

York Catholic District School Board



BOARD POLICY	
<i>Policy Section</i> Program/Curriculum	<i>Policy Number</i> 304
<i>Former Policy #</i>	<i>Page</i> 1 of 8
<i>Original Approved Date</i> May 5th, 2009	<i>Subsequent Approval Dates</i>

POLICY TITLE: RESEARCH PROJECTS AND SURVEY REQUESTS

SECTION A

1. PURPOSE

The York Catholic District School Board supports the use of research and innovation to enhance decision-making and practice in support of Our Shared Vision and the Board's strategic priorities for improving student learning and achievement – Quality Learning by All, Catholic Communities of Faith and Safe and Caring Schools. The purpose of this policy is to provide parameters and guidelines for facilitating requests to conduct research and surveys that are outside of the realm of Board mandate and to ensure adherence to provincial legislation, federal guidelines and Ministry directives.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the York Catholic District School Board to permit internal and external individuals or agencies to conduct research or administer surveys that will benefit student learning and achievement, subject to approved parameters and guidelines.

3. PARAMETERS

- 3.1 All individuals who are interested in conducting research and / or administering surveys within the York Catholic District School Board must agree to abide by this policy;
- 3.2 Research conducted within the York Catholic District School Board must conform to accepted standards for research and ethical practices and comply with legislation governing Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy;
- 3.3 Research or survey requests must receive prior approval – from the School Principal for internal research requests and the Research Advisory Committee for external research requests – before inviting participation;
- 3.4 Participation by individual schools, staff and students in research projects or surveys is voluntary with the exception of those mandated by the Ministry or Board;
- 3.5 All individuals invited to participate in the research project or survey must be fully informed of the research objectives, procedures, foreseeable risks and potential benefits;

- 3.6 Privacy, anonymity and confidentiality of data / information identifying respondents, participants and / or schools must be strictly maintained;
- 3.7 A Vulnerable Sector Screening Police Check is required, prior to commencement, if the researcher has direct contact with any student;
- 3.8 Researchers will ensure that they are never alone with any student(s).
- 3.9 Written parental permission is required for any research project or survey involving students under 18 years of age;
- 3.10 Researchers must indicate in their application the intended use(s) of results, including any resources or products that may be created as a result of the project. It is understood that
 - Not-for-profit resources or products will be made available to the York Catholic District School Board, at no cost, for internal use only;
 - For-profit resources or products become the joint property of the researcher and the York Catholic District School Board, unless otherwise agreed to by the Director of Education; and
- 3.10 Quality assurance studies, performance reviews or testing that is within the realm of Ministry / Board mandate and normal educational requirements are not subject to this Board review process.

4. DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 Research
Refers to an investigation undertaken to increase knowledge and understanding through the gathering of data and information in order to develop new materials, products and / or processes;
- 4.2 Internal Research
Refers to a research study or survey that is administered by a Board employee, parent group, student group or Board partner that meets specific school and / or Board needs;
- 4.3 External Research
Refers to a research study or survey that is administered to benefit students and the field of education by: an institution; a community agency; an external individual; or, a Board employee conducting research outside of his / her area of responsibility.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 Research Advisory Committee (or other designated Board staff)
 - To review external research proposals with respect to:
 - a. Their relevance to the Catholic precepts, educational objectives, priorities and research needs of the Board;
 - b. Ethical considerations and protection of privacy and information;
 - c. The impact on individual school(s) and the system; and
 - d. The effect on instructional time and the extent of involvement required from staff and students;
 - To approve and recommend or deny requests to conduct research in school(s) / Board;

- To protect schools, students and staff from research that will have an adverse effect on their rights and well-being;
- To serve as a liaison between schools and external research investigators; and
- To adjudicate issues that may arise from an approved research or survey request.

5.2 Superintendents of Education

- To provide principals with recommendations for school participation in external research requests and guidance for internal research requests, as required.

5.3 Principals

- To ensure adherence to the Board research policy, parameters and guidelines;
- To determine their schools' involvement and participation in external research projects or surveys approved and recommended by the Research Advisory Committee;
- To review and approve or deny internal research requests at their school received from staff, student or parent groups; and
- To inform and communicate details of the research project or survey and obtain necessary permissions prior to commencement.

5.4 Researchers

- To ensure that their research complies with all aspects of the Board research policy, parameters and guidelines;
- To submit requests to conduct external research in the Board to the Research Advisory Committee and to the school principal for internal research requests;
- To cooperate to the fullest extent with school principal(s) and / or Board central staff throughout the process; and
- To perform at all times with the highest level of ethical and professional standards.

