

# 2008/18 BACCALAUREATE AND BEYOND (B&B:08/18) FIELD TEST

Supporting Statement Part A  
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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 2008/18 Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study (B&B:08/18). The primary contractor for this study is RTI International (Contract# ED-IES-13-C-0070).

This submission covers B&B:08/18 field test materials and procedures required for conducting the student survey and for matching data to administrative records. Following the field test study in 2017, 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 B&B:08/18 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, presenting the overarching plan for all of the phases of the data collection and 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. Field test materials, procedures, and results will inform the full-scale study. After completion of 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 B&B:08/18 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 initially identified in the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS). The first cohort (B&B:93) 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 1994 for the initial follow-up. 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 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 year preceding each of the respective main studies. The B&B:93 and B&B:08 cohorts also included transcript collections. B&B:08/18 will be the third and final follow-up for the third cohort of the B&B series (OMB# 1850-0729). Please note that a new cohort of baccalaureate recipients from the 2015-16 academic year (B&B:16/17) will also be entering full-scale data collection in 2017 (OMB# 1850-0926). Given that overlapping B&B cohorts are in different stages of data collection, B&B cohorts prior to B&B:16 are approved under OMB# 1850-0729 and the new B&B:16 cohort is approved under OMB# 1850-0926.

The B&B:08/18 field test will attempt to survey both respondents and nonrespondents to prior B&B:08 follow-up interviews. At the start of data collection, sample members will be contacted by mail and electronic mail and asked to complete the full B&B:08/18 field test survey online. Outbound calling will begin within the first 4 weeks of data collection. The average respondent burden estimate of 45 minutes for the field test survey, which is higher than in the B&B:08/12 field test, reflects the fact that the data to be collected cover a 6-year span. Most of the data collection strategies to be

employed in B&B:08/18 have been previously approved by OMB for prior B&B studies and include: promised incentives of up to \$30 for prior round respondents and \$45 for prior round nonrespondents (paid by check or PayPal); survey completion via web or Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI); locating and tracing efforts; and the offer of an abbreviated interview. Unique to this collection are the options to upload resumes to a secure NCES server and to complete the mini survey on paper.

As described in section 2c of this document and in Part B of this submission, the B&B:08/18 field test includes experiments designed to evaluate the impact on participation of the following components: (1) customized contact materials, (2) different source and signatory of the entity sending emails (NCES versus RTI), and (3) offer of an abbreviated “mini” interview online and in a paper format. We will also monitor the willingness of sample members to upload a recent resume that can supplement or supplant the employment history captured in the full interview. An additional experiment pertaining to the survey instrument will evaluate differences in the quality of data obtained when response options are in the *check all* format compared to options requiring selection of explicit *Yes/No* and *No/Yes* responses.

The B&B:08/18 study design draws on several prior data collections: (a) the earlier follow ups with the B&B:08 cohort, (b) B&B:93/03 – the only other 10-year follow-up, and (c) the currently underway B&B:16/17 collection. Most items in the B&B:08/18 field test survey were included in the B&B:08/12 survey, with some changes made to align the upcoming collection with the research goals for the 10-year follow-up. Compared with the 1-year and 4-year follow-up studies (B&B:08/09 and B&B:08/12 respectively), the 10-year follow-up is designed to capture the experiences and outcomes of graduates at a different life stage. By this point, many of the B&B:08 cohort will have been able to pursue and complete additional undergraduate and graduate education, establish a career pathway, marry, start a family, and/or purchase a home. Some questions unique to the B&B:93/03 (10-year follow-up) survey have been added to B&B:08/18 to allow trend comparisons with the B&B:93 cohort, and other questions have been added to permit future comparison to the B&B:16 cohort on topics related to student loan debt burden, mid-career employment experiences, teacher satisfaction, and gender identity/sexual orientation. In addition, B&B:08/18 survey items reflect revisions made based on recommendations from the study’s Technical Review Panel (TRP), which met in November 2016, and the results of cognitive testing conducted in September through November 2016.

This submission includes the following appendixes:

- A membership list of the TRP for the B&B:08/18 student data collection component (appendix A);
- A description of the confidentiality procedures in place for the student interview and administrative record matching (appendix B);
- Contacting materials for sample members selected for participation in the student survey (appendix C);
- The cognitive testing final report (appendix D); and
- A facsimile for the B&B:08/18 field test interview, including identification of items to be used in the abbreviated interview and re-interview (appendix E).

