

<DATE>

<Superintendent name>

<district name>

<address>

<city, state zip>

Dear <superintendent>

I am writing to invite your district to take part in a pilot test of the School Climate Surveys (SCLS). This pilot test of SCLS is being carried out by American Institutes for Research (AIR) on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

This national effort extends current activities that measure school climate, including the state-level efforts of the Safe and Supportive Schools (S3) grantees, who were awarded funds in 2010 by the Department of Education's Office of Safe and Healthy Students (OSHS) to improve school climate. SCLS are a suite of online surveys being developed for schools, school districts, and states by NCES. Through the SCLS, schools nationwide will have access to survey instruments and a survey platform that will allow for the collection and reporting of school climate data across stakeholders at the local level. The surveys will be used to produce school-, district-, and state-level scores on various indicators of school climate from the perspectives of students, instructional staff, non-instructional staff, and parents. The SCLS platform will be freely available to education agencies, with no licensing or other required costs associated with acquiring, installing, configuring, or administering the survey on existing network systems. Following the pilot test, NCES also plans to conduct a national benchmark study to provide data for comparisons between school climate scores at the local and national levels.

The SCLS pilot will be an operational test, under "live" conditions of all components of the survey system (e.g., survey instruments, and data collection, processing, and reporting tools). Your district will be able to install the survey platform on your district server, administer the surveys, monitor the data collections of all schools in the district, and access the survey reports for the entire district, as well as each school in the system. Information collected from this pilot test will be used to prepare a pilot test report and to refine the SCLS survey items and delivery and reporting features of the web-based survey platform. The reports will not identify participating districts, schools, children, their parents, or individual staff. If your district is willing to participate, please call us at <SCLS PHONE NUMBER> or send an email to schoolclimate@air.org. In the next few days a representative from AIR may also contact you about your district's participation.

Participation in this study is voluntary; however, I encourage your district's participation in this phase of SCLS. The participation of your district in this data collection is crucial for the development of valid survey questions that will accurately measure school climate and to the refinement of a no-cost, user-friendly, high-functioning tool that schools, districts, and states throughout the United States can use at their discretion to administer the suite of SCLS surveys.

NCES is authorized to conduct this study by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (20 U.S.C., §9543). Under this law, the data provided by you to NCES and originally collected from your schools, staff, students, and their parents may be used only for statistical 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). The U.S. Office of Management and Budget has approved the data collection under OMB # 1850-0803 (expires 9/30/2016). If you have questions about the SCLS or your district's participation in this pilot test, please feel free to call us at <SCLS PHONE NUMBER> or send an email to schoolclimate@air.org.

Thank you for your support of the SCLS.

Sincerely,

<CONTACT NAME>

National Center for Education Statistics

School Climate Surveys (SCLS)

Pilot Test 2015

Attachment 3
Communication Materials

<RECRUITER CONTACT INFORMATION>

LETTER FOR SCHOOLS FOR THE SCLS 2015 PILOT TEST

<DATE>

<Administrator name>

<school name>

<address>

<city, state zip>

Dear <administrator>

I am writing to invite your school to take part in a pilot test of the School Climate Surveys (SCLS). This pilot test of SCLS is being carried out by American Institutes for Research (AIR) on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

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The SCLS pilot will be an operational test, under "live" conditions, of all components of the survey system (e.g., survey instruments, and data collection, processing, and reporting tools). Your school will be able to install the survey platform on your school server, administrate and monitor the data collections, and access the survey reports for your school in the system. Information collected from this pilot test will be used to prepare a pilot test report and to refine the SCLS survey items and delivery and reporting features of the web-based survey platform. The reports will not identify participating schools, children, their parents, or individual staff. If your school is willing to participate, please call us at <SCLS PHONE NUMBER> or send an email to schoolclimate@air.org. In the next few days a representative from AIR may also contact you about your school's participation.

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Thank you for your support of the SCLS.

Sincerely,

<CONTACT NAME>

<RECRUITER CONTACT INFORMATION>

LETTER FOR PARTICIPATING DISTRICTS FOR THE SCLS 2015 PILOT TEST

<DATE>

<Superintendent name>

<district name>

<address>

<city, state zip>

Dear <superintendent>,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the pilot test of the School Climate Surveys (SCLS). In the next few weeks, you will receive a FedEx package containing the detailed information needed to administer SCLS.

