

2016/17 BACCALAUREATE AND BEYOND
(B&B:16/17) FIELD TEST

Supporting Statement Part A

(OMB # 1850-NEW v. 1)

Submitted by
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A. Justification

1. Circumstances Making Collection of Information Necessary

a. Purpose of this Submission

This request is for the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), within the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), part of the U.S. Department of Education, to conduct a field test of the 2016/17 Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study (B&B:16/17). NCES's primary contractor for this study is RTI International (Contract# ED-IES-13-C-0070).

This submission covers B&B:16/17 field test materials and procedures required for conducting the student survey and for matching data to administrative records. Following the field test study in 2016, NCES will provide the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) with a memorandum summarizing any changes planned for the full-scale data collection, and a revised OMB package. The materials that will be used in the 2016-17 full-scale study will be based upon the field test materials included in this submission. Additionally, this submission is designed to adequately justify the need for and overall practical utility of the full study and to present the overarching plan for all of the phases of the data collection, providing as much detail about the measures to be used as is available at the time of this submission. As part of this submission, NCES is publishing a notice in the Federal Register allowing first a 60- and then a 30-day public comment period. Given that the full-scale materials and procedures will be based on those used in the field test, and informed by its results, after the field test, NCES will publish a notice in the Federal Register allowing an additional 30-day public comment period on the final details of the 2016-17 full-scale study.

B&B examines students' education and work experiences after they complete a bachelor's degree, with a special emphasis on the experiences of school teachers. The B&B-eligible cohort is identified in the National Postsecondary Study Aid Study (NPSAS). The first cohort (B&B:93 cohort) was identified in NPSAS:93, and consisted of students who received their bachelor's degree in the 1992-93 academic year. NPSAS:93 provided the base-year data, and students were interviewed in an initial follow-up in 1994. This follow-up also included a collection of transcript data. The B&B:93 cohort was surveyed again in 1997 and 2003. The second cohort (B&B:2000) was selected from the NPSAS:2000, which became the base year for a single B&B:00/01 follow-up in spring 2001. The third cohort (B&B:08) was selected from the NPSAS:2008, which became the base year for follow-up interviews in 2009 and 2012. The field test collections for each study were conducted in the years preceding the main study. The B&B:93 and B&B:08 cohorts also included transcript collections. B&B:16/17 will be the first follow-up for the fourth cohort of the B&B series (B&B:16 cohort), which consists of NPSAS:16 sample members who were baccalaureate recipients during the 2014-15 (field test) and 2015-16 (full-scale) academic years. Due to the limited utility involved in collecting transcripts for baccalaureate students one year following receipt of their degrees, and current budgetary limitations, B&B:16/17 will not include a transcript component. B&B cohorts prior to B&B:16 were approved under OMB# 1850-0729. B&B:16 is submitted under a new clearance number which will be assigned upon approval (currently 1850-new).

The differences between plans for the B&B:16/17 field test and the study designs approved for the previous B&B cohort, B&B:08, are minimal. The revisions that have been made for this field test are intended to build upon information gained in previous B&B data collections. The B&B:16/17 field test will focus its data collection efforts on the B&B-eligible base-year (NPSAS:16) interview nonrespondent sample (hereafter, base-year nonrespondents), as they have proved the most complex to encourage to participate in the B&B follow-up surveys. Part B of this submission describes a field test design that includes all base year respondents and nonrespondents, and employs a variation of data protocols between four groups, including two randomly-assigned base-year nonrespondent groups, a base-year early respondent group, and a group of all remaining base-year respondents. The data collection strategies to be employed have been previously approved by OMB in prior B&B studies and include: prepaid incentives and promised incentives of up to \$30, Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI), locating and tracing efforts, and the offer of an abbreviated interview. The B&B:16/17 field test is unique in its proposal to combine these proven data collection strategies into four separate data collection protocols for the four groups described above. The protocols differ by when during data collection the strategies are employed and the intensity with which they are employed. For example, B&B:16/17 will not pursue outbound calling with the base-year interview early respondent group in order to learn if that group will complete the first follow-up survey at the same previous high levels of response without the additional data collection effort. Savings in data collection costs realized for that group will be sufficient to allow us to pursue all of the base-year nonrespondents. In addition, B&B:16/17 will conduct an observational Mahalanobis calculation, similar to the Mahalanobis design which included interventions in the B&B:08/12 full-scale study. This design, described in detail in Part B, will allow us to monitor Mahalanobis values as another measure of an individual's potential contribution to bias to evaluate the benefits of using the measure in the full-scale study.

While most items in the B&B:16/17 field test student survey have been included in surveys for the prior B&B cohort (B&B:08), the B&B:16/17 survey also includes revisions based on results from the B&B:08 cohort data collections and feedback from the B&B:16/17 Technical Review Panel (TRP) meeting conducted in October 2015. As with the data collection methodology, revisions to the survey are intended to reflect current research goals as well as reduce respondent burden and improve data quality. Many items added to the B&B:16/17 field test survey were previously tested and included in other NCES studies, while several items include new content recommended for inclusion by the TRP or content necessary to conduct analyses of interest regarding students' financial situation and other changes in the year following receipt of their bachelor's degree. Specifically, some month-level enrollment, employment, and financial questions have been added for respondents whose situations change, which will allow researchers to explore how debt or other characteristics affect graduates' time to employment, the timing and duration of unemployment spells, and the timing of life milestones, such as family formation. In addition, in response to a recommendation made at the October 2015 meeting of the B&B:16/17 TRP, pre-kindergarten (pre-K) teachers will be included in the definition of "teachers" studied by B&B:16/17, particularly because some states are instituting universal pre-school programs and raising certification and degree

requirements to teach pre-K. To balance the inclusion of the additional items, several other survey questions have been revised to improve efficiency within the survey, and prior B&B cohort items no longer considered relevant for this B&B:16/17 cohort have been removed. Appendix D provides detail on these changes. The average respondent burden estimate of 35 minutes for the field test survey remains unchanged from the field test time estimates approved for the previous B&B cohort.

