

INDEPENDENT STUDY

A. CRITERIA FOR PARTICIPATION

The Board of Education recognizes the value of supervised Independent Study for students in situations where their special interests, abilities, or individual needs are not being met through traditional instructional approaches. These students must have the willingness and ability to successfully complete the educational requirements of Independent Study.

Students who may be appropriately enrolled in Independent Study include, but are not limited to, students who:

1. Have an understanding of and commitment to Independent Study.
2. Have learning styles that can best be met through Independent Study.
3. Are exceptional or gifted and need in-depth opportunities, which may include concurrent enrollment in post secondary education or participation in visual or performing arts, athletics and/or sports.
4. Request Independent Study because they will be absent from school for five (5) or more consecutive school days.
5. Have an acceptable reason for requesting Independent Study. Some acceptable reasons may include:

Extended illness (mono, chicken pox, etc.)	Other contagious diseases
Family emergencies	Religious purposes
Funeral	Safety issues
Immunization	Severe weather situations
Jury Duty	Vacation or travel

6. Have experienced difficulty in adapting to the classroom setting, achieving academic success, or conforming to school rules, and are ready to or have dropped out.
7. Could be classified as school-phobic.
8. Have special needs, as defined in Education Code Section 56026, and an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) specifying Independent Study as an appropriate instructional modality.
9. Have medical and/or psychological problems and choose Independent Study in place of Home/Hospital Instruction.
10. Have received suspended expulsion (or stay of expulsion), rather than full expulsion from the Governing Board, and have been offered independent study with a classroom option (i.e., enrollment at a traditional or alternative school, charter or county program, opportunity class, community day school, or continuation school).
11. Are genuinely needed at home because of illness in the family.
12. Have parent/guardian who wishes to assist in the Independent Study instruction designed for their children.
13. Have attended a high school but have not achieved a high school diploma.
14. Arrived in the District mid-semester.

Administrative Regulations 6158(b)

15. Are employed and need to help the family.
16. Are in drug or alcohol rehabilitation programs.
17. Are pregnant or have children.
18. Need to complete an extra or special course outside the regular school day.

B. SELECTION OR INTAKE PROCESS

Approval for participation in Independent Study shall be based on evidence that the student will work independently to complete the program and availability of experienced certificated staff with adequate time to supervise the student effectively. School districts are not obliged to permit a student to engage in Independent Study if school officials given responsibility for the decision determine that Independent Study is not an appropriate alternative for the student. (Title 5, Code of Regulations 11700 (d))

A student who has met the criteria for participation may:

1. Complete a full program of courses.
2. Take a full program of courses and continue or take a class or classes at the school of enrollment.
3. Complete an extra or special course outside the regular school day.
4. Enroll for a limited period of time if the student is to be out of school for five (5) or more consecutive school days.

The selection or intake process should be accomplished through a standardized district application. The student and/or parent/guardian should:

1. Request Independent Study at the school office or with the counselor or Independent Study teacher or Coordinator.
2. Meet with the school counselor or the coordinator of Independent Study or the Independent Study teacher for an intake conference to determine if the student meets the criteria for Independent Study.
3. Complete all elements of the Independent Study Agreement with the supervising coordinator or teacher or administrator of short term Independent Study.

Finishing the above process completes the student's intake process. Depending on the availability of space in Independent Study, a student should be able to start the Independent Study option immediately.

C. STUDENT EXIT FROM INDEPENDENT STUDY

The student or parent/guardian may request a classroom option at any time. This request may come from the student, parent/guardian, or the school administration. As a general rule, students may transfer to a classroom option at any time during a semester. The coordinator, teacher, counselor or school administrator will make every effort to counsel the student and parent/guardian on the most appropriate option.

Administrative Regulations 6158(c)

The school may request a change because the student:

1. Is not meeting the obligations of the Independent Study Agreement.
2. Is no longer meeting the criteria for participation.
3. Is inappropriately placed.

