

HOME SCHOOLING ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

1. A parent or guardian wishing to teach his or her child at home rather than enroll the child in a public or approved private school must submit a Proposal for Home Schooling to the Superintendent of Schools or designee. The home education program cannot begin unless and until the Superintendent approves the parents'/guardians' home education proposal. Consequently, the school districts urge parents/guardians who wish to home school their children for an upcoming school year to submit their home education proposal no later than August 1st.
2. Permission to teach a child at home will be granted in accordance with the following requirements, which are detailed in the document, "Instructions for Making a Home Education Proposal:"
 - A. The Superintendent has the right to inquire about the competency of the person who will teach the child. The individual teaching the child must be shown to be capable of providing basic instruction for the proposed level. The teacher, however, is not required to have attained a certain educational level or to have obtained a teaching certificate.
 - B. A list of curriculum objectives, including the proposed hours of instruction, shall be required. Also, a list of texts and/or other instructional materials to be used shall be required.
 - C. Students with Special Needs. Parents/guardians of a home-schooled child who believe their child may need a special education evaluation and/or special education services should notify the Director of Pupil Services. Parents/guardians of home-educated students with identified special education needs also may be required to provide information about how they plan to meet their child's special education needs.
 - D. A Plan for the Evaluation of Student Progress. The Acton Public Schools and the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District require periodic, standardized testing of home-educated children, to ensure that home-educated students are making educational progress and attaining minimum standards. Parents/guardians of home-educated students must inform the district of:
 - The type of standardized tests they plan to use,
 - The subjects in which the children will be tested,
 - When, where, and by whom the testing will be administered, and
 - The date when the results of these tests will be shared with the Superintendent.

If the parents/guardians of a home-educated child would like the Superintendent to consider an alternative method of evaluating progress (such as periodic progress reports, portfolios, or dated work samples), their Proposal for Home Education must describe the proposed alternatives and identify the date(s) when the results of these assessments will be shared with the Superintendent.

The Superintendent may rescind approval of a home schooling plan if the parents/guardians do not provide the evaluation data previously agreed-upon. Also, failure to demonstrate appropriate educational progress may require that the Superintendent re-examine the home education plan.

- E. Extra-Curricular Activities. The administration will determine whether home-schooled students may participate in extra-curricular activities on a case-by-case basis. Parents/guardians who would like their home-schooled children to participate in certain extra-curricular activities should include a letter detailing their request(s) with their Proposal for Home Schooling. Home-schooled students are welcome to participate if:
- Their home schooling plans have been approved,
 - Requests to participate are submitted in writing in a timely fashion,
 - Space is available,
 - School officials determine that the program requested is appropriate for the child,
 - The home-schooled student agrees to follow all rules and regulations applied to all students while involved in the activity,
 - Proof of requisite immunizations and, where required, timely physical examination, have been provided (subject to the provisions of C. 76, §15, and C. 71, §57 of Massachusetts General Laws, these requirements may be waived if they conflict with a person's sincere religious beliefs),
 - Relevant fees are paid,
 - Where applicable, the Chemical Health agreement has been signed.

In the case of participation in interscholastic athletics, the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District Principal(s) must indicate that the junior-high or high-school-aged home-schooled student is eligible to participate in the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District athletic program on the annual MIAA membership form. Determinations regarding eligibility will be made on the basis of MIAA rules governing transfers, academic eligibility, age requirements, and the number of consecutive seasons of athletic eligibility beyond grade six. Principals must include the names of all home-schooled students in the annual MIAA report.

- F. Enrollment in Public School. A home-schooled student may opt to enroll in the Acton or Acton-Boxborough schools at any time. At the time of enrollment, the school district will determine grade placement and whether to award credit for work completed while the student was being home schooled. These determinations will be based upon a review of the home study course content as well as the results of assessments undertaken prior to the initiation of home schooling and during the home schooled period. Other criteria may also be considered.

- G. Part-Time Home Schooling. The integrated and changeable structure of the school day in the school districts makes it impossible for students to be home-schooled for some subjects and educated in school for other subjects. The Acton Public Schools will therefore not approve applications for home schooling on a part-time basis in grades K-6. At the Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools, a home-schooled student may request to be allowed to take some courses in school. The Superintendent or designee will make a decision on a case-by-case basis after consideration of all relevant information.
- H. High School Diploma. As a matter of state law, beginning with the class of 2003, students must pass the English Language Arts and Mathematics MCAS tests in order to receive a high school diploma from a public school. The state prohibits home-schooled students from taking the MCAS examinations while they are being home-schooled. Acton-Boxborough Regional High School, in its discretion, may grant diplomas to students who have been home-schooled during some portion of their high school years and who have passed the requisite MCAS examinations. Determinations regarding credits for work completed while the student was being home-schooled will be made in accordance with the provisions in section “F” above.
3. The Superintendent or designee will provide written notification to parents/guardians regarding the acceptance or rejection of the home school proposal within a reasonable time after receipt of the proposal. If the Superintendent or designee rejects the proposal, he/she will detail the reasons for his decision and will give the parents/guardians an opportunity to remedy the inadequacies. Upon receipt of this written notification, the parents/guardians will have ten calendar days to submit a revised proposal for the Superintendent’s consideration. If the Superintendent rejects the revised proposal, the Superintendent will provide the parents with an opportunity to explain their proposed plan to him/her, including presenting witnesses on their behalf.

Parents are reminded that they are required by law to ensure that their children who are of compulsory school age (ages six to sixteen) attend either a public school or an approved private school until the parents receive school district approval to educate their children at home. If a parent fails to enroll their child in school or withdraws their child from school to begin a home school program without first obtaining the Superintendent’s or designee’s approval of the home schooling plan, then the school district must act promptly to enforce the compulsory school attendance law. The school district’s actions may include seeking judicial intervention by filing a truancy complaint (Mass Gen. Laws ch. 76, sections 2 and/or 4) or initiating a care and protection proceeding (Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 119, section 24).

4. Any home schooling proposal must be approved annually if the student is to continue in a home school program for more than one school year.