

# **Homeschooling Guide to San Antonio and Texas**

**by**

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**“Homeschooling Guide to San Antonio and Texas”**

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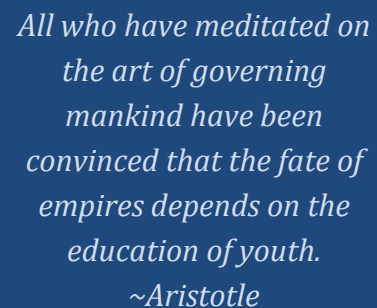
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## Introduction

### Who Should Read this Book

This book is for two groups of people. The first are homeschoolers who have just moved to San Antonio or are planning to do so. You already know how to homeschool, you just want a quick survey of the local homeschool landscape. Here you'll find the basics of homeschooling requirements in Texas and local resources.

The second group is for those new to homeschooling living in Texas. This book is an introduction to homeschooling. It will provide you with the basic requirements for homeschooling in Texas and where to go locally for help. In some ways, it may raise more questions than it answers but this is a good thing for new homeschoolers. Now you know what questions to ask which can really help out when you first start homeschooling.



*All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth.*  
~Aristotle

### What is in this Book

Think of this book as a “lite” version of a Homeschooling 101 class with applications in San Antonio. There are plenty of books out there that go into detail on how and why to homeschool. What’s provided here is just a basic outline of information for people considering homeschooling in Texas. For example, it talks about how to withdraw a child from public school in Texas which is not the same thing as withdrawing a child from a school in New York. The “applications” part is an overview of resources commonly used by homeschoolers in San Antonio. I provide a list of support groups, relevant issues, museums and such for the general San Antonio area. This information, especially concerning support groups, tends to change frequently, so you should visit the [website](#) for the latest information.

## Questions to Ask Yourself before Deciding to Homeschool

The first question is the big one and all the ones that follow it are merely specific aspects of it.

### **Are you willing to accept responsibility for your child's education?**

One way to think about this question is to look at how much of your child's education you are already responsible for. If you send your child to public school, you probably do most, if not all of the following:

- Get your child up, fed, and off to school in the morning. You hear from the school the importance of a well rested, well fed child but it is your responsibility. And you'll definitely hear from the school if he doesn't show up.
- Supervise homework. This is more common the younger the child but it is also something that is increasingly becoming expected of the parent. If the teacher posts the assignments on the internet then the parent doesn't have to rely on the child for the information.
- Remediation. If your child is having problems in math but doesn't have any sort of learning disability designation, you're most likely responsible for providing extra help in the subject, even if it is only making the child show up for tutoring sessions. But given all the advertisement I receive in the mail, it looks many parents end up hiring professional help for tutoring.

Decisions you aren't responsible for but are responsible for the consequences:

- Teacher selection. Although education research has documented different teaching styles and the role of personality of the teacher, you don't get to select your child's teacher. The school's argument is that "all of our teachers are

professionals” therefore it shouldn’t matter which class your child is assigned. Yet your child through her grades is responsible for the consequences of that teacher selection.

- **Curriculum selection.** With the limited exception of some electives in middle and high school, you don’t get to pick which subjects your child will study, when they will study it, or for how long. But once again, ultimately your child is responsible for the results of that curriculum. It’s his grade on the report card.
- **School hours.** The school sets the school hours and everyone else must accommodate those hours. In general, this is a reasonable arrangement but there are times when the approach stubbornly lacks flexibility. If your child is sick for more than a certain number of days, better have a doctor’s excuse although that is often not enough. If you can only take off for your vacation in January, many schools will not excuse the absences even if the student makes up the work. Want to take your child out of school for some important family event-it will be an unexcused absence. Too many unexcused absences and your child could fail even while making A’s in all of her classes.

If your child doesn’t do well in school, you can always blame the school although they will in no way be held accountable. In reality, even the public schools hold the parents responsible for their children’s education results. Ok, it’s just usually the bad results when this is most obvious but still true. Surely you’ve hear professional educators ask what do you expect teachers to do when children come to school with parents who let them stay up all night or can’t afford to provide them with decent cloths to wear? This isn’t to say that schools don’t have legitimate concerns about being held responsible for the success or failure of such children. But the bottom line is that if things work out great for the student, the school takes credit for it but if the student doesn’t succeed, the problem lays with the family-not the school.

Like it or not, you are already responsible for the results of your child's education. The question is whether or not you want to take control of the tools to provide the education.

Related Website Resource: [Why I Homeschool--Thursday Nights](#)

### **Do you want to spend most the day and week with your child?**

I can't tell you how often I have heard "I could never spend that much time with my child." I really don't know how to respond to this. I assume that the parent actually likes the child so what is the problem? Behavioral problems that they would rather just let the school deal with? Just not that interested in the child's world? Worried that it would be just the child and the parent locked in the house together 24/7?

I do know families where they have a child with special needs or behavioral issues where having the child in school allows the rest of the family to function together. They are obviously doing what is in the best interest of their family. I also know families where removing the child from the school actually resolved a lot of behavioral problems.

As for not being interested in the child's world? Once people start homeschooling, a very common response is that education is wasted on the youth.

As for being locked in the house together 24/7, that leads to the next question. But the reality is that you will be spending a lot of time together with your children and in any new relationship, you will have to get used to each other. You're used to doing things one way, your children another. It will take time to develop new routines for you and your children to do things together.

### **Are you willing to provide your child with all the necessary socialization opportunities that non-homeschoolers worry about?**

I've never met any homeschoolers who are actually home all of the time. All those extra-curricular activities that children participate in school are available in some form to homeschoolers. In fact, many homeschoolers feel overscheduled. There are so many

things to do and homeschooling allows for more time to do them. When my son was in middle school, he did Odyssey of the Mind on Mondays, fencing on Tuesdays and Thursdays, piano lesson and art class on Wednesday, and baseball in the evening. Yeah, homeschoolers have plenty of opportunities to get out and about but as the parent, you'll be responsible for making it happen.

Even if you don't know any other homeschoolers, there are all the "normal" extracurricular activities for kids such as 4H, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Civil Air Patrol, soccer, baseball, football, etc. Many organizations will create a daytime option for their activities to accommodate homeschoolers.

*A man who carries a cat  
by the tail learns  
something he can learn  
in no other way.*

*~Mark Twain*

Then there are the high school issues, or as it is often phrased, "what about the prom?" Here's the deal, if your child can't get an invitation to some local prom, you hold your own. After all, it's parents organizing the prom in the high schools. If you want your child to participate in a specific activity, you may have to organize it yourself.

More than likely, it's not going to be as convenient as when they can participate in the activity through the school. You could end up having to drive some distance to get your children involved in specific activities. It may also end up costing you more because the school won't be subsidizing needed equipment and supplies. And there will be times when it simply can't be done—I have yet to hear of a homeschool marching band.

But while some traditional avenues of socialization may be limited or closed, others will become available. The entire family may volunteer at the local food bank or animal shelter. Groups of family may organize cooperatives where parents take turn teaching/leading kids in various activities. Many homeschoolers set aside a day during the week to meet with other families in a local park just for the "social interaction" opportunities.

The socialization opportunities will be there but it will up to you to make sure your kids have access to them.

### **Will you be able to find time for yourself?**

Any stay at home mom (or dad) with pre-schoolers can relate to the often desperate need to have some adult conversation with an actual adult. The homeschooling parent will often find herself in the same situation. There will be opportunities to chat with other homeschoolers as you chauffer you kids from activity to activity and park days are a great way to sit down and talk with another adult with a reduced amount of interruptions. When my son decided he didn't want to do park day anymore, I still went just to be able to talk to some other homeschoolers. For some, this will not be enough and it will be up to you to carve out the amount of "me" time needed.

### **Are you willing to figure out how your children will learn a subject you know nothing about or even despise?**

The first thing to notice about the above question is that it isn't phrased as "how will you teach" the subject because your children can and will learn plenty without you teaching.

If you plan on teaching the subject, you can always learn it before your children or with your children. For a while my husband taught at a pharmacy school and with the rapid change of information in his field, his goal was to be one day ahead of the student. And if he should be confronted with a question where he didn't know the answer from a student while on rounds, the automatic response was, "that's a great question, why don't you look up the answer and tell us about it tomorrow."

But there is nothing that says you have to teach the subject. There are plenty of alternatives:

- use a self-teaching curriculum such as Teaching Textbooks or Rosetta Stone

- hire a tutor
- barter another homeschooler for teaching it
- join a coop that offers the subject
- pay for an online class
- use free online materials such as Khan Academy or MIT Courseware
- enroll in dual credit

This tends to be more of a concern at the high school level. Yet this is also the point where most students are capable of self-teaching. In fact, that's exactly what is happening in a lot of high school classrooms. The point is that you don't have to know the material but be willing to find a way for your child to learn it.

Related Website Resource: [What courses are available to meet college requirements?](#)

### **How are you going to afford homeschooling?**

For many families considering homeschooling it means giving up an income. Of course, there are usually expenses that go away as well but it can mean a dramatic change in lifestyle.

Homeschooling itself doesn't have to be expensive. People have homeschooled their families by designing their own curriculum based on what's available at the local library. You can also buy a complete packaged curriculum for a specific grade along with a teacher to grade the work from various companies. This can start in the hundreds of dollars and easily run into thousands of dollars.

Most homeschoolers will find themselves somewhere in between, paying for some things while creating their own for others which means they are spending some money or homeschooling.

Then there are the extra-curricular activities. Again, these don't have to be expensive. Things like Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and 4H have minimal costs as do certain community

or church sponsored programs. But you could easily spend a lot of money on music lessons, volleyball clubs, and classes at local museums. Again, it will vary by family and child.

Don't underestimate the cost of homeschooling but also realize that you'll be making a life style change that will seriously change your expectations.

### **Are you flexible enough to change tactics as needed?**

Many families new to homeschooling immediately purchase some very expensive curriculum to start homeschooling. As their school year progresses, they find themselves falling further behind in the curriculum provided lesson plans or perhaps constantly battling their kids to complete assignments. At this point, many new homeschoolers start questioning if homeschooling is for them and maybe they should send their kids to school.

It's not just the money that they invested in the curriculum that keeps them from considering it as a possible problem but the emotional investment as well. They picked this program and think this how I'm supposed to homeschool. Often that decision reflects a deep held belief in what they think learning is supposed to look like or how they would like to learn. In essence, they are making the same mistake the school do in adapting a one size fits all approach which is probably one of the main reasons why they considered homeschooling to begin with.

So it's not surprising that it can be difficult to make that first adjustment. Maybe you'll have to change the curriculum. Or maybe you'll need to switch from doing a few subjects everyday to doing just one subject a day. Or maybe you'll need to change your expectations—not all homeschoolers are geniuses and not all children need to go to college.

Homeschooling is a learning process, not just about academics but learning about ourselves as well.

Related Website Resource: [Pizza and Homeschool](#)

## **Are you willing to be judged by family and strangers about your decision to homeschool?**

Yes, total strangers will question your decision to homeschool. It usually begins in the grocery store or at the post office during school hours when someone will see your child and ask “no school today?” Usually, this is nothing more than polite conversation. You say you homeschool and the person politely responds with some variation of “that’s nice.” But there are people who ask about your qualifications or start quizzing your kids on the multiplication tables or state capitols. I have no idea why they think they have the right to do this, but they will do it.

This can be a lot easier to deal with than the in-laws with whom you already have a strained relationship or a sibling whose children are doing so well in school. Often the combination of more information about homeschooling and time to see how your children are doing is enough to silence family criticism.

But not always. This can add another level of stress to homeschooling. Some families handle it by simply biting their tongues and ignoring unwelcomed comments. Others are more proactive and explicitly state that discussion of their homeschooling choice will not be tolerated and leave the situation as necessary. Of course, you will have to decide how your family will approach the problem.

*What does education often do? It makes a straight cut ditch of a free meandering brook.*

*~Henry David Thoreau*

However, presenting a unified family front on homeschooling can be difficult if one spouse isn’t completely onboard with the concept. Such situations aren’t that unusual. One parent has done a lot of research and wants to homeschool and the other isn’t sure if homeschooling will be effective or the answer to their problems. Under such

circumstances, it is critical for both parents to communicate what their expectations are so that one parent doesn't see a failure while another sees a success.

Related Website Resource: [And What About Socialization?](#)

### **Do you want more control over your family time and values?**

I would argue that this should be a no-brainer question. But this is why answering the first question is so important. If you are willing to accept responsibility for your child's education then you will have control of school hours and amount of homework assigned so you will have more control over your family time. If you choose the curriculum, you decide what is important to teach and at what level and if you are responsible for arranging social opportunities, you can limit the negative influence of others.

Reading the previous paragraph can make it sound like homeschooling is just a way to isolate your child from the "real" world and deny them the opportunity to learn from a variety of opinions. But a careful examination of many school situations reveals a world far different than the "real" world and one that often only pays lip service to true diversity of opinion and backgrounds. You could easily write a dissertation on the problems of holding public schools as the standard for the "real" world and that's not the point of answering this question.

The point of this question is recognizing that schools have an enormous influence over the lives of families, often forcing them to accommodate a system that can't possibly meet the specific needs of their families. By taking control of your children's education, you have the ability to teach in a way that is most effective for your children rather than changing your children to meet the needs of the education system.

Related Resource Website: [When Children Might be Better Left Behind](#)

## I've Decided to Homeschool-Now What?

You've made the decision to homeschool, so what's next? The following is some friendly, non-legal advice from me to you based on my experiences and others who also homeschool in Texas.

### Withdrawing your child from school

The important thing to remember is that homeschools are considered private schools in Texas. Give some thought as to what this means. You are withdrawing your child to place her in a private school. Private schools are unregulated in Texas.

Public schools do not ask private schools to submit their curriculums for approval. They do not consider children in private school truant. They do not ask you for attendance records.

Nonetheless, just because you know you are a private school, doesn't mean that the public school will know it. So when you go, you might want to take the following with you:

- **A Letter of Assurance:** This letter should state that you are withdrawing your child to educate at home. In it state that per Education Code 25.086; you have a curriculum that meets basic education goals of reading, spelling, grammar, mathematics and a study of good citizenship. Also state that you will respond only to school district requests that are put into writing.
- **TEA Commissioners Letter:** You can download the latest version of this letter from the TEA website. A copy is included at the end of this book. Basically, it tells districts that you are allowed to homeschool.

