

Handbook  
For  
Home Educating High Schoolers  
In  
Kentucky

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## **Intro./History**

My history.

First, I would like to tell you a little bit about myself and my family. I was raised in Northern Michigan and attended public elementary, parochial middle, and public high schools. I am educated as a Registered Nurse. My husband, a native Kentuckian, had attended public schools in Anderson County. He also attended Transylvania University for his undergraduate degree, and received his Doctorate of Medicine in Dentistry from the University of Kentucky.

We have educated our children at home from the beginning. I had attended a MOPS (Mothers Of Pre-Schoolers) group here in Anderson County, and there were a number of families who planned to, or already home schooled their children. With this home education being a new idea to us, we learned more by reading books from the library, talking with home school families, and searching on-line resources. After conducting our research, we decided to begin the home school journey, and would take it one year at a time. The main reason for our decision is that we wanted to be in charge of what our children learned. We wanted to be able to tailor each child's education to their interests and abilities. We wanted to foster family relationships. In fact, the Adams Academy's motto is "Nosce te ipsum", which is "know thyself", through God, Others, and Learning.

So, fast forward to 2020, our children are now 23, 21, 19, and 17 years old. Our kids have never attended a public or parochial school until college. We still take it one year at a time, and offer school options, but have never regretted our decision to home school. Our oldest graduated from Eastern KY University with a BS in Aviation/Pro-Flight. She is a pilot and is employed by St. Louis University as a Flight Instructor. Our second child is a senior at Northern KY University majoring in Media Informatics (Web site and Graphic Design). Our third child is a Sophomore Mechanical Engineering Student at University of KY, and our fourth is a senior in High School.

Why I wrote this guide

To me, elementary and middle school education at home is a no brainer. Why would you send your little darlings off to government schools?

I wanted to teach them to read. I wanted to finger paint, make cookies, visit museums, and go to the zoo with them! We did these things and so much more. We had so much fun! We made projects, read living books, and had a ball. We celebrated life in general, and relished simply living and learning together.

When high school arrived my thoughts turned to, “Oh my, now I need to get serious”. I learned a lot from attending many classes at Homeschool Conventions, reading books & blogs, and talking with more experienced Moms. Even though I am still learning, I feel that it would have been extremely helpful to have all of this information, (KY specific) in one place. Thus, the idea of this “Home Educating High Schoolers in KY” guide was born.

## **Legalities**

In the state of KY home schools are viewed as non-accredited private schools. Therefore, as a private school we are able to determine the details, such as curriculum used, hours/days in session etc. There are some guidelines we need to follow as per KY laws. See CHEK (Christian Home Educators of KY)

[http://www.chek.org/KY\\_Laws\\_&\\_Forms](http://www.chek.org/KY_Laws_&_Forms)

See HSLDA's site as well: (see link below, as well as my next section)

<https://hsllda.org/content/hs101/KY.aspx>

### CHEK- Christian Home Educators of KY

The CHEK site contains loads of home school information. The above link will take you to the Laws and Forms.

I feel that this organization is also helpful to further the home school cause. They charge \$25 annually to become a member. I recommend joining.

### HSLDA- (Home School Legal Defense Association)

In my opinion all homeschoolers would benefit from joining HSLDA, as well. Their goal is to bring together a large number of homeschooling families so that each can have a low-cost method of obtaining quality legal defense. They also have a plethora of information on their website regarding all sorts of home schooling issues, including legal guidelines per state.

Although, we have home schooled in Anderson County, KY for many years and have never had any difficulties, there are various counties in the state that are sending letters that, I feel, over reach. I prefer to have HSLDA on my side, (a lawyer at my beck and call), should I ever need them. I keep their number handy, just in case a school or social worker should come knocking at my door, or the school district send a threatening notice. Think of joining HSLDA as legal defense insurance.

I believe their annual fee is around \$130 per family. For more information, visit their website: [www.hsllda.org](http://www.hsllda.org)

## **Planning**

\_ Okay, first off, I need to admit that I am a planner. I like organizing and making lists. So, coming up with a four year high school plan for each of my children was a logical and easy step for me. Having said that, it is also a comfort to know that you have a high school plan, aka a roadmap to keep you on track. On the HSLDA (Home School Legal Defense Association) website there is a ton of information, including the below link to a worksheet.

4 year worksheet

<https://hslda.org/content/highschool/docs/4-Year-HS-Plan.pdf>

Starting in 8<sup>th</sup> grade I began filling out this plan for each child. For instance, I could go ahead and decide on their Math plan. If they were taking Algebra 1 in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, I could go ahead and fill in Algebra 2 for 9<sup>th</sup>, Geometry for 10<sup>th</sup>, College Algebra and Trig. for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, or whatever path you would like them to follow.

