**2015-16**

**NATIONAL TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL SURVEY (NTPS)**

**PRELIMINARY FIELD ACTIVITIES**

OMB Supporting Statement

Part B

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**National Center For Education Statistics (NCES)**

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**B. COLLECTION OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS**

The purpose of this submission is to request clearance to contact and seek research approval from “special contact districts” and to send pre-contact letters to schools selected for the 2015-2016 NTPS sample. The special contact districts are those known to require completion of a research application before they will allow schools under their jurisdiction to participate in a study. Based on an initial assessment of previous SASS data collections, we estimate that 320 special contact districts will be in the sample. The school pre-contact letter is to verify school mailing addresses and to inform schools about the upcoming data collection. About 4% of all school addresses get corrected by the U.S. Post Office in response to the pre-contact letter, saving time and effort during the actual data collection period.

1. **Respondent Universe**

The respondent universe for the 2015-16 NTPS consists of approximately 95,750 public schools in the 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia (DC) that offer instruction in any of grades K-12. To be eligible for inclusion in the sample, schools must provide instruction to students, have one or more teachers to provide instruction, serve students in at least one of grades 1-12 or the ungraded equivalent, must be located in one or more buildings, and must be located in the U.S. and not in the outlying areas or U.S. territories. NCES’ 2012-13 Common Core of Data (CCD) will be used to construct the public school sampling frame unless a more recent CCD file becomes available.

1. **Statistical Procedures for Collecting Information**
   1. **Sampling**

In the first year of the study, approximately 7,800 public schools will be sampled from a school frame developed from the 2012-13 Common Core of Data Public School Universe file. The target number of cooperative, eligible schools is 5,300 (assuming an eligibility rate of 94% and a response rate of 70%). The school sample is a stratified, probability proportionate to size sample, with measure of size equal to the square root of school FTE (full-time equivalent teachers). A teacher roster will be collected from the cooperating, eligible schools, and a sample of approximately 40,500 teachers will be drawn from these teacher rosters. The target number of teacher interviews is 27,000: a mean value of 5 teachers per school (assuming an eligibility rate of 96% and a response rate of 70% for teachers). The mean number of sampled teachers per sampled school is 7.5. The teacher sample sizes are proportional to the square root of school FTE, and teachers are sampled from the school teacher rosters in a stratified, equal probability sample. Charter schools and teachers, combined schools and teachers, and ‘town’ schools and teachers are oversampled to achieve domain precision targets. The resultant school and teacher samples are nationally representative probability samples. Final sample sizes and selection procedures will be included in the data collection package submission.

**2.2 Response Rates**

Approximately 94% of the special districts contacted in the 2011-12 SASS responded to a request for external research. These responses were either: unconditional approval (39.8%), conditional approval (7.3%), or refusal (47.2%). The Census Bureau has identified districts that have refused multiple rounds of SASS for special outreach. We plan to engage senior NCES staff and others with personal contacts at these districts in our efforts to gain approval for NTPS this cycle.

**2.3 Procedures for Collection of Information**

The special district contact operations for the 2015-16 NTPS will be based on those used in the 2011-2012 data collection. Districts are identified as ‘special districts’ prior to data collection because they were flagged as such during previous cycles of SASS or other NCES studies, or identified during updating district information based on what is found in online sources. The application process for each individual district is obtained either through direct contact via phone or e-mail or through the district website. Most districts require that the following documents be provided in the research request packet:

* Study proposal with a timeline of the study
* Study Abstract and/or Executive Summary
* IRB approval (NTPS is exempt from seeking IRB approval)
* Consent form
* Project Director’s resume
* Copy of any communications that would be sent to participants
* Copy of questionnaires

Some districts require a processing fee (approximately $50-$200) before the research proposal can be evaluated.

