# 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey Report

How Do We **Measure** Up?

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The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) is the primary federal entity for collecting, analyzing, and reporting data related to education in the United States and other nations. It fulfills a congressional mandate to collect, collate, analyze, and report full and complete statistics on the condition of education in the United States; conduct and publish reports and specialized analyses of the meaning and significance of such statistics; assist state and local education agencies in improving their statistical systems; and review and report on education activities in foreign countries.

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# Foreword

A vital part of the mission of the National Center for Education Statistics is to provide data about education in the United States and other nations to the public. The information NCES provides must bear on important issues in education, and it must be relevant to the needs of our data users.

The 1999 NCES Customer Satisfaction Survey was conducted to find out whether we as an agency are responding to the needs of our customers and to identify areas for improvement. We asked federal, state, and local policymakers, academic researchers, policy staff from education associations, education journalists, and National Education Data Resource Center (NEDRC) users about their satisfaction with NCES products and services. I want to thank all those who participated in the survey.

I am gratified that the survey found high levels of satisfaction with our publications, databases and user tools, and services. At the same time, the results indicate areas in which we must improve our performance. Knowing whether NCES is collecting and disseminating relevant data, in a manner useful to our customers, will assist us in performing our role as the nation's foremost provider of education information.

Gary W. Phillips
Acting Commissioner of Education Statistics

# Acknowledgments

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# List of Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| AERA | American Educational Research Association |
| ALS | Academic Library Survey (ALS) |
| | |
| B&B | Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study |
| BPS | Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study |
| | |
| CBO | Congressional Budget Office |
| CCD | Common Core of Data |
| CCSSO | Council of Chief State School Officers |
| COSLA | Chief Officers of State Library Agencies |
| CRS | Congressional Research Service |
| | |
| DAS | Data Analysis System |
| | |
| ECB | Electronic Code Book |
| ED | Department of Education |
| EOP | Executive Office of the President |
| EWA | Education Writers Association |
| | |
| FRSS | Fast Response Survey System |
| | |
| GAO | General Accounting Office |
| GPRA | Government Performance and Results Act |
| | |
| HS&B | High School and Beyond |
| HSTS | 1994 High School Transcript Study |
| | |
| IALS | International Adult Literacy Survey |
| IEA | IEA Reading Literacy Study |
| IPEDS | Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System |
| | |
| NAEP | National Assessment of Educational Progress |
| NALS | National Adult Literacy Survey |
| NCES | National Center for Education Statistics |
| NCSL | National Conference of State Legislators |
| NCVS | National Crime Victimization Survey |
| NEDRC | National Education Data Resource Center |
| NELS:88 | National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 |
| NHES | National Household Education Survey |
| NPSAS | National Postsecondary Student Aid Study |
| NSF | National Science Foundation |
| NSOPF | National Study of Postsecondary Faculty |
| | |
| OERI | Office of Educational Research and Improvement |

| OMB | Office of Management and Budget |
| PEQIS | Postsecondary Education Quick Information System |
| PLS | Public Libraries Survey |
| PSS | Private School Universe Survey |
| SASS | Schools and Staffing Survey |
| SHEEFO | State Higher Education Executive Finance Offices |
| SHEEO | State Higher Education Executive Officers |
| SLS | School Library Survey |
| TIMSS | Third International Mathematics and Science Study |

# Executive Summary

**Introduction**

In 1999, the Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) surveyed a targeted sample of its current and potential customers to determine their levels of satisfaction and needs related to

- NCES publications;
- NCES databases and user tools; and
- NCES services such as ordering publications or databases, information services, and the NCES Web site.

*The Internet: a new mode of collection in 1999*

This survey focused more closely than customer satisfaction surveys conducted in 1997 and 1996 on specific NCES products and services, providing program managers with information specific to their programs. Also, for the first time, the customer satisfaction survey was administered to half of the sample using the Internet.

This report summarizes the results of the 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey and also compares results from the 1999 and 1997 surveys for the core customer groups—policymakers and academic researchers—that were sampled in both years. All satisfaction results reported apply to those customers who indicated that they had used the product or service in question and all percentages reported are based on weighted data.

**Target Population**

The 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey does not reflect—nor was it intended to reflect—the total NCES customer base or the views of all its customers. Rather, it focuses on responses of specific customer groups whose use of NCES products and services can have an important effect on the "condition and progress of education." In 1999, NCES targeted the following seven customer groups:

- *Federal policymakers* from the U.S. Department of Education (Assistant and Under Secretaries and other staff), National Science Foundation, Office of Management and Budget, Congressional Research Service, Congressional Budget Office, General Accounting Office, Senate and House Committees, and Presidential staff.

- *State policymakers* from the National Conference of State Legislators, Council of Chief State School Officers, State Higher Education Executive and Finance Officers, Chief Officers of State Library Agencies, education policy advisors to state governors, and education assessment directors in state departments of education.

- *Local policymakers* from elementary/secondary school districts or postsecondary institutions—including school district superintendents and higher education administrators such as directors of institutional research, or other school district or institutional staff members who used educational data for policymaking purposes.

- *Academic researchers*, identified as directors of research centers and regional education laboratories, funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, and members of the American Educational Research Association.

- *Education associations' policy staff*, represented by one education data user from the administrative office of each trade or professional association related to education.

- *Education journalists*, including newspaper reporters who were members of the Education Writers Association and some additional education journalists identified by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Public Affairs.

- *National Education Data Resource Center (NEDRC) users*, consisting of people who had requested NCES information because they did not have the appropriate skills or facilities to take advantage of the available NCES databases and user tools.

Figure A shows the distribution of the seven customer groups in the target population.

**Figure A.—Distribution of the target population by stratum**
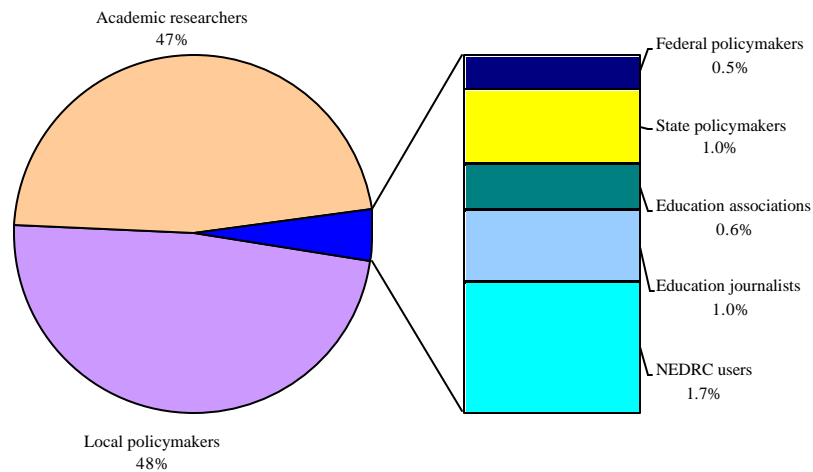


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

From a list of more than 40,000 such individuals, NCES sent mail or Internet questionnaires to 3,284 of whom 3,256 were found to be eligible [1]. All who had not responded after about 7 weeks were called and asked to complete a telephone interview. With 2,563 respondents, the final response rate was 79%. See appendices for the questionnaire and details of the survey methodology.

All percentages presented in the remainder of the Executive Summary are based on weighted data.

## Customer Profile

A majority of customers had *heard* of NCES and had *used* its products and services (72% and 61%, respectively). The level of awareness of NCES and use of its products and services varied across customer groups. The following customer groups were the four groups that were both most likely to have heard of NCES and to have used its products or services:

- Federal policymakers (98% and 91%, respectively)
- State policymakers (91% and 83%, respectively)
- Education associations (89% and 84%, respectively)
- NEDRC Users ( 84% and 87%, respectively)

**Figure B.—Awareness of NCES and use of its products or services, by Customer group**
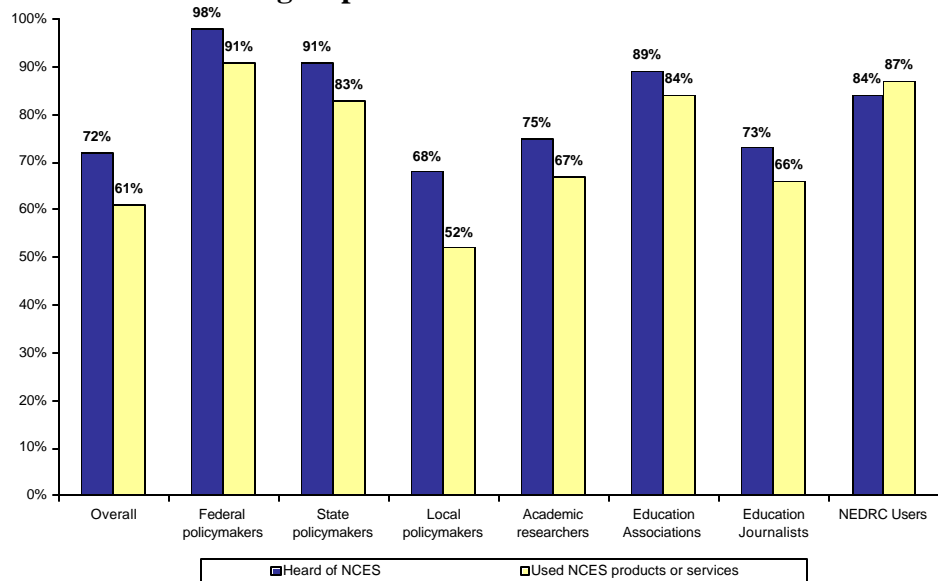


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

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[1] A person in the sample could be ineligible for any of the following reasons: (1) death; (2) retirement without replacement (if a member of the sample retired but was replaced, the replacement became the sample member, except in the case of AERA members in the academic researcher stratum); and (3) closure of the institution that the person represented (higher education substratum of the local policymaker stratum).

NCES users tended to have used NCES products and services *recently* (72 percent, overall, had used them in the past 12 months), with this level of use highest among Federal policymakers, state policymakers, and education association users (above 90 percent).

The uses made of NCES products and services covered many areas. The predominant uses that NCES users cited were research and analysis (82 percent), general information (77 percent), and planning (53 percent).

**Publications**       Although, overall, 45 percent of the respondents had used NCES publications in the past 2 years, the level of use varied among customer groups. In the past 2 years, the following three groups were the most likely to have used NCES publications:

- Federal policymakers (82 percent )
- State policymakers (73 percent)
- Education associations (73 percent)

The percentage of customers who were *unaware* of NCES publications was substantial (32 percent) and this percentage was not insignificant even among two of the three groups with the highest rate of usage of publications:

- State policymakers (13 percent)
- Education associations (14 percent)

More than a third of NCES publication users obtained publications through the internet (43 percent), whereas a majority of the users indicated they used traditionally-bound-and-printed publications (76 percent).

NCES *statistical compendia* received very high marks with over 90 percent of customers reporting that they were satisfied or very satisfied with two out of the three compendia:

- *Condition of Education* (93 percent)
- *Digest of Education Statistics* (93 percent)
- *Projections of Education Statistics* (88 percent)

Customers also reported a high level of satisfaction (at least 80 percent) with publications from all NCES' program areas except Library Survey publications (65 percent).

No more than 5 percent of users reported dissatisfaction with such publication aspects as overall quality of report, comprehensiveness, ease of understanding, relevance of information, and accuracy. However, 15 percent of users reported dissatisfaction with timeliness.

**Databases and User Tools**

A majority of customers were *unaware* of NCES databases or user tools (58 percent). Although, overall, only 12 percent of respondents had used NCES databases or user tools, the level of use among those that were aware of NCES databases and user tools was 29 percent.

No one database or user tool was used by more than 5 percent of customers during the past 2 years. Among these, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) database was used most often (5 percent) and the Library surveys databases was used least often (1 percent).

Customers employing specific NCES *user tools* such as the Electronic Code Book (ECB) and the Data Analysis System (DAS) gave these tools satisfaction ratings ranging from 84 to 92 percent. The percent of users satisfied with the specific NCES *databases* ranged from 74 to 91 percent.

Users were most dissatisfied with the timeliness of the database release, the ease of access, and ease of use of these databases and user tools (20, 16, and 15 percent, respectively).

**Services**

Similar to databases and user tools, a majority of customers were *unaware* of the availability of the range of NCES services (54 percent). Although, overall, only 22 percent of respondents had used NCES services, the level of use among those that were aware of these services was 47 percent. Among those that were aware, the highest percentage of use was highest among NEDRC users (93 percent), education associations (74 percent), and federal policymakers (71 percent).

Most users of NCES services (82 percent) had used these services occasionally in the past 2 years while the rest had used them more often (14 percent monthly and 4 percent weekly). The following were the most widely used services among respondents:

- Visits to the NCES Web site (15 percent)
- Information requests from NCES staff (13 percent)
- Ordering NCES materials through ED Pubs (11 percent)

Satisfaction levels with all services were high, ranging from 84 to 96 percent. Customers also reported a high level of satisfaction (at least 80 percent) with various aspects of NCES services except handling of complaints (60 percent).

**Comparison of Results from the 1997 and 1999 Surveys**

NCES targeted the same four core customer groups—federal, state, and local policymakers and academic researchers—in 1997 and 1999. Comparing results from these four groups shows that, overall, there are no profound changes in customers' responses from 1997 to 1999. (Note that since only responses from the four core groups are being used, out of the seven groups surveyed in 1999, the 1999 percentages presented in this section are different from the 1999 percentages cited above. Here and in the body of the report, only changes that are statistically significant at the .05 level are discussed.)

**Publications:** More than 85 percent of customers reported being satisfied or very satisfied with NCES compendia publications in both 1997 and 1999. Although satisfaction with the *Digest of Education Statistics* remains high among state policymakers, there was a *decrease* in satisfaction between 1997 and 1999 (97 percent to 92 percent).

Also, between 79 and 93 percent of customers reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the following program-specific NCES publications in both years:

- Educational assessment publications
- National longitudinal studies publications
- Elementary and secondary education publications
- Postsecondary publications

There were some specific findings that may merit further consideration. For example, with regard to the program-specific publications, the percentage of users satisfied or very satisfied—

- *Increased* by 8 percentage points with the national longitudinal studies publications between 1997 and 1999 (81 percent to 89 percent, respectively).
- *was below 75 percent* in both years for the library publications (72 percent and 64 percent, respectively).

With regard to aspects of NCES publications, similar percentages of customers (around 80 to 90 percent) reported being satisfied or very satisfied in both 1997 and 1999 with five of the six aspects of NCES publications (overall quality, relevance, accuracy, ease of understanding, and comprehensiveness). However, a sixth aspect, timeliness, showed a notable improvement in customers' levels of satisfaction. The percentage of users who were satisfied or very satisfied with timeliness *increased* from 72 percent in 1997 to 78 percent in 1999. Also, the aspect of overall quality was consistently rated the highest among the six aspects in both years (90 percent in 1997 and 93 percent in 1999).

**Databases**[2]**:** About 90 percent of customers reported being satisfied or very satisfied with NCES elementary and secondary education databases (NHES, SASS, CCD) and an assessment database (NAEP) in both 1997 and 1999. The percentage of customers satisfied with databases in the longitudinal (B&B, BPS, NELS:88), postsecondary (NSOPF, NPSAS, IPEDS), and library studies areas (SLS, PLS, ALS) ranged between 72 and 91 percent in both years.

With regard to aspects of NCES databases, similar percentages of customers (between 69 and 87 percent) reported being satisfied or very satisfied in both 1997 and 1999 with four of the six aspects of NCES databases (accuracy of database, database documentation, ease of use, and comprehensiveness of database). However, two aspects, ease of access and timeliness, showed a notable improvement in customers' levels of satisfaction between 1997 and 1999. The percentage of users who were satisfied or very satisfied *increased*—

- by 18 percentage points with the aspect "ease of access" of NCES databases (55 percent to 73 percent)
- by 15 percentage points with the aspect "timeliness" of NCES database release (52 percent to 67 percent)

Also, the aspect of comprehensiveness of database was consistently rated the highest among the six aspects in both years (81 percent in 1997 and 87 percent in 1999).

**Services:** Generally around 90 to 95 percent of customers reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the following NCES services:

- National Education Data Resource Center (NEDRC)
- Department of Education's toll-free number
- NCES Web Site

With regard to the seven aspects of NCES services, similar percentages of customers (83 to 93 percent) reported being satisfied or very satisfied in both 1997 and 1999 with four aspects (extent to which the information met your needs, staff expertise, time needed to reach knowledgeable staff, courtesy of staff). However, the percentage of users who were satisfied or very satisfied differed between 1997 and 1999 for the other three aspects:

- *Increased* by 4 percentage points with the aspect "speed with which you received NCES information" (89 percent in 1997 to 93 percent in 1999)

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[2] Note that the 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey asked respondents about use and levels of satisfaction with aspects of NCES databases *and user tools*, while the 1997 Survey questions referred only to NCES data files.

- *Decreased* by 5 percentage points with the aspect "ease of obtaining information" (92 percent in 1997 to 87 percent in 1999)
- *Decreased* by 15 percentage points with the aspect "handling of complaints" (75 percent in 1997 to 60 percent in 1999)

Also, the aspect of extent to which information met your needs was consistently rated the highest among the seven aspects in both years (92 percent in 1997 and 93 percent in 1999).

**Awareness of how to contact NCES:** The percentage of customers aware of how to contact NCES *increased* from 34 percent in 1997 to 47 percent in 1999. This reflected increased percentages of awareness among state policymakers (from 69 percent in 1997 to 77 percent in 1999) and among local policymakers (from 32 percent in 1997 to 44 percent in 1999).

# I. Introduction

*NCES Mission*

The first Federal education agency was established in 1867 "for the purpose of collecting such statistics and facts as shall show the condition and progress of education in the several States and territories . . . ." The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) currently performs these duties in a greatly expanded Department of Education. Its primary responsibility is to collect, analyze, and disseminate statistics relating to the status of education in the United States.

The NCES mission is, in itself, closely related to the public good. It requires that NCES collect information from and provide information to the public—its potential customers.

*Customer Service Requirements*

The Government Performance and Results Act was enacted on August 3, 1993, to "provide for the establishment of strategic planning and performance measurement in the Federal Government." One purpose of the landmark legislation is to:

> *"improve Federal program effectiveness and public accountability by promoting a new focus on results, service quality, and customer satisfaction . . . ."*

On September 11, 1993, the President issued Executive Order 12862, "Setting Customer Service Standards," which called on all Federal agencies to develop plans to better serve their customers. This order requires agencies to survey customers to determine the kind and quality of services they want and their level of satisfaction with existing services.

On March 22, 1995, the President sent additional guidance to the heads of agencies in a memorandum entitled, "Improving Customer Service." The memorandum required that customer surveys be "ongoing" and "continuing." Further, it established that development and tracking of customer service measures, standards, and performance should be integrated with other performance initiatives, including strategic planning and performance measurement under the Government Performance and Results Act.

*NCES Customer Service Team and Customer Feedback System*

To respond to these requirements, NCES assembled a customer service team to initiate and oversee many customer-related initiatives. These have included:

- Conducting customer focus groups
- Training employees about customer service delivery
- Completing the 1996 customer survey and report
- Completing the 1997 customer survey

- Completing the 1999 customer survey that is the subject of this report

The customer surveys are part of a larger NCES customer feedback system, illustrated in figure 1 below. Therefore, this survey is part, but certainly not all, of the means by which NCES captures and uses customer feedback.

**Figure 1.—Five key points of customer feedback**
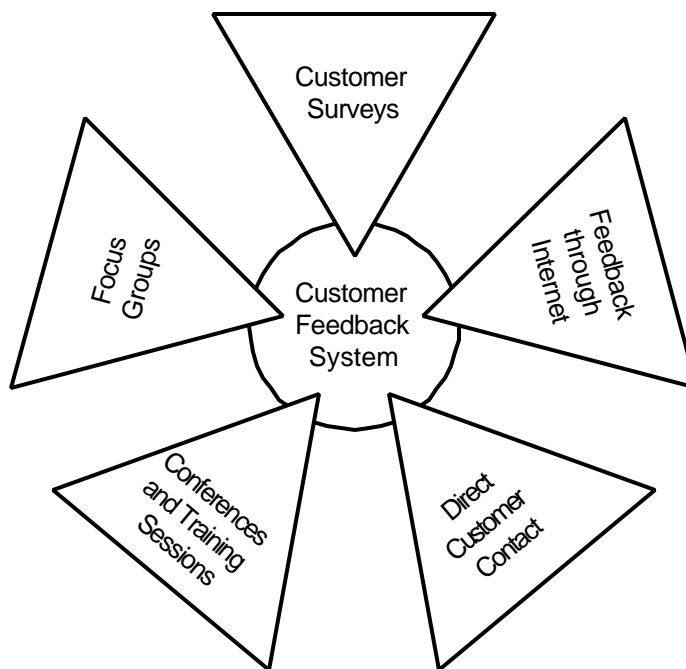


*NCES Potential Customer Base*

NCES has potential customers of many types and interests. They include:

- Policymakers (local, state, and national)
- Media and education associations
- Administrators and heads of institutions
- Researchers
- Parents, teachers, students, and community leaders

These groups vary in how directly NCES' work affects them and the extent to which they use (or are even aware of) the broad range of NCES products and services. Each customer group was the target of at least one customer focus group meeting and report that NCES completed in 1994 and 1995.

NCES also decided to conduct much of its "customer" research among *potential* customers—people who may not even have heard of NCES but who, through their work, seem likely to need data of the type produced by NCES.

| *1996 Customer Survey Target Population* | The first survey targeted *known customers across all categories of potential customers*. This provided a broad overview of customers' use of and satisfaction with NCES products and services, established a baseline of information, and yielded useful information from which to shape subsequent surveys. NCES sent questionnaires to 4,760, of whom 1,887 responded. The affiliations of the respondents to the 1996 survey follow: |

- University, college, or other postsecondary institution (35 percent)
- State or local government agency (22 percent)
- Professional organization (21 percent)
- Elementary or secondary school (9 percent)
- Other (including media, library, and no affiliation) (9 percent)
- Federal (including White House and Congress) (4 percent)

Because of the low response rate (40 percent) and uncertainty about the population, this survey was used to identify issues for improvement, not to compute indicators of satisfaction, and the results were not released to the public.

*1997 Customer Survey Target Population*

In 1997, as part of an overall NCES effort to reach out to potential customers, especially on the local level, the survey's target population was heavily weighted to the local policymaker group. NCES sent questionnaires to 2,980 individuals, of whom 2,465 responded. Respondents to the 1997 survey were from four groups (strata):

- Federal policymakers: This group included U.S. Department of Education Assistant and Under Secretaries, and staff from the National Science Foundation (NSF), Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Congressional Research Service (CRS), General Accounting Office (GAO), and Senate and House Committees (1 percent).
- State policymakers: This group included the National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL), Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), State Higher Education Executive Finance Officers (SHEEFO), and Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) (2 percent).
- Local policymakers: This group included individuals affiliated with elementary/secondary school districts or postsecondary institutions, including school district superintendents and higher education chief administrators, primarily directors of institutional research (92 percent).
- Academic researchers: This group included Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) center directors, regional lab directors, school of education deans, and chairs of Sociology departments (5 percent).

For the 1999 survey, NCES decided to include in its target population people from its four "core" groups (i.e., federal, state, and local policymakers and academic researchers) plus people in the media and education associations and NEDRC users (see figure 2). Although obtaining an adequate sample of each group required that some groups constitute a larger proportion of the sample than of the target population (see figure 3), the sample was still dominated numerically by local policymakers and academic researchers. The process of reaching local policymakers was refined in 1999—where previously surveys were mailed to administrative offices with instructions to have it completed by an appropriate person, in 1999 calls were made to these offices asking for the most appropriate respondent, to whom the survey was specifically addressed.

- **Federal policymakers:** This group comprised 0.5 percent of the target population and 6 percent of the sample. It includes U.S. Department of Education Assistant and Under Secretaries and other staff, and education research and policy staffs at the National Science Foundation (NSF), Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Congressional Research Service (CRS), Congressional Budget Office (CBO), General Accounting Office (GAO), Senate and House Committees, and Presidential staff. The total population, after adjusting for retirements from the original sample, was 188. All were included in the sample.

- **State policymakers:** This group made up 1 percent of the target population and 9 percent of the sample. It comprises legislative leaders drawn from the National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL), members of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), State Higher Education Executive and Finance Officers (SHEEFO), Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA), education policy advisors to state governors, and education assessment directors in state departments of education. These groups totaled 408 persons, of whom 307 were included in the sample.

- **Local policymakers:** This group made up 48 percent of the target population and comprises individuals affiliated with elementary/ secondary school districts or postsecondary institutions (37 percent and 11 percent, respectively); it made up 37 percent of the sample. This group includes school district superintendents and higher education chief administrators, primarily directors of institutional research. There were 14,963 school districts and 4,538 institutions of higher education in the target population, a total population of 19,501. A sample of 1,211 (after adjustment for ineligibles) was drawn from this population (764 school districts, 447 higher education institutions). The size of the populations was adjusted for closures that

occurred between the time the sampling frames were developed and the time that the sample was actually drawn.

**Figure 2.—Distribution of customers in the sampling frame by stratum**
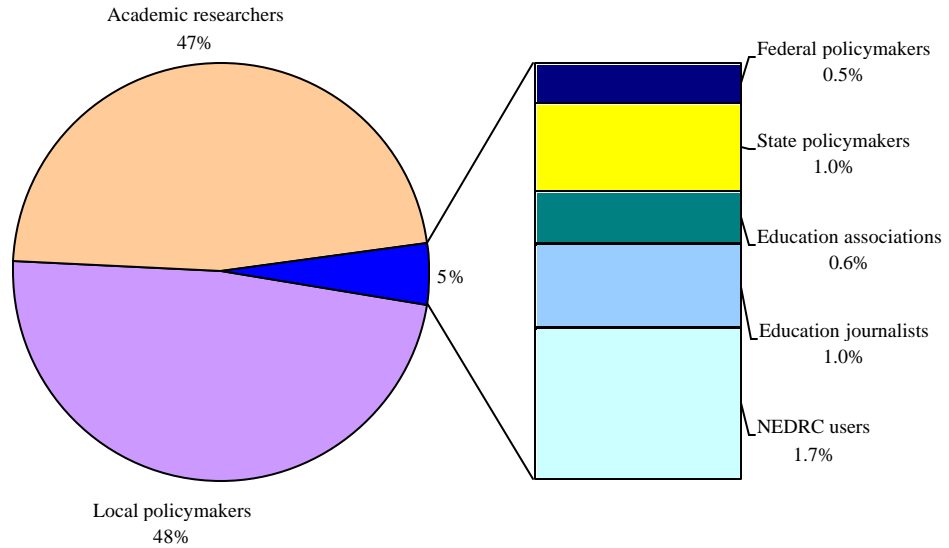


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

**Figure 3.—Distribution of customers selected in the sample by stratum**
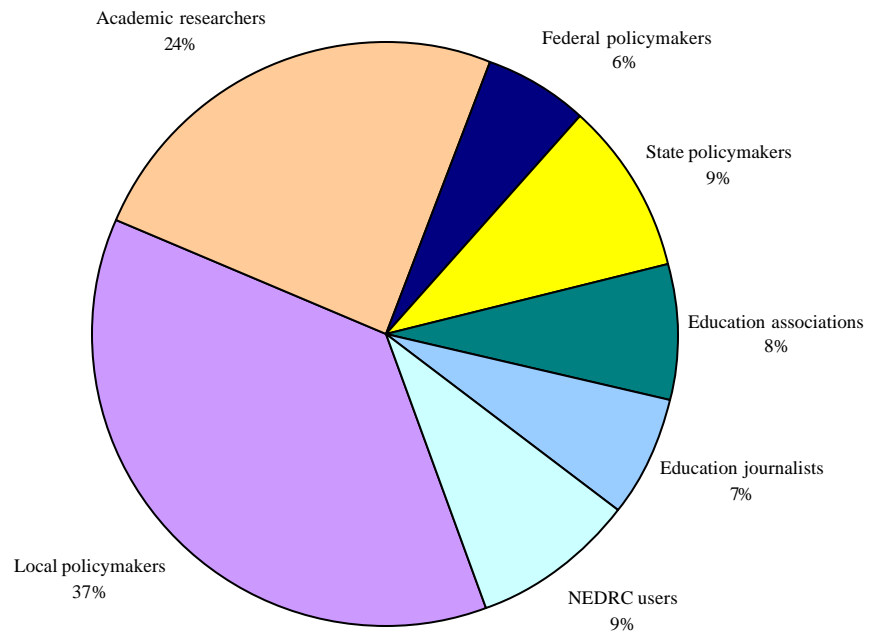


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

- **Academic researchers:** This group made up 47 percent of the target population in 1999 but only 24 percent of the sample. It includes directors of Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) centers and regional labs, and members of the American Educational Research Association (AERA). The total population size, after adjustment for sample members found out of scope, was 19,022, from which an eligible sample of 797 was drawn.

- **Education Associations.** This stratum made up 0.6 percent of the target population and 8 percent of the sample. It included one education data user from the policy staff of the administrative office of each trade or professional association related to education. All 248 relevant associations identified were included in the sample; 1 was found no longer to be in operation, leaving a population and sample size of 247.

- **Education Journalists:** This group comprised 1 percent of the population but 7 percent of the sample. It included newspaper and periodical reporters who were members of the Education Writers Association (EWA) and some additional education journalists identified by the U.S. Department of Education public affairs office, or their replacements at their publications. The original list included 394 journalists; after adjustment for unreplaced retirees, the estimated population size was 390, from which an eligible sample of 216 was drawn.

- **NEDRC Users:** This last group included 1.7 percent of the target population and 9 percent of the sample. It consisted of people who had requested information from the National Education Data Resource Center (NEDRC), a service established by NCES. NEDRC responds to requests for specific analyses and tabulations on the data sets maintained by NCES;[3] provides assistance to on-site researchers; develops standardized tables, graphic materials, and detailed reports of data contained in the data sets in anticipation of data needs of education policymakers and researchers; and provides limited programming, analysis, and other support functions. The estimated population size was 699; the eligible sample was 290.

It was possible for people to be in more than one group, and in some cases the same person was sampled from two different groups. For example,

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[3] NEDRC has data for the following NCES surveys: Beginning Postsecondary Students (BPS), Common Core of Data (CCD), High School and Beyond (HS&B), Integrated Postsecondary Eduaction Data System (IPEDS), Library Statistics Program, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS:88), National Household Education Survey (NHES), National Longitudinal Study (NLS), National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS), National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF), Private School Survey (PSS), Recent College Graduates Study (RCG), and Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS).

several of the Federal policymakers were also included in the AERA segment of the education researcher sample. Population estimates and weights were adjusted to avoid overestimates from double counting. Appendix table B-1 provides, for each customer group and detailed subgroup, the size of the known population and the size of the sample selected. The number of respondents for each customer group is shown in appendix table B-3, and the response rate for each customer group is shown in appendix table B-5.

All percentages presented in the remainder of this report are based on weighted data.

*1999 Customer Survey Results*

According to NCES standards, response rates ($R_o$) are to be calculated as the ratio of the number of completed interviews to the number of sample respondents drawn minus respondents considered to be out of scope.[4] From an initial estimated total population of 40,455, NCES requested that 3,284 participate in the survey. There were 3,256 eligible individuals in the sample; 79 percent (2,563) responded. Approximately half of the sample was originally contacted by e-mail and asked to complete a version of the survey questionnaire on a World Wide Web site. The other half of the sample was initially contacted by mail. Ultimately, all respondents had the option of participating through the Web site, by mail, or by fax. All who did not respond were called and asked to complete a telephone interview. Respondents had the option of returning the questionnaires by mail or being interviewed over the telephone. Of the 2,563 responses, 30 percent were received through the Web site, 39 percent were submitted by mail or fax, and 29 percent were obtained by telephone. Responses (to four items) were imputed for 32 members of the sample who stated that their reason for refusing to participate in the survey was that they had never used NCES products or services.[5] Because samples were drawn at different rates from among the different types of potential customers who constitute the sampling strata, all tabulations are based on responses weighted by the inverses of these sampling rates. For instance, academic researchers constitute nearly half of the study population (47 percent), but are less than a quarter of the sample; responses from this stratum have been given about twice as much weight in overall tabulations as responses from the other strata. Likewise, local policymakers are 48 percent of the population but only 37 percent of the sample, so they have been given extra weight in tabulation of the responses. Without this weighting, the

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[4] See U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *NCES Statistical Standards*, NCES 92-021, by Emmett Flemming, Jr. (Washington, DC: 1992), 30.

[5] The four items and the answers that were imputed are as follows: A3 Have you used any NCES publications in the past 2 years? (answer imputed: No, not aware of NCES publications); B1 Have you used any NCES databases or user tools in the past 2 years? (answer imputed: "No, not aware of NCES databases and user tools); C2 Have you used any NCES services in the past 2 years? (answer imputed: "No, not aware of NCES services"); and D1 How recently have you used NCES publications, databases, user tools, or services? (answer imputed: "Never").

overall importance of the smaller strata would be exaggerated. (See appendix B for methodology and appendix C for a response mode analysis.)  The results are reported in sections II to VI of this publication. Wherever there are important differences among different types of education data consumers, the results are reported by strata.  All differences in percentages discussed in the text of this report have been tested as significant at the .05 level of significance (using Bonferroni adjustment, see appendix B).[6]

As in 1996 and 1997, the 1999 survey was designed to determine information about customers and their levels of satisfaction and needs related to:

- NCES publications;
- NCES databases (and, in 1999, user tools); and
- Other NCES services such as ordering, information services, and the NCES Web Site.

Questions about each service type were grouped in a single section. Each of these three sections also included questions for non-users; that is, individuals who have never used NCES products or services but who, based on their needs for education data, are potential customers.

Further information on methodology is in appendix B.

*Important Points to Remember*
The percentages reported are obtained by weighting respondents up to the estimated population size in each stratum.

This survey does not reflect—nor was it intended to reflect—the total NCES customer base or the views of all its customers. Rather, it focuses on responses of specific customer groups whose use of NCES products and services can have an important effect on the "condition and progress of education."

*What the Surveys Can Tell Us*
The 1999 survey has four primary purposes: to assess current users' use of NCES products and services, to assess current users' satisfaction with these products and services, to track how well NCES is doing according to the performance indicators and targets it established for itself under GPRA, and to identify areas for improvement.

The NCES performance objectives and corresponding performance indicators and targets are described below.

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[6] For an explanation of the Bonferroni adjustment for multiple comparisons, see Rupert G. Miller, *Simultaneous Statistical Inference* (New York: McGraw Hill Co., 1981) or Olive Jean Dunn, "Multiple Comparisons Among Means*," Journal of the American Statistical Association* 56 (293) (March 1961): 52–64.

