

Governing Board

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MATRIX FOR SUCCESS ACADEMY
INDEPENDENT STUDY – GOVERNING BOARD POLICY

Purpose

The Governing Board of Matrix for Success Academy (“Matrix” or the “Charter School”) shall offer independent study to meet the educational needs of pupils enrolled in the Charter School. Independent study shall offer Matrix students a means of individualizing the educational plan with a flexible schedule personalized to students’ needs, and enabling students to reach curriculum objectives and fulfill graduation requirements.

A pupil's participation in independent study shall be voluntary. (Education Code 51747, 51749.5)

Independent study for each pupil shall be under the general supervision of the principal or designee who possesses a valid certification document pursuant to Education Code 44865 or an emergency credential pursuant to Education Code 44300, registered by law. pupils' independent study shall be coordinated, evaluated, and documented, as prescribed by law and reflected in the accompanying administrative regulation. (Education Code 51747.5)

An individual with exceptional needs, as defined in Education Code Section 56026, may participate in independent study, if the pupil’s individualized education program (IEP specifically provides for that participation. If a parent or guardian of an individual with exceptional needs requests independent study, the pupil’s individualized education program team shall make an individualized determination as to whether the pupil can receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in an independent study placement. A pupil’s inability to work independently, the pupil’s need for adult support, or the pupil’s need for special education or related services shall not preclude the individualized education program team from determining that the pupil can receive a free appropriate education in an independent study placement. (Education Code 51745(c))

A temporarily disabled pupil may receive individual instruction pursuant to Education Code Section 48206.3 through independent study. Education Code 51745(d)

In accordance with Education Code Section 47607, Matrix has adopted the following policies:

Maximum Length of Assignment

To foster each participating student’s success in independent study, the Governing Board establishes the following maximum length of time which may elapse between the date an assignment is made and the date by which the student must complete the assigned work:

- *20 school days for students in all Matrix programs and grades 9-12*

Evaluation to determine whether it is in the student’s best interest to remain in independent study:

- (1) When any participating student fails to complete **three independent study assignments** in a period of **20 school days**.

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- (2) In the event a student's educational progress falls below satisfactory levels as determined by the Charter School's SST and MTSS committees, which considers ALL of the following indicators:
- 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 52060(d) paragraphs (4) and (5).
 - The completion of assignments, assessments, or other indicators that evidence that the pupil is working on assignments.
 - Learning required concepts, as determined by the supervising teacher.
 - 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. This 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.

The Charter School 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 the Charter School for graduation and approved by the UC or CSU as credible under the A-G admissions criteria.

**Pupils Participating in Independent Study for 15 Days or More:
Opportunities for Live Interaction and/or Synchronous Instruction, Tiered Reengagement and Transition to In-Person Instruction**

The Charter School has adopted tiered reengagement strategies for 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 who are in violation of the written agreement pursuant to Education Code Section 51747(g). These procedures are as follows:

- Verification of current contact information for each enrolled pupil;
- Notification to parents or guardians of lack of participation within one school day of the absence or lack of participation;
- Outreach from the Charter School to determine pupil needs including connection with health and social services as necessary;
- When the evaluation described above is triggered to consider whether remaining in independent study is in the best interest of the pupil, a pupil-parent-education conference shall be required to review a pupil's written agreement and reconsider the independent study program's impact on the pupil's achievement and well-being. This conference shall be a meeting involving, at a minimum, all parties who signed the pupil's written independent study agreement.

The following plan shall be in place in accordance with Education Code Section 51747(e) for synchronous

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instruction:

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:

- i. weekly in-person meetings for academic support with the pupil's supervising teacher
or
- ii. weekly virtual meetings (small group or one-on-one) with the pupil's supervising teacher
or
- iii. weekly telephone check-ins with the pupil's supervising teacher

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:

If a student or their guardian wishes to return the student to in-person instruction, Matrix for Success personnel shall assist the student in securing enrollment at their home school, or at another public school of their choice. All transcripts, records, evaluations, and other required documentation will be shared expeditiously with the school in which the student will be enrolled.

Pupil-Parent-Educator Conference

Before signing a master agreement, the parent or guardian of a pupil may request that the charter school conduct a telephone, videoconference, or in-person pupil-parent-educator conference or other meeting during which the pupil, parent/guardian, and if requested by the pupil, parent or guardian, an education advocate, may ask questions about the educational options, including which curriculum offerings and nonacademic supports will be available to the pupil in independent study before making the decision about enrollment or disenrollment in the various options for learning. (Education Code 51747(h)(2))

A pupil-parent-educator conference shall be held as appropriate including, but not limited to, as a re-engagement strategy and/or if requested by a parent or guardian prior to enrollment or disenrollment from independent study. (Education Code 51745.5, 51747, 51749.5)

Master Agreement

The Principal or designee shall ensure that a written master agreement exists for each participating student as prescribed by law. (Education Code 51747, 51749.5) Independent Study agreements shall include, but not limited to, all of the requirements of Education Code section 51747(g).

