

VENTURA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

**ADMINISTRATIVE
REGULATION NO. 6158**

ADOPTED: 02/24/97

CLASSIFICATION: Curriculum/Instruction

REVISED: 08/11/00

SUBJECT: Independent Study

No student shall be required to participate in independent study and shall only be offered when the regular class time alternative is deemed to be an unsuitable instructional setting. In the case of a student referred or assigned to any school class or program pursuant to Ed. Code 48915 or 48917, the agreement shall state that independent study is appropriate only if the student is offered the alternative of classroom instruction.

No course required for high school graduation shall be offered exclusively through independent study.

No individual with exceptional needs, as defined in Education Code 56026, may participate in independent study unless his/her individualized education program specifically provides for such participation.

No temporarily disabled student may receive individual instruction pursuant to Education Code 48206.3 by means of independent study.

No apportionment may be claimed for students residing outside the local or adjoining county.

No ADA may be claimed for students 19 or 20 years of age unless they have been continuously enrolled in school since their eighteenth birthday.

CRITERIA FOR PARTICIPATION

Approval for participation in independent study shall be based on the following criteria:

1. Evidence that a community school seat time program is not an acceptable educational setting.
2. Evidence that the pupil can work independently.
3. Evidence that the pupil will work to complete the assignments and meet necessary appointments.

4. Acceptable reason for requesting independent study and verification that the student meets one of the following criteria as defined in Education Code Section 1981. Enrollment of pupils:
 - a. Pupils who have been expelled from a school district.
 - b. Pupils who have been referred to the county community schools by a school district as a result of the recommendation by a school attendance review board or pupils whose school district of attendance have, at the request of the pupils' parent or guardian, approved the pupil's enrollment in a county community school.
 - c. Pupils who are probation referred pursuant to Sections 300, 601, 602, and 654 the Welfare and Institutions Code, or are on probation or parole and who are not in attendance in any school.
 - d. Homeless children.
5. Availability of experienced certificated staff with adequate time to supervise the student effectively.
6. Documentation of a written statement indicating educational objectives, how the objectives will be accomplished, and how progress toward the objectives will be measured.
7. Parental approval and signature of the written agreement if the pupil applicant is under 18 years of age.
8. Evidence that students engaging in independent study must be residents of the county or an adjacent county.
9. Documented notice that the county shall not provide to students engaged in independent study, or to their parents or guardians funds or any other things of value that are not provided for students engaged in regular classroom-based instruction as limited by Education Code Section 51747.3.
10. Each student's independent study shall be coordinated, evaluated, and carried out under the general supervision of a certificated employee.

INDEPENDENT STUDY WRITTEN AGREEMENTS

A written independent study agreement shall be executed for each participating student. The agreement must require and cover a study plan that represents not less than the equivalent of a minimum school day for the pupil's grade level for every school day covered by the agreement. The independent study agreement shall include, but not be limited to, all of the following:

1. The manner, frequency, time and place for submitting the student's assignments and for reporting his/her progress.
2. The objectives and methods of the course of study for the pupil's work covered by the agreement.
3. The specific resources, including materials and staff, which will be made available to the student in order to attain the objectives.
4. A schedule for achieving objectives and completing the agreement.
5. A schedule for conferences between pupil and supervising teacher.
6. The method used to evaluate the pupil's work.
7. A statement of the Board policies adopted pursuant to Education Code 51747(a) and (b), describing the maximum length of time allowed between an assignment and its completion and the number of missed assignments which will trigger an evaluation of whether the student should be allowed to continue in independent study.
8. The duration of the independent study agreement, including the beginning and ending dates for the pupil's participation under the agreement, up to a limit of one semester or one-half year for a school on a year round schedule.
9. A statement of the number of course credits or, for the elementary grades, other measures of academic accomplishment appropriate to the agreement, to be earned by the student upon completion.
10. A statement that independent study is an optional educational alternative in which no student may be required to participate. Additionally, in the case of a pupil who is referred or assigned to any school, class, or program pursuant to Section 48915 or 48917, the agreement shall also include the statement that instruction may be provided to the pupil through independent study only if the pupil is offered the alternative of classroom instruction.
11. The signatures of the pupil, pupil's parent(s) or guardian if the pupil is less than 18, certificated employee of the district who has been designated as the person responsible for the general supervision of independent study, and any person who has direct responsibility for providing assistance to the pupil.

RECORDS

Records shall identify all students participating in independent study and shall specify the grade level, program placement, and school in which each student is enrolled.

