

The Montana Guide to Home Education



2017



Montana

Guide To Home Education

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Choosing to Home Educate ...

Parents decide to home school their children for many reasons. Home school parents are unique individuals with many different reasons for starting homeschooling and often continue because of the many benefits.

Academic success - Studies show homeschool students do as well and often better than conventional school students.

One-on-one instruction - Tutorial method's superiority provides more child-adult interaction, feedback and behavior reinforcement. It is difficult to find a classroom teacher that would not agree on the value of one-on-one instruction. Anytime one teacher can spend quality time with one student, the student is the real winner.

Customized education - The flexibility of home education will provide motivation for your children, to expand their gifts and abilities.

Individualized instruction - The child is able to progress at his own pace with individualized curriculum.

Special needs - Children with learning disabilities and handicaps often do better in a warm and loving environment.

Family closeness and unity - Provides respect for parental authority and is not undermined by outside influences. The more time that families spend together improves family unity and closeness. It is a special time for all families when the children are growing up.

Religious / Spiritual - Ability to integrate religious and spiritual training into all areas of learning, thereby instilling moral values and building character. The opportunity to select curriculum to build on the biblical values in the child's life is often a primary motivation.

Positive, integrated socialization with better communication and respect between all age groups. This is especially true in large families, where the older children assist with the education of their younger siblings. This is not possible in an institutional setting where age/grade isolation/segregation inhibits socialization.

Fosters independent thinking, leadership skills and self-confidence, while avoiding damaging peer dependency. Again, in a typical classroom setting, the student is only with others his/her own age. And often an attitude develops toward taking direction and counsel more from others their own age, than their own parents. Home educated children often develop leadership skills early and avoid the trap of following others that may go the wrong direction.

More time for development of special talents and interests, creative activities, travel, field trips and community service.

Flexibility to work around the father's work hours and plan travel experiences.

Development of responsibility and respect for work ethic. Home schooled children realize early that they enjoy a unique educational experience and freedom where they are not confined in specific time and space barriers. Home education is often referred to as three dimensional education.

This publication; *The Montana Guide to Home Education*, is designed to provide answers to many of your questions, as well as serve as an ongoing resource to parents presently involved in home education.

I hope that you enjoy reading *The Guide*, and that it answers many of your questions about homeschooling in Montana. Also take time to visit the **Montana Coalition of Home Educators'** web site for additional current home education information and updates: www.mtche.org.

Best Wishes in Your Homeschooling Endeavours,

Steve White
Publisher

From the U.S. Supreme Court....

"The values of parental direction of the rearing and education of their children in the first five years have a high place in our society. Interest in universal education, however, is not totally free from a balancing of competing fundamental rights and interests. The Fourteenth Amendment protects by the Fourteenth Amendment the right of the parent to direct the education of his child ... and bring

"The history and culture of the American tradition of parental concern for their children. This primary role of their children is now established American tradition."
Wisconsin v. Yoder, 406 U.S. 205
 U.S. Supreme Court

"The Fourteenth Amendment ... guarantee[s] ... the right of the individual ... to marry, establish home and bring up children ..."

"The right of parents to engage him [the teacher] so to instruct their children, we think are within the liberty of the [Fourteenth] Amendment." The Court protected "the right of parents to control the education of their own."

The Court protected "the power of parents to control the education of their own."

Meyer v. State of Nebraska
262 U.S. 390 (1923)
U.S. Supreme Court

“We think it is unreasonable interference for the State to appoint guardians to direct the upbringing of its children under their control.”

“The fundamental theory of liberty which all governments in this Union repose upon excludes any general power of the State to standardize its children by forcing them to receive instruction from public teachers only. The child is not the mere creature of the State; its right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness is paramount to the right of the State to control its education. It is the duty of the State to protect the child from abuse, neglect and exploitation, but it is not its duty to assume the position of parent and to dictate to the natural parents how to raise their children. It is the duty of the State to protect the child from abuse, neglect and exploitation, but it is not its duty to assume the position of parent and to dictate to the natural parents how to raise their children. It is the duty of the State to protect the child from abuse, neglect and exploitation, but it is not its duty to assume the position of parent and to dictate to the natural parents how to raise their children.”

"It is cardinal with us that the custody, care and nurture of the child reside first in the parents, whose primary function and freedom include preparation for..."

The *Montana* Guide To Home Education

The Montana Guide To Home Education is published and designed to provide information pertaining to home education.

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Active and Visible in American Life

Growing at the rate of 15% to 40% per year, there are 520,000 to 1,000,000 children (grades K-12) home educated during 1994-1995. (Patricia M. Lines, 1991; Brian D. Ray, 1992, 1995.)

"Not once but twice yesterday, the House corrected a problem in an education bill that had homeschoolers in an uproar and congressional switchboards swamped for a week." The House voted with home educators, 424-1. (Carol Innerst, *The Washington Times*, 2/25/94.)

Home education families are not dependent on public, tax-funded resources – they save taxpayers many millions of dollars. (Brian D. Ray, 1995.)

Academic Achievement

The largest data set on the academic success of the home educated reveals positive things. 16,311 students from across the country were tested with the nationally normed Iowa Test of Basic Skills. The nationwide average for the home schooled on the Basic Battery (i.e., reading, language, and math) was the 77th percentile. They were at the 79th percentile in reading, the 73rd in language, and the 73rd in math. (The national average is the 50th percentile.) (HSLDA, 1994).

Canada's largest study of its kind revealed similar findings on the academic success of the home educated. Dr. Brian Ray found the students scoring, on average, at the 80th percentile in reading, the 76th in language, and the 79th in math. Students whose parents were certified teachers did no better than the other students. (Brian D. Ray, 1994)

Dr. Steven Duvall compared the academic engaged time (AET) and basic skill development of learning disabled students who were home educated to those in public school special education programs. Higher rates of AET and greater academic gains were made by the home educated." ... parents, even without special education training, provided powerful instructional environments at home ..." (Steven F. Duvall, 1994.)

The Home Educated as Adults

Drs. Paulo de Oliveira, Timothy Watson, and Joe Sutton studied Christian college-age students at a large liberal arts, Christian university. They compared three groups – those who had graduated from two types of private schools and those from home schools. There were no statistically significant differences in various critical thinking skills among the student groups. That is, the home educated did as well as the others. (Paulo Oliveira, Timothy G. Watson & Joe P. Sutton, 1994.)

Public school, conventional Christian schools, and home school graduates at a large, Christian liberal arts university were examined and compared for their college academic preparedness and college academic achievement. Dr. Rhonda Galloway found that the home educated performed as well or better than the others on these measures. (Rhonda A. Galloway, 1994.)

Facts and Statistics....

1997-98

General Characteristics

Continued growth in the home education movement parallels a simultaneous decline in the enrollment in other forms of education. About 1.1 to 1.5 million students in grades K to 12 were home educated during 1997-1998.2, and in the Fall of 1998 1.4 million students"

Key reasons for home educating are the transmission of a distinct set of beliefs and values to children, close family relationships, controlled and positive peer social interactions, quality academics, alternative approaches to teaching and learning, and the safety (e.g., physical, drug-related, and sexual) of children and youth.

Social Responsibility and Mutual Respect

Patricia Lines of the U.S. Dept. of Education concluded that home education families "... have not turned their backs on the broader social contract as understood at the time of the Founding [of America]. [They are] ... asserting their historic individual rights so that they may form more meaningful bonds with family and community. In doing so, they are not abdication from the American agreement. To the contrary, they are affirming it."

Home educators and their families are not dependent on public, tax-funded resources. (In Oregon, they appear to be saving taxpayers at least \$61 million per year.→ Neither do they, in general, have a strong desire for access to tax-funded resources. Their children are learning well, they do not need or want more state regulation and will strongly oppose it, and the parents will not likely be coaxed into more regulation by the lure of offered services. They want to be understood and treated as people and educators of integrity.

Academic Achievement

Dr. Howard Richman and his colleagues have found that the home educated in Pennsylvania score, on average, at the 86th percentile in reading and the 73rd percentile in math. (The national average is the 50th percentile.)

Repeatedly, across the nation, the home educated score as well as or better than those in conventional schools. (See the book *Strengths of Their Own* mentioned below and Fact Sheets 1 and 2.)

Social and Emotional Adjustment

Dr. Larry Shyers observed children in their play and group interaction activities. Conventionally schooled children had significantly more problem behaviors than did the home educated. This is probably because the primary models of behavior for the home educated are their parents.

Home educated children are more mature and better socialized than are those sent to school, according to Thomas Smedley's personal interaction and communications approach to understanding socialization.

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2007

General Characteristics

There were an estimated 1,900,000 to 2,400,000 children (grades K-12) home educated during 2005-2006 in the United States. It may be the fastest growing form of education, growing at 5-12% per year.

Families engaged in home-based education are not dependent on public, tax funded resources for their children's education. This represents over \$16 billion that American taxpayers do not have to spend (since these children are not in public schools).

A demographically wide variety of people homeschool - these are atheists, Christians and Mormons; conservatives, libertarians, and liberals; low-, middle-, and high-income families; black, Hispanic, and white; parents with Ph.D.s, GEDs, and no high-school diplomas.

Homeschool students are regularly engaged in field trips, scouting, 4-H, and community volunteer work, and their parents (i.e., their main role models) are significantly more civically involved than are public school parents

Academic Achievement

The home-educated students typically score 15-30 percentile points above public-school students on standardized academic achievement tests.

Homeschool students score above average on achievement tests regardless of the parents' level of education or income. Whether homeschooling parents were ever certified teachers is not related to their children's academic achievement.

Degree of state control and regulation of homeschooling is not related to academic achievement.

Home-educated students typically score above average on the SAT and ACT tests that colleges consider for admissions. Homeschool students are increasingly being actively recruited by colleges.

