

Fort Worth
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Conducting Research in Fort Worth ISD

2024-2025

Revised August 2024

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Acceptable Research & District Priorities	4
Application Process	5
Application: Introduction	6
Title	6
Researcher Information	6
Student Status	6
Project Dates	6
Application: Research Base	7
Statement of Purpose	7
Research Questions	7
Theoretical Basis	7
Significance of Study	7
Application: Methodology	8
Target Areas	8
Research Method	8
Analysis Plan	8
Request Existing Data	8
Collect New Data	8
Participant Population	8
Consent or Permission	9
Data Collection Instruments	9
Focus Groups or Interviews	9
Observations	9
Surveys	9
Application: Additional Forms	10
Benefit to the District	10
Burden on Research Subjects	10
Institutional Review Board	10
Confidentiality Agreement	10

Introduction

Fort Worth ISD (FWISD) recognizes the value of high-quality research for supporting and improving teaching and learning. However, the district has legal and moral obligations that require oversight of research activities conducted with district resources such as data, facilities, employee time, and access to students and their parents.

These obligations include:

- Protecting students and employees from risk of harm, violation of rights, and loss of privacy
- Protecting the educational process from unwarranted distractions and interruptions
- Protecting public resources, including data, from misappropriation for private or unjustified use

We reserve the right to limit the types and volume of research projects conducted in the district in order to focus on our priorities. Though we value the interest of researchers like yourself, we will be intentional in monitoring what is requested from our FWISD community (principals, teachers, students, parents, and staff). Please keep this in mind when considering whether to conduct research in FWISD.

Research approval from the district does not impose any obligation on any person, school, or office to cooperate with researchers. You must have the appropriate campus or department leadership approval before you may begin your study.

Additionally, campus or departmental leadership approval does not imply district approval. District approval must be obtained prior to contacting a campus or department.

Participation in any approved research project is subject to informed consent and is strictly voluntary.

The district reserves the right to discontinue applications for external research if the number of requests becomes a burden on students, their families, and/or district staff.

Acceptable Research & District Priorities

There are two types of requests for research in FWISD that can be submitted through the online application:

1. Collaborations with a university or research organization partner
2. Graduate projects resulting in a thesis or dissertation

You may also use the online application to submit a request for an initial letter of support as per your IRB or grant application. You will be asked to complete the relevant sections of the application: Introduction, Research Base, and Methodology. If support is granted, you may then return at a later date to complete the remaining portions of the application. You must submit the complete online application and secure district approval prior to conducting research.

FWISD employees who are collecting data or conducting any type of research, not as part of their regularly assigned administrative or instructional duties, must submit the online application and secure district approval prior to conducting research.

In addition to being associated with one of the types of requests listed above, research conducted by district personnel completing advanced degrees, or studies that align with district priorities will be given priority.

Research should be designed to answer well-formed research questions of educational importance and should employ methods that are appropriate to the research questions. Elements of the research design, including the theoretical framework, participant/sample selection, data collection instruments, and analysis plan should support the goals of the research. Research conducted in FWISD or with its resources must also be justified in terms of the anticipated benefit to the district and not merely for the advancement of knowledge or completion of the researcher's own agenda.

It is the responsibility of the researcher to communicate these things clearly in the proposal. Even research that imposes no risk may be rejected by the FWISD if it is judged to be poorly designed, described, or justified; or if it places undue burden on students, teachers, or schools.

It is highly encouraged to use FWISD data that are available in the public domain, such as the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), the National Center for Education Research (NCER), and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). For public information under the Texas Public Information Act, please review information on FWISD Open Records Requests.

Application Process

Specific dates for each component of the application process is provided below:

Submission Window	Evaluation Period	Notification Deadline
Window 1: Oct 1 – Nov 15	Nov 21 - Dec 5	Dec 13
Window 2: Nov 16 – Feb 21	Feb 27 – Mar 6	Mar 14
Window 3: Feb 22 – May 16	May 22 – Jun 5	Jun 13
Window 4: May 17 – Aug 15	Aug 21 – Sep 4	Sep 12
2025 – 2026 School Year Window 1: Aug 16 – Oct 3	TBD	TBD

Requests submitted during the dates for each submission window will be evaluated during the evaluation period and requesters will be sent a response on or before the notification deadline regarding the status of the request. Researchers requesting to conduct research in FWISD are invited to submit proposals through our online application process.

https://fortworthisd.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4PIyesbd5uRAIjr

FWISD will review proposals and send notification of acceptance or denial according to the timeline. Only completed applications will be reviewed.

If you exit the online application prior to completing and submitting it, your responses will be saved for one month, during which time you may return on the same device and complete the application. After one month, your incomplete application will no longer be available.

Research proposals should address each of the required elements in the online application. Materials such as data collection instruments, consent forms, assent forms, confidentiality statements, IRB approvals, and other documents must be uploaded in the appropriate sections of the application. In order to expedite the review of requests, we ask that documents be uploaded as .pdf files.

