

Dear Homeschooler,

May 2003

No doubt you remember the frenzied activity late last year when we worked together with the State Board of Education to change the homeschool regulations. Our primary concern was to uncouple homeschooling curriculum from the public school Content and Performance Standards, but we were also encouraged at that time to clean up other areas in the NAC (Nevada Administrative Code) to make homeschooling better in the State of Nevada.

After working with many (many!) individuals and groups and the Department of Education, we came before the Board of Education in October, then again in December, and presented our proposed changes to the NAC. In December the Board voted to grant our requested NAC changes. The regulations went into effect immediately, but they have not been "codified" into the NAC yet because the LCB (Legislative Counsel Bureau) that drafts the legal language has been occupied with the current Legislature. After the LCB reviews the proposed language, the State Board of Education will re-vote on our regulations.

Meanwhile, several homeschoolers have talked with the Board of Education members, some of whom are new to the Board, and some of whom have questions regarding homeschooling. Moreover, the success of homeschooling has brought new challenges to those of us in homeschool leadership positions, and to the State Board. Imitation is the highest form of flattery, and many educational alternatives (to their credit!) are learning what makes homeschooling work, and are using those concepts to provide a better education for their students. Unfortunately, some are also using the homeschooling name in public and private school ventures, and others are using our current homeschooling regulations as the basis for business enterprises. Their reputations, and any failures of these concerns, reflects badly on the homeschooling community and should be of immediate concern to us.

In private conversations some Board members have asked what improvements can be made, over and above what we did in December, to the homeschool regulations. Recognizing the position of responsibility the Board members have to see that an education is provided to ALL children in the State of Nevada, we feel we can stand proudly and define for them "classic homeschooling"* as opposed to "pseudo

homeschooling"* and reflect this definition in regulations. We feel this is the best way to keep homeschooling free and successful in Nevada. We don't want to exclude anyone from the joy and excellence of homeschooling their child, no matter what method of homeschooling they use, but we do want everyone to consider their homeschooling responsibilities seriously. We want to promote a good working relationship with the public, charter, and private schools for the benefit of those who find that homeschooling isn't working for them. And most importantly, we want to make homeschooling as free and unrestricted as possible for those who do choose to homeschool their child.

Attached is the first attempt at making these changes in the NAC, over and above what we did in December. These address concerns brought to us by homeschoolers, and by people working in public school districts who would like to see homeschooling succeed. We encourage you to read these and make suggestions.

Nevada Home School Advisory Councils
Tim Hartman (Southern President)
Frank Schnorbus (Northern President)

* "Classic" and "Pseudo" are terms used by Susan A. McDowell, *The Home Schooling Mother-Teacher: Toward a Theory of Social Integration* published in the *Peabody Journal of Education*, 75(1&2), 187-206.