Science: Example: Physical Science for 9<sup>th</sup>, Biology for 10<sup>th</sup>, Chemistry for 11<sup>th</sup>, and Physics for 12<sup>th</sup>.

English can be filled in as well, leaving English 101 for 11<sup>th</sup> grade, and English 102 for 12<sup>th</sup> grade. (Remember that a one semester college class equals one year of high school)

Social Science- Example: US History (1 credit) in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, World Geography/ Cultures (1 credit) in 10<sup>th</sup> grade and Government (.5 credit), and Economics (.5 credit) in 11<sup>th</sup> grade etc, depending on your needs and requirements.

Be sure to include, PE, Fine Arts, Health, and any electives they may take.

Of course, I would write these in pencil as the plan changed as to what was offered at our co-op each year. The schedule is entirely up to you, but I would check an any college website to see what an individual school may require.

Here is a link to an idea of what a 4 year plan would contain:

<https://hslda.org/content/highschool/hths4yearplan.pdf>

## **Curriculum**

There is a plethora of high school curriculum out there, and every family educates in their own special way. My philosophy is to tailor the classes to each individual student. This takes a lot of trial and error, but is worth it. We home schooled our kids from the beginning, so that by the teen years, I had a pretty good handle on what type of learning benefitted each child, and what their passions were.

I would recommend to sit down and decide what is important to you and your family. What are your priorities? How do you teach the best? How does your child learn the best? How can we work in making the teen love learning and to be an independent learner? Do they plan to attend college? trade school? get a job? What are their passions and goals?

I recommend doing research to see what is all out there.

-Talk to other families who home educate their kids.

- Read some books, like "The Well Trained Mind" by Susan Wise Bauer,

-Visit websites, such as Kathy Duffy Reviews, Rainbow Resource, Apologia, Saxon, Home Science Tools, Rod & Staff, etc.

-Attend a conference such as the Midwest Homeschool Convention in Cincinnati.

<https://greathomeschoolconventions.com/locations/ohio/>

They have a huge curriculum fair as well as a large selection of classes to attend. I recommend looking at the class list ahead of time and planning out your day(s). A friend of mine and I went to a convention each year, sans kiddos. This was a great time to plan the next year and really think about what I wanted to do with each child. One year, when my kids were young, I went to look at every math curriculum that I could find (I settled on Saxon). Another year, when my oldest was in 8th grade, I attended every class offered on high school transcripts. They have topics and resources for babies through high school. The conventions are phenomenal!

Best of luck, and remember that you can always change your plan if it doesn't work!

## **Record keeping**

### Transcripts-

I have found that a one page transcript is what most colleges request. Here is my template that I have used:

[Transcript- Suzy Smartypants- word.doc](#)

I use this as a fluid document for the first few years, but once you send it to somebody (BCTC for instance), you cannot change it. In other words, keep good records about what was sent when, and to whom!!

I have found that some schools and organizations want the transcript notarized. So, I go ahead and get a couple of copies notarized at the end of high school. My local bank does not charge to notarize documents.

### GPA- Grades- and Course Descriptions

Keeping track of grades, reporting them, and GPA is totally up to you.

Personally, I keep a 3 inch, 3 ring binder for each child starting 9<sup>th</sup> grade year. In it, I include the course description, grading rubric, and final grade for each class taken throughout high school, (sort of a syllabus, with final grades) I also make a copy of the front cover of the book, inside cover (ISBN#), and index.

So, for example, if my child completed Saxon Algebra 1. The first page, I would title "Suzy Smartypants 9<sup>th</sup> Grade - Saxon Algebra 1" I would then proceed to explain how I graded the course. For instance: 70% test scores, 30% daily work. I would then make a table to show their test scores for each test.

(Test 1: 8-7-18 = 90%, Test 2 : 8-14-18 = 90%.etc.)

I would also show the grade for their daily work.

If there were 20 tests , added together they equalled 1800, I would divide that number by 20 and their average score would be 90 %, I would times 90% by the .7 (70% of their grade) to get 63. Then I would times their daily score (100%)by .3 to get 30. Thus their grade for the course would be 93%. I also would show my grading scale on this page.

For each class I decide on how I want the tests, quizzes, papers, etc weighted. For high school science with a lab, I usually have tests = 50%, labs= 30%, and daily work = 20%. These percentages and categories are totally up to you.



At our school we use the below grading scale. This too should be on your course descriptions and transcript as well.

