

# RESEARCH

IN THE CHERRY CREEK SCHOOL DISTRICT (CCSD)

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*These procedures are administered by the  
Office of Assessment & Performance Analytics  
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## Introduction

### To the research requestor:

We welcome your request to conduct research within CCSD . Please note that CCSD is more likely to approve research that aligns with our district goals. For more information on current district goals, priorities, and values, please explore the following link: [CCSD Vision, Mission and Core Values](#). Please note that the following requests will **not** be approved:

- Secondary data collection of a personal nature (e.g. questions about substance abuse, family dynamics, self-esteem, etc.)
- Research requiring a large number of student or teacher participants to complete a test, questionnaire, or other type of instrument
- Data collections/research requests that require student-level free and reduced lunch status

### Research request timeline:

- **Requests will be accepted and reviewed from October 1 through April 15 of each school year. Requests received after April 15 will not be reviewed until the next review cycle the following school year.** Data collection that involves working directly with student participants is only permitted between October 1<sup>st</sup> and March 1<sup>st</sup> of the school year unless otherwise arranged with appropriate district personnel.
- All requests to conduct research with student participants in the current school year must be submitted prior to Thanksgiving break of that year.
- Except by special arrangement, no research studies will be approved that involve data collection activities in the schools before October 1<sup>st</sup> or after March 1<sup>st</sup>
- The review of requests can take between 4-12 weeks, depending on the complexity of the study and the number of CCSD administrators (outside of the Office of Assessment and Performance Analytics) needed to adequately review the request. Strong consideration is given to research that aligns with the Core Values.. The review process can proceed most quickly when research applications follow the guidelines as set forth in this document.

### Important policy to review:

**Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA):** FERPA is a federal privacy law (20 USC 1232g) that gives parents certain protections with regard to their children's education records, such as report cards, transcripts, disciplinary records, contact and family information, and class schedules. Review the policy [here](#).

## Procedures and Instructions

### How does CCSD define research?

**Research is defined as:**

- Any *primary data collection* (e.g., survey administration, focus groups, interviews, etc.) to be conducted from or about CCSD students, staff, or parents;

**OR**

- Any *analyses* of internal or external databases containing CCSD student, staff, or school data.

### How does CCSD define “External Research” and “Internal Research”?

**External researchers and evaluators should submit a research request if their study is research-focused and involves human subjects (e.g., students, teachers, school leaders, etc.).**

**External research studies are those:**

- Initiated by individuals, organizations, or agencies outside of CCSD who wish to conduct independent research.
- Individuals or groups that have established programs within CCSD (e.g., grantees, foundations, service providers) who wish to evaluate their programs.
- CCSD employees who wish to conduct research for personal purposes outside of their work duties and/or work hours (e.g., research for the completion of a master’s thesis or doctoral dissertation). Employee theses or dissertations will only be considered if the topic aligns with district priorities.

**Internal research studies are those:**

- Initiated by a district or school staff member on behalf of a school or the district, as part of a school, district research, or program evaluation agenda (e.g., evaluation of action steps for improvement plans or classroom/PLC action research projects are internal research).

### What is NOT considered research?

**The following activities are not considered research by CCSD:**

- Class visitations by university students or by individuals in such classes where **no data is collected**. Contact regarding these visits should be made with the Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction at 720-554-5556.



- Piloting of curricular/instructional materials or techniques where no data is collected for *external* purposes. Contact should be made with the Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction at 720-554-5556.

**Common Question:** I am completing a project for a higher education class assignment and my university does not classify the assignment as research. Do I still need to go through CCSD's research request process and obtain IRB approval?

**While the university may not define the assignment as research, CCSD classifies research as the following:**

- Any primary data collection (e.g., survey administration, focus groups, interviews, etc.) to be conducted from or about CCSD students, staff, or parents;

**OR**

- Any analysis of internal or external databases containing CCSD student, staff, or school data.

**If the project falls under either condition, CCSD classifies it as research and therefore the research is required to go through the CCSD research request process and obtain IRB approval. If it is believed that IRB approval is not needed, a letter must be obtained from the university's or institution's IRB stating the research is exempt from IRB.**

## How does someone initiate a research request?

1. Complete the [Research Request Application Checklist](#).
2. Complete the [CCSD Application for Research](#)
  - a. If the research is in fulfillment of a class or degree requirement, CCSD also requires sponsorship by a college/university faculty member.
3. Provide Institutional Review Board (IRB) research approval.
  - a. If you are affiliated with a university or other research institution, you are required to provide documentation of IRB approval from your home institution before we can approve the start of any research within CCSD. The research review process can be initiated and completed while you are awaiting IRB approval, but we cannot allow research to start without IRB approval. IRB approval ensures protection of the rights and welfare of human research human subjects (e.g. district staff, principals, teachers, and students) recruited to participate in research activities. **You are required to include the status of your IRB application in your materials.**
4. Provide copies of any questionnaires/surveys, tests, interview protocols, and/or any other data collection instruments.
5. Provide copies of consent forms. If data will be collected about or from individual students, CCSD faculty or CCSD staff, **you must secure active consent from all participants**. For student participants, both student consent and parental permission are required in most cases. Copies of

consent and permission letters should be attached to the application. These letters should permit the parent and the student to provide or decline full, informed permission and consent.

