



Policy Number: 5.042017

Policy Type: Governing Board Policy

Policy Name: Independent Study Policy

Background

AB 130 makes significant changes to independent study (IS) and, for the 2021–22 school year only, requires school districts and county offices of education to offer independent study as an educational option (California Education Code Section 51745). The Contra Costa County School of the Performing Arts offering of Independent Study will be operated in such a manner as to prioritize students with medical restrictions first. In consideration of restrictions by the California Department of Education on ADA and education program designation, Independent Study will be offered on a first come-first serve basis up to 20% of the enrolled student population established by *EC* Section 51745.6. Eligible students in excess of the 20% threshold will be placed on a waitlist until such a time as space is available.

Definition

Independent Study provides an alternative education program and setting for students. Independent study programs are voluntary and use alternative instructional strategies that respond to individual student needs and learning styles. The flexibility of independent study programs makes it possible to serve a wide variety of students, enabling some students who otherwise might not graduate to stay in school. Students who enroll in independent study include students who have health problems, are parents, need to work, and are child actors or aspiring Olympic athletes. Additionally, independent study serves students who desire to accelerate or move more slowly through a course, or to make up a subject that they have missed in a traditional classroom.

Traditional Independent Study (IS): Attendance is based on the time value of assignments, and shall be under the general supervision of a LEA employee with a valid credential.

Course-based Independent Study (CBIS): Attendance is earned if all course requirements are met and the pupil is making satisfactory progress. CBIS replaces time valued assignments with enrollment and the satisfactory progress in certified courses. All courses shall be under the general supervision of a teacher with the appropriate subject matter credential.



A. This Policy shall apply to all pupils participating in independent study. This statute also requires the board policy to reflect an awareness that excessive leniency in the duration of assignment due dates can result in students falling so far behind their peers as to increase, rather than decrease, their risk of failing or dropping out of school.

B. This Policy confirms access to all pupils to devices and connectivity (as-needed) adequate for participation and completion of work.

C. Educational opportunities offered through independent study may include, but shall not be limited to, the following:

1. Individualized alternative education designed to teach the knowledge and skills of the core curriculum.
2. Individualized study in a particular area of interest or in a subject not currently available in the regular school curriculum.

C. Contra Costa School of Performing Arts shall comply with all state and federal laws regarding independent instruction.

D. Each student's independent study shall be coordinated, evaluated, and carried out under the general supervision of an assigned certificated employee or employees.

E. The maximum length of time that may elapse between the times an independent study assignment is made and the date by which the pupil must complete the assigned work shall be determined in each student's independent study agreement or as modified by an assigned certificated employee at the time the work is assigned to the pupil.

F. After three missed assignments within an evaluation period an evaluation shall be conducted to determine whether it is in the best interests of the pupil to remain in independent study. A written record of the findings of any evaluation made pursuant to this subdivision shall be maintained in the pupil's permanent record.

G. A current written agreement for each independent study pupil shall be maintained on file for each participating student. 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. Also each agreement shall contain the following:



- The manner, time, frequency, and place for submitting a pupil's assignments and for reporting his or her progress.
- The objectives and methods of study for the pupil's work, and the methods utilized to evaluate that work.
- The specific resources, including materials and personnel that will be made available to the pupil.
- 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, 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 duration of the independent study agreement, recognizing that no independent study agreement shall be valid for any period longer than one semester per instance. The duration of time will be no more than fifteen school days for short term independent study, and no more than the length of a semester for long term independent study..
- A statement of the number of course credits to be earned by the pupil upon completion.
- The inclusion of a statement that IS program is optional and pupil may be provided IS instruction if pupil is also offered classroom instruction. Before the commencement of IS, master agreement must be signed and dated by pupil, pupil's parent or legal guardian, and certificated employee designated as providing general supervision of the student in IS.
- Each written agreement shall be signed, prior to the commencement of independent study, by the pupil, the pupil's parent, legal guardian, or care giver; if the pupil 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 all persons who have direct responsibility for providing assistance to the pupil.