***Objective 1:*** *Provide timely, useful, and comprehensive data that are relevant to policy and educational improvement.*

**Indicator and Target:**

At least 85 percent of surveyed customers in fiscal year (FY) 1999 and 90 percent in FY 2001 will agree that NCES data are timely, relevant, and comprehensive.

***Objective 2:*** *Collect high quality data.*

**Indicator and Target:**

At least 85 percent of surveyed customers in FY 1999 and 90 percent in FY 2001 will agree that NCES data are of high quality.

***Objective 3:*** *Develop publications that are easy to read, useful, and of high overall quality.*

**Indicators and Targets:**

a. At least 85 percent of surveyed customers in FY 1999 and 90 percent in FY 2001 will agree that NCES publications are easy to read.

b. At least 85 percent of surveyed customers in FY 1999 and 90 percent in FY 2001 will rate NCES publications as useful in their work.

c. At least 85 percent of surveyed customers in FY 1999 and 90 percent in FY 2001 will express satisfaction with the overall quality of NCES publications.

How NCES does against these targets will be discussed in chapter VII, Conclusions.

The chapters that follow are:

- Questions About You, Our Customer
- Questions About NCES Publications
- Questions About NCES Databases and User Tools
- Questions About NCES Services
- Comparison of 1997 and 1999 Results
- Conclusions

These chapters are followed by seven appendices:

- 1999 NCES Customer Satisfaction Survey Mail Questionnaire
- Methodology
- Analysis of Response Mode
- Weighted Number and Percent of Respondents for Selected Survey Items, by Customer Group
- Open-ended Items
- Recontact of Nonrespondents

- Representative Standard Errors for Selected Percentages from the 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey Report

# II. Questions About You, Our Customer

*"Before this survey, had you heard of NCES, and were you aware that NCES is a part of the U.S. Department of Education?"*

Fifty-nine percent of all respondents had heard of NCES and were aware that NCES is a part of the U.S. Department of Education (ED). Federal (96 percent) and state (82 percent) policymakers, those from education associations (85 percent), and NEDRC users (78 percent) were the most aware of NCES and its relationship to ED (see figure 4).[7] Throughout this and the remaining chapters, only changes that are statistically significant at the .05 level are discussed.

**Figure 4.—Awareness of NCES, by customer group**
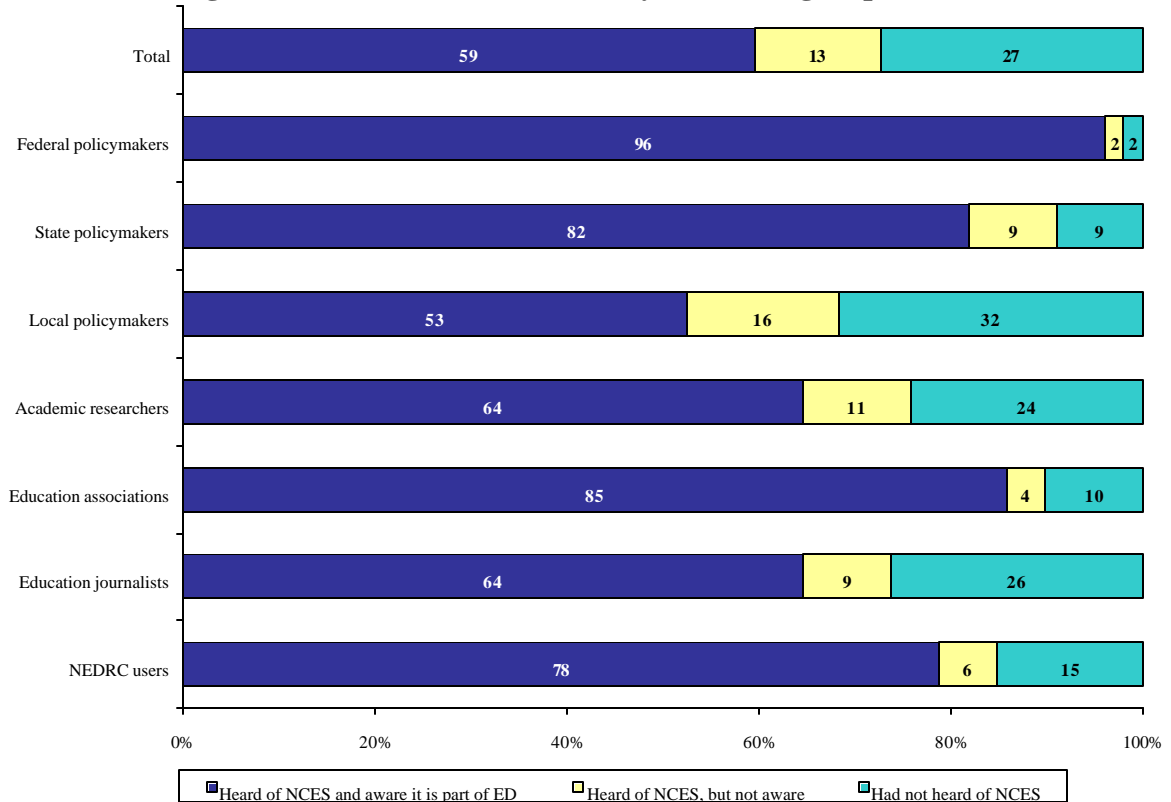


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

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[7] Some people in the "NEDRC users" stratum called the survey contractor to say that they could not respond to the survey because they were not users of NCES data or services (even though NEDRC is an NCES service). In conversations with them, contractor staff determined that some had made peripheral use of NCES data, such as a single figure to include in a legal brief, and that others had probably gotten onto the NEDRC user list because assistants had requested data in their names. These circumstances explain why 15 percent of the "NEDRC users" responded that they had never heard of NCES before being asked to participate in the customer survey.

Local policymakers, of whom 32 percent had not heard of NCES, are more likely to use state and local information, which is available to them through sources other than NCES. Further, NCES has only a limited amount of information specific to local districts, most of which would be available (i.e., CCD) through Departments of Education in individual states.

*"How recently have you used NCES publications, databases, user tools, or services?"*

Nearly half (44 percent) of all respondents had used NCES products and services in the past 12 months (see figure 5); another 11 percent had used these products and services in the past 13 to 24 months. However, 39 percent had never used NCES products and services.

The customer groups most likely to have used NCES products and services during the past 12 months (see figure 5) were federal policymakers (83 percent), individuals from education associations (78 percent), and state policymakers (77 percent).

**Figure 5.—How recently respondents have used NCES products and services, by customer group**
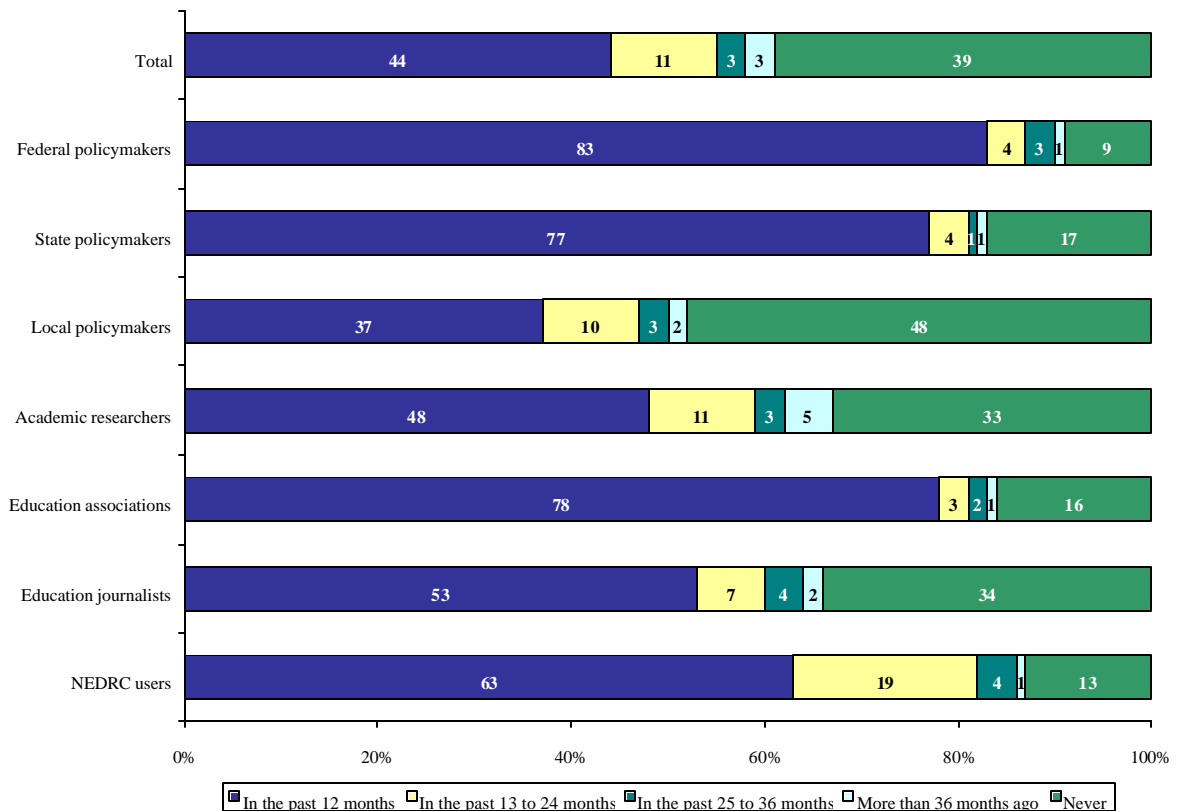


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

While 48 percent of the local policymakers had never used NCES products and services, it is likely that the state and local information most useful to them would either not be available from NCES, or would be available from local sources.

Fifteen percent of the people sampled from among NEDRC users responded that they had not heard of NCES, and 13 percent of those who had heard of NCES responded that they had not used NCES products or services. Telephone and e-mail exchanges with people who thought they were ineligible for the survey suggested that these "NEDRC users" had gotten onto NEDRC user lists because NEDRC had been contacted on their behalf by staff members such as research assistants, or because they had made peripheral use of educational data and had forgotten their contact with NCES (for instance, an attorney who had needed a specific datum to include in a legal brief).

The rest of this chapter will present data from only those respondents who had used NCES products and services.

*"How did you find out about the NCES publications, databases, user tools, or services you used?"*

Overall, users were most likely to learn about NCES products and services (see table 1) from NCES publications (65 percent). Other means cited by numerous users were colleagues (55 percent), journal articles (49 percent), professional associations (47 percent), the Internet (42 percent), and conferences, seminars, etc. (40 percent).

**Table 1.—How users found out about NCES products and services (in rank order)**

| Found out from... | Percent* |
|---|---|
| NCES publications | 65 |
| Colleagues | 55 |
| Journal articles | 49 |
| Professional associations | 47 |
| The Internet | 42 |
| Conferences, seminars, etc. | 40 |
| Product announcements | 24 |
| Libraries | 21 |
| Ongoing contact with NCES staff | 10 |
| Other source | 5 |

* Respondents could provide multiple responses.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

The top three purposes that users cited for using NCES products and services (see table 2) were research or analysis (82 percent), general information (77 percent), and planning (53 percent).

Since three of NCES' customer groups are policymakers at various levels, it may appear puzzling that only 34 percent of the users cite "policy or legislation" as a purpose for which they have used NCES products and services. However, most of these "policymakers" head local education agencies or postsecondary institutions. The national-level data that NCES provides might not be very useful for policymaking that is limited to a single college or university or a single school district.

**Table 2.—Purposes for which NCES products and services have been used (in rank order)**

| Purposes | Percent* |
|---|---|
| Research or analysis | 82 |
| General information | 77 |
| Planning | 53 |
| Teaching or class material | 43 |
| Administrative decisions | 40 |
| Giving speeches | 38 |
| Policy or legislation | 34 |
| Reformulating data for use by others | 22 |
| Writing news articles, preparing TV or radio material | 15 |
| Updating databases | 12 |
| Marketing, sales, or promotion | 7 |
| Other purpose | 7 |

\* Respondents could provide multiple responses.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

# III. Questions About NCES Publications

*"Have you used any NCES publications (bound or on the Internet) in the past 2 years?"*

Nearly half of all respondents (45 percent) had used NCES publications in the past 2 years (see figure 6). Another 23 percent were aware of these publications, but had not used them during this time period, and nearly a third (32 percent) were not aware of these publications.

The customer groups most likely to have used NCES publications in the past 2 years (see figure 6) were federal policymakers (82 percent), state policymakers (73 percent), and individuals in education associations (73 percent). Conversely, the customer groups with the highest percentage of members not aware of NCES publications were local policymakers (37 percent), academic researchers (29 percent), education journalists (27 percent), and NEDRC users (24 percent).

The rest of this chapter will present data only from respondents who had used NCES publications.

**Figure 6.—Awareness and use of NCES publications in the past 2 years, by customer group**
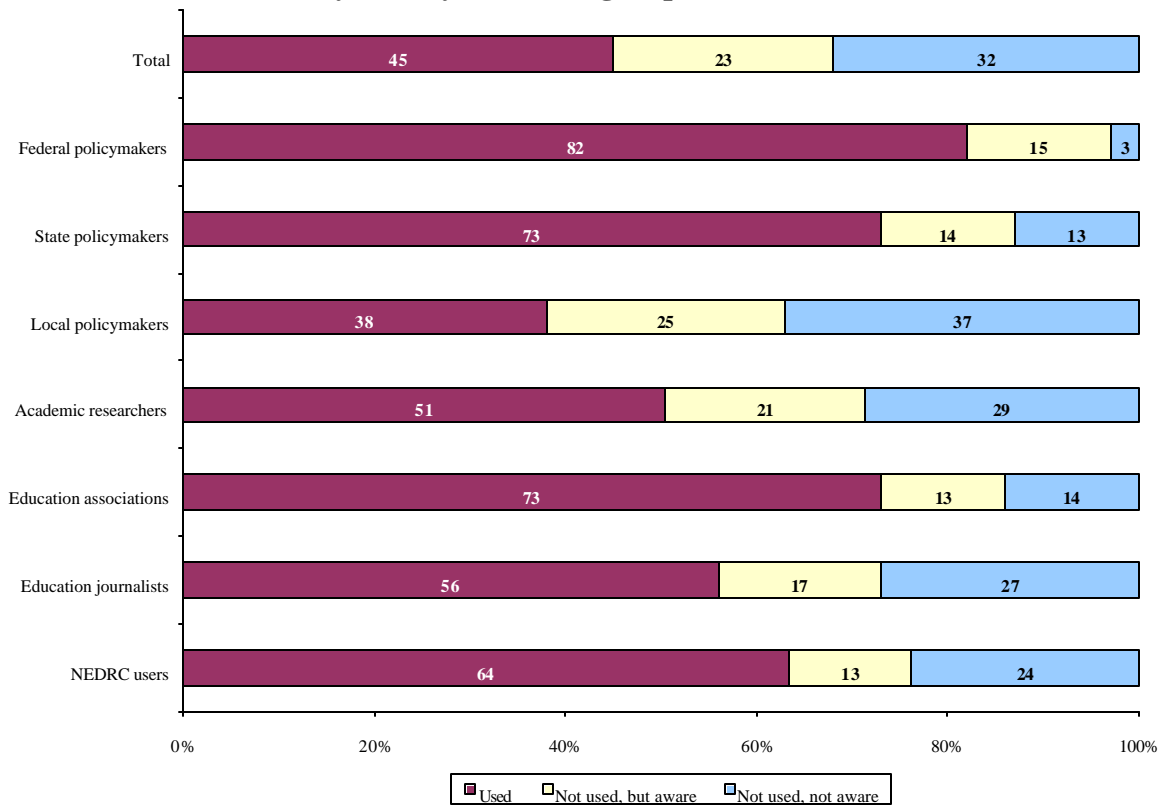


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

Users were most likely to have used traditionally bound and printed publications (see figure 7), 57 percent indicating they used this medium. Twenty-four percent indicated they obtained publications through the Internet and 19 percent obtained publications in both formats. Figure 7 also shows the distribution of use of publication formats by customer groups.

**Figure 7.—Use of traditionally-bound-and-printed publications versus publications obtained through the Internet in the past 2 years, by customer group**



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

*"How frequently have you used NCES publications (bound or on the Internet) in the past 2 years?"*

The frequency of use, by customer group, of those who have used NCES publications in the past 2 years is shown in figure 8. Federal policymakers were more likely to use NCES publications on a weekly basis (24 percent).

**Figure 8.—How frequently users have used NCES publications in the past 2 years, by customer group**



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

*"For each [compendium] publication (bound or on the Internet) that you have used in the past 2 years, please indicate how satisfied you were with it."*

Overall, from 21 to 31 percent of the users had used NCES compendium publications in the past 2 years (see table 3). The *Digest of Education Statistics* was used most frequently (31 percent overall), followed by the *Condition of Education* (26 percent), and *Projections of Education Statistics* (21 percent). Use varied among the customer groups; at least 63 percent of federal policymakers and at least 51 percent of state policymakers and individuals from education associations had used *Digest* and *Condition*.

A high percentage of those who had used NCES statistical compendia in the past 2 years expressed satisfaction with these publications, with generally little variation among customer groups (see table 3):

- *Condition of Education* (93 percent)
- *Digest of Education Statistics* (93 percent)
- *Projections of Education Statistics* (88 percent)

**Table 3.—Use of and satisfaction with NCES compendium publications in the past 2 years, by customer group**

| Customer group and compendium publication | Percent using compendium publications | Percent of users satisfied/very satisfied |
|---|---|---|
| **Overall** | | |
| *Condition of Education* | 26 | 93 |
| *Digest of Education Statistics* | 31 | 93 |
| *Projections of Education Statistics* | 21 | 88 |
| **Federal policymakers** | | |
| *Condition of Education* | 63 | 92 |
| *Digest of Education Statistics* | 72 | 95 |
| *Projections of Education Statistics* | 31 | 83 |
| **State policymakers** | | |
| *Condition of Education* | 51 | 91 |
| *Digest of Education Statistics* | 60 | 92 |
| *Projections of Education Statistics* | 43 | 90 |
| **Local policymakers** | | |
| *Condition of Education* | 23 | 91 |
| *Digest of Education Statistics* | 27 | 92 |
| *Projections of Education Statistics* | 19 | 88 |
| **Academic researchers** | | |
| *Condition of Education* | 28 | 94 |
| *Digest of Education Statistics* | 33 | 94 |
| *Projections of Education Statistics* | 21 | 88 |
| **Education associations** | | |
| *Condition of Education* | 58 | 93 |
| *Digest of Education Statistics* | 61 | 95 |
| *Projections of Education Statistics* | 44 | 90 |
| **Education journalists** | | |
| *Condition of Education* | 29 | 84 |
| *Digest of Education Statistics* | 41 | 84 |
| *Projections of Education Statistics* | 20 | 83 |
| **NEDRC users** | | |
| *Condition of Education* | 31 | 92 |
| *Digest of Education Statistics* | 48 | 94 |
| *Projections of Education Statistics* | 31 | 86 |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

Figure 9 shows the specific satisfaction rating of the NCES compendium publications for each of the customer groups.

**Figure 9.—Users' levels of satisfaction with NCES compendium publications, by customer group**
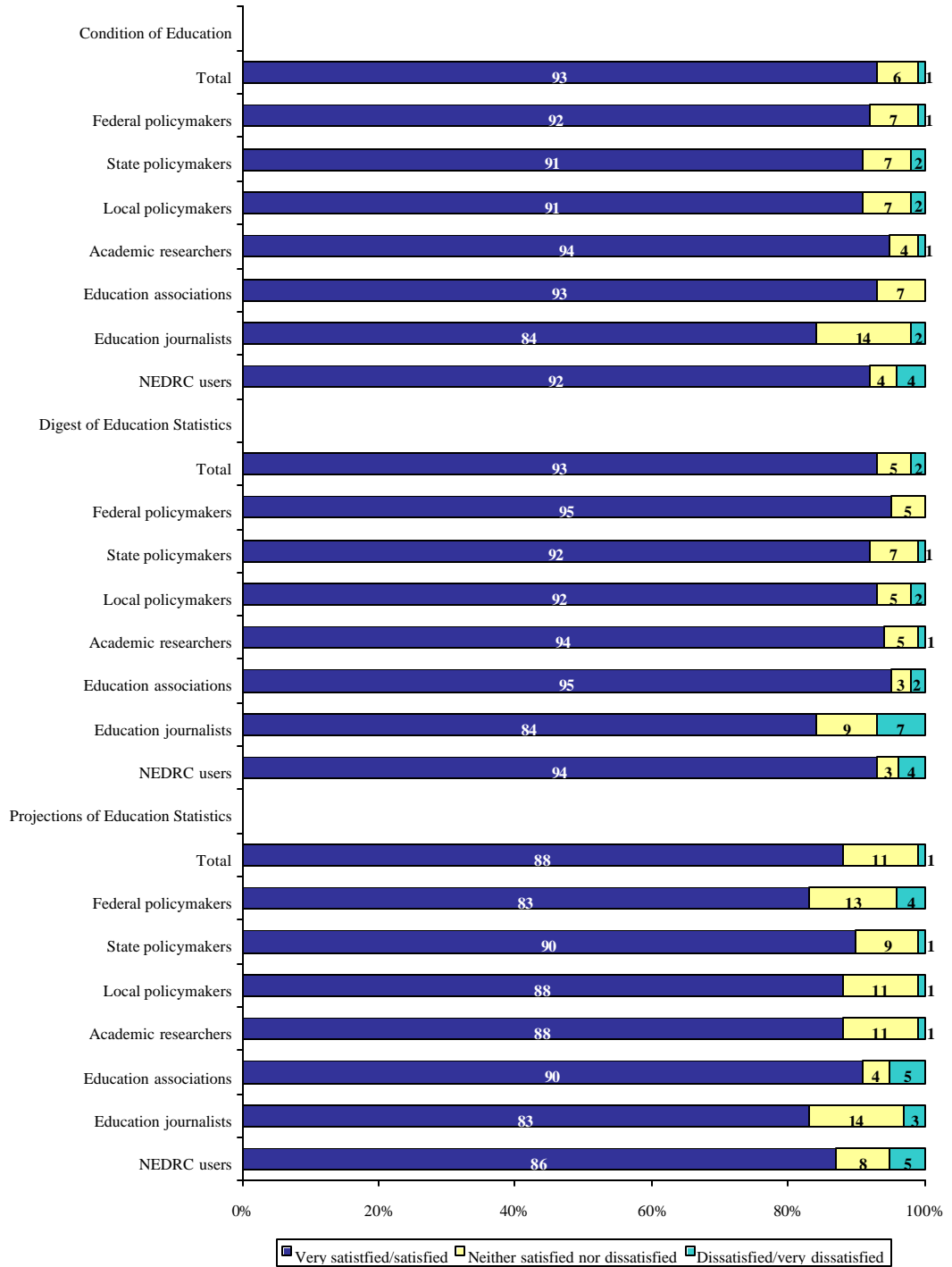


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

*"If, in the past 2 years, you have used any NCES publications (bound or on the Internet) for any survey listed below, please indicate how satisfied you were with those publications."*

A feature of the 1999 survey was to assess use of and customer satisfaction with publications in specific program and survey areas. Table 4 shows the customer use of and satisfaction with publications in 24 areas. Use ranged from 30 percent for National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) publications to 2 percent for Public Libraries Survey publications.

**Table 4.—Use of and satisfaction with NCES publications, by program area and survey**

| Program area and survey | Percent using survey publications | Percent of users satisfied/very satisfied |
|---|---|---|
| **Educational assessments** | **29** | **\*91** |
| Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) | 23 | 93 |
| National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) | 30 | 92 |
| IEA Reading Literacy Study | 9 | 87 |
| International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) | 4 | 72 |
| National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) | 7 | 83 |
| **National longitudinal surveys** | **19** | **\*89** |
| National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88) | 12 | 89 |
| High School and Beyond (HS&B) | 16 | 91 |
| Baccalaureate and Beyond (B&B) Longitudinal Study | 7 | 86 |
| Beginning Postsecondary Students (BPS) Longitudinal Study | 7 | 84 |
| **Library surveys** | **6** | **\*65** |
| Academic Library Survey (ALS) | 4 | 75 |
| School Library Survey (SLS) | 3 | 78 |
| Public Libraries Survey (PLS) | 2 | 70 |
| **Elementary and secondary surveys** | **20** | **\*86** |
| National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) | 6 | 83 |
| Fast Response Survey System (FRSS) | 4 | 78 |
| Common Core of Data (CCD) | 11 | 89 |
| 1994 High School Transcript Study (HSTS) | 5 | 83 |
| National Household Education Survey (NHES) | 8 | 84 |
| Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) | 15 | 88 |
| Private School Universe Survey (PSS) | 4 | 74 |
| **Postsecondary surveys** | **11** | **\*80** |
| National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF) | 5 | 76 |
| Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) | 9 | 81 |
| National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS) | 4 | 77 |
| National Household Education Survey (NHES) | 4 | 74 |
| Postsecondary Education Quick Information System (PEQIS) | 3 | 70 |

\* This percentage reflects responses to an independent question about an overall assessment of the program publications.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

Figure 10 shows specific user satisfaction ratings for NCES publications in the program and survey areas.

**Figure 10.—Users' levels of satisfaction with NCES publications, by program area and survey**



| | Very satisfied/satisfied | Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied | Dissatisfied/very dissatisfied |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Education assessment publications** | | | |
| Overall | 91 | 6 | 2 |
| TIMSS | 93 | 4 | 3 |
| NAEP | 92 | 5 | 3 |
| IEA Reading Literacy Study | 87 | 10 | 3 |
| IALS | 72 | 21 | 8 |
| NALS | 83 | 14 | 3 |
| **National longitudinal studies publications** | | | |
| Overall | 89 | 10 | 1 |
| NELS:88 | 89 | 8 | 3 |
| HS&B | 91 | 7 | 2 |
| B&B | 86 | 14 | |
| BPS | 84 | 15 | 1 |
| **Library publications** | | | |
| Overall | 65 | 33 | 2 |
| ALS | 75 | 22 | 3 |
| SLS | 78 | 20 | 3 |
| PLS | 70 | 28 | 2 |
| **Elementary and secondary education publications** | | | |
| Overall | 86 | 11 | 3 |
| NCVS-School crime supplement | 83 | 11 | 7 |
| FRSS | 78 | 17 | 5 |
| CCD | 89 | 8 | 3 |
| HSTS | 83 | 14 | 4 |
| NHES | 84 | 15 | 2 |
| SASS | 88 | 8 | 4 |
| PSS | 74 | 25 | 1 |
| **Postsecondary education publications** | | | |
| Overall | 80 | 18 | 2 |
| NSOPF | 76 | 19 | 6 |
| IPEDS | 81 | 13 | 6 |
| NPSAS | 77 | 20 | 2 |
| NHES-Adult components | 74 | 20 | 6 |
| PEQIS | 70 | 23 | 8 |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

Table 5 reports the overall use of publications in each of the five program areas for the seven customer categories. With a few exceptions, satisfaction with these publications was generally at least 81 percent.

**Table 5.—Use of and satisfaction with NCES publications, by customer group and program area**

| Customer group and program area | Percent using program publications | Percent of users satisfied/very satisfied |
|---|---|---|
| **Federal policymakers** | | |
| Educational assessments | 52 | 96 |
| National longitudinal surveys | 39 | 92 |
| Library surveys | 10 | — |
| Elementary and secondary surveys | 46 | 95 |
| Postsecondary surveys | 33 | 95 |
| **State policymakers** | | |
| Educational assessments | 42 | 95 |
| National longitudinal surveys | 32 | 87 |
| Library surveys | 24 | 87 |
| Elementary and secondary surveys | 37 | 95 |
| Postsecondary surveys | 32 | 86 |
| **Local policymakers** | | |
| Educational assessments | 24 | 96 |
| National longitudinal surveys | 13 | 88 |
| Library surveys | 6 | 69 |
| Elementary and secondary surveys | 17 | 86 |
| Postsecondary surveys | 10 | 77 |
| **Academic researchers** | | |
| Educational assessments | 33 | 88 |
| National longitudinal surveys | 23 | 90 |
| Library surveys | 4 | — |
| Elementary and secondary surveys | 23 | 86 |
| Postsecondary surveys | 12 | 79 |
| **Education associations** | | |
| Educational assessments | 45 | 90 |
| National longitudinal surveys | 36 | 92 |
| Library surveys | 8 | — |
| Elementary and secondary surveys | 38 | 83 |
| Postsecondary surveys | 23 | 81 |

**Table 5.—Use of and satisfaction with NCES publications, by customer group and program area—Continued**

| Customer group and program area | Percent using program publications | Percent of users satisfied/very satisfied |
|---|---|---|
| **Education journalists** | | |
| Educational assessments | 38 | 89 |
| National longitudinal surveys | 18 | 77 |
| Library surveys | 7 | — |
| Elementary and secondary surveys | 27 | 80 |
| Postsecondary surveys | 5 | — |
| **NEDRC users** | | |
| Educational assessments | 26 | 89 |
| National longitudinal surveys | 28 | 91 |
| Library surveys | 9 | — |
| Elementary and secondary surveys | 28 | 88 |
| Postsecondary surveys | 32 | 96 |

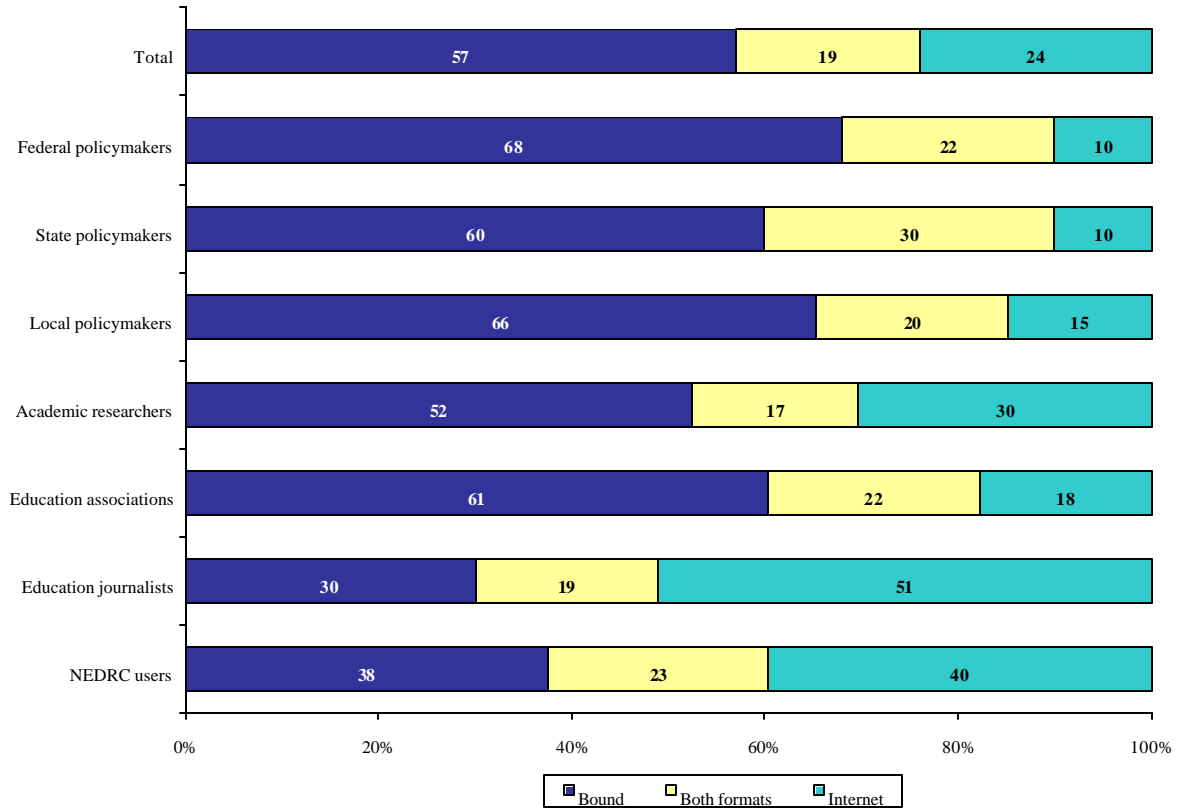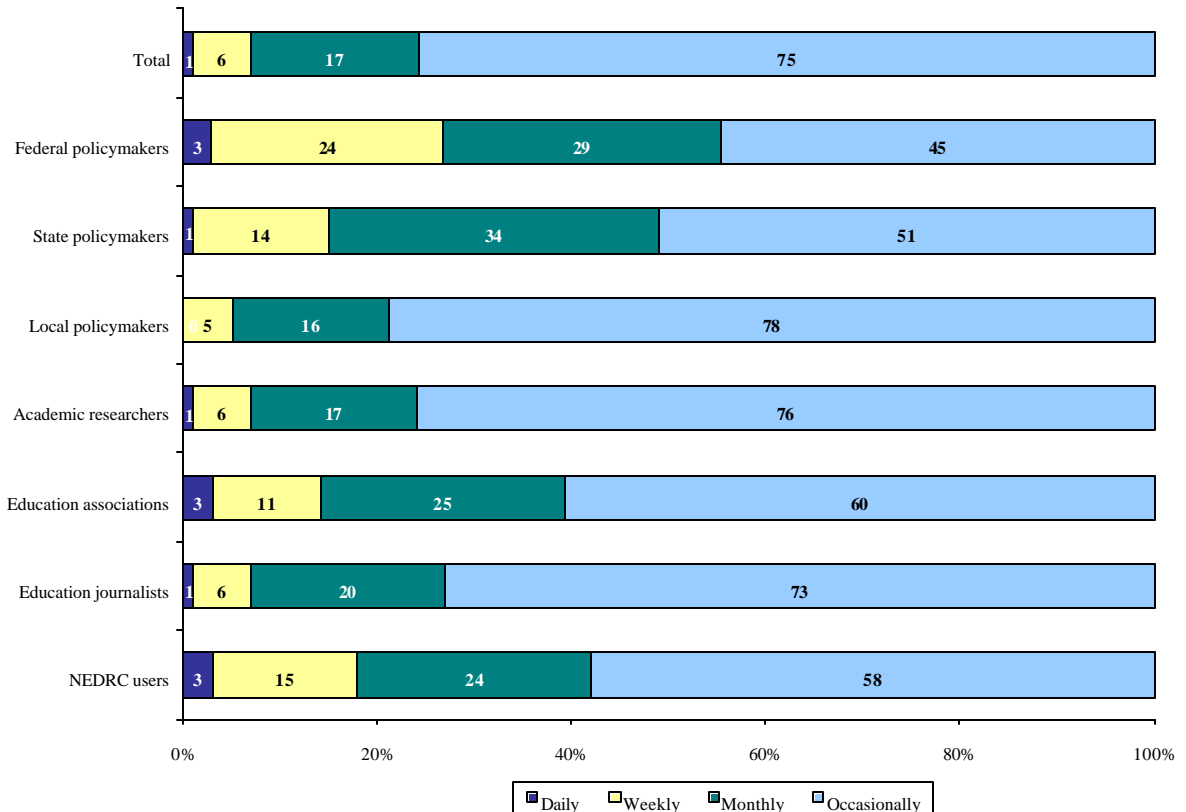— Too few cases for reliable estimate
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

*"For each one [of the publication formats used by NCES] (bound or on the Internet) you have used in the past 2 years, please indicate how useful it is to you."*

Overall use of the publication formats utilized by NCES varies, with users making use of issue briefs, topical/analytic reports, and tabular reports more (59 to 61 percent) than technical/ methodological reports or directories (38 to 43 percent). Education journalists were least likely to use technical/methodological reports (18 percent).

