Board Policy

Instruction

INDEPENDENT STUDY

Note: Education Code 51745-51749.3 authorize districts to establish independent study programs to meet the educational needs of students. Independent study may be offered as a charter school, a program within a school, or an alternative school of choice pursuant to Education Code 58500-58512; see AR 0420.4 - Charter Schools and BP/AR 6181 - Alternative Schools/Programs of Choice.

When developing policy on independent study, 5 CCR 11701 requires the Governing Board to consider, in a public hearing, (1) the scope of its existing or prospective use of independent study as an instructional strategy, (2) its purposes in authorizing independent study, and (3) factors bearing specifically on the maximum realistic lengths of assignments and acceptable number of missed assignments for specific populations of students or adult students.

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 and enabling students to reach curriculum objectives. 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.

(cf. 0420.4 - Charter Schools)
(cf. 6011 - Academic Standards)
(cf. 6143 - Courses of Study)
(cf. 6146.1 - High School Graduation Requirements)
(cf. 6181 - Alternative Schools/Programs of Choice)
(cf. 6200 - Adult Education)

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 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.

The minimum period of time for any independent study option shall be five consecutive school days.
INDEPENDENT STUDY (continued)

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that a written independent study agreement, as prescribed by law, exists for each participating student. (Education Code 51747)

Independent Study contracts shall be for a minimum of five days. Assignments must be completed and handed in within five (5) days of the end of the contract. 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 three weeks for all grade levels and types of program. However, when necessary based on the specific circumstances of the student's approved program, the Director of Pupil Services 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 a 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.

Note: The remainder of this section is optional and may be revised to reflect district practice.

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, either in person or by electronic means, with each participating student at least once a week to discuss the student's progress.

(cf. 5147 - Dropout Prevention)

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.
INDEPENDENT STUDY (continued)

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

EDUCATION AUDIT APPEALS PANEL DECISIONS
Lucerne Valley Unified School District, Case No. 03-02 (2005)

(Legal Reference, continued next page)
INDEPENDENT STUDY (continued)

Legal Reference, continued

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

Policy
adopted: 3/4/2008
revised: 12/10/2013

SAUGUS UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
Santa Clarita, California