

Cincinnati Public Schools
Research, Evaluation, and Test Administration
P.O. Box 5381
Cincinnati, OH 45201-5381

Protocols for Conducting Research within the Cincinnati Public School District

The Cincinnati Public School District receives many requests to supply information or to participate in research studies administered by individuals or agencies outside the school system. Researchers including staff of the Cincinnati Public School District must request approval prior to initiating research. Staff members conducting research for the purpose of classroom/school use only are exempted from completing an application. In addition, community members requesting aggregated student information that is already in the public domain are also exempted from submitting an application. The requests are to be processed through the Office of School and Community Engagement. If the request is from a federal or state agency representative, please contact Dr. Elizabeth Holtzapple at 513-363-0171. Please check the district's website and Department of School and Community Engagement for additional information. Cincinnati Public School Board Policy 1350 dictates that research conducted within our district shall be limited to those studies that will provide information of benefit to the school system. At minimum, all research conducted within the Cincinnati Public School District is expected to benefit students. Benefits must be tangible.

All researchers not specifically exempted above must complete a Research Application Form, which can be downloaded from: <http://www.cps-k12.org/general/Research/ResearchReq.htm>. The application must be received at least six weeks prior to the desired start date. If an application is returned to the researcher for revisions, the start date could possibly be postponed. Facsimile or electronic copies are not acceptable. Only typed applications with original signatures will be considered. All applications for the current school year must be postmarked by March 1st. Any requests received after March 1st will be returned. Research cannot be conducted in any school building during the months of March through June, since district-wide tests are administered during those months. Research applications should be mailed to:

Dr. Elizabeth Holtzapple
Director of Research, Evaluation, and Test Administration
Cincinnati Public Schools
P.O. Box 5381
Cincinnati, OH 45201-5381

All applications will be evaluated by an internal Research Review Committee. Applicants will receive notice of the status of their application from the Director of Research, Evaluation, and Test Administration within six weeks of the final application submission. Approval of the application does not guarantee admission into a school building. Once the application has been approved by the Research Review Committee, the researcher can then obtain approval from the school principal to begin the study. All logistics should be finalized with the school principal prior to the study's start date. Please note: students and staff members still have the option to refuse participation in the research.

All applications must be submitted with a non refundable \$35.00 fee if applicant is a student or a \$75.00 fee if applicant represents a professional organization or association including universities and colleges. We accept money order or check. If you send a check, you must bring in your

driver's license or send a copy of your driver's license to Dr. Elizabeth Holtzapple, Research, Evaluation & Testing, Cincinnati Public Schools, 2651 Burnet Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45219 or fax it to 513-363-0205. This fee is to cover administrative costs associated with processing the application. In addition, data requests are invoiced at \$75.00 per hour, plus the cost of copies and/or electronic storage. A purchase order is required prior to generating data. All checks must be made payable to Cincinnati Public Schools Board of Education. Applications submitted without the processing fee will be returned. All data requested must be applicable to the scope of the research. Only data that does not violate the privacy of staff and students will be generated. If the researcher does obtain parental consent to access student records, only items specifically listed in the parental consent form will be made available. Original student records cannot leave the school building. Approval of the research study is only effective for the school year the application was reviewed. The researcher must reapply if he/she cannot collect all necessary information by the end of the school year.

Researchers are required to retain and secure all signed consent forms while the study is underway and be prepared to make them available to parents, teachers, and other school officials if there is a question about a student's permission to participate. Researchers must agree to only use the data collected for the purpose described in the application. In addition, information collected on individual students/staff, whether solicited or unsolicited, must not be revealed to any outside agency or person not disclosed in the application, unless required by law. If a researcher becomes aware of a situation that he/she is legally required to report, the Director of Research, Evaluation, and Test Administration must be notified immediately.

A copy of the final written report must be submitted to the Director of Research, Evaluation, and Test Administration within three months of its completion and prior to submission for publication. The applicant agrees to release his/her final report for publication by the Cincinnati Public School District without remuneration.

Failure to comply with all district's requirements will revoke the researcher's permission to continue his research in the district and potentially jeopardize his/her organization from conducting future studies within the Cincinnati Public School system. Please contact Dr. Holtzapple at 513-363-0171 if additional clarification is needed.

I have read the Protocols for conducting research within the Cincinnati Public School District in its entirety and agree to abide by all of the requirements set forth.

_____	_____
Signature of Researcher (I)	Date
_____	_____
Signature of Researcher (II)	Date
_____	_____
Signature of Advisor (If Applicant is a Student)	Date
_____	_____
Signature of Assistant (I)	Date
_____	_____
Signature of Assistant (II)	Date

Application Content

The Research Review Board will consider the following factors when reviewing applications. These include but are not limited to:

1. Compliance – Has the researcher submitted all required documentation and fees with the application?
2. Significance – Does the research offer potential benefits to the Cincinnati Public School District?
3. Alignment – Is the research proposal aligned to district initiatives and goals?
4. Research Design – Is the design sound in methodology? Are the instruments reliable and valid? Are the proposed practices ethical? Are the data requested directly related to the hypothesis or overall scope of the project? Are the requests for recording justifiable?
5. Timeline – Is the proposed timeline feasible? Could the research be potentially disruptive to student learning and unreasonably time consuming?
6. Costs – Are there any costs to the district?
7. Appropriateness – Is the overall topic and activities considered suitable by the district?
8. Intended Use – How will the data collected be used by the researcher?

