
Minnesota requires that homeschool students be registered with their resident districts, and sets minimum requirements for subject areas of instruction and student testing.

What is a homeschool?

In Minnesota, a homeschool is classified as a type of nonpublic school, subject to most of the requirements applicable to traditional nonpublic schools including student registration, areas of instruction, and performance assessments. A homeschool instructor does not need a teaching license and may be a parent or an unrelated person who holds a baccalaureate degree. There is no minimum number of required days or hours of instruction for a homeschool student.

How many students in Minnesota are homeschooled?

In the 2018-2019 school year, approximately 16,700 Minnesota students ages seven to 16 were enrolled in homeschools, making up 1.9 percent of Minnesota students.

What instruction are homeschools required to provide?

Homeschool parents must provide instruction in basic communication skills including reading and writing, literature, and fine arts; math and science; social studies including history, geography, economics, government, and citizenship; and health and physical education. State standards and benchmarks in these subject areas do not apply to homeschool students. A parent must maintain documentation showing that the required subjects are being taught and proof that required tests have been administered. The documents must include class schedules and copies of instructional materials, and descriptions of the methods used to assess student achievement.

Homeschool students must take a nationally norm-referenced standardized achievement examination each year unless the homeschool is accredited by a state-recognized accrediting agency. The resident district superintendent and the parent must agree on the specific examination the child will take, and how and where the child will take it. If the nationally normed test does not include all required subject areas, the parent must assess the child's performance in the applicable subject area. If a child scores at or below the 30th percentile or one grade level below children of the same age on a standardized exam, the parent must have the child evaluated to determine whether the child has learning problems.

What data does the state maintain on homeschool students?

The parent of a child in a homeschool must submit to the superintendent of the child's resident district the child's name, birth date, and address; the performance assessments used; and the name of each instructor. The report is due by October 1 of the first school year the child receives instruction after reaching age seven; within 15 days of when a parent withdraws a child from public school after age seven to homeschool, or of when a child moves out of a district; and by October 1 after the child establishes a new resident district. After the first year, the parent must send the superintendent a letter of intent to continue to provide homeschool instruction by October 1 of each school year.

A superintendent must report annually to the commissioner of education the total number of homeschool students reported in the district and the number of homeschools in compliance with state

requirements. The Department of Education does not maintain records on individual homeschool students, and does not certify any transcript or diploma provided by a homeschool.

The student information submitted to a superintendent is private data and cannot be designated as directory information or disclosed without the parent's prior written consent unless a limited exception applies. School districts that receive federal funds under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act must provide military recruiters, when requested, with directory information that includes students' names, addresses, and telephone numbers unless the parent requests that the district not release the information to a military recruiter.

The Department of Education also maintains data related to a homeschool's request to the resident school district for reimbursement for educational expenses. Reimbursed items are considered district property. For information on homeschool eligibility for state education credits and deductions, see the House Research Department publication *Income Tax Deductions and Credits for Public and Nonpublic Education in Minnesota*.

What public school programs can homeschool students participate in?

Upon request, and subject to cost limits, a school district must provide homeschool students with textbooks, the same health services offered to public school students, and for homeschool students in grades 7 to 12, the same guidance and counseling services offered to public school students if the services are provided at a public school or neutral site.

At the request of a homeschool, a student in a homeschool of five or fewer students may participate in the extracurricular activities of the resident district on the same basis as public school students; the district may charge participation fees. Homeschool students may also participate in Minnesota State High School League activities through their homeschool alone or through a cooperative sponsorship with other schools.

Subject to a district's policy, homeschool students may participate in academic activities in their resident districts. A homeschool student may access public school courses ("shared-time") in the resident district, subject to the district's shared time policy, or may request shared-time instruction in a nonresident district, with the resident district providing the shared-time funding. A homeschool student cannot use shared-time to access public online learning without paying tuition but can instead enroll in a full-time online learning program. Homeschool students may also participate in the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Program.

Federal law requires districts to provide special education services to homeschool students residing in the district.

What health and safety requirements apply to homeschools?

County human services investigate allegations of all forms of child neglect, including educational neglect. In addition, a parent must submit to the superintendent the child's immunization records or a statement indicating that the child has not been immunized due to the parents' conscientiously held beliefs. Minnesota does not regulate the facilities in which homeschool students receive instruction.



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