Guidelines for Conducting Research in Houston Independent School District (HISD)

Formerly DME 1 and DME2

Guidelines for Conducting Research in HISD

The Division of Assessment, Accountability, and Compliance (AAC) at Houston Independent School District (HISD) oversees the Institutional Review Board (IRB), which plays a crucial role in ensuring responsible administration and facilitation of internal and external research within the District.

The IRB carries out several key functions, including:

1. Evaluation of external research proposal submissions.
2. Oversight of any modifications made to approved research projects.
3. Ensuring that the outcomes of research involving HISD staff, educators, and students, are mutually beneficial for the District.

It's important to note that the approval of external research proposals is contingent on their alignment with HISD's priorities. Additionally, the review process considers the level of commitment required from HISD staff, educators, and students. The policies, procedures, and guidelines provided in this handbook are designed to encourage maximum benefits to be derived from the time and resources invested in supporting external research proposals.

Prior to each submission period, we strongly recommend reviewing the guidelines to gain a clear understanding of the current internal and external research submission process and proposal requirements within the District.

Note: HISD employees cannot conduct research at their campus of employment.

The submission windows are as follows:

1. Fall (for research starting in the Spring Semester): October 15 - November 15.
2. Spring (for research starting in the summer): February 15 - March 15.
3. Summer (for research starting in the Fall Semester): June 15 - July 15.

Please note that these guidelines and all related forms will undergo periodic updates to ensure that processes and policies remain current and coherent for external researchers. Updated versions will be accessible on the IRB Website, two weeks before the start of each submission window.

If you have any questions after reviewing the handbook, feel free to reach out to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at research@houstonisd.org. You can also access all the necessary forms and additional information on HISD Assessment, Accountability, and Compliance website.

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Guidelines for Conducting Research in HISD

The objective of a formal protocol for requesting permission to conduct research in the Houston Independent School District is to conform to District practice and to set forth guidelines for individuals requesting permission to conduct research in the District. Any study that involves student or campus-level data not publicly available. Any study that involves data collection through observations, interviews, surveys, tests, and the like, from students and personnel in Houston public schools is defined as "research" and is subject to District practice and the following procedures. This includes District employees who are collecting data and testing students, not as part of their regularly assigned administrative or instructional duties, but for educational or research purposes.

1. DISTRICT PRACTICE

These guidelines seek to balance the need for advancement through research with the need for uninterrupted instructional activities for maximal student learning. In addition, by requiring an approval process, this administrative regulation acts to ensure the protection of staff and student rights. Researchers should be aware that permission to conduct research is a multistep process, and permission to conduct research in the District does not guarantee any school's willingness to participate. In all instances, the principal of a school will have the authority to make the final decision regarding participation. However, initial permission may be granted only through the Division of Assessment, Accountability, and Compliance.

2. FEDERAL REGULATIONS COMPLIANCE

All research proposals must comply with federal and state regulations including:

Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA): FERPA is a federal privacy law that gives parents certain protections regarding their children's education records. Education records include, but are not limited to report cards, transcripts, disciplinary records, personally identifiable information, and class schedules. For more information on FERPA, visit this webpage.

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA): HIPAA gives students and parents the right to be informed of the privacy practices of health providers, as well as their privacy rights with respect to their personal health information. These requirements will be more relevant to health-related studies (e.g., chronic illness,

mental or physical issues). For more information on HIPAA as it pertains to education, visit this webpage.

Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA): PPRA affords parents or legal guardians of minors (below the age of 18) the right to consent to survey questions of a personal nature (e.g., political affiliations, mental problems, sexual behavior, illegal behavior, religious practices, or income). See the full list PPRA survey question consideration areas on this webpage.

National School Lunch Act (NSLA): NSLA protects the privacy of information that the District collects from families of children who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch meals. Therefore, individual student's free or reduced-priced records cannot be shared by the District. For more information on NSLA, visit this webpage.

Free research ethics online training course is available through the Global Health Training Centre.

For a cost, **CITI ethics online training** can be accessed through the CITI Program.

To ensure the protection of HISD students and families, any proposals that violate the terms of these federal regulations will not be approved by the IRB.

3. FERPA EXCEPTIONS

The general rule under FERPA is that Personal Identifiable Information (PII) from education records cannot be disclosed without written consent. However, FERPA includes several exceptions that permit the disclosure of PII from education records without consent. Three of these exceptions are discussed below: (i) school official exception, (ii) studies exception, and (iii) audit or evaluation exception. *Ultimately the IRB committee will determine which FERPA exception, if any, a research proposal falls under.* **HISD requires all studies employing FERPA exception to have an associated district sponsor:** Note that district sponsorship does not guarantee approval, but it does help satisfy the FERPA exception requirement. If you already have a district sponsor, then you may indicate this by including a letter of support in the data request submission and provide the contact details of the district sponsor. For more detailed explanation of these and other FERPA exceptions, please visit FERPA Guidelines for School Officials.

