



Research Review Procedures

Research Department
Clark County School District

Assessment, Accountability, Research, and
School Improvement Division

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Introduction

The Clark County School District (CCSD, the District) is currently the nation's sixth largest school district with over 320,000 students and 357 schools. Because its highly diverse geography and demography offer a wide range of contexts for conducting educational research and program evaluations, the District receives numerous requests to conduct research from a variety of individuals and organizations. This Manual sets forth the guidelines and practices for those requests.

Purpose of the Research Application and Review

Internal and external applicants seeking approval to conduct a research project within the District must go through official review by the Research Department. The research application review process provides a mechanism to:

1. Protect the interests and well-being of the District. Any activities that receive approval must relate to the District's stated mission.
2. Demonstrate good stewardship of the time and resources of all employees and students of the district. The benefits must outweigh the costs to students and staff in terms of their time and resources for all research projects approved in the District. Research projects that are poorly designed or unlikely to produce useful results may be a poor use of District resources and it may not be in the best interest of the District to approve such research.
3. Protect the rights of proposed research subjects within CCSD. The United States Department of Education has established regulations governing all education institutions that use human subjects in research activities (*Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects*) Research proposals that do not align with these laws are prohibited from taking place within the District.¹

¹Title 34, *Code of Federal Regulations*, Part 97, *Protection of Human Subjects*, which includes Subpart A, *Basic Policy*, and Subpart D, *Additional Protections for Children*. U.S. Department of Education, <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/fund/guid/humansub/overview.html>

Fingerprinting and Badging

Please note: All volunteers and researchers who may, through the course of their research, have *unsupervised* contact with students **MUST** get fingerprinted and badged through the CCSD Human Resources office. More information is available here: [.](#) It is the researcher's responsibility to work with the principals at the schools where research is taking place to ensure that either the researcher will always have supervision, or that the researcher goes through the proper fingerprinting and badging procedures.

Research Application

The Application Process

Anyone looking to conduct research in CCSD must submit an application through the on-line Research Application housed within CCSDAPPS² according to the procedures outlined below.³ Incomplete applications will not be accepted. Should an application be denied, applicants will be notified and given the opportunity to revise or complete their applications.

Please note: Any research conducted at a CCSD facility requires the acknowledgment and consent of the site administrator. No research will be conducted at a CCSD location without the site administrator's permission—even if it is otherwise approved by the Research Department.

Submitting an application for review is a multi-step process to ensure protection of students and their information, the interest of the District, and the goals of the researcher. All questions asked in the Research Application are standard and we expect researchers would be familiar with them after writing any formal grant proposal, IRB proposal, or thesis/dissertation prospectus. The following describes each step of the research process and the requirements of each step for both the researcher and the Research Department.

Part A: Letter of Intent

The Letter of Intent is the first step to getting a research protocol approved. It comprises of some procedural information (title of project, home organization, names of research team, contact information) and questions designed to establish if the study meets minimum requirements. Any proposed study must be address one of more of CCSD's Focus: 2024 goals.⁴ Researchers must explain the connection between their proposed study and the CCSD Indicators using peer reviewed literature, and defend the compatibility of the study within the public school setting.

Once submitted, the Research Department will evaluate the Letter of Intent to determine if the research proposed is appropriate for the school setting and in line with the stated goals of the District. Most proposals are approved at this stage. Unfortunately, however, there are some research methods and topics that are not appropriate for the public school setting.

²<https://ccsdapps.net/v/rareview>

³This information can also be found on the Research Department website here: <https://aarsi.ccsd.net/research/research-review-process/>.

⁴More information can be found here <https://focus2024.ccsd.net/>

Once a determination has been made regarding the application, the researcher will receive an email explaining the next steps, and an automated email from the CCSDAPPS system informing of the change in status.

The remainder of the application is divided into three sections.

