



**School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS) 2018  
Cognitive Interviews**

**Appendix C-2  
- Appendices to Part C1 -**

**OMB #1850-0761 v.16**

National Center for Education Statistics  
Institute of Education Sciences  
U.S. Department of Education

March 2017

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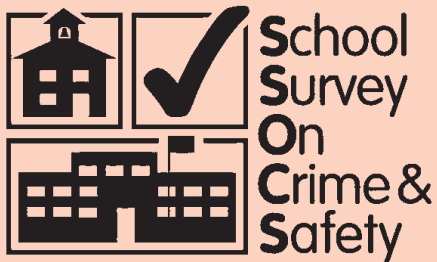
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# SCHOOL SURVEY ON CRIME AND SAFETY

## PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE

### 2015–16 SCHOOL YEAR

**This survey is designed to be completed by the principal or the person most knowledgeable about school crime and policies to provide a safe environment at your school.**



*(Please correct any errors in name, address, and ZIP Code.)*

#### **THIS SURVEY HAS BEEN ENDORSED BY:**

American Association of School Administrators  
American Federation of Teachers  
American School Counselors Association  
Association for Middle Level Education  
Association of American Educators  
Council of Chief State School Officers  
Education Northwest  
National Association of State Boards of Education  
National Association of Elementary School Principals

National Association of School Resource Officers  
National Association of Secondary School Principals  
National PTA  
National School Safety Center  
School Safety Advocacy Council  
UCLA Center for Mental Health in Schools  
National Association of School Psychologists  
School Social Work Association of America

#### **NOTICE**

Your answers 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 [Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002) 20 U.S.C., § 9573]. Reports of the findings from the survey will not identify participating districts, schools, or staff. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

**PLEASE RESPOND BY:**

FORM **SSOCS-1**  
(9-12-2016)

## DEFINITIONS

The following words are bolded and marked by an asterisk (\*) wherever they appear in the questionnaire. Please use these definitions as you respond.

**Arrest** – the act of detaining in legal custody. An "arrest" is the deprivation of a person's liberty by legal authority in response to a criminal charge.

**At school/at your school** – activities happening in school buildings, on school grounds, on school buses, and at places that hold school-sponsored events or activities. Unless otherwise specified, this refers to normal school hours or to times when school activities/events were in session.

**Bullying** – any unwanted aggressive behavior(s) by another youth or group of youths that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated. Bullying occurs among youth who are not siblings or current dating partners.

**Diagnostic assessment** – an evaluation conducted by a medical or mental health professional that identifies whether an individual has one or more medical and/or mental health diagnoses. This is in contrast to an educational assessment, which does not focus on clarifying a student's diagnosis.

**Firearm/explosive device** – any weapon that is designed to (or may readily be converted to) expel a projectile by the action of an explosive. This includes guns, bombs, grenades, mines, rockets, missiles, pipe bombs, or similar devices designed to explode and capable of causing bodily harm or property damage.

**Gender identity** – means one's inner sense of one's own gender, which may or may not match the sex assigned at birth. Different people choose to express their gender identity differently. For some, gender may be expressed through, for example, dress, grooming, mannerisms, speech patterns, and social interactions. Gender expression usually ranges between masculine and feminine, and some transgender people express their gender consistent with how they identify internally, rather than in accordance with the sex they were assigned at birth.

**Harassment** – harassing conduct may take many forms, including verbal acts and name-calling, as well as non-verbal behavior, such as graphic and written statements, or conduct that is physically threatening, harmful, or humiliating.

**Mental health disorders** – collectively, all diagnosable mental disorders or health conditions that are characterized by alterations in thinking, mood, or behavior (or some combination thereof) associated with distress and/or impaired functioning.

**Mental health professionals** – mental health services are provided by several different professions, each of which has its own training and areas of expertise. The types of professionals who may provide mental health services include psychiatrists, psychologists, psychiatric/mental health nurse practitioners, psychiatric/mental health nurses, clinical social workers, and professional counselors.

**Probation officer** – sometimes referred to as *community supervision* officers, supervises people who have been placed on probation instead of sent to prison. They work to ensure that the probationer is not a danger to the community and to help in their rehabilitation through frequent visits with the probationer. Probation officers write reports that detail each probationer's treatment plan and their progress since being put on probation. Most work exclusively with either adults or juveniles.

**Restorative circle** – a formal mediation process led by a facilitator that brings affected parties of a problem together to explore what happened, reflect on their roles, find a solution, and ultimately restore harmony to individual relationships and the larger community.

**Sexual harassment** – conduct that is unwelcome, sexual in nature, and denies or limits a student's ability to participate in or benefit from a school's education program. All students, regardless of sex or gender identity, can be victims of sexual harassment, and the harasser and the victim can be of the same sex. The conduct can be verbal, nonverbal, or physical.

**Sexual misconduct** – any act, including, but not limited to, any verbal, nonverbal, written or electronic communication or physical activity, directed toward or with a student regardless of the age of the student that is designed to establish a romantic or sexual relationship with the student. School staff have power over students by virtue of their position; thus student-staff relationships are not equal and students cannot be consenting parties to romantic or sexual relationships.

**Sexual orientation** – means one's emotional or physical attraction to the same and/or opposite sex.

**Trauma sensitivity** – a trauma-sensitive school is one in which all students feel safe, welcomed, and supported and where addressing trauma's impact on learning on a school-wide basis is at the center of its educational mission.

**Treatment** – a clinical service addressed at lessening or eliminating the symptoms of a disorder. In mental health, this may include psychotherapy, medication treatment, and/or counseling.

**Violence** – actual, attempted, or threatened fight or assault.

**Weapon** – any instrument or object used with the intent to threaten, injure, or kill. This includes look-alikes if they are used to threaten others.

## **SURVEY INSTRUCTIONS:**

- For most questions, please mark the box that best reflects your school's circumstances. Please mark your response with an "X".
- Some questions ask for counts or percents of items. Please place an "X" in the None box, rather than leaving the item blank, if the number of such items at your school is zero.
- Definitions are available for many terms on page 2. Defined terms are bolded and marked with an asterisk (\*) throughout the survey.
- Please report for the 2015–16 school year where noted.
- Please have this questionnaire filled out by the person most knowledgeable about school crime and policies to provide a safe environment.

### Paperwork Burden Statement

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 control number. The valid OMB control number for this voluntary information collection is 1850-0761. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 52 minutes per response, 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 estimate, suggestions for improving this collection, or comments or concerns about the contents or the status of your individual submission of this questionnaire, please write directly to: School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS), National Center for Education Statistics, 550 12th Street, S.W., #4012, Washington, DC 20202.

## School Practices and Programs

1. During the 2015–16 school year, was it a practice of your school to do the following?  
 ☛ If your school changed its practices during the school year, please answer regarding your most recent practice.

☛ Check "Yes" or "No" on each line.

	YES	NO
a. Perform one or more random sweeps for contraband (e.g., drugs or <b>weapons*</b> ), including dog sniffs	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
b. Prohibit non-academic <u>use</u> of cell phones or smartphones during school hours	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>

2. Does your school have a written plan that describes procedures to be performed in the following scenarios?

	YES	NO
a. Natural disasters (e.g., earthquakes or tornadoes)	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
b. Bomb threats or incidents	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
c. Accidents (e.g., school bus or other vehicle accidents; injury during a school-sponsored activity or trip)	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
d. Suicide threat or incident	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>

3. During the 2015–16 school year, did your school have any formal programs that included the following components for students?

- ☛ If a program has multiple components, answer "Yes" for each that applies.  
 ☛ Check "Yes" or "No" on each line.

	Does your school have a formal program with the following component?		If "Yes," was an intention of this program to prevent or reduce <b>violence*</b> ?	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
a. Prevention curriculum, instruction, or training for students (e.g., conflict resolution, <b>anti-bullying*</b> , dating <b>violence*</b> prevention)	394 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	396 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
b. Behavioral or behavior modification intervention for students (including the use of positive reinforcements)	398 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	400 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
c. [Illegible text]	402 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	404 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
d. [Illegible text]	406 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	408 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
e. [Illegible text]	410 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	412 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
f. [Illegible text]	414 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	416 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
g. Student involvement in restorative circles* (e.g., "peace circles," "talking circles," "conflict circles")	418 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	420 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
h. Programs to promote a sense of community/ social interaction among students	422 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	424 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>

\*Please use the definition on page 2.

4. To the best of your knowledge, during the 2015–16 school year, were there any staff at your school who legally carried a **firearm\*** on school property?
- 🍎 Exclude School Resource Officers, other sworn law enforcement officers, or other security guards or personnel who carry firearms.
- 1  Yes
- 2  No

## School Mental Health Services

5. During the 2015–16 school year, did your school have the ability to provide **diagnostic assessment\*** (e.g., screening, psychiatric assessment) to students for **mental health disorders\*\***?
- 🍎 Include services that were provided **at school\*** as well as services provided through a contract the school has with an outside provider.

- 1  Yes
- 2  No → GO TO item 7 below.

6. Were **diagnostic assessment\*** services available to students from your school in the following locations?

🍎 Check "Yes" or "No" on each line.

a. **At school\***, by a school-employed or contracted **mental health professional\***

	YES	NO
a.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
b.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>

b. Outside of school, by a school-employed or contracted **mental health professional\***

7. During the 2015–16 school year, did your school have the ability to provide **treatment\*** (e.g., psychotherapy, medication) to students for **mental health disorders\*\***?

🍎 Include services that were provided **at school\*** as well as services provided through a contract the school has with an outside provider.

- 1  Yes
- 2  No → GO TO item 9 on page 6.

8. Were **treatment\*** services available to students from your school in the following locations?

🍎 Check "Yes" or "No" on each line.

a. **At school\***, by a school-employed or contracted **mental health professional\***

	YES	NO
a.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
b.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>

b. Outside of school, by a school-employed or contracted **mental health professional\***

\*Please use the definition on page 2.