**Table 6.—Use of types of publication, by customer group (percent)**

| Customer group | Issue briefs | Topical/ analytic reports | Tabular reports | Technical/ methodological reports | Direc- tories |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Overall | 59 | 60 | 61 | 38 | 43 |
| Federal policymakers | 70 | 75 | 78 | 43 | 52 |
| State policymakers | 79 | 78 | 86 | 45 | 54 |
| Local policymakers | 65 | 56 | 58 | 35 | 50 |
| Academic researchers | 53 | 62 | 62 | 40 | 36 |
| Education associations | 72 | 75 | 82 | 35 | 43 |
| Education journalists | 60 | 61 | 65 | 18 | 38 |
| NEDRC users | 43 | 51 | 71 | 37 | 47 |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

Figure 11 shows that about one-fourth (23 to 30 percent) of the customers rated each of these five formats as very useful, and two-thirds of the customers (66 to 73 percent) rated these five formats as useful.

**Figure 11.—Reported usefulness of NCES publications among users, by report format**
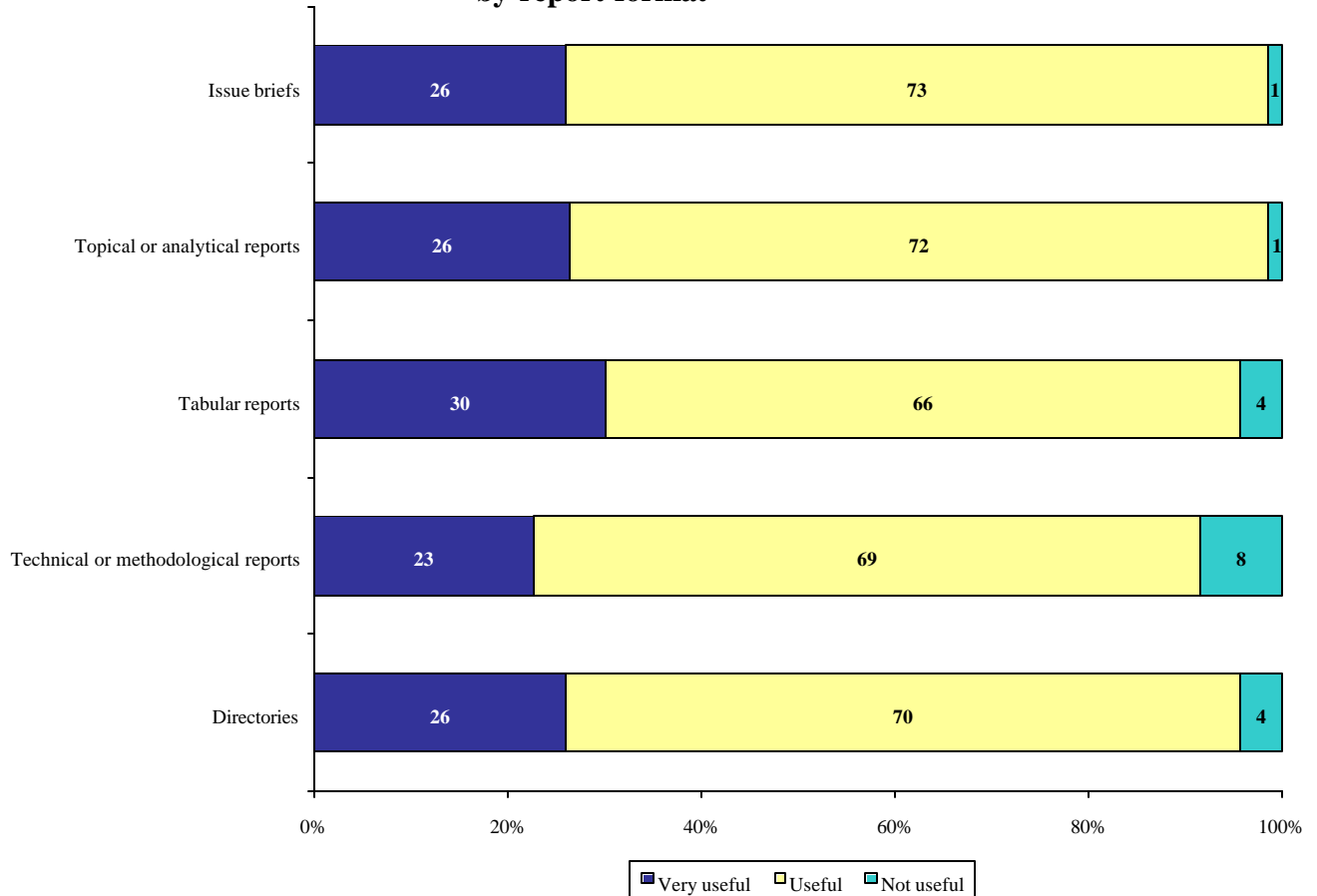


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

*"Overall, how satisfied were you with the following aspects of the publications?"*

Satisfaction with various aspects among those who had used NCES publications in the past 2 years is shown in table 7. Although 93 percent of users were satisfied with the overall quality of publications and 90 percent or more were satisfied with their comprehensiveness and ease of understanding, timeliness was a less satisfactory aspect, with 15 percent of users dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with this aspect of NCES publications. Accuracy had a relatively low satisfaction percentage but mostly because 14 percent of users were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with that aspect.

**Table 7.—Users' levels of satisfaction with specific aspects of NCES publications (percent)**

| Aspect | Very Satisfied/ Satisfied | Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied | Very dissatisfied/ dissatisfied |
|---|---|---|---|
| Comprehensiveness | 91 | 5 | 3 |
| Ease of understanding | 90 | 5 | 5 |
| Timeliness (up-to-date information) | 77 | 8 | 15 |
| Accuracy | 84 | 14 | 2 |
| Relevant information | 89 | 6 | 5 |
| Overall quality of publications | 93 | 6 | 1 |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

*"Which aspects of NCES publications do you consider to be the three most important?"*

Users were also asked to rank the three aspects of NCES publications which they considered to be most important among the following choices:

- Comprehensiveness
- Ease of understanding
- Timeliness (up-to-date information)
- Accuracy
- Relevant information

Table 8 shows the percentage distribution of the first, second, and third most important aspects of NCES publications. Thirty-five percent of users rated accuracy of the information as the *most important* aspect, and 24 percent so rated relevance of information. In addition, at least 64 percent of users rated accuracy, relevance, or timeliness as either their first, second, or third most important aspect.

**Table 8.—Users' ranking of three most important aspects of NCES publications (percent)**

| Aspect | Most important | Second most important | Third most important | Either first, second, or third most important |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Comprehensiveness | 12 | 17 | 18 | 47 |
| Ease of understanding | 14 | 14 | 21 | 50 |
| Timeliness (up-to-date information) | 15 | 24 | 26 | 64 |
| Accuracy | 35 | 24 | 12 | 71 |
| Relevant information | 24 | 21 | 23 | 68 |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

Figure 12 presents a way of comparing across users' ratings of the *importance* of an aspect to the level of *satisfaction* with the aspect. The score was normalized by subtracting the overall mean and dividing by the standard deviation (for each dimension separately). Reading down the scale, the figure shows that relative to one another, users' overall order of importance for these aspects is accuracy, relevance, comprehensiveness, timeliness, and ease of understanding. Reading from right to left, the figure shows that users' levels of satisfaction are similar for comprehensiveness, relevance, accuracy, and ease of understanding and decidedly less for timeliness.

The diagonal line cutting through the center from the bottom left to the upper right identifies the relative weights of importance and satisfaction. Aspects appearing on the line would have equal levels of importance and satisfaction. For aspects that fall above the line (accuracy and timeliness), users' judgment of their importance is greater than their satisfaction with them. For the aspects that appear below the line (relevance, comprehensiveness, and ease of understanding), users' levels of satisfaction are greater than users' judgments of their importance.

**Figure 12.—Joint satisfaction and importance rating of different aspects of NCES publications**
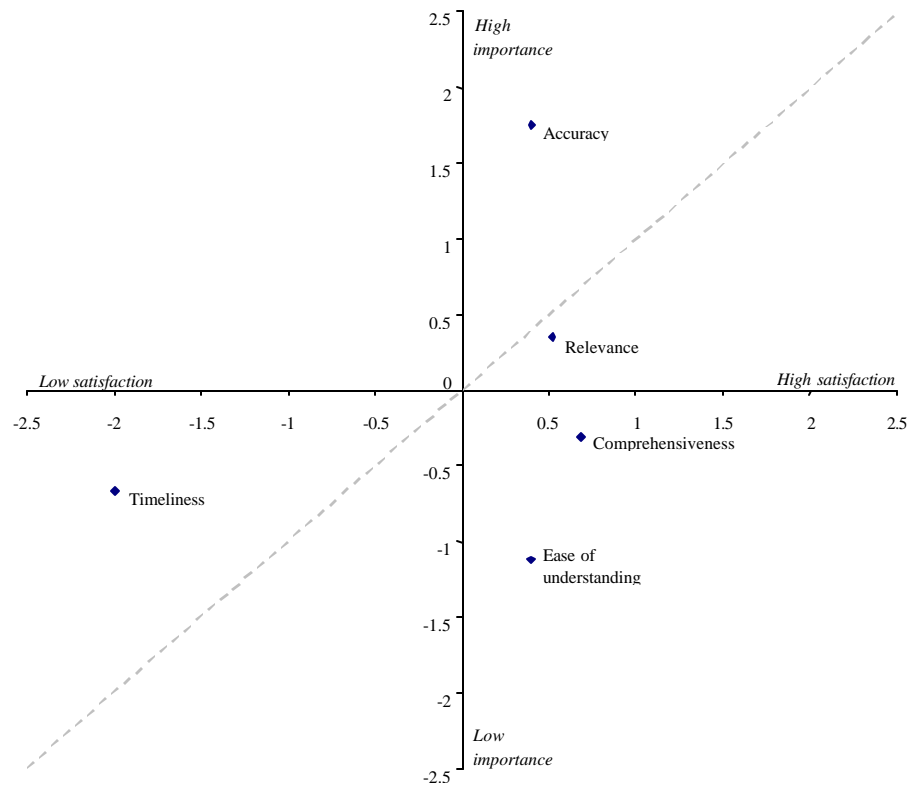


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

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*"Below is a list of reasons why you may not have used NCES publications (bound or on the Internet) in the past 2 years. For each of the following reasons, indicate if it applies to you or not."*

Potential customers who were aware of NCES publications, but who had not used any in the past 2 years, were asked why they had not used these publications (see table 9): 88 percent indicated they obtained education information from other sources, and 59 percent indicated they obtained NCES information indirectly from other sources.

**Table 9.—Reasons for not using NCES publications in the past 2 years, by customer group (percent)**

| Reasons | Overall | Federal policy-makers | State policy-makers | Local policy-makers | Academic researchers | Education associations | Education journalists | NEDRC users |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Obtain NCES information indirectly from other sources | 59 | — | 79 | 62 | 56 | — | — | — |
| Don't need NCES publications in work | 35 | — | 28 | 28 | 44 | — | — | — |
| Need different levels or types of information than NCES provides | 48 | — | 42 | 48 | 50 | — | — | — |
| Obtain education information from other sources | 88 | — | 86 | 91 | 86 | — | — | — |
| Don't know how to obtain NCES publications | 31 | — | 20 | 31 | 31 | — | — | — |
| Think NCES publications are outdated | 2 | — | — | 3 | 1 | — | — | — |
| Think NCES publications are too difficult to use | 5 | — | — | 7 | 2 | — | — | — |

— Too few cases for reliable estimate
NOTE: Respondents could provide multiple responses.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

# IV. Questions About NCES Databases and User Tools

*"Have you used any NCES databases or user tools in the past 2 years?"*

NCES provides public-use and restricted-use survey databases for users who want to conduct their own analyses using software such as SAS, SPSS, Excel, etc. NCES also provides several types of user tools that can be used in conjunction with these databases, such as the Electronic Code Book (ECB), the Data Analysis System (DAS), the Common Core of Data (CCD) CD-ROM user interface, and the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) CD-ROM user interface.

At least 58 percent of NCES' potential customers were not aware of NCES databases or user tools (see figure 13), and 30 percent had not used them, even though they were aware of their existence. Only one in eight (12 percent) of NCES' customers had used these products in the past 2 years.

Figure 13 also shows the specific awareness of and use by the various customer groups. NEDRC users (52 percent), state policymakers (28 percent), federal policymakers (24 percent), and individuals from education associations (20 percent) were the largest users of NCES databases and user tools. The customer groups least aware of these products included local policymakers (65 percent), education journalists (60 percent), and academic researchers (52 percent).

The rest of this chapter will present data from only those respondents who had used NCES data files.

**Figure 13.—Awareness and use of NCES databases and user tools in the past 2 years, by customer group**
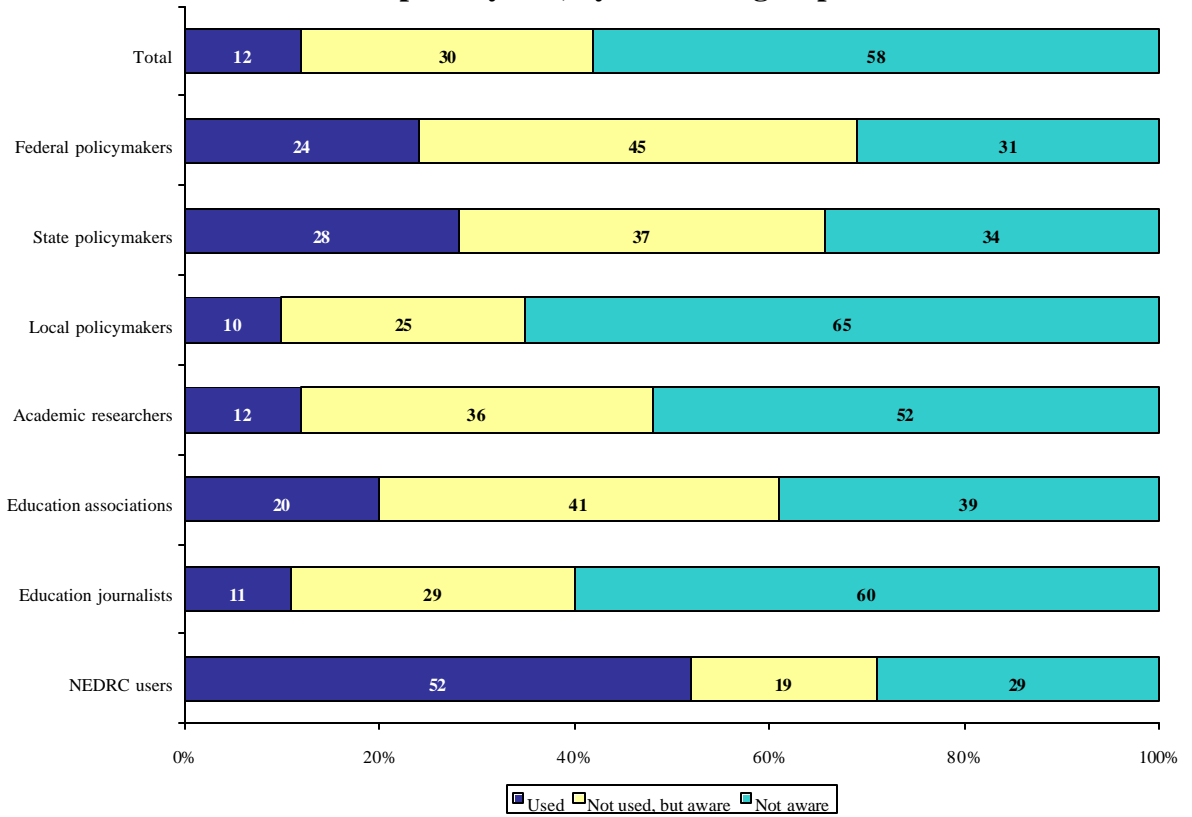
| Customer group | Used | Not used, but aware | Not aware |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 12 | 30 | 58 |
| Federal policymakers | 24 | 45 | 31 |
| State policymakers | 28 | 37 | 34 |
| Local policymakers | 10 | 25 | 65 |
| Academic researchers | 12 | 36 | 52 |
| Education associations | 20 | 41 | 39 |
| Education journalists | 11 | 29 | 60 |
| NEDRC users | 52 | 19 | 29 |

Legend: Used, Not used, but aware, Not aware

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

*"How frequently have you used NCES databases or user tools in the past 2 years?"*

The frequency of use, by customer group, of those who have used NCES databases or user tools in the past 2 years is shown in figure 14. At least 42 percent of the federal and state policymakers have used NCES databases and user tools at least once a month.

**Figure 14.—How frequently users have used NCES databases and user tools in the past 2 years, by customer group**
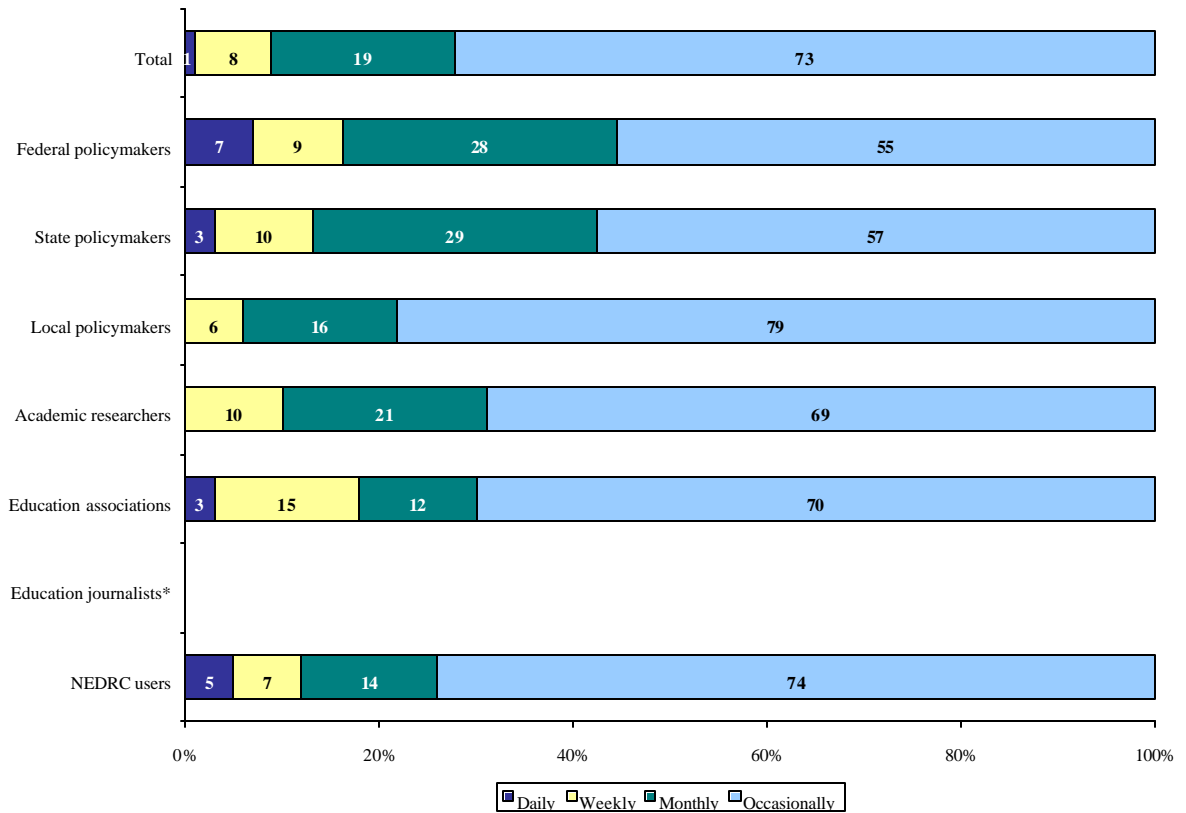


* No data can be presented for the Education journalists because there were too few cases for reliable estimate.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

Table 10 shows that while use of NCES user tools is low (3 to 4 percent), those who use these tools are generally satisfied with them. Satisfaction with these tools ranged from 84 to 92 percent.

**Table 10.—Use of and satisfaction with NCES user tools**

| User tool | Percent of respondents using data user tool | Percent of users satisfied/very satisfied |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Electronic Code Book (ECB) | 3 | 92 |
| Data Analysis System (DAS) | 4 | 84 |
| CCD CD-ROM User Interface | 4 | 88 |
| IPEDS CD-ROM User Interface | 4 | 84 |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

The division of opinion between "very satisfied/satisfied," "neither dissatisfied nor satisfied," and "dissatisfied/very dissatisfied" is shown in figure 15. Because of the small numbers of responses for most user tools and related issues of reliability, breakdowns by the various customer groups are not shown.

**Figure 15.—Users' levels of satisfaction with NCES user tools**
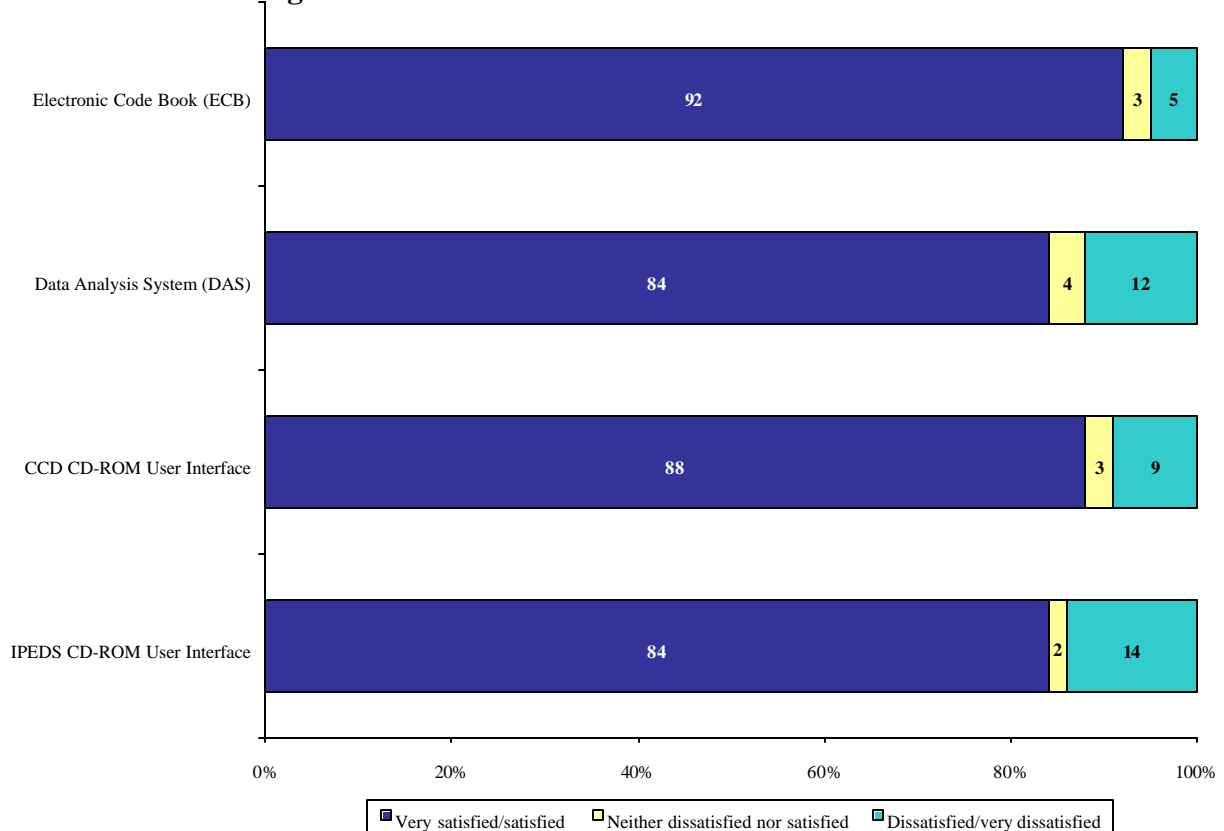


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

At most, 5 percent of the respondents used any specific NCES databases during the past 2 years; however, 17 percent used at least one of the several NCES databases (see table 11). The percent of users satisfied with the NCES databases ranged from 74 to 91 percent.

**Table 11.—Use of and satisfaction with NCES databases, by program area and survey**

| Program area and survey | Percent of respondents using survey databases | Percent of users satisfied/very satisfied |
|---|---|---|
| **Any database** | 17 | * |
| **Educational assessments** | | |
| Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) | 3 | 89 |
| National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) | 2 | 80 |
| National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) | 5 | 90 |
| **National longitudinal surveys** | | |
| National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88) | 4 | 91 |
| Beginning Postsecondary Students (BPS) Longitudinal Study | 2 | 79 |
| High School and Beyond (HS&B) | 4 | 88 |
| Baccalaureate and Beyond (B&B) Longitudinal Study | 2 | 78 |
| **Library surveys** | | |
| School Library Survey (SLS) | 1 | 82 |
| Academic Library Survey (ALS) | 1 | 78 |
| Public Libraries Survey (PLS) | 1 | — |
| **Elementary and secondary surveys** | | |
| Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) | 4 | 91 |
| National Household Education Survey (NHES) | 2 | 89 |
| Common Core of Data (CCD) | 4 | 88 |
| **Postsecondary surveys** | | |
| National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS) | 2 | 87 |
| Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) | 4 | 85 |
| National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF) | 2 | 84 |
| National Household Education Survey (NHES) | 2 | 74 |

— Too few cases for reliable estimate
* Satisfaction percentages can not be determined for users of "any" database because they could be satisfied with some and dissatisfied with others.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

The satisfaction rating of the various databases within NCES program areas is shown in figure 16.

**Figure 16.—Users' levels of satisfaction with a select group of NCES databases, by program area and survey**

Education Assessment Databases

| Database | Very satisfied/satisfied | Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied | Dissatisfied/very dissatisfied |
|---|---|---|---|
| TIMSS | 89 | 3 | 8 |
| NALS | 80 | 15 | 5 |
| NAEP | 90 | 5 | 5 |

National Longitudinal Studies Databases

| Database | Very satisfied/satisfied | Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied | Dissatisfied/very dissatisfied |
|---|---|---|---|
| NELS | 91 | 7 | 3 |
| BPS | 79 | 15 | 6 |
| HS&B | 88 | 7 | 5 |
| B&B | 78 | 12 | 10 |

Library Databases

| Database | Very satisfied/satisfied | Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied | Dissatisfied/very dissatisfied |
|---|---|---|---|
| SLS | 82 | 18 | 1 |
| ALS | 78 | 16 | 6 |
| PLS | 74 | 26 | |

Elementary and Secondary Education Databases

| Database | Very satisfied/satisfied | Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied | Dissatisfied/very dissatisfied |
|---|---|---|---|
| SASS | 91 | 7 | 3 |
| NHES | 89 | 11 | |
| CCD | 88 | 6 | 6 |

Postsecondary Education Publications

| Database | Very satisfied/satisfied | Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied | Dissatisfied/very dissatisfied |
|---|---|---|---|
| NPSAS | 87 | 12 | 1 |
| IPEDS | 85 | 8 | 7 |
| NSOPF | 84 | 12 | 4 |
| NHES | 74 | 15 | 11 |

■ Very satisfied/satisfied   □ Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied   ■ Dissatisfied/very dissatisfied

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

*"Overall, how satisfied were you with the following aspects of the databases and user tools?"*

Table 12 shows that 87 percent of the users were satisfied with the comprehensiveness and overall quality of the databases and user tools, and 82 percent were satisfied with the accuracy of the database. However, a fifth of the users (20 percent) expressed dissatisfaction with the timeliness of the database releases, and nearly a sixth were dissatisfied with the ease of access (16 percent) and ease of use (15 percent) of these databases and user tools.

**Table 12.—Users' levels of satisfaction with specific aspects of NCES databases and user tools (percent)**

| Aspect | Very satisfied/ satisfied | Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied | Very dissatisfied/ dissatisfied |
|---|---|---|---|
| Comprehensiveness | 87 | 10 | 3 |
| Ease of use | 75 | 10 | 15 |
| Ease of access | 73 | 10 | 16 |
| Database documentation | 77 | 15 | 9 |
| Accuracy of database | 82 | 15 | 4 |
| Timeliness of database release | 67 | 13 | 20 |
| Overall quality of database | 87 | 9 | 4 |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

Users were also asked to rank the three aspects of NCES databases and user tools which they considered to be most important among the following choices:

- Comprehensiveness
- Ease of use
- Ease of access
- Database documentation
- Accuracy of database
- Timeliness of database release

Table 13 shows the percentage distribution of the first, second, and third most important aspects of NCES databases and user tools. Forty-two percent of users rated accuracy of database as the *first most important*, and at least 11 percent rated comprehensiveness, ease of use, or timeliness as the first most important aspect. In addition, at least 53 percent of users rated accuracy, ease of use, comprehensiveness, or timeliness of database release as either their first, second, or third most important aspect.

**Table 13.—Users' ranking of three most important aspects of NCES databases and user tools (percent)**

| Aspect | Most important | Second most important | Third most important | Either first, second, or third most important |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Comprehensiveness | 23 | 16 | 18 | 57 |
| Ease of use | 16 | 20 | 24 | 60 |
| Ease of access | 4 | 13 | 17 | 34 |
| Database documentation | 4 | 8 | 11 | 23 |
| Accuracy of database | 42 | 15 | 15 | 72 |
| Timeliness of database release | 11 | 27 | 15 | 53 |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

Figure 17 presents a way of analyzing across users' ratings of the *importance* of an aspect to the levels of *satisfaction* with the aspect. The score was normalized by subtracting the overall mean and dividing by the standard deviation (for each dimension separately). Reading down the scale, the figure shows that, relative to one another, users' overall order of importance for these aspects is accuracy, comprehensiveness, timeliness, ease of use, ease of access, and documentation. Reading from right to left, the figure shows the order of users' levels of satisfaction is comprehensiveness, accuracy, documentation, ease of access, ease of use, and timeliness.

The diagonal line cutting through the center from the bottom left to the upper right identifies the relative weights of importance and satisfaction. Aspects appearing on the line would have equal levels of importance and satisfaction. For aspects that fall above the line (accuracy, timeliness, and ease of use), users' judgment of their importance is greater than their satisfaction with them. For the aspects that appear below the line (comprehensiveness, ease of access, and documentation), users' levels of satisfaction are greater than users' judgments of their importance.

**Figure 17.—Joint satisfaction and importance rating of different aspects of NCES databases and user tools**
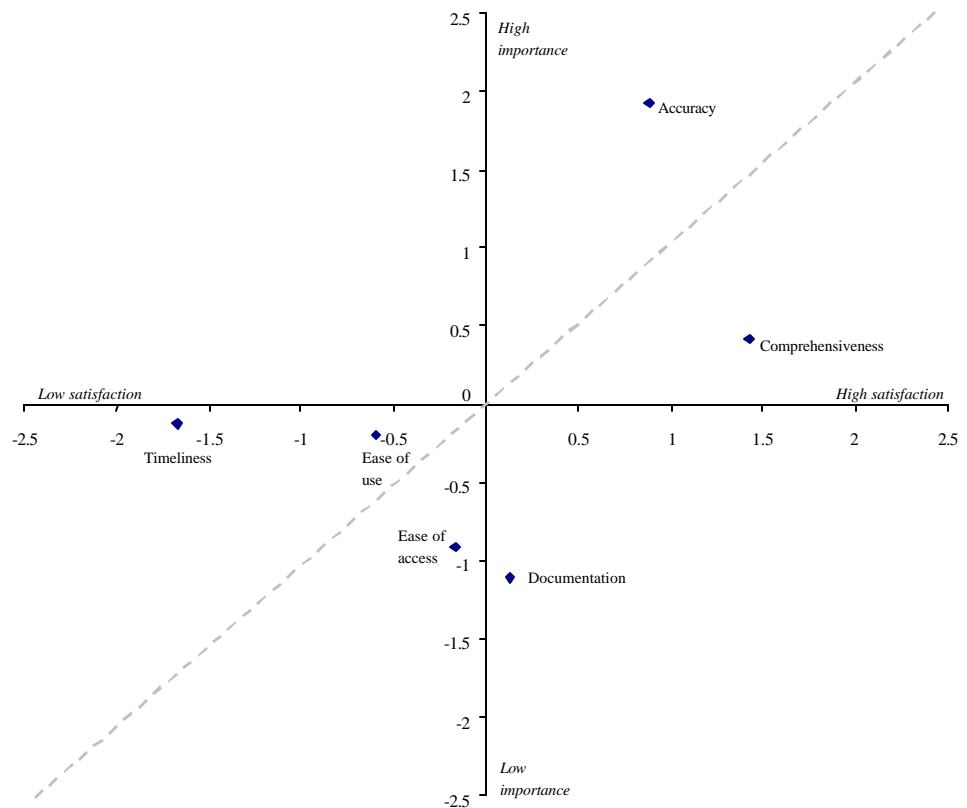


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

*"Below is a list of reasons why you may not have used NCES databases and user tools in the past 2 years. For each of the following reasons, indicate if it applies to you or not."*

Potential customers who were aware of NCES databases or user tools, but who had not used any in the past 2 years, provided reasons why they had not used these products (see table 14). Most (82 percent) indicated they had obtained NCES information directly from other sources, and 67 percent indicated they obtained NCES information indirectly from other sources. Only small percentages of users (3 to 15 percent) reported avoiding using NCES databases and user tools because they were too difficult to use.

