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High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSLS:09) 2013 Update and Transcript Main Study (2013)

Supporting Statement Part A

Request for OMB Review
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Submitted by

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High School Longitudinal Study of 2009

This document has been submitted to request clearance under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 and 5 CFR 1320 for the High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSLs:09). The study is being conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), with the Research Triangle Institute (RTI) International as the main contractor, and the American Institutes for Research (AIR), Windwalker Corporation, Horizon Research Inc., Research Support Services (RSS), and MPR Associates (MPR) as subcontractors, under contract to the U.S. Department of Education (Contract number ED-IES10C0033).

This submission describes plans for the HSLs:09 High School Transcript and 2013 Update collections and the second follow-up panel maintenance, however, at this time, NCES only seeks clearance of the panel maintenance prior to the 2013 Update. The [details pertaining to the responsive design and incentives for the main data collection](#) and the second follow-up panel maintenance are being worked on in consultation with OMB and will be submitted at a later date, [so NCES is not seeking approval for those phases at this time](#). The materials to be used in the main study are based upon those that were approved in April 2012 for the field test data collections (OMB# 1850-0852 v.10). With that submission, NCES adequately justified the need for and overall practical utility of the full study as proposed and an overarching plan for the phases of the data collection over the next 3 years that provides as much detail as to the measures to be used as is available at the time of the submission. OMB approved Phase 1 of this collection in April 2012, and NCES publish a notice in the Federal Register allowing a 30-day public comment period on the details of the subsequent study component described in this submission.

This submission contains a description of the High School Transcript collection, along with the 2013 Update questionnaire, which can be completed by either students or their parent/guardian. It should be noted that at the time of the field test, the study was referred to as the “College Update.” However, given that students who do not go on immediately (or at all) to college are of the same importance to the study as those who do enroll, it would seem that the name “2013 Update” will be more appropriate for the main study. It should be noted that the 2013 Update is, in fact, an update and should not be confused with the second follow-up study, scheduled to be conducted in 2016.

Proposed changes to the data collection plans from the field test to the main study are described in this submission. Minor changes were made to contacting materials to make them more concise, with less redundancy across letters. For the main study, the details of the responsive design and use of incentives are being worked on in consultation with OMB and will be submitted at a later date. On the survey instrument, a number of new items were added to fill in gaps identified by the TRP, while other items were removed due to response ambiguity, low frequencies, or high parent-student disagreement.

A. JUSTIFICATION

A.1 Circumstances Necessitating Collection of Information

A.1.a Purpose of This Submission

The materials in this document support the request for clearance for the 2013 Update and High School Transcript collection for HSLs:09 that NCES will make when providing the details on responsive design and incentives that are still being worked on in consultation with OMB that will be submitted at a later date. In its current content, this submission fully supports the request for clearance of the panel maintenance prior to the 2013 Update. The basic components and key design features of HSLs:09 are summarized below.

Base Year

- survey and math assessment administered to more than 21,000 high school 9th graders in 944 schools during fall 2009;
- surveys of 9th-graders' parents, mathematics and science teachers, school administrators, and school counselors in fall 2009;

First Follow-up

- follow-up in spring 2012, when sample members are high school juniors, have dropped out, or are in other grades;
- survey of school administrators, school counselors, and subsample of parents in 2012;
- return to the same schools but separate following of transfer students and dropouts;

2013 Update

- a 2013 Update with parents or students in the summer/fall after modal senior year (2012-2013);

High School Transcript

- high school transcript component in the 2013-2014 academic year (records data for grades 9–12); and

Future Follow-ups

- post-high school follow-ups by web survey and computer-assisted telephone interview (CATI; second follow-up scheduled for 2016 and a third follow-up in 2021).

HSLs:09 will provide information in support of several goals of the President's agenda and the American Competitiveness Initiative (ACI): 1) Strengthening math and science education; 2) Improving the high school experience in the United States; 3) Expanding access to postsecondary education. First, HSLs:09 brings a new and special emphasis to the study of youth transition by exploring the paths that students pursue in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Second, the 2013 Update takes a snapshot of the cohort at a key transition point between high school and postsecondary education or work. The HSLs:09 data will help analysts examine how high school experiences influence this transition. Third, HSLs:09 will provide policymakers with data about the factors that promote or inhibit postsecondary access and matriculation.

Indeed, before reaching postsecondary education, students must complete secondary education, an attainment which eludes a large fraction of the student population. High schools that do not graduate at least 60% of their students have been labeled ‘dropout factories’ (Balfanz and Legters, 2004). Yet, the decision to drop out is made on several levels, from the individual to the parent and family, among peers, and within high schools. HSLs:09 provides data to illuminate the multi-level factors involved in students’ decisions to depart high school without a diploma. Eventually, a percentage of dropouts will obtain alternative credentials such as the GED, and the timing and means of earning these alternative credentials will be captured in the HSLs:09 data. All students, including dropouts and holders of alternative diplomas, may pursue some form of postsecondary education at some point, so their postsecondary educational aspirations, plans, and expectations should be understood as well.

The HSLs:09 survey collects student-level factors, such as expectations and academic preparation, which may combine with background characteristics to facilitate or inhibit enrollment at a postsecondary institution. The choice set of postsecondary education includes type of institution attended, whether it was a first-choice institution, the level of intensity (full- or part-time), and the means to fund the choices, among other matters. This choice is also related to such considerations as institution types, offered programs, provided aid, and other institutional characteristics, such as reputation, size, cost, and social environment.

