

AHEM News

Volume 5 • No 1 • Fall 2007

Advocates for Home Education in Massachusetts, Inc.

What
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Current State Issues . . .

Clarification of IDEA and Massachusetts Homeschoolers

Earlier this year, AHEM reported on new federal regulations¹ for the reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA-2004). Recently, we have been able to confirm with the Special Education office of the Massachusetts Department of Education what these federal regulations mean for Massachusetts homeschoolers with special needs, and the news is good.

We wrote regarding the federal regulations for IDEA-2004 (cited above) as they apply to a child with an IEP in public school whose parents withdraw him or her to homeschool, and give express refusal to consent to a reevaluation, and waive IDEA rights in writing. We asked if the regulations, coupled with the circumstances outlined above, release the school from having to provide such a child with a free appropriate public education.

The DOE confirmed that if the parent of a child who is homeschooled does not provide consent for an initial evaluation or a reevaluation, or the parent fails to respond to a request to provide consent, the public agency may not use the consent override procedures. However, because Massachusetts is an entitlement state and the state regulations supercede the federal regulation, the local public schools must provide/make services available to a homeschooled student if the parents do sign onto an IEP. Put another way, if a homeschooler rejects services, the school is under no obligation to use consent override procedures, but if a homeschooler wants services, the school must provide them. Eligible Massachusetts homeschoolers still have right to special services through the public schools if they desire them.

Since it has now been clarified that IDEA does not require school districts to provide FAPE to children who

are homeschooled, presumably school districts will no longer need to worry about liability issues concerning their obligation to provide special services to homeschoolers who have waived their right to publicly-funded services. Hopefully this will make approval of homeschooling plans for special needs students a clearer and smoother process for all parties involved.

Legislative Update

The new two year legislative session got underway in January of this year. Over 3000 new bills have been filed. Several of these bills have been identified by AHEM as having the potential to impact homeschoolers.

The following bills have been assigned to the Education Committee:

On the House side

- HB 416 "An Act Providing That Parents and Legal Guardians be Held Responsible for School Attendance of Children in Their Care"
- HB 399 "An Act Relative to Full Day Kindergarten"
- HB 400 "An Act Relative to the Awarding of High School Diplomas"
- HB 527 "An Act Relative to Mandatory Minimum Age for School Attendance"
- HB 401 "An Act Relative to School Age Attendance Requirements"
- HB 402 "An Act to Prevent Students from Dropping Out of School"
- HB 463 "An Act Relative to Encouraging Students to Stay in School"
- HB 576 "An Act to Increase the Mandatory School Age"
- HB 577 "An Act Relative to the Development of a Comprehensive Strategy to Prevent Students from Dropping Out of School"
- HB 507 "An Act Relative to Homeschooling"
- HB 523 "An Act Permitting Non Public School Students to Take MCAS Exam"
- HB 394 "An Act Raising the Compulsory Attendance Age to 18"

¹ United States. Department of Education, Assistance to States for the Education of Children With Disabilities and Preschool Grants for Children With Disabilities; Final Rule. 34 CFR Parts 300 and 301, RIN 1820-AB57, Federal Register / Vol. 71, No. 156 / Monday, August 14, 2006 / Rules and Regulations, p. 46543. 9 Dec. 2006.

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On the Senate side

- SB 343 "An Act to Encourage School Attendance and to Strengthen Parental Responsibility"
SB 357 "An Act Relative to School Attendance"
SB 366 "An Act to Amend School Attendance"
SB 304 "An Act Relative to School Attendance"
SB 329 "An Act Changing the Maximum Required Age for School Attendance"

You can find the text of these bills at
<http://www.mass.gov/legis/>.

On May 8th, there was a public hearing for several of the bills that deal with an increase in the compulsory attendance age. Many people contacted members of the Education committee to voice their opposition to these bills. AHM will continue to track these various bills, keep you informed of their progress, and alert you if any action is required.

