

FAQ about the new home study statute:

These questions were asked during the two Zoom meetings where the new changes were explained to attendees. These answers reflect those of VHEN (Vermont Home Education Network) and Retta Dunlap. Please understand that VHEN and Retta have no control of what AOE (Agency of Education) does or will do with this new law. Nor do we know exactly how they will transition to it. These answers are Retta's opinion. The AOE is the final word on how this will all be done. If homeschoolers do not like how it was done, we can certainly try to address that later.

1. Those of us who have already sent in enrollment notices for this upcoming school year (23/24) and have received our email confirmation from them, will we need to reregister for the 2023-2024 year?

- No, you will not need to enroll again. This means that you will use the new law for the first time in 2024.

2. For us parents that have been doing this for a while and were enrolled for 2022/2023 school year, do we need to pass in an EOYA (end of year assessment) or can we skip it and just send in our intent after July 1st?

- The AOE has stated that you do not need to submit an EOYA for the 22/23 school year unless you want a verification letter from the state. VHEN is of the opinion that this is not necessary. That giving them an EOYA by itself is not contemplated by law that they can even ask for that even before the law changed.

3. What if we can get our work done in less than 175 days?

- Instruction in the minimum course of study does not just include book work or completion of a plan of work. If you are driving down the road on vacation in the summer and visit a historical site or national park, at some point in that visit you will eventually talk about something that is covered in minimum course of study. This also counts as instruction. Homeschoolers think or at least they should think that everything in life is a learning experience. Sometimes we take advantage of it and some times we don't. Homeschooling is not just about course work or class work or home work. It is way more than that. It is a lifestyle in which every moment of every day is a learning experience for a child.

4. With regards to the form that AOE requires for Intent to Enroll, do we expect it to have additional "hoops" to go through beyond just information about child to be enrolled, etc.?

- I do not expect it to have additional hoops but I do wonder if the AOE will try that. If they do, we can address it then.

5. Portfolio - four samples total, or 4 per subject?

- The law states four samples total.

- 6. If a student accesses a class at school, does the school still submit a form C?**
 - Form C is no longer needed.
- 7. When will the Agency of Ed. have the Notice of Intent form ready?**
 - They hope to have something put together by July 1st.
- 8. With the disability aspect; if they are already enrolled and receive another diagnosis, does that new one need the evidence submitted?**
 - The law does not require that a second enrollment notice be submitted which would contain that information. Will the AOE try to ask for that? They have no statutory support to do so. Should parents tell them? I would say no. As a parent do you need the state to know to do what you as a parent are supposed to do? The state does not need to know this information.
- 9. We have been doing parent report and portfolio, can we continue to do just that? Or are we now required to do an assignment as well?**
 - The parent report and portfolio is one form of assessment that you can do. If you do that you do not need to do anything else. Currently, many families do a portfolio for submission and also test for their own information. Just to know how the kids are doing when compared to other kids their age takes the same test. You are required to keep only one form on file. Doing multiple types of assessments may help you know where your kids are academically. Totally up to you.
- 10. Does anything change about us being able to access classes in public school?**
 - Nothing changes when integrating with the public-school system. Each school board has a home study integration policy that explains how the home study student is to be integrated. Check with your local school board for a copy of that policy.
- 11. We are going into our third year of homeschooling. Would we submit an annual notice or would we submit just the annual notice since we have been enrolled previously? Already submitted the MCOS (minimum course of study) and accepted for 22-23.**
 - Every homeschooling family will need to send in an enrollment notice under the new law. This notice does not expire. Under the old law, all enrollment notices expired on July 31st.
- 12. If we choose to do a standardized assessment, do we need to still keep records of proof of all areas of the MCOS if the assessment doesn't cover it all (example, art.)?**

- The assessment is not based on the minimum course of study. It just that you need to have your child assessed each year and maintain that record. Why would you not want to assess in each area of the minimum course of study? It is important that you do enough documentation of your homeschooling experience so that you have enough information for college to draw for admissions, so that should you ever go back to the public school they can see the academic progress of your child over the years in the minimum course of study.

13. Did you say that they cannot ask for MCOS I have a 13-year-old and i believe that was part of the old law that after 12 you have to submit one.

- They will no longer ask for an MCOS at the age of 13. That is not in the new law.