(i) School Official or Outsourcing Exception*:* *Is your institution an authorized vendor for HISD?* ***If YES:*** You may be eligible for the FERPA exception for *school officials*. Pursuant to 34 CFR § 99.31(b), a School Official is a contractor that: (1) Performs an institutional service or function for which the agency or institution would otherwise use employees; (2) Is under the direct control of the agency or institution with respect to the use and maintenance of Student Data including Education Records; and (3) Is

subject to 34 CFR § 99.33(a) governing the use and re-disclosure of Personally Identifiable Information from Education Records.

(ii) Research Studies Exception: *Is your study primarily for one of the following purposes: (1) developing, validating, or administering predictive tests; (2) administering student aid programs; (3) or improving instruction?* ***If YES:*** You may be eligible for the FERPA exception for studies.

(iii) **Audit or Evaluation:** *Is your study primarily for auditing or evaluating a Federal- or state-supported education program, or to enforce or comply with Federal legal requirements that relate to those education programs (audit, evaluation, or enforcement or compliance activity)?* ***If YES:*** You may be eligible for the FERPA exception for audit/evaluation.

Data requests made in support of an audit or assessment of a Federally or State-funded educational initiative, or those intended to enforce or adhere to Federal legal obligations linked to the program, are covered by the "evaluation" exception outlined in FERPA. To establish eligibility for this exception, it is necessary to furnish supporting records, which may encompass grant award notifications, contractual arrangements, and related agreements, among other items.

(iv) Collecting Data: *Will you be working with individual-level data? Teachers, students, principals, etc.* ***If YES:*** Do you plan to obtain a written consent document from each participant?

Individual-level data (student or staff-level data) are often identifiable, even in cases where direct identifiers (e.g., student ID, name, date of birth, and address) are removed. Datasets that do not include direct identifiers may be identifiable if individual identities can be revealed or deduced through a unique pattern of variables in the dataset or when combined with other datasets. Generally, datasets containing groups of five or fewer individuals with a unique pattern of variables are considered personally identifiable information (PII). *As a result, all requests for student or staff-level data are considered identifiable and therefore, all are subject to FERPA protections*. ***If NO,*** and no FERPA exception, then *aggregate data only, and masking of small n-counts*.

(v) ***Parental Consent:*** *Do you plan to survey students on any matter related to the following?* 1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent; 2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family; 3. Sex behavior or attitudes; 4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior; 5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships; 6. Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers; 7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student's parent; or 8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

IF YES: Under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment or PPRA (20 U.S.C. § 1232h, 34 CFR Part 98), certain surveys are subject to additional requirements for documentation of parental consent before surveys can be administered. Parents must have the opportunity to inspect the survey created by a third party before the survey is administered or distributed to the student regardless of the funding source.

4. WHO SHOULD SUBMIT A REQUEST

Internal and external researchers who are interested in doing research that involves students, teachers, school leaders, or central office administrators, or data about these people and contributes to generalizable knowledge should submit their proposals to the HISD IRB.

Internal and External Researchers who submit proposals to the IRB come from a variety of institutions, including:

- Research organizations,
- Universities, including students in master's or doctoral programs,
- Grantees or foundations,
- Educational programs or service providers who wish to evaluate their programs,
- HISD employees who wish to conduct research for personal purposes outside of their normal work duties (e.g., research for the completion of a master's thesis or doctoral research project), and
- Other individuals (e.g., consultants) interested in doing research with the District.

5. TYPES OF RESEARCH REQUESTS

To streamline the research request process and ensure alignment with district and campus priorities, researchers are encouraged to collaborate with campuses and district leaders to establish research initiatives in HISD. There are two avenues for requesting permission to conduct research in the district: (i) district-level sponsorship and (ii) campus-level sponsorship.

District-Level Sponsorship: is mandatory for research that is district-wide or involves more than 15 campuses. Researchers from various organizations are encouraged (though not obligated) to seek District-level Sponsorship for their research projects. Sponsored Research initiatives are developed in collaboration with a HISD Sponsor who can leverage the findings to enhance district policies, practices, or programs. To qualify as a HISD Sponsor, the individual must hold the position of Director, Executive Director, or Division Chief responsible for overseeing the relevant policy, practice, or program within the District.

District sponsorship entails external researchers providing evidence that the district and its partners:

a. Have reviewed the research project overview and related research activities.
b. Have ensured that all study materials align with HISD objectives, values, and, if applicable, current TEKS.
c. Express interest in participating in the research project.
d. Believe that the research will yield valuable insights to inform department or district initiatives.

If a researcher intends to propose a District Study, they should contact the IRB via email before formally submitting their proposal. They can submit an unsigned but fully completed District Sponsor Statement of Support, which will enable the IRB to identify and facilitate the connection between the researcher and the sponsor. Prior to proposal submission, the researcher will be required to meet with the sponsor to discuss the study and incorporate any adjustments or feedback into the proposal and all the necessary documents.

