

RELATIONS WITH EDUCATIONAL ENTITIES
RESEARCH APPLICATION PROCEDURES

GNA
(REGULATION)

The District permits research studies initiated by external agencies and individuals as well as District employees. The study results should be valuable to the District or a particular campus or department. Research topics that address issues of particular interest to the District will have a greater likelihood of approval than research that does not.

Procedures have been established for conducting research in Pflugerville ISD. These procedures are designed to protect student and staff time and ensure their privacy. The procedures are also designed to reduce the disruption to the education program. Studies need to be compatible with District policy, sound educational practices, and non-disruptive to the educational program. Research studies shall in no way be in conflict with open records requirements.

INITIAL CONTACT

Contact regarding research studies in the District shall be initiated through the Department of Accountability and Assessment. An application must be completed and submitted for approval. The application must include the signature of a sponsor (university faculty member, an agency staff member or District staff member). The application must include copies of any questionnaires, test data collection instruments to be used, and a parent and student permission letter. Parent and student permission letters should give parent and student full and knowing consent. Contact with campus principals prior to the application process is not permitted and may jeopardize the approval of the application.

TIMELINE

Applications must be submitted by June 30 to be considered for the following school year. PfISD will not accept new research proposals that start during the spring semester. Exceptions will be made for employees and/or applications that provide direct tangible benefits to the District. Notification regarding application status will be provided by July 31st.

APPLICATION
APPROVAL

The completed application with all required documents will be reviewed by the appropriate departments chosen on a case-by-case basis depending on the proposal's subject area. The panel of reviewers will provide recommendations to the PfISD Instructional Leadership Team of whether the proposal should be accepted, rejected or accepted with required changes. Final decisions will be made by the PfISD Executive Leadership team.

Once an application has been approved by the Instructional Leadership Team, the researcher may contact specific campus principals to discuss the proposed project and secure final approval. Principals have the final authority to approve or disapprove a project.

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REQUIREMENTS FOR
DATA COLLECTION
AND RELEASE

PfISD complies with all state and federal regulations regarding the release of confidential student or staff data. Only certain information, in certain formats, may be disclosed without the consent of students' parents/guardians. Many, but not all, of the legal guidelines on which data release procedures are based are drawn from the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA; 20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99).

Any student participation in data collection activities or any release of individually identifiable information to researcher requires active consent from the student's parent/guardian and, often, student assent. Permission letters must:

- be signed by the parent or guardian,
- dated on the date consent is given,
- specify the data and/or the student data records to be released,
- specify the reason for the data collection or release,
- identify the person and institution to whom the information will be released,
- describe the feedback that will be provided to the parents and students.

Information regarding a student's eligibility for free/reduced price meals is considered confidential under the Healthy Meals for Healthy American Act of 1994, P.L. 103-448. Requirements for release are detailed in Section 4.26 of the Texas Department of Agriculture's Food Services Administrator's Reference Manual.

Individual students, staff, or schools may not be identified in any research or evaluation product.

STUDENT RECORDS
REQUESTS

Approval of a research application does not automatically provide access to the data. Individuals must secure an approved Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) with PfISD for access to individual data records. If the project is approved, data requests are processed at \$50 per hour.

REQUIREMENTS
DURING THE
RESEARCH

While the project is in progress the following is required:

1. All research activities must be non-disruptive to the educational process.
2. Meetings, interviews, administration of instruments, etc., need to be scheduled in advance to allow for adequate planning.
3. Parental permission for student participation is required.

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4. Parents must be given the opportunity to view any instruments used.
5. Students must give permission for their participation.
6. Parents and/or students can voluntarily cease to be part of the research at any time.
7. The confidentiality of records, individuals, and schools must be observed. Data containing names or identities must be destroyed when their use is complete.
8. Professional conduct must be observed at all times.

COMPENSATION OR
INCENTIVES

Researchers may compensate participants or schools for their participation in the study.

TERMINATION OF
STUDY

PfISD reserves the right to terminate participation in any study at any time. Violations of procedures of professional conduct will result in the termination of the study.

AFTER THE STUDY

The Department of Curriculum and Instruction will be given summaries of data collected and conclusions drawn from the research. The researcher will provide the district's professional library a copy of any book, journal article, dissertation, etc., written as a result of the study.

LETTERS OF
SUPPORT

Any organization requesting a letter of support must first contact the Department of Accountability and Assessment. The organization will be directed to the appropriate department after the initial contact.