



**School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS)  
2016 and 2018**

**OMB #1850-0761 v.7**

Supporting Statement Part A

National Center for Education Statistics  
Institute of Education Sciences  
U.S. Department of Education

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## **Section A. Justification**

This document is being submitted in support of a request for clearance to conduct the 2016 and 2018 administrations of the School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS). This request also seeks clearance to conduct preliminary activities for the 2016 and 2018 SSOCS, namely contacting and obtaining research approvals from school districts with an established research approval process and sending pre-contact letters to schools selected for SSOCS. SSOCS was conducted in 2000, 2004, 2006, 2008, and 2010 (OMB# 1850-0761). Four years separated the first two collections of SSOCS to allow for sufficient time to study the results of the first survey and to allow for necessary redesign work; the next three collections were conducted at 2-year intervals. An updated SSOCS questionnaire, including two new items, received OMB approval for a spring 2012 administration, but due to the reorganization of the sponsoring agency (the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools) and funding issues the collection was not fielded. With new funding available through the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), SSOCS will be conducted again in the spring of the 2015–16 school year. Pending additional funding, SSOCS is to be conducted on a biennial basis, with the next administration anticipated to take place in spring of the 2017–18 school year.

SSOCS is a survey of approximately 3,230 public schools on the topic of school crime and violence. It is conducted by mail, with telephone and e-mail follow-up, and is designed to produce nationally representative data on public schools. The respondent is the school principal or a member of the school staff designated by the principal as the person “the most knowledgeable about school crime and policies to provide a safe environment.”

The 2016 survey is being funded by NIJ through its Comprehensive School Safety Initiative, which was developed in response to a 2014 congressional appropriation to conduct research about school safety. The responsibility for the design and conduct of the survey continues to rest with the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) of the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), within the U.S. Department of Education. As in 2006, 2008, and 2010, NCES has entered into an interagency agreement with the Census Bureau to conduct the 2016 collection of SSOCS.

### **A.1. Circumstances Making Collection of Information Necessary**

SSOCS is the only recurring federal survey that collects detailed information on the incidence, frequency, seriousness, and nature of violence affecting students and school personnel, as well as other indices of school safety from the schools’ perspective. As such, it fills an important gap in data collected by NCES and other agencies. It collects information on:

- the frequency and types of crimes at schools, including homicide; rape; sexual assault; physical attacks with or without weapons; threats of attack with or without weapons; robbery with or without weapons; theft; possession of weapons; distribution, possession, or use of illegal drugs or alcohol; and vandalism;
- the frequency and types of disciplinary actions for selected offenses, such as removals with no continuing services; transfers to specialized schools; and suspensions;
- perceptions of other disciplinary problems, such as student racial or ethnic tensions; bullying; verbal abuse; disorder in the classroom; and gang activities;
- school policies and programs concerning crime and safety;
- student, parent, teacher, and law enforcement involvement in efforts intended to prevent or reduce school violence;
- mental health services available to students at school and limitations on schools’ efforts to provide these services (the 2016 collection will be the first to collect information on this topic); and
- school characteristics associated with school crime.

The predecessor to SSOCS was a one-time survey done through NCES’s Fast Response Survey System

(FRSS) in 1996–97. Around the time when the FRSS data were being released in 1997–98, a number of tragic shootings occurred at schools across the county. These events took place in Pearl, MS; West Paducah, KY; Jonesboro, AR; and Columbine, CO. When it came to light that neither the Departments of Justice nor Education had a recurring survey by which to measure the frequency of crime and violence at schools, the Department of Education made a commitment to begin such a survey on a regular basis. Thus, planning for SSOCS began.

The original SSOCS questionnaire, used in the 2000 data collection, was developed in consultation with a technical review panel (TRP) consisting of some of the nation’s top experts on school crime and school programs relating to crime and safety. Revisions to the 2004 questionnaire were based on an analysis of responses to the 2000 questionnaire, a review of current literature in the field, feedback from a TRP and invested government agencies, and the results of extensive pretesting conducted by Abt Associates. The questionnaires used in 2006 and 2008 were essentially the same as that used in 2004. The questionnaire used in 2010 was similar to that used in 2008, but it incorporated minor revisions based on feedback from several SSOCS data users and school crime and safety experts. The questionnaire planned for use in 2012 incorporated two additional items on bullying that underwent cognitive testing and were approved in the OMB clearance update for the 2012 collection (OMB# 1850-0761 v.6).

