



# Wisconsin Parents Association Newsletter

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## Legislative Watch

One of WPA's main functions is legislative watch. We are constantly on the lookout for potential issues that would impact Wisconsin homeschoolers. Through vigilance and hard work we watch, inform, and ask for action when needed.

Here are the top three things we are watching right now:

### ITEM #1: Wisconsin's Biennial Budget

The Governor released his proposal for Wisconsin's biennial budget, which would go into effect in July of 2017. We carefully reviewed the 644 page document to see if there was any mention of homeschooling. There was not. However, there will be changes as the budget moves through the next several steps in the process and legislators are able to make modifications.

It is important to note that anything can be slipped into the budget, even if it is not a budgetary item. For example, the legislation forcing public schools to allow homeschoolers to play sports was added to the previous budget bill (2015), in spite of MANY homeschoolers being opposed to it and voicing their opposition. In the case of the homeschool sports legislation, there was not much time for public input (although lots of homeschoolers worked very hard to try to get this line removed) and the biennial budget was passed in spite of the majority of those who would be affected by the legislation expressing that they did not want it. When attempts to introduce a bill about homeschoolers playing public school sports was brought up in the past, it was defeated each time.

Now is the time to lay the groundwork with your representatives. Please **contact your state representatives** and let them know that you are a homeschooling family and that you do not want any government money in any form for homeschoolers. Letting representatives who may want to help homeschoolers know that we do not want this help allows them to understand where we are coming from BEFORE "help" is introduced into the budget bill. Encourage other homeschoolers to do so as well.

### ITEM #2: H.R. 610, also known as "Choices in Education Act of 2017"

H.R. 610 was introduced in the United States House of Representatives on January 23, 2017. Among other things, it would require states, in order to receive certain federal dollars, to provide voucher money for homeschoolers. It has been referred to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce. This federal bill would offer block grants to states and specifically require them to offer some of the grant money in the form of vouchers to homeschoolers. (*You can view the proposed bill at <http://j.tinyurl.com/z9okor>*)

The way this piece of legislation is written, in a state like Wisconsin it will mean more immediate regulation for homeschoolers than we currently have, should the state choose to accept the money. The legislation would require a "local educational agency" to determine how many homeschooled children would be eligible, which homeschooled children are eligible, and would determine that the money being spent is "used for appropriate educational expenses." This alone is significantly more regulation than is currently required of us.

**Contact your federal representatives** and let them know that you are a homeschooling family and that you do not want anything in the form of government money to go to homeschoolers. Encourage others to do so as well.

### ITEM #3: Confirmation of Betsy DeVos

Betsy DeVos was confirmed as Secretary of Education. DeVos supports publicly funded alternatives to public school, possibly including homeschooling. WPA will closely watch the U.S. Department of Education in the coming days and months to see what proposals and policies could affect homeschooling in Wisconsin.

**Contact your federal representatives** and let them know that you are a homeschooling family and that you do not want any public money for homeschooling. Encourage others homeschoolers to do so as well.

### What can homeschoolers do to protect their homeschooling freedoms?

**1. Speak up** for homeschooling freedom in Wisconsin. Contact your representatives at both the state level and federal level and let them know that you are a homeschooling family and you do not want government money or favors for homeschoolers.

**2. Join WPA.** Our voice is strongest if we speak for many. We defend homeschooling freedom for all homeschoolers. Your membership helps support our work; it also gives us more of a voice. When we talk with legislators, they want to know how many families we represent.

Continued on page 2

## Legislative Watch (continued)

**3. Be vigilant** and share anything that you think may be of interest. Please email us at [wpa@homeschooling-wpa.org](mailto:wpa@homeschooling-wpa.org) with any information that you think is interesting, relevant or concerning. We would rather know about something more than once than miss anything.

