

INDEPENDENT STUDY POLICY BRIDGES CHARTER SCHOOL

- A. This policy shall apply to all pupils enrolled in BRIDGES Charter School's independent study/homeschool program.
- B. Educational opportunities offered through independent study may include, but shall not be limited to, the following:
1. Individualized alternative education designed to teach the knowledge and skills of the core curriculum.
- C. The Charter School shall comply with all state and federal laws regarding independent instruction.
- D. Each student's independent study shall be coordinated, evaluated, and carried out under the general supervision of an assigned certificated employee or employees of the Charter School.
- E. The maximum length of time that may elapse between the time an independent study assignment is made and the date by which the student must complete the assigned work shall be no more than twenty (20) school days, or as modified by an assigned credentialed teacher at the time the work is assigned to the pupil.
- F. After three (3) missed assignment an evaluation shall be conducted to determine whether it is in the best interests of the pupil to remain in independent study. A written record of the findings of any evaluation made pursuant to this subdivision shall be maintained in the pupil's permanent record. The evaluation may consist of some or all of the following:
- a. Attendance based on completion of assignments as quantified by the credentialed teacher
 - b. Demonstration of skills
 - c. Standardized test scores
 - d. Written tests and reports if appropriate
 - e. Oral or written presentations
 - f. Student's attitude toward learning and achievement
 - g. Punctual attendance at scheduled appointments
 - h. Ability to meet scheduled appointments
 - i. Parent and student preparedness for scheduled appointments
 - j. Student demonstration of adequate and appropriate progress toward California State Standards
 - k. Appropriate learning environment
 - l. Adequate parent/student relationship as necessary to enhance learning process

The role of the credentialed teacher is critical to the success of home independent study. The teacher's observations, discussions with parents and students, and examinations of written work are the key to quality control. Continual failure to meet charter guidelines with regards to attendance or progress may be grounds for ending the student's independent study. At that time, the teacher might need to recommend the student's return to the regular classroom or placement in a different educational situation. Attendance of 75% or less in any given assignment period (not to exceed twenty (20) school days) will automatically result in probationary status of the student. A second probation in the current academic year will result in immediate dismissal from the charter school.

- G. A current written student agreement for each independent study pupil shall be maintained on file for each

participating student. Each agreement shall be signed and in effect prior to the start of reporting attendance (ADA) pursuant to that agreement. Students must meet all elements of the written student agreement in order for continued enrollment in this charter school. The independent study agreement for the student must require and cover a study plan that represents the same amount of study that would be required of a student in a classroom. Written agreements will include subsidiary agreements, such as course contracts and assignments, work records, and testing requirements. Each agreement shall also include the following:

- The manner, time, frequency, and place for submitting a pupil's assignments and for reporting his or her progress.
 - The objectives and methods of study for the pupil's work, and the methods utilized to evaluate that work.
 - The specific resources, including materials and personnel that will be made available to the pupil.
 - 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, 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 duration of the independent study agreement, recognizing that no independent study agreement shall be valid for any period longer than one semester.
 - A statement of the number of course credits to be earned upon completion.
 - 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.
 - Each written agreement shall be signed, prior to 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 persons who have direct responsibility for providing assistance to the pupil.
- H. The Charter School shall not provide any funds or other things of value to the pupil or his or her Parent or guardian that a school district could not legally provide to a similarly situated pupil of the school district, or to his or her parents or guardian.
- I. The Charter School may only receive funding for the provision of independent study to pupils who are residents of Ventura County or who are residents of a county contiguous to Ventura County.
- J. The Charter School must comply with Education Code Section 51745.6 and California Code of Regulations Section 11704 regarding teacher to ADA limits.
- K. Each enrolled student will be assigned a credentialed teacher, who will serve as teacher to the student and mentor to the home-schooling parent as applicable. The parent will provide the daily instruction, while the teacher will meet with the student(s) and parent(s) on a regular basis (as provided by the charter and the written independent study student agreement) to provide lesson planning, consultation, evaluation of student work, collection of work samples, and resource check-out.
- L. On a regular basis, consistent with the written independent study agreement, the assigned teacher and the parent and student shall evaluate the education program of the student and modify as necessary to maximize student success. The assigned credentialed teacher will have the final authority with regard to the education program of the student, necessary assessments, and outcomes with the exception of students who qualify for special education services whose services and outcomes will be determined by an Individual Education plan ("IEP") team pursuant to law.
- M. It is understood that no student who qualifies for special education services under the Individuals with

