



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES

NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

December 17, 2008

TO: Shelly Martinez
OMB

FROM: Shelley Burns
DOE/IED/NCES/ODC/SSP

SUBJECT: Approval of Changes to Questionnaire Forms for OMB Clearance # 1850-0803

This memo is to request approval of minor changes to the survey questionnaire forms for OMB # 1850-0803, NCES Cognitive Study to Test Feasibility of Tracking Principals' Employment Status. We have completed pretests of the two instruments, the NCES Principal Mobility Survey (mail) and the NCES Survey of Former Principals (CATI).

The Principal Mobility Survey was pretested with five principals located across the nation. The findings from the pretest pointed to several questionnaire items that would be improved if slight modifications were made. The pretesting also uncovered two key items that were missing and should be added to the questionnaire to fully understand principal mobility. The recommended changes and justification for each change are provided below.

Principal Mobility Survey

Current Question Number(s)	Suggested Change	Justification for Change
Q2/Q7/Q29	Add city and state to already existing question on name of school.	Many schools have the same name and must be distinguished by their city and state to ensure accurate data.
Q8	Add a new question: "In total at how many different schools have you served as principal?"	This will provide a broader picture of principal mobility than what is currently captured, and will be important to understanding principal mobility.

Q9	Add clarification text in the stem on how to mark the columns. Add item on school size to the list of reasons in response option g.	This will give the respondent more direction on how to answer the item properly.
Q11	Add a new question: “Before you became a principal, how many total years had you served as an assistant or vice principal of any school?”	Respondents noted that this was an important item missing. We collect information on their total years teaching and total years as a principal, but many also served as a vice principal for some period of time. This information will be a key variable to understanding the experience of principals, and whether that impacts their mobility.
Q12	Add “middle” to stem	This will provide a more accurate stem so there is no ambiguity that principals should also include their work at a middle school.
Q31	Remove questions about the name of the person the telephone is listed under	Respondents did not know this information.

The Former Principal Survey was pretested with five principals located across the nation. The findings from the pretest pointed to several questionnaire items that would be improved if slight modifications were made. In order to maintain consistency between this survey and the Principal Mobility survey, we have also suggested adding two new questions. The recommended changes and justification for each change are provided below.

Former Principal Survey

Current Question Number(s)	Suggested Change	Justification for Change
Q2city and Q2state	Add city and state to already existing question on name of school.	Many schools have the same name and must be distinguished by their city and state to ensure accurate data.
Q4a	Add a new question: “In total at how many different schools have you served as principal?”	This will provide consistency with the Principal Mobility Survey and may provide important information regarding a relationship between principal mobility and those that do or not leave their school.
Q8	Add new response category k: “Improve quality of life”	Pretest respondents indicated that an important reason for their decision to leave a school was to improve their quality of life.

Q9a	Add a new question: “Before you became a principal, how many total years had you served as an assistant or vice principal of any school?”	Respondents noted that this was an important item missing. We collect information on their total years teaching and total years as a principal, but many also serve as a vice principal for some period. This information will be a key variable to understanding the experience of principals, and whether that impacts their mobility.
Q10	Add “middle” to stem	Will provide a more accurate stem so there is no ambiguity that principals should also include work at a middle school.
Q35	Remove questions about the name of the person the telephone is listed under	Respondents did not know this information.

The suggested changes detailed above do not add or change any topic in the questionnaire. We do not believe that any of the proposed changes will add to respondent burden because the changes are either very minor or ask about the principal themselves, in which case they should be able to answer them easily and quickly.

cc: Marilyn Seastrom
Michelle Coon