

MEMORANDUM**OMB # 1850-0598 v.13**

DATE: January 26, 2016

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

FROM: Chelsea Owens
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THROUGH: Kashka Kubzdela
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SUBJECT: National Teacher and Principal Surveys (NTPS) 2015-16 Refusal Conversion Change Request

The National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS) 2015-16 is currently in the field collecting data from K-12 schools. In an effort to maximize response rates and minimize the potential for bias, NCES took a number of steps prior to data collection to identify high priority schools for special handling. The schools identified as high priority were those that did not have an identified school coordinator, and those with the lowest propensity to respond (based on the 2011-12 SASS data) and the highest potential impact on estimates. The design for the current NTPS sent these high priority schools into a Phase I field follow-up operation early in collection in an effort to boost response.

Despite the early field collection efforts, we are experiencing significant response issues with this group of high priority schools. There are currently about 1,200 high priority schools that have either refused the survey in field follow-up or have not responded to our contact attempts. In an effort to improve response for these high priority schools, we would like to send a revised letter via FedEx that is addressed directly to the name of the school principal. Through conversations with the field Regional Offices we have learned that it is highly likely that our generic packages addressed to "School Administrator/Principal" have been overlooked or thrown in the trash. We believe that a package addressed directly to the principal, in a FedEx envelope, and with a letter tailored to helping the principal understand the importance of participation will help increase response from these priority schools.

We are also currently working on a contingency plan for the priority schools if this new letter/package does not sufficiently increase their participation rate. NCES and Census are working on developing a back-up plan that includes more targeted follow-up efforts. We will submit to OMB for review a separate change request for the full contingency plans in early February 2016.