

National Center for Education
Statistics

School Climate Surveys
Cognitive Interviews and Usability
Testing

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Appendix A: Informational Flyer for All Participants

Education Research Study – Participants Needed

American Institutes for Research (AIR) is looking for participants to help evaluate questions for a new survey for the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education. These survey questions are part of the School Climate Survey, a project with the goal to better understand what it is like in schools.

We are looking for the following groups of participants:

- Students in grades 5-12
- Parents of students in grades 5-12
- Teachers of grades 5-12
- Principals and Non-Instructional Staff in middle schools and high schools

You will be asked to review survey questions and offer your thoughts about them. This type of research is known as cognitive interviews. We will audio record your responses and take other notes as necessary; information collected during this study will be for research purposes only. Cognitive interview sessions will be held at <LOCATION> on <DATES>. These sessions will last no more than 60 minutes.

Students will receive \$25 to thank them for their time and participation. Parents, Teachers, and staff will receive \$40 for their time and participation. In addition (for students), parents or legal guardians who are not participating in the interview will receive \$25 to thank them for the time and effort in bringing their child to and from the cognitive interview site. If you are interested, please contact (or ask your parent or guardian to contact) <NAME> at <CONTACT INFORMATION>.

Appendix B: Recruitment E-mail for Students

Subject: Research Study Opportunity

<DATE>

Dear Parent/Guardian,

My name is <CONTACT NAME> and I am contacting you from <RECRUITER>, a <RECRUITER LOCATION> area research company. The American Institutes for Research (AIR) is conducting an important study for the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education.

On behalf of AIR, we are recruiting students, and also parents of students, currently in grades 5 to 12 to help us with the development of the School Climate Survey. NCES needs to know if the questions in the survey are clear. You and/or your child's input will help NCES improve the survey so that students like your child and parents like yourself will understand it. Participants will be asked to think aloud while they read student questions from the School Climate Survey. Additionally, the interviewer (AIR staff member) will ask targeted questions to gain a better understanding of participant comprehension of the survey questions. Interviewers will also observe how participants interact with the questionnaire technology.

If selected to participate, your child will receive \$25 to thank them for their time and participation. You will also receive \$25 to thank you for your time in bringing your child to and from the session site. However, if you choose to participate in an interview as well, you will instead receive \$40.

The interview session will take place at our <LOCATION>, and will last approximately 60 minutes. The session can be scheduled at your convenience. These sessions will be audio recorded. All of your child's responses will be used only for research purposes and will not be disclosed or used, in identifiable form, for any other purpose except as required by law [Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002) 20 U.S.C., § 9573].

If you and/or your child are interested in participating in this research study, please call <CONTACT PHONE> or e-mail <CONTACT EMAIL>. We look forward to speaking with you soon!

Thank you,

<CONTACT NAME>

<RECRUITER CONTACT INFORMATION>

Appendix C: Recruitment E-mail for Parents

Subject: Research Study Opportunity

<DATE>

Dear Parent/Guardian,

My name is <CONTACT NAME> and I am contacting you from <RECRUITER>, a <RECRUITER LOCATION> area research company. The American Institutes for Research (AIR) is conducting an important study for the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education.

On behalf of AIR, we are recruiting parents of students, currently in grades 5 to 12 to help us with the development of the School Climate Survey. NCES needs to know if the questions in the survey are clear. Your input will help NCES improve the survey so that parents like yourself will understand it. Participants will be asked to think aloud while they read parent questions from the School Climate Survey. Additionally, the interviewer (AIR staff member) will ask targeted questions to gain a better understanding of participant comprehension of the survey questions. Interviewers will also observe how participants interact with the questionnaire technology. If selected to participate, you will receive \$40 to thank you for your time and participation.

The interview session will take place at our <LOCATION>, and will last approximately 60 minutes. The session can be scheduled at your convenience. These sessions will be audio-recorded. All of your responses will be used only for research purposes and will not be disclosed or used, in identifiable form, for any other purpose except as required by law [Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002) 20 U.S.C., § 9573].

If you are interested in participating in this research study, please call <CONTACT PHONE> or e-mail <CONTACT EMAIL>. We look forward to speaking with you soon!

Thank you,

<CONTACT NAME>

<RECRUITER CONTACT INFORMATION>

Appendix D: Recruitment E-mail for Teachers

Subject: Research Study Opportunity

<DATE>

Dear Teacher,

My name is <CONTACT NAME> and I am contacting you from <RECRUITER>, a <RECRUITER LOCATION> area research company. The American Institutes for Research (AIR) is conducting an important study for the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education.

On behalf of AIR, we are recruiting teachers of grades 5 to 12 to help us with the development of the School Climate Survey. NCES needs to know if the questions in the survey are clear and your input will help NCES to improve the survey. Participants will be asked to think aloud while they read teacher questions from the School Climate Survey. Additionally, the interviewer (AIR staff member) will ask targeted questions to gain a better understanding of participant comprehension of the survey questions. Interviewers will also observe how participants interact with the questionnaire technology. If selected to participate, you will receive \$40 to thank you for your time and participation.

The interview session will take place at <LOCATION>, and will last approximately 60 minutes. The session can be scheduled at your convenience. These sessions will be audio-recorded. All of your responses will be used only for research purposes and will not be disclosed or used, in identifiable form, for any other purpose except as required by law [Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002) 20 U.S.C., § 9573].

If you are interested in participating in this research study, please call <CONTACT PHONE> or e-mail <CONTACT EMAIL>. We look forward to speaking with you soon!

Thank you,

<CONTACT NAME>

<RECRUITER CONTACT INFORMATION>

Appendix E: Recruitment E-mail for Non-Instructional Staff

Subject: Research Study Opportunity

<DATE>

Dear School Staff Member,

My name is <CONTACT NAME> and I am contacting you from <RECRUITER>, a <RECRUITER LOCATION> area research company. The American Institutes for Research (AIR) is conducting an important study for the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education.

