

# Benicia USD

## Board Policy

Instruction

BP 6158(a)

### INDEPENDENT STUDY

Note: Education Code 51745-51749.6 authorize districts to establish independent study programs to meet the educational needs of students. **Pursuant to Education Code 51745, as amended by AB 130 (Ch. 44, Statutes of 2021), for the 2021-22 school year, all districts are required to offer independent study to meet the educational needs of students. Independent study may be offered as a program within a school, as a charter school, or as an alternative school of choice pursuant to Education Code 58500-58512; see AR 0420.4 - Charter School Authorization, BP 6146.11 - Alternative Credits Toward Graduation, and BP/AR 6181 - Alternative Schools/Programs of Choice.**

Education Code 51747, as amended by AB 130, mandates that the Governing Board adopt a policy with specified **components requirements** as a condition of receiving state apportionments for independent study students. **In addition to meeting the requirements specified by Education Code 51747, board policies must comply with rules and regulations adopted by the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI). Boards are encouraged to review independent study policies as the SPI adopts revised rules to reflect the new requirements of AB 130.**

**Commencing with the 2021-22 fiscal year Guide for Annual Audits of K-12 Local Education Agencies and State Compliance Reporting, the State Controller is required to incorporate verification of the adoption of the policies, including loss of apportionment for independent study for districts found to be noncompliant.**

**In addition, Education Code 51749.5, as added by SB 858 (Ch. 32, Statutes of 2014), mandates that the Board adopt policy with specified components as a condition of offering a program of course-based independent study beginning in the 2015-16 school year.** The mandated components are reflected throughout this policy and the accompanying administrative regulation.

When developing policy on independent study, 5 CCR 11701 requires the Board to consider, in a public hearing, (1) the scope of its existing or prospective use of independent study as an instructional strategy, (2) its purposes in authorizing independent study, and (3) factors bearing specifically on the maximum realistic lengths of assignments and acceptable number of missed assignments for specific populations of students or adult students.

**In the event of a school closure necessitated by an emergency condition pursuant to Education Code 46392, districts must develop a plan for offering independent study to affected students pursuant to Education Code 46393, as added by AB 130. See BP 3516.5 - Emergency Schedules.**

Independent study may be offered as a program within a school, as a charter school, or as an alternative school of choice pursuant to Education Code 58500-58512; see AR 0420.4 - Charter School Authorization, BP 6146.11 - Alternative Credits Toward Graduation; and BP/AR 6181 - Alternative Schools/Programs of Choice.

The Governing Board authorizes independent study as an optional alternative instructional strategy for **eligible** students whose needs may be best met through study outside of the regular classroom setting. Independent study shall offer a means of individualizing the educational plan to serve students who desire a more challenging educational experience, whose health or other personal circumstances make classroom attendance difficult, who are

**INDEPENDENT STUDY** (continued)

unable to access course(s) due to scheduling problems, and/or who need to make up credits or fill gaps in their learning. As necessary to meet student needs, independent study may be offered on a full-time basis or on a part-time basis in conjunction with part- or full-time classroom study.

The Superintendent or designee may provide a variety of independent study opportunities, including, but not limited to, through a program or class within a comprehensive school, an alternative school or program of choice, a charter school, a home-based format, and an online course.

*(cf. 0420.4 - Charter School Authorization)*

*(cf. 6181 - Alternative Schools/Programs of Choice)*

A student's participation in independent study shall be voluntary. **(Education Code 51747, 51749.5)** Students participating in independent study shall have the right, at any time, to enter or return to the regular classroom mode of instruction. ~~(Education Code 51747, 5 CCR 11700)~~

**Independent study for each student shall be under the general supervision of a district employee who possesses a valid certification document pursuant to Education Code 44865 or an emergency credential pursuant to Education Code 44300. Students' independent study shall be coordinated, evaluated, and documented, as prescribed by law and reflected in the accompanying administrative regulation. (Education Code 51747.5)**

Note: Pursuant to Education Code 46300, **as amended by AB 130**, the attendance of students participating in independent study for **three five** or more consecutive school days will be included in computing average daily attendance for apportionment purposes. The following **optional** paragraph is for use by districts that wish to limit independent study to periods of **three five** or more consecutive school days.

The minimum period of time for any independent study option shall be **three five** consecutive school days.

**Written Agreements**

Note: Education Code 51747 **mandates** that the Board adopt a policy providing that a current written agreement (i.e., the "master agreement") will be maintained for each student who participates in independent study for five or more consecutive school days. ~~As amended by SB 858 (Ch. 32, Statutes of 2014), Education Code 51747 provides that no independent study agreement can be valid for longer than one school year.~~

~~In addition, Education Code 51749.5, as added by SB 858, **mandates** that the Board adopt a policy providing that a "learning agreement" be maintained for each student participating in course-based independent study.~~

## INDEPENDENT STUDY (continued)

See the accompanying administrative regulation for required content of these agreements.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that a written master agreement and, as appropriate, a learning agreement for students participating in course-based independent study exist for each participating student as prescribed by law and the accompanying administrative regulation. (Education Code 51747, 51749.5)

The master agreement shall specify the length of time in which each independent study assignment must be completed.

