2019–20 NATIONAL POSTSECONDARY STUDENT AID STUDY (NPSAS:20)

Appendix A: Technical Review Panel Member

Appendix B: Endorsing Organizations for NPSAS:20

Appendix C: Confidentiality for Administrative Record Matching

OMB # 1850-0666 v.25

**Submitted by**

**National Center for Education Statistics**

**U.S. Department of Education**

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Appendix A  
Technical Review Panel Members

**Techincal Review Panel**

(Panelists from May 2019 meeting to discuss student data collection)

Lindsay Ahlman

Senior Policy Analyst

The Institute for College Access and Success

4819 Beaumont Ave.

Philadelphia, PA 19104

Phone: (202) 854-0232

Email: lahlman@ticas.org

Drew Anderson

Associate Economist

RAND

1776 Main Street

Santa Monica, CA 90401

Phone: (303) 503-7741

Email: drew@rand.org

Eric Atchison

Director of System Analysis, Research & Enrollment Management

Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning

3825 Ridgewood Road

Office of Strategic Research

Jackson, MS 39211

Phone: (601) 432-6288

Email: eatchison@mississippi.edu

Dominique Baker

Assistant Professor of Education Policy

Southern Methodist University

3101 University Blvd, Ste. 345

Box 750114

Dallas, TX 75275

Phone: (214) 768-1012

Email: djbaker@smu.edu

Christine Baker-Smith

Senior Research Manager

Temple University

1301 Cecil B. Moore Avenue

Ritter Annex

Philadelphia, PA 19122

Phone: (215) 204-1822

Email: Christine.Baker-Smith@temple.edu

Cheryl Blanco

Vice President for Postsecondary Education

Southern Regional Educational Board

592 10th St. N.W.

Atlanta, GA 30318

Phone: (443) 325-5736

Email: cheryl.blanco@sreb.org

Alberto Cabrera

Professor, Higher Education

University of Maryland

3112 Benjamin Building Room E

College Park, MD 20742

Phone: (301) 405-2875

Email: cabrera@umd.edu

Margaret Cahalan

Vice President for Research COE & Director, Pell Institute

Council for Opportunity in Education COE

1025 Vermont Avenue NW

9th Floor

Washington, DC 20005

Phone: (202) 347-7430

Email: margaret.cahalan@pellinstitute.org

Vincent Castano

Dean of Institutional Effectiveness

Fayetteville Technical Community College

2201 Hull Road

Administration Building, Room 167-C

Fayetteville, NC 28303

Phone: (910) 678-8535

Email: castanov@faytechcc.edu

Rong Chen

Associate Professor

Seton Hall University

400 South Orange Avenue

South Orange, NJ 0

Phone: (973) 275-2823

Email: rong.chen@shu.edu

Rachel Christeson

Research Associate

National Center for Higher Education Management Systems

3035 Center Green Dr.

Suite 150

Boulder, CO 80301

Phone: (303) 497-0350

Email: Rachel@nchems.org

James Stuart Cole

Associate Scientist

Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research

1900 East 10th St.

Suite 419

Bloomington, IN 47406

Phone: (812) 856-3004

Email: colejs@indiana.edu

Bryan Cook

Director, Center for Policy Analysis

Association of Public & Land Grant Universities

1307 New York Ave NW

Suite 400

Washington, DC 20005

Phone: (202) 478-6040

Email: bcook@aplu.org

Bradley Curs

Associate Professor & Department Chair

University of Missouri

202 Hill Hall

Columbia, MO 65211

Phone: (573) 882-2759

Email: cursb@missouri.edu

Karole Dachelet

Policy Analyst

Education Commission of the States (ECS)

