

Homeschooling through Highschool and Beyond

Planning your homeschool year represents a brand new start. Bring on the routine, bring on the quiet mornings of reading and lessons, bring on the satisfaction of a newly learned concept.

We're not all cut from the same cloth, but most homeschoolers find it helpful to plan lessons and workflow. But what does that look like? It actually starts at the end of the prior school year with an evaluation of what went well and what needs to be improved.

3 Preliminary Homeschool Planning Steps

1. Planning Step: Find the Right Homeschool Curriculum

If you're new to homeschooling, start with researching methods of education and curriculum a good place to start is <https://thsc.org/home-school-resources/curriculum/#types>. Veterans can ask the following questions to help fine-tune curriculum choices when planning your homeschool year:

- What are my children's strengths and weaknesses?
- Do they need another year of geometry, spelling or reading comprehension?
- Did the last book help them learn?
- Are their learning styles visual/verbal, tactile/kinesthetic, visual/non-verbal or auditory/verbal?
- For which subjects do I need new books—books that fit their learning styles best?
- With how many subjects do they need minimal help?
- How well do they work alone?
- Which books will enable them to work and learn independently?
- How much time do I have available if I want to use a more interactive curriculum?
- Do I want curriculum that does all the work for me—lesson plans, tests, study sheets, etc.?
- Should I sign them up for tutorials or co-op classes with other kids?
- When is it a good time to have them take dual-credit classes at the local community college?

2. Planning Step: Pick Electives

- What are their gifts and talents?
- What do they love to spend most of their time doing?
- Could I push them a little outside of their comfort zone?

According to public school development guidelines, students can earn six credits for electives on their high school transcripts.** Some examples include: foreign language, music, art, photography, computer programming, web design, game design, driver education, speech, debate or sports.

Consider enrolling all of your kids—or siblings close in age—in the same sport: Larger families can find it helpful to only do one sport or hobby per year. One family did soccer for years, and then they all agreed to switch to jiu-jitsu. It cut hours off the driving schedule and helped the family to stay close.

3. Planning Step: Assess Time Commitments

- How much time do I have to spend with my children?
- Do my children need a daily checklist?
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- What will I use to create checklists for my children and me?
- How often am I able/willing to drive my children to extracurricular activities?

- How many hours of study per day works for us as a family? How early do we start each day?
- For how many weeks of the year will we do school?

3 Homeschool Recommendations and Requirements to Consider During Planning

The only requirements to legally home school in Texas are:

- The instruction must be bona fide (i.e., not a sham).
- The curriculum must be in visual form (e.g., books, workbooks, video monitor).
- The curriculum must include the basic subjects of reading, spelling, grammar, mathematics, and good citizenship.

1. According to the ruling in the [Leeper v. Arlington](#) class-action suit that defines homeschooling in Texas as a private school for the purpose of compulsory attendance, homeschoolers must follow a bona fide (i.e., not a sham) curriculum that includes math, reading, spelling, grammar and a study in [good citizenship](#).

2. The [TEA recommends](#) that Texas public school students take two semesters of P.E., two semesters of computer technology and one semester of health education. Students can take a total of six credits of elective classes.

3. For high school students headed to college, you will need this many years of each:

1. English (4)
2. Math (3)
3. Social Science (3)
4. Laboratory Science (2)
5. Foreign Language (2)
6. Electives (3.5)

3 Homeschool Planning Hacks

1. Buy books that already have yearly lesson plans in place.
2. Research resources that are available online or through social media to help plan your homeschool year.
3. Get your teens to plan their own school year. It will take less time to tweak their plan than to start from scratch. The added bonus is teens will take ownership of their own education.

High School Graduation Requirements

[Grading Guidelines](#)

Evaluating your child's work in a subject area may be difficult for you, but grades are an important source of feedback for your child. Also, grades for high school subjects are normally included on the high school transcript. If grading is an area that you need help with, you may find [Grading Guidelines](#) at <https://hsllda.org/content/highschool/docs/GradingGuidelines.asp>. iCAN Homeschool provides grading information during our August Parent Meeting.

Recordkeeping

Recordkeeping and documentation are important during the high school years. You should maintain good records of each course your teen completes during each year of high school, including textbooks used, credits, and short summaries of the [course content](#). Taking the time to write down this information each year will be a benefit when your high schooler is a senior and it is time to prepare his or her transcript.

Whatever route your teen takes after high school—employment, military, or college—accurate records of the high school course work completed will serve him or her well when recapping educational background for an employer, providing information to military recruitment offices, completing college applications, or filling out scholarship applications.

[Evaluation of High School Credits](#) Determining the credits to be awarded for each high school course is not difficult.

[Short Video](#) <https://hslida.org/content/highschool/videos.asp#diane5>

Testing

There are many types of tests available to teens. The tests your teens need to take will depend on their post high school goals. For more information about College Testing, look at the resources below:

- [College Entrance Exams: Making Sense of the ACT, SAT, and CLT](#)
- [The PSAT Tests: A Litany of Choices for College-Bound Teens](#)
- [The Benefits of AP® and CLEP Tests for College-Bound Teens](#)
- [“What You Need to Know About College Testing”](#) by Kim Lundberg provides more information on the various tests.

Preparing your teen to score well on tests is important especially for college admissions and dual enrollment. Check out the test prep help below.

[Standardized Achievement
Advanced Placement
General Placement Tests
CLT10, PSAT, ACT Aspire](#)

[SAT/ACT and CLT
SAT Subject
ACCUPLACER
CLEP](#)

[DSST
High School Equivalency Tests
\(GED, HiSET, TASC\)
Personality/Aptitude/Career
Test Prep](#)

National Honor Societies

Honor societies are a great way for students to develop leadership skills, impact their communities, demonstrate high academic achievement, and boost their chances of college admission and scholarship awards.