### General Independent Study Requirements

**Note:** Education Code 51745, as amended by AB 130, requires districts to offer independent study for the 2021-22 school year only. Districts may meet the requirement for the 2021-22 school year by contracting with a county office of education or by entering into an interdistrict transfer agreement with another district pursuant to Education Code 46600. In addition, the requirement to offer independent study for the 2021-22 school year may be waived for districts by the county superintendent of schools in the county in which the district is located if the district demonstrates that (1) offering independent study would create an unreasonable fiscal burden on the district or county office of education due to low numbers of students participating or other extenuating circumstances; and (2) the Board does not have the option to enter into an interdistrict transfer agreement with another district or to contract with a county office of education to provide an independent study option.

For single-district counties, the waiver must be granted by the SPI.

**For the 2021-22 school year, the district shall offer independent study, as specified in Education Code 51745, to meet the educational needs of students unless the district has obtained a waiver. (Education Code 51745)**

Parents/guardians of students who are interested in independent study shall contact the Superintendent or designee.

**For the 2022-23 school year and thereafter, the Superintendent or designee may continue to shall offer and approve independent study for an individual student only upon determining that the student is prepared to meet the district's requirements for independent study and is likely to succeed in independent study as well as or better than he/she the student would in the regular classroom setting.**

*(cf. 5147 - Dropout Prevention)*

*(cf. 6011 - Academic Standards)*

*(cf. 6143 - Courses of Study)*

*(cf. 6146.1 - High School Graduation Requirements)*

*(cf. 6146.11 - Alternative Credits Toward Graduation)*

*(cf. 6172 - Gifted and Talented Student Program)*

*(cf. 6200 - Adult Education)*

**INDEPENDENT STUDY (continued)**

Note: Education Code 51747 **mandates** that the Board, in a public hearing, adopt a policy on the maximum length of time, by grade level and type of program, which may elapse between the time an independent study assignment is made and the date by which the student must complete the assignment. 5 CCR 11700 defines "type of program" as the statutory program category for purposes of attendance accounting, such as adult education or continuation high school. In addition, 5 CCR 11701 **mandates** that Board policy reflect an awareness that excessive leniency in the duration of independent study assignments can result in a student falling so far behind **his/her** peers as to increase, rather than decrease, the risk of dropping out of school.

The following paragraph sets one week for all grade levels and types of programs as the maximum length of time an independent study assignment should be completed, and **should be revised to reflect the length of time determined by the Board.** In order to ensure that apportionments are received, the length of time determined by the Board in its policy should be reflected in the district's written agreement. See the section on "Master Agreement Written Agreements" below and in the accompanying administrative regulation.

Because excessive leniency in the duration of independent study assignments may result in a student falling behind **his/her** peers and increase the risk of dropping out of school, independent study assignments **shall be completed no more than one week after** assigned ~~no more than one week~~ for all grade levels and types of program. However, when necessary based on the specific circumstances of the student's approved program, the Superintendent or designee may allow for a longer period of time between the date an assignment is made and when it is due, up to the termination date of the agreement.

Note: Education Code 51747 **mandates** that the Board, in a public hearing, adopt a policy which specifies **the level of satisfactory educational progress and** the number of missed assignments allowed before an evaluation would be required to determine whether it is in a student's best interest to remain in independent study. **The following paragraph specifies a maximum of three assignments and should be revised to reflect the Board's determination of the number of missed assignments that will trigger an evaluation.**

The number of missed assignments that will trigger an evaluation must be included in the student's written agreement; see the accompanying administrative regulation. In order to ensure that apportionments are received, the district's written agreement should also be revised to reflect the number of assignments determined by the Board in its policy.

An evaluation shall be conducted to determine whether it is in a student's best interest to remain in independent study whenever the student **fails to make satisfactory educational progress and/or** misses three assignments. **Satisfactory educational progress shall be determined based on all of the following indicators: (Education Code 51747)**

1. **The student's achievement and engagement in the independent study program, as indicated by the student's performance on applicable student-level measures of student achievement and engagement specified in Education Code 52060**
2. **The completion of assignments, assessments, or other indicators that evidence that the student is working on assignments**
3. **Learning required concepts, as determined by the supervising teacher**

**INDEPENDENT STUDY (continued)**

- 4. Progress towards successful completion of the course of study or individual course, as determined by the supervising teacher**

**Note:** Education Code 51747, as amended by AB 130, mandates the Board to adopt policy that includes the provision of content aligned to grade level standards that is provided at a level of quality and intellectual challenge substantially equivalent to in-person instruction. For high schools, this requirement includes access to all courses offered by the district for graduation and approved by the University of California or the California State University as creditable under the A–G admissions criteria. See BP/AR 6143 - Courses of Study.

