

**INDEPENDENT STUDY/INDIVIDUALIZED
ARRANGEMENTS (Continued)**

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 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 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.

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 for all grade levels and types of program. 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 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.

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,

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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.

The governing board of a school district which maintains an elementary school, secondary school, an opportunity school/program, a continuation school, summer school, a work experience program, or a special education program may adopt rules and regulations which authorize any pupil enrolled to enroll in a voluntary independent study program of the district, except as provided in subdivision.

Not more than 10 percent of the pupils enrolled in an opportunity school/program or a continuation high school shall participate in an independent study pursuant to this article.

The primary goal of Independent Study is to offer a means of individualizing the educational program for students whose needs may best be met through study outside of the regular classroom setting. No course required for high school graduation shall be offered exclusively through Independent Study. (Education Code 51745).

Program Administration

Independent Study Program is a district program under the direction of the Assistant Superintendent for Educational Services. However, the Tracy Adult School principal shall serve as the coordinator for the Independent Study Program. His/her responsibilities shall include:

1. Making sure that the program adheres to district policy, regulations, and state law.

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2. Approving the enrollment of all students and facilitating the completion of independent study agreements.
3. Approving all independent study credits and forwarding this information to the appropriate school personnel so that it becomes a permanent part of the student's records.
4. Authorizing Independent Study teachers and other personnel involved with the program.
5. Completing or coordinating all necessary records and reports including submitting to the district's finance division all necessary enrollment and attendance information.
6. Monitoring enrollment to stay within prescribed caps and maximizing income to the district.
7. Developing and managing the Independent Study Program budget.

An independent study program shall be coordinated, evaluated, and under the general, but not necessarily immediate, supervision of an employee of the district who possess a valid certification document.

No individual with exceptional needs may be enrolled in an independent study program, unless his or her individualized education program specifically provides for such enrollment.

The nature, manner of conducting, and location of any independent study program shall be determined by the school district pursuant to rules and regulations adopted by the State Board of Education. The school district or county board shall ensure that the components of each individual study program for each pupil shall be set out in writing.

A pupil enrolled in an independent study program shall not be credited with more than one day of attendance per calendar day.

Independent study shall be based on a written agreement signed by the student, the student's parents or legal guardian, the certificated person providing general supervision, and any other person who has direct responsibility to provide instructional assistance to the student.

This agreement shall include but not be limited to:

1. The duration of the independent study agreement.
2. The manner, frequency, time and place of reporting progress.
3. The title and statement of the major objectives of the course of study to be undertaken.

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4. The method of evaluation.
5. A statement of the number of credits to be earned upon completion of the agreement.

The student and parents or guardian of a minor student shall meet with the supervising staff member to review rules and regulations and to develop and sign the contract. The contract is then sent to the parent/guardian; one copy is retained by the Independent Study coordinator and one copy is retained by the supervising staff member.

Academic Performance and Attendance Requirements

The following rules of attendance shall apply with each Independent Study Agreement:

1. Every Independent Study student shall meet with the school district representative named in his or her written agreement a minimum of one hour per week, at the site specified in the agreement, unless other specific contacts are described in the agreement to accommodate a student's travel away from the area where the customary contact would occur or other officially recognized reason. Further, each student shall be responsible for not less than twenty (20) hours of study per calendar week.
2. If a student fails to meet the terms and conditions of his or her written agreement including the specified contact(s) with his/her school district representative, he/she shall be notified in writing. After a second such incident, a second letter shall be sent to the student and parent(s) and failure to respond to this letter within one week without acceptable justification may result in his/her ISP agreement termination or "drop."
3. Two significant performance failures as described in item 2 above within 90 calendar days may constitute a "drop". Illness, medical, or dental appointments, medical emergencies, or a death in the family would constitute satisfactory justification for failure to keep a scheduled appointment. Illness and other conditions which constitute an "excused absence" for students in classroom-based schooling do not count for "excused absences" in the ISP positive attendance accounting process.
4. Appointments or student/teacher contact shall be kept regularly. Missed appointments shall be made up within one week.

Curriculum

The academic curriculum for Independent Study is individualized for each student participating in the program. Each student is tested, placed, and encouraged to progress from where he is to a higher level. A variety of instructional materials are utilized to meet the individual needs of students.

