Strategies for Preparing At-Risk Youth for Postsecondary Success:

OMB Information Clearance Request – Supporting Statement Part A

November 14, 2012

Contents

Exhibits

Supporting Statement, Part A
Paperwork Reduction Act Submission

A. Justification

Introduction

Approximately 1.2 million students fail to graduate from high school each year (Diploma Counts 2011). Only seven out of ten students will finish high school on time; of those who do not, most never earn their degree (Alliance for Excellent Education 2010). The overall national graduation rate of 72% is at its highest point in twenty years, yet a gap continues between white and non-white students. Of particular concern are the graduation rates for Hispanic, Black and American Indian males that consistently fall near or below the 50 percent mark (Swanson 2011). Additionally, graduation rates are significantly lower in districts with higher percentages of high poverty students (eligible for free or reduced-price lunch) (Swanson 2004). The impact of not earning a high school degree is far-reaching economically and on various other quality of life factors such as health, life expectancy, and involvement in crime (Amos 2008).

Yet for today's students, even earning a high school diploma is unlikely to provide access to the American Dream. The rapidly changing conditions in the global economy increasingly demand more education and training than secondary schools can provide. A recent report suggests this phenomenon will worsen over time (Carnevale, Smith, and Strohl 2010). The report projects that in the future, people will not only need to graduate from high school but also pursue some level of postsecondary training. For example, it is expected that the economy will create 46.8 million job openings by 2018, and 63% of the new and replacement jobs (positions vacated by those who have retired) will require some college or training.

To be responsive to these educational and economic concerns, the Administration set a goal that every American successfully complete at least one year of postsecondary education or training. Meeting this goal requires a policy shift from aiming to keep at-risk youth in high school to engaging at-risk youth in their learning and instilling aspirations that reach beyond high school graduation to achieving postsecondary success. Beyond policy, local schools and districts need concrete strategies and practices that are successful at preventing students from dropping out and preparing them for postsecondary endeavors.

Few studies are available that bridge dropout prevention strategies and college-readiness efforts and can guide practitioners in tackling this new policy imperative.[1] This study, *Strategies for Preparing At-Risk Youth for Postsecondary Success*, aims to provide timely, descriptive information on these new types of programs as practitioners and policymakers aim to respond to these new policy goals. The U.S. Department of Education (the Department) intends to provide school districts and others with information on implementing dropout prevention and recovery strategies that will also prepare students for postsecondary pursuit.

This study is descriptive in nature and will consist of up to 15 case studies. The study will focus on gathering qualitative data from interviews with district- and school-level staff and community partners that are invested in helping solve this problem. The study is not a program evaluation and does not purport to assess program outcomes.

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[1] A literature review conducted for this project identified this gap in the field. Literature review findings and their implications will be discussed later in the introduction and where relevant in other parts of Supporting Statements A and B for this project.

The research team will collect descriptive data from a purposive case study sample that includes a range of dropout prevention and college-readiness programs. Because it is purposive, the sample will not be representative of any distinct set of districts or schools. The sample is based on two sources: 1) nominations from federal officials and national experts who understand the problem and have knowledge of successful programs, and 2) a completed literature review of dropout prevention and recovery strategies, including strategies that focus on supporting students for high school graduation and postsecondary education.

The selected case studies will meet specific selection criteria such as involving a public school or district, serving the target population of students at risk of not completing high school or pursuing a postsecondary degree, having some evidence suggesting success in increasing postsecondary attainment for at-risk youth, and falling into one of four program types serving at-risk youth (see Statement B, section B.1 for more details about the sampling plan).

A final report on lessons from the field will identify practical lessons for district and school administrators to consider in selecting and implementing new programs in supporting at-risk youth. It will provide details on programs and strategies that are designed to prevent students from dropping out, reengage out-of-school youth, and prepare the students for postsecondary education. To be useful, the report will highlight implementation successes and challenges, discuss evidence that suggests sites may be effective in improving high school and postsecondary outcomes, and describe how sites use data to monitor and improve their program. The final report will also include case study profiles and integrate literature review findings.