This submission includes:

- A membership list of the TRP for the student data collection component of B&B:16/17 (appendix A);
- A description of the confidentiality procedures in place for the administrative record matching (appendix B);
- Contacting materials for sample members selected for participation in the student survey (appendix C); and
- A facsimile for the B&B:16/17 field test student interview, including items in the abbreviated interview and re-interview (appendix D)

b. Legislative Authorization

The B&B longitudinal series is conducted by NCES in close consultation with other U.S. Department of Education offices, federal agencies, and organizations (see sections A.4 and A.8 of this document). B&B and NPSAS, the base-year study for B&B, are authorized under the Education Sciences Reform Act (ESRA) of 2002 (20 U.S.C. § 9543) and the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) of 2008, 20 U.S.C. § 1015(a) (k):

“Student aid recipient survey

- (1) Survey required: The Secretary, acting through the Commissioner for Education Statistics, shall conduct, on a State-by-State basis, a survey of recipients of Federal student financial aid under subchapter IV of this chapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42 —
 - (A) to identify the population of students receiving such Federal student financial aid;
 - (B) to describe the income distribution and other socioeconomic characteristics of recipients of such Federal student financial aid;
 - (C) to describe the combinations of aid from Federal, State, and private sources received by such recipients from all income categories;
 - (D) to describe the—
 - (i) debt burden of such loan recipients, and their capacity to repay their education debts; and
 - (ii) the impact of such debt burden on the recipients’ course of study and post-graduation plans;
 - (E) to describe the impact of the cost of attendance of postsecondary education in the determination by students of what institution of higher education to attend; and
 - (F) to describe how the costs of textbooks and other instructional materials affect the costs of postsecondary education for students.
- (2) Frequency: The survey shall be conducted on a regular cycle and not less often than once every four years.
- (3) Survey design: The survey shall be representative of students from all types of institutions, including full-time and part-time students, undergraduate, graduate, and professional students, and current and former students.
- (4) Dissemination: The Commissioner for Education Statistics shall disseminate to the public, in printed and electronic form, the information resulting from the survey.”

c. Prior and Related Studies

The B&B series provides a longitudinal study of the education, work, financial, and personal experiences of individuals who have completed a bachelor’s degree at a given point in time. Three B&B cohorts, each sampled about eight years apart, have allowed researchers to evaluate how baccalaureate degree recipients have fared at differing times in recent history. Students are identified as bachelor’s degree recipients through the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS), a nationally representative trend study of postsecondary students designed to determine how students and their families pay for postsecondary education. B&B:16/17 is the first follow-up of a panel of baccalaureate degree recipients identified in the 2015–16 National Postsecondary Student Aid Survey (NPSAS:16), and part of the fourth cohort (B&B:16) of the B&B series. The current cohort contains students who earned their bachelor’s degrees in 2015–16. For the B&B:16/17 field test, students earned their bachelor’s degrees in 2014–2015 and were identified in the NPSAS:16 field test conducted in 2015.

The chronology of the previous administrations of the NPSAS study and its associated longitudinal components, including the Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS), is presented in table 1. Similar to the first and most recent B&B series, additional follow-up studies with the B&B:16 cohort may be conducted 4 and 10 years after bachelor’s degree receipt (contingent upon funding). For all studies, full-scale data collection was preceded by a field test data collection one year earlier in order to test methods and procedures planned for the full-scale data collection.

Table 1. Chronology of NPSAS and its longitudinal components

| Base year | First follow-up | Second follow-up | Third follow-up |
|------------|-----------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| NPSAS:90 | BPS:90/92 | BPS:90/94 | — |
| NPSAS:93 | B&B:93/94 | B&B:93/97 | B&B:93/03 |
| NPSAS:96 | BPS:96/98 | BPS:96/01 | Administrative data matching only |
| NPSAS:2000 | B&B:2000/01 | — | — |
| NPSAS:04 | BPS:04/06 | BPS:04/09 | Administrative data matching only |
| NPSAS:08 | B&B:08/09 | B&B:08/12 | B&B:08/18 (anticipated) |
| NPSAS:12 | BPS:12/14 | BPS:12/17 | — |
| NPSAS:16 | B&B:16/17 | B&B:16/20 (anticipated) | — |

— Not applicable.

NOTE: BPS = Beginning Postsecondary Students; B&B = Baccalaureate and Beyond.

The seven major issues addressed in these Sample Surveys Division studies are:

1. Undergraduate access/choice of institution;
2. Persistence;
3. Progress/curriculum;
4. Attainment/outcome assessment;
5. Financial aid and student debt;
6. Access to graduate programs; and
7. Benefits of postsecondary education to individuals and society.

