

## **Appendix A. Recruitment Materials**

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## STATE RECRUITING LETTER

NCES/ED Letterhead

[Date]

[Title First Name Last Name]

[State Department of Education Official's Title]

[State Department of Education]

[Address]

[City, State Zip]

Dear [Name]:

I am writing to inform your state education agency about a vitally important new national study: the **High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSLs:09)**. The study will follow a cohort of 9<sup>th</sup> grade students as they progress through high school and enter post-secondary institutions or the work force. The goals of the study are to assess achievement gains throughout high school and to understand students' choice, access, and persistence in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) courses, postsecondary education, and careers. The study will be conducted by RTI International on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

HSLs:09 will build upon and extend a series of longitudinal high school studies that have been conducted each decade since 1972. The study will measure achievement and also focus on how home, school, and community factors influence the plans and thought processes of 9<sup>th</sup> graders and how they may be linked to their high school coursetaking, college and career decisions. Information collected by students, parents, teachers, counselors, and school administrators will help to inform and shape efforts to improve the quality of math and science education in America, increase our global competitiveness in STEM-related fields, and improve the high school experience.

The first phase of HSLs:09 will be conducted in the fall of 2008. Fifty-five public and private schools enrolling 9<sup>th</sup>- and 12<sup>th</sup>-graders in the states of California, Florida, Illinois, New York, and Texas have been selected to participate. The main study will take place in the fall of 2009 with 9<sup>th</sup>-graders from 800 schools across the country.

In February, we will begin contacting the school districts and schools that have been selected. Each school's participation is important in order to provide reliable, statistically significant data from an inclusive and diverse group of American secondary schools and students. A list of the school districts and schools selected in your state is attached to this letter.

In each school, the first phase will include a math assessment of 25 9<sup>th</sup>-graders and 25 12<sup>th</sup>-graders as well as the administration of a background questionnaire. The student assessment will take approximately 40 minutes to complete and the student questionnaire will require another 35 minutes. Ninth grade math and science teachers, a school administrator, a school counselor, and a parent of each selected student will be asked to complete questionnaires. Each of these will require about 30 minutes per respondent. All data will be collected through a web-based application or telephone interview.

Enclosed you will find an HSLs:09 brochure to further explain the study. Should you have any questions, please call the HSLs:09 information number, 866-253-1063, or send an e-mail to [hsls@rti.org](mailto:hsls@rti.org). You may also contact Laura LoGerfo at NCES at 202-502-7402 for more information.

We look forward to working with your schools to make HSLs:09 a success. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Mark Schneider  
Commissioner  
National Center for Education Statistics

Enclosures:

HSLs:09 Brochure  
List of Selected Schools in [State]

## DISTRICT RECRUITING LETTER

NCES Letterhead

[Date]

[ID#]

[Superintendent's Name]

Superintendent

[District]

[Address]

[City, State Zip]

Dear [Name]:

I am writing to request your district's participation in a vitally important new national study: the **High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSLs:09)**. The study will focus on mathematics and science and follow a cohort of 9<sup>th</sup> grade students as they progress through high school and enter post-secondary institutions or the work force. The goals of the study are to assess achievement gains throughout high school and to understand students' choice, access, and persistence in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) courses, postsecondary education, and careers. The study will be conducted by RTI International on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

HSLs:09 will build upon and extend a series of longitudinal high school studies that have been conducted each decade since 1972. The study will measure achievement and also focus on how home, school, and community factors influence the plans and thought processes of 9<sup>th</sup> graders and how they may be linked to their high school coursetaking, college and career decisions. Information collected by students, parents, teachers, counselors, and school administrators will help to inform and shape efforts to improve the quality of math and science education in America, increase our global competitiveness in STEM-related fields, and improve the high school experience.

Within your district, [LIST FT SCHOOL NAME(S) – IF MULTIPLE SCHOOLS, ADD “AND” BEFORE LAST SCHOOL] [have/has] been selected to participate in the first phase of HSLs:09 to be conducted in the fall of 2008. [IF DISTRICT IS ALSO IN MAIN STUDY ADD: We have also selected the following [school/schools] for the main study in the fall of 2009: [LIST MS SCHOOLS. IF MULTIPLE SCHOOLS, ADD “AND” BEFORE LAST SCHOOL].] With your permission, RTI will contact these schools to discuss study details and to invite them to join the study.

