

HOME INSTRUCTION (HOME SCHOOLING)

From time to time, parents will choose to instruct their children at home. The Berlin Central School District will attempt to cooperate with parents who wish to provide homeschooling for their children realizing that the child who is educated at home should receive an education in a manner consistent with an educational plan and at least substantially equivalent to that given to students of like age and attainments in the local public schools. The required subjects should be taught in a competent, systematic, and sequential manner, specifically in relation to the required courses as enumerated in Commissioner's Regulation Section 100.10.

Provisions and Limitations of Services to Home-Instructed Students

Home-instructed students are not awarded a high school diploma. A high school diploma may only be awarded to a student enrolled in a registered secondary school who has completed all program requirements set by the Board of Regents, the school or the District.

a) Home schooled students are not eligible to participate in interscholastic sports. The Commissioner's Regulations mandate that only students enrolled in the public school are allowed to participate in interscholastic sports.

b) Home schooled students may participate in any after-school intramural sports which are not related to physical education instruction and other before and after school sponsored club activities. The District will permit home-instructed students to participate in such extra-curricular activities so long as the students can arrange for their own transportation, there is room in the program and there is no additional cost to the District. This excludes theater productions and curricular-related activities such as enrichment programs, field trips, music lessons, band, orchestra, and chorus. If students participate, they must abide by all District rules and regulations such as, but not limited to, the student Code of Conduct. The District will follow the provisions of Public Health Law Section 2164 (required immunizations) when home schooled children attend extra-curricular activities. Parents of home schooled children must contact the appropriate building principal if they desire to pursue any of the above listed opportunities so that all of the necessary details are in place.

c) The District is not required to loan available textbooks and other materials (e.g., library materials, microscopes, computer software, movie projectors) to home schooled students. However, the District may provide such textbooks and other materials to home-instructed

students when extras are available at no additional cost to the District.

- d) The District does not furnish health services to home schooled students and is not required to do so.
- e) The District is not responsible for providing remedial instruction, such as academic intervention services, to home schooled students.
- f) The District shall not make available to home-instructed students occupational and vocational education programs (career and technical education programs) and programs for gifted students.
- g) The District shall offer a home-instructed student with disabilities the special education services as addressed in the approved Individualized Education Services Program (IESP) by the Committee on Special Education, provided that the parent or guardian submits a written request for such services no later than June 1. However, there is no requirement that such services be provided in the student's home. Further, the District shall conduct a census and register students with disabilities who reside in the District in accordance with Education Law and Commissioner's Regulations. Parents of home schooled students with disabilities who are initially classified after June 1, or who move into the District after June 1, may request special education services within 30 days. No other exceptions to the June 1 deadline will be made.
- h) Upon request, at least ten (10) days prior to the scheduled test date (by contacting the superintendent's office), home-instructed students may take certain Regents exams on school premises with Berlin High School students. Exempted from such a list are those courses requiring the completion of minimum laboratory activities (e.g., earth science, biology, chemistry, physics).
- i) ***Home schooled students may use school facilities such as the library or gym, only during non-school hours, with the prior permission of the building principal. Such use may be permitted only when the home schooled student is supervised by a parent or guardian and such use will not impose extra costs upon the District.***
- j) ***Except as otherwise indicated in this policy, students instructed at home shall not be allowed to use school facilities.***

Primary responsibility for determining compliance with Commissioner's Regulations addressing home instruction rests with the Superintendent of Schools in which a home-instructed student resides.

Parents' Responsibilities

1. Notification

Parents or persons in parental relation to a student of compulsory school attendance age, who are residents in this District, shall annually provide written notice to the Superintendent of Schools of their intention to educate their child at home by July 1st of each school year. If such instruction is to begin after the start of the school year, parents must provide such written notice within fourteen (14) days after beginning such instruction within the District.

2. Individualized Home Instruction Plan (IHIP)

Within ten (10) days of receipt of the above-mentioned notice, the District will send to the parents a copy of §100.10 of the Regulations of the Commissioner, and a form on which to submit an individualized home instruction plan (IHIP). One such IHIP must be submitted for each child of compulsory attendance age who is to be taught at home. The IHIP forms must be submitted to the District office within four (4) weeks of receipt. If requested, the District will provide assistance in preparing the forms.

Each child's IHIP will contain:

- a. the child's name, age, and grade level;
- b. a list of the syllabi, curriculum materials, textbooks, or plan of instruction to be used in each of the required subjects listed below;
- c. the dates for submission to the school district of the parents' quarterly reports; and
- d. the names of the individual(s) providing instruction.

3. Determination of compliance/noncompliance

The Superintendent of Schools shall review each IHIP, and notify the parents within ten (10) business days of receipt as to whether the forms comply with the requirements listed in (2) above, or if there is any deficiency. The District will provide written notice of such deficiency(ies). Parents must submit a revised IHIP, correcting any deficiency(ies), within 15 days of such notice.

The Superintendent will then review the revised IHIP and notify the parents of its compliance or noncompliance with the above requirements within 15 days of receipt of the revised IHIP.

4. Appeals

If the IHIP is determined not to be in compliance, written notice of noncompliance (including the reasons for such determination) shall be sent to the parents. This notice will contain the date of the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board, and inform parents that if they wish to contest the determination of non-compliance, they must notify the Board at least three (3) business days prior to the meeting. At the Board meeting, the parents have the right to present proof of compliance, and the Board shall make the final determination of compliance/noncompliance.