Repeatedly, across the nation, the home educated score as well as or better than those in conventional schools.

The Home Educated as Adults

Nationwide research recently revealed that adults who were home educated are more civically and politically involved (e.g., working in political campaigns, voting, and writing letters to editors and government officials), more active in local community service, and complete more college-level studies than does the general U.S. adult population.

A study of adults who were home educated found that none were unemployed and none were on welfare, 94% said home education prepared them to be independent persons, 79% said it helped them interact with individuals from different levels of society, and they strongly supported the home education method.

Recent research shows that homeschool graduates are active in their local community and government.

National Home Education Research Institute is actively engaged in collecting and analyzing original research data. A subscription to the journal *Home School Researcher* will keep you abreast of the ever-growing body of research in the area of home education. An extensive bibliography (including the above references) and various research papers are also available from NHERI. Donations assist greatly in the essential work of the non-profit, 501(c)(3), NHERI.

NATIONAL HOME EDUCATION RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Attn: Brian D. Ray, Ph.D.

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Homeschooling in Montana. The History....

Though home education has been part of Montana's history for many years, for the past 25 years it has continued to increase in popularity. And in the last ten years the number of parents choosing this form of education has grown at an even greater rate.

In 1895 and 1903 the Montana legislature acknowledged homeschools. In 1980 Attorney General Mike Greeley issued an opinion, stating that the 1971 legislature had done away with home education with the school recodification bill. The 1971 bill was limited to cleaning up the statutes and was to bring no "substantive changes" in the education laws. As a result of Greeley's opinion (what many regarded as erroneous), some homeschoolers were forced into court to defend their right to direct the education of their children.

Advocates of parental control and choice in education worked to obtain protection for home and private education in the 1983 legislative session. There were several bills introduced in that session that were seeking to severely restrict alternatives to public education. The Senate wrote a compromise bill seeking to balance parent's rights and state's interests. The present home schooling requirements were adopted in that session (20-5-109 MCA). The State Board of Education was then asked to clarify the reporting requirements of this new law.

As recorded in the CLASS Review, Helena, MT 09/16/83, "The state Board of Public Education formally relinquished all interest and control over private education Thursday. By unanimous vote, the board approved a motion by Thomas Thompson of Browning declaring that it will take no further action of any kind with relation to non-public schools.

"The motion pre-empted the scheduled discussion of a special committee's recommendation that the

board adopt a formal definition of the term 'organized course of study' as used in the 1983 law outlining minimum requirements for private schools in Montana.

"The vote came moments after Rick Bartos, an attorney for the Office of Public Instruction, presented a legal memorandum stating the new law took the state completely out of private education. 'The time has come to lay the non-public issue to rest,' he said. 'The legislature has spoken and they have spoken clearly.'

"Bartos later challenged the board to save its energies for the needs of public schools. 'Non-public schools in Montana have a greater flexibility today than they have in many other states,' he said. 'The public educational system in Montana is our primary focus and cannot be ignored.'"

In the 1991 legislative session the Montana School Boards Association and School Administrators of Montana attempted to pass adverse legislation against home education. Their bill failed. But in the same session, the Montana Coalition of Home Educators worked with Senator Del Gage (Cut Bank) to draft a bill supporting home education. This bill was passed overwhelmingly by a Democratic House

and Senate and signed by Republican Governor Stephens. It added another section of law to Montana's statutes

(20-5-111 MCA) which clarified the "responsibilities and rights of a parent who provides home school and rights of a child in home school".

This new statute listed four areas that the home educating parent is "solely" responsible for: *the educational philosophy of the home school; the selection of instructional materials; the time, place and method of instruction; and; the evaluation of the home school instruction.* The result of our home schooling laws of Montana has provided a freedom in education unknown in many states.

For a number of sessions since, few bills had been introduced that represented significant changes to Montana's homeschool laws. But in the 2003 session, several bills appeared that once again required

homeschoolers from across the state to travel to Helena to fight against.

Representative Carol Juneau (D-Browning) introduced HB274. This bill was designed to raise the compulsory attendance age from the present 16 to 18. Rep. Juneau's reason for introducing this bill was related to the 55% high school dropout rate on Montana Indian reservations. MCHE strongly opposed this bill. Fortunately it died in the House Education Committee.

The next and biggest bill that was introduced was another testing bill; SB276. Senator Don Ryan (D-Great Falls) began working on a bill similar to the 1991 legislation, seven months before the 2003 session even began. The unique thing about SB276 was that it stretched beyond testing home-school students, by also including all private schools.

As in 1991, the homeschool community across Montana voiced strong opposition. On the day of the hearing the capitol was packed with parents and students that traveled many miles to demonstrate their opposition. The hearing Sign-in sheets listed 472 opponents, and 1 proponent.

After Senator Ryan finished giving his opening statement, the chairman of the Senate Education Commit-



MCHE Executive Committee members Steve White (left) and Mark Gerber (right) prepare to present testimony with HSLDA President Michael Farris before the Montana House Education Committee in 1991.



tee, Senator Glazer, asked for the proponents (supporters of the bill) to testify. No one spoke in favor of the bill. The chairman then asked for any opponents. A long line began to form. Steve White, Legislative Liaison for MCHE spoke against the passage of SB276, followed by Dee Black of Home School Legal Defense Association, and for the next 3 hours private and home educators gave passionate testimonies against SB276.

Several days later, the committee killed SB276; 9-1. (Senator Ryan casting the only vote in support of the bill.)

Prior the start of the 2005 session, there were many bills requests that directly affected Montana home educators. Senator Trudi Schmidt (D-Great Falls) submitted five bill requests for testing of home school students. Senator Schmidt also requested a bill to 'define education neglect'. And again, Senator Ryan requested a homeschool related bill titled 'Quality home school and child protection act'.

Senator Ryan's request became SB291. (And since the results of the 2004 Montana election produced a democrat majority in the Senate, Senator Ryan was appointed to a Chairmanship position in the Senate Education Committee.)

If passed, SB291 would have changed Montana's homeschool law from one of the best in the nation, to the worst. SB291 required a homeschooling parent to have either a college degree or teaching certificate. Otherwise, the parent would be monitored by a certified teacher for two years.

Prior to the hearing, Senator Ryan used the state's email system to send out a request for anti-homeschool

stories. As the chair of the Education Committee, Senator Ryan had complete control of all aspects of the hearing.

As the date of the hearing approached, home educators from across the state began to prepare for their trip to Helena. Using a special website developed to enhance citizen involvement (www.bad-bills.com), home educators learned much about the legislative process in Montana - and how to prepare.

The hearing on SB291 was held on Valentine's Day - 2005. The hearing room was filled one hour BEFORE the hearing began - resulting in closed circuit televisions being set up on all floors of the Capitol for overflow.

Until the hearing on SB291, it was assumed that the homeschool hearing in the 2003 would be the largest in history. But, the hearing on SB291 included 1148 citizens

signing in as opponents, and 5 proponents. Those working in the Capitol had never seen a larger turnout for any hearing. Testimony lasted nearly

one hour. Opposing SB291 included MCHE Legislative Liaison Steve White, Dee Black of HSLDA, Dr. Brian Ray of NHERI, Evangelina Duke -

Miss Montana, Senator Bob Keenan (R-Big Fork) and many others from all political and religious affiliations. Homeschooling parents lined into the hallway, fully prepared with their typed testimony for the committee.

After time expired, the Chair invited people with typed testimony to come forward, state their name and hand in their testimony. Quickly realizing that that would take too much time, the Chair asked for people to come forward and simply pass in their typed testimony. Still, it was determined, THAT would take too much time, since so many people were still in line. Next, the Chair asked that pages collect the testimony in the outside hallway.

Immediately after Senator Ryan gave his closing remarks, Senator Elliott (D-Trout Creek) made a motion to table (kill) SB291. The motion passed 10-1.

Because of the overwhelming opposition to SB291, none of the other homeschool testing bills were drafted or introduced.

In the most recent session (2007), Senator Ryan again introduced a bill (SB458) aimed squarely against home education in Montana (and again he served as Chairman of the Senate Education Committee).

And as in the previous two sessions, homeschooling families from

across the state traveled to Helena to oppose his bill (there were no proponents). And as in the 2005 hearing, the bill was immediately tabled by his committee (8-1). Not willing to accept the decision of his committee, Senator Ryan made a motion on the floor of the full Senate to force the bill from his committee. Realizing ahead of time that he planned to do this, parents from across the state contacted their Senators to vote NO on his motion. He made his motion, it failed (10-39), and SB458 was permanently killed.

In the 2009 session, home educators opposed a bill that was heard by the House Education Committee. HB433, introduced by Rep Sue Malek, was designed to make a significant change to the ages of compulsory attendance. Present Montana law is 7-16. HB433 would have modified that to 6-17. Though not a direct attack on homeschooling, HB433 would have created an additional burden that was unnecessary. The hearing was held only two days after our Legislative Day. Proponents of HB433 included the newly elected Superintendent of OPI, Board of Regents, MEA and MSBA. The committee received a lot of letters from home educators in opposition. The bill ultimately failed in committee, 15-3.

As you can see, the history of home education in Montana is still being written. And as in the past, the Montana Coalition of Home Educators will continue to monitor proposed bills and keep homeschoolers informed of adverse developments. We appreciate greatly the sacrifice and contributions of those families and friends that have helped keep home education free from unnecessary government restrictions.

