



Information and Instructions  
for  
Conducting Research  
  
Local School Research

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## 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.

## 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?

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## Local School Research Information

### DeKalb County School District Local School Research

A local school action research project is research initiated by DCSD employees related to their roles, responsibilities, and or job duties. An action research project is often a requirement for a graduate course leading to a master's or specialist's degree, add-on certification, or a certification endorsement. Accordingly, research projects only involve data collection at the employees' place of employment (school site) and would therefore require only the approval of the school's principal as long as the research project meets these elements:

- The rights and privacy of students, parents/guardians, and staff are protected;
- Instructional time is protected;
- Continuous improvement in student achievement is promoted;
- The research project benefits the district and supports the mission, goals, and strategic plan;
- The research will be used to inform educational practice;
- Names of school stakeholders, school names, and/or the school district's name will not be used in the study, report, or paper.

Employees who plan to conduct local school action research projects that involve data collection at **more than one school site or at a school site other than the school where they are employed**, must submit the Research Review Board Research Application.

Research, Data, and Evaluation has placed the Local School 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. List of references or annotated bibliography
  - b. All data collection instruments (ex: survey or interview questions)
  - c. Permission letter to use published survey (if using a published instrument)
  - d. Letter(s) of Informed Consent
  - e. MOU, if applicable
  - f. Completed Principal Approval Form (automatically sent to your principal upon application submission)
  - g. 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 three places:

- a. The researcher submitting the form
  - b. The researcher’s principal stated in the application
  - c. The Research, Data, and Evaluation department
5. The principal will then complete an online approval form that will be sent to the Office of Research, Data and Evaluation to complete the researcher’s application.

**Local School Research Application Link**

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

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

**Research Process Flow Chart**

<b>Local School Research</b>	<b>Research Review Board</b>
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.	Researcher’s university/college also submits online approval application to Research, Data, and Evaluation.
Research, Data, and Evaluation receives both the application and the principal approval form.	RAG staff reviews the application packet (1st screening).
Research, Data, and Evaluation files the information for tracking purposes	Research proposal is accepted or denied for RRB review.
Researcher conducts local research study.	RRB review proposals 3x a year (2 <sup>nd</sup> screening). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• September, January, and May</li> </ul>
Researcher forwards a copy of completed research project to the RDE department.	RRB sends a letter of approval or denial to the researcher.
	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).
	Once study is completed, 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/attachment
- 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 VI: 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
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_____ Parent/Guardian's Name (please print) (For student participant)	_____ Parent/Guardian's Signature (For student participant)	_____ Date
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Return to \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

## Letter of Institutional Endorsement

### **DeKalb County School District** **Requirements for the Letter of Institutional Endorsement**

Any individual requesting approval for research to be conducted in the DeKalb County School District must request their university/college to submit a *Letter of Institutional Endorsement* written and signed by the researcher's advisor, major professor, instructor, dissertation committee chair, or appropriate college or university official.

RRB applicants: This letter will be submitted by a representative from the college/university when they submit their approval for the applying researcher.

Local Research applicants: This letter will be written by the university but submitted by the researcher during the application process.

The *Letter of Institutional Endorsement* must include:

- be on letterhead stationery from the college or university;
- include a recent date (within the past 3 months);
- state that the researcher is a current student and that the research project is part of an approved course of study;
- specifically state the title of the project;
- state that the research is proposed for the DeKalb County School District;
- University's IRB approval date or time frame dependent of district approval (doctoral dissertation studies);
- be signed by the advisor, major professor, dissertation committee chair, or other appropriate college or university official.