



Board Policy: Independent Study Policy

Reference:

Approved:

Camino Nuevo Charter Academy (CNCA) may offer independent study to meet the educational needs of students enrolled at a CNCA School. CNCA's independent study program shall provide content aligned to grade level standards that is substantially equivalent to in-person instruction. CNCA shall provide appropriate existing services and resources to enable students to complete their independent study successfully. Each student's independent study shall be coordinated, evaluated, and carried out under the general supervision of an assigned certificated employee or employees. Students who voluntarily choose to enroll in CNCA's independent study program have the alternative option of attending a classroom-based instructional program in a school of their district of residence or potentially at CNCA subject to capacity. CNCA's approval or denial of a request for independent study shall be based on the best educational interests of student as determined by student performance data and in consultation with the students' teachers whenever possible.

These independent study policies have been established by CNCA in alignment with Education Code § 51744 et seq., updated to meet the requirements of Assembly Bill 181 (2022) and Assembly Bill 185 (2022), and adopted pursuant to Education Code § 51747 and 5 C.C.R. § 11701. The following written policies have been adopted by the Board for implementation at CNCA schools and are effective as of the start of the 2023-24 school year:

1. The Principal or designee is responsible for managing the independent study program, which includes reviewing and granting requests for independent study for CNCA students. The Principal or designee will determine if a student qualifies for independent study based on criteria including the below:
 - a. Experienced certificated staff who hold the appropriate subject matter credential and are CNCA employees are available to effectively supervise students in independent study (Education Code § 51749.5(a)(3));
 - b. Ensuring the enrollment does not result in noncompliance with independent study ADA requirements (e.g., ADA-to-Certificated Teacher Ratio per Education Code § 51745.6; ensuring 80% of ADA generated by the CNCA is from classroom-based instruction per Education Code § 47612.5; etc.).
 - c. An individual with exceptional needs, as defined in Education Code § 56026, may participate in independent study if his/her Individualized Education Program ("IEP") specifically provides for such participation. If a parent or guardian of a student with exceptional needs requests independent study pursuant to Education Code § 51745(a)(5), the student's IEP team shall make an individualized determination as to whether the student can receive a free appropriate public education 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 IEP team from determining that the student can receive a free appropriate education in an independent study placement. (Education Code § 51745(c))
 - d. No student that is referred or assigned to a CNCA pursuant to Education Code § 48915 or Education Code § 48917, may be provided with instruction through independent study unless they are offered the alternative of classroom instruction and they choose independent study.

- e. In accordance with Education Code § 51747.3(c), students enrolling in the independent study program must be residents of Los Angeles County or an adjacent county.

The Principal or designee is responsible for establishing the number of available seats for short-term and full-time independent study and must consider the independent study ADA requirements (see Section 1(b)) in making these determinations. The Executive Director or designee may consider factors under Section 1(a)-(e) and other factors in determining the total number of full-time independent study seats and enrollment eligibility.