700 Broadway

Suite 810

Denver, CO 80203

Phone: (303) 299-3605

Email: kdachelet@ecs.org

Rajeev Darolia

Associate Professor

University of Kentucky

Martin School

Patterson Office Tower 427

Lexington, KY 40506

Phone: (859) 323-7522

Email: Rajeev.Darolia@uky.edu

William Doyle

Associate Professor of Higher Education

Vanderbilt University

230 Appleton Place

Peabody #414

Nashville, TN 37203

Phone: (615) 322-2904

Email: w.doyle@vanderbilt.edu

Fred Galloway

Professor, Leadership Studies

University of San Diego, School of Leadership and Education Science

5998 Alcala Park

Office MRH-275H

San Diego, CA 92110

Phone: (619) 260-7435

Email: galloway@sandiego.edu

Thomas Harnisch

Director of State Relations and Policy Analysis

American Association of State Colleges and Universities

1307 New York Avenue, N.W.

5th Floor

Washington, DC 20005

Phone: (202) 478-4660

Email: harnischt@aascu.org

Brad Hershbein

Economist

W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research

300 South Westnedge Avenue

Kalamazoo, MI 49007

Phone: (269) 385-0437

Email: hershbein@upjohn.org

Nicholas Hillman

Associate Professor

University of Wisconsin-Madison

1000 Bascom Mall

Education Building, Room 249

Madison, WI 53706

Phone: (812) 345-1435

Email: nwhillman@wisc.edu

Aaron Horn

Associate Director for Policy Research

Midwestern Higher Education Compact

105 Fifth Ave. S

Suite 450

Minneapolis, MN 55401

Phone: (612) 677-2768

Email: aaronh@mhec.org

Christine Keller

Executive Director & CEO

Association for Institutional Research

1983 Centre Pointe Boulevard

#101

Tallahassee, FL 32308

Phone: (850) 385-4155

Email: ckeller@airweb.org

Nicholas Kent

Senior Vice President of Policy and Research

Career Education Colleges and Universities

1530 Wilson Blvd

Suite 1050

Arlington, VA 22209

Phone: (571) 800-6524

Email: nicholas.kent@career.org

Daniel Klasik

Assistant Professor of Higher Education Administration

The George Washington University

2136 G Street NW

Washington, DC 20052

Phone: (202) 994-1453

Email: djklasik@gwu.edu

Dennis Kramer

Assistant Professor

University of Florida

200E Norman Hall

PO Box 117049

Gainesville, FL 32611

Phone: (352) 273-4315

Email: dkramer@coe.ufl.edu

Patrick Lane

Vice President of Policy Analysis and Research

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

3035 Center Green Drive

Suite 200

Boulder, CO 80301

Phone: (303) 541-0266

Email: plane@wiche.edu

Amy Li

Associate Professor

University of Northern Colorado

University of Northern Colorado, Higher Education Student Affairs Leadership

Campus Box 103

Greeley, CO 80639

Phone: (970) 351-3796

Email: amy.li@unco.edu

Rebecca Martin

Executive Director

National Association of System Heads

3300 Metzerott Road

Adelphi, MD 20789

Phone: (301) 445-2780

Email: rebecca@nash-dc.org

Jordan Matsudaira

Assistant Professor

Columbia University

525 West 120th St.

Box 174

New York, NY 10027

Phone: (212) 678-3430

Email: matsudaira@tc.columbia.edu

Matthew Mayhew

Professor

The Ohio State University

College of Education and Human Ecology

127 Arps Hall, 1945 N. High Street

Columbus, OH 43210

Phone: (614) 292-2387

Email: mayhew.65@osu.edu

Hironao Okahana

Assistant Vice President, Research & Policy Analysis

Council of Graduate Schools

One Dupont Circle NW

Suite 230

Washington, DC 20036

Phone: (202) 696-1560

Email: hokahana@cgs.nche.edu

Amelia Parnell

Vice President for Research and Policy

National Association of Student Personnel Administrators

111 K St. NE

10th Floor

Washington, DC 20002

Phone: (202) 265-7500 x1191

Email: aparnell@naspa.org

Kent Phillippe

Associate Vice President, Research & Student Success

American Association of Community Colleges

One Dupont Circle NW

Suite 410

Washington, DC 20036

Phone: (202) 728-0200

Email: kphillippe@aacc.nche.edu

Jason Ramirez

Director of Research and Policy Analysis

National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities

1025 Connecticut Ave NW

Suite 700

Washington, DC 20036

Phone: (202) 835-0003

Email: jason@naicu.edu

Neil Ridley

Director of the State Initiative

Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce

3300 Whitehaven Street, N.W.

Suite 3200

Washington, DC 20007

Phone: (202) 687-7766

Email: Neil.Ridley@georgetown.edu

Lauren Schudde

Assistant Professor

University of Texas at Austin

College of Education 1912 Speedway, Stop D5000

Austin, TX 78712

Phone: (512) 471-1623

Email: schudde@austin.utexas.edu

David Tandberg

Vice President

State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO)

