

MEMORANDUM

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Institute of Education Sciences
National Center for Education Statistics

DATE: March 30, 2017
TO: Robert Sivinski & E. Ann Carson, OMB
THROUGH: Kashka Kubzdela, NCES
FROM: Lydia Malley, NCES
Re: International Computer and Information Literacy Study (ICILS 2018) Field Test Timeline and Confidentiality Pledge Change Request (OMB# 1850-0929 v.4)

The International Computer and Information Literacy Study (ICILS) is a computer-based international assessment of eighth-grade students' computer and information literacy (CIL) skills that will provide a comparison of U.S. student performance and technology access and use with those of their international peers. ICILS is coordinated by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), an international collective of research organizations and government agencies that creates the assessment framework, assessment, and background questionnaires and provides procedures and technical standards which all countries must follow. In the U.S., the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) conducts ICILS. In preparation for the ICILS 2018 main study, in 2017, NCES will conduct a field test to evaluate new assessment items and background questions, to ensure practices that promote low exclusion rates, and to ensure that classroom and student sampling procedures proposed for the main study are successful. The U.S. ICILS main study will be conducted from February through May 2018.

The request for the field test and the main study recruitment activities and the field test data collection was approved in August 2016 (OMB# 1850-0929 v.1), with the final versions of the field test questionnaires approved through a change request in December 2016 (OMB# 1850-0929 v.2), and a main study sample size increase approved in February 2017 (OMB# 1850-0929 v.3).

This request is to: 1) change the field test data collection timeline, 2) update the confidentiality pledge cited as part of ICILS to account for the Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2015, and 3) cite additional data security and confidentiality requirements.

Field Test Data Collection Timeline

The IEA has delayed the field test data collection period for all participating countries. NCES was informed in early March 2017 that the IEA's new "eAssessment" system (computer-based assessment system) will not be ready in time to allow the originally planned April 2017 field test data collection for ICILS. The IEA has identified issues in the software which they are confident they can resolve, but they need more time to do so. The earliest that field trial data collection can begin is now projected to be May 22, 2017. About half of the participating countries, including the United States, have expressed major concerns with collecting data so late in the school year. However, it is not possible to push back the field test by a full year due to the funding arrangements of many countries. Because countries may have difficulty getting a sufficient number of schools to participate in the ICILS field test late in the school year this spring, the IEA has extended an option to collect some of the field test data in the fall of 2017 if necessary.

Given the delay imposed and the options presented by IEA, the revised field test data collection window in this request is May through October 2017. The United States will work to reschedule test dates for sampled schools where feasible for the end of May or early June 2017 and, where this is not feasible because of school schedules, to October 2017. NCES's preference will be to collect data from schools at the end of May/early June rather than in October in order to have more time to analyze the data, evaluate the study operations, and make any needed adjustments before the 2018 main study. This change in timeline will not affect the timing of the ICILS main study, which is still planned for February through May 2018.

Update to Confidentiality Pledge and Citation of Security and Confidentiality Requirements

Citation of the data security and confidentiality protection procedures has been expanded in Part A to reflect all of the laws and regulations with which ICILS data collection contractors and agents comply. Also, the confidentiality pledge has been updated throughout the submission documents (Part A, Appendix A, and Appendix B) to reflect the addition of the Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2015 provision. The revised pledge reads: "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)." In Appendix A, parental consent letters for the Field Test and all Main Study materials include the updated confidentiality pledge. Field Test materials for recruitment are not updated because they have already been used, given that recruitment began prior to the implementation of the revised pledge. All other aspects of the Field Test data collection will include the revised pledge.

These revisions do not affect the estimated burden to respondents or the total cost to the federal government for ICILS 2018.