INSTRUCTION Alternative/Specialized Programs INDEPENDENT STUDY

A. <u>ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION</u>.

1. Introduction.

Alternative education is designed to meet the individual needs of students who are unable or unwilling to benefit educationally from the comprehensive school environment. Students with difficulties in academic, emotional, family, or financial problems, who are habitually truant or excessively absent from school, who misbehave when in attendance, or who, for a variety of reasons, do not function well in the traditional, comprehensive school environment may benefit from an alternative education program.

2. <u>Referrals</u>.

Referrals to alternative education may be initiated by the student, the parents of the student, or by the principal or designee when it is determined that the student is unable or unwilling to profit from attendance in the comprehensive educational program.

Referrals to the Superintendent's designee for consideration of placement in alternative education will include all relevant educational information available. An Individualized Education Profile, academic record (transcript), attendance record, behavior record, and health record are minimal records to be submitted in support of an alternative education program request/referral. Students who are new to the District may be referred based upon student provided information, check-out transfer, or report card from the previous school of attendance.

3. <u>Superintendent's Designee</u>.

The Superintendent's designee will review all available information with the student and the parents of the student to ensure an adequate understanding of the student's current educational status and the general educational opportunities available through alternative education.

Based upon this review, the student may be assigned to alternative education where the student and the parents of the student will be provided specific guidance, assessment, and program assignment according to the student's identified educational and/or vocational goals.

4. Student Services and School Attendance.

The principal of alternative education or designee will meet with the student and the parents of the student to review the student's educational records, goals, and identified needs. When it is determined that additional information or testing is required, the student will be placed in

an interim program pending receipt of necessary information.

Based upon the review of the student's records and other available information, the student and the parents of the student will choose an educational option stressing basic academic and life skills pertaining to the identified needs of the student including:

- a. An Individual Learning Plan for the student;
- b. Plans of monitoring and assessing the student's progress; and
- c. Provisions allowing for changes and adjustments in the program as required.

5. Alternative Education Program.

When a student enrolls in alternative education, an Individual Learning Plan will include one of the following educational options:

- a. Standard: The Standard Option is a composite of the available alternative educational programs designed to remediate and compensate for educational deficiencies and provides an opportunity for the student to return and graduate from the comprehensive high school.
- b. Trade/Vocational: The Trade/Vocational Option provides the student with maximum exposure to the world of work, while stressing the importance of earning a high school diploma. The focus of the option is development of work skills through vocational educational programs, work experience, work exploration, and knowledge of post-secondary vocational educational opportunities. The student may concurrently select participation in Standard or Extended Options.
- c. Accelerated: The Accelerated Option provides the student, who is deficient in credits for graduation with his/her class, an opportunity to compensate for the deficiency by taking more than the normal number of credits. The student must demonstrate to the Principals of Alternative Education a commitment to completing all approved credits for acceptance into the option. The student may concurrently select participation in the Standard or Adult School Options.
- d. Extended: The Extended Option provides students with major credit deficiencies the option of selecting a diploma program with a projected graduation date other than with the class of entry (the student is provided a nine or ten semester program). The student may concurrently select participation in the Trade/Vocational Option.
- e. Adult School: The Adult School Option provides the opportunity for students not yet adults to pursue a course of study designed for a subsequent transfer to and graduation from the Clovis Adult School.

f. Dropout Recovery: The Dropout Recovery Option provides the opportunity for students who have actually or effectively dropped out of school to participate in an educational program designed for enrollment in alternative education or adult school for earning a high school diploma.

6. <u>Transfer from Alternative Education</u>.

A student who has been involuntarily transferred to an alternative program may be eligible to return to the regular school at the end of the semester following the semester the student was transferred.

A student who voluntarily transfers to an alternative education program is eligible to apply for return to the regular program at the end of the semester the student transferred to alternative education.

The programs for elementary and junior high school students are reviewed every six to nine weeks and those students are eligible to transfer to the regular school program when the goals of the alternative education program have been achieved.

7. Gateway High School.

Students enrolled in Gateway High School attend classes a minimum of six hours each day and can earn 30 credits each semester in regular coursework. Students are enrolled in six courses and attend six classes every day.

Students who are in good standing in attendance, behavior, and academic progress are eligible for consideration of return to their comprehensive high school or residence at the conclusion of each semester.

8. <u>Academic Core – Grade 9 and Grade 10</u>.

The Academic Core Program for grades 9 and 10 is housed at the comprehensive high school, if available. This program is an academic intervention program designed to support students in grades 9 and 10 in jeopardy of failing, as well as to avert referrals for students that might otherwise be candidates to attend alternative education. Academic Core is a semester program.

