

CSBA Sample

Board Policy

Independent Study

Use CSBA Sample with Revision -
Accepted

BP 6158
Instruction

***Note: Education Code 51745-51749.6 authorize districts to establish independent study programs to meet the educational needs of students. Independent study may be offered as a program within a school, as a charter school, or as an alternative school of choice pursuant to Education Code 58500-58512; see AR 0420.4 - Charter School Authorization, BP 6146.11 - Alternative Credits Toward Graduation, and BP/AR 6181 - Alternative Schools/Programs of Choice. ***

***Note: Education Code 51747 mandates that the Governing Board adopt a policy with specified components as a condition of receiving state apportionments for independent study students. In addition, Education Code 51749.5, as added by SB 858 (Ch. 32, Statutes of 2014), mandates that the Board adopt policy with specified components as a condition of offering a program of course-based independent study beginning in the 2015-16 school year. The mandated components are reflected throughout this policy and the accompanying administrative regulation. ***

Comment [WT1]: New Law.

***Note: When developing policy on independent study, 5 CCR 11701 requires the Board to consider, in a public hearing, (1) the scope of its existing or prospective use of independent study as an instructional strategy, (2) its purposes in authorizing independent study, and (3) factors bearing specifically on the maximum realistic lengths of assignments and acceptable number of missed assignments for specific populations of students or adult students. ***

The Governing Board authorizes independent study as an optional alternative instructional strategy for eligible students whose needs may be best met through study outside of the regular classroom setting. Independent study shall offer a means of individualizing the educational plan to serve students who desire a more challenging educational experience, whose health or other personal circumstances make classroom attendance difficult, who are unable to access course(s) due to scheduling problems, and/or who need to make up credits or fill gaps in their learning. As necessary to meet student needs, independent study may be offered on a full-time basis or on a part-time basis in conjunction with part- or full-time classroom study.

(cf. 5147 - Dropout Prevention)
(cf. 6011 - Academic Standards)
(cf. 6143 - Courses of Study)
(cf. 6146.1 - High School Graduation Requirements)
(cf. 6146.11 - Alternative Credits Toward Graduation)
(cf. 6172 - Gifted and Talented Student Program)

(cf. 6200 - Adult Education)

The Superintendent or designee may provide a variety of independent study opportunities, including, but not limited to, through a program or class within a comprehensive school, an alternative school or program of choice, a charter school, a home-based format, and an online course.

(cf. 0420.4 - Charter School Authorization)

(cf. 6181 - Alternative Schools/Programs of Choice)

A student's participation in independent study shall be voluntary. Students participating in independent study shall have the right, at any time, to enter or return to the regular classroom mode of instruction. (Education Code 51747; 5 CCR 11700)

Parents/guardians of students who are interested in independent study shall contact the Superintendent or designee. The Superintendent or designee shall approve independent study for an individual student only upon determining that the student is prepared to meet the district's requirements for independent study and is likely to succeed in independent study as well as or better than he/she would in the regular classroom setting.

***Note: Pursuant to Education Code 46300, the attendance of students participating in independent study for five or more consecutive school days will be included in computing average daily attendance for apportionment purposes. The following optional paragraph is for use by districts that wish to limit independent study to periods of five or more consecutive school days. ***

The minimum period of time for any independent study option shall be five consecutive school days.

Written Agreements

***Note: Education Code 51747 mandates that the Board adopt a policy providing that a current written agreement (i.e., the "master agreement") will be maintained for each student who participates in independent study for five or more consecutive school days. As amended by SB 858 (Ch. 32, Statutes of 2014), Education Code 51747 provides that no independent study agreement can be valid for longer than one school year. ***

Comment [WT2]: Amendment to law

***Note: In addition, Education Code 51749.5, as added by SB 858, mandates that the Board adopt a policy providing that a "learning agreement" be maintained for each student participating in course-based independent study. ***

Comment [WT3]: Amendment to law

***Note: See the accompanying administrative regulation for required content of these agreements. ***

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that a written master agreement and, as appropriate, a learning agreement for students participating in course-based independent study exist for each participating student as prescribed by law. (Education Code 51747, 51749.5)

***Note: Education Code 51747 mandates that the Board, in a public hearing, adopt a policy on the maximum length of time, by grade level and type of program, which may elapse between the time an independent study assignment is made and the date by which the student must complete the assignment. 5 CCR 11700 defines "type of program" as the statutory program category for purposes of attendance accounting, such as adult education or continuation high school. In addition, 5 CCR 11701 mandates that Board policy reflect an awareness that excessive leniency in the duration of independent study assignments can result in a student falling so far behind his/her peers as to increase, rather than decrease, the risk of dropping out of school. ***

***Note: The following paragraph sets one week, for all grade levels and types of programs, as the maximum length of time an independent study assignment should be completed. This paragraph should be revised to reflect the length of time determined by the Board. In order to ensure that apportionments are received, the district's written agreement should also be revised to reflect the length of time determined by the Board in its policy. ***

The master agreement shall specify the length of time in which each independent study assignment must be completed. Because excessive leniency in the duration of independent study assignments may result in a student falling behind his/her peers and increase the risk of dropping out of school, independent study assignments shall be no more than one week for all grade levels and types of program. However, when necessary based on the specific circumstances of the student's approved program, the Superintendent or designee may allow for a longer period of time between the date an assignment is made and when it is due, up to the termination date of the agreement.

