

**Instruction  
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 to serve students who desire a more challenging education 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.

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.

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.

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.

The minimum period of time for any independent study option shall be five (5) consecutive school days. (Mark West Charter School Students shall be two (2) or more consecutive school days).

**Written Agreements**

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

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 submitted no more than seven(7) calendar days after the assigned due date. 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.

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 3 assignments.

**Student-Teacher conferences**

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.

#### 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.

#### Program Evaluation

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, 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 graduate or successfully complete independent study. Based on the program evaluation, the Board and Superintendent shall determine areas for program improvement as needed.

#### 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 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  
49011 Student Fees  
51225.3 Requirements for high school graduation  
51745-51749.3 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

##### 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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**Instruction  
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Educational opportunities offered through independent study may include, but are not limited to: (Education Code 51745)

1. Special assignments extending the content of regular courses of instruction
2. Individualized study in a particular area of interest or in a subject not currently available in the regular school curriculum
3. Individualized alternative education designed to teach the knowledge and skills of the core curriculum, but not provided as an alternative curriculum
4. Continuing and special study during travel
5. Volunteer community service activities that support and strengthen student achievement

In addition, when requested by a parent/guardian due to an emergency, vacation, or illness, independent study may be used on a short-term basis to ensure that the student is able to maintain academic progress in his/her regular classes.

**Equivalency**

The district's independent study option shall be substantially equivalent in quality and quantity to classroom instruction to enable participating students to complete the district's adopted course of study within the customary time frame. Students in independent study shall have access to the same services and resources that are available to other students in the school and shall have equal rights and privileges. (5 CCR 11700, 11701.5)

The District shall not provide independent study students and their parents/guardians with funds or items of value that are not provided for other students and their parents/guardians. (Education Code 46300.6, 51747.3)

**Eligibility for Independent Study**

Provided that experienced certificated staff are available to effectively supervise students in independent study, the Superintendent or designee may approve the participation of a student who demonstrates the motivation, commitment, organizational skills, and academic skills necessary to work independently. A student whose academic performance is not at grade level may participate in independent study only if the school is able to provide appropriate support, such as supplemental instruction, tutoring, counseling, ongoing diagnostic assessments, and/or differentiated materials, to enable the student to be successful. For an elementary student, the Superintendent or designee may consider the parent/guardian's level of commitment to assist the student.

A student participating in independent study must be a resident of the county or an adjacent county. Full-time independent study shall not be available to students whose district residency status is based on their parent/guardian's employment within district boundaries pursuant to Education Code 48204. (Education Code 46300.2, 51747.3)

For a student with disabilities, as defined in Education Code 56026, participation in independent study shall be approved only if his/her individualized education program specifically provides for such participation. (Education Code 51745)

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A temporarily disabled student shall not receive individual instruction pursuant to Education Code 48206.3 by means of independent study. (Education Code 51745)

**Written Agreements**

A written agreement shall be developed and implemented for each student participating in independent study for five or more consecutive school days (two or more days for the Mark West Charter middle school). (Education Code 46300, 51747) The agreement shall include general student data, including the student's name, address, grade level, birth date, school of enrollment, and program placement.

The independent study agreement for each participating student also shall include, but not be limited to, all of the following: (Education Code 51747; 5 CCR 11700)

1. The manner, time, frequency, and place for submitting the student's assignments and for reporting his/her progress
2. The objectives and methods of study for the student's work and the methods used to evaluate that work
3. The specific resources, including materials and personnel that will be made available to the student
4. A statement of the Board's policy detailing 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
5. The duration of the independent study agreement, including the beginning and ending dates for the student's participation in independent study under the agreement, of one(1) school year for home based Independent Study Program and 20 days for school based Independent Study Program.
6. A statement of the number of course credits or, for an elementary student, other measures of academic accomplishment appropriate to the agreement, to be earned by the student upon completion
7. A statement that independent study is an optional educational alternative in which no student may be required to participate
8. In the case of a suspended or expelled student who is referred or assigned to any school, class, or program pursuant to Education Code 48915 or 48917, a statement that instruction may be provided through independent study only if the student is offered the alternative of classroom instruction

Before the student begins the independent study, the written agreement shall be signed and dated by the student, the parent/guardian or caregiver of the student if the student is under age 18, the certificated employee responsible for the general supervision of independent study, and all persons who have direct responsibility for providing assistance to the student. (Education Code 51747; 5 CCR 11702)

**Monitoring Student Progress**

Independent study students who are late, miss scheduled conferences, or do not submit assigned work on time shall not be reported as tardy or truant.

