

NON-DISTRICT RESEARCH INVOLVING DISTRICT SCHOOLS OR PROGRAMS

Policy 336

Waunakee Community School District

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The School Board generally encourages the District's professional employees to contribute to the field of education through research and other scholarly work that, for example, studies or evaluates methods of instruction, student learning, or innovative practices. However, it is also important that such activities be properly planned, vetted, and authorized. In some cases, the District may reject well-intended research proposals due to concerns with ethical research practices, limitations on the use of certain records/information, the appropriate allocation and use of District resources, or possible disruptions to District program operations.

Accordingly, if any District employee or non-District third party wishes to independently initiate any research project or study that involves the District, either on their own behalf or in collaboration with others, the individual shall first request and obtain written permission to undertake the activity from the appropriate Director of Instruction for the District building level if any of the following apply:

1. The research or study would be likely to be considered a type of "human subject research." Examples of such research may include activities in which individuals are assigned to a control group or experimental group with respect applying some research-related intervention, or research that involves the administration of certain surveys or interviews. (In the case of a non-District third party's request, this criteria assumes that the relevant research is seeking access to "human subjects" through the District.)
2. The research or study would be conducted or analyzed using the paid time of any District employee(s) or otherwise impose costs on the District that the District has discretion to approve or deny.
3. The research or study would involve the access, use, or disclosure of any individually-identifiable student record information or other individually-identifiable District data/records as to which any applicable state or federal law places relevant restrictions on such access, use, or disclosure.
4. The research or study would require any other special access to District facilities, programs/operations, personnel, students, or data beyond that which is generally accessible to any member of the public. Examples of data/records that are generally accessible to the public include data obtained as the result of a public records request, data that is already published by the District and accessible to the public (e.g., on the District website), and District data that is publicly available from the Department of Public Instruction.

A District employee's or a non-District third party's current enrollment in or other association with an institution of higher education does not change the above requirements for obtaining advance permission to conduct a research project or study that involves the District.

Although appropriate care and caution regarding ethical research practices and ensuring the appropriate use and security of confidential records/information must also be exercised with District-initiated efforts to evaluate its own programs and operations, this policy is not intended to directly apply to intra-District studies or evaluations that are undertaken within the scope of an employee's duties solely for internal purposes or that are otherwise authorized or directed by the appropriate Director of Instruction for the District building level.

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Legal References:

Wisconsin Statutes

[Subchapter II of Ch. 19](#) [state public records law]
[Section 118.125](#) [state student records law]
[Section 120.12\(2m\)](#) [prohibition on the disclosure of certain employee evaluations]

Federal Laws

[20 U.S.C. § 1232h](#) [Protection of Pupil Rights Provision of General Education Provisions; student privacy policies required and other privacy and parent's rights mandates]
[20 U.S.C. § 1232\(g\)](#) [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; the federal student records law]
[34 C.F.R. Part 99](#) [U.S. Department of Education FERPA regulations]
[34 C.F.R. Part 300, Subpart F](#) [U.S. Department of Education IDEA regulations; confidentiality and maintenance of records]
[42 U.S.C. § 1758\(b\)\(6\)](#) [heightened privacy rules for students' eligibility status and other National School Lunch Program records; limitations on local district use of such data]

Cross References:

WASB PRG 336 *Sample Policy 1*
333, Parent Rights in Relation to District Programs/Activities and Student Privacy
347-Rule (1), Student Record Procedures
526, Personnel Records 823,
Access to Public Records

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