

March 21, 2007

[District Name]
[District Street Address]
[District City], [District State] [District Zip]

Dear District Superintendent,

I am writing to inform you that one or more schools from your district have been selected as part of a nationally representative sample to participate in the National Survey of Algebra Teachers (NSAT) for the National Mathematics Advisory Panel. This survey is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education and is being conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago (NORC). We would like to include in the survey all teachers currently teaching one or more classes of Algebra I in <school name 1>. We have included a copy of the letter sent to the principal(s) requesting their assistance in identifying and contacting Algebra I teachers in their school.

The National Mathematics Advisory Panel was established by Executive Order in April 2006 and is charged with making recommendations, based on the best scientific evidence, to improve mathematics education with a particular focus on algebra readiness and algebra success. The purpose of this study is to obtain teachers' observations on student preparation, motivation, work habits, and skills as well as teacher views on how math is taught, how math education could be improved to better prepare children to succeed at algebra, and what would add value for mathematics teachers to enhance instruction. The results of the study will be useful for the Department of Education, policymakers, and practitioners and will help influence key decisions made in the evaluation of current mathematics instruction. This will be a one-time survey conducted this spring and will involve only the Algebra I teachers in the sampled schools.

Your school district's participation in this study will help ensure that the data collected are representative and thus provide policymakers with accurate and complete information. Data collection is being conducted in only a sample of school districts throughout the nation. This greatly increases the importance of your participation since the algebra teachers in your school[s] represent other teachers in districts and schools similar to your own. Participation of teachers is voluntary and no negative consequences will attend a decision not to participate. 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 or your district to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.

We recognize that participation in this study will demand time and energy from algebra teachers in your school district. In appreciation of the teachers' time and effort, we will provide a check for \$20 to each teacher selected for the survey.

If you have any questions or concerns, you may contact me directly at (773) 256-6097 or hoffer-tom@norc.uchicago.edu, or you may contact the NSAT research team at algebra@norc.org or by calling our study toll-free number at 1-866-696-4580. We thank you for considering this request and we hope we will be able to include algebra teachers from your district in this important new study.

Sincerely,



Tom Hoffer, Ph.D.
Project Director, NORC at the
University of Chicago



Tyrrell E. Flawn
Executive Director
National Math Panel
U.S. Department of Education