Revisions to the full SSOCS questionnaire planned for use in 2016 and 2018 are based on several sources of information, including an analysis of responses to the SSOCS:2010 questionnaire, a review of current literature in the field, feedback from a TRP and invested government agencies, the results of extensive cognitive testing (OMB# 1850-0803 v.116), and NIJ’s goals related to collecting information about school security personnel and mental health services. These revisions are detailed in Supporting Statement Part C. SSOCS:2016 and SSOCS:2018 will continue to provide a valuable tool to policymakers and researchers who need to know what the level of crime is and how it is changing, what disciplinary actions schools are taking, what policies and programs related to school crime and violence schools have in place, and what related services are available to students.

## **Legislative Authorization**

NCES is authorized to conduct SSOCS by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002: U.S.C. 20, Section 9543).

“The Statistics Center shall collect, report, analyze, and disseminate statistical data related to education in the United States and in other nations, including—

- (1) collecting, acquiring, compiling (where appropriate, on a State-by-State basis), and disseminating full and complete statistics (disaggregated by the population characteristics described in paragraph (3)) on the condition and progress of education, at the preschool, elementary, secondary, postsecondary and adult levels in the United States, including data on—
  - (A) State and local education reform activities;
  - (B) State and local early childhood school readiness activities;
  - (C) student achievement in, at a minimum, the core academic areas of reading, mathematics, and science at all levels of education;
  - (D) secondary school completions, dropouts, and adult literacy and reading skills;
  - (E) access to, and opportunity for, postsecondary education, including data on financial aid to postsecondary students;
  - (F) teaching, including—
    - (i) data on in-service professional development, including a comparison of courses taken in the core academic areas of reading, mathematics, and science with courses in noncore academic areas, including technology courses; and
    - (ii) the percentage of teachers who are highly qualified (as such term is defined in section 9101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801)) in each State and, where feasible, in each local educational agency and school;
  - (G) instruction, the conditions of the education workplace, and the supply of, and demand for, teachers;
  - (H) the incidence, frequency, seriousness, and nature of violence affecting students, school personnel, and other individuals participating in school activities, as well as other indices of school safety, including information regarding—
    - (i) the relationship between victims and perpetrators;
    - (ii) demographic characteristics of the victims and perpetrators; and
    - (iii) the type of weapons used in incidents, as classified in the Uniform Crime Reports of the Federal Bureau of Investigation;
  - (I) the financing and management of education, including data on revenues and expenditures;
  - (J) the social and economic status of children, including their academic achievement;

- (K) the existence and use of educational technology and access to the Internet by students and teachers in elementary schools and secondary schools;
  - (L) access to, and opportunity for, early childhood education;
  - (M) the availability of, and access to, before-school and after-school programs (including such programs during school recesses);
  - (N) student participation in and completion of secondary and postsecondary vocational and technical education programs by specific program area; and
  - (O) the existence and use of school libraries;
- (2) conducting and publishing reports on the meaning and significance of the statistics described in paragraph (1);
  - (3) collecting, analyzing, cross-tabulating, and reporting, to the extent feasible, information by gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, limited English proficiency, mobility, disability, urban, rural, suburban districts, and other population characteristics, when such disaggregated information will facilitate educational and policy decision making;
  - (4) assisting public and private educational agencies, organizations, and institutions in improving and automating statistical and data collection activities, which may include assisting State educational agencies and local educational agencies with the disaggregation of data and with the development of longitudinal student data systems;
  - (5) determining voluntary standards and guidelines to assist State educational agencies in developing statewide longitudinal data systems that link individual student data consistent with the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.), promote linkages across States, and protect student privacy consistent with section 9573 of this title, to improve student academic achievement and close achievement gaps;
  - (6) acquiring and disseminating data on educational activities and student achievement (such as the Third International Math and Science Study) in the United States compared with foreign nations;
  - (7) conducting longitudinal and special data collections necessary to report on the condition and progress of education;
  - (8) assisting the Director in the preparation of a biennial report, as described in section 9519 of this title; and
  - (9) determining, in consultation with the National Research Council of the National Academies, methodology by which States may accurately measure graduation rates (defined as the percentage of students who graduate from secondary school with a regular diploma in the standard number of years), school completion rates, and dropout rates.”

The reauthorization in 2002 of the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1994 and the Department of Justice Appropriations Act passed in 2014 provide additional legislative authority to conduct this study. In 2002, Congress reauthorized the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1994 to support drug and violence prevention programs, including a data collection to be performed by NCES to collect data on the incidence and prevalence of illegal drug use and violence in elementary and secondary schools. SSOCS will address this provision by providing statistics on the frequency of school violence, the nature of the school environment, and the characteristics of school violence prevention programs.

