

At the last PATCH Board meeting it was decided that we, as a group, need to define Non-Traditional Instruction (NTI) vs. Homeschool Instruction. Until recently, when PATCH got a website, people found out about our group by word of mouth. That is still true today. If you haven't yet, you will probably get a call from someone in your county. They will be wanting information on homeschooling, but then may say they will be using the NTI at home option.

So, how do we respond to these calls, especially since we can no longer give all the information they will need to get started? A previous email was sent explaining that we can only give practical advice, not legal advice. This is not just for the board members, but *all PATCH members*. We should always refer families to HSLDA's website for legal advice about homeschooling. www.hsllda.org. Also, refer them to HSLDA if they want to know what to do when a local school district asks to see anything to do with a school at home. However, if their questions have to do with where to get curriculum, field trips, clubs, etc. that is practical advice that you can share.

PATCH will define NTI as the following: If a child(ren) is getting school work on a computer, workbook/worksheets, or virtual class from the school district in which they live, then they are a public school student. Example: If a family chooses to use the NTI option for at home education, and the public school is providing the curriculum, then they are *not* homeschooling. If the parent/guardian is not picking out the curriculum for the student, grading the work they complete, or keeping up with daily attendance and what they do each day, they are *not* homeschooling. That student is enrolled as a public school student. (This does not apply to trade school or dual-enrollment.)

The definition for Homeschool is as follows: The parent/guardian is picking out the curriculum, grading the work (unless using an accredited homeschool curriculum), and keeping up with what is required as outlined in the Best Practices Document. The parent/guardian is solely responsible for the education the child(ren) is getting. That student is a homeschool student.

According to these definitions, PATCH will remain a support group for homeschool families only. Families that have a child(ren) homeschooling *and* a child(ren) in public school can join PATCH, but the child(ren) enrolled in the public school will not be allowed at age-specific PATCH events. All family/household members are welcome at PATCH family events (like family picnics, tie-dye day, etc). These events are excellent opportunities for doubting family members to see just how socialized our children really are.

If you do get calls or questions from friends or acquaintances, and it's clear they will be doing at home NTI, then politely suggest they start a support group for the district where they live. Take it a step further, and encouragingly let them know if they see that in the future they want to pull their child(ren) from public school, at that time they can join PATCH.

Our hope is that this will be a stepping stone for families who are considering homeschooling to realize they CAN homeschool successfully. We want to encourage others to learn and research all their education options and make wise decisions for their child(ren)'s future based on what is best for their individual family.