**Table 14.—Reasons for not using NCES databases and user tools in the past 2 years, by customer group (percent)**

| Reasons | Overall | Federal policy-makers | State policy-makers | Local policy-makers | Academic researchers | Education associations | Education journalists | NEDRC users |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Obtain NCES information indirectly from other sources | 67 | 76 | 63 | 70 | 65 | 49 | 63 | 49 |
| Someone else is responsible for databases | 40 | 57 | 64 | 46 | 35 | 39 | 54 | 31 |
| Need different levels or types of information than NCES provides | 37 | 39 | 32 | 33 | 40 | 39 | 38 | 27 |
| Obtain education information from other sources | 82 | 67 | 72 | 85 | 80 | 61 | 98 | 52 |
| Don't know how to obtain NCES databases and user tools | 32 | 23 | 31 | 34 | 31 | 30 | 51 | 28 |
| Don't have computer technology or technical knowledge to use NCES databases and user tools | 16 | 36 | 22 | 13 | 17 | 26 | 43 | 33 |
| Think NCES databases and user tools are outdated | 3 | 3 | 9 | 5 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 0 |
| Think NCES databases and user tools are too difficult to use | 7 | 15 | 12 | 9 | 6 | 3 | 8 | 11 |

NOTE: Respondents could provide multiple responses.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

# V. Questions About NCES Services

*"If you have a question, do you know how to contact NCES?"*

All respondents were asked if they knew how to contact NCES if they had a question. Most of the NEDRC users (85 percent), federal (81 percent) and state (77 percent) policymakers, and individuals from education associations (78 percent) responded in the affirmative (see figure 18). However, 56 percent of the local policymakers and 52 percent of the academic researchers indicated they did not know how to contact NCES.

**Figure 18.—Awareness of how to contact NCES, by customer group**
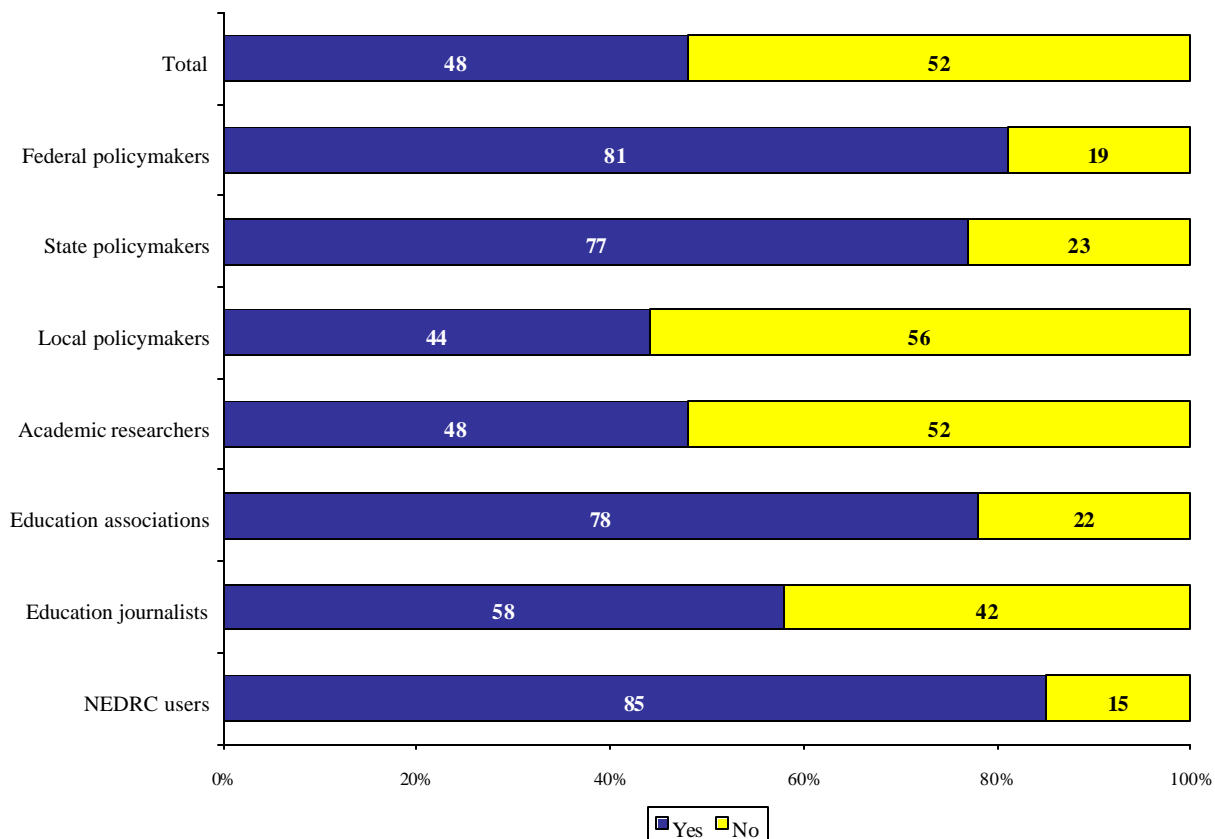


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

*"Have you used any NCES service in the past 2 years?"*

Respondents were asked if they had used any of the following services in the past 2 years: e-mailing, faxing, mailing, or telephoning NCES staff a request for information; requesting NCES information from the Education Publications Center (ED Pubs), the National Education Data Resource Center (NEDRC), or the Department of Education's toll-free number; attending training seminars, workshops, or conferences; participating in the NCES fellows program; and visiting the NCES Web Site. At least half of customers (54 percent) were not aware of NCES services (see figure 19). Awareness levels varied by customer group: NEDRC users and

federal policymakers were most aware (81 and 80 percent, respectively), and local policymakers were least aware (42 percent).

Overall, only 22 percent of customers used NCES services; however, again, levels of use varied by customer group. NEDRC users reported the highest level of use (75 percent), local policymakers the lowest (15 percent).

**Figure 19.—Awareness and use of NCES services in the past 2 years, by customer group**
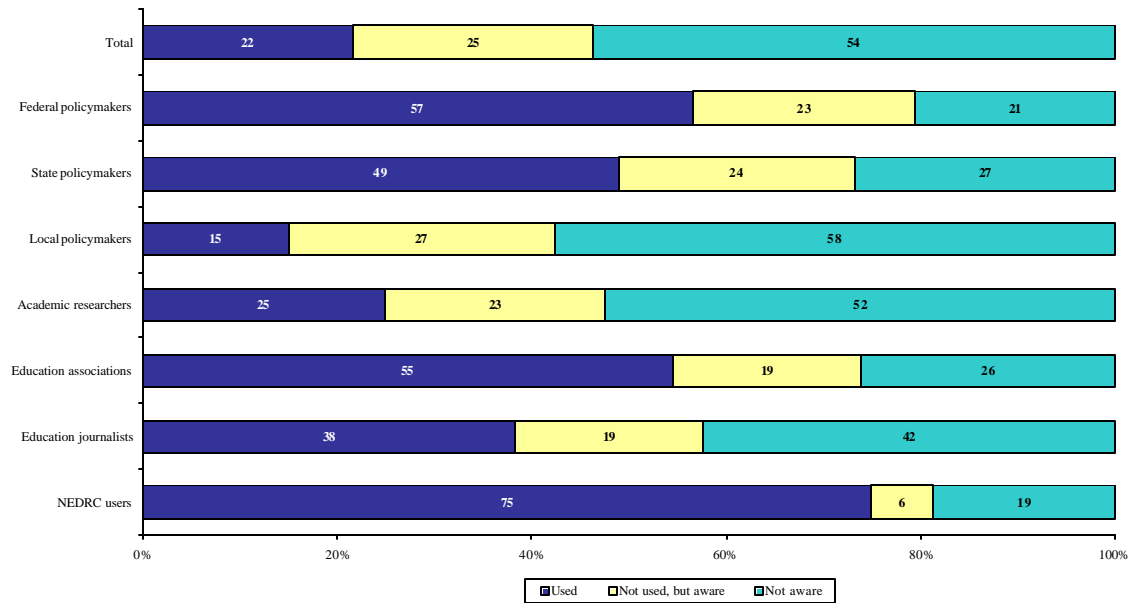


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

The rest of this chapter will present data from only those respondents who had used NCES services.

*"How frequently have you used NCES services in the past 2 years?"*

Users of NCES services were then asked how often in the past 2 years they had used the services. Figure 20 shows that most (82 percent) of these users had used these services occasionally in the past 2 years.

**Figure 20.—How frequently users have used NCES services in the past 2 years**
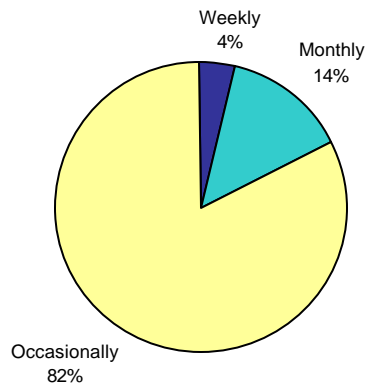


Weekly
4%

Monthly
14%

Occasionally
82%

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

*"For each of these services [Web sites and on-line data access tools] that you have used in the past 2 years, please indicate how satisfied you were with it."*

The widest uses of NCES services (see table 15 on p. 42) were visits to the NCES Web Site (15 percent), requesting information from NCES staff by e-mail, mail, fax, or telephone (13 percent), and ordering NCES materials through ED Pubs (11 percent). Of NCES Web services, 8 percent used the electronic catalog and NAEP Summary Data Tools, and 7 percent used the "What's New" feature. Satisfaction levels with these services were high, ranging from 84 to 96 percent.

Table 16 (on p.43) shows selected results for the various customer groups, and includes the percent using each of the selected services and their satisfaction with these services. In most cases, the highest three or four services are listed for each customer group. Where a specific service or tool is targeted for a particular customer group, it is also included, even if it is not among those used the most. For instance, the IPEDS Interactive Database Search is included because it is targeted at higher education policymakers, part of the local policymaker stratum. The Public School District Finance Peer Search is also included in the table because it is intended for use by elementary and secondary policymakers, the other component of the local policymaker stratum.

**Table 15.—Use of and satisfaction with specific NCES services in the past 2 years**

| Service | Percent of respondents using services | Percent of users satisfied/very satisfied |
|---|---|---|
| **Any services** | 33 | * |
| **General services** | | |
| Info by e-mail, mail, fax, phone | 13 | 92 |
| Ordered from ED Pubs | 11 | 95 |
| Requested info from NEDRC | 6 | 96 |
| Requested info from ED's 1-800 number | 7 | 91 |
| Visited NCES Web Site | 15 | 95 |
| **Web site services** | | |
| NCES Electronic Catalog | 8 | 93 |
| News Flash Subscription Service | 3 | 86 |
| "What's New" Feature | 7 | 92 |
| NCES Staff Directory | 5 | 92 |
| NAEP Summary Data Tables | 8 | 93 |
| K-12 Practitioners' Circle | 3 | 94 |
| **Online data access tools** | | |
| National Public School Locator (CCD) | 3 | 89 |
| Data Analysis System (DAS) on the Web | 3 | 91 |
| Interactive Database Search (IPEDS) | 4 | 84 |
| Public School District Finance Peer Search | 1 | 94 |

* Satisfaction percentages can not be determined for users of "any" services because they could be satisfied with some and dissatisfied with others.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

Many of the stratum percentages of use in table 16 are higher than the comparable figures for all strata in table 15. The use percentages in table 15 are reduced by the low use rates in the local policymaker stratum, which comprises nearly half the population. When use percentages are controlled for stratum, they are higher for most strata than for the user population as a whole.

**Table 16.—Use of and satisfaction with selected NCES services, by customer group and service**

| Customer group and NCES service | Percent of respondents using NCES service | Percent of users satisfied/very satisfied |
|---|---|---|
| **Federal policymakers** | | |
| Requested info from NCES staff | 49 | 95 |
| Ordered from ED Pubs | 26 | 93 |
| NCES Web Site | 48 | 96 |
| NAEP Summary Data Tables | 25 | 91 |
| **State policymakers** | | |
| Requested info from NCES staff | 38 | 92 |
| NCES Web Site | 43 | 92 |
| What's New Feature | 28 | 99 |
| NCES Staff Directory | 26 | 98 |
| NAEP Summary Data Tables | 22 | 99 |
| **Local policymakers** | | |
| Requested info from NCES staff | 9 | 91 |
| Ordered from ED Pubs | 9 | 94 |
| NCES Web Site | 10 | 93 |
| Interactive Database Search (IPEDS) | 4 | 90 |
| Public School Dist. Fin. Peer Search | 2 | — |
| **Academic researchers** | | |
| Requested info from NCES staff | 13 | 92 |
| Ordered from ED Pubs | 11 | 97 |
| NCES Web Site | 17 | 96 |
| **Education associations** | | |
| Requested info from NCES staff | 39 | 90 |
| Ordered from ED Pubs | 25 | 91 |
| NCES Web Site | 38 | 94 |
| **Education journalists** | | |
| Requested info from NCES staff | 29 | 88 |
| NCES Web Site | 34 | 88 |
| NAEP Summary Data Tables | 21 | 94 |
| **NEDRC users** | | |
| Requested info from NCES staff | 69 | 90 |
| Ordered from ED Pubs | 37 | 90 |
| Requested info from NEDRC | 44 | 90 |
| NCES Web Site | 57 | 96 |

— Too few cases for reliable estimates

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

*"Overall, how satisfied were you with the following aspects of NCES services?"*

NCES users were generally satisfied with most aspects of the services they received, with those satisfied ranging from 80 to 93 percent (see table 17). The one exception is that 60 percent of the customers were satisfied with the handling of their complaints, and 30 percent were dissatisfied with this aspect.

**Table 17.—Users' levels of satisfaction with specific aspects of NCES services (percent)**

| Aspect | Very satisfied/ satisfied | Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied | Very dissatisfied/ dissatisfied |
|---|---|---|---|
| Extent to which information met needs | 93 | 4 | 3 |
| Speed with which information was received | 93 | 2 | 5 |
| Ease of obtaining information | 86 | 2 | 11 |
| Staff expertise | 88 | 7 | 5 |
| Time needed to reach knowledgeable staff | 83 | 6 | 10 |
| Courtesy of staff | 88 | 6 | 6 |
| Handling of complaints | 60 | 10 | 30 |
| Search capabilities on NCES Web Site | 80 | 7 | 13 |
| Ease of locating information on NCES Web Site | 80 | 9 | 12 |
| Ease of downloading publications and databases from NCES Web Site | 80 | 8 | 12 |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

Potential customers who were aware of NCES services, but who had not used any in the past 2 years, provided reasons why they had not used these products (see table 18). Most of these (84 percent overall) indicated they had obtained their information from other sources; 71 percent indicated they obtained NCES information but only indirectly, from third-party sources instead of from NCES itself. Only low percentages indicated they did not use NCES services because they thought that the NCES Web Site was too difficult to use (2 percent overall) or that NCES information was outdated (6 percent overall).

**Table 18.—Reasons for not using NCES services in the past 2 years, by customer group (percent)**

| Reasons | Overall | Federal policy-makers | State policy-makers | Local policy-makers | Academic researchers | Education associations | Education journalists | NEDRC users |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Obtain NCES information indirectly from other sources | 71 | — | 74 | 72 | 71 | 58 | — | — |
| Someone else is responsible for obtaining NCES information | 31 | — | 69 | 33 | 29 | 32 | — | — |
| Obtain education information from other sources | 84 | — | 84 | 87 | 79 | 82 | — | — |
| Think NCES information is outdated | 6 | — | 23 | 4 | 7 | 16 | — | — |
| Don't know how to contact NCES staff | 26 | — | 4 | 30 | 23 | 18 | — | — |
| Don't know how to contact Education Publications Center (ED Pubs) | 29 | — | 10 | 30 | 28 | 18 | — | — |
| Don't know how to access the NCES Web Site | 24 | — | 15 | 29 | 19 | 9 | — | — |
| Don't have computer technology or technical knowledge to use NCES Web Site | 11 | — | 7 | 13 | 8 | 6 | — | — |
| Think NCES Web Site is too difficult to use | 2 | — | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | — | — |

— Too few cases for reliable estimates
NOTE: Respondents could provide multiple responses.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

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# VI. Comparison of 1997 and 1999 Results

*Introduction*

The 1999 customer survey population included the four "core" groups of customers that were surveyed in 1997—federal, state, and local policymakers, and academic researchers. This chapter compares the responses of these core groups of customers for selected questions that were asked in both 1997 and 1999. All satisfaction results reported apply to the percentage of users who were *satisfied or very satisfied* with the product or service in question. All relevant percentages from the two years are included in the tables. However, only differences that are statistically significant are discussed in the text. Differences have been tested for significance at the .05 level (using Bonferroni adjustment for testing large numbers of differences, see appendix B). Differences that are not discussed are not significant, even though the tables might show small increases or decreases in satisfaction from 1997 to 1999. In accord with NCES statistical policy, the tables do not include data from questions that were asked, but were not answered by at least 30 respondents.

*Customer use of NCES publications*

In both 1997 and 1999, similar percentages[8] of respondents (44 and 45 percent, respectively) reported using NCES publications (see figure 21). While the overall percentages were the same in both years, the percentages of publication users *increased* among federal policymakers from 72 percent in 1997 to 82 percent in 1999 and *decreased* among local policymakers from 43 percent in 1997 to 38 percent in 1999.

**Figure 21.—Use of NCES publications, by customer group: 1997 and 1999**
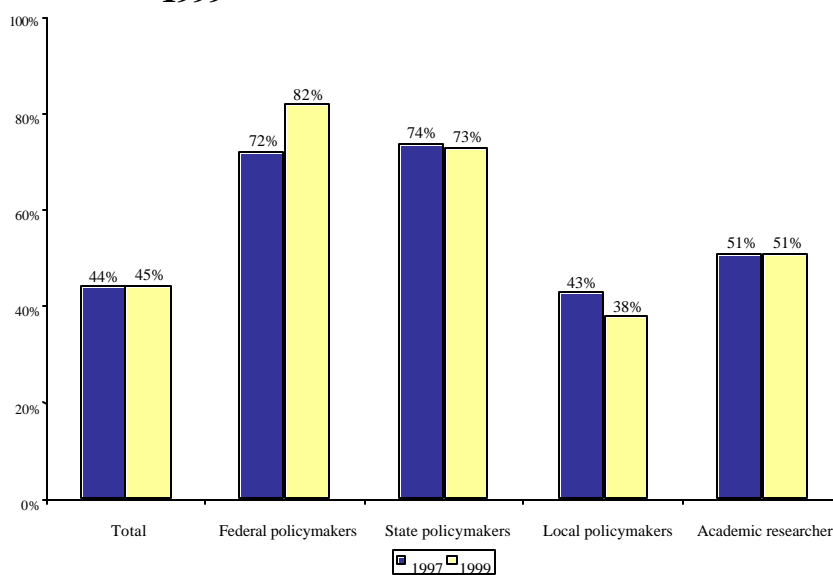


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1997 and 1999 Customer Satisfaction Surveys.

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[8] The term "similar" is used when two percentages are not significantly different at the 0.05 level.

*Customer satisfaction with NCES statistical compendia*

Users were highly satisfied with NCES statistical compendia in both 1997 and 1999 (see figure 22). In both years at least 90 percent were either very satisfied or satisfied with two NCES compendia, the *Condition of Education* and the *Digest of Education Statistics*, and at least 86 percent were very satisfied or satisfied with the *Projections of Education Statistics*.

**Figure 22.—Percentage of users *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with NCES statistical compendia: 1997 and 1999**



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1997 and 1999 Customer Satisfaction Surveys.

Only one of four core groups of customers reported a change in their level of satisfaction with one of the NCES compendium publications between 1997 and 1999. State policymakers reported a *decrease* in satisfaction with *Digest of Education Statistics* from 97 percent in 1997 to 92 percent in 1999 (see table 19).

**Table 19.—Percentage of users *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with NCES compendium publications, by core customer group: 1997 and 1999**

| Core customer group and compendium publication | Percent of users Satisfied/very satisfied 1997 | Percent of users satisfied/very satisfied 1999 |
|---|---|---|
| **Federal policymakers** | | |
| *Condition of Education* | 98 | 92 |
| *Digest of Education Statistics* | 94 | 95 |
| *Projections of Education Statistics* | 89 | 83 |
| **State policymakers** | | |
| *Condition of Education* | 94 | 91 |
| *Digest of Education Statistics* | 97 | 92 |
| *Projections of Education Statistics* | 90 | 90 |
| **Local policymakers** | | |
| *Condition of Education* | 91 | 91 |
| *Digest of Education Statistics* | 89 | 92 |
| *Projections of Education Statistics* | 86 | 88 |
| **Academic researchers** | | |
| *Condition of Education* | 94 | 94 |
| *Digest of Education Statistics* | 95 | 94 |
| *Projections of Education Statistics* | 91 | 88 |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1997 and 1999 Customer Satisfaction Surveys.

*Customer satisfaction with program-specific NCES publications*

Overall, similar percentages of customers reported being very satisfied or satisfied in both 1997 and 1999 with NCES publications related to all but one of the program areas (see figure 23). Customer satisfaction with publications in the national longitudinal studies area showed an *increase* from 81 percent in 1997 to 89 percent in 1999.

**Figure 23.—Percentage of users *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with NCES publications in certain program areas: 1997 and 1999**
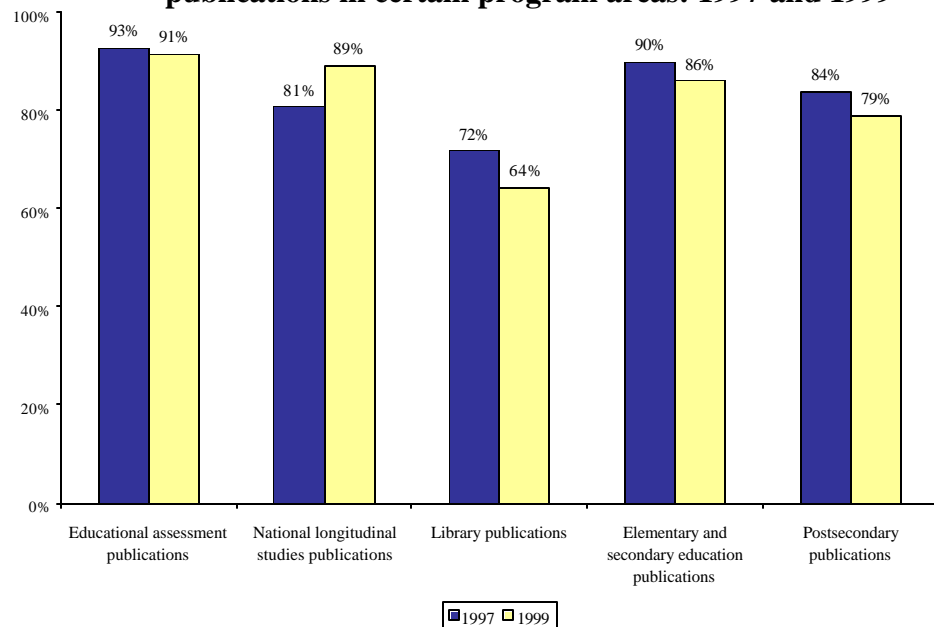


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1997 and 1999 Customer Satisfaction Surveys.

In addition, two of the four core customer groups reported changes in their levels of satisfaction with publications in some of the program areas between 1997 and 1999 (see table 20).

State policymakers reported an *increased* level of satisfaction between 1997 and 1999 with publications in two program areas, as follows:

- Educational assessment publications (89 percent and 95 percent, respectively)
- Elementary and secondary education publications (89 percent and 95 percent, respectively)

Academic researchers reported a *decreased* level of satisfaction between 1997 and 1999 with publications in two program areas, as follows:

- Elementary and secondary education publications (92 percent and 86 percent, respectively)
- Postsecondary education publications (92 percent and 79 percent, respectively)

**Table 20.—Percentage of users *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with NCES publications, by core customer group and program area: 1997 and 1999**

| Core customer group and program area | Percent of users satisfied/very satisfied 1997 | Percent of users satisfied/very satisfied 1999 |
|---|---|---|
| **Federal policymakers** | | |
| Educational assessments | 95 | 96 |
| National longitudinal surveys | — | 92 |
| Library surveys | — | — |
| Elementary and secondary surveys | 94 | 95 |
| Postsecondary surveys | 88 | 95 |
| **State policymakers** | | |
| Educational assessments | 89 | 95 |
| National longitudinal surveys | 86 | 87 |
| Library surveys | 81 | 87 |
| Elementary and secondary surveys | 89 | 95 |
| Postsecondary surveys | 88 | 86 |
| **Local policymakers** | | |
| Educational assessments | 93 | 96 |
| National longitudinal surveys | 80 | 88 |
| Library surveys | 72 | 69 |
| Elementary and secondary surveys | 90 | 86 |
| Postsecondary surveys | 82 | 77 |
| **Academic researchers** | | |
| Educational assessments | 92 | 88 |
| National longitudinal surveys | 90 | 90 |
| Library surveys | 61 | — |
| Elementary and secondary surveys | 92 | 86 |
| Postsecondary surveys | 92 | 79 |

— Too few cases for reliable estimate
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1997 and 1999 Customer Satisfaction Surveys.

Overall, similar percentages of customers reported being very satisfied or satisfied in both 1997 and 1999 with all but one of the six aspects of NCES publications (see figure 24). Customer satisfaction with timeliness of NCES publications showed an *increase* from 72 percent in 1997 to 78 percent in 1999.

**Figure 24.—Percentage of users *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with aspects of NCES publications: 1997 and 1999**
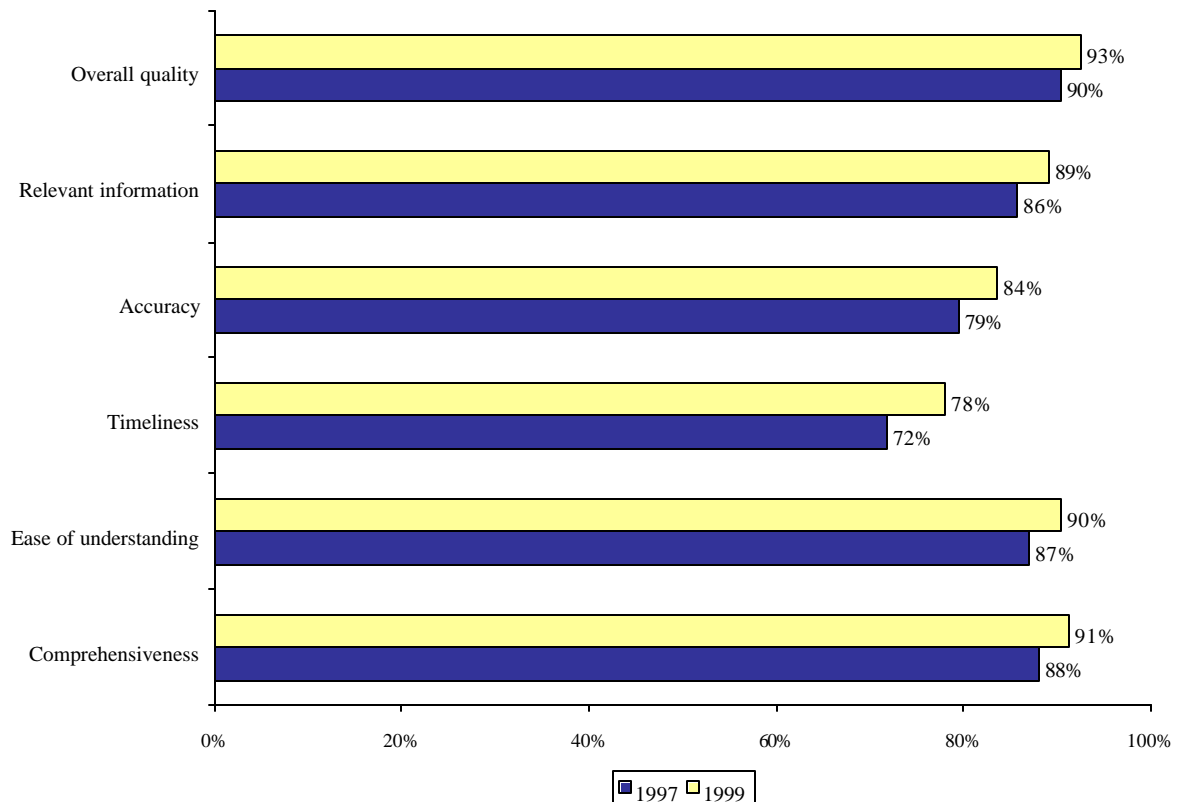


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1997 and 1999 Customer Satisfaction Surveys.

In addition, three of the four core customer groups reported changes in their levels of satisfaction with some of the aspects of publications between 1997 and 1999 (see table 21).

Federal policymakers reported a *decreased* level of satisfaction with timeliness of NCES publications between 1997 and 1999 (72 percent and 61 percent, respectively) and an *increased* level of satisfaction with the overall quality of NCES publications between 1997 and 1999 (93 percent and 100 percent, respectively).

State policymakers reported an *increased* level of satisfaction with the comprehensiveness of NCES publications between 1997 and 1999 (91 percent and 96 percent, respectively).

Local policymakers reported an *increased* level of satisfaction with the timeliness of NCES publications (72 percent and 80 percent, respectively) and with the relevant information in NCES publications (85 percent and 91 percent, respectively) between 1997 and 1999.

**Table 21.—Percentage of users *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with specific aspects of NCES publications, by core customer group: 1997 and 1999**

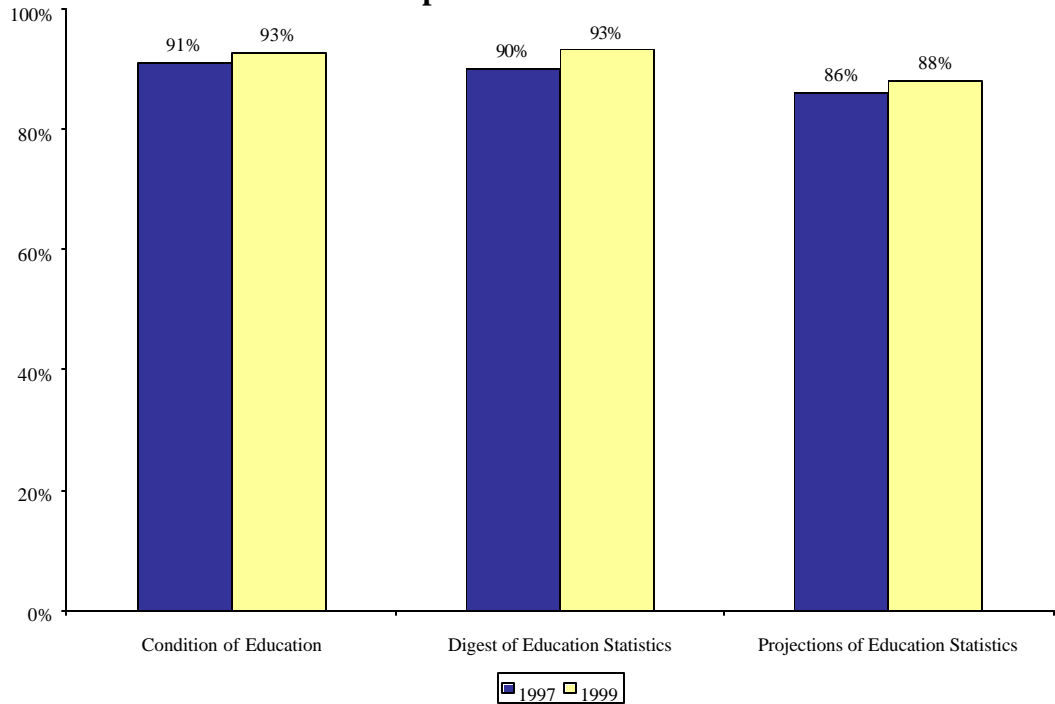| Core customer group and aspect | Percent of users satisfied/very satisfied 1997 | Percent of users satisfied/very satisfied 1999 |
|---|---|---|
| **Federal policymakers** | | |
| Overall quality of publications | 93 | 100 |
| Relevant information | 90 | 87 |
| Accuracy | 90 | 92 |
| Timeliness (up-to-date information) | 72 | 61 |
| Ease of understanding | 89 | 95 |
| Comprehensiveness | 88 | 92 |
| **State policymakers** | | |
| Overall quality of publications | 96 | 98 |
| Relevant information | 94 | 93 |
| Accuracy | 89 | 89 |
| Timeliness (up-to-date information) | 49 | 54 |
| Ease of understanding | 91 | 93 |
| Comprehensiveness | 91 | 96 |
| **Local policymakers** | | |
| Overall quality of publications | 90 | 93 |
| Relevant information | 85 | 91 |
| Accuracy | 79 | 85 |
| Timeliness (up-to-date information) | 72 | 80 |
| Ease of understanding | 87 | 88 |
| Comprehensiveness | 88 | 90 |
| **Academic researchers** | | |
| Overall quality of publications | 94 | 92 |
| Relevant information | 91 | 88 |
| Accuracy | 84 | 82 |
| Timeliness (up-to-date information) | 79 | 78 |
| Ease of understanding | 90 | 92 |
| Comprehensiveness | 91 | 92 |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1997 and 1999 Customer Satisfaction Surveys.

*Customer satisfaction with NCES databases*

Overall, similar percentages of customers reported being very satisfied or satisfied in both 1997 and 1999 with all 13 NCES databases that were asked about in both years (see figure 25; for full names of survey databases, see list of acronyms on page xi).

