



Lowell Public Schools
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To: Dr. Joel Boyd, Superintendent of Schools, and Members of Lowell School Committee
From: Stephanie Selvaggio, Science Department Chair, Lowell High School
Date: September 25, 2019
Subject: Executive Memo for Dissertation Request per Lowell School Committee Policy LC

I am currently a doctoral candidate in the UMass Lowell Leadership in Education Ed.D. Program. The purpose of the practitioner-based Ed.D is to prepare PK-12 educators to be leaders who address problems of teaching and learning in their local contexts. In this final year of the program, I am ready to undertake my dissertation-in-practice study.

As the student-researcher, I am reaching out to your for institutional support to carry out my dissertation-in-practice within the Lowell Public Schools. Below I have provided information that addresses all points outlined in Lowell Public Schools' policy on Relations about Education Research and Service Centers.

1. Objectives of research: The purpose of my research is to study the affect of the *claim, evidence, reasoning* format of writing in science and its potential to a) increase students' content knowledge acquisition and b) improve students' science writing abilities.
2. Impact of research: Schools and teachers are tasked with helping students increase their science learning and, as a result, their science MCAS scores. This study will help provide data for school leaders by measuring the impact of explicitly teaching the *claim, evidence, reasoning* format of writing in science.
3. Privacy: Pseudonyms will be used in all data that are collected (i.e. pre- and post-test scores, student interviews, student surveys) to protect the confidentiality of the participants and school. Only the student researcher and the Principal Investigator (PI) will have access to the data, which will be stored on password-protected laptops. Consent will be obtained from all staff members involved, as well as from the parents of all students participating in the study. Parents will be provided the opportunity to opt their child out, and participants can remove themselves from the study at any time.
4. Scope of research: All data collection will take place as part of the regular classroom routines. Interview times will be established to best minimize students missing instructional time in the classroom.
5. Interruption of instructional time: No instruction will be interrupted; the study is focused on an instructional practice commonly used in science classrooms.
6. Faculty member approval: The PI of this study is Dr. Iman Chahine and she is my dissertation advisor. Dr. Chahine oversees and has direct responsibility for my dissertation study. I have passed my dissertation proposal defense and the IRB approval process at UMass Lowell. Head of Schools Busteed, Principal Cardaci and Principal Stahl have provided permission as well.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this proposed study.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Selvaggio