



Dear Parents, Guardians of Columbia Elementary School,

For the 2021-2022 school year, we are required to offer an independent study option to students and families to be made available to students whose health would be put at risk by in-person instruction, as determined by the parent or guardian.

State and federal laws require us to inform all parents of their option to enroll their student in an Independent Study program instead of in-person instruction. From these options, parents may choose the one that best suits their child. This letter also explains that:

- Parents have the right to request a parent-teacher conference prior to enrollment in the IS program to inform their decision.
- Parents will review the process and students' rights regarding procedures for enrolling, disenrolling, and re-enrolling in independent study.
- Parents will review the asynchronous and synchronous instructional time that the student will have access to as part of independent study.

### **Requesting an Independent Study Conference**

It is a parent's responsibility to request an Independent Study conference prior to enrolling their student in Independent Study in order to inform the decision and ensure that it is appropriate for the student.

### **Enrolling, Disenrolling & Re-Enrolling**

Once you have determined that you would like to pursue Independent Study, you can begin the enrollment process.

If you are enrolled in Independent Study and would like to return to in-person instruction, you must follow the procedure for disenrolling.

Once disenrolled, should you need to return to Independent Study you are required to adhere to the re-enrollment process.



## **Instructional Time**

The goal of our Independent Study program is to provide an alternative to in-person instruction to students whose health may be put at risk by attending class face-to-face. As such, Independent Study is an educational program that provides instruction based on the state-adopted content standards by certificated teachers. There are specific requirements for instructional time that may include both synchronous and asynchronous work. These expectations will also be outlined in the students' written Learning Agreement, which must be signed within 30 days of enrollment.

For the 2021-22 school year, the district will provide full-day in-person instruction to all students. To ensure the safety of students and staff, the district will be following the required "2021-22 K-12 COVID-19 School Guidance" issued by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). The district will also offer an Independent Study Educational Option following the regulations in the new education trailer bill AB130 which requires school districts to offer an Independent Study educational option to be made available to students whose health would be put at risk by in-person instruction, as determined by the parent or guardian. Based on this new legislation, CUSD has developed new board policies and an Independent Study (IS) program that will be offered to families for the upcoming school year.

## **Transitional Kindergarten to 3rd Grade Students**

- **Asynchronous** (Independent) Instruction: A portion of the student's instructional time will consist of "Asynchronous Instruction" which consists of assignments, tasks, and projects aligned to grade level standards that is assigned to the student by a classroom teacher to work on independently at home.
- **Synchronous** Instruction: daily instruction that involves classroom-style, small group, or individual instruction involving live, two-way communication between the teacher and student. The number of minutes per day and the type of lesson delivery will be outlined in the written master agreement as determined by the district.
- **Parents or other adult(s) are expected to serve as independent learning coach(es)** in the home throughout the instructional day to help guide and assist students with the Independent Study program.



#### **4th through 8th Grade Students**

- **Asynchronous** (Independent) Instruction: A portion of the student's instructional time will consist of "Asynchronous Instruction" which consists of assignments, tasks, and projects aligned to grade level standards that is assigned to the student by a classroom teacher to work on independently at home.
- **Synchronous** Instruction: At least weekly synchronous instruction that involves classroom-style, small group, or individual instruction involving live, two-way communication between the teacher and student. The number of minutes per day or week and the type of lesson will be outlined in the written master agreement as determined by the district.
- **Daily Live interaction:** A certified teacher or classified employee will interact with the student daily for the purpose of maintaining school connectedness. The number of minutes and form of communication will be outlined in the written master agreement as determined by the district.
- **Parents or other adult(s) are expected to serve as independent learning coach(es)** in the home throughout the instructional day to help guide and assist students with the Independent Study program.

At Columbia Union School District, Long Term Independent Study and Homeschool programs allow students to receive a quality education while having flexibility in their scheduling to accommodate other needs or activities. The request for Long Term Independent Study or Homeschool must begin with a meeting between the parent/guardian and the school, and must be approved by the district superintendent.

Once the enrollment process is complete, a teacher assigned and the parent/guardian will receive a learning schedule as part of the master agreement for program participation. Students will work with the Long Term Independent Study and Homeschool Teacher to receive assignments and to seek any clarification or support for completing the assignments.

If you are interested in learning more about the Long Term Independent Study program at CUSD or if you think this is the appropriate course placement for your child, please contact the school administration in writing to schedule a conference in preparation for your child's enrollment in the Long Term Independent Study or Homeschool program.

If you have any questions, please direct them to Suzanne Mohr, Principal, or Sarah Gillum, Superintendent.