

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE
OFFICE OF CHARTER SCHOOLS
TELEPHONE 414-229-4682
FAX NUMBER 414-229-2670

DATE: August 21, 2014
TO: SOE Faculty
FROM: Adrienne Woods, Director
SUBJECT: Research Opportunities for Faculty and Students

The Office of Charter Schools, as part of its oversight responsibilities, collects a great deal of information on each charter school authorized by UWM. This includes student and staff demographics, attendance, truancy, and discipline data, student, staff, and parent satisfaction indicators, and student achievement data.

The charter contract requires each school to cooperate with UWM in regard to research efforts. Specifically, the contract gives UWM researchers the right to conduct surveys, test pupils, observe both staff and students, and conduct other research. Further, the contract requires the schools to seek parental approval for UWM research as part of the registration process.

Faculty and students are encouraged to take the opportunity to conduct research at UWM authorized charter schools. Information regarding the IRB process can be found at: <http://www4.uwm.edu/usa/irb/>. In addition to the previous link, attached is a summary of things to consider if you may be conducting Human Subjects Research at UWM.

For further information, attached is a Protocol Abstract that provides specific information on charter school research including Appendix B – Contract provisions facilitating University research, Appendix C – Charter school data submission requirements, and Appendix D – a list of charter school data collected by the Office. These documents should give faculty and students a good idea of the data available. This packet also includes information regarding research assistance from the Consulting Office for Research and Evaluation, CORE.

The process for applying to conduct research with the Office of Charter Schools is as follows:

1. Complete the IRB Manager Protocol Form and schedule an appointment with me to discuss your proposal.
2. If your research protocol is approved by the Charter School Office, you will then complete the other IRB documents and submit all the forms to the IRB office for University approval.
3. Once approved provide copies of all the IRB documents to the Office for our records and stop by the Office to begin your research.

University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee Human Subjects Review Protocol

Abstract

Charter School Research

Description

The Office of Charter Schools (Office) of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) routinely collects data for the purposes of evaluation and charter renewal. It should be noted that the terms in the contract signed by each charter school requires them to participate in research (see Appendix B).

The first type of research allows faculty members and student researchers to use existing data to answer research questions of interest. All of these data, with the exception of student achievement data, is public domain and available under Wisconsin open records laws. Student achievement data is collected annually by the schools and analyzed by the Office. These data will also be available for use with all identifying information removed.

The second type of research is any non-intrusive observation of charter school activities. This includes classroom observations, as well as observations of school procedures. The Office routinely conducts these observations on a monthly basis. However, allowing researchers access to the schools will provide a more in-depth analysis on charter school activities and procedures.

Participation Selection

In this study, existing data will be obtained by researchers from the Office. The population will include all students who are currently or who have attended a charter school, as well as school level information (see Appendix C).

All schools chartered by the Office will be eligible for participation in naturalistic, non-intrusive observational studies. All research that involves interaction with students or school staff, including but not limited to interviews, focus groups and surveying, must be clearly defined in the IRB forms submitted to the IRB office for approval.

Confidentiality

All data will be treated confidentially and no personal identifying indicators whatsoever will be used within the scope of this study. No raw data will be shared and only grouped or aggregate data will be used for any research project approved. All individuals will remain unknown.

This first type of research is considered exempt 3(d) (b) (v.) of Appendix A because it involves the study of existing data, documents, and records and the information will be recorded in such a way that participants cannot be identified directly or by identifiers linked to the subjects.

The second type of research is considered exempt under 3(d) (b) (i) in that it involves research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices.

Appendix A

Things to consider if you may be conducting Human Subjects Research at UWM

1. When is UWM IRB review required?

In order for research studies conducted by UWM faculty, staff or students to require review by the UWM IRB, the study must meet the following 2 definitions (as defined by the Protection of Human Subjects regulations 45 CFR 46.102):

1. **"Research"** defined as: A systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge (meaning the intention of the research is for the results of the study to be applied to a broader population outside of the research participants).
2. **"Human subjects"** defined as: a living individual about whom an investigator (whether professional or student) conducting research obtains (1) data through intervention or interaction with the individual, or (2) identifiable private information.

