



I. Policy Statement

The Board of Education believes that responsible research is necessary to evaluate and improve educational programs and practices, and expects that the system will conduct such studies from time to time. The Board further recognizes that individuals and agencies may approach the Board for permission to conduct research in the school system.

The Board recognizes its responsibility to ensure that research conducted in the system is of high quality, safeguards the privacy of individuals, furthers the goals of the school system, and minimizes interruptions to the instructional program.

II. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for approving, conducting, and reporting research in the school system.

III. Definitions

- A. Action Research – School and classroom-based studies initiated and conducted by teachers and other school staff. Action research involves teachers, aides, principals, and other school staff as researchers who systematically reflect on their own teaching or other work and collect data that will answer their questions. (Hawaii Department of Education)
- B. Anonymity – Assurance that the research subjects remain anonymous or nameless; the subject’s identity is protected, and the individual is unknown.
- C. Confidentiality – Assurance that information collected during research may have identifiers attached to it, but the researcher holds it in confidence or keeps it secret from the public; the information is not released in a way that permits linking specific individuals to specific responses or information and is publicly presented only in aggregate form.
- D. Questionnaire or Survey – A tool commonly used in research to gather data; these may include written questions, focus groups, and both formal and informal interviews.

- E. Research – A formal and systematic structure of investigation. Sound research employs the scientific or problem-solving attitude and method. Most research is done for one or more of the following purposes: (1) to describe "what was" in an attempt to determine the historical aspects of change, growth, and development; (2) to describe "what is" in making a description involving some type of comparison or contrast; (3) to describe "what will be" under certain experimental conditions; and (4) to solve immediate problems through research involving the school worker on the job.

IV. Standards

- A. All proposals to conduct research in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) will be screened and evaluated. Proposals not meeting the ethical, quality, or priority guidelines outlined in Standards B, C, and D of this policy will be denied. Categories of research approval are as follows:
1. Research that may be approved by the Superintendent's designee after screening and evaluation
 - a. Proposals originating within the HCPSS offices, departments, divisions, and other units and transmitted through appropriate central office administrative channels
 - b. Proposals from HCPSS employees for studies for master's theses/projects or doctoral dissertations for the conclusion of a program resulting in a degree.
 2. Research that may be recommended for approval by the Superintendent's designee after screening and evaluation, but must be approved by the Board of Education
 - a. Responses to HCPSS requests for proposal (RFP's) for external audits and research
 - b. Unsolicited proposals from organizations or individuals independent of the HCPSS.
 3. Research that may be approved by the principal
 - a. Action research conducted within the school
 - b. Student research conducted within the school.
 4. Research that will not be approved or supported

- a. Research proposals designed to meet requirements for receiving credit in undergraduate or graduate courses, seminars, practicum or training workshops, except as addressed under 3.a of this section
- b. Research proposals from non-HCPSS employees for studies for master's theses/projects or doctoral dissertations for the conclusion of a program resulting in a degree.

B. Ethical Research Standards

1. Staff and researchers, both internal and external, will act in an ethical and moral manner and will minimize any negative impact of their research on instructional time.
2. Researchers will respect the students and staff who supply data by protecting their rights and not imposing an undue burden on them.
3. Researchers will recognize that participation in research is voluntary, and will therefore obtain informed consent as appropriate.
4. Researchers will honor all guarantees of privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity.
5. Researchers will protect the confidentiality of all data in compliance with Board policy and legal mandates.

C. High Quality Research Standards

1. Research proposals must be well written and well organized.
2. Research proposals must provide a clear research statement and rationale.
3. Researchers should use the most appropriate research methodology for the topic of inquiry.
4. Researchers must interpret results consistent with the data and strive for accuracy in reporting.

D. Priorities for Research

Research proposal selection will be made according to the following list of priorities:

1. Highest priority will be assigned to studies which relate directly to current school system goals and priorities
2. Second priority will be assigned to studies which promise direct benefit to the instructional program.
3. Third priority will be assigned to studies that show promise for the extension of knowledge in a substantive field or fields related to, or having implications for, education.

E. Training

1. Training for administrators regarding the implementation of this policy will be provided to support their role in approving action research projects and ensuring that staff members comply with procedures for conducting research in the school system.
2. Training for appropriate personnel will be provided to ensure that staff members comply with procedures for conducting research in the school system.

F. Communication of Policy

1. The policy will be published publicly in multiple formats to ensure that all potential researchers have the information necessary to submit a research project proposal.
2. Administrators will share the policy with those who approach them regarding research projects.

V. Compliance

A. The Superintendent's designee is responsible for:

1. Screening and evaluating research proposals in accordance with this policy
2. Handling all communication with those proposing to conduct research
3. Submitting research proposals recommended under Standard IV.A.2 to the Board of Education for approval
4. Monitoring the implementation of research projects to ensure adherence to guidelines and timeframes.

- B. Principals are responsible for evaluating action research and student research proposals in their schools, informing the Superintendent's designee of proposals that have been approved, and monitoring implementation of approved proposals.

VI. Delegation of Authority

The Superintendent is authorized to develop procedures for the implementation of this policy.