Steve White, MCHE



Over 1100 home educators attended the hearing in Montana's capitol on 02/14/05 to oppose SB291. (Photo: Melanie Mutcher)



Montana home educators sharing their joy in the defeat of SB291. (Photo: Colleen Turk)

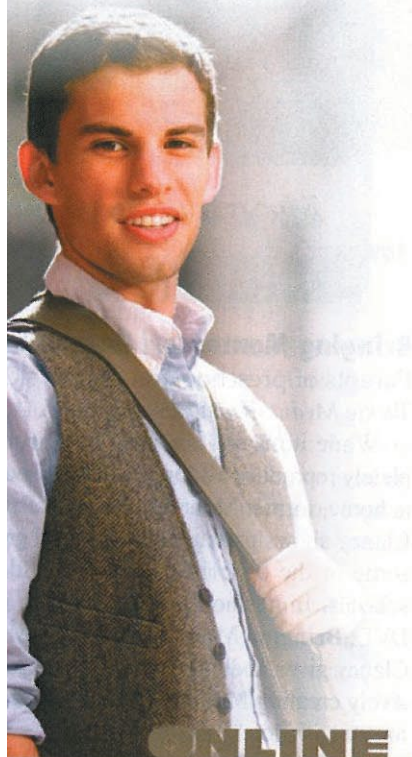
Legal Requirements....

by Steve White, MCHE



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Section 20-5-102 of the Montana Code Annotated sets forth the compulsory school attendance and enrollment requirements for Montana children.

Homeschools are exempted from compulsory attendance by 20-5-102(2) (f). That section defines a homeschool as the instruction by a parent of his child, stepchild, or ward in his residence, and a nonpublic school includes a parochial, church, religious, or private school.

This definition of homeschool is very specific. A homeschool is:

- (1) Instruction by a parent;
- (2) Of the parent's child, stepchild, or ward; and
- (3) In the parent's home or residence.

In the event that either of the above three elements is not satisfied, there is room for the argument that the school is not a homeschool, but is rather a nonpublic private school.

The primary statute which sets forth requirements for nonpublic schools and homeschools is 20-5-109 MCA.

Due to the fact that each of these five criteria can be misinterpreted, these requirements will be discussed below.

Record Maintenance

The first criteria is to maintain records on attendance and disease immunization 20-5-109(1). This section of law requires that the records be available to the county superintendent only upon request. There are no specific forms required in law. Requiring homeschoolers to fill out miscellaneous forms does in fact exceed the clear intent of this statute and the scope of their authority.

Attendance Requirement

Prior to July 1, 2005, the statute requires 180 days of pupil instruction "or the equivalent." In the 2005 legislative session, SB170 removed the 180 day requirement for both public and nonpublic schools. After July 1st, the length of the school year is defined in hours of instruction. 20-5-109 MCA references the hours in:

"20-1-301 MCA. School fiscal year. The school fiscal year shall begin on July 1 and end on June 30. At least the minimum aggregate hours defined in subsec-

tion (2) must be conducted during each school year..." Subsection (2) specifies the number of hours required by grade: "(a) 720 hours for grades 1 through 3; and (b) 1080 hours for grades 4 through 12" (except 1050 aggregate hours of pupil instruction for graduating seniors)

20-1-302 MCA. School day and week. Though, prior to the passage of SB170, this section of law defined a school day (in hours). SB170 struck all references to the length of each day, and allows the local school district to decide daily schedules for the public schools in their own district. There is now no legal demand dictating the length of a school day for non-public schools.

Subsection (1) of 20-5-109 requires a home school to provide attendance records upon request. Attendance records are just that - hours in attendance. There is no longer a clear definition of a school day in current statute. As long as the number of hours of pupil instruction adds up to the required hours of 20-1-301, the home school is complying with Montana law. Though current Montana does not mention days, some county superintendents accept records in days (remember the total hours need to satisfy 20-1-301 MCA).

Compliance With Local Health and Safety Regulations

The residence must meet health and safety regulations **applicable to residences**. It **does not** need to meet the requirements for a school or assembly facility. The primary things that need to be seen to are those things such as lighting, loose cords, etc. If your house is safe to reside in, then it is certainly safe to teach children in.

Organized Course of Study

Homeschoolers must remember to educate in the basics. The statute referred to states as follows:

"20-7-111. Instruction in public schools. The board of public education shall define and specify the basic instructional program for pupils in public schools, and such program shall be set forth in the standards of accreditation. Other instruction may be given when approved by the board of trustees."

As you as see, 20-7-111 doesn't lend a lot of clarity to the problem. This section of law refers to the 'basic instructional program' in the 'standards of accreditation' as established by the board of education. The full text of these basic standards can be found in the Administrative Rules of Montana (visit: <http://www.mtrules.org/gateway/ChapterHome.asp?Chapter=10%2E55>)

You must just basically remember that you need to teach the basic of language arts (including reading and writing), mathematics, social studies (including American and world history, and government), good citizenship, science, arts (including music and art), health and physical education, and safety.

Notification of County Superintendent

Parents homeschooling their children must notify the county superintendent of schools of the county in which the homeschool is located. There is no mention of the method of notification. You may choose to call them or you may write them. Again, the statute does not require that you fill out the forms that are sent to you by the county superintendent of schools, but you may choose to do so.

Also, Montana law does not define when to notify. **It is important to remember that until you notify your county superintendent, you have not complied with Montana law for exemption from compulsory attendance requirements. Thus, your child could be deemed truant and subject to truancy enforcement.**

Some members of the education community in Montana, as well as across the nation have made it clear that they want more control and authority over homeschoolers (see 'Homeschooling History' section). Each and every homeschool parent should work diligently in order to secure the provisions of this statute for future generations. This means educating the community at large, the education community, and the politicians.

This article is not provided as a legal opinion or legal advice. For legal assistance you should consult an attorney or HSLDA (if you are a member)

Montana's Homeschool Law....

20-5-102. Compulsory enrollment and excuses. (1) Except as provided in subsection (2), any parent, guardian, or other person who is responsible for the care of any child who is 7 years of age or older prior to the first day of school in any school fiscal year shall cause the child to be instructed in the program prescribed by the board of public education pursuant to 20-7-111 until the later of the following dates:

- (a) the child's 16th birthday;
- (b) the date of completion of the work of the 8th grade.

(2) A parent, guardian, or other person shall enroll the child in the school assigned by the trustees of the district within the first week of the school term or when he establishes residence in the district unless the child is:

- (a) enrolled in a school of another district or state under any of the tuition provisions of this title;
- (b) provided with supervised correspondence study or supervised home study under the transportation provisions of this title;
- (c) excused from compulsory school attendance upon a determination by a district judge that attendance is not in the best interest of the child;
- (d) excused by the board of trustees upon a determination that attendance by a child who has attained the age of 16 is not in the best interest of the child and the school; or
- (e) enrolled in a nonpublic or home school that complies with the provisions of 20-5-109. For the purposes of this subsection (2)(e), a home school is the instruction by a parent of the parent's child, stepchild, or ward in the parent's residence and a nonpublic school includes a parochial, church, religious, or private school.

20-5-109. Nonpublic school requirements for compulsory enrollment exemption. To qualify its students for exemption from compulsory enrollment under 20-5-102, a nonpublic or home school:

- (1) shall maintain records on pupil attendance and disease immunization and make the records available to the county superintendent of schools on request;
- (2) shall provide at least the minimum aggregate hours of pupil instruction in accordance with 20-1-301 and 20-1-302;
- (3) must be housed in a building that complies with applicable local health and safety regulations;
- (4) shall provide an organized course of study that includes instruction in the subjects required of public schools as a basic instructional program pursuant to 20-7-111; and
- (5) in the case of home schools, shall notify the county superintendent of schools, of the county in which the home school is located in each school fiscal year of the student's attendance at the school.

20-5-111. Responsibilities and rights of parent who provides home school. Subject to the provisions of 20-5-109, a parent has the authority to instruct the parent's child, stepchild, or ward in a home school and is solely responsible for:

- (1) the educational philosophy of the home school;
- (2) the selection of instructional materials, curriculum, and textbooks;
- (3) the time, place, and method of instruction; and
- (4) the evaluation of the home school instruction.

20-1-301. School fiscal year. (1) The school fiscal year begins on July 1 and ends on June 30. At least the minimum aggregate hours defined in subsection (2) must be conducted during each school fiscal year, except that 1050 aggregate hours of pupil instruction for graduating seniors may be sufficient.

(2) The minimum aggregate hours required by grade are:

- (a) 360 hours for a half-time kindergarten program or 720 hours for a full-time kindergarten program, as provided in 20-7-117;
- (b) 720 hours for grades 1 through 3; and
- (c) 1,080 hours for grades 4 through 12.

(3) For any elementary or high school district that fails to provide for at least the minimum aggregate hours, as listed in subsections (1) and (2), the superintendent of public instruction shall reduce the direct state aid for the district for that school year by two times an hourly rate, as calculated by the office of public instruction, for the aggregate hours missed.

Driver Education

According to current OPI administrative rule 10.13.307, "An approved traffic education program for young novice drivers must...be scheduled so that a sufficient number of courses are provided to allow every eligible student within the school's geographic jurisdiction an equitable opportunity to enroll."

In the Fall of 1999 the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) made an important clarification of their interpretation of this rule.

OPI included in their SUMMARY OF OPI ACTIVITIES (October, 1999): "The 'Application for Approval; Traffic Education Program for Young Novice Drivers' (form TE01) includes an assurance that this provision is being met. Yet schools which have given this assurance are still falling short of providing driver education services to students enrolled in home schools. This reason for at least some schools stems from a misunderstanding of 'school jurisdiction'. Some schools have interpreted this to mean enrolled students. The position of the Office of Public instruction in this matter has always been geographic—within the schools boundaries."

Further, "Traffic education (novice driver education) is more than an educational issue. It is also a significant public safety issue for all road users, but especially our new drivers. The legislature has authorized the public schools to provide this service to its eligible population. To limit it to students enrolled in public school is to limit this valuable service to students seeking education to be eligible for early licensing (at age 15 rather than 16)."

