

CPS Research Proposal Review – July 2024

Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS) receives many requests to support or participate in research studies and program evaluations administered by individuals or agencies outside the school district. The principal researcher, including CPS employees, must request district approval prior to initiating their research. Research proposals are approved on a year to year basis. In other words, research approved for one school year may not continue into the subsequent school year. The standard research proposal includes a scope of work and associated research documents. When requesting student data, the proposal will include authorization of a data-sharing agreement adhering to the Federal Education Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), which governs access to student records. Exemptions apply to staff members conducting research within their individual classrooms for the purpose of classroom/school use only, and independent agencies requesting aggregated student information already in the public domain.

The approval process for conducting research in CPS requires the principal researcher to first submit an application through our on-line survey application. If approved, the researcher will be provided a Google Drive folder for sharing proposal documents. The standard period for research with CPS is from September 1 through July 31. A data sharing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is required when a project involves classroom data collection or when disaggregated student data is requested as part of the proposal. Note that a data sharing MOU is not required for internally administered grants and when aggregate student data is being requested. The research project should be clearly described following the scope of work template provided in Appendix A of the MOU. If an MOU is not required, the researcher should still provide the scope of work for proposal review.

Proposal review normally takes three to four weeks. If the submission is found to be incomplete and additional information is requested, the response period will be delayed. The following procedure will be followed for the review and approval of research proposals.

1. The proposal is recorded upon receipt, and filed by principal researcher last name. If the researcher is involved in multiple projects with CPS, such as ongoing program evaluation, the name of the organization may be used in place of the last name.
2. Correspondence between CPS and the researcher begins for the purpose of answering questions and resolving issues related to the proposal (or renewal request). During the initial review, CPS may request additional information regarding the project and use of student data. Depending on the scope of work, a more thorough review may be required involving communication with other CPS departments and school principals impacted by the research.
3. When the review is complete, a recommendation will be made on whether or not to approve the proposal. Following the recommendation, additional communication with the researcher may be required to respond to additional questions or concerns raised.
4. A final decision on the proposal will be made and the researcher will be notified of the decision. If an MOU is required, it will be administered through on-line signature routing application. In some instances, a formal "letter of support" is provided to meet the requirements of an academic Institutional Review Board (IRB).
5. Research requiring access to schools requires the approval of all associated building principals prior to beginning work. Approval from the Office of Research and Evaluation for a proposal does not guarantee approval of the project. Principals have the discretion to opt-out of research projects.

The principal researcher is responsible for submitting a final report or status report on their research to the Office of Research and Evaluation in July. The principal researcher may notify CPS of their intent to continue research by submitting a renewal request through the research application. In the event that a final report or renewal request is not received as required, the authorization for continuing research with CPS is considered expired. Researchers interested in submitting a proposal may refer to the CPS Research Proposal Documents, available through the CPS Web site.