

I'm John Graves, the director the Master of Science in Science Education (MSSE) Program at Montana State University. This letter is to introduce our program and explain the process that our graduate students undergo in order to conduct a classroom research project based on the action research model.

Since 1997 we have offered the master's degree, which consists of 30 credits with 14 credits in science education and 16 in science content electives. The course work culminates in an action research-based classroom research project conducted in the graduate students' classrooms. The graduates identify a topic to study such as the implementation of science inquiry, Next Generation Science Standards, assessment, technology, and many others. As part of the steps to assure that ethics, compliance, and safety are addressed, all graduate students conducting classroom research complete CITI training. The approximately two-hour training, titled Human Subject Classroom Training: Students and Class Projects, is required for all students. Prior to beginning the research project, graduate students apply for an exemption through Montana State's Institutional Review Board. The application is completed before approval of the project is granted by the review board. One of the required documents for the MSU IRB application is approval from the school's administrator in which the research will be conducted. This research generally falls under normal classroom best-practices, and data collection instruments such as surveys, pre/post tests and interviews are used. Normally, administrators view this type of research as minimal classroom intrusion and, as a result, do not require informed consent. However, if an administrator requires informed consent, the graduate students know how to obtain it. As an administrator, I thank you for supporting your teacher in their pursuit of a master's degree by approving your teacher's project.

If you have further questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

Thank you for your support of the professional development of your teachers.



*John Graves, EdD*  
Director, MSSE  
Room 449 Reid Hall  
MSU Bozeman 59717  
406-581-1253

**Master of Science in  
Science Education  
Program**

451 Reid Hall  
P.O. Box 172805  
Bozeman, MT 59717-2805  
[www.montana.edu/msse](http://www.montana.edu/msse)

Tel 406-994-5679  
Fax 406-994-5575  
Email [msse@montana.edu](mailto:msse@montana.edu)