**4. Learn about the history of homeschooling** in Wisconsin and why our homeschooling law is unique. We are always open to questions and conversation about these issues as well, so members are encouraged to get involved, ask questions and attend board meetings. Please see the “About Us” section on our website for a brief history of homeschooling in Wisconsin and for information on upcoming board meetings.

**5. Homeschool responsibly.** Know the law (our law is different from other states) and be an example of responsible homeschooling in Wisconsin.

Things can change quickly. Please keep up with the latest news and information by clicking on the “Current Issues” tab of our website.

# Protecting Our Homeschooling Freedoms

## Why Our Children Don't Play Sports in the Public Schools

by WPA member, Juli Hacker

We've all found ourselves in this situation (if you haven't yet it is coming); you are in a social setting chatting with other parents. The conversation turns to schooling and you are asked what school your children attend. When you respond—“we homeschool”—one of two things happen. Either you are praised because you are doing something “they could never do” or they have a long list of questions for you. Usually the questions start with “what about socialization?” followed by “what about college?” and then “what about sports (or prom)?” Let's talk about sports.

Our children are passionate about cross country skiing and running. We've had parents ask us why our kids are not running Cross Country for the public school in our district because they have heard of other homeschoolers running for the public school in their district. We then explain to these parents (both homeschool and public school) that we do not want to risk losing our homeschool freedoms by participating in WIAA sponsored events. Most times the parents then commend us for taking the extra time to make sure our athletic children are competing AND standing up for what is important for them. There are so many options out there for our homeschool athletes that we do not need to try to get into the public school WIAA sponsored sports.

In case you are not familiar with Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA) here is a brief overview of who they are. WIAA is a voluntary, unincorporated, private and nonprofit organization that is associated with public and private high schools and middle schools in Wisconsin. They are governed by its member schools. The purpose of the Association is . . .

- to organize, develop and control an interscholastic athletic program that will promote the ideals of its membership and the opportunities for member schools' participation.
- to emphasize interscholastic athletics as a partner with other school activities in the total education process, and to formulate and maintain policies that will cultivate the high ideals of good citizenship and sportsmanship.
- to promote uniformity of standards in interscholastic athletic competition, and prevent exploitation by special interest groups of the school program and the individual's ability (<http://www.wiaawi.org/aboutwiaa.aspx>)

The following are WIAA academic requirements:

### ACADEMICS

A student-athlete must meet school and DPI requirements defining a full-time student and have received no more than one failing grade (including incompletes) in the most recent school issued grade reporting period. Note: Some member schools adopt code and academic policies and other participation requirements which are more stringent than WIAA minimum requirements. In those instances the schools requirements prevail and must be applied as written.

(<http://www.wiaawi.org/Schools/EligibilityRulesForms.aspx>)

When talk of allowing homeschoolers on public school teams was taking place in 2015 WIAA had an interesting story on their website as to why they did not want this to take place. Their concern about allowing homeschoolers to compete on WIAA teams was that if there is an athlete that is academically ineligible, that particular athlete could drop out of public school and claim to be homeschooled and still continue to participate in athletics. Once the sport season is completed that child would re-enter public school and not have had any consequences for the inadequate academic performance. As a homeschool parent I put a lot of thought, energy, time and resources into educating my children. I take offense at somebody thinking they can effectively homeschool for a few weeks and then pop back into the public school setting to continue on. Homeschooling should not be considered a swinging door solution when a family is not fully committed to their public school educational choice.

Wisconsin Parents Association (WPA) has worked long and hard for our homeschool freedoms. There is a genuine concern that home

## School Sports—Protecting our Homeschooling Freedoms (continued)

schoolers participating with public school WIAA sponsored team sports could undermine our freedoms. There are 4 primary concerns (outlined in WPA communications from May, 2015):

- Increased regulation of homeschool – Accepting tax dollars or other favors from the government consistently leads to increased government regulation.
- A dangerous new precedent and a serious loss of homeschooling freedom. For the first time in Wisconsin history, this provision allows public schools to determine whether homeschools meet public school standards.
- Increased state regulation for ALL homeschoolers. Supporters of sports legislation claim that increased regulation of homeschoolers would apply only to those who participate in public school sports. However, many examples show that regulations that initially applied to only a small subset of a larger group eventually get applied to the whole group.
- Loss of unity among homeschoolers.

