

**Appendix F:
Survey Notification Letters for District,
and Principals
for the Study of
Weighted Student Funding (WSF) and
School-Based Budgeting (SBB) Systems**

Summary

As indicated in the sample recruitment OMB package, study notification letters will be sent to the selected states and districts during the sample recruitment process. At the state level, a copy of the letter will be sent to the appropriate state official, such as the chief state school officer or state superintendent. At the district level, a copy of the letter will be sent to the district superintendent. The letters describe the study activities and also request that they encourage the selected district administrators and principals to participate in the study.

As indicated in the data collection OMB package, survey notification letters will be sent to the targeted respondents for the district administrator and principal surveys one week prior to the launch of the surveys to let them know the surveys are coming. The letters describe the study activities, encourage their participation, and describe how their responses will be kept confidential and how the data will be used. The following table summarizes the purpose of each of these notification letters included in this appendix and who will receive each.

Letter	Purpose	Sample member receiving letter
F.1	District administrator survey	Nationally representative sample, non-case study certainty districts
F.2	District administrator survey	Case study sites
F.3	Principal survey	Nationally representative sample, non-case study certainty districts
F.4	Principal survey	Case study sites

F.1 Survey Notification Letter – District Administrator

Nationally representative sample, non-case study certainty districts

[Date]

[Name]

[Position]

[Street Address]

[City, State, ZIP]

Dear [Sample member Name selected for District Administrator Survey]:

Your district was recently notified that [school district name] has been selected to participate in the upcoming study of Weighted Student Funding (WSF) and School-Based Budgeting (SBB) Systems, an important new study examining how districts allocate funds and resources to their schools. The purpose of this study is to understand different systems for allocating resources to schools including school-based budgeting practices and weighted student formulas. The U.S. Department of Education has contracted with American Institutes for Research (AIR) to conduct this study. The study will include conducting surveys with a national sample of approximately 400 school district administrators and 679 principals, including you and [X] principals in your district.

We are now writing to inform you that you have been selected to complete a district administrator survey. In about a week, you will receive an email invitation to complete the survey online. The invitation will include the web address and a unique password to log-in and complete the survey. The survey should take you about 20-30 minutes to complete *{[IF DISTRICT ALLOWS]}* and you will receive a \$25 gift card as a token of our appreciation.

Your participation is critical to the success of the study, as you are a part of those selected to provide this valuable information about the WSF and SBB systems to policymakers. Your experiences will represent other districts that are comparable in size, poverty level and locale. The study sample design does not allow for substitution of selected participants.

Participation in this survey is voluntary. Responses to this survey will be used to summarize findings in an aggregate manner (across groups or sites) or will be used to provide examples of program implementation in a manner that does not associate responses with a specific site or individual. The study team will use only the survey responses you provide in its analysis and neither the name of any school site nor your name will be used in any reporting. The study team will make sure that access to all data with identifiable information is limited to members of the study team. Except for that which is already public, every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality for all information collected and **we will not provide information that identifies you or your district to anyone outside the study** team, except as required by law.

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This study is not an evaluation of districts or schools in your district. Information gathered in this study will help policymakers understand, for example, how different districts implement SBB and WSF and under which conditions they work well.

Should you have any questions, or if you would like to discuss this study further, please feel free to contact the project officer, Oliver Schak of the U.S. Department of Education, at 202-453-5643 or Oliver.Schak@ed.gov. You also may contact the project director, Jesse Levin of AIR, at 650-376-6270 or jlevin@air.org.

We thank you in advance for your cooperation and truly appreciate your willingness to provide the time needed for the success of this important national study.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Bell-Ellwanger
Director, Policy and Program Studies Service

{*[IF RESPONDENT IS NOT THE DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT]* Cc: [District Superintendent Name]}

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB number. The valid OMB control number of this information collection is ###-####. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 30 minutes per survey, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimates(s) or suggestion for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, 20202-4651. If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, write directly to:

Policy and Program Studies Service,
Office of the Deputy Secretary, US Department of Education,
400 Maryland Avenue, SW,
Washington, DC 20202.

F.2 Survey Notification Letter – District Administrator

Case study sample

[Date]

[Name]

[Position]

[Street Address]

[City, State, ZIP]

Dear [Sample member Name selected for District Administrator Survey]:

Your district was recently notified that [school district name] has been selected to participate in the upcoming study of Weighted Student Funding (WSF) and School-Based Budgeting (SBB) Systems, an important new study examining how districts allocate funds and resources to their schools. The purpose of this study is to understand different systems for allocating resources to schools including school-based budgeting practices and weighted student formulas. The U.S. Department of Education has contracted with American Institutes for Research (AIR) to conduct this study. The study will include:

- *Surveys* with a national sample of approximately 400 school district administrators and 679 principals including you and [X] principals in your district.
- *Case studies* with a sample of nine case study districts, including yours, that will involve up to seven in-person interviews with district officials and school staff involved in WSF system administration and a review of relevant documents and analysis of budget and fiscal data.

We are now writing to inform you that you have been selected to complete a survey. In about a week, you will receive an email invitation to complete the survey online. The invitation will include the web address and a unique password to log-in and complete the survey. The survey should take you about 20-30 minutes to complete *{[IF DISTRICT ALLOWS]}* and you will receive a \$25 gift card as a token of our appreciation}.

