



September 5, 2018

MEMORANDUM

To: Robert Siviniski, OMB
From: Maura Spiegelman, NCES
Through: Kashka Kubzdela, NCES
RE: National Teacher and Principal Survey of 2019-20 (NTPS 2019-20) Teacher Focus Groups Update (OMB# 1850-0803 v.237)

The National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS), conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), is a system of related questionnaires that provides descriptive data on the context of elementary and secondary education while also giving policymakers a variety of statistics on the condition of education in the United States. Redesigned from the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) with a focus on flexibility, timeliness, and integration with other ED data, the NTPS system allows for school, principal, and teacher characteristics to be analyzed in relation to one another. NTPS is an in-depth, nationally representative, large sample survey of first through twelfth grade public and private school teachers, principals, and schools. Kindergarten teachers in schools with at least a first grade are also surveyed. NTPS utilizes core content and a series of rotating modules to allow timely collection of important education trends as well as trend analysis. Topics covered include characteristics of teachers, principals, schools, working conditions, teacher training opportunities, retention, retirement, hiring, and shortages. NTPS is conducted every two years, starting in the 2015–2016 school year, and will be conducted next during the 2019–2020 school year. NCES conducted its predecessor, SASS, from 1987 to 2011. The request to conduct focus groups with teachers in public charter schools and urban schools (both public charter and traditional public schools in cities) to: (a) better understand both barriers and benefits teachers associate with participation in surveys like NTPS; (b) identify communication strategies that will aid recruitment and help teachers overcome barriers to participation; and (c) determine if and how messages should be customized for teachers in different school settings, were approved in July 2018 (OMB# 1850-0803 v.235). Due to difficulties with recruitment, this update request is to increase the incentive provided to teachers who participate in either of two in-person focus groups. This information will guide recruitment strategies and materials development for NTPS 2019–20.

Teachers have been recruited for 6 online focus groups using the approved \$75 incentive (OMB# 1850-0803 v.235). To recruit for the two planned in-person focus groups, the study contractor and NCES staff reached out to contacts in their networks, including current and former DCPS teachers, principals, and school district staff. These efforts yielded no participants. Given the narrow eligibility criteria for the in-person focus groups (current teachers at public charter or traditional public schools in Washington, D.C. – a subgroup typically declining participation in NTPS), the study plan has been revised to reflect a higher, \$125 incentive, which will allow NTPS to utilize a local professional recruitment firm to assist with the recruitment efforts and contact potential participants from their databases. The higher incentive is expected to be more successful in recruiting in-person focus group participants and, additionally, the work of a local professional recruitment firm is expected to allow for faster and more successful recruitment, which is needed for the in-person portion of the study, which is now behind the schedule.

The requested changes do not affect the estimated respondent burden, but they delay the expected completion date for the study, and increase the total cost to federal government by \$3,000, to total \$55,000. The burden shown in this submission is 1 respondent, 1 response, and 1 burden hour, given that the actual burden (reflected in Table 2, on page 5 of Volume 1) has been already approved and accounted for in the initial submission (OMB# 1850-0803 v.235).

To reflect the increased incentive amount for in-person focus group participants, the following changes were made for this submission to the approved version of Volume 1:

- Sections 3 and 3.2 (p.2 and 3): noted that two vendors, rather than one vendor, will be used for recruitment, adding that “Shugoll Research in Bethesda, MD, will serve as the research facility and recruitment vendor for the two in-person focus groups.”
- Sections 7 (p.5): reflected the \$125 incentive for teachers who participate in in-person focus groups. Added the following rationale (revisions are reflected in blue font below):

During recruitment, teachers **asked to participate in the online focus groups will be offered a \$75 incentive for participation and teachers asked to participate in the in-person focus groups will be offered a \$125 incentive.** A monetary incentive is deemed necessary both to thank participants for their time and effort and to encourage select types of teachers to take part in the focus groups, so that the sample can be as representative as possible of the types of teachers that tend to decline participation in NTPS, **a group by definition reluctant to partake in studies.**

Given the experienced inability to recruit the needed subgroup of teachers in Washington, DC for in-person interviews, the \$125 incentive is needed to realize the in-person focus groups and constitutes the minimum amount for local recruitment firms to accept the assignment as they deem this amount to be the minimum necessary to be able to recruit teachers that tend to decline participation in studies.

- Section 8 (p.5): updated estimated cost to federal government from \$52,000 to \$55,000.
- Section 9, table 3 (p.5): reflected that recruitment and data collection will conclude in September rather than August of 2018.
- Sections 6 and 9: corrected typos to clarify that focus groups involve teachers (rather than principals).

The following revisions were made to Appendix A (Teacher Recruitment Materials and Moderator’s Guide):

- Appendix A-1: corrected typos to clarify that the recruitment script applies to teachers; clarified label for charter school group on internal tracking metrics; updated focus group length in all references from “approximately 90 minutes” to “up to 90 minutes”; and revised a sentence to read: “Historically, NCES has struggled to **get <insert school characteristics>, similar to your school, to complete 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.”
- Appendix A-1: updated script to note the higher incentive amount for in-person focus groups.
- Appendix A-3: clarified that exemplar materials will be provided on the screen for online focus groups and as hard copies during the in-person focus groups.