

**APPENDIX D**

**STUDY SUMMARY  
ED COVER LETTER  
FILE UPLOAD INSTRUCTIONS  
MOU TEMPLATE  
CONSENT FORM**

# *National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS-2012)*

## **Why Are We Studying “Transition”?**

More than two million children receive federally funded special education services. For youth with disabilities, the transition to adulthood is often marked by challenges that can impede their education, employment, and ability to live independently. This study will help educators and policymakers identify and address the barriers to successful transition.

NLTS-2012 is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education and is part of the congressionally mandated National Assessment of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA).

## **Focus of the Study**

The study will compare a national sample of youth with disabilities to those without disabilities, examining:

- Youth characteristics
- Services and accommodations received in school, and courses of study
- Transition experiences and outcomes as youth leave school, including the extent to which they enter postsecondary education, secure jobs, and live independently

To examine changes in youth experiences and outcomes over time, the study will also compare the current cohort of youth with disabilities to two cohorts studied previously.

## **Sources of Information**

Data collection will occur in spring 2012 and spring 2014 and include a sample of 15,000 students in approximately 300 school districts. The nationally representative sample will be randomly selected from among all public school students ages 13 to 21 as of December 2011. In addition to collecting students' school records, the study team will conduct surveys with youth and their parents, teachers, and principals.

## **The Study Team**

The study is being conducted by Mathematica Policy Research ([www.mathematica-mpr.com](http://www.mathematica-mpr.com)), the Institute on Community Integration at the University of Minnesota (<http://ici.umn.edu>), and Decision Information Resources ([www.dir-online.com](http://www.dir-online.com)).

If you have questions, please contact Mathematica's project director, John Burghardt, by phone at (609) 275-2395 or by email at [jburchardt@mathematica-mpr.com](mailto:jburchardt@mathematica-mpr.com).

## **Confidentiality**

Responses to all data collection activities will be kept confidential and be used only for research purposes. The reports prepared for the study will summarize findings across large groups of participants and will not associate responses with a specific district, school, or individual.

[ED LETTERHEAD]

DATE

Superintendent [or Other Title]  
District  
Street Address  
City, ST ZIP

Dear Dr./Mr./Ms. LASTNAME:

I am writing to tell you about an important new U.S. Department of Education-sponsored study of youth and their transitions beyond high school, the National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS-2012). NLTS-2012 is part of the congressionally-mandated national assessment of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). [DISTRICT NAME] has been selected to help represent the nation in developing a profile of the services received and outcomes achieved by students with and without disabilities.

The transition to adulthood is a difficult time, but even more so for youth with disabilities. As you know, in addition to the host of issues facing all transition-age youth, students receiving special education services face distinct barriers related to health, social isolation, service needs, and access to supports. Over 2 million children receive special education services funded under Part B of IDEA. Many more require some accommodation (under section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973). NLTS-2012 will help identify the barriers to more effective transitions and, by examining the relationship between services and outcomes, give policy makers information to develop strategies to overcome these barriers and lead to improved academic and employment outcomes, reduced risk of dependency, and averting a lifetime of poverty.

[DISTRICT NAME], along with 300 other school districts, will help provide this crucial look at the transition of youth with disabilities. I realize that the competing demands and limited resources currently faced by school districts represent a serious challenge to active participation in research studies. I want to assure you that this concern played an important role in designing this study to be as least burdensome as possible on school and district staff. The Department of Education has contracted a highly professional study team led by Mathematica Policy Research, along with their partners, the Institute on Community Integration (ICI) and Decision Information Resources, Inc. (DIR), to work closely with districts and conduct the study the study in an agreeable and efficient manner that will not distract from your primary mission.

The study will include a nationally representative sample of youth, with a particular focus on youth between the ages of 13 and 21 who receive special education services or accommodation. There is no available substitute for this information that is relied on by policymakers and educators. The primary information being sought will come from confidential, easy to respond to surveys of selected principals, teachers, students, and their parents. Each individual will be free to decide if they want to participate and will receive a small payment as gratitude for their effort if they choose to do so. The district's assistance is being sought initially to provide the information necessary to select no more 50 students as potential study participants.

A member of the research team will contact you in the next few days to discuss how to best proceed. I have enclosed some additional information about the study. If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact me at xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx. Please accept my appreciation in advance for assisting this important research effort.

