

MEMORANDUM

OMB # 1850-0911 v.10

DATE: March 30, 2016

TO: Robert Sivinski
Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget

FROM: Carolyn Fidelman
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THROUGH: Kashka Kubzdela
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SUBJECT: Middle Grades Longitudinal Study of 2017–18 (MGLS:2017) Operational Field Test (OFT) Recruitment Change Request

The Middle Grades Longitudinal Study of 2017-18 (MGLS:2017) is the first study conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), within the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) of the U.S. Department of Education, to follow a nationally representative sample of students as they enter and move through the middle grades (grades 6-8). An Item Validation Field Test (IVFT) is being conducted to determine the psychometric properties of items and the predictive potential of assessment and survey items so that valid, reliable, and useful assessment and survey instruments can be composed for the main study. The IVFT data collection was approved in November 2015 (OMB# 1850-0911 v.4), and the Operational Field Test (OFT) recruitment in December 2015 (OMB# 1850-0911 v.6). Both were amended through a change request approved in December 2015 and another in March 2016 (OMB# 1850-0911 v.8 and 9 respectively).

This request is (1) to modify language in supporting statement Parts A and B and the respondent contacting materials to reflect the longitudinal nature of the MGLS:2017 OFT data collection; (2) update language in the contacting materials to better reflect the branding and style guide of the study components (changing mention of the OFT from a pilot study to a field test); (3) update the parent contacting materials to separate the parent permission letter for student participation from the parent letter asking them to complete the parent questionnaire; (4) update Appendix J to include revisions to the website text for the OFT and to include example screenshots of the study website; (5) update parent permission form (Appendix F) to add parent phone number and e-mail address to the form; (6) update student roster information (Appendices J, S, and T) to add e-mail address for math- and special-education teachers, course title, and period or section number for student's math class; and (7) update FERPA citations in section A.11 of Part A.

Additionally, to accommodate these revisions, the approved MGLS:2017 OFT recruitment activities have been rescheduled to begin in April 2016, as reflected in the updated Part A. Study-related phone numbers, URLs, IDs, and passwords in the contact materials were also specified or updated, as reflected in the *Appendices A-S MGLS 2017 Operational Field Test 2017 Recruitment* document. The revisions requested in this submission do not change the approved burden estimates for MGLS:2017 OFT or the total cost to federal government for the study.

(1) Changes to Reflect the Longitudinal Nature of the OFT

MGLS:2017 OFT is a longitudinal study which will follow at least 1,200 students in grade 6 over a three-year period. The OFT was designed to track students to their new schools for the follow-up years but not conduct data collection with those students after grade 6. This submission requests to modify the language to add the possibility of follow-up data collection for these students in 2018 and 2019, in addition to the originally planned tracking and tracing activities. Collecting data from the OFT sample in the follow-up years will better simulate the plans for the main study and will provide valuable information about the recruitment and data collection protocols for the follow-up years, particularly for those students who leave their base school after the sixth grade.

Edits to this effect were made in Supporting Statement Part A (section A.2 and A.6), Part B (section B.1), and Appendices B, C, D, and I. In the appendices, the following language was added to the contact materials: "Follow-up data collections will occur in the spring of 2018 and spring of 2019, when students are in the seventh and eighth grades, respectively, regardless of whether they have changed schools."

(2) Changes to Language in Contacting Materials to reflect the OFT as a field test

MGLS:2017 will involve multiple phases, including two field tests and a main study. The contacting materials in the original submission labeled the IVFT as a field test and the OFT as a pilot study. In this submission, references to the two field tests have been revised to more accurately reflect the name of each phase – the item validation field test and operational field test, respectively. Edits to this effect were made in Appendices B, C, D, E, F, H, I, J, and S.

(3) Changes to Parent Contacting Materials

Parents are contacted for two purposes for MGLS:2017. They are contacted to provide permission for their child to participate and they are contacted to complete the parent survey. The previously approved submission contained a single letter to cover both purposes. In this submission, a separate letter is provided for each activity to reflect the possible disparity in timing between the two (i.e., the parent data collection letter may precede or succeed the parent permission letter). Corresponding changes were made in Appendices F and G.

(4) Changes to Website Text

In conjunction with the OFT recruitment, the study website text will be revised to: reflect the OFT as a field test rather than pilot study; remove references to grades other than grade 6 for the OFT student sample; adjust language to explain the nature of both field tests; change the tense of the IVFT from future to present tense, now that the IVFT is in production; and remove text which gave the impression that there would be international comparisons and that there would not be subnational comparisons. These proposed text revisions are reflected in the revised Appendix J, which now also includes example screen shots of the website currently in production for the IVFT.

(5) Update Parent Permission Form to Include Contact Information

Parent contact information is crucial for MGLS:2017 student- and parent- data collections as well as ongoing tracking for longitudinal follow-ups. Appendix F has been revised to include parent phone number and e-mail address to the permission form.

(6) Update Student Rostering Materials to Include Contact and Course Information

To facilitate contacting of teachers, teacher e-mail address has been added to student roster information request in Appendices J, S, and T. Also in Appendices J, S, and T we have added a request for period or section number in addition to course name for student's math class to facilitate linkage to student for the teacher class-specific section of the math teacher survey.

(7) Update FERPA Citations

To be consistent with the approved request for the IVFT data collection, edit was made in section A.11 (Sensitive Questions) of the OFT recruitment Supporting Statement Part A to ensure that the FERPA citations are consistent. Section A.11 describes the request of a list of middle grade students with IEPs. The revision refers to the correct exception to the general consent requirement (34 CFR §§ 99.31 (a)(3)(iii) and 99.35). This exception permits disclosures to authorized representatives of the Secretary for the purpose of evaluating federally supported education programs. The previous version of Section A.11 for the OFT recruitment package included incomplete citations (34 CFR Part 99.31).