

## RESEARCH AT FACTS

FACTS has a responsibility to protect the privacy of members of its school community (staff, parents/families, and students) and a particular legal responsibility to protect the privacy of its students. This impacts research at FACTS.

**The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)** guarantees the confidentiality of student education records. Student education records include: tests, test scores, grades, written assignments, emails containing information about students, notes from a conversation with a student, etc. It also includes information that FACTS maintains in its files from the registration process such as address, birthdate, birthplace, home language, etc.

### Exceptions to FERPA:

Directory Information: The only information that FACTS has designated as “Directory Information” which is not subject to FERPA is: student name; photographs (including video image); degrees, honors, and awards received; grade level; and participation in officially recognized activities and sports. This information is only considered “Directory Information” when it is used for school-sponsored/school affiliated purposes.

Legitimate Educational Purpose: School officials who have a “legitimate educational purpose” may access the specific educational records which they need *in the discharge of their duties* without violating FERPA. School officials may include teachers, other staff, volunteers, student teachers and interns who are performing school functions. For example, a college student who is tutoring in a classroom would be considered a school official while a college student who is conducting their own research project in the school would not be considered a school official.

- School officials are still bound by FERPA and may not access records out of curiosity, outside research work, or for reasons other than the conduct of their role at FACTS.
- School officials conducting research may access student information:
  - If they are studying the effectiveness of their instructional methods or techniques
  - If they are aggregating data in a way such that personally identifiable information cannot be tracked back to individual students

### How to get permission to conduct research at FACTS

1. Submit the Application for Permission to Conduct Research at FACTS to the Executive Director at least 60 days prior to the intended start date.
  - Explain the purpose of your research
  - Describe the information on research participants that you are requesting to access

- List the research questions that you will be asking
  - Attach any research instruments that you will be using such as surveys, interviews, etc.
  - Explain how you will keep the identity of research participants anonymous or if student identities are not anonymous, how you will comply with FERPA and keep all identities confidential
  - Describe how your research will benefit FACTS and how it will benefit the students, staff, families you are studying
  - Describe any risks your research may pose to FACTS and any potential risks to the students, staff, families you are studying
  - Describe how, if at all, your research activities might disrupt student learning, staff work, or school operations or how you will work to minimize this disruption
  - Describe how and with whom your research will be shared (with classmates, a professor only, in conference presentations or publications, etc)
2. After you submit your proposal to the ED, the proposal will undergo a review process that includes a preliminary review by the Executive Director. If it passes this preliminary review by the ED, it will then undergo a full review by the FACTS Research Review Board.
  3. If the FACTS Research Review Board grants you permission to conduct research at FACTS, this body will send you formal written approval.
  4. The approval from FACTS does not take the place of your responsibilities for the ethical conduct of your research. You must seek informed consent from the student and their parent or guardian, staff, or other individual subjects. Informed consent means you must:
    - Make sure that you are communicating in a language the person giving consent understands
    - Explain the purpose of your study and with whom it will be shared
    - List the research questions that you will be asking or any research instrument that you will be using such as surveys, interviews, etc.
    - All communication with parents/guardians and/or students and staff must have the prior review and approval by the Research Review Board before such communication is initiated.
  5. Once the approval letter has been issued, no changes in the scope of the research (e.g., timeframe of study, number of schools included, number of participants, etc.), procedure, or instrumentation may be made without authorization. Requests to amend the study must be submitted in writing to the chair of the Research Review Board and approved before proposed changes are enacted.

# Request to Conduct a Research Project at FACTS

All requests must be in accordance with FERPA regulations, and copies of Institutional Review Board for Protection of Human Subjects (IRB) approval must be attached. However, IRB approval does not overrule Institution denial of access to data. IRB approval is required unless you can demonstrate that the project is for pedagogical purposes.

Storage of this data, either electronic or paper, must be in a secure location, not shared with a third party and must be destroyed at the conclusion of the project.

## Requestor's Information

Principal Investigator(s)

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Institutional Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_ Institutional Role(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Professor's Name and Department (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Your Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Your E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

I affirm that the requested student data will only be used to meet the purpose of the study as herein stated, that personally identifiable information of students will not be released to anyone other than those with a legitimate educational interest, and that said personally identifiable information will be destroyed or returned upon conclusion of the study unless extension of such date is requested.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Project Information

Purpose and scope of Project: \_\_\_\_\_

Data Requested (Is the request for aggregate or personally identifiable data): \_\_\_\_\_

How and where will the data be stored (i.e., electronic & paper): \_\_\_\_\_

When will the Project end? (Personally identifiable data must generally be destroyed at the conclusion of a project or a written request for extension must be submitted): Date \_\_\_\_\_

Attach a brief description of the research

- Explain the purpose of your research
- Describe the student information that you are requesting to access
- List the research questions that you will be asking
- Attach any research instruments that you will be using such as surveys, interviews, etc.
- Explain how you will keep the identity of students anonymous or if student identities are not anonymous, how you will comply with FERPA and keep all identities confidential
- Describe how your research will benefit FACTS and how it will benefit the students, staff, families you are studying
- Describe any risks your research may pose to FACTS and any potential risks to the students, staff, families you are studying

- Describe how, if at all, your research activities might disrupt student learning or how you will work to minimize this disruption
- Describe how and with whom your research will be shared (with classmates, a professor only, in conference presentations or publications, etc)
- Will the research identify FACTS as the research site?

## Approval

Documentation of IRB Approval (Attach) Protocol# \_\_\_\_\_

Date received by FACT Charter School: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of approval by FACTS Research Review Board: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

FACT Executive Director Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Waiver**

I, [parent/guardian name]\_\_\_\_\_, the parent/guardian of [student's name]\_\_\_\_\_, have been informed of the purpose of the research project of [researcher's name]\_\_\_\_\_. I voluntarily consent to release my student's educational records, specifically:

List of specific records requested [check all that apply]:

- Student's name
- Grades
- Test Scores
- Student Work (writing, assignments, etc)
- Disciplinary Records
- Surveys or Interviews with Student
- Other [specify]: \_\_\_\_\_

This research is being done for the purposes of:

- Coursework to be shared with a professor only
- Coursework to be shared with classmates
- A Conference Presentation [specify]: \_\_\_\_\_
- A Publication [specify]: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that I may revoke this consent at any time by submitting a request in writing.

Parent's/Guardian's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_