

## **Response to Questions from OMB Received 10/1**

1. For item 1, please add this confidentiality citation to A10.

The confidentiality citation was added to A10.

2. Please include the voluntary nature of participation and the confidentiality assurance to letters. Note that NCSER should use the standard ESRA confidentiality pledge language in use at NCEE and NCES. RIMS should be able to assist in this regard if needed.

The voluntary nature of participation and the confidentiality assurance was added to the letters (see exhibits 1 through 4).

3. Please also add a small amount of burden for each parent being asked to complete and mail the postcard. We consider this a "collection" from parents, and therefore once again request your anticipated response rate for this group.

The burden for the postcard was added to the burden estimates.

4. We note that the last PEELS submission to OMB in 2006 indicated that Wave 3 reports would all be available by April 2007 and all Wave 4 reports available by April 2009. In each case, methodology reports were scheduled to be released earlier than substantive reports. Given that, please explain why you are now estimating no reports for either wave until 2009. What happened to delay these reports?

We apologize for the confusion. In the 2006 OMB submission, the reports listed in Table 2 were internal reports and are complete. Each of those reports is used to prepare the overview reports which are posted to the IES/NSCER and PEELS website. The Wave 1 and Wave 2 overview report are both available. The Wave 3 overview report is currently in IES external review, and the Wave 4 overview report is in IES internal review. In addition to the overview reports, three articles have been accepted to refereed journals:

Bitterman, A., Daley, T., Misra, S., Carlson, E., and Markowitz, J. (2008). A National Sample of Preschoolers with Autism Spectrum Disorders: Services Received and Parent Satisfaction. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disabilities*, 38(8), 1509-1517.

Daley, T., Simeonsson, R., and Carlson, E. (in press). Constructing a measure of severity of disability in a national sample of preschoolers with disabilities. *Disability and Rehabilitation*.

Daley, T. and Carlson, E. (in press). Predictors of change in eligibility status among preschoolers in special education. *Exceptional Children*.

5. If some methodology reports are available from these waves, please provide them (a url or soft copy is fine).

Both the Wave 1 and Wave 2 overview reports contain a methods chapter. Although some of information in the Wave 1 and 2 overview methods chapters overlap, each contains distinct information. For example, the Wave 1 overview report (<http://ies.ed.gov/ncser/pdf/20063003.pdf>) provides a detailed description of the different subtests used in the PEELS study. The Wave 2 overview report has an extensive description of study methods (Chapter 2, Appendix A, B, and C) and is available on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncser/pdf/20083011.pdf> or the PEELS web site, [www.peels.org](http://www.peels.org).

6. Please provide the detailed results of the nonresponse bias analysis described in item 4 of the original passback.

The results of the nonresponse bias analysis for Waves 3 and 4 are included in exhibits 5 and 6.

**Exhibit 1: Letter to families who have moved out of their original PEELS district**

«GuardianName»  
«mStreet1»  
«mStreet2»  
«mCity», «mState» «mZip»

Dear «GuardianName»:

Thank you for playing such an important part in the Pre-Elementary Education Longitudinal Study (PEELS). We still need your help. We are getting ready for our next data collection. We want to update our records about where your child goes to school.

Please write the name of your child’s current teacher, grade, and school on the postcard included with this letter and mail it to us. We will use this information to work with your child’s school to schedule the PEELS assessment. You can also give us this information by phone by calling the PEELS toll free Hotline at 1-888-534-8348.

Responses to this data collection are voluntary and 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 or individual. We will not provide information that identifies individuals or their districts to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.

In the first part of January, we will send you information about the last round of PEELS. We will also send you a newsletter that shows important study findings. If you want to ask questions about the study, you can call 1-888-534-8348. We also have an Internet address. It is [www.peels.org](http://www.peels.org).

Sincerely,



Elaine Carlson, Ph.D.  
Project Director

## Exhibit 2: Letter reminding parents of the upcoming assessments

January 2008

ID number: «WESTATChildID»

«GuardianName»  
«mStreet1»  
«mStreet2»  
«mCity», «mState» «mZip»

Phone: «Dayphone»  
Email Address: «Email»

Dear «GuardianName»:

Westat is about to begin the fifth and final round of data collection for the Pre-Elementary Education Longitudinal Study (PEELS), sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Special Education Research (NCSEER). We want to thank you for your continuing participation in this important study.

We'd like to remind you that this last round of data collection will involve only a child assessment. We will not be contacting you for a telephone interview or asking teachers for information on your child's educational program. The child assessments, which are typically completed at school, will begin at the end of January. Your child's PEELS assessor will send you a letter confirming the specific date and time of the assessment.

Responses to this data collection are voluntary and 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 or individual. We will not provide information that identifies individuals or their districts to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.

