

INDEPENDENT STUDY PROGRAM

The Governing Board authorizes independent study as an optional alternative instructional strategy by which students in grades K-12 may reach curriculum objectives and fulfill graduation requirements. Independent study shall offer a means of individualizing the educational plan for students whose needs may be best met through study outside the regular classroom setting.

(cf. 5147 – Dropout Prevention)

The district's independent study option shall be substantially equivalent in quality and quantity to classroom instruction, thus enabling students enrolled in independent study 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 as is available to other students in the school.

(cf. 6143 – Courses of Study)

(cf. 6200 – Adult Education)

The Superintendent or designee shall determine that the prospective independent study student understands and is prepared to meet the district's requirements for independent study.

Independent study entails a commitment by both the parent/guardian and the student. As the student gets older, he/she assumes a greater portion of the responsibility involved. Independent study may be offered only to students who can achieve in this program as well as or better than they would in the regular classroom.

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 Board recognizes that independent study may be used as an option to encourage students to remain in school. Teachers should carefully set the duration of independent study assignments, within the limits specified by the Board in order to help identify students falling behind in their work or in danger of failing or dropping out of school.

To foster each student's success in independent study, the Board establishes that the following maximum lengths of time which may elapse between the time an assignment is made and date by which the student must complete the assigned work shall be as follows:

1. For students in grades K-3: one week
2. For students in grades 4-8: two weeks
3. For students in grades 9-12, three weeks
continuation and adult education

INDEPENDENT STUDY PROGRAM (continued)

When circumstances justify a longer time, the Superintendent or designee may extend the maximum length of an assignment to a period not to exceed eight weeks, pursuant to a written request with justification.

When any student fails to complete consecutive independent study assignments, the Superintendent or designee shall conduct an evaluation to determine whether it is in the student's best interest to remain in independent study. Evaluation findings shall be kept in the student's permanent record.

(cf. 5125 – Student Records)

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

17289 Exemption for building

44865 Qualifications for home teachers and teachers in special classes and schools; consent to assignment

46300-46300.6 Methods of computing ADA

48220 Classes of children exempted

48340 Improvement of pupil attendance

48915 Expulsion: particular circumstances

48917 Suspension of expulsion order

51225.3 Requirements for High School Graduation and Diploma

51745-51749.3 Independent study programs

52000(e) Improvement of elementary and secondary education: Legislative intent

52015 School improvement plans: components of plan

52017 Secondary schools: additional plan components

56026 Individual with exceptional needs

FAMILY CODE

6650 Authorization affidavits

CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 5

11700-11703 Independent Study

Management Resources:

CDE PROGRAM ADVISORY

1113.90 Independent Study: New Legislation, SPB: 90/91-04

0904.86 Independent Study, SPB; 86/7-5

CDE PUBLICATIONS

Independent Study Operations Manual, 1993 revised edition, updated 1994, 1996

WEB SITES

CDE: <http://www.cde.ca.gov>

INDEPENDENT STUDY PROGRAM

No course required for high school graduation shall be offered exclusively through independent study. (Education Code 51745)

(cf. 6146.1 – High School Graduation Requirements)

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

No student shall be required to participate in independent study. (Education Code 51747)

Students enrolling in independent study must be residents of the local county or an adjacent county. (Education Code 51747.3)

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 51747.3)

(cf. 5111.12 – Residency Based on Parent/Guardian Employment)

No individual with disabilities as defined in Education Code 56026, may participate in independent study unless his/her individualized education program specifically provides for such participation. (Education Code 51745)

(cf. 6159 – Individualized Education Program)

No temporarily disabled student may receive individual instruction pursuant to Education Code 48206.3 by means of independent study. (Education Code 51745)

(cf. 6183 – Home/Hospital Instruction)

No more than 10% of the students enrolled in a continuation high school or opportunity school or program, not including pregnant and parenting students who are primary caregivers for one or more of their children, may be in independent study at any given time. (Education Code 51745)

(cf. 5146 – Married/Pregnant/Parenting Students)

(cf. 6182 – Opportunity School/Class/Program)

(cf. 6184 – Continuation Education)

Students age 21 or older, and students 19 or older who have not been continuously enrolled in school since their 18th birthday may participate in independent study through the adult education program. (Education Code 46300.1)

(cf. 6200 – Adult Education)

INDEPENDENT STUDY PROGRAM (continued)**Criteria for Participation**

Students who are interested in independent study should contact their school principal. Approval for participation shall be based on the following criteria:

1. Evidence that the student will work independently to complete program.
2. Availability of experienced certificated staff with adequate time to supervise the student effectively.

