

## KERN COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

### INSTRUCTION

#### INDEPENDENT STUDY FOR COURT AND COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Education Code Section 51747 provides that, a school district or county office of education shall not be eligible to receive apportionments for independent study by pupils, regardless of age, unless it has adopted written policies, and has implemented those policies, pursuant to rules and regulations adopted by the Superintendent. In Kern County, court and community schools are administered by the County Superintendent of Schools and Independent Study is provided as an educational alternative.

The following policies are adopted by the Kern County Board of Education in order to ensure that the independent study programs in the court and community schools operated by the Kern County Superintendent of Schools are in compliance with the law.

In adopting these policies, the Board considers that the current and prospective use of independent study as an instructional strategy supplements and provides an alternative to the regular classroom setting that can address the needs of motivated pupils and assist them to reach curricular objectives and fulfil graduation requirements. The Board recognizes that excessive leniency in the terms of independent study programs can result in pupils falling so far behind their peers as to increase, rather than decrease, the risk of dropping out of school.

#### **1. Authority**

These policies are adopted pursuant to Education Code Section 51745, et seq., and 5 California Code of Regulations (CCR) Section 11700, et seq.

#### **2. Definitions**

All terms defined in 5 CCR 11700 shall have the meanings specified in that section.

#### **3. Administration**

The County Superintendent of Schools or designee shall be responsible for the implementation of these policies as part of the administration of the court and community schools.

#### 4. Requirements

- A. The maximum elapsed time between an independent study assignment and the required completion date shall be four weeks for all grade levels and types of programs. The Superintendent may authorize a longer time for individual pupils, not to exceed eight weeks, for special or extenuating circumstances, upon written request for justification, and administrative approval.
- B. A pupil will be evaluated by a certificated employee for possible return to a regular or other alternative program in the event of the pupil's failure to complete any four-week independent study assignment, or equivalent. The final decision regarding retention in independent study will be made by the administrator in charge.
- C. A written agreement containing the elements described in section 5 below, shall be signed, prior to the commencement of the independent study program, by the pupil, a parent, guardian, or caregiver if the pupil is under the age of 18, the certificated employee designated by the Superintendent as having responsibility for general supervision of independent study, and all persons having direct responsibility for providing assistance to the pupil.

#### 5. Written Agreement

Each written agreement required in section 4c, above, shall include:

- A. The manner, frequency, time and place for submitting a pupil's assignments and for reporting his or her progress.
- B. The objectives and methods of study for the pupil's work, and the methods utilized to evaluate the work.
- C. The specific resources including materials and personnel that will be made available to the pupil.
- D. A statement of the policies adopted pursuant to subdivisions 4A and 4B regarding the maximum length of time allowed between the assignment and the completion of a pupil's assigned work, and the number of missed assignments allowed before an evaluation of whether or not the pupil should be allowed to continue in independent study.
- E. The duration of the independent study agreement, including the beginning and ending dates for the pupil's participation in

independent study under the agreement. No independent study agreement shall be valid for any period longer than one school year.

- F. 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 pupil upon completion.
- G. A statement that independent study is an optional educational alternative in which no pupil may be required to participate. In the case of a pupil who is referred or assigned to any school, class, or program pursuant to CA Education Code 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.
- H. Each written agreement shall be signed, before the commencement of independent study, by the pupil, the pupil's parent, legal guardian, or caregiver, if the pupil is less than 18 years of age, the certificated employee who has been designated as having responsibility for the general supervision of independent study, and all the persons who have direct responsibility for providing assistance to the pupil.

## **6. Eligibility**

- A. Independent study is an optional educational alternative in which no pupil may be required to participate.
- B. Pupils must obtain at least a 4.0 grade reading level as measured by local assessments in order to be eligible for enrollment in independent study.

In the case of a pupil who is unable to demonstrate the ability to read at a 4.0 grade level or higher, and whose parent, legal guardian, or caregiver, has requested enrollment in independent study, the site administrator shall review other relative data including but not limited to, pupil transcripts, GPA, and previous educational experience to determine if independent study is an appropriate placement. In most cases, independent study may be approved on a probationary basis, subject to review in accordance with Section 4B.

- C. An individual with exceptional needs, as defined in CA Ed Code Section 56026, shall not participate in independent study, unless his or her individualized education program specifically provides for that participation.

## **7. Records**

The Superintendent or designee shall maintain at the site of any independent study program those records required by statute or by regulation adopted by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.