Grace School Associations



MEMBER HANDBOOK

REVISION DATE 08/10/2023

Grace Home School Association

Member Handbook

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Contact Information

Address: 3336 W. Palmetto Street, Florence, SC 29501 Phone: 843-667-9777 Fax: 843-667-8833

Website: www.gsaeducators.com

Email: contactus@gsaeducators.com (general email, application and attendance) records@gsaeducators.com (high school forms One Time transcripts)

HSLDA Member Number—299324 SAT / ACT School Code—411361

Hours: May-August 9-5 Monday. —Thursday 9-2 Friday Sept.—April Monday-Friday 9-2

Newsletter

Join Grace School Associations (organization) on Facebook. You will receive our updates and news.

SC Code of Laws 59-65-47

In lieu of the requirements of Section 59-65-40 or Section 59-65-45, parents or guardians may teach their children at home if the instruction is conducted under the auspices of an association for homeschools which has no fewer than fifty members and meets the requirements of this section.

Bona fide membership and continuing compliance with the academic standards of the associations exempts the home school from the further requirements of Section 59-65-40 or Section 59-65-45.

The State Department of Education shall conduct annually a review of the association standards to ensure that requirements of the association, at a minimum, include:

- (a) a parent must hold at least a high school diploma or the equivalent general educational development (GED) certificate.
- **(b)** the instructional year is at least one hundred eighty days.
- **(c)** the curriculum includes, but is not limited to, the basic instructional areas of reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies, and in grades seven through twelve, composition and literature; and
- (d) educational records shall be maintained by the parent-teacher and include:
- (1) a plan book, diary, or other record indicating subjects taught and activities in which the student and parent-teacher engage;
- (2) a portfolio of samples of the student's academic work; and
- (3) a semiannual progress report including attendance records and individualized documentation of the student's academic progress in each of the basic instructional areas specified in item (c) above.

By January thirtieth of each year, all associations shall report the number and grade level of children home schooled through the association to the children's respective school districts.

It is unlawful to use the name Grace Home School Association, Grace School Associations, or the name of any GSA officer or staff on diplomas, transcripts or any document without consent from our board. To do so is to commit fraud and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

Thank you for letting GRACE be your homeschool accountability association. We strive to be the best association in the state. Grace has always been on the cutting edge of homeschooling in SC. Since 1993, we have served over 9000 families. We started issuing transcripts and diplomas in 1996. We were the first to have an online and physical bookstore. We are one of few associations that have an office with staff. Our job is to answer your questions, send out the necessary letters to institutions needing them and to verify your compliancy to whomever you want us to verify. We have worked closely with the FBI, CIA, and Office of Personnel for high security positions for our graduates. By the way, these folks ask for proof of everything from when the child is in kindergarten on up through high school! Fortunately, because our parents do a great job of sending in what we need, we have been able to satisfy the requirements to help these students get the positions they wanted.

When I started homeschooling in 1987, parents were (and usually are) the BEST teachers for their kids. They truly have their child's best interest at heart. Of course, there are parents who do not have the child's best interest in mind and others who do an excellent job of homeschooling their kids. Because we are an accountability association with a great reputation, we have to ask for enough paperwork, to do the verifications for you and to remain a great accountability association.

GRACE still only requires what the law requires. The difference in what we want you to turn in to us now versus a few years ago has changed. The law says you have to have a plan book, diary, or other record indicating subjects taught and activities in which the student and parent-teacher engage in each day. For high school courses such as PE, CAP, home economics, equine studies., etc. we ask for a copy of this documentation. It is something you are required to do anyway.

Your membership package is emailed to you. Our attendance and compliance record are still the only paperwork you need to turn in each year, unless you have high school students. For them, we have a high school form that needs to be sent in. This keeps them up to date in their class ranking.

We believe parents do the best for their children. Keep up the good work. Thank you for letting us be here for you!

Sincerely,

Gloria Gregory

President

Grace School Associations

How to Get Started

After joining GRACE, you will need to plan a course of study for each student and purchase the material (books) necessary to implement your plan.

You will need to keep a written record indicating subjects taught and activities in which the students engage.

