



Homeschooling

Prepared by: Raine Black, Staff Attorney

Under [s. 118.15 \(4\), Stats.](#), a parent or guardian has the right to select a home-based private educational program, commonly referred to as homeschooling, for their child or children. A home-based private educational program is a program of educational instruction provided to a child by the child's parent or guardian or by a person designated by the parent or guardian. [\[s. 115.001 \(3g\), Stats.\]](#) This issue brief outlines the enrollment and curriculum requirements of a home-based private educational program, as well as extracurricular participation guidelines and online schooling options.

ENROLLMENT IN A HOME-BASED PRIVATE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

In Wisconsin, under the compulsory school attendance law, any parent or guardian with a child between the ages of six and 18 must ensure their child attends school regularly. A home-based private educational program that meets all of the following requirements may be substituted for attendance at a public or private school:

- The primary purpose of the program is to provide private or religious-based education.
- The program is privately controlled.
- The program provides 875 hours of sequentially progressive fundamental instruction per year.
- The program is not operated for the purpose of avoiding or circumventing compulsory school requirements. [\[ss. 118.15 \(1\) \(a\) and \(4\) and 118.165 \(1\), Stats.\]](#)

If a parent or guardian chooses to homeschool, the parent or guardian is required to complete the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) PI-1206 Homeschool Enrollment Report (HOMER). The HOMER must be filed annually, on or before October 15. If a HOMER is not submitted by October 15, a school district may compel submission of the form. [\[s. 115.30 \(3\), Stats.\]](#) If a child is withdrawn from a public or private school during the school year to start a home-based private educational program, a HOMER must be filed on or before the date the child stops attending the school. The HOMER is not an application that must be approved, it is simply a notice to the state and the child's school district that the child is in homeschooling. The HOMER has two sections; the first section records the total number of children homeschooled and their grade (e.g. fifth grade), and the second section requires signed affirmation that the homeschooling program meets the statutory criteria.

As noted, the compulsory school attendance law only applies to children ages six to 18. Therefore, children under six cannot technically be enrolled in a homeschool program. However, if a child turns six before September 1, and the child will be homeschooled, the parent must submit a HOMER for that school year.

Curriculum and Instruction

Home-based private education must provide at least 875 hours of instruction every school year. Curriculum must be "sequentially progressive" instruction in reading, language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and health. [\[s. 118.165 \(1\), Stats.\]](#) Under Wisconsin law, instruction provided to more than one family unit does not constitute a home-based private education program. [\[s. 115.001 \(3g\), Stats.\]](#)

Homeschool instruction may be provided by either the child's parent or guardian or by a person designated by the child's parent or guardian. Parents are not required to meet certain educational requirements, like holding a teaching certificate or license, in order to facilitate a home-based private educational program.

Neither DPI nor school districts are required to provide educational materials or curricula for home-based private instruction. Homeschool providers may find many resources for homeschooling curricula via private publishers, education organizations, or the Internet.

Part-Time Attendance at Public School

Homeschooled students may take up to two courses per semester at any Wisconsin public school under the part-time attendance law. A student may attend one course in each of two school districts, but may not attend more than two courses per semester. Minimum standards of admission for the course are set by the school district. [[s. 118.53 \(2m\) and \(4\), Stats.](#)]

Online Schools

Homeschooling differs from virtual charter and private schooling. A virtual charter school is a “charter school under contract with a school board...in which all or a portion of the instruction is provided through means of the Internet, and the pupils enrolled in an instructional staff employed by the school are geographically remote from each other.” [[s. 115.001 \(16\), Stats.](#)] Therefore, if a child is enrolled in a virtual charter school, the child is not considered homeschooled and the parent does not need to submit a HOMER. Similarly, if a child is enrolled in a virtual private school they are not considered homeschooled.

SPORTS AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

School districts are required to permit homeschooled students to participate in athletics and extracurricular activities to the same extent as students enrolled in the district. [[s. 118.133 \(1\) and \(2\), Stats.](#)] The parent or instructor in the home-based private educational program must provide a written statement that the student meets participation requirements for the sport, such as having obtained and maintained satisfactory grades. Participation or uniform and equipment fees may still apply.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Questions regarding sports participation in a particular school district should be directed to the district's athletic director or the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association (www.wiaawi.org). Additional general information regarding home-based private educational programs is available from DPI at (608) 267-9248 or homeschooling@dpi.wi.gov. The Wisconsin Parents Association is the largest home-based parent association, and may be contacted at (608) 283-3131 or homeschooling-wpa.org.