

Durham Public Schools Guiding Research Practices & Frequently Asked Questions

Guiding Practices and Standards:

Individuals wishing to conduct research projects in Durham Public Schools (DPS) must adhere to the following standards.

1. A complete research application must be submitted on or before the deadline listed to be reviewed in that meeting cycle. Incomplete applications will be returned without review. The 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 or master’s advisor.
 - g. Consent forms
 - h. Fee Payment
2. Proposals must comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).
3. Proposals must comply with DPS policies.
4. All research projects must be approved by the DPS Research Process prior to the start of any research.
5. Research applications for students in a masters’ or doctoral program will not be considered unless the student is a current DPS staff member.
6. DPS principals and teachers may not be contacted about participating in the research prior to approval through the DPS Research Process. However, you may contact the central office staff to determine feasibility and viability prior to submission instead of the school personnel.
7. Proposals that collect student data related to a particular project or treatment must gain active parental consent (parents must opt-in to the project) and active student consent if the students are of age to provide consent.
8. Proposals that collect staff data related to a particular project must gain active participant consent.
9. Video and audio recordings that may include students are not allowed.
10. DPS students, staff, schools and the district itself may not be identified in any publications or presentations, unless requested and approved by the district.
11. DPS does not approve or distribute surveys or flyers for studies that have not been approved through the Research Review Process.
12. DPS does not recruit participants for studies that have not been approved through the Research Review Process.
13. For projects that are a part of a research grant, DPS teachers should be compensated for their participation outside of school hours (i.e., before or after school, summer, intersession, etc.).

Application Deadlines:

Revised July 2017

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.

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 in regards to their submitted research proposal. The table below outlines external research proposal due dates for the 2016-17 school year.

Research Review Cycles for 2017-18

Intended Start of Research	Submission Deadline	Tentative Proposal Decision
On or after August 15, 2017	July 14, 2017	August 2, 2016
On or after November 1, 2017	October 2, 2017	October 25, 2017
On or after March 1, 2018	January 22, 2018	February 16, 2018
*On or after June 11, 2018	April 16, 2018	May 11, 2018

*Submissions for the April cycle are for proposals to begin with the 2017-18 school year

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 if attend the quarterly workshop

DPS Internal Masters/Doctoral Students Prep Sessions:

June 15, 2017
 September 14, 2017
 February 15, 2018

Data Collection and Processing Fees:

Durham Public Schools makes available to the general public aggregate data on many test scores and metrics, and will also provide information as required by North Carolina public records law and the Freedom of Information Act. These reports may be accessed via the district's website (www.dpsnc.net) or via North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (www.ncpublicschools.net).

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.

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, such as completing a dissertation.

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.
- 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 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 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.

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 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 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 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 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 Research or a DPS representative will be assigned to work with you as a second author and consultant.**