The UWM IRB has a "Determination of UWM IRB Submission" form on its website to assist with this question. <http://uwm.edu/irb/guidance-documents/>.

2. Human Research Subjects Training

The CITI Human Subjects Research Training provides information on the rules, regulations, and ethical principles governing research involving human subjects and is required for all Principal Investigators, Student Principal Investigators, and strongly recommended for research personnel interacting (consenting, recruiting, data collecting, etc.) with research participants.

Access to the CITI training program and additional details about training requirements can be found on the following page:

<http://uwm.edu/irb/training/human-subjects-training-citi/>

3. Submissions

All IRB submissions must be submitted through the IRB Manager Submission system. User accounts, user guides, and registering for training sessions can be done here:

<http://uwm.edu/irb/submission/submission-instructions/>

Things to understand before you submit:

- a. UWM IRB Guidelines can be found at: <http://uwm.edu/irb/guidance-documents/>
- b. Only UWM faculty or staff may serve as the Principal Investigator (PI) on the study. The Student PI or other study personnel may create new submissions. However, if someone other than the PI

submits through IRB Manager, the PI listed on the study will receive a notice requiring them to log in and "Sign Off" as the PI to the IRB.

- c. If your study involves other sites (e.g., recruiting from Milwaukee Public Schools, accessing medical records from Froedtert, using imaging equipment from Aurora, etc.), make sure you are aware of any additional IRB's or institutional policies beyond that of UWM's IRB.
- d. Different IRB review types are determined by study activities and the risks participants encounter as a result of study participation.
 - a. Definition of **Minimal Risk** according to the regulations, 45 CFR 46.102(i): "the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests."
 - b. **Exempt** (no risk to minimal risk) and must fit a specific category including:
 - i. Research on normal educational activities
 - ii. Surveys that are anonymous or include questions that pose no risk to participants (adult participants only)
 - iii. Interviews that include no risk questions (adult participants only)
 - iv. Observations of public activities
 - v. Research of school records already in existence and there are no plans to record any subject identifiers
 - vi. Exempt studies are reviewed in the IRB office and annual reports are not required. Review time is approximately 2-4 days.
 - c. **Expedited** (minimal risk) and must fit into specific categories including:
 - i. Tests or procedures commonly used in medical practice
 - ii. Interviews (adults or minors)
 - iii. Surveys (adults or minors)
 - iv. Educational activities
 - v. Expedited studies are assigned to IRB members with appropriate expertise. Annual reports are required and initial review time is approximately 2-3 weeks.
 - d. **Full Board** (more than minimal risk)
 - i. Research involving procedures with x-ray devices
 - ii. Vulnerable populations requiring additional protection of full board review
 - iii. Full Board studies are reviewed by the entire IRB at monthly meetings. Researchers are encouraged to attend the meeting at which their study is reviewed. There are deadlines for submission and annual reports are required.
 - e. Requirements for Study approval
 - a. Risks to subjects are minimized

- b. Risks are reasonable in relation to expected benefits
- c. Selection of subjects is equitable
- d. Consent is sought and documented
- e. When appropriate, adequate provisions for:
 - i. Monitoring data to ensure safety
 - ii. Protection of privacy and confidentiality
- f. Time points when submissions to the IRB are required:
 - a. New Studies
 - b. Changes to an approved study
 - c. Annual (Continuing) Reports for expedited and full board studies
 - d. Reportable Events (Breach of Confidentiality, deviations from the approved protocol, unexpected risks to participants, etc.)