However, the independent study administrator and/or supervising teacher shall promptly and directly address any failure by the student to meet the terms of his/her written agreement. The following supportive strategies may be used:

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1. A letter to the student and/or parent/guardian
2. A meeting between the student and the teacher
3. A meeting between the student and the teacher, including the parent/guardian if appropriate
4. An increase in the amount of time the student works under direct supervision

When the student has missed the number of assignments specified in the written agreement as precipitating an evaluation, the Superintendent or designee shall conduct an evaluation to determine whether or not independent study is appropriate for the student. This evaluation may result in termination of the independent study agreement and the student's return to a regular school program.

**Assignment and Responsibilities of Independent Study Teachers**

Each student's independent study shall be coordinated, evaluated, and carried out under the general supervision of a certificated employee who consents to the assignment. (Education Code 44865, 51747.5; 5 CCR 11700)

The principal and independent study administrator may recommend, and the Superintendent shall approve the assignment of teachers to directly supervise independent study and/or work with students on specific subject matter. The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that independent study teachers have access to professional development and support comparable to classroom-based teachers.

The ratio of student average daily attendance to full-time equivalent certificated employees responsible for independent study shall not exceed the equivalent ratio for all other education programs in the district. (Education Code 51745.6)

The responsibilities of the supervising teacher shall be to:

1. Complete designated portions of the written independent study agreement and add additional information to the written agreement when appropriate
2. Supervise and approve coursework
3. Design lesson plans and make assignments
4. Maintain records of student assignments showing the date the assignment is given and the date the assignment is due
5. Provide direct instruction and counsel as necessary for individual student success
6. Regularly meet with the student to discuss the student's progress
7. Judge the time value of assigned work or work products completed and submitted by the student
8. Assess student work and determine and assign grades or other approved measures of achievement
9. Select and save representative samples of the student's completed and evaluated assignments for each subject, signed or initialed and dated in accordance with item #3 in the section on "Records" below

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10. Maintain a daily or hourly attendance register in accordance with item #4 in the section on "Records" below
11. Maintain any other required records and files on a current basis

**Records**

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that records are maintained for audit purposes. These records shall include, but not be limited to: (Education Code 51748; 5 CCR 11703)

1. A copy of the Board policy, administrative regulation, and other procedures related to independent study.
2. A separate listing of the students, by grade level, program, and school, who have participated in independent study. This listing shall identify units of the curriculum attempted and units of the curriculum completed by students in grades K-8.
3. A file of all agreements, with representative samples of each student's work products bearing the supervising teacher's signed or initialed and dated notations indicating that he/she has personally evaluated the work or that he/she has personally reviewed the evaluations made by another certificated teacher.
4. A daily or hourly attendance register, as appropriate to the program in which the students are participating, separate from classroom attendance records, and maintained on a current basis as time values of student work products judged by a certificated teacher, and reviewed by the supervising teacher if they are two different persons.

The above records shall be maintained for three years, excluding the current fiscal year.

The Superintendent or designee also shall maintain a record of grades and other evaluations issued to each student for independent study assignments.

Each school shall maintain records for the students at that school.

