Contract No.: ED-06-CO-0029
Lab Internal Ref No.:

Mapping the Adopted Core Curriculum in the Mid-Atlantic Region

Supporting Statement A for Request for OMB Approval of

Announcement Letter

May 13, 2008

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INTRODUCTION

This document presents the Supporting Statement requesting approval for a plan to collect data to identify the adopted curricula in the Mid-Atlantic Region. The project is sponsored by the Institute of Education Sciences in the U.S. Department of Education. We request approval to collect data from school districts in the Mid-Atlantic region on curricula adoption for specific grades and subjects.

The advent of the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) of 2001 (P.L. No. 107-110) made clear the need to align standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment goals with proven instructional curriculum in mathematics, language arts literacy, and science that address the needs of all subgroups. This need has been identified consistently throughout the Mid-Atlantic region, yet no mechanism exists to identify alignment issues at the state and local level. The What Works Clearinghouse has begun to identify curricula that might address achievements goals; however, there is no published record of adopted curricula that districts are currently using. Without a reliable and continuing source of information about current curricula usage, and future adoption plans, it is difficult, if not impossible, to address alignment in a realistic and systematic fashion. This data collection begins to address this problem and provides an on-going documentation of certain adopted curricula in all districts in the Mid-Atlantic Region in mathematics, language arts literacy, and science.

This document describes the planned data collection and an estimate of associated respondent burden.

A. JUSTIFICATION

A1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.

The Knowledge Gap of Adopted Curriculum in the Mid-Atlantic Region

Curriculum adoption has come under increased scrutiny with the passing of the NCLB Act. The act is perceived as a locus for change when schools or districts are labeled "In Need of Improvement" due to insufficient student subgroup achievement (Goertz, 2005). Problems arise when the staff assigned to evaluate potential curriculum are not trained in evaluation processes, are not familiar with current relevant research, do not have sufficient time to conduct the evaluation, and rely on insufficiently rigorous publisher supplied data and research (Stein, Stuen, Carnine, & Long, 2001) and anecdotal evidence. The problem is further complicated by the absence of systematic and current data about district choices and processes so that supporting state agencies, technical assistance and research organizations can assess choices, problems and trends to offer appropriate advice and assistance.

The Chief State School Officers of our region made clear in the first governing board meeting that a database identifying adopted curricula was a high priority need which they would like the REL Mid-Atlantic to satisfy. However, as confirmed through regional needs assessments, neither the states and District of Columbia (DC) in the Mid-Atlantic region nor the Lab possess any comprehensive or continuing information about certain core and supplemental curricula in the areas of mathematics, language arts and science in use within the region's school districts; or on related matters of curriculum adoption and professional development. Thus, it stands to reason that states lack information to systematically assess current curriculum adoption status, analyze curriculum adoption trends, and strategically develop appropriate research and evaluation agendas on curriculum-based interventions; and, the Lab is not able assist them in such efforts.

Research Questions to Understand Curriculum Adoption and Related Activities

This data collection will provide important and useful information to the educational leaders and policy makers in the Mid-Atlantic region. It does so by addressing the following research questions in mathematics, science, and language arts literacy at the elementary, middle, and high school grades:

- What core and supplemental curricula has been adopted across the Mid-Atlantic region?
- When was the curriculum adopted?
- What training and professional development in support of curriculum implementation is provided?
- What assessments are used (e.g., homegrown, publisher, other)?

Defined here, "core curriculum" refers to the primary set of resources used to teach a given content area; typically, it is commercially purchased (e.g., Harcourt, Macmillan, Houghton Mifflin, Glencoe/McGraw-Hill), but also can be homegrown or a combination of the two. A "supplemental curriculum" refers to additional texts and resources designed to supplement or complement the adopted core curriculum.

Overview of Study Design

This data collection will occur over 3 years. Figure 1 presents a summary of the flow for the data collection by year (see page 7). Corresponding steps in the data collection process are described as follows.

