

LOUISIANA

Compulsory Attendance Ages:	From the child’s “seventh birthday until his eighteenth birthday... unless the child graduates from high school prior to his eighteenth birthday” West’s Louisiana Revised Statutes Annotated § 17:221(A)(1).
Required Days of Instruction:	180 days. La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 17:236(A).
Required Subjects:	A “sustained curriculum of a quality at least equal to that offered by public schools at the same grade level,” La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 17:236(A), including the Declaration of Independence (in elementary school) and the Federalist Papers (in high school). La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 17:268.

Home Schoolers have two options:

Option 1: Home School Statute. La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 17:236. “[A] child who participates in a home study program approved by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education” is exempt from the compulsory attendance law. To qualify, homeschool parents must comply with the following:

1. Parents must apply to the Board of Education for approval of the home study program “within fifteen days after commencement of the program.” La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 17:236.1(A).
2. “The initial application shall be approved if the parent certifies that the home study program will offer a sustained curriculum of quality at least equal to that offered by public schools.” La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 17:236.1(B). The phrase “shall be approved” removes the board’s arbitrary discretion in the approval process. The initial application must include a certified copy of the child’s birth certificate. This, however, is not required for the renewal. La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 17:236.1(A).
3. A renewal application must be submitted by Oct. 1 of the school year or within twelve months after initial approval, whichever is later. La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 17:236.1(A).
4. A renewal application “shall be approved” if the parent submits “satisfactory evidence that the program has in fact offered a sustained curriculum of quality at least equal to that offered by public schools at the same grade level.” La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 17:236.1(C)(1).
5. When a child is 11 years old, the parent shall provide evidence of immunization for meningococcal disease to the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 17:170.4(A)(1)(c), unless they have a waiver for religious, medical, or personal reasons. La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 17:170.4(B).

Homeschool students who enroll in a home study program no later than the end of 10th grade may be eligible for a Louisiana Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) award. Home study students could be eligible for the following awards based on a minimum ACT score of: Tech-19; Opportunity-22; Performance-24; Honors-28. SAT scores can be used as long as the total score for the critical reading and mathematics sub-scores are at least: Tech-820; Opportunity-940; Performance-1050; Honors-1210.

Option 2: Alternate Statute. La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 17:236 (Home-based Private Schools)

1. A homeschool can operate as a private school in lieu of the above, if it meets the following requirements:
 - a. has an “adequate physical plant” (i.e., a home);
 - b. has “instructional staff members” (i.e., parents);
 - c. operates 180 days;
 - d. receives no local, state, or federal funds, either “directly or indirectly”;
 - e. “meets such requirements as prescribed by the school or the church”; and
 - f. meets the definition of a school, which is “an institution for the teaching of children.” The Department of Education unofficially recognizes that homeschools fit this definition and accepts annual reports from home-based private schools.
2. Such home-based private schools which receive no local, state, or federal funds must “report to the state Department of Education their total attendance as of the thirtieth day of their school term...” La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 17:232(C).

A student who is withdrawn from public school during the school year, or who attended public school the year before enrolling in a private school, must provide written notification of enrollment to the public school he attended within 10 days of enrollment. This notification must include the student’s: legal name; date of birth; gender; and race. In addition, the notification may include a request for the student’s transcript. La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 17:221.3(B)(1)-(2).

Teacher Qualifications: None.

Standardized Tests: Parents have three options which only apply if the homeschool is operating under the home study law (Option 1 above). La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 17:236.1(D).

A renewal application “shall be approved” if the parent submits:

1. a packet of materials which includes such documents as” (a) a complete outline of each subject taught, (b) a list of books and materials used, (c) copies of the student’s work, (d) copies of standardized tests, and (e) statements of third parties who have observed the child’s progress.
2. a passing score on the Louisiana’s competency-based education examination given to their child;
3. a score by the child at or above his or her grade level on the California Achievement Test or on another standardized test approved by the board. A score is also acceptable if the child has “progressed at a rate equal to one grade level for each year in [the] home study program”; or
4. a teacher certified to teach at the child’s grade level writes a statement that he has examined the program being offered and that in his professional opinion the child “is being taught in accordance with a sustained curriculum of quality at least equal to that offered by public schools at the same grade level” or “at least equal to that offered by public schools to children with similar disabilities.”

High School Diplomas: “[A] high school diploma awarded by a home study program approved by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education shall be deemed by all public postsecondary educational institutions, all state departments, agencies, boards, and commissions, and all other state and local governmental entities to have all of the rights and privileges afforded to a high school diploma awarded by a state-approved nonpublic school.” La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 17:236.1(G).