

INDEPENDENT STUDY BOARD POLICY

These policies apply to all pupils participating in independent study at the Community School for Creative Education (“CSCE”). CSCE is choosing to offer independent study per Education Code 51744 et seq. as a short-term instructional strategy to address individual pupils’ needs.

Independent study is an optional educational alternative in which no pupil may be required to participate. This policy intends for the length of an independent study written agreement to be between three (3) and twenty (20) days, with exceptions approved by the Head of School or designee. The Head of School or designee retains discretion to approve independent study written agreements for pupils.

Each pupil’s independent study shall be coordinated, evaluated, and under the general supervision of a certificated employee of CSCE, along with CSCE’s Independent Study Coordinator.

Time Allowed Between Assignments: For pupils in all programs and grade levels of independent study, the maximum length of time that may elapse between the time an assignment is made and the date by which the pupil must complete the assigned work is 20 school days. When special or extenuating circumstances justify a longer time for individual pupils, the Head of School or designee may approve a period not to exceed 45 school days.

Missed Assignments and Level of Satisfactory Educational Progress: When any pupil fails to complete 15% of assigned work during any period of 20 school days, any pupil is absent 10% or more days of synchronous instruction or live interaction over any period of 20 school days, any pupil’s educational progress falls below satisfactory levels as determined by receiving an overall grade of “1 - Emerging” in any core subject, or any pupil fails to make “satisfactory educational progress” as defined below, CSCE will conduct an evaluation to determine whether it is in the best interests of the pupil to remain in independent study or to return to the regular in-person school program. A written record of the findings of any evaluation made pursuant to this subdivision shall be maintained in the pupil’s permanent record and treated as a mandatory interim pupil record. The record shall be maintained for a period of three years from the date of the evaluation and, if the pupil transfers to another California public school, the record shall be forwarded to that school.

A pupil is deemed to be making satisfactory educational progress if the pupil 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 individualized education program (“IEP”). The Head of School or designee is responsible for making this determination based on all of the following indicators:

Pupil achievement, as measured by all of the following, as applicable:

- Statewide assessments that are part of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (a.k.a., “CAASPP”, or any other subsequent assessment as certified by the state board of education),
- English learner pupils who make progress toward English proficiency as measured by the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (a.k.a., “ELPAC” or subsequent assessments of English proficiency certified by the state board), and
- The English learner reclassification.

Pupil engagement, as measured by all of the following, as applicable:

- School attendance,
- Chronic absenteeism, and
- Middle school dropout.

The completion of assignments, assessments, or other indicators that evidence that the pupil is working on assignments.

Learning required concepts, as determined by the supervising teacher.

Progressing toward successful completion of the course of study or individual course, as determined by the supervising teacher.

Academic Content: Independent study shall include the provision of content aligned to grade level standards that is substantially equivalent to in-person instruction.

Tiered Reengagement¹: For all pupils who are not generating attendance for more than 10 percent of required minimum instructional time over four continuous weeks of CSCE’s approved school calendar, a pupil is found not participatory in synchronous instructional offerings pursuant to Education Code Section 51747.5 for more than 50% of the scheduled times of synchronous instruction in an school month as applicable by grade span, or pupils who are in violation of their independent study written agreement, CSCE shall:

- Verify current contact information for the pupil,
- Notify parents or guardians of lack of participation within one school day of the absence or lack of participation,
- Reach out to the pupil and/or parents or guardians to determine pupil needs, including a

¹ The tiered reengagement strategies shall not apply to pupils that participate in an independent study program for fewer than 15 school days in a school year.

- connection with health and social services, as necessary,
- If a pupil fails to complete 15% of assigned work during any period of 20 school days, a pupil is absent 10% or more days of synchronous instruction or live interaction over any period of 20 school days, a pupil's educational progress falls below satisfactory levels as determined by receiving an overall grade of "1 - Emerging" in any core subject, or a pupil fails to make satisfactory educational progress as defined herein, CSCE will schedule a pupil-parent-educator conference, as defined below, to review the pupil's independent study written agreement, reconsider the independent study program's impact on the pupil's achievement and well-being, and
 - Implement any other local programs of CSCE intended to address chronic absenteeism, as applicable.

For the purposes of this policy, "pupil-parent-educator conference" means a meeting involving, at a minimum, all parties who signed the pupil's independent study written agreement.

Opportunities for Live Interaction and Synchronous Instruction²: CSCE shall plan to provide opportunities for live interaction and synchronous instruction as follows for all pupils engaged in independent study:

For pupils in transitional kindergarten, kindergarten, and grades 1 to 3, inclusive, CSCE shall plan to provide opportunities for daily synchronous instruction for all pupils throughout the school year.

For pupils in grades 4 to 8, inclusive, CSCE shall plan to provide opportunities for both daily live interaction and at least weekly synchronous instruction for all pupils throughout the school year.

For the purposes of this policy, "live interaction" means interaction between the pupil and CSCE staff, and may include peers, provided for the purpose of maintaining school connectedness, including but not limited to wellness checks, progress monitoring, provision of services, and instruction. This live interaction may take place in-person, or in the form of internet or telephonic communication.