The following presents an overview of the study design, beginning with the research questions guiding the study, and then a discussion of the conceptual framework. Then the literature review implications for the study design, the data collection process, and the plans for the final report are briefly described.

Research Questions

To better understand key program strategies and practices that may help other practitioners and policymakers refine their own programs, the Department established the following research questions to guide the study:

1. What evidence is available about the effectiveness of dropout prevention and recovery programs and strategies?
2. What are the key features and characteristics of dropout prevention and recovery strategies? Do programs with stronger evidence of effectiveness differ from other programs? How do programs that focus on preparing students for success in college and careers differ from traditional programs that focus primarily on high school graduation?
3. What supports and challenges did districts and schools experience in implementing these strategies?
4. How do dropout recovery strategies and their effectiveness vary across differing state, local, school, and community contexts?
5. What measures are being used for benchmarking and accountability for dropout prevention and recovery programs? Are there measures that could be used to examine program results and accountability across programs?

Taken together, these research questions aim to provide rich descriptions of how districts, schools, and their partners can support students, particularly strategies and practices that have some evidence suggesting success in increasing postsecondary attainment for at-risk youth. The data collected on the

site visits will be used to address research questions 2 through 5. A separate literature review addresses research question 1.

Conceptual Framework

To address the research questions, the research team developed a working conceptual framework that is informed by an already completed literature review. The conceptual framework describes the types of programs that may be found in schools or districts serving at-risk youth and aiming to improve those students' high school and postsecondary outcomes. The conceptual framework also describes the different contexts within which the programs operate and which influence how they are implemented. By its nature, the conceptual framework is a way of thinking about the research problem that generally will apply across the majority of programs. It is intended to capture just the main program, organization, community, and policy factors that are relevant; it cannot capture nuanced details that will vary across programs. As such, the conceptual framework is useful in providing a structure for protocol development. The protocols systematically ask respondents about the factors in the conceptual framework and probe for details beyond what can be displayed in a diagram but will help address the research questions, such as what specific services and supports the local programs offer, the site's experiences, successes, and challenges in implementing them, and data suggesting the program's effectiveness.

Exhibit 1 depicts the conceptual framework. Embedded in the K–12 School System box, the **high school programs and strategies** that aim to prevent dropouts and prepare students for postsecondary education are of main interest to this project. Both targeted and schoolwide programs and strategies may be necessary to accelerate at-risk youth's academic content and skills development, build college knowledge, and provide non-academic supports (Balfanz, Herzog, and Mac Iver 2007). Targeted programs provide services to identified individuals based on their specific needs. Schoolwide programs implement support strategies intended to reach all or most members of a specific subpopulation of concern. Programs and strategies serving at-risk youth, especially those to improve students' transition to high school, are also increasingly tied to middle school reform (Balfanz 2010). [2]

Dropout recovery programs are shown in the conceptual framework as embedded in the K–12 system, representing the programs within the scope of this project. However, the majority of the dropout recovery programs identified in the literature operate outside of the K–12 system (see examples in Martin and Halperin 2006) and they are not depicted in the conceptual framework because they are outside the scope of this project. Within the K–12 system, alternative high schools (i.e., not traditional comprehensive high schools), charter schools, and vocational training are different options to reengage youth in their education. Only those programs that operate within or in partnership with public schools or districts will be considered for case study under the scope of this project.

The high school programs and strategies are embedded in multiple contexts. The conceptual framework posits that federal, state, and district policies, resources, and priorities help shape the nature of the programs preparing at-risk youth for postsecondary success, as do the specific school-level characteristics such as size, capacity and resources, performance and accountability status, choice status, and climate and culture. To prepare students for postsecondary success requires monitoring outcomes related to readiness prior to, and through, high school into college (Dynarski et al. 2008; Mac Iver 2009; Tierney et al. 2009).

