

The National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS)
Teacher Focus Groups

Appendix A
Teacher Recruitment Materials and Moderator's Guide

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National Center for Education Statistics
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Appendix A-1

Teacher Focus Group Recruitment Call Script

Hello, my name is <INTERVIEWER'S NAME> and I am calling on behalf of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), a division of the U.S. Department of Education. May I please speak with <teacher's name>?

We are recruiting potential participants for a paid focus group about how school teachers view participating in education studies. As the Department begins to prepare for the next iteration of the National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS) during the 2019–2020 school year, we are interested in talking with school teachers about what they think about education studies like NTPS so the data collection team can make their experience as good as possible.

We are not selling anything. We are simply interested in hearing your thoughts about education studies because you work in the type of school we are interested in hearing from. Historically, NCES has struggled to achieve strong participation in the survey, especially in some urban areas, and we would like to learn about the unique challenges or issues that face a school like yours when considering participation in a survey like NTPS.

Do you teach in a public or a charter secondary or primary school? [Indicate which type]

[Consider for public school group] Public Primary

[Consider for public school group] Public Secondary

[Consider for charter school group] Charter Primary

[Consider for charter school group] Charter Secondary

[DO NOT ACCEPT SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS, STUDENT TEACHERS, TEACHER AIDES, OR OTHER NON-TEACHING SCHOOL STAFF – MUST TEACH AT LEAST ONE REGULAR CLASSROOM IN ANY GRADES K-12 AT LEAST HALF TIME]

What is the name and location of the school where you teach?

Name of school:

City/State of school:

What subject do you teach?

Subject:

[ACCEPT ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS: ARTS AND MUSIC, ENGLISH AND LANGUAGE ARTS, ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE, FOREIGN LANGUAGES, HEALTH EDUCATION, MATHEMATICS AND COMPUTER SCIENCE, NATURAL SCIENCES, SOCIAL SCIENCES, CAREER OR TECHNICAL EDUCATION]

[NOTE: RECRUITERS WILL HAVE FULL LIST FROM NTPS QUESTIONNAIRE]

Your opinions are very important to us and to thank you for your time, we will give you <\$75 FOR ONLINE GROUPS; \$125 FOR IN-PERSON GROUPS> as a token of our appreciation.

We would like to meet <via WebEx or in person> between <TIME> on <DATE> with other teachers to discuss NTPS. During the meeting, we will discuss your experiences with other studies you may have participated in and garner your advice. We also want to learn how we might better word our materials and discussions when approaching schools to participate. The discussion will last up to 90 minutes.

NCES is authorized to conduct this study by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 [*if requested*: ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C. §9543]. Your participation is voluntary and all of the information you provide 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 (20 U.S.C. §9573 and 6 U.S.C. §151).

Would you be willing and available to participate in a discussion about education surveys like NTPS?

If YES, continue. If NO, thank and terminate.

As I mentioned, we will give you <\$75 FOR ONLINE GROUPS; \$125 FOR IN-PERSON GROUPS> as a token of our appreciation for your participation in this discussion.

If participating VIA WEBEX: Prior to the <WebEx or in person discussion>, you will receive specific instructions for joining the call on <DATE> at <TIME>.

RESPONDENT NAME: _____

[VERIFY:]

SCHOOL NAME: _____

SCHOOL ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE/EMAIL: _____

Thank you.

[Message in case not available: Hello, I'm calling on behalf of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education. We are recruiting potential participants for a paid focus group about how school teachers view participating in education studies. Your opinions are very important to us and to thank you for your time, we will give you <\$75 FOR ONLINE GROUPS; \$125 FOR IN-PERSON GROUPS> as a token of our appreciation. If you are interested, give us a call at < phone number > or email us at < >. Thank you. Goodbye.]

Appendix A-2 **Teacher Focus Group Consent Form**

CONSENT FORM

PARTICIPATION IN A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PROJECT

FOCUS GROUP PURPOSE

A focus group will be held with elementary and secondary school teachers about participation in voluntary education studies. The information obtained from this group will guide school recruitment strategies for the upcoming National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS), in an effort to improve participation rates and collect valid data on education contexts across the U.S.

AGENCY CONDUCTING THE STUDY

This project is being conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education. Representatives from Hager Sharp, an independent communications firm, will administer the focus group sessions on behalf of NCES.

