



INDEPENDENT STUDY

It is the intent of the Board of Education to provide the highest quality educational experience to meet the individual needs and interests of each student. The Board of Education 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 ~~and to serve students who desire a more challenging~~ *an alternative educational experience, whose health or other personal circumstances make classroom attendance difficult, who are unable to access courses due to scheduling problems, and/or who need to make up credits or fill gaps in their learning*, enabling students to reach curriculum objectives, *meet college and career goals*, and fulfill graduation requirements. 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, a program or class within a comprehensive school, an alternative school or program of choice, a home-based format, a home-hospital program, or online coursework.

A student's participation in independent study shall be agreed upon by both the parent or guardian and the school (mutually voluntary). Students participating in independent study shall have the right, at any time, to enter or return to the ~~regular~~ *traditional* classroom mode of instruction (Education Code 51747; 5 CCR 11700). In addition, the school has the right to deny independent study agreements. *For students with disabilities, as defined in Ed Code 56026, participation in independent study shall be approved only if his/her individualized education program specifically provides for such participation (Ed Code 51745).*

Parents or guardians of students who are interested in independent study shall contact the Superintendent or designee. The Superintendent or designee shall 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 ~~perform in independent study as successfully as he or she would in the regular traditional classroom~~ *meet the performance expectations of the independent study program.*

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

Short-term independent study contracts are to be requested a minimum of five school days prior to the first day of the agreed upon contract.

Written Agreements

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that a written independent study agreement, as prescribed by law, exists for each participating student. *The maximum duration of a written independent study agreement shall be one school year (Education Code 51747).*

The written agreement shall specify the length of time in which each independent study assignment must be completed. 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 no more than one week for all grade levels and types of programs. 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.

Student Evaluation

The Superintendent or designee will establish guidelines and procedures for student evaluation, including, but not limited to, guidelines and procedures for assignment due dates and submission procedures, in-person meetings with teachers and/or counselors, progress monitoring, and grade reporting.

Supervising teachers should establish an appropriate schedule for student-teacher conferences in order to help identify students *who may be* falling behind in their work or *who are* in danger of failing or dropping out of school.

~~When a participating student misses three assignments, an evaluation shall be conducted to determine whether it is in the student's best interest to remain in independent study. However, a student's written agreement may specify a lower or higher number of missed assignments that will trigger an evaluation when the Superintendent or designee determines it appropriate based on the nature of the assignments, the total number of assignments, and/or other unique circumstances.~~

~~Except in unusual circumstances, it is expected that the supervising teacher will meet, either in person or by electronic means, with each participating student at least once a week to discuss the student's progress.~~

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

Program Evaluation

The Superintendent or designee shall 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 determine areas for program improvement as needed.

~~Home-Based Independent Study~~ K-6 Home School

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.

Funding for Traditional Independent Study Programs

Pursuant to Ed Code 51745.5, the district may only claim apportionment credit for independent study based on the time value of student work products as personally judged in each instance by a certificated teacher. The teacher is not required to sign and date the work products (Ed Code 51745.5). The class size ratio limits shall be equivalent to all other educational programs per grade span unless an alternative is collectively bargained. Apportionment may be claimed for students participating in independent study for five or more consecutive school days.

Course-Based Certification

The course-based certification program is an independent study option for students within Irvine Unified School District.

Courses in this program are to be annually certified by the governing board that courses are of the same rigor and educational quality as classroom-based courses and are aligned to all relevant state and local content standards. Courses are taught under the general supervision of an appropriately certified teacher. (SB-858)

Funding for Course-Based Certification

Beginning with the 2015-16 school year, funding for students in course-based certification programs is determined by enrollment in the program, provided that the course is of the same quality, rigor, and instructional minutes as the corresponding classroom course. (SB-858) Class size ratios shall be aligned with the Local Control Funding Formula, equivalent to the average ratio of all other educational programs per grade span, unless an alternative is collectively bargained.

Adopted: October 2, 1990

Revised: October 2, 2012

Revised:

Administrative Regulation 6158

Administrative Procedure 6158.2

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

17289 Exemption for facilities

41976.2 Independent study programs; adult education funding

42238 Revenue limits

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

46300-46307.1 Methods of computing average daily attendance

47612.5 Independent study in charter schools

48204 Residency based on parent employment
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
51225.3 Requirements for high school graduation
51745-51749.3 Independent study programs
52206 Gifted and talented education; use of independent study to augment program
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 Authorization affidavits

CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 5

11700-11703 Independent study

19819 State audit compliance

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:

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PUBLICATIONS

Independent Study Operations Manual, 2000 Edition

Elements of Exemplary Independent Study

Approaches to Satisfying No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 Teacher Requirements for Independent Study in Secondary Schools, January

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>

SB-858 Education Finance: Education Omnibus Trailer Bill (2013-2014)