90-100% = A
80-89 % = B
70-79% = C
60-69% = D
59 and below = failing

To continue with the Saxon Algebra 1 example, I would copy the front cover, and the inside cover, along with the Table of Contents. Some folks, may think this is overkill, but if I have to come up with the ISBN # or edition of a book three years down the road, I may not own the book anymore, and I may not even remember what I used.

### NCAA Sports

If by chance, your student may be interested in playing college sports at an NCAA school, any division, there is additional paperwork for home schoolers.

<http://www.ncaa.org/student-athletes/future/home-school-students>

The above site explains all that you need to know about keeping records and when to submit information, etc.

None of my kids have participated in NCAA sports. However, I have a now up and coming junior, that may or may not. To be on the safe side, I am compiling Core - Course Worksheets (CCW) now, as it is fresh in my mind.

There is also a Facebook page "Homeschool and NCAA Academic Eligibility" that has sample CCWs, and is a wealth of information.

### NAIA Sports

As I understand it, to play sports for a NAIA school, the requirements for home schoolers are not as stringent as NCAA. See the below website for details.

<http://www.naia.org/ViewArticle.dbml?ATCLID=210783389>

### Extra Curricular Activities, Community Service, and Awards and Honors

**I cannot emphasize enough** the importance of keeping specific records of these activities beginning in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. I have one page for each topic, for each student, for each year! Write down details!

Ex: For Extra Curricular Activities and Comm. Service, take note when, where, and for how long the activity lasted. For Awards and Honors, also keep track of how many teams or individuals were competing for that specific award. Was it a local, state,

national, or international competition? Also write good descriptions, as any reader may not be familiar with that specific activity.

If you are wondering who would want to know about your child's activities? All sorts of folks! These activities are needed for the GSP (Governors Scholar Program) application, College applications, as well as scholarship applications. My daughter received a \$8000 scholarship from AOPA (Aircraft Owners and Pilot Association) partly because of her aviation related activities prior to, and all through high school. Since she was my oldest, I had not kept records of all of her activities. We learned the hard way that this was vital information. We had to go back years, probing our brains, phoning friends, and looking up information. Her siblings can thank her for paving the way, as it was after that scholarship application, that I realized the extreme importance of keeping detailed records.

Some of the extra-curricular activities my kids were in are as follows: Aviation Competitions, Dance, Soccer, Basketball, Orchestra, Youth Group, Art competitions, 4-H Horse, FIRST Robotics, Jobs, Beta Club, Leadership Club, Teen Advisory Board (Library), Teacher's Aide, Teaching music lessons, Building guitars, and more.

### **Co-ops-**

For our home school, I felt early on, that I wanted my kids to be involved with like minded students. We found a co-op to join about 10 miles away at a YMCA. My kids ages at the time were 3,5,7,9 or so. This gave them a chance to get some exercise, meet some home educated friends, and simply play with a bunch of kids.

From that initial co-op experience, some of us got together to form M-I-N-D. (Motivating Independence and Nurturing Development). This was a very low key operation. People would find an activity that they wanted to do and would spread the word. If you wanted to join in the activity, you did. If not, that was okay. No strings attached. No commitments. We started having a monthly "Geography Luncheon" where we would agree on an area of the world to study at home all month, then get together for a cultural luncheon. These were great fun, as we made and tried various foods from all over the world. The kids could also present what they learned as well. We made lots of salt dough maps to show and tell! Another activity example was this: One mom found Historical Art prints that we passed out to families, and met later to discuss and present. We also put on plays, talent shows, visited historical sites, and more.

For the past 10 years or so, our family has been a part of another co-op. Christian Homeschoolers In Lawrenceburg (CHIL). This co-op was started by a handful of moms who wanted to get their kids together to do high school science labs, put on drama

productions, have gym class, host dances, high school graduation, and other social activities. It is set up once a week for 3 hours. We currently have 120+ kids of all ages. It is parent-led by a volunteer steering committee, and a local church has graciously allowed us to meet in their facility for no charge. The children must have a parent or another responsible adult present at all times. The classes are set up in three class periods and are broken up by age. The teaching and aiding is done by the parents, and all parents are required to participate. Over the years Science has been offered along with a plethora of various classes depending on want, need, and expertise and willingness of the “teachers” There is a small annual membership fee, and teachers charge various fees depending on the needs of their class. This co-op has become so successful that there is currently a waiting list.

There are many co-ops available in Central KY and beyond. Bluegrass United, Mars Hill Academy, Bluegrass Homeschool Learning Cooperative, and more. Do a google search for your area, reach out to fellow homeschoolers, join a facebook group or two and go for it.

Overall, we have had a positive experience with all of the co-ops we chose to attend. My kids have made life long friends, as have I. It has been a joy traveling with my mom friends on this incredible home education journey. We went through teaching our kids how to read, to making high school transcripts, to maneuvering the college application process, and beyond.

