



Saskatchewan Home Based Educators

December 2025 Newsletter

Happy December! I hope your homeschool year has been off to a great start (and if not, be assured that there is still time to turn around the year for the better). With the start of a new calendar year just around the corner and the mid-point of the school year fast approaching, it's a great time to celebrate what's going well and consider where any changes would be supportive to your big picture goals.

Inside this newsletter you'll find a message from our SHBE President, information about a webinar on post-secondary education, details about the upcoming convention, an article on classical education and some questions to help you facilitate a mid-year reflection.

Please feel free to email us at journal@shbe.ca with your thoughts, questions and comments.

We hope to see you at convention!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Kayely Rich,
Communications Committee Chair

President's Corner

As we look back over the past year, there is much to be thankful for in Saskatchewan's homeschooling community. While many other jurisdictions across Canada are seeing declines or stagnation in home-based education, Saskatchewan continues to experience steady growth. Families are choosing home-based education in increasing numbers, not merely as a temporary alternative, but as a deliberate and thoughtful commitment to the long-term education of their children. This is both encouraging and instructive.



With growth, however, comes new pressures. Over the past year, SHBE has observed a continued push from some school divisions for increasingly specific goals, outcomes, and documentation requirements. In a small number of cases, this has been accompanied by an adversarial tone that is neither helpful nor consistent with the spirit of the Home-Based Education Regulations. While these situations are concerning and require careful attention, it is also important to note that the overall environment remains relatively stable. Many school divisions continue to work cooperatively with home educators, and respectful relationships remain the norm rather than the exception.

SHBE remains committed to advocating clearly and firmly for families when issues arise. Our role has always been to help parents understand their rights and responsibilities, to support constructive dialogue with school divisions, and to intervene when the regulatory framework is being misunderstood or misapplied. As the landscape evolves, this advocacy remains as necessary as ever.

One notable trend we are seeing is the increasing blending of educational models. Traditional classroom instruction, online learning, distance education, and home-based education are often spoken of as interchangeable, or as points along a single continuum. While there can certainly be overlap in tools and resources, it is important to be clear about the fundamental distinction: home-based education is the only option that is truly parent-directed. In home-based education, parents—not institutions—retain responsibility for the education, instruction, and assessment of their children. This distinction is not merely semantic; it lies at the heart of why many families choose this path and why it must be carefully preserved.

As homeschooling grows in visibility and popularity, clarity matters. SHBE will continue to articulate, both publicly and privately, what home-based education is—and what it is not—so that families can make informed decisions and so that regulatory boundaries remain respected.

Looking ahead, I would like to extend a warm invitation to our upcoming SHBE Convention in February. The convention remains one of the most valuable opportunities for encouragement, practical instruction, and fellowship within our community. Whether you are new to homeschooling or many years in, the convention offers rich resources, experienced speakers, and the chance to connect with like-minded families from across the province. We strongly encourage you to plan to attend.

Finally, as we approach the Christmas season, I wish you and your families peace, rest, and joy. The Christmas story is first and foremost the story of salvation accomplished in Christ Jesus. Our lives are rightly understood as a matter of formation: shaping hearts and minds in the context of truth, gratitude, and faithful obedience. As families, we are invited to rest in the peace Christ has secured, and from that place of rest to carry out the good and demanding work of teaching our children. May this season renew your confidence in God's faithfulness and strengthen you for the calling entrusted to you.

On behalf of the SHBE board, thank you for your continued support and involvement. We look forward to serving you in the coming year.

Merry Christmas,

Rod Amberson
President, Saskatchewan Home Based Educators

Upcoming Discussion on Post-Secondary Education

Do you have high school aged children? Or are you approaching the high school years? Unfortunately, we are seeing some school districts trying to tell homeschooling families that they can't or shouldn't continue homeschooling through high school. They may try to tell you that your child needs a typical high school diploma in order to open doors for post-secondary. But homeschoolers need to hear other voices who can share about both the opportunities and challenges of preparing homeschoolers for post-secondary.

