



Appendix E

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Template

Instructions:

- Disclaimer: the information contained in this IRB template was created following the guidelines and parameters established for the national project. Researchers intending to add additional components to this national study for the purpose of their individual research agendas are cautioned that the information contained therein must be adapted.
- Your local university's IRB has a human subjects' protocol form. The following information is recommended for use within the categories of your IRB.
- Since this is research conducted in established educational settings, involving normal educational practices, it potentially falls under the category of "waived" or "expedited."

Cover Sheet: Use the cover sheet provided by your university.

Project Title: *[Participant researchers will create their own title]*

Project Rationale:

Utilizing quantitative approaches, middle grades researchers have addressed the positive effects of interdisciplinary teaming with common planning time (CPT). Research has documented positive effects on student outcomes including student achievement, better social adjustment, and more positive school climate. Positive benefits to teachers include more positive work/school climate, higher levels of efficacy, and higher levels of engagement in interdisciplinary team and classroom instructional activities. While the results of this research are promising and support the need for common planning time, there still remains an unknown—what teachers do when they meet for common planning time. This, then, is the focus of this national research project.

Project Objectives:

The purpose of this quantitative study is to explore the phenomenon of common planning time in middle schools at the local and the national level. Specifically, we seek to examine teachers' perceptions of perceived benefits and barriers of common planning time, structures and functions of common planning time meetings, and how common planning time impacts interdisciplinary team practices. This study will answer the following research questions:

- 1) What are teachers' understandings of the purpose, goals, and value of common planning time?
- 2) How do teachers use their common planning time?
- 3) How are teachers prepared professionally to use common planning time?

- 4) What are the perceived barriers to common planning time?
- 5) What are the perceived benefits of common planning time?

[Participant researchers who join this project can establish their own research questions. This may require a change in the methodology.]

Participants/Subjects/Sample:

Typically IRBs ask for information for participants, subject and sample. Your response would include answers to the following

- Identify the school/school district setting.
- Identify the number of schools and participants within the schools you expect to recruit.
- Identify the characteristics of the population, e.g., age, gender, ethnic background.
- Identify criteria (i.e., teachers must be engaged in CPT), and methods used for the recruitment of teachers and teams.

Risk to Subjects: This study poses minimal risk to participants.

- Teacher surveys will be anonymous.
- Teacher surveys will remain confidential and results will only be reported in group (aggregate) format; responses from individual teachers will never be reported.
- Teacher surveys will be administered via a secure website and email addresses/IP addresses will not be collected.
- Copies of data sets will be sent electronically to MLER SIG national data base to be stored on a secure (password protected) server.

Informed Consent Process:

- Permission to conduct this study must be obtained following your local school system guidelines. Sometimes this permission comes from the local school administrator; sometimes the permission needs to come from the director of research at the district level. Attach a letter granting such permission to conduct this study.
- Each participant in this study will be given a CPT Project Information Sheet [*See Attachment A*]. A standard an Informed Consent Form [*See Attachment B*] will be contained within the online web survey. After reading the consent form, survey participants click a button to say they understand the information in the consent and agree to participate in the survey. The action of clicking the button serves as a proxy for signed consent. If your IRB does not accept these procedures, you may be required to pass out a hard copy Informed Consent Form to teachers prior to participation in the written survey, and collect signed copies.
- Both the CPT Project Information Sheet and the Informed Consent Form will be reviewed with each participant before data collection.

Provisions to ensure safety of participants:

- Each teacher will be provided with a link to the online teacher survey. They will have the opportunity to complete the survey at any time.
- Teacher names, IP addresses, and email addresses will not be collected and stored as part of the survey process.

Provisions to secure the data:

- The survey data will be processed by the Center for Prevention Research and Development at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, and copies of each data set (all teacher surveys from a particular school) will be provided to individual researchers. Copies of all data sets will be sent electronically to MLER SIG national database to be stored on a secure (password protected) server.
- School names will not be changed when submitting data to the national database so that participating researchers can access data from the national database for comparisons and other research purposes.
- Individual teacher survey data is anonymous and will be treated as confidential data.
- Data will be stored on a password-protected, secure server.

Data Analysis Procedures: *[Fill in this section according to how you intend to analyze your data.]*

Attachment A: CPT Project Information Sheet

The National Middle Grades Research Program (NMGRP) was launched in 2006 at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA). The project's purpose is to develop a national database on middle grades education issues for research. The first issue studied by the project is common planning time (CPT).

Researchers have documented the positive effects of CPT on student outcomes including student achievement, better social adjustment, and more positive school climate. Positive benefits to teachers include more positive work/school climate, higher levels of efficacy, and higher levels of engagement in interdisciplinary team and classroom instructional activities. While the results of this research are promising and support the need for common planning time, there still remains an unknown—what teachers do when they meet for common planning time. This is the focus of the Common Planning Time (CPT) Project.

Phase I of the CPT Project is nearing completion and has focused on collecting qualitative data on CPT. More than 60 researchers from across the country attended the Phase I trainings and have been working with middle schools in their communities to collect teacher interview data and observations of common team planning meetings.

Phase II of the project will involve the collection of quantitative data on CPT. MLER SIG has partnered with the Center for Prevention Research and Development (CPRD) at the University of Illinois for this phase of the project. In Phase II, researchers will work with middle schools in their communities to conduct a teacher survey about CPT practices, benefits, outcomes, and its impact on students and teachers.

Data will be co-owned by the principal investigator, the MLER SIG, and CPRD. A national database will be constructed from the data that are submitted by researchers.

Attachment B: Informed Consent Form

To **ALL** Middle Grades Teachers:

You are being asked to complete this survey as part of a national research project called the Common Planning Time Project, sponsored by the Middle Level Education Research (MLER) Special Interest Group (SIG) of the American Educational Research Association (AERA). The project's purpose is to develop a national database on middle grades education issues, such as common planning time, for research. The project is being conducted in your school by (*insert participant researcher's name and institutional affiliation here*).

To inform this project, we would like your participation in an online teacher survey. Questions asked include information about how you use your common planning time, what is and is not working, and your needs for professional development. Participation will take approximately 20 minutes of your time. Your participation is completely voluntary. Your decision to participate, decline, or withdraw from participation will have no effect on either your current status or your future relations with your employer or this project. There are no risks involved in participating in this survey, other than the unintended discomfort you may feel regarding some questions. Because of this, you can refuse to answer any questions that you choose.

The Center for Prevention Research & Development (CPRD) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has set up the online survey and will process the data for the project. Your answers to all of the survey questions will remain private and confidential. Results will be summarized, with the responses of participants combined. This information will then be used by middle grades researchers to examine the practice of common planning time.

To maintain your confidentiality, individual names, email addresses and computer IP addresses will not be collected. However, if you feel uncomfortable with any question, you do not need to respond to it; and you can exit the survey at any time.

If you have any questions about this project, please contact (*insert participant researcher's name and institutional affiliation here*). If you have technical problems with the survey, please contact Nancy Flowers (nflowers@illinois.edu or 217-333-3231) at CPRD.

"I have read and understood this consent document and voluntarily agree to participate."

If you want a copy of this document for your records please print a paper copy now.

Please click on the link below to consent and begin the survey.

<<INSERT SURVEY LINK HERE>>

Thank you for your participation!