

SUMMARY

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) endeavors to provide opportunities for research studies of quality to be conducted within the system by graduate students and by other professionally and technically qualified individuals and research organizations.

Factors which are considered in assessing whether the school system can cooperate in a proposal for research include the following:

1. The technical soundness of the proposal design
2. The appropriateness of the research topic for support in the public setting
3. The availability of research sites and subjects of the kinds requested
4. The nature and amount of the interruption required in the ongoing educational program
5. The kinds of background data on subjects required for the proposed study and the kinds of information of a personal nature to be secured from the subjects themselves
6. The kind and number of data-gathering procedures or instruments to be used in the study
7. The need for the schools to safeguard the personal and legal rights of students, parents, and staff

The following categories of research will be accepted for screening and evaluation:

1. Proposals for research activities originating within MCPS offices, departments, divisions, and other units, transmitted through their central office administrative channels
2. Responses to MCPS requests for proposals (RFP's) for external audits and research
3. Unsolicited research proposals from individuals or organizations independent of MCPS
4. Proposals for studies for master's theses and doctoral dissertations originating from MCPS employees
5. Proposals for studies for doctoral dissertations originating from proponents other than MCPS employees

Applications for support of research projects to meet requirements of undergraduate or graduate course papers *cannot* be accepted from any individuals or groups.

The Office of Shared Accountability is responsible for screening and evaluating a request for support of a research project, and the signatures of both the associate superintendent of the Office of Shared Accountability and the deputy superintendent of schools are required to certify approval before a research study can proceed. Proposals involving sensitive issues or substantial commitment of MCPS resources may be referred to the superintendent of schools for approval, disapproval, or transmittal to the Board of Education for comment and approval.

Applications to conduct research in MCPS cannot be accepted after April 1 in any given school year. Research activities involving students may not be conducted from April 15 through September 15, unless the project is for MCPS.

The Office of Shared Accountability cannot provide applicants with assistance in research design, instrument development, data analysis, or report writing except as represented in the evaluation provisions of MCPS Regulation AFA-RA: *Conducting Research in the Montgomery County Public Schools*.

Student and parent participation in a study is voluntary. Participation of school personnel also is voluntary unless specifically indicated by the deputy superintendent of schools. Any instruments to be administered to the research subjects must display a clarifying statement to this effect on its fact sheet. Anonymity of any participant must be preserved. The identity of schools or the school system can be revealed *only* if authorized by the superintendent of schools.

The applicant is responsible for submitting an acceptable health certificate for all project staff who are not MCPS employees whenever the research activity requires contact with students.

For additional details on MCPS policy and procedures on supporting and screening research proposals, refer to MCPS Regulation AFA-RA. Copies are available on request.

INSTRUCTIONS: Applicants wishing to conduct research in MCPS are required to complete two forms, MCPS Form 495-1: *Request for a Research Activity* and MCPS Form 226-1: *Data Acquisition Clearance Request*. Submit both forms and accompanying materials to: Office of Shared Accountability, Montgomery County Public Schools, 850 Hungerford Drive, Room 11, Rockville, MD 20850.

Research Request Date ____/____/____ Applicant Name _____

Project Name _____

Office Use Only: Processing Status

Date Forms Received ____/____/____ Date to Reviewer ____/____/____ Date from Reviewer ____/____/____

Reviewer Decision: Accept Revise Reject

Date Revisions Sent ____/____/____ Date Revisions Received ____/____/____ Date to Deputy Superintendent of Schools ____/____/____

Final Decision: Accept Revise Reject

NOTE: Type or print requested information in spaces provided. Enter check marks in appropriate answer choice blocks.

A. IDENTIFICATION OF APPLICANT

1. Applicant Name: Mr. Mrs. Miss Ms. Dr. _____

Home Address _____
Street City State Zip

Business Name _____

Business Address _____
Street City State Zip

Your Professional Position/Title _____

Home Telephone Number _____ - _____ - _____ Business Telephone Number _____ - _____ - _____

E-mail Address _____

2. Are you employed by Montgomery County Public Schools? Yes No

If "Yes," are you a: Full-time employee Part-time employee Employee on leave

3. Are you proposing this study in connection with the degree requirements of a college or university?

Yes (If "Yes," answer parts a, b, and c of this question.) No (Skip to Question 4.)

a) What degree requirements? Master's Doctoral Other (specify) _____

b) Who is your advisor or committee chairperson?

Name _____ Phone _____ - _____ - _____

Institution _____ Department _____

Address _____
Street City State Zip

c) What is the approval status of your proposal at your college or university?

Formally approved Approved by advisor but not by dissertation committee Not at the approval stage

4. If you answered "No" in Question 3, indicate whether you are proposing this study as:

An MCPS Program Unit. An external research organization.

A response to a request for proposals (RFP) or grant announcement.

An individual researcher. Briefly describe your area of research specialization and activity:

5. Indicate your degree status: Nondegree Baccalaureate Master's Master's equivalent Doctoral

6. How are the costs of this proposed study being financed?

By applicant By applicant's institution, organization, or business By MCPS program funds

By government foundation or other research grant (explain) _____

B. MAJOR FEATURES OF PROPOSED STUDY

NOTE: All applications must be accompanied by a full technical proposal, submitted as an attachment to this application form and project summary. See page 7 for format.

