**Subject: Independent Study Reforms: Call/email your legislators this week**

Dear Superintendents,

State legislators, especially Democrats in the State Assembly, need to hear from you. Attached is a letter urging legislative leaders to adopt a virtual learning option for next year, but with critical amendments to protect students currently enrolled in traditional independent study. **Please contact your legislators by COB Thursday** and, if at all possible, let us know when you do.

**Background**

This letter is a response to the Governor’s May Revision, which authorized a virtual learning option (i.e., distance learning for 2021–22) within an amended independent study framework.

CCSESA members have embraced many of the Governor’s proposed improvements to the quality of independent study, including weekly synchronous instruction, tiered reengagement strategies, identification of supports for struggling students, and content aligned to grade-level standards.

Members of the Legislature have urged even stricter independent study reforms (e.g., Assembly Bill 1316).

But we have not supported the proposed requirement for daily live interaction and weekly synchronous instruction. These requirements may be reasonable for new virtual academies, but could easily push our at-promise youth out of public education altogether.

With our alternative education students in mind, CCSESA and other stakeholders are actively **lobbying for a relief valve for families that determine daily live interaction or weekly synchronous instruction is either (1) not in the best interest of the pupil or (2) not feasible for the pupil**. We cannot lose the adaptable nature of independent study to meet these students where they are.

**Key Points + Action**

We urge you to contact your assembly members and senators. [Use the tabs on this spreadsheet to find your legislators and their staff contract information](link%20to%20excel%20file).

You can [attach the finalized letter](link%20again%20to%20the%20letter). Use the email body (or text/Zoom/phone call) to provide examples of how a one-size-fits-all requirement around daily live interaction does not work for all students. Here are high-level talking points for your consideration:

* Our county supports full-time, in-person instruction for next year.
* We also urge a virtual learning option for families that are reluctant to return to in-person instruction due to the pandemic.
* We agree with many of the Governor’s proposed reforms to improve the quality of independent study, but need changes to protect our current independent study programs for at-promise youth.
* **Give examples of how your independent study programs meet the unique needs of students. Show how a one-size-fits-all requirement around daily live interaction does not work for all students.**
* Please see the attached letter and draft amendments.
* If there are provisions of AB 1316 to which you object, identify those as needed.

Of note: This request is not about “local flexibility” or supporting more “distance learning” -- two phrases that have lost their luster over the past year (read: do not use them). This is about raising the quality of independent study *while also* preserving programs that meet the needs of current alternative education and other students. It’s about striking a balance.

If you have any questions, call or text Derick Lennox (925200-7215, dlennox@ccsesa.org).

Thank you!

Derick