

HENRY COUNTY SCHOOLS

Guidelines for Conducting

Research

2025-2026

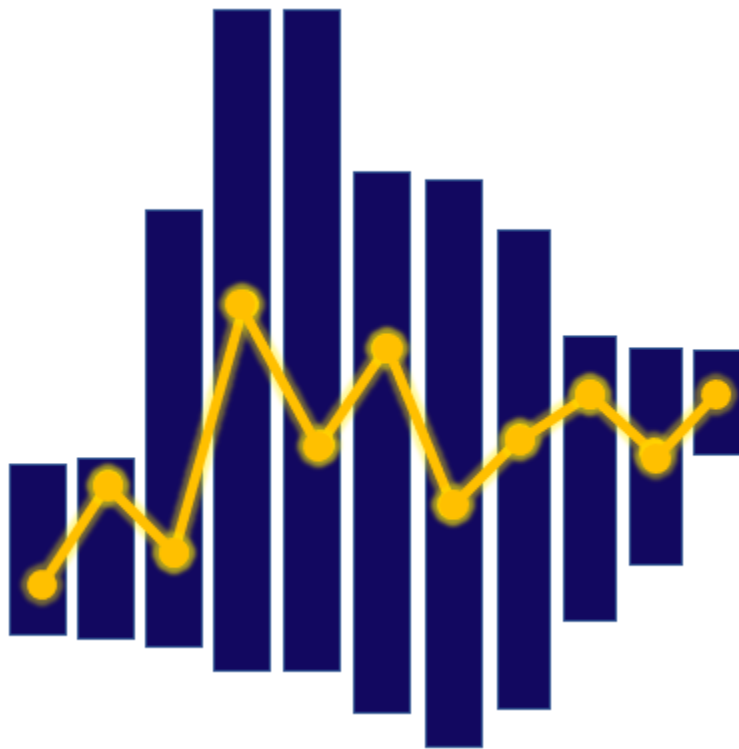




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GENERAL INFORMATION

Henry County Schools has developed an internal process for requests to conduct research. Researchers must complete the required application process and receive written approval from the Research Review Committee (RRC) prior to conducting any research activities. All research conducted in Henry County Schools meets these guidelines:

- Protect the rights and privacy of students, families, and employees.
- Respect instructional time without being detrimental to student learning.
- Data must be collected by the researcher, not HCS staff.
- Support continuous school system improvement goals.
- Align with the HCS Strategic Plan.

Existing Board Policies that should be reviewed prior to conducting any research in Henry County Schools include the following:

- Board Policy IFBGA: Electronic Communications
- Board Policy DFK: Gifts and Bequests
- Board Policy JR: Student Records
- Board Policy KEBA: Solicitations of Students

SUBMISSIONS CALENDAR

All research applications must be submitted by the following deadlines. Exceptions to these submission deadlines and approval timeframes will not be made for any reason.

Submission Deadline (by Midnight)	Research Review Period	Approval Decision Issued Week of:
August 22 nd , 2025	September 2025	September 25 th , 2025
October 17 th , 2025	November 2025	November 27 th , 2025
December 12 th , 2025	January 2026	February 16 th , 2026
February 20 th , 2026	March 2026	March 30 th , 2026
April 10 th , 2026	May 2026	May 11 th , 2026
June 5 th , 2026	July 2026	July 20 th , 2026

WEBSITE

[Conducting Research in Henry County Schools](#) (Website)



CONTACT INFORMATION

All requests to conduct research are facilitated by the Performance and Strategy Department.

Direct questions or materials for consideration to:

Sean Thompson
Director of Performance and Accountability
sean.thompson@henry.k12.ga.us
770.957.6547 Ext. 01459

HENRY COUNTY SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN

All research requests must align with Henry County School's Strategic Plan and Actions:

- **Strategic Action 1:** Advance PreK-12 learning opportunities and experiences for all students.
- **Strategic Action 2:** Advance effective school leadership and classroom instruction.
- **Strategic Action 3:** Advance connectivity to value and engage all students, employees, families, and partners in our growing community.
- **Strategic Action 4:** Advance student and employee health, wellness, and support structures.
- **Strategic Action 5:** Advance a high-performing operational culture.

Additional information regarding the HCS Strategic Plan can be found here: [HCS Strategic Plan](#)

LOCAL SCHOOL RESEARCH REQUESTS

A local school action research project is any research initiated by an employee related to their role, responsibilities, and/or job duties. An action research project is often required for a graduate course leading to a master's or specialist's degree, add-on certificate, or certification endorsement. Accordingly, research projects that only involve data collection at the employee's place of employment (school site) require approval of the school's principal. Researchers applying to conduct action research must complete the [Local School Research Request Form](#).

Employees who plan to conduct local school action research projects that involve data collection at more than one school or at a school site other than their place of employment must submit the [District Level Research Request Form](#).