2. For students in all grade levels offered by CNCA, the maximum length of time that may elapse between the time an assignment is made and the date by which the student must complete the assigned work shall be twenty (20) school days. (Education Code § 51747(a).)
3. When any student fails to complete three (3) assignments during any period of twenty (20) school days, or fails to make satisfactory educational progress (defined below in Section 4), the school will conduct an evaluation to determine whether it is in the best interests of the student to remain in independent study, or whether the student should return to or otherwise be placed in a regular in-person school program. A written record of the findings of any evaluation will be maintained in the student's permanent record. This record will be maintained for a period of three years from the date of the evaluation and if the student transfers to another California public school, the record will be forwarded to that school. (Education Code § 51747(b).) CNCA schools may disenroll students who accrue ten (10) unexcused absences due to failure to turn in assignments.
4. For purposes of conducting the evaluation in Section 3, a student is deemed to be making satisfactory educational progress if the student is on track to enter the next grade level at the completion of the current school year and/or progressing toward their goals pursuant to their IEP. The Principal or designee is responsible for making this determination based on all of the following indicators:
 - a. The student's achievement and engagement in the independent study program, as indicated by the student's performance on student-level measures of student achievement and student engagement set forth in Education Code § 52060(d)(4)-(5).
 - b. The completion of assignments, assessments, or other indicators that show the student is working on assignments.
 - c. Learning required concepts, as determined by the supervising teacher.
 - d. Progressing toward successful completion of the course of study or individual course, as determined by the supervising teacher. (Education Code § 51747(b)(2).)
5. The school will provide content to students aligned to grade level standards that is substantially equivalent to in-person instruction. The CNCA Board of Directors annually certifies that CNCA's independent study policies are the same rigor, educational quality, and intellectual challenge as CNCA's in-person instruction and are aligned to all relevant local and state content standards. For high school students, this includes access to all courses offered by a Camino Nuevo High School for graduation and approved by the University of California or the California State University as creditable under the A–G admissions criteria. (Education Code § 51747(c).) CNCA will provide support to students in need, such as students not performing at grade level, English learners, individuals with exceptional needs with an individualized educational program pursuant to Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. Sec. 794), students experiencing homelessness or in foster care, and students requiring mental health support. To provide support for English Learners, CNCA will provide support through targeted instruction and intervention via a digital curriculum focused on language development, teacher use of specially designed academic instruction in English (SDAIE), and consultation (as necessary) with District specialists regarding language development. (Education Code § 51747(g)(7))

6. The following provisions in Section 6 of this policy shall not apply to students who participate in independent study at CNCA for fewer than fifteen (15) schooldays per school year and students enrolled in CNCA 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. CNCA shall obtain evidence from appropriately licensed professionals of the need for students to participate in independent study. (Education Code § 51747(i); Education Code § 51749.5(b).)

6.1 For students who do not generate attendance for more than 10 percent of required minimum instructional time over four continuous weeks of CNCA's approved instructional calendar, students found not participatory in synchronous instructional offerings pursuant to Education Code § 51747.5 for more than 50 percent of the scheduled times of synchronous instruction in a school month as applicable by grade span, or students who are in violation of their independent study written agreement, CNCA shall:

- a. Verify current contact information for each enrolled student;
- b. Notify parents or guardians of lack of participation within one school day of the student's absence or lack of participation (e.g., via email, message, text, telephone, letter, etc.);
- c. Reach out to the student directly and/or parents or guardians, as well as health and social services as necessary, to determine student's needs for reengagement; and
- d. If the student has failed to complete three (3) assignments during any period of twenty (20) schooldays or is failing to make satisfactory educational progress as defined in Section 4 herein, the school will schedule a student-parent-educator conference (a meeting involving all individuals who signed the student's written agreement) to review the student's written agreement and reconsider the independent study program's impact on the student's achievement and well-being. (Education Code § 51747(d); Education Code § 51749.5(a)(8)(C).)

6.2 Based on each student's grade level, their assigned teacher(s) of record will schedule and offer opportunities for synchronous instruction and daily live interaction at least as frequently as set forth in subsections a-b below. (Education Code § 51747(e); Education Code § 51749.5(a)(4)(C).)

"Live interaction" means interaction between the student and CNCA school staff, and may include peers, to maintain school connectedness. Examples of live interaction include check-ins, progress monitoring, provision of services, and instruction, and live interaction can be in-person or in the form of internet or telephonic communication.

"Synchronous instruction" means classroom-style instruction, designated small-group instruction, or one-on-one instruction delivered in person or in the form of internet or telephonic communication by the student's assigned teacher(s) of record, and involving live two-way communication. (Education Code § 51745.5.)

- a. For students in grades TK-3, inclusive, their assigned teacher(s) of record will schedule and offer opportunities for daily synchronous instruction.
- b. For students in grades 4-12, inclusive, their assigned teacher(s) of record will schedule and offer opportunities for weekly synchronous instruction and daily live interaction.

CNCA will document each student's participation in live interaction and synchronous instruction on each schoolday, as applicable, in whole or in part, for which independent study

is provided. A student who does not participate in independent study on a schoolday will be documented as nonparticipatory for that schoolday. (Education Code § 51747.5(c).)