**Figure 25.—Percentage of users *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with NCES databases: 1997 and 1999**
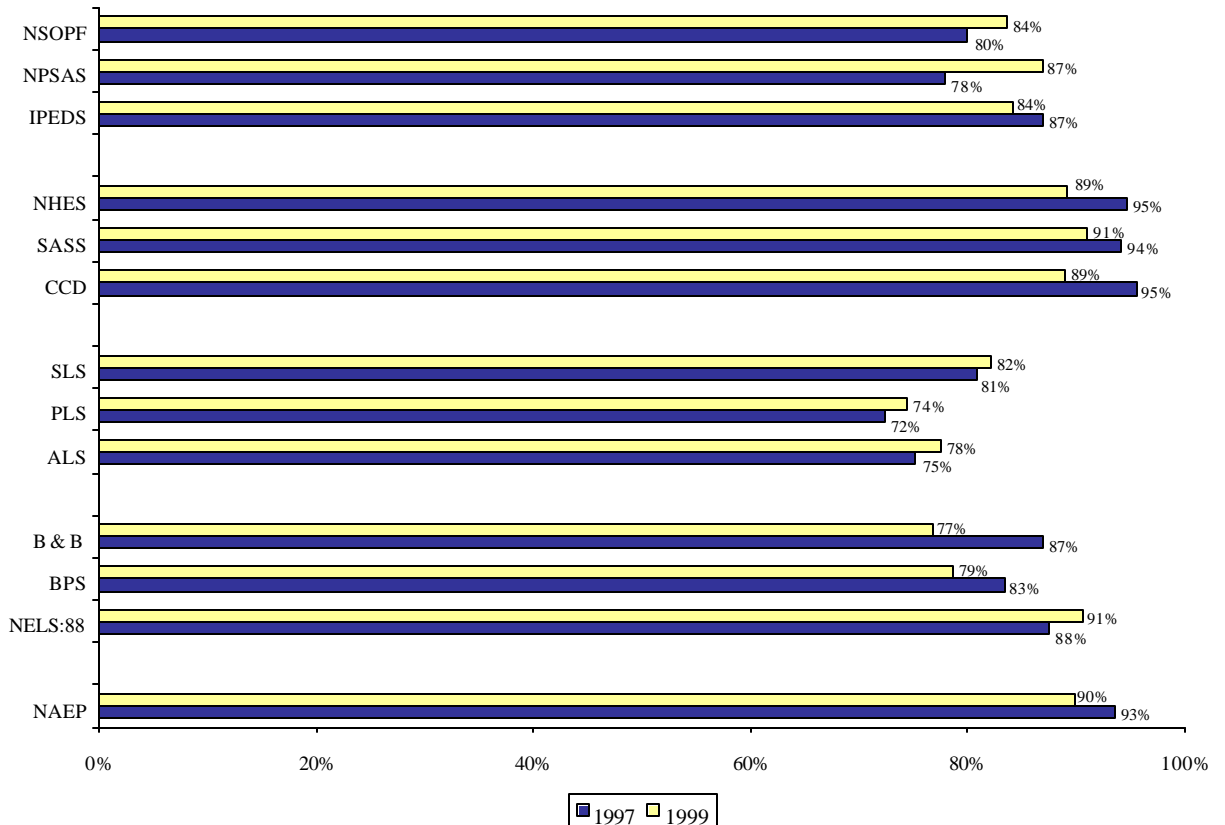


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1997 and 1999 Customer Satisfaction Surveys.

*Customer satisfaction with aspects of NCES databases*

Overall, similar percentages of customers reported being very satisfied or satisfied in both 1997 and 1999 with all but two of the six aspects of NCES databases (see figure 26). The questions being compared are similar but could have prompted different responses. The 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey asked, "OVERALL, how satisfied were you with the following ASPECTS of the DATABASES AND USER TOOLS [you have used in the past 2 years]?" while the 1997 Survey asked, "Overall, how satisfied were you with the following aspects of the NCES ELECTRONIC DATA FILES that you have used?" It could be argued that cases where more use is reported in 1999 represent a definite increase, but cases where the estimates remain the same or decline could be true patterns, or increases, or decreases. Only increases are reported here, and as with all of the differences discussed in the report, these increases tested

as significant at the .05 level of significance. Customer satisfaction with ease of access of NCES databases showed an *increase* from 55 percent in 1997 to 73 percent in 1999. Also, customer satisfaction with timeliness of NCES databases showed an *increase* from 52 percent in 1997 to 67 percent in 1999.

**Figure 26.—Percentage of users *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with aspects of NCES databases: 1997 and 1999**



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1997 and 1999 Customer Satisfaction Surveys.

In addition, two of the four core customer groups reported changes in their levels of satisfaction with some of the aspects of databases between 1997 and 1999 (see table 22).

State policymakers reported an *increased* level of satisfaction with the ease of access of NCES databases between 1997 and 1999 (55 percent and 76 percent, respectively).

Local policymakers reported an increased level of satisfaction with the ease of access of NCES databases (54 percent and 73 percent, respectively) and with the timeliness of NCES databases (50 percent and 69 percent, respectively—see table 22) between 1997 and 1999.

**Table 22.—Percentage of users *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with specific aspects of NCES databases, by core customer group: 1997 and 1999**

| Core customer group and aspect | Percent of users satisfied/very satisfied 1997 | Percent of users satisfied/very satisfied 1999 |
|---|---|---|
| **Federal policymakers** | | |
| Timeliness of database release | — | 52 |
| Accuracy of database | — | 81 |
| Database documentation | — | 65 |
| Ease of access | — | 80 |
| Ease of use | — | 73 |
| Comprehensiveness of database | — | 88 |
| **State policymakers** | | |
| Timeliness of database release | 50 | 51 |
| Accuracy of database | 81 | 85 |
| Database documentation | 82 | 77 |
| Ease of access | 55 | 76 |
| Ease of use | 69 | 70 |
| Comprehensiveness of database | 89 | 90 |
| **Local policymakers** | | |
| Timeliness of database release | 50 | 69 |
| Accuracy of database | 71 | 80 |
| Database documentation | 68 | 76 |
| Ease of access | 54 | 73 |
| Ease of use | 69 | 77 |
| Comprehensiveness of database | 79 | 85 |
| **Academic researchers** | | |
| Timeliness of database release | 66 | 68 |
| Accuracy of database | 91 | 83 |
| Database documentation | 71 | 76 |
| Ease of access | 64 | 73 |
| Ease of use | 75 | 75 |
| Comprehensiveness of database | 93 | 88 |

— Too few cases for reliable estimate
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1997 and 1999 Customer Satisfaction Surveys.

*Customer awareness of how to contact NCES*

Overall, the percentage of customers aware of how to contact NCES *increased* from 34 percent in 1997 to 47 percent in 1999 (see figure 27). Also, the percentages of customers aware of how to contact NCES *increased* among state policymakers from 69 percent in 1997 to 77 percent in 1999 and among local policymakers from 32 percent in 1997 to 44 percent in 1999.

**Figure 27.—Awareness of how to contact NCES, by customer group: 1997 and 1999**
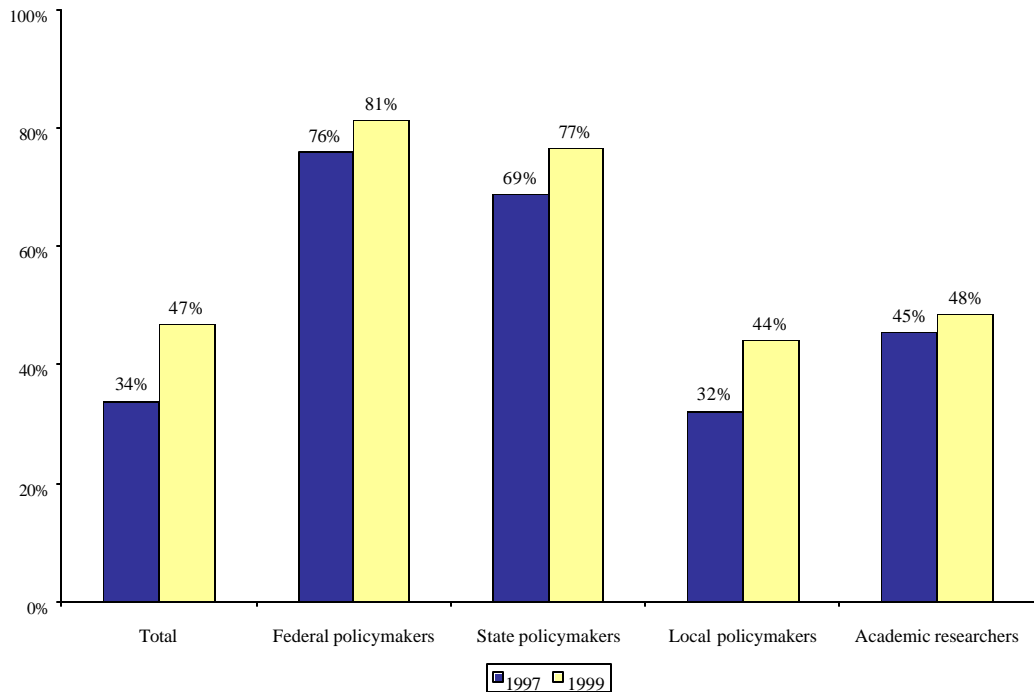


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1997 and 1999 Customer Satisfaction Surveys.

*Customer satisfaction with selected NCES services*

Overall, *similar* percentages of customers among those who used

- the National Education Data Resource Center (NEDRC),
- the Department of Education's toll-free number, and
- the NCES Web Site

reported being very satisfied or satisfied in both 1997 and 1999 (see figure 28).

**Figure 28.—Percentage of users *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with selected NCES services: 1997 and 1999**
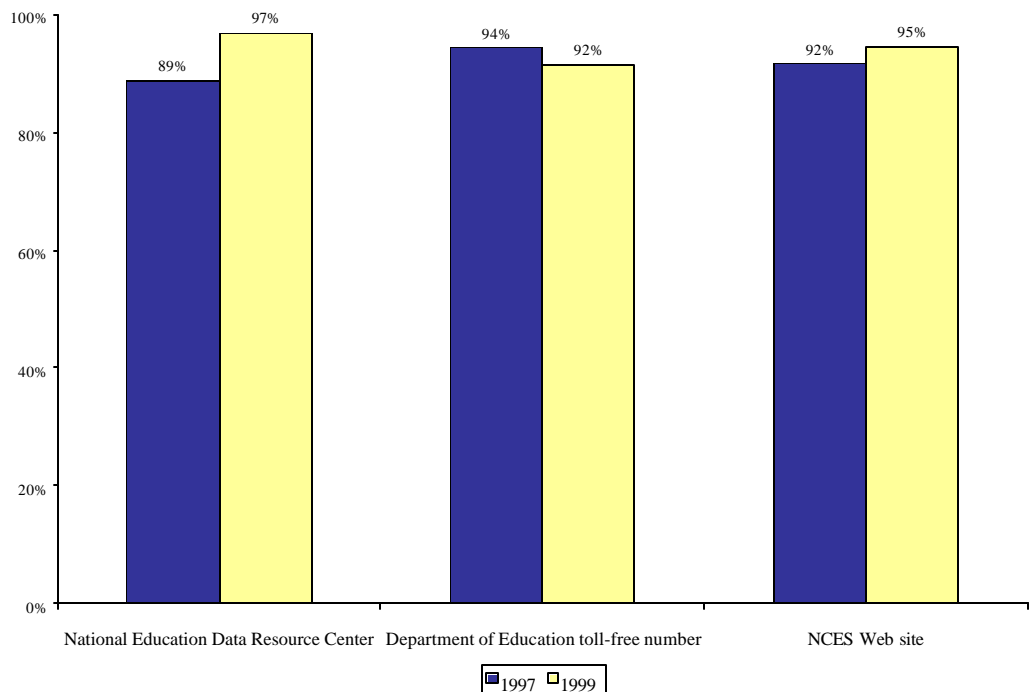


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1997 and 1999 Customer Satisfaction Surveys.

*Customer satisfaction with aspects of NCES services*

Overall, similar percentages of customers reported being very satisfied or satisfied in both 1997 and 1999 for the following four aspects of NCES services (see figure 29):

- Extent to which the information met your needs
- Staff expertise
- Time needed to reach knowledgeable staff
- Courtesy of staff

Customer satisfaction with the speed with which information was received from NCES showed an *increase* from 89 percent in 1997 to 93 percent in 1999.

However, the level of customer satisfaction *decreased* between 1997 and 1999 for the following two aspects of NCES services:

- Ease of obtaining information (92 percent and 87 percent, respectively)
- Handling of complaints (75 percent and 60 percent, respectively)

**Figure 29.—Percentage of users *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with aspects of NCES services: 1997 and 1999**
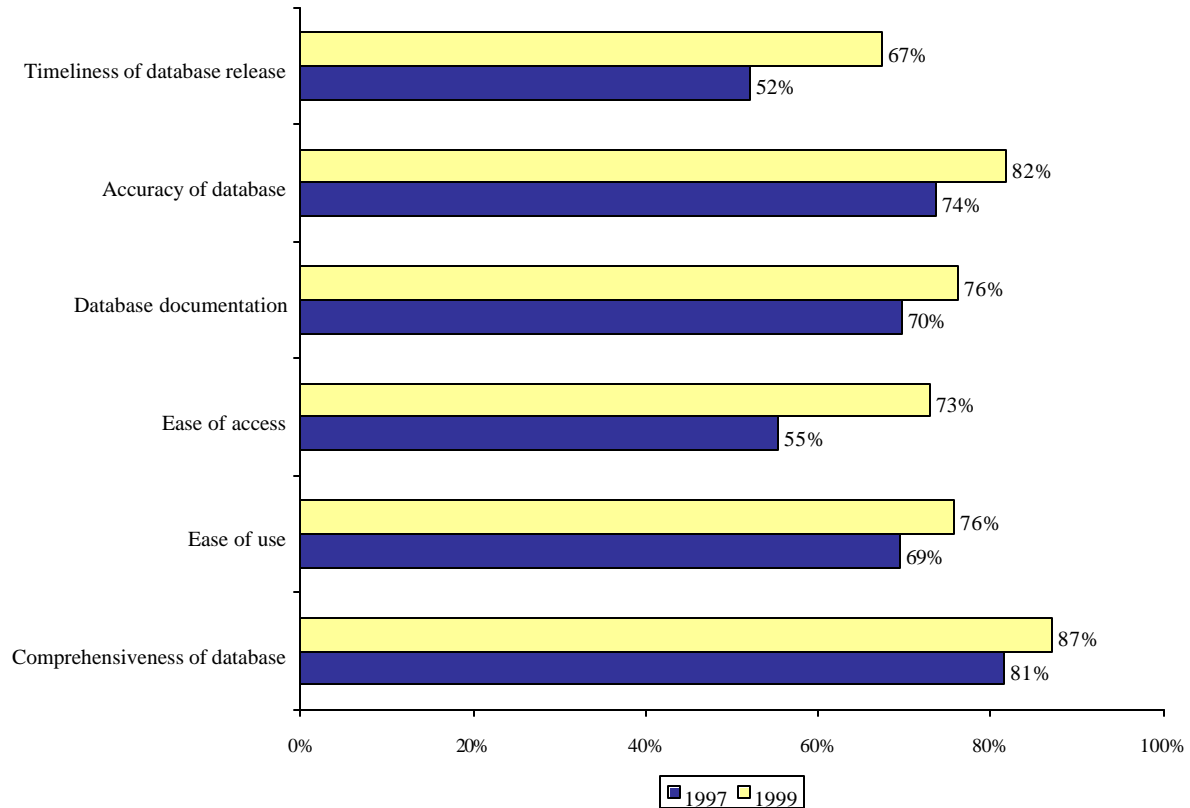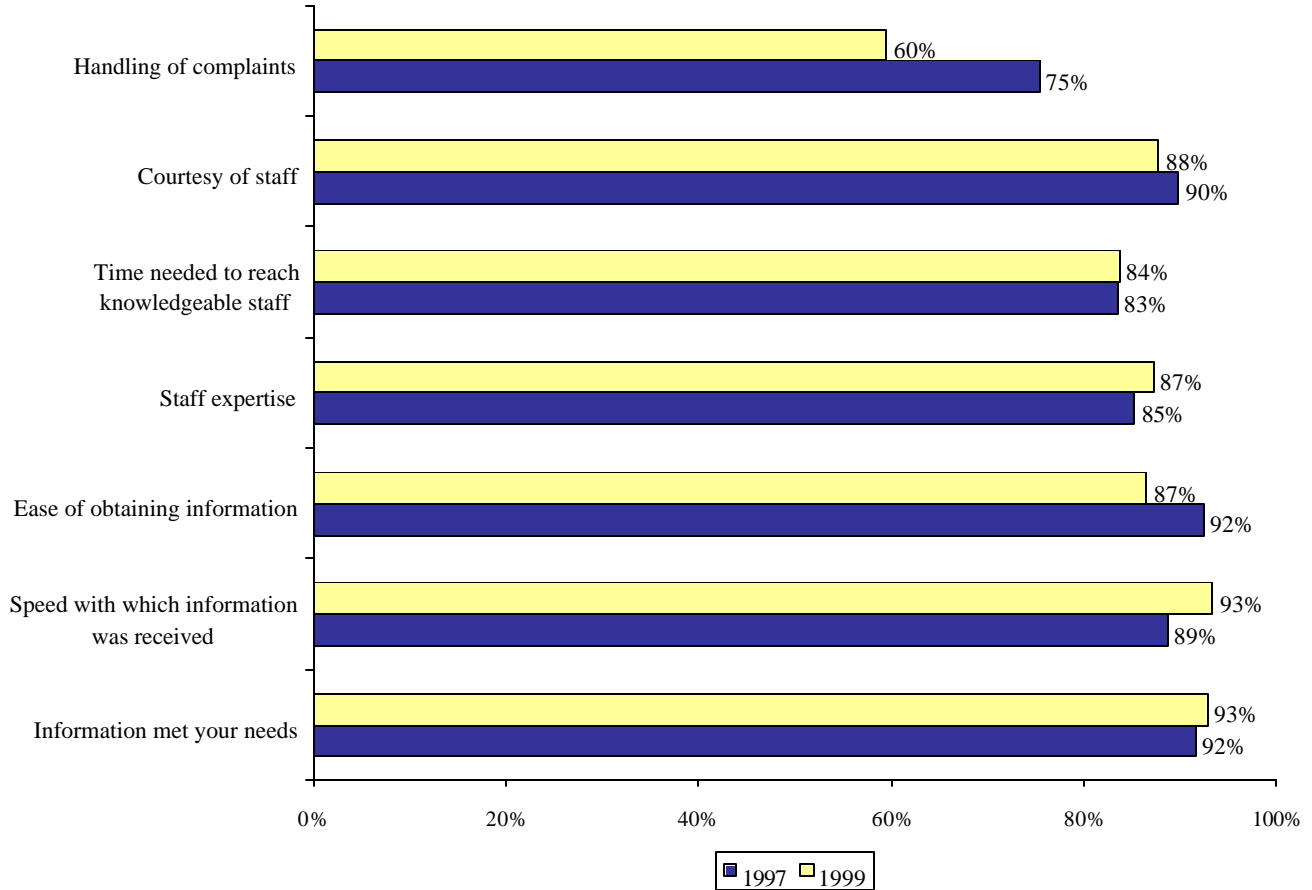


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1997 and 1999 Customer Satisfaction Surveys.

In addition, two of the four core customer groups reported a change in their level of satisfaction for some of the aspects of NCES services (see table 23). Local policymakers reported an *increased* level of satisfaction with the speed with which NCES information was received (89 percent and 94 percent, respectively) between 1997 and 1999. Academic researchers reported a *decreased level* of satisfaction with handling of complaints (68 percent and 40 percent, respectively) between 1997 and 1999.

**Table 23.—Percentage of users *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with specific aspects of NCES services, by core customer group: 1997 and 1999**

| Core customer group and aspect | Percent of users satisfied/very satisfied 1997 | Percent of users satisfied/very satisfied 1999 |
|---|---|---|
| **Federal policymakers** | | |
| Handling of complaints | — | — |
| Courtesy of staff | 95 | 95 |
| Time needed to reach knowledgeable staff | 87 | 86 |
| Staff expertise | 92 | 94 |
| Ease of obtaining information | 86 | 88 |
| Speed with which information was received | 91 | 88 |
| Information met your needs | 95 | 93 |
| **State policymakers** | | |
| Handling of complaints | 81 | 71 |
| Courtesy of staff | 95 | 92 |
| Time needed to reach knowledgeable staff | 84 | 84 |
| Staff expertise | 92 | 94 |
| Ease of obtaining information | 87 | 84 |
| Speed with which information was received | 82 | 87 |
| Information met your needs | 94 | 94 |
| **Local policymakers** | | |
| Handling of complaints | 75 | 78 |
| Courtesy of staff | 90 | 89 |
| Time needed to reach knowledgeable staff | 84 | 84 |
| Staff expertise | 85 | 91 |
| Ease of obtaining information | 93 | 87 |
| Speed with which information was received | 89 | 94 |
| Information met your needs | 91 | 94 |
| **Academic researchers** | | |
| Handling of complaints | 68 | 40 |
| Courtesy of staff | 85 | 86 |
| Time needed to reach knowledgeable staff | 77 | 83 |
| Staff expertise | 82 | 84 |
| Ease of obtaining information | 89 | 86 |
| Speed with which information was received | 90 | 93 |
| Information met your needs | 93 | 92 |

— Too few cases for reliable estimate
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1997 and 1999 Customer Satisfaction Surveys.

*NCES strategies for improvement between 1997 and 1999*

The increases in satisfaction with various aspects of NCES publications, databases, and services between 1997 and 1999 might be a result of steps taken by NCES. The following are some examples of actions, related to specific data programs, to address areas that needed to be improved as indicated by the 1997 customer survey results.

- *Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)*

To improve the timeliness of IPEDS data, NCES redesigned forms, converted to a web-based system, and maintained its goal of releasing data within 6 months. To increase the timeliness of reports, NCES streamlined its review process and engaged an outside contractor to perform additional review. To improve data quality, IPEDS incorporated automated data edits within the data-collection web survey, conducted re-interviews within collection system field tests, and incorporated improved quality control systems within all data collection activities.

- *National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)*

NCES established a regular schedule so that users would know when various subjects would be evaluated. The principal NAEP reports were shortened so that they could be released more quickly after the data were collected. NCES conducted a program-specific customer survey and consulted users through state assessment directors and other groups. As a result of this focussed survey, NAEP state reports were streamlined and topical reports have been instituted on the subjects of highest interest. Since the 1997 survey indicated a rapid growth of web access, NAEP developed a web site with pages for specific groups such as teachers and administrators. In response to a finding in the 1997 survey that customers had difficulty using NAEP electronic files, NAEP developed a data tool kit and has conducted training seminars for NAEP database users.

- *Common Core of Data (CCD)*

Between release of the 1995–96 data and the 1998–99 data, the period between completion of data collection and release of district and school data was reduced from 17 to 9 months. The CCD program formed technical review panels of data users to advise on the usefulness and quality of the information. Several panels are held every year. Each brings together managers of state and local education agency data systems to discuss issues of data quality and comparability in a selected topic. Topics in 2000 included how states were interpreting the CCD high school completer categories; what states and NCES could do to improve the timeliness and quality of CCD data; and how NCES could take better advantage of Web-based data collection technologies. Outcomes have led to changes in CCD editing and collection procedures and guidance to state CCD coordinators.

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# VII. Conclusions

As indicated earlier, the 1999 survey had four primary purposes:

- To assess customers' level of use of NCES products and services
- To assess current users' satisfaction with NCES products and services
- To track how well NCES is doing according to the performance targets it has established under GPRA
- To identify areas for improvement in customer satisfaction

The following conclusions are organized by NCES' performance objectives, using levels of customer satisfaction as indicators of how NCES is doing according to their performance targets. A final section summarizes areas for improvement.

***Objective 1:***   *Provide timely, useful, and comprehensive data that are relevant to policy and educational improvement.*

**Indicator and Target:**
At least 85 percent of surveyed customers in fiscal year (FY) 1999 and 90 percent in FY 2001 will agree that NCES data are timely, relevant, and comprehensive.

Data from the 1999 customer survey indicate that most responding customers were either satisfied or very satisfied with the timeliness, relevance, and comprehensiveness of NCES products and services (table 24). The Center indicator of "at least 85 percent" was reflected by respondents' satisfaction with timeliness of services (93 percent), relevance of services (93 percent), comprehensiveness of publications (91 percent), relevance of publications (89 percent), and comprehensiveness of databases (87 percent). However, notably fewer respondents were satisfied with the timeliness of databases (67 percent) and timeliness of publications (77 percent).

**Table 24.—Percentage of users *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with timeliness, relevance, and comprehensiveness of NCES publications, databases, and services**

|  | Timeliness | Relevance | Comprehensiveness |
|---|---|---|---|
| Publications | 77 | 89 | 91 |
| Databases and User Tools | 67 | -- | 87 |
| Services | 93 | 93[1] | -- |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.
[1]The aspect measured was "extent to which information met needs"

***Objective 2:***       *Collect high quality data.*

**Indicator and Target:**
At least 85 percent of surveyed customers in FY 1999 and 90 percent in FY 2001 will agree that NCES data are of high quality.

Data from the 1999 customer survey indicate that, of responding customers, most were either satisfied or very satisfied with the aspects of quality of NCES data (table 25). The Center indicator of "at least 85 percent" was reflected by respondents' satisfaction with overall quality of databases (87 percent). However, not as many respondents were satisfied with database documentation (77 percent) and the accuracy of databases (82 percent).

**Table 25.—Percentage of users *very satisfied or satisfied* with quality of NCES databases/user tools**

| Aspect of quality | Very satisfied/satisfied |
|---|---|
| Database documentation | 77 |
| Accuracy of databases | 82 |
| Overall quality of databases | 87 |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

***Objective 3:***       *Develop publications that are easy to read, useful, and of high overall quality.*

**Indicators and Targets:**
a.  At least 85 percent of surveyed customers in FY 1999 and 90 percent in FY 2001 will agree that NCES publications are easy to read.
b.  At least 85 percent of surveyed customers in FY 1999 and 90 percent in FY 2001 will rate NCES publications as useful in their work.
c.  At least 85 percent of surveyed customers in FY 1999 and 90 percent in FY 2001 will express satisfaction with the overall quality of NCES publications.

Data from the 1999 customer survey indicate that, of responding customers, most were either satisfied or very satisfied with the above aspects of NCES publications (table 26). The Center indicator of "at least 85 percent" was reflected by respondents' satisfaction with all three aspects of publications:

- Ease of understanding (90 percent)
- Relevant information (89 percent)
- Overall quality (93 percent)

**Table 26.—Percentage of users *very satisfied or satisfied* with ease of understanding, relevance, and overall quality of NCES publications**

| Aspect of publications | Very satisfied/satisfied |
|---|---|
| Ease of understanding | 90 |
| Relevance | 89 |
| Overall quality | 93 |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

*Areas for improvement*

**Need for enhanced NCES outreach:** Many NCES customers were not aware of the broad range of products and services available to them. For example, at least 58 percent of the customers reported not being aware of any of the NCES databases or user tools identified by the survey. In addition, at least 54 percent of the customers reported that they were not aware of any of the 15 NCES services listed in the survey. Thus, although most customers who used NCES databases and services were satisfied or very satisfied, more customers need to be aware of the availability of the broad range of NCES products and services.

Increased awareness among customers is likely to increase the use of NCES products and services. For example, although only 45 percent of all customers surveyed used NCES publications, 66 percent of customers that were aware of NCES publications used them. Similarly, although only 22 percent of all customers surveyed used NCES services, 47 percent of customers that were aware of NCES services used them. Clearly, the implication for NCES is that increased outreach is especially important.

**Need for better understanding of local policymaker needs:** Local policymakers are especially important to the NCES mission because of their potential effect on the "condition and progress of education." However, in comparison to other customer groups surveyed, local policymakers were the least aware of NCES (only 53 percent had heard of NCES and knew it was part of the U.S. Department of Education), made the least use of NCES products and services (38 percent used NCES publications, 10 percent used NCES databases and user tools, and 15 percent used NCES services), and were the least aware of how to contact NCES (44 percent). Also, local policymakers' use of NCES publications declined from 43 percent in 1997 to 38 percent in 1999.

The implication for NCES is that it needs to better understand its information needs and then not only develop appropriate outreach and dissemination strategies tailored to these needs, but also develop more appropriate products.

**Need to better understand the reason for low satisfaction or decline in satisfaction with particular publications:** Above or near 80 percent of customers reported being satisfied or very satisfied with most of the survey-specific publications. However, there were a few exceptions where users reported comparatively lower levels of satisfaction:

- Academic Library Survey (ALS) publications (75 percent)
- National Household Educational Survey (NHES) publications (74 percent)
- International Adult Literacy Survey publications (72 percent)
- Postsecondary Education Quick Response (PEQIS) publications (70 percent)
- Public Library Survey (PLS) publications (70 percent)

Although overall satisfaction with one of NCES' flagship publications, *Digest of Education Statistics,* remained high, both overall and among three of the core groups that were queried in both 1997 and 1999, among state policymakers it declined from 97 percent in 1997 to 92 percent in 1999.

Also, satisfaction with publications in the elementary/secondary and postsecondary program areas declined among academic researchers between 1997 and 1999:

- Elementary and secondary education publications (92 percent in 1997 and 86 percent in 1999)
- Postsecondary education publications (92 percent in 1997 and 79 percent in 1999*)*

The implication for NCES is that it needs to better understand the reasons why there are low levels of satisfaction with some of their publications and why there has been a decline in satisfaction with some publications among state policymakers and academic researchers.

**Need to continue working on improving accuracy and timeliness of publications:** NCES customers considered accuracy to be the most important aspect of NCES publications, but lower proportions of customers were satisfied with that aspect than with some other aspects.

Also, although satisfaction with the timeliness of NCES publications increased from 1997 to 1999, publication users were still less satisfied with the timeliness of these publications than they were with all other aspects except accuracy.

The implication for NCES is that it needs to continue taking steps to improve timeliness without affecting the accuracy of its publications.

**Need to continue working on timeliness ease of use, and ease of access of databases and user tools:** Respondents indicated a relatively low level of satisfaction with the aspects of timeliness and ease of use of NCES databases and user tools (67 percent and 75 percent, respectively). Although satisfaction with the ease of access of NCES databases increased from 55 percent in 1997 to 73 percent in 1999, this rating is still relatively low.

The implication for NCES is that it needs to understand the reasons that customers have indicated relatively low satisfaction ratings with particular aspects of databases and user tools, in order to take steps to improve customers' satisfaction with its databases and user tools.

**Need to improve process of handling complaints:** Although satisfaction levels with NCES services were generally high, handling of customer complaints was a notable exception. Nearly a third of NCES' customers were dissatisfied with NCES in this respect.

The implication for NCES is that it needs to examine the process for handling complaints and modify it to improve customer satisfaction.

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# Appendix A: 1999 NCES Customer Satisfaction Survey Mail Questionnaire

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# NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

# 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey

# How Do We Measure Up?

## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## INSTRUCTIONS

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this important survey. Directions are provided for each question. Because not all questions apply to everyone, you may be asked to skip certain questions.**

- Please use a blue or black ink pen to complete the survey.

- When answering questions that require marking a box, please use an "X."

- If you need to change an answer, please make sure that your old answer is clearly crossed out.

- EXAMPLES of NCES PUBLICATIONS are provided in a supplement for your reference as you answer the questions in Section A.

- When you have finished the survey, please return it in the enclosed envelope or, if you wish, fax it to (703) 812-9723, attn: Lori Thurgood.

- If you have any questions about the survey, please contact Lori Thurgood at (703) 807-2311 or by e-mail at LoriT@smdi.com.

**Thanks again for your help. We would really appreciate your response within 5 business days.**

## QUESTIONS ABOUT AWARENESS OF NCES AND NCES PUBLICATIONS

We would like to ask some questions about your awareness of NCES and your use of **NCES PUBLICATIONS** (bound or on the Internet). Please note that **use** means any level of use, ranging from light use (skimming a report, extracting a few numbers for a speech, etc.) to heavy use (reading a full report, extracting large amounts of data for further study, etc.).

*In Section A, please consider only your use of NCES PUBLICATIONS. We will ask you questions about NCES databases in Section B.*

**A1.** **Before this survey, had you heard of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)?**
1 ❑ Yes ⟶ Go to Question A2
2 ❑ No ⟶ Skip to Question A3

**A2.** **Before this survey, were you aware that NCES is a part of the U.S. Department of Education?**
1 ❑ Yes
2 ❑ No

**A3.** **Have you used any NCES PUBLICATIONS (bound or on the Internet) in the past 2 years?** *(See SUPPLEMENT for examples of NCES publications)*
1 ❑ Yes ⟶ Go to Question A4
2 ❑ No, but aware of NCES publications ⟶ Skip to Question A11, page 6
3 ❑ No, not aware of NCES publications ⟶ Skip to Section B, page 7

**A4.** **Which forms of NCES PUBLICATIONS have you used in the past 2 years?** *(Please select only one response)*
1 ❑ Used bound publications only
2 ❑ Used Internet publications only
3 ❑ Used bound publications more than Internet publications
4 ❑ Used Internet publications more than bound publications
5 ❑ Used bound publications and Internet publications about the same

**A5.** **How frequently have you used NCES PUBLICATIONS (bound or on the Internet) in the past 2 years?**
1 ❑ Daily
2 ❑ Weekly
3 ❑ Monthly
4 ❑ Occasionally

**A6.** **We are interested in your use of NCES COMPENDIUM PUBLICATIONS. For each PUBLICATION (bound or on the Internet) that you have used in the past 2 years, please indicate how satisfied you were with it. If you have not used the PUBLICATION in the past 2 years, please indicate that.**

| | Didn't Use | Very Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Satisfied | Very Satisfied | Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. *The Condition of Education* . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |
| b. *Digest of Education Statistics* . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |
| c. *Projections of Education Statistics* . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |

COMMENTS ON NCES COMPENDIUM PUBLICATIONS

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_____

_____

**A7.** We are also interested in your use of NCES PUBLICATIONS in specific program areas. If, in the past 2 years, you have used any NCES PUBLICATIONS (bound or on the Internet) for any survey listed below, please indicate how satisfied you were with those PUBLICATIONS. If you have not used any PUBLICATIONS for a survey in the past 2 years, please indicate that. *(See SUPPLEMENT for examples of NCES publications in each program area)*

| a. EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT PUBLICATIONS | Didn't Use | Very Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Satisfied | Very Satisfied | Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |
| (2) National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |
| (3) International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |
| (4) IEA Reading Literacy Study | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |
| (5) Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |
| (6) Overall satisfaction with educational assessment publications | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |

COMMENTS ON EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT PUBLICATIONS

_____

_____

_____

| b. NATIONAL LONGITUDINAL STUDIES PUBLICATIONS | Didn't Use | Very Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Satisfied | Very Satisfied | Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) High School and Beyond (HS&B) | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |
| (2) National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88) | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |
| (3) Beginning Postsecondary Students (BPS) Longitudinal Study | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |
| (4) Baccalaureate and Beyond (B&B) Longitudinal Study | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |
| (5) Overall satisfaction with national longitudinal studies publications | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |

COMMENTS ON NATIONAL LONGITUDINAL STUDIES PUBLICATIONS

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| c. LIBRARY PUBLICATIONS | Didn't Use | Very Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Satisfied | Very Satisfied | Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) Academic Library Survey (ALS) - A Component of the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |
| (2) School Library Survey (SLS) - A Component of the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |
| (3) Public Libraries Survey (PLS) | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |
| (4) Overall satisfaction with library publications | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |

COMMENTS ON LIBRARY PUBLICATIONS

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**d. ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION PUBLICATIONS**

| | Didn't Use | Very Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Satisfied | Very Satisfied | Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) Common Core of Data (CCD) | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |
| (2) Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |
| (3) Private School Universe Survey (PSS) | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |
| (4) National Household Education Survey (NHES) | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |
| (5) National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) - School Crime Supplement | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |
| (6) 1994 High School Transcript Study (HSTS) | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |
| (7) Fast Response Survey System (FRSS) | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |
| (8) Overall satisfaction with elementary and secondary education publications | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |

COMMENTS ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION PUBLICATIONS

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**e. POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION PUBLICATIONS**

| | Didn't Use | Very Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Satisfied | Very Satisfied | Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |
| (2) National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS) | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |
| (3) National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF) | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |
| (4) Postsecondary Education Quick Information System (PEQIS) | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |
| (5) National Household Education Survey (NHES) - Adult Components | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |
| (6) Overall satisfaction with postsecondary education publications | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |

COMMENTS ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION PUBLICATIONS

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**A8. Below is a list of PUBLICATION FORMATS used by NCES. For each one (bound or on the Internet) you have used in the past 2 years, please indicate how useful it is to you. If you have not used the PUBLICATION FORMAT in the past 2 years, please indicate that.**

| | Didn't Use | Not Useful | Useful | Very Useful |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. **Issue Briefs**, which are about two pages with a policy focus ........................ | .9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ |

COMMENTS _____

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| | Didn't Use | Not Useful | Useful | Very Useful |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| b. **Topical or Analytic Reports**, which are text with tables ........................... | .9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ |

COMMENTS _____

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| | Didn't Use | Not Useful | Useful | Very Useful |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| c. **Tabular Reports**, which are mostly tables with some text, such as the *Digest of Education Statistics* ........................................ | .9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ |

COMMENTS _____

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| | Didn't Use | Not Useful | Useful | Very Useful |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| d. **Technical or Methodological Reports** ...................................... | .9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ |

COMMENTS _____

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| | Didn't Use | Not Useful | Useful | Very Useful |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| e. **Directories**, such as directories of school districts or postsecondary institutions .......... | .9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ |

COMMENTS _____

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**A9.** Now consider all the NCES PUBLICATIONS (bound or on the Internet) that you have used in the past 2 years. OVERALL, how satisfied were you with the following ASPECTS of the PUBLICATIONS? *(For each aspect, please indicate your level of satisfaction)*

| | Very Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Satisfied | Very Satisfied | Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Comprehensiveness | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ | 3 ❏ | 4 ❏ | 5 ❏ |
| b. Ease of understanding | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ | 3 ❏ | 4 ❏ | 5 ❏ |
| c. Timeliness (up-to-date information) | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ | 3 ❏ | 4 ❏ | 5 ❏ |
| d. Accuracy | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ | 3 ❏ | 4 ❏ | 5 ❏ |
| e. Relevant information | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ | 3 ❏ | 4 ❏ | 5 ❏ |
| f. Overall quality of publications | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ | 3 ❏ | 4 ❏ | 5 ❏ |
| g. Other aspect *(Please specify)* | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ | 3 ❏ | 4 ❏ | 5 ❏ |

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COMMENTS ON ASPECTS OF PUBLICATIONS

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**A10.** Five ASPECTS of PUBLICATIONS are listed below.

