



Information and Instructions
for
Conducting Research

External Agencies

Department of Research, Data, and Evaluation

1701 Mountain Industrial Boulevard
Stone Mountain, GA 30083-1027
678-676-0300

Dr. Rebecca Braaten, Director
Dr. Melisha Harris, Coordinator II
Mr. Michael Shaw, Coordinator II
Dr. Carol Thurman, Coordinator II

Table of Contents

General Information	3
Submission Calendar.....	3
Website.....	4
Contact Information	4
External Agency Research Information	5
External Agency Research Application	6
Employee Compensation to Participate in Research Studies.....	6
Research Process Flow Chart.....	7
DCSD Strategic Goal Areas	8
Letter of Informed Consent Checklist.....	9
Sample Letter of Informed Consent	10
Research Review Board's Rubric	11
Research Review Board Standards	12

General Information

DeKalb County School District
Information and Instructions for Conducting Research
Please read carefully prior to requesting to conduct research.

The DeKalb County School District reserves the right to approve or deny at any time any research conducted in the district.

The **Purpose** of this process is to govern and coordinate research conducted in the DeKalb County School District (DCSD) for the following reasons:

- To protect the rights and privacy of students, parents/guardians, and staff;
- To protect instructional time;
- To promote continuous improvement in student achievement;
- To benefit the DCSD and support the mission, goals, and strategic plan;
- To ensure that the research will inform educational practice.

The DeKalb County School District’s **Board of Education** has adopted policy KIB-R Special Interest Material Distribution, Research, Surveys, and Questionnaires. This policy states that before any survey, questionnaire, or other data collecting instruments are administered, the Department of Research, Data, and Evaluation shall first approve it in writing. This policy shall apply to requests made by employees of the DeKalb County School District and/or external requests to conduct research within the district. Approval will be based on consistent procedures in keeping with established policies. Any study that involves data collection through observation, interview, survey, tests, and other data collection devices is defined as “research” and is subject to these policies and procedures.

Submission Calendar

Research Proposal Review Calendar for the School Year 2022-2023

Submission Deadline (<i>Midnight</i>)	Reviewed	Decision Letter Sent (<i>approximate date</i>)
August 19, 2022	September 2022	October 2022
December 16, 2022	January 2023	February 2023
April 12, 2023	May 2023	June 2023

FRIDAY, MARCH 31, 2023

**IS THE LAST DAY TO COLLECT DATA IN THE SCHOOLS
FOR THE 2022-2023 SCHOOL YEAR**

Website

**DeKalb County School District's
Research webpage**

<https://www.dekalbschoolsga.org/research-data-evaluation/>

Contact Information

Questions about the research application or review process?

Dr. Rebecca Braaten
Director
Research, Data, and Evaluation
rebecca_braaten@dekalbschoolsga.org
phone: 678-676-0472

Dr. Carol Thurman
Coordinator II
Research, Data, and Evaluation
Carol_thurman@dekalbschoolsga.org
Phone:678-676-0677

External Agency Research Information

DeKalb County School District (DCSD) External Agency Research

Research requiring Research Review Board approval is research initiated by DCSD employees for the purpose of a doctorate degree (dissertation) requirement consisting of data collection at multiple school sites. Research needing RRB approval also includes studies initiated by central office employee, **a non-DCSD employee, e.g. a university faculty member, professional research organization, a government agency, or research for the purposes of a grant.**

- Applications must be submitted electronically via the survey link by midnight of the submission deadline listed on the Research Proposal Review Calendar for 2022-2023.
- Answer all questions in the application and provide all supporting information/documents requested.
- Incomplete applications will not be reviewed.
- Proposal applications that are not representative of scholarly work or are not professionally prepared will not be reviewed and will be automatically denied.
- Proposals that require district or school staff other than the researcher to collect data and/or provide reports for study purposes will be denied.
- Proposals to conduct studies that are not logically feasible in the district will be denied.
- Applications to conduct research within the DeKalb County School District are reviewed three times a year (September, January, and May). We do not provide expedited reviews.
- The DCSD Research Review Board (RRB), which includes Research, Data, and Evaluation staff, district leaders, content experts, and school leaders, evaluates all research applications based on the DCSD Research Standards and determines which studies will be approved.
- Researchers will receive a decision letter via e-mail regarding the status of their applications between the last week of the review month and the first week of the month after the review.

