

Series 6000 – Instruction

AR 6158

**TITLE: Independent Study Programs**

Approved by: <u>Rob Gregor</u> Rob Gregor, Superintendent of Schools	Series: <b>Instruction</b> Version: <b>4</b> Effective Date: <b>8/9/2024</b> Previous Policy Date: <b>5/1/2024</b> Revised By: <b>Legal Counsel</b> Policy Number: <b>AR 6158</b>
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**Definitions**

*Live interaction* means interaction between the student and classified or certificated staff. It may include peers provided to maintain school connectedness, including, but not limited to, wellness checks, progress monitoring, provision of services, and instruction. This interaction may occur in person, via the Internet, or by telephone.

*Student-parent-educator conference* means a meeting involving, at a minimum, all parties who signed the student's written independent study agreement pursuant to Education Code 51747 or the written learning agreement pursuant to Education Code 51749.6.

*Synchronous instruction* means classroom-style instruction, designated small group instruction, or one-on-one instruction delivered in person or via Internet or telephone and involving live two-way communication between the teacher and student. The teacher of record for that student shall provide synchronous instruction pursuant to Education Code 51747.5.

**Educational Opportunities**

Educational opportunities offered through independent study may include but are not limited to:

1. Special assignments extending the content of regular courses of instruction
2. Individualized study in a particular area of interest or a subject not currently available in the regular school curriculum
3. Continuing and special study during travel
4. Volunteer community service activities and leadership opportunities that support and strengthen student achievement
5. Individualized study for a student whose health, as determined by the student's parent/guardian, would be put at risk by in-person instruction

In addition, when requested by a parent/guardian due to an emergency or illness, independent study may be used short-term to ensure that the student can maintain academic progress in their regular classes.

**Equivalency**

YCOE's independent study option shall be substantially equivalent in quality and quantity to classroom instruction to enable participating students to complete the YCOE-adopted course of study within the customary timeframe. Students in independent study shall have access to the same services and resources available to other students in the school and equal rights and privileges.

Students participating in independent study shall have access to Internet connectivity and devices adequate to participate in the educational program and complete assigned work.

The COE shall not provide independent study students and their parents/guardians with funds or items of value that are not provided for other students and their parents/guardians. Providing access to Internet connectivity and local educational agency-owned devices adequate to participate in an independent study program and complete assigned work consistent with Education Code 51747 or to participate in an independent study course, as authorized by Education Code 51749.5, shall not be considered funds or other things of value.

**Eligibility for Independent Study**

Students are eligible for independent study as authorized in law, and as specified in policy and administrative regulation.

A student participating in independent study must be a resident of the county or an adjacent county. Full-time independent study shall not be available to students whose district residency status is based on their parent/guardian's employment within district boundaries pursuant to Education Code 48204.

A student with disabilities, as defined in Education Code 56026, may participate in independent study if the student's individualized education program (IEP) provides explicitly for such participation. If a parent/guardian of a student with disabilities requests independent study because the student's health would be put at risk by in-person instruction, the student's IEP team shall make an individualized determination as to whether the student can receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in an independent study placement. A student's inability to work independently, need for adult support, or need special education or related services shall not preclude the IEP team from determining that the student can receive FAPE in an independent study placement.

A student temporarily disabled shall not receive individual instruction pursuant to Education Code 48206.3 by means of independent study.

Students aged 21 or older and students aged 19 or older who have not been continuously enrolled in school since their 18th birthday may participate in independent study only through the adult education program for the purpose of enrolling in courses required for a high school diploma.

**Monitoring Student Progress**

The independent study administrator and/or supervising teacher shall promptly and directly address any failure by the student to meet the terms of the student's written agreement. The following supportive strategies may be used:

1. A letter to the student and/or parent/guardian
2. A meeting between the student and the teacher and/or counselor
3. A meeting between the student and the independent study administrator, including the parent/guardian if appropriate
4. An increase in the amount of time the student works under direct supervision

When the student has failed to make satisfactory educational progress or missed the number of assignments specified in the written agreement requiring an evaluation, the Superintendent or designee shall conduct an evaluation to determine whether independent study is in the student's best interest. This evaluation may result in the termination of the independent study agreement and the student's return to the regular classroom program or other alternative program. A written record of the findings of any such evaluation shall be treated as a mandatory interim student record, which shall be maintained for three years from the date of the review, and if the student transfers to another public school in California, the record shall be forwarded to that school.