Prior to this rule change, Montana home-school families were denied access to the driver's education programs in some school districts. In a memo dated June 25, 1999, Janice Doggett, OPI attorney, issued a memo to David Huff (OPI) stating "You have asked me to address whether a school district may charge nonpublic school students more than they charge public school students for drivers education courses. It is my opinion that school districts may not charge different amounts for different classes of students without demonstrating a governmental necessity. Without the showing of a governmental necessity, a district would be violating the

equal protection rights of the nonpublic school students."

Ms. Doggett concluded her assessment by adding: "I, however, cannot think of any governmental reason why a district would be charging the nonpublic school students more than the public school students. In fact, if the nonpublic school students are all from a sectarian school they may be able to claim that they are being discriminated based on religion."

In legislative sessions since 1999, bills have been considered to allow non-public educators the opportunity to teach drivers education courses. In the 2003 and 2005 sessions, several bills were introduced that would have allowed homeschooling parents the option of teaching their children to drive. Even though parents are not presently prevented from teaching their own children to drive, these bills would have provided a way for homeschool students to receive the same certificates from their parent teacher (needed for obtaining a drivers license, insurance coverage, etc) as those taught by the present public school program. Unfortunately both bills failed.

In 2003 OPI adopted a change to their rules regarding non-public school students attendance:

10.13.307(4)(b) "Eligible student" means any youth who lives within the geographic boundaries of the public school district whether or not they are enrolled in the public school district and who meets the age requirements of 10.13.312"

Most recently, the 2005 Montana legislature passed SB104, making Montana the 50th state to implement a 'Graduated Drivers License' program. Included in SB104, was language prohibiting any school district from denying access to non-public school students for driver education: "available to all who meet the age requirements specified in 20-7-503 MCA and reside within the geographical boundaries of or attend a school in the school district that offers the course."

Montana law now requires all school districts to accept eligible students into their driver education classes.

What's So Great About Homeschooling?

by Mary Pride

Learning at home is the magic key that millions of people have used to unlock the educational treasure-chest. No longer must you or your children climb the academic bean-stalk in competition with a hundred other Jacks, each of whom can only succeed by knocking his fellows off into the depths. No longer must you spend a fortune on college credits for knowledge offered elsewhere for a pittance. No longer must you watch your child shrivel up under the burden of a label that some trendy educrat has stuck on him or her. In the comfort and privacy of your own home you can learn whatever you want to, whenever you want to – and so can your children.

Current estimates now place the number of homeschooled children at over two million. That's a lot of practical, one-on-one teaching experience homeschoolers have gained over the past decade, since the movement changed from a tiny trickle into a full-grown flood.

While homeschoolers cover the entire political and lifestyle spectrum, we do have one thing in common:

We believe that parents can do a great job of teaching their children at home.

No, let me put that more strongly:

We know from experience that you can do a great job of teaching your children at home!

Homeschooled children consistently test academically ahead of public-schooled children. (See the detailed research summary in Appendix 1.) In most categories, they even surpass the test scores of children from the finest private schools. The one exception? Math computation speed. Moral: homeschool moms don't like math drills!

Generally, homeschooled children are at least one year ahead academically. When it comes to reasoning skills, homeschooled children test an unbelievable seven years ahead of public-school children!

The academic rocket boost home-

schooling provides often translates into homeschooled children winning competitions. Although homeschooled kids are just a fraction of the schooled population, and most homeschoolers don't enter competitions (a situation I expect to change as information about contests become more accessible-see the chapter and appendix devoted to contests in this book), it's becoming more and more common for homeschoolers to win, place, or show in academic competitions of all kinds.

A few prominent examples of some of these pioneering contestants:

* In 1997, a delighted Rebecca Sealfon was the first homeschooler to win the Scripps Howard National Spelling Bee. Three short years later, homeschoolers swept the Spelling Bee, winning first, second, and third places!

* In 1999, homeschooler Rio Bennin won the Intel Science Talent Search, the USA's most prestigious science competition for high schoolers. Accepted at Harvard, Berkeley, and Cambridge University in England, he chose to go to Harvard.

* Also in 1999, homeschooler David Biehl won the National Geography Bee.

Homeschooled kids are performing brilliantly in everything from music competitions, to science fairs, to writing competitions, to Latin and mythology competitions, to sports and martial arts. They have won essay contents, chess contests, and math contests. They have received community service awards and been recognized by members of Congress.

We know from experience that you can do a great job of teaching your children at home! We know from experience that you can do a great job of teaching your children at home!

Homeschool graduates have been accepted into Ivy League universities such as Harvard and Yale. They have served with distinction in the military. They have joined apprenticeship programs, served as missionaries, and started their own businesses.

Often, they have done this at younger ages than their schooled counterparts. While nobody in the homeschool movement advocates

whizzing through school for its own sake, thousands of homeschoolers have been mature enough and well enough prepared academically to start taking community-college or

Advanced Placement courses at age 16 or earlier. Both are favored options for these younger children, because they save money, allow students of high-school age to accumulate credits toward a college degree in a more prominent institution, and allow kids to live at home when they might be too young to go away to college.

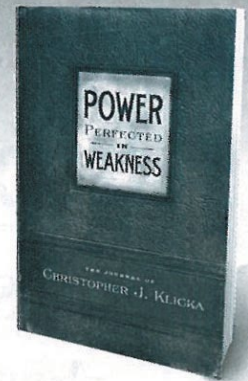
Mary Pride is the publisher of Practical Homeschooling magazine and the founder of the website, www.home-school.com. A graduate of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute with two degrees in engineering, she and her husband, Bill, are parents of nine totally homeschooled children.

The above article was adapted with permission from Chapter 1 of *Mary Pride's Complete Guide to Getting Started in Homeschooling*. © 2004 Home Life, inc.

Freed by homeschooling from the necessity of following rigorous school schedules or attending class in one physical location, some families have shared adventures that range from sailing trips around the world to professional and semiprofessional careers in theatre, dance, circus, and other performing arts. Still others have become expert cyberspace "netizens," creating their own websites, writing their own programs, publishing their own electronic newsletters, or attending online academies.


Take a look at the homeschooled kids featured on the section pages throughout this book [*Mary Pride's Complete Guide to Getting Started in Homeschooling*] for just a small taste of the success homeschoolers are enjoying. Truly, homeschooling has more than proved itself as a road to success in education . . . and in life.

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How Home Education Has Benefited Me

by Kristina Fowl

When I was younger, I knew we were different than most people, but at the same time, school was school. My family did it at home, while others did it away from home. Not until the last few years have I come to realize and truly appreciate what my parents have done for us. Here are four things that stand out to me as benefits of being home educated.

1. The Environment that I Was Raised In

During the early years of a child's life what they see, what they hear, and what surrounds them is so critical to their development. It is so important that we have to take it very seriously. My parents did, and by home educating us they had great control over our environment. Whether it was books, movies, relationships or what we were being taught, my parents took seriously the commandment in Proverbs 22:6 that says to "train up a child in the way he should go." Unlike the parents that sent their children to school, my parents did not have to undo the lies those children were daily subjected to, or the bad influence of teachers and peers that did not share a similar worldview. The key to a stable and Biblical environment is Jesus Christ. He must be the foundation, and everything must be built upon Him. While not perfect, our home was a place where Jesus Christ was Lord. His laws and commandments were upheld and expected to be obeyed, and the Bible was viewed as our roadmap for life. Deuteronomy 6:4-7 says "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and

shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." This verse describes one of the great beauties of home education. You get to walk day-by-day with your children and teach them God's commandments.

2. Social Skills

Now you're probably saying, "Wait a minute, you're telling me that one of the *benefits* of home education is socialization?" To that I answer a resounding, "Yes!" Around home education circles, socialization is the big, scary word. It's the first thing grandparents, other relatives, and friends question. I mean, we've all been asked a zillion times, "What about socialization?" If you're a homeschool mom, and you're worried about your child's social skills, don't stress it. On average, homeschoolers are shown to be well beyond their peers socially. Wonder why? Well the fact is, we homeschoolers are concerned about socialization. That is probably one of the reasons why you decided to keep your children home with you. You don't want them just spending time with and only learning to relate to their own age group. You don't want them learning about life and the world around them mostly from their peers. Being home educated has allowed me the opportunity to regularly interact with people of various ages, such as older and younger siblings, other families, elderly people at the nursing home where we ministered, and many others.

3. Pursue My Own Interests

Being home educated has allowed me to develop and pursue my passions and interests, many times incorporating them right into my schooling. God has designed each of

us uniquely with special talents and skills, and He wants us to develop and use them. He has a special calling and purpose for each of us in His Kingdom, and we need to be about finding out what that is and making it our mission. We do not all need to learn the same things. For instance, a doctor will need to know a whole lot more about science than a carpenter. Homeschooling gave me the unique ability to really focus on and develop the talents and interests that God has equipped me with to fulfill His calling on my life.

4. Sibling Relationships

I have the best two brothers in the world; the relationships we share are priceless to me. My brothers are my best friends. Whether hiking, playing sports, watching a movie, or memorizing scripture, we love being together and doing things together. We were at home with each other for most of our childhood, and what has emerged from spending so much time together is truly special. I would not trade it for anything.

In closing, I encourage all you mothers. Don't give up. Stay the Course. Persevere. It is so worth it. Cling to God and His Word. It is truth, and it is life. God will be faithful even through the hard times, if you will

rest in Him. Remember you hold the destiny of future generations in your hands! May you truly be able to say, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." III John 4

I also want to thank you. Thank you for forging a path, for leading the way, and for your example. If the Lord wills, I want to follow in your footsteps someday.



