

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES / INDEPENDENT STUDY

Educational opportunities offered through independent study may include, but are not limited to:

1. Special assignments extending the content of regular courses of instruction
2. Individualized study in a particular area of interest or in a subject not currently available in the regular school curriculum
3. Individualized alternative education designed to teach the knowledge and skills of the core curriculum
4. Continuing and special study during travel

No course required for high school graduation shall be offered exclusively through independent study.

EQUIVALENCY

The district's independent study option shall be substantially equivalent in quality and quantity to classroom instruction, thus enabling students participating in independent study to complete the district's adopted course of study within the customary time frame. Students in independent study shall have access to the same services and resources that are available to other students in the school.

The district shall not provide independent study students and their parents/guardians with funds or items of value that are not provided for other students and their parents/guardians.

ELIGIBILITY FOR INDEPENDENT STUDY

Parents/guardians of students who are interested in independent study should contact the principal or designee. Approval for participation shall be based on the following criteria:

1. Evidence that the student will work independently to complete the program
2. Availability of experienced certificated staff with adequate time to effectively supervise the student

A student's participation in independent study shall be voluntary.

Students participating in independent study must be residents of the local county or an adjacent county.

Full-time independent study shall not be available to students whose district residency status is based on their parent/guardian's employment within district boundaries pursuant to Education Code 48204.

A student with disabilities, as defined in Education Code 56026, shall not participate in independent study unless his/her individualized education program specifically provides for such participation.

A temporarily disabled student shall not receive individual instruction pursuant to Education Code 48206.3 by means of independent study.

No more than 10 percent of the students enrolled in a continuation high school or opportunity school or program, not including pregnant and parenting students who are primary caregivers for one or more of their

children, shall be in independent study at any given time. (Education Code 51745)

Students age 21 or older, and students age 19 or older who have not been continuously enrolled in school since their 18th birthday, may participate in independent study if offered, only through the adult education program for the purpose of enrolling in courses required for a high school diploma by Education Code 51225.3 or by the Board of Trustees.

WRITTEN AGREEMENTS

A written agreement shall be developed for each student participating in independent study for five or more school days.

The written independent study agreement for each participating student shall include, but not be limited to, all of the following:

1. The manner, frequency, time and place for submitting the student's assignments and for reporting his/her 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, including materials and personnel, that will be made available to the student
4. The Board's independent study policy describing the maximum length of time allowed between an assignment and its completion and the number of missed assignments 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 semester, or one-half year if the school is on a year-round calendar
6. A statement of the number of course credits to be earned by the student upon completion
7. A statement that independent study is an optional educational alternative in which no student may be required to participate
8. In the case of a 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
9. A schedule for achieving objectives and completing the agreement and a schedule of conferences between the student and supervising teacher

The curriculum and methods of study specified in the written agreement shall be consistent with Board policy, administrative regulations and procedures for curriculum and instruction.

Before beginning the independent study, each written agreement shall be signed and dated by the student, the parent/guardian or caregiver of the student if the student is under age 18, the certificated employee designated as responsible for the general supervision of independent study, and all persons who have direct responsibility for providing assistance to the student.

The agreement shall state that the parent/guardian's signature confirms his/her permission for the student's independent study as specified in the agreement.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Students participating in independent study shall continuously have the right to enter or return to the regular classroom mode of instruction, including upon termination of the agreement.

Independent study students who are late, miss scheduled conferences or do not submit assigned work on time shall not be reported as tardy or truant. However, the independent study administrator shall promptly and directly address any failure by the student to meet the terms of his/her written agreement. The following supportive strategies may be used:

1. A letter to the student and/or parent/guardian
2. A meeting between the student and the teacher and/or counselor
3. A meeting between the student and the independent study administrator, including the parent/guardian if appropriate
4. An increase in the amount of time the student works under direct supervision

When the student has missed the number of assignments specified in Board policy and the written independent study agreement as precipitating an evaluation, the Superintendent or designee shall conduct an evaluation which may result in termination of the independent study agreement and the student's return to a regular classroom or alternative instructional program.

ADMINISTRATION OF INDEPENDENT STUDY

Each student's independent study shall be coordinated, evaluated and carried out under the general supervision of a certificated employee.

The responsibilities of the independent study administrator shall be to:

1. Ensure that the district's independent study option is operated in accordance with law, Board policy and administrative regulation
2. Approve the participation of students requesting independent study
3. Facilitate the completion of written independent study agreements
4. Approve all credits earned through independent study and forward the information to the appropriate staff so that the information becomes part of the student's record
5. Authorize the selection of staff to be assigned to supervise independent study
6. Supervise any staff assigned to independent study functions who are not regularly supervised by another administrator
7. Complete or coordinate the preparation of all necessary records and reports
8. Establish and maintain in a systematic manner all records required by law, Board policy and administrative regulation
9. Monitor student participation in independent study so that the district stays within prescribed limits and income to the district is maximized

10. Develop and manage the budget for independent study
11. Obtain and maintain current information and skills required for the operation of an independent study strategy that meets established standards for the district's educational programs
12. Assure a smooth transition into and out of the independent study mode of instruction
13. Prepare and submit reports as required by the Board or Superintendent

SUPERVISING TEACHERS

The principal may recommend and the independent study administrator shall approve the assignment of teachers to directly supervise independent study. The teacher may be the student's regular classroom teacher.

The ratio of students to full-time equivalent certificated employees responsible for independent study shall not exceed the equivalent ratio for all other education programs in the district.

The teacher supervising independent study shall:

1. Complete designated portions of the written independent study agreement and add additional information to the written agreement when appropriate
2. Supervise and approve coursework
3. Design all lesson plans and assignments
4. Assess all student work and determine and assign grades or other approved measures of achievement
5. Personally judge the time value of assigned work or work products completed and submitted by the student
6. Select and save with each agreement representative samples of the student's completed and evaluated assignments on not less than a monthly basis, preferably biweekly, and signed or initialed and dated in accordance with item #3 in the section on "Records" below
7. Sign and complete the agreement when the student has reached his/her objectives or the agreement is terminated
8. Maintain a daily or hourly attendance register in accordance with item #4 in the section on "Records" below
9. Maintain any other required records and files on a current basis

RECORDS

For audit purposes, the Superintendent or designee shall maintain the following records:

1. A copy of the Board policy, administrative regulation, and other procedures related to independent study
2. A separate listing of the students by grade level, program and school, who have participated in independent study, identifying course credits attempted by and awarded to students in grades 9-12

as specified in their written agreements

3. A file of all agreements, with representative samples of each student's work products bearing the supervising teacher's signed or initialed and dated notations indicating that he/she has personally evaluated the work or that he/she has personally reviewed the evaluations made by another certificated teacher
4. A daily or hourly attendance register, as appropriate to the program in which the students are participating, separate from classroom attendance records, and maintained on a current basis as time values of student work products are personally judged by a certificated teacher, and reviewed by the supervising teacher if they are two different persons

The Superintendent or designee also shall maintain a record of grades and other evaluations issued to each student for independent study assignments.

Each school shall maintain records for the students at that school.

A written record of the findings of any evaluation conducted after the student has missed the number of assignments specified in Board policy shall be treated as a mandatory interim student record which shall be maintained for three years from the date of the evaluation.