

SUMMARY OF IOWA HOMESCHOOL LAW*

Courtesy of Home School Legal Defense Association, May 1, 2026

<i>Compulsory age: age 6 by Sept 15 to age 16¹--or until end of school year if child is enrolled in public school and turned 16 after Sept. 15.</i> MUST do list!		Private Instruction Programs				
		Independent Private Instruction program ²	Competent Private Instruction (CPI) programs			
			§299A.3 programs		§299A.2 programs	
		CHOICE 1	CHOICE 2	CHOICE 3	CHOICE 4	CHOICE 5
1	What must be filed?	Informational report, but <u>only</u> if requested ⁵	Nothing	Form A by Sept. 1 ⁶	Form A by Sept. 1-include teacher folder number ⁷	Form A by Sept 1 ⁸
2	Send withdrawal letter? ⁹	See endnote 9				
3	Are 148 days of instruction, with 37 per school quarter required? ¹⁰	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
4	Can the school impose additional requirements?	No	No	No	No	Yes
5	Must family cooperate with the school system's teacher?	No	No	No	No	Yes
6	What subjects must be taught?	reading-language arts, math, science, social studies	None	None	Check with your supervising teacher	Up to public school
7	Must the parent (1) have a course of study and (2) use a plan?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
8	Is filing a baseline and annual assessment required? ¹¹	No	No	Yes. Administer by May 31 ; file by August 1 .	No	Up to public school
9	What subjects must be assessed?	None	None	Grades 1-5: reading, language, math; In grades 6-12, add science and social studies ¹²	Up to your supervising teacher	Up to public school
10	Child with special needs? "Get to do" list!	No special rule--no approval is necessary				
		Choice 1	Choice 2	Choice 3	Choice 4	Choice 5
11	Is free testing available through public school? ¹³	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
12	Is student eligible for a driver's license before age 18? ¹⁴	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
13	Is the public school driver ed. program available? ¹⁵	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

		Choice 1	Choice 2	Choice 3	Choice 4	Choice 5
14	Parent-taught driver ed. available? ¹⁶	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
15	Are community college concurrent classes ¹⁷ and career academy classes available? ¹⁸	Yes ¹⁹	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
16	Are PSEO classes available? ²⁰	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
17	Are public school classes ²¹ , special ed. services ²² , extracurriculars, open enrollment ²³ , AP tests and courses available? ²⁴	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes ²⁵
Other Items!						
18	Is filing a Form A necessary for a 16 year old (or older) student to dual enroll? ²⁶					
19	What does the Iowa Dep. of Ed. call this choice?	Independent private instruction	CPI Option 2 Opt-Out reporting	CPI Option 2 Opt-In reporting	CPI Option 1 Privately hired supervising teacher	CPI Option 1 HSAP
20	Dept of Ed's "Private Instruction Handbook": Read with caution!					
21	If signed by governor, HF 2754 will change Form A, reduce IPI restrictions, and establish diploma protection					

¹ A child age 4 or 5 (by Sept 15) who is enrolled in a public school program is of compulsory age until withdrawn in writing. [IC 256C.3](#) A student who turns 16 on or after September 15 is of compulsory age until the end of the school year if the child is enrolled (including dual enrolled) in public school program. [IC 299.1A.1](#) Graduation from an accredited school or getting a GED exempts the child.

² IPI programs per se are not allowed to enroll more than 4 unrelated students or charge fees. [IC 299A.1](#).

³ A supervising teacher must have a valid practitioner license, teaching certificate, substitute teacher license or substitute authorization appropriate to the child's age or grade level. [IAC 281-31.3\(1\)\(c\)](#), [IC 299A.2](#) Duties of teacher: two contacts w student per 45 days of instruction (half must be face to face); consult w parents; assessments; keep record of assistance provided; refer child if reason to believe child needs special education; a teacher must not exceed 25 families or 50 children. [IAC 281-31.3\(1\)](#).

⁴ The HSAP teacher is provided by the public school and must contact the student 4 times every 45 days of instruction, and one of every two of those must be face to face. [IAC 281-31.3\(c\)\(2\)](#)

⁵ No form is necessary. Must report child's name, primary instructor, location, and person responsible for the instruction. The request must come from the local superintendent of schools or state department of education and be in writing and mailed to the parents. [IC 299A.1.2.b\(6\)](#).