Individualized documentation of the student's academic progress in these subject area—math, science, social studies, reading or literature, writing or composition is necessary and required.

Keep up an attendance record daily, to be turned in by August 1. Send us your high school record form at the end of the ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade. These are due by May 22 (grades 10-12, grade 9 by Aug. 1) Failure to submit these forms will result in your home school not reaping full membership benefits or your student receiving state scholarships.

We supply these, in the membership package and online.

Create a semi-annual progress report for each student. Do not send this form to GRACE. It is for YOUR records.

GRACE PLUS!

GRACE PLUS! is an optional service where you send us quarterly reports and we send your child a report card. You can also keep papers and records in a file here at the GRACE office. Dues are annual:

K-12-\$60

Grace Plus! Can be started at any time during the school year.

Who Needs Grace Plus!?

- ◆ Those wanting more accountability
- ◆ Those who need help keeping up with important papers
- ♦ Anyone wanting quarterly report cards for their children
- ◆ Those planning to return to conventional school

Testing

Grace does not require testing of any kind. We do recommend testing every two or three years. Testing gives the teacher confidence that what they are doing is right. Please keep in mind some children do not test well.

If you are interested in testing, you can call the following resources:

BJUP offers Iowa Basic Skills.

<u>Iowa AssessmentsTM Online | Homeschool (bjupresshomescho</u>ol.com) Cost of average test is \$40-50.

The Wide Range Achievement Test has been around for over 60 years and is still used in public schools. I like it because you can do spelling, math, and reading in 45 minutes to an hour.

All ages. We will test your child. \$30.00 with an appointment



We have a **no** refund policy. Memberships, books, and all services included. Returned Checks – Return check fee is \$50.

Layaways – 20% down or \$5.00 on orders less than \$25. A payment must be made at least once a month. Handling fee of \$5.00 will be charged for canceled layaways.

Hold – We will hold books for 10 days

Special Orders – must be prepaid. Shipping charges apply. All sales are final.



Book-Buying Policy — How to Trade Your Used Textbooks

Make a list of the books you plan to sell and include the retail price.

- ♦ Workbooks or tests booklets that have been written in (more than 25%) will not be traded.
- ♦ Books must be in overall good condition.
- ♦ Offers are made based on the condition, the edition, and the retail price of the book.
- ♦Bring in or send your books to the store during the months of January, June, September, October, and November,
- ♦ Payment to the seller will be made in the form of a digital gift card.

Digital Gift Cards are good for all items and most services we offer. Graduation packages excluded.

Grace reserves the right to refuse to purchase any textbooks.

We are unable to purchase most textbooks or public school textbooks that are not a set of teacher and student books.

Books left in store 30 days after your offer become the property of GSA.

Before you go to the DMV

Call before you go to the DMV for permits and licenses!!! We usually need to fax them a letter of school attendance and verify residency. You may need to give us their fax number.



The school will need a certified transcript from the association.

To order an elementary or middle school transcript with

no high school credits go to www.www.gsaeducators.com.

Look under "Forms" and get the One-Time Transcript Request form or you can call and request one from the office.

For high school credit, you must use the high school record form to order transcripts.

Please allow 10-14 days for processing. Order as early as possible. We get very busy with transcripts during summer months. Once you have the transcript, go to the school and enroll your child.

Fees:

Grades K-8 - \$25.00 (1 year with no high school subjects)

Grades 7-8 with high school credit \$60

Mid –year transcript updates are available for \$15.

This is only for students who have a high school membership.

Younger students can have Grace Plus, or we can do the One-Time transcript as needed.

High School Credits for Middle School Students

Middle School students can earn high school credit for core subjects that are on a high school level. These are core subjects or foreign language, no exceptions. Please limit to five credits per year. We do not need this to be turned in until the end of the ninth grade unless you need a transcript prior to the end of grade nine.



High School Requirements

What do we need from you?

When you join GRACE, each home school with high school student is sent a Grace Home School High School Record. A copy of this record and the attendance record and compliance form is all we require annually (deadline for records is May 22 for grades 10, 11, 12 only.) Our class ranking is finalized on or before June 15. If we do not have your students records by May 22, they may not receive a class rank and Will Not be eligible for LIFE, HOPE, or Palmetto Fellows or other state awarded scholarships. GSA used the SC UGP in establishing a student's GPA.

