



December 10, 2024

Home Education Regulations Update

The following are changes that Alberta Homeschooling Association requests be made in the August 2025 version of the Home Education Regulations.

Definitions

1(F.1) Substitute “supportive” and “support” and “supported” for “supervision” and “supervised.”
Rationale: the term “supervision” is adversarial and confers a power difference of authority that should not be in the facilitator/school/government relationship with the parent/child. It’s a cooperative relationship working together as a team for the best outcomes. Because of the punitive language used, many parents fear the two evaluation meetings per year and will avoid the facilitator at all costs.

This also puts undo pressure on the facilitator to be an untrained social worker. They are expected to have “eyes on the child”, yet, do not know what is expected.

All parents want the best education for their child and the Home Education Program must be a vehicle of trust and support in building the parent’s capacity to educate the child in increasingly difficult studies. The child is the parent’s and not the government’s and the child’s education is not “supervised” by the government from ages 0-5 when research indicates the most formative brain development takes place. Thus, supervision shouldn’t begin at age 5-16 either in Home Education programs. This is not school that takes place in the home. This is a unique form of learning unlike anything in any institution and parents know their child best. A Home Education Program financially supported and academically supported by a board conveys a relationship of colleagues (parent and facilitator) working together for the best interests of the child.

Notification for Unsupervised

1.1(2) Keep. Notifying yearly is a reasonable expectation and many parents switch education formats for each year whether classroom, online, supervised or unsupervised Home Education, or Shared Responsibility.

Investigation and Notice

1.2(1) This whole section is threatening, biased and unnecessary. Every child who breathes, learns. Every child progresses all the time. Every child will meet the Schedule of Outcomes for Home Education Students just by living their life. Any director or investigator that doesn’t understand the mountain of evidence in brain science and learning in the past thirty years will unnecessarily tread

on parental rights and abilities to provide a stimulating learning environment customized to their unique child.

This section was only added in 2019 to pacify the public optics when the government introduced Unsupervised Home Education. It should be removed or the language must be softened to be more supportive and less threatening.

Notice of Intention to Provide Supervised Home Education Program

2(1) Add “including electronic methods.” It is time to utilize the digital age. Many AB ED auditors will not allow any electronic means to notify. They insist on a paper and pen form as well as a wet signature. This creates a hardship for school boards and parents. If public schools can accept registrations via Learning Management Software, so should Independent school authorities for Home Education.

Home Education Program

3(5)(a) The word “certify” means.....? This is unclear how detailed or the language parents must use to outline their home education activities, and resources to meet outcomes. Some Home Education Plans are 20 pages. Others are 1 page. Define “certify” better.

3(6)(a) The word “explanation” is problematic for parents who do not have teacher training. They can’t be expected to state an outcome and provide a rubrics for how the outcome will be met. This legislation imposes school, classroom and teacher expectations on parents in the home. It is needless as science clearly tells us that all children learn and progress if they are breathing. Brains never stop connecting neurons.

3(8) This is problematic for schools because they are expanding teacher time to help parents with the Home Education plan before the parents have even notified or been accepted.

Evaluation of Student Progress

4(1)(b) No date or length of time is stated for keeping samples.

4(1)(c) If parents do not attend the facilitator meeting, there should not be consequences other than the school board might not accept the notification for the following year. The board can document attempts made, but the parent should not be coerced into meeting with a possibly unsupportive facilitator (and yes, they are out there. Many disagree with home education and do not hide it.)

4(1)(d) Change this to read that having the child present is optional. It is not reasonable to have the student present for evaluations. Evaluations can be evidence-based provided by parents or caregiver. Many students are too shy, anxiety ridden or traumatized by recent school events to be forced to sit in front of a facilitator and be interrogated on learning. Many children under the age of 12 don’t remember much of the activities and resources they used and the parent must fill in the

gaps reporting to the facilitator. Sometimes parents want to speak with the facilitator in confidence and out of earshot of the child. Make the child's presence optional.

4(1)(d)(i) Some boards will not allow Zoom evaluations because of their specific Alberta Education Liason's personal preference. It should be the parent's preference. Some children also may not wish to be on camera due to anxiety etc., which is the major reason they may be home educating.

4(2)(d) Advising parents of progress just creates work for the parents. All parents know exactly where their child is at. Some boards want parents to write reports or create powerpoint presentations of students progress, and deliver to the facilitator, just so the facilitator can report back to the parent exactly what the parent gave them. This is work and redundant. All parents know exactly where their child is at, and if they don't, they can ask their facilitator for tests.

4(2)(3) "does not provide a reasonable opportunity for the student to achieve the applicable outcomes," This phrase should be deleted. Every child who breathes, learns. Again, the wording here is biased against home education and feeds society's view that it is a "lesser" form of education and the child will be deficient despite evidence that proves home educated children are often ahead of their classroom peers.

Responsibilities of Board

5(d) The boards do not provide parents with services and amenities until they notify. Would be nice to have them advertised on their websites and printed materials so parents know beforehand who to choose.

High School Credit Eligibility

6 Keep this section. The ability of Home Education students to earn high school credit is essential for their learning success. Define this: Is this a Course Challenge or a Portfolio Review? Many boards just give an exam worth 100% under a Course Challenge which is bad for those kids who don't do well on exams and contradicts the regulations for Course Challenge in which the school must provide a variety of Summative assessment options. Often, the reason for giving just an exam is that there is no extra government funding for boards to hire subject matter experts to spend 3 hours perusing the student's portfolio in order to award a mark and credit for each course. The current funding for Home Education doesn't cover this requirement for high school credits. (Home Education in Grades 10-12 should be funded more). A Course Challenge should include a portfolio review and much choice in assessment as requested by the facilitator who is a certified teacher. Trust in the facilitator that they are a certified teacher and will assess all parts of the portfolio and not just an exam. Choice of assessment is critical.

Funding

7(2) Some boards follow the regulation, but also charge parents a "registration" fee of up to \$200 per child. These "drip" fees create a barrier to choose home education because that child now has \$200 less of lessons and curriculum funded. Registration fees should not be allowed.

7(3) Should parents pay for distance learning materials. This statement is no longer relevant. This was relevant when ADLC existed, but now parents can order distance education materials from many companies and third party lesson providers and this statement confuses the issue.

7(4)(a)(i) This should state “in accordance with the Home Education Reimbursement Standards” because the statement “or other resources” may be valid for the home education program but not valid under the Standards. Many AB ED auditors do not allow certain resources because of their personal bias and opinion, yet the resources are used in classrooms and are justified in parent’s Home Education plan.

7(5) If parents decline funding, they should be allowed to check a box on the Notification Form that gives their consent for the supervising board to keep their funding. This gives permission up front instead of the board having to chase parents for consent. The boards use the funding to help families that pull their children out midyear and have no academic support and their funding has stayed with the previous school.

7(6) Boards never ask for materials back because most are not compatible with the APS. The practice has ceased in the past twenty years. This should be removed.

Termination of Home Education Program

8(3)(b)(i) There is no grade level in home education as each child progresses individually, not as a cohort. Remove “grade level.” Also remove “age-appropriate.” Many parents home educate so that their child is not compared to cohorts but instead progress compared to their own abilities. This was missed by all stakeholders in the last review and the government said to bring it up at the next review.

8(4) should have Option (c) to match the government’s Home Education Handbook. Program can also be terminated if the parent notifies directly with the Government.

We hope that Alberta Education considers these changes to the Home Education Regulation. We believe that they put the student’s best interests first and recognizes that Home Education is a unique program unlike any other form of education delivery and is not just “school delivered in the home”.

Other issues that was outside the focus of the Home Education Regulations, are three more “asks.”

1. Allow students to challenge the diploma exams at age 16 without a course mark for a final mark and credits, rather than wait until age 19.
2. Increase home education funding to increase parental choice, especially at the high school level. The cost of home education is a significant barrier to choice. We have been hit hard by inflation with no increases or grants. This hurts students.
3. The Home Education Reimbursement Standards have not been revised since 2020. Alberta Education auditors are unfairly harsher on Independent schools supervising funding, than public school boards. Auditors also have their own biases and opinions on what is acceptable for parents to teach with. For example, some will accept basic Lego (which is very educational) and some will only accept Lego if it states “educational” on the box. It is

very confusing for parents and schools on what the auditors accept to be funded. The Standards need to be much clearer.

Sincerely,

Alberta Homeschooling Association Board