

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

Appendices A and B
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Appendix A: Technical Review Panel (TRP) Members.....	A-1
Appendix B: Confidentiality for Administrative Record Matching.....	B-1

Appendix A

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Appendix B

Confidentiality for Administrative Record Matching

B.1 Develop Linkages with Administrative Data Sources

Linkages will be developed with existing data sources to supplement the 2008/18 Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study (B&B:08/18) during both the field test (2017) and full-scale (2018) collections. NCES recognizes the great value added to the B&B:08/18 data file with the addition of data from specific administrative data sources given that certain data, such as specific financial aid amounts and associated dates, can only be accurately obtained from sources other than the student. Our postsecondary studies, including the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS) and the Beginning Postsecondary Students Study (BPS), have included file merges 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 National Student Clearinghouse (NSC). For this study, we plan to perform file merges with the following datasets: CPS, NSLDS, and NSC. We are reviewing the possibility of matching to other administrative data sources in the full-scale study.

As described in more detail in Section A.10 of the Supporting Statement Part A, which is a part of this request, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (34 CFR Part 99) allows the disclosure of information without prior consent for the purposes of B&B:08/18 according to 34 CFR §99.31.

Secure Data Transfers. NCES has set up a secure data transfer system, using the NCES member site with Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) technology. The contractor will use this electronic system for submitting data containing potentially identifying information (such as SSNs, names, and dates of birth of our sample members) along with their survey ID (not the same ID that is available on the restricted-use data). Before being transmitted, files will be encrypted using FIPS 140-2 validated encryption tools. Data will be received from the NCES system as well. The system requires that both parties to the transfer be registered users of the NCES Members Site and that their Members Site privileges be set to allow use of the secure data transfer service as described above. This process will be used for file matching procedures described below, except in instances when the vendor already has a secure data transfer system in place.

B.2 File Merge with ED Central Processing System (CPS)

File merges will be performed by the data collection contractor with the CPS data containing federal student aid application information. The merge with CPS can occur at any time for any number of cases, provided that the case has an apparently valid SSN associated with it. A file will be sent to CPS and in return a large data file containing all matched students who applied for federal aid will be received. The data collection contractor has programs and procedures in place to prepare and submit files according to rigorous CPS standards, and to receive and process data obtained from CPS.

A file will be electronically uploaded on the FAFSA secure web-site for matching which contains SSN and the first 2 letters of the sample member's last name (but no other information). Access to the site for the upload is restricted to authorized users

who are registered and provide identification/authentication information (user name and password) to the FAFSA data site. The file is retrieved by the Central Processing System or CPS (the FAFSA contractor data system) for linkage. The linked file, containing student aid applications for matched records, is then made available to us only through a secure connection (EdConnect) which also requires user name and password. All CPS files will be processed, edited, and documented for inclusion in the final restricted use file (RUF).

B.3 File Merge with National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS) Disbursement

A file merge will be conducted with the NSLDS to collect federal loan and Pell grant data. The resulting file will contain cumulative amounts for each student's entire postsecondary education enrollment. NCES has set up a secure data transfer system that uses their NCES member site and Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) technology. The system requires that both parties to the transfer be registered users of the NCES Members Site and that their Members Site privileges be set to allow use of the secure data transfer service. These privileges are set up and carefully controlled by the ED's Institute of Education Sciences (IES) NCES Chief Technology Officer (CTO), a service designed by ED/NCES specifically for the secure transfer of electronic files containing personally identifying information (i.e., data protected under the Privacy Act or otherwise posing risk of disclosure), and can be used for NCES-to-Contractor; Contractor-to-Subcontractor; Subcontractor-to-Contractor; and Contractor-to-Other-Agency data transfers. The party uploading the information onto the secure server at NCES is responsible for deleting the file(s) after the successful transfer has been confirmed. Programs have been developed to create the files for the merge and also to read the data received. All matching processes are initiated by the data collection staff providing a file with one record per sample member to be merged.

B.4 File Merge with the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC)

The NSC will be used to obtain the *Student Tracker* data on institutions attended, enrollment dates, and degree completions for the B&B:08/18 sample.

The data collection contractor will first set up an account with the Clearinghouse which will enable sending and receiving of files securely over encrypted FTPS connections. The file containing sensitive student identifiers (name, date of birth, and SSN) will be encrypted using FIPS 140-2 validated encryption tools then submitted to the Clearinghouse using their secure FTP site. All files received by the Clearinghouse will be securely stored using FIPS 140-2 validated AES encryption, the US federal encryption standard. Matched files, containing data on enrollment dates, institution names, and degrees completed, will be returned to the data collection contractor using the same secure FTP site.

B.5 Processing Administrative Data

We propose to send files for matching during data collection. We may need to match to a source (e.g., CPS or NSLDS) more than once during the full-scale study.

The data from all of these sources, as allowed by the vendor, will be delivered for inclusion on the RUF and will be useful for creating derived variables. The derived variables will be available on PowerStats and QuickStats, and both direct-pull and derived variables will be documented thoroughly. Data from CPS will also be useful for purposes of locating the sample.