

9560 ADMINISTRATION OF SCHOOL SURVEYS

Approval of/Rules for Projects and Surveys

The Ridgewood Board of Education recognizes the importance of educational research, including pupil surveys, in answering educational questions, changing educational practices, and developing instructional programs. Therefore, the Superintendent is authorized to cooperate, when feasible, with colleges, universities, and recognized research agencies to collaborate with potentially useful research. It is the policy of the Ridgewood Public School District that all surveys of pupils be conducted in accordance with applicable State and Federal law.

Educational research/survey is defined as:

1. Research projects or surveys conducted by pupils in college programs;
2. Research projects or surveys conducted by non-district agencies, professional researchers, community agencies, or individuals;
3. District-originated surveys or research projects; and
4. Any academic or nonacademic assessment, analysis, or evaluation.

Research involves the gathering of information with the intent of publicizing the findings. Research should not be construed as restricting faculty members from implementing the district curriculum and conducting their instructional program.

All research projects and surveys must be approved in advance by the Superintendent, and the Board of Education must be informed unless Board approval is required as noted below. A written application for approval must state the purpose of the research, the specific ways in which pupils will be involved, the estimated duration of the project, the persons who will conduct the research project and their relevant affiliations, and any possible benefits to pupils or to the school district. Approval will be granted only to those projects that will serve the interests of pupils and the educational program; approval will not be granted to projects that will impede or significantly disrupt the instructional program approved by the Board. Pupils will not be exploited for the benefit of any individual group or organization. Any staff member found violating this policy is subject to disciplinary action.

The conduct of research activities must rigorously protect pupils' privacy. The Superintendent must be satisfied that strict standards of anonymity and confidentiality, where appropriate, will be observed.

If an educational research/survey contains any questions concerning: (1) political beliefs of the pupil or the pupil's parent(s) or legal guardian(s), or (2) religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the pupil or the pupil's parent(s) or legal guardian(s), then the Board of Education must first



review and approve such instrument prior to administration. In addition, any participation in such project must be voluntary and anonymous. There will be clear written communication from the district to parent(s) or legal guardian(s) on how parent(s) or legal guardian(s) may exercise their rights not to have their children participate. Pupils will also be informed of the voluntary and anonymous nature of the survey/research and instructed by the Principal on procedures for not participating. All material in connection with the said survey shall be made available in advance for inspection by the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of the pupils. The results of the research must be made available to the district and filed with the Superintendent.

Parent/Pupil Notice and Consent

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) requires written consent for certain pupil surveys, analysis and/or evaluations funded in whole or in part by a program of the United States Department of Education. The district will comply with the PPRA consent requirements and Policy 2415.05 for certain pupil surveys, analysis, and/or evaluations.

The district will also comply with the requirements of 34 CFR Part 98 – Student Rights in Research, Experimental Programs and Testing for certain programs administered by the Secretary of the United States Department of Education:

1. Instructional material used in connection with any research or experimentation program and project shall be made available for inspection by parents/legal guardians of pupils engaged in such program or project in accordance with the requirements of 34 CFR Part 98.3.
2. Prior written parental/legal guardian consent is required for any surveys, analysis, and/or evaluations that involve psychiatric or psychological examination, testing, or treatment; if the primary purpose is to reveal information as specified in 34 CFR Part 98.4(a)(1).
 - a. Psychiatric or psychological examination or test means a method of obtaining information, including a group activity, that is not directly related to academic instruction and that is designed to elicit information about attitudes, habits, traits, opinions, beliefs or feelings.
 - b. Psychiatric or psychological treatment means an activity involving the planned, systematic use of methods or techniques that are not directly related to academic instruction and that is designed to affect behavioral, emotional, or attitudinal characteristics of an individual or group.

However, academic and nonacademic surveys, assessments, analyses, and/or evaluations may be administered to pupils for programs or activities that are not funded in whole or in part by a program of the United States Department of Education and/or programs not administered by the



Secretary of the United States Department of Education as defined in 34 CFR Part 98.1. In accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:36-34, the district shall receive prior written informed consent from a pupil's parent or legal guardian before administering these academic and nonacademic surveys, assessments, analyses, and/or evaluations that reveal information concerning:

1. Political affiliations;
2. Mental or psychological problems potentially embarrassing to the pupil or the pupil's family;
3. Sexual behavior and attitudes;
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom a respondent has a close family relationship;
6. Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as lawyers, physicians, and ministers;
7. Income, other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under a program;
8. Social security number; or
9. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the pupil or parent(s) or legal guardian(s).

When administering an academic and/or nonacademic survey, assessment, analysis, and/or evaluation that concern the issues listed in 1. through 9. above, the Superintendent shall request written informed consent at least two weeks prior to the administration of the survey. The request for consent shall provide the parent/legal guardian the opportunity to view a copy of the document at a convenient location and time. The pupil shall not participate in the administration of the academic and/or nonacademic surveys, assessments, analyses, and/or evaluations if the requested written informed consent is not obtained.

Notification of this policy, and of the specific or approximate dates (to the extent known) of the administration of an educational research/survey concerning the subject matter areas enumerated above, shall be provided to parent(s) or legal guardian(s) at the beginning of each school year.

N.J.A.C. 6A:32-7.5
N.J.S.A. 18A:36-34
34 CFR Part 98

Adopted: 7 December 2009

