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Park City School District Review Research Process

Research can be an important tool to ensure our school system is equitable and empowers each student and their family. The Park City School District (PCSD) supports the conduct of educational research and strives to achieve this by collaborating with educators, students, families, community based organizations, and university partners –listening to and uplifting the stories of our communities.

As such, our district partners with school leaders, educators, students, families and the community to support novel research that contributes to organizational learning, planning and decision-making aligned to our district [strategic goals and objectives](#). Additionally, we support grant-funding efforts that provide innovative research-practice partnerships with external researchers and organizations on projects that include research and strategic planning, providing consultation and evaluation using academic data analysis, surveys, interviews and other quantitative, qualitative, and design-based research methods and communication. Priority projects seek to primarily support Teaching and Learning –early literacy, math, college and career readiness, school climate and continuous improvement. We view such collaborations as primary vehicles for change, grounding our work in district wide initiatives and accountability structures that are centered around the PCSD vision of being student centered with a focus and emphasis on the whole-child - our students are safe, supported, engaged, challenged, and healthy.

Process

In accordance with the district [Student Data Governance Plan](#), PCSD has implemented a rigorous research review process managed by the department of Teaching and Learning. Our district requires this process for all individuals and organizations interested in conducting human subjects or secondary administrative data research with Park City School District students and staff (*note that staff includes school administrators, school leaders, and teachers*). Our Teaching and Learning Department manages the formal review process for all internal and external research requests, evaluating proposals to ensure they are relevant to district strategic priorities, rigorous in methodological approach, and low risk and low burden for school leadership, educators, and study participants. Federal and state agencies, institutes of higher education, and individuals seeking to conduct research in Park City School District must have their research approved by the Park City School District Teaching and Learning Team. Complete and submit this [Application to Conduct Research Form](#) to have your research proposal reviewed.

Research projects approved should adhere to the following guiding principles:

- Equity guides all research at all stages.

- Projects produce knowledge that will inform district leaders as they make decisions about how to best support students.
- Impactful research projects are developed in partnership and collaboration with PCSD stakeholders, practitioners, and content experts.
- Project timelines are succinct and respect the urgency of potential high-impact decisions that need to be made.

PCSD Research Review Committee

The PCSD Research Review Committee reviews applications for educational studies. The committee consists of representatives from the Departments of Data & Assessment, Student Services, Teaching & Learning, Health Services, Special Education, Educational Equity, Educational Technology, and other relevant district personnel depending on the scope of research represented in the proposed research.

The review committee generally meets 4 times per year on pre-scheduled dates and screens applications for:

- Relevance to districtwide strategic initiatives and goals
- Rigor of research methodology
- Risks/benefits to schools and study participants
- Burden to the district, schools, and study participants

Committee members will recommend District participation in projects which: (a) have a sound experimental design and have all required materials; (b) will benefit education in the District; (c) will not unreasonably disrupt instructional or administrative time, nor violate other law or policy; (d) will not intrude on the privacy of District patrons or personnel; (e) agree to provide the District with the results of the research and allow the District to publish the results in whole or in part on publicly accessible platform(s), (f) will allow the District to obtain feedback from research participants concerning their satisfaction with their participation or their experiences in the research.

PCSD will not approve applications which seek to: (a) study domains extraneous to the improvement of quality teaching and student learning; (b) conduct market research which doesn't correlate with the long-range objectives of the Board of Education; (c) conduct longitudinal research which requires tracking student placement and data from year to year; (d) recruit students and/or employees for research unrelated to district priorities, interests, or programs. (e) are of a financial benefit to parties or individuals in the district or community and are otherwise partisan unless those disclosures are made appropriately and the committee is in unanimous agreement.

Research Application Review Process: Completed applications are first reviewed by the District Statistician/Data Analyst to ensure the application is complete, that the proposed research is

appropriate, and that it is built upon a sound research design, methodology, and instrumentation. If the research meets these conditions the review process will follow one of two paths:

a) **First Path.** If the research is being conducted solely by a Park City School District teacher, specialist, or administrator, is simple in design and scope (e.g., Capstone project), is limited to the teachers classroom, and the researcher has their principal's or supervisor's approval, the research may be approved directly by the Research Review Committee. However, if the committee has concerns with the research or feels that additional perspectives are necessary, the research application will follow the 'Second Path.'

b) **Second Path.** If the research is complex in design and/or scope, or involves multiple teachers, classrooms, or schools, or is being conducted by any person(s) not affiliated with Park City School District, the Research Review Committee may bring on additional committee members from the departments with whom the research most closely aligns. Together with their specialists, the Research Review Committee will provide their recommendations for the proposed research to the Superintendent of the District.

Applicants will receive email notification of the committee's decision along with any conditions or recommendations. Research requests are reviewed as they come in during regularly pre-scheduled meetings of the District Teaching and Learning Department (see below for list of this year's scheduled meetings). Research request applications received between July 1st and September 1st will generally not be reviewed until at least mid-September. The review process is normally completed within 1-2 weeks of the next scheduled meeting if it follows the first path or up to 4 weeks if it follows the second path beginning when the research application is first received.

PLEASE NOTE: District approval informs our school leadership and potential participants that your research methodology and research design have scientific merit, and that the focus of your research supports district research interests. However, district approval neither requires nor implies participation of PCSD staff, employees, students, or stakeholders in your research. Rather, upon district approval and prior to conducting your research, you must obtain the active written consent of the principal from whose school you are seeking or recruiting participants as well as the written active consent of all potential participants and their legal guardians.

Primary Data Collection: **Students**

- Active consent continues to be required in order to collect primary data from students, as per the PCSD Policy; remote consent can be obtained so long as the information is securely stored.
 - PCSD may conduct an audit of electronic consents forms for any reason and at any time in order to validate the collected information.
- Remote one-to-one research activities involving students (i.e., interviews) are prohibited, per the Student Acceptable Use Policy.
- The researcher must secure a PCSD staff volunteer for any virtual focus group involving students. The selected CPS staff member (identified by the PCSD Central Office project lead)

must (1) host the virtual meeting and (2) remain in attendance for the full duration of the focus group.

- Background checks will be required as per usual; researchers will need Level 1 background checks. Returning researchers may not need to reapply, but new researchers will need to go through the background check process.
- If approved, all virtual focus groups or interviews with students must be conducted through the PCSD -verified conferencing platform, Google Meets.

Primary Data Collection: **Staff**

- Principals must agree that the research is of value in their community, and that their staff has capacity to participate in the research.
- The burden on schools of recruiting research participants must be minimal.
- We recommend, but do not require, that researchers utilize Google Meets for primary data collection from CPS staff.
- Active consent continues to be required; consent can be obtained remotely.

Primary Data Collection: **Parents/Families**

- Principals must agree that the research is of value in their community, and that their families have capacity to participate in the research.
- The burden on schools of recruiting research participants must be minimal.
- Active consent continues to be required; consent can be obtained remotely.