*I said how, and why, young children, were sooner allured by love, than driven by beating, to attain good learning.*

*~ Roger Ascham*

- Paper and pen: you'll want to have your facts.

What not to do:

- Sign anything. You don't have to sign anything. The school may request you sign a form stating you're withdrawing your child and for what reasons. This is often used by the district to maintain their enrollment and attendance records. Whether or not you choose to sign is up to you.
- Show your curriculum. You don't have to show the school your curriculum or provide its name or anything else beyond the assurances you state in your letter.

Related Website Resource: [Is it Legal to Homeschool in Texas?](#)

## **Don't Panic--How to Choose a Curriculum**

So you've got junior at home now. And then it hits you--what am I supposed to teach him--how am I going to teach him--I don't know how to teach him--WHAT HAVE I DONE!?

As I'm always telling my son, the first rule is "don't panic." Take a deep breath and tell yourself that you can do this. You may not know how, but you'll figure it out. The following are some suggestions on how to go about it.

Give yourself some time. Most people realize that they are going to need some time to review their curriculum options but they often forget that they need time to figure out what works best for their children. You may already have some idea about your child's learning style in that it didn't fit in with the school's teaching style. So now you need to know what works best or you'll just be setting yourself up for frustration.

If you've decided to make the change at the end of the school year, you've got all summer to plan. Don't let it slip away. If you withdrew your child during the school year, it's especially important for you to sit down and make a plan, even a schedule for research. Whatever your plan may be, simply having one will help alleviate your feelings of panic.

One last note for working parents who are quitting full time jobs to homeschool. If at all possible, quit at the beginning of summer rather than the end. It will easily take you two to three months to learn to live with your child fulltime. You have both been used to different schedules and interacting with one another in set circumstances. Those will radically change with homeschooling--give yourselves time to adjust.

This is all fine and dandy you may say, but what do I do with junior in the mean time? Remember, learning about junior or juniors, is part of this process. Spend this time trying different activities to find out what is most effective for all involved. Take the kids

to the local museums, check out books and videos from the local library, download worksheets and unit studies from the internet, read the local paper, and so on.

There are plenty of resources on how to choose a curriculum so I won't try to duplicate them here. Just remember, don't panic, and a couple of weeks without a set curriculum won't prevent them from getting into Harvard.

Related Website Resource: [Don't Panic Homeschooling Curriculum](#)

## What Do Homeschooler REALLY do all day?

I know, it sounds like the headline for some celebrity gossip magazine. What superstars do in private isn't the same thing that they project to the world and we all want to know. Well, this is actually a pretty similar situation except what homeschoolers really do isn't the same thing that non-homeschoolers or even new homeschoolers believe is happening or should be happening.

This is why so many non-homeschoolers are worried about socialization among homeschoolers and why so many new homeschoolers feel overwhelmed and that they aren't doing it right. So while any experienced homeschooler will tell you that no two families homeschool alike, this is a brief attempt at explaining what homeschoolers really do all day.

It's actually easier to start with what they don't do--they don't spend seven hours a day doing school at home.

Okay, there are probably some families somewhere who do, but I've never heard of them. Yet, apparently a lot of non-homeschoolers have since this is what they think homeschoolers do. We sit down at a table and do math for 50 minutes and then switch to history for another 50 minutes and then to language arts and...you get the idea.

Maybe they even imagine the mom (and while there are many more dads doing the homeschooling, it's still mainly moms) rings some sort of handheld bell to indicate time to switch to another subject. No wonder they worry about socialization issues for homeschoolers.

No, we don't spend seven hours a day doing school work.

There is something in education call "time on task" which means how much time is actually spent learning in a class as oppose to non-learning activities (I'm being nice,

you can choose for yourself which non-learning activities they would be.) I haven't looked at the research lately but I would be surprised if the actual time on task is much more than half the time actually spent in school. So if homeschoolers don't have to deal with all of the non-learning activities in school, doesn't it make sense that they probably only spend about half as much time doing school work as their traditional schooling peers?

So for non-homeschoolers, this means that homeschoolers have that much extra time to socialize and for new homeschoolers it means that you shouldn't worry if you finish all your school work before lunch.

Now about the school work--learning doesn't have to be like traditional school.

This is where a lot of new homeschoolers trip themselves up. They buy a packaged curriculum with a nice set of teacher plans that are scheduled for the year. It's comforting, they don't have to figure out what to teach which can be intimidating, they just have to teach.

But what starts off seeming like a great idea soon becomes a daily reminder of inadequacy and failure around January or February. By this time, most new homeschoolers will be behind according to their lesson plans and will be panicking that they can't teach their kids everything they need to know.

Because the curriculum was sold as homeschool curriculum, new homeschoolers think the lesson plan is the measure of success for homeschoolers. It isn't.

- You don't have to do each subject every day.
- You don't have to do each subject every week.
- Heck, you don't even have to do every subject every year.

You do have to do what is going to work for you and your family.

You may find you have one child that thrives on a schedule and loves workbooks but learns math better with one curriculum and history with another.

You may find you have a child that will become totally absorbed with a subject to the point where you are buying college level material and you just try to maintain a low level of effort in other subjects so that you don't feel guilty. (Don't, these are the kids that get into Harvard.)

One child may learn through videos, another through books, another by building something related to the subject.

This doesn't mean that homeschoolers can't be organized or structured.

What it means is that you are going to have to decide if you want to change your family to fit the needs of the curriculum or change the curriculum to fit your family's needs.

So ultimately what homeschoolers really do all day is what works for their families. Some may have school rooms with nice stacks of books and weekly tests while others may be on a first name basis with the staff at the local museums.

You can make a few generalizations of what homeschoolers do:

- Homeschoolers will not be spending as much time on school work as they did in school because there is no need to.
- Homeschoolers will not be doing school work only during school hours because there is no need to.
- Homeschoolers have a lot more free time to socialize and will often be involved in more "extra-curricular" activities than kids in traditional school.

- Homeschoolers spend a lot more time around various age groups, including adults, and subsequently will act differently than kids who are only around other kids their same age and background.

As for specifics, that will vary from family to family. I know that's not a good answer, especially for new homeschoolers who want to know how they might do things differently. So I offer the following four blogs of homeschoolers that give glimpses into what their days look like.

### **Four Homeschooling Blogs**

Stephanie Hoffmann Elms' blog "[Throwing Marshmallows](#)" has 40 blog entries on Typical Homeschool Days--thanks for making them so easy to find. These are detailed descriptions of what she did with her kids that day. Stephanie's [Notes for the Past](#) gives a nice sense of her approach to schooling and how their days go.

I like her "[By Jove I think he's got it post](#)" for several reasons. It shows Stephanie dealing with a learning block. She already realizes that Jason is a right brain learner and is not going to be good at rote memorization--this means she has taken the time to figure out how Jason actually learns, not just how she wishes he would learn. She's been looking for other ways to teach number facts and keeps trying different things until something works. Ultimately, this is a common homeschool situation that you need to learn to recognize--what you're doing isn't working, try something else. And homeschoolers spend a lot of their days trying to figure out what works.

The [Sprittibee](#) blog is done by Texas homeschool mom Heather who can tell a good story. Her posts will give you the feel of the spirit of homeschooling. The post "[Hello, my name is Heather and I Steal French Fries](#)" is a great example of accepting being less than perfect (no, there isn't a wholesome home cooked meal everyday) and more importantly being able to laugh at said imperfections. I think "[The Naming - and](#)

[CLAIMING - of a Year](#)" is a poignant self-examination of how easy it is to get off track while how hard it can be to recognize it.

The [Sardines in a Can](#) blog may not be the most prolific homeschooling blog around but it is one of the funniest. For anyone interested in seeing how unschooling works, read "[How We Manage Homeschooling in the Can](#)." Seeing as how she is an unschooler, you might guess that there isn't a lot of "managing" involved. There are five children in the sardine can, so she always has something interesting to say. Having finished my son's transcript for college, I found "[We'd like that with a side of Geography and a Textbook Garnish, Please](#)" hitting close to home. And I'm sure any homeschooler, unschooler or curriculum hound understands her outburst:

I lost it. I yelled. And I threatened them with SCHOOL. Camille started crying, Joel ignored me because I've done this before, Jules pulled the big Backfire Plug by saying he'd always wanted to ride in a school bus, and Jasper screamed, "What? You want to send me to school? But I'm not EDUCATED!!" That was my point, but he was missing it.

Yes, we threaten our kids with sending them to school.

The [Shaggy Boys Blog](#) by GrilledCheeseChic has a nice variety of posts on her family in homeschooling mode. There's the post "[Co-op](#)" which is about, surprise, the co-op four families formed. "[Weekly Rhythm](#)" is an early description of the boys schedule and Austen's need for more "school work." "[Natural Learning](#)" is a later post on how even recognition of the need for more structured learning can and should be put aside as needed.

## Frequently Asked Questions about Homeschooling in Texas

### Who do I have to register with or report to?

You do not have to register with your local school district or with any government organizations. As a private school in Texas, you are not subject to any regulations regarding public schools.

### What is a letter of intent?

A letter of intent is a letter that states that you are educating your child at home and that you are providing "a curriculum designed to meet basic education goals of reading, spelling, grammar, mathematics and a study of good citizenship." A letter of intent is not required for withdrawing your child from school although it can be used to meet any requests from the school district.

*Our school education ignores, in a thousand ways, the rules of healthy development.*

*~ Emily Blackwell*

School districts which become aware of a student who is potentially being home schooled may request in writing a letter of notification from the parents of the student regarding their intention to home-school the student. This letter may require assurances that the home-school curriculum is designed to meet basic education goals including reading, spelling, grammar, mathematics, and a study of good citizenship. Please note that a letter of this type is not required each year (from the April 20, 2004 Commissioner's Home School Policy Letter)

You may want to provide a letter of intent when you withdraw your child from school to provide any necessary assurances.

Is there a required curriculum?

You must follow a curriculum that is "designed to meet basic education goals including reading, spelling, grammar, mathematics, and a study of good citizenship." This does not have to be a packaged, commercial curriculum.

Does the school district have to approve my curriculum?

No. The school, nor any other state organization, has authority to review or approve your curriculum. You do not have to have your curriculum before you withdraw your child from school. Your child will not be considered truant since he will no longer be enrolled in school.

Do I have to have specific qualifications to homeschool?

No. You do not have to a teaching certificate, college degree, or high school degree.

Do I have to join a homeschool group?

No. You have no legal obligation to join a homeschool group. Many homeschoolers join groups for support and group activities. Anyone may form a homeschool group for support.

Will my child have to take the TAKS?

No. The TAKS test as well as any other state mandated tests do not apply to homeschoolers. You may download previous years' tests from the TEA website to administer yourself. You may also pay to take national achievement tests such as the Iowa or Stanford.

### Will my child receive a diploma?

If you provide one. The state will not provide a diploma. As a private school you award your own diploma.

### Can I deduct the costs of homeschooling from my taxes?

No. Just because you choose not to use the public school does not mean that you can somehow "recover" the money you spend in school taxes. We all pay for government services that we don't use.

### How do I withdraw my child from school?

According to the Commissioner's Home School Policy Letter "Students should be disenrolled by school officials when they receive written notice either by signing withdrawal forms or sending a letter of withdrawal. It is not necessary for the parents to make a personal appearance with school officials or present curriculum for review." You can send a letter of intent by register mail so that you have proof the school received it. You should also bring paper and pen and record the name of everyone you deal with for future reference.

### Where can I get curriculum?

You can purchase curriculum online, through local homeschool book stores, or used curriculum sales. You do not have to purchase curriculum. You can design your own using your local library resources and free resources. Most museums and organizations that have education outreach, have material that is aligned to state or national curriculum standards. You do not have to purchase curriculum before withdrawing your child from school. Your child will not be truant since she is no longer attending the public school.

### How do I pick curriculum?

There are a bewildering number of options to choose from. You can use the state's Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills curriculum as a guide which is available on the TEA website. I've written more on this at "I've Decided to Homeschool--now what?"

### Do I have to keep attendance?

No. There is no minimum number of days you are required to homeschool or any set number of hours during the day.

### Can my child go out during the day?

There are a variety of daytime curfew laws across the state. There is no problem if you are accompanying your child. In general, these curfews do not allow children outside their house alone during school hours unless their school is not in session. You will need to check the ordinances in your locality.

### What should I do if a truant officer knocks on my door?

The truant officer can only enter your house if he has a warrant or you give him permission. You have the right to ask for the request in writing. You do not have to let him talk to your children. Visit the THSC website for specific information on what to do in such a situation.

### Can my child go to college?

Colleges accept homeschoolers. You will have to provide your own transcripts or portfolio for your student. Your student may still have to take a college entrance exam such as the ACT or SAT. Some community colleges allow homeschoolers to enroll in dual credit classes. Entrance requirements vary by college but many actively recruit homeschoolers.

### What if I want to send my child back to public school?

According to the Commissioner's Home School Policy Letter" Students transferring from home schools should be afforded the same treatment as students transferring from unaccredited private school." Whatever method the school uses to place students from unaccredited private schools should also be used for assessing and placing your child in the public school.

### Can I get special education services for my child through the school?

It depends. Districts used to provide some special education services regardless of a child's enrollment status. Section 25.086 of the education code states that:

(b) This section does not relieve a school district in which a child eligible to participate in the district's special education program resides of its fiscal and administrative responsibilities under Subchapter A, Chapter 29, or of its responsibility to provide a free appropriate public education to a child with a disability.

However, in recent years, schools have been deny homeschoolers services, presumably with some legal basis to do so (remember, I'm not a lawyer.)

### How much does it cost?

As much or as little as you want. There will be no shortage of companies offering to sell you curriculum and supplies. Some packaged, comprehensive curriculums with teacher support cost more than \$1,000 a year. Your local library card is free.

### What is a statement of faith?

Many homeschool groups are based on religious principles. They may compile these principals into a single document referred to as a statement of faith.

### What is the difference between inclusive and exclusive groups?

Some homeschool groups restrict their membership based on religious values or education philosophies. These groups are considered exclusive. Groups that do not restrict membership are considered inclusive. There are groups that have a statement of faith but allow people who don't share their beliefs to participate.

### Can my child play football with the local high school?

Not in Texas. While individual schools may allow homechooolers to participate in some school extracurricular activities, the University Interscholastic League (UIL) does not allow them UIL sanctioned events. In other words, you wouldn't be able to play in the games or participate in the competition for any other activities. Homeschoolers have set up their own teams to compete in baseball, basketball, football, softball, track and field, and volleyball.