⁶ The Form A is due by Sept. 1 [IC 299.4.1](#) or within 30 days of starting homeschooling. [IAC 31.3\(2\)](#). Include written instructions (available on HSLDA's website) telling the public school to NOT release any information on your Form A to preserve your privacy rights. Form A calls for: subjects, lesson plans, time spent in subject areas, (for first time filers) immunization info. [IC 299.4](#) See [IC 135.105D](#) for lead testing.

⁷ The Form A is due by Sept. 1 [IC 299.4.1](#) or within 30 days of starting homeschooling. [IAC 31.3\(2\)\(a\)](#). Include written instructions (available on HSLDA's website) telling the public school to NOT release any information on

your Form A to preserve your privacy rights. Form A calls for: subjects, lesson plans, time spent in subject areas, (for first time filers) immunization info. [IC 299.4](#) See [IC 135.105D](#) for lead testing.

⁸ The Form A is due by Sept. 1 [IC 299.4.1](#). Include written instructions (available on HSLDA's website) telling the public school to NOT release any information on your Form A to preserve your privacy rights. Form A calls for: subjects, lesson plans, time spent in subject areas, (for first time filers) immunization info. [IC 299.4](#)

⁹ If your child is currently enrolled in a school, or if your child WAS enrolled previously and the school staff are probably expecting him to return, it is highly advisable to send them a short letter stating that you are withdrawing the child in order to homeschool him.

¹⁰ The 148-day requirement only applies to supervising teacher and HSAP choices. [IC 299A.1.2](#)

¹¹ [IC 299A.4.2](#) provides clear indications that no assessment is required if child is under age 7 by September 15. The first assessment is the "baseline" from which future progress is measured.

¹² The assessment may be:

- (1) a report card with passing grades in all subjects from a school or correspondence school accredited by an agency recognized by the US Dept. of Education [IAC 281-31.4\(4\)\(b\)](#); or
- (2) a review of a portfolio of samples of the child's work written by a "qualified, licensed Iowa practitioner" [IC 299A.4.7\(b\)](#) The reviewer must have a "practitioner license or teacher certificate appropriate to the age and grade level" of the child, and the portfolio must cover reading, language arts, math and (for grades 6 and above) science and social studies [IAC 281-31.1\(4\)\(a\)](#); or
- (3) a standardized test showing 30th percentile or higher in all areas and either at-grade level performance or 6 months progress from the last test. [IC 299A.6](#) The parent must use a "nationally recognized standardized achievement" test [IAC 31.4\(1\)\(a\)](#) or an alternative test approved by Dep. of Ed. per [IAC 31.4\(1\)\(b\)](#); or
- (4) the Dep. of Ed. may approve an alternative evaluation for a child with a significant mental or physical disability [IAC 31.4\(7\)\(c\)](#); or
- (5) the school district or AEA will conduct an evaluation if the parent requests it at no cost [IAC 31.4\(3\)](#) CPI must stop if the results do not show adequate progress. [IC 299A.6](#) But if another evaluation showing adequate results is submitted before public school starts [IC 299A.6.1](#), homeschooling may proceed under a remediation plan. [IC 299A.7](#) and [IAC 31.4\(6\)](#)

¹³ A student need not dual enroll or file Form A for free testing. [IAC 281-31.5\(3\)](#) and [IA Code 299A.4\(6\)](#). Choice 2 parents must demonstrate the student is complying with CPI requirements. [IAC 281-31.7\(5\)](#).

¹⁴ In order for a student to obtain an intermediate or full driver's license before age 18, the student must be enrolled in a public school, accredited private school, CPI, or IPI. [IC §299.1B](#)

¹⁵ Choice 2 parents need not dual enroll or file Form A but must demonstrate the student is complying with CPI requirements. [IAC 281-31.7\(5\)](#) More details are available in [IC §321.178](#), and [IAC 281- 31.7\(4\)](#), [31.7\(5\)](#) and [31.7\(6\)](#).

