INDEPENDENT STUDY

The Board of Education authorizes independent study as an optional alternative instructional strategy for eligible 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 whose health or other personal circumstances make classroom attendance difficult. As necessary to meet student needs, independent study may be offered on a full-time basis or on a part-time basis in conjunction with part- or full-time classroom study.

(cf. 5147 - Dropout Prevention)
(cf. 6011 - Academic Standards)
(cf. 6143 - Courses of Study)
(cf. 6146.1 - High School Graduation Requirements)
(cf. 6146.11 - Alternative Credits Toward Graduation)
(cf. 6172 - Gifted and Talented Student Program)
(cf. 6200 - Adult Education)

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 home-based format, and an online course.

(cf. 0420.4 - Charter School Authorization)
(cf. 6181 - Alternative Schools/Programs of Choice)

A student's participation in independent study shall be voluntary. Students participating in independent study shall have the right, at any time, to enter or return to the regular classroom mode of instruction. (Education Code 51747; 5 CCR 11700)

Parents/guardians of students who are interested in independent study shall contact the Superintendent or designee. The Superintendent or designee shall approve independent study for an individual student only 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 he/she would in the regular classroom setting.

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

Written Agreements

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that a written master agreement and, as appropriate, a learning agreement for students participating in course-based independent study exist for each participating student as prescribed by law. (Education Code 51747, 51749.5)

The master agreement shall specify the length of time in which each independent study assignment must be completed. Because excessive leniency in the duration of independent
INDEPENDENT STUDY (continued)

study assignments may result in a student falling behind his/her peers and increase the risk of dropping out of school, independent study assignments shall be no more than one week for all grade levels and types of program. However, 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, up to 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 misses three assignments, unless the student's written agreement specifies a lower or higher number of missed assignments based on the nature of the assignments, the total number of assignments, and/or other unique circumstances.

Student-Teacher Conferences

Supervising teachers should establish an appropriate schedule for student-teacher conferences in order to help identify students falling behind in their work or in danger of failing or dropping out of school. Teachers are expected to monitor student progress and work closely with each student to determine the amount and type of contact needed for the student to be successful in the program.

Missing appointments with the supervising teacher without valid reasons may trigger an evaluation to determine whether the student should remain in independent study.

Home-Based Independent Study

The Superintendent or designee shall encourage parents/guardians desiring to teach their children at home to have their children participate in independent study. Such participation allows continued contact and cooperation between the school system and the home-based student and ensures that the student will be offered a standards-based education substantially equivalent in quality and quantity to the district's classroom instruction.

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.

(cf. 0500 - Accountability)
(cf. 5121 - Grades/Evaluation of Student Achievement)
(cf. 6162.5 - Student Assessment)
(cf. 6162.51 - State Academic Achievement Tests)
(cf. 6162.52 - High School Exit Examination)
INDEPENDENT STUDY (continued)

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE
- 17289 Exemption for facilities
- 41976.2 Independent study programs; adult education funding
- 42238 Revenue limits
- 42238.05 Local control funding formula; average daily attendance
- 44865 Qualifications for home teachers and teachers in special classes and schools
- 46200-46208 Instructional day and year
- 46300-46307.1 Methods of computing average daily attendance
- 47612.5 Independent study in charter schools
- 48204 Residency
- 48206.3 Home or hospital instruction; students with temporary disabilities
- 48220 Classes of children exempted
- 48340 Improvement of pupil attendance
- 48915 Expulsion; particular circumstances
- 48916.1 Educational program requirements for expelled students
- 48917 Suspension of expulsion order
- 49011 Student fees
- 51225.3 Requirements for high school graduation
- 51745-51749.6 Independent study programs
- 52522 Adult education alternative instructional delivery
- 52523 Adult education as supplement to high school curriculum; criteria
- 56026 Individuals with exceptional needs
- 58500-58512 Alternative schools and programs of choice

FAMILY CODE
- 6550 Authorization affidavits

CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 5
- 11700-11703 Independent study
- 19819 State audit compliance

UNITED STATES CODE, TITLE 20
- 6301 Highly qualified teachers

COURT DECISIONS
- EDUCATION AUDIT APPEALS PANEL DECISIONS
  Lucerne Valley Unified School District, Case No. 03-02 (2005)

Management Resources:

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PUBLICATIONS
- Elements of Exemplary Independent Study
- Approaches to Satisfying No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 Teacher Requirements for Independent Study in Secondary Schools, January 28, 2010

WEB SITES
- California Consortium for Independent Study: http://www.ccis.org
- California Department of Education, Independent Study: http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/eo/is
- Education Audit Appeals Panel: http://www.eaap.ca.gov

Policy
- adopted: December 12, 2017
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SAN DIEGO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
San Diego, California