

Durham Public Schools Research Frequency Asked Questions

Q: Who should I contact if I am interested in conducting research in Durham Public Schools?

A: Contact Meredith Mooney (meredith_mooney@dpsnc.net) in the Research & Accountability Office. You are NOT allowed to contact principals, teachers, department heads, or other school officials. All research in Durham Public Schools MUST be reviewed by the Office of Research & Accountability. Solicitation for research cannot begin until approval has been received.

Q: What is considered research?

A: Any investigation into students or staff in Durham Public Schools is considered research. This includes all data collection involving DPS students or staff, including surveys.

Q: What is considered external research?

A: External research is research requested by agencies outside of Durham Public Schools, such as colleges and universities. It can also be research conducted by a DPS staff member for purposes not related to his or her job.

Q: Why are all these procedures necessary?

A: There are several very important reasons for the research proposal procedures.

1. Instructional time must be protected. Without the procedures, we would have no way to protect students and teachers from an overwhelming amount of research.
2. All research must be of high quality, aligned with the Guiding Principles, compliant with the Research Standards, and benefit the school system or individual school(s).
3. The procedures highlight the privacy laws that researchers must follow, and it allows us to establish clear agreements between DPS and researchers.

Q: Can you pay the application fee online or by credit card?

A: The only approved forms of payment for the application is cash, check, or money order. Those can be mailed or dropped off at our Central Services Office (511 Cleveland St. Durham, NC 27701). Please make sure the check/money order is made out to Durham Public Schools. Also, if you mail your payment, please address the envelope to Meredith Mooney to ensure our department is aware of the payment.

Q: How do you make your decisions?

A: The Research Review Committee will review the proposal based on the following criteria:

- You must be a DPS Employee completing a doctoral degree or an external agency outside of Durham Public Schools, such as colleges and universities.
 - **Undergraduate and Master's level projects will not be accepted regardless of employment status within Durham Public Schools.**
- There **MUST** be minimal impact on instructional time.
- No additional assessments will be given for data collection and use beyond what is typically administered in the school year.
- The research should be beneficial to DPS and aligned to the Guiding Principles and comply with the Research Standards. Risks to DPS and its students **MUST** be minimal.
- Research conducted primarily to add to the general body of literature, without significant benefit to DPS, its schools or departments may be considered. However, they will be considered low-priority proposals and have a very low chance of being approved.
- All data collection and site visits **MUST** be completed by April 30.
- All research must support the Guiding Principles and best practices.
- All research **MUST** be legal, ethical, and compliant with DPS policies and the DPS Research Standards. The privacy of research participants must be protected at all times.
- Requests for data involving personal student data and information about their families will not be approved. (No research involving personal and/or controversial student/family data will be approved.)
- Researchers must be qualified to conduct research in the school district. The design and implementation of the proposal must be complete, thorough, well-constructed, and acceptable to DPS.
- Any cost to DPS **MUST** be approved. Generally, proposals involving monetary cost to DPS are not approved. Research requiring the participation of large numbers of DPS employees, students and parents is also given low priority status. Research requiring a large amount of time from administrators, teachers, parents and/or students is rarely considered for approval.
- Research requiring particular risk for students, teachers, schools, parents, etc., such as external research dealing with physical, mental, emotional, and social health-related matters; self-worth; family/personal problems; race; sexual behavior or orientation; illegal activities; etc. Benefits provided by external research in these areas do not compensate for the potential risks to participants.

Q: What are some reasons why research applications are typically not approved?

A: Below is a sample list of research applications that would be denied.

- Data collection involving a significant loss of instructional time for students and DPS employees.
- Research requiring district resources (DPS employees, students, parents' time, AND/OR large numbers of participants).
- Research requiring particular risk for students, teachers, schools, parents, etc., such as external research dealing with physical, mental, emotional, and social health-related matters; self-worth; family/personal problems; race; sexual behavior or orientation; illegal activities; etc. Benefits provided by external research in these areas do not compensate for the potential risks to participants.
- Research scheduled to be conducted in the latter portion of the second semester (April through June).

Q: Who reviews research proposals and makes the final decisions?

A: The Office of Research and Accountability completes the initial screening of all internal and external research proposals to ensure that all proposals are complete. Incomplete proposals will be returned without review. The complete proposals are then reviewed by the Research Review Committee (RRC). Input from principals, central office leaders, and teachers may also be used to make decisions regarding research approval.

Q: If I turn my research application in before the deadline, can it be reviewed early?

A: All research proposals are reviewed by the DPS Research Review Committee (RRC) after the deadline for each research cycle (July, October, January, & April). It is the goal of the DPS RRC to have reviewed all applications within 4 weeks of the research cycle's deadline. **No research application will be reviewed prior to the deadline.**

Q: Will I be contacted if my proposal is denied?

A: You will be notified via email with a denial letter from the Office of Research & Accountability. You may request reconsideration by resubmitting your proposal 12 months after you have been notified of the decision. Revised proposals will not be reconsidered before this waiting period is complete.

Q: What happens if my proposal is approved?

A: You will be notified via email with an approval letter from the Office of Research & Accountability. The approval letter will include procedures to be followed by the research and any potential constraints or conditions that may apply to the study.

- **All approved studies must be approved by school principals or district administrators involved in the proposed study. If a principal or administrator declines to participate in the study (particularly for single-site studies), the study may not continue, even if the Research Review Committee has approved the study.**