2026- 2027

Guidelines for

Requests to Conduct Research in the Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation



Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation
Office of Accountability

8/28/2026

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The Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation Research Review Panel

The Research Review Panel (RRP) acts on behalf of the Superintendent and EVSC Board of School Trustees to review research proposed by internal, external and EVSC contracted researchers. The RRP is comprised of EVSC staff as well as representatives from the professional community and is facilitated by the Office of Accountability (OA). These guidelines are meant to provide researchers with a clear understanding of the research encouraged within EVSC and procedures for submitting a research proposal for review.

Access to Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation students, staff or data for research purposes, may be granted when determined to be in the best interests of the EVSC Board. If access is granted, Researcher may only access schools, students, staff and data relevant to the research as approved by the RRP and the Office of Accountability.

Principles

•Preventing the undue disruption of the educational process.
•Protecting the privacy of students and staff and ensuring compliance with state and federal law. The Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) are based on the idea that information about an individual student is private and confidential and generally may only be accessed with parent consent.

Important policies to review

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy Rule
https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-professionals/special-topics/research/index.html

Types of Research

Research

Research includes various evaluation, measurement and inquiry activities that include, but are not limited to: (1) the systematic investigation, including research development, testing and/or evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to general knowledge; (2) collecting and analyzing of information aimed at discovering new facts and their correct interpretation to draw conclusions; and (3) quantitative and qualitative study activities such as observations, interviews, case studies, ethnographic analysis, analysis of written materials, secondary analysis of data, achievement testing, surveys, experimental designs to examine causal relationships, product testing and analysis of cost and management records.

Internal Research

Internal research involves EVSC employees who plan to conduct research on how to improve EVSC or contract as part of a work assignment or as part of their general job duties. Internal researchers must obtain the prior approval of their supervisor prior to commencement of research activities. This explicitly excludes research for a college class, master's thesis or dissertation. While research to improve EVSC services and programs does not require the approval of the Research Review Panel, student level data must be requested through a formal data request through the EVSC Office of Accountability. (See Appendix B)

Board Contracted Research

Research conducted by Board contractors in accordance with their contract with the Board or a memorandum of understanding with EVSC department or school. EVSC contracted researchers may be requested to submit a full proposal to the EVSC Research Review Panel.

External Research

External research includes (1) independent research conducted by individuals, organizations, or agencies not affiliated with the EVSC; (2) research conducted by EVSC employees for personal purposes outside of their work duties and/or work hours, (e.g. research for the completion of a college class, master's thesis or doctoral dissertation or for any other personal purposes); or (3) product research conducted by company or entity to study a product's effectiveness for potential sale to the Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation.

External researchers must submit an Application to Conduct Research within the Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation (Appendix B) if they propose to conduct research.

A. Research Review Process for External Research

The Research Review Panel is comprised of members representing the following offices; EVSC Office of Accountability, Office of Schools & Instructional Core and community partners. The RRP meets monthly to evaluate all forms of requests (i.e. new proposals for research, resubmissions and continuing projects) to conduct research. Decisions resulting from the research review process will be emailed to the applicant of the request as well as appropriate staff after the monthly meetings.
Researchers may not begin any research activities or obtain data for research purposes without first following the procedures outlined in this policy and securing the necessary approvals.

B. Criteria for Evaluating Research Proposals

In addition to complying with EVSC policy, federal and state laws and regulations, proposed research should also:

- Prevent the undue disruption of the educational process
- Demonstrate educational value, either to the Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation directly or as a contribution to the profession of education.
- Manifest a sound research methodology using valid and reliable techniques and the research capacity and experience to successfully complete the project. Studies judged as poorly designed or justified may be rejected by the panel.
- **Research proposals will be reviewed when the applicant submits all required information and any additional documentation as requested by the Research Review Panel.**

C. Research Restrictions

The following are important EVSC and RRP policies to consider in selecting participating schools, in determining recruitment and data collection procedures, and in providing compensation for participation.