4. Consent

Respect for persons requires that potential subjects, to the degree that they are capable, be given the opportunity to choose what shall happen to them. The informed consent process is the primary mechanism by which respect for persons is ensured in research. The IRB reviews the informed consent documents that Principal Investigators will use to ensure that the following requirements are included:

- a. Clear statement that study involves research
- b. Purpose of the research
- c. Detailed description of procedures
- d. Length of participation
- e. Risks, benefits, alternatives
- f. Confidentiality - how will it be maintained
- g. Contact information – PI and IRB
- h. Subject's rights and voluntary choice to participate

Consent is a process and should occur regularly during research participation. Consent can be withdrawn by participants at any time. The consent form and process must be based on the population being recruited and the risk level of the study procedures. The type of consent is reviewed by the IRB on a study by study basis. A variety of Consent Form templates and waivers to obtain consent are available on the UWM IRB website: <http://uwm.edu/irb/guidance-documents/>

Types of Consent include:

- a. Written and documented (signed) – most common type of consent.
- b. Written (information letters) - Consent forms containing all pertinent study information are provided prior to participation, but consent is indicated by participation rather than a documented signature. Commonly used for online surveys or studies where participants names are not recorded (in order to protect link to study participation). A waiver to document consent must be justified (see below for justification criteria).

- c. Verbal – consent is indicated by a verbal agreement rather than a documented signature. Commonly used for phone interviews or short in person interviews. A waiver to obtain, alter or document consent must be justified (see below for justification criteria).
- d. Passive – Commonly requested for research conducted in schools. This is considered the same as not obtaining consent since there is no proof that someone received a consent form. A waiver to obtain consent must be justified (see below for justification criteria). In addition, the UWM IRB requires approval from the school for this type of consent.
- e. Assent (for minors) – In the state of Wisconsin, a person must be 18 to provide consent for research participation. If research participants are under 18, they should provide assent (in a form appropriate to the minor’s age and development) to participate and a parent or legal guardian provides the written consent.

The IRB may **waive or alter the requirement to obtain informed consent**, if the IRB finds (and documents with specificity) that **one** of the two sets of criteria below (either all of the A or all of the B criteria) are met.

A1. The research or demonstration project is to be conducted by, or subject to the approval of, state or local government officials, and is designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine: (i) public benefit or service programs; (ii) procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs; (iii) possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures; or (iv) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs; and

A2. The research could not practicably be carried out without the waiver or alteration.

or

B1. The research involves no more than minimal risk to the subjects;

B2. The waiver or alteration will not adversely affect the rights and welfare of the subjects;

B3. The research could not practicably be carried out without the waiver or alteration; and

B4. Whenever appropriate, the subjects are provided with additional pertinent information after participation.

An IRB may **waive the requirement for the Principal Investigator to obtain a signed consent form** for some or all subjects, if one or more of the following conditions exist:

- (1) The only record linking the subject and the research would be the consent document, and the principal risk would be potential harm resulting from a breach of confidentiality. Each subject will be asked whether the subject wants documentation linking the subject with the research, and the subject’s wishes will govern.
- (2) The research presents no more than minimal risk of harm to subjects and involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside of the research context.

In cases in which the signed consent requirement is waived, the IRB may still require the Principal Investigator to provide subjects with a written statement regarding the research.

Appendix B

Charter School Contract Language Regarding Research

ARTICLE EIGHT: PROVISIONS FACILITATING UNIVERSITY RESEARCH

Section 8.1. Research. The Parties agree that the University may seek information from the Grantee and the Charter School for purposes of research. Prior to conducting such research, the University shall seek the Grantee's prior written approval, which will not be unreasonably withheld. Information relevant to such research shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

(1) Surveys. The University may survey individuals and groups (including but not limited to, parents, students, teachers, board members, others involved in the governance of the Charter School, and the public) concerning the performance of the Charter School, provided that such surveying (i) shall be done at the University's sole expense and (ii) shall not materially interfere with the orderly and efficient operation of the Charter School. The Grantee agrees to cooperate with the University's efforts to conduct such surveys. Employment contracts with teachers employed at the Charter School shall specify that they shall cooperate with such surveys.

(2) Pupil Testing. The University may seek to administer to each pupil of the Charter School (other than kindergarten pupils), in connection with the pupil's first enrolling in the Charter School, a one-time examination designated by the University. Such examination shall be administered at the University's sole expense and shall not materially interfere with the orderly and efficient operation of the Charter School. The results of any such examination shall be promptly shared with the Grantee.