- 6.3 A student's parent or guardian may request their student return to in-person instruction from independent study by making a written request to Principal or designee or their assigned teacher of record. If there is capacity in the school's in-person program at the student's grade level, the school will transition the student within five schooldays. If there is not capacity in the school's in-person program at the student's grade level, the school will help the student transition to enrolling in the in-person program offered by their district of residence, will transfer the student's educational records within five schooldays, and offer the student an opportunity to join the school's waitlist. (Education Code § 51747(f); Education Code § 51749.5(a)(9).)
7. A current written agreement shall be maintained on file for each student participating in independent study at CNCA. The independent study agreement for a student must require and cover a study plan that represents the same amount of study that would be required of a student in the classroom. Written agreements may include subsidiary agreements, such as course contracts and assignment and work records. Pursuant to Education Code § 51747(g), each agreement shall include, but is not limited to, all of the following:
- a. The manner, time, frequency, and place for submitting a student's assignments, for reporting his or her academic progress, and for communicating with a student's parent or guardian regarding a student's academic progress.
 - b. The objectives and methods of study for the student's work, and the methods utilized to evaluate that work.
 - c. The specific resources, including materials and personnel that will be made available to the student. These resources shall include confirming or providing access to all students to the connectivity and devices adequate to participate in the educational program and complete assigned work.
 - d. A statement of the policies adopted herein regarding the maximum length of time allowed between the assignment and the completion of a student's assigned work, and the number of missed assignments allowed prior to an evaluation of whether or not the student should be allowed to continue in independent study.
 - e. The duration of the independent study agreement, including beginning and ending dates for the student's participation in independent study under the agreement. No independent study agreement shall be valid for any period longer than one school year.
 - f. A statement of the number of course credits or, for the elementary grades, other measures of academic accomplishment appropriate to the agreement, to be earned by the student upon completion.
 - g. A statement detailing the academic and other supports that will be provided to address the needs of students who are not performing at grade level, or need support in other areas, such as English learners, individuals with exceptional needs in order to be consistent with the student's IEP or plan pursuant to Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. Sec. 794), students in foster care or experiencing homelessness, and students requiring mental health supports.
 - h. The inclusion of a statement in each independent study agreement that independent study is an optional educational alternative in which no student may be required to participate. In the case of a student who is referred or assigned to any school, class or program pursuant to Education Code § 48915 or 48917, the agreement also will include

the statement that instruction may be provided to the student through independent study only if the student is offered the alternative of classroom instruction. (Education Code § 51747(g).)

- i. CNCA schools will comply with the written independent study agreement signature requirements set forth in Education Code § 51747(g)(9), including:
 - i. For a student participating in an independent study program that is scheduled for more than 14 school days, each independent study agreement will be signed, prior to the commencement of independent study, by the student, the student's parent, legal guardian, or care giver, if the student is less than 18 years of age, the certificated employee who has been designated as having responsibility for the general supervision of independent study, and the certificated employee designated as having responsibility for the special education programming of the student, as applicable. Beginning in the 2022-23 school year, for a student participating in an independent study program that is scheduled for less than 15 school days, each written agreement shall be signed within 10 school days of the commencement of the first day of the student's enrollment in independent study, by the student, the student's parent, legal guardian, or caregiver, if the student is less than 18 years of age, the certificated employee who has been designated as having responsibility of the general supervision of independent study, and the certificated employee designated as having responsibility for the special education programming of the student, as applicable. For purposes of this paragraph, "care giver" means a person who has met the requirements of Part 1.5 (commencing with Section 6550) of the Family Code.
 - ii. Written agreements may be signed using an electronic signature that complies with state and federal standards, as determined by the department, that may be a marking that is either computer generated or produced by electronic means and is intended by the signatory to have the same effect as a handwritten signature. The use of an electronic signature shall have the same force and effect as the use of a manual signature if the requirements for digital signatures and their acceptable technology, as provided in Section 16.5 of the Government Code and in Chapter 10 (commencing with Section 22000) of Division 7 of Title 2 of the California Code of Regulations, are satisfied.
 - iii. Before signing a written agreement, the parent or guardian of a student may request that the school conduct a phone, videoconference, or in-person student-parent-educator conference or other school meeting during which the student, parent or guardian, and, if requested by the student or parent, an education advocate, may ask questions about the educational options, including which curriculum offerings and nonacademic supports will be available to the student in independent study, before making the decision about enrollment or disenrollment in the various options for learning. (Education Code § 51747(h)(2).)
8. Family Rights and Responsibilities: The independent study program entails a commitment by the parent/guardian and the student. Families participating in independent study agree to:

- a. Support the student, including by monitoring the student's progress in the independent study program and helping the student track important deadlines (e.g., assignment deadlines).
- b. Complete the independent study agreement.
- c. Participate in any interventions recommended by the school to promote academic success.
- d. Complete the CNCA Assignment Sheet and Attendance Record daily to document their student's daily engagement in independent study educational activities.

9. Supervising Teacher Responsibilities:

- a. Each student's independent study shall be coordinated, evaluated and carried out under the general supervision of a certificated CNCA employee. (Education Code § 51747.5.)
- b. Principal or designee shall oversee the teacher(s) who directly supervise independent study on a regular basis and ensure that the teacher(s):
 - i. Complete designated portions of the independent study agreement and add additional information to the agreement when appropriate.
 - ii. Supervise and approve coursework.
 - iii. Design/identify curriculum objectives.
 - iv. Communicate with students as required by the independent study agreement.
 - v. Assess all work that students are required to submit to the teacher.
 - vi. Personally judge the time value of assigned work or work products completed and submitted by the student.
 - vii. Select and save with each independent study agreement, representative samples of the student's completed and evaluated assignments.
 - viii. Maintain any required records and files on a current basis.
 - ix. When appropriate, determine and assign grades or other approved measures of achievement.

10. CNCA Administrative Responsibilities:

- a. CNCA will not provide independent study students and parents/guardians with funds or items of value that are not provided for other students who attend regular classes or to their parents/guardians. (Education Code § 51747.3(a).)
- b. CNCA may claim apportionment credit for independent study only to the extent of the time value of student work products, as personally judged in each instance by a certificated teacher employed by CNCA, or the combined time value of student work product and student participation in synchronous instruction pursuant to Education Code section 51747.5(b)(2). (Education Code § 51747.5(b).)
- c. CNCA will maintain records of the independent study program as required by law. School records maintained by CNCA shall identify all students participating in its independent study program and shall specify the grade level in which each of these students is enrolled.
- d. CNCA will maintain written or computer-based evidence of student engagement that includes, but is not limited to, a grade book or summary document that, for each class, lists all assignments, assessments, and associated grades. This includes documenting each student's participation in live interaction and synchronous instruction as described above in Section 6.2. (Education Code § 51747.5(c)-(d).)

- e. Records of the independent study program shall be maintained for audit purposes and shall include the following:
 - i. A copy of the Board policy and procedures related to independent study.
 - ii. A separate listing of the students, by grade level, who have participated in independent study identifying units of the curriculum attempted (also known as the “course of study”) and units of the curriculum completed by students, as specified in their independent study agreements.
 - iii. A file of all independent study agreements, with representative samples of each student’s work products and a signed acknowledgement by the supervising teacher indicating that he/she has personally evaluated the work or that he/she has personally reviewed the evaluations made by another certificated teacher.
 - iv. A daily attendance register, as appropriate to the program in which the students are enrolled, separate from classroom attendance records, and maintained on a current basis as time values of student work products are personally judged by a certificated teacher, and reviewed by the supervising teacher if they are two different individuals. (5 C.C.R. § 11703.)
- 11. CNCA shall comply with the Education Code Sections 51744 through 51749.3 and the provisions of the Charter School’s Act and the State Board of Education regulations adopted there under.
- 12. No student who qualifies for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (“IDEA”) shall participate in independent study unless it is specifically authorized under his or her Individual Education Plan (“IEP”).
- 13. The Principal will comply with all applicable law regarding independent study, including ADA-to-certificated employee ratio requirements and course-based independent study requirements (if applicable). (Education Code § 51744 et seq.; 5 C.C.R. 11700 et seq.)