

Approaches to Satisfying No Child Left Behind Teacher Requirements for Independent Study in Secondary Schools

This is an updateⁱ of a handout from workshops at California Consortium for Independent Study (CCIS) conferences in which independent study administrators, coordinators, and lead teachers shared approaches to meeting the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) teacher requirements for secondary teachers. The specific focus has been on ways to meet the requirement that all core subjects be taught by teachers who have demonstrated subject matter competence. This handout summarizes some approaches being piloted in districts around the state, including restructuring options.

In the models outlined below, while the role of the “supervising teacher” is retained, teaching assignments are more specialized and individual teachers are no longer responsible for teaching all core academic subjects. In most cases this means that an individual student will be taught by more than one teacher. In several of the models, students receive instruction for certain subjects in small groups, classes, or lab settings. In all models, when existing staff are not able to offer the full range of academic courses, students may take needed classes at a community college, online, or at a comprehensive high school.

MODELS

- 1. SPECIALIZED TEACHING MODEL:** Students only take courses from teachers who have demonstrated subject matter competence in those courses. Schools vary in the number of courses that a student takes at a time and in the number of teachers that a student sees each week.

A. Berkeley High School, Berkeley Unified School District, Alameda Countyⁱⁱ

Program characteristics

- This is a program within a comprehensive high school that has a total enrollment of 3,318. Grades nine through twelve (9-12) independent study enrollment is 146.

Structure

- Students take a minimum of three year-long courses in a semester (math courses are taken for the whole year).
- Students have half an hour per week with each of three or more teachers. Often teachers combine student appointment times to maximize teacher contact so that, for example, four students taking U.S. History could meet together with the teacher for two hours each week (combining four half-hour segments).

- Each subject teacher signs a course contract (which supplements, and is incorporated into, the master agreement) for the subject he or she teaches. The teacher is responsible for the paperwork for that subject.
- Courses are "blocked" (i.e., a student takes courses with the same teachers for an entire semester) to make scheduling less disruptive for students and teachers.

Teachers

- All teachers hold single subject credentials, and some teachers are NCLB compliant in additional subjects as well. All teachers work under hourly contracts; a number of the teachers are part-time.

Other resources

- Students have access to up to two classroom-based courses at the high school at any given time, for courses not offered through independent study.

B. North Monterey County Center for Independent Study, North Monterey County Unified School District, Monterey Countyⁱⁱⁱ

School characteristics

- This is a grades 9-12 alternative school of choice with a total enrollment of 162. Independent study enrollment is 146.

Structure

- Students are enrolled in one core course and up to two electives per cycle. When students finish their core course, they move on to another teacher for instruction in the next core course.
- Students meet with their teacher once a week for one hour. Students in lab sciences are required to attend lab classes and complete all required laboratory projects.

Teachers

- Teachers only teach core courses they are qualified in (single subject credential, university major, California Subject Examinations for Teachers [CSET], or Supplemental Authorization Credential).
- All teachers are on full-time teaching contracts.
- All certificated staff members may teach elective courses.

Criteria for participation in independent study

- Independent study serves students who can thrive academically with nominal teacher guidance. Only those students who can excel in such a learning environment are considered.
- Students interested in independent study contact their principal or school counselor.
The Independent Study Principal approves participation based on the following criteria:
 - ▼ Evidence that the student can work independently
 - ▼ The student's STAR performance level is Basic or higher
 - ▼ For grades 11 and 12, passage of the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE)
 - ▼ For grades 11 and 12, successful completion of Algebra I, or
 - ▼ Special circumstances

C. Mt. Everest Academy, San Diego Unified School District, San Diego County^{iv}

School characteristics

- This is a K-12 alternative school of choice with a total enrollment of 250. All students use the independent study mode of delivery. Grades 9-12 independent study enrollment is 75, and the following information is for the high school program.

Structure

- Each student interested in enrollment fills out an application and submits various documents to assist staff in making a decision regarding the student's potential for success in independent study.
- Students take a full load of courses throughout the school year, typically six courses at a time. A traditional semester system is used.
- Students typically attend 90-minute study groups/classes on Tuesday and Thursday, three periods per day.
- Students attend two-hour weekly science labs for biology, chemistry, and physics.
- Each "subject teacher" creates and signs a subsidiary course agreement for the subject he or she teaches. While the "supervising teacher" retains responsibility for attendance and the audit file, the "subject teachers" are

responsible for weekly study groups/classes and academic evaluation in each subject.