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[2] For example, dropout prevention programs such as Communities in Schools operate in elementary and middle schools, as well as in high schools; Accelerated Middle Schools attempt to decrease students' chances of dropping out by catching them up academically in the middle grades; and Talent Development High Schools has a middle school initiative.
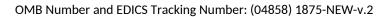
Exhibit 1. Preparing At-Risk Youth for Postsecondary Success: A Conceptual Framework

The district and school-based dropout prevention and college-readiness programs and strategies often **partner** with community based organizations, youth advocacy organizations, local businesses, and employment agencies to deliver services the education system is unable to. The partnership between K–12 and postsecondary systems is essential in offering dual enrollment programs to students, as well as in providing outreach and support in transition to a higher education environment (see examples in Martin and Halperin 2006; Steinberg and Almeida 2011).

The **outcomes** of interest to this study are also depicted in the conceptual framework. In high school, intermediate outcomes such as attendance, engagement in schoolwork, persistence, staying on track for graduation and beyond, college-going identity, and achievements build towards outcomes at high school completion, including graduation, college readiness, and accumulated transferable college credit that can boost students' chances of college enrollment. Intermediate outcomes play a key role in whether high schools can identify students at risk of dropping out, and help administrators identify students not making the necessary progress to position themselves for the transition to postsecondary education. Even as students enroll in postsecondary education, significant supports will likely be necessary to help students adjust to and develop the skills to cope with the academic pressure, social freedom, lack of structure, and lack of monitoring typical of college life (Bailey and Karp 2003; American Institutes for Research/SRI International 2009).

Ultimately, the combined efforts of these programs and strategies at the secondary and postsecondary levels are intended to culminate in students' enrollment, persistence, and completion of a two- or four-year degree or an industry-recognized credential that will maximize their employment and economic chances in life.

Literature Review

As previously noted, a literature review for this project was completed as the initial activity. The literature review documented the knowledge base on a range of strategies that schools and districts use to prepare at-risk youth for postsecondary education and work and helped inform the conceptual framework and case study selection. The literature review focused on dropout prevention, dropout recovery, and college-readiness strategies and programs and articles were reviewed using evidence standards developed by the What Works Clearinghouse.[3]

Several key findings from the literature review are relevant to the study design.

1. The review revealed that the literature pertaining to the Department's primary interest—understanding programs or strategies that target and sufficiently support at-risk youth to complete high school and gain postsecondary education and training—is two mutually exclusive bodies of research. Dropout prevention programs traditionally target those identified as at risk based on different demographic and academic data and aim to retain them in high school. Other programs or strategies that have a more explicit focus on college readiness for students underrepresented in higher education may in practice serve students with higher academic background. Only more recently has the goal of providing postsecondary access to students who are truly at risk of dropping out emerged as a specific policy vision, and at this time, is considered an aspirational model (Steinberg and Almedia 2011).

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[3] What Works Clearinghouse, created in 2002, is an initiative of the Department's Institute of Education Sciences (IES) to be a central and trusted source of scientific evidence for what works in education. http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/

2. Although research on the programs of interest is limited, the literature review did identify several programs that both support at-risk youth in returning or remaining in school and prepare them for postsecondary success.

3. Because the field has only begun to respond to the policy imperative to raise students at serious risk of dropping out to college readiness, little opportunity has passed to study the effectiveness of the newest programs that—at least by design—aspire to this ambitious goal. The case studies for this project may offer that opportunity.

Case Studies

The Department is requesting OMB clearance for two qualitative data collection activities, guided by semi-structured protocols:

1. A phone screen with program managers (i.e., a school leader or other administrator who oversees the local dropout prevention program), to determine the final sample of up to 15 sites from a shortlist developed through the literature review and consultation with Department officials. Seven national experts were also consulted (See A.8.b for more information about the experts).

2. Up to 15 site visits to a **purposive case study sample** to describe relevant program strategies and practices, implementation success and challenges, and evidence suggesting effectiveness. The case study sites do not represent any set of districts/schools/programs as the sample is not representative.

The site visits will be the basis for case studies that will include rich descriptions of the strategies schools and districts implement to support at-risk youth to not only graduate from high school but to be adequately prepared for postsecondary endeavors.