3035 Center Green Drive

#100

Boulder, CO 80301

Phone: (303) 541-1627

Email: dtandberg@sheeo.org

Marvin Titus

Associate Professor, Higher Education

University of Maryland

Benjamin Building

3209

College Park, MD 20742

Phone: (301) 405-2220

Email: mtitus@umd.edu

Rob Toutkoushian

Professor

University of Georgia, Institute of Higher Education

106 Herty Drive

0114 Meigs Hall

Athens, GA 30602

Phone: (706) 542-0577

Email: rtoutkou@uga.edu

David Troutman

Associate Vice Chancellor, Institutional Research & Advanced Analytics

The University of Texas System

210 West 7th Street

Austin, TX 78701

Phone: (512) 499-4798

Email: dtroutman@utsystem.edu

Jonathan Turk

Senior Policy Research Analyst

American Council on Education

One Dupont Circle NW

Suite 1B

Washington, DC 20036

Phone: (202) 939-9321

Email: jturk@acenet.edu

Lesley Turner

Assistant Professor

University of Maryland

Department of Economics

3115E Tydings Hall

College Park, MD 20742

Phone: (301) 405-3512

Email: turner@econ.umd.edu

Mamie Voight

Vice President of Policy Research

Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP)

1825 K Street NW

Suite 720

Washington, DC 20006

Phone: (202) 587-4967

Email: mvoight@ihep.org

Xueli Wang

Assistant professor

UW-Madison Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis (ELPA)

270-H Education Building

1000 Bascom Mall

Madison, WI 0

Phone: (608) 263-5451

Email: xwang273@wisc.edu

Jeff Webster

Director of Research

Trellis Company

301 Sundance Parkway

Round Rock, TX 78681

Phone: (800) 252-9743

Email: jeff.webster@trelliscompany.org

Amanda Winters

Program Director

National Governors Association

444 North Capitol St.

Suite 267

Washington, DC 20001

Phone: (202) 719-2872

Email: AWinters@NGA.ORG

Joan Wodiska

Senior Federal Affairs Counsel

National Conference of State Legislatures

444 North Capitol Street, N.W.

Suite 515

Washington, DC 20001

Phone: (202) 624-3558

Email: joan.wodiska@ncsl.org

**Federal Panelists**

Sarah Hay

Director

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education

400 Maryland Ave SW

HQ-LBJ-281-15

Washington, DC 20202

Phone: (202) 453-6879

Email: sarah.hay@ed.gov

Noah Mann

Program Examiner

Office of Management and Budget

725 17th Street NW

Washington, DC 20503

Phone: (202) 395-3256

Email: nmann@omb.eop.gov

Lynn Milan

Survey Statistician

National Science Foundation, NCSES

2415 Eisenhower Avenue

Alexandria, VA 22314

Phone: (703) 292-2275

Email: lmilan@nsf.gov

John Mingus, Jr.

