# Liberty Union High School District

**Board Policy**

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| Classification: | Instruction | Policy No. | BP 6158 |
| | | Page | 1 of 11 |
| | | Effective | 11/2/94 |
| Subject: | Independent Study | Revised | 6/18/25 |

The Governing Board authorizes independent study as an optional alternative instructional strategy for 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 necessary to meet student needs, independent study may be offered for short- or long-term placements, on a full-time basis or on a part-time basis and/or in conjunction with part- or full-time classroom study.

The Board shall hold a public hearing when considering the scope of its existing or prospective use of independent study as an instructional strategy, its purposes in authorizing independent study, and factors bearing specifically on the maximum realistic lengths of assignments and acceptable number of missed assignments for specific populations of students or adult education students. (Education Code 51747; 5 CCR 11701)

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

Student participation in independent study shall be voluntary and no student shall be required to participate. (Education Code 51747, 51749.5, 51749.6)

Independent study for each student shall be under the general supervision of a district employee who possesses a valid certification document pursuant to Education Code 44865 or an emergency credential pursuant to Education Code 44300. Students' independent study shall be coordinated, evaluated, and documented, as prescribed by law and reflected in the accompanying administrative regulation. (Education Code 51747.5)

An independent study student shall not be credited with more than one day of attendance per calendar day. (Education Code 46300)

A nutritionally adequate breakfast and lunch shall be made available at no cost to any independent study student scheduled for educational activities lasting two or more hours at a school site, resource center, meeting space, or other satellite facility, who requests a meal. (Education Code 49501.5)

General Independent Study Requirements

The Superintendent or designee may offer and approve independent study for an individual student upon determining that the student is prepared to meet the district's requirements for participation and is likely to succeed as well as or better than the student would in the regular classroom setting.

The minimum instructional minutes shall be the same for all students at each school including students participating in independent study, except as otherwise permitted by law. (Education Code 46100)

Because excessive leniency in the duration of independent study assignments may result in a student falling behind peers and increase the risk of dropping out of school, independent study assignments shall be completed no more than one week after assigned for all grade levels and types of program. 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. However, in no event shall the due date of an assignment be extended beyond the termination date specified in the student's written agreement.

An evaluation shall be conducted to determine whether it is in a student's best interest to remain in independent study whenever the student fails to make satisfactory educational progress and/or misses three assignments. Satisfactory educational progress shall be determined based on all of the following indicators: (Education Code 51747)

1. The student's achievement and engagement in the independent study program, as indicated by the student's performance on applicable student-level measures of student achievement and engagement specified in Education Code 52060

2. The completion of assignments, assessments, or other indicators that evidence that the student is working on assignments

3. Learning of required concepts, as determined by the supervising teacher

4. Progress towards successful completion of the course of study or individual course, as determined by the supervising teacher

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that students participating in independent study are provided with content aligned to grade level standards at a level of quality and intellectual challenge substantially equivalent to in-person instruction. For high schools, this shall include access to all courses offered by the district for graduation and approved by the University of California (UC) or the California State University (CSU) as creditable under the A–G admissions criteria. (Education Code 51747)

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that all students participating in independent study for 16 school days or more in a school year receive opportunities for at least weekly synchronous instruction throughout the school year. (Education Code 51747) and shall have access to a designated learning center or study area staffed by appropriately trained personnel Education code 5146(a).

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that procedures for tiered reengagement strategies are used for all students participating in an independent study program for 16 school days or more in a school year who are: (Education Code 51747)

1. Not generating attendance for more than ten percent of required minimum instructional time over four continuous weeks of the district's approved instructional calendar

2. Not participating in synchronous instructional offerings pursuant to Education Code 51747.5 for more than 50 percent of the scheduled times of synchronous instruction in a school month as applicable by grade span

3. In violation of their written agreement

Tiered reengagement strategies procedures used in district independent study programs shall include local programs intended to address chronic absenteeism, as applicable, including but not limited to 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 recording of a nonattendance day 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 agreement and reconsider the independent study program's impact on the student's achievement and well-being

The Superintendent or designee shall, for students who participate in an independent study program for 16 school days or more in a school year, develop an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP), which includes details 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. (Education Code 51747)

When any student enrolled in classroom-based instruction is participating in independent study due to necessary medical treatment or inpatient treatment for mental health or substance abuse under the care of appropriately licensed professionals, the student shall be exempt from the live interaction and/or synchronous instruction, tiered reengagement strategies, and transition back to in-person instruction requirements specified above. In such cases, evidence from appropriately licensed professionals, of the student's need to participate in independent study, shall be submitted to the Superintendent or designee. (Education Code 51747)