A. Design and Dispatch of Data Request to Districts

In the first year, curricula data will be collected in a census format. Every school district in the Mid-Atlantic region (DC, DE, MD, NJ, PA) will be contacted to identify adopted curricula in three content areas: math, science, and language arts literacy. In subsequent years, each jurisdiction with a small number of districts (DC, DE, MD) will continue to be involved in the census data collection. However, a sample of districts in NJ and PA (the states with the largest number of districts in the region, with 600+ each) will be conducted if analysis of year 1 data reveals that it is possible to develop a sampling design will yield representative results (in which case the Lab will submit an addendum to the current data collection request that reflects that change). Otherwise, the census approach will continue for all districts in years 2 and 3.

To constrain the data collection and increase specificity, data will be collected on a sample of content areas including math, science, and language arts literature. Because even within those content areas there are many topical areas covered across grade levels, the collection is constrained even further. In mathematics, the data to be collected will be constrained to grade 4, Algebra I, and Pre-calculus. In science, the data to be collected will be constrained to grade 4, Earth Science, and Physics. In language arts literacy, the data to be collected will be constrained to grade 1, grade 4, and grade 8. Table 1 presents the specific curricula to be collected by content area.

Table 1. Data to be collected by content area.

Math	Science	Language Arts Literacy
Grade 4	Grade 4	Grade 1
Algebra 1	Earth Science	Grade 4
Pre-Calculus	Physics	Grade 8

In year 1, for each of the content areas, we will collect the following pieces of information for core and supplemental curricula:

- Name
- Publisher
- Date adopted
- Date due for re-adoption
- Benchmark assessment, if any

FIGURE 1. MAPPING THE ADOPTED CORE CURRICULUM
DATA COLLECTION FLOW DESIGN

YEAR 1

Design & Dispatch Data Request Disseminate Core Data	Collect Requested Data	Screen and Enter Data
Letter to all school districts requesting copy of annual curriculum adoption lists for last three years	District follow up with REL staff (LES) as needed	Screen core curricula data for consistency, resolving any questions with districts
Request copy of adoption cycle for curricula decisions from each district		Enter screened data in data base with appropriate QC.
Prepare and disseminate user's guide and selected summary reports		Enter adoption cycle data

YEARS 2 AND 3

Design & Dispatch Data Request Disseminate Core Data	Collect Requested Data	Screen and Enter Data
For smaller jurisdictions – DC, DE, and MD, determine which districts to solicit new curricular adoptions from review of adoption cycle documents	District follow up with REL staff (LES) as needed	Screen core curricula data for consistency, resolving questions with districts
For NJ and PA, develop sampling plan and determine which districts to solicit new curricular adoptions from review of adoption cycle documents		Enter screened data in data base for consistency, base with appropriate QC, Enter new adoption cycle data
Determine whether a new cycle document is needed		
Prepare and disseminate user's guide and selected summary reports		
Move screened data to website		

In years 2 and 3, we intend to ask additional questions related to curriculum adoption processes including:

1) What sources of information are used for selection (select predominant one)?
a) publisher presentations _____
b) colleague recommendation_____
c) research evidence_____
d) other_____

2) How much training, if any, is typically provided for teachers when major new curriculum is introduced? (select one)
a) None _____
b) Less than 6 hours _____
c) Six or more hours _____

3) If staff development is provided, who provides (check all that apply)?
a) Publisher _____
b) Internal staff _____
c) Consultant _____
d) University _____
e) Professional Organization _____
f) Other _____

B. Collect Requested Data

In follow up to the initial announcement letter (see Exhibit A), the laboratory extension specialists (LES)—internal REL outreach staff—will contact the districts to encourage their cooperation with the request. For the region's smaller states with smaller numbers of school districts (DC with 1, Delaware with 9 and Maryland with 27) and no formal public adoption information, the LES will collect all the needed information via telephone or in person as needed.