Assistant Director

U.S. Government Accountability Office

441 G Street, NW

Washington, DC 20548

Phone: (202) 512-4987

Email: MingusJ@gao.gov

Jagir Patel

Program Examiner

Office of Management and Budget

725 17th Street NW

Washington, DC 20503

Phone: Unlisted

Email: jpatel@omb.eop.gov

Daniel Pollard

Senior Advisor, Enterprise Data

U.S. Department of Education, FSA, Office of the Chief Operating Officer

830 First Street NE

Washington, DC 20202

Phone: (202) 377-3389

Email: daniel.pollard@ed.gov

Bob Sivinski

Senior Statistician

Office of Management and Budget

725 17th Street NW

Washington, DC 20503

Phone: (202) 395-1205

Email: robert\_g\_sivinski@omb.eop.gov

David Smole

Specialist in Education Policy

Congressional Research Service

101 Independence Avenue SE

Washington, DC 20540

Phone: (202) 707-0624

Email: dsmole@crs.loc.gov

**U.S. Department of Education, NCES**

Sharon Boivin

Senior Research and Policy Analyst

U.S. Department of Education, NCES

550 12th Street SW

Potomac Center Plaza (PCP), Room 4054

Washington, DC 20202

Phone: (202) 881-9108

Email: sharon.boivin@ed.gov

Chris Chapman

Statistician

U.S. Department of Education, NCES

550 12th Street SW

Potomac Center Plaza (PCP), Room 4054

Washington, DC 20202

Phone: (202) 245-7103

Email: chris.chapman@ed.gov

Christopher Cody

Senior Researcher

American Institutes for Research

1000 Thomas Jefferson Street, NW

Washington, DC 20007

Phone: (202) 403-5826

Email: ccody@air.org

Tracy Hunt-White

Education Statistician

U.S. Department of Education, NCES

550 12th Street SW

Potomac Center Plaza (PCP), Room 4007

Washington, DC 20202

Phone: (202) 245-6507

Email: tracy.hunt-white@ed.gov

Huade Huo

Research Associate

American Institutes for Research

1000 Thomas Jefferson Street, NW

Washington, DC 20007

Phone: (202) 403-5128

Email: hhuo@air.org

Kashka Kubzdela

OMB Liaison

U.S. Department of Education, NCES

550 12th Street SW

Potomac Center Plaza (PCP)

Washington, DC 20202

Phone: (202) 245-7377

Email: kashka.kubzdela@ed.gov

Gail Mulligan

Education Statistician, Branch Chief

U.S. Department of Education, NCES

550 12th Street SW

Potomac Center Plaza (PCP), Room 4178

Washington, DC 20202

Phone: (202) 245-8413

Email: gail.mulligan@ed.gov

Jeremy Redford

Senior Researcher

American Institutes for Research

1000 Thomas Jefferson Street, NW

Washington, DC 20007

Phone: (202) 403-6565

Email: jredford@air.org

David Richards

Associate Education Research Analyst

U.S. Department of Education, NCES

550 12th Street SW

Potomac Center Plaza (PCP), Room 4037

Washington, DC 20202

Phone: (202) 245-6202

Email: david.richards@ed.gov

Marilyn Seastrom

Chief Statistician and Program Director

U.S. Department of Education, NCES

550 12th Street SW

Potomac Center Plaza (PCP), Room 4063

Washington, DC 20202

Phone: (202) 245-7766

Email: marilyn.seastrom@ed.gov

Ted Socha

Mathematical Statistician

U.S. Department of Education, NCES

550 12th Street SW

Potomac Center Plaza (PCP), Room 4004

Washington, DC 20202

Phone: (202) 245-7071

Email: ted.socha@ed.gov

James Woodworth

Commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics

U.S. Department of Education, NCES

550 12th Street SW

Potomac Center Plaza (PCP)