On behalf of AIR, we are recruiting non-instructional staff members of middle and high schools to help us with the development of the School Climate Survey. NCES needs to know if the questions in the survey are clear and your input will help NCES to improve the survey. Participants will be asked to think aloud while they read non-instructional staff questions from the School Climate Survey. Additionally, the interviewer (AIR staff member) will ask targeted questions to gain a better understanding of participant comprehension of the survey questions. Interviewers will also observe how participants interact with the questionnaire technology. If selected to participate, you will receive \$40 to thank you for your time and participation.

The interview session will take place at <LOCATION>, and will last approximately 60 minutes. The session can be scheduled at your convenience. These sessions will be audio-recorded. All of your responses will be used only for research purposes and will not be disclosed or used, in identifiable form, for any other purpose except as required by law [Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002) 20 U.S.C., § 9573].

If you are interested in participating in this research study, please call <CONTACT PHONE> or e-mail <CONTACT EMAIL>. We look forward to speaking with you soon!

Thank you,

<CONTACT NAME>

<RECRUITER CONTACT INFORMATION>

Appendix F: Recruitment E-mail for Principals

Subject: Research Study Opportunity

<DATE>

Dear School Principal,

My name is <CONTACT NAME> and I am contacting you from <RECRUITER>, a <RECRUITER LOCATION> area research company. The American Institutes for Research (AIR) is conducting an important study for the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education.

On behalf of AIR, we are recruiting principals of middle and high schools to help us with the development of the School Climate Survey. NCES needs to know if the questions in the survey are clear and your input will help NCES improve the survey. Participants will be asked to think aloud while they read principal questions from the School Climate Survey. Additionally, the interviewer (AIR staff member) will ask targeted questions to gain a better understanding of participant comprehension of the survey questions. Interviewers will also observe how participants interact with the questionnaire technology. If selected to participate, you will receive \$40 to thank you for your time and participation.

The interview session will take place at <LOCATION>, and will last approximately 60 minutes. The session can be scheduled at your convenience. These sessions will be audio-recorded. All of your responses will be used only for research purposes and will not be disclosed or used, in identifiable form, for any other purpose except as required by law [Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002) 20 U.S.C., § 9573].

If you are interested in participating in this research study, please call <CONTACT PHONE> or e-mail <CONTACT EMAIL>. We look forward to speaking with you soon!

Thank you,

<CONTACT NAME>

<RECRUITER CONTACT INFORMATION>

Appendix G: Recruitment Phone Script for Students

Recruitment Script for Student Cognitive Interviews

Hello. My name is [XXXXXX] and I work for [recruitment firm]. We are conducting a brief but important study about students' experiences at school. Your participation is voluntary, and you will receive no sales pitch or follow-up calls based on your participation. I'd like to tell you a little bit about the study first; is now a good time? (YES or NO and call back later)

We are looking for students to help us understand how they interpret survey questions asking about the student's school. These survey questions are part of a new suite of School Climate Surveys that are being developed by the U.S. Department of Education. The objective of the current study is to assess the clarity of the survey questions, and we need help from students to do that. The information gained from the study will be used for potential revisions to the survey questions. American Institutes for Research (AIR) will be conducting the interviews. I'd like to ask you a few questions to see if you qualify for the study.

[Interviewer to circle:]

1. Do you have a child in your household who is currently enrolled in middle school or high school?
 - Yes
 - No (THANK AND TERMINATE)
2. What is the name of the school this child is currently attending?

IF PARENT HAS MORE THAN ONE CHILD IN MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL ASK THEM TO REFER TO THE ONE WHO HAD THEIR BIRTHDAY MOST RECENTLY.

3. Is this a public school, private school, charter school, or some other type of school?
 - Public school
 - Charter school [ATTEMPT TO RECRUIT A MIX]
 - Private school
 - Other type of school (specify: _____)
 - Don't know
4. What grade is this child currently in?
 - Grade 5
 - Grades 6-8 (ATTEMPT TO RECRUIT ~2 5th GRADE; THEN A MIX OF THE OTHER 2 CATEGORIES)
 - Grades 9-12

Other (THANK AND TERMINATE.)

5. How old is this child?

RECORD AGE _____

The next few questions are for classification purposes only.

6. Is this child Hispanic or Latino?
 - Yes [RECRUIT A MIX OF YES/NO]
 - No
 - Prefer not to answer

7. Which of the following categories best describes this child's ethnic or racial background? (check all that apply)

[RECRUIT A MIX OF RACE/ETHNICITY BASED ON RESPONSES TO Q6/7]

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- White
- Prefer not to answer

8. What kind of area do you live in? (READ LIST)

- Urban
- Suburban [ATTEMPT TO RECRUIT A MIX]
- Rural
- Don't know (Specify location)_____

We are conducting a study with students about new survey questions that ask about their experiences at school. If your child qualifies, do you give your permission for us to invite him/her to also participate in a 60-minute interview? Your child will receive a \$25 gift card to thank them for their time and participation, and if you bring your child to and from the interview, you will also receive \$25.

- Yes
- No [THANK AND TERMINATE]

CHILD SCREENING

At this point, I'd like to be able to ask your child a few questions, during which you are welcome to stay on the line. Is he/she available to speak with me at this time? (If not, get a re-call time and call back)

What is your child's name?

RECORD NAME _____

Again, you are welcome to stay on the line, but please allow your child to speak for him/herself. Thank you.

RECRUITER: Please determine how talkative and articulate the student is. It is critical that we speak with students who are comfortable expressing themselves with someone they are meeting for the first time. Please use your best judgment and recruit only students that are thoughtful and freely express themselves in a manner that is relevant to the topic being discussed.

All recruits MUST be articulate students who can answer open ended questions, and can provide support or explanation for their responses--that is "I like it because..." "I don't like it because..."