### Do I have to keep Records?

No, but it's probably a good idea to, especially if you'll be moving to another state or plan on returning to public school. You don't have to create a report card or transcript unless you want to. At the younger ages, you know how your child did; do you need a transcript to tell you? You might if she is applying for summer academic programs. By high school, a transcript or portfolio substitute is a requirement for virtually all colleges. There are lots of ways to keep records but probably the most critical information to keep is a list of textbooks used. If you have that, you can probably create a transcript even three years after the fact.

*The secret of education  
is respecting the pupil.*

*~Ralph Waldo Emerson*

### What is Decomposition/Deschooling?

Decomposition or deschooling refers to the time period that many children need after withdrawing from school to adjust to homeschooling. Depending on the situation, some

kids have been so traumatized by their school experience that they'll reject anything that resembles school, including homework and tests. Others may take a while to get used to mom (or dad) as the teacher and performing without the threat of a poor report card. This period can be especially important for kids who are leaving a toxic situation at school. It's important not to recreate the situation at home that was causing problems in school.

### How will I know if they are learning?

You can always test them. Some states require homeschoolers to be tested or evaluated each year—not Texas. Just remember, testing isn't the only way to determine if a child is learning. Are they progressing in their math book? Can they explain to you what they just read? Do they attempt projects seen in videos or on the computer? This is a natural feeling for you, "have I screwed up and they'll be living under a bridge for the rest of their lives?" In my case, these bursts of panic, which happened every 9 to 12 month or so, ended up with me printing out the seventh grade TAKS or similar test for my son to take.

### How Can I teach what I don't know?

There many possibilities. Learn it with your kids. Hire someone else to teach it. Join a co-op so that they can learn from others. Take an online course (the child, not you.) If it's important enough, the kid will probably learn it himself—people learn to read for all kinds of reasons. Maybe it's not as important as you think since you've managed to go through life without knowing it.

### Will my child be truant if I do not have a curriculum before I start homeschooling?

No. Truancy happens when a child enrolled in a public school doesn't show up for class. So if you child isn't enrolled in public school, what can she be truant from—your own homeschool? There are no set days or hours for homeschooling in Texas. In other words, just because you aren't teaching on a certain day doesn't mean that your child is

truant. Anyone who tries to tell you that your child will be truant if you withdraw them from public school and don't have your curriculum yet is just trying to sell you curriculum.

## What is Curriculum?

Curriculum is basically a grouping of subjects of study. We tend to think about curriculum by organization or subject. For example, any public high school curriculum in Texas is required to include math and science. Math and science are just parts of the curriculum.

But even these parts are "curriculum." The school selects a specific science curriculum for biology that includes a textbook, labs, and software. So "curriculum" is actually a pretty broad term. The definition by Dictionary.com is "the aggregate of courses of study given in a school, college, university, etc." Also note that this definition of curriculum would include "studies" not based on a textbook.

So what does this mean for homeschoolers?

If you assume that curriculum is a course of study, then whatever a homeschooler studies is his or her curriculum. That's not the answer a newcomer expects or even wants to hear. New homeschoolers often want someone to hand them the curriculum they can use to teach with. I think the mindset is along the lines of the first day of class in school when the teacher gives you the books for the year. That's something people understand.

However, as a homeschooler, the school isn't going to hand you your curriculum. It is up to you to decide what will be included in the curriculum within the constraints of homeschool requirements for your state. In Texas, whatever curriculum you choose must be "designed to meet basic education goals of reading, spelling, grammar, mathematics and a study of good citizenship."

If you think about it, that's not a very specific requirement. It doesn't mention history or science nor does it even say that you have to use a curriculum that is at the appropriate,

for the lack of a better word, grade level. So that still leaves new homeschoolers stuck with deciding what to use for their curriculum.

Curriculum is really two questions.

Ultimately, what many new homeschoolers don't understand is that the question of curriculum for homeschoolers is really a combination of two questions:

- What do I want to teach my children?
- How should I teach it?

It isn't until they go to a homeschool bookstore or a website to buy a "package curriculum" for their children do they begin to realize that as a homeschooler, curriculum isn't decided for you; it's something you have to decide for yourself.

So initially, new homeschoolers see these two questions as a matter of deciding between Sonlight or Saxon or some other package of textbooks, workbooks, quizzes, answer sheets, and teacher lesson plans. It is only after sitting down and struggling to keep up with the suggested lesson plans or finding that their children "don't get it," do new homeschoolers start to think that there might be more than one way to "get it."

The goal of curriculum: do they get it?

Once you see that your children "get" math by playing fantasy football or "get" reading by writing and producing their own plays, you realize that the concept curriculum goes beyond a collection of books and subjects assigned by someone else. Maybe your curriculum will include books on geology as well as software for computer programming.

The point is that as homeschoolers, curriculum doesn't have to be something that comes from a textbook publisher. Simply because selected curriculum meets some organization's standards doesn't mean that it will meet yours. Curriculum is whatever collection of methods and resources that you use so that your child will "get" the topics you decide to teach by whatever standards you set.

It's both a scary and liberating concept. Do you get it?

Related Website Resource: [Homeschooling Teaching Strategies](#)

## Ditch Your Curriculum for these 13 Competitions Instead

As a homeschooler, what do you have your kids do for PE? You could design fitness curriculum that includes exercises and an introduction to various sports. Or maybe you include some form of physical fitness as part of your planned unit studies. Or more likely, your kids join a local basketball team or take a class at the YMCA. And in doing so, you don't worry too much about justifying it as fulfilling a PE requirement—it's pretty obvious isn't it?

Take the "Extra" out of "Extra-Curricular Activities"

The same opportunities exist for subjects other than PE. Surely, it's pretty clear that any student preparing for the spelling bee is learning how to spell just as one studying for the Geo Bee is learning plenty of geography. The amount of time these kids put into preparing for the competition alone justifies counting these as actual classes and not merely extracurricular activities.

However, their real value lies in how much the kids actually learn and retain as part of the process. This isn't something that they are just learning for a test and then forget about it. These competitions usually require months of preparation and plenty of learning opportunities about something they care about.

I'm not suggesting abandoning all curriculums for just one competition. However, I do believe that many contests could form the bulk or the spine of a subject for the school year. Many of the contests offer information for teachers on how to adapt the contest to their normal classroom curriculum. Guiding your child through these competitions isn't necessarily any easier than traditional school work, but it can be a very rewarding.

There are lots of competitions out there to choose from. I picked the following competitions as possible courses because of the amount of preparation that they require. You'll notice that there aren't any specific writing/essay contests for English. There are

plenty available, I just haven't identified a single one that I would count as an entire course. However, I think that if you have child that likes to compete in this area, you could create a course based on entering multiple contests.

### 13 Competitions for Homeschoolers

- Type: (I) Individual, (G) Group
- Deadline: If only month is given, the competition date varies within the month; (~) generally occurs in or around the listed month
- Examples: (Y) Example projects available, (N) No examples available, (S) Sample questions available.

Competition	Subject	Grades	Type	Deadline	Examples
<a href="#">American Statistical Association Poster Competition and Project Competition</a>	Math	K-12	I,G	April 1	Y
<a href="#">ExploraVision</a>	Science	K-12	G	Feb	Y
<a href="#">First Lego League</a>	Science, Math	4-8	G	varies	N
<a href="#">Intel International Science and Engineering Fair</a>	Science, Math	9-12	I, G	March	N
<a href="#">MathCounts</a>	Math	6-8	I, G	Feb	S
<a href="#">NASA Space Settlement Contest</a>	Science, Math, Social Studies	6-12	I, G	Mar 15	Y
<a href="#">National Geographic GeoBee</a>	Social Studies	4-8	I	~Jan	S
<a href="#">National History Day</a>	Social Studies	6-12	I,G	~Jan	S
<a href="#">Odyssey of the Mind</a>	Varies	3-12	G	Feb	N
<a href="#">Scripps Spelling Bee</a>	English	8 & under	I	varies	S
<a href="#">Siemens We Can Change the World Challenge</a>	Science, Social Studies, Math	K-12	G	Mar 15	Y
<a href="#">Young Epidemiology Scholars</a>	Science, Math, Social Studies	11-12	I	Feb 1	N
<a href="#">Young Naturalist Awards</a>	Science, Math	7-12	I	Mar 1	Y

### [American Statistical Association Poster Competition and Project Competition](#)

Yes, statistics for as young as kindergarten. The actual age category is K-3 so I would guess the winners were probably on the older side of the group. But still... And what kind of posters are they doing? A few titles: Battle of the Condiments; What's Your Favorite Board Game?; The Fastest Way to Melt Butter; and Are the Hawk Mountain Raptor Populations in Trouble? The last two were homeschool winners in 2009. The poster competition is open to grades K-12 and the project category is for grades 4 to 12.

### [ExploraVision](#)

You might be able to classify this under science fiction as well since this contest doesn't require creating a new technology but imagining one based on existing technology. Each team selects an existing technology and researches how it works and when it was invented. Then they project what the technology will be like 20 years in the future. All the research is presented in a webpage that is submitted for judging. A homeschool K-3 team won second place in 2009 with the idea of an EpiWatch.

### [First Lego League](#)

This isn't just about playing with Legos. The team must build autonomous robot using LEGO MINDSTORMS technology to score points in 2.5-minute matches on a themed playing field. The team must also identify a problem related to the year's theme, research solutions, and present the solution at the competition. research a scientific project and present its findings. While the initial purchase of the Mindstorms set can be expensive, you can reuse the kit each year.

### [Intel International Science and Engineering Fair](#)

This is the largest science fair in the world. There are 17 different categories to compete in including Animal Sciences, Engineering, Computer Science, and Behavioral and Social Sciences. They don't have actual examples of entries but they do have videos of the contestant talking about their projects as part of the Archimedes Initiative. Oh, and the top award is \$75,000.

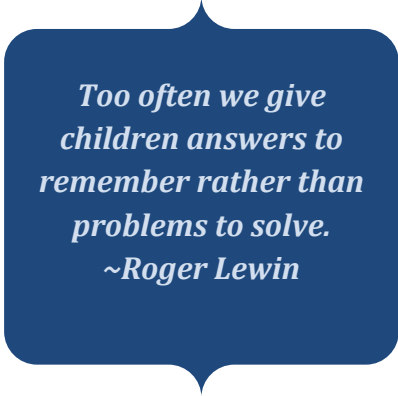
### [MathCounts](#)

This competition challenges students' math abilities with and without a calculator.

Students take various tests as individuals and teams.

The program provides handbooks on how to start a program at a school or as a club. The website provides a new set of problems each week for practice. You can also find MATHCOUNTS mini videos that demonstrate the problem and includes downloadable activities.

Once they graduate from middle school, they should start looking at the [USA Mathematical Talent Search](#).



*Too often we give children answers to remember rather than problems to solve.  
~Roger Lewin*

### [NASA Space Settlement Contest](#)

Just as an aside, don't you think it's weird that such a high tech idea will only accept hardcopy submissions? Anyway, this is the chance to design your own permanent space colony. This is really a wide open, comprehensive project. Issues to consider range from structure design to agriculture to government. One entry has a section on the business plan. There are even awards for artistic and literary merit.

### [National Geographic GeoBee](#)

Cultural geography isn't something taught in middle schools so you're better off just calling it social studies. When the contest includes questions about which country has the largest population of Muslims, you're not just memorizing state capitals anymore.

The contest consists of seven rounds where contestants answer multiple choice and open-ended questions. Missing a question does not eliminate you from a round. The winner is determined by the number of questions answered correctly who then gets to take a test to see if she advances to the state level.

### [National History Day](#)

If you're looking for flexibility in your competition format, National History Day is it. Students pick a historical topic related to the year's theme. They can present their research as an exhibit, research paper, documentary, website, or performance. All projects must have an annotated bibliography that documents the research and a short process paper that explains how you selected your topic and did the research. The website even provides sample topics and you can download a theme book.

### [Odyssey of the Mind](#)

Odyssey of the Mind is a creative problem solving competition. Each year, teams pick one of five "long-term" problems to solve that range from classically inspired to creating balsa wood structures to hold weights to designing cars. The team will present its problem at competition where it will also solve a "spontaneous" problem. The most interesting aspect of this competition is that the team can receive no assistance from anyone else, including adults which makes it very hard on the adult. A similar competition is Destination Imagination.

### [Scripps Spelling Bee](#)

Not just spelling but also knowing the parts of speech (grammar) and word origins that often leads to literature. The contest website has section to practice spelling words by origin and difficulty level. Unfortunately, most of the teacher material is geared to generating support for the spelling bee so you'll have to figure out on your own how to go beyond just spelling lists.

### [Siemens We Can Change the World Challenge](#)

This is a competition for students interested in identifying environmental problems and implementing programs to address them. The science comes in defining the problem and the hypothesis to test the solution. Creating a program to be implemented in the community to address the problem falls under social studies and the math in measuring the outcomes of the project. First place winners get a \$10,000 savings bond and a Discovery adventure trip.

### [Young Epidemiology Scholars](#)

I think that epidemiology is the perfect subject to demonstrate the application of traditional high school science subjects. Studying the health of the general population pulls from all the sciences and history as well. A great book to read is *The Ghost Map: The Story of London's Most Terrifying Epidemic--and How It Changed Science, Cities, and the Modern World* by Steven Johnson. The project requires the student to complete an original epidemiological study which can be very demanding. But winning one of the 120 scholarships is a pretty good incentive. There are two grand prize winners of \$50,000.

### [Young Naturalist Awards](#)

Think science outdoors. This contest is for investigations in the areas of biology, Earth science, ecology, and astronomy. You present the results of your investigation in the form of an essay with all of your supporting evidence. It's an opportunity to use existing scientific tools to answer questions such as: is the water polluted; does the presence of one species act as an indicator for another; or what is the effect on the environment. And since it's an essay, writing well counts.

## San Antonio Daytime Curfews

Yes, San Antonio has a daytime curfew for teenagers. In fact, it is considered a “model” for the nation. I would think that a daytime curfew might conflict with the city’s status as a tourist destination but I guess the authorities just don’t arrest any teens near Sea World or who look like they have a lot of money to spend as tourists.