The Department of Justice Appropriations Act passed in 2014 provided funds for NIJ to conduct research about school safety. In response, NIJ developed the Comprehensive School Safety Initiative (of which NCES is a federal partner) to use a variety of research and data collection efforts to learn which programs, policies, and practices are effective in making schools safer. Since understanding schools’ safety problems begins with collecting better data, part of the initiative’s goal is to improve data collection at the national level. As a part of this effort, NIJ is providing funding for the 2016 SSOCS data collection. SSOCS will specifically address the priorities of the initiative by collecting more in-depth information on the roles and responsibilities of mental health professionals and law enforcement officers working in schools. Federal funding for the 2018 administration of SSOCS is currently pending.

## **A.2. Purposes, Uses, and Availability of Information**

SSOCS has been designed to meet the congressional mandate for NCES to provide statistics on the frequency of school violence, the nature of the school environment, and the characteristics of school violence prevention programs. Such national data are critical, given the tendency to focus on anecdotal evidence of crimes without knowing the true frequency of problems in schools. Without accurate information, policymakers may make misinformed decisions about school policy and the public might lose confidence in public schools. Most items from the 2004, 2006, 2008, and 2010 surveys (and from the OMB-approved, but never fielded 2012 survey) will be included in the 2016 and 2018 surveys, thus allowing comparisons with previous years. A complete description of the differences between the 2012 and 2016 surveys is provided in the questionnaire changes and rationale section in Supporting Statement Part C.

NCES will use the SSOCS:2016 and SSOCS: 2018 data to prepare summary descriptive reports of the findings and will make the data available both as a restricted-use database (for use by researchers and policymakers on school crime and safety) and as a public-use database available on the NCES website.

Data from the previous SSOCS surveys have been released in NCES's *Condition of Education* and *Digest of Education Statistics*, as well as in its *Indicators of School Crime and Safety*. Each iteration of SSOCS data has also been released in a First Look report, as listed below:

- *Crime, Violence, Discipline, and Safety in U.S. Public Schools, Findings From the School Survey on Crime and Safety: 2009–10*;
- *Crime, Violence, Discipline, and Safety in U.S. Public Schools, Findings From the School Survey on Crime and Safety: 2007–08*;
- *Crime, Violence, Discipline, and Safety in U.S. Public Schools, Findings From the School Survey on Crime and Safety: 2005–06*;
- *Crime, Violence, Discipline, and Safety in U.S. Public Schools, Findings From the School Survey on Crime and Safety: 2003–04*; and
- *Violence in U.S. Public Schools: 2000 School Survey on Crime and Safety*.

All of these publications are available on the NCES website and through the Department of Education's main publication distribution center, EdPubs. Summary statistics are also available on the NCES website in a table library containing cross-tabulations of SSOCS variables by various school characteristics.

Data products from the previous SSOCS surveys are also available on the NCES website. Public-use data files are available on the NCES website in various software formats (with accompanying survey documentation and codebooks), while restricted-use SSOCS data files are available to users who obtain a restricted use license agreement with NCES. Additionally, some SSOCS public-use datasets are hosted on the website of the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) and have a wide user base. ICPSR utilization reports show that more than 1,500 unique users from more than 120 institutions have downloaded the most recent available SSOCS data over the last 2 years.<sup>1</sup>

### **A.3. Appropriate Use of Information Technology**

The survey will be conducted by mail, with telephone and e-mail follow-up. Fax and e-mail might also be used to deliver questionnaires if respondents so request. Schools will be asked to provide the e-mail addresses of their principals, and reminders will be sent to these e-mail addresses, as appropriate, in the data collection period. When e-mails are sent, addresses will be "masked" so that recipients do not have access to the e-mail addresses of other recipients. An electronic database will be used to track all sampled cases in order to determine where further follow-up is required.

Computer edits will be performed to verify the completeness of the questionnaire and the consistency of the data collected. For example, computer edits will verify whether a subset of responses adds to the total, whether skip patterns have been followed correctly, whether values fall outside of the range typically found for such schools, and whether some responses might be logically inconsistent.

Because of its small sample size (about 3,230 public schools), SSOCS will not offer an internet option in 2016. The possibility of providing such an option in later administrations will be kept open. The SSOCS survey design team will closely watch other NCES surveys that offer an internet option and evaluate the pros and cons of providing such an option in the future.

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<sup>1</sup> ICPSR utilization report retrieved February 4, 2015, from <https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/studies/25421/utilization>.

#### A.4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

SSOCS was initially developed in consultation with the:

- Office of Safe and Healthy Students (OSHS; formally known as Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools);
- Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP);
- Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS);
- Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP);
- National Institute of Justice (NIJ);
- Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS); and
- National experts on the topic of school crime.

When SSOCS was first developed, extant surveys that touch on the topic of school crime and safety were examined to determine where duplication might exist. While there are other federal surveys that collected information from principals about school crime and safety (the 2000 National Study of Delinquency Prevention in Schools and the 1999–2000 School Health Policies and Programs), they did not collect the same type of information as SSOCS. SSOCS provides more extensive coverage of the types of crime and discipline that occur in schools, as well as the efforts that schools use to combat these problems.

