

**Middle Grades Longitudinal Study of 2017–18 (MGLS:2017)
Recruitment Communication Materials for
2016 Item Validation Field Test**

OMB# 1850-0911 v.5

Appendices A through S

February 2015
Revised September 2015

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Consortium/Network/Diocese Endorsement Request Letter

[NCES Letterhead]

[Date]

[Director's name]

[Consortium/Network/Diocese name]

[Address]

[City, State Zip]

Dear [Name]:

I am writing to inform you about a vitally important new national study: the **Middle Grades Longitudinal Study of 2017-18 (MGLS:2017)**. The study is the first of its kind and will provide invaluable information on students' mathematics and reading skills, executive function, socioemotional wellbeing, and on family and school factors that may encourage success during these important, yet generally understudied years of education.

The study will involve multiple phases, including an item validation field test, operational field test, and a main study, all of which are essential to learning about students in these grades. In order to encourage schools and parents to participate, we are asking esteemed organizations from around the nation to learn about and then endorse the study. We would like to speak with you or, if you prefer, someone else in your organization about the importance of the MGLS:2017 and the opportunity to endorse the study.

In the next few days, an individual from RTI International, which is administering MGLS:2017 on behalf of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education, will be following up with you about endorsing this historic study. Alternatively, you can sign up to endorse the study by visiting our website at <recruitment website URL>. Should you have any questions in the meantime, please call the MGLS:2017 information line at 800-xxx-xxxx, or send an email to MGLS@rti.org.

Enclosed you will find an MGLS:2017 brochure that further explains the study and a set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

Thank you in advance for your support of the MGLS:2017, and for working together to improve the quality of education for our country's middle grade students.

Sincerely,

Peggy G. Carr, Ph.D.
Acting Commissioner, NCES

NCES is authorized to conduct MGLS:2017 by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C., § 9543). The data are being collected for NCES by RTI International, a nonprofit research organization based in North Carolina. The collected data 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 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C., § 9573). The collected information will be combined across respondents to produce statistical reports.

Enclosures:

MGLS:2017 Brochure

FAQs

State Notification Letter – [NCES/ED Letterhead]

[Date]

[Title First Name Last Name]
[State Department of Education Official's Title]
[State Department of Education]
[Address]
[City, State Zip]

Dear [Name]:

I am writing to inform your state education agency about an important new national study: the **Middle Grades Longitudinal Study of 2017-18 (MGLS:2017)**. The study will involve multiple phases- a field test in 2016, a pilot study in 2017, and a main study in 2018. The main study will follow a cohort of 6th grade students in spring of 2018 as they progress through the middle grade years, making the transition from elementary school and preparing for the transition into high school. The goal of the study is to examine the factors that encourage success during these important yet often understudied years of education. MGLS:2017 is described in more detail in the enclosed materials.

The MGLS:2017 data collection will be administered by RTI International on behalf of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education. Approval for the data collection by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is pending under OMB #1850-0911v.4. Schools in your state may be drawn to participate in one of the three study phases described below.

~ **2016 field test**- data collection will include a one-time student assessment and survey in grades 5, 6, 7 and 8. <TIER 1 SAMPLE SCHOOLS ONLY: A school administrator, the math teachers and special education providers for each sampled student, and one parent of each sampled student, will be asked to complete brief questionnaires.>

~**2017 pilot study**- data collection will include a student assessment and survey for 6th grade students. A school administrator, the math teachers and special education providers for each sampled student, and one parent of each sampled student will be asked to complete brief questionnaires. These students will be tracked to obtain their location in the 7th grade, but no further data collection will be conducted.

~**2018 main study**- data collection will include a student assessment and survey for 6th grade students. A school administrator, the math teachers and special education providers for each sampled student, and one parent of each sampled student will be asked to complete brief questionnaires. A follow-up data collection will occur in the spring of 2019 and 2020, when students are in the 7th and 8th grades, respectively. Students who move from their 6th grade school will be tracked to their 7th grade location and similar follow-up data collection activities will be conducted.

While participation in MGLS:2017 is voluntary, we ask for your support of the participation of sampled schools in your state. The MGLS:2017 first phase and pilot test samples are small, as only about 50-60 schools will be asked to participate. Each school's participation is important, because these phases of the study need an inclusive and diverse group of American schools serving students in the middle grades. Schools that participate in the first phase of MGLS:2017 are not anticipated to participate in any subsequent years of the study. The results of the first two phases will significantly inform the main study, which will begin in early 2018 with 6th graders from approximately 800 schools across the country.

In < month >, we will begin contacting the school districts and schools that have been selected to participate in the first phase of the study. Should you have any questions, please call the MGLS:2017 information number, 800-xxx-xxxx, or send an email to MGLS@rti.org. You may also contact Carolyn Fidelman at NCES at 202-502-7312 for more information.

We look forward to working with your schools to make MGLS:2017 a success. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Peggy G. Carr Ph.D
Acting Commissioner, NCES

NCES is authorized to conduct MGLS:2017 by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C., § 9543). The data are being collected for NCES by RTI International, a nonprofit research organization based in North Carolina. The collected data 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 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C., § 9573). The collected information will be combined across respondents to produce statistical reports.