Teachers

- All teachers have demonstrated subject matter competence in several core subjects. All subjects are taught by NCLB compliant teachers. About half the teachers have single subject credentials.
- “Supervising teachers” typically work across all grade levels and remain the supervisor throughout a student’s enrollment.
- All teachers are contracted annually; most are full time and teach a variety of subjects.

Other resources

- Students have access to an on-site computer lab with two computer workshops offered each week, a fully stocked library, and a math tutoring center.
- Some of the specialty classes offered include instrumental music and jazz band, a variety of Honors and AP courses, Spanish, and French.
- A number of “subject teachers” supplement their weekly study groups/classes with interactive online assignments.

D. Pacific Coast High School (PCHS), Orange County Department of Education, Orange County^v

School characteristics

- PCHS is a high school within a K-12 county community school with a total enrollment of 1,493. The PCHS enrollment is 442.

Structure

- PCHS operates like a community college. It has developed its own on-campus, online, and hybrid (combination of on-campus and online) courses using a semester syllabus.
- Typically students take four to six courses at a time to complete 30 units each semester. Math and foreign language courses are spread out over two semesters whereas other year-long courses can be completed in a semester. Generally students take most of their courses at the same that other students take those courses – for example, most students take ten units of English in the fall semester and ten units of Social Studies in the spring.

- A faculty advisor is assigned to each student, and subject matter expert teachers are assigned to each course. Students interact with their faculty advisor as well as their individual course instructors on a weekly basis.
- The faculty advisor is the primary signature on the master agreement; all other course instructors are supplementary signatures to the master agreement.

Teachers

- Teachers hold single subject credentials and/or are “Highly Qualified” as individual course instructors who are responsible for teaching courses within their subject area expertise. Course instructors design their course(s), grade weekly assignments, and communicate weekly with each student enrolled in their course(s).
- Teachers are also faculty advisors (guidance support) for a roster of students.
- Teachers meet together weekly to discuss programs, students, and attendance.
- All teachers are on full-time teaching contracts.

Other resources

- Each student is required to take a minimum of 20 units with PCHS but for their additional credits may also choose to take community college classes, ROP classes, or private classes that may count toward graduation.
- In addition to the community college format, PCHS offers additional formats to meet individual student needs: the traditional learning contract format, a direct instruction format, and a credit recovery format.

E. Orchard View Charter School, Twin Hills Union School District, Sonoma County^{vi}

Program characteristics

- This is a K-12 independent study charter school with a total enrollment of 179. Grades 9-12 enrollment is 108 and the following information is for the high school program.

Structure

- After completing an application and initial interview, a student is assigned to a supervising teacher who is responsible to oversee the student’s academic program.
- Students typically take 6 courses at a time to complete 30 units each semester.

- Students have the option of attending on-campus classes taught by Orchard View contracted teachers who are credentialed in that particular subject or, in some instances, by independent contractors with credentials in the specific subject.
 - ▼ The schedule is similar to a junior college format where students come to campus at the time and days when their classes are being offered. Most classes meet twice a week for 1½ to 2 hours.
 - ▼ Classes include English 10 and 11, Poetry, Pre-Algebra, Algebra 1 and 2, Geometry, Trig/Pre-Cal, Biology, Chemistry, Physical Science, Spanish 1 and 2, Studio Art, and World Cultures and Geography.
- Assignments for other subjects are the responsibility of the supervising teacher who meets with the student on a weekly basis. A system of communication between supervising teachers and on-campus class teachers is in place.
 - ▼ On campus class teachers evaluate work and assign grades for their particular courses. All other evaluations and grading is done by the supervising teacher.
 - ▼ The supervising teacher is the primary signature on the master agreement; all other course instructors are supplementary signatures to the master agreement.
- Math and science tutorials and computer labs are also available.

Teachers

- All supervising teachers are credentialed employees of the district and members of the teachers association and are paid on the district certificated salary schedule.
- All district employee teachers are responsible for the development of an individualized plan for each of their 22 students. They meet with their students and parents on a regular basis to discuss education goals, plan and design instruction, review student work, assess student progress and complete necessary documentation for independent study.
- All of the on-campus high school instructors have single subject credentials in their subject areas.
- All the supervising teachers have completed the 100 points required for the HOUSSSE I Option for the cores subjects they teach.
- Supervising teachers typically work across all grade levels and remain the supervisor throughout a student's enrollment.

Other resources

- 15-20 percent of the students attend community college classes to supplement their high school program.
- Community resources are used for the Acting Workshop (through the Sonoma County Repertoire Theater), and for Music Performance (through Great Burrows Studios.)

