



Application for Approval of a Proposed Research Project by an Employee Researcher

Applicant's Name: Maci V. DeCarlo

Position in Closter Public Schools: School Psychologist, Case Manager, Child Study Team member

Affiliation (College or University): Fairleigh Dickinson University, Department of School Psychology

Date of Application: 01/02/2025

Please provide the following information, with as much detail as possible:

State the purpose of the research project:

The purpose of the research project is to explore the perspectives, themes, and patterns of reported Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB) incidents among school-aged students over the past years to develop effective, targeted school-wide interventions that address the root causes of bullying and improve the overall school climate.

Detailed description of the research project:

This research will involve analyzing the Superintendent's HIB report to the Closter Board of Education from the last 4-5 years. from schools in the Closter Public School District. The project will identify common themes, patterns, and trends in bullying behavior and assess the perceptions of teachers, administrators, and staff regarding these incidents. The findings will inform strategies to reduce bullying, enhance student well-being, and create a safer educational environment.

Provide any background information necessary to understand the project:

Bullying is a pervasive issue in schools across the United States, affecting students' mental health, academic performance, and overall well-being. New Jersey's HIB framework provides specific definitions and processes for addressing bullying. However, schools often underutilize HIB data, missing opportunities to develop targeted interventions. Understanding the scope of verbal, emotional, physical, and electronic bullying, along with staff and administrative perceptions, is essential for creating consistent and effective anti-bullying strategies.

Projection of the number of students involved in the research project:

No students will be interviewed or discussed. HIB data and reports across the Closter Public School District will be de-identified to ensure confidentiality and privacy.

Projection of the number of Closter teachers, administrators, or staff involved in the research project:

Teachers, Administrators, and Staff will not directly be involved in the research project. If staff perspectives are needed to provide insights to enrich the HIB data, all information will be de-identified to ensure confidentiality and privacy.



State the specific ways in which students and/or employees will be involved:

- Students: Participation is indirect, with their anonymized HIB incident reports analyzed to identify trends.
- Teachers/Staff: Participation is indirect, with a de-identified HIB report. If necessary the project may include their perceptions of HIB incidents and feedback on existing interventions. All of this information will be anonymous.
- Administrators: Assistance in providing access to de-identified HIB data.

State the estimated duration of the project:

The project is expected to span 9-12 months, including data collection from up to 5 years ago.

Provide the names of persons who will conduct their research and their relevant affiliations:

Maci DeCarlo, Fairleigh Dickinson University, Department of School Psychology, and the Fairleigh Dickinson Institutional Review Board (IRB).

To what degree, if any, will the project interrupt or displace the regular instructional program?

The project is designed to have no disruption to the instructional program.

List any possible benefits to the students or to the Closter Public School District:

- Increased awareness and understanding of HIB among staff and administrators.
- Enhanced ability to implement data-driven, targeted interventions.
- Improved school climate and student well-being.
- Reduction in the incidence of bullying.

Describe the project's contribution to this district's educational program:

The project will strengthen the district's commitment to fostering a safe, supportive educational environment by providing actionable insights and interventions that enhance the overall effectiveness of anti-bullying efforts. This contributes to academic success and the well-being of the student population.

Will the final research report be shared with the district? ☒ YES ☐ NO

Other comments: I would be more than happy to share the results of this project with the district, if they are interested in the results.