6. CROSS REFERENCES

The Ontario Education Act
 Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
 Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans
 Guidelines & Procedures for Research Projects and Survey Requests

7. RELATED FORMS

Admin. #51: Internal Research Approval Form
 Admin. #52: External Research Application Form
 Admin. #53: External Research Approval Form

Approval by Board	May 5th, 2009

	Date
Effective Date	May 5th, 2009

	Date
Revision Date	_____
	Date
Review Date	May, 2011

	Date

POLICY TITLE: RESEARCH PROJECTS AND SURVEY REQUESTS

SECTION B

GUIDELINES & PROCEDURES FOR RESEARCH PROJECTS AND SURVEY REQUESTS

These guidelines and procedures apply to internal and external individuals / agencies wishing to conduct research projects or surveys involving schools, students, staff or parents in the York Catholic District School Board. Individuals who are interested in conducting research, including administering survey(s), within the York Catholic District School Board should contact the Research Officer for additional information. For an overview of the research application process in the York Catholic District School Board, please refer to Appendix "A" on page 8.

1.1 Internal Requests

- Staff, School Councils and Student Councils wishing to conduct research in the school / Board must complete the Internal Research Approval Form (Admin. # 51) and receive prior written approval from the principal before commencing;
- Student coursework or class projects involving a survey component do not require the completion of a Research Approval Form; however, they are expected to be reviewed by a school administrator and receive approval from the principal, or designate, in advance of starting the survey;
- Principals, Supervisory Officers or designates, review and approve or deny research and survey requests to be conducted in a school or group of schools;
- The person who approves the research project or survey is responsible for supervising the internal researcher in the Board or school(s) throughout the process; and
- Internal researchers are required to share a written summary of the findings with the principal(s) of participating school(s).

1.2 External Requests

- All research or survey requests are to be forwarded to the Research Officer for review by the York Catholic District School Board Research Advisory Committee (see Section 3);
- All external investigators wishing to conduct research in the Board must complete the External Research Application and Approval Forms (Admin. # 52 & # 53) and receive written approval from the Research Advisory Committee prior to requesting the permission of the school principal(s);
- While all external proposals will be considered, those from undergraduates and college students will be assessed as a low priority. Market research requests will be considered only if there is direct educational application or relevance.

2. Criteria for Approval of Research Projects or Survey Requests

2.1 Benefits for Student Learning and Achievement

- The study must be worthwhile, have a high degree of educational relevance;
- Priority will be given to research projects and surveys that support improvements in student learning and achievement and / or inform the decision-making process;
- The research project or survey should demonstrate direct benefits to the school / system including the provision of feedback, learning opportunities, materials and / or summary data; and
- The research process should be a meaningful experience for participants considering time lost from other activities.

2.2 Moral, Ethical and Religious Guidelines

- Respect for all individuals and groups must be ensured in all research or survey activities. Materials or scripts must not reinforce racist, sexist, religious or other stereotypes;
- Care must be taken to avoid contentious or personal topics that may be considered by students, staff and parents to be an invasion of privacy;
- An appropriate protocol for responding to sensitive issues that may arise during the research must be outlined in the original application; and
- The researcher must agree to disclose all features of the research project or survey that might influence an individual's willingness to participate.

2.3 Legal Issues and Ethical Guidelines – Protection of Individuals and Schools

- Researchers are responsible for respecting the safety, dignity and welfare of all participants and meeting all ethical requirements for research as defined by the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*;
- Confidentiality of participating students, staff and parents must be assured. Conditions outlined in the *Ontario Education Act* and the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* regarding the access and privacy provision of personal information must be adhered. Personal information may only be obtained for the specific purposes for which it is gathered as authorized in both Acts;
- Participants must be informed as to who will have access to the information, how the information will be used, where it will be stored; and who to contact for additional information about the data collected;
- Appropriate safeguards must be implemented to ensure complete anonymity of individuals and schools. Research investigators under no circumstances are to identify individuals, schools or the Board in any presentation of results without prior written permission from the Director of Education;
- Investigators must respect the freedom of an individual to decline to participate in the research or to discontinue participation at any stage of the process;

- Approval will not be granted for research projects or surveys that require students to report any of the following:
 - illegal activities without parents / guardians being informed of the specific questions that will be asked;
 - life-threatening behaviour or level of depression without detailing to students and their parents / guardians the specific supports that are available for those students who self-identify;
 - behaviour of others;
 - information on the student's background (e.g., ethnic or racial identifiers) without a relevant link to the research;
- All participants must be clearly, fairly and fully informed of the research objectives, procedures, foreseeable risks, potential benefits;
- A Vulnerable Sector Screening Police Check is required, prior to the commencement of the research study, if the researcher will have direct contact with any student; and
- Researchers should ensure that they are never alone with any student(s).