Because any strategies or practices schools attempt are embedded in their specific school context, including student needs, climate and culture, and school resources, and because schools are further embedded in districts, which actively initiate improvement strategies and mediate state policy (Spillane 1996, 1998), the case studies will follow an embedded approach. Respondents from multiple levels of the local system (i.e., program, school, and district levels) will be asked to participate and data collection protocols will probe on the influence of contextual factors depicted in the conceptual framework. Respondents will include district administrators responsible for college readiness/high school initiatives, including curriculum and instruction and accountability. At the school level, we will conduct interviews with principals and assistant principals for instruction or deans of students, program managers, teachers, and counselors, and a focus group with parents. A case will moreover include any external intermediaries or partners engaged in the student support strategies at the site.

Semi-structured protocols based on the conceptual framework will guide case study data collection. The research team will systematically analyze data across multiple respondents on the constructs reflected in the conceptual framework to generate portraits of programs and strategies that the sites use, lessons based on implementation successes and challenges, and evidence suggesting their effectiveness in improving the outcomes of interest. This analysis will form the basis for case study profiles of each site.

Additionally, the final report will include a cross-site analysis. The goal of the analysis will be to compare, contrast, and synthesize findings and propositions from the single cases to arrive at initial lessons that apply to groups of similar programs and possibly across all programs. While it is possible that common lessons may emerge from multiple cases, the lessons will not be generalizable beyond those sites because the sample is purposive and not intended to be representative of all programs that serve youth at risk of dropping out.

Reporting

A publicly available report on lessons from the field will include the individual case profiles and findings from the literature review. The report will be aimed at district and school leaders and others seeking descriptive information on how others have developed dropout prevention and recovery strategies to serve at-risk youth and to prepare them for postsecondary education. Although the lessons are not generalizable to a larger population because the sample is purposive and small, the case studies will provide rich contextual information to help practitioners assess the applicability of the lessons in their own schools or districts. Practical information such as how target students are identified and recruited into the programs, challenges specific cases faced and their attempts to overcome those challenges, and how the programs use data to monitor improvements among students and program effectiveness will also provide practitioners with a range of ideas to consider for their own programs.

A.1. Circumstances Requiring the Collection of Data

The dropout crisis nationally is persistent and pervasive. On a daily basis, 6,400 students drop out of school (Swanson 2011). The crisis is particularly extreme in the nearly 2,000 high schools across the U.S. that have been designated "dropout factories," schools in which less than 60 percent of students who enter ninth grade make it to their senior year in the expected number of years (Balfanz and Legters 2004).

Policymakers at all levels are looking for effective strategies for increasing the number of students who graduate from high school prepared for and enroll in postsecondary education. The Administration has identified the failure of youth to complete high school and pursue postsecondary education as a priority area. $535 million was appropriated in FY 2011 for School Improvement Grants[4] to help curb the dropout crisis and better prepare students for college and careers. States are also using federal and state funds to establish dropout prevention and college- and career-readiness initiatives. For example, to identify students who are likely to drop out, Louisiana and Colorado are implementing statewide early warning data systems while in Florida, Oregon, and Ohio, new data systems that follow student advancement from high school into jobs and college are helping to hold high schools accountable for their graduates' college- and career-readiness.

A new federal policy focus further raises the stakes by calling for all students to complete one year of postsecondary education or training. High schools are now responsible for boosting graduation rates, lowering dropout rates, and preparing *all* students for success in postsecondary education or training. Supporting students, especially at-risk students, to meet the new national goal will pose a challenge for many schools and districts. A few high school programs exist as models. For example, the early college high school (ECHS) model shows promising results with at-risk students (e.g., low economic status, first in their family to attend college, minority) but targets a different population than this study.[5] Yet little is known about programs that effectively improve dropout prevention *and* increase students' college- and career- readiness, the focus of this project. This study will provide the field with rich descriptive information on how new programs are playing out and will help inform practitioners striving to serve their own at-risk populations.