Basically, persons under the age of 17 and over the age of nine can’t be out on Mondays through Fridays from 9:00 am and 2:30 pm. Yup, your lower elementary kids are free to run wild.

Now juvenile law is weird and I’m no lawyer so this is obviously not legal advice. Minors aren’t innocent until proven guilty. What happens is that the minor gets a ticket and the family has to go to court and present an acceptable reason from the list of” defenses” given in the law. So my understanding of this is that your kid could be out practicing his First Amendment Rights and the officer who may recognize that is what is happening, can give a ticket anyway and you’ll still have to make a trip to the courthouse.

Bexar County also has a daytime curfew of minors (not sure about the age) between the times of 9:00 and 2:00 pm in unincorporated areas. You’ll have to check with your individual city to see if it has a daytime curfew. And night time curfews are the rule rather than the exception in the area.

I know some homeschoolers don’t let their kids outside during the day because they are worried about the curfew. I can’t say I blame them since the curfew is basically gives the police an excuse to question and potentially pickup anyone under the age of 17. The Texas Home School Coalition has some examples involving homeschoolers. That being said, I did let my son ride his bike around the neighborhood and we never had any issues.

Relate Website Resource: [Information on the San Antonio daytime curfew website.](#)

## High School Athletics for Homeschoolers in Texas

Can your child play on the local high school football team in Texas? The short answer is “no.” The longer answer is if the school lets him but he will not be able to play in any official games and how many high school coaches do you think want to spend practice time on someone who isn’t going to be able to play in a game?

Most individual sports offer competition outside official school events including track and field, swimming, and gymnastics. It’s high school team sports that are the issue in Texas.

*Education is not the  
filling of a pail, but the  
lighting of a fire.*

*~William Butler Yeats*

So what’s a future Tim Tebow to do in Texas? Play on a homeschool team. Homeschoolers have formed their own teams for football, basketball, soccer, baseball, softball, volleyball, and track. They compete against public and private schools in non-district games. In sports with strong club programs such as soccer, playing during the high school season isn’t even necessarily required to make it to the college level. And homeschoolers are recruited to play at the college level even if they aren’t playing on a public high school team.

In San Antonio, FEAST sponsors multiple teams at the high school level. There are also some basketball teams as well as the [San Antonio Homeschool Wolverines](#) baseball team that have formed independently of FEAST. Contact the larger homeschool groups to see if they are organizing a high school team for a particular sport.

You don’t have to rely on homeschool organizations; you can form your own team. This is where forming a homeschool team at younger ages and keeping them together can really pay off. Even if you don’t have all homeschool members, it will help recruit at the high school level. If you have enough people interested then usually the biggest obstacle will be finding a place to practice.

## Drivers Education

Most people know that you don't have to go to public school to get your driver's license, but did you realize that you don't have to go to a private school either? According to the [Texas Department of Public Safety](#), parent taught driver's education is still allowed.

There are three options. All three options require you to submit a [DL-92](#) form (Request for Parent Taught Drivers Education Packet) along with a \$20.00 registration fee. As part of the completed application you will receive the state's curriculum, Course 101. If you choose to use this curriculum, you will need to purchase the State Approved Driver Education Textbook specified in the curriculum. However, you don't have to use the state curriculum. You have eleven other choices, including [Virtual Drive of Texas](#), [National Driver Training Institute](#), course 102, and [Driver Ed in a Box](#), course 103.

Why would you want to teach Drivers Ed yourself rather than let a driver's school do it? That was my plan, we were going to sign our teen up with a local driving school. I figured with everything else, I didn't need the added stress of also being the "driver teacher." It was the "let someone else deal with him" kind of thing. Plus, they don't have to go to DPS to get their permit, the drivers school issues it to them. However, because of his baseball schedule, we couldn't get him into a class for four consecutive weeks and had to do it ourselves.

I won't say that it was a wonderful experience although his little Jedi "you did not see that" hand wave was amusing when it didn't involve nearly rear-ending the car in front of us. However, I would recommend it because you will know that your teen has been learning how to drive. Talking to some other parents whose teens finished driver's school, they were reluctant to let them behind the wheel simply because they had not seen them learn to drive. Teaching your teen yourself allows you to see her progress and improved abilities where this wasn't the case for most of the other parents I talked to. Also, depending on the program, your teen will have to complete a lot more actual

driving teaching him yourself. I know some parents were surprised at how much "observing" their teens were doing as opposed to driving at the driver's schools.

Should you choose to enroll at a private driving school be sure it is certified by [the Texas Education Agency](#). The following schools are currently listed with the Texas Education Agency.

### San Antonio Area Driving Schools

Name	City	Zip Code	Physical Address	Phone Number
55 Driving School	San Antonio	78227	8139 Latigo	210-674-7710
A.D.S./ Adult Driving School	San Antonio	78201	1714 W. Gramercy Place	210-534-0683
Austin Driving School	San Antonio	78238	7530 Bandera Road, Suite 270	210-308-9939
Ayala & Associates Driving School	San Antonio	78249	5015 De Zavala Road, Suite 102	210-690-6276
Central Park Driving School	San Antonio	78216	7115 Blanco Road, Suite 114	210-344-4351
Country Roads Driving School	San Antonio	78252	11887 Robert Glenn #1	210-622-0600
D & E Driving School	San Antonio	78222	1972 S. W W White Rd.	210-359-9770
First Gear Driving School	San Antonio	78221	1245 S.W. Military Drive	210-923-7233
Gary Job Corps	San Marcos	78667	2800 Airport, Hwy 21	512-396-6798
GTZ Driving School	San Antonio	78228	3570 Culebra	210-434-5222
Hendricks Driving School	Seguin	78155	747 D N. 123 Bypass	830-379-9292
Interstate Driving School	San Antonio	78221	6203 South Zarzamora	210-923-1515
Rhodes Driving School	San Antonio	78232	14526 Brookhollow Blvd.	210-490-9686
Rhodes Driving School	San Antonio	78240	7724 Eckhert Rd	210-680-3980
Rhodes Driving School	San Antonio	78251	114 N. Ellison Drive # 102	210-680-3980
Roadworthy Driving Academy	Schertz	78154	124 A Schertz Pkwy	210-945-7600
San Marcos Driving School	New Braunfels	78130	1516 South Seguin Avenue	830-620-6654
San Marcos Driving School	San Marcos	78666	1244 Highway 123	512-396-7258
Sun Driving School	San Antonio	78213	1011 Jackson-Keller Road	210-340-2871
Texas Driving School	San Antonio	78207	424 N. Zarzamora	210-222-1864
Texas Driving School	San Antonio	78210	2038 Pleasanton	210-532-3322
Texas Driving School	San Antonio	78217	2453 Nacogdoches	210-646-0771
Texas Driving School	San Antonio	78223	119 Goliad Road	210-532-3322
Texas Driving School	San Antonio	78228	2647 Culebra	210-432-2125
Texas Driving School	San Antonio	78237	1763 South General McMullen Drive	210-521-4000

Name	City	Zip Code	Physical Address	Phone Number
Texas Driving School	San Antonio	78253	11219 Potranco Road, Suite 103	210-432-2125
The Driving Academy	San Antonio	78213	11329 West Avenue	210-410-7777

## 10 Education Resources in San Antonio Every Homeschooler Should Know About

Some education resources are obvious, some are under utilized by homeschoolers, and some just don't make the average homeschooler's radar.

### [1. San Antonio Public Library](#)

This may seem like a "duh" kind of choice but many homeschoolers don't realize the [variety of resources](#) offered by the [San Antonio library](#). There are the obvious items such as Teaching Company DVD's that would cost several hundred dollars if you purchased yourself. It is quite possible to construct an entire home school high school curriculum based solely on lectures from the Teaching Company. Pre-high school science could probably be covered by Bill Nye the Science Guy videos.

But there are other services that people are often not familiar with. Library members can get [free online help from tutor.com](#). If your son is having trouble with a geometry problem, an online tutor will help them to solve it with simply giving them the answer. The libraries also offer [opportunities for "socialization" through a variety of activities](#) including book clubs, craft activities, and games (video and traditional board.) Furthermore, local branches of the libraries have organized specific activities/classes targets at homeschoolers. And best of all, library cards are free.

### [2. San Antonio Express News](#)

Until newspapers are actually extinct, a subscription to the [San Antonio Express News](#) gets great education returns for homeschool dollars spent (\$15.00 a month). Let's start with the basics: reading. If nothing else, you can get kids started reading the comics. And it's unlikely that you could get through reading a day's worth of comics without having to explain something about what the comic was trying to say--critical thinking! Of course there are sports for your Spurs fans along with various sports columnists'

opinions that you may or may not agree with. The Express-News also runs a weekly feature on Tuesdays providing an explanation of some item or issue targeted at kids. If the stories aren't grabbing your kid's interest, you can always go through looking at the pictures and speculating on the stories behind them. And then there is always the never ending source of amusement and outrage, the letters to the editors. Don't underestimate the education usefulness of the paper.

### [3. San Antonio PREP - Prefreshmen Engineering Program](#)

San Antonio Prep is an eight week summer program designed to prepare middle and high school students for engineering and science careers. Students in grades six and up attend sessions at area colleges and universities for up to four summers. The curriculum covers Logic, Engineering, Algebra, Physics, Technical Writing, Statistics, and Computer Science. Homeschoolers must apply to the program and have math, science, and English grades and submit an essay. Tuition is \$300 for non-district sponsored students-that's less than \$40 a week. This is a competitive program but homeschoolers are admitted based on qualifications and available space. The [application deadline](#) is the end of January. Since homeschoolers don't have to take their vacations in the summer, this is a great opportunity for students interested in math and science.

### [4. San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department](#)

[The Parks and Rec Department](#) offers a variety of programs of interest to homeschoolers. The [First Saturday Walks and the Second Saturday programs](#) at various parks are good examples. These programs cover everything from trees, fossils, snakes, birds, wildflowers, and more. In fact, if there is enough participation by homeschoolers, they will hold events for homeschoolers during the week. (Note, I said participation, not interest. When too many home schoolers sign up for such programs and don't show up, the programs tend to go away as well.) The Parks and Rec Department has also been offering homeschool PE classes at various centers. The community centers also offer a variety of [low cost dance and music classes](#) throughout the year. Then there are also the various youth sports offered during the year, including basketball, volleyball, flag

football, and softball. At one point, one of the rec centers was willing to host a homeschool volleyball program during the day but there wasn't enough interest. The San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department offers incredible potential for any homeschoolers willing to work with them. ([The City of New Braunfels Park and Recreation Department](#) is pretty awesome as well.)

### [5. San Antonio Water System](#)

Like most organizations with a large public constituent, the San [Antonio Water System](#) offers home educators various lesson plans that can be downloaded at its website. While they're better than average, they're not the reason SAWS is on the list. The [SWAT program](#) and [Annual Water Conference for Educators](#) are the reasons why homeschoolers should know about SAWS. SWAT is the Student Water Action Team. This is a yearlong program for high school level students interested in the historical, environmental, or scientific aspects of water use. The SWAT teams conduct various field investigations and complete a service learning project which they present at the SWATCon end of the year dinner and conference. The Annual Educators' Conference is open to homeschool educators as well as well as other non-formal educators. The conference is free and explores practical, up-to-date examples of successful educational programs and materials throughout fifty interactive sessions.

### [6. Scholastic Warehouse Sale](#)

Every December and May [Scholastic has a warehouse sale](#) for Book Fair volunteers, school employees, and teachers--that includes homeschoolers. Everything is discounted up to 80% and there will be thousands of items less than a dollar. The selection will include everything from cookbooks to craft kits to atlases to science fair books to classics to trending celebrities. Be prepared to spend a lot of time browsing the aisles of the warehouse. It is a warehouse so make sure you go early in the day during May. There really isn't any good way to describe the selection and prices--you just need to go!

## [7. Children's Fine Arts Series](#)

San Antonio is incredibly fortunate to have the [Children's Fine Arts Series](#). The series began as a community project by the Judson Montessori School in 1982 and became an independent non-profit in 1988. The goal of the program is provide an introduction to the arts through a series of quality programs designed for children. The programs are no more than an hour each and have included puppets, theater, music, and dance. The programs are at the Charline McCombs Empire Theater or Trinity's Laurie Auditorium. The website includes [study guides](#) for the various programs as well as recommend ages for attendance. Group rates for ten or more for daytime shows are only \$4.00 each. Many of the local homeschool groups have someone who coordinates the group purchases each year.

## [8. The Witte Museum](#)

[The Witte](#) is my favorite museum to visit. It's a perfect combination of natural and cultural history packaged for San Antonio and south Texas. The immediate interest for homeschoolers is the HEB Science Treehouse. I don't think you're ever too old to learn about simple machines. Then there are the more traditional exhibits of Texas ecology, dinosaurs, ancient Texans, mummies, and more. But perhaps the resources most underutilized by homeschoolers are [the environmental workshops](#). These are workshops geared to students in grades four to eight and are held in the Witte's lab classroom. In "From River to Sink, What's in My Drink?" students investigate water chemistry and learn lab skills. There are also history and art workshops available. The cost is \$2.50 per student for the 2.5 hours workshop. It would be nice if the Witte would simply set up programs for homeschoolers like the [Houston Museum of Natural Science](#) does, but they don't so you'll have to have someone organize a group to take advantage of the workshops.

## [9. Dual Credit](#)

Home school high school juniors and seniors are eligible to take [dual credit college classes at the Alamo Community colleges](#). Currently, students can enroll in two classes and pay only for books--their tuition will be waived. This is a great deal since in other community college districts, homeschoolers have to pay half or even full tuition. Students must have a qualifying Accuplacer score, submit the application by the deadline, and provide a notarized transcript. The deadlines and courses available vary by school so you need to check with each school. Also be sure to check on your ability to have transcripts sent to colleges. Some homeschoolers have not been allowed to request transcripts until they have actually graduated from high school which obviously does not meet most college application deadlines. You can take these classes on campus or online. You can take classes at other colleges, both public and private, as dual credit but you will probably pay regular tuition. If you find the class selection at the community colleges limiting, you can enroll as an early admission student which will allow you to take any class and you'll go through the regular registration process. However, you will also pay the regular tuition.

