

BRAVE NEW SCHOOLS

Christian working mom homeschools – on state's dime

Program allows full-time market analyst to reject evolution, sex ed assignments

Posted: May 20, 2009
11:40 pm Eastern

By Chelsea Schilling
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One flustered parent who was disillusioned with [public school](#) systems and what she believed to be lack of personal attention and creeping propaganda has chosen an alternative, where she may opt out of lessons on [evolution](#), sex education and teaching that goes against her Christian beliefs – and her tax dollars pay for it all.

"We had reached a point where the indoctrination in the schools was just untenable," said Susan Lockhart, a homeschooling mother. "I was going down there and complaining on a nearly daily basis about things. It got to the point where I had to do something. I had to get them out of there."

So Lockhart, a market analyst in [Palm](#) Bay, Fla., and her husband Glenn began homeschooling their children, Kristin and Shaun.

She used curricula from Bob Jones University and Abeka Books until her children reached high school, but as they grew older, she found it increasingly difficult to teach them advanced subjects they needed to study.



Susan, Kristin and Glenn Lockhart

Lockhart enrolled them in courses at [Florida Virtual School](#), an [online program](#) with 95 courses for children in grades 6 through 12. It's sister program, [Florida Virtual Global School](#), is available to students in 44 states and 38 countries. Lockhart was charged nothing, except taxes she already paid, because her new homeschooling program was funded through the state and local districts. The program came with a major benefit – she was allowed to monitor every assignment given to her children and opt out of ones that conflicted with her Christian beliefs.

"They make everything available for the parents so they can read every word of the curriculum and every word of everything your child turns in," she said. "You are totally in control of everything. It is far better than regular school systems."

Before each course, Lockhart explains that her children are Christian homeschool students and that her family will not deny creation or support ungodly agendas. She said she was surprised how accommodating teachers have been.

"Every teacher I have spoken with has told me, 'I also am a Christian, and I appreciate your position and have no problem working around that,'" she said. "They don't worry about what a student's position is, as long as they make a well thought-out argument and use proper grammar. They grade students on the work they do, not on their opinions."

Elaine McCall, principal of Florida Virtual Global Schools, told WND that the teachers always inform parents of district and state requirements but that they do accommodate Christian homeschoolers if the need should arise.

"If you have a homeschooled student, we have alternative assignments or we would excuse the student from those assignments and they wouldn't be counted in the grade book," McCall said. "Some situations become topics for discussion, and we have no problem with them opting out."

When the subject of evolution was addressed in Kristin Lockhart's marine science course, she was given an assignment to create a marine life that would evolve and adapt to [its environment](#) over time.



"I spoke to the teacher and told her we don't believe in evolution. We believe in creation," Lockhart explained. "I told her my daughter was going to do this assignment in terms of creationism, which she did. The teacher had no problem with it, and she got an 'A.'"

Lockhart said instructors give students one-on-one instruction, and they are always available by instant message, telephone, e-mail or by a virtual, interactive whiteboard called Illuminate. Teachers meet with parents and students once every month in a [teleconference](#) to discuss progress, and they receive personalized attention.

Lockhart said she has homeschooled while working full time because the structured program is available online and easy for her kids to use. When she worked in an office away from home, she simply checked her children's progress by logging into their classes during her breaks. Her husband stays home, but Lockhart said her children were able to do most of it with minimal supervision.

"If families can find someone like a grandmother – even if she's not really up to being a teacher – as long as the child is supervised, there is no reason – that they couldn't do any of that on their own," she said.

Students may progress at different rates and begin classes at any time during the year. The program offers honors and AP courses, and teachers are willing to work with students who have learning [disabilities](#) as well.

"For science classes, they have labs students must do," Lockhart said. "We work on those together as a family, and it is done to encourage kids to work with their families. A lot of the assignments have actually boosted our family conversations around the [dinner](#) table. It's engaging for the entire family."

The program has become wildly popular for families across the United States, McCall said. It currently serves 130,000 Florida students and has a partnership with [Texas](#) where 10 districts use it. In [North Carolina](#), 800 students have enrolled in AP English courses, and another 400 students in West Virginia are participating.

Lockhart said she thinks it's wonderful that she doesn't have to pay private school tuition rates – and that she isn't forced to deal with issues that arise in the traditional public school systems.

"My kids don't have to put up with bullying. They don't have to put up with indoctrination. They don't have to have sex education. We're allowed to pray all we want at home," she said. "It's really a lifesaver for Christian parents."

Chelsea Schilling is a staff writer for WorldNetDaily.

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