

LETTERS FOR COMBINED SCHOOLS ONLY+

FRSS ARTS EDUCATION COVER LETTERS



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES

NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

September 2009

Dear Principal:

On behalf of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), U.S. Department of Education, I am asking your school to participate in the **congressionally mandated study on arts education** in U.S. public schools. The study includes surveys of elementary and secondary school principals to collect information about arts-related school policies and programs. It also includes surveys of elementary and secondary teachers to collect information about teacher training and experience, arts curricula and resources, and classroom practices. The federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has approved these surveys (OMB No. xxxx-xxxx). Westat, a research firm in Rockville, Maryland, is conducting the studies for NCES using the Fast Response Survey System (FRSS).

As principal of a school that has both elementary and secondary grades, we ask that you provide information only for grades that are considered **elementary** at your school. Please complete the enclosed **school questionnaire** about arts education at your school and have a **list of eligible teachers** prepared according to the enclosed instructions. The school survey is designed to take about 30 minutes to complete, and the teacher list is designed to take about 20 minutes to compile. We will use the list of eligible teachers to select one music specialist, one visual arts specialist, and one general education classroom teacher. In January 2010, we will ask the selected teachers to complete a three-page survey designed to take about 30 minutes.

- ✍ **Why is NCES conducting the surveys?** These surveys were mandated by Congress to provide nationally representative information on arts education in public schools. Data from this study will help to examine changes in arts education from 1999–2000, when NCES conducted the last national study on the topic. The teacher surveys will collect information on arts curricula and classroom practices that can only be obtained from teachers.
- ✍ **Why is participation by your school important?** Your school's participation, while voluntary, is vital to the development of national estimates. We need your input because your school is one of a small sample of schools selected for the study.
- ✍ **How does NCES protect the confidentiality of the information that you provide?** The list of eligible teachers will only be used to sample teachers for the survey and will only be seen by people authorized to work on the survey. The list should contain only teachers' names and no other identifying information. The information collected on the school and teacher surveys may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose unless otherwise compelled by law (Public Law 107-279, Education Sciences Reform Act, Section 183). Your district has been informed about this survey.
- ✍ **What do you get from the study?** A copy of the final report for each study will be sent to all participating schools once the study is completed.

The **school survey** may be completed using either the enclosed questionnaire or an online version available through the Internet. The online survey is available at www.frss-elementary-arts-survey.org. The username and password appear on the Web Survey Information Sheet included in the school survey packet. The paper version of the questionnaire may be returned to Westat in the postage-paid envelope. **The school survey should be completed only once, using either the paper or the online version.**

The **list of eligible teachers** may be submitted by toll-free fax (1-800-254-0984) or mailed in the postage-paid envelope, according to the instructions in the teacher list packet.

We ask that the school survey and list of eligible teachers be completed **within 3 weeks**, and that you keep a copy for your files. If you have any questions about this study, please contact Basmat Parsad, the Westat survey manager, at 1-800-937-8281, ext. 8222 (toll-free) or 301-251-8222, or by e-mail at basmatparsad@westat.com. You may also call Peter Tice, the NCES Project Officer, at 202-502-7497. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Stuart Kerachsky
Acting Commissioner

Enclosures

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006



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As principal of a school that has both elementary and secondary grades, we ask that you provide information only for grades that are considered **secondary** at your school. Please complete the enclosed **school questionnaire** about arts education at your school and have a **list of music and visual arts teachers** prepared according to the enclosed instructions. The school survey is designed to take about 30 minutes to complete, and the teacher list is designed to take about 20 minutes to compile. We will use the list of teachers to select one music specialist and one visual arts specialist. In January 2010, we will ask the selected teachers to complete a three-page survey designed to take about 30 minutes.

- ✍ **Why is NCES conducting the surveys?** These surveys were mandated by Congress to provide nationally representative information on arts education in public schools. Data from this study will help to examine changes in arts education from 1999–2000, when NCES conducted the last national study on the topic. The teacher surveys will collect information on arts curricula and classroom practices that can only be obtained from teachers.
- ✍ **Why is participation by your school important?** Your school's participation, while voluntary, is vital to the development of national estimates. We need your input because your school is one of a small sample of schools selected for the study.
- ✍ **How does NCES protect the confidentiality of the information that you provide?** The list of eligible teachers will only be used to sample teachers for the survey and will only be seen by people authorized to work on the survey. The list should contain only teachers' names and no other identifying information. The information collected on the school and teacher surveys may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose unless otherwise compelled by law (Public Law 107-279, Education Sciences Reform Act, Section 183). Your district has been informed about this survey.
- ✍ **What do you get from the study?** A copy of the final report for each study will be sent to all participating schools once the study is completed.

The **school survey** may be completed using either the enclosed questionnaire or an online version available through the Internet. The online survey is available at www.frss-secondary-arts-survey.org. The username and password appear on the Web Survey Information Sheet included in the school survey packet. The paper version of the questionnaire may be returned to Westat in the postage-paid envelope. **The school survey should be completed only once, using either the paper or the online version.**

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We ask that the school survey and list of eligible teachers be completed **within 3 weeks**, and that you keep a copy for your files. If you have any questions about this study, please contact Basmat Parsad, the Westat survey manager, at 1-800-937-8281, ext. 8222 (toll-free) or 301-251-8222, or by e-mail at basmatparsad@westat.com. You may also call Peter Tice, the NCES Project Officer, at 202-502-7497. Thank you for your assistance.

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As principal of a school that has both elementary and secondary grades, we ask that you provide information only for grades that are considered **elementary** at your school. Please complete a **list of music and visual arts teachers** prepared according to the enclosed instructions. This activity is designed to take about 20 minutes. We will use the list of eligible teachers to select one music specialist and one visual arts specialist. In January 2010, we will ask the selected teachers to complete a three-page survey designed to take 30 minutes or less.

- ✍ **Why is NCES conducting the surveys?** These surveys were mandated by Congress to provide nationally representative information on arts education in public schools. Data from this study will help to track changes in arts education from 1999–2000, when NCES conducted the last national study on the topic. The teacher surveys will collect information on arts curricula and classroom practices that cannot be obtained at the school level.
- ✍ **Why is participation by your school important?** Your school's participation, while voluntary, is vital to the development of national estimates. We need the teacher list and input from your teachers because your school is one of a small sample of schools selected for the study.
- ✍ **How does NCES protect the confidentiality of the information that you provide?** The list of eligible teachers will only be used to sample teachers for the survey and will only be seen by people authorized to work on the survey. The list should contain only teachers' names and no other identifying information. The information collected on the school and teacher surveys may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose unless otherwise compelled by law (Public Law 107-279, Education Sciences Reform Act, Section 183). Your district has been informed about this survey.
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As principal of a school that has both elementary and secondary grades, we ask that you provide information only for grades that are considered **secondary** at your school. Please complete a **list of music and visual arts teachers** prepared according to the enclosed instructions. This activity is designed to take about 10 minutes. We will use the list of teachers to select one music specialist and one visual arts specialist. In January 2010, we will ask the selected teachers to complete a three-page survey designed to take about 30 minutes.

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