

## Frequently Asked Questions:

What is Independent Study for the 2021-2022 school year?

- Pursuant to Education Code 51747, the Lemoore Union Elementary School District offers independent study for students who choose an alternative learning environment in lieu of attending school in-person. Independent study is available to students from kindergarten through eighth grade, designed to provide students with access to grade-level curriculum and support services as needed.

The Long-Term Independent Study Master Agreement details specific requirements and expectations for this home-based educational program. Independent Study is *not* distance learning or home/hospital instruction. Students complete assignments at home with parental assistance. Depending on the grade level, students may receive limited instructional time from a teacher and/or frequent check-ins from a teacher or staff member. Independent study is meant to be a program where the student largely works through lessons and assignments on their own (i.e. independently) with parental support and frequent contacts with the teacher of record.

Is Independent Study the same as Distance Learning?

- No. Independent study is not distance learning. Each grade span has certain requirements as described in the Master Agreement. Independent study is a home-based educational program where parents have to ensure that students participate and complete assignments as stated in the master agreement. All assignments and coursework will be available through an online curriculum (i.e. Edgenuity) that the district will utilize along with workbooks for grades K-5. Additional services, such as OT, Speech, ELD and counseling will be provided through the school either remotely or may be scheduled for appointments on campus. Access to the student's teacher of record in Edgenuity is also limited. The independent study proctor or school staff will be reaching out to parents daily to ensure that students are engaged in their learning. Parents will also have access to the student's dashboard allowing them to track their child's progress.

Is Independent Study (IS) voluntary?

- Yes, independent study must be completely voluntary. The IS program is an alternative method of instruction for students whose needs may best be met outside of the traditional classroom setting or for students whose health would be put at risk by in-person instruction as determined by their parent or guardian. Students must adhere to the conditions of the IS agreement to remain in the independent study program.

What do you mean by synchronous and asynchronous instruction? Are these the same as live interaction?

- **Synchronous instruction** is when the student and the teacher are working together at the same place and at the same time whether that is in-person or remotely via the internet. **Asynchronous instruction** is a student-centered teaching method where students engage in their lessons at their own pace. With asynchronous instruction, the student and teacher are not interacting together at the same place or at the same time. **Live interaction** is a two-way communication between a staff member (not necessarily the teacher) and the student. It is used primarily to make contact with the student to make sure the student is making progress on their lessons, check-in on their well-being and answer questions the student/parent may have. Live interaction is not intended to be a time for new instruction.

Does the independent study program provide live instruction?

- LUESD will utilize a virtual program where students will access their lessons and assignments via the Edgenuity program. These lessons and assignments will be completed by the student within a prescribed

period of time with limited or no live instruction. Every grade level will have an opportunity for synchronous instruction and/or live interaction throughout the week. Specifically, students in K through grade 3 must be offered opportunities for daily synchronous instruction. Students in grades 4 to 8 must be offered opportunities for both daily live interaction and at least weekly synchronous instruction. Students may also be provided additional remote or in-person services if they are students with disabilities on an IEP, English learners, foster youth, homeless youth or receive mental health support.

Who will teach independent study?

- Students will be interacting with and/or receiving online instruction from their Edgenuity teacher who will also be their teacher of record. The Edgenuity teacher of record will provide the direct support to the students, assign work, collect the work and grade the work submitted by the student. The district has also hired teachers to operate the independent study program. These teachers will act as the supervising teachers (i.e. proctors) and will follow up with parents for questions related to the instructional program, attendance-related matters, tiered re-engagement, and provide additional academic tutoring as needed. One teacher will support the K-5 program while another teacher will support the 6-8 program. The supervising teachers will also coordinate services with the student's school and act as a liaison between the parent and the school.

How will parents be alerted to the district's independent study option?

- For the 2021–2022 school year only, school districts and county offices of education shall notify the parents and guardians of all enrolled pupils of their options to enroll their child in in-person instruction or independent study during the 2021–2022 school year. This notice shall include written information on the district's website, including, but not limited to, the right to request a pupil-parent-educator conference meeting before enrollment pursuant to this section, pupil rights regarding procedures for enrolling, disenrolling, and reenrolling in independent study, and the synchronous and asynchronous instructional time that a pupil will have access to as part of independent study. The district's notification to parents will be sent the week(s) preceding the first day of school.

How does a parent request independent study for their child?

- Upon the verbal or written request of a parent or guardian, the LEA must conduct a phone, video conference, or in-person student-parent-educator conference to answer questions about the educational options, curriculum offerings, and nonacademic supports that will be available to the student. This meeting may be conducted in a group setting with multiple parents/families. Parents wishing to proceed with independent study would have to sign the Long-Term Independent Study Master Agreement. While the student is allowed to start in independent study right away, the school will have up to 30 days to get the parents' signature on the agreement. Ink/electronic/digital signatures are all permissible.

How does a student return to in-person learning from independent study?

- The parent will notify the school with their request to have his/her child return to in-person learning. The school will have 5 instructional days to place the student and have them return to a traditional, full-time learning program.

How soon after a parent requests independent study can the student begin in the program?

- The student can be placed in the independent study program immediately. Edgenuity will allow the district to add student licenses without delay allowing for a quick turnaround time. The school will need to contact the independent study teacher to have the student registered in the Edgenuity program. The

school's office staff will keep the student enrolled at the school and will update their program code to reflect an independent study program placement. The teacher of record will contact the student and parent with the information necessary to get the student started in their coursework.

