

Berkeley Unified School District

PARENT NOTIFICATION LETTER:

Independent Study Program

July 30, 2021

(Una traducción al español de esta carta se publicará en el sitio web de BUSD el lunes 2 de agosto.)

Dear BUSD Families,

We hope you are getting significant rest and enjoying your summer break. We are very excited to welcome you all back on August 16th. As we prepare for a return to in-person schooling, five full days a week, we wanted to share some changes enacted with the adoption of Senate Bill 130.

For the 2021-2022 school year, state and federal laws require us to inform you of your option to enroll your student in an Independent Study program instead of 5 day a week in-person instruction. 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. We understand that this isn't necessarily an easy decision to make. This letter will provide you with the information needed to request a conference/orientation and enroll in one of the independent study options.

Three independent study programs will be available: K-5 virtual academy, K-8 Assisted Home School, or a 9-12 High School program. For more information about each independent study program please visit the BIS website:

<https://berkeleyindependentstudy.wordpress.com/>

This letter also explains:

- Your right to request a parent-teacher conference/orientation prior to enrollment to inform your decision.
- The process and your students' rights regarding procedures for enrolling, disenrolling, and re-enrolling in independent study.
- The asynchronous and synchronous instructional time that your student will have access to as part of independent study.

Enrolling in BIS

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

- Sign up for an orientation by visiting the Berkeley Independent Study Website : <https://berkeleyindependentstudy.wordpress.com/> and attend an orientation.
- Fill out a BIS application
- Sign a BIS agreement contract
- The Admissions Office will assign you to Independent Study. Please follow the enrollment process in the link [here](#).

Disenrolling from BIS & Re-Enrolling in In-Person Instruction

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

- Email bis@berkeley.net to let us know that you are interested in transferring out of independent study. BIS will inform the Admissions Office.
- Complete the school preference form that is available at this link.
- Admissions will support the family in transferring back to an in-person school within five days.

The Admissions Office will make every effort to return the student to the original in-person school if there is still room available at the appropriate grade level.

Instructional Time

Our Independent Study program aims to provide an alternative to 5-day-a-week in-person instruction to students whose health may be at risk by attending class face-to-face. Independent Study is an educational program that provides instruction based on the state-adopted content standards by certificated teachers. In addition, there are specific requirements for the instructional time that may include both synchronous and asynchronous work. These expectations are outlined in the students' written Learning Agreement, which must be signed before enrollment.

Instructional Time	Description
Synchronous Instructional Time	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 the teacher(s) of record for that student.
Asynchronous work	Assignments submitted/completed in Google Classroom or SeeSaw, or reading, for example. Families are responsible for supporting students to complete asynchronous work as a required part of the program. This parent expectation is part of the BIS Agreement contract that families sign.

Parents or guardians may select an instructional program that best suits their child’s needs. If you have any questions beyond the details listed above, please contact bis@berkeley.net to ask about the process. As you make your decision about Independent Study options, you may want to review the California Department of Public Health COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools in California, 2021-22 School Year.

Sincerely,

Rubén Aurelio
Associate Superintendent /Chief Academic Officer