1. **Methods for Maximizing Response Rates**

A variety of procedures will be employed to ensure high response rates at both the level of the responding unit (i.e., sample member) and at the level of the individual survey items in each survey questionnaire. A pilot test to look at optimal contact strategies was approved in July 2014 (OMB# 1850-0803 v.105) and will begin in October 2014. The final NTPS design will be based on results from this study.

The entire survey process, starting with securing research cooperation from key public school groups and individual sample members and continuing throughout the distribution and collection of individual questionnaires, is designed to increase survey response rates. In addition, we believe that the following elements of the data collection plan, in particular, will contribute to overall success of the survey and will enhance the survey response rates.

1. *Visible support from top-level Federal, State, and local education officials*. Without the support of high-level officials in the U.S. Department of Education, State Education Agencies, and the sampled local school districts, surveys of public school principals and teachers cannot be successfully implemented. Obtaining endorsements from these officials is a critical factor in the success of the data collection procedures. Top-level Education Department officials will need to fully support the data collection by endorsing the survey in writing and sending advance letters and notices to sampled districts' Superintendents, and individual survey participants (principals and teachers) to encourage participation.
2. *Endorsements from key public school groups*. The level of interest and cooperation demonstrated by key groups can often greatly influence the degree of participation of survey respondents. Endorsements are viewed as a critical factor in soliciting cooperation from state and local education officials. The NTPS is seeking endorsement by the following organizations or agencies:

American Association of School Administrators

Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development

American Federation of Teachers

American Counseling Association

Association for Middle Level Education

National Science Foundation

Council of Chief State School Officers

Council of the Great City Schools

National Association of Elementary School Principals

National Association of Secondary School Principals

National Education Association

1. *Stressing the importance of the survey and the respondents' participation*. Official letters (advance notification, inside the questionnaire, and follow-up) from the NCES Commissioner of Education Statistics will be used to motivate respondents to return surveys. The additional personalization of survey materials (cover letters and survey packets with teachers' names) is also expected to have positive effects on the response rates.
2. *Minimize the survey burden on school-level authorities*. The procedures for the surveys are designed to minimize the survey burden on schools and sampled individuals (principals and teachers) and the survey instruments have been designed to be completed as quickly and easily as possible.

Good questionnaire design techniques have been employed to minimize item nonresponse. All completed questionnaires from the 2011-12 SASS have been carefully analyzed to determine which items had the highest levels of item nonresponse. This information guided NCES in reviewing the clarity of item wording, definitions, and instructions. Items that were not considered to be effective or useful were deleted so as to streamline the questionnaires and ease the response burden.

NTPS also plans to provide links to or incorporate data from other NCES collections such as EDfacts and the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) into final datasets to allow researchers and policymakers to include additional data in their analyses. This will further reduce the need to collect data from schools that have already been collected at the state or district level.

1. *Seeking the recruitment of a school coordinator*. An important procedural measure for helping to maximize response rates is the plan to establish a school-based "survey coordinator" to serve as a primary point of contact for NTPS staff. The use of a school coordinator is expected to help keep response rates high, provide some minimal data quality checks, and simplify the follow-up process by having one point of contact.
2. **Tests Of Procedures And Methods**

As noted previously, the 2015-16 NTPS is built on the experience of previous rounds of SASS. Results from the pilot test that will start in October 2014 will be implemented in the final NTPS design. These results and the final design will be described in the 2015-16 NTPS OMB data collection clearance package to be submitted in early 2015.

1. **Reviewing Statisticians**

The following statisticians are contributing to the NTPS sample design

Randall Parmer, U.S. Census Bureau, Suitland, MD

Edward Mulrow, NORC, Bethesda, MD

Kirk Wolter, NORC, Chicago, IL

David Marker, Westat, Rockville, MD

Lou Rizzo, Westat, Bethesda, MD

Sharon Lohr, Westat, Bethesda, MD

Andrew Zukerberg, NCES, Washington, DC

Marilyn Seastrom, NCES, Washington, DC