#### **b. Legislative Authorization**

B&B is a longitudinal series of surveys 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 longitudinal studies of the education, employment, 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 for the first follow-up about eight years apart, have allowed researchers to evaluate how baccalaureate degree recipients have fared at differing times in recent history. Bachelor’s degree recipients are identified 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.

Table 1 presents the chronology of the previous administrations of the NPSAS study and its associated longitudinal components, including the Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS). For all studies, full-scale data collection was preceded by a field test conducted 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
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:08/18 and an overview of the primary research issues it addresses.

### **a. B&B:08/18 Purposes**

The primary purpose of the B&B longitudinal study series is to describe the post-graduation pathways of baccalaureate recipients, with a focus on their experiences in the labor market, postbaccalaureate 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 worked as a K-12 teacher. Since graduating from college, many members of this B&B cohort will have moved into and out of the workforce, enrolled in additional postsecondary education, formed families, and repaid undergraduate education-related debt. Documenting these choices and pathways, along with individual, institutional, and the employment characteristics 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. While these graduates are homogeneous in many ways, there are important variations to consider. B&B represents both traditional-age and non-traditional-age college graduates of public, private nonprofit, and for-profit institutions, including graduates who began their postsecondary education at a community college and those who began at a four-year college or university. Findings based on B&B data are presented in multiple publications such as First Look and Statistics in Brief reports, and Web Table publications. The data are also made available to be used to calculate statistics using PowerStats, QuickStats, and TrendStats – web-based software applications accessible to the public at <http://nces.ed.gov/datalab>, and to qualified researchers through the IES restricted-use data-licensing program.

### **b. B&B:08/18 Research and Policy Issues**

The B&B:08/18 data will allow researchers to address a wide variety of policy-relevant topics related to various outcomes of bachelor's degree recipients in the ten years following graduation. Key topics include postbaccalaureate enrollment, education debt and repayment, and labor market outcomes. Data collected for the B&B:08 cohort also allow for analyses of outcomes related to the study of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields and the experiences of K-12 teachers.

**Education debt and loan repayment.** As the price of college has increased across the country, so has the focus on the amount of education debt accrued and the burden of subsequent repayment. Borrowing for undergraduate education is predicated upon the assumption that future employment will allow for repayment of debt. B&B:08/18 will provide the latest information on college graduates' debt burden and employment

experiences, including information on cumulative amounts borrowed and owed ten years after graduation, repayment status, and enrollment in income-driven repayment plans. It will also allow for an examination of the relationship between loan debt and postbaccalaureate outcomes such as enrollment, employment, family formation, and financial well-being.

**Postbaccalaureate education.** The 10-year follow-up of the B&B:08 cohort will enable examination of outcomes related to postbaccalaureate enrollment in both graduate and additional undergraduate education. Many B&B:08 cohort members will have earned an additional degree in the ten years following college graduation, and B&B will provide researchers with information needed to understand the factors associated with positive postbaccalaureate enrollment outcomes.

**Labor market outcomes.** The B&B:08 cohort is well suited to examining college graduates' long-term employment experiences. Data collected in the 10-year follow-up will enable study of the timing and nature of employment and its relationship to undergraduate characteristics and post-graduation experiences. In addition to employment history data, B&B:08/18 will provide information about current employment status and wages as well as unemployment and under-employment, job satisfaction, and the value of the bachelor's degree in finding employment. Trend comparisons with B&B:93/03 will allow researchers to analyze recession-era impacts on labor market participation, salary outcomes, and job satisfaction.

**Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.** Given the emphasis that policymakers and business leaders place upon college graduates' science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) expertise, analyzing the paths of graduates with STEM majors will provide information about why and when people move into and out of STEM occupations and graduate programs. The B&B:08/18 data will allow further study of whether college graduates with training in these fields are using that training in the workplace or pursuing graduate education in STEM fields. B&B:08/18 data will also provide information about those who enter STEM education and/or employment in the years after college.

**The K-12 teacher.** B&B cohorts have historically focused on K-12 teacher recruitment and retention as important issues for education policymakers. 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. B&B's unique contribution to policymakers' understanding of the K-12 teaching workforce provides researchers the ability to use B&B data to compare teachers with their similarly-educated peers in other occupations on a variety of important topics, including career paths, workplace satisfaction, and salaries.

