



Research Proposal Procedures

Anyone wishing to access Arlington Independent School District (AISD) resources to conduct research studies must obtain approval from the Arlington Research Review Committee (ARRC).

The following guidelines describe the general principles underlying the review process and the procedure to follow in submitting a research proposal for review. Only proposals that have a clear, direct, and immediate benefit to the district in terms of informing practice will be considered for approval. We are limited in our ability to provide access to student data. Please understand that we can only accommodate requests for data that do not involve merging of data from different sources or across multiple school years. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Dr. Natalie Lopez, Director of Research and Analysis, at nlopez3@aisd.net.

Guidelines

Read carefully--These requirements are critical for research permission. Please adhere to the following guidelines in determining a proposal for research or to conduct a project as a class assignment:

- 1) AISD receives many requests for research and its capacity to accommodate all of them is limited. Because research facilitation and administration requires a great deal of effort and resources, AISD will use its discretion in determining which research activities will be approved.
- 2) AISD must recognize a value to participating in proposed research. AISD expects to be furnished with copies of any final reports or relevant findings.
- 3) No instructional time can be used for research activities. All research interventions planned to take place during regular instructional time must be approved by AISD as standard curriculum. If it is not AISD curriculum, it will not occur during instructional time.
- 4) Please note that the ARRC is NOT an Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB). The ARRC convenes after you have university permission and have submitted for review to the IRB or HRSB as appropriate. Conditional approval may be granted with the expectation that the researcher's institutional IRB will provide a statement of approval or exemption before the actual research process begins.
- 5) Applications to the ARRC must be complete. Typical key elements of a complete application include a complete application form, description of the research protocol, evidence of IRB or HSRB action, and appropriate consent/assent materials. Include any surveys, questionnaires, test forms, interview protocols, and any other instruments to be used.
- 6) Researchers should not contact individual principals, teachers, staff, etc. about research planning or coordination prior to submitting a research request to the ARRC and receiving approval.
- 7) If you are an AISD employee and your research is not sponsored by AISD, all correspondence regarding

your approved research must be sent through a non-AISD email address. In all correspondence you must represent yourself as a researcher affiliated with the sponsoring institution rather than as an AISD employee.

- 8) Approved research shall be conducted in accordance with Board of Education and administrative policies of the district. An approved research study may be terminated, at any time, by the ARRC.
- 9) The primary investigator is responsible for maintaining all data in such a manner that ensures the security and confidentiality of all research participants. All data will be stored in files and on devices that are password protected and/or encrypted. Data will be transferred from AISD to the principal investigator by downloading the data directly to a USB flash drive supplied by the principal investigator. No data will be transmitted electronically. Access to data will be limited to the principal investigator and secondary researchers.
- 10) Any student, staff, school, or district information should be used solely for completion of your research study and should remain strictly confidential. Pseudonyms should be used in any documents produced from the research project to ensure the anonymity of students, staff, schools, and the district.

Criteria

All research proposals are reviewed based on the following criteria:

- 1) The time involved for students, teachers, administration, staff in terms of minimal disruption to instructional time.
- 2) The proposal conforms to standards for protecting human subjects.
- 3) The application and content is submitted correctly with all required fields completed.
- 4) The researcher must have a signed parent permission slip for each minor student who is involved. Students older than 18 years can provide student consent without parental assent.
- 5) If research includes comparing any pupil records to determine how a student's progress has been affected as a result of the research, explicit parental (or student age 18 and above) consent must be obtained not only for participation in the research, but for AISD to provide the researcher with the specific records.
- 6) In lieu of formal consent/assent, the ARRC may find that notification letters to families are an acceptable means to inform families of research being conducted in the classroom. In almost all cases, notification letters are associated with minimally intrusive research focusing solely on the teacher without any observations or data collected about students. In such cases, staff consent would still be required.



Approval process

The ARRC meets every 3rd Thursday of the month, with the exception of July and December. Research requests must be received at least one week prior to the meeting, so that members of the AARC have time to thoroughly review the proposal. Within two weeks of the meeting, the ARRC will inform the researcher by email of the action taken on the application.

Once the researcher has received approval, it will be the researcher's responsibility to contact the school (or district contact) cited in your application and make arrangements with appropriate personnel for the implementation of the research project.

Prior to approval, the ARRC makes every effort to ensure that sufficient interest and capacity exists in the school or program area needed to accommodate a research proposal. Even after ARRC approval, the principal of any campus or administrator of any program may decline participation in a research study.

Please note: Reflecting state and federal guidelines, AISD cannot freely disclose who receives free and reduced price lunches. To obtain this information, consent forms must explicitly state a researcher's intent to obtain this information, that the information will be used only for the research indicated and will not be re-disclosed. The signed consent form must also specifically request that AISD provide the lunch status information to the researcher.

Additionally, employees of the district often need access to sensitive information to carry out their jobs. However, this access does not grant them permission to use that data for reason other than the specific purposes for which they were granted initial access. Schools and school staff are generally not considered "owners" of data for purposes of determining the appropriateness of its release. A data owner is the administrator, director, or supervisor of the division that collects and/or uses data on behalf of the entire district. In other words, just because a teacher has access to testing information does not give them explicit right to use this information without permission.