

<b>FREDERICK COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS</b>	<b>Reg. No. 200-41</b>
<b>Subject:</b> <b>RESEARCH REQUESTS</b>	<b>Issued:</b> <b>9/2/91</b>
<b>Preparing Office:</b> <b>Office of the Superintendent</b>	<b>Amended:</b> <b>1/31/18</b>

## I. Policy

## II. Purpose

Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) understands that research is important in evaluating the effectiveness of educational programs and initiatives, as well as providing information that contributes to the knowledge, development, and improvement of services provided to its students.

FCPS recognizes that it may receive requests to conduct research within FCPS from individuals and/or agencies. It is the responsibility of the school system to ensure that research conducted in FCPS is of high quality; protects the anonymity and/or confidentiality of participants; poses the least impact on instructional time; does not pose undue burden on staff, students, and/or parents; and supports the goals/objectives of FCPS. Therefore, anyone wishing to conduct independent, internal or external research within FCPS must receive permission through the process outlined below in this regulation.

The purpose of this regulation is to establish guidelines for how research within FCPS is approved and conducted, and how results from research activities are disseminated and/or published.

## III. Definitions

- A. Research – A research study is considered a systematic structure of investigation, evaluation, or measurement activities involving students, parents or staff members. Research studies can include the collection of new data or analysis of postsecondary or archival data.
- B. Action Research – Research that is conducted within schools and/or classrooms by administrators, teachers, interns, and/or other school system staff that provides diagnostic information that aids in improving, refining, and/or reflecting on academic, instructional, or organizational strategies.
- C. Data Collection – A research study may include, but is not limited to, quantitative or qualitative data collection methods such as surveys/questionnaires, interviews or focus groups, observations, document analysis, tests/assessments, and/or inventories or scales.

D. Student Personally Identifiable Information (PII) - COMAR 13A.08.02.03.B(13) – “Personally identifiable” means that the data or information includes:

1. The name of the student;
2. The student’s parent, guardian or other family member;
3. The address of the student;
4. A personal identifier, such as the student’s Social Security number or student number;
5. A list of personal characteristics which would make it possible to identify the student with reasonable certainty; or
6. Other information which would make it possible to identify the student with reasonable certainty.

NOTE: Any sharing of PII for instructional purposes must be in accordance with guidelines provided by the Department of Technology Infrastructure and in compliance with FCPS approved digital tool content platform.

E. Employee Personally Identifiable Information (PII) – Data elements such as an individual’s first name or first initial and last name, personal mark or unique biometric or genetic print or image combined with one or more of the following:

1. A Social Security Number;
2. A driver’s license number, state identification card number or other individual identification number issued by a unit;
3. A passport number or other identification number issued by the United States government;
4. An Individual Taxpayer Identification Number; or
5. A financial or other account number, a credit card number or a debit card number that, in combination with any required security code, access code or password, would permit access to an individual’s account.

F. Anonymity – Research participants are not identified and/or are not linked to data.

G. Confidentiality – The identity of and information about all research participants must be kept confidential (or private) and in compliance with laws protecting privacy, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

**IV. Procedures**

A. Any person or group wishing to conduct a research study in FCPS shall complete and submit the “Application to Conduct Research” to the coordinator of data analysis and research in the System Accountability and School Improvement (SASI) department.

1. Inclusions - Research that is conducted by, but not limited to:
  - a. Federal, state, or local agencies, national study groups, for-profit and non-profit organizations.
  - b. FCPS employees conducting research for coursework, master’s thesis, or doctoral dissertations.

