



Independent Study Program Policy

AR 6158 - Independent Study
Administrative Regulation
Adopted: August 11, 2021

Per [Education Code 51747](#), schools must **adopt written policies** and implement those policies to be eligible to receive apportionments for independent study. [AB/SB 130](#) amends Education Code 51747.

Independent Study Structure & Offerings Ed. Code 51745, [Ed. Code 51747\(c\)](#)

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

- Every student will receive 240 minutes at minimum of instructional minutes per day
- Special assignments extending the content of regular courses of instruction ([cf. 6143 - Courses of Study](#))
- Individualized study in a particular area of interest or in a subject not currently available in the regular school curriculum
- Individualized alternative education designed to teach the knowledge and skills of the core curriculum. Independent study shall not be provided as an alternative curriculum.
- Continuing and special study during travel
- Volunteer community service activities that support and strengthen student achievement ([cf. 6142.4 - Service Learning/Community Service Classes](#))

No course required for high school graduation shall be offered exclusively through independent study

The provision of content aligned to grade level standards that is provided is at a level of quality and intellectual challenge substantially equivalent to in-person instruction.

- This includes access to all courses offered by the school for graduation and approved by the University of California or the California State University as creditable under the A–G admissions criteria.

The school's independent study option shall be substantially equivalent in quality and quantity to

classroom instruction, thus enabling students participating in independent study to complete the school's adopted course of study within the customary time frame. Students in independent study shall have access to the same services and resources that are available to other students in the school. (5 CCR 11701.5)

Nondiscrimination in School Programs and Activities Ed. Code 51745, [Ed. Code 51747\(c\)](#)

- The school 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. ([Education Code 46300.6, 51747.3](#))

Eligibility for Independent Study Ed.Code 51747.3, Ed Code 51745

Parents/guardians of students who are interested in independent study should contact the principal or designee. Approval for participation shall be based on the following criteria:

1. Evidence that the student will work independently to complete the program
2. Availability of experienced certificated staff with adequate time to effectively supervise the student

A student's participation in independent study shall be voluntary.

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. ([Education Code 51747.3](#))

(cf. 5111.12 - Residency Based on Parent/Guardian Employment)

A student with disabilities, as defined in Education Code 56026, shall not participate in independent study unless his/her individualized education program specifically provides for such participation. ([Education Code 51745](#))

([cf. 6159 - Individualized Education Program](#))

A temporarily disabled student shall not receive individual instruction pursuant to Education Code 48206.3 by means of independent study. ([Education Code 51745](#))

([cf. 6183 - Home and Hospital Instruction](#))

No more than 10 percent of the students enrolled in a continuation high school or opportunity school or program, not including pregnant and parenting students who are primary caregivers for one or more of their children, shall be in independent study at any given time. (Education Code 51745)

(cf. 6184 - Continuing Education)

Students age 21 or older, and students age 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 by Education Code 51225.3 or by the Board of Education. (Education Code 46300.1, 46300.4)

Administration of Independent Study Ed. Code 51747.5

Each student's independent study shall be coordinated, evaluated and carried out under the general supervision of a certificated employee. (Education Code 51747.5)

The responsibilities of the independent study administrator shall be to:

1. Ensure that the school's independent study option is operated in accordance with law, Board policy and administrative regulation
2. Approve the participation of students requesting independent study
3. Facilitate the completion of written independent study agreements
4. Approve all credits earned through independent study and forward the information to the appropriate staff so that the information becomes part of the student's record
5. Determine availability of staff to supervise independent study
6. Supervise any staff assigned to independent study functions who are not regularly supervised by another administrator
7. Complete or coordinate the preparation of all necessary records and reports
8. Establish and maintain in a systematic manner all records required by law, Board policy and administrative regulation
9. Monitor student participation in independent study so that the school stays within prescribed limits and income to the school is maximized
10. Develop and manage the budget for independent study
11. Obtain and maintain current information and skills required for the operation of an independent study strategy that meets established standards for the school's educational programs
12. Assure a smooth transition into and out of the independent study mode of instruction
13. Prepare and submit reports as required by the Board or Superintendent

Supervising Teachers

The independent study by each pupil or student shall be coordinated, evaluated, and, notwithstanding subdivision (a) of Section 46300, shall be under the general supervision of an employee of the school who possesses a valid certification document pursuant to Section 44865 or an emergency credential pursuant to Section 44300, registered as required by law.