Substantial time and effort may be required for district staff to provide the requested data with the appropriate selection and matching of records and concealment of personal identities. If data extraction costs are required, the approval will include a time estimate and dollar amount.

This guide provides the order of the application sections, information about the requirements of each section, and detailed explanations of application elements. In addition to reviewing this guide, you may also download the entire application file to review prior to beginning the application. The file is available on our website and within the application. If you experience difficulty with the application process, please report any technical issues to AskEval@fwisd.org.

Application: Introduction

The application begins by asking you to confirm whether you are a district employee. You will then enter introductory information about the project, such as title, primary investigator, and project dates.

Title

Enter the projected title of your project.

Researcher Information

Enter the name, title, and contact information for the primary researcher of your project.

Student Status

Enter your student status. If you are a graduate student, you will be prompted to enter the name and contact information of your advisor.

Project Dates

Enter the Anticipated Data Collection Start and End Dates, as well as Anticipated Project Completion Date which is the date that a results summary will be completed and submitted to FWISD (approval includes a requirement to send us a results summary and/or publications resulting from your study).

Application: Research Base

This section asks you to outline the study. This includes research questions and hypotheses, the theoretical basis (summary of literature review with APA references), and the expected contribution.

Statement of Purpose

State clearly what you intend to accomplish with this research. What is the problem that requires this research? (minimum 50 words).

Research Questions

State the research question(s). Include any hypotheses, if applicable.

Theoretical Basis

Provide a brief summary of your literature review, or the theoretical basis for your study, from prior published research (include references in APA format).

Significance of Study

Describe the expected contribution of your work. What is the gap that this study will fill?

Application: Methodology

This section includes questions about the study's methodology. You will be asked to describe your research design and anticipated plan for analysis. You will also be asked about the target population, the plan for collecting data, and collection instruments.

Target Areas

Specify the general area targeted by the research, such as Administration, School Level, or a Specific Department

Research Method

Describe the methods (quantitative, qualitative, mixed-methods, etc.) that you will use and why they are appropriate for your research question(s). Include a timeline if appropriate.

Analysis Plan

Describe your anticipated analysis plan, including specific information regarding your treatment of the data, statistical or otherwise.

Request Existing Data

If the study requires use of existing district data, in addition to a reminder about the cost, you will be asked to provide a detailed explanation outlining the type and date range of data requested from the district. If the proposal is approved, an estimated time and dollar amount for the data request will be provided in the approval email.

Collect New Data

If the study will require collecting new data, you will be asked about your participants and recruitment procedures, and you will be asked to upload copies of forms and data collection instruments.

Participant Population

You will be asked to indicate the number of FWISD participants by associated grade level. Use the Non-Campus Personnel column if targeted adults are not associated with an elementary, middle, or high school campus. You will also be asked to describe your recruitment procedures.

The promotion and recruitment for participation in any study approved by FWISD is the sole responsibility of the researcher and is at the discretion of department and/or school leadership.

Consent or Permission

Collecting data directly from the targeted population requires consent for any/all participants. If students will be asked to participate, assent from minors as well as permission from parents of minors is required. These forms should be uploaded as .pdf files.

Data Collection Instruments

If the study will collect data via focus groups / interviews, observations, or surveys, the applicant will be asked to describe the collection instruments to be used. For each collection instrument selected, a .pdf file of the instrument/protocol must be uploaded.

Focus Groups or Interviews

If the project will include focus groups or interviews, a list of questions or sample questions must be uploaded as a .pdf file.

Observations

If the project will require observations, a copy of the protocol or rubric must be uploaded as a .pdf file.

Surveys

If the project will use a survey or questionnaire, a list of the questions must be uploaded as a .pdf file.

Application: Additional Forms

Benefit to the District

This section asks to describe how FWISD will directly benefit from the study and how the findings will be shared with any schools or groups associated with the research.

Burden on Research Subjects

It is in the district's interest to minimize the human costs of research. Therefore, before the district approves research to be conducted, an explanation of the expected burden on research subjects is required.

- Provide a clear rationale for the number of participants, the number of contacts, and the total time required by each participant.
- Include a statement of how research participants are to be compensated for their involvement, if at all.

Institutional Review Board

Educational research is generally subject to review by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Before research may begin in FWISD, applicants will be required to upload documentation of one of the following:

- In the case of research subject to review by an IRB, applications must include a copy of the IRB submission and provide a copy of the IRB approval letter before beginning research.
- In the case of research that is exempt from review by an IRB, the application must include documentation from the institution clearly delineating reasons for such an exemption.
- In the case of research not affiliated with any institution subject to IRB requirements, the proposal must include persuasive evidence that the researcher has carefully considered the potential risk to human subjects, especially students and families, and has ensured the appropriate protections in the research design.

Confidentiality Agreement

Finally, you will be asked to acknowledge that you understand the FWISD Confidentiality Agreement, which ensures compliance with state law and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) guidelines, and the importance of protecting student, family, and/or district data.