## **Testing**

The state of KY does not require any testing of home educated students. Having said that, I chose to get my kids tested. I know that I should not compare our little geniuses with anyone else, and yes, I knew their weaknesses and strengths. However, I still wanted to see where they stood amongst their peers. I wanted to prove to myself, and family, that home schooling worked!

Therefore, when our co-op offered testing, I signed them up starting in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. The test used was the Stanford 10 Achievement Test, through BJU Press. One mom volunteered to collect the money, order the tests, organize the location and proctors. I was pleased with the test taking experience. The kids were with friends at a familiar location. There was no pressure, just an opportunity for them to take a timed test, without me, and not at home. The results were as expected. I knew who was doing well in which areas, but I liked having the confirmation. The test experience also got them primed for the ACT and other high school tests.

## ACT-

Fast forward to 8<sup>th</sup> grade, when I started having my kids take the ACT. I figured that practice makes perfect. Even though I knew that they had not received all of the math instruction that was needed to do well, that was okay. Each time they took the test, their scores increased, as did their confidence. You can take the ACT test up to 12 times!

As far as prepping, we purchased various ACT prep books. The giant sized Kaplan and Princeton's ACT Prep books were not as popular, with my offspring, as Barron's "ACT 36: Aiming for the Perfect Score" was. Two of my children, so far, have used this book to prepare. They liked that it was only 299 pages, and explored various strategies as well as had an overview of each section.

We have had success with the ACT test, with an average 11<sup>th</sup> grade score of 31.

There are various prep classes aka ACT boot camps that some of my friend's children have attended. All four had success of bringing their scores up at least two points. One such program is "Torch Prep". The cost is around \$510.00 for an intense review prior to taking the test. Again, I have no personal experience with these, I am just putting it out there as an option.

So, why is there such a push for a good ACT score? It all boils down to merit scholarship money. Do a Google search at the college of your choice and see the difference a good score makes. With college being so expensive, this is one way to defray the cost. Also, being home educators, this also is a way to "prove" that your transcript and student's GPA is legit. If they get a 4.0 GPA on their college prep transcript, but only score a 20 on the ACT, something is not right. Likewise, if they have a 4.0 GPA and score a 32 on the ACT, that makes sense.

## How to Take the ACT

Now for the practical advice on what to do to get your child signed up to take the test.

#1- Visit the web site- <http://www.act.org>. Explore; there is a lot of testing information here.

#2- Make an account for each child. BE SURE TO WRITE DOWN your User ID and Password for future reference. :) The Homeschool code is 969-999.

#3 - Selecting a test date and location. Not all dates are offered at all locations. My kids either chose Anderson County High School (#167490) or Mercer County (188500). We chose these because they are close to where we live. If you child does better with being in familiar surroundings, I'd stick with the same location for each test. As far as having your child complete the writing portion, that is totally up to you. Most colleges do

not require it. However, I would check with any schools your child may be considering. I did not have my kids take the written part of the ACT.

#4- Pay. The last test I paid for the total was \$50.50 without the writing portion. I paid using a credit card, while on the ACT web site.

Also, there is an option on certain test dates where you can pay to receive the actual completed ACT test, along with their answers, and the correct ones. I ordered these once, and found them incredibly useful. We could see where any trouble was, and where to focus the prep for the next time they took the test. I recommend doing this at least once.

There are also prep materials for sale on this site. We did not utilize these, so I have no insight.

#5- Completing the Profile- There are many questions that ACT.org asks you regarding future plans, current studies, activities, etc. I have found that most of these can be skipped. As the student gets older, 11<sup>th</sup> grade or so, it may be helpful to complete these, but that is totally up to each person/family.

#6- Print your ticket. You will need to upload a head shot of your student and get it onto your Admission Ticket. I like to print these out the day I register them for testing. I put the tickets in our "ACT folder", so the night before the test, they can easily be found.

#7- Identification. If you child has his or her drivers permit or license, they can use it for their ID on test day. If your child does not have their drivers permit, there are a couple of ways to get an ID. I understand that you can get an ID that looks like a drivers license from your local court house. We chose to not go this route, so I am not sure of the process or cost. We chose to use the Student Identification Form on the ACT.org site. You simply print it out, attach a small photo, and get it notarized. We have a local bank that will notarize forms for free. Just be sure that their Notary Seal is partially over the picture to prove that child is who he or she is. The directions on the form are self explanatory. This Student ID is taken with the student along with the Admission Ticket on test day.

#8- Plan for test day. There are test day directions on the ACT.org site. These are important to go over as they explain the calculator policy, what to take, what to expect, and what to do. They are helpful!