Written Agreements and Assignments

A written independent study agreement shall be executed for each participating student. The agreement shall include, but not be limited to, all of the following: (Education Code 51747)

1. The manner, frequency, times 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 staff, which will be made available to the student.
4. The district's independent study policy 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.
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. No independent study agreement shall be valid for any period longer than one semester, or one-half year for a school on a year-round calendar.
6. 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.
7. A statement that independent study is an optional educational alternative in which no student may be required to participate. In the case of a student who is referred or assigned to any school, class or program pursuant to Education Code 48915 or 48917, the agreement shall also include the statement that instruction may be provided through independent study only if the student is offered the alternative of classroom instruction.

INDEPENDENT STUDY PROGRAM (continued)

The curriculum and methods of study specified in the written agreement shall be consistent with the Governing Board's policies, administrative regulations and procedures for curriculum and instruction. (5 CCR 11702)

(cf. 6143 – Courses of Study)

The agreement also may include a schedule for achieving objectives and completing the agreement and a schedule of conferences between the student and supervising teacher.

Before beginning the independent study, each written agreement shall be signed and dated by the student, the parent/guardian of the student under 18 years of age, the certificated employee designated as responsible for the general supervision of independent study, and all persons who have direct responsibility for providing assistance to the student. (Education Code 51747)

The agreement shall state that the parent/guardian's signature confers his/her permission for the student's independent study as specified in the agreement.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

Students participating in independent study shall have the right, continuously, to enter or return to the regular classroom mode of instruction.

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 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:

1. A letter to the student and/or parent/guardian, as appropriate.
2. A special meeting between the student and the teacher and/or counselor.
3. A meeting between the student and the administrator, 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 Board Policy as precipitating an evaluation, the Superintendent or designee shall conduct an evaluation which may result in termination of the independent study agreement, with the student's return to a regular classroom or alternative instructional program.

(cf. 1312 – Complaints Concerning the Schools)
(cf. 1312.1 – Complaints Concerning District Employees)

INDEPENDENT STUDY PROGRAM (continued)**Administration of Independent Study**

Each student's independent study shall be coordinated, evaluated and carried out under the general supervision of a certificated employee. (Education Code 51747.5)

The responsibilities of the independent study administrator shall be to:

1. Ensure that the district's independent study option is operated in accordance with law, Board policy and administrative regulation.
2. Approve the participation of students requesting independent study for a period exceeding five school days.
3. Facilitate the completion of independent study written agreements.
4. Approve all credits earned through independent study supervised at a location apart from the student's regular school and forward the information to the appropriate staff so that the information becomes part of the student's record.
5. Authorize the selection of staff who are assigned to supervise independent study.
6. Supervise any staff assigned to independent study functions who are not regularly supervised by another administrator.
7. Complete or coordinate the preparation of all necessary reports and records.
8. Establish and maintain in a systematic manner all records required by law, Board policy and administrative regulation.
9. Monitor enrollment in independent study to stay within prescribed limits and to maximize income to the district without compromising the educational quality of independent study.
10. Develop and manage the budget for independent study.
11. Obtain and maintain current information and skills required for the operation of an independent study strategy that meets established standards for the district's educational programs.
12. Prepare and submit reports as required by the Board or Superintendent.
13. Assure smooth transition into and out of the independent study mode of instruction.

INDEPENDENT STUDY PROGRAM (continued)

Supervising Teachers

The independent study administrator shall approve the assignment of any teachers who directly supervise independent study on a regular basis. The principal may recommend teachers or students for independent study. The teacher may be the student's regular classroom teacher, particularly for elementary students.