Parents have the right to appeal the final determination of the Board to the Commissioner of Education within 30 days of receipt of such determination.

If parents do not contest the determination of noncompliance by either the administration or the Board, or if the Commissioner of Education upholds the final school district determination of noncompliance, then the parents must immediately provide for the instruction of their children in a public school or elsewhere in compliance with Education Law §§3204 and 3210.

5. Required courses

Instruction in the following subjects shall be required:

- a. For grades one through six: arithmetic, reading, spelling, writing, the English language, geography, United States history, science, health education, music, visual arts, physical education, bilingual education and/or English as a second language where the need is indicated.
- b. [For the purposes of this and the following subdivisions, a unit means 6480 minutes of instruction per school year.]

For grades seven and eight: English (2 units); history and geography (2 units); science (2 units); mathematics (2 units); physical education (on a regular basis); health education (on a regular basis); art (1/2 unit); music (1/2 unit); practical arts (on a regular basis) and library skills (on a regular basis). The units required are cumulative requirements for both grades seven and eight.

- c. The following courses shall be taught at least once during the first eight grades: United States history, New York State history, and the Constitutions of the United States and New York State.
 - d. For grades nine through twelve: English (4 units); social studies (4 units, which includes 1 unit of American history, 1/2 unit in participation in government, and 1/2 unit economics); mathematics (2 units); science (2 units); art and/or music (1 unit); health education (1/2 unit); physical education (2 units); and 3 units of electives. The units required are cumulative requirements for grades nine through twelve.
 - e. All other subjects mandated by the Education Law to be covered during grades K-12.
6. Attendance requirements

Each child shall attend upon instruction as follows:

- a. The substantial equivalent of 180 days of instruction shall be provided each year.
 - b. The cumulative hours of instruction for grades 1-6 shall be 900 hours per year. The cumulative hours of instruction for grades 7-12 shall be 990 hours per year.
 - c. Records of school attendance shall be maintained by the parent and shall be made available to the school district upon request.
 - d. Instruction provided at a site other than the primary residence of the parents shall be provided in a building which has not been determined to be in violation of the local building code.
7. Quarterly reports

On or before the dates specified in the IHIP, parents must furnish the District with a quarterly report for each child receiving instruction at home. Such report shall contain the following information:

- a. the number of hours of instruction during the quarter;
- b. a description of material covered in each subject listed in the IHIP;
- c. either a grade for the child in each subject or a written narrative evaluating the child's progress; and

- d. in the event that less than 80% of the amount of the course materials as set forth in the IHIP has been covered in any subject for that quarter, a written explanation.

8. Annual assessment

Parents must submit an annual assessment at the time of filing their fourth quarterly report. Such annual assessment shall include the results of a commercially published norm-referenced achievement test which meets the requirements outlined in §100.10(h) of the Regulations of the Commissioner. Such test will be provided by the school district upon request. An alternative form of evaluation may be permitted if it meets the requirements outlined in §100.10(h) of the Commissioner's Regulation.

The test will be administered at the public school, by its professional staff, or at a registered nonpublic school, by its professional staff, provided that the consent of the chief school officer of such nonpublic school is obtained. The test may be administered at a nonregistered nonpublic school by its professional staff, with the prior consent of both the public school Superintendent and the chief school officer of the nonpublic school.

If the test is to be administered at the parents' home or any other reasonable location, by a New York State certified teacher or another qualified person, the Superintendent must consent to having such person administer the test. The cost of any testing facilities, transportation, and/or personnel for testing conducted at a location other than the public school shall be borne by the parents. The test shall be scored by the persons administering the test or by other persons who are mutually agreeable to the parents and the Superintendent. A student's score shall be deemed adequate if he/she has a composite score above the 33rd percentile on national norms, or if his/her score reflects one academic year of growth as compared to a test administered during or subsequent to the prior school year. If a score on the test is determined to be inadequate, the home instruction program shall be placed on probation.

9. Probation

If a child's annual assessment fails to comply with the above requirements, the home instruction program shall be placed on probation for a period of up to 2 years. The parent(s) must submit a plan of remediation which addresses the deficiencies in the child's achievement. The plan will be reviewed by the Superintendent, who may require the parent(s) to make changes prior to acceptance.

The program will be removed from probation only if, after the end of any semester of the probationary period, the child has progressed to the level specified in the remediation plan. If the child does not attain at least three-

quarters (75%) of the objectives specified in the remediation plan at the end of any given semester, or if after 2 years of probation 100% of such objectives have not been satisfied, the program will be deemed not in compliance. The Superintendent shall then serve written notice of noncompliance as specified in (3) above.

10. Home visits by the Superintendent

If during the period of probation the Superintendent has reasonable grounds to believe that the home instruction program is in substantial noncompliance with this policy and/or regulation, the Superintendent may require one or more home visits. Following the third day of receipt of a written notice to the family such visits will take place. The purpose of such visit(s) will be to ascertain the areas of noncompliance and to determine methods of remediating any deficiency(ies). The home visits shall be conducted by the Superintendent or his/her designee; the Superintendent may include members of a home instruction peer review panel as part of a "home visit team."