Washington, DC 20202

Phone: (202) 245-7291

Email: James.Woodworth@ed.gov

**RTI International**

Mike Bryan

Director, Center for Education Survey Design and Analysis

RTI International

3040 East Cornwallis Road

P.O. Box 12194

Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

Phone: (919) 541-7498

Email: mbryan@rti.org

Rachel Burns

Research Education Analyst

RTI International

3040 East Cornwallis Road

P.O. Box 12194

Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

Phone: (919) 316-3870

Email: rburns@rti.org

Austin Caperton

Research Education Analyst

RTI International

3040 East Cornwallis Road

P.O. Box 12194

Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

Phone: (919) 541-6333

Email: acaperton@rti.org

Austin Lacy

Senior Research Education Analyst

RTI International

3040 East Cornwallis Road

P.O. Box 12194

Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

Phone: (919) 990-8386

Email: tlacy@rti.org

Emilia Peytcheva

Research Survey Methodologist

RTI International

3040 East Cornwallis Road

P.O. Box 12194

Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

Phone: (919) 541-7217

Email: epeytcheva@rti.org

Joshua Pretlow

Research Education Analyst

RTI International

3040 East Cornwallis Road

P.O. Box 12194

Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

Phone: (919) 541-6432

Email: jpretlow@rti.org

Peter Siegel

Senior Statistician

RTI International

3040 East Cornwallis Road

P.O. Box 12194

Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

Phone: (919) 541-6348

Email: siegel@rti.org

Jamie Wescott

Senior Research Associate

RTI International

3040 East Cornwallis Road

P.O. Box 12194

Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

Phone: (919) 485-5573

Email: jwescott@rti.org

Ashley Wilson

Research Education Analyst

RTI International

3040 East Cornwallis Road

P.O. Box 12194

Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

Phone: (919) 541-7092

Email: awilson@rti.org

Jennifer Wine

Sr. Director, Center for Education Survey Design and Analysis

RTI International

3040 East Cornwallis Road

P.O. Box 12194

Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

Phone: (919) 541-6870

Email: jennifer@rti.org

**Consultants**

Anthony Jones

Director of Financial Aid

University of Georgia

0303 Holmes/Hunter

Athens, GA 30602

Phone: (706) 542-8207

Email: jones68@uga.edu

Stephen Porter

Professor

North Carolina State University

6416 Northwyck Place

Raleigh, NC 27609

Phone: (515) 428-0008

Email: porterstephenr@gmail.com

Appendix B  
Endorsing Organizations for NPSAS:20

NPSAS:20 Endorsing Organizations

**Endorsement will be sought from the following organizations which previously endorsed NPSAS:18‑AC:**

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers

American Association of Community Colleges

American Association of State Colleges and Universities

American Council on Education

Association for Institutional Research

Association of American Colleges & Universities

Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities

Association of Public and Land-grant Universities

Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

Career Education Colleges and Universities

The College Board

Council of Graduate Schools

Council of Independent Colleges

Education Commission of the States

Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities

Midwestern Higher Education Compact

National Association of College and University Business Officers

National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities

National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs

National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

New England Board of Higher Education

Southern Regional Education Board

State Higher Education Executive Officers Association

United Negro College Fund

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

**[The list of endorsing organizations will be finalized prior to data collection and will include those listed above (upon confirmation) as well as any additional organizations for which endorsement is sought and confirmed.]**

Appendix C  
Confidentiality for Administrative Record Matching

C.1 Develop Linkages with Administrative Data Sources

Linkages will be developed with existing data sources to supplement the 2019–20 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:20). The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) recognizes the great value added to the NPSAS:20 data file with the addition of data from specific administrative data sources as certain data, such as specific financial aid amounts and associated dates, can only be accurately obtained from sources other than the student. Postsecondary studies, including previous NPSAS studies, Beginning Postsecondary Students (BPS), and Baccalaureate and Beyond (B&B), have included file merges with many existing sources of valuable data, including the U.S. Department of Education’s Central Processing System (CPS) for Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) data, the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS), the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), ACT, the College Board (SAT), and the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) data. For this study, contractor and NCES staff plan to perform file merges with the following datasets: CPS, NSLDS, NSC, ACT, SAT, and VBA.

As described in detail in Section A.10 of the Supporting Statement Part A, which is a part of this request, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (34 CFR Part 99) allows the disclosure of information without prior consent for the purposes of NPSAS:20, according to 34 CFR §99.31.

As part of initial sampling activities, we will ask participating institutions to provide Social Security Numbers (SSNs) for all students on their enrollment list. Having an initial list of all students’ SSNs minimizes the time and burden on both the institution and the data collection contractor. Institutions will only have to provide one enrollment list, except institutions selected to participate in the calibration study will be asked to provide both a fall list and spring list. If SSNs were provided only for those students selected, the institutions would have to provide two (or in the case of the calibration study, four) separate enrollment lists. SSNs and all other sample member identifying information are protected using the security measures described in section A.10.

**Secure Data Transfers.** The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) has set up a secure data transfer system (<https://transfer.ies.ed.gov/>), which uses Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) technology. The contractor will use this electronic system for submitting data. The data may contain potentially personally identifiable information (PII) such as SSNs, names, and dates of birth of study sample members along with a special file match ID (different from the ID used in data collection, on interim data files, and the restricted-use data files).

Data will be received from the IES system as well. The system requires that one party of the transfer be a registered user of the NCES Members Site and that their Members Site privileges be set to allow use of the secure data transfer service as described above. The study contractor has such users. These privileges are set up and carefully controlled by IES’s Chief Technology Officer (CTO), a service designed by IES specifically for the secure transfer of electronic files containing PII (i.e., data protected under the Privacy Act or otherwise posing risk of disclosure). This service can be used for NCES-to-contractor; contractor-to-subcontractor; subcontractor-to-contractor; and contractor-to-other-agency data transfers. The party uploading the information onto the secure server at NCES is responsible for deleting the file(s) after the successful transfer has been confirmed. This process will be used for file matching procedures described below, except in instances when the vendor already has a secure data transfer system in place.