(3) Parent/Guardian Evaluation Participation. The University may ask the parent and/or legal guardian of a pupil enrolled in the Charter School to participate in an evaluation or research, which may include their participation in an interview or responding to a questionnaire, about the performance of the Charter School. The Grantee shall use its good offices to urge that the parent and/or legal guardian to participate in such evaluation or research process, subject to their consent.

(4) Research Observers. The Grantee agrees to accept on the Charter School's premises research observers designated by the University to serve as observers of the activities of the Charter School, provided that the activities of such research observers shall not interfere with the orderly and efficient conduct of education and business at the Charter School. Costs and expenses incurred for the evaluation activities of such observers shall be reimbursed to the University as part of the reimbursement owing under Section 4.6 of this Contract.

Appendix C

CONTRACT RENEWAL SUMMATIVE EVALUATION DATA REQUIREMENTS

The following information specified the data that is collected and presented as part of the summative evaluation leading to a decision on the part of the Office of Charter School to renew or non-renew the school's charter. It is recommended that schools gather the information on a regular on-going basis so that little special effort is required at the time of the summative evaluation.

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Basic Tenets

1. State the school's mission.
2. State the school's core beliefs.
3. State the board's vision for the school's future.
4. How does the school determine if it is meeting its mission?
5. Provide evidence to show that the school has met or made significant progress toward achieving its mission.

Developmental History

1. Provide a developmental history of the school including relations with sponsors, sites utilized by the school, and enrollment patterns.
2. Provide information regarding services provided to students and parents beyond the regular school program.

Student Body

1. What is the ethnic mix of the student body?
2. What percentage of students qualify for free or reduced school lunch?
3. What is the average daily attendance rate of the students over the past three years?
4. What percentage of students have been suspended outside of school during the previous year?
5. What is the total number of days students were suspended from school?
6. How many students were expelled from school in each of the past three years?
7. What is the year-to-year mobility rate of students?
8. How satisfied are students with the school?

Continual Improvement

1. What have been the school's major improvement efforts over the last three years?
2. What are the results of the improvement efforts?
3. What continued action is being considered in regard to the above improvement efforts?

Academic Achievement

1. WKCE results and analysis will be provided by the Office of Charter Schools.
2. NWEA PMAP & MAP results and analysis will be provided by the Office of Charter Schools
3. Provide any other academic results and analysis of results that should be considered.

School Board

1. How many members make up the school board?
2. What are the board leadership positions?
3. What is the responsibility of each position?
4. How long have members served?
5. How are new members selected?
6. How does the board develop strategic goals?
7. How does the board evaluate progress toward the strategic goals?
8. How does the board take action to correct deficiencies?
9. How does the board obtain information regarding the school's progress?
10. How does the board evaluate administrators?
11. How does the board use the results of administrative evaluations to improve leadership?
12. Provide as an appendix all board policies/bylaws.
13. Provide as an appendix the latest strategic plan.

Leadership

1. How do leaders communicate the school's mission, values, and beliefs?
2. How do leaders establish a culture of high expectations?
3. How do leaders set priorities for school improvement?
4. How many members make up the administrative team?
5. What are the responsibilities of each administrative/leadership position?
6. What is the certification and degree status of each administrator/leader?
7. How many years of experience do administrators/leaders have – total, at present school, in present position?

Parents

1. Describe the process in place for parents to seek information.
2. Describe the process in place for parents to make complaints and how the complaints are managed.
3. Describe the process in place for parents to provide input to administrators and teachers.
4. How satisfied are parents with the school?

Curriculum

1. What courses are taught in each grade?
2. Is essential knowledge and skills that all students are expected to achieve defined at each grade level?
3. How is the curriculum aligned with state standards?

4. How are teachers provided with the information to correctly implement the curriculum?
5. Do teachers develop unit lesson plans that are in alignment with the defined knowledge and skills and follow those plans?
6. Do teachers use the data from the Measures of Academic Progress to determine instructional objectives for each student and groups of students?
7. How do school leaders determine if the curriculum is being implemented correctly at all levels?
8. What process is in place to evaluating the effectiveness of the curriculum?
9. What procedure is in place to modify and/or improve the curriculum?
10. Please provide as an appendix the full school curriculum.