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The academic curriculum is designed to upgrade basic skills, complete high school graduation requirements, or pass the GED or California High School Proficiency Exam. Students will be graded by the Independent Study teacher at the regular grading intervals (1st quarter, 2nd quarter, 3rd quarter, 4th quarter). Students will receive credits commensurate with the time in the program and the amount of work successfully completed in one to five unit increments.

The following is a list of subject areas covered through the Independent Study Program:

1. Math
2. Science
3. Social Studies
4. English
5. Physical Education (max 40 credits)
6. Fine Arts
7. Elective Courses
8. Vocational Classes (i.e. typing or accounting)
9. Work Experience (maximum of 40 credits)

Recordkeeping

The supervising staff member shall maintain a file for each student on Independent Study. This file shall contain a copy of the contract, a written curriculum plan, and an attendance/time log. An identical file shall be maintained by the Independent Study Coordinator.

The supervising staff member shall report attendance to the Independent Study Clerk once per week or every 20 hours. Should a student miss an appointment, the supervising staff member shall send a notice of unsatisfactory progress to the parent with one copy to the Independent Study Coordinator and one copy to the student's counselor. Two consecutive missed appointments may cause termination of the contract.

In addition to attendance, the supervising staff member shall maintain a record of student progress by completing the student progress report once per week or every 20 hours. One copy of the progress report will remain with the supervising staff member and one copy will be forwarded to the Independent Study Coordinator, and one copy will be forwarded to the student's counselor.

To foster each student's success in independent study, the Board establishes the following maximum lengths of time, which may elapse before an independent study assignment is due:

1. Special assignments extending the content of regular course of instruction:

Students in grades K-3:	two weeks
Students in grades 4-8:	four weeks

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Students in grades 9-12: six weeks

2. Continuing and special study during travel:

Students in grades K-3: three weeks

Students in grades 4-8: six weeks

Students in grades 9-12: ten weeks

3. Individualized alternative education designed to teach the knowledge and skills of core curriculum.

Students in grades K-3: one week

Students in grades 4-8: two weeks

Students in grades 9-12: three weeks

When circumstances justify a longer time, the Superintendent or designee may honor the request of an individual student or his/her parent/guardian to extend the maximum length of an assignment as follows:

Students in grades K-3: four weeks

Students in grades 4-8: eight weeks

Students in grades 9-12: twelve weeks

When any student fails to complete two consecutive independent study assignments, the Superintendent or designee shall conduct an evaluation to determine whether it is in the student's best interest to remain in independent study. Evaluation findings shall be kept in the student's permanent record. (Education Code 51747).

Termination of Agreement

An Independent Study agreement may be terminated for the following reasons:

1. Failure to report to two consecutive appointments with the supervising staff member.
2. Failure to complete at least 20 hours of homework per week.
3. Any violation of the Student Conduct or Discipline Policy of the Districts' schools.

When an agreement is terminated, the supervising staff member shall mail a drop notice to the parent/guardian. A copy of the drop notice shall be sent to the Independent Study coordinator and a copy sent to the student's counselor.

Completion of Agreement

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When a student has successfully completed the Independent Study agreement, the supervising staff member shall indicate the units earned on the agreement form, sign the agreement, and forward the agreement to the Independent Study Coordinator. The Independent Study Coordinator shall review the completed contract and forward one copy to the school registrar and one copy to the student's counselor. The Independent Study Coordinator shall enter the units earned into the student's record. The agreement shall be retained in the student's cumulative record.

Independent Study Program Flow Chart – K-8/(Continuation School Students)

1. Parent petitions school principal or designee for entrance into the program
2. Coordinator identifies supervising staff member who then develops curriculum for the contract.
3. If petition is denied, parent can institute appeal process to the Director of Student Services.

Independent Study Program Flow Chart – 9-12

1. Student/parent petitions to counselor for entrance into the program.
2. Counselor reviews records, determines eligibility, and determines area of study.
3. Petition sent to the District Student Assistance Team for review and parent notification.
4. If petition is denied, parent can institute appeal process to the Director of Student Services
5. Coordinator identifies supervising staff member who then develops curriculum for the contract.
6. Student/parent meet with supervising staff member to review rules and to develop and sign the agreement. The agreement will be sent to coordinator for review and signature.
7. Student begins work – meets with supervising staff member at least once per week – supervising staff member monitors attendance and progress, makes regular reports, and contacts parents if problems arise.
8. When the agreement is completed, the supervising staff member assigns the units, signs the contract, and forwards to coordinator for review.
9. Coordinator reviews the agreement and enters units into the student's record. The agreement is retained in student's cumulative record.

