

Subject:	EXTERNAL RESEARCH BY AGENCIES OR INDIVIDUALS	Regulation Identifier:	TEV-01
Office:	TESTING AND EVALUATION		
Reference:			
To:	All Principals		
Date:	August, 2014	Reissued By:	Brenda Ward

RESEARCH DEFINED

Research for the purposes of this policy is defined as any formal study collecting data from or about NISD students or staff. Requests to collect data from parents will not be approved.

Research under this policy excludes:

- (1) informal observations without formal data collection and reporting,
- (2) piloting materials and techniques without formal data collection and reporting, and
- (3) requests for directory information or non-directory information where nothing other than use of currently maintained information is required.

EXTERNAL DEFINED

External under this policy includes:

- (1) non-NISD agencies or individuals,
- OR -
- (2) NISD employees working in areas not directly related to their current job duties and responsibilities.

(Examples of staff doing a study not directly related to their current job duties would include a teacher studying counseling, a principal studying district staffing procedures, or an athletics director studying transportation.)

- OR -

- (3) NISD students working under the supervision of a NISD-sanctioned advisor.

External under this policy excludes:

- (1) studies conducted by a principal and staff internal to one school and affecting only that campus,
- (2) NISD employees working in areas directly related to their current job duties and responsibilities, and
- (3) State-mandated testing and data-collection efforts.

PHILOSOPHY

Northside recognizes good instruction comes from quality staff employing researched methods and techniques. We will attempt to cooperate with legitimate and important studies that do not detract from the education of our students or the performance of our staff.

DISSERTATIONS AND THESES

Masters theses and doctoral dissertations generally are considered external research and require approval. The college/university Institutional Review Board (IRB) documentation must be submitted. In those cases where the study is conducted by NISD staff in an area directly related to their current job duties and responsibilities AND internal to one campus or department the staff members does not need district approval. However, staff must obtain supervisor approval and observe standard research procedures, including obtaining parental consent.

STUDENT RESEARCH

- (1) Only surveys conducted as a project within the standard curriculum in marketing, psychology, journalism and similar courses that use surveys will be considered. GT (ALPHA) students working with NISD-sanctioned mentors may propose conducting student surveys.
- (2) Students are not permitted to survey other students without the prior permission of the principal.
- (3) Students may only survey students on their home campus.
- (4) Only classmates and section mates may be surveyed.
- (5) A single time and location must be set and monitored by a NISD staff member.
- (6) Parental permission must be obtained.

ADMINISTRATION

- (1) The first contact regarding external research should be with the Program Evaluation Specialist for District Programs rather than with schools, principals, or individual staff members.
- (2) Unsolicited requests are reviewed as presented from the Texas Education Agency, standardized test publishers and federal agencies. Other unsolicited requests should be accompanied by the original of the application form. All forms are posted on the Testing and Evaluation webpage at <http://nisd.net/testing-evaluation/node/6>.
- (3) Requests should be submitted a minimum of six weeks prior to anticipated start date.
- (4) Research will generally not be approved to start prior to the fourth week of school or continue into the last month.
- (5) Copies of data collection instruments should be attached to the original application.
- (6) A parental consent form similar to the sample attached also should be included. The sample form must:
 - (a) be appropriately modified by the researcher,
 - (b) have a place for the parent/guardian to give consent,
 - (c) have a place to be dated if consent given,
 - (d) specify the data to be collected or records released,
 - (e) specify the reason(s) for the research,
 - (f) identify to whom information will be released,
 - (g) describe any procedures to be followed and identify any which are experimental,

- (h) describe any foreseeable risks or discomforts,
- (i) describe any benefits,
- (j) explain the extent to which confidentiality of records will be maintained,
- (k) state whom to contact with questions or concerns,
- (l) state participation is voluntary and students may withdraw from participation, without jeopardy.

Where students are not "subjects" in a research study (subject to active manipulation of an independent variable) but completing paper and pencil tests a parental notification form may be used.

- (7) Submit the documents in electronic form including the application form, data collection instruments, and parental consent form and email them to: testing.department@nisd.net.

APPROVAL PROCESS

A panel of selected district administrators in roles relevant to the research will review each proposal. On the basis of reviews, the Program Evaluation Specialist for District Programs will approve or disapprove the proposal.

If a researcher needs to directly interact with NISD students during the study and/or during data collection efforts, a criminal background check will be needed. The criminal background check will be initiated once the researcher is tentatively approved based on the three research review criteria below.

The Program Evaluation Specialist for District Programs will consider the sites proposed by the researcher; however, the District reserves the right to select schools to participate in such a manner as to spread requests and not burden schools.

Campuses will be required to participate in district-approved studies conducted a) for the Texas Education Agency, b) when laws require federal agencies to collect data, and c) program-based evaluations such as the Safe and Drug Free program's use of the Texas School Survey of Substance Use. Principals may decline to participate in other unsolicited requests.

Principals in participating schools should inform the Program Evaluation Specialist of any concerns or problems related to the conduct of any external research study. District approval to continue may be withdrawn.

CRITERIA USED IN REVIEWING RESEARCH

- (1) Because of our commitment to instruction, our position on time requirements is very conservative. However, each research study will be judged on its own merits and some studies requiring unusual amounts of instructional time may not be approved. Studies requiring few schools and students are preferred over larger studies.

- (2) The technical quality and rigor of the study are very important for Northside to make its students and/or staff available for external-researcher based studies. Such issues as the contribution to the field of education, the quality and clarity of the purpose of the proposed research, the quality and clarity of research design and data collection tools and techniques, the appropriateness of the data analysis procedures and tools, the qualifications of the individual researcher and the qualifications of the agency performing the research will be carefully reviewed.
- (3) An assessment will be made regarding the extent to which NISD may directly benefit from the study. This could include such things as the specific applicability of the results of the study to Northside, materials and/or services donated, etc.

TESTING

In order to protect the integrity of classroom instructional time, Northside is currently operating under a moratorium on participating in item tryout, standardization, norming, equating, or similar-type requests from testing companies. Only extraordinarily unique requests would lead Northside to consider a waiver. Northside will review the impact of this moratorium annually.

OTHER

In cases where parental consent is required, one copy of parental consent form is to be filed in the Vice Principal's office for 1 year after the completion of the research.

The confidential nature of records and information must be observed and the privacy and rights of individuals and schools must be respected throughout any study. Therefore, data identified with student names must be disposed of when its use is complete.

Northside ISD will suspend or cancel an operating project if it has not been approved. Furthermore, Northside reserves the right to suspend or cancel an approved and operating project if concerns about inappropriate professional behavior or unreasonable research tools and techniques are raised.

At the conclusion of the study, a copy of the final report will be sent to the Program Evaluation Specialist for District Programs.

These procedures are not in conflict with open records requirements. Requests for information maintained by Northside ISD should be directed to the Superintendent's Office for referral to the appropriate department.

This ends the External Research Guidelines.

Forms used to implement the Guidelines are in the separate file: External Research - Forms.