LOCAL SCHOOL APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS



Researchers who are current Henry County Schools employees requesting to conduct action research at their current school of employment must complete the **Local School Research Request Form**. After this form is submitted, the researcher must send the following documents as pdf files to sean.thompson@henry.k12.ga.us:
(Continued on next page)

1. List of references or annotated bibliography
2. All data collection instruments and protocols (i.e. survey or interview questions)
3. Permission letter to use published survey (if using a published survey)
4. Letter(s) of Informed Consent
5. Letter of Institutional Endorsement (on university letterhead)
6. Researcher's resume

All documents must be titled using this format: *First Initial. Last Name (1) Title of Document*. For example, J. Doe (1) List of References, J. Doe (4) Letters of Informed Consent, J. Doe (6) Resume.

Incomplete submissions will not be reviewed. Once all required documents are received, they will be forwarded to the school principal for review. The principal will decide on approval or denial, and a decision will be provided to the applicant via email. The researcher may not begin research activities until written approval has been received.

DISTRICT LEVEL RESEARCH REQUESTS

Certain research requests require district-level approval, and the applicant will need to complete the **District Level Research Request Form**. Examples of research requiring district-level approval include:

- Research for graduate course requirements
- Research for graduate degree requirements (i.e. master's thesis, doctoral dissertation)
- Requests to conduct research at multiple schools and/or district locations
- Research conducted by district office employees
- Requests from external organizations/agencies, or individuals who are not employees of Henry County Schools

DISTRICT LEVEL APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

For district level research requests, the applicant must complete the **District Level Research Request Form**. After this form is submitted, the researcher must send the following documents as pdf files to sean.thompson@henry.k12.ga.us:

1. IRB Approval (to include name of university, title of research project, statement of approval from your advisor, and contact information of advisor)
2. Chapters 1-3 (Introduction, Review of Literature, and Methodology) (or a Narrative of the proposed study if request is being submitted by an agency/organization)
3. Complete list of references from the study formatted correctly



4. All data collection instruments and protocols (i.e. survey or interview questions)
5. Permission letter to use published survey (if using a published survey)
6. Letter(s) of Informed Consent
7. Researcher's resume

All documents must be titled using this format: *First Initial. Last Name (1) Title of Document*. For example, J. Doe (1) IRB Approval, J. Doe (4) Data Collection Instruments, J. Doe (7) Resume.

Incomplete submissions will not be reviewed. Once all required documents are received, they will be forwarded to the Research Review Committee (RRC). The RRC will decide on approval or denial, and a decision will be provided to the applicant via email. The researcher may not begin research activities until written approval has been received.

GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH

- Data collection activities must not interfere with the instructional day.
- Data collection activities must not interfere with HCS employees' duties and responsibilities.
- Research should be conducted after the school day has ended.
- The researcher assumes all responsibility related to the research, including but not limited to recruitment, consent forms, and data collection.
- All data collected must be used solely for the purpose articulated in the research application.
- HCS district-level staff may not conduct research that includes interviews, observations, surveys, or focus groups of peers or subordinates.
- Other than action research, research may not take place in the school(s) where the researcher is employed.
- HCS discourages research studies that require more than 45 minutes for interviews, focus groups, or surveys per person.
- Participation in an approved study will be completely voluntary. Employees, parents, and students who do not wish to participate have a right to refuse or withdraw their consent at any time.
- Principals may decline the opportunity for their schools to participate in the study at any time and for any reason.
- Researchers who are employees of HCS cannot retrieve data from Infinite Campus for research purposes.
- HCS resources (i.e. laptops, email addresses, copiers, etc.) should not be used for personal research.
- Research cannot be conducted during district-wide standardized testing dates.
- Employees and supervisors of employees by positional authority shall not influence or require participation in a research study that is deemed voluntary, including such persuasive measures as offering monetary or in-kind incentives, job-related promises such as promotions, or performance management incentives.

APPLICATION REVIEW PROCEDURES



All applications to complete research must be reviewed and approved by the principal and/or the Research Review Committee (RRC) before any research is conducted. Suppose multiple schools and/or district locations are requested as part of the application. In that case, the RRC will include the principal(s)/supervisor(s) of those locations as part of the review process before issuing an approval or denial. An approval/denial letter will be issued no later than the approval decision week indicated in the submission calendar for the deadline by which the researcher submits his/her application.

The following considerations will be made as part of the review process:

- Risks/Benefits:

- Does the research project protect the rights and privacy of students, families, and employees?
- Does the research application abide by State and Local Policies (e.g. KEBA, Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment)?
- To what degree does the project pose risks (emotional and/or physical) to participants?

- Burden:

- Does the research project impose an undue burden on students, employees, schools or the district?
- Are the data collected by the researcher?
- Does the research project respect instructional time without being detrimental to student learning?

