

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH / STUDENT SURVEYS

Date of Adoption: November 23, 2004

The 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.

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 valuation) 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 student's parent/guardian; or
- h. Income (other than 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) will be allowed to opt out.

Prior approval of the Superintendent is required for all 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. 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.

Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools

Legal References:

NJSA 18A:36-34

NJAC 6A:16-1.4

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. 107-110, 20 USCA 6301 et seq.