C. Screen and Enter Data

All materials will be reviewed and coded centrally to identify which data elements from the list match each curricular category (core, supplemental, assessment) and all data will be entered into a centrally managed database. In subsequent data collection years, we intend to explore electronic entry by LES and possibly by respondents to reduce burden.

Changes will be documented and entered into the Curriculum Mapping Database annually. Each annual database will be distinct. In the first year, the full database will be developed. In the second and subsequent years, an initial roll-over of all prior year's data will occur; then all changes/updates will be incorporated into the database. The NCES district identifying code will be used to match data from year to year. When the first year's data is collected we will examine the timeline for district approval of curriculum throughout the region to determine the most appropriate time for collection and release of an annual updated report.

D. Disseminate Core Data

A database, a user's guide, and descriptive report will provide a full range of adopted curricula in math, language arts, and science by state (DE, MD, NJ, PA DC), and by grade span (elementary, middle, high). Moreover, the searchable database will allow educators to identify the adopted curricula for districts with similar characteristics. Exhibit B provides an illustrative example of a report generated through the use of the on-line tool. Note that although the on-line user interface has yet to be developed, the variables in the far left column represent a set of filters that users can select to identify districts' curricular adoptions. For example, districts could be examined by the number of students, by their urbanicity, by their student demographics etc. The database will assist educational leaders as they assess and improve the quality of the curricula they are providing to students in each state.

A2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.

The data will be used by local and state level educators, researchers, and policymakers for identifying commonly adopted curricula in the Mid-Atlantic region at a given period. A secondary purpose is to compare these cross-sections over time to determine whether and how curricula adoption changes over time in a given state.

These data will help educators make informed decisions about their own curriculum planning and adoption by identifying adopted curricula that have been systematically reviewed by the WWC and, as a result, have been evaluated for effectiveness in improving student achievement. Policymakers, parents, business and community members may use the data to determine which districts use "homegrown" curricula or may have adopted curriculum with evidence of effectiveness.

Researchers and policymakers may use the data as the basis for mounting new randomized control trials or other studies to assess curriculum effectiveness around alignment with educational goals. For example, when REL Mid-Atlantic was planning the recruitment for the randomized experiment to test the effectiveness of Connected Math Project 2, the lack of this data made it difficult for the Lab to determine how many districts and schools in each state were ineligible for the trials because they were already using the intervention.

A3. ***Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.***

The data collection process will be structured to reduce overall burden for the district staff and to reduce the overall cost of the data collection. On-line submittal of data by district personnel was considered, but ruled out for year 1 to ensure valid responses. In years 2 and 3 we will evaluate the extent to which electronic entry by stakeholders is feasible.

A4. ***Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in item 2 above.***

Careful reviews of known federal (NCES, NCEE) and state databases (state department of education websites) were conducted to identify related data collections of district level adopted curricula. None were found. Thus, this data collection effort is unique and fills an important void in the K-12 curriculum landscape.

A5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities (Item 5 of OMB Form 83-I), describe any methods used to minimize burden.

To reduce the burden of data collection to districts, a minimum number of questions will be asked on adopted curricula and benchmark assessments in school districts.

A6. ***Describe the consequences to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.***

Absent this data collection, Mid-Atlantic region state education agencies have severely limited knowledge and understanding of curricula adoption patterns across the region.

If the expected interest in and use of the data is realized, annual updates to the database will be planned around the district level adoption cycles (typically 3-5 years). Adoption cycles are included in the data collection to gather this data empirically. The proposed data collection serves as an important baseline and will be carefully monitored to ensure reliability and accuracy. In subsequent collections according to empirically determined curriculum adoption cycles, expansion of grade levels and courses may be included if feasible.

