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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES

NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

Board of Education
Brick Township Public Schools
101 Hendrickson Avenue
Brick, NJ 08724

January 27, 2012

To Whom It May Concern,

The National Center for Education Statistics is requesting approval for the administration of the 2011-12 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) to some of the schools within the Brick Township Public Schools during the 2011-12 school year. The Schools and Staffing Survey is administered once every 4 years to a sample of districts, schools, principals, teachers, and library media center staff. No student or classroom time is involved.

SASS is designed to measure critical aspects of schools and teaching, the composition of the principal and teacher workforces, and conditions for learning in schools. With the results from the Schools and Staffing Survey, the National Center for Education Statistics produces estimates of public school characteristics and comparisons among elementary and secondary schools at the state and national levels. The information provided by the principals, schools, teachers, and school librarians in your area will represent the uniqueness and diversity of your school district and will contribute to a robust portrait of education in the United States. By participating in SASS, schools in your district will provide important information that will better inform and shape education policies in the future. Further information about SASS is available on our website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sass>. Any of our publications can be ordered without charge from the website.

The enclosed materials describe the purpose, survey topics, sample sizes, and respondent burden for the survey. Final versions of the 2011-12 SASS questionnaires are included for your review. These are the versions that will be used during data collection.

In addition to these application materials, a District Administration Form is enclosed that you may use to indicate whether or not your district has approved the participation of sampled school(s). This form will facilitate participation in SASS. Please return this form at your earliest convenience. This form may be returned by fax to Lucia Chavez at (301) 763-3035 or email to Lucia.J.Chavez@census.gov.

If you require further information, please let me know, and I will be happy to provide it.

Sincerely,

Kerry J. Gruber
Project Director, Schools and Staffing Survey
National Center for Education Statistics
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Washington, D.C. 20006

CONTACT

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TITLE

Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), 2011-12

PURPOSE

The need for contextual data on teachers, school principals or school heads, and school policies and programs has been well established. In response to concerns about the status of teaching and education, state and local education policymakers have sought more information about the school environment, the composition of the school workforce, and policies affecting the recruitment, retention, and retirement of teachers.

The Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) is sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the statistical agency for the United States Department of Education to gather data on the teaching and working conditions in public and private elementary and secondary schools in the United States. SASS is authorized by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, 20 U.S. Code §9541(b) and §9543(a). SASS provides data on the characteristics and qualifications of teachers and principals, teacher hiring practices, professional development, class size, and other conditions in schools across the nation.

Since its inception in 1987, the Schools and Staffing Survey has had four core components: the School District Questionnaire, School Questionnaire, Principal Questionnaire, and Teacher Questionnaires. In the 1999-2000 administration of SASS, the Library Media Center Questionnaire was added. In the 2011-12 administration, the School, Principal, and Teacher Questionnaires will be sent to respondents in public, public charter, and private schools. The public schools also will receive the Library Media Center Questionnaire.

SASS, which is conducted on a 4-year cycle, is a large survey of K-12 school districts, schools, teachers, and principals or school heads in the United States today. Its data are used by a wide variety of people interested in K-12 education, including teacher professional organizations, private school associations, education advocacy groups, legislators, researchers, and journalists. SASS provides a unique resource for information on elementary and secondary education by linking data provided by schools with their respective principals, teachers, libraries, and districts. Data can be analyzed not only within each component (i.e., the district, school, principal, teacher, and library media center data files), but also across components or data files. This linkage across the different respondent groups makes SASS data unique among school surveys and allows researchers to study the complexities of the American education system from

multiple perspectives. For example, researchers can study teacher attrition using information from not only teachers but also from their schools and principals. The integrated survey design also allows NCES to collect information from the school personnel who can best supply it, causing less inconvenience to respondents and providing more accurate information.