**The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that students participating in independent study are provided with content aligned to grade level standards at a level of quality and intellectual challenge substantially equivalent to in-person instruction. For high schools, this shall include access to all courses offered by the district for graduation and approved by the University of California or the California State University as creditable under the A–G admissions criteria. (Education Code 51747)**

**Note:** Education Code 51747, as amended by AB 130, mandates the Board to adopt policy that includes plans, by grade level, to provide students with specified levels of live interaction and/or synchronous instruction as described below and defined in the accompanying administrative regulation. This requirement only applies to students participating in an independent study program for 15 school days or more.

**The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that students participating in independent study for 15 school days or more receive the following throughout the school year: (Education Code 51747)**

- 1. For students in grades transitional kindergarten, kindergarten, and grades 1 to 3, opportunities for daily synchronous instruction**
- 2. For students in grades 4-8, opportunities for both daily live interaction and at least weekly synchronous instruction**
- 3. For students in grades 9-12, opportunities for at least weekly synchronous instruction**

**Note:** Education Code 51747, as amended by AB 130, mandates the Board to adopt policy that includes procedures for tiered reengagement strategies for all students who are not generating attendance for more than three school days or 60 percent of the instructional days in a school week. This requirement only applies to students participating in an independent study program for 15 school days or more.

**INDEPENDENT STUDY (continued)**

**The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that procedures for tiered reengagement strategies are used for all students who are not generating attendance for more than three school days or 60 percent of the instructional days in a school week, or who are in violation of their written agreement. This requirement only applies to students participating in an independent study program for 15 school days or more. The procedures shall include, but are not necessarily limited to, all of the following: (Education Code 51747)**

- 1. Verification of current contact information for each enrolled student**
- 2. Notification to parents/guardians of lack of participation within one school day of the absence or lack of participation**
- 3. A plan for outreach from the school to determine student needs, including connection with health and social services as necessary**

**Note: Education Code 51747 requires districts to hold a student-parent-educator conference as defined by Education Code 51745.5, at specified times, as reflected below and in the accompanying regulation.**

- 4. A clear standard for requiring a student-parent-educator conference to review a student's written agreement and reconsider the independent study program's impact on the student's achievement and well-being**

**Note: Education Code 51747, as amended by AB 130, mandates the Board to adopt policy that includes a plan to expeditiously, and not longer than five instructional days, transition students whose families wish to return to in-person instruction from independent study. This requirement only applies to students participating in an independent study program for 15 school days or more.**

**The Superintendent or designee shall develop a plan to transition students whose families wish to return to in-person instruction from independent study expeditiously, and, in no case later, than five instructional days. This requirement only applies to students participating in an independent study program for 15 school days or more. (Education Code 51747)**

**Note: Education Code 51747, as amended by AB 130, mandates that the Board to adopt a policy providing that a current written agreement (i.e., the "master agreement") will be maintained for each student who participates in independent study and for whom apportionment is claimed. five or more consecutive school days. As amended by SB 858 (Ch. 32, Statutes of 2014), Education Code 51747 provides that no independent study agreement can be valid for longer than one school year. For the 2021-22 school year only, the district is required to obtain a signed written agreement for independent study no later than 30 days after the first day of instruction.**

**INDEPENDENT STUDY** (continued)

In addition, Education Code 51749.5, ~~as added by SB 858,~~ **mandates that the Board to adopt a policy** providing that a "learning agreement" be maintained for each student participating in course-based independent study.

See the **section "Master Agreement" below accompanying administrative regulation** for required content of these agreements.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that a written master agreement ~~and, as appropriate, a learning agreement for students participating in course-based independent study,~~ **exist exists** for each participating student as prescribed by law. (Education Code 51747, 51749.5)

**Note:** For the 2021-22 school year only, the district must provide notice with specified components of the independent study option available through Education Code 51747. Education Code 51747, as amended by AB 130, requires that the written information, in addition to being written in English, be written in the primary language if 15 percent or more of the students enrolled in a district that provides instruction in transitional kindergarten, kindergarten, or any of grades 1 to 12, inclusive, speak a single primary language other than English, as determined from the census data submitted to the California Department of Education.

**The district shall provide written notice to the parents/guardians of all enrolled students of the option to enroll their child in in-person instruction or independent study during the 2021-22 school year. This notice shall be posted on the district's web site, and shall include, at a minimum, information about the right to request a student-parent-educator conference before enrollment, student rights regarding procedures for enrolling, disenrolling, and reenrolling in independent study, and the instructional time, including synchronous and asynchronous learning, that a student will have access to as part of independent study. (Education Code 51747)**

**Note:** Education Code 51747, as amended by AB 130, requires districts to hold a student-parent-educator conference upon the request of a parent/guardian prior to enrollment or disenrollment in independent study. The term student-parent-educator conference is defined in Education 51745.5, and as reflected in the accompanying regulation.