H. Contra Costa School of the Performing Arts shall not provide any funds or other things of value to the pupil or his or her parent or guardian that SPA could not legally provide to a similarly situated pupil of the school, or to his or her parent or guardian.

I. Contra Costa School of the Performing Arts may only receive funding for the provision of independent study to pupils who are residents of Contra Costa County or who are residents of a county immediately adjacent to Contra Costa County. Participation by claiming state apportionment for students whose residence status is based on parents' place of employment within district boundaries (ED Code section 51747.3) will not be permitted.

J. Contra Costa School of the Performing Arts must comply with Education Code Section 51745.6 and California Code of Regulations Section 11704 regarding teacher to ADA limits.



K. Each enrolled student will be assigned a certificated employee, who will serve as teacher to the student and mentor to the home-schooling parent as applicable. The parent will provide the daily instruction or the computer so the student may participate in independent study/on-line learning, while the teacher will meet with the student(s) and parent(s) on a regular basis (as provided by the written independent study agreement) to provide lesson planning, consultation, and resource check-out.

L. Each enrolled student will be afforded weekly synchronous instruction (classroom-style instruction) or designated small group or One on one instruction delivered in person or internet or telephonic communications involving live two-way communication between the teacher and pupil. Synchronous instruction shall be provided by the teacher of record also known as the assigned supervising teacher who must be an employee

M. Contra Costa School of Performing Arts will work with the parents and students to ensure that students are participating in enrichment activities. Contra Costa School of the Performing Arts shall facilitate enriched educational opportunities beyond the standard curriculum such as educational opportunities for students at other institutions of learning when available, shared instruction amongst charter school families, field trips, internships, outdoor education, shared social events for Contra Costa School of the Performing Arts students, and community service according to considerations of student capacity, safety, and wellbeing.

N. The assigned teacher and the parent and student shall evaluate the education program and modify as necessary, consistent with the written independent study agreement, to maximize student success. The assigned teacher of record will have the final authority with regard to the education program of the student, with the exception of students who qualify for special education services whose services and outcomes will be determined by an Individual Education Plan (“IEP”) team pursuant to law.

O. Contra Costa School of the Performing Arts will provide academic and other supports to address the needs of pupils not performing at grade level, or needed support in other areas such as English learners, individuals with exceptional needs consistent with pupil’s IEP or 504 plan, pupils in foster care, pupils experiencing homelessness, and pupils requiring mental health supports

P. It is understood that 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 IEP.

Q. It is further understood that for the 21-22 school year only, written agreements must be signed no later than 30 days after the first day of instruction, but all other IS requirements



must be met upon commencement of instruction. For any other school year, written agreements must be signed prior to commencement of IS.

R. Independent Study Roles:

The Certificated Employee will:

- Be responsible for completing designated portions of the written agreement for independent study, and add additional information when appropriate.
- Supervise and approve course work.
- Design all lesson plans.
- Write assignments for students.
- Assess the student's work, either orally or in written form.
- Suggest reinforcement of content when needed or requested.
- Personally judge the time value of student assignments or work products before ADA is earned.
- Assess the child's level of education, modifying the curriculum as necessary to meet district or county guidelines, and administer state mandated tests as required.
- Inform parents of or offer workshops that will enhance the teaching techniques of the parents as applicable.
- Select and save with each agreement representative samples of the student's completed and evaluated assignments on at least a monthly basis.
- Sign and complete the agreement when the student has reached his or her objectives or the agreement is terminated.
- Maintain any required records and files on a current basis.
- Determine and assign grades or other approved measures of student achievement when appropriate.

Parents will:

- Be committed to understand and use the independent study strategy appropriately.
- Provide an appropriate environment for the student's study.
- Participate with the assigned certificated employee in the development of the student's educational plan, including goals, objectives, and assignments. (While the assigned teacher is responsible for the educational design, the parent must be concerned about his or her role and the student's needs and interests.)
- Along with the student, prepare a study schedule that incorporates family and educational responsibilities.
- Facilitate and enable, as much as possible, the student's effective and successful study under the written agreement. This would include avoiding disturbances during study such as phone calls, TV watching, and conflicting family duties.