Our federally sponsored lab has experienced the impact that a lack of knowledge on district patterns of curriculum adoption can have when planning for randomized experiments. This knowledge is critical for planning randomized experiments to test the effectiveness of a K-12 curriculum. For example, when planning to recruit enough districts and schools to achieve statistical power in one lab experiment, it was critical to know how many districts were not eligible for the experiment because they were already using the K-12 curriculum being tested as the experimental intervention. Without the curriculum mapping data, the lab had no choice but to rely on expert opinion and anecdotal information.

A7. ***Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with usual policy.***

None of the detailed issues listed in the OMB as inconsistent with usual policy for this section are relevant in the proposed study.

A8. ***If applicable, provide a copy and identify the data and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8(d), soliciting comments on***

the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden.

The Department of Ed will submit the 60-day notice and if there are any comments, we will respond appropriately (see Exhibit D).

A9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

No incentives will be provided with this data collection.

A10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

Respondent information. No information that identifies individual district respondents will be disclosed. All individual-level identifiable information will be kept in secured locations and identifiers will be deleted as soon as they are no longer required.

Curricula information. With respect to this data collection, all districts and their curricula will be explicitly identified in reports and the searchable database.

REL Mid-Atlantic will be following the new policies and procedures required by the Education Sciences reform Act of 2002, Title I, Part E, Section 183 requires "All collection, maintenance, use, and wide dissemination of data by the Institute" to "conform with the requirements of section 552 of title 5, United States Code, the confidentiality standards of subsection (c) of this section, and section 444 and 445 of the General Education Provision Act (20 U.S.C 1232g, 1232h)." These citations refer to the Privacy Act, the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, and the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment.

REL Mid-Atlantic will protect the confidentiality of all respondent information. No information that identifies any study participant will be released. All individually identifiable information will be kept in secured locations and identifiers will be destroyed as soon as they are no longer needed. In addition, all REL personnel involved in the project will sign an Affidavit of Nondisclosure (See Exhibit C).

A11. ***Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private. This justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.***

This data collection will not include any questions of a sensitive nature. Participation in all data collection activities is completely voluntary, with no sanctions or penalties being applied for respondents who choose not to provide information or who do not answer specific questions.

A12. ***Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. This statement should:***

- ***Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated. Unless directed to do so, agencies should not conduct special surveys to obtain information on which to base hour burden estimates.***

- ***Consultation with a sample (fewer than 10) of potential respondents is desirable. If the hour burden on respondents is expected to vary widely because of differences in activity, size, or complexity, show the range of estimated hour burden and explain the reasons for the variance. Generally, estimates should not include burden hours for customary and usual business practices.***

Each district represents a respondent unit. Because all curricula must be approved every year by local school boards, public records that list all currently adopted curricula are kept in central offices for each district. Although the actual title of the person who responds to this census may vary considerably across districts—depending on the size and organizational structure of the district—the data requested for this project is expected to be readily available.

A pre-test was conducted with eight districts across the region to determine the actual time burden for respondents and includes time spent speaking to extra staff (e.g., secretaries) needed to identify which district level person(s) would be able to provide the relevant data. Table 1 presents this estimated respondent burden for the data collection which is 0.50 hours.

TABLE 1

RESPONDENT BURDEN ESTIMATES
For Response to Questionnaire

Informant	Number of Responses	Number of Response Activities	Average Time per Respondent (Hours)	Total Respondent Time (Hours)	Estimated Hourly Wage (Dollars)	Estimated Cost Burden to Respondents (Dollars)
School District Staff	1496	1	0.50	748	$10.02[1]	$7,494.96

[1] 2003 Statistical Abstract of the U.S. Table No. 251: Average Salary and Wages Paid in Public School Systems: 1980-2002 (estimate in table is for 2002).

A13. ***Provide an estimate for the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information. (Do not include the cost of any hour burden shown in Items 12 and 14).***
There are no start-up or direct costs to respondents. Burden hour costs to respondents are discussed above in Section A. 12 of this document.

