

Guidelines and Review Process for Requests to Conduct Research in the District Revised 2021

The Edmonds School District recognizes the importance of relevant and valid research and is committed to facilitating appropriate research activities in the district. The following guidelines and procedures are designed to ensure the appropriateness and integrity of research conducted in the district and the protection of privacy and other rights of participants. Projects conducted under the auspices of the Edmonds School District in collaboration with another agency/organization may be exempt from these procedures. Research studies mandated at the federal, state, or district level are exempt from the review process.

All research conducted by a non-district employee, or by a district employee for personal reasons (e.g., degree requirement), must be approved through the formal district review process. The review process consists of three levels.

1. Review conducted by the district's Department of Assessment, Research and Evaluation (ARE) :
 - Review focuses on technical aspects of research such as design and methodology.
 - Review establishes legality of research such as IRB approval and informed consent procedures.
2. If approved by the Department of ARE, the ARE works with effected school level and district level administrators to gain approval for the research study.
3. If approved by the Department of ARE and approved by the effected school level and district level administrators, the proposal is submitted to Superintendent's cabinet for final approval.

To be approved for implementation in the district, the proposed research study must be accepted by all three review levels. Specific timelines for approval cannot be granted as each research proposal contains unique attributes that require varying degrees of attention that is required for full approval. In general, applicants should be prepared to allow for up to 4 weeks after time of submission before approval will be granted.

The review process for a project conducted by a district staff member that involves no district cost or other district resources, is limited to the staff member's assigned school, and involves only very minor changes in the regular instructional program, may begin with the approval of the building principal and will require the additional approval of only the district's ARE Director and the appropriate Assistant Superintendent.

The review process for all proposals will consider the following factors:

- The appropriateness of the research topic for the district and/or school(s)
- The technical soundness of the proposal design
- The nature and amount of interruption in the ongoing instructional program caused by the study
- The need for the district and schools to safeguard the personal and legal rights of students, parents, and staff
- The amount of district and/or school staff time and resources needed to conduct the study
- The technical quality of data-gathering procedures or instruments to be used in the study
- The timing of the proposed study in relation to activities in the district and/or schools
- The potential benefit to the district and/or education in general
- Any other variables related to the specific study that would impact the district and/or participants in the study

Procedure for Applicants

Steps in proposing research to the Edmonds School District:

1. Researcher completes *Request to Conduct Research in the Edmonds School District* (template provided on page 5 of this document) and submits it to the district's Director of Assessment, Research, and Evaluation (ARE). If the ARE Director approves the research, the following documentation will be required before Step 2 is initiated:
 - *Summary of Proposed Research* (format provided)
 - A copy of all questionnaires, forms, tests, instruments, and curricular materials to be used
 - A copy of all consent forms and other communications to be distributed to participants (see "Guidelines for Securing Consent" below)
 - Signed *Ethical Principles for Research in Edmonds School District*, if appropriate
 - Signed *Agreement for Release of Student Information*, if appropriate
2. The application and materials listed above are reviewed the effected school level and district level administrators.
3. If the school level and district level administrators approve the *Request to Conduct Research*, the Superintendent's Cabinet will review the application and decide upon final approval.
4. The complete set of documents will be reviewed by relevant district staff.
5. The researcher should allow at least 4 weeks for the review of the complete set of materials from the date of district receipt.

In reviewing a proposal to conduct research, reviewers will strongly consider the fiscal impact of the district's involvement, alignment with district goals, impact on staff and student morale, and other projects currently occurring in the district. In addition, projects will have a greater chance of being approved that:

- ✓ Do not interfere with instructional time;
- ✓ Have direct application to the educational programs or decision-making process of the Edmonds School District;
- ✓ Have a high degree of technical merit; and
- ✓ Are minimally inconvenient to administrators, staff, and students.

If the applicant is affiliated with an institution in which specific approval for research with human subjects must be obtained, a copy of such approval must be received by the district's ARE director before final district approval will be granted.

Guidelines for Conducting Approved Research

1. Approved research proposals are regarded as contracts with the Edmonds School District. Any deviation from procedures described in the approved proposal must be approved by the district's Director of Assessment, Research, and Evaluation or designee. Unapproved procedural changes will be considered grounds for terminating the research study.
2. An Edmonds School District employee must supervise all activities in which a non-district researcher has direct access to students.
3. Any non-district researcher who will be one-on-one behind closed doors with a student must be approved through a WA State Patrol review process.
4. Upon completion of the study, the researcher must submit a written report summarizing the project and its findings to: (a) the District ARE Office and (b) the school(s)/department(s) involved.
5. All data, data collection instruments, reports, publications, and results related to the study will be available to the district without charge, unless otherwise agreed upon in writing.

