, an ST can supervise for students 5-8. With a secondary classroom license, an ST can supervise for students 7-12. With a substitute license or substitute authorization, an ST can supervise for any grade. *See Reg. 31.3(2).* A parent with an appropriate license can be their own ST.
3. Access to programs for ST students. These homeschoolers have access to driver education programs and free testing at the local public school, and certain low-cost community college classes via the concurrent enrollment program. It is not necessary for a student to dual enroll to obtain access to these programs.

Students under this option have the right to dual enroll in their local public school, which is required for access to public school classes and extracurricular activities, and low-cost college classes through the post-secondary enrollment program. The deadline for dual enrolling is September 15.

They can also seek to open enrollment in order to dual enroll in a public school district other than their local public school district. To do so, they must be currently dual enrolled in their local school district (by the September 15 deadline) and apply for open enrollment by March 1 preceding the beginning of the school year during which they wish to open enroll to another school district. Open enrollment can be denied under certain circumstances.

They can participate in parent-taught driver education if they were under any option OTHER than IPI during the previous year.

#### **Option 4: Annual Assessment (AA)**

1. The parent or legal guardian files a Form A annually (*See "Form A" below*).
2. A year end assessment is due annually. Parents can use an accredited or correspondence school report card, portfolio review, or a standardized test (*See "Standardized Tests" below*).
4. Access to programs for AA students. These homeschoolers have access to driver education programs and free testing at the local public school, and certain low-cost community college classes via the concurrent enrollment program. It is not necessary for a student to dual enroll to obtain access to these programs.

Students under this option have the right to dual enroll in their local public school, which is required for access to public school classes and extracurricular activities, and low-cost college classes through the post-secondary enrollment program. The deadline for dual enrolling is September 15.

They can also seek to open enrollment in order to dual enroll in a public school district other than their local public school district. To do so, they must be currently dual enrolled in their local school district (by the September 15 deadline) and apply for open enrollment by March 1 preceding the beginning of the school year during which they wish to open enroll to another school district. Open enrollment can be denied under certain circumstances.

They can participate in parent-taught driver education if they were under any option OTHER than IPI during the previous year.

#### **Option 5: Home School Assistance Program (HSAP)**

1. An HSAP is a public school program. Individual public school districts have the option of offering HSAPs to homeschool families.
2. The parent or legal guardian must submit Form A annually (*See "Form A" below*), but only needs to fill out items 1, 3 and 5 on the form.
3. Public schools can impose any additional requirements they wish on families as a condition for participating in the HSAP. HSAP programs typically offer families free secular school books and access to a teacher of the school's choice.

5. Access to programs for HSAP students. These homeschoolers have access to driver education programs and free testing at the local public school, and certain low-cost community college classes via the concurrent enrollment program. It is not necessary for a student to dual enroll to obtain access to these programs.

Students under this option have the right to dual enroll in their local public school, which is required for access to public school classes and extracurricular activities, and low-cost college classes through the post-secondary enrollment program. The deadline for dual enrolling is September 15.

They can also seek to open enrollment in order to dual enroll in a public school district other than their local public school district. To do so, they must be currently dual enrolled in their local school district (by the September 15 deadline), and apply for open enrollment by March 1 preceding the beginning of the school year during which they wish to open enroll to another school district. Open enrollment can be denied under certain circumstances.

They can participate in parent-taught driver education if they were under any option OTHER than IPI during the previous year.

## **Form A**

Form A must be filed annually by September 1<sup>st</sup> (for all options but option 1, IPI, and option 2, PI). If moving into the state or initiating homeschooling after the school year has begun, submit a form that is at least partially completed within 14 calendar days and a fully completed form within 30 days.

The form asks for the name and age of the child, the number of days of instruction (must be 148), texts used, the name and address of the instructor, and an "outline of course of study" (meaning subjects covered, lesson plans, and time spent on the areas of study--there is no mandated minimum). It also requires evidence of vaccinations (or medical or religious exemption) for children being home schooled for the first time. The form asks for birth dates, but this may be omitted since it is not required under law (Iowa Code Ann. § 299.4).