- c. Non-FCPS employees conducting research for doctoral dissertation coursework.  
*Note: Per policy, FCPS will not consider undergraduate thesis research or master's degree studies by non-FCPS employees.*
  - d. FCPS students wanting to conduct research that is not part of their classroom assignments and/or research that will be shared beyond FCPS.
2. Exceptions to this requirement include:
- a. Studies undertaken at the direction of the Board of Education and/or the Superintendent of schools.
  - b. Studies mandated by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) or the United States Department of Education (USDE).
  - c. School-initiated action research projects approved by the school principal or designee.
  - d. Senior projects or informal surveys conducted at the school that are approved by the principal.
  - e. Sole use of publicly available data obtained from public sources, such as Maryland Report Card, MSDE, FCPS web site, etc.
3. Exclusions - Research studies not eligible for consideration include:
- a. Clinical research involving medication, drugs, or collection of biospecimens are not permitted in FCPS.
  - b. Undergraduate thesis research.
  - c. Master's degree studies by individuals who are not FCPS employees.
  - d. Research studies concerning the "protected areas" outlined in FCPS Regulation 400-67 *Student Surveys – Protection of Student Rights*.
  - e. Any individual or agency wishing to distribute materials (e.g., flyers, brochures) within schools to announce research opportunities for students, staff, or families. These requests should be submitted in accordance with FCPS Regulation 400-30 *Community Informational Materials*.
- B. Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval – Research that is part of a degree requirement must have the approval of the college or institution (i.e., IRB approval) before submitting the "Application to Conduct Research."
- C. Following receipt of the "Application to Conduct Research," the coordinator of data analysis and research shall designate a committee (or appropriate staff) to review the merits of the study and recommend whether or not permission shall be granted based on the following criteria:

1. Submission of application and all supporting materials;
  2. Relevance of the research study to the current needs and interests of FCPS;
  3. Technical soundness/quality of the research study;
  4. Qualifications of the researcher;
  5. Impact on the instructional day;
  6. Impact on staff time;
  7. Availability of data being requested;
  8. Safeguards of research participants;
  9. Right of privacy of the student, parent and staff;
  10. Parental consent where appropriate;
  11. Conflicts with state assessment programs; and
  12. In accordance with FCPS policies, procedures, and regulations.
- D. Timeline – Any person requesting to conduct research in FCPS must submit a copy of the application and supporting documentation/materials to the coordinator of data analysis and research a **minimum of 6 weeks** prior to the desired starting time of such project. It should be understood that this is an application and does not constitute an approval of the research.
- E. Researchers are not permitted to request data directly from FCPS schools or other FCPS departments without receiving approval.
- F. Approval of research studies does not guarantee access to schools, staff, or students. It is at the discretion of the school administrator to decide whether their school will participate in the research study. Participation in research studies, unless federally or state mandated, are voluntary. Once approved, researchers are held responsible for obtaining required consent from school administrators, staff, students, and/or parents.
- G. Any significant changes in research design (e.g., additional data collection, changes in targeted populations, etc.) must be resubmitted for further review and approval. If research is not completed within approved time period, then the researcher will need to be approved for an extension.
- H. FCPS employees offered a gift or monetary incentive over \$20 for participation in research will need to ensure compliance with Board Policy 109 *Ethics* prior to acceptance.
- I. Confidentiality and Data Security Requirements
1. Research records and materials must be properly secured and stored to prevent unauthorized access, use, modification, or disclosure.

2. Applicants may not share information about research participants, schools, or the district with third parties, except when additional approval has been granted.
3. Any breach of data security and confidentiality regarding the research should be communicated with the coordinator of data analysis and research.
4. Research records should be destroyed upon termination of the project.

J. Dissemination of Research Results

1. Identifiers must be removed from datasets and dissemination of results must be at an aggregate level.
2. FCPS' name, school name, or affiliation of research participants will not be used in dissemination and/or publication of research findings/results. Instead, descriptors such as school system in Western Maryland, may be used.
3. Upon completion of research, researchers are asked to share findings (and/or any resulting publications) with the coordinator of data analysis and research.

Approved:

*Original signed by*

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Theresa R. Alban  
Superintendent

## **PROCEDURES TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE FREDERICK COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM**

Any person requesting to do a research project relating to the Frederick County Public School (FCPS) system's staff, parents, or students must submit a copy of this application to the coordinator of data analysis and research **a minimum of 6 weeks** prior to the desired starting time of such project. Understand that this is an application and does not constitute an approval of the research project. Also, any research project that is part of a degree requirement must have the approval of the institution **before** it is submitted. All applications must be complete.

The coordinator of data analysis and research (and appropriate staff) will evaluate each research project based on the following criteria:

- Submission of application and all supporting materials;
- Relevance of the research study to the current needs and interests of FCPS;
- Technical soundness/quality of the research study;
- Qualifications of the researcher;
- Impact on the instructional day;
- Impact on staff time;
- Availability of data being requested;
- Safeguards of research participants;
- Right of privacy of the student, parent and staff;
- Parental consent where appropriate;
- Conflicts with state assessment programs; and
- In accordance with FCPS policies, procedures, and regulations.