CONFIDENTIALITY

NCES is authorized to conduct this study by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C. §9543). Your participation is voluntary and all of the information you provide 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 (20 U.S.C. §9573 and 6 U.S.C. §151).

QUESTIONS

If you have any questions about the discussion group, please call Christina Nicols of Hager Sharp at 202-842-3600.

CONSENT

I, _____, agree to participate in this focus group.

SIGNATURE

Appendix A-3

Moderator's Guide: Teacher Focus Group

Research Questions:

- What value does NTPS have in education?
- Does the format of NTPS influence teachers' motivations to participate?
- What information do teachers use when deciding whether or not to participate in a survey like NTPS? Who do they consult?
- What barriers prevent or discourage participation in NTPS?
- What would minimize these barriers in the teacher's school?
- What factors might motivate teachers to participate in a voluntary survey such as NTPS?
- What are the perceived benefits of participation for teachers? How do teachers value NTPS?
- What current or potential NTPS messages or materials do teachers find relevant, useful, and informative?
- What would be the most effective channels, formats, and materials to use to communicate with teachers?
- What other groups (e.g., principals, district, other administrators) would be central to the decision-making process and what would be the best way to reach those influencers?

INTRODUCTION (5 MINUTES)

My name is Christina Nicols and I work for Hager Sharp, an independent communications company, working on behalf of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), which is part of the U.S. Department of Education.

Today's focus group allows us to talk with people in a bit more depth than when using other methods, such as surveys. We are looking to get your honest opinions. I will be asking questions, which are meant to generate discussion. There are no right or wrong answers. I encourage you to express your opinion even if it might be different from other participants. We want all types of viewpoints—positive, negative, and everything in between. We do not have to come to any consensus on what we talk about. Your individual opinion is important so I would like to hear from everyone. We will be audio recording the session so that I have a record of the discussion to write my report. Once the report is written we will destroy the recording.

Your feedback 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 [*if requested: 20 U.S.C. §9573 and 6 U.S.C. §151*]. No names will appear in the summary report about what we learn through this focus group. If at any time you decide you do not want continue, that is your choice and you may stop. Before we begin, do you have any questions about what I just said?

Draft materials will be presented along with other information. I want to point out that these are not materials that I have developed, so you will not flatter me or insult me by anything that you say. My job is to ensure that we cover everything that we need to cover and that I keep the discussion going. I have no stake in the outcome of the discussion.

For online groups: Are there any questions about using the WebEx technology? [ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT WEBEX]

I'd like everyone to introduce themselves. When I call on you, please tell us a little bit about your school (size/grades), how long you've been in education, and anything else you'd like to tell us about yourself.

VALUE OF SCHOOL SURVEYS (10 MINUTES)

Let's start by talking broadly about education studies involving samples of primary or secondary schools, staff and students.

- Are you aware of any assessments or surveys like that? Do any studies come to mind?
- Have you ever participated in any of these kinds of studies? Do you know anyone whose school has participated?
- What is your overall reaction to such studies? What questions or concerns do you have about these studies?
- To whom are they valuable? In what ways are they necessary or unnecessary?

EXPLORING INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN NTPS (20 MINUTES)

Let's talk more specifically about a study called the National Teacher and Principal Survey or NTPS.

- What, if anything, have you heard or do you know about NTPS?

I'd like to show you the information you would receive if you were asked to participate in NTPS. I will show you each piece and we will discuss each one.

[SHOW CONTACT ENVELOPE ON SCREEN FOR ONLINE GROUPS / HAND OUT FOR IN-PERSON GROUPS]

This is the letter that the invitation to participate would arrive in.

- How likely would you be to open this letter? Why?
- Does the statistic on the envelope influence your decision to open it? Why or why not?
- Are there any changes we could make to the envelope that would make it more likely for you to open it?

[SHOW INITIAL CONTACT LETTER ON SCREEN FOR ONLINE GROUPS / HAND OUT FOR IN-PERSON GROUPS]

When asked to participate in NTPS, teachers receive a letter like the one I am showing you. Let's take a few minutes to read this.

