U. S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES
NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION EVALUATION AND REGIONAL ASSISTANCE

TO: Nicole Cafarella, Shelly Martinez

FROM: Lauren Angelo, Marsha Silverberg

SUBJECT: Response to OMB Request to Collect Additional Information about Changes Associated with Magnet School Conversion
1850-NEW, EDICS # 3262

DATE: 7/06/2007

OMB REQUEST

After reviewing ED's forms clearance package and responses to initial questions, OMB has asked that the Magnet School Evaluation collect additional information regarding the changes that have occurred in schools as they converted to magnets. Specifically, on Monday, July 2, OMB sent a list of topics, including:

- Principal changes
- Personnel (especially teacher) changes
- Curriculum changes
- Student population changes

In addition, in conversation with OMB on June 29, OMB noted an interest in understanding how the magnet school conversion was related to achievement of AYP benchmarks and any corrective actions that the schools might be undertaking.

ED'S PROPOSED CHANGES

We have attempted to address OMB's interests, while balancing the other needs of the evaluation and the need to limit the burden on respondents. As a result, we are proposing to eliminate one question currently in the principal survey (Item18), while adding others related to OMB's request. The survey, with the proposed questions added/deleted is attached.

Principal changes:

Item 22 of the Principal Survey (p. L-14) asks respondents to report on their tenure as principals at the school in which they are currently serving. That information can be used to distinguish schools that retained the principals they had before conversion to magnet schools from schools in which the principal was hired at the time of or after the adoption of a magnet program. In addition, item 28 (p. L-16), which is asked specifically of principals at federally-funded magnet schools, will provide information on the role that the magnet program played in retaining principals who remained and in attracting principals to those schools in which there has been a change in leadership.

Personnel (especially teacher) changes

We have included two new items to assess personnel changes in the teaching staff (see p. L-1). Item I-1 indicates the change in the number of full and part-time teachers between the 2003-2004 school year, which is the year before the school became a magnet, and 2006-2007, the last year of the magnet grant. This question is asked of both magnet and non-magnet control schools to offer a basis of comparison for the change. Item I-2 asks about the number of teachers who were newly hired during the three year period of the grant. Once again, the non-magnet control school principals offer a basis of comparison for the volume of new hires. The change between 2003-2004 and 2006-2007 in the number of full and part-time teachers employed by the school (Item I-1) might be compared to the number of newly hired teachers during the three year interval to get a sense of turnover in teaching staff in magnet schools relative to the non-magnet, control schools.

Curriculum changes

The principal survey includes several items designed to assess curriculum changes.

Item 16 of the principal survey (p. L-9) provides a measure of changes with respect to special curricular focus, instructional approaches, assessment approaches, and other features of the schools. The principal is asked to report on the particular features existing in the 2006-2007 school year, and to indicate whether these features also existed in 2003-2004. In asking the same question of the non-magnet control schools one can identify features that may have been implemented district wide and obtain a sense of the extent to which the use of special programs, instructional approaches, and other features might distinguish schools adopting magnet programs from their non-magnet counterparts.

Item 19 (p. L-11) asks principals to report on the extent to which the school had focused on a variety of school improvement strategies during the three year period of the federally funded grant. The extent to which the use of these strategies distinguishes magnet schools from non-magnet schools can be assessed by comparing the responses of the magnet school principals to

those of their counterparts in the non-magnet control schools. Although not a direct measure of change, Item 20 (p. L-12) provides a basis for comparing the amount of instructional time spent on various subject areas in magnets schools relative to their non-magnet counterpart.

Student population change

ED is, of course, also interested in the changes in the student population as elementary schools convert to magnet status. However, in order to minimize the burden on respondents, from the start we decided not to ask principals for current or historical data on student enrollments and characteristics. Instead, the study will use data from the NCES's Common Core Data (CCD) to examine changes in the student population served by the magnet schools. We anticipate that by the end of the data collection effort in the Spring of 2011, NCES will have released public use files of the CCD through the 2007-2008 school year. For the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 school year, we will rely on obtaining early versions of the CCD data through *EDEN*, a recently implemented system by which states can submit their data to the U.S. Department of Education. If, over the next two years, it appears that these data will not be available through *EDEN*, we would come back to OMB to request permission to go directly to the states or districts for the data.

Meeting AYP

Item I-3a addresses the issue of whether the conversion magnet schools were meeting AYP benchmarks as required under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) before and after becoming a magnet school. Item I-3b records the corrective actions and the timing of those actions undertaken by schools that have failed to meet AYP. One of the corrective actions included in the item is becoming a magnet school. The survey will permit comparisons between conversion magnet schools and the non-magnet control schools on the extent to which schools make AYP, and the corrective actions being taken when they do not make AYP. Schools are not classified as in need of improvement for failing to meet AYP in a single year and therefore may indicate that no corrective action has been undertaken as none was required.

Implementation of the Magnet Program

Because it appears that OMB is interested in activities that are a direct result of conversion, we expanded the list of implementation activities in the current Item 32 and added a second question to understand the activities that the school considers most important to it's new program. These are asked only of magnet schools in the sample.

Item 32 measures the timing of implementation of the magnet program along various dimensions by asking the principals of the conversion magnet schools to indicate the extent to which various implementation activities had been

completed during the first and final year in which the program received federal funds.

Item I-4 provides an indicator of how important the principal found completion of each implementation activity to be for the success of the magnet program.