HYPOTHESES

Congress, the Department of Education and other Federal agencies, State Departments of Education, education associations, and the education research community will use data from the 2011-12 SASS to conduct research on a range of issues. In the past, some of the most frequently published topics have included class size, new teachers, out-of-field teaching, professional development, teacher attrition/retention, and teacher qualifications. Based on previous administrations of SASS, the data will be used to:

- Assess teacher capacity as defined by teacher qualifications, teacher career paths, professional development activities, and support for these aspects of teachers' careers by the school and the district;
- Assess school capacity as defined by school organization and decision-making, management of curriculum and instruction, school programs, and school safety;
- Assess district capacity as defined by policies regarding the recruitment, retention, and retirement of teachers; and
- Collect national statistics on school libraries, which the Federal government has been doing since 1958, to provide a national picture of school library media center staffing, collections, expenditures, technology, and services.

MEASUREMENT

Each topic is briefly described below in terms of the broad education issues in need of measurement.

TEACHER QUALITY AND CAREER PATHS

Teacher quality and the factors that influence it have become the focus of many educational researchers and the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. The movement of teachers in and out of the teaching workforce has been a central concern of SASS since 1987 when data describing these phenomena were first collected. Building upon this base, more detailed indicators of teachers' career paths may help explain entry into teaching and teacher attrition. Teachers' experiences during the recruitment process and their first year of teaching can greatly influence decisions to continue teaching. Teacher quality items help inform NCES about the characteristics of training, which can be related to teaching assignments. Quality is defined as the match between teacher preparation (degrees, certification, and endorsements) and teaching assignment fields. These topics are measured in fine detail in the SASS.

TEACHER RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, AND EVALUATION

Recruiting and retention methods for teachers are a major topic of interest as schools and districts investigate ways to recruit and retain high-quality teachers. Questions in the School District Questionnaire investigate pay ranges and incentives. Related questions also explore teacher vacancies and the ease with which positions are filled as well as the dismissal of teachers, and are included in the School Questionnaire. Recent additions to the Principal and Teacher Questionnaires explore the evaluation of teachers.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In recent years, policy makers, educators, researchers, and others have come to recognize that the kinds of changes envisioned by current reform efforts may require teachers to further expand their knowledge and alter their working relationships with students. Teachers are being called upon to be flexible and figure out ways to adapt instructional methods to fit the needs of all styles of learners in order to provide an education to the nation's children, to use new technologies, and to change how they interact with students and each other. As a result, professional development aimed at improving teaching quality is a key component of all reform efforts.

SCHOOL REFORM

An important role of SASS is to document the evolution of major reforms, especially as they affect schools and teaching practices. In response to the use of accountability measures in the 2002 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) or the No Child Left Behind Act, items are included on the District and Principal Questionnaires about Adequate Yearly Progress for the district and the school, respectively. Other topics continued from the 1999-2000, 2003-04, and 2007-08 SASS questionnaires are the amount of influence principals have in setting school policies.

SCHOOL SAFETY

School safety is frequently reported as a major problem in public schools in the United States. Violence and drug abuse in schools put huge constraints on teachers, students, administrators, and schools. Increased attention to school safety has led policy makers to begin examining school safety at the national level. The school safety items include the principal's knowledge of violence and other school problems and school security policies and how they are implemented.

BASIC DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

Each of the SASS surveys contains questions that provide basic descriptive information on the respondent:

- The Principal and Teacher Questionnaires include items on gender, age, and race/ethnicity;
- The Principal Questionnaire includes items on principals' licensure, highest degree earned, years of teaching experience, and salary;
- The Teacher Questionnaire contains items on years of teaching experience, education degrees and fields, certification, salary, and main teaching assignment;
- The School Questionnaire contains items on enrollment, the type of school (regular, special education, etc.), programs and services in the school, and counts of various types of school staff; and
- The District Questionnaire contains items on numbers of newly-hired teachers and principals, counts of full-time equivalent teachers and student enrollment, and salary schedules for teachers.

LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER

The Library Media Center Questionnaire is administered to public schools that report having a library media center. The survey section delves into questions about the library's facilities and policies, staffing, technology, and collections and expenditures. Facilities and policy

questions include the physical facilities available to students, faculty, and community members; the frequency with which students visit and check out materials; and types of programs offered. The staffing section asks about paid and unpaid staff, and the technology section includes questions about the number of computer workstations, internet access, availability of databases, and the use of an information literacy curriculum. Finally, information is gathered on the library's holdings, acquisitions, and expenditures.

