CPS Research Proposal Process

Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS) frequently receives requests to assist or participate in research studies and/or program evaluations from a variety of stakeholders. A research study or program evaluation which involves the collection of student and/or teacher data requires the principal researcher, including CPS employees, to prepare a research proposal for approval prior to initiation. Any project involving interaction with students or the collection of individual student data will require a Data Sharing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which specifies the researcher’s responsibility to adhere to the Federal Education Privacy Act of 1974 (“FERPA”) governing access to student records. Exemptions apply to staff members conducting research within their individual classrooms for the sole purpose of classroom/school use, and studies requiring access to aggregated student information that is already in the public domain.

The process for requesting approval to conduct research requires the principal investigator to submit an application and proposal for approval through the Department of Performance & Accountability. CPS will consider proposals during the following application periods:

- Fall Quarter Submission— Application period from July 15 through August 15 for study or evaluation beginning September 1 through October 30.
- Winter Quarter Submission— Application period from November 1 through December 1 for study or evaluation beginning January 1 through February 28.
- Summer Submission— Application period from April 15 through May 15 for study or evaluation beginning June 1 through June 30.

Researchers interested in applying for research with the school district should submit a CPS Research Application, through our Web site.
The research application requires the principal investigator to clearly describe how the research study or program evaluation will improve teaching and learning at CPS and/or result in positive educational outcomes for students. The review process normally takes three to four weeks. Depending on the scope of work, a more thorough review may be required involving others directly impacted by the research, including but not limited to CPS departments and school principals. If a project involves student survey data collection of a sensitive nature, the requirements of the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (34 CFR, Part 98) must also be met prior to approval. In this case, researchers should plan for an extended review period (8 to 12 weeks).

The duration of a research proposal may not exceed one year. Any research that is intended for more than one year requires re-application during the application period for which the original research proposal was approved (see above). The following procedure will be followed for review of research proposals:

1. The principal investigator completes and submits the on-line CPS Research Application. An email confirmation will signify the application was received.

2. Within three weeks of confirmation the principal investigator will receive formal notification indicating if the application has been accepted or denied. If denied, the process ends here. If accepted, the letter will include instructions on how to submit the research proposal and any associated electronic documents (e.g. survey instrument, parental consent form, etc.) through a designated Google Drive.

   **Note:** Research involving access to school buildings requires the approval of each school principal prior to beginning data collection. Principals may opt out at their discretion. The Department of Performance and Accountability will contact principals as part of the review process to determine willingness to participate; researchers are respectively requested to refrain from contacting principals.

3. The technical review of the research proposal, consisting of a data sharing MOU and scope of work, begins at this stage. All correspondence must include research proposal number, principal investigator name and project title. If additional information is requested requiring modification of the proposal, the response period will be delayed accordingly. When complete, an approval or denial recommendation is made to the Director of Performance & Accountability (Director).
4. The Director makes a decision on the proposal and the principal investigator is notified by email. If the proposal is denied, the process ends here. If the proposal is approved, a signed copy of the data sharing MOU is returned to the principal investigator. In some instances, a formal notification letter is prepared to meet the requirements of an academic Institutional Review Board.

The principal investigator is responsible for submitting an annual status report on their research to the Director. If a report is not submitted or, for multiple year studies, a re-application is not received, the authorization for continuing research with CPS is automatically expired. A final report will be submitted by the principal investigator upon completion of the research study or program evaluation to the Director.

Additional information to help with submissions is available on the Research Proposals (click here) Web site. For more detail on the technical requirements for proposals, see attachment. Thank you for your interest in working with Cincinnati Public Schools on your research.

Connie Solano
Director of Performance & Accountability
Cincinnati Public Schools
2651 Burnett Avenue
Cincinnati, Ohio 45210
e-mail: RESAPPS@cps-k12.org
A research proposal is required for both research studies and program evaluations. Proposals.

1) All research proposals must be in compliance with:
   a) Cincinnati Public School Board (CPS) policy, available on line at https://community.cps-k12.org/sites/boardpolicies/default.aspx,
   b) The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA),
   c) Protection of Pupil Rights Act,
   d) Protection of Human Subjects, and
   e) CPS Data Sharing MOU.

2) 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 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 Parental Consent Form – To Release Child’s School Records 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 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.
d) Active Staff Consent Form 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 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 must:
   i) Be in final form;
   ii) Be approved by CPS (see Research Proposal Review and Data Sharing MOU).

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 their Institutional Review Board’s research approval letter.

5) All applicants must receive security clearance before entering a CPS building.
   a) Researchers must comply with Board Policy 8475: Procedure for Background Checks.

6) A letter to the school’s principal must be submitted if the research requires access to a school building. 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.