

Memorandum

United States Department of Education
Institute of Education Sciences
National Center for Education Statistics

DATE: March 31, 2020
TO: Robert Sivinski, OMB
THROUGH: Carrie Clarady, Avar Consulting, in contract to NCES
FROM: Carolyn Fidelman, NCES
SUBJECT: Middle Grades Longitudinal Study of 2017-18 (MGLS:2017) Main Study First Follow-up (MS2) Data Collection Incentive Change Request (OMB# 1850-0911 v.26)

The Middle Grades Longitudinal Study of 2017-18 (MGLS:2017) is the first study conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) to follow a nationally representative sample of students as they enter and move through the middle grades (grades 6–8). The data collected through repeated measures of key constructs will provide a rich descriptive picture of the academic experiences and development of students during these critical years and will allow researchers to examine associations between contextual factors and student outcomes. The study focuses on student achievement in mathematics and literacy along with measures of student socioemotional wellbeing and other outcomes. The study includes students with disabilities for whom descriptive information on their outcomes, educational experiences, and special education services are being collected.

The study conducted an Item Validation Field Test (IVFT) in Winter/Spring 2016 to determine the psychometric properties of assessment and survey items and the predictive potential of items so that valid, reliable, and useful assessment and survey instruments could be developed for the Main Study. An Operational Field Test (OFT) was conducted in Winter/Spring 2017 with a follow-up in Winter/Spring 2018 to test the near-final instruments and recruitment and data collection procedures and materials in preparation for the MGLS:2017 Main Study Base Year (MS1). The MS1 data collection took place in Winter/Spring 2018. The MS2 data collection was delayed by a year to allow time to secure participation from a supplemental sample of schools. While the MS1 data collection was conducted primarily in school settings, the MS2 collection will be conducted outside of school for those students no longer attending their MS1 school or those students who miss the MS2 session.

OMB has approved recruitment activities for the MS2 data collection, tracking of the MS1 sample, and plans for the MS2 data collection. (OMB# 1850-0911 v.20-25).

The current request is to (1) conduct out of school data collection during school closures due to COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019); (2) offer students participating outside of school two timing options.

Conduct out-of-school data collection during school closures due to COVID-19. MS2 data collection began January 14 and runs through June 2020. Data collection has been conducted in over 400 schools to date. Moving forward, the data collection is at risk due to the COVID-19 outbreak which is closing schools nationwide. In addition, the Department of Education has suspended all field operations between March 16 and April 17, 2020. At least 160 school sessions were scheduled for this four-week period and will need to be cancelled or rescheduled. Many school closures are scheduled to extend beyond the April 17 date and some through the end of the year. As a result, we are proposing to send communication to students who would have had an in-school session during this period and ask them to participate outside of school. We will also send this request to students from schools that have not yet scheduled a session date. This will triple the number of students who will be asked to participate outside of school.

Offer students participating outside of school two timing options. In January 2020, we received approval to reduce the student session from 75 minutes to 45 minutes to increase the number of students who would be willing to participate outside of school. To mitigate data loss from the number of students participating outside of school, we are now asking to give students a choice between the two session timings. Students who opt to complete the 45-minute session will receive the \$20 incentive plus the certificate for 2 hours of community service from the U.S. Department of Education. Students who select the 75-minute session will receive the \$20 incentive, a certificate for 3 hours of community service, and be told the study will make a \$20 donation to the American Red Cross for their participation. Students participating

in the 75-minute session will be completing the second stage mathematics and reading assessments that their counterparts taking the 45-minute session will not.

The revisions made to the last approved MGLS:2017 clearance documents (OMB# 1850-0911 v.25) are reflected below. Blue text indicates the document and green text the section of the document in which a change was made, followed by notes regarding the edits. Black font demarks the text that remains unchanged from the last approved, while text in red font shows the revisions that were made.

Part A

Preface was modified to reflect the current request, as follows:

The MS2 data collection, to be conducted from January through June 2020 (when most sample students will be in the eighth grade), was approved in November 2019 and January 2020 (OMB# 1850-0911 v.24-25). ~~The latest revision to this submission is to reduce the out-of-school data collection student session timing from 75 minutes to 45 minutes and to add language to the online surveys to ensure the security of survey responses.~~ **The current request is to (1) conduct out-of-school data collection during school closures due to COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019); (2) offer students participating outside of school a choice between two session times with differential incentives:**

Session length	Incentive
A 45-minute session	\$20 plus a certificate for 2 hours of community service from the U.S. Department of Education
A 75-minute session	\$20 plus a certificate for 3 hours of community service from the U.S. Department of Education and a donation of \$20 to Save the Children's special fund to help kids affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.