F. Independence High School, Roseville Joint Union High School District, Placer County^{vii}**School characteristics**

- This is a grades 9-12 alternative school of choice with a total enrollment of 281. Independent study enrollment is 281.

Structure

- Students take three courses at a time. Math, foreign language, and physical education are scheduled for an entire semester. Students can complete other courses at their own pace. When the student finishes one course, the student is assigned another course with another teacher. This allows students to move at their own pace, but creates some scheduling challenges. To ease scheduling problems, students are assigned one of three blocks of time during the day (8 a.m. – 12 p.m., 12:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m., or 4:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.) during which all their meeting times will be scheduled. Teachers select one or two blocks of time in which they see students.
- Teachers who hold subject-specific credentials teach the non-lab part of science courses. In addition, students are required to concurrently attend ten two-hour laboratory sessions offered by another teacher who is NCLB compliant in Biology, Earth Science, and Physical Science/Physics. This teacher offers different labs twice a day, three days per week.

Teachers

- All but one teacher hold a single subject credential, as well as either a Multiple Subject or a Standard Secondary Credential.

Other resources

- Honors and Advanced Placement (AP) courses have been offered online through UC College Prep. The school purchased the necessary server and software to host their own classes beginning in fall 2005.

Other Information

- Students who test “far below basic” are not allowed to enter independent study; students who test “far below basic” while on independent study are not allowed to continue on in independent study. Students testing “below basic” and “basic” must attend a three hours per week Academic Literacy and Composition class until they demonstrate improvement during the next testing cycle in the spring.

G. Horizon School, Desert Sands Unified School District, Riverside County^{viii}

School characteristics

- This is a kindergarten through grade 12 school with a total enrollment of 435. Grades 9-12 independent study enrollment is 332, and the following information is for the high school program.

Structure

- Students take six courses at a time from six teachers. One of these teachers is designated the student’s “supervising teacher” and has certain duties, such as calculating the average daily attendance (ADA) for the student.
- Students come in on their designated day and see teachers individually. Students must provide completed assignments to the first teacher before they can see the next teacher, and so on through the day.

Teachers

- Teachers are only hired to teach in their credentialed areas.

Other resources

- The school is developing and buying online courses.

H. Cold Stream Alternative, Tahoe Truckee Joint Unified School District, Placer County^{ix}

School characteristics

- This is a grades 9-12 alternative school of choice with a reported CBEDS enrollment of 46 (enrollment fluctuates throughout the year with pressure for services heavier at second semester for students involved in competitive skiing programs). All students use the independent study mode of delivery. The school serves students in Placer, El Dorado and Nevada counties.

Structure

- Students are enrolled in 6 or more courses including college courses each semester or a minimum of 4 classes at one time.

- Students meet with their teachers a minimum of once a week. Every student meets individually with each core teacher to review their work in-depth and to test. Additional meetings are required for students needing science lab work, math and English tutoring, and/or time to do retesting. Study halls are open to students every day. Students sign in and out and receive elective credit for attendance.
- For students enrolled into the college fast track program, time is built into their scheduled weekly meeting to review their progress, homework and grades with all teachers for all subjects. This is a requirement.

Teachers

- 2.6 FTE teachers:
 - 1 FTE HQT for math – business math, basic math, pre-algebra, Algebra 1 & 2, geometry, trig/pre-calculus, calculus including a math-based physics – and modern world history; also teaches vocational education.
 - 1 FTE HQT for English – grades 9-12, English electives, and the CSU expository reading and writing curriculum – and U.S. History, American Government, and economics.
 - .6 FTE HQT for sciences – earth sciences, biology, and chemistry; also teaches health.

Other resources

- Out school board approved "equal access" policy allows alternative education students the opportunity to participate in extra curricular activities, sports, elective courses, advanced placement and college preparation courses not offered at our site.
- Students may also attend the local community college to take AP courses in lieu of attending the comprehensive high school. Textbooks are provided by the school.
- In addition, a school counselor is available and a school-to-career community liaison is available for post-secondary preparation for juniors and seniors.

- 2. THE COLLABORATIVE TEACHING MODEL:** Students continue to see a “supervising teacher” for all subjects, but for core subjects in which their supervising teacher is not NCLB compliant, students also see another teacher who is the “teacher of record” for those subjects. The “teacher of record” is NCLB compliant and sees students for group sessions and labs, tutoring, and assessments in core subjects. All teachers are NCLB compliant in at least one core subject.