D. INSTRUCTION

Instructional guidelines for Independent Study participants are:

1. Grade 9-12 and Adult students must be enrolled in a district school as a condition of participating in Independent Study (California Education Code 51748).
2. The maximum length of enrollment covered by the Master Agreement shall be one semester.
3. No course required for high school graduation shall be offered exclusively through Independent Study. In other words, any course required for graduation must also be offered in the classroom mode. Note: A student may complete an elective course, even if there is currently no classroom equivalent, as long as that course has been board approved (California Education Code 51745 (e)).
4. For grade 9-12 ADA purposes, Independent Study teacher-ADA ratio must not exceed the baseline ratio for other instructional programs. A teacher-ADA ratio cap does not apply to adult education (California Education Code 51745.6).
5. Class size reduction funding is not available for any student enrolled in Independent Study (California Education Code 52123).
6. Special education students (individuals with exceptional needs as defined in California Education Code 56026) must have an IEP that allows Independent Study (California Education Code 57145 (c)).
7. Independent Study students will not be provided with funds or other things of value that are not provided to other students in the District.
8. A certificated teacher in the school district must generally supervise, coordinate, and evaluate the work of each student engaged in Independent Study. Apportionment credit for Independent Study may be claimed only to the extent of the time value of student work products, as personally judged in each instance by a certificated teacher (California Education Code 51747.5).
9. Students engaged in Independent Study must be residents of the local county or an adjacent county (California Education Code 46300.2, 51747.3 (b)).
10. Full-time Independent Study shall not be available to students whose district residency is based on their parent/guardian's employment within district boundaries (Education Code Section 51747.3)

Administrative Regulations 6158(d)

11. No temporarily disabled student may use Independent Study as a means of instruction for Home/Hospital Instruction. However, if the student/parents/guardians and district agree, the student may receive instruction through Independent Study as an alternative to Home/Hospital Instruction. Inter district transfers are required if the student is in a hospital that is out of district (California Education Code 48206.3, 51745 (d)).
12. No more than 10% of the ADA students participating in the continuation high school or opportunity programs may be engaged in Independent Study education in addition to pregnant or parenting students (California Education Code 51745 (b)).
13. To receive 9-12 apportionment, students who are age 19 or 20 must have been continuously enrolled in school since their 18th birthday (California Education Code 46300.1).
14. The Independent Study option shall be substantially equivalent in quality and quantity to classroom instruction. Independent Study students shall have the same access to existing services and resources as other students in their school. Independent Study students shall have equal rights and privileges with other students.
15. For all schools, the Independent Study curriculum must meet district and state content standards to ensure students are prepared to successfully pass the CAHSEE and earn a high school diploma (California Education Code 11701.5, 51745a(3)).
16. Students in Independent Study will be administered district wide assessments and state achievement tests including the California High School Exit Exam and Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) tests.
17. The curriculum specified in the written Independent Study Agreement and Subsidiary Agreements shall be consistent with the Board's Policies, Administrative Regulations, and Procedures for curriculum and instruction (California Education Code 11702)

E. WRITTEN INDEPENDENT STUDY AGREEMENT

A written Independent Study Agreement must be executed for each participating student and must be maintained on file. The Independent Study Agreement requires a learning plan that a student be assigned an equivalent of a full day's work.

The Independent Study Agreement shall include, but not be limited to:

1. General data
 - a. Name of student/student E.C. 51748
 - b. Address E.C. 51747.3(b), 51748
 - c. Grade level E.C. 51748
 - d. School Name/program placement (GATE, EL, etc.) E.C. 51748
 - e. Birth date E.C. 51748
2. Subjects and course value/units/credits E.C. 51747 (c)(6)
3. Objectives included for student work E.C. 51747 (c)(2)
4. Methods of study E.C. 51747 (c)(2)
5. Specific resources including materials and personnel E.C.51747(c)(3)
6. Methods of evaluation E.C. 51747(c)(2)

Administrative Regulations 6158(e)

