

Instruction

INDEPENDENT STUDY

The Inyo County 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 enabling students to reach curriculum objectives 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.

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. (Education Code 51747; 5 CCR 11700)

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 county office'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.

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

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that a written independent study agreement, as prescribed by law, exists for each participating student. (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~~ two weeks for students in grades 7-8 and three weeks for students in grades 9-12. 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.

When ~~any~~ 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.

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. Except in unusual circumstances, it is expected that the supervising teacher will meet,

Instruction

INDEPENDENT STUDY

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.

The Superintendent or designee shall annually report to the Board the number of students participating in independent study, the average daily attendance generated for apportionment purposes, the quality of these students' work as measured by standard indicators, 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

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.

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

Instruction

INDEPENDENT STUDY

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 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>

BOARD POLICY:

First/Second Reading/Adoption:

May 18, 2010

Revised:

February 8, 2011

Instruction

INDEPENDENT STUDY

Educational Opportunities

Educational opportunities offered through independent study may include, but are not limited to: (Education Code 51745)

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, but not provided as an alternative curriculum
4. Continuing and special study during travel
5. Volunteer community service activities that support and strengthen student achievement

In addition, when requested by the parent/guardian due to emergencies, vacation or illness, independent study may be used on a short-term basis to ensure that the student is able to maintain academic progress in his/her regular classes. (cf. 5113 - Absences and Excuses)

No course required for high school graduation shall be offered exclusively through independent study. (Education Code 51745) (cf. 6146.1 - High School Graduation Requirements)

Equivalency

The county office'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 county office'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 and shall have equal rights and privileges. (5 CCR 11701.5) (cf. 0410 - Nondiscrimination in County Office Programs and Activities)

The county office 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. (Education Code 46300.6, 51747.3)

Eligibility for Independent Study

Provided that experienced certificated staff are available to effectively supervise students in independent study, the Superintendent or designee may approve the participation of a student who demonstrates the motivation, commitment, organizational skills, and academic skills necessary to work independently. A student whose academic performance is not at grade level may participate in independent study only if the school is able to provide appropriate support, such as supplemental instruction, tutoring, counseling, ongoing diagnostic assessments, and/or differentiated materials, to enable the student to be successful. For an elementary student, the Superintendent or designee may consider the parent/guardian's level of commitment to assist the student.

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

Instruction

INDEPENDENT STUDY

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. (Education Code 46300.2, 51747.3)

For a student with disabilities, as defined in Education Code 56026, participation in independent study shall be approved only if his/her individualized education program specifically provides for such participation. (Education Code 51745) (cf. 6159 - Individualized Education Program)

A temporarily disabled student shall not receive individual instruction pursuant to Education Code 48206.3 by means of independent study. (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 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 Governing Board. (Education Code 46300.1, 46300.4)

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 eligible for apportionment credit for independent study. (Education Code 51745)

Written Agreements

A written agreement shall be developed and implemented for each student participating in independent study for five or more school days. (Education Code 46300, 51747)

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 not be limited to, all of the following: (Education Code 51747)

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. **A statement of the Board's policy** detailing 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

Instruction

INDEPENDENT STUDY

6. maximum of one semester, or one-half year if the school is on a year-round calendar
A statement of the number of course credits or, for an elementary student, other measures of academic accomplishment appropriate to the agreement, 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 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)

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. (Education Code 51747)

Monitoring Student Progress

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 the written independent study agreement as precipitating an evaluation, the Superintendent or designee shall conduct an evaluation to determine whether or not independent study is appropriate for the student. This evaluation may result in termination of the independent study agreement and the student's return to a regular school program.

Administration of Independent Study

The responsibilities of the independent study administrator shall be to:

1. Ensure that the county office's independent study option is operated in accordance with law, Board policy and administrative regulation and is substantially equal in quality and quantity to the classroom instruction
2. Obtain and maintain current information and skills required for the operation of an independent study program that meets established standards for the district's educational programs

Instruction

INDEPENDENT STUDY

3. Develop and manage the budget for independent study
4. Authorize the selection of certificated staff to be assigned as independent study teachers
5. Supervise any staff assigned to independent study functions who are not regularly supervised by another administrator
6. Approve or deny the participation of students requesting independent study
7. Facilitate the completion of written independent study agreements
8. Assure a smooth transition for students into and out of the independent study mode of instruction
9. 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
10. Complete or coordinate the preparation of all records and reports required by law, Board policy, or administrative regulation

Assignment and Responsibilities of Independent Study Teachers

Each student's independent study shall be coordinated, evaluated, and carried out under the general supervision of a certificated employee who consents to the assignment. (Education Code 44865, 51747.5; 5 CCR 11700)

The principal and independent study administrator may recommend and the Superintendent shall approve the assignment of teachers to directly supervise independent study and/or work with students on specific subject matter. The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that independent study teachers have access to professional development and support comparable to classroom-based teachers.

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

The responsibilities of 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. Maintain records of student assignments showing the date the assignment is given and the date the assignment is due
5. Provide direct instruction and counsel as necessary for individual student success
6. Regularly meet with the student to discuss the student's progress
7. Judge the time value of assigned work or work products completed and submitted by the student
8. Assess all student work and determine and assign grades or other approved measures of achievement
9. Select and save representative samples of the student's completed and evaluated assignments for each subject signed or initialed and dated in accordance with item #3 in

Instruction

INDEPENDENT STUDY

the section on "Records" below

10. Maintain a daily or hourly attendance register in accordance with item #4 in the section on "Records" below
11. Maintain any other required records and files on a current basis

Records

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 separate listing of the students, by grade level, program and school, who have participated in independent study. This listing shall identify units of the curriculum attempted and units of the curriculum completed by students in grades K-8 and identifying course credits attempted by and awarded to students in grades 9-12 and in adult education, 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 judged by a certificated teacher, and reviewed by the supervising teacher if they are two different persons

The above records shall be maintained for three years, excluding the current fiscal year.

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. (Education Code 51747) (cf. 5125 - Student Records)

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION:

First/Second Reading/Adoption: May 18, 2010
Revised: February 8, 2011