Parent/Guardian Permission

Title: Reasoning Tools for Understanding Water Systems
Sponsor: National Science Foundation
Project Director: Dr. Beth Covitt, Environmental Studies Program, University of Montana, 59812. Phone: (406) 243-4660. Email: beth.covitt@umontana.edu

Purpose:
Your son/daughter is invited to participate in being interviewed for the Reasoning Tools for Understanding Water Systems Project– a University of Montana project that aims to help students learn about Earth’s water systems.

Procedures:
Your child’s teacher has agreed to participate in this project by integrating water-related teaching tools into his or her instruction about water. As part of their regular science learning, students in your child’s class are participating in this project by completing pre and posttests of their understanding of water systems and completing surveys reporting their experiences learning about water systems. The researchers will ask students to identify their gender and ethnicity so that it will be possible to assess the extent to which this project effectively serves diverse student populations. ID numbers (as opposed to names) will be generated to coordinate assessment data and demographic information. Your child will never be identified in any reporting of this project’s results.

A subset of students from each teacher’s class will be interviewed about their water understanding as part of this project. Students will participate in two interviews – one before the class learns about water and one after. This form requests your consent for your child to participate in video-recorded interviews of their understanding of water systems. Both you and your child must agree to participate in order for your child to be interviewed.

Water systems interviews will last about 30 minutes. Participation in interviews will not affect your child’s grade. The interviews will take place at a time that is judged to be educationally appropriate by your child’s teacher (e.g., during a study period).

Risks/Discomforts:
There are minimal risks associated with this study. For example, your child may be uncomfortable with sharing their understanding of water systems if they do not feel confident in their knowledge. We will minimize student discomfort in multiple ways including telling the students that their participation in the project will not affect their grade, and that we are interested in learning about how students think about water systems so that we can do a better job of teaching all students about water systems. Only students who express an interest in participating in interviews will do so, and students will be informed at the beginning of the interview that they can choose to discontinue the interview at any time.

Benefits:
The data collected in this study will allow researchers and teachers an opportunity to explore the effectiveness of materials for teaching about water systems. This will provide benefit to many students and teachers beyond those directly participating in the project. Students participating in this type of study may benefit from increased opportunity to have their ideas recognized and valued by adults, thus increasing their engagement in learning.
Confidentiality:
- Your child’s identity will be kept confidential.
- Only the researchers will have access to the data (including video data) from this study. Interview data (audio and video) will be kept in a secure location.
- If the results of this study are written in a professional journal or presented at a professional meeting, your child’s name will not be used.

Compensation for Injury:
Although we believe that the risk of taking part in this study is minimal, the following liability statement is required in all University of Montana consent forms.
In the event that you are injured as a result of this research you should individually seek appropriate medical treatment. If the injury is caused by the negligence of the University or any of its employees, you may be entitled to reimbursement or compensation pursuant to the Comprehensive State Insurance Plan established by the Department of Administration under the authority of M.C.A., Title 2, Chapter 9. In the event of a claim for such injury, further information may be obtained from the University’s Claims representative or University Legal Counsel. (Reviewed by University Legal Counsel, July 6, 1993)

Voluntary Participation/Withdrawal:
Your decision to allow your child to take part in the interviews is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to allow your child to take part in or you may withdraw your child from the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you or your child are normally entitled.

Questions:
If you have any concerns or questions about this research study, please contact Dr. Beth Covitt, Environmental Studies Program, University of Montana, Missoula, MT 59812, (406) 243-4660, beth.covitt@umontana.edu.

If you have specific questions about the rights of human subjects regarding this research study, please contact the Chair of the Institutional Review Board at the University of Montana, 406-243-6670.

Parent’s Statement of Permission:
Please read the options described below, check that you do or do not give permission for your child’s participation in an interview, then sign and return the form to your child’s teacher.

___ The researchers MAY interview my child about his or her learning in science class.

___ The researchers MAY NOT interview my child about his or her learning in science class.

Child’s Name__________________________________________________________

Parent/Guardian’s Name______________________________________________________________
(please print)

Parent/Guardian’s Signature__________________________________________ Date________________