Kristina is 23 years old and a blessed daughter of Greg and Kathleen Fowl. She resides in Canyon Lake, Texas with her parents and two awesome brothers. Striving to fulfill God's calling on her life, she is deeply grateful and very glad to be at home serving her family and others through hospitality, working for her father's business, and preparing to, Lord willing, be a wife and a mother someday. Reprinted with permission from Kristina and The Informer (IAHE) March/April 2009.

For more information on homeschooling in Montana, check out the web site of the Montana Coalition of Home Educators:

www.mtche.org

Drama & Duct Tape

by Annabel Barry

In fifth grade, some friends of mine asked me to join their Destination ImagiNation team. They explained what the competition entailed: writing a script according to a themed challenge, creating props and costumes, and finally performing the team-produced play for a panel of judges. I've always loved anything creative, so I accepted.

We decided on the "Hit or Myth" science challenge, which required teams to present a historical myth and then explain why this myth was or was not true. We chose the myth of Odysseus and the Cyclops, as described in Homer's Odyssey. Through our research, we found out that the Ancient Greeks had believed that the Cyclops existed. The Greeks had most likely found mammoth bones in Sicily and assembled them so that they seemed to form the skeleton of a huge one-eyed man, with the trunk hole resembling a single eye socket.

We created a two-scene play in which we acted out the myth, then played the part of scientists solving the mystery. Because Connecticut is such a small state, teams go straight to the state tournament without having to compete in school or regional tournaments. We didn't win at states, but I loved the experience. I was hooked.

The Journey Continues

The next year, we again chose the science challenge, "Instinct Messaging," for which we had to create a skit that demonstrated two types of communication of a "Featured Creature." We chose honey bees, and our skit contained opera ("Apus Mellifera is the greatest kind of beee!") and a lot of obnoxious bee puns. We were thrilled to be named the Connecticut state champions for our challenge and age level, which earned us our first invitation to Global Finals. We came in middle-of-the-pack at globals, but getting to see everyone's props and plays motivated us to push ourselves to a new level the next year.

During the 2009-2010 season, my team chose the theater arts-themed Central Challenge called "You're Gonna Flip." Our skit had to feature one character who experiences a flip, or sudden change, in the way he or she views the world. We also had to create, live on stage, a work of art illustrating the flip and incorporate a team-created puppet into the performance.

Our solution was a skit about Marco Polo and the Silk Road, a 6,000-mile trade route that ran through China in the 1500s. In our skit, the short-sighted duke of a fictional Ancient Chinese town called Du Tsan doesn't want to open his town for trade with the rest of the world via the Silk Road. The duke believes that the ideas and culture of his town are perfect without foreign interference—until Marco Polo, an Italian who famously traveled the Silk Road, shows the duke the error of his ways through an original poem. Other characters, such as the Great Dragon Spirit (a Chinese dragon puppet), Yin and Yang, who take an Angel/Devil role, the duke's mischievous monkey advisor, and a Chinese sage also contribute. For our live art, we created a Chinese brush painting. We outlined the painting in black and white to show the monochromatic world the duke wanted. Then, each character helped to color in the painting, showing how the duke came to appreciate the world with color and depth.

For our skit, we were awarded first place and a Renaissance Award "for incredible skill in performance and engineering" at the state level. Best of all, we were invited to participate in Global Finals again!

It was our first time participating in a theater arts-based challenge at globals, and our performance area was a real stage, not a classroom as it had been the year before. The venue threw us off a bit, and we temporarily forgot our lines. However, we were able to improvise the scene until we got our footing again.

We received disappointingly low scores, especially compared to our scores at states, which had been nearly perfect. Even though the head judge told us that the judges we had faced were giving low scores to all the teams, we weren't reassured. At the closing ceremony, we were shocked and excited when the leaderboard for our challenge and age level was revealed. We came in seventh out of eighty teams, putting us in the top ten globally for the first time! Now, all we could think about was coming back.

The Current Season

This year, my team chose the science-based challenge, "Spinning a Tale," which entails writing a skit that has three unique acts and a finale. Act I causes Act II to occur, Act II causes Act III to occur, and Act III causes Act I to occur again, so that the story is cyclical. At the tournament, the judges may select any act, and we are required to start our story with that act. For instance, if Act II is selected, the order of our story would be Act II, Act III, Act I, Finale. The acts are expected to make sense in any order. The Challenge also required us to construct a Dicycler, a device that changes once each act and is finally used to signal the end of the performance. In addition, we have to incorporate knowledge of a natural or physical energy cycle into our skit.

Our skit is about Leonardo da Vinci, a scientist and artist who studied many different things, including water and flight. In our skit, Leonardo learns to use his imagination, which enables him to find out more about the water energy cycle and realize that hydropower can be used to power his flying machine. Once Leonardo realizes that he can use hydropower, he wants to know more, so he uses his imagination again. We created an enormous changing Rubik's Cube as our Dicycler. The cube is folded during the play to reveal different images related to

the theme of our play. We also made a puppet replica of Leonardo's flying machine (as sketched in his notebook) out of pool noodles and black duct tape.

Characters in our play include Leonardo, of course, as well as representations of the Mona Lisa and Vitruvian Man, and Leonardo's notebook, which speaks to him throughout the play. I act the part of Leonardo's imagination.

We will be taking our play to Global Finals this May, and we are incredibly excited. Although this will be our last year participating in the middle school age group, we hope to return next year to compete at the high school level.

The DI Experience

For me, DI carries with it memories of painting in my basement, listening to "Don't Stop Believing" on a loop, struggling to transport our props to tournaments, and building towers out of empty rolls of duct tape. There's a certain bond with DI teammates that's strengthened by defeat, victory, and plenty of lame jokes and rituals. With months of preparation and rehearsal time involved, DI takes hard work and dedication. However, DI is much more than competition. It's an incomparable experience and a family that encompasses over 100,000 students across more than 30 nations. It's an environment where there is no wrong answer, where creativity and original ideas are expected and encouraged.

Annabel Barry is an eighth-grade homeschooled student who participates in several academic contests, including National History Day and science competitions. She is a competitive alpine ski racer during the winter and spends her summers at a camp in Maine.

Learn more about Destination ImagiNation at <http://idodi.org>.

Homeschooling - Marching to a Different Drumbeat

by Joyce Burges

It was a rainy afternoon. I was rocking my baby girl by the fire and enjoying a cup of hot chamomile tea. To me, life couldn't get any better than this. Our three older children were in school, "getting a good education." I received a call from my oldest son's school. I was told that my husband and I needed to come to a school meeting. Unpleasant thoughts flooded my mind. But I was comforted because we were active in our children's school. I was PTO president and chairman of the advisory board. So all was well, right?

Nothing could have prepared me for what I was about to hear at this meeting. We thought that being involved as parents assured our children of an excellent education. I was mistaken. When we had met with the teachers, they informed us that our son Eric Jr. was doing fine academically. His 3.0 GPA dropped to 2.8 during the first six weeks of school. To me, this was a workable issue because we were still in the first semester. At this latest meeting, we were informed that our son was "failing." According to his counselor, this was a "blight" on this school's reputation. The school gave us two choices: We could place our son in a school across town, or he would have to repeat this grade next year. These options left me feeling that there was no hope for our son. I pleaded and said that we would work with him to raise his grade point average. This would not do. The administration's position was firm. I began to cry. My confidence was shattered. I thought that we had failed our son, and that we were unfit to be a part of this school system.

We discussed this problem when we got home that evening. Something began to stir my heart - a vision of me keeping my children at home with me. I was tired of raising money for equipment when overburdened teach-

ers were making copies of books for children in overstuffed classrooms, and I was exhausted with rising early in the morning to whisk my children away to school.

I heard that a family at our local church was homeschooling. We met one evening, and the rest is history. I was forced to rethink my children's educational life. If my children were going to succeed, become excellent learners and have a chance to go college, I had to rally my courage and start right now.

I learned many things during the first years of teaching my children. I didn't realize the pressure we were under until we were set free of the educational "mess" of which they were part: The prepackaged curriculum, the one-size-fits-all model, the bullying and the negative socialization. Homeschooling allowed us to discover and experience pure, superior learning and a customized learning environment.

Some thought we were out of our minds. But, since then, my husband and I started an organization where parents are empowered to educate their children for excellence. The National Black Home Educators' primary focus is to target African-Americans with the option of homeschooling. We also offer resources to parents of children that are still in the public and private schools, including learning materials that enable parents to engage in learning 30 minutes per day with their children at home.

The National Black Home Educators is not an exclusive organization. But, in my opinion, black children require a certain kind of attention and understanding. Many of us are concentrating on a more urban attitude - an attitude that, in my opinion, that does not promote excellence but a mindset that is mediocre and accepts the status quo. We need to raise the bar. We, as

parents, must exert a powerful influence in determining the quality of life we want for our children. We do not want to produce "functional illiterates." We must teach our children well.

It's time to raise the standard of our culture so that the minds of our girls and boys can be lifted to see beyond sports, bad music, sexual promiscuity, drugs and perhaps even tennis shoes. Having shared the dream of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., I knew that our family was being given another dream, one that would encompass King's and would rise and carry our family to a greater level. This is why we homeschooled our children. Homeschooling offered us a chance to pour into the lives of our children. We are very blessed and thankful that we were given that chance. We learned that sometimes your deepest challenges become your greatest blessings. We knew our children deserved a first-class education, and homeschooling was our path to take.

As for Eric, after 12 years of military service with the 82nd Airborne, serving two tours in Iraq and a season in Haiti, he lives in New York with his family and is homeschooling his children as well. He attributes his success to homeschooling. He says, "Homeschooling gave me a chance to see the leader in myself." Our other children are also doing very well. They are productive citizens in their communities and are enjoying their families.