- There must be minimal interference with school instruction and operations and relationships between students, parents and school and district staff. Personal, social, psychological or medical research that may be in conflict with the rights of individuals or groups will not be approved.

- The anticipated use of EVSC staff time or resources during the research must be specified in the "Application to Conduct Research within the EVSC". In addition, the RRP will not grant permission for the use of EVSC school buildings for data collection. This arrangement must be made with the school principal.

- EVSC is not responsible for recruiting participants for research. School staff may not be utilized to collect data without prior approval.

- Researchers may not request data directly from schools or departments. All data requests must be submitted to the Office for Performance, Assessment, and Research for handling. Researchers may not receive personally-identifiable student level data unless the researcher also provides PAR with written evidence that the parent or student, as appropriate, has consented to the release of student records.

- Research conducted by an EVSC employee:
    - Must occur in compliance with EVSC Board Policy 3231 "Outside Activities of Staff". The anticipated use of EVSC staff time or resources during the research must be specified in the "Application to Conduct Research within the EVSC".
    - Generally, may not include research on individuals known to the researcher. In general, researchers should use independent research subjects in their studies. For example, it is not advisable for principals to collect data from staff in their schools because this would present a conflict of interest. Similarly, it is not advisable for teachers to collect data from their current or former students. **If the researcher proposes to conduct research on individuals known to him/her, how conflict of interest will be avoided must be discussed in the application.**

- The RRP may place additional conditions on an external researcher as deemed necessary including but not limited to requirements related to insurance, Institutional Review Board and criminal background checks (at researcher's expense). RRP's approval of an external research project may be withdrawn.

D. Research Proposal Requirements

All requests to conduct research within the Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation must be submitted in writing by the final submission date each month in order to be reviewed at the following meeting. We strongly encourage submission of request 60 days in advance of proposed research commencement. A list of scheduled meetings and the submission deadline for each is provided in Appendix A.
An electronic copy of the application should be sent to:

Attn: Research Review Panel
frances.dumas-hines@evsck12.com

All research proposals must include the following:

1. Fully completed Application to Conduct Research within the EVSC.

2. Institutional Review Board approval

    If the research includes an intervention or interaction with a living person (i.e., student, teacher or parent) that <u>would not occur but for the research</u>, or if the researcher will obtain identifiable private data or information, then the researcher must get advance approval from an Institutional Review Board (IRB). Surveys, interviews, videotaped observations, questionnaires and reviews of student files are all interventions or

interactions that would require IRB review. Research that is typically exempted from IRB must include an exemption letter.

An IRB is generally associated with colleges or universities. The IRB evaluates whether the risk to the subjects of the research is reasonable in relation to the potential benefit [21 CFR 56.111(a)(2)] and, if the research is approved, will specify whether the researcher needs to obtain informed consent from the subjects of the research. A researcher's lack of affiliation with a college, university, or other institution with an IRB, does not remove the IRB review requirement from the EVSC Research Review Panel process.

The fact that an IRB has approved a proposal for research does not mean that EVSC must approve it. IRB approval only means that the proposed research design is in compliance with the federal regulations regarding human subject research. EVSC may determine that IRB-approved research does not warrant EVSC support for the reasons previously described.

3. Copy of any survey or other instruments
   This includes any assessments administered to students. For online surveys, a listing of the items and a link to the online survey is required.

4. IRB approved and stamped copy of the informed parent consent form(s)
   All external research surveys, assessments, analyses or evaluations require the prior written and active informed consent of a parent or legal guardian on behalf of a minor student before data collection commences. Regardless of the sponsoring university or agency's requirements, parent consent form must be written in easily understood language and should provide the following information:

