

Series 6000 – Instruction

SP 6158

TITLE: Independent Study Programs	
Approved by: <u>Francisco Reveles</u> <i>Francisco Reveles, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools</i>	Series: Instruction Version: 3 Effective Date: 9/1/2022 Previous Policy Date: 8/1/2021 Revised By: Sima Gandhi, Ed.D Policy Number: SP 6158

Yuba County Office of Education recognizes its responsibility for the education of all pupils in the public school system. The Board of Education authorizes Independent Study (IS) as an optional alternative instructional strategy with limited exceptions to meet the educational needs of pupils in a setting other than the regular classroom.

Yuba County Office of Education 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 to serve students who desire a more challenging educational experience, whose health or other personal circumstances make classroom attendance difficult, who are unable to access course(s) due to scheduling problems, and/or who need to make up credits or fill gaps in their learning. As a necessary alternative 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. 5147 - Dropout Prevention)
- (cf. 6011 - Academic Standards)
- (cf. 6143 - Courses of Study)
- (cf. 6146.1 - High School Graduation Requirements)
- (cf. 6146.11 - Alternative Credits Toward Graduation)
- (cf. 6172 - Gifted and Talented Student Program)
- (cf. 6200 - Adult Education)

The Superintendent or designee may provide a variety of independent study opportunities with limited exceptions, including, but not limited to, through a program or class within a comprehensive school, an alternative school or program of choice, a charter school, a home-based format, and an online course.

- (cf. 0420.4 - Charter School Authorization)
- (cf. 6181 - Alternative Schools/Programs of Choice)

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 setting.

The primary purpose for Independent Study is to offer a means of individualizing the educational plan for pupils who choose this option to best meet their needs. Independent study (IS) may be used by pupils as provided in California Education Code (EC) section 51745.

- No pupil shall be required to participate in IS. All pupils shall have the alternative of classroom instruction.
- No course required for high school graduation by the State or the District governing board or admission into the University of California or California State University system shall be offered exclusively through IS.
- Students enrolled in special education programs may participate in independent study if the Individual Education Plan (IEP) team agrees and Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) can be established. The “certificated employee with responsibility for the student’s special education programming” must be a signatory to the written agreement.
- No temporarily disabled pupil may receive individual instruction pursuant to EC section 48206.3 through IS. However, if the temporarily disabled pupil's parent or guardian and the district agree, the pupil may receive instruction through IS instead of receiving the "home and hospital" instruction provided pursuant to EC section 48206.3.
- Before signing a written agreement for IS, a pupil, or their parent, guardian, or caregiver if the pupil is less than 18 years of age, may request a parent-pupil-educator conference, during which they may ask questions about educational options, that may include academic and nonacademic supports that will be made available to participating pupils, and the curriculum offerings. The district will conduct conferences by phone, videoconference, in-person, or during a school meeting.
- Agreements for traditional and course-based independent study do not require signatures by “all persons who have direct responsibility for providing assistance to the pupil.” However, in addition to the student, the parent, guardian, or caregiver (if the student is less than 18 years old), and the certificated employee supervising independent study, agreements must be signed by “the certificated employee designated as having responsibility for the special education programming of the pupil,” (i.e., special education teacher) if applicable.
- Pupils at the elementary level who request IS, together with their parents or guardians, should recognize that IS at the elementary level must emphasize a commitment on the part of the pupils' parent(s) or guardian. At the secondary level, the pupil must make the major commitment and must be assisted or supported, as necessary, by parents and others who may help guide the instruction.
- Pupils who request to return to in-person instruction from IS, or have been identified as needing to return to in-person instruction by the supervising teacher, shall be:

A. California Education Code (EC) section 51747 (f):

Accommodated in no case later than five (5) instructional days at their home school or another school within the district. [This return will involve a transition meeting with the IS supervising teacher and administrator, and the in-person classroom teacher, and on-campus counselor. The transition meeting will include reviewing academic progress summary and input from the IS teacher of record. It may be determined at this meeting if partial credits need to be awarded to ensure progress toward graduation.]