Once students matriculate at postsecondary institutions, additional issues that HSLs:09 can address include rate of return on sub-baccalaureate and baccalaureate education, postsecondary educational persistence, patterns of transfer, and baccalaureate attainment. Brock (2010) points out that changes in federal policy and public attitudes have opened up higher education to women, minorities, and nontraditional students, who are overrepresented in sub-baccalaureate programs and in community colleges (Provasnik and Planty 2008). Students at two-year colleges, however, are less likely than those at four-year institutions to complete a bachelor’s degree, even when they plan and expect to do so (Brock 2010; Provasnik and Planty 2008). With the increased prevalence and importance of community college comes the need to understand better who attends, for what reasons, under what circumstances, and to what outcomes. Success in community college reflects the combined influence of opportunity structures, institutional practices, and the social, economic, and academic attributes students bring to college (Goldrick-Rab 2010).

With more nontraditional and underprepared students in community college, it is important to understand nontraditional pathways into and through higher education. As Adelman observes, “the complexity of student postsecondary enrollment patterns has accelerated” (Adelman 2006). Issues such

as patterns of transfer are particularly important, as exemplified by purposeful migration from two-year to four-year institutions versus “swirling” (wandering from one school to another—swirling has a significant negative association with degree completion [Adelman 2006]). Stopping out, dropping in, and auditing are additional patterns of attendance that must be delineated and understood and that may be tied to the relatively low baccalaureate attainment rate. Even when low-SES and first-generation college students begin in 4-year institutions, they are disproportionately likely to engage in “reverse” movement from 4-year to 2-year schools, which in turn is associated with much lower odds of completion (Goldrick-Rab and Pfeffer 2009). The HSLs:09 2013 Update and subsequent follow-ups will examine these complexities of postsecondary educational access, choice, and success.

In sum, the HSLs:09 design, with its carefully-selected points of data collection, captures the ever-longer and more branching path to adulthood. The in-school rounds capture the transition into high school, the bulk of the high school experience, algebraic reasoning achievement gain expected in the high school years, and the transition out of high school, from early plans and expectations to actual choice. The two high school assessment and survey points are complemented by the continuous data from 9th grade through 12th grade that will be supplied by high school transcripts. The 2013 Update collects the plans and decisions of students at the transition between secondary education and postsecondary experiences, which opens a window onto issues of access and choice. Subsequent rounds of data collection will explore patterns of postsecondary attendance, as well as the transition of the non-college-going young adults into the labor market, postsecondary education persistence, intensity of enrollment, remediation, transfer, and attainment.

A.1.b Legislative Authorization

HSLs:09 is sponsored by NCES, within the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), in close consultation with other offices and organizations within and outside the U.S. Department of Education (ED). HSLs:09 is authorized by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (20 U.S.C. Section 9543).

A.1.c Prior and Related Studies

In 1970, NCES initiated a program of longitudinal high school studies. Its purpose was to gather time-series data on nationally representative samples of high school students that would be pertinent to the formulation and evaluation of education policies.

Starting with the National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS:72), NCES began providing education policymakers and researchers with longitudinal data that linked education experiences with later outcomes. Almost 10 years later, in 1980, High School and Beyond (HS&B) included one cohort of high school seniors comparable to the seniors in NLS:72. The third longitudinal

study of students was the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88), which began with a cohort of 8th-graders. The Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002) started with a 10th grade cohort in 2002, with follow-ups in 2004, 2006, a third follow-up questionnaire administration in 2012, and a postsecondary transcript collection scheduled for 2013-2014.

These studies have investigated the educational, personal, and vocational development of students and the school, familial, community, personal, and cultural factors that affect this development. Each of these studies has provided rich information about the critical transition from high school to postsecondary education and the workforce. HSLs:09 continues on the path of its predecessors while also creating a new focus on factors associated with choosing, persisting in, and succeeding in STEM course-taking and careers.

A.2 Purpose and Use of Information Collection

HSLs:09 is intended to be a general-purpose dataset; that is, it is designed to serve multiple policy objectives. Policy issues studied through HSLs:09 include the identification of school attributes associated with mathematics achievement, college entry, and career choice; the relationship between parent and peer involvement and student achievement, activities, plans, decisions, and development; the factors associated with dropping out of the education system; and the transition of different groups (e.g., racial and ethnic, gender, and socioeconomic status groups) from high school to postsecondary institutions and the labor market, and especially into STEM curricula and careers.

The objectives of HSLs:09 also encompass the need to support both longitudinal and cross-cohort analyses and to provide a basis for important descriptive cross-sectional analyses. HSLs:09 is first and foremost a longitudinal study; hence survey items are chosen for their usefulness in predicting future outcomes as measured in later survey waves. Compared to its earlier counterparts, there are considerable changes to the design of HSLs:09—specifically, changes in the grade at which data are collected in the in-school rounds—that will need to be considered when doing trend comparisons. NELS:88 began with an eighth-grade cohort in the spring term; although this cohort is not markedly different from the fall-term 9th-grade cohort of HSLs:09 in terms of student knowledge base, it differs at the school level. The HSLs:09 time point represents the beginning of high school rather than the point of departure from middle school. Unlike its predecessor studies, HSLs:09 includes a spring-term 11th-grade follow-up because only modest gains have been seen on assessments in the final year of high school, and the 11th-grade follow-up minimizes unit response problems associated with testing in the spring term of the senior year. The design of HSLs:09 calls for information to be collected from parents of (modal) 11th-graders and the use of a parent/student 2013 Update survey. The collection of transcripts will provide continuous

term-by-term data for 9th through 12th grades, which will relate achievement gain to coursetaking choices. All of these data will allow trend comparisons of coursetaking patterns and other common high school policy issues with HS&B, NELS:88, and ELS:2002.