Joyce Burges is the co-founder of the *National Black Home Educators*, an organization that empowers parents to educate their children for excellence. She and her husband, Eric, have been married for 35 years and have five children between the ages of 16 to 35.

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The Support Network....

The success of home education in Montana is the result of sacrifices of fellow home educators in local support groups from across the state. As more and more parents begin their journey of educating their own children at home, local support groups play a very important role.

Support groups bring parents and children together for activities, including; field trips, athletics, seminars, book fairs, conventions, and more. From these support groups, relationships are created that last a lifetime. And for many, these relationships continue even when some families move away to other communities across the country.

In Montana, there are many active local support groups. These are lead by homeschooling parents that have many years of experience. The following page lists these support groups, organized by regions in the state. You are invited to contact any of these leader for local information.

In addition to coordinating local activities, these support groups are also very involved in other activities that are vital to the future of home schooling. These activities include the political arena.

In 1988, it was discovered that there was adverse legislation being planned against home education. In preparation for the 1989 legislative session, the **Montana Coalition of Home Educators** was formed. The goal and purpose of this new organization was to bring homeschoolers from across the state together in an organized fashion to protect Montana's homeschooling families from unnecessary regulation. And at the same time, preserve the independence and individuality of each family, as well as local support groups.

To accomplish this, an executive board was selected to design and implement an organization that would be able to monitor legislation and quickly dispense information statewide to individuals and support groups.

After the session was completed, a statewide leadership meeting was held in Helena the summer of 1989. From that meeting plans were made to organize the first statewide convention and the first statistical study of academics (with demographics) by Dr. Brian Ray. The **Montana Coalition of Home Educators** took on the task of

organizing those and other statewide activities.

For home education to flourish, it is necessary that we continue to maintain and support a statewide organization that encourages self motivation and responsibility. The 'Coalition' has always been careful to never take on tasks that should be done at a local level. Local support groups are essential.

The 'Coalition' is more than the executive committee. The **Montana Coalition of Home Educators** is comprised of every homeschooling family who maintain a passion for their freedom to teach and raise their children. And the price to be paid is in the form of time spent lobbying their own legislators, writing letters, testifying at hearings in Helena, and being quick to respond to action when called upon by others.

From these efforts, our grass-roots movement has achieved great success. In 1991, homeschooling in Montana met its greatest battle. Two public school organizations; the Montana School Board Association and the School Administrators of Montana banded together to draft a bill that would have damaged our homeschool freedom. Even though this bill was cosigned (and originally drafted) by the chairman of the House Education Committee, it met with defeat in 'his' committee. And in the same session, at the same time, a bill drafted by the homeschool community made it through Montana's congress, and was signed into law. This new statute puts in black and white, the God-given rights of parents to home educate their children. To accomplish this task took a great deal of sacrifice by homeschooling parents from across the state. (Even greater battles have been fought recently in the 2003 and

2005 sessions. See '*Homeschooling in Montana. The History...*')

The **Montana Coalition of Home Educators** is supported financially by individuals and groups. There are no memberships. **Support comes from a suggested donation of \$25 per year/family.**

In the future the 'Coalition' will continue to monitor legislation, maintain our internet web site, answer inquiries, help coordinate Legislative Day, statewide conventions, graduations, book fairs, seminars, sport camps, summer campouts and any other activities that help advance and build strong communities of homeschool families.



Members of the 1991 MCHE Executive Committee included (L to R) Kent Gilge (Havre), Danita Hane (Seeley Lake), Linda Collins (Gardiner), Mark Gerber (Billings), Steve White (Bozeman) and Russ Wahl (Cut Bank)

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Montana Support Groups....

1

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Michele Elliott
114 Cherry Creek Drive
Libby, MT 59923
406-293-5849
EMAIL: michelli43@live.com
Cities: Libby
Counties: Lincoln

Clark Fork Home Schoolers

Greg & Kimberly Joner
22 Pine Meadow Lane
Plains, MT 59859 826-7890

MT FIELD for Home Educators (Fun Innovative Educational Learning Days)

Cindy Ruth
PO Box 2375
Eureka, MT 59917
406-459-2755
EMAIL: cruthconsulting@aol.com
Counties: Lincoln
Cities: Troy, Libby, Eureka, Fortine, Stryker, Trego

Five Valleys Homeschool Co-op

Janine Overland
EMAIL: j9nkc@hotmail.com
Lora Hall
EMAIL: silvertipminis@msn.com
Cities: Missoula area
Counties: Missoula, Ravalli, Lake, Mineral, Sanders, and Granite

Flathead Home Educators Assoc.

Mark and Heidi Roedel
P.O. Box 7661, Kalispell, MT 59904
406-756-0801
EMAIL: fheaonline@gmail.com
URL: fheaonline.org
Cities: Kalispell, Whitefish, Bigfork, Lakeside, Columbia Falls and Marion
Counties: Flathead, Lake, Lincoln and Sanders

Glacier County Home Educators

Tom & Val Tuma
Box 776
Cut Bank, MT 59427 336-2392
EMAIL: tuma@northerntel.net

Mission Valley Home Educators

John & Connie Doty
41570 Wilderness Way
Polson, MT 59860 849-5169
EMAIL: missionvalleyhomeeducators@gmail.com
URL: Facebook - Mission Valley Home Educators
Cities: Polson, Ronan, & towns surrounding Flathead Lake
Counties: : Lake

Missoula Area Homeschool

Gail Heaton
EMAIL: clanheaton@aol.com
URL: missoulahomeschool.com
Counties: Missoula area & surrounding counties

Ravalli Area Homeschool Network

Liz Johnson
EMAIL: mailto:bvhomesch@ya-hoogroups.com
Counties: Ravalli area

Tobacco Valley Home Educators

Jenny Ressler
125 Tumbleweed Trail
Rexford, MT 59930
889-3810
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Cities: Eureka, Rexford, Trego, Fortine
Counties: Lincoln

2

Cascade County Homeschoolers

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1304 Valley View Drive
Great Falls, MT 59405
452-2030
EMAIL: kds4_2grkds@yahoo.com
URL: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/cascadecountyhomeschoolers/info>
Cities: Great Falls area
Counties: Cascade and nearby counties

Central Montana Homeschoolers

Trevis & Karla Butcher
Box 7
8000 Butcher Road
Winifred, MT 59489 462-8000
EMAIL: trevisbutcher@gmail.com
Counties: Fergus – Petroleum - Judith basin

East Slope Home Educators

Maria Elings
6829 Coalmine Road
Conrad, MT 59425

Chouteau County Home

Gabe & Lea Ann Williams
249 Williams Drive
Big Sandy, MT 59520
386-2226
Counties: Chouteau

Hi-Line Home Educators

Kent & Lois Gilge
4145 70th Avenue West
Havre, MT 59501 262-9755
Doug & Betty Boyce
1513 Boulevard Avenue
Havre, MT 59501 265-6957
EMAIL: dougandbettyboyce@msn.com
Cities: Havre area
Counties: Hill, Blaine

Phillips County Home Educators

Jeanne Engebretson
P.O. Box 702
Malta, MT 59538 654-1732

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Colstrip Area Home Educators

Lydia Hesel
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Colstrip, MT 748-3166

Glendive Area Christian Home Ed

Inger Koppenhaver
PO Box 517
Terry, MT 593549
406-853-0343
EMAIL: lingermoo@midrivers.com
Cities: Baker, Wibaux, Sidney, Glendive, Terry, Fallon, Bloomfield, Circle, Wolf Point
Counties: Fallon, Wibaux, Richland, Dawson, Prairie, McCone, Roosevelt

Yellowstone Coalition of Home Educators (YCHE)

PO Box 30002
Billings, MT 59107
EMAIL: ychemt@gmail.com
URL: www.yche.org
Cities: Billings area
Counties: Yellowstone



5

Gallatin Valley Home Ed

Rachel Rippel, Lifeline Newsletter
EMAIL: gchlifeline@gmail.com

Joliet Area Homeschoolers

Souad Jarecke
962-3661
EMAIL: souad@kennethjarecke.com
36 Jarecke Lane
Joliet, MT 59401
Cities: Joliet & Red Lodge area
Counties: Carbon

Park County Homeschool Network

Mary Murphy
222-3543
EMAIL: mqmurphy@hotmail.com
URL: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/P_H_N/
Cities: Livingston area
Counties: Park

6

Boulder - Basin Home Educators

Suzanne Schultz
EMAIL: sshultz89@gmail.com
406-439-0446
Cities: Boulder, Basin
Counties: Jefferson

Beaverhead Area Community of Homeschoolers

Starr Van Dalen
187 Trista Dr
Dillon MT 59725
phone: 406-660-0989
EMAIL: mailto:starrvandalen@gmail.com
Counties: Beaverhead

Helena Area Christian Home Educators (HACHE)

Cyndy Munson
406-459-9981
EMAIL: munsoncyndy@gmail.com
Cities: Helena, East Helena
Counties: Lewis & Clark

HelenaHome School Enrichment

Co-op

Chris Hauer
406-585-1259
EMAIL: enrichment.coop@gmail.com
URL: enrichmentcoop.com
Cities: Helena, East Helena
Counties: Lewis & Clark

Helena Homeschoolers

Chessa Hickox
EMAIL: homeschoolhelena@gmail.com
URL: helenahomeschoolers.com
Cities: Helena, East Helena
Counties: Lewis & Clark

Jefferson Valley Homeschooling Association

Bethel Wagner 406-287-2276
P.O. Box 99
Whitehall, Montana 59759
EMAIL: steve@truthinliving.org

Ruby Valley Home Educators

Jake & Jamie Barnosky
601 Ruby River Drive
Sheridan, MT 59749 842-7218
EMAIL: jsbarnosky@yahoo.com
Cities: Ennis, Sheridan
County: Madison

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Coalition of Home Edu-
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Homeschooling...Are You Sure?