Discounted MBTA Fares for Homeschooled Students

Junior high and high school students ride the T for 50% off the price of standard T fares and are eligible for a \$20/month Student T-Pass good for unlimited travel on

Bus, Subway, Express Bus, and Commuter Rail Zones 1A, 1 and 2 until 8 PM on school days. Discounted rides or passes require a Student CharlieCard or CharlieTicket.¹

The MBTA issues student fare media to homeschoolers for use on the MBTA system. In August, they will be issuing magnetic plastic CharlieCards for the 2007-2008 Academic School Year.

Please complete the order request form [<http://www.ahem.info/StudentCharlieCardSchoolLetterOrderForm.pdf>] with your best estimates for the session. Simply self-certify that you are a homeschooler – no further ID is required.

Up to two children 11 and under ride for free when accompanied by a paying adult. No ID required.

Homeschool parents who wish to make additional requests or seek general information about MBTA student services should contact Will Kingkade in the Automated Fare Collection (AFC) Department at (617) 222-4545.

¹ From
http://www.mbta.com/fares_and_passes/reduced_fare_programs/

Yo Jo

What to Say When They Ask

by Joanne Casiello

A new homeschooling mother once said she felt as if she were an Alien trying to educate Earthlings on the topic of homeschooling. Should she point out the advantages of homeschooling? Cite the idea that parents know what is best for children? Change the subject? I replied, "Yes. Depending upon which Earthlings you are educating."

With grandparents or others who truly love your child and also want what is best for her, you reassure, point out advantages, point out disadvantages of school, thank them for advice.

With those who feel that your homeschooling is a silent attack on their sending their child to school, you say that all of us are trying to do the best for our families and this is the best choice for you.

With those who are truly asking why, you might encourage them to remember their own school experiences and help them see how homeschooling their child could be better. When they are concerned about socialization get them to remember what school socialization is really like. Remember bullies? Remember what recess was like? Remember being homesick?

If you are getting in touch with your inner female-of-the-dog-species, you could point out how unnatural it is for anyone to want to abandon their small, own flesh and blood to a bunch of strangers to raise.

You can tell them you had your child on purpose and plan to enjoy every moment you have together.

I often told my husband's Aunt, who had a very different philosophy of life from mine, the most outrageous things. I told her we were using little, plastic, educational placemats as our curriculum. I told her I had no idea what other kids their age were capable of and didn't care. I told her we never planned to wear shoes and that my oldest was never planning to bathe again since he was doing an experiment on bacteria and disease spread. She soon stopped asking.

In choosing to homeschool you have become a member of a minority which means that like any minority member you will sometimes be the only contact those Earthlings have ever had with your kind. Your daughter will be a poster child for her minority. That means when she comes up with a new scientific theory, composes a masterpiece, and wins a gold medal in the Olympics, those Earthlings will assume all home-schoolers are like that. And if she stands up on stage when accepting her Nobel Peace Prize, farts loudly, and picks her nose, those Earthlings will assume all home-schoolers do that too. You will be acclaimed saint or sinner depending upon the last piece about home-schoolers in the news by those who don't really know anything about homeschooling.

Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is first to raise your child in the best way that you can. Next, you should enjoy the time you have together. And finally you must educate the world, over, and over and over, one Earthling at a time.

Send Joanne your question about homeschooling. Either email info@ahem.info with Attn: Joanne in the subject field, or write to Joanne, c/o AHM, PO Box 1307, Arlington, MA 02474.

Guest Column

The Door is Open

This essay, by Earl Gary Stevens, was originally published in the Talk About Learning column in the July-August 1997 issue of *Home Education Magazine*.

As children grow into their teens, some families worry that continuing with home education might be closing

the door to college. They wonder if independent learning is more suitable for little kids than for teenagers and perhaps not very practical as a prelude to college admission. While college may not be the best choice for every person, none of us wants to eliminate the option for our children.

There exists a myth that the only way for a young person to be accepted into college is through building a record for compliant behavior in a secondary educational institution. This myth was exposed for many of us when David and Micki Colfax wrote about their boys being accepted into Harvard on the strength of their own efforts and on the lives that they had put together for themselves, as described in *Homeschooling for Excellence*.

