

Durham Public Schools Research Process and Forms

Application Requirements:

Individuals wishing to conduct research projects in Durham Public Schools (DPS) must submit an *Application to Conduct Research* by the application deadline and pay the required research review fee. ***Incomplete applications will be returned without review.*** A complete application consists of:

- a. Application
- b. Research Proposal
- c. Curriculum Vitae or resume for the researcher and collaborators
- d. Data collection instruments and timeline for collection
- e. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, including the IRB submission
- f. As needed – a letter of support from the doctoral advisor
- g. Consent forms
- h. Assurance Letter
- i. Fee Payment
- j. Data Destruction Agreement

Application Deadlines:

DPS strongly encourages anyone interested in submitting a proposal to do so as far in advance as possible of the proposed start date. It is important that researchers submit a complete, well-conceived, thorough application for the Research Review Committee to make an informed decision on the applications. If your research proposal is denied, you must wait 12 months before resubmitting your application package.

The table below outlines external research proposal due dates for the 2020-21 school year. Submissions for the April cycle are for proposals to begin during the Fall 2020-2021 school year and include time for summer preparation/planning prior to the July submission cycle.

All research projects that require multiple years of study still require annual submission and approval.

Intended Start of Research	Submission Deadline	Tentative Proposal Decision
On or after August 14, 2020	July 14, 2020	August 7, 2020
On or after November 2, 2020	October 9, 2020	October 30, 2020
On or after March 1, 2021	January 29, 2021	February 19, 2021
*On or after June 14, 2021	April 22, 2021	May 28, 2021

Research Application Fees:

A non-refundable payment must be submitted along with the application by each cycle's deadline to be considered for review. Please note that if the research study is not approved, the payment is still non-refundable.

Entity	Fee per application
University or University-Affiliated Program including Centers or Departments	\$100
Community or Partnering Agencies	\$100
Non-Profits	\$100
Research Agency (Federal or Regional)	\$100
External Evaluators	\$100
Durham Public Schools' Staff/Employee	No fee after attending in-person workshop

Research Review Process:

All proposals are reviewed by the DPS Research Review Committee. It is the goal of the DPS Research Review Committee (RRC) to notify all researchers within 4 weeks of the submission date of their research proposal of the RRC's decision. If information beyond the submitted application is necessary for the review, an interview with the researcher may be requested. The review committee may suggest revisions to the proposal prior to final decision. Applications are reviewed based on the following criteria:

1. Alignment with the goals and objectives of DPS Strategic Plan
2. Expected benefits to student, staff, and the District
3. Quality of research – Research studies that have a potential for misinformation or misuse of data or studies requiring invasive physical examinations will not be approved.
4. Resources required of staff, students and the District – Research studies requiring extensive intrusion on student and staff time and disruption of normal routines may not be approved.
5. Alignment with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations. Personally Identifiable Information (PII) from student, parent or teacher educational records will not be disclosed without active consent.
6. Alignment with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)
7. Research must be approved by the Institutional Review Board of the investigators own institution. A copy of the approval letter or exempt form must be submitted before implementation can begin.
8. In accordance with the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA), surveys that request students to provide information on the following eight areas may not be approved.

Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent;	Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships
Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family	Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers
Sex behavior or attitudes	Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or the student's parent
Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior	Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility

Review Notification

Following a review of the application, the researcher will be notified by letter. If the project is approved, the letter will specify:

1. Procedures to be followed by the researcher
2. Special conditions or constraints that may apply to the project.

Principals will receive notification of proposals that have been approved. However, principals will have input in the decision to conduct research in their schools based on the priorities of their school at the projected time of implementation. ***The researcher should not contact principals.***

Data Requests and Processing Fees:

Durham Public Schools makes available to the general public aggregate data on many district indicators and will also provide information as required by North Carolina public records law and the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Aggregated District data may be accessed via the district's website (www.dpsnc.net) or via North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (www.dpi.nc.gov).

Requests for additional data often require an investment of staff time to define the parameters of the request and to write computer programs to pull the requested data. Durham Public Schools receives multiple such requests each year. In order to help alleviate the financial burden that these activities (reviewing and responding to information and data requests) create, fees may be implemented depending on the depth and time commitment of the request. Please note that these fees could apply to DPS-approved partnerships, grants, and research projects.