14. What can the state use as cause to request our EOYA that we've filed for ourselves?

- Should an accusation of educational neglect surface, you would most likely run into the Department of Children and Families or DCF. They have a proceeding called "children in need of services" or a CHINS proceeding. This is the container where the parental rights are discussed and due process of those rights is managed. DCF know of this law change and that homeschooling parents are to provide 175 of instruction and do an annual assessment and maintain copies of that record. In a CHINS proceeding they can ask for it. Family court is also a place where parental rights are adjudicated and family court can ask for them. This is serious. Parents need to provide the instruction and have an annual assessment done maintaining the records of such assessments. This mean that all assessment are to be kept as a record of the education.

15. How does the change in law affect paperwork for dual enrollment and early college?

- This change should not change how the paperwork for dual enrollment and early college is done. However, the AOE has been asking for parents to supply a minimum course of study to apply for these vouchers. This is mistakenly done. Vermont law says that to get these vouchers that a PLP or personal learning plan is to be created which contains dual enrollment or early college as the educational plan for the student. Vermont law also define what a PLP is. Homeschooling parents need to know what this is and can solely decide what goes into such a document. VHEN will be doing a zoom call explaining what this all is.

16. I'm curious to know how many homeschoolers are taking the self-directed learning/unschooling route. Is there a way to find out?

- There is no way to know. When I am asked about this here is what I tell those outside of homeschooling so they can understand what self-directed/unschooling is. There is a spectrum here and different parents

have different definitions of what this is. This is mine. Those outside of homeschooling are concerned that no education is taking place. And to be honest there are some homes where nothing is being done and a child grows up not having been exposed to lots of learning experiences that prepare them for life. I like to think this is rare. Having done unschooling, I tell people, legislators mostly, that unschooling is not no schooling. It is having a child in an atmosphere where they are intentionally exposed to many things and learning naturally without realizing that it is "schooling". There is little paper work or sit in a chair book work. In the younger years, this can work quite well. As a child grows, they should also be learning to love learning so that when they are older, they will learn, on their own, what they need to learn to do what they want to do. That is self-directed learning. Children no more like "work" than the rest of us. They must learn to be disciplined to do what they need to do to get things done. Learning is no different.

17. How long do we need to keep the assessment on file for? We should keep the work from the children and complete a parent "essay" until the children go to college or "graduate"? Can this be digital?

- All assessments should be kept on file until the child grows up and the documents are no longer relevant. The parents are required to maintain the records of all these assessments and yes, they can be maintained digitally.

18. An enrollment notice is needed for each student as they turn 6, still, correct?

- Yes.

19. What is a Personal Learning Plan (PLP)?

- The law defines a PLP this way: "Personalized learning plan" and "PLP" mean documentation of an evolving plan developed on behalf of a student in an ongoing a home study student and the student's parent or guardian shall be solely responsible for developing a plan. The plan shall be developmentally appropriate and shall reflect the student's emerging abilities, aptitude, and disposition. The plan shall define the scope and rigor of academic and experiential opportunities necessary for a secondary student to complete secondary school successfully, attain postsecondary readiness, and be prepared to engage actively in civic life. While often less formalized, personalized learning and personalized instructional approaches are critical to students in kindergarten through grade 6 as well."

20. After 16-year-old, can we stop notification even if they are still doing homeschooling?

- Yes, you can. I would suggest that you still provide instruction and still do annual assessments. And for the high school level student you should

create a high school transcript for them. This is a link to VHEN's sample transcript that you can download and use. <https://vhen.org/college-resources>. You need to do these things even if you are not enrolled because to go back to high school or to go to college you have to document that an education took place.

21. I've always had a teacher evaluate, but now I will do a parent report... is there a template to follow or does it look like the teacher evaluation?

- A parent's report is similar to a teacher evaluation in that you describe or summarize what was done in each subject area. You just talk about what you did and the progress you saw in your student. Think of it as journaling your child's educational experience.

22. Is there still a ratio we have to be teaching to be considered homeschoolers? My eldest goes to a private school without a drivers ed program. It would be nice if I could teach him.