A. Wilson School, Santa Clara Unified School District, Santa Clara County^x

School characteristics

- This is a K-12 alternative school of choice with a total enrollment of 416. Grades 9-12 independent study enrollment is 294, and the following information is for the high school program.

Structure

- This school is *moving towards* a teaching model where:
- All teachers have demonstrated subject matter competence in at least one core subject.
- Each teacher continues to be the “supervising teacher” for his or her assigned students, for five to six subjects. The “supervising teacher” meets with students on his or her “case load” weekly and gives weekly assignments to those students, but is the “teacher of record” only for the subjects in which he or she has demonstrated subject matter expertise.
- When a teacher is the “teacher of record” for the subject(s) in which he or she has demonstrated subject matter expertise, he or she:
 - ▼ Develops the curriculum, materials, and exams for the subject(s).
 - ▼ Serves on the district’s subject matter committee for the subject(s).
 - ▼ Provides group sessions and labs at key points in the course.
 - ▼ Provides tutoring to students as needed.
 - ▼ Gives the end of course exams and course grades.
 - ▼ Serves as a resource to other teachers.
- Math, science, social studies, Spanish, and technology labs are available.

Teachers

- Four out of ten teachers have single subject credentials. The rest have multi-subject credentials.

Other resources

- Students also have access to community college classes, the regional occupational center, and classes at the comprehensive high school.

3. **THE MIXED STRATEGY MODEL:** Schools use different delivery structures for different students depending on student need. Students may work with one or a number of teachers at a time, and delivery options may include classes, labs, grouping students for instruction, and one-on-one meetings.

A. Davis School for Independent Study, Davis Joint Unified School District, Yolo County^{xi}

School characteristics

- This is a K-12 alternative school of choice with a total enrollment of 174. Grades 9-12 independent study enrollment is 118, and the following information is for the high school program.

Structure

- “Supervising teachers” have demonstrated subject matter competence in all core academic subject areas except foreign language, and some students only see their supervising teacher.
- Students wishing to meet the UC/CSU a-g subject area requirements also attend classes:
 - For English and social studies courses, they attend a one-hour per week "advisory class" to help fulfill the requirements for student-teacher interaction set forth by the UC a-g policy for independent study. This class provides an opportunity for students to meet with a teacher who has subject matter competence in a particular a-g course.
 - For visual and performing arts, foreign language, higher level math, and laboratory science, students attend "small group classes" taught exclusively by single-subject credentialed teachers. Other small group elective classes are taught by teachers who have demonstrated subject matter competence. The small group classes meet anywhere from one to four times a week with an enrollment ranging from 3-16 students.

Other resources

- Where subject matter experts are not available on staff, students can access courses:
 - ▼ Through other institutions via online courses.
 - ▼ At the comprehensive high school.
 - ▼ At a community college or the university.

B. Summit View School, Riverside Unified School District, Riverside County^{xii}

School Characteristics

- Summit View shares its campus with a continuation high school and an Opportunity program that share the same curriculum, facilities, and some of the same staff. Summit View serves students in grades 1-12 with a total

CBEDS enrollment of 923 (870 in grades 9-12) but with a peak enrollment of 1,231. The following information refers to the high school programs.

Structure

- There are no assessment barriers to enroll; all students with valid referrals are accepted.

- Though all Summit View teachers are NCLB compliant, and certified to teach English learners, recently the staff developed a hybrid system of traditional and lab-based instruction.
 - ▼ Except for lab sciences and Algebra and above math courses, the traditional format centers on a one-hour conference one day each week in addition to voluntary attendance in computer and tutoring labs.
 - ▼ Lab sciences (Biology and Earth Science) and Algebra and above math courses require a two-hour conference and mandatory two-hour labs.
 - ▼ The most recent development is the creation of the ICAN (Increased Credit Achievement Now) alternative for students age 17 or older who are severely credit-deficient. Students meet with a teacher one day each week for 2.5 hours and then attend another day each week for 2.5 hours for lab work and support.
 - ▼ Typically students take two to three courses at a time, completing six courses each semester.