   - Title of the study and identification of the researcher(s) conducting the study (e.g., doctoral candidate at Indiana University);
   - The purpose(s) for collecting data (e.g., to learn about foreign language acquisition in primary school students);
   - Description of what participants will be asked to do (e.g., complete a written survey, respond to a group interview with eight other students);
   - Amount of time required of participants;
   - Notice that participants will be audio- or videotaped (if applicable) with an explanation of how the recordings will be used and what happens to the tapes after the research is completed;
   - Description of any individually-identifiable student data to which the researcher seeks access (e.g., test scores, attendance records, address and phone number) and how and when data will be destroyed. There must also be a separate yes/no check box referring to the release of student level data;
   - Notice that all information will remain confidential;
   - Notice that participation is entirely voluntary and participants may withdraw from the study at any time, without negative consequences;

- Notice of any reasonably foreseeable risks or benefits to the participant;

- A local or toll free telephone number of researcher(s), so that the parent or participant may call if there are questions or concerns;

- Space and lines for the student's name and parent/guardian signature. There must be a check-off for either consent or refusal to participate and the parent signature must refer to "Yes, I agree to have my child participate" or "No, I do not give consent for my child to participate". Active consent, i.e., signature approving participation, is required under the federal Protection of Human Subjects regulations. Passive consent, failure to object after notice, is not sufficient.

- If the consent form is longer than one page, a summary of what participants will be asked to do and/or the student level data to be requested from EVSC must appear immediately above the parent's signature.

- In addition, the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) passed under the No Child Left Behind Legislation requires that parents/guardians have access to the materials that will be used in school with their children. Therefore, all consent forms should include the following text:

Parents please be aware that under the Protection of Pupil Rights Act. 20 U.S.C. Section 1232(c)(1)(A), you have the right to review a copy of the questions asked of or materials that will be used with your students. If you would like to do so, you should contact [INSERT APPROPRIATE CONTACT] at (XXX) XXX-XXXX to obtain a copy of the questions or materials.

This indicates that researchers must have a plan to provide parents/guardians access to the surveys or materials that does not utilize EVSC staff or resources.

5. IRB approved and stamped copy of the student assent form
   Students who are age 12 (6th grade) and up are required to sign an assent form. This form should include many of the elements described above and the text of the form should be at an appropriate reading level to ensure students understand their participation in the research project.

6. IRB approved and stamped copy of the staff consent form
   Active informed consent forms must also be signed by any EVSC staff asked to participate in research. Consent forms are to include all of the relevant elements described above.

Special notes on consent and assent forms

- If there is the possibility that parents and/or students do not understand English, forms in appropriate alternative languages must be provided.
- The researcher must retain all consent and assent forms, and must be prepared to make them available if a parent, teacher or school official questions a student's or staff member's participation.
- To avoid any perceived coercion, the invitation to participate in research is to be printed on the researcher's stationery, and not on that of any office or school of the Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation. Consent and assent forms may not indicate EVSC support or approval of the research study.

E. Approved Studies

Notice of Approval or Acknowledgement

If a research proposal is approved, the RRP will issue a research approval letter to the Researcher. The RRP will issue an acknowledgement letter to researchers who only are required to complete the Notice of Intent to Conduct Research form. The RRP's approval of a research proposal is limited to the study scope and methods outlined in the proposal or EVSC contract.

Limited Approval

The RRP's approval/acknowledgement of an external research study is conditional and subject to further approval by the school principal(s) and research subject(s) that form the basis for the proposed study. A principal may place restrictions on an External Researcher's access to students and staff to minimize disruption to school activities.

Modifications

If a Researcher wishes to modify the research scope, methods or materially change the research activities (including surveys or other instruments or consent forms), the Researcher must obtain prior written approval of the modification from the RRP (see: the Modification & Continuing Review Process Coversheet in the appendix). For EVSC contracted researchers, this obligation shall exist in addition to any other requirements regarding project modifications that may be specified in their contract or memorandum of understanding.

Duration

The RRP's approval of an external research project will only be valid for a period of one year. If research activities extend beyond one year, the external researcher must request approval for an extension from the RRP (see: the Modification & Continuing Review Process Coversheet) Appendix C. The RRP's approval of an EVSC contracted research project will be valid for the duration of the contract.

