

Regulation

INDEPENDENT STUDY

Independent study, otherwise known in the State of New Jersey as “Option Two” may serve as an alternative to traditional high school courses and involve in-depth experiences that may be provided by district personnel or instructors not employed by the school district. Options for independent study include, but are not limited to: interdisciplinary or theme-based programs, independent study, magnet programs, student exchange programs, distance learning, internships, community service, co-curricular or extra-curricular programs, and/or other structured learning experiences.

In addition, independent study includes successful completion of accredited college courses that assures student learning consistent with the knowledge and skills identified in the New Jersey Student Learning Standards.

In order for students to participate in independent study, the following procedures must be followed:

A. Accredited College Courses

High School credit will be awarded for courses taken at a college/vocational institution under the following conditions:

1. Student and parent will make a request to School Counselor using Exhibit A.
2. Course must be approved by the school Principal or Designee.
3. Student must be approved by the college/vocational institution and meet their requirements to take course(s) as a high school student.
4. An official transcript from the college/vocational institution will be required at the end of the course to award credits.
5. Credits that impact grade level promotion must be submitted by August 1st.
6. Credits that impact graduation participation must be submitted by June 1st.
7. If a student successfully completes an out of district course it will be recorded on the student's transcript as a Pass.
8. The district reserves the right to deny the credits for any course.
9. Courses may be taken any semester after July 1st of the student's 9th grade year.

The safety, cost and transportation, to and from, any Option Two program and any and all costs for programs, fees, books, supplies, support, tutoring, etc. are the responsibility of the student's parent/guardian. By completing the Option Two request the parent/guardian(s) agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Passaic Public Schools, Passaic Board of Education, its agents or employees from any and all claims of any type, action, complaint, judgment, costs or personal injury, arising out of, or related to, the student's participation in the Option Two program.

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B. Distance Learning

High School credit will be awarded for courses taken via the Internet under the following conditions:

1. All courses must be approved prior to registration by the Principal or Designee.
 - a. The institution must be accredited.
 - b. The course must be at high school level or above.
 - c. The learning must be guided and must have an evaluative component (tests and/or projects).
2. An official transcript from the Distance Learning institution will be required at the end of the course to award credits.
3. Credits that will determine grade level promotion must be submitted by August 1st.
4. Credits that impact graduation participation must be submitted by June 1st.
5. If a student successfully completes an out of district course, it will be recorded on the student's transcript as a Pass. No partial credit will be given. Pass or fail grade will be issued. Grade will not affect GPA or class rank.
6. Distance learning credits will be assessed by the principal or his/her designee and be converted to the Passaic High School 5.0 credit scale (Full year course = 5 credits and Single Semester course = 2.5 credits).

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C. Independent Work, Internships, and Community Service

This is not designed to replace or work in conjunction with our cooperative education programs. The cooperative education programs have a required classroom component and provide supervision and on-site visits.

High School credit will be awarded for programs under the following conditions:

- A. Programs will only be approved for students in grade 11 or 12.
- B. Independent work and internships may count toward the fulfillment of elective credits or 21st Century Life and Career Skills credits.
- C. It is the responsibility of the student and parent/guardian to find a work/internship/ community service placement which suits the interest and career goals of the student.
- D. The application (Exhibit A) must be submitted to the school counselor. The counselor and the principal's designee will approve or reject the application. Any change in the work/internship must be approved.