The ratio of students to full-time equivalent certificated employees responsible for independent study shall not exceed the equivalent ratio for all other education programs in the school.

The teacher supervising independent study shall:

1. Complete designated portions of the written independent study agreement and add additional information to the written agreement when appropriate
2. Supervise and approve coursework
3. Design all lesson plans and assignments
4. Assess all student work and determine and assign grades or other approved measures of achievement
5. Personally judge the time value of assigned work or work products completed and submitted by the student
6. Select and save with each agreement representative samples of the student's completed and evaluated assignments on not less than a monthly basis, preferably biweekly, and signed or initialed and dated in accordance with item #3 in the section on "Records" below
7. Sign and complete the agreement when the student has reached his/her objectives or the agreement is terminated
8. Maintain a daily or hourly attendance register in accordance with item #4 in the section on "Records" below
9. Maintain any other required records and files on a current basis

Records Ed.Code 51748

For audit purposes, the Principal or designee shall maintain the following records: (Education Code 51748; 5 CCR 11703)

1. A copy of the Board policy, administrative regulation, and other procedures related to independent study
2. A separate listing of the students and adult education students, by grade level, program and school, who have participated in independent study, identifying units of the

curriculum attempted and units of the curriculum completed by students in grades K-8 and identifying course credits attempted by and awarded to students in grades 9-12 and in adult education, as specified in their written agreements

3. A file of all agreements, with representative samples of each student's or adult education student's work products bearing the supervising teacher's signed or initialed and dated notations indicating that he/she has personally evaluated the work or that he/she has personally reviewed the evaluations made by another certificated teacher
4. A daily or hourly attendance register, as appropriate to the program in which the students are participating, separate from classroom attendance records, and maintained on a current basis as time values of student or adult education work products are personally judged by a certificated teacher, and reviewed by the supervising teacher if they are two different persons

Each school shall maintain records for the students at that school.

A written record of the findings of any evaluation conducted after the student has missed the number of assignments specified in Board policy shall be treated as a mandatory interim student record which shall be maintained for three years from the date of the evaluation. (Education Code 51747)

(cf. 5125 - Student Records)

Contract Independent Study Program

Students in grades K-12 whose needs may best be met outside of the regular classroom setting may participate in an individualized independent study program as a means of meeting graduation requirements or earning school credit. No student shall be required to participate in independent study.

Administrative Procedure

All courses of independent study shall be designed to fit the educational needs of the participating students.

1. Independent Study is an alternative to a regular program of instruction that is consistent with the school's course of study and equivalent to that which is being taught in the classroom. It is not an alternative curriculum. It is an instructional strategy.
2. No individual with exceptional needs, as defined in Education Code 56026, may participate in independent study unless his/her individualized education program (IEP) specifically provides for that participation.

3. No temporarily disabled student may receive individual instruction through independent study.
4. When an independent study contract is deemed important by a teacher, student, parent/guardian or when recommended by School Attendance Review Board (SARB), a student and the student's parent/guardian will meet with the assistant principal, principal or designee from the school the student is currently attending to develop the contract.
5. The Independent Study Contract (filled out in its entirety) must be on file before any independent study work is initiated.
6. Components of each individual study program shall be set out in writing, and the agreement shall be signed by the student, the student's parent/guardian, and the credentialed staff member designated as the teacher of record.
7. Students requesting independent study and their parents/guardians should recognize that independent study at the elementary level realistically must emphasize a commitment on the part of the students' parents/guardians.
At the secondary level, the major commitment must be made by the student, assisted or supported as necessary by parents/guardians and others who may assist directly with instruction.
8. The student shall participate in this program under the coordination, evaluation and general, but not immediate, supervision of a credentialed staff member as designated by the assistant principal, principal or designated representative.
9. Components may include work, study in foreign countries, special projects or a combination of work and study.
10. All student work must be periodically submitted to the school teacher for evaluation and grading.
11. A sample of the student's work shall be maintained and, upon completion of the Independent Study Contract, be attached to the completed contract and included in the student's file as required by the California State Department of Education.
12. The school shall provide appropriate existing services and resources to enable students to complete their independent study successfully and shall ensure the same access to all existing services and resources in the school in which the student is enrolled as is available to all other students in the school.
13. Credit will be assigned according to the work accomplished and will be contracted in the written agreement.
14. Work assigned must equal time (minutewise) spent in classroom; for example:
K = 180 minutes
Grades 1-3 = 230 minutes
Grades 4-12 = 240 minutes
15. The student assigned to independent study whose program involves work outside of school will keep a work card to be signed by his employer, which includes time on the job, a description of the nature of the work and an indication of how the work meets instructional objectives.
16. For students in all types of independent study, 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 as follows:

- a. For pupils in kindergarten and grades one through three, **one week**
 - b. For pupils in grades four through eight, **two weeks**
 - c. For students in grades nine through twelve, **three weeks**
When special or extenuating circumstances justify a longer time for individual students, the superintendent or designee may approve a period **not to exceed eight weeks**, pursuant to a written request with justification.
17. Staff members who are supervising students on independent study will meet with their students as needed or a minimum of three times per semester to discuss student objectives.
 18. When any student misses two/three consecutive independent study assignments, the Principal or designee shall conduct an evaluation to determine whether it is in the student's best interest to remain in independent study. A written record of the findings of any evaluation conducted pursuant to this policy shall be maintained in the student's permanent record.
 19. Each building principal or designee will review all cases of independent study approved by them at the end of each school year to determine further action.
 20. Except in unusual circumstances as approved by the principal, the maximum number of units of independent study that may be applied toward graduation is
 21. Independent study agreements will be filled out by the teacher/counselor of record and signed by the parent/guardian. A copy of the agreement will be kept in the school office. Upon completion of the agreement, copies signifying completion will be sent to the principal or designee and to the school attendance office.
 22. Records of independent study agreements will be maintained at the school and serve as a documentation for an annual report to the Board of Education.

Student Rights and Responsibilities [Ed. Code 51747\(b\)\(1\)](#), [Ed. Code 51747\(a\)](#)

Students participating in independent study shall have the right, continuously, to enter or return to the regular classroom mode of instruction, including upon termination of the agreement.

The maximum length of time, by grade level and type of program, that may elapse between the time an independent study assignment is made and the date by which the pupil must complete the assigned work, is all dependent on the student's Independent Study Agreement.

Independent study students who are late, miss scheduled conferences or do not submit assigned work on time shall not be reported as tardy or truant. However, the independent study administrator shall promptly and directly address any failure by the student to meet the terms of his/her 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. Increase in the amount of time the student must be on campus or work under direct supervision

When the student has missed the number of assignments specified in Board policy and the written independent study agreement as precipitating an evaluation, the Superintendent or designee shall conduct an evaluation which may result in termination of the independent study agreement and the student's return to a regular classroom or alternative instructional program.

Student Evaluation

The level of satisfactory educational progress and the number of missed assignments that will be allowed before an evaluation is conducted to determine whether it is in the best interests of the pupil to remain in independent study, or whether the pupil should return to the regular school program, is as follows:

- Level of satisfactory educational progress: depends on Independent Study Agreement
- Number of missed assignments: two/three, if applicable

- A written record of the findings of any evaluation made pursuant to this subdivision must be treated as a mandatory interim pupil record.
- The record must be maintained for a period of three years from the date of the evaluation and, if the pupil transfers to another California public school, the record must be forwarded to that school.

Satisfactory Education Progress

Satisfactory educational progress must be determined based on all of the following indicators: Ed. Code 51747(b)(2)

- (A) 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 paragraphs (4) and (5) of subdivision (d) of Section 52060.*
- (B) The completion of assignments, assessments, or other indicators that evidence that the pupil is working on assignments.
- (C) Learning required concepts, as determined by the supervising teacher.
- (D) Progressing toward successful completion of the course of study or individual course, as determined by the supervising teacher.

***Note on Ed. Code 51747(b)(2)(A): Required measures of pupil achievement and engagement**

include the following (from [Ed. Code 52060\(d\)\(4-5\)](#)), as applicable to the student:

- *Statewide assessments*
- *A-G course completion*
- *CTE pathway completion*
- *A-G course completion AND CTE pathway completion*
- *English Learner progress toward proficiency, as measured by ELPAC*
- *EL reclassification rate*
- *Passing AP exam score*
- *College preparedness per Early Assessment Program*
- *School attendance*
- *At risk of chronic absence*
- *At risk of dropout*
- *On-track for graduation*

Procedures for Tiered Re-Engagement Strategies [Ed. Code 51747\(d\)](#)

Procedures for tiered re-engagement strategies will be created for all pupils who are not generating attendance for more than three schooldays or 60 percent of the instructional days in a school week, or who are in violation of the written agreement (see [Ed. Code 515747\(g\)](#)). These procedures must include, but are not necessarily limited to, all of the following:

- (1) Verification of current contact information for each enrolled pupil.
- (2) Notification to parents or guardians of lack of participation within one school day of the absence or lack of participation.
- (3) A plan for outreach from the school to determine pupil needs, including connection with health and social services as necessary.
- (4) 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 in the student's written agreement regarding evaluating satisfactory educational progress (see [Ed. Code 51747\(g\)\(4\)](#)).

