

Independent Study

The governing board authorizes independent study as an optional alternative instructional strategy for eligible students whose needs may be best met through study outside the regular classroom setting. Independent study shall offer a means of individualizing the educational plan and enabling students to reach curriculum goals and fulfill graduation requirements. As necessary and when funding is available, to meet student needs, independent study may be offered on a full-time basis or a part-time basis in conjunction with part- or full-time classroom study.

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.

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

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that a written independent study agreement, as prescribed by law, exists for each participating student. (Education Code 51747)

The written agreement shall specify the length of time in which each independent study assignment must be completed. Because excessive leniency in the duration of independent 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 programs. 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 of the agreement.

When a participating student misses three assignments, an evaluation shall be conducted to determine whether it is in the student's best interest to remain in independent study. However, a student's written agreement may specify a lower or higher number of missed assignments that will trigger an evaluation when the Superintendent or designee determines it appropriate based on the nature of the assignments, the total number of assignments, and/or other circumstances.

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. Except in unusual circumstances, it is expected that the supervising teacher will meet, either in person or by electronic means, with each participating student at least once a week to discuss the student's progress.

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

The Superintendent or designee shall annually report to the Board the number of students participating in independent study, the average daily attendance generated for apportionment purposes, the quality of these students' work as measured by standard indicators, 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.

Reference:

CALIFORNIA EDUCATION CODE

17289	Exemption for facilities
41976.2	Independent Study programs; adult education funding
42238	Revenue limits
44865	Qualifications for home teachers and teachers in special classes and schools
46300-46307.1	Methods of computing average daily attendance
47612.5	Independent Study in Charter Schools
48204	Residency based on parent employment
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
51225.3	Requirements for high school graduation
51745-51749.3	Independent study programs
52206	Gifted and talented education; use of independent study to augment program
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
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CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 5

11700-11703	Independent Study
19819	State audit compliance

COURT DECISIONS

Modesto City Schools v. Education Audit Appeal Panel, (2004) 123 Cal.App4th 1365

EDUCATION AUDIT APPEALS PANEL DECISIONS

Lucerne Valley Unified School District, Case No. 03-02 (2005)

Management Resources:

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PUBLICATIONS

Independent Study Operations Manual, 2000 Edition

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://eaap.ca.gov>

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LONG BEACH UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT