iNACOL
International Association for K-12 Online Learning

August 14, 2015

Director of the Information Collection Clearance Division
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Ave., SW (LBJ)
Mailstop L-OM-2-2E319
Room 2E103
Washington, D.C. 20202

To the Director:

The International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL) is pleased to submit comments in reference to the Federal Register Notice on Proposed Collection Activities for the Impact Evaluation of Data-Driven Instruction Professional Development for Teachers, Docket No. ED-2015-ICCD-0076.

The mission of iNACOL is to ensure all students have access to a world-class education and quality blended and online learning opportunities that prepare them for a lifetime of success. iNACOL supports innovators in online, blended, and competency education to share best practices, provide resources, connect practitioners, develop quality standards, and amplify educator voices to transform education. With over 4,500 members, we are supporting the largest active community of innovative practitioners transforming the future of learning.

In responding to this request for comment, iNACOL wishes to address the following issue raised in the Notice:

How might the Department enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected?

iNACOL encourages the Department to study a sample of schools that offer a diverse cross-section of learning environments, including new learning models that personalize learning using competency-based approaches, supported by blended and online learning modalities and environments. A diverse sample of learning environments will allow evaluators to identify important variables in the impact of data-driven instruction professional development for teachers. These variables could include the availability of learning analytics, adaptive educational tools, instructional design, teacher capacity, and the extent to which systems are built around student learning versus seat time.

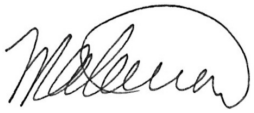
The ultimate power of blended and online learning lies in the potential to transform the education system and enable higher levels of learning through competency-based approaches. Technology-based models can allow for rapid capture of student performance data and differentiated instruction tailored to the

specific needs of individual students. By adapting instruction to reflect the skills and knowledge students have mastered, blended and online models have the potential to keep students engaged and supported as they learn and to help them progress at a flexible pace, leading to dramatically higher levels of learning and attainment.

This study provides an important opportunity to learn how new learning models support and amplify the effect of data-driven instruction professional development. The shift to new learning models will require educators to take on new roles and develop increased capacity to continuously use data to improve student learning. As an increasing number of districts and schools shift to these new learning models, the results of this study can provide valuable data that point to promising and best practices for the field.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Maria Worthen
Vice President, Federal & State Policy

Attachments:

1. New Learning Models Vision (iNACOL)
2. Blended Learning Teacher Competency Framework (iNACOL)
3. Laying the Foundation for Competency Education: A Policy Guide for the Next Generation Educator Workforce (iNACOL & KnowledgeWorks)