2. Purposes and Uses of the Data

This section provides information on the purposes of B&B:16/17 and an overview of the primary research issues it addresses.

a. B&B:16/17 Purposes

The primary purposes of the B&B studies are to describe the post-baccalaureate paths of new college graduates, with a focus on their experiences in the labor market and post-baccalaureate education, and their education-related debt. B&B also focuses on the continuing education paths of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) graduates, as well as the experiences of those who have begun careers in education of students through the 12th grade. Since graduating from college in 2014-15 for the field test, and 2015-16 for the full-scale study, members of this B&B cohort will begin moving into and out of the workforce, enrolling in additional undergraduate and graduate education, forming families, and repaying undergraduate education-related debt. Documenting these choices and pathways, along with individual, institutional, and employment characteristics that may be related to those choices, provides critical information on the costs and benefits of a bachelor's degree in today's workforce.

The B&B series of studies is critical to understanding the education paths of *all* types of bachelor's degree recipients. These studies include both traditional-age and non-traditional-age college graduates, whose education options and choices often diverge considerably, and allow study of the undergraduate paths taken by these different graduates. These results are presented in multiple publications such as First Look and Statistics in Brief reports, and Web Table publications. The data can also be used to calculate statistics with PowerStats, QuickStats, and TrendStats, web-based software applications available to the public at <http://nces.ed.gov/datalab>, and to qualified researchers through the IES restricted-use data-licensing program.

b. B&B:16/17 Research and Policy Issues

The B&B:16/17 data will allow researchers to address a wide variety of policy-relevant topics, including the consequences of education debt, the academic preparation and career paths of pre-kindergarten-12th grade teachers, and labor market outcomes of bachelor's degree recipients in the year following graduation.

Education debt and loan repayment. As the price of college has increased across the country, so has focus on the amount of education debt students accrue and whether loan repayment is burdensome. Borrowing for undergraduate education is predicated on the assumption that future employment will allow the debt to be repaid. B&B:16/17 will provide the latest information on recent college graduates' debt burden and employment experiences, including their selection of income-driven repayment plans, and whether their income is sufficient to repay their loans. The data will allow an examination of the rates of repayment and default on federal student loans among students who graduated from various types of institutions. It will also allow an examination of the relationship between loan debt and post-baccalaureate enrollment and employment, and in particular, whether contemporary college graduates make different graduate enrollment and employment decisions than they might otherwise, due to their education-related debt.

Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Given the crucial roles that science and technology play in the global economy and solving critical social problems, policymakers and business leaders need information on college

graduates' science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) expertise and use of that expertise in the labor market. Analyzing the paths of graduates with STEM majors as well as those who work in STEM occupations will provide information about why and when people move into and out of STEM jobs. The B&B data allow the study of whether college graduates with training in these fields are using that training in the workplace or pursuing graduate education in STEM fields.

The pre-kindergarten-12th (pre-K-12) grade teacher. B&B cohorts have historically focused on kindergarten-12th grade teacher recruitment and retention as important issues for education policymakers, and B&B's focus on those who enter K-12 teaching after college graduation allows in-depth study of teacher experiences, satisfaction, and mobility into and out of the K-12 teaching profession. In response to a recommendation made at the October 2015 meeting of the B&B:16/17 TRP, pre-kindergarten (pre-K) teachers will be included in the definition of "teachers" studied by B&B:16/17, particularly because some states are instituting universal pre-school programs and raising certification and degree requirements to teach pre-K. B&B's unique contribution to policymakers' understanding of the pre-K-12 teaching workforce would be researchers' ability to use these data to compare pre-K-12 teachers with their similarly-educated peers on such important topics as career paths, workplace satisfaction, and salaries. Results from the field test for the pre-K teacher population will be examined for its utility toward the overall B&B study, and a decision will be made on whether pre-K will be included in the definition of "teachers" studied by B&B:16/17, prior to the full-scale study. If the definition of "teacher" is expanded to include pre-K for the full-scale study, B&B would only be representative of pre-kindergarten teachers who are recent baccalaureate degree recipients, since a baccalaureate degree is not required in all places to teach pre-K.

Labor market outcomes. Finally, the B&B:16 cohort will be well suited for examining recent college graduates' employment and job search experiences. The data from this study will allow an examination of employment and wages as well as un- and under-employment, job satisfaction, job search behavior, and the value of the bachelor's degree in finding employment.

Some of the primary research and policy issues to be addressed with B&B:16/17 data will be:

(1) Debt and finances;

- How much do bachelor's degree recipients owe on undergraduate student loans 1 year after college? What is the status of the loans?
- If in repayment, what are the monthly payments? Are parents helping to repay the loan?
- Has student loan debt influenced career or graduate school plans?
- Do graduates consider the loans a worthwhile investment in their future? Would it have been possible to complete college in the same period without the loans?
- What is their total household income including spouses' or partners' incomes?
- Do they own or make payments on a home or a car?
- What are their monthly payments for housing, auto loans, and credit cards?

- What is the total debt burden (monthly payments as percent of income) including student loans?
- Are graduates living at home with parents, alone, or with others? Are they married or living with a partner? Do they have any children or other dependents?

