

Thank you for your interest in conducting research in Bozeman School District #7. Please follow our District guidelines and feel free to contact Research Committee Co-Chairs and Deputy Superintendents Marilyn King, Ed.D. and Mike Van Vuren at marilyn.king@bsd7.org and mike.vanvuren@bsd7.org if you have any questions.

Bozeman Public Schools

Policy #2132

Research Studies

The district recognizes the value of participation in educational research. Studies using observation, surveys, and experimentation can aid in the improvement of the instructional program in the school system as well as growth in the profession and growth for individual teachers and researchers.

Simultaneously, the district recognizes that the amount of time available for student learning is limited and must be handled carefully. It is, therefore, important that only those research studies which are of the greatest value to the district should be allowed to be conducted in the school system.

No test, questionnaire, survey, or enumeration containing questions about a pupil's or his parent's personal beliefs, practices in sex, family life, morality and religion will be administered without Board approval.

Procedure #2132

General guidelines for access to BSD7 students, staff and/or parents for research purposes-

- All research requests to use students, student data, faculty or staff of Bozeman Public Schools are to be in written form and submitted to the Office of the Deputy Superintendent (Marilyn King, Ed.D. and Mike Van Vuren).
- BSD7 receives a large volume of research requests and its capacity to accommodate all of them is limited. For this reason the district is unable to support undergraduate class assignments and research projects at this time. Because research facilitation and administration requires a great deal of effort and resources, BSD7 will use its discretion in determining which research activities will be approved.
- BSD7 must recognize a value to participating in proposed research. BSD7 expects to be furnished with copies of any final reports or relevant findings.
- The proposed research should not intrude, or only minimally intrude, upon instructional time, or disrupt the educational process.
- Research in BSD7 must comply with FERPA requirements. All researchers must view [Student Privacy 101](#) and must certify their understanding and compliance with FERPA on their External Research Request for Access Form.
- Initial BSD7 review may take place prior to IRB (Institutional Review Board) or HSRB (Human Studies Review Board) approval. Final BSD7 approval will occur only after review by an IRB or HSRB as appropriate.
- Applications must be complete. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed. Typical key elements of a complete application include a completed online Request for Access application form, description of the research protocol, and appropriate consent/assent materials. Include any surveys,

questionnaires, test forms, interview protocols, and other instruments to be used. Evidence of IRB or HSRB action must occur prior to final BSD7 approval.

- To ensure BSD7 oversight and centralization of project management, researchers should not contact individual principals, teachers, staff, etc. about research planning or coordination. Researchers should not contact building staff prior to submitting a research request to the Deputy Superintendent Instruction. If you have preferences about where or with whom you want to work, please state this in your proposal.
- Action Research done by District staff must follow these [action research specific guidelines](#).
- Requests to survey participants are monitored. Survey fatigue is an ongoing issue. Please consider other options before proposing surveys as part of your study. If you have research questions that can be answered with BSD7 survey items, we are happy to consider sharing existing data.
- Requests to research health, safety and wellness are limited. Health, mental health, safety, substance use and other wellness measures are important factors related to education. We are happy to consider sharing existing information. Please be advised the district has very limited capacity to support external studies which cover these topics.

If you are interested in submitting a research request, please use the [External Research Request for Access Form](#) as a template for submittal.

All research proposals and ultimate approval are reviewed based on the following criteria:

1. The Quality of the Research

- The appropriateness of the research and its topic
- The time involved for students, teachers, administration, staff in terms of minimal disruption to instructional time
- The meaningfulness of the research
- The research design. The proposed research must manifest a sound research methodology using valid and reliable techniques
- The content of the proposal
- The proposed research must protect the privacy of students and staff and ensure compliance with state and federal laws. The Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and associated state laws and District policies are based on the idea that information about an individual student is private and confidential and generally may only be accessed with parent consent

2. The Benefit of the Research

- Is the research aligned with BSD7's needs?
- Will the proposed research improve the achievement of our students?
- Does the research support current programming within BSD7?
- Does the proposal conform to standards of protecting human subjects?
- Was the application & content submitted correctly with all required fields completed?
- Did the researcher follow BSD7 requirements and guidelines?

- Was IRB/HSRB approval or evidence of IRB/HSRB action provided?
- Were sample consent/assent forms submitted as appropriate?

3. Evidence of IRB or HSRB action (must be reviewed prior to final BSD7 approval)

- If the researcher is enrolled in or associated/affiliated in ANY way with ANY college, university or other research facility, evidence of a favorable review by an IRB or HSRB or your plan to receive approval must be documented.
- Researcher should include copies all parent/guardian/teacher/student consent. Any subsequent changes made to the consent forms must be resubmitted to the District for approval.
- Research may not begin until final IRB/HSRB approval is on file at BSD7.

