

INDEPENDENT STUDY BOARD POLICY

Vaughn Next Century Learning Center (hereinafter “Charter School”) may offer independent study to meet the educational needs of pupils enrolled in the Charter School in accordance with applicable law. Independent study shall be substantially equivalent in quality and quantity to classroom instruction, thus enabling students enrolled in independent study to complete the Charter School’s adopted course of study within the customary time frame. (5 C.C.R. § 11701.5.)

Charter School shall provide appropriate services and resources to enable pupils to complete their independent study program successfully. Independent study is a voluntary, educational alternative in which no student may be required to participate. (Education Code § 51747.) Students who voluntarily choose to enroll in the Charter School’s independent study program have the alternative option of attending a classroom-based instructional program in a school of their district of residence or potentially at the Charter School subject to capacity.

The following written policies have been adopted by the Board for implementation at the Charter School:

1. For pupils in all grade levels offered by the Charter School, the maximum length of time that may elapse between the time an assignment is made and the date by which the pupil must complete the assigned work shall be twenty (20) school days. (Education Code § 51747(a).)
2. When any pupil fails to complete three (3) assignments during any period of twenty (20) school days, the Site Director or designee shall conduct an evaluation to determine whether it is in the best interests of the pupil to remain in independent study. A written record of the findings of any evaluation conducted pursuant to this policy shall be treated as a mandatory interim pupil record. This record shall be maintained for a period of three years from the date of the evaluation and if the pupil transfers to another California public school, the record shall be forwarded to that school. (Education Code § 51747(b).) Charter School may disenroll pupils who accrue ten (10) unexcused absences due to failure to turn in assignments.
3. A current written agreement shall be maintained on file for each independent study pupil, including but not limited to, all of the following:
 - a. The manner, time, frequency, and place for submitting a pupil’s assignments and for reporting his or her progress.
 - b. The objectives and methods of study for the pupil’s work, and the methods utilized to evaluate that work.

- c. The specific resources, including materials and personnel, which will be made available to the pupil.
 - d. A statement of the policies adopted herein regarding the maximum length of time allowed between the assignment and the completion of a pupil's assigned work, and the number of missed assignments allowed prior to an evaluation of whether or not the pupil should be allowed to continue in independent study.
 - e. The duration of the independent study agreement, including 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. 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 Education Code §§ 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.
 - h. Each written agreement shall be signed, prior to 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. (Education Code § 51747(c).)
4. Family Rights and Responsibilities: The independent study program entails a commitment by the parent/guardian and the student. Families participating in independent study agree to:
- a. Support the student, including by monitoring the student's progress in the independent study program and helping the student track important deadlines (e.g., assignment deadlines).
 - b. Complete the independent study agreement.
 - c. Participate in any interventions recommended by the Charter School to promote academic success.

5. Supervising Teacher Responsibilities:

- a. Each student's independent study shall be coordinated, evaluated and carried out under the general supervision of a certificated employee of the Charter School. (Education Code § 51747.5.)
- b. Executive Director or designee shall oversee the teacher(s) who directly supervise independent study on a regular basis and ensure that the teacher(s):
 - i. Complete designated portions of the independent study agreement and add additional information to the agreement when appropriate.
 - ii. Supervise and approve coursework.
 - iii. Design/identify curriculum objectives.
 - iv. Communicate with students as required by the independent study agreement.
 - v. Assess all work that students are required to submit to the teacher.
 - vi. Determine the time value of assigned work or work products completed and submitted by the student.
 - vii. Select and save with each independent study agreement, representative samples of the student's completed and evaluated assignments.
 - viii. Maintain any required records and files on a current basis.
 - ix. When appropriate, determine and assign grades or other approved measures of achievement.

6. Charter School Administrative Responsibilities:

- a. Charter School will not provide independent study students and parents/guardians with funds or items of value that are not provided for other students and parents/guardians. (Education Code § 51747.3(a).)
- b. Charter School may claim apportionment credit for independent study only to the extent of the time value of pupil or student work products, as personally judged in each instance by a certificated teacher. (Education Code § 51747.5(b).)
- c. Charter School will maintain records of the independent study program. School records maintained by Charter School shall identify all students participating in its independent study program and shall specify the grade level in which each of these students is enrolled.
- d. Records of the independent study program shall be maintained for audit purposes and shall include the following:
 - i. A copy of the Board policy and procedures related to independent study.
 - ii. A separate listing of the students, by grade level, who have participated in independent study identifying units of the curriculum attempted (also known as the "course of study") and units of the curriculum completed by students, as specified in their independent study agreements.

- iii. A file of all independent study agreements, with representative samples of each student's work products and a signed acknowledgement 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.
- iv. A daily attendance register, as appropriate to the program in which the students are enrolled, separate from classroom attendance records, and maintained on a current basis as time values of student work products are personally judged by a certificated teacher, and reviewed by the supervising teacher if they are two different individuals. (5 C.C.R. § 11703.)
- v. The Charter School shall ensure that students participating in IS for 15 school days or more receive the following throughout the school year: (Education Code 51747)
 1. For students in grades transitional kindergarten, kindergarten, and grades 1 to 3, opportunities for daily synchronous instruction
 2. For students in grades 4-8, opportunities for both daily live interaction and at least weekly synchronous instruction
 3. For students in grades 9-12, opportunities for at least weekly synchronous instruction
- vi. The Charter School shall ensure that procedures for tiered reengagement strategies are used for all students 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 their written master agreement. This requirement only applies to students participating in an IS program for 15 school days or more. The procedures shall include, but are not necessarily limited to, all of the following: (Education Code 51747)
 1. Verification of current contact information for each enrolled student
 2. Notification to parents/guardians of lack of participation within one school day of the absence or lack of participation
 3. A plan for outreach from the school to determine student needs, including connection with health and social services as necessary
 4. A clear standard for requiring a student-parent-educator conference to review a student's written master agreement and reconsider the IS program's impact on the student's achievement and well-being

7. No individual with exceptional needs, as defined in Education Code § 56026, may participate in independent study unless his/her Individualized Education Program (IEP) specifically provides for such participation.
8. A temporarily disabled pupil shall not receive individual instruction pursuant to Education Code § 48206.3 through independent study.
9. Charter School will comply with ADA-to-certificated employee ratio requirements of Education Code § 51745.6.
10. The Charter School shall develop a plan to transition students whose families wish to return to in-person instruction from IS expeditiously. Students who wish to return to in-person instruction from IS will be transitioned no later than five instructional days. This requirement only applies to students participating in an IS program for 15 school days or more. (Education Code 51747)
11. Charter School shall comply with the Education Code §§ 51745-51749.3 and the provisions of the Charter Schools Act and applicable State Board of Education regulations adopted thereunder.