

Parent: Informed Consent Form

Title of the Study: The Thriving Classroom: Strengths-Based Professional Development for Educators

Sponsor: Mayerson Academy

Principal Investigator: Mark Linkins

Email Address: marklinkins64@gmail.com

Telephone: (610) 259-8699 (24 Hours)

Additional Contact: Mary Judd

Address: Bethlehem Central Middle School
332 Kenwood Rd.
Delmar, NY 12054

Please read this form carefully. Take time to ask the Principal Investigator or study staff member as many questions about the study as you would like. The Principal Investigator or study staff can explain words or information that you do not understand. You may contact them at the telephone number or email address listed above.

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH

Your child is invited to participate in a research study related a school-wide focus on helping students and staff members to become: (1) more aware of their own personal character strengths and (2) more deliberate in their use of character strengths in the classroom and across the school community. The purpose of the study is to evaluate a variety of outcomes (e.g. academic achievement, engagement) related to this initiative.

This study will include any Bethlehem Middle School students and staff members who choose to participate. The study plans to enroll up to 1300 participants.

This study will take place at Bethlehem Middle School.

WHAT WILL MY PARTICIPATION INVOLVE?

If your child agrees to participate in this study and you consent, your child will be asked to complete a questionnaire survey on 4 separate occasions between 2/15/14 and 7/30/15. The questionnaire includes only multiple choice items and will take most students 15-20 minutes to complete.

The questionnaire measures the following items: student perceptions about their own strengths, student attentiveness to other peoples' strengths, and student levels of satisfaction and engagement in the classroom/school. The survey items address strengths (rather than deficits) and do not involve sensitive or emotionally difficult content. Your child may also skip any survey questions if he/she is uncomfortable.

There is also a possibility that your child will be invited to volunteer in a focus group discussion/interview. If your child chooses to participate, he/she would be asked to respond to questions about character strengths and specific aspects of the school's character strengths initiative. Students would *not* be asked to discuss any personal or sensitive information. Focus groups would consist of 5-10 students and are completely voluntary.

HOW WILL MY CHILD'S CONFIDENTIALITY BE PROTECTED?

While articles may be published as a result of this study, your child's name will not be used. Only group characteristics will be published. All data is **de-identified**, meaning no one can link specific answers to your child. **Your child's name (or other identifiable information) will not be known to the researchers involved in analyzing or writing about the data.**

What are the potential risks and discomforts?

Although all measures are taken to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of your child's survey responses, a risk of this research is a loss of privacy (accidentally revealing to others that your child is taking part in this study) or confidentiality (accidentally revealing information about your child to others to whom you have not given permission to see this information). Researchers take these risks seriously. We minimize them by assigning all participants an arbitrary ID number to use when completing the assessments. All responses will be stored using only this ID (not your child's name). Members of the research team will at no time be able to link student names to student data. Only one individual – a Bethlehem Central School District technology employee who is not based at the middle school – will possess information linking student names and ID numbers. Your child can leave the study at any time for any reason.

Are there benefits to taking part in the research?

It is possible that your child may enjoy sharing his or her perceptions and perspectives via the questionnaires and/or focus group sessions. Participation will provide students with experiential knowledge about certain aspects of conducting research. It is also possible that your child will not benefit directly from participating in the study.

What about privacy and confidentiality?

The people who will know about your child's participation in the study include the on-site research coordinator and other students who may be involved in focus group sessions with your child. Only the researchers involved in this study will have access to your child's responses to questionnaires, and these data will be coded by participants' arbitrary ID numbers. No information from the assessments about your child will only be disclosed to others without your written permission, or if required by law.

. Confidentiality will be maintained through the following measures:

- When your child completes the assessments, he or she will use an arbitrary participant identification. With this number, your child's demographic information and survey responses will be recorded anonymously using Qualtrics, an online service that collects survey responses securely while protecting respondents' identities.
- Participants' names and identification numbers will be linked in a single file that will be accessible to only one individual, a Bethlehem Central School District technology employee who is not based at the middle school. (The researchers who will be analyzing data will not be able to link identification numbers with individuals' names.) This file will be destroyed at the end of the study.
- Data will be analyzed using data files with arbitrary participant ID numbers, and only group aggregate statistics will be reported in any presentations, papers, publications, or other reports that might use the data from this study.

Will my child be paid for my participation in this research?

