



Dear parents/guardian,

My name is Lori Cooney and I am a project coordinator and universal design specialist at the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston. I work on a number of projects at ICI that are focused on helping individuals with disabilities.

In September of 2012, we were awarded a Stepping-Up grant from the US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs to develop an accessible, web-based, tool called "Future Quest Island" (FQI). Future Quest Island is being designed to support the development of college and career readiness for middle school youth with and without disabilities, through activities that promote student self-discovery, self-advocacy, self-exploration, organization, and technology literacy skills. The FQI website will be accessible to a wide range of users and will have engaging activities and lesson plans.

We would like to speak with students about the website's design and functions and ask them what they think of it (e.g., color, pictures, easy or hard to use). We would also like to observe the student use of the website over the course of the school year as part of a professional development initiative with the teachers. Additionally, we hope to conduct assessments of students' college readiness, career exploration, and self-determination levels; and conduct an end-of-year focus group to determine the impact of the Future Quest Island curriculum.

Before I can seek information from the students, I need to obtain assent from the students and their parents or guardians in order to participate in this project. In addition to participating in the project, I am also asking both you and your son or daughter if I may record any focus group sessions so I can clarify responses later. If you agree, I would also like to record students using Future Quest Island in order to review the steps a student takes and the students level of engagement during his or her "trip" on the island.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to call me at UMass Boston. My number is (508) 801-6382. Or you can speak to the Institutional Review Board at the UMass Boston, which oversees all research conducted by UMass staff. They may be reached at IRB, Quinn Administration Building 2-080, University of Massachusetts Boston, and 100 Morrissey Blvd., Boston, MA 02125-3393. You can also call them at (617) 287-5374 or email them at human.subjects@umb.edu

Please read over the consent form attached to this letter. If you consent to your son or daughter's participation, please sign and date the form and send it back to me in the prepaid envelope I am providing. Then I will ask for your son or daughters' permission to participate in the discussion. Your son or daughter's participation in this project is strictly voluntary and you and your son or daughter will in no way be penalized for not participating.

After receiving the consent form, I will explain this project to your son or daughter and provide them with an assent form. I will tell them to review it with a parent. I will also explain to them that should they decide not to participate, their grades and school and community activities will in no way be affected. I will use multiple formats to describe the project and modify the consent forms so that students understand what I am asking of them.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Lori Cooney, M.Ed.

Consortium for Postsecondary Education for Students with Developmental Disabilities

Institute for Community Inclusion

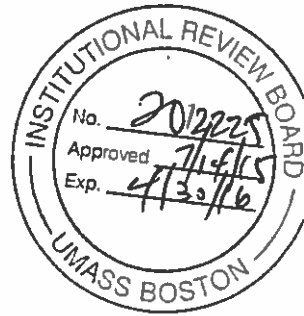
UMass Boston

617-287-4307

508-801-6382

lori.cooney@umb.edu

PARENT/ GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM
Future Quest Island Pilot with Middle School Students
University of Massachusetts Boston
Institute for Community Inclusion
100 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, MA 02125-3393



Your son/daughter, _____ has been asked to take part in a research study. The researcher, Lori Cooney will provide you with a written description of the project. Both you and your son/daughter should feel free to ask questions at any time during the study. You may directly contact Lori at 617-287-4307 or through email at lori.cooney@umb.edu.

Description of Project:

Future Quest Island is a website designed to support the development of college and career readiness for middle school youth with and without disabilities. In this study, we hope students will develop this readiness through activities that promote self-discovery, advocacy, exploration, organization, and technology literacy skills. Information gathered from this project will be used to improve the Future Quest Island website, educational materials and trainings that promote early career awareness and development practices for students with and without disabilities.

The students will be asked to:

- Be part of this project for a year. It will be a part of their regular school lessons.
- Do the activities associated with the new website (specifically, creating portfolios about their interests and future career ideas).
- Participate in group discussions about the website at the end of the school year.
- Fill out two surveys asking about their attitudes and personal characteristics, as well as opinions about a future career and education. The survey is completed before and after the project.

You and other parents will be asked to:

- Participate in group discussions about the website and your children's school and career plans at the end of the project year.

Risks or Discomforts:

It is understood that there are some risks and minimal discomforts that participants might experience. Any foreseen discomfort, such as participants' uneasiness in disclosing information to other project participants, teachers, staff or project facilitators in the group will be avoided. Every attempt will be made to assure students of their right to stop talking or to exclude information at any time and for any reason.