(2) Post-baccalaureate enrollment;

- What percentage of recent college graduates apply to graduate or first-professional institutions, and what percentage actually enroll within 1 year of completing a bachelor's degree? What factors are associated with post-baccalaureate enrollment?
- What are their reasons for continuing their education?
- Of those who apply, what percentage are accepted? Of those accepted, what percentage actually enroll?
- How are they financing their post-baccalaureate education?
- What institutions do they attend and why?
- What types of programs do they pursue?
- What percentage of bachelor's degree recipients who enroll in graduate education do so in STEM fields, and what proportion of those had undergraduate majors in STEM fields? How does this enrollment relate to graduates' career paths?
- What paths do college graduates with bachelor's degrees in STEM fields take after graduation? What percentage obtain employment or enroll in further education in STEM fields? What percentage of graduates who received a non-STEM bachelor's degree are employed in STEM occupations?
- How are post-baccalaureate enrollment patterns related to demographic characteristics, undergraduate enrollment histories, undergraduate academic performance, and financial factors?
- Among those without post-baccalaureate enrollment, what are their reasons for delaying further education or not planning to attend at all?
- What percentage are continuing education in undergraduate, vocational, or non-degree programs?

(3) Pre-K-12 teaching;

- How did the undergraduate experiences of graduates who taught differ from those of graduates who considered teaching, those who prepared to teach, and other graduates?
- What percentage of college graduates were employed as a teacher within a year of receiving a bachelor's degree? What percentage taught throughout the period?
- What were the experiences of recent college graduates who are in the pre-kindergarten/ elementary/secondary schoolteacher "pipeline," (i.e., those who were trained, certified, or considered teaching as a career)?
- What percentage of recent college graduates applied to and were accepted for teaching positions?
- What were the reasons for not applying to or not accepting teaching positions?
- Do those who entered teaching feel that they were well prepared?

- What type of teaching position did they hold during the first year, and how effective was the school in assisting them to teach?
- With which aspects of teaching during the first year were they satisfied or dissatisfied?

(4) Labor market outcomes;

- What type of careers are recent college graduates planning, and how successful are they in obtaining jobs leading to future careers within 1 year of graduation?
- How successful are graduates with different majors in finding career-related employment? What is the relationship between graduates' majors and the occupations and industries in which they become employed?
- What were their employment statuses in the months following graduation?
- What are the characteristics of the jobs held post-graduation?
- What percentage are employed full-time and part-time, in temporary or permanent positions?
- What is the annual income and what are the monthly wages across all jobs held?
- What percentage have participated in job-related training programs?
- How do the B&B:16 cohort's labor market outcomes a year after receiving a bachelor's degree compare to those observed among the previous B&B cohorts of 1992-93 and 2007-08?

Answers to these and other questions are vital if policymakers at the local, state, and national levels are to respond adequately to the changing environment of postsecondary education and the labor market.

c. Study Design for B&B:16/17

Data collection for B&B:16/17 will consist of a sample member survey and administrative data matching. The respondent universe for the full-scale B&B study consists of all persons who completed requirements for the bachelor's degree during the 2015-16 academic year, and received their degree by June 30, 2017. These respondents will be surveyed for B&B in 2017. For the B&B field test, the respondent universe is the same except that the survey year is 2016 and respondents will have completed their bachelor's degree in the 2014-15 academic year, and received their degree by June 30, 2016. Data from sample members will be collected via a self-administered survey on the Internet or through web-based CATI. The field test will also include a brief reinterview survey to test the reliability of a subset of survey items.

Administrative data matching for the B&B:16/17 student sample will be obtained from a variety of sources, including: the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS), containing federal loan and grant files; the Central Processing System (CPS), which houses and processes data contained in the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) forms (useful for information on baccalaureate recipients continuing their education); the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC); and vendors of national undergraduate, graduate, and professional student admission tests. These data will be obtained through file matching/downloading. A description of the confidentiality procedures in place for administrative record matching is provided in appendix B.

3. Use of Information Technology

The student website for data collection will reside on NCES' Secure Socket Layer-certified servers with secure data connection. On a nightly basis, the data collection contractor, RTI, will download student interview data, in batches, to their Enhanced Security Network (ESN) via a secure web service. Once in the ESN, data will be cleaned and undergo quality analysis.

To improve its efficiency, the B&B:16/17 student interview will use web-based questionnaires across two modes of data collection, a self-administered survey, which is mobile-friendly to allow completion of the full survey on a tablet or smartphone, and computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI). In the NPSAS:16 field test, 65.9% of surveys were completed on a personal computer and 23.6% on a handheld device.

4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

Efforts to identify duplication have included NCES consultations with other federal offices, such as the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Postsecondary Education; the Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development; and other agencies, such as the Government Accountability Office; the Congressional Budget Office; and the Office of Management and Budget. In addition, NCES collaborates with the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES) at the National Science Foundation (NSF) to ensure that each unit is kept up-to-date on each other's studies pertaining to postsecondary students and institutions. NCES and NSF meet on a regular basis to cover topical issues relevant to both offices and each has staff serving on study TRPs. NCES routinely consults with non-federal associations, such as the American Council on Education, the Association of Private Sector Colleges and Universities, the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, the Council of Graduate Schools, and the Institute for Higher Education Policy to confirm that data collected through B&B are not available from any other sources. NCES also consults with academic researchers, several of whom attend the B&B TRP meetings. Beyond identification of duplication, these consultations provide methodological insights from the results of similar and related studies conducted by NCES, other federal agencies, and nonfederal sources. The consultations also assure that data collected through B&B will meet the needs of the federal government and relevant organizations.