How is attendance recorded for students in independent study?

- Students must make adequate daily progress in all of their lessons and regularly turn in their completed assignments within one week to get attendance credit. Adequate daily progress in Edgenuity is considered to take approximately 5 hours per course per week. The teacher of record will assign, collect and grade the assignments and will enter that information into the Edgenuity dashboard. The supervising teacher will review this information and will enter the student's attendance. Because attendance/participation in independent study is dependent on students completing the lessons and engaging in their lessons in an asynchronous manner, all student attendance records will have a lag-time of one instructional day.

What do we do if the student requires additional services?

- Students with disabilities, English Learners, foster youth, homeless youth and other student populations may require the need for additional services including but not limited to: services written into an IEP, English language development, tutoring, speech services and counseling. The supervising teacher will help coordinate the additional services with the student's home school and staff members at the school site. These services may be provided remotely, when appropriate, or require the student to visit the campus on a regular basis.

What does the documentation look like for independent study?

- An updated independent study agreement has been created which must be signed within 30 days. Student attendance will continue to be recorded in Aeries. The supervising teacher will input the student attendance on a daily basis. Students upload their completed assignments into Edgenuity. These assignments are visible to the teacher of record as well as to the supervising teacher. All of these records must be kept for auditing purposes.

What is the re-engagement plan and its purpose?

- The re-engagement plan is a part of the Master Agreement that parents must agree to. If a child misses instruction, appointments with their teacher(s), or fails to complete assignments, the school staff will work through the re-engagement process to ensure that the student continues making progress by regularly engaging in their lessons and completing the required coursework.

Are Edgenuity Instructional Services Teachers CA certified?

- Yes, teachers serving as teacher of record for CA students will be certified in the state and content area for courses that they teach

What opportunities exist for synchronous instruction for students?

- All K-8 students can schedule office hours with their teacher of record by going to their SIS account and viewing the Course Information section.

From here, students can select the Book a Meeting option to schedule a 1:1 synchronous session with their teacher. Additional group synchronous sessions will be communicated by the teacher of record to students. Students should frequently check their SIS messages for information about group synchronous meetings and opportunities.

K-5 students will be invited to a synchronous virtual meet and greet by their teacher at the beginning of the school year.

Teachers will facilitate daily group synchronous sessions (30-60 minutes in duration) for students in grades K-3 and weekly sessions for students in grades 4-8.

Students in grades K-3 also meet with their teacher of record at various times throughout the course for synchronous benchmarks in language arts and math.

What opportunities exist for live interaction for students?

- In addition to support from our teachers via phone, email and synchronous sessions, Edgenuity also has concept coaches available 7 days a week via live chat to support understanding and mastery of core courses for students in grades 3-8.
  - <https://www.virtualschoolresourcecenter.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/IS-Concept-Coaching-Flyer-admins.pdf>

How is participation in live interactions and synchronous instruction documented?

- The Edgenuity student information system includes a communication log where Edgenuity's concept coaches, school mentors, and teachers can document and view student communications (phone calls, emails, Learning Management System (LMS) message, chat, live Blackboard meeting). These communication logs are available in the mentor and school administrator accounts for review.

What attendance metrics are available in the Edgenuity SIS?

- The SIS includes progress data for all students including grade, percent complete, pacing progress (% ahead or behind in a course) as well as active time that a student spends in the LMS (measured in minutes).
  - For K-5 students, note that the activity minutes may not be comprehensive of all that students are doing since they complete workbook pages out of the system.

What factors could result in the student being brought back to in-person instruction at the school?

- An evaluation shall be conducted to determine whether it is in the student's best interest to remain in independent study whenever the student fails to make satisfactory educational progress and/or misses three assignments. Satisfactory educational progress shall be determined based on all of the following indicators:
  1. 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 engagement specified in Education Code 52060
  2. The completion of assignments, assessments, or other indicators that evidence that the student is working on assignments
  3. Learning required concepts, as determined by the supervising teacher
  4. Daily participation and progress towards successful completion of the course of study or individual course, as determined by the supervising teacher

What will happen if the student is absent or misses assignments?

- The supervising teacher and/or school will follow these steps to re-engage with the student and family:

- Tier 1: Non-participation or insufficient participation in the day's lessons or incomplete assignments will result in the teacher contacting the parents and verifying the current contact information for the student. A first truancy letter may be provided to the parent/guardian.
- Tier 2: For an additional instance of non-participation, insufficient participation or incomplete assignment, the supervising teacher and/or school staff will contact the student and/or family through phone calls and emails. Designated office staff members at each school are able to translate for Spanish-speaking families. A second truancy letter may be provided to the parent/guardian.
- Tier 3: After 3 consecutive missed school days or 60% of days absent in a given week, the supervising teacher may request that the school's staff schedule a Student Attendance Review Team (SART) conference to determine student needs, including connection with health and social services as necessary.
- Tier 4: Ongoing non-participation, insufficient participation or incomplete assignments will result in a home visit and the issuance of a third truancy letter. The student's progress in independent study will be reviewed and the independent study master agreement may be terminated.
- Tier 5: The independent study master agreement is terminated due to repeated violations of the agreement and the parent is referred to the School Attendance Review Board (SARB). The student is expected to return to the school site for full-time, in-person learning.