B. Instructional Delivery Methods

Pupils enrolled in the LEA's IS Program may participate in live interaction and synchronous instruction, as provided in the IS agreement.

Pupils in IS may have the opportunity to participate in live interaction and synchronous instruction, in accordance with law, at each grade level throughout the school year, or until they disenroll from the program, as follows:

- Kindergarten to grade 3 — daily synchronous instruction
- Grades 4 to 8 — both daily live interaction and at least weekly synchronous instruction
- Grades 9 to 12 — at least weekly synchronous instruction

Live interaction may be between the pupil and the County Office of Education (COE) classified or certificated staff and may include peers. Live interaction is intended to maintain school connectedness, including, but not limited to, wellness checks, progress monitoring, provision of support services, and instruction. This interaction may take place in person or in the form of internet or telephonic communication.

Synchronous instruction is 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 involves live, two-way communication between the teacher and pupil. Synchronous instruction shall be provided by the teacher of record for that pupil. A pupil who does not participate in independent study on a school day shall be documented as non-participatory for that school day for purposes of pupil participation reporting and tiered re-engagement.

C. Satisfactory Educational Progress

YCOE employees will take measures to re-engage pupils who are not generating attendance for more than 10 percent of required minimum instructional time over four continuous weeks of approved instructional calendar, pupils found non-participatory in synchronous instructional offerings pursuant to Section 51747.5 for more than 50% of the scheduled times of synchronous instruction in a school month as applicable by grade span, or pupils who are in violation of their written agreement pursuant to Educational Code section 51747 (g), MCBE P 5220, and this policy. Procedures for tiered re-engagement strategies will include but not limited to:

1. Verification of the pupil's current contact information
2. Notification to parents or guardians of lack of participation within one school day of the

absence or lack of participation.

3. A plan for outreach to determine pupil needs, including connection with health and social services, as necessary.
4. SST meeting to review a pupil's written agreement and reconsider the independent study program's impact on the pupil's achievement and well-being, consistent with the provisions of this policy regarding missed assignments and satisfactory education progress.
5. Based on SST, referral to MTSS systems of support for targeted intervention in the identified area of need(s)
6. Meetings between the family and school staff to determine the best manner to re-engage the pupil in the IS program.
7. Referral to school-based mental health services.
8. Additional training for IS teachers.
9. Home visits, using Child Welfare and Attendance support.
10. Technology check to ensure digital access is supported.
11. Connecting the family to Community Liaison support personnel

Designated staff will notify pupils, or their parents, guardians, or caregivers if the pupil is less than 18 years of age, of the lack of participation within one school day of an absence or lack of participation in the pupil's program. Notification will be issued by written, telephonic, or other forms of direct communication.

This section shall not apply to pupils that participate in an independent study program for fewer than 15 school days in a school year.

The satisfactory educational progress for each pupil enrolled in IS will be determined by all the following:

- The pupil's achievement and engagement in the program, as indicated by their performance on applicable pupil-level measures of pupil achievement and engagement as indicated in the policy.
- The completion of assignments, assessments, or other indicators that evidence that the pupil is working on assignments.
- Learning required concepts, as determined by the supervising teacher.
- Progressing toward successful completion of the course of study or individual course, as determined by the supervising teacher.

The Superintendent or designee shall collect all necessary data elements to compile a report, as necessary, of pupils participating in IS, including data on the number and percentage of pupils who successfully complete the requirements for a high school diploma through IS.

Notification of a pupil's academic progress will be reported and communicated to the pupil, or the pupil's parent, guardian, or caregiver if the pupil is less than 18 years of age, as described in the written agreement. Notification will be issued by written, telephonic, or other forms of direct communication.

