

INDEPENDENT STUDY

Education Code 51745-51749.6 authorizes districts to establish independent study programs 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.

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 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.

A student's participation in independent study shall be voluntary. Students participating in independent study shall have the right, at any time, to enter or return to the regular classroom mode of instruction.

Parents/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 succeed in independent study as well as or better than he/she would in the regular classroom setting.

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

WRITTEN 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.

The master 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 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.

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.

STUDENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

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

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.

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.

LEGAL REFERENCE**EDUCATION CODE**

17289	Exemption for facilities
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
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
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
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CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 5

11700-11703	Independent study
19819	State audit compliance

UNITED STATES CODE, TITLE 20

6301	Highly qualified teachers
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COURT DECISIONS

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

EDUCATION AUDIT APPEALS PANEL DECISIONS

Lucerne Valley Unified

MANAGEMENT RESOURCES:**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PUBLICATIONS**

Elements of Exemplary Independent Study

Approaches to Satisfying No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 Teacher Requirements for Independent Study in Secondary Schools, January 28, 2010

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>