

Appendix A

Recruitment Materials

STATE RECRUITING LETTER

NCES/ED Letterhead

[Date]

«state_contact_name»
«state_title»
«state_entity_name»
«state_address»
«state_citystzip»

Dear «state_contact_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 9th grade students as they progress through high school and enter postsecondary 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 courses, postsecondary education, and careers. Special emphasis will be placed on, but not limited to, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). The study will be conducted by RTI International on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). NCES is authorized to conduct this study under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-279, Section 153).

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 focus on how home, school, and community factors influence the plans and decision-making of 9th graders and how these factors may be linked to their high school coursetaking and college and career decisions. Information collected from students, parents, teachers, counselors, and school administrators will help to inform and shape efforts to improve the high school experience, advance the quality of math and science education in America, and increase our global competitiveness in STEM-related fields.

The first phase of HSLs:09 is being conducted at a small sample of schools in the fall of 2008 to test the study's design and implementation procedures. Collection of data for the second phase will take place in the fall of 2009 at 800 schools across the country.

In October 2008, we will begin contacting the school districts and schools that have been selected for the main study. Each school's participation is important in order to provide reliable, significant data from an inclusive and diverse group of American secondary schools and students.

HSLs:09 will include a math assessment and a student background questionnaire administered to approximately 30 9th graders per school. The student assessment will take approximately 40

minutes to complete and the student questionnaire will require another 35 minutes. The math and science teachers of the selected 9th graders, 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.

School and student participation is voluntary, and we hope all selected districts and schools will choose to contribute to the study. The data provided by your schools, staff, students, and their parents 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 (Public Law 107-279, Section 183). Follow-up data will be collected in the spring of 2012 when the students are in 11th grade, and student transcript data will be collected in 2013.

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. 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,

Stuart Kerachsky
Acting Commissioner
National Center for Education Statistics
Institute of Education Sciences
U.S. Department of Education

Enclosures:
HSLs:09 Brochure

DISTRICT RECRUITING LETTER

NCES Letterhead

[Date]

«dist_contact_name»

«dist_title»

«dist_entity_name»

«dist_address»

«dist_citystzip»

Dear «dist_contact_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 follow a cohort of ninth grade students as they progress through high school and enter postsecondary 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 courses, postsecondary education, and careers. Special emphasis will be placed on, but not limited to, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). 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 focus on how home, school, and community factors influence the plans and decision-making of 9th graders and how these factors may be linked to their high school coursetaking and college and career decisions. Information collected from students, parents, teachers, counselors, and school administrators will help to inform and shape efforts to improve the high school experience, advance the quality of math and science education in America, and increase our global competitiveness in STEM-related fields. Within your district, [LIST POOL 1 SCHOOLS] (has/have) been selected to participate in the main study of HSLs:09. We may also contact [LIST POOL 2 & 3 SCHOOLS]. Data will be collected in the fall of 2009. With your permission, RTI will contact (the school/schools) to discuss study details and to invite the school/schools to join the study.

In each school, HSLs:09 will include the administration of a math assessment and a background questionnaire to approximately 30 ninth-graders. The student assessment will take approximately 40 minutes to complete and the student questionnaire will require another 35 minutes. A school administrator, a school counselor, the math and science teachers of selected 9th graders, 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. Follow-up data will be collected in the spring of 2012 when the students are in eleventh grade, and student transcript data will be collected in 2013.

We are asking you to encourage the school(s) selected in your district to participate in HSLs:09. Students will receive a drawstring backpack filled with educational items for participating.

School and student participation is voluntary, and we hope all selected districts and schools will choose to contribute to the study. NCES is authorized to conduct this study under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-279, Section 153). Under that law, the data provided by your schools, staff, students, and their parents 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 (Public Law 107-279, Section 183). A representative from RTI will contact you in the next few days to answer any questions you may have.

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.

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

Sincerely,

Stuart Kerachsky
Acting Commissioner
National Center for Education Statistics
Institute of Education Sciences
U.S. Department of Education

Enclosure: HSLs: 09 Brochure

SCHOOL RECRUITMENT LETTER

NCES Letterhead

[Date]

«sch_contact_name»

«sch_title»

«sch_entity_name»

«sch_address»

«sch_citystzip»

Dear «sch_contact_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 follow a cohort of 9th grade students as they progress through high school and enter postsecondary 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 courses, postsecondary education, and careers. Special emphasis will be placed on, but not limited to, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). 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 will focus on how home, school, and community factors influence the plans and decision-making of 9th graders and how these factors may be linked to their high school coursetaking and college and career decisions. Information collected from 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 HSLs:09 which will be conducted in the fall of 2009. HSLs:09 will include a math assessment and a student background questionnaire administered to approximately 30 9th graders per school, all of which will take about ninety minutes. A school administrator, a school counselor, the math and science teachers of selected students, 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. Follow-up data will be collected in the spring of 2012 when most of the students will be in 11th grade, and student transcript data will be collected in 2013.

