

**FRSS 7-28-09 Response to OMB Questions**  
**Arts Surveys, 1850-New**

**From OMB**

As you may know, the House Appropriations Committee's Report on FY 2010 appropriations included language (pages 212-213) requesting the any future NAEP or FRSS survey of arts education provide "comprehensive reports on the status of all arts education disciplines." Does NCES believe that the currently pending FRSS survey meets the spirit of this request? If not, would NCES provide an assessment of what it would take to meet this request?

**Response from NCES**

The currently pending FRSS surveys were requested by Congress, and included in the FY 2008 appropriations for the U.S. Department of Education (House Bill report H16251 and Senate Report 110-107). The appropriations report specified that the surveys were to be conducted by the Office of Innovation and Improvement (OII) and the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), using the NCES Fast Response Survey System (FRSS). The surveys were to borrow from and build on the 1999-2000 FRSS surveys on arts education. As stated in Senate Report 110-107, "The Committee expects this survey and reporting to have the comprehensive quality of the 2002 report and to include national samples of elementary and secondary school principals, as well as surveys of elementary and secondary classroom teachers and arts specialists." Teacher surveys at the secondary level are new to the current iteration of the FRSS arts education surveys; the 1999-2000 FRSS included teacher surveys at the elementary school level only.

NCES and OII, following the charge given to them by Congress in FY 2008, have spent the last year developing the FRSS surveys included in the OMB clearance request. Part of this development included extensive input from stakeholders in the arts education community, including representatives from the music, visual arts, dance, and theatre education associations, as discussed on page 6 of the OMB Supporting Statement. In addition to obtaining written feedback from these representatives, NCES and OII also convened a meeting on September 9, 2008, that included a larger number of stakeholders in the arts education community. This meeting included discussion of the Congressional intent of the surveys, as well as the limitations and difficulties of sampling secondary-level dance and drama/theatre teachers. Feasibility calls and pretests for the surveys were also conducted during the lengthy questionnaire development process. The school-level surveys at both the elementary and secondary levels request information about visual arts, music, dance, and drama/theatre, as they did in 1999-2000. This provides nationally representative information about all of these arts education disciplines.

Development work also included exploring the feasibility of incorporating the emerging area of media arts into the visual arts. Westat conducted feasibility calls with both secondary school principals and secondary school visual arts specialists about the term "media arts" and media arts instruction. The results of the feasibility calls indicated that there was no consistent understanding of the term. In addition, the technology-based courses that could be considered media arts were often taught within the framework of technology/computer courses. Based on the findings of the feasibility calls, Deborah Reeve of the National Art Education Association, who had been spear-heading the interest in media arts, agreed that media arts should not be incorporated into the FRSS arts surveys.

Prior to beginning intensive survey development for the current FRSS surveys, NCES, at the request of OII, also explored the possibility of including teacher surveys for dance and drama/theatre at the secondary level. This included reviewing information from the 1997 NAEP arts assessment, which concluded from the field test that there were not a sufficient number of qualified programs to obtain a nationally representative sample in these fields. NCES and OII concluded that FRSS, with much smaller sample sizes than NAEP, would be unable to locate and survey sufficient numbers of dance and

drama/theatre teachers without increasing the number of sampled schools far beyond the bounds of FRSS and the funds that Congress allocated for the project. Additional review indicated that the population of drama and dance instructors is not well defined. Some drama instructors, for instance, may teach primarily within other disciplines, such as English/language arts, and therefore be classified as English/language arts teachers rather than drama teachers. Similarly, some dance teachers may be classified as physical education teachers. These definitional problems would confound sampling problems already presented by the very small incidence of these instructors in the population.

In order to meet the dual goals of both providing the survey data quickly and examining change since 1999-2000, NCES will be preparing two kinds of reports for the 2009-10 FRSS arts education surveys. The first type of report will be NCES *First Look* reports, which are short reports designed to make data from a survey available quickly. NCES plans to release four *First Look* reports, one each for data from the elementary school survey, the secondary school survey, the elementary teacher surveys, and the secondary teacher surveys. NCES also plans to release a more comprehensive statistical analysis report that will include data from all of the surveys, and will also examine changes in arts education since 1999-2000. The comprehensive report will address the charge given to NCES in Senate Report 110-107 that the “reporting have the comprehensive quality of the 2002 report.”

Thus, NCES believes that the currently pending FRSS surveys are the appropriate surveys to be fielding at this time, commensurate with the charge from Congress in FY 2008, and in the spirit of the FY 2010 appropriations request to the best of the ability of FRSS surveys to provide this information.