

## WAC 392-121-182

## Alternative learning experience requirements.

(1) An alternative learning experience may be counted as a course of study. A school district alternative learning experience may make use of digital and/or on-line curricula, and may be delivered over the internet or using other electronic means. A school district alternative learning experience may also include significant participation by students, parents, and families in the design and implementation of a student's learning experience. This section provides an alternative method of determining full-time equivalent enrollment and claiming state funding for public school learning experiences that are:

(a) Individual courses of study for students who meet the definition for enrollment specified by WAC 392-121-106. Students may enroll part-time in alternative learning experiences. Such enrollment shall be subject to the provisions of RCW 28A.150.350 and chapter 392-134 WAC;

(b) Supervised, monitored, assessed, and evaluated by school staff. As used in this section, "school staff" means certificated instructional staff of the school district according to the provisions of chapter 181-82 WAC, or a contractor pursuant to WAC 392-121-188;

(c) Provided in accordance with a written alternative learning experience plan that is implemented pursuant to the school district board's policy for alternative learning experiences; and

(d) Provided in whole or part, outside the regular classroom setting, including those learning experiences provided digitally via the internet or other electronic means.

This section sets forth the standards, procedures, and requirements for state funded alternative learning experiences. This section is not intended to prevent or limit alternative education programs provided by a school district with federal or local resources.

An alternative learning experience may be counted as a course of study pursuant to WAC 392-121-107 if the following requirements are met:

(2) **School district board policies for alternative learning experiences:** The board of directors of a school district claiming state funding for alternative learning experiences shall adopt and annually review written policies for each alternative learning experience program and program provider that:

(a) Require a written plan for each student participating in an alternative learning experience that meets the minimum criteria pursuant to subsection (4) of this section;

(b) Require that the overall ratio of certificated instructional staff to full-time equivalent students enrolled in alternative learning experience programs and courses, including those that rely primarily on digital curriculum, be identified and approved by the school district board of directors in a public meeting;

(c) Describe how student performance will be supervised, monitored, assessed, evaluated, and recorded by school staff. Such description shall include methods for periodic grade reporting, if different from existing school district policy;

(d) Require each student enrolled in an alternative learning experience to have direct personal contact with school staff at least weekly, until the student completes the course objectives or the requirements of the learning plan. Direct personal contact shall be for the purposes of instruction, review of assignments, testing, reporting of student progress, or other learning activities. Direct personal contact means a face-to-face meeting with the student and, where appropriate, the student's parent or guardian. In establishing policies for alternative learning experience programs and program providers, the school district board of directors may determine that direct personal contact can be accomplished through the use of telephone, e-mail, instant messaging, interactive video communication, or other means of digital communication, instead of a face-to-face meeting, if in the judgment of the board such contact methods do not compromise educational quality, student health and safety, or the fiscal integrity of the district;

(e) Require that each student's educational progress be reviewed at least monthly and that the results of each review be communicated to the student and if the student is in grades K-8, the student's parent or guardian;

(f) At the discretion of the school district board, the policy may describe responsibilities of the student's parent(s) or guardian including, but not limited to:

(i) Approval of the written alternative learning experience plan;

(ii) Responsibility for the parent(s) or guardian to provide or implement a portion of the student's alternative learning experience under the supervision of school staff, if the parent(s) or guardian agrees; and

(iii) Requirements to meet with school staff for purposes of evaluating the student's performance and/or receiving instructions on assisting with the student's alternative learning experience. The school district board may also prescribe requirements for appointing a person to provide or supervise a portion of the student's alternative learning experience in the

event the student's parent(s) or guardian will not or cannot be a participant in the student's alternative learning experience;

(g) Designate one or more school district official(s) responsible for approving specific alternative learning experience programs or courses, monitoring compliance with this section, and reporting at least annually to the school district board of directors on the program. This annual report shall include at least the following:

(i) Documentation of alternative learning experience student headcount and full-time equivalent enrollment claimed for basic education funding;

(ii) A description of how certificated and classified staff are assigned program management and instructional responsibilities that maximize student learning, including the ratio of certificated instructional staff to full-time equivalent students;

(iii) A description of how a written student learning plan pursuant to subsection (4) of this section, is developed, and student performance supervised and evaluated, by certificated staff;

(iv) A description of how the program supports the district's overall goals and objectives for student academic achievement; and

(v) Results of any self-evaluations conducted pursuant to subsection (7) of this section;

(h) Satisfy the office of superintendent of public instruction's requirements for courses of study and equivalencies (chapter 392-410 WAC);

(i) For alternative learning experience courses offering credit, or for alternative learning experience programs issuing a high school diploma, satisfy the state board of education's high school graduation requirements (chapter 180-51 WAC); and

(j) Identify what, if any, expenditures which are directly related to the written student learning plan and are paid by participants of an alternative learning experience may be subject to reimbursement by the district.

