

MEMORANDUM

OMB # 1850-0652 v.6

DATE: November 29, 2010

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

FROM: John Wirt
National Center for Education Statistics

THROUGH: Kashka Kubzdela
National Center for Education Statistics

SUBJECT: ELS 2002 Third-Follow-up 2011 Field Test and Full Scale Batch Tracing

This request is to amend the Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS 2002) Panel Maintenance clearance package approved by OMB on 9/10/2010 (OMB# 1850-0652 v.5), which included batch tracing and other sample maintenance activities being conducted as part of the Third Follow-up to ELS 2002. Per the approved plan, the first letters to both Field Test and Full-scale sample members and their parents have already been sent, requesting update of their addresses. A return envelope and form was included with these letters (see ELS 2002 3rd-Follow-up 2012 Field Test Batch Tracing Appendix 2.doc) and the sample members and parents were asked to write address update information on the form and return it to a mailbox maintained by the ELS contractor.

We have since determined that it would be beneficial and possible to send reminder emails to all of the Field Test and Full-scale sample members and their parents who have not responded to the letter. The E-mails would remind them of the request and provide an alternative method for updating or confirming their address - a link to the ELS data collection website where update address information could be entered online instead of having to mail the form back. If this plan is approved by OMB, the goal is to try to send the reminder E-mails within two to three weeks of when the letters were sent.

Contacting the sample members and their parents by email to remind them of the mailed request for update information was not included in the original ELS:2002 Third Follow-up Panel Maintenance, because some security issues concerning emailed messages with reply via a web link had not been resolved. The issues have now been resolved so that the reminder can now be emailed to sample members in order to boost response rates as much as possible. The text of the email reminder (see attached) is composed so as to personalize the communication with sample members and their parents as much as possible

Copies of this emailed reminder sent to *Field Test sample members and their parents*, as distinct from Full-scale sample members and parents, will also include a short paragraph reminding them of the incentive that will be paid if they respond (for the sample members that were selected as the experimental group). This incentive will be offered as part of the approved incentives experiment to be included in the Field Test.

We would also like to follow-up this first email reminder with a second email reminder to those Field Test and Full-scale sample members and their parents who have not responded within two or three weeks to the first reminder.

The original Panel Maintenance Clearance request also includes sending a second update request letter to sample members and parents in the Full-scale data collection (only) just before the Full-scale data collection begins. This will be about a year after the first update letter request was sent, since the Full-scale data collection will occur about one year after the Field test. The request letter asks the Full-scale sample members and parents to again update their addresses in the same way as in the current request, by mailing in a form. As with the current letter request, we would then like to send two reminder emails to all of the (Full-scale) sample members and parents who do not respond within two to three weeks.

If the experiment now underway in the Field Test demonstrates the effectiveness of incentives in boosting response rates for address updates, we will request to offer the incentive for responding to the request for address update information to all Full-scale sample members and their parents.

Finally, in a further attempt to communicate with the Full-scale sample members and their parents and to personalize our relationship with them, we would like to send a cover letter to them with any incentive checks, as in the address updating for the Field Test, thanking the sample member directly for responding. A proposed text for this thank you letter is also attached.

Draft versions of the four email reminders and the letter that we would like to enclose with the incentive checks thanking them for their assistance with ELS:2002 are attached.

Attachments:

- Appendix 1: Email texts for Field Test Phase of Panel Maintenance Reminder Emails.doc
- Appendix 2: Email texts for Full-scale Phase of Panel Maintenance Reminder Emails.doc
- Appendix 3: Previously approved texts for the Panel Maintenance Request Letters.doc (already part of the approved ICR)