- This ratio was artificially imposed by the AOE. I do not see a mechanism where they can enforce this through the new law. You are no longer required to submit signatures of those providing the instruction. How would they know? However, homeschooling is where a child is learning at home. If your child is enrolled in home study and is in an institutional setting all day – that is not homeschooling and the child should be enrolled in that school. Can the student be enrolled in home study and have a class or two in an institutional setting and still be homeschooling, sure. The definitions blur when the student spends most of the day at the institution and not learning from home.

23. Retta, can you just quickly explain again, the enrollment notice will be once and done for ever and then the annual notice will be every year or what?

- Yes, the new law is that simple. The enrollment notice is once and done and the annual notice is every year.

24. I know you wanted to limit how we reach out to our reps for good reason. At this point, would it be worthwhile, advisable to reach out to our state reps (My state senator is new and on the ed committee). I listened to the link for the committee you sent us and heard the "wild west" comment that you emailed about. Would it be worthwhile to (1) reach out to her only with a thank you? (2) reach out to her and see if we could meet her and have her go over our homeschool process so she can understand homeschooling better?

- During the lobbying efforts for the new law and how the Legislature works, if the legislature is going to agree with the language there is no need for mass emailing legislators. However, always get to know your local representatives. They need to meet and know homeschoolers so they can see it is not some cult of non-educators hiding in the woods! When you meet with them, let them ask questions, talk to the kids, and make sure

they are in clean clothes!!! My kids knew that when they were at the State House or meeting legislators, they would be clean and behaved! I have found that legislators like to meet homeschooled kids and are generally supportive of homeschooling. When they say they are supportive always ask for more information. They may be supportive but think public school testing should be mandatory. Try not to react too strongly that!! You are on a mission of introducing them to homeschooling.

25. I'm a VT Licensed teacher homeschooling my children. It sounds like I can do the VT teacher assessment as usual? Are there any changes for me?

- Vermont licensed teachers can still do the teacher eval as usual.

26. The ANNUAL notice, will they send us a letter that they received it, like with the enrollment?

- I do not know. The law does not require that they do. The whole point of this is that the enrollment notice does not expire. The old law clearly stated that all enrollment expired on July 31st. This was intentionally left out of the language.

27. If we have already started home study for the next year, how will I count it since I haven't enrolled yet?

- I am not sure what you mean by "counted" but if you do not enroll in home study then you are not enrolled.

28. We study year-round, and I'm not sure how the 10 days before starting works. Do I just pick a date?

- Yup, just pick a date and use that to send in the annual notice. I would suggest pick a date in the summer before the schools start. Just because that is how they see "schooling" as starting in the fall. The law says "at least" 10 days before. You could submit 30 days before. This gives you breathing room to schedule the timing.

29. No more MCOS for those not exempt?

- Under the new law there is no longer an exemption as described in the old law. In fact, there is no submission of the MCOS anymore.

30. I was under the understanding that when a child reached high school the old MCOS requirements changed. Since we no longer will provide this, is there info about needs to be covered on the AOE website?

- The AOE, I am sure will address this. Bottom line your MCOS can have whatever you want in it and there will be no one to critic it for you. Write what your child actually needs. This gives you the freedom to follow what your child needs to learn.

31. My son will turn six years old in January. Does this mean he should be enrolled for 23/24 school year? Or do I not enroll him until 24/25 school year? I am so unclear on this.

- Home study students are to follow the compulsory attendance statute. Have your child enrolled by the time they are 6 years old. There are other laws beyond this one that the public schools follow whereby they can refuse to enroll a student that is too young for first grade. Such as a child who turns 6 in January. The public schools are allowed to delay enrollment for that child. Home study students have no such laws to allow that. Send in the paper work by age 6.

32. Is there any language that implies the state may ask for access to the assessments we keep on file?

- There is no language in the new law that implies the AOE can ask for access to these assessments. Department of Children and Families (DCF) through a child in need of services process (CHINS proceeding) can certainly ask for it.

33. What would happen (theoretically) if you failed to send the annual notice on time?

- If the local truant officers got wind of it, they could come knocking on your door. If you refuse to have your child enrolled anywhere, they can start truancy proceedings. Parents who have control of a child SHALL cause their child to be enrolled If you do not send in those annual notices it goes to intent to not be enrolled.

If you have further questions, email or call Retta Dunlap at mountainfoldvt@gmail.com or 802.472.5491.