

HOME EDUCATION Practices, Policies, and Procedures:

1. What are the reasons that parents choose to home educate?

Reasons vary and many parents seldom reveal nor are they required to reveal the actual reason or reasons.

2. What is the position of the chief administrative school officer in Florida?

The Commissioner of Education supports the right of parents to choose an appropriate educational environment for their child.

3. How long has home education been a means of meeting the regular attendance requirement in Florida?

The law, which created Florida's home education program, became effective June 17, 1985.

4. How may a parent locate an evaluator for the annual evaluation?

Parents may contact the local district home education office or the local Florida Parent Educators Association to obtain the names of available evaluators.

5. What type of diploma does a home education student receive?

School districts are not authorized to award a diploma to a home education student.

6. Do parents have access to any state appropriated funds for home education?

There are no funds that are specifically appropriated for home education.

7. Do students who have been home educated have the option to return to public school?

Yes. Any student who is within the compulsory attendance age has the right to enroll in a public school.

Current district policies and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) standards govern the grade placement of the home education student or any new student.

8. Do the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) standards prohibit a home school student from re-entry into a public high school?

No. Regional Accreditation, however, regulates this process. Students from home education programs are considered the same as a student from any non accredited institution.

9. How does a home education student at the high school level transfer into a public school when the previous course work is not awarded in the traditional manner?

Home education students enrolling in a district high school must have all course work validated, by any of several means, according to district policies, State Board of Education rules and SACS accreditation standards.

10. Are home education students bound by the required hours of a school that apply to public school students?

No. There are no specific hourly attendance requirements for children in a home education program.

11. Do home education students have the same opportunity as public school students to enter a college of their choice?

Yes, depending on their qualifications and the admission requirements of the post secondary institution.

12. Is there an opportunity for home school students to qualify for a state scholarship?

Yes. Home education students may qualify for a scholarship through the Bright Futures Scholarship Program. For information about this program, call the toll free number in Tallahassee (1-888-827-2004).

13. How does a parent seek support from others who are teaching at home?

There are home education support groups in every district. One statewide group is the Florida Parent Educators Association (FPEA). The toll free number is 1-877-275-3732.

14. Does the home education student have the right to take standardized tests at the local school district?

School districts are required to provide students with the opportunity to take state assessment tests if the parent chooses this option as a form of evaluation.

School districts may offer other standardized tests to home education students.

15. Are there health/immunization requirements for home education students?

Yes. If the home education student is participating in extracurricular activities under s. 232.425, F.S.

16. May a parent implement a home education program for a 5 year old even though compulsory school attendance begins at age 6?

Districts are not required to accept a letter of intent for a 5 year old, but some districts do. In that case, the home education parent keeps a portfolio and the child is evaluated the same as a student who is subject to regular attendance.

17. May a district establish a deadline for the annual evaluation?

Yes. Some districts request the evaluation during June and July and find this satisfactory to home education parents who equate these months with the end of the school year. "Annually" is defined as one-year from the date of the letter of intent.

Districts should determine an appropriate means of communicating evaluation information with parents.

18. May a home education student attend summer school?

Home education students may be allowed to enroll if the district offers summer school.

19. Who in the district process waivers for employment of home education students?

School districts are not required to process waivers for employment of home education students except to confirm, with a release for information from the parent, that the student is enrolled in home education.

20. Must a district's packet of Information regarding home education include a form letter of registration and termination of home education students?

No. School districts are not required to provide forms, although some districts do so for ease of processing.

21. Does the school district have the authority to exceed the Florida statutes with local policies?

Yes, in some circumstances districts may require higher standards, e.g., graduation requirements, etc. However, a district may not enact policies that would apply different standards to home education students or to make it more difficult for them.

22. Do school districts provide instructional materials to home education students?

There is no requirement for districts to provide instructional materials to home education students.

23. What services do school districts provide to home education students?

There is no requirement for school districts to provide services to home education students beyond that which is required in the law. However, eligible home education students with disabilities are eligible for special education related services (ESE). If a district is requested by a home education parent for an evaluation of a child, the district must provide the assessment service. If an exceptionality is verified, the district must provide the ESE services at a school determined by the school district.

24. What happens to the records of a student who is withdrawn and entered into home education?

Cumulative folders of students that are in a home education program are retained in the school district pursuant to state and local requirements.

25. How do districts report transcripts to the Department of Education for Home Education students who take courses at a public school?

Districts may report this information using the number 0998. This will place Home Education transcripts in a separate and unique category identifiable from all other students.