

HOME EDUCATION

Background

The School District has long recognized home education programs for students conducted under stated guidelines of the Superintendent and in accord with the limited provisions of Section 1327 of the Public School Code. The School Code was amended by Act 169 of 1988 (24 P.S. 1327.1). This Act was an extensive revision of the Code and provides specific statutory provisions applicable to the establishment of a home education program by parents and the curriculum, reporting, testing and administration of such a program with certain limited monitoring to be provided by the Superintendent and school personnel. The home education program provisions of School Code Section 1327.1 were further amended by Act 196 of 2014. In the District's view, its friendly compliance with the home education law is in the best interests of the children. The District, whenever reasonably practical, will cooperate with the home education supervisor to positively affect the home schooled child's education.

Definitions

"Supervisor" shall mean the parent or guardian or such person having legal custody of the child or children who shall be responsible for the provision of instruction, provided that such person has a high school diploma or its equivalent.

"Home School Portfolio" shall mean and consist of a log, made contemporaneously with the instruction, which designates by title the reading materials used, samples of any writings, worksheets, workbooks or creative materials used or developed by the student in the home education program and in all grades where required by applicable law, results of nationally normed standardized achievement tests in reading/language arts and mathematics or the results of statewide tests administered in these grade levels.

"Course" or "class" shall include all curriculum programs offered by the District.

"Extracurricular activities" shall mean all non-curricular activities sponsored or offered by the District, other than interscholastic athletics, including but not limited to clubs, intramural or club sports and non-curricular field trips.

"Interscholastic athletics" shall mean any and all athletic programs, teams, events, meets, matches, competitions and/or tournaments under the auspices, jurisdiction, direction or control of the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association ("PIAA"), or the Western Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic League ("WPIAL"), but shall not include club sports not sanctioned by the PIAA or the WPIAL.

Policy

It is the policy of the Board that home education programs conducted for resident students of the School District be carried out in strict accord with Section 1327.1 of the Public School Code of 1949, as amended.

Further, the Board's Policy with respect to a home schooled student's entry/reentry into the District, ability to receive a District diploma and/or participate in the District's graduation ceremony and /or participate in classes/curriculum/extracurricular activities and/or interscholastic athletics is set forth below. A person who has been expelled from any public school shall not be eligible for placement within the District nor shall he or she be eligible for participation in any District curricular or extracurricular program or interscholastic sports, notwithstanding his or her participation in a *bona fide* home education program.

The use of home education as a subterfuge to avoid the requirements of compulsory attendance or otherwise violates this Policy and the intent of the School Code. Parents, guardians or students who attempt such subterfuge shall be out of compliance with School Code Sections 1327 and 1327.1 and may be subject to prosecution for truancy.

No home schooled student shall be placed within the District or otherwise permitted to participate in any District curricular or extracurricular program until all residency and other eligibility requirements are satisfied.

This policy shall not apply to a student enrolled in any other public, private or parochial school or any student who has been expelled from any other school. A home education program shall not be considered a non-public school.

I. Entry/Reentry and Placement of Home Schooled Students Into the District

A. Elementary and Middle School/Junior High Students (K-8)

Any elementary or middle school/junior high student (grades K-8) seeking enrollment/re-enrollment within the District upon termination of a home education program shall be evaluated by the principal and placed in such grade level as the principal (after consultation with the appropriate administrators) deems appropriate.

Factors which may be considered by the principal in making this determination include, but are not limited to:

1. Age of the student (both intellectual and chronological)
2. Academic achievement as measured by any academic achievement tests
3. Results of any school administered curriculum based assessment

4. Reported level of grade completion in home education program
5. Academic achievement as demonstrated by contents of the home school portfolio
6. Standardized Test performance

The District also reserves the right to seek and/or consider the opinion of an appropriate home education program evaluator/assessor.

If, after a reasonable period for adjustment, the student's principal believes, in his or her professional opinion, that the initial placement of the student was inappropriate, the principal may, with input from staff and with the approval of the Superintendent, reassign the student to a more appropriate grade or to different courses.

B. High School Students

A high school student (grades 9-12) seeking enrollment/re-enrollment within the District upon termination of a home education program shall be evaluated by the principal and other appropriate administrators who shall make a recommendation of proper grade level and course placement to the Superintendent. The student shall be placed at such grade level and instruction level within that grade as the Superintendent deems appropriate after consultation with the principal and other appropriate administrators and after evaluating the student's home school portfolio, annual evaluation reports and any other information or assessment results that the Superintendent deems necessary or relevant. In determining the student's appropriate grade and instructional level and in determining whether assessments in addition to those which are available in the home school portfolio and annual reports are required to place the student appropriately, the Superintendent shall use his or her best professional judgment and may seek the advice and input of such professional staff as he or she may deem appropriate.

