

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
Part B

NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

PRIVATE SCHOOL UNIVERSE SURVEY
July 2010—June 2013

OMB # 1850-0641

B. COLLECTION OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

B1. Respondent Universe

The target population for the survey consists of all private schools in the United States that are not supported primarily by public funds, provide classroom instruction for one or more of grades K-12 or comparable ungraded levels, and have one or more teachers.

B2. Procedures for Data Collection—Statistical Methods, Estimation Procedures, Accuracy, and Anticipated Problems

The universe frame to be used by NCES for the 2011-12 PSS will be composed of the 2011-12 PSS list frame and the 2011-12 area-search frame. The list frame is based on the 2009-10 PSS and is updated with current membership lists from private school associations and private school lists from state departments of education and social services (for kindergarten programs).¹ The area list is developed after a systematic search of approximately 124 randomly selected primary sampling units (PSUs). The list of schools found in this search is unduplicated with the list frame to yield the area-frame schools. The area frame is used to represent schools missing from the list frame. The 2007-08 area-frame search was conducted in 124 PSUs and identified 665 unduplicated schools, weighting up to represent 3,428 private schools.

A combination of mail/Internet, telephone follow-up, and personal visit follow-up will be used to ensure an anticipated 95 percent response rate for the 2011-12 PSS. The first mailout will be followed by a reminder card (1 week later) and by a second mailout to nonrespondents (1 month later). Six weeks after the second mailout, noninterview cases will be turned over to the CATI facility for telephone follow-up and, when necessary, to field staff for personal visit follow-up.

B.3 Methods for Maximizing Response Rates

Several procedures will be employed to ensure high response rates. The following elements of the data collection plan will contribute to the overall success of the survey.

1. Visible support from top-level federal education officials.

Top-level education department officials addressed the representatives of several private school associations at an NCES-sponsored meeting that took place in November 2009. The officials demonstrated their support for the survey by informing the representatives of the timing and objectives of the survey and by soliciting the representatives' cooperation to ensure the survey's success.

2. Interactive field monitoring with extensive follow-up (by telephone and personal visits) of nonrespondents.

¹ See appendices A and B for examples of letters used to request private school lists.

The survey will use mixed survey modes—mail/Internet, telephone, and personal interviews, as needed, to achieve high response levels in 2011-12. Past experience indicates that the majority of the school surveys will be completed by mail/Internet. Follow-up telephone or in-person interviews for the mail nonrespondents will be conducted to achieve an expected response rate of 95 percent.

In addition, the survey content is based upon administrative information that is commonly on file in private schools. The ease of answering the items should increase the respondent's willingness to complete the questionnaire.

B.4 Test of Procedures and Methods

The survey questionnaire and procedures will be based on those used in the 2009-10 PSS. See appendix D for a draft 2011-12 PSS questionnaire. Since no new items are to be included in the 2011-12 PSS questionnaire, there is no need to test the 2011-12 PSS questionnaire.

B5. Statistical Consultants, Agency Staff, and Contractors

In addition to review within NCES, Dennis Schwanz and Steven Tourkin, of the U.S. Census Bureau, reviewed the PSS sample design and related matters for statistical quality, feasibility, and suitability to the overall objectives of the survey. The following individuals have oversight of the data collection and analysis:

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