Records shall include the following:

1. A copy of the board policy, administrative regulation, and procedures related to independent study.
2. A file of all agreements, with representative samples of each student's completed and evaluated assignments.
3. A list of all students who have participated or are currently participating in independent study, showing the credits attempted by and awarded to each pupil according to the agreement and a record of the pupil's attendance.
4. An attendance register, separate from the register used for regular classroom attendance, in which attendance is recorded on the basis of positive attendance accounting procedures approved by the California Department of Education.
5. A record of grades and other evaluations issued to each student for independent study assignments.
6. Units of credit earned by a pupil are applied toward promotion to the next grade or toward graduation. The school in which the pupil is enrolled shall certify independent study pupils for graduation providing they meet all the requirements. In the event there is a dispute about the credits given, the parents and pupil have a right to appeal through county office procedures.
7. A record of the number of students in each type of independent study program, the ADA generated, the quality of the students work as measured by the teacher's evaluation, and the number of independent study students who graduate or successfully complete their program. This information will be presented to the Board on an annual basis.

INDEPENDENT STUDY STUDENTS' RIGHTS, PRIVILEGES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Each student engaged in independent study is entitled to and should have the same right to all existing services and resources of the school in which the student is enrolled as do all other students enrolled in the school and engaged in regular classroom study.
2. Each student engaged in independent study has the right, continuously, to enter or return to the regular classroom mode of instruction.
3. Each student should promptly submit assigned work. When written assignments are not submitted, the problem should be assessed promptly and directly.

4. The administrator shall incorporate in program procedures the appropriate use of the following strategies to deal with missed appointments. The aim is to increase the pupil's achievement as well as to reduce and prevent the pupil's failure to meet the terms and conditions of the written agreement. If an assignment is missed the following procedures will be used:
 - a. Telephone or contact the student and/or parent.
 - b. Send a letter of concern to the student and parent, if appropriate.
 - c. Schedule appointment.
 - d. Set up a meeting with the teacher or counselor or both.
 - e. Meet with the student, together parent or guardian, if appropriate.
 - f. Place the pupil on probation.
 - g. Increase the amount of time the pupil must be on campus or in an equivalent supervised situation.
 - h. Terminate the agreement and return the pupil to a regular classroom program of instruction or other appropriate alternative.

INDEPENDENT STUDY SUPERVISING TEACHERS

1. Independent study teachers shall:
 - a. Complete designated portions of the written agreement.
 - b. Add additional information when appropriate.
 - c. Supervise and approve course work.
 - d. Design all lesson plans.
 - e. Write the assignments for students.
 - f. Assess all student work.
 - g. Personally judge the time value of assigned work or work products completed and submitted by the student.

- h. Select and save with each agreement representative samples of the pupil's completed and evaluated assignment "on not less than a monthly basis," preferably biweekly.
 - i. Sign and complete the agreement when the pupil has reached his or her objectives or the agreement is terminated.
 - j. Maintain any required records and files on a current basis.
- 2. Independent study teachers shall complete a record of the pupil's assignments "on not less than a monthly basis," preferably biweekly. The record form shall provide for individual assignments, with comments on resources provided to facilitate the completion of each assignment due date and evaluation comments to be added when the assignments have been completed. Each form shall be consistent with the terms of the written agreement and to be signed by the pupil and teacher at the time of the assignment and after evaluation of completed work.
- 3. Independent study teachers shall determine and assign grades or other approved measures of the pupil's achievement when appropriate.

ADMINISTRATION OF INDEPENDENT STUDY

The use of independent study shall be administered by the Director of Secondary Education and Principal of the community school program. Their responsibilities shall include:

- 1. Ensuring that independent study occurs in accordance with state law and Office policy and regulations.
- 2. Approving the participation of pupils requesting independent study for a period exceeding five school days.
- 3. Facilitating the completion of independent study written agreements.
- 4. Approving all credits earned through independent study.
- 5. Supervising staff assigned to the community school program.
- 6. Completing or coordinating the preparation of all necessary records and reports.
- 7. Establishing and maintaining in a systematic manner all records required by state regulation for an audit trail of average daily attendance attributed to independent study and reported to the Office.

8. Monitoring enrollment in independent study to stay within prescribed limits and to maximize income to the county office without compromising the educational quality of independent study.
9. Developing and managing the budget for independent study.
10. Obtaining and maintaining current information and skills required for the operation of an independent study strategy that meets established standards for feeder districts educational programs.
11. Preparing and submitting reports as required by the Superintendent or Board.