Instruction

1. What model/models of instruction are in place?
2. What instructional strategies are utilized?
3. How do teachers determine what is to be taught?
4. How do administrators evaluate instructional practices?
5. How many teachers are employed and in what positions?
6. How many years of experience in total and in the charter school does each teacher have?
7. What licenses does each teacher hold?
8. What is the ethnic make-up of the teacher group?
9. What is the mobility rate of the teacher group?
10. How are teachers evaluated?
11. How is direct support provided to teachers?
12. How satisfied are teachers with the school?

At Risk Learners

1. How are at risk learners identified?
2. What services are provided to at risk learners?
3. What screening procedures in place for identifying students and providing them with appropriate intervention?
4. How are services provided to at risk learners coordinated?
5. What special programs exist to help at risk learners?

Student Behavior Management

1. Is a documented discipline policy in place? If so, provide as an appendix.
2. What classroom management techniques are routinely used?
3. How are minor disciplinary infractions handled?
4. For what reason is a student suspended in-school/out-of-school?
5. Is a documented student suspension procedures in place? If so, provide as an appendix.
6. Under what circumstances can a student be expelled?

7. Is a documented expulsion procedure are in place? If so, please provide as an appendix.
8. Is a documented school safety program in place? If so, please provide as an appendix.

Professional Development

1. How is the content of the professional development program determined?
2. Who is involved in making professional development content decisions?
3. How are new teachers oriented to the school's operations and requirements?
4. How is the professional development program evaluated?
5. Who is involved in the evaluation of the professional development program?
6. How are accomplishments of the staff recognized and celebrated?
7. How does the school provide for and encourage individual and organizational learning and enable personnel to adapt to change?
8. What systems are in place to motivate educate, and train personnel to work effectively in a high-performance work place?

Data Collection, Analysis, and Use

1. Is a documented, comprehensive data collection plan in place? If so, please provide as an appendix.
2. How are data analyzed?
3. To whom are the results of data analysis communicated?
4. How are the results of data analysis communicated?
5. How are data used to improve student learning?
6. How are the security and confidentiality of data maintained?

Legal Requirements

1. What systems are in place to ensure that legal and contractual requirements are met?
2. What legal problems has the school faced during the last three years?
3. How have legal problems (if any) been resolved?

Finance

1. What is the process for preparing the annual school budget?
2. Who is involved in developing the school budget and what are their roles?
3. How often does the school board review the budget during the school year?
4. Please provide, as an appendix, actual revenue and expenditures for the past three years and the current revenue and expenditure budget.
5. Does the school maintain an operating reserve?
6. What was the balance of the operating reserve at the end of the last fiscal year?
7. What outstanding debt does the school have?
8. What lines of credit have been approved for the school?
9. What is the current cash position of the school?
10. What outstanding (more than 30 days) bills exist?
11. What written policies/procedures exist to maintain internal financial control?

12. What recommendations have auditors made to improve the financial accounting system?
13. How has the school responded to auditor's recommendations?

Future Plans

1. Describe any planned changes to the school's structure
2. Describe any planned changes to the school's educational program
3. Describe any planned changes to school's governance structure
4. Describe the school's fiscal and facility issues and how they will be addressed.

Appendix D

Charter School Data

The following data is available through the Office of Charter Schools.

Student Data

- Student Satisfaction Surveys
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Special Education
- WKCE Scores
 - Grades 3-8, 10
- NWEA MAP Scores: Fall, Winter, Spring
 - Grades: K – 12
 - Subjects: Reading and Math (Some schools have Language, Science Concepts and Processes, and General Science)

Teacher Data

- Teacher Satisfaction Surveys
- Faculty members by position
- Faculty Mobility
- Years of Experience
- Highest Level of Education
- Salary
- Faculty Gender Percentage
- Faculty Ethnicity Percentage
- Percent Average Daily Attendance of Faculty
- Classroom Pupil/Teacher Ratios
- Staffing Ratios
- Special Education Case Load