DO NOT recruit any who have difficulty answering these questions, whose parent answers FOR them, who seem hesitant or shy speaking with you (an adult they do not know), who answer "I don't know," or who CANNOT provide an explanation supporting their responses.

SAY TO STUDENT:

Hi (insert target student's first name). My name is _____ and I have been speaking with your (mom/dad/other) for a few minutes.

As I explained to your (mom/dad/other), I work for a research company and we are conducting an important study about how things are at school. These questions are part of a survey of what students like you think about their school. We are looking for students who can help us understand what they think about these survey questions, so we can help to make the survey better. Right now, I'd like to talk to you to find out if you are able to participate in the study. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers to any of these questions, and whatever you say is OK. OK?

Great.

ASK THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS OF THE STUDENT:

1. What grade are you currently in?

2. What type of school do you currently attend? (READ LIST)
 - Public school
 - Charter school (RECRUIT A MIX)
 - Private school

- o Don't know

3. What is the name of your school? (RECORD)

4. Please tell me what your favorite subject is in school and why. (WRITE VERBATIM)

NOTE TO INTERVIEWERS: IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT THAT STUDENTS IN THIS STUDY BE ARTICULATE. IF STUDENT CANNOT OR WILL NOT EASILY GIVE A ONE-TO-TWO SENTENCE UNPROMPTED ANSWER IN WELL UNDERSTOOD ENGLISH, PLEASE TERMINATE.

5. Do you think you'd be comfortable coming to an interview to talk with an adult you haven't met before about your opinions of some questions about your experiences at school? [IF CHILD IS A MINOR, ADD: Your parent will be coming with you. IF NOT A MINOR: A parent or friend can come to the interview, if you wish.]

SELECT ONE

- o YES
- o NO [THANK AND TERMINATE]

6. RECORD STUDENT GENDER – DO NOT ASK

Male

Female [RECRUIT A MIX]

INVITATION

IF STUDENT IS 18 OR OLDER, GO TO THAT SECTION ON NEXT PAGE.

IF STUDENT IS UNDER 18 ASK TO SPEAK TO PARENT AGAIN

Your student has qualified to participate in an interview session with a researcher in (INSERT LOCATION) to discuss survey questions about their school environment. The interview is scheduled for (INSERT DAY/DATE AND TIME). The session will last 60 minutes. The interview is strictly for research purposes. Let me assure you that no one will attempt to sell or

enroll you in anything. \$25 will be given to each participant to thank them for their time and participation and, in addition, we will give you \$25 as a thank you for your time in bringing the student to and from the facility. Will your student be able to attend the interview?

SELECT ONE

Yes (CONTINUE)

No (TRY FOR ALTERNATE TIME. IF NONE WORK, THANK AND TERMINATE.)

In order for your child to participate in the research study, you must sign and return a parental consent form. You can either bring the signed form to the interview or you can scan it and email it back. Without a signed form your child cannot participate in the interview and receive the \$25. May I email you a parental consent form?

SELECT ONE

Yes (RECORD EMAIL ADDRESS)

EMAIL _____

No --Please remember that you will need to sign the consent form when you arrive or your child cannot participate in the interview and receive \$25.

RECRUITER: Please attempt to recruit the student's parent for the parent survey cognitive lab if the parent quotas have not been reached. The parent of the recruited child is automatically eligible for the parent survey.

In addition to interviews with students, we are interested in interviewing their parents. If you would like to participate, we could schedule your interview at the same time as your child's interview, and we would also give you \$40 as a thank you for your time and participation.

Would you be willing to participate in the parent study?

YES

NO

IF STUDENT IS 18 OR OLDER

You have qualified to participate in an interview session with a researcher in (INSERT LOCATION) to discuss survey questions about their school environment. The interview is scheduled for (INSERT DAY/DATE AND TIME). The session will last 60 minutes. The interview is strictly for research purposes. Let me assure you that no one will attempt to sell or enroll you in anything. A \$25 gift card will be given to each participant, plus \$25 to a parent or guardian if they bring you to and from the interview. Would you be able to attend the interview?

SELECT ONE

Yes (CONTINUE)

No (TRY FOR ALTERNATE TIME. IF NOT AVAILABLE FOR ANY TIMES, THANK AND TERMINATE)

In order to attend the session and receive your gift card, you must bring a signed student consent form with you or scan it and email it back to us. May I email you a student consent form?

SELECT ONE

Yes (RECORD EMAIL ADDRESS)

EMAIL _____

No --Please remember that you will need to sign the form when you arrive or you cannot participate in the interview and receive \$40.

Could I please speak to your parent/guardian again?

RECRUITER: Please attempt to recruit the student's parent for the parent survey cognitive lab if the parent quotas have not been reached. The parent of the recruited child is automatically eligible for the parent survey.

In addition to interviews with students, we are also interested in interviewing their parents. If you would like to participate, we could schedule your interview at the same time as your child's interview and we will give you an additional \$40 gift card as a thank you for your time and participation.

Would you be willing to participate in the parent study?

YES

NO

IF PARENT QUOTA ALREADY MET:

Thank you for speaking with me today. I just wanted to let you know that the interview is scheduled for (INSERT DAY/DATE AND TIME). The session will last 60 minutes. The interview is strictly for research purposes. Let me assure you that no one will attempt to sell or enroll you in anything. Your child will receive a \$25 gift card. If you end up bringing you child to and from the interview, we will also give you a \$25 gift card as a thank you for your time and effort.

Appendix H: Recruitment Phone Script for Parents

Recruitment Script for Parent Cognitive Interviews

[TRY TO RECRUIT PARENTS VIA STUDENT PROTOCOL; IF NEED MORE PARENTS AFTER STUDENT RECRUITMENT COMPLETE, USE THIS SCRIPT TO RECRUIT PARENTS]

Hello. My name is [XXXXXXX] and I work for [recruitment firm]. We are conducting a brief but important study about parents' opinions of their child's school. Your participation is voluntary, and you will receive no sales pitch or follow-up calls based on your participation. I'd like to tell you a little bit about the study first; is now a good time? (YES or NO and call back later)

We are looking for parents to help us understand how they interpret survey questions asking about their child's school. These survey questions are part of a new suite of School Climate Surveys that are being developed by the U.S. Department of Education. The objective of the current study is to assess the clarity of the survey questions, and we need help from parents to do that. The information gained from the study will be used for potential revisions to the survey questions. American Institutes for Research (AIR) will be conducting the interviews. I'd like to ask you a few questions to see if you qualify for the study.