¹⁶ [All parents \(including non-homeschoolers\)](#) can provide parent-taught driver education, with a clean driving record. Specific requirements apply. Fill out the Iowa Department of Transportation's "[Parent-Taught Driver Education Pre-Qualification Application](#)," then wait for a response. You may need to submit other documents to show you are lawfully educating the child AND were doing so the previous year.

¹⁷ IPI students and CPI students "may access the program through the school district in which the accredited nonpublic school or private school or private institution is located." [IC 261E.8.2\(a\)](#) The public school enters a

contract with a community college to provide certain courses, and only those courses are available through “concurrent enrollment” (also called “district-to-community college sharing”). The CPI student must dual enroll. IPI students need not dual enroll. [IAC 281-31.7\(6\)](#) More details are available [here](#).

¹⁸ [This site describes the program](#)

¹⁹ Per [IAC 281- 22.7\(4\)](#), the rule in [IAC 281-31.5\(4\)](#) that a parent may not use public school dual enrollment for all a child’s courses but one, does not apply to concurrent enrollment.

²⁰ Must dual enroll to obtain access. Post-Secondary Enrollment Option provides low or no cost college classes (math, science, soc studies, humanities, vo-tech, career option) when the requirements are met. The classes available are not limited by a contract with the public school, but there are some limits. [IAC 281-22.11](#). If a comparable course (substantially the same concepts) is offered in the local public school, the school board must refuse to allow the student to take the requested PSEO course. [IAC 22.10\(2\)](#) and [22.11\(1\)b](#) A PSEO course must not duplicate an available concurrent enrollment course. [IAC 281-22.11\(3\)](#)

²¹ There is *no* statute and *no* regulation that imposes an explicit deadline for seeking dual enrollment. The courts have not determined, however, whether a request for dual enrollment that is submitted *after* the Form A was due gives the student a right to dual enroll. Per [Dept of Ed policy](#) (p. 29) a family withdrawing a child from public school in order to homeschool has 14 days to file Form A and request dual enrollment. **But this conflicts** with [IAC 31.3\(2\)\(a\)](#) which gives such families 30 days.

²² Homeschoolers who have filed a timely Form A and requested dual enrollment for special services can seek services on the same basis as others.

²³ An open enrollment request for a child in grades 1-12 must be filed by March 1 of the prior school year unless there is “good cause” (demonstrated by Oct. 1) or approval from the receiving school board. [IC 282.18](#), as amended by [SF 2435](#) (2024). Appeals are allowed in limited situations. See [IAC 281-17.1 through 17.10](#) for more details about open enrollment.

²⁴ To get access to these programs, families must dual enroll by checking the “dual enrollment” box on Form A if the child is of compulsory age. [IAC 281-22.5](#) and [IC 261E.4](#). The student must not take so many courses via dual enrollment that they take only one course outside public school dual enrollment. Reg 31.5(4) There are some restrictions on open enrollment. [IA Code §282.18](#).

²⁵ The Dept of Ed’s 2025 “[Private Instruction Handbook](#)”, p. 26, says requests to participate in a HSAP (or dual enroll) must generally be submitted by September 15, but there is no support for this in the Iowa Code or [IAC 281-31.6](#) or anywhere else [in IAC 281 chapter 31](#).

²⁶ This is a gray area. [By statute](#), the Form A is necessary only if the student is “of compulsory attendance age.” The Iowa statute establishing dual enrollment ([IC 299A.8](#)) does not state that filing a Form A is a precondition to dual enrolling. A student who turns 16 after September 15 who dual enrolls immediately becomes subject to compulsory attendance and must file a Form A to dual enroll and comply with compulsory attendance. It is questionable, however, whether a student who turns 16 (or older) prior to Sept. 15 must file Form A when dual enrolling. *Former* rule [IAC 281-31.6\(1\)](#) said that if the child is past compulsory age, the parents do not need to file a Form A but must submit child’s name, age, parent contact info, and list of services or programs requested. The Iowa Dept of Ed says ([here](#) and [here](#)) that students have a right to attend public school until age 21 prior to the first day of school, and this would extend to dual enrollment.

*This document is provided as a courtesy and does not constitute legal advice to any person.