## [10. San Antonio Zoo Home School Classes](#)

Once a month, [the San Antonio Zoo](#) offers programs just for homeschoolers. The [home school programs](#) are for grades kindergarten to five and include biofacts, animal presentations, themed activities and a topic related tour. Parents are not required to stay. Last fall the zoo offered an overnight program for homeschool families. The zoo offers other programs that homeschoolers would be interested in although they are not designed specifically for homeschoolers. Students can learn conservation and natural history as part of the zoo's [Jane Goodall's Roots and Shoots Chapter](#) (Ages 8 to 12). S.A. Fari Kids is for kids ages 5 to 7 to explore animals around the Zoo while building relationships and skills. The advantage of these zoo programs is that it doesn't require someone to organize a group for the program.

## Free Field Trips for the Frugal San Antonio Homeschooler

Are the best things in life free or do you get what you pay for? I think this selection of free museum days in San Antonio is probably a mix of the two. Would a visit to the missions be dramatically better if the National Park Service charged a fee for the visit? Probably not--or at least not worth the price. Yet I think a case could be made that a visit to the Alamo would be much more informative if an admission fee was charged. If nothing else, the free days at the museums that otherwise charge an admissions fee allows you to visit and decide if you think it would be worth it return and pay the regular price.

### [1. The Alamo](#)

Yes, the Alamo is free. Every day, all day. Whenever the homeschooling day just isn't working, grab the kids and head down for the Alamo for a free field trip. Unfortunately, the Alamo doesn't provide any walking tours but they do provide history talks every half hour. You can also rent an audio tour for \$5.00 although that can add up quickly if you're bringing the family and kind of undermines the "free" aspect of visiting. There is a theater in the long barracks that shows a 17 minute film about the Alamo. I suggest stopping by your local library and reading up on the Alamo before you actually visit.

### [2. The Missions](#)

The four Spanish Missions, collectively referred to as "the Missions," are a great reminder religious roots other than the Pilgrims run deep in the United States. All of the missions were built before the American Revolution with Mission Espada being founded in 1690. All of the missions offer free tours, some depend on staff availability. They also offer cell phone audio tours. The visitors' center is located at Mission San Jose, so you should probably allow for extra time for your visit there compared to the other missions. The National Park Service offers curriculum materials online designed to meet 4th and 7th grade TEKS standards. Of course, there are all sorts of educational possibilities

ranging from comparing English to Spanish settlements to treatment of Native American Indians to architecture and community planning.

There is an eight mile hike and bike trail that connects all of the missions. So if you need a destination that offers educational opportunities as well as physical activity to keep kids focused during the educational opportunities, the Missions are a great choice.

### [3. McNay Art Museum](#)

The McNay Art Museum is free on Thursday nights and the first Sunday of the month. On the first Sunday and third Sunday (not free), you can check out a family gallery kit to use to explore the galleries. The museum offers an Acoustaguide Cell Phone Tour for free with specific family friendly stops. Official docent student tours are free as well. There are five tracts to select from and must be scheduled at least two weeks in advanced. (Time out for my pet peeve: if you sign up for a tour--show up! If homeschoolers don't show up for tours, they may just stop offering them to homeschoolers.) You can find online lesson plans at the Teacher Resource Center along with programs for educators. The grounds are also a wonderful place for picnicking.

### [4. San Antonio Museum of Art](#)

San Antonio Museum of Art is free to the public every Tuesday from 4 pm to 9 pm. There is also a free tour starting at 4:30 pm that covers the museum highlights. Children ages 12 and up can participate in the sketching sessions that start at 6:00 pm. Attendance is limited to 20 and they encourage you to bring your own sketchpads and pencils. You can download teacher guides for "Asian Art in Focus" and "Retratos: 2000 Years of Latin American Portraits: from the museum website. Going on a free Tuesday night probably isn't as much fun for younger kids as the museum's First Sunday programs but it may be a good way to serve up art appreciation in smaller bites--you can leave after 30 minutes and not feel guilty about the admission cost.

### [5. The Witte Museum](#)

The Witte has free admissions on Tuesdays from 3 pm until 8 pm. While the museum doesn't offer any free tours, with places like the H-E-Be Science Treehouse, you probably won't miss it. You shouldn't have to worry about keeping kids quiet or focused during your visit through the Treehouse. Unfortunately, there aren't any lesson plans available on line, but with the vast number of hands on activities, you'll probably be able to create your own unique lesson plan just based on the questions your kids ask. The Witte is a great a place to go without a plan, the perfect solution for a less than successful homeschooling day.

### [6. San Antonio Children's Museum](#)

The San Antonio Children's Museum is free to children age 12 and under on the Third Thursday of the month from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm. Unfortunately, adults still have to pay the \$7.00 admission fee. Given that the special workshops (such as Pint-Sized Science and Art Studio) aren't on Thursdays, it might be worth the trip to get an idea if you want to pay regular admission fees at another time.

### [7. St. Mary's Earth Science Museum](#)

Okay, I can't say I've actually been to this museum or even know someone who has. According to the website, the St. Mary's Earth Science Museum is always free. It's open weekdays throughout the year and is located in a second floor hallway. This makes me think this may not be a great spur of the moment trip unless you have someone in the family really into rocks. However, it could be a great trip for anyone doing a unit study on geology or fossils. Unfortunately, because of the lack of information you would probably need to go visit the museum first to see how it would fit in with your study plans. But given that it's free and you may find walking around the campus (without the kids) relaxing, it may well be worth the trip.

## Area Museums

### The Alamo (free)

[www.thealamo.org](http://www.thealamo.org)  
210-225-1391

300 Alamo Plaza  
San Antonio, Texas 78205

### Buckhorn Museum (not recommended)

[www.buckhornmuseum.com](http://www.buckhornmuseum.com)  
210-247-4000

318 E. Houston Street  
San Antonio TX 78205

### Center for Archaeological Research

<http://car.utsa.edu>  
210-458-4378

One UTSA Circle  
San Antonio, TX 78249

### McKenna Children's Museum in New Braunfels

[www.mckennakids.org](http://www.mckennakids.org)  
830-606-9525

801 West San Antonio Street  
New Braunfels, Texas 78130

### Earth Science Museum (free)

[www.stmarytx.edu/set/index.php?site=PhysicsAndEarthSciences](http://www.stmarytx.edu/set/index.php?site=PhysicsAndEarthSciences)  
210-436-3996

St. Mary's University  
One Camino Santa Maria  
San Antonio, Texas 78228

### Fort Sam Houston (free)

<http://ameddcs.army.mil/details.aspx?dt=234>  
210-221-1886

1210 Stanley Road, Building 123  
Fort Sam Houston, TX 78234

### Heritage Museum of the Texas Hill Country

[www.theheritagemuseum.com/](http://www.theheritagemuseum.com/)  
830-899-4542

4831 FM 2673  
Canyon Lake, Texas 78133

### Heritage Village

[www.nbheritagevillage.com](http://www.nbheritagevillage.com)  
830-629-6504

1370 Church Hill Drive  
New Braunfels, TX. 78130

### Institute of Texan Cultures

[www.texancultures.utsa.edu](http://www.texancultures.utsa.edu)  
210-458-2300

801 East Durango Blvd.  
San Antonio, TX 78205-3296

### McNay Art Museum

[www.mcnayart.org](http://www.mcnayart.org)  
210-824-5368

6000 North New Braunfels  
San Antonio, Texas 78209

### Museo Alameda

[www.thealameda.org](http://www.thealameda.org)  
210-299-4300

101 South Santa Rosa  
San Antonio, TX 78207

### San Antonio Botanical Gardens

<http://www.sabot.org>  
210-207-3250

555 Funston  
San Antonio, TX 78209

**San Antonio Children's Museum**

[www.sakids.org](http://www.sakids.org)  
210-212-4453

305 E. Houston St.  
San Antonio, TX 78205

**San Antonio Missions National Historical Park (free)**

[www.nps.gov/saan/](http://www.nps.gov/saan/)  
210-932-1001

2202 Roosevelt Avenue  
San Antonio, Texas 78210

**San Antonio Museum of Art**

[www.samuseum.org](http://www.samuseum.org)  
210-978-8100

200 West Jones Avenue  
San Antonio, Texas 78215

**San Antonio Zoo**

[www.sazoo-aq.org](http://www.sazoo-aq.org)  
210-734-7184

3903 N. St. Mary's Street  
San Antonio, TX 78212

**Sophienburg Museum**

[www.sophienburg.com](http://www.sophienburg.com)  
830-629-1572

401 W. Coll St.  
New Braunfels, Texas 78130

**Texas Air Museum**

[www.texasairmuseum.org](http://www.texasairmuseum.org)  
210-977- 9885

1234 99th St.  
San Antonio, TX 78214

**Texas Transportation Museum**

[www.txtransportationmuseum.org](http://www.txtransportationmuseum.org)  
210-490-3554

11731 Wetmore Road  
San Antonio, TX 78247

**The National Museum of the Pacific War**

[www.pacificwarmuseum.org](http://www.pacificwarmuseum.org)  
830-997-8600

340 East Main Street  
Fredericksburg, Texas 78624

**U.S. Army Medical Department Museum (free)**

[www.ameddgiftshop.com/museum.htm](http://www.ameddgiftshop.com/museum.htm)  
210-221-6358/6277

Ft. Sam Houston  
San Antonio, TX

**Witte Museum**

[www.witemuseum.org](http://www.witemuseum.org)  
210-357-1900

3801 Broadway  
San Antonio, TX 78209

## A Course of Study in Good Citizenship: Lower Elementary

One of the few requirements for homeschooling in Texas is to have a curriculum that provides for a course of study in good citizenship. For high schoolers, this seems relatively clear since most public high school students take a one semester government class. However, there isn't any such designated class for middle or elementary school. Citizenship and government are listed as TEKS items under social studies for elementary and middle school.

Furthermore, if you review the Texas Education Knowledge and Skills listings for high school, you will find a "citizenship" category listed under a number of subjects in history and social studies. That's because good citizenship isn't the same thing as taking a government class. You can learn about all kinds of governments in such a class; good citizenship is about being a good citizen in a very specific kind of government.

*Our task is to provide an education for the kind of kids we have... Not the kind of kids we used to have... Or want to have... Or the kids that exist in our dreams.*

*~Mary Kay Utech*

In 2010, Texas revised its Social Studies TEKS. At the lower elementary school levels, there aren't many changes in the requirements but there are a few interesting differences. "Good citizenship" now includes "participation in government by educating oneself about the issues, respectfully holding public officials to their word, and voting" which was not in the old standards. So good citizenship now requires more than just participating in the community, it means participating actively in government.

Another change is that they dropped the phrase "exhibit a love of individualism and 'inventiveness'" for identifying ordinary people who exemplified good citizenship. I always wondered about the "inventiveness" part. Did it mean technically invent things? Then what about the poor people with no engineering aptitude? And under a more generic understanding "inventiveness" could cover everything from devising new taxes to lying.

A course in good citizenship does not have to be its own separate course from other subjects since it's not treated that way by the schools. And it obviously is not the same thing as government. As far as I can tell, the goal of good citizenship referenced in the following education code:

The State Board of Education and each school district shall foster the continuation of the tradition of teaching United States and Texas history and the free enterprise system in regular subject matter and in reading courses and in the adoption of textbooks. A primary purpose of the public school curriculum is to prepare thoughtful, active citizens who understand the importance of patriotism and can function productively in a free enterprise society with appreciation for the basic democratic values of our state and national heritage.

Texas Education Code, §28.002(h)

The requirements for achieving such goals at the lower elementary school grades are pretty basic. Students are required to

- identify and explain the meaning of the American and Texas flags;
- recite the Pledge of Allegiance and the Pledge to the Texas Flag;
- know Patriotic Songs;
- identify symbols, patriotic and other;
- explain the use of voting for group decision making;
- identify characteristics of good citizenship, including truthfulness, justice, equality, respect for oneself and others, responsibility in daily life, and participation in government by educating oneself about the issues, respectfully holding public officials to their word, and voting;
- identify historic figures who exemplified good citizenship; and
- explain how selected customs, symbols, and celebrations reflect an American love of individualism and freedom.

Without evaluating whether or not the above TEKS elements constitute a meaningful course of study on good citizenship, you can pretty much cover all these areas using the free [Law Focused Education](#) website.

Start with [A Salute to Our Flag Curriculum Guide](#). This is a 60 page pdf file that includes a variety of activities. According to the guide: The flag of the United States of America symbolizes freedom and represents the efforts of countless generations who have protected and preserved the liberty that citizens of the United States and other countries enjoy today. The purpose of "A Salute to Our Flag" is to acquaint young children, in kindergarten through the third grade, with the significance of the flag. Children will be introduced to the purpose, symbolism, and history of the flag. They will also learn how to demonstrate respect for the flag and will have many opportunities to communicate what they have learned with others. It is hoped that this curriculum will help prepare young children to become more responsible, active citizens who appreciate and respect the flag.

Then visit their [lesson plan archives](#). Here you will find a variety of lesson plans including "Learning the Pledge to the Texas Flag," "Stephen F Austin, The Father of Texas," "Honoring Outstanding Americans," and many more.

If you find you're interested in some more specific symbols or actually how Texas Government works, visit the [Texas House of Representatives Kids' House](#) and the [Texas Senate Kids](#). Kids can color their own symbols at the Representative site and do a word find at the Senate site. If you are able to visit the state capitol, be sure to check out their [Educator Tour Guide](#) available online.

Finally, if you need resources to on government to provide the basic frame work for citizenship, visit [Ben's Guide to US Government for Kids](#). It provides a nice simple overview of government including an ABC listing of government related terms.

Given the rather scattered shot nature of the public school requirements, I suggest you look at getting a subscription to [BrainPop](#). They have an extensive collection on short,

animated movies that cover all the usual school subjects. You can even search for matching state standards by state, grade, and subject. I used these with my son and he found Tim and Moby very entertaining while learning about subjects ranging from isotopes to the blues.

## A Course of Study in Good Citizenship: Upper Elementary

One of the few requirements for homeschooling in Texas is to have a curriculum that provides for a course of study in good citizenship. For high schoolers, this seems relatively clear since most public high school students take a one semester government class. However, there isn't any such designated class for middle or elementary school. Furthermore, if you review the Texas Education Knowledge and Skills listings for high school, you will find a "citizenship" category listed under a number of subjects in history and social studies. Citizenship and government are listed as [TEKS](#) items under social studies for elementary and middle school. Obviously, a course in good citizenship does not have to be its own separate course from other subjects and does not have to be the same thing as government.