Do not think that my one homeschooled child amongst the rest of the team of public school educated kids is not going to upset the system. It very well could. Your one child plus a smattering of other homeschool children across the state plus a few academically ineligible public school athletes could really muddy the waters of our amazing homeschool laws. Having your child participate on the public school team is asking for a favor from your school district.

Here are a few examples of what is happening in other states that allow homeschoolers to participate in interscholastic activities (an online search will turn up many more):

**Arizona**—Homeschooled students have full access to participation in interscholastic activities “in the same manner” as public school students. Parents must submit evidence of satisfactory academic progress. [\*Arizona Revised Statutes § 15-802.01\*](#)

**Arkansas**—In 2013, Arkansas passed legislation giving homeschooled students full access to participation in interscholastic activities if they score at least the 30th percentile on their annual nationally standardized achievement test. The school district may allow a student with a lower score to participate, and may also require participating homeschooled students to attend the school for not more than one period per day. [\*Arkansas Statutes §6-15-509\*](#)

**New Mexico**—Homeschool students are eligible to participate in up to three school district activities in their school district of residence. The school district may verify the student’s academic eligibility. Public schools receive funding for homeschool involvement. [\*New Mexico Statutes Annotated § 22-8-23.8\*](#)

**Tennessee**—In 2013, Tennessee passed legislation granting students homeschooled under a local education agency (LEA) full access to participation in interscholastic athletics. As required by the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association (TSSAA), the director of schools must confer with the parents to determine that the student is academically eligible. Other basic requirements must also be met. See TSSAA Home School Rule and [\*Tennessee Statute §49-6- 3050\(e\)\*](#). Students homeschooled through church schools are not included.

(Enter the italic text into your favorite online search engine—reading the full text of each state is fascinating.)

Here is a quick reminder of what we have going for us here in Wisconsin:

Homeschoolers in Wisconsin are NOT required to follow a curriculum chosen by the state; we are free to choose our own curriculum.

Our children are NOT required to take the state-mandated tests that students in public schools must take. Instead, we can evaluate our children’s learning in ways we choose. We can observe them learning; listen to their questions and ideas; and keep records of their accomplishments.

We do not need school board approval to teach our children what we feel is important. We do not have to take standardized tests to prove that our homeschool is educating our children. As parents we do not need to submit an affidavit proving that our child has met academic qualifications. Our Wisconsin homeschool laws are amazing. Let’s not risk losing them. It is not worth it.

There is no denying that some children thrive with sports and the team camaraderie. Soccer and gymnastics are often offered at a club or rec levels. Rock climbing gyms have high school and middle school climbing teams. There are mountain bike riding teams for a variety of age groups. A web search for “WI Homeschool Sports Teams” will provide a number of resources.

I want to share specific information about cross country skiing opportunities, since our children have participated for so long. You will find nordic ski teams statewide. While none of these teams are associated with WIAA (the league chose to govern themselves and not get involved with WIAA) a few clubs in the state are associated with schools, but allow athletes from outside their school to compete on their team. They understand WIAA’s limiting effect on sports and the fact that it doesn’t do a thing to create a life-long athlete. The goal of our ski club is to create life-long skiers. Sounds a lot like creating life-long learners.

Our athletic children have an elevator speech when others ask them why they don’t compete on public school teams. Over the years of attending the WPA conferences they have learned that we cannot take our hard-earned freedoms for granted. We run the risk of losing these precious freedoms by asking favors from state run organizations. Please keep in mind that what each homeschooling family does affects the freedom of all of us.

