

## **Lewis Center for Educational Research**

### **BP 6158: INSTRUCTION INDEPENDENT STUDY PROGRAM**

**Adopted: September 8, 2014**

**Revised: August 8, 2022**

The Lewis Center for Educational Research (LCER) Board of Directors authorizes Independent Study as an optional alternative instructional strategy for students in any K-12 school in the organization, which includes Academy for Academic Excellence and Norton Science and Language Academy. Independent Study provides a means for students to achieve curriculum objectives and meet graduation requirements outside the regular classroom. For the purpose of this policy, the terms "student" and "pupil" are synonymous.

Independent Study is a continuously voluntary, educational alternative in which no student may be required to participate. Instruction may be provided only if the student is offered a classroom option that is always available. Short-term independent study (less than 15 days in a school year) is available to all students.

Independent Study shall offer a means of individualizing an educational learning plan for students whose needs may be best met temporarily through study outside of the regular classroom setting. The organization shall provide and ensure students who are engaging in Independent Study have the same access to existing services and resources as are available to all other students in the school in which the Independent Study students are enrolled.

The President/CEO or designee shall determine that the prospective Independent Study student understands the organization's requirements for Independent Study and is prepared to meet them.

#### **Legal Requirements:**

1. **Maximum Length:** For students in all grade levels and all Schools governed by the organization, the maximum length of time that may elapse between the time an assignment is made and the date by which the student must complete the assigned work shall be ten (10) school days.
2. **Evaluation:** The President/CEO 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 student fails to complete three (3) consecutive assignments during any period of ten (10) school days.
  - b. In the event Student's educational progress falls below satisfactory levels as determined by the Charter School's Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) team 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 student record. This record shall be maintained for a period of three (3) years from the date of the evaluation and if the student transfers to another California public school, the record shall be forwarded to that school.

3. The Charter School 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 School for graduation and approved by the UC or CSU as credible under the A-G admissions criteria.
4. Fully Executed Written Agreement: A current written agreement shall be maintained on file for each independent study student, including but not limited to, all of the following:
  - ◆ The manner, time, frequency, and place for submitting a student's assignments, for reporting the student's academic progress, and for communicating with a pupil's parent or guardian regarding a pupil's academic progress.
  - ◆ The objectives and methods of study for the student's work, and the methods utilized to evaluate that work.
  - ◆ The specific resources, including materials and personnel, that will be made available to the student. 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.
  - ◆ A statement of the policies adopted pursuant to Education Code Section 51747, subdivisions (a) and (b) 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 prior to an evaluation of whether or not the student should be allowed to continue in independent study.
  - ◆ The duration of the independent study agreement, including beginning and ending dates for the student's participation in independent study under the agreement. No independent study agreement shall be valid for any period longer than one school year.
  - ◆ 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.
  - ◆ 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.

- ◆ The inclusion of a statement in each independent study agreement that independent study is an optional educational alternative in which no student may be required to participate. In the case of a student who is referred or assigned to any school, class or program pursuant to Education Code sections 48915 or 48917, the agreement also shall include the statement that instruction may be provided to the student through independent study only if the student is offered the alternative of classroom instruction.
  - ◆ Each written agreement shall be signed, within 10 days of the beginning of the first day of the student's enrollment in short term independent study, by the student, the student's parent, legal guardian, or care giver, if the student is less than 18 years of age, the certificated employee who has been designated as having responsibility for the general supervision of independent study, the certificated employee with responsibility for the student's special education programming, and all persons who have direct responsibility for providing assistance to the student. 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.
    - ◆ Before signing a written agreement for independent study, the parent or guardian may request a meeting regarding the placement in the independent study program.
5. The Charter School 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.
  6. The President/CEO or designee may establish administrative regulations to implement Independent Study in accordance with the law.