Researchers who receive DeKalb RRB approval will be provided a signed approval letter and a DCSD Research identification number from the Department of Research, Data, and Evaluation. To secure approval from the principal(s), provide the principal(s) a copy of your approval letter, application form, copies of all data collection instruments, and Letters of Informed Consent. Once the researcher has received permission from the principal(s), the researcher may contact staff, parents, and/or students. Principals **may decline participation** in any research study at their own discretion. **School staff, parents, and students may elect not to participate** in a research study even if it is approved by the DCSD Research Review Board (RRB) and the principal.

*All research proposals are approved for one calendar year as submitted. Changes or extensions must be requested in writing to the Department of Research, Data, and Evaluation. Researchers who receive a denial to conduct research in the DeKalb County School District may submit a new application for later review.

Research, Data, and Evaluation has placed the Research Review Board Research Application online. All interested researchers/applicants must:

1. Have the following five/six documents saved electronically in **ONE** file document. The application will ask you to upload this file.
 - a. Narrative of the proposed study
 - b. Complete list of references from the study formatted correctly
 - c. All data collection instruments and protocols (ex: survey or interview questions)
 - d. Permission letter to use published survey (if using a published instrument)
 - e. Letter(s) of Informed Consent
 - f. Researcher's resume
2. Go to the link below
3. Complete the application. The save and continue feature is active on the online application. This allows you to start the application and finish it at another time (if necessary). When using the same computer, previously entered information will be saved.
4. Once the application has been submitted, a copy will automatically be sent to two places:
 - a. The researcher submitting the form.
 - b. The Research, Data, and Evaluation department.
5. Someone in Research, Data, and Evaluation will contact you once the application packet is complete with next steps.

External Agency Research Application Link:

<https://survey.sogosurvey.com/r/rKXVjQ>

Employee Compensation to Participate in Research Studies

For information on DeKalb County School District's Board Policy concerning gifts to employees, please click on the link below:

<https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Policy/ViewPolicy.aspx?S=4054&revid=8YvdQplusaOKBtUBaXTWQUvp&PG=6&st=gifts&mt=Exact>

DeKalb County School District
Department of Research, Data, and Evaluation (RDE)

Research Process Flow Chart

Local School Research	Research Review Board
Researcher submits online application w/attachments to Research, Data, and Evaluation.	Researcher submits online application to Research, Data, and Evaluation. Applications may also be submitted by government agencies or research institutes.
Principal submits online approval form to Research, Data, and Evaluation.	RDE staff reviews the application packet (1st screening).
Research, Data, and Evaluation receives both the application and the principal approval form.	Research proposal is accepted or denied for RRB review.
Research, Data, and Evaluation files the information for tracking purposes	RRB review proposals 3x a year (2 nd screening). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September, January, and May
Researcher conducts local research study.	RRB sends a letter of approval or denial to the researcher.
Researcher forwards a copy of completed research project to the RDE department.	If approved, researcher secures permission from the principal(s) to conduct the research at the school site. If denied, researcher may resubmit proposal (at a later date).
	Researcher conducts study.
	Researcher submits a copy of the completed study to RDE.

Denial may be based on one or more of the following criteria.

- Failure to protect the rights and privacy of students, parents/guardians, and staff
- Failure to protect instructional time
- Failure to promote continuous improvement in student achievement
- Lack of benefit for DCSD and support of the mission, goals, and strategic plan
- Failure to ensure that the research will inform educational practice
- Failure to provide a complete application w/attachments
- Failure to submit a professionally prepared proposal
- Failure to submit a proposal that exemplifies scholarly work
- Failure to submit a research proposal that is logistically feasible in the school district

DCSD Strategic Goal Areas

DCSD Strategic Plan **Goal Areas and Performance Objectives**

Goal Area I: Student Success with Equity and Access

- Increase the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement experiences
- Provide academically rigorous courses and/or pathways
- Increase graduation rate for all students

Goal Area II: Stakeholder Engagement and Communication

- Increase the effectiveness of stakeholder experiences
- Improve opportunities for innovative stakeholder collaboration
- Improve and ensure effective district internal and external communication

Goal Area III: Staff Effectiveness

- Recruit highly qualified staff
- Develop high performing staff
- Retain highly effective staff