### **Please complete the following application and forward to:**

Coordinator of Data Analysis and Research  
Frederick County Public Schools  
191 South East Street  
Frederick, MD 21701  
Phone: 301-696-6890  
Fax: 301-696-6956

## Frederick County Public Schools APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

**\* NO RESEARCH WILL BE CONDUCTED PRIOR TO APPROVAL \***

### SECTION 1: PRIMARY RESEARCH APPLICANT CONTACT INFORMATION

1. Applicant Name: Click or tap here to enter text.
2. Research Affiliated Institution/Organization: Click or tap here to enter text.
3. Address: Click or tap here to enter text.
4. Email Address: Click or tap here to enter text.
5. Home Phone: Click or tap here to enter text. Work Phone: Click or tap here to enter text.
6. Are you currently a FCPS employee?  Yes  No  Former FCPS employee  
If yes or former employer, provide your FCPS role and location: Click or tap here to enter text.

### SECTION 2: OTHER PERSONS INVOLVED WITH THE RESEARCH

7. Name: Click or tap here to enter text. Title/Affiliation: Click or tap here to enter text.
8. Name: Click or tap here to enter text. Title/Affiliation: Click or tap here to enter text.

### SECTION 3: QUALIFICATIONS OF RESEARCHER

9. Is your research for an educational degree program?  Yes, masters  Yes, doctoral  No
  - Degree/major on which you are working: Click or tap here to enter text.
  - If not for a degree program, please specify other: Click or tap here to enter text.
10. Years of work experience in this field: Click or tap here to enter text.

### SECTION 3: RESEARCH PURPOSE

11. Name of Study: Click or tap here to enter text.
12. Purpose of Study: Click or tap here to enter text.
13. Describe the benefits of the research to FCPS. Click or tap here to enter text.

### SECTION 4: RESEARCH DESIGN/PROCEDURES

14. Indicate the target population(s) and proposed data/data collection methods in your research.

Target Population	Postsecondary Data Analysis (specify)	Surveys	Interviews/ Focus Groups	Observations	Document Review	Other, specify:
<input type="checkbox"/> Students	<input type="checkbox"/> Click or tap here to enter text.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> School Principal	<input type="checkbox"/> Click or tap here to enter text.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<input type="checkbox"/> Teachers	<input type="checkbox"/> Click or tap here to enter text.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Parents	<input type="checkbox"/> Click or tap here to enter text.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Central office	<input type="checkbox"/> Click or tap here to enter text.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Click or tap here to enter text.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**15. School(s) of Interest:**

Elementary  Middle  High  Not applicable  Other, specify: Click or tap here to enter text.

- If specific schools are included in your research, please indicate which schools: Click or tap here to enter text.

**16. Provide additional information describing your targeted populations for your study (e.g., number targeted for your sample, targeted grades, special services, or demographics, etc.).** Click or tap here to enter text.

**17. Duration of research project:** Click or tap here to enter text.

**18. Estimate the time required of research participants (students, teacher, and other school personnel) involved.** Click or tap here to enter text.

**19. Indicate the research materials that are included with your research application.**

- Detailed research protocol (includes purpose of research, research questions, recruitment, methods, data privacy/security, data analysis, and reporting)
- Copy of IRB approval (If not included, please explain) Click or tap here to enter text.
- Consent form(s). No research project requiring home/family information or identification of individual students by name or code shall be approved without requiring informed parental consent. At minimum, consent forms should include a detailed explanation of the research and participant's involvement, benefits/risks, safeguards and confidentiality procedures, participant's voluntary choice to participate or withdraw, opportunity to receive copy of results, and contact to ask questions.
- Copy of survey(s)
- Copy of interview/focus group protocol or guide
- Other, specify:

**SECTION 5: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**20. Please provide any additional information regarding your research.** Click or tap here to enter text.



**SECTION 6: SIGNATURE**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

- For purposes of this form, my typewritten name is considered my signature.
- I understand that this application does not constitute an approval of the study for collection of data in the FCPS system.
- I have read and understand the policies and procedures outlined in FCPS Regulation No. 200-41.

**SECTION 7: STATUS OF REQUEST**

*To be completed by FCPS staff only.*

Rendered Decision:             Approved     Conditional approval     Denied

Name of Reviewer:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Aligned to FCPS Aspirational Goal(s):     Goal 1     Goal 2     Goal 3     Goal 4     Goal 5