The HSLs:09 2013 Update allows analysts to understand students' postsecondary plans for after high school, including their potential college plans, preparation, and information-seeking behavior. In terms of students planning for college, the survey questions will tap if and where students applied, if and where they were accepted, and with what financial aid (if any); what work they expect to take in the fall after their intended high school graduation date; as well as parental resources and support. In addition to potential college plans, the 2013 Update collects information about employment plans and other postsecondary options such as military and family formation. Traditionally, past studies have waited for retrospective data on these critical topics, but these issues, given today's policy interests, are too important to tolerate inaccuracies from post-hoc recall. The 2013 Update will provide data at the most critical time period to predict, for example, postsecondary matriculation and to track how students' plans evolve from the beginning to the end of high school.

A.2.a Content Justifications: 2013 Update Questionnaire and High School Transcripts **2013 Update**

The 2013 Update is a 15-minute questionnaire to be answered by either the student or the parent. The questions will be largely objective since a student or a parent must have the same information to provide consistent answers across respondent types. The 2013 Update instrument anchors responses to November 1, when college-bound students should be enrolled in postsecondary education and most of the cohort will have completed high school. Main study cohort members will not be interviewed again until 2016, when most will be three years beyond high school, and when information about postsecondary plans, choice sets, and decision processes would be subject to recall bias and ex post facto rationalization.

The questionnaire is organized in five substantive sections: (1) high school attendance and completion status; (2) general plans for fall 2013; (3) postsecondary applications and programs of study; (4) cost and financial aid of attending postsecondary education; and (5) employment experiences and plans. The 2013 Update marks another stage for tracing and measuring the evolution of postsecondary plans, including STEM-related plans, and for connecting plans to outcomes. Each topic in the questionnaire contributes to the fuller understanding of the factors affecting postsecondary educational access and choice, or to employment outcomes.

High School Attendance and Completion Status. Since high school completion is a critical defining event for this cohort, four distinct types of completion status will be discerned: 1) early completion

(ahead of the modal completion time for the cohort); 2) on-time completion (the mode for the cohort); 3) non-completion (still in high school or in homeschool); and 4) non-completion (dropout). The survey will map these four critical pathways. Because of differences in the quality of educational experience that each represents, it is also important to know the type of high school credential obtained. If a high school credential has not yet been earned, respondents will be asked about plans to do so. Additionally, names of high schools attended since last interviewed will be collected, which will be valuable in the high school transcript collection. The interview will also gather information on enrollment in Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and dual enrollment courses by subject area (math, science, other). Finally, respondents will be asked about meetings with high school counselors and who they consider to have been the most influential people in the student's decisions regarding college, financial aid, and careers.

General Plans for Fall 2013. The questionnaire asks respondents to report their plans on November 1, 2013, when the majority of the cohort will be entering postsecondary education, entering the workforce, serving in the military, starting a family, or a combination of these or other activities. Respondents who will be continuing their education and working will be asked which of these activities will be the main focus, allowing for the possibility that both may receive equal attention. Those who will be taking classes or working will be asked if they will be pursuing these activities full-time or part-time. Respondents who plan to serve in the military will be asked in which branch they will enlist.

Postsecondary Applications and Programs of Study. Respondents planning to continue their education or training will be asked to report their chosen postsecondary institution, the type of program, expected major field of study, and where they will live while enrolled.

The 2013 Update supplies an invaluable opportunity to take a snapshot of the cohort's plans at a key transition point. All respondents, regardless of fall plans, will be asked the names of at most two postsecondary institutions to which they applied (only two to minimize burden), in addition to the institution they will attend, if applicable. Admission status for each of these schools will be collected, and respondents then will be requested to indicate which of the schools in the application set and acceptance set was or is their first choice. Those who will be taking classes will be asked which characteristics were important in their selection of their postsecondary institution.

Cost and Financial Aid of Attending Postsecondary Education. College choice is sensitive to cost, and cost can be mitigated by financial aid. The 2013 Update instrument asks all respondents, regardless of postsecondary plans whether financial aid was applied for and whether financial aid was received. The instrument ascertains the type of financial aid offered by the institution to be attended on November 1, as well as financial aid offered by the institution designated as the respondent's first choice

among the institutions where accepted. Those students (and families) who did not apply for financial aid will be surveyed for reasons for not applying. The information collected in this section of the questionnaire will be complemented by federal financial aid data from the Central Processing System (FAFSA) and the National Student Loan Data System for federal loans (Stafford, Perkins) and federal grants (Pell) which will be acquired later through administrative records matching. Cost—actual or perceived—is important information for modeling choice. Information is gathered about cost, relative to the first-choice institution and the school that the student will actually attend. Those who chose not to continue their education or training will be asked about their rationale for deciding not to extend their education after high school.