- Relevance:

- Does the research project support continuous school system improvement goals?
- Does the research project align with HCS Strategic Plan?

- Research Plan:

- Is the research design and analysis clear and detailed as written in the application?
- Is the applicant's timeline, as written in the application, aligned to the HCS posted timeline for review?

Upon review of the application, the researcher will receive a written decision via email. The final decision may indicate the following:



- Approval as submitted
- Approval with conditions:
 - ___ The researcher may need to revise and resubmit the full application or sections of the application, or
 - ___ The approval letter will state the conditions the researcher must follow.
- Denial:
 - ___ The researcher will be sent a letter indicating why the application request was denied.
 - ___ The researcher will be allowed to revise their application and submit a new application during the next review period.

REASONS FOR DENIAL

The most common reasons for a research application to be denied include the following:

- The application is incomplete.
- The application is not professionally prepared and is not representative of scholarly work.
- The research study will impact instructional time, and/or proposed study materials are not aligned with HCS instructional practices and resources.
- The plan requires HCS staff to collect data for the researcher.
- The research study does not align with HCS's core beliefs and commitments, plan of action, and/or strategic plan.
- The research study does not protect the privacy of students or HCS staff (i.e. identification of students/staff).
- Study is not feasible due to extensive time commitments for HCS staff and/or students.
- The research study timeline does not allow enough time for HCS review and approval.

For all applicants who receive a denial of their research request, the RRC highly recommends that the applicant meet with his/her dissertation chair to thoroughly address the concerns in the revised proposal before resubmitting a research proposal. Please do not resubmit a proposal until time has been spent addressing each of the issues raised in the denial letter.

Principals may decline for their schools to participate in a research study at any time and for any reason.

RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS AFTER APPROVAL



For District Level Research Requests, researchers may not begin research activities until they have received the approval letter via email from the Director of Performance and Accountability. Upon receipt of the approval letter, the researcher must contact the principal(s) of the approved schools identified in the letter before beginning any research activities.

All researchers must abide by the following once approval is received:

- Abide by HCS policies and procedures, which are found on the district's website.
- Accept the responsibility to ensure that the research will abide by all relevant laws, policies, and regulations on the protection of human subjects.
- Will preserve the privacy of students and employees. Any student, staff, school, or district information should be used solely for the completion of your research study. Information collected must remain confidential. Pseudonyms for students, employees, schools, and this school district must be used in all reporting.
- Not interfere with students' instructional day, standard curriculum, and educational services.
- Assume all responsibility in conducting all aspects of the study, including, but not limited to, recruitment, consent forms, and data collection.
- Not interfere with HCS employees' work duties and responsibilities.
- Understand that participation in this study will be completely voluntary. Employees, parents, and students who do not wish to participate have the right to refuse or withdraw consent. Principals may decline the opportunity for their schools to participate in the study at any time.
- All data collected must be used solely for the purpose articulated in the research application.
- Follow all procedures as outlined in the approved research application.
- If modifications or changes are needed to the approved research application (including but not limited to research procedures or instruments) that become necessary during the research project, changes must be submitted in writing and receive written approval from the Performance and Strategy Department before implementation.
- All research studies are approved for one year from the date of the approval letter. If the research project and/or data collection go beyond this period, the researcher must file an Amendment Request.

TERMINATION OF RESEARCH

HCS may terminate research being conducted at the district (including all schools/programs) for any reason deemed appropriate at our discretion. Additionally, principals may decline/withdraw the opportunity for their schools to participate in the study at any time.

RESEARCH FINDINGS



HCS requires that all approved researchers submit a report of their findings and conclusions within 6 months of completing their approved study.

- Before publication, the researcher must submit a copy of the finalized report to the Performance and Strategy Department.
- After publication or completion of the research project, the researcher must delete all data collected or received because of the application.

RESEARCH PROCESS FLOW CHART

Local School Research	District Level Research
Researcher completes Local School Research Request Form.	The researcher completes the District Level Research Request Form.
The researcher submits the required documents to Sean Thompson via email.	The researcher submits the required documents to Sean Thompson via email.
The principal reviews the application.	The Research Review Committee (RRC) reviews the application.
The research study is approved or denied by the principal.	The research proposal is approved or denied by the RRC.
The researcher is provided with an approval or denial letter via email.	The researcher is provided with an approval or denial letter via email.
If approved, the researcher contacts the principal before beginning research activities.	If approved, the researcher contacts the principal(s) at the approved locations before beginning research activities.
If denied, the researcher may resubmit the proposal for the new application review period.	If denied, the researcher may resubmit the proposal for the new application review period.
If approved, the researcher will conduct research.	If approved, the researcher will conduct research.
Once the study is complete, the researcher submits a copy to the Performance and Strategy Department.	Once the study is complete, the researcher submits a copy to the Performance and Strategy Department.