Guidelines for Securing Consent

Human subjects asked to contribute their time and effort to research should consent to do so freely and without fear of any penalty whether or not they agree to participate. Before giving consent, all subjects must understand what they are consenting to do, the reason for the study, and any risks that may be involved. If minors are the subjects of research, the informed consent of the parent or legal guardian is required. In addition, the assent of the student must be secured. (Student assent occurs when students agree willingly to participate in the study following parental consent.)

Subjects and/or their families must be assured that there will be no penalties for declining to participate, and that they are free to withdraw from the research *at any time* after they have given their initial consent.

The requirement for informed consent is ordinarily fulfilled by telling the subject in writing:

- The general nature of the research,
- The procedures in which the subject is being asked to participate,
- That the subject's privacy will be protected,
- That participation is voluntary and s/he is free to withdraw from participation at any time, and
- Whom the subject may contact for more information about the study.

Explicit consent is required for:

- Experimental studies with students or staff.
- Survey research involving students.
- Access to identifiable data records (which may be covered through a signed *Agreement for Release of Student Information for Conducting a District-Approved Research Project*)

Implicit consent may be considered for:

- Observational studies which do not change the instructional setting for students or staff.
- Surveys of adults (consent is implicit in the completion of the survey).
- Data which is not identifiable at the individual level.

In some situations, a potential subject's privacy might be invaded simply by being identified as a qualified participant for a study. People may belong to groups being studied, but may not wish to have such group membership known (e.g., parents of gifted children). In such situations, researchers may be required to ask persons who already have access to the necessary information to approach subjects for them.

Explicit informed consent must be documented by a signed consent form approved by the Edmonds School District. Two copies must be provided to the participant or the participant's legal representative, one to be signed and returned to the researcher and the other to be kept by the participant.

The consent form and all related correspondence with participants must be approved by the Edmonds School District. The basic elements of the consent form are below, in the order in which they usually appear.

1. A heading, identifying the research with the Edmonds School District and with the researcher by title and affiliation.
2. Nature and purpose of the research, in language suitable for the participants involved. Writing should be straightforward, avoiding jargon and technical language.
3. A description of what the subject will be asked to do, the setting of the research, how much time will be required, and the duration of the project.
4. A description of the consequences of the procedures and any risks or discomforts that might occur.

5. A description of the benefits of the research to the subject or to education in general.
6. An assurance that the subject's confidentiality will be protected. Specify who will have access to the data and include assurance that public reports will not contain any information that will identify individual participants.
7. An assurance that participation is voluntary, and that the subject may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty of any kind.
8. The approximate number of subjects in the study.
9. A written statement, to be signed and dated by the subject, indicating that the study has been explained, that the subject has had the opportunity to ask questions, and that the subject consents to the research.
10. The availability of the researcher to respond to questions at any time prior to, during, or after the study, including a phone number.

If a study is being carried out under the auspices of other agencies or institutions, those institutions may have additional requirements for informed consent. Irreconcilable differences in requirements should be brought to the attention of the district's Director of Assessment, Research, and Evaluation.

Request to Conduct Research in the Edmonds School District

Applicant Name _____ Date _____

Applicant Address _____ Phone _____

_____ Email _____

Affiliation and Title _____

Names and titles of other researchers who will interact with school staff/students/parents:

If student applicant: Faculty Supervisor Name _____

Faculty Phone Number _____

Faculty Signature _____

Proposed Research Title/Topic: _____

Timeline: Desired Start Date _____ End Date _____

Date of Final Report to the Edmonds School District _____

Ultimate purpose of project (e.g., thesis, publication, product development): _____

1. Brief description of project:

2. Anticipated contribution to educational practice or theory:

3. Anticipated contribution to Edmonds School District:

4. Anticipated involvement of Edmonds District staff, students, and parents: (to be explained in *Summary of Proposed Research*)

| | <i># Individuals</i> | <i>Approx. Hours/Individual</i> |
|--|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>District Administrators</i> | | |
| <i>Building Administrators</i> | | |
| <i>Teachers / Instructional Staff</i> | | |
| <i>Support Staff</i> | | |
| <i>Students - instructional time</i> | | |
| <i>Students - non-instructional time</i> | | |
| <i>Parents</i> | | |