CONTENT DESIGN

Since the 2007-08 SASS collection, there has been an opportunity to revise and review the content and emphasis of SASS. The revision process involved an analysis of items on the nine SASS surveys. Items that had low response rates, consistently confusing responses, and other grammatical or clarity issues were highlighted and discussed at length. These discussions expanded to include review sessions of each item. Several items were redesigned, reformatted, or moved to ensure item precision, and some new items were added. Before the surveys were finalized, new and revised items underwent cognitive lab testing to determine whether items were likely to be understood correctly and uniformly across the survey population.

The same five core components of the 2007-08 SASS remain: the District Questionnaire, School Questionnaire, Principal Questionnaire, Teacher Questionnaire, and Library Media Center Questionnaire. These surveys are linked so that researchers may analyze school-level and district-wide phenomenon at the state, regional, or national levels.

In this administration, SASS will retain or expand many of the topics covered in previous administrations, maintaining the capability for trend analysis. At the same time, new items developed for the 2011-12 administration of SASS will collect additional information on a number of topics crucial to education reform.

QUESTIONNAIRES

We have enclosed a final version of the questionnaires intended for public schools for the 2011-12 administration of SASS. As mentioned above, the content was discussed at length and has been finalized; only the final formatting procedure remains. The 2007-08 SASS questionnaires, as well as those from earlier administrations, are available on our website: <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/SASS/questionnaire.asp>.

METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLING

The U.S. Census Bureau is the collection agent for SASS data on behalf of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). SASS is a self-administered survey that is mailed to sampled participants (teachers will be offered an online survey option). The survey does not require the use of any school personnel to administer it, other than the direct time it takes for the sampled person to fill out the form, and does not involve students. Schools are asked to designate one person as a coordinator for the various survey questionnaires, but this is entirely voluntary. Sampled principals, teachers, and the most appropriate school or district staff are requested to record their answers onto the printed questionnaire and return the questionnaire as directed (usually by mail to the U.S. Census Bureau). Sampled teachers who choose the online survey option send in their responses via a secure server link. A U.S. Census Bureau representative will contact the school or district by phone prior to mailing the

questionnaires. There is no use of classroom time required for the completion of these questionnaires.

The 2011-12 SASS samples will include approximately 5,000 districts, 13,000 schools and school principals (including 10,000 public schools), and 60,000 teachers (including 51,500 public school teachers). The library media center sample will consist of approximately 9,200 traditional public and public charter school library media centers.

Sampling for SASS begins by selecting schools as the primary sampling unit, and then, including the school district, principal, library media center, and a relatively small sample of teachers within each selected school. Public schools selected for SASS are sampled from the Common Core of Data (CCD), the universe of public schools supplied annually by state educational agencies to NCES. NCES collects data for the CCD annually from all state education agencies. NCES *does* modify the list of schools from the CCD to meet the definition of a school as used by SASS. To make sure that the sample contains sufficient numbers for estimates, the SASS uses a stratified probability sample design. The main design objective is to provide the following data for public schools:

- National, regional, and state-level estimates of public schools and public school characteristics;
- State estimates for the number of elementary, middle, and high school-level public schools and associated characteristics;
- National estimates of combined grade public schools (schools with a grade span that overlaps the elementary, middle, and/or high school levels); and
- National estimates of public charter schools and selected school characteristics.

After schools are stratified and sampled, teachers within the schools are also stratified and sampled based on the broad level of teaching assignment area, full- or part-time teaching status, and years of teaching experience. The sample of teachers will be selected either from a list of teachers provided by the school, using the Teacher Listing Form, or from a file of the teachers in the selected schools provided by the school district. For each school in the sample, all teachers who teach students in grades K-12 during the fall of 2011, except for short-term substitutes, student teachers, and teacher aides, are eligible for sampling. At least one but no more than 20 teachers, based on school size, are sampled from each selected school. In order to achieve the desired sample size of new teachers, as well as teachers nearing retirement, the teacher sample will be stratified into four teacher groups based on years of teaching experience. This stratification will ensure a sufficient number of teachers in each group to permit estimates at the state level for all beginning and new public school teachers (i.e., teachers with 1 to 3 years of teaching experience), and all experienced and highly experienced public school teachers (i.e., teachers with 4 or more years of experience). A sufficient number of teachers is defined to be at least 2,400 teachers by experience category and school type (i.e., public, public charter, and private). Within each selected school, teachers will be classified as belonging in one of the following four categories:

1. Beginning (first year in the K-12 teaching profession);
2. New (2 to 3 years of teaching experience);
3. Experienced (4 to 19 years of teaching experience); or
4. Highly experienced (20 or more years of teaching experience).