Privacy and Confidentiality of Data

Applications must meet certain security, data destruction, data dissemination and Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) provisions, among others. FERPA is a law that protects the privacy of student records. Parents and students put their trust in the stewards of educational data to ensure students Personally Identifiable Information (PII) is properly safeguarded and is used in accordance with Federal Law. The Office of Research and Accountability deeply values this trust and strives to ensure it is doing all it can to protect the privacy of our students as the uses of their data to improve education increase.

Reports and Dissemination

Following the completion of the research project, DPS will have an interest in how the findings are shared publicly. The Coordinator of Research and Accountability will request a review of the findings prior to dissemination and/or publication. DPS may also request the researcher to present preliminary findings to the Assistant Superintendent of Research and Accountability, district administrators and/or a small committee prior to completion of final report. In addition, DPS may request the researcher to produce and provide written research brief about the project for circulation within the district.

If the researcher would like to submit the study's findings to an academic or professional journal for publication, the Coordinator of Research and Accountability may request review of the article prior to submission.

Researcher are requested to submit 2 copies of the final report to the Office of Research and Accountability within 60 days of the completion of the study. The researcher has the responsibility to ensure any dissemination or publication of the study or its findings does not violate FERPA or the confidentiality of personally identifiable information.

Data Destruction

If the school district supplies data or a database(s), these will be returned to the Coordinator of Grants & Research upon completion of the original dissertation, study, or research, with no copies remaining. In the event a researcher wishes to publish data using analyses or methods not originally produced or approved within the study, Durham Public Schools reserves the right to disallow/allow access to data for further analyses and reporting. **In the event you wish to publish using analyses or methods not originally produced or approved within the study, and you receive DPS approval, the Coordinator of Grants & Research or a DPS representative will be assigned to work with you as a second author and consultant.**

Research Statement - Current DPS Employees Only:

To support employees' professional growth and development, DPS does allow current staff who are pursuing a master's or doctoral degree to conduct research in the district with the following stipulations:

- The staff member must set up an in-person meeting/workshop to discuss research needs, data, and overall feasibility of the study with the district coordinator. It is highly recommended that you meet with the district coordinator prior to submitting your proposal to your committee chair or advisor to ensure that it can be done within the district.
- The staff member cannot conduct research in his/her current school placement(s).
- The staff member must have written permission from the principal(s) or district leader(s) to conduct the research and submit this with the application documents.
- Any aspects of the research that change (site location, number of participants, grade levels, etc.) must submit a research modification form.
- IRB through the staff member's university/college must be obtained prior to submitting the research application.
- DPS employees may not use access to databases that contain student-level data or demographic information to use as part of their research without first submitting an application and receiving approval.
- DPS employees must use their university or alternate email address to communicate information or solicit participation about the study.
- DPS has a "one and done" recruitment policy. Multiple emails/solicitations cannot be sent to potential participants.

Legal and Ethical Risks/Obligations:

The study shall conform to federal regulations, DPS policy and sound educational research practice that ensures negligible risks for those involved and family/pupil privacy and protection rights. To this end, the originator of the request shall have the qualifications necessary for working in the school system as an educational researcher. Specific sections of the law may be found on the internet under the following headings.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA), Office for Human Protection - Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, American Psychological Association's Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct

Although case-by-case, district approval shall be granted until specified data collection has concluded OR for a maximum of one year from the approval letter's date, whichever comes first. After one year the researcher must submit for approval a request for extension. For any research extending beyond one school year, the researcher shall submit an annual progress report along with a request for extension.

District approval does not constitute approval for the study to be conducted in any specific school. Researchers must obtain written approval of principals and others involved, prior to conducting research in the district. The researcher shall present the Research Review Committee's approval letter and briefing **materials to school principals or department heads before or upon an entrance meeting at the school or collection site.** The school or district administrator shall have several days to notify the researcher or Coordinator of Grants & Research if the school/entity does not wish to participate. The highest-ranking individual (usually the school principal) at the site of data collection must be briefed throughout the project's duration in his/her school. Data collection must be scheduled far enough in advance to allow for adequate planning at the school or classroom site.