Campus-Level Sponsorship: If your research project involves direct participation of students or staff on HISD campuses, you will need principal permission. The Principal Permission Form will be generated based on your online application and will be sent to you upon application completion. You can then share the link to the form with the campuses you wish to involve in your study. This form will provide information about the number of participants, their level of participation, time commitment, and their role (e.g., students, teachers, etc.). Activities such as surveys, program implementation, or technology utilization that require staff or classroom time fall into this category. We recommend visiting the HISD department page to find a suitable campus sponsor corresponding to your study (https://www.houstonisd.org/domain/7900).

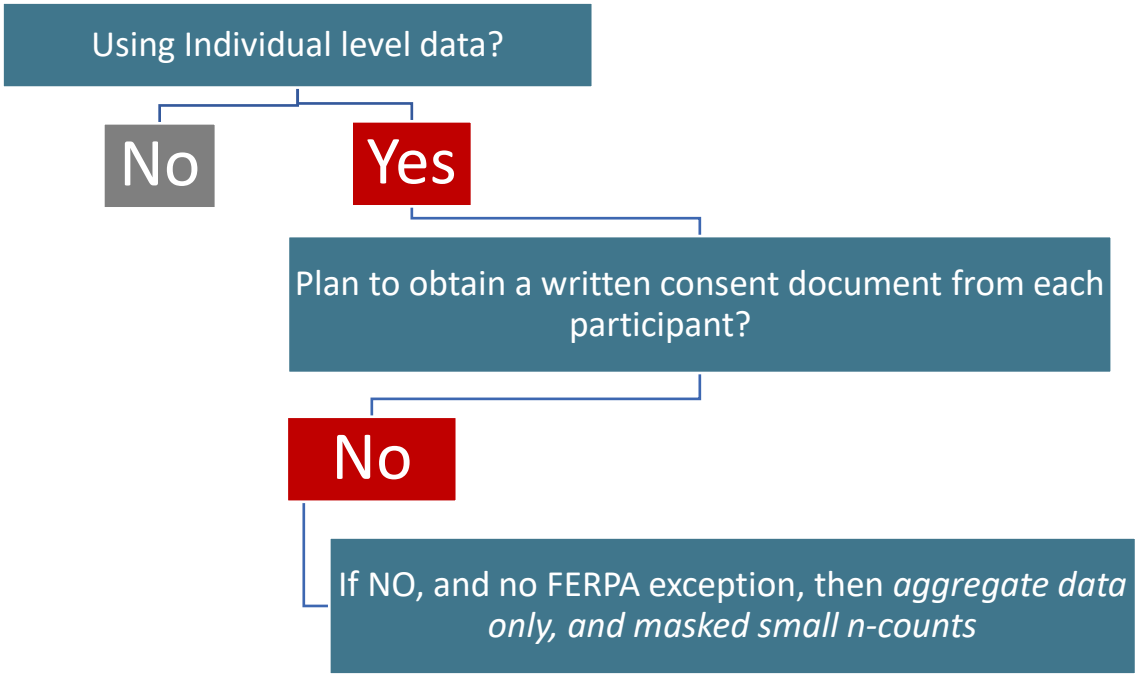
It is important to note that having an HISD sponsor or principal permission does not guarantee research application approval. However, the HISD IRB will not review applications lacking principal permission. Gaining support from the district or principal is the researcher's responsibility; the HISD IRB does not assist in this regard.

6. TYPES OF DATA REQUESTS

Those researchers who are using publicly available data are not required to submit an IRB application (Appendix A: List of Publicly Available Data). If you are using secondary data not publicly available and / or primary data, you MUST submit an IRB.

Secondary Data Collection
If you are seeking access to individual-level data stored within HISD databases (secondary data), including information related to demographics, academic performance, attendance, personnel, or other district records.

Individual Level Data: *Will you be working with individual-level data (Teachers, students, principals, etc.)?* Individual-level data (student or staff-level data) are often identifiable, even in cases where direct identifiers (e.g., student ID, name, date of birth, and address) are removed. Datasets that do not include direct identifiers may be identifiable if individual identities can be revealed or deduced through a unique pattern of variables in the dataset or when combined with other datasets. Generally, datasets containing groups of five or fewer individuals with a unique pattern of variables are considered personally identifiable information (PII). *As a result, we consider all requests for individual-level data elements personally identifiable information and therefore, ~~are~~ subject to FERPA protections*.



Administrative Data: *Do you plan to request administrative data about specific participants whose written consent you have collected?* **IF YES:** Write how you plan to match these records from your consent forms against the administrative data requested.

Primary Data Collection
Research projects that entail gathering individual-level data from or about Houston Independent School Board (HISD) students, staff, or parents (such as surveys, tests, interviews, observations, focus groups, or similar direct data-collection methods)

Student Survey: Do you plan to survey students on any matter related to the following? *(i). Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent; (ii) Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family; (iii) Sex behavior or attitudes; (iv) Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior; (v) Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships; (vi) Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers; (vii) Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student's parent; or (viii) Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.*

IF YES: Under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment or PPRA (20 U.S.C. § 1232h, 34 CFR Part 98), certain surveys are subject to additional requirements for documentation of parental consent before surveys/questionnaires can be administered. Parents must have the opportunity to inspect the survey created by a third party before the survey is administered or distributed to the student regardless of the funding source.