9. <u>Clovis Community Day Elementary and Secondary School</u>.

Clovis Community Day Elementary and Secondary Schools function as community day schools and include:

a. Clovis Community Day Elementary School: Grades 4 through 6 students are taught in a six-hour day, self-contained classroom. The class enrollment is limited to a maximum of 15 students with a student review every six weeks. At the end of the six-week review,

the Student Success Team will determine if the student is ready to return to the home school or will remain another six weeks.

b. Clovis Community Day Secondary School: Grades 7 and 8 students are taught in a sixhour day, academic block schedule. The class enrollment is limited to a maximum of 15 students. At the end of the six-week review, the principal or designee will determine if the student is ready to return to the home school or will remain another six weeks.

Grades 9 through 12 students are taught in a six-hour day, academic block classroom. Each student will be reviewed by the principal or designee in six weeks for another alternative school, to return to a comprehensive school at the end of a semester, or stay and graduate at Clovis Community Day Secondary School.

Students may be assigned to Clovis Community Day School in the following priority order:

- a. Expulsion for any reason, including, but not limited to, offenses listed in Education Code section 48915(c): possessing, selling, or otherwise furnishing a firearm; brandishing a knife at another person; unlawfully selling a controlled substance; committing or attempting to commit a sexual assault; and possession of an explosive.
- b. Suspended expulsion for any other reason.
- c. Probation referred pursuant to section 300 or 602 of the Welfare and Institution Code.
- d. SARB/or attendance referral.
- e. Any other reason.

Even though students have varying levels of academic ability, teaching strategies will include individualized assignments, collaborative projects, one-on-one, small group, and whole class instruction. Each student in grades 4 through 8 and some students in grades 9 through 12 will develop an Individual Learning Plan. Imbedded in the Individual Learning Plan is a contract listing academic and social expectations for the student's classroom behavior and consequences for infractions. A 4-level Step system is utilized with 15 Character Traits integrated into the curriculum.

Unless specifically restricted by Student Services and School Attendance, all students are eligible for a review within six weeks. For grades 4-8, a student must have completed the program requirements before the student may return to the student's home school. A high school student may petition for enrollment at Gateway High School after six weeks or for return to the student's home school at the end of a semester.

B. INDEPENDENT STUDY

The provisions in this Paragraph B govern independent study for the District and Clovis Online Charter School. No course required for high school graduation shall be offered exclusively through independent study. (Education Code 51745(e))

1. <u>Educational Opportunities</u>.

Pursuant to Education Code section 51745, the District offers short-term site-based independent study and long-term independent study as set forth below. Written evidence (a medical note) from appropriately licensed professionals must be submitted to the District with any request for a student to participate in independent study due to necessary medical treatments or inpatient treatment for mental health care or substance abuse. (Education Code 51747(i))

a. Short Term Site-Based Independent Study for Student Emergency/Illness or Vacation.

The District offers short-term independent study to students for student emergency/illness or vacation as requested by their parents/guardians. Students who are on independent study due to a student emergency/illness or vacation will remain enrolled at their current school while they are participating in short-term independent study.

Parents/guardians should request independent study at least five school days before the date on which independent study is anticipated to commence. The principal or designee may approve the request for independent study and provide the student and parents/guardians/caregivers with an independent study agreement. The District requests that the independent study agreement be signed before the date on which independent study is to commence to allow the District sufficient time to provide the student with learning materials for the duration of the independent study. The independent study agreement must be signed within 10 school days of the commencement of independent study. (Education Code 51749.6(b)(1))

Short-term independent study may be requested for a minimum of three school days but not to exceed 14 school days. A student with disabilities, as defined in Education Code section 56026, may participate in independent study if his/her individualized education program specifically provides for such participation. (Education Code 51745(c), 51749.5(a)(7))

For independent study that is expected to last 15 or more school days, students will attend Enterprise Independent Study School (a medical note must be provided) or be enrolled at Clovis Online School (which will require the student to be disenrolled from the District school in which he/she is currently enrolled).

A student who is on independent study must complete the assignments that are provided to him/her and submit the completed assignments to his/her teachers upon the student's return to school from independent study.

b. Long-Term Independent Study (Enterprise Independent Study School or Clovis Online School).

Long-term independent study options are available through the District's Enterprise Independent Study School (for a medical reason and a medical note must be provided) or through Clovis Online School, a non-classroom based charter school authorized by the Board of the District. Parents/guardians/caregivers may elect a long-term independent study educational option, including for students whose health would be put at risk by inperson instruction, as determined by the parents/guardians/caregivers of the student.