If you are considering home education, it is important to understand the magnitude and significance of your decision. As mentioned in an earlier section of this **GUIDE**, there are many reasons that motivate parents to homeschool, and it is vitally important to take time to consider the ultimate responsibility of this endeavor.

Before starting your first school year, many things need to be done. If your children are presently in another school setting, whether private or public, it is important to carefully consider your decision to homeschool. Often-times an event happens at school that causes a parent to immediately want to remove the child or the parents may not be pleased with the academic progress the child is achieving. Whatever the reason, you need to prayerfully consider your options. To remove a child from any school mid-year is difficult enough, but to remove the child without proper preparation is unwise.

The first question that needs to be answered is ... **WHY DO I WANT TO HOMESCHOOL?** In answering this question, you will begin to develop your homeschool "position paper". This would include your philosophy for your future homeschool. Years ago I attended a workshop that helped parents to actually develop and write down a paragraph describing their homeschool "position". You need to write down your reasons for considering home education and review it often as your point of reference.

The next step of the homeschool journey is ... **RESEARCH**. Not too many years ago it was very difficult to find information on homeschooling. Today, it is different...very different. Not only are there many books and magazines devoted to this topic, but you also have the availability of the Internet. In addition to all of these sources,

there are support groups across the state that include many parents that are able to answer some of the hard questions. **THE GUIDE** is provided to help steer you toward resources that will also answer many questions. **Check out MCHE's web site for many "links" to valuable home education sites: www.mtche.org.**

After doing your research, you are now ready to connect your "WHY?" with your "RESEARCH" to develop **GOALS AND CHOOSE MATERIALS**. Your goals should directly connect with your position statement, and the curriculum chosen should also agree. To assist in developing goals for the school year, use the "scope and sequence charts" provided with your curriculum. This is where other homeschoolers in your area can be of great assistance. Beyond your curriculum, you also need to obtain teaching materials that may include maps, white boards, art supplies, etc. Some of the larger communities actually have retail businesses dedicated to serving teachers. Ask other homeschoolers for their advice. At different times of the school year, you may even find homeschooling "garage" sales. These are excellent sources for materials, and advice.

For years the old proverb has been "**ORGANIZATION** is the key to success" and this is also certainly true with homeschooling. It is very important to arrange your household so that the school has its own area. In fact, many families actually set aside an entire room for their schooling. Younger children may enjoy their own desk; however, you may find it easiest and most convenient to simply work at the dining room table. Older children will prove to be a wonderful resource to help with their younger siblings. Make sure that you have plenty of bookshelves so that at the end of each school day each your students can clean up his/her area and neatly

return all books and materials to their storage location.

As the teacher, you should keep a close record of all lesson plans, books read, tests given, essays written, etc. This should be

kept on a daily basis, and filed away at the end of the year. By doing this you will ultimately produce organization in your homeschool, and save time in planning for the next year. And for families with several children, the records kept for the older children will prove invaluable for the younger.

THE GUIDE includes the **LEGAL REQUIREMENTS** for home education. Montana's current statute requires all children to be in some type of educational setting from 7-16 years of age. Homeschooled children are technically exempt from the compulsory attendance law, if the parents have complied with the legal requirements. You must annually notify your local County Superintendent of Schools (an elected official in each county whose office is generally located in the County Courthouse).

There are some instances where families and their homeschool have been called into question. As long as you follow the current Montana laws, you are protected by the law and the courts, so make it your priority to familiarize yourself clearly with Montana's homeschool law. Still there is always the possibility of some

county attorney, child protective services, county superintendent or others that will attempt to interfere. **THE HOME SCHOOL LEGAL DEFENSE ASSOCIATION** provides

legal assistance to more than 50,000 homeschooling members nationally. To join HSLDA requires filling out a lengthy application and the payment of \$100.00 per year.

When asked by those considering home education, I often reply with a

list of **SACRIFICES** to think about. Few parents that have chosen to home educate their children regret their decision, but life for homeschooling parents is much different than for those that have given the educational responsibility to others.

Your children will be with you all day, every day, and if both parents are working, one must quit their job to stay home full-time. Montana's homeschool law specifically states that the definition of homeschooling is the teaching of the child by the parent in their own home.

You may encounter new **PRESSURE** from your friends, relatives, pastor, doctor and neighbors. Even though home education is widely accepted and respected today, there still are many that cannot comprehend education outside of a classroom by someone without a teaching certificate. Be careful to always present your defense in a concise, educated, patient and loving manner. This is not the time to lose your temper.

The **EXPENSE** of home education is totally the responsibility of the

If you are considering home education, it is important to understand the magnitude and significance of your decision.

(Continued Next Page)

Homeschooling...Continued

parent. Montana does not permit tax deductions, tax rebates, tax credits, vouchers or any other financial assistance for offsetting home education costs. The local school district does not provide any books or materials. Some school districts allow homeschool students to take up to two classes per year in any subject, if there are open seats. Check with your local district for more information.

For families that have children interested in **SPORTS**, take special note of this section. Up to 8th grade, some school districts allow children to participate in extra-curricular sport teams and events. But in grades 9-12, the Montana High School Association controls all conference sports.

Their rules prohibit participation by any student other than full-time public school students with a passing grade

Home educating your child requires sacrifice, dedication, conviction and planning.

residing in the local school district. The Montana Supreme Court has upheld this decision by the MHSA. The importance of high school athletics needs to be considered before choosing to home educate.

For homeschool graduates, **COLLEGE** is often a goal. Unfortunately, many of the scholarship programs are available only to public school graduates, and the diploma your student receives will mostly likely not be accredited. Beware of advertisements that claim their curriculum is accredited. The word "accredited" is not the same as that accepted by the Montana Office of Public Instruction. All accredited high schools (public and private) must conform to standards designed by OPI. Entrance in the Montana University System by homeschool students is well defined. Any homeschool student may apply for college in Montana with either a G.E.D. diploma, or a passing grade on the ACT or SAT exams.

Home educating your child requires sacrifice, dedication, conviction and planning. Before beginning your endeavor, consider the costs. Also talk to others that have several years of homeschooling experience, consider those areas listed above, and most of all pray about your decision. For families who have taken this task on, few regret it, and many do not look forward to the adventure ending, because the sacrifice has proven well worth the effort.

Steve White, Montana Coalition of Home Educators.

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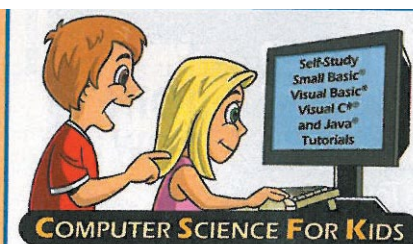
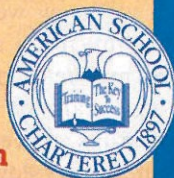
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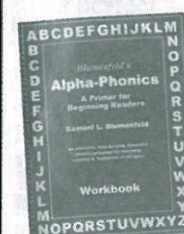
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What About High School?

The high school years are when many parents stop teaching their children at home. These parents feel overwhelmed by the demands of high school subjects, feel unqualified to teach upper level math and sciences, and begin wondering if their children need the social exposure and athletic opportunities found in public and private high schools. Also, there is the question of accreditation and transcripts for students wishing to go to college. Last, but not least, during the high school years, children begin expressing themselves much more forcefully and it would be easier for parents to let someone else require schoolwork from a teen who is going through mood swings or becoming argumentative.

If we do nothing else, we want to encourage you to do all you can to keep your child at home during the high school years. If you find your resolve drooping, your vision dimming, your enthusiasm waning, listen to Josh Harris' tape *Why Home School Through High School* or Ellyn Davis' tape *Charting a Course for High School*, or read *Dumbing Us Down* by John Gatto. The teen years are crucial to the identification and legitimizing of a child, and we can't afford to let others set our children's life course for them.

There seem to be three teaching options for high school:

1. The textbook route. Parents who want their children to go to college and who are unsure about how to cover all the requirements at home often choose to buy each year's curriculum from a Christian publisher.

2. The non-textbook route. The necessary core subjects and electives are covered by using alternative, non-textbook resources.

3. A combination of textbooks and alternative resources which together cover all essential requirements.

There are four basic decisions that must be made no matter which teaching option is chosen:

1. **Picture the child's future.** Most parents can tell by the time their child is 12 or 13 whether he/she is suited for a profession or trade. This is when we have to

be realistic. Even though we might want our son to become a doctor or lawyer, he might do better as an auto mechanic. We need to map out the high school years as a "career pathway" that lays a foundation for what will serve our sons and daughters well as adults.

If college is in their future, there are certain course requirements that must be met. If college is not in their future, there are still state requirements that must be met and an emphasis on certain courses important to the child's future. Your state Board of Education can provide you with high school course requirements and your state's Board of Regents has a list of college entrance requirements.

2. **Map out a course of study.** The average high school credit requires 100 hours of study. This study can be accomplished through textbooks or through independent projects you devise yourself. If using a nontraditional approach, you will have to decide your own 'course requirements' such as: What will this course entail? What will have to be done for the work to be considered completed? What constitutes an A, B, or C, in this course? Some parents gear the course work to the PSAT, SAT, ACT, or achievement tests and "teach to the tests," others cover the required number of course credits in a way that best suits their family.

3. **Devise a record keeping system.** You will need to devise some sort of transcript that shows the number of credits in each subject and the grades in each course. The closer you can make this look like a high school transcript, the better. It also helps to keep a portfolio of selected projects and a list of extracurricular activities like church work, 4-H, apprenticeship opportunities, etc.

4. **Find out what your state homeschooling organization offers.** (In Montana, we have had a state graduation ceremony every year when the parents issue their diplomas).

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What About College?

