



CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION- 6000

Policies BP 6158

Board Policy: Independent Study

The 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 educational 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.

Each student's independent study shall be coordinated, evaluated, and carried out under the general supervision of an assigned certificated employee or employees.

The primary purpose for Independent Study is to offer a means of individualizing the educational plan for pupils who choose this option in order to best meet their needs. Independent study (IS) may be used by pupils as provided in California Education Code (EC) section 51745.

No pupil shall be required to participate in IS. All pupils shall have the alternative of classroom instruction.

An individual with exceptional needs as defined in EC section 56026 may participate in IS if their individualized education program (IEP) specifically provides for that participation.

Before signing a written agreement, the parent or guardian of a pupil may request that the Charter School shall conduct a phone, videoconference, or in-person pupil-parent-educator conference or other school meeting during which the pupil, parent or guardian, and, if requested by the pupil or parent, an education advocate, may ask questions about the educational options, including which curriculum offerings and nonacademic supports will be available to the pupil in independent study, before making the decision about enrollment or disenrollment in the various options for learning.

The GCC shall provide appropriate existing services and resources to enable pupils to complete their IS successfully and shall ensure that the IS pupil has the same access to all services and resources in the school in which the pupil is enrolled as is available to all

other pupils in the school, including providing equipment and internet connectivity support.

Pupils at the elementary level who request IS, together with their parents or guardians, should recognize that IS at the elementary level must emphasize a commitment on the part of the pupils' parent(s) or guardian. At the secondary level, the pupil must make the major commitment and must be assisted or supported, as necessary, by parents and others who may help guide the instruction.

Board Policies Pursuant to Education Code Section 51747(a) and (b):

- a. For pupils in all grade levels and programs offered by GCC, the maximum length of time that may elapse between the time an assignment is made and the date by which the pupil must complete the assigned work shall be five (5) school days.
- b. The Principal or designee shall conduct an evaluation to determine whether it is in the best interests of the pupil to remain in independent study upon the following triggers:
 - i. When any pupil fails to complete 2 consecutive assignments, or four assignments within any semester.
 - ii. In the event a student's educational progress falls below satisfactory levels as determined by the Charter School's considering ALL of the following indicators:
 1. The pupil's achievement and engagement in the independent study program, as indicated by the pupil's performance on applicable pupil-level measures of pupil achievement and pupil engagement set forth in Education Code Section 52060(d) paragraphs (4) and (5).
 2. The completion of assignments, assessments, or other indicators that evidence that the pupil is working on assignments.
 3. Learning required concepts, as determined by the supervising teacher.
 4. Progressing toward successful completion of the course of study or individual course, as determined by the supervising teacher.
 5. For grades 9-12 if a student is not making sufficient academic progress to complete at least twenty (20) credits in a semester.

Academic Content: Independent study shall include the provision of content aligned to grade level standards that is substantially equivalent to in-person instruction.

Independent study shall include access to all courses offered by the School for graduation and approved by the University of California or the California State University as creditable under the A-G admission criteria.

Tiered Reengagement: For pupils who do not generate attendance for more 10 percent of required minimum instructional time over four continuous weeks of the Charter School's approved instructional calendar, pupils found not participatory in synchronous instructional offerings pursuant to Section 51747.5 for more than 50 percent of the scheduled times of synchronous instruction in a school month as applicable by grade span, or pupils who are in violation of their written agreement, the school shall have

procedures that shall include local programs intended to address chronic absenteeism, as applicable, with at least all of the following reengagement strategies:

- Verifying current contact information for the pupil,
- Notifying parents or guardians of lack of participation within one school day of the absence or lack of participation,
- A plan for outreach from the school to determine pupil needs, including a 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, consistent with the policies adopted pursuant to paragraph (4) of subdivision (g) of Education Code Section 51747.