No studies in the U.S duplicate the data produced by B&B. B&B studies have collected detailed data on college graduates in various stages of the K-12 teaching career pathway and, in the field test, will add pre-kindergarten to the definition of teachers included in the survey. While both B&B and NCES's National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS, formerly the Schools and Staffing Survey, or SASS) survey teachers, the studies' aims are different. NTPS includes only K-12 teachers and focuses on teachers' preparation, working conditions, and career development. With the exception of the five-year Beginning Teacher Longitudinal Study (BTLs) that concluded in 2011-12, NTPS does not follow teachers over time. B&B, in contrast, typically follows graduates for 4 years or more and supports comparisons between graduates who go into teaching with other graduates. The B&B study collects less detailed data than NTPS on current teachers, but provides data on graduates who consider or prepare for teaching without taking a teaching job, as well as teachers who leave teaching. Results from the field test for the pre-K teacher population will be examined for its utility toward the overall B&B study, and a decision will be made on whether pre-K teachers will be included in the definition of "teachers" studied by B&B:16/17, prior to the full-scale study.

5. Method Used to Minimize Burden on Small Businesses

Target respondents for B&B:16/17 interviews are individuals and the data collection activities will not involve burden to small businesses or entities.

6. Frequency of Data Collection

A new B&B cohort has been created about every eight years since the first set of studies was initiated with NPSAS:93. B&B:93 and B&B:08 were the two cohorts in which college transcript data were collected. The current B&B study, B&B:16/17, will be conducted 1 year after the base-year NPSAS:16 data collection. Though not currently contracted, at least one additional follow-up study of the B&B:16 cohort is anticipated in 2020.

The NPSAS and its longitudinal spin-off studies, BPS and B&B, are conducted to reflect the large-scale and rapid changes in federal policy concerning postsecondary student aid—eligibility restrictions change, sizes of grant and loan amounts fluctuate, and the balance between various aid options can change dramatically. A recurring study is essential to help predict future costs for financial aid because loan programs create continued obligations for the federal government as long as the loans are being repaid. Second, repeated surveys can capture the changing nature of the postsecondary environment. With the longitudinal design of the NPSAS survey and B&B follow-ups, representative national samples of bachelor's degree-receiving postsecondary students with similar base-year characteristics may be compared over time to determine the effects of changes in federal policy and programs.

7. Special Circumstances of Data Collection

No special circumstances of data collection are anticipated.

8. Consultants Outside the Agency

Recognizing the significance of the B&B data collection, several strategies have been incorporated into the project work plan that allow for the critical review and

acquisition of comments relating to project activities, interim and final products, and projected and actual outcomes. These strategies include consultations with persons and organizations both internal and external to NCES, the U.S. Department of Education, and the federal government (see also section A.4 of this document).

Previous B&B implementations have benefited from a TRP composed of staff from several offices in the Department, representatives of OMB, the Congressional Budget Office, the Government Accountability Office, NSF, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics; and non-federal members who are considered experts in postsecondary education issues, including employment and teaching outcomes of baccalaureate recipients. A list of the TRP members is provided in appendix A. A TRP meeting was held to inform the B&B:16/17 data collection in October 2015, during which plans for the 2016 field test and the 2017 full-scale study design were presented and discussed.

9. Provision of Payments or Gifts to Respondents

The use of incentives for completion of the student interview can provide significant advantages to the government in terms of increased overall student response rates, timely data collection, and reduction of nonresponse bias. In addition, the use of incentives may also result in decreased data collection costs. Therefore, all cases in the B&B:16/17 field test will be offered a monetary incentive for completing the B&B interview.

NPSAS:16 field test interview (base-year) early respondents will be offered \$20 for completing the interview, while all other sample members will be offered a total incentive of \$30. For most respondents, \$20 or \$30 will be paid upon completion of the survey by the sample member’s choice of check or PayPal, an online money transfer service (about 35% of respondents opted for PayPal during the NPSAS:16 field test). In an effort to increase response rates and decrease nonresponse bias, a random sample of NPSAS:16 field test (base-year) interview nonrespondents will be offered \$10 of the \$30 total incentive prior to completion, as a prepaid incentive paid via PayPal or check. Upon completion of the interview, these cases will receive the additional \$20, for a total incentive of \$30. The \$30 amount has been offered in NPSAS full-scale collections since NPSAS:04. The use of incentives is an integral part of the overall data collection plan that includes multiple strategies to minimize bias-inducing nonresponse (e.g. early telephone contact and intensive tracing and abbreviated interviews).

Table 2 shows the distribution of the incentive amounts among the B&B:16/17 field test sample. More information regarding the distribution of the incentives by respondent group is provided in the Supporting Statement Part B of this submission.

Table 2. Distribution of incentive amounts among the B&B:16/17 field test sample

| | NPSAS:16 FT interview nonrespondents Group 1 (N=399) | NPSAS:16 FT interview nonrespondents Group 2 (N=399) | NPSAS:16 FT interview respondents Group 3 (N=604) | NPSAS:16 FT interview early respondents Group 4 (N=696) |
|--------------------------|--|--|---|---|
| Prepaid incentive | Initial email and letter offering \$10 prepaid incentive via PayPal or check | None | None | None |

| | | | | |
|---|------|------|------|------|
| Incentive amount upon completion of interview | \$20 | \$30 | \$30 | \$20 |
| Total incentive | \$30 | \$30 | \$30 | \$20 |

10. Assurance of Confidentiality

NCES assures participating individuals that all identifiable information collected under B&B 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), 20 U.S.C. § 9573].