Disabilities in Education Act (“IDEA”) shall participate in independent study unless it is specifically authorized in his or her IEP. Identified special education students are expected to attend scheduled tutorials to assist him/her in meeting the identified goals and objectives in their Individual Educational Plan (IEP). Three unexcused absences, or missing more than 50% of a student’s special education services in a month will result in the student being placed on probationary status. Parents will be invited to an IEP meeting to review their student’s educational progress, and to insure that home schooling remains the least restrictive environment in which to promote educational benefit. A second probation in the current academic year will result in immediate dismissal from the charter school.

- N. Acceptance into Independent Study: Acceptance of students into home-based independent study requires evidence of the following:
- a. A sincere desire of the parents to facilitate their child’s education by following independent study guidelines.
 - b. A positive relationship between parents and student.
 - c. Understanding of independent study by all concerned.
 - d. A positive attitude by both the parents and the student about independent study and its requirements.
 - e. The parents’ ability to supervise their child and participate in instruction.
 - f. The parents’ agreement to meet the requirements in the written agreement.
 - g. The student’s ability and willingness to work with limited supervision by a certificated teacher.
 - h. Availability of certificated staff to supervise student’s study effectively.
 - i. Education Code Section 51746(b) provides that a district or county office may require that qualified personnel “assess the achievement, abilities, interests, aptitudes, and needs of participating pupils to determine each of the following:
 1. Whether full-time independent study is the most appropriate for the pupil being referred.
 2. If the answer to (a) is affirmative, the determination of the most appropriate individualized plan and resources to be made available to pupils enrolled in full-time independent study.
- O. Pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Section 11700, “Independent Study” means an alternative to classroom instruction consistent with the district’s course of study. “Independent Study is an optional educational alternative in which no pupil may be required to participate” means
- a. With regard to school districts or county offices of education, that they are not required to offer independent study, and
 - b. School districts that do offer independent study are not obligated to permit a pupil to engage in independent study if school officials given responsibility for the decision determine that independent study is not an appropriate alternative for the pupil.

P. Independent Study Roles

The credentialed teacher will:

- Ensure that independent study occurs in accordance with state law and charter policy and regulations.
- Approve the participation of students requesting independent study through the charter.
- Facilitate the completion of written student agreements.
- Supervise and assess approved coursework.
- Approve all grades and credits earned and report the information for inclusion in student’s permanent record.

- Establish, complete, and maintain necessary reports and records, including, but not limited to, learning records and attendance record.
- Personally judge the time value of student assignments or work products before ADA is earned.
- Assess the student's level of education, modifying the curriculum as necessary to meet charter guidelines, and administer state mandated tests as required.
- Select and save representative samples of the student's completed and evaluated assignments on a monthly basis.

The parents will:

- Be committed to understand and use the independent study strategy appropriately
- Provide an appropriate environment for the student's study.
- Participate with the credentialed teacher in the development of the student's educational plan.
- Along with the student, prepare a study schedule that incorporates family and educational responsibilities.
- Supervise the student while following the plan as the student is working on assignments, making sure that the student's effort at least meets the minimum requirement set forth in the student agreement.
- Ensure timely submission to the credentialed teacher of all student work, completed assignments, and accurate records that will be needed for the assessment of student progress and attendance accounting according to charter policy.
- Participate supportively in the regularly scheduled credentialed teacher-student-parent meetings.
- Under the direction of the credentialed teacher: Assume responsibility for supplied books, materials, supplies, and equipment Make intermediate assignments Introduce curricular elements Reinforce learning Promptly check student work for errors
- Pay for the costs of the replacement of books, equipment, and other resources loaned to the family that are lost or damaged beyond normal wear and tear.
- Provide any transportation necessary as required by the charter, written agreement, and charter policy, including, but not limited to, transportation to and from testing sites.

The student will:

- Have the right to all existing services and resources of the charter school as do all other students enrolled in the charter school.
- Participate in regularly scheduled meetings with the credentialed teacher.
- Complete at least the assigned work by the due date.
- Have all possible assignments available at meetings with the credentialed teacher.
- Be responsible for other tasks that may be required to fulfill the written agreement.