

APPENDIX K

**PARENT INFORMATION AND
CONSENT FORM**

NWREL Experimental Study of Project CRISS

Dear Parent,

The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL), under contract with the U.S. Department of Education, is conducting a study of *Project CRISS*, which is designed to help teachers improve student reading comprehension in high school. _____ High School has agreed to participate in this research study and will receive the *Project CRISS* instructional program—including teacher training, books, and teaching materials—at no cost for participation. All teachers in the “core” subjects— English language arts, science, social science, and mathematics—will use learning strategies with their students that are designed to improve reading comprehension.

We are asking for your participation in this study. In order to determine if *Project CRISS* works, a student reading comprehension test will be administered to all ninth grade students during this school year. The student comprehension test will be administered by a school or district test coordinator. Your child’s name, school ID number, or any personal information will **not** be used when student data is transmitted to the NWREL researchers for data analysis.

Responses to this data collection will be used only for statistical purposes. The reports prepared for this study will summarize findings across the sample and will not associate responses with a specific district, school, or individual. The study will not provide information that identifies you, your child, or the district or school to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.

The attached Consent Form explains the study and its potential risks and benefits in more detail. Please read the form carefully.

If you do NOT wish your child to participate in this study, please sign the last page of the form and return it to NWREL at the address provided.

If you do not return the signed form, the Institutional Review Board monitoring this study will assume that you agree to have your child participate in the *Project CRISS* study by taking a reading comprehension test.

Yours truly,

Jim Kushman, PhD
(include contact information)

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY

PROJECT TITLE: *Study of Project CRISS Reading Program on Ninth-Grade Reading Comprehension in Rural High Schools*

PROJECT DIRECTOR/PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: *Jim Kushman, PhD. Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. 101 SW Main Street, Suite 500. Portland, OR 97204. Phone: 503-275-9569. Email: kushmanj@nwrel.org*

SPONSOR: *US Department of Education, Institute for Education Sciences*

The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) Institutional Review Board (IRB) has approved this research project. For information on your rights as a research participant, call Dr. Bob Rayborn, Chairman of the Institutional Review Board at 503-275-9578.

INTRODUCTION

You are invited to consider participating in a research study to investigate the effectiveness of *Project CRISS*, an instructional program for high school students. This form will describe the purpose and nature of the research, its possible risks and benefits, and your rights as a participant in the study. The decision to participate, or not to participate, is yours. The end of the form includes signature boxes for you to authorize or not authorize your child's participation. **If you do not return the form, the IRB will assume that you agree to have your child participate in the study described in this form.**

WHY IS THIS RESEARCH STUDY BEING DONE?

In this research study, we are evaluating *Project CRISS* to determine how much ninth-grade student reading comprehension improves when teachers are well trained and use selected instructional materials designed to help students understand what they read. Reading comprehension is critically important for entering high school students so that they can understand the content they are expected to learn and master across different subject classes during the course of high school.

HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL TAKE PART IN THE STUDY?

Across four Northwestern states, about 7,000 ninth-grade students will take part in this study spread across about 60 high schools.

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN THE STUDY?

Your student's school has decided to participate in a study in which half of the schools are selected to receive *Project CRISS* immediately and half serve as comparison schools for a two-year data collection period. Schools were selected into a *Project CRISS* group or *non-Project CRISS* much like picking names out of a hat using a process called

randomization. This is a process in which schools have a 50/50 chance of being selected into either the *Project CRISS* group or the *non-Project CRISS*. Randomization allows the researchers to conduct a scientific test of the effectiveness of this program.

To determine the effectiveness of the new program, your ninth-grade student—whether in a *Project CRISS* school or *non-Project CRISS* school—will take a national reading comprehension test given in the Fall of 2008 and again in Spring 2009. The test will be administered to all ninth-graders during a regular class period by a school or district test coordinator.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF TAKING PART IN THE STUDY?

This study involves low risk to your child limited to the inadvertent disclosure of his/her performance on the reading comprehension test.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS

All participating schools will receive the *Project CRISS* instructional program—including teacher training, books, and teaching materials—at **no cost** for their participation. Even the *non-Project CRISS* group of schools will eventually receive *Project CRISS* beginning in September 2010, upon completion of the student data collection.

It is reasonable to expect that students who receive the *Project CRISS* instruction will improve their reading comprehension skills. However, we cannot guarantee that your child will personally experience benefits from participating in this study. Others may benefit in the future from the information we obtain in this study.

WHAT ABOUT CONFIDENTIALITY?

The student comprehension test will be administered by a school or district test coordinator. Your child's name, school ID number, or any personal information will **not** be used when student data is transmitted from your school to NWREL for data analysis. Responses to this data collection will be used only for statistical purposes. The reports prepared for this study will summarize findings across the sample and will not associate responses with a specific district, school, or individual. We will not provide information that identifies you, your child, or your district or school to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.

WILL I BE PAID FOR PARTICIPATING?

Students will **not** be paid for participating in this study. But, as noted above, participating schools will receive the *Project CRISS* instructional program at no cost.

WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS AS A RESEARCH PARTICIPANT?

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary at all times. You have the right not to participate at all or to leave the study at any time. Deciding not to participate or choosing to leave the study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are

entitled. If you decide to leave the study, the procedure is to contact your child's school principal.

WHOM DO I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS?

Call Dr. Jim Kushman at NWREL (503/275-9569) during regular Pacific Time business hours if you have questions about the study.

If you do NOT wish your child to participate in this study, please sign the statement below and return to NWREL at the address provided.

I DO NOT AGREE to participate.

As parent or legal guardian, I **do not** authorize _____
(child's name) to become a participant in the Project CRISS research study described in this consent form.

Parent or Legal Guardian's Signature

Date

Return the signed form to:

Jim Kushman
NWREL
101 SW Main Street, Suite 500
Portland, OR 97204

If you do not return the signed form, the Institutional Review Board monitoring this study will assume that you agree to have your child participate in the *Project CRISS* study by taking a reading comprehension test.