Sincerely,

Federal Project Officer

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. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 61 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is voluntary. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Amanda DeGraff at 555 New Jersey Ave NW, Washington DC, 20208 or email Amanda.degraff@ed.gov and reference the OMB Control Number XXXX-XXXX. Note: Please do not return the completed data file application to this address."



# National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS-2012) Data File Upload Instructions

Please provide a file of with the following fields for all district students with a date of birth between December 2, 1989 and December 1, 1998.

## VARIABLE LIST:

- Gender
- Race/Ethnicity
- Date of birth
- School
- Grade level
- IEP status
- 504 status
- Federal disability category (if applicable)
- Free/Reduced-price lunch status
- Student ID, or an identifier that can be linked back to full student record

## OPTION 1: WEB (*Preferred*)

1. **GO TO:** [https://www.\[placeholder\].org](https://www.[placeholder].org)
2. **LOGIN** (case sensitive):  
Username: [Username]  
Password: [Password]
3. **CLICK:** "UPLOAD"
4. **CLICK:** "CHECK IN"
5. **CLOSE BROWSER WHEN DONE CALL:** [Recruiter] at [Phone] if file is password-protected to let us know password. Do not email password.

## OPTION 2: EMAIL

1. **PASSWORD-PROTECT DATA FILE:**  
**DATA should not be sent in body of email.**
2. **CALL:** [Name] at [Phone] and provide password. **Do not email password.**  
**EMAIL: Password-protected file** attachment to Mathematica at [xxx@xxxxxxxxxx.org](mailto:xxx@xxxxxxxxxx.org). Include your name, phone number, and name of district in message.
3. **SAVE:** Password for your records
4. If possible, **zip file** using WinZip, PKZIP or Stuffit. If larger than 20MB, use secure website: [https://www.\[placeholder\].org](https://www.[placeholder].org)


*How to  
Password  
Protect  
Files*

## HOW TO PASSWORD PROTECT FILES SENT BY EMAIL

\* **RECORD** your password and note if it is case-sensitive

### Microsoft Office 2007 Users

#### EXCEL or WORD document protection

1. **OPEN:** document
2. **CLICK:** Microsoft Office Button  while file is open
3. **POINT TO:** "Prepare," **CLICK:** "Encrypt Document"
4. **TYPE/ENTER:** A password, **CLICK:** "OK"
5. **RETYPE/REENTER:** The password, **CLICK:** "OK"
6. **SAVE:** file
7. **TEST PASSWORD:** Close and reopen workbook

### All Microsoft Office 2003 and Earlier Users

1. **RIGHT CLICK** in the folder space where you will save the Winzip file
2. **POINT** to New, and **POINT** and **CLICK** on Winzip file.
3. **TYPE** the name of the Winzip file and **PRESS** enter.
4. **OPEN** the Winzip file.
5. **CLICK** Add, **NAVIGATE** to file, and **CLICK** Add. **REPEAT** for each file to be added.
6. **CLICK** on Encrypt and **CLICK** OK.
7. Under Encryption Method, **SELECT** 256-Bit AES Encryption (stronger).
8. **CONFIRM** the box is checked next to Mask Password.
9. **TYPE** and then **RE-TYPE** your encryption password.
10. **CLICK** OK and **CLOSE** Winzip.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact [Name] at [Email] or [Phone]

NLTS-2012 - XX

May 1, 2011

Dear:

Thank you for your cooperation in the National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS-2012). The purpose of this letter is to summarize our communication thus far and to clearly describe how we expect the study to proceed. In our experience working with school districts on many successful studies, we have found it is to the benefit of everyone involved to review the steps that will take place in advance to ensure we share the same expectations and goals for the study. If you feel that any aspect of the plan described in this letter is incomplete or inconsistent with your understanding, please contact me at [insert phone and email] and we can explore possible revisions. We will be continually focused on conducting the study in a manner that is agreeable and respectful to the district and all participants. We will always welcome your input to do this to the best of our abilities. The study is not intended to be a time-intensive commitment by any individuals.