2.4 Feedback and Communication

- External researchers are encouraged to provide feedback to participating schools through workshops, written materials or other means. Internal researchers are not required to give full reports to participants, school staff or parents however, they are required to share a brief written summary with the school principal(s);
- Research reports should contain aggregate data only. Researchers may not reveal individual data to participants, school staff or parents;
- Researchers must continue to ensure that the anonymity of students, teachers and schools is preserved in subsequent publications or forums of any kind; and
- Researchers must arrange for debriefing of participants, as appropriate, and the sharing of findings with participating school(s).

3. Research Advisory Committee of the York Catholic District School Board

3.1 Prioritization of External Research Requests

- Requests for research are to be presented and reviewed at regular Research Advisory Committee meetings or by email;
- The Research Advisory Committee will approve requests not more than three (3) times throughout the school year during the months of September, January and April;
- Proposals that receive conditional approval may receive final disposition from the Research Advisory Committee outside of the regularly scheduled meeting dates;
- Priority status will be assigned to projects that are consistent with system initiatives; and
- Ministry mandates and newly funded initiatives may require changes to the timelines of some research projects that were previously approved.

3.2 Approval Process

- Completed information packages will be provided to members of the Research Advisory Committee for review;
- The Research Officer will inform research investigators in writing regarding the disposition of their proposal (i.e., permission granted, conditional approval or request denied);
- With the permission of the supervisory officer, principal(s) of the involved school(s) shall be invited to participate in the approved research project or survey. A copy of the completed Research Approval Form (Admin. #53) will be forwarded to the school principal(s) for final approval and signature; and
- Upon principal agreement, the investigator will be given approval to contact the school in order to make the necessary arrangements to commence the study.

APPENDIX A

RESEARCH APPLICATION PROCESS OVERVIEW			
	MINISTRY / BOARD / BOARD PARTNER	EXTERNAL REQUESTS	INTERNAL REQUESTS
Request Originator ↓	a) Ministry Agencies (federal or provincial)	a) Institutionally funded project or survey	a) Individual school, area of school or department research project or survey related to local or regional initiatives
	b) Board	b) Externally funded project or survey	b) Staff request to conduct research that meets specific Board / school needs (e.g., action research project or case study)
	c) Board Partner	c) Research request from: i) a non-Board employee; ii) a Board employee collaborating with a non-Board agency	c) Staff request to conduct research in the classroom / school / Board within his / her area of responsibility, subject to supervisor approval.
		d) A Board employee wishing to conduct research that is outside of his / her area of responsibility, subject to supervisor approval (e.g., Master's thesis)	d) School Council's or / parent group's request to conduct a survey or opinion poll in the school
		e) Publisher	e) Student coursework / project involving a survey component
		f) For-profit agency	f) Student Council survey or opinion poll
Process Steps ↓	Mandated requests received from <u>Ministry Agencies</u> are coordinated through the Superintendents of Curriculum or Exceptional Learners and forwarded for approval and action to Senior Executive. Research priorities of the <u>Board</u> and research study requests received from <u>Board Partners</u> must: 1) adhere to Board research policy, parameters and guidelines and 2) receive prior approval from Senior Executive.	All <u>external requests</u> must: 1) adhere to Board research policy, parameters and guidelines 2) receive signed approval from the YCDSB Research Advisory Committee before 3) receiving the signed consent of the Principal(s) and / or Supervisory Officers(s), as required.	All <u>internal requests</u> initiated by <u>Staff, School Councils</u> and <u>Student Councils</u> must: 1) adhere to Board research policy, parameters and guidelines and 2) receive prior approval from the principal or designate.
Board Forms ↓	<u>Ministry</u> : No Board forms are required for submission. <u>Board</u> : Internal Research Approval Form (Admin. #51) should be completed. <u>Board Partner</u> : External Research Application Form (Admin. #52) and External Approval Form (Admin. #53) should be completed and forwarded, for initial approval, to the Superintendent of Education: Curriculum & Assessment or the Superintendent of Education: Exceptional Learners, as appropriate.	Completion of the External Research Application (Admin. #52) and Approval Forms (Admin. #53) is required from individuals or agencies identified above as external. External requests and supporting documentation must be forwarded and processed through the YCDSB Research Advisory Committee.	<u>Staff, School Councils</u> and <u>Student Councils</u> are expected, prior to commencement, to complete the Internal Research Approval Form (Admin. #51) and obtain signed approval from the principal. <u>Student coursework / projects</u> involving a survey component do not require the completion of a form but are expected to 1) adhere to the spirit of the Board's Research Policy and 2) receive prior approval from the principal or designate.
Approvals & Permissions	Research applications and survey requests received from Board Partners, External Researchers and /or Internal Researchers must receive required approval(s) and signature(s) prior to inviting student, staff and / or parent participation.		

**GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCTING
RESEARCH PROJECTS AND ASSESSING SURVEY REQUESTS**

Research Request Forms

Admin. #51: Internal Research Approval Form 10

Admin. #52: External Research Application Form..... 11

Admin. #53: External Research Approval Form 16

York Catholic District School Board Internal Research Approval Form

This request to conduct research or administer a survey is to be completed by the research investigator and signed by the Principal and / or Superintendent of Education approving the request. Please attach all additional information (i.e., supporting documentation including permission letters, consent forms and copies of survey instruments) needed to support the request. Kindly note that research investigators are expected to share the outcomes / findings of the research study with the school principal(s).

**** Requests received in the school without completion of this form and required signature are not to be completed. ****

Title of Project / Initiative: _____ Date of Request: _____

Name of Research Investigator & Contact Information: _____

Number of Participating Schools: _____ Names of School(s): _____

Estimated Timeline (including start and completion dates): _____

Brief Description of the Purpose of the Project:

Project Steps Required:

Intended use of the data collected:

Plans for Communication of the Findings:

- Please check each box to indicate your agreement:
- I have read and will abide by the YCDSB Research Policy and Procedures for Submission.
 - The project respects the safety, dignity and welfare of all participants and meets all research ethics standards.
 - Information collected will comply with the provisions of the **Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act** and will not be used for any purpose other than described in this application.

Previously submitted for approval Date of previous submission: _____

Signature of Research Investigator Location Date

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY

- The principal has approved the original request
- The principal has not approved the original request
- The principal has approved the request with the following modifications:

Signature:
Principal / Supervisory Officer: _____

Status of approval request:

Approved Not approved Conditional Approval No action taken

Comments:

York Catholic District School Board External Research Application

Please read the **Procedures for Submission** and **Criteria for Approval** carefully before completing this application. Submit the External Research Application Form (Admin #52) and Approval Form (Admin #53) along with information needed to support the request (i.e., certificate of ethics approval, survey instruments, permission letters and consent forms). Kindly forward five (5) copies of all required documentation to the Research Officer at the following address:

Research Officer
York Catholic District School Board
Catholic Education Centre
320 Bloomington Road West
Aurora, Ontario L4G 3G8

1. IDENTIFYING INFORMATION:	Date:
Name of Principal Investigator(s):	
Institution/Agency:	
Mailing Address:	
E-mail:	
Telephone:	Fax:

Please Check All That Apply: YCDSB staff: Yes No

<input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral Dissertation	<input type="checkbox"/> Graduate Course Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>please specify below</i>):
<input type="checkbox"/> Master's Thesis	<input type="checkbox"/> Class Assignment	
<input type="checkbox"/> University Faculty Research	<input type="checkbox"/> Externally funded project	
<input type="checkbox"/> Qualifying Research Paper	<input type="checkbox"/> Contractual Project	

Please list any other school boards to which you have applied:

2. TITLE OF STUDY:

3. STANDARDS FOR RESEARCH AND ETHICAL PRACTICES:
 This is to certify that the proposal has been examined and meets:

the standards for ethical conduct for research involving humans
 standards for sound research design and methodology

Name of Supervising Authority (Please Print):

Position: _____ Institution/Agency: _____
 Signature: _____ Telephone: _____

4. YCDSB STAFF CONDUCTING RESEARCH OUTSIDE OF THEIR AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY ONLY:

School:	Name (please print):	Signature:

5. TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION:

Approximate time for data collection:

Preferred start date:

Estimated completion date:

6. OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH STUDY:

a) Brief description of the research topic and purpose:

b) Statement of research question(s) or specific hypotheses:

7. IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH STUDY:

a) Contribution to educational knowledge:

b) Benefits, through participation and/or feedback, to schools, students and / or staff:

8. DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

a) Research design (*be as specific as possible*):

b) Proposed method to identify potential participants (including any special characteristics):

c) Identification of grades by participants and the time required for each participant:

i) Check where applicable: ii) Grade by number of participants and time commitment required