B&B:16/17 data security and confidentiality protection procedures are in place to ensure that RTI and its subcontractors comply with all privacy requirements, including:

- The Statement of Work of this contract;
- Privacy Act of 1974 5 U.S.C. § 552(a);
- The U.S. Department of Education Incident Handling Procedures (February 2009);
- The U.S. Department of Education General Handbook for Information Technology Security General Support Systems and Major Applications Inventory Procedures (March 2005);
- The U.S. Department of Education, ACS Directive OM: 5-101, Contractor Employee Personnel Security Screenings;
- Family Educational and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, 20 U.S.C. § 1232(g);
- ESRA, 20 U.S.C. § 9573; and
- All new legislation that impacts the data collected through this contract.

RTI will comply with the Department’s IT security policy requirements as set forth in the Handbook for Information Assurance Security Policy and related procedures and guidance as well as IT security requirements in the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA), OMB Circulars, and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) standards and guidance. All data products and publications will also adhere to the revised NCES Statistical Standards, as described at the website: <http://nces.ed.gov/statprog/2012/>.

The B&B:16/17 procedures for maintaining confidentiality include notarized nondisclosure affidavits obtained from all personnel who will have access to individual identifiers; personnel training regarding the meaning of confidentiality; controlled and protected access to computer files; built-in safeguards concerning status monitoring and receipt control systems; and a secure, staffed, in-house computing facility. B&B:16/17 follows detailed guidelines for securing sensitive project data, including, but not limited to: physical/environment protections, building access controls, system access controls, system login restrictions, user identification and authorization procedures, encryption, and project file storage/archiving/destruction.

There are security measures in place to protect data during file matching procedures described in section 3. NCES has a secure data transfer system, which uses Secure Socket Layer (SSL) technology, allowing the transfer of encrypted data over the Internet. The NCES secure server will be used for all administrative data sources with the exception of the NSC, which has its own secure FTP site. All data transfers will be encrypted.

The Department has established a policy regarding the personnel security screening requirements for all contractor employees and their subcontractors. The contractor must comply with these personnel security screening requirements throughout the life of the contract. The Department directive that contractors must comply with is OM:5-101, which was last updated on 7/16/2010. There are several requirements that the contractor must meet for each employee working on the contract for 30 days or more. Among these requirements are that each person working on the contract must be assigned a position risk level. The risk levels are high, moderate, and low based upon the level of harm that a person in the position can cause to the Department's interests. Each person working on the contract must complete the requirements for a "Contractor Security Screening." Depending on the risk level assigned to each person's position, a follow-up background investigation by the Department will occur.

B&B:16/17, and other NCES postsecondary studies, include data linkages with many existing sources of valuable data, including Department of Education's (ED) Central Processing System (CPS) for Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) data, the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS), and National Student Clearinghouse (NSC). These NCES studies also obtain data from institution student records and admissions test scores from ACT and The College Board. While the B&B:16/17 field test will not include any non-interview sources pulled forward from NPSAS:16, the B&B:16/17 full-scale study will include data collected in the NPSAS:16 full-scale study.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (34 CFR Part 99) allows the disclosure of personally identifiable information from students' education records without prior consent for the purposes of B&B:16/17 according to the following excerpts: 34 CFR § 99.31 asks, "Under what conditions is prior consent not required to disclose information?" and explains in 34 CFR § 99.31(a) that "An educational agency or institution may disclose personally identifiable information from an education record of a student without the consent required by §99.30 if the disclosure meets one or more" of several conditions. These conditions include, at 34 CFR § 99.31(a)(3):

The disclosure is, subject to the requirements of §99.35, to authorized representatives of--

- (i) The Comptroller General of the United States;
- (ii) The Attorney General of the United States;
- (iii) The Secretary; or
- (iv) State and local educational authorities.

B&B:16/17 is collecting data under the Secretary's authority. Specifically, NCES, as an authorized representative of the Secretary of Education, is collecting this

information for the purpose of evaluating a federally supported education program. Any personally identifiable information is collected with adherence to the security protocol detailed in 34 CFR § 99.35:

(a)(1) Authorized representatives of the officials or agencies headed by officials listed in §99.31(a)(3) may have access to education records in connection with an audit or evaluation of Federal or State supported education programs, or for the enforcement of or compliance with Federal legal requirements that relate to those programs.

(2) The State or local educational authority or agency headed by an official listed in §99.31(a)(3) is responsible for using reasonable methods to ensure to the greatest extent practicable that any entity or individual designated as its authorized representative—

(i) Uses personally identifiable information only to carry out an audit or evaluation of Federal- or State-supported education programs, or for the enforcement of or compliance with Federal legal requirements related to these programs;

(ii) Protects the personally identifiable information from further disclosures or other uses, except as authorized in paragraph (b)(1) of this section; and

(iii) Destroys the personally identifiable information in accordance with the requirements of paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section.

(b) Information that is collected under paragraph (a) of this section must—

(1) Be protected in a manner that does not permit personal identification of individuals by anyone other than the State or local educational authority or agency headed by an official listed in §99.31(a)(3) and their authorized representatives, except that the State or local educational authority or agency headed by an official listed in §99.31(a)(3) may make further disclosures of personally identifiable information from education records on behalf of the educational agency or institution in accordance with the requirements of §99.33(b); and

(2) Be destroyed when no longer needed for the purposes listed in paragraph (a) of this section.

