

# **Da Vinci Schools**

## ***Board Policy***

### **INDEPENDENT STUDY BOARD POLICY**

The Da Vinci Schools Board of Trustees authorizes independent study at the charter schools operated by Da Vinci Schools, Da Vinci Design, Da Vinci Communications, Da Vinci Science, and Da Vinci Connect (nonclassroom-based school) (hereinafter, the “Charter School”) as an optional alternative instructional strategy for students whose educational needs may be best met through study outside of the regular classroom setting. Independent study shall offer a means of individualizing the educational plan and enabling students to reach curriculum objectives and fulfill promotion requirements.

Da Vinci Schools’ CEO or designee shall approve independent study for an individual student only upon determining that the student understands and is prepared to meet Charter School’s requirements for independent study and is likely to succeed in independent study as well as or better than he/she would in the regular classroom. 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.

The CEO or designee shall annually report to the Board the number of students participating in independent study, the average daily attendance (ADA) generated for apportionment purposes, the quality of these students’ work as measured by standard indicators, and the number and proportion of independent study students who graduate or successfully complete independent study.

The CEO or designee shall ensure that a written independent study agreement, as prescribed by law, exists and is maintained on file, for each participating student. (Education Code § 51747.)

#### **Equivalency**

The Charter School’s independent study option shall be substantially equivalent in quality and quantity to classroom instruction, thus enabling students participating in independent study to complete the Charter School’s adopted course of study within the customary time frame. Students in independent study shall have access to the same services and resources that are available to other students in the school. (5 C.C.R. § 11701.5.)

The Charter School 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 § 51747.3.)

#### **Eligibility for Independent Study**

Parents/guardians of students who are interested in independent study should contact the

Principal or his/her designee. Approval for participation at classroom-based schools shall be based on the following criteria:

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

A student's participation in independent study shall be voluntary. (Education Code § 51747.) Students participating in independent study must be residents of the local county or an adjacent county. (Education Code § 51747.3.) Charter School will not claim apportionment funding for any student who lives outside of these geographical boundaries unless otherwise permitted by law.

Full-time independent study shall not be available to students whose Charter School residency status is based on their parent/guardian's employment within Charter School boundaries pursuant to Education Code § 48204. (Education Code § 51747.3.)

A student with disabilities, as defined in Education Code § 56026, shall not participate in independent study unless his/her individualized education program specifically provides for such participation. (Education Code § 51745.)

A temporarily disabled student shall not receive individual instruction pursuant to Education Code section 48206.3 by means of independent study. (Education Code § 51745.)

### **Written Agreements and Assignments**

A written agreement shall be developed for each student participating in independent study. (Education Code § 51747.)

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

1. The manner, frequency, time 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 personnel that will be made available to the student.
4. The Charter School'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 year.

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.
8. In the case of a student who is referred or assigned to any school, class or program pursuant to Education Code section 48915 or 48917, a statement that instruction may be provided through independent study only if the student is offered the alternative of classroom instruction.

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.

The curriculum and methods of study specified in the written agreement shall be consistent with Board policy and procedures for curriculum and instruction. (5 C.C.R. § 11702.)

Before beginning the independent study, each written agreement shall be signed and dated by the student, the parent/guardian or caregiver 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/caregiver'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, including upon termination of the agreement. For nonclassroom-based schools, this right is conferred to students through their rights to enroll in their home district program.

Independent study students who are late, miss scheduled conferences or do not submit assigned work on time may not be reported as 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.
2. A 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.

5. Teachers issuing or modifying deadlines for assignments to ensure the student is making adequate progress

A pupil may not turn in his/her Learning Log late, miss more than 2 work samples, submit insufficient record of work during any Learning Period (assignment periods), or miss more than 1 regularly scheduled/mandatory\* meeting (each incident referred to as an “Occurrence”), before an evaluation may be conducted to determine whether it is in the best interest of the pupil to remain in independent study or whether the pupil should return to the regular program.