We've included the most recent edition of the *PEELS Winter Times*. This newsletter shares results from earlier rounds of the study on topics such as parent satisfaction and changes in services. If you have questions about the study, you can send an email to [questions@peels.org](mailto:questions@peels.org) or visit our web site: [www.peels.org](http://www.peels.org). Thanks again for your help in making this study such a success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elaine Carlson".

Elaine Carlson, Ph.D.  
Project Director

**Exhibit 3: Notification to parents of scheduled assessment**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

This note is to let you know that a PEELS representative will be conducting an assessment with \_\_\_\_\_. PEELS is a national study of preschool, kindergarten, and elementary age children who received special services. It is being conducted by Westat for the U.S. Department of Education.

The assessment will be conducted by: \_\_\_\_\_, who is an approved assessor for the study. The assessment is scheduled for:

\_\_\_\_\_

at: \_\_\_\_\_.

The PEELS assessment takes about 45 minutes. On the day of the assessment, please let your child know that someone is coming to talk with him/her and to play some school-like activities. Your child will receive a small “thank you” gift for completing the assessment.

If you have any questions, please call the assessor

at: \_\_\_\_\_.

Responses to this data collection are voluntary and 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 or individual. We will not provide information that identifies individuals or their districts to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.

Thank you for all your help!

**Exhibit 4: Reminder to parents of assessment if it's going to be conducted in the child's home or the parent is transporting the child to the assessment**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

This note is to remind you that a PEELS representative will be conducting an assessment with \_\_\_\_\_. PEELS is a national study of preschool, kindergarten and elementary age children who received special services. It is being conducted by Westat for the U.S. Department of Education.

The assessment will be conducted by: \_\_\_\_\_, who is an approved assessor for the study. The assessment is scheduled for:

\_\_\_\_\_

at: \_\_\_\_\_.

The PEELS assessment takes about 45 minutes. If the assessment is being conducted in your home, please set aside a quiet area that will be free of interruptions for the assessment. Also, on the day of the assessment, please let your child know that someone is coming to talk with him/her and to play some school-like activities.

As a "thank you" for letting us conduct the assessment in your home or for transporting your child to another location, you will receive a \$15.00 gift certificate. Your child will also receive a small "thank you" gift for completing the assessment.

If you have any questions, or there is a conflict with this date or time, please call the assessor

at: \_\_\_\_\_.

Responses to this data collection are voluntary and 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 or individual. We will not provide information that identifies individuals or their districts to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.

Thank you for all your help!



## Exhibit 5: Wave 3 nonresponse bias examination

Non-response bias is usually small when the response rate is high or moderate, and weight adjustments can eliminate most of the bias. In Wave 3, PEELS was fortunate to have moderately high response rates, reducing the overall level of concern about response bias. Table 1 presents the Wave 1, Wave 2, and Wave 3 response rates for PEELS. The response rate for the teacher questionnaires is below 80 percent in Wave 1, which is a concern. However, it has been improved in later waves.

To explore the possibility of response bias in the Wave 3 collection, Westat generated tables showing the number and percentage of responses by child's race/ethnicity and household income. Those data are presented in tables 2 and 3.

Response rates suggest some variation by child's race/ethnicity. On the parent interview, response rates ranged from 82 percent for parents of Black or African American children to 93 percent for parents of non-Hispanic White children. On the child assessment, response rates ranged from 89 percent for American Indians to 97 percent for Asians, Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders. Finally, on the teacher questionnaires, rates ranged from 76 percent of Black children's teachers to 85 percent of non-Hispanic White children's teachers (see table 2).

The data on response rates suggest an association between household income and response probability on the parent interview, with lower income families less likely to complete interviews. The response rates for all income groups were between 83 and 95 percent. Response rates for the child assessment and teacher questionnaires showed little variation by household income (see table 3).

This level of variation does not present a serious threat of nonresponse bias.

Table 1. PEELS Response rates, by wave and instrument

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3 <sup>a</sup>
SEA questionnaire	100%	--	--
LEA questionnaire	87%	--	--
Parent interview	96%	93%	88%
Child assessment	96%	94%	93%
Teacher	76%	86%	81%

questionnaire			
Principal/ program director questionnaire	76%	--	--

<sup>a</sup> Wave 3 response rates are subject to change until the data have been finalized.

SOURCE: PEELS Study Management System. Previously unpublished tabulations, August 2006.

**Table 2. Number and percentage of PEELS Wave 3 respondents, by race/ethnicity**

	Total Sample		Parent		Assessment		Teacher	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Total	3,098		2,719	87.8	2,889	93.3	2,509	81.0
American Indian or Alaskan Native	19		17	89.5	17	89.5	15	78.9
Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	59		52	88.1	57	96.6	49	83.1
Black or African American	277		228	82.3	258	93.1	211	76.2
Hispanic	557		468	84.0	526	94.4	439	78.8
White, Non-Hispanic	1,730		1,604	92.7	1,653	95.5	1,467	84.8
More than one race	161		138	85.7	145	90.1	129	80.1
Missing	295		212	71.9	233	79.0	199	67.5

NOTE: Study withdrawals manually added to missing data line, column 1.

