



Superintendent's Circular

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ODA-01
Version 01

PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCTING EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

This circular will remain in effect unless rescinded or superseded by a subsequent version.

The purpose of this circular is to define the policy and procedures for conducting educational research in the Boston Public Schools.

OVERVIEW

The mission of the Boston Public Schools' Office of Data and Accountability is to serve the BPS community by facilitating access to quality information and building capacity to make data-driven decisions that advance educational equity, opportunity, and achievement for all students. Research is one way to facilitate our community's access to quality information. It is the responsibility of the Office of Data and Accountability to ensure that researchers have access to quality data and can responsibly interpret the results. As such, the Office of Data and Accountability reviews and approves research that works to advance educational equity, opportunity, and achievement for all students by ensuring responsible access to and use of quality data.

All research activities must be coordinated through the Office of Data and Accountability's BPS Research Team. ODA approval is

not required for research that uses data that is publicly available sources such as on the BPS public website. A list of current sources of publicly available data can be found in the appendix of the Policy and Guidelines document. In these instances, the researcher may use the data presented from these sources as long as the sources are cited, and any modifications or analysis done by the researcher are clearly delineated. Approval by the researcher's IRB and/or BPS school leaders does NOT guarantee approval of research proposals by the BPS Office of Data and Accountability (ODA). While research may be approved by ODA, BPS school leaders have the final say in whether their particular school will participate in any given study.

WHO MAY CONDUCT RESEARCH

Any academic or professional organization or any individual doing doctoral work may submit a proposal to conduct research with the Office of Data and Accountability in BPS. Doctoral candidates must submit written evidence that their proposed research has been approved by their university's IRB and will be supervised by their advisor(s).

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH TEAM REVIEW?

While it is necessary for all research submissions to have an approved/exempted IRB decision from their own institution, BPS requires that all research is submitted to the BPS Research Team for review prior to BPS approval. The BPS research review is not duplicative of the IRB process and aims to ensure the following:

- The research is aligned with district priorities.
- The research follows federal and local guidelines regarding conducting research with human subjects in

school settings (This includes consent forms for all research participants; assurance that students receive no incentives of monetary value for students and not to exceed \$50 for teachers; voluntary participation for all research subjects).

- The research is not overly burdensome to classrooms and is new research that will advance the aims of the district.
- The research is fully supported by an internal BPS staff member (district sponsor) who is committed to using the result of the research.

WHAT ARE THE STEPS TO CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN THE BPS?

1. Submit a research proposal adhering to the [Guidelines and Procedures](#). In general, the research submission and review calendar is as follows:

Review Period	Submission Month	Review Month	Decision Letter Sent
P1	June 1-30	July 1-31	Mid-August
P2	October 1-31	November 1-30	Mid-December

2. For *primary* research (i.e., interviewing, focus groups, observations, and in-person surveys), each researcher needs to have submitted and passed a CORI check.
3. For *secondary* research (i.e., requesting administrative data: records that are maintained by the school district), researchers need to submit a data request and sign a [standard NDA template](#). NOTE: for some administrative data requests, a fee will be assessed to assist in the fulfillment of the data pull.

4. Submit policy brief updates annually to your district sponsor and the Research Team
(research@bostonpublicschools.org).
5. Annually renew your research proposal with the BPS research team.
6. For continuing research, the following needs to be submitted:
 - a. Cover page describing research activities already conducted and proposed changes to the study for the next year
 - b. Most recent policy brief describing interim findings
 - c. Updated district sponsor letter
 - d. Updated IRB approval for next year of research
7. Submit a final report and policy brief ([template](#)) for review to research@bostonpublicschools.org once the study has been finalized. The study is officially finalized once the final report and policy brief have been approved.

For additional information about this circular and the application process, contact:

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