If students participate, copies of all approved and completed informed consent forms shall be stored by the researcher for possible district review. Again, the researcher will be responsible for archiving and presenting this information upon request. No personal information on students shall be made available until parental permission forms are secured for each participant.

Confidentiality of student records and all student information shall be observed. The privacy and rights of individuals and schools shall be respected. Data with student, employee, school, or other personal identifiers shall not be reported or presented (school identifiers may be reported upon explicit approval). In addition to maintaining complete anonymity, all personal-identifying data shall be destroyed upon completion of analysis and the final report.

When conducting research in schools, individuals shall abide by DPS standards of professional conduct and dress. **Failure to do so will be cause for immediate termination of the study and retraction of research approval.**

The Assistant Superintendent of Research and Accountability may withdraw district approval at any time and for any reason. If approval is terminated, all research and accompanying activities involving the district, the external researcher, and/or the external agency will cease in DPS. **Note, the district does not merge, compile, or collect data for external research, unless required by law or contractually based upon approval of a DPS Data Use Agreement submitted by the external researcher requesting data services from the Research and Accountability Data Team.**

All research approval or denial is determined at the sole discretion of the RRC. Due to the number of requests received throughout the year, denial or rejection letters may or may not indicate reasons for denial or recommendations for improvement. All research approval or denials are made on the merits of the information contained in the application.

Again, all research approvals or denials are determined at the sole discretion of the RRC.

Below is a sample list of external projects typically not approved:

- Data collection involving a 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, 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).

Upon conclusion of the research, an Executive Summary or Abstract (500 words) that summarizes the research findings will be submitted at no charge to the Coordinator of Grants & Research and the Research and Accountability Department. **The Executive Summary or Abstract must be submitted within two months of final data collection. Please notify DPS if the findings will be published, presented or included in a dissertation or thesis.**

Furthermore, all data and databases are to remain secure at all times. If the school district supplies data or a database(s), these will be returned to the Coordinator of Grants & Research upon completion of the original dissertation, study, or research, with no copies remaining. In the event a researcher wishes to publish data using analyses or methods not originally produced or approved within the study, Durham Public Schools reserves the right to disallow/allow access to data for further analyses and reporting. **In the event you wish to publish using analyses or methods not originally produced or approved within the study, and you receive DPS approval, the Coordinator of Grants & Research or a DPS representative will be assigned to work with you as a second author and consultant.**

Frequently Asked Questions:

Who should I contact if I'm interested in conducting research in Durham Public Schools?

Contact the DPS Research and Accountability Department. DO NOT contact principals, teachers, department heads, or other school officials. All research in Durham Public Schools MUST be reviewed by the R&A department and cannot begin without R&A approval.

What is considered research? 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.

What's the difference between external and internal research? 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,

Why are all these procedures necessary? There are several very important reasons for the research proposal procedures. First, instructional time must be protected. Without the procedures, we would have no way to protect students and teachers from an overwhelming amount of research. Secondly, 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). Third, the procedures highlight the privacy laws that researchers must follow, and it allows us to establish clear agreements between DPS and researchers.

How do you make your decisions? The Research Review Committee will review the proposal based on the following criteria:

- ✓ 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 due to testing and other year- end activities.
- ✓ 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, 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.
- ✓ 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 approved the study.

Who reviews research proposals and makes the final decisions? The Coordinator of Grants & Research 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.

Will I be contacted if my proposal is denied? Yes. You will be notified in writing. 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.

What happens if my proposal is approved?

- You will be notified in writing. You will be asked to sign a Statement of Agreement stating the responsibilities of DPS and you/your organization.
- You should contact the principal or district office staff involved in the research. Present your approval notification and fully explain your research proposal **BEFORE** beginning the project. Keep in mind that **final approval rests with the school principal** or other parties involved the research.
- All meetings with school staff, students and parents must be arranged in advance. Meeting times must be convenient to and approved by participants.
- Full disclosure must be given to parents to ensure informed consent. Parents must sign a parental permission form granting permission for their child to participate in the research. All signed consent forms must be available at the request of the district or school-level personnel.