

SURVEYS, INTERVIEWS, QUESTIONNAIRES AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

The School Board recognizes the use of surveys, questionnaires and other data gathering instruments as a means of improving the quality of educational services the public school system provides. The use of surveys can also provide a means for feedback from various elements of the community. The Board therefore encourages the conducting of research studies that have relevance to education, whether initiated by district personnel or by other individuals or organizations. Research will be undertaken with approval of the Director of Instructional Improvement.

DEFINITION OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

Educational research will be regarded as those data- gathering efforts that have relevance to the School Board Mission and District Goals. They will be characterized by an educational rationale, a design for testing that rationale, and a plan for reporting the findings and conclusions.

Studies governed by this policy exclude:

1. Informal survey activities involving parents, teachers and/or students approved by the principal for making school-level decisions or conducted as part of a class assignment.
2. Routine inquiries by district staff or the Board for information necessary to carry on the district's program.
3. The collecting and reporting of information from existing public records to satisfy legitimate requests from local, state, and federal government agencies.

SERVICES OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL RESEARCHERS:

1. Make it possible for the Board of Directors and District Administrators to examine problems and plans in light of current research;
2. Provide guidance to the staff in helping individuals and groups carry out well-planned investigations and;
3. Maintain liaison with educational research agencies.

APPROVAL OF RESEARCH

Approval of any research project will be contingent upon the following criteria:

1. The study will be conducted as outlined in the proposal and will be subject to any special instructions designated by the Director of Instructional Improvement.

2. When individual tests or questionnaires which would be interpreted as being sensitive in nature or as an invasion of privacy are to be administered to students as part of an approved study, parental permission must be obtained and filed with the Director of Instructional Improvement prior to its formal initiation. The parental permission form must be accompanied by a brief overview of the project summarizing the study and its purpose.
3. The identity of all students, teachers and staff members who participate in a study is strictly confidential and may not be revealed at any time to any person, group, or organization.
4. Surveys and polls which assess student attitudes or opinions regarding race, creed, sexual orientation or other potentially controversial matters must be approved by the Director of Instructional Improvement. The Director of Instructional Improvement will consult the Board if the Director finds it advisable.
5. If the district is to be identified in any manner in a final report of an approved study, prior permission must be secured.
6. The cooperating agency or individual will furnish a copy of the final results to the district.

After completing a review of the research proposal, the Director of Instructional Improvement will either approve or disapprove the proposed research and then notify all interested parties. Any appeals may be submitted to the Superintendent for a final decision.

No students will be required (without parental consent) to take part in a survey, analysis, or evaluation. Surveys, analyses or evaluation that reveals information covering the following will not be utilized:

1. political affiliations
2. potentially embarrassing psychological problems
3. sex behavior or attitudes
4. anti-social and demeaning behavior
5. critical appraisals of family members
6. legally privileged relationships
7. income
8. religion, ethnicity, gender preference

In all cases, (1) students and their parents will be apprised of the purpose of any survey or poll; (2) participants will be voluntary; (3) participants will not be identified individually; and (4) the Director of Instructional Improvement will receive a copy of the survey or poll instrument in advance and a copy of the results upon completion.

No faculty, staff or student may accept individual remuneration for their participation.

MEDIA AND PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

Interviews of students will follow similar guidelines in order to be conducted with district students or staff.

Prior to interviews the interviewer must:

1. have approval of the building administrator or designee;
2. provide the text of the interview, including questions or information that may be asked;
3. allow a responsible adult/faculty member to be present; and
4. have parental permission for sensitive issues.

Legal Reference: 20 U.S.C. § 1232(h)

Cross Reference: JRA – Student Educational Records