IF NO: Proceed.

7. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Please ensure that you thoroughly review the application requirements before proceeding with the online application process.

For each submission to the IRB, a comprehensive proposal is necessary. The full proposal should encompass the completion of the online application, the District Sponsor Statement of Support, Principal Approval Form, Conflict of Interest form, Informed Consent forms, Publication Agreements, and Data Collection Instruments. Detailed instructions for each of these components are provided below:

- Proposal Instructions (See APPENDIX B: PREPARING A REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH)
- District Sponsor Statement of Support Instructions
- Principal Approval Form Instructions
- Conflict of Interest Form Instructions
- Informed Consent Guide

After receiving conditional approval from the HISD IRB, researchers must submit a final letter of approval from their own IRB, along with the signed Principal Approval Forms. These submissions are prerequisites for finalizing HISD IRB approval and for commencing any research activities.

8. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval Letter

The DPS RRB enforces the protection of human subjects by mandating an Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval letter. IRB approval is a crucial measure to safeguard the rights and well-being of human subjects (e.g., students, parents or guardians, teachers, and school leaders) who are invited to participate in the proposed study activities.

Researchers must collaborate with their institution's internal IRB or seek an external IRB for a comprehensive review of the proposal and acquire an IRB approval letter to be submitted to the DPS RRB. In cases where a researcher lacks an IRB approval letter at the time of submission, the DPS RRB will review the proposed study conditionally. The final approval will be granted once the DPS RRB has received the IRB approval letter.

If the researcher's IRB mandates district approval before issuing their own IRB approval, the district can provide conditional approval before receiving the researcher's IRB approval, thus allowing the process to move forward.

Background Check

(NOTE: This requirement is not applicable to current HISD employees since they have already undergone a background check as a requirement for their current employment)

If the researcher does not directly provide services to students but has access to District Data, both the Researcher and all individuals, including the Research Team, must comply with a criminal background check in accordance with the internal employment policies of the researcher's institution. The definition of "direct services to students" encompasses a range of activities, including but not limited to instruction, physical, mental, and social health support, transportation, and food services, which are offered to students at least once per month during the school year.

In cases where the researcher offers direct services to students and has access to student data, it is mandatory for the researcher and all individuals, including the Research Team, who have unsupervised access to students or student data, to undergo a criminal background check that meets the requirements stipulated in Chapter 22 Subchapter C, of the Texas Education Code (TEC), and other District criteria. This requirement includes a fingerprint-based conviction investigation. It is important to note that conducting a Texas Department of Public Safety criminal history name search or a Name Check investigation for any person providing services under this Agreement does not meet the District's requirements. The financial responsibility for the background check rests solely with the researcher.

Furthermore, throughout the term of the Research Project, any newly engaged, hired, or added personnel who are involved in the Research Project must meet these same requirements before engaging in research on behalf of the researcher. The researcher is

obligated to provide the results of the background check upon the District's request, in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 22, Subchapter C, of the Texas Education Code (TEC). Additionally, the District reserves the right to conduct its own criminal background check on every individual before the Research Project commences.

It should be noted that, notwithstanding the above-mentioned criminal background check requirement, the researcher hereby affirms that neither the researcher nor any member of the Research Team engaged in the Research Project has been convicted of a criminal offense in Texas or any other state related to: (i) the abuse, abduction, sexual molestation, physical or sexual assault of a minor; (ii) any crime involving the exploitation of minors, including, but not limited to, child pornography offenses or any violent crime; and (iii) the researcher must immediately notify the District upon discovering or receiving information regarding the detention or arrest of any person working on the Research Project by a law enforcement agency.

The researcher is aware that allowing any member of the Research Team access to students, District records, including personally identifiable information (PII), or entry onto the District's property, who has been arrested or convicted of the aforementioned crimes, constitutes a material breach of this Agreement. Such a breach may result in the immediate termination of this Agreement and the Research Approval Letter and may lead to a referral to law enforcement for potential criminal charges or additional civil penalties in accordance with federal and state laws.

Please note that misdemeanor convictions may not automatically lead to the immediate termination of the Approval Letter. Misdemeanor convictions will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration factors such as the nature and severity of the offense, time elapsed since the offense or conviction, time served, and the nature of the research project. Upon request by the District, the researcher is required to provide documentation for each person involved in the Research Project to substantiate the basis for this certification.

Ethical Research and Practice

The CITI (Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative) program offers online training in ethical research practices. All individuals involved in the research study must furnish a copy of their certification to the DPS RRB. Additionally, they are expected to possess and sustain their CITI training certification for the entire duration of the research study.

CITI training can be accessed through the CITI Program.

Institutional Responsibilities - Colleges

It is the institution’s responsibility to maintain effective communication with their student/researcher while conducting research to ensure adherence to ethical research practices outlined by the Institutional Review Boards (IRB) and the Houston Independent School District (HISD). If at any point, the student/researcher breaches the ethical

research practices outlined by HISD and/or their institutional IRB, the District we will remove the approval for the research and potentially refuse future requests for research from the department and/ or institution for up to two years.

9. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION TIMELINE

Applications for research proposals requiring primary data collection *involving students*, *teachers*, and *administrators* for the upcoming or current school year must be submitted on or before due dates outlined in table below.

External research requests will only be accepted by the following submission deadlines:

Window	Due Dates	Target for Data Collection
#1	February 15th to March 15th	Summer or Later
#2	May 15th to June 15th July 15th to August 15th	Fall Semester or Later
#3	October 15th to November 15th	Spring Semester or Later
Requests submitted outside of these windows and incomplete requests will not be considered. Failure to respond to requests from the HISD IRB within 2 weeks will result in closure of the research proposal. You may resubmit in the next window.		

10. SUBMITTING A REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

The following link is to be used to complete the online HISD research application. The online application can be accessed via computer or mobile device.

Upon submission of the Qualtrics Form, the researcher can expect to receive an email confirmation acknowledging the receipt of the request. This email will contain the assigned IRB number, which should be used as a reference in all communications with the IRB or sponsor. In the event that the email is not received, please ensure to check the junk folder of the 'preferred email address' provided on the Application Form. A completed Principal Permission Form or District Sponsor Form will be automatically emailed to the researcher once the online application is completed. It is the researcher's responsibility to forward those forms to the appropriate parties.

11. APPLICATION FEE

A nonrefundable application fee must be submitted prior to proposals being reviewed.

Applicant Category	Fee Structure
HISD Employee	Fee waived upon confirmation of employee status
Graduate Student	$50
Institution or organization	$350
This fee may be paid by check, money order, credit card, or EFT from the researcher, the researcher's institution, or by the sponsoring HISD department.	

Payment does not guarantee the proposal will be approved; only that it will be reviewed, and a letter of acceptance or rejection will be provided to the researcher.

The proposal review will begin as soon as the payment has been received.

Fee for Data Requests

In recognition of the availability of HISD staff time and resources, commencing in January 2024, the HISD IRB will impose a fee of $160 per hour for administrative (secondary) data requests, with a minimum of 2 hours billed.

This fee may be paid by the researcher, by the HISD Sponsor, or by a third party.

Charges for such requests will be applied once the data has been retrieved and the actual time expended has been recorded for billing. The data pull fee must be paid in full before the data will be provided, with delivery scheduled for an agreed-upon due date.

Submitting Fees

Please include the title of the proposed study, the name(s) of the researchers, and the application number in the communication.

Check or EFT Payment

Check or Money Order

Mail to:
Houston ISD
Attn: Research Committee 2NW
4400 West 18th Street,
Houston TX 77092-8501

12. RESEARCH COMMITTEE

The Research Committee holds its meetings on the 1st of April, August, and December to evaluate proposed studies that have been submitted during the respective application periods. In cases where the committee necessitates additional clarification or more information, it is recommended to allocate a minimum of one month for the approval process. Following this, preparations for data collection should begin approximately two months after the proposal submission deadline, in accordance with the application window schedule.

The committee may take the following actions:

a. The committee may approve the proposal as submitted.
b. The committee may request that certain changes be made and ask that the applicant consider submitting a modified proposal. *Modified proposals will be processed as they are received.*
c. The committee may issue a conditional approval, pending successful negotiation of a fee-for-service schedule regarding the administrative data requested.
d. The committee may issue an approval with the caveat that executing a *Research Data Privacy Agreement* will be necessary before administrative data can be transferred.
e. The committee may deny approval on the grounds that, in the judgment of the committee, it would be inappropriate to conduct the proposed research study. Deficiencies will be outlined for the applicant.

Resubmission

In the event of a proposal submission being declined, it is imperative that the provided feedback is thoroughly addressed before making a resubmission in a future window. The HISD IRB will assess the resubmission as an entirely new proposal, devoid of any connection to the previous submission. It is important to bear in mind that an application fee is mandatory for each submission and for each window.

Types of IRB Review

There are two types of review:

New Requests to Conduct Research in HISD

The Research Committee receives a request for permission to conduct research from the principal investigator. The committee is expected to complete its action prior to making a review decision. The review action must be completed within 30 days after the submission date.

Amendments for Approved Projects

The investigator must report to the committee for review any problems or proposed procedural changes that may affect the status of the ongoing program with regard to the established Criteria for Approving Studies.

IRB Decisions
Decisions are based on the majority approval of the committee. At least three of the five committee members must agree that a proposal meets criteria for approval.

13. POST PROPOSAL APPROVAL

Your District-level or campus-level study becomes approved once you have received the HISD IRB approval letter, signed and returned it to the IRB, submitted the IRB approval letter from your institution, provided the signed District Approval Form or Principal Approval Forms to the IRB, and submitted Data Sharing Agreement (if requiring secondary data). Following these steps, the researcher is then allowed to commence the study.

What should follow next?
After your study has been approved by the HISD IRB and your institution's IRB, you should collect signed principal approval forms, if applicable, from the principals at all schools where you intend to gather data. To do this, you must furnish copies of both your HISD IRB and your institution's IRB approval letters to the principals for their review before they sign the principal approval form. Only after submitting all signed principal approval forms to the HISD IRB, can you initiate your study.