**Upon the request of the parent/guardian of a student, before making a decision about enrolling or disenrolling in independent study and entering into a written agreement to do so, the district shall conduct a telephone, videoconference, or in-person student-parent-educator conference or other meeting during which the student, parent/guardian, or their advocate may ask questions about the educational options, including which curriculum offerings and nonacademic supports will be available to the student in independent study. (Education Code 51747)**

~~Note: Education Code 51747 mandates that the Board, in a public hearing, adopt a policy which specifies the number of missed assignments allowed before an evaluation would be required to determine whether it~~

**INDEPENDENT STUDY (continued)**

~~is in a student's best interest to remain in independent study. The following paragraph specifies a maximum of three assignments and should be revised to reflect the Board's determination of the number of missed assignments that will trigger an evaluation.~~

~~The number of missed assignments that will trigger an evaluation must be included in the student's written agreement; see the accompanying administrative regulation. In order to ensure that apportionments are received, the district's written agreement should also be revised to reflect the number of assignments determined by the Board in its policy.~~

~~An evaluation shall be conducted to determine whether it is in a student's best interest to remain in independent study whenever the student misses three assignments, unless the student's written agreement specifies a lower or higher number of missed assignments based on the nature of the assignments, the total number of assignments, and/or other unique circumstances.~~

**Master Agreement**

Note: Education Code 51747 mandates that, in order to receive apportionments for independent study, the district must adopt and implement policy providing for a signed written independent study agreement which contains the components listed in the following section. Because apportionments are only provided for independent study of ~~five~~ **three** or more consecutive school days pursuant to Education Code 46300, as amended by AB 130, written agreements are required only in such instances.

Education Code 46300.7 states that apportionments shall be received for a student in independent study only if the district receives written permission from the parent/guardian before the independent study begins, specifying the actual dates of participation, methods of study and evaluation, and resources to be made available for the student's independent study. Since all these components are included in the written agreement which the parent/guardian must sign before the commencement of independent study pursuant to Education Code 51747, the parent/guardian's signature on the agreement satisfies the requirement to obtain the parent/guardian's ~~his/her~~ written permission.

However, for the 2021-22 school year the district must obtain a signed written agreement for independent study no later than 30 days after the first day of instruction, pursuant to Education Code 51747, as amended by AB 130.

**For the 2021–22 school year only, the district shall obtain a signed written agreement for independent study no later than 30 days after the first day of instruction.**

A written agreement shall be developed and implemented for each student participating in independent study for ~~five~~ **three** or more consecutive school days. (Education Code 46300, 51747; 5 CCR 11703)

The agreement shall include general student data, including the student's name, address, grade level, birth date, school of enrollment, and program placement.

The independent study agreement for each participating student also shall include, but are not limited to, all of the following: (Education Code 51747; 5 CCR 11700, 11702)

**INDEPENDENT STUDY (continued)**

1. The frequency, time, place and manner for submitting the student's assignments, **reporting the student's academic progress, and reporting communicating with a student's parent/guardian regarding the student's his/her academic progress**
2. The objectives and methods of study for the student's work and the methods used to evaluate that work
3. The specific resources that will be made available to the student, including materials and personnel, and **access to Internet connectivity and devices adequate to participate in the educational program and complete assigned work**

Note: **As described in the section "General Independent Study Requirements" above, pursuant Pursuant to Education Code 51747, the written agreement must contain statements reflecting Board policy pertaining to (1) the maximum length of time, by grade level and type of program, which may elapse between the time an independent study assignment is made and the date by which the student must complete the assignment and (2) the number of missed assignments allowed before an evaluation would be required to determine whether it is in a student's best interest to remain in independent study. See the accompanying Board policy. As amended by AB 130, Education Code 51747 also requires that the written agreement contain a statement of the Board's policy regarding the level of satisfactory educational progress for students participating in independent study.**

4. A statement of the Board's policy detailing the maximum length of time allowed between an assignment and its completion, **the level of satisfactory educational progress**, and the number of missed assignments, ~~by grade level and type of program~~, which will trigger an evaluation of whether the student should be allowed to continue in independent study
5. The duration of the independent study agreement, including the beginning and ending dates for the student's participation in independent study under the agreement, with a maximum of one school year
6. A statement of the number of course credits or, for ~~the an elementary student grades~~, other measures of academic accomplishment appropriate to the agreement, to be earned by the student upon completion
7. **A statement detailing the academic and other supports that will be provided to address the needs of students who are not performing at grade level, or need support in other areas, such as English learners, students with disabilities with an individualized education program or a Section 504 plan in order to be consistent with their program or plan, students in foster care or experiencing homelessness, and students requiring mental health supports.**
87. A statement that independent study is an optional educational alternative in which no student may be required to participate

