

Competent Private Instruction

Students who are 6 years old by September 15th and under the age of 16 by September 15th are required to attend school. Students between these ages may be exempted from this state attendance requirement if they are receiving competent private instruction (home schooling) under the provisions of Iowa law.

Adopted: March 11, 1996
Revised: April 19, 2010
Revised: March 14, 2016

Legal Reference:
Code of Iowa, Ch. 299.1-.6,
Code of Iowa, Ch. 299.A
I.A.C., Ch. 281-31

Iowa law provides that students may receive competent private instruction as an alternative to attending an accredited public or private school. A parent, guardian, or legal custodian of a student receiving competent private instruction must notify the resident school district by the first day of school, or within 14 calendar days of removing the child from school, that the student will be receiving such instruction by filing Form A per guidelines outlined in the Iowa Department of Education Private Instruction Handbook with the Dubuque Community Schools home school coordinator, The Forum, 2300 Chaney Road, Dubuque, Iowa, 52001-3095.

All mandatory items on the form must be completed by the parent, guardian, or legal custodian in order for the report to be in compliance with the law.

Parent, guardian, or legal custodian of students receiving competent private instruction are expected to comply with the rules and regulations of the code.

Dual Enrollment:

The parent, guardian, or legal custodian of a child of compulsory attendance age who is receiving competent private instruction may enroll the child under dual enrollment. Those desiring dual enrollment shall notify the district no later than September 15 of the school year for which dual enrollment is sought.

Dual enrolled students may enroll in a total of three-quarters of instruction by way of the district's academic programs and have at least one-quarter of the student's instruction by way of competent private instruction. Form A must be filed for all dual enrolled students. Annual assessment results must be filed with the district if student is dual enrolled not working with a licensed teacher or in a home school assistance program. Students requesting an academic class and/or an activity need to meet participation requirements (see Policy #5305) in order to be included in the class or activity.

Students receiving competent private instruction may open enroll in another district for dual enrollment. The parent, guardian, or legal custodian must notify the superintendent by the legal deadline that the student will request open enrollment.

Home Schooling Assistance Program:

Parent, guardian, or legal custodian of students receiving competent private instruction who wish to receive the services of the district's home schooling assistance program must:

1. Complete Form A for competent private instruction and provide two copies for the district's home schooling coordinator within the deadlines specified by code.
2. Meet with the home schooling assistance program teacher with the enrolled student at least four times per quarter during the period of instruction. Two of these visits need to be face-to-face with the student; the other two may be phone visits.

The responsibilities of the home schooling assistance program teacher include:

1. Assisting parent, guardian, or legal custodian in locating/using resources.
2. Administering standardized tests to students in the spring and fall of the school year.
3. Providing input and feedback to parent, guardian, or legal custodian regarding the lesson plans of the enrolled students.

The responsibilities of the parent, guardian, or legal custodian of student(s) receiving services from the home schooling assistance program teacher include:

1. Being in attendance at and prepared for the four required quarterly meetings with the home schooling assistance program teacher.
2. Providing a safe environment that is conducive for instruction during the home schooling assistance program teacher's four required quarterly meetings.
3. Demonstrating that the student(s) is making adequate and appropriate progress on learning goals and objectives that align with the student's age and expected grade placement.

Parent, guardian, or legal custodian who fail to demonstrate one or more of the listed responsibilities will be expected to work with the home schooling assistance program teacher or coordinator to remediate the problem within 3 weeks or by the next scheduled home schooling assistance program teacher's meeting.

Parent, guardian, or legal custodian who do not fulfill the necessary responsibilities within the given time period will lose their eligibility for the services of the home schooling assistance program teacher.

The home schooling assistance program teacher is limited to serving 40 students or 20 families at one time.

Procedures and Qualifications for Regular Enrollment:

Students who have previously received competent private instruction who are seeking regular enrollment in the district will be admitted to school as designated by district policies and guidelines.

Elementary (K-5) – The principal of the neighborhood school in which the student is enrolling shall review the student's test scores or portfolio, samples of the student's work, the student's age, and the student's developmental level to determine grade placement. The principal may also administer competence tests or curriculum-based assessments to determine grade placement.

Middle School (6-8) – The principal shall review the student's test scores or portfolio, samples of the student's work, the student's instructional lesson plans, and may administer competency tests in subject areas to determine grade level placement. Student age and developmental level will also be a consideration in grade level placement.

High School (9-12) – The principal shall review the student's test scores or portfolio, samples of the student's work, the student's instructional lesson plans, and may administer competency tests in the subjects for which credit is sought. The principal shall place the student at the grade level which corresponds with the course work he/she has completed satisfactorily and is compatible with the course of study typical of most students at a given grade level.

Credit Evaluation:

Students at all levels will receive grades only for work performed while enrolled in Dubuque public schools. Grades from private instruction will not be included in grade point averages or class rank and will not be listed on the transcript.

Graduation Credits:

Regardless of the admission level status, the student must earn the number of credits in the subjects required by Board Policy #6210 to receive a Hempstead or Senior High School diploma. The principal or designee may grant credit(s) toward attainment of the diploma after verifying that a student's previous instruction in a specified subject area met comparable time requirements for a credit, after reviewing the lesson plans for comparability to courses in the Board approved registration guide, and upon the student's demonstrating competency in the subject area(s) through criterion and performance testing. Credits accepted through this administrative process will be noted on the transcript as "Home School Credit." These credits will not be used in the computation of GPA or class rank. These accepted credits may be used to fulfill established district graduation requirements.

Home school and dual enrolled credit will not be considered toward fulfillment of graduation requirements until the student is enrolled as a full-time student.

Diploma Eligibility:

In order to receive a Hempstead or Senior diploma, a student who has been receiving competent private instruction must have earned 10.8 credits at Hempstead or Senior; fulfilled graduation credit requirements as specified in Board Policy #6210; and attended Hempstead or Senior fully enrolled (Policy #6209) for two consecutive semesters immediately prior to graduation.

Scholastic Achievement and Honors:

Students enrolled full time in any Dubuque public school will be eligible for honors and scholarships as defined by the honors and scholarship programs.

Students may receive recognition for scholastic achievement only by virtue of courses taken at the appropriate school. A parent, guardian, or legal custodian who wishes to have the student receive honors or scholarships is responsible for contacting the school to find out the requirements for the honors or scholarships and for having the student comply with the enrollment and performance requirements necessary for eligibility.

Home School Limitations:

1. Students in home school or dual enrollment are not eligible for dual enrollment in more than one school.
2. Students seeking dual enrollment or full time enrollment coming from home school will be subject to a review of prior disciplinary stipulation and full accountability of previous educational experiences. Any previous disciplinary determinations may be re-imposed at the discretion of the enrolling school.

Appeal Process:

The home schooling coordinator will establish a review committee composed of district and building administrators and teachers as a response to any parent appeal of home school related decisions made at the building level. The members and size of the committee will be determined by the nature of the decision being appealed. The parent, guardian or legal custodian of the student will have the right to make a final appeal to the Dubuque Community School District Board of Education. The decision by the Dubuque Community School District Board of Education may be appealed to the State of Iowa Board of Education pursuant to Iowa Code Section 290.1.

Student Fees:

Fees will be charged according to the fee schedule adopted annually by the Board of Education.