



LONDON DISTRICT
Catholic School
BOARD

Guidelines for Research Requests

Research Advisory Committee

(2008-2009)



GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH REQUESTS

Policy

The London District Catholic School Board (LDCSB) is committed to developing and implementing programs and practices that are evidence-based, research informed and aligned with Board strategic priorities. In recognizing the value of conducting educational research and evaluation studies, the LDCSB supports research/evaluation proposals from staff, as well as from external institutions, agencies and individuals. All internal and external research and evaluation studies involving students and/or their parents, and/or educators need to be reviewed and approved by the Board's Research Advisory Committee (RAC) and/or Administrative Council.

Requests to conduct research and evaluation studies in the schools and/or at the system level must be made in writing to the Director of Education or her designate. A complete and detailed research proposal (see below) submitted by the principal investigator is required. The full proposal will be reviewed and evaluated by the Research Advisory Committee and/or Administrative Council and with a recommendation to the Director or her designate to either approve or deny the research proposal. In light of our partnership with the Faculty of Education and King's College of the University of Western Ontario, an expedited review protocol has been established. Expedited reviews are conducted for research requests that carry minimal risk to participants and have approval from another institutional Research Ethics Board. Examples include research projects that are part of university course work and have received approval from a Faculty or Departmental ethics review committee. In reviewing research requests, the Research Advisory Committee abides by the guiding ethical principles outlined in the *Canadian Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*. The Research Advisory Committee strives to render a decision to approve or deny a research request within two weeks from the date the research request was received.

Participation of a particular school in a research and/or evaluation study is also contingent upon the written approval of the school principal. Parents are consulted whenever research and/or evaluation projects involve their child and may exempt their child from participating. All research and/or evaluation projects involving children require written parental informed consent

The Board reserves the right to monitor all research and evaluation studies undertaken within the district including on-line surveys conducted by school staff.

Research Priorities for 2008-2009

The following research topics are considered high priority for the Board for the current school year:

- Inclusion
- Effective Use of Data
- School Improvement Planning
- Teacher Collaborative Inquiry
- Evaluation of Literacy/Numeracy Strategies
- Cooperative Learning
- Differentiated Instruction
- Learning Blocks
- Teacher Moderation
- Use of Assistive Technology

Research Advisory Committee (RAC)

The purpose of the Research Advisory Committee is to ensure that research which is conducted within the Board and its schools is of high quality, protects the rights and interests of students, parents, and educators, conforms to legal, ethical and scientific principles and standards, and is congruent with the mission and values of the London District Catholic School Board. The Research Advisory Committee serves as a consultative resource for senior administration, school-level and system staff.

Membership of Research Advisory Committee (RAC)

The core members of the Research Advisory Committee primarily include the Superintendent of Program, Assessment and Evaluation Consultant and the Research and Evaluation Officer. Other individuals (e.g., School Superintendents, Elementary and Secondary School Principals, Coordinators, Senior Administrators, Teachers etc.) may be consulted on an ad hoc basis depending upon the nature and focus of the proposed research study.

Responsibilities

1. Reviews requests and proposals for conducting research and evaluation studies involving students, parents, and educators within the London District Catholic School Board.
2. Evaluates research proposals for ethical and scientific merit, as well as relevance to the mission, goals, and values of the London District Catholic School Board.
3. Upon careful review of the research proposal and evaluative discussion, the RAC recommends approval or denial of the proposal and communicates this decision and accompanying rationale to the principal investigator.
4. The RAC may also recommend suggestions to improve the research design and methodology of the proposal that may make it more likely to be accepted.
5. Ensures that participant rights are protected and safeguarded.
6. Identifies and addresses any real or apparent conflict of interest.
7. Monitors the implementation of research and evaluation projects.
8. Maintains a list of all active and ongoing research and evaluation projects conducted within the Board and submits an annual report to Administrative Council.