Enclosures:
MGLS:2017 Brochure
FAQs

Appendix C. District Notification and Recruitment Letters

District Notification and Recruitment Letter – Item Validation Field Test

[MGLS Letterhead]

[Date]

[Superintendent's Name]

Superintendent

[District]

[Address]

[City, State Zip]

Dear [Name]:

I am writing to inform you about an important new national study: the **Middle Grades Longitudinal Study of 2017-18 (MGLS:2017)**. The study will involve multiple phases- a field test, a pilot study, and a main study. The main study will follow a cohort of 6th grade students in spring of 2018 as they progress through the middle grade years, making the transition from elementary school and preparing for the transition into high school. The goal of the study is to examine the factors that encourage success during these important yet often understudied years of education.

The MGLS:2017 data collection will be administered by RTI International on behalf of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education. Some schools in your district have been sampled for the first phase of MGLS:2017 scheduled to begin in early 2016. Data collection in the majority of the sampled schools will include math, reading, and executive function assessments and surveys of a small sample of students in grades 5, 6, 7, and 8. <TIER 1 SAMPLE ONLY: A school administrator, the math teachers and special education providers for each sampled student, and one parent of each sampled student will be asked to complete brief questionnaires.> RTI International will contact these schools to discuss study details and invite them to join.

The student assessment will take about 70 minutes to complete and the student survey will require another 20 minutes. Each school staff survey will require about 30 minutes. All data will be collected through a computer-based application or a telephone interview, and will significantly inform the main study, which will begin in early 2018 with 6th graders from approximately 800 schools around the country.

We are asking you to encourage your school(s) to participate in this vital phase which will take place in early 2016. As a thank you for the school's help with this phase of the study, each participating school in your district will receive <\$200, \$400, or \$400 in goods and/or services>. School and student participation is voluntary, but we hope your district and all selected schools will choose to contribute to the study.

Enclosed you will find an MGLS:2017 brochure that further explains the study and a sheet of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). Should you have any questions, please call the MGLS:2017 information line at 800-xxx-xxxx, or send an email to MGLS@rti.org.

We look forward to working with your schools in this endeavor to advance the quality of education for our country's middle grade students. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Peggy G. Carr Ph.D.
Acting Commissioner, NCES

NCES is authorized to conduct MGLS:2017 by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C., § 9543). The data are being collected for NCES by RTI International, a nonprofit research organization based in North Carolina. The collected data 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 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C., § 9573). The collected information will be combined across respondents to produce statistical reports.

Enclosures:

MGLS:2017 brochure

List of selected schools in District

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) sheet

School Recruitment Letter – Item Validation Field Test
MGLS Letterhead

[Date]
[Principal's Name]
[Title]
[School]
[Address]
[City, State Zip]

Dear [Name]:

I am writing to request your school's participation in a vitally important new national study: the **Middle Grades Longitudinal Study of 2017-18 (MGLS:2017)**. The study will involve multiple phases- a field test, a pilot study, and a main study. The study will focus on students' mathematics, reading, and executive function skills and follow a cohort of 6th graders as they progress through the middle grade years, making the transition from elementary school and preparing for the transition into high school. The goal of the study is to examine the factors that encourage success during these important yet often understudied years of education.

The MGLS:2017 data collection will be administered by RTI International on behalf of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education.

Your school is one of only a limited number of schools around the country selected to participate in the first phase of MGLS:2017 to be conducted in early 2016. The first phase of MGLS:2017 will include a math, reading, and executive function assessment of students in grades 5, 6, 7, and 8, as well as a student survey on socioemotional well-being, peers, and schooling experiences. Student participation will take about 90 minutes. <TIER 1 SAMPLE ONLY: A school administrator, the math teachers and special education providers for each sampled student, and one parent of each sampled student will be asked to complete brief questionnaires. Each will require about 30 minutes. Math and Special Education providers of participating students will also be asked to provide information on participating students. This will take approximately 25 minutes per student to complete.> All data will be collected through a computer-based application or a telephone interview, and will significantly inform the main study, which will begin in early 2018 with about 20,000 sixth-graders from approximately 800 schools. Schools participating in the first phase field test will be exempt from participating in the 2017 pilot test.

[IF PUBLIC AND GIVEN SUPPORT OF DISTRICT: The study has been given the support of Superintendent [INSERT NAME OF DISTRICT'S SUPERINTENDENT] and we encourage you to include MGLS:2017 on your 2016 calendar.] [IF PRIVATE AND ENDORSED: The study has been endorsed by [INSERT RELEVANT ENDORSING ORGANIZATION] and we encourage you to include MGLS:2017 on your 2016 calendar.] Your school will receive <**\$200/\$400/\$400 in goods and/or services**> as a thank you for your help with this phase of the study. We will also provide **\$150** for a school coordinator to serve as the central point of contact and help with data collection at your school. Teachers completing surveys will receive **\$20** for answering the surveys and an additional **\$7 per student** form. One parent of participating students will receive <\$20/\$40> for completing their survey.

Within the next few days, a representative from RTI International will contact you to answer any questions you may have and address any outstanding issues that may be required for your district and school(s) to participate in this unprecedented study. Enclosed please find an MGLS:2017 brochure that further explains the study and a sheet of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). Should you have any questions, please call the MGLS:2017 information number at 800-xxx-xxxx, or send an email to MGLS@rti.org. You can also learn more about the study and education research focused on students in the middle grades by visiting the MGLS:2017 website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/mgls>.

We look forward to working with your school in this endeavor to advance the quality of education for our country's middle grade students. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Peggy G. Carr Ph.D
Acting Commissioner, NCES

NCES is authorized to conduct MGLS:2017 by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C., § 9543). The data are being collected for NCES by RTI International, a nonprofit research organization based in North Carolina. The collected data 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 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C., § 9573). The collected information will be combined across respondents to produce statistical reports.

Enclosures: MGLS:2017 Brochure and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) sheet

Teacher Recruitment Letter – Item Validation Field Test

MGLS Letterhead

[DATE]
[TEACHER NAME]
[SCHOOL NAME]
[ADDR1]
[ADDR1]
[CITY STATE ZIP]

Dear [TEACHER NAME],

[SCHOOL NAME] has graciously agreed to participate in the first phase of the Middle Grades Longitudinal Study of 2017-18 (MGLS:2017), which is being administered by RTI International on behalf of the by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education. The study will involve multiple phases- a field test, a pilot study, and a main study. The study will focus on students' mathematics, reading, and executive function skills and follow a cohort of 6th graders as they progress through the middle grade years, making the transition from elementary school and preparing for the transition into high school. This first phase of MGLS:2017 includes a teacher survey of approximately 175 [MATH or SPECIAL EDUCATION] teachers in grades 5, 6, 7, or 8 from around the county. You are one of the teachers selected to participate in the study.

As a [MATH or SPECIAL EDUCATION] teacher at [SCHOOL NAME], you can provide essential information about academic policies and programs, activities and curriculum in the classroom, and other school related experiences that impact student learning. Within the next two weeks, you will receive an email from RTI International that will contain your unique USER NAME and PASSWORD, as well as instructions for how to complete the teacher survey. [FOR MATH TEACHERS ONLY: The survey will include several general questions about your background and experiences at school and in the classroom, as well as questions about specific students that are part of the study. The questions on your background and classroom experiences will take approximately 20 minutes to complete, and the questions about specific students will take about 10 minutes per student to complete.] [FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS ONLY: The survey will include several general questions about your background and the special education services you provide at the school, as well as questions about specific students that are part of the study. The questions on your background and special education services provided will take about 10 minutes to complete, and the questions about specific students will take approximately 25 minutes per student to complete.] As a token of our appreciation you will receive \$20 for answering the questions about your background, and \$7 per student for answering questions about specific students.

Enclosed please find an MGLS:2017 brochure that further explains the study, a sheet of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), and a list of national organizations endorsing the study. Should you have any questions, please call the MGLS:2017 information number, 800-xxx-xxxx, or send an email to MGLS@rti.org. You can also learn more about the study and education research focused on students in the middle grades by visiting the MGLS:2017 website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/mglc>.

We thank you in advance for your cooperation in making this important research study a success.

Sincerely,

Peggy G. Carr Ph.D.
Acting Commissioner, NCES

NCES is authorized to conduct MGLS:2017 by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C., § 9543). The data are being collected for NCES by RTI International, a nonprofit research organization based in North Carolina. The collected data 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 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C., § 9573). The collected information will be combined across respondents to produce statistical reports.

Enclosures:
MGLS:2017 brochure
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) sheet

Appendix F. Parent Recruitment Letters, Implicit Consent

MGLS:2017 Child Permission Form- Implicit Permission- Item Validation Test

Dear Parent or Guardian,

This letter is to inform you about an important study of student learning being conducted in our school this spring. The Middle Grades Longitudinal Study of 2017-2018 (MGLS:2017) will follow a cohort of students as they progress through the middle grade years, making the transition from elementary school and preparing for the transition into high school. The goals of the study are to assess students' mathematics and reading skills, socioemotional wellbeing, and to collect data on family and school factors that may encourage success during these important years of education.

Our school has accepted an invitation from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education, to participate in the first phase of MGLS:2017. A sample of students from our school will take part. Your child is one of only approximately 5,000 students sampled from across the United States to participate. The enclosed summary sheet provides background information about MGLS:2017, explains what is involved for each student selected to participate in the study, and gives a contact phone number and email address where you can find answers to any questions you might have.

To have an accurate picture of what U.S. students in grades 5, 6, 7, and 8 can do in reading and math, it is important that each student selected take part in the study. In addition to answering reading and math questions, students will be asked to complete a brief questionnaire about themselves. I urge you to support this effort by encouraging your child to take part; however, participation by your child in this study is entirely voluntary.

Parent Survey Information

The family is so important for students, and you are the best person to tell us about your family. We would greatly appreciate it if you would complete a brief online survey for the study. As a token of our appreciation for being a part of the study, when you finish the 30-minute survey either online or over the phone, you will receive a check for **[\$20/\$40]**. To access the parent survey, **please log into surveys.nces.ed.gov/mgls and use ID: xxxxxxxx and password: xxxxxxxx.**

Completing the survey is voluntary for you and your child and there are no penalties for not participating. You may also skip any question you do not want to answer if you choose to participate. All of the information collected is safeguarded, as required by law. MGLS:2017 is conducted by NCES under the authorization of the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C., § 9543). The data are being collected for NCES by RTI International, a nonprofit research organization based in North Carolina. Data collected are used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed or used, in identifiable form, for any other purpose except as required by law (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C., § 9573). Students and schools are never identified in any reports. All reported statistics refer to the United States as a whole.

If you have any objection to your child joining in the MGLS activities, please let us know by completing the attached consent form and returning it to the school.

For more information, please visit the study website at <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/mgls/>. You may also call the study hotline at (800) xxx-xxx or send email to mgls@rti.org. Thank you for taking the time to learn about this important study.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Enclosures: FAQs for MGLS

Parent/Guardian Consent Form

Parent/Guardian Permission Form – MGLS

Your child has been asked to participate in a study of student learning called the Middle Grades Longitudinal Study of 2017-2018 (MGLS:2017). Student data will be collected in a 90-minute session during the school day. The student assessment will be administered by a team of researchers from RTI International, on behalf of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

If you grant permission for your child to participate in MGLS:2017, you do not need to return this form. Please keep this copy for your records.

If you do not consent to your child’s participation in MGLS:2017, please indicate in the box below, sign and return this form to your child’s school as soon as possible.

No, I do not grant permission for my child to participate in MGLS:2017.

(Signature of parent or guardian)

Date of signature: ____/____/____

Please Print:

Student Name: _____

Parent Name: _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Student ID: _____

MGLS:2017 Child Permission Form- Explicit Permission- Item Validation Test

Dear Parent or Guardian,

This letter is to inform you about an important study of student learning being conducted in our school this spring. The Middle Grades Longitudinal Study of 2017-2018 (MGLS:2017) will follow a cohort of students as they progress through the middle grade years, making the transition from elementary school and preparing for the transition into high school. The goals of the study are to assess students' mathematics and reading skills, socioemotional wellbeing, and to collect data on family and school factors that may encourage success during these important years of education.

Our school has accepted an invitation from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education, to participate in the first phase of MGLS:2017. A sample of students from our school will take part. Your child is one of only approximately 5,000 students sampled from across the United States to participate. The enclosed summary sheet provides background information about MGLS:2017, explains what is involved for each student selected to participate in the study, and gives a contact phone number and email address where you can find answers to any questions you might have.

To have an accurate picture of what U.S. students in grades 5, 6, 7, and 8 can do in reading and math, it is important that each student selected take part in the study. In addition to answering reading and math questions, students will be asked to complete a brief questionnaire about themselves. I urge you to support this effort by encouraging your child to take part; however, participation by your child in this study is entirely voluntary.

Parent Survey Information

The family is so important for students, and you are the best person to tell us about your family. We would greatly appreciate it if you would complete a brief online survey for the study. As a token of our appreciation for being a part of the study, when you finish the 30-minute survey either online or over the phone, you will receive a check for [\$20/\$40]. To access the parent survey, **please log into surveys.nces.ed.gov/mgls and use ID: xxxxxxxx and password: xxxxxxxx.**

Completing the survey is voluntary for you and your child and there are no penalties for not participating. You may also skip any question you do not want to answer if you choose to participate. All of the information collected is safeguarded, as required by law. MGLS:2017 is conducted by NCES under the authorization of the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C., § 9543). The data are being collected for NCES by RTI International, a nonprofit research organization based in North Carolina. Data collected are used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed or used, in identifiable form, for any other purpose except as required by law (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C., § 9573). Students and schools are never identified in any reports. All reported statistics refer to the United States as a whole.

Before we can allow your child to join in the MGLS:2017 activities, we must have your written consent. Please complete the attached form and return it to the school.

For more information, please visit the study website at <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/mgls/>. You may also call the study hotline at (800) xxx-xxx or send email to mgls@rti.org. Thank you for taking the time to learn about this important study.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Enclosures: FAQs for MGLS
Parent/Guardian Consent Form

Parent/Guardian Permission Form – MGLS

Your child has been asked to participate in a study of student learning called the Middle Grades Longitudinal Study of 2017-2018 (MGLS:2017). Student data will be collected in a 90-minute session during the school day. The student assessment will be administered by a team of researchers from RTI International, on behalf of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

PLEASE CHECK ONE:

Yes, I grant permission for my child to participate in MGLS:2017.

No, I do not grant permission for my child to participate in MGLS:2017.

I have read this permission form and understand what I am being asked to do.

PLEASE SIGN YOUR NAME BELOW:

_____ Date of signature: ____/____/_____
(Signature of parent or guardian)

PLEASE PRINT:

Student name: _____

School name: _____

Parent name: _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Student ID: _____

MGLS:2017 Brochure Text – Item Validation Field Test

COVER

Middle Grades Longitudinal Study of 2017-18 (MGLS:2017) – First Phase

Education quote: “Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.” ~John Dewey

Study conducted by: National Center for Education Statistics of U.S. Department of Education

Data collection by: RTI International

INTERIOR

The Study

The Middle Grades Longitudinal Study of 2017-18 (MGLS:2017) will be the first study to follow a nationally-representative sample of students as they enter and move through the middle grades (grades 6, 7, and 8).

The First Phase

Participants in the first phase of the MGLS:2017 will provide invaluable feedback to improve the study. Information from the first phase will be used to improve the data collection instruments and practices of the main study.

Your Participation

As part of the first phase of the MGLS:2017, you are one of about 58 schools, approximately 5,000 students, and about 150 teachers selected to participate in all of the U.S. The first phase will be conducted in early 2016. Your participation is essential to the success of the study.

What Will Be Included?

- Mathematics and reading skills
- Executive function development
- Socioemotional wellbeing
- Peer experiences
- Classroom characteristics and students’ learning
- Services to students with disabilities
- Family characteristics and students’ success

BACK

For More Information

If you have questions about MGLS:2017 or would like more information, please contact the study. Its success depends on you!

Phone number: 800-xxx-xxxx

E-mail address: mglis@rti.org

Website: <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/mglis>

MGLS:2017 FAQs – Item Validation Field Test

MGLS Letterhead

Middle Grades Longitudinal Study of 2017-18 (MGLS:2017) – First Phase – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is MGLS:2017?

The Middle Grades Longitudinal Study of 2017-18 (MGLS:2017) is a new, unprecedented study of middle grade students being conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) within the U.S. Department of Education. RTI International is carrying out the MGLS:2017 data collection on behalf of NCES.

What is the focus of MGLS:2017?

The study will follow a cohort of 6th grade students as they progress through the middle grade years, making the transition from elementary school and preparing for the transition into high school. The goals of the study are to assess students' mathematics and reading skills, executive function, socioemotional wellbeing, and to collect data on family and school factors that may encourage success during these important, yet generally understudied, years of education.

When is the study being conducted?

The first phase will take place in early 2016. The main study will begin in early 2018.

Why participate in the first phase of MGLS:2017?

Results from the first phase of the study will significantly inform the creation and development of the assessments and survey instruments used in the main study. For example, the first phase will be used to learn more about how students respond to the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade mathematics and reading assessment items planned for the main study. Surveys developed for school administrators, math teachers, special education teachers, parents, and students will also be tested during the first phase to inform the selection of items to include in the main study. Participants in the first phase of the study will provide essential feedback to improve data collection for the main study, and provide the basis upon which the remainder of the Middle Grades Longitudinal Study will be built.

How will MGLS:2017 data be used?

MGLS:2017 data will allow researchers, educators, and policy makers to examine student development and achievement through this important stage of students' educational career. More generally, MGLS:2017 data will allow researchers to examine family and schooling factors related to students' achievement. The study will capture changes in young people's lives and their connections with communities, schools, teachers, families, parents, and peers, including:

- Academic (especially in math and reading), social, and interpersonal growth;
- Transitions from elementary school and preparations for transitions into high school;
- School connectedness, belongingness, and engagement;
- Characteristics of schools serving students in the middle grades and their relationship to student outcomes; and
- School progress and outcomes of students' with disabilities.

How many schools and students will be involved in the first phase of the study?

A sample of approximately 5,000 students enrolled in grades 5, 6, 7, and 8 from about 58 schools, will participate in the first phase of the MGLS:2017. The main study will involve a nationally representative sample of about 20,000 students enrolled in grade 6 from about 800 public and private schools.

What is involved for students?

Students will complete a direct-assessment of their math, reading, and executive function skills that will take approximately 70 minutes. Each student will also be asked to complete a survey that will take about 20 minutes. For the first phase of the MGLS:2017, students will only be asked to participate once. For the main study, students will be followed for the next two years (early 2019 and early 2020, respectively). The assessments and survey will be completed on touch screens, tablets, or computers provided by the study.

What is involved for school staff?

A school administrator will be asked to complete an approximately 30 minute web-based questionnaire about the school and the school environment. The math teachers of students who participate in the study will complete web-based questionnaires about their background and classroom characteristics (approximately 20 minutes), as well as answer questions about the skills and abilities of specific students in the study (about 10 minutes per student). The special education teacher for students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) will be asked to complete web-based questionnaires about their background

and special education services provided (about 10 minutes), as well as answer questions about the skills and abilities of specific students in the study (approximately 25 minutes per student).

What is involved for parents?

One parent of each student who participates in the study will complete a questionnaire via a web survey or a telephone interview. The questionnaire will take about 30 minutes to complete.

Who will be responsible for data collection?

Trained MGLS:2017 staff will facilitate the student assessments and questionnaires and provide all required materials. Schools will only be asked to designate a school contact to assist MGLS:2017 staff with in-school arrangements.

Do teachers need to help administer the assessments?

No, trained MGLS:2017 staff will visit the school, bringing all required materials for administering the assessments. Exceptions will be made for students with IEP accommodations that may require the assistance of school personnel (e.g., if a student works one-on-one with an aide).