D. Written Agreement

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that a written master agreement and, as appropriate, a learning agreement for students participating in course-based independent study exist for each participating student as prescribed by law. (Education Code 51747, 51749.5) This agreement will be maintained for each student who participates in IS for five or more consecutive school days and no IS agreement will be valid for longer than one school year.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that the COE executes a written IS agreement with each participating pupil, as prescribed by law. Individual IS agreements and any supplemental agreements and assignments will be consistent with the COE's adopted course of study. IS agreements shall be signed, before the commencement of the program, by the pupil or by the pupil's parent, legal guardian, or caregiver, if the pupil is less than 18 years of age, the school official who is designated as having responsibility for the general supervision of the IS program, and all persons who will have direct responsibility for providing assistance to the pupil.

For independent study requests for more than 14 school days, written agreements must be obtained before the pupil commences independent study. Written agreements for independent study lasting fewer than 15 school days must be signed by parent / guardian within 10 days of enrollment in independent study.

Written agreements may be signed by all required parties electronically in compliance with state requirements.

The written agreement shall include a statement that articulates the academic and other supports that will be provided to pupils who are not performing at grade level, or who need support in other areas.

Connectivity support and COE devices will be made available to participating pupils, and pupils will have access to support personnel who can provide maintenance and functionality of devices and connectivity, and who will provide training on using COE-purchased software platforms, or other technology-based aspects of the IS program.

For pupils in IS, 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 one week for pupils in grades K through grade 12.

E. Returning to In-person Instruction

Pupils whose families wish to return to classroom-based instruction from independent study may notify the designed contact person, as set forth in the pupil's written agreement. Upon notice from the pupil's family that a return to in-person instruction is desired, the Independent Study Administrator shall provide for the pupil's return to the school of the pupil's previous in-person attendance, or such other school as is appropriate for the pupil's grade level and place of residence, no later than five instructional days after the request is received.

This section shall not apply to pupils that participate in an independent study program for fewer than 15 school days in a school year.

F. Independent Study Fewer Than Fifteen Days

Written agreements for independent study lasting fewer than 15 school days must be signed by parent/guardian within 10 days of enrollment in independent study.

G. Special Education Students Participating in Independent Study

Students enrolled in special education programs may participate in independent study if the Individual Education Plan (IEP) team agrees and Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) can be established. The “certificated employee with responsibility for the student’s special education programming” must be a signatory to the written agreement.

H. Student-Teacher Conferences

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. Teachers are expected to monitor student progress and work closely with each student to determine the amount and type of contact needed for the student to be successful in the program.

Missing appointments with the supervising teacher without valid reasons may trigger an evaluation to determine whether the student should remain in independent study.

I. Independent Study Enrollment and Notice

Upon request of the parent or pupil, and before signing a written agreement with the pupil’s parent or guardian, the YCOE staff may conduct a phone, videoconference, or in-person SST meeting or other school meeting during which the pupil, parent, or guardian, may ask questions about the educational options, including which curriculum offerings and nonacademic supports will be available to the pupil in independent study, before making the decision about enrollment and disenrollment in the various options for learning.

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

17289 Exemption for facilities

41976.2 Independent study programs; adult education funding 42238 Revenue limits

42238.05 Local control funding formula; average daily attendance

44865 Qualifications for home teachers and teachers in special classes and schools

46200-46208 Instructional day and year 46300-46307.1 Methods of computing average daily attendance

47612.5 Independent study in charter schools 48204 Residency

48206.3 Home or hospital instruction; pupils with temporary disabilities 48220 Classes of children exempted

48340 Improvement of pupil attendance 48915 Expulsion; particular circumstances

48916.1 Educational program requirements for expelled pupils
48917 Suspension of expulsion order
49011 Pupil fees
51225.3 Requirements for high school graduation
51745-51749.3 Independent study programs
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
UNITED STATES CODE, TITLE 20
6301 Highly qualified teachers
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
Elements of Exemplary Independent Study
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>.