Other surveys that collected similar information as SSOCS are not administered repeatedly. For example, the Safe School Study of 1976; and the 1991, 1996–1997,<sup>2</sup> and 2014 FRSS Surveys collected data from principals on school crime. These surveys, however, were not recurring. SSOCS’s regular and repeated administrations allow for analysis of trends in the incidence of school crime and its correlates.

NCES is currently developing the School Climate Surveys (SCLS), which will assess various indicators of school climate from the perspectives of students, parents, teachers, and non-instructional staff. A small subset of SSOCS items will be included in the SCLS to provide a school-level picture of safety. However, the SCLS will only collect nationally representative data one time during a 2016 benchmarking study.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the SSOCS items included in the SCLS will be framed as Likert-type perception questions rather than as factual questions on school crime incidents and safety policies. Moreover, this duplication was intended to provide an opportunity to validate SCLS benchmarks by collecting similar information on a larger scale.

Other federal surveys obtain information about school crime from individuals other than those with the school-level perspective of principals. For example, the School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey—administered in 1989, 1995, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011, and 2013—collected data on school crime and safety from students ages 12 to 18. Students also serve as the primary respondents in the Youth Risk Behavior Survey and the Monitoring the Future Survey. The Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) collects some information on crime and discipline from local education agencies (LEAs) rather than the principal. For the CRDC, each LEA completes an LEA-level survey plus one school-level survey for each of its schools. There is some overlap in topical areas, specifically the counts of incidents reported. However, the CRDC collects other topical areas at a disaggregated level (e.g. by student race/ethnicity), specifically disciplinary actions and harassment/bullying data, whereas SSOCS focuses on overall counts at the school level and is intended to provide a national benchmark on the status of violence and discipline in our nation’s schools.

To address the priorities of the NIJ in collecting more data on mental health services in schools, several new items in this area have been added to SSOCS:2016. At present, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) administers the School Health Policies and Practices Study (SHPPS), a national survey conducted periodically to assess school health policies and practices at the state, district, school, and classroom levels. The 2014 SHPPS included a questionnaire on mental health and social services that collected

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<sup>2</sup> The 1996–97 FRSS survey was a predecessor to SSOCS:2000.

<sup>3</sup> At this time, there are no plans to update the SCLS benchmarks after the 2016 collection.

school-level information; however, the respondent could be any member of the school staff. SHHPS included items on the types and number of mental health professionals in schools and the services they offer. The questions proposed for the SSOCS questionnaire complement those in the SHHPS, but focus on student access to services and professionals as funded by the school or district. Gathering this information through SSOCS will provide an indication of whether or not schools are equipped to deal with student mental health issues that may contribute to school crime and violence. In addition, it will allow for the analysis of the incidence of crime in relation to the provision of student services.

#### **A.5. Methods Used to Minimize Burden on Small Entities**

The burden on small schools and districts is minimized during the SSOCS data collection through the sample design. The design specifies the selection of schools as a function of size, which is defined by the number of students. Small schools and districts are sampled at lower rates because they comprise a smaller proportion of the student population per school.

The SSOCS:2016 questionnaire will be mailed to respondents on February 22, 2016, with instructions to return it within two weeks. The data collection period, however, will remain open through June 13, 2016. Schools that do not respond within two weeks will be contacted again and encouraged to complete their questionnaires. SSOCS:2016 will replicate the data collection procedures used in the 2000, 2004, 2006, 2008, and 2010 SSOCS. For a number of reasons, it is required that the survey be completed in less than 30 days. One reason for this is the time of year when the survey is administered; since the data collection is designed to close at the end of the school year (and not overlap with the beginning of summer vacation). In order to achieve a high response rate, there needs to be enough time before the end of the school year to place follow-up calls to principals, if necessary. Most of the schools in the earlier SSOCS collections required some form of nonresponse follow-up, and this is the expectation for the 2016 survey as well. The timing of the survey administration is also designed to avoid overburdening principals at the very end of the school year, when they have other administrative responsibilities. The survey collects counts of certain events, such as the number of crimes or disciplinary actions, which occur during the school year. In order to collect information on as much of the school year as possible, the data collection period is kept short and as close to a full school year as possible.

#### **A.6. Frequency of Data Collection**

As indicated earlier, SSOCS is planned as a recurring survey. This request is for clearance of SSOCS:2016 and SSOCS:2018. Separate requests will be submitted for future SSOCS collections. If these data were not collected on a recurring basis, it would hamper the ability to monitor trends and to provide policymakers with timely data on school crime. If the data were not collected at all, NCES would fail to meet its legislatively required mandate to collect and report such data, and legislators, school officials, and constituents would be without timely data on the incidence and frequency of school crime, and on the characteristics of disciplinary actions, programs, and indicators of disorder in U.S. schools.

#### **A.7. Special Circumstances of the Data Collection**

There are no other special circumstances.

#### **A.8. Consultants Outside the Agency**

##### SSOCS:2000

SSOCS was initially developed in consultation with a Technical Review Panel (TRP) created to review crime-related surveys sponsored by NCES. The panel members and their affiliations at the time of the development of SSOCS:2000 are as follows:

- Lynn Addington, Department of Justice, Law and Society, American University
- Bill Bond, National Association of Secondary School Principals
- Margaret Evans, National Association of Elementary School Principals



- Denise Gottfredson, Department of Criminology and Justice, University of Maryland
- Gary Gottfredson, Gottfredson Associates, Inc.
- Kristen Hayes, Office of Safe and Healthy Students (formally known as Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools)
- William Lassiter, Center for Prevention of School Violence
- Colin Loftin, School of Criminal Justice, State University of New York, Albany
- Sister Dale McDonald, National Catholic Education Association
- Shannon Means, Kentucky Center for School Safety
- Michael Rand, Bureau of Justice Statistics
- Bill Smith, Instructional Support Services, Sioux Falls School District

#### SSOCS:2004

Prior to SSOCS:2004, nine administrators from schools varying in locale, level, and district participated in cognitive interviews to identify potential issues with wording, formatting, and content. They responded to a series of scripted questions related to the survey items that tested the clarity of terms, the appropriateness of response options, and overall ease in responding to specific survey questions. The interviews were conducted at the schools and varied in length from 1 to 2 hours.

After the questionnaire was modified based on the results of the cognitive interviews, seven site visits were completed to determine how schools record crime data (i.e., the format and layout of the data) and the amount of time it takes to obtain the appropriate data. As with the cognitive interviews, administrators from schools varying in locale, level, and district completed a shortened version of the questionnaire. The interviews were conducted at the schools and varied in length from 1 to 3 hours.

To test the wording and format of the questionnaire and to find out how long it took for respondents to complete the SSOCS:2004 instrument in its entirety, a total of eight debriefing interviews were completed. Unlike the cognitive interviews and site visits, the respondents were principals only from public schools. The respondents were asked to complete the survey as if they had received the survey request in the mail, recording the total amount of time it took them to complete it. Telephone interviewers then contacted them and asked how much time it took to complete the questionnaire, who and what information was needed to respond to the items, and whether the questions were clear.

Due to the complexity of this undertaking for SSOCS:2004, its associated cost, and the minimal amount of change that resulted to the questionnaire, subsequent consultations with principals about SSOCS have focused on testing specific items that are new to the survey, rather than the entire questionnaire. This is the approach that has been followed for the SSOCS instrument development in 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, and 2016 and is planned for future SSOCS administrations in which substantive revisions will be limited to specific items.

#### SSOCS:2016

For SSOCS:2016, consultations were held with a TRP and federal partners from the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). Along with NCES, these federal partners are members of the Comprehensive School Safety Initiative Group established by NIJ. They recommended shared priority areas for SSOCS development.

The TRP members and their affiliations are as follows:

- Lynn Addington, Department of Justice, Law and Society, American University
- Denise Gottfredson, Department of Criminology and Justice, University of Maryland
- Amanda Nickerson, Department of Counseling, School, and Educational Psychology, University at Buffalo, SUNY
- William Dikel, Independent Consulting Child, Adolescent, and Adult Psychiatrist

The federal partners and their affiliations are as follows:

- Jenna Truman, BJS
- Rachel Morgan, BJS
- Michael Planty, BJS
- Matthew Scheider, NIJ (COPS)
- Calvin Hodnett, NIJ (COPS)
- William Modzeleski, Consultant to NIJ (COPS), SIGMA Threat Management Associates

As part of the SSOCS:2016 development, 17 administrators from public schools varying in locale, level, and district tested a portion of new and modified survey items through cognitive interviews. The purpose of the interviews was to uncover comprehension issues and to measure the participants' overall understanding of the content surveyed. Participants were asked to think aloud as they answered items in the SSOCS questionnaire and to respond to a series of scripted questions related to the survey items that tested the clarity of terms, the appropriateness of response options, and overall ease in responding to specific survey questions. Interviews were approximately 90 minutes in length and were conducted remotely, via telephone or videoconference, or in person at schools. In response to early findings during cognitive interviews, modifications were made to item wording and design, then further tested in subsequent interviews. The 2015–16 SSOCS questionnaire was modified based on the results of these cognitive interviews.

#### **A.9. Provision of Payments or Gifts to Respondents**

We will not provide any cash payment to survey respondents. The school respondent will be provided with a token noncash gift of a SSOCS promotional pen as part of the effort to encourage participation. Upon completion of the data collection and report/data release, we will provide a copy of the “First Look” publication to all schools participating in SSOCS.

#### **A.10. Assurance of Individually Identifiable Data Protection From Disclosure**

NCES, AIR and the Census Bureau have developed a plan for protecting individual data from disclosure. Under this plan, SSOCS:2016 will conform to all applicable federal legislation and guidelines—specifically, Section 183 of the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002) Public Law 107-279, Section 183, the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. 552a); the Privacy Act Regulations (34 CFR Part 5b); Sections 444 and 445 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. Sections 1232g and 1232h); the Federal Information Security Management Act of 2002; and the NCES *Statistical Standards* handbook.

NCES and its data collection agents for SSOCS, the Census Bureau and AIR, will comply with ED's IT security requirements as set forth in the Handbook for Information Assurance Security Policy; with related procedures and guidance, including the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA), Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars, and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) standards and guidance; and with the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002; 20 U.S.C., § 9573). These requirements include the successful certification and accreditation of the system before it can be implemented. Appropriate memoranda of understanding and interconnection security agreements will be documented as part of the certification and accreditation process.

From the initial contact with the participants in this survey through all of the follow-up efforts, potential survey respondents will be informed that the information they provide will be protected. The following language will be included recruitment materials, as appropriate, and on all survey instruments:

*Your answers 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 [Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002) 20 U.S.C., § 9573]. Reports of the findings from the survey will not identify participating districts, schools, or staff. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.*

*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 for this voluntary information collection is 1850-0761. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 52 minutes per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate, suggestions for improving this collection, or comments or concerns about the contents or the status of your individual submission of this questionnaire, please write directly to: School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS), National Center for Education Statistics, 1990 K Street, N.W., #9034, Washington, DC 20006.*

### **A.11. Sensitive Questions**

As is clearly stated on recruitment materials and in the questionnaires, SSOCS:2016 is a voluntary survey. No one is required to respond to the SSOCS questionnaire or specific questions within it. The items in the SSOCS questionnaire are not considered to be sensitive, as they collect information about schools rather than about individuals (see Supporting Statement Part C for a description and justification of the items and Appendix B for the questionnaire). Items about the frequency of crime and disciplinary problems at the school could be viewed as sensitive by some respondents because schools may not want to report data associated with unusually high frequencies of problems. However, the protection of individually identifiable information from disclosure is stated in the cover letter to participants, as well as the fact that the responses are not in any way tied to funding. Also, the SSOCS questionnaire asks for information that is generally in the public domain (e.g., information on policies which schools communicate to their students and parents in a variety of ways).

### **A.12. Estimates of Burden for Information Collection**

This package shows estimated burden to respondents for all SSOCS:2016 and SSOCS:2018 activities and requests approval for burden to respondents for both administrations of data collections. The time required to respond to the collection is estimated based on the responses in previous SSOCS administrations. Recruitment and pre-collection activities include (a) the time to review study requirements in the districts that require research approval before contacting its schools and (b) the time involved in a school deciding to participate.

SSOCS:2010 yielded an unweighted response rate of approximately 77 percent. When the responding schools were weighted to account for their original sampling probabilities, the response rate increased to approximately 81 percent. SSOCS:2008 yielded an unweighted response rate of approximately 75 percent and a weighted response rate of approximately 77 percent. Based on the average weighted response rate of the two prior administrations of SSOCS, a response rate of 79 percent is anticipated for SSOCS:2016 and is reflected in the sample size of approximately 3,230 schools, with a goal of collecting data from at least 2,550 schools.

Principals of sample schools will be notified of the survey through an advance letter and an email sent a week or two before the questionnaire. We estimate that principals will require about 1.5 minutes to read and process them.

An item was included in the SSOCS:2008 questionnaire that asked respondents, “How long did it take you to complete this form, not counting interruptions?” Based on the received answers, it was estimated that respondents would need approximately 45 minutes, on average, to respond to the SSOCS survey in 2010.<sup>4</sup> To address the goal of NIJ’s Comprehensive School Safety Initiative to collect in-depth information about the mental health services available to students and the roles and responsibilities of mental health professionals and law enforcement officers working in schools, some of the existing items have been expanded and new items have been added to SSOCS:2016 to provide the needed information

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<sup>4</sup> The length of time needed to complete SSOCS:2006 was 63.5 minutes, based on cognitive testing for SSOCS:2004. To determine the length of time needed to complete SSOCS:2008, item C0580 in the SSOCS:2006 questionnaire (“How long did it take you to complete this form, not counting interruptions”) was used to estimate the response burden at 45 minutes, or 11.5 seconds per item (with 234 items total).

related to mental health. We estimate that with these additions the average survey response time will be 52 minutes.<sup>5</sup> We do not anticipate any impact on response rates and we emphasize in all of the communication materials the importance of the crime-related data collected by SSOCS. Additionally, respondents are reminded that their responses are voluntary and that they may skip any set of items.

