



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

CATEGORY: Instruction, Miscellaneous

SUBJECT: Authorization to Administer Questionnaires/
Surveys to District Staff, Students and Parents

A. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

1. To provide guidelines for approval of questionnaires/surveys, including internal surveys by district employees or community groups working with the district.
2. **Related Procedures:**
 - Research projects involving the district, by students for advanced degrees and by nondistrict agencies and professional researchers 4930
 - Release of public information to news media and public 9015
 - Release of student information 6525
3. The process outlined in this procedure applies to the process of obtaining permission to administer all questionnaires/surveys to district staff, students and parents *except in the cases of:*
 - a. Questionnaires/surveys already authorized under Administrative Procedure 4930 (for example, district-approved research projects or cooperative research involving nondistrict agencies).
 - b. Evaluation and data-reporting activities associated with or required by grants.
 - c. District-originated research projects.
 - d. Compliance reports, program evaluation reports, needs assessments or similar data-development activities conducted by district staff while carrying out job responsibilities.
 - e. Requests by outside entities for general information about district policies, procedures and operation of schools (see Administrative Procedure 9015).
 - f. Surveys of district staff members conducted by bargaining units.

B. LEGAL AND POLICY BASIS

1. **Reference:** Board policy: F-1500, F-9400, H-8900; Education Code Sections 49074, 51513; Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (20 USC 1232g); General Education Provisions Act of 1974 (20 USC 1232h); Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (20 USC 123h; 34 CFR Part 98).

2. **Limits to Collection and Release of Student Information.**

- a. The **Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)** outlines requirements and limitations governing release of student information by school districts receiving federal funds; violations can result in withholding of such funds. No personal information concerning any minor student shall be released, except that the governing board may, in its discretion, provide information to the staff of a college, university, educational research and development organization or laboratory, if such information is necessary to a research project or study conducted, sponsored, or approved by the college, university, or educational research and development organization or laboratory. A student must not be identified by name in information submitted for research; also, a student must not be identified in the completed report, nor in any public report of the research project or study. (See Procedure 6525 for other provisions.)
- b. The **Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)** to FERPA identifies eight specific subject areas that may not be addressed in questionnaires/surveys without consent of a student's parent or guardian:
 - (1) Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parents;
 - (2) Mental and psychological problems potentially embarrassing to the student or his or her family;
 - (3) Sexual behavior and attitudes;
 - (4) Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating and demeaning behavior;
 - (5) Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom the student has close family relationships;
 - (6) Legally recognized privileged and analogous relationship, such as those of lawyers, physicians and ministers;
 - (7) Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; *or*
 - (8) Income other than that recognized by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under a program.
- c. **Education Code Section 49074** states: "Nothing in this chapter shall preclude a school district from providing, in its discretion, statistical data from which no pupil may be identified to any public agency, entity, private nonprofit college, university

or educational research and development organization when such actions would be in the best educational interests of pupils.”

- d. **Education Code Section 51513** states: “No test, questionnaire, survey or examination containing any question about the pupil’s personal beliefs or practices in sex, family life, morality and religion or any questions about the pupil’s parents’ or guardians’ beliefs and practices in sex, family life, morality and religion shall be administered to any pupil in kindergarten or grades 1 to 12, inclusive, unless the parent or guardian of the pupil is notified in writing that this test, questionnaire, survey or examination is to be administered and the parent or guardian of the pupil gives written permission for the pupil to take this test, questionnaire, survey or examination.”

C. GENERAL

1. **Originating Office.** Suggestions or questions concerning this procedure should be directed to the Research and Reporting Department, Office of Accountability.
2. **Limiting Impact on Schools.** The purpose of schools is to educate students; all other objectives, however worthy, are secondary to this goal. The district’s efforts to minimize distractions of students from their regular academic pursuits and to allow staff the opportunity to provide high-quality instruction and related services necessitate keeping to a minimum the number of questionnaires/surveys in which the district will participate.
3. **Approval Requirements.**
 - a. Approval of all requests to conduct a questionnaire/survey in a single school or department must be obtained from the site administrator(s) using the criteria outlined in this procedure. Site administrator(s) may direct questions about the application of guidelines to the Research and Reporting Department, Office of Accountability.
 - b. Approval of all requests to administer a questionnaire/survey in multiple schools or departments must be obtained from the Research and Reporting Department, Office of Accountability. Unless otherwise directed by the superintendent, chief of staff, deputy superintendent or area superintendents, no school or department is under obligation to approve the administration of a questionnaire/survey.

4. **Criteria for Approving Requests to Administer Questionnaires and Surveys.**

Note: Approval of these requests is dependent on the perceived value of information to be obtained and the impact on those being surveyed.

- a. Approver must consider and determine the right of the requester to know and to have access to the information.
- b. Questionnaire/survey must not contain questions or statements of a psychological or sociological nature about the student or his/her environment that conflict with B.2.
- c. Questionnaire/survey must not contain confidential information about employees (Procedure 7100). For information that may be released to employee groups, see the appropriate collective negotiations contract.
- d. Study of characteristics, performance, behavior, preferences or status within or among students and staff along racial, ethnic and/or socioeconomic dimensions will be carefully considered by district officials and approved only if determined to be in the best interest of education.
- e. Relationships among and between students, parents/guardians and district staff must not be jeopardized by a questionnaire/survey.
- f. Questionnaire/survey must be consistent with, and must not complicate, evaluation of district practices and programs.
- g. The district discourages questionnaires/surveys conducted by individuals or nonschool groups to satisfy self-group interests, such as market research.

D. IMPLEMENTATION

1. **Questionnaire/survey to schools/departments.** Principal or other site administrator reviews request for compliance with district criteria (B.2. and C.4.) before administration. Questionnaires/surveys directed to multiple schools or departments should be directed to the Research and Reporting Department.
2. **Questionnaire/survey to superintendent/board.** Superintendent may review request for compliance or forward to the Research and Reporting Department.
3. **Questions or concerns.** Staff members or parents should address any questions or concerns about responding to questionnaires/surveys to the Research and Reporting Department.

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E. FORMS AND AUXILIARY REFERENCES

None.

F. REPORTS AND RECORDS

1. Questionnaires/surveys: Retention is determined by the Office of Accountability.

G. APPROVED BY



General Counsel, Legal Services
As to form and legality

H. ISSUED BY



Chief of Staff