

Appendix B – Participant Contact Materials

Initial letter to send out in the fall

Dear <panel member name>,

Did you know that about 10 percent of first-year public school teachers do not return to teaching the following year? After that first year, what happens to teachers who leave teaching and to those who continue to teach? That's what we'd like to find out and why we need your help!

We invite you to participate in the Beginning Teacher Longitudinal Study (BTLS). The BTLS is a study of people, like you, who were first-year public school teachers during the 2007–08 school year. Enclosed is a brochure that describes the study. Policymakers want to understand how to retain high-quality teachers. Your information will help us to describe how the career and life paths of these people develop over time.

Early in January 2010 you will be mailed (and e-mailed) an invitation to participate in the study. The invitation will contain the web link to the survey and your unique username and password. A **\$20** bill will be included with the mailed invitation as a token of thanks for your participation in the study.

Data from the BTLS will be used to

- Determine the rates at which teachers stay with the profession and leave the profession.
- Determine the rate of reentry into the profession.
- Describe those who stay in the teaching profession, those who move from one school to another, those who leave the profession, and those who return to the teaching profession.
- Determine whether those who leave the teaching profession are working elsewhere or not, and describe career patterns of those who leave the teaching profession and those who remain in the profession.
- Note changes in the highest degree earned and future plans.
- Report on attitudes about the teaching profession and job satisfaction.

The questionnaire is entirely web based and should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Questions include topics such as characteristics of your current position (teaching or nonteaching) and your opinions on your current position (including reasons for change in position, if one occurred).

Your 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 (Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 [ESRA 2002], Public Law 107-279, Section 183). The information you provide will be combined with the information provided by others and presented in statistical summaries. Your participation is very important to ensure that this

study yields meaningful results. However, you may decline to answer any or all of the items.

As we complete our preparation of the survey, we would like your help in updating our records. ***Please take a few minutes to verify, correct, or update the enclosed Contact Information Update sheet and return it to the U.S. Census Bureau in the enclosed postage-paid envelope.*** If you have any questions, please contact the U.S. Census Bureau staff at 1-888-595-1334 or via e-mail at dsd.education.surveys@census.gov.

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

Sincerely,

Stuart Kerachsky
Acting Commissioner
National Center for Education Statistics
Enclosures

Letter to send out announcing opening of survey

Dear <panel member name>,

Would you like to express your thoughts about teaching and receive \$20 as a token of appreciation?

We are urging you to participate in an important new study about teachers being conducted for the U.S. Department of Education by the U.S. Census Bureau. The Beginning Teacher Longitudinal Study (BTLS) will provide a new source of rich and comprehensive information on teachers' careers, starting with first-year teachers as they move into the next phase of their lives. This follow-up with participants who were first-year teachers in 2007 or 2008, such as yourself, will enable us to learn about career paths and produce much-needed data on movement within teaching as well as outside of teaching.

This is the third data collection in a key longitudinal study, which began with the Schools and Staffing Survey (in 2007–08) and the Teacher Follow-up Survey (in 2008–09). You were sampled for both of these surveys, and we thank you for your previous participation.

We invite you to complete the BTLS questionnaire over the Internet by going to <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/btls>. Type the username and password (provided below) on the Home/Login page, and Press “Sign in” to begin the questionnaire. If you are unable to complete the questionnaire by <date>, a U.S. Census Bureau interviewer will call you to complete the questionnaire by telephone. The interview will take about 15 to 25 minutes.

Please be assured that both the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Census Bureau follow strict procedures to protect the privacy of study participants and that your 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 (Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 [ESRA 2002], Public Law 107-279, Section 183). Your participation is voluntary, but your responses *are necessary* to make the results of this study accurate and timely.

Enclosed you will find a brochure with a brief description of the study. If you have any questions, please contact the U.S. Census Bureau staff at 1-888-595-1334. Staff will be available to take your call Monday through Friday between 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 midnight (Eastern Time). The U.S. Census Bureau is also available to answer your questions via e-mail at dsd.education.surveys@census.gov. Please also feel free to contact Freddie Cross, TFS Project Director, at freddie.cross@ed.gov or 1-202-502-7489.

We sincerely appreciate your participation and thank you for helping us conduct this important study.

Sincerely,

Go to: http://surveys.nces.ed.gov/btls Your study ID: «username» Your password: «password»
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Stuart Kerachsky
Acting Commissioner
National Center for Education Statistics
Enclosures

Initial E-mail with Username

Dear <panel member name>,

We need your input! Recently we mailed notification that you have been selected to participate in the Beginning Teacher Longitudinal Study (BTLS). This survey is sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics of the U.S. Department of Education. It is designed to help us better understand the career paths, whether in education or not, of those who were first-year teachers in 2007 or 2008.

Your responses will be collected on a secure website, and we estimate that it will take only 15 minutes of your time. To log in to the BTLS questionnaire, go to <http://surveys.nces.ed.gov/btls>.