- [Awards and Honors: Showcase Your Teens’ Specialties](#)

The organizations listed below represent prestigious opportunities for your homeschooler.

- ["Eta Sigma Alpha National Home School Honor Society"](#)
The first national homeschool honor society.
- [Mu Eta Sigma National Math Honor Society](#)
- [Science National Honor Society](#)
- [The National Society of High School Scholars](#)
Founded by Claes Nobel, whose family established the Nobel Prizes, this organization allows homeschoolers to

participate. To request an invitation, homeschoolers should go to the FAQ section of the website, print out an invitation request, attach GPA documentation, and submit. If accepted, they will receive an invitation by mail.

- [The Homeschool Student and National Honor Societies](#) by Erin McRee

Graduation

Because a home school is considered a private school (only where graduation and attendance is concerned, we are not under any other requirements) in Texas, the administrators of a home school (the parents) have the ability to determine the requirements for graduation for its students just as any other private school. When your child has completed what you have determined to be your school's requirements for graduation, you may graduate him/her and give him/her a diploma.

What is a high school transcript and why do I need one?

Transcripts are records of the courses that your children completed in high school, the credit earned for each course, and each course's final grade. Transcripts also include personal information used for identification purposes and usually a grade point average (GPA). Colleges and other post-high school institutions will likely request a transcript from your child in order to consider him for admission.

There are many good references that will direct you step by step in preparing a transcript for your child. In addition, some distance learning programs offer to provide transcripts for homeschooled students. For your convenience [sample transcripts](#) can be found at <https://hsllda.org/content/highschool/academics.asp#transcripts> and an explanation of the [GPA calculation](#) are provided on our high school website.

Video 4min <https://hsllda.org/content/highschool/vid>

Chart taken from

<https://www.academicrecords.net/transcript.nsf/Challenge-Difference-Assigning-Credits.pdf?OpenFileResource>

Beyond Graduation

Another oft-asked question from new home educators concerns what happens after home schooling. The options for home school graduates are no different from those for any other high school graduates. They include apprenticeship, college, employment, marriage and family, the military, and trade schools. On succeeding pages, several of these options are addressed. Students should feel confident about their home school education, because home school graduates have proven to be excellent students when they choose to further their education, conscientious employees, and successful members of the armed forces.

The Market Place

Apprenticeship

Many home educators are returning to this time-tested method of training for employment. Mike Rowe has a great website with listing of local apprenticeship opportunities as well as scholarships <https://www.mikeroweworks.org/about/>. Also check out <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/apprenticeship-finder/listings>.

College

Many home schoolers successfully attend college after graduation. There are a number of ways for home school students to [make the transition to college](#). The specifics may vary, based upon the needs and goals of the student. Some have begun college work while completing their high school-level work by taking courses at a local college for dual credit. Some begin after high school graduation by enrolling in a local junior college and later transferring those credits to a four-year university.

Military

The United States military is an admirable career field open to almost any home school graduate. For reasons explained in the article, [Military Recruitment and Acceptance of Home School Graduates](#), those who wish to have a military opportunity for their students should look for classroom opportunities for their children, including dual credit classes at junior colleges or college classes after graduation.

Proprietary or Trade Schools

A home school graduate may attend trade schools in Texas. If asked about a high school diploma, he may simply explain that he received his diploma from a home school. In 1999 the Texas Administrative Code dealing with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) and [admission into proprietary schools](#) {Section 807.2(21)} was modified to define secondary education as “successful completion of public, private or home schooling at the high school level or obtainment of a recognized high school equivalency credential.”

Law Enforcement

Another career that is open to home school graduates is law enforcement. Texas allows high school graduates to attend police academies hosted by junior colleges or cities for the purpose of training potential police officers. In 2004 the director of education and training for the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education (TCLEOSE) clarified [state policy](#) for these academies by stating, “...an academy may not require more of a homeschooler than they do for any other applicant.”

<https://thsc.org/graduation/>

Guides with checklists and examples:

TEA (Texas Education Agency) Graduation Toolkit

https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&ved=2ahUKEwi33v6wueHgAhVR4qwKHeutDjEQFjABegQICBAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Ftea.texas.gov%2Fcommunications%2Fgrad_toolkit%2Fbooklet.pdf&usg=AOvVaw0mXWQx8JQ9r60VjAV2K2d6

HSLDA Guide for Homeschooling Through High School

<https://hslida.org/content/HighSchool/HSguide.asp>

THSC Home School and beyond

<https://thsc.org/home-school-resources/high-school-and-beyond/>

Students with Learning Differences guides and curriculum providers:

<https://homeeducator.com/homeschooling-your-special-needs-student-through-high-school/>

<https://thsc.org/home-school-resources/special-needs/>

Curriculum

<https://thsc.org/home-school-resources/curriculum/>

<https://hslida.org/content/landingpages/courses-and-curriculum.asp>

Graduation Requirements:

Classical Conversations chart with nationwide information

<https://www.academicrecords.net/transcript.nsf/Challenge-Difference-Assigning-Credits.pdf?OpenFileResource>

TEA State of Texas Public School

<https://tea.texas.gov/graduation.aspx>

Homeschool Requirements

<http://www.texasunschoolers.com/resources/texas-homeschool-laws>

Electives and Vocational Training

<https://hslida.org/content/highschool/vocation.asp>

<https://thsc.org/home-school-resources/high-school-and-beyond/>