- Supervise the student while following the plan as the student is working on assignments, making sure that the student's effort at least meets the minimum requirement set forth in the written agreement.
- Take steps to ensure the timely submission to the assigned teacher of all student work, completed assignments, and accurate records that will be needed for the assessment of student progress and attendance accounting as specified in the written agreement.
- Participate in a supportive role in regularly scheduled teacher/student meetings.
- Under the direction of the supervising teacher and with the assistance of any other assigned Contra Costa School Of Performing Arts staff, participate in the student's instruction and assessment of learning and skills mastery. This may include the following:
 - Assuming responsibility for supplied textbooks, instructional materials and supplies, and equipment
 - Making intermediate assignments
 - Introducing curricular elements
 - Reinforcing learning
 - Promptly checking student work for errors, which the student should then correct
 - Whenever possible, attend workshops that provide instruction and guidance that will make independent study a satisfying and beneficial experience for the participating child and parent/guardian.
 - Ensure the student's voluntary participation in and understanding of independent study and facilitate the student's transfer to traditional instruction when ready or when the student is unwilling to continue in independent study.

Students will:

- Have the right to all existing services and resources of Contra Costa School Of Performing Arts as do all other students enrolled in Contra Costa School Of Performing Arts and engaged in regular classroom study.
- Make regular, scheduled contact with the assigned certificated employee as specified in the written agreement.
- Complete *at least* the assigned work by the due date.
- Have all possible assignments available at meetings with the assigned certificated employee.
- Make an effort to participate in pertinent public or private extracurricular activities, including social activities with other children and adults.
- Be responsible for other tasks that may be required to fulfill the written agreement.



The Director will:

- Administer the use of independent study by pupils.
- Ensure that independent study occurs in accordance with state law and district policy and regulation.
- Facilitate the completion of independent study agreements.
- Authorize the selection of all staff who are assigned to supervise independent study.
- Supervise any staff assigned to independent study functions.
- Complete or coordinate the preparation of all necessary records and reports.
- Establish and maintain in a systematic manner all records required by state regulations for an audit trail of average daily attendance attributed to independent study and reported by the district.
- Monitor enrollment in independent study and the pupil to teacher ratio.

P. To Succeed in Independent Study There Must Exist:

- An understanding of independent study by all concerned
- A positive attitude by both the parents and the student about independent study
- The parents' ability to assist their child and participate in instruction
- The students' agreement to meet the requirements in the written agreement
- The students' ability and willingness to work with limited supervision by a credentialed employee
- Availability of certificated employees to supervise students' independent study effectively

Q. Attendance Rules

- Contra Costa School Of Performing Arts shall maintain records identifying all grade levels of students' participating in independent study.
- Contra Costa School Of Performing Arts shall maintain a file of all agreements with representative samples of completed and evaluated student assignments, with notations on the work samples that indicate the supervising teacher's determination of the time value of the student's work.
- Contra Costa School Of Performing Arts shall maintain a list showing the credits attempted by and awarded to each student along with a record of grade and other evaluations of independent study assignments issued to the students participating in independent study according to the agreement.
- Students will not be placed in independent study or will be ineligible for participation if they are 19 years of age or older.
- No more than 20% of Contra Costa School Of Performing Arts' population will be allowed to participate in full time independent study at any given time.



- Students who are temporarily disabled (requiring home/hospital instruction) per EC 48206.3 are not eligible for long term independent study.

R. Missed Appointments - The Director shall incorporate in program procedures the appropriate use of the following strategies to deal with missed student appointments. The aim is to increase the student's achievement as well as to reduce and prevent the student's failure to meet the terms and conditions of the written agreement. If a student misses two or more appointments, the Director shall:

- Immediately telephone or contact the student and/or parent or have the teacher do so.
- Send a letter of concern to the student and parent, if appropriate.
- Schedule a special appointment.