In long-term independent study, students can satisfy all of their course requirements for graduation and those approved by the University of California or the California State University as creditable under the A-G admission criteria. However, not all courses offered at the comprehensive school sites are available through independent study at Enterprise Independent Study School or Clovis Online School.

2. Equivalency.

The District's independent study option shall be substantially equivalent in quality and quantity to classroom instruction to enable participating students to complete the District's adopted course of study within the customary timeframe. (5 CCR 11701.5(a)) Students in independent study shall have the same access to existing services and resources as other students of the school in which the independent study student is enrolled and shall have equal rights and privileges. (5 CCR 11701.5(b) and (c))

The provision of content aligned to grade level standards that is substantially equivalent to inperson instruction. (Education Code 51747(c)) For high schools, this shall include access to all courses offered by the local educational agency for graduation and approved by the University of California or the California State University as creditable under the A–G admissions criteria. (Education Code 51747(c))

Students participating in independent study shall have access to Internet connectivity and devices adequate to participate in the education program and complete assigned work. (Education Code 51747(g))

The District shall not provide independent study students and their parents/guardians with funds or items of value that are not provided for other students and their parents/guardians. (Education Code 46300.6, 51747.3(a)) Providing access to Internet connectivity and local educational agency-owned devices adequate to participate in an independent study program

and complete assigned work consistent with Education Code section 51747 shall not be considered funds or other things of value. (Education Code 51747.3(b))

3. <u>Eligibility for Independent Study</u>.

The Superintendent or designee may approve the participation of a student who demonstrates the motivation, commitment, organizational skills, and academic skills necessary to work independently. A student whose academic performance is not at grade level may participate in independent study only if the program is able to provide appropriate support, such as supplemental instruction, tutoring, counseling, ongoing diagnostic assessments, and/or differentiated materials, to enable the student to be successful. A student will be expected to participate in the interventions provided for success in independent study. For an elementary student, the Superintendent or designee may consider the parent/guardian's level of commitment to assist the student.

A student participating in independent study must be a resident of the county or an adjacent county. (Education Code 51747.3(c)) Full-time independent study shall not be available to students whose District residency status is based on their parent/guardian's employment within District boundaries pursuant to Education Code section 48204. (Education Code 46300.2, 51747.3)

To be considered for participating in independent study through Enterprise Independent Study School, a student must reside within the District's boundary and comply with other residency requirements, or be admitted through an inter-district transfer. Initial placement at Enterprise Independent Study School is made by a Consultant at Student Services and School Attendance and a medical note must be provided.

A student with disabilities, as defined in Education Code section 56026, may participate in independent study if his/her individualized education program specifically provides for such participation. (Education Code 51745(c), 51749.5(a)(7))

A temporarily disabled student shall not receive individual instruction pursuant to Education Code section 48206.3 by means of independent study. (Education Code 51745(d))

Students who are 21 years of age or older, and students age 19 or older who have not been continuously enrolled in school since their 18th birthday, may participate in independent study only through the adult education program for the purpose of enrolling in courses required for a high school diploma by Education Code section 51225.3 or the Board. (Education Code 46300.1, 46300.4)

No more than 10 percent of the students enrolled in a continuation high school or opportunity school or program, not including pregnant students and parenting students who are primary caregivers for one or more of their children, shall be enrolled in independent study. (Education Code 51745(b))

4. Assignment and Responsibilities of Independent Study Teachers.

Each student's independent study shall be coordinated, evaluated, and carried out under the general supervision of a certificated employee who consents to the assignment. (Education Code 44865, 51747.5; 5 CCR 11700)

The ratio of student average daily attendance for Enterprise independent study students age 18 years or younger to full-time equivalent certificated employees responsible for independent study shall not exceed the equivalent ratio for all other education programs in the District, unless the District enters into a memorandum of understanding that contains an alternative ratio. (Education Code 51745.6) Clovis Online will adhere to the guidelines established in charter school guidelines.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that independent study teachers have access to professional development and support comparable to classroom-based teachers.

To help each student succeed in long-term independent study, the maximum length of time, by grade level and type of program, which may elapse between the time an independent study assignment is made and the date by which the student must submit the assigned work shall be as follows:

- 1. Four calendar weeks for grades K through 12.
- 2. Six calendar weeks for grades 7 through 12 at any school during summer school.
- 3. When circumstances justify a longer time between assignments, the Superintendent or designee may extend the maximum length of an assignment and have it documented on the Independent Study Assignment Record. The date, reason for the extension, and designee signature must be included.
- 4. When any student fails to complete five assignments while earning less than 20 days in one attendance period (four calendar weeks), the Superintendent or designee shall conduct an evaluation to determine whether it is in the student's best interest to remain in long-term independent study. A written record shall be kept in the student's record.

