



Research Proposal Procedures

Anyone wishing to access Arlington Independent School District (AISD) resources to conduct research 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. 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. 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 Genea Stewart, Department of Research and Accountability, at gstewart@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 must recognize a value to participating in proposed research. AISD expects to be furnished with copies of any final reports or relevant findings.
- 2) 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.
- 3) 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.
- 4) 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, recruitment emails and appropriate consent/assent materials. Include any surveys, questionnaires, test forms, interview protocols, and any other instruments to be used.
- 5) Researchers should not contact individual principals, teachers, staff, etc. about research planning or coordination prior to submitting a research proposal to the ARRC and receiving approval.
- 6) If you are an Arlington ISD employee and your research is for a non-AISD entity, all correspondence regarding your proposal should 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.



- 7) Approved research shall be conducted in accordance with the Board of Education and administrative policies of the district. An approved research study may be terminated, at any time, by the ARRC.
- 8) 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 secure files and on devices that are password protected and/or encrypted. Access to data will be limited to the principal investigator and secondary researchers.
- 9) 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, and staff in terms of minimal disruption to instructional time.
- 2) The proposal conforms to standards for protecting human subjects.
- 3) The application and content are submitted correctly with all required fields completed.
- 4) The researcher must have a parent permission consent and a student assent form for any research involving minors. The researcher must include a researcher consent form for any interviewers including staff.
- 5) 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 proposals must be received at least one week prior to the meeting, so that members of the ARRC 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. Please attach a copy of your approval letter, from the ARRC, in your recruitment email to participants.



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. 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.