

## SERVING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN ALTERNATIVE LEARNING PROGRAMS

### *Independent Study*

Independent study is provided as an alternative instructional strategy, not an alternative curriculum. In independent study programs, curriculum is provided to students in accordance with a written agreement and under the general supervision of a credentialed teacher(s). Students participating in independent study continue to follow the Sacramento City Unified School District (District)-adopted curriculum and meet District graduation requirements.

The Independent Study Written Agreement (also known as the Master Agreement) outlines the course of study for each independent study student. A written agreement may include the following information:

- District name;
- Student personal information;
- Duration- length of the agreement that include a beginning and ending date of the agreement;
- Objectives- subjects/course(s) and course value/credits that will be earned;
- Method(s) of study- the student activities selected by the supervising teacher that the student will complete in order to meet the course objectives/outcomes;
- Methods of evaluation that will be used to determine if the student met the subject/course objectives;
- Information about the student's requirements to report to their teacher(s)- frequency, location, and manner of reporting;
- Resources for the student to accomplish subject/course objectives;
- Policies on assignment completion and deadlines; and
- Statement to demonstrate that independent study is a voluntary program opportunity, and the quality and quantity; rights and privileges; resources and services for students who attend an independent study program.

This written agreement must be agreed upon by the student, parent/caregiver/guardian, supervising teacher, and any other person(s) assisting who are responsible for the student's program.

## ***Equal Enrollment for Students with Disabilities***

The District shall not deny placement in independent study or other alternative programs to any student on the basis of a disability, or the nature of, or extent of their disability.

### ***IEP Team Considerations***

The IEP team shall consider the student's individualized needs, all placement options and how the program is able to provide the student with a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE). The IEP placement recommendation should reflect the alternative learning educational program. Therefore, District shall consider the following information when developing a student's IEP:

- Assessments and the individual student needs including:
  - Social emotional;
  - Behavioral;
  - Social skill development of the student including needs for: social interaction, peer modeling, and generalization of skills learned with peers;
  - If face to face assistance is required and how much;
  - Accommodations and/or modifications;
- IEP goals;
- Services and supports that are required to meet the student's needs, including all related services such as, but not limited to, specialized academic instruction, occupational therapy, speech and language services, ERMHS services, behavior intervention services, assistive technology services, etc.;
- Where and how special education services will be delivered;
- Assistive technology needed to access curriculum;
- Transportation; and
- Progress monitoring and program review to ensure that the independent study program continues to be appropriate, and the student continues to receive educational benefit.

It is important that the IEP team carefully investigate and identify student needs for socialization, language pragmatics, and emotional regulation to ensure all of the student's needs are being addressed in the independent study program. It is equally important that the IEP team have a discussion with the parent/caregiver/guardian about their responsibilities and the level of parent/caregiver/guardian involvement required for their child in the independent study program.

### ***Accommodations and Modifications***

The IEP team shall consider which accommodations and modifications are necessary for the student to receive educational benefit. Curricular adaptations may be required in an independent study virtual and hybrid learning program for a student to access and make progress in their grade level curriculum to meet standards.

For additional information on accommodations and modifications, please refer to the curriculum adaptations section of the procedural guide.

### ***Assistive Technology***

In virtual education, the use of computer technology may increase the need for assistive technology. The following is a list of some assistive technologies that virtual programs may need to consider and document in the student's IEP:

- On-screen keyboards;
- Grammatical support tools;
- Braille embosser and text to Braille conversion;
- Animated signing characters (signing avatars);
- Switches;
- Alternative mouse systems;
- Word prediction;
- Accessible online learning tools;
- Alternative keyboards;
- Display-based personal data assistants;
- Voice recognition systems.

### ***Continuum of Special Education Services***

The District is required to provide and consider the continuum of special education, related services, and placement options for students. If an IEP team determines that an alternative/independent study program is **not** an appropriate placement for a student, the District shall take steps to ensure that the student receives FAPE by being placed in the appropriate educational setting.