
INDEPENDENT STUDY POLICY

Pathways Academy Adult Education (hereinafter, “PAAE”) offers independent study to meet the educational needs of students enrolled in PAAEs. Independent study is an optional alternative education program in which no pupil may be required to participate and is designed to teach the knowledge and skills of the core curriculum. PAAE shall provide appropriate existing services and resources to enable students to complete their independent study successfully.

The following written policies have been adopted by the Board of Directors for implementation at PAAE:

1. For students in all grade levels offered by PAAE, the maximum length of time that may elapse between the time an assignment is made and the date by which the student must complete the assigned work shall be twenty (20) school days.
2. PAAE shall provide content aligned to grade level standards that is provided at a level of quality and intellectual challenge substantially equivalent to in-person instruction. For high school grade levels this shall include access to all courses offered by PAAE for graduation and approved by the UC or CSU as credible under the A-G admissions criteria.
3. Regular attendance is critical to the success of all students. Attendance is defined as *“a student is engaged in educational activities required of them by the school, on days when school is actually taught. (5 C.C.R. 11960(a).)”*

Pathways Academy Adult Education utilizes an Independent Study model, which is a non-classroom-based instructional program. Attendance is calculated based on the work completed by the student and submitted by the due dates established in the Independent Study Master Agreement. The assigned teacher assesses the student’s work to determine whether the work completed constitutes a full day of attendance. When determining the time value of a student’s work, the teacher will consider each student individually and may adjust the assignments accordingly.

4. An evaluation shall be completed to determine whether it is in the best interests of the student to remain in independent study under the following circumstances:
 - a. When any pupil fails to complete five assignments per week.
 - b. In the event that a student’s educational progress falls below satisfactory levels as determined by PAAE, which considers ALL of the following indicators:
 - i. The pupil’s achievement and engagement in the independent study program, as indicated by the pupil’s performance on applicable pupil-level measures of pupil achievement and pupil engagement set forth in Education Code Section

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- 52060(d) paragraphs (4) and (5).
- ii. The completion of assignments, assessments, or other indicators that evidence that the pupil is working on assignments.
 - iii. Learning required concepts, as determined by the supervising teacher.
 - iv. Progressing toward successful completion of the course of study or individual course, as determined by the supervising teacher.

A written record of the findings of any evaluation conducted pursuant to this policy shall be treated as a mandatory interim pupil record. The record shall be maintained for a period of three years from the date of the evaluation and, if the pupil transfers to another California public school, the record shall be forwarded to that school.

5. PAAE has adopted tiered reengagement strategies as outlined in its Attendance Policy for the following pupils:
 - a. All pupils who are not generating attendance for more than three (3) school days or 60% of the instructional days in a school week, or 10 percent of required minimum instructional time over four continuous weeks of the Charter School's approved instructional calendar;
 - b. Pupils found not participatory pursuant to Education Code Section 51747.5 for more than the greater of three school days or 60 percent of the scheduled days of synchronous instruction in a school month as applicable by grade span; or
 - c. Pupils who are in violation of the written agreement pursuant to Education Code Section 51747(g).

These procedures shall include, but are not necessarily limited to, all of the following:

- a. Verification of current contact information for each enrolled pupil;
- b. Notification to parents/guardians or adult students of lack of participation within one school day of the recording of a non-attendance day or lack of participation;
- c. A plan for outreach from the school to determine pupil needs including connection with health and social services as necessary;
- d. A clear standard for requiring a pupil-parent-educator conference to review a pupil's written agreement, and reconsider the independent study program's impact on the pupil's achievement and well-being, consistent with the policies adopted pursuant to

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- paragraph (4) of subdivision (g) of Education Code Section 51747.
- e. A plan to evaluate the pupil's achievement and necessary support through PAAE's Multi-Tiered Systems of Support process.
6. The following plan shall be in place in accordance with Education Code Section 51747(e):
 - a. For pupils in grades 9-12, inclusive, the plan to provide opportunities for at least weekly synchronous instruction for all pupils throughout the school year by each pupil's assigned supervising teacher shall be as follows: Weekly synchronous activity will be in the online classroom with group or one-to-one instruction.
 7. A current written agreement shall be maintained on file for each independent study student, including but not limited to, all of the following:
 - a. The manner, time, frequency, and place for submitting a student's assignments and for reporting the student's progress.
 - b. The objectives and methods of study for the student's work, and the methods utilized to evaluate that work.
 - c. The specific resources, including materials and personnel, which will be made available to the student. These resources shall include confirming or providing access to all pupils to the connectivity and devices adequate to participate in the educational program and complete assigned work.
 - d. A statement of the policies adopted herein, pursuant to Education Code Section 51747, subdivisions (a) and (b), regarding the maximum length of time allowed between the assignment and the completion of a student's assigned work, 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.
 - e. The duration of the independent study agreement, including beginning and ending dates for the student's participation in independent study under the agreement.
 - i. No independent study agreement shall be valid for any period longer than two semesters, or one year for a school on a year-round calendar.
 - f. A statement of the number of course credits to be earned by the student upon completion.
 - g. The inclusion of a statement in each independent study agreement that independent study is an optional educational alternative in which no student may be required to participate. 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, the agreement also shall 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.
 - h. A statement detailing the academic and other supports that will be provided to address

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- the needs of pupils 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 pupil's individualized education program or plan pursuant to Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. Sec. 794), pupils in foster care or experiencing homelessness, and pupils requiring mental health support.
- i. Each written agreement shall be signed, prior to the commencement of independent study, by the student, the student's parent/guardian if the student 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 student. For purposes of this paragraph "caregiver" means a person who has met the requirements of Part 1.5 (commencing with Section 6550) of Division 11 of the Family Code.
 - i. Written agreements may be signed using an electronic signature that complies with state and federal standards, as determined by the California Department of Education, that may be a marking that is either computer generated or produced by electronic means and is intended by the signatory to have the same effect as a handwritten signature. The use of an electronic signature shall have the same force and effect as the use of a manual signature if the requirements for digital signatures and their acceptable technology, as provided in Section 16.5 of the Government Code and in Chapter 10 (commencing with Section 22000) of Division 7 of Title 2 of the California Code of Regulations, are satisfied.
 - ii. For the 2021–22 school year only, the Charter School shall obtain a signed written agreement for an independent study program of any length of time no later than 30 days after the first day of instruction in an independent study program or October 15, whichever date comes later.
 8. The following plan shall be utilized to transition pupils whose families wish to return to in-person instruction from independent study expeditiously, and, in no case, later than five instructional days: The withdraw form will be sent to the parent or guardian of the pupil or adult student within 24 hours (on business days) of the request. Within four (4) business days of receiving the signed form, PAAE will prepare withdraw documents (including exit grades) and send them to the parent/guardian or adult student.

PAAE shall comply with the Education Code Sections 51745 through 51749.3 and the provisions of PAAE's Act and the State Board of Education regulations adopted thereunder.

The Director may establish regulations to implement these policies in accordance with the law.