Your district has also been invited to participate as a case study site; if you participate, we would like to schedule a time to interview you to discuss your district's budgeting system in more depth. The AIR team will be in contact with you to discuss this invitation shortly. The interview should take about 60 minutes.

Your participation is critical to the success of the study, as you are a part of those selected to provide this valuable information about the WSF and SBB systems to policymakers. Your experiences will represent other districts that are comparable in size, poverty level and locale. The study sample design does not allow for substitution of selected participants.

Participation in this survey is voluntary. Responses to the survey will be used to summarize findings in an aggregate manner (across groups or sites) or will be used to provide examples of program implementation in a manner that does not associate responses with a specific site or individual. The study team will use only the survey responses you provide in its analysis and neither the name of any school site nor your name will be used in any reporting. The study team will make sure that access to all data with identifiable information is limited to members of the study team. Except for that which is already public, every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality for all information collected and **we will not provide information that identifies you or your district to anyone outside the study** team, except as required by law. However, note that case study sites will be identified and quotes from interviews may be attributed to individual district staff.

This study is not an evaluation of districts or schools in your district. Information gathered in this study will help policymakers understand, for example, how different districts implement SBB and WSF and under which conditions they work well.

Should you have any questions, or if you would like to discuss this study further, please feel free to contact the project officer, Oliver Schak of the U.S. Department of Education, at 202-453-5643 or Oliver.Schak@ed.gov. You also may contact the project director, Jesse Levin of AIR, at 650-376-6270 or jlevin@air.org.

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Sincerely,

Jennifer Bell-Ellwanger
Director, Policy and Program Studies Service

{[*IF RESPONDENT IS NOT THE DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT*] Cc: [District Superintendent Name]}

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400 Maryland Avenue, SW,
Washington, DC 20202.

F.3 Survey Notification Letter – Principal Survey

Nationally representative sample, non-case study certainty districts

[Date]

[Name]

[Position]

[Street Address]

[City, State, ZIP]

Dear [Sample member Name selected for Principal Survey]:

Your district was recently notified that [school district name] has been selected to participate in the upcoming study of Weighted Student Funding (WSF) and School-Based Budgeting (SBB) Systems, an important new study examining how districts allocate funds and resources to their schools. The purpose of this study is to understand different systems for allocating resources to schools including school-based budgeting practices and weighted student formulas. The U.S. Department of Education has contracted with American Institutes for Research (AIR) to conduct this study. The study will include conducting surveys with a national sample of approximately 400 school district administrators and 679 principals including you and [X] other principals in your district.

We are now writing to inform you that you have been selected to complete a principal survey. In about a week, you will receive an email invitation to complete the survey online. The invitation will include the web address and a unique password to log-in and complete the survey. The survey should take you about 20-30 minutes to complete *{[IF DISTRICT ALLOWS]}* and you will receive a \$25 gift card as a token of our appreciation}.

Your participation is critical to the success of the study, as you are a part of those selected to provide this valuable information about the WSF and SBB systems to policymakers. Your responses will represent other similar schools across the country, so your responses are critical as the study sample design does not allow for substitution of selected participants.

Participation in this survey is voluntary. Responses to the survey will be used to summarize findings in an aggregate manner (across groups or sites) or will be used to provide examples of program implementation in a manner that does not associate responses with a specific site or individual. The study team will use only the survey responses you provide in its analysis and neither the name of any school site nor your name will be used in any reporting. The study team will make sure that access to all data with identifiable information is limited to members of the study team. Except for that which is already public, every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality for all information collected and **we will not provide information that identifies you or your district to anyone outside the study** team, except as required by law.

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Sincerely,

Jennifer Bell-Ellwanger
Director, Policy and Program Studies Service

Cc: [District Superintendent Name]

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400 Maryland Avenue, SW,
Washington, DC 20202.

F.4 Survey Notification Letter – Principal Survey

Case study sample

[Date]

[Name]

[Position]

[Street Address]

[City, State, ZIP]

Dear [Sample Member Name selected for Principal Survey]:

Your district was recently notified that [school district name] has been selected to participate in the upcoming study of Weighted Student Funding (WSF) and School-Based Budgeting (SBB) Systems, an important new study examining how districts allocate funds and resources to their schools. The purpose of this study is to understand different systems for allocating resources to schools including school-based budgeting practices and weighted student formulas. The U.S. Department of Education has contracted with American Institutes for Research (AIR) to conduct this study. The study will include:

- *Surveys* with a national sample of approximately 400 school district administrators and 679 principals including you and [X] other principals in your district.
- *Case studies* with a sample of nine case study districts, including yours, that will involve up to seven in-person interviews with district officials and school staff involved in WSF system administration and a review of relevant documents and analysis of budget and fiscal data. We may reach out to you at a later date to invite you to participate in an interview.

We are now writing to inform you that you have been selected to complete a principal survey. In about a week, you will receive an email invitation to complete the survey online. The invitation will include the web address and a unique password to log-in and complete the survey. The survey should take you about 20-30 minutes to complete [*IF DISTRICT ALLOWS*] and you will receive a \$25 gift card as a token of our appreciation].

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Sincerely,

Jennifer Bell-Ellwanger
Director, Policy and Program Studies Service

Cc: [District Superintendent Name]

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