Employment Experiences and Plans. The 2013 Update also collects information on employment at the time of the interview. Questions will include the job title and duties, compensation and hours worked, relation to career goals, whether the job is an apprenticeship, when the job began, and whether the high school assisted the student in getting the job. Respondents who hold more than one job at the time of the interview will be asked about additional hours worked and earnings from all other jobs. Those who have plans to work on November 1st are asked if their current main job is the one they plan to hold at that time. If not, they are asked for their expected job title and duties as of November 1st.

Locating Information. The 2013 Update also collects locating information to assist in tracking the cohort as it disperses at this key transition point. Information collected includes name, addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses, and social security numbers for the teenager and a parent. For students who will still be enrolled in high school in the fall, the name and location of their school for the 2013-2014 school year is collected.

High School Transcripts

In addition to the 2013 Update, HSLs:09 will be collecting high school transcripts. High school transcript studies have been conducted by NCES as part of the Secondary Longitudinal Studies Program and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) High School Transcript Studies (HSTS) program since 1982. Transcripts include the official and fixed record of student coursetaking. When course and grade information is collected from students, apart from increased burden, students have difficulty reporting accurate information about the number and types of courses taken, the date taken, and the grades received over the four-year period (Fetters, Stowe, and Owings 1984). As such, transcripts are considered to be more accurate than students' self-reported information. While the collection of administrative records from schools presents a number of challenges and has its own set of limitations (e.g., uncooperative schools, incomplete records), transcripts offer an objective, reliable, cost-effective means for obtaining information about crucial aspects of students' educational experiences. Course catalogs are being collected, and a course

offerings file will be created in addition to a transcript file. In HSLs:09, specific content requested in the High School Transcript component includes:

Student-level information:

- Type of diploma awarded;
- Date diploma awarded;
- Date student left school (for students who did not graduate);
- Reason student left school (graduated, transferred, etc.);
- Cumulative GPA;
- Dual (concurrent) enrollment; and
- Standardized test scores for the PSAT, SAT, ACT, and Advanced Placement tests.

Coursetaking histories for grades 9 through 12 (plus high-school-level courses such as algebra taken before 9th grade and inclusive of high school summer courses in 2013):

- Course title and number;
- Year, grade level, and term course taken;
- Number of credits earned; and
- Grade assigned.

School-level information:

- Grade scale;
- Course grade weighting system used, if any;
- Availability of student-level information;
- GPA formula;
- Carnegie unit conversion information;
- Term system used;
- Course catalogs (if not collected previously);
- Types of diplomas granted; and
- Credits required for different types of diplomas.

The immense value of high school transcripts as objective, reliable measures of crucial aspects of students' educational experiences is widely recognized. When coupled with data on students' family backgrounds and demographic characteristics, school environments, and standardized achievement and outcome measures, transcripts permit the specification of complex models of educational processes. Moreover, transcript components of longitudinal studies such as HS&B, NELS:88, ELS:2002, and HSLs:09 permit the measurement of the association between high school program and courses and post-high school outcomes in labor force and postsecondary education. The data are invaluable for intra-cohort analysis, such as measuring the relationship between mathematics coursetaking and achievement gains (Bozick and Ingels 2008). Prior studies such as NELS:88 and ELS:2002 supported trend comparisons (both with each other and NAEP high school transcripts), but this was possible only because of freshening at 12th grade to provide a representative sample of high school seniors. The HSLs:09 transcripts pertain to a 9th grade cohort only. However, successor studies to HSLs:09, with a fall ninth-grade starting point, are anticipated in the future and would make inter-cohort transcript comparisons possible.

A.3 Use of Improved Information Technology and Burden Reduction

A.3.a 2013 Update

With few exceptions, 2013 Update questionnaire data collected for the HSLS:09 2013 Update will be limited to electronic media. Student sample members and their parents will be given a username and password and will be asked to have one of the two (either student or parent) complete the 2013 Update via the Internet. There will be a computer-assisted telephone interview (CATI) follow-up for student sample members and their parents who do not complete the web questionnaire by self-administration. Computer control of interviewing efficiently manages survey activities, including scheduling of calls, generation of reports on sample disposition, data quality monitoring, interviewer performance, and flow of information between telephone and field operations.

Additional features of the CATI system include: 1) online help for each screen to assist interviewers in question administration; 2) full documentation of all instrument components, including variable ranges, formats, record layouts, labels, question wording, and flow logic; 3) capability for creating and processing hierarchical data structures to eliminate data redundancy and conserve computer resources; 4) a scheduler system to manage the flow and assignment of cases to interviewers by time zone, case status, appointment information, and prior cases disposition; 5) an integrated case-level control system to track the status of each sample member across the various data collection activities; 6) automatic audit file creation and timed backup to ensure that, if an interview is terminated prematurely and later restarted, all data entered during the earlier portion of the interview can be retrieved; and 7) a screen library containing the survey instrument as displayed to the interviewer.

A.3.b High School Transcripts

As a first step in the high school transcript collection, whenever and wherever possible, RTI collected course catalogs during the first follow-up for the academic years 2009–10 to 2012–13 in electronic or hard-copy form. Any schools whose catalogs could not be obtained electronically via e-mail or uploaded to the study website were asked to provide hard copy course catalogs via an express delivery service. At the time of the transcript collection, any outstanding school catalogs will be requested.