Part B: Description of the Study

Part B comprises of a more detailed description of the study. These questions ask for more information on the problem, a description of the research design, methods, plan for data security, and the expected benefit to CCSD. Finally, this section asks for estimates on the number of subjects and the time requested of each subject to complete the research. We ask for this information to ensure the burden on students, schools, and staff is not too large. The researcher does not have to know the exact number of participants or the exact time the study will take—best estimates are sufficient for our purposes.

Part C: Forms for Research Involving Human Subjects

We ask researchers to upload their informed consent/assent forms for staff/parents/students and explain the use of protected populations if necessary. CCSD requires **Active** consent and assent for all research involving human subjects in the district.

Part D: Sponsorship

Part D consists of the sponsorship forms and facility acknowledgment letters.

A sponsor is a person at director level or higher who confirms the study is of interest to the District and that the conclusions will assist the District in creating the best possible learning environment for all students. Having a sponsor is optional but highly recommended as it expedites the review process.

A Facility Acknowledgment Letter is a letter from the principal/facility manager at the schools or sites of interest to the researcher. This letter must be on official letterhead and explicitly approve the proposed research at that particular facility. All researchers are **required** to have letters from all schools/facilities in their study **before** research begins.

We highly recommend all researchers get a sponsor for their projects because it expedites the review process and ensures things go smoothly. If research will only be conducted in one or two schools, a principal from one of the schools can be the sponsor. In addition to sponsoring the research, he or she also needs to fill out a Facility Acknowledgment Letter giving the researcher permission to conduct the project at their school. However, if the

proposed project is going to take place at several schools, researchers must either obtain a director level (or higher) sponsor or go through the District Review process (outlined below).

Even if a researcher has a sponsor, they are still required to provide facility acknowledgment letters from the principals at each school in the study. Having an approved and sponsored application does not guarantee principals will allow the study within their school.

The Research Department is unable to assist researchers in getting a sponsor or facility acknowledgment letters from any site in the District.

Fees

We charge an administration fee for each application submitted to the research department. This fee is collected through Stripe, a secure 3rd party payer. The application fee is \$50 for faculty and independent researchers and \$25 for students.

Review

After a full application is submitted, the Research Department will review it to ensure that the application is complete, all forms adhere to standards set forth by the federal government and CCSD, and that the proposal conforms with CCSD expectations. We want research to continue in the District and we will work with researchers in order to get the proposal to meet the requirements of the District.

While we endeavor to review applications quickly, researchers should still plan to submit their application early. Reviews may take longer depending on if the reviewers have any questions about the application, how many applications come in at one time, and the other needs of the District.

If the applicant has a sponsor, the research review is done by a team of trained researchers in the Research Department. All have advanced degrees and work with data and research projects on a daily basis.

District Review

Applicants without a sponsor are still able to submit the application for review. In this case, review is done by a team of researchers in the CCSD Research Department as well as by an additional reviewer from elsewhere in the District. The outside researcher will be a director (or higher) who works in a field related to the proposed research. This ensures the study is of value to the District as a whole.

Because applications must leave the Research Department for a third party review, District Review can be slow. We recommend researchers obtain an appropriate sponsor to expedite the review process — particularly if they are working with a tight deadline.

Conditions of Approval

Should the research be approved, the final step in the process is for the researcher to sign the Conditions of Approval. The Conditions of Approval stipulates researchers must keep the data confidential and use for authorized purposes only. Additionally, it outlines the requirements should there be any changes to the research protocol as time goes on. Researchers agree to report progress and findings to CCSD.

Approval

The research project will be approved through the end of the fiscal year (coinciding with the school calendar). All research proposals expire on June 30 and we require researchers to complete the Check-In form in July if they intend to continue the research for another year.

Check-In

Check-Ins are available all the time, but we require researchers to complete a new one for all open research protocols in July. Check-ins ensure all parties are on the same page in regards to the research being performed in the District. Every research application will expire at the end of the fiscal year in which it was approved. This is to ensure the research still meets the expectations for all parties. In particular, this gives principals additional autonomy regarding the research occurring in their school—particularly in the event the principal is new to the school. Principals are under no obligation to continue allowing research in their school should they deem it a distraction.