Participating students will receive a drawstring backpack filled with educational items. 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 2009 calendar.

School and student participation is voluntary, and we hope all selected districts and schools will choose to contribute to the study. NCES is authorized to conduct this study under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-279, Section 153). Under that law, the data provided by your schools, staff, students, and their parents 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 (Public Law 107-279, Section 183).

Enclosed you will find an HSLs:09 brochure to offer further explanation of 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.

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,

Stuart Kerachsky
Acting Commissioner
National Center for Education Statistics
Institute of Education Sciences
U.S. Department of Education

Enclosure: HSLs:09 Brochure

HSLs:09 BROCHURE TEXT

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. NCES is authorized to conduct this study under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-279, Section 153).

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. One distinctive feature of HSLs:09 is 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). The other distinctive feature is that it is 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?

Initial data collection will occur in the fall of 2009. The first follow-up will take place in the spring of 2012.

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 study will involve a nationally representative sample of approximately 800 high schools, including both public and private schools. An average of 30 ninth-graders per school will be selected and over 20,000 students are expected to participate.

What is involved for students?

Sampled students will complete a mathematics test and a questionnaire. The in-school sessions will take about 90 minutes. The assessments and questionnaires will be completed on school computers, if available, or on laptop computers that will be brought to the school for use by the students for the study. Participating

students will receive a “goodie bag” (a drawstring backpack filled with educational items) as a token of our appreciation. Students will participate in another in-school session 2 years later. Transcripts of coursework and grades will also be collected. Additional follow-ups are 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 about the home environment. 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. Development of valid national results depends on a high rate of participation.

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 (Public Law 107-279, Section 183). School and student participation is voluntary, and we hope all selected districts and schools will choose to contribute to the study. 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 visit our website at <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/hsls>, call (866) 253-1063, send email to HSLs@RTI.ORG, or contact:

RTI Project Director:

Mr. Dan Pratt
(919) 541-6615

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 Independent Schools
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

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR SURVEY LETTER

NCES/ED Letterhead

[Date]

<SCHOOL ADMIN NAME>

<SCHOOL NAME>

<ADDR1>

<ADDR1>

<CITY STATE ZIP>

Web Address: www.xxx.xxx.gov

Your USER ID: <XXXXXXXX>

Your PASSWORD: <XXXXXXXX>

Dear <School Administrator>:

As you are aware, the High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSL:09) is now underway. We thank you for your school's participation which is crucial to the success of this important research. Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, HSL:09 seeks to understand the impact of the high school experience on students' learning and their educational and career choices, and to explore the transitions students make from high school to postsecondary education, the labor force, and adulthood. The study is being conducted by RTI International (a university-affiliated not-for-profit research organization in North Carolina) on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). NCES is authorized to conduct this study under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-279, Section 153).

You have elected to participate in HSL:09 which will be conducted during the fall of 2009 and includes approximately 30 9th-graders per school from more than 940 high schools across the country. Each student in the study will complete a math assessment as well as a background questionnaire which will take 90 minutes to complete.

As part of the study, we would like to have your input about the administration and policies at your school. Therefore, we would like for you to complete an online school administrator questionnaire which should take approximately 30 minutes for most respondents. To give you access to the questionnaire, the web link and your unique USER NAME and PASSWORD are provided above. The questionnaire is divided into four sections. The first three sections mainly request factual information about this school and its programs. These sections can be answered by the principal or a designee who is able to provide this information. The final section asks for judgmental evaluations about the school climate, and we ask that this section be completed by the principal only. If you will have a designee (someone other than yourself) complete the initial portion of the survey, please let us know so that we may supply that person with access to the on-line survey.

All responses will be protected from disclosure. No individuals, whether parents, students, school officials, teachers or staff, will see any other questionnaires or individually identifying data (for example, names or addresses). Data collected are used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required by law (Public Law 107-279, Section 183). The data collected will be used in analyses to understand students' course-taking behaviors, motivation and achievement, and how students decide what pathways to follow during and after high school. 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.

