



April 29, 2022

## **Independent Study Program enrollment 2022-23 school year**

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Due to the popularity and continued interest of our Independent Study Program started for this current school year, we plan to continue this option for the 2022-23 school year.

Registration form: <https://bit.ly/ISP22-23formENG>

All families completing this form should review the Independent Study FAQ before completing the form. FAQ: <https://bit.ly/ISPfaq22-23Eng>

**Please complete this enrollment form by Monday, May 9, 2022 at 5 p.m.** ONLY if you are interested in enrolling your child in SMMUSD's Independent Study Program for the 2022-23 school year. Please complete one form per child you are interested in enrolling.

If you are currently enrolled in our Independent Study program and plan to return to in-person learning, you do not need to complete this form.

Independent study is a voluntary program in which students follow a self-paced curriculum from home.

Thank you,

Sincerely,

Dr. Ben Drati, Superintendent

Mr. Isaac Burgess, Director, Malibu Pathway



## **SMMUSD Independent Study Program 2022-23**

### **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

**What is SMMUSD's Independent Study Program?** Independent study is an alternative instructional model for students whose needs may be best met best through study outside of the traditional, in-person, classroom setting. This is an option for those who feel that they need an alternative non-in person method of learning. Please note: students will need to be able to work independently when given the time to do so.

**Who is eligible for enrollment in the Independent Study Program?** Any student who has and maintains residency within the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District boundaries.

**What curriculum is used for the Independent Study Program?** APEX learning online standards-aligned curriculum will be used for the Independent Study Program for grades 6-12. Our TK-5 grades students will receive their instruction using our current district-adopted curriculum that will be taught remotely by SMMUSD credentialed teachers.

**How much time will students spend completing independent study coursework?** It is important to make sure that independent study students and parents/guardians understand the time commitment they are making when they sign the Independent Study Agreement. Parents/guardians/caregivers and students should expect to spend as much time on independent study assignments as they would for in-person learning.

**Is the Independent Study Program for my child?** In general, success in independent study requires motivation and a strong commitment on the part of the student and his, her, their parents/guardians/caregivers, especially for younger students.

It also requires sufficient organizational skills and academic preparation to enable the student to work independently. Students struggling with accessing the curriculum, meeting standards, and making appropriate academic progress should be considered as a part of the decision to enroll or NOT enroll in the independent study program. The ISP administrator and staff will keep the students and parents informed as to the progress being made for future decision placement in independent study.

**Does my child need to be a resident within Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District boundaries to enroll in the Independent Study Program?** Students are expected to maintain residency during the duration of the school year and may be asked to pick up supplies and complete exams on campus or at the district office. Parents and students may be asked to attend in-person meetings if necessary.

**Can my child return to traditional in-person schooling at any time?** In order to minimize the disruption to the student's educational program and ensure continuity of learning we are requesting families commit to one semester (secondary 6-12) or one trimester (elementary TK-5). However, if there is a need to transfer sooner, we ask that you communicate with the Independent Study Administrator and your child's teacher to schedule a Student Success Team meeting to make a determination to return to in-person learning taking into consideration space availability. Transitioning to in-person schooling or transitioning to independent study after the

start of the school year will require a change in teacher and curriculum for students. At the secondary level, it may necessitate a change in course schedules.

**Why must families enroll by May 9, 2022 5 p.m.?** Families are highly encouraged to enroll in the Independent Study Program now to ensure that your child is appropriately assigned and SMMUSD is able to properly staff the Independent Study Program to meet students' needs.

**May students with active Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) enroll?** State law requires students with special needs who wish to participate in independent study to have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that allows for independent study. Students with IEPs may submit the Independent Study Program enrollment form. However, an IEP meeting must be scheduled and program placement is determined by the IEP team.

**What is the parent's/guardian's role in the independent study program?** During independent study, parents/guardians act as a learning coach and assist their child with assignment completion and progress monitoring. As the learning coach, parents should help ensure their child is on task and keeping up with their daily work. This assistance with daily work is especially important for younger students. Most students require less parental support as they get older. Parents should also help their child create a quiet space for work as well as protecting their child's time to complete their work. If your child neglects to make appropriate academic progress, it will be strongly recommended to re-enroll in in-person learning. A student success team meeting will be scheduled.

**Are students required to complete assignments within a specific timeframe?** Yes. In order to earn credit and continue participating in independent study, a student must complete assignments within the guidelines on the Independent Study Written Agreement. If a student does not complete an established number of assignments within the required time period, the student will be evaluated to determine if the Independent Study Program is the correct option for the student. If the school team determines that independent study is not the appropriate placement for the student, a parent conference will be held to determine whether the student should continue with ISP or in person instruction.

