

Lewis Center for Educational Research

AR 6158 INSTRUCTION **INDEPENDENT STUDY PROGRAM CRITERIA FOR PARTICIPATION**

Adopted: December 8, 2005

Revised: September 8, 2014

The Governing Board recognizes the value of supervised Independent Study for students in situations where their special interests, abilities, or individual needs are not being accommodated in the traditional instructional program. These students must have the willingness and ability to successfully complete the educational requirements of Independent Study.

Students who may be appropriately enrolled in Independent Study include, but are not limited to, students who:

1. Have an understanding of and commitment to Independent Study.
2. Exhibit the ability and the willingness to work independently with limited supervision by the certificated teacher.
3. Have learning styles that can best be met through Independent Study.
4. Have parents/guardians who wish to assist in the home Independent Study for their children.

Others who may benefit from Independent Study include students who:

Have received suspended expulsion (or stay of expulsion), rather than full expulsion from the Board, and have been offered Independent Study with a classroom option (i.e., enrollment at a traditional or alternative school, charter or county program, opportunity class, community day school, or continuation school).

A student who has met the criteria for participation may:

1. Complete a full program of courses.
2. Take a full program of courses and continue or take a lab class (i.e., band, chemistry) at the comprehensive school.
3. Complete an extra or special course outside the regular school day.

Student Exit from Independent Study

The student or parent/guardian/caregiver may request a classroom option at any time. This request may come from the student, parent/ guardian/caregiver, or school administration. The teacher, counselor or school administrator will make every effort to counsel the student and parent/guardian/caregiver to the most appropriate option.

The school may request a change because:

1. The student is not meeting the obligations of the Independent Study Master Agreement (Family Partnership Agreement).

2. The student is no longer meeting the criteria for participation.

Instruction

1. All Independent Study students must be enrolled in a school.
2. No course required for high school graduation shall be offered exclusively through Independent Study. Approved elective courses not required for graduation may be offered only in the independent study mode. Note: A student may complete an optional alternative study course as a unique elective course through independent study and not have a classroom equivalent as long as the classroom option is in place for required or district electives.
3. For K- 12 ADA purposes, Independent Study Teacher-ADA ratio must not exceed the baseline ratio for other instructional programs in the district.
4. Class size reduction funding is not available for any student enrolled in Independent Study.
5. Special education students (individuals with exceptional needs as defined in Education Code [56026](#)) must have an IEP that specifically provides Independent Study.
6. No funds or other things of value may be provided to Independent Study students that are not provided to other students in the school in which the student has a classroom option.
7. A certificated employee of the school site (or county office) will supervise, coordinate, and evaluate the study of each student engaged in Independent Study. Assistance to the student on Independent Study by any other non-certificated individual must be supervised by the designated supervising teacher or coordinated by him or her if the other individual is a certificated employee of the district (or county office).
8. Students engaged in Independent Study must be residents of the local county or an adjacent county.
9. No temporarily disabled student may receive individual instruction by means of Independent Study. Home and Hospital Instruction may not be provided through Independent Study. However, if the student/parents/guardians/caregivers and district agree, the student may instead receive instruction through Independent Study as an alternative to Home and Hospital Instruction.
10. To receive K-12 apportionment, students who are age 19 or 20 must have been continuously enrolled in school since their 18th birthday.
11. The curriculum specified in the written Independent Study Master Agreement (Family Partnership Agreement) and Subsidiary Contracts shall be consistent with the Board's Policies, Administrative Regulations and Procedures for curriculum and instruction.
12. The curriculum shall be substantially equivalent in quality and quantity to classroom instruction.
13. As stated in the Independent Study Master Agreement (Family Partnership Agreement) the student shall have a maximum length of one month allowed between the assignment and the completion of the pupil's work. The student may be required to attend a weekly progress meeting in order to monitor progress in assigned work.

Independent Study Master Agreement (Family Partnership Agreement)

A written Independent Study Master Agreement (Family Partnership Agreement) must be executed for each participating student and must be maintained on file. The Independent Study Master Agreement (Family Partnership Agreement) requires a learning plan that represents not less than the equivalent of a minimum school day for the student's grade level for every school day covered by the agreement.

The Independent Study Master Agreement (Family Partnership Agreement) shall include, but not be limited to:

1. General data
 - a. Name of pupil/student
 - b. Address
 - c. Grade level
 - d. School name/program placement
 - e. Birthdate
2. Subject(s) and course value/units/credits (other measures for elementary)
3. Objectives including for student's work
4. Method(s) of study (activities to reach objectives; e.g., read, define)
5. Resources including materials and personnel made available
6. Method(s) of evaluation
7. Manner of reporting (e.g., small groups, one-on-one, E-mail, FAX)
8. Time of meetings with the teacher and student
9. Location/place of the meeting
10. Frequency of the meetings between the teacher and student
11. Duration of enrollment with beginning and ending dates
12. Maximum length of enrollment that covers one semester or one-half year for a school on year-round calendar schedule
13. Dated signatures for each:
 - a. Student
 - b. Parent/Guardian/Caregiver
 - i. Caregiver Affidavit must be on file
 - ii. Not necessary if adult or Emancipated Minor
 - iii. Emancipated Minors include: married, active military or court directed
 - c. Supervising certificated teacher
 - d. Other teachers who have direct responsibility for providing assistance. Note: Independent Study Master Agreement (Family Partnership Agreement) for attendance becomes effective only when all signatures on the Independent Study Master Agreement (Family Partnership Agreement) have been signed and dated.
14. If Subsidiary Contracts are used such as Record of Academic Work and Assignment Summary sheets, they should be made a part of the Independent Study Master Agreement (Family Partnership Agreement) by specific reference(s).
15. A statement is included that identifies the number of missed assignments that will lead to an evaluation of whether the student should continue in Independent Study or return to the classroom for his or her best interest. A written report of the outcomes of any such evaluation must be retained in the student's permanent record file or folder. Note: At a minimum, permanent means for the full duration of the student's enrollment in school. It does not mean the audit file for Independent Study Master Agreement (Family Partnership Agreement).
16. Maximum length of time and type of program that may elapse between the date the assignment is made and the date the student must complete the assigned work.
17. Independent Study is a continuously voluntary, educational alternative and that a classroom option is always available.

Record of Academic Work/Assignment Summary Sheet

The detailed components of the Independent Study Master Agreement (Family Partnership Agreement) will include:

1. Course of study/subject(s).
2. Objectives of the assignments.
3. Method of studies (activities that the student needs to complete the objectives).
4. Resources materials (texts, workbooks, videos, computer activities, project, etc.) and personnel who may be assisting the student to meet the objectives.
5. Methods of evaluation for attendance and academic credit.
6. Date assignment made and date assignment due.
7. Signature of certificated teacher or initials.
8. Signature of participating student and parent/guardian.

Student Responsibilities and Rights

The student's legal rights and responsibilities must be identified and included in the Master Agreement. Procedures have been established that ensures a student's due process rights.

The student agrees to:

1. Read and understand the conditions listed on the Independent Study Master Agreement (Family Partnership Agreement).
2. Voluntarily sign the Independent Study Master Agreement (Family Partnership agreement).
3. Abide by all terms of the Independent Study Master Agreement (Family Partnership Agreement).
4. Complete all school intake process.
5. Notify school in advance for all planned missed school appointments.
6. Complete and submit work assignments by the due date.
7. Deal with incomplete assignments, as the teacher requires.
8. Contact the teacher or school when assistance is needed.
9. Ask for a classroom option whenever a student feels that Independent Study is not appropriate.

There are no excused absences in Independent Study. Students are in violation of the Independent Study Master Agreement (Family Partnership Agreement) and are subject to dismissal if they are late or absent from scheduled appointments or do not submit assigned work on time on the due dates.

The administrator shall incorporate into program procedures the appropriate use of strategies with the aim of increasing pupil achievement as well as reducing and preventing failures. They include:

1. A letter of concern to the student and parent if appropriate.
2. A specially scheduled appointment.
3. A special meeting with the teacher and/or counselor.
4. A meeting with the administrator, including the parent/guardian/ caregiver.
5. Placing the student on a student discipline contract.
6. Increasing the amount of time the student meets with a teacher or in an equivalent supervised situation.
7. Terminating the Independent Study Master Agreement (Family Partnership Agreement) and recommending for the student's return to a regular classroom option or other appropriate alternatives.

Parent Responsibilities and Rights

The parent/guardian/caregiver must agree to:

1. Read and understand the conditions listed on the Independent Study Master Agreement (Family Partnership Agreement).
2. Abide by the terms of the Independent Study Master Agreement (Family Partnership Agreement) including a commitment to, and the support and guidance of, the student in Independent Study.
3. Voluntarily sign the Independent Study Master Agreement (Family Partnership Agreement).
4. Notify the school in advance when the student will be away from school.
5. Ensure student completes all assignments by the due date.
6. Ensure the student makes all appointments.
7. Furnish transportation to school when needed.
8. Act as a support system for the student in the discipline of completing work independently.
9. Understand they have the right to review the program of instruction and revoke the Independent Study Master Agreement (Family Partnership Agreement) at any time.

Supervising Teacher

One of the most important components to the success of Independent Study is the selection of the teacher. An Independent Study teacher should have the following characteristics:

1. Have great human relation skills with the student as well as with the parent/guardian/caregiver because of the close relationship of the teacher and student.
2. Counselor, coach and sometimes Mom and Dad are secondary roles of a good Independent Study teacher.
3. A well-rounded general education background since the teacher may teach all subjects.
4. A high degree of organizational skills because the paper trail is so different than the classroom option.

The Independent Study shall be coordinated, evaluated, and, notwithstanding subdivision (a) of Section 46300, shall be under the general supervision of an employee of the school district or county office of education who possess a valid certification document pursuant to Section 44865 or an emergency credential pursuant to Section 44300, registered as required by law with a valid teaching credential.