Some of the primary research and policy issues to be addressed with B&B:08/18 data include:

(1) Debt and finances:

- How much do bachelor's degree recipients still owe on education loans ten years after graduation?
- What is the status of the education loans?
- If in repayment, what are the monthly payments, and what is the ratio of education loan payments to income?
- Has student loan debt influenced postbaccalaureate enrollment or employment plans?



- Has student loan debt influenced plans regarding buying a home, marriage, or family formation?
- Do graduates consider their education costs a worthwhile investment in their future?
- Are graduates married or living with a partner? Do they have children or other dependents?
- What is their total household income including spouse or partner incomes?
- Do graduates own or make payments on a home or a car? What are the monthly payments for housing, auto loans, and credit cards?

(2) Postbaccalaureate enrollment:

- What percentage of graduates applied to graduate programs, and what percentage actually enrolled within 10 years of completing a bachelor's degree?
- What factors are associated with postbaccalaureate enrollment? What percentage of graduates completed an additional degree?
- How are they financing their postbaccalaureate education?
- What institutions do they attend and what types of degree programs and majors do they pursue?
- What percentage pursued continuing education in undergraduate, vocational, or non-degree programs?
- What paths do college graduates with bachelor's degrees in STEM fields take after graduation? What percentage enroll in further education in STEM fields? What percentage of non-STEM majors enroll in a STEM graduate program?
- How do postbaccalaureate enrollment patterns relate to demographic characteristics, undergraduate enrollment histories, undergraduate academic performance, and financial factors?

(3) Labor market outcomes:

- What is the relationship between choice of majors and the occupations and industries in which graduates work? How does success in finding career-related employment vary by undergraduate field of study?
- What percentage are employed full-time or part-time, in temporary, or permanent positions?
- What are the characteristics of their current and past jobs?
- How satisfied are graduates with different aspects of their jobs?
- What are the reasons reported for leaving a job?
- How does timing of employment relate to timing of enrollment, marriage, family formation?
- To what extent have graduates experienced unemployment? To what extent have graduates spent time out of the labor force?
- What is the annual income and what are the monthly wages across all jobs held?
- How do the B&B:08 cohort's labor market outcomes ten years after receiving a bachelor's degree compare to those observed among the previous 10-year cohort (B&B:93)?

(4) K-12 teaching:

- What percentage of college graduates were employed as a teacher within 10 years of receiving a bachelor's degree? What percentage taught uninterrupted throughout the period?

- What percentage of college graduates were late entrants to the teaching profession, and how did they become certified?
- What percentage of teachers exited and re-entered the teacher workforce?
- What were the reasons for those exiting the teaching profession?
- With which aspects of teaching were they satisfied or dissatisfied?
- What are the reported reasons for continuing in the teaching profession?

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:08/18**

The respondent universe for the full-scale B&B:08/18 study consists of all persons who completed requirements for the bachelor's degree during the 2007–08 academic year, and received their degree by June 30, 2009. These respondents will be surveyed for B&B in 2018. For the B&B field test, the respondent universe is the same except that sample members completed the baccalaureate degree one year earlier and will be surveyed in 2017.

Data collection will begin with mail and email communications asking sample members to complete the full B&B:08/18 survey online; an incentive of \$30 will be paid to prior round respondents for a completed survey and \$45 to prior round nonrespondents. The first data collection experiment will encourage sample member participation by using tailored mail out materials to draw an explicit relationship between the survey and sample members' experiences, such as their specific undergraduate major. Half of the sample will be randomly assigned to receive tailored communications while the other half will receive generic communications appropriate to a wide range of students. The second experiment will evaluate survey participation when letters and emails originate from the U.S. Department of Education, conveying authority, rather than from the contractor, RTI International. Again, sample members will be randomly assigned to either the U.S. Department of Education or the RTI condition.

At the start of every survey fielded earlier in the B&B:08 series, respondents have had to confirm their identity by affirming their name and their bachelor's degree institution. In an effort to encourage participation by getting a "foot in the door," a mini survey will be offered to survey refusals and late nonrespondents with the expectation that some of those who complete the mini survey will be willing to complete the full survey once they realize the survey questions are easy to answer. For the third experiment, a paper version of the mini survey with an addressed, postage paid envelope will be sent to half of the full survey refusals and nonrespondents for completion by mail. As an additional mode, the paper survey option may improve the representativeness of the survey data by reaching sample members who would otherwise not participate. The control group will receive a request to complete the mini survey online or as a telephone interview. Finally, the fifth field test experiment will focus on question design. Respondents will receive six questions with response options presented in either a check all, a forced choice Yes/No design, or a forced choice No/Yes design to evaluate the ease of administration and completeness of responses.

