

AP 348 – Research in Schools

Purpose

The Board supports participation in research activities that further the knowledge base upon which improvements to education can be made or research activities that support other values of importance to society. However, such participation must not be detrimental to the normal educational activities in the school district.

Research activities include the use of tests or other forms of assessment, checklists, surveys or questionnaires, interviews, audiotapes or videotapes, and observation when these are not part of classroom instruction and evaluation.

The Board authorizes the Superintendent/designate to screen and approve applications for research projects, subject to the guidelines outlined in this administrative procedure.

Purpose

APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Before research and other projects are considered for approval, they must be sponsored and supervised by a recognized post-secondary educational institution or a recognized research institute, or must be a component of approved research by district personnel. Research projects must have the support of the human ethics committees or of committees with similar responsibilities at the respective institutions.

Those who wish to conduct research and/or surveys in Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools must make written application to the Superintendent/designate, and provide copies of any materials to be used.

ADJUDICATION OF APPLICATIONS

Screening

On receipt of an application, the proposed research study will be screened by the Superintendent/designate, for the following:

- a) **Sensitivity:** nature of the topic or questions as they relate to value-laden or sensitive issues.
- b) **Intrusiveness:** extent of disruption to students and/or teachers and classes or support

staff; request for special arrangements within the school or district offices; need for involvement of district or school staff.

- c) **Personal Information:** infringement of personal or family privacy; naming of individuals, schools, staff, students, and/or parents in the report.
- d) **Methodology:** requirements of the research design for identification and selection of participants; quality of the research design, procedures and data analysis
- e) **Timelines:** time of year and duration of the study.
- f) **Scope:** proposed contact group, number of participants and schools or district offices involved.
- g) **Relevance:** meaningfulness and contribution to the improvement of education and/or knowledge of student learning.
- h) **Confidentiality:** procedures for guaranteeing anonymity and confidentiality, including storage and eventual disposal of data.
- i) **Timeliness:** number of studies in progress at a given time.
- j) **Honorarium:** assurance that no reward or honorarium is offered to research participants.

Acceptance in Principle

- a) Research requests are "accepted in principle" or "rejected" following screening. "Acceptance in principle" carries no implication for commitment from schools, staff, students or parents/guardians.
- b) Applications that have been "accepted in principle" are forwarded to the relevant school principals and district staff by the Superintendent/designate. The final decision for participation rests with those directly involved.
- c) Parents or families making individual decisions to participate in research activities without district or school sanction will do so outside of school hours and outside of school district premises.

CRIMINAL RECORD SEARCH

Prior to entering a school to conduct a research study, a person who is not a district employee must undergo a criminal record search and submit the report to the Human Resources Department. Final acceptance for the study is contingent on the results of the criminal record search.

INFORMED CONSENT

Parents/guardians of students taking part in research studies in schools must be advised of the nature and purpose of the research.

When research procedures involve contact with students on an individual basis, written parental/guardian consent based on complete information about the purpose and procedures of the research must be received prior to commencement.

Participating students must be informed that their involvement is voluntary and that they may withdraw from participation at any time.

RESULTS

On completion of a research project undertaken in Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools, a full report of the research results must be submitted to the Superintendent/designate. Copies of the full reports are to be made available to all participants and other interested persons on request.

Researchers should be prepared to discuss or present their findings to school or district staff and parents/guardians in a manner that contributes to the knowledge and/or practice of staff, students or parents.