



## **BOARD POLICY FOR INDEPENDENT STUDY**

The Governing Board of Options for Youth – Duarte (“The Board”) authorizes independent study as an optional alternative instructional strategy at Options for Youth – Duarte (“the Charter School”) by which students may reach curriculum objectives and fulfill graduation requirements. Independent study shall offer a means of individualizing the educational plan for students whose needs may be met best through study outside of the regular classroom setting.

The Charter School will provide content to students aligned to grade level standards that is substantially equivalent to in-person instruction. For high school students, this includes access to all courses offered by the Charter School for graduation and approved by the University of California or the California State University as creditable under the A–G admissions criteria.

### **Time Allowed Between Assignments and Missed Assignments/Satisfactory Educational Progress/Academic Recovery Program:**

The Board recognizes that independent study may be used as an option to encourage students to remain in school. Teachers should carefully set the duration of independent study assignments, within the limits specified by the Board in order to help identify students who might be falling behind in their work or in danger of failing or dropping out of school. To foster each student’s success in independent study, the Board establishes the following maximum lengths of time which may elapse between the time an assignment is made and the date by which the student must complete the assigned work.

1. In all grades served by the Charter School, no more than twenty (20) school days may pass between the time the assignment is made and the date the assignment is completed.

It is important that students are making satisfactory educational progress while participating in independent study. A student is deemed to be making “satisfactory educational progress” if the student is progressing toward meeting the goals and/or metrics pursuant to their Individualized Learning Plan and/or individualized education program (“IEP”). The Principal or designee is responsible for making this determination based on all of the following indicators:

1. The student’s achievement and engagement in the independent study program, as indicated by the student’s performance on student-level measures of student achievement and student engagement set forth in Education Code Section 52060(d)(4)-(5).

2. The completion of assignments, assessments, or other indicators that show the student 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.

If a student fails to complete 100% of the minimum work assignments required for one school month, fails to verify at least 75% attendance for one school month, misses four instructor appointments without valid reason, or is not making satisfactory educational progress, the Principal or designee shall conduct an evaluation to determine whether it is in the student's best interest to remain in independent study. A written record of the findings of any evaluation shall be kept in the student's record and shall be treated as a mandatory interim pupil record. The record shall be maintained for a period of three years from the date of evaluation and, if the student transfers to another California public school, the record shall be forwarded to that school.

Any student wishing to transition to in-person instruction should make a written request to the Principal or designee or to their assigned teacher(s) of record. Upon receipt of the written request, the Charter School will assist the student with enrolling in the in-person program offered by their district of residence and will transfer the student's educational records within five school days.

### **Tiered Reengagement**

If a student does not generate attendance for more than 10% of required minimum instructional time over four continuous weeks of the school's approved instructional calendar, a student is found not participatory in synchronous instructional offerings pursuant to Education Code Section 51747.5 for more than 50% of the scheduled times of synchronous instruction in a school month as applicable by grade span, or a student is in violation of their written independent study agreement, the Charter School will:

1. Verify current contact information for each enrolled student;
2. Notify parents or guardians of lack of participation within one school day of the recording of a nonattendance day or lack of participation (e.g., via email, message, text, telephone, letter, etc.);
3. Reach out to the student directly and/or parents or guardians, as well as health and social services as necessary, to determine the student's needs for reengagement;
4. If the student has failed to complete three assignments during any period of ten school days or is failing to make satisfactory educational progress as defined herein, the Charter School will schedule a student-parent-educator conference (a meeting involving all individuals who signed the student's written independent study agreement) to review the student's agreement and reconsider the

independent study program’s impact on the student’s achievement and well-being;  
and

5. Implement any other local programs of the Charter School intended to address chronic absenteeism, as applicable.

### **Live Interaction and Synchronous Instruction**

Based on each student’s grade level, their assigned teacher(s) of record will schedule and offer opportunities for synchronous instruction and/or daily live interaction at least as frequently as set forth below.

“Live interaction” means interaction between the student and Charter School staff, and may include peers, to maintain school connectedness. Examples of live interaction include check-ins, progress monitoring, provision of services, and instruction, and live interaction can be in-person or in the form of internet or telephonic communication.

“Synchronous instruction” means classroom-style instruction, designated small-group instruction, or one-on-one instruction delivered in person or in the form of internet or telephonic communication by the student’s assigned teacher(s) of record, and involving live two-way communication.

1. For students in grades 7-8, their assigned teacher(s) of record will schedule and offer opportunities for weekly synchronous instruction and daily live interaction.
2. For students in grades 9-12, their assigned teacher(s) of record will schedule and offer opportunities for weekly synchronous instruction.

The Charter School will document each student’s participation in live interaction and synchronous instruction on each school day, as applicable, in whole or in part, for which live interaction or synchronous instruction is provided as part of the independent study program. A student who does not participate in scheduled live interaction or synchronous instruction on a school day will be documented as non-participatory for that school day for purposes of pupil participation reporting and tiered reengagement pursuant to Education Code Section 51747.

### **Written Agreements and Assignments:**

A current written independent study agreement (“the Agreement”) shall be executed and maintained on file for each participating student. Each Agreement shall be signed and in effect prior to the start of reporting attendance pursuant to that Agreement.

The Agreement shall include, but not be limited to, all of the following:

1. The manner, frequency, times and places for submitting the student’s assignments, for reporting the student’s academic progress, and for communicating with a student’s parent or guardian regarding a student’s academic progress. (*Education Code 51747(g)(1)*)

2. The objectives and methods of study for the student's work, and the methods used to evaluate the work. (*Education Code 51747(g)(2)*)
3. The specific resources, including materials and personnel, that will be made available to the student. These resources shall include confirming or providing access to all students to the connectivity and devices adequate to participate in the educational program and complete assigned work. (*Education Code 51747(g)(3)*)
4. A statement of the Charter School's policies regarding the maximum length of time allowed between an assignment and the completion of a student'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 student should be allowed to continue in independent study. (*Education Code 51747(g)(4)*)
5. The duration of the Agreement including the beginning and ending dates for the student's participation in independent study under the Agreement. No Agreement shall be valid for any period longer than one school year. (*Education Code 51747(g)(5)*)
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. (*Education Code 51747(g)(6)*)
7. A statement detailing the academic and other supports that will be provided to address the needs of students who are not performing at grade level, or need support in other areas, such as English learners, individuals with exceptional needs in order to be consistent with the students IEP or plan pursuant to Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. Sec. 794), students in foster care or experiencing homelessness, and students requiring mental health support. (*Education Code 51747(g)(7)*)
8. A statement that independent study is an optional education alternative in which no student may be required to participate. In the case of a student who is referred or assigned to the school pursuant Education Code Section 48915 or 48917, the Agreement also shall include the statement that enrollment is voluntary and instruction may be provided to the pupil through independent study only if the pupil is offered the alternative of classroom instruction. (*Education Code 51747(g)(8)*)
9. Each Agreement shall be signed, prior to the commencement of independent study, by the student, the student's parent, legal guardian or caregiver (if the student is less than 18 years of age), the certificated employee of the Charter School who has been designated as having responsibility for general supervision of independent study, and the certificated employee designated as having responsibility for the special education programming of the student, as applicable. For purposes of this document "caregiver" means a person who has met the requirements of Part 1.5 (commencing with Section 6550) of the Family Code. A

signed written agreement may be maintained on file electronically. (*Education Code 51747(g)(9)*)

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