Staff Information

- Staff Satisfaction Surveys
- Staff members by position
- Staff Mobility
- Years of Experience
- Highest Level of Education
- Salary Information
- Staff Gender Percentage
- Staff Ethnicity Percentage
- Percent Average Daily Attendance of Staff
- Staffing Ratios

School Data

- School Year Calendar
- Days and Hours of Instruction
 - Instructional minutes per day/yearly total /School day begin & end times
 - Teacher total calendar days
 - Teacher pre-service/professional development days
- Enrollment by Year and Grade
- Enrollment by Zip Code
- Special Education
 - Enrollment by grade and disability
 - Transfers In and Out
 - Initial Referrals
 - Identified from Referrals
 - Dismissals
 - Reversals
- Percent Average Daily Attendance
- Mobility
- Number of Students Promoted or Retained
- Number and Percentage of Students Qualifying for Free and/or Reduced Lunch
- Student Participation in Sponsored Activities
- Student Discipline by Infraction
- Number of Students Habitually Truant
- Number of students Suspended out of School
- Number of Students Expelled

Financial Information

- Audit requirements
- Revenue – total and per student
- Revenue – Federal Break Out total and by student
- Expenditures – total and per student
- Fund Balance
- Insurance requirements

Building/Facilities

- Building – own/rent, square footage
- Lease rate per sq. ft. / Lease annual cost
- Uniform required
- Dress code requirement
- Lunch / breakfast service
- Transportation
- Before/After school on-site care
- Gymnasium/cafeteria/auditorium/library/computer laboratory/science laboratory

Parent Data

- Parent Satisfaction Surveys
- Parent-Teacher Conference Days & Attendance Percentage

Focus on the Consulting Office for Research and Evaluation

The Consulting Office for Research and Evaluation (CORE), located in Enderis 238, assists SOE faculty and staff with the design, execution, and analyses associated with their research and evaluation projects.

CORE can provide short term technical assistance to researchers working on:

- Designing a research study
- Designing, processing, and/or managing a complex database
- Conducting statistical analyses and interpreting the results
- Learning how to use analytical software such as SPSS, SAS and LISREL
- Developing an instrument for data collection purposes
- Creating an on-line form for data collection purposes

Dr. Cindy Walker, Director of CORE and Associate Dean of Research & Engaged Scholarship, said that CORE helps to support the scholarship of the School, by providing an infrastructure to assist with short-term methodological research needs, so that faculty can be more productive as scholars.

CORE is currently staffed by five SOE doctoral candidates who Walker said have been chosen to work in CORE because they have strong analytical and quantitative skills. When a request is made for research assistance, one of these students is assigned to be the primary consultant. This student then sets up an initial meeting with the faculty or staff member that made the request. Weekly group meetings are held to discuss the progress of all current projects, as well as to brainstorm any methodological or logistical issues that may have arisen. Working together as a team allows the students to take part in an ongoing process of learning about what it means to be a research consultant and also helps students to develop their methodological skills.

CORE is also supported by other faculty members in the SOE that have experience and expertise in various research methodologies. The assistance of these faculty members is sought out on an as-needed basis depending on the project.

"We get quite a few projects and we are used by every department in the SOE. It's a great learning experience for the students and a great support system for everyone in the school," said Walker.

Currently CORE services are provided free of charge to SOE faculty and staff for short-term assistance with non-funded research projects. Walker said it is possible for funded research projects in the SOE to utilize the services that CORE provides if they are willing to help financially support CORE with their grant funds. Fees are determined by the volume and complexity of the project and an initial consultation is provided free of charge. Walker also stated that she would eventually like to see their services utilized by the university at large, as well as in the greater community.

To request an initial consultation, complete a service request form, which is available outside the CORE office (Enderis 238). Completed forms can be returned to the bin outside their office. An on-line form is also available on CORE's Web site. For more information about the Consulting Office for Research and Evaluation, contact Dr. Cindy M. Walker, director, at 414-229-5441, or <http://uwm.edu/education/research/core/>.