7. Manner of reporting E.C. 51747(c)(1)
8. Time of reporting to the teacher E.C. 51747(c)(1)
9. Location/place of the reporting E.C. 51747(c)(1)
10. Frequency of the meetings between the teacher and student E.C. 51747(c)(1)
11. Duration of enrollment with beginning and ending dates. E.C. 51747(c)(5)
12. The minimum length of enrollment shall be five days and the maximum length of enrollment covered by the Master Agreement shall be one semester. E.C. 51747(c)(5)
13. Dated signatures for each E.C. 51747(c)(8)
 - a. Student
 - b. Parent/guardian or caregiver (affidavit must be on file).(Not necessary if adult or Emancipated Minor including married, active military or court directed)
 - c. Supervising certificated teacher.
 - d. Other assisting person(s) who have direct responsibility for providing assistance. (Note: No apportionment credit can be taken until all required signatures are on the agreement. The Independent Study Agreement can be started in the subjects under the control of the supervising teacher, but if an “other” teacher is involved, attendance/ADA cannot be taken for that course until the agreement is dated and signed by that “other” teacher.
14. All Subsidiary Agreements such as Assignment and Work Records and/or High School Course Agreements should be made a part of the Independent Study Agreement by specific reference(s).
15. A Statement that identifies the number of missed assignments that will lead to a written evaluation of whether the student should continue in Independent Study or return to the classroom for his or her best interest. A written record of the findings of this evaluation must be retained as an interim student record.
16. A statement of the maximum length of time, by grade level and type of program, that may elapse between the date the assignment is made and the date the student must complete the assigned work. E.C. 51747(a)
17. A statement that Independent Study is a continuously voluntary, educational alternative and that a classroom option is always available. E.C. 51747(c)(7), 11700(d) (2)(b)
18. A statement that instruction may be provided for a Section 48915 (expulsion) or 48917 (suspended expulsion) student through Independent Study only if the student is offered the alternative of classroom instruction. E.C. 51747 (c)(7).
19. A statement that when circumstances justify a longer time, the Superintendent/designee may approve a request from an Independent Study teacher to revise an Independent Study Agreement in order to extend the maximum length of an assignment.
20. A statement allowing one or more classes to be added to the Independent Study Agreement during the semester.

Administrative Regulations 6158(f)

F. INDEPENDENT STUDY AGREEMENT WITH SUBSIDIARY AGREEMENT(S)

If subsidiary agreements are used, such as Assignment and Work Records and/or High School Course Agreements, they should be made a part of the Independent Study Agreement by specific reference.

Subsidiary Agreements should include:

1. Specific subject objectives.
2. Specific subject assignments and activities.
3. Specific subject resources including materials and personnel.
4. Methods of evaluation.
5. Signatures of student, teacher, and other persons assisting

G. STUDENT ASSIGNMENT/EVALUATION/WORK RECORDS

The Student Assignment/Evaluation Form or Work Records supplements the Independent Study Agreement. It contains detailed components of the Independent Study Agreement that includes: (E.C. 11700-11703)

1. Course of study/subjects
2. Objectives of the assignments.
3. Method of study (activities that the student does to complete the objectives).
4. Resource materials (texts, workbooks, videos, computer activities, projects, etc.) and personnel who may be assisting the student to meet the objectives.
5. Methods of evaluation for attendance and academic credit.
6. Date assignment made and date assignment due.
7. Grades and/or academic credits earned after the assignment is completed.
8. Apportionment (attendance) Note: The teacher may keep grades, credits, and attendance on the Student Assignment or Work Record, or on a separate form, in a grade book, in a Final Report, or on the Subsidiary Agreement.

H. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS

The student's legal rights and responsibilities specific to Independent Study must be identified and included in the Independent Study Agreement. Additional student's rights and responsibilities will be specified in other written documents (e.g., Administrative Regulations, student handbook, etc.) Policies and procedures that ensure a student's due process rights apply to Independent Study students.