The researcher may be required to submit status reports to the RRP. Upon completion of the research study, the researcher must send a letter to the RRP notifying the committee of completion of the study. A copy of the final report or summary of the results must be provided to the Research Review Panel, and to the principal of the school studied. The Evansville Vanderburgh School Board of Education reserves the right to use the information in the research report or summary for educational programming or services, planning, solicitation of grants, staff development and any other purposes to improve instruction or services to students of the Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation. These reports must be emailed in PDF format to frances.dumas-hines@evsck12.com or submitted by mail to the EVSC Research Review Panel.

Note on Rejected Proposals:

Proposals that are rejected by the Research Review Panel are deemed by the EVSC as having issues that likely cannot be addressed with a resubmitted proposal. Because of this, researchers whose proposals are rejected are not encouraged to resubmit their proposals. Should a researcher insist on resubmitting a proposal, s/he cannot do so for 2 review cycles.

F. Fee Structure

Fees for External Researchers

The Office of Accountability (OA) is authorized under the EVSC's ResearchStudy and Data Guidelines to establish reasonable fees to charge researchers when necessary for thereview and evaluation of proposals and the compilation of requested data.

Rationale for charging fees:

The Indiana Department of Education, through its website (http://ww.doe.in.gov), makes available to the general public aggregate data on many test scores and metrics. Researchers' requests for additional aggregate or student-level data often require an investment of staff time to define the parameters of the request and to write queries to pull the requested data. The EVSC is interested in facilitating new knowledge acquisition through educational research, but also must balance this interest with compliance with federal and state laws as well as ensuring the research will cause minimal disruption to the school environment.

Applicable to External Researchers only:
Under the guidelines, researchers can be considered either an EVSC contracted researcher, internal researcher, or an external researcher. The fee structure will apply to only the external researchers. In applicable situations OA staff will contact the requestor and discuss the details of the request. During this process, OA will generate an estimate of the number of staff hours and the total cost of filling the request. During this process, OA and the requestor will also agree upon a timeline for filling the request. Generally, requests can be filled in several weeks depending on the current workload of OA staff. When applicable, fees may be charged. Expedited requests may be subject to an additional fee and are not always possible.

APPENDIX A

Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation

2026-2027

Research Review Calendar

Submission Deadline	**Review Date**
August 3, 2026	August 17, 2026
September 7, 2026	September 21, 2026
October 5, 2026	October 19, 2026
November 2, 2026	November 16, 2026
December 7, 2026	December 21, 2026
January 4, 2027	January 18, 2027
February 1, 2027	February 16, 2027
March 1, 2027	March 15, 2027
April 5, 2027	April 19, 2027
May 3, 2027	May 17, 2027
June 1, 2027	June 14, 2027
July 6, 2027	July 19, 2027

Please note:

- Researchers should submit their research proposal at least 60 days in advance of when they plan to begin research activities.
- Deadlines are firm- there are no exceptions.
- Proposals must be received by 4 PM on the deadline date. Proposals sent on the deadline date and received the week after will be reviewed during the next cycle.

  It is recommended that proposals be sent well in advance of the deadline date.

APPENDIX B

Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation

APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH WITHIN EVANSVILLE VANDERBURGH SCHOOL CORPORATION

Please submit completed application to:

Director of Performance Management
Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation
Email: frances.dumas-hines@evsck12.com

Researcher's Name: _____

Position: _____

Home Address: _____

Home Phone: _____

Home email: _____

Work Address: _____

Work Phone: _____

Work email: _____

Member of EVSC staff? ☐ **No** ☐ **Yes** **Position:** _____

Is this research part of an educational requirement? ☐ **No** ☐ **Yes**

If yes -- **Institution:** _____

Department: _____

Degree sought: _____

Advisor/Professor: _____

Advisor's phone: _____

Is this research for:

☐ **a course** ☐ **a master's thesis** ☐ **a dissertation**

Has this study been approved by an IRB (Institutional Review Board)? ☐
Where?_____**If so, attach evidence of approval**

If not part of an educational requirement please indicate if your research is being done through an agency and if so, where? _____

Project title: _____
(Attach additional pages, if necessary, to complete the following sections.)

