



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
National Center for Education Statistics

October 15, 2021

MEMORANDUM

To: Dominic Mancini, Acting Administrator, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs
From: Peggy Carr, NCES
Through: Carrie Clarady, NCES
Re: Emergency Clearance Request for School Pulse Panel Data Collection Fall 2021 Study Delay Revision (v. 6)

The purpose of this request is to suspend the School Pulse Panel (SPP) data collections for the months of October, November, and December 2021. The reason for the request is that response rates for the first month of the collection was under 10 percent and may not provide sufficient data for accurate and unbiased estimates to be produced. We are requesting this delay to provide the Institute of Education Sciences sufficient time to redesign the study to improve response rates. A primary strategy to do so will be to reduce burden in each month's collection and to rotate content to address data needs of the agencies across months. Additionally, we plan to spend October, November, and December actively recruiting schools in a more comprehensive manner in order to start the January collection with a more robust, committed panel of schools. The January SPP collection will be based on materials cleared through OMB in previous submissions for the study. The SPP study itself is extremely important particularly now that COVID-19 has not waned, and the pulse model is one that the agency will need after the pandemic subsides for other quick-turnaround data needs.

In September, the SPP monthly data collection was cleared under emergency review under 5 CFR 1320.13(a) to collect voluntary responses from a nationally representative sample of public schools to better understand how schools, students, and educators are responding to the ongoing stressors of the coronavirus pandemic (OMB 1850-0963 v5).

NCES requested emergency clearance to allow us to comply with the January 21, 2021 EO 14000 Executive Order on Supporting the Reopening and Continuing Operation of Schools and Early Childhood Education Providers which states that the Secretary of Education must "coordinate with the Director of the Institute of Education Sciences to facilitate, consistent with applicable law, the collection of data necessary to fully understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on students and educators, including data on the status of in-person learning. These data shall be disaggregated by student demographics, including race, ethnicity, disability, English-language-learner status, and free or reduced lunch status or other appropriate indicators of family income." The SPP intends to continue to collect this critical information, along with other priority items for the White House, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Department of Education program offices, throughout the 2021-22 school year. Normal clearance procedures would not allow IES to comply with the intent of this EO. As this request is a delay, we will not publish a Federal Register Notice associated with this request. The next revision will more thoroughly detail NCES plans for future data collections, and that revision will be accompanied by a Federal Register Notice with 30-day public comment.

In order to extend this research beyond the 6 months allowed for research activities cleared under 5 CFR 1320.13(a), NCES will simultaneously publish a Federal Register Notice soliciting both 60-day and 30-day public comment on this collection concurrent with data collection. Furthermore, we anticipate that new content will be rotated in (and some rotated out) on a monthly basis. All content to be rotated in and out in the first six months of collections will include items that had been cleared under the emergency clearance (OMB 1850-0963 v.5) Moving forward, we plan to submit requests for new quarterly to OMB for 30-day public comment and review following the testing of proposed items.

During the pause for the collection, NCES plans to spend the next few months primarily focused on recruitment and building a more robust, committed panel. Therefore, new communication materials have been developed and will be submitted as part of this request. Furthermore, to appeal to sampled schools to commit to the panel, we are proposing to reduce the burden of the survey to an average response time of 30 minutes for each monthly collection. This reduction in burden will be communicated in outgoing materials. Due to the highest priority of Executive Order 14000, the core elements of the survey will be the learning modes being offered to students and the enrollment counts for various student subgroups for each of the learning modes offered. Lastly, we received feedback that our description of the reimbursement (“a total of \$5,000 over 12 months”) was perceived as spam. Therefore, the reimbursement for monthly participation will remain roughly the same, but we are communicating it as \$400 a month for each completed survey, rather than a total of \$5,000 for a year commitment.

The costs to the government have not changed as a result of this amendment, but because our estimated time to complete the survey has reduced, our burden estimates have been revised. In addition to the changes mentioned above, detailed summaries of the changes to the supporting documents are below and across following pages.

A.1.3 Prior and Related Studies

The School Pulse Panel is essentially a continuation of the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) 2021 School Survey (OMB# 1850-0957) that was fielded in the spring of 2021. This NAEP 2021 School Survey met the need of Executive Order 14000 by using an existing sample and survey data collection infrastructure to quickly collect information on instructional mode offerings and enrollment counts of various subgroups of students using the various instructional modes. The School Pulse Panel intends to continue to collect this critical information, along with other priority items for the White House, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Department of Education program offices throughout the 2021-22 school year.

Additionally, the recruitment operation for the School Pulse Panel was cleared under an Emergency Clearance (OMB# 1850-0963) and went through 30-day public comment. This included a generic application to be sent to districts that require special approval prior to conducting research within their schools, recruitment materials to inform sampled schools of the study, and a brief, eight question survey asking about summer school plans.

In September 2021, NCES made the decision to suspend data collection for the months of October, November, and December 2021, as the response rate for the first month of the collection was under 10 percent and not expected to provide sufficient data for accurate and unbiased estimates to be produced. The reason for the delay was to provide the Institute of Education Sciences sufficient time to redesign the study to improve response rates. A primary strategy is to reduce burden in each month’s collection and to rotate content to address data needs of the agencies across months. The January SPP collection will be based on updated materials cleared through OMB in previous submissions for the study. The SPP study itself is extremely important particularly now that COVID-19 has not waned, and the pulse model is one that the agency will need after the pandemic subsides for other quick-turnaround data needs.

A.1.4 Study Design

The U.S. Census Bureau will collect the School Pulse Panel data on behalf of NCES. The School Pulse Panel will be a self-administered, online survey (as built in Qualtrics). It is estimated for the survey to require, on average, ~~a total of about 2-3 hours~~ 30 minutes of school staff time.

The sampled school will be offered ~~up to a total~~ reimbursement of ~~\$5,000~~ \$400 a month for their participation in the study over the course of 12 months (~~including September 2021 through August 2022~~). The reimbursement will be paid out quarterly in the form of a debit card and will be prorated to include the dollar amount that reflects the number of months of participation for that quarter. Additionally, a non-monetary incentive (tote bag) will be sent to sampled schools as part of the ~~November~~ January or February

communications. If a school district does not permit its schools to receive any form of incentive, the reimbursement will be sent to a point of contact in the district or the reimbursement and any non-monetary incentives will be withheld. Principals, or the school staff most knowledgeable about COVID-19 impacts on the school environment and instructional offerings, can complete the survey, however it is encouraged for school staff to seek assistance in responding from other school staff or district staff to help reduce burden. No classroom time is involved in the completion of this survey.

A.9 Provision of Payments or Gifts to Respondents

The sampled school will be offered ~~up to a total~~ reimbursement of ~~\$5,000~~ \$400 a month for their participation in the study over the course of 12 months ~~(including September 2021 through August 2022)~~. The reimbursement will be paid out quarterly in the form of a debit card and will be prorated to include the dollar amount that reflects the number of months of participation for that quarter. Additionally, a non-monetary incentive (tote bag) will be sent to sampled schools as part of the ~~November~~ January or February communications. If a school district does not permit its schools to receive any form of incentive, the reimbursement will be sent to a point of contact in the district or the reimbursement and any non-monetary incentives will be withheld.

A.10 Assurance of Confidentiality

The following language will be included on data collection instruments:

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-NEW. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average ~~180~~ 30 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 e-mail: XXX@census.gov.

A.12 Estimated Response Burden

This request is to collect information from a national representative sample of public elementary, middle, and high schools.

The total response burden estimate for this collection is based on a total of ~~180~~ 30 minutes to complete the survey per month. It is planned for there to be a total of 12 months ~~(August 2021 through September 2022)~~. Based on the estimated hourly rates for principals/administrators of \$49.52, and based on ~~4,752~~ 26,352 total burden hours for 12 months of School Pulse Panel collections, the total estimated burden time cost to respondents is ~~\$235,319~~ \$1,305,951.

Table 1. Estimates of respondent burden for field activities

Activity	Sample Size	Estimated Response Rate	Estimated Number of Respondents	Estimated Number of Responses	Average Burden Time per Respondent (Minutes)	Total Burden Hours
Preliminary Activities						
District IRB Staff Review	300	80%	240	240	360	1,440
District IRB Panel Review	300*6	80%	1,440	1,440	60	1,440
Notification email – District respondent	900	80%	720	720	3	36
8 item questionnaire – District respondent	900	80%	720 ^a	720	10	120
Notification letter – Schools respondent	2,400	30%	720	720	3	36
Total Preliminary Activities	--	--	3,120	3,940	--	3,072
Monthly Data Collections						
Advance email	2,400	30%	720	720	3	36

Monthly Survey Response	2,400	30%	720	720	180 30	2,160 360
Total Monthly Data Collections – one month	-	-	720	1,440	-	2,196 396
Total Data Collection – full year	-	-	720	17,280	-	26,352 4,752
Total Estimated Burden Requested In This Submission	-	-	720	17,280	-	26,352 4,752

Greyed out rows represent burden approved in previous packages and are provided for context only.

A.16 Publication Plans and Time Schedule

This data collection was originally scheduled to take place monthly from September 2021 through August 2022. The three-month pause in data collection means that the survey will next be fielded January 2022. The release of the first collection in September may take longer than expected, therefore it is expected for that release to be up to 4-6 weeks after the end of the data collection. It is intended for findings of subsequent collections to be released 2-3 weeks after the end of data collection.

Data Collection Month	Monthly Report Published
September 2021	November 2021
October 2021	December 2021
November 2021	January 2021
December 2021	January 2021
January 2022	February 2022
February 2022	March 2022
March 2022	April 2022
April 2022	May 2022
May 2022	June 2022
June 2022	July 2022
July 2022	August 2022
August 2022	September 2022

Section B. Methodology

The U.S. Census Bureau will collect the School Pulse Panel (SPP) data on behalf of NCES. Data collection will be a self-administered, online survey. It is estimated for the survey to require, **on average, up to 2-3 hours about 30 minutes of school staff time** each month. The sampled school will be offered **up to a total reimbursement of \$5,000 \$400** for their participation in the study over the course of 12 months **(including September 2021 through August 2022)**. The reimbursement will be paid out quarterly in the form of a debit card and will be prorated to include the dollar amount that reflects the number of months of participation for that quarter. Additionally, a non-monetary incentive (tote bag) will be included in the **November January or February** communications. If a school district does not permit its schools to receive any form of incentive, the reimbursement will be sent to a point of contact in the district or the reimbursement and any non-monetary incentives will be withheld. Principals, other school staff most knowledgeable about COVID-19 impacts on the school environment and instructional offerings, and district staff can help complete the survey. No classroom time is involved in the completion of this survey.

B2. Procedures for the Collection of Information

The School Pulse Panel data collection will begin in September of 2021. The U.S. Census Bureau, acting as a contractor for NCES, will handle the data collection. Starting in September, each sampled school will receive an email notifying them of the full survey, which will include information necessary to complete the online questionnaire. Respondents will have a two-week window to respond to the survey. Reminder emails will be sent during the data collection window. Data will be formally reviewed for disclosure prevention and released a several weeks after data collection ends for that month. This will be repeated monthly through August of 2022.

Due to a low response rate for the September collection, NCES plans to put the monthly collection on hold until January to focus on recruitment and building a more robust panel with committed schools.

School Communication

The School Pulse Panel will be conducted via a self-administered web-based survey instrument. A clerical operation prior to data collection was conducted to obtain e-mail addresses for all the sampled school principals, and these e-mails will be used to contact the school principals throughout the data collection. During the recruitment process (cleared in July 2021; last change request approved in August OMB# 1850-0963 v.3), an initial letter was sent via e-mail in July 2021 to notify sampled schools of their selection for the survey, to verify contact information, to inform schools about reimbursements of \$400 a month (up to \$5,000 total) offered to schools over the course of 12 months for their continued participation in the study, and also included a link to a short preliminary summer questionnaire. Reminder e-mails have continued to be sent throughout August 2021. An new initial invitation e-mail was will be sent in September, and each month thereafter to distribute instructions on how to complete the monthly web questionnaire, including the survey URL to access the survey online. (Attachment A): Due to the pause in the monthly collection to focus on recruitment, new emails and letters have been developed and will be sent in November and December (Attachment A). As part of these emails and letters, sampled schools are being asked to complete a short screener capturing updated point of contact information that will be used for communications about upcoming collections which we believe will also aid in successfully reaching the appropriate staff at schools (Attachment B). Physical letters will be sent in October and November in advance of the monthly collections to assist with legitimizing the study and bring attention to the study, in general.

The sampled school will be offered up to a total reimbursement of \$5,000 \$400 for their monthly participation in the study over the course of 12 months (including September 2021 through August 2022). The reimbursement will be paid out quarterly in the form of a debit card and will be prorated to include the dollar amount that reflects the number of months of participation for that quarter. Additionally, a non-monetary incentive (tote bag) will be included in the November January or February communications. If a school district does not permit its schools to receive any form of incentive, the reimbursement will be sent to a point of contact in the district or the reimbursement and any non-monetary incentives will be withheld.

B3. Methods to Maximize Response Rates

NCES is committed to obtaining a high response rate in the SPP. In general, a key to achieving a high response rate is to track the response status of each sampled district and school, with telephone follow-up, as well as follow-up by e-mail, of those schools that do not respond promptly. To help track response status, survey responses will be monitored through an automated receipt control system.

It is estimated that the survey will require, on average, a total of about 2-3 hours 30 minutes of school staff time each month. To encourage study participation, the sampled school will be offered up to a total reimbursement of \$5,000 \$400 a month for their participation in the study over the course of 12 months and will be sent a tote bag as a token of appreciation as part of the November January or February mailout.

Appendices A & B

Appendix A – Communication Materials

October Advance Letter

(Variations of this letter will be sent depending on whether they can accept incentives or not)

(NCES does not currently plan to circulate this letter, but we have left it as part of the package in order to maintain continuity of our plans.)

[Date]

Dear Principal,

The Covid-19 pandemic continues to impact K-12 education in the United States. It is critical for the Department of Education, Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and other Federal agencies to have accurate and up to date information on the operating status of schools. We have selected a small number of schools to represent all schools in the United States as part of a carefully selected panel. Your school was selected to participate in this important panel. Each month during the 2021-22 school year, you will be asked to provide information on the operating status and COVID-19 related protocols at your school.

On October 12th, the US Census Bureau will send you an email invitation (sender: ADDP.School.Pulse.Panel@census.gov) to participate in the **School Pulse Panel**. To learn more about the School Pulse Panel, visit www.census.gov/schoolpulse.

What Is Involved?

Within the email invitation that you receive is a link to the October survey, which asks about your school's response to the pandemic, including reopening status, virus spread mitigation strategies, services offered for students and staff, and technology use. This email will be sent to:

[principal email address]

If this is the incorrect email address, please contact the School Pulse Panel staff at 1-844-868-3661 to provide the correct email address.

Participating schools will be compensated up to **\$5,000** for the year if each survey is completed. Total time to complete the survey is expected to be 2-3 hours each month. You are encouraged to work with district staff to complete the survey. Working with your district will greatly reduce the time it takes to complete the survey. On the back of this letter are specific instructions for accessing and completing the survey. Participation is voluntary.

What's Next?

After completing the October survey, you will receive a new survey monthly, through August 2022. You will receive the next survey in an email on Tuesday, November 9. Each survey will focus on various aspects of your school's response to the pandemic.

If you have any questions about the study, contact the U.S. Census Bureau at 1-844-868-3661 or via e-mail at addp.school.pulse.panel@census.gov. The Census Bureau is collecting the data for NCES.

Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Christopher Chapman
Associate Commissioner

Additional Information About Participating in the School Pulse Panel

This study is in support of the recent Executive Order on Supporting the Reopening and Continuing Operation of Schools and Early Childhood Education Providers. The School Pulse Panel is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). NCES is a center within the Institute of Education Sciences.

Accessing the Survey

You can access the survey using the unique link that will be emailed to you. The survey does not need to be completed in one sitting. You will have two weeks to complete the survey.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of topics covered in this survey:

- instructional mode offered,
- enrollment counts of subgroups of students using various instructional modes,
- pandemic-related learning needs,
- safe and healthy school mitigation strategies,
- mental health services,
- use of technology, and
- information on staffing.

