

RESEARCH

The Township of Union Board of Education recognizes that educational research can be a valuable tool in identifying and applying strategies to enhance student achievement and in identifying factors that could prevent students from becoming contributing members of society. Surveys among student populations can be an important part of this research.

Staff members are encouraged to participate in and cooperate with such projects. To assure appropriateness, to avoid overlapping and duplications and ensure that the results are available and adequately disseminated, all research and experimental projects using either district staff, students, or materials must be approved prior to their beginning by the superintendent. Results of all research must be furnished to the superintendent.

Students and parents/guardians retain certain rights, however, in the administration of surveys. The board shall ensure that prior written consent is obtained from parents/guardians or emancipated students before any survey is administered, if the survey (analysis or evaluation) is designed to reveal information on any of the following:

- A. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parents/guardians;
- B. Mental and psychological problems of the student or the student's family;
- C. Sex behavior or attitudes;
- D. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
- E. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
- F. Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, or ministers;
- G. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or the student's parent/guardian; or
- H. Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program).

Written informed consent shall also be obtained from parents/guardians or emancipated students prior to the administration of any academic or nonacademic survey, assessment, analysis or evaluation that would reveal the student's social security number.

Parents/guardians shall be given the opportunity to inspect any survey, analysis or evaluation that solicits information in any of the above areas. If parents/guardians object to their child(ren)'s participation in the survey, the child(ren) shall be allowed to opt out.

Prior approval of the superintendent is required for all other surveys on topics not listed. Anyone seeking approval of a proposed survey must provide the superintendent with details of the survey methodology, its specific educational purpose and a description of how results will be disseminated and applied.

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For all surveys the identity of the respondent shall remain confidential.

The superintendent shall develop regulations to implement this policy that include reasonable timelines for parents/guardians to access and review surveys as prescribed by law, and arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of a survey.

This policy and the regulations shall be made available to the public at least annually at the beginning of the school year, especially to parents/guardians and to district staff. The public shall be informed within a reasonable period of time if substantive change is made to policy and regulations. The public shall also be informed of specific or approximate dates, if known, when surveys may be administered.

Adopted: June 1999
 NJSBA Review/Update: April 2012
 Readopted: April 29, 2014

Key Words

Student Privacy, Research, Surveys

Legal References: N.J.S.A. 18A:36-34 Written approval required prior to acquisition of certain survey information from students
 N.J.A.C. 6A:16-1.4 District policies and procedures

20 U.S.C.A. 1232g – Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

20 U.S.C.A. 1232h – Protection of Student Rights Amendment

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. 107-110, 20 U.S.C.A. 6301 et seq.

In re: Application of Charles V. Reilly, Robert A. Hutton and Sean Reilly to Contest the Validity of the Enactment of Assembly Bill 3359 (P.L. 2001, c. 364), Superior Court of New Jersey, Appellate Division, Docket No. A-0163-02T2, 2003 N.J. Super. Lexis 376

Possible

Cross References: *1140 Distribution of materials by students and staff
 1315 Distribution of materials to students and staff
 4132 Publications/materials
 *5020 Role of parents/guardians
 *5124 Reporting to parents/guardians
 *5125 Student records
 *5141.3 Health examinations and immunizations
 *6147.1 Evaluation of individual student performance

*Indicates policy is included in the Critical Policy Reference Manual.