



INDEPENDENT STUDY BOARD POLICY

The charter schools operated by Fenton Charter Public Schools (hereinafter “Charter School” or “FCPS”) may offer independent study to meet the educational needs of students enrolled in the Charter School in accordance with applicable law. This policy applies to all charter schools operated by FCPS. Independent study is an optional educational alternative in which no pupil may be required to participate and is designed to teach the knowledge and skills of the core curriculum.

The Director or designee retains discretion to approve independent study written agreements for students. Families interested in independent study should contact their Director or designee or main office.

Charter School will provide appropriate existing services, supports, technology and resources to enable students to complete their independent study program successfully. The following independent study policies have been established by Charter School Board in alignment with Education Code (“EC”) § 51744 et seq., and adopted pursuant to EC § 51747 and 5 C.C.R. § 11701:

1. For each student in independent study, Charter School will assign a certificated teacher or teachers of record to coordinate, evaluate, and provide general supervision of the student’s independent study instruction. (EC § 51747.5(a).)
2. For students in independent study in any grade level, the maximum length of time that may lapse between the time an independent study assignment is made and the date by which the student must complete the assigned work is twenty (20) school days. (EC § 51747(a).)
3. The Director or designee shall conduct an evaluation to determine whether it is in the best interests of the pupil to remain in independent study upon the following triggers:
 - a. When any student fails to complete three (3) assignments during any period of twenty (20) school days.
 - b. In the event a student’s educational progress falls below satisfactory levels as determined by ALL of the following indicators:.
4.
 - i. The student’s achievement and engagement in the independent study program, as indicated by the student’s performance on student-level measures of student achievement and student engagement set forth in EC § 52060(d)(4)-(5).
 - ii. The completion of assignments, assessments, or other indicators that show the student is working on assignments.
 - iii. Learning required concepts, as determined by the supervising teacher.
 - iv. Progressing toward successful completion of the course of study or individual course, as determined by the supervising teacher. (EC § 51747(b)(2).)

For purposes of conducting the evaluation in Section 3, a student is deemed to be making satisfactory educational progress if the student is on track to enter the next grade level at the completion of the current

school year and/or progressing toward their goals pursuant to their individualized education program (“IEP”). A written record of the findings of any evaluation will be maintained in the student’s permanent record. This record will be maintained for a period of three years from the date of the evaluation and if the student transfers to another California public school, the record will be forwarded to that school. (EC § 51747(b).)

5. Charter School will provide content to students aligned to grade level standards that is substantially equivalent to in-person instruction. (EC § 51747(c).)
6. For students who participate in independent study at Charter School for more than fifteen (15) school days per year:

6.1. Tiered reengagement strategies: If a student does not generate attendance for more than 10 percent of required minimum instructional time over four continuous weeks of the school’s approved instructional calendar, students found not participatory in synchronous instruction pursuant to EC § 51747.5 for more than 50 percent of the scheduled times of synchronous instruction in a school month as applicable by grade span, or for students who are in violation of their independent study written agreement, Charter School shall:

- a. Verify current contact information for each enrolled student;
- b. Notify parents or guardians of lack of participation within one school day of the recording of a non-attendance day or lack of participation (e.g., via email, message, text, telephone, letter, etc.);
- c. Reach out to the student directly and/or parents or guardians, as well as health and social services as necessary, to determine student’s needs for reengagement;
- d. If the student has failed to complete three (3) assignments during any period of twenty (20) school days or is failing to make satisfactory educational progress as defined in Section 3 herein, Charter School will schedule a pupil-parent-educator conference (a meeting involving all individuals who signed the student’s written agreement) to review the student’s written agreement and reconsider the independent study program’s impact on the student’s achievement and well-being; and
- e. Implement any Charter School programs intended to address chronic absenteeism, as applicable. (EC § 51747(d).)

6.2 Based on each student’s grade level, their teacher(s) of record will schedule and offer opportunities for synchronous instruction and daily live interaction at least as frequently as set forth in subsections a-b below. (EC § 51747(e).)

“Live interaction” means interaction between the student and Charter School staff, and may include peers, to maintain school connectedness. Examples of live interaction include check-ins, progress monitoring, provision of services, and instruction, and live interaction can be in-person or in the form of internet or telephonic communication.

“Synchronous instruction” means classroom-style instruction, designated small-group instruction, or one-on-one instruction delivered in person or in the form of internet or telephonic communication by the student’s assigned teacher(s) of record, and involving live two-way communication. (EC § 51745.5.)

- a. For students in grades TK-3, inclusive, the Charter School will schedule and offer opportunities for daily synchronous instruction.
- b. For students in grades 4-8, inclusive, the Charter School will schedule and offer opportunities for weekly synchronous instruction and daily live interaction.

Charter School will document each student's participation in live interaction and synchronous instruction on each school day, as applicable, in whole or in part, for which live interaction or synchronous instruction is provided as part of the independent study program. A student who does not participate in scheduled live interaction or synchronous instruction on a school day will be documented as non-participatory for that school day for purposes of pupil participation reporting and tiered reengagement pursuant to EC § 51747. (EC § 51747.5(c).)

6.3 A student's parent or guardian may request their student return to in-person instruction from independent study by making a written request to Director or designee or their assigned teacher(s) of record. If there is capacity in Charter School's in-person program at the student's grade level, Charter School will transition the student within five school days. If there is not capacity in Charter School's in-person program at the student's grade level, Charter School will help the student transition to enrolling in the in-person program offered by their district of residence, will transfer the student's educational records within five school days, and offer the student an opportunity to join Charter School's waitlist. (EC § 51747(f).)