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- E. A student must work/intern for at least 180 hours to earn 2.5 credits or 360 hours to earn 5 credits. No partial credit will be given. Pass or fail grade will be issued. Grade will not affect GPA or class rank.
- F. A student must demonstrate the number of hours, as specified above in section E, have been fulfilled, and may be required to complete an assignment in order to certify the completion.
- Hours will begin to be counted from the time of application approval and must be completed within the school year.
 - Hours may begin as early as July 1st of the academic year and must be completed no later than June 1st of the same academic year.
 - The attached weekly log (Exhibit B) must be filled in by the student and signed by the site supervisor. The log is to be signed by the student's guidance counselor in September and at the end of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd marking periods. The entire log will be turned in by June 1 of the year the program is completed to the counselor.
 - For community service, a reflective journal is required in addition to the weekly log identified above section c above (Exhibit C).
- G. The same experience may not be duplicated from one year to the next; however:
- A student may earn up to ten (10) credits through an independent work/internships. A student may receive payment through an employer for independent work/internships; and
 - A student may earn up to 10 (10) credits through community service. A student may not receive payment for hours of community service.
- H. The school principal has the right to refuse the granting of the credits based on lack of fulfilling requirements identified above. At the discretion of the principal, his/her designee and/or site supervisor the student may be ineligible to receive credit under this program (excessive school absenteeism, tardiness, insubordination, dishonesty, poor performance, or other serious violation). In order to maintain eligibility, students are expected to act in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct and all applicable board policies. Violation of those policies at the work site may result in the discipline procedures described therein.
- I. Working papers, if needed, may be obtained through the school office.
- J. Guidelines for Community Service credit are subject to change in order to reflect the New Jersey Department of Education Community Service Guidelines.
- K. The safety, cost and transportation, to and from, any Option Two program and any and all costs for programs, fees, books, supplies, support, tutoring, etc. are the responsibility of the student's parent/guardian. By completing the Option Two request the parent/guardian(s) agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Passaic Public Schools, its agents or employees from any and all claims of any type, action, complaint, judgment, costs or personal injury, arising out of, or related to, the student's participation in the Option Two program.

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Independent Study

Independent Study is offered as an Option Two program to allow students to develop interests beyond those available in the district curriculum which:

- A. Relates the real world and the school world in a more meaningful fashion.
- B. Inculcates a sense of community service in the minds of students.
- C. Broadens the base of learning to include a greater variety of experiences.
- D. Draws upon the human and material resources that the community offers.

High School credit will be awarded for Independent Study under the following conditions:

- A. All courses must be approved prior to beginning the study. An Independent Study Proposal Form (Exhibit D) must be filled out and signed by the appropriate individuals.
- B. Student and parent will make a request to the school counselor. Application must be completed and accompanied by a proposal for the Independent Study work explaining the project, timeframe, objectives, and credit desired.
- C. A committee of staff members, as appointed by the principal, will review the proposal to approve for submission for approval by the Superintendent or his/her designee.
- D. Upon completion of the independent study a weekly time log and a portfolio of work completed must be submitted for evaluation and grading to the committee.
- E. The committee will grant credit based on a review of the completed project. As a general guide 5 credits = 180 hours.
- F. No more than 10 credits can be earned through Independent Study in a school year.
- G. Independent Study work will be recorded on the transcript as a Pass or Fail and will not be calculated into GPA or class rank.
- H. The safety, cost and transportation, to and from, any Option Two program and any and all costs for programs, fees, books, supplies, support, tutoring, etc. are the responsibility of the student's parent/guardian. By completing the Option Two request the parent/guardian(s) agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Passaic Public Schools, Passaic Board of Education, its agents or employees from any and all claims of any type, action, complaint, judgment, costs or personal injury, arising out of, or related to, the student's participation in the Option Two program.

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Proficiency-Based Advanced Credit

1. Any student who feels they are proficient in a course offered through the Passaic Public Schools Programs of Study must complete the Proof of Proficiency Form (Exhibit E). (Proof of Proficiency does not apply to Advanced Placement (AP), Health or Physical Education courses).
2. The student must have passed the state assessment in the content area related to the course for which credit is requested.
3. The student will complete a district assessment prior to July 15 of the school year in which the credit will be posted on the high school transcript. Some courses may require a project based performance assessment.
4. The student must earn an 85% or higher on the district assessment to prove proficiency.
5. If a student successfully completes the assessment, the course will be recorded on the student's transcript as a Pass. No grades will be issued for the course.
6. The student may only attempt each district assessment once per course title per high school career. If the student scores below an 85% they may take the course during a future school year.
7. Where course sequence applies, a student may not take an assessment for a course that is below another course that s/he is currently enrolled or has already passed. For example, a student may not request to take the Algebra I assessment after they successfully completed Algebra II or while they are taking Geometry.

First Reading:	December 19, 2016
Second Reading:	January 30, 2017
Adopted:	January 30, 2017