

**INDEPENDENT STUDY/INDIVIDUALIZED  
ARRANGEMENTS**

The Board of Education authorizes independent study as an optional alternative educational and 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. The District shall provide appropriate existing services and resources to enable pupils to complete their independent study successfully. 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, expeditiously, and, in no case, later than five instructional days, 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. Except during the 2021-22 school year, 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 during a learning period, 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.

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Supervising teachers shall 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 of students in grades 4-12 will meet, either in person or by electronic means, with each participating student at least once a week to discuss the student's progress and offer synchronous instruction. The supervising teacher of students in grades TK-3 will meet, either in person or by electronic means, with each participating student at least daily to discuss the student's progress and offer synchronous instruction.

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, 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 Education Code Section 51745(b).

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).

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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.
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 District 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.

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

For the 2021-22 school year only, the District shall notify the parents and guardians of all enrolled pupils of their options to enroll their child in in-person instruction or independent study during the 2021-22 school year. This notice shall include written information on the District's website, including, but not limited to, the right to request a pupil-parent-educator conference meeting before enrollment, pupil rights regarding procedures for enrolling, disenrolling, and reenrolling in independent study, and the synchronous and asynchronous instructional time that a pupil will have access to as part of independent study.

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**

Except as described below for independent study of fifteen (15) or more days in one school year, 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.

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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.

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**

TUSD Adopted: 09.10.13

TUSD Revised: 08.24.21

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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
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:

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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**

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.

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**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.

**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.



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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.

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.

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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

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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**

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.

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The Governing Board authorizes independent study for students whose health would be put at risk by in-person instruction under Assembly Bill 130, for the 2021-22 school year. Some AB 130 program requirements do not apply to students participating in short term independent study program, defined as fewer than 15 days.

The following procedures for students enrolled in independent study for fifteen (15) or more days in one school year must be followed by supervising staff and teacher:

1. Procedures for tiered re-engagement strategies for all students enrolled in independent study for fifteen (15) or more days in one school year who are not generating attendance for more than three school days or 60 percent of the instructional days in a school week, or who are in violation of the students' written agreement. These procedures are as follows:
  - a. Verification of current contact information for each enrolled pupil;
  - b. Notification to parents or guardians of lack of participation within one school day of the absence or lack of participation;
  - c. Outreach from the District to determine pupil needs including connection with health and social services as necessary;
  - d. When the evaluation described above is triggered to consider whether remaining in independent study is in the best interest of the pupil, a pupil-parent-education conference shall be required to review a pupil's written agreement and reconsider the independent study program's impact on the pupil's achievement and well-being. This conference shall be a meeting involving, at a minimum, all parties who signed the pupil's written independent study agreement.
  
2. A plan to transition students whose families wish to return to in-person instruction from independent study expeditiously, and, in no case, later than five instructional days. The plan includes:
  1. Parent notifies independent study program in writing that they wish to have their student return to in-person instruction.
  2. Independent study classified/certificated office staff will notify teacher, academic counselor, and student services to drop the student in the independent study program/school.
  3. Student Services classified/certificated staff will work to place the student back in zoned school. If zoned school is impacted, student services will find the nearest school available within 5 school days.

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### 3. Live interaction and synchronous instruction requirements by grade level:

Kindergarten to grade 3- daily synchronous instruction from the supervising teacher for all students throughout the school year.

Grades 4 to 8- both daily live interaction from a District employee and at least weekly synchronous instruction from the supervising teacher for all students throughout the school year.

Grades 9 to 12- at least weekly synchronous instruction from the supervising teacher for all students throughout the school year.

In accordance with Education Code Section 51745.5(a), “Live interaction” means interaction between the student and local educational agency classified or certificated staff, and may include peers, provided for the purpose of maintaining school connectedness, including but not limited to: wellness checks, progress monitoring, provision of services and instruction. This interaction may take place in person or in the form of internet or telephonic communication.

In accordance with Education Code Section 51745.5(d), “Synchronous instruction” means classroom-style instruction or designated small group or one-on-one instruction delivered in person, or in the form of internet or telephonic communications and involving live, two-way communication between the teacher and student. Synchronous instruction shall be provided by the teacher of record for that student.

### 4. Written learning agreements must be signed before a student commences an independent study course. Electronic signatures are allowable for auditing purposes. Written learning agreements must include:

a. The manner, time, frequency, and place for submitting a pupil’s assignments, for reporting the pupil’s academic progress, and for communicating with a pupil’s parent or guardian regarding a pupil’s academic progress.

b. The objectives and methods of study for the pupil’s work, and the methods used to evaluate that work.

c. The specific resources, including materials and personnel, that will be made available to the pupil. These resources shall include confirming or providing access to all pupils to the connectivity and devices adequate to participate in the educational program and complete assigned work.

d. A statement of the policies adopted pursuant to Education Code Section 51747, subdivisions (a) and (b) regarding the maximum length of time allowed between the assignment and the completion of a pupil’s assigned work, the level of satisfactory educational progress, and the number of missed assignments allowed before an evaluation of whether or not the pupil should be allowed to continue in independent study.

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- e. The duration of the independent study agreement, including the beginning and ending dates for the pupil's participation in independent study under the agreement. No independent study agreement shall be valid for any period longer than one school year.
- f. 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 pupil upon completion.
- g. A statement detailing the academic and other supports that will be provided to address the needs of pupils who are not performing at grade level, or need support in other areas, such as English learners, individuals with exceptional needs in order to be consistent with the pupil's individualized education program or plan pursuant to Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. Sec. 794), pupils in foster care or experiencing homelessness, and pupils requiring mental health supports.
- h. The inclusion of a statement in each independent study agreement that independent study is an optional educational alternative in which no pupil may be required to participate. In the case of a pupil who is referred or assigned to any school, class, or program pursuant to Section 48915 or 48917, the agreement also shall include the statement that instruction may be provided to the pupil through independent study only if the pupil is offered the alternative of classroom instruction.
- i. Each written agreement shall be signed, before the commencement of independent study, by the pupil, the pupil's parent, legal guardian, or caregiver, if the pupil is less than 18 years of age, the certificated employee who has been designated as having responsibility for the general supervision of independent study, and all persons who have direct responsibility for providing assistance to the pupil. For purposes of this paragraph "caregiver" means a person who has met the requirements of Part 1.5 (commencing with Section 6550) of Division 11 of the Family Code.

Documentation of live and synchronous instruction is required for each school day, in whole or in part, that independent study is provided. The certificated teacher of instruction must document any student who does not participate in independent study on a school day as non-participatory for that day. The certificated teacher of instruction must maintain either written or computer-based evidence of student engagement. This includes but is not limited to a grade book or summary document for each class that lists all assignments, assessments and associated grades.

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### 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
<u>CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS, Title 34</u>	
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

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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>