Administrative Regulations 6158(g)

The student's rights and responsibilities stated in the Independent Study Agreement will include:

1. I understand that this agreement will remain in effect as written, unless amended.
2. I will report progress to my teacher, will meet assigned deadlines and attend scheduled conferences.
3. I understand that if I miss my scheduled appointment, or fail to complete all the work on my assignment sheet, I will receive an absence.
4. I understand that either missing a scheduled appointment or failing to complete an assignment for the third time in one academic semester will result my continued enrollment being evaluated to determine if I will remain in the program or be immediately returned to my last school of enrollment.
5. I understand that I must follow discipline codes and behavior guidelines of the West Sonoma County Union High School District.
6. I understand that visitation on any other school campus requires permission from that school.
7. If I have an IEP, it must specifically provide for my enrollment in Independent Study.
8. I am liable for the cost of replacement or repair of any lost or damaged books and/or materials.
9. I am eligible for all West Sonoma County Union High School District services and resources.
10. I acknowledge that I am required to take the STAR and CAHSEE just as in the regular classroom program.
11. I understand that if I achieve only the minimum amount of study required to remain enrolled in Independent Study (4 hours of study per day), I may not earn sufficient credits to graduate.

I. PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS

The parent/guardian's rights and responsibilities stated in the Independent Study Agreement will include:

1. I grant permission for my student to enroll in independent study, an optional alternative education strategy, offered by the West Sonoma County Union High School District.
2. I understand that this enrollment is for a period not to exceed one semester and I have the right to review the program of instruction and revoke this agreement at any time.
3. I understand no progress reports will be issued due to the short duration of the contracts, but I may contact the coordinator for information at any time.

Administrative Regulations 6158(h)

4. I understand that should my student either miss a scheduled appointment or fail to complete an assignment for the third time in one academic semester, my student's attendance will be evaluated and he/she may be returned to his/her last school of enrollment.
5. I understand if my student has an IEP, it must specifically provide for his/her enrollment in Independent Study.
6. I am liable for the cost of replacement or repair of any lost or damaged books and/or materials.
7. I have the right to appeal any decision about my child's placement according to the school district's procedures.
8. I have read and agree to the student responsibilities and understandings.
9. I acknowledge my student is required to take the STAR and CAHSEE just as in the regular classroom program.
10. I understand that if my student achieves only the minimum amount of study required to remain enrolled in Independent Study (4 hours of study per day), he/she may not earn sufficient credit to graduate.

J. SUPERVISING TEACHER

One of the most important factors in the success of the student in Independent Study is the selection of the teacher. An Independent Study teacher should have the following characteristics:

1. Great human relation skills with the student, as well as with the parent/guardian because of the close relationship that develops between the teacher and student.
2. Ability to act as a student advisor and sometimes student advocate are secondary roles of a good Independent Study teacher.
3. A well-rounded general education background since the teacher may teach all subjects. Note: Like all teachers, Independent Study teachers must be Highly Qualified in the subjects, which they teach.
4. A high degree of organizational skills because the paper trail is different than the classroom option and well-kept records are essential.

Independent Study shall be coordinated, evaluated, and notwithstanding subdivision (a) of Section 46300, be under the general supervision of an employee of the school district who possesses a valid California Teaching Credential, registered as required by law with:

- A valid teaching document pursuant to Section 44865 or an Emergency Permit pursuant to Section 44300, registered as required by law.
- Student teaching.
- A special fitness to perform.
- Been assigned to the student as his/her "Supervising Teacher."
- No Child Left Behind highly qualified status.

Administrative Regulations 6158(i)

If other teachers besides the supervising teacher are used, they must sign the agreement as “other assisting person.”

The duties of the supervising teacher shall include the following:

1. The teacher must assign courses in areas identified in EC Section 44865 (a-g classes).
2. The supervising certificated teacher must generally supervise, coordinate, evaluate the work, and provide general supervision of the student’s Independent Study Agreement. The teacher shall:
 - a. Complete designated portions of the Independent Study Agreement, accompanying documents, and required record keeping for student assignments and attendance credits.
 - b. Design a learning plan and assign appropriate student work that is comparable to classroom work.
 - c. Provide curriculum based on the District approved Course of Study and Content Standards.
 - d. Supervise student’s study and evaluate coursework completed by the student.
 - e. Assess all student work for attendance credit.
 - f. Select and save representative samples of the student’s completed and evaluated assignments.
 - g. Maintain and keep current any required records and files.
 - h. Determine and assign grades or other approved measures of the student’s achievement when appropriate.
 - i. Keep parents informed of the student’s progress when appropriate.
 - j. Counsel and coach for the student’s success.

