

## **Appendix A**

### **Draft Consent Form**





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## National Study of Education Data Systems and Decision Making

### School-Level Participant Informed Consent Form

#### **Purpose**

This evaluation is being sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, Policy and Program Studies Service (PPSS). The evaluation is being carried out by SRI International. The purposes of the evaluation are to document the prevalence of data-driven decision making at all levels of the educational system, and to describe the nature of the necessary supports and challenges to implementation of data-driven decision making at the school level to improve the educational outcomes of students (an overarching goal of NCLB).

#### **Interview Procedures**

To achieve the purposes described above, we are asking school personnel to participate in a series of interviews. Each interview should last about 45 to 90 minutes and will be audiotaped.

The interviews are intended to provide information about data-driven decision-making practices and the context for their implementation. Your participation in the evaluation will contribute to a better understanding of educational policies and practices. The interviews are not intended to evaluate given individuals or their capabilities or performance.

#### **Your Rights as a Participant**

For questions regarding your rights as a human subject participating in this research, you may contact SRI's Human Subjects Committee, at (650) 859-2686.

#### **Privacy**

We will not provide information that identifies you or your school to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law. Only selected evaluation staff will have access to your actual interview responses, and those data, including the audiotape, will be stored in a locked file cabinet. The audiotape will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study. Participating schools will be acknowledged in the final report for their cooperation, but they will not be identified in the text of any report unless model practices are highlighted. If information from your school is used to illustrate model practices, specific permission will be obtained and school staff will have an opportunity to review the text developed to describe the practice.

#### **Informed Consent**

By signing this form you are indicating that you have read and understood the information provided to you about your participation in this interview.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title/Position

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## **Appendix B**

### **Notification Letters**



*[letter to be sent to schools after initial phone call to principal to determine willingness to participate in the case study sample]*

[date]

Dear [name of principal]:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the Study of Education Data Systems and Decision Making. The purpose of the study is to document the availability of education data systems, their characteristics, the prevalence and nature of their use in districts and schools, and the conditions and practices associated with effective data usage. In addition to collecting survey data from a national sample of districts, we will also be conducting site visits to 15 schools to provide a much more in-depth understanding of how school staff use data systems and the influence of the data on instructional practice. Included with this letter is a brochure that provides additional information about the study.

The case study data collection will take place in the first half of the 2006-07 school year. During our visit we would like to talk to you and interview the following members of your school staff: your technology coordinator (if this position exists in your school), 4 to 6 active practitioners of data-driven decision making, and 4 to 6 teachers who represent average use. During our visit, we will conduct teacher focus groups and/or interviews depending on teacher schedules. In addition, we plan to ask teachers to show us the types of data that they have examined in the past, as well as to respond to several mock-ups of hypothetical student data designed to resemble typical data representations in widely implemented systems.

We recognize that participation in this study will require time and energy from you and your staff, however, your participation is vital to developing principles for designing systems and practices that support frequent and effective use of data to inform decision making. We will work closely with you and your staff to establish a site visit schedule that will minimize the burden associated with our data collection activities. Please note that we will provide participants with an executive summary of our findings that will include information on promising practices regarding data-driven decision making in schools.

The information that is collected for this study will be used only for statistical purposes and we will not provide information that identifies you or your school to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law. Reports prepared for the Department of Education will summarize findings across the sample of schools and districts and will not associate responses with a specific district, school or individual. Participating schools will be acknowledged in the final report for their cooperation, but they will not be identified in the text of any report unless implementation practices are highlighted, in which case permission will be obtained from you before the information is included in the reporting. All participants will be informed of the purposes of the data collection and the uses that may be made of the data collected, and provided with a consent form that outlines privacy rights.

The study is being conducted by SRI International under contract with the U.S. Department of Education. One of the evaluation researchers will contact you shortly to begin making arrangements for data collection. If you have any comments or questions regarding the study, please contact the Deputy Project Director, Christine Padilla, at 650-859-3908 or via e-mail at [christine.padilla@sri.com](mailto:christine.padilla@sri.com). Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Timothy J. Magner  
Director, Office of Educational Technology

Alan Ginsburg  
Director, Policy and Program Studies Service

*[letter to be sent to superintendent after initial phone call to district to select case study schools and where district respondents will be included]*

[date]

Dear [name of superintendent]:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the Study of Education Data Systems and Decision Making. The purpose of the study is to document the availability of education data systems, their characteristics, the prevalence and nature of their use in districts and schools, and the conditions and practices associated with effective data usage. In addition to collecting survey data from a national sample of districts, we will also be conducting site visits to 15 schools to provide a much more in-depth understanding of how school staff use data systems and the influence of the data on instructional practice. Included with this letter is a brochure that provides additional information about the study.