No.

Is there any cost to me or my child for taking part in this study?

No.

Financial Disclosure

Mark Linkins, the Principal Investigator, serves as a consultant for the Mayerson Academy, the study's sponsor. Mark Linkins receives greater than \$25,000 in compensation annually from Mayerson Academy for those services. Mark Linkins will not be involved in the recruitment or informed consent process for study participants or administering data collection. Speak with the Principal Investigator if you have additional questions.

Can I withdraw my child from the study?

Your child does not have to take part in this study. Your child's participation is voluntary. If you and your child do not want to be in the study there will be no penalty and your child will not be treated any differently.

If your child agrees to participate in the study (with your consent), you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue your child's participation at any time without penalty. Your child may also skip any survey questions without penalty. Please contact the Principal Investigator Mark Linkins at the telephone number or email address listed on the first page of this form if you wish to remove your child from the study.

Your child's part in the study may stop at any time for any reason, such as, the academy or the investigator decides to stop the study.

What are my rights as a research participant?

If you feel that your child has not been treated according to the description presented here, or if you have any questions about your child's rights as a research participant, you may contact Mark Linkins.

You will be told about any new information found during the study that may affect whether you want your child to continue to take part.

WHOM SHOULD I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

You may ask any questions about the research at any time. If you have questions about the research study you should contact the Principal Investigator: Mark Linkins at the telephone number or email address listed on the first page of this form.

Your participation is completely voluntary. If you begin participation and change your mind you may end your participation at any time without penalty.

Please sign this form and send it to:

mary@maryjuddcommunications.com

or mail to:

Mary Judd Communications LLC
11 Herber Ave.
Delmar, NY 12054

If you have any questions or complaints about your child's rights as a research participant contact Chesapeake IRB:

- By mail:
Study Subject Adviser
Chesapeake IRB
7063 Columbia Gateway Drive, Suite 110
Columbia, MD 21046
- or call **collect**: 410-884-2900
- or by **email**: adviser@irbinfo.com

.Please reference the following number when contacting the Study Subject Adviser: Pro00008817.

An IRB is a group of people who review research studies to protect the rights and safety of research participants.

Your signature indicates that you have read this consent form, had an opportunity to ask any questions about your participation in this research and voluntarily consent to participate. You will receive a copy of this signed and dated form for your records. You will also be given your personal classified ID number.

Name of Child (please print): _____

Name of Parent/Legal Guardian (please print)

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian

Date

HIPAA Authorization Agreement Permission to Review, Use and Release Information about Your Child

If you and your child decide to be in this study, the Principal Investigator and study team will use and share de-identified study data about your child to conduct the study. Study data may include:

- Date of birth.
- Information from the study visits, including all questionnaire assessments.

Study data may come from your child's study records.

Note that your child's name will not be used or shared, as his or her data will be linked to an arbitrary ID number. Neither the Principal Investigator nor members of the study team will have access to your child's name.

For this study, the study team may share de-identified study data about your child with authorized users. Authorized users may include:

- Representatives of Mayerson Academy.
- Representatives of the Principal Investigator and study staff.
- Representatives of Qualtrics.
- Representatives of Chesapeake IRB (a Research Ethics Review Board that reviews this study).
- Representatives of government agencies.

The Principal Investigator and those working for the Principal Investigator may use the study data sent to them:

- (1) to help students identify and understand their individual strengths
- (2) to help students apply their personal character strengths in productive ways.

Once your child's de-identified study data has been shared with authorized users, it may no longer be protected by federal privacy law.

Your permission to use and share study data about your child will not end unless required by state law. If state law applies, your permission to use and share study data about your child will end on December 31, 2063.

You may take back your permission to use and share study data about your child at any time by writing to the Principal Investigator. If you do this, your child will not be able to stay in this study.

No new study data will be gathered from your child after your written request is received. However, study data about your child that has already been gathered may still be used and given to others as described in this form.

If you decide not to sign this form, your child will not be able to take part in the study.

STATEMENT OF AUTHORIZATION

I have read this form and its contents were explained. My questions have been answered. I voluntarily agree to allow the study staff to collect, use and share my child's study data as specified in this form. I will receive a signed and dated copy of this form for my records. I am not giving up any of my or my child's legal rights by signing this form.

Name of Parent/Legal Guardian (please print)

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian

Date