In September 2011, the Department contracted with SRI International to conduct a study, *Strategies to Prepare At-Risk Youth for Postsecondary Success*. The goal is to understand and describe programs that

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[4] http://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/budget13/13pbapt.pdf

[5] The ECHS model provides students with the opportunity to earn an Associate's degree at no cost to students. The ECHS model blends high school and college in a rigorous yet supportive program that shortens the time it takes to earn a high school degree and up to two years of college credits. The typical student who attends an ECHS may not consider themselves 'college bound' but would most likely be on track to graduate from high school.

schools and districts are implementing with some signs of success in decreasing dropouts and preparing students to seek a postsecondary degree or training. Using qualitative case study methods, the study will culminate in a report on lessons from the field, targeted at district and school leaders, and their postsecondary, community and/or local business partners, who are either establishing, or broadening, existing dropout prevention and recovery programs to include a postsecondary component.

The proposed data collection is authorized by the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA)*, as reauthorized by the *No Child Left Behind Act* (Public Law 107-110), Part H, School Dropout Prevention.[6]

A.2. Purposes and Use of Data

Policymakers at the federal, state, and local level are concerned with poor high school graduation rates, especially among at-risk youth. Many of the programs adopted by districts and schools to decrease the dropout rate and improve dropout prevention traditionally set the goal of completing high school. Yet this goal by itself will not be sufficient to ensure satisfactory postsecondary outcomes for these students; even high school graduates steadily fall behind college-degree holders economically (Carnevale and Rose 2011); postsecondary education and training are likely a crucial pathway to long-term employment. Programs that have the dual goals of supporting at-risk youth to graduate from high school and then enroll in and succeed in postsecondary education are not commonly found in most school districts. Dropout prevention and college- and career-readiness programs historically operate as distinct programs targeting different types of students. The literature review for this study identified few rigorous studies of dropout prevention programs with a postsecondary focus. This study aims to provide descriptive information that might help direct future research to fill this gap.

The Department will use the study results to share with practitioners a set of contemporary strategies for preparing at-risk youth for postsecondary education and training. Specifically, through case studies, the project will document program strategies and practices, contextual factors including resources, organizational capacity, and partnerships, implementation successes and challenges, and evidence suggesting the strategies that may help to improve high school and postsecondary outcomes. The data will primarily come from interviews with multiple respondents representing key stakeholder groups in each site, including district and school leaders, teachers, guidance counselors/social workers, parents, and students, and staff from participating partner organizations (e.g., postsecondary institutions, community organizations).

The results from the case studies will be combined with findings from the literature review to generate a report on lessons from the field targeted specifically at practitioners. The report will be posted on the Department's website, and study authors will also share lessons learned through webinars and appropriate professional conferences.

A.3. Use of Information Technology to Reduce Burden

The research team will use information technology to reduce burden on school districts, schools, and partner organizations in several different ways. First, researchers will access state, district, and/or local school web sites to gather information about the sites (e.g., target student population, partners, and assessment/accountability data). Second, they will conduct brief screening phone calls with potential case study sites to supplement online material to determine the extent to which the site meets the sampling criteria. The results of the web-based search and phone calls will enable the study team to eliminate sites that likely would not provide useful information to the field. Third, the research team will

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[6] http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg15.html#sec1802

use the extant information to refine and tailor interview protocols for each site so that the interviews focus only on issues not covered in the background documents.

Researchers will digitally record in-person interviews and focus groups. The recordings will help reduce errors in field notes by capturing respondents' verbatim responses, thereby minimizing researchers' requests for clarifications after the site visit.

A.4. Efforts to Identify and Avoid Duplication

The Department will make all efforts to avoid duplicating other federally funded projects. Currently, a small study at the Regional Educational Lab Central uses existing databases to calculate the rates of high school dropout and completion in the Central Region[7]; however, it does not appear to examine specific dropout programs and strategies. Otherwise, the Department is not aware of any other federal studies of dropout prevention and recovery programs. The last federal study in the field, published in 2008, focused on dropout recovery efforts but was fundamentally different from the proposed data collection because it did not specifically examine programs or strategies involving local education agencies, a central sampling criterion for this project.[8]

To this point, most prior studies have focused narrowly on strategies to support students in earning their high school diploma. The planned data collection will describe programs that have evidence suggesting success in increasing postsecondary attainment for at-risk youth and focuses on recent trends in the dropout prevention field not covered in past federal studies, including examining schools' use of early warning systems to target students for intervention.