A14. ***Provide estimates of annualized costs to the Federal government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost, which should include quantification of hours, operational expenses (such as equipment, overhead, printing, and support staff), and any other expenses that would not have been incurred without this collection of information. Agencies may also aggregate cost estimates from items 12, 13, and 14 in a single table.***

For the data collection activities for which OMB approval is currently being requested, the overall cost to the government is $125,000. This includes:

- $15,000 for study design, OMB clearance, and planning
- $15,000 for pre-testing, additional training, and monitoring during the course of the study year
- $95,000 for data collection, data analysis, database development, report preparation and dissemination

A15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in items 13 or 14 of the OMB Form 83-I.

This is a new data collection.

A16. ***For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.***

TABLE 2 DATA COLLECTION PLAN

Data Sources and Products	Timeline for Each Year
Curricula Data Collection From Districts	7 Months, to begin after OMB approval- Approx Dec 2008
Demographic Data collected from Common Core of Data	1 Month, to begin after OMB approval- Approx Dec 2008
Database development	7 months
Descriptive Report	1.5 months after database is completed
On-Line Database	1.5 months after database is completed

We will use a database that includes district-level data. We anticipate that this data will be organized in one file in a relational database, with a single record for each curriculum at each grade span and content area in each district. Although it is likely that some districts will have multiple curricula for a given content area and grade level, we will only be reporting the most predominately adopted one. We anticipate that those "curricula records" will have the following fields:

- District name
- NCES code
- Grade
    - Content area (math, language arts literacy, science)
    - Core curriculum
    - Supplemental curriculum
    - Benchmark assessments

To organize and report the data in our Annual Descriptive Report and Searchable Database, we will use additional demographic data on each district, which will be collected from other data sets and stored in a separate data file within the relational database, with a record for each district in the region including the following fields:

- NCES District Code (key field for joining data in district demographic relation)
- District Type, using the NCES' 8 levels ((Large Central City, Mid-size Central City, Urban Fringe of Large City, Urban Fringe of Mid-Size City, Large Town, Small Town, Rural inside metropolitan statistical area (MSA), and Rural outside MSA).
- District level (elementary, middle, high)
- Grades Included in district
- State (DC, DE, MD, NJ, PA)
- Percentage of Students from low-income families
- Number and percentage of students in each of the following categories:
    - White

- Black
- Latino/Hispanic
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- American Indian/ Native Alaskan
- Multi-racial/ethnic
- Male
- Female
- IEP – Special Education
- Limited English Proficiency
- Economically Disadvantaged.

These data are collected as data files provided by the National Center for Educational Statistics and/or State Education Agencies, and are reformatted as needed under the supervision of the project PIs by our REL Mid-Atlantic database expert, Chris Magarelli, at Rutgers University.

• **Annual Descriptive Reports.** This report will present state-level data on core and supplemental curricula adopted across the Mid-Atlantic region by grade span and content area (math, language arts, and science). This report will indicate:

(1) range and frequency of core adopted curricula,
(2) proportion of districts which utilize supplemental curricula,
(3) range and frequency of assessment use,
(4) categories of adoption processes,
(5) amount of professional development in support of the adopted curriculum, and
(6) patterns of curricula adoption by demographic characteristics.

Following a presentation of the data for the most recent year, data representing changes from year to year for each state will be presented.

• **On-line Searchable Database**. We will develop an on-line tool that regional constituents can access that will provide information about the adopted curricula by content area, grade span, and state (PA, NJ, DC, DE, MD). Such characteristics will include, for example, rural and urban patterns, proportions of racial/ethnic groups, and proportion economically disadvantaged. Indicators regarding whether evidence exists as to the curricular effectiveness and descriptive characteristics of the districts will also be provided. For example, if a curriculum has been reviewed by What Works Clearinghouse a link to that site will be provided.

A17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.

No exceptions are sought.

A18. ***Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in Item 19, "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions," of OMB Form 83-I.***

No exceptions are sought.