

HOME SCHOOLING GUIDELINES

The General Laws of the Commonwealth is defined and serves as the base of our work with parents who wish to provide home education to their child(ren). The following guidelines will assist the parent and the school in meeting state requirements.

Parents are required to seek approval before beginning a program of home education for their children. The School Committee delegates the approval of home instruction to the Superintendent.

The school district may, at its discretion, grant automatic approval of all home-schooling proposals establishing, if desired, an annual review process acceptable to parents and school officials.

The law allows, but does not require, school officials to ask parents to provide the following:

1. Information about the parent's academic credentials or other qualifications;
2. A description of the proposed educational program/curriculum;
3. Access to the kind of educational materials the parent expects to use;
4. Agreement on no more than one kind of periodic reporting or evaluation.

The Franklin Public Schools have chosen to consider all of the above criteria when reviewing home education applications. However, it is important to advise that approval will not be conditioned on requirements that are not essential to the State's interest in ensuring that all children will be educated. Non-essential requirements include a family's reasons for home schooling, social group experience for the child, a two-parent family, report cards, lesson plans, overly frequent evaluation, use of curriculum determined by the school and so forth.

The General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts cites the following requirements:

1. ". . . Schools shall be taught by teachers of competent ability and good morals; and shall give instruction and training in"
orthography music drawing
reading U.S. history arithmetic
writing U.S. constitution geography
English & grammar citizenship health
education
Physical education good behavior

2. "In all public elementary and high schools, American history and civics, including the Constitution of the United States, the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights, and in all public schools the Constitution of the Commonwealth and local history and government shall be taught as required subjects for the purpose of promoting civic service and a greater knowledge thereof, and of fitting the pupils, morally and intellectually for the duties of citizenship."

3. "Physical education shall be taught as a required subject in all grades for all students in the public schools for the purpose of promoting the physical well-being of such students."
4. Home schools are to provide education "equal in thoroughness and efficiency, and in progress made therein, as that in the public school in the same town."

We respect a parent's desire and right to home educate their child(ren). In addition to complying with the General Laws of the Commonwealth, we desire to work in a very cooperative manner with parents. We invite parents to visit the School Principal for the purpose of establishing such a relationship, even though all of the requirements could be met through the exchange of written communications. We call attention the communication entitled "A Workable Process" developed by Mass. H.O.P.E. The last paragraph states, "It is recommended that the specific evaluation method to be used be discussed in the early stages of the communications between parents and school officials." We feel such discussion is more effective when done in person rather than through written communication and, therefore, invite the parent to meet with the principal for this purpose.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:1; 71:2; 71:3; 71:4; 76:1- 76:2; 76:3; 119
603 Code Mass. Regulations Section 27.01 (1980)
S.J.C. Care and Protection of Charles, 399 Mass. 324 (1987)

