

Explaining the Liaison Role in External Research Conducted at MMSD

All approved external research projects in MMSD are assigned a Central Office staff liaison. These individuals are identified based on their content knowledge and their role within the district – both of which make him/her a valuable resource to external researchers. Liaisons also represent departments most likely to benefit from the work of the researcher.

In general, liaisons serve as a link between the district and the external researchers. As such, they are the primary contact person, and they work with the researcher during the entirety of the research being performed. This role includes activities such as answering questions and providing access to the district. The relationship between the liaison and the researcher is flexible to fit the needs of the researcher, the district, and the schools.

If a potential liaison is directly involved in the research as a participant, the potential liaison should recommend someone to take their place as liaison.

Role of Liaisons before ERC Final Approval

Liaisons are contacted before Conditional Approval is granted to researchers, but after the proposal has gone through Committee review. They are asked to carefully review the research proposal and provide feedback, as well as indicate their willingness to take on the liaison role.

Sometimes staff members are unable to accommodate the additional responsibilities of being a liaison for a particular study. If that is the case, and the research project is determined as sound by the ERC and valuable by the relevant department, the potential liaison should recommend a person to fulfill that role in their stead.

What Liaisons Do after ERC Final Approval

Beginning the Research: Once the researcher receives Final Approval from the ERC, the researcher will contact the liaison for guidance on how to access the schools they need to perform their work in, and researchers will work with liaisons regarding additional resources and materials relevant to the research. Essentially, liaisons will collaborate with the researcher and help coordinate the logistics for completion of the research.

During the Work: Additionally, liaisons will help building staff if issues arise during or as a result of the research being conducted. Should the researcher wish to amend or change their research, the ERC will take the desired changes or amendments and verify that the liaison agrees with such changes before approval.

After Completion of the Work: Liaisons will receive a copy of any research reports furnished to MMSD as the result of completed research projects within the district.

Please contact Christopher Harrison (608-442-2158; cwharrison@madison.k12.wi.us), coordinator of the External Research Committee, with questions or concerns about the liaison role.