For a pupil participating in an independent study program that is scheduled for more than 14 school days, each written agreement shall be signed, before 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 the certificated employee designated as having responsibility for the special education programming of the pupil, as applicable. (Education Code 51747)

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For a pupil participating in an independent study program that is scheduled for 15 school days or fewer, each written agreement shall be signed during the school year in which the independent study program takes place, 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 the certificated employee designated as having responsibility for the special education programming of the pupil, as applicable. The written agreement may be signed at any time during the school year, but it is the intent of the Legislature that parents or guardians of pupils be provided the agreement at or before the beginning of the school year. (Education Code 51747(g)(9)(A)(ii))

The agreement shall include general pupil data, including the pupil's name, address, grade level, birth date, school of enrollment, and program placement.

The independent study written agreement for each participating pupil also shall include, but is not limited to, all of the following: (Education Code 51747; 5 CCR 11700, 11702)

- ◆ The manner, time, frequency, and place for submitting a pupil's assignments, for reporting the pupil's academic progress, and for communicating with a pupil's parent or guardian regarding a pupil's academic 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. 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.
- ◆ A statement of the Board's policies adopted 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 pupil'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 pupil should be allowed to continue in independent study.
- ◆ The duration of the independent study agreement, including beginning and ending dates for the pupil's participation in independent study under the agreement. No independent study agreement shall be valid for any period longer than one school year.

- ◆ 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 pupil upon completion.
- ◆ A statement detailing the academic and other supports that will be provided to address 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 supports.
- ◆ 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. In the case of a pupil 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 pupil through independent study only if the pupil is offered the alternative of classroom instruction.
- ◆ Each written agreement shall be signed, prior to the commencement of independent study, by the pupil, the pupil's parent, legal guardian, or care giver, 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. For purposes of this paragraph "caregiver" means a person who has met the requirements of Part 1.5 (commencing with Section 6550) of the Family Code.
- ◆ In the case of a suspended or expelled pupil who is referred or assigned to any school, class or program pursuant to Education Code 48925 or 48917, a statement that instruction may be provided to the pupil through independent study only if the pupil is offered that alternative of classroom instruction

Written agreements may be signed using an electronic signature that complies with state and federal standards, as determined by the California Department of Education (CDE). (Education Code 51747)

The parent/guardian's signature on the agreement shall constitute permission for the pupil to receive instruction through independent study.

Records for Audit Purposes

The principal or designee shall ensure that records are maintained for audit purposes. These records shall include, but not be limited to: (Education Code 51748; 5 CCR 11703)

1. A copy of the Board policy, administrative regulation, and other procedures related to independent study
2. A listing of the pupils, by grade level, program, and school, who have participated in independent study, the course credits attempted by and awarded to pupils in grades 9-12.
3. A file of all agreements, with representative samples of each pupil's work products bearing the supervising teacher's notations indicating that the teacher has personally evaluated the work or personally reviewed the evaluations made by another certificated teacher

4. As appropriate to the program in which the pupils are participating, a daily or hourly attendance register that is separate from classroom attendance records, maintained on a current basis as time values of pupil work products judged by a certificated teacher, and reviewed by the supervising teacher if they are two different persons
5. Appropriate documentation of compliance with the teacher-pupil ratios required by Education Code 51745.6 and 51749.5 (Education Code 51745.6 and 51749.5)
6. Appropriate documentation of compliance with the requirements pursuant to Education Code 51747.5 to ensure the coordination, evaluation, and supervision of the independent study of each pupil by a school employee who possesses a valid certification document pursuant to Education Code 44865 or an emergency credential pursuant to Education Code 44300 (Education Code 51747.5)

Matrix shall document each pupil's participation in live interaction and synchronous instruction pursuant to Education Code 51747 on each school day, as applicable, in whole or in part, for which independent study is provided. A pupil who does not participate in independent study on a school day shall be documented as non participatory for that school day. (Education Code 51747.5)

The principal or designee also shall maintain a written or computer-based record such as a grade book or summary document of pupil engagement, for each class, of all grades, assignments, and assessments for each pupil for independent study assignments. (Education Code 51747.5)

The signed, dated agreement, any supplemental agreement, assignment records, work samples, and attendance records may be maintained on file electronically. (Education Code 51747)

Matrix shall comply with the Education Code Sections 51745 through 51749.3 and the provisions of the Charter School's Act and the State Board of Education regulations adopted there under.

The Principal shall establish procedures to implement these policies in alignment with applicable law.