

A Handbook for Research Procedures



CMCSS Research Committee Contact:
The Director of Accountability
at assessment@cmcss.net



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Introduction

We have developed this handbook to serve as a valuable resource for individuals interested in conducting research within the Clarksville-Montgomery County School System (CMCSS). Our primary objective is to establish a solid foundation for conducting research by providing a controlled environment and utilizing appropriate, established research tools and methodologies. Interested researchers and institutions may gain essential information about research practices and standards upheld in our community's schools by reading this handbook.

It is important for researchers to recognize the responsibility of the CMCSS Research Committee in safeguarding the privacy rights of students, parents, teachers, and administrators. As an organization, we are committed to protecting the quality of instruction in our schools, maintaining classroom stability, and preserving instructional time between teachers and students. These considerations are of utmost importance to us.

Therefore, we invite all interested individuals and institutions to familiarize themselves with this handbook, as it outlines the necessary information, guidelines, and standards for conducting research within the CMCSS. Together, we can ensure the advancement of research while prioritizing the well-being and educational experience of our students and educators.

Thank you,
Director of Accountability, CMCSS

Part I. Procedures and Policies for Conducting Research¹

1. All interested persons must first contact the CMCSS Director of Accountability at assessment@cmcss.net. In the subject line of all emails include "Research Request."
2. All persons interested in conducting research should fully read ['Approval of Request to Conduct Research Procedure' \(INS-P014\)](#) and [this handbook \(INS-P014A\)](#).
3. The researcher or individual responsible for data collection within CMCSS should refrain from contacting any school personnel regarding the proposed research or surveys until they have obtained written permission from the CMCSS Research Committee, granted through the Director of Accountability.
4. The Director of Accountability will make all contacts with the populations the researcher is requesting to access.
5. The CMCSS Research Committee will not grant approval for surveys, research, or research projects that contravene the goals and policies of the school system or disrupt the regular school program.
6. The CMCSS Research Committee will not approve the collection of data which is not specifically required to answer the questions outlined in each study or is in violation of state or federal law.
7. As per CMCSS policy, all principals possess the authority to accept or reject any requests for research, surveys, or research projects in their respective buildings, regardless of approval granted by the CMCSS Research Committee.
8. To ensure meaningful contributions to the understanding of the teaching-learning process, all research, survey, and research project proposals submitted to the CMCSS Research Committee must demonstrate their potential to contribute valuable insights.

9. Proposed research and survey restrictions:
 - a. The involvement of students should be kept to a minimum to minimize classroom disruption.
 - b. A specific school shall not be involved in more than one research project or survey project during a school year.
10. Surveys conducted on behalf of agencies, organizations, or individuals must obtain the recommendation and approval of the CMCSS Research Committee regarding their content and purpose.
11. In accordance with federal and state laws, 20 U.S.C. §1232h(c) and implementing regulations and T.C.A. §49-2-211, parents have the right to access and review all "surveys, analysis, or evaluations" conducted in their child's classroom.
12. A clear explanation of any survey, research, or research projects involving students must be presented to the parents or guardians of the students involved. Additionally, a signed document from the parent or guardian providing informed consent for the proposed research is required.
 - a. Copies of all consent and ascent forms must be submitted to the CMCSS Research Committee at assessment@cmcss.net.
13. Anyone presenting a research project or proposal must provide a letter of approval from the Organization Committee, affirming the implementation of measures to safeguard the rights and well-being of human subjects involved in the research.
14. To receive approval from the CMCSS Research Committee, minimal information required by the committee must be provided. In general, the information requested is, but is not limited to,
 - a. A copy of the approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) from the University where the research is being conducted.
 - b. The general target population of the study including age, sex, grade level, proposed school, and proposed numbers of students, parents and/or teachers.

- c. A statement of the general purpose of the survey, research, or research project proposed.
- d. Procedures for informing and obtaining written consent and/or assent from participants to include copies of each consent and/or assent.
- e. A copy of all instruments to be administered by the researcher.
- f. A list of all data being requested which is maintained or collected by the district and/or school with associated dates of data.
- g. In depth information as to how the results of the research, survey, or research project will be used, to whom will it be given, and what will be the long-term results.
- h. A digital copy of all signed consent forms prior to any data collection.

Part II. Special Requirements

The researcher is required to submit copies of all project results and/or data derived from the research to the school system.

If an individual or institution seeks a grant (federal, state, private, or local) and plans to conduct research within the CMCSS, written approval from the CMCSS Research Committee must be obtained prior to securing funding. It is important to note that receiving grant funding does not automatically imply consent for conducting research within the school system.

Part III. Parents and Students' Rights as Outlined in State And Federal Research Acts

In order to remain in compliance with state and federal laws, CMCSS regularly reviews, and as needed, modifies, and reissues the procedures concerning research in the schools.

CMCSS is charged with the protection of students and parents' rights. These rights are outlined under state and federal laws. (T.C.A. §49-2-211; 20 U.S.C. §1232h(c) and implementing regulations, Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment).

Part IV Surveys

The CMCSS Research Committee permits surveys for research purposes under the following conditions:

- The project contributes to a better understanding of the teaching-learning process.
- The project aligns with the goals and policies of the school system without violation.
- Minimal disruption is caused to the regular school program.
- No student under the age of 18 may, without parental written consent, take part in a survey, analysis, or evaluation.
- Students 18 and older must provide written consent to participate in a survey, analysis, or evaluation.

Surveys conducted on behalf of agencies, organizations, or individuals must receive a recommendation from the CMCSS Research Committee. Approval regarding the content and purpose of the survey is also required from the committee.

Parents retain the right to review all instructional materials intended for use in surveys, analyses, or evaluations conducted.

Part V. Controversial Topics

The CMCSS Research Committee will not approve research requests related to divisive topics. Controversial topics, which are not limited to the following, are considered divisive.

1. Political affiliations
2. Standardized testing
3. Potentially embarrassing psychological problems
4. Sex behavior or attitudes
5. Anti-social and demeaning behavior
6. Sex education and curriculum content to include Family Life curriculum
7. Critical appraisals of family members
8. Cultural and ethnic representation in curriculum

9. Medical trauma or traumatic loss
10. Teacher evaluation and performance metrics
11. School choice
12. School funding
13. Income

Part VI. Data Collection Timeline

Approval to conduct research within CMCSS grants permission for data collection exclusively during the approved school year. If a researcher needs to access data beyond the specified school year mentioned in their approval letter, they must submit a new research request for the additional period.

¹The term research is used in this document to mean any work proposed and/or carried out with students by any person or persons to accomplish the following: To search, to inquire, to examine, to investigate, to seek newly discovered facts by methods of discovery (surveys and polls included).