

Research Protocols

Flagstaff Unified School District Research and Assessment Department

October 2025

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1. FUSD Board Policies

The following policies govern research within the district:

[5-303 Student Records](#)

[5-303.A Student Records- Annual Notification of Rights](#)

The following procedures govern and inform research related decisions:

PROFESSIONAL RESEARCH AND PUBLISHING

The Board has proprietary rights to publications, instructional materials, and devices prepared by employees unless prepared by such employees on their own time and without use of school facilities and/or equipment.

- The Board authorizes the Superintendent to review material prepared by staff members prior to copyright or patent for subsequent publication or distribution, and to recommend waiving all or part of the Board's proprietary rights in favor of the employees preparing such materials.
- Any staff member who submits professional materials for publication in which the District is mentioned will submit all such material to the Superintendent prior to release for publication, including materials developed on the employee's own time.

RELATIONS WITH EDUCATION RESEARCH AGENCIES

The Superintendent is authorized to cooperate with colleges, universities, and other recognized research agencies in promoting potentially useful research. Because of the requirements in the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (20 U.S.C. 1232h) it may be necessary to limit the number and establish guidelines for the approval of studies.

The District will comply with all statutes pertaining to surveys including the requirement that notwithstanding *any other law, each school district and charter school shall obtain written informed consent from the parent of a pupil before administering any survey that is retained by a school district, a charter school or the department of education for longer than one (1) year and that solicits personal information about the pupil regarding a number of characteristics which are listed in the statute A.R.S. [15-117](#).*

Decisions in connection with research involving students, teachers, or other employees will be influenced by the following factors:

- A. The objectives of the research should be clearly stated and the design should produce valid and reliable results that will then be made available to the District.
- B. The research should be expected to contribute to the improvement of education or the general welfare of students.

C. Data derived from school records, interviews, surveys or questionnaires that have potential for invasion of the privacy of students or their families must have advance written authorization of parents or guardians even though the collecting and reporting of data are to be conducted under conditions of anonymity.

D. Research proposals should be of sufficient scope and depth to justify the time and effort.

E. In general, instructional activities will not be interrupted unless there is a clear significance for the educational program of the schools.

F. Projects involving student researchers must have prior written approval by a faculty member of the institution in which the student is enrolled. This faculty member must have direct responsibility related to the student's research.

The following activities require direct annual notification to parents at the beginning of the school year of the specific or approximate dates when scheduled, if scheduled in accordance with the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment:

A. Activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the purpose of marketing or for selling that information (or otherwise providing that information to others for that purpose).

B. The administration of any survey containing one (1) or more items described below.

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent.
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family.
3. Sex behavior or attitudes.
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior.
5. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships.
6. Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers.
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or the student's parent.
8. Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program).

C. Any nonemergency, invasive physical examination or screening that is:

1. required as a condition of attendance;
2. administered by the school and scheduled by the school in advance; and
3. not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student, or of other students.

2. Research Approval Protocols

Applications for research within FUSD will be evaluated on the following:

1. What are the risks to the sample participants?
2. What are the risks to any special populations?
3. How invasive is the research to student, family, school, and district operations?
4. How invasive are the recruitment procedures?
 - a. To what extent is involvement voluntary?
5. How will you comply with the need for written informed consent from a parent?
6. How will you obtain assent from students, if needed?
7. How is confidentiality/anonymity maintained in obtaining and maintaining records?
8. How long is data kept?
9. How is data stored?
10. What is your protocol for destroying data?
11. What are the benefits of the research for FUSD? Note that statements to the effect of “general development of knowledge within the field” are not sufficient for approval.

Of particular concern are the following:

- Student and staff safety
- Student and family privacy
- Student records privacy
- Staff and their family privacy
- Voluntary consent/assent
- Written consent from parents
- Data destruction
- Minimizing the disruption to student learning and staff work
- Mandatory reporting: Researchers must report any cases of child abuse or neglect to police or Department of Child Safety personnel.

3. District Rights and Responsibilities

Per federal, state, and local laws and policies, FUSD has the following rights when it comes to permitting research on its campuses:

- The Director of Research and Assessment, Assistant Superintendent, or Superintendent may refuse to permit research projects based upon an application review
- Research projects that are deemed to be too invasive or disruptive may be stopped at any time
- Research personnel who will meet with children are required to abide by all FUSD policies governing visitors, volunteers, or employees at the discretion of district administrators.
- Any interviews or research with children conducted using FUSD resources, including sites, must be conducted in the presence of a building administrator or their designee.
- Research personnel may be denied access to children at any time by FUSD staff for any reason.
- Information obtained during research regarding children on FUSD campuses may be reviewed at any time by the Director of Research and Assessment, Assistant Superintendent, or Superintendent.
- Researchers must report any cases of child abuse or neglect to police or Department of Child Safety personnel.
- FUSD maintains the rights to any data or research obtained from its organization. Any study or report published must have copies shared with FUSD.
- FUSD reserves the right to not permit future research with institutions whose investigators refuse to provide FUSD with copies of research findings.

4. Process for Approval of Research Proposals

The following steps take place in the approval of all research within FUSD:

1. A research application is made and submitted.
2. Supporting documents are completed and ancillary documents are all sent to the Director of Research and Assessment via email or mail.
3. The application and supporting materials are reviewed using the protocols outlined in section 2.
4. The Director of Research and Assessment may request modifications or changes in the proposed research protocol.
 - a. Changes or modifications may be made in an addendum document that will be included with the original application. The document should indicate what is being adjusted from the original application as well as the new language.
5. The application is presented to the Assistant Superintendent after approval from the Director of Research and Assessment. The application may also be provided to building administrators or other staff for additional consideration.
 - a. FUSD reserves the right to convene an Institutional Review Board to further evaluate proposed research.
6. If needed, additional modifications or changes may be requested.
7. If approved, a formal letter indicating approval will be provided to the research team outlining the approved research and dates of permission.
8. Researchers are required to follow up with specific sites or departments to obtain voluntary agreement to host their research. The letter must be presented to sites at initial communication.
9. Researchers will need to follow up with the Department of Research and Assessment for each stage of their research using provided communication tools.

5. Requests to Continue Approved Research

FUSD recognizes that research may take longer than expected or be necessary over multiple years. To obtain additional time for a research project or to renew/revisit/or continue one past one year, then the researchers need the following:

- Outline current research findings
- New expected dates for research
- Updates to any sites or samples
- A brief description of why a continuation is requested
- Reference to the original research project by title and date of original approval
- Addendum supporting documentation must be attached.

FUSD reserves the right to refuse continuation of research projects for any reason.