## School Security Staff

9. During the 2015–16 school year, did your school have one or more school-based probation officers located on school property?

1  Yes

2  No

## Staff Training

10. During the 2015–16 school year, did your school or school district provide any of the following for classroom teachers or aides?

☛ Check "Yes" or "No" on each line.

	YES	NO
a. Training in classroom management for teachers	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
b. Training in school-wide discipline policies and practices related to <b>violence*</b>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
c. Training in recognizing early warning signs of students likely to exhibit violent behavior	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
d. Training in recognizing signs of self-harm or suicidal tendencies	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
e. Training in <b>trauma sensitivity*</b>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>

## Number of Incidents

11. Please record the number of **arrests\*** that occurred at your school during the 2015–16 school year. Please include all arrests that occurred **at school\***, regardless of whether a student or non-student was arrested.

☛ If none, please place an "X" in the None box.

Number of arrests

0  None

12. To the best of your knowledge, during the 2015–16 school year, have there been any incidents of **sexual misconduct\*** between a staff member at your school and a student at your school?

☛ Report on misconduct between staff and students whether or not the incidents occurred at school or away from school.

1  Yes

2  No

\*Please use the definition on page 2.



## Disciplinary Problems and Actions

13. To the best of your knowledge, how often do the following types of problems occur **at your school**?

👉 Check one response on each line.

	Happens daily	Happens at least once a week	Happens at least once a month	Happens on occasion	Never happens
a. Student racial/ethnic tensions	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
b. Student <b>sexual harassment</b> * of other students	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
c. Student <b>harassment</b> * of other students based on <b>sexual orientation</b> *	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
d. Student <b>harassment</b> * of other students based on <b>gender identity</b> *	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
e. Student <b>harassment</b> * of other students based on religion	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
f. Student <b>harassment</b> * of other students based on disability	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

\*Please use the definition on page 2.

## Appendix A-2: Cognitive Interview Communication Materials (for testing)

### Appendix A-2a: Advance Letter

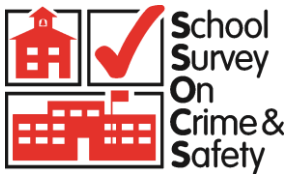


#### U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES

SSOCS-12(L)

NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

(12-2015)



I am writing to invite you to participate in the 2016 School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS). Data collection for this survey is being carried out by the U.S. Census Bureau on behalf of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) of the U.S. Department of Education. SSOCS is a recurring survey that focuses on the frequency of crime and violence in public schools and the programs and practices schools have developed to provide a safe school environment. It provides a unique opportunity to collect national data on crime and safety from the school's perspective. **SSOCS is the only survey of its kind.**

**Your response is critical to the success of this study** because your school is one of only a small number invited to participate in SSOCS. Your school represents hundreds of similar schools nationwide. Your involvement will only require the completion of a questionnaire. The person most knowledgeable about school crime and school policies to provide a safe environment should complete this survey.

NCES is authorized to conduct this survey by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA; 20 U.S.C., § 9543). Your answers 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). Reports of the findings from the survey will not identify participating districts, schools, or staff. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

**The U.S. Census Bureau will be sending the SSOCS questionnaire to your school next week.** If you have any general questions about the study, please contact the U.S. Census Bureau at 1-888-595-1332. Someone will be available to take your call Monday through Friday, between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. (Eastern Time). The U.S. Census Bureau is also available to answer your questions via e-mail at [adp.education.surveys@census.gov](mailto:adp.education.surveys@census.gov).

Thank you for giving this matter your attention. We look forward to your school's participation in this important data collection effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Peggy Carr".

Peggy G. Carr  
Acting Commissioner  
National Center for Education Statistics

Enclosures

#### SSOCS is endorsed by:

- American Association of School Administrators
- American Federation of Teachers
- American School Counselors Association
- Association for Middle Level Education
- Association of American Educators
- Council of Chief State School Officers
- Education Northwest
- National Association of State Boards of Education
- National Association of Elementary School Principals
- National Association of School Resource Officers
- National Association of Secondary School Principals
- National PTA
- National School Safety Center
- School Safety Advocacy Council
- UCLA Center for Mental Health in Schools
- National Association of School Psychologists
- School Social Work Association of America

#### Data collected by:

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
Economics and Statistics Administration  
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

#### Study conducted by:

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION  
STATISTICS

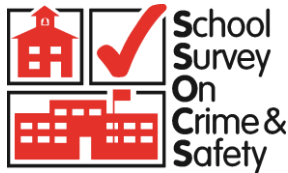
Dear

## Appendix A-2-b: Cover Letter

WASHINGTON, DC 20202



SSOCS-13(L)  
(12-2015)



### SSOCS is endorsed by:

- American Association of School Administrators
- American Federation of Teachers
- American School Counselors Association
- Association for Middle Level Education
- Association of American Educators
- Council of Chief State School Officers
- Education Northwest
- National Association of State Boards of Education
- National Association of Elementary School Principals
- National Association of School Resource Officers
- National Association of Secondary School Principals
- National PTA
- National School Safety Center
- School Safety Advocacy Council
- UCLA Center for Mental Health in Schools
- National Association of School Psychologists
- School Social Work Association of America

### Data collected by:

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
Economics and Statistics Administration  
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

### Study conducted by:

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION  
STATISTICS

Dear

Last week, I wrote to request your participation in the School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS), an important national study that collects information about crime and safety in public schools. Data collection for this survey is being carried out by the U.S. Census Bureau on behalf of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) of the U.S. Department of Education.

### U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES

### NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

As we mentioned in our previous letter, SSOCS provides a unique opportunity to collect national data on crime and safety from the school's perspective. We are confident that, with your participation, we can provide data to state and federal agencies about various types of crime and discipline that exist in schools today. Although SSOCS may ask some questions that appear similar to those on other surveys, this survey is not connected to any other state or federal data collection system. **SSOCS is unique in that it provides national estimates of school crime and safety using common definitions across all states.**

NCES is authorized to conduct this survey by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA; 20 U.S.C., § 9543). We realize that data on school crime are highly sensitive, so we want to remind you that information provided as part of this study 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). Reports of the findings from the survey will not identify participating districts, schools, or staff. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

While your participation in this survey is voluntary and your decision will not affect any benefits or funding you receive from the U.S. Department of Education, we do hope that you will participate in this important national survey.

**We would appreciate the return of the questionnaire within two weeks.** A postage-paid return envelope has been enclosed for your convenience. If you have any general questions about the study, please contact the U.S. Census Bureau at 1-888-595-1332. Someone will be available to take your call Monday through Friday, between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. (Eastern Time). The U.S. Census Bureau is also available to answer your questions via e-mail at [adep.education.surveys@census.gov](mailto:adep.education.surveys@census.gov).

Sincerely,

Peggy G. Carr  
Acting Commissioner  
National Center for Education Statistics

Enclosures

WASHINGTON, DC 20202



## Do individual school data remain confidential?

Your answers 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. Code, Section 9573). Your answers will be combined with those from others to produce summary statistics and reports. No individual data such as names or addresses will be reported. Any attempt on the part of a data user to identify a school or a specific respondent is prohibited by law and punishable with a fine of up to \$250,000 and/or a prison term up to 5 years.

## Where can I find more information about the SSOCS?

To see reports, publications, and other information on the SSOCS, please visit the SSOCS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/SSOCS>.

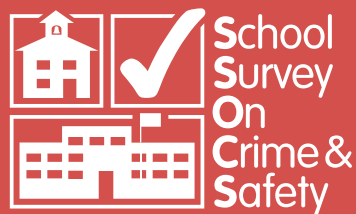
## Resources

- ★ For helpful tips on emergency planning: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oesel/ohs/news.html>
- ★ For more information on the prevention of bullying: <http://www.stopbullying.gov>
- ★ For important school safety resources: <http://nij.gov/topics/crime/school-crime>
- ★ More school safety resources: <http://www.cdc.gov/features/safeschools>



# The School Survey on Crime and Safety

( S S O C S )



National Center for Education Statistics  
Institute of Education Sciences

1990 K Street NW  
Washington, DC 20006-5651

[nces.ed.gov](http://nces.ed.gov)  
202-502-7300

[www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)



[ies.ed.gov](http://ies.ed.gov)



NCES 2015-045  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



## What is the School Survey on Crime and Safety?

The School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS) is a national survey of elementary and secondary public school principals that collects information on school safety, including the frequency of school crime and violence, disciplinary actions, and school practices related to the prevention and reduction of crime. SSOCS is one of the nation's primary sources of school-level data on crime and safety. Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), it has been administered five times since 1999 to nationally representative samples of schools and will be conducted again in the spring of the 2015–16 school year. Your school has been selected to participate in this new wave of data collection.

## Why is the SSOCS important?

To address school crime, parents, school staff, and policymakers must understand the extent and nature of the problem. SSOCS is designed to provide measures of crime and safety in the nation's public schools. Some findings from the most recent collection done in the 2009–10 school year:

- ★ During the 2009–10 school year, the rate of violent incidents per 1,000 students was higher in middle schools (40 incidents) than in primary schools or high schools (21 incidents each).
- ★ Some 25 percent of schools reported at least one incident of the distribution, possession, or use of illegal drugs, a higher percentage than that of the distribution, possession, or use of alcohol (14 percent of schools) or prescription drugs (12 percent of schools).
- ★ A higher percentage of middle schools reported that student bullying occurred at school daily or at least once a week (39 percent) than did high schools or primary schools (20 percent each).