All experienced teachers, who are more numerous than the beginning, new, or highly experienced groups, will be sampled with equal probability and at a lower rate than those in the other groups. To avoid placing an undue burden on schools by sampling teachers, NCES intends to cap the limit of teachers sampled per school to no more than 20.

For all public schools, the principal and the school district will be included in the survey as a result of the school being selected. The library media center, if one is present, will be included in the survey as a result of the school being selected. Schools, principals, libraries, teachers, and school districts will be weighted by the inverse of their probability of selection, multiplied by various sampling and nonresponse adjustments. The general purpose of weighting is to scale up the sample estimates to represent the target survey population.

DATA COLLECTION

The U.S. Census Bureau handles the data collection and editing phases. The 2011-12 SASS is primarily a mail-based survey (teachers will be offered an online response option). Follow-up for sampled entities and individuals who do not respond to the initial mailing will be handled first by telephone and then through personal visits by a trained field representative. U.S. Census Bureau staff who conduct SASS receive training in preparation for the survey.

School principals will be contacted by email and phone beginning in October 2011 to establish the school's eligibility; confirm the mailing address; attempt to identify a coordinator, or primary contact person at the school; and to introduce the use of a web-based control center that will provide the status of each questionnaire. Schools will then be mailed the set of questionnaires. U.S. Census Bureau staff will follow-up on outstanding questionnaires associated with the schools first through the coordinator and then with each respondent by telephone and by personal interview, as appropriate, from November 2011 through June 2012.

Questionnaires will be mailed to school districts in October 2011. Telephone follow-up will begin with nonresponding districts in December 2011. Field staff will conduct personal visits to follow-up on the remaining nonresponding districts beginning in February 2012.

The data collection schedule is outlined on the next page.

2011-12 SASS Timetable

Call school districts to verify information and discuss the plan for collecting teacher lists for each school	June 2011
Mail letters to schools to inform them about SASS	June 2011
Initial mail-out of School, Library, Principal, & TLF Questionnaires to schools	October 2011
Mail District Questionnaire to school districts	October 2011
Screen schools and establish school coordinator	October – November 2011
Telephone follow-up on Teacher Listing Form (TLF)	
With District	October – November 2011
With Schools (Screener & Reminder operations)	October – January 2011
Mail District Reminder Letter (for questionnaires) to districts	October 2011
Second mail-out of School, Library, & Principal Questionnaires	November 2011
Telephone follow-up on District Questionnaire	December – January 2011
Mail Teacher Questionnaires weekly as they are sampled	November 2011 – April 2012
Mail Teacher Reminder packages	November – December 2011
Second mail-out of District Questionnaires	November 2011
Telephone reminders to return questionnaires	November 2011 – January 2012
Begin TLF follow-up with schools from non-responding districts	November 2011
Reminder Letter to schools for outstanding questionnaires	November 2011
Telephone non-response follow-up	January – February 2012
Mail second District Reminder Letter to districts	January 2012
Field follow-up	
With District	February – March 2012
With Schools	March – May 2012
Data capture of all questionnaires	December 2011 – June 2012
Data Processing	March 2012 – January 2013
Completion of files, tabulations, and codebooks	February 2013
Release of SASS results	June 2013

RESPONSE BURDEN

SASS relies on the voluntary participation of the school district, principal, teacher, and library personnel. The quality of national and state estimates is limited by the level of respondent participation. Every effort is made to create questionnaires that collect in-depth data without putting an undue burden on the respondent. The estimated average response time for each public school sector questionnaire in the 2011-12 SASS is presented in the following table, Table 1. The average length of time necessary to complete each type of questionnaire is estimated from the results of the 2007-08 SASS and the number of survey item codes on the 2011-12 SASS, and is also presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of survey item codes and estimated average response time per respondent for each public school sector questionnaire in the 2011-12 SASS

