

# HSLDA Sues New York City Over Abuse of Homeschooling Families

Tonya Acevedo, like many parents, decided to pull her child out of New York City's public school system in order to begin homeschooling.

She followed every requirement to the letter. But about a month after beginning homeschooling, she was confronted by a social worker who came to her door at 7 p.m. one evening because her child was reported as truant from school.

It's becoming a far more frequent problem as more and more families in New York City pull their children out of the failing public school system. The Home School Legal Defense Association's contact attorney for New York, T.J. Schmidt, said he spends much of his time sorting out paperwork issues between homeschooling families and school districts. He said it's hard to understand why, in a city as diverse as New York City, the system in place has not been updated.

That's why HSLDA announced Monday it has filed a lawsuit against the City of New York for what it calls "systematic mistreatment" of homeschooling families. The organization stated in a press release that the city's homeschool infrastructure is "archaic and creates unnecessary burdens for homeschooling families, school officials and social workers."

Through the lawsuit, it seeks to have these issues corrected by requiring bureaucrats to follow the state's homeschool regulations, as well as money damages.

"Family after family has found itself in legal limbo because the central office simply cannot or will not follow the timelines in the regulation," HSLDA Director of Litigation

James Mason said. "More than one homeschooling family told me they had been turned over to [Child Protective Services] because of the office's delayed handling of the homeschooling paperwork."

HSLDA, in the press release, stated that New York City's administrative functions relating to homeschooling for all school districts are located in one office that is understaffed and underfunded. It said the city often requires homeschooling parents to pick up and file paperwork in person, which results in delays and, sometimes, lost paperwork.

"Even though Tanya notified both the central office and the school before she began homeschooling, the school could not flip the switch in the attendance database to turn off her son's 'absences,'" Mason said. "And the central office, always woefully behind, had not gotten around to it yet." {eo}