In each school, participation in the first phase of HSLs:09 will include a math assessment of about 25 9<sup>th</sup>-graders and 25 12<sup>th</sup>-graders, as well as the administration of a background questionnaire. [IF ALSO IN MAIN STUDY ADD: The student component of the main study will include about 25 9<sup>th</sup>-graders.] The student assessment will take approximately 40 minutes to complete and the student questionnaire will require another 35 minutes. Ninth grade math and science teachers, a school administrator, a school counselor, and a parent of each selected student will be asked to complete questionnaires. Each of these

will require about 30 minutes per respondent. All data will be collected through a web-based application or telephone interview.

We are asking you to encourage your school(s) to participate in this important phase which will take place in fall 2008. [IF SCHOOL INCENTIVE: Participating school(s) in your district will receive a **\$500** technology allowance as a token of our appreciation.] [IF STUDENT INCENTIVE: Participating students will receive a \$20 incentive for participating.] School and student participation is voluntary, but we hope all selected districts and schools will choose to contribute to the study. A representative from RTI will contact you in the next few days to answer any questions you may have about HSLs:09.

Enclosed you will find an HSLs:09 brochure to further explain the study. Should you have any questions, please call the HSLs:09 information number, 866-253-1063, or send an e-mail to [hsls@rti.org](mailto:hsls@rti.org).

We look forward to working with your schools in this endeavor to advance the quality of education for our country's secondary students. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Mark Schneider  
Commissioner  
National Center for Education Statistics

Enclosures:

HSLs: 09 Brochure

## SCHOOL RECRUITMENT LETTER

NCES Letterhead

[Date]

[ID#]

[Principal's Name]

[School]

[Address]

[City, State Zip]

Dear [Name]:

I am writing to request your school's participation in a vitally important new national study: the **High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSLs:09)**. The study will focus on mathematics and science and follow a cohort of 9<sup>th</sup> grade students as they progress through high school and enter post-secondary institutions or the work force. The goals of the study are to assess achievement gains throughout high school and to understand students' choice, access, and persistence in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) courses, postsecondary education, and careers. The study will be conducted by RTI International on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

HSLs:09 will build upon and extend a series of longitudinal high school studies that have been conducted each decade since 1972. The study will measure achievement and also focus on how home, school, and community factors influence the plans and thought processes of 9<sup>th</sup> graders and how they may be linked to their high school coursetaking, college and career decisions. Information collected by students, parents, teachers, counselors, and school administrators will help to inform and shape efforts to improve the quality of math and science education in America, increase our global competitiveness in STEM-related fields, and improve the high school experience.

Your school has been selected to participate in the first phase of HSLs:09 to be conducted in the fall of 2008. HSLs will include a math and science assessment of 25 9<sup>th</sup>-graders and 25 12<sup>th</sup>-graders as well as the administration of student background questionnaires. Student participation will take about ninety minutes. Ninth grade math and science teachers, a school administrator, a school counselor, and a parent of each selected student will be asked to complete questionnaires. Each of these will require about 30 minutes per respondent. All data will be collected through a web-based application or telephone interview.

[IF PUBLIC & CATHOLIC: We have been given permission to contact you by your [IF PUBLIC: district superintendent] [IF CATHOLIC: diocese] and we encourage you to include HSLs on your fall 2008 calendar.] [IF OTHER PRIVATE: We encourage you to include HSLs on your fall 2008 calendar] [IF SCHOOL INCENTIVE: Your school will receive a **\$500** technology allowance as a token of our appreciation for your participation.] [IF STUDENT INCENTIVE: Participating students will receive a \$20

incentive for participating.] A representative from RTI will contact you in the next few days to answer any questions you may have about HSLs: 09. We hope that by contacting you now it will be easier for you to fit us into your school's fall 2008 calendar.

Enclosed you will find an HSLs brochure to offer further explanation of the study. Should you have any questions, please call the HSLs information number, 866-253-1063, or send an e-mail to [hsls@rti.org](mailto:hsls@rti.org).

Your participation in this endeavor is important to advance the quality of education for our country's secondary students. We look forward to working with your school to make HSLs:09 a success. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Mark Schneider  
Commissioner  
National Center for Education Statistics

Enclosure:  
HSLs: 09 Brochure

## **HSLs:09 Brochure Text**

### **High School Longitudinal Study of 2009; NCES logo; RTI logo**

**Conducted for:** National Center for Education Statistics of U.S. Department of Education

**Conducted by:** RTI International

### **What is HSLs:09?**

HSLs:09 is the High School Longitudinal Study of 2009. The study is sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics and carried out by RTI International.

