



Conducting External Research in Montgomery County Public Schools

Office of Shared Accountability



Conducting External Research in Montgomery County Public Schools

The purpose of this presentation is to provide an overview of the requirements and process for requesting to conduct an external research activity in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS)

- Topics covered:
 - Types of requests considered for review
 - Types of requests not considered for review
 - Requirements and steps for submitting an external research request
 - What should be considered before submitting a request
 - What factors are used in the review of proposals
 - How are applicants informed of decision



Montgomery County Public Schools Regulation AFA-RA

- External research requests are governed by Montgomery County Public Schools Regulation AFA-RA, *Research and Other Data Collection Activities in Montgomery County Public Schools*.¹
- Approval of proposals must be obtained prior to the initiation of any research activities.
- Regulation AFA-RA requires proposals for external research studies conducted in MCPS to be:
 - Reviewed by the Office of Shared Accountability (OSA)
 - Approved by the Office of the Chief of Staff

¹ <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/policy/detail.aspx?policyID=AFA-RA>



Proposal Submissions

Proposals that fall under the following areas will be accepted for review:

- Unsolicited research proposals from individuals or organizations independent of MCPS
- Proposals from MCPS employees who are completing a master's degree or a doctoral degree (e.g., M.A., Ph.D., Ed.D.)
- Proposals from individuals other than MCPS employees who are completing a doctoral degree (e.g., Ph.D., Ed.D.)
- Proposals required for the evaluation of grants implemented in MCPS



Proposals Not Accepted for Review

Research requests that fall under these categories are not accepted and will not be reviewed:

- Proposals/data collection activities designed to meet the requirements for receiving course credit in high school, undergraduate, or graduate courses; seminars; practicums; or training workshops
- Proposals/data collection activities for the completion of a master's degree from individuals who are not MCPS employees
- Proposals/data collection activities intended for publication that occur in the same MCPS school or office where a MCPS staff member is employed



Submission Requirements

In order to request a research activity, the following steps should be taken:

- Complete the Online Request For A Research Activity (ORFARA) application process

- Provide the following required documents:
 - ✓ **Institutional Review Board (IRB) Decision Letter**
Official IRB decision letter or e-mail

 - ✓ **Letter or e-mail of support**
A letter or e-mail of support from a MCPS associate superintendent or director who is familiar with the research topic



Submission Requirements (continued)

- ✓ **Consent Forms (if applicable)**

A copy of the approved IRB active adult consent form for proposals requesting participation of adults or students over the age of 18 years

A copy of the approved IRB active parent consent form for proposals requesting participation of MCPS students under the age of 18 years

- ✓ **Copies of data collection instruments (if applicable)**

- ✓ **Copy of resume(s)**



What Should I Consider?

- **Scheduling Data Collection Activities**
 - Data collection activities involving MCPS students or staff must occur during non-instructional times or after the regular work day
- **Conflicts of Interest**
 - MCPS staff should not be asked to:
 - provide student-level information or staff-level information (personally-identifiable or non-identifiable), unless required by law
 - provide other school district data
 - recruit subjects
 - distribute or collect consent forms or other documents related to the project
 - Requests from MCPS employees **will not** be approved for data collection activities occurring in the same MCPS school or office as the employee
 - Participation in external research studies is voluntary for schools, offices, and individuals, unless required by federal, state, or local law or by the authority of the Superintendent.

What Factors are Considered in the Review of Proposals?



- Technical soundness of the proposal's design
- Use of reliable and valid data collection instruments
- Processes identified to maintain individuals' confidentiality
- Proposal's overall clarity and organization
- Benefit(s) of the study's educational value to MCPS or makes a contribution to educational research
- Procedures that guarantee confidentiality and privacy rights of students and staff in accordance with
 - Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA),
<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/students.html>
 - Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects (34CFR Part 97),
<http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.html#subpartd>
 - Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA),
<https://www2.ed.gov/policy//gen/guid/fpco/ppra/index.html>
- Impact of the study's data collection activities for students and staff



What Factors Are Considered in the Review of Proposals? (continued)

- **Impact of the data collection activities to the ongoing instructional program**
 - Students as subjects:
 - Amount of time required for students to participate
 - Students' transportation needs if data collection activity is after school
 - Compliance with MCPS Policy JHC, *Child Abuse and Neglect*;
<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/policy/detail.aspx?policyID=JHC>
 - Staff as subjects:
 - Privacy of personally identifiable information of current or former employees
 - Interruption to the regular work day activities (schools or offices) is minimal



What Factors Are Considered in the Review of Proposals? (Continued)

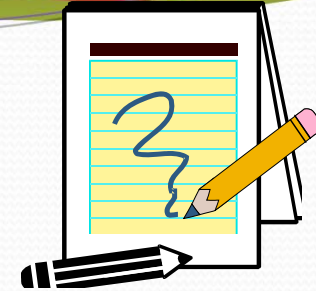
- **Benefits of research to MCPS**
 - How does the research proposal directly benefit MCPS?
 - Can results be used to improve the instructional program?
 - Do the research activities provide staff development opportunities (i.e. continuing education, professional development, etc.)?
 - Does the research topic align with ongoing MCPS initiatives with the potential to inform outcomes?



Other Considerations

- **Can I receive MCPS electronic files or databases?**
- It is strongly recommended that researchers explore the use of publicly available data:
 - Please refer to:
<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/sharedaccountability/resources.aspx>

What Do I Need To Do?



- Complete the ORFARA online application form
It is available from any computer with Internet access at:

<http://sharedaccountability.mcpsmd.org/ORFARA/App.php>

- Submit all required documentation outlined in the first page of instructions in the ORFARA application process using the e-mail link you received when you first submitted your application.
- Check the status of your application by using the e-mail link you received with your submitted application

How Do I Know If My Proposal Is Approved?



After you complete your online ORFARA application, a confirmation email will be sent to your email address as entered on your application. Included in this confirmation email is a link to check the status of your application submission.

Questions?

Please contact

Dr. Helen Wang by e-mail at Helen_Wang@mcpsmd.org