1. Comprehensiveness
2. Ease of understanding
3. Timeliness (up-to-date information)
4. Accuracy
5. Relevant information

**Although all of the ASPECTS may be desirable, please indicate which one you consider MOST IMPORTANT, SECOND MOST IMPORTANT, and THIRD MOST IMPORTANT.** *(Please enter the number of the aspect on the appropriate line below)*

a. Most important          _____

b. Second most important          _____

c. Third most important          _____

**SKIP TO SECTION B, PAGE 7**

**A11. Below is a list of reasons why you may NOT have used NCES PUBLICATIONS (bound or on the Internet) in the past 2 years. For each of the following reasons, indicate if it applies to you or not.** *(Please select Yes or No for each reason)*

a. You obtain NCES education information indirectly from other sources . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .**Yes** 1 ❑          **No** 2 ❑

   COMMENTS _____

   _____

   _____

b. You don't need NCES publications in your work . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .**Yes** 1 ❑          **No** 2 ❑

   COMMENTS _____

   _____

   _____

c. You need different levels or types of information than NCES provides . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .**Yes** 1 ❑          **No** 2 ❑

   COMMENTS _____

   _____

   _____

d. You obtain education information from sources other than NCES . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .**Yes** 1 ❑          **No** 2 ❑

   COMMENTS _____

   _____

   _____

e. You don't know how to obtain NCES publications . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .**Yes** 1 ❑          **No** 2 ❑

   COMMENTS _____

   _____

   _____

f. NCES publications are outdated . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .**Yes** 1 ❑          **No** 2 ❑

   COMMENTS _____

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   _____

g. NCES publications are too difficult to use . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .**Yes** 1 ❑          **No** 2 ❑

   COMMENTS _____

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   _____

h. Any other reason? *(Please specify)* . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .**Yes** 1 ❑          **No** 2 ❑

   COMMENTS _____

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   _____

## QUESTIONS ABOUT NCES DATABASES AND USER TOOLS

NCES provides public-use and restricted-use **SURVEY DATABASES** for users who want to conduct their own analyses using software such as SAS, SPSS, Excel, etc. NCES also provides several types of **USER TOOLS** that can be used in conjunction with these databases, such as the Electronic Code Book (ECB), the Data Analysis System (DAS), the Common Core of Data (CCD) CD-ROM user interface, and the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) CD-ROM user interface.

We would like to ask some questions about your use of **NCES DATABASES** and **USER TOOLS**. Please note that **use** means any level of use, ranging from light use (e.g., generating an occasional table) to heavy use (e.g., analyzing large amounts of data for a research project).

**B1. Have you used any NCES DATABASES OR USER TOOLS in the past 2 years?**

1 ❑ Yes ⟶ Go to Question B2

2 ❑ No, but aware of NCES databases and user tools ⟶ Skip to Question B7, page 10

3 ❑ No, not aware of NCES databases and user tools ⟶ Skip to Section C, page 12

**B2. How frequently have you used NCES DATABASES OR USER TOOLS in the past 2 years?**

1 ❑ Daily

2 ❑ Weekly

3 ❑ Monthly

4 ❑ Occasionally

**B3. We are interested in your use of the following NCES USER TOOLS. For each USER TOOL that you have used in the past 2 years, please indicate how satisfied you were with it. If you have not used the USER TOOL in the past 2 years, please indicate that.**

| | Didn't Use | Very Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Satisfied | Very Satisfied | Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Electronic Code Book (ECB)* | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |
| b. Data Analysis System (DAS)* | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |
| c. Common Core of Data (CCD) CD-ROM User Interface | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |
| d. Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) CD-ROM User Interface | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |

COMMENTS ON NCES USER TOOLS

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*An Electronic Code Book (ECB) and/or Data Analysis System (DAS) is available for the following surveys:*

| | ECB | DAS |
|---|---|---|
| Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) | ✔ | |
| National Household Education Survey (NHES) | ✔ | ✔ |
| National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF) | ✔ | ✔ |
| National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS) | ✔ | ✔ |
| High School and Beyond (HS&B) Study | | ✔ |
| National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88) | ✔ | ✔ |
| Beginning Postsecondary Students (BPS) Longitudinal Study | ✔ | ✔ |
| Baccalaureate and Beyond (B&B) Longitudinal Study | ✔ | ✔ |

**B4.** **We are interested in your use of a select group of NCES DATABASES. For each DATABASE you have used in the past 2 years, please indicate how satisfied you were with it. If you have not used the DATABASE in the past 2 years, please indicate that.**

| | Didn't Use | Very Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Satisfied | Very Satisfied | Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **a.** **EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT DATABASES** | | | | | | |
| (1) National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) . . . . . . | 9 ❏ | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ | 3 ❏ | 4 ❏ | 5 ❏ |
| (2) National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | 9 ❏ | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ | 3 ❏ | 4 ❏ | 5 ❏ |
| (3) Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) . . . . | 9 ❏ | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ | 3 ❏ | 4 ❏ | 5 ❏ |

COMMENTS ON EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT DATABASES

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| | Didn't Use | Very Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Satisfied | Very Satisfied | Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **b.** **NATIONAL LONGITUDINAL STUDIES DATABASES** | | | | | | |
| (1) High School and Beyond (HS&B) . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | 9 ❏ | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ | 3 ❏ | 4 ❏ | 5 ❏ |
| (2) National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88) . . . | 9 ❏ | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ | 3 ❏ | 4 ❏ | 5 ❏ |
| (3) Beginning Postsecondary Students (BPS) Longitudinal Study . . | 9 ❏ | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ | 3 ❏ | 4 ❏ | 5 ❏ |
| (4) Baccalaureate and Beyond (B&B) Longitudinal Study . . . . . . | 9 ❏ | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ | 3 ❏ | 4 ❏ | 5 ❏ |

COMMENTS ON NATIONAL LONGITUDINAL STUDIES DATABASES

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_____

| | Didn't Use | Very Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Satisfied | Very Satisfied | Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **c.** **LIBRARY DATABASES** | | | | | | |
| (1) Academic Library Survey (ALS) - A Component of the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) . . | 9 ❏ | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ | 3 ❏ | 4 ❏ | 5 ❏ |
| (2) School Library Survey (SLS) - A Component of the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | 9 ❏ | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ | 3 ❏ | 4 ❏ | 5 ❏ |
| (3) Public Libraries Survey (PLS) . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | 9 ❏ | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ | 3 ❏ | 4 ❏ | 5 ❏ |

COMMENTS ON LIBRARY DATABASES

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| d. **ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION DATABASES** | Didn't Use | Very Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Satisfied | Very Satisfied | Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) Common Core of Data (CCD) . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | 9 ❏ | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ | 3 ❏ | 4 ❏ | 5 ❏ |
| (2) Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | 9 ❏ | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ | 3 ❏ | 4 ❏ | 5 ❏ |
| (3) National Household Education Survey (NHES) . . . . . . . . . . | 9 ❏ | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ | 3 ❏ | 4 ❏ | 5 ❏ |

COMMENTS ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION DATABASES

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| e. **POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION DATABASES** | Didn't Use | Very Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Satisfied | Very Satisfied | Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) . . | 9 ❏ | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ | 3 ❏ | 4 ❏ | 5 ❏ |
| (2) National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS) . . . . . . . | 9 ❏ | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ | 3 ❏ | 4 ❏ | 5 ❏ |
| (3) National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF) . . . . . . . . | 9 ❏ | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ | 3 ❏ | 4 ❏ | 5 ❏ |
| (4) National Household Education Survey (NHES) - Adult Components . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | 9 ❏ | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ | 3 ❏ | 4 ❏ | 5 ❏ |

COMMENTS ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION DATABASES

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**B5.** Now consider all the NCES DATABASES AND USER TOOLS that you have used in the past 2 years. OVERALL, how satisfied were you with the following ASPECTS of the DATABASES AND USER TOOLS? *(For each aspect, please indicate your level of satisfaction)*

| | Very Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Satisfied | Very Satisfied | Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Comprehensiveness of database . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ | 3 ❏ | 4 ❏ | 5 ❏ |
| b. Ease of use . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ | 3 ❏ | 4 ❏ | 5 ❏ |
| c. Ease of access . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ | 3 ❏ | 4 ❏ | 5 ❏ |
| d. Database documentation . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ | 3 ❏ | 4 ❏ | 5 ❏ |
| e. Accuracy of database . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ | 3 ❏ | 4 ❏ | 5 ❏ |
| f. Timeliness of database release . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ | 3 ❏ | 4 ❏ | 5 ❏ |
| g. Overall quality of database . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ | 3 ❏ | 4 ❏ | 5 ❏ |
| h. Other aspect *(Please specify)* . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ | 3 ❏ | 4 ❏ | 5 ❏ |

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COMMENTS ON ASPECTS OF DATABASES

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**B6.** **Six ASPECTS of DATABASES AND USER TOOLS are listed below.**

1. Comprehensiveness of database
2. Ease of use
3. Ease of access
4. Database documentation
5. Accuracy of database
6. Timeliness of database release

**Although all of the ASPECTS may be desirable, please indicate which one you consider MOST IMPORTANT, SECOND MOST IMPORTANT, and THIRD MOST IMPORTANT.** *(Please enter the number of the aspect on the appropriate line below)*

a. Most important _____

b. Second most important _____

c. Third most important _____

### SKIP TO SECTION C, PAGE 12

**B7.** **Below is a list of reasons why you may NOT have used NCES DATABASES AND USER TOOLS in the past 2 years. For each of the following reasons, indicate if it applies to you or not.** *(Please select Yes or No for each reason)*

a. You obtain NCES education information indirectly from other sources . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . **Yes** 1 ❑        **No** 2 ❑

COMMENTS _____

_____

_____

b. Someone else on your staff is responsible for databases . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . **Yes** 1 ❑        **No** 2 ❑

COMMENTS _____

_____

_____

c. You need different levels or types of information than NCES provides . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . **Yes** 1 ❑        **No** 2 ❑

COMMENTS _____

_____

_____

d. You obtain education information from sources other than NCES . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . **Yes** 1 ❑        **No** 2 ❑

COMMENTS _____

_____

_____

e. You don't know how to obtain NCES databases and user tools . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . **Yes** 1 ❑        **No** 2 ❑

COMMENTS _____

_____

_____

f.  You don't have the computer technology or technical knowledge necessary to
    use NCES databases and user tools . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .**Yes** 1❑          **No** 2❑
    COMMENTS _____

    _____

    _____

g.  NCES databases and user tools are outdated . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .**Yes** 1❑          **No** 2❑
    COMMENTS _____

    _____

    _____

h.  NCES databases and user tools are too difficult to use . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .**Yes** 1❑          **No** 2❑
    COMMENTS _____

    _____

    _____

i.  Any other reason? *(Please specify)* . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .**Yes** 1❑          **No** 2❑
    COMMENTS _____

    _____

    _____

## QUESTIONS ABOUT NCES SERVICES

We are interested in your use of the **SERVICES** that NCES offers. Please note that **use** means any level of use: making one or more requests for information by e-mail, fax, or telephone; attending one or more training seminars or conferences; ordering one or more publications or databases; visiting the NCES web site one or more times, etc.

**C1. If you have a question, do you know how to contact NCES?**
1 ❏ Yes
2 ❏ No

**C2. Have you used any NCES SERVICES in the past 2 years? These include e-mailing, faxing, mailing, or telephoning NCES staff a request for information; requesting NCES information from the Education Publications Center (ED Pubs), the National Education Data Resource Center (NEDRC), or the Department of Education's toll-free number; attending training seminars, workshops, or conferences; participating in the NCES fellows program; and visiting the NCES web site.**
1 ❏ Yes ⟶ Go to Question C3
2 ❏ No, but aware of NCES services ⟶ Skip to Question C8, page 14
3 ❏ No, not aware of NCES services ⟶ Skip to Section D, page 16

**C3. How frequently have you used NCES SERVICES in the past 2 years?**
1 ❏ Daily
2 ❏ Weekly
3 ❏ Monthly
4 ❏ Occasionally

**C4. We are interested in your use of a select group of NCES SERVICES. For each SERVICE you have used in the past 2 years, please indicate how satisfied you were with it. If you have not used the SERVICE in the past 2 years, please indicate that.**

|  | Didn't Use | Very Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Satisfied | Very Satisfied | Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Requested information from NCES staff by e-mail, mail, fax, or telephone | 9 ❏ | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ | 3 ❏ | 4 ❏ | 5 ❏ |
| b. Ordered NCES publications or databases from the Education Publications Center (ED Pubs), the Department of Education's new ordering service | 9 ❏ | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ | 3 ❏ | 4 ❏ | 5 ❏ |
| c. Requested information from the National Education Data Resource Center (NEDRC) | 9 ❏ | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ | 3 ❏ | 4 ❏ | 5 ❏ |
| d. Requested information from the Department of Education's toll-free number (1-800-424-1616) | 9 ❏ | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ | 3 ❏ | 4 ❏ | 5 ❏ |
| e. Visited the NCES web site | 9 ❏ | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ | 3 ❏ | 4 ❏ | 5 ❏ |

COMMENTS ON NCES SERVICES

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**C5.** We are interested in your use of the following selected **SERVICES** on the NCES **WEB SITE**. For each **WEB SITE SERVICE** you have used in the past 2 years, please indicate how satisfied you were with it. If you have not used the **WEB SITE SERVICE** in the past 2 years, please indicate that.

*You may access these services on the NCES web site through the web addresses given below.*

| | Didn't Use | Very Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Satisfied | Very Satisfied | Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. NCES Electronic Catalog . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .<br>{http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/index.asp} | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |
| b. News Flash Subscription Service . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .<br>{http://nces.ed.gov/newsflash/index.asp} | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |
| c. "What's New" Feature . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .<br>{http://nces.ed.gov/ncesnew.html} | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |
| d. NCES Staff Directory . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .<br>{http://nces.ed.gov/ncestaff/index.html} | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |
| e. NAEP Summary Data Tables . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .<br>{http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/sdt/sdt.asp} | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |
| f. K-12 Practitioners' Circle . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .<br>{http://nces.ed.gov/practitioners/} | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |

COMMENTS ON SELECTED WEB SITE SERVICES

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**C6.** We are also interested in your use of the following **ONLINE DATA ACCESS TOOLS** on the NCES **WEB SITE**. For each **ONLINE DATA ACCESS TOOL** you have used in the past 2 years, please indicate how satisfied you were with it. If you have not used the **ONLINE DATA ACCESS TOOL** in the past 2 years, please indicate that.

*You may access these online data access tools on the NCES web site through the web addresses given below.*

| | Didn't Use | Very Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Satisfied | Very Satisfied | Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. National Public School Locator . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .<br>{http://nces.ed.gov/ccdweb/school/school.asp} | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |
| b. Data Analysis System (DAS) on the Web . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .<br>{http://nces.ed.gov/das/} | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |
| c. Interactive Database Search (IPEDS) . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .<br>{http://nces.ed.gov/ipedsearlyrelease/index.html} | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |
| d. Public School District Finance Peer Search . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .<br>{http://nces.ed.gov/edfin/search/search_intro.htm} | 9 ❑ | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ |

COMMENTS ON ONLINE DATA ACCESS TOOLS

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**C7.** **Taking into account all the experiences you have had with NCES SERVICES in the past 2 years, please indicate how satisfied you were with each of the following ASPECTS.** *(For each aspect, please indicate your level of satisfaction)*

| | Very Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Satisfied | Very Satisfied | Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied | Does Not Apply |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Extent to which the information met your needs | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ | 9 ❑ |
| b. Speed with which you received the information | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ | 9 ❑ |
| c. Ease of obtaining the information | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ | 9 ❑ |
| d. Staff expertise | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ | 9 ❑ |
| e. Time needed to reach knowledgeable staff | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ | 9 ❑ |
| f. Courtesy of staff | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ | 9 ❑ |
| g. Handling of complaints | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ | 9 ❑ |
| h. Search capabilities on the NCES web site | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ | 9 ❑ |
| i. Ease of locating information on the NCES web site | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ | 9 ❑ |
| j. Ease of downloading publications or databases from the NCES web site | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ | 9 ❑ |
| k. Other aspect *(Please specify)* | 1 ❑ | 2 ❑ | 3 ❑ | 4 ❑ | 5 ❑ | 9 ❑ |

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COMMENTS ON ASPECTS OF SERVICES

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**SKIP TO SECTION D, PAGE 16**

**C8.** **Below is a list of reasons why you may NOT have used NCES SERVICES in the past 2 years. For each of the following reasons, indicate if it applies to you or not.** *(Please select Yes or No for each reason)*

a. You obtain NCES education information indirectly from other sources  **Yes** 1 ❑  **No** 2 ❑

COMMENTS _____

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b. Someone else on your staff is responsible for obtaining NCES information  **Yes** 1 ❑  **No** 2 ❑

COMMENTS _____

_____

_____

c. You obtain education information from sources other than NCES  **Yes** 1 ❑  **No** 2 ❑

COMMENTS _____

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d.  NCES information is outdated . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . **Yes** 1 ❏            **No** 2 ❏

COMMENTS _____

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e.  You don't know how to contact NCES staff . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . **Yes** 1 ❏            **No** 2 ❏

COMMENTS _____

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f.  You don't know how to contact the Education Publications Center (ED Pubs) . . . . . . . . . . . . . . **Yes** 1 ❏            **No** 2 ❏

COMMENTS _____

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g.  You don't know how to access the NCES web site . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . **Yes** 1 ❏            **No** 2 ❏

COMMENTS _____

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h.  You don't have the computer technology or technical knowledge necessary to use the

NCES web site . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . **Yes** 1 ❏            **No** 2 ❏

COMMENTS _____

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i.  The NCES web site is too difficult to use . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . **Yes** 1 ❏            **No** 2 ❏

COMMENTS _____

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j.  Any other reason *(Please specify)* . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . **Yes** 1 ❏            **No** 2 ❏

COMMENTS _____

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## A FEW LAST QUESTIONS

We would like to ask a few additional questions about your use of **NCES publications, databases, user tools, and services**. Please note that **use** means any level of use, ranging from light use (skimming a report, generating a few tables from a database, occasionally e-mailing a request for information, etc.) to heavy use (reading a full report, analyzing large amounts of data in a survey database, ordering several publications or databases, etc.).

**D1. How recently have you used NCES publications, databases, user tools, or services?**
1 ❏ In the past 12 months
2 ❏ In the past 13 to 24 months    Go to Question
3 ❏ In the past 25 to 36 months    D2 below
4 ❏ More than 36 months ago
5 ❏ Never  →  Skip to Question D4

**D2. We would like to know the purposes for which you use NCES publications, databases, user tools, or services. Have you used NCES publications, databases, user tools, or services for...** *(Please select Yes or No for each purpose)*

| | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| a. Planning | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ |
| b. Policy or legislation | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ |
| c. Administrative decisions | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ |
| d. Teaching or class material | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ |
| e. Research or analysis | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ |
| f. General information | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ |
| g. Writing news articles, preparing TV or radio material | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ |
| h. Updating databases | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ |
| i. Reformulating data for use by others | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ |
| j. Marketing, sales, or promotion | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ |
| k. Giving speeches | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ |
| l. Other purpose *(Please specify)* | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ |

_____

**D3. How did you find out about the NCES publications, databases, user tools, or services you used? Did you find out from...** *(Please select Yes or No for each source)*

| | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| a. Conferences, seminars, workshops, NCES fellows program | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ |
| b. Journal articles | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ |
| c. Colleagues | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ |
| d. NCES publications | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ |
| e. Professional associations | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ |
| f. Ongoing contact with NCES staff | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ |
| g. The Internet | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ |
| h. Libraries | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ |
| i. Product announcements | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ |
| j. Other source *(Please specify)* | 1 ❏ | 2 ❏ |

_____

**D4. Have you obtained education information from any organizations other than NCES in the past 2 years?**
1 ❏ **Yes** → If Yes, please provide the names of these organizations and the types of information you obtain from them in the space below.

_____

_____

_____

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_____

2 ❏ **No**

**D5. If you are interested in learning more about NCES products and services, please provide your name and address below. We will mail you a brochure about NCES products and services.**

First Name: _____

Last Name: _____

Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____

ZIP Code: _____

Phone #: _____

E-mail: _____

# THANK YOU

**This concludes the survey.** Thank you very much for completing the survey today. We appreciate your input. Please return the survey in the enclosed envelope or, if you wish, fax it to: 703-812-9723, attn: Lori Thurgood.

If you have any questions or problems concerning this study, please contact Lori Thurgood by e-mail at LoriT@smdi.com, or by phone at 703-807-2311.

If you would like to learn more about NCES, please visit the NCES web site by entering any of the following web addresses:

## N C E S   L I N K S

NCES web site
{http://nces.ed.gov/}

NCES Fast Facts
{http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/index.asp}

NCES Conference Connection
{http://nces.ed.gov/conferences/}

## C O M P E N D I U M   P U B L I C A T I O N S

*The Condition of Education*
{http://nces.ed.gov/pubs98/condition98/}

*Digest of Education Statistics*
{http://nces.ed.gov/pubs/digest97/}

*Projections of Education Statistics*
{http://nces.ed.gov/pubs98/pj2008/}

## P R O G R A M   A R E A S

### EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT
National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)
{http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/site/home.asp}

National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS)
{http://nces.ed.gov/nadlits/}

International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS)
{http://nces.ed.gov/ilss/}

IEA Reading Literacy Study
{http://nces.ed.gov/internat/index.html}

Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)
{http://nces.ed.gov/timss/}

### NATIONAL LONGITUDINAL STUDIES
High School and Beyond (HS&B)
{http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/hsb.html}

National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88)
{http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/nels88.html}

Beginning Postsecondary Students (BPS) Longitudinal Study
{http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/bps.html}

Baccalaureate and Beyond (B&B) Longitudinal Study
{http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/b&b.html}

### LIBRARIES
Academic Library Survey (ALS)
{http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/academic.html}

School Library Survey (SLS)
{http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/school.html}

Public Libraries Survey (PLS)
{http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/public.html}

### ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
Common Core of Data (CCD)
{http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/}

Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS)
{http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sass.html}

Private School Universe Survey (PSS)
{http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pss.html}

National Household Education Survey (NHES)
{http://nces.ed.gov/nhes/}

National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) –
School Crime Supplement
{http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/NACJD/SDA/ncvs.html}

1994 High School Transcript Study (HSTS)
{http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/hst.html}

Fast Response Survey System (FRSS)
{http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/frss.html}

### POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION
Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)
{http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/index.html}

National Household Education Survey (NHES)
{http://nces.ed.gov/nhes/}

National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS)
{http://nces.ed.gov/npsas/}

National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF)
{http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/nsopf.html}

Postsecondary Education Quick Information System (PEQIS)
{http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/peqis.html}

# EXAMPLES OF NCES PUBLICATIONS

## CROSS-SURVEY PUBLICATIONS

*The Condition of Education*

*Digest of Education*

*Projections of Education Statistics*

*Youth Indicators*

*Dropout Rates in the United States*

*Participation in Basic Skills Education*

*State Comparisons of Education Statistics*

*Student Victimization at School*

*Urban Schools: The Challenge of Location and Poverty*

*Education Indicators: An International Perspective*

*America's Teachers: Profile of a Profession*

## EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT PUBLICATIONS

### NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS (NAEP)

*Education Indicators: An International Perspective*

*Learning About Our World and Our Past: Using the Tools and Resources of Geography and U.S. History*

*Linking the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS): Eighth-Grade Results*

*NAEP 1992 Writing Report Card*

*NAEP 1994 Reading Report Card for the Nation and the States*

*NAEP 1996 Mathematics Cross-State Data Compendium for the Grade 4 and Grade 8 Assessments*

*NAEP 1996 Mathematics Report Card for the Nation and the States*

*NAEP 1996 Mathematics State Reports*

*NAEP 1996 Science Cross-State Data Compendium for the Grade 8 Assessment*

*NAEP 1996 Science Report Card for the Nation and the States*

*NAEP 1996 Science State Reports*

*NAEP 1996 Trends in Academic Progress*

*NAEP 1997 Arts Report Card: Eighth Grade Findings from the National Assessment of Educational Progress*

*NAEP 1998 Reading Report Card for the Nation*

*NAEP 1998 Reading Report Card: National Highlights*

*School Policies and Practices Affecting Instruction in Mathematics*

*Students Learning Science*

*Students Selecting Stories: The Effects of Choice in Reading Assessment*

### NATIONAL ADULT LITERACY SURVEY (NALS)

*Adult Literacy in America: A First Look at the Findings of the National Adult Literacy Survey*

*Literacy Behind Prison Walls: Profiles of the Prison Population from the National Adult Literacy Survey*

*Literacy of Older Adults in America: Results from the National Adult Literacy Survey*

### INTERNATIONAL ADULT LITERACY SURVEY (IALS)

*Adult Literacy in OECD Countries: Technical Report on the First International Adult Literacy Survey*

*Adult Literacy: An International Perspective (Working Paper)*

### IEA READING LITERACY STUDY

*Reading Literacy in an International Perspective: Collected Papers from the IEA Reading Literacy Study*

*Reading Literacy in the United States: Findings from the IEA Reading Literacy Study*

*Reading Literacy in the United States: Technical Report*

### THIRD INTERNATIONAL MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE STUDY (TIMSS)

*International Mathematics and Science Assessments: What Have We Learned*

*Linking the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and the Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS): Eighth-Grade Results*

*Pursuing Excellence: A Study of U.S. Eighth-Grade Mathematics and Science Teaching, Learning, Curriculum, and Achievement in International Context: Initial Findings from the Third International Mathematics and Science Study*

*Pursuing Excellence: A Study of U.S. Fourth Grade Mathematics and Science Achievement in International Context*

*Pursuing Excellence: A Study of U.S. Twelfth-Grade Mathematics and Science Achievement in International Context*

## NATIONAL LONGITUDINAL STUDIES PUBLICATIONS

### NATIONAL LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF THE HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 1972 (NLS-72)

*A Capsule Description of Young Adults Seven and One-Half Years After High School*

*Careers in Teaching: Following Members of the High School Class of 1972—In and Out of Teaching*

*High School Seniors: A Comparative Study of the Classes of 1972 and 1980*

*High School Seniors Look to the Future, 1972 and 1992*

*Patterns and Consequences of Delay in Postsecondary Education*

*A Trend Study of High School Offerings and Enrollments: 1972-73 and 1981-82*

*Trends Among High School Seniors, 1972-1992*

*Trends in Postsecondary Credit Production, 1972 and 1980 High School Graduates*

### HIGH SCHOOL AND BEYOND (HS&B)

*America's High School Sophomores: A Ten Year Comparison, 1980-1990*

*College Persistence and Degree Attainment for 1980 High School Graduates: Hazards for Transfers, Stopouts, and Part-Timers*

*A Comparison of High School Dropout Rates in 1982 and 1992*

*Continuity of Early Employment Among 1980 High School Sophomores*

*Dropout Rates in the United States: 1996*

*Factors Associated With Decline of Test Scores of High School Seniors, 1972 to 1980*

*Gender Differences in Earnings Among Young Adults Entering the Labor Market*

## HIGH SCHOOL AND BEYOND (HS&B)

*High School and Beyond: Educational Attainment of 1980 High School Sophomores by 1992*

*High School Seniors: A Comparative Study of the Classes of 1972 and 1980*

*The Relationship Between Postsecondary & High School Course-Taking Patterns: The Preparation of 1980 High School Sophomores Who Entered Postsecondary Institutions by 1984*

*A Trend Study of High School Offerings and Enrollments: 1972-73 and 1981-82*

*Trends Among High School Seniors, 1972-1992*

*Trends in Postsecondary Credit Production: 1972 and 1980 High School Graduates*

*Understanding Racial-Ethnic Differences in Secondary School Science and Mathematics Education*

*Urban Schools: The Challenge of Location and Poverty*

## NATIONAL EDUCATION LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF 1988 (NELS:88)

*Access to Postsecondary Education for the 1992 High School Graduates*

*America's High School Sophomores: A Ten Year Comparison, 1980-1990*

*A Comparison of High School Dropout Rates in 1982 and 1992*

*Confronting the Odds: Students At Risk and the Pipeline to Higher Education*

*Dropout Rates in the United States: 1996*

*Generational Status and Educational Outcomes Among Asian and Hispanic 1988 Eighth Graders*

*High School Seniors Look to the Future, 1972 and 1992*

*NELS:88: Eighth Graders' Reports of Courses Taken During the 1988 Academic Year by Selected Student Characteristics: E.D. TAB*

*NELS:88 High School Senior's Instructional Experiences in Science and Math*

*NELS:88 Students' School Transition Patterns Between 8th and 10th Grades*

*NELS:88/94 Descriptive Summary Report With an Essay on "Access and Choice in Postsecondary Education"*

*A Profile of American 8th Grade Mathematics and Science Instruction*

*A Profile of the American Eighth Grader: NELS:88 Student Descriptive Summary*

*A Profile of the American High School Senior in 1992*

*A Profile of the American High School Sophomore in 1990*

*Profiles of Students with Disabilities as Identified in NELS:88*

*Science Proficiency and Course Taking in High School: The Relationship of Science Course-Taking Patterns to Increases in Science Proficiency Between 8th and 12th Grades*

*Subsequent Educational Attainment of High School Dropouts*

*The Tested Achievement of the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 Eighth-Grade Class: E.D. TAB*

*Trends Among High School Seniors, 1972-1992*

*Two Years Later: Cognitive Gains and School Transitions of NELS:88 Eighth Graders*

*Understanding Racial-Ethnic Differences in Secondary School Science and Mathematics Achievement*

*Urban Schools: The Challenge of Location and Poverty*

## BEGINNING POSTSECONDARY STUDENTS (BPS) LONGITUDINAL STUDY

*Descriptive Summary of 1989-90 Beginning Postsecondary Students: 5 Years Later With an Essay on Postsecondary Persistence and Attainment*

*Descriptive Summary of 1989-90 Beginning Postsecondary Students: Two Years Later: 90-92*

*Descriptive Summary of 1995-96 Beginning Postsecondary Students: With Profiles of Students Entering 2- to 4-Year Institutions*

*Early Labor Force Experiences and Debt Burden*

*First-Generation Students: Undergraduates Whose Parents Never Enrolled in Postsecondary Education*

*How Low Income Undergraduates Financed Postsecondary Education: 1992-93*

*Minority Undergraduate Participation in Postsecondary Education*

*Nontraditional Undergraduates: Trends in Enrollment from 1986 to 1992 and Persistence and Attainment Among 1989-90 Beginning Postsecondary Students*

*Persistence and Attainment in Postsecondary Education for Beginning Academic Year 1989-90 Students as of Spring 1992*

*Postsecondary Financing Strategies—How Undergraduates Combine Work, Borrowing, and Attendance*

*Profile of Older Undergraduates: 1989-90*

*Profile of Part-Time Undergraduates in Postsecondary Education: 1989-90*

*Stopouts or Stayouts? Undergraduates Who Leave College in Their First Year*

*Transfer Behavior Among Beginning Postsecondary Students: 1989-94*

## BACCALAUREATE AND BEYOND (B&B) LONGITUDINAL STUDY

*America's Teachers: Profile of a Profession, 1993-94*

*B&B Teacher Report: Out of the Lecture Hall and Into the Classroom: 1992-93 College Graduates and Elementary/Secondary School Teaching*

*A Descriptive Summary of 1992-93 Bachelor's Degree Recipients: 1 Year Later With an Essay on Time to Degree*

*Early Labor Force Experiences and Debt Burden*

*First-Generation Students: Undergraduates Whose Parents Never Enrolled in Postsecondary Education*

## LIBRARY PUBLICATIONS

**ACADEMIC LIBRARY SURVEY (ALS) – A COMPONENT OF THE INTEGRATED POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION DATA SYSTEM (IPEDS)**

*Academic Libraries: 1994*

*The Status of Academic Libraries in the United States: Results from the 1990 and 1992 Academy Library Surveys*

