



## THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH, EVALUATION, ACCOUNTABILITY, & DATA STRATEGY

160 Glenn Rogers Sr. Street • Memphis, TN 38112 • (901) 416-5455 • [www.scsk12.org](http://www.scsk12.org)

# Secondary Data Application: Applicant User Guide

*Research & Performance Management (RPM) | User Guide | July 28, 2026*

## Overview

**Who:** You, the applicant, complete the [Secondary\\_Data\\_Request\\_Form.xlsx](#) workbook and submit it with your MS Forms application. RPM reviews every request; if anything is unclear or has no direct connection to your research questions, project purpose, or analysis plans, you will be contacted for follow-up.

**What:** Two items submitted together: your MS Forms [Secondary Data Application](#) (project info and purpose) and the completed workbook attached to that application form. In the workbook, mark exactly which variables, aggregation levels, school years, and administration windows you need.

**When:** Complete both as soon as possible and build in extra time before any deadlines you may have. If anything in your request is unclear or doesn't obviously connect to your stated research questions, project purpose, or analysis plans, RPM will follow up before work starts, which adds time.

**Where:** Everything happens within the existing [MSCS Secondary Data Application](#) (MS Forms) and workbook. The workbook is a change from prior years, which should help reduce uncertainty and confusion regarding how your requested data connects to your project.

**Why:** Specifying exactly what you need, tied to a clear reason, reduces any need for clarification and allows RPM to start your data pull more quickly upon final project approval, instead of guessing at intent or seeking clarification.

**How:** Follow the step-by-step guide below.

## Before You Begin

- Have your research question(s), project purpose, and analysis plans in hand from your initial Research Application. Every row you mark in the workbook should trace back to one of these.
- Know roughly which data Sources you're likely to need (e.g., "ACT Scale Score (Composite)" and "ACT English – Scale Score" rather than "ACT Data"). This makes filtering the table much faster and provides RPM with greater specificity regarding the data you need to answer your research questions.
- Download [Secondary\\_Data\\_Request\\_Form.xlsx](#) and open it in Excel (not a browser-based viewer — the dropdowns and filters need the full Excel application). If you must use a browser-based viewer or OpenOffice (or equivalent software), please place a capital "X" in each cell for the data you are requesting.

## Step-by-Step Guide

1. **Start on the Instructions tab.** Open the workbook and read the Instructions tab.
2. **Go to Your Request.** Click the 'Your Request' tab at the bottom of the workbook.

3. **Filter to what you need.** Every column header has a filter arrow. Click the arrow on Domain, and check only the domain(s) you need (e.g., Assessment). Do the same on Source (e.g., ACT). The table narrows to just the matching rows.
4. **Mark the Aggregation Level(s).** For each variable (row) you want, click a pale-yellow cell in the Aggregation Level columns (Student, Class Section, Teacher, School, District) and choose X from the dropdown. You can mark more than one level for the same variable if you need more than one — each is its own cell. If a cell background is grey rather than pale yellow, that means the data is not available.
5. **Mark the Window(s), if applicable.** If the row is an Assessment or Survey variable, the Window columns (Fall, Winter, Spring, BOY, MOY, EOY, etc.) will have some pale-yellow cells. Mark a capital “X” using the dropdown list on each cell for every administration window you need. If the variable doesn't have a window (most non-Assessment domains), those columns will be grey and locked; skip them.
6. **Mark the School Year(s).** Mark X in every school year column (17-18 through 27-28) you need that variable for. A marked cell turns **green**. This is your visual confirmation of what has been requested. Note: Some data are only available for certain years. See item 7 below for details. Please note some data during the COVID-19 pandemic years of 2019-20 to 2020-21 may be incomplete or inconsistent. Data for these years may not be available, regardless of cell color.
7. **Skip grey cells.** Grey cells are not available for that variable — that combination doesn't exist in the data (for example, a District-level variable has no Student-level column available). You can't and shouldn't try to mark these.
8. **Fill in Notes as needed.** See the Writing Useful Notes section below for what to include. This is not optional for any variable that you add in manually (see item 9) and strongly recommended to clarify any data needs you have regarding all variables. If in doubt, add a note for clarification; this is especially helpful for RPM to determine which variable(s) are to be used for your individual research questions.
9. **Need something not in the table?** For example, your project includes a custom pre/post survey to be matched to student academic outcomes, or an online platform has usage data that must be included. Scroll to the bottom of the table — the last 50 rows are blank. Type in the Domain (optional), Source (optional), and Variable name (required) yourself, mark whichever Level/Window/Year cells apply (all are open on these rows), and use Notes to fully describe what you're requesting and why.
10. **Save the file.** Save the workbook using the following filename:  
<RAPP-1234\_Secondary\_Data\_Request\_v1.xlsx>, where “RAPP-1234” is the RAPP number assigned to your project in the first email you received after submitting your initial application. “v1” indicates this is the first version of the spreadsheet. If any subsequent modifications are required, please increment that number as needed.
11. **Submit through MS Forms.** Complete the [Secondary Data Application](#) in MS Forms and attach your saved secondary application workbook. Submit.

## What This Looks Like

Below is an example: a request for ACT Scale Scores at the School and District levels, for the highest Composite Scale Score attained to date by each student, for the 2025–26 school year.

| A                                                                                                                                              |        | B                             |     | C                 |     | D   |     | E   |     | F   |     | G   |     | H   |     | I   |     | J   |     | K                                         |     | L   |     | M   |     | N   |     | O   |     | P   |     | Q   |     | R   |     | S           |     | T   |     | U   |     | V   |     | W   |     | X   |     | Y     |     | Z     |       | AA |  | AB |  | AC |  | AD |  | AE |  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-------------------------------|-----|-------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|-----|-------|-------|----|--|----|--|----|--|----|--|----|--|
| Your Data Request — filter to a Domain/Source below, then choose X from the dropdowns                                                          |        |                               |     |                   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |                                           |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |             |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |     |       |       |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |
| Only pale yellow cells are editable (click, then choose X from the dropdowns). Gray cells aren't available for that variable. Selected cells X |        |                               |     |                   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |                                           |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |             |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |     |       |       |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |
| Variable Identification                                                                                                                        |        |                               |     | Aggregation Level |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     | Window Measurement (Survey response only) |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     | School Year |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     | Notes |     |       |       |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |
| Domain                                                                                                                                         | Source | Row                           | Col | Row               | Col | Row | Col | Row | Col | Row | Col | Row | Col | Row | Col | Row | Col | Row | Col | Row                                       | Col | Row | Col | Row | Col | Row | Col | Row | Col | Row | Col | Row | Col | Row | Col | Row         | Col | Row | Col | Row | Col | Row | Col | Row | Col | Row | Col | Row   | Col | Notes | Notes |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |
| Assessment                                                                                                                                     | ACT    | National Percentile           |     |                   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |                                           |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |             |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |     |       |       |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |
| Assessment                                                                                                                                     | ACT    | Percentage Correct            |     |                   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |                                           |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |             |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |     |       |       |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |
| Assessment                                                                                                                                     | ACT    | State Score (Composite)       |     |                   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |                                           |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |             |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |     |       |       |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |
| Assessment                                                                                                                                     | ACT    | English - State Score         |     |                   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |                                           |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |             |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |     |       |       |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |
| Assessment                                                                                                                                     | ACT    | English - National Percentile |     |                   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |                                           |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |             |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |     |       |       |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |
| Assessment                                                                                                                                     | ACT    | Math - State Score            |     |                   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |                                           |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |             |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |     |       |       |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |
| Assessment                                                                                                                                     | ACT    | Math - National Percentile    |     |                   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |                                           |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |             |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |     |       |       |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |
| Assessment                                                                                                                                     | ACT    | Reading - State Score         |     |                   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |                                           |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |             |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |     |       |       |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |
| Assessment                                                                                                                                     | ACT    | Reading - National Percentile |     |                   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |                                           |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |             |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |     |       |       |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |
| Assessment                                                                                                                                     | ACT    | Science - State Score         |     |                   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |                                           |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |             |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |     |       |       |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |
| Assessment                                                                                                                                     | ACT    | Science - National Percentile |     |                   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |                                           |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |             |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |     |       |       |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |
| RQ1: Use only highest Composite state score administration per student, as is and including 2015-26                                            |        |                               |     |                   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |                                           |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |             |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |     |       |       |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |
| RQ2: Use only highest Composite state score administration per student, as is and including 2015-26                                            |        |                               |     |                   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |                                           |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |             |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |     |       |       |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |
| RQ3: Use only highest Composite state score administration per student, as is and including 2015-26                                            |        |                               |     |                   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |                                           |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |             |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |     |       |       |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |
| RQ4: Use only highest Composite state score administration per student, as is and including 2015-26                                            |        |                               |     |                   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |                                           |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |             |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |     |       |       |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |
| RQ5: Use only highest Composite state score administration per student, as is and including 2015-26                                            |        |                               |     |                   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |                                           |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |             |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |     |       |       |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |
| RQ6: Use only highest Composite state score administration per student, as is and including 2015-26                                            |        |                               |     |                   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |                                           |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |             |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |     |       |       |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |    |  |

Yellow = available, not yet selected. Green = selected (X). Grey = not available for that variable.

## Writing Useful Notes

The Notes column is where you connect a row back to your project. A strong note is short but specific:

- Which research question or hypothesis this data point supports (reference it by number (“RQ1”) or short name (“Impact of Intervention X on ACT Scores”).
- Any specific subgroup, cohort, or comparison you need, if that's not obvious from the variable name.
- Typically, data MSCS provides is de-identified and MSCS does any required matching (see item 9, above). If your data must be identified (i.e., you will be able to determine which individuals’ data you have), the level of oversight on the application will be greater and a Data Use and Sharing Agreement will be required. This will increase the amount of time required to provide a final approval for your application.

A row with no note and an unclear connection to your application is exactly the kind of request that gets escalated for clarification — see below.

## Special Note on Grade Levels

Please use the Notes column to specify grade levels. This is required, as most multi-year requests involve tracking students across years. Adding a note regarding which grade levels you are requesting for each selected year is the most efficient way to ensure you receive the correct data for your analysis.

## Every Request Needs a Reason

**Every variable you mark must clearly tie to a research question or stated purpose in your Initial Research Application.**

RPM reviews each submitted request against your application. If a row's connection to your stated research question isn't clear — or the request itself is ambiguous — we will reach out to you for clarification before your pull can start. That back-and-forth is one of the greatest sources of delay in this process, and it is often avoidable.

**Do not request data for the sake of having it. There must be a valid, specific need for every variable you mark.**

Broad, exploratory, or “just in case” requests will be denied. All requests will be fulfilled with the FERPA minimum necessary rule in mind. In addition, such requests slow down your data pull and put unnecessary demand on RPM's capacity. If you're not sure whether something is justified by your stated purpose, it's better to leave it off and follow up with RPM directly than to mark it and risk a delay. For any questions, email [Data-Partnerships@scsk12.org](mailto:Data-Partnerships@scsk12.org), including your full RAPP Number in the Subject.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **The variable I need isn't in the table — what do I do?**

Use one of the 50 blank rows at the bottom (see item 9 and Writing Useful Notes, above). Type the Domain, Source, and Variable yourself, mark the Level/Window/Year cells you need (if appropriate), and describe it fully in Notes. RPM will confirm availability.

### **Can I request the same variable at more than one Aggregation Level?**

Yes — mark X in every Level column you need. Each is independent. Please note if you request data at the Student level as well as a higher aggregation level, RPM may provide a student-level file only and you can create the aggregated versions on your own.

### **A cell is grey and I can't click it. Why?**

That combination isn't available for that variable (see item 6, above). Either it is not stored at that level, or that variable doesn't have administration windows. This isn't a bug; it reflects what RPM can actually deliver. If you believe data does exist for a greyed out cell, please email [Data-Partnerships@scsk12.org](mailto:Data-Partnerships@scsk12.org), including your full RAPP Number in the Subject.

### **I typed something and the cell didn't turn green. Why?**

Only a capital X, selected from the dropdown, is accepted. If you type anything else, it will either be rejected or (if it happens to be a lowercase “x”) accepted by Excel but not counted, since it stays pale yellow instead of turning green. Always use the dropdown. This helps RPM more quickly ascertain which data you are requesting.

### **I need data for school years that are not shown.**

Email [Data-Partnerships@scsk12.org](mailto:Data-Partnerships@scsk12.org), including your full RAPP Number in the Subject. The year range is reviewed each year and future years can be added, as needed. Requests for data prior to the years listed in the spreadsheet or years that are greyed out will not be considered. For data requests outside of these years, please consider opening an [Open Records Request](#).

### **Do I need to fill out every row?**

No. Leave any row you don't need completely blank.

### **Once I complete this form, how do I see the current status of my research application?**

The current status of all active research applications can be found on our [Research Application Status](#) dashboard. Select the year of your application and your RAPP Number to see the overall status, the status of each required form and document, and an indication of whether the application is waiting on MSCS or the Applicant.

## **Getting Help**

Questions about how to use the workbook itself (filters, dropdowns, blank rows): email [Data-Partnerships@scsk12.org](mailto:Data-Partnerships@scsk12.org), including your full RAPP Number in the Subject.

Questions about whether a specific data point is justified by your application, or requests that need further review: email [Data-Partnerships@scsk12.org](mailto:Data-Partnerships@scsk12.org), including your full RAPP Number in the Subject.

For broader questions about the research application process with MSCS, please see our [FAQs](#).