

Board Adopted: March 18, 2024 [New]  
Board Information: February 26, 2024

Contact Person: Executive Director of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment

## **POLICY 515.3                      STUDENT RESEARCH**

### **I.        PURPOSE**

To provide guidelines for students who wish to conduct research within the District.

### **II.      GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY**

This policy establishes procedures for student research conducted within the District and aims to:

- Foster a culture of inquiry and independent learning.
- Ensure the safety, ethical conduct, and appropriate oversight of research activities.

This policy applies to all student research conducted within the District, including:

- Research projects for classes
- Independent studies
- Science fairs
- Personal exploration

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## **REGULATION 515.3      STUDENT RESEARCH**

### **I.      DEFINITIONS**

Human Subjects Research - Any research involving interaction or collection of data from individuals (e.g., surveys, interviews, observations).

Potentially Hazardous Materials - Any materials posing physical, chemical, or biological risks requiring specific safety protocols (e.g., chemicals, biological agents, radiation sources).

### **II.     STUDENT RESEARCH**

- A.    We encourage ethical research practices even in exempt classroom activities, though the formal involvement of the Research, Evaluation, and Assessment department is limited to the outlined structure. This approach fosters teacher and principal autonomy while ensuring responsible research conduct.
- B.    The responsibility lies with teachers for initial assessment of all proposals, focusing on topic suitability, methodology, project scope, and ethical considerations prior to data collection. Human subjects research that poses more than minimal risk to participants cannot be approved.
- C.    Research involving (a) human subjects who are minors, (b) animal subjects, (c) harmful microorganisms, or (d) hazardous materials requires additional principal approval, considering parental consent.
- D.    Students who want to publish or publicly present their findings regarding human subjects research, including competition settings, are required to obtain additional principal approval and District approval.
- E.    Supervising teachers have a responsibility to ensure that students understand and follow ethical obligations and federal regulations when conducting research projects. They shall guide, supervise, and ensure ethical conduct. They should provide guidance during data collection so as to minimize any unintentional harm, especially when dealing with private information or interacting with individuals.
- F.    The supervising teacher must review all proposed research materials, including surveys, questionnaires, interview questions, focus group questions, or other interventions, as well as student plans for protecting the well-being of animal and human subjects, as well as anonymity and/or confidentiality.

- G. Principals are responsible for reviewing designated projects and ensuring compliance with regulations. Principals are also responsible for ensuring written parental informed consent is obtained prior to any research activities taking place, when required.
- H. Students remain responsible for conducting research ethically, following approved procedures, and obtaining necessary consent.
- I. Students must receive written approval by the supervising teacher, principal (if applicable), Assistant Superintendent (if applicable), and the Executive Director of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (if applicable) prior to conducting any research activities.
- J. Documentation is decentralized, with teachers maintaining records of approved proposals and consent forms, principals keeping records of projects requiring their approval, and the Executive Director of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment keeping records of projects requiring District approval. Records shall be maintained for a minimum of two years.

### III. REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCESS

#### A. All Research Proposals

All proposals must be reviewed and approved by the supervising teacher, who will assess:

- Topic appropriateness (age-appropriate, aligns with learning objectives)
- Research methods (feasibility, safety, ethical considerations)
- Project scope (realistic timeline, manageable workload)

#### B. Research Requiring Additional Review

1. The following research requires additional review and approval by the principal:
  - Human subjects (surveys, interviews, focus groups involving minors)
  - Potentially hazardous materials or procedures must also be reviewed and approved by the principal, who will consider:
    - Additional risk management
    - Parental consent
    - Compliance with regulations
2. The following research activities require additional review and approval by the principal, Assistant Superintendent, and the Executive Director of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment. Students wishing to conduct research activities requiring this additional review must make a written request to the Research, Evaluation, and Assessment Department using the

“Student Research Request Form” available from the Executive Director of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment.

- Students publishing or publicly presenting human subjects research

C. Documentation:

1. Teachers will maintain records of approved proposals, consent forms (if applicable), and project updates.
2. Principals will maintain records of research requiring their approval and any additional risk management measures (if applicable).
3. The Executive Director of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment will maintain records of research requiring their approval (if applicable).

D. Exemptions:

1. Routine classroom activities are exempt, but ethical research practices are encouraged.

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Students shall conduct research ethically, follow procedures, and obtain necessary consent.
- B. Teachers shall review proposals, provide guidance, supervise, and ensure ethical conduct.
- C. Principals shall review research requiring their approval, implement risk management measures (if applicable), ensure compliance, and provide support and resources to teachers and students engaged in research.

V. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For further details on data privacy and research involving external entities, please refer to:

- Regulation 515 - Data Privacy For Student Educational Records
- Regulation 515.1 - Administration Procedures For Research
- Regulation 515.2 - Student Surveys Used for Research

**STUDENT RESEARCH REQUEST FORM**  
Department of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment  
BLOOMINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Overview:

1. Project Overview:

What is the title of your research project/study?

Briefly describe your research question or hypothesis (what are you trying to learn?).

Describe the main research method(s) you plan to use (e.g., surveys, interviews, experiments).

2. Participants:

Who will you recruit as participants? (Specify age range, student status, or other relevant characteristics.)

How many participants do you aim for? (Be realistic)

3. Activities & Risks:

Briefly describe the activities participants will engage in during the study (e.g., complete a survey, participate in a group discussion, perform any tasks, be observed).

Are there any potential risks or discomforts involved? Be honest about any potential challenges or downsides (e.g., time commitment, emotional vulnerability). How will you minimize these?

4. Informed Consent / Assent:

How will you explain the research study and its risks/benefits to potential participants and parents/guardians if applicable? (e.g., written consent form, written assent form, verbal explanation)

Will participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time?

5. Data Privacy:

Describe how you will ensure participant privacy and confidentiality (i.e., explain how you will protect their names and answers; e.g., will you use anonymous surveys?)

How will you ensure data security? (e.g., password-protected files)

Will you share data with anyone else? If so, who will you be sharing the data with and how will you protect participant privacy?

6. Incentives:

Will participants receive any incentives for participation (e.g., extra credit, prizes)? If not, please state that no incentives will be offered.

7. Timeline:

Provide a realistic timeframe for your project. (When will you start and finish? E.g., data collection within 2 months, analysis by end of trimester 2.)

8. Additional Information:

Describe any potential conflicts of interest (e.g., your relationship with the participants) Briefly explain how your research might benefit society or contribute to the field.

Who else needs to be informed about this project (e.g., parents/guardians, school administrators)? Is there anything else you think the IRB should know?

9. Please attach copies of all standardized and non-standardized instruments to be used.

**RETURN TO**  
**Department of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment**  
**Bloomington Public Schools**  
**1350 West 106th Street Bloomington, MN 55431**  
**PH: (952) 681-6486 — Fax: (952) 681-6497**  
**REA@isd271.org**

*For Bloomington Public Schools Use Only:*

Bloomington Public Schools					
Required Approval	Department / School	Signature	Date	Approval	
				Yes	No
X	Research, Evaluation, and Assessment				
X	Assistant Superintendent				
X	Building Principal				
X	Faculty Advisor				