[Interviewer to circle:]

1. Do you have a child in your household who is currently enrolled in middle school or high school?
 - Yes
 - No (THANK AND TERMINATE)

2. What is the name of the school this child is currently attending?

IF PARENT HAS MORE THAN ONE CHILD IN MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL ASK THEM TO REFER TO THE ONE WHO HAD THEIR BIRTHDAY MOST RECENTLY.

3. Is this a public school, private school, charter school, or some other type of school?
 - Public school
 - Charter school [ATTEMPT TO RECRUIT A MIX]
 - Private school
 - Other type of school (specify: _____)
 - Don't know

4. What grade is this child currently in?
 - Grade 5
 - Grades 6-8 (ATTEMPT TO RECRUIT ~2 5th GRADE; THEN A MIX OF THE OTHER 2 CATEGORIES)
 - Grades 9-12

Other (THANK AND TERMINATE.)

5. How old is this child?

RECORD AGE _____

The next few questions are for classification purposes only.

6. Is this child Hispanic or Latino?
 - Yes [RECRUIT A MIX OF YES/NO]
 - No
 - Prefer not to answer

7. Which of the following categories best describes this child's ethnic or racial background? (check all that apply)
- American Indian or Alaska Native [RECRUIT A MIX OF RACE/ETHNICITY BASED ON RESPONSES TO Q6/7]
 - Asian
 - Black or African American
 - Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
 - White
 - Prefer not to answer
8. What kind of area do you live in? (READ LIST)
- Urban
 - Suburban [ATTEMPT TO RECRUIT A MIX]
 - Rural
 - Don't know (Specify location)_____

You qualify to participate in an interview session with a researcher in (INSERT LOCATION) to discuss new survey questions that ask parent about their opinions of their child's school. The interview is scheduled for (INSERT DAY/DATE AND TIME). The session will last 60 minutes. The interview is strictly for research purposes. Let me assure you that no one will attempt to sell or enroll you in anything. A \$40 gift card will be given to each participant.

Appendix I: Recruitment Phone Script for Teachers

Recruitment Script for Teacher Cognitive Interviews

Hello. My name is [XXXXXX] and I work for [recruitment firm]. We are conducting a brief but important study about school climate. Your participation is voluntary, and you will receive no sales pitch or follow-up calls based on your participation. I'd like to tell you a little bit about the study first; is now a good time? (YES or NO and call back later)

We are looking for school staff members to help us understand how they interpret school climate survey questions. These survey questions are part of a new suite of School Climate Surveys that are being developed by the U.S. Department of Education. The objective of the current study is to assess the clarity of the survey questions, and we need help from people who work at schools to do that. The information gained from the study will be used for potential revisions to the survey questions. American Institutes for Research (AIR) will be conducting the interviews. I'd like to ask you a few questions to see if you qualify for the study.

[Interviewer to circle:]

1. Do you currently work at an elementary, middle, or high school?
 - Yes
 - No [THANK AND TERMINATE]

2. What type of school do you work at; is it an elementary school, a middle school, or a high school? (check all that apply)
 - Elementary school only (no grades above 5) [THANK AND TERMINATE]
 - Middle school / junior high (roughly grades between 5-9) [RECRUIT MIX OF MIDDLE/HIGH; BE SURE TO HAVE AT LEAST SOME MS ONLY AND SOME HS ONLY]
 - High school (roughly grades between 9-12)

3. Is this a (read school types):
 - Public school, [RECRUIT 2/3 PUBLIC, 1/3 OTHERS]
 - Charter school, or
 - Private school?

4. ONLY ASK IF NOT ALREADY CLEAR WHICH CATEGORY RESPONDENT FALLS INTO: What is your title at this school?
 1. Teacher for core subjects (e.g., math, science, English, foreign language, social studies, history) [RECRUIT A MIX OF JOB TYPES]
 2. Teacher for non-core subjects (e.g., band, art, computer, music, gym)
 3. Instructional staff (e.g., NOT A CLASSROOM TEACHER - teacher's aide, instructional coach, department head)

5. Would your school location be considered (read response options):
 - Urban, [RECRUIT HALF URBAN; HALF SUBURBAN/RURAL]
 - Suburban, or
 - Rural?[DON'T READ]: Don't know (Specify location)_____

6. Including this school year, how many years have you been working as a [title]? [IF NEEDED: at any school, not limited to current school]
 [RECRUIT A MIX OF EXPERIENCE LEVELS]
- 2 years or less
 - 3 to 6 years
 - 7 years or more

The next few questions are for classification purposes only.

7. Are you Hispanic or Latino?
- Yes [RECRUIT A MIX OF YES/NO]
 - No
 - Prefer not to answer
8. Which of the following categories best describes your ethnic or racial background? (check all that apply)
 [RECRUIT A MIX OF RACE/ETHNICITY BASED ON RESPONSES TO Q7/8]
- American Indian or Alaska Native
 - Asian
 - Black or African American
 - Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
 - White
 - Prefer not to answer
9. What is your primary position at this school?
- Teacher / instructional staff (e.g., teacher's aide) [RECRUIT X]
 - Principal [RECRUIT FOR PRINCIPAL (RECRUIT X TOTAL) ; IF ALREADY HAVE ENOUGH OF THESE RECRUITED, THANK AND TERMINATE]
 - Non-instructional staff (e.g., school counselor, lunchroom staff, nurse, janitor, bus driver, administrative support) [RECRUIT X; IF ALREADY HAVE ENOUGH OF THESE RECRUITED, THANK AND TERMINATE]
 - Other (specify) _____ (IF TEACHING STAFF OR NONINSTRUCTIONAL STAFF, RECRUIT FOR COG LAB, IF NEEDED. OTHERWISE THANK AND TERMINATE.)