In fact, at the elementary school level, citizenship is not the same as government—they are two different items. Citizenship isn't simply government; it's what constitutes being a citizen of a particular nation, in this case the United States. What's interesting is that the public schools require just "citizenship" curriculum. For some reasons, the course in citizenship for homeschoolers must be "good" citizenship. Should we even speculate why?

As tempting as it is, let's not.

In 2010, Texas revised its Social Studies TEKS. As in the lower elementary levels, there are a few differences. For all grades "good citizenship" now includes "participation in government by educating oneself about the issues, respectfully holding public officials to their word, and voting" which was not in the old standards. So good citizenship now requires more than just participating in the community, it means participating actively in government.

Other interesting differences include adding Ann Richards, Sam Rayburn, Henry B Gonzalez, James A Baker III, and Wallace Jefferson as historic figures who have

exemplified good citizenship for fourth graders. This is left out for fifth graders which also takes out Benjamin Franklin and Caesar Chavez. Franklin probably makes it back in with the new requirement to "explain the contributions of the Founding Fathers to the development of the national government." And the second amendment is specifically mentioned in important individual rights along with other specific rights defined in the Bill of Rights.

The requirements for the upper elementary school grades are pretty much more of the same based on the lower elementary standards. The major distinction is that fourth graders concentrate on state and local government and fifth graders on federal government. Students in all grades are required to

- identify and explain the meaning of the American and Texas flags;
- recite the Pledge of Allegiance and the Pledge to the Texas Flag;
- know Patriotic Songs;
- identify symbols, patriotic and other;
- identify historic figures who exemplified good citizenship;
- and explain how selected customs, symbols, and celebrations reflect an American love of individualism and freedom.

The areas relevant only to fourth or fifth graders include the following:

- explain how individuals can participate voluntarily in civic affairs ;
- explain how to contact elected/appointed people identify leadership qualities of leaders, past and present;
- describe important individual rights include freedom of religion, speech, and press, the right to assemble and petition the government, and the right to bear arms;
- describe important due process rights including trial by jury and the right to an attorney;

- summarize selected amendments to the US Constitution such as those that extended voting rights to US citizens;

A good place to start is [Democracy Kids](#), an online module for fourth to sixth graders. It really does seem to cover all of the new TEKS areas with the exception of identifying historic individuals who exemplify good citizenship. It does have a list of legislators who would probably fall under the "ordinary people" requirement. The Fact of Congress shows a series of videos explaining the importance of citizen participation, what does Congress do, Amendments, Checks and Balances, and more. The Making a Difference sections quizzes users as to what level of government you would contact for different problems such as Backpack Safety, Hazardous Waste, Drug Use, etc. It also gives examples of students taking actions to address the problem. The site covers others issues as well. Essentially, it appears to meet the more advanced requirements for elementary school aged students.

You can find lesson plans that identify historic individuals and characteristics of good citizenship at the free [Law Focused Education](#) website. Also check out [America's Story](#), [Meet Amazing Americans](#) from the Library of Congress. If you feel the need for a specific lesson plan to use with the site, [EDSITEment](#) has a plan based on a webquest. EDSITEment also has a lesson plan on the [Statue of Liberty](#) that can help cover the whole symbol/monument TEKS stuff. And if that's not enough, [Ben's Guide to U.S. Government for Kids](#) has grade appropriate information on symbols, statues, government buildings, etc.

This TEKS seems to emphasize the First Amendment so a visit to the [First Amendment Center](#) is in order. It includes a variety of lessons relating to the First Amendment as well as links to other resources. You can also find free materials at the [Illinois First Amendment Center](#). [The Center for Civic Education](#) provides Constitution Day Lessons and The American Bar Association has a lesson on [Due Process Freedoms](#). It's difficult to find lesson plans specifically on the Second Amendment for elementary level students. Most of what is available is in the context of studying the Bill of Rights. There

is a lesson plan targeted at 6th to 8th graders, "[To Keep & Bear Arms: An Individual or Collective Right?](#)" that might be appropriate for 5th graders as well.

Please remember using these resources to cover the TEKS requirements for good citizenship doesn't necessarily mean that you have provided a meaningful study course of study for citizenship. Of course, it all depends on your definition of good citizenship. The point of this listing is to show that simply using a few easily obtained resources can meet the citizenship TEKS requirements for state schools. Ultimately, you could use a resource such as the [Theme Pack on U.S. Government](#) from Cobblestone or [BrainPop](#) and it would meet the good citizenship requirement since there is no requirement for homeschoolers to follow the TEKS.

## San Antonio Calendar of Events

The following is a list of events in the San Antonio area that would be of interest to homeschoolers. Some of these are just general events such as the Folklife Festival. Others are academically oriented including registration for homeschool coops and competitions. Sponsors and specific dates vary from year to year so use these as a reminder to be on the lookout for relevant information.

### San Antonio Calendar of Events

#### January

Martin Luther King Jr. March and Rally-[link](#)

Alamo Regional Academy of Science and Engineering Fair Registration Deadline-[link](#)

National Geo Bee (usually [SA-HERO](#))

National History Day (usually [SA-HERO](#))

Odyssey of the Mind Registration Deadline(usually [SA-HERO](#))

Scripps Spelling Bee (usually [FEAST](#))

San Antonio Prep Application Deadline-[link](#)

San Antonio Botanical Garden's Children's Garden-[link](#)

Registration for Dual Credit for the Fall-[SAC Northwest Vista](#)

#### February

San Antonio Rodeo and Stock Show-[link](#)

Founders Day Contest-[link](#)

UTSA Asian Festival-[link](#)

Voelcker Biomedical Research Academy Application Deadline-[link](#)

#### March

Historical Re-enactments at the Alamo-[link](#)

Luminaria Art and Cultural Festival-[link](#)

**April**

Fiesta-[link](#)

Coop Registration for the Fall-[link to Coop List](#)

**May**

FEAST Curriculum Fair-[link](#)

Scholastic Warehouse Sale-[link](#)

**June**

San Antonio Poetry Fair Deadline <http://www.unusualmuseums.org/sapf/student.html>

Shakespeare in the Park-[link](#)

Texas Folklife Festival-[link](#)

**July**

Look at all the registration deadlines in January and decide if you want to participate

**August**

SA HERO Roundup Homeschool Conference-[SA-HERO](#)

Contact your local school district about registering for the PSAT (10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> grade)-[link](#)

**September**

Sea World Homeschool Day-[link](#)

SA BEST Robotics Competition-[link](#)

San Antonio Botanical Garden's Children's Garden-[link](#)

Registration for Dual Credit for the Spring-[SAC Northwest Vista](#)

**October**

International Accordion Festival-[link](#)

**November**

River Parade and Lighting Ceremony-[link](#)

**December**

Scholastic Warehouse Sale-[link](#)

## San Antonio Area Homeschool Support Groups

The following table is a listing of San Antonio area homeschool organizations. Each is classified by its type. The type definitions are listed first. Of course, not all groups fall into such neat categories but I tried to place them appropriately for quick reference. Click on the organization for more information. You can get more information on homeschooling in San Antonio at the SA-HERO website, [www.sahero.org](http://www.sahero.org). HERO acts as a clearing house for local information, hosts an annual conference, and provides a variety of activities open to all homeschoolers.

### Support Group

A support group usually has periodic meetings for its members and provides various activities such as field trips, 4-H, scouts, sports, yearbooks, and graduations. In general, you must formally join a support group to participate. Some may also offer park days, co-ops, classes.

### Co-op

Co-ops are classes organized and taught by parents. For students to participate, their parents must contribute by teaching classes or assisting the co-op in other ways. In general, co-ops have no or low fees and you must be a member to participate.

### Park Day Support

Park Day groups are more informal support groups that are based on meeting at a park on a weekly basis. There is usually no membership requirement and you may show up as desired. The groups exist to simply interact with other homeschoolers. There isn't necessarily any specific activity planned for the park day. Some groups will organize other activities such as field trips as desired.

### Tutors/Classes

Tutors/classes organizations provide classes to homeschoolers for a fee. Teachers are generally independent contractors and set their own fee. You may pay a general

enrollment fee to the organization that is sponsoring the teachers and another fee to the teacher on a monthly basis. Parents are not required to contribute to the group as in a co-op situation.

### University Model

A University Model school is a private school that offers classes twice or three times a week like a university. Parents supervise the student's work during the remaining time. It may have some co-op elements as well.

### Specialty

These groups focus on a specific service or area such as theater arts, gifted children, or field trips. They may require membership and payment for their services.

### Online Only

These are usually discussion or announcement groups that exist online only. Other groups will often post their announcements on such groups.

### Statement of Faith

A Statement of Faith is a document detailing a group's religious beliefs. Often an organization will require its members to sign and support the statement of faith. Some may only require it of people in leadership or teaching positions. Others simply require participants to acknowledge the statement but not necessarily agree with it.

**G Support Group**

**\$ Tutors/Classes**

**O Online Only**

**C Co-op**

**U University Model**

**F Statement of Faith**

**P Park Day Support**

**S Specialty**

Group Name	Type						
<a href="#">Alamo Area Christian Educators</a>				\$			F
<a href="#">Boerne Area Christian Homeschoolers</a>	G	C					F
<a href="#">C.L.A.S.S. Caring, Learning and Some Smiles Support Group</a>	G		P				

Group Name	Type					
<a href="#">CAYA-Come As You Are Support Group</a>			P			
<a href="#">Christian Homeschool Co-op of Wilson County</a>	G	C				F
<a href="#">Educational Network for Academics, Arts, and Character Training (ENAACT)</a>				U		
<a href="#">Families Advocating Instruction in the Texas Home (FAITH)</a>	G					F
<a href="#">Family Educators Alliance of South Texas (FEAST)</a>			S	S		F
<a href="#">Gifted at Home</a>				S		
<a href="#">Home and Values Educational Network (HAVEN) Educators</a>	G	P				
<a href="#">Hometeam Playgroup</a>	G	P				
<a href="#">Hill Country Christian Homeschoolers</a>	G	P	S			F
<a href="#">Homeschool Happenings</a>	G	P				
<a href="#">Infinity Christian Academy</a>				S		
<a href="#">It's our CLASS</a>	G	P				
<a href="#">KONOS KARATS</a>				S		
<a href="#">Latter-day Heritage Homeschool Association</a>	G	C				
<a href="#">Laude Catholic Co-op</a>		C				
<a href="#">Learning in a Family Environment (LIFE) Co-op</a>		C				F
<a href="#">LifeShine Homeschool Enrichment Program</a>			S	S		F
<a href="#">North Central Homeschoolers Play Group</a>		P				
<a href="#">Northwest Home Educators</a>	G	C				
<a href="#">NW Homeschoolers</a>		P				
<a href="#">Randolph Area Military Christian Home Educators</a>	G	P				F
<a href="#">Relaxed Homeschool Group</a>		P				
<a href="#">Supporting Homeschoolers In the NorthEast (SHINE)</a>	G	C				
<a href="#">SA Christian Homeschoolers (SACH)</a>	G	P				F
<a href="#">SA Homeschoolers Who Care</a>				S		
<a href="#">San Antonio Home Education Resources and Opportunities (SA-HERO)</a>				S		
<a href="#">San Antonio Home School</a>					O	
<a href="#">San Antonio Homeschool Connections (SAHC)</a>	G	P				
<a href="#">San Antonio Homeschool Fun and Learning (SAHFL)</a>		P				
<a href="#">San Antonio Military Home Educators (SAMHE)</a>	G					
<a href="#">San Antonio NorthEast Homeschoolers (SANE)</a>		C		S		
<a href="#">San Antonio Special Homeschoolers</a>					O	
<a href="#">San Antonio TEAMS Homeschool Co-op</a>		C				
<a href="#">Smoothing the Way Group</a>				S		
<a href="#">Summit Christian Academy</a>				U		F
<a href="#">Traditions Of Roman Catholic Homes (TORCH)</a>	G					

**Alamo Area Christian Educators**

San Antonio

[www.fridayschool.com](http://www.fridayschool.com)

AACE, Inc. offers supplemental academic tutoring in a classroom environment for homeschoolers in and around the San Antonio area. We meet on Fridays throughout the school year. Students may take from one to five classes as needed. All tutors and staff are Christians and lessons are taught from a Christian perspective, but we welcome all students regardless of religious affiliation as long as we feel we can serve their educational needs.

**Boerne Area Christian Homeschoolers (BACH)**

Boerne

[www.bachboernehomeschoolers.org](http://www.bachboernehomeschoolers.org)

BACH is a Christ-centered support group that uses the Bible to provide the basis and standard of truth and values. The primary goal of BACH is the development of Christian character in our children, where each child is led to a personal relationship with Christ and trained in scriptural principals and values. Another goal is to promote academic excellence, which is to be acquired as a natural outcome of responsible, consistent homeschooling.

Our purpose of meeting together is to encourage and support the families of those in pursuit and continuance of homeschooling by sharing experiences, pooling resources, and providing opportunities to build relationships with others whose values and perspectives are within the scope of the values and perspectives of this organization. As a Christ-centered support group, BACH will provide encouragement, information, and appropriate experiences to anyone who may be interested in homeschooling, or is already homeschooling

**Caring, Learning and Some Smiles Support Group C.L.A.S.S.**

San Antonio

[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Its\\_our\\_CLASS/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Its_our_CLASS/)

This is a support group for families primarily from the South West side of San Antonio, but everyone is welcome. We all need a little support, for parents and homeschoolers alike. We all strive to help our kids learn with care and kindness. We also hope that by homeschooling our children we can form a closer relationship with them. We are the parents and the educators. That's a big responsibility. That's why having a support system is so important. This group is a place to discuss anything about homeschooling and to meet others who school their own children, as well as a place to make friends. It is a secular group and is open to anyone and everyone so please be mindful of others beliefs and opinions.

**Come As You Are Support Group C.A.Y.A.**

San Antonio

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/cayatexas/>

We are a diverse, welcoming homeschool support group for families located in and around the New Braunfels, Tx area. This is an inclusive group with no religious affiliation and a serious slant towards natural and attachment parenting. We have a weekly gathering and regular participation is encouraged.

**Christian Homeschool Co-op of Wilson County**

Wilson County

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/CHCWC/>

We are a conservative Christian homeschooling co-op that provides parent led classes to enrich our children's education in a safe and nurturing environment that allows for both children and adults the opportunity for positive socialization.

