Research at the Moss Street Partnership School

Facilitating research is an important aspect of the Moss Street Partnership School (MSPS) charge. MSPS faculty, staff, and administrators engage in inquiry and reflection processes related to their practices. They also actively leverage existing and emerging research findings for the continuous improvement of student learning, health, and experiences; the school; and the greater MSPS community. In addition to the inquiries MSPS staff make into their practices, research with partners from beyond the school is encouraged. The overarching goals for this research is to generate, refine, and expand knowledge of interest to society while simultaneously serving the interests and needs of MSPS stakeholders including students, school personnel, families, and the broader community.

For the purposes of this document, “MSPS personnel” will be used to refer to teachers, staff, and leaders whose appointments are to the school. While individuals within this group may conduct various forms of research, the term “researcher” will be used to designate scholars not appointed to MSPS.

Researchers interested in conducting work at MSPS must gain approval for the projects they plan to conduct at MSPS prior to engaging in any research activities. Proposals for research at MSPS will be reviewed based on two sets of criteria: 1) required and 2) preferred. All required criteria must be met to gain research approval. Preferred criteria will be applied to the review of all research proposals, but there may be specific cases in which one or more of the preferred criteria are not appropriate or necessary for a particular proposal. The review committee will employ the preferred criteria at its discretion. Approval of all research proposals, regardless of a request's alignment with review criteria, is contingent on the capacity of MSPS to facilitate the proposed activities. Capacity may be related to MSPS personnel or student availability, physical resources (including space), or the number of other initiatives and projects underway at the school.

Required Criteria

- The research must be consistent with the MSPS Mission and Guiding Principles.
- The research must address topics of scholarly significance that are also significant to the MSPS community.
- The research must be conducted ethically, responsibly, and in accordance with the standards and expectations of educational and school-based research.
- The research must ultimately be approved by the UNCG Institutional Review Board (IRB). Researchers are encouraged to submit proposals for research at MSPS to the MSPS Research Review Board first. If approved, then researchers will need to gain UNCG IRB approval before conducting any research activities at MSPS.
- Researchers must follow all MSPS policies and regulations regarding access to the school. For example, research activities that call for interaction with MSPS students can only be conducted following approved background checks for the researchers who will conduct this work.
**Preferred Criteria**

- The research should inform educators about one or more of the following areas:
  - Improving teaching and learning in high-needs schools.
  - Improving leadership, organization, and mentorship in high needs schools.
  - Improving student health including mental health.
  - Improving school/family/community partnerships/relationships or some combination.
- Researchers should have a previously established, positive relationship with MSPS personnel. Whenever possible, researchers are encouraged to plan and conduct their research in partnership with MSPS personnel.
- The research and associated activities should help to expand MSPS community members’ knowledge about teaching, learning, health, mental health, and/or other forms of educational practice and outcomes.
- The research and associated activities should help to expand MSPS community members’ knowledge about research and its uses for informing practice and policy.
- The research should involve a UNCG-based scholar.

Upon completion of research conducted at MSPS and/or prior to the sharing of research findings (with public audiences including but not limited to publications, presentations, and media outlets), researchers are expected to submit a report of their activities and findings. This report should provide a brief description (no more than five pages) of what was done, what was found, and how those findings might improve topics of interest to the MSPS community (see list within the preferred criteria). The MSPS Leadership Team will examine the report and may call for follow-up communication with researchers before any findings are shared with public audiences.

In addition to the written report, researchers who conduct projects at MSPS are expected to make themselves available for presentations of their work. The MSPS Leadership team and Research Review Board may request that researchers share their work with the MSPS community.

**Research Approval Processes**

The MSPS Research Review Board (RRB) is made up of two permanent members and five appointed members. The permanent members will be the School of Education Associate Dean of Research and a member of the MSPS Leadership Team (one of the Co-Directors or Associate Directors) to be determined by the Dean of the School of Education, who serves as the Chancellor’s designee as the head of MSPS. The appointed members will be appointed by the Dean of the School of Education, and they will serve in three-year rotating terms. Two appointed members will be MSPS personnel, and three appointed members will be UNCG faculty. UNCG faculty representatives hold appointments in one of the following UNCG units: School of Education, School of Health and Human Sciences, College of Visual and Performing Arts, and College of Arts and Sciences. Multiple UNCG units should be represented on the MSPS RRB at all times. The RRB may invite other UNCG faculty and/or MSPS personnel to serve as ad-hoc reviewers on specific proposals based on their areas of expertise and experience.
If a member of the RRB is directly involved in a research application, then that member will be recused from review of the application.

At the beginning of each academic year, the RRB will select a chair from among the appointed members. The Board Chair and the permanent members (SOE Associate Dean and MSPS Leader) will serve as the RRB’s Leadership Team. A member of the RRB Leadership Team will make regular reports of research activities to the MSPS Advisory Board and the Community Council.

The RRB will hold pre-scheduled meetings to discuss research applications three times per year. Meeting times will be posted online.

The following steps will be followed for the review of research applications.

1. Applications are submitted to the SOE Division of Research, Discovery & Innovation (RDI)
2. RDI sends applications to the RRB Leadership Team.
3. The RRB Leadership Team completes an initial review to check for adherence to mandatory criteria. RRB Leaders can decide to a) return the application to the researchers for clarification or additions, b) forward the application to the RRB for full consideration, c) call for an expedited, electronic review of the application, or d) reject the application for failure to meet the required criteria.

If the application is forwarded to the RRB for full consideration,
4. RRB members review the application.
5. RRB members can suggest inclusion of an ad hoc reviewer to support review of a particular application.
6. RRB and ad hoc reviewers meet to discuss applications and make a decision. If a consensus decision is not reached, then the leadership team can call for a vote (of RRB members and ad hoc reviewers). The option (accept or deny) with the most votes will be the decision.

If the Board Leadership calls for an expedited, electronic review of an application
7. The application is sent to RRB members for review.
8. Standing board members share comments on the application via email and vote electronically on whether to accept or deny the application. The option (accept or deny) with the most votes will be the decision.

9. For applications that have been accepted by the RRB, the MSPS Leader representative will share the project with the rest of the MSPS Leadership Team. If the MSPS Leadership Team has concerns about the project, the MSPS Leader representative to the RRB will communicate those concerns with the RRB. Ultimately, the MSPS Leader, in consultation with the MSPS and RRB Leadership Teams can deny an application even if it has received approval by the RRB.
10. The decision is communicated to the applicant.

Revisions to the MSPS Research Guidelines and Process
The RRB is responsible for reviewing and revising research policies and processes associated with MSPS. Changes to this document as well as the MSPS Research Application involve a two-step process. Potential changes are first discussed by the RRB. Changes that are supported by a majority of the RRB are forwarded to the SOE Dean. Finalization of the change requires approval by the Dean.