We are often asked what is required of high school. CHE now recommends 20 units. This is our minimum requirement for our basic diploma. Our advice is to look at several schools and colleges pre-requisites your child may attend and meet their requirements.

4 English 4 Math 3 Sciences 1 Social Studies 1 US History 1/2 Government 1/2 Economics 1 PE or ROTC

1 Fine Arts 2 Foreign Language 1 1/2 Electives 1/2 Personal Finance

(2026 and beyond)

Homeschoolers are not bound by these. However, it is at our discretion which diplomas are awarded to student not meeting the above minimum requirements. (See page 10 for diploma policy.) USC no longer accepts Physical Science or Earth Science for HS credit. Most public schools no longer accept Pre-Algebra for high school credit.

College Preparatory Courses

College Preparatory Course Prerequisite Requirements for Entering College Freshmen beginning in Academic Year 2019-2025.

FOUR UNITS OF ENGLISH: All four units must have strong reading (including works of fiction and non-fiction), writing, communication, and researching components. It is strongly recommended that students take two units that are literature based, including American, British, and World Literature.

FOUR UNITS OF MATHEMATICS: These units must include Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry. A fourth higher –level mathematics unit should be taken before or during the senior year.

THREE UNITS OF LABORATORY SCIENCE: Two units must be taken in two different fields of the physical, earth, or life sciences and selected from among biology, chemistry, physics, or earth science. The third unit may be from the same field as the first two units or from any laboratory science for which biology, chemistry, or physics is a pre-requisite. Courses in general or introductory science for which one of these four units is not a prerequisite will not meet this requirement. It's strongly recommended that students desiring to pursue careers in science, mathematics, engineering or technology take one course in in all four fields: biology, chemistry, physics, and earth science.

TWO UNITS OF THE SAME WORLD LANGUAGE Two units with a heavy emphasis on language acquisition. (GSA accepts Latin for this requirement.

THREE UNITS OF SOCIAL SCIENCE: One unit of US History, a half unit of economics and a half unit of government are required. World History or Geography is strongly recommended.

ONE UNIT OF FINE ARTS: One unit in appreciation of, history of, or performance in one of the fine arts. This unit should be selected from among media/digital arts, dance, music, theater, or visual and spatial arts. ONE UNIT OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION OR ROTC: One unit of physical education to include one semester of personal fitness and another semester in lifetime fitness. Exemption applies to students enrolled in Junior

ROTC and for students exempted because of physical disability or for religious reasons.

TWO UNITS OF ELECTIVES: Two units must be taken as electives. A college preparatory course in Computer Science recommended for this elective. Other acceptable electives include college preparatory courses in English, fine arts, foreign language, social science, humanities, mathematics, physical education, and laboratory science (courses for which biology, chemistry, physics, or earth science is a prerequisite.) Total: 20

Carnegie units One Carnegie unit equals 135-150 hours of study not including reading and research.

Documenting Physical Education, Art, Music, Home Economics, and All Internet Work

It is possible to get books for these subjects, however, most homeschooling families prefer to take the less costly way and make-up their own curriculum. For each of these subjects, the student needs to complete 135 hours of work/study time. This equals 45 minutes per day for 180 days.

P.E. – basically consists of physical activity and being health conscious. "Health" curricula can take the place of 65 of the work/study hours (also ½ credit). Then the other 70 hours could include walking, swimming, tennis, basketball, working-out, baseball, and other sports activities.

Home Ec. – usually consists of duties of a homemaker. Cleaning, cooking, budgeting, balancing checkbooks, planning meals, shopping and preparing those meals while staying within a budget, sewing, childcare, etc.

Music / Art / Drama – Most families would combine these together for 1 Fine Arts unit. Playing an instrument, drama (at a local theater), and studying different forms of art can all be included.

Work Credits can be earned when working on a job. Documentation is also necessary and a letter from a job supervisor is usually helpful when it tells how good a worker they are.