#9- Test Day! Get your things together the night before, get a good nights rest, eat a good breakfast and re-read the Test Day Checklist found on ACT.org.

Another fun thing that we have incorporated over the years is, to try and get friends to take the test the same day and go out for lunch afterwards. This has been a huge success for us, and folks in our home school co-op. It is enjoyable to be sharing a meal at Taco Bell and hear the kids discussing their testing experience. "What did you

put for the geometry question about the isosceles triangle?" etc. There is usually lots of chatter and discussion about various test sections and the ease or difficulty of each.

As of fall 2020 I understand that kids are able to sign up to take only one section at a time if they wish. I'm not sure what this will mean for any future college admissions. It would be worth looking into.

#### PSAT / NMSQT- Pre-SAT / National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test

This test is taken in October of Junior year. Our local school district allowed my oldest child to take the PSAT at their facility. However, my next two were denied access. So we contacted the local Christian Academy and they happily allowed home schoolers to take the test with them. I contact them in June to get dates, costs, and give them any information that they need. Consider making a tax deductible donation if you use a privately funded school to say, "thank you".

There are also PSAT for 9th and 10th graders. I did not have my kids take these tests, but I understand that the procedure is the same as above. It is only the Junior PSAT that is eligible for the National Merit Scholarships.

#### SAT

This test is offered through CollegeBoard.org  
After taking the ACT and PSAT my kids decided that they liked the way the ACT was set up. Therefore, they did not take the SAT.

### **Drivers Education**

Please keep in mind that I live in Anderson County, KY and all counties do things a little differently. My advice is for you to do your own research, talk to other home schooling families in your county, call the Superintendent of Schools, contact the Circuit Clerks office, visit the web site:

<https://drive.ky.gov/driver-licensing/Pages/Graduated-Driver-Licensing-Program.aspx>

I have learned that there are three phases for your teen driver to get his or her full license.

- 1) Permit
- 2) Intermediate
- 3) Graduated

Permit- To obtain a driver's permit, the teen must have passed their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday and will need to take a written test. In Anderson County this test is given on Wednesdays only from 8:30am-10:00am. Prior to taking this test you will have to get a letter from the

Superintendent of Schools. I gave them a call to ask them to have one ready for me. I simply stopped by their office, and picked it up. You must also take an original birth certificate and their social security card as well as the school letter. Take these items to the Circuit Clerk's office and they will "check you in". The testing is actually done in a building close to the court house. If they pass the written test, you will need to go back to the Circuit Clerk's office and get their picture taken, pay cash (it was \$12 the last time I did this), and get their permit. To prepare for the written test, go to the website above and look for the online manual. They go over laws and such. There are also online practice tests that were helpful for my kids.

Intermediate- You will need to have your permit for at least 6 months before going to take the driving skills test. During the 6 month period, you need to log the hours that your teen drove with you. I believe you need 50 daytime and 10 night time hours. (You can do this!!) Once the six months has elapsed AND you have your 60 driving hours, you can go take your test for the Intermediate license. In Anderson County you need to go to the testing office between 8:30am and 10:30 am. Take along the driving logs, driver's permit, proof of insurance for the car your child will be driving for the test, and you will need to print a verification letter that enables him or her to take the skills test you can find it here:

<https://drive.ky.gov/driver-licensing/Pages/Graduated-Driver-Licensing-Program.aspx#print-your-eligibility-letter>

If all of your paperwork is in order, you will be given a time to come back with your student to take the driver's skills test in your vehicle. All three of my kids were nervous about the test. (I have one that just turned 16) For weeks, we had practiced parallel parking, talked through the street signs, laws, and practiced K-turns. They all passed on the first try!

### Graduated Drivers License

After 6 months of having their intermediate license, and taking the 4 hour traffic school course. (One of my kids took the free course at the local high school, the other two opted to do it online. The online class cost \$12.50, but two of my kids felt like they would rather do it at home) All in all, we felt that the class was not educational, but it is mandatory, so there ya go!

So, once again, you will need to print an eligibility letter and take it to the Circuit Clerk's office along with their intermediate license. They will charge you \$8.00 (cash), take the student's picture, and re-issue their full license.

Once they receive their full license, hand them a grocery list; you've earned this luxury!



## **Youth Salute**

The Youth Salute program is a central KY leadership program for high school Juniors, sponsored by Holifield Photography in Lexington. If you have ever seen the Youth Salute picture boards in the Fayette Mall and various stores around the Bluegrass, this is the program, and Home schoolers can participate! One of the co-op Moms that I know led this up by contacting Holifield to get more information. She graciously has made announcements and gathered everyone's paperwork and submitted it each year.