4. Consent/Assent Materials and Notification Letters

- Consent/assent materials must be written appropriately for their intended audience. Consider age level and any special needs of intended audience.
- Consent/assent materials must be labeled for their intended audience (i.e., Parental Consent, Student Assent, Student Consent, Teacher Consent, etc.).
- Consent/assent materials must provide contact information for research subjects and families to use should they have questions about the research.
- Student assent/consent depends on the age of the student being studied. Formal written student consent is required for all students age 18 and older. Formal written student assent is required for all students between the ages of 11 and 18 years. Oral assent is required for students between the ages of 5 and 11 years. Students younger than 5 years are generally subject to the consent provided by their parent. However, a student younger than 5 years may express a reasonable refusal to participate in the research, which must be honored by the researcher.
- When a student passes one of the above age milestones while participating in a research project, he or she must be re-assented or provide consent as appropriate. For example, a student who begins participating in a literacy study at age 10 and turns 11 while the study is still being conducted must be presented with a written assent form that he or she may or may not choose to sign.
- The researcher must have a signed parent permission slip for each minor student who is involved. Minors' assent is the second step. Parental consent must be granted first. Student assent without parental consent does not provide proper consent for a student to be the subject of any research. Students older than 18 years can provide student consent without parental assent.
- If research includes comparing any pupil records to determine how a student's progress has been affected as a result of the research, explicit parental (or student age 18 and above) consent must be obtained not only for participation in the research, but for BSD7 to provide the researcher with the specific records.

- In lieu of formal consent/assent, BSD7 may find that notification letters to families are an acceptable means to inform families of research being conducted in the classroom. In almost all cases, notification letters are associated with minimally intrusive research focusing solely on the teacher without any observations or data collected about students. In such cases, staff consent would still be required.
- A notification letter is a document that has been prepared for families that outlines the reason for the research and what will be happening while it is being conducted. The letter must include contact information of the principal investigator or a research team member that can answer any questions parents may have. Parents do not sign and return a notification letter. While not a consent form per se, researchers should be prepared to respond to parents who do not want the research to be conducted in their child's presence.
- If applicable, consent/assent forms must contain the supervising researcher signature and professor or principal investigator (PI) if the researcher is a student and give a current and valid phone number to answer any questions about the study.
- All expenses in obtaining parent permission are the obligation of the researcher, including postage-paid responses to the researcher. Consent/assent forms may be sent to families and returned to the researcher by first class mail or be hand carried by students.
- Parent permission is not required if the research activities are initiated/sponsored by the BSD7 and/or the research activities are considered part of the normal instructional process.

Consent/Assent Materials

Unless otherwise authorized by the Deputy Superintendent Instruction, researchers shall provide at a minimum the following information to each subject in the form of consent/assent materials or notification letter to families:

1. A statement that the study involves research, an explanation of the purposes of the research and the expected duration of the subject's participation, a description of the procedures to be followed, and identification of any procedures that are experimental.
2. A description of any reasonably foreseeable risks or discomforts to the subject.
3. A description of any benefits to the subject or to others that may be reasonably be expected from the research.
4. A statement describing the extent, if any, to which confidentiality of records identifying the subject will be maintained.
5. A statement that participation is voluntary, refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled, and the subject may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled.
6. The name, address, phone number and institutional affiliation of the principal investigator.
7. If you plan to propose using video recording, audio recording or photography in your research, additional safeguards may be required.
8. If the research protocol involves a survey instrument administered to students, the consent forms must clearly state that parents have the right to preview the survey before they provide consent. The consent form must also state how the parent may preview the survey. Providing the preview is the responsibility of the researcher; BSD7 will not provide copies of these surveys to parents.

If research involves more than minimal risk, an explanation about whether there is compensation available and an explanation about whether any medical treatments are available if injury occurs and, if so, what they consist of or where further information may be obtained must be included. Sample documents are located here:

[Sample Parent/Guardian Consent Form](#)

[Assent Form for Child Between the Ages of 7 and 17](#)

[Sample Teacher/Staff Consent Form](#)

Requirements for Data Collection, Release and Data Destruction

BSD7 complies with all state and federal regulations regarding the release of confidential student or staff data. For further information, click [here](#).

A [data destruction certificate](#) is required to be submitted at the end of the research.

Approval process

- Research proposal reviews are conducted on an on-going basis as time allows. Please note that District review may not be possible if a short timeline exists.
- Applicants proposing a partnership with BSD7 on a grant that will require a letter of support from BSD7 go through the same process. Once the application has been approved, a letter of support is drafted and routed for a signature from the Superintendent or designee. We understand that sometimes grant deadlines do not fit nicely within a pre-determined time frame. We will do our best to work with applicants in order to meet deadlines. Please be mindful of grant submission deadlines and get the process started early.
- The Deputy Superintendent Instruction will inform you by letter of the action taken on your request for access. Possible outcomes are approval, rejection or conditional approval that is subject to the satisfaction of specific revisions or requirements.
- Once you have received the approval letter, it will be your responsibility to contact the school or schools cited in your application, and make arrangements with appropriate personnel for the implementation of your research project.
- Prior to approval, BSD7 makes every effort to ensure that sufficient interest and capacity exists in the school or program area needed to accommodate a research proposal. Even after formal approval, the Principal of any building, administrator of any program, or staff member may decline participation in a research proposal.

Compensation –

- Payment or compensation to teachers is not allowed for activities taking place during contract hours. This includes prep-time.

In the course of the research effort, if the researcher determines that changes need to be made in the agreed upon procedures, such changes are to be submitted in writing to and must be approved by the Deputy Superintendent

Instruction before such changes are set in place. The Deputy Superintendent Instruction will inform the principal researcher in writing regarding the approval or disapproval of the proposed procedural changes.

An abstract or PowerPoint presentation, a comprehensive written summary of the results of the research conducted in the Bozeman Public Schools and the data destruction certificate are to be delivered to the Deputy Superintendent Instruction no later than four (4) months after the completion of data collection.