

APPENDIX A. NOTIFICATION LETTERS

State Chief School Officer
School District Superintendent
School Principal (in schools with district approval process)
School Principal

Dear **Chief State School Officer**:

I am writing to request your participation in an important study being conducted for the U.S. Department of Education (ED). As you know, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) included an unprecedented \$100 billion of new funding for educational institutions and programs. ED officials, including Secretary Duncan, and others want to understand how those funds are being used to invest in educational capacity and to stimulate reforms. They also want to know what challenges your state is facing in implementing new improvement strategies. Your state's participation – at the state education agency level, the district level, and the school level – in ED's multi-year evaluation is critical to drawing lessons for future federal activity.

We seek your help in ensuring high rates of response to the surveys we will administer in spring 2011, spring 2012, and spring 2013. In developing the surveys we have made every effort to take into account other federal reporting requirements including those under ARRA. We would appreciate your assistance in the following ways:

- 1) **Designate a study liaison:** Given the breadth of the survey topic areas, we expect that more than one person in your agency will need to contribute to the survey to provide a complete agency response. The liaison can assign portions of the survey to the appropriate individuals and ensure that all parts of the survey are completed in a timely manner.
- 2) **Encourage your districts and schools to complete the evaluation surveys:** The higher the response from the districts and schools sampled in your state, the more valid the aggregate survey information we provide back to you will be. Every state will receive a set of tables summarizing the ARRA survey data from their state. Attached is the list of your state's districts and schools that were randomly selected for the study. We will be contacting the relevant superintendents and principals to solicit their participation but would be grateful for your support.

The evaluation team includes Westat, Policy Studies Associates (PSA), and school finance experts from the University of Wisconsin, working under the direction of ED's Institute of Education Sciences (IES). [Contact name] from PSA has been assigned as your agency's primary contact for the ARRA Evaluation and will contact you shortly to answer any questions you may have and to ask who will serve as the SEA Liaison for this evaluation. We estimate that this process will take up to 30 minutes. Your participation is voluntary.

Information collected for this study come under the confidentiality and data protection requirements of the Institute of Education Sciences which is discussed in further detail below..

Feel free to contact me with questions or issues. My e-mail is mbhaslam@policystudies.com . Mark Low can also assist. His email is mloew@policystudies.com. You can reach either of us at 1-800-xxxxxxx. We look forward to working with your agency over the next several years to make the ARRA evaluation a success.

Sincerely,

M. Bruce Haslam

ARRA Evaluation Project Design Director

Notice of Confidentiality

Information collected for this study come under the confidentiality and data protection requirements of the Institute of Education Sciences (The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, Title I, Part E, Section 183). Information that could identify an individual or institution will be separated from the survey responses submitted, kept in secured locations, and be destroyed as soon as they are no longer required. Survey responses will be used only for research purposes. The reports prepared for the study will summarize findings across individuals and institutions and will not associate responses with a specific district, school, or person. We will not provide information that identifies district or school respondents to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.

Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995

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 xxxx-xxxx. The approximate time required to discuss your participation in the evaluation is estimated to be 30 minutes. Your participation is voluntary. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimates or suggestions for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 20202-4651. If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, write directly to: [insert program sponsor/office], U.S. Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue, S.W., [insert building/room number], Washington, D.C. 20202-xxxx.

School District Superintendent

«Sal» «Sup_Fname» «Sup_Lname»
«Sup_Title»
«District_Address1»
«City», «State» «Zip»

Dear «Sal» «Sup_Lname»:

I am writing to request your participation in an important study being conducted for the U.S. Department of Education (ED). As you know, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) included an unprecedented \$100 billion of new funding for educational institutions and programs. ED officials, including Secretary Duncan, and others want to understand how those funds are being used to invest in educational capacity and to stimulate reforms. They also want to know what challenges states, districts, and schools are facing in implementing new improvement strategies.

Your district has been randomly selected to partake in this evaluation. Your response to the web-based spring 2011, spring 2012, and spring 2013 surveys - along with response from your state education agency and select schools in your district - is critical to drawing lessons for future federal activity. In turn, we assure you that we have made every effort to take into account other federal reporting requirements, including those under ARRA, when developing the surveys. Your district may also be asked to participate in a very short “pulse” poll that is part of this evaluation.