Completing the Survey

You may not be the most appropriate person to answer every question related to each of these topics. For some topics, such as enrollment and attendance, staff at the district level may be in a better position to respond. You are free (and encouraged) to send the survey link to members of your school and/or district staff to ease the burden of completion. *Please note* that when other staff members access the survey, they will be brought to the introduction page; when you send the link to others, be sure to include which specific questions you want them to answer. These questions are numbered and can be easily accessed using the table of contents, found at the top of each survey page.

Compensation

The school will be offered up to a total reimbursement of \$5,000 for participation in the study over the course of 12 months (this includes September 2021 through August 2022). The reimbursement will be paid out quarterly to the district in the form of a debit card and will be prorated to include the dollar amount that reflects the number of months of participation for that quarter. More information on the delivery of the debit card will come in November.

Other Important Information

All participation is voluntary. There are no penalties for not participating in the study. However, each school in the School Pulse Panel sample was selected to represent schools with similar characteristics, therefore your participation is critical. Please be assured that by federal mandate we are required to protect the responses of all schools included in our survey. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

Questions?

If you have any questions about the study, contact the U.S. Census Bureau at 1-844-868-3661 or via e-mail at addp.school.pulse.panel@census.gov. The Census Bureau is collecting the data for NCES.

NCES is authorized to conduct this survey by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP 2021; Sec. 2010) and the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C. §9543). All of the information schools provide 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). Reports of the findings from the survey will not identify participating Local Education Agencies (LEAs), schools, or staff. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

November Tote Bags – Participated and allowed to receive incentives

(NCES does not currently plan to circulate this letter, but we have left it as part of the package in order to maintain continuity of our plans.)

Dear Principal,

On behalf of the Department of Education, I want to thank you for your participation in the School Pulse Panel so far. Your school is one of a small number of schools that are providing a monthly snapshot of the operational status of schools during the 2021-22 school year. I have included a tote bag as a token of appreciation for your continued participation in the panel.

On November 9th, the US Census Bureau will send you an email invitation (sender: ADDP.School.Pulse.Panel@census.gov) to participate in the November collection of the **School Pulse Panel**. For more about the School Pulse Panel, visit www.census.gov/schoolpulse.

Thank you again for helping to ensure that policy makers at the Department of Education, Centers for Disease Control, and other Federal agencies have accurate, timely data to drive policy decisions and to inform resource allocations to assist with school reopening efforts.

If you have any questions about the study, contact the U.S. Census Bureau at 1-844-868-3661 or via e-mail at addp.school.pulse.panel@census.gov. The Census Bureau is collecting the data for NCES.

Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Christopher Chapman

Associate Commissioner
National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)
U.S. Department of Education

NCES is authorized to conduct this survey by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP 2021; Sec. 2010) and the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C. §9543). All of the information schools provide 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). Reports of the findings from the survey will not identify participating Local Education Agencies (LEAs), schools, or staff. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

November Tote Bags – Non-responding schools and can accept incentives

(NCES does not currently plan to circulate this letter, but we have left it as part of the package in order to maintain continuity of our plans.)

Date

Dear Principal,

Recently, we sent you an invitation to join the U.S. Department of Education’s School Pulse Panel. We have selected Your school as part of a small number of schools to participate in this important panel. The panel provides a monthly snapshot of school operating status and COVID-19 safety measures that is used to help determine Federal policy to support schools during this difficult time.

We will be sending the next survey to {email} on November 9th. Please respond to ensure that your school and students have a voice in public policy as we navigate the challenges posed by COVID-19.

To learn more about the School Pulse Panel, visit www.census.gov/schoolpulse.

If you do not receive the email on November 9th, please contact the School Pulse Panel staff at 1-844-868-3661.

Please complete this survey as soon as possible.

Participating schools will be compensated up to **\$5,000** for the year if each survey is completed. Total time to complete the survey is expected to be 2-3 hours each month. You are encouraged to work with district staff to complete the survey. Working with your district will greatly reduce the time it takes to complete the survey. On the back of this letter are specific instructions for accessing and completing the survey. Participation is voluntary.

What’s Next?

After completing the November survey, you will receive a new survey monthly, through August 2022. Each survey will focus on various aspects of your school’s response to the pandemic.

If you have any questions about the study, contact the U.S. Census Bureau at 1-844-868-3661 or via e-mail at adp.school.pulse.panel@census.gov. The Census Bureau is collecting the data for NCES.

As an additional token of our appreciation, I have included a tote bag with this letter. Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Christopher Chapman

Associate Commissioner

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

U.S. Department of Education

Additional Information About Participating in the School Pulse Panel

This study is in support of the recent Executive Order on Supporting the Reopening and Continuing Operation of Schools and Early Childhood Education Providers. The School Pulse Panel is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). NCES is a center within the Institute of Education Sciences.

Accessing the Survey

You can access the survey using the unique link that will be emailed to you. The survey does not need to be completed in one sitting. You will have two weeks to complete the survey.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of topics covered in this survey:

- instructional mode offered,
- enrollment counts of subgroups of students using various instructional modes,
- pandemic-related learning needs,
- safe and healthy school mitigation strategies,
- mental health services,
- use of technology, and
- information on staffing.

Completing the Survey

You may not be the most appropriate person to answer every question related to each of these topics. For some topics, such as enrollment and attendance, staff at the district level may be in a better position to respond. You are free (and encouraged) to send the survey link to members of your school and/or district staff to ease the burden of completion. *Please note* that when other staff members access the survey, they will be brought to the introduction page; when you send the link to others, be sure to include which specific questions you want them to answer. These questions are numbered and can be easily accessed using the table of contents, found at the top of each survey page.

Compensation

The school will be offered up to a total reimbursement of \$5,000 for participation in the study over the course of 12 months (this includes September 2021 through August 2022). The reimbursement will be paid out quarterly to the district in the form of a debit card and will be prorated to include the dollar amount that reflects the number of months of participation for that quarter. More information on the delivery of the debit card will come in November.

Other Important Information

All participation is voluntary. There are no penalties for not participating in the study. However, each school in the School Pulse Panel sample was selected to represent schools with similar characteristics, therefore your participation is critical. Please be assured that by federal mandate we are required to protect the responses of all schools included in our survey. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

Questions?

If you have any questions about the study, contact the U.S. Census Bureau at 1-844-868-3661 or via e-mail at addp.school.pulse.panel@census.gov. The Census Bureau is collecting the data for NCES.

NCES is authorized to conduct this survey by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP 2021; Sec. 2010) and the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C. §9543). All of the information schools provide 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). Reports of the findings from the survey will not identify participating Local Education Agencies (LEAs), schools, or staff. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

All materials in the remainder of this memo are additions to this package with v. 6

Letter AX. Thank you letter from Secretary Cardona

Dear Principal/Head of School <Name>,

I want to express my sincere gratitude for your participation in the September collection of the School Pulse Panel. I understand the difficulties that the beginning of the school year has presented to school administrators, who find themselves tasked with not only focusing on their students' learning, but their mental and physical health as well. Despite these challenging circumstances, your willingness to join this monthly panel and provide the U.S. Department of Education with the data we need to make decisions that support all members of the education field is all the more impressive and deserving of recognition.

Thank you for all that you do to support public education.

Sincerely,

Miguel A. Cardona, Ed.D.

Letter BX. Secretary Letter to Non-responding Schools

Dear Principal/Head of School <Name>,

To support schools and districts as they respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, we at the U.S. Department of Education have committed to collecting timely information on the operating status of public schools. To obtain this information, we have selected a small number of schools to provide data on a monthly basis that will represent all schools in the United States. <School Name> has been selected to participate in this new study, the School Pulse Panel (SPP).

Over the past few months, members of the Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the U.S. Census Bureau have been attempting to reach your school about this study. Your participation is vital to the success of this study and I write to you today to ask that you please join this historic data collection effort.

School Pulse Panel Background

- The SPP was developed in response to a *Presidential Executive Order on Supporting the Reopening and Continuing Operation of Schools and Early Childhood Education Providers*.
- The SPP was designed by NCES, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the U.S. Census Bureau, and other federal agencies to better understand the impact of COVID-19 on education.
- The SPP is a monthly survey collection that will begin in January 2022 and may last up to 12 months.
- Data will be collected through web-based surveys and no student or classroom time is required to respond.

School Pulse Panel Participation

- Each monthly survey is expected to take approximately 30 minutes to complete.
- Due to the importance of these data, your school will be compensated \$400 for each month you complete a survey.
- The surveys will focus on school learning modes, enrollment, and COVID-19 mitigation strategies.
- Findings from this study will be shared through web tables and an online dashboard within a few weeks of each survey.
- Your school's responses will be kept confidential and shared findings will not allow individual schools to be identified.