Districts selected for the 2015–16 SSOCS sample that require submission and approval of a research application before the schools under their jurisdiction can be asked to participate in a study (referred to here as the special contact districts) will be contacted to seek research approval. Based on previous SSOCS administrations, we estimate that 181 special contact districts will be in the sample. Such districts will be identified based on NCES records from various studies and based on public information available on districts’ websites. We will then call the special contact districts to verify where to send our completed research application, to obtain contact information for this process, and to ask about the amount of time the district typically spends reviewing similar research applications. The application for research approval operation should begin by early September 2015 (by September 2017 for the 2018 collection) to allow sufficient time for the districts’ review processes. We will begin contacting these districts upon receiving OMB’s approval, and continue to work with them until we receive a final response (approval or denial of request) up until January 2016 (January 2018 for the 2018 collection).

**Table 1. Estimate of hourly burden for each SSOCS administration (SSOCS:2016 and SSOCS:2018)**

Activity for each administration	Sample Size	Expected Response Rate	Number of Respondents* *	Number of Responses	Burden Hours per Respondent	Total Burden Hours
Special districts’ research approval	181	0.55	100	100	4	400
School pre-notification	3,228	1.0	3,228	3,228	.025	81
Data collection	3,228	0.79	2,550	2,550	.867	2,211
Total for each administration	-	-	3,328	5,878	-	2,692
<b>Annualized total for SSOCS:2016 and SSOCS:2018 between 2016 and 2018*</b>	-	-	<b>2,219</b>	<b>3,919</b>	-	<b>1,795</b>

\*The estimated annualized totals for the 3-year span were calculated by summing the estimating burden for SSOCS:2016 and SSOCS:2018 and dividing by 3.

\*\*Details may not sum to totals because counts are unduplicated.

Assuming that the respondents (district education administrators for district approvals and mostly principals for data collection) earn \$42.68<sup>6</sup> per hour, the total cost to respondents for the overall burden of each SSOCS administration (SSOCS:2016 and SSOCS:2018) is estimated to be \$114,895.

### **A.13. Estimates of Cost Burden to Respondents or Record Keepers Resulting From the Collection of Information**

There are no additional costs to respondents beyond those reported for the hour burden.

### **A.14. Estimates of Annual Government Cost**

The Census Bureau will conduct the SSOCS:2016 data collection and data file development work for \$1,240,750 over 2 years, for an annualized average cost of \$620,375. A task in NCES’s ESSIN contract with AIR also supports this survey at about \$458,600 over 2 years, for an annualized average cost of \$229,300. Under the ESSIN contract, NCES has also contracted with Synergy Enterprises to support the survey development at a cost of \$49,912 and NCES has allotted an additional \$200,000 for additional

<sup>5</sup> Each subitem in the SSOCS:2016 questionnaire was counted as an item. Assuming an average burden of 11.5 seconds per item, the additional burden for the 38 new subitems is estimated at 7 minutes, given that the items do not differ substantially in complexity or length.

<sup>6</sup> The source of this estimate is the mean hourly rate of Education Administrators (datatype: SOC:119030) on the BLS Occupational Employment Statistics website, <http://data.bls.gov/oes/>, accessed on March 12, 2015.

post-collection support tasks. Thus, SSOCS:2016 will cost the government \$1,949,262 over 2 years, for a total annualized average cost of \$974,631.

### A.15. Reasons for Changes in Response Burden and Costs

This is a reinstatement of a previously approved collection (OMB# 1850-0761 v.6). The expected number of respondents and burden hours has remained similar to those approved for the 2011–12 SSOCS.

### A.16. Time Schedule

NCES is committed to releasing the first publication from a data collection as soon as possible after it is completed. The ultimate goal for all NCES collections, including SSOCS:2016 and SSOCS:2018, is to release a restricted-use data file, First Look report, and supplemental data documentation within 12 months of the data collection end date. Table 2 displays the time schedule for the major project activities in SSOCS:2016 (a similar schedule is expected for SSCOS:2018).