**Responsibilities of Independent Study Administrator**

The responsibilities of the independent study administrator include, but are not limited to:

1. Recommending certificated staff to be assigned as independent study teachers at the required teacher-student ratios pursuant to Education Code 51745.6 and supervising staff assigned to independent study functions who are not regularly supervised by another administrator
2. Approving or denying the participation of students requesting independent study
3. Facilitating the completion of written independent study agreements
4. Ensuring a smooth transition for students into and out of the independent study mode of instruction
5. Approving all credits earned through independent study
6. Completing or coordinating the preparation of all records and reports required by law, board policy, or administrative regulation

**Assignment and Responsibilities of Independent Study Teachers**

Each student's independent study shall be coordinated, evaluated, and carried out under the general supervision of a County Office employee who possesses a valid certification document pursuant to Education Code 44865 or emergency credential pursuant to Education Code 44300, registered as required by law, and who consents to the assignment.

The ratio of student average daily attendance for independent study students age 18 years or younger to full-time equivalent certificated employees responsible for independent study shall not exceed the equivalent ratio for all other education programs unless a new higher or lower

ratio for all other educational programs offered is negotiated in a collective bargaining agreement or the district enters into a memorandum of understanding that indicates an existing collective bargaining agreement contains an alternative ratio.

The responsibilities of the supervising teacher shall include, but are not limited to:

1. Completing designated portions of the written independent study agreement and signing the agreement
2. Supervising and approving coursework and assignments
3. Maintaining records of student assignments showing the date the assignment is given and the date the assignment is due
4. Maintaining a daily or hourly attendance register in accordance with Item #4 in the section on "Records" in the accompanying board policy
5. Providing direct instruction and counsel as necessary for individual student success
6. Regularly meeting with the student to discuss the student's progress
7. Determining the time value of assigned work or work products completed and submitted by the student
8. Assessing student work and assigning grades or other approved measures of achievement
9. Documenting each student's participation in live interaction and/or synchronous instruction pursuant to Education Code 51747 on each school day, as applicable, in whole or in part, for which live interaction or synchronous instruction is provided as part of the independent study program

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that independent study teachers have access to professional development and support comparable to classroom-based teachers.

**Legal References:****FEDERAL**

20 USC 6301 Highly qualified teachers

**STATE**

5 CCR 11700-11703 Independent study

Ed. Code 17289 Exemption for facilities

Ed. Code 41976.2 Independent study programs; adult education funding

Ed. Code 42238 Revenue limits

Ed. Code 42238.05 Local control funding formula; average daily attendance

Ed. Code 44865 Qualifications for home teachers

Ed. Code 46200-46208 Incentives for longer instructional day and year

Ed. Code 46300-46307.1 Methods of computing average daily attendance

Ed. Code 46390-46393 Emergency average daily attendance

Ed. Code 47612-47612.1 Charter School Operation

Ed. Code 47612.5 Charter schools operations, general requirements

Ed. Code 48204 Residency requirements for school attendance

Ed. Code 48206.3 Home or hospital instruction; students with temporary disabilities

Ed. Code 48220 Classes of children exempted

Ed. Code 48340 Improvement of pupil attendance  
Ed. Code 48915 Expulsion; particular circumstances  
Ed. Code 48916.1 Educational program requirements for expelled students  
Ed. Code 48917 Suspension of expulsion order  
Ed. Code 49011 Student fees  
Ed. Code 51225.3 High school graduation  
Ed. Code 51745-51749.6 Independent study  
Ed. Code 52522 Adult education alternative instructional delivery  
Ed. Code 52523 Adult education as supplement to high school curriculum; criteria  
Ed. Code 56026 Individual with exceptional needs  
Ed. Code 58500-58512 Alternative schools and programs of choice