National organizations endorsing HSL:09 include the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the American Association of School Administrators, the National Education Association and the National School Boards Association. The enclosed brochure provides detailed information about HSL. If you have any

questions about your participation in the survey, please call Mr. Randy Ottem at RTI toll-free at 1-877-292-HSLS. If you have questions about your rights as a study participant, you may call RTI's Office for Research Protection at 919-316-3358 in Durham, NC or 1-866-214-2043 (a toll-free number).

We thank you in advance for your cooperation in this important research.

Sincerely,

Stuart Kerachsky
Acting Commissioner
National Center for Education Statistics
Institute of Education Sciences
U.S. Department of Education

Enclosure: HSLs: 09 Brochure

TEACHER SURVEY LETTER

NCES/ED Letterhead

[Date]

<TEACHER NAME>

<SCHOOL NAME>

Web Address:

www.xxx.xxx.gov

<ADDR1>

Your USER NAME:

<XXXXXXXX>

<ADDR1>

Your PASSWORD:

<XXXXXXXX>

<CITY STATE ZIP>

Dear <Teacher Name>:

<SCHOOL NAME> has elected to participate in the High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSLs:09), sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education . NCES is authorized to conduct this study under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-279, Section 153). The purpose of the study is to understand the impact of the high school experience on students' learning and educational and career choices and to explore the transitions from high school to postsecondary education, the work force, and adulthood. HSLs:09 includes approximately 30 9th-graders per school from more than 940 high schools across the country. Each student in the study will complete a math assessment and a background questionnaire. For more information on the study and RTI, the nonprofit organization conducting it, please see the attached brochure.

Your participation is voluntary; however, as a <MATH or SCIENCE> teacher at <SCHOOL NAME>, your knowledge of the school's academic policies and programs and their impact on student learning is crucial to the study. Therefore, we ask that you complete an online questionnaire, which will take approximately 30-40 minutes for most respondents. To do so, please log in using the web link and unique USER NAME and PASSWORD provided above. Your responses will be protected from disclosure; no parents, students, school officials, teachers or staff will see your answers and no individually identifying data will be reported. Data collected are used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required by law (Public Law 107-279, Section 183). For more information on the data protection procedures please see the attached brochure or call RTI at 1-866-253-1063.

You will receive a check for \$25 within a few weeks of completing the questionnaire as a token of our appreciation.

National organizations endorsing HSLs:09 include the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, the National Science Teachers Association, the American Federation of Teachers, the National Education Association, the National Parent Teacher Association, National Association of Secondary School Principals, the American Association of School Administrators, and the National School Boards Association. The enclosed brochure provides detailed information about HSLs:09. If you have any questions about your participation in the survey, please call Randy Ottem at RTI toll-free at 1-877-292-HSLs. If you have questions about your rights as a study participant, you may call RTI's Office for Research Protection at 919-316-3358 in Durham, NC or 1-866-214-2043 (a toll-free number).

We thank you in advance for your cooperation in this important research.

Sincerely,

Stuart Kerachsky
Acting Commissioner
National Center for Education Statistics

Institute of Education Sciences
U.S. Department of Education

Enclosure: HSLs: 09 Brochure

COUNSELOR SURVEY LETTER

NCES/ED Letterhead

[Date]

<COUNSELOR NAME> Web Address: www.xxx.xxx.gov
<SCHOOL NAME > Your LOGIN: <XXXXXXX>
<ADDR1> Your PASSWORD: <XXXXXXX>
<CITY STATE ZIP>

Dear <Counselor Name>:

<SCHOOL NAME> has elected to participate in the High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSL:09), sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. NCES is authorized to conduct this study under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-279, Section 153). The purpose of the study is to understand the impact of the high school experience on students' learning and educational and career choices and to explore the transitions from high school to postsecondary education, the work force, and adulthood. HSL:09 includes approximately 30 9th-graders per school from more than 940 high schools across the country. Each student in the study will complete a math assessment and a background questionnaire. For more information on the study and RTI, the nonprofit organization conducting it, please see the attached brochure.

Your participation is voluntary; however, as a counselor at <SCHOOL NAME>, your understanding of the influence of the school's academic policies and programs on the overall learning environment is crucial to the study. Therefore, we ask that you complete an online questionnaire, which will take approximately 30-40 minutes for most respondents. To do so, please log in using the web link and unique LOGIN and PASSWORD provided above. Your responses will be protected from disclosure; no parents, students, school officials, teachers or staff will see your answers and no individually identifying data will be reported. Data collected are used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required by law (Public Law 107-279, Section 183). For more information on the data protection procedures please see the attached brochure or call RTI at 1-877-292-HSL.

