

Guidelines for Conducting Research in the Barrow County School System

Barrow County Schools encourages meaningful empirical research and offers the services of the Teaching and Learning Department to facilitate the efforts of researchers in conducting approved studies. Groups or individuals desiring to conduct research studies in the Barrow County School System must submit a **Request to Conduct Research Form** and a detailed proposal to the Superintendent's Office for approval prior to implementation of the study. Guidelines have been formulated to regulate research activities, to protect the rights of students and staff, and to avoid interference with the ongoing instructional programs in the schools.

The following guidelines apply to anyone who desires to conduct research studies within the Barrow County School System; including, students, teachers, principals, coordinators, directors, assistant superintendents, graduate students, university professors, government personnel, or independent researchers. Both employees and non-employees of the school system are required to go through the screening process and receive a formal approval letter before beginning a research study in the BCSS.

- 1.) Any individual requesting approval of research to be conducted for partial fulfillment of requirements for an advanced degree from an institution of higher education must submit a completed **Request to Conduct Research Form** and a written proposal. Evidence of the IRB approval is not required at the time the **Request to Conduct Research Form** and proposal are submitted, but must be submitted prior to any research beginning.
- 2.) The proposed research must have the promise of improving the instructional program, student achievement, parent involvement/outreach or the delivery of services in the school system and of producing additional knowledge relevant to the field of education. The proposed study should be coordinated with the overall plan and goals/objectives for the school system.
- 3.) Research must be in the best interest of students and the schools. Activities related to a research study must be conducted without adversely affecting the instructional program or the state and local testing programs. Research studies should not be conducted during the core curriculum classes and should be scheduled during non-instructional hours.
- 4.) Research must be acceptable in terms of the values and standards of the school/community. Permission of the principals of the schools involved in the research study is required prior to beginning research activities.
- 5.) Research must be of value to the profession and to the Barrow County School System in proportion to the expenditure of time and effort on the part of students, teachers, administrators and staff members participating in the study.
- 6.) Research activities must be severely limited within the school system during certain times of the year because of the state and local testing program, the beginning and ending of the year activities, and the holidays for students and staff members.

7.) The administration of psychological tests (e.g., individual intelligence tests, projective instruments, or personality tests) will not be approved. Because of the extensive state and local testing programs, the administration of additional achievement tests will most likely not be approved. Survey instruments, focus groups, or interviews consisting of items related to illegal or sensitive issues will be highly scrutinized. Medical tests cannot be approved.

8.) Test scores or any other confidential student record information (e.g., socioeconomic data, family data, or health data) on individual students will not be released. Aggregate or blind data may be approved on request. Researchers will not be allowed access to student permanent record folders or to personally identifiable test or other data.

9.) Confidential data on individual teachers will not be released. Only aggregate or blind data can be provided.

10.) The confidentiality of the Barrow County School System students, staff, schools, and the system must be addressed in all research proposals. The use of pseudonyms for people and schools is required in final reports or presentations outside of the Barrow County School System.

11.) Students, teachers, and other Barrow County School System staff members can participate in research studies only on a voluntary basis.

12.) Videotaping and/or audio taping of students must have informed consent of all participants and parents and will be subject to heavy scrutiny prior to approval.

13.) The Research Screening Committee composed of representatives of the Barrow County School System who have particular concerns about the subject area of the proposed research, must review and approve of the research study. Principals must give final approval for research conducted at their school sites.

14.) The research proposal under review may be returned to the researcher with suggested changes in the design or purpose of the research and the request that the proposal be resubmitted for further consideration.

15.) Notice of approval from the Research Screening Committee must be obtained by the researcher prior to implementation of the study. Such notice shall constitute authorization of the research and shall specify conditions and limitations (if any) under which the research shall be conducted.

16.) Approval of research studies to be conducted in the Barrow County School System includes the provision that after completion of the study a copy of the final report shall be submitted to the Teaching and Learning Department.

17.) Two copies of the proposal, two copies of the completed **Request to Conduct Research Form**, two copies of the IRB approval must be submitted to the Superintendent's Office, Attn: Dr. Chris McMichael, 179 West Athens Street Winder, GA 30680. (Telephone: (770) 867-4527; Fax: (770) 867-4540; Email: chris.mcmichael@barrow.k12.ga.us)

18.) Two copies of each instrument (e.g., questionnaire, survey, interview or observation protocol) to be used in the data collection phase of the research study must accompany the copies of the proposal.

19.) Research proposals and supporting materials must be typed and submitted with all attachments placed together in folders or packets.

20.) Researchers must submit two copies of a proposed parental permission letter. Requests to conduct research involving students must be accompanied by a proposed parental permission letter. This letter must describe the activities involved in the research study and must assure parents that confidentiality will be maintained. Parents must be provided with the opportunity to actively select whether to allow their children to participate in a research study. Procedures for securing and maintaining parental permission must be included in the proposal. Signed and dated parental permission forms must be on file at the school prior to conducting research studies.

21.) At a minimum, the research proposal should specify the sample size and selection procedures in terms of students, schools, grades, and should describe in detail the methodology in terms of measurement, instrument(s), treatment(s), research design, and data collection and analysis procedures. Results of pilot studies should be given as well as projected findings, research questions, hypotheses, and significance of the research study to the field of education. The names of schools in the Barrow County School System involved in the study must be included in the proposal.

22.) Researchers planning to conduct studies beyond one year must submit annual requests for continuation. The research request must be reviewed on an annual basis by the committee and can be terminated under specific circumstances.

23.) Research proposals will be reviewed by the Research Screening Committee three times each year. Proposals must be received by the following deadline dates to be considered during the forthcoming meeting of the Research Screening Committee. Special consideration may be requested for proposals needing review which do not fall within the designated timelines for submission by e-mailing chris.mcmichael@barrow.k12.ga.us:

Cycle	Deadline for Submission	Application Decisions Issued By
Cycle I	August 31	October 1
Cycle II	January 31	March 1
Cycle III	June 1	July 1

Note 1: If a deadline or review date falls over a weekend or on a holiday, the proposed deadline and/or review date will be held on the following Monday.

24.) All research screening application packets must contain all required documents upon submission for review. The committee will not review incomplete application packets. The results of the review will be sent to the researcher approximately four weeks after the Research Screening Committee review date.

25.) Principals and/or Division Heads should request to see an approval letter from the Superintendent before allowing a researcher to begin a study. Researchers who have been through the Screening process will have a letter in hand. Principals of schools involved in the research study will be sent copies of the approval letters.