

### **3120 Independent Study**

Approved: June 11, 2002

Amended: March 4, 2008, September 1, 2009, December 7, 2011, June 29, 2015, September 24, 2015

The governing board recognizes its responsibility for the education of all students in the school. The board authorizes the President to establish independent study as an optional alternative instructional strategy by which all enrolled students may achieve curriculum objectives and fulfill graduation requirements in a setting other than the regular classroom.

The primary purpose for independent study is to offer a means of individualizing the educational plan for students whose needs may be best met through study outside the regular classroom setting. Independent study may be used by all students who are motivated to achieve educationally as well as or better than they would in the regular classroom.

1. No student shall be required to participate in independent study. All students shall have the alternative of classroom instruction.
2. No course required for high school graduation shall be offered exclusively through independent study.
3. No individual with exceptional needs as defined in *Education Code* Section 56026 may participate in independent study unless his or her individualized education program (IEP) specifically provides for that participation.
4. No temporarily disabled student may receive individual instruction pursuant to *Education Code* Section 48206.3 through independent study. However, if the temporarily disabled student's parent or guardian and the district(s) agree, the student may receive instruction through independent study instead of receiving the "home and hospital" instruction provided pursuant to *Education Code* Section 48206.3.
5. Audeo Charter School shall provide appropriate existing services and resources to enable students to complete their independent study successfully and shall ensure that the independent study student has the same access to all existing services and resources in the school in which the student is enrolled as are available to all other students in the school. As part of the school's individualized instructional process, students with Individualized Service Plans (ISP/504 plans) shall receive instruction appropriate to their needs.
6. Students must make the major commitment and must be assisted or supported, as necessary, by parents and others who may help directly with instruction.

#### **Written Agreement and Contracts**

1. The President or designee shall ensure that the school executes a written independent study agreement with each participating student as prescribed by law. Assignments will be consistent with the school's adopted course of study.
2. For students grades K through 12 in independent study at Audeo Charter School the maximum length of time that may elapse between when an assignment is made and when that assignment is due shall be one month or 20 school days. When special or extenuating

circumstances justify a longer time for individual students, the President or designee may approve a period not to exceed eighteen weeks.

3. When any student in grades K-5 fails to complete 4 or more days of assigned work during a 20 day learning period, or misses two appointments without valid reason, the President. When any student grades K through 12 fails to complete two independent study courses during any period of 40 schools days, or misses two appointments without valid reasons, the President or designee shall conduct an evaluation to determine whether the pupil or student should be allowed to continue in independent study. A written record of the findings of any evaluation conducted pursuant to this policy shall be maintained in the student's permanent record as part of the personalized education plan.
4. The President or designee shall report to Audeo Charter School Board the number of students in charter independent study by typical categories of study and duration; the ADA generated; a description of the students' performance on those indicators of quality which the board may specify; and the number and proportion of students, by typical categories, who graduate or successfully complete their studies.
5. The President or designee shall establish regulations to implement this policy in accordance with the law.
6. Audeo Charter School will not provide any funds or other thing of value to the pupil or his or her parent or guardian that a school district could not legally provide to a similar situated pupil of the school district, or to his or her parent or guardian.

### **Legal References**

*Education Code* 46300(e), 47612.5, 51745-51749.5  
California Code of Regulations, Title 5 11700-11703

### **Administrative Regulations for Independent Study**

1. Educational opportunities offered through independent study may include, but shall not be limited to, the following:
  - a. Special assignments that extend the content of regular courses of instruction
  - b. Individualized study in a particular area of interest or in a subject not currently available in the regular school curriculum
  - c. Individualized alternative education designed to teach the knowledge and skills of the core curriculum
  - d. Continuing and special study during travel
  - e. Volunteer community service activities that support and strengthen the student's achievement
2. Approval of proposed independent study agreements shall be based on the following criteria:
  - a. Evidence that the student in grades K-5 has sufficient parental support to be successful, and/or that the student in grades 6-12 can work independently.