C.2 File Merges with Central Processing System (CPS) Data

File merges will be performed by the contractor with the CPS data containing federal student aid application information. The merge with CPS will only occur for cases with a SSN that meets the criteria for validity. A file containing the SSN and the first two letters of the sample member’s last name (but no other information) will be electronically uploaded to FAFSA secure website for matching. Access to FAFSA data site for the upload is restricted to authorized users, who are registered and provide identification/authentication information (ID, password, and token key). The file is retrieved by CPS (FAFSA contractor data system) for linkage. The linked file, containing student aid applications for matched records, is then made available to the study contractor through a secure connection, which also requires ID, password, and token key. Files will be downloaded directly into the contractor’s Enhanced Security Network (ESN). All CPS files will be processed, edited, and documented for inclusion in the final restricted use file (RUF).

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

A file merge will be conducted with NSLDS to collect federal loan and Pell Grant data. The resulting file will contain cumulative amounts for each student’s entire postsecondary education enrollment. There are two methods for obtaining NSLDS data. One is an automated process developed specifically for NCES studies. A file containing SSNs, names, and dates of births are uploaded through the same secure connection discussed in section C.2 for CPS which requires ID, password, and token key. The results file is transmitted back to the study contractor using the same system. In the second process for obtaining NSLDS data, the study contractor uploads a file of SSNs via IES File Transfer System. The file merge is performed using custom SQL queries and results files are downloaded through the same IES site.

C.4 File Merge with National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) Data

NSC will be used to obtain the *Student Tracker* data on institutions attended, enrollment dates, and degree completions for the NPSAS:20 sample. The contractor has an account with NSC which enables sending and receiving of files securely over encrypted FTPS connections. The file containing PII will be encrypted and then submitted to NSC using their secure FTP site. All files received by NSC will be securely stored using current industry standard tools that meet the U.S. federal encryption standard. Results files will be returned to the contractor through the same encrypted FTPS site. The contractor has already established an agreement with NSC.

C.5 File Merge with American College Testing (ACT) Data

To obtain valuable admissions test data, a file merge will be performed with ACT data by the study contractor. NPSAS has collected and utilized ACT data since NPSAS:96. Matching of students to ACT data uses PII to assist the data vendor in performing confirmatory data quality checks. This process will be initiated by providing a file containing the sample member information then creating a password-protected, encrypted file; uploading the electronic file to IES File Transfer System for download by ACT. ACT will process the data on their database and provide the matched data on IES File Transfer System for secure download. The study contractor must establish a data use agreement (DUA) with the vendor prior to conducting this match. If the study contractor is unable to secure an agreement with ACT, a change memo will be submitted to OMB by October 2020.

C.6 File Merge with the College Board’s SAT Data

To obtain SAT data, a file merge will be performed with the College Board by the study contractor. Matching of students to SAT data uses PII to assist the data vendor in performing confirmatory data quality checks. This process will be initiated by providing a file containing the sample member information. The same procedures will be used as described in section C.5 for ACT linkage: creating a password-protected, encrypted file; uploading the electronic file on IES File Transfer System for download by the College Board. The College Board will process the data on their database and provide the matched data on IES File Transfer System for secure download. The study contractor must establish a DUA with the vendor prior to conducting this match. If the study contractor is unable to secure an agreement with the College Board, a change memo will be submitted to OMB by October 2020.

C.7 File Merge with the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)

To identify veterans and their federal Veteran’s education benefits, a file merge will be performed with the VBA data. These data from the VBA contain reliable military service records of all applicable sample members, so that variables pertaining to military service can be derived. The data obtained from VBA also contain detailed information on veterans federal education benefit amounts, and the enrollment information associated with those benefits. Matching of sample members to VBA data uses PII to assist the data vendor in performing confirmatory data quality checks. The data collection contractor will initiate this process by providing a file containing the sample member information. The same procedures will be used as described above for the ACT and SAT linkages: creating a password-protected, encrypted file, and uploading the electronic file on IES’ File Transfer system for pick-up by the VBA. The VBA will process the data on their database and provide the matched data on the IES File Transfer system for secure download. NCES has an established agreement with VBA, in place since NPSAS:16.

C.8 Processing Administrative Data

NCES staff will send files for matching after the student record abstractions are completed to ensure the availability of the maximum number of verified SSNs and to facilitate the batch mode processing that is suitable to many of these resources. Data collection staff may need to match to a source (for example, CPS or NSLDS) more than once.

All of the collected information 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 and 6 U.S.C. §151). The data from all of these sources, as allowed by the vendor, and stripped of direct identifiers, will be delivered for inclusion on the RUF and will be useful for creating derived variables. The derived variables will be available on PowerStats, QuickStats, and TrendStats, and both direct-pull and derived variables will be documented thoroughly.