The Dallas ISD Research Review Board

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At-a-Glance

Purpose and Description

The Dallas ISD supports high quality research that addresses well-formed research questions of educational importance. At the same time, the district has moral and legal obligations that require oversight of research activities that make use of district resources such as data, facilities, employee time, or access to students.

In order to conduct research in the Dallas ISD, a proposal must be submitted to and reviewed by the district’s Research Review Board (RRB). The RRB is housed within the Department of Evaluation & Accountability, and draws on the expertise of district researchers and program evaluators, as well as the professional knowledge of staff from the departments of Teaching and Learning, Student Services, School Leadership, and Legal Services, among others.

External research proposals must demonstrate clear and direct educational value to the district and not just to the profession of education in general; be minimally disruptive to the educational process; manifest a sound research methodology; and comply with current privacy laws. The potential direct benefit to Dallas ISD must outweigh demands on district resources, particularly on staff and student time. Dallas ISD strongly encourages and gives priority to external research projects that contribute to or complement the district’s research agenda.

Procedures for Research Proposals

Researchers must submit an application:

- if the research project involves collecting individual-level data from or about Dallas ISD students, staff, or parents (e.g., surveys, tests, interviews, observations, focus groups, or other direct primary data-gathering methodologies), or
- if they are requesting an extract of individual-level data maintained by Dallas ISD on district databases, including demographic, achievement, attendance, personnel, or other district records.

From January through April 2010, the Research Review Board conducted an extensive analysis of policies and procedures for conducting external research in large urban districts nationwide, as well as all large districts in Texas. Following this study, Dallas ISD’s application procedures, criteria, and forms were all revised significantly. New application forms were posted online in June 2010, and supplementary forms and instructions continue to be added to the district’s website as they are modified and approved. The new guidelines and updated application materials are available at http://www.dallasisd.org/inside_disd/depts/evalacct/research/proposals.htm.

As of June 2010, application materials must be submitted electronically. Applications or questions about the application process should be submitted to research@dallasisd.org.

Proposal Review

The number of research proposals received by the district has increased significantly over the past few years. In 2007-2008, the district received a total of 25 proposals for review, of which 23 were approved. Between January and August 2010, despite a six-weeks moratorium on submissions during the transition to new procedures, the Research Review Board accepted 46 proposals for review. Of these, six were rejected, and seven more were withdrawn after revisions to the research process were stipulated, resulting in an acceptance rate of 72%.

For more information, contact Dr. Dorothea Weir at 972-925-6413.