**(3) Alternative learning experience implementation standards:**

(a) Alternative learning experiences shall be accessible to all students, including those with disabilities. Alternative learning experiences for special education students shall be provided in accordance with chapter 392-172A WAC.

(b) It is the responsibility of the school district or school district contractor to ensure that students have all curricula, course content, instructional materials, and other learning resources essential to successfully complete the requirements of the written student learning plan. Curricula, course content, instructional materials, and other learning resources for alternative learning experiences shall at minimum be consistent in quality with those available to the district's overall student population. Instructional materials shall be provided in accordance with RCW 28A.320.230.

(c) Work-based learning as a component of an alternative learning experience course of study shall be subject to the provisions of WAC 392-410-315 and 392-121-124.

(d) Contracting for alternative learning experiences shall be subject to the provisions of WAC 392-121-188 and RCW 28A.150.305.

(e) A school district that provides one or more alternative learning experiences to a student shall provide the parent(s) or guardian of the student, prior to the student's enrollment, with a description of the difference between home-based instruction pursuant to chapter 28A.200 RCW and the enrollment option selected by the student. The parent or guardian shall sign documentation attesting to his or her understanding of the difference and the documentation shall be retained by the district and made available for audit.

(f) The school district shall institute reliable methods to verify a student is doing his or her own work. The methods may include proctored examinations or projects, including the use of web cams or other technologies. "Proctored" means directly monitored by an adult authorized by the school district.

(g) State funded public schools or public school programs whose primary purpose is to provide alternative learning experiences using digital or on-line means shall be accredited through the state accreditation program or through the regional accreditation program.

**(4) Written student learning plan:** Each student enrolled in an alternative learning experience course of study shall have a written student learning plan designed to meet the student's individual educational needs. The written student learning plan may be developed in partnership with the student, the student's parents, and other interested parties, with recognition that school staff has the primary responsibility and accountability for the plan, including supervision and monitoring, and evaluation and assessment of the student's progress. The written student learning plan shall include, but not be limited to, the following elements:

(a) A beginning and ending date for the learning experience;

(b) An estimate of the average number of hours per week that the student will engage in learning activities to meet the requirements of the student learning plan. This estimate may be used in reporting enrollment in compliance with subsection (5) of this section and must be based upon the criteria in subsection (6) of this section;

(c) A description of how weekly contact requirements will be fulfilled;

(d) A description of the specific learning goals and performance objectives of the alternative learning experience. This requirement may be met through the use of course syllabi or other similarly detailed descriptions of learning requirements. The description shall clearly identify the requirements a student must meet to successfully complete the course or program;

(e) Identification of instructional materials essential to successful completion of the learning plan; and

(f) A description of the timelines and methods for evaluating student progress toward the learning goals and performance objectives specified in the learning plan.

The written student learning plan shall identify whether the alternative learning experience meets one or more of the state essential academic learning requirements or any other academic goals, objectives, and learning requirements defined by the school district. For a high school alternative learning experience, the plan shall specify whether the experience meets state and district graduation requirements.