Many homeschool students continue their studies in colleges and universities across the country. In fact it is common to find younger homeschool students attending local universities to complement their current home education programs, before graduation.

Homeschool students that enter college often discover that the first year of schooling contains many classes that cover remedial material. This constitutes an incredible waste of time and money. But these classes can be avoided by utilizing the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP). By taking these placement tests, it is possible for students to "CLEP" or skip up to the first two years of college, thereby saving precious tuition dollars and advancing ahead of the competition. To learn more about the CLEP program and whether your college allows it, contact: www.collegeboard.org

Entrance requirements into colleges vary depending upon the policies established by either the state or the university. In the last number of years the number of colleges actively seeking homeschooled students has increased. The issue of the student's transcript has become less of a factor.

In Montana, all public universities are part of the Montana University System. The U-System and its policies are under the direction of the governor appointed Montana Board of Regents.

Until recently the requirement for entry into any Montana University required a passing score on the G.E.D. and one semester of probation with a full course load. The entrance policy was changed in

January of 1999, and again in September of 2010, to include a "satisfactory" score on the ACT and/or SAT college entrance exams, in lieu of the G.E.D.

Part of the current rules (of Policy 301) are listed below:

I. General Policies: Student Responsibilities:

A. Students must have graduated from a high school accredited by the state accrediting agency, OR have a GED to be admitted to any campus of the Montana University System. At the discretion of the institution, for students who complete their secondary education through home schooling or at unaccredited secondary schools, this requirement may be met by "satisfactory performance" on the ACT, SAT, or a recognized testing instrument defined in the Federal Register as indicative of a student's "ability to benefit".

Additional requirements can be found at the Board of Regents web site: www.mus.edu/borpol/bor300/301.pdf

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What About the Military?

Can Homeschoolers Enlist in the Military?

Yes, homeschoolers can enlist in the military as Tier 1 candidates (reserved for those who have graduated from high school or who have at least 15 college credit hours). Prior to October 1998, homeschoolers were categorized with high school dropouts and GED recipients in the Tier II category, were required to obtain a GED, and often had difficulty in receiving the placement and positions they desired. In October 1998, Congress approved a five-year pilot program, which allowed homeschoolers to be considered high school graduates and placed in Tier I. This pilot program expired on September 30, 2004. However, on January 21, 2005, the Department of Defense authorized a new policy affirming that homeschoolers could be placed in Tier I without having to take a GED. This policy was set to expire on September 30, 2011, but HSLDA is currently working with DoD officials to have it extended permanently.

Do Homeschoolers Experience any Problems Enlisting in the Military?

In most cases, no, as an increasing number of recruiters are familiar with the 2005 policy and homeschoolers. If a homeschool graduate can provide the recruiter with a copy of his or her high school diploma, official transcripts, and proof of compliance with state law on homeschooling (as well as pass the regular physical test like all enlistees), homeschoolers usually have no problem enlisting. In the few cases where recruiters are confused about the DoD's policy towards homeschoolers, a letter from HSLDA clarifying the policy and affirming that a child has earned his or her high school diploma solves the problem.

Under no circumstances should you have your homeschool graduate obtain his or her GED, because the military will use this to automatically place your child as a Tier II enlistee.

What are the requirements for a homeschool graduate enlisting in the military?

The graduate must have been homeschooled during the last nine months of his or her academic year. In other words, he or she can't have dropped out of his or her homeschool program.

The homeschool graduate must pass the ASVAB (with a 50 or above) and the AIM test.

The homeschool graduate must provide a copy of his or her highschool diploma. (Note: a professional-looking diploma, like that provided by HSLDA, seems to most easily satisfy the recruiters).

You must provide a high school transcript that is clear and concise. Notarization is recommended. You must also provide transcripts from other institutions attended.

Homeschool graduates must show that they were homeschooler under their state's laws (for example, providing a copy of their notice of intent to homeschool letters from their highschool years).

For more detailed information, see HSLDA's article, "Enlisting Help." http://www.hslda.org/docs/nche/Issues/M/Military_Enlistment.asp

In the Fall of 2011, President Obama signed the National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 1540) into law. HSLDA was successful in ensuring that Congress included the following section which guarantees equal treatment for homeschool graduates who enlist in the Armed Forces:

SEC. 532. POLICY ON MILITARY RECRUITMENT AND ENLISTMENT OF GRADUATES OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

(a) EQUAL TREATMENT FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL GRADUATES.—

(1) EQUAL TREATMENT.—For the purposes of recruitment and enlistment in the Armed Forces, the Secretary of a military department shall treat a graduate described in paragraph (2) in the same manner as a graduate of a secondary school (as defined in section 9101(38) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801(38))).

(2) COVERED GRADUATES.—Paragraph (1) applies with respect to person who—

(A) receives a diploma from a secondary school that is legally operating; or

(B) otherwise completes a program of secondary education in compliance with the education laws of the State in which the person resides.

(b) POLICY ON RECRUITMENT AND ENLISTMENT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall prescribe a policy on recruitment and enlistment that incorporates the following:

(1) Means for identifying persons described in subsection (a)(2) who are qualified for recruitment and enlistment in the Armed Forces, which may include the use of a non-cognitive aptitude test, adaptive personality assessment, or other operational attrition screening tool to predict performance, behaviors, and attitudes of potential recruits that influence attrition and the ability to adapt to a regimented life in the Armed Forces.

(2) Means for assessing how qualified persons fulfill their enlistment obligation.

(3) Means for maintaining data, by each diploma source, which can be used to analyze attrition rates among qualified persons.

(c) RECRUITMENT PLAN.—As part of the policy required by subsection (b), the Secretary of each of the military departments shall develop a recruitment plan that includes a marketing strategy for targeting various segments of potential recruits with all types of secondary education credentials.

(d) COMMUNICATION PLAN.—The Secretary of each of the military departments shall develop a communication plan to ensure that the policy and recruitment plan are understood by military recruiters.

HSLDA will be monitoring the implementation of this section. Until the Pentagon creates a new policy to implement this law, however, homeschool applicants continue to be eligible for enlistment in the military under the Pentagon's pilot program that was extended until September 30, 2012.



The Internet...

Many parents considering home education for their children begin their search for information using their computers at home. By plugging into the internet and doing simple searches (www.google.com, www.yahoo.com, etc) using keywords such as HOMESCHOOL, HOME EDUCATION, etc you quickly discover hundreds, if not thousands of sites that can provide many answers. And for families already homeschooling their children, the internet provides ample material to answer questions as they pop up.

Statistics continue to show that a high majority of homeschooling families have computers in their homes, and use them regularly. And many of these computers are used to 'surf' for information on the net.

In addition to finding resources, many discover that local 'support groups' have posted web pages that include names and addresses of other homeschooling parents/leaders. Events and contests are regularly posted in many areas. Legislative information can also be easily obtained in most states.

The internet, when used properly, can be a rich wealth of information. But always remember that as easy as it is to find beneficial material on the net, it is just as easy to stumble onto harmful material. Using the internet should be a family endeavor.

In the event that your family does not own a computer, most libraries provide computers for public use. Also, many eateries and coffee shops offer free wireless services to their customers who have laptops.

To help you get started, below and on the following pages, are lists of internet sites that contain valuable information on home education. And if you are a seasoned internet user, there may be a few new sites to add to your 'bookmark' list. As experienced users know, this is but a snapshot of what is really 'out there'.

A Beka Book - For School And Homeschool
www.abeka.com

Simply Music
www.simplymusic.com

Bob Jones University Press
www.bju.edu/press/home.html

Calvert School's
www.calvertschool.org

Christian Liberty Academy
www.homeschools.org

Scholars Online
www.scholarsonline.org

Dive into Math & Science
www.diveintomath.com

Discount Homeschool Supplies
www.dhss.com

Memoria Press
www.memoriapress.com

Grace and Truth Books
www.graceandtruthbooks.com

GreatScopes Microscopes
www.greatscopes.com

Greenleaf Press
www.greenleafpress.com/

Holt GWS
www.HoltGWS.com
www.fun-books.com

Home Education & Family Services
www.HomeEducator.com/HEFS/

Home Grown Families
www.homegrownfamilies.com

Home School Legal Defense Association
www.hslda.org

The HomeSchool.com
www.thehomeschool.com

Homeschool Digest
www.HomeSchoolDigest.com

Homeschool World
www.home-school.com

Timberdoodle
www.timberdoodle.com

Home Training Tools
www.hometrainingtools.com

Apologia Educational Ministries
www.apologia.com

The Learnables Foreign Language Courses
www.learnables.com

KONOS Curriculum
www.konos.org

Montana Coalition of Home Educators
www.mtche.org

Nallenart
www.nallenart.on.ca

National Home Education Research Institute
www.nheri.org

Practical Homeschooling Magazine
www.home-school.com

Saxon Publishers, Inc.
www.saxonpub.com

Sycamore Tree Homeschool and Catalog
www.sycamoretree.com

Teaching Home
www.teachinghome.com

Vision Forum
www.visionforum.com

Wisdom's Gate Home Page
www.wisgate.com

Yes, Phonics
www.yesphonics.com

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Christian curriculum. K-12.
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Montana law (20-5-109(5) MCA) requires that a parent annually notify their county superintendent of schools that they intend to home educate their children. As discussed in the legal

requirements section, this is one of the necessary components to exempt a child between the ages of 7 and 16 from compulsory attendance (in a public school).

The county superintendent of schools is different than the local school superintendent. The county superintendent is an elected position, and the school superintendent is hired by the local public school district board of trustees.

The school board's authority is limited to the the operation of the local public school district. It is important to understand the difference in order to avoid confusion.

The county superintendent's office is typically in the county courthouse, in the county seat (city).

It is important to meet your local county superintendent. They are elected officials and their doors are open to the benefit of educating parents.

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