You will soon receive additional materials from NCES and the U.S. Census Bureau that provide instructions on how to participate in this study. More information about the SPP can be found at: www.census.gov/schoolpulse. If you have any questions, please contact the SPP project director, Rachel Hansen (Rachel.Hansen@ed.gov). I believe all students in our public education system deserve the best education possible. This collection can help us understand more about the many challenges COVID-19 has created for schools and students. Thank you for considering participating in this important data collection effort.

Sincerely,

Miguel A. Cardona, Ed.D.

Letter EX. Secretary Letter to non-applied Special Districts

Dear Superintendent <Name>,

To support schools and districts as they respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, we at the U.S. Department of Education have committed to collecting timely information on the operating status of public schools. To obtain this information, we have selected a small number of schools to provide data on a monthly basis that will represent all schools in the United States. At least one school in <School District Name> has been selected to participate in this new study, the School Pulse Panel (SPP).

In the coming weeks, your district will receive a research application about the SPP and communications from members of the Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the U.S. Census Bureau that will ask you to approve this study to be conducted in one or more schools in your district. School participation is vital to the success of this study, and I write to you today to ask that you please approve, endorse, and encourage the selected school(s) in <School District Name> to join this historic data collection effort.

School Pulse Panel Background

- The SPP was developed in response to a *Presidential Executive Order on Supporting the Reopening and Continuing Operation of Schools and Early Childhood Education Providers*.
- The SPP was designed by NCES, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the U.S. Census Bureau, and other federal agencies to better understand the impact of COVID-19 on education.
- The SPP is a monthly survey collection that will begin in January 2022 and may last up to 12 months.
- Data will be collected through web-based surveys and no student or classroom time is required.

School Pulse Panel Participation

- Each monthly survey is expected to take approximately 30 minutes to complete.
- Due to the importance of these data, each school will be compensated \$400 for each month they complete surveys.
- The surveys will focus on school learning modes, enrollment, and COVID-19 mitigation strategies.
- Findings from this study will be shared through web tables and an online dashboard within a few weeks of each survey.
- Responses will be kept confidential and shared findings will not allow individual schools to be identified.

More information about the SPP can be found at: www.census.gov/schoolpulse. If you have any questions, please contact the SPP project director, Rachel Hansen (Rachel.Hansen@ed.gov). I believe all students in our public education system deserve the best education possible. This collection can help us understand more about the many challenges COVID-19 has created for schools and students. Thank you for considering participating in this important data collection effort.

Sincerely,

Miguel A. Cardona, Ed.D.

Letter F/GX. Secretary Letter to non-responding Special Districts

Dear Superintendent <Name>,

To support schools and districts as they respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, we at the U.S. Department of Education have committed to collecting timely information on the operating status of public schools. To obtain this information, we have selected a small number of schools to provide data on a monthly basis that will represent all schools in the United States. At least one school in <School District Name> has been selected to participate in this new study, the School Pulse Panel (SPP).

Over the past few months, members of the Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the U.S. Census Bureau have been recruiting selected schools to participate. To date, your district has either not responded or has rejected the SPP application to contact selected schools in your district. Their participation is vital to the success of this study, and I write to you today to ask that you please endorse this study and urgently request your district to approve the application to have <School District Name>'s selected school(s) join this historic data collection effort.

School Pulse Panel Background

- The SPP was developed in response to a *Presidential Executive Order on Supporting the Reopening and Continuing Operation of Schools and Early Childhood Education Providers*.
- The SPP was designed by NCES, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the U.S. Census Bureau, and other federal agencies to better understand the impact of COVID-19 on education.
- The SPP is a monthly survey collection that will begin in January 2022 and may last up to 12 months.
- Data will be collected through web-based surveys and no student or classroom time is required.

School Pulse Panel Participation

- Each monthly survey is expected to take approximately 30 minutes to complete.
- Due to the importance of these data, each school will be compensated \$400 for each month they complete surveys.
- The surveys will focus on school learning modes, enrollment, and COVID-19 mitigation strategies.
- Findings from this study will be shared through web tables and an online dashboard within a few weeks of each survey.
- Responses will be kept confidential and shared findings will not allow individual schools to be identified.

More information about the SPP can be found at: www.census.gov/schoolpulse. If you have any questions, please contact the SPP project director, Rachel Hansen (Rachel.Hansen@ed.gov). I believe all students in our public education system deserve the best education possible. This collection can help us understand more about the many challenges COVID-19 has created for schools and students. Thank you for considering participating in this important data collection effort.

Sincerely,

Miguel A. Cardona, Ed.D.

Email A1: Schools Who Responded to September Collection

[Date] [Subject line] Thank You for Your Response to the School Pulse Panel

Dear Principal,

On behalf of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) within the U.S. Department of Education, thank you for participating in the September data collection for the new School Pulse Panel. Your responses will provide meaningful and timely data on the experiences of schools as they navigate the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We received feedback from schools indicating that the September survey was too long. In the interest of minimizing this burden on schools, we will take a brief pause in the monthly cycle to remove content from the survey. **The Census Bureau will resume collecting data for the School Pulse Panel starting in January 2022 with an abbreviated, 30-minute survey which will continue monthly thereafter.** Schools will continue to be reimbursed \$400 for each month that they complete the survey.

We will contact you again in November to verify contact information for your school.

Again, thank you for your support of this important initiative. We appreciate your patience and look forward to your participation in the School Pulse Panel again in January.

Sincerely,

Dr. Peggy Carr
Commissioner
National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)
U.S. Department of Education

NCES is authorized to conduct this survey by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP 2021; Sec. 2010) and the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C. §9543). All of the information schools provide 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). Reports of the findings from the survey will not identify participating Local Education Agencies (LEAs), schools, or staff. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

Email A2: Schools Who Have Responded To Date: advise of changes, send screener POC (Nov 8th email)

[Date] [Subject Line] School Pulse Panel: Upcoming Changes

Dear Principal,

Thank you for participating in the School Pulse Panel last month. This study is providing critical information to the Department of Education and the public on the operating status of schools in the United States. We could not have these important data without your participation.

To prepare for the next collection in January, we want to make sure we have the best contact for your school's participation in the Panel. Additionally, in order to receive your first reimbursement for completing the September survey, we need the name and school mailing address of the person who should receive this reimbursement on behalf of the school. We cannot send a reimbursement until this information has been provided. Please complete this information for your school as soon as possible by visiting the following link and entering the User ID listed below:

[URL]
User ID: XXX

You may also call 1-844-868-3661 to confirm your school's contact information. To learn more about the School Pulse Panel, visit www.census.gov/schoolpulse.

- **The Census Bureau will send you an invitation in January 2022 for a shorter, 30-minute survey.**
- The new, shorter survey will continue every month after January for up to 12 months.

- Schools will continue to be reimbursed \$400 for each month that they complete the survey.

Again, thank you for your previous response and your support of this important study. We appreciate your patience and look forward to your participation in the School Pulse Panel again in January.

Sincerely,

Dr. Peggy Carr
Commissioner
National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)
U.S. Department of Education

NCES is authorized to conduct this survey by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP 2021; Sec. 2010) and the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C. §9543). All of the information schools provide 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). Reports of the findings from the survey will not identify participating Local Education Agencies (LEAs), schools, or staff. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

Letter A3: Schools Who Have Responded to Date (summer and/or September)-November 8 Letter

[Date]

Dear Principal,

On behalf of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) within the U.S. Department of Education, we express our gratitude to you for your participation in the School Pulse Panel.

We received feedback from schools indicating that the September survey was too long. In the interest of minimizing this burden on schools, we will take a brief pause in data collection from October to December to shorten the length of the survey. **The Census Bureau will resume collecting data for the School Pulse Panel starting in January 2022 with an abbreviated, 30-minute survey which will continue monthly thereafter.** Schools will continue to be reimbursed \$400 for each month that they complete the survey.

To prepare for the next collection in January, we want to make sure we have the best contact information for your school's participation in the Panel. Additionally, in order to receive your first reimbursement for completing the September survey, we need the name and school mailing address of the person who should receive this reimbursement on behalf of the school. We cannot send a reimbursement until this information has been provided. Please complete this information for your school as soon as possible by visiting the following link and entering the User ID listed below:

[URL]
User ID: XXX

You may also call 1-844-868-3661 to provide this information. If you have already provided this information, thank you.