*The Status of Academic Libraries in the United States: Results from the 1994 Academy Library Survey with Historical Comparisons*

**SCHOOL LIBRARY SURVEY – A COMPONENT OF THE SCHOOLS AND STAFFING SURVEY (SASS)**

*Issue Brief: Library/Media Centers in Schools: Are There Sufficient Resources?*

*School Library Media Centers: 1993-94*

**PUBLIC LIBRARIES SURVEY**

*Public Libraries in the United States: 1995*

**STATE LIBRARY AGENCIES SURVEY**

*State Library Agencies, Fiscal Year 1996*

**FEDERAL LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION CENTERS SURVEY**

*Directory of Federal Libraries and Information Centers: 1994*

*E.D. TAB: Federal Libraries and Information Centers in the United States: 1994*

*The Status of Federal Libraries and Information Centers in the United States: Results from the 1994 Federal Libraries and Information Centers Survey*

## ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION PUBLICATIONS

**COMMON CORE OF DATA (CCD)**

*Characteristics of the 100 Largest Public Elementary and Secondary School Districts in the United States: 1995-96*

*Characteristics of Small and Rural School Districts*

*Developments in School Finance, 1997*

*Directory of Public Elementary and Secondary Education Agencies: 1995-96*

*Dropout Rates in the United States: 1996*

*Early Estimates of Public Elementary and Secondary Education Statistics, School Year 1998-99*

*Inequalities in Public School District Revenues*

*Key Statistics on Public Elementary and Secondary Schools and Agencies: School Year 1993-94*

*Profile of Children in U. S. School Districts*

*Public Elementary and Secondary Education Statistics: School Year 1996-97*

*Selected Papers in School Finance, 1996*

*Overview of Public Elementary and Secondary Schools and Districts: 1996-97*

*Public School Student, Staff, and Graduate Counts by State: School Year 1995-96*

*Revenues and Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education: School Year 1995-96*

*Trends in School District Demographics, 1986-87 to 1990-91*

**SCHOOLS AND STAFFING SURVEY (SASS)**

*America's Teachers: Profile of a Profession, 1993-94*

*Characteristics of American Indian and Alaska Native Education*

*Characteristics of Stayers, Movers, and Leavers: Results from the Teacher Followup Survey: 1994-95*

*A Comparison of Vocational and Non-Vocational Teachers*

*Education in States and Nations: Indicators Comparing U.S. States with the OECD Countries in 1988*

*How Different, How Similar? Comparing Key Organizational Qualities of American Public and Private Secondary Schools*

*Job Satisfaction Among America's Teachers: Effects of Workplace Conditions, Background Characteristics, and Teacher Compensation*

*Out-of-Field Teaching and Educational Equality*

*The Patterns of Teacher Compensation*

*Public and Private School Principals in the United States: A Statistical Profile, 1987-88 to 1993-94*

*Public School Districts in the United States: A Statistical Profile: 1987-88 to 1993-94*

*Public School Teacher Cost Differences Across the United States*

*SASS 1993-94: A Profile of Policies and Practices for Limited English Proficient Students: Screening Methods, Program Support, and Teacher Training*

*SASS by State, 1993-94 Schools and Staffing Survey: Selected State Results*

*Schools and Staffing in the U.S.: A Statistical Profile, 1993-94*

*State Comparisons of Education Statistics: 1969-70 to 1996-97*

*The Status of Teaching as a Profession: 1990-91*

*Student Victimization at School*

*Teacher Professionalization and Teacher Commitment: A Multilevel Analysis*

*Teacher Supply, Teacher Qualifications, and Teacher Turnover, Aspects of Teacher Supply and Demand in the U.S.*

*Teacher Supply in the U.S.: Sources of Newly Hired Teachers in Public and Private Schools*

*Time Spent Teaching Core Academic Subjects in Elementary Schools: Comparisons Across Community, School, Teacher, and Student Characteristics*

*Toward Better Teaching: Professional Development in 1993-94*

*Urban Schools: The Challenge of Location and Poverty*

**PRIVATE SCHOOL UNIVERSE SURVEY (PSS)**

*Early Estimates: Key Statistics for Private Elementary and Secondary Education: School Year 1989-90*

*E.D. TABS: Private School Universe Survey: 1991-92*

*Private School Universe Survey, 1995-96*

*Private Schools in the United States: A Statistical Profile, with Comparisons to Public Schools*

## NATIONAL HOUSEHOLD EDUCATION SURVEY (NHES)

*Approaching Kindergarten: A Look at Preschoolers in the United States*

*Characteristics of Children's Early Care and Education Programs: Data from the 1995 National Household Education Survey*

*Child Care and Early Education Program Participation of Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers*

*The Civic Development of 9th Through 12th Grade Students in the United States: 1996.*

*Comparison of Estimates from the 1995 National Household Education Survey*

*Early Literacy Experiences in the Home*

*The Elementary School Performance and Adjustment of Children Who Enter Kindergarten Late or Repeat Kindergarten: Findings from National Surveys*

*Issue Brief: Factors Associated with Fathers' and Mothers' Involvement in Their Children's Schools*

*Parent Involvement in School-Related Activities*

*Participation in Basic Skills Education: 1994-95*

*Preprimary Education Enrollment*

*Student Interest in National News and its Relation to School Courses*

*Student Participation in Community Service Activity*

*Student Reports of Availability, Peer Approval, and Use of Alcohol, Marijuana, and Other Drugs at School: 1993*

*Student Strategies to Avoid Harm at School*

*Student Victimization at School*

*Use of Public Library Services by Households in the United States: 1996*

*Use of School Choice*

## NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMIZATION SURVEY (NCVS) – SCHOOL CRIME SUPPLEMENT

*Indicators of School Crime and Safety, 1998*

*Students' Reports of School Crime: 1989 and 1995*

## 1994 HIGH SCHOOL TRANSCRIPT STUDY (HSTS)

*The 1994 High School Transcript Study Tabulations: Comparative Data on Credits Earned and Demographics for 1994, 1990, 1987, and 1982 High School Graduates*

## FAST RESPONSE SURVEY SYSTEM (FRSS)

*Advanced Telecommunications in U.S. Private Schools, K-12 Fall 1995*

*Arts Education in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools, 1995*

*College-Level Remedial Education in the Fall of 1989*

*E.D. TABS: Advanced Telecommunications in U.S. Public Elementary and Secondary Schools, 1995*

*E.D. TABS: Advanced Telecommunications in U.S. Public Schools, K-12*

*E.D. TABS: Curricular Differentiation in Public High Schools*

*E.D. TABS: Public School District Survey on Safe, Disciplined, and Drug Free Schools*

*E.D. TABS: Public School Principal Survey on Safe, Disciplined, and Drug Free Schools*

*E.D. TABS: Teacher Survey on Safe, Disciplined, and Drug-Free Schools*

*Issue Brief: How Old are America's Public Schools?*

*Issue Brief: Internet Access in Public Schools*

*Nutrition Education in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools*

*Parent Involvement in Children's Education: Efforts by Public Elementary Schools*

*Public Elementary Teachers' Views on Teacher Performance Evaluations*

*Public School Kindergarten Teachers' Views on Children's Readiness for School*

*Public Secondary School Teacher Survey on Vocational Education*

*Racial and Ethnic Classifications Used by Public Schools*

*Services and Resources for Children in Public Libraries, 1988-89*

*Services and Resources for Children and Young Adults in Public Libraries*

*State Survey on Racial and Ethnic Classifications*

*Statistics in Brief: Advanced Telecommunications in U.S. Public Elementary and Secondary Schools, Fall 1996*

*Statistics in Brief: Parents and Schools: Partners in Student Learning*

*Status of Education Reform in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools: Principals' Perspectives*

*Teacher Quality: A Report on Teacher Preparation and Qualifications of Public School Teachers*

*Use of Educational Research and Development Resources by Public School Districts*

*Violence and Discipline Problems in U.S. Public Schools: 1996-97*

## POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION PUBLICATIONS

### INTEGRATED POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION DATA SYSTEM (IPEDS)

*Chartbook of Degrees Conferred, 1969-70 to 1993-94*

*Current Funds, Revenues, and Expenditures of Degree-Granting Institutions: Fiscal Year 1996*

*Current Funds, Revenues, and Expenditures of Institutions of Higher Education, FY1987 through FY1995*

*Degrees and Other Awards Conferred by Institutions of Higher Education: 1995-96*

*Directory of Postsecondary Institutions: Volume I: Degree-Granting Institutions*

*Directory of Postsecondary Institutions: Volume II: NonDegree-Granting Institutions*

*Fall Enrollment in Postsecondary Institutions, 1996*

*Fall Staff in Postsecondary Institutions, 1995*

*Historically Black Colleges and Universities, 1976-1994*

*Residence and Migration of First-Time Freshmen Enrolled in Degree-Granting Institutions: Fall 1996*

*Salaries of Full-Time Instructional Faculty on 9- and 10-Month Contracts, 1996-97*

*Salaries, Tenure, and Fringe Benefits, 1996-97*

## NATIONAL POSTSECONDARY STUDENT AID STUDY (NPSAS)

*Choosing a Postsecondary Institution*

*Descriptive Summary of 1995-96 Beginning Postsecondary Students: With Profiles of Students Entering 2- to 4-Year Institutions*

*How Low Income Undergraduates Financed Postsecondary Education: 1992-93*

*Institutional Aid, 1992-93*

*NPSAS: Student Financial Aid Estimates for 1995-96*

*National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, 1995-96: Student Financial Aid Estimates for Federal Aid Recipients, 1995-96*

*Nontraditional Undergraduates: Trends in Enrollment from 1986 to 1992 and Persistence and Attainment Among 1989-90 Beginning Postsecondary Students*

*Postsecondary Financing Strategies—How Undergraduates Combine Work, Borrowing, and Attendance*

*Profile of Undergraduates in U.S. Postsecondary Education Institutions, 1995-96: With an Essay on Undergraduates Who Work*

*Stopouts or Stayouts? Undergraduates Who Leave College in Their First Year*

*Student Financing of Graduate and First-Professional Education, 1995-96: With Profiles of Students in Selected Degree Programs*

*Student Financing of Undergraduate Education, 1995-96: With an Essay on Student Loans*

## NATIONAL STUDY OF POSTSECONDARY FACULTY (NSOPF)

*1988 National Survey of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF-88): Faculty in Higher Education Institutions, 1988*

*1993 National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF-93): Institutional Policies and Practices Regarding Faculty in Higher Education*

*Faculty and Instructional Staff: Who Are They and What Do They Do?*

*Instructional Faculty and Staff in Higher Education Institutions: Fall 1987 and Fall 1992*

*Profiles of Faculty in Higher Education Institutions, 1988*

*Retirement and Other Departure Plans of Instructional Faculty and Staff in Higher Education Institutions*

## POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION QUICK INFORMATION SYSTEM (PEQIS)

*Campus Crime and Security at Postsecondary Education Institutions*

*College-Level Remedial Education in the Fall of 1989*

*Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students in Postsecondary Education*

*Distance Education in Higher Education Institutions*

*Issue Brief: Distance Education in Higher Education Institutions: Incidence, Audiences, and Plans to Expand*

*Programs at Higher Education Institutions for Disadvantaged Precollege Students*

*Remedial Education at Higher Education Institutions in Fall 1995*

*Statistics in Brief: Higher Education Finances and Services*

*Statistics in Brief: Outcomes of Recent Changes in Federal Student Financial Aid*

## NATIONAL HOUSEHOLD EDUCATION SURVEY (NHES) – ADULT COMPONENTS

*Adult Civic Involvement in the United States*

*Adult Education: Employment-Related Training*

*Adult Education: Main Reasons for Participating*

*Adult Education Profile for 1990-1991*

*Adults' Participation in Work-Related Courses: 1994-95*

*Forty Percent of Adults Participate in Adult Education Activities: 1994-1995*

*Participation of Adults in English as a Second Language Classes: 1994-95*

*Participation in Basic Skills Education: 1994-95*

## RECENT COLLEGE GRADUATES STUDY (RCG)

*America's Teachers: Profile of a Profession*

*Estimates of 1985-86 Bachelor's Degree Recipients' Course-Taking Behavior*

*New Teachers in the Job Market, 1991 Update*

*Occupational and Educational Outcomes of 1989-90 Bachelor's Degree Recipients 1 Year After Graduation*

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# Appendix B: Methodology

Appendix B presents the methodology for the 1999 NCES Customer Satisfaction Survey. Included are sections on questionnaire design, frame development, sampling design, survey operations, unit response rates, weighting procedures, standard error calculations, and formulas for testing statistical significance.

*Questionnaire Design*

Like the 1997 survey instrument, the 1999 questionnaire focused on use and satisfaction with NCES products and services. The 1999 questionnaire, however, evolved into a much more comprehensive instrument than was used in the earlier survey. It collected data on:

- publications and databases at the *survey level* within each of the program areas;
- database user tools; and
- specific services and data access tools available on the NCES Web site.

The 1999 questionnaire also gave respondents the opportunity to provide more comments than in past surveys: a comments area was included in every satisfaction item. In addition, Web sample members could click on window boxes to view lists of publications and databases; mail sample members were provided a supplementary list of publications. The questionnaire also included a list of useful URLs on the NCES Web site. On the Web instrument, the respondent could simply click a URL to link to the Web page of interest. The paper instrument included a full page of URLs inside the back cover.

Another change to the survey instrument benefits NCES program managers by making the information on use and satisfaction more current. The reference period for most questions was changed to 2 years in 1999 (from 3 years in the 1997 survey). This shorter time frame provides more recent—and presumably more useful—information to program managers.

NCES decided to use a split-mode administration in 1999, where half of the sample received a paper survey by mail and the other half of the sample received an e-mail message containing a link to the survey on the World Wide Web. The implementation of this design required the development of two versions of the questionnaire. Content was the same in both versions, but the formats differed somewhat. Clickable skip instructions on the Web instrument were rewritten and reformatted for the paper instrument. The contents of window boxes (e.g., publication lists) on the Web instrument were converted to another format on the paper instrument, such as a supplemental listing of

publications. A PDF version of the paper instrument was placed on the Web site as an option for members of the Web sample. If they so chose, members could download and print the PDF version, complete the survey on paper, and return the survey by mail or fax.

The 1999 survey was pretested twice by potential sample members—the first time on paper, the second time on the Web. NCES and contractor staff also tested the instruments at various times prior to data collection.

*Frame Development*

The target population for the 1999 NCES Customer Satisfaction Survey included current and potential customers from seven different customer groups. The 1999 target population was expanded beyond the four "core" customer groups in the 1997 population to include three new groups of customers— researchers and policymakers at education associations; education reporters for newspapers and magazines; and individuals who requested customized data from the National Education Data Resource Center (NEDRC), a data analysis service offered by NCES. In addition, the size of the sampling frame for the four core customer groups common to both the 1997 and 1999 surveys was larger in 1999. The core customer groups comprised federal, state, and local policymakers, and academic researchers. Thus, the size of the 1999 sampling frame—40,711 customers—was more than twice the size of the sampling frame in the 1997 survey.

The target population was restricted to customers in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Department of Defense Education Agency (DoDEA). The first column of table B-2 on page B-11 shows the initial size of all strata and substrata in the sampling frame.

The first step in developing the sampling frame was to obtain lists of names of customers and other contact information for each of the seven groups of customers. The following describes the source of the contact information for these seven groups and any differences in these sources between 1997 and 1999.

**Federal policymakers:** Nine groups formed the federal policymakers stratum in 1999. The Congressional Budget Office and the White House (Domestic Policy Council) were added to the federal policymaker subgroups included in 1997, and three subgroups were increased in size—the Department of Education senior officers and senior staff, the National Science Foundation, and the General Accounting Office. The relevant agencies provided the names and contact information of individuals to be included. The federal policymakers stratum totaled 192 in 1999, one-third larger than the 129 policymakers included in the 1997 survey.

**State policymakers:** Two new groups were added to the customer base of state policymakers in the 1999 survey—governors' education policy advisors (GEPA) and state assessment directors. These additions increased the population of state policymakers from 361 in 1997 to 408 in 1999. Relevant groups provided lists with members' names and some contact information. Missing information was obtained by calling the members.

**Local policymakers:** This stratum includes two substrata—policymakers affiliated with *public* school districts and similar entities at the elementary and secondary level, and policymakers affiliated with *public and private* postsecondary institutions. Note that, while it was not possible to include private schools in the elementary/secondary substratum, private schools are represented at the association level in the education association stratum.

The frame lists for the local policymakers were developed from two NCES survey data sets. For the *elementary/secondary substratum*, the 1996–97 Common Core of Data (CCD) Public Agency Mailing List provided the names of public school districts, classification information, mailing addresses, and telephone numbers—but not the names of individuals within each school district. Therefore, the first step in developing the frame for this group involved the selection of a sample of 766 public school districts, representing 15,007 districts nationwide. Districts with zero enrollment were excluded. The target population included charter and laboratory schools that reported directly to the state rather than through a local school district, as long as students were enrolled. Note that the 1999 population of school districts was lower than the 16,365 districts included in the 1997 population and that the distribution by locale (a combination of urbanicity and size of city/town) was somewhat different. The latter probably resulted from changes in locale assignment procedures and definitions of large and mid-size cities.

The next step was to call each of these school districts to obtain names and contact information for up to five local policymakers who use educational data; in all, 864 names were collected. Most individuals on the elementary/secondary list were superintendents.

The frame list for the *substratum of postsecondary policymakers* was developed from the 1997–98 Institutional Characteristics File of the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). IPEDS resembles CCD in that it provides information only at the organizational level (in its case, postsecondary institutions). The process for developing the postsecondary frame list was the same as for the elementary/ secondary list, except for the selection criteria. First, a sample of 450 postsecondary institutions was

selected from the prescribed population of 4,570 2-year and 4-year institutions. Next, calls were made to each of the selected institutions to obtain the names and contact information for 1–5 individuals appropriate for the survey; in all, 640 names were collected. The postsecondary list was more varied than the elementary/secondary list. It consisted primarily of directors of institutional research, provosts, deans, vice presidents, and presidents.

The 1999 population of the postsecondary institution component of the local policymaker population included more than twice as many institutions as in 1997 (N=2,099). Two modifications combined to produce this increase:

(1) NCES decided to include 2-year institutions that award an associate or higher degree (institutions awarding only certificates were not considered appropriate for the survey). The 1997 survey excluded all 2-year institutions.

(2) The population of 4-year-and-above institutions was determined in a different way. In 1997, the postsecondary population was defined by the Carnegie Classifications, which are periodically assigned to institutions by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The classification an institution receives depends on several factors, including the highest degree offered, number of degrees offered at the highest level, number of programs offered at the highest level, and research and development expenditures. The institutions eligible for the Carnegie Classifications are accredited by regional agencies recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education. These institutions are generally eligible for federal Title IV funding.

Because the Carnegie Classifications were last updated in 1994, they do not reflect changes to postsecondary institutions since then. New schools established since 1994 cannot be identified from the Carnegie Classifications, nor can school mergers and closings that occurred since 1994. For these reasons, an alternative method was used to select eligible institutions in 1999. First, the IPEDS variable for level of institution distinguished 4-year-and-above institutions from 2-year institutions. The institutions were then substratified by highest degree offered—bachelor's degree, master's degree, and doctorate/first professional degree. Within these groups, institutions were identified

as public or private. Accreditation and Title IV eligibility were not explicit considerations in 1999.

If a local school districts and postsecondary institutions had more than one

policymaker who might use educational data, one of them was chosen at random.

**Academic researchers:** As in 1997, academic researchers included a substratum of directors of OERI National Research and Development Centers and OERI Regional Educational Laboratories. The Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) supplied a list of names and contact information. This substratum is quite small (only 24 directors in 1999). By far the largest portion of academic researchers consists of individuals from various other sectors. In 1997, chairs of departments of sociology and deans of schools of education comprised most of this stratum. A much larger group was used in the 1999 survey—members of the American Educational Research Association, numbering more than 19,000. Consequently, the target population of academic researchers in 1999 (N=19,169) was significantly larger than in 1997 (N=1,079). Because of the size of the AERA membership, a sample of 779 members was selected before attempts were made to obtain missing contact information. No substitutes were allowed for AERA members since the individuals were selected specifically because of their membership rather than because they occupied specific offices or positions.  The only other stratum with no substitutions was the NEDRC users.

AERA's composition also made the customer base of academic researchers more diverse in 1999 than it was in 1997. AERA members have elementary/secondary, government, and association affiliations as well as postsecondary affiliations, whereas the department chairs and deans in the 1997 survey were affiliated solely with postsecondary institutions (although their research interests could have included elementary/secondary issues).

**Education associations:** The frame for this new stratum was developed from several lists of associations received from NCES or found on the Internet. Missing telephone numbers were obtained through searches of the Internet and library references and from directory assistance. Calls were then made to each of the associations on the combined list to obtain the names and contact information for up to five individuals for the survey; 322 names were collected. The only criterion for inclusion as a potential sample member was that the individual use education data. Several associations could not be located during calling and were assumed to have closed. Others were found to be inappropriate for the survey. These associations, as well as any duplicates identified at this stage, were deleted from the frame. Representatives of 248 education associations made up the target population for this stratum. As in the case of the local policymakers, an education association might have more than one education data user; if so, one was chosen at random.

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**Education reporters:** This group was also new to the survey in 1999. The frame was developed from a short list of names provided by NCES and a much longer list provided by the Education Writers Association (EWA), which counts among its members both print and broadcast reporters interested in education issues. NCES chose to limit this stratum to reporters in the print media and to exclude broadcasters. Because EWA provided only mailing labels for its large membership, it was necessary first to identify the print reporters eligible for the frame. Eligibility was based on a recognizable affiliation with a newspaper or magazine on the reporter's address label. If the address did not include an affiliation, that EWA member was dropped from the frame list. Telephone numbers of the newspapers and magazines then had to be obtained. This was accomplished primarily through look-ups in library references, as Internet searches were time-consuming with little yield. With the availability of telephone numbers, calls were made to reporters to complete any missing contact information. In some cases, the reporter on the frame list was no longer at the newspaper or no longer covered education. Substitutes were allowed as long as they covered education. In all, the frame list included 399 reporters from 218 newspapers and magazines. Where a newspaper or magazine had more than one reporter, one was selected at random.

**NEDRC users:** NCES decided to add a third new group of customers in 1999—those known to have requested data from the National Education Data Resource Center (NEDRC) during the previous 2 years. This stratum includes two substrata: users of elementary/secondary-level data and users of postsecondary-level data. NCES established NEDRC as a service center to respond to customers' special requests for data from NCES surveys. Pinkerton Computer Consultants, Inc., which operates NEDRC, provided data files containing the names and some contact information for 723 data requesters (365 who requested elementary/ secondary data, and 358 who requested postsecondary data). Requesters of both types of data were randomly assigned to one of the substrata. Substitutes were not allowed since this stratum was restricted to documented NEDRC users.

Contact information was very limited for many individuals, so a sample of 300 (150 in each substratum) was selected before any calls were made. During calls, it was discovered that the contact information obtained from NEDRC was often not current. Calls were made to all 300 selected cases to confirm the contact information and obtain any missing items. Because of the number of NEDRC users who could not be located, a second sample was drawn. Calls were made to individuals in this sample until there was confirmed contact information for 150 cases in each substratum.

These various sampling stratum frames did not necessarily include everyone

who might be an NCES data or services user, or who might find NCES data or services useful if he or she knew about them. Federal and state education policy might be affected by holders of positions not covered by the lists that were used, such as members of Congressional appropriations committee staffs, state legislative committees other than the "education" committees, and others whose influence on education policy depends on personal relationships or interest rather than holding formal positions. At the elementary and secondary level, the local policymaker stratum excludes school board members. They are commonly part-timers and not professional educators, but they might use NCES data, or find it useful, in making some local decisions. Although extensive inquiries were made to identify the most appropriate respondents at each sampled higher education institution, there were probably additional users and potential users whom the informants did not name. The academic researcher stratum was limited to the small number of NCES-funded lab directors and to the much larger AERA membership, but scholars in many other disciplines, including history, political science, public administration, economics, and sociology might use national, state, and local education data. Although all the major national education associations were covered, state and local organizations, or chapters of national associations, might have their own staffs that use NCES data and services. For the 1999 survey, the addition of education reporters was limited to journalists in print media, although the list obtained clearly included members associated with broadcast media. Moreover, although the Education Writers Association is a specialized organization for journalists who cover or have an interest in education, it does not necessarily include all the reporters and commentators who might benefit from NCES data and services and who NCES would want to have use them. Finally, the NEDRC users list could be incomplete because of failure of NEDRC staff to record sufficient information about callers or correspondents, because some callers might have refused to provide identifying information, and because some people who tried to use NEDRC might have failed to contact the service (for instance, calling outside of working hours or getting a busy signal).

*Sampling Design*    The population was stratified into 37 types of customers (see table B-2 for stratum sizes). Note that some of the seven major types of customers were further stratified into subgroups and the number of levels of substratification varied from one customer group to another. Because these strata and substrata varied substantially in size, it was necessary to sample from them at different rates to achieve comparable precision across all strata.  Thus, in some strata, all individuals were selected. In others, representative samples were selected. Simple random sampling was the method used whenever sampling was undertaken. (See table B-2 for sample sizes for all strata.)

All 192 federal policymakers were sampled. Among state policymakers, simple random samples were drawn in the following substrata: National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL), state higher education executive officers (SHEEO), state higher education executive finance officers (SHEEFO), and chief officers of state library agencies (COSLA). All state policymakers were selected in the three remaining substrata—Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), governors' education policy advisors (GEPA), and state assessment directors. The total sample size for state policymakers was 307 in the 1999 survey.

The local policymakers sample totaled 1,216. As described under Frame Development, samples were drawn in both substrata of local policymakers— 766 public school districts with enrollment greater than zero for the elementary/secondary substratum and 450 institutions that offered at least an associate degree for the postsecondary substratum. The elementary/secondary substratum was further stratified by locale (a combination of urbanicity and size of city/town); this resulted in eight sub-substrata. The postsecondary substratum of local policymakers was substratified by level of institution (2-year vs. 4-year-and-above); highest degree offered (bachelor's degree, master's degree, doctorate/first-professional) within level, and type of control (public vs. private) within level and highest degree offered. There are eight sub-substrata within the postsecondary substatum of local policymakers. When there were multiple persons for a given school district or postsecondary institution, one policymaker was selected to represent that district or institution in the survey. Thus, the total number of local policymakers in the sample equals the total number of school districts and postsecondary institutions selected.

Among academic researchers, all 24 directors of OERI National Research and Development Centers and OERI Regional Educational Laboratories were selected. For the AERA substratum, a sample of 779 AERA members was randomly selected. A total of 803 academic researchers were included in the 1999 sample.

All 248 education associations were included in the sample. If multiple people were listed for a given association, one person was randomly selected to represent the association in the survey. The same was true for education reporters. One reporter for each of the 218 newspapers and magazines on the frame was selected for the sample.

A sample of 300 NEDRC users was drawn for the survey, evenly divided between the two substrata. There were 150 users of elementary/secondary data and 150 users of postsecondary data in the 1999 sample.

*Duplicates in the Sample*

The samples for the seven strata were combined into a single database which was then checked for duplicates within each stratum and substratum and also across all strata. If an individual appeared more than once within a substratum, only one entry was retained for the individual in that substratum. If an individual was found in two or more substrata within a stratum, one of the person's records was randomly selected so he or she counted in only one substratum within that stratum. However, if an individual appeared in more than one *stratum*, he or she was retained in all applicable strata. This situation was quite possible because of the new strata in the 1999 survey. For example, an individual might be both an AERA member counting as an academic researcher and a federal, state, or local policymaker. Similarly, a sample member in the NEDRC users stratum could well be a sample member in any of the other strata. There were also duplications between the state and local policymaker strata because the District of Columbia and Hawaii do not have local school districts: their "state" education officials are the equivalents of local superintendents and could appear in the local policymaker strata. Such individuals were considered to be "valid duplicates." Only one questionnaire was sent to these duplicates, but their survey responses were counted in all applicable strata, with proper adjustment of weights. The 1999 sample contained 11 valid duplicates. Eight of these duplicates involved NEDRC users; six of them were also in the federal policymaker stratum, one was in the education association stratum, and one was in both NEDRC substrata. Of the remaining three duplicates, one was an AERA member (academic researcher stratum) who was a federal policymaker; one was an AERA member (academic researcher stratum) who worked at an education association; and one was both a state and a local policymaker.

*Assignment to Recruitment Mode*

The 1999 survey had a split-mode design. That is, half of the sample was administered the survey by mail and the other half by e-mail message with a link to the survey on the World Wide Web. However, because the sources from which the sample was drawn did not always contain complete contact information (especially e-mail addresses), telephone calls were made to obtain the missing items for every member of the sample. We were not successful in obtaining an e-mail address for every member of the sample. To implement this split-mode design, sample members for whom e-mail addresses were available were assigned randomly to the e-mail recruitment mode until half the stratum had been so assigned; the remaining members with e-mail addresses, and all members without e-mail addresses, were assigned to the mail recruitment mode. Table B-1 shows the availability of e-mail addresses at the time this recruitement mode assignment was made within each of the seven major customer groups.

**Table B-1.—E-mail availability, by recruitment mode and customer group (percent)**

| Customer Group | Recruitment mode | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | E-mail | Mail | Total |
| Federal policymakers | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| State policymakers | 100 | 82 | 91 |
| Local policymakers | 100 | 15 | 57 |
| Academic researchers | 100 | 38 | 69 |
| Education associations | 100 | 90 | 95 |
| Education journalists | 100 | 77 | 89 |
| NEDRC Users | 100 | 63 | 82 |
| Total | 100 | 49 | 74 |

Table B-2 shows the distribution of both the population and the recruitment mode for the in-scope sample. The "adjusted population size" is an estimate of the population size based on the number of cases in the original sample found to be out-of-scope. The adjusted population size assumes that the proportion of the initial population out-of-scope was the same as the proportion of the sample found to be out-of-scope. The in-scope sample size is shown with the number of cases assigned to the two recruitment modes for the mail ("paper/pencil") and internet ("Web") surveys. A person who was sampled twice was asked to participate in the survey only once, and thus has only one "recruitment" mode, in one randomly chosen substratum. These people are accounted for in their other substrata in the "duplicate" column under the "In-scope sample by recruitment mode" header in table B-2.

**Table B-2.—Population and sample sizes for the 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey**

| | | | | In-scope sample by recruitment mode | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strata / Substrata | Initial population size | Adjusted population size | In-scope sample | Paper/ Pencil survey | Web survey | Dupli-cates* |
| **Federal policymakers** | **192** | **188** | **188** | **94** | **92** | **2** |
| Department of Education Senior Officers/Staff (ED) | 67 | 66 | 66 | 33 | 32 | 1 |
| National Science Foundation (NSF) | 10 | 9 | 9 | 4 | 5 | 0 |
| Executive Office of the President (EOP; i.e., Office of Management and Budget, OMB, and White House Domestic Policy Council) | 10 | 9 | 9 | 4 | 5 | 0 |
| Congressional Research Service (CRS)/ Congressional Budget Office (CBO) | 8 | 8 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| General Accounting Office—Education Staff (GAO) | 38 | 37 | 37 | 19 | 18 | 0 |
| Senate Committee on Labor & Human Resources, Subcommittees on Children & Families, and on Employment & Training | 16 | 16 | 16 | 8 | 8 | 0 |
| House Committee on Education & the Workforce, Subcommittees on Early Childhood, Youth, & Families: and on Postsecondary Education, Training, & Life-Long Learning | 43 | 43 | 43 | 22 | 21 | 0 |
| | | | | | | |
| **State policymakers** | | | | | | |
| House/Senate: National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL) | 92 | 92 | 65 | 32 | 33 | 0 |
| State Department of Education: Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) | 51 | 51 | 51 | 25 | 25 | 1 |
| State Department of Education: State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) and State Higher Education Executive Finance Offices (SHEEFO) | 107 | 107 | 60 | 30 | 30 | 0 |
| Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) | 52 | 52 | 25 | 14 | 11 | 0 |
| Governors Education Policy Advisors | 53 | 53 | 53 | 26 | 27 | 0 |
| State Assessment Directors | 53 | 53 | 53 | 27 | 26 | 0 |

## Table B-2.—Population and sample sizes for the 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey (continued)

| Strata / Substrata | Initial population size | Adjusted population size | In-scope sample | In-scope sample by recruitment mode | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Paper/ Pencil survey | Web survey | Dupli-cates* |
| **Local policymakers** | **19,577** | **19,501** | **1,211** | **612** | **599** | **0** |
| | | | | | | |
| **CCD (elementary/secondary school districts)** | **15,007** | **14,963** | **764** | **385** | **379** | **0** |
| Large central city | 298 | 298 | 34 | 18 | 16 | 0 |
| Mid-size central city | 903 | 903 | 60 | 30 | 30 | 0 |
| Urban fringe of large city | 2,880 | 2,880 | 134 | 69 | 65 | 0 |
| Urban fringe of mid-size city | 1,213 | 1,213 | 70 | 35 | 35 | 0 |
| Large town | 182 | 182 | 35 | 18 | 17 | 0 |
| Small town | 2,449 | 2,429 | 124 | 62 | 62 | 0 |
| Rural | 7,024 | 7,000 | 292 | 146 | 146 | 0 |
| Blank | 58 | 58 | 15 | 7 | 8 | 0 |
| | | | | | | |
| **IPEDS (postsecondary institutions)** | **4,570** | **4,538** | **447** | **230** | **220** | **0** |
| **4-year-and-above institutions** | **2,719** | **2,719** | **276** | **138** | **138** | **0** |
| Doctorate/First-professional degree | **976** | **976** | **96** | **48** | **48** | **0** |
| Public | 263 | 263 | 30 | 15 | 15 | 0 |
| Private | 713 | 713 | 66 | 33 | 33 | 0 |
| | | | | | | |
| Master's degree | **934** | **934** | **90** | **45** | **45** | |
| Public | 269 | 269 | 30 | 15 | 15 | 0 |
| Private | 665 | 665 | 60 | 30 | 30 | 0 |
| | | | | | | |
| Bachelor's degree | **809** | **809** | **90** | **45** | **45** | |
| Public | 95 | 95 | 20 | 10 | 10 | 0 |
| Private | 714 | 714 | 70 | 35 | 35 | 0 |
| | | | | | | |
| **2-year institutions** | **1,851** | **1,819** | **171** | **89** | **82** | **0** |
| Public | 1,104 | 1,104 | 105 | 53 | 52 | 0 |
| Private | 747 | 715 | 66 | 36 | 30 | 0 |
| | | | | | | |
| **Academic researchers** | **19,169** | **19,022** | **797** | **398** | **398** | **1** |
| American Educ. Research Assoc. (AERA) | 19,145 | 18,998 | 773 | 386 | 386 | 1 |
| OERI R&D Centers/Regional Educ. Labs | 24 | 24 | 24 | 12 | 12 | 0 |
| | | | | | | |
| **Education associations** | **248** | **247** | **247** | **123** | **123** | **1** |
| | | | | | | |
| **Education journalists** | **394** | **390** | **216** | **108** | **108** | **0** |
| | | | | | | |
| **NEDRC users** | **723** | **699** | **290** | **148** | **142** | **0** |
| Elementary/secondary survey data | 365 | 353 | 145 | 75 | 70 | 0 |
| Postsecondary survey data | 358 | 346 | 145 | 73 | 72 | 0 |
| | | | | | | |
| **GRAND TOTAL** | **40,711** | **40,455** | **3,256** | **1,637** | **1,614** | **5** |

* The "duplicate" column indicates the number of members of the in-scope sample in each substratum who were not assigned to a recruitment mode. Each of these cases was assigned to a recruitment mode in its other substratum.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 NCES Customer Satisfaction Survey.