To be eligible for recognition the students must be a high school junior, have a least a cumulative 3.0 GPA, and have held two leadership roles. Examples of leadership roles may be a captain of a team, leading a class, or being an officer in a club. The nominated student must complete the Nomination Form, Leadership Essay, and Biography. The deadline has been around the end of Sept. in the past.

Once the student is accepted, there is a mandatory short orientation held in Lexington where you set a date for your photo shoot. The photo shoots last approximately 1.5 hours and can be set up November - January. (Two of my children have participated (one of each gender), and both had a blast at their photo shoot). There is an option at this time to pay \$100 to see your proofs on line prior to your proofing session, where you go to the studio to choose your pictures and layout. The \$100 fee goes toward any photos you may buy. We did opt to do this, for two reasons. One, we were able to view all of the fabulous proofs with my extended family, and secondly, we were able to make our choices over several days in the comfort of our home, instead of feeling rushed in someone's office. You go back to the studio a week or two after your shoot to select the photos for the Community Boards and to purchase any pictures if you should desire. Purchases are not mandatory. However, I must say that the pics were so good, I had to have a few!

There is also a Leadership Seminar and Awards Ceremony held in May at a local University where there are scholarship opportunities, and a chance to mingle with other Youth Saluters.

There is much more information on the Holifield website. I just wanted to take the time to let you know that this has been a fun and positive experience for my family.

<https://www.centralky.youthsalute.com>

## **GSA-GSP**

GSA= Governor's School of the Arts

<https://www.kentuckycenter.org/education-community-arts/gas>

GSP= Governor's Scholars Program

<https://gsp.ky.gov/Pages/index.aspx>

My history: First off, I must apologize to my oldest child. When she was of the age to apply for and attend these programs, I had no idea that these programs existed for home educated students. I have since learned a lot.

GSA is a 3 week summer camp, based on the arts, held on the campus of Centre College. You are eligible to attend after 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades. The camp is free of charge. Focus areas are Architecture + Design, Creative Writing, Dance, Drama, Instrumental music, Musical Theatre, Film + Photography, Visual Art, and Vocal Music.

My second oldest attended the fall GSA Workshops ( for 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders) ,and applied for GSA. She did not get in, but had a ball at the dance, instrument, and art workshops. I would recommend the workshops aka Art shops. See the website for details. I also understand that the application process has changed since we went through it, so I would also recommend visiting the website for application details as well. Just be aware that this program is extremely competitive. Back in 2015 there were around 200 kids chosen of the 2200 that auditioned, (less than 10%).

Now, GSP is something I know more about. I have had two of my kids successfully go through the Governor's Scholars Program. They are 2016 and 2018 Alumni. One attended Morehead campus with a focus in Astronomy, and the other attended NKU with an Engineering focus. My youngest has been accepted to GSP for this summer (2020), due to CoVid-19 he will be attending a one week camp at Centre College with a focus on Modes of Mathematical Thinking. In a normal, not CoVid year, this program is a free 5 week summer camp for kids who finished their junior year, it is held on three different campuses each year. (For 2019-21 the program will be held at Morehead, Bellarmine, and Centre) There are approximately 350 scholars at each campus. There are many focus areas to choose from and all are not offered at all campuses. During the application process you choose three focus areas, and they assign you one of the three. If you get accepted, they will send paperwork in the mail. You will not know which campus or focus area you are assigned to until after you send in your acceptance letter. The program provides , as per their website, academic and personal growth through the balance of a strong liberal arts program with a full co-curricular and residential life experience.

The application goes live the fall of their junior year and it is quite lengthy. I would start early! They ask for all high school activities, recommendation letters, and an essay as well. This process is much easier if you have been compiling the student's high school activities, as I suggested earlier! Check the website for details. This program is also very competitive.

Both of my kids enjoyed their time at GSP. They made life long friends, expanded their educational horizons, and got a taste of college dorm life. Both said they would do it again and encourage others to attend as well.

Another benefit of completing GSP is that most state universities offer free tuition, or decent scholarships. Some have a minimum ACT requirement attached as well. For instance, the University of KY offers full tuition if you have completed the GSP 5 week program and have a 31+ on the ACT. I would encourage you to visit each school's website to see their specific qualifications.

## **KHEAA**

<https://www.kheaa.com/website/kheaa/home>

Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority is where you can go to get some assistance. As of this writing all Junior and Senior high school students in KY are eligible to get a scholarship for two Dual Enrollment classes. This means that you can take two college classes, and get both high school and college credit at the same time. You will need to visit the website, make an account, and apply for the scholarship.

