

Lower Merion School District

Policy No.: 244
Section: PUPILS
Title: EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH INVOLVING DISTRICT STUDENTS
Date Adopted: 3/18/76
Date Last Revised: 10/17/16; Suspension 9/28/15; 4/21/08, 7/79

244 EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

The District supports the efforts of “Outside Research Entities” (as defined below) in conducting important educational research and in fostering innovative and productive educational practices and techniques aligned with the priorities of the District. Therefore, a request by an Outside Research Entity to conduct a research study which involves students, staff members, parents/guardians, or any District data which is not publicly accessible may be permitted on a limited basis at the discretion of the Superintendent within the guidelines set forth below and in the accompanying administrative regulation.

In exercising this discretion, the Superintendent should inquire into and examine the motivations of the Outside Research Entity in performing the study to ensure that the study furthers legitimate educational research. The Outside Research Entity also should articulate whether the research would yield an educational benefit or outcome for the District specifically. The Superintendent is therefore authorized to review the Outside Research Entity’s research protocols and approvals, any prior research by the Outside Research Entity, and any other credentials of the Outside Research Entity deemed necessary to assist in this determination. Therefore, prior to the Superintendent authorizing an Outside Research Entity to conduct a research study, the Superintendent shall create a research review panel comprised of administrators and school-based personnel as deemed appropriate by the Superintendent. The panel shall include at least one individual who maintains current certification through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) (or similar institution upon prior approval of the Superintendent) and at least one Board member.

For purposes of this policy, an “Outside Research Entity” means:

- a non-District organization or institution;
- an individual associated with a non-District organization or institution;
- an individual acting in the capacity of a researcher but not affiliated with an organization or institution; or
- an employee conducting research in the employee’s personal capacity.

The Superintendent shall promulgate regulation which includes procedures for:

- Notification to parents/guardians of the research study and the extent of their right to have their child and information about their child excluded from inclusion in the research study;
- An application process which ensures that the potential positive outcomes of the research study outweigh the burden to the District;
- Ensuring that the research study is conducted with the highest ethical standards; and
- Notification to the Board of approved research studies prior to implementation.