Although not set up as an experiment, we will track participants' willingness to upload a current resume. We will offer a \$10 incentive for a resume uploaded with a survey, and at the end of data collection. All nonrespondents will be offered \$20 for the resume upload. If a sufficient number of resumes is collected, we will be able to assess the benefits of using resumes in future data collections to supplement employment

information and, potentially, to reduce time in the interview. Relatedly, a survey question will ask sample members whether or not they would be willing to provide secure access to their LinkedIn account as an additional means for improving the efficiency of the interview.

In addition to the survey, administrative data matching for the B&B:08/18 student sample will be conducted with several 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; the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), which provides enrollment and degree verification; vendors of national undergraduate, graduate, and professional student admission tests; and, potentially, from LinkedIn, an employment-oriented social networking site. 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 a secure data connection. On a nightly basis, the data collection contractor, RTI, will download student 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 efficiency, the B&B:08/18 student interview will use web-based questionnaires across two electronic modes of data collection, a self-administered survey, which is mobile-friendly to allow completion of the survey on a tablet or smartphone (in the NPSAS:16 field test, 65.9% of surveys were completed on a personal computer and 23.6% on a handheld device), and computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI).

After completion of the student interview, participants will be offered the opportunity to upload a resume to the same secure NCES server. Resume collection for the field test is designed to assess participant response to and compliance with the request. Should response to the resume request be sufficient, the full-scale plans for resume usage will be described in the full-scale OMB package.

### **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 (OPE); the Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development (OPEPD); and other agencies, such as the Government Accountability Office (GAO); the Congressional Budget Office; and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). 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 relevant 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 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. 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 for more than one year. B&B, in contrast, follows graduates for up to 10 years 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 and on teachers who leave the teaching profession.

## **5. Method Used to Minimize Burden on Small Businesses**

Target respondents for B&B:08/18 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 are the two cohorts for which college transcript data were collected. The current B&B study, B&B:08/18, will be conducted 10 years after the base-year NPSAS:08 data collection.

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 and fluctuation in sizes of grant and loan amounts. A recurring study is essential to help predict future costs for financial aid because loan programs create ongoing obligations for the federal government for as long as loans are in repayment. 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 in November 2016 to inform the B&B:08/18 data collection, during which plans for the 2017 field test and the 2018 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:08/18 field test will be offered a monetary incentive for completing the B&B interview. All incentives for the B&B:08/18 field test will be paid by the sample member's choice of check or PayPal (about 35% of student respondents to the NPSAS:16 field test opted for PayPal).

During data collection, prior round respondents, that is, sample members who completed the B&B:08/12 field test interview, will be offered \$30 for completing the B&B:08/18 field test interview; while prior round nonrespondents will be offered \$45. Following completion of the B&B:08/18 full survey, respondents will be offered an additional \$10 to upload their resume. Sample members who explicitly refuse to participate in the full survey and all nonrespondents remaining after approximately 8 weeks of data collection will be offered \$20 for completing the mini interview. All mini survey respondents will be offered an additional \$10 to upload their resume. At approximately one week before the end of data collection, all remaining nonrespondents will be offered \$20 to upload their resume. Table 2 shows the distribution of the incentive amounts among the B&B:08/18 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:08/18 field test sample**

Type of response	B&B:08/12 FT interview respondents	B&B:08/12 FT interview nonrespondents
<b>Full survey</b>	\$30	\$45
Plus resume	+\$10	+\$10
<b>Total potential incentive with full survey</b>	<b>\$40</b>	<b>\$55</b>
<b>Mini survey</b>	\$20	\$20
Plus resume	+\$10	+\$10
<b>Total potential incentive with mini survey</b>	<b>\$30</b>	<b>\$30</b>
<b>Resume only, after refusal</b>	<b>\$20</b>	<b>\$20</b>

## 10. Assurance of Confidentiality

NCES assures individuals participating in B&B that all of the information they 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).