They also offer career testing. This is an online quiz that takes the students interests and comes up with a list of potential jobs. This can be enlightening as well as entertaining! Be sure to print and save for future fun and giggles. (Update: As of today 5/13/19 I cannot find this career test on KHEAA's updated website. It may still be there somewhere, feel free to explore.)

It is also through KHEAA where your student will get KEES (Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship) money. Sadly, home schoolers are only eligible for a one time payment based on their ACT score. (the amount is around \$500), which is better than nothing. However, government schoolers get more KEES \$ based on their GPA as well. BAVEL students are also eligible for GPA KEES \$

## **BAVEL- Barren Academy of Virtual and Expanded Learning**

<http://www.barren.kyschools.us/11/Content2/622>

We chose not to do BAVEL, which is an on line public school through the Barren Public School system. However, we have had friends that had a great experience with it. We also had friends who did not like BAVEL at all. My advice, is to explore the website, and ask lots of questions. It is my understanding that the students who do

school through BAVEL are eligible for KEES money based on their GPA for each year they participate.

## **Dual Enrollment**

BCTC- (Bluegrass Community Technical College)

I had all of my kids take Dual Enrollment classes at BCTC. I wanted them to get a classroom experience, get me out of the school equation, and earn some college credit. Each one semester 3 credit hour class counts for one year of high school as well as three college credits...thus dual credit. Having said that, you must be sure that the class taken at the community college will transfer to the university of your choice. English 101 and 102 seem to be good choices. There is a website that shows Even if you find out later that the credits will not transfer, your child will still have the experience, and the high school credits.

All three of my DE kids started dual credit by taking College Algebra (MTH 150) at the Lawrenceburg BCTC with J. Druggan beginning in 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> grade. (They'll need a 22+ on the Math section of the ACT to be able to take MTH 150. This was a super way to begin outside classes. Ms. Druggan was a great professor, she explained things thoroughly, and my kids were so happy to have a Mathematics teacher that knew her stuff! BCTC is less than 15 minutes away from our home, and the atmosphere is not intimidating.

BCTC now requires that the students be 16 years old and have met their ACT score guidelines. Update: I heard a rumor that the kids no longer have to be 16. Call BCTC for verification. <https://bluegrass.kctcs.edu/admissions/information-for/dual-credit/dual-enrollment.aspx>

If they have not taken the ACT, or did not get a high enough score, there is a Compass/Wonderlic test that they can take at the local BCTC. We did not need to take the Compass exam, so my experience is limited. I would call BCTC for details.

My three oldest had 12-22 college credits when they went to the university. We had no trouble from ECU or NKU in regards to receiving credit for their Dual Enrollment classes. We simply went to the BCTC web site and had their transcripts sent to the appropriate schools.

As far as cost, BCTC Dual Enrollment is a deal. In addition to the two free classes through KHEAA, the DE fee is only around \$59 per credit hour. So, for a three hour class it is only around \$180. Which is very reasonable!

### Online

We chose to do “in seat” college classes only. Mainly because our internet can be sketchy, and I wanted the kids to get a feel for how a classroom worked. However, I have had many friend’s kids take online classes through EKU, BYU, BCTC, and more.

### AP and CLEP

We did neither Advanced Placement (AP) classes nor the College Level Examination Program (CLEP). As far as I know AP classes end with taking an exam. If you do well enough on the test you are awarded college credit. I’ve heard that to get the college credit is difficult depending on which university the student attends. I would definitely research prior to investing time and money into AP. I have heard good things about CLEP, but once again, do your research.

### **College Readiness**

Establish college list- This list will depend on what your child wants to study, and where. I would google college selection and begin thinking about it in the beginning of 11<sup>th</sup> grade. Thoughts to ponder: size of student body, geographic location, course of study, and cost.

My oldest daughter wanted to get an Aviation/ Pro-Flight Degree. Her choices were Embry Riddle (Daytona Beach, FL), or EKU. Since, I felt that Daytona Beach would be a little more than distracting, she/we easily chose EKU. She was able to finish her book work in three years, and used the rest of the time to complete her flight hours.

My second daughter was undecided in her major, so her college list was lengthy. However, she was a Governors Scholar so she wished to stay in state due to her free tuition. She ended up selecting NKU because of being located near a large city. She also wanted to be close to home (2 hours) without being too close to home. She felt that if she were only 30 minutes away, she would be tempted to come home all of the time to visit her dog, and to partake of homemade meals!

My third child, who is looking into an engineering degree has Rose Hullman, UK, UofL, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Georgia Tech, and Vanderbilt on his list. We will see where he ends up going. Update: He has decided to attend the University of Kentucky to major in Mechanical Engineering.

Conduct research and narrow down list- My advice on this is to search their web sites, go visit the schools, talk to admissions, talk to students, and get a “feel” for the campus.