When David Illingworth, senior admissions officer at Harvard, spoke to Maine families attending our statewide home education conference some years ago, he assured them that even Harvard does not require a high school diploma for admission to a degree program. He suggested that Harvard was more interested in the lives of home educated kids and in how they presented themselves than in whether or not they had high school diplomas, documents which are not extremely rare.

Since then we have read many accounts of young men and women being accepted into colleges and universities on the strength of their independent learning and the interesting and productive lives they have led. We are accustomed to seeing letters in the home education media from admissions officers encouraging home educated kids to apply to their colleges. In fact, as more than one admissions officer has stated, all else being equal, many colleges tend to choose homeschooled kids for their motivation and for the diversity that they bring to the campus community.

Admission requirements vary. Some institutions require SAT scores, and some don't. Practice SAT exams are readily available in bookstores along with advice on how to prepare. Some institutions less prestigious than Harvard may require a general equivalency diploma, while others will not care. Depending on what colleges you may choose the prerequisites will be more or less extensive. But the critical thing to know is that anyone who truly desires to go to college can do so without benefit of scholastic records and without help from public or private school educators.

I did it 30 years ago as a high school "dropout," and it has gotten easier since then. I was one of those bored kids who throughout my time as a public school student

was always getting into minor conflicts with teachers and administrators over my lack of effort and my indifference to schooling. I finally dropped out in the 10th grade after years spent watching the clock, falling asleep, being the class clown, staring out the window, and daydreaming. But a few years later when I tried a couple of college courses I found that it was entirely different from compulsory schooling. I could arrange my life as I pleased, take what interested me, and get treated respectfully. I enjoyed campus life, and I continued on to earn a degree. It was not a big deal, even 30 years ago.

It did make me wonder though. If I could all but ignore school for so many years, dismiss the final three grades of high school entirely, and still do well in college, what was all the commotion about? Now I know. It is about jobs and control and jealously guarded prerogatives. Anyone can bypass this with confidence, especially these days when so many others have paved the way. In order to do well in college you need to be able read and you need to want to be there. It may not be all one might require for an advanced degree in physics at MIT, but it is enough to start you on your way.

Kids who don't live far from a college can learn to relax about it and demythologize their thinking by looking into signing up for a course under open enrollment. My son, Jamie, and many others in our support group between the ages of 9 and 16 have taken college courses. They earned real credits that can be applied to a degree upon matriculation or, in many instances, transferred to other institutions similarly.

I can't stress enough that college courses do not require a high school background or any special training in academics. Over the past three years Jamie has taken history, art, Latin, psychology, and public speaking in the University of Maine System. We were "unschoolers," and Jamie had never been given an academic lesson in his life before taking his first college course. When he found he needed to know grammar for his Latin course, he learned grammar along with the matriculated students in his class who had forgotten much of it from high school. Some people have wondered if Jamie and these other kids who take college courses are so unique that they are not a practical example for others. This is only another measure of the power of the mythology that educators have promoted in our society.

There are other issues which may make decisions about these matters more complex. For instance many academic and sports scholarships are available only to bonafide high school students. There may be a variety of

personal and practical reasons for a family to utilize a secondary school in preparation for college instead of doing it on their own. I hope, though, that the primary reason is not fear of shutting the door to college. If college is your dream, the door is open, and you can get there in your own way.

State and local nonprofit volunteer-based support organizations may reprint this article for their members without asking for permission. As a favor, please send a copy to Earl at 25 Belmeade Road, Portland, Maine 04101.

[For more on the years beyond homeschooling, including college admissions for homeschoolers, visit this special section of the AHEM website: <http://www.ahem.info/BeyondHomeschooling.htm>]

Around AHEM . . .

Getting Started Homeschooling

Tuesday, August 14, 2007, 6:30 - 8:00 PM

Downstairs in the Community Room of the Robbins Library (take the elevator to LLR), 700 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington, MA.