1. Title of research _____
2. Desired time schedule for carrying out the research: From $\frac{\quad}{\text{Mo.}/\text{Yr.}}$ to $\frac{\quad}{\text{Mo.}/\text{Yr.}}$
3. The research problems and subproblems to be studied:
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____
 - d) _____
 - e) _____
4. Type of research site(s) required:
 - a) Check all that apply: Elementary Middle High Central or Field Office
 - b) Do you want to work with a specific school or schools? Yes No
If "Yes," specify _____

 - c) Are there other types of research sites required? Yes No
If "Yes," specify _____

C. REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDY

1. Will data be collected from/on students?
 Yes (Answer parts a and b of this question.) No (Skip to Question 2.)
 - a) Total number of students needed for this study _____
 - b) Check and describe any specific criteria for selection of students to take part in the study.
 Grade level _____
 Ability/Achievement level _____
 Racial/Ethnic background _____
 Sex _____
 Enrollment in special programs _____
 Receiving special education services _____
 Other (specify) _____

2. Will data be collected from/on school staff, parents, or former students?

Yes (Answer part a of this question.) No (Skip to Section D.)

a) Check all that are applicable; indicate number needed and briefly describe individuals' roles in study.

| Description of Individuals Needed | Total Number of Individuals | Role of Individuals |
|--|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom Teachers | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School-based Administrators | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Central Office Administrators | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parents | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Former Students, Graduates, and/or Their Family Members | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Support Services Staff (i.e., technology, instructional assistants, etc.) | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____ | _____ | _____ |

D. INSTRUMENTS, EQUIPMENT, AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

1. What tests, observation guides, questionnaires, attitude scales, interest inventories, and other typed or printed instruments will be used? Specify here.

| Type of Instrument | Name of Description of Instrument | Who will Complete/Answer or be Observed? | Is Instrument Researcher Made? | | Estimated Time Required to Administer |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | | | Yes | No | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Group Test | _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Test | _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Questionnaire | _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Protocol | _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Observation Guide | _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attitude/Interest Inventory | _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____ | _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ |

NOTE: All data collection instruments used as part of a research study are subject to the clearance procedure prescribed in MCPS Regulation AFA-RA: *Clearance of Data Acquisition Activities*. By this regulation, MCPS Form 226-17: *Data Acquisition Clearance Request*, must be submitted to the Office of Shared Accountability; and approval of requests for data requires the signatures of both the associate superintendent of the Office of Shared Accountability and the deputy superintendent of schools.

2. Will instructional materials be used for research purposes? Yes No

If "Yes," specify _____

E. REQUESTED PARTICIPATION OF MCPS STAFF

1. Will teachers be asked to assist with the study? Yes No If "Yes," for how much time? _____

2. Will other school system personnel be asked to assist with the study? Yes No If "Yes," who and for how much time?

F. ATTACHMENTS

Check items which you are attaching to this application:

- Proposal Description (REQUIRED). See page 7 for outline of narrative description required.
- Instruments to be used (if available) with a completed MCPS Form 226-17: *Data Acquisition Clearance Request*, listing all instruments.
- Copy of the documents submitted to the Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects and the decision document (REQUIRED).
- Consent forms (if applicable) if studies include parents, students, and MCPS staff members (REQUIRED).
- Letter or e-mail of support from offices, departments, or schools impacted by the research study and the data collection activities (REQUIRED).

G. RESEARCH ACTIVITY REPORTS

Indicate compliance with the following statement: I have read MCPS Regulation AFA-RA, Section IX.C, *Research Activity Reports*, regarding report requirements and understand that I must comply.

_____ /_____/_____
Signature, Applicant *Date*

MCPS Regulation AFA-RA, Section IX.C, *Research Activity Reports*, provides:

When students, MCPS staff members, or parents are participants in a research study, an executive summary of no more than 25 pages will be prepared and reproduced by the researcher and one copy provided to the Office of Shared Accountability. In addition, the office may request one complete copy of each report or product developed as a part or outcome of the research project. No charge will be made to MCPS for any of these reports, copies, or products; and all will be provided within 30 days of the development of the report or product, or within 30 days of the end of the study, whichever comes first.

H. SIGNATURE OF THESIS COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

The following is to be signed by the chairperson of the applicant's thesis/dissertation committee (if applicable).

I have reviewed the enclosed research proposal and find it to be technically competent, theoretically sound, and significant in focus.

_____ /_____/_____
Signature, Chairperson *Title* *Date*

Title of research _____

NOTICE OF ACTION ON RESEARCH ACTIVITY REQUEST

To Be Completed by Office of Shared Accountability

1. Clearance Recommendation:

Approval Disapproval Provisional Approval (approval contingent on acceptance of modifications indicated below.)

