

MCS D Research Policy:

Anyone desiring to conduct research activities in the Muscogee County School District must request permission in writing. The Department of Research, Accountability, and Assessment will coordinate a committee to evaluate the proposal and make a recommendation to the Superintendent, who must give written approval before data collection can begin. The definition of “research” shall be any systematic study that requires data collection using surveys, observation, interview, or scores. All research proposals should be submitted to the Director of the Department of Research, Accountability, and Assessment. No action will be taken on an incomplete proposal. The Research Evaluation Committee will meet three times each school year on or about September 1st, January 1st, and March 1st. Six copies of proposals should be submitted in final form at least four weeks before one of the dates above.

E-mail proposals will not be accepted. If the proposal is rejected, it will be returned with an explanation. If it is satisfactorily amended, it will be reviewed again at the next meeting. If it is rejected the second time, no explanation will be given, and the proposal will not be reviewed again. The proposal should include the following, organized with corresponding numbers and letters:

1. Cover sheet
 - a. Title of the Research Project
 - b. Name, address, phone number(s), and e-mail address of the primary researcher
 - c. Collaborators with the same information
 1. Co-researchers
 2. Major professor / instructor / advisor
 3. Sponsors
 - d. Reason for research – college course, grant, etc.
 1. Institution or organization
 2. Course Title and number
 3. Beginning and ending date for proposed research
2. Qualification of the researcher
 - a. Vita of primary researcher
 - b. Qualifications of other researchers or anyone assisting with data collection
3. Description of the Study
 - a. Problem under investigation
 - b. Description of the population being studied
 1. Plan for confidentiality or anonymity including plan for coding and destruction of code list
 2. Plan to protect participants from risk or invasion of privacy
 3. Ancillary documents, including directions
 - c. Interventions to be used
 - d. Data collection processes
 - e. Data analysis procedures
 - f. Copies of surveys, interview prompts, or observation rubrics
 - g. If changes are made after approval, it must be resubmitted
4. Informed consent should not be written on school letterhead and should include
 - a. The purpose of the project
 - b. How the participants were selected
 - c. What information is being requested?

- d. Anticipated benefits to the participants and to the school district
 - e. Possible risks: physical, legal, psychological, or other
 - f. To whom the results will be available and for what purposes
 - g. Participants' or guardians' right to inspect materials before consenting, and their right to withdraw consent at any time
 - h. The person to whom inquiries should be addressed before, during, and after the project
 - i. A statement that neither the school district nor the school is conducting the research nor sponsoring the project
 - j. Neither the parents nor the student will suffer adverse consequences from the school, the district, or the organization (such as college) if they do not wish to participate
5. Copies of all consent forms should be reviewed by the building administrator and kept at the school.
 6. All proposals will be reviewed by the Research Evaluation Committee. The committee will be an ad hoc group of at least four administrators and/or teachers from the following departments, who represent the population being sampled:
 - a. Research, Accountability, and Assessment
 - b. Division of Teaching and Learning
 - c. Division of Information Services
 - d. Program for Exceptional Students
 - e. Department of Gifted Education
 - f. Principal of the school for which the research is proposed
 - g. Division of Student Services
 7. The following criteria will be used to assess the value of the study:
 - a. The school district will not consider
 1. Sensitive topics such as drug use, sexual activity, family income, free and reduced lunch status, etc. (You may contact the Guidance Department to access any summary data that is open records.)
 2. Research conducted during instructional time for students or contract time for employees
 3. The release of individual student data to researchers
 4. The release of information about families
 5. Research with schools to which the researcher is not assigned
 6. Data collection that asks for political affiliations
 7. Data collection that evaluates job performance
 - b. The school district encourages:
 1. The use of online data such as the Georgia Public Education Report Card and the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) report for school comparisons.
 2. The Muscogee County School District website for test scores that can be used for comparison from year to year.
 8. Proposals should be read by the principal before they are submitted to the District office. The principal must sign the front of the proposal indicating that he or she has read the proposal and would be willing to insure that the research is conducted according to the proposal
 9. The researcher will be assigned to an administrator to monitor the data collection. The monitor may be the principal or someone in the department that oversees the population being researched.
 10. Researchers may not use data that has been generated in the classroom without approval from the Superintendent and consent from parents or guardians.
 11. A copy of the final research project must be filed with the Department of Research, Accountability, and Assessment upon completion.
 12. Principals who will not allow student teachers to conduct research should make that known to the teachers before the principal agrees to let them student teach at that school.