- After reading the letter, what are your thoughts on NTPS?
 - Is there anything that appeals to you about participating?
 - What factors would you consider? [PROBE: Timing of the survey, time involved for you, incentives...]
 - What are some potential drawbacks or issues regarding participation that you can identify?
 - Would you have any questions about NTPS after reading this letter? What are some of the questions you would have?
 - What specific information would you need or want to decide whether or not to participate (like confidentiality assurance, time, the number of sampled teachers, sampling procedures, district research application status, the questionnaires and all questions)?
 - How would the decision be made to participate or not? For example, who would be involved in the decision? (District personnel, school leadership like principals, assistant principals, and department heads...)

[SHOW FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS PAGE ON SCREEN FOR ONLINE GROUPS / HAND OUT FOR IN-PERSON GROUPS]

The letter is accompanied by a page of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), as shown. Let's take a few minutes to read this [MODERATOR TO SUMMARIZE TOPIC AREAS AS PARTICIPANTS READ]

- Do the FAQs answer the questions you would have about NTPS?
- Are there any additional questions you might have that are not covered?

[SHOW INITIAL CONTACT EMAIL ON SCREEN FOR ONLINE GROUPS / HAND OUT FOR IN-PERSON GROUPS]

Teachers who are asked to participate also receive the letter in an email, which I am showing.

- Does the email appeal more, less, or about the same to you compared to the mailed letter? Why?
- Does having the link to the survey in the email make it more likely that you will participate in the survey? Why or why not?

PARTICIPATING IN NTPS (15 MINUTES)

I'd like to tell you more about NTPS and show you a sample of the survey....

NTPS is a survey of elementary and secondary school teachers and principals that collects data on core education topics including teacher and principal preparation, classes taught, school characteristics, and demographics of the teacher and principal labor force. Separate surveys are administered to principals and teachers. The teacher survey is initially administered electronically, with a link for completion shared via email and physical letter. If no response is received after two rounds of contact, a paper questionnaire is delivered. It takes approximately 40 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

- Participation is voluntary.
 - o Based on the description of the survey, are there any challenges or burdens you would anticipate in taking the survey?

[SHOW SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE ON SCREEN FOR ONLINE GROUPS / HAND OUT FOR IN-PERSON GROUPS]

- Let's talk specifically about the sample survey questionnaire [MODERATOR TO BRIEFLY SUMMARIZE THE TOPIC AREAS WHILE SCROLLING THROUGH THE QUESTIONNAIRE]
 - o Does the sample survey form seem straightforward to you?
 - o Do you think you would have any difficulties in filling it out? [If yes, what are some of the difficulties you foresee?]
- How likely would you be to participate in NTPS if you were selected in the sample? NOTE: You are not being asked to participate. Nothing you say in this group will commit you to participating. We want to gauge your reaction to the concept of participating in NTPS.

[FOR USE ONLY WITH PARTIPANTS WHO RESPONDED NEGATIVELY]

- Is there anything that may change your mind about participating in NTPS?
 - o Would something about your school need to change? What?
 - o Would something about the survey need to change? What? (PROBE FOR timing, access, time required, etc.)

NTPS TOPICS (5 MINUTES)

I would like to get a better understanding of the topics explored in NTPS that teachers may find most interesting.

[SHOW PAGE OF SAMPLE STATISTICS AND TOPICS ON SCREEN FOR ONLINE GROUPS / HAND OUT FOR IN-PERSON GROUPS]

Please take a few minutes to read the page.

- If you had to pick one, which one of these statistics is most interesting to you?
- Are there any that don't really interest you? Which ones?

REACTIONS TO NTPS LETTER OF BETTER UNDERSTANDING (10 MINUTES)

Let's look at how NCES may use some of these statistics in outreach materials for teachers.

[SHOW LETTER OF BETTER UNDERSTANDING ON SCREEN FOR ONLINE GROUPS / HAND OUT FOR IN-PERSON GROUPS]

This letter provides more details about the topics that are covered in NTPS and some of the statistics that result from the data.

- What do you think of this letter – is it interesting? Useful? Relevant to you?
- Does this letter make you more likely to participate in NTPS?
- Is there anything you don't like about it?
- Is there anything we should change about this letter to make it more appealing for teachers?

SOURCES OF INFORMATION (5 MINUTES)

- Where do you get information about what's happening in education? About what's happening in your school system?
- What sources would you trust the most in getting information about assessments?
- Where would you go to get additional information about NTPS?

CONCLUSIONS

- Do you have any additional comments about these materials, NTPS, or surveys or assessments in general?
- Thank you.