

REGULATION

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Related Entries: AFA, AFA-RA, EGG-RA, EGI-RA, KBB

Responsible Office: Superintendent of Schools
Shared Accountability

Clearance of Data Acquisition Activities

I. PURPOSE

To reduce the burden imposed on personnel in the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) through the elimination of unnecessary duplication of requests for data and by increasing the utility of information collected, this regulation provides guidelines for data acquisition, sets forth definitions of terms used, and establishes procedures for approval of a data collection activity

II. GUIDELINES

A. The procedures set forth below apply to:

1. Data collection activities conducted as part of a research study
2. A survey in which the same information is requested from more than one respondent

B. Requests to administer instruments, the findings of which are to be used for research purposes must, in addition to receiving approval under this regulation, be cleared under Regulation AFA-RA: *Conducting Research in the Montgomery County Public Schools*. This applies to MCPS-sponsored research, research conducted as part of graduate programs of study, and research conducted by outside organizations.

C. This regulation does not apply if the data collected will be used for MCPS purposes only and:

1. The persons from whom the data are being requested report directly to the data collector

2. Teachers are collecting data from students in their classes or, with the approval of their principal, from their students' parents
3. Principals are collecting data from students in their schools, community members located within their schools' attendance areas, or staff in their schools
4. Principals in paired or clustered schools are collecting data from community members located in the attendance areas of their pair or cluster, as a whole, and have first checked with the director of the Office of Shared Accountability to ensure that other principals within their pair or cluster have not already collected the desired data
5. The Office of School Performance is collecting data from schools and has first checked with the director of the Office of Shared Accountability to ensure that the desired data have not already been collected

Persons whose data acquisition activities are exempted from the provisions of this regulation on the basis of the above guidelines must so inform their prospective respondents by having the following statement printed at the top of the first page of each instrument:

“This request for data is not subject to Regulation EHC-RA: *Clearance of Data Acquisition Activities.*”

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. A *collector* is defined as any office, department, division, or staff member of MCPS seeking to obtain information from persons within the school system or from parents or other community members. Institutions, agencies, or individuals outside of MCPS seeking to obtain information from within the school system are also collectors.
- B. *Data* means information requested for use in decision making, research studies, record keeping, or other approved purposes. Data may be expressed in words, symbols, codes, or numbers.
- C. *Data acquisition* is the process by which information is obtained from persons within the school system or from parents or other community members for use in decision making, research, studies, recordkeeping, or other approved purposes. The process may be implemented through the use of data acquisition forms or memoranda or by means of telephone surveys or electronic submission formats.

- D. A *data acquisition form* is a printed, typed, or written document with blank spaces systematically arranged for the entry of information, designed to acquire data from persons within the school system or from parents or other community members.
- E. A *data acquisition memorandum* is any memorandum, the purpose of which is to request data from persons within the school system or from parents or other community members.
- F. A *data element* is any single item of information requested in data acquisition form or memorandum, by telephone, or through use of electronic submission formats.
- G. *Electronic submission formats* include any type of computer-related screen layout, frame, or format that is designed to collect data by computer or other electronic submission techniques from persons within the school system or from parents or other community members.
- H. The term *instrument* refers to a data acquisition form, memorandum, questionnaire, telephone script, or electronic submission format.
- I. A *questionnaire* is a data acquisition form containing questions, the answers to which constitute the data elements being collected. Such data elements may represent matters of fact or opinion.
- J. A *report* is defined as a document that presents data to decision makers, researchers, recordkeepers, or other data users.
- K. A *respondent* is any person who fills out a data acquisition form or responds to a data acquisition memorandum, telephone survey, or request for data by means of an electronic submission format.
- L. A *telephone survey* is defined as any data acquisition effort to obtain information from persons within the school system or from parents or other community members through contacting such respondents by telephone.
- M. A *telephone survey script* is a written document that structures a conversation designed to elicit data or information via telephone interview.
- N. A *user* is any office, department, division, or staff member of MCPS making use of the data collected by a form, memorandum, or telephone survey or by means of an electronic submission format for decision making, recordkeeping, or other approved purposes.

IV. PROCEDURES

- A. Prior to use, all collectors must submit final drafts of all data acquisition forms, memoranda, telephone survey scripts, and electronic submission formats to the director of the Office of Shared Accountability for clearance.
- B. Using MCPS Form 226-17: *Data Acquisition Clearance Request*, collectors must furnish information with each existing or proposed data acquisition form, memorandum, telephone survey script, or electronic submission format, including:
1. A statement of the purpose (need to know) and intended use of each data element requested
 2. Identification of the categories of respondents, including size of the sample
 3. Identities of all intended users of the data collected
 4. Anticipated date of administration and the time needed for response
 5. Frequency of data collection (e.g., monthly, one-time)
 6. Anticipated date of publication of report based on data collected on this instrument
- C. Collectors must indicate whether the data to be collected are intended for general distribution or for limited distribution only and whether response to the instrument is voluntary or compulsory by means of statements (see MCPS Form 226-17: *Data Acquisition Clearance Request*) that must appear on the first page of the instrument. These statements are delivered orally to respondents in telephone surveys.
- D. The staff in the Office of Shared Accountability will screen each data acquisition request in regard to the following:
1. Possible redundancies or current availability of requested data elements
 2. Efficiency and clarity of the data collection instrument
 3. Readability and clarity of the data collection instrument
 4. Assurance that respondents' privacy is not being compromised

5. Assurance that the data collection methodology is cost-effective

Where it is felt that a request is unsound, based on any of the above criteria, the materials will be returned to the applicant, and an explanatory memorandum may be sent or a discussion held. Suggestions may be made as to how the instrument/procedure might be improved.

- E. For each data acquisition request, the director of the Office of Shared Accountability will make a recommendation to the chief of staff to approve the instrument as submitted, to approve if specific modifications are made, or to disapprove.
- F. The chief of staff , who has final sign-off authority, will screen the data acquisition requests to determine whether the data are indeed needed and whether the collection effort justifies the reporting burden on the school system.
- G. It will be considered a violation of this regulation for MCPS personnel to respond to, or transmit, any request for data in written form unless such a request has been approved. The only exception to this will be if the following statement is printed at the top of the first page: “This request for data is not subject to Regulation EHC-RA: *Clearance of Data Acquisition Activities*”, or if approval by the chief of staff is clearly indicated.
- H. Telephone or electronic surveys will be treated as data collection methods falling under the constraints of this regulation. A script or format of the method by which data will be collected is submitted in lieu of a draft form, and all provisions of this regulation apply to telephone or electronic surveys.

Regulation History: Formerly Regulation No. 202-6, October 18, 1978; directory information updated January, 1983; reprinted April 1988; revised November 19, 1991; revised April 5, 1994; revised January 10, 2003.