INVITATION

You qualify to participate in an interview session with a researcher in (INSERT LOCATION) to discuss new school climate survey questions). The interview is scheduled for (INSERT DAY/DATE AND TIME). The session will last 60 minutes. The interview is strictly for research purposes. Let me assure

you that no one will attempt to sell or enroll you in anything. A \$40 gift card will be given to each participant.

Appendix J: Recruitment Phone Script for Non-Instructional Staff

Recruitment Script for Non-instructional Staff Cognitive Interviews

Hello. My name is [XXXXXX] and I work for [recruitment firm]. We are conducting a brief but important study about school climate. Your participation is voluntary, and you will receive no sales pitch or follow-up calls based on your participation. I'd like to tell you a little bit about the study first; is now a good time? (YES or NO and call back later)

We are looking for school staff members to help us understand how they interpret school climate survey questions. These survey questions are part of a new suite of School Climate Surveys that are being developed by the U.S. Department of Education. The objective of the current study is to assess the clarity of the survey questions, and we need help from people who work at schools to do that. The information gained from the study will be used for potential revisions to the survey questions. American Institutes for Research (AIR) will be conducting the interviews. I'd like to ask you a few questions to see if you qualify for the study.

[Interviewer to circle:]

1. Do you currently work at an elementary, middle, or high school?
 - Yes
 - No [THANK AND TERMINATE]

2. What type of school do you work at; is it an elementary school, a middle school, or a high school? (check all that apply)
 - Elementary school only (no grades above 5) [THANK AND TERMINATE]
 - Middle school / junior high (roughly grades between 5-9) [RECRUIT MIX OF MIDDLE/HIGH; BE SURE TO HAVE AT LEAST SOME MS ONLY AND SOME HS ONLY]
 - High school (roughly grades between 9-12)

3. Is this a (read school types):
 - Public school, [RECRUIT 2/3 PUBLIC, 1/3 OTHERS]
 - Charter school, or
 - Private school?

4. ONLY ASK IF NOT ALREADY CLEAR WHICH CATEGORY R FALLS INTO: What is your title at this school?[RECRUIT A MIX OF JOB TYPES]
 - School counselor
 - School nurse
 - Librarian
 - Administrative support staff (e.g., secretary)
 - Janitorial staff
 - Lunchroom/kitchen staff
 - Bus driver
 - Sports coach
 - Other

5. Would your school location be considered (read response options):
 - Urban, [RECRUIT HALF URBAN; HALF SUBURBAN/RURAL]
 - Suburban, or
 - Rural?[DON'T READ]: Don't know (Specify location)_____

6. Including this school year, how many years have you been working as a [title]? [IF NEEDED: at any school, not limited to current school]

[RECRUIT A MIX OF EXPERIENCE LEVELS]

- 2 years or less
- 3 to 6 years
- 7 years or more

7. Are you Hispanic?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer

8. Which of the following categories best describes your ethnic or racial background? (check all that apply)

[RECRUIT A MIX OF RACE/ETHNICITY BASED ON RESPONSES TO Q7/8]

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- White
- Prefer not to answer

9. What is your primary position at this school?

- Non-instructional staff (e.g., school counselor, lunchroom staff, nurse, janitor, bus driver, administrative support) [RECRUIT X]
- Principal [RECRUIT FOR PRINCIPAL (RECRUIT X TOTAL) ; IF ALREADY HAVE ENOUGH OF THESE RECRUITED, THANK AND TERMINATE]
- Teacher / instructional staff (e.g., teacher's aide) [RECRUIT FOR TEACHING STAFF (RECRUIT X TOTAL); IF ALREADY HAVE ENOUGH OF THESE RECRUITED, THANK AND TERMINATE]
- Other (specify) _____ (IF TEACHING STAFF OR NONINSTRUCTIONAL STAFF, RECRUIT FOR COG LAB, IF NEEDED. OTHERWISE THANK AND TERMINATE.)

INVITATION

You qualify to participate in an interview session with a researcher in (INSERT LOCATION) to discuss new school climate survey questions). The interview is scheduled for (INSERT DAY/DATE AND TIME). The session will last 60 minutes. The interview is strictly for research purposes. Let me assure you that no one will attempt to sell or enroll you in anything. A \$40 gift card will be given to each participant.

Appendix K: Recruitment Phone Script for Principals

Recruitment Script for Principal Cognitive Interviews

Hello. My name is [XXXXXX] and I work for [recruitment firm]. We are conducting a brief but important study about school climate. Your participation is voluntary, and you will receive no sales pitch or follow-up calls based on your participation. I'd like to tell you a little bit about the study first; is now a good time? (YES or NO and call back later)

We are looking for school staff members to help us understand how they interpret school climate survey questions. These survey questions are part of a new suite of School Climate Surveys that are being developed by the U.S. Department of Education. The objective of the current study is to assess the clarity of the survey questions, and we need help from people who work at schools to do that. The information gained from the study will be used for potential revisions to the survey questions. American Institutes for Research (AIR) will be conducting the interviews. I'd like to ask you a few questions to see if you qualify for the study.

[Interviewer to circle:]

1. Do you currently work at an elementary, middle, or high school?
 - Yes
 - No [THANK AND TERMINATE]

1. What type of school do you work at; is it an elementary school, a middle school, or a high school? (check all that apply)
 - Elementary school only (no grades above 5) [THANK AND TERMINATE]
 - Middle school / junior high (roughly grades between 5-9) [RECRUIT MIX OF MIDDLE/HIGH; BE SURE TO HAVE AT LEAST SOME MS ONLY AND SOME HS ONLY]
 - High school (roughly grades between 9-12)

2. Is this a (read school types):
 - Public school, [RECRUIT 2/3 PUBLIC, 1/3 OTHERS]
 - Charter school, or
 - Private school?