Master Learning Agreement

A learning agreement shall be developed and implemented for each student participating in independent study. (Education Code 46300, 51747)

For student participation for 16 school days or more, a signed written agreement shall be obtained before the student begins independent study. For student participation of 15 days or fewer, a signed written agreement may be obtained at any time during the school year in which the independent study program takes place. (Education Code 46300, 51747)

The learning agreement shall include general student data, including the student's name, address, grade level, birth date, school of enrollment, and program placement.

The independent study learning agreement for each participating student also shall include, but is not limited to, all of the following: (Education Code 51747; 5 CCR 11700, 11702)

1. The manner, time, frequency, and place for submitting the student's assignments, reporting the student's academic progress, and communicating with a student's parent/guardian regarding the student's academic progress

2. The objectives and methods of study for the student's work and the methods used to evaluate that work

3. The specific resources that will be made available to the student, including materials and personnel, and access to Internet connectivity and devices adequate to participate in the educational program and complete assigned work

4. A statement of the Board's policy detailing the maximum length of time allowed between an assignment and its completion, the level of satisfactory educational progress, and the number of missed assignments which will give rise to an evaluation of whether the student should be allowed to continue in independent study

5. The duration of the independent study agreement, including the beginning and ending dates for the student's participation in independent study under the agreement, with a maximum of one school year

6. A statement of the number of course credits or, other measures of academic accomplishment appropriate to the agreement, to be earned by the student upon completion

7. 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, students with disabilities with an individualized education program or a Section 504 plan in order to be consistent with their program or plan, students in foster care or experiencing homelessness, and students requiring mental health supports.

8. A statement that independent study is an optional educational alternative in which no student may be required to participate

9. In the case of a suspended or expelled student who is referred or assigned to any school, class, or program pursuant to Education Code 48915 or 48917, a statement that instruction may be provided through independent study only if the student is offered the alternative of classroom instruction

All learning agreements shall be signed by the student, the student's parent/guardian or caregiver if the student is less than 18 years of age, the certificated employee responsible for the general supervision of independent study, and as applicable for students with disabilities, the certificated employee designated as having responsibility for the special education programming of the student. If the independent study program is projected to last for more than 15 school days, the learning agreement shall be signed before the commencement of the program. For an independent study program that is projected to last for 15 or fewer school days, the learning agreement shall be signed at any time during the school year in which the independent study program is to take place. (Education Code 51747)

For purposes of the above paragraph, caregiver means a person who has met the requirements of Family Code 6550-6552.

Learning agreements may be signed using an electronic signature that complies with state and federal standards, as determined by the California Department of Education (CDE). (Education Code 51747)

The parent/guardian's signature on the learning agreement shall constitute permission for the student to receive instruction through independent study.

Course-Based Independent Study Requirements

The district's course-based independent study program for students shall be subject to the following requirements: (Education Code 51749.5)

1. A signed learning agreement shall be completed and on file for each participating student, pursuant to Education Code 51749.6

2. Courses shall be taught under the general supervision of certificated employees who hold the appropriate subject matter credential and are employed by the district or by another district, charter school, or county office of education with which the district has a memorandum of understanding to provide the instruction

3. Courses shall be annually certified by Board resolution to be of the same rigor and educational quality and to provide intellectual challenge that is substantially equivalent to in-person, classroom-based instruction, and shall be aligned to all relevant local and state content standards

   For high schools, this shall include access to all courses offered by the district for graduation and approved by UC or CSU as creditable under the A-G admissions criteria

   The certification shall, at a minimum, include the duration, number of equivalent daily instructional minutes for each school day that a student is enrolled, number of equivalent total instructional minutes, and number of course credits for each course, consistent with that of equivalent classroom-based courses. Additionally, the certification shall include plans to provide opportunities throughout the school year for all to receive at least weekly synchronous instruction

4. Students enrolled in courses shall meet the applicable age requirements established pursuant to Education Code 46300.1, 46300.4, 47612, and 47612.1, and the applicable residency and enrollment requirements established pursuant to Education Code 46300.2, 47612, 48204, and 51747.3

