

SCHOOL FOR INTEGRATED ACADEMICS AND TECHNOLOGIES

Students enrolled in charter schools operated by SIATech, Inc. (hereinafter “SIATech” or “Charter School”) may be offered Independent Study to meet their educational needs consistent with applicable laws and this policy. SIATech’s Board of Directors (the “Board”) recognizes the value of supervised Independent Study for students in situations where special interest, abilities or unique individual needs cannot be properly accommodated in the regular instructional program. Independent Study is an optional alternative instructional strategy by which students may reach curriculum objectives and/or fulfill graduation requirements. Independent Study helps SIATech achieve its mission to educate at-promise students through high-quality, personalized high school diploma options that prepare them for success in college, career, and beyond.

SIATech’s Independent Study option shall be substantially equivalent in quality and quantity to classroom instruction, thus enabling students enrolled in Independent Study to complete SIATech’s adopted course of study within the customary time frame. SIATech will provide appropriate services, supports, technology and resources to enable students to complete their Independent Study program successfully. These Independent Study policies have been established by SIATech in alignment with Education Code § 51745 et seq., updated to meet the requirements of Assembly Bill 130 (2021) and Assembly Bill 167 (2021), Assembly Bill 181 (2022) and adopted pursuant to Education Code (“EC”) § 51747 and 5 C.C.R. § 11701. The following policies are effective as of the start of SIATech’s 2022-23 school year:

1. For each student in Independent Study, SIATech will assign a certificated employee to coordinate, evaluate, and provide general supervision of the student’s Independent Study instruction. (EC § 51747.5(a).)
2. The components of the Independent Study program shall be reviewed and approved by the Chief of Schools (the “COS”). The COS or designee retains discretion to approve Independent Study written agreements for students.
3. For students in Independent Study in any grade level, the maximum length of time that may lapse between the time an Independent Study assignment is made and the date by which the student must complete the assigned work is thirty (30) school days. On a case-by-case basis, when circumstances justify a longer time, the COS or designee may approve an extension not to exceed forty (40) school days. (EC § 51747(a).)
4. When any student fails to complete three (3) assignments, fails to attend two (2) scheduled meetings, or fails to make satisfactory educational progress (defined below in Section 5), SIATech will conduct an evaluation to determine whether it is in the best interests of the student to remain in Independent Study, or whether the student should return to or otherwise be placed in a regular in-person school program. A written record of the findings of any evaluation will be maintained in the student’s permanent record. This record will be maintained for a period of three years from the date of the evaluation and if the student transfers to another California public school, the record will be

forwarded to that school. (EC § 51747(b).) SIATech will consider factors in the evaluation such as:

- a. Demonstration of skills
 - b. Standardized test scores
 - c. Written test and reports
 - d. Oral or written presentations
 - e. Student's attitude toward learning and achievement
 - f. Punctual attendance at scheduled appointments
 - g. Ability to meet scheduled appointments
 - h. Parent and student preparedness for scheduled appointment.
 - i. Student demonstration of adequate and appropriate progress toward student growth standard as outlined in charter
 - j. Learning environment
 - k. Adequate parent/student relationship as necessary to enhance learning process
5. For purposes of conducting the evaluation in Section 4, a student is deemed to be making satisfactory educational progress if the student is on track to enter the next grade level at the completion of the current school year and/or progressing toward their goals pursuant to their individualized education program ("IEP"). The COS or designee is responsible for making this determination based on all of the following indicators:
- a. 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 EC § 52060(d)(4)-(5).
 - b. The completion of assignments, assessments, or other indicators that show the student is working on assignments.
 - c. Learning required concepts, as determined by the supervising teacher.
 - d. Progressing toward successful completion of the course of study or individual course, as determined by the supervising teacher. (EC § 51747(b)(2).)
6. SIATech will provide content to students 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 students, this includes access to all courses offered by SIATech for graduation and approved by the University of California or the California State University as creditable under the A–G admissions criteria. (EC § 51747(c).)

7. For students who participate in Independent Study at SIATech for at least fifteen (15) schooldays per year:

7.1. If a student does not generate attendance for more than 10 percent of required minimum instructional time over four continuous weeks of the school's approved instructional calendar, students found not participatory pursuant to EC § 51747.5 for more than the greater of 50 percent of the scheduled times of synchronous instruction in a school month as applicable by grade span, or for students who are in violation of their Independent Study written agreement, SIATech shall implement procedures for tiered reengagement. These procedures shall include local programs intended to address chronic absenteeism, as applicable, with at least all of the following:

- a. Verify student's current contact information;
- b. Notify parents or guardians of lack of participation within one schoolday of the recording of a non-attendance day or lack of participation (e.g., via email, message, text, telephone, letter, etc.);
- c. A plan for outreach from the school to determine pupil needs, including connection with health and social services as necessary, to determine student's needs for reengagement; and
- d. If the student has failed to complete three (3) assignments, failed to attend two (2) scheduled meetings, or is failing to make satisfactory educational progress as defined in Section 5 herein, SIATech will schedule a pupil-parent-educator conference (a meeting involving all individuals who signed the student's written agreement) to review the student's written agreement and reconsider the Independent Study program's impact on the student's achievement and well-being. (EC § 51747(d).)

7.2 For students in grades 9-12, their assigned teacher of record will schedule and offer opportunities for synchronous instruction at least as frequently as set forth in subsection a below. (EC § 51747(e).)

“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 a teacher or teachers of record, and involving live two-way communication. (EC § 51745.5.)