A written record of the findings of any evaluation conducted after the student has missed the number of assignments specified in Board policy shall be treated as a mandatory interim student record which shall be maintained for three years from the date of the evaluation. (Education Code 51747)

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Mark West Union School District

**INDEPENDENT STUDY MASTER AGREEMENT**

Mark West Union School District Independent Study is an optional education strategy offered by the Mark West Union School District in which no student may be required to participate. Independent Study students have all of the rights and privileges that accompany the status of a Mark West Union School District student.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_

School of Record \_\_\_\_\_ Student # \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address (if different than above) \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (HOME) \_\_\_\_\_ (WORK) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Duration of Agreement: Beginning date \_\_\_\_\_ End Date \_\_\_\_\_

- This agreement is to enable the student to work toward completion of appropriate grade level curriculum goals and learning standards as outlined by the Mark West Union School District and complete assignments identified on the Independent Study Assignment Worksheet.
- In accordance with Board Policy for Independent Study in grades K-8, assignments shall be submitted within seven (7) calendar days of the date it is due. All assigned work will be submitted to the school site for teacher evaluation.
- The Mark West Union School District will provide the teacher services instructional materials, and other necessary items and resources as specified for each assignment.
- The student will complete the studies listed below during the term of the agreement as they are outlined in the Mark West Union School District independent Study Assignment Worksheet.
- Evaluation of student assignments will entail observation, interview and documentation. The student will demonstrate what he/she has learned by using one or more of the following exhibits: test/quizzes, log book/diary, scrapbook, photographs, related reading assignments, charts/maps, collection of materials/samples, collection of brochures/program notes, written review, reports, essays, sketches and/or diagrams, tape recordings, calculations, demonstrations, oral report, on site demonstration, documentation and internet research

Frequency: _____	Date&Time _____	Place _____	Manner _____
Date of Evaluation _____			
ADA days assigned _____		ADA days earned _____	

**THESE THREE SIGNATURES MUST BE OBTAINED PRIOR TO START DATE OF AGREEMENT:**

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date Signature Date

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

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**Student**

I understand that:

Independent Study is a voluntary form of education

I am entitled to textbooks and supplies, supervision by my teacher, and all rights, services and resources received by other children enrolled in my grade in the Mark West School District.

I am liable for damage or loss of any textbooks/materials. Non-consumable supplies/materials/equipment/provided by the Mark West School District are property of the district and are utilized on a loan basis. Upon termination of the Independent Study program, or when materials or equipment are no longer being used, I will return them to the district.

I must follow the rules and standards in discipline code and behavior guidelines of the Mark West School District.

If I do not complete 3 assignments, I will be subject to an evaluation to determine whether I will be allowed to continue in the Independent Study program.

\_\_\_\_\_ Initial when read

**Parent/Guardian**

I understand that the major objective of the Independent Study program is to provide a voluntary educational alternative for my son/daughter. I agree to the above conditions listed under "Student". I also understand that:

Learning objectives are consistent with and evaluated in the same manner they would be if he/she were enrolled in a traditional classroom.

If my child has an individualized education plan (IEP), the IEP must specifically provide for his/her enrollment in an Independent Study program.

Unless otherwise indicated, the supervising teacher who signs this agreement will meet with my son/daughter on a regular basis as specified on side 1 to review and assign work/activities as well as recommend appropriate instructional techniques and additional learning activities in curriculum areas. It is my responsibility to maintain scheduled appointments and participate in evaluating the student's activities and assessing student progress.

It is my responsibility to promptly reschedule any appointments missed due to an emergency.

I am responsible to provide daily instruction to the student using appropriate materials that correspond to the written agreement.

I am responsible for the supervision of my son/daughter while he/she is completing the assigned work and for ensuring the submission of all completed assignments necessary for evaluation.

I am liable for the cost of replacement or repair of any damaged or destroyed books/materials/equipment checked out to my son/daughter.

\_\_\_\_\_ Initial when read

INDEPENDENT STUDY STUDENT ASSIGNMENT SHEET

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Start Date \_\_\_\_\_

**DUE DATE FOR  
ASSIGNMENTS IS :**

SUBJECT	ASSIGNMENT	ESTIMATED WORK HOURS	ACTUAL WORK HOURS	TEACHER SIGNATURE

VERIFYING TEACHER'S SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL HOURS \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF EVALUATION \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL ATTENDANCE HOURS \_\_\_\_\_