The District may, at its discretion, consider the results of a performance evaluation/test of the student administered by the District, the contents of which shall be determined by the District according to the student's prior learning experiences, whether as a student enrolled in the District or other school, or as a home schooled student. The District may also consider the student's performance on any placement tests or his or her completion of prerequisite course(s) required prior to enrolling in a particular course or courses.

The District also reserves the right to seek and/or consider the opinion of an appropriate home education program evaluator/assessor.

If, after a reasonable period for adjustment, the student's principal believes, in his or her professional opinion, that the initial placement of the student was inappropriate, the principal may, with input from staff and with the approval of the Superintendent, reassign the student to a more appropriate grade or to different courses.

C. Placement of a Student Seeking Entry/Reentry During a School Year

Any student seeking enrollment/re-enrollment within the District upon termination of a home education program, which program has been terminated during the course of an academic year, shall be placed within the District in accordance with the provisions of A and/or B hereinabove.

Home schooling should occur for at least one academic year to allow for the parent and child to develop a schedule and work out any problems that arise. In determining the appropriate placement of the student, the Superintendent may consider the premature termination of the program and the effects of premature termination on the student.

II. Diplomas, Graduation Ceremonies, Credits and Grade Point Averages

The District shall not award its diploma to any student who obtains or completes his or her education in a home education program, nor shall such student be permitted to participate in the District's graduation ceremony.

The District may award its diploma to a student who receives a portion of his or her high school education in a home education program if such student was enrolled as a full time student at the District for at least the last two consecutive years of his or her high school education (i.e. 11th and 12th grades) and earned at least 22 of the credits required for a Mt. Lebanon diploma at the District as a full time enrolled student. When evaluating a home schooled student for entry/re-entry placement within the District, the District shall, in its sole discretion, identify those course credits that must be earned at the District for the student to qualify for a Mt. Lebanon diploma. The District may, in its sole discretion, modify or amend its decision regarding the credits that must be obtained at the District if the student's actual performance demonstrates that such modification or amendment is appropriate. The District will not, under any circumstances, accept, recognize or count more than 21 credits earned in a home education program toward a Mt. Lebanon diploma. Any such student who received a part of his or her high school education in a home education program, but who qualifies to receive a Mt. Lebanon diploma shall be permitted to participate in the District's graduation ceremony.

Only those grades earned in courses or classes taken at the District will be incorporated into the cumulative grade point average and/or the cumulative class ranking system.

III. Special Education (Excluding Gifted and/or Talented)

If a child who is in an approved home education program in accordance with School Code Section 1327.1 has been identified pursuant to the provisions of applicable law as needing special education services, excluding those students identified as gifted and/or talented, and the supervisor of such home education program requests that the District provide services that address the specific needs of the exceptional student in the home education program, then the District may provide such requested services in accordance with an appropriate Individual Education Plan and School Code Section 1327(d) to such exceptional home education student when the provision of such service is agreed to by both the home education supervisor and the District. All such services shall be provided in the public schools, intermediate unit or in a private school licensed to provide such programs and services.

IV. Loan of Instructional Materials

The District shall, at the request of the supervisor, and to the extent available and reasonable, lend to the home education program copies of the District's planned courses, textbooks and other curriculum materials appropriate to the student's age and grade level. Teacher lesson plans, tests and teacher editions will not be provided.

Books and materials will be loaned for a period not to exceed one school term. In order to help assure availability of the requested textbooks and materials, requests for such materials should be submitted to the District as early as possible, preferably with the affidavit required under School Code Section 1327.1(b)(1). Such books and materials shall be returned promptly at the end of the school term. The parents/guardians of the student shall promptly reimburse the District for any materials not returned or which are damaged or destroyed.

V. Home Schooled Student's Participation in District Programs

- A. Curriculum Programs - The Board will permit home schooled students residing within the District to be "dually enrolled" and participate in or take a limited number of courses or classes offered by the District in accordance with the following conditions and requirements:
 - 1. Home schooled students may take or participate in a maximum of two courses per semester provided that the addition of a home schooled student or students does not significantly impact the financial obligation of the District (e.g. requiring the addition of another teacher or section).