As part of the pilot test, AIR will provide each participating school in your district with a laptop or tablet computer. On this device, the SCLS website will be set up as the browser homepage. PDF versions of the SCLS questionnaires will be available in case potential respondents would like to know more about SCLS or review the items before the data collection. Your district will also receive an external hard drive that will contain the SCLS system and technical manuals on how to set up the SCLS system. After we finalize the SCLS system based on the pilot test data, your district will receive the updated system for your future administration of SCLS.

If you have questions about the SCLS, please call us at <SCLS PHONE NUMBER> or send an email to schoolclimate@air.org. More information about the SCLS is also available at <SCLS WEBSITE>. Thank you for your support of the SCLS.

<CONTACT NAME>

<RECRUITER CONTACT INFORMATION>

LETTER FOR PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS FOR THE SCLS 2015 PILOT TEST

<DATE>

<Administrator name>

<school name>

<address>

<city, state zip>

Dear <administrator>,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the pilot test of the School Climate Surveys (SCLS). In the next few weeks, you will receive a FedEx package containing the detailed information needed to administer SCLS.

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<CONTACT NAME>

<RECRUITER CONTACT INFORMATION>

[NOTE: While the italicized text may be modified to suit the needs of each school or district, the non-italicized text should be kept consistent across all pilot study sites.]

SAMPLE OPT-IN PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

Dear parent/guardian:

<SCHOOL NAME> is participating in a pilot test of a voluntary survey about school climate. The survey will be administered to students during regular school hours during the week of <WEEK OF ADMINISTRATION>. It will ask students about their perceptions surrounding topics such as student engagement, school environment, and school safety.

To analyze and refine the questionnaires, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) will receive individual-level responses from participating schools and districts but without the names or other direct personal identifiers of the respondents. All information received by NCES that in any way relates to or describes identifiable characteristics of individuals is protected from disclosure by federal statute; it may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required law (20 U.S.C., §9573).

If you do want your child to participate in this survey, please complete, sign, and postmark this letter using the enclosed postage paid envelope by <DEADLINE DATE>. If you sign and postmark this letter by <DEADLINE DATE>, this means your child will participate in the survey and will be asked to report to a designated place in the school (for example, the computer lab) where the survey is administered.

If you have any questions about this study or about your child's participation or would like to see a copy of the student survey, please contact <ADMINISTRATOR NAME> at <ADMINISTRATOR NUMBER>. If you have any questions about your child's rights as a participant in this study, please contact <NCES CONTACT INFO>.

I understand that completing and signing the form below and returning this letter, my child will be allowed to take the School Climate Survey.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student Printed Name: _____ Date of birth: _____

If you do want to allow your child to take the survey, you do not have to sign or send back anything.

Sincerely,

<ADMINISTRATOR NAME>

[NOTE: While the italicized text may be modified to suit the needs of each school or district, the non-italicized text should be kept consistent across all pilot study sites.]

SAMPLE OPT-OUT PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

Dear parent/guardian:

<SCHOOL NAME> is participating in a pilot test of a voluntary survey about school climate. The survey will be administered to students during regular school hours during the week of <WEEK OF ADMINISTRATION>. It will ask students about their perceptions surrounding topics such as student engagement, school environment, and school safety.

To analyze and refine the questionnaires, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) will receive individual-level responses from participating schools and districts but without the names or other direct personal identifiers of the respondents. All information received by NCES that in any way relates to or describes identifiable characteristics of individuals is protected from disclosure by federal statute; it may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required law (20 U.S.C., §9573).

If you do not want your child to participate in this survey, please complete, sign, and postmark this letter using the enclosed postage paid envelope by <DEADLINE DATE>. If you sign and postmark this letter by <DEADLINE DATE>, this means your child will not participate in the survey and will be asked to report to a designated place in the school (for example, the library) while the survey is administered.

If you have any questions about this study or about your child's participation or would like to see a copy of the student survey, please contact <ADMINISTRATOR NAME> at <ADMINISTRATOR NUMBER>. If you have any questions about your child's rights as a participant in this study, please contact <NCES CONTACT INFO>.

I understand that completing and signing the form below and returning this letter, my child will not be allowed to take the School Climate Survey.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student Printed Name: _____ Date of birth: _____

If you do want to allow your child to take the survey, you do not have to sign or send back anything.

Sincerely,

<ADMINISTRATOR NAME>