We are excited to be hosting a round table discussion featuring Peter Stock, President of HSLDA, and our very own Rod Amberson, President of SHBE. This promises to be an evening of learning about alternate paths to preparing your child for post-secondary education.

Join us!

Monday January 19 @ 5:30pm on Zoom
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83374106863?pwd=SFmU6TJSnr7LamxBG74ekLa1MsLjqN.1>

Meeting ID: 833 7410 6863

Passcode: 060098

Convention is Coming to Saskatoon!

Join us February 27-28 at Elim Church in Saskatoon for SHBE's Annual Convention!

Registration is now open at [SHBE.ca](https://shbe.ca) - don't miss out on early registration before January 20th.

In response to numerous requests to once again have convention in Saskatoon, our convention committee worked hard exploring potential venues with sufficient space for all our needs at a reasonable cost. Thank you to Elim Church for sharing your space with us!

Our keynote speaker, Greta Eskridge, is a second-generation home schooler, a former high school English teacher, an author, a speaker and a podcast host. She is a wife of 27 years to her artist husband Aaron, and a mother to 2 teens and 2 young adults. Greta loves encouraging her fellow parents to dive deep into relationship with their children. She is passionate about helping families create connection in a disconnected world, protecting kids from pornography and helping parents create healthy sexual cultures in their homes. Greta has published 3 books with Thomas Nelson: *Adventuring Together*, *100 Days of Adventure*, and *It's Time to Talk to Your Kids About Porn*.

We are pleased to once again offer a **Homeschool Completion Recognition Ceremony**. If you would like your child to participate, please be sure to purchase a 'graduate' ticket when you register for convention.

Know someone that is considering homeschooling? Invite them to join us for free on Friday morning for our **'Can I Really Do This?' Workshop**. This popular homeschooling workshop is the ideal place to start. It's the one workshop that doesn't require registration or payment, but to attend any other parts of the convention, you will need to purchase a ticket.



33rd Annual
Saskatchewan Home
Based Educators
Convention

Feb 27-28, 2026

Elim Church
419 Slimmon Road
Saskatoon, SK

Convention Highlights:

- Plenary Sessions
- Workshops
- Teen Program
- Exhibit Hall
- Homeschool Completion Recognition Ceremony
- and so much more!



Keynote Speaker

Greta Eskridge is a second-generation home schooler, a former high school English teacher, an author, a speaker and a podcast host. She loves encouraging her fellow parents to dive deep into relationship with their children and is passionate about helping families create connection in a disconnected world.

Join Us!

For more information and to register, visit:

https://www.shbe.ca/convention_2026

Facebook  (SHBE) & Instagram  (@shbesask)

Why I Appreciate Classical Education

by Chelsa Budd

Some eight years ago, my younger sister, in beginning the education of her first child, entered the world of classical education through a homeschool cooperative run in her local community. Thus began a slow and steady journey for me too, as I watched and listened to her. Our classical discourse had begun, an adventure into a new world of which I had never before heard, despite two degrees in education. She was Socrates and I, Plato: teacher and student in a dialectic of discovery.

What is classical education? That's a great question and one that belies a simple explanation because it is not just one thing, but a whole thing, something almost lost and yet slowly being recovered into the modern panoply of educational landscapes. How I define classical education today will undoubtedly be refined and sharpened in an answer given 5 or 10 years hence, but that is part of the joy of continuing down this path of discovery and learning in classical homeschooling, not just for my children, but for me.

My aim in providing an answer for my appreciation of classical education is not to give an exhaustive response that touches on every aspect, but to give the reader a few points to ponder. Classical education is not a curriculum but a belief system about education. It stands in contrast to the modern education that has developed over the past 100 or so years - a contrast in its purpose, aims, and outcomes. One must suspend the modern frame of reference and recognize that classical education is not just different practically, but philosophically. It likely won't make sense through a modern lens - not at first, at least.