We would appreciate your assistance in the following ways:

- 1) **Designate a study liaison:** Given the breadth of the survey topic areas, we expect that more than one person in your district will need to contribute to the survey to provide a complete district response. The liaison can assign portions of the survey to the appropriate individuals and ensure that all parts of the survey are completed in a timely manner.
- 2) **Encourage your schools to complete the evaluation surveys:** In addition to the nationwide reports we will issue, each state will receive a report with an individualized set of tables. The higher the response from both the districts and the schools sampled in your state, the more valid the information we provide will be. Attached is a list of the schools that were randomly selected from your district for the study. We will be contacting the principals to solicit their participation but would be grateful for your support.

The evaluation team includes Westat, Policy Studies Associates (PSA), and school finance experts from the University of Wisconsin, working under the direction of ED’s Institute of Education Sciences (IES). [Contact name] from Westat has been assigned as your agency’s primary contact for the ARRA Evaluation and will contact you shortly to answer any questions you may have and to ask who will serve as the District Liaison for this evaluation. We estimate that this process will take up to 30 minutes. Your participation is voluntary. During this call, [Contact name] will also ask whether your district has a formal approval process that we must complete before beginning data collection.

Study findings will be provided in aggregate. No districts or schools will be identified in any evaluation reports or in any state level tabulations. As explained below, all data collected for this study will be kept confidential (The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002), except as required by law.

Feel free to contact me with questions or issues. My e-mail is babettegutmann@westat.com. Juanita Lucas-McLean, the evaluation's Data Collection Manager, can also assist. Her e-mail address is juanitalucas-mclean@westat.com. We both can be reached by calling 1-800-937-8281. We look forward to working with your district over the next several years to make the ARRA evaluation a success.

Sincerely,



Babette Gutmann
ARRA Evaluation Project Director

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School Principal (in schools with a district approval process)

«Sal» «Prin_Fname» «Prin_Lname»
«Prin_Title»
«School_Address1»
«City», «State» «Zip»

Dear «Sal» «Prin_Lname»:

I am writing to request your participation in an important study being conducted for the U.S. Department of Education (ED). As you know, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) included an unprecedented \$100 billion of new funding for educational institutions and programs. ED officials, including Secretary Duncan, and others want to understand how those funds are being used to invest in educational capacity and to stimulate reforms. They also want to know what challenges states, districts, and schools are facing in implementing new improvement strategies.

Your school has been randomly selected to partake in this evaluation. Your response to the web-based spring 2011, spring 2012, and spring 2013 surveys - along with response from your state education agency and your own district - is critical to drawing lessons for future federal activity. In turn, we assure you that we have made every effort to take into account other federal reporting requirements, including those under ARRA, when developing the surveys.

The evaluation team includes Westat, Policy Studies Associates (PSA), and school finance experts from the University of Wisconsin, working under the direction of ED's Institute of Education Sciences (IES). We notified your superintendent that your school was selected to participate in this evaluation, we completed your district's formal approval process for conducting research, and we received authorization for the evaluation. We will contact you shortly to answer any questions you may have. We estimate that this process will take up to 10 minutes. Your participation is voluntary. We ask that when you receive a letter from Westat that provides instructions for accessing and completing the survey instrument you respond.

Study findings will be provided in aggregate. No districts or schools will be identified in any evaluation reports or in any state level tabulations. As explained below, all data collected for this study will be kept confidential (The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002), except as required by law.

Feel free to contact me with questions or issues. My e-mail is babettegutmann@westat.com. Juanita Lucas-McLean, the evaluation's Data Collection Manager, can also assist. Her e-mail address is juanitalucas-mclean@westat.com. We both can be reached by calling 1-800-937-8281. We look forward to working with your school over the next several years to make the ARRA evaluation a success.

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Babette Gutmann

ARRA Evaluation Project Director

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School Principal

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«Prin_Title»
«School_Address1»
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