

Board Policy

Instruction

BP 6158 (a)

Independent Study

***Note: A policy on this topic is mandated by Education Code 51747. When setting this mandated policy, the Governing Board is required by 5 CCR 11701 to publicly consider the scope and purposes of the district's independent study option and factors bearing specifically on the realistic maximum lengths of assignments and the acceptable number of missed assignments for specific populations of students, including adult education students. ***

Note: Pursuant to Register 97, No. 50, Code of Regulations, effective January 12, 1998, 5 CCR 11701-11703 have been amended to specifically include adults engaged in independent study through adult education in the implementation requirements for independent study. Although the term "student" as used below also includes adult students, districts offering adult education should specify that the independent study policy and administrative regulation are also applicable to adult education students.

The Governing Board authorizes independent study as an optional alternative instructional strategy by which students in grades K-8 and adult education may reach curriculum objectives and fulfill graduation requirements. Independent study shall offer a means of individualizing the educational plan for students whose needs may be met best through study outside of the regular classroom setting.
(cf. 5147 - Dropout Prevention)

***Note: The following paragraph reflects 5 CCR 11701.5, as added by Register 97, No. 50, to highlight the equality of rights and privileges to which a student is entitled. ***

The district's independent study option shall be substantially equivalent in quality and quantity to classroom instruction, thus enabling students enrolled in independent study to complete the district's adopted course of study within the customary time frame. Students in independent study shall have access to the same services and resources as is available to other students in the school.
(cf. 6143 - Courses of Study)
(cf. 6200 - Adult Education)

The Superintendent or designee shall determine that the prospective independent study student understands and is prepared to meet the district's requirements for independent study. Independent study entails a commitment by both the parent/guardian and the student. As the student gets older, he/she assumes a greater portion of the responsibility involved. Independent study may be offered only to students who can achieve in this program as well as or better than they would in the regular classroom.

Note: Education Code 51747 mandates Board policy which provides that a current written agreement as specified in law be maintained for each student.

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 Board recognizes that independent study may be used as an option to encourage students to remain in school. Teachers should carefully set the duration of independent study assignments, within the limits specified by the Board in order to help identify students falling behind in their work or in danger of failing or dropping out of school.

Note: Education Code 51747 mandates Board policy on the maximum length of time, by grade level and type of program, which may elapse between the time an independent study assignment is made and the date by which the student must complete it. As amended in Register 97, No. 50, 5 CCR 11700 defines "type of program" as the statutory program category for purposes of attendance accounting, such as adult education and continuation high school. Pursuant to Education Code 51747, no independent study agreement can be valid for longer than one semester (or one-half year for a school on a year-round calendar). In addition, 5 CCR 11701 requires Board policy to reflect an awareness that excessive leniency in the duration of independent study assignments can result in students failing so far behind their peers as to increase, rather than decrease, the risk of their dropping out of school.

Note: The times indicated below are suggestions from the CDE's Independent Study Operations Manual and should be revised to reflect the Board's deliberations as to the maximum realistic lengths of assignments and the grades offered by the district. The Board may also want to detail the circumstances which would justify an extension of the maximum length of an assignment in order to set clear and equitable standards for all students.

To foster each student's success in independent study, the Board establishes the following maximum lengths of time which may elapse between the time an assignment is made and date by which the student must complete the assigned work shall be as follows:

1. For students in grades K-3: 1 week
2. For students in grades 4-8: 2 weeks

When circumstances justify a longer time, the Superintendent or designee may extend the maximum length of an assignment to a period not to exceed eight weeks, pursuant to a written request with justification.

Note: Education Code 51747 also mandates policy which identifies the number of missed assignments allowed before an evaluation determines whether it is in the student's best interest to remain in independent study. When determining the number of missed assignments, the Board should consider how many absences or missed assignments by students in the regular program would trigger action such as calling the parents/ guardians or having a parent/guardian conference.

When any student fails to complete consecutive independent study assignments, the Superintendent or designee shall conduct an evaluation to determine whether it is in the student's best interest to remain in independent study. Evaluation findings shall be kept in the student's permanent record.
(cf. 5125 - Student Records)

Note: The following paragraph is optional.

The Superintendent or designee shall annually report to the Board the number of students engaged in independent study, the ADA generated 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.

Home Schooling through Independent Study

Note: The following section is optional.
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The Superintendent or designee shall encourage parents/guardians desiring to teach their children at home to enroll their children in independent study. Such enrollment allows continued contact and cooperation between the school system and home-based student.

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

17289 Exemption for building

44865 Qualifications for home teachers and teachers in special classes and schools; consent to assignment

46300-46300.6 Methods of computing ADA

48220 Classes of children exempted

48340 Improvement of pupil attendance

48915 Expulsion; particular circumstances

48917 Suspension of expulsion order

51225.3 Requirements for high school graduation

51745-51749.3 Independent study programs

52000 Improvement of elementary and secondary education: legislative intent

52015 School improvement plans: components of plan

52017 Secondary schools: additional plan components

56026 Individual with exceptional needs

FAMILY CODE

6550 Authorization affidavits

CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 5

11700-11703 Independent study

Management Resources:

CDE PROGRAM ADVISORIES

1113.09 Independent Study: New Legislation, SPB: 90/91-04

0904.86 Independent Study, SPB: 86/7-5

CDE PUBLICATIONS

Independent Study Operations Manual, 1993 revised edition, updated 1994, 1996

WEB SITES

CDE: <http://www.cde.ca.gov>

(12/90 6/93) 6/98

ADOPTED: 2-9-05

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