

New Option for Home Instruction

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Tennessee parents now have an additional option for conducting home instruction of their children. The Tennessee Department of Education has decided to recognize enrollment in the distance learning program of an accredited private school as a means of complying with the compulsory attendance law.

According to Dr. Connie Mayo, director of non-public and home schools at the Department of Education, parents may enroll their children in an online, Category III non-public school to meet the school attendance requirements. A Category III non-public school is one that is accredited by one of the five regional accrediting associations, e.g. the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Each school establishes its own admissions and academic standards consistent with its accreditation.

Parents choosing this option are not required to notify their local school district, do not have to meet any state teacher qualifications, and do not have to administer any standardized test required by the state. They need only comply with whatever requirements are established by the school in which their child is enrolled. Category III schools located in Tennessee are required by state law to report to the school district where the school is located the names, ages, and residences of students attending the school. Out-of-state schools do not have to report such information about their students, because they are not located in any Tennessee school district.

Students residing in Tennessee are not eligible for the HOPE Scholarship unless the Category III school providing the on-line program is located in Tennessee. On the other hand, Tennessee citizens residing out of state as dependents of parents who are full-time religious workers in another nation or active-duty military are eligible for the scholarship under the rules of the Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship Program.

Parents choosing this newly recognized option of home instruction through a Category III non-public school are eligible for membership in Home School Legal Defense Association.

This information is from:

<http://www.hslda.org/hs/state/tn/200903020.asp>