

INDEPENDENT STUDY**Definitions**

Live interaction means interaction between the student and classified or certificated staff, and may include peers, provided for the purpose of maintaining school connectedness, including, but not limited to, wellness checks, progress monitoring, provision of services, and instruction. The interaction may take place in person, or in the form of Internet or telephonic communication. (Education Code 51745.5)

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. (Education Code 51745.5)

Synchronous instruction means classroom-style instruction or designated small group or one-on-one instruction delivered in person, or in the form of Internet or telephonic communications, and involving live two-way communication between the teacher and student. Synchronous instruction shall be provided by a teacher or teachers of record for that student pursuant to Education Code 51747.5. (Education Code 51745.5)

Educational Opportunities

Independent study is an alternative instructional strategy that is offered at the district's discretion. Independent study may be offered in any of the following situations below:

1. To accommodate a student's temporary absence. A student who is usually in classroom attendance but who will be temporarily out of school for any reasonable excuse, including illness, may participate in independent study to earn academic credit and, within limits, generate ADA. Schools must inform parents that academic credit can still be earned once a student returns to regular classroom attendance. Students shall be allowed to complete all assignments and tests missed during the absence within a reasonable period of time and shall be given full credit for their successful completion thereof. Tests and assignments shall be reasonably equivalent to, but not necessarily identical to, the tests and assignments that the student missed during the absence. (Education Code 48205) Requests to accommodate a student's temporary absence are made on an individual basis.
2. Full academic program. A student may enroll in a full academic program that offers independent study as the primary instructional strategy.

Educational opportunities offered through independent study may include, but are not limited to: (Education Code 51745)

1. Special assignments extending the content of regular courses of instruction.

(cf. 6143 - Courses of Study)

2. Individualized study in a particular area of interest or in a subject not currently available in the regular school curriculum.
3. Continuing and special study during travel.

(cf. 5112.3 - Student Leave of Absence)

4. Volunteer community service activities and leadership opportunities that support and strengthen student achievement.

(cf. 0420.4 - Charter School Authorization)

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(cf. 6142.4 - Service Learning/Community Service Classes)

(cf. 6181 - Alternative Schools/Programs of Choice)

- 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.
- 6. Individualized study for a student experiencing an emergency or illness that requires a short-term absence.
- 7. Other opportunities as permitted or required by Education Code section 51745.

No course required for high school graduation shall be offered exclusively through independent study. (Education Code 51745)

(cf. 6146.1 - High School Graduation Requirements)

Equivalency

The district's independent study option shall be substantially equivalent to in-person, classroom-based instruction to enable participating students 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 that are available to other students in the school and shall have equal rights and privileges. (5 CCR 11700, 11701.5)

(cf. 0410 - Nondiscrimination in District Programs and Activities)

Students participating in independent study shall have access to Internet connectivity and devices adequate to participate in the educational program and complete assigned work. (Education Code 51747) The district 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, shall not be considered funds or other things of value. (Education Code 46300.6, 51747.3)

Eligibility for Independent Study

Students are eligible for independent study as authorized in law, and as specified in Board Policy and Administrative Regulation.

For the 2022-23 school year and thereafter, the Superintendent or designee may approve the participation of a student who demonstrates the motivation, commitment, organizational skills, and academic skills necessary to work independently provided that experienced certificated staff are available to effectively supervise students in independent study. The Superintendent or designee may also approve the participation of a student whose health would be put at risk by in-person instruction. A student whose academic performance is not at grade level may participate in independent study only if the program is able to provide appropriate support, such as supplemental instruction, tutoring, counseling, ongoing diagnostic assessments, and/or differentiated materials, to enable the student to be successful. For an elementary student, the Superintendent or designee may consider the parent/guardian's level of commitment to assist the student.

Independent study is conducted under the supervision of a credentialed district employee. A student participating in independent study must be a resident of the county or an adjacent county. Full-

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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 46300.2, 51747.3)

(cf. 5111.1 - District Residency)

An individual with exceptional needs, as defined in Education Code section 56026, may participate in independent study if the student's individualized education program (IEP) specifically provides for participation in independent study. If a parent or guardian of an individual with exceptional needs requests independent study because the student's health would be put at risk by in-person instruction, or the student is unable to attend in-person instruction due to COVID-19, the student's IEP team shall make an individualized determination as to whether the student can receive a free appropriate public education in an independent study placement. A student's inability to work independently, the student's need for adult support, or the student's need for special education or related services shall not preclude the IEP team from determining that the student can receive a free appropriate education in an independent study placement. (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)

The district may not receive apportionments for independent study by students age 21 or older or students age 19 or older who have not been continuously enrolled in school since their 18th birthday, (Education Code 46300.1)

(cf. 6200 - Adult Education)

Beginning July 1, 2021, with the exception of students participating in independent study programs due to an emergency, as described in Education Code sections 41422 and 46392, not more than 10 percent of the students participating in an opportunity school or program, or a continuation high school shall be eligible for apportionment credit. A student who is pregnant or is a parent who is the primary caregiver for one or more of their children shall not be counted within the 10 percent cap. (Education Code 51745)

(cf. 5146 - Married/Pregnant/Parenting Students)

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 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. 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

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assignments specified in the written agreement as requiring an evaluation, the Superintendent or designee shall conduct an evaluation to determine whether or not independent study is appropriate for the student. This evaluation may result in 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 evaluation. (Education Code 51747) 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.

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 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 district employee who possesses a valid certification document or emergency credential, registered as required by law, and who consents to the assignment. (Education Code 44865, 51747.5; 5 CCR 11700)

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 in the district, 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. (Education Code 51745.6)

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 for Audit Purpose" in the accompanying Board policy.

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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 for which live interaction or synchronous instruction is provided as part of the independent study program.
 - a. For purposes of apportionment credit, the supervising teacher may include a student's participation in synchronous instructional offerings to augment the time value of student work products, when evidence of participation is provided and maintained. Such evidence may include but is not limited to, student work produced or performed, as verified by a certificated employee, and maintained by the district for each hour or fraction thereof of the synchronous instructional offering.

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

(cf. 4131 - Staff Development)

SAN DIEGO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
San Diego, California

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