



PROCEDURE 260	
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CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN HASTINGS AND PRINCE EDWARD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

1. PURPOSE

The director of education has developed this administrative procedure to regulate the conduct of research in the schools of Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board. This procedure describes the application process and sets out the criteria for the acceptance of research projects.

2. RESEARCH APPLICATIONS

- 2.1 Research and information gathering in Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board has been placed in three categories for regulation purposes each having procedures outlined in this document. In most cases, Form F260-1 Research Application must be completed.
- 2.2 If the initial application contains all of the information that would normally be found in the research application, or if the application is detailed enough that only minor details need to be clarified by direct contact with the researchers, this requirement may be waived by an ad hoc research review committee. [See section 4.] Applications are available on request from the director's office and shall be returned to the director's office according to the procedures outlined for the research category. If approved, a copy with the director's signature will be sent to the researcher.

3. CATEGORIES OF RESEARCH

3.1 Category One

- 3.1.1 Studies in Category One take place in one school and are focussed primarily on instructional methodologies. The data would clearly not deal with moral or ethical questions and not infringe on students' rights in any way.
- 3.1.2 In order to conduct Category One research, an application must be submitted to the principal of the school for approval. If in doubt, the principal may refer the question to the director or superintendent. As a final step in the process, the director must sign all Category One applications.

3.2 Category Two

- 3.2.1 Category Two research is any project involving more than one school where someone must judge the implications for instructional time and overall worth.
- 3.2.2 An application must be submitted to the director of education for possible referral to an ad hoc research review committee. If the proposal is accepted, the investigator may then approach the principal with the proposal. The principal may decline the request unless the research has been designated as a system priority by the director.

3.3 Category Three

- 3.3.1 Three conditions place research in Category Three: (1) any study which collects data from students or the staff on potentially ethical or moral questions; (2) questions on issues which appear to have the possibility of infringing on the rights of subjects; (3) all research applications from sources external to the system.
- 3.3.2 The application is made to the director of education. The director may consult a research review committee and if approval is recommended, conditions which the study must meet will be specified. Constraints may be placed upon the publication of data.

4. THE RESEARCH REVIEW COMMITTEE

- 4.1 The research review committee is an ad hoc committee called by the director to assist with the examination of research proposals. The membership must be qualified to judge the implications of the application. The opinions of qualified judges from other sources may be used, including the Board's legal firm and the Program and Human Resources Committee.
- 4.2 The research review committee chairperson will provide the director with written recommendations and identify a contact person for external research applications recommended for approval. The research review committee can recommend approval or rejection and can specify conditions to be met by any applicant.

5. CRITERIA FOR APPROVING RESEARCH

- 5.1 The research needs to have a potential "pay off" to the investigator, the system, and education in general. The assumption is that in general, internal research will be encouraged and assisted whenever there are benefits, and the implications for the district's participation are reasonable.
- 5.2 The loss in instructional time and potential for disruption must not be excessive. Included in the decision-making is consideration for other research already going on, instructional time lost (if any), other plans and activities which might be interrupted by the project, and the amount of instructional time consumed by competing activities during the year.
- 5.3 Costs to the board, including expenditures, legal risks, and the possible loss of good will of students, parents and the community must be considered.
- 5.4 Ethical, moral and legal implications of the study for the subjects and the district are important considerations. The implications which might arise from the publication of data must be taken into account.

- 5.5 Protection of student rights when students are subjects is an essential consideration. When data are collected from students, their rights and those of parents are not to be infringed upon. Conditions to be met include:
- a) approval in writing from parents or the adult student;
 - b) that the project not create stress;
 - c) non-infringement of privacy;
 - d) the right to withdraw from participation at any time;
 - e) assurance that information is given voluntarily without any special form of reward;
 - f) anonymity of subjects is guaranteed;
 - g) all rights are explained to participants in advance of data collection; and
 - h) there is no denial of learning opportunity.
- 5.6 The quality of the research design is important. Proposals with apparent design flaws will be rejected or required to be revised. Any apparent violation of the ethical responsibilities normally expected of researchers will result in rejection of the project.
- 5.7 There must be adherence to confidentiality and privacy requirements which arise from conducting research in schools. Research in schools has specific legal requirements designed to maintain confidentiality and protect privacy. *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* outlines specific conditions to protect confidentiality and privacy which researchers must meet, particularly when using written records. Eight conditions are outlined in section 6.

While official student records are developed and controlled by schools, ownership does not belong to the school, and access is limited to authorized school personnel. Anyone else must have written parental permission when the student is under age, or written student permission when the student is an adult (age 18 or over). Authorized school personnel are not entitled to use these records for research purposes without written approval.

Similarly, records related to staff members must meet the conditions outlined under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

6. **REGULATIONS UNDER THE *FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY ACT***

- 6.1 The following are the terms and conditions relating to security and confidentiality that a person is required to agree to before a head may disclose personal information to that person for a research purpose:
- 6.1.1 The person shall use the information only for a research purpose set out in the agreement or for which the person has written authorization from the institution.
 - 6.1.2 The person shall name in the agreement any other persons who will be given access to personal information in a form in which the individual to whom it relates can be identified.
 - 6.1.3 Before disclosing personal information to other persons under paragraph 6.1.2 above, the person shall enter into an agreement with those persons to ensure that they will not disclose it to any other person.
 - 6.1.4 The person shall keep the information in a physically secure location to which access is given only to the person and the persons given access under paragraph 6.1.2.
 - 6.1.5 The person shall destroy all individual identifiers in the information by the date specified in the agreement.

- 6.1.6 The person shall not contact any individual to whom personal information relates, directly or indirectly, without the prior written authority of the institution.
- 6.1.7 The person shall ensure that no personal information will be used or disclosed in a form in which the individual to whom it relates can be identified without the written authority of the institution.
- 6.1.8 The person shall notify the institution in writing immediately if the person becomes aware that any of the conditions set out in this section have been breached.

Legal References:

- *Education Act, section 265 Duties of Principal: Care of Pupil*
- *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*

District References:

- Administrative Procedure 194 - Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy
- Administrative Procedure 195 Records Management
- Form F260-1 Research Application