- Additional Labs and Workshops
 - ▼ English/Writing Lab: Students may get help from a credentialed teacher in reading and writing in any subject area.
 - ▼ Math Lab: Students may drop in for extra support provided by teachers and instructional aides during the open lab hours.
 - ▼ Social Studies Lab: Students may get help from a credentialed teacher in any social studies course.
 - ▼ Intensive Intervention Workshops: Students identified as being severely deficient in basic skills may attend these workshops.
 - ▼ Scholastic Read 180: Students identified with reading deficiencies are referred to this program and attend two 90- minute sessions each week.
 - ▼ Strategic Intervention Workshops: Students identified as being close to passing the CAHSEE may attend intensive, five-week courses tailored to their specific needs as identified by previous test results and an on-site Kaplan assessment. Students are targeted based on the grades being tested on the next CAHSEE administration.

- ▼ The “All but CAHSEE” program provides academic remediation tailored to passing the CAHSEE exam for students who have not passed the CAHSEE but have completed all the credit requirements for a diploma.

Teachers

- Teachers have either single-subject or multiple-subject credentials, but all are EL/CLAD certified and NCLB compliant through the HOUSSE process in five core areas. Some teachers teach only the subjects in which they are credentialed; other teachers teach all subjects.

Other resources

- Students who need classes that Summit View does not offer (e.g., theater, band, choir, foreign language, chemistry, physics) may take those classes at their referral school or the local community college while attending Summit View.
- Students have access to additional resources including:
 - ▼ English Learner Office staffed by several aides and a teacher-on-special-assignment.
 - ▼ Counseling Office/Study Hall staffed by two counselors and two clerical staff members.
 - ▼ EOCweb (<http://eocweb.rusd.k12.ca.us>) with approximately 360 video and PowerPoint tutorials. For example, there are 50 video clips for *Macbeth* arranged by act, scene, and line in which a teacher guides students through the play.
 - ▼ Technology Resource Center with 18 computer stations used for direct instruction lessons incorporating technology, and the Digital Resource Center with 36 computer stations for students to do research and word process.

C. North State Independence High School, Shasta Union High School District, Shasta County^{xiii}

School characteristics

- This is a grades 9-12 alternative school of choice with a total enrollment of 234. Independent study enrollment is 212.

Structure

- Most students see one “supervising teacher” for English, social science, and electives.

- Other subjects/courses (foreign language, math, lab science, computer science, CAHSEE Prep, Orientation, and fine arts) are called “augmented classes.” Augmented classes in core subjects are taught exclusively by NCLB compliant subject matter experts.
 - ▼ Classes are offered in a master schedule that allows students to select the day and time of attendance.
 - ▼ Classes are one and a half hours long with an average size of seven students.
 - ▼ Most students attend school between 4.5 to 7.5 hours per week.

Teachers

- All teachers have demonstrated subject matter competence in at least one subject and most are NCLB compliant in multiple subjects.
 - ▼ The “supervising teacher” is responsible for reporting attendance and maintaining the audit file for the student.
 - ▼ The “augmented class” teacher assigns grades and provides work samples to the “supervising teacher.”

Other resources

- Where subject matter experts are not available on staff, students access courses:
 - ▼ At a comprehensive high school (two periods maximum).
 - ▼ At a community college.
- Students also have access to Odyssey Ware online courses and Videotext Algebra and Geometry online.

- 4. MODEL FOR A SMALL PROGRAM WITHIN A COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOL:** The independent study teacher or teachers teach courses in which they are NCLB compliant and recruit classroom-based or retired teachers who are NCLB compliant to teach other courses on a part-time basis. Students take core courses that cannot be offered through independent study either in the classroom or through other institutions.

In this *composite* model:

Structure

- Independent study teachers teach those courses in which they have demonstrated subject matter competence.
- For subjects where no independent study teacher is NCLB compliant, classroom-based teachers may be recruited to teach courses through independent study as “extra duty” after regular school hours or in return for release from classroom teaching duties. (In some cases, NCLB-compliant retired teachers may be recruited to teach certain subjects.)
- Independent study teachers may teach some classroom-based courses in return for the classroom-based teachers teaching some independent study courses, in their areas of demonstrated subject matter competence.

Teachers

- Individual teachers may be working to further develop subject matter expertise so that they can become NCLB compliant in additional subjects.

Other resources

- Students may also take some courses in the classroom, online, or at the community college or university.

CHALLENGES

1. Preserving the essential component of close student-teacher relationships.
2. Resources:
 - Finding space to run small group sessions and labs.
 - Finding additional teaching staff with expertise in subject areas not currently covered by existing staff.
3. Scheduling:
 - Scheduling courses with multiple teachers.
 - Finding options that fit students’ schedule constraints.
4. Finding other options for students to take core courses not available through independent study (e.g., comprehensive high school, community colleges, online).

ⁱ This update includes new school examples and current contact information.

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