A presentation and discussion addressing common questions and concerns about homeschooling. General public welcome. Free admission. Please join us! For more info, call Sophia 781-641-0566.

This evening is intended for adult-to-adult support, so if your children will be as happy at home with a loving caregiver, please leave them there; if you are unable to come unless you bring your kids, then bring them. (The Children's Room will be closed, so pack quiet activities for them to do during the meeting.)

Not-Back-to-School Time

If you are a support group leader or otherwise homeschool outreach person, this time of year you're experiencing a flood of inquiries regarding getting started homeschooling. In the interest of helping both local support networks and potential new homeschoolers, we at Advocates for Home Education in Massachusetts have a couple of ideas:

Not-Back-to-School Event listing

A treat that we homeschoolers experience during the "Back-to-School" season is the feeling of heading off to a beach or park on a glorious September day when the rest of the world has settled back into closeting themselves indoors at school again. If your group hosts a "Not-Back-to-School" event at which you'd welcome newcomers, we invite you to send details about it to list

on our special page of such events
<http://www.ahem.info/Not-Back-to-SchoolEvents.htm>.
It is fun and inspirational to see the myriad of events that take place across Massachusetts at this time of year, from Cape Cod homeschoolers heading to the beach to Western Mass. homeschoolers atop of mountains, (or go ahead — break the stereotype!) and everything in between. We hope you will send us your listing.

AHEM brochures

We appreciate that sometimes the role of support person is thrust upon otherwise busy homeschoolers, and we hope that by partnering with you we can help to make that role, whether warmly embraced or not, a bit easier. If you would find it helpful, AHEM would be happy to provide you with copies of our brochure which introduces AHEM and has information on how to get started homeschooling in Massachusetts (.pdf version here: <http://www.ahem.info/Trifold03.pdf>).

While we are not in the business of recruiting people to homeschooling, it is in all of our best interests that those who choose this path are well informed about Massachusetts homeschool guidelines. These brochures would be appropriate to hand out at informal gatherings like picnic or park days, at support meetings, information nights, or mailed to individuals who contact you looking for more information. The pamphlet format allows for a few to be stashed in a glove compartment or backpack so that they're on hand when you need them.

If you'd like some, send us your name, address, and number of pamphlets desired and we'll get them right out to you.

Cry Innocent

Advocates for Home Education in Massachusetts presents "Cry Innocent" at the Old Town Hall, 32 Derby Square, Salem, MA on **Friday, October 12th, 2007 at 11:00 AM**. Please arrive at 10:45 AM and meet in front of the Old Town Hall. Bridget Bishop is arrested nearby and escorted to the Old Town Hall for her trial.

The year is 1692. Bridget Bishop has been accused of witchcraft and the audience sits on the Puritan jury. They hear the historical testimonies, cross-examine the witnesses and decide the verdict. The actors respond in character to all comments and questions, revealing much about the Puritan mind. Play your part in history...

A must see for everyone, *Cry Innocent* is the longest continuously running show north of Boston. Featured on the Discovery Channel, the Travel Channel, A&E,

Nickelodeon, TLC, NPR, BBC, CNN and MTV. *Cry Innocent: the People versus Bridget Bishop* was commissioned by Norman Jones, professor of theatre and was written by Mark Stevick, professor of English. The 2007 production is directed by Dawn Jenks Sarrouf and under the artistic direction of Kristina Wacome Stevick.

Cry Innocent is performed at the Old Town Hall, 32 Derby Square, Salem, MA, accessible from the Essex Pedestrian Walkway and from Front Street. Several historic sites and the Peabody Essex Museum are within walking distance. October is a great time to visit Salem.

Cost: \$7.00 per person; children under 6 are free.

If you want to go: Mail a check made out to *Advocates for Home Education in Massachusetts* to AHEM, PO Box 1307, Arlington, MA 02474. Please include

- the names and number of all children and adults who will be attending,
- ages of children,
- your address, and
- email or phone number.

Those with email will receive confirmation about a week before the visit.

Space is limited; **checks must be postmarked by September 28th**. No refunds after September 28th. Email FieldTrips@AHEM.info for more information or call 978-532-5778.