- a. Permission/consent letters must include all items listed in the [Informed Consent Checklist](#). Note that the Informed Consent Checklist must be submitted along with your application.
    - i. Sample parent, student, and CCSD staff consent forms are provided in Links to Supplemental Application Materials section (pg. 8) of this guide.
6. Submit the request electronically to: [assessment@cherrycreekschools.org](mailto:assessment@cherrycreekschools.org)

## What needs to be considered when requesting to conduct district research?

The following are important issues to consider when requesting to conduct research within CCSD:

- You **must** have a plan in place to protect participant confidentiality.
- Consider how many student participants and/or staff needed to participate in your study; a large number of participants may be unreasonable.
- Consider how much time is needed for students/staff to participate, as this is an important consideration when reviewing applications. Proposals that have too many demands on student and/or staff time will be denied.
- Carefully consider the content of the research. Topics of a controversial nature or questions with inflammatory or especially personal or sensitive content are likely not appropriate.
- Timing and/or conflicts with other activities and/or studies will be considered.
- Check with participating schools regarding other research/activities that would interfere with proposed timing, and/or could potentially confound research results.

## Who reviews the application?

Research requests are reviewed by the Research Review Committee (RRC) within the Office of Assessment and Performance Analytics and appropriate administrators from other departments as needed.

## What is the criteria for approval?

The criteria for approval are as follows:

- The researcher needs to demonstrate that the study results will benefit a particular school(s), the district, or education in general.
  - The research should be compatible with CCSD policy and sound educational practices.
  - The relative cost-benefit to the school system and to education at large should be equitable. The research should promote the district's strategic priorities. Impact on students, parents, and staff should be positive and not interfere with classroom progress or instruction.
  - The design and instrumentation of the research should be sound and acceptable to the RRC.
- Successful submission of all required documents as listed in the [Research Request Application Checklist](#) and the [Informed Consent Checklist](#).

## Who approves or denies each research request?

**The Director of the Office of Assessment and Performance Analytics or designee will judge whether the application should be accepted, rejected, or accepted with stipulations/revisions.**

- If the application is rejected, the Director or designee will notify the application by email.
- If it appears that the study could be approved with minimal changes, the applicant may be advised to re-apply.

## What happens after approval?

- If the request is approved, the researcher will be notified by email and should present the approval letter to the school principal(s) or department(s) involved.
- The school principal(s) or other administrators may notify the researcher or Office of Assessment and Analytics if the school does not wish to participate in the study.
- Administrative approval does not necessarily constitute approval for the study to be conducted in any specific school. Researchers **must** obtain the approval of principals and others involved prior to conducting research in specific schools.
- Meetings, interviews, and the administration of instruments, etc. must be scheduled far enough in advance to allow for adequate planning. Professional conduct in the school by the researcher is vital.
- Parental approval of direct participation of any student in the research study is required. The researcher will provide schools with sufficient copies of the approved parental permission form. At least 2 copies of the form per student should be maintained as records. The principal or his/her designee will be responsible for supplying forms to the student and obtaining parental permission, one form will be placed in the student's file and another maintained by the researcher. Names, addresses, or any other information on the students should not be made available to the researcher until this parental permission form is secured.

## What are the requirements while the research study is being conducted?

- Confidentiality of student records must be observed and the privacy and rights of the individuals and the schools must be respected. Data with student names or any other identifiers must be disposed of when it is no longer needed.
- While conducting research studies in the schools, individuals should abide by the standards of professional conduct and dress. Failure to do so will be sufficient cause for termination of the research study.
- Any violation of procedures noted by teachers or other participants in the study should be reported to the school principal. The principal should then, if indicated, discuss such infractions with the Director of Assessment and Performance Analytics.

## What obligations does the researcher have to CCSD?

- The confidential nature of records must be observed at all times.
- Each person conducting a research study in CCSD must submit a report detailing the results of the study as soon as it is completed. An abstract of the results, such as the one linked in the Supplemental Application Materials, is the most important type of report. A copy of any full research report or dissertation is also appreciated, but the abstract is essential.

## What happens after the research study?

- The researcher agrees to release the report for use or publication by CCSD without remuneration.
- If the researcher desires to publish in a more complete form-book, dissertation, journal article, etc., the author should provide the CCSD with a copy. Approval must be granted by the Superintendent’s office before publication.
- The researcher is also required to provide any report findings to CCSD/school.
- After completion of the research study, all CCSD data should be returned or destroyed.

***Please note that these procedures shall in no way be interpreted as in conflict with open records requirements. Requests for public information extant in system records and involving no school research should be directed to the Communications Office.***

## Links to Supplemental Application Materials

Item	Required for submission?
<a href="#">Application Checklist</a>	Yes
<a href="#">Research Request Application</a>	Yes
<a href="#">Informed Consent Checklist</a>	Yes - If the research study involves human subjects
<a href="#">Parent Informed Consent Template</a>	Yes - If the research study involves CCSD student participants
<a href="#">Student Informed Consent Template</a>	Yes - If the research study involves CCSD student participants
<a href="#">Adult Informed Consent Template</a>	Yes - If the research study involves <b>any</b> CCSD staff participants
<a href="#">Sample Summary Abstract</a>	Yes - An abstract must be submitted after the research study has been <b>completed</b>