



DISTRICT PRACTICE 2350

RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS

DISTRICT PRACTICE:

The Board of Education will permit educational research activities in schools involving students and/or staff only in accordance with the following principles and guidelines:

1. Requests

- a. The school district will consider research proposals from district teachers and administrators, university graduate students, post-secondary faculty members and professional educational associations. Research proposals from other individuals, agencies or organizations will be considered only under exceptional circumstances.
- b. All research requests must be submitted on a Rocky Mountain School District Application for Permission to Conduct Research form, and must clearly describe such details as the nature of the activity, participation involved, assistance needed, and proposed time frame.
- c. Any submission from a university graduate student or post-secondary faculty must first be approved by that institution's Ethics Committee. A copy of that approval shall be included with the submission.
- d. Any research proposal from a graduate student must be endorsed by a full-time member of that university's academic staff.
- e. The submission shall also include copies of any consent forms, questionnaires, inventories or tests to be used in the study.
- f. Those submitting a research request shall be aware of the requirement to provide the school district with a full report on the research results, as well as to discuss or present their findings to school or district staff if required (see Section 6. Results).

2. Proposal Evaluation

In evaluating study proposals, consideration will be given to such factors as the purpose and educational value of the study, the impact on educational programs, the amount of time required of students and/or staff, and the effect on community relations.

- a. A proposed research study will be reviewed by designated staff with specific consideration to:
 - i. Relevance: meaningfulness and contribution to the improvement of education and/or knowledge of student learning, or general community benefit.
- b. Methodology: requirements for identification and selection of participants; quality of the research design, procedures and data analysis.
- c. Scope: proposed contact group, number of participants and schools or district offices involved.



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- d. Intrusiveness: extent of disruption to students, staff or school operations; need for special arrangements within the school or district offices; need for involvement of district or school staff.
 - e. Timelines: time of year, duration of the study and related impact on the school, students or staff.
 - f. Timeliness: number of studies in progress at a given time.
 - g. Privacy: infringement of personal or family privacy through access to personal information.
 - h. Confidentiality: procedures for guaranteeing anonymity and confidentiality including storage and eventual disposal of data.
 - i. Sensitivity: nature of the topic or questions as they relate to value-laden or sensitive issues.
3. Research conducted in schools shall:
- a. be consistent with sound educational practice and meaningful inquiry;
 - b. meet professional ethical standards including informed consent, voluntary participation, right to withdraw, and confidentiality;
 - c. seek to contribute to a body of relevant knowledge and be mutually beneficial to the researcher and the school or district;
 - d. be methodologically sound, free from bias, and nonpartisan; and
 - e. avoid contentious or personal topics that could be considered by students, parents/guardians or staff to be an invasion of personal privacy.
4. The school district will not approve studies that:
- a. examine contentious or personal topics that may be considered to be an invasion of privacy; or
 - b. make unreasonable demands upon the participating students, staff or schools.
5. Research studies or surveys that are controversial in nature or deal with issues of public policy may be referred to the Board.



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6. Approval Process

- a. Research proposals deemed appropriate on the basis of the initial review shall be accepted in principle.
- b. Proposals that have been accepted in principle shall be forwarded to the relevant school principal(s) and/or district staff.
- c. The final decision to participate in the proposed research study will rest with those directly involved.
- d. Individuals wishing to participate in research activities without district or school sanction may do so outside of school hours and premises.
- e. The research team must disclose to the District the plan for data collection and storage.

7. Student Participation

- a. District approval does not constitute a requirement for students to take part in the study. Such participation shall remain voluntary.
- b. Participating students must be informed that their involvement is voluntary and that they may withdraw from participation at any time.
- c. Parents/guardians of students taking part in research studies in schools must be advised of the nature and purpose of the research and may upon request review research materials.
- d. When research procedures involve contact with students in Kindergarten to Grade 8 on an individual basis, written parental/guardian consent based on complete information about the purpose and procedures of the research must be received prior to commencement. Written parental/guardian consent is not required for students in Grades 9-12.
- e. Photography, filming, videotaping or audio taping of students shall not be done without written consent of parents/guardians.
- f. The anonymity of those participating in a research study must be maintained and protected at all times.

8. Criminal Record Search

- a. When research procedures involve direct contact with students on an individual basis, a person conducting the research who is not a district employee must undergo a criminal record search and submit the results of said search to the designated district staff prior to entering a school or district site.
- b. Final approval of research studies involving direct contact with students is contingent on the results of the criminal record search.



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9. Results

- a. The school district shall be provided with a full report on the results of research undertaken in the district upon completion.
- b. Copies of final research reports shall be made available to participants and other interested persons on request.
- c. Researchers should be prepared to discuss or present their findings upon request to school or district staff and parents/guardians in a manner that contributes to the knowledge and/or practice of staff, students or parents.