3. Would your school location be considered (read response options):
 - Urban, [RECRUIT HALF URBAN; HALF SUBURBAN/RURAL]
 - Suburban, or
 - Rural? [DON'T READ]:
 - Don't know (Specify location) _____

4. What is your primary position at this school?
 - Principal [RECRUIT X]
 - Teacher / instructional staff (e.g., teacher's aide) [RECRUIT FOR TEACHING STAFF (RECRUIT X TOTAL); IF ALREADY HAVE ENOUGH OF THESE RECRUITED, THANK AND TERMINATE]
 - Non-instructional staff (e.g., school counselor, lunchroom staff, nurse, janitor, bus driver, administrative support)[RECRUIT FOR NONINSTRUCTIONAL STAFF (RECRUIT X TOTAL); IF ALREADY HAVE ENOUGH OF THESE RECRUITED, THANK AND TERMINATE]
 - Other (specify) _____ (IF TEACHING STAFF OR NONINSTRUCTIONAL STAFF, RECRUIT FOR COG LAB, IF NEEDED. OTHERWISE THANK AND TERMINATE.)

5. Including this school year, how many years have you been working as a principal? [IF NEEDED: at any school, not limited to current school]
 - 2 years or less [RECRUIT A MIX OF EXPERIENCE LEVELS]
 - 3 to 6 years

- 7 years or more
6. Are you Hispanic or Latino?
- Yes
 - No
 - Prefer not to answer
7. Which of the following categories best describes your ethnic or racial background? (check all that apply)
- American Indian or Alaska Native [RECRUIT A MIX OF RACE/ETHNICITY BASED ON RESPONSES TO Q6/7]
 - Asian
 - Black or African American
 - Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
 - White
 - Prefer not to answer

INVITATION

You qualify to participate in an interview session with a researcher in (INSERT LOCATION) to discuss new school climate survey questions. The interview is scheduled for (INSERT DAY/DATE AND TIME). The session will last 60 minutes. The interview is strictly for research purposes. Let me assure you that no one will attempt to sell or enroll you in anything. A \$40 gift card will be given to each participant.

Appendix L: Child Assent Form

Assent form

I understand the research is about a new survey that asks about my opinions of the school that I currently attend. I understand that I'm participating voluntarily, that the session will be audio-recorded, that this is a one-time activity, and that my answers may be used only for research purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required by law (20 U.S.C. §9573).

I have read this information (or had the information read to me) I have had my questions answered and know that I can ask questions later if I have them.

I agree to take part in the research.

OR

I do not wish to take part in the research and I have not signed the assent below. _____ (initialled by child/minor)

Only if child assents:

Print name of child _____

Signature of child: _____

Date: _____
day/month/year

Statement by the researcher/person taking consent

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant, and to the best of my ability made sure that the child understands the cognitive interview process.

I confirm that the child was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by him/her have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

A copy of this assent form has been provided to the participant.

Print Name of Researcher/person taking the assent _____

Signature of Researcher /person taking the assent _____

Date _____
Day/month/year

Appendix M: Informed Consent Form for Parents/Legal Guardians of Students

INFORMED CONSENT – PARENTS/LEGAL GUARDIANS OF STUDENTS

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The American Institutes for Research (AIR) is conducting a study on behalf of the National Center for Education Statistics, part of the U.S. Department of Education. For the study, the School Climate Survey, we are seeking students between grades 5-12 to participate in an effort to gather information that will improve the survey. For this study, an AIR staff member will meet students individually or in small groups for up to 60 minutes at <LOCATION>. Students will be given \$25 to thank them for their time and participation. Parents/Guardians will be given \$25 in the event he/she transports the child to and from the study location and is not participating in interview.

Students will be asked to think aloud while they read student questions from the School Climate Survey. Additionally, the interviewer (AIR staff member) will ask targeted questions to gain a better understanding of student comprehension of the survey questions. Student responses will be audio-recorded and the information collected during this study will be for research purposes only. Your child's participation is voluntary, and he/she may request to stop at any time during the session.

Before your child is eligible to participate, the attached consent form is required. Additionally, parents are responsible for the transportation of his/her child to and from <LOCATION>.

If you have further questions, please contact <NAME> at <PHONE NUMBER>, or via <EMAIL>.

Thank you,

<CONTACT NAME>

American Institutes for Research

<CONTACT INFORMATION>

Informed Consent Form for Parents/Legal Guardians of Students

Student Name (Please Print): _____

Parent/Guardian Name (Please Print): _____

I am the parent/guardian of the student identified above. I have read the attached description of the School Climate Survey study and associated activities; I hereby give my permission for my child named above to participate in the study sessions. I understand that my child's session will be audio-recorded. All responses will be used only for research purposes and will not be disclosed or used, in identifiable form, for any other purpose except as required by law [Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002) 20 U.S.C., § 9573].

I understand that my child's participation is voluntary, and that he/she may stop participating at any time during the session. I understand that I am responsible for my child's transportation to and from <LOCATION>. If I have further questions and/or concerns about my child's participation, I may contact <NAME> at <CONTACT INFORMATION>.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Please bring this to the scheduled study session.

Appendix N: Informed Consent Form for Parents

INFORMED CONSENT - PARENT

Dear Parent,

The American Institutes for Research (AIR) is conducting a study on behalf of the National Center for Education Statistics, part of the U.S. Department of Education. For the study, the School Climate Survey, we are seeking parents of students between grades 5-12 to participate in an effort to gather information that will improve the survey. For this study, an AIR staff member will meet with parents individually or in small groups for up to 60 minutes at <LOCATION>. Participants will be given \$40 to thank for their time and participation.

