

## ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE #416

# RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS

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## BACKGROUND

The District supports sound, ethical, and minimally disruptive research that advances public education, benefits students and staff, and contributes to community knowledge. This procedure governs all research involving students, staff, classrooms, programs, data, and facilities and outlines the process for approving and conducting research in Burnaby schools, ensuring that research activities support educational goals, respect the rights of participants, and do not disrupt school operations.

## PROCEDURES

### Requests

1. The School District will consider research proposals from District teachers and administrators, university graduate students, post-secondary faculty members and professional educational associations. Research proposals from other individuals, agencies or organizations will be considered only under exceptional circumstances.
2. All research requests must be submitted using the District's Research Proposal Form, including details of the activity, participants, assistance required, and proposed time frame.
3. University-affiliated proposals must include institutional ethics approval and endorsement from a faculty member.
4. The submission shall also include copies of any consent forms, questionnaires, inventories or tests to be used in the study.

### Proposal Evaluation

1. Proposals will be reviewed by designated District staff for educational value, relevance, methodology, scope, and potential impact on educational objectives with consideration for the following factors:
  - a. Relevance: meaningfulness and contribution to the improvement of education and/or knowledge of student learning, or general community benefit.
  - b. Methodology: requirements for identification and selection of participants; quality of the research design, procedures and data analysis.

- c. Scope: proposed contact group, number of participants and schools or District offices involved.
  - d. Intrusiveness: extent of disruption to students, staff or school operations; need for special arrangements within the school or District offices; need for involvement of District or school staff.
  - e. Timelines: time of year, duration of the study and related impact on the school, students or staff.
  - f. Timeliness: number of studies in progress at a given time.
  - g. Privacy: infringement of personal or family privacy through access to personal information.
  - h. Confidentiality: procedures for guaranteeing anonymity and confidentiality, including storage and eventual disposal of data.
  - i. Sensitivity: nature of the topic or questions as they relate to value-laden or sensitive issues.
2. Research conducted in schools shall:
    - a. be consistent with sound educational practice and meaningful inquiry;
    - b. meet professional ethical standards including informed consent, voluntary participation, right to withdraw, and confidentiality;
    - c. seek to contribute to a body of relevant knowledge and be mutually beneficial to the researcher and the school or District;
    - d. be methodologically sound, free from bias, and nonpartisan; and,
    - e. avoid contentious or personal topics that could be considered by students, parent(s) and/or guardian(s) or staff to be an invasion of personal privacy.
  3. The School District will not approve studies that:
    - a. examine contentious or personal topics that may be considered to be an invasion of privacy; or,
    - b. make unreasonable demands upon the participating students, staff or schools.
  4. Research studies or surveys that are controversial in nature or deal with issues of public policy may be referred to the Board.
  5. In reviewing research involving Indigenous students, families, or communities, the District will apply an Indigenous lens that recognizes relational accountability, cultural protocols, Indigenous Methodologies, community context, and Indigenous knowledge systems.

### **Approval Process**

1. Research proposals deemed appropriate on the basis of the initial review shall be accepted in principle.
2. Proposals that have been accepted in principle shall be forwarded to the relevant school principal(s) and/or District staff.
3. The final decision to participate in the proposed research study will rest with those directly involved.

**Student Participation**

1. District approval does not constitute a requirement for students to take part in the study. Such participation shall remain voluntary.
2. Participating students must be informed that their involvement is voluntary and that they may withdraw from participation at any time.
3. Parent(s) and/or guardian(s) of students taking part in research studies in schools must be advised of the nature and purpose of the research and may upon request review research materials.
4. When research procedures involve contact with students on an individual basis, written parental and/or guardian consent based on complete information about the purpose and procedures of the research must be received prior to commencement. Written parental and/or guardian consent is not required for students in Grades 9-12.
5. Photography, filming, video recording or audio recording of students shall not be done without written consent of parent(s) and/or guardian(s).
6. The anonymity of those participating in a research study shall must be maintained and protected at all times.

**Criminal Record Check**

External researchers with direct contact with students must provide a criminal record check prior to commencing research.

**Results**

1. The School District shall be provided with a full report on the results of research undertaken in the District upon completion.
2. Copies of final research reports shall be made available to participants and other interested persons on request.
3. Researchers should be prepared to discuss or present their findings upon request to school or District staff and parent(s) and/or guardian(s) in a manner that contributes to the knowledge and/or practice of staff, students or parent(s) and/or guardian(s).

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Cross References: