



Lowell Public Schools
Lowell High School
50 Fr. Morissette Blvd
Lowell, Massachusetts 01852-1050



Marianne E. Busteed
Head of School

Tel. (978) 937-8900
Fax (978) 937-8902
Email: MBusteed@lowell.k12.ma.us

August 10, 2018

Dear Mr. Paul Schlichtman:

My name is Deanna Stanford, and I am a teacher in the English Department at Lowell High School. I am also an Ed.D. student in the College of Education at the University of Massachusetts Lowell, working under the direction of Dr. Anita Greenwood. I am writing this memo to request permission to undertake my dissertation-in-practice study at Lowell High School. My proposed study titled "Improving Writing Across the Curriculum: A Coherent Approach to Explicit Writing Instruction" is designed to explore the impact of using an intervention tool that provides a coherent approach to explicit writing instruction at Lowell High School. As a teacher myself, I am well aware of how precious and limited teachers' time is, and I have designed the study with this in mind. I am looking for the voluntary participation of at least eight teachers who teach either honors 9th or honors 10th grade students. Optimally, I would like two teachers from each of the following departments to participate: English, Math, Biology and History.

The study aims to explore the impact of using an "open response essay protocol" and an "open response essay explicit writing tool" on student writing skills in four disciplines: English, Math, Science and History. Additionally, the research will identify and analyze the various ways teachers report using the protocol and tool. Both the protocol and explicit writing tool have been developed by me, but the method of implementation is at each teacher's discretion. The results of this study may be used to inform future professional development initiatives that work toward establishing a coherent explicit writing instruction across the disciplines at Lowell High School.

I am asking for voluntary participation from teachers in the following activities during the period September 2018-December 2018:

1. Require students in one section of either a 9th or 10th grade honors class to complete an open-response essay question in class (the pre-test).
2. Assign a code number to each student to ensure student anonymity (instructions will be provided by the researcher).
3. Provide the researcher with students' responses, which I will score with a research team member. The responses must bear the students' codes.
4. Have students complete a second open-response essay question in class, but this time provide them with the researcher developed open-ended essay protocol and the open-ended essay tool (the posttest).
5. Use the protocol and tool in any way that suits teacher's instructional style.
6. Provide the researcher with students' responses, which I will score with a research team member. The responses must bear the same students' codes as used for the first response.
7. Provide the researcher with the code numbers of students who were absent for either the pre-test or the posttest.
8. Anonymously, complete an eight question survey about the teacher's experience.

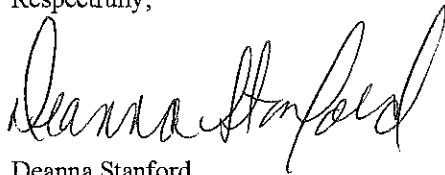
There should be no more risk or discomfort for the teachers and/or students than one would experience during the course of his/her everyday work. Participating teachers are not required to score their students' work, but they will

be provided with the scores for their use. If teachers decide to participate, they can be assured that all student and faculty names will be kept confidential and secured on a password protected computer. Only the research team will have access to the data. The school and district will not be identified in any oral or written report. If, for some reason, teachers are uncomfortable while participating in the study, they will be able to withdraw their participation at any time.

Please find letters of support attached from Marianne Busteed, Head of School, and department heads Suzanne Keefe, Chair of English, Tracy Estrella, Chair of Mathematics, Stephanie Selvaggio, Chair of Science and Health, and Robert DeLossa, Chair of Social Studies.

In closing, I greatly appreciate your time, consideration, and support in my pursuit of my doctorate of education in school leadership. I hope that the Lowell School Committee will permit me to conduct my dissertation study at Lowell High School. Please let me know if you require any additional information. If you need to reach me, you may email me at dstanford@lowell.k12.ma.us or call me at (857) 363-0228.

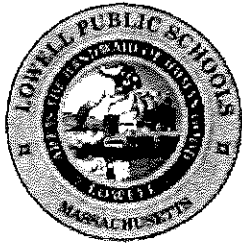
Respectfully,



Deanna Stanford

English Teacher

Lowell High School



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*Marianne E. Busteed
Head of School*

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September 6, 2018

Dear Mr. Schlichtman:

As Head of School, I lend my support to Deanna Stanford's study which has the potential to benefit our students' writing skills by offering them protocols and tools to use in writing open response essays.

I have discussed the work with Deanna, and it appears that the work will have minimal impact on instructional time as students are completing assignments that would normally be used in the class. This type of lesson typically takes one class period for students to receive an open response essay prompt and to write an open response essay. The method of distribution of the protocol and tools to be used in writing the open response essays will be left to the discretion of each faculty member participating in the study.

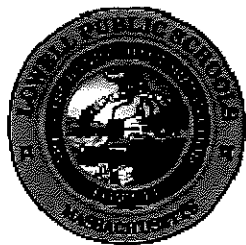
The time commitment expected of faculty will be kept to a minimum. Faculty who agree to participate in this study will be relieved of two duty periods to give them time to remove student names from the open response essays and to replace them with numerical codes. Furthermore, faculty completion of a brief survey should take about ten minutes. The delivery and collection of materials will be handled by Deanna so that the faculty will not have to spend time on this aspect of the study.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

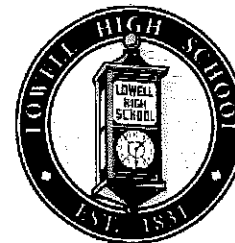
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marianne E. Busteed".

Marianne Busteed
Head of School
Lowell High School



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Marianne E. Busted
Head of School

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September 10, 2018

Dear Mr. Schlichtman:

As Chair of the English Department, I lend my support to Deanna Stanford's study which has the potential to benefit our students' writing skills by offering them protocols and tools to use in writing open response essays.

I have discussed the work with Deanna, and it appears that the work will have minimal impact on instructional time as students are completing assignments that would normally be used in the class. This type of lesson typically takes one class period for students to receive an open response essay prompt and to write an open response essay. The method of distribution of the protocol and tools to be used in writing the open response essays will be left to the discretion of each faculty member participating in the study.

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Thank you for your time and consideration.

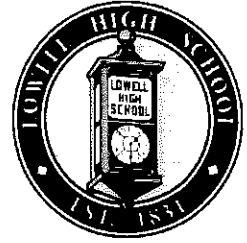
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Suzanne Keefe".

Suzanne Keefe
English Department Chair
Lowell High School



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Marianne E. Busted
Head of School

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September 6, 2018

Dear Mr. Schlichtman:

As Chair of Mathematics Department, I lend my support to Deanna Stanford's study which has the potential to benefit our students' writing skills by offering them protocols and tools to use in writing open response essays.

I have discussed the work with Deanna, and it appears that the work will have minimal impact on instructional time as students are completing assignments that would normally be used in the class. This type of lesson typically takes one class period for students to receive an open response essay prompt and to write an open response essay. The method of distribution of the protocol and tools to be used in writing the open response essays will be left to the discretion of each faculty member participating in the study.

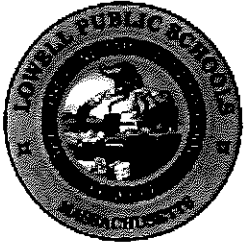
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Thank you for your time and consideration.

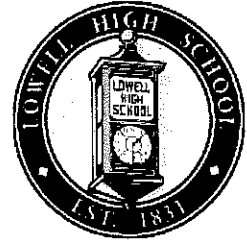
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tracy Estrella".

Tracy Estrella
Mathematics Department Chair
Lowell High School



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September 6, 2018

Dear Mr. Schlichtman:

As Chair of the Science and Health Departments, I lend my support to Deanna Stanford's study which has the potential to benefit our students' writing skills by offering them protocols and tools to use in writing open response essays.

I have discussed the work with Deanna, and it appears that the work will have minimal impact on instructional time as students are completing assignments that would normally be used in the class. This type of lesson typically takes one class period for students to receive an open response essay prompt and to write an open response essay. The method of distribution of the protocol and tools to be used in writing the open response essays will be left to the discretion of each faculty member participating in the study.

The time commitment expected of faculty will be kept to a minimum. Faculty who agree to participate in this study will be relieved of two duty periods to give them time to remove student names from the open response essays and to replace them with numerical codes. Furthermore, faculty completion of a brief survey should take about ten minutes. The delivery and collection of materials will be handled by Deanna so that the faculty will not have to spend time on this aspect of the study.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Stephanie Selvaggio".

Stephanie Selvaggio
Science and Health Department Chair
Lowell High School



LOWELL HIGH SCHOOL
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Marianne Busteded, *Head of School*
Robert DeLossa, *Academic Chair, Social Studies*

e-mail: mbusteded@lowell.k12.ma.us
e-mail: rdelossa@lowell.k12.ma.us

10 September 2018

Paul Schlichtman
Coordinator of Research, Testing, and Assessment
Lowell Public Schools

Dear Paul,

I am writing to lend my department's support to Deanna Stanford's doctoral research study. It focuses on student writing skills and offers them protocols and tools to use, especially in writing open response essays. Ms. Stanford's work seeks to provide a methodology that improves outcomes on open response essays.

This work should have minimal impact on instructional time, since students will complete assignments that already would be used in the class. It is expected that the protocol lesson will take one class period; students will receive an open response essay prompt and write an open response essay. The method of distribution of the protocol and tools to be used in writing the open response essays will be left to the discretion of each faculty member participating in the study.

Along with the one-period commitment for the administration of the activity, faculty who agree to participate in this study will be relieved of two duty periods, in order to give them time to remove student names from the open response essays and to replace them with numerical codes. Faculty completion of a brief survey about the process should take about ten minutes. The delivery and collection of materials will be handled by Ms. Stanford.

I recommend that you approve Ms. Stanford's research study in two of my department's classrooms. When analyzing MCAS and AP scores, it is clear that free response/open response writing is an area in which we, as a school, need focused effort. Every carefully planned effort to produce effective instruction in this area is something that we should embrace.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert DeLossa".

Robert DeLossa