## What topics are covered in the questionnaire?

- ★ School policies and programs concerning crime and safety;
- ★ Student and teacher involvement in efforts to prevent or reduce school violence;
- ★ Frequency and types of disciplinary actions such as expulsions, transfers, and suspensions for selected offenses;
- ★ Frequency and types of crimes at school, including rape, sexual battery, physical attack, robbery, theft, and vandalism;
- ★ Student access to mental health services; and
- ★ Responsibilities of sworn law enforcement officers and SROs.

## Why was my school selected?

There are more than 80,000 public schools in the United States and only a small proportion are surveyed at one time. Your school was selected to represent schools similar to yours from across the nation. Your participation is important so that the results represent the diversity of America's public schools.

# Cognitive Laboratory: Protocol for SSOCS Survey

## MATERIALS NEEDED FOR INTERVIEW

- INTERVIEWER PROTOCOL BOOKLET (THIS BOOKLET)
- SSOCS SURVEY INTRODUCTION MATERIALS (COVER LETTER, ADVANCE LETTER, BROCHURE)
- RESPONDENT QUESTIONNAIRE
- DO YOU HAVE THE CORRECT VERSION OF THE BOOKLET AND QUESTIONNAIRE?
- THINK ALOUD PRACTICE PAGE
- CONSENT FORM (TWO COPIES)
- INCENTIVE
- PAYMENT RECEIPT
- DIGITAL RECORDER AND EXTRA BATTERIES
- PENS AND PENCILS

**NOTE:** Probes preceded by the symbol ❖ are considered to be “critical”. If pressed for time, interviewers should prioritize them over non-critical questions/probes. However, all probes should be asked if time allows for it. If a probe is not asked, please record it as: ‘DID NOT PROBE’.

## STEP 1: WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION SCRIPT

**Interviewer Instructions:** The following scripts should NOT be read verbatim. Text in italics is suggested content with which the interviewer should be thoroughly familiar in advance. Text in brackets [ ] presents instructions for the interviewer.

Hello, my name is **<your name>** and I work for the American Institutes for Research. It’s nice to meet you, thanks for coming to help us out today.

[Create small talk to build rapport with the principal]:

You are here today to help us out with a survey that we are working on with the U.S. Department of Education. This survey asks about your opinions of the school where you work: [school name]. I will ask you to take the survey as if you were taking a real survey. There are no right or wrong answers, and it’s ok if you do not know some of the answers. As you are answering the questions I will stop you once in a while to ask you questions. This will help us make the survey better and clearer for other principals and school staff just like you.

Because the information you provide is so important, I am going to be taking notes while you are filling in the survey and we are talking [INSERT IF THERE IS AN OBSERVER: and my colleague will also be observing our session today]. We’d also like to record this interview so researchers can review the tapes later. Any information that refers to you or the name of your school will not be included in our report. Your answers 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). Are you okay with us recording the interview? [BEGIN RECORDING]

As a thank you for your time and effort, you will receive a \$75 gift card at the end of today’s interview.

Remember, you are not being tested; we want you to tell us what you think about the survey. Would you like to be a part of this study? [If respondent agrees, continue. If not, end the interview.]

If at any time you want to stop, just let me know. [If, for any reason, the participant is no longer interested in participating, thank the participant for his/her time and end the interview.]

Before we continue, do you have any questions about what I just said? [Answer any questions the participant may ask.]

PROVIDE RESPONDENT WITH A COPY OF THE INFORMED CONSENT FORM. ASK THE RESPONDENT TO READ THE FORM (OR READ IT TO HIM/HER, DEPENDING ON RESPONDENT PREFERENCE), ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS, AND HAVE THE RESPONDENT SIGN THE FORM. LEAVE A SEPARATE COPY OF THE FORM WITH THE RESPONDENT.

- SIGNED CONSENT FORM COLLECTED
- COPY OF CONSENT FORM GIVEN TO RESPONDENT

**STEP 2: THINK-ALOUD PRACTICE**

While you fill out the survey I want you to think out loud about how you are answering the questions. Hearing you talk about how you figure out your answers to the questions will help me understand how to make the questions better. I am more interested in how you arrive at your answers than in the answers you give me. To help you get started on thinking aloud, we are going to do a practice activity.

I’m going to give you a piece of paper with a question in it. I’m going to ask you to read out loud the question and think aloud as you decide on your answer. [Give respondent handout with think aloud practice.]

**QUESTION: How many windows are there in the house or apartment where you live?**

Please tell me what you are thinking while you are figuring out your answer.

[NOTE: If Principal has difficulty with the think-aloud practice, please show them an alternative method of responding by answering the question yourself and model the think-aloud method]

**STEP 3: COMPLETION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

Now I would like you to begin the questionnaire. [Hand respondent a copy of the questionnaire and a pen.]

While you are answering the questions, please think about the school you currently work at: [school name]. I’d like you to think aloud while you decide on your answer. Please read aloud anything you would have read to yourself if I were not here.

Remember that I am very interested in hearing you talk about what you are thinking about as you figure out your answers to the questions.

General Probes – These should be used when the R shows signs of confusion to a question or when you would like the R to elaborate on a question that does not have a specific probe.	
Problem Items	What is this question asking, in your own words?
	What were you thinking when you answered this question?
Problem Instructions	Tell me what this introduction/instruction is telling you.

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Problems with Clarity	Can you tell me in your own words what this question is asking?
	What does this word [term] mean to you? [in reference to a particular word of technical term]
	Tell me what you were thinking when I asked you about this [topic, time period, degree, certification, etc...]
Skip and Marking Issues	I noticed you skipped this/checked this. How did you choose this answer and not this other option?
	Can you tell me how you chose this category? How easy or hard was it to find your answer on that list

**START THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

<b>SECTION: School Practices and Programs</b>	
<b>STOP Respondent after Question 4 – I'd like you to stop here</b>	
ALL: Were there any questions in this section that were confusing or a bit difficult for you to answer? Which ones? PROBE.	
1. During the 2015–16 school year, was it a practice of your school to do the following? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If your school changed its practices during the school year, please answer regarding your most recent practice.</li> <li>• Check “Yes” or “No” on each line.</li> </ul>	
a. Perform one or more random sweeps for contraband (e.g., drugs or <b>weapons*</b> ), including dog sniffs	Can you tell me in your own words what this question is asking?  What is a sweep? What does this term mean for you? Can you describe this for me?
b. Prohibit non-academic <u>use</u> of cell phones or smartphones during school hours	What were you thinking when you answered this question?  ❖ Does your school allow for the use of cell phones or smartphones in certain situations or for specific purposes? Can you elaborate on these situations or purposes?



<p><b>Glossary term referenced:</b>  <b>Weapon</b> – any instrument or object used with the intent to threaten, injure, or kill. This includes look-alikes if they are used to threaten others.</p>	
<p>2. Does your school have a written plan that describes procedures to be performed in the following scenarios?</p>	
<p>General</p>	<p>What is this question asking, in your own words?</p>
<p>c. Accidents (e.g., school bus or other vehicle accidents; injury during a school-sponsored activity or trip)</p>	<p>What were you thinking when you answered this question?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Are there other types of accidents beyond the examples here that are included in your school plans?</li> </ul>
<p>3. During the 2015–16 school year, did your school have any formal programs <u>intended to prevent or reduce violence*</u> that included the following components for students?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a program has multiple components, answer "Yes" for each that applies.</li> <li>• Check "Yes" or "No" on each line.</li> </ul>	
<p>General</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Can you tell me in your own words what this question is asking?</li> <li>❖ What would a program need to include for you to consider it to have the intention to prevent or reduce violence?</li> <li>❖ How did you handle this question if a component listed here is included in a program in your school without the specific intention to prevent or reduce violence?</li> </ul> <p>[WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW: Try to find out if principals are marking components that are specifically in “programs intended to prevent or reduce violence” – as noted in the stem – or if they are marking components for any programs they have, regardless of if the program has a specific focus on violence prevention/reduction.]</p>

<p><b>Glossary term referenced:</b>  <b>Violence</b> – actual, attempted, or threatened fight or assault.</p>	
<p>4. To the best of your knowledge, during the 2015–16 school year, were there any staff at your school who legally carried a <b>firearm*</b> on school property? Exclude School Resource Officers, other sworn law enforcement officers, or other security guards or personnel who carry firearms.</p>	
<p>General</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Can you tell me in your own words what this question is asking?</li>   <li>❖ If answered yes: Can you tell me about any additional policies or practices that staff who carry firearms must follow?</li> </ul> <p>[WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW: Try to find out how principals would know about policies or know if their staff carry guns and if there are particular rules the staff have to follow if they do bring a gun to school (specific training, ways of securing, etc.).]</p>
<p><b>Glossary term referenced:</b>  <b>Firearm/explosive device</b> – any weapon that is designed to (or may readily be converted to) expel a projectile by the action of an explosive. This includes guns, bombs, grenades, mines, rockets, missiles, pipe bombs, or similar devices designed to explode and capable of causing bodily harm or property damage.</p>	
<p><b>LET THE RESPONDENT CONTINUE WITH THE SURVEY.</b></p>	
<p><b>SECTION: School Security Staff</b></p>	
<p><b>STOP Respondent after Question 5 – I’d like you to stop here</b></p>	
<p>5. During the 2015–16 school year, did your school have one or more school-based <b>probation officers*</b> located on school property?</p>	
<p>General</p>	<p>Can you tell me in your own words what this question is asking?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Can you tell me what “probation officer” means to you in the context of this question?</li>   <li>❖ How did you come up with your answer? Tell me more about your answer?</li> </ul> <p>[WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW: Try to find out if principals know if students at their school are under probation, and if probation officers play a different role if they aren’t onsite.]</p>

**Glossary term referenced:**

**Probation officers** – sometimes referred to as *community supervision officers*, supervises people who have been placed on probation instead of sent to prison. They work to ensure that the probationer is not a danger to the community and to help in their rehabilitation through frequent visits with the probationer. Probation officers write reports that detail each probationer’s treatment plan and their progress since being put on probation. Most work exclusively with either adults or juveniles.