Section A.9's Table 2 was updated to reflect the change in the student out-of-school administration.

Table 2. MS2 and OFT3 Tracking Activities, Data Collection Instruments, and Incentive Amounts

Instrument/Activity	Administration Time*	MS2 and OFT1** Incentives
MS2 Tracking, Recruitment, and Data Collection		
Student return of parent consent forms (explicit consent schools only)	10 minutes	Food event at school (e.g., pizza, bagels, etc.) sponsored by the study
Student Assessments and Survey – In-school administration (Mathematics, Reading, Executive Function, Height, Weight, & Survey)	90 minutes	Earbuds used during assessment and a certificate for 2 hours of community service from the U.S. Department of Education
Student Assessments and Survey – Out-of-school administration (Mathematics, Reading, & Survey)	45 minutes or 75 minutes	\$20 and plus a certificate for 2 hours of community service from the U.S. Department of Education \$20 plus a certificate for 3 hours of community service and a \$20 donation to Save the Children's special fund to help kids affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.
Parent Panel Maintenance	5 minutes	\$10
Parent Survey	35 minutes	\$20 to \$30 (one parent per student)

*Note that the assessment administration time may be longer for students with disabilities.

** Final incentive amounts were determined based on the outcome of the field tests and main study base year.

Students

Main Study First Follow-up (MS2): Students in the MS1 sample or the MS2 augmentation sample (described in Part

B.1) who are participating in MS2 at school (most of whom will be in grade 8) will be allowed to keep the earbuds and pencil used during the MS2 assessment. Students who have left their Base Year school and are unable to participate in school (e.g., if the number of MGLS:2017 sampled students at the new school in which they are enrolled, meaning the school to which they transferred, is less than 4, see Part B.2 for additional detail) will be invited to participate via web outside of school. These students will not receive earbuds and pencils. **Instead, students who opt to complete the 45-minute session will receive \$20 plus a 2-hour certificate of community service from the U.S. Department of Education, while students who choose the 75-minute session will receive \$20 plus a 3-hour certificate of community service from the U.S. Department of Education plus we will make a \$20 donation to Save the Children’s special fund to help kids affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.** The out-of-school data collection is used so that students in the base-year sample may still participate regardless of their educational situation in subsequent rounds **or in the event of school closures due to COVID-19.** These students are critical as they may be different from students who participate in school. Students who may begin but are unable to complete the assessment and survey in school will also be offered a \$20 incentive. The monetary incentive offered to these students is designed to encourage them to incur the burden of participating in the study on their out-of-school time. ~~A \$20 incentive is less than that offered for out-of-school data collection for HSLs (which offered an incentive between \$25 and \$50 in the First Follow-up). However, \$20 has been deemed sufficient in the middle-school study based on OFT2 experiences. In addition, both students participating in MS2 in and out of school will receive a certificate for 2 hours of community service from the U.S. Department of Education.~~

Part B

Preface was updated to reflect the current request, as follows:

MS2 data collection was approved in November 2019 (OMB# 1850-0911 v. 24-25), and **the current request is to (1) conduct out-of-school data collection during school closures due to COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019); (2) offer students participating outside of school the choice between a 45-minute session for \$20 plus a certificate for 2 hours of community service from the U.S. Department of Education or a 75-minute session for \$20 plus a certificate for 3 hours of community service from the U.S. Department of Education and a donation of \$20 to Save the Children’s special fund to help kids affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.** ~~the latest revision to this submission is to reduce the out-of-school data collection student session timing from 75 to 45 minutes and to add language to the online surveys to ensure the security of survey responses.~~

Section B.3 was updated to reflect a larger incentive for students participating outside of school (p15).

- Students participating outside of school will be offered **a choice between a 45-minute session for \$20 plus a certificate for 2 hours of community service from the U.S. Department of Education or a 75-minute session for \$20 plus a certificate for 3 hours of community service from the U.S. Department of Education and a donation of \$20 to Save the Children’s special fund to help kids affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.** ~~\$20 for completing the session on their own time.~~
- Schools that mention their school time is limited will be offered a partial in-school session and for students who don’t finish, they will be asked to participate outside of school (Appendix MS2B-R5). **For completion of the assessment out of school, the student will receive \$20. This incentive will be provided in cash if the session is completed by a session facilitator in the field or by check if the student participates online.**

Appendices A-S

Appendix MS2B-E (MGLS:2017 District Letter; Newly Identified School sin Study District (Destination & Transfer) and MS2B-F (MGLS:2017 District Letter: Newly Identified Schools in Non-Study District (Destination) that have four or more students) was modified to reflect the new incentive structure.

