Private School Universe Survey (PSS) 2023-24 Data Collection, and 2023-24 and 2025-26 PSS Frame Development Activities

Supporting Statement
Part B

OMB# 1850-0641 v. 14

Submitted by

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

January 2022
revised April 2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS

B. COLLECTION OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

Bl. Respondent Universe

The target population for the survey consists of all private schools in the United States that provide instruction to any of grades Kindergarten-12, or comparable ungraded levels (approximately 32,500 schools).

B2. Procedures for Data Collection—Statistical Methods, Estimation Procedures, Accuracy, and Anticipated Problems

The universe frame to be used by NCES for the 2023-24 PSS will be composed of the 2023-24 PSS list frame and the 2023-24 area-search frame. The list frame is based on the 2021-22 PSS. and is updated with current membership lists from private school associations and private school lists from state departments of education and social services (for kindergarten programs) (see appendices A and B for examples of letters used to request private school lists). The area list is developed after a systematic search of approximately 124 randomly selected primary sampling units (PSUs). The list of schools found in this search is unduplicated with the list frame to yield the area-frame schools. The area frame is used to represent schools missing from the list frame. The 2019-20 area-frame search was conducted in 124 PSUs and identified 2,156 unduplicated cases, weighting up to represent 12,413 cases. Similarly, the universe frame to be used by NCES for the 2025-26 PSS will be composed of the 2025-26 PSS list frame and the 2025-26 area-search frame.

A combination of mail/Internet, telephone follow-up, and personal visit follow-up will be used to ensure an anticipated 85 percent response rate for the 2023-24 data collections (the 2019-20 PSS response rate was 73.3 percent). The 2019-20 PSS weighted response rates by type of school and percentage of interviews by mode are presented below.

2017-18 PSS Unweighted Response Rates and Percentage of Interviews by Mode				
Type of School	Weighted Response Rate	Percentage of Interviews by Paper/Internet	Percentage of Interviews by CATI Followup	Percentage of Interviews by Field Followup
All Schools	73.3%	77.6%	17.4%	5.0%
Catholic	74.7%	-	-	-
Other Religious	72.8%	-	-	-
Nonsectarian	71.5%	-	-	-

The first mailout (web invitation); see Appendix C-2) will be followed by a second mailout (web invitation and/or paper questionnaire) to nonrespondents a week later. The second mailout will be followed by a third mailout (web invitation and/or paper questionnaire) three weeks later. A reminder postcard will be sent one week after the third mailout. Six weeks after the third mailout, noninterview cases will be turned over to the CATI facility for telephone follow-up and, when necessary, to field staff for personal visit follow-up.

B3. Methods for Maximizing Response Rates

Although different types of private schools have different response rates, each method designed to increase response rates will be applied to all private schools. The following procedures will be employed to maximize response rates:

1. Visible support from top-level federal education officials: Top-level education department officials addressed the representatives of private school associations at an NCES-sponsored meeting that took place in February 2021. The officials demonstrated their support for the survey by informing the

representatives of the timing and objectives of the survey and by soliciting the representatives' cooperation to ensure the survey's success.

2. Endorsements by private school associations: The 2019-20 PSS was endorsed by 36 private school associations.

3. Interactive field monitoring with extensive follow-up (by telephone and personal visits) of nonrespondents: The survey will use mixed survey modes—mail/Internet, telephone, and personal interviews, as needed, to maximize response levels in 2023-24. Experience indicates that most of the school surveys will be completed by mail/Internet. Follow-up telephone or in-person interviews for the mail nonrespondents will be conducted to achieve an expected response rate of 85 percent. In the 2019-20 administration of PSS, we received 52% of responses by internet, with about 78% of responses by a self-administered mode in total (internet or mail).

In addition, the survey content is based upon administrative information that is commonly on file in private schools.

B4. Test of Procedures and Methods

The survey questionnaire and procedures will be based on those used in the 2021-22 PSS. See Appendix D for the 2023-24 PSS questionnaire.

One test has been conducted on PSS since the last OMB clearance:

In 2019-20 PSS, NCES conducted a pilot operation to test both our ability to harvest school e-mail addresses clerically from the Internet for 6,714 private schools and the impact on response rates of sending web reminders to schools by e-mail. We were successful in obtaining a working email for 64% of the test cases and were able to send reminder emails to 4,321 private schools. The reminder email resulted in 864 completed interviews and the identification of 42 out-of-scope cases. Informed by this work, NCES does plan to send reminders by email to schools in 2023-24 and beyond.