5. For each student participating in a course, satisfactory educational progress shall be determined based on the student's achievement and engagement in the independent study program as indicated by the student's performance on applicable student-level measures of student achievement and engagement set forth in Education Code 52060; completion of assignments, assessments, or other indicators that evidence that the student is working on assignments; learning of required concepts, as determined by the supervising teacher; and progress toward successful completion of the course of study or individual course, as determined by the supervising teacher

   If satisfactory educational progress in one or more independent study courses is not being made, the teacher providing instruction shall notify the student and, if the student is under 18 years of age, the student's parent/guardian. The teacher shall conduct an evaluation to determine whether it is in the student's best interest to remain in the course or whether the student should be referred to an alternative program, which may include, but is not limited to, a regular school program

   Procedures for tiered reengagement strategies shall be used for all students who are not making satisfactory educational progress in one or more courses or who are in violation of the written learning agreement, as described in the section "Learning Agreement for Course-Based Independent Study" below. These procedures shall include, but are not necessarily limited to, the verification of current contact information for each enrolled student; a plan for outreach from the school to determine student needs, including connection with health and social services as necessary; and a clear standard for requiring a student-parent-educator conference

to review a student's written agreement and reconsider the independent study program's impact on the student's achievement and well-being

6. Examinations shall be administered by a proctor

7. Statewide testing results shall be reported and assigned to the school at which the student is enrolled and shall be included in the aggregate results of the district

   Test results also shall be disaggregated for purposes of comparisons with the test results of students enrolled in classroom-based courses

8. A student shall not be required to enroll in courses included in the course-based independent study program

9. The student-teacher ratio in the courses in this program shall be in accordance with Education Code 51745.6

10. For each student, the combined equivalent daily instructional minutes for courses in this program and all other courses shall meet applicable minimum instructional day requirements, and the student shall be offered the minimum annual total equivalent instructional minutes pursuant to Education Code 46200-46208

11. Courses required for high school graduation or for admission to UC or CSU shall not be offered exclusively through independent study

12. A student participating in this program shall not be assessed a fee that is prohibited by Education Code 49011

13. A student shall not be prohibited from participating in independent study solely on the basis that the student does not have the materials, equipment, or access to Internet connectivity necessary to participate in the course

14. A student with disabilities, as defined in Education Code 56026, may participate in course-based independent study if the student's individualized education program specifically provides for that participation

15. A temporarily disabled student shall not receive individual instruction pursuant to Education Code 48206.3 through course-based independent study

16. The district shall maintain an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP), including details to transition any student whose family wishes to return to in-person instruction from course-based independent study expeditiously, and, in no case, later than five instructional days

Learning Agreement for Course-Based Independent Study

Before enrolling a student in a course within a course-based independent study program, the Superintendent or designee shall provide the student and, if the student is under age 18 years, the student's parent/guardian, with a written learning agreement that includes all of the following: (Education Code 51749.6)

1. A summary of the district's policies and procedures related to course-based independent study pursuant to Education Code 51749.5

2. The duration of the enrolled course(s) and the number of course credits for each enrolled course, consistent with the Board certifications made pursuant to Item #3 of "Course-Based Independent Study" above

3. The duration of the learning agreement, which shall not exceed a school year or span multiple school years

4. The learning objectives and expectations for each course, including, but not limited to, a description of how satisfactory educational progress is measured and when a student evaluation is required to determine whether the student should remain in the course or be referred to an alternative program, which may include, but is not limited to, a regular school program

5. The specific resources that will be made available to the student, including materials and personnel, and access to Internet connectivity and devices adequate to participate in the educational program and complete assigned work

6. 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, students with disabilities with an individualized education program or a Section 504 plan in order to be consistent with their program or plan, students in foster care or experiencing homelessness, and students requiring mental health supports

7. A statement that enrollment is an optional educational alternative and no student may be required to participate

   In the case of a suspended or expelled student who is referred or assigned to any school, class, or program pursuant to Education Code 48915 or 48917, a statement that instruction may be provided through course-based independent study only if the student is offered the alternative of classroom instruction

8. 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/guardian regarding a student's academic progress

9. The objectives and methods of study for the student's work, and the methods used to evaluate that work

10. A statement of the adopted policies regarding the maximum length of time allowed between the assignment and the completion of a student's assigned work, the level of satisfactory educational progress, and the number of missed assignments allowed before an evaluation of whether the student should be allowed to continue in course-based independent study

11. A statement of the number of course credits or, for the elementary grades, other measures of academic accomplishment appropriate to the learning agreement, to be earned by the student upon completion

