

Central High School
1700 West Olney Avenue
rlherbsttritt@philasd.org
Philadelphia, PA. 19141



March 1, 2026

Dear Philadelphia Researcher,

Central High School, the premier academic magnet school in Philadelphia is looking for research mentors to work with advanced students in a unique independent research program we offer. Our program recruits students who excel and have expressed strong motivation to pursue independent research. Students leave school early most days to work in a laboratory, doing work that will be presented at regional and state science fair competitions. You are receiving this letter because a student has identified your lab as one that does research they are particularly interested in. Your partnership in this program helps to develop passionate young people for the research sciences.

Following is some general information regarding the scope and operation of Central High School's Advanced Research program:

- Our goal is to develop in students the skills and habits of mind necessary to carry out an independent research project relating to the focus of your lab.
- Students will present their research in at least 2 science competitions - the Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science (February) and the Carver Science Fair (March). Both fairs lead to increasingly competitive levels.
- Students taking this '7th period elective' are excused from school at 2:10 pm most days so that they may get to their laboratory placement.
- Students should work a mutually established average of *6 hours per week* in their lab between September and early May
- Work may include reviewing literature, planning and carrying out experiments, shadowing other lab members, data analysis, regular lab tasks, lab meetings and presentations.
- Partners may work out a custom schedule for the student's lab work that is appropriate for their labs and personal constraints.
- Students will need an introduction by partners to the context, techniques and requirements of their labs in the beginning of their placements before beginning their own work and will need help developing an appropriate research question (preferably with some of their own input)
- Students are expected to independently read in the area of their research focus. We ask partners to provide students with a reference list of important publications.
- Students are required to have a lab notebook and to create entries every time they do work related to their research.

- Students will have time sheets to be verified by the supervising scientist to ensure the student is spending sufficient time at the facility. Time sheets are reviewed every 2 weeks at regularly scheduled meetings.
- I will send you a brief evaluation email at the end of each week to gather feedback on your intern and how they are progressing.
- Students will need to complete **paperwork** required by the Science Fair organizations by the middle of December. I will take care of most of this, but some forms may need to be completed by you. Here is an overview of the forms:
<https://student.societyforscience.org/intel-isef-forms>
- The student understands that they have a responsibility to the lab. If they are ill or have an emergency, they must notify lab partners in a timely fashion. Conversely, if partners cannot meet with the student for whatever reason, we ask them to contact students.

I have tried to address the major points of the program but undoubtedly you have other questions. Please feel free to call or text me on my cell (856) 905 9598 or e-mail rherbstritt@philasd.org.
Your willingness to consider mentoring our students is genuinely appreciated.

Sincerely,

Robert Herbstritt
Advanced Research Coordinator
Central High School
Philadelphia, PA