Students: Grade: _____ No (#): _____ Time Required: _____

Teachers: Grade: _____ No (#): _____ Time Required: _____

Parents: Grade: _____ No (#): _____ Time Required: _____

Grade: _____ No (#): _____ Time Required: _____

d) Data collection procedures (*Please also describe the process to retrieve existing data, if applicable*):

e) Data collection instruments (*List and attach copies of all measures to be used. If commercial instruments are to be utilized, the investigator must use original copies of the instrument and attest to obtaining copyright permission to duplicate*):

f) Facilities and staff assistance required (*e.g., preferred location(s), size, research space, special arrangements*):

9. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY:

IMPORTANT:

Under the municipal freedom of information legislation, and in adherence with the *Education Act*, only supervisory officers, the principal and teachers of the school have access to the Ontario Student Record (OSR), without the consent of the parent / guardian or adult student, for the purpose of improving instruction. Information collected routinely for school records is not obtained with the expectation of disclosure to independent researchers. Therefore, it is not possible for the Board / school to isolate specific information, along with the names of particular individuals or groups, to provide to researchers. Researchers will need to obtain parental consent and liaise with Board officials to avoid creating undue demands on the school system, if a study requires the classification of students using specific identifying characteristics (e.g. secondary school students taking math courses by program of study and gender).

a) Personal information required from Board / school records and legal authority sanctioning the collection:

b) Procedures to ensure the anonymity, confidentiality, protection and management of participants from risks (*i.e., real or perceived risks that are physical, psychological or social in nature*):

c) Methodology to be used to obtain informed consent (*attach copies of all consent forms*):

d) Description of activities planned for participants including preparation and debriefing:

e) Security procedures (*e.g., procedures for storage, removal of personal identifiers, data retention and final disposal of items such as audio and videotapes, hardcopy and electronic files*):

10. PROCEDURES FOR PROVIDING FEEDBACK:

a) Procedures for providing feedback to participants (e.g., a written report and / or an executive summary; a workshop or information session for parents, staff and / or School Council):

b) Plans for publication, communication or commercialization of the findings:

c) It is required that a summary of the completed report be submitted to the Research Advisory Committee of the York Catholic District School Board and participating schools.

Expected date for submission of report:

11. RESEARCHER'S AGREEMENT TO CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM:

I agree that:

- This research will be conducted according to the policies and parameters outlined by the York Catholic District School Board.
- Information collected as part of this study will be in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and will not be used for any purpose other than that described in the application without written authorization of the York Catholic District School Board.
- All personal data will be collected with the informed consent of the student and his / her parents / guardians. Parents / guardians will be informed of the objective of the research, the principal purpose for which the personal information is to be used and the title, business address and telephone number of an officer or employee of the institution who can answer the individual's questions about the collection. Passive consent procedures will not be used for the collection of research related data.
- The above described research proposal has been vetted for its academic soundness with due consideration given to ethical, legal, moral and religious issues arising from the proposal.
- The utmost confidentiality will be maintained with respect to any personal information – on students, staff or others – obtained through this research.
- All individual identifiers will be anonymous and destroyed after completion of the data analysis described in the application.
- No individual to whom personal information relates will be contacted directly or indirectly after completion of the research described in this application.
- No York Catholic District School Board school(s), student(s) or staff will be identified in any verbal or written report originating from this research study.

Signature:

Date:

York Catholic District School Board External Research Approval Form

This request for approval of research is to be completed by the external research investigator. Five (5) copies of the completed form are to be forwarded to the Research Officer of the York Catholic District School Board. Kindly note that research investigators are required to share the outcomes / findings of the research study upon completion.

**** Research projects or surveys may not proceed until final approval is received with all required signatures. ****

Name of Principal Investigator: _____ Email: _____

Title of project / initiative: _____ Date of Request: _____

Number of Participating Elementary Schools: _____ Number of Participating Secondary Schools: _____

Estimated Timeline (including start and completion dates): _____

Brief Description of the Purpose of the Project: _____

Project Steps Required:

Intended Use of Data Collected:

Plans for Communication of the Findings (internally and externally):

Please check all applicable boxes:

- I have read and will abide by the YCDSB Policy and Parameters for Conducting Research including the "Guidelines and Procedures for Submission and Criteria for Approval".
- I have included 5 signed copies of the application and approval forms for the Research Advisory Committee
- Previously submitted for approval Date of previous submission: _____

Signature of Principal Investigator Institution / Affiliation

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Status of approval request:

Approved Not approved Conditional Approval No action taken

Comments:

Signatures:

Research Advisory Committee

Principal / Supervisory Officer