Conducting External Research in Montgomery County Public Schools

Office of Shared Accountability

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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 <u>not</u> 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 <u>non-instructional times</u> or after the regular work day
- **Conflicts of Interest**
  - MCPS staff <u>should not</u> 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 <u>voluntary</u> 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/parents.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.)?

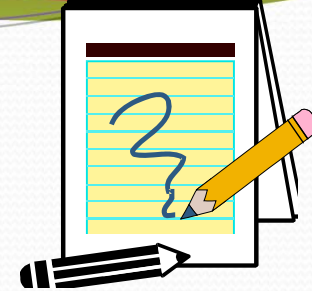   - ➢ Does the research topic align with ongoing MCPS initiatives with the potential to inform outcomes?

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

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