

Appendix F. Introductory Letter to Grantees

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF PLANNING, EVALUATION AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT

POLICY AND PROGRAM STUDIES SERVICE

The US Department of Education's Office of Innovation and Improvement (OII) has sought to improve the quality and rigor of grantee performance reporting and evaluations through the provision of technical assistance. The Policy and Program Studies Service (PPSS) in the Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development (OPEPD) is conducting a study to comprehensively examine OII strategies for supporting and improving grantee performance reporting and evaluations. This study will include two OII grant programs—Charter Schools Program: State Educational Agencies (CSP SEA) and Voluntary Public School Choice (VPSC). The study will include a review of local grantee documentation and technical assistance materials and presentations; interviews with OII program offices technical assistance providers and grantee monitors; and interviews with local grantee program directors, data managers, and evaluators. Study results will inform the Department's technical assistance efforts to improve the quality and rigor of grantee performance reporting and evaluations.

PPSS has commissioned SRI International, who has subcontracted with Abt Associates, an independent research organization, to conduct this study. Abt Associates is a recognized leader in policy, consulting, and program evaluation. As Project Director of a [CSP SEA or VPSC] grant, we value your perspective and hope that you will contribute to this study by agreeing to participate in an interview about the technical assistance you have received on performance reporting and evaluation. Participation in the interview is voluntary and nonparticipation will have no impact on you or your grant.

The intent of this interview is not to evaluate the performance of your grant. Rather, we are trying to understand how grantees perceive the technical assistance support that they receive, how that assistance affects their performance reporting and evaluations, and which aspects of support are most beneficial. The interview will take no more than one hour of your time. While we cannot assure confidentiality, every attempt will be made to not provide information that identifies a subject or district to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.

A member of the Abt Associates team will be contacting you shortly to seek your participation in this study. In the meantime, if you have any concerns or questions about the study, please contact Ellen

Bobronnikov, the study director, at ellen_bobronnikov@abtassoc.com. Thank you in advance for helping with this important study.

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 1 hour per response for grantees, 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 the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20210-4537 or email ICDocketMgr@ed.gov and reference the OMB Control Number (04869)-1875.

Sincerely,

Tom Weko
Director, Policy and Program Studies Service

Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development
U.S. Department of Education