Directions: Take Route 128N to exit 25A - Route 114 East. Follow Route 114 East toward Salem and Marblehead. You will end up taking a left on Pulaski Street and a right on Gardner Street (marked as Route 114 East.) Continue to follow Route 114 East. Take the ramp marked Route 107 toward Beverly/Peabody. Turn right onto Bridge Street (Route 107N). At the next roundabout, take the first exit onto Washington St. Take the first left onto Church Street. There will be a parking lot on your left that is available for parking, or you can continue to go straight and will come to a parking garage, the entrance ramp will be on your right. Walk to the right when leaving the garage. The brick pedestrian walkway is Essex Street. Take a right onto Essex Street and the Old Town Hall will be on your left.



Photo from
<http://www.gordon.edu/historyalive>

Field trip participants will be added to the Friends of AHEM list unless they specifically opt out.

AHEM presents A Morning Matinee at the Theater

AHEM continues its popular field trips to New Repertory Theater. The next show is Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*. Set in 1692 during the height of New England Puritanism, the play follows the actions set in motion by a group of girls covering up their forbidden activities and a society bent on vengeance. Based on the real-life events of one of our nation's darkest moments, this Tony Award-winning play reveals how superstition and hysteria can undermine and engulf an entire community. November 5, 10:00 AM at New Repertory Theatre, Arsenal Center for the Arts, 321 Arsenal St., Watertown. Ticket price TBA (between \$13-\$15). Space is limited; **checks must be postmarked by October 5th**. Contact Milva for more info: FieldTrips@ahem.info or 781-648-5579. Field trip participants will be added to the Friends of AHEM list unless they specifically opt out.

Upcoming Field Trips for 2007-2008

In addition to *Cry Innocent and The Crucible*, plans are in the works for field trips to the Jackson Homestead, the Worcester Art Museum, and more. Deadlines don't always line up neatly to get full information into the newsletter, printed three times a year. To be sure to receive notice of these upcoming events and other information of interest to Massachusetts homeschoolers, send your name, address, and email address to info@AHEM.info and ask to join our announcement-only elist (see "Become a Friend of AHEM" on page 7 if we don't already have you listed as one.) Alternatively, you can periodically check our website where field trips are listed at <http://www.ahem.info/FieldTrips>.

Unit study on Massachusetts History and Government

In the fall of 2006, AHEM unveiled a unit study on Massachusetts history and government for homeschoolers. This unit provides a variety of activities for six weeks of study, covering topics in history, geography, economics, civics, and government such as:

- the purposes, principles, and practices of American government as established by the United States Constitution;
- the rights and responsibilities we have as citizens and how to exercise these rights and responsibilities in local, state, and national government;
- basic concepts of American government;

- history and politics of Massachusetts.

The activities have been chosen to teach the fundamental ideas each week, while appealing to a range of learning styles and ages. Parents are encouraged to individualize the unit to suit their own child's present level of knowledge and interest. Some assignments involve reading, writing, and research; others involve hands-on games, art, even music and cooking. We hope that students will let us know if they come up with an idea that we might add to the unit for future students to learn from.

Some weeks allow for choosing one or more activities; other weeks require that more than one activity be completed. Some weeks have suggested field trips that tie in with the subject matter. Students keep a log of their accomplishments in a unit study notebook. When a student completes the unit study, we hope that he or she will let AHEM know, and give us any constructive feedback. We will then be pleased to send a Certificate of Completion.

To request the Unit Study be sent to you, send an email with your name and address to info@ahem.info, or a SASE to AHEM, PO Box 1307, Arlington, MA 02474. You will be added to the Friends of AHEM list unless you specifically opt out.

Educators' Discounts

AHEM has a web page that lists museums and retail stores that offer discounts to homeschoolers: <http://www.ahem.info/EducatorsDiscounts.htm>.

Please send us more listings of Massachusetts stores and museums that offer discounts to homeschoolers. (Email info@ahem.info or write to AHEM, PO Box 1307, Arlington, MA 02474.) Include as much info as possible, including the name of a contact person if you have one.