Consider the following guidelines while completing the application:

- 1) How clearly defined are the hypotheses or research questions?
 - a) Are the objectives and procedures specific?
 - b) Have variables been identified and controlled?
 - c) Has researcher included supporting literature/evidence that demonstrates a need for this research?
- 2) How well defined are the populations to be studied?
- 3) How adequate are the sampling procedures?
 - a) Is the sample size appropriate?
 - b) What is the proposed method for sampling?
 - c) Is the timeline appropriate?
- 4) How adequate are sources of error controlled?
 - a) Has the possibility for sampling error/response error been addressed?
 - b) How will non-responses be handled?
 - c) Is there a possibility for interviewer bias?
 - d) Has the effect of teacher's presence/absence been considered?
 - e) Are there any extraneous factors not considered?
 - f) Are the researchers qualified or have proper guidance to conduct the evaluation?
- 5) How adequate are the measuring instruments?
 - a) Has the researcher selected appropriate measuring tools?
 - b) Are the instruments clear, reliable, and valid?
 - c) Are the instruments in final form or still in draft form?
 - d) Are the questions/activities appropriate to administer in a school setting?
 - e) Is there a clear relationship between the data requested and research objectives?
- 6) How appropriate is the statistical analysis of the data?
 - a) Is it clear from the application how the data will be analyzed?
 - b) What statistical tools will be used?

Application Requirements

- 1) All research requests must be in compliance with:
 - a) Cincinnati Public School Board Policies, which are available on line at <http://www.cps-k12.org/general/BdPolicies/BdPolicies.html>.
 - b) The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act;
 - c) Protection of Pupil Rights Act;
 - d) Protection of Human Subjects;
- 2) The application must be a stand alone document.
 - a) The Research Review Committee must be able to make a decision from the information provided on the application.
 - b) Do not simply state “See Attached” on the application. Use spaces provided and attach additional pages if necessary. Include researcher’s name and project title on each page.
 - c) Be thorough. A well prepared, well written application will shorten review time.
- 3) Copies of all research instruments must be attached. This includes but is not limited to:
 - a) Active Parental Consent Form (To Participate in the Study), which must:
 - i) Be written on researcher’s stationery or company letterhead in non-technical, plain language, and when necessary, in parent’s home language if parent does not read English;
 - ii) Include a brief summary of the research project and a description of what will be required of his/her child, including any risks associated with the research and his/her rights to withdraw child from the study at any time;
 - iii) Request permission for student be video/audio taped or photographed and why this is needed;
 - iv) Guarantee anonymity and confidentiality;
 - v) Discuss storage/disposal of data;
 - vi) Provide contact information of researcher (i.e. name, telephone number, and affiliation) in the event parent has questions or concerns;
 - vii) Require parent’s signature. Verbal consent is not permitted;
 - b) Active Parent Consent Form (To Release Child’s School Records), which must:
 - i) Be written on researcher’s stationery or company letterhead in non-technical, plain language, and when necessary, in parent’s home language if parent does not read English;
 - ii) Include a brief summary of the research project;
 - iii) Include a detailed list of items requested with specific time periods needed;
 - iv) Explain why the records are needed and how the information will be used;
 - v) Notify parents of their right to cross out any item on the list he/she does not wish to be made available to researcher;
 - vi) Guarantee anonymity and confidentiality;
 - vii) Discuss storage/disposal of data
 - viii) Require parent’s signature; Verbal consent is not permitted.
 - c) Active Student Assent Form, which must:
 - i) Be written in age-appropriate language, on researcher’s stationery or company letterhead;
 - ii) Include a brief summary of the research project and a description of what will be required of him/her, including any risks associated with the research, and his/her rights to withdraw from participation at any time;
 - iii) Request permission to be video/audio taped or photographed and why this is needed;
 - iv) Guarantee anonymity and confidentiality;
 - v) Require student’s signature;

Application Requirements – Continued

- d) Active Staff Consent Form, which must:
 - i) Be written on researcher's stationery or company letterhead in non-technical, plain language;
 - ii) Include a brief summary of the research project and a description of what will be required of him/her, including any risks associated with the research and his/her rights to withdraw from participation at any time;
 - iii) Request permission to be video/audio taped or photographed and why this is needed;
 - iv) Guarantee anonymity and confidentiality;
 - v) Discuss storage/disposal of data;
 - vi) Provide contact information of researcher (i.e. name, telephone number, and affiliation) in the event staff member has questions or concerns;
 - vii) Require staff signature
 - e) Survey Instruments, which must:
 - i) Include a cover letter providing a brief overview of the survey;
 - ii) Provide clear instructions for completing the survey;
 - iii) Be in final form;
 - f) Interview Questions and Objectives which must:
 - i) Be in final form;
 - ii) Any changes to questions must be approved by the internal Research Review Committee prior to dissemination.
 - g) Observation Objectives – with a description of what will be observed;
 - h) Debriefing Protocol – if there are potential risks to students or staff members, describe procedure for mitigating the risks;
- 4) If applicant is affiliated with a college or university, he/she must submit a copy of the Institutional Review Board's research approval letter.
- 5) All applicants must receive security clearance.
- a) All researchers and their assistants must submit a current police report to the Security Office and obtain a temporary ID badge. Access into the district's building(s) will not be granted without this ID badge.
 - b) Researchers must comply with Board Policy 3517 which stipulates rules while on district property.
- 6) A letter to the school's principal must be submitted. The letter should include:
- a) A description of research objectives in non-technical, plain language;
 - b) Anticipated start date;
 - c) Location and duration of research activities;
 - d) An accurate number of students and staff members needed;
 - e) Requirements from staff and/or students;
 - f) Timeline of research and number of repeat visits;
- 7) Include a self-addressed return envelope with the application;