**LET THE RESPONDENT CONTINUE WITH THE SURVEY.**

**Section: School Mental Health Services****STOP Respondent after Question 9 – I’d like you to stop here**

6. During the 2015–16 school year, did your school have the ability to provide **diagnostic assessment\*** (e.g. screening, psychiatric assessment) to students for **mental health disorders\*?** *Include services that were provided at school\* as well as services provided through a contract the school has with an outside provider.*

*OBSERVE:* This is a yes/no question with a skip pattern if “no” is chosen. Does respondent follow the skip pattern?

General

Can you tell me what “diagnostic assessment” means to you?

General

Can you tell me what “mental health disorder” means to you?

**Glossary terms referenced:**

**At school/at your school** – activities happening in school buildings, on school grounds, on school buses, and at places that hold school-sponsored events or activities. Unless otherwise specified, this refers to normal school hours or to times when school activities/events were in session.

**Diagnostic assessment** – an evaluation conducted by a medical or mental health professional that identifies whether an individual has one or more medical and/or mental health diagnoses. This is in contrast to an educational assessment, which does not focus on clarifying a student’s diagnosis.

**Mental health disorders** – collectively, all diagnosable mental disorders or health conditions that are characterized by alterations in thinking, mood, or behavior (or some combination thereof) associated with distress and/or impaired functioning.

7. Were **diagnostic assessment\*** services available to students from your school in the following locations?

a. **At school\***, by a school-employed or contracted **mental health professional\***

In the context of this question, can you tell me what “mental health professional” means to you?

b. Outside of school, by a school-employed or contracted **mental health professional\***

In the context of this question, can you tell me what “mental health professional” means to you?

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<p>General</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Does your school have a contract with mental health professionals not employed by the school to provide diagnostic assessment services to students, either at school or outside of school?</li>   <li>❖ <i>If yes:</i> Could you tell me more about these contracted relationships?</li>   <li>❖ Are there other ways that your school is providing diagnostics assessment services to students from your school?</li>   <li>❖ <i>If yes:</i> What are they?</li> </ul>
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**Glossary terms referenced:**

**At school/at your school** – activities happening in school buildings, on school grounds, on school buses, and at places that hold school-sponsored events or activities. Unless otherwise specified, this refers to normal school hours or to times when school activities/events were in session.

**Diagnostic assessment** – an evaluation conducted by a medical or mental health professional that identifies whether an individual has one or more medical and/or mental health diagnoses. This is in contrast to an educational assessment, which does not focus on clarifying a student’s diagnosis.

**Mental health professionals** – mental health services are provided by several different professions, each of which has its own training and areas of expertise. The types of professionals who may provide mental health services include psychiatrists, psychologists, psychiatric/mental health nurse practitioners, psychiatric/mental health nurses, clinical social workers, and professional counselors.

8. During the 2015–16 school year, did your school have the ability to provide **treatment\*** (e.g. psychotherapy, medication) to students for **mental health disorders\*?** *Include services that were provided **at school\*** as well as services provided through a contract the school has with an outside provider.*

OBSERVE: This is a yes/no question with a skip pattern if “no” is chosen. Does respondent follow the skip pattern?

<p>General</p>	<p>Can you tell me what “treatment” means to you?</p>
<p>General</p>	<p>Can you tell me what “mental health disorder” means to you?</p>

**Glossary terms referenced:**

**At school/at your school** – activities happening in school buildings, on school grounds, on school buses, and at places that hold school-sponsored events or activities. Unless otherwise specified, this refers to normal school hours or to times when school activities/events were in session.

**Mental health disorders** – collectively, all diagnosable mental disorders or health conditions that are characterized by alterations in thinking, mood, or behavior (or some combination thereof) associated with distress and/or impaired functioning.

**Treatment** – a clinical service addressed at lessening or eliminating the symptoms of a disorder. In mental health, this may include psychotherapy, medication treatment, and/or counseling.

9. Were **treatment\*** services available to students from your school in the following locations?

<p>a. <b>At school*</b>, by a school-employed or contracted <b>mental health professional*</b></p>	<p>In the context of this question, can you tell me what “mental health professional” means to you?</p>
<p>b. Outside of school, by a school-employed or contracted <b>mental health professional*</b></p>	<p>In the context of this question, can you tell me what “mental health professional” means to you?</p>
<p>General</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Does your school have a contract with mental health professionals not employed by the school to provide treatment services to students, either at school or outside of school?</li> <li>❖ <i>If yes:</i> Could you tell me more about these contracted relationships?</li> <li>❖ Are there other ways that your school are providing treatment services to students from your school? <i>If yes,</i> what are they?</li> </ul>

**Glossary terms referenced:**

**At school/at your school** – activities happening in school buildings, on school grounds, on school buses, and at places that hold school-sponsored events or activities. Unless otherwise specified, this refers to normal school hours or to times when school activities/events were in session.

**Mental health professionals** – mental health services are provided by several different professions, each of which has its own training and areas of expertise. The types of professionals who may provide mental health services include psychiatrists, psychologists, psychiatric/mental health nurse practitioners, psychiatric/mental health nurses, clinical social workers, and professional counselors.

**Treatment** – a clinical service addressed at lessening or eliminating the symptoms of a disorder. In mental health, this may include psychotherapy, medication treatment, and/or counseling.

**LET THE RESPONDENT CONTINUE WITH THE SURVEY.**

<b>Section: Staff Training</b>	
<b>STOP Respondent after Question 10 – I'd like you to stop here</b>	
10. During the 2015–16 school year, did your school or school district provide any of the following for classroom teachers or aides?	
c. Training in recognizing early warning signs of students likely to exhibit violent behavior	Can you tell me in your own words what this question is asking?
e. Training in <b>trauma sensitivity*</b>	❖ Can you tell me what “trauma sensitivity” means to you in the context of this question?
<b>Glossary terms referenced:</b> <b>Trauma sensitivity</b> – a trauma-sensitive school is one in which all students feel safe, welcomed, and supported and where addressing trauma’s impact on learning on a school-wide basis is at the center of its educational mission.	
<b>LET THE RESPONDENT CONTINUE WITH THE SURVEY.</b>	
<b>SECTION: Number of Incidents</b>	
<b>STOP Respondent after Question 12 – I'd like you to stop here</b>	
11. Please record the number of <b>arrests*</b> that occurred at your school during the 2015–16 school year. Please include all arrests that occurred <b>at school*</b> , regardless of whether a student or non-student was arrested.	
General	❖ How did you come up with your answer? Tell me more about your answer?  ❖ Can you tell me what “arrests” means to you in the context of this question?
<b>Glossary terms referenced:</b> <b>Arrest</b> – the act of detaining in legal custody. An "arrest" is the deprivation of a person's liberty by legal authority in response to a criminal charge.  <b>At school/at your school</b> – activities happening in school buildings, on school grounds, on school buses, and at places that hold school-sponsored events or activities. Unless otherwise specified, this refers to normal school hours or to times when school activities/events were in session.	
12. To the best of your knowledge, during the 2015–16 school year, have there been any incidents of <b>sexual misconduct*</b> between a staff member at your school and a student at your school? Report on misconduct between staff and students whether or not the incidents occurred at school or away from school.	
General	❖ How did you come up with your answer? Tell me more about your answer?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Can you tell me what “sexual misconduct” means to you in the context of this question?</li>   <li>❖ If answered yes: About how many incidents of sexual misconduct occurred during the 2015–16 school year?</li> </ul>
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**Glossary terms referenced:**

**Sexual misconduct** – any act, including, but not limited to, any verbal, nonverbal, written or electronic communication or physical activity, directed toward or with a student regardless of the age of the student that is designed to establish a romantic or sexual relationship with the student. School staff have power over students by virtue of their position, thus student-staff relationships are not equal and students cannot be consenting parties to romantic or sexual relationships.

**LET THE RESPONDENT CONTINUE WITH THE SURVEY**

**SECTION: Disciplinary Problems and Actions**

**STOP Respondent after Question 13 – I’d like you to stop here**

❖ ALL: Were there any questions in this section that were confusing or a bit difficult for you to answer? Which ones? PROBE.

**13. To the best of your knowledge, how often do the following types of problems occur at your school\*?**

General	Can you tell me in your own words what this question is asking?
a. Student racial/ethnic tensions	What were you thinking when you answered this question?
b. Student <b>sexual harassment*</b> of other students	<p>Can you tell me in your own words what this question is asking?</p> <p>Can you tell me what “sexual harassment” means to you?</p>
c. Student <b>harassment*</b> of other students based on <b>sexual orientation*</b>	Can you tell me in your own words what this question is asking?

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	<p>Can you tell me what “harassment” means to you?</p> <p>Can you tell me what “sexual orientation” means to you?</p>
d. Student <b>harassment*</b> of other students based on <b>gender identity*</b>	Can you tell me what “gender identity” means to you?
e. Student <b>harassment*</b> of other students based on religion	What were you thinking when you answered this question?
f. Student <b>harassment*</b> of other students based on disability	Can you tell me in your own words what this question is asking?

**Glossary terms referenced:**

**At school/at your school** – activities happening in school buildings, on school grounds, on school buses, and at places that hold school-sponsored events or activities. Unless otherwise specified, this refers to normal school hours or to times when school activities/events were in session.

**Gender identity** – means one’s inner sense of one’s own gender, which may or may not match the sex assigned at birth. Different people choose to express their gender identity differently. For some, gender may be expressed through, for example, dress, grooming, mannerisms, speech patterns, and social interactions. Gender expression usually ranges between masculine and feminine, and some transgender people express their gender consistent with how they identify internally, rather than in accordance with the sex they were assigned at birth.

**Harassment** – harassing conduct may take many forms, including verbal acts and name-calling, as well as non-verbal behavior, such as graphic and written statements, or conduct that is physically threatening, harmful or humiliating.

