

## Instruction

### Research Studies and Projects

The Racine Unified School District supports research designed to improve all phases of the learning process. Surveys, testing instruments, questionnaires and interviews are all a part of the process of research and evaluation.

The Racine Unified School District engages in a number of research activities in an attempt to evaluate many of its current programs. As a result, the District frequently may call upon our students and staff to participate in testing activities and to respond to various questionnaires and surveys. For this reason, the District must carefully evaluate all requests for research which originate either inside or outside Racine Unified School District. Only a limited number shall be approved.

#### 1. Research Requiring Approval:

- a) Collection of data from students, parents, teachers, school staff, and/or district staff.
- b) Observations, surveys, focus groups, interviews, evaluations, or other types of research.
- c) Release of private data from district records.
- d) Personal research study.
- e) Program evaluation.
- f) Research conducted for degree/course requirement, including action research projects.

#### 2. Criteria for Research:

- a) Aligned with District priorities and/or School Board policy.
- b) Minimize disruption to teaching and learning.
- c) Comply with all federal and state laws, School Board policies and procedures.
- d) Protects student privacy.

#### 3. Priority Research

- a) Highest priorities are given to studies or projects related to instructional programs already in operation within the District or to projects which might lead to revisions or improvements in the District's instructional program.
- b) The next level of priority is given to studies or projects which will add to the general fund of educational knowledge and would be of direct educational or instructional benefit to the District.

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- c) The lowest priority is assigned to those studies or projects which may add to the knowledge but have little or no relationship to the District's priorities.
4. Compensation
- a) Students are not allowed to receive compensation.
  - b) Staff may be allowed to receive compensation when work is performed outside of normal work hours and prior permission has been obtained from the Office of Human Capital.
5. Review of Research Proposal Requests
- a) Requests are reviewed by the Department of Accountability.
  - b) Requests submitted by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month will be reviewed by the last day of the month submitted.
  - c) Applications submitted after the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month will be reviewed by the end of the following month.
  - d) Applicants will be notified if their application was approved or denied the week following the review date.
  - e) All research proposal requests shall be considered at the sole discretion of the Department of Accountability.
6. Regulations Affecting Surveys or Research Projects
- a) All surveys and research project requests must be directed to the Department of Accountability. Such requests must be in writing, and at a minimum, follow the format outlined on the "Research/Survey Proposal Request" (Appendix A).
  - b) A signed copy of the *Appropriate Use of Data Agreement to Protect Privacy/Statement of Non-Disclosure to Release Confidential Information* form must be included with the Research/Survey Proposal Request. Each individual on the research team who will have access to the data must sign the agreement form.
  - c) A research project or survey collecting data from school records, interviews or through questionnaires has the potential for invasion of privacy of

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students or their families, even though the data is to be collected and reported under conditions of anonymity, and therefore, must adhere to the following process:

- (1) At least ten (10) business days prior to the start of the project or survey, parents/guardians shall be notified (through specific mailing to the child's listed residence), that their child(ren) have been identified as being within a population subject to the research project or data collection.
  - (2) The notice will explain the method of data collection, its purpose and the intended use of the information.
  - (3) Parents/Guardians will be alerted to any potential for the invasion of privacy of students or their families.
  - (4) Parents/Guardians will be provided assurance that the data will be collected and reported under conditions of anonymity.
  - (5) Enclosed within the notice will be a form provided for denial of permission for the child's participation. Specific directions will be included for return of the denial (e.g. "If you prefer for your child not to participate in this study, please return the enclosed form to your child's school office (ADDRESS) by (DATE)"). Parents/Guardians shall have a minimum of two weeks response time.
  - (6) The notices will include contact information for parent/guardian questions.
  - (7) All expenses incurred in the production, mailing and administration of these notices will be borne by the research study and/or project sponsors.
- d) The participant's parent(s)/guardian(s) must have ample opportunity to inspect the materials before electing to deny child participation. Parent(s)/guardian(s) may withdraw consent for child participation at any time.
- e) A copy of all tests and questionnaires to be given as part of the project must be filed with the Superintendent of Schools, through the Department of

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Accountability. A copy should be included with the research request proposal.