Parents will be asked to think aloud while they read questions from the School Climate Survey. Additionally, the interviewer (AIR staff member) will ask targeted questions to gain a better understanding of parent comprehension of the survey questions. Participant responses will be audio-recorded and the information collected during this study will be for research purposes only. Your participation is voluntary, and you may request to stop at any time during the session.

Before you are eligible to participate, the attached consent form is required.

Thank you,

<CONTACT NAME>

American Institutes for Research

<CONTACT INFORMATION>

Informed Consent Form - Parent

Parent/Guardian Name (Please Print): _____

I have read the attached consent form for the School Climate Survey study and associated activities; all of my questions have been answered. I understand that my session will be audio-recorded. All responses will be used only for research purposes and will not be disclosed or used, in identifiable form, for any other purpose except as required by law [Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002) 20 U.S.C., § 9573]. I understand that my participation is voluntary, and that I may stop participating at any time during the session. I agree to participate in this study.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Please bring this to the scheduled study session.

Appendix O: Informed Consent Form for Teachers

INFORMED CONSENT - TEACHER

Dear Teacher,

The American Institutes for Research (AIR) is conducting a study on behalf of the National Center for Education Statistics, part of the U.S. Department of Education. For the study, the School Climate Survey, we are seeking teachers of students between grades 5-12 to participate in an effort to gather information that will improve the survey. For this study, an AIR staff member will meet with teachers individually or in small groups for up to 60 minutes at <LOCATION>. Participants will be given \$40 to thank them for their time and participation.

Teachers will be asked to think aloud while they read questions from the School Climate Survey. Additionally, the interviewer (AIR staff member) will ask targeted questions to gain a better understanding of teacher comprehension of the survey questions. Participant responses will be audio-recorded and the information collected during this study will be for research purposes only. Your participation is voluntary, and you may request to stop at any time during the session.

Before you are eligible to participate, the attached consent form is required.

Thank you,

<CONTACT NAME>

American Institutes for Research

<CONTACT INFORMATION>

Informed Consent Form - Teacher

Teacher Name (Please Print): _____

I have read the attached consent form for the School Climate Survey study and associated activities; all of my questions have been answered. I understand that my session will be audio-recorded. All responses will be used only for research purposes and will not be disclosed or used, in identifiable form, for any other purpose except as required by law [Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002) 20 U.S.C., § 9573]. I understand that my participation is voluntary, and that I may stop participating at any time during the session. I agree to participate in this study.

Teacher Signature

Date

Please bring this to the scheduled study session.

Appendix P: Informed Consent Form for Non-Instructional Staff

INFORMED CONSENT – Non-Instructional Staff

Dear Non-Instructional Staff Member,

The American Institutes for Research (AIR) is conducting a study on behalf of the National Center for Education Statistics, part of the U.S. Department of Education. For the study, the School Climate Survey, we are seeking non-instructional staff members in schools of students between grades 5-12 to participate in an effort to gather information that will improve the survey. For this study, an AIR staff member will meet with participants individually or in small groups for up to 60 minutes at <LOCATION>. Participants will be given \$40 to thank them for their time and participation.

Participants will be asked to think aloud while they read questions from the School Climate Survey. Additionally, the interviewer (AIR staff member) will ask targeted questions to gain a better understanding of non-instructional staff comprehension of the survey questions. Participant responses will be audio-recorded and the information collected during this study will be for research purposes only. Your participation is voluntary, and you may request to stop at any time during the session.

Before you are eligible to participate, the attached consent form is required.

Thank you,

<CONTACT NAME>

American Institutes for Research

<CONTACT INFORMATION>

Informed Consent Form – Non-Instructional Staff

Non-Instructional Staff Name (Please Print): _____

I have read the attached consent form for the School Climate Survey study and associated activities; all of my questions have been answered. I understand that my session will be audio-recorded. All responses will be used only for research purposes and will not be disclosed or used, in identifiable form, for any other purpose except as required by law [Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002) 20 U.S.C., § 9573]. I understand that my participation is voluntary, and that I may stop participating at any time during the session. I agree to participate in this study.

Non-Instructional Staff Signature

Date

Please bring this to the scheduled study session.

Appendix Q: Informed Consent Form for Principals

INFORMED CONSENT – PRINCIPALS

Dear Principal,

The American Institutes for Research (AIR) is conducting a study on behalf of the National Center for Education Statistics, part of the U.S. Department of Education. For the study, the School Climate Survey, we are seeking principals of students between grades 5-12 to participate in an effort to gather information that will improve the survey. For this study, an AIR staff member will meet with staff individually or in small groups for up to 60 minutes at <LOCATION>. Participants will be given \$40 to thank them for their time and participation.

Participants will be asked to think aloud while they read questions from the School Climate Survey. Additionally, the interviewer (AIR staff member) will ask targeted questions to gain a better understanding of principal comprehension of the survey questions. Participant responses will be audio-recorded and the information collected during this study will be for research purposes only. Your participation is voluntary, and you may request to stop at any time during the session.

Before you are eligible to participate, the attached consent form is required.

Thank you,

<CONTACT NAME>

American Institutes for Research

<CONTACT INFORMATION>

Informed Consent Form – Principals

Principal Name (Please Print): _____

I have read the attached consent form for the School Climate Survey study and associated activities; all of my questions have been answered. I understand that my session will be audio-recorded. All responses will be used only for research purposes and will not be disclosed or used, in identifiable form, for any other purpose except as required by law [Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002) 20 U.S.C., § 9573]. I understand that my participation is voluntary, and that I may stop participating at any time during the session. I agree to participate in this study.

Principal Signature

Date

Please bring this to the scheduled study session

Appendix R: Confirmation E-mail/Letter for Students

IF SENT AS E-MAIL - Subject: Confirmation of Study Participation

<DATE>

Dear <NAME>,

Thank you for permitting your child to participate in the School Climate Survey study. This study is being conducted by the American Institutes for Research (AIR), on behalf of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education. Your child's input will help NCES improve the survey so that students will better understand it. Your child will be asked to think aloud as he/she reads student questions from the School Climate Survey. This is in order for us to better understand student comprehension of the survey items and/or interaction with the questionnaire technology. His/her participation is voluntary and he/she may request to stop at any time during the session.

