

**PALISADES CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL
STATE AWARD FINDINGS AND QUESTIONED COSTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2020**

FIVE DIGIT CODE

10000
40000
42000
60000
61000
62000
70000
71000
72000

AB 3627 FINDING TYPE

Attendance
State Compliance
Charter School Facilities Programs
Miscellaneous
Classroom Teacher Salaries
Local Control Accountability Plan
Instructional Materials
Teacher Misassignments
School Accountability Report Card

FINDING 2020-001: NONCLASSROOM-BASED INSTRUCTION/INDEPENDENT STUDY (10000)

Criteria: For attendance generated through independent study, all independent study written agreements must contain the signature of the pupil, pupil’s parent/guardian, and certificated employee affixed prior to the commencement of the independent study (Education Code Section 51747(c)(8)).

Condition: Through our testing of a representative sample of five (5) Nonclassroom-based independent study contracts, we noted five deficiency in which the pupil did not have a complete master agreement on file for either the Fall or Spring of the 2019-20 school year. Four of the master agreements provided for review did not contain the supervising certificated employee. One of the master agreements provided for review did not contain the signature of the pupil and the supervising certificated employee. In addition, all agreements were signed after the beginning agreement date.

Effect: Loss of apportionment funding for days of attendance related to the incomplete independent study master agreement.

Cause: Procedures were not fully followed to obtain all required elements of the independent study agreement. This results in a loss of apportionment funding for days of attendance related to deficient independent study contracts and required supplemental documentation.

Repeat Finding: This is not a repeat finding.

Questioned Costs: A total of 255 attendance days from the 2019-20 school year are overstated resulting in calculated questioned costs of \$19,257. Questioned costs are calculated as follows:

| Grade Span | Grades 9-12 |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| Excess ADA | 2.04 |
| Adjusted Base Grant per ADA | \$ 9,572 |
| Questioned Costs | \$ 19,527 |

Recommendations: We recommend that the Charter implement adequate procedures related to the Nonclassroom-based independent study program to ensure that independent study master agreements are being filled out with all the necessary information required and signed by all necessary individuals prior to the beginning of the contract period.

Corrective Action Plan: Palisades Charter High School has modified its enrollment and approval process for incoming scholars. Additional checkpoints have been created for the Independent Study Coordinator and Information Services Manager. Internal auditing will occur on a weekly basis by the Director of Attendance & Admissions.

1. **Complete and detailed explanation or root-cause analysis of the audit finding:**

In the 2019-2020 school year, the PCHS Virtual Academy was appointed a new administrator, who was in the process of being trained on the processes and legal aspects of running an Independent Study program. Additionally, the program's co-coordinator left for a different position. During this time, the PCHS Virtual Academy grew over 50 students who would be a part of the program. The remaining coordinator ensured that all families received contracts and returned them. Many families were late on returning contracts, dating them when they signed the contract rather than when the student began working. Each of those contracts were filed and accounted for. In the interim of running the program and managing student/family/and teacher concerns, a technicality occurred, where the signature and dates on the contract were not double checked. Hence, although every student had a contract in their file, several had incorrect start dates and some were unsigned

2. **Description of the school's specific steps/plan to address the audit finding moving forward (include action/implementation dates/timelines)**

The Independent Study coordinator along with the Attendance Administrator have put into action:

- A. A comprehensive review of each and every PCHS Independent Study contract from the 2020-2021 school year. This will continue moving forward in the upcoming school years.
- B. A thorough evaluation that ensures each and every contract from the 2020-2021 school year, and future school years, are completely filled out and are dated and signed correctly.
- C. An internal control process that efficiently checks each contract and attendance by holding bi-monthly meetings to review incoming students, contracts, and daily attendance records
- D. A scheduled review meeting that will evaluate the thoroughness of the contract for each semester during every school year both at the beginning, mid, and end of the Fall and Spring semester