Independent study teachers shall:

1. Complete designated portions of the written agreement and add additional information to the written agreement when appropriate.
2. Supervise and approve coursework.
3. Design all lesson plans
4. Write the assignments for students
5. Assess all student work.
6. Personally judge the time value of assigned work or work products completed and submitted by the student.
7. Select and save with each agreement representative samples of the student's completed and evaluated assignments on not less than a monthly basis, preferably biweekly.
8. Sign and complete the agreement when the student has reached his/her objectives or the agreement is terminated.
9. Maintain any required records and files on a current basis.

When appropriate, independent study teachers shall determine and assign grades or other approved measures of achievement.

Records

District records shall identify all students participating in independent study and shall specify the grade level, program placement and school in which each of these students is enrolled. (Education Code 51748)

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

Records shall be maintained for audit purposes and shall include the following: (5 CCR 11703)

INDEPENDENT STUDY PROGRAM (continued)

1. A copy of the Board policy, administrative regulation, and procedures related to independent study.
2. A separate listing of the students and adult education students, by grade level, program and school, who have participated in independent study, identifying units of the curriculum attempted and units of the curriculum completed by students in grades K-8 and identifying course credits attempted by and awarded to students in grades 9-12 and in adult education, as specified in their written agreements.
3. A file of all agreements, with representative samples of each student's or adult education student's work products bearing signed or initialed and dated notations by the supervising teacher indicating that he/she has personally evaluated the work or that he/she 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 or adult education students are enrolled, separate from classroom attendance records, and maintained on a current basis as time values of student or adult education work products are personally judged by a certificated teacher, and reviewed by the supervising teacher if they are two different persons.

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

HIGH SCHOOL MASTER AGREEMENT FOR INDEPENDENT STUDY

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Course Agreement

There will be a separate course agreement for each individual course. It will include objectives, specific resources, materials and personnel.

Method of Evaluation

Demonstration of skills. Product completion. Oral/written tests.

Student will be evaluated on the basis of one or more of the above at each appointment. Grades and credits earned will be written on the course agreement to provide the student immediate feedback of progress. A report card will be given at the completion of each class. A final report will be given when the student exits or at the close of the school year.

Student

- I agree to meet regularly with my teacher as specified in this master agreement.
- I will abide by all school rules and regulations. I understand any violation could result in dismissal.
- My student rights and options have been explained to me.
- I will complete my weekly assignments to the best of my ability.

Parent/Guardian

As a parent/guardian/caregiver, I agree to be responsible in complying with all aspects of this agreement and supervise the work of my student. I understand that failure to do so may result in my student being transferred from Independent Study to an alternative classroom or to another school and/or legal action may be taken. I agree to supervise my student in pursuit of his/her Independent Study agreement. I agree to work in conjunction with the Independent Study teacher to provide a meaningful educational option.

I must provide transportation, pay for any school issued materials lost or stolen, and call if student is to be absent from an appointment.

Student Signature

Date

Teacher Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian/Caregiver
Signature

Date

Teacher Signature

Date

**EL RANCHO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
SPECIAL & ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION
MIDDLE SCHOOL MASTER AGREEMENT FOR INDEPENDENT STUDY**

	School _____
Student's Name _____	I.D. Number _____ Grade _____
Address _____	City _____ Zip _____
Phone (home) _____	(work) _____ Birthdate _____
Beginning Date _____	Ending Date _____

Objective: This master agreement is in effect for the _____ semester of the _____ school year. The student will complete the courses listed below during the semester as they are outlined in the El Rancho Unified School District course descriptions. All course objectives will be consistent with the established district guidelines. Assignment and Work-Record Forms will include additional descriptions of the major objectives and activities of the course of study covered by the agreement and the methods for evaluating student work. It is understood that:

- The purpose of this agreement is to enable the student to successfully reach the objectives and complete the assignments identified in the course agreement, assignment and other forms that will be part of this agreement.
- According to district policy for independent study, no more than four weeks or 20 school days may elapse between the date an assignment is made and the date it is due, unless an exception is made in accordance with district policy.
- The El Rancho Unified School District will provide the teacher services, instructional materials, and other necessary items and resources as specified for each assignment.
- The student agrees to meet with or report to the teacher regularly, in accordance with this agreement.
- This master agreement is in effect for one semester. Independent Study is a continuously voluntary optional alternative in which no pupil may be required to participate; a classroom will always be available. In the case of a pupil who is referred or assigned pursuant to Education Code 48915 or 48917, a classroom has been offered and is available at all times.
- The student's work will be evaluated by the method specified in the assignment and Work-Record Form.
- Three consecutive missed assignments or substandard work will call for an evaluation to determine if continuation in Independent Study is the best educational placement. This evaluation will be kept in my permanent file.

Time: _____ Day: _____ Frequency: _____ Location: _____ Manner: _____

Subject:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Additional courses may be added during the semester. All signatures with dates will be necessary.

**EL RANCHO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
SPECIAL & ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MASTER AGREEMENT FOR INDEPENDENT STUDY**

	School _____
Student's Name _____	I.D. Number _____ Grade _____
Address _____	City _____ Zip _____
Phone (home) _____	(work) _____ Birthdate _____
Beginning Date _____	Ending Date _____

Objective: This master agreement is in effect for the _____ semester of the _____ school year.

- The major objective for the duration of this agreement is to enable the student to keep current with ____ grade studies for the period covered by this agreement.
- This agreement is to enable the student to successfully reach the objectives and complete the assignments identified in the assignment and other form(s) that will be a part of this agreement. With the support of the parent, guardian, or caregiver, the student will submit assignments on the due date.
- According to district policy for independent study in grades K-6, no more than 4 weeks or 20 school days may elapse between when an assignment is made by the teacher and the date it is due, unless an exception is made in accordance with district policy.
- The El Rancho Unified 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 semester of the agreement as they are outlined in the El Rancho Unified School District curriculum.
- This master agreement is in effect for one semester. Independent Study is a continuously voluntary optional alternative in which no pupil may be required to participate; a classroom will always be available. In the case of a pupil who is referred or assigned pursuant to Education Code 48915, a classroom has been offered and is available at all times.

List studies here:

The student's work will be evaluated by the method specified in the assignment and other forms and district bench mark standards.

We agree on regular reports on the student's work, as follows:

Frequency: _____ Day: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____ Manner: _____

Student:

I understand that:

- Independent Study is a form of education that I have voluntarily chosen and I will always have a classroom option available.
- I am entitled to textbooks and supplies, supervision by my teacher, and all the services and resources received by other children enrolled in my grade at _____ school.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MASTER AGREEMENT FOR INDEPENDENT STUDY

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- I must follow the rules and standards in the discipline code and behavior guidelines of _____ school.
- If I miss three consecutive assignments or my work is substandard, an evaluation will be made to determine if independent study is the best educational setting. This evaluation will be kept in my permanent file.

I agree to:

- Be supervised by and meet regularly with my teacher, as specified on page 1.
- Complete my assigned work by its due date, as explained by my teacher and described in my written assignments.

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian/Caregiver:

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

- Learning objectives are consistent with and evaluated in the same manner that they would be if he or she were enrolled in a traditional school program.
- If my student has an Individual Education Program (IEP), the IEP must specifically provide for his or her enrollment in Independent Study.
- Unless otherwise indicated, the supervising teacher who signs this agreement will meet with my student on a regular basis as specified on page 1 to direct the student's study and measure progress toward objectives of this agreement. It is my responsibility to promptly reschedule any appointment missed because of any emergency.
- I am responsible for supervising my student while he or she is completing the work assigned by the Independent Study teacher and for ensuring the submission of all completed assignments necessary for evaluation.
- I am liable for the cost of replacement or repair for willfully damaged or destroyed books and other school property checked out to my student.
- It is my responsibility to provide any needed transportation for my student's scheduled meetings and any other travel covered by this agreement.

Parent/Guardian/Caregiver Signature

Date

Agreement: We have read pages 1 and 2 of this agreement and hereby agree to all the conditions set forth within:

Parent/Guardian/Caregiver

Date

Student Signature

Date

Teacher Signature

Date

Other Signature

Date