

LOUISIANA

Compulsory Attendance Ages:	From the child's "7th birthday until his 18th birthday." West's Louisiana Revised Statutes Annotated § 17:221(A).
Required Days of Instruction:	180 days. La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 17:236.
Required Subjects:	A "curriculum of a quality at least equal to that offered by public schools at the same grade level," La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 17:236, including the Declaration of Independence (elementary) and the Federalist Papers (high school). La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 17:268.

Home Schoolers have two options:

Option 1: Home School Statute. La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 17:236. "[A] child who participates in a home study program approved by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education" is exempt from the compulsory attendance law. To qualify, homeschool parents must comply with the following:

1. Parents must apply to the Board of Education for approval of the home study program within fifteen days after commencement. La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 17:236.1(A).
2. "The initial application...or renewal application, shall be approved if the parent certifies that the home study program will offer a sustained curriculum of quality at least equal to that offered by public schools." La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 17:236.1(B). The initial application must include a certified copy of the child's birth certificate. This, however, is not required for the renewal.
3. A renewal application must be submitted by Oct. 1 of the school year or twelve months after initial approval, whichever is later. La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 17:236.1(A).
4. A renewal application "shall be approved" if the parents submit "satisfactory evidence that the program has in fact offered a sustained curriculum of quality at least equal to that offered by public schools at the same grade level." Parents must submit "with the renewal application a packet of materials which includes such documents as": (a) a complete outline of each subject taught, (b) a list of books and materials, (c) copies of the student's work, (d) copies of standardized tests, (e) statements of third parties who have observed the child's progress. La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 17:236.1(C)(1)(emph. added).
5. The phrase "shall be approved" removes the board's arbitrary discretion in the approval process.
6. Homeschool students who enroll in a home study program no later than the end of 10th grade may be eligible for a Louisiana Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) award. Home study students could be eligible for the following awards based on a minimum ACT score of: TOPS Tech – 19; TOPS Opportunity – 22; TOPS Performance – 24; TOPS Honors – 28.

Option 2: Alternate Statute. La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 17:236 (Home-based Private Schools)

1. A homeschool can operate as a private school in lieu of the above, if it meets the following requirements:
 - a. has an “adequate physical plant” (i.e., a home);
 - b. has “instructional staff members” (i.e., parents);
 - c. operates 180 days;
 - d. receives no Federal or State funds, “either directly or indirectly;”
 - e. “shall meet such requirements as prescribed by the school or the church;” and
 - f. meets the definition of school: “an institution for the teaching of children.” The Department of Education unofficially recognizes that homeschools fit this definition and accepts annual reports from home-based private schools.
2. Such home-based private schools which receive no local, state, or federal funds must “report to the state Department of Education their total attendance as of the 30th day of their school term...” La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 17:232(c).
3. Students who are withdrawn from public school during the school year, or who attended public school the year before enrolling in a private school, must provide a written notification of enrollment to the public school he attended within 10 days of enrollment. This notification must include:
 - a. Student’s legal name;
 - b. Date of birth;
 - c. Gender; and
 - d. Race.

In addition, the notification may include a request for the student’s transcript. La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 17:221.3.

Teacher Qualifications: None.

Standardized Tests: Parents have three options which only apply if the homeschool is operating under the home study law (Option 1 above). La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 17:236.1(D).

A renewal application “shall be approved” if (in lieu of submitting the materials mentioned above):

1. child receives passing score on the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP) test;
2. or the child scored at or above his grade level on a California Achievement Test or other standardized test approved by the board or has “progressed at a rate equal to one grade level for each year in [the] home study program;”
3. or a teacher certified to teach at the child’s grade level writes a statement that the child “is being taught in accordance with a sustained curriculum of quality at least equal to public schools” or “at least equal to that offered by public schools to a child of similar disabilities.”

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