



Education for Change Public Schools

INDEPENDENT STUDY BOARD POLICY

1st amendment 11/1/09

2nd amendment 8/21/14

3rd amendment 1/31/19

4th amendment 8/18/21

5th amendment 5/5/22

The Education for Change (“EFC”) governing board (“Board”) recognizes its responsibility for the education of all students in their schools. This Board Policy applies to all EFC charter schools (the “Charter Schools”)¹. The Board authorizes the Superintendent of Schools to establish independent study as an optional alternative instructional strategy in which no pupil may be required to participate and is designed to teach the knowledge and skills of the core curriculum, and by which all enrolled students may achieve curriculum objectives and fulfill graduation requirements in a setting other than the regular classroom. The primary purpose for independent study is to offer a means of individualizing the educational plan for students whose needs may be met best through study outside the regular classroom setting because study within the regular education setting is challenged by personal circumstances.

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

1. Independent Study exceeding 14 school days in one school year shall only be approved under the following circumstances:
 - a. When a pupil must quarantine or isolate per the COVID-19 public health requirements established by the Alameda County Department of Public Health other local, state, or federal Department of Public Health Order; or
 - b. When a pupil becomes temporarily disabled, if
 - i. The student's parent or guardian provides written documentation by a licensed physician of the temporary disability which would prevent the student from attending in-person instruction, and
 - ii. The student's parent or guardian and the Charter School agree that the student may receive instruction through independent study instead of receiving the "home and hospital" instruction.

¹ As of the date of this adoption, the Charter Schools operated by EFC include Achieve Academy, ASCEND, COX, Latitude 37.8 High School, Lazear Charter Academy, Learning Without Limits.

2. For pupils in all grade levels and programs offered by the Charter Schools (TK-12), 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 fifteen (15) school days.
3. For pupils in all grade levels and programs offered by the Charter Schools (TK-12), the maximum length of time that a student may receive instruction through independent study in one school year is 40 school days.
4. The Superintendent of Schools 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 pupil fails to complete at least 75% of assignments during any period of 15 school days
 - b. In the event a student's educational progress falls below satisfactory levels as determined by the Charter Schools' Multi-Tiered System of Supports ("MTSS") which considers ALL of the following indicators:
 - i. The pupil's achievement and engagement in the independent study program, as indicated by the pupil's performance on applicable pupil-level measures of pupil achievement and pupil engagement set forth in Education Code Section 52060(d) paragraphs (4) and (5).
 - ii. The completion of assignments, assessments, or other indicators that evidence that the pupil 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.

A written record of the findings of any evaluation conducted pursuant to this policy shall be treated as a mandatory interim pupil record. The 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.

5. The Charter Schools shall provide content aligned to grade level standards that is substantially equivalent to in-person instruction. For high school grade levels this shall include access to all courses offered by the Charter Schools for graduation and approved by the UC or CSU as creditable under the A-G admissions criteria.
6. The Charter School has adopted tiered reengagement strategies* for all pupils who are not generating attendance for more than 10 percent of required minimum instructional time over four continuous weeks of the Charter School's approved instructional calendar, pupils found not participatory in synchronous instructional offerings pursuant to Education Code Section 51747.5 for more than 50 percent of the scheduled times of synchronous instruction in a school month as applicable by grade span, or who are in

violation of the written agreement pursuant to Education Code Section 51747(g). These procedures shall include local programs intended to address chronic absenteeism, as applicable, with at least all of the following:

- 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 Charter School to determine pupil needs including connection with health and social services as necessary;
7. The following plan shall be in place in accordance with Education Code Section 51747(e) for synchronous instruction and live interaction*:
- a. For pupils in transitional kindergarten through grade 3, inclusive, the plan to provide opportunities for daily synchronous instruction for all pupils throughout the school year by each pupil's teacher or teachers of record shall be as follows: a minimum of 30 minutes of literacy-based direct instruction via Zoom or a similar platform will be provided daily. The remainder of instructional time will be spent in asynchronous learning.
 - b. For pupils in grades 4-8, inclusive, the plan to provide opportunities for daily live interaction between the pupil and a certificated or non-certificated employee of the Charter School and at least weekly synchronous instruction for all pupils throughout the school year by each pupil's teacher or teachers of record shall be as follows: a minimum of 30 minutes of direct instruction via Zoom or a similar platform will be provided weekly. A minimum of 15 minutes daily for the remainder of the days that week will provide for live interaction with a staff member over telephone or via video conference.
 - c. For pupils in grades 9-12, inclusive, the plan to provide opportunities for at least weekly synchronous instruction for all pupils throughout the school year by each pupil's teacher or teachers of record shall be as follows: a minimum of 30 minutes of direct instruction via Zoom or a similar platform will be provided weekly.
8. The following plan shall be utilized to transition pupils whose families wish to return to in-person instruction* from independent study expeditiously, and, in no case, later than five instructional days:
- a. Upon receipt of the request from the parent/guardian, office staff shall transfer the pupil back to in-person instruction within three school days, provided that the pupil does not need to complete a quarantine or isolation period as a result of a pending or positive COVID-19 test or COVID-19 exposure;
 - b. Office staff shall notify the pupil's in-person supervising teacher and the parent/guardian regarding the student's in-person start date no later than the school day following receipt of the request.

** The tiered reengagement strategies, plan for synchronous instruction and live interaction, and plan to transition pupils whose families wish to return to in-person instruction shall not apply to pupils who participate in an independent study program for fewer than 15 schooldays in a school*

year and pupils 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. These sections shall not apply to 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.

9. 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, 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 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.
 - 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. For a pupil participating in an independent study program that is scheduled for more than 14 school days, 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 the certificated employee designated as having responsibility for the special education programming of the pupil, as applicable. Beginning in the 2022–23 school year, for a pupil participating in an independent study program that is scheduled for less than 15 school days, each written agreement shall be signed within 10 school days of the commencement of the first day of the pupil's enrollment in 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 the certificated employee designated as having responsibility for the special education programming of the pupil, as applicable. 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.
 - 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.
10. The following shall be considered by the Charter Schools and parents and students when choosing independent study as an educational option:
- a. No student shall be required to participate in independent study. All students shall have the alternative of classroom instruction.
 - b. An individual with exceptional needs as defined in Education Code 56026 may participate in independent study if their individualized education program (IEP) specifically provides for that participation.
 - c. No temporarily disabled student may receive individual instruction pursuant to Education Code Section 48206.3 through independent study. However, if the temporarily disabled student's parent or guardian provides formal documentation of the temporary disability by a licensed medical professional, and the student's parent or guardian and the Charter School agree, student may receive instruction

through independent study instead of receiving the "home and hospital" instruction provided pursuant to Education Code Section 48206.3.

- d. EFC shall provide appropriate existing services and resources to enable students to complete their independent study successfully and shall ensure that the independent study student has the same access to all existing services and resources in the school in which the student is enrolled as is available to all other students in the school.
 - e. Pupils at the elementary level who request independent study, together with their parents or guardians, should recognize that independent study at the elementary level must emphasize a commitment on the part of the pupil's parent(s) or guardian. At the secondary level, the student must be assisted or supported, as necessary, by parents and others who may help directly with instruction.
 - f. The Superintendent of Schools shall establish appropriate screening procedures to ensure that the necessary levels of understanding and preparation exist to meet the conditions of the independent study agreement before its approval by the designated certificated representative of the Education for Change schools.
11. The Superintendent of Schools or designee shall report to the Board the number of students in independent study by typical categories of study and duration; the ADA generated; a description of the students' performance on those indicators of quality as the board may specify; and the number of proportion of students by typical categories that successfully complete their studies.
 12. The Charter Schools shall comply with the Education Code sections 51745 through 51749.3 and the provisions of the Charter Schools Act of 1992 and the State Board of Education regulations adopted there under.
 13. The Superintendent of Schools may establish regulations to implement these policies in accordance with the law. A copy of these policies shall be maintained on file, amended and approved as necessary by the Education for Change Board of Directors.