To learn more about the School Pulse Panel, visit www.census.gov/schoolpulse. As we prepare the inaugural data release, please feel free to review data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Monthly School Survey that was administered in the spring of 2021. This collection served as the predecessor to the School Pulse Panel and captured similar critical information for the 2020-2021 school year: <https://ies.ed.gov/schoolsurvey/>.

Again, thank you for your continued support of this important study. We appreciate your patience and look forward to your participation in the Panel again in January.

Sincerely,

Dr. Peggy Carr
Commissioner
National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)
U.S. Department of Education

School Pulse Panel: Frequently Asked Questions

How is the School Pulse Panel different from other education surveys?

The School Pulse Panel is a unique survey. While surveys like the National Assessment of Educational Progress and the National Teacher and Principal Survey produce benchmark statistics critical to monitoring progress over time, they are not designed to capture the rapid pace at which schools must adapt in this pandemic environment. Your contribution is key to producing a new source of “near time” statistics that shed light on these challenges and inform the response of education officials at the federal level.

How frequently do you collect data for the School Pulse Panel?

The School Pulse Panel is designed to collect data from schools every month. However, based on feedback from schools who participated in initial data collection efforts, we will take a brief break in data collection for the months of October-December 2021 to shorten the survey and minimize the amount of time required to participate. The next time we will request your participation will be January 2022 – and then every month for up to 12 months.

How do I participate?

The survey will resume in January 2022. At that time, your school’s designated Point of Contact will receive an invitation to complete the School Pulse Panel survey via email. The email will include a link to the survey, which should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. A new survey invitation will be issued each month from the email address addp.school.pulse.panel@census.gov. The Census Bureau is conducting the Panel on behalf of NCES.

Does the person completing the School Pulse Panel have to be the principal?

No. We initially identified the principal at each school as the School Pulse Panel Point of Contact, but you are welcome to delegate completion of the survey to another staff member who is knowledgeable about student enrollment and other programs at the school. Please confirm or correct the Point of Contact information by visiting the URL on the front of this letter.

Will you ask the same questions every month?

Some questions may remain on the survey from month to month to detect how schools are experiencing and adapting to change. Other questions may rotate in and out. Topics may include instructional mode, enrollment counts of subgroups of students, pandemic-related learning needs, virus spread mitigation strategies, services offered for students and staff, technology use or information on staffing.

How will my school be reimbursed?

If permitted, for each month of participation, the school will be offered \$400. For most schools, these reimbursements will be paid out quarterly to the district in the form of a debit card. Some schools may need to make alternate arrangements with the Census Bureau.

Other important information

All participation is voluntary. However, each school in the School Pulse Panel sample was selected to represent schools with similar characteristics, making your participation critical. Please be assured that by federal mandate we are required to protect the responses of all schools included in our survey. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports. No teacher or student time is required to complete the survey.

Questions?

If you have any questions about the study, contact the U.S. Census Bureau at 1-844-868-3661 or via e-mail at addp.school.pulse.panel@census.gov. The Census Bureau is collecting the data for NCES.

NCES is authorized to conduct this survey by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP 2021; Sec. 2010) and the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C. §9543). All of the information schools provide 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). Reports of the findings from the survey will not identify participating Local Education Agencies (LEAs), schools, or staff. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

Email A4: Schools Who Have Responded To Date, Nov 17th reminder email

[Date] [Subject Line]: School Pulse Panel: Confirm Contact Information

Dear Principal,

We greatly appreciated your earlier response to the School Pulse Panel. We need to confirm that we have the best Point of

Contact to send the survey invitation to in January 2022 to ensure your school has a chance to participate.

To prepare for the next collection in January, we want to make sure we have the best contact information for your school's participation in the Panel. Additionally, in order to receive your first reimbursement for completing the September survey, we need the name and school mailing address of the person who should receive this reimbursement on behalf of the school. We cannot send a reimbursement until this information has been provided. Please complete this information for your school as soon as possible by visiting the following link and entering the User ID listed below:

[URL]

User ID: XXX

You may also call 1-844-868-3661 to provide this information. Thank you again.

Sincerely,

Dr. Peggy Carr
Commissioner
National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)
U.S. Department of Education

Email A6: Schools Who Have Responded to Date, December 23rd reminder email

[Date] [Subject line: School Pulse Panel: Last chance to correct contact information]

Dear Principal,

As we finalize our plans for the January School Pulse Panel, we wanted to provide you one last opportunity to confirm that we have the correct contact information for your school. If you have not already responded, please do so now using the link and User ID provided:

[URL] User ID: XXX

You may call 1-844-868-3661 if you wish to provide the information by phone. If we do not receive your response, we will use the information we currently have on file for your school for the January survey.

Again, thank you for your previous response and your support of this important initiative. We appreciate your patience and look forward to your participation in the Panel again in January.

Sincerely,

Dr. Peggy Carr
Commissioner
National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)
U.S. Department of Education

Email B1: Schools Who Did Not Respond (Passive), advise of changes, encourage participation, compelling need for your representation (Nov 8th email)

[Date] [Subject line] School Pulse Panel: Information Needed

Dear Principal,

We recognize and appreciate the unprecedented challenges that your school is facing as the COVID-19 pandemic continues through the 2021-22 school year. In order to guide response and recovery, education policymakers need to know more about what is happening in your school. Your school represents many others with similar characteristics and therefore we need *your* involvement to represent the experiences of schools like yours.

- The survey will be **30 minutes or less** once a month starting in January 2022.
- Schools will be reimbursed \$400 for each month they complete the survey.
- All you need to do before January 2022 is ensure that we have the best contact information for your school's participation in the Panel.
- **Please confirm or correct contact information by visiting this link and using this User ID:**

[URL] User ID: XXX

You also may call 1-844-868-3661 if you wish to provide this information by phone.

The Census Bureau will send an invitation for the January 2022 data collection to the point of contact you designate.

The School Pulse Panel is designed to produce real-time data that shed light on the challenges you and your school are experiencing during the COVID-19 pandemic as they are happening. Data from the study can ensure that policy-related and resource allocation decisions made on behalf of our schools are responsive and impactful.

To learn more about the School Pulse Panel, visit www.census.gov/schoolpulse. As we prepare the inaugural data release, please feel free to review data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Monthly School Survey that was administered in the spring of 2021. This collection served as the predecessor to the School Pulse Panel and captured similar critical information for the 2020-2021 school year: <https://ies.ed.gov/schoolsurvey/>.

Thank you for your consideration of this important initiative and we look forward to your school's participation in January!

Sincerely,

Dr. Peggy Carr
Commissioner
National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)
U.S. Department of Education

Letter B2: Schools Who Did Not Respond (Passive)
[Date]

Dear Principal,

We received feedback from schools that the September School Pulse Panel was too long. In the interest of minimizing this burden on schools, the U.S. Department of Education and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) is taking a break from data collection until January to shorten the survey. **The Census Bureau will resume collecting data for the School Pulse Panel starting in January 2022 with an abbreviated, 30-minute survey and continuing monthly for up to 12 months.** Schools will continue to be reimbursed \$400 for each month that they complete the survey.

Your school is one of a small number invited to participate in the Panel, an initiative to produce continuous, real-time data on the experiences of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are reaching out to you again to encourage your participation when the survey resumes in January. In the meantime, we want to take this opportunity to make sure we have the best contact information for your school's participation in the Panel. Please confirm or correct this information by visiting the following link and entering your User ID:

[URL] User ID: XXX

You may call 1-844-868-3661 if you wish to provide the information by phone.

We understand the pandemic has placed exceptional demands on your school, staff and students, but the federal government currently lacks the timely data needed to guide response and recovery from this unprecedented period for our schools. Data from the study will be used to make policy and funding decisions. By participating in the Panel, you can ensure that the experiences of your school are included in these decisions.

To learn more about the School Pulse Panel, visit www.census.gov/schoolpulse. As we prepare the inaugural data release, please feel free to review data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Monthly School Survey that was administered in the spring of 2021. This collection served as the predecessor to the School Pulse Panel and captured similar critical information for the 2020-2021 school year: <https://ies.ed.gov/schoolsurvey/>.

