

CLASSIFICATION: Instruction**ADOPTED: 4/28/82****REVISED: 6/11/15****SUBJECT: Independent Study****PAGE: 1 of 7**

The primary objective of alternative schools is to provide a means for students to resume the course of their education and graduate from high school prepared for college, career, and responsible citizenship. It is the intention of the County Board of Education and the County Superintendent of Schools to make available independent study as a continuously voluntary, optional alternative instructional strategy for students enrolled in grades K through 12 in schools and programs operated by the County Superintendent of Schools. Independent study and other rich instructional strategies may be offered to help students recover credits and transition back to their traditional schools.

Students may not be required to participate in independent study and may not be provided instruction through independent study unless classroom instruction has been offered. Students participating in independent study shall have the continuing option of entering or returning to a classroom-based instructional program.

The independent study curriculum shall be substantially equivalent in quality and quantity to classroom-based instruction. Students enrolled in independent study shall have the same access to existing services and resources and the same rights and privileges as all other students. No funds or other things of value shall be provided to independent study students or their parents/guardians that are not provided to students in the classroom-based instructional program or to their parents/guardians.

The County Superintendent of Schools or designee is responsible for administering independent study in a manner that ensures its quality and compliance with State law and regulations and the guidelines presented in this administrative regulation.

Academic Credit

Academic credit, including credit toward high school graduation, may be granted to students participating in independent study. Time requirements will be at least equal to those of the classroom-based instructional program established by the County Superintendent of Schools.

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

Attendance Accounting

Attendance shall be reported in a positive manner using a State-approved attendance accounting system. Accounting procedures shall ensure that the following requirements are met:

1. A written independent study agreement containing all required elements shall be executed for each student participating in independent study.
2. The maximum attendance that may be earned under independent study is limited to the maximum attendance that may be earned by a student in the classroom-based instructional program.
3. Earned days of attendance shall be determined by the time value of completed student work, as judged by the supervising teacher.
4. Only full days of attendance shall be counted.
5. No attendance shall be claimed for students enrolled in independent study for fewer than five consecutive days.
6. The independent study average daily attendance (ADA)-to-teacher ratio shall not exceed the ratio described in Education Code section 51745.6(a).

Coordination, Evaluation and Supervision

1. The independent study instructional strategy shall be coordinated, evaluated, and under the supervision of the responsible principal/site administrator.

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2. The independent study agreement for an individual student shall be coordinated, evaluated, and under the general supervision of a certificated employee of the County Superintendent of Schools, designated as the supervising teacher. The supervising teacher shall be responsible for continuing oversight of the study design, implementation plan, allocation of resources, and evaluation of student progress and for determining the time values of student work products.

Grades and Progress Reports

Grades shall be given for independent study. Grades have no direct relationship to the attendance credit earned.

Periodic written progress reports shall be prepared by the supervising teacher, shared with the student and parent/guardian, and placed in the student's permanent record.

Eligibility for Independent Study

1. Students who are referred or assigned to any school or program operated by the County Superintendent of Schools pursuant to Education Code sections 48915 or 48917, may be provided instruction through independent study only after the student is offered the alternative of classroom instruction.
2. Independent study may be the most appropriate instructional strategy for students at any level of educational achievement. Any student enrolled in a classroom-based instructional program operated by the County Superintendent of Schools is eligible for consideration to participate in independent study if enrollment is deemed appropriate by the principal/site administrator. Approval of participation shall include an evaluation of each student's academic record and evidence of his/her ability to work independently.
3. Students who expect to be absent from a classroom-based instructional program for five or more consecutive school days, due to an emergency, vacation, or illness, may be provided instruction through short-term independent study.

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4. Students who are age 19 or 20 must have been continuously enrolled in grades K-12 since their 18th birthday to be eligible to participate in independent study.
5. No student with exceptional needs, as defined in Education Code section 56026, may participate in independent study unless his/her individualized education program (IEP) specifically provides for that participation. Students with an active IEP may be enrolled to age 22.
6. No temporarily disabled student who qualifies for home or hospital instruction may receive individual instruction, as defined in Education Code section 48206.3, through independent study.
7. Students participating in independent study must be residents of San Diego County or an adjacent county.

Written Agreements

A written independent study agreement shall be executed for each participating student prior to the commencement of independent study. This agreement shall be dated and signed by the student, the student's parent/guardian, the supervising teacher, any other certificated teacher delivering instruction to the student, and all persons who have direct responsibility for providing assistance to the student.

The curriculum and methods of study specified in the written agreement shall be consistent with those established for students in the classroom-based instructional program.

Elements of the written agreement shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Specific course title(s), description of course objectives, method of study, and the means to be used to evaluate the student's work.

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2. The duration of the independent study agreement, including specific beginning and ending dates for the student's participation. No independent study agreement shall be valid for any period longer than one year.
3. The number of course credits, or for an elementary student, other measures of academic accomplishment appropriate to the agreement, to be earned by the pupil upon completion of the independent study agreement.
4. The manner, time, frequency, and place for submitting student assignments and reporting progress.
5. The specific resources, including materials and services, available to the student.
6. Notifications of the following:
 - a. For all grade levels, the maximum length of time between the date assignments are made and the date by which the student must complete the assigned work shall be no more than one semester or six months.
 - b. Failure to complete four consecutive independent study assignments will initiate an evaluation to determine whether the student shall remain in independent study or be returned to a classroom-based program.
 - c. Independent study is an optional educational alternative in which no student may be required to participate.
 - d. One or more classes may be added to the independent study agreement during the term of the agreement if a student needs a course adjustment based on ability level or completes pre-determined classes before the ending date of the agreement.

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- e. Instruction may be provided through independent study to students referred pursuant to Education Code section 48915 or 48917 only if the student is offered the alternative of classroom-based instruction.

Records

For audit purposes, the following records shall be retained for three years excluding the current fiscal year:

1. Copies of the Board policy, administrative regulation, and procedures related to independent study.
2. A list of independent study teachers and their assignments.
3. A list of students, by grade level and program or school, who have participated in independent study.
4. An attendance register separate from that used for classroom-based attendance 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 individuals.
5. Files for each student that include the following:
 - a. Signed independent study written agreement(s) identifying units of the elementary curriculum undertaken and completed or high school course credits attempted and awarded. The agreement may be maintained electronically.
 - b. Student assignment and work record(s).
 - c. Representative samples of original, completed student work.

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- d. Teacher records of apportionment/attendance, credits, grades, and other evaluations of independent study assignments and student achievement.
- e. Any evaluations conducted to assess the student's continued participation in the independent study option. If the student transfers to another California public school, evaluations shall be forwarded to that school.

Board Policy: 1312, 6158, 6141

Administrative Regulation: 1312.4, 5125, 6161, 6146

Derivation: Former Administrative Regulation, Adopted 4/28/82, Amended 10/18/94. Renamed, Amended, and Renumbered 6158, 11/8/95. Amended 3/24/03, 7/6/12, 6/11/15.

Legal References: Education Code

1983, 44809, 44865, 46300 et seq., 48206.3, 48915, 48917, 51745 - 51749.3

California Code of Regulations, Title 5

432, 11700 – 11703, 16023 – 16028, 19819

Court Decisions

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

Management Resources: California Consortium for Independent Study: <http://www.ccis.org>
Compliance Manual 2014-2015, California Consortium for Independent Study, 2014