Brief summary of project purposes:

Value of the study to the Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation (applicant's opinion):

Hypotheses to be tested:

List instruments to be used (Note: One copy each of all instruments, including tests, surveys, questionnaires, and pictures to be used must be included with the request. For online surveys, a listing of the items & a link to the survey is required.):

Include a detailed description of methodology, research design, procedures, population and analysis:

Describe what participants will be asked to do:

Please list any specific school site(s) that you are requesting.

Has the school principal been contacted and has he/she given permission for this study?

If an EVSC employee and you request to conduct research with known individuals, please explain fully how a conflict of interest will be avoided.

Note: P.4(C) under "research conducted by EVSC employee" in "Guidelines for Requests to Conduct Research in the Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation"

How will compliance with FERPA (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html **and confidentiality/anonymity of student data be guaranteed?** (Note: A copy must be included of each of the information letters, consent forms and assessment forms to be used. See pg. 4-6 of "Guidelines to Conduct Research in the EVSC" for additional information.)

How do you plan to notify parents of this research? (Note: All relevant information outlined in 4(D) of the "Guidelines to Conduct Research in the Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation" must be included in the consent form.)

Number of persons to be involved:

_____ Administrators_____Teachers _____ Students

Specify grade levels:

_____Administrators _____ Teachers_____Students

Estimated time required of each:

_____ Administrators_____Teachers _____ Students

Specify the extent to which EVSC resources will be utilized:

Detail how much time away from assigned duties will be involved (in accordance with EVSC Board Policy 3231)**.**

Proposed Starting date: _____

Expected completion date: _____

Assurances:

I have read the Guidelines for Requests to Conduct Research in the Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation and hereby agree to conduct this project using the procedures and instruments described above and in accordance with the guidelines. I agree to submit interim reports (if required) and a final report within one month of the completion of this study to the EVSC Research Review Panel. I understand that if my research requires me to work in the schools, that I must obtain a criminal history check at my own expense. Further, if my research extends beyond one year I will notify the RRP via the "Modification and Review Coversheet".

Applicant's Signature: _____

Date: **_____**

Submit completed application (along with attachments noted in application) to Research Review Panel via email or at address noted on first page of this application.

EVANSVILLE VANDERBURGH SCHOOL CORPORATION USE ONLY

I have reviewed the proposed research study and consider the project to be educationally worthwhile, sound in research technique, and worthy of involvement of the EVSC.

SIGNATURES:

_____ _____

_____ _____

Research Review Panel Members

EVSC

APPENDIX C

Modification & Continuing Review Coversheet

Complete and submit if: there are changes to your approved proposal or if your research extends beyond one year after the original approval date.

Proposal Title:	Today's Date:
Researcher Name:	Original Approval Date:
Organization:	
Address:	
Phone:	Email:

Reason for requesting this extension:
Indicate purpose of this submission (select all that apply):

	Extension needed

Extensions will only be granted one year at a time. The IRB renewal letter must be provided.

If there are modifications to the proposal, complete the section below and submit the changes.

	Modification to original proposal

What are the modifications and why are they being made:
Indicate the portion of the proposal being modified (select all that apply):

	Research question or hypothesis
	Study timeline
	Study population
	Recruitment methods or advertising
	Methodology and/or procedures
	Consent form(s) and/or the process by which consent is obtained
	Survey/instruments
	Type of data collected
	Other (explain)
	Fee enclosed for processing

Send materials to:

Attn: Research Review Panel
Office for Performance, Assessment and Research
Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation
951. Walnut Street
Evansville, Indiana 47713

Office Use Only:

Continuance Review:_____/_____/_____ Letter Sent:_____/_____/_____