For the purposes of this policy, "synchronous instruction" means classroom-style instruction or designated small group or one-on-one instruction delivered in person, or in the form of internet or telephonic communications, and involving live two-way communication between the teacher(s) of record and the pupil.

Return to In-Person Instruction: For pupils whose families wish to return to in-person instruction from independent study, CSCE shall allow the pupil to return expeditiously, and in no case later than five school days³.

² The plan for synchronous instruction and live interaction shall not apply to pupils that participate in an independent study program for fewer than 15 school days in a school year.

³ The plan to transition pupils whose families wish to return to in-person instruction shall not apply to pupils that participate in an independent study program for fewer than 15 school days in a school year.

Special Circumstances: The sections of this policy on Tiered Reengagement, Opportunities for Live Interaction and Synchronous Instruction, and Return to In-Person Instruction do not apply to pupils 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. CSCE shall obtain evidence from appropriately licensed professionals of the need for pupils to participate in independent study due to such medical or inpatient treatment.

Pupils with Exceptional Needs: An individual with exceptional needs as defined in Education Code Section 56026 may participate in independent study if specified in the pupil's IEP. If a parent or guardian of an individual with exceptional needs requests independent study, the pupil's IEP team shall make an individualized determination as to whether the pupil can receive a free appropriate public education in an independent study placement.

Written Agreements: A current written agreement for each independent study pupil shall be maintained on file. The independent study agreement for a pupil will require and cover a study plan that represents the same amount of study that would be required of a pupil in the classroom and be consistent with CSCE curriculum and course of study of pupils participating in the regular classroom setting.

Agreement Content: Each independent study written agreement shall contain at least all of the following provisions:

The manner, time, frequency, and place for submitting a pupil's assignments, for reporting the pupil's academic progress, and for communicating with a pupil's parent or guardian regarding academic progress.

The objectives and methods of study for the pupil's work, and the methods used to evaluate that work.

The specific resources, including materials and personnel that will be made available to the pupil. These resources shall include confirming or providing access for all pupils to the connectivity and devices adequate to participate in the academic program and complete assigned work.

A statement of the policies adopted regarding the maximum length of time allowed between the assignment and the completion of a pupil's assigned work, the level of satisfactory educational progress, and the number of missed assignments allowed prior to an evaluation of whether or not the pupil should be allowed to continue in independent study. The level of satisfactory educational progress and missed assignments shall conform to the requirements specified in this policy.

The duration of the independent study agreement, including the beginning and ending dates for participating in independent study, recognizing that no independent study agreement shall be valid for any period longer than one school year.

A statement of the number of course credits, or for elementary grades pupils, other measures of academic accomplishment appropriate to the agreement, to be earned by the pupil upon completion.

A statement detailing the academic and other supports that will be provided to address the needs of pupils who are not performing at grade level, or need support in other areas such as English learners, individuals with exceptional needs as needed to be consistent with the pupil's IEP or plan pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. Sec. 794), pupils in foster care, pupils experiencing homelessness, and pupils requiring mental health support.

The inclusion of a statement in each independent study agreement that independent study is an optional educational alternative in which no pupil may be required to participate. In the case of a pupil who is referred or assigned to any school, class, or program pursuant Education Code Section 48915 or 48917, the agreement also shall include the statement that enrollment is voluntary and instruction may be provided to the pupil through independent study only if the pupil is offered the alternative of classroom instruction.

Agreement Signature: CSCE will comply with the signature requirements set forth in Education Code Section 51747(g)(9), including:

For pupils participating in independent study that is scheduled for fourteen (14) or less school days:

- o Each written agreement shall be signed by the pupil, the pupil's parent/guardian/caregiver if the pupil is less than 18 years of age, the certificated employee designated as responsible for the general supervision of independent study, and the certificated employee designated as having responsibility for the special education programming of the pupil, as applicable, within ten (10) school days of the commencement of the first day of the pupil's participation in independent study.

For pupils participating in independent study that is scheduled for fifteen (15) or more school days:

- o Each written agreement will be signed, prior to the commencement of independent study, by the by the pupil, the pupil's parent/guardian/caregiver if the pupil is less than 18 years of age, the certificated employee designated as responsible for the general supervision of independent study, and the certificated employee designated as having responsibility for the special education programming of the pupil, as applicable. For purposes of this policy, "caregiver" means a person who has met the requirements of Part 1.5 (commencing with Section 6550) of the Family Code.

Written agreements may be maintained electronically may include subsidiary agreements, such as course contracts and assignment and work records. Written agreements may be signed using electronic signatures that comply with applicable state and federal standards, as determined by the California Department of Education, and are intended by the signatory to have the same effect as a handwritten signature.

Before signing a written agreement, the parent or guardian of a pupil may request that CSCE conduct a phone, videoconference, or in-person pupil-parent-educator conference or other school meeting during which the pupil, parent or guardian, and, if requested by the pupil or parent, an education advocate, may ask questions about the educational options, including which curriculum offerings and nonacademic supports will be available to the pupil in independent study, before making the decision about enrollment or disenrollment in the various options for learning.