SOURCE: PEELS Study Management System. Previously unpublished tabulations, August 2006.

**Table 3. Number and percentage of PEELS Wave 3 respondents, by household income**

	Total Sample		Parent		Assessment		Teacher	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Total	3,098		2,719	87.8	2,889	93.3	2,509	81.0

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Less than \$20,000	723	599	82.8	677	93.6	57479.4
\$20,001 to \$30,000	424	365	86.1	399	94.1	35483.5
\$30,001 to \$40,000	359	330	91.9	341	95.0	29682.5
\$40,001 to \$50,000	306	283	92.5	293	95.8	24981.4
More than \$50,000	960	913	95.1	918	95.6	81584.9
Missing	326	229	70.2	261	80.1	22167.8

NOTE: Study withdrawals manually added to missing data line, column 1.

SOURCE: PEELS Study Management System. Previously unpublished tabulations, August 2006.

## Exhibit 6: Wave 4 nonresponse bias examination

Non-response bias is usually small when the response rate is high or moderate, and weight adjustments can eliminate most of the bias. In Wave 4, PEELS continued to have moderately high response rates, reducing the overall level of concern about response bias. Table 1 presents the Wave 1, Wave 2, Wave 3, and Wave 4 response rates for PEELS. Lower response rates in Wave 4 may be partially attributed to efforts to reduce the Wave 4 data collection budget.

To explore the possibility of response bias in the Wave 4 collection, Westat generated tables showing the number and percentage of responses by child's race/ethnicity and household income. Those data are presented in tables 2 and 3.

Response rates suggest some variation by child's race/ethnicity. On the parent interview, response rates ranged from 70 percent for parents of Black or African American children to 90 percent for parents of American Indians or Alaskan Natives. On the child assessment, response rates ranged from 79 percent for American Indians and Alaskan Natives to 90 percent for non-Hispanic Whites. Finally, on the teacher questionnaires, rates ranged from 75 percent of Black children's teachers to 87 percent of non-Hispanic White children's teachers (see table 2).

The data on response rates suggest an association between household income and response probability on the parent interview, with lower income families less likely to complete interviews. The response rates for all income groups were between 74 and 93 percent. Response rates for the child assessment and teacher questionnaires showed little variation by household income (see table 3).

This level of variation does not present a serious threat of nonresponse bias.

Table 1. PEELS Response rates, by wave and instrument

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4 <sup>a</sup>
SEA questionnaire	100%	--	--	--
LEA questionnaire	87%	--	--	--
Parent interview	96%	93%	88%	80%
Child assessment	96%	94%	93%	85%
Teacher questionnaire	76%	86%	81%	81%
Principal/program director questionnaire	76%	--	--	--

<sup>a</sup> Wave 4 response rates are subject to change until the data have been finalized.

SOURCE: PEELS Study Management System. Previously unpublished tabulations, July 2007.

**Table 2. Number and percentage of PEELS Wave 4 respondents, by race/ethnicity**

	Total Sample		Parent		Assessment		Teacher	
	n		n	%	n	%	n	%
Total	3,104		2,488	80.	2,632	84.	2,502	80.
American Indian or Alaskan Native	19		17	89.	15	78.	15	78.
Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	58		50	86.	48	82.	50	86.
Black or African American	276		193	69.	224	81.	207	75.
Hispanic	545		418	76.	480	88.	435	79.
White, Non-Hispanic	1,702		1,490	87.	1,528	89.	1,472	86.
More than one race	160		127	79.	131	81.	127	79.
Missing	344		193	57.	206	59.	196	57.

NOTE: Study withdrawals manually added to missing data line, column 1.

SOURCE: PEELS Study Management System. Previously unpublished tabulations, July 2007.

**Table 3. Number and percentage of PEELS Wave 4 respondents, by household income**

	Total Sample		Parent		Assessment		Teacher	
	n		n	%	n	%	n	%
Total	3,104		2,488	80.2	2,632	84.8	2,502	80.6
Less than \$20,000	720		531	73.8	621	86.3	580	80.6

\$20,001 to \$30,000	412	327	79.4	358	86.9	331	80.3
\$30,001 to \$40,000	357	287	80.4	308	86.3	287	80.4
\$40,001 to \$50,000	300	256	85.3	265	88.3	260	86.7
More than \$50,000	948	879	92.7	852	89.9	828	87.3
Missing	367	208	56.7	228	62.1	216	58.9

NOTE: Study withdrawals manually added to missing data line, column 1.

SOURCE: PEELS Study Management System. Previously unpublished tabulations, July 2007.