We list the following businesses and organizations as a service to Massachusetts homeschoolers, but being listed here does not imply an endorsement by AHEM.

Retail Stores

A.C. Moore

To apply for a Teacher Discount Card, please mail a copy of one of the following requirements:

- Teacher Union Card
- State Issued Teaching Certificate
- Home Schooler Affidavit or IHIP approval letter from School District or your State
- Home Schooling Certificate
- AHEM membership card (front and back)

Along with your Card or Certificate you must send in

the name of the school, address, phone number, and principal name. Also, we need the individual teacher's home phone number and address where the card should be mailed. Please mail your information to:

A. C. Moore
Attn: Teacher Discount Program
130 A.C. Moore Drive
Berlin, NJ. 08009

Apple

Apple is pleased to offer discounts to homeschoolers through the Apple Store for Education. To place an order visit <http://store.apple.com/Catalog/US/Images/routingpage.html> and click Homeschool in the lower left corner. If you have further questions regarding verification, email us at homeschool@apple.com or call 1-800-MY-APPLE.

Borders/Waldenbooks and Barnes & Noble stores

Both *Borders* and *Barnes & Noble* stores recognize homeschoolers as educators, and will issue an educators' discount card to them with proper ID.

Borders accepts AHEM membership cards as valid proof of educator status for the purpose of obtaining the discounts. If you would like an AHEM membership card, see below.

Mary Ausman of *Barnes & Noble* clarifies that homeschoolers may self-certify themselves as well: "You may apply for the discount card in the store by bringing in something that does indicate you are currently homeschooling. We realize that identification for homeschooling varies by state, and lesson plans, membership to a homeschooling/unschooling support groups, or other ID that verifies you home school is acceptable to receive the discount card. If no other form of ID is available, a signed letter by the homeschooling parent that includes: family name and address, name of homeschooling parent(s), and the grade level of each child is acceptable. The discount offers Pre-K - 12th grade educators a 20% discount off the publisher's list price on most hardcover and paperback books used in the classroom. The discount is not valid on the website."

Jo-Ann Fabric & Crafts

Jo-Ann Fabric & Crafts does extend discounts to homeschoolers. Stores issue cards directly. Verification of teaching that may be required by your state or a card from a recognized organization such as AHEM, is sufficient to receive a card. Please provide this information to a member of the management team at store level.

Staples

Homeschool teachers are eligible for the Teachers Rewards Program. To enroll, go to <https://www.staplesrewardscenter.com/SORC/UserManagement/Login/Login.aspx> and click on "Enroll in Staples Teacher Rewards now." Fill in the necessary fields and click "Submit." A confirmation screen will appear stating that you have successfully been enrolled in the program.

Museums

Boston Children's Museum

<http://www.bostonchildrensmuseum.org/index.html>
Children's Museum will recognize a homeschooling parent as an educator, who therefore has the following benefits:

Free Resources and Other Benefits for Teachers

- Free admission to the Museum at all times
- 10% discount at the Recycle Shop
- 10% discount at the Museum shop with your educator I.D.

All educators have access to:

- Circulating library
- Computers with Internet Access (10 pages free printing, then 25 cents per page)
- Laminating machine
- GBC binder
- Ellison shape and letter cutting machine (bring your own paper!)
- Art waxer
- Room Rentals (under 12 people FREE!)
- Exploration of Kits materials

Simply identify yourself as a homeschooler at the admissions desk.

Museum of Science, Boston <http://www.mos.org/>

Your family can go on a "field trip" to the Museum at these rates if you follow the guidelines below. For complete field trip guidelines, see http://www.mos.org/educators/field_trip_resources/field_trip_planner/field_trip_reservations.