(5) **Enrollment reporting:** Effective the 2005–06 school year, the full-time equivalency of students enrolled in alternative learning experience programs shall be determined as follows:

(a) Using the definition of full-time equivalent student in WAC 392-121-122 and the number of hours the student is expected to engage in learning activities as follows:

(i) On the first enrollment count date on or after the start date specified in the written student learning plan, the estimated average weekly hours of learning activity described in the written student learning plan;

(ii) On subsequent monthly count dates, if the student's progress review pursuant to subsection (6) of this section indicates satisfactory progress, the student's full-time equivalent shall be based on the estimated average weekly hours of learning activity identified in the student learning plan;

(iii) If the student's progress review indicates a lack of satisfactory progress, the student's full-time equivalent shall be based on the estimated average weekly hours of learning activity described in the student learning plan, and the actual number of hours the student engages in learning activity pursuant to the written student learning plan shall be documented during the ensuing month. Documented hours shall encompass only time spent on those learning activities intended to accomplish the learning goals and performance objectives identified in the written student learning plan, shall meet the following criteria and shall be verified by district staff:

(A) Those hours of classroom instruction provided by school staff;

(B) Those hours of work based learning calculated in accordance with WAC 392-121-107 (1)(f);

(C) Those hours of learning activity other than those specified in (a)(iii)(A), (B) and (D) of this subsection that are conducted and supervised by the student's parent(s) or guardian, or other person as designated by the written plan; and

(D) Those hours that the student participates in learning activities other than those specified in (a)(iii)(A), (B) and (C) of this subsection. If the student is in grades K–8, such learning activity shall be supervised by the student's parent(s) or guardian or other person designated by the written student learning plan;

(iv) On subsequent monthly count dates, if the student's progress review indicates a lack of satisfactory progress, the student's full-time equivalent shall be based on the actual average weekly hours of learning activity documented during the prior month;

(v) Enrollment of part-time students shall be subject to the provisions of RCW 28A.150.350, and shall generate the pro rata share of full-time funding.

(b) The enrollment count shall exclude students meeting the definition of enrollment exclusions in WAC 392-121-108 or students who have not had direct personal contact with school staff for twenty consecutive school days. Any such student shall not be counted as an enrolled student until the student has met with appropriate school staff and resumed participation in their alternative learning experience or participated in another course of study as defined in WAC 392-121-107;

(c) School districts providing alternative learning experiences to nonresident students shall document the district of the student's physical residence, and shall establish procedures that address, at a minimum, the coordination of student counting for state funding so that no student is counted for more than one full-time equivalent in the aggregate.

**(6) Accountability for student performance:**

(a) At minimum, students enrolled in alternative learning experiences shall have their educational performance evaluated according to the following process and schedule:

(i) Each student's educational progress shall be reviewed at least once per month. The progress review shall be based on the learning goals and performance objectives defined in the written student learning plan.

(ii) The progress review shall be conducted by school staff and shall include direct personal contact with the student. If allowed by district policy, direct personal contact may include the use of telephone, e-mail, instant messaging, interactive video communication, or other means of digital communication. The results of the review shall be communicated to the student and, where possible, the student's parent(s) or guardian.

(iii) Based on the progress review, school staff shall determine and document whether the student is making satisfactory progress in completing the learning activities and reaching the learning goals and performance objectives defined in the written plan.

(iv) If the student fails to make satisfactory progress for no more than two consecutive evaluation periods or if the student fails to follow the written student learning plan, an intervention plan designed to improve student progress shall be developed and implemented. This intervention plan shall be developed by school staff in conjunction with the student and, for students in grades K-8, the student's parent(s) or guardian.

(v) If, after no more than three subsequent evaluation periods, the student still is not making satisfactory progress, a plan designed to more appropriately meet the student's educational need shall be developed and implemented by school staff in conjunction with the student and, for students in grades K-8, the student's parent(s) or guardian.

(b) The educational progress of students enrolled in alternative learning experiences shall be assessed at least annually, using, for full-time students, the state assessment for the student's grade level and using any other annual assessments required by the school district. Part-time students shall also be assessed at least annually. However, part-time students who are either receiving home-based instruction under chapter 28A.200 RCW or who are enrolled in an approved private school under chapter 28A.195 RCW are not required to participate in the assessments required under chapter 28A.655 RCW.

(c) Students enrolled full-time in nonresident alternative learning experience schools, programs, or courses shall have the opportunity to participate in any required annual state assessments at the district of residence, subject to that district's planned testing schedule. It is the responsibility of the enrolling district to facilitate all necessary coordination with the district of residence and with the student and, where appropriate, the student's parent(s) or guardian to fulfill this requirement. Such coordination may include arranging for appropriate assessment booklets, student notification of assessment administration schedules, arrangements for forwarding of completed assessment booklets to the enrolling district for submission for scoring and reporting, and other steps as may be necessary. Assessment results for students assessed according to these provisions shall be included in the enrolling district's accountability measurements, and not in the district of residence's accountability measurements.