Goal Area IV: Culture and Climate

- Create and maintain a safe, orderly, positive learning environment for
- Establish and maintain clear and high expectations for excellence for all stakeholders
- Cultivate culturally responsive learning environments for all
- Provide support for social and emotional learning for

Goal Area V: Organizational Excellence

- Ensure excellent financial management
- Ensure efficient use of resources

Goal Area IV: Facilities

- Improve and maintain facility conditions
- Ensure that educational facilities meet programmatic needs
- Develop and increase sustainable funding for facilities

Letter of Informed Consent Checklist

- ___ 1. The approximate date that the letter will be distributed.
- ___ 2. The title of the proposed research study.
- ___ 3. A brief explanation of the research objectives.
- ___ 4. The research methods to be used (survey, focus group, interview, analysis of test scores etc.) If audio taping, videotaping, or photographing is involved, it must be explicitly stated.
- ___ 5. The expected duration of the subject's participation.
- ___ 6. Identification of any procedures that are experimental.
- ___ 7. A description of any reasonably foreseeable risks or discomforts to the subject— if none, this must be stated.
- ___ 8. A description of any benefits to the subject that may reasonably be expected from the research - if none, this must be stated.
- ___ 9. A statement explaining how confidentiality of data identifying the subject will be maintained.
- ___ 10. A privacy notice that personally identifiable information and the specific name of the school or site will not be included in the final report.
- ___ 11. A statement describing what access to student records is needed—if none, this must be stated.
- ___ 12. Contact information for the researcher (name, telephone number, and email address) Do not use DCSD telephone numbers and/or DCSD first class email addresses.
- ___ 13. Contact information (name, telephone number, and email address) for an institutional contact Person is also required in case someone has a question or concern about the research and/or the right also of subjects.
- ___ 14. A statement that participation is voluntary and refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled.
- ___ 15. A statement that the subject may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled.
- ___ 16. A statement that participants and parents/guardians of students have the right to inspect, upon request, any instrument or materials related to the proposal within a reasonable period of time after the request is received.
- ___ 17. Directions for how to return the letter.
- ___ 18. A line on which the participant or parent/guardian should sign.
- ___ 19. A line on which the signer's name should be printed legibly.
- ___ 20. A line on which the participant's name should be printed legibly (if he/she was not the signer).
- ___ 21. A line on which to write the date the document was signed.
- ___ 22. Make sure that the letter of informed consent has been proofread for clarity, spelling, punctuation, grammar, and mechanics.

Sample Letter of Informed Consent

(Date)

Dear (parent/guardian, student, colleague, other),

I am currently enrolled as a graduate student at (name of institution). As a requirement for my (class, certification program, degree), I will be conducting a research project entitled (title of project). The purpose of this research is to (give a brief description of the purpose of the research). I am requesting your permission to include (you, your child) as a participant in this project.

This project will begin on (beginning date) and end on (ending date). The project will involve (give a brief explanation of the procedures to be followed including experimental procedures). As a part of this research, I (will/will not) need to look at (your, your child's) (grades, test scores, etc.—give the name of the test or any other personal records that you plan to examine).

Possible benefits for the participants of this project are (give a brief explanation of the possible benefits for subjects). There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts for participants in this project. (If there are foreseeable risks or discomforts for subjects, you must describe them.) (Your, Your child's) name and all other personally identifiable information will be kept confidential. The name of (your, your child's) school or the school district will not be included in the final report.

(Your, Your child's) participation in this project is voluntary. (You, Your child) will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which (you, your child) are otherwise entitled if you decide that (you, he/she) will not participate in this research project. If (you, your child) decide(s) to participate in this project, (you, he/she) may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. You have the right to inspect any instrument or materials related to the proposal. Your request will be honored within a reasonable period after the request is received.

(Researcher's name) _____

(Researcher's school) _____

(Researcher's phone number) _____ (researcher's email address) _____

(Institutional contact's name [major professor, advisor, dissertation chair,]) _____

(Institutional contact's affiliation [college, university, etc.]) _____

(Institutional contact's phone number) _____

(Institutional contact's email address) _____

If you agree to (allow your child to) participate in this research, please complete the information below:

Participant's Name (please print) Participant's Signature Date

Parent/Guardian's Name (please print) Parent/Guardian's Signature Date
(For student participant) (For student participant)

Return to _____ by _____ (date)

Research Review Board’s Rubric

DCSD Department of Research, Data, and Evaluation RRB Proposal Rubric

- 1. The rights and privacy of students, parents/guardians, and staff are protected. __ yes __ no
- 2. Instructional time is protected. __ yes __ no
- 3. Continuous improvement in student achievement is promoted. __ yes __ no
- 4. The research will benefit the DCSD and support the mission, goals, and strategic plan. __ yes __ no
- 5. The research findings will inform educational practice. __ yes __ no

The DCSD RRB shall not grant approval of the research proposal if any of the above requirements are not met.