Questionnaire	Number of items	Estimated average response time per respondent
Teacher Listing Form	N/A	30 minutes
School District	211	50 minutes
School	197	50 minutes
Unified School (for single-school districts)	250	60 minutes
Principal	193	45 minutes
Teacher	440	60 minutes
School Library Media Center	53	30 minutes

The Schools and Staffing Survey does not require any form of student or parent participation. All respondents will receive an advance letter that explains that participation in the survey is voluntary. In addition, each questionnaire states on the inside cover, "We hope you will participate in this voluntary survey."

SASS has achieved a high response rate in previous administrations. Weighted response rates for the components to the public school sector for the 2007-08 SASS are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Sample size and weighted response rate for each survey population for the 2007-08 SASS

Survey population	Sample size	Weighted response rate (%)
School District	5,250	87.8
Public School Principal	9,800	79.4
Public School	9,800	80.4
Public School Teacher	47,440	84.0
Public School Library Media Center	9,800	81.7

ANALYSIS

Once the U.S. Census Bureau receives the completed survey forms, staff enter responses from the surveys into electronic data files, which are checked against the survey forms for accuracy. Names, addresses, and other identifying information for schools, principals, teachers, library staff, and districts are removed from the data files to protect respondents' confidentiality. When the respondents' identifying information is removed from the data files, a school identification number is used to link principal and teacher data from the schools in which they work. The data are used in statistical summaries only. Survey results and data files will be released within 12 months of the end of data collection, in summer 2013.

The data are used in statistical summaries only. NCES issues its own reports and allows researchers to access the data through restricted-use licensing for other analyses. Only users who have official clearance from NCES may have access to the restricted-use data files. Several reports may be issued once the data are finalized. These reports may include: a general report that provides an overview of the data, a teacher report, a school report, and a report on state-level findings, among others. Congress and the U.S. Department of Education use these data to critically examine existing educational programs and services and to plan new programs intended to improve education throughout the nation.

Summary results from the SASS data are in the public domain and will be made available on our website (<http://nces.ed.gov/survey/sass>) after all the data have been fully processed and tabulated.

Free printed copies of SASS publications can be obtained by telephone or the Internet through the Ed Pubs Online Ordering System (www.edpubs.org or 1-877-433-7827). The NCES publications page (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/>) allows users to download PDF versions of many recent SASS publications.

CONSENT

The nature of this self-administered, cross-sectional survey is not considered intrusive, and has been ruled to be exempt under the protection of human subjects' provisions in federal research.

There is no individual student data (such as test scores or Social Security numbers) associated with any of the data acquired in this data collection. Since no data is collected about individual students, it is not necessary to obtain active, informed consent from students' parents/guardians.

Participation in the SASS is completely voluntary, and individual survey items can be left blank, at the discretion of each respondent. On each questionnaire for each respondent, there is a statement that participation is voluntary.

The Department of Education has adopted a common set of regulations known as the *Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects or "Common Rule."* The design of these regulations is based on established, internationally recognized ethical principles. The specific regulation is Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 97, Protection of Human Subjects, which includes Subpart A, Basic Policy, and Subpart D, Additional Protections for Children. These regulations classify as exempt certain categories of research. Research that is nonexempt is covered by the regulations. Research activities in which the only involvement of human subjects will be in one or more of the following categories are exempt:

(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless the information identifies the subjects and disclosure could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation. Subpart D amends this exemption, in part: *If the subjects are children, research involving interview or survey procedures and research involving observations of public behavior in which the researcher(s) participate in the activities being observed are not exempt. However, research involving the use of educational tests and research involving observations of public behavior in which the researcher(s) do not participate in the activities being observed are exempt.*

For more information, please see <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/fund/guid/humansub/overview.html>.

