

IOWA

- Compulsory Attendance Ages:** Age 6 as of September 15 and less than 16. If a child turns 16 on or after Sept. 15 while enrolled (might include dual-enrolled) in a public or accredited private school, he is of compulsory attendance age until the end of the school year. Iowa Code Ann. § 299.1A.
- Required Days of Instruction:** 148 days total, 37 per “school quarter” (not defined)
- Required Subjects:** None, but see *Standardized Tests* section below.

Home School Statute: Iowa Code Ann. § 299A.1–299A.10; Iowa Admin. Code §§ 281-31.1 to -31.10. The Iowa Dept. of Education’s “Competent Private Instruction Handbook” is sometimes a useful reference, but it also contains errors.

1. Parents must annually submit a “Competent Private Instruction” (CPI) form (2 copies) to the school board secretary.

TIMING: File the CPI form by August 26. If moving into the state or initiating homeschooling after the school year has begun, submit a form that is at least partially completed within 14 calendar days and a fully completed form within 30 days.

CONTENTS: The form asks for the name and age of the child, the number of days of instruction (must be 148), texts used, the name and address of the instructor, and an “outline of course of study” (meaning subjects covered, lesson plans, and time spent on the areas of study--there is no mandated minimum). It also requires evidence of vaccinations (or medical or religious exemption) for children being home schooled for the first time. The form asks for birth dates, but this may be omitted since it is not required under law (Iowa Code Ann. § 299.4).

The form contains an optional section which can be disregarded at the parent’s discretion.

BLOOD LEAD TESTING: The Iowa Department of Education’s 2009-2010 CPI Handbook states on page 5: “Legislation enacted by the 2007 Iowa General Assembly requires all children under the age of 6 to have a blood lead test. Compliance with this requirement will be verified for children enrolling in kindergarten and children under the age of 6 for whom a Competent Private Instruction report form is filed. This will be done by matching the names of these children with the Iowa Department of Health’s blood lead database.” Families with questions about this should contact HSLDA for individualized guidance. *See* HF 158, 2007.

OPTIONS: When filling out the form, parents must choose whether they will homeschool under the “supervising teacher” (ST) option or the “annual assessment” option. If the former, you must identify the person (including her “folder number”) who will be the ST. Exception: if the child is age 6 as of Sept. 15, neither an ST nor any type of annual assessment is needed. *See* 2009-2010 CPI Handbook p. 7.

PRIVACY: Unless you give clear written instructions to the school district each time you file the form, the school district will treat much of the information you put on the CPI form as available to the public. We recommend you use the “privacy notification form” on the members-only section of the HSLDA website. *Also see* § 299A.11 and § 22.7.1.

2. **Supervising Teacher Option.** If choosing this option, you must file the CPI form but will not need to submit a year-end assessment. However, you will need to cooperate in working with the ST you choose. This will generally involve consulting and advising. The ST must contact the student twice each 45 days of instruction, one of which contact must be face to face. The ST must provide formal and informal assessments and keep a record of contacts and assistance provided. *See Reg. 31.3(3).*

ST Qualification. With an elementary classroom license, an ST can supervise for students in grades K-6. With a middle school license, an ST can supervise for students 5-8. With a secondary license, an ST can supervise for students 5-8. With a secondary classroom license, an ST can supervise for students 7-12. (*See 2009-2010 CPI Handbook, p. 16*). With a substitute license, an ST can supervise for any grade. With a substitute authorization, an ST can supervise for grades 5-12. *See Reg. 31.3(2).* A parent with an appropriate license can be their own ST.

3. **Students with special needs.** Prior to the 2009 regulatory changes, students whom the public schools had “identified” as having special needs were required to obtain “approval” from the Area Education Agency before homeschooling. Now approval is needed only if a family intends to seek special education benefits, services or evaluations from the public school system. *See Reg. 31.10* This is a result of HSLDA’s victory in the Federal Court of Appeals, 8th Circuit, in *Fitzgerald vs. Camdenton R-III School District* and federal regulations subsequently adopted, 34 CFR 300.300

Teacher Qualifications: None (except for supervising teachers).

Standardized Tests: If under the supervising teacher option, none. If under the annual assessment option, assessments are required beginning the year the child is 7 on Sept. 15 (or their first year of homeschooling, if older). This first assessment is considered the “baseline” assessment, and it is not required that progress be shown or any particular result be obtained. It is simply used as a point from which to measure future progress. *See Reg. 31.8(1)*

Beginning with the year the student is age 8 on Sept. 15, an annual assessment must be submitted that shows adequate progress.

SUBJECTS TO BE ASSESSED: For grades 5 and below, reading, language arts and math must be assessed. For grades 6 and above, social studies and science must also be assessed.

TIMING, CONTENTS: The assessment must be conducted by May 1 and submitted to the school system by June 30. Any results that are not required under law may be redacted before submitting. A copy or original may be submitted. The former requirement to submit assessment results to the state was abolished in the 2009 regulatory revisions.

DECLARATION OF CHOICE OF ASSESSMENT: Parents are not required to indicate in advance to their school system what type of assessment they will use.

TYPES OF ASSESSMENT FOR BASELINE AND SUBSEQUENT YEARS:

- *Report card* from an accredited school or correspondence school. School must be accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. “Adequate progress” is a passing grade. *Portfolio review*. Parents choose a teacher to review student materials and write a brief evaluation. The evaluation—not the portfolio—is submitted to the school system. The evaluation must indicate adequate progress. A teacher with an elementary classroom license can evaluate children in grades 1-6. A teacher with an elementary content license can evaluate grades 1-8. With a secondary content license, a teacher can evaluate grades 5-12. A teacher who no longer has a current classroom or content license, but who has a current substitute license, can evaluate students of the same grade levels as if his classroom or content license were in force. *Standardized test*. The test must be administered in a manner consistent with the requirements of the test publisher. The test level that most closely approximates the child’s chronological age must be used. Only the following tests can be used: (1) Terra Nova, the second edition CAT (also called CAT/6), forms C and D, 2000 norms; (2) Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, forms A & B, 2000 norms; (3) Iowa Tests of Educational Development, forms A&B, 2000 norms; (4) Metropolitan Achievement Test, 8th Edition, 2000 norms; (5) Stanford Achievement Test, 10th edition, 2002 norms. The Department of Education may grant individual permission to use other tests. Adequate progress is a score above the 30th percentile in each required test area PLUS either (a) student scoring at grade level or (b) 6 months progress from previously-submitted test.

INADEQUATE PROGRESS: If adequate progress is not shown, the family may submit another assessment before the next school year begins. If adequate progress is still not shown, the child must be enrolled in school unless the Dept. of Education approves a remediation program. Iowa Code Ann. 299A.6.

Reg. 31.5(1)(d) requires schools systems on June 30 to report to the state the names of all children who did not submit an assessment or who did not show adequate progress. However, since families can submit their assessment results on June 30, school systems should wait until July 1 or later to submit the report.

PLEASE NOTE: Membership in HSLDA is not available with respect to children enrolled in a virtual charter school, public on-line school, or public school independent study program. Enrollment in these secular programs is enrollment in a public school, giving it authority to impose state assessments, approval of curriculum, and supervision by a certified teacher.

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