The case study data collection will take place in the first half of the 2006-07 school year. Two schools, [name of schools], have been selected to participate in the study. The case study data collection will take place in the first half of the 2006-07 school year. During our visit, we will meet with the principal, technology coordinator (if this position exists in the school), 4 to 6 active practitioners of data-driven decision making, and 4 to 6 teachers who represent average use to learn about how school staff use data systems and the influence of data on instructional practice. While the primary focus of our site visits is at the school level, we would also like to talk to district staff knowledgeable about the district's data system and how the district supports data-driven decision making. Every effort will be made to minimize the burden associated with our data collection activities.

We recognize that participation in this study will require time and energy from your staff, however, we are requesting your support of this important study that will inform both educational policy and practice. The information collected for this study can be used by (1) states and districts to identify and develop policies to support promising practices in data-driving decision making and to develop and implement performance measurement systems that utilize high quality data and (2) the U.S. Department of Education staff to design outreach efforts to stimulate and enhance the use of data systems to improve instruction. Please note that we will provide participants with an executive summary of our findings that will include information on promising practices regarding data-driven decision making in schools.

The information that is collected for this study will be used only for statistical purposes and we will not provide information that identifies you or your district to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law. Reports prepared for the Department of Education will summarize findings across the sample of schools and districts, and will not associate responses with a specific district, school or individual. Participating schools and districts will be acknowledged in the final report for their cooperation, but they will not be identified in the text of any report unless implementation practices are highlighted, in which case permission will be obtained from the principal and district staff before the information is included in the reporting. All participants will

be informed of the purposes of the data collection and the uses that may be made of the data collected, and provided with a consent form that outlines privacy rights.

The study is being conducted by SRI International under contract with the U.S. Department of Education. If you have any comments or questions regarding the study, please contact the Deputy Project Director, Christine Padilla, at 650-859-3908 or via e-mail at [christine.padilla@sri.com](mailto:christine.padilla@sri.com). Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Timothy J. Magner  
Director, Office of Educational Technology

Alan Ginsburg  
Director, Policy and Program Studies Service

*[informational letter to be sent to superintendent in districts where only the school will be a case study site]*

No longer applies since we will be including both the district and schools in all 10 case study districts

## **Appendix C**

### **Study Brochure**



**STUDY OF EDUCATION  
DATA SYSTEMS AND  
DECISION MAKING**



For more information, please contact:

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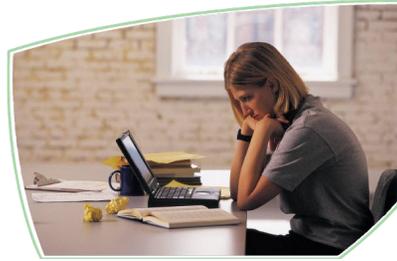
## Purpose

This study, a component of the U.S. Department of Education's National Technology Activities (NTA), will document the availability of systems and supports for using data to improve instruction, and the prevalence and nature of data-informed decision making in districts and schools. It will examine the challenges that educators face in trying to use data systems in their efforts to improve instruction and the practices employed by districts and schools that have used data to inform their decisions and have obtained successful outcomes for their students. The information collected through this study will be used in designing outreach efforts by the U.S. Department of Education to stimulate and enhance the use of data systems to improve instruction.



## Study Design

The study consists of data collection activities at the state and local level to provide (1) nationally representative quantitative data on the prevalence of data-use practices and (2) in-depth, qualitative data on the nature of promising practices in schools and districts that are linking data analysis to instructional decision making.



### States

State data collected from participants in activities sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education and other organizations will be analyzed.

### Districts

District-level data will be collected in spring 2007 from approximately 500 district administrators. Selected school districts will be representative of the nation in terms of geographic region, enrollment size, and district/community income level.

### Schools

Teacher focus groups and individual interviews with principals and teachers will be conducted in 30 schools during the 2006-07 school year. Schools will be selected to participate based, in part, on school performance and teachers' use of data to make instructional decisions.

Study Questions	Data Source		
	States	Districts	Schools
What kinds of systems are available to support district and school data-driven decision making?	✓	✓	
Within these systems, how prevalent are tools for generating and acting on data?	✓	✓	✓
How prevalent are state and district supports for school use of data systems to inform instruction?	✓	✓	✓
How are school staff using data systems?			✓
How does school staffs' use of data systems influence instruction?			✓

## Timeline

This study will be conducted over a period of two years beginning October 2006 and extending through September 2008. An interim report describing preliminary analyses of