Thank you for your consideration of this important initiative and we look forward to your school's participation in January!

Sincerely,

Dr. Peggy Carr
Commissioner
National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)
U.S. Department of Education

School Pulse Panel: Frequently Asked Questions

How is the School Pulse Panel different from other education surveys?

The School Pulse Panel is a unique survey. While surveys like the National Assessment of Educational Progress and the National Teacher and Principal Survey produce benchmark statistics critical to monitoring progress over time, they are not designed to capture the rapid pace at which schools must adapt in this pandemic environment. Your contribution is key to producing a new source of “near time” statistics that shed light on these challenges and inform the response of education officials at the federal level.

How frequently do you collect data for the School Pulse Panel?

The School Pulse Panel is designed to collect data from schools every month. However, based on feedback from schools who participated in initial data collection efforts, we will take a brief break in data collection for the months of October-December 2021 to shorten the survey and minimize the amount of time required to participate. The next time we will request your participation will be January 2022 – and then every month for up to 12 months.

How do I participate?

The survey will resume in January 2022. At that time, your school’s designated Point of Contact will receive an invitation to complete the School Pulse Panel survey via email. The email will include a link to the survey, which should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. A new survey invitation will be issued each month from the email address addp.school.pulse.panel@census.gov. The Census Bureau is conducting the Panel on behalf of NCES.

Does the person completing the School Pulse Panel have to be the principal?

No. We initially identified the principal at each school as the School Pulse Panel Point of Contact, but you are welcome to delegate completion of the survey to another staff member who is knowledgeable about student enrollment and other programs at the school. Please confirm or correct the Point of Contact information by visiting the URL on the front of this letter.

Will you ask the same questions every month?

Some questions may remain on the survey from month to month to detect how schools are experiencing and adapting to change. Other questions may rotate in and out. Topics may include instructional mode, enrollment counts of subgroups of students, pandemic-related learning needs, virus spread mitigation strategies, services offered for students and staff, technology use or information on staffing.

How will my school be reimbursed?

If permitted, for each month of participation, the school will be offered \$400. For most schools, these reimbursements will be paid out quarterly to the district in the form of a debit card. Some schools may need to make alternate arrangements with the Census Bureau.

Other important information

All participation is voluntary. However, each school in the School Pulse Panel sample was selected to represent schools with similar characteristics, making your participation critical. Please be assured that by federal mandate we are required to protect the responses of all schools included in our survey. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports. No teacher or student time is required to complete the survey.

Questions?

If you have any questions about the study, contact the U.S. Census Bureau at 1-844-868-3661 or via e-mail at addp.school.pulse.panel@census.gov. The Census Bureau is collecting the data for NCES.

NCES is authorized to conduct this survey by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP 2021; Sec. 2010) and the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C. §9543). All of the information schools provide 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). Reports of the findings from the survey will not identify participating Local Education Agencies (LEAs), schools, or staff. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

Email B3/C3: Schools Who Did Not Respond (Passive or Refusal), Nov 17th reminder email

[Date] [Subject Line] Respond to the School Pulse Panel to Shape Education Policy

Dear Principal,

We need to hear from your school so that Department of Education has accurate, up-to-date information about the impact

of COVID-19 on K-12 education to inform key decisions on policy and funding.

We want to confirm that we have the best Point of Contact to send the survey invitation to in January 2022 when the Panel resumes. Please confirm or update this information here using the link and User ID provided:

[URL]
User ID: XXX

You may also call 1-844-868-3661 to provide this information. If you have already provided this information, thank you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Peggy Carr
Commissioner
National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)
U.S. Department of Education

Email B4/C4: Schools Who Did Not Respond (Passive or refusal), December 13rd reminder email

[Date] [Subject line: Last chance to correct contact information for School Pulse Panel]

Dear Principal,

As we finalize our plans for the January School Pulse Panel survey, we wanted to provide you one last opportunity to confirm that we have the correct contact information for your school. If you have not already responded, please do so now using the link and User ID provided below:

[URL] User ID: XXX

You may call 1-844-868-3661 if you wish to provide the information by phone. If we do not receive your response, we will use the information we currently have on file for your school.

Again, thank you for your consideration in participating in this important initiative. We appreciate your patience and look forward to your participation in the Panel in January.

Sincerely,

Dr. Peggy Carr
Commissioner
National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)
U.S. Department of Education

Email C1: Schools Who Refused, advise of changes, resolicit participation given lower burden (Nov 8th email)

[Date] [Subject line] New, Shorter School Pulse Panel

Dear Principal,

We understand that your school chose not to participate in the School Pulse Panel. Schools are facing unprecedented challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, so we have decided to reduce the survey to just **30 minutes** to make it easier for schools to respond. We also will not have a survey from October- December 2021. We need *your* involvement in January 2022 to represent the experiences of schools like yours.

- Participating in the School Pulse Panel is your chance to tell policymakers in the Department of Education and the White House about your school's experiences as you continue to provide education during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The shorter, 30-minute survey will begin in January 2022.
- Schools will still be reimbursed \$400 for each month they complete the survey.
- All you need to do before January 2022 is ensure we have the best contact information for your school's participation in the Panel.
- **Please confirm or correct contact information by visiting this link and using this User ID:**

[URL]
User ID: XXX

You also may call 1-844-868-3661 if you wish to complete this by phone.

The Census Bureau will send an invitation for the January 2022 data collection to this point of contact.

Thank you for your consideration of this important study.

Sincerely,

Dr. Peggy Carr
Commissioner
National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)
U.S. Department of Education

Letter C2: Schools Who Refused (Active) (Nov 8th letter)

[Date]

Dear Principal,

We understand that you chose not to participate in the School Pulse Panel this fall. The Department of Education and the National Center for Education Statistics recognize that schools are facing many challenges right now, so in the interests of minimizing the School Pulse Panel's burden, we are taking a break from data collection until January. The Panel will resume **with a much shorter 30-minute** survey that will continue monthly for up to 12 months. We hope that you will consider participating in this shorter School Pulse Panel to tell us about your school's experiences with educating students during the COVID-19 pandemic. **Schools will still be reimbursed \$400 for each month that they complete the survey.**

We want to take this opportunity to make sure we have the best contact information for your school's participation in the study. Please confirm or correct this information by visiting the following link and entering your User ID:

[URL]

User ID: XXX

You also may call 1-844-868-3661 if you wish to complete this by phone.

The Department of Education and other Federal agencies lack the timely data needed to guide response and recovery from this unprecedented period for our schools. The School Pulse Panel is an initiative to produce continuous, real-time data on the experiences in schools during the COVID-19 pandemic as they are happening. Data from the study can ensure that decisions made on behalf of our schools are responsive and impactful.

Your school is one of a small number invited to participate in the Panel. We need *your* involvement to represent the experiences your schools and of other schools like yours.

To learn more about the School Pulse Panel, visit www.census.gov/schoolpulse. As we prepare the inaugural data release, please feel free to review data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Monthly School Survey that was administered in the spring of 2021. This collection served as the predecessor to the School Pulse Panel and captured similar critical information for the 2020-2021 school year: <https://ies.ed.gov/schoolsurvey/>.

Thank you for your consideration of this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Dr. Peggy Carr
Commissioner
National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)
U.S. Department of Education
School Pulse Panel: Frequently Asked Questions

How is the School Pulse Panel different from other education surveys?

The School Pulse Panel is a unique survey. While surveys like the National Assessment of Educational Progress and the National Teacher and Principal Survey produce benchmark statistics critical to monitoring progress over time, they are not designed to capture the rapid pace at which schools must adapt in this pandemic environment. Your contribution is key to producing a new source of "near time" statistics that shed light on these challenges and inform the response of education officials at the federal level.

How frequently do you collect data for the School Pulse Panel?

The School Pulse Panel is designed to collect data from schools every month. However, based on feedback from schools who participated in initial data collection efforts, we will take a brief break in data collection for the months of October-December 2021 to shorten the survey and minimize the amount of time required to participate. The next time we will request your participation will be January 2022 – and then every month for up to 12 months.

How do I participate?

The survey will resume in January 2022. At that time, your school’s designated Point of Contact will receive an invitation to complete the School Pulse Panel survey via email. The email will include a link to the survey, which should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. A new survey invitation will be issued each month from the email address addp.school.pulse.panel@census.gov. The Census Bureau is conducting the Panel on behalf of NCES.