- a. For students in grades 9-12, inclusive, their assigned teacher of record will schedule and offer opportunities for weekly synchronous instruction.

SIATech will document each student's participation in synchronous instruction pursuant to EC § 51747 weekly, as applicable, in whole or in part, for which synchronous instruction is provided as part of the Independent Study program. A student who does not participate in weekly scheduled synchronous instruction shall be

documented as non-participatory for that week for purposes of pupil participation reporting and tiered reengagement pursuant to EC § 51747. (EC § 51747.5(c).)

7.3 A student's parent or guardian may request their student return to in-person instruction from Independent Study by making a written request to COS or designee or their assigned teacher of record.

- a. If there is capacity in SIATech's in-person program at the student's grade level and SIATech is otherwise able to serve the student (e.g., in accordance with law and charter), SIATech will offer the student a seat in the in-person program within five schooldays.
 - b. If SIATech is unable to serve the student (e.g., no capacity in in-person program, in-person program is not feasible under charter or law, etc.), SIATech will assist the student's transition to enrolling in the in-person program offered by their district of residence within five schooldays. (EC § 51747(f).)
8. A current written Independent Study agreement for each Independent Study student will be maintained on file. Each written agreement will contain the following:
- a. The manner, time, frequency, and place for submitting a 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.
 - b. The objectives and methods of study for the student's work, and the methods used to evaluate that work.
 - c. The specific resources, including materials and personnel, which will be made available to the student. These resources will include confirming or providing access to all students to the connectivity and devices adequate to participate in the educational program and complete assigned work.
 - d. A statement of the policies adopted herein regarding the maximum length of time allowed between the assignment, 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.
 - e. The duration of the Independent Study agreement, including beginning and ending dates for the student's participation in Independent Study under the agreement. No Independent Study agreement will be valid for any period longer than one school year.
 - f. A statement of the number of course credits to be earned by the student upon completion.
 - g. 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 student's 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 supports.

- h. 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 EC § 48915 or 48917, the agreement also will 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. (EC § 51747(g).)
- i. SIATech will comply with the written Independent Study agreement signature requirements set forth in EC § 51747(g)(9), including:
 - i. Each Independent Study agreement will be signed, prior to the commencement of Independent Study, by the student, the student's parent, legal guardian, or care giver, 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 the certificated employee responsible for the student's special education programming, if applicable. For purposes of this paragraph, "care giver" means a person who has met the requirements of Part 1.5 (commencing with Section 6550) of the Family Code.
 - ii. In accordance with EC§ 51747 (g)(9)(B), signed written agreements, supplemental agreements, assignment records, work samples, and attendance records assessing time value of work or evidence that an instructional activity occurred may be maintained as an electronic file.
- j. Upon the request of the parent or guardian of a student, before signing a written agreement pursuant to EC§ 51747, SIATech will conduct a telephone, videoconference, or in-person pupil-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. (EC § 51747(h)(2).)

9. Additional Independent Study Requirements:

- a. SIATech will not provide any funds or other thing of value to the student or his or her parent or guardian that a school district could not legally provide to a similarly

situated student of the school district, or to his or her parent or guardian. (EC § 51747.3(a).)

- b. SIATech may only receive funding for the provision of Independent Study to students who are residents of the county where the student’s charter school is authorized or who are residents of a county immediately adjacent to said county. (EC § 51747.3(c).)
- c. An individual with exceptional needs, as defined in Section 56026, *may* participate in independent study, *if* the pupil’s individualized education program developed pursuant to Article 3 (commencing with Section 56340) of Chapter 4 of Part 30 specifically provides for that participation. *If a parent or guardian of an individual with exceptional needs requests independent study pursuant to paragraph (5) of subdivision (a), the pupil’s individualized education program team shall make an individualized determination as to whether the pupil can receive a free appropriate public education 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.* (EC § 51745(c).)
- d. SIATech may claim apportionment credit for Independent Study only to the extent of the time value of student work products, as personally judged in each instance by a certificated teacher or the combined time value of pupil work product and pupil participation in synchronous instruction as set forth in EC § 51747.5(b).
- e. SIATech will maintain written or computer-based evidence of student engagement that includes, but is not limited to, a grade book or summary document that, for each class, lists all assignments, assessments, and associated grades. (EC § 51747.5(d).)
- f. Records of the Independent Study program will be maintained in paper form or electronically for audit purposes and shall include the following:
 - i. A copy of the Independent Study board policies.
 - ii. A separate listing of the students, by grade level who have participated in Independent Study identifying units of the curriculum attempted (also known as the “course of study”) and units of the curriculum completed by students, as specified in their written agreements.
 - iii. A file of all written agreements, with representative samples of each student’s work products and a signed acknowledgement by the supervising teacher indicating that he/she has personally evaluated the work or that

he/she has personally reviewed the evaluations made by another certificated teacher.

- iv. A daily attendance register, as appropriate to the program in which the students are enrolled, separate from classroom attendance records, and maintained on a current basis as time values of student work products are personally judged by a certificated teacher, and reviewed by the supervising teacher if they are two different individuals.
- v. Any other documents charter schools are required to maintain as required by law. (5 C.C.R. § 11703.)

g. SIATech will comply with all applicable law regarding Independent Study, including ADA-to-certificated teacher ratio requirements, Independent Study ADA rules for quarantined students set forth in EC § 51747(j), and course-based independent study requirements (if applicable). (EC § 51745 et seq.; 5 C.C.R. 11700 et seq.)

DATE OF ADOPTION BY THE BOARD: FEBRUARY 17, 2009

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