Independent Study Program

The Board of Education authorizes independent study as an optional alternative instructional strategy by which students in grades K-12 and adult education may reach curriculum objectives and fulfill graduation requirements. Independent study shall offer an educational plan for students whose needs may be best met through study outside of the regular classroom setting. Independent study shall offer a means of individualizing the educational plan to serve students who desire a more challenging educational experience, whose health or other personal circumstances make classroom attendance difficult, who are unable to access course(s) due to scheduling problems, and/or who need to make up credits or fill gaps in their learning. As necessary to meet student needs, independent study may be offered on a full-time basis or on a part-time basis in conjunction with part- or full-time classroom study. A student’s participation in independent study shall be voluntary. Students participating in independent study shall have the right, at any time, to enter or return to the regular classroom mode of instruction. (Education Code 51747; 5 CCR 11700)

The Superintendent or designee may provide a variety of independent study opportunities, including, but not limited to, through a program or class within a comprehensive school, an alternative school, a home-based format, and an online course.

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. The Superintendent or designee shall determine that the prospective independent study student is prepared to meet the District's requirements for independent study and is likely to succeed in independent study as well as or better than they would in the regular classroom. The minimum period of time for any independent study option shall be five consecutive days.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that a written independent study agreement, as prescribed by law, exists for each participating student. (Education Codes 51747, 51749.5)

The master agreement shall specify the length of time in which each independent study assignment must be completed. Because excessive leniency in the duration of independent study assignments may result in a student falling behind his/her peers and increase the risk of dropping out of school, independent study assignments shall be no more than the following specified maximum length of time which may elapse before an independent study assignment is due.

1. Special assignment extending the content of regular courses of instruction:
   - Long-Term Independent Study:
     - Student in grades K-3: one week
     - Students in grades 4-8: two weeks
     - Students in grades 9-12: three weeks

2. Continuing and special study during travel:
   - Short-Term Independent Study:
     - Students in grades K-3: four weeks
     - Students in grades 4-8: six weeks
     - Students in grades 9-12: ten weeks
When any participating student in grades 9-12 fails to complete three consecutive independent study assignments in a period of 15 school days, or misses two appointments with his/her supervising teacher without valid reasons, an evaluation shall be conducted to determine whether it is in the student's best interest to remain in independent study.

A student with exceptional needs, as defined in Education Code section 56026, shall not participate in independent study unless his/her individualized education program specifically provides for that participation (Education Code section 51745).

Legal Reference:
EDUCATION CODE
17289 Exemption for facilities
41976.2 Independent study programs; adult education funding
42238 Revenue limits
42238.05 Local control funding formula; average daily attendance
44865 Qualifications for home teachers and teachers in special classes and schools
46200-46208 Instructional day and year
46300-46307.1 Methods of computing average daily attendance
47612.5 Independent study in charter schools
48204 Residency
48206.3 Home or hospital instruction; students with temporary disabilities
48220 Classes of children exempted
48340 Improvement of pupil attendance
48915 Expulsion; particular circumstances
48916.1 Educational program requirements for expelled students
48917 Suspension of expulsion order
49011 Student fees
51225.3 Requirements for high school graduation
51745-51749.3 Independent study programs
52522 Adult Education alternative instructional delivery
52523 Adult Education as supplement to high school curriculum; criteria
56026 Individuals with exceptional needs
58500-58512 Alternative schools and programs of choice
FAMILY CODE
6550 Authorization affidavits
CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 5
11700-11703 Independent study
19819 State audit compliance

Adopted: (7-88 12-92 3-08 8-13) 8-16

ORANGE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Orange, California