

Notice of Intent Curriculum Description

According to § 22.1-254.1 B, any parent who complies with § 22.1-254.1 by filing a Notice of Intent or writing a letter to the division superintendent, must provide a description of curriculum to be followed for the coming year with their letter of intent.

The law states the following:

*Any parent who elects to provide home instruction in lieu of school attendance shall annually notify the division superintendent in August of his intention to so instruct the child and **provide a description of the curriculum, limited to a list of subjects to be studied during the coming year**, and evidence of having met one of the criteria for providing home instruction as required by subsection A. Effective July 1, 2000, parents electing to provide home instruction shall provide such annual notice no later than August 15.*

Two bills, initiated by HEAV to clarify the meaning of a “description of the curriculum,” passed both the House and Senate and have been signed by Governor McDonnell. The new language, which took effect July 1, 2012, requires a parent to “provide a description of the curriculum, **limited to a list of subjects** to be studied during the coming year...” Superintendents may no longer require course descriptions, outlines, textbook titles, explanations of methods, tables of contents, or scope and sequences. This change will provide consistency in all school districts.

What is included in a “description of the curriculum”?

A curriculum description includes a list of all the subjects included in a plan of study. A curriculum is defined in the *American Heritage Dictionary* as a listing of “all the courses of study offered by an educational institution.” The *Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* defines curriculum as “the group of subjects studied in a school, college, etc.

The description is now limited by law to a list of subjects to be studied during the coming year. Examples of subjects could include math, algebra, geometry, history, world history, American history, handwriting, science, biology, physics, language arts, grammar, composition, British literature, music, art, rhetoric, Latin, foreign language, macroeconomics, etc.

Are there certain subjects I am required to teach?

No, the law does not list the subjects that must be taught for each grade level. That decision is up to the parent. However, most parents teach the traditional subjects, i.e., language arts, math, science, history, etc. It’s important to teach what is appropriate for your child and to present it in a reasonable, understandable way. You do not want to raise questions that could lead to unnecessary problems.

What if I change my mind about the curriculum I plan to use?

If you have submitted a list of subjects to be studied along with the information on your Notice of Intent, you have properly notified the superintendent. The law does not require you to inform the superintendent's office concerning any changes you make to your educational plan once the school year has begun.

Does my curriculum have to include the Standards of Learning (SOLs) for Virginia?

No, homeschoolers do not have to include the SOLs in their curriculum. Neither are homeschoolers required to take SOL tests. However, some parents may choose to [refer to the SOLs](#) to see what the SOLs include at a particular grade level.

Does the superintendent or his designee approve the curriculum?

The parent is required to supply a list of courses to be studied for the upcoming year. Neither the superintendent nor his designee is given the authority to “approve” or “disapprove” a parent's curriculum choices. They do not have authority to take action concerning your curriculum, and they cannot make any judgments on the subjects you plan to teach, on the content of those subjects, or on the type of curriculum and instructional methods you choose to employ in teaching those subjects.

If I have religious exemption, should I submit a curriculum description?

No, parents who have religious exemption under §22.1-254 B do not have to comply with the requirements of the homeschool statute as listed in §22.1-254.1 B.

If I am a certified tutor, must I submit a curriculum description?

It depends on how you file to homeschool. If you comply with the homeschool statute §22.1-254.1 and check the second option on the Notice of Intent form, you must comply with all requirements of the homeschool statute, including providing a curriculum description. However, if you write a letter to your superintendent and clearly state that you are filing under the certified tutor statute as referenced in §22.1-254 A, you are NOT under any of the requirements of the homeschool statute. You are under another section of the law—the certified tutor law—not the homeschool law.

The information above should not be considered legal advice, but is for informational purposes only. For legal advice, please contact an attorney.