If your student does **internet** work for any subject, hours must be documented, and tests need to be printed and saved. Turn in the tests with the high school form at the end of the school year.

Documenting these courses

Use our table or make your own in Microsoft Excel. Excel will total the hours and average the grade for you, so you know when you have all the time necessary for the unit to be completed.

Grading for some of these subjects is generally done on attitude and effort. Teaching the student cooperation, time-management, etc. will better prepare them for the workplace. We tell our students, they are our employees. It is their job to go to school. If they do a good job, they get pay raises, promotions, etc. Doing jobs poorly leads to...nothing. It is their choice. We need the DAILY documentation (with total hours).

HONORS, AP, Dual Credit Courses

An honors course must have a published syllabus that verifies rigor that is sufficiently beyond the college prep or tech prep requirements. Textbooks and/or other course materials must be differentiated and more rigorous than those used in college prep or tech prep courses. Honors courses may be offered in English, Math, Science and Social Studies. Additionally honors courses may be designated in other content areas for courses where students are earning their 3rd or 4th Carnegie unit in the content area, *provided the standards listed above are met*.

Some Honors Courses are – Abeka Literature (only for 11th and 12th grade), Algebra 2, Plane Geometry, Advanced Math, Physics, and Spanish 2. (Ask your publisher if theirs is CP or Honors). Parents can also determine criteria if it meets **UGS** requirements for honors courses. Transcripts will reflect honors designation for any honors course taken.

AP classes must include AP test scores for AP credit. Test grades are not released until JULY. Once we receive the official AP score, we will upgrade the H to AP and the GPA. Class ranking cannot and will not change until the following school year. GSA does not recommend AP courses for seniors.

Dual Credit courses count 1.0 high school credit for each 3 college credit hours. School attending transcripts are required. All Dual Credit classes that are for high school credit MUST be on our high school form. We only transcript what is written on our high school form. All Dual Credit classes must be recorded on high school form and transcripts or they lose scholarship eligibility.

English Credit - Grammar, Compositions, Literature, Vocabulary and Spelling are all inclusive in high school English.

CLEP Tests do **not** count for high school credit. For college-level exams, it's a slightly different credit awarding process –. Let's say your student takes and passes a CLEP exam. That passing score is kept by the testing agency until you request they send your student's test transcript to a particular college/university. This is generally referred to as "banking" credits. Once a college/university receives your test transcript, they evaluate it and officially award the credits by placing them on your student's college transcript. You may let your student bank as many credits as you'd like by having them take several exams over a period of time.

TRANSCRIPT POLICY

Only courses and grades that can be verified will be placed on the transcript. If course of study is not submitted, we cannot verify the unit earned.

Please send in records in a timely fashion. If no high school form is received by September 1 of a senior's school year, we will be unable to process a transcript.

We do not certify diplomas if we cannot certify the transcript.

DIPLOMA POLICY

If you do not complete high school level work, you will receive a Certificate of Attendance.

If you complete nearly all the minimum requirements as outlined on page 7 of our handbook, (no foreign language or missing one other requirement) but did complete high school level material, you may receive a basic skills diploma.

If you do not use high school level textbooks, you receive a Life Skills diploma. Anything above and beyond the minimum requirements listed receives a regular diploma. Also, you are not required to purchase or obtain a diploma from GSA.

GSA RANKING POLICY

We use the SC UGP in establishing a student's GPA for class ranking. Our ranking is finalized on or before June 15 each year. Records must be received by May 22 for GSA to complete this calculation. This is for each class, sophomores through seniors.

In the event of a tie, the date records were submitted will be the determining factor to break the tie. Records not received by May 22 will receive a 4.0 GPA calculation.

SENIOR POLICY

Grace does not accept seniors after January 31 of the year of graduation. After September 30, a late fee of \$25 is required of incoming seniors. Transcripts for all high school students must be submitted with application.

If you student is registered with us as a junior and will be graduating early, please notify us as soon as possible so we can include them in the senior ranking. Otherwise, they will be ranked as a junior and cannot be reranked after the established deadline.

If your student does not intend to go to college

We will still have to have the grades as outlined above in order to effectively rank all students in that grade. It has been our experience that students change their minds after a year or two of "real world" experience.