B5. Statistical Consultants, Agency Staff, and Contractors

In addition to review within NCES, Christina Cox and Aaron Gilary of the U.S. Census Bureau reviewed the PSS sample design and related matters for statistical quality, feasibility, and suitability to the overall objectives of the survey. The following individuals have oversight of the data collection and analysis:

NCES, U.S. Department of Education
Washington, DC 20006

Stephen Broughman
PSS Project Director

Andrew Zukerberg
Program Director
Branch Chief of Cross-sectional Surveys

Chris Chapman
Associate Commissioner
Sample Surveys Division

U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, DC 20233

Brian Kincel
PSS Project Director
Associate Director of Demographic Programs,
Survey Operations

Aaron Gilary
Branch Chief of Statistical Methods Division

Christina Cox
Associate Director of Demographic Programs,
Survey Operations

Part C. ITEM JUSTIFICATION

The questionnaire is designed to collect information concerning the number of private schools, teachers, students, and high school graduates. In addition, the questionnaire contains several screening items that are necessary to establish that schools are bona fide schools or educational programs offering kindergarten programs and not day care centers, preschools, and the like. See Appendix D for a copy of the 2023-24 PSS questionnaire.

Item 1 seeks information to identify the respondent.

Item 2 lists statements that will be used to screen out schools that are not private schools or do not serve students in grades K-12.

Item 3 gives instructions to the respondent.

Items 4 and 5 obtain information regarding the grades offered, enrollment by grade, and total enrollment. These questions will be used to determine the current grades taught in private schools and to classify sampled schools as elementary/middle, secondary/high, or combined/other. The total enrollment (Item 5) and enrollment by grade (Item 4) will be used to estimate the total enrollment in private schools and the number of private school students by grade or grade span. This data will be used in the sample selection design for other school surveys.

Item 6 asks the racial/ethnic distribution of the student body. This is a basic school descriptor and an important policy-relevant measure of minority group composition in the school. This data will be used in the sample selection design for other school surveys.

Item 7 asks if a school is coeducational, all female, or all male and, if coeducational, how many male students attend the school. This is a basic school descriptor. This data will be used in the sample selection design for other school surveys.

Item 8 asks for the number of regular high school graduates during the 2018-19 academic year and the percent that went to 4-year colleges. This is a basic school descriptor and an important policy-relevant measure.

Item 9 asks schools to indicate the existence of a kindergarten program, and for those schools with a kindergarten program, whether it is a full- or half-day program and the number of days per week of the kindergarten program. The characteristics of kindergarten programs in private schools are important policy-relevant measures. This data will be used in the sample selection design for other school surveys.

Item 10 asks schools to indicate their number of full- and part-time teachers. This information will allow estimates of both the total number of private school teachers and the total number of full-time-equivalent teachers in private schools. This data will be used in the sample selection design for other school surveys.

Item 11 seeks information regarding school type. This information will be used as a classification variable in analysis.

Item 12 asks the extent to which private schools are supporting home schooling and whether the school is operated in a private home used as a family residence. This question will be used to determine the prevalence of schools in private residences and will also be used (in conjunction with Item 5) to screen out families that are homeschooling.

Items 13 and 14 ask schools to indicate whether they have a religious orientation and to indicate to what associations they belong. These data will be used to estimate the number of Catholic, other religious, and nonsectarian schools; and to determine if schools are members of school associations. The data will also be used as a classification variable in analysis and in the sample selection design for other school surveys.

Item 15 asks for the number of days in the school year for students. These data will be used to estimate the average length of the school year for students attending private schools.

Item 16 will obtain information about the length of the school day in private schools. These data will be used to estimate the average length of the school day for students attending private schools.

Item 17 asks schools to indicate the existence of a library/media center. This is a basic school descriptor and will be used in the sample selection design for other school surveys.

Item 18 will be used by NCES to study survey response patterns.

Item 19 will be used for updating the school name and address. This data will be used in sample surveys and future PSS collections.

Item 20 will obtain the physical or street address of the school, if different from the mailing address. This information will be used in assigning a geocode to the school location and for unduplication.