**Sexual harassment** – conduct that is unwelcome, sexual in nature, and denies or limits a student’s ability to participate in or benefit from a school’s education program. All students, regardless of sex or gender identity, can be victims of sexual harassment, and the harasser and the victim can be of the same sex. The conduct can be verbal, nonverbal, or physical.

**Sexual orientation** – means one’s emotional or physical attraction to the same and/or opposite sex.

**END OF SURVEY**

**IF TIME ALLOWS: Review the respondent’s answers to the survey in order to ensure that there isn’t any confusion about any of the answers.**

**STEP 4: REVIEW SSOCS MATERIALS**



Now I'd like to review the materials that you receive either in preparation of the survey or with the survey. [Hand respondent the SSOCS Survey Introduction Materials (including the advanced letter, cover letter, and brochure)]

Please take a few minutes to read through these materials.

[Referring to the Advanced Letter and Cover Letter]

1. ❖ In your own words, can you tell me what these letters are for?
2. In your own words, can you tell me what the information gathered from this survey is going to be used for?
3. How would you improve these letters?
4. After you received the Advanced letter, would you take any steps to prepare for the SSOCS survey? If yes, what would those steps be?

[Referring to the Brochure]

1. In your own words, can you tell me what this brochure is telling you?
2. Is there any additional information that you would want provided in the brochure?
3. ❖ Is receiving this brochure helpful or not helpful? (PROBE: *Why is that?*)
4. ❖ Do you prefer to receive the brochure in the mail or is there a better way to access this information?

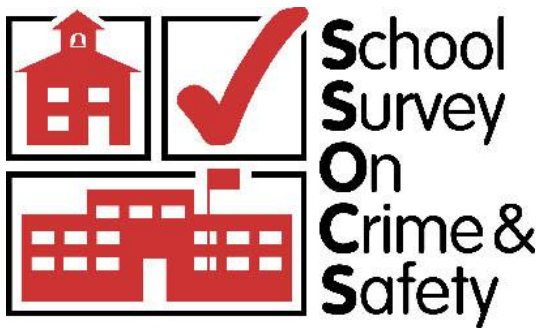
[Referring to the Physical Envelope/Pen]

1. What would be your response if you received this survey in a FedEx envelope at your school? Why?

2. What would increase the likelihood that you would open the envelope?
3. ❖ Would your approach to this survey change if it were delivered by USPS or priority mail? Why?
4. ❖ Would the inclusion of a small gift, such as a free pen, increase the likelihood that you would respond to the survey?

[Referring to all the materials together]

1. ❖ Based on these materials, are there any reasons why you would or would not complete this survey?
2. ❖ Are there materials or information not included that would increase the likelihood that you would respond to the survey? What would they be?
3. Do you have anything else you would like to tell me about these materials that you haven't had a chance to mention?



**National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)**

**School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS)  
Cognitive Interviews**

**Cognitive Laboratory Protocol  
OMB #1850-0803 v.169**

**September 29, 2016**

# Cognitive Laboratory: Protocol for SSOCS Survey

## MATERIALS NEEDED FOR INTERVIEW

- INTERVIEWER PROTOCOL BOOKLET (THIS BOOKLET)
- SSOCS SURVEY INTRODUCTION MATERIALS (COVER LETTER, ADVANCE LETTER, BROCHURE)
- RESPONDENT QUESTIONNAIRE
- DO YOU HAVE THE CORRECT VERSION OF THE BOOKLET AND QUESTIONNAIRE?
- DIGITAL RECORDER AND EXTRA BATTERIES
- PENS AND PENCILS

**NOTE:** Probes preceded by the symbol ❖ are considered to be “critical”. If pressed for time, interviewers should prioritize them over non-critical questions/probes. However, all probes should be asked if time allows for it. If a probe is not asked, please record it as: ‘DID NOT PROBE’.

## STEP 1: WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION SCRIPT

**Interviewer Instructions:** The following scripts should NOT be read verbatim. Text in italics is suggested content with which the interviewer should be thoroughly familiar in advance. Text in brackets [ ] presents instructions for the interviewer.

Hello, my name is **<your name>** and I work for the American Institutes for Research. It’s nice to meet you, thanks for coming to help us out today.

[Create small talk to build rapport with the principal]:

You are here today to help us out with a survey that we are working on with the U.S. Department of Education. This survey asks about your opinions of the school where you work: [school name]. I will ask you to take the survey as if you were taking a real survey. There are no right or wrong answers, and it’s ok if you do not know some of the answers. As you are answering the questions I will stop you once in a while to ask you questions. This will help us make the survey better and clearer for other principals and school staff just like you.

Because the information you provide is so important, I am going to be taking notes while you are filling in the survey and we are talking [INSERT IF THERE IS AN OBSERVER: and my colleague will also be observing our session today]. We’d also like to record this interview so researchers can review the tapes later. Any information that refers to you or the name of your school will not be included in our report. Your answers 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). Are you okay with us recording the interview? [BEGIN RECORDING]

As a thank you for your time and effort, you will receive a \$50 gift card will be mailed to you after today’s interview.

Remember, you are not being tested; we want you to tell us what you think about the survey. Would you like to be a part of this study? [If respondent agrees, continue. If not, end the interview.]

[NOTE: Verbal consent is sufficient for a remote interview that is being recorded. If interview is not being recorded, respondent will need to email a signed consent form (which they will be sent with all of the materials.)]

If at any time you want to stop, just let me know. [If, for any reason, the participant is no longer interested in participating, thank the participant for his/her time and end the interview.]

Before we continue, do you have any questions about what I just said? [Answer any questions the participant may ask.]

**STEP 2: THINK-ALOUD PRACTICE**

While you fill out the survey I want you to think out loud about how you are answering the questions. Hearing you talk about how you figure out your answers to the questions will help me understand how to make the questions better. I am more interested in how you arrive at your answers than in the answers you give me. To help you get started on thinking aloud, we are going to do a practice activity.

I’m going to ask you a question, and I would like you to think aloud as you decide on your answer.

**QUESTION: How many windows are there in the house or apartment where you live?**

Please tell me what you are thinking while you are figuring out your answer.

[NOTE: If Principal has difficulty with the think-aloud practice, please show them an alternative method of responding by answering the question yourself and model the think-aloud method]

**STEP 3: COMPLETION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

Now I would like you to begin the questionnaire. Please open the attachment “SSOCS 2016 Questionnaire.” If you have printed the questionnaire out, please pull it out.

While you are answering the questions, please think about the school you currently work at: [school name]. I’d like you to think aloud while you decide on your answer. Please read aloud anything you would have read to yourself if I were not here.

Remember that I am very interested in hearing you talk about what you are thinking about as you figure out your answers to the questions.

General Probes – These should be used when the R shows signs of confusion to a question or when you would like the R to elaborate on a question that does not have a specific probe.	
Problem Items	What is this question asking, in your own words?
	What were you thinking when you answered this question?
Problem Instructions	Tell me what this introduction/instruction is telling you.
Problems with Clarity	Can you tell me in your own words what this question is asking?
	What does this word [term] mean to you? [in reference to a particular word of technical term]

	Tell me what you were thinking when I asked you about this [topic, time period, degree, certification, etc...]
Skip and Marking Issues	I noticed you skipped this/checked this. How did you choose this answer and not this other option?
	Can you tell me how you chose this category? How easy or hard was it to find your answer on that list?

**START THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

<b>SECTION: School Practices and Programs</b>	
<b>STOP Respondent after Question 4 – I'd like you to stop here.</b>	
ALL: Were there any questions in this section that were confusing or a bit difficult for you to answer? Which ones? PROBE.	
1. During the 2015–16 school year, was it a practice of your school to do the following? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If your school changed its practices during the school year, please answer regarding your most recent practice.</li> <li>• Check “Yes” or “No” on each line.</li> </ul>	
a. Perform one or more random sweeps for contraband (e.g., drugs or <b>weapons*</b> ), including dog sniffs	Can you tell me in your own words what this question is asking?  What is a sweep? What does this term mean for you? Can you describe this for me?
b. Prohibit non-academic <u>use</u> of cell phones or smartphones during school hours	What were you thinking when you answered this question?  ❖ Does your school allow for the use of cell phones or smartphones in certain situations or for specific purposes? Can you elaborate on these situations or purposes?
<b>Glossary term referenced:</b> <b>Weapon</b> – any instrument or object used with the intent to threaten, injure, or kill. This includes look-alikes if they are used to threaten others.	
2. Does your school have a written plan that describes procedures to be performed in the following scenarios?	

SSOCS 2018 Cognitive Labs OMB Package (Remote Protocol)

General	What is this question asking, in your own words?
c. Accidents (e.g., school bus or other vehicle accidents; injury during a school-sponsored activity or trip)	<p>What were you thinking when you answered this question?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Are there other types of accidents beyond the examples here that are included in your school plans?</li> </ul>
<p>3. During the 2015–16 school year, did your school have any formal programs <u>intended to prevent or reduce violence*</u> that included the following components for students?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a program has multiple components, answer "Yes" for each that applies.</li> <li>• Check "Yes" or "No" on each line.</li> </ul>	
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Can you tell me in your own words what this question is asking?</li> <li>❖ What would a program need to include for you to consider it to have the intention to prevent or reduce violence?</li> <li>❖ How did you handle this question if a component listed here is included in a program in your school without the specific intention to prevent or reduce violence?</li> </ul> <p>[WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW: Try to find out if principals are marking components that are specifically in “programs intended to prevent or reduce violence” – as noted in the stem – or if they are marking components for any programs they have, regardless of if the program has a specific focus on violence prevention/reduction.]</p>
<p><b>Glossary term referenced:</b>  <b>Violence</b> – actual, attempted, or threatened fight or assault.</p>	
<p>4. To the best of your knowledge, during the 2015–16 school year, were there any staff at your school who legally carried a <b>firearm*</b> on school property? Exclude School Resource Officers, other sworn law enforcement officers, or other security guards or personnel who carry firearms.</p>	
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Can you tell me in your own words what this question is asking?</li> <li>❖ If answered yes: Can you tell me about any additional policies or practices that staff who carry firearms must follow?</li> </ul>

	[WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW: Try to find out how principals would know about policies or know if their staff carry guns and if there are particular rules the staff have to follow if they do bring a gun to school (specific training, ways of securing, etc.).]
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**Glossary term referenced:**

**Firearm/explosive device** – any weapon that is designed to (or may readily be converted to) expel a projectile by the action of an explosive. This includes guns, bombs, grenades, mines, rockets, missiles, pipe bombs, or similar devices designed to explode and capable of causing bodily harm or property damage.