- b. Indication that the student will work to complete the assignments and meet necessary appointments
  - c. Availability of one or more certificated teachers with appropriate qualifications, including classroom teaching experience, and adequate time to supervise the student effectively
  - d. A written statement of educational objectives and the means of accomplishing and measuring progress toward the objectives
3. If the student or parent appeals a rejection of the application to the President or the school board, a committee established by the President shall reconsider the application and make recommendations.
  4. If the student applicant is under 18 years of age, the parent, guardian, or caregiver must approve and sign the written agreement.
  5. Students engaging in independent study must be residents of the county or an adjacent county.
  6. Students who are 19 or 20 years of age may engage in independent study through the regular high school program, apart from Adult Education, only if they have been continuously enrolled in school since their eighteenth birthday.
  7. Each student's independent study shall be coordinated, evaluated, and carried out under the general supervision of a certificated employee.

### **Independent Study Written Agreements**

A written independent study agreement shall be executed for each participating student. Each agreement shall be signed by the student, the teacher, and the parent/guardian or caregiver and in effect prior to the start of reporting attendance (ADA) pursuant to that agreement. If a new teacher takes over the classroom, he or she shall sign an addendum. The independent study agreement for a student shall include a study plan that represents the same amount of study that would be required of a student in the classroom for the student's grade level for every school day covered by the agreement. Any changes to the Master Agreement will be noted in an addendum agreement. The Master Agreement shall include subsidiary agreements such as the Assignment and Work Records. The Master Agreement and subsidiary documents shall specify:

1. The manner, frequency, date, time, and place for submitting a student's assignments and for reporting his or her progress,
2. The objectives and methods of study for the student's work covered by the agreement,
3. The specific resources, including materials and personnel, that will be made available to the student in order to attain the objectives,
4. A schedule for achieving objectives and completing the agreement,
5. A schedule of conferences between student and supervising teacher,
6. The methods used to evaluate the student's work,
7. A statement of the maximum length of time allowed between the assignment and the completion of the student's assigned work, as determined by governing board policy,

8. A statement of the maximum number of assignments that a student may miss before an evaluation must be made of whether the student should be allowed to continue in independent study, as determined by board policy,
9. The duration of the independent study agreement, including the beginning and ending dates for the student's participation under the agreement, up to duration of one full school year (July – June)
10. Students in grades K-5 are expected to complete work assigned in each core subject area, providing for at least one year's academic growth per year. Students in 6-12 are expected to earn one credit per month or 12 credits per year. Students choosing to graduate from Audeo Charter School shall have earned 42 credits in specified courses for graduation,
11. A statement that independent study is an optional alternative in which no student may be required to participate (Further, in the case of a student who is referred or assigned to any school, class, or program pursuant to Section 48917, the agreement shall also include the statement that instruction may be provided to the student through independent study *only if the student is offered the alternative of classroom instruction.*
12. The signatures of the student, student's parent(s), guardian, or caregiver, if the student is less than 18, certificated employee of the school who has been designated as the person responsible for the general supervision of independent study, and any person who has direct responsibility for providing assistance to the student.

### **Independent Study Attendance Rules**

1. Audeo Charter School shall maintain records for the students enrolled in the school.
2. Records shall include, but not be limited to, the following:
  - a. A copy of the district policy, administrative regulations, and procedures pertaining to independent study.
  - b. A file of all agreements with representative samples of completed and evaluated student assignments, with notations on the work samples that indicate the supervising teacher's determination of the time value of the student's work. Representative samples will include one entire assignment each attendance month a student worked on the class.
  - c. Records of all students who have participated or are currently participating in independent study, showing the credits attempted by and awarded to each student in grades 6-12, or, for students in grades K-5, other measures of academic accomplishment appropriate to the agreement and a record of the pupil's attendance.
  - d. An attendance register, separate from the register used for regular actual classroom attendance, in which attendance is recorded on the basis of positive attendance accounting procedures approved by the California Department of Education.
  - e. A record of grades and other evaluations of independent study assignments issued to the student.
3. Units of credit earned by a student are applied toward promotion to the next grade or toward graduation. The high school in which the student is enrolled shall certify independent study students for graduation providing they meet all the requirements. In the event there is a

dispute about the credits given, the parents and student have a right to appeal through Audeo Charter School procedures.

