At-a-Glance

The Dallas ISD Research Review Board

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Current RRB responsibilities are handled by an eight-member team, comprised of a coordinator and seven evaluation researchers (including the chair) who review proposals submitted to the district. During the 2014-15 school year, board members made several changes to refine the RRB website, application forms, and proposal submission and review procedures which further improved the quality of submitted proposals and the speed with which researchers are informed about the board’s decision. Additionally, a link for approved projects was added to the RRB website for easy reference by campus administrators and district staff.

Proposal Submission

Application materials must be submitted electronically. Research guidelines and application materials are available on the district’s website at http://www.dallasisd.org/Page/868. Applications or questions about the application process are submitted to research@dallasisd.org.

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 the research project involves requesting an extract of individual-level data maintained by Dallas ISD on district databases, including demographic, achievement, attendance, personnel, or other district records.

Research studies that require secondary data must complete a Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) after the research proposal is approved by the Dallas ISD RRB. School or district staff cannot provide data to external researchers. Researchers need to request a DSA template after the RRB has approved their research proposal.

Proposal Review

For studies taking place during the 2014-15 school year, 67 proposals were submitted between May 2014 and April 2015 (Table 1).
Table 1: Proposals Submitted for SY 2014-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approved (Includes 4 resubmission)</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed*</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rejected</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>67</td>
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*Researchers withdrew their proposals

Out of the 67 proposals submitted, the RRB approved (includes proposals approved with condition) 45 or 67.2% of proposed studies while rejecting 23.9% or 16 proposals. Researchers for the remaining 6 (8.9%) proposals withdrew their submission for various reasons. Out of the 45 approved proposals, 14 or 31% submitted Data Sharing Agreements requesting secondary data.

There are several reasons why proposals were rejected. Reasons listed below are some of the most common reasons.

- No clear and direct educational value to the district
- Did not comply with state and federal laws (e.g., FERPA and PPRA)
- Conflict between the study timeline and district testing window
- Too disruptive to campuses or central office.
- Too costly in terms of campus resources (e.g., time, personnel, supplies)
- Poor research design or lack of sufficient information about the study (program, population, research methods, etc.)
- No district sponsor (applicable to some proposals)

Approved proposals can be grouped under three broad categories. The first category consists of district-sponsored research projects which have the support of a department in the district because the department believes the findings from these studies will inform the work of the department. The second category includes external studies that are not sponsored by a district department and include major state and national research projects and studies conducted by university researchers. The third category include graduate research projects, including those of current district employees. Examples of approved research projects are listed below, including the research organization conducting the study.

**District-sponsored studies**

*Elementary School Excellence Study* (University of Pennsylvania).

*Designing Well-Run Schools* (Bain & Co. Consulting Firm).

*Improving the Effectiveness of Digital Educational Tools in Increasing Student Achievement* (University of Texas at Austin).

*2015 - 2016 National Teacher and Principal Survey* (National Center for Education Statistics).

*School Physical Activity and Nutrition (SPAN) Project* (UT School of Public Health).

**External studies**

*Mathematics Teachers & Teaching Survey (MTTS)* (Center for Education Policy Research).

*Evaluation of the NFTE Core Program* (Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE)).

*Evaluation of The Concilio’s PASE Program* (SMU Simmons School of Education: Center on Research & Evaluation).

*Program Evaluation of Promising Youth Alliance* (The University of Texas at Dallas).


**Graduate research projects**

*An Ethnography of Design for Change* (Abilene Christian University).

*School Counselor Preparation to Serve Intellectually Gifted Students* (Texas A&M University, Commerce).

*FASTECHS: A Financial Allocation Study of Texas’ Early College High Schools* (Dallas Baptist University).

*The TAP Evaluation System and its Effect on Teacher Classroom Performance* (Grand Canyon University).

*The Efficacy of the Single-Gender Education Model for Middle School Boys* (Walden University).

**RRB Expectations for 2016-17**

The Dallas RRB will continue to refine its processes and procedures and expects to have a fully automated application submission system in place by the beginning of the 2016-17 school year.

For more information, contact Dr. Anduamlak Meharie at 972-925-6432.