

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS REGARDING HOME EDUCATION from the OH SBE

To: All Ohio Superintendents

From: Ohio State Board of Education

Date: June, 1993

Subject: The Home Education Regulations - Ohio Administrative Code Chapter 3301-34 Rules for Excuses From Compulsory Attendance for Home Education

In July 1989, the State Board of Education adopted Rules for Excuses from Compulsory Attendance for Home Education. These rules are contained in Chapter 3301-34 of the Administrative Code and were distributed after adoption to all superintendents. Over the past several years, a number of questions have been raised by superintendents concerning these rules. The following questions and answers are offered as guides to assist in implementing the standards and in working with home educating parents.

1. 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?

Yes. Rule 3301-34-03(G) states “At the request of a parent, a child who has been excused from compulsory 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.

2. May a superintendent request academic assessment information for the previous school year when the student was not in the district (home education, other public school, elsewhere)?

The standards state that the parent must provide an academic assessment report only when sending their subsequent notification for home education. If the academic assessment report is not sent with the subsequent notification, the superintendent may request, in writing, the missing information. Request for the initial notification, need not include assessment results for the previous year.

3. If the assessment information is not available when home education begins, may testing be required to establish a starting point from which to gauge the home education process?

No, the academic assessment report only needs to be sent when the parent is sending the subsequent notification for home education. The superintendent may not require an academic assessment to establish a starting point from which to gauge academic proficiency.

4. What options are available for conducting the academic assessment of the home educated student?

The decision as to the type of assessment report to be sent is up to the parents, and they are not required to commit to any system when sending the initial notification for home education or when sending subsequent notifications. If the parents choose to use the school district's testing program, that decision should be coordinated with the superintendent. Rule 3301-34-04 governs the area of academic assessment reporting. One option allows for the academic report to be derived from the results of a nationally normed, standardized achievement test. The test used must meet requirements for approved standardized test set forth in the State Board of Education Rule 3301-12-02. District sponsored testing is an option which may be exercised by the parent, and thus, should the parent chose this option the parent would contact the superintendent to learn the time and location for such standardized testing. The second option provides for a written narrative indicating that a portfolio of samples of the child's work has been reviewed. The third option is an alternative academic assessment report of the student's proficiency mutually agreed to by the parent and the superintendent.

5. May home educated students participate in sports and other co-curricular/extracurricular activities?

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 an enrolled (an ADM pupil) in the school to be eligible for athletic participation. Participation in other extracurricular activities should follow local board policy.

6. Is home education board policy required?

No. The State Board standards serve as the rules and policies for the districts to follow. However, the local board of education may choose to establish policies to govern such issues as part-time participation and the involvement of home education students in activities. At no time shall any of these policies conflict with the State Board standards.

7. Can home education parents declare themselves "o8" schools?

There have been questions about non-chartered, non-tax supported schools which are also categorized as "o8" schools. The State Board of Education has adopted standards for these schools. These rules are contained in Rule 3301-35-08 on pages 21 and 22 of the Minimum Standards for Elementary and Secondary Schools (1983). Superintendents are encouraged to review that particular section for the rules governing these schools.

8. How do missing children laws affect the information collected on home education families? (Check of driver's license, birth certificates, etc.)

School Boards can only collect the data set forth in the State Board standards governing home education.

9. May superintendents request copies of high school diplomas, college diplomas, transcripts, etc. of home education parents, or home teachers to "affirm" that proper credentials are in place?

No, the standards do not require that the specific copy of a high school diploma or college diploma, etc. be sent with the notification for home education.

10. May superintendents require parents to come to a conference with district staff to discuss proposed educational programs submitted by the parents?

No. Parents are not required to attend conference with the superintendent or district staff to discuss the intended curriculum. They are required to provide the district written notification.

11. How are high school credits awarded to students entering public schools during the high school years?

If parents enroll a student in one of the top four grade levels, the district should have for review the most recent assessment report, may 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 may use interviews with the student and parent as well as other evaluative methods.

12. May superintendents require periodic meetings with home education parents to review progress of the student(s)?

No. Superintendents may not require parents to attend a meeting at the school site nor may school personnel require a visit to take place at the home education site.

13. Are the requirements in Rule 3301-34-03 just minimum standards that local districts may make more restrictive?

No. These are rules of the State Board that carry the same effect as law, and school districts may not add to these requirements.

14. Can home education be placed under the "educational Options" standard so students can be counted on ADM?

No. Under the Educational Options standard of the State Board, the student must be under the direct supervision of a certificated staff member of the school

district, and this does not apply to the home education situation. Home educated students may not be counted in the ADM calculation.

15. What is the time line for a superintendent to respond to the parent notification for home education?

The standards require that school districts respond to the home education notification within 14 days.

16. Must the parents provide the notification on a form supplied by the State Department of Education?

No. The standards say that the parent may use a form supplied by the State Department of Education. They may use their own forms, or may simply notify by a narrative document. A copy of the suggested Ohio Home Education form is enclosed.