Comment [WT4]: In current BP

***Note: Education Code 51747 mandates that the Board, in a public hearing, adopt a policy which specifies the number of missed assignments allowed before an evaluation would be required to determine whether it is in a student's best interest to remain in independent study. The following paragraph specifies a maximum of three assignments and should be revised to reflect the Board's determination of the number of missed assignments that will trigger an evaluation. ***

***Note: The number of missed assignments that will trigger an evaluation must be included in the student's written agreement; see the accompanying administrative regulation. In order to ensure that apportionments are received, the district's written agreement should also be revised to reflect the number of assignments determined by the Board in its policy. ***

An evaluation shall be conducted to determine whether it is in a student's best interest to remain in independent study whenever the student misses three assignments, unless the student's written agreement specifies a lower or higher number of missed assignments based on the nature of the assignments, the total number of assignments, and/or other unique circumstances.

Comment [WT5]: In current BP

Student-Teacher Conferences

***Note: The following optional section may be revised to reflect district practice. ***

Supervising teachers should establish an appropriate schedule for student-teacher conferences in order to help identify students falling behind in their work or in danger of failing or dropping out of school. Teachers are expected to monitor student progress and work closely with each student to determine the amount and type of contact needed for the student to be successful in the program.

Missing appointments with the supervising teacher without valid reasons may trigger an evaluation to determine whether the student should remain in independent study.

Home-Based Independent Study

***Note: The following section is optional. ***

The Superintendent or designee shall encourage parents/guardians desiring to teach their children at home to have their children participate in independent study. Such participation allows continued contact and cooperation between the school system and the home-based student and ensures that the student will be offered a standards-based education substantially equivalent in quality and quantity to the district's classroom instruction.

Program Evaluation

***Note: The following optional section may be revised to reflect district practice. ***

The Superintendent or designee shall report to the Board the number of district students participating in independent study that may include the average daily attendance generated for apportionment purposes, student performance as measured by standard indicators and in comparison to students in classroom-based instruction, and the number and proportion of independent study students who successfully complete independent study. Based on the program evaluation, the Board and Superintendent shall determine areas for program improvement as needed.

(cf. 0500 - Accountability)
(cf. 5121 - Grades/Evaluation of Student Achievement)
(cf. 6162.5 - Student Assessment)
(cf. 6162.51 - State Academic Achievement Tests)
(cf. 6162.52 - High School Exit Examination)

Legal Reference:
EDUCATION CODE
17289 Exemption for facilities
41976.2 Independent study programs; adult education funding

42238 Revenue limits
42238.05 Local control funding formula; average daily attendance
44865 Qualifications for home teachers and teachers in special classes and schools
46200-46208 Instructional day and year
46300-46307.1 Methods of computing average daily attendance
47612.5 Independent study in charter schools
48204 Residency
48206.3 Home or hospital instruction; students with temporary disabilities
48220 Classes of children exempted
48340 Improvement of pupil attendance
48915 Expulsion; particular circumstances
48916.1 Educational program requirements for expelled students
48917 Suspension of expulsion order
49011 Student fees
51225.3 Requirements for high school graduation
51745-51749.6 Independent study programs
52522 Adult education alternative instructional delivery
52523 Adult education as supplement to high school curriculum; criteria
56026 Individuals with exceptional needs
58500-58512 Alternative schools and programs of choice
FAMILY CODE
6550 Authorization affidavits
CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 5
11700-11703 Independent study
19819 State audit compliance
UNITED STATES CODE, TITLE 20
6301 Highly qualified teachers
COURT DECISIONS
Modesto City Schools v. Education Audits Appeal Panel, (2004) 123 Cal.App.4th 1365
EDUCATION AUDIT APPEALS PANEL DECISIONS
Lucerne Valley Unified School District, Case No. 03-02 (2005)

Management Resources:

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PUBLICATIONS

Elements of Exemplary Independent Study

Approaches to Satisfying No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 Teacher Requirements for Independent Study in Secondary Schools, January 28, 2010

WEB SITES

California Consortium for Independent Study: <http://www.ccis.org>

California Department of Education, Independent Study: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/eo/is>

Education Audit Appeals Panel: <http://www.eaap.ca.gov>

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