

RESEARCH PROPOSALS, PROCEDURES, AND GUIDELINES

Stillwater Public Schools collaborates with individuals and outside agencies to conduct research that has the potential to provide knowledge in areas that have an impact on the district. The mission of Stillwater Public Schools is to ensure academic excellence and create a safe and positive learning environment.

The assistant superintendent for educational services is authorized to approve, if appropriate, research projects conducted by certified staff, professors, and graduate students from colleges and universities, and representatives from other recognized research agencies. Such projects must provide research that will be useful to the district in supporting instructional programs and improving teaching and learning conditions. Research guidelines apply to formal research proposals as well as college course assignments involving research. For some college course assignments that do not require university IRB approval, IRB approval can be waived if the assignment meets all other SPS policy guidelines.

Requirements and Restrictions

1. Proposals may be submitted to Stillwater Public Schools at any time during the school year. Proposals will only be reviewed by the district committee twice a year: May 30-July 15 and from Dec. 15 to January 30. Research must be completed within the school year. Multiyear studies must request an extension each year.
2. The objectives of the research must be clearly stated and the design must produce valid and reliable results, which will be made available to the district.
3. The research shall be expected to contribute to the improvement of education and the general welfare of children.
4. Research proposals shall be of sufficient scope and depth to justify the time of the district students and staff.
5. Projects involving student or school employee research must have prior written approval by a faculty member of the institution in which the student is enrolled. This faculty member must have direct responsibility related to the student's research. **The researcher must also have a letter from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) giving approval of the research and provide the district with the IRB application.**
6. The assistant superintendent for educational services will collaborate with principals, directors, and coordinators regarding the selection of the school site(s) for the study.
7. The identity of all students, teachers, staff members, and schools who participate in a study is strictly confidential based on FERPA guidelines and may not be revealed at any time to any person, group, or organization without written consent.
8. The study will be conducted as outlined in the proposal and will be subject to any special instructions designated by the assistant superintendent for educational services.
9. Any deviation from procedures described in the proposal must be approved in advance by the assistant superintendent for educational services. Unapproved procedural changes will be considered grounds for project termination.

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10. Each approved study will be monitored by a district employee designated by the assistant superintendent for educational services.
11. No data identifying Stillwater Public schools staff or students may be released by the researcher during the tenure of the study, or after a study has been completed, to any person, group, or organization without the approval of the district.
12. If data from students is to be garnered from interviews, individual tests, or questionnaires, written parental permission must be obtained on file prior to its formal institution. All permission forms should be treated as data and kept in a secure location for at least 5 years before using approved guidelines for disposing of confidential documents. Each parental permission form must be accompanied by a brief overview of the study summarizing the study and its purpose and be approved by the assistant superintendent of educational services. Student assent forms, where appropriate, must also be approved by the assistant superintendent of educational services.
13. The researcher(s) may be asked to communicate with parents by mail. If letters are required, the researcher(s) will be responsible for all mailing costs.
14. The time frame of the study will be determined at the time of approval of the study.
15. One complete copy of the final report of an approved study must be on file in the curriculum department after the study has been completed. Depending on the study this may include, a summary of the data, a completed thesis, or a copy of any study submitted for publication in a professional journal.

Procedures

The process for submitting a proposal to conduct research is as follows:

1. Researchers submitting research prior to the review periods should expect their research be reviewed by the end of the review window. Researchers submitting during the review window should allow a minimum of five weeks for the review process.
2. An "Application to Conduct Research in Stillwater Public Schools" should be obtained from the assistant superintendent for educational services at the board of education offices or downloaded from the district web site.
3. The completed application form, the proposal, and all supporting materials must be submitted to the assistant superintendent for educational services, Stillwater Public Schools, 314 S. Lewis, Stillwater, Oklahoma 74074. The submitter should retain one copy. If the project requires an IRB, a copy of the IRB should accompany the proposal to the district. Before the research begins, the IRB's letter of approval should also be submitted. In reviewing the research proposal, the following factors will be considered:
 - A. The proposed research must have the potential to provide knowledge that will support the district's mission and instructional program.
 - B. The research is expected to contribute to the improvement of education and the general welfare of children.

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- C. Survey instruments, letters to subjects, etc., must be free of misspelled words and grammatical errors. Although the research instruments are not constructed by the district, they are often viewed as being “from the district” and, as such, reflect on the reputation and perception of the district.
- D. The proposal must be well organized and clearly identify the elements on the proposal for research form.
- E. The objective of the research must be clearly stated, and the design must produce valid and reliable results.
4. The proposed study will be reviewed for completeness by the assistant superintendent for educational services, who will notify the submitter of receipt and the status of the proposal.
5. All proposals will be reviewed by the assistant superintendent for educational services for acceptability in the following areas:
- Benefits to the district and education in general;
 - Compatibility with the regular instructional program;
 - Impact on students, parents, and staff; and
 - Technical adequacy.
6. Within one week following review and action by the assistant superintendent for educational services, the submitter will be informed of that action. If the proposal is approved, the prospective researcher(s) must contact the principals, directors, and coordinators of the selected schools to determine how to proceed with the scheduling of the project.
7. If the proposal is approved, the researcher(s) will be asked to notify parents by mail if the project involves activities or testing not commonly included in the regular instruction program. Data from students derived from interviews or questionnaires must have advance written authorization of parents or guardians. Parents will have the option of excluding their child from the research project.
8. Students, faculty, other personnel, and the school’s anonymity must be assured based on FERPA guidelines.
9. The level of intrusiveness in personal and parental habits, attitudes, and behaviors must be considered.
10. The developmental appropriateness of the proposal for the given population must be considered, i.e., instrumentation and interview protocols.
11. Interruption of instruction must be limited.
12. The amount of assistance required by the researcher from district and site staff will be considered. Research proposals should be of sufficient scope and depth to justify the time spent by Stillwater Public Schools students and staff involved in the research.
13. The research must not put the district in danger of legal or public relations repercussions.
14. Copies of all project reports (dissertations, journal articles, etc.) based on data collected within the Stillwater Public Schools district, and a one-page summary of results must be submitted to the assistant superintendent for educational services at the conclusion of the research project.