**INDEPENDENT STUDY (continued)**

98. In the case of a suspended or expelled student who is referred or assigned to any school, class, or program pursuant to Education Code 48915 or 48917, a statement that instruction may be provided through independent study only if the student is offered the alternative of classroom instruction

*(cf. 5144.1 - Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process)*

109. **Before the commencement of independent study, the agreement shall be signed and dated by the student, the student's parent/guardian or caregiver if the student is under age 18 years, the certificated employee responsible for the general supervision of independent study, and all persons who have direct responsibility for providing assistance to the student.**

**However, for the 2021-22 school year, the district shall obtain a signed written agreement for independent study from the student, or the student's parent/guardian if the student is less than 18 years of age, the certificated employee who has been designated as having responsibility for the general supervision of independent study, and all persons who have direct responsibility for providing assistance to the pupil, no later than 30 days after the first day of instruction.**

**Written agreements may be signed using an electronic signature that complies with state and federal standards, as determined by the California Department of Education (CDE). (Education Code 51747)**

The parent/guardian's signature on the agreement shall constitute permission for the student to receive instruction through independent study.

**Course-Based Independent Study**

Note: This section is for districts that provide independent study courses to its students. Education Code 51749.5-51749.6, as amended by AB 130, establish a course-based independent study option that may be offered if certain requirements are met, as described below. ~~As a condition of offering this option,~~ Education Code 51749.5 mandates that boards in the districts ~~district~~ adopt policies ~~policy~~ or regulations that comply with the legal requirements listed in the following section and any applicable regulations adopted by the State Board of Education.

The following paragraph may be revised to reflect the grade levels offered by the district.

The ~~district's district~~ shall offer a course-based independent study program for students in grades K-12 **shall be** subject to the following requirements: (Education Code 51749.5)

1. **A signed learning agreement shall be completed and on file for each participating student pursuant to Education Code 51749.6**

**INDEPENDENT STUDY** (continued)

12. Courses shall be taught under the general supervision of certificated employees who hold the appropriate subject matter credential and are employed by the district or by another district, charter school, or county office of education with which the district has a memorandum of understanding to provide the instruction.

*(cf. 4112.2 - Certification)*

23. Courses shall be annually certified by Board resolution to be of the same rigor and educational quality as equivalent classroom-based courses and to provide intellectual challenge that is substantially equivalent to in-person, classroom-based instruction, and shall be aligned to all relevant local and state content standards. For high schools, this shall include access to all courses offered by the district for graduation and approved by the University of California or the California State University as creditable under the A-G admissions criteria. This certification shall, at a minimum, include the duration, number of equivalent daily instructional minutes for each school day that student is enrolled, number of equivalent total instructional minutes, and number of course credits for each course, consistent with that of equivalent classroom-based courses. The certification shall also include plans to provide opportunities for students in grades transitional kindergarten, kindergarten, and grades 1-3 to receive daily synchronous instruction, for students in grades 4-8, to receive both daily live interaction and at least weekly synchronous instruction, and for students in grades 9-12 to receive at least weekly synchronous instruction.

34. Students enrolled in these independent study courses shall meet the applicable age requirements established pursuant to Education Code 46300.1, and 46300.4, 47612, and 47612.1, and the applicable residency and enrollment requirements established pursuant to Education Code 46300.2, 47612, 48204, and 51747.3.

45. Teachers shall communicate with each student in person, by telephone, or by any other live visual or audio connection at least twice per calendar month to assess whether the student is making satisfactory educational progress. For this purpose, satisfactory educational progress includes, but is not limited to, applicable statewide accountability measures and the completion of assignments, examinations, or other indicators that the student is working on assignments, learning required concepts, and progressing toward successful completion of the course, as determined by the teacher providing instruction.

Written or computer-based evidence of satisfactory educational progress shall be retained for each course and student, including, at a minimum, a grade book or summary document that lists all assignments, examinations, and associated grades for each course.

**INDEPENDENT STUDY (continued)**

**For each student participating in an independent study course, satisfactory educational progress shall be determined based on the student's achievement and engagement in the independent study program, as indicated by their performance on applicable student-level measures of student achievement and student engagement set forth in Education Code 52060, completion of assignments, assessments, or other indicators that evidence that the student is working on assignments, learning of required concepts, as determined by the supervising teacher, and progress toward successful completion of the course of study or individual course, as determined by the supervising teacher.**

If satisfactory educational progress in an independent study class is not being made, the teacher shall notify the student and, if the student is under age 18 years, his/her the student's parent/guardian. The teacher shall conduct an evaluation to determine whether it is in the student's best interest to remain in the course or whether he/she the student should be referred to an alternative program, which may include, but is not limited to, a regular school program. A written record of the evaluation findings shall be a mandatory interim student record maintained for three years from the date of the evaluation. If the student transfers to another California public school, the record shall be forwarded to that school.