How long do we keep your paper records?

Nearly all our archived files are also stored electronically. Official report cards, transcripts and diplomas are kept for 5 years.

Students who complete all requirements for high school graduation mid-year

(December/January) may be eligible to participate in the state scholarship programs if they meet all the initial and general eligibility criteria.

Students are responsible for ensuring that all required documentation is submitted to their institution's financial department by their established deadline. All decisions regarding student's Early Graduation Application will be based entirely on the documentation/information submitted to the institution by the institutions established deadline. Students must check with their institution's financial aid department for required documentation. Students must submit the minimum documents to their institution's financial aid department:

- A final official high school transcript that demonstrates all required items;
- A letter on school letterhead signed by by the principal/school counselor stating that the student has completed SC graduation requirements;
- SAT/ACT scores (if applicable)

*Please note: Students who graduate mid-year are not able to use rank as an eligibility criterio for the LIFE and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship.

http://www.che.sc.gov/Students,FamiliesMilitary/LIFE/HighSchoolEarlyGraduationInformation.aspx

If your student is an early/late graduate, records must be submitted within 30 days of the graduation date.

If a student takes more than 4 years to complete high school, they cannot earn the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship. Once they graduate high school, they will have to go one year in college without a scholarship (and use 2 terms of eligibility) and then earn the LIFE scholarship after their first academic year, if they met the continued eligibility requirements.

Graduation Policy

Parents/students cannot "choose" to extend their high school experience and "choose" to prolong progress to graduation due to the reasons of accountability.

Any student who is not eligible to graduate in 4 years or less, ie, has an IEP that requires extra time or lack required credits, may enroll for another **full year** to meet graduation requirements. Early graduation is not permitted for students taking a 5th year.

Students taking fifth year may not rank in the top 30% of their class and "knock out" students who have worked to meet graduation requirements within the 4 year period.

Do Your Grades Reconcile with Your SAT or ACT Test Scores?

Admissions departments use scores mostly as a check against the transcript. In public and private school, grades and rigor always trump test scores. This is not the case when considering homeschool applications because often homeschool programs lack class rank and accreditation. While course grades and a student's standardized test scores may vary, homeschool parents should be aware of how admissions officers look for consistency between the two.

Getting a GED

After you have withdrawn from Grace, submit the GED Verification of Withdrawal form, filled out, and we will fax or mail it back to you. These forms are available online. http://ed.sc.gov/agency/Standards-and-Learning/Adult-Education/old/ace/ged/Verfiy.html

Scholarship Information

South Carolina Requirements for State Scholarship Eligibility

According to the SC Commission on Higher Education, all home schools are required to submit transcripts with grades converted to the SC Uniform Grading Scale (UGS) for the purpose of determining state scholarship eligibility. This official transcript must indicate the cumulative GPA and student's class rank. Class rank and transcripts can come only from the student's accountability association.

LIFE Scholarship Program

The Legislative for Future Excellence (LIFE) Scholarship Program is a merit-based scholarship program approved by the General Assembly in 1998. Requirements: Cumulative 3.0 GPA, 1100 SAT or ACT 24, top 30% of class. We have to have all grades, ninth through eleventh, in to us no later than May 22 for class ranking.

HOPE Scholarship Program

The SC HOPE Scholarship Program was established under the SC Education Lottery Act approved by the General Assembly during the 2001 legislative session. The program is a merit-based scholarship created for students attending a four-year institution who do not qualify for the LIFE or Palmetto Fellows Scholarships. The scholarship is awarded during the freshman-year of attendance only. Requirements: 3.0 GPA on 4.0 scale and legal SC resident. We have to have all grades, ninth through eleventh, in to us no later than May 22 for class ranking.

Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program

The Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program is a merit-based scholarship program administered by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education. Each Palmetto Fellow may receive a scholarship of up to \$6,700 annually. Half of the scholarship is disbursed in the fall term and half is disbursed in the spring term. The scholarship must be applied directly toward the cost of attendance, less any other gift aid received. Palmetto Fellows may be supported for a maximum of eight full-time semesters of study toward the first baccalaureate degree at a participating college or university. To qualify—top 6% of class the sophomore, junior, or senior years, SAT 1200 or ACT 25. You do not have to be in the top 6% if your score is 1400 on the SAT or 31 on the ACT. Be sure we have your SAT or ACT scores. GRACE does the nominations late November. We have to have all grades, ninth through eleventh, to us no later than May 22 for class ranking. The top 6% must also turn in SAT or ACT scores no later than August 1. There is also a later entry deadline, May 22.