**Educational Network for Academics, Arts, and Character Training**

New Braunfels

**E.N.A.A.C.T.**[www.enaact.net](http://www.enaact.net)

E.N.A.A.C.T. Family Academy is a university-model co-op for homeschool families. Our New Braunfels facility is equipped with 25 classrooms, including a science lab, art, music and dance studios, library, computer lab, and lecture rooms with white boards and classroom seating for 6 to 16 students in each. We offer about 170 different academic and elective classes each semester, taught by both parents who volunteer their area of specialization and professional paid instructors. Due to parent participation, many of our classes are free, or only have a small supply fee. Registration fee \$25-\$40 per semester, parent participation encouraged, drop-off tuition also available. Most classes are taught by parent volunteers, but some are studio-quality classes offered by professional instructors.

Social events, reading contest, presidential physical fitness, student ID's, yearbook, standardized testing, grading, honor roll, transcripts, honor society, community service, SAT Prep, science fair, art show, and dual credit classes (for those who qualify) are just some of the programs available to ENAACT students. The students have weekly chapel, and enjoy a recreational lunchtime together each co-op day. High School Juniors and Seniors also have Prom and Graduation. Parents and students work together to coordinate these activities, with the goal of honoring the Lord in all that we do.

E.N.A.A.C.T. is a non-profit ministry of Tree of Life Church and is open to all Christian homeschoolers. We are a university-model parent cooperative, using the talents and resources of parents as teachers and helpers whenever possible. For parents who are unable to participate, enrollment by tuition is also available.

**F.A.I.T.H.**

San Antonio

[www.faith-homeschool.com/](http://www.faith-homeschool.com/)

FAITH is a Christian home school support group made up of families with children from preschool through high school. We offer support for home schooling families who are just getting started and want to know how home schooling works. Our mission is to encourage home schooling families, provide support for learning, and build friendships among our children.

For parents, we have a monthly meeting where we discuss the “nuts and bolts” of home schooling – curriculum selections, motivation, teaching methods, organization, family issues and much more. We publish a monthly e-newsletter with upcoming FAITH events and home school activities in the area. We have a small (but growing!) library of home schooling resources that is available to all members.

For students, we organize a variety of activities throughout the month, such as field trips, outdoor learning activities, recreation and game days, science and history fairs, holiday craft days, and visits to the San Antonio symphony and theater productions.

**Family Educators Alliance of South Texas F.E.A.S.T.**

San Antonio

<http://www.homeschoolfeast.com>

FEAST is a non-profit, regional organization that offers support services for home schooling families in the South Texas area. FEAST offers orientations for new homeschoolers, Co-op classes, A Life of Faith, Annual Convention and Curriculum Fair, Bible Bee, Sports Program, monthly newsletter, Summer Reading Program, Scholarships, workshops and training seminars, testing services, apprenticeship opportunities, court and party/meeting room rentals, used book sales, support group contacts, activities such as Spelling Bee, Geography Bee, Debate Tournament, Science Fair, Ag Fair, as well as a bookstore stocked with over 7,000 titles.

Co-op: The primary purpose for the FEAST Teaching Co-op is to provide additional options for parents as they continue to seek the Lord for His provision for their children's education. It is also to give an opportunity for members of the Body of Christ to make their gifts and talents available to others. It is not the purpose of FEAST to undermine the authority or confidence of parents in any way. Neither can it be a replacement for parent involvement. An added bonus is the opportunity to encourage one another through Christian fellowship.

OUR TEACHERS We thank the Lord for every one of our teachers. Without their talents and skills our co-op would not have flourished as much as it has in the last 9 years. They are all approved by the FEAST Co-op office with a minimum of two references. Their teaching materials have also been approved and all classes are taught from a Biblical, Christian worldview. Our teachers are self-employed, independent contractors.

**Gifted at Home**

San Antonio

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/giftedathome/>

It is meant to provide support for the unique needs of children who are intellectually gifted, whose needs are not being met in traditional school settings. Participants are home-schoolers, or parents considering homeschooling in the greater San Antonio area. Members of the group have children who have been identified as gifted by objective criteria, WISC-IV, WIPSI, Stanford achievement test, Stanford Binet, Weschler, cogAT, etc.

**Home and Values Educational Network H.A.V.E.N. Educators**

San Antonio

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/havenhomeschoolgroup>

We are a network of home schooling families in the northwest side of San Antonio who wish to foster lasting friendships and positive experiences for our children. As most of you know, we generally have a field trip each month as well as our monthly meetings. Other activities include park day, holiday parties, 4-H, kids newsletter, art exhibit, book clubs, and making a yearly scrapbook yearbook. All faiths and opinions welcome; members respect one another's views. Meets 7 p.m. on the second Monday at the Western Hills Christian Church, 9655 Huebner Rd. at Eckhert. The whole family is welcome to attend.

**Hill Country Christian Homeschoolers**

Bulverde

<http://www.hcchnet.com/>

HCCH is a Christian organization established to provide support, education, and fellowship for local homeschooling families who are striving to train up their children in the Lord. Our existence depends on dedicated members who invest their time and resources.

**Home Team Support and Fieldtrip Group**

San Antonio

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HomeTeamPlaygroup/>

We are a Homeschool field trip group for Christians on the NE side of San Antonio, Texas and surrounding areas. Most members have children between the ages of 1 month to 17 yrs of age. We get together mostly on Tuesdays for play time or organized field trips AND offer fun Fridays at parks!

Our Home Teen group is part of Home Team and offers teen activities every month. Our teen group is for ages 12 to 18yrs. We often have special activities for the teens at our weekly Friday park days too! All members must have at least one school age child to enjoy the membership as most field trips are aimed at kinder and older. We encourage all members to join in on at least one field trip a month when possible.

**Homeschool Happenings**

San Antonio

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HomeschoolHappenings/>

This is a homeschool group designed to provide information on activities in and around New Braunfels and San Antonio for homeschool families. The activities range from field trips to play days. If you are new to homeschooling, we would like to welcome you and offer you support and encouragement. This group is open to children of all ages and all stages of homeschooling. This is primarily a Christian group, but all faiths are welcome!

**In the Loop Moms Group**

San Antonio

[Brenda@orbtree.com](mailto:Brenda@orbtree.com)

210-875-8635

Are you in the Loop? Whether you are inside Loop 410, or in the know, home schooling, or no schooling, a SAH mom, or a mom balancing work and kids- Join this group of moms In the Loop for play and chat- at the park or at a field trip. We are a secular, open group welcoming all faiths, traditions, and styles meant to provide companionship and kid activities.

We meet weekly on Monday 12:00-3:00 with periodic activities announced though the yahoo group. We meet at Olmos Basin Park, (playscape) 651 Devine 78209, (near Quarry Market) which features a playscape, creek, lots of shade, and biking trails, Field trips are not required, but additional.

**Infinity Christian Academy**

Leon Springs

[www.infinitychristianacademy.com](http://www.infinitychristianacademy.com)

INFINITY CHRISTIAN ACADEMY, Inc. combines the best features of a traditional classroom education with the strengths of parent-led schooling for the goal of academic excellence within the framework of Christian discipleship. This concept of schooling gives parents the gift of time and the ability to take a more-hands-on role in their child's education.

INFINITY CHRISTIAN ACADEMY, Inc. seeks to partner with parents to provide: curriculum, direction and planning, classroom instruction, weekly lesson plans, daily assignments, periodic testing, class projects, labs, field trips, parties, and grade reports. For the students it is our goal to provide: fellowship, encouragement, challenge, coaching, positive competition, accountability, godly character development, and foster spiritual growth. We accomplish this through two days a week teacher-led classroom instruction with the remaining 3 days of school assignments done under the encouraging supervision of the parents at home. The parents partner with the school to mentor their children in Christian behavior, disciplined work habits, and to co-teach lessons. The essential core subjects of Math, Language Arts (English, reading, writing, spelling), Science, and History, are taught on Tuesdays/Thursdays. An elective course in PE will be offered after-school on the same days. Other elective courses including Art, Improv, Spanish, Music, newspaper/yearbook, Bible, drama/theater may also be offered on Wednesdays.

**It's Our CLASS**

San Antonio

[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Its\\_our\\_CLASS/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Its_our_CLASS/)

This is a support group for families primarily from the South West side of San Antonio, but everyone is welcome. We all need a little support, for parents and homeschoolers alike. We all strive to help our kids learn with care and kindness. We also hope that by homeschooling our children we can form a closer relationship with them. We are the parents and the educators. That's a big responsibility. That's why having a support system is so important. This group is a place to discuss anything about homeschooling and to meet others who school their own children, as well as a place to make friends. It is a secular group and is open to anyone and everyone so please be mindful of others beliefs and opinions.

We also have park day at Miller's Pond Park every Monday from 10-12 a.m. We are new so any input is welcome. Also, if you have any materials-books, curriculum, etc., or even household stuff/clothes or whatever you can think of that you don't use any more and you'd like to give them away, bring them to our park day. It'd be a great way to share and exchange materials. If you have anything you'd like to bring to our park day, such as games for the children to play definitely feel free. It'd be welcomed.

**KONOS KARATS**

San Antonio

[http://konos\\_karats.tripod.com/supportnetwork](http://konos_karats.tripod.com/supportnetwork)

We are Christian parents--MOMS and DADS--who have formed a group to allow networking and support among families who have chosen to use the unit study approach to home educate our children. We are using the KONOS unit study curriculum and approach to teach our children and unify our families. We function solely as a support/networking group for PARENTS. We are not a co-op for children. We welcome everyone who is interested in finding out more about the unit study approach and the KONOS curriculum. Please contact us with any questions you may have!

**L.I.F.E. Co-op**

San Antonio

<http://www.lifehomeschoolco-op.org>

Learning in a Family Environment, formally CLEAR, has much to offer Christian homeschoolers with excellent classes for all ages, preschool through high school. We have a variety of classes for K3-12th grade. We are a homeschooling co-operative which offers academic, supplemental, as well as elective classes. We have certified and degreed teachers, as well as parents who are gifted and talented in different areas, who offer both free and fee classes.

We are a community of homeschooling families that come together with the following goals:

Encouragement, accountability, and sharing of the homeschool calling. Social connection: relationships with other families who embrace our desire to educate our children Christian growth and encouragement – our goal is to draw all into a relationship with Jesus Christ through love Strong marriages and healthy families –we rely on God’s word, prayer and mutual encouragement to help build and bond.

Interesting, fun, challenging classes where our children can experience learning in a group environment Using our God Given gifts and talents in a cooperative setting

### **Latter-Day Heritage Homeschool Association**

San Antonio

[www.ldhha.com/](http://www.ldhha.com/)

We are a predominantly LDS (Mormon) Homeschool group. We offer many activities for our members, such as field trips, service projects, family camp, teen activities, parties, education co-op, etc. We meet once a week for two 6-9 week sessions for co-op classes, which include P.E. We take field trips, have parties and special activities for our teens, attend a week-long homeschool camp, go to the symphony, hold an annual art show, etc. and basically have a lot of fun!

### **Laude Catholic Co-op**

San Antonio

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SALaudeCo-op/>

Located at St. Anthony Claret Catholic Church on Roft Rd. in northwest San Antonio. Laude Co-op emphasizes morals, strong family values, and virtue. Laude Co-op offers great opportunities to participate in a positive learning environment, while making new friends and enjoying group activities. Laude Co-op sing the praises of the Lord!

### **LifeShine Homeschool Enrichment Program**

San Antonio

[www.lifeshinetx.org](http://www.lifeshinetx.org)

A Christ-Centered Educational Enrichment Program for Homeschooled Children LifeShine is an all day educational program and ministry designed for 1st-5th grade home schooled children that meets once a week. Classes are taught by certified elementary school instructors and specialists who utilize a hands on approach to learning through unit studies. The classes are intended as a supplement to a home school curriculum, not as a substitute for parent led instruction the rest of the week. Students are encouraged to explore their abilities and learn in a fun, interactive, and challenging environment. Core classes include daily devotionals, Music, Recess, Science, Spanish, Communications and Art. Our desire is for each child to experience a variety of opportunities and develop their God-given creative abilities.

We are committed to work in partnership with families who have made the choice to educate at home. We believe in promoting unity and good will among all home schooling families in the San Antonio area, regardless of educational style. Our instructors hold to strong Biblical values and strive to honor Christ in all things. LifeShine is organized as a non-profit educational enrichment program rather than a "Co-op"

and is designed to give the homeschool parent a weekly break to refresh and be energized for the rest of the week! Parents are not required to stay with their children on program days but are welcome to stay and help if they choose. We also provide the children with opportunities to play with quality educational materials that may be expensive to the individual homeschool family. Our hope is to acquire the most quality, hands on resources for home school families to utilize throughout the elementary years.

### **North Central Homeschoolers Play Group**

San Antonio

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NCSAHomeschoolers/>

Meets Thursdays at 10 am at various parks near Stone Oak. This newly formed group is for homeschoolers of all ages (and their parents, of course) looking for a playgroup in the north central, Bulverde and Stone Oak areas. We are a relaxed group with no prerequisites for joining, other than you must be friendly and respect other people's beliefs. The main goal of the group is to serve as a place to share information, play dates and fun. We are open to ideas, but basically just want a place where our kids can make new friends and the adults can have a chance to talk with each other and share ideas. We meet at a park or play area near Stone Oak on Thursdays from 10 am to noon (e-mail for the most recent event).

### **Northwest Home Educators**

San Antonio

[www.nwhe.org](http://www.nwhe.org)

We are a Christian support group, located in San Antonio, Texas, for families who are educating their children at home. Our mission is to glorify God by supporting and encouraging one another through prayer, mentoring and fellowship as we educate our children at home. We work to enhance your family's home education experience through field trips, classes, co-ops and celebrations. Membership requires the family to be home educating according to Texas State Law. Each member will be responsible for helping with the success of the events by holding a position within the group.

### **NW Homeschoolers**

San Antonio

[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NW\\_Homeschoolers/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NW_Homeschoolers/)

Join the fun at Raymond Russell Park -- We're a group of home schooling families that meet for a fun park day, make friends and learn! We welcome everyone...home schoolers, unschoolers, and unfulfilled, unsatisfied public/private schoolers of all faiths. Raymond Russell has a multitude of playgrounds, volleyball and basketball courts, and even a now-dry riverbed for exploring. (Watch out if we get some much-needed rain!)

