



Date: July 30, 2021

To: Navigator Schools Board of Directors

From: Sharon Waller, Director of Student Services

Subject: Long-Term and Short-Term Independent Study Policies

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, new legislation passed in California for the 2021-22 school year mandates that large districts and county offices of education (COE) offer long-term independent study programs for any student whose parents or guardians request it for health-related reasons. The long-term independent study program, as defined by the state, is to address absences of more than 15 days, and includes additional elements that must be written into a new long-term independent study policy by all qualifying districts and COE.

Independent study (*California Education Code* [EC] sections 51745–51749.3) is provided as an alternative instructional strategy, not an alternative curriculum. Independent study students work independently, according to a written agreement and under the general supervision of a credentialed teacher or teachers. Navigator Schools (NS), like most school districts or COE, has always offered independent study for students on a short-term basis per the independent study policy in the NS Parent/Student Handbook.

To remain in alignment with current legislation and surrounding districts, the NS leadership team would like to offer long-term independent study options to our families for the 2021-22 school year. These independent study programs will be operated by NS or by a local district or COE.

NS would determine to operate a long-term independent study program if there are enough students interested, thereby increasing fiscal and educational viability, *or* NS would refer students to a long-term independent program operated by a local district or COE through an MOU agreement if there are very few families interested. This option is allowable under the new legislation. These students would maintain the right to return to NS when their independent study program is completed.

We are requesting that the NS Board of Directors approves the new Policy for Long-Term Independent Study at Navigator Schools. We are also requesting the approval of an amended Policy for Short-Term Independent Study at Navigator Schools, stipulating that participation in the plan is limited to 15 days. The previous short-term policy included in the NS Parent/Student Handbook did not limit the number of days.