It is imperative to obtain informed consent/assent from all participants after your study has received approval from the HISD IRB and your institution's IRB, but before you commence data collection.

Throughout the duration of the study, the HISD District Sponsor may be involved, without any obligation to provide support in the following areas:

- Recruitment of study participants
- Implementation of a program, policy, or practice
- Compiling the study findings in interim or final reports for engagement and further dissemination.

Note: District Sponsor should not retrieve secondary (or existing) data for quantitative or mixed methods studies. This should be requested from the Department of Assessment, Accountability, and Compliance using the online application.

Data Requests: Research Requires Secondary Data

What is the Next Step?
For studies that necessitate a secondary data pull, the process entails obtaining data from HISD that the researcher did not directly collect (e.g., demographics, assessments, discipline, BESS). Please be aware that data pulls for quantitative or mixed methods studies impose a demand on HISD staff time and resources.

To initiate a request for secondary data from HISD, a Data Privacy Agreement (DPA) must be established with the District. If neither the researcher nor their institution has an existing relevant DPA in place, it will be necessary for the researcher to negotiate and execute this document before that data can be shared. *HISD will not execute a DPA without a District Sponsor.*

Please contact Research@houstonisd.org for the following: most recent appropriate DPA template and User Guide and any modifications required for an already signed DPA.

APPENDIX A: Publicly Available Data

STATE-WIDE DATA SOURCES

State Assessment-Data Interaction: Data Interaction for Texas Student Assessments public, analytic portal allows all users to view summary results across all Texas K-12 public and charter organizations.

TEA Analytic Portal: TEA provides a robust selection of resources that analyzes student, school, and district performance. A few features highlight STAAR performance and comparison, College, Career, and Military Readiness (CCMR), graduation rates, and academic growth outcomes.

State Accountability Ratings: Texas provides annual academic accountability ratings to its public-school districts, charters, and schools. The ratings are based on performance on state standardized tests; graduation rates; and college, career, and military readiness outcomes. The ratings examine student achievement, school progress, and whether districts and campuses are closing achievement gaps among various student groups. To learn more, visit TXschools.gov.

TPRS (annual), or Texas Performance Reporting System

- **The most comprehensive reporting system published by TEA**
- The Texas Performance Reporting System (TPRS) integrates state and federal reporting requirements into a single reporting system that can be viewed at the campus, district, region, and state level.
- Additional performance reports, results, and indicators for student groups not previously reported on state accountability data tables, the Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPR), or the School Report Card.

TAPR (annual), or Texas Academic Performance Report

- The **Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPR)** pull together a wide range of information on the performance of students in each school and district in Texas every year.
- Performance is shown disaggregated by student groups, including ethnicity and socioeconomic status.
- The reports also provide extensive information on school and district staff, programs, and student demographics.
- TAPR was published from 2012-2013 to 2012-2022. It has been replaced by the more robust TPRS (above).
- Before 2012-2013, the TAPR was previously known as the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) Reports. Those reports were published from 2003–04 to 2011–12. They may be found at the AEIS Archive.

The most recent TAPR data as a website with graphics, from **The Texas Tribune**

- Link to Public Schools Explorer (Updated May 2023)

TEA School Report Card (annual) from TEA

- The state's school report card (SRC) combines accountability ratings, data from the Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPR), and financial information to give a broad view of campus performance.
- Available for each campus in Texas, the SRC is intended specifically to inform parents and guardians about a school's individual characteristics and its academic performance.
- These state report cards are available online.

TXReports site from TEA, with STAAR 3-8, EOC, and TELPAS data | Link to EMetric.net

Federal Report Card: The *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA),* as amended by *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*, requires each State education agency to prepare and publish an annual report card with state-, district- and campus-level data.

- The annual FEDERAL report cards for SY21-22 were released in December 2022

PEIMS (annual) Standard Reports covering Geographic Information, Student Reports, and Staff Reports | *PEIMS Standard Reports*

- **College Credit Reports**
  Description: Student counts and totals of college credit hours earned by Career and Technical Education (CTE) students and all students.
  Years: 2013-2014 to 2022-2023

- **Economically Disadvantaged Reports**
  Description: Counts of students by economic status: free meals, reduced-price meals, other economic disadvantage, and not economically disadvantaged.
  Years: 2011-2012 to 2022-2023 and there are Economically Disadvantaged Report by campus Statewide.

- **Emergent Bilingual/English Learner (EL) Student Reports by Category and Grade**
  Description: Counts of English learner (EL) students by category and grade
  Years: 2012-2013 to 2022-2023

- **Graduate Reports**
  Description: Graduates by ethnicity and type of graduation plan
  Years: 2011-2012 to 2021-2022

- **Special Education Reports**
  Description: Students receiving special education services in school districts, by primary disability
  Years: 2012-2013 to 2021-2023

- **Transfer Reports**: Counts of students residing in one district and attending another **Years**: 2011-2012 to 2022-2023

FEDERAL DATA SOURCES:

U.S. Department of Education Ed Facts Data Files

- **Description:** The U.S. Department of Education provides assessment data that tracks achievement growth for subjects such as mathematics and reading/language arts.