Are there incentives for participating schools?

MGLS:2017 recognizes the demands placed on schools from many sources throughout the school year, and will give a modest incentive to schools that agree to help in the first phase of the study. MGLS:2017 will also provide \$150 for a school coordinator to serve as the central point of contact and manage the data collection at each school .

What happens if a student refuses to participate?

All participation is voluntary. There are no penalties for not participating in the study. When completing the questionnaires, respondents can skip any question they do not want to answer. If individuals or schools are hesitant to be a part of the study, please reach out to MGLS:2017 staff so we can address any concerns you may have.

Will the names of participants and their responses be kept confidential?

Under law, the information provided by schools, staff, students, and 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 [Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002), 20 U.S. Code, Section 9573]. All field staff and other staff working on the study have signed an affidavit of non-disclosure where they swear to abide by this law. Field staff have also undergone a criminal background check as a condition of employment.

Who do I contact for further information about MGLS:2017?

For additional information, call the MGLS:2017 information number, 800-xxx-xxxx, or send an email to mglis@rti.org. You may also learn more about the study and education research focused on students in the middle grades by visiting the MGLS:2017 website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/mglis>.

Appendix J. MGLS:2017 Recruitment Website Text

The recruitment website has not yet been developed, but will be a very welcoming, interactive website that will allow any interested party (state, district, school, teacher, parent, or student) to learn more about the field tests as well as the main study. Content will include, but will not be limited to, information contained in the recruitment brochure, information from the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) sheet, as well as links for contacting the study.

The website will also serve as a portal to securely upload student list information and complete the parent and school staff questionnaires.

The content of the recruitment website will be provided in the request for the MGLS:2017 field test data collections later in 2015.

MGLS Letterhead

Direct Mathematics Assessment

Approximate length Goal for main study	30 minutes (part of 90 minute student assessment and survey)
Mode of administration	Computerized administration using touch screen, tablets, or computers that will be brought in to the school by the study
Key constructs (bullets represent learning progression)	<p>Number System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• finding common factors and multiples• comparing fractions• applying basic operations with fractions and integers to word problems• using basic operations• representing and understanding rational numbers in multiple forms• understanding the relative size of irrational numbers <p>Proportional Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• extending students' understanding of the number system• multiplying and dividing fractions and multiplicative thinking• understanding basic concepts of ratio, rate and proportional relationships• using rational numbers to solve problems and understand slope and functions <p>Expressions and Equations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• understanding the use of expressions beginning with letter representations of a single number• applying knowledge of rational numbers and operations to solve equations• constructing equations and inequalities to solve real-world problems• recognizing different types of notation (such as square root)• reasoning with equalities and inequalities• solving and representing linear equations and inequalities <p>Functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• understanding the definition of a function• comparing functions represented in different ways• distinguishing between linear and nonlinear functions• comparing and creating representations of different functions• understanding of functions to context

MGLS Letterhead

Direct Reading Assessment

Approximate length Goal for main study	30 minutes (part of 90 minute student assessment and survey)
Mode of administration	Two-stage, computerized assessment using touch screen, tablets, or computers that will be brought in to the school by the study
Key constructs	<p>Word Recognition & Decoding Students read words (e.g., elect), pronounceable nonwords (e.g., clort) and pseudohomophones (e.g., brane) and decide whether the stimulus is a word, not a real word, or sounds exactly like a real word.</p> <p>Vocabulary A single target word is presented and the student decides which of provided three words goes with the target word. Correct answers are either synonyms (e.g., data - information) or meaning associates (e.g., thermal - heat).</p> <p>Morphological Awareness The student completes a sentence by choosing from three words derived from the same root word (e.g., She is good at many sports, but her _____ is basketball: specialty, specialize, specialist). The target words vary in difficulty based on the frequency of the derived forms (i.e., lower frequency derivations are more difficult).</p> <p>Sentence Processing The student completes sentences of increasing length and syntactic complexity by choosing from three choices (e.g., Shouting in a voice louder than her friend Cindy's, Tonya asked Joe to unlock the door, but _____ didn't respond: he, she, they). In this task, frequent words used in everyday language are used in the sentences to decrease the influence of vocabulary knowledge in this task. Consequently, the focus is on understanding of sentence syntax and meaning (rather than word meaning).</p> <p>Efficiency of Basic Reading Comprehension (MAZE task) Students read short passages containing sentences that are completed using a forced-choice cloze task (e.g., Agriculture meant that people stayed in one place to grow their baskets / crops / rings.). These passages are between 250-300 words in length and have Flesch-Kinkaid Grade Level estimates of 6th - 7th grade. Students in this block will read approximately 3 paragraphs in this way. This task is timed such that students are given 3 minutes to complete a passage and its corresponding items, making it a measure of efficiency as well as basic comprehension.</p> <p>Reading Comprehension Students answer questions about the passage they read while doing the MAZE task. The passage presented in the MAZE task will be presented again with the correct completions for the items presented in the MAZE task. The passage will appear on the same screen as the questions. Easier questions will be selected for this skill-based block.</p>

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Direct Executive Function Assessment