**Procedures for tiered reengagement strategies shall be used for all students who are not making satisfactory educational progress in one or more courses or who are in violation of the written learning agreement, as described in the section "Learning Agreement for Course-Based Independent Study" below. These procedures shall include, but are not necessarily limited to, the verification of current contact information for each enrolled student, notification to parents/guardians of lack of participation within one school day of the absence or lack of participation, a plan for outreach from the school to determine student needs, including connection with health and social services as necessary, and a clear standard for requiring a student-parent-educator conference to review a student's written agreement and reconsider the independent study program's impact on the student's achievement and well-being.**

*(cf. 5125 - Student Records)*

56. Examinations shall be administered by a proctor.

67. Statewide testing results shall be reported and assigned to the school at which the student is enrolled and shall be included in the aggregate results of the district. Test results also shall be disaggregated for purposes of comparisons with the test results of students enrolled in classroom-based courses.

*(cf. 6162.51 - State Academic Achievement Tests)*

**INDEPENDENT STUDY (continued)**

78. A student shall not be required to enroll in courses included in ~~this~~ **the course-based independent study** program.

89. The student-teacher ratio in the courses in this program shall meet the requirements of Education Code 51745.6.

910. For each student, the combined equivalent daily instructional minutes for courses in this program and all other courses shall meet applicable minimum instructional day requirements, and the student shall be offered the minimum annual total equivalent instructional minutes pursuant to Education Code 46200-46208.

*(cf. 6111 - School Calendar)*

*(cf. 6112 - School Day)*

1011. Courses required for high school graduation or for admission to the University of California or California State University shall not be offered exclusively through independent study.

1112. A student participating in this program shall not be assessed a fee that is prohibited by Education Code 49011.

*(cf. 3260 - Fees and Charges)*

1213. A student shall not be prohibited from participating in independent study solely on the basis that **the student** ~~he/she~~ does not have the materials, equipment, or ~~Internet~~ access to Internet **connectivity** necessary to participate in the course.

14. A student with disabilities, as defined in Education Code 56026, shall not participate in course-based independent study, unless the student's individualized education program specifically provides for that participation.

15. A temporarily disabled student shall not receive individual instruction pursuant to Education Code 48206.3 through course-based independent study.

16. The district shall maintain a plan to transition any student whose family wishes to return to in-person instruction from course-based independent study expeditiously, and, in no case, later than five instructional days.

**Learning Agreement for Course-Based Independent Study**

**Note: Education Code 51749.6, as amended by AB 130, requires that, before enrolling a student in course-based independent study, the district provide the student and, if the student is less than 18 years of age, the student's parent/guardian, with a written learning agreement that includes specified components.**

**INDEPENDENT STUDY (continued)**

Before enrolling a student in a course within this program, the Superintendent or designee shall provide the student and, if the student is under age 18 years, ~~his/her~~ **the student's** parent/guardian with a written learning agreement that includes all of the following: (Education Code 51749.6)

1. A summary of the district's policies and procedures related to **course-based independent study pursuant to Education Code 51749.5**
2. The duration of the enrolled course(s) and the number of course credits for each enrolled course, consistent with the Board certifications made pursuant to item #2 above
3. The duration of the learning agreement, which shall not exceed a school year or span multiple school years
4. The learning objectives and expectations for each course, including, but not limited to, a description of how satisfactory educational progress is measured and when a student evaluation is required to determine whether the student should remain in the course or be referred to an alternative program, which may include, but is not limited to, a regular school program
5. The specific resources, ~~including materials and personnel~~, that will be made available to the student, **including materials and personnel, and access to Internet connectivity and devices adequate to participate in the educational program and complete assigned work**
6. ~~A statement that the student is not required to enroll in courses in this program~~
6. **A statement detailing the academic and other supports that will be provided to address the needs of students who are not performing at grade level, or need support in other areas, such as English learners, students with disabilities with an individualized education program or a Section 504 plan in order to be consistent with their program or plan, students in foster care or experiencing homelessness, and students requiring mental health supports.**
7. ~~Signatures of the student, the student's parent/guardian if the student is under age 18 years, and all teachers providing instruction~~
7. **A statement that enrollment is an optional educational alternative in which no student may be required to participate. In the case of a student who is suspended or expelled, or who is referred or assigned to any school, class, or program pursuant to Education Code 48915 or 48917, the agreement also shall**