**LET THE RESPONDENT CONTINUE WITH THE SURVEY.**

**SECTION: School Security Staff**

**STOP Respondent after Question 5 – I’d like you to stop here.**

5. During the 2015–16 school year, did your school have one or more school-based **probation officers\*** located on school property?

General	<p>Can you tell me in your own words what this question is asking?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Can you tell me what “probation officer” means to you in the context of this question?</li> <li>❖ How did you come up with your answer? Tell me more about your answer?</li> </ul> <p>[WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW: Try to find out if principals know if students at their school are under probation, and if probation officers play a different role if they aren’t onsite.]</p>
---------	--

**Glossary term referenced:**

**Probation officers** – sometimes referred to as *community supervision officers*, supervises people who have been placed on probation instead of sent to prison. They work to ensure that the probationer is not a danger to the community and to help in their rehabilitation through frequent visits with the probationer. Probation officers write reports that detail each probationer’s treatment plan and their progress since being put on probation. Most work exclusively with either adults or juveniles.

**LET THE RESPONDENT CONTINUE WITH THE SURVEY.**

**Section: School Mental Health Services**

**STOP Respondent after Question 9 – I’d like you to stop here.**

6. During the 2015–16 school year, did your school have the ability to provide **diagnostic assessment\*** (e.g. screening, psychiatric assessment) to students for **mental health disorders\*?** *Include services that were provided at school\* as well as services provided through a contract the school has with an outside provider.*



<i>OBSERVE</i> : This is a yes/no question with a skip pattern if “no” is chosen. Does respondent follow the skip pattern?	
General	Can you tell me what “diagnostic assessment” means to you?
General	Can you tell me what “mental health disorder” means to you?
<p><b>Glossary terms referenced:</b></p> <p><b>At school/at your school</b> – activities happening in school buildings, on school grounds, on school buses, and at places that hold school-sponsored events or activities. Unless otherwise specified, this refers to normal school hours or to times when school activities/events were in session.</p> <p><b>Diagnostic assessment</b> – an evaluation conducted by a medical or mental health professional that identifies whether an individual has one or more medical and/or mental health diagnoses. This is in contrast to an educational assessment, which does not focus on clarifying a student’s diagnosis.</p> <p><b>Mental health disorders</b> – collectively, all diagnosable mental disorders or health conditions that are characterized by alterations in thinking, mood, or behavior (or some combination thereof) associated with distress and/or impaired functioning.</p>	
7. Were <b>diagnostic assessment*</b> services available to students from your school in the following locations?	
a. <b>At school*</b> , by a school-employed or contracted <b>mental health professional*</b>	In the context of this question, can you tell me what “mental health professional” means to you?
b. Outside of school, by a school-employed or contracted <b>mental health professional*</b>	In the context of this question, can you tell me what “mental health professional” means to you?
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Does your school have a contract with mental health professionals not employed by the school to provide diagnostic assessment services to students, either at school or outside of school?</li> <li>❖ <i>If yes:</i> Could you tell me more about these contracted relationships?</li> <li>❖ Are there other ways that your school is providing diagnostics assessment services to students from your school?</li> </ul>

	❖ <i>If yes:</i> What are they?
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**Glossary terms referenced:**  
**At school/at your school** – activities happening in school buildings, on school grounds, on school buses, and at places that hold school-sponsored events or activities. Unless otherwise specified, this refers to normal school hours or to times when school activities/events were in session.  
**Diagnostic assessment** – an evaluation conducted by a medical or mental health professional that identifies whether an individual has one or more medical and/or mental health diagnoses. This is in contrast to an educational assessment, which does not focus on clarifying a student’s diagnosis.  
**Mental health professionals** – mental health services are provided by several different professions, each of which has its own training and areas of expertise. The types of professionals who may provide mental health services include psychiatrists, psychologists, psychiatric/mental health nurse practitioners, psychiatric/mental health nurses, clinical social workers, and professional counselors.

8. During the 2015–16 school year, did your school have the ability to provide **treatment\*** (e.g. psychotherapy, medication) to students for **mental health disorders\***? *Include services that were provided **at school\*** as well as services provided through a contract the school has with an outside provider.*

OBSERVE: This is a yes/no question with a skip pattern if “no” is chosen. Does respondent follow the skip pattern?

General	Can you tell me what “treatment” means to you?
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General	Can you tell me what “mental health disorder” means to you?
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**Glossary terms referenced:**  
**At school/at your school** – activities happening in school buildings, on school grounds, on school buses, and at places that hold school-sponsored events or activities. Unless otherwise specified, this refers to normal school hours or to times when school activities/events were in session.  
**Mental health disorders** – collectively, all diagnosable mental disorders or health conditions that are characterized by alterations in thinking, mood, or behavior (or some combination thereof) associated with distress and/or impaired functioning.  
**Treatment** – a clinical service addressed at lessening or eliminating the symptoms of a disorder. In mental health, this may include psychotherapy, medication treatment, and/or counseling.

9. Were **treatment\*** services available to students from your school in the following locations?

<p>a. <b>At school*</b>, by a school-employed or contracted <b>mental health professional*</b></p>	<p>In the context of this question, can you tell me what “mental health professional” means to you?</p>
<p>b. Outside of school, by a school-employed or contracted <b>mental health professional*</b></p>	<p>In the context of this question, can you tell me what “mental health professional” means to you?</p>
<p>General</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Does your school have a contract with mental health professionals not employed by the school to provide treatment services to students, either at school or outside of school?</li>   <li>❖ <i>If yes:</i> Could you tell me more about these contracted relationships?</li>   <li>❖ Are there other ways that your school are providing treatment services to students from your school? <i>If yes,</i> what are they?</li> </ul>

**Glossary terms referenced:**

**At school/at your school** – activities happening in school buildings, on school grounds, on school buses, and at places that hold school-sponsored events or activities. Unless otherwise specified, this refers to normal school hours or to times when school activities/events were in session.

**Mental health professionals** – mental health services are provided by several different professions, each of which has its own training and areas of expertise. The types of professionals who may provide mental health services include psychiatrists, psychologists, psychiatric/mental health nurse practitioners, psychiatric/mental health nurses, clinical social workers, and professional counselors.

**Treatment** – a clinical service addressed at lessening or eliminating the symptoms of a disorder. In mental health, this may include psychotherapy, medication treatment, and/or counseling.

**LET THE RESPONDENT CONTINUE WITH THE SURVEY.**

**Section: Staff Training**

**STOP Respondent after Question 10 – I’d like you to stop here.**

10. During the 2015–16 school year, did your school or school district provide any of the following for classroom teachers or aides?

<p>d. Training in recognizing signs of self-harm or suicidal tendencies</p>	<p>Can you tell me in your own words what this question is asking?</p>
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<p>e. Training in <b>trauma sensitivity*</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Can you tell me what “trauma sensitivity” means to you in the context of this question?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Glossary terms referenced:</b>  <b>Trauma sensitivity</b> – a trauma-sensitive school is one in which all students feel safe, welcomed, and supported and where addressing trauma’s impact on learning on a school-wide basis is at the center of its educational mission.</p>	
<p><b>LET THE RESPONDENT CONTINUE WITH THE SURVEY.</b></p>	

<p><b>SECTION: Number of Incidents</b></p>	
<p><b>STOP Respondent after Question 12 – I’d like you to stop here.</b></p>	
<p>11. Please record the number of <b>arrests*</b> that occurred at your school during the 2015–16 school year. Please include all arrests that occurred <b>at school*</b>, regardless of whether a student or non-student was arrested.</p>	
<p>General</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ How did you come up with your answer? Tell me more about your answer?</li>   <li>❖ Can you tell me what “arrests” means to you in the context of this question?</li> </ul>

<p><b>Glossary terms referenced:</b>  <b>Arrest</b> – the act of detaining in legal custody. An "arrest" is the deprivation of a person's liberty by legal authority in response to a criminal charge.   <b>At school/at your school</b> – activities happening in school buildings, on school grounds, on school buses, and at places that hold school-sponsored events or activities. Unless otherwise specified, this refers to normal school hours or to times when school activities/events were in session.</p>	
<p>12. To the best of your knowledge, during the 2015–16 school year, have there been any incidents of <b>sexual misconduct*</b> between a staff member at your school and a student at your school? Report on misconduct between staff and students whether or not the incidents occurred at school or away from school.</p>	
<p>General</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ How did you come up with your answer? Tell me more about your answer?</li>   <li>❖ Can you tell me what “sexual misconduct” means to you in the context of this question?</li>   <li>❖ If answered yes: About how many incidents of sexual misconduct occurred during the 2015–16 school year?</li> </ul>

<p><b><u>Glossary terms referenced:</u></b> <b>Sexual misconduct</b> – any act, including, but not limited to, any verbal, nonverbal, written or electronic communication or physical activity, directed toward or with a student regardless of the age of the student that is designed to establish a romantic or sexual relationship with the student. School staff have power over students by virtue of their position, thus student-staff relationships are not equal and students cannot be consenting parties to romantic or sexual relationships.</p>	
<p><b>LET THE RESPONDENT CONTINUE WITH THE SURVEY</b></p>	

<b>SECTION: Disciplinary Problems and Actions</b>	
<b>STOP Respondent after Question 13 – I'd like you to stop here</b>	
❖ ALL: Were there any questions in this section that were confusing or a bit difficult for you to answer? Which ones? PROBE.	
13. To the best of your knowledge, how often do the following types of problems occur <b>at your school</b> ?	
General	Can you tell me in your own words what this question is asking?
a. Student racial/ethnic tensions	What were you thinking when you answered this question?
b. Student <b>sexual harassment*</b> of other students	Can you tell me in your own words what this question is asking?  Can you tell me what “sexual harassment” means to you?
c. Student <b>harassment*</b> of other students based on <b>sexual orientation*</b>	Can you tell me in your own words what this question is asking?  Can you tell me what “harassment” means to you?  Can you tell me what “sexual orientation” means to you?
d. Student <b>harassment*</b> of other students based on <b>gender identity*</b>	Can you tell me what “gender identity” means to you?
e. Student <b>harassment*</b> of other students based on religion	What were you thinking when you answered this question?
f. Student <b>harassment*</b> of other students based on disability	Can you tell me in your own words what this question is asking?