A.5. Efforts to Minimize Burden on Small Businesses or Other Entities

The research team anticipates minimal burden on small businesses. School districts and the institutions of higher education that might be included in the study are large enough that they do not meet the definition of small entities. A few respondents may come from small entities (e.g. community-based organizations) that partner with school districts to support dropout recovery students. The research team will work in the months preceding scheduled site visits to capture as much existing data (e.g., publicly available demographic and achievement data, strategic plans that identify dropout prevention strategies, news articles about the program and local community contexts, etc.) about specific organizations rather than requiring their staff to provide such data.

A.6. Consequence if the Information is Not Collected or Collected Less Frequently

If the proposed information is not collected, the federal government will miss the opportunity to provide timely and practical information to school and district personnel and policymakers on the urgent issue of dropout prevention and improving postsecondary outcomes for at-risk youth. As the literature review indicated, very little research has been conducted to date that addresses the bridge between dropout prevention strategies that help students attain a high school diploma and college-readiness efforts that raise student aspirations and prepare them for postsecondary education and work. School and district personnel are now devoting scarce resources to those dual goals but could benefit from practical information about programs and strategies that other sites have been successful with. This project will fill that need and improve the likelihood that practitioners and policymakers efficiently use those resources.

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[7] The states in the Central Region include Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming.

[8] *Bring Them Back, Move Them Forward: Case Studies of Programs Preparing Out-of-School Youths for Further Education and Careers* was sponsored by the Department of Vocational and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education Contract No. ED-04-CO-0121/0001 with Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.

A.7. Special Circumstances

This information collection will not be conducted in a manner that will require using any special circumstances.

A.8. Federal Register Comments and Persons Consulted Outside of Agency.

a. Federal Register Announcement. The Department published the 60-day notice in the Federal Register announcing the agency's intention to request OMB review of data collection activities for this study. Comments on this data collection effort were solicited on May 23, 2012 in Volume 77, page 30512. To date, one public comment has been received from Dr. Dana Zorovich of the School District of Palm Beach County in Florida. Dr. Zorovich requested information about how the case study sites would be collected for the data collection component of the study. The Department referred Dr. Zorovich to Supporting Statement Part B. The site selection criteria are presented in section B.1. Sampling Design.

b. Consultation Outside the Agency. SRI contacted seven national experts who understand the study's focus on dropout prevention and postsecondary enrollment and success and have knowledge of high-quality programs to discuss possible sites for the case studies (see Exhibit 2).

Exhibit 2. National Experts

Name	Professional Affiliation
Robert Balfanz	Johns Hopkins University
Terry Cash	National Dropout Prevention Center
Linda Clarke	Educational Consultant
Susan Curnan	Brandeis University
Nancy Martin	Educational Consultant
Russell Rumberger	University of California, Berkeley
Adria Steinberg	Jobs for the Future

A.9. Payment to Respondents

No payment to respondents will be offered.

A.10. Assurances of Confidentiality

The study team will adhere to federal rules regarding the protection of human subjects in research. The research team has a duty to protect all information, but particularly anything sensitive or potentially embarrassing to individuals. The study will treat any information about the student or family in a confidential manner consistent with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The following provisions will apply on this project:

• As part of the case study training, all members of the research team will be trained on data confidentiality. Specifically, researchers will be trained on how to store data without individual names and how to discuss interview and other case study data only within a team context for analysis purposes.

• As part of obtaining consent, research members will apprise each respondent that their participation in the project is voluntary, that they may cease participation at any time during the interview or focus group, and that their individual responses will be kept confidential, except as may be required by law. Researchers will provide this information orally as well as in writing in the consent

form. All respondents will be asked to sign the relevant consent form (see Attachment 5) for copies of all consent forms).