Making Reservations

Reservations by PHONE only. Call Science Central, open daily, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM. Reserve at least 24 hours in advance: Exhibit Halls and Omni films. Reserve at least two weeks in advance: Field Trip Programs that require a reservation. 617-723-2500 (voice)

Payment Rates for Exhibit Halls Teachers Free [One parent per homeschooling family counts as a teacher.] All field trips must include Exhibit Halls admission, unless otherwise noted. Additional programs cost extra. See

http://www.mos.org/educators/field_trip_resources/field_trip_planner/field_trip_reservations for current rates. Multiple visits: If you return with the same students, you receive 50% off Exhibit Halls admission. When making reservations, inform Science Central that you will be visiting more than once with your students.

Parking

Chaperones and teachers may park cars in the Museum garage for flat fee of \$3. Flat fee applies during field trip participation only.

Old Sturbridge Village

Homeschoolers and their families are offered the Education Department discount during the School year. Homeschool students and accompanying adults are \$7 per person, including adults and youths (those under age 3 are admitted free). You just need to identify yourself as a homeschooling family to secure the rate. There are specific days during the week and throughout the year that we offer this discounted opportunity to visit. These days are typically M-F, September through June (closed on Mondays in the winter). This discount is not offered during school vacation weeks and some holidays. We offer one Saturday a month which is typically the third Saturday. Please call 508-347-0290 before your visit to confirm the day you are planning to go is one that the discount is offered.

AHEM Membership Cards

Any Massachusetts homeschooler can use a letter from their local school department as legal proof of homeschooling status. AHEM has available "membership" cards. While they are not legal proof of homeschooling status, homeschoolers have found that many retailers do accept such cards as evidence of homeschooling, allowing homeschoolers to be eligible for educator discounts at various retail stores, most notably book stores, arts and crafts stores, and educational supply stores. Anywhere that offers discounts to teachers is probably receptive to offering the same to homeschoolers. It can't hurt to ask! And don't forget to let us know if you have an addition to our Educators' Discounts page.

If you would like an AHEM membership card, please send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to AHEM, PO Box 1307, Arlington, MA 02474. Indicate "membership card" on the envelope, and allow 4-6 weeks for delivery. People requesting cards will be added to the Friends of AHEM list unless they specifically opt out, so include your email address as well if you have one, as that is our preferred form of communication.

Become a Friend of AHEM

Advocates for Home Education in Massachusetts (AHEM) is a nonprofit, independent, grassroots, volunteer-run, educational organization that gathers and disseminates information about homeschooling in Massachusetts through education, advocacy, and events. We believe that informed and active homeschoolers are their own best advocates in maintaining the right to independently homeschool. We welcome and value the participation of anyone interested in homeschooling in Massachusetts. AHEM, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. All donations are tax-deductible.

Friends of AHEM keep abreast of legislative and other issues that affect Massachusetts homeschoolers via an announcement-only email list or this newsletter. Friends of AHEM with email get special notice of AHEM events, field trips, and get-togethers. Be proactive: become a Friend of AHEM. Even if your involvement is simply to stay informed, that strengthens all of us.

To become a Friend of AHEM and receive email updates, send your name, address, and email address to info@AHEM.info. To become a Friend of AHEM and receive *AHEM News* by US mail instead of email updates, send your name and address to AHEM, PO Box 1307, Arlington, MA 02474. Donations to offset cost are appreciated.

Why Are You Getting This Newsletter?

You are receiving this paper copy of the newsletter through the mail instead of our timely announcement-only emails because we have you listed as a Friend of AHEM, but either the email address we have for you has been bouncing, or we don't have an email address for you. We'd appreciate hearing from you with an updated email address in order to conserve paper and postage, and to keep our costs down.

If you would like to keep receiving this paper version of the newsletter, please consider making a tax-deductible donation to AHEM to support efforts like sending this newsletter to Massachusetts homeschoolers who don't have computer access. And please pass your newsletter on to a friend or leave it in your local library when you're done with it. Thanks!

If you don't wish to receive this newsletter, please take a moment to let us know and we will stop sending it. Either email info@ahem.info, call 781-641-0566, or drop us a line at AHEM, PO Box 1307, Arlington, MA 02474. We really appreciate your help in keeping our lists current.
