

Instruction

INDEPENDENT STUDY

Educational Opportunities

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
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.

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

INDEPENDENT STUDY (continued)

Eligibility for Independent Study (continued)

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 District or the local county or an adjacent county through an Interdistrict transfer.

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.

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 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 trimester
6. 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

INDEPENDENT STUDY (continued)

Written Agreements (continued)

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

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, the certificated employee designated as responsible for the general supervision of independent study, and all persons who have 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 have the right, continuously, 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 teacher 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 three assignments, 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 other alternative instructional program.

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

INDEPENDENT STUDY (continued)

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, particularly for elementary students.

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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. Assess all student work and determine and assign grades or other approved measures of achievement
4. Personally judge the time value of assigned work or work products completed and submitted by the student
5. 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
6. Sign and complete the agreement when the student has reached his/her objectives or the agreement is terminated
7. Maintain a daily or hourly attendance register in accordance with item #4 in the section on "Records" below
8. 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

INDEPENDENT STUDY (continued)

Records (continued)

2. A separate listing of the students, by grade level, program and school, who have participated in independent study, identifying units of the curriculum attempted and units of the curriculum completed by students in grades K-8, 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 products are personally judged by a certificated teacher, and reviewed by the supervising teacher if they are two different persons

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.