

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. The Board recognizes that by offering a range of quality options, including classroom-based, hybrid, and non-classroom based programs, instruction is better tailored to meet students' needs, thereby improving academic outcomes.

As necessary to meet student needs, Independent Study may be offered on a long-term or short-term basis in conjunction with full or part-time classroom study. Independent Study shall last for no fewer than three (3) consecutive school days.

Independent Study coursework is aligned to grade-level standards that is substantially equivalent to in-person instruction. High school students will have access to all courses offered for graduation requirements and approved by the University of California or the California State University as creditable under the A-G admissions criteria through Independent Study. No course required for high school graduation shall be offered exclusively 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 long-term Independent Study shall have the right, at any time, to return to the regular school program. Students wishing to return to in-person instruction from Independent Study will be transitioned within five (5) school days.

Parents/guardians of students who are interested in Independent Study may request that the school district conduct a telephone, videoconference, or in-person student-parent-educator conference or other school meeting during which the student, parent or guardian, or if requested by the parent, an education advocate, may ask questions about the educational options 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.

Pursuant to Education Code Section 51745(c), an individual with exceptional needs, as defined in Section 56026, may participate in independent study, if the student's individualized education program developed pursuant to Article 3 (commencing with Section 56340) of Chapter 4 of Part 30 specifically provides for that participation. If a parent or guardian of an individual with exceptional needs requests independent study pursuant to paragraph (5) of subdivision (a), the student's individualized education program team shall make an individualized determination as to whether the student can receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) 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 individualized education program team from determining that the student can receive a free appropriate education in an independent study placement.

A temporarily disabled student shall not receive individual instruction pursuant to Education Code Section 48206.3 through independent study.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that each student participating in Independent Study will have an executed written master agreement that includes, but is not limited to, all the requirements of Education Code section 51747(g) for traditional Independent Study or, as appropriate, a learning agreement that includes, but is not limited to, all of the requirements of Education Code section 51749.6 for students participating in course-based Independent Study. Written agreements must be agreed upon and signed, in-person or electronically, by the student, parent, legal guardian, or caretaker if the student is under the age of 18, teacher of record, and the special education case manager of the student, if applicable, and a current written agreement for each Independent Study pupil shall be maintained on file. For a student participating in an Independent Study program scheduled to last more than 14 cumulative school days, written agreements must be signed prior to the commencement of Independent Study. Short-term Independent Study master agreements must be signed within 10 days of the start of short-term Independent Study.

Because excessive leniency in the duration of independent study assignments may result in a student falling behind peers and increase the risk of dropping out of school, for all grades and programs in Independent Study, the maximum length of time which may elapse between the time the assignments are made and the date by which the student must complete the assigned work is 14 consecutive school days for short-term independent study and no more than 20 consecutive school days for long-term independent study. 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

The requirements for tiered reengagement strategies, Synchronous Instruction Live Interaction and transition plans to return to in-person instruction shall not apply to students that participate in an Independent Study program for fewer than 15 school days in a school year and students enrolled in a comprehensive school for classroom based instruction who, under the care of appropriately licensed professionals, participate in independent study due to necessary medical treatments or inpatient treatment for mental health care or substance abuse. Local educational agencies shall obtain evidence from appropriately licensed professionals of the need for pupils to participate in independent study pursuant to this subdivision.

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 or the student should return to the regular school program whenever the student falls below a level of satisfactory educational progress and/or misses four assignments. Satisfactory educational progress is determined based on student achievement, engagement, completion of assignments, learning required concepts, and progress toward completion of the course of study or specific course. A written record of the findings of the evaluation will be retained for a minimum period of three years from the date of evaluation and, if the student transfers to another California public school, the record will be forwarded to that school.

Pursuant to Education Code 51747(d) procedures for tiered reengagement strategies for all pupils who are not generating attendance for more 10 percent of required minimum instructional time over four continuous weeks, pupils found not 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 the written agreement, shall include local programs intended to address chronic absenteeism and the following:

1. Verification of current contact information for each enrolled student.
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 student needs, including connection with health and social services as necessary.
4. A clear standard for requiring a student-parent-educator conference to review a student's written agreement and reconsider the Independent Study program's impact on the student's achievement and well-being, consistent with satisfactory educational progress.

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 51749.3, 46300 (e), and 46300.4 - 46300.7
Title V Division I, Chapter II, Subchapter 13 (Sections 11700 - 11703)

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