

§ 1320.13 Emergency processing.

An agency head or the Senior Official, or their designee, may request OMB to authorize emergency processing of submissions of collections of information.

(a) Any such request shall be accompanied by a written determination that:

(1) The collection of information:

(i) Is needed prior to the expiration of time periods established under this Part; and

(ii) Is essential to the mission of the agency; and

(2) The agency cannot reasonably comply with the normal clearance procedures under this part because:

(i) Public harm is reasonably likely to result if normal clearance procedures are followed;

(ii) An unanticipated event has occurred; or

(iii) The use of normal clearance procedures is reasonably likely to prevent or disrupt the collection of information or is reasonably likely to cause a statutory or court ordered deadline to be missed.

(b) The agency shall state the time period within which OMB should approve or disapprove the collection of information.

1320.13(a)(1)(i) The NASA-sponsored NASA Explorer Schools (NES) must collect information from educators necessary to determine which school teams will be selected in 2008 to participate in the three-year NES project.

To lessen the impact on those who will complete the NES Project Application, and to ensure an optimum response rate, the data collection must occur during times when educators are less likely to be needed in the classroom and can obtain any required school board approvals. Educator feedback indicates that the application period should be open during the summer months and through other school breaks traditionally taken in the fall and winter months.

Using normal OMB information collection clearance procedures, with an estimated five- to six-month minimum timeline, the earliest possible clearance date would be approximately September-October 2007. Most, if not all, schools will be in session during this time. Educator feedback indicates they are focused on classroom responsibilities when schools are in session and time for completing the NES project application is much more limited. Additionally, the three- to four-month process for selection of 2008 schools must begin no later than February 2008, so that accepted school team members can be notified and can make plans to attend an orientation workshop during their summer break. The use of normal clearance procedures, therefore, would not only prevent the optimum number of schools from applying to become a participant in the three-year NES project but could possibly eliminate the application period for 2008 schools.

The application period must begin no later than July 1, 2007, (i.e. during summer break) and remain open until at least December 31, 2007 (i.e. after fall and winter breaks).

1320.13(a)(1)(ii) The NES project supports *The Strategic Management of Human Capital* initiative under the President’s Management Agenda as well as education outcomes detailed in *NASA’s Strategic Plan*.

Over the three-year partnership, NES school teams (grades 4-9) work with NASA personnel and other partners to develop and implement improvement plans for staff and students that promote and support the use of NASA content and programs to address the school teams' local needs in mathematics, science and technology education. School teams in the NES project are eligible to receive up to \$17,500 (pending budget approval) over the three-year period. These monies support the integration of technology tools, such as video conferencing equipment, which allows NES school teams, sometimes located in remote areas, to become part of a digital network and connected with a broader range of educational resources. The NES project is intended for underserved schools, and is providing comprehensive support including access to educational resources and professional development assistance.

The NES Project Application is a required deliverable and is necessary to determine which schools will be selected in 2008 to participate in the three-year project.

1320.13(a)(2)(i) Fewer and fewer U.S. students are entering science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields. It is imperative for NASA to provide educational opportunities and resources, such as those provided through the NES project, to the education community. High achievement in STEM education is essential to the accomplishment of NASA’s mission. The Strategic Management of Human Capital initiative under the *President’s Management Agenda* requires agencies to “build, sustain, and effectively deploy the skilled, knowledgeable, diverse, and high-performing workforce needed” to meet agency core competencies. NASA’s education investments will contribute to the Agency’s human capital needs.

All of NASA’s education efforts are part of an integrated Agency-wide approach to human capital management. Within the *NASA Strategic Plan*, education is identified as a cross-cutting function that supports all of the Agency’s strategic goals and objectives. NASA delivers a comprehensive Agency education portfolio—a collection of investments and strategies, such as research and development, managed to further common goals—implemented by the Office of Education, the NASA Mission Directorates, and the NASA Centers. Through the portfolio, NASA contributes to our Nation’s efforts in achieving excellence in STEM education.

Several initiatives within the NES project support the active engagement of students in STEM investigations to increase their ability to apply STEM and to learn about career paths. Typically done with teacher support and training, these program elements offer direct use of NASA mission data to solve investigative questions posed by students.

Multiple efforts are underway to provide educators and students with content-specific activities and investigations that can be used in many local and state curricula.

With an estimated five- to six-month minimum timeline, following standard OMB information collection procedures would severely narrow or perhaps even eliminate the application period for selection of 2008 NES school teams. Educators would be prevented from completing the NES project application during times that are least disruptive of their classroom activities. Qualified school teams would be unable to apply for participation in the three-year NES project and, therefore, would not have the opportunity to each receive up to \$17,500 in technology funds or benefit from the unique learning opportunities provided by the NES project to engage students, and NASA's future workforce, in STEM education.

1320.13(a)(2)(iii) Using normal OMB information collection clearance procedures, with an estimated five- to six-month minimum timeline, the earliest possible clearance date would fall in September-October 2007. Most, if not all, schools are in session during these months. Educators are focused on classroom responsibilities when schools are in session and time for completing the NES project application is much more limited. Additionally, the selection process for 2008 schools must begin no later than February 2008. Qualified schools may be unable to apply to become a participant in the 2008 class of the three-year NES project.

Additionally, extensive marketing efforts must occur prior to and during the application period to publicize the data collection and encourage the education community to apply for participation in the three-year NES project. These efforts include banners and features on various NASA Web sites, listserv notices to educators, press releases, etc. Using normal clearance procedures would disrupt these efforts.

Therefore, the Agency cannot reasonably comply with normal clearance procedures at this late date.

1320.13(b) The NES project respectfully requests that approval of the data collection as detailed in the attached sample be granted by or before June 15, 2007.