### **What is the focus of the study?**

The focus of the study is to understand the impact of the high school experience on students' learning and their educational and career choices, and also to explore the transitions students make from high school to postsecondary education, the labor force, and adult roles. The distinctive features of HSLs:09 are that it is longitudinal – the same students will be followed over time, regardless of the path they take (for example, dropouts, the college-bound, and those who go directly into the military or work force after high school) – and multilevel (in addition to surveying and testing students, information will be gathered from parents, teachers, school administrators and counselors to better understand the many home, school, peer and community influences on students' development and choices). While all educational and career choices are of interest, additional information will be collected about science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) coursetaking and career preparation.

### **When is the study being conducted?**

The first phase of this study will take place in the fall of 2008. A follow-up with students and school personnel will take place in the spring of 2011. The main phase of data collection will occur in the fall of 2009. The first follow-up for that phase will take place in the spring of 2012.

### **How will HSLs:09 data be used?**

HSLs:09 data will allow researchers, educators, and policy makers to examine motivation, achievement, and persistence in STEM course taking and careers. More generally, HSLs:09 data will allow researchers to examine changes in young people's lives and the influence of communities, schools, teachers, families, parents, and friends on student transitions, progress, and outcomes.

### **How will HSLs:09 data be used?**

HSLs:09 data will allow researchers, educators, and policymakers to examine motivation, achievement, and persistence in high school coursetaking; and entry into careers (either directly or by way of postsecondary education). More generally, HSLs:09 data will allow researchers to examine changes in young people's lives and the influence of communities, schools, teachers, families, parents, and friends on student transitions, progress, and outcomes.

### **Why is participation important?**

HSLs:09 will build upon and extend a series of longitudinal high school studies that have been conducted each decade since 1972. The study will measure achievement and various influences on the plans and decision-making of high school students. Information collected

from students, parents, teachers, counselors, and school administrators will help to inform and shape efforts to improve the quality of the high school experience, including math and science education in America.

**How many schools and students will be involved?**

The first phase will involve 55 schools and about 27 9<sup>th</sup> graders and 27 12<sup>th</sup> graders in each school. The main phase will involve a nationally representative sample of 800 high schools, including both public and private schools.

**What is involved for students?**

Sampled students will complete a mathematics test and a background questionnaire. The in-school sessions will take about 90 minutes. The assessments and questionnaires will be completed on school computers, if available, or RTI will bring laptop computers to the school for use by the students for the study. Students will participate in another in-school session 2 years later with additional follow-ups planned after high school.

**What is involved for school staff?**

A school administrator will be asked to complete a questionnaire about the school and its environment. Mathematics and science teachers will be asked to complete questionnaires about their backgrounds and approaches to teaching. A school counselor will be asked to complete a questionnaire about school counseling practices. Each questionnaire will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

**What is involved for parents?**

One parent of each sampled student will be asked to complete a questionnaire. Each interview will take about 30 minutes.

**Who will be responsible for data collection?**

Trained HSLs:09 staff will facilitate administration of assessments and questionnaires and provide all required materials. Schools will be asked to designate a school contact to assist HSLs:09 staff with in-school arrangements.

**Do students, staff or parents have to participate?**

Participation is voluntary, but participation is important to ensure the completeness and accuracy of the results.

**Will the names of participants and their responses be kept confidential?**

Student, parent, and staff answers may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required by law. The data collected will be used in analyses to understand students' coursetaking behaviors, motivation and achievement, and how students decide what to do after high school.

**Who do I contact for further information about HSLs:09?**

For additional information, you may send email to [HSLs@RTI.ORG](mailto:HSLs@RTI.ORG), or contact:

RTI Project Director:

Mr. Dan Pratt

(919) 541-6615

(866) 253-1063

RTI Principal Investigator:

Dr. Steven Ingels

(202) 974-7834

NCES Project Officer:

Dr. Laura LoGerfo

(202) 502-7402

**Among the organizations endorsing HSLs:09 are:**

American Association of School Administrators

American Counseling Association

American Federation of Teachers

Council of Chief State School Officers

National Association of Secondary School Principals

National Catholic Educational Association, Department of Secondary Schools

National Center for Improving Science Education/WestED

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics

National Education Association

National Parent Teacher Association

National School Boards Association

National Science Teachers Association