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Independent Study Program Flow Chart/(Students over 18 years of age)

1. Student submits a request for Independent Study to the program coordinator.
2. Once the student is accepted into the program, the Independent Study Coordinator identifies supervising staff member, who then develops curriculum for the agreement.
3. Student meets with supervising staff member to review rules and to develop and sign the agreement. The agreement will be sent to coordinator for review and signature.
4. Students begins work – meets with supervising staff member at least once per week- supervising staff member monitors attendance and progress, and makes regular reports.
5. When the agreement is completed, the supervising staff member assigns the units, signs the agreement, and forwards to coordinator for review.
6. Coordinator reviews agreement and enters units into the student’s record. The agreement is retained in student’s cumulative record.

Exit from the Independent Study Program

1. Each student in grades K-8 and Continuation Education students will be formally reviewed at the end of each semester by the site principal or designee to assess his/her academic progress and determine if Independent Study is the most appropriate educational program for the student.
2. Each student in grades 9-12 will be formally reviewed at the end of each semester by the District Student Assistance Team to assess his/her academic progress and determine if Independent Study is the most appropriate educational program for the student.
3. The Student Assistance Team will discuss each case and make a group recommendation to the Coordinator of the Independent Study Program. In turn, the Coordinator for Independent Study will determine if Independent Study is the appropriate placement for the student. If the parent/guardian disagrees with the decision made by the Coordinator of Independent Study, then he/she may appeal to the Director of Student Services. The decision of the Director of Student Services shall be final.

Admission To The Independent Study Program:

Consistent with the California Education Code, the following process shall be followed for Independent Study for all schools within the District high schools.

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1. The parent/guardian submits request to principal (K-8) who contacts the Independent Study Director.
2. The parent or guardian and the student (9-12) shall submit a request for participation in the Independent Study Program to the student's counselor.
3. The counselor shall review the student's records, determine the feasibility of Independent Study and submit the student's request to the District Student

Assistance Team. The Student Assistance Team will consist of an administrator for District high schools, the student's grade level counselor, the Tracy Adult School Principal, and other support staff as needed.

The parent/guardian will be notified of the Student Assistance Team meeting to consider placement of the student in Independent Study and the opportunity for the parent/guardian to be present at the meeting.

1. The Alternative Education Committee will review each student's request and determine if Independent Study is the appropriate program for the student. Typically, students in grades 9-12 must be enrolled in a comprehensive high
2. School for at least one semester before being considered for the District's Independent Study Program. Exceptions to the one semester enrollment provision will be considered on an individual case by case bases. Entrance criteria for Independent Study shall include, but is not limited to one or more of the following:
 - a. Inappropriate behavior as documented by administrative records of disciplinary referrals and/or suspensions.
 - b. A pattern of irregular attendance as documented by school attendance records.
 - c. Habitual truancy
 - d. Failing grades as documented by academic records (deficiency notices, report cards, transcripts).
 - e. Temporary or short term medical problems not best served by home reaching.
 - f. A genuine economic hardship within the student's immediate family that would prevent him/her from attending school on a full-time basis.

Travel Study

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1. Travel study is a short-term independent study agreement arranged on the school site by petitioning the counselor or principal.
2. Travel study students request work from their regular teachers and must submit acceptable work to receive regular classroom credit.
3. Travel is for four school weeks (20 days) or less, unless special circumstances exist in which the principal extends the agreement for additional 10 school days.
4. Travel study must be arranged for in advance or absence.

Legal References:

EDUCATION CODE

11700	Regulations on Independent Study
11701	District Responsibilities
11702	Agreements
11703	Records
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	Method for 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	Instituting an Independent Study Program
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

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CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS, Title 34

300.340-349	Individualized education programs
300.503	Independent educational assessment
300.533	Placement procedures
300.550-553	Least restrictive environment; alternative placements; Placement; non-academic settings

ADMINISTRATIVE CODE, TITLE 5

3022	Assessment plan
3023	Assessment
3024	Transfer
3040	Individualized education program implementation
3043	Extended school year

FAMILY CODE

6550	Authorization affidavits
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CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 5

11700-11703	Independent study
19819	State audit compliance

COURT DECISIONS

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>