

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
FOR THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS
2007-2008 and 2009-2010 PRIVATE SCHOOL UNIVERSE SURVEY
Section C

C. ITEM JUSTIFICATION

The questionnaire is designed to collect information concerning the number of private schools, teachers, students and high school graduates. In addition, the questionnaire contains several screening items that are necessary to establish that schools are bona fide schools or educational programs offering kindergarten programs and not day care centers, preschools, etc. See section G for a copy of the 2005-2006 PSS questionnaire and section H for the new email address item (item 23).

Question 1: Information to identify the respondent.

Question 2 lists statements that will be used to screen out schools that are not private schools or do not serve students in grades K-12.

Question 3 gives instructions to the respondent.

Question 4 asks when the survey was started and will help to determine the time required to finish the questionnaire.

Question 5 and Question 6 obtain information regarding the grades offered, enrollment by grade, and total enrollment. These questions will be used to determine the current grades taught in private schools and will be used to classify sampled schools as elementary, secondary, or combined. The total enrollment (Question 6) and enrollment by grade (Question 5) will be used to estimate the total enrollment in private schools and the number of private school students by grade or grade span. This data will be used in the sample selection design for other school surveys.

Question 7 asks the racial/ethnic distribution of the student body. This is a basic school descriptor and an important policy-relevant measure of minority group composition in the school. This data will be used in the sample selection design for other school surveys.

Question 8 asks if a school is coeducational, all female, or all male and, if coeducational, how many male students attend the school. This is a basic school descriptor. This data will be used in the sample selection design for other school surveys

Question 9 asks for the number of regular high school graduates during the 2002-2003 academic year and the percent that went to four-year colleges. This is a basic school descriptor and an important policy-relevant measure.

Question 10 asks schools to indicate the existence of a kindergarten program, and for those schools with a kindergarten program, whether it is a full or half day program and the number of days per week of the kindergarten program. The characteristics of kindergarten programs in private schools are important policy-relevant measures. This data will be used in the sample selection design for other school surveys.

Question 11 asks schools to indicate their number of full- and part-time teachers. This information will allow estimates of both the total number of private school teachers and the total number of full-time-equivalent teachers in private schools. This data will be used in the sample selection design for other school surveys

Question 12 seeks information regarding school type and the extent to which private schools are supporting home schooling. This information will also be used as a classification variable in analysis and will be used (in conjunction with Questions 6, 11, and 13) to screen out families that are homeschooling.

Question 13 asks whether the school is operated in a private home used as a family residence. This question will be used to determine the prevalence of schools in private residences and will also be used (in conjunction with Questions 6, 11, and 12) to screen out families that are homeschooling.

Questions 14 and 15 ask schools to indicate whether they have a religious orientation and to indicate to what associations they belong. They will be used to estimate the number of Catholic, other religious, and nonsectarian schools; and to determine if schools are members of school associations. The data will also be used as a classification variable in analysis and in the sample selection design for other school surveys

Question 16 asks for the number of days in the school year for students. These data will be used to estimate the average length of the school year for students attending private schools

Question 17 will obtain information about the length of the school day in private schools. These data will be used to estimate the average length of the school day for students attending private schools.

Question 18 asks schools to indicate the existence of a library/media center. This is a basic school descriptor and will be used in the sample selection design for other school surveys.

Question 19 will be used in conjunction with Question 4 to determine the time required to finish the survey.

Question 20 will be used by NCES to study survey response patterns.

Question 21 will be used for updating the school name and address. This data will be used in sample surveys and future PSS collections.

Question 22 will obtain the physical or street address of the school, if different from the mailing address. This information will be used in assigning a geocode the school location.

Question 23 will obtain the school's email address. This will be used for email notification of an Internet response option and for reminder messages (beginning in 2009-2010).