- f) A copy of all results and any interpretation of results must also be filed with the Superintendent of Schools, through the Department of Accountability.
- g) A copy of all results and any interpretation of results shall be provided to the Superintendent of Schools, through the Department of Accountability, prior to any results or interpretations being made public.
- h) Instructional activities or District curriculum scope and sequence must not be interrupted or changed unless there is a clear significance for improvement of the educational program of the District.
- i) No control or experimental group will be denied the use of the best teaching methods in use in the District.

Legal Reference: Wis. Stats. §§ 115.297; 118.125; 118.169  
 Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g;  
 34 C.F.R. Part 99  
 Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment, 20 U.S.C. § 1232h;  
 34 C.F.R. Part 98  
 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1400;  
 34 C.F.R. Part 300; 34 C.F.R. Part 303  
 Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, 42 U.S.C. §  
 300gg and 29 U.S.C. § 1181 *et seq.* and 42 U.S.C. § 1320d *et*  
*seq.*; 45 C.F.R. Part 164

Policy adopted: April 19, 1999  
 Policy reviewed: August 21, 2000  
 Administrative Regulation modified: December 19, 2016

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## Appendix A

## RESEARCH/SURVEY PROPOSAL REQUEST

Title of Project:

Name and Affiliation of Person Submitting Proposal (Include contact information and Instructional Review Board (IRB) or other approval forms from the college or university when research is conducted for a course or degree program):

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I. DEFINITION OF THE PROJECT

- A. Statement of the proposed project
- B. Brief history of the problem
- C. Definition of terms
- D. Hypotheses
- E. Identification of all individuals who will be participating in the project

II. DESIGN OF THE PROJECT

- A. Extent of school personnel involved
- B. Description of student involvement in the project
  - 1. Number needed
  - 2. Age or grade level and student subgroups needed
  - 3. Amount of time needed
- C. Instrumentation (tools used to conduct research, collect data)
- D. Procedure for data collection
  - 1. Data security plan.
  - 2. Signed copy of the *Appropriate Use of Data Agreement to Protect Privacy/Statement of Non-Disclosure to Release Confidential Information* form for each individual on the research team who will have access to the data must sign and submit the form.
  - 3. Data breach response plan
- E. Proposed date for beginning and end of project

III. PROCESS OF EVALUATION

IV. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROJECT

- A. For the school district
- B. For education in general

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## Appendix B

**Appropriate Use of Data Agreement to Protect Privacy  
Statement of Non-Disclosure to Release Confidential Information**

You have been granted permission to access secure, confidential data about students in the Racine Unified School District (RUSD). Protecting student privacy is required by law and is the highest priority of the RUSD. Resources regarding protecting student privacy in Wisconsin are provided at <http://dpi.wi.gov/wise/data-privacy>.

To protect the privacy of students, you are required to agree to each of the statements below. Please acknowledge your agreement by reading each statement and signing this agreement. Each individual participating in an approved research project or partnership with the District, who will be analyzing or having access to the approved data must sign this agreement.

This agreement must be sent to the Department of Accountability before data will be released and before research can begin.

- I will respect and safeguard the privacy of students and the confidentiality of student data.
- I will comply with state and federal privacy laws and all district regulations, policies, and procedures established to maintain the confidentiality of student data.
- I will not disclose or transmit confidential data to persons not specifically authorized access to these data by the district.
- I will use the confidential data for legitimate educational purposes only as necessary to perform the agreed upon tasks, and only as agreed upon in the approved proposal.
- I will not share my access passwords and access rights (if applicable) with anyone.
- I understand my obligation to protect the confidentiality of the student data I will be accessing.
- In the event of a data breach, I will ensure appropriate protocols are carried out to protect the confidentiality of student data.
- I agree to comply with all applicable District and Board policies with respect to pupil records and data.

I agree to comply with the above procedures.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

Date \_\_\_\_\_