

Administration

Educational Research in District Schools

All requests to conduct research within the School must be directed to the Superintendent of Schools. The following criteria will be utilized to make a determination regarding approval of such requests:

1. The study results in direct benefits or provides direct services to the children of within the school district;
2. The study provides in-service opportunities for the growth and development of faculty and/or staff;
3. There be no expenditures of district funds or use of staff/faculty time unless there are benefits as described in 1 and 2 above.
4. Students participating in studies, authorized by school administration, must have the approval of their parents.
5. The Superintendent should inform the Board of Education of such studies before the research begins in the district.

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A screening committee, consisting of individuals named by the Superintendent, will assist in the process of determining the suitability and appropriateness of all research requests. Such determination will depend upon the applicant satisfactorily addressing the "Criteria for Research Approval" (see below), as well as any other recommendations for modification or clarification that are suggested by the screening committee.

It is expected that all applicants, both from within the system and from without, will admit a written request for permission to conduct research, along with an explicit proposal addressing the "Criteria," and all materials to be used in the research project. An interview with the applicant also may be required.

All requests for permission to conduct educational research must be approved prior to the commencement of the project.

In-System Requests for Project Approval

A staff member who wishes to conduct a research project involving no cost to the system will usually be restricted to the member's assigned school. It is presumed that the applicant will have secured the permission of the building Principal prior to submitting the required documents mentioned above. Modifications to the instructional program, if any, required by staff member research projects, should be minor.

System-wide research efforts, initiated by central administration or other individuals within the district, involving broader based data collection efforts, and undertaken for internal use only, will be bound by the same application procedures mentioned above. The Superintendent or his designee, may make a specific request of the screening committee and the school committee to waive these requirements.

Out-of-System Requests for Project Approval

Individuals or groups who seek permission to conduct research projects within the school district, and who are not part of the professional staff, must adhere to the application requirements outlined above. Moreover, while the School Committee wishes to cooperate with reasonable requests to conduct research, its primary obligation is to protect the rights of students who may be requested to participate.

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Educational Research in District Schools (continued)

Proposals and collateral materials will be reviewed by the Superintendent, as well as the system research screening committee. Approval will be based upon the acceptability of projects and their congruence with the following "Criteria for Research Approval." Proposed projects should:

- Offer promise of improving educational practice;
- Be organized so that there are few, if any, interruptions to the regular school programs;
- Pertain to relevant education problem;
- Contain an appropriate research design;
- Spell out procedures clearly;
- Respect the rights of individuals, including the confidentiality of personal data about students and employees;
- Obtain "informed consent" from the parents of all participating students.

Performance Expectations for Approved Studies

Once a project proposal has been approved, the investigator will be obligated to fulfill the following:

- Respond to any concerns that are raised in the course of the research by participants, parents, teachers, or others who become involved;
- Whenever possible make any necessary adjustments which do not compromise the integrity or validity of the study;
- Secure approval for any publication of outcomes, enabling the Superintendent to determine if identification of the school or system will be in the best interest of the school district;
- Submit copies of all documents and any other materials developed as a consequence of the study, including, but not restricted to, theses, videotapes, summary reports, booklets, and any other account of project outcomes;
- Provide, if feasible, opportunities for professional staff and others to learn from the research findings and to utilize the results to improve instruction for children.

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Educational Research in District Schools (continued)

Performance Expectations for the District Public Schools

Upon receipt of a written request for permission to conduct research and supporting documentation, the system agrees to do the following;

- Carefully consider the application at one of the regularly scheduled meetings of the proposal screening committee.
- Interview the applicant, if necessary, to gather additional information about the proposed project;
- Assist in modifying the design or procedures if a proposal is deemed to have merit, but deficient in some minor way;
- Inform each applicant of the decision of the screening committee, and when permission is denied, offer a thorough explanation of why approval has not been granted;
- Provide any reasonable assistance to those investigators whose proposals have been approved.