**Glossary terms referenced:**

**At school/at your school** – activities happening in school buildings, on school grounds, on school buses, and at places that hold school-sponsored events or activities. Unless otherwise specified, this refers to normal school hours or to times when school activities/events were in session.

**Gender identity** – means one’s inner sense of one’s own gender, which may or may not match the sex assigned at birth. Different people choose to express their gender identity differently. For some, gender may be expressed through, for example, dress, grooming, mannerisms, speech patterns, and social interactions. Gender expression usually ranges between masculine and feminine, and some transgender people express their gender consistent with how they identify internally, rather than in accordance with the sex they were assigned at birth.

**Harassment** – harassing conduct may take many forms, including verbal acts and name-calling, as well as non-verbal behavior, such as graphic and written statements, or conduct that is physically threatening, harmful or humiliating.

**Sexual harassment** – conduct that is unwelcome, sexual in nature, and denies or limits a student’s ability to participate in or benefit from a school’s education program. All students, regardless of sex or gender identity, can be victims of sexual harassment, and the harasser and the victim can be of the same sex. The conduct can be verbal, nonverbal, or physical.

**Sexual orientation** – means one’s emotional or physical attraction to the same and/or opposite sex.

**END OF SURVEY**

**IF TIME ALLOWS: Review the respondent’s answers to the survey in order to ensure that there isn’t any confusion about any of the answers.**

**STEP 4: REVIEW SSOCS MATERIALS**

I’d like to review the materials that you receive either in preparation of the survey or with the survey. Please open the attachment from the email I sent you earlier that is called “SSOCS Survey Introduction Materials”.

Please take a few minutes to read through these materials.

[Referring to the Advanced Letter and Cover Letter]

5. ❖ In your own words, can you tell me what these letters are for?
  
6. In your own words, can you tell me what the information gathered from this survey is going to be used for?
  
7. How would you improve these letters?

8. After you received the Advanced letter, would you take any steps to prepare for the SSOCS survey? If yes, what would those steps be?

[Referring to the Brochure]

5. In your own words, can you tell me what this brochure is telling you?
6. Is there any additional information that you would want provided in the brochure?
7. ❖ Is receiving this brochure helpful or not helpful? (PROBE: *Why is that?*)
8. ❖ Do you prefer to receive the brochure in the mail or is there a better way to access this information?

[Referring to the Physical Envelope/Pen]

5. What would be your response if you received this survey in a FedEx envelope at your school? Why?
6. What would increase the likelihood that you would open the envelope?
7. ❖ Would your approach to this survey change if it were delivered by USPS or priority mail? Why?
8. ❖ Would the inclusion of a small gift, such as a free pen, increase the likelihood that you would respond to the survey?



[Referring to all the materials together]

4. ❖ Based on these materials, are there any reasons why you would or would not complete this survey?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. ❖ Are there materials or information not included that would increase the likelihood that you would respond to the survey? What would they be?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. Do you have anything else you would like to tell me about these materials that you haven't had a chance to mention?

**AT THE END OF THE INTERVIEW**

**If this is a remote interview, please ask the respondent for his or her mailing address (so that we can send the incentive).**

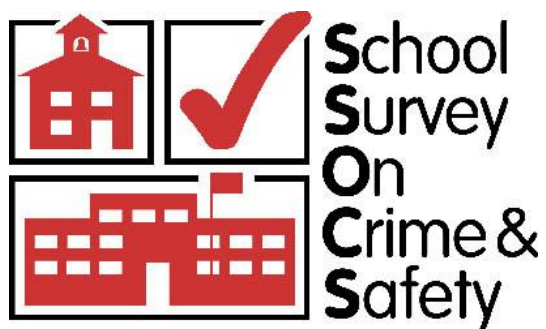
**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Street** \_\_\_\_\_

**City** \_\_\_\_\_

**State** \_\_\_\_\_

**Zip** \_\_\_\_\_



**National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)**

**School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS) 2018  
Cognitive Interviews 2016**

**Appendices A – E  
Communication Materials**

**OMB #1850-0803 v.171**

**September 2016**

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## Appendix C-1: Recruitment E-mail for SSOCS Cognitive Interviews

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Subject: Opportunity to Participate in a Research Study

<DATE>

Dear School Principal,

My name is <CONTACT NAME> and I am contacting you from the American Institutes for Research (AIR) [<RECRUITER>, a <RECRUITER LOCATION> area research company]. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education, and its contractor, the American Institutes for Research (AIR), are conducting an important study on school crime and safety.

On behalf of NCES, we are recruiting elementary and secondary principals (or other school personnel who are most knowledgeable about school crime and policies to provide a safe environment) to assist with the development of the School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS). Participants must have at least one full year of experience at their school in order to be eligible to participate in this study.

NCES needs to know if the questions in the survey are clear, and your input will help NCES to improve the overall quality of the survey. Participants will be asked to think aloud while they read questions from the School Survey on Crime and Safety. Additionally, the interviewer (AIR staff member) will ask targeted questions to gain a better understanding of participant comprehension of the survey questions. If selected to participate, you will receive either a \$50 gift card for your participation in a remote interview or a \$75 gift card for your participation in an in-person interview as a thank you for your time and effort.

The interview session can either take place in-person at your school or can be conducted remotely by telephone or video conference and will last approximately 60 minutes. The session can be scheduled at your convenience. Your participation is voluntary, and you may request to stop at any time during the interview session. The interview session will be recorded; all of your responses will be used for research purposes only and will not be disclosed or used, in identifiable form, for any other purpose except as required by law [Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002) 20 U.S.C., § 9573].

If you are interested in participating in this research study, please call (202) 403-6420 or e-mail [ssocs.survey@air.org](mailto:ssocs.survey@air.org). If you are not the person at your school that is most knowledgeable about school crime and policies to provide a safe environment, please feel free to forward this request to the most appropriate contact. We look forward to speaking with you soon!

Thank you,

Steven Hummel  
American Institutes for Research  
1000 Thomas Jefferson St. NW  
Washington, DC 20007  
(202) 403-6420  
[ssocs.survey@air.org](mailto:ssocs.survey@air.org)

**Appendix C-2: Recruitment Phone Script for SSOCS Cognitive Interviews**

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My name is <CONTACT NAME> and I am contacting you from the American Institutes for Research (AIR) [<RECRUITER>, a <RECRUITER LOCATION> area research company]. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education, and its contractor, the American Institutes for Research (AIR), are conducting an important study on school crime and safety. On behalf of NCES, we are looking for school principals or other school personnel who are “most knowledgeable about school crime and policies to provide a safe environment” to participate in interview sessions to help us understand how they interpret survey questions on school crime and safety. I’d like to tell you a little bit about the study; is now a good time? (YES or NO and call back later).

The School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS) is a nationally representative survey administered by NCES. Our objective in these interviews will be to assess the clarity of SSOCS survey questions. The information gained from these interview sessions will be used to revise the survey items. AIR will be conducting the interviews on behalf of NCES. Your participation is voluntary, and the interview session can be scheduled at your convenience. As a thank you for your time and effort, you will receive either a \$50 gift card for your participation in a remote interview or a \$75 gift card for your participation in an in-person interview.

As we know that <SCHOOL NAME> is <SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS (EX: ENROLLMENT SIZE, LOCATION, DEMOGRAPHICS)> you qualify to participate in an interview session with a researcher to discuss survey questions on school crime and safety. Would you be interested in participating in an interview session?

Participants must have at least one full year of experience at their school in order to be eligible to participate in this study. Have you been <POSITION> at this school for at least one full school year?

[If no, thank and terminate.]

The session will last approximately 60 minutes, and the interview is strictly for research purposes. Let me assure you that no one will attempt to sell or enroll you in anything.

We have several options for participation. The interview session can either take place in-person at <PRINCIPAL’S SCHOOL> or can be conducted remotely by telephone or video conference. The session can be scheduled at your convenience. Would you prefer an in-person or remote interview session? What date and time would work best for you?

[Wait for respondent response] Okay, great! The interview is scheduled for <DAY/DATE AND TIME>. Can you provide us with your email address so that we can send you a confirmation email? Following this conversation, you will receive an email confirming your interview time and location.

Thank you for your willingness to participate in an interview session. We look forward to seeing you on the <DATE> at <TIME>.