**Table 2: Schedule of major project activities: SSOCS:2016**

Task	Date
Contact Special Districts to begin approval process	September 2015 – January 2016
Complete and deliver special district applications and packages	September 2015 – January 2016
Draft special mailing materials for schools in special districts	September 2015 – January 2016
Data collection begins	February 2016
Data collection ends	June 2016
Restricted-use data file finalized	February 2017
First Look report through NCES review	March 2017
First Look report released	June 2017
Restricted-use data file released	June 2017
Public-use data file released	September 2017
Data file user’s manual released	September 2017
Statistical analysis report through NCES review	December 2017
Web tables through NCES review	December 2017
Statistical analysis report released	March 2018
Web tables released	March 2018

### Analysis Tasks

#### 1. First Look Report

This First Look report will use data from the 2015–16 SSOCS to examine a range of issues dealing with school crime and safety, such as the frequency of school crime and violence, disciplinary actions, and school practices related to the prevention and reduction of crime and safety. This publication will largely follow the format and analysis techniques used in prior years, such as:

- <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2009326>
- <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2011320>

#### 2. Data files and related data documentation

All data files (in several statistical formats) and data documentation (codebooks and user’s manuals) are publicly available on the NCES website at [http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ssocs/data\\_products.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ssocs/data_products.asp).

#### 3. Statistical analysis report

An example of a statistical analysis report from a prior SSOCS collection can be found at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2004314>.

#### 4. SSOCS web tables

Data from each SSOCS administration are tabulated and released in a table library, accessible through the NCES website at [http://nces.ed.gov/programs/crime/crime\\_tables.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/programs/crime/crime_tables.asp).

Generally, analyses of the SSOCS data follow the research questions presented below. Data will be analyzed in accordance with the research questions. A goal of the data analysis is to provide answers to these questions using various analytical techniques, including *t* tests and cross-tabulations.

#### Research Questions

The SSOCS instrument is divided into 10 main research objectives, each with a series of items addressing a specific research question, as presented below. See Supporting Statement Part C for a description and justification of the items.

- I. What is the frequency and nature of crime at public schools?
  - a. What is the number of incidents, by type of crime?
  - b. What are the characteristics of those incidents?
    - i. How many incidents were reported to police?
  - c. What is the number of hate-crime incidents?
    - i. What biases motivated these incidents?
  - d. How many arrests were made at school?
  - e. How many schools report violent deaths?
  - f. How many schools report school shootings?
  - g. How many schools report disruptions for violent threats?
- II. What is the frequency and nature of discipline problems and disorder at public schools?
  - a. What types of discipline problems and disorder occur at public schools?
  - b. How serious are the problems?
- III. What disciplinary actions do public schools use?
  - a. What types of disciplinary actions were available to principals?
  - b. How many disciplinary actions were taken, by type of action and offense?
- IV. What practices to prevent/reduce crime and violence do public schools use?
  - a. How do schools monitor student behavior?
  - b. How do schools control student behavior?
  - c. How do schools monitor and secure the physical grounds?
  - d. How do schools limit access to the school?
  - e. How do schools plan and practice procedures for emergencies?
- V. How do schools involve law enforcement?
  - a. Do schools have sworn law enforcement officers present on a regular basis?
    - i. How often are they available and at what times?
    - ii. What activities do they participate in?
    - iii. How many are present at the school?
    - iv. How are sworn law enforcement officers armed?
  - b. Is there written documentation outlining the roles and responsibilities of law enforcement in schools?
  - c. Do schools have security guards or personnel other than law enforcement?
- VI. How do schools provide access to student mental health services?
  - a. Are mental health services, such as diagnostic assessment and treatment, available to students?
    - i. Where are those services available?
    - ii. Are services provided by school or district employees?
  - b. What factors limit a school's efforts to provide mental health services to students?

- VII. What formal programs designed to prevent/reduce crime and violence do public schools use?
  - a. Which programs target students, teachers, parents, and other community members?
  - b. What are the characteristics of the programs?
  - c. Do schools have threat assessment teams?
    - i. How often do they formally meet?
  - d. What student groups promote acceptance of student diversity?
  - e. What training is provided to staff?
- VIII. What efforts used by public schools to prevent/reduce crime and violence involve various stakeholders (e.g., law enforcement, parents, juvenile justice agencies, mental health agencies, social services, and the business community)?
  - a. In what activities are stakeholders involved?
  - b. How much are stakeholders involved?
- IX. What problems do principals encounter in preventing/reducing crime and violence in public schools?
- X. What school characteristics might be related to the research questions above?
  - a. What are the demographic characteristics of schools?
  - b. What are the characteristics of the student population?
  - c. What is the average student/teacher ratio?
  - d. What are the general measures of school climate, such as truancy or student mobility?

#### **A.17. Approval to Not Display Expiration Date of OMB Approval**

NCES is not seeking approval to not display the expiration date of OMB approval.

#### **A.18. Exceptions to the Certification**

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.