Student Achievement Measure (SAM)

- **Description:** Tracks student movement across post-secondary institutions to provide a more complete picture of undergraduate student progress and completion within the higher education system.

Federal Report Card for Texas Public Schools (Link to 2021 FRC) is a web-based system that generates the required federal report cards at the state, district, and campus levels for easy dissemination by school districts.

- The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), requires each State education agency to prepare and publish an annual report card with state-, district- and campus-level data.
- The annual FEDERAL report cards for SY21-22 were released in December 2022

Common Core of Data (Link to CCD Data Files) is a comprehensive, annual, national database of all public elementary and secondary schools and school districts maintained by National Center for Education Statistics. It is the Department of Education's primary database on public elementary and secondary education in the United States.

- The **School Search** tool will show one school's enrollment by grade, by gender, and by race/ethnicity, plus the number of students eligible for free/reduced lunch programs. (Link at URL)
- The **District Search** tool will show one district's enrollment, the number of classroom teachers, and the student/teacher ratio. (Link at URL)

Data.gov, developed by the U.S. General Services Administration, Data.gov provides over 200,000 data sets on a variety of topics, including nearly 500 data sets on U.S. education.

National Student Clearinghouse (NCS) publishes data and research on student enrollment, mobility, and other outcomes derived from their data collection process through an extensive network of U.S. post-secondary institutions.

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) is the primary federal entity for collecting and analyzing data related to education in the U.S. and other nations. NCES is the home of several sources of data on national post-secondary institutions.

Condition of Education The *Condition of Education* is a congressionally mandated annual report from NCES. The report contains key indicators on the condition of education in the United States at all levels, as well as labor force outcomes and international comparisons

Digest of Education Statistics The Digest contains information on a variety of subjects in the field of education statistics, including the number of schools and colleges, teachers, enrollments, and graduates, in addition to educational attainment, finances, federal funds for education, libraries, and international education.

Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) IPEDS data are submitted at the aggregated level from post-secondary institutions, as mandated by the Higher Education Opportunity Act. Institutions submit data through 12 interrelated survey components about general higher education topics, providing one of the most comprehensive data tools for higher education researchers.

DISTRICT-WIDE DATA SOURCES

The **Program Evaluation and District Reports (HISD)** uses complex statistical analyses to conduct formative and summative evaluations of districtwide educational programs. Conduct research to assess the impact of programs on student performance. Design evaluations using theory to guide program administrators to take an evidenced-based approach to decision-making. The following resources could assist researchers in their data analysis process:

Assessment Reports: Comprehensive report on district performance on State of Texas Assessments, graduation, TELPAS, as well as various reports on district programs (GT, SPED, Multilingual), school performance (discipline, waivers, district demographics, etc.).

Campus Demographic Reports: Dashboard providing information on the student population, enrollment trends, and transfer demographics for zoned and non-zoned campuses in Houston ISD. Additional data elements include campus program type and facility capacity and utilization. Supplemental maps are included to visualize student transfers between HISD campuses.

District and School Profiles: Dashboard that provides_accessible and transparent communication about student demographics and outcomes. The dashboard provides a five-year trend data table, a count or percentage of districtwide student membership, Teacher and Staff Profiles, and Student Outcomes Profiles.

HISD GIS Open Data Portal: GIS data repository for the district. This site facilitates exploring and downloading GIS data for the district by division and school location.

Houston Education Research Consortium (HERC): The Houston Education Research Consortium is a research-practice partnership between the Kinder Institute and Houston-

area school districts to guide data-driven, equity-minded policy. Reports are available on various district programs and topics.

Houston ISD ESSER Program Evaluation: This site displays ESSER II and III Program Evaluations conducted in Houston ISD.

Progress Monitoring Reports: Report evaluating whether the district met the goals and constraints with their respective progress measures for the school year._Houston Independent School District (HISD) Board of Education developed four goals in alignment with their mission and vision. In addition, the board set a framework in which the Superintendent could operate to achieve the goals through five constraints.

State Accountability Rating System Reports: Reports on the state accountability system, which uses student assessments (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness or STAAR®), but also makes use of additional indicators to provide parents and taxpayers greater detail on the performance of a district or charter and each individual campus throughout the state.

APPENDIX B: Preparing A Request for Permission to Conduct Research

The online form you complete will include:

A. Title of Study

B. Contact Information for each Researcher:

1. Name, title, position in the project, email address, mailing address, telephone number, and institution representing.
2. For a graduate dissertation or thesis, also include the information and signature of the student's Advisor.

C. District or Campus Sponsor(s):

1. Name, position, title, district email address, and department(s) represented.
2. Signed District Level Sponsorship form (if applicable)
3. Signed Campus Level Sponsorship form (if applicable)

D. Primary Purpose of Research

1. For example: graduate dissertation/thesis, individual research, class project, publication, test normalization/development, commercial product development, audit or evaluation of government-funded program, formative program evaluation for continuous improvement.
2. List any funding agencies or sponsoring institutions associated with the project.
3. If there are possible or perceived conflicts of interest due to the involvement of a funding agency, district sponsor, or another stakeholder, this is the place to discuss them.

