

What is the intent of the home-based education policy?

The home-based education policy recognizes that the parents have both the responsibility to provide for the education of their children and the right to direct their children's education from their home. The policy also acknowledges the province's compelling interest in the education of all children by delegating to school divisions the responsibility to register home-based education students. The home-based education policy establishes guidelines to assist school divisions and parents.

Education in Saskatchewan is "inclusive" in that a child may be educated in the public, separate, Francophone, independent school systems or at home. Although preferences vary regarding the decision of where and in what manner to educate a child, mutual respect for that choice is essential from both parents and school officials.

What is the legal framework for home-based education?

Guiding Saskatchewan's home-based education are *The Education Act, 1995*, *Home-based Education Regulations*, and the *Home-based Education Policy and Procedures*. School divisions are required to develop local policies and procedures that adhere to the provincial legal framework.

What is a home-based education program?

A home-based education is a learning program based in the home started and directed by the parents for their own children of compulsory school age (7-15 years). Home-based education programs may occur before or after compulsory school age depending on school division policy.

Why do parents' home school?

Parents choose to home-school because of sincere religious or philosophical beliefs regarding the education of their children. Home-educating parents are usually highly motivated and have positive reasons for providing educational opportunities for their children at home.

How does the parent register?

Parents register with their resident board of education. To register, parents complete a "Notification of a Home-Based Education" form which includes a written educational plan. Registration provides an exemption from compulsory attendance requirements (Section 155, *The Education Act*). Parents are required to give at least 30 days' notice before commencing a new home-based education program, whether at the beginning or in the middle of a school year.

What should be included in the written educational plan?

The written educational plan will demonstrate that there is a positive and constructive approach to the student's education program. The plan should be appropriate for the age and ability of the child and it should not be inconsistent with the Goals of Education for Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan's goals embody a student-centered approach to learning which recognizes the inherent worth and potential of each individual student and address all aspects of child development, knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for life-long learning. A written educational plan includes: the philosophical approach to the program; the learning materials that will be used; broad general learning outcomes for language arts, math, science, and social studies; and the means of assessing student progress.

Student assessment strategies may include: a summary of educational progress or summative record and portfolio of work, standardized testing, a third party assessment or mutually agreed upon assessment. In addition, parents must maintain a portfolio of work and a summative record for student record keeping purposes.

What is meant by monitoring the program?

Monitoring is the responsibility of the school division. A designated school division official ensures that parents are following the regulations and policies. The emphasis in monitoring home-based programs is on educational outcomes. School divisions ensure that children are receiving an education based upon an educational plan rather than concentrating on the methods by which the education program is delivered. School divisions cannot, as a component of monitoring,

require home visits or interviews of the students without parental consent. However, monitoring may include a conference when the parents register their home-based education program and when the program concludes.

Are there any other requirements of parents?

Recognizing the flexible and spontaneous nature of home-based education, the regulations were written to provide freedom without burdensome requirements upon parents. Parents are expected to follow the educational program presented in the educational plan. Parents may arrange learning activities with tutors, private schools, public schools, correspondence schools, or in concert with other home-school parents. Choices related to the duration and frequency of instruction belongs to the parent. Students are not required to follow a prescribed attendance schedule. Parents must maintain a portfolio of work and summative record for each child.

What services are required for students with special needs?

School divisions are required to provide access to special needs assessment and diagnosis at the request of the home-based educator. If a child has special needs additional supportive activity may involve periodic testing, progress reports and additional conferences.

What services are required of school divisions?

School divisions are required to maintain permanent student records, monitor the home-based education program, arrange for student testing and diagnosis, and cancel programs under special conditions. Policies will be developed by boards of education with respect to how home-based educators may access, on behalf of their home-based learners, the services that the board is prepared to make available.

What is required to renew a program?

To renew a program parents may complete a "Notification of a Home-Based Education" form or provide similar information by August 15 of each year. Renewal also involves updating the written educational plan.

How is a home-based education program terminated or cancelled?

A parent may terminate the program during the school year or not renew the program by August 15. A school division may cancel a program because of a violation of *The Education Act*, or provincial policy. Refer to the provincial Home-Based Education Handbook or Policy Manual, available in your school division office, for details.

How should local disputes be resolved?

In the event that a dispute occurs between a school division and a parent, a dispute resolution process of several steps has been included in the regulations and policies. The objective of the process is to resolve any disagreements in a positive, non-confrontational manner. The dispute resolution process may be initiated by a parent and is designed to ensure a fair hearing with the board of education. The decision of the board of education is final. If a parent feels that processes described in provincial policy were not followed, they may appeal to the Director, Independent Schools and Home-based Education.

What may be included in a school division home-based education policy?

School division policy indicates a commitment to serve home-based education students within the school division. In addition, a registering authority is designated and procedures are established to guide administration of the provincial policy.

How is home-based education monitored by the Ministry?

Home-based education is monitored by the Director, Independent Schools and Home-based Education, who ensures that provincial policy and regulations are followed.

How can I get further information on home-based education?

For further information contact your local school division office.