

August 17, 2011

**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Shelly Martinez, OMB  
**From:** Elise Christopher, NCES  
**Through:** Kashka Kubzdela, NCES  
**Re:** Response to August 8 and August 17 OMB Passback on ELS:2002/12 FS Cog Labs 2011  
(OMB# 1850-0803 v.54)

---

**August 8, 2011 Passback from OMB**

- 1) please tell us why NCES is proposing to add 30 items to ELS after the field test is already completed. These items are proposed for testing following additional discussions that arose at the time of the field test package clearance process. In particular, following clearance of the field test instrument, the decision was made not to collect financial aid data administratively due to budget constraints, thus leaving a potential gap in the questionnaire. It was also suggested during this NCES internal review that sections such as the civic engagement section might benefit from further vetting of items from other sources. Following the field test, timing data will be examined, as well as response rates. If the questionnaire is under the expected burden of 35 minutes, then some questions could be added. If the questionnaire is over the expected burden of 35 minutes, and we would like to add in vital items such as those on financial aid, then we plan to cut under-performing items as necessary to keep the burden at or under 35 minutes on average. All effort would be made to keep the burden neutral.
- 2) What items are proposed to be removed to remain burden neutral? Or is NCES proposing to increase the burden of the ELS follow up?  
This discussion is planned for the TRP meeting in November, when performance data from the field test instrument will be available. TRP members will discuss which items to retain and which to cut, if necessary, and provide suggestions to NCES for the full study questionnaire. We are not proposing any increase in burden.
- 3) Also, please provide more information about what the "Youth Development Survey" is.  
The Youth Development Study (YDS) is conducted by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. This survey examines the consequences of work and other formative experiences in adolescence for the transition to adulthood, as well as the effects of experiences during this transition, for mental health, for economic attainment, and multiple facets of behavioral adjustment.  
(<http://www.soc.umn.edu/research/yds/>)
- 4) Finally, please delete the word "either" in the Hispanic origin question(s).  
The word has been deleted (see attached).

## August 17, 2011 Passback from OMB

- 1) The response to question one says that “the decision was made not to collect financial aid data administratively due to budget constraints.” Were these data from ED’s administrative databases, such as those used in NPSAS? Has NCES determined that adding questions to the survey is cheaper? We would be interested in more information on that decision.

By administratively, we mean collecting the financial aid information directly from the institutions, similarly to how transcripts are collected. This was going to cost an estimated \$1.9 million. Because of cuts to the secondary longitudinal studies budget, this will no longer occur.

This is why we are now planning to collect this information from students, so that it is part of the ELS follow-up data. We believe that these questions should be tested before being suggested for the main study questionnaire, and therefore are proposing to cognitively test them.

- 2) When were these cog labs to begin?

We would like to begin these cognitive labs as soon as possible this month (August) so that we can have the results for the ELS TRP, tentatively being planned for the beginning of November.