	<<Schools with 4 or more students	<<Schools with 1-3 students
School	\$400	\$0 (no in-school data)

		collection)
School Coordinator	\$100	\$0 (no school coordinator)
List Provider	\$50	\$50
Students	A 2-hour community service certificate, a pencil, and earbuds	Students may choose between a 45-minute session for \$20 plus a 2-hour community service certificate, a pencil, earbuds, and \$20 <incentive> or a 75-minute session for \$20 plus a 3-hour community service certificate and a donation of \$20 to Save the Children's special fund to help kids affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.
Math and Special Education Teachers	\$20 web survey & \$7 per student report plus a certificate of participation	\$20 web survey & \$7 per student report plus a certificate of participation

Appendix MS2B-Q7b (Out of school Student Instructions) was modified to reflect a fill in the number of minutes the session will take.

<75/45>

In Appendix MS2B-R1 (Parent and Out-of-School Student Data Collection – Parent Letter Initial), the following language was added to explain the temporary out-of-school data collection activities while schools are closed due to COVID-19 as well as the increased incentive for the choice of session length. References to the hybrid session were removed as no schools opted for this option and therefore this no longer applies.

[IF IN 'TEMPORARY OUT OF SCHOOL' GROUP: Your child's school was scheduled to participate in Spring 2020. You may have already received a letter explaining this. Due to the high number of temporary school closings across the nation, we'd like to invite your child to participate online.]

<<FULL OOS: ~~Students will be asked to spend about 45 minutes taking a survey and answering math and reading questions. Students~~ will be asked to take a survey and answer math and reading questions and may **CHOOSE** between a 45- or 75-minute session. <<HYBRID OOS: ~~Your child recently participated in MGLS:2017 in school. We would like him/her to complete the rest at home. In return we will send your child~~Students who complete the 45-minute survey and math and reading items will receive \$20 and a 2-hour community service certificate. Those who complete the 75-minute survey and math and reading items will receive \$20 and a 3-hour community service certificate and, for the extra time with this survey, **we will make an additional donation of \$20 to Save the Children's special fund to help kids affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.** .>>

Appendix MS2B-R1a (Parent and Out-of-School Student Data Collection – Parent Letter Initial – Spanish) was modified to translate the changes to the English version into Spanish.

[IF IN 'TEMPORARY OUT OF SCHOOL' GROUP: La escuela de su hijo(a) estaba programada para participar en la primavera de 2020. Es posible que ya haya recibido una carta explicando esto. Debido a la gran cantidad de cierres temporales de escuelas a través el país, nos gustaría invitar a su hijo(a) a participar en línea.]

[IF STUDENT IS PARTICIPATING OUT OF SCHOOL: <<FULL OOS: ~~Se les pedirá a los estudiantes que dediquen aproximadamente 45 minutos a completar una encuesta y contestar algunas preguntas sobre lectura y~~

matemáticas.>><<HYBRID OOS: ~~Su hijo(a) participó recientemente en MGLS:2017 en la escuela. Nos gustaría que él/ella completara el resto en casa.>> En agradecimiento le enviaremos a su hijo(a) **un certificado por 2 horas de servicio comunitario y \$20.>>** Se les pedirá a **los estudiantes** que realicen una encuesta y respondan preguntas de matemáticas y lectura y pueden escoger entre una sesión de 45 o 75 minutos. Los estudiantes que completen una sesión de 45 minutos recibirán \$20 y un certificado de servicio comunitario de dos horas. Los que completen una sesión de 75 minutos recibirán \$20 y un certificado de servicio comunitario de tres horas más, por su tiempo extra con esta encuesta, **haremos una donación adicional de \$20 a la organización Save the Children** para ayudar a los necesitados niños afectados por debido a la pandemia del COVID-19.>>~~

Appendix MS2B-R2. Parent and Out-of-School Student Data Collection – Reminder

Your student may choose between a 45- or 75-minute session. In return, we will send your child \$20 and a 2-hour community service certificate for completing the 45-minute session or those completing the 75-minute session will receive \$20 plus a 3-hour community service certificate, and, for the extra time with this survey, we will make a donation of \$20 to the American Red Cross to help those in need due to the COVID-19 Corona Virus pandemic.>>

Appendix MS2B-R3. Out-of-school Data Collection – Student Letter

The study will ~~take about 45 minutes and will~~ include a short survey and math and reading questions. Your answers will never be shared with your parents, teachers, or school staff. To participate, please use the web link and the unique student study ID and password provided above. ~~We will send you a 2-hour community service certificate plus \$20 after you have completed the session.~~ You will have the choice between:

- a 45-minute session for \$20 plus a certificate for 2 hours of community service from the U.S. Department of Education, or
- a 75-minute session for \$20 plus a certificate for 3 hours of community service from the U.S. Department of Education and, for taking extra time, a donation of \$20 to Save the Children's special fund to help kids affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.