K. ADMINISTRATION OF INDEPENDENT STUDY

The Superintendent shall assign a designee to administer/coordinate Independent Study and ensure quality and legal compliance.

The Superintendent or designee will:

1. Ensure that Independent Study occurs in accordance with state law and district policies and regulations.
2. Approve the participation of students requesting Independent Study.
3. Facilitate and monitor all paperwork and procedures for Independent Study.
4. Establish and maintain in a systematic manner all records required by state law and regulations.
5. Approve all academic credits and attendance earned through Independent Study.
6. Authorize the selection of all staff members who are assigned to supervise Independent Study.
6. Prepare or coordinate the preparation of all necessary records and reports.
7. Develop and manage the Independent Study budget.
8. Provide a smooth transition into and out of the Independent Study mode of instruction.
- 9.

Administrative Regulations 6158(j)

The Independent Study Coordinator or administrator shall use appropriate strategies to increase student achievement as well as reduce and prevent failures. They include:

1. Letters of concern to the student and parent/guardian if appropriate.
2. A specially scheduled appointment with students or parents/guardian when appropriate.
3. A special meeting with teachers or counselors.
4. A special meeting with administrators, including student/parent/guardian.
5. Referring the student to a student study team.
6. Terminating the Independent Study Agreement and recommending a student's return to a regular classroom option or other appropriate alternatives.
7. Referring the student to Student Attendance Review Board if appropriate.
8. Increasing the amount of time the student meets with a teacher or in an equivalent supervised situation.

L. WORK SAMPLES

Representative samples of original work must be on file for each student and evaluated by a certificated teacher. Note: Representative samples are defined as examples for each course, representing student work product where ADA was reported for attendance credit for apportionment. One or more representative samples will be kept for each course during a semester at the discretion of the teacher, but not less than one per course.

The work samples should include the identification of the:

1. Certificated teacher signature or initials.
2. Date of assessment evaluation for apportionment credit.
3. Subject or course name
4. Student's name
5. Date student completed the assignment
6. Academic evaluation

M. ATTENDANCE

A student must be assigned the equivalent of a full day's work. A student may be assigned more than the minimum number of hours of work in order to meet academic requirements; however, the minutes/hours listed below reflect the maximum apportionment a teacher may give.

Type of Program:

Grades 9-12 - 240 minutes per day	E.C. 46145, 46147
Continuation/Opportunity—15 hours per week	E.C. 46170, 48400

Independent Study apportionment credit is based on the completed work product of the student. ADA is based on the Independent Study teacher's judgment of the time value of each work product. Work assignments must be equivalent to the full school day assignments that would have been required if the student had been in the classroom. If the work is completed

Administrative Regulations 6158(k)

and submitted to the appropriate teacher by the due date, attendance credit may be claimed providing the student's completed work is equivalent to the minimum day for the specified grade level.

Independent Study Attendance must: E.C. 11703(b)(4)

1. Be recorded on a separate state approved attendance register or state approved computerized attendance accounting system (written approval from the California Department of Education must be on file).
2. Match teacher ADA records with attendance reported.
3. Be recorded in whole days for apportionment for 9-12. Continuation/Opportunity programs must record in hours.
4. Never accept work after the due date for apportionment credit. Student's work may be accepted for academic credit after the due date.
5. Never "bank" excessive days/hours of work.
6. Include signature of certificated teacher or initials on attendance records.

N. RECORDS

Each school shall maintain records for all students using Independent Study. All records (except student transcripts, which are kept permanently) are to be kept for the three years excluding the current fiscal year and made available for auditing. Title 5, E.C. 16023 and 16026. The following records must be available for an audit. Records shall include, but not be limited to:

1. A copy of the District Board Policy and Administrative Regulations and Procedures pertaining to Independent Study. 11703 (b) (1)
2. A file or files for each student containing a:
 - Written Independent Study Agreement and any Subsidiary Agreements 11703 (b) (3)
 - Student Assignment or Work Record. 11703 (b) (3)
 - Representative samples of completed work by the student that have been evaluated by a certificated teacher. 11703 (b) (3)
 - Teacher record of apportionment/attendance credits, grades, and other evaluations of Independent Study assignments. 11703 (b) (2)
3. A permanent record of the student transcript for the high school student.
4. A written record of findings of an evaluation regarding non-producing or non-attending students. 51747 (b)
5. A list of all students, by grade level, and or school, who have participated or are currently participating in Independent Study, show credits attempted and credits awarded to each student and a record of the student's attendance. 11703 (b) (2)
6. A list of Independent Study teachers that includes the teaching assignments. This list allows the auditor to calculate the Independent Study teacher to ADA ratio and compare the ratio to other instructional programs in the district. EC 51745.6
7. Written approval of attendance register from the California Department of Education must be on file.

Administrative Regulations 6158(l)

O. SHORT TERM INDEPENDENT STUDY

All the laws and regulations that govern “regular” Independent Study apply to “short term” Independent Study. Short term Independent Study may be appropriate when a student who is usually in a classroom will be absent from school; apportionment may be claimed if the student will be absent for five (5) or more consecutive school days but fewer than twenty (20) consecutive school days through an Independent Study Agreement for the student to complete the work he/she will miss. E.C. 46300 (e) (1) An approved student may participate in short-term independent study twice a year for a total of not more than twenty (20) school days a year.

P. PROCEDURES FOR SHORT-TERM INDEPENDENT STUDY

Step 1. The parent or student should pick-up a Master Agreement for Short Term Independent Study (Board Exhibit (3) 6158) at the school office at least five (5) days in advance of the absence.

Step 2. The student submits the completed Master Agreement for Short Term Independent Study, including parent/guardian signature, to the School Coordinator and picks up the Short-Term Independent Study Assignment Sheet (Assignment Sheet) (Board Exhibit (4) 6158) from the School Coordinator.

Step 3. The student will obtain signatures and assignments from teachers by taking the Assignment Sheet to each teacher to complete his or her part by adding assignments with all the required elements (including objectives, methods of study, resources, and evaluation). Each teacher will sign and date the Assignment Sheet as the teacher who has direct responsibility for providing assignments. All signatures must be on the original Assignment Sheet, not a copy. The work assigned must be the current class curriculum, not standardized packets.

Step 4. The student will return the completed Short-Term Assignment Evaluation Form to the School Coordinator for approval. The School Coordinator must review the completed Agreement Sheet to ensure that all required information is in the Agreement Sheet and that the work assigned is the current course curriculum for days the student will be absent.

Step 5. When the student returns to school, all work is to be returned by the due date to the School Coordinator. Independent Study attendance is claimed based on completed work. If the student has met the objectives of the Master Agreement and Assignment Sheet by the due date, the student will receive academic credit and apportionment credit may be claimed. If work comes in after the due date, academic credit may be given, but no apportionment/attendance credit may be claimed.

Administrative Regulations 6158(m)

Step 6. Each teacher must grade and determine the value of the student's work for his or her class using the Short Term Independent Study Evaluation Sheet (Evaluation Sheet) (Exhibit 5 6158), initial all worked reviewed for credit, and sign and date the Evaluation Sheet. All teachers must also select samples of original work (not photocopies) from completed student work as part of the required documentation and attach samples to the Agreement form.

Step 7. All teachers must submit all required documentation to the School Coordinator (student assignment/work record, attendance record, and samples of student work, etc.) within five (5) days after the due date on the agreement.

Step 8. The School Coordinator must evaluate the time value of all completed work. If some assignments are missing, the School Coordinator must determine whether the student has missed assignments when on Short Term Independent Study during previous absences and whether an evaluation is needed regarding the appropriateness of accessing Independent Study for this student in the future. Education Code 51747 (c)(4)

Step 9. The School Coordinator must return all required paperwork to the office in order to complete this process within five (5) days after the due date on the agreement. The School Coordinator will maintain and store the student's Independent Study file for audits.

Adopted: April 19, 1996

Revised: 11/18/99; 6/27/07; 4/7/08; 9/24/08; 10/22/08

WEST SONOMA COUNTY UHSD

Sebastopol, CA