Approximate length	10 minutes (part of 90 minute student assessment and survey)
Goal for main study	
Mode of administration	Computerized administration using touch screen, tablets, or computers that will be brought in to the school by the study
Key constructs	<p>Inhibitory control (Stop Signal task) Involves the ability to stop ongoing thoughts or actions, particularly prepotent responses. Development of inhibitory control occurs rapidly in early childhood and advances more slowly during adolescence. The Stop Signal task is a measure of inhibitory control that has been positively correlated with achievement among students in the middle grades. It distinguishes children with ADHD from both typically developing children and children with other clinical problems. The task revealed age effects for ages 10 through 14.</p> <p>Working memory (N-back tasks) Working memory is considered a strong measure of reasoning ability, and involves keeping information active in primary memory while acting on it in relation to other information, such as keeping a list of words in memory and then ordering the words alphabetically or by categories. The n-back tasks are measures of working memory often used in research, particularly in neuroscience studies that look at the regions of the brain activated by different types of working memory (that is memory for verbal, symbolic, and spatial information).</p> <p>Cognitive flexibility (Hearts and Flowers task) Shifting involves flexibility in thinking and moving between rules, tasks, or mental states. With shifting, each mental set may involve several task rules. Several regions of the brain (cortex and the prefrontal cortex) show increased activation when participants respond to measures of shifting. The Hearts and Flowers task (Dots task) includes a congruent condition, an incongruent condition, and a mixed condition. The task calls on working memory and inhibitory control as students remember the rule and decide whether to inhibit a prepotent response. The mixed condition measures shifting (or cognitive flexibility) as the task shifts between the congruent and incongruent condition.</p>

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Student Survey

Approximate length	20 minutes (part of 90 minute student assessment and survey)
Goal for main study	
Mode of administration	Computerized administration using touch screen, tablets, or computers that will be brought in to the school by the study
Key constructs	<p>Demographics</p> <p>School experiences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conversations with teachers about math courses, jobs or careers, and going to college• Student perspective of teacher support• Perceptions of school climate (e.g., safety and rule fairness)• Academic culture (e.g., high standards and expectations)• Problems at school (e.g., student misconduct and bullying) <p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Time use-structured activities: student employment; participating in activities (sports, clubs, etc.)• Time use-unstructured or unsupervised activities (e.g., watching television, doing homework, or being with friends)• Technology activities <p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical well-being <p>Peers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Perception of peer social support• Peer victimization• Perception of peer values (importance of education, engagement in risky behaviors, peer pressure)• Belongingness (a sense of belonging in school)• Risk-taking (students' sensation seeking behaviors) <p>"Tell us about Yourself"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Academic engagement (e.g., persistence)• Identity formation (interests of students ("sparks"); ethnic and gender identity; perceived social status)• Socioemotional well-being <p>Home Life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conversations with parents about math courses, jobs or careers, and going to college• Parental support to help child achieve• Parent-child relationships (autonomy-granting, disclosure)• Community perspectives <p>Future</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aspirations and expectations (educational, career/life goals)

MGLS Letterhead

Parent Survey

Approximate length Goal for main study	30 minutes
Mode of administration	Web-based administration accessible by individualized link, with a telephone-based interview option available.
Key constructs	<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student demographics <p>Family Roster</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Family demographics• Household composition <p>Family and Parent Background</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Language (student uses most, family primary language)• Parent education <p>Home Life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parent-child relationship—monitoring/disclosure• Risk-taking and risky behaviors (i.e. students' sensation seeking behaviors and parents' report of students' deviant behaviors)• Community perspectives (poverty, crime, victimization) <p>Child's School Experiences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parent contact/communication with school• Disciplinary actions taken by school• Grade progression (retention, early promotion)• ESL participation• Student free- and reduced-price lunch eligibility <p>Child Health and Well-Being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health and physical well-being• IEP and Disability Details• IEP/Disability - Receipt of Special Education Services• IEP/Disability - Participation in IEP• IEP/Disability - School Services and Programs• IEP/Disability - Outside Services• IEP/Disability - Satisfaction with Services <p>Employment and Income</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parent occupation• Family income• Family assets <p>Mobility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mobility (number of school changes) <p>Parent Involvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conversation about math courses• Conversation about going to college• Conversation about jobs or careers• Academic expectations

Appendix P. MGLS:2017 Summary of the Math Teacher Survey

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Mathematics Teacher Survey

Approximate length	30 minutes
Goal for main study	
Mode of administration	Web-based administration accessible by individualized link.
Key constructs	<p>Teacher background and classroom characteristics</p> <p>Student and Classroom Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Class size (number of students)• Course type• Heterogeneity in math ability• Classroom climate (e.g., misbehavior) <p>Classroom Mathematics Instruction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Curriculum/textbook used• Opportunities to learn (length of course)• Content covered in course (Common Core & practice standards)• Instructional practice/pedagogy• Availability and use of classroom resources <p>Views on Teaching and School Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Instruction in self-contained classrooms or departmentalized• Factors for determining math course (take a test, prerequisite)• Teacher efficacy• Instructional leadership• Academic culture (high standards and expectations)• Teaching climate <p>Teacher Background</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education and degree (courses in math and math education)• Years of experience• Certification• Demographic information <p>Teacher provided information on individual students</p> <p>Mathematical Thinking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Math class performance <p>Social Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approaches to learning• Externalizing behaviors• Social skills and positive behavior <p>Classroom Behaviors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Academic engagement (behavioral and cognitive)• Attendance <p>Student and Classroom Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Math support services (tutoring, pull-out, instruction frequency)