Data security and confidentiality protection procedures have been put in place for B&B:08/18 to ensure that RTI and its subcontractors comply with all privacy requirements, including:

1. The Statement of Work of this contract;
2. *Family Educational and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974* (20 U.S.C. §1232(g));
3. *Privacy Act of 1974* (5 U.S.C. §552a);
4. *Privacy Act Regulations* (34 CFR Part 5b);
5. *Computer Security Act of 1987*;
6. *U.S.A. Patriot Act of 2001* (P.L. 107-56);
7. *Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002* (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C. §9573);
8. *Confidential Information Protect and Statistical efficiency Act of 2002*;
9. *E-Government Act of 2002*, Title V, Subtitle A;
10. *Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2015* (6 U.S.C. §151);
11. The U.S. Department of Education General Handbook for Information Technology Security General Support Systems and Major Applications Inventory Procedures (March 2005);
12. The U.S. Department of Education Incident Handling Procedures (February 2009);
13. The U.S. Department of Education, ACS Directive OM: 5-101, Contractor Employee Personnel Security Screenings;
14. NCES Statistical Standards; and
15. All new legislation that impacts the data collected through the contract for this study.

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), Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) publications, Office of Management and Budget (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:08/18 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:08/18 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.

B&B:08/18 will utilize additional security measures to protect the web survey from unauthorized access in the form of security questions based on data previously collected on the participants. These questions will take a form commonly associated with credit check "pick lists." A survey entrant will be asked (a) a yes/no question to confirm their name and (b) a pick list question about the identity of the institution awarding his/her bachelor's degree in 2006-07. If they answer correctly, they will move onto the B&B:08/18 questionnaire. If their answer does not match the B&B:08 record, they will be asked for their email address, their phone numbers, and the month and the year of their birth. If at least two of their responses are correct, they will be allowed into

the survey. If not correct, data collection staff will attempt to contact the sample member to confirm their identity. The web survey will also be programmed to prevent backtracking to areas of the survey with personally identifiable information (PII). This measure is intended to prevent unauthorized access to PII within in-progress surveys.

As part of the field test, survey respondents will be asked to upload current resumes. The resulting files will be stored on secure NCES servers. Respondents will not have access to the file location beyond uploading their own document. Resume files will be downloaded to RTI's ESN on a daily basis at the same time and through the same process by which survey data are downloaded. As part of the survey, respondents will be asked a question regarding their willingness to share LinkedIn information to gauge sample coverage and potential participation levels. No actual data will be collected from LinkedIn at this juncture. Any attempts to do so would take place in the full-scale survey, the details of which would be provided in the full-scale OMB package. These alternative data sources are being considered for employment and education data verification purposes and as possible means to increase efficiency and reduce participant burden.

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:08/18 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 the 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:08/18 field test will not include any non-interview sources pulled forward from NPSAS:08, the B&B:08/18 full-scale study will include data collected in the NPSAS:08 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:08/18 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:08/18 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:08/18 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, NCES is obtaining 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. The administrative record data are accurate and much easier to obtain than collecting the same data by administering a questionnaire.

## **11. Sensitive Questions**

The B&B:08/18 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, and (c) assurances that their responses will be protected.

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. 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. 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.

## 12. Estimates of Response Burden

Table 3 provides the projected estimates for response burden and costs for B&B:08/18 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, the duration of the survey varies by type of instrument (full or mini) and follow-up requests (see section A.2.c of this document and in Part B for a description of the field test design). In addition, there will be a reinterview of approximately 10 minutes' duration. This package also includes an address update for the full-scale study, which will begin before the full-scale data collection clearance request will be concluded. For the field test and address update for the full scale data collection, estimating an average hourly rate of \$30.75<sup>1</sup> for participating students, the 905 total burden hours translate to a respondent burden time cost of approximately \$27,829.

**Table 3. Maximum estimated burden to respondents in B&B:08/18**

Data collection activity	Sample	Expected response rate (percent)	Expected number of respondents	Expected number of responses	Average time burden per response (minutes)	Total time burden (hours)
<b>Field test</b>						
Address update	1,560	15	234*	234	3	12
<i>Full interview (totals)</i>	<i>1,560</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>858</i>	<i>858</i>	-	<i>657</i>
Full, with resume upload	-	-	156	156	50	130
Full only	-	-	702	702	45	527
<i>Mini interview (totals)</i>	<i>702</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>281</i>	<i>281</i>	-	<i>56</i>
Mini, then full interview and resume upload	-	-	16	16	55	15
Mini, then full interview	-	-	16	16	50	13
Mini, with resume upload	-	-	78	78	10	13
Mini only	-	-	125	125	5	11
Resume upload only	-	-	46	46	5	4
Re-interview	890	35	312*	312	10	52
<b>Field test total</b>			<b>1,139</b>	<b>1,685</b>		<b>777</b>
<b>Full-scale study</b>						
Address update	17,040	15	2,556*	2,556	3	128
Full-scale interview	17,040	87	14,825	14,825	35	8,648
<b>Full-scale total</b>			<b>14,825</b>	<b>17,381</b>		<b>8,776</b>
<b>Total in this request</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>3,695</b>	<b>4,241</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>905</b>

\* Duplicative counts of individuals, not included in respondent totals.

