

Student participation in a research project may be approved subject to the guidelines of policy 5230. The process for reviewing requests for such projects is set out below.

All proposals must be submitted to the Student Services Director no later than March 1st of the school year in which the research is to be conducted.

A research proposal must first be approved by the proposing agency's Internal Review Board. If no Internal Review Board exists for the agency, one will be established subject to the approval of the Student Services Director.

The Student Services Director shall coordinate the establishment of a WCS Research Evaluation Committee for each proposal. The committee shall review proposals for research involving students to determine if such requests are educationally sound, if the instrument is age appropriate, if the time required for administering the instrument is reasonable, and if there are adequate and appropriate safeguards to protect student well-being and privacy rights.

The Research Evaluation Committee for the elementary schools shall consist of a principal or designee, a teacher, and one parent. The high school committee will consist of a principal or designee, a teacher, a parent, and a student. Committee members shall be determined by the principal of the school where the research is proposed. If the research proposal involves more than one school, committee members will be determined by the Student Services Director and approved by the principals involved in the research proposal.

Each research request must include the following:

1. **Purpose of the Study:** Include a statement of the potential value of the study to the Watauga County Schools and to education in general. Also specify how the study would respond to questions or problems which have not been adequately addressed in the past.
2. **Qualifications of the Researcher:** Include a statement of related coursework, experiences or independent study done by the researcher. Also include qualifications of any other persons that will be assisting with the actual data collection in the schools.
3. **Description of the Study:** Identify the population to be used, the interventions to be used, data collection and analysis procedures, and methods to protect participants from risk and invasion of their privacy. Copies of all data collection instruments are to be included.
4. **Estimate of Student and/or Staff Time Requirements:** Include proposed testing schedule: times, days, etc. Disruptions to instructional time must be kept to a minimum.
5. **Parental Informed Consent Procedures and Forms:** Written parental consent is required for any study involving students or access to student records. The parent/guardian consent forms must be kept on file in the principal's office.

Parents and (where appropriate) students must be informed of the following before giving consent for participation:

- (a) The project's purpose
- (b) How the students are selected
- (c) The procedure to be followed, including an easily understood, precise description of the child's involvement
- (d) Anticipated benefits for general knowledge
- (e) Possible physical, legal, psychological or other risks
- (f) Whether the students will be personally identifiable, and to whom
- (g) To whom the results would be available, and for what purposes
- (h) Participants and parent rights to inspect materials before consenting, and their right to withdraw consent at any time.
- (i) The person to whom inquiries should be addressed before, during, and after the project
- (j) That the school is neither conducting nor sponsoring the project
- (k) That there will be no adverse consequences for choosing not to participate in the study

The Research Evaluation Committee shall recommend approval or denial of the research request to the Student Services Director. The Student Services Director will make the final decision on the request, subject to the approval of the superintendent.

All research projects must comply with the confidentiality requirements of policy 4700, Student Records, policy 4705/7825, Confidentiality of Personal Identifying Information, and policy 4720, Surveys of Students.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-47, -230

Cross References: Student Records (policy 4700), Confidentiality of Personal Identifying Information (policy 4705/7825), Surveys of Students (policy 4720), Participation in Research Projects (policy 5230)

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Replaces: Board policy 5.05.80, Use of Students as Research Subjects by External Agencies or Individuals