5. <u>Instructional Delivery Methods in Independent Study Program</u>.

Instruction shall be provided to all students in the independent study program in accordance with the student's written agreement, and shall include, at a minimum, the following (Education Code 51747(e)):

a. For students in transitional kindergarten, kindergarten, and grades 1 to 3, inclusive, there will be a plan for opportunities for daily synchronous instruction to be provided for all students throughout the school year.

- b. Students in grades 4 to 8, inclusive, there will be a plan for opportunities for both daily live interaction and at least weekly synchronous instruction to be provided to all students throughout the school year.
- c. Students in grades 9 to 12, inclusive, there will be a plan for opportunities for at least weekly synchronous instruction to be provided to all students throughout the school year.

"Live interaction" means interaction between the student and local educational agency classified or certificated staff, and may include peers, provided for the purpose of maintaining school connectedness, including, but not limited to, wellness checks, progress monitoring, provision of services, and instruction. This interaction may take place in person, or in the form of internet or telephonic communication. (Education Code 51745.5(a))

"Synchronous instruction" means classroom-style instruction or designated small group or one-on-one instruction delivered in person, or in the form of internet or telephonic communications, and involving live two-way communication between the teacher and student. Synchronous instruction shall be provided by a teacher or teachers of record for that student pursuant to Education Code section 51747.5 or the certificated employee of the local educational agency providing instruction for course-based independent study. (Education Code 51745.5(d))

The requirement of this paragraph 5 shall not apply to: (1) students who participate in an independent study program for fewer than 15 cumulative schooldays in a school year, or (2) students enrolled in a comprehensive school for classroom-based instruction who, under the care of appropriately licensed professionals, participate in independent study due to necessary medical treatments or inpatient treatment for mental health care or substance abuse. (Education Code 51747(i)).

6. <u>Agreement for Independent Study</u>.

A written agreement shall be developed, implemented, and maintained for each student participating in independent study in accordance with applicable statutes and accompanying regulations. (Education Code 46300, 51747; 5 CCR 11703) The agreement shall include general student data, including the student's name, address, grade level, birth date, school of enrollment, and program placement. The agreement shall also include, but not be limited to, all of the requirements for written independent study agreements set forth in Education Code section 51747, 5 CCR 11700 and 11702, and any other applicable laws.

Each student's written agreement for independent study shall be maintained on file and comply with the requirements set forth in Education Code section 51747(g), which requirements include but are not limited to, the following:

- a. The manner, time, frequency, and place for submitting a student's assignments, reporting the student's academic progress, and communicating with a student's parent or guardian regarding the 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, 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.
- d. A statement regarding the maximum length of time allowed between the assignment and the completion of a student's assigned work, the level of satisfactory educational progress, and the number of missed assignments allowed before 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 the beginning and ending dates for the student's participation in independent study under the agreement. No independent study agreement shall be valid for any period longer than one school year.
- f. A statement of the number of course credits, for the elementary grades, other measures of academic accomplishment appropriate to the agreement, 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 individualized education program 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. A statement 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 shall include that statement that instruction may be provided to the student through independent study only if the student is offered the alternative of classroom instruction.

For a student participating in independent study that is scheduled for 15 or more school days (Enterprise Independent Study School or Clovis Online School), the independent study agreement must be signed, before the commencement of independent study, by: (1) the student, (2) the parent/guardian/caregiver if the student is under 18 years of age, (3) the certificated

employee who has been designated as having responsibility for the general supervision of independent study, and (4) the certificated employee designated as having responsibility for the special education programming of the student, as applicable. (Education Code 51747(g)(9))

Beginning in the 2022 - 2023 school year, for a student participating in an independent study program that is for less than 15 school days, the independent study agreement must be signed, within 10 school days of the commencement of the first day of the pupil's enrollment in independent study, by: (1) the student, (2) the parent/guardian/caregiver if the student is under 18 years of age, (3) the certificated employee who has been designated as having responsibility for the general supervision of independent study, and (4) the certificated employee designated as having responsibility for the special education programming of the student, as applicable. (Education Code 51747(g)(9))

The parent/guardian/caregiver's signature or the student's signature if he/she is 18 years old or older on the agreement shall constitute permission for the student to receive instruction through independent study. For purposes of the independent study agreement, "caregiver" means a person who has met the requirement of Family Code section 6550 et seq. (Education Code 51747(g)(9))

Written agreements may be signed using an electronic signature that complies with state and federal standards 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. (Education Code 51747(g)(9)(E)) The District requests that electronic signature be done using DocuSign. 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. (Education Code 51747(g)(9)(E))

Before signing an independent study agreement, the parent/guardian may request that the District 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. (Education Code 51747(h)(2))

7. Monitoring Student Progress.

The independent study administrator and/or supervising teacher shall promptly and directly address any failure by the student to meet the terms of his/her written agreement.

