

The Policy Committee reviewed the proposed policy at its public work session on 10/29/19.

**FILE: KDBB**

## **RESEARCH AND DATA COLLECTION REQUESTS**

### **I. Purpose**

The purpose of Policy KDBB is to allow for research studies and other data collection activities in Washington County Public Schools (WCPS).

### **II. Background**

From time to time, the Board of Education receives requests to conduct research or collect data from outside organizations. The Board is under no legal obligation to comply with said requests, but recognizes the importance in evaluating the effectiveness of educational programs and initiatives in order to inform instructional and administrative decision-making.

### **III. Definitions**

Within the context of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- A. **Data Collection:** Methods such as, but not limited to, surveys/questionnaires, interviews or focus groups, observations, document analysis, tests/assessments, and/or inventories or scales.
- B. **Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval:** Approval of research that is granted by the college or institution when the research is part of a degree requirement.
- C. **Research:** A systemic structure of investigation, evaluation, or measurement activities involving students, parents or staff members that can include the collection of new data or analysis of postsecondary or archival data.

### **IV. Policy Statement/Procedures**

- A. Research and data collection should cause limited interruptions to the instruction program, not pose undue burdens on staff, students, and/or parents, and support the goals/objectives of WCPS.
- B. School system staff shall ensure the technical competency, the feasibility, and the appropriateness of research and other data collection activities in the school system.
- C. Applicants shall submit research and data collection requests using the *Request for Conducting a Research Study* form (Exhibit KDBB-E) to the Office of Testing and Accountability for review and approval. Researchers are not permitted to request data directly from WCPS schools or other WCPS departments without receiving approval first from the Office of Testing and Accountability.
- D. The following agencies, groups, organizations, or individuals shall submit the *Request for Conducting a Research Study* form and secure approval from the Office of Testing and Accountability:
  - 1. Federal, state, or local agencies, national study groups, for-profit and non-profit organizations;
  - 2. WCPS employees conducting research for coursework, master's thesis, or doctoral dissertations; and

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3. Non-WCPS employees conducting research for doctoral dissertation coursework. Exceptions to this requirement include:

1. Studies undertaken at the direction of the Board of Education and/or the Superintendent;
2. Studies mandated by the Maryland State Department of Education or the United States Department of Education; and
3. Senior projects or informal surveys conducted at the school level that are approved by the principal in consultation with the Office of Testing and Accountability.

E. Undergraduate thesis research and master's degree studies by individuals who are not WCPS employees are not permitted.

### F. Timeline

Any person requesting to conduct research in WCPS must submit a copy of the application and supporting documentation/materials to the office of Testing and Accountability a **minimum of six (6) weeks** prior to the desired starting time of such project. It should be understood that this application does not constitute an approval of the research. Research cannot begin until written notification of the approval is provided by the Office of Testing and Accountability.

### G. Confidentiality and Data Security Requirements

1. The identity of and information about all research participants must be kept confidential (or private) and in compliance with laws protecting privacy, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
2. Research records and materials must be properly secured and stored to prevent unauthorized access, use, modification, or disclosure.
3. Applicants may not share information about research participants, schools, or the district with third parties, except when the Office of Testing and Accountability has granted additional approval.
4. Any breach of data security and confidentiality regarding the research should be communicated to the Office of Testing and Accountability.
5. Any damages or any liability that might arise out of any breach of data security and confidentiality regarding the research is the financial responsibility of the researcher.

### H. Dissemination of Research Results

1. Identifiers must be removed from datasets and dissemination of results must be at an aggregate level.
2. WCPS' name, school name, or affiliation of research participants will not be used in dissemination and/or publication of research findings/results without prior written permission. Instead, descriptors such as "school system in Western Maryland" may be used.
3. Upon completion of research, and prior to the release of any findings or studies, researchers are asked to share findings (and/or any resulting publications) with the Office of Testing and Accountability.

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- I. The Superintendent is authorized to promulgate an administrative regulation that establishes guidelines for how research studies and data collection requests within WCPS are approved and conducted, and how results from research studies and data collection requests are disseminated and/or published.

Adopted:  
Board of Education of Washington County