<i>The DCSD Research RRB shall rate each of the following indicators.</i>	<i>3 Points Excellent</i>	<i>2 Points Good</i>	<i>1 Point Marginal</i>	<i>0 Points Poor</i>
1. The research study aligns to the goals of the district’s Strategic Plan.				
2. The research will benefit educational practices.				
3. The purpose, significance, and relevance of the study are clearly articulated.				
4. The research questions (hypotheses) are appropriate for the purpose and design of the study.				
5. The methodology logically flows from the purpose of the study and the research questions (hypotheses).				
6. All data collection (surveys, focus groups, interviews, etc.) involving students and/or staff does not interrupt instructional time , assemblies, meetings, or professional learning sessions.				
7. The data collection methods and instruments are detailed and appropriate to the research questions and design of the study.				
8. The data analysis is thoroughly explained and will yield results directly related to the research questions (hypotheses).				
9. All research is scheduled in congruence with the DeKalb County School Calendar , avoiding the first and last week of classes and district-wide standardized testing dates. (mid-August – March 31)				
10. The timeline of conducting the study is feasible.				
11. The amount of time required of the participants (students or staff) is within reason.				
12. The application/proposal is professionally prepared and formatted . It exemplifies scholarly writing . (standard English –grammar and mechanics)				

Research Review Board Standards

1. Research Proposals conform to customary principles of scholarly educational research and scientific inquiry.

1.1 The purpose, significance, and relevance of the study are clearly articulated demonstrating a substantial need and value for the research.

1.2 The research aligns to the DeKalb County School District mission, goals, strategic plan, and instructional initiatives.

1.3 The review of literature provides an exhaustive summary of prior, relevant research and identifies a gap that the researcher's proposed study will fill.

1.4 The study is designed to answer a concise set of research questions and/or confirm or reject a clear set of research hypotheses.

1.5 The methodology logically aligns with the purpose of the study and the research questions/hypotheses.

1.6 Data collection instruments and protocols are detailed and are appropriate to the design of the study and aligned to the research questions/hypotheses.

1.7 The data analysis is thoroughly explained and will yield results directly related to the research questions/hypotheses.

1.8 Quantitative studies will include reliability and validity information for each data collection instrument.

1.9 Qualitative studies will include verification (trustworthiness) discussed in terms of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability and how their data collection methods and analysis will insure that the study is trustworthy.

1.10 Mixed methods studies will address reliability and validity for the quantitative portion and verification for the qualitative portion. They must explain the quantitative and qualitative portions relate or inform each other.

2. Instructional time and focus is protected.

2.1 Data may not be collected during instructional time if it interferes with learning. Data may not be collected during assemblies, meetings, or professional learning sessions.

2.2 Data may not be collected during the first week of classes, immediately preceding or following school holidays, or during standardized testing. Data may not be collected in the schools after March 30th.

2.3 The timeline of study must be feasible considering the school calendar and the data collection required.

3. All research proposal data collection must comply with FERPA guidelines protecting personal information of DCSD stakeholders.

3.1 The names of school stakeholders, school names, or the school district name may not be used.

3.2 All data collection instruments and protocols must adhere to FERPA guidelines. Additionally, questions must be age appropriate and demonstrate cultural sensitivity for diverse groups of stakeholders.

3.3 Data collection instruments and questions must be reviewed by the Department of Research, Assessments and Grants prior to distribution.

4. All references must be appropriately cited.

4.1 A complete reference list must be correctly formatted and included.

4.2 If data collection instruments/protocols have authors and/or publishers other than the researcher, letters documenting permission for the researcher to use the instrument/protocol must be attached.

5. All proposal applications must be professionally prepared and formatted.

5.1 Preparation and submission must adhere to DCSD guidelines.

5.2 The use of Standard English conventions and APA style is expected.