

RICHLAND COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT ONE

RESEARCH PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

All proposals for doing research within the District are to be submitted to the Research Committee administered by the Office of Accountability, Assessment, Research and Evaluation. Please submit proposals at least eight weeks prior to the time the study is to be conducted. Most proposals are reviewed within four to six weeks. The Research Committee consists of a chair and two other members from the District. Each committee member independently reviews research proposals with the following criteria in mind:

- ◆ the proposed study's potential benefit to the District
- ◆ the soundness of the proposed study's research design
- ◆ the amount of time required of participants
- ◆ the number of participants required
- ◆ the matter of whether participants should be compensated
- ◆ the legal, physical or psychological risks the subjects are exposed to
- ◆ the extent to which participants will be informed about the study

All participation in research studies is **voluntary**. **Principals and teachers who do not wish to participate have the right to refuse.** No research may be conducted during statewide testing or during other times as specified by the Research Committee (dates vary year to year). The participants of a study receive and sign an **informed consent form** that acquaints them with the study. In particular, parents of students asked to participate, and when appropriate, the students themselves, should be informed of the following:

- (1) the project's purpose;
- (2) how the student was selected;
- (3) the procedure to be followed, including an easily understood, precise description of the child's involvement;
- (4) anticipated benefits for general knowledge, the student, and the District;
- (5) possible physical, psychological, legal, or other risk;
- (6) whether students will be personally identifiable and to whom;
- (7) to whom results will be available and for what purpose;
- (8) participants'/parents' right to inspect materials before consenting and to withdraw consent at any time;
- (9) the person to whom inquiries should be addressed before, during, and after the project;
- (10) that the school is neither conducting nor sponsoring the project, if that is the case; and
- (11) the lack of adverse consequences of failure to participate.

Informed consent forms must also contain the following sentences:

- ◆ "I do not wish (my child) to participate." option.
- ◆ The school district is neither sponsoring nor conducting this research.
- ◆ **There is no penalty for not participating.**
- ◆ Participants may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Research proposals must contain the following:

- ◆ purpose and basis of the study
- ◆ procedures that will be used in the District:
 - ◆ data collection schedule
 - ◆ impact on instructional time at the schools, if any
 - ◆ selection method for participants/schools
 - ◆ what participants will be asked to do
 - ◆ potential risks and benefits to the participants
 - ◆ informed consent form
 - ◆ written materials participants receive (e.g., surveys)
- ◆ type of data collected and general overview of how the data is to be used and/or analyzed
- ◆ researcher's contact information (i.e., daytime phone number, fax number, e-mail address)

Students working on their thesis/dissertation must submit (a) research proposal application form (b) a summary of their thesis/dissertation proposal, (c) informed consent forms, (d) written material participants receive, (e) an approval letter from their ethics committee, and (f) a letter of support from their research adviser. The original thesis/dissertation proposal may also be submitted to the Committee as an appendix.

To expedite the review process, send or bring three **(3)** copies of your proposal to:

Research Committee
Accountability, Assessment,
Research and Evaluation
Richland School District One
1616 Richland St., Room 105
Columbia, SC 29201

If you need further assistance, contact the Chair of the Research Committee at (803) 231-7450.