Opportunities for Live Interaction and Synchronous Instruction: The School shall plan to provide opportunities for live interaction and synchronous instruction as follows for all pupils engaged in independent study:

- For pupils in transitional kindergarten through grades 1 to 3 inclusive, the School shall plan to provide opportunities for daily synchronous instruction for all pupils throughout the year
- For pupils in grades 4 to 8 inclusive, the School shall plan to provide opportunities for both daily live interaction and at least weekly synchronous instruction for all pupils throughout the year
- For pupils in grades 9-12 inclusive, the School shall plan to provide opportunities for at least weekly synchronous instruction for all pupils throughout the year

For the purposes of this policy, "live interaction" means interaction between the pupil and certificated or non-certificated staff, and may include peers, provided for the purpose of maintaining school connectedness, including but not limited to wellness checks, progress monitoring, provision of services, and instruction. This live interaction may take place in-person, or in the form of internet or telephonic communication.

For the purposes of this policy, "synchronous instruction" means classroom-style instruction or designated small group or one-on-one instruction delivered in person, or in the form of internet or telephonic communications, and involving live two-way communication between the teacher or teachers of record and the pupil.

Return to In-Person Instruction: The following plan shall be utilized to transition pupils whose families wish to return to in-person instruction from independent study expeditiously, and, in no case, later than five instructional days: Within five (5) instructional days of written receipt of a family's wish to return to in-person instruction, the school staff shall discuss options for in-person instruction with the family. The Charter School cannot guarantee enrollment availability in any school.

Written Agreements: (5 C.C.R. § 11702) A current written agreement for each independent study pupil shall be maintained on file for each participating student. Each agreement shall be signed, dated, and in effect prior to the start of reporting attendance (ADA) pursuant to that agreement. The independent study agreement for a student will require and cover a study plan that represents the same amount of study that would be

required of a student in the classroom and be consistent with the School curriculum and course of study of students participating in the regular classroom setting.

Agreement Content: Each independent study written agreement shall contain at least all of the following provisions:

- The manner, time, frequency, and place for submitting a pupil's assignments, for reporting the pupil's academic progress, and for communicating with a pupil's parent or guardian regarding academic progress.
- The objectives and methods of study for the pupil's work, and the methods used to evaluate that work.
- The specific resources, including materials and personnel that will be made available to the pupil. These resources shall include confirming or providing access for all pupils to the connectivity and devices adequate to participate in the academic program and complete assigned work.
- A statement of the policies adopted regarding the maximum length of time allowed between the assignment and the completion of a pupil's assigned work, the level of satisfactory educational progress, and the number of missed assignments allowed prior to an evaluation of whether or not the pupil should be allowed to continue in independent study. The level of satisfactory educational progress and missed assignments shall conform to the requirements specified above in this policy.
- The duration of the independent study agreement, including the beginning and ending dates for participating in independent study, recognizing that no independent study agreement shall be valid for any period longer than one school year.
- A statement of the number of course credits, or for elementary grades pupils, other measures of academic accomplishment appropriate to the agreement, to be earned by the pupil upon completion.
- A statement detailing the academic and other supports that will be provided to address the needs of pupils who are not performing at grade level, or need support in other areas such as English learners, individuals with exceptional needs as needed to be consistent with the student's individualized education program or plan pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. Sec. 794), pupils in foster care, pupils experiencing homelessness, and pupils requiring mental health supports.
- The inclusion of a statement in each independent study agreement 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 Section 48915 or 48917, the agreement also shall 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.
- For a pupil participating in an independent study program that is scheduled for more than 14 school days, 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 the certificated employee designated as

having responsibility for the special education programming of the pupil, as applicable.

- Written agreements may be signed using an electronic signature that complies with state and federal standards, as determined by the California Department of Education, that may be a marking that is either computer generated or produced by electronic means and is intended by the signatory to have the same effect as a handwritten signature. The use of an electronic signature shall have the same force and effect as the use of a manual signature if the requirements for digital signatures and their acceptable technology, as provided in Section 16.5 of the Government Code and in Chapter 10 (commencing with Section 22000) of Division 7 of Title 2 of the California Code of Regulations, are satisfied.

GCC shall comply with the Education Code sections 51745 through 51749.3 and the provisions of the Charter School Act of 1992 and the State Board of Education regulations adopted there under.