Does the person completing the School Pulse Panel have to be the principal?

No. We initially identified the principal at each school as the School Pulse Panel Point of Contact, but you are welcome to delegate completion of the survey to another staff member who is knowledgeable about student enrollment and other programs at the school. Please confirm or correct the Point of Contact information by visiting the URL on the front of this letter.

Will you ask the same questions every month?

Some questions may remain on the survey from month to month to detect how schools are experiencing and adapting to change. Other questions may rotate in and out. Topics may include instructional mode, enrollment counts of subgroups of students, pandemic-related learning needs, virus spread mitigation strategies, services offered for students and staff, technology use or information on staffing.

How will my school be reimbursed?

If permitted, for each month of participation, the school will be offered \$400. For most schools, these reimbursements will be paid out quarterly to the district in the form of a debit card. Some schools may need to make alternate arrangements with the Census Bureau.

Other important information

All participation is voluntary. However, each school in the School Pulse Panel sample was selected to represent schools with similar characteristics, making your participation critical. Please be assured that by federal mandate we are required to protect the responses of all schools included in our survey. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports. No teacher or student time is required to complete the survey.

Questions?

If you have any questions about the study, contact the U.S. Census Bureau at 1-844-868-3661 or via e-mail at addp.school.pulse.panel@census.gov. The Census Bureau is collecting the data for NCES.

NCES is authorized to conduct this survey by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP 2021; Sec. 2010) and the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C. §9543). All of the information schools provide 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). Reports of the findings from the survey will not identify participating Local Education Agencies (LEAs), schools, or staff. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

Email D1: Special Districts Who Approved

[Date]

Dear School District Research Coordinator,

On behalf of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) within the U.S. Department of Education, I am writing to express our thanks for your support on behalf of the new School Pulse Panel. We have completed the first month (September) of data collection and appreciate the approval for your schools to participate. Their responses, combined with others from a select sample of schools across the nation, will provide timely and relevant data on the experiences of schools, staff, and students as they navigate the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are implementing a major change in plans for the School Pulse Panel. Having received feedback from schools that the September survey was too long, we are pausing data collection briefly to remove content from the survey. **We will resume the monthly data collection cycle starting January 2022 with an abbreviated, 30-minute survey.** Schools will continue to be reimbursed \$400 for each month that they complete the survey, subject to district conditions and restrictions.

We are continuing our outreach to schools to ensure the Panel is fully representative of how schools, staff, and students are experiencing education during this period.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions. The School Pulse Panel email is adp.school.pulse.panel@census.gov and the phone number is 1-844-868-3661.

Again, thank you for your support of this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Rachel Hansen
Statistician, Project Director, School Pulse
National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)
U.S. Department of Education

NCES is authorized to conduct this survey by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP 2021; Sec. 2010) and the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C. §9543). All of the information schools provide 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). Reports of the findings from the survey will not identify participating Local Education Agencies (LEAs), schools, or staff. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

Email E1: Special Districts Active, Pending Approval

[Date]

Dear School District Research Coordinator,

On behalf of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) within the U.S. Department of Education, I am writing to express our thanks for your support on behalf of the new School Pulse Panel. We have completed the first month (September) of data collection and appreciate your continued consideration as we await approval of our application to engage the schools in your district selected for the Panel.

I also want to advise you that NCES is implementing a major change to the School Pulse Panel. Having received feedback from schools participating in the September survey that it was too long, we are pausing data collection briefly to remove content from the survey. **The Census Bureau will resume collecting data for the School Pulse Panel starting in January 2022 and will continue monthly thereafter with an abbreviated, 30-minute survey.** Schools will continue to be reimbursed \$400 for each month that they complete the survey, subject to district conditions and restrictions.

We are asking for your district to make a decision on our research application as soon as possible, so that we can engage schools and prepare them for the January 2022 start. The Panel is comprised of a small number of carefully selected schools across the nation. We understand this is a challenging time, but we need your involvement to ensure the experiences of your district's schools and schools like them are represented. Please let us know as soon as possible whether we need to make an amendment to our research application to reflect the change in survey length.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions. The School Pulse Panel email is addp.school.pulse.panel@census.gov and the phone number is 1-844-868-3661.

To learn more about the School Pulse Panel, visit www.census.gov/schoolpulse. As we prepare the inaugural data release, please also feel free to review data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Monthly School Survey that was administered in the spring of 2021. This collection served as the predecessor to the School Pulse Panel and captured similar critical information for the 2020-2021 school year.

Again, thank you for your support of this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Rachel Hansen
Statistician, Project Director, School Pulse
National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)
U.S. Department of Education

School Pulse Panel: Frequently Asked Questions

How is the School Pulse Panel different from other education surveys?

The School Pulse Panel is a unique survey. While surveys like the National Assessment of Educational Progress and the National Teacher and Principal Survey produce benchmark statistics critical to monitoring progress over time, they are not designed to capture the rapid pace at which schools must adapt in this pandemic environment. Your contribution is key to producing a new source of “near time” statistics that shed light on these challenges and inform the response of education officials at the federal level.

How frequently do you collect data for the School Pulse Panel?

The School Pulse Panel is designed to collect data from schools every month. However, based on feedback from schools who participated in initial data collection efforts, we will take a brief break in data collection for the months of October-December 2021 to shorten the survey and minimize the amount of time required to participate. The next time we will request your participation will be January 2022 – and then every month for up to 12 months.

How do I participate?

The survey will resume in January 2022. At that time, your school’s designated Point of Contact will receive an invitation to complete the School Pulse Panel survey via email. The email will include a link to the survey, which should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. A new survey invitation will be issued each month from the email address addp.school.pulse.panel@census.gov. The Census Bureau is conducting the Panel on behalf of NCES.

Does the person completing the School Pulse Panel have to be the principal?

No. We initially identified the principal at each school as the School Pulse Panel Point of Contact, but you are welcome to delegate completion of the survey to another staff member who is knowledgeable about student enrollment and other programs at the school. Please confirm or correct the Point of Contact information by visiting the URL on the front of this letter.

Will you ask the same questions every month?

Some questions may remain on the survey from month to month to detect how schools are experiencing and adapting to change. Other questions may rotate in and out. Topics may include instructional mode, enrollment counts of subgroups of students, pandemic-related learning needs, virus spread mitigation strategies, services offered for students and staff, technology use or information on staffing.

How will my school be reimbursed?

If permitted, for each month of participation, the school will be offered \$400. For most schools, these reimbursements will be paid out quarterly to the district in the form of a debit card. Some schools may need to make alternate arrangements with the Census Bureau.

Other important information

All participation is voluntary. However, each school in the School Pulse Panel sample was selected to represent schools with similar characteristics, making your participation critical. Please be assured that by federal mandate we are required to protect the responses of all schools included in our survey. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports. No teacher or student time is required to complete the survey.

Questions?

If you have any questions about the study, contact the U.S. Census Bureau at 1-844-868-3661 or via e-mail at addp.school.pulse.panel@census.gov. The Census Bureau is collecting the data for NCES.

NCES is authorized to conduct this survey by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP 2021; Sec. 2010) and the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C. §9543). All of the information schools provide 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). Reports of the findings from the survey will not identify participating Local Education Agencies (LEAs), schools, or staff. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

Email F1: Special District Who Did Not Respond (Passive)

[Date]

Dear School District Research Coordinator,

On behalf of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) within the U.S. Department of Education, I am writing to provide you an update on the School Pulse Panel. We received feedback from schools indicating that the September survey was too long. In the interests of minimizing this burden on schools, we will take a break from data collection for a few months while we significantly reduce the survey's length. **The Census Bureau will resume collecting data for the School Pulse Panel starting in January 2022 with an abbreviated, 30-minute survey and will continue monthly for the 2021-22 school year.** Schools will still be reimbursed \$400 for each month that they complete the survey.

We need *your* involvement to represent the experiences of schools like the ones in your district. We are asking that your district approve our research application as soon as possible so that we can engage the selected schools and prepare them for the January 2022 start. If you are awaiting paperwork or otherwise believe there is a miscommunication about your district's approval process, please let us know so we can resolve these issues. Please do not hesitate to let us know if you have questions. The School Pulse Panel email is addp.school.pulse.panel@census.gov and the phone number is 1-844-868-3661.