4. Students may earn credit for all the work they submit based on the time value the student work produces, as personally judged in each instance by a certificated teacher. The school may claim one day's apportionment credit for each day's worth of independent study work done by a student. If a student completes more work than there are days for apportionment, they shall receive academic credit for their work but no additional apportionment.

### **Independent Study Students' Privileges, Rights, and Responsibilities**

1. Each student engaged in independent study has the right, continuously, to enter or return to the regular classroom mode of instruction.
2. Independent study students who are late for or miss scheduled conferences, or who do not submit assigned work on time, fail to meet the terms of their written agreements.
3. The administrator shall incorporate in program procedures the appropriate use of the following strategies to deal with missed appointments. The aim is to increase the student's achievement as well as to reduce and prevent the student's failure to meet the terms and conditions of the written agreement.
  - a. Immediately telephone or contact the student and/or parent,
  - b. Send a letter of concern to the student and parent, if appropriate,
  - c. Schedule a special appointment,
  - d. Set up a special meeting with the teacher or counselor or both.
  - e. Meet with the student, together with the parent, guardian, or caregiver, if appropriate,
  - f. Place the student on probation,
  - g. Terminate the agreement and return the student to a regular classroom program of instruction or other appropriate alternative.

### **Parents' Right to Appeal**

Parents may appeal decisions in accordance with charter school procedures.

### **Independent Study Supervising Teachers**

The following regulations shall apply to the selection and duties of supervising teachers:

1. Teachers who directly supervise independent study on a regular basis will be approved, prior to assignment, by the independent study administrator.
2. Independent study teachers shall:
  - a. Complete designated portions of the written agreement.
  - b. Add additional information when appropriate.
  - c. Supervise and approve coursework.
  - d. Personalize lesson plans.
  - e. Write the assignments for students

- f. Assess all student work<sup>1</sup>
  - g. Personally judge the time value of assigned work or work products completed and submitted by the student.
  - h. Select and save with each agreement representative samples of the student's completed and evaluated assignments. Representative samples will include one entire assignment for each attendance month a student completed work on the class.
  - i. Sign and complete the Assignment and Work Record when the student has reached his or her objectives or the course agreement is terminated.
  - j. Maintain any required records and files on a current basis.
3. Independent study teachers shall complete a record of the student's assignments on a monthly schedule. The record form shall provide for individual assignments; due date; and any comments to be added when the assignments have been completed. Each form shall be consistent with the terms of the written agreement and be signed by the teacher at the time the assignment is due and after evaluation of the completed work.
  4. Independent study teachers shall determine and assign grades or other approved measures of the student's achievement when appropriate.

#### **Administration of Independent Study**

The use of independent study shall be administered by the President. His or her responsibility shall include:

1. Ensuring that independent study occurs in accordance with charter and independent study law/regulations.
2. Approving the participation of students requesting independent study for a period exceeding five school days.
3. Facilitating the completion of independent study written agreements.
4. Approving all credits earned through independent study and forwarding the information to the appropriate charter school staff so that it becomes part of the student's permanent record.
5. Authorizing the selection of all staff who are assigned to supervise independent study.
6. Supervising any staff assigned to independent study functions who are not regularly supervised by another administrator.
7. Completing or coordinating the preparation of all necessary records and reports.
8. Establishing and maintaining in a systematic manner all records required by state regulations for an audit trail of average daily attendance attributed to independent study and reported by the school.
9. Developing and managing the budget for independent study.

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<sup>1</sup> Parents, instructional aides, and other support persons can assist in the educational program only under the supervision of a credentialed staff member.

10. Obtaining and maintaining current information and skills required for the operation of an independent study strategy that meets established standards for California charter schools.
11. Preparing and submitting reports as required by Audeo Charter School, the district, the county and/or the state.