**(7) Program evaluation:** School districts offering alternative learning experiences shall engage in periodic self-evaluation of these learning experiences in a manner designed to objectively measure their effectiveness, including the impact of the experiences on student learning and achievement. Self-evaluation shall follow a continuous improvement model, and may be implemented as part of the school district's school improvement planning efforts.

**(8) Annual reporting:** Each school district offering alternative learning experiences shall report annually to the superintendent of public instruction on the types of programs and course offerings subject to this section, including student headcount and full-time equivalent enrollment claimed for basic education funding. The report shall identify the ratio of certificated instructional staff to full-time equivalent students enrolled in alternative learning experience courses or programs. The report shall separately identify alternative learning experience enrollment of students provided under contract pursuant to RCW 28A.150.305 and WAC 392-121-188.

**(9) Documentation:** In accordance with required records retention schedules, a school district claiming state funding for alternative learning experiences shall maintain the following written documentation available for audit:

(a) School board policy for alternative learning experiences pursuant to this section;

(b) Annual reports to the school district board of directors as required by subsection (2)(g) of this section;

(c) Annual reports to the superintendent of public instruction as required by subsection (8) of this section;

(d) The written student learning plans required by subsection (4) of this section, including documentation of required weekly direct personal contact;

(e) Student progress reviews, evaluations, and assessments required by subsection (6) of this section;

(f) Student enrollment detail substantiating full-time equivalent enrollment reported to the state, including estimated total hours of participation in educational activities, and any actual documentation of hours of learning for those students failing to make satisfactory progress; and

(g) Signed parent enrollment disclosure documents required by subsection (3)(e) of this section.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 28A.150.290. 09-06-038, § 392-121-182, filed 2/25/09, effective 3/28/09. Statutory Authority: RCW 28A.150.290 and 2005 c 356. 05-13-154, § 392-121-182, filed 6/21/05, effective 7/22/05. Statutory Authority: 1997 c 265 § 6 and RCW 28A.150.290. 99-08-008 (Order 99-01), § 392-121-182, filed 3/25/99, effective 4/25/99. Statutory Authority: RCW 28A.150.290. 95-18-097, § 392-121-182, filed 9/6/95, effective 10/7/95; 95-01-013, § 392-121-182, filed 12/8/94, effective 1/8/95. Statutory Authority: RCW 28A.150.290, 28A.150.250 and 28A.150.260. 91-02-096 (Order 50), § 392-121-182, filed 1/2/91, effective 2/2/91. Statutory Authority: RCW 28A.41.055 and 28A.41.170. 88-03-013 (Order 88-8), § 392-121-182, filed 1/11/88.]

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## Taking Charge

Larry and Susan Kaseman

### Homeschoolers, Is Our Good Name For Sale?

Public schools and business people are increasingly trying to convince homeschoolers to enroll in their programs and use their services. At first glance, the offers may seem attractive. However, they undermine homeschoolers' identity and freedom and serve the interests of their promoters to the detriment of homeschoolers. The way we respond will strongly influence the future of homeschooling. It may be difficult for some families to refuse the offers, especially the financial incentives. But aren't our freedoms worth it? Many families homeschool happily and successfully on very limited budgets.

This column will discuss why homeschoolers have become the targets of this marketing, how accepting these offers would affect us, and what we can do, including sharing this information with others, since even if we refuse these offers, our freedoms will be undermined if other people accept them.

#### Offers Discussed in this Column

Here are some examples of the offers being marketed to homeschoolers:

- Public school districts in states such as Washington are setting up programs in which parents work with their own children at home under the guidance and direction of teachers, coordinators, and school officials. Specifics vary. Participants often can take courses and use school equipment. Sometimes families are given equipment, such as computers, to use at home and vouchers to cover expenses the school district designates as "educational." Although children do school work at home, and although they are called "homeschoolers," this is not homeschooling. The dangers of these programs being confused with homeschooling are even greater when well-known homeschooling leaders allow their names to be associated with them.

