

San Dieguito Union High School District

Independent Study

BP 6158

Instruction

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 or, whose health or other personal circumstances make classroom attendance difficult.

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, an alternative school or program of choice, a charter school, and an online course.

Student participation in independent study shall be voluntary.

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. Student's independent study shall be coordinated, evaluated, and documented, as prescribed by law and reflected in the accompanying administrative regulation.

The minimum period of time for any independent study option shall be five consecutive school days.

General Independent Study Requirements

The district shall offer independent study, as specified in Education Code 51745, to meet the educational needs of students unless the district has obtained a waiver.

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 independent study and is likely to succeed in independent study as well as or better than the student would in the regular classroom setting.

The minimum instructional minutes for students participating in independent study shall be the same as required for their peers at the school who are receiving in-person instruction, except as otherwise permitted by law.

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 two weeks 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 of the 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:

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 or the California State University as creditable under the A–G admissions criteria.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that students participating in independent study for 15 school days or more receive the following throughout the school year:

1. For students in grades 7-8, opportunities for both daily live interaction and at least weekly synchronous instruction
2. For students in grades 9-12, opportunities for at least weekly synchronous instruction

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that procedures for tiered reengagement strategies are used for all students participating in an independent study program for 15 school days or more.

Procedures for 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 a local educational agency's approved instructional calendar, pupils found not participatory in synchronous instructional offerings pursuant to 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 pupils who are in violation of the written agreement pursuant to subdivision (g). These

procedures shall include local programs intended to address chronic absenteeism, as applicable, with at least all of the following:

- (1) Verification of current contact information for each enrolled pupil.
- (2) Notification to parents or 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 pupil needs, including connection with health and social services as necessary.
- (4) A clear standard for requiring a pupil-parent-educator conference to review a pupil's written agreement, and reconsider the independent study program's impact on the pupil's achievement and well-being.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop a plan 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. This requirement only applies to students participating in an independent study program for 15 school days or more.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that a written agreement exists for each participating student as prescribed by law.

The district shall provide written notice to the parents/guardians of all enrolled students of the option to enroll their child in in-person instruction or independent study during the 2022-23 school year. This notice shall be posted on the district's web site, and shall include, at a minimum, information about the right to request a student-parent-educator conference before enrollment, student rights regarding procedures for enrolling, disenrolling, and re-enrolling in independent study, and the instructional time, including synchronous and asynchronous learning, that a student will have access to as part of independent study.

Upon the request of the parent/guardian of a student, and before signing a written agreement, as described below in the section "Written Agreement" the district shall conduct a telephone, videoconference, or in-person student-parent-educator conference or other meeting during which the student, parent/guardian, or their advocate may ask questions about the educational options, including which curriculum offerings and nonacademic supports will be available to the student in independent study.

Written Agreement

A written agreement shall be developed and implemented for each student participating in independent study for three or more consecutive school days.

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.

The 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 agreement for each participating student also shall include, but are not limited to, all of the following:

1. The frequency, time, place and manner 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 trigger 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, for the elementary grades, 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
10. Before the commencement of independent study, the agreement shall be signed and dated by the student, the student's parent/guardian or caregiver if the student is under age 18 years, the certificated employee responsible for the general supervision of independent study, and all persons who have direct responsibility for providing assistance to the student.

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

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

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.

Records

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that records are maintained for audit purposes. These records shall include, but not be limited to:

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 units of the curriculum attempted and completed by students in grades K-8 and 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 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
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.

The Superintendent or designee also shall 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.

The signed, dated agreement, any supplemental agreement, assignment records, work samples, and attendance records may be maintained on file electronically.

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.

State	Description
5 CCR 11700-11705	Independent study
Ed. Code 17289	Exemption for facilities
Ed. Code 41976.2	Independent study programs; adult education funding

Ed. Code 42238	Revenue limits
Ed. Code 42238.05	Local control funding formula; average daily attendance
Ed. Code 44865	Qualifications for home teachers
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 47612-47612.1	Charter School Operation
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 49011	Student fees
Ed. Code 51225.3	High school graduation
Ed. Code 51745	Independent study
Ed. Code 52522	Adult education alternative instructional delivery
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
Federal	Description
20 USC 6301	Highly qualified teachers
Management Resources	Description
California Department of Education Publication	California Digital Learning Integration and Standards Guidance, April 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

Website

[California Consortium for Independent Study](#)

Website

[California Department of Education, Independent Study](#)

Website

[Education Audit Appeals Panel](#)

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