- The voluntary nature of project participation, the confidentiality provisions, and consent forms are subject to and overseen by SRI's Institutional Review Board for human subjects research.
- All electronic data will be stored on SRI's secure servers. Access to the server is password protected, with required changes at regular intervals and strong password elements. Each user's access is limited, determined by the network administrator.
- SRI's standard practice is to shred documents and destroy electronic data once the data are no longer required, typically within three years to allow for any questions that may arise after publication.

Because the project aims to provide information that is useful to other practitioners or policymakers striving to improve their services to at-risk youth, it would be valuable to disclose the program name and location (i.e., school and district). Naming the program and school/district will be helpful to others who want to learn more about the program and explore whether they might adopt or adapt the strategies or practices to their local contexts. However, no data will be attributed to individuals by name, role type, or title.

A.11. Justification for Questions of a Sensitive Nature

The data collection instruments (see Attachments 7-13 for all data collection instruments) do not ask sensitive questions. However, given that the subpopulation of concern includes students at risk of dropping out for a variety of reasons, it is possible that information on students' financial, family, and social needs may arise during data collection. In SRI's experience, teachers and administrators are very careful not to disclose confidential information as they deal with student privacy concerns daily. Parents participating in focus groups, however, may not be aware of privacy and confidentiality issues. Researchers will remind them at the beginning of each focus group not to provide sensitive information about themselves or others by name, but rather to focus on the supports the program provides and the effects of the program.

A.12. Estimate of Information Collection Burden

As described previously, this request relates to two different data collection activities. The first is an initial round of screening calls with program managers to determine the final sample of case study sites. The second is the actual site visits to conduct the case studies.

Data collection for the initial screening will involve a single phone call with a program manager (see Attachment 6 for screening protocol). The interview will cover basic descriptive topics including questions about the program strategies, program goals, the outcomes data collected, organizations they partner with, and information on the feasibility of hosting a two-person site visit team in fall 2012 should they meet the case study sampling criteria.

In cases where the nominated "site" is actually a large program that operates in multiple locations, an initial screen will be conducted with a national program representative to request a potential site to visit. In those cases, an additional phone screen will then be conducted with the site-based program manager. Exhibit 3 displays the total estimated burden of the initial screening data collection.

Exhibit 3. Number of Respondents and Labor Hours Expected for Initial Screening Calls

Role	Number of Respondents	Time per Person	Total Time Burden
Program Manager	50	45 minutes	37.5 hours

Using the average national salary for "education administrators, elementary and secondary school"[9] as a proxy for the salary of dropout prevention program managers and an estimate of a 2,000-hour work-year, the estimated hourly cost is $45. The total cost burden for the initial screening calls is estimated at $1,688.

Data collection for the case studies will include up to 23 individual interviews per site (see Attachments 7-13 for site visit protocols). All of those interviews would ideally be conducted in person during a two- to three-day site visit, but some may be conducted over the phone if scheduling conflicts arise. The interviews will include multiple respondent groups at the school site (e.g., principal, other school administrator, counselors, teachers, and if there is a family component, parents). However, given that many programs operate using external intermediaries, interviews will also include representatives of partner organizations where applicable. Exhibit 4 displays the projected time burden placed on the various respondent groups at each of the visited sites.

Exhibit 4. Number of Respondents and Labor Hours Expected for Each Site Visit

Role	Number of Respondents	Time Per Person	Total Time Burden Per Site	Total Time Burden Across 15 Sites[10]
Program Manager	1	5 hours (3.75 hours preparation including document collection, 1.25 hours interview)	5 hours	75 hours
Principal	1	60 minutes	1 hour	15 hours
Assistant Principal or Other School-Level Administrator	1	60 minutes	1 hour	15 hours
Teachers/Program Staff	6	60 minutes	6 hours	90 hours
Counselors/Social Workers	2	60 minutes	2 hours	30 hours
District Administrators	3	60 minutes	3 hours	45 hours
Partner Organization Staff	4	60 minutes	4 hours	60 hours
Parent Focus Groups	5 (1 group of 5)	30 minutes	2.5 hours	37.5 hours
TOTAL	23	-	24.5 hours	367.5 hours

While respondents suffer no direct monetary costs for this activity, their time is valuable, as estimated in Exhibit 5. The salary used to calculate hourly rates for each group of respondents is based on Bureau of Labor Statistics data from May 2010.