First and foremost, the check-in serves as an extension request for all projects continuing past the June 30 expiration date. In order to be approved for an additional year, researchers need to provide an updated Sponsorship form (if applicable), updated facility acknowledgment letters for all schools involved in the research, and an updated IRB approval if the previous one has expired. Finally, we ask researchers to disclose any changes in research protocol and/or research team.

Modification

If at any point in the course of research applicants make changes to their protocol, we request they fill out a check-in indicating and explaining the change. Modifications can include (but are not limited to) changing a survey instrument, changing the number or specific schools used in the project, or adding additional tests and/or survey instruments. This is so members of the Research Department are aware of any fundamental changes to the proposal. We may deny a modification request if the changes compromise students or student information in any way.

When doing a modification request, we require researchers to submit a letter from their home institution detailing the changes to the initial application. We also require copies of any updated survey instruments and an updated IRB approval letter.

Completion Form

Once the researcher completes the project, we ask that researchers fill out a completion form. This closes the application and lets us know the research is concluded. As part of the conditions of approval researchers agree to share with us a copy of any findings, dissertation, article, or report that stems from this project. This can be uploaded within the Completion Form, along with any comments regarding the project. The Research Department reserves the right to share results either internally or externally (with proper attribution). Please let us know in the comment box if the research results are embargoed for any reason and the length of the embargo. We will not publicly release embargoed findings.

Researchers have the ability to work on multiple projects at once provided all have gone through the research application and review process. Completing one does not exclude the researcher from working with any other research protocol or applying for another. Likewise, denial of a research application does not exclude the researcher from working on another protocol, or submitting a new research project for review.

Release of Student Information (ROSI) Request

The ROSI Process

There is a request process for data gathered by the District. In order to submit a Release of Student Information (ROSI) Request, the researcher must have an approved research application with the District.

There are some types of sensitive information the District collects through its normal course of business but are never released to researchers. These includes (but is not limited to) student names and student Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) status. In the event the researcher requests data that the Research Department does not have access to, we may direct the researcher to the appropriate source.

The Research Department may deny any request in whole or in part. Reason for the denial may not always be communicated to the researcher.

Request

The ROSI application is designed for researchers to explain to us exactly what data they want. Due to the complex nature of some requests, please describe in the best detail possible what data is necessary. Please include as much detail as possible about business rules. For example, a list of test scores for students in ABC school can be interpreted as students in the school on Count Day, students in the school as of another specific day, or any student ever enrolled in the school through the year. Please be as clear and as specific as possible when writing the request. We will endeavor to provide exactly what is requested and we will not assume the researcher wants a variable not listed.

If there is anything about the data request that is unclear, we will contact the researcher via email to request more detail about the request. We do all in our power to get all researchers exactly what they need.

Once a request is submitted, we will review it, ask for clarification (if necessary) and offer a price quote for the work. We generally do not start pulling the data until after the researcher has paid for the request. The Research Department reserves the right to deny the request in whole or in part. Reason for the denial may not always be communicated to the researcher requesting data.

Fees

We charge \$125 an hour for data extraction requests. The student rate is \$62.50 an hour. We do this to protect CCSD Employee time. We have many systems of data and they are not always compatible in streamlined ways. Even seemingly simple requests can take several hours to compile, combine, clean, and verify. If cost is an issue, we will work with researchers to get them the data requested in a way that is pleasing to all parties.

Gathering Data

Upon receipt of payment and final request instructions from the Research Team, the Research Department will request data from Data Services using the Internal Data Request Process on behalf of the external researcher.

Releasing Data

Once the data is finalized and verified, the Research Department will release the data to the researcher via the CCSDAPPS application. Due to FERPA guidelines, we are unable to directly email files and must instead transfer them via CCSDAPPS or other secure methods.

If the researcher later determines that the data requested is not sufficient, they are free to request different data with the understanding that doing so will incur more charges.