**Study Background.** The U.S. Department of Education (ED) has commissioned Mathematica Policy Research (Mathematica) to conduct a longitudinal study focused on the educational and transitional experiences of youth between the ages of 13 and 21. The study team consists of Mathematica, Institute on Community Integration (ICI), Decision Information Resources (DIR), and ED). The study will be used to understand the current needs and gauge the nation's progress in addressing the needs of youth with disabilities. Information will be collected on topics such as the characteristics of youth with disabilities, the services and accommodations received, and their transition experiences as the youth leave school. The study will include youth who have been identified as needing special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), youth who have a condition requiring some accommodation under section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and youth with no identified disabilities to provided context for the information collected for the other two groups..

**Compensation.** Mathematica will provide compensation of \$[INSERT] to the district for time spent processing data files. This amount will be provided in two equal installments, the first following the receipt by Mathematica of complete student lists required for sample selection of potential study participants, the second following the receipt of school records at the conclusion of the study.

**Data Collection.** Data collection activities will occur at set points throughout the study. Specifically, the study will collect:

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- **Data used to select a random sample of students for the study.** The district will provide Mathematica with a list of all district students aged 13 to 21, including key data variables specified in Appendix A.
- **Contact information for selected students.** Following the sample selection of approximately 50 to 60 students, available contact information will be provided to Mathematica in order to contact parents and attempt to gain consent for their children to participate in the study. If consent is not obtained from individual students' families, no further contact will be made by the study team and contact information will be destroyed. The study design requires approximately 40 students respondents from each district so a supplemental sample will be selected to account for potential nonresponse. Students in the supplemental sample will not be contacted until all efforts have been expended to convert nonrespondents from the primary sample.
- **Parent/youth surveys.** Parents and youth will be interviewed two times by telephone -- in the baseline year of the study about youth and family characteristics, and experiences and supports in school; and in the follow-up year about school experiences and outcomes. Youth will only be interviewed if their parent judges them able to do so.
- **Principal surveys.** Principals of sampled students' schools will be interviewed in the baseline year of the study by either web or phone about school policies and environment.
- **General education teacher surveys.** Math or language arts teachers of mainstream classes taken by sampled students with a disability will be interviewed in the baseline year of the study by web or phone.
- **Special education teacher surveys.** The special education staff with the best knowledge of each sampled student's program, services, and performance will be interviewed in both the baseline and follow-up years of the study by web or phone.
- **School records.** The district will provide Mathematica with data on sampled students' attendance, courses taken, and grades.

Data files should be sent to Mathematica in electronic format, if possible. Prior to construction of these files, Mathematica staff will contact the appropriate person at the district to discuss the best means of formatting and transmitting the data (See Appendix A for an example of requested data variables.)

**Confidentiality.** Any student-level data provided to Mathematica by the district in support of this study will be kept strictly confidential, except as may be required by law or regulation, and will be used only for research purposes. Any identifying information on students will be replaced with randomly generated, anonymous identifiers prior to analysis. Access to individual level data will be restricted to the study team and researchers directly authorized by ED. Data related to individual students, their parents, schools, their staff member, or districts will only be publicly reported at an aggregated level and not identified in study findings. A restricted-use data file will

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be created for ED for potential further analysis. This file will contain individual level data, but no names or identifiers that would allow data to be attributed to a specific student, school, or district.

**Timeline.** Study participation will run from the Fall of 2011 through the Summer of 2014, or whenever school records for the 2013-2014 school year become available. The timeline on the following page provides general dates of study activities. Specific dates will be determined by Mathematica and the District once we coordinate calendars.

**Research Approval.** Mathematica will comply with the district’s requirements for participation in research. All necessary information will be provided and approvals secured before any data are collected for the study.

**Communication.** I will be your representative on the study team. Please contact me by telephone or by email with any questions or concerns about study activities.

Eric Zeidman  
 Liaison to [District]  
 Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.  
 P.O. Box 2393  
 600 Alexander Park  
 Princeton, NJ 08543-2393  
 Telephone: (609) 936-2784  
 ezeidman@mathematica-mpr.com

STUDY ACTIVITIES TIMELINE

Time Period	Activity
Spring and Summer 2011	Mathematica works with district to agree to terms of study participation and sign study work plan
Fall 2011	District provides student lists to Mathematica District provides contact information for sampled students and facilitates consent process
Spring 2012	Surveys conducted with principals, general education and special education teachers, and parents and youth
Fall 2013	District provides any available updated contact information for sampled youth to Mathematica
Spring 2014	Surveys conducted with special education teachers, and parents and youth
Summer 2014	District provides Mathematica with student-level school records