2. The home schooled student must be of the appropriate grade level for the course he or she desires to take and must satisfy any prerequisite(s) for the course. The District may, in its discretion, require the student to take tests to establish qualification for the course.
3. Home schooled students must satisfy the same qualifications and prerequisites, and are subject to the same curriculum and attendance requirements, as enrolled students and will be graded accordingly.
4. When determined by the District to be appropriate, grades earned by home schooled students in such courses will be recorded permanently as with other students. No audit of courses will be permitted.
5. Transportation of the student to and from the school is the parents' or guardians' responsibility. The District will not provide or be responsible for providing transportation.
6. Home schooled students must arrive at the school premises not more than 10 minutes prior to the starting time for his or her class/course and must leave the school premises promptly after the class/course is concluded.
7. While on District property/premises, home schooled students shall be subject to all school policies, rules and regulations, including the District's discipline policies, and must comply with the directions/requirements of all authorized District staff.
8. Parents of home schooled students must notify the District of the student's request to enroll in a specific class/course by not later than 60 days before the beginning of the semester in which the class/course is to be taken. Home schooled students may enroll in courses at the same time as regularly enrolled students, but must enroll not later than thirty days before the beginning of the semester in which the class/course is to be taken. Home schooled students may enroll only in those classes that remain open.
9. It is the parent/student's responsibility to keep abreast of available activities, schedules and/or schedule changes. The District has no responsibility to inform parents of home schooled children of the availability of curricular or extracurricular activities or changes in schedules.

B. Extracurricular Programs (Other than Interscholastic Sports)

The Board will permit home schooled students residing within the District to participate in extracurricular activities (i.e. clubs, intramural athletics, interscholastic club sports not sanctioned by the PIAA or the WPIAL, non-curricular field trips), in accordance with the following conditions and requirements:

1. Home schooled students electing to participate in extracurricular activities or athletic programs are required to abide by all the guidelines and regulations concerning such participation as adopted from time to time by the District.
2. Home schooled students must meet the regular academic standards or other eligibility standards/qualifications required of other students. If an activity requires a student to be enrolled in a course at the District (e.g. band, theater), the home schooled student must also be enrolled in that course at the District and satisfactorily complete/comply with the requirements of such course.
3. Home schooled students must comply with the District's discipline policies and all other District policies, rules, regulations or principles and procedures.
4. Conduct which would result in loss of extracurricular activities privileges applies to all students.
5. The parent/guardian of the home schooled student is responsible for maintaining personal injury medical insurance for the home schooled student and must provide proof of same to District, and is responsible for providing medical certification of fitness/eligibility to participate where applicable.
6. Transportation of home schooled students to and from extracurricular activities is the responsibility of the parents/guardians, except where transportation is provided by the District for other participants.
7. Home schooled students may come to school buildings solely for the purpose of participating in the programs and must leave the school building and property when the program or event is completed, except to the extent of times and locations at which the public is generally admitted to school district property or buildings.
8. Home schooled students must comply with directions and requirements of all teachers, coaches or administrators involved in or with the program(s) in which such student is participating or intends to participate.

9. Home schooled students are subject to the same eligibility, try-out and squad selection criteria as other students who compete for spots on teams, squads or other activities.
10. It is the parent/student's responsibility to keep abreast of available activities, schedules and/or schedule changes. The District has no responsibility to inform parents of home schooled children of the availability of extracurricular activities or changes in schedules.
11. If any cost or fee is associated with the activity, the home schooled student is also subject to pay the cost or fee.
12. The home schooled student must obtain any medical examination or medical test required of other students. Whenever such an examination or test is required and the District offers such examinations or tests to its students, similar access to such examinations or tests will be granted to home schooled students. The District will publish the dates and times of such examinations or tests in a publication of general circulation in the District and on its website.

C. Standardized Testing

Home schooled students shall be eligible to participate in standardized testing programs conducted by the District, provided the home schooled student is of the appropriate age or grade for the test being administered, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) made appropriate advance arrangements with the District and the home schooled student's participation in the standardized testing program does not significantly impact the financial obligation of the District.

VI. Interscholastic Athletics

In July, 1996, the PIAA Board of Control adopted the position that a student participating in a properly qualified home education program under Section 1327.1 of the School Code may be declared by the Board of School Directors of the school district in which the home education program is operating to be eligible for participation in PIAA athletics at the school which the student would attend by virtue of his or her residence. The PIAA Board of Control further stated that All other PIAA eligibility rules shall apply to such students. The Board of School Directors of the District has determined that home schooled students shall be eligible for participation in PIAA interscholastic athletics provided the student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) comply with and satisfy the terms, conditions, requirements and obligations under this policy and provided that the PIAA does not determine this policy to be in violation of its eligibility requirements.