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[9] BLS Occupation Code 11-9032, Report from May 2010. Retrieved from: http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_nat.htm#11-0000

[10] The maximum possible number of site visits (15) is used in all burden calculations.

Exhibit 5. Estimated Cost of Respondents' Time

Role	Time Needed (Total for 15 Sites)	Hourly Wage (Estimated)[11]	Total Cost[12]
Program Manager	75 hours	$45.00	$3,375
Principal	15 hours	$45.00	$675
Assistant Principal or Other School-Level Administrator	15 hours	$45.00	$675
Teachers/Program Staff	90 hours	$28.00	$2,520
Counselors/Social Workers	30 hours	$27.99	$840
District Administrators	45 hours	$45.00	$2,025
Partner Organization Staff	60 hours	$31.18	$1,871
Parent Focus Groups	37.5 hours	$21.35	$801
TOTAL	367.5 hours	-	$12,781

The numbers in Exhibits 4 and 5 represent an upper bound on the number of individuals and roles included in a site visit. Such numbers are representative only for programs with multiple partner organizations and a large number of students served. The study team will approach each site with the goal of minimizing the number of interviews conducted while ensuring that key stakeholder groups are included. For example, a schoolwide intervention aimed at improving graduation rates will likely include more administrators and teachers than a small, targeted intervention not directly overseen by the principal. Additionally, in many smaller sites it is expected that these categories will overlap. The initial phone screen protocol includes questions that will allow researchers to plan the visit more efficiently.

Nonetheless, taking the two data collection activities (i.e., initial screening calls and the site visits) together, the annualized cost of respondents' time is $4,823.

A.13. Estimate of Cost Burden to Respondents

There is no capital or start-up cost component to these data collection activities nor is there a total operation, maintenance, or purchase cost associated with the study.

A.14. Estimate of Annualized Costs

The estimated cost of the study to the Federal government is $603,892 for 24 months, or approximately $301,946 per year. This estimate includes costs already invoiced, plus budgeted future costs that will be charged to the government for the literature review, study design, site selection, data collection, analysis, and reporting.

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[11] All estimates are from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, data.bls.gov, retrieved on January 6, 2011. The Support Coordinator, Principal, Assistant Principal, and District Administrator estimates were all derived from BLS occupation code 11-9032 – "Education Administrators, Elementary and Secondary Schools". Teachers/Program Staff was derived from BLS occupation code 25-2031 – "Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education". Counselors/Social Workers was derived from BLS occupation code 21-1012 – "Educational, Guidance, School, and Vocational Counselors". Partner Organization staff was derived from BLS occupation code 11-9151—"Social and Community Service Managers". The rate for parents is the mean hourly wage (BLS occupation code 00-0000).

[12] Costs are rounded to the nearest dollar.

A.15. Change in Annual Reporting Burden

This is a new study/data collection.

A.16. Plans for Tabulation and Publication of Results

The data collection period will begin in early fall, assuming OMB approval is obtained by then. Training for site visitors will occur prior to this date, so that the research team is ready to contact potential case study sites shortly after OMB approval. The initial phone screen may require up to four weeks, depending on whether the program manager at the potential sites is accessible during the start of the school year. Once the phone screens are completed, the research team will select the final case study sample in collaboration with the Department. The research team will begin setting up the site visits immediately after the final case study sample is identified, with plans to complete all site visits by December 12, 2012.The final report will integrate literature review findings from an earlier task and lessons synthesized across the case study profiles to address the research questions guiding this study, as well as include the individual case study profiles. In addition to a practitioner-friendly, easily accessible format for the written report that will be posted on the Department website, the Department and SRI will identify other possible venues for dissemination. The release date for the final report is planned for November 1, 2013.

A.17. Expiration Date Omission Approval

Not applicable. All data collection instruments will include the OMB data control number and data collection expiration date.

A.18. Exceptions

Not applicable. No exceptions are requested.