

# Santa Barbara Unified School District

## Board Policy

### Instruction

BP 6158

### INDEPENDENT STUDY

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 and enabling students to reach curriculum objectives and fulfill graduation requirements. 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. 0420.4 - Charter Schools)*

*(cf. 6011 - Academic Standards)*

*(cf. 6143 - Courses of Study)*

*(cf. 6146.1 - High School Graduation Requirements)*

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

*(cf. 6200 - Adult Education)*

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)

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.

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

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that a written independent study agreement, as prescribed by law, exists for each participating student. (Education Code 51747)

The written 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, the due date for the completion of independent study assignments shall be no more than:

1. One week for students in grades K-3
2. Two weeks for students in grades 4-6
3. Three weeks for students in grades 9-12, continuation or adult education

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.

When a participating student misses three assignments in a period of 15 school days or misses two appointments with supervising teacher without valid reasons, an evaluation shall be conducted to

determine whether it is in the student's best interest to remain in independent study. However, a student's written agreement may specify a lower or higher number of missed assignments that will trigger an evaluation when the Superintendent or designee determines it appropriate based on the nature of the assignments, the total number of assignments, and/or other unique circumstances.

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. Except in unusual circumstances, it is expected that the supervising teacher will meet, either in person or by electronic means, with each participating student at least once a week to discuss the student's progress.

*(cf. 5147 - Dropout Prevention)*

The Superintendent or designee shall annually report to the Board the number of students participating in independent study, the average daily attendance generated for apportionment purposes, the quality of these students' work as measured by standard indicators, and the number and proportion of independent study students who graduate or successfully complete independent study.

*(cf. 0500 - Accountability)*

*(cf. 5121 - Grades/Evaluation of Student Achievement)*

*(cf. 6162.5 - Student Assessment)*

### **Home-Based Independent Study**

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.

Administrative Regulations shall be implemented for Independent Study in accordance with law. (Education Code 11703(b)(1))

#### *Legal Reference:*

##### EDUCATION CODE

17289	Exemption for facilities
41976.2	Independent study programs; adult education funding
42238	Revenue limits
44865	Qualifications for home teachers and teachers in special classes and schools
46300-46307.1	Methods of computing average daily attendance
47612.5	Independent study in charter schools
48204	Residency based on parent employment
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
51225.3	Requirements for high school graduation
51745-51749.3	Independent study programs
52206	Gifted and talented education; use of independent study to augment program
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*

**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**

*Independent Study Operations Manual*, 2000 Edition

*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>

SANTA BARBARA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Santa Barbara, California            May 5, 2009; December 14, 2010