

POLICY ————— **PEQUANNOCK TOWNSHIP**
BOARD OF EDUCATION
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2320 – INDEPENDENT COURSE OF STUDY

The Pequannock Township Board of Education, recognizing the need to provide educational alternative opportunities as part of the district’s instructional program, authorizes students to participate in Independent Course of Studies. Independent Course of Study options include: independent honors course of study, structured learning experiences and curriculum extensions virtually or at a college/university not offered within the current Pequannock Township Program of Studies, or opportunities to study abroad at a high school or college. Independent Course of Study will be aimed for promotion and graduation purposes in accordance with the requirements of N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1 (a) ii.

I. INDEPENDENT HONORS COURSE OF STUDY

Independent Honors Course of Study will only be considered as an alternate to taking the honors course due to irresolvable schedule conflicts. Independent Honors Course of Study cannot be in lieu of a scheduled course of instruction and will be in conjunction with the student’s placement in an academic level of instruction in their current schedule for the program of study. Students may elect to participate in this Independent Honors Course of Study based on the following requirements.

1. Students must have been recommended for the honors level placement based on the established rubric for the course of study. Parental waivers are not considered for placement into the Independent Honors Course of Study.
2. Students interested in pursuing the Independent Honors Course of Study must submit the completed, signed application to the supervisor of guidance prior to the start of the academic school year.
3. Students must maintain a 93% cumulative average in their academic course of study throughout the year in order to be considered for the weighting and course of study designation of honors on their final transcript. This cumulative average will be checked on marking period report cards.
4. Student’s academic level assessments and report card grades will reflect the progress at the academic level throughout the year. Independent study work will be assessed using the honors level course of study rubrics and not reflected until a final determination is made at the conclusion of the school year. If such a determination is made, the final transcript will reflect the honors course designation and the GPA will be adjusted to reflect the weighted average.
5. Students and parents/legal guardians must agree to the conditions set forth by the Independent Honors Course of Study program as described in the district Independent Honors Course of Study contract. This contract must be signed by all parties including the student, parents, teacher, principal and director of guidance.

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6. Students must recognize that an Independent Honors Course of Study program and appropriate assessment shall be administered to specific objectives aimed at meeting or exceeding the Core Curriculum Content Standards. It is the student's responsibility to research and extend their learning to meet these standards. No additional instruction will be scheduled for the student outside their academic level course of study.
7. All supplemental work must be completed outside the academic course of study and students must participate completely during their scheduled program of study. It is the independent student's responsibility to arrange, gather and submit all necessary work to the teacher on the time schedule set forth. Late work will be considered a withdrawal from the Independent Honors Course of Study.
8. Independent Honors Course of Study work must be completed within the Pequannock Township School District Board approved academic calendar.
9. Administration, teachers, guidance counselors, students and parents reserve the right to end this Independent Honors Course of Study at any time. Withdrawal from this program will not result in designation on report cards or final transcripts.
10. Weighting and honors designation will not be considered for students failing to meet or exceed the criteria set forth.
11. Appeals concerning the final outcome for the Independent Honors Course of Study will be held by the high school principal or his/her designee.

II. STRUCTURED LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Students may elect to participate in a Structured Learning Experience, as defined by the New Jersey State Department of Education, which can include a community service project and/or a work experience which has its primary purpose for furthering the career education and/or other life experiences that occur outside the regular classroom. Students interested in this must collaborate with a mentor (business personnel) agreeing to guide the student throughout the learning experience. Mentors (business personnel) will be required to document participation and attendance.

Structured Learning Experiences (SLEs) are experiential, supervised, in-depth learning experiences aligned to the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS) that are designed to offer all students the opportunity to more fully explore career interests within one or more of the Career Clusters. SLEs are designed as rigorous activities that are integrated into the curriculum and that provide students with opportunities to demonstrate and apply a high level of academic and/or technical skills, and develop personal, academic, and career goals.

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The board shall offer students in grades 11 (supervisor approval) and grade 12 the opportunity to actively explore career interests by participation in structured learning experiences that are linked to the New Jersey Student Learning Standards:

1. Structured learning experiences should give students opportunities to demonstrate and apply a high level of academic attainment and to develop career and personal/social goals.
2. Interested students may voluntarily select structured learning experiences that are co-curricular or extra-curricular activities and taking place within the school district, at a work site, or in the community.
3. The board shall ensure students participating in school-sponsored, paid, or unpaid external structured learning experiences are supervised by school personnel and conform to federal and state law.
4. SLE is graded as “pass/fail”.

III. VIRTUAL LEARNING

Students can elect to advance or remediate their studies through a virtual or outside campus learning experience outside or during school hours as established by Policy 5460 High School Graduation.

All independent courses will require the approval of the Pequannock Township Board of Education. The Pequannock Township Board of Education will not support expenses including, but not limited to tuition costs, room and board, mentor fees, transportation, textbooks, materials, supplies and/or technology associated with independent study.

N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1 et seq.

Adopted: 11 November 1999
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