CONFIDENTIALITY

A security plan for assuring the confidentiality of individual respondent data has been developed by NCES and the U.S. Census Bureau. Under this plan, the 2011-2012 SASS will conform to federal regulations – specifically, the *Privacy Act of 1974* (5 U.S.C. 552a), *Privacy Act Regulations* (34 CFR Part 5b), the *Hawkins-Stafford Amendments of 1988* (P.L. 100-297), the *Computer Security Act of 1987*, *NCES Restricted-Use Data Procedures Manual*, the *Federal Statistical Confidentiality Order of 1997* (an OMB directive), the *U.S.A. Patriot Act of 2001* (P.L. 107-56), the *E-Government Act of 2002, Title V, Subtitle A, Confidential Information Protection*, the *Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002* (P.L. 107-279), and the *NCES Statistical Standards and Policies* handbook.

The U.S. Census Bureau will collect data under an interagency agreement with NCES. The U.S. Census Bureau will maintain the individually identifiable questionnaires as confidential material. The required plan will include the following:

1. Provisions for data collection in the field;
2. Provisions to protect the data-coding phase required before machine processing;
3. Provisions to safeguard completed survey documents;
4. Authorization procedures to access or obtain files containing identifying information; and
5. Provisions to remove printouts and other outputs that contain teacher identification information from normal operation. Such materials will be maintained in secured storage areas and will be destroyed as soon as practical by burning.

From the initial contact with the participants in this survey through all of the follow-up efforts, careful attention will be paid to informing potential survey respondents that NCES and the U.S. Census Bureau will protect the confidentiality of their personal data. The survey responses are protected from disclosure by federal statute (20 U.S.C., § 9573). All responses that relate to or describe identifiable characteristics of individuals may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose, unless otherwise compelled by law. In addition, the U.S. Census Bureau and NCES will treat the data as confidential, based on the *Privacy Act of 1974* and as amended under the *U.S.A. Patriot Act of 2001*.

In particular, the *National Education Statistics Act of 1994*, as amended, prohibits any of these activities:

- Producing any publication in which data furnished by any particular individual can be identified; or
- Permitting any person not authorized by the NCES Commissioner to examine any individual data or reports.

A violation of any of these restrictions is a felony, punishable by imprisonment of up to 5 years and a fine of up to \$250,000.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The primary purpose of the Schools and Staffing Survey is to provide valuable information about schools and school staff, and the teaching and working conditions in the nation's schools. With the help of survey participants, the National Center for Education Statistics is able to produce state estimates of public school characteristics and facilitate comparisons among elementary, middle, and high schools at the state and national levels and combined elementary/secondary schools at the national level. The ability of NCES to provide this beneficial service is contingent upon the voluntary participation of schools, principals, and teachers whose inclusion is dependent upon their districts' approval. The Schools and Staffing Survey provides respondents with the opportunity to participate in a unique national survey and contribute to data that are used by researchers interested in improving the education system in the United States.

The Brick Township Public School District benefits from being a sampled district by representing itself and also the state of New Jersey. Consequently, your district's participation will improve the reliability of state and national estimates, which will result in higher quality data. By choosing to participate, the policies and characteristics of the Brick Township Public School District will be reflected in the 2011-12 SASS, which will allow your schools to compare themselves to other schools within New Jersey and across the nation. The important information provided by your district will better inform and shape future education policies.

Schools Selected for 2011-12 SASS
Brick Township
Brick Comm Prim Learn Ctr
Brick Twp High
Lake Riviera Middle
Lanes Mill Elem

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) REVIEW

Under the federal policy for the protection of human subjects, SASS is exempt from IRB review because it utilizes survey procedures and is conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices. There is no potential for harm to human subjects. Confidentiality of individually identifiable information is required under federal law by the Privacy Act of 1974 and as amended under the *U.S.A. Patriot Act of 2001*.

For more information, please see <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/fund/reg/humansub/part97-2.html>

CONSENT

The nature of this self-administered, cross-sectional survey is not considered intrusive, and has been ruled to be exempt under the protection of human subjects' provisions in federal research. There is no individual student data (such as test scores or Social Security numbers) associated with any of the data acquired in this data collection. Since no data is collected about individual students, it is not necessary to obtain active, informed consent from students' parents/guardians.