# 2017 Wisconsin Parents Association Member Event

## Rediscovering WPA: Rights, Responsibilities, and Community

Saturday, May 13, 2017 • [Piffner Park](#), Stevens Point WI

*Join us for a day-long, members-only event that will inspire, inform and celebrate our lives as homeschoolers.*

### Schedule for the day

**10:30 – 11:00—Registration, Coffee, and Conversation**

**11:00-12:00—Welcome:** Jen Lynch, WPA Executive Director

**Speaker:** Pamela Roland, WPA Board President and Issues Director, “How We Got Here, Where We’re Going: Modern Homeschooling in Wisconsin”

**12:00- 1:00—Lunch!** Bring your own or sign up for purchased lunch when you register.

**1:00-2:00—Table Talks—**Topics will include homeschooling for high school, getting started, record keeping, dealing with challenges, finding and sharing resources, and more. These will be small-group conversations led by experienced homeschoolers and Regional Contacts.

**2:00-3:00—WPA Annual Business Meeting—**This is where we talk about how and what WPA is doing. It is also the time for you (the members) to ask questions, raise issues and make your voices heard.

**3:00-4:00—Graduation/Recognition Ceremony—**This is always an inspiring and joyful event as we join together with families in our community to celebrate the accomplishments of their children.

**Speaker topic:** “Homeschooling Responsibilities: Personal Reflections”

**4:00-5:00—Party!** Let’s talk and eat, laugh, and socialize. We are so lucky to have such a diverse community of homeschoolers in Wisconsin.

This event is aimed primarily at adults and teens. Children are very welcome, however there will be no special programming or workshops for children.

### Registration

Register at [www.homeschooling-wpa.org](http://www.homeschooling-wpa.org). **Only 220 spaces are available.**

You will have the option to print your registration form and mail a check if you prefer. If you have no access to a computer, please call the WPA voicemail to request a paper form. (608) 283-3131

### Cost

**Registration only:** \$10/person

**Registration plus lunch:** \$22/person (sandwich, side and drink) Lunch choices appear on the registration form.

You are free to bring your own lunch and snacks. Beverages will be provided in the morning and a snack in the afternoon.

**Registration deadlines:** April 19 for lunch and registration,  
April 28 for registration only

Member event generously sponsored by



Our next full conference will be May 4-5, 2018 at the Stevens Point Holiday Inn Convention Center



# Homeschooling

You've Got Questions?  
We've Got Answers.

## What is the Wisconsin Parents Association?

WPA is a state-wide, grassroots organization that supports homeschooling and is committed to supporting homeschoolers in maintaining their homeschooling freedoms and their right to provide a homeschool education consistent with their families' principles and beliefs.

Board meetings are open to any interested member. For details email [wpa@homeschooling-wpa.org](mailto:wpa@homeschooling-wpa.org).

## What resources does the WPA make available?

### • On the web

How and when to file the required paperwork • Issues and legislation of interest to homeschoolers • Answers to most of your questions about homeschooling in Wisconsin

### • The WPA Handbook

Now in its 7th edition, this resource contains information about getting started homeschooling, resources for homeschooling, your rights and responsibilities as a homeschooler, why and how homeschooling works, and how to deal with challenges to homeschooling. Copies can be ordered through the WPA website.

### • Email/telephone support

Most homeschooling questions are answered on the website. For those that aren't, you can connect with your Regional Contact (see list below), email WPA, or leave a message on our voicemail and request a call-back.

### • WPA Regional Contacts

Speak with an experienced homeschooler via WPA's network of Regional Contacts. All of them are ready for you to contact them with questions about homeschooling.