High school transcripts will be requested for the cohort from the schools from which the students were sampled as part of HSLS:09 base year, as well as all additional schools attended by the students since then. A complete transcript will be requested for each sample member. Several methods will be used for obtaining the transcript data including:

1. Asking school staff to upload electronic transcripts for sampled students to a secure study website;

2. Asking school staff to send electronic transcripts for sampled students by secure File Transfer Protocol;
3. Asking school staff to send electronic transcripts via e-mail with encrypted attachments;
4. Obtaining transcripts directly using a dedicated server at the University of Texas at Austin (described in more detail below) for those schools participating in the program;
5. If none of the above methods is possible, school staff may send transcripts to a secure electronic fax at RTI (after sending a confirmed test page); or
6. If none of the above methods is possible, school staff may send the transcripts via an express delivery service after redacting personally identifiable information.

The fourth collection method listed above is a relatively new process. Approximately 100 high schools across the nation currently send academic transcripts in standardized electronic formats via a dedicated server at the University of Texas at Austin. The server now supports Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) and XML formats. Based on RTI's experience with the collection of postsecondary transcripts for the B&B:08/09 and BPS:04/09 transcripts, it is likely that very few high schools will provide data via this server. However, providing schools with this option will reduce the burden of providing transcripts on those schools that do use it.

After collecting the transcripts and catalogs, data from the transcripts will be keyed, when needed, and the courses coded. The current plan is for courses to be coded using a course-coding taxonomy based on the Classification of Secondary School Courses (CSSC) from the 2009 NAEP High School Transcript Study. Because the CSSC is a modified version of the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP), RTI will carefully review both the CSSC and the 2010 CIP to identify any updates that may be beneficial to carry over to the CSSC. NCES is currently considering the possibility of using the School Codes for the Exchange of Data (SCED) as the course-coding taxonomy. Should that happen, a crosswalk between the CSSC and the SCED will be developed to facilitate analyses and comparisons. Guidance will be provided by NCES, technical review panel members, and other key personnel on refining and reviewing the taxonomy for transcript coding and new courses and fields of study.

Verifications of transcript data keying and coding at the student level will be performed. Any errors will be recorded and corrected as needed. Once the transcripts for each school are keyed and coded, transcript course coding at the school level will be reviewed by expert coders to ensure that: (1) coding taxonomies have been applied consistently and data elements of interest have been coded properly within schools; (2) program information has been coded consistently according to the program area and sequence level indicators in course titles; (3) records of sample members who attended multiple schools do not have

duplicate entries for credits that transferred from one school to another; and (4) additional information has been noted and coded properly.

A.3.c. Panel Maintenance.

Two panel maintenance collections are planned. The first will take place immediately upon receipt of OMB approval, in spring of 2013, and will inform sample members that the next update begins in June 2013. Sample members will be asked to provide updated contact information via web or hardcopy reply form.

A second panel maintenance collection will take place between the update round and the second follow-up study. To prepare for the second follow-up, sample members will be given an online or hardcopy option to provide updated contact information. This panel maintenance mailing prior to the second follow-up is planned for both the field test and main study samples.

The field test sample will only receive a single panel maintenance mailing in late 2013 to prepare for the second follow-up which is scheduled for spring 2015. This is because the field test update has already taken place. Panel maintenance would be performed on the main study sample in spring 2013 to prepare for the 2013 Update and in late 2014 to prepare for the second follow-up study.

A.4 Efforts to Identify Duplication and Use of Similar Information

Since 1970, NCES has consulted with other federal offices to ensure that the data collected in this important series of longitudinal studies do not duplicate information from any other national data sources. In addition, NCES staff have regularly consulted with nonfederal associations such as the College Board, American Educational Research Association, the National Association for College Admission Counseling, the American Association of Community Colleges, and other groups to confirm that the HSLs:09 data to be collected are not available from any other sources. These consultations also provide methodological and substantive insights from other studies of secondary and postsecondary students and labor force members. This openness to input and feedback ensures that the data collected through HSLs:09 will meet the needs of the federal government and other interested agencies and organizations.

Within NCES, HSLs:09 builds on and extends past studies rather than duplicating them. First, the instrumentation and design of HSLs:09 explicitly complement the redesign of NPSAS and BPS. HSLs:09 staff ensure that the questions raised by NPSAS and BPS about what happens to their participants before they enter the respective postsecondary studies are asked. Indeed, the postsecondary and secondary longitudinal survey staff collaborate extensively to align the foci of the research questions, the definition and meaning of study constructs, and the measurement of these constructs across survey

programs. Such collaboration maximizes the possibility of producing an analytically valuable data product with interest to educators, researchers, and policymakers.

Second, design articulation with prior NCES secondary longitudinal studies also shows coordination, and innovation, not duplication. These earlier studies were conducted during the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, and the early 2000s and represent education, employment, and social experiences and environments different from those experienced by the HSLS:09 student sample. While at a high level of generality HSLS:09 models the same basic transition through high school and beyond to postsecondary education and the world of work, grade-specific comparisons with the prior studies are not possible (none of the prior studies comprises a ninth-grade cohort). Rather than extending prior secondary longitudinal studies temporally as a time series, HSLS:09 extends them conceptually. To a greater degree than the prior secondary longitudinal studies, HSLS:09 provides data that are necessary to understand the role of different factors in the development of student commitment to attend higher education and the steps necessary to persist and succeed in college (applying for financial aid, taking courses in specific sequences, etc.). Further, HSLS:09 focuses on the factors associated with choosing and persisting in mathematics and science course-taking and STEM careers. These focal points present a marked difference between HSLS:09 and its predecessor studies.