VII. References

- A. Legal
 - National School Lunch Act, Public Law 79-396, Section 9 amended
 - Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
 - COMAR 13A.08.02, Student Records
- B. Other Board Policies
 - Policy 4000 Grants
 - Policy 7010 Confidentiality of Personnel Records
 - Policy 8120 Testing: State and Local Responsibilities and Protocols
 - Policy 9050 Student Records and Confidentiality

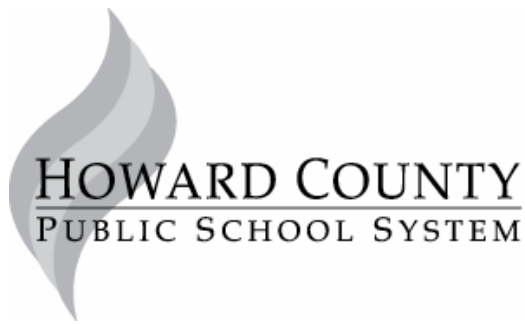
ADOPTED: September 26, 1974

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EFFECTIVE: September 7, 2006



POLICY 3030-PR
IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES
**RESEARCH INVOLVING EMPLOYEES
AND STUDENTS**

Effective: July 1, 2007

I. Research Project Proposals that may be Approved by the Coordinator of Research and Program Evaluation

- A. Research proposals originating within the HCPSS offices, departments, divisions, and other units and transmitted through appropriate central office administrative channels and proposals from HCPSS employees for studies for master's theses/projects or doctoral dissertations for the conclusion of a program resulting in a degree may be approved by the Coordinator of Research and Program Evaluation.

- B. Proposals submitted for approval under this provision must be sent to the Department of Strategic Planning, Assessment, and Program Evaluation and must include the following:
 - 1. The completed Application to Conduct Research in the Howard County Public School System
 - 2. A detailed research plan
 - 3. A detailed justification
 - 4. Copies of all research materials (e.g., questionnaires, tests, interview protocols, other research instruments, and informed consent forms) that will be used
 - 5. An estimate of the schools, teachers, students, and other school personnel that are to be involved
 - 6. A list of outside personnel who are to be involved and their qualifications and assignments
 - 7. A detailed estimate of the time required of students, teachers, and other school personnel involved
 - 8. Institutional Review Board approvals and documentation (only required for proposals from HCPSS employees for studies for master's theses/projects or doctoral dissertations).

II. Research Project Proposals Requiring Board of Education Approval

- A. Unsolicited research proposals from organizations or individuals independent of HCPSS, and responses to HCPSS requests for proposal (RFPs) for external audits and research must be approved by the Board of Education.
- B. Proposals submitted for approval under this provision must be sent to the Department of Strategic Planning, Assessment, and Program Evaluation and must include the following:
 - 1. Those items listed under I.B above
 - 2. A detailed list of the ways in which the data will be used by agencies and the means for protecting the privacy of staff and students
 - 3. Institutional Review Board approvals and documentation.
- C. Modifications to the proposal at any time require that notification be made to the Coordinator of Research and Program Evaluation.
- D. All proposals to be considered during any given school year must be received at least twelve (12) weeks prior to the desired starting time. It is preferred that the research begin between September and March of the current school year.
- E. Research proposals that have all completed documentation will be reviewed within a two-week time period, unless substantial problems are encountered with the proposed study's methodology. A letter will be sent to applicants notifying them of the status of their proposal.
- F. The research proposal will initially be screened by the Coordinator of Research and Program Evaluation. This Coordinator will then identify the appropriate curricular and/or program departments and solicit their input to determine the benefit and suitability of the research. If proposals are made to involve specific schools, the principals and appropriate staff of those schools will also be asked for input.
- G. Using the input and recommendations from the appropriate curricular departments and school staff, the Coordinator of Research and Program Evaluation will recommend approval or denial of the research proposal based on the standards and procedures outlined in this policy.
- H. Any research proposal that has been accepted and recommended for approval will then be scheduled for consideration at the next available Board of Education

meeting. The Board of Education establishes its own agenda so the timeline for Board approval may vary.

- I. Once approved or denied by the Board of Education, a final notice will be sent to the research applicant.
- J. All approved research must be completed within the approved timeline. Research that is not completed within the allotted time period must apply for an extension.
- K. Once the research is completed, an Executive Summary and a final report must be submitted to the Department of Strategic Planning, Assessment, and Program Evaluation within a 90-day period.
- L. A letter of completion will be sent to the researcher from the Department of Strategic Planning, Assessment, and Program Evaluation indicating that all required materials have been received.

III. Research Proposals that may be Approved by Principals

The following research does not require approval from the Superintendent's designee, but does require approval by appropriate principals. Notification of the approved research proposals should be sent to the Department of Strategic Planning, Assessment, and Program Evaluation.

- A. Action Research Conducted at the School Level. Action research conducted by teachers within a school must be approved by the principal at that school.
- B. Student Research Conducted at the School Level. Student research that involves the student body-at-large, students from other schools, or the local community must be approved by that student's teacher and the principals at all schools involved.

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