

Instruction

INDEPENDENT STUDY

AR 6158

Definitions:

Independent study is a supplement to, or an alternative for, the regular classroom program of instruction. It is a learning experience, which allows a student to develop competencies as an individual, but with the help and supervision of others.

Independent study may provide opportunities for:

1. In-depth study;
2. The individual pursuit of educational interests on a supervised basis;
3. Students who have experienced difficulty in adapting to the regular curriculum;
4. Students with compelling scheduling and/or attendance problems;
5. Individualized study in a subject not currently available in the regular school curriculum;
6. Study during travel;
7. Study through volunteer community service.

General Provisions

No student shall be required to participate in independent study.

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

Students enrolling 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.

No more than 10 percent of the students enrolled in continuation or opportunity education may be in independent study at any given time.

Independent Study may be assigned for a temporarily disabled student if the student is able to complete a full day of assigned work and if efforts to obtain a home teacher have been unsuccessful. Final approval for the use of Independent Study as a means to support a student assigned to Home & Hospital will rest with the Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services.

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

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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 through the adult education program.

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

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Criteria for Participation

Students who are interested in independent study should contact their school principal or his/her 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 supervise the student effectively.

Written Agreements and Assignments

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

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

1. The manners, frequency, times 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 staff, which will be made available to the student.
4. The district'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. No long-term independent study agreement shall be valid for any period longer than one semester, or one-half year for a school on a year-round calendar.
6. A statement of the number of course credits or, for the elementary grades, other measures of academic accomplishment appropriate to the agreement, to be earned by the student upon completion.

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7. A statement that independent study is an optional educational alternative in which no student may be required to participate. In the case of a student who is referred or assigned to any school, class or program pursuant to Education Code 48915 or 48917, the agreement shall also include the statement that instructions may be provided through independent study only if the student is offered the alternative of classroom instruction.

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

The agreement also may include a schedule for achieving objectives and completing the agreement and a schedule of conferences between the student and supervising teacher.

Before beginning the independent study, each written agreement shall be signed and dated by the student, the parent/guardian or caregiver of the student under 18 years of age, 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 confers his/her permission for the student's independent study as specified in the agreement.

Records

District records shall identify all students participating in independent study and shall specify the grade level, program placement, and school in which each of these students is enrolled.

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

Records maintained for auditing purposes shall be the responsibility of the school and shall include:

1. A copy of the Board policy, administrative regulation, and procedures related to independent study.
2. A separate listing of students and adult education 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 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 or adult education student's work products bearing signed or initialed and dated notations by the supervising teacher 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 or adult education students are enrolled, separate from classroom

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attendance records, and maintained on a current basis as time values of student or adult education work products are personally judged by a certificated teacher, and reviewed by the supervising teacher if they are two different persons.

The district also shall maintain a record of grades and other evaluations issued to each student for independent study assignments. This record shall include all progress reports or drop notices sent to students who do not complete an Independent Study Contract.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

1. Students participating in independent study shall have the same right to all existing services and resources of the school in which the student is enrolled, as do all other students enrolled in the school.
2. Students participating in independent study shall have the right, continuously, to enter or return to the regular classroom mode of instruction.
3. 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.
 - a) A letter to the student and/or parent/guardian, as appropriate.
 - b) A special meeting between the student and the teacher and/or counselor.
 - c) A meeting between the student and the administrator, including the parent/guardian, if appropriate.
 - d) An increase in the amount of time the student works under direct supervision.

When the student has missed three consecutive independent study assignments the designated site administrator shall conduct an evaluation which may result in termination of the independent study agreement, with the student's return to a regular classroom or alternative instructional program.

Supervising Teachers

The independent study administrator shall approve the assignment of any teachers who directly supervise independent study on a regular basis. The principal may recommend teachers or students for independent study. The teacher may be the student's regular classroom teacher, particularly for elementary students.

Independent study teachers shall:

1. Complete designated portions of the written agreement and add additional information to the written agreement when appropriate.

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2. Supervise and approve coursework.
3. Design all lesson plans.
4. Write the assignments for students.
5. Assess all student work.
6. Personally judge the time value of assigned work or work products completed and submitted by the student.
7. 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.
8. Sign and complete the agreement when the student has reached his/her objectives or the agreement is terminated.
9. Maintain any required records and files on a current basis.

When appropriate, independent study teachers shall determine and assign grades or other approved measure of achievement.

Administration of Independent Study

The responsibilities of the independent study administrator shall be as follows:

1. Ensuring that the district's independent study option is operated in accordance with law, Board policy and administrative regulation.
2. Approving the participation of students requesting independent study for a period exceeding five school days.
3. Facilitating the completion of independent study written agreements.
4. Approving all credits earned through independent study supervised at a location apart from the student's regular school and forwarding the information to the appropriate staff so that the information becomes part of the student's record.
5. Authorizing the selection of staff who are assigned to supervise independent study.
6. Supervising any staff assigned to independent study functions who are not regularly supervised by another administrator.
7. Completing or coordinating the preparation of all necessary records and reports.
8. Establishing and maintaining in a systematic manner all records required by law, Board policy and administrative regulation.

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1. Monitoring enrollment in independent study to stay within prescribed limits and to maximize income to the district without compromising the educational quality of independent study.
2. Developing and managing the budget for independent study.
3. Obtaining and maintaining current information and skills required for the operation of an independent study strategy that meets established standards for the district's educational programs.
4. Preparing and submitting reports as required by the Board or Superintendent.
5. Assuring a smooth transition into and out of the independent study mode of instruction.

Original implementation: June 1, 1981

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