Upon application to the Superintendent not less than thirty days prior to the first team try-out, the parent or guardian may request permission for the home schooled child to participate in interscholastic sports subject to the following conditions:

1. Home schooled students must meet the same admission/eligibility requirements, including try-outs and squad selection procedures, as are in effect for all other students.
2. If selected as a member of an interscholastic team, the home schooled student must agree to represent the school subject to all rules and regulations of the school principal, athletic director, coaching staff, WPIAL and PIAA.
3. To be initially eligible for participation in PIAA/WPIAL interscholastic athletics, the home schooled student must provide the District with evidence that he or she earned at least passing grades in an equivalent of four full credit courses in the grading period previous to the grading period in which the sport is played. In the event that eligibility for participation must be determined in the first grading period of a school year, the home schooled student must provide the District with his or her final grades from the previous school year. To maintain eligibility, the home-schooled student must maintain passing grades in an equivalent of four current full credit courses and meet the same attendance requirements in the home-schooling schedule as required of students who are not home schooled. Should WPIAL and PIAA requirements be revised regarding curriculum requirements, grades, attendance or other eligibility requirements, home schooled students must meet the revised requirements.
4. In the event that the District or a coach requires more than the minimum curriculum/grade eligibility requirements established by the PIAA, such increased minimum requirements shall also apply to any home schooled student desiring to participate in the activity.
5. The parent, guardian or home supervisor must file a weekly report/affidavit with the principal certifying that all curriculum and attendance requirements have been met. Such reports shall be due in the principal's office by not later than 2:00 P.M. on Friday of each week during the time period in which the sport is played. Such report shall be on a District approved form and include the courses taught each day during the reporting period, the number of hours of instruction in each course for each day and the student's cumulative grade in each course from the beginning of the nine week grading period. Such nine week grading period shall be determined by the District's schedule.
6. In the event that an appropriately completed affidavit is not submitted in a timely fashion, the student shall be deemed to be out of compliance with the PIAA's curriculum requirements and shall be ineligible to participate in the sport/activity

from the immediately following Sunday through the Saturday following the next Friday as of which the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) provide(s) the District with an appropriate report/affidavit showing the student to be in compliance with the attendance and curriculum requirements.

7. The supervisor must also provide cumulative grades at the end of each nine week grading period and statements of number of hours of instruction for each course during such grading period. Should the home schooled student's grades fail to meet the minimum qualification standards for such grading period, he or she shall be ineligible to compete/participate in the sport or activity for a period of time as determined by the PIAA's rules, regulations and/or by-laws.
8. In the event that minimum eligibility requirements are not met by the home schooled student, he or she shall be ineligible to participate for a period as determined by the PIAA's rules, regulations and/or by-laws.
9. The District retains the right to request additional information which it, in its sole discretion, deems necessary to determine compliance with the eligibility requirements of the PIAA or WPIAL and/or compliance with this policy. The District retains the right to cancel/withdraw the student's eligibility if, in the District's sole discretion, it is determined that the information is inadequate or if the District has any reason to believe the information is inaccurate or if the home education program is determined or believed to be subterfuge in an attempt to avoid eligibility, compulsory attendance or other requirements.
10. The District may, at any time subsequent to receiving notice of the home schooled student's desire to participate in interscholastic athletics, whether prior to or subsequent to declaring such home schooled student eligible for participation, or at any time during the season, initiate a review/evaluation of the home education program to determine compliance with School Code Section 1327.1 and the eligibility requirements of the District and the PIAA/WPIAL.
11. The District reserves the right to amend this policy at any time or cancel/withdraw any home schooled student's eligibility should the District, the PIAA or WPIAL determine that this policy and/or its reporting or other requirements do not provide satisfactory evidence of compliance with their eligibility requirements.
12. In addition to the above, the Board shall not declare any home schooled student eligible for participation in PIAA/WPIAL interscholastic athletics unless and until such student has participated in a *bona fide* home education program for at least 12 months/1 full term and/or two full semesters.
13. If at any time it is determined that the home schooled student's home education program is out of compliance with School Code Section 1327.1 such student shall

be ineligible to participate in PIAA/WPIAL athletics for the remainder of the term.

14. All other terms and conditions for participation in extracurricular activities set forth in Section V above apply to home schooled students participating in interscholastic athletics.
15. The home schooled student must obtain any medical examination or medical test required of other students. Whenever such an examination or test is required and the District offers such examinations or tests to its students, similar access to such examinations or tests will be granted to home schooled students. The District will publish the dates and times of such examinations or tests in a publication of general circulation in the District and on its website.

Administrative Responsibility

It shall be the responsibility of the Administration to implement and enforce this policy, and to develop Administrative Procedures for implementation and enforcement where necessary.

Communication

A copy of School Code Section 1327.1 will be provided upon request.

This policy shall be communicated to:

1. All District staff
2. The Mt. Lebanon community

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Revised May 20, 1985
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