Appendix MS2B-R4. Out-of-school Data Collection – Student Letter Reminder

we didn't want you to miss out on an opportunity to ~~earn two hours of volunteer service from the U.S. Department of Education plus \$20.~~ have your voice be heard. All you have to do is ~~spend about 45 minutes answering~~ answer a short survey and math and reading questions. You can choose to spend 45 minutes and receive \$20 plus a 2-hour community service certificate from the U.S. Department of Education, or you can spend 75 minutes and receive \$20 plus a 3-hour community service certificate from the U.S. Department of Education, and, for taking the extra time, we will make a \$20 donation to Save the Children's special fund to help kids affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.. We would really appreciate it if you would share your middle school experiences and opinions to help improve education for you and other students.

Appendix MS2B-R8g. MGLS:2017 Parent FAQs Text – Out-of-School Participation

What is involved for students?

Students will complete an online session made up of reading and math problems as well as a survey. ~~The online session will take about 45 minutes and once students have completed it, they will receive \$20.~~ Students who complete the 45-minute survey and math and reading items will receive \$20 and a 2-hour community service certificate. Those who complete the 75-minute survey and math and reading items will receive \$20 and a 3-hour community service certificate and, for their extra time with this survey, **we will make a donation of \$20 to Save the Children's special fund to help kids affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.** ~~plus a certificate for 2 hours of community service from the U.S. Department of Education.~~

Appendix MS2B-R8g1. MGLS:2017 Parent FAQs Text – Out-of-School Participation – Spanish

¿Qué deben hacer los estudiantes?

Los estudiantes completarán una sesión en Internet que incluye preguntas de matemáticas y lectura y una encuesta. ~~La sesión toma aproximadamente 45 minutos y una vez completada los estudiantes recibirán \$20 y un certificado por 2 horas de servicio comunitario del Departamento de Educación de los Estados Unidos.~~ Los estudiantes que completen una sesión de 45 minutos recibirán \$20 y un certificado de servicio comunitario de dos horas. Los que completen una sesión de 75 minutos recibirán \$20 y un certificado de servicio comunitario de tres horas más, por su tiempo extra con esta encuesta, **haremos una donación adicional de \$20 a la organización Save the Children** para ayudar a los necesitados niños afectados por debido a la pandemia del COVID-19.

Appendix T-V

Appendix MS2-U1. Student Survey. Specifications for the student survey were modified (p7) to add a screen on which students choose their session length, as follows:

OUT-OF-SCHOOL STUDENTS ONLY

SESSION CHOICE

We have two versions of this session to choose from. Please indicate below which one you would like to participate in:

- Up to 45 minutes. You will receive \$20 and a 2-hour community service certificate.
- Up to 75 minutes. You will receive \$20 and a 3-hour community service certificate. In addition, **we will make a donation of \$20 to Save the Children's special fund to help kids affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.**

PROGRAMMER BOX

IF STUDENT SELECTS 75-MINUTE OPTION, LOAD FULL ASSESSMENTS WITH SECOND STAGE READING AND MATH. OTHERWISE, LOAD ROUTER-ONLY ASSESSMENTS.

Appendix W

Appendix MS2-W.3.a. was revised to reference the choice of session time and associated incentive, as follows:

[IF STUDENT IS PARTICIPATING OUT OF SCHOOL: <<FULL OOS: Your child has an opportunity to help improve education for themselves and other students in the future. We are asking <CHILD_NAME> to **choose between a 75-minute or spend about 45-minutes taking session consisting of** a survey and math and reading questions.>> <<HYBRID OOS: <CHILD_NAME> recently participated in the MGLS:2017 in school and is asked to complete the remaining student activities outside of school.>> <<IF IN 'TEMPORARY OUT OF SCHOOL' GROUP: Your child's school was scheduled to participate in Spring 2020. You may have already received a letter explaining this. Due to the high number of temporary school closings across the nation, we'd like to invite your child to participate online.>>] Students who complete the 45-minute survey and math and reading items will receive \$20 and a 2-hour community service certificate. Those who complete the 75-minute survey and math and reading items will receive \$20 and a 3-hour community service certificate plus, for their extra time with this survey, **we will make a donation of \$20 to Save the Children's special fund to help kids affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.**