We understand the pandemic has placed exceptional demands on schools, staff, and students, but the Department of Education and other Federal agencies lack the timely data needed to guide response and recovery from this unprecedented period for our schools. The School Pulse Panel is designed to produce real-time data that shed light on these challenges as they are happening. Data from the Panel can ensure that decisions made on behalf of schools are responsive and impactful.

To learn more about the School Pulse Panel, visit www.census.gov/schoolpulse. As we prepare the inaugural data release, please also feel free to review data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Monthly School Survey that was administered in the spring of 2021. This collection served as the predecessor to the School Pulse Panel and captured similar critical information for the 2020-2021 school year.

Thank you for your consideration of this important School Pulse Panel initiative.

Sincerely,

Rachel Hansen
Statistician, Project Director, School Pulse
National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)
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School Pulse Panel: Frequently Asked Questions

How is the School Pulse Panel different from other education surveys?

The School Pulse Panel is a unique survey. While surveys like the National Assessment of Educational Progress and the National Teacher and Principal Survey produce benchmark statistics critical to monitoring progress over time, they are not designed to capture the rapid pace at which schools must adapt in this pandemic environment. Your contribution is key to producing a new source of “near time” statistics that shed light on these challenges and inform the response of education officials at the federal level.

How frequently do you collect data for the School Pulse Panel?

The School Pulse Panel is designed to collect data from schools every month. However, based on feedback from schools who participated in initial data collection efforts, we will take a brief break in data collection for the months of October-December 2021 to shorten the survey and minimize the amount of time required to participate. The next time we will request your participation will be January 2022 – and then every month for up to 12 months.

How do I participate?

The survey will resume in January 2022. At that time, your school’s designated Point of Contact will receive an invitation to complete the School Pulse Panel survey via email. The email will include a link to the survey, which should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. A new survey invitation will be issued each month from the email address addp.school.pulse.panel@census.gov. The Census Bureau is conducting the Panel on behalf of NCES.

Does the person completing the School Pulse Panel have to be the principal?

No. We initially identified the principal at each school as the School Pulse Panel Point of Contact, but you are welcome to delegate completion of the survey to another staff member who is knowledgeable about student enrollment and other programs at the school. Please confirm or correct the Point of Contact information by visiting the URL on the front of this letter.

Will you ask the same questions every month?

Some questions may remain on the survey from month to month to detect how schools are experiencing and adapting to change. Other questions may rotate in and out. Topics may include instructional mode, enrollment counts of subgroups of students, pandemic-related learning needs, virus spread mitigation strategies, services offered for students and staff, technology use or information on staffing.

How will my school be reimbursed?

If permitted, for each month of participation, the school will be offered \$400. For most schools, these reimbursements will be paid out quarterly to the district in the form of a debit card. Some schools may need to make alternate arrangements with the Census Bureau.

Other important information

All participation is voluntary. However, each school in the School Pulse Panel sample was selected to represent schools with similar characteristics, making your participation critical. Please be assured that by federal mandate we are required to protect the responses of all schools included in our survey. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports. No teacher or student time is required to complete the survey.

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Email G1 Special Districts Who Refused, advise of changes, resolicit participation given lower burden

[Date]

Dear School District Research Coordinator,

On behalf of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) within the U.S. Department of Education, I am writing to provide you with an update on the School Pulse Panel. Schools in your district were one of a select number invited to participate in the Panel, an initiative to produce continuous, real-time data on the experiences in schools during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We recognize that the burden of completing a 2-3 hour survey was a central source of concern for school districts who declined to approve our outreach to their schools. We have paused data collection briefly to reduce the survey's length. **The Census Bureau will resume collecting data for the School Pulse Panel starting in January 2022 and continuing monthly thereafter with an abbreviated, 30-minute survey.** Schools will still be reimbursed \$400 for each month that they complete the survey, subject to district conditions and restrictions.

Given this shortened instrument, we respectfully request that you revisit your district's decision as soon as possible. As the pandemic continues to place exceptional demands on our schools, staff, and students, there is a critical gap in our data resources; specifically, we lack the timely data needed to guide response and recovery from this unprecedented period for our schools. The School Pulse Panel is designed to produce real-time data that shed light on these challenges as they are happening. We need your support to permit the experiences of schools in your district to be represented and to ensure that decisions made on behalf of schools are responsive and impactful.

We are asking that your district approve our research application as soon as possible. This will give us time to engage your schools and prepare them for the January 2022 survey. If you have questions, do not hesitate to contact us. The School Pulse Panel email is addp.school.pulse.panel@census.gov and the phone number is 1-844-868-3661.

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Thank you for your consideration of this important School Pulse Panel initiative.

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Appendix B – Screener (to be programmed in Qualtrics)

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact K-12 education in the United States. It is critical for the Department of Education, Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and the public to have accurate and up-to-date information on how schools are responding to the pandemic. We have selected a small number of schools to represent all schools in the United States as part of a carefully selected panel. Your school was selected to participate in this important panel. Each month for the remainder of the 2021-22 school year, you will be asked to provide information on the operating status and COVID-19 related protocols at your school.

The purpose of this screener is to:

1. Ensure that we have up-to-date contact information for your school.
2. Provide you with the opportunity to appoint a primary person of contact who will be responsible for completing the monthly survey.
3. Indicate the best way to provide your school with compensation for its participation

This screener should take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

{Page Break}

1. Please confirm or enter the following information about your school.
 - a. School Name: _____
 - b. Principal/Head of School First Name: _____
 - c. Principal/Head of School Last Name: _____
 - d. Principal/Head of School Phone Number: _____
 - e. School Address 1: _____
 - f. School Address 2: _____
 - g. City: _____
 - h. State: _____
 - i. Zip Code: _____
2. Is this also the MAILING address for your school?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

If no, another fill-in question to enter school mailing address

- a. Name: _____
- b. Address 1: _____
- c. Address 2: _____
- d. City: _____
- e. State: _____
- f. Zip Code: _____

3. What type of school is [School Name]
 - a. Public School
 - b. Charter School
 - c. Private School

- d. Home School
- e. Bureau of Indian Education School

4. Please indicate the grades that your school offers:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Kindergarten | <input type="radio"/> 7 th grade |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 st grade | <input type="radio"/> 8 th grade |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 nd grade | <input type="radio"/> 9 th grade |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 rd grade | <input type="radio"/> 10 th grade |
| <input type="radio"/> 4 th grade | <input type="radio"/> 11 th grade |
| <input type="radio"/> 5 th grade | <input type="radio"/> 12 th grade |
| <input type="radio"/> 6 th grade | |

5. The survey will collect information on your school's enrollment, current learning environment (for example, in-person or remote learning), COVID-19 mitigation strategies, and other various topics. Please identify the best person in your school for us to contact for this survey. As principal/head of school, you may be this person, or you can identify another school staff member to serve in this role. This person will serve as your school's primary person of contact for this study.

The primary person of contact will receive future communications regarding the School Pulse Panel, including monthly survey links. This person should be a school staff member who can respond to monthly surveys. This person is responsible for collecting information necessary to answer survey items and submit completed surveys online.

- a. Name: _____
- b. Job Title: _____
- c. Email: _____
- d. Work Phone Number: _____

I, the principal/head of school, will be the primary person of contact for the School Pulse Panel (contact information collected in item 1 will be used).

6. Please identify an alternative person of contact.

The alternative person of contact will be contacted if the primary person of contact leaves the school or is otherwise unavailable during a collection period.

- a. Name: _____
- b. Job Title: _____
- c. Email: _____
- d. Work Phone Number: _____

I, the principal/head of school, will be the alternative person of contact for the School Pulse Panel (contact information collected in item 1 will be used).

7. Given that you are being asked to provide enrollment counts, it may be helpful for us to also contact the person in your school or district who is responsible for this type of data. This might be a student information systems manager or someone responsible for federally mandated state reporting. If you wish for us to include this person in our outreach, please provide their information below.

- a. Name: _____
- b. Job Title: _____
- c. Email: _____
- d. Work Phone Number: _____

8. Your school will receive \$400 for each completed monthly survey. Where would you like this to be sent?

- a. My school mailing address
- b. My district mailing address
- c. Other, please specify

If b or c selected: Please provide the following:

- a. Name: _____
- b. Address 1: _____
- c. Address 2: _____
- d. City: _____
- e. State: _____
- f. Zip Code: _____