



COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Colorado Department of Education Institutional Review Board

Procedure for Seeking to Conduct Research Involving Colorado Statewide Data

The Institutional Review Board for the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) reviews all requests that are made to conduct research. Individuals who propose to conduct program evaluation projects do not require the approval of the IRB¹. The potential researchers include those who are not currently employed by the State of Colorado. Potential researchers include any person who wishes to use statewide data of any type including data for specific districts or schools obtained from the CDE. Doctoral and master's degree candidates, university faculty, independent researchers, and private and public agencies must all submit proposals before conducting research. If the research involves only the collection of aggregate student information that is already available online in the public domain, the committee need not be involved.

Please read the procedure carefully. For approval to be granted, the following materials must be provided in electronic form. Faxed or hard copy materials are not acceptable. IRB approval must be granted before research takes place.

A cover letter and a proposal for the study must be submitted. The letter should include the general purpose, a brief description of the study, the type of statewide data requested, and contact information (e.g., e-mail address, phone number of the principal researcher). A written description of the research must be provided in a formal proposal.

1. The proposal must include a design for an original piece of scholarship. It must include rationale, methodology, sampling design, and respondent burden.
2. A current résumé or curriculum vitae from the requestor must be provided.
3. In the case of graduate students who are proposing to conduct research, CDE requires written approval by the person who is the advisor to the person making the request.
4. In the case of independent researchers who are proposing to conduct research, CDE requires written evidence of the knowledge and ability to conduct the proposed research (i.e. copy of peer reviewed articles).
5. If research is being conducted, CDE requires written proof that the institution or organization under whose auspices the requestor is working (National Science

¹ There is often confusion about the difference between the research and program evaluation since there is considerable overlap between them. Program evaluation tends to focus on the degree to which objectives or criteria were or were not met with regard to a certain program. Research, on the other hand, is generally grounded in theory and prior literature and is likely to be an original piece of scholarship. The goal of research is to generalize the results to other settings while the goal of program evaluation is usually done to meet a very specific purpose for a given program. There are times when the difference is not clear. If the researcher/evaluator is uncertain which category into which the project falls, submit it to the IRB for clarification.

Foundation, National Institute of Health, CRESST, Stanford University, University of Colorado, Colorado Children's Campaign, and Piton Foundation etc.) has granted written permission for the study through its own IRB or other signatory authority.

6. The requestor must present a persuasive case in writing that the proposed study will inform practice in a helpful way. The requestor must argue in writing in a clear and compelling manner that the study will benefit educational priorities (e.g., safety, instruction, professional development, learning, etc.).
7. CDE expects to receive written assurance that a requestor fully disclosed all aspects of planned research.
8. Pursuant to the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act, the CDE expects a written assurance that confidentiality of student- and staff-level data will be maintained. This is true for all research involving any human subjects.
9. Because the CDE closely scrutinizes the risks associated with research involving human subjects, the CDE expects a written assurance that the proposed study will not hinder learning, interfere with safety, or negatively impact the teaching/learning process. Any study involving data at an individual level must first meet the requirements of #5 above (concerning prior approval by the IRB or signatory leadership of the sponsoring organization).
10. The CDE expects to examine in advance any and all questionnaires or surveys that are proposed, coding protocols that are used, interview scripts that are planned, etc.
11. The CDE expects to inspect closely all letters that go to staff, students, and/or parents seeking permission for individuals to participate.
12. The CDE expects a written assurance that the identities of students, staff, schools, districts, the CDE and/or the state of Colorado will be masked when the researcher disseminates findings.
13. The requestor must acknowledge in writing that it is the responsibility of the researcher(s) to perform any additional work (e.g., re-code data, match data, develop sub-scores, etc.) in any CDE database provided. If the researcher(s) requests state data for selected schools and/or school districts, the researcher(s) must also provide documentation granting permission from the target school(s) or school district(s).
14. The CDE expects a written assurance that the requestor will provide a summary of preliminary research findings and a technical report for CDE's review at least 30 days prior to the publication of the study.
15. The CDE expects a written assurance that the requestor will provide the CDE with a full copy of the published study and results.
16. Upon application, those seeking to conduct research acknowledge in writing that no right to an appeal process exists.
17. The CDE reserves the right to refuse a study if, in CDE's view, it has the potential to negatively impact the state of Colorado, a particular school, a staff group, cohorts of students or established laws and rules.
18. The CDE reserves the right to withdraw approval and terminate a study without explanation.

19. The researcher(s) may be contacted for clarification questions and/or a follow-up discussion regarding the scope of the research and requested information.

The completed packet of materials should be sent to Dr. Dianne L. Lefly, Director of Research and Evaluation (lefly_d@cde.state.co.us) at the Colorado Department of Education, 201 E Colfax Ave., Denver, CO 80203.

Once a requestor has provided a complete packet of materials, the Institutional Review Board will begin its review (Incomplete packets will not be considered). The IRB will provide a written response. Requestors should allow at least 45 days for the approval process to be completed. IRB recommendations go to the Commissioner of Education who makes final determinations. After the Commissioner makes the final determination, notification to the requestor will come from the chair of the CDE Institutional Review Board².

Upon formal approval, all the researchers involved in the research study must sign a confidentiality agreement and/or a memorandum of understanding that outlines the parameters (such as data security) of the project.

²

The Colorado Department of Education would like to acknowledge the incorporation of review suggestions in our IRB process from the New York City Public Schools and the Delaware Department of Education.

REQUIRED PROPOSAL CHECKLIST

You can speed up the approval by checking to make sure that all necessary parts of the proposal are enclosed and that the materials to be reviewed are clear and legible.

Provide:

1. ___A proposal cover letter including a summary and an address and phone number where the researcher can be readily contacted
2. ___A current résumé or curriculum vitae
3. ___Statement of the rationale, methodology, sampling design and respondent burden of the research
4. ___Written approval from advisor (graduate students), IRB or organizational leadership
5. ___Written evidence of knowledge and ability to conduct proposed research
6. ___A persuasive argument about how the study will inform CDE practice in a helpful way
7. ___A discussion of the educational significance of this study and its implications for Colorado public schools
8. ___Written assurance that requestor has fully disclosed all aspects of planned research
9. ___Written assurance that individual-level confidentiality will be maintained
10. ___Written assurance that the identities of students, staff, schools, districts, the CDE and/or the State of Colorado will be masked when researcher disseminates findings
11. ___Copies of all instruments that will be used for data collection including questionnaires, surveys, coding protocols and interview scripts
12. ___Copies of all letters to staff, students and parents seeking permission for individuals to participate (if appropriate)
13. ___An acknowledgement of understanding that there is no right to an appeal process
14. ___An acknowledgement that additional data preparation work on databases (e.g., recoding of data, matching the data, developing sub-scores) obtained from the CDE are the responsibility of the researcher

I acknowledge that I have provided all items requested by CDE.

Name (Printed): _____

Signature: _____

Date Submitted: _____

Reviewed for CDE/IRB by _____

Approved: _____

Date: _____

Other: _____