2. Remarks (Include specific modifications needed or reason(s) for disapproval, as appropriate.) _____

_____/_____/_____
Signature, Associate Superintendent, Office of Shared Accountability

_____/_____/_____
Date

To Be Completed By Office of the Deputy Superintendent of Schools

1. Clearance recommendation: Approved Disapproved Participation in study is: Voluntary Compulsory

2. Remarks (Include specific modifications needed or reason(s) for disapproval, as appropriate.) _____

_____/_____/_____
Signature, Deputy Superintendent of Schools

_____/_____/_____
Date

REQUIREMENTS FOR NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

Any proposal which is submitted will discuss the research issues and rationale of the investigation; present a list of hypotheses; name specific instruments that will be used to meet specific study requirements; and discuss in detail the sampling, data collection, and data analysis strategies which will be used in the study.

Proposals are to be limited to no more than 50 pages. Resumes and write-ups of previous personal experience, if required, need not be included in the above page count.

The proposal should be organized in the following manner; required chapters are asterisked.

CHAPTER

* 1. The applicant's completed MCPS Form 495-1: *Request For A Research Activity*, constitutes the PROPOSAL OVERVIEW.

*2. BACKGROUND AND STUDY DESIGN

This chapter should address in detail the background and specific research objectives of the study, hypotheses to be tested, and questions to be addressed. It should demonstrate the applicant's familiarity with the research issues to be considered in developing and implementing the activities described in the proposal. Awareness of relevant ongoing and previous research should be demonstrated, and attention should be devoted to describing the strengths and weaknesses of related efforts. The chapter should discuss how the proposed research complements or improves upon previous efforts.

*3. INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT/IDENTIFICATION

This chapter should address the instrumentation requirements of the study. Specific instruments should be identified. Where questionnaires, unobtrusive observation protocols, or interview protocols are specified, content and respondent burden should be addressed. Applicants should indicate for each instrument to be used the approximate amount of response time required. If instrument development is proposed as part of the research, a justification must be presented which documents the need for new measures and explicates why existing alternatives are not satisfactory. In developing instrument specifications, it must be kept in mind that *respondent burden must be minimized*. In evaluating proposals, this will be a major consideration. A listing of key data elements to be collected from each type of respondent should be included along with a rationale for collecting each of the key items of information. Copies of instruments proposed for use in the study should be attached to the proposal.

*4. SAMPLING

The sampling schema should be discussed fully in this chapter. If the plan includes the sampling of students, teachers, parents, etc., the methodology for accomplishing this should be clearly presented in this chapter; and the number of respondents for each type should be specified.

*5. DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGY

Both the data collection strategies and the data collection procedures for the proposed study should be fully addressed in this chapter.

*6. DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter should address the detailed analytic procedures that will be used in the study. Each of the key data elements identified in Chapter 3 should be addressed *vis-a-vis* the analytic techniques to be used with each element or set of related elements. Relationships between the analysis proposed and the hypothesis identified for testing in Chapter 2 should be specified.

*7. PROPOSED SCHEDULE OF PERFORMANCE

The time frame during which each task will be accomplished needs to be specified. Time spans should be denoted in calendar days and/or months.

*8. SUMMARY OF STAFF ASSIGNMENTS AND USE OF RESOURCES

This chapter should identify the specific individuals who will be used to accomplish each task. Specific time commitments should be made for each individual on each task to which he/she is assigned. The chapter should include an exhibit which summarizes the time commitments of each individual by task. In a similar manner, the chapter also should discuss any sizable nonpersonnel resources which may be required on a task-by-task basis. The use of charts in this chapter is encouraged.

If data are requested from MCPS to conduct the study, the applicant/organization must indicate the kinds of data and the amount of staff time the request may entail. Such requests may require the applicant/organization to pay for staff time in order to fulfill the request.

9. CONSULTANTS AND SUBCONTRACTORS

The manner in which any consultants or subcontractors will be used should be addressed in this chapter. Of particular concern is the manner in which their efforts will be coordinated with those of the regular research study staff. A discussion of previous experience in working with the same organizations/individuals is highly appropriate, as is a summary of their technical qualifications. Dissertation committee members or advisors may be included in this chapter if they will play a significant role in the conduct of the study.

10. RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

A brief discussion of relevant studies completed by the applicant and/or the organization should be presented in this chapter. This chapter should not extend beyond two pages. Any project descriptions should include the dollar value of the award, the dates started and completed, and the telephone numbers of the project and contract officers.

*11. BENEFIT TO MCPS

This chapter should present a detailed discussion of the specific benefits of this research activity to MCPS. Please note that the request to conduct research in MCPS by individuals, private groups, and other agencies will not be approved except in instances where the benefit to MCPS of such research is very substantial or where such research may be required by law. (See MCPS Regulation AFA-RA.)

12. AUTHORSHIP

This chapter should list, in decreasing order of involvement, the authors of each chapter of the proposal.

13. BUDGET

A detailed task-by-task budget for the proposed research activity should be presented in this chapter along with a discussion of the sources from which the funds are being made available.

*14. RESUMES

Resumes for all senior and mid-level staff should be provided. A preliminary statement of the manner in which each person is relevant to his/her assigned tasks should be provided.