The only other dataset that offers so large an opportunity to understand the key transitions into postsecondary institutions or the world of work is the Department of Labor's (Bureau of Labor Statistics) National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 and 1997 cohorts (NLSY79, NLSY97). However, the NLSY youth cohorts represent temporally earlier cohorts than HSLS:09. There are also important design differences between NLSY79/ NLSY97 and HSLS:09 that render them more complementary than duplicative. NLSY is a household-based longitudinal survey; HSLS:09 is school-based. For both NLSY cohorts, base-year Armed Service Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) test data are available, but there is no longitudinal high school achievement measure. Although NLSY97 also gathers information from schools (including principal and teacher reports and high school transcripts), it cannot study school processes in the same way as HSLS:09, given its household sampling basis. Any given school contains at most just a few of NLSY97 sample members, a number that constitutes neither a representative sample of students in the school nor a sufficient number to provide within-school estimates. Thus, although both studies provide important information for understanding the transition from high school to the labor market, HSLS:09 is uniquely able to provide information about education processes and within-school dynamics and how these relate to both school achievement and ultimate labor market outcomes, including outcomes in STEM education and occupations.

Both NAEP and the secondary longitudinal studies sponsor periodic collections of transcripts, but the NAEP transcript data are cross-sectional and cannot be used longitudinally.

A.5 Impact on Small Businesses or Other Small Entities

Target respondents for HSLS:09 are individuals who typically have recently completed high school. Data collection activities will involve no burden to small businesses or entities.

A.6 Consequences of Collecting the Information Less Frequently

This submission describes the main study data collection for the 2013 Update, which will take place in the summer/fall of 2013, and a high school transcript collection in the academic year of 2013-14 for the main study. A second follow-up collection is scheduled for the spring of 2016. The tentative design for the study calls for a final round at about age 26 (2021). Recent education and social welfare reform initiatives, changes in federal policy concerning postsecondary student support, and other interventions necessitate periodic studies. Important areas of change for which better information is needed include the increasing role of community colleges, the needs of demographic minorities, and of first-generation college-goers. Repeated surveys are also necessary because of rapid changes in the secondary and postsecondary education environments and the world of work. Indeed, longitudinal information arguably provides better measures between program, policy, and environmental changes and long term outcomes than would multiple cross-sectional studies.

The HSLS:09 cohort was first surveyed at the very beginning of high school to provide a baseline which also includes the full pool of potential high school dropouts. The First Follow-up occurred in what was, for most, the spring of their junior year. The 2013 Update is a snapshot taken in the summer/fall after the cohort's modal senior year and records sample members' status in terms of the transition to higher education and the workforce, with an anchor in expected status as of November 1, 2013, for the main study. The timing is important in that it provides a fresh and immediate look at the outcomes in relation to the cohort's postsecondary planning. High school transcripts will be collected in the 2013-14 academic year, when most cohort members have completed high school. Postsecondary follow-ups are tentatively planned for the modal three-years-out of high school time point, the ideal juncture at which to study postsecondary access and choice, and for eight-years-out of high school, to capture final outcomes. While an argument could be made for additional data points, less frequent collection would adversely affect the study's ability to meet its goals.

A.7 Special Circumstances Relating to Guidelines of 5 CFR 1320.5

All data collection guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5 are being followed. No special circumstances of data collection are anticipated.

A.8 Consultations Outside NCES

Consultations with persons and organizations both internal and external to NCES and the federal government have been pursued. In the planning stage for HSLs:09, there were many efforts to obtain critical review and to acquire comments regarding project plans and interim and final products. The first follow-up Technical Review Panel (TRP) has also been convened and serves as the major vehicle through which future consultation will be achieved in the course of the project. The TRP met in September of 2010 and in June of 2011. It met again in December 2012 specifically to make recommendations on the data elements to be included in the 2013 Update and the high school transcript component of HSLs:09.

For base-year and first follow-up assessment development, a mathematics advisory panel comprising the following experts was formed:

- Hyman Bass, Professor of Mathematics, University of Michigan;
- Katherine Halvorsen, Professor of Mathematics and Statistics, Smith College;
- Joan Leitzel, President Emeritus, University of New Hampshire and Professor of Mathematics (retired), Ohio State University;
- Mark Saul, Mathematics Teacher (retired), Bronxville High School, NY; and
- Ann Shannon, Mathematics Education Consultant, Oakland, CA.

Additional consultants outside ED and members of the base-year and first follow-up Technical Review Panels include the following individuals:

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A.9 Explanation of Payment or Gift to Respondents

The following section is being worked on in consultation with OMB and will be submitted at a later date.

Transcript Reimbursement. Schools will be reimbursed for the cost of preparing and sending transcripts at the school's standard rate. If additional costs are incurred by the schools, RTI will reimburse such expenses to the extent that they are reasonable and properly documented.

A.10 Assurance of Confidentiality Provided to Respondents

A data security plan (DSP) for HSLS:09 was approved by the IES Disclosure Review Board chair. The plan includes protocols for the base-year and first follow-up studies as well as the 2013 Update and Transcript collections. The HSLS:09 plan represents best-practice survey systems and procedures for protecting respondent confidentiality and securing survey data. An outline of this plan is provided in Exhibit A-3. The HSLS:09 DSP

- establishes clear responsibility and accountability for data security and the protection of respondent confidentiality with corporate oversight to ensure adequate investment of resources;
- details a structured approach for considering and addressing risk at each step in the survey process and establish mechanisms for monitoring performance and adapting to new security concerns;
- includes technological and procedural solutions that mitigate risk and emphasize the necessary training to capitalize on these approaches; and
- is supported by the implementation of data security controls recommended by the National Institute of Standards and Technology for protecting federal information systems.