## Directory of Regional Contacts

### Far North

Kim Suske (Washburn • Bayfield County)  
(715) 373-5931 • [kims@homeschooling-wpa.org](mailto:kims@homeschooling-wpa.org)

### Middle West

Nancy Horton (Etrick • Trempealeau County)  
(608) 525-7104 • [nancyh@homeschooling-wpa.org](mailto:nancyh@homeschooling-wpa.org)

### Southwest

Colleen Manning (Lone Rock • Richland County)  
(608) 647-4102 • [colleenm@homeschooling-wpa.org](mailto:colleenm@homeschooling-wpa.org)

### North Central

Keith and Cindy White (Rhineland • Oneida County)  
(715) 282-2132 • [cindyw@homeschooling-wpa.org](mailto:cindyw@homeschooling-wpa.org)

### East Central

Lori Fares (Appleton • Outagamie County)  
(920) 733-8002 • [lorif@homeschooling-wpa.org](mailto:lorif@homeschooling-wpa.org)  
(*Habla español*)

### South Central

Mae Seib (Columbus • Columbia County)  
(920) 623-5568

Dona Campos (Jefferson County)  
(920) 248-6614 • [donac@homeschooling-wpa.org](mailto:donac@homeschooling-wpa.org)

### Central

Elizabeth Whelan (Wisconsin Rapids • Wood County)  
(715) 421-3958 • [elizabethw@homeschooling-wpa.org](mailto:elizabethw@homeschooling-wpa.org)

Therese Kluck (Hatley • Marathon County)  
(715) 454-7126 • [theresek@homeschooling-wpa.org](mailto:theresek@homeschooling-wpa.org)

### Southeast

Tomi Fay Forbes (Cedarburg • Ozaukee County)  
(262) 377-5984 • [tomifayf@homeschooling-wpa.org](mailto:tomifayf@homeschooling-wpa.org)

Susan Rozanski (Wauwatosa • Milwaukee County)  
(414) 771-9388 • [susanr@homeschooling-wpa.org](mailto:susanr@homeschooling-wpa.org)

Patricia Plichta (Germantown • Washington County)  
(262) 345-4065 • [patriciap@homeschooling-wpa.org](mailto:patriciap@homeschooling-wpa.org)

## How can I get involved?

Your financial support allows WPA to monitor legislation and current developments that may affect homeschoolers. Part of our mission is to keep the homeschooling community, the general public, legislators, and government officials informed about issues regarding homeschooling.

### • Join

WPA is a membership organization. Your ongoing financial support helps us protect everyone's right to homeschool and builds a strong statewide community. Many families continue to support WPA with membership long after their active homeschooling years are over.

### • Donate

Your tax-deductible donation helps WPA continue to serve the needs of Wisconsin homeschoolers as it has done since 1984.

**Wisconsin Parents Association | PO Box 2502 Madison, WI 53701**

[www.homeschooling-wpa.org](http://www.homeschooling-wpa.org) | 608-283-3131

# “Can I homeschool?” A Guide to Answering Questions

**By Jodi Buntin, WPA member**

This is a composite of a conversation which some of us may have had with families who want to know more about homeschooling, and hopefully it can provide some help for you if you struggle with talking with others about homeschooling.

**Prospective Family (PF):** “I see that you homeschool. I give you a lot of credit. I don’t think I could do it ... but yet our child is really struggling, and while I know we need to do something different, I have no idea what to do. Maybe we need to look into homeschooling.”

**Homeschooling Parent (HP):** “I’m sorry to hear that your child is having a tough time. Honestly, I didn’t think I could homeschool either, but here we are many years later, and we have no intention of stopping.”

**PF:** “Isn’t it hard to get started? Don’t you need to report everything you’re going to be doing to the school? I heard that you have to do a lot of reporting and get a lot of approvals in order to homeschool.”

**HP:** “No. You can withdraw your child from the school and inform them that you will be homeschooling. Wisconsin has some of the best homeschooling laws around! All we are required to do is file a PI-1206 form each year, which simply informs the state of our intent to homeschool, and that we agree to provide 875 hours of instruction in reading, language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and health. We are free to choose the curriculum which best meets the needs of our children. That’s it. There are lots of books about how to get started with homeschooling available at your local library, and the Internet has a wealth of information. I would also suggest that you get in touch with your local homeschool group for advice, resources and guidance and Wisconsin Parents Association to learn more about what is required of homeschoolers in Wisconsin.”