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The district has named the following person as the district-level contact for discussions related to the study:

[Name]  
[Title/Department]  
[District]  
[Address]  
Telephone: [Phone]  
[email]

**Agreement to Proceed.** If the plan described in this letter is acceptable to you and consistent with your understanding of our plan, please sign at the bottom, keep one copy of the letter for your files, and send one copy of the letter to me in the enclosed Federal Express envelope. We appreciate your assistance with this important study, and we look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



Signed:

The plan described in this letter accurately describes our understanding of the plan for including [district] in the NLTS-2012 study.

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[District Designee]  
[Title]  
[School District Name]

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John Burghardt  
Project Director  
Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.

Attachment: Appendix A

## Appendix A

Student-Level Data for Sample Selection	Specific Information Requested
Student ID	Student identification number used by district
Gender	Male or Female
Race/Ethnicity	Race and Hispanic/Latino designations
Birth date	Month and year of birth
School	Name of school(s)
Grade level or indication of ungraded status	Grade at beginning of 2011 – 2012 school year
IEP	Does student have an Individual Education Plan (IEP)? (Yes or No)
504 plan	Does student have a Section 504 plan? (Yes or No)
Federal disability classification	What is the IDEA classification of any disabilities for which the student needs special education and related services?
Student-Level Data for Selected Students	Specific Information Requested
Parent name	First name and last name
Student name	First name and last name
Eligibility for free or reduced price lunch	Is student eligible for free or reduced-price lunch? (Yes or No)
English Language Learner (LEP) Status	Is the student designated as ELL or LEP? (Yes or No)
Eighth grade achievement test scores	Available data on state administered assessments
Language spoken at home	What is the primary language to be used for contacting a student and/or parent?
Mailing address	Address used for official school mailings
Telephone number(s)	Home, work, and cell phone numbers at which parents can be reached
Email address	Address used for any electronic communications
Attendance	The number of days students were absent in the requested school year
Courses	A listing of the courses taken during the requested school year
Course grades	Grades received in graded courses during the requested school year

# SCHOOL DISTRICT CONSENT FOR CONTACT INFORMATION

TO BE PRINTED ON SCHOOL DISTRICT STATIONERY

## READ THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:

The CHILD'S SCHOOL DISTRICT is participating in a national study, the National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS-2012), sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. The study is being conducted by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. The study will learn about the experiences of students as they work towards completing high school and attempt a successful transition into the workforce and/or further schooling in the coming years. We are pleased to be part of a study that will find ways to improve the opportunities for the success for all students.

The study plans to interview students and parents to learn about their experiences and will provide each of you \$25 as thanks for participating in the interviews. The study will not affect your child's school experience in any way. We would like your permission to allow Mathematica to contact you about the study. **By giving your consent to be contacted, you are not committing to any study activities. You have the right to refuse to participate in any or all study activities when you are contacted.**

The study will also collect information directly from teachers. By signing this form, you are also allowing Mathematica to contact one or two of your student's teachers. Study information will be kept confidential and will only be reported in statistics without the names of people or schools. This is being done in about 300 school districts across the country with around 15,000 students participating. While you and your child will not receive any direct benefit from participating in this study, the study will help to better understand students' experiences in school and beyond and find ways to improve those experiences for others. Participating in the study poses no risk to you or your child.

## COMPLETE AND SIGN:

Print Your Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian **Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_


Print Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Enter Your Telephone Number: (\_\_\_\_\_) - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

## MARK (X) ONLY ONE BOX:

YES, I CAN be contacted as part of the National Longitudinal Transition Study

NO, I CANNOT be contacted as part of the National Longitudinal Transition Study

 **RETURN THIS FORM:** Return using the attached postage-paid envelope or to your child's teacher.

 **QUESTIONS:** Please call our Mathematica Policy Research study staff, toll free, at (xxx) xxx-xxxx.

Per the policies and procedures required by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, Title I, Part E, Section 183, responses to this data collection will be used only for statistical purposes. The reports prepared for this study will summarize findings across the sample and will not associate responses with a specific district or individual. We will not provide information that identifies you or your district to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law. Any willful disclosure of such information for nonstatistical purposes, without the informed consent of the respondent, is a class E felony.