COLORADO
Department of Education

Requesting Approval for Alternative Attendance Documentation

(Independent Study Courses Only)

Guidance as of October 21, 2026

School Auditing Office
201 E. Colfax Ave., Room 206, Denver, CO 80203
audit@cde.state.co.us

Independent Study Courses

Per 1 CCR 301-39, rule 1.01(3), beginning with the 2024-2025 school year, Independent Study courses may be included as instructional time in the determination of funding level for some brick-and-mortar students. For the purposes of this guidance, "Independent Study" refers to those courses in which some or all of the course is being completed off-site, independently by a student attending a brick-and-mortar school. These courses include the provision of content aligned to grade-level standards (where applicable) and are substantially equivalent to a traditional course. Independent Study courses must follow a written learning plan that includes a curriculum, course outline, or plan for study, the materials to be used, the requirements for submitting assignments and recording academic progress, and the role of the supervising licensed teacher.

Colorado public school students may meet the attendance requirements for funding using any course. However, depending on the structure of the courses offered by a school, students enrolled in Independent Study courses may not be required to attend in person and on-site at their school. To demonstrate participation in an Independent Study course that does not require regular, in-person attendance at a student's school of enrollment, the district must request approval from the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) to use documentation other than reports from a school's Student Information System.

Requesting approval to use Alternative Attendance Documentation

Districts wishing to use alternative documentation to demonstrate student attendance in an Independent Study course may do so by requesting approval from the School Auditing Office. Requests must be emailed to the School Auditing Office at audit@cde.state.co.us (prior to September 15) and must include, at a minimum:

- The name of the school requesting approval
- The name and a description of the Independent Study course for which approval is being requested
- A sample of the documentation that would be used to demonstrate attendance
    - The sample documentation must not include Personally Identifiable Information (PII) for any student.
- A sample of a written learning plan for Independent Study courses

For general concerns or questions about requesting the use of alternative attendance documentation for Independent Study courses, please contact the School Auditing Office at audit@cde.state.co.us.