

BOARD POLICY

Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District

Instruction

6141.5 - BP

INDEPENDENT STUDY

The Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District Board of Education authorizes Independent Study as an optional alternative instructional strategy for eligible 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 personalized 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 full or part-time classroom study. Independent Study coursework is aligned to grade-level standards with the provision of standards-aligned content that is substantially equivalent to the quality and intellectual challenge of in-person instruction. High school students will have access to graduation requirements and UC a-g admissions criteria through Independent Study.

A student's participation in Independent Study shall be voluntary. Independent Study can be course-based or traditional. Students participating in traditional Independent Study shall have the right, at any time, to enter or return to the regular classroom mode of instruction. Students in a traditional Independent Study school wishing to return to a regular classroom instruction school will be transitioned from the Independent Study school to a comprehensive school within five (5) school days. Correspondingly, students wishing to begin the Independent Study school from a regular classroom instruction school will be transitioned from the comprehensive school to the Independent Study school within ten (10) school days.

Parents/guardians of students who are interested in Independent Study shall contact the Principal or designee of the school offering Independent Study. Parents and students have the right to meet with the Principal or designee prior to signing agreements to participate in Independent Study. The Principal or designee shall approve Independent Study for an individual student upon determining that the student is prepared to meet the district's requirements for Independent Study.

A student identified as having a disability may participate in Independent Study when the Individualized Educational Planning (IEP) team agrees that Independent Study is an appropriate educational program for the student and documents this on the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) of the student.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that a written master agreement for traditional Independent Study or, as appropriate, a learning agreement for students participating in course-based Independent Study exists for each participating student as prescribed by law. Written agreements must be agreed upon and signed by the student, parent, and teacher. A provision for electronic signatures will be established. For the 2021-22 school year only, written agreements must be signed no later than 30 days after the first day of instruction. However, it is important to note that all other Independent Study requirements must be met upon commencement of instruction. For any other school year, written agreements must be signed prior to the commencement of the Independent Study.

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 20 school days or four weeks for all grade levels and types of programs. However, when necessary, based on the specific circumstances of the student's approved program, the Superintendent or designee may allow for a longer period of time between the date an assignment is made and when it is due, up to the termination date of the agreement.

Students enrolled in Independent Study are provided with and expected to participate in Live Interaction (defined as some contact with school personnel) and/or Synchronous Instruction (defined as live two-way communication, as either group or individual, with the student's teacher) opportunities. These interactions may take place online, over the phone, or in person. Learning opportunity requirements vary by grade level.

TK-3: Daily Synchronous Instruction

4-8: Both daily Live Interaction and weekly Synchronous Instruction

9-12: Weekly Synchronous Instruction

Access will be provided to all students to the connectivity and devices needed for participation and completion of work.

An evaluation shall be conducted to determine whether it is in a student's best interest to remain in Independent Study whenever the student falls below a level of satisfactory educational progress. Satisfactory educational progress is determined based on pupil achievement, engagement, completion of assignments, learning required concepts, and progress toward completion of the course of study or specific course.

Educational progress is considered unsatisfactory if the student misses the equivalent of three (3) days of instruction in a week or two assignments, unless the student's written agreement specifies a lower or higher number of missed assignments based on the nature of the assignments, the total number of assignments, and/or other unique circumstances.

If a student misses the equivalent of three (3) or more school days in a week or falls below a satisfactory level of educational progress, as determined by the supervising teacher, tiered re-engagement strategies shall 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 satisfactory educational progress.

Student-Teacher Conferences

Supervising teachers should establish an appropriate schedule for student-teacher conferences in order to help identify students falling behind in their work or in danger of failing or dropping out of school. Teachers are expected to monitor student progress and work closely with each student to determine the amount and type of contact needed for the student to be successful in the program.

Missing more than two appointments for conferences with the supervising teacher may trigger an evaluation to determine whether the student should remain in Independent Study.

The Superintendent or designee shall establish administrative regulations and procedures to implement this policy in accordance with the California Education Code Section 51747.

Legal Reference:	Education Code	Sections	11701, 11701.5, 11703
		Sections	46300, 46300.2, 46300.3, 46300.6, 48206.3
		Sections	51747, 51747.3, 51749.5, 56026, 57145
		Sections	51745, 51749.3, 46300 (e), and 46300.4 – 46300.7
	Title V		Division I, Chapter II, Subchapter 13 (Sections 11700 – 11703)
Policy adopted:			11/14/88
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