We meet between noon and 3pm, and almost every week an opportunity for learning is offered. The kids are free to participate or observe or just go play! Raymond Russell Park is located at 20644 W. IH-10 in NW San Antonio, about 3.5 miles northwest of Loop 1604 on IH-10.

**Randolph Area Military Christian Home Educators (RAMCHE)**

San Antonio

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/RAMCHE/>

Welcome to the e-group home of the Randolph Area Military Christian Home Educators (RAMCHE)! This e-group is for Christian military homeschool families living on or near Randolph Air Force Base, just northeast of San Antonio, TX. Here you can find details about RAMCHE activities, and resources to help you in your homeschooling endeavors.

Members of this yahoo group should read and agree to the guidelines of the group, including Statement of Faith and Guidelines for Conduct. Members of this yahoo group will then have access to the current roster, contact information for activity coordinators, the updated calendar of events, and the group email postings for discussion and questions. RAMCHE offers weekly park/playdays at rotating parks and play areas around (and within) Randolph AFB. These weekly playdays are the central activity for our group, allowing our children to form friendships with other military, homeschooled children. Moms find this visiting time especially valuable for forming friendships with other Moms, as well as seeking/providing homeschooling support through questions about curriculum, methods, and shared ideas! RAMCHE also offers monthly Family Dinners Out, and a well-deserved occasional Mom's Night Out! It is our goal for members to provide each other with encouragement and activities to support them as homeschoolers, as we share the common background of military homeschooling. We have active duty, reserve, and IRR members and their homeschooling families.

**Relaxed Homeschool Group**

San Antonio

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/RelaxedHomeschoolers>

The Relaxed Homeschool Group meets in the San Antonio/New Braunfels area in Texas. The children in our group range in age from babies up to 15 years old. We are not a religious based group; therefore, we have no statement of faith and no forms to sign, no membership fees or other requirements. Anyone who is interested in homeschooling can join us for our regular meetings.

**S.H.I.N.E.**

San Antonio

[www.shinehomeschool.com/](http://www.shinehomeschool.com/)

SHINE is a non-profit 501c3 organization designed to provide cooperative opportunities and a support network to families educating their children at home in the Northeast San Antonio, TX area.

Our mission is to provide opportunities for encouraging homeschool families in the endeavor of faithful Christian training and education of their children in the Northeast San Antonio area through the union of like-minded families. We currently serve families from San Antonio, Schertz, Garden Ridge, Universal City, Randolph AFB, Live Oak and surrounding areas.

Our theme verse, Matthew 5:16, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven," exemplifies our desire to honor Christ in all we do. SHINE is a completely volunteer group. All the leadership positions are held by moms willing to freely give of their time in various areas to support the SHINE group.

**SA Christian Homeschoolers S.A.C.H.**

San Antonio

<http://www.SAChristianHomeschoolers.com>

S.A.C.H. was formed in January 2005 to provide support, activities, and encouragement to Christian homeschooling families that are training up and educating their children in the Lord. S.A.C.H. is based on the Southwest Side of San Antonio, but welcomes Christian families from the entire San Antonio and surrounding area. Currently, we offer Park Days, Mom's night out activities, Field Trips, Teen Activities, Monthly Newsletter, Members Only Yahoo Group, Small Lending Library, Printed Membership Directory/Handbook and Quarterly Support Meetings focusing on homeschooling topics.

**San Antonio Home Education Resources and Opportunities**

San Antonio TX

[www.sahero.org](http://www.sahero.org)

H.E.R.O. is a 501c non-profit organization committed to providing access to opportunities and resources for home educators of all races, religions, philosophies, and education styles for expanding and improving their home education experience. H.E.R.O. is dedicated to fostering a supportive atmosphere for home educators by raising the awareness of alternative education choices and increasing positive interactions within the San Antonio metro area community. H.E.R.O. hosts an annual homeschool conference, informational speakers, Odyssey of the Mind Teams, GeoBee, and National History Day.

**San Antonio Homeschool Connections (SAHC)**

San Antonio

[www.meetup.com/San-Antonio-Homeschoolers/](http://www.meetup.com/San-Antonio-Homeschoolers/)

San Antonio Homeschoolers is a cooperative community of parents who are actively involved in providing the best possible education for their children and the children who benefit from their parents' dedication. We are an inclusive group, welcoming all types of homeschooling families in San Antonio and its surrounding areas, and we do not require a statement of faith to become a part of the group. We offer support and resources to both new and seasoned homeschooling families, and provide opportunities for our children to connect and form long-lasting friendships. We provide both fun and educational activities for our kids--park days, field trips, home playdates, co-op learning experiences, and volunteer opportunities, as well as planned events to allow parents to connect-- Parents Night Out, Parents Game Night, Girls Night Out, and Dad's Golf Day.

**San Antonio Homeschool Fun and Learning**

San Antonio

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SAHFL/>

S.A.H.F.L. is a secular homeschooling group in San Antonio and the surrounding area striving to provide a tolerant place for ALL homeschoolers. There is no statement of faith to sign and everyone is welcome regardless of religion. We get together several times a month for arts and crafts, field trips, park days, chess, and basically whatever anyone feels they need. We are dedicated to having fun and spending time with other families that are open minded and dedicated to raising healthy, friendly, loving children. If you are friendly with different religions....ie..Pagan, Buddhist, Christian, Agnostic...like to talk, laugh, have your kids in a safe environment and generally be in great company you have come to the right place.

**San Antonio Military Home Educators S.A.M.H.E.**

San Antonio

<http://www.homeschool.sushicereal.com/>

This group is a place for military families in the San Antonio, TX area who homeschool. We have such unique opportunities and situations! This group aims to support, encourage, swap curriculum, and otherwise have fun!

**San Antonio TEAMS Homeschool Co-op**

San Antonio

[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/TEAMS\\_co-op/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/TEAMS_co-op/)

This is a TEAMS oriented co-op. We need parents who will work with each other to help our children grow both academically and in character. Together we can set a positive example of working as a team. New ideas, fresh insights, and direction are welcome. Parent participation with teaching or assisting is mandatory.

**Co-op Goals:**

- \* Enjoy hands-on learning;
- \* Drill in a fun way;
- \* Learn personal and team accountability;
- \* Plan and achieve individual and group goals;
- \* Learn effective study skills;
- \* Gradually teach children to work independently;
- \* Motivate children to learn.

**Parent Goals:**

- \* Learn from each other as teachers;
- \* Give and receive parental support.

[T] - TEACH Academics & Character Development

[E] - EACH OTHER both parents and children

[A] - ACCOUNTABILITY to peers, friends, and family

[M] - MANAGEMENT of studies, time and children

[S] - SUPPORT other homeschooling families

### **Summit Christian Academy**

San Antonio

<http://scatx.net>

Summit Christian Academy is a University-Model School® located in the hill country of San Antonio. University-Model Schools allow parents more involvement in their children's education by combining the traditional private classroom environment with homeschooling. Classes are attended Tuesday and Thursday with optional electives on Wednesday. This allows for more family time on alternate days as parents guide their children through detailed lessons given by the teacher to complete their student's education. This formula allows for better character development as quality relationships between parents and children are fostered. Please visit [www.scatx.net](http://www.scatx.net) for more info.

### **T.O.R.C.H.**

San Antonio

[www.catholic-homeschool.com/](http://www.catholic-homeschool.com/)

Two Hearts Chapter is a local chapter of a national support group for Catholic Home educators. The purpose of our group is to strengthen each other in the common desire to provide both academic excellence as well as a solid foundation in the Catholic faith for all of our children. We have several functions each month related to the Church and her teachings as well as functions which are for more general educational purposes. Our various functions and special events take place at a variety of locations throughout the San Antonio area.

- Little Flowers - a girls group which meets to learn about the Saints and Virtues.
- Blue Knights - a boys group which meets to learn about the Saints and Virtues.
- Boys' Club - a boys' group which meets to discuss religious topics and does some athletics or socializes.
- Mom's Night Out - a mother's only, monthly meeting to discuss a topic regarding home-schooling, relationships, faith, etc.
- Geo-Culture Club - a group that meets to present projects and reports about countries that the group members have studied.
- First Friday Mass & Picnic
- Children's Adoration Hour
- Monthly Family Event - planned to coincide with events in the Church's Liturgical Year.
- Field Trips - vary from month to month
- Familia - groups that focus on motherhood and fatherhood, studying a program to apply one's faith into their daily life.

- Youth Group - a group for boys and girls ages 13 and up
- Youth Choir - a performance group for ages 10 and up.

## TEA Home School Information Letter

Texas Education Agency  
High School Information Letter

November 1, 2007

### TO THE INDIVIDUAL ADDRESSED:

This letter provides information about parental instruction or “home schooling” in lieu of public school attendance. It is available to you as a courtesy. The Texas Education Agency does not regulate, index, monitor, approve, register, or accredit the programs available to parents who choose to home school.

For most of this century, Texas has exempted children enrolled in a private or parochial school from compulsory school attendance. In the case of *Leeper et al. v. Arlington ISD et al.*, the Supreme Court of Texas affirmed a decision by District Judge Charles J. Murray holding that a school age child residing in Texas who is pursuing, under direct supervision of his/her parents, a curriculum designed to meet basic education goals is attending a private school within the meaning of Section 25.086(a)(1) of the Texas Education Code and is therefore exempt from compulsory school attendance. This case has a statewide application because school districts in the state and certain state officials were parties to the suit.

The State of Texas does not award a diploma to students that are home schooled. In the event a home-schooled student wishes to enter a public school, most districts have policies and procedures in place to assess the mastery level of courses that students in home schools have taken. The results of the assessment may be used for grade placement and/or award of credit.

There may be several sources of information, materials, and books about parental/home education available in your community. Parents can obtain information from many different sources, some of which are found in your local libraries and on the Internet. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) does not recommend, approve, support, or endorse any person, educational program, group, or organization. As another alternative, interested parents may also wish to contact the Texas Private School Accreditation Commission, P.O. Box 12073, Longview, Texas 75607, [www.tepsac.com](http://www.tepsac.com) for information about accredited private schools.

Persons interested in acquiring the state-mandated curriculum may purchase the document from the TEA Publications office. The document is all-inclusive; individual grades and/or courses are not available separately. To inquire about ordering the State Board of Education Rules for Curriculum, you may contact TEA Publications at (512) 463-9744, [www.tea.state.tx.us/publications/](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/publications/). The cost of the document changes periodically but is approximately \$50.00 per copy. The publications office maintains publications only and does not respond to questions related to home schooling. **THIS DOCUMENT IS NOT REQUIRED OF PERSONS CONDUCTING HOME SCHOOLING.**

A Textbook Current Adoption Bulletin located at [www.tea.state.tx.us/textbooks/materials/bulletin/](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/textbooks/materials/bulletin/) may be purchased (approximately \$10.00 per copy) from TEA Publications; however, state-adopted textbooks can be purchased directly from the publishers. Please understand that a local school district is not required to provide textbooks nor to facilitate purchases. Textbooks purchased with public funds are to be used only by students enrolled in a public school. If further information or assistance is necessary, please contact home school support groups, regional/state organizations on home schooling, or call 806.744.4441.

## TEA Commissioner Letter to School Districts

March 23, 2010

TO THE ADMINISTRATOR ADDRESSED:

Re: Home Schools

The issues surrounding students schooled at home continue to be of significant interest to parents and school districts. Because of the number of inquiries the Texas Education Agency receives regarding this matter, I am providing some general information with respect to the Agency's position on home schooled students.

The decision rendered in *Leeper et al. vs. Arlington ISD et al.* clearly establishes that students who are home schooled are exempt from the compulsory attendance requirement to the same extent as students enrolled in private schools. Students should be disenrolled by school officials when they receive written notice either by signing withdrawal forms or a letter of withdrawal. It is not necessary for the parents to make a personal appearance with school officials or present curriculum for review. School districts which become aware of a student who is potentially being home schooled may request in writing a letter of assurance from the parents of the student regarding their intention to home-school the student. This letter may require assurances that the home-school curriculum is designed to meet basic education goals including reading, spelling, grammar, mathematics, and a study of good citizenship. Please note that a letter of this type is not required each year.

Additionally, it has been brought to my attention that there may be some confusion with respect to the awarding of transfer credit from students who have been home schooled. Students transferring from home schools should be afforded the same treatment as students transferring from unaccredited private schools. Awarding of credit for courses

taken may be determined by reviewing the curriculum and/or work of the student, or by using appropriate assessments.

When appropriate assessments are used for determination of placement, the passing standard for those students who have been home schooled should be no higher than the standard required of students transferring from unaccredited private schools. As the Texas Education Agency has stated in the past, school districts may assess students by administering valid and reliable assessment instruments. The determination of whether or not to use such an instrument is a local matter. Districts may place students according to a review of the curriculum, course of study, and work of the student coming from a home school environment. Section 28.021 of the Texas Education Code (TEC) requires advancement or credit to be awarded on the basis of "academic achievement or demonstrated proficiency of the subject matter."

If assessments are utilized for determining placement, the agency would suggest the following guidelines for assessing students:

- 1) Elementary students should be assessed by means of a nationally recognized norm-referenced test or by a previously released TAAS or TAKS exam of appropriate grade level.
- 2) Secondary students may be assessed using the credit-by-examination methods for individual subject area or by a previously released TAAS or TAKS exam of appropriate grade level.
- 3) A secondary student assessed using the credit-by-examination method should be given adequate time to prepare for the test, particularly if multiple examinations are required. The standard of 70% for students to receive credit for courses they have already taken should be used rather than that the 90% standard for earning credit for courses not previously taken.

4) The Texas legislature amended TEC 29.916 that requires school districts to allow home school students the opportunity to participate in PSAT/NQMST and Advanced Placement (AP) testing that each district provides enrolled students. The statute also requires the district to notify the public via its website or local newspaper: of the dates of PSAT/NQMST and AP tests; that home school students are eligible to take the test; and the procedures for registering for such tests. This public notice must be posted or published at the same time and with the same frequency as the notice of the tests given to students attending the school district.

Finally, there has been some concern that school districts may be contacting Child Protective Services regarding children who are being home-schooled. While school officials are required to contact that agency in instances of abuse or neglect of a child, the determination of whether compulsory attendance has been violated should be made by the school district or local judicial authorities.

It is my hope that these policy statements will help to alleviate any confusion with respect to the issues surrounding notification, placement and the awarding of credit to previously home-schooled students. Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Sincerely,

Robert Scott  
Commissioner of Education