



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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December 1, 2025

The Honorable Glenn Youngkin
Governor of Virginia
P.O. Box 1475
Richmond, Virginia 23218

The Honorable L. Louise Lucas
Chair, Senate Finance and Appropriations
Committee
201 North 9th Street, Room 1404
Richmond, VA 23219

The Honorable Luke E. Torian
Chair, House Appropriations Committee
201 North 9th Street, Room 123

The Honorable Ghazala F. Hashmi
Chair, Senate Education and Health Committee
201 North 9th Street, Room 616
Richmond, VA 23219

The Honorable Sam Rasoul
Chair, House Education Committee
201 North 9th Street, Room 910
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Governor Youngkin and Chairs Lucas, Torian, Hashmi, and Rasoul:

I am pleased to submit this report to meet the requirements of § 22.1-16.1 of the *Code of Virginia* that requires the human research committee of the Virginia Department of Education to submit to the Governor, the General Assembly, and the Superintendent of Public Instruction or her designee at least annually a report on the human research projects reviewed and approved by the committee and shall require the committee to report any significant deviations from the proposals as approved.

If you have questions or require additional information, please contact Ms. Christina Berta, Chief Operations Officer, at 804.225.2025 or Christina.P.Berta@doe.virginia.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emily Anne Gullickson".

Emily Anne Gullickson, M.Ed. J.D.
Superintendent of Public Instruction

c: The Honorable Aimee Rogstad Guidera
Virginia Secretary of Education

HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH REPORT

Va. Code § 22.1-16.1



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AUTHORITY FOR THE REPORT

Section 22.1-16.1 of the *Code of Virginia* requires the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) to report annually on any research projects conducted or authorized by the agency that meet the definition of human research projects. See Appendix A for statutory and regulatory language from the *Code of Virginia* and the *Virginia Administrative Code*.

OVERVIEW

VDOE follows a prescribed process, outlined in the agency's administrative manual, for the approval of research involving human subjects. In brief, researchers are required to submit their research proposals for review by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) and provide documentation of the completed review and the IRB determination to agency staff before sensitive data are released or research subjects are contacted.

Many of the research studies authorized by VDOE rely on administrative data from the Virginia Longitudinal Data System (VLDS). In addition to an IRB review (often acquired from the researchers' home institution), research projects using VLDS data require additional review by VDOE's Data Governance Committee. This committee is responsible for ensuring the requested student-level data are used, transferred, and secured appropriately and consistently with state and federal data privacy and protection laws. Similarly, the non-VLDS data requests from researchers (i.e., requests for data from VDOE directly) also require a rigorous review process. The research purpose, researchers' credentials, specific data elements requested, data security plan, and the research project's IRB status (also often acquired from the researchers' home institution) must be reviewed and approved collectively by a sponsoring VDOE office or the Office of Strategic Analysis and Research, Director of Data Standards and Governance, Director of Cybersecurity and Risk Management, data owner, and Deputy Superintendent/Chief Operations Officer.

APPROVED RESEARCH PROJECTS

Table 1 provides a summary of the three human research projects that underwent IRB review with the VDOE's Human Research Committee during calendar year 2025. VDOE's IRB process was filed with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in 2023. Members of the IRB have completed all the required training and certification for the role. There is also a comprehensive handbook and set of procedures around IRB review process.

Table 1. Research Projects Reviewed in Calendar Year 2025

VDOE Contract Number/ Project Title	Lead Researcher	University/Organization	Institutional Review Board Determination
IRB0012025/Exploring the Experiences of Cultural Exchange Teachers in Teaching Science: Challenges, Strategies, and Cultural Perspectives	Japhet Tendoy	Independent Researcher	Exempt/Withdrawn Prior to Data Collection
IRB0022025/Differentiated Instruction for Gifted and Twice-Exceptional Learners in Elementary Music (Phase 1)	Dr. Krystal Stark	Arlington Public Schools	Exempt
IRB0032025/Differentiated Instruction for Gifted and Twice-Exceptional Learners in Elementary Music (Phase 2)	Dr. Krystal Stark	Arlington Public Schools	Exempt

IRB exempt status indicates that a research study does not require full IRB review because it falls into a category of activities considered very low risk under the federal “exempt” categories outlined in 45 CFR 46. These projects typically involve anonymous data collection, such as surveys, and focus on normal educational practices, for example, examining instructional strategies in established school settings.

In addition, several projects undertaken in 2025 involved secondary administrative data sharing with other government entities for non-research purposes (e.g., program evaluation, administrative reporting). As such, these activities are not subject to IRB oversight and are not included in this report. VDOE will continue to review and monitor all proposed research activities to ensure compliance with federal and state regulations for the protection of human subjects. There were no deviations from the proposals as approved.

APPENDIX A

§ 22.1-16.1 of the Code of Virginia

The Board shall promulgate regulations pursuant to the Administrative Process Act (§ 2.2-4000 et seq.) to effectuate the provisions of Chapter 5.1 (§ 32.1-162.16 et seq.) of Title 32.1 for human research, as defined in § 32.1-162.16, to be conducted or authorized by the Department of Education or any public schools including the Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind or any proprietary schools certified by the Board. The regulations shall require the human research committee to submit to the Governor, the General Assembly, and the Superintendent of Public Instruction or his designee at least annually a report on the human research projects reviewed and approved by the committee and shall require the committee to report any significant deviations from the proposals as approved.

8VAC20-565-40. Research committee.

Any such research shall be approved and conducted under the review of a human research committee, which shall be established by the agency or school conducting or authorizing the research. Any such committee shall comply with the provisions of § 32.1-162.19 of the Code of Virginia. Each committee shall submit to the Governor, the General Assembly, and the Superintendent of Public Instruction or his designee at least annually a report on the student projects reviewed and approved by the committee, which shall state significant deviations from the proposals as approved.