

Conducting Research in NYC Public Schools:
What Principals Need to Know

Research can only happen with the approval of the IRB, you and study participants!

- **The DOE IRB** ensures that research does not compromise the rights of students and their parents or disrupt instructional activity in our schools.
- Even if the IRB and principal have approved the study, participation for **school staff and students** is also *strictly voluntary*. School staff must give their consent. Families must consent for their child to participate. Students must give assent.
- Even if the DOE IRB has approved the study, **principals** may decline their school's participation in a study, or withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.

The researcher needs to follow the rules!

- Researchers must show principals **three documents**: (1) a DOE IRB *Approval Letter*; (2) an official *Approval to Conduct Research in Schools* form requiring your signature; and (3) an informational *Principal Letter* approved by the IRB.
- Anyone conducting research in NYC schools must be **fingerprinted** and pass security clearance before going into schools.
- Except for classroom observations, research should not be conducted during **instructional time** and research activities should be scheduled in collaboration with the principal and participants.
- NYC law prohibits **compensating** DOE employees for participation in research studies. Schools and individual classrooms can be compensated via donation online services such as DonorsChoose.org

The researcher has to do the work!

- Principals may not assist researchers in **identifying or recruiting** school staff, classrooms or students for participation in research studies, with the exception of staff who teach specific grades or are responsible for specialized curricula/initiatives.
- **Parental consent forms** sent home with students should be returned to the researcher (not to school staff) or placed in a secure sealed box in the school, with the principal's permission.
- School staff should not provide student administrative records to researchers; researchers can **request data online**: <http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/data/DataRequests.htm>. Obtaining *identifiable* student data requires active parent/guardian consent.

If principals have any questions or are being asked to participate in activities outside the approved scope of research, they can email IRB@schools.nyc.gov or call the IRB Director at 212-374-3913.