

Procedure for Conducting Research Within the School District

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PROCEDURE FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH WITHIN THE SCHOOL DISTRICT

- 1. How is research defined?**
 - a. Research is defined as any data collection from or about any Orange County School student or staff member.
 - b. The following activities are not considered research: observations or class visitations by university classes or by individuals in such classes.

- 2. What are the purposes of these procedures?**
 - a. To protect student and staff time from unauthorized or excessive data collection and thereby protect instructional times;
 - b. To review the request in light of current laws covering privacy and research;
 - c. To ensure that research is of high quality and may improve educational practice.

- 3. How does someone make an application?**
 - a. Retrieve an application from the office of the Chief Academic Officer, Orange County Board of Education, 200 East King Street, Hillsborough, NC 27278.
 - b. Submit the application approximately one month prior to the suggested date of starting the research.
 - c. Provide the information requested on the application form. Student research projects always require a sponsor. A sponsor may be a college or university faculty member, an agency staff member, or an OCS staff member. Faculty members and independent contractors do not need a sponsor for their research.
 - d. Attach copies of any questionnaires, tests, or data collection instruments to be used.
 - e. If data will be collected from or about individual students, parental permission in most cases will be required and a copy of a proposed parental permission letter should be attached to the application.
 - f. Submit 2 copies of the proposal.

- 4. Who reviews the application and makes the decision?**
 - a. The Chief Academic Officer reviews all research proposals.
 - b. The Chief Academic Officer makes the decision after consultation with the superintendent and principals. Staff and student participation is voluntary.
 - c. The Board of Education will receive a yearly report of all research requests and actions.

- 5. What is the basis for accepting a research proposal?**
 - a. The study has high value to a particular school or the school system as a whole.
 - b. The study is compatible with school district policy and sound educational practice.
 - c. The relative cost-benefit to the school district should be equitable.
 - d. The design and implementation is sound.

- 6. What obligations does the researcher have to the school system?**
 - a. The school system requires a summative report at the conclusion of the research. A full report is appreciated but an abstract provides sufficient information.
 - b. The researcher also agrees to release the report for use or publication by Orange County Schools without remuneration.

- 7. What happens after central administrative approval?**
 - a. If the study is approved, the researcher will be notified in writing. The researcher should then contact the school principal or supervisor to proceed.
 - b. The researcher must assume the major responsibility in conducting all aspects of the study (copying letters/forms, setting up schedules within the guidelines determined by the principal or designee, collecting materials, etc.)

- 8. What are the requirements while the project is being conducted?**
 - a. Confidentiality of student records must be observed and the privacy and rights of the individuals and schools must be respected.
 - b. Individuals should abide by standards of professional conduct and dress at all times. Failure to do so will be sufficient cause for termination of the study.
 - c. Any violation of procedures noted by teachers or other participants in the study should be reported to the school principal.

- 9. Is there any way to enhance the probability of having a research proposal approved?**
 - a. Using existing data is the least time-consuming activity for schools.
 - b. The faculties of local university and colleges who want their student to conduct research in Orange County Schools are encouraged to refer students to the Chief Academic Officer prior to finalization of thesis or dissertation plans so that closer coordination between system needs and research efforts can occur.
 - c. Discussing a potential project with the Chief Academic Officer before details are finalized may assist a researcher in coming up with a viable design.

- 10. What have been some of the problems with past research proposals?**
 - a. There is risk for the participants.
 - b. There is deception as to the purpose of the research.
 - c. The project would require too much time for students and staff.
 - d. The timing of the project conflicts with other school activities.
 - e. Too many students are requested to participate.
 - f. The proposal underestimates the amount of time required to complete the project.
 - g. Subject/content is too controversial; questions are too inflammatory or personal.
 - h. The schools' tasks are not clearly defined and delineated from the responsibilities of the researcher.
 - i. The research questions are unclear.
 - j. The instruments are not developmentally appropriate.
 - k. Measures do not relate to hypotheses.
 - l. There is information collected about illegal activities.
 - m. Activities already underway could obscure results.