Adhering to rules outlined in the DSP, invitation letters will be sent to sample members (students and parents). Respondents will be informed of the voluntary nature of the survey and of the confidentiality provision in the initial cover letter and on the questionnaires, stating that their responses may be used for statistical purposes only and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any

other purpose except as required by law [Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA) 20 U.S.C., § 9573]. The material sent will also include a brochure describing the study and the extent to which respondents and their responses will be kept confidential (see Appendix A).

Exhibit A-3. HSLS:09 Data Security Plan Outline

| | |
|--|---|
| HSLS:09 Data Security Plan Summary | Physical Environment Protections |
| Maintaining the Data Security Plan | System Access Controls |
| Information Collection Request | Survey Data Collection/Management Procedures |
| Our Promise to Secure Data and Protect Confidentiality | Protecting Electronic Media |
| Personally Identifying Information That We Collect and/or Manage | Encryption |
| Institutional Review Board Human Subject Protection Requirements | Data Transmission |
| Process for Addressing Survey Participant Concerns | Storage/Archival/Destruction |
| Computing System Summary | Protecting Hard-Copy Media |
| General Description of the RTI Networks | Internal Hard-Copy Communications |
| General Description of the Data Management, Data Collection, and Data Processing Systems | External Communications to Respondents |
| Integrated Monitoring System | Handling of Mail Returns, Hard-Copy Student Lists, and Parental Consent Forms |
| Receipt Control System | Handling and Transfer of Data Collection Materials |
| Instrument Development and Documentation System | Tracing Operations |
| Data Collection System | Transcript Operations |
| Document Archive and Data Library | Software Security Controls |
| Employee-Level Controls | Data File Development: Disclosure Avoidance Plan |
| Security Clearance Procedures | Data Security Monitoring |
| Nondisclosure Affidavit Collection and Storage | Survey Protocol Monitoring |
| Security Awareness Training | System/Data Access Monitoring |
| Staff Termination/Transfer Procedures | Protocol for Reporting Potential Breaches of Confidentiality |
| Subcontractor Procedures | Specific Procedures for Field Staff |

Additionally, HSLS:09 will conform to NCES *Restricted Use Data Procedures Manual* and NCES *Standards and Policies*. The plan for maintaining confidentiality includes obtaining signed confidentiality agreements and notarized nondisclosure affidavits from all personnel who will have access to individual identifiers. Each individual working in HSLS:09 will complete the e-QIP clearance process. The plan includes annual personnel training regarding the meaning of confidentiality and the procedures associated with maintaining confidentiality, particularly as it relates to handling requests for information and providing assurance to respondents about the protection of their responses. The training will cover controlled and protected access to computer files under the control of a single database manager; built-in safeguards concerning status monitoring and receipt control systems; and a secured and operator-manned in-house computing facility.

All data transferred electronically for HSLS:09 will be transmitted through a secure server at NCES. The system requires that both parties to the transfer be registered users of the NCES Members Site and also that their Members Site privileges be set to allow use of the new service. This service is designed for the secure transfer of electronic files containing personally identifying information (i.e., data protected under the Privacy Act or otherwise posing risk of disclosure).

This secure server has been used successfully and without incident on HSLS:09 and other NCES studies. Procedures have been put into place for using the server to transfer confidential data. The system

requires that both parties to the transfer be registered users of the NCES Members Site and that their Members Site privileges be set to allow use of the secure data transfer service. These privileges are set up and carefully controlled by NCES' Chief Technology Officer (CTO). This service has been designed by ED/NCES specifically for the secure transfer of electronic files containing personally identifying information (i.e., data protected under the Privacy Act or otherwise posing risk of disclosure) and can be used for NCES-to-Contractor, Contractor-to-Subcontractor, Subcontractor-to-Contractor, and Contractor-to-Other-Agency data transfers. The party uploading the information onto the secure server at NCES is responsible for deleting the file(s) after the successful transfer has been confirmed. Data transfers using this system will include notification to IES, the NCES CTO, the NCES Chief Statistician, and the NCES project officer. The notification will include the names and affiliations of the parties in the data exchange/transfer and the nature and approximate size of the data to be transferred.

A.11 Justification for Sensitive Questions

The 2013 Update asks no questions that normally would be deemed sensitive.

A.12 Estimates of Annualized Burden Hours and Their Cost to Respondents

Estimates of response burden for the HSLs:09 2013 Update, transcript, and panel maintenance data collection activities are shown in Exhibit A-4. Also included are the estimates for panel maintenance which will be conducted between the 2013 Update and second follow-up study. The field test panel maintenance will consist of a mailing to each sample member and his or her parent/guardian asking that they log onto the survey website to update contact information or that they complete a hardcopy address update. The main study panel maintenance will be conducted as done in the field test. Plans regarding incentives for the between-round panel maintenance are being worked on in consultation with OMB and will be submitted at a later date. Estimates of response burden are developed from experience with the base-year and first follow-up HSLs:09 questionnaires, the high school transcript collection for ELS:2002, and from other education longitudinal studies (e.g., ELS:2002, NELS:88, HS&B).