Your username is: <username>

Your password will be sent in a separate e-mail.

We encourage you to participate in this survey. This longitudinal study involves surveying the same group of teachers over a period of time. Over time, this information will provide an in-depth examination of the careers of teachers and former teachers as they grow and change. As with all of our surveys, your responses are protected from disclosure by federal statute. More information is provided once you log in to the survey.

If you have any questions, please contact the U.S. Census Bureau toll-free at 1-888-595-1334 or by e-mail at dse.education.surveys@census.gov. Someone will be available to take your call or answer your e-mail Monday through Friday, between 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 midnight (Eastern Time). At any other time, please leave a message, and someone will get back to you as soon as possible.

Thanks, in advance, for your participation.
Sincerely,

Beginning Teacher Longitudinal Study Team
National Center for Education Statistics

Initial E-mail with Password

Dear <panel member name>,

Earlier today we sent you an e-mail about the Beginning Teacher Longitudinal Study (BTLS). The earlier e-mail contained your username.

Your password is: <password>

To log in to the BTLS questionnaire,

1. Go to <http://surveys.nces.ed.gov/btls>;
2. Enter your username provided in the initial e-mail;
3. Enter <password> for your password; and
4. Click "Sign in" to participate in the survey.

If you have any questions, please contact the U.S. Census Bureau toll-free at 1-888-595-1334 or by e-mail at dse.education.surveys@census.gov. Someone will be available to take your call or answer your e-mail Monday through Friday, between 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 midnight (Eastern Time). At any other time, please leave a message, and someone will get back to you as soon as possible. Thanks, in advance, for your participation in this important study.

Sincerely,

Beginning Teacher Longitudinal Study Team
National Center for Education Statistics

Reminder Letter

Dear <panel member name>,

Don't miss this opportunity to inform education policy!

Recently, the National Center for Education Statistics of the U.S. Department of Education contacted you to obtain your insight into the teaching profession and career paths of current and former teachers by completing the Beginning Teacher Longitudinal Study (BTLS) questionnaire. We rely on professionals like you to help us provide information to aid those who determine school policies and practices.

If you have already completed the survey, thank you for your assistance and please disregard this communication. If you haven't had the opportunity to take the survey yet, we encourage you to log in to the survey by

1. Going to <http://surveys.nces.ed.gov/btls>;
2. Entering _____ for your username;
3. Entering _____ for your password; and
4. Clicking "Sign in" to participate in the survey.

If you have any questions, please contact the U.S. Census Bureau staff at 1-888-595-1334. Staff will be available to take your call Monday thru Friday between 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 midnight (Eastern Time). The U.S. Census Bureau is also available to answer your questions via e-mail at dse.education.surveys@census.gov. Please also feel free to contact Freddie Cross, TFS Project Director, at freddie.cross@ed.gov or 1-202-502-7489.

We want to assure you that the information you provide is protected from disclosure by federal statute (P.L. 107-279, Title I, Part E, Sec. 183). We are using a secure server to collect your data online. In addition, information you provide on working conditions, commitment, job satisfaction, and perceptions and attitudes is combined with that of teachers and former teachers from all over the country to give an overall portrait of today's teacher career paths. Your 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. Your decision to participate is voluntary, but your responses are necessary to make the results of this study accurate and timely.

For additional information about the BTLS, please visit <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/btls/respondents.asp>.

Thank you, again, in advance for your cooperation in this important survey effort.

Sincerely,

Stuart Kerachsky
Acting Commissioner for Education Statistics
Office of the Commissioner

Reminder E-mail

Dear <panel member name>,

We know that you are really busy, but we need your help!

The Beginning Teacher Longitudinal Study (BTLS) telephone staff has been trying to reach you.

If you have already completed the survey, thank you for your assistance and please disregard this e-mail. If you haven't had the opportunity to complete the survey yet, we encourage you to log in to the survey by going to <http://surveys.nces.ed.gov/btls>.

Your username is: <username>

If you have forgotten your password, you will be able to retrieve it by using your username.

If you have any questions, please contact the Census Bureau toll-free at 1-888-595-1334 or by e-mail at dse.education.surveys@census.gov. Someone will be available to take your call or answer your e-mail Monday through Friday, between 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 midnight (Eastern Time). At any other time, please leave a message, and someone will get back to you as soon as possible.

Thanks, in advance, for your participation.
Sincerely,

Beginning Teacher Longitudinal Study Team
National Center for Education Statistics

<Logo>

CONTACT INFORMATION UPDATE

Username: «username»

Please review your current contact information displayed on the left side of the box below. Check here if all preprinted information in this section is **correct**.....

If the preprinted information is not correct or is not current, **please update** it in the space provided on the right side of the box.