The "adjusted population size" is an estimate of the population size based on the number of cases in the original sample found to be out-of-scope. The adjusted population size assumes that the proportion of the initial population out-of-scope was the same as the proportion of the sample found to be out-of-scope. The in-scope sample size is shown with the number of cases assigned to the two recruitment modes for the mail ("paper/pencil") and internet ("Web") surveys. The "duplicate" column indicates the number of members of the in-scope sample in each substratum who were not assigned to a recruitment mode. Each of these cases was assigned to a recruitment mode in its other substratum.

*Survey Operations*  Data collection took place over a period of about 18 weeks, beginning on May 28 and ending on October 17, 1999. On May 28, e-mail messages were sent to the 1,631 sample members in the Web group. On June 3, paper questionnaires were mailed to the 1,642 sample members in the mail group. The initial mode of delivery is referred to as the "recruitment" mode. These numbers exclude the 11 valid duplicates described above; just one questionnaire was sent to each of these individuals.

About 18 percent of the first e-mail messages were returned as undeliverable within a few days of being sent out. The applicable sample members were called in an effort to obtain their correct e-mail addresses. Then the initial message was re-sent in three additional waves to individuals for whom new e-mail addresses were obtained. Some attempts failed continuously even though the sample members had been contacted by telephone for correction of their e-mail addresses. By the end of the fourth wave, a total of 440 messages sent to 337 sample members (20.7 percent of the Web group) had come back as undeliverable. Eventually, survey packets were mailed to 44 members who could not be reached by e-mail (either because of continued delivery failures or because the members were not available by telephone to correct their e-mail addresses). Thus, the mail survey became their actual "contact" mode. Similarly, e-mail messages were eventually sent to two sample members in the mail group because complete mailing addresses were not available for them; the Web survey then became their contact mode.

Nonrespondents in the Web group received up to three reminder notices. The first reminder was sent about 1 week after the initial e-mail message; the second reminder was sent 2 weeks later; and the third reminder was sent in another 3 weeks. In the initial e-mail message, as well as in all reminder notices, Web sample members were given the option of downloading a PDF version of the questionnaire on the Web site, completing it on paper, and then returning it by mail or fax.

The mail data collection included four reminder notices. A postcard reminder

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was sent out about 1 week after the initial mailing of survey packets, each of which contained a cover letter, questionnaire, and reply envelope. Two weeks later, another full packet of survey materials was mailed to individuals for whom a questionnaire had not yet been received. In another 2 weeks, a third reminder was mailed to nonrespondents. This reminder contained a letter encouraging participation in the survey and, for the first time, offering nonrespondents the option of completing the survey on the Web; no questionnaire was included in this reminder mailing. About 3 weeks after the third reminder, an e-mail message was sent to mail sample members for whom e-mail addresses were available.

Telephone follow up of nonrespondents began on July 21 with the web sample members; follow up of the mail sample members began on August 5. Telephone follow up continued through September 29. Questionnaires continued to arrive at the contractor's address by mail or fax, or to be completed on the Web site, after September 29. This trickle had largely ceased by October 17 and no responses received after that date were tabulated or counted in the response rate. The important dates in the data collection process are listed in table B-3.

**Table B-3.—Key dates during data collection period**

| World Wide Web data collection | | Mail data collection | |
|---|---|---|---|
| First e-mail | May 28 | Initial mailing | June 3 |
| Repeat e-mail to corrected addresses | June 4 June 11 | Reminder postcard | June 11 |
| Second e-mail | June 7 | Second mailing | June 24 |
| Third e-mail | June 22 | Third mailing (Web info, no questionnaire | July 8 |
| Fourth e-mail | July 13 | E-mail reminder | July 28 |
| Start telephone follow up | July 21 | Start telephone follow up | August 5 |
| End telephone follow up | September 29 | End telephone follow up | September 29 |
| Survey closure | October 17 | Survey closure | October 17 |

All paper questionnaires had identification numbers so that they could be assigned to the proper stratum and so that telephone follow up could be directed to nonrespondents. (Web responses could be identified by an access code provided to respondents in the initial e-mail message and required for entry into the questionnaire pages.) However, in the initial mailing these numbers were stamped on the back cover. The inside of the back cover contained a list of useful URLs for the NCES Web site, and some respondents tore off that page before mailing in their responses. In 2 cases, the respondent was identified, and in 5 cases, a stratum could be inferred from the answers to particular questions; for example, a respondent who used the data for writing news articles could be assigned to the education journalist stratum. Such cases were treated like identifiable responses for all purposes, including weighting.

Seven questionnaires could not be used or counted in the response rate.

*Unit Response Rates*  During the data collection phase, 28 out-of-scope cases were identified (see table B-5). Subtracting the out-of-scope cases from the sample provided a total in-scope sample of 3,256. The final response rate was 78.7 percent— calculated as the number of completed interviews divided by the sampled respondents minus respondents considered to be out-of-scope (see table B-6). Among the 2,563 responding cases, 945 were completed by mail (36.9 percent), 776 were completed by Web (30.3 percent), 744 were completed in the telephone follow up (29.0 percent), 66 were completed by fax (2.6 percent), and 32 were imputed (1.2 percent). (See table B-6 on page B-18.)

Considering the six primary strata, the highest response rate occurred among the education associations (85.4 percent), while the lowest occurred among federal policymakers (71.8 percent).

**Table B-4.—Number of responses by mode and overall for 1999 NCES Customer Satisfaction Survey**

| Stratum | Responses | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Web | Mail | Fax | Telephone | Imputed | Overall |
| **Federal policymakers** | **45** | **53** | **2** | **35** | **0** | **135** |
| U.S. Dept. of Education | 16 | 22 | 1 | 13 | 0 | 52 |
| Nat'l. Science Foundation | 3 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| EOP (OMB/White House) | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 6 |
| Congressional Res. Service/CBO | 3 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 7 |
| GAO | 12 | 15 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 35 |
| Senate | 1 | 5 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 10 |
| USHR | 7 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 0 | 17 |
| **State policymakers** | **64** | **93** | **17** | **60** | **2** | **236** |
| NCSL | 6 | 6 | 0 | 19 | 0 | 31 |
| CCSSO | 8 | 21 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 39 |
| SHEEO/SHEEFO | 18 | 19 | 7 | 9 | 1 | 54 |
| COSLA | 6 | 15 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 23 |
| Gov. education advisors | 14 | 13 | 2 | 12 | 1 | 42 |
| Assessment directors | 12 | 19 | 3 | 13 | 0 | 47 |
| **Local policymakers** | **273** | **352** | **26** | **302** | **10** | **963** |
| Large city | 6 | 10 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 26 |
| Mid-size city | 11 | 16 | 2 | 14 | 1 | 44 |
| Large city fringe | 28 | 35 | 0 | 24 | 0 | 87 |
| Mid city fringe | 8 | 20 | 1 | 19 | 2 | 50 |
| Large town | 7 | 9 | 1 | 9 | 1 | 27 |
| Small town | 25 | 31 | 4 | 36 | 0 | 96 |
| Rural | 56 | 75 | 4 | 94 | 4 | 233 |
| LEA Blank | 4 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 14 |
| Doctorate Public | 10 | 11 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 25 |
| Doctorate Private | 21 | 20 | 1 | 12 | 1 | 55 |
| Master's Public | 9 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 0 | 22 |
| Master's Private | 15 | 20 | 1 | 19 | 0 | 55 |
| Bachelor's Public | 8 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 14 |
| Bachelor's Private | 16 | 23 | 2 | 16 | 0 | 57 |
| 2-year Public | 32 | 43 | 2 | 21 | 1 | 99 |
| 2-year Private | 17 | 24 | 2 | 16 | 0 | 59 |
| **Education associations** | **191** | **242** | **8** | **159** | **6** | **606** |
| AERA | 185 | 233 | 6 | 157 | 6 | 587 |
| OERI | 6 | 9 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 19 |
| **Education associations** | **70** | **68** | **9** | **60** | **4** | **211** |
| **Education journalists** | **39** | **47** | **1** | **85** | **0** | **172** |
| **NEDRC users** | **94** | **90** | **3** | **43** | **10** | **240** |
| NEDRC El.em./Sec. | 47 | 39 | 1 | 25 | 5 | 117 |
| NEDRC Higher Educ. | 47 | 51 | 2 | 18 | 5 | 123 |
| *Total* | *776* | *945* | *66* | *744* | *32* | *2,563* |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 NCES Customer Satisfaction Survey.

**Table B-5.—Status of nonrespondents and out-of-scope cases for 1999 NCES Customer Satisfaction Survey**

| Stratum | No response | Refusal | Unlocatable | Total nonrespondents | Dec'd. | Ret'd. | Ineligible | Invalid | Institution closed | Total out-of-scope |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Federal policymakers** | **23** | **27** | **3** | **53** | **0** | **1** | **3** | **0** | **0** | **4** |
| U.S. Dept. of Education | 5 | 8 | 1 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Nat'l. Science Foundation | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| EOP (OMB/White House) | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Congressional Res. Serv./CBO | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| GAO | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Senate | 2 | 4 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| USHR | 10 | 14 | 2 | 26 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **State policymakers** | **44** | **22** | **5** | **71** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **0** |
| NCSL | 22 | 8 | 4 | 34 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| CCSSO | 5 | 7 | 0 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SHEEO/SHEEFO | 6 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| COSLA | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Gov. education advisors | 6 | 5 | 0 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Assessment directors | 3 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Local policymakers** | **168** | **75** | **5** | **248** | **0** | **0** | **3** | **0** | **2** | **5** |
| Large city | 6 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mid-size city | 11 | 5 | 0 | 16 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Large city fringe | 30 | 15 | 2 | 47 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mid city fringe | 15 | 5 | 0 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Large town | 7 | 1 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Small town | 20 | 7 | 1 | 28 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Rural | 33 | 25 | 1 | 59 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| LEA Blank | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Doctorate Public | 4 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Doctorate Private | 8 | 3 | 0 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Master's Public | 5 | 3 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Master's Private | 4 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bachelor's Public | 4 | 2 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bachelor's Private | 10 | 3 | 0 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2-year Public | 5 | 1 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2-year Private | 6 | 1 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 3 |
| **Education associations** | **114** | **32** | **45** | **191** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **0** | **0** | **6** |
| AERA | 110 | 31 | 45 | 186 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| OERI | 4 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Education associations** | **26** | **8** | **2** | **36** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **1** | **0** | **1** |
| **Education journalists** | **31** | **10** | **3** | **44** | **0** | **0** | **2** | **0** | **0** | **2** |
| **NEDRC users** | **27** | **15** | **8** | **50** | **1** | **7** | **1** | **1** | **0** | **10** |
| NEDRC El.em./Sec. | 15 | 8 | 5 | 28 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 5 |
| NEDRC Higher Educ. | 12 | 7 | 3 | 22 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| *Total* | *433* | *189* | *71* | *693* | *2* | *10* | *12* | *2* | *2* | *28* |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 NCES Customer Satisfaction Survey.

**Table B-6.—Unweighted and weighted response rates for 1999 NCES Customer Satisfaction Survey**

| Stratum | Total sample | In-scope | Unweighted response rate | Weighted response rate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Federal policymakers** | **192** | **188** | **71.8%** | **71.8%** |
| U.S. Dept. of Education | 67 | 66 | 78.8% | |
| Nat'l. Science Foundation | 10 | 9 | 88.9% | |
| EOP (OMB/White House) | 10 | 9 | 66.7% | |
| Congressional Res. Serv. | 8 | 8 | 87.5% | |
| GAO | 38 | 37 | 94.6% | |
| Senate | 16 | 16 | 62.5% | |
| USHR | 43 | 43 | 39.5% | |
| **State policymakers** | **307** | **307** | **76.9%** | **77.4%** |
| NCSL | 65 | 65 | 47.7% | |
| CCSSO | 51 | 51 | 76.5% | |
| SHEEO/SHEEFO | 60 | 60 | 90.0% | |
| COSLA | 25 | 25 | 92.0% | |
| Gov. Education Advisors | 53 | 53 | 79.2% | |
| Assessment Directors | 53 | 53 | 88.7% | |
| **Local policymakers** | **1,216** | **1,211** | **79.5%** | **78.1%** |
| Large city | 34 | 34 | 76.5% | |
| Mid-size city | 60 | 60 | 73.3% | |
| Large city fringe | 134 | 134 | 64.9% | |
| Mid city fringe | 70 | 70 | 71.4% | |
| Large town | 35 | 35 | 77.1% | |
| Small town | 125 | 124 | 77.4% | |
| Rural | 293 | 292 | 79.8% | |
| LEA Blank | 15 | 15 | 93.3% | |
| Doctorate Public | 30 | 30 | 83.3% | |
| Doctorate Private | 66 | 66 | 83.3% | |
| Master's Public | 30 | 30 | 73.3% | |
| Master's Private | 60 | 60 | 91.7% | |
| Bachelor's Public | 20 | 20 | 70.0% | |
| Bachelor's Private | 70 | 70 | 81.4% | |
| 2-year Public | 105 | 105 | 94.3% | |
| 2-year Private | 69 | 66 | 89.4% | |
| **Academic researchers** | **803** | **797** | **76.0%** | **75.9%** |
| AERA | 779 | 773 | 75.9% | |
| OERI | 24 | 24 | 79.2% | |
| **Education associations** | **248** | **247** | **85.4%** | **85.4%** |
| **Education journalists** | **218** | **216** | **79.6%** | **79.6%** |
| **NEDRC users** | **300** | **290** | **82.8%** | **82.7%** |
| NEDRC El.em./Sec. | 150 | 145 | 80.7% | |
| NEDRC Higher Educ. | 150 | 145 | 84.8% | |
| *Total* | *3,284* | *3,256* | *78.7%* | *77.2* |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 NCES Customer Satisfaction Survey.

*Item Response Rates*  NCES Standard III-02-92 stipulates that item response rates ($R_i$) "are to be calculated as the ratio of the number of respondents for which an in-scope response was obtained to the number of completed interviews for which the question (or questions if a composite variable) was intended to be asked."

For calculating item response rates, questions composed of several subitems were considered together; a participant was counted as having provided a response if at least *one* of the subitems had been answered. Table B-7 shows item response rates for all questions in the survey. Questions in bold are critical items, and questions in italics are open-ended items.

The median item response rate for closed-ended items was 93.6 percent, and the last closed-ended item had the lowest response rate, 79.7 percent. The placement of the last closed-ended item in the mail questionnaire and the accompanying skip instructions seem to have been confusing or misleading. The response rate for those who filled out a questionnaire on paper and mailed or faxed it back was only 75.8 percent; in telephone interviews, where the same questionnaire was used, it was only 78.2 percent. However, on the web version, where the skip pattern was automated, the item response rate was 89.6 percent.

The open-ended items had very low response rates: the median item response rate for open-ended items was 9.6 percent. These items required respondents to describe the "other" aspects of publications, databases, etc., that they wished to rate, or their "other" reasons for not using NCES products or services; apparently, few survey participants chose to provide this detail: less than 20 percent at most, and for one item only 7.3 percent.

**Table B-7.—Item response rates for 1999 NCES Customer Satisfaction Survey**

| Survey question number/question wording (abbreviated) | Number of items | Item response rate (percent) |
|---|---|---|
| A1    Heard of NCES? | 1 | 97.5 |
| A2    Aware that NCES is a part of U.S. Dept. of Ed.? | 1 | 93.6 |
| A3    Used NCES publications in past two years? | 1 | 100.0 |
| A4    Form of publications used | 1 | 92.5 |
| A5    Frequency of use of NCES publications | 1 | 93.7 |
| **A6    Satisfaction with NCES compendium publications** | **3** | **98.0** |
| **A7a1 through A7e6    Satisfaction with NCES survey publications** | **29** | **98.0** |
| A8    Usefulness of publication formats | 5 | 92.0 |
| A9    Satisfaction with aspects of publications | 6 | 91.6 |
| *A9other    Satisfaction with any other aspect of publications* | *1* | *10.3* |
| A10    Ranking the importance of aspects of publications | 5 | 89.6 |
| A11    Reasons why publications not used | 8 | 94.5 |
| *A11other  Any other reason not used publications?* | *1* | *19.9* |
| B1    Used NCES databases/user tools in past two years? | 1 | 100.0 |
| B2    Frequency of use of NCES databases/user tools | 1 | 85.3 |
| B3    Satisfaction with NCES user tools | **4** | **94.5** |
| **B4a1 through B4e4    Satisfaction with NCES survey databases** | **17** | **96.3** |
| B5    Satisfaction with aspects of databases/user tools | 8 | 87.3 |
| *B5other    Satisfaction with any other aspect of databases and user tools* | *1* | *7.3* |
| B6    Ranking the importance of aspects of databases/user tools | 6 | 87.3 |
| B7    Reasons why databases/user tools not used | 9 | 90.8 |
| *B7other    Any other reason not used databases/user tools?* | *1* | *13.7* |
| C1    Know how to contact NCES? | 1 | 93.9 |
| C2    Used NCES services in past two years? | 1 | 100.0 |
| C3    Frequency of use of NCES services | 1 | 92.1 |
| *C4    Satisfaction with NCES services* | **5** | **97.6** |
| *C5    Satisfaction with services on NCES Web Site* | **6** | **95.5** |
| C6    Satisfaction with online data access tools | 4 | 90.5 |
| C7    Satisfaction with aspects of NCES services | 11 | 91.7 |
| *C7other    Satisfaction with any other aspect of NCES services* | *1* | *8.6* |
| C8    Reasons why NCES services not used | 10 | 91.8 |
| *C8other    Any other reason not used NCES services?* | *1* | *9.1* |
| D1    How recently used NCES publications, databases, user tools, or services? | 1 | 81.8 |
| D2    Purposes for which use NCES publications, databases, user tools, or services? | 12 | 99.6 |
| D3    How found about NCES publications, databases, user tools, or services? | 10 | 97.4 |
| **D4    Obtained education info. from organizations other than NCES in past 2 years?** | **1** | **79.7** |

*Weighting*
*Procedures*

The 1999 NCES Customer Satisfaction Survey used a stratified random sampling design.  Therefore, in each stratum or substratum, a sample mean or percentage based on responses from all of the sampled units is an unbiased estimate of the population mean or percentage.  However, since not all the sampled units in each stratum responded to the survey, data are available for the respondents only. The nonrespondents, if they had responded, might have answered differently from the respondents.  In that case an estimate based only on the respondents would be biased.  However, we recontacted a subsample of nonrespondents (see Appendix F), and from their replies to a subset of items in the questionnaire, we concluded that the nonrespondents are not significantly different from the actual respondents.  Thus, an estimate based solely on the respondents would have small or negligible bias, and there is no need to adjust the results for nonresponse.  Each response was assigned a weight equal to $N_h/n_h$, where $n_h$ = the number of respondents in stratum $h$, $N_h$ = the estimated size of the population of stratum $h$, $Sn_h = n$, and $SN_h = N$.  Initial population estimates, based on actual counts, were adjusted on the basis of indications of cases that were out of scope (see table B-2 on page B-11).

Since five respondents in the sample appeared in two strata/substrata, two weighting schemes have to be developed for these five responses depending on whether an estimate is developed at the stratum level or the whole population. In the case of a stratum level estimate, all the respondents receive a weight of one. In the case of the whole population estimate, each of the five respondents is randomly assigned to one of the two strata that the respondent belongs to, and is assigned a weight of one; a weight of zero is assigned for the other stratum. The following chart shows the weighting scheme for these five respondents.

| Respondent | Stratum | |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| 1 | Federal Policymakers<br>Weight = 1 | NEDRC Users<br>Weight = 0 |
| 2 | Federal Policymakers<br>Weight = 0 | NEDRC Users<br>Weight = 1 |
| 3 | Federal Policymakers<br>Weight = 0 | NEDRC Users<br>Weight = 1 |
| 4 | Federal Policymakers<br>Weight = 1 | NEDRC Users<br>Weight = 0 |
| 5 | Federal Policymakers<br>Weight = 0 | Academic Researchers<br>Weight = 1 |

*Standard Error Calculations of Percentages within a Stratum or Substratum*

Let

$p_h$ = sample percentage in stratum or substratum $h$,

$n_h$ = the number of respondents in stratum or substratum $h$, and

$N_h$ = the population size of stratum or substratum $h$.

The estimate of the standard error of any estimated percentage ($p_h$) from the $h^{th}$ stratum or substratum, when the sampling fraction $\dfrac{n_h}{N_h}$ is small, is approximately equal to $\sqrt{\dfrac{p_h(100-p_h)}{n_h-1}}$. If the sampling fraction $(\dfrac{n_h}{N_h})$ is not small, the above formula must be modified by a quantity known as the finite population correction factor and the estimate of the standard error of $p_h$ is equal to:

$$\sqrt{\frac{(N_h-n_h)}{N_h}\frac{p_h(100-p_h)}{n_h-1}}$$

*Standard Error Calculations for Percentages across Strata or Substrata*

The combined estimated percentage ($p$) over $k$ strata or substrata is obtained as follows:

$$p = \frac{\sum\limits_{h=1}^{k} N_h p_h}{\sum\limits_{h=1}^{k} N_h}$$

The estimate of the sampling variance of $p$ is obtained as follows:

$$v(p) = \sum_{h=1}^{k} \frac{(N_h-n_h)N_h \cdot p_h(100-p_h)}{N^2(n_h-1)}$$

where $N = \sum\limits_{h=1}^{k} N_h$

and the estimate of the standard error of p is as follows:

$$s.e.(p) = \sqrt{\sum_{h=1}^{k} \frac{(N_h-n_h)N_h \cdot p_h(100-p_h)}{N^2(n_h-1)}}$$

*Confidence*
*Intervals*

Intervals can be constructed for different confidence levels once the standard error (s.e.) is estimated. For example, a 95 percent confidence interval for the unknown population percentage is given by *p - 1.96* (s.e.), *p + 1.96* (s.e.), where 1.96 is the normal deviate corresponding to 95 percent probability.

*Statistical Tests*

The standard statistical theory of testing hypotheses must be used to compare two estimates. A difference between two estimates is statistically significant when it can be concluded with sufficient confidence that they are unequal in the two subpopulations. In other words, the percentages, $p_1$ and $p_2$, from two independent samples (for example, two strata) can be compared to find out if they are significantly different (i.e., if the corresponding population percentages $P_1$ and $P_2$ are different) using the following formula:

$$t = \frac{p_1 - p_2}{\sqrt{\dfrac{p_1(100 - p_1)}{n_1 - 1} + \dfrac{p_2(100 - p_2)}{n_2 - 1}}}$$

where $p_1$ and $p_2$ are the observed sample percentages, $n_1$ and $n_2$ are the corresponding number of respondents (assumed to be larger than 20), and when the sampling fractions are small.

If, however, the sampling fractions are not small, the finite population correction factors must be taken into account and the corresponding $t$ has the following form:

$$t = \frac{p_1 - p_2}{\sqrt{\dfrac{(N_1 - n_1)p_1(100 - p_1)}{N_1(n_1 - 1)} + \dfrac{(N_2 - n_2)p_2(100 - p_2)}{N_2(n_2 - 1)}}}$$

where $N_1$ and $N_2$ are the population sizes.

If the null hypothesis $H_0: P_1 = P_2$ is tested against the alternative hypothesis $H_A: P_1 \neq P_2$, a two-tailed test is performed. That is, if $|t|$ is greater than 1.96 (normal deviate), the null hypothesis is rejected at a 5 percent level of significance. (Note: All differences of percentages included in this report were significant when tested at the 5 percent level of significance.)

For comparing two non-overlapping percentages, $p_1$ and $p_2$, within the same stratum (when these two percentages do not add to 100), we have used the following formula (a modification of the usual $t$ test):

$$t = \frac{p_1 - p_2}{\sqrt{\left[\frac{(N-n)}{N(n-1)}\right]\left[2p_1(100 - p_1) + 2p_2(100 - p_2) - (p_1 + p_2)(100 - p_1 - p_2)\right]}}$$

where,

$N$ is equal to the stratum size

$n$ is equal to the number of respondents in the stratum

$p_1$ and $p_2$ are the two observed sample percentages.

This modification of the usual $t$-test is necessary because we can not assume that the two response groups from the same stratum are independent samples from two populations.

*Bonferroni Adjustment*

When we make comparisons between the strata, common statistical practice requires that the procedure be done in such a way as to control for error in the decision process. For example, when we say that there is a significant difference between two stratum means, we are able to say we are at least 95 percent confident there is a real difference in the population, not just a random difference due to sampling.

All possible pairwise comparisons between the seven strata (21 total) can be analyzed simultaneously with the data. The more comparisons that are made, the greater the potential that some of these comparisons will be declared significant when they are actually not different in the population. In this case, additional statistical measures are employed to control the overall error of the decision process.

One of the common procedures is to apply the Bonferroni adjustment. For 21 comparisons, we use the critical value of 3.25 corresponding to the Type I error set equal to (0.05/21) for each comparison, instead of 1.96 at the usual 5 percent level of significance.

# Appendix C: Analysis of Response Mode

NCES decided to use a split-mode administration in 1999, where half of the sample received a paper survey by mail and the other half of the sample received an e-mail message containing a link to the survey on the World Wide Web. Half the sample was assigned to each of these two modes of data collection in order to determine if there were any systematic differences in response rates or in responses that might be attributable to the method of data collection.

The use of two combinations of recruitment mode also permits comparison of the relative effectiveness of the newer, electronic methods with the traditional mail methods. Compared to mail administration, electronic survey administration has several important advantages.

- It is faster.
- It is cheaper because there are no printing or postage costs.
- It is cheaper because it is not necessary to go through a keying process to convert responses on paper into electronic records for analysis.
- It is more accurate because bypassing the keying of responses eliminates a source of error.

Electronic administration may be more convenient for respondents as well, because they do not have to find writing instruments to fill out the questionnaires, keep track of reply envelopes, and remember to mail them. Therefore, it was hoped that initial response rates (prior to telephone follow up) would be higher than in 1997 when only a mail mode was available. If that were the case, the reduced need for expensive telephone follow up would have created additional cost savings.

*Effect of mail versus Web data collection on response rates prior to telephone follow up*

The split-mode (Web vs. mail) administration experiment ended when telephone follow up began. The electronic group was contacted by telephone 7½ weeks after the initial e-mails, and the mail group was given the opportunity to reply electronically in a mailing sent out 7½ weeks after the first mailing. Telephone follow up for the mail group began 9 weeks after the initial mailing.

The response rate for the web group at the point at which telephone follow-up began was slightly lower than the response rate for the mail group at the same juncture:  43 percent versus 50 percent.  About equal proportions of the respondents in both groups were "crossovers" who took advantage of opportunities to use the other response method.  The web site included an option for respondents to download the questionnaire, print it on their own printers, and then mail or fax it to the contractor.  The last mailing to the mail group included the web site address.  These opportunities were provided to maximize the overall response rate and

minimize expensive telephone follow-up.  See table C-3 for details.

The 1999 response rate prior to telephone follow up was 18 percentage points higher than in 1997, an increase from 27 percent to 45 percent. This substantial reduction in the need for telephoning was probably due to both the greater variety of response modes offered to all members of the sample and to more extensive pre-telephone follow-up contacts.

*Effect of mail versus Web data collection on final response rates*

Although the Web site and associated e-mail contacts were designed to replicate the paper questionnaire and accompanying letters as closely as possible, it was not known in advance if there would be any systematic differences in final response rates that might be attributable to the method of data collection.

Table C-1 shows the final response rates to the survey by mode of initial contact. Within the period before telephone follow up, the mail and Web groups received equivalent follow-up response reminders; see table B-2. After the initial mailing of a letter from the Commissioner of NCES and a questionnaire, the paper group received a reminder postcard, another letter from the Commissioner with a questionnaire, and a third letter (with no questionnaire) before telephone follow up was initiated; the mailings that included questionnaires also included return envelopes. The Web group received a series of e-mail messages that included the Web site address and the addressee's access code instead of a questionnaire and envelope. The content of the e-mail messages was similar to the letters except for the instructions about how to respond. After several messages, telephone follow up was initiated with the Web group. Thus, the two groups received equivalent treatment to the extent possible.

**Table C-1.—Final response rate, by recruitment mode**

| Recruitment mode | Number of cases* | Number of responses | Response rate (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Paper | 1,630 | 1,295 | 79 |
| Web | 1,616 | 1,258 | 78 |

*Excluding 10 duplicates and 28 out of scope (1 duplicate was also out of scope).
NOTE: "Recruitment mode" refers to original assignment and approach, not to how the response was eventually obtained.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

As table C-1 shows, there was no significant difference in final response rate between the recruitment groups (79 percent for mail and 78 percent for Web). The last letter to the paper group included the Web site address and an access code so that the paper group could respond electronically, some members of the Web group had to be approached through the mail when their e-mail addresses proved to be invalid, and some recruited via e-mail requested that paper questionnaires be mailed to them. However,

beginning survey recruitment with e-mail messages did not significantly reduce the response rate in comparison to the group treated with the more traditional approach.

However, response rates were higher from the mail recruitment group than from the Web recruitment group within two strata: federal policymakers, and state policymakers. See table C-2.

**Table C-2.—Final response rate, by recruitment mode and stratum**

| Stratum | N | Recruitment mode | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Web (%) | Paper (%) |
| Federal policymakers | 186 | 67 | 78 |
| State policymakers | 304 | 73 | 81 |
| Local policymakers | 1,210 | 80 | 79 |
| Academic researchers | 795 | 75 | 77 |
| Education associations | 246 | 85 | 87 |
| Education journalists | 215 | 80 | 79 |
| NEDRC users | 290 | 83 | 82 |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

Table C-3 shows how responses were ultimately obtained from each recruitment mode group. Most of the respondents recruited by e-mail responded through the Web site, whereas most of the respondents recruited by regular mail used the postal service to respond.

**Table C-3.—Distribution of response mode (percent), overall and by recruitment mode**

| Response mode | All respondents | Recruitment mode | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Web | Paper |
| Web site | 30 | 59 | 3 |
| Mail | 37 | 4 | 68 |
| Fax | 3 | 4 | 1 |
| Telephone | 30 | 33 | 28 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

Table C-4 shows response rates before telephone follow up began by stratum and recruitment mode.  Pre-telephone response rates were significantly lower for the web group within the state policymaker, local policymaker, and academic researcher strata, and in the user population as a whole.

**Table C-4.—Response rates (percent) before telephone follow up, by stratum and recruitment mode**

| Stratum | Overall | Recruitment mode | |
|---------|---------|-----|-------|
| | | Web | Paper |
| Federal policymakers | 45 | 44 | 46 |
| State policymakers | 49 | 43 | 55 |
| Local policymakers | 46 | 42 | 50 |
| Academic researchers | 46 | 42 | 50 |
| Education associations | 50 | 49 | 51 |
| Education journalists | 34 | 28 | 40 |
| NEDRC users | 56 | 57 | 54 |
| Total | 47 | 43 | 50 |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

*Effect of mail versus Web data collection on responses*

Although the way in which customers were initially contacted and asked to participate in the survey generally did not produce large differences in response rates, it is possible that the responses themselves would be different depending on how they were obtained. This could have happened because the data collection mode itself influenced responses, or because there were systematic differences between the types of people in the web and mail samples. For instance, those who had e-mail and web access and used it to respond might have been more satisfied with NCES data bases than were customers who either did not have e-mail (and thus had to be assigned to the mail recruitment mode) or chose not to use it (and thus had to be followed up by telephone). The remaining pages in this chapter present comparisons of satisfaction levels among the three different response modes—web, mail, and telephone—for a selected set of the items. The analysis represents items from each of the sections of the questionnaire.

*Comparisons of responses to items on NCES publications, by response mode*

Table C-5 shows the responses to a question about satisfaction with a widely used NCES publication, *The Condition of Education.* Overall, NCES customers who responded by the different modes did not differ in their satisfaction with *The Condition of Education.*

**Table C-5.—Satisfaction with *The Condition of Education*, by response mode (percent)**

| Response mode | Very dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied | Satisfied | Very satisfied |
|---------------|-------------------|--------------|------------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Mail or fax | 1.13 | 0.96 | 5.22 | 58.10 | 34.58 |
| Web site | 0.92 | 0.14 | 4.09 | 58.99 | 35.85 |
| Telephone | 1.08 | 0 | 9.64 | 55.07 | 34.22 |
| Total | 1.05 | 0.49 | 5.79 | 57.75 | 34.92 |

Similarly, the usefulness rating of NCES issue briefs did not differ by response mode (see table C-6).

**Table C-6.—Reported usefulness of NCES issue briefs, by response mode (percent)**

| Response mode | Not useful | Useful | Very useful |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mail or fax | 1.91 | 78.83 | 19.26 |
| Web site | 1.24 | 68.28 | 30.48 |
| Telephone | 0.17 | 67.51 | 32.31 |
| Total | 1.33 | 72.67 | 26.01 |

The final publication item analyzed by response mode looked for differences in the mean rating of five aspects of NCES publications. Because respondents were asked to rank only the top three aspects, it is impossible to determine which one was the least important. Therefore, the "mean" is derived by assigning a value of 3 to the aspect rated most important, a value of 2 to the aspect rated second most important, a value of 1 to the aspect rated third most important, and a value of 0 to the two aspects not rated in the top three, and dividing the sum of these values by the number of respondents who rated at least one aspect.

There were no differences in users' ranking of timeliness or ease of understanding of NCES publications by response mode, but there were differences for the other three aspects (see table C-7). The mail or fax group rated accuracy as more important (1.90) than the Web (1.50) and telephone groups (1.55), and both the telephone and Web groups rated comprehensiveness (0.94 and 0.91, respectively) higