

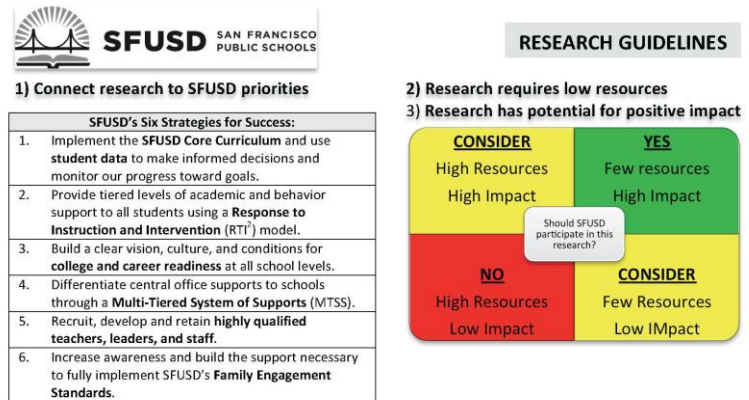
Application to Conduct Research in the SFUSD

Frequently Asked Questions about Conducting Research Studies in SFUSD

Individuals and organizations may conduct research in SFUSD if the research follows these guidelines:

- 1. The research is aligned with SFUSD's Guidelines for Research:**
The research must be aligned with three guidelines for research. 1) The research must be connected to SFUSD's priorities as outlined in Figure 1 to the right. 2) The research must require low resources – time, money, effort from the district, and 3) the research must have potential for positive impact. Check the district's website for further details of the district's priorities (www.sfusd.edu).

Figure 1: SFUSD Guidelines for Research



- 2. The research does not interrupt district or school operations:** The research must not interrupt the operations of the district or a school, interfere unduly with instructional time, or require effort, time, or resources from the participants that the district or the school considers to be disruptive. SFUSD will charge a fee for projects that require extra effort and time by district personnel.
- 3. The research does not invade privacy:** The research may not invade the privacy of the participants and it must adhere to FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) guidelines and PPR (Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment). For instance, students cannot be asked about their own or their parents' race, beliefs, or practices regarding sex, family life, morality, or religion without explicit, written permission to do so from a child's parent or guardian through district-approved consent forms. Participants may not be identified by name in any reports or on any data-gathering documents, nor may students or their files be used to obtain information relating to their parents. Also, researchers may not have access to basic staff personnel records.
- 4. The researchers obtain district-approved consent/assent from participants:** Researchers must obtain active, informed consent from all participants and/or their guardians for all research studies that collect personally identifiable data. Copies of all consent forms must be submitted with the application and are subject to SFUSD review and approval. Student assent to participate in research must be obtained from students in grades 6 through 12. In most cases, research instruments and consent forms for parents may need to be translated into Chinese, Spanish, Vietnamese, Tagalog, and Arabic and the translated versions must also be submitted with the research application.
- 5. The research follows guidelines for interacting with schools and participants:** Researchers conducting research at school sites must complete a tuberculosis test and be fingerprinted, according to procedures established by the Department of Justice and the FBI. It is the responsibility of the research organization conducting the research to keep documentation of this information on file and such information must be made available to the district upon request. In addition, a certified SFUSD employee must be present at all times when non-district personnel are with students.
- 6. The researchers submit their research application on time and follow application agreements:** Please see next section for application procedures.

Research Application Procedures at SFUSD

Please note that this application is a significantly streamlined combination of what were formerly the SFUSD Research Application, SFUSD Survey Application, and SFUSD Data Use Agreement Template. This is the only application required to conduct research in the district.

1. Download and complete forms, and gather relevant documentation:

- a. [Form 1](#), “Executive Summary” and “Application to Conduct a Research Study in SFUSD”
 - a. All applicants need to fill out Form 1.
 - b. Provide complete yet concise descriptions that detail your research project and explain the feasibility and relevance of your research study.
- b. [Form 2](#), “Request to Administer a Survey, Interview, or Other Assessment in SFUSD”
 - a. Complete this form if you plan to obtain any primary data through a survey, interview, focus group, or other assessment.
 - b. Include final versions of all surveys, assessment instruments, and interview or observation protocols for review and approval. Any subsequent revisions must be reviewed and approved before they may be administered.
- c. [Form 3](#), “Request for SFUSD Administrative Data to Use in a Research Study”
 - a. Complete this form if you are requesting administrative data from SFUSD. This will serve as the Data Use and confidentiality Agreement (DUA).
- d. [Form 4](#), “Criminal Background Check, Subsequent Arrest Notification, Tuberculosis Clearance Certification”
 - a. Complete this form if any research personnel will collect data in school sites.
 - b. This form identifies specific personnel who have completed the necessary fingerprinting, background checks and TB tests required before interacting with students.
- e. Additional supporting documentation:
 - a. All applicants should include copies of any existing MOUs, DUAs or contracts with the district that pertain to the proposed study, as well as IRB approval if applicable.
 - b. You may also include letters of support for the research study.
 - c. If this is a research application that is part of a master’s thesis or a dissertation, you must include a letter from your faculty advisor.

If you are requesting access and/or the release of information on individually identified students:

- a. You must include a letter of approval for research with human participants (human subjects) from your institution’s internal review board (IRB) for research with human subjects.
- b. You must also obtain active parental consent before you collect or obtain access to individually identifiable data. Please submit consent/assent forms with your research application for review.

2. Submit your application:

Applications must be submitted and approved by RPA by March 15 in the current academic year to be executed in the subsequent academic year. Please allow at least **six weeks** for processing of the application. Submit the complete application both via email in PDF format and as a hard copy.

Mail to:

Jan Link, Supervisor
Research, Planning and
Accountability Department (RPA)
San Francisco Unified School District
555 Franklin Street, Second Floor,
San Francisco, CA 94102

E-mail to:

LINKJ@sfusd.edu.

For more information, please call
(415) 241-6454.

The Application Review Process

Once RPA receives the original hard copy, a research application will go through the following process:

1. A supervisor at RPA will review the application and will contact the primary researcher within six weeks.
2. If the application meets all the necessary district criteria, RPA will recommend the application for approval by a central office administrator (such as an assistant superintendent).
3. When an application is approved, RPA sends a letter of approval to the primary researcher.
4. After the primary researcher receives written approval from RPA, he or she may begin conducting research in the district.

Please keep in mind that for research taking place at a school site, final approval rests with the site principal or program administrator and impacted classroom teachers. The approval of the research application at the central office level does not obligate any site or individual to participate in any research.

Once You Have Received District Approval...

Note that once research approval is granted, there can be no changes in research procedures, protocols, or instruments without prior written approval from RPA.

- a. Before starting any research activity, the study's primary researcher must submit a copy of their research approval letter from RPA to all participating school sites' administrators.
- b. Signed Consent Forms for Release of Pupil Information and/or Participation in Research and signed Student Assent Forms must be filed at the school site with the principal or his/her designated representative at least two weeks prior to collecting data for each student.
- c. Researchers must coordinate with SFUSD operations personnel to administer an approved survey.
- d. Researchers' data requests, once approved, will be fulfilled by Research, Planning, and Assessment department personnel.
- e. During the course of the research, the research team will be expected to provide interim updates on the research progress. This is to ensure both that the research is able to take place as planned, and that the relevant district personnel understand and can act upon the research findings.

Once Research is completed

A copy of the study's final report with findings and analysis must be submitted to RPA by the specific date agreed upon in writing by the primary research applicant and RPA. All charts included in reports must detail the source, date, and definition of the data used.

Instructions for Form 2: Request to Administer a Survey, Interview, or Other Assessment in SFUSD

Please attach the final instrument or interview protocol and any supplementary materials and documentation that will assist in assessing its validity and reliability.

GUIDELINES FOR SURVEY ELEMENTS

The following elements ought to be standardized in all surveys administered at SFUSD:

1. **SURVEY TITLE:** All surveys must be clearly titled and include:
 - a. The name of the organization administering the survey
 - b. The survey title
 - c. Date/semester when survey is being administered
2. **INTRODUCTION:** All surveys ought to have an introduction that specifies
 - a. The name of the organization administering the survey and either SFUSD or the site where the survey is being administered (i.e., UCLA/SFUSD)
 - b. The title of the survey
 - c. The semester when the survey is being administered (i.e., Fall 2011)
3. **FIDELITY:** All survey items ought to align with the stated purpose of the survey and their construct ought to lend itself to meaningful tabulation and analysis. Therefore, all scales ought to be carefully constructed and validated.
4. **RELEVANCE, AUDIENCE, AND LENGTH:** When considering your survey for approval, we will carefully consider the relevance of your survey within the context of your research and its relevance to the audience (respondents). Consider carefully the length of your survey, the appropriateness for your audience, and limit your questions to what is going to provide actionable findings.

Please note that all surveys that involve interviewing students in elementary and secondary schools must adhere to the requirements of the *Protection of Pupil Rights Act* and related amendments (see 20 US Code Section 123h and amendments included in Section 1061 of the No Child Left Behind Acts of 2002). Specifically, without written consent from a student's parent, questions may not be asked about the following:

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the students or the student's parent;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the students or the student's family;
3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or the student's parent; or
8. Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation or for receiving financial assistance under such a program).

Instructions for Form 4: Subsequent Arrest Notification, and Tuberculosis Testing Requirements for Researchers

Overview:

There are certain instances when a researcher working in SFUSD will need to meet criminal background check, subsequent arrest notification and tuberculosis testing requirements. Generally, a researcher must meet such requirements if:

- Guideline 1: If, in the course of the performance of the research agreement, there is a possibility that the researcher might be alone with a student or group of students at any time.
- Guideline 2: If, in the course of the performance of the research agreement, there is a possibility that the researcher might be able to develop a relationship of trust with a student (e.g. through repeat visits). This can occur in one visit in which a researcher will interact extensively with a student or students. This can also occur where a researcher will make repeated visits to a school, for example, to observe in the same classroom, survey students, or provide a service. Even where the researcher may not work or interact with students extensively during any one visit, repeated visits in which a student sees and interacts with a researcher at school may come to accept that adult as a trustworthy person.

As a researcher working in SFUSD, you may **not** need to meet criminal background check, subsequent arrest notification and tuberculosis testing requirements if:

1. You are visiting a school and observing adult-only activities on a one-time or limited basis: staff meeting, professional development, etc.
2. You are visiting a school and observing student activities on a one-time or limited basis, and will not, at any time no matter how brief, be alone with a student or group of students, AND the nature of your visit or limited visits precludes the possibility of your interacting with students often enough and extensively enough for a student to develop a relationship of trust with you.
3. You are surveying adults or students, and do not come into the schools to administer the survey. You can drop surveys off at the office once or administer surveys via email.
4. You are only working with pre-existing SFUSD administrative data and have no contact with schools or students.

Criminal Background Check and Subsequent Arrest Notification Requirements:

- For all researchers, Research Organization shall obtain a criminal background check and request subsequent arrest notification from the California Department of Justice (CDOJ) through a Livescan electronic fingerprint scanning service or other CDOJ-approved means of fingerprinting (for example through a Police station), the results of which shall be directed to the Research Organization. Research Organization shall ensure that no researcher shall have contact with District pupils pursuant to this Agreement if he or she has been convicted of a serious or violent felony as described in EC 45125.1 (citing 45122.1), a sexual offense as defined by EC 44010, or a controlled substance offense as described in EC 44011. This prohibition does not apply to a researcher who has obtained a certificate of rehabilitation and pardon pursuant to California Penal Code Section 4852.01 et seq. for a serious or violent felony listed under EC 45122.1.
- Research Organization shall provide a list of all researchers providing services, and specify (as timely as possible) to which sites they will be assigned.

- District shall not be responsible for the costs of the criminal background checks and subsequent arrest notifications.
- Upon receipt of notice that a researcher has been arrested or convicted of a serious or violent felony as described in EC 45125.1 (citing 45122.1), a sexual offense as defined by EC 44010, or a controlled substance offense as described in EC 44011, the Research Organization will prohibit such researcher from having any contact with pupils. Research Organization shall promptly report any such arrest to the District.
- The Research Organization shall also require each researcher to report to it any subsequent arrest within 24 hours of such arrest. Research Organization shall promptly report any such arrest to the District.

Tuberculosis Testing Requirements:

- a) Research Organization shall ensure that all researchers who will have prolonged or frequent contact with District students will submit an official California Adult Tuberculosis (TB) Risk Assessment Questionnaire, Certificate of Completion, signed by a licensed healthcare provider to show that the individual is free from active tuberculosis.
- b) District shall not be responsible for the costs of the examination.
- c) Research Organization shall provide to District a list with each researcher's name and the date of the clearance test result as detailed under "Certification of Compliance." The Research Organization shall keep on file in its offices the physician's notice of such result for each researcher throughout the duration of the researcher's participation pursuant to the research agreement.

Completion of the Criminal Background Check/Tuberculosis Clearance Written Certification Form:

- To certify that is has complied with the above requirements, as applicable, Research Organization shall complete the Criminal Background Check/Tuberculosis Clearance Written Certification form. Any time a new researcher will be assigned to the District, Research Organization shall again comply with these provisions as to that researcher, and shall complete an additional form as provided for herein.
- If a Research Organization asserts that its researchers will have **no contact, or only limited contact** with District students pursuant to the performance of the Research Agreement, the Research Organization may check the corresponding boxes on the Criminal Background Check/Tuberculosis Clearance Written Certification form. If District RPA staff concur, they will sign the form. If District RPA staff do not concur, they will contact the Research Organization and require the relevant researcher be cleared as detailed herein, and the form will be redone to reflect this determination.
- Failure to comply with the above requirements, as applicable, may result in termination of the Research Agreement at the District's sole discretion.

APPENDIX 1

Parent and Guardian Release of Pupil Information (SAMPLE)

Dear Parent:

San Francisco Unified School District does not allow your child to participate in research studies, nor does it release information concerning your child to any non-educational organization, agency, or individual, without your written consent.

[Researcher's name or organization] would like to include information about your child from district files and/or databases in a District-approved research study. The study is about [STATE TOPIC] The information gained through this study will be used to [STATE PURPOSE]

Inclusion of your child's information in the study is strictly voluntary. Agreeing or not agreeing to have your child's information included in the study will not affect your child's school status in any way.

[Description of extent and means of assuring confidentiality.]

Please let me know, by checking the appropriate box below, whether or not you wish the school to allow the release of your child's information for this study.

If information is to be released, you may receive a copy of the record or information to be released by submitting a request in writing to this office. If you have any questions regarding the information, our organization may assist in interpreting it.

Please sign and return the following page of this form to the Office of the Principal as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Principal

I give my consent for my child _____ to participate in the research study being conducted by _____.

I do not give my consent for my child _____ to participate in the research study conducted by _____.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

APPENDIX 2

Parent/Guardian Consent Form for Pupil Participation in Research Study (SAMPLE)

Dear Parent:

I am conducting research in your child's school and would like to include your child in my study. My study is about _____

_____.

The information from the study will be used to _____

_____.

Your child's participation in the study will involve [describe procedures, out of class time, total time requirements, release of student information, any potential benefits or risks associated with participation].

Your child's participation in the study is strictly voluntary. Agreeing or not agreeing to have your child included in the study will not affect your child's school status in any way. In addition, your child may withdraw from the study at any time.

[Description of extent and means of assuring confidentiality.]

Please let me know, by checking the appropriate box below, whether or not you wish the school to allow the release of your child's information for this study.

I would like your approval for your child to participate in this study. If you would like to review a copy of the research instruments or have other questions you would like to discuss, please feel free to call me at: _____.

Sincerely,

Researcher
Organization and Address

I give my consent for my child _____ to participate in the research study being conducted by _____.

I do not give my consent for my child _____ to participate in the research study conducted by _____.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

APPENDIX 3

Student Assent to Participate in Research Study (SAMPLE)

[Appropriate for use with students in grades 6 through 12.]
[Student must be allowed to keep a copy of this Assent Form]

I agree to participate in the study about [topic].

I understand that my participation in the study will involve [describe procedures, time requirements, release of student information, any potential benefits or risks associated with participation].

I understand that my participation in the study is strictly voluntary. Agreeing or not agreeing to participate in the study will not affect my school status, grades, or opportunities in any way.

I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time, even after I begin participating.

I understand that my privacy will be protected in the following way: [Description of extent and means of assuring confidentiality.]

I understand that if I have any questions about this study or my participation in it, I can contact [RESEARCHER] at [organization and phone number].

I agree to participate in the research study about [topic] being conducted by [researcher/organization]

I do not agree to participate in the research study about [topic] being conducted by [researcher/organization]

Student Signature

Date

Student Name (please print)