For the 2013 Update, assuming that 40 percent of the respondents are students and 60 percent are parents (as in the field test), and assuming an hourly rate of \$7.25 per hour for students and \$20 for parents, the total cost to participants is estimated at \$19,239 for students and \$79,611 for parents, for a total of \$98,850. Included in the parent and student notification letters will be the following statement:

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number of this voluntary information collection is 1850-0852. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 15 minutes for the questionnaire including the time to review instructions and complete and review the information collection. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate or suggestions for improving the interview, please write to: High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSLs:09), National Center for Education Statistics, 1990 K Street NW, Washington, DC 20006.

The cost to the school registrar is estimated at \$20 per hour. The cost for the school registrar to prepare and submit transcripts is estimated at \$15,963 for base year schools and \$30,974 for transfer schools, for a total of \$46,937. The cost to panel maintenance participants is estimated at \$20 per hour for a total of \$7,805 for the main study panel maintenance, \$377 for the field test panel maintenance, and \$11,708 for the main study panel maintenance in advance of the second follow-up. The total cost to respondents is estimated at \$165,677.

Exhibit A-4. Estimated Burden for HSLs:09 2013 Update and Transcript Main Study

| Respondents | Sample | Expected response rate | Number of respondents | Number of responses | Average time per response (minutes) ¹ | Range of response times (minutes) | Total burden (hours) |
|--|--------|------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|--|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Main study panel maintenance | 23,415 | 20% | 4,683 | 4,683 | 5 | 3-7 | 390 |
| 2013 Update: Students or Parents | 23,415 | 82% | 19,203 | 19,203 | 15 | 10-20 | 4,801 |
| Transcripts: School registrar (BY) | 939 | 85% | 798 | 798 | 60 | 30-180 | 798 |
| Transcripts: School registrar (transfer) | 1,822 | 85% | 1,549 | 1,549 | 60 | 30-90 | 1,549 |
| Field test panel maintenance (2 FU) | 754 | 30% | 226 | 226 | 5 | 3-7 | 19 |
| Main study panel maintenance (2 FU) | 23,415 | 30% | 7,025 | 7,025 | 5 | 3-7 | 585 |
| Total | | | 21,776 | 33,484 | | | 8,142 |

¹ Transcript time is specified by school not by student. The higher burden per response is due to the greater number of transcripts to be processed by each school.

A.13 Estimates of Total Annual Cost Burden to Respondents

There are no capital, startup, or operating costs to respondents for participation in the project. No equipment, printing, or postage charges will be incurred.

A.14 Annualized Cost to the Federal Government

Estimated costs to the federal government for HSLs:09 are shown in Exhibit A-5. Included in the contract estimates are all staff time, reproduction, postage, and telephone costs associated with the management, data collection, analysis, and reporting for which clearance is requested.

Exhibit A-5. Total Costs to NCES

| Costs to NCES | Amount |
|---|---------------------|
| Main study 2013 Update, Transcripts (2013-14), and Panel Maintenance | \$ 6,947,595 |
| Salaries and expenses | 150,000 |
| Contract costs | 6,797,595 |

NOTE: All costs quoted are exclusive of award fee. Main study costs include tasks 5 and 6. The proposed panel maintenance activity is not included in the current contract.

A.15 Reasons for Program Changes

The apparent decrease in respondent burden from that last approved is due to the fact that the last clearance included burden for both the First Follow-up Full Scale Collection (OMB# 1850-0852 v.9) and the HSLs:09 High School Transcript Collection and College Update Field Test and Second Follow-up

Panel Maintenance (OMB# 1850-0852 v.10), while this request only includes burden for the HSLS:09 2013 Update and Transcript Main Study and Panel Maintenance.

The primary real change associated with this submission is the shift from school-based student data collection to the 2013 Update collection to occur after students had graduated from high school.

A.16 Publication Plans and Project Schedule

The formal contract for HSLS:09 requires the following reports, publications, and other public information releases in the main study:

1. a detailed methodological report describing all aspects of the 2013 Update and high school transcript main study design and data collection procedures (a working paper detailing the methodological findings from the field test will also be produced);
2. complete data files and documentation for research data users in the form of both a restricted-use and public-use electronic codebook (ECB) and a public-use data tool (i.e., EDAT); and
3. a descriptive First Look Report, reporting initial findings on issues of interest to the secondary school and higher education community, as determined by NCES.

Exhibit A-6 shows the schedule for the approved field test as well as the main study components included in this submission.

Exhibit A-6. Operational Schedule for HSLS:09

| HSLS:09 activity | Start date | End date |
|---|-------------------|-----------------|
| Field test | | |
| College Update | Jun. 2012 | Oct. 2012 |
| Transcript collection | Sept. 2012 | Jan. 2013 |
| Panel maintenance (prior to second follow-up) | Oct. 2013 | Dec. 2013 |
| Main study | | |
| Panel maintenance (prior to 2013 Update) | Apr. 2013 | Jun. 2013 |
| 2013 Update | Jun. 2013 | Oct. 2013 |
| Transcript collection | Sept. 2013 | May 2014 |
| Panel maintenance (prior to second follow-up) | Oct. 2014 | Dec. 2014 |

A.17 Reason(s) Display of OMB Expiration Date Is Inappropriate

The expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection will be displayed on data collection instruments and materials. No special exception to this requirement is requested.

A.18 Exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Statement

There are no exceptions to the certification statement identified in the Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions of OMB Form 83-I.

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