Lottery Tuition Assistance Program

The financial aid office on each two-year college campus administers the Lottery Tuition Assistance Program. C. Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education administers the Lottery Tuition Assistance Program for technical colleges, http://www.sctechsystem.com/lottery/lotteryinfo.htm.

A student may receive up to the cost-of-tuition. In calculating the amount awarded in Lottery Tuition Assistance, any all federal grants and Need-based Grants must be awarded first before determining the amount eligible in Lottery Tuition Assistance to be used for payment towards cost-of-tuition.

Links for More Information

Questions About the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Program, Need-based Grants, LIFE Scholarship Program, South Carolina HOPE Scholarship Program, and Lottery Tuition Assistance Program

SC Commission on Higher Education www.che.sc.gov

Valedictorian is determined by the GRACE Board of Directors in April based on timeliness of forms returned, membership status, overall GPA and class rankings for each high school year, sophomore—junior, as well as other documentation.

Support Group Information

Go online to https://schea.net/support-groups/ to view support group information in your area.

Graduation

The Grace Graduation is always a day to remember. Here are some quotes from parents and students:

"Thank you so much for doing all of this for us. I never expected so much." B. P. C

"I would like to thank you all for the lovely graduation ceremony on Saturday. You should all receive a standing ovation! My son is generally shy around people he doesn't know. But you took him under your wings and he was relaxed and happy to be a part of the whole celebration. It was a really special event, in every sense of the word. The decorations, the music, the class, the whole atmosphere was just beautiful. Thank you all so much from my family as well as myself. It was truly a graduation I will never forget. "Mrs. L. (parent)

Everything looks great. You did a great job. Thanks for doing this for the seniors. You guys are great!

This is just a small way of saying "thank you" for a job well done at the graduation! Indeed it was a pleasure to meet you in person. I wanted to say to you that we thoroughly enjoyed the ceremony. That was the best graduation that I have ever attended. It was very beautiful, elegant, and so well organized. I've been to private and public school graduations and neither touches what Grace HSA had done on Saturday. Words cannot express the blessing that you have been to our family. I was so proud to see my son walk across that stage! Thanks so much for your patience, caring, and understanding. I greatly appreciated your promptness in responding to my e-mails. That meant so much to me. The biggest word that I can say is "elephant" thanks to Grace. Keep up the good work! May God pour out a special blessing upon you and yours! Mrs. C (parent)

"Awesome! Way more than I expected."

"We were thrilled with everything. Everyone was friendly and helpful and we had a blast! It has been wonderful using Grace these past few years." W. P.

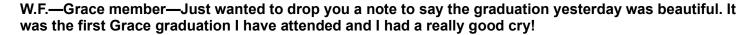
"The ceremony was absolutely beautiful!" M.F. (Grace member)

"Thank you so much for all that you guys have done for us seniors! We appreciate you so much, and the ceremony was amazing! Thanks so much!" K. B.

"My son wasn't excited about the ceremony going into it, but by the end of the day he was bragging to all his friends 'My grad was better than yours.' Thank you guys so much for all that you did, it was the most beautiful graduation I've ever been to and we are very excited to 'graduate' our " A.T.

C.C. - I thought the graduation was very pretty. I had fun and was very glad I did it.

E.L.— It was great!! I enjoyed myself and I'm glad I had the chance to meet new, exciting people!



Thanks sooo much! I can't wait to see some pics! Thank you both for all that you do! Robin—mom of graduate.

Job well done! The graduation was wonderful and I'm very excited about next year's ceremony! Parent participations is a wonderful touch and I'm glad I didn't know that you all did that. and can't wait to do it again.

The timing was down to the minute and you let everyone know you meant business. We couldn't have been happier. J. J. —mom of graduate