The duties of the supervising teachers shall include the following:

1. The teacher must assign courses in areas identified in Education Code [44865](#) (a-f classes).
2. The supervising teacher must design, assign, coordinate, evaluate the work and provide general supervision of the student's Independent Study. The teacher shall:
 - a. Complete designated portions of the Independent Study Master Agreement (Family Partnership Agreement), accompanying documents, and required record keeping for student assignments and attendance credits.
 - b. Design a learning plan and assign appropriate student work that is comparable to classroom work.
 - c. Provide curriculum based on district approved Course of Study and Content Standards.

- d. Generally, supervise student's study and evaluate coursework completed by the student.
- e. Assess all student work for attendance credit.
- f. Select and save representative samples of the student's completed and evaluated assignments.
- g. Maintain and keep current any required records and files.
- h. Determine and assign grades or other approved measures of the student's achievement when appropriate.
- i. Keep parents/guardians informed of the student's progress when appropriate
- j. Counsel and coach for student's success.

Administration of Independent Study

School districts or county offices of education are not obliged to permit a student to engage in Independent Study if school officials given responsibility for the decision determine that Independent Study is not an appropriate alternative for the student.

When a district approves a Board policy to offer Independent Study, the CEO/President should assign a designee to administer and to ensure quality and legal compliance. The CEO or designee will:

1. Ensure that Independent Study occurs in accordance with state law and district policies and regulations.
2. Approve on site recommendation the participation of students requesting Independent Study.
3. Facilitate and monitor all paperwork and procedures for Independent Study.
4. Establish and maintain in a systematic manner all records required by state law and regulations.
5. Review an annual report by site for academic credits and attendance earned through Independent Study.
6. Authorize the selection of all staff members who are assigned to supervise Independent Study.
7. Supervise and evaluate staff.
8. Develop and participate in a staff development program for Independent Study.
9. Coordinate the preparation of all necessary records and reports.
10. Develop and manage the budget for Independent Study.
11. Provide a smooth transition into and out of the Independent Study mode of instruction.
12. Ensure that not more than one day of attendance can be recorded or earned for each pupil for any calendar day on which school was in session.
13. Ensure that there is performed an evaluation of pupil work samples, bearing signed or initialed and dated notions by the supervising teacher indicating that he or she personally evaluated the work, or that he or she personally reviewed the evaluation made by another certificated teacher, and that these evaluations are retained in the file.

Work Samples

Representative samples of original work of the student evaluated by a certificated teacher must be on file. Representative samples are defined as examples representing student work pertaining to Independent Study assignments where ADA was reported for attendance. The work samples should include the identification of the:

1. Required
 - a. Certificated teacher signature or initials
 - b. Date of assessment evaluation for attendance credit
2. Recommended
 - a. Subject
 - b. Student's name
 - c. Date student completed the assignment
 - d. Academic evaluation
 - e. Notation of the assessment evaluation for attendance credit (i.e., number of days or hours)

Attendance

Attendance procedures for Independent Study must meet the following attendance requirements:

Kindergarten 180 minutes per day

Grades 1-3 240 minutes per day

Grades 4-8 240 minutes per day

Grades 9-12 240 minutes per day

Independent Study attendance credit is based on the completed work product of the student. ADA is based on the Independent Study teacher's judgment of the time value of each work assignment. Work assignments must be equivalent to the full school day assignments that would have been required of the student if the student were in the classroom option. If the work is completed by the due date, attendance credit may be claimed, providing the student's completed work is equivalent to the minimum day for the specified grade level. For K-12 attendance is recorded in days.

Independent Study attendance must:

1. Be on a separate state approved attendance register.
2. Be approved by the State Department of Education if a school/program is using an alternative and/or computerized attendance accounting system.
3. Match teacher records with attendance reported.
4. Be recorded in whole days for apportionment of at least the applicable minimum day for K- 12 with maximum ADA of five days per week.
5. Never accept work after the due date for attendance credit. Student's work may be accepted for academic credit after the due date.
6. Never "bank" excessive days/hours of work and report them for some period of time when a student does not turn in work equal to the minimum number of days/hours.

Records

Each school or program shall maintain records for all students using Independent Study. Units of credit in Independent Study may be applied toward promotion to the next grade or towards graduation.

The following records must be available for an audit. Records shall include, but not be limited to:

1. A copy of the district Board Policy, Administrative Regulations, and Procedures pertaining to Independent Study.
2. A file for each student containing a:
 - a. Independent Study Master Agreement (Family Partnership Agreement) and any Subsidiary Contracts
 - b. Student Record of Academic Work/Assignment Summary Sheet
 - c. Representative samples of completed work by the student and evaluated by a certificated teacher.
 - d. Record of attendance credits, grades, and other evaluations of Independent Study assignments.
 - e. Student transcript for high school students
3. A list of all students, by grade level program or school, who have participated or are currently participating in Independent Study, showing "credits attempted" and "awarded to" each student and a record of the student's attendance.
4. An attendance register for Independent Study separate from the register(s) used for regular classroom attendance.

All records (except the student transcripts which are kept permanently) are to be kept for three years and made available for auditing.