National organizations endorsing HSL include the American School Counselors Association, the American Association of School Administrators, the National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, the National Parent Teacher Association, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the American Association of School Administrators, and the National School Boards Association among others. The enclosed brochure provides detailed information about HSL:09. If you have any questions about your participation in the survey, please call Mr. Randy Ottem at RTI toll-free at 1-877-292-HSL. If you have questions about your rights as a study participant, you may call RTI's Office for Research Protection at 919-316-3358 in Durham, NC or 1-866-214-2043 (a toll-free number).

We thank you in advance for your cooperation in this important research.

Sincerely,

Stuart Kerachsky
Acting Commissioner
National Center for Education Statistics
Institute of Education Sciences

U.S. Department of Education

Enclosure: HSLs: 09 Brochure

PARENT SURVEY LETTER
NCES/ED Letterhead

<PARENT NAME>
<ADDR1>
<ADDR2>
<CITY STATE ZIP>

Web Address: www.xxx.xxx.gov
Your LOGIN: <XXXXXXXX>
Your PASSWORD: <XXXXXXXX>

Dear <Parent or Guardian Name>:

<SCHOOL NAME> has elected to participate in the High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSL:09), sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. NCES is authorized to conduct this study under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-279, Section 153). The purpose of the study is to understand the impact of the high school experience on students' learning and educational and career choices and to explore the transitions from high school to postsecondary education, the work force, and adulthood. HSL:09 includes approximately 30 9th-graders per school from more than 940 high schools across the country. Each student in the study will complete a math assessment and a background questionnaire. For more information on the study and the RTI, the nonprofit organization conducting it, please see the attached brochure.

Your participation is voluntary; however, as the parent or guardian of <STUDENT NAME>, you are a unique source of information on the family background; information about the home environment is crucial to the study. Therefore, we ask that you complete an online questionnaire, which will take approximately 30 minutes for most respondents. To do so, please log in using the web link and unique LOGIN and PASSWORD provided above. Your responses will be protected from disclosure; no parents, students, school officials, teachers or staff will see your answers and no individually identifying data will be reported. Data collected are used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required by law (Public Law 107-279, Section 183). For more information on the data protection procedures please see the attached brochure or call RTI at 1-877-282-HSL or 1-877-282-4757.

National organizations endorsing HSL include the National Parent Teacher Association, the National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, American School Counselors Association, the American Association of School Administrators and the National Association of Secondary School Principals among others. The enclosed brochure provides detailed information about HSL:09. If you have any questions about participation in the study, please call Mr. Randy Ottem at RTI toll-free at 1-877-282-HSL or 1-877-282-4757. If you have questions about rights as a study participant, you may call RTI's Office for Research Protection at 919-316-3358 in Durham, NC or 1-866-214-2043 (a toll-free number).

We thank you in advance for your cooperation in this important research.

Sincerely,

Stuart Kerachsky
Acting Commissioner
National Center for Education Statistics
Institute of Education Sciences
U.S. Department of Education

Enclosure: HSL:09 Brochure

PARENT IMPLIED CONSENT LETTER

NCES/ED Letterhead

Dear Parent or Guardian:

We are pleased to inform you that your child has been selected to participate in the High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSLs:09), a national education study sponsored by the U. S. Department of Education. The purpose of the study is to understand the impact of the high school experience on students' learning and their educational and career choices, and to explore the transitions students make from high school to postsecondary education, the labor force, and adulthood. Approximately 24,000 students from 940 schools across the country have been randomly selected to participate in HSLs:09, which will be conducted in the fall 2009. In a few weeks, your teenager will be asked to spend approximately 90 minutes completing a background questionnaire and a math test on a computer at school.

HSLs:09 will measure achievement and various influences on the plans and decision-making of high school students. On the questionnaire students will be asked about their current education activities such as coursework, study habits, extracurricular activities, future plans, attitudes and beliefs. In addition, we would like you to complete a parent survey that will provide important background information. You will be contacted separately to complete this survey. We will also ask a school administrator, a school counselor, and your teenager's math and science teachers to complete a questionnaire, which will provide information about programs and practices at the school.

