

**Memorandum**

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

---

**DATE:** September 28, 2020  
**TO:** Robert Sivinski, OMB  
**THROUGH:** Carrie Clarady, NCES  
**FROM:** Maura Spiegelman, NCES  
**SUBJECT:** 2020-21 National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS 2020-21) Teacher Letter Change Request (OMB# 1850-0598 v.35)

The National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS), conducted every two to three years by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), is a system of related questionnaires that provides descriptive data on the context of elementary and secondary education. Redesignated from the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) with a focus on flexibility, timeliness, and integration with other ED data, the NTPS system allows for school, principal, and teacher characteristics to be analyzed in relation to one another. NTPS is an in-depth, nationally representative survey of first through twelfth grade public and private school teachers, principals, and schools. Kindergarten teachers in schools with at least a first grade are also surveyed. NTPS utilizes core content and a series of rotating modules to allow timely collection of important education trends as well as trend analysis. Topics covered include characteristics of teachers, principals, schools, teacher training opportunities, retention, retirement, hiring, and shortages.

The NTPS 2019-20 preliminary activities were approved in July 2019, with a change request approved in November 2019 (OMB# 1850-0598 v.26-27). OMB approved the main study for 2020-21 in March 2020 (OMB# 1850-0598 v.28-30). In December 2019, NCES received OMB approval (OMB#1850-0803 v. 259) for cognitive interviews to test new and revised items about virtual schools and online course offerings in the NTPS School Questionnaire. Questions about virtual schools and online course offerings were revised, based on the results of this cognitive testing. This testing occurred in the winter and spring of 2020. During the end of this testing window, in March 2020, it became clear that questions needed to distinguish between typical practices (the intent of these questions) and changes implemented by schools due to the coronavirus (COVID-19). Questions on virtual schools and online course offerings were added to all NTPS questionnaires (OMB# 1850-0598 v.31-33), and references to the coronavirus pandemic were added to correspondence with sampled schools and principals (OMB# 1850-0598 v.34). This request makes minor revisions to the COVID-19 language used in the initial and third teacher mailout letters, and also revises the topics referenced to more accurately reflect the content of the 2020-21 survey. The revisions made to the last approved NTPS 2020-21 clearance documents (OMB# 1850-0598 v.34) are reflected below. Black font demarks the text that remains unchanged from the last approved, while text in red font shows the revisions that were made.

**Modifications to the Initial Teacher Contact Letters (Appendix A)**

- Several pieces of communication in Appendix A were updated to revise the COVID-19 and topical language used in the initial and third teacher mailout letters:

Initial Teacher Mailout Letter to Survey Coordinator – 21.1LC/21.2LC/21.3LC (Appendix A, p.79)

We greatly appreciate your assistance so far with the 2020–21 National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS). Now, we need your help to ensure the NTPS Teacher Questionnaire invitations are distributed and the questionnaires are completed in a timely manner. The survey gives teachers an opportunity to tell policymakers about their experiences in the teaching profession. Each selected teacher’s participation is critical to obtain an accurate view of the teaching profession, including teachers’ professional backgrounds, teaching fields, workloads, and working conditions across the country. ~~We are aware of the strain COVID-19 has put on schools and teachers; We know the pressures of COVID-19~~

have placed additional strain on schools and teachers, and we would not add more if this survey were not a critical source of information for a number of policy issues, including the response to pandemics. As such, we ~~and~~ have added questions to the Teacher Questionnaire to address how the pandemic ~~has~~ impacted the delivery of instruction to students.

Initial Teacher Mailout Letter – 21.1/2/LE(M/NM) (Appendix A, p.82)

~~We are aware of the strain COVID-19 has put on schools and teachers;~~ We know the pressures of COVID-19 have placed additional strain on schools and teachers, and we understand that you may be facing challenges in adjusting your instruction to deliver meaningful learning experiences to students. ~~We would not add to this if the NTPS were not a critical source of information for a number of policy issues, including the response to pandemics.~~ As such, we have added questions to address how COVID-19 impacted your teaching during the beginning of the pandemic. The success of this national survey depends on your participation. Only a small percentage of schools and teachers are selected to participate, ~~so your voice will also represent the voices of your colleagues.~~ We cannot substitute another teacher for you.

The Department of Education, state and local education agencies, and researchers use the NTPS data to understand the professional background, teaching field, workload, and working conditions of teachers in the United States. In addition, the reports produced allow you to compare your experiences as a teacher, including your salary, workload, and ~~opportunities for professional development attitudes toward teaching,~~ with other [~~<teachers nationally and in your state> // <private school teachers>~~].

Initial Teacher Mailout Letter for Amish and Mennonite – 21L(A) (Appendix A, p.85)

The success of this national survey depends on your participation. Only a small percentage of schools and teachers are selected to participate, ~~so your voice will also represent the voices of your colleagues.~~ We cannot substitute another teacher for you. Please complete the enclosed questionnaire within one week and return it to the U.S. Census Bureau using the enclosed postage-paid envelope. Your responses to the survey questions will not be shared with your school administration.

The Department of Education, state and local education agencies, and researchers use the NTPS data to understand the professional background, teaching field, workload, and working conditions of teachers in the United States. In addition, the reports produced allow you to compare your experiences as a teacher, including your salary, workload, and ~~opportunities for professional development attitudes toward teaching,~~ with other teachers at the state or national level.

Third Teacher Mailout Letter – 23L(1/2) (Appendix A, p.92)

We need your help to continue to provide an accurate view of teachers in schools across the country. Policymakers at the state, federal, and local levels use this data to set education policy and improve teacher and principal working conditions. This is your chance to let your voice be heard! ~~Only a small percentage of teachers are selected to participate, so your voice will also represent the voices of your colleagues.~~