Process and Timeline

The CMS Office of Accountability Outside Research Projects web page includes a link to download the research application form and also includes more information on the application process.

The research review panel meets monthly (dates posted on website) and will review all applications that are complete and received approximately 10 days prior to review panel meetings (dates posted on website). You will be emailed a list of questions/comments. You may respond directly to the email or you may update your research application in response to the comments by using Track Changes and then resubmit the application. The review panel will conduct a final review of the responses from the researcher and make a final decision at the following research review panel meeting. Once the panel of reviewers has made a decision on your study, you will receive an email from Susie Freije. If approved, the email will include a letter of approval and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that is created by CMS Accountability and has been signed by the Chief Accountability Officer. You should sign the MOU and return a copy of the entire document to Susie Freije. The MOU will outline exactly which data will be shared with you by Accountability, so be very clear in your application about the data needs of your project so that you are able to request the information that you need. Once you have signed and returned the MOU, you are able to begin conducting your research study.

Data Collection

Research cannot take place in the school where the researcher is currently employed.

District level staff may not conduct research that includes interviews, observations, surveys or focus groups of peers or subordinates

CMS school staff cannot provide demographic (e.g., address, race/ethnicity, LEP status, EC status, etc.), attendance, discipline, or testing information on individual students; all data should be requested from Accountability. This is done to: (1) save schools from being over burdened by requests for data that Accountability can easily provide; and (2) ensure that researchers get accurate information that can be verified. This means that you cannot retrieve data from the Portals or other sources for research purposes.

However, some student information requires prior parental consent before it can be released if it is identifiable (e.g., student birth date, address). Similarly, to receive identifiable teacher data, (e.g., EVAAS growth scores), teacher consent is required.

Data should be collected from a minimum of three schools to maximize the value and generalizability of the study. Each school’s principal should submit a preliminary letter of support (although principals cannot officially sign on to support your study until you have Accountability approval), to be included with the submission of your research application.

Surveys and assessments may not be administered during CMS Survey Blackout Dates (refer to Outside Research webpage http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/cmsdepartments/accountability/REA/Pages/OutsideResearchProjects.aspx

CMS will not approve research studies involving large-scale surveys of students, teachers or other staff, or parents. Exceptions may be made if proposal includes a letter of support from an executive director of the relevant department.

Updated January 8, 2016
CMS will not approve research studies involving surveys or interviews that exceed 45 minutes per individual.

CMS will not approve any market research studies.

**Participation expectations**

Expectations for participants should be clearly identified for each type of participant (student, parent, teacher, etc.) and should include the time commitment (e.g., number of hours per session or data collection/training activity; number of months during which data will be collected) for each type of participant who receives a consent form.

**Data requests**

If data is required that will not be collected as part of the study, once the research study is approved and an MOU has been signed by CMS and the researcher, a data request can be submitted to CMS Accountability.

**Recruitment**

School staff cannot offer referrals for specific students/staff to participate. Recruitment can be school-wide (e.g., the researcher may distribute a letter to all students or staff), and in some instances, can target sub-groups. If, for example, only male teachers or students in self-contained classrooms are necessary participants, it would be allowable to make the announcement only to those groups. Staff can be recruited, for example, by posting fliers in common spaces (e.g., the teachers’ lounge) or in their mailboxes with information on how to contact the researcher if they are interested in participating.

**Consent and assent forms**

Participants should consent to each activity of the study separately. In particular, consent and assent to videotape should have separate check box and signature lines on the consent and assent forms (something like this):

**I consent to my child’s participation in the science activity:**

[ ] Yes [ ] No

**I consent to the use of videotape during the science activity:**

[ ] Yes [ ] No

**I consent to my child’s participation in the baseline and follow-up questionnaires.**

[ ] Yes [ ] No

__________________________  __________________
Parent/Guardian Signature  Date

**Anonymity and Confidentiality**

Please be aware of the difference between anonymity and confidentiality and be clear about which you expect to guarantee in your study. It is extremely critical that confidential information of students and staff is not disclosed. We expect a plan to address confidentiality to be described in the research proposal application.

**Data Security and Disposal Plan**

Federal regulations suggest storing data for a minimum of three years and then disposing of it: Research data must be archived for the longer of (i) three years after the final project close-out or (ii) five years after the final reporting or publication of a project, with original data retained wherever possible. Sponsored research grants, contracts, and cooperative agreements may mandate different retention periods (including state and local sponsors which generally require retention for six years following final project close-out).
Surveys and Interviews

It is our aim to not over-burden school staff with data collection requests. Therefore, we do not typically allow large-scale (i.e., greater than 50 employees or 250 students) surveys or surveys/interviews/focus groups that last longer than 45 minutes.

Fees

All researchers are required to pay the application fee – CMS employees are not exempt.