An important feature of HSLs:09 is that it is longitudinal, meaning it will follow the same students as they progress through school and eventually enter the work force and/or go to college. In two years, we would like to contact your teenager again for a follow-up study, so we will ask for his/her address and telephone number and those of a relative or close friend. Transcript data of coursework and grades will also be collected from the school.

The U.S. Department of Education is authorized by federal law (Public Law 107-279) to conduct HSLs:09. Data collected are used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required by law (Public Law 107-279, Section 183). No individual data (such as names or addresses) will be reported. Participation is voluntary and there is no penalty if you or your teenager decides not to participate. Your teenager may choose not to answer any question. There are no risks to your teenager from taking part in the study. The data collected will be used in analyses to understand students' course-taking behaviors, motivation and achievement, and how students decide what to do during and after high school.

If you allow your teenager to participate, you do not need to return this form. If for any reason you object to his or her participation, please fill out the enclosed form and return it to his/her school as soon as possible.

The enclosed brochure provides more information about HSLs:09. If you have questions about the study please call Mr. Dan Pratt at RTI, toll-free, at 1-866-253-1063 between 9 AM and 5 PM Eastern time, Monday through Friday. RTI is a non-profit research organization in North Carolina that has been contracted to collect the data. If you have questions about your rights as a study participant, you may call RTI's Office for Research Protection toll-free at 1-866-214-2043. Both Mr. Pratt and staff from the Office for Research Protection can be reached at: RTI, P.O. Box 12194, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709.

We thank you in advance for your cooperation in this important research.

Sincerely,

Stuart Kerachsky
Acting Commissioner
National Center for Education Statistics
Institute of Education Sciences
U.S. Department of Education

Enclosure: HSLs: 09 Brochure

PARENT ACTIVE CONSENT LETTER
NCES/ED Letterhead

Dear Parent or Guardian:

We are pleased to inform you that your child has been selected to participate in the High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSLs:09), a national education study sponsored by the U. S. Department of Education. The purpose of the study is to understand the impact of the high school experience on students' learning and their educational and career choices, and to explore the transitions students make from high school to postsecondary education, the labor force, and adulthood. Approximately 24,000 students from 940 high schools across the country have been randomly selected to participate in HSLs:09, which will be conducted in the fall 2009. In a few weeks, your teenager will be asked to spend approximately 90 minutes completing a background questionnaire and a math test on a computer at school.

HSLs:09 will measure achievement and various influences on the plans and decision-making of high school students. On the questionnaire students will be asked about their current education activities such as coursework, study habits, extracurricular activities, future plans, attitudes and beliefs. In addition, we would like you to complete a parent survey that will provide important background information. You will be contacted separately to complete this survey. We will also ask a school administrator, a school counselor, and your teenager's math and science teachers to complete a questionnaire, which will provide information about programs and practices at the school.

An important feature of HSLs:09 is that it is longitudinal, meaning it will follow the same students as they progress through school and eventually enter the work force and/or go to college. In two years, we would like to contact your teenager again for a follow-up study, so we will ask for his/her address and telephone number and those of a relative or close friend. Transcript data of coursework and grades will also be collected from the school.

The U.S. Department of Education is authorized by federal law (Public Law 107-279) to conduct HSLs:09. Data collected are used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required by law (Public Law 107-279, Section 183). No individual data (such as names or addresses) will be reported. Participation is voluntary and there is no penalty if you or your teenager decides not to participate. Your teenager may choose not to answer any question. There are no risks to your teenager from taking part in the study. The data collected will be used in analyses to understand students' course-taking behaviors, motivation and achievement, and how students decide what to do during and after high school.

Please take a moment in the next day or two to fill out the enclosed form and return it to your teenager's school in the enclosed envelope. We cannot allow your teenager to participate without your written consent.

The enclosed brochure provides more information about HSLs:09. If you have questions about the study please call Mr. Dan Pratt at RTI, toll-free, at 1-866-253-1063 between 9 AM and 5 PM Eastern time, Monday through Friday. RTI is a non-profit research organization in North Carolina that has been contracted to collect the data. If you have questions about your rights as a study participant, you may call RTI's Office for Research Protection toll-free at 1-866-214-2043. Both Mr. Pratt and staff from the Office for Research Protection can be reached at: RTI, P.O. Box 12194, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709.

We thank you in advance for your cooperation in this important research.

Sincerely,

Stuart Kerachsky
Acting Commissioner
National Center for Education Statistics
Institute of Education Sciences
U.S. Department of Education