E. Alignment with District Goals

1. How does the study align with the District's goals and core initiatives.
2. Reasons for conducting the study in the District, with justification of the motivation for conducting research in the District and the necessity of using District personnel or students.
3. Relevance to the District; (e.g., subsequent use of results and benefits to the District).

F. Theoretical Basis of Study and Research Questions

A brief overview of the framework of concepts, principles, and existing knowledge that provides a foundation for your research. Followed by the research questions you aim to answer through your study.

G. Type(s) of Research Proposed

(e.g., participatory action research, qualitative, quantitative, experimental, or quasi-experimental, etc.)

The type of research proposed tie into the research questions, the goals of the study, and the available resources. The response will be used to examine resource allocation and feasibility with the district.

H. Contribution of Study to Research

External research proposals must demonstrate evident and direct educational advantages to the district, prioritizing local impact over broader educational contexts. These proposals should be designed to minimize any disturbance to the learning process, underscore a well-structured research methodology, and adhere to stringent privacy regulations. The anticipated gains for the Houston Independent School District (HISD) should unmistakably justify the allocation of resources, particularly staff and student time. Considerable preference will be granted to research initiatives that closely align with the strategic plan of the district.

I. Sampling Design, and Rationale

1. Include the number and type of schools, names of schools, number and type of students or staff members.
2. Include the amount of time required by HISD students or staff for participation in study.

J. Recruitment and Consenting Procedures

1. Consent form(s)
2. Any proposed compensation or reward for participants
3. Standard campus recruiting letter for Principal
4. Process for consent forms to be returned to the researcher

Principals and other HISD staff may not assist researchers in identifying, recruiting, or consenting school staff, classrooms, parents, or students for participation in research studies.

K. Methodological Procedures

1. Instruments to be used,
2. Methods of maintaining confidentiality,
3. Data to be collected by research team,
4. Data elements existing in District records that will be requested by researcher,
5. Timeframe(s) for collecting primary data and for requesting administrative data,

NOTE: *Except for classroom observations, research should not be conducted during instructional time and research activities should be scheduled in collaboration with the principal and participants.*

L. Data Cleaning/validation and Analysis Procedure

1. Process for matching records between consent forms and district administrative records for consented study participants while maximizing participant privacy.

2. Technology to be used for secure storage of data while at rest or in motion. *HISD data must remain encrypted both in motion and at rest. The Committee may not approve any request that does not agree to this provision.*

M. Data Management Plan
(including procedures for the retention or disposal of sensitive data)

Technology to be used for secure storage of data while at rest or in motion. *HISD data must remain encrypted both in motion and at rest. The Committee may not approve any request that does not agree to this provision.*

- For support, see https://ldbase.org/resources/templates/data-management-plan
- Any researcher requesting individual-level student data must comply with the guidelines in FL and FL3(REGULATION)]. *Additional assurances will be requested if a RDPA is deemed necessary.*
- Any researcher planning to request to employ a FERPA exception to access or collect individual-level data must include the date and method by which related project data is destroyed or deleted.
- Any researcher planning on re-disclosure to outside researchers or on publishing project files to an open data repository (such as IES) must identify the specific language in their consent form(s) that allows for these practices. For support, see https://ldbase.org/resources/templates/informed-consent-language

N. Target date for submission

- Please include the date when the final report will be submitted to the District.
- The final report should be uploaded through the online application system using the application number provided at the time of completing the application.

APPENDIX C: Excluded Campuses

Primary Data Collection

No primary data collection can be conducted at any New Educational System or Aligned Campus (NES/A). The table below identifies the campuses that are NES/A aligned:

Table 1. List of Educational System or Aligned Campus (NES/A)			
Elementary School		**Middle School**	**High School**
Alcott ES	Kennedy ES	Cullen MS	Furr HS
Ashford ES	Lewis ES	Edison MS	Houston MSTC HS
Benavidez ES	Lockhart ES	Fondren MS	Las Americas Newcomer HS
Blackshear ES	Looscan ES	Hartman MS	Long Academy HS
Bonham ES	Northline ES	Holland MS	Madison HS
Bonner ES	Oates ES	Lawson MS	Reagan K-8 ED Center HS
Brookline ES	Osborne ES	M.C. Williams MS	Scarborough HS
Burrus ES	Port Houston ES	Project Chrysalis MS	Sterling HS
Cage ES	Robinson ES	Revere MS	Washington HS
Coop ES	Rucker ES		Wisdom HS
DeZavala ES	Seguin ES		Worthing HS
Durkee ES	Smith ES		Yates HS
Franklin ES	Thompson ES		
Gallegos ES	Wainwright ES		
Gregg ES	Whidby ES		
Harris JR ES	Whittier ES		
Harris RP ES	Young ES		
Hartsfield ES			
Hobby ES			

Note: This list may change.