All of your child's responses will be used only for research purposes and will not be disclosed or used, in identifiable form, for any other purpose except as required by law [Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002) 20 U.S.C., § 9573]. His/her responses will be audio-recorded.

Your child has been scheduled for a session at <TIME RANGE> on <DATE> at <LOCATION>. To thank your child for his/her time and participation, he/she will receive \$25 following the session. Also, if a parent/guardian provides transportation for the child, the parent/guardian will receive \$25 to them him/her for his/her time and effort.

The address of <LOCATION> is as follows:

<ADDRESS>

We have <INCLUDED/ATTACHED> a consent form that needs to be completed and signed by a parent. Please have your child bring this consent form with him/her to the session. Your child will not be able to participate without your written consent.

We thank you for your child's participation in this important study. If you have any questions, please contact <NAME> at <CONTACT INFORMATION>.

Thank you,

<CONTACT NAME>

American Institutes for Research

<CONTACT INFORMATION>

Appendix S: Confirmation E-mail/Letter for Parents

IF SENT AS E-MAIL - Subject: Confirmation of Study Participation

<DATE>

Dear <NAME>,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the School Climate Survey study. This study is being conducted by the American Institutes for Research (AIR), on behalf of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education. Your input will help NCES improve the survey so that other parents will better understand it. You will be asked to think aloud as you read parent questions from the Student Climate Survey. This is in order for us to better understand parent comprehension of the survey items and/or interaction with the questionnaire technology. Your participation is voluntary and you may request to stop at any time during the session.

All of your responses will be used only for research purposes and will not be disclosed or used, in identifiable form, for any other purpose except as required by law [Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002) 20 U.S.C., § 9573]. Your responses will be audio-recorded.

You have been scheduled for a session at <TIME RANGE> on <DATE> at <LOCATION>. To thank you for your time and participation, you will receive \$40 following the session.

The address of <LOCATION> is as follows:

<ADDRESS>

We thank you for your participation in this important study. If you have any questions, please contact <NAME> at <CONTACT INFORMATION>.

Thank you,

<CONTACT NAME>

American Institutes for Research

<CONTACT INFORMATION>

Appendix T: Confirmation E-mail/Letter for Teachers

IF SENT AS E-MAIL - Subject: Confirmation of Study Participation

<DATE>

Dear <NAME>,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the School Climate Survey study. This study is being conducted by the American Institutes for Research (AIR), on behalf of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education. Your input will help NCES improve the survey so that other teachers will better understand it. You will be asked to think aloud as you read teacher questions from the School Climate Survey. This is in order for us to better understand teacher comprehension of the survey items and/or interaction with the questionnaire technology. Your participation is voluntary and you may request to stop at any time during the session.

All of your responses will be used only for research purposes and will not be disclosed or used, in identifiable form, for any other purpose except as required by law [Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002) 20 U.S.C., § 9573]. Your responses will be audio recorded.

You have been scheduled for a session at <TIME RANGE> on <DATE> at <LOCATION>. To thank you for your time and participation, you will receive \$40 following the session.

The address of <LOCATION> is as follows:

<ADDRESS>

We thank you for your participation in this important study. If you have any questions, please contact <NAME> at <CONTACT INFORMATION>.

Thank you,

<CONTACT NAME>

American Institutes for Research

<CONTACT INFORMATION>

Appendix U: Confirmation E-mail/Letter for Non-Instructional Staff

IF SENT AS E-MAIL - Subject: Confirmation of Study Participation

<DATE>

Dear <NAME>,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the School Climate Survey study. This study is being conducted by the American Institutes for Research (AIR), on behalf of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education. Your input will help NCES improve the survey so that other school staff members will better understand it. You will be asked think aloud as you read non-instructional staff questions from the School Climate Survey. This is in order for us to better understand your comprehension of the survey items and/or interaction with the questionnaire technology. Your participation is voluntary and you may request to stop at any time during the session.

All of your responses will be used only for research purposes and will not be disclosed or used, in identifiable form, for any other purpose except as required by law [Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002) 20 U.S.C., § 9573]. Your responses will be audio-recorded.

You have been scheduled for a session at <TIME RANGE> on <DATE> at <LOCATION>. To thank you for your time and participation, you will receive \$40 following the session.

The address of <LOCATION> is as follows:

<ADDRESS>

We thank you for your participation in this important study. If you have any questions, please contact <NAME> at <CONTACT INFORMATION>.

Thank you,

<CONTACT NAME>

American Institutes for Research

<CONTACT INFORMATION>

Appendix V: Confirmation E-mail/Letter for Principals

IF SENT AS E-MAIL - Subject: Confirmation of Study Participation

<DATE>

Dear <NAME>,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the School Climate Survey study. This study is being conducted by the American Institutes for Research (AIR), on behalf of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education. Your input will help NCES improve the survey so that other school principals will better understand it. You will be asked to think aloud as you read principal questions from the School Climate Survey. This is in order for us to better understand your comprehension of the survey items and/or interaction with the questionnaire technology. Your participation is voluntary and you may request to stop at any time during the session.

All of your responses will be used only for research purposes and will not be disclosed or used, in identifiable form, for any other purpose except as required by law [Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002) 20 U.S.C., § 9573]. Your responses will be audio-recorded.

You have been scheduled for a session at <TIME RANGE> on <DATE> at <LOCATION>. To thank you for your time and participation, you will receive \$40 following the session.

The address of <LOCATION> is as follows:

<ADDRESS>

We thank you for your participation in this important study. If you have any questions, please contact <NAME> at <CONTACT INFORMATION>.

Thank you,

<CONTACT NAME>

American Institutes for Research

<CONTACT INFORMATION>