

Lewis Center for Educational Research

BP 6158: INSTRUCTION INDEPENDENT STUDY PROGRAM

Adopted: September 8, 2014

Revised: October 18, 2021

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) and long-term independent study (15 days or more 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 provided at a level of quality and intellectual challenge 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. For students who participate in fifteen (15) days or more of independent study in a school year, the Charter School has adopted tiered reengagement strategies for the following pupils:
 - a. All pupils who are not generating attendance for more than three (3) school days or 60% of the instructional days in a school week, or 10 percent of required minimum instructional time over four continuous weeks of the Charter School's approved instructional calendar;
 - b. Pupils found not participatory pursuant to Education Code Section 51747.5 for more than the greater of three schooldays or 60 percent of the scheduled days of synchronous instruction in a school month as applicable by grade span; or
 - c. Pupils who are in violation of the written agreement pursuant to Education Code Section 51747(g).

These procedures shall include, but are not necessarily limited to, 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 (1) school day of the recording of a non-attendance day or lack of participation;
- c. A plan for outreach from the Charter School to determine pupil needs including connection with health and social services as necessary;
- d. 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, consistent with the policies adopted pursuant to paragraph (4) of subdivision (g) of Education Code Section 51747.¹

¹ The tiered reengagement strategies 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

5. For students who participate in fifteen (15) days or more of independent study in a school year, 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 kindergarten through grade 8, inclusive, the plan to provide opportunities for daily synchronous instruction for all pupils throughout the school year by each pupil's assigned teachers shall be as follows:
 - i. Pupils will enroll in classes through a third-party vendor such as Acellus. The vendor will offer daily standards-based lessons with asynchronous instructional support for all core academic areas. The vendor will provide attendance, grades and progress monitoring for the supervising teacher.
 - ii. The supervising teacher will offer synchronous instruction and interaction daily. The supervising teacher will be available to students daily, upon request.
 - b. 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 assigned supervising teacher shall be as follows:
 - i. Pupils will enroll in classes through an accredited third-party vendor such as Brigham Young University (BYU). The vendor will offer credit-bearing courses to fulfill high school graduation and UC/CSU A-G admission requirements.
 - ii. The supervising teacher will offer synchronous instruction at least once a week. The supervising teacher will be available to students daily, upon request.²
6. For students who participate in fifteen (15) days or more of independent study in a school year, 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 request to return to in-person instruction, the student and parent will meet with an academic counselor or administrator to review completed coursework, enroll in appropriate classes, and review the four-year plan for graduation.
 - b. The MTSS team will monitor the progress of students returning to in-person instruction to determine if additional academic, behavioral or social emotional support are needed.³

described in Education Code Sections 46392 and 46393 for which the Charter School files an affidavit seeking an allowance of attendance due to emergency conditions.

² The plan for synchronous instruction and live interaction 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 46392 and 46393 for which the Charter School files an affidavit seeking an allowance of attendance due to emergency conditions.

³ The plan to transition pupils whose families wish to return to in-person instruction 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 46392 and 46393 for which the Charter School files an affidavit seeking an allowance of attendance due to emergency conditions.

7. 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, prior to the commencement of 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, 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.
 - ◆ For the 2021–22 school year only, the Charter School shall obtain a signed written agreement for an independent study program of any length of time no later than 30 days after the first day of instruction in an independent study program or October 15, whichever date comes later.
8. 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.
 9. The President/CEO or designee may establish administrative regulations to implement Independent Study in accordance with the law.