(c) Paragraph (b) of this section does not apply if:

(1) The parent or eligible student has given written consent for the disclosure under §99.30; or

(2) The collection of personally identifiable information is specifically authorized by Federal law.

Additionally, the study, including the administrative data linkage, qualifies for a 45 CFR Part 46 waiver of consent based on the following factors:

- There is minimal risk to the participants. There is no physical risk and only minimal risk associated with linkage of data to sample members. The public-use and restricted-use data, prepared as part of the contract with RTI, will not include Social Security Numbers (SSNs), even though these numbers are used for the linkage. Data will undergo disclosure avoidance analysis and disclosure treatment steps to further reduce the risk.
- The waiver will not affect the rights and welfare of the subjects. The voluntary nature of the study is emphasized to sample members. Public-use and restricted-use data are only used for research purposes and lack direct individually-identifying information. The data are further protected through disclosure avoidance procedures approved by the NCES Disclosure Review Board.
- Whenever appropriate, subjects will be provided with additional pertinent information after they have participated. For each round of the study, information about prior rounds and the nature of the study is made available to sample members.
- The study cannot be conducted practicably without the waiver. To obtain written consent from sample members, multiple forms would have to be sent to the sample members with multiple follow-up telephone and in-person visits. This process would add weeks to the data collection process and is not feasible from a time standpoint. Additionally, the value of these data would be jeopardized from a nonresponse bias perspective.
- The potential knowledge from the study is important enough to justify the waiver. These linked data for B&B:16/17 will provide invaluable data to researchers and education policy makers about the federal financial aid that students have received related to their persistence in and graduation from postsecondary education. Rather than relying on students for information about financial aid, we are getting it from the NSLDS, which is the Department's system of recording federally aided student loans taken out and grants received by students. Students generally tend not to be a very reliable source of information about the amounts or timing of grants and loans they have received. This administrative record data is accurate and much easier to obtain than obtaining the same data by administering a questionnaire.

11. Sensitive Questions

The B&B:16/17 interview collects information about earnings, assets, and marital and family status. Regulations governing the administration of these questions require (a) clear documentation of the need for such information as it relates to the primary purpose of the study, (b) provisions to clearly inform sample members of the voluntary nature of participation in the study, as well as assurances that their responses will be treated confidentially.

The collection of data related to income, earnings, assets, indebtedness, and long-range employment outcomes is central to understanding key policy issues driving this study. Financial assets and obligations are important post-graduate outcomes of students and are important indicators of the rate of return of educational experiences to the respondent. The collection of information about marital and family status likewise facilitates the exploration of key policy issues. Financial and

family-related obligations also influence decisions about employment, additional education, and loan repayment so it is important to collect information about marital status and dependents. Several procedures have been implemented (see section A.10) to provide assurances to sample members about the voluntary nature of participation in the study as well as the confidentiality provisions for survey responses.

Social Security Numbers (SSNs) will be needed to 1) conduct file matches to administrative records and 2) maintain the sample for the B&B longitudinal study. File matching to administrative records is a crucial element of the B&B study and would not be possible without the collection of SSNs. Data obtained from file matching will both minimize respondent burden and increase data quality.

12. Estimates of Response Burden

Table 3 provides the projected estimates for response burden and costs for B&B:16/17 for the field test and full-scale study, based on experiences from prior rounds of NPSAS and B&B. For the field test, we expect the student address update on average to require approximately 3 minutes to complete, student interview approximately 35 minutes, and the reinterview 10 minutes. This request also includes address update for full-scale study, which may begin before the full-scale data collection clearance will be concluded. For the field test, estimating an average hourly rate of \$20¹ for participating students, the 849 total student burden hours translate to a cost of approximately \$16,980, and for the full-scale address update the 128 hours to \$2,560.

Table 3. Maximum estimated burden and costs to respondents in B&B:16/17

| Data collection activity | Sample | Expected eligible | Expected response rate (percent) | Expected number of respondents* | Expected number of responses | Average time burden per response (minutes) | Total time burden (hours) |
|------------------------------|--------|-------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| Field test | | | | | | | |
| Address update | 2,098 | -- | 10 | 210 | 210 | 3 | 11 |
| Field test interview | 2,098 | 1,794 | 75 | 1,351 | 1,351 | 35 | 788 |
| Field test re-interview | 600 | 600 | 50 | 300 | 300 | 10 | 50 |
| Total | | | | 1,861 | 1,861 | | 849 |
| Full-scale study | | | | | | | |
| Address update | 25,556 | -- | 10 | 2,556 | 2,556 | 3 | 128 |
| Full-scale interview | 25,556 | 23,000 | 87 | 20,053 | 20,053 | 30 | 10,027 |
| Total | | | | 22,609 | 22,609 | | 10,155 |
| Total in this request | -- | -- | -- | 4,417 | 4,417 | -- | 977 |

* Respondent totals do not include duplicative counts of individuals.

13. Estimates of Cost

There are no additional costs to the respondents.

¹ The estimated average student hourly rate was obtained by taking the average salary of the class of 2014 according the National Association of Colleges and Employers (<http://time.com/money/3829776/heres-what-the-average-grad-makes-right-out-of-college/>), multiplied by an 88% employment rate in 2014 for adults with a bachelor's degree aged 20-24 years, from *The Condition of Education, 2015*: <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=561> http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cbc.asp.