First name/Middle name/Last name/suffix	Name:
	First Middle Last
Address	Address:
Address	
City/State/Zip	City State Zip code
Personal e-mail	Personal e-mail:
Work e-mail	Work e-mail:
Area code/phone number	Home phone: ()
Area code/phone number	Work phone: ()
Area code/phone number	Cell phone: ()

*Thank you for your assistance.
Please return this page in the enclosed postage-paid envelope.*

Information available on the web page

What is the purpose of this survey?

The purpose of this survey is to obtain information about the career paths of new teachers, including current teachers' experiences and satisfaction levels, and about former teachers' current employment and reasons for leaving the teaching profession.

Who authorizes this survey?

This survey is authorized by Title I, Part E, Sections 151(b) and 153(a) of Public Law 107-279, the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002. The U.S. Census Bureau is conducting this survey for the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) of the U.S. Department of Education.

Why should you participate in this survey?

Policymakers and education leaders rely on data from this study to inform their decisions concerning K–12 schools. This study provides important insight into the career paths of beginning teachers, and your participation will contribute to the success of this data collection. Because it is a sample, your responses represent the responses of other beginning teachers. Higher response rates give us confidence that the findings are representative of everyone who started out as a teacher 2 years ago.

Will your responses be kept confidential?

Your 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 (Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 [ESRA 2002], Public Law 107-279, Section 183).

How will your information be reported?

Your 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 (Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 [ESRA 2002], Public Law 107-279, Section 183). The information you provide will be combined with the information provided by others in statistical summaries.

Paperwork Burden Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1850-0617. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average ___ minutes per response, including the time spent to review instructions, search existing data sources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate(s) or suggestions for improving this form, please write to U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC 20202-4651. If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, e-mail dsd.education.surveys@census.gov, or write directly to Schools and Staffing Survey, National Center for Education Statistics, 1990 K Street, N.W., #9018, Washington, DC 20006.

Brochure Language

What is the Beginning Teacher Longitudinal Study?

The Beginning Teacher Longitudinal Study (BTLS) is an important new study of a group of public school teachers who began teaching in 2007 or 2008. The study will follow this cohort of teachers through the phases of their careers to create an unfolding “story.” You have been selected to be a part of this cohort.

Over time, the information gathered will permit a better understanding of the impact that different life events have on teachers’ careers and how teachers respond to transitions in their lives, such as moving to a different school or grade or subject, becoming a mentor, exiting teaching to enter the nonteaching workforce, starting a family, and so forth.

Why is the BTLS important?

This survey will contribute to policymakers’ understanding of the lives and careers of teachers over the course of time, even of those who leave the profession. More specifically the BTLS will gather information about

- the *percentage* of your cohort that leaves the profession—and the percentage that later re-enters it;
- the *characteristics* of those who stay in the teaching profession, move from one school to another, leave the profession temporarily, and leave permanently;
- the *career patterns* of those who remain in teaching and, in contrast, the career patterns of former teachers after they leave the profession;
- *personal educational activities* and plans for the future; and
- *attitudes* about the teaching profession and job satisfaction.

The BTLS is a *major, national long-term survey* of people who began teaching in 2007 or 2008. It will provide an excellent way for the voices of your cohort to be heard.

Why should I participate?

Policymakers and education researchers want to learn about *your* impressions of your experiences as a teacher. They want to know about, for example, whether you believe you received adequate support from your school, your training and educational background, and your impressions of your current job situation.

Even if you have left teaching, your continuing participation is very important because the decisions you make and the path you follow can help researchers and planners gain deeper insight into what influences a person’s choice to leave the teaching profession.

Your participation is crucial to making sure that the survey results will provide a true picture of teachers—and former teachers—across the country. By contributing information about your individual experience, you will be contributing to the future of the teaching profession as a whole.

How are the data collected?

You will receive e-mails containing a username, password, and link to the web-based questionnaire. Your responses to the survey are stored on a secure server, much like using PayPal™.

Does data remain confidential?

All responses are protected by Public Law 107-279, the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, Title I, Part E, Section 183. Your answers may be used for statistical purposes only and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose except as provided by law. The information you provide will be combined with the information provided by others in statistical summaries.

How was I selected?

Participants in this study were selected from among those who provided data about their first year of teaching in the most recent Schools and Staffing Survey. The sample for this new study was selected to be representative of the entire population of public school teachers who began teaching in 2007 or 2008.

What kinds of questions are asked?

You will be asked questions about your employment status (e.g., if you are currently teaching, working in a nonteaching position, or not working); characteristics of your current teaching or nonteaching position; your opinions of your current position, including the reasons for any change in your position that may have occurred; as well as background information.

Where do I get more information?

To see our publications and to obtain additional information, go to <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/btls>.

Recent reports and public-use data can be ordered free of charge from ED Pubs online at <http://edpubs.ed.gov> or by calling 1-877-4-ED-PUBS, while supplies last.