

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

### **Guidelines for Conducting Research**

All academic/non-commercial research conducted by a non-district employee, or by a district employee for personal reasons (e.g., degree requirement), must be approved by the Superintendent of the Port Townsend School District. Before receiving approval from the Superintendent, all research projects will be reviewed by the Superintendent's Cabinet for content and technical merit. Depending on the nature of the study, the Superintendent may choose to ask other groups to review the proposal prior to approval (e.g., the Superintendent's Advisory Committee or the Board of Directors).

The steps to obtaining approval are:

1. Applicants are encouraged to meet with the Port Townsend Superintendent or designee prior to submitting their final proposal to clarify district requirements, resources, and constraints.
2. Complete applications must include the following:
  - a. A completed "Request to Conduct Research" form (1331F-1)
  - b. A summary of the proposed research in the required format as outlined below
  - c. A draft "informed consent" letter to all necessary parties following the Port Townsend School District required format shown below
  - d. A signed and dated "Research Contract"(1331F-2)
  - e. A signed and dated "Ethical Principles for Research" (1331F-3)
  - f. A signed and dated "Final Research Report Format" (1331F-4)
3. Applications must be submitted early enough for all steps in the approval process to occur and for the applicant to make necessary changes when appropriate.
4. Applicants are responsible for all research costs unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the Port Townsend Superintendent.

In reviewing an application to conduct research, the fiscal impact of the District's involvement and the impact on staff and student morale will be considered. In addition, priority will be given to projects that:

- a. do not reduce instructional time;
- b. have direct application to the educational program or decision-making process of the Port Townsend School District;
- c. have a high degree of technical merit; and,

- d. do not require an inordinate amount of administrative, staff, or student time.

### **Summary of Proposed Research**

The Summary of Proposed Research should not exceed five pages. General length recommendations are included for each element.

1. **Name, address, phone number(s), and affiliations** of Investigator(s)
2. **Title of proposed project**
3. **Statement of the problem** (limit to one page), including (where appropriate):
  - basic intent of the study
  - educational area to be investigated
  - type of investigation
  - description of existing and/or manipulated situation
  - reason for undertaking the study
  - possible value of the findings to the school district
  - anticipated generalizability
4. **Research hypotheses, questions, or objectives** (limit to ½ page)
5. **Methods** (limit to two pages), including:
  - a. **Population and Sample**
    - description of the population to be sampled (experimental and control, if any)
    - sampling method and rationale
    - sample size and justification
    - desired schools and grade levels
    - procedures for identifying sample and gaining consent
  - b. **Design and Procedures**
    - research design
    - dependent and independent variables
    - treatment(s) and levels
    - instrumentation (including technical characteristics of instruments, e.g., validity, reliability, objectivity, administration time per pupil)
    - data collection procedures
    - timeline, with dates if appropriate
    - debriefing procedures
6. **Analyses** (limit to ½ page)
  - data reduction and analysis methods
  - responsibilities and resources for completing analyses
  - timeline for analysis
7. **Anticipated Final Product** (limit to ½ page)
  - distribution
  - timeline

### **Guidelines for Securing Consent**

Human subjects asked to contribute their time and effort to research should consent to do so freely. The consent should be given only after the subject understands what he or she is consenting to, and any risks that may be involved. If minors are the subjects of research, the informed consent of the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) is required. In addition, the consent of the student(s) must be secured.

Subjects and/or their families should be assured that there will be no penalties for declining to participate, and that they are free to withdraw from the research at any time after they have given their initial consent. Informed consent can occur only if the person being asked to consent understands what he or she is consenting to, and feels free to agree or not to agree to participate without any penalty.

The requirement for informed consent is ordinarily fulfilled by telling the subject in writing, (1) the general nature and purpose of the research, (2) the procedures in which the subject is being asked to participate, (3) that the subject's privacy will be respected, (4) that participation is voluntary and the subject is free to withdraw from participation at any time and free to decline to participate in any part of the procedures to which the subject may object, and, (5) whom the subject may contact to find out more about the study.

Explicit informed consent is required for all experimental and observational studies involving staff, students, or their families. Access to any records also requires explicit informed consent. Research only involving surveys may be approved with procedures securing implicit consent (willingness to complete the survey), if the respondents are adults. If surveys are to be distributed to students, explicit informed consent must be secured from the parent/guardian; student assent will be implied by their completion of the survey.

There are situations in which a potential subject's privacy might be invaded simply by being identified as a qualified participant for a study. People may belong to groups being investigated, but may not wish to have such group membership known, (e.g., parents of gifted children or parents of students who have been retained in grade). In such situations, the Superintendent or designee may require that consent be obtained from all parents and have the records reviewed by someone other than the researcher.

Explicit informed consent is to be documented by a signed consent form approved by the Superintendent or designee. Two copies must be provided by the researcher to the participant or the participant's legal representative - one to be signed and returned to the investigator and one to be kept by the participant.

The consent form and related correspondence with participants must be written on Port Townsend School District letterhead. The basic elements required in the consent form are listed below:

- a. A heading, identifying the research with the Port Townsend School District and with the investigator (by title and affiliation).
- b. Nature and purpose of the research, in language suitable for the participants involved. Writing should be straightforward; technical terms and jargon are to be avoided.
- c. A description of what the subject will be asked to do, the setting of the research, how much time will be required, and the duration of the consent (i.e., for the remainder of the semester, a specific two-week period, etc.)
- d. A description of the consequences of the procedures and any risks or discomforts that may reasonably be expected to occur.
- e. A description of the benefits to the subjects, or others.
- f. An assurance that the subject's confidentiality will be respected. The subject should be told who will have access to the data and assured that public reports will not contain information that identifies individual subjects.
- g. The subject must be told that participation is voluntary, that non-participation entails no loss of benefits to which the subject would be otherwise entitled, and that the subject may withdraw at any time. Students must be informed that refusal to participate or withdrawal during a study will have no impact on any grade or other evaluation.
- h. The approximate number of subject in the study.
- i. A written statement, to be signed and dated by the subject, that the study has been explained and that the subject has had an opportunity to ask questions about the research.
- j. The availability of the researcher to respond to questions at any time prior to or during the research (including a telephone number).

The items listed above are required by the Port Townsend School District. If an investigator's research is funded or carried out in cooperation with other agencies or institutions, those agencies or institutions may have additional requirements for informed consent. Irreconcilable differences in requirements must be brought to the attention of the Superintendent or designee of the Port Townsend School District prior to beginning the study.

**Date: 2/6/17**