Upon the request of a student's parent/guardian, and before signing a learning agreement as

described above, the district shall conduct a telephone, videoconference, or in-person student-parent-educator conference, or other meeting during which the student, parent/guardian, and, if requested by the parent/guardian, an advocate, may ask questions about the educational options, including which curriculum offerings and nonacademic supports will be available to the student in independent study. (Education Code 51749.6)

Student-Parent-Educator Conferences

A student-parent-educator conference shall be held as appropriate including, but not limited to, as a reengagement strategy and/or if requested by a parent/guardian prior to enrollment or disenrollment from independent study. (Education Code 51745.5, 51747, 51749.5)

Records

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that records are maintained for audit purposes.

These records shall include, but not be limited to: (Education Code 51748; 5 CCR 11703)

1. A copy of the Board policy, administrative regulation, and other procedures related to independent study

2. A listing of the students, by grade level, program, and school, who have participated in independent study, along with the course credits attempted by and awarded to students in grades 9-12 and adult education

3. A file of all agreements, with representative samples of each student's work products bearing the supervising teacher's signed or initialed and dated notations indicating that the teacher has personally evaluated the work or personally reviewed the evaluations made by another certificated teacher

4. As appropriate to the program in which the students are participating, a daily or hourly attendance register that is separate from classroom attendance records, maintained on a current basis as time values of student work products judged by a certificated teacher, and reviewed by the supervising teacher if they are two different persons

   Additionally, the district shall maintain documentation of hours or fraction of an hour for student work products and the time that students engaged in asynchronous instruction. (Education Code 54747.5)

5. Appropriate documentation of compliance with the teacher-student ratios required by Education Code 51745.6 and 51749.5

6. Appropriate documentation of compliance with the requirements pursuant to Education Code 51747.5 to ensure the coordination, evaluation, and supervision of the independent study of each student by a district employee who possesses a valid certification document pursuant to Education Code 44865 or an emergency credential pursuant to Education Code 44300

The district shall document each student's participation in live interaction and synchronous instruction pursuant to Education Code 51747 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 shall be documented as non-participatory for that school day. (Education Code 51747.5)

The Superintendent or designee shall also maintain a written or computer-based record such as a grade book or summary document of student engagement, for each class, of all grades, assignments, and assessments for each student for independent study assignments. (Education Code 51747.5)

Signed written and supplemental agreements, assignment records, work samples, and attendance records may be maintained as an electronic file in accordance with Education Code 51747 and 51749.6, as applicable.

Program Evaluation

The Superintendent or designee shall annually report to the Board the number of district students participating in independent study, the average daily attendance generated for apportionment purposes, student performance as measured by standard indicators and in comparison, to students in classroom-based instruction, 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.

Policy Reference Disclaimer:
These references are not intended to be part of the policy itself, nor do they indicate the basis or authority for the board to enact this policy. Instead, they are provided as additional resources for those interested in the subject matter of the policy.

| State | Description |
|---|---|
| 5 CCR 11700-11705 | Independent study |
| Ed. Code 147610-47615 | Charter School Operation |
| Ed. Code 17289 | Exemption for facilities |
| Ed. Code 41020 | Requirement for annual audit |
| Ed. Code 41422 | Emergency conditions and apportionments |
| Ed. Code 42238 | Revenue limits |
| Ed. Code 42238.05 | Local control funding formula; average daily attendance |
| Ed. Code 44865 | Qualifications for independent study teachers |
| Ed. Code 46100 | Length of school day |
| Ed. Code 46200-46208 | Incentives for longer instructional day and year |
| Ed. Code 46300-46307.1 | Methods of computing average daily attendance |
| Ed. Code 46390-46393 | Emergency average daily attendance |
| Ed. Code 46600 | Interdistrict attendance computation |
| Ed. Code 47612.5 | Charter schools operations; general requirements |
| Ed. Code 48204 | Residency requirements for school attendance |
| Ed. Code 48206.3 | Home or hospital instruction; students with temporary disabilities |
| Ed. Code 48220 | Classes of children exempted |
| Ed. Code 48340 | Improvement of pupil attendance |
| Ed. Code 48915 | Expulsion; particular circumstances |
| Ed. Code 48916.1 | Educational program requirements for expelled students |
| Ed. Code 48917 | Suspension of expulsion order |
| Ed. Code 49010 | Educational activity; definition |
| Ed. Code 49011 | Student fees; definition |
| Ed. Code 49501.5 | School Meals |
| Ed. Code 51225.3 | High school graduation requirements |
| Ed. Code 51744-51749.6 | Independent study |