### Appendix C-3: Informed Consent Form for SSOCS Cognitive Interviews

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Dear Participant,

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education, and its contractor, the American Institutes for Research (AIR), are developing a survey, the School Survey on Crime and Safety. As part of the development process, we are seeking principals or school personnel who are “most knowledgeable about school crime and policies to provide a safe environment” to participate in interview sessions in an effort to gather information that will improve the clarity of the survey. An AIR staff member will meet with principals individually for up to 60 minutes by audio or video conference or in-person at <LOCATION>. As a thank you for their time and effort, participants will receive either a \$50 gift card for their participation in a remote interview or a \$75 gift card for their participation in an in-person interview.

Participants will be asked to think aloud while they read questions from the School Survey on Crime and Safety. Additionally, the interviewer (AIR staff member) will ask targeted questions to gain a better understanding of the principal’s comprehension of the survey questions. Participants’ responses will be recorded, and the information collected during these sessions will be used for research purposes only. Your participation is voluntary, and you may request to stop at any time during the interview session.

If you have any questions about this study or your rights as a study participant, you may contact Steven Hummel at the American Institutes for Research by phone (202-403-6420) or by email ([ssocs.survey@air.org](mailto:ssocs.survey@air.org)).

Before you are eligible to participate, you must sign the attached consent form.

Thank you,

Steven Hummel  
American Institutes for Research  
1000 Thomas Jefferson St. NW  
Washington, DC 20007  
(202) 403-6420  
[ssocs.survey@air.org](mailto:ssocs.survey@air.org)

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### Consent Form

You are invited to participate voluntarily in this interview, which is being conducted by the American Institutes for Research, a contract research firm, on behalf of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), which is part of the U.S. Department of Education. The purpose of this interview is to help NCES review the School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS) questionnaire to ensure that new survey items are well understood.

NCES is authorized to conduct these interviews by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA; 20 U.S.C. §9543), and this study has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB# 1850-0803). The interview and discussion will take approximately 60 minutes, and all responses will be recorded. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions we ask—we just want to ask your opinions about the questionnaire that has been developed. You will be asked how you understand specific terms and phrases in the questions as well as how you arrived at your answers. You can help us by describing anything you find confusing or difficult to understand in the questions or any issues that come up as you answer them.

Again, your participation in this study is voluntary. There is no physical risk and only minimal risk associated with data confidentiality. We will protect your information. We do not anticipate that any of the discussion topics will make you uncomfortable or upset. However, you may refuse to answer any question, and you may take a break at any time. The information you give us will be combined with the responses of others in a summary report that does not identify you as an individual. Your answers 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).

There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this study, but we hope that these interviews will help us develop and improve questions for a national survey about school crime and safety. Upon completing the interview, you will receive <INCENTIVE AMOUNT> in appreciation for your time and effort.

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I have read the attached consent form for the School Survey on Crime and Safety and associated activities; all of my questions have been answered. The above document describing the voluntary nature, response confidentiality, and procedures for this research study has been explained to me. I agree to participate.

**Signature of Participant** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

I certify that the purpose, the voluntary nature, and response confidentiality associated with participating in this research have been explained to me.

**Signature of Person Who Obtained Consent** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

**Appendix C-4: Confirmation E-mail for SSOCS Cognitive Interviews (In Person)**

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Subject: Confirmation of SSOCS Study Participation

<DATE>

Dear <NAME>,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS) study. This study is being conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education, and its contractor, the American Institutes for Research (AIR). Your input will help NCES improve the clarity of the survey so that others will better understand it. You will be asked to think aloud as you read sample questions from the School Survey on Crime and Safety so that we can better understand your comprehension of survey items. Your participation is voluntary, and you may request to stop at any time during the session.

Your responses will be used for research purposes only and will not be disclosed or used, in identifiable form, for any other purpose except as required by law [Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002) 20 U.S.C., § 9573]. Your responses will be recorded.

You have been scheduled for an interview session at <TIME RANGE> on <DATE> at <LOCATION>. You will receive a \$75 gift card as a thank you for your time and participation.

The address of <LOCATION> is as follows:

<ADDRESS>

We thank you for your participation in this important study. If you have any questions, please contact Steven Hummel at (202) 403-6420 or [ssocs.survey@air.org](mailto:ssocs.survey@air.org).

Thank you,

Steven Hummel  
American Institutes for Research  
1000 Thomas Jefferson St. NW  
Washington, DC 20007  
(202) 403-6420  
[ssocs.survey@air.org](mailto:ssocs.survey@air.org)

**Appendix C-5: Confirmation E-mail for SSOCS Cognitive Interviews (Remote)**

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Subject: Confirmation of SSOCS Study Participation

<DATE>

Dear <NAME>,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS) study. This study is being conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education, and its contractor, the American Institutes for Research (AIR). Your input will help NCES improve the clarity of the survey so that others will better understand it. You will be asked to think aloud as you read sample questions from the School Survey on Crime and Safety so that we can better understand your comprehension of survey items. Your participation is voluntary, and you may request to stop at any time during the session.

Your responses will be used for research purposes only and will not be disclosed or used, in identifiable form, for any other purpose except as required by law [Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002) 20 U.S.C., § 9573]. Your responses will be recorded.

You have been scheduled for a <TELEPHONE OR VIDEO CONFERENCE> interview session at <TIME RANGE> on <DATE>. You will receive a \$50 gift card as a thank you for your time and participation.

<VIDEO CONFERENCE LOG-IN INFORMATION>

We thank you for your participation in this important study. If you have any questions, please contact Steven Hummel at (202) 403-6420 or [ssocs.survey@air.org](mailto:ssocs.survey@air.org).

Thank you,

Steven Hummel  
American Institutes for Research  
1000 Thomas Jefferson St. NW  
Washington, DC 20007  
(202) 403-6420  
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## Appendix D-1: Tracking sheet

SSOCS Cognitive Testing Tracking			
<b>Program Name</b>			
<b>Study Name</b>	2018 School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS) Cognitive Interviews		
<b>OMB Clearance Date</b>	10/5/2016		
<b>Recruitment Efforts Start Date</b>	10/7/2016		
<b>Data Collection Start Date</b>	10/17/2016 [target]; 11/9/2016 [actual]		
<b>Data Collection End Date</b>	11/30/2016 [target]; 12/23/16 [actual]		
<b>Target Respondent Number</b>	approximately 20 [target]; 19 [actual]		
<b>Type of research</b> (cognitive interview, usability study, focus group)	Cognitive interview		
<b>Target participants</b> (key demographic characteristics)	<b>School demographics</b>	<b>Participant distribution [actual]</b>	<b>Participation distribution [target]</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
	<b>Level</b>		
	Primary	5	5
	Middle	5	7
	High	4	7
	Combined	5	1
	<b>Enrollment</b>		
	Less than 300	8	3
	300-499	4	4
	500-999	6	7
	1000 or more	1	6
	<b>Urbanicity</b>		
	City	12	6
	Suburb	4	7
	Town	1	3
	Rural	2	4
<b>Percent White Enrollment</b>			
More than 95 percent	0	4	
More than 80 to 95 percent	1	5	
More than 50 to 80 percent	3	5	
50 percent or less	15	6	
<b>Unique research characteristics</b> (e.g., sensitive topics, difficult tasks or collections, tight project schedule)	Time burden (60+ minutes); Principals are a harder-to-reach population (as compared with students, teachers).		
<b>Expected interview length</b> (in minutes)	60		
<b>Cities and states</b> where interviews were conducted	California - 6 interviews (Atwater, Concord, Fresno, Madera, Redwood City, Riverdale) Illinois - 4 interviews (Chicago) Colorado - 2 interviews (Denver) Texas - 2 interviews (Austin, Frisco) District of Columbia - 1 interview (Washington) Georgia - 1 interview (Riverdale) South Carolina - 1 interview (Columbia) Ohio - 1 interview (Cincinnati) Mississippi - 1 interview (Poplarville)		
<b>Mode of the interview</b> (e.g. in person, WebEx, telephone)	3 In-person 6 Videoconference 10 Telephone		
<b>Location interviews conducted</b> (participant's home, participant's business, focus group facility, or location convenient for participant like coffee shop)	16 remote (telephone or videoconference) 3 in-person (at participant's school)		
<b>Source of participants</b> (prerecruited database, advertisements, etc.) and <b>Start of Recruitment Efforts</b>	NICHOLS RESEARCH - CONTRACTED RECRUITMENT FIRM Recruitment period: 10/07/16 thru 12/21/16 14 completed interviews  AIR - RECRUITMENT THROUGH PROFESSIONAL/PERSONAL CONTACTS Recruitment period: 12/9/16 thru 12/23/16 5 completed interviews		
<b>Number of eligible participants screened</b>	Nichols - 63 phone screened (14 completed interviews) Nichols & AIR both conducted email outreach to an indeterminate number of eligible participants (AIR outreach yielded 5 completed interviews)		
<b>Number of people recruited</b>	23 recruited and scheduled		
<b>Number of participant initiated cancelations</b>	2		
<b>Number of participant initiated rescheduling</b>	7		
<b>Number of no shows</b> (no participant call to cancel)	1		
<b>Final number of interviews conducted</b>	19		
<b>Incentive offered</b>	\$75 for in-person interviews \$50 for remote interviews		
<b>Participant travel allowance</b> , parking reimbursement in addition to honorarium, etc. (if applicable)	N/A - interviewers travel to participants for in-person interviews		
<b>Any other funds paid to respondent</b> (e.g. bonus for arriving at all or early, referral bonus, child-care allowance)	None		
<b>Any non monetary gratuities/gifts to participants</b> (e.g., food provided, free parking, childcare, gift cards)	None		
<b>Urbanicity</b> of area where interview took place	See demographics table above under "Target Participants"		
<b>Time of day</b> interviews were scheduled	9am-7pm		
<b>Days of the week</b> interviews were scheduled	Monday - Friday		
<b>Notes</b> on perceived and known causes of recruitment refusals, cancellations, and no shows	Time burden Various school districts require a vetting process and/or application process for research Incidents coming up at school during scheduled interview times		