These alternative public school programs are large enough to cause serious concern about their effects on homeschooling. For example, in Washington state, the growth rate for homeschooling, which had consistently been 15-20% per year, has dropped to

zero in the past two years, in large part because of the growth of alternative public school programs.

- On-line publicly-funded community schools (referred to as "charter schools" by the media) will be operating in Ohio by the fall of 2000. Promoters are marketing them primarily to homeschoolers.

- Wisconsin recently passed legislation allowing homeschoolers to take courses in public schools (under certain circumstances) and school districts to receive state aid for these courses.

- Around the country, local school officials are holding meetings and mailing out surveys to ask homeschoolers what services the public schools could provide them.

Why are these programs being offered? NOT at the request of homeschoolers. In fact, the vast majority of homeschoolers want to be as independent as possible of control by public schools.

School districts have strong financial incentives to enroll homeschoolers. The more students enrolled, the more money a district receives from state and local taxes. Homeschoolers are especially appealing because schools have to spend less money on classrooms, teachers, etc. Also, public school officials want to control homeschoolers because they feel threatened by comparisons with homeschoolers and because they think children really cannot learn outside the control of public schools and trained teachers.

There is also financial incentive to market distance learning programs (in which the primary communication between students and teachers is via computers) to homeschoolers. Tax money is available through charter schools, vouchers, and other sources, and some programs charge tuition.

#### How will these programs affect us as homeschoolers?

When we interact with public schools, we are drawn into their values, standards, men-

tality, assumptions, and approach to education. We increase the incentive and opportunities school officials have to question us and investigate our homeschools. For reasons such as these, the vast majority of homeschoolers choose to homeschool without being involved in public schools.

The more involved in the public schools we are, the greater the compromises we make. Something as simple as taking a course in a conventional school requires conforming to the school's schedule, standards, beliefs, values, and tests. Homeschoolers who are clear about what they are doing and why, seem to navigate these waters with the least trouble. However, it is important that they not set precedents (such as taking qualifying tests) that could be applied to other homeschoolers, unless these are required of all students, public and private.

By contrast, families enrolled in alternative public school programs are more seriously involved in public schools. They are agreeing to the values, standards, goals, basic curricu-

lum, testing, and approaches to education of conventional public schools. Their participation in publicly funded programs gives the government a basis for holding them accountable.

Unfortunately, even if we don't participate in such programs ourselves, our homeschooling freedoms will be undermined if others do. A significant increase in homeschoolers' participation in public schools will change the definition of homeschooling, which will increasingly be viewed as an arm of the public schools. The new definition is likely to spread rapidly because families enrolled in alternative public school programs are so visible; after all, they are part of public education. Because it is so much easier for the media and researchers to identify and contact them than homeschoolers, these families will increasingly appear in news stories and research on homeschooling.

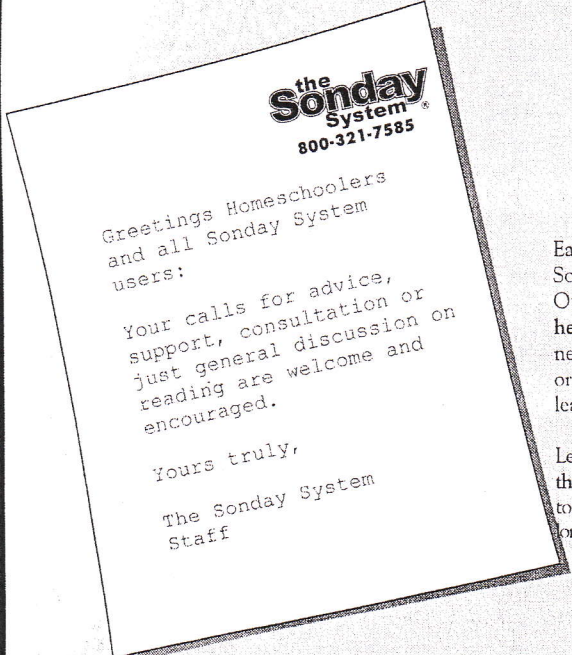
Of course, this change will be especially serious if the term "homeschoolers" is used to refer to children enrolled in alternative public

school programs. The general public will conclude that "homeschoolers" are people who teach their children at home under the control, guidance, direction, and supervision of public schools. This perception would make sense to the general public because it is familiar and therefore feels "safe." But we homeschoolers will have lost our good name.