Failure to comply may result in additional meetings/requirements/accountability measures as outlined by supervising teachers and/or Principal or his/her designee. Therefore, should a pupil fail to turn in his/her work journal on time, fail to submit the required number of work samples, submit insufficient record of work during any given Learning Period, or should a Parent or pupil miss more than 1 scheduled meetings, the following actions will apply:

- a. First Occurrence: Both the Parent and the pupil (“Student”) will receive a FIRST NOTICE OF NONCOMPLIANCE. A time period not to exceed 1 week will be given for: (1) the Student to complete and submit the delinquent assignments to his/her teacher or administrator, if the Student has failed to turn in his/her Learning Log on time, failed to complete more than 2 work samples, or submitted insufficient record of work; or (2) the Parent to schedule a meeting with the teacher and Student, if the Parent or Student has missed more than 1 regularly scheduled/mandatory meeting. Additionally, the Student will be expected to maintain progress on all currently assigned school work during this same time period.
- b. Second Occurrence: Upon the Second Occurrence, both the Parent and Student will receive a SECOND NOTICE OF NONCOMPLIANCE, and both will be required to meet with the Principal or his/her designee to conduct an evaluation to determine whether it is in the best interest of the pupil to remain in Independent Study. A written record of the findings of this evaluation and any pursuant actions outlined in this evaluation shall be signed and agreed upon by all participants and treated as a mandatory interim pupil record. This record will be maintained by the school for three years from the date of the evaluation.
- c. Final Occurrence: A Third Occurrence will constitute sufficient indication that Independent Study is not the proper placement for the Student. Both the Parent and the Student will receive a NOTICE OF REMOVAL and the Student will be released from this voluntary independent study program consistent with applicable law.

For Charter School pupils, the maximum length of time that may elapse between when an assignment is made and the date by which the pupil must report to the teacher and submit the completed work shall not exceed 50 school days.

\*Mandatory meetings consist of Student Led Conferences (SLCs), Exhibition, Presentations of Learning (POLs) and any meeting request indicated as “mandatory” by the student’s teacher or Charter School administrator.

### **Administration of Independent Study**

The responsibilities of the Principal shall be to:

1. Ensure the Charter School’s independent study program is operated in accordance with

law and Board policies.

2. Approve (or deny) 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 records and reports.
8. Establish and maintain in a systematic manner all records required by law and Board policy.
9. Monitor student participation in independent study so that the Charter School stays within prescribed limits to support Charter School's operation.
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 Charter School's educational programs.
12. Assure a smooth transition into and out of the independent study mode of instruction, as necessary.
13. Prepare and submit reports as required by the Board or CEO.

### **Supervising Teachers**

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 Principal may recommend and the independent study administrator shall approve the assignment of teachers to directly supervise independent study. The teacher may be the student's regular classroom teacher, particularly for elementary students.

Consistent with California Code of Regulations, Title 5, § 11704, the ratio of average daily attendance for independent study pupils to full-time equivalent (FTE) certificated employees shall not exceed: (i) a ratio of 25:1; or (ii) the ratio of pupils to FTE certificated employees for all other educational programs operated by the largest unified school district (as reported at the second principal apportionment in the prior year) in the county or counties in which the charter school operates. All students enrolled in the Charter School's independent study program, regardless of age, shall be included in pupil-to-certificated-employee ratio calculations. (Education Code § 51745.6.)

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 lesson plans and assignments.
4. Assess student work and determine and assign grades or other approved measures of achievement.
5. Personally judge the time value of assigned work or work products completed and submitted by the student.
6. 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, and signed or initialed and dated in accordance with item #3 in the section on "Records" below.
7. Sign and complete the agreement when the student has reached his/her objectives or the agreement is terminated.
8. Maintain a daily or hourly attendance register in accordance with item #4 in the section on "Records" below.
9. Maintain any other required records and files on a current basis.

### **Records**

For audit purposes, the CEO or designee shall maintain the following records: (5 C.C.R. § 11703.)

1. A copy of the Board policy, enrollment agreement, and other policies and procedures related to independent study.

2. A separate listing of the 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 and awarded to the students, 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 the supervising teacher's signed or initialed and dated notations indicating that he/she has 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 are participating, 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.

A written record of the findings of any evaluation conducted after the student has missed the number of assignments specified in Board policy shall be treated as a mandatory interim student record which shall be maintained for three years from the date of the evaluation. (Education Code § 51747.)

#### **Additional Charter School Responsibilities**

Charter School may claim apportionment credit for independent study only to the extent of the time value of pupil or student work products, as personally judged in each instance by a certificated teacher. (Education Code § 51747.5.)

Charter School administration shall establish procedures, as necessary, to implement these policies in accordance with the law.