The form contains optional questions which can be disregarded at the parent's discretion.

## **Blood Lead Testing**

When a Form A is filed, the children listed will be checked against a government database to see if they have had the blood lead test that Iowa law requires. See HF 158, 2007. Families choosing a homeschool option that does not involve filing a Form A will not be checked for blood lead test compliance.

The blood lead test requirements do not apply to families operating under IPI (because it is not a type of CPI).

Noncompliance with the blood lead test requirement shall not be considered a violation of compulsory attendance laws. See Iowa Administrative Code 281-31.2(1)a(7).

## **Privacy**

Unless you give clear written instructions to the school district each time you file Form A, the school district will treat much of the information you put on the form as available to the public. We recommend you use the “privacy notification form” on the members-only section of the HSLDA website. Also see § 299A.11 and § 22.7.1.

### **Special Needs**

Prior to the 2009 regulatory changes, students whom the public schools had “identified” as having special needs were required to obtain “approval” from the Area Education Agency before homeschooling. Now approval is needed only if a family intends to seek special education benefits, services or evaluations from the public school system. See Reg. 31.10 This is a result of HSLDA’s victory in the Federal Court of Appeals, 8th Circuit, in *Fitzgerald vs. Camdenton R-III School District* and federal regulations subsequently adopted, 34 CFR 300.300

**Teacher Qualifications: None (except for supervising teachers).**

### **Standardized Tests**

Only required under Option 4. Assessments are required beginning the year the child is 7 on Sept. 15 (or their first year of homeschooling, if older). This first assessment is considered the “baseline” assessment, and it is not required that progress be shown or any particular result be obtained. It is simply used as a point from which to measure future progress. Subsequent assessments must show 'adequate progress', as separately defined for each type of assessment. See Reg. 31.8(1)

*Subjects to be assessed:* For grades 5 and below, reading, language arts and math must be assessed. For grades 6 and above, social studies and science must also be assessed.

*Timing, contents:* The assessment must be conducted by May 1 and submitted to the school system by June 30. Any results that are not required under law may be redacted before submitting. A copy or original may be submitted. (The former requirement to submit assessment results to the state was abolished in the 2009 regulatory revisions.)

*Declaration of Choice for the assessment:* Parents are not required to indicate in advance to their school system what type of assessment they will use. Many school systems seek this information nonetheless.

*Types of assessments for baseline and subsequent years:*

- *Report card from an accredited school or correspondence school.* School must be accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. “Adequate progress” is a passing grade.
- *Portfolio review.* Parents choose a teacher to review student materials and write a brief evaluation. The evaluation—not the portfolio—is submitted to the school system. The evaluation must indicate adequate progress. A teacher with an elementary classroom license can evaluate children in grades 1-6. A teacher with an elementary content license can evaluate grades 1-8. With a secondary content license, a teacher can evaluate grades 5-12. A teacher who no longer has a current classroom or

content license, but who has a current substitute license, can evaluate students of the same grade levels as if his classroom or content license were in force.

- *Standardized test.* The test must be administered in a manner consistent with the requirements of the test publisher. The test level that most closely approximates the child's chronological age must be used. Only tests approved the Department of Education may be used. The department shall publish an approved list each year (*See Reg. 31.8(2)a*). Adequate progress is a score above the 30th percentile in each required test area PLUS either (a) student scoring at grade level or (b) 6 months progress from previously-submitted test.

*Inadequate progress:* If adequate progress is not shown, the family may submit another assessment before the next school year begins. If adequate progress is still not shown, the child must be enrolled in school unless the Dept. of Education approves a remediation program. Iowa Code Ann. 299A.6.

PLEASE NOTE: Membership in HSLDA is not available with respect to children enrolled full time in a virtual charter school, public on-line school, or public school independent study program. Enrollment in these secular programs is enrollment in a public school.