**PF:** “Curriculum ... what about that? What do I choose? Does the school provide it? Is it expensive?”

**HP:** “There are a ton of curriculum choices available, ranging from essentially free to more costly options, and we are free to choose what we want. The school does not provide it, and there is no requirement to spend a lot of money. Some families utilize their local library exclusively, while some can find great deals on used curriculum and books, and take advantage of free digital books, some piece together their own curriculum using a mix of new and used items, and some use a ‘boxed’ curriculum. It all depends on your child’s needs and learning style, your budget, and what works for you as the teacher. Many curriculum providers have samples available and have Facebook groups and forums where you can ask questions.”

**PF:** “Can we deduct our homeschool expenses, or is there some kind of tax credit available?”

**HP:** “Not in Wisconsin or on federal tax returns, and honestly, we’re better off without it, since tax dollars always come with strings attached.”

**PF:** “What about socialization? Are their opportunities for my child to be around other kids?”

**HP:** “Yes! There are lots of opportunities for socialization – field trips, park days, trips to the library, enrichment classes, service opportunities, social gatherings, church activities, and even weekly shopping trips! My kids have benefitted from being around people of all ages. Trust me, your child will not be lacking in this area.”

**PF:** “What about socialization for me?”

**HP:** “One of the best pieces of advice I have received is to find your tribe – find families who are structured similarly to yours, and have common values and interests. Get involved in your local homeschool group, and take advantage of opportunities they have for moms.”

**PF:** “Wow, I didn’t know that there are all these options! Do you plan all the way through high school?”

**HP:** “<Laughing> No, if I had done that, I think my head would have exploded from being overwhelmed, plus things change – your child’s interests change, their needs change, so detailed long-term plans usually don’t work. From the beginning, I have taken things year by year; but as my oldest approached high school, I then started looking at things from a multi-year perspective. Right now, focus on this year and then as you approach the next year, focus on next year – take it year by year. It will be much easier.”

**PF:** “I have family and friends who are very critical of homeschooling. What do I do?”

**HP:** “It’s tough to have to deal with that, and I’ve been there. The best thing you can do is to gently set some boundaries – engage

# Homeschooling Support Groups

## What Are You Supporting?

There was a time when homeschoolers were so secretive about what they were doing that they were thrilled to find another homeschooling family and many never imagined the options that are available for homeschoolers today.

Today, many homeschoolers belong to homeschooling support groups where they can find those who share common interests, toss around ideas about homeschooling, ask questions, and share resources.

Support groups may come together based on a common method of homeschooling, shared interests, geographical closeness, shared beliefs, or another reason. Some homeschooling groups are inclusive to all homeschoolers and others have a more narrow focus.

WPA is not a support group. Our mission is to provide accurate, up-to-date information about the legal requirements for homeschooling in Wisconsin. We provide legislative watch and communicate with our members so that parents in Wisconsin can advocate for the continued freedom to provide an education for their children that reflects the family's principals and beliefs.

Does your support group know about the history of homeschooling in Wisconsin and how 1983 Act 512 came to pass?

Does each member of your support group understand that in order for all homeschoolers to continue to have the freedom that we have in this state, each homeschooling family must homeschool responsibly?

Does your support group discuss legislation that might threaten homeschoolers and prepare your members to act to maintain our good homeschooling laws, if necessary?

Do the members of your support group understand that the homeschooling law in Wisconsin is unique and that other states face regulation that Wisconsin homeschoolers don't?

Are the members of your group aware of how quickly the homeschooling laws can change?

Does your support group include Virtual Public School families? These schools are public schools and the needs and concerns of these families are very different from homeschoolers and they are not invested in maintaining homeschooling freedoms.

Wisconsin Parents Association works for the interest of ALL homeschoolers. It is your voice and action as a homeschooler that will maintain the excellent homeschool law we currently have.