Participation in the SASS is completely voluntary, and individual survey items can be left blank, at the discretion of each respondent. On each questionnaire for each respondent, there is a statement that participation is voluntary.

The Department of Education has adopted a common set of regulations known as the *Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects or "Common Rule."* The design of these regulations is based on established, internationally recognized ethical principles. The specific regulation is Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 97, Protection of Human Subjects, which includes Subpart A, Basic Policy, and Subpart D, Additional Protections for Children. These regulations classify as exempt certain categories of research. Research that is nonexempt is covered by the regulations. Research activities in which the only involvement of human subjects will be in one or more of the following categories are exempt:

(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless the information identifies the subjects and disclosure could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation. Subpart D amends this exemption, in part: *If the subjects are children, research involving interview or survey procedures and research involving observations of public behavior in which the researcher(s) participate in the activities being observed are not exempt. However, research involving the use of educational tests and research involving observations of public behavior in which the researcher(s) do not participate in the activities being observed are exempt.*

For more information, please see <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/fund/guid/humansub/overview.html>

**PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT FORM
SCHOOLS AND STAFFING SURVEY (SASS), 2011-12**

You are being asked to participate in a survey called the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), for the 2011-12 school year. This form provides you with information about this study, and the Project Director, Ms. Kerry Gruber, who can be reached at 202-502-7349 or Kerry.Gruber@ed.gov, is also available to answer your questions. Please read the information below and ask any questions you might have before deciding whether or not to take part.

The SASS is sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in order to collect extensive data on public and private elementary and secondary schools in the United States. The SASS provides data on the characteristics and qualifications of teachers and principals, teacher hiring practices, professional development, class size, and other conditions in schools across the nation. Participants are asked to complete a paper questionnaire and return it in the pre-addressed, postage-paid envelope provided (teachers are also given an online option). Details about the data collection instrument, respondent type, and time required to complete the questionnaire are below.

Data Collection Instrument	Respondent Type	Estimated Time Required to Complete Questionnaire
Teacher Listing Form	District Administrator	30 minutes
School District Questionnaire	District Administrator	50 minutes
School Questionnaire	Principal	50 minutes
Principal Questionnaire	Principal	45 minutes
Teacher Questionnaire	Teacher (1-20 per school)	60 minutes
Library Media Center Questionnaire	Library Media Specialist	30 minutes

Each SASS Principal or Teacher Questionnaire contains questions that provide basic descriptive information on the respondent. Some of these items are: gender, age, race/ethnicity, principals' licensure, highest degree earned, salary, years of teaching experience, education degrees earned and fields, certification, main teaching assignment, teacher salary schedules, and hours worked per week.

Once the U.S. Census Bureau receives the completed survey forms, the responses are keyed into electronic data files, which are checked against the survey forms for accuracy. Names, addresses, and other identifying information for schools, principals, teachers, library staff, and districts are removed from the data files to protect respondents' confidentiality. A school identification number is used to link principal and teacher data to the schools where they work.

The data are used in statistical summaries only. NCES issues its own reports and requires researchers to access the data through restricted-use licensing for other analyses. Only users who have official clearance from NCES may have access to the restricted-use data files. Several reports are issued once the data are finalized, which may include: a general report that provides an overview of the data, a teacher report, a school report, and a district report, a principal report, and a school library report. State-level web tables will also be issued corresponding to the national data in the reports. Congress and the U.S. Department of Education use these data to critically examine existing educational programs and services to plan new programs intended to improve education throughout the nation.

There are no risks involved in participating in this important survey. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you can refuse to participate without any penalty or loss of benefits to you or your school. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your participation at any time during the study without any adverse consequences from the U.S. Department of Commerce or your school.

Please check one of the following:

I am willing to participate in the research project.

I am *not* willing to participate in the research project.

I fully understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential, and that my signature gives my consent to voluntarily participate in this project.

Signature _____
Participant Printed Name Date

Please return this form to Lucia Chavez via fax at (301) 763-3035 or email to Lucia.J.Chavez@census.gov or mail to:

U.S. Census Bureau
Lucia Chavez, 6H030D
4600 Silver Hill Road, Stop 8400
Washington, DC 20233