Classical education is the following:

- An enculturation (training of a whole life) of Christian piety, virtue, and wisdom, what the New Testament calls *paideia*, rather than a passing along of ideas.
- A liberal arts tradition that provides tools and seeds of learning in language and math, with 7 roads referred to in Latin as the trivium and quadrivium: grammar, dialectic, rhetoric; and arithmetic, geometry, music, astronomy, respectively.
- A belief and commitment to education as the shaping of a human soul, centred on wonder and curiosity about God and his world; piety, as a duty to love God and others in the community; and gymnastic and music as a training of bodies and tuning of hearts to a moral imagination, centred on God as the source of all knowledge.
- A high view of western civilization and respect for what has been understood and established in the past, while at the same time recognizing its shortcomings and failures.
- A commitment to history: knowing it, learning from it, gleaning its wisdom, putting the modern world into its context, and recognizing we are connected to it.
- A system that provides the skills of learning, so students know how to learn, in contrast to being told what to learn.

- A belief that freedom in individuals and society is reflected through dialogue, questioning, and the ability to think critically.
- A dedication to reading writers and their ideas from their original (primary) sources, rather than via textbooks, and doing so across disciplines.
- A system whereby knowledge is interconnected across disciplines, because the originator of all truth is God.

The classical student will memorize large amounts of information to grow in *knowledge*, so that later the mind is freed to think critically and ask questions to grow in *understanding*. He will have regular practice with writing well and speaking in front of others so that he can articulate his beliefs for others as he grapples with both sides of ideas and grows in *wisdom*.

One practical application I have come to appreciate with my children is learning about world history and memorizing a timeline of the world. In three years of formally educating my children, I have learned more world history than in my entire lifetime before. We sing and do actions as we learn; it will be in their brains forever (like 90s pop music is in mine).

The freedoms we take for granted in the western world have been shaped by classical thinkers and learners over 1000s of years; we are seeing these freedoms eroded in our current time. A recovery of the classical liberal arts is a move to recovering these again.

I think it's normal to look at classical education and feel overwhelmed. It's a study of God and the world he created. We should be overwhelmed. At the same time, the classical approach gives us a framework for doing so, one that, as much as it is philosophical, is immensely practical. It takes its aim at intentionally shaping the human soul; modern education aims to train a worker. This is not a dig at the latter, but a reflection of the difference in the two. Both are necessary, but when and how this is done is the distinction.

I am thankful for classical education and the community of families we are learning alongside in our classical cooperative. We're getting a robust education - all of us.

Suggestions for further reading:

The Lost Tools of Learning - Essay by Dorothy Sayers (available for free online)

The Core - Leigh Bortins (Sask library system)

The Well-Trained Mind - Susan Wise Bauer (Sask library system)

The Liberal Arts Tradition - Kevin Clark and Ravi Scott Jain

Reflect on Your Homeschool

How are you doing? (*No, really. How are you?*) How is each person in your household doing? Below are some questions that you could use to complete a mid-year reflection. A few of the questions ask you to think ahead so could be useful before purchasing curriculum for next year at the upcoming convention.

THIS YEAR

1. How is each member of your household doing? Consider everyone's physical, mental and spiritual health because learning doesn't happen in a vacuum. Going through a particularly challenging season as a family? This may change when, how or what you choose to teach. Have a child who is really excited about a certain hobby? This too could impact your plans.
2. What has gone well in your homeschool this fall?
3. What was hard this fall?

LOOKING BACK OVER YOUR HOMESCHOOLING YEARS

4. Looking at what you have already done over the years as a family... what rhythms, decisions and accomplishments have positively impacted your family?
5. What has been neglected (even if by necessity), that will need attention in the future?

LOOKING AHEAD

6. Looking ahead 10 years...what would you like your family to say have been the highlights of homeschooling?
7. What would you like to have taught to your children?

SETTING GOALS

8. Recognizing that not everything can be accomplished in a single year, are there any goals you would like to set for future years?
9. Between now and June, what do you need to keep doing? What do you need to change?
10. What needs to be your priority for the coming months?

Need some support? Your SHBE zone reps are here to help. Homeschooling thrives in community and with encouragement to pursue excellence for the sake of the next generation in Saskatchewan and beyond.

Wishing you all the best in 2026!