Visiting schools- I personally like the homeschool days that the various schools offer, such as Asbury and University of KY. They cater to the issues home schoolers have, such as transcript questions, Dual Enrollment credit, etc.

My advice also, is that if your student is undecided it is good to go to the school's career days when they have all of the colleges present to disperse information. If your child is decided on a major I would suggest meeting with that specific college/ department to get details.

Applications- Once you get your school list down to 3 or so, it is application time. September of the senior year is a good time to begin this process, as many schools have "Early Action" due Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>. My experience is that Early Action is a good thing as long as it is Non-Binding. At least, my kids were not sure where they wanted to go until they got the financial packages. These usually come out in January-March of their Senior year. Decision day is May 1<sup>st</sup> nationwide, but the sooner they can make their decision, the sooner they can get their orientation and housing figured out.

Just know that most schools charge to apply \$25-75. Sometimes, you can get this fee waived if you attend their homeschool day. (UK does this)

Common App- This on-line application is offered for many schools with the idea that you only need to fill out one app. Basically, there is a lot of information that only needs to be inputted once. There is then a section for each school's specific needs, such as number and types of recommendation letters, essays, questions, etc. I had my son do his applications.

Being a home schooling parent, you are also the Counselor and your student must send you an Invite to complete that portion. I will admit that it was a bit daunting. They of course want transcripts as expected. However, there is a place to write an essay regarding your home school's philosophy. There is another section to write an essay on anything else you would like the schools to know about your student. Of course, being the Mom as well, this was a glowing review! I did focus on a couple of things that my son had done that I felt would be helpful to admissions counsellors to know.

I also added 2 "transcripts". The first was a download of his one page high school transcript. The second was a two page brief course description of all of his core classes. I had gotten the template from Vanderbilt's site.

There was also an area regarding class rank. I chose the "no basis" choice, as being a homeschooler, the students are always #1 in their class.

Recommendation letters- Colleges will want letters of recommendations from someone other than you. A dual enrollment professor is a great recommendation, thus another reason to attend BCTC. Co-op teachers, and community leaders work to provide recommendation letters as well depending on what the specific school wants. You may want to think about this in 11<sup>th</sup> grade and get together a potential list of folks to ask. Some schools ask for specific letters, such as one from a science or math teacher, or from “others” such as community leaders or coaches.

Essays - For the Common App, there are a list of 7 essay topic prompts. They are pretty self explanatory. My advice here, is to start it early to allow time to revise prior to the deadlines.

FAFSA- (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)

The FAFSA is required by most colleges. It is a form to apply for financial aid (grants, work-study, and loans), to pay for college or career school.

October 1<sup>st</sup> of senior year is the day the FAFSA application opens. Just know that there is **no fee** for this application. There are many sites that look legitimate, but then ask for payment. Be sure to be on the correct site:

<https://fafsa.ed.gov>

You will need to make an account with each child that requires a FAFSA. Be sure to **keep this information** for future years. Also, you will need a password for the student and for you as well. Again- **keep this ID information** for the next year, and beyond.

Also helpful is to have your last year's tax returns handy when completing the FAFSA. Overall, the experience was not bad and took about 30-45 minutes per child. Sadly, we never received any funds in this way, but some of my friend's kids did. They suggest filling out the FAFSA as close to October 1<sup>st</sup> as you can, so the funds are not depleted.

Having said above, that it only took me 30 minutes, I will rescind that statement. This past fall (2018) the FAFSA site was having “intermittent issues” on Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>. A friend of mine spent 2+ hours to get hers completed. I tried three or four times on October 1<sup>st</sup> with no results as I couldn't even log in. When I finally got around to doing it three days later, it took me about 40 minutes. I had a problem with my password and had to go through creating a new one. So, set aside some time to get this accomplished, and be sure to record your student's and your ID info.

You will need to complete the FAFSA each year your student attends college to be considered for financial aid.



## **Conclusion**

I remember attending a Home schooling conference ten+ years ago and the speaker was asked why his family chose to home educate their children. He said that his ultimate goal of homeschooling was to have a good relationship with his family.

I think of this statement when we're having a rough day. It is not a bad thing to put away the books and play a board game, or go for a walk. For us.....so far so good. Our kids like us- and each other! When we all get together we have fun, play games, and sit around after dinner and chat.

Is home schooling hard work? Yes. Is it worth it? Yes!

If you have any questions or comments, please reach out! I am passionate about the benefits of home education, and love to share my experiences.

Disclaimer: This handbook is full of my opinions and ideas. It is your responsibility to further research all home education topics and make the decisions for your home school accordingly, oh, and enjoy the ride!