**How much synchronous instruction or live interaction will occur in the Independent Study Program?** Independent study students will participate in "live interaction" and/or "synchronous instruction." Daily live interaction (check in, support) may be between the student and SMMUSD classified or certificated staff, may include peers, and is provided for the purpose of progress monitoring and wellness checks. This interaction may take the form of video conferencing or telephonic communication. Synchronous instruction (direct instruction) will be delivered in the form of video conferencing involving live, two-way communication between the supervising teacher and student. Independent study students will have the opportunity to participate in live interaction and/or synchronous instruction in accordance with required law at each grade level throughout the school year, or until they disenroll from the program, as follows:

- ❖ TK/K to grade 3: ➤ Approximately 90 minutes per day of synchronous instruction
- ❖ Grades 4 to 5: ➤ Approximately 180 minutes per week of synchronous instruction ➤ Daily live interaction/check-in
- ❖ Grades 6 to 8: ➤ Approximately 120 minutes per week of synchronous instruction ➤ Daily live interaction/check-in
- ❖ Grades 9 to 12: ➤ Approximately 60 minutes per week of synchronous instruction

**If I choose to enroll in the Independent Study Program, do I lose my home elementary school of residence spot or my school of choice in a transfer agreement?** No. Students

enrolled in ISP will remain assigned at their home school or school of approved permit. However, space availability will be taken into consideration.

**My child is eligible for free and reduced lunch. Can they still receive a meal daily?** All students in the Independent Study Program will have access to the free and reduced lunch program.

**Are students in the dual immersion program eligible for enrollment in the Independent Study program?** Dual immersion families may select to enroll in the Independent Study Program. However, note that dual immersion curriculum is not available in the Independent Study Program.

**Who assigns the grades in the Independent Study program?** The SMMUSD credentialed/supervising teacher for the Independent Study Program will assign the grades.

**Will students be able to participate in counseling services?** Yes, SMMUSD school counseling services will be available to Independent Study Program students.

**How will attendance be tracked?** Attendance and participation will be monitored daily, and staff will follow up with students and families as necessary. Tiered re-engagement strategies will be initiated to promote student attendance for students in violation of their student written agreement. Students who do not maintain attendance standards will be required to enroll in in-person learning.

**Are students able to participate in music, band, performing arts, extracurricular, clubs or athletics?** No. This aligns with parental decision to select the independent study option.

**Which content areas and courses will be available to students?** APEX online is our learning platform for students in grades 6-12. APEX Learning provides independent study courses that are standards-based and meet A-G requirements. Our elementary students will continue with the current SMMUSD board approved curriculum in English language arts, math, science and history/social science taught remotely by SMMUSD credential teachers. **Do Samohi and MHS students who enroll in full-time independent study receive their diploma from their home school?** High school seniors enrolled in the Independent Study Program will receive a Samohi or MHS diploma through successful completion of all graduation requirements.

**What else should my family consider when making the choice to enroll in the Independent Study Program?** Please think about the academic and social-emotional needs of your child, especially considering the fact that the Independent Study Program will have limited opportunities for in-person social interactions with typically developing peers.

**Can students take part-time independent study courses and part-time in-person courses?** No. Students must be enrolled in either full-time in-person learning or full-time independent study.

**How do I enroll my child in the Independent Study Program?** Parents enroll children in the Independent Study Program by completing this enrollment form by Friday, May 9, 2022, 5 p.m.: <https://bit.ly/ISP22-23formENG>.

**What happens after I complete the Independent Study Program enrollment form?** A meeting (in person or via zoom etc) will be scheduled to review your enrollment form and the Independent Study Written Agreement.

**Will project based learning (PBL) students be able to continue in this pathway if enrolled in the Independent Study Program?** No. Project based learning families may select to enroll

in the Independent Study Program. However, note that the PBL curriculum is not available in the Independent Study Program.

**If we choose independent study, can we move back to the in-person program once our children are vaccinated?** There is no vaccination requirement/status for students to enroll in independent study or in-person instruction.

**Will my child receive school support services as an independent study student?** If a student begins struggling while participating in the program, a meeting will be scheduled with the teacher, the parent/guardian, and an administrator or admin designee. The Student Success Team will make a determination regarding next steps which could include the potential return to in-person instruction. For students who already have an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP), independent study will need to be written into the IEP, and any support services outlined in the IEP will be provided.

**What are the course sequencing (APEX Online Learning) for Middle and High School students enrolled in the Independent Study Program for 2022-23?**

Middle School Course Sequence

[SMMUSD ISP Course Sequence Middle School 202223.pdf](#)

High School Course Sequence

[SMMUSD ISP Course Sequence High School 202223.pdf](#)

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