
Independent Study Policy 3-401

Purpose

The Board recognizes the critical importance of regular student attendance in fostering academic success.

The Board adopts this policy to permit Independent Study (IS) as an alternative instructional strategy, with District approval.

This policy is designed to offer flexibility to meet the diverse needs of students while maintaining high educational standards. A student's participation is only permitted if the student is prepared to meet the IS requirements and is likely to succeed

Scope:

The Governing Board authorizes the use of Independent Study ("IS") as an instructional strategy for students enrolled in the District, provided that all legal requirements are met and the program is implemented in a manner that maintains the educational quality and accountability standards expected by the Board.

Adopted on: September 1, 2026
Revised on: N/A

Page 1 of 5

The policies are developed in collaboration with the Small School Districts' Association for general informational, educational and procedural purposes only and are not intended to constitute legal advice for any specific situation.

If a student's needs can be met during IS, a student may be permitted to go on Short-Term or Long-Term IS as set forth below under the supervision of a District employee that possesses a valid teaching credential.

1. Written Agreement

Any student permitted to participate in IS, Short-Term or Long-Term, must enter into a Written Agreement with the District. The Written Agreement shall be between the student, parent/guardian and the District. All Written Agreements shall be signed before the start of IS and include all components required by law, including but not limited to the following:

- Objectives and methods of study for the student's work.
- The resources, including instructional materials, to be made available to the student.
- The manner, time, and place for submitting the student's assignments and for reporting progress.
- The method used to evaluate the student's work.
- The maximum length of time between the assignment and completion dates.
- The duration of the IS agreement, including beginning and ending dates.
- How satisfactory educational progress will be determined for the student.
- A statement of the number of missed assignments that will trigger an evaluation of whether the student should continue in IS.
- A statement that participation in IS is voluntary, and no student may be required to participate.

A copy of the Written Agreement shall be maintained by the District, along with all other records required to document attendance IS students.

2. Short-Term Independent Study

Short-term Independent Study is defined as an IS program scheduled for 15 school days or fewer.

Except under emergency circumstances, families must provide at least two weeks' notice to the District of their desire to place their student on Short-Term IS. With District approval, the Short-Term IS will be approved and an agreement will be provided to the family for execution.

3. Long-Term Independent Study

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Page 2 of 5

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Long-term Independent Study is defined as an IS program scheduled for 16 school days or more.

For long-term IS, the District shall ensure that the IS program is consistent with the student's grade-level standards and provides the same level of quality instruction as the traditional classroom setting. Regular evaluations and progress monitoring shall be conducted to ensure the student remains on track to meet their educational goals.

Long-Term IS shall meet the requirements of the law, and by way of illustration and not limitation, including the following:

- **Synchronous Instruction Requirements**

Synchronous instruction shall be defined as instruction provided in real-time by the supervising teacher to the student, involving live two-way communication. The instruction may be classroom-style, small group or one-on-one. The District shall document evidence of student participation in synchronous instruction, which may include documentation of verbal or visual participation during instructional periods, even if conducted via telephone or non-video communication.

For grades K-3, there must be opportunities for daily synchronous instruction.

For grades 4-8, there must be opportunities for at least weekly synchronous instruction.

For grades 9-12, there must be opportunities for at least weekly synchronous instruction.

- **Asynchronous Instruction Requirements**

Asynchronous instruction refers to educational activities that students complete independently at their own pace, without real-time interaction with a teacher. This may include online modules, recorded video lessons, assignments, and other instructional activities that can be accessed at any time. Asynchronous instruction may be utilized to provide students with greater flexibility in completing their coursework. The time value of asynchronous instructional activities will be determined by a certificated teacher and included in the documentation of the student's work product, as required by law.

- **Live Interaction Requirements**

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Page 3 of 5

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Live interaction refers to interactions between the student and District staff (classified or certificated), and may include peers, for the purpose of maintaining school connectedness, including wellness checks, progress monitoring, provision of services and instruction. This interaction may include in-person, internet or telephone communication.

For grades 4-8, there must be opportunities for daily live interaction.

- **Tiered Reengagement & Satisfactory Educational Progress**

All students that are not generating attendance for more than 10% of minimum instructional time over four continuous weeks, are not participating in more than 50% of the synchronous instruction in a month, or violated the Written Agreement, the District shall implement their tiered reengagement procedures. The tiered reengagement procedures shall comply with the law and by way of illustration and not limitation includes the following:

- Verification of current contact information for each enrolled pupil.
- Notification to parents or guardians of lack of participation within one school day of the recording of a nonattendance day or lack of participation.
- A plan for outreach from the school to determine pupil needs, including connection with health and social services as necessary.
- A clear standard for requiring a pupil-parent-educator conference to review a pupil's written agreement, and reconsider the independent study program's impact on the pupil's achievement and well-being.

Any student determined to not be making satisfactory educational progress, notification shall be provided to the student. Evaluations and recommendations shall be made regarding whether it is in the student's best interest to remain on IS.

4. High School Independent Study and Course-Based IS

The District may offer course-based Independent Study programs for high school students as permitted by law. Such programs must meet all requirements related to curriculum alignment with state standards, the measurement of student achievement, instructional time equivalent to classroom-based instruction, and the qualifications of the certificated teacher responsible for the program.

5. Restrictions on Funding and/or Supplies

No student shall be prohibited from participating in the District's IS solely on the basis that he or she does not have the materials, equipment, or Internet access that are necessary to participate in the independent study course.

Students participating in the District's IS may be provided with educational materials, equipment, etc., as needed to support them in their program. However, the District shall not provide a student or his/her parent or guardian with funds or any other thing of value that a school district could not legally provide to a similarly situated student attending the District.