

August 1, 2009

Dear Parent/Guardian:

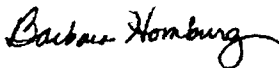
We are pleased to inform you of an important research study called “**Understanding Teaching Quality**” that is being conducted in your child’s school. The study is sponsored by the Educational Testing Service (ETS), the RAND Corporation, and the University of Michigan, with funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. This study is endorsed by Superintendent Dr. Cindy Loe. The information gathered through this study will be used by educators to design practical and effective methods for measuring teaching quality and will help improve teaching practices.

We are not asking teachers or students to do anything special or different because of this study--we simply want to observe classrooms as teachers and students engage in their regular activities. However, we will be collecting two additional types of information that will be used for research purposes. On a few occasions, your child’s classroom may be video recorded while a research observer takes notes about the teaching methods being used in the classroom. No child’s name will be associated with this video recording. In addition, on a few occasions, research observers will collect and copy a small sample of classroom assignments that students complete and it is possible that your child’s assignments will be in that sample. Student names will be removed from these assignments before they leave the school, so names will not be associated with these data. Should you decide you do not want your child to be included in these activities, we will not collect any of his or her classroom assignments and we will do everything we can to ensure that your child is not in the video.

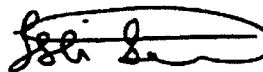
Upon completion of data collection, video and student assignment data will be retained by the University of Michigan in a research database that has no information identifying the names of participating schools, teachers, or students. Before accessing this database, researchers will be required to sign pledges of confidentiality promising to strictly adhere to research policies and honor the anonymity of all students, teachers, and schools. In this way, all data gathered as part of this study will be kept completely confidential.

If you do not want your child to participate in the videotaping or student work assignment components, please complete and return the form on the back of this letter. Participation in the study is strictly voluntary and will have no impact on your child’s grades or program placement. If you have any questions about the study you can contact Lesli Scott by calling: 866-997-3702. Thank you in advance for your help.

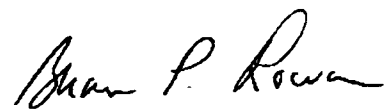
Truly,



Barbara Homburg
Field Manager
bhomburg@isr.umich.edu



Lesli Scott
UTQ Study Director
ljscott@umich.edu



Dr. Brian Rowan
UM Principal Investigator
browan@umich.edu

Conducted by:

Educational Testing Service (ETS) • RAND Corporation • University of Michigan

Funded by:

Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

Thank you for your support.

If your child CAN TAKE PART in the videotaping and student work assignment components, then you may THROW THIS FORM AWAY.

Or, if you DO NOT want your child to take part in the videotaping or student work assignment components, then complete the items below and return this form immediately.

I HAVE BEEN INFORMED OF THE "UNDERSTANDING TEACHING QUALITY STUDY"

- I do NOT want my child to take part in the videotaping activity and therefore I want the research team to do everything they can to ensure my child is not in the video.
- I do NOT want my child's assignments included in the anonymous collection of student work samples.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Child's Name: _____

(Please Print)

Name of School: _____

Name of Math Teacher: _____ Period of Math Class: _____

Name of Language Arts Teacher: _____ Period of Language Arts Class: _____