14. Costs to Federal Government

A summary of estimated costs to the federal government for B&B:16/17 are shown in table 4. Included in the cost estimates are staff time, reproduction, postage, and telephone costs associated with the management, data collection, analysis, and reporting for which clearance is requested (costs shown are for the entire field test and full-scale data collections). Table 5 provides a more detailed breakdown of contract costs.

Table 4. Costs to NCES for the B&B:16/17 field test and full-scale

| B&B:16/17 implementations | Costs to NCES |
|----------------------------|---------------|
| Field test | |
| NCES Salaries and expenses | \$110,000 |
| Contract costs | \$2,612,513 |
| Total | \$2,722,513 |
| Full-scale study | |
| NCES Salaries and expenses | \$330,000 |
| Contract costs | \$5,098,245 |
| Total | \$5,428,245 |

NOTE: Costs presented here do not include base fee.

Table 5. Contract costs for B&B:16/17

| Study area and task | Budgeted amount |
|--|-----------------|
| 110 Initial meeting | \$18,094 |
| 120 Schedules | 21,862 |
| 130 Project management | 179,606 |
| 140 Study monitoring plan | 281,336 |
| 150 Technical review panels (TRPs) | 385,131 |
| Field test data collection | |
| 310 Sampling | 58,708 |
| 320 OMB forms clearance | 47,151 |
| 321 Instrument development | 765,018 |
| 322 Training | 168,166 |
| 323 Tracing | 42,738 |
| 324 Student data collection | 439,418 |
| 325 Student data processing | 288,961 |
| 333 NSLDS file merge | 9,428 |
| 334 Other systems file merge | 73,404 |
| 335 Develop data collection materials | 106,938 |
| 340 Methodology memorandum | 159,190 |
| Full-scale data collection | |
| 410 Sampling | 58,184 |
| 420 OMB forms clearance | 51,501 |
| 421 Instrument development | 716,622 |
| 422 Training | 185,942 |
| 423 Tracing | 139,058 |
| 424 Data collection | 1,376,534 |
| 425 Interview data processing | 896,424 |
| 433 NSLDS file merge | 23,235 |
| 434 Other systems file merge | 134,197 |
| 435 Develop data collection materials | 81,686 |
| 436 Weighting, imputation, and nonresponse bias analysis | 217,847 |
| 437 Data disclosure | 24,547 |
| Reporting | |
| 511 Report prospectus | 54,583 |
| 512 Draft manuscript | 253,862 |

| Study area and task | | Budgeted amount |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| 513 | Review-quality manuscript | 151,932 |
| 514 | Public-ready manuscript | 83,075 |
| 515 | Respond to professional judgment | 20,757 |
| 520 | Datalab/WebVTS tools | 130,557 |
| 530 | Restricted-use data files | 65,066 |
| Total | | \$7,710,760 |

15. Reasons for Changes in Response Burden and Costs

This is a reinstatement of a previously approved collection. The estimated time to complete the student survey is the same as in the last administration of B&B.

16. Publication Plans and Time Schedule

The operational schedule for the B&B:16/17 field test and full-scale study is shown in table 6. The contract for B&B:16/17 requires multiple reports, publications, and other public information releases. Results of the field test will be published as a report and appended to the full-scale data file documentation. In addition, the following will be produced from the full-scale data:

- Descriptive summaries of significant findings for dissemination to a broad audience;
- Detailed data file documentation describing all aspects of the full-scale study design and data collection procedures, including an appendix summarizing the methodological findings from the field test;
- Complete data files and documentation for research data users in the form of both a restricted-file; QuickStats, a public-use data analysis system in which users create their own tables and charts using pre-defined categories from a subset of variables; and PowerStats, which allows users to create their own tables and charts using all of the variables, in addition to conducting regression analysis, and is the basis for TrendStats, which allows users to analyze data across B&B administrations with optional automatic inflation adjustments for dollar values; and
- Special tabulations of issues of interest to the higher education community, as determined by NCES.

Table 6. Operational schedule for B&B:16/17

| B&B:16/17 activity | Start date | End date |
|---|-------------------|-----------------|
| Field test | | |
| Select student sample | Feb. 15, 2016 | June 3, 2016 |
| Address update | June 6, 2016 | July 7, 2016 |
| Self-administered web-based data collection | July 11, 2016 | Nov. 11, 2016 |
| Conduct telephone interviews of students | Aug. 1, 2016 | Nov. 11, 2016 |
| Process data, construct data files | July 11, 2016 | Jan.11, 2017 |
| Prepare/update field test reports | Sept. 15, 2016 | May 3, 2017 |
| Full-scale study | | |
| Select student sample | Nov. 15, 2016 | April 27, 2017 |
| Address update | June 1, 2017 | July 6, 2017 |
| Self-administered web-based data collection | July 10, 2017 | Mar. 9, 2018 |
| Conduct telephone interviews of students | July 31, 2017 | Mar. 9, 2018 |
| Process data, construct data files | July 10, 2017 | Sept. 7, 2018 |
| Prepare/update reports | Jan. 8, 2018 | Nov. 1, 2019 |

17. Approval to Not Display Expiration Date for OMB Approval

The expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection *will be displayed* on data collection instruments and materials. No special exception is being requested.

18. Exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions

There are no exceptions to the certification statement identified in the Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions of OMB Form 83-I.