MGLS Letterhead

Special Education Teacher/Provider Survey

Approximate length	35 minutes
Goal for main study	
Mode of administration	Web-based administration accessible by individualized link.
Key constructs	<p>Teacher background</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher Assignment or Position<ul style="list-style-type: none">Teaching Assignment or PositionInstruction and instructional environmentTeacher Background and Education<ul style="list-style-type: none">Demographic informationExperiences and TrainingTeacher Experience<ul style="list-style-type: none">Years of experience <p>Teacher provided information on specific students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Student Grade and IEP Status<ul style="list-style-type: none">Student Grade and IEP statusStudent's Disability and Services<ul style="list-style-type: none">Primary disabilitySpecial education and related servicesStudent's Instruction and Instructional Environment<ul style="list-style-type: none">Instruction and instructional environmentCommunication About Student<ul style="list-style-type: none">Communication with general education teacherStudent Goals, Performance, and Expectations<ul style="list-style-type: none">IEP goals and evaluationTeacher's expectations for studentAcademic & life skills

Appendix R. MGLS:2017 Summary of the School Administrator Survey

MGLS Letterhead

School Administrator Survey

Approximate length	20 minutes
Goal for main study	
Mode of administration	Web-based administration accessible by individualized link.
Key constructs	<p>School Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• School characteristics (e.g., average daily attendance, tuition)• Student population (e.g., percent IEP, percent ELL/LEP)• Providing additional support for struggling students (tutoring, extra assistance, pull-out, homework assistance) <p>Services and Supports for Students with Disabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• IEP/Disability-School services and programs <p>School Programs and Practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Courses offered: for particular courses ask about the number of slots available• Subject-specific academic tracking practices (order/progression of courses)• School extended learning opportunities: additional instruction time, Gifted and Talented, International Baccalaureate• Assisting students with transitions from elementary to middle grades; from middle grades to high school• Health services (e.g., sex education classes) <p>School Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Problems at school: absenteeism, student mobility, student misconduct, bullying• School-level security (police officer on site, security officer on site, metal detectors, teachers supervise hallways during transition)• Community perspectives (poverty, crime, victimization) <p>School's Teachers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• School's teachers: number, preparation <p>School Administrator Background</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demographic information• Years of experience

Appendix S. MGLS:2017 Student Rostering Materials for Item Validation Field Test

Request for Student Roster Information from Schools Item Validation Field Test [MGLS Letterhead]

[Date]
[Title] [Name First] [Name Last]
[Title/Department]
[State District]
[Address]
[City], [State] [Zip code]

Dear [School Contact Name]:

Thank you again for participating in the < first phase / pilot study > of the Middle Grades Longitudinal Study of 2017 (MGLS:2017). Your participation is critical to the success of the study.

Not all students in your school are needed for participation. We will be selecting a sample. In order to select the sample, we are requesting a complete roster of the students currently enrolled in < 5th, 6th, 7th, or 8th grade / 6th grade > at your school. The roster should include key characteristics about each student for sampling purposes. The MGLS:2017 roster data request conforms fully to the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) (34 CFR Part 99.31). Under FERPA's general consent rule, the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) is authorized to obtain student level data from education entities for any study-eligible student, without prior consent, if the disclosure is to an organization conducting studies for, or on behalf of, NCES. Student data are subject to strict protections that are adhered to by NCES and its contractor organizations. Roster information will be used for sampling purposes only and will be securely destroyed once student samples are drawn.

The key characteristics of interest include:

- Name
- Student identification number
- Date of birth
- Grade level
- Gender
- Race/ethnicity
- IEP status (Disability codes, if applicable)
- Students' parent and/or guardians contact information
- Students' math teacher(s)
- Students' special education teacher (if applicable)

We have developed a form to provide guidance for preparing the student roster. You may access and submit the form via the study website. To access the form, please go to <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/mgls> and enter user ID: xxxxxxxx and password: xxxxxxxx.

The sample of students will be selected in the next few weeks, but in order to select the sample we first need the student roster with key characteristics from you. In the next few days, a study representative from RTI, which is administering MGLS:2017 on behalf of NCES, will contact you to discuss the best way of obtaining student roster information. We are prepared to collect this information in a format convenient to you. This could be electronically or through a paper and pencil form. If at any time you should have questions about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me at <data collection contractor contact information, both phone and email>.

Thank you for your time and participation in this unprecedented study.

Sincerely,

<Data Collection Contractor contact information>

NCES is authorized to conduct MGLS:2017 by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C., § 9543). The data are being collected for NCES by RTI International, a nonprofit research organization based in North Carolina. The collected data 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 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C., § 9573). The collected information will be combined across respondents to produce statistical reports.