<sup>1</sup> The estimated average was calculated from an estimated hourly rate of \$30.75, based on the median earnings of bachelor's degree recipients, age 25 years and older (\$64,000 per year; Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor (2016). *Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey* ([www.bls.gov/cps/](http://www.bls.gov/cps/))).

### 13. Estimates of Cost

Respondents will incur no costs associated with participation in this study beyond the response burden time cost.

### 14. Costs to Federal Government

A summary of estimated costs to the federal government for B&B:08/18 are shown in table 4. Cost estimates include 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:08/18 field test and full-scale**

B&B:08/18 implementations		Costs to NCES
<b>Field test</b>		
NCES Salaries and expenses		\$110,000
Contract costs		\$1,817,463
Total		\$1,927,463
<b>Full-scale study</b>		
NCES Salaries and expenses		\$330,000
Contract costs		\$4,970,414
Total		\$5,630,414

NOTE: Costs presented here do not include base fee.

**Table 5. Contract costs for B&B:08/18**

Study area and task		Budgeted amount
110	Initial meeting	\$18,379
120	Schedules	22,886
130	Project management	185,582
140	Study monitoring plan	283,531
150	Technical review panels (TRPs)	390,807
<b>Field test data collection</b>		
310	Sampling	63,766
320	OMB forms clearance	48,308
321	Instrument development	709,794
322	Training	150,345
323	Tracing	29,219
324	Student data collection	242,476
325	Student data processing	273,030
333	NSLDS file merge	9,597
334	Other systems file merge	73,961
335	Develop data collection materials	72,613
340	Methodology memorandum	144,354
<b>Full-scale data collection</b>		
410	Sampling	59,231
420	OMB forms clearance	53,327
421	Instrument development	682,281
422	Training	167,410
423	Tracing	109,503
424	Data collection	965,909
425	Interview data processing	885,623
433	NSLDS file merge	22,917
434	Other systems file merge	128,779
435	Develop data collection materials	45,233
436	Weighting, imputation, and nonresponse bias analysis	208,398
437	Data disclosure	24,231
<b>Reporting</b>		
511	Report prospectus	52,368
512	Draft manuscript	242,116
513	Review-quality manuscript	145,151
514	Public-ready manuscript	80,676
515	Respond to professional judgment	20,451
520	Datalab/WebVTS tools	116,729
530	Restricted-use data files	58,896
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$6,787,877</b>

## 15. Reasons for Changes in Response Burden and Costs

This is a reinstatement of a previously approved collection. The average estimated time to complete the student survey is 45 minutes, about 10 minutes higher than in the B&B:08/12 field test, reflecting the fact that the data to be collected in B&B:08/18 cover a 6-year span (as opposed to a 3-year span in B&B:08/12). Worth noting is that the goal for moving from the field test to the full-scale survey is to reduce items and improve the efficiency of the survey so that the estimated completion time is approximately that of the B&B:08/12 full-scale survey.

## 16. Publication Plans and Time Schedule

The operational schedule for the B&B:08/18 field test and full-scale study is shown in table 6. The contract for B&B:08/18 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 (including First Look reports);
- 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-use 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:08/18**

B&B:08/18 activity	Start date	End date
Field test		
Select student sample	Sept. 27, 2016	June 16, 2017
Address update	June 12, 2017	July 31, 2017
Self-administered web-based data collection	July 17, 2017	Oct. 30, 2017
Conduct telephone interviews of students	July 31, 2017	Oct. 30, 2017
Process data, construct data files	July 10, 2017	Dec. 29, 2017
Prepare/update field test reports	Sept. 1, 2017	April 30, 2018
Full-scale study		
Select student sample	Jan. 10, 2018	June 11, 2018
Address update	September 1, 2017	July 31, 2018
Self-administered web-based data collection	July 12, 2018	March 25, 2019
Conduct telephone interviews of students	Aug. 2, 2018	March 25, 2019
Process data, construct data files	July 12, 2018	Oct. 25, 2019
Prepare/update reports	Jan. 22, 2019	Nov. 9, 2020

## 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.