When the student has missed the number of assignments specified in the written agreement as requiring an evaluation, the Superintendent or designee shall conduct an evaluation to

determine whether independent study is appropriate for the student. This evaluation may result in termination of the independent study agreement and the student's return to the regular classroom program or other alternative program.

A written record of the findings of any such evaluation shall be treated as a mandatory interim student record which shall be maintained for three years from the date of the evaluation. (Education Code 51747)

Independent study students who are late, miss scheduled conferences, or do not submit assigned work on time shall not be reported as tardy or truant. However, they may be identified as requiring reengagement strategies and reevaluation of the impact of independent study and whether the pupil should be allowed to continue in independent study.

In addition to the number of missed assignments permitted before an evaluation is conducted to determine whether it is in the best interests of a student to remain in independent study, or whether the student should return to the regular school program, the student's level of satisfactory progress shall be considered. Satisfactory educational progress shall be determined based on all of the following indicators (Education Code 51747(b)):

- a. The student's achievement and engagement in the independent study program, as indicated by the student's performance on applicable student-level measures of student achievement and student engagement set forth in Education Code section 52060(d)(4) and (5).
- b. The completion of assignments, assessments, or other indicators that evidence that 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.

8. <u>Tiered Re-Engagement Strategies</u>.

The District will take measures to re-engage students who are not generating attendance for more than 10 percent of required minimum instructional time over four continuous weeks of the District's approved instructional calendar, students found not participatory in synchronous instructional offerings pursuant to Education Code section 51747.5 for more than 50 percent of the schedule times of synchronous instruction in a school month as applicable by grade span, or students who are in violation of their written agreement pursuant to Education Code section 51747(g), Board Policy No. 6158, and this administrative regulation. (Education Code 51747(d))

Procedures for tiered reengagement strategies shall include local programs intended to address chronic absenteeism, as applicable, with at least the following (Education Code 51747(d)):

- a. Verification of the student's current contact information.
- b. Notification to parents or guardians of lack of participation within one school day of the recording of non-attendance day or lack of participation.
- c. A plan for outreach from the school to determine student needs, including connection with health and social services as necessary.
- d. A clear standard for requiring a student-parent-educator conference to review a student's written agreement and reconsider the independent study program's impact on the student's achievement and well-being, consistent with the provisions of Board Policy No. 6158 regarding missed assignments and satisfactory educational progress.

"Student-parent-educator conference" means a meeting involving, at a minimum, all parties who signed the student's written independent study agreement pursuant to Education Code section 51747(g) or the written learning agreement pursuant to Education Code section 51749.6(b). (Education Code 51745.5(c))

Tiered reengagement shall be required for any student who participates in independent study for: (1) 15 or more cumulative school days in a school year, or (2) any reason other than due to necessary medical treatments or inpatient treatment for mental health care or substance abuse under the care of appropriately licensed professionals. (Education Code 51747(i))

9. <u>Returning to In-Person Instruction From Independent Study Provided Through</u> <u>Enterprise Independent Study School or Clovis Online School.</u>

The requirements of this section shall apply only to students who participate in long-term independent study at Enterprise Independent Study School or Clovis Online School. (See paragraph B.1.b. regarding Long-Term Independent Study (Enterprise Independent Study School or Clovis Online School).)

Any student who wishes to return to in-person instruction from independent study provided through Enterprise Independent Study School or Clovis Online School may notify his/her counselor or other designated District staff. Upon notice from the student's parent/guardian that a return of the student to in-person instruction from Enterprise Independent Study School is desired, the District Independent Study Administrator or designee shall provide for the student's return to in-person instruction expeditiously, and in no case, later than five instructional days. (Education Code 51747)(f)) The student may be returned to the school of the student's previous in-person attendance or such other school as is appropriate for the

student's grade level and place of residence. A student is not guaranteed to return to the prior school of residence and placement may be contingent on space availability and other factors.

10. <u>Records</u>.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that records are maintained for audit purposes. These records shall include, but not be limited to those set forth in Education Code section 51748, 5 CCR 11703, and other applicable laws.

The Superintendent or designee also shall maintain a record of grades and other evaluations issued to each student for independent study assignments.

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

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