If you find yourself disagreeing with WPA on a certain issue, ask yourself "why?" Are you putting the interests of your child or family above what is best for all homeschoolers? Is it sustainable for homeschoolers to get special treatment without increased regulation for all homeschoolers?

It's a great time to think about the structure of your homeschooling group and ask yourself if your group actively supports homeschooling freedom.

Would you like a representative from WPA to come speak to your support group? You can also invite people to sign up for membership with WPA through your support group, keeping \$5 of each membership to strengthen your group. For more information, please visit our website and click on "Membership."

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## "Can I Homeschool?" (continued)

them, answer their questions, but you don't need to justify your family's decision, nor should you try to debate them on why your choice is right. I have never asked anyone to approve of, endorse, or like our decision to homeschool; however, I do ask that they respect it. You'll find your way, and over time, the concerns and criticisms usually lessen. The bottom line is that you need to do what's right for your family."

**PF:** "Wow, thanks for taking some time for talking to me; you've given me a lot to think about. Would you mind if I contacted you if I had more questions?"

**HP:** "Sure! I'd be more than happy to answer your questions!"

You don't need to have all sorts of statistics or study results at the ready to share, or a prepared script with well-crafted talking points, and you don't need to argue why homeschooling is superior – our personal experiences are much more moving and convincing. It is very easy to talk to people about homeschooling, as we are homeschooling's best advocates!

*Jodi Buntin lives in New Franken, WI. She has homeschooled her two sons from the very beginning.*

# A few words about transcripts

In Wisconsin, parents/guardians are the administrators of their homeschools. That means parents grant their children a high school diploma when they feel their child has achieved the graduation goals of their homeschool. Most employers or institutions of higher education will ask your student for a diploma, 4 years of your completed PI-1206 forms (this is proof that you have followed the homeschooling laws of the State of Wisconsin for the four years of high school), and a transcript.

A transcript is meant to be a summary of subjects studied, grades received, and credits earned. The purpose of a transcript is to demonstrate what a student has done as a homeschooler. Developing a transcript can be challenging. Ways of homeschooling are wide-ranging and varied, making it tricky to summarize the homeschooling experience with a quick grid or checklist.

Keep in mind, a transcript is really just a quick way to assure an employer, college admissions officer, or some other person that a student has worked on a number of general subjects. There are many ways to supplement a transcript such as a personal interview, resume, portfolio of work, etc.

A transcript can be developed in a variety of ways. It can be written based on the number of hours spent studying a subject, or what has been learned. Some homeschoolers use state guidelines to inform how they write their transcript. Many conventional schools award one semester credit for 90 hours of classwork plus homework. A transcript using this method might have 8 semesters of English, 8 semesters of science, 2 semesters of a foreign language, etc.

There are many examples of transcripts online. Remember, tailor the transcript to the goal. Homeschoolers should be prepared to advocate for themselves and be ready to explain just how much work it is to be responsible for creating a personalized educational plan. Homeschoolers are often asked to supply reading lists, examples of work, or detailed class descriptions. Institutions are trying to figure out and verify that your student has received an education that is at least commensurate with what accredited institutions provide – they are trying to understand what your child has experienced through their educational path.

If plans include college, entry or re-entry to public school, look at the requirements or record keeping methods of the institution under consideration. Making the transcript look similar will make it easier for institutions to translate the homeschooler's experiences into their expectations.

Testing is not required by Wisconsin law. If standardized tests are taken (PSAT, ACT, SAT, CLEP, SAT – subject tests, etc.), those scores can be listed on the transcript. Test scores do not have to be reported to the state or school district. Some colleges or universities may require standardized testing in lieu of a conventional transcript from an accredited institution.

Sometimes it feels a little unfair that homeschoolers are asked to jump through additional hoops. It is a consequence we need to be aware of as we chart the educational path for our children. Ask around in your support group or community. There have been others before you!