

Appendix A

Notification Letters

Letter to selected sites [charter schools, CMOs/networks, authorizers] from the Department

[Department of Education letterhead]

[Date]

[Name], Site name

[Street Address]

[City, State, ZIP]

Dear [Site Leader (e.g., Principal, CEO of CMO/network, Executive Director)]

The U.S. Department of Education (Department) commissioned a project to create profiles of selected innovative practices of charter schools, charter management organizations (CMOs) or networks, and authorizers. Each profile will examine one innovative practice and feature charter schools, networks, and/or charter authorizers that are known to be implementing that practice with favorable student outcomes. We have secured Office of Management and Budget (OMB) clearance for this project to launch the data collection [insert OMB approval number].

As the project team discussed with you during your phone conversation, we would like to include your [school/organization/school in your network] in our profile of [insert name(s) of profile topic(s)]. Your participation in this project will enable the broader education field to learn from your experiences and insights. Specifically, we ask your organization to participate in [a site visit/phone or video interviews], [if site visit: including interviews and observations], and share relevant documents to provide information on key features of the practice, challenges and successes from implementing the practice, and lessons learned to inform the work of both charter and traditional public schools.

Recognizing that you have many other demands on your time, the project team has designed the interview protocols to minimize the burden of participation and will review relevant documents in advance of the [site visit/interviews]. The project team will interview [up to eight] staff members involved in designing and/or implementing the practice. Two researchers will conduct the [site visit/interviews] between [date1] and [date2]. Individual interviews will be audio-recorded. We will communicate at the time of scheduling the amount of time we are requesting.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such a collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is XXXX-XXXX. Public reporting burden for this collection is estimated to take up to 60 minutes, with the exception of one or two interviews lasting up to 90 minutes, for participation in the interview. The obligation to respond to this collection is voluntary. If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of individual interviews, please contact: Policy and Program Studies Service, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202 directly.

The project will culminate in up to 13 profiles of innovative practices being used by charter schools, CMOs/networks, and charter school authorizers around the country. The profiles will be disseminated to educators, policymakers, parents, and other stakeholders to help them learn from and replicate these practices, thereby promoting the implementation of innovative practices. The profiles will name the organizations implementing the innovative practice but will not name individuals who participate in the interviews.

The project is being conducted for the Department by SRI Education (SRI), Center on Reinventing Public Education (CRPE), and Policy Studies Associates (PSA). A member of the project team will contact you within the next week to discuss your participation. If you have any questions about this project, you can reach the project director, Katie Woodworth, at katrina.woodworth@sri.com or 650-859-5256, or Michael Fong here at the Department at michael.fong@ed.gov or 202-401-3132.

We greatly appreciate your cooperation and support and thank you and your staff for providing the expertise and time needed for the success of the project.

Sincerely,

Greg Fortelny
Director, Policy and Program Studies Service

Ellen Safranek
Director, Charter Schools Program

Letter to site leaders/administrators and staff in profile topics from project team

[Date]

[Site name] staff member
[Street Address]
[City, State, ZIP]

Dear [Site name] staff member,

We are writing to inform you about a national project, **Profiles of Selected Practices of Charter Schools, Charter Management Organizations (CMOs)/Networks, and Charter School Authorizers**, being conducted for the U.S. Department of Education (Department). The project includes site visits to 30 charter schools, CMOs/networks, and authorizers. The project team selected [Site name] to be one of the sites we profile for [practice topic(s)]. We would like to take this opportunity to explain the project purpose and design and invite you to participate in an interview.

This project is designed to gather information on key features of the practice, challenges and successes from implementing the practice, and lessons learned to inform the work of both charter and traditional public schools. Two members of the project team from SRI Education (SRI), Center on Reinventing Public Education (CRPE), or Policy Studies Associates (PSA) will [visit/be conducting interviews with] [Site name] on [date(s)]. The project team will interview [up to eight] staff members involved in designing and/or implementing the practice.

We hope that you will take the time to participate in an interview as it will enable the broader education field to learn from your organization's experiences and insights. To use [Site name] leaders and staff time efficiently, we have designed the interview protocols to minimize the burden of participation and will review relevant documents in advance of the interview. The staff interviews will be audio-recorded.

The project team will store all data collected for the project in a secure environment and will protect the confidentiality of the information you provide, to the extent provided by the law. After completion of the project, the project team will destroy all data files with identifiable information. The team will not use the data for purposes other than this project. The project team will produce a profile of the practice that will be disseminated to educators, policymakers, parents, and other stakeholders to help them learn from and replicate these practices. The profiles will name the organizations implementing the innovative practice but will not name individuals who participate in the interviews.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such a collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is XXXX-XXXX. Public reporting burden for this collection is estimated to take up to 60 minutes, with the exception of one or two interviews lasting up to 90 minutes, for participation in the interview. The obligation to respond to this collection is voluntary. If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of individual interviews, please contact: Policy and Program Studies Service, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202 directly.

If you have any questions about this project, you can reach the project director, Katie Woodworth, at katrina.woodworth@sri.com or 650-859-5256, or Michael Fong at the Department at michael.fong@ed.gov or 202-401-3132.

Thank you for your cooperation and support. Your participation in this project will ensure that the broader charter and traditional public school communities can learn from your experience and insights and improve teaching and learning for students.

Sincerely,

[SRI/CRPE/PSA Interviewer names and contact information]