Benefits of Project:

It is hoped that this project will encourage students to be aware of their options for college and careers and that their middle and high school education can help them to prepare for college or a career. In addition, information from this project will inform teacher and parent training focused on supporting young people with and without disabilities to consider college and career options.

Confidentiality:

Confidentiality of all project records and photographs in identifying the subject(s) will be maintained. Your and your son or daughter's part in this project is confidential unless you/they give explicit assent and consent. The files will be stored in a locked file at the school or at UMass Boston and all materials will be destroyed after the project has been concluded unless specific assent and consent is obtained by you and your son/daughter for other educational purposes.

No information about you or your son/daughter will be given to anyone outside of the project team. The one exception to this confidentiality is that federal and state law mandates reporting to the authorities information that someone being abused or is in imminent danger. Otherwise all information will be available only to project staff at the University of Massachusetts.

Voluntary Participation:

The decision whether or not you and/or your son/daughter take part in this project is voluntary on both his/her and your parts. You and they do not have to participate. We will ask your son/daughter to also sign an assent form if he or she agrees to participate. If your son/daughter does decide to take part in this study, she/he may terminate participation at any time. If he/she wishes to terminate participation in the project, you or your son/daughter may simply inform project staff or your child's teacher. Whatever he/she or you decide will in no way penalize him/her or you.

I HAVE READ THE CONSENT FORM. MY QUESTIONS HAVE BEEN ANSWERED. MY SIGNATURE ON THIS FORM MEANS THAT I UNDERSTAND THE INFORMATION AND I CONSENT TO MY SON'S/ DAUGHTER'S PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY.

By signing this form you are agreeing to:

- My son's or daughter's participation in the study
- My son or daughter doing brief assignments (as part of the class curriculum) and have them reviewed by teachers and researchers
- The researcher's visit in my child's classroom in order to write notes about how my child works with the website
- My son or daughter filling out two surveys at the beginning and at the end of the school year that will ask questions about future career/ college plans and self-determination
- My son's or daughter's participation in group discussions with other students and the researcher about how they liked the website and the lessons
- My participation in group discussion with other parents about the experience and my thoughts on my son's/ daughter's future career plans

Please note that you don't have to participate in all of these activities to be a part of the study. If there are activities you would rather not agree to, please note them below:

Signature of Parent/ Guardian

Signature of Researcher

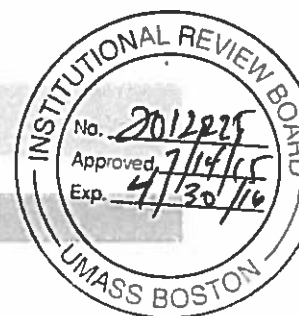
Typed/ printed name of Parent/ Guardian

Typed/ printed name of Researcher

Date

Date

**Digital Recording
Consent Form**



Assent/Consent Form

University of Massachusetts Boston
Institute for Community Inclusion
100 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, MA 02125-3393




Directions: The group discussion leader will read this form to you and you may sign it if you agree to everything in the form. However, you may also read it through with someone you trust to make sure you understand everything. Please have your parent read through it, and sign it if they agree, and return it to your teacher as soon as possible.

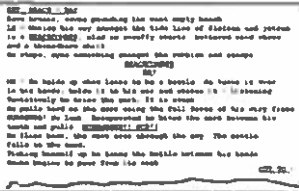

This study involves audio and video recording the focus group. Neither your name nor any other identifying information will be associated with either the audio or video recordings. We will use the recordings to create transcripts. A transcript is a written version of the audio recording. Only the Future Quest Island researchers will be able to view/listen to the recording or read the transcript.

The audio and video files will be erased once the transcriptions are checked for accuracy. Parts of your interview transcript, such as a quote, may be used in reports or presentations. Neither your name nor any other identifying information (such as your voice or picture) will be used in anything without your official agreement.

You can have your audio or video recording erased. You can also decide not to consent to participate at any time.

By signing this form you agree to the activities listed below. You can change your mind and say no at any time and for any reason. (If you wish not to participate in certain activities, please specify them on the space provided at the end of this form).

	the facilitator taking notes during discussion groups
	having your interview with the group taped
	Having your interview with the group video recorded (if you don't agree, we may still video record other people in the room, but not you)

	<p>having the interviews transcribed</p>
	<p>allowing results of the process to be written up for a study</p>

If you do not want to participate in any activities from this list, please indicate which ones here:

The above permissions are in effect until the following date: June 2015.2016

Student signature: _____

Parent signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher: _____