6.4 Sections 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3 of this policy do not apply to students enrolled in a comprehensive school for classroom-based instruction who:

- a. participate in an independent study program for fewer than 16 school days in a school year;
- b. are enrolled in a comprehensive school for classroom-based instruction who, under the care of appropriately licensed professionals, participate in independent study due to necessary medical treatments or inpatient treatment for mental health care or substance abuse. Local educational agencies shall obtain evidence from appropriately licensed professionals of the need for pupils to participate in independent study pursuant to this subdivision; or
- c. independent study offered due to school closure or material decrease in attendance for 15 school days or less for affected pupils under one or more of the circumstances described in Education Code Sections 41422 and/or 46392, and 46393 for which the Charter School files an affidavit seeking an allowance of attendance due to emergency conditions. (EC § 51747(i).)

7. A current written independent study agreement for each independent study student will be maintained on file. Written agreements may include subsidiary agreements, such as course contracts and assignment and work records. Each written agreement will contain the following:
 - a. The manner, time, frequency, and place for submitting a student's assignments, for reporting the student's academic progress, and for communicating with a student's parent or guardian regarding a student's academic progress.
 - b. The objectives and methods of study for the student's work, and the methods used to evaluate that work.
 - c. The specific resources, including materials and personnel, which will be made available to the student. These resources will include confirming or providing access to all students to the connectivity and devices adequate to participate in the educational program and complete assigned work.
 - d. A statement of the policies adopted herein regarding the maximum length of time allowed between the assignment, the level of satisfactory educational progress, and the number of

missed assignments allowed prior to an evaluation of whether or not the student should be allowed to continue in independent study.

- e. The duration of the independent study agreement, including beginning and ending dates for the student's participation in independent study under the agreement. No independent study agreement will 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 student upon completion.
- g. A statement detailing the academic and other supports that will be provided to address the needs of students 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 student's IEP or plan pursuant to Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. Sec. 794), students in foster care or experiencing homelessness, and students 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 student may be required to participate. In the case of a student who is referred or assigned to any school, class or program pursuant to EC § 48915 or 48917, the agreement also will include the statement that instruction may be provided to the student through independent study only if the student is offered the alternative of classroom instruction. (EC § 51747(g).)
- i. Charter School will comply with the written independent study agreement signature requirements set forth in EC § 51747(g)(9), including:
 - i. For a student participating in independent study that is scheduled for fifteen (15) or fewer school days (must obtain signatures during the school year in which the independent study program takes place): Charter School will obtain a signed written agreement from the student, the student's parent, legal guardian, or caregiver, if the student 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 the certificated employee designated as having responsibility for the special education programming of the student, as applicable.
 - ii. For a student participating in independent study that is scheduled for more than fifteen (15) school days (must obtain signatures before independent study instruction commences): Each independent study agreement will be signed, prior to the commencement of independent study, by the student, the student's parent, legal guardian, or caregiver, if the student 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 the certificated employee designated as having responsibility for the special education programming of the student, as applicable. For purposes of this policy, "caregiver" means a person who has met the requirements of Part 1.5 (commencing with Section 6550) of the Family Code.
 - iii. Written agreements may be signed using an electronic signature that complies with state and federal standards, as determined by the California Department of Education, that may be a marking that is either computer generated or produced by electronic means and is intended by the signatory to have the same effect as a handwritten signature. The use of an electronic signature shall have the same force

and effect as the use of a manual signature if the requirements for digital signatures and their acceptable technology, as provided in Section 16.5 of the Government Code and in Chapter 10 (commencing with Section 22000) of Division 7 of Title 2 of the California Code of Regulations, are satisfied.

- j. The Executive Director may establish regulations to implement these policies in accordance with the law.

8. Additional Independent Study Requirements:

- a. Charter School will not provide any funds or other thing of value to the student or his or her parent or guardian that a school district could not legally provide to a similarly situated student of the school district, or to his or her parent or guardian. (EC § 51747.3(a).)
- b. Charter School may only receive funding for the provision of independent study to students who are residents of Los Angeles County or who are residents of a county immediately adjacent to Los Angeles County. (EC § 51747.3(b).)
- c. A student with exceptional needs, as defined in EC § 56026, may participate in independent study if the student's IEP specifically provides for that participation. If a parent or guardian of an individual with exceptional needs requests independent study, the student's IEP team shall make an individualized determination as to whether the student can receive a free appropriate public education in an independent study placement. A student's inability to work independently, the student's need for adult support, or the student's need for special education or related services shall not preclude the IEP team from determining that the student can receive a free appropriate education in an independent study placement. (EC § 51745(c).)
- d. Charter School may claim apportionment credit for independent study only to the extent of the time value of student work products, as personally judged in each instance by a certificated teacher employed by Charter School, or the combined time value of student work product and student participation in synchronous instruction. (EC § 51747.5(b).)
- e. Charter School will maintain written or computer-based evidence of student engagement that includes, but is not limited to, a grade book or summary document that, for each class, lists all assignments, assessments, and associated grades. This includes documenting each student's participation in live interaction and synchronous instruction as described above in Section 6.2. (EC § 51747.5(c)-(d).)
- f. Records of the independent study program will be maintained for audit purposes and shall include the following:
 - i. A copy of the independent study board policies.
 - 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 written agreements.
 - iii. A file of all written 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.
- v. Any other documents charter schools are required to maintain as required by law. (5 C.C.R. § 11703.)
- g. Charter School will comply with all applicable law regarding independent study, including but not limited to ADA-to-certificated teacher ratio requirements and course-based independent study requirements (if applicable). (EC § 51745 et seq.; 5 C.C.R. 11700 et seq.)

adopted: July 18, 2024