Appendix MS2-W.3.a.1. was revised to translate the above English revision into Spanish

[IF STUDENT IS PARTICIPATING OUT OF SCHOOL: <<FULL OOS: Su hijo(a) tiene la oportunidad de ayudar a mejorar ~~su~~ la educación ~~y la de~~ para ellos mismos y otros estudiantes en el futuro. Le ~~estamos pidiendo~~ pedimos a <CHILD_NAME>

que ~~dedique aproximadamente~~ escoja entre una sesión de 75 minutos o 45 minutos ~~a completar~~ que consiste en una encuesta y ~~contestar algunas~~ preguntas ~~sobre lectura y~~ de matemáticas y lectura. >> <<HYBRID OOS: <CHILD_NAME> recientemente participó en el MGLS: 2017 en la escuela y se le pide que complete las actividades estudiantiles restantes fuera de la escuela el resto de las actividades para estudiantes.>>. Una vez que hayamos.>>] [IF IN 'TEMPORARY OUT OF SCHOOL' GROUP: La escuela de su hijo(a) estaba programada para participar en la primavera de 2020. Es posible que ya haya recibido una carta explicando esto. Debido a la gran cantidad de cierres temporales de escuelas a través el país, nos gustaría invitar a su hijo(a) a participar en línea.] Los estudiantes que completen una sesión de 45 minutos recibirán \$20 y un certificado de servicio comunitario de dos horas. Los que completen una sesión de 75 minutos recibirán \$20 y un certificado de servicio comunitario de tres horas más, por su tiempo extra con esta encuesta, **haremos una donación adicional de \$20 a la organización Save the Children** para ayudar a los niños afectados por **la pandemia del COVID-19.**>>

Appendix MS2-W.3.c Reminder E-mail, Parent Survey and Out-of-school Student Data Collection

we wanted to make sure your child had the opportunity to ~~receive \$20 and 2 hours of community service from the U.S. Department of Education.~~ <<FULL OOS: All <CHILD_NAME> has to do is spend about either 45 or 75 minutes on the computer completing a survey and answering math and reading questions. Students who spend 45 minutes will receive \$40 and those who spend 75 minutes will receive \$60.>> have their voice heard. All <CHILD NAME> has to do is choose between

- a 45-minute session for \$20 plus a certificate for 2-hours of community service from the U.S. Department of Education, or
- a 75-minute session for \$20 plus a certificate for 3-hours of community service from the U.S. Department of Education plus, for taking extra time, a donation of \$20 to Save the Children's special fund to help kids affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.

Appendix MS2-W.5a. Email Invitation for Out-of-School Participation, Student Respondent

This is your chance to not only improve education for yourself and other students, but you will also earn ~~\$20 money and 2 hours of~~ volunteer service ~~hours~~ from the U.S. Department of Education.

All we are asking you to do is to ~~take about 45 minutes to~~ complete a short survey and ~~math and~~ answer some reading and math questions.

...

You will have the choice between:

- a 45-minute session for \$20 plus a certificate for 2 hours of community service from the U.S. Department of Education, or
- a 75-minute session for \$20 plus a certificate for 3 hours of community service from the U.S. Department of Education plus, for taking extra time, a donation of \$20 to Save the Children's special fund to help kids affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.

Appendix MS2-W.5b. Email Reminder for Out-of-School Participation, Student Respondent

We wanted to remind you that it's not too late to ~~earn \$20 money and 2 hours of volunteer service from the U.S. Department of Education!~~ All you have to do is to spend about 45 minutes ~~completing complete a short survey and answer some reading and math questions~~ have your voice be heard. All we are asking you to do is to complete a short survey and answer some reading and math questions. You can choose to spend 45 minutes and receive \$20 plus a 2-hour community service certificate from the U.S. Department of Education, or you can spend 75 minutes and receive \$20 plus a 3-hour community service certificate from the U.S. Department of Education, and, for taking the extra time, we will make a donation to Save the Children's special fund to help kids affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.

Appendix MS2-W.5c. Final Email Reminder for Out-of-School Participation, Student Respondent

Remember, once you finish the session, we will send you **a check for \$20 and a 2-hour certificate of service from the U.S. Department of Education** as a thank you. ~~Your certificate will be for 2 hours if you complete the 45-minute~~

session or 3 hours if you complete the 75-minute session. If you take the extra time, we will also donate \$20 to Save the Children's special fund to help kids affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.