In addition, many alternative public school programs and charter schools are built on programs originally designed for at-risk students, dropouts, and those in special education, which sends the subtle message that many children learning at home are problems.

To maintain our homeschooling freedoms, we have to make it clear, first to ourselves and then to others, that despite apparent similarities (children learning at home), families who choose public school programs are doing something fundamentally different from what homeschoolers do.

What is that difference? Homeschoolers

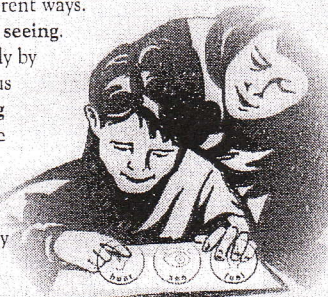


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## Taking Charge

say things like, "We are taking fundamental responsibility for choosing the values, approaches, methods, curriculum, and assessment for our children's education. We may choose to purchase a curriculum that tells us what to study each day and follow that curriculum precisely. Or we may develop our own curriculum, based on our children's interests, strengths, abilities, and unique timetables. What is central to our homeschooling is that we are freely choosing each of these things. We willingly take on the responsibility for our children's education and are free to change any time, to make mid-course corrections, to skip math today and do two math lessons tomorrow, or to skip today's math entirely because it's a review of things our children already know, or skip geometry altogether because music is more important and we only have so much time and energy."

Families who enroll in an alternative public school program say things like, "In exchange for resources, guidance, and money, we agree to adopt your values, use your curriculum, take your tests, and comply with your standards. We realize that if we skip today's math lesson, we still have to make sure that our children can pass the required math test. This means that skipping geometry altogether is not really an option, and the music that the children love will just have to wait."

The differences between homeschooling and participating in alternative public school programs are difficult to put into words. And it's risky. We do not want to come up with a definition of homeschooling, because then all homeschoolers would be expected to comply with the definition. One of the best parts of homeschooling is the space it has for every family, whatever approach to education they choose. However, we can clearly identify many things that are not homeschooling, including alternative public school programs and distance learning through charter schools.

But what about public school programs that say, "Oh, you can choose the subjects you want your child to study, and we'll help you find resources"? Don't they offer the best of both worlds: freedom to choose what our family will study and support and resources from the public schools? Unfortunately, they do not. Participants still have to comply with whatever general requirements the program

has. And new programs that do not have many requirements at first will soon add them.

## What We Can Do

Now comes the tricky part. How can we protect our right and freedom to homeschool without interfering with the rights and freedom of families who want to participate in such programs? How do we as a society balance the needs and wants of a given individual with the needs and wants of other individuals and the good of the whole society? If my freedom is being undermined by what you are doing, do I have the right to prevent you from doing it, even though this limits your choices? Or do you have a moral imperative not to do it? Such questions, too complicated to be answered in this short column, show the complexity of this issue.

We may not be able to prevent public schools from offering alternative programs and having at least a few families enroll. But we are not being responsible to our children, to ourselves, or to those families who are coming after us if we stand idly by while homeschooling is taken over by alternative public school programs. If even learning that takes place in people's homes is controlled by the government, where is our educational freedom? At least parents who send their children to conventional public schools realize (or should realize) that they are surrendering most decisions about their children's education to the government. The debate over whether alternative public school programs should exist, and if they do, whether they should be called homeschools, is not simply a question of homeschoolers' freedom versus the freedom of families who want to enroll in alternative public school programs. It is a question of fundamental educational freedom.

Here are some things we can do:

- We can share our concerns with others in informal conversations, support group meetings, workshops at homeschooling conferences, etc.
- We can make choices for our own families that minimize the opportunities public schools have to control our homeschools.
- We can show parents that it is not only



possible but highly desirable and rewarding to homeschool without assistance or resources from public schools or the government, that you don't have to be connected to or regulated by the government to learn, and, in fact, for many families it is much better not to be. We can share ways we have discovered to homeschool inexpensively. We can communicate such information through magazines like this, inclusive grassroots state organizations, local support groups, homeschooling conferences, and meetings to inform the general public about homeschooling.