Summary of Proposed Research *(not to exceed five pages)*

1. Purpose of the Proposed Research
 - Rationale
 - Data/background research that supports the need for the proposed study
 - Research hypotheses, questions, objectives
 - Source of financial support for the research
2. Sample / Participants Requested
 - Who they are
 - How many
 - How they will be selected
 - Rationale for sampling method and sampling size
 - Desired schools and grade levels, and rationale
 - Procedures for gaining consent
3. Time Commitments (explanation of chart in #4 of *Request to Conduct Research*)
 - Details and explanation for each participant
 - Details and explanation for any other district and/or school staff member
4. Resource Commitments Needed from School or District (e.g., room, tables/chairs, data)
5. Design and Procedures
 - Research design (including dependent and independent variables, if appropriate)
 - treatment(s) and levels, if appropriate
 - Instrumentation (including source and technical characteristics of instruments, e.g., validity, reliability, administration time per pupil)
 - Data collection procedures (including description of any data requested from the district's internal database, and methods for protecting the confidentiality of all personally identifiable data)
 - Chronology of procedures, with dates if appropriate
 - Debriefing procedures, if appropriate
6. Data Analysis Methods (include methods to be used and persons responsible)
7. Use of the Results
 - How the results will be used
 - How the results will benefit the district
 - How the results will be shared with the district.
 - How the results will benefit education in general (e.g., anticipated generalizability)
8. Agreement to adhere to all guidelines outlined in the *Edmonds School District Guidelines and Review Process for Requests to Conduct Research in the District*

Required Attachments:

- ✓ A copy of all questionnaires, forms, tests, instruments, and/or curricular materials to be used
- ✓ A copy of all consent forms and other communications to be sent to participants

Ethical Principles for Research in the Edmonds School District

The following principles must be adhered to by anyone conducting research involving human subjects in the Edmonds School District:

1. The researcher is responsible for ensuring that s/he and all collaborators and/or assistants treat all research participants fairly and ethically.
2. The study must not invade the privacy of students, district employees, or any of their families.
3. Schools, students, family members, and staff cannot be identified by name or any other identifying manner in any reports or publications, unless otherwise agreed upon in writing.
4. The researcher must make full disclosure to and answer all questions of participants regarding features of the research that might affect their willingness to participate.
5. When the validity of a study necessitates concealment or deception, the researcher must make clear to the participants the reasons for such actions prior to the start of the study.
6. The researcher must respect the right of families, students, and staff to decline participation and to discontinue participation **at any time**. Participants must be informed of this right prior to the start of the project.
7. From the outset, the researcher must clarify to each participant the responsibilities of both the researcher and participant. Commitments made at this time must be honored.
8. The researcher must protect participants from physical and mental discomfort, harm, or danger, and any other undesirable consequences.
9. After the data are collected, the researcher must provide participants with full clarification of the study and remove any possible misconceptions.
10. The researcher must treat all information obtained about research participants as confidential. If others have access to such information, the researcher must have procedures in place to protect the privacy of all participants.

I, the undersigned, agree to adhere to the above principles and regulations.

Researcher

Date

**Agreement for Release of Student Information for Purposes of
Conducting a District-Approved Research Project**

_____ (Name of entity receiving the information, hereafter referred to as "Research Entity") hereby acknowledges and agrees that the personally identifiable student information (a detailed description of which is attached, hereafter referred to as "Student Information") being disclosed to it by Edmonds School District will be used only for the stated purpose of the approved research.

Further, the Research Entity is subject to compliance with all relevant laws and regulations pertaining to the possession and maintenance of such Student Information, including, but not limited to the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. Section 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99), and the Washington RCW 28A.605.030 and RCW 42.56.210.

This compliance includes the following limitations:

- The study has been approved in writing by the Director of Assessment, Research, and Evaluation for the District;
- The study is being conducted to improve instruction;
- The study and its reports shall be conducted and displayed in a manner that does not permit personal identification of parents and/or students by individuals other than the representatives of the Research Entity; and
- The Student Information provided by the district will be destroyed when no longer needed for the purposes for which the study was conducted.

In addition, the personally identifiable information about a student provided by the District will not be disclosed to any other party without the prior written consent of the parent or eligible student or as is otherwise authorized by law or regulation.

In exchange for access to this Student Information, the Research Entity agrees to defend, indemnify and hold harmless the District, its officers, employees and agents, from any and all complaints, charges, causes of action, claims, or damages of every kind and nature whatsoever relating to an improper release of the Student Information by the Research Entity.

The undersigned hereby certifies that he/she has the authority to execute this document on behalf of the Research Entity.

Name of Research Entity

By: _____
Signature

Printed Name

Its: _____
Position of person signing

Date: _____