

**MEMORANDUM**

**OMB # 1850-0852 v.5**

DATE: April 19, 2010

TO: Shelly Martinez  
Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget

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SUBJECT: HSLs:09 1<sup>st</sup> Follow-up Field Test Locating and Sample Maintenance Procedures,  
1850-0852

Background

The High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSLs:09) focuses on understanding students' trajectories from the beginning of high school into postsecondary education, the workforce, and beyond. What students decide to pursue when, why, and how are crucial questions for HSLs:09, especially, but not solely, in regards to science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) courses, majors, and careers. For HSLs:09, students take an assessment in algebraic skills, reasoning, and problem solving, and students, their parents, math and science teachers, school administrators, and school counselors complete questionnaires.

The HSLs:09 full scale study comprises more than 20,000 9th graders in 944 schools who will be followed through their secondary and postsecondary years. The full scale study's data collection occurred in students' 9<sup>th</sup> grade year, starting in the fall of 2009 and ending in April 2010. The main study's first follow-up data collection will occur in 2012 when most sample members are in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade.

The procedures and instruments used in the HSLs:09 base year full scale study were initially tested among a field test sample of 1,000 students in 41 schools across five states. The base year field test was conducted in the fall of 2008. The HSLs:09 follow-up field test, when most of the field test sample will be 11<sup>th</sup> graders, will occur in 2011.

This memo outlines the procedures designed to locate field test sample members who will participate in the first follow-up field test. The sample maintenance and locating for the first follow-up field test will occur in 2010 to ensure that students can be located expeditiously

when the field test occurs in 2011. The sample maintenance and locating procedures in the first follow-up field test will be applied to the first follow-up full scale study, with modifications based on the field test results and experiences. Any changes to these procedures for the main study will be described in the field test clearance package, which will also seek approval for sample maintenance and locating procedures for the full scale study.

### Sample Maintenance Activities

Two broad categories of sample maintenance activities will be conducted in spring 2010, *School Enrollment Status Update* and *Parent Contact/Locating Data Update*. The two sections below provide details on each activity.

#### **School Enrollment Status Update**

The purpose of the school enrollment status update is to verify the enrollment status of the sampled students in each HSLs:09 field test school. We anticipate that the majority of the students will continue to be enrolled in the base year school, but a subset will have transferred to another school, dropped out of school, started home schooling, left the country, graduated early, or become deceased. Schools will be asked to provide each sampled field test student's status information in the spring of 2010 and again in the fall of 2010 when securing school participation for the first follow-up field test begins. Collecting this information in both school years (the current 2009-10 school year and the 2010-11 school year) is necessary to maintain current records.

A staff member at each of the 41 high schools that participated in the 2008 field test will be asked to review the list of sampled students from the base year field test. An average of 27 students per school comprised the field test cohort. For the subset of students who are no longer in the school, schools will be asked to provide the students' last date of attendance, current school status (transfer, dropout, etc), last known address and phone number, and, for transfer students, the name, city, and state of the student's new school. It should take 20 minutes, on average, to provide this information on the HSLs:09 secure website.

To initiate this contact, the school principal from each school will receive a lead letter that explains the purpose of the follow-up field test and includes a user name, password and secure website address. The letter will prompt the principal or designee to reset the password upon logging into the study (letters attached separately). There is no access to any information until the password is reset using a strong password. A test of the password's strength is built into the password change application. The user then proceeds to a screen where they verify the current enrollment of sampled students and provide any updated information on HSLs:09

students who are no longer enrolled. A separate attachment provides sample screen shots of the enrollment list update application.

If users must stop and continue updating later, they must use the new password they created. If users forget the new password, they must contact the HSLs:09 help desk to reset the password.

A follow-up email will be sent two weeks later to all non-respondents. There are two groups of School Enrollment List update non-respondents:

**Group One:** Has not changed their password or initiated the process at all. They will receive an email with the same study ID, password and URL prompting them to change the password and initiate the enrollment update process, just like the letter.

**Group Two:** Has started the update but has not "submitted" it. They will receive an email prompting them to continue and reminding them that if they have forgotten their password, they can contact the help desk to have it reset.

### **Parent/Student Address Update**

In addition to the school-level update, we plan to contact the 1,038 field test participants directly to update the sample address database. A mailing will be sent to the parent or guardian of each sampled student asking that the parent or guardian log onto our website and update their contacting information. For data security reasons, no personally identifiable information will be preloaded onto the website for this address update. Parents will be asked if their teenager will be at the same school as he/she attended in the fall of 2008, or if his/her school enrollment status has changed. This provides two sources of information in preparation for the first follow-up study. The address update will take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

The processes for both the school- and student-level updates have been approved by RTI's IRB office. Appendix C contains this IRB approval form.

### **Burden and Cost**

Estimates of response burden for the HSLs:09 enrollment status and locating activities are shown in table 1. Because the proposed field test will be the first application of the proposed electronic enrollment status update, the estimates of response burden are based on initial estimates developed from experience with ELS:2002.

**Table 1. Estimated burden on school staff and parents for completing the enrollment status update for the field test studies**

Respondents	Sample	Expected response rate	Number of respondents	Average burden/response <sup>1</sup>	Total burden (hours)
School Staff	41	95	39	20 minutes	13
Parents	1,276	10	128	5 minutes	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,317</b>		<b>167</b>		<b>24</b>

For high school staff, we have used \$20 per hour to estimate the cost to participants. The cost is estimated at \$260 for the field test. For parents, assuming a \$20 hourly wage, the cost to parent respondents is estimated to be \$220 for the field test.

Annualized Cost to the Federal Government

The cost estimate to the federal government submitted in April 2009 must be revised to include the most recent contract modification for the implementation of incentives in the full scale parent data collection. Updated estimated costs for HSLs:09 are shown in Table 2 along with cost estimates supplied in the prior submissions. These costs include the tasks representing the Field Test Locating and Tracing and Full Scale Locating and Tracing tasks (tasks 5 and 6, respectively).

**Table 2. Total costs to NCES**

Costs to NCES	2010 Updated Amount	2009 Updated Amount	Original Amount
Total HSLs:09 BY costs	\$18,376,580	\$18,226,580	\$15,205,684
Salaries and expenses	719,900	719,900	719,900
Contract costs	17,656,680	17,546,680	14,485,784
Field test (2008)	3,541,587	3,541,587	3,035,673
Salaries and expenses	215,648	215,648	215,648
Contract costs	3,325,939	3,325,939	2,820,025

NOTE: All costs quoted are exclusive of award fee. Field test costs represent Tasks 2 and 5 of the HSLs:09 contract.