• One option we do have, if we feel strongly about the risks of alternative public school programs that are called "homeshooling," is to oppose the formation of such programs. If such programs are being considered in our community, we can contact public officials, parents, and others to explain the problems involved. We can attend public meetings designed to discuss and plan such programs. If such programs already exist, we can request audits by pointing out to our legislators that public funds are being misused.

• If we cannot prevent such programs, we can work to ensure that they are not called "homeshools." Instead they could be called alternative public school programs, off-campus programs, or some such.

• If we are contacted by our local public school superintendent who wants to draw homeschoolers into the public school by offering services or resources, we can explain clearly that we don't want what public schools have to offer and neither do most homeschoolers.

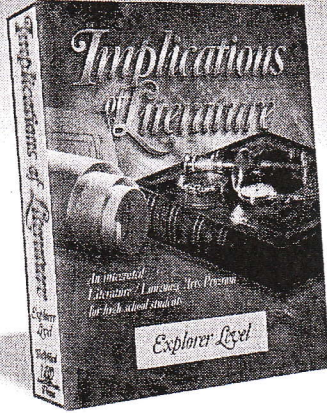
**Conclusion**

Alternative public school programs that allow students to do some of their school work at home and charter schools with distance learning programs undermine our identity as homeschoolers and our good name, especially when participants in these programs are incorrectly called "homeshoolers." To maintain our good name, we homeschoolers need to alert others to this problem and work to minimize these programs and ensure that they do not use the term "homeshools."

HEM

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 Larry and Susan Kaseman have been learning through homeschooling with their four children since 1979. They are the authors of *Taking Charge Through Homeschooling: Personal and Political Empowerment*.

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## We Have Come Full Circle

By Mia Anderson.

In an interesting way, homeschooling has come full circle. We are again, at the beginning.

Those homeschoolers who came first educated their children at home, and underground, a fringe element by just about every definition of the word. They were educational extremists with some pretty extreme ideas.

Those ideas included such things as: children are natural learners; parents want, and can provide, what's best for their children; and that education is a much broader concept than a list of academic subjects. Those early homeschoolers absolutely knew that parents don't need educational "experts" to tell them how to teach, or government schools to dictate and evaluate what they teach.

Time moves on and homeschooling becomes legal and more commonplace, no longer an extreme idea, just a little strange. Then the studies start to appear. Homeschoolers test better than average on standardized tests. Homeschoolers are well adjusted and well socialized. Most surprising of all, homeschoolers can get into college! Homeschooling is a proven success, and, becomes a real educational alternative.

Concurrently, public education is in trouble. The system created for a burgeoning industrial society needing factory worker is not working for an entrepreneurial, computerized society needing life long learners who are creative thinkers and problem solvers. The system is failing, and the expert's answer to that failure is testing and program standardization. Meanwhile, the children within the system are being crushed first by the system failure, and then by the corrective response.

Concerned parents want options for their children, and homeschooling is one of those options. But, and here's the important part, many of these parents are moving away from *a school* that is failing *their child*, not necessarily away from a system or an educational philosophy. These parents are looking for a solution to a personal crisis. They are not necessarily embracing those independent values and beliefs of the early homeschooling community. They may not be interested in going it alone. They may believe in the "educational expert" and support the goals and objectives of public education.

So an increasing number of dissatisfied families are leaving public education to homeschool, taking their educational funding with them. Well, education is a business. In business, if a competitor is successful, you do your best to copy its product, and give that product a recognizable name. So in response to the increased popularity of homeschooling, the public system creates alternative education programs with high levels of parent involvement and often call them homeschooling programs, deceptive, but not illegal. Thus alternative education, or parent partnered, "homeschooling" programs are born.

And, for some it's a good fit. Parents who want to have more involvement with and influence over their child's education, but don't necessarily want to leave the values, security and support of the public system have the perfect program. And, that's good.

But, this new group of alternative education parents also wants to broaden the label "homeschoolers" to include them. They don't understand the loud objection from traditional homeschoolers. Do you know what they call the traditional homeschoolers who want to keep the meaning of the word clear and concise? What they call those homeschoolers who want homeschooling to mean education independent of the public system, who maintain that homeschooling parents don't need educational "experts" to tell them how to teach, or government schools to dictate and evaluate what they teach? They call them extremists.

Here we are, again.