

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. This 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 or the written learning agreement pursuant to Education Code 51749.6. (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 the teacher of record for that student pursuant to Education Code 51747.5. (Education Code 51745.5) A pupil who does not participate in independent study on a school day shall be documented as non-participatory for that school day for purposes of pupil participation reporting and tiered re-engagement pursuant to section 51747.5 (c).

Educational Opportunities

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. Individualized alternative education designed to teach the knowledge and skills of the core curriculum, but not provided as an alternative curriculum
4. Continuing and special study during travel
(cf. 5112.3 - Student Leave of Absence)
5. Volunteer community service activities and leadership opportunities that support and strengthen student achievement
6. Individualized study for a student whose health, as determined by the student's parent/guardian, would be put at risk by in-person instruction

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(cf. 0420.4 - Charter School Authorization)

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

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

In addition, when requested by a parent/guardian due to an emergency, vacation, or illness, independent study may be used on a short-term basis to ensure that the student is able to maintain academic progress in his/her regular classes.

(cf. 5113 - Absences and Excuses)

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 Yolo County Office of Education's independent study option shall be substantially equivalent in quality and quantity to classroom instruction to enable participating students to complete the county's adopted course of study within the customary timeframe. 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 County 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 Yolo County Office of Education 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 (Education Code 46300.6, 51747.3)

Re-engagement Strategies

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YCOE employees will take measures to re-engage pupils who are not generating attendance for more than 10 percent of required minimum instructional time over four continuous weeks of approved instructional calendar, pupils found non-participatory in synchronous instructional offerings pursuant to Section 51747.5 for more than 50 percent of the scheduled times of synchronous instruction in a school month as applicable by grade span, or pupils who are in violation of their written agreement pursuant to Educational Code section 51747 (g) and this policy. Procedures for tiered re-engagement strategies shall include all of the following:

1. Verification of the pupil's current contact information.
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 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 provisions of this policy regarding missed assignments and satisfactory education progress.

"Pupil-parent-educator conference" means a meeting involving, at a minimum, all parties who signed the pupil's written independent study agreement pursuant to subdivision (g) of Section 51747 or the written learning agreement pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 51749.6.

This section shall not apply to pupils that participate in an independent study program for fewer than 15 schooldays in a school year.

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, and, provided that experienced certificated staff are available to effectively supervise students in independent study, 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. 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

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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.

A student participating in independent study must be a resident of Yolo county or an adjacent county. Full-time independent study shall not be available to students whose county residency status is based on their parent/guardian's employment within county boundaries pursuant to Education Code 48204. (Education Code 46300.2, 51747.3)

(cf. 5111.1 - County Residency)

For a student with disabilities, as defined in Education Code 56026, participation in independent study shall be approved only if his/her individualized education program specifically provides for such participation. (Education Code 51745) and Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) can be established (Education Code Section 51745[c]). The "certificated employee with responsibility for the student's special education programming" must be a signatory to the written agreement.

(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)

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 the Governing Board. (Education Code 46300.1, 46300.4)

(cf. 6200 - Adult Education)

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

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

(cf. 6184 - Continuation Education)

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Each pupil's written agreement must be completed and signed by parent, student, and teacher prior to program commencement for programs scheduled for 15 days or more.

Independent Study Fewer Than Fifteen Days

Written agreements for independent study lasting fewer than 15 school days must be signed by parent/guardian within 10 days of enrollment in independent study.

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 missed the number of 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:

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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 certificated 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. (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 county, unless a new higher or lower ratio for all other educational programs offered is negotiated in a collective bargaining agreement or the Yolo County Office of Education 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
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" below

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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 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)