

DIXON MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL INDEPENDENT STUDY POLICY

A. This policy shall apply to all pupils enrolled in Dixon Montessori Charter School (DMCS) and participating in DMCS' independent study program (the "Program").

B. For the period that students participate in the Program, they will be educated through individually designed curricula, which may include, but are not limited to, non-classroom based learning programs, cooperative school programs and classes, apprenticeships, community-based educational programs, group seminars, distance learning via current technology, and supplemental learning projects.

C. DMCS shall comply with all state and federal charter school laws regarding independent study instruction.

D. Each student's independent study shall be coordinated, evaluated, and carried out under the general supervision of an assigned certificated employee or employees of DMCS, although day-to-day instruction may be provided by another party such as a parent or private tutor.

E. The maximum length of time that may elapse between the time an independent study assignment is made and the date by which the student must complete the assigned work shall be no more than twenty (20) school days, or as modified by an assigned credentialed teacher at the time the work is assigned to the pupil.

F. Students who fail to demonstrate adequate and appropriate monthly progress toward the student standards, as determined by the professional judgment of the credentialed teacher assigned to that student, will be subject to expulsion for truancy.

After one (1) missed assignment an evaluation shall be conducted to determine whether it is in the best interests of the pupil to remain in independent study. A written record of the findings of any evaluation made pursuant to this subdivision shall be maintained in the pupil's permanent record.

The evaluation may consist of some or all of the following:

- Monthly review of work,
- Annual portfolios,
- Parent, student, and teacher/tutor observation,
- Norm and criterion referenced tests,
- Student demonstrations,
- Student grades,
- Student work samples,
- Student self-evaluation.

The role of the credentialed teacher is critical to the success of charter school independent study students. The teacher's observations, discussions with parents and students, and examinations of written work are the key to quality control. Students who fail to demonstrate adequate and appropriate progress toward the student standards, as determined by the professional judgment of the credentialed teacher assigned to that student, will be subject to expulsion hearings.

G. A current written student agreement for each independent study pupil shall be maintained on file for each participating student. Students must meet all elements of the written student agreement in order for continued enrollment in this charter school.

The independent study agreement for the student must require and cover a study plan that represents the same amount of study that would be required of a student in a classroom. Written agreements will include subsidiary agreements, such as course contracts and assignments, work records, and testing requirements. Each agreement shall also include the following:

- The manner, time, frequency, and place for submitting a pupil's assignments and for reporting his or her 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.
- A statement of the policies adopted regarding the maximum length of time allowed between the assignment and the completion of a pupil's assigned work, 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 written student agreement, recognizing that no written student agreement shall be valid for any period longer than one semester.
- 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.
- The inclusion of a statement in each written student agreement that attendance at this charter school is an optional educational alternative in which no pupil may be required to participate.
- Each written student agreement shall be signed, prior to 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 all persons who have direct responsibility for providing assistance to the pupil.

H. The Charter School shall not provide any funds or other things of value to the pupil or his or her parent or guardian that a school district could not legally provide to a similarly situated pupil of the school district, or to his or her parents or guardian.

I. The Charter School may only receive funding for the provision of independent study to pupils who are residents of Solano County or who are residents of a county contiguous to Solano County.

J. The Charter School must comply with Education Code Section 51745.6 and California Code of Regulations Section 11704 regarding teacher to ADA ratio limits.

K. Each enrolled student will be assigned a credentialed teacher. Student participates with the credentialed teacher and parents in the design of an individualized learning plan that incorporates all aspects of his or her educational program and that serves as the student's learning contract with DMCS.

L. On a regular basis, consistent with the written student agreement, the assigned credentialed teacher and the parent shall evaluate the education program of the student and modify as necessary to maximize student success. The assigned credentialed teacher will have the final authority with regard to the education program of the student, and outcomes with the exception of students who qualify for special education services whose services and outcomes will be determined by an Individual Education plan ("IEP") team pursuant to law.

M. It is understood that no student who qualifies for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act ("IDEA") shall participate in independent study unless it is specifically authorized in his or her IEP. Identified special education students are expected to attend scheduled tutorials to assist him/her in meeting the identified goals and objectives in their Individual Educational Plan (IEP). Three unexcused absences or missing more than 50% of a student's special education services in a month will result in the student being placed on probationary status. Parents will be invited to an IEP meeting to review their student's educational progress, and to insure that this charter school remains the least restrictive environment in which to promote educational benefit. A second probation in the current academic year will result in immediate dismissal from the Charter School.

N. Acceptance into this Charter School:

Acceptance of students into the charter school requires the following:

a) Parents who enroll their children in DMCS shall, through specific enrollment and curriculum contracts, accept responsibility for their children's education. DMCS will support its students and parents with appropriate educational materials, and with a team of credentialed teachers and advisors. DMCS credentialed teachers and advisors shall advise and assist parents and students in all aspects of student education pursuant to relevant contracts.

b) Any parent(s) or legally responsible entity may designate an alternate party to act in place of the parent(s).

O. Independent Study Roles

The credentialed teacher will:

- Ensure that independent study occurs in accordance with state law and charter policy and regulations.
- Facilitate the completion of written student agreements.
- Supervise and assess approved coursework.
- Assign all grades and credits earned and report the information for inclusion in student's permanent record.
- Establish, complete, and maintain necessary reports and records, including, but not limited to, learning records and attendance record.
- Personally judge the time value of student assignments or work products before ADA is earned.
- Assess the student's level of education, modifying the curriculum as necessary to meet charter guidelines
- Administer state mandated tests as required.
- Select and save representative samples of the student's completed and evaluated assignments.

The parents will:

- Participate with the credentialed teacher in the development of the student's educational plan.
- Parents and education specialists meet face to face at least once every 20 school days* to review and document attendance and the learning that occurs in that learning period.
- Under the direction of the credentialed teacher: Assume responsibility for supplied books, materials, supplies, and equipment

The student will:

- Be responsible to fulfilling the written student agreement components.