Procedures

1. Principal applicant/investigator submits a complete and detailed proposal including consent form(s) in writing to the Director of Education or her designate.
2. The RAC may request the principal investigator to attend a meeting.
3. The RAC will review and evaluate the research proposal and recommend approval or denial of the research proposal, along with suggestions to improve the proposal.
4. An Appeal process will be considered by the RAC.
5. The principal investigator will be notified in writing by the RAC the Board's decision with respect to approval or denial of the proposal. The decision will be accompanied with a rationale.

Procedures (continued)

6. If approval is granted by the Board to conduct the study, the principal investigator should then obtain the written approval of principals who agree to have their school participate in the study (if applicable).
7. During the course of the study investigators are expected to keep the Board's Research Officer apprised of the study's status and progress.
8. If any change or changes are sought to the research proposal, a separate request must be made and approved by the Research Advisory Committee before any proposed change(s) can take effect that impact how the study is conducted in any of the London District Catholic School Board schools.
9. At the conclusion of the study, a report or presentation stemming from the research study should be submitted to the Board and/or participating school(s).

Proposal Format

Proposals, in general, should include detailed information concerning the following:

1. Project title.
2. Names and qualifications of the principal and co-investigators.
3. Purpose(s), research questions and/or hypotheses of the proposed study.
4. Theoretical framework and review of the literature.
5. Participant population (ages, grades, settings, sample size etc.) and recruitment methods.
6. Study design and statistical analysis procedures.
7. Detailed description of the study's methods and data collection procedures.
8. School resources and personnel time required.
9. Timelines and schedules associated with the study.
10. Statement of possible risks, compensations, and benefits to the participants, the school and the Board.
11. Description of the data and/or information to be obtained.
12. Safeguards regarding participant confidentiality and privacy including data access, storage, use and destruction.
13. Copies of all instruments, surveys, questionnaires, rating forms etc., to be used in the study.
14. Copies of all consent forms and accompanying documentation.

Informed Consent

Informed consent is required if:

- √ Students, parents and/or educators will be asked to complete a questionnaire, survey or other measure and/or complete a task that they would not complete within normal educational requirements.
- √ Information will be obtained from a student's school record.

Informed consent should be obtained in written form and in the language the prospective participant is fluent in. The language used in the consent form should be simple and direct. Scientific terms and legal phrases should be avoided. Ideally in the first paragraph the consent form should contain an invitation to participate in the study and an acceptance clause worded in the first person. All research and/or evaluation projects involving students require written parental/legal guardian informed consent.

A consent form should contain the following information:

- Name of the principal investigator(s) and contact phone numbers for answering questions or raising concerns.
- Purpose(s) of the study.
- Basis on which participants are to be selected.
- Description of methods/procedures and their anticipated frequency and duration that will involve the participant(s).
- Anticipated risks, consequences and benefits of the study and of subject's participation.
- Safeguards and provisions regarding participant's confidentiality of data/information.
- Invitation to the participant to withdraw from the study at any time without explanation or sanction for doing so.
- Statement regarding whether participants will receive results of the study, as well as publication of results.

Additional requirements and information regarding informed consent can be obtained from the *Canadian Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*.

Research Application Evaluation Criteria

Recommendation for approval/denial of a research application will be guided by the criteria specified below:

- Ethics clearance from a Research Ethics Board.
- Agreement/approval of Administrative Council.
- Agreement/approval of the school Principal.
- Scientific merit (i.e., design and methodology conform to acceptable standards).
- Relevance and worthiness to Catholic education, mission, goals, and values.
- Educational benefit and utility of the study.
- Minimal risk to students, parents and educators.
- Minimal burden to students, parents and educators especially in light of other research and evaluation projects.
- No undue interference with instructional program.
- Rights of all participants are protected.
- Participant confidentiality is safeguarded.
- Resource implications within the Board and schools.

For more information and/or questions about conducting research within the London District Catholic School Board please contact:

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