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| Ed. Code 52060 | Local control and accountability plan |
| Ed. Code 52523 | Adult education as supplement to high school curriculum; criteria |
| Ed. Code 56026 | Individual with exceptional needs |
| Ed. Code 58500-58512 | Alternative schools and programs of choice |
| Fam. Code 6550-6552 | Caregivers |

| Federal | Description |
|---|---|
| 20 USC 6311 | State plan |

| Management Resources | Description |
|---|---|
| California Department of Education Publication | Legal Requirements for Independent Study |
| California Department of Education Publication | Conducting Individualized Determinations of Need |
| California Department of Education Publication | California Digital Learning Integration and Standards Guidance, May 2021 |
| California Department of Education Publication | Elements of Exemplary Independent Study |
| Court Decision | Modesto City Schools v. Education Audits Appeal Panel (2004) 123 Cal.App.4th 1365 |
| Education Audit Appeals Panel Publication | Guide for Annual Audits of K-12 Local Education Agencies and State Compliance Reporting |
| Website | CSBA District and County Office of Education Legal Services |
| Website | California Consortium for Independent Study |
| Website | California Department of Education, Independent Study |
| Website | Education Audit Appeals Panel |

Cross References

| Code | Description |
|---|---|
| 0410 | Nondiscrimination In District Programs And Activities |
| 0420.4 | Charter School Authorization |
| 0420.4 | Charter School Authorization |
| 0450 | Comprehensive Safety Plan |
| 0470 | COVID-19 Mitigation Plan |
| 0500 | Accountability |
| 3260 | Fees And Charges |
| 3260 | Fees And Charges |
| 3516.5 | Emergency Schedules |
| 3550 | Food Service/Child Nutrition Program |
| 3580 | District Records |
| 3580 | District Records |
| 4112.2 | Certification |
| 4112.2 | Certification |
| 4131 | Staff Development |
| 5111.1 | District Residency |
| 5111.1 | District Residency |
| 5112.3 | Student Leave Of Absence |
| 5112.3 | Student Leave Of Absence |
| 5113 | Absences And Excuses |
| 5113 | Absences And Excuses |
| 5113.1 | Chronic Absence And Truancy |
| 5113.1 | Chronic Absence And Truancy |
| 5121 | Grades/Evaluation Of Student Achievement |
| 5121 | Grades/Evaluation Of Student Achievement |
| 5125 | Student Records |

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| 5125 | Student Records |
| 5126 | Awards For Achievement |
| 5126 | Awards For Achievement |
| 5141.22 | Infectious Diseases |
| 5141.22 | Infectious Diseases |
| 5141.31 | Immunizations |
| 5141.31 | Immunizations |
| 5144.1 | Suspension And Expulsion/Due Process |
| 5144.1 | Suspension And Expulsion/Due Process |
| 5145.6 | Parent/Guardian Notifications |
| 5145.6-E(1) | Parent/Guardian Notifications |
| 5146 | Married/Pregnant/Parenting Students |
| 5147 | Dropout Prevention |
| 6000 | Concepts And Roles |
| 6011 | Academic Standards |
| 6111 | School Calendar |
| 6112 | School Day |
| 6112 | School Day |
| 6142.4 | Service Learning/Community Service Classes |
| 6143 | Courses Of Study |
| 6143 | Courses Of Study |
| 6146.1 | High School Graduation Requirements |
| 6146.11 | Alternative Credits Toward Graduation |
| 6146.11 | Alternative Credits Toward Graduation |
| 6152 | Class Assignment |
| 6159 | Individualized Education Program |
| 6159 | Individualized Education Program |
| 6162.5 | Student Assessment |
| 6162.51 | State Academic Achievement Tests |
| 6162.51 | State Academic Achievement Tests |
| 6164.5 | Student Success Teams |
| 6164.5 | Student Success Teams |
| 6172 | Gifted And Talented Student Program |
| 6172 | Gifted And Talented Student Program |
| 6181 | Alternative Schools/Programs Of Choice |
| 6181 | Alternative Schools/Programs Of Choice |
| 6183 | Home And Hospital Instruction |
| 6184 | Continuation Education |
| 6184 | Continuation Education |
| 6185 | Community Day School |
| 6185 | Community Day School |
| 6200 | Adult Education |
| 6200 | Adult Education |