Synchronous Instruction [Ed. Code 51747\(e\)](#)

For pupils in grades 9 to 12, inclusive, the school will provide opportunities for at least weekly synchronous instruction for all pupils throughout the school year.

Transition Plan [Ed. Code 51747\(f\)](#)

A plan 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.

Written Agreement [Ed. Code 51747\(h\)\(2\)](#), [Ed. Code 51747\(g\)](#), Ed. Code 46300

A current written agreement for each independent study pupil must be maintained on file.

Before signing a written agreement, and upon the request of the parent or guardian of a pupil, the school will conduct a phone, videoconference, or in-person pupil-parent-educator conference or other school meeting during which the pupil, parent or guardian, and, if requested by the pupil or parent, an education advocate, may ask questions about the educational options, including which curriculum offerings and nonacademic supports will be available to the pupil in independent study, before making the decision about enrollment or disenrollment in the various options for learning.

A written agreement shall be developed for each student participating in independent study for a minimum of five and no more than one semester of concurrent school days. ([Education Code 46300](#), [51747](#))

The written independent study agreement for each participating student shall include, but not be limited to, all of the following: ([Education Code 51747](#))

1. The manner, frequency, time and place for submitting the student's assignments and for reporting his/her progress
2. The objectives and methods of study for the student's work, and the methods used to evaluate that work
3. The specific resources, including materials and personnel, that will be made available to the student
4. The Board's independent study policy describing the maximum length of time allowed between an assignment and its completion and the number of missed assignments which will trigger an evaluation of whether the student should be allowed to continue in independent study
5. The duration of the independent study agreement, including the beginning and ending dates for the student's participation in independent study under the agreement, with a maximum of one semester, or one-half year if the school is on a year-round calendar
6. A statement of the number of course credits or, for an elementary student, other measures of academic accomplishment appropriate to the agreement, to be earned by the student upon completion
7. A statement that independent study is an optional educational alternative in which no student may be required to participate
8. In the case of a student who is referred or assigned to any school, class or program pursuant to Education Code 48915 or 48917, a statement that instruction may be provided through independent study only if the student is offered the alternative of classroom instruction
([cf. 5144.1 - Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process](#))

The agreement also may include a schedule for achieving objectives and completing the agreement and a schedule of conferences between the student and supervising teacher.

The curriculum and methods of study specified in the written agreement shall be consistent with Board policy, administrative regulations and procedures for curriculum and instruction. (5 CCR 11702)

(cf. 6143 - Courses of Study)

Before beginning the independent study, each written agreement shall be signed and dated by the student, the parent/guardian or caregiver of the student if the student is under age 18, the certificated employee designated as responsible for the general supervision of independent study, and all persons who have direct responsibility for providing assistance to the student. (Education Code 51747)

The agreement shall state that the parent/guardian's signature confirms his/her permission for the student's independent study as specified in the agreement.

Parent & Guardian Notice - 2021-22 School Year [Ed. Code 51747\(h\)\(1\)](#)

For the 2021–22 school year only, the school will notify the parents and guardians of all enrolled pupils of their options to enroll their child in in-person instruction or independent study during the 2021–22 school year.

This notice will include written information on the LEA's internet website, including, but not limited to:

- The right to request a pupil-parent-educator conference meeting before enrollment
- Pupil rights regarding procedures for enrolling, disenrolling, and re-enrolling in independent study
- The synchronous and asynchronous instructional time that a pupil will have access to as part of independent study

Because 15 percent or more of the pupils enrolled in the school speak a single primary language other than English, as determined from the census data submitted to the department pursuant to Section 52164 in the preceding year, the written information must, in addition to being written in English, be written in the primary language, Spanish.

Exception [Ed. Code 51747\(i\)](#)

Subdivisions 51747(d), 51747(e), and 51747(f) must not apply to pupils that participate in an independent study program for fewer than 15 schooldays in a school year.