**INDEPENDENT STUDY (continued)**

- include the statement that instruction may be provided to the student through course-based independent study only if the student is offered the alternative of classroom instruction.**
- 8. The manner, time, frequency, and place for submitting a student's assignments, for reporting the student's academic progress, and for communicating with a student's parent/guardian regarding a student's academic progress.**
  - 9. The objectives and methods of study for the student's work, and the methods used to evaluate that work.**
  - 10. A statement of the adopted policies regarding the maximum length of time allowed between the assignment and the completion of a student's assigned work, the level of satisfactory educational progress, and the number of missed assignments allowed before an evaluation of whether the student should be allowed to continue in course-based independent study.**
  - 11. A statement of the number of course credits or, for the elementary grades, other measures of academic accomplishment appropriate to the learning agreement, to be earned by the student upon completion.**
  - 12. Before the commencement of an independent study course, the learning agreement shall be signed and dated by the student, the student's parent/guardian or caregiver, if the student is less than 18 years of age, the certificated employee who has been designated as having responsibility for the general supervision of the independent study course, and all persons who have direct responsibility for providing assistance to the student. For purposes of this paragraph "caregiver" means a person who has met the requirements of Family Code 6550-6552.**

**However, for the 2021–22 school year only, the district shall obtain a signed written agreement for independent study from the student, or the student's parent/guardian if the student is less than 18 years of age, the certificated employee who has been designated as having responsibility for the general supervision of the independent study course, and all persons who have direct responsibility for providing assistance to the pupil no later than 30 days after the first day of instruction.**

**Written agreements may be signed using an electronic signature that complies with state and federal standards, as determined by the CDE. (Education Code 51749.6)**

## **INDEPENDENT STUDY (continued)**

The student's or parent/guardian's signature shall constitute permission for the student to receive instruction through independent study. (Education Code 51749.6)

The Superintendent or designee shall retain a physical or electronic copy of the signed learning agreement for at least three years and as appropriate for auditing purposes. (Education Code 51749.6)

### **Student-Parent-Educator Conferences ~~Teacher Conferences~~**

**Note:** Education Code 51747 and 51749.5, as amended by AB 130, require districts to hold student-parent-educator conferences as defined by Education Code 51745.5, at specified times. See the accompanying regulation for the definitions of student-parent-education conference.

A student-parent-educator conference shall be held as appropriate including, but not limited to, as a reengagement strategy and/or if requested by a parent/guardian prior to enrollment in or disenrollment from independent study. (Education Code 51745.5, 51747, 51749.5)

~~Supervising teachers should establish an appropriate schedule for student teacher conferences in order to help identify students falling behind in their work or in danger of failing or dropping out of school. Teachers are expected to monitor student progress and work closely with each student to determine the amount and type of contact needed for the student to be successful in the program.~~

~~Missing appointments with the supervising teacher without valid reasons may trigger an evaluation to determine whether the student should remain in independent study.~~

### **Home-Based Independent Study**

~~Note: The following section is optional.~~

~~The Superintendent or designee shall encourage parents/guardians desiring to teach their children at home to have their children participate in independent study. Such participation allows continued contact and cooperation between the school system and the home-based student and ensures that the student will be offered a standards-based education substantially equivalent in quality and quantity to the district's classroom instruction.~~

### **Records for Audit Purposes**

**Note:** Education Code 51745.6, 51747, 51747.5, and 51749.5, as amended by AB 130, require, commencing in the 2021-22 fiscal year, the State Controller to incorporate verifications of compliance with specified components of the laws into the Guide for Annual Audits of K-12 Local Education

**INDEPENDENT STUDY (continued)**

**Agencies and State Compliance Reporting to the extent that these verifications are not yet included in the audit guide, with loss of apportionment for independent study for districts found to be noncompliant.**

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that records are maintained for audit purposes. These records shall include, but not be limited to: (Education Code 51748; 5 CCR 11703)

1. A copy of the Board policy, administrative regulation, and other procedures related to independent study
2. A listing of the students, by grade level, program, and school, who have participated in independent study, along with the units of the curriculum attempted and completed by students in grades K-8 and the course credits attempted by and awarded to students in grades 9-12 and adult education
3. A file of all agreements, with representative samples of each student's work products bearing the supervising teacher's notations indicating that **the teacher he/she** has personally evaluated the work or ~~that he/she has~~ personally reviewed the evaluations made by another certificated teacher
4. As appropriate to the program in which the students are participating, a daily or hourly attendance register that is separate from classroom attendance records, maintained on a current basis as time values of student work products judged by a certificated teacher, and reviewed by the supervising teacher if they are two different persons
5. **Appropriate documentation of compliance with the teacher-student ratios required by Education Code 51745.6 and 51749.5 (Education Code 51745.6 and 51749.5)**
6. **Appropriate documentation of compliance with the requirements pursuant to Education Code 51747.5 to ensure the coordination, evaluation, and supervision of the independent study of each student by a district employee who possesses a valid certification document pursuant to Education Code 44865 or an emergency credential pursuant to Education Code 44300 (Education Code 51747.5)**

**Note: Education Code 51747.5, as amended by AB 130, requires districts to document each student's participation in live interaction and synchronous instruction pursuant to Education Code 51747 on each school day, as applicable, in whole or in part, for which independent study is provided. A student who does not participate in independent study on a school day shall be documented as nonparticipatory for that school day. In addition, Education Code 51747.5 requires districts to maintain written or computer-based evidence of student engagement that includes, but is not limited to, a grade book or summary document that, for each class, lists all assignments, assessments, and**

**INDEPENDENT STUDY** (continued)

associated grades. Commencing in the 2021-22 fiscal year, the Guide for Annual Audits of K-12 Local Education Agencies and State Compliance Reporting will incorporate compliance reviews of these requirements.

The district shall document each student's participation in live interaction and synchronous instruction pursuant to Education Code 51747 on each school day, as applicable, in whole or in part, for which independent study is provided. A student who does not participate in independent study on a school day shall be documented as nonparticipatory for that school day. (Education Code 51747.5)

The Superintendent or designee also shall maintain a **written or computer-based record such as a grade book or summary document of student engagement, for each class, of all grades, assignments, and other evaluations issued to assessments** for each student for independent study assignments. (Education Code 51747.5)

*(cf. 3580 - District Records)*

Note: Education Code 51747, as amended by SB 828 (Ch. 29, Statutes of 2016), authorizes specified records to be maintained in an electronic file, as provided in the following paragraph. Pursuant to Education Code 51747, an electronic file includes a computer or electronically stored image of an original document, including, but not limited to, a PDF, JPEG, or other digital file type, that may be sent via fax machine, email, or other electronic means.

The signed, dated agreement, any supplemental agreement, assignment records, work samples, and attendance records may be maintained on file electronically. (Education Code 51747)

**Program Evaluation**

Note: The following **optional** section may be revised to reflect district practice.

The Superintendent or designee shall **may** annually report to the Board the number of district students participating in independent study, the average daily attendance generated for apportionment purposes, student performance as measured by standard indicators and in comparison to students in classroom-based instruction, and the number and proportion of independent study students who graduate or successfully complete independent study. Based on the program evaluation, the Board and Superintendent shall **may** determine areas for program improvement as needed.

*(cf. 0500 - Accountability)*

*(cf. 5121 - Grades/Evaluation of Student Achievement)*

*(cf. 6162.5 - Student Assessment)*

*(cf. 6162.51 - State Academic Achievement Tests)*

*Legal Reference: (see next page)*

## INDEPENDENT STUDY (continued)

### Legal Reference:

#### EDUCATION CODE

17289 Exemption for facilities

#### **41020 Audit guidelines**

41976.2 Independent study programs; adult education funding

42238 Revenue limits

42238.05 Local control funding formula; average daily attendance

44865 Qualifications for home teachers and teachers in special classes and schools

46200-46208 Instructional day and year

46300-46307.1 Methods of computing average daily attendance

#### **46600 Interdistrict attendance computation**

#### **46390-46393 Emergency average daily attendance**

#### **47612-47612.1 Charter school operation**

47612.5 Independent study in charter schools

48204 Residency

48206.3 Home or hospital instruction; students with temporary disabilities

48220 Classes of children exempted

48340 Improvement of pupil attendance

48915 Expulsion; particular circumstances

48916.1 Educational program requirements for expelled students

48917 Suspension of expulsion order

49011 Student fees

51225.3 Requirements for high school graduation

51745-51749.6 Independent study programs

#### **52060 Local control and accountability plan**

52522 Adult education alternative instructional delivery

52523 Adult education as supplement to high school curriculum; criteria

56026 Individuals with exceptional needs

58500-58512 Alternative schools and programs of choice

#### FAMILY CODE

6550-6552 Authorization affidavits

#### CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 5

11700-11703 Independent study

~~19819 State audit compliance~~

#### UNITED STATES CODE, TITLE 20

6301 Highly qualified teachers

#### **6311 State plans**

#### COURT DECISIONS

*Modesto City Schools v. Education Audits Appeal Panel*, (2004) 123 Cal.App.4th 1365

#### EDUCATION AUDIT APPEALS PANEL DECISIONS

*Lucerne Valley Unified School District, Case No. 03-02 (2005)*

Management Resources: (see next page)

**INDEPENDENT STUDY (continued)**

*Management Resources:*

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PUBLICATIONS

Elements of Exemplary Independent Study

California Digital Learning Integration and Standards Guidance, April 2021

EDUCATION AUDIT APPEALS PANEL PUBLICATIONS

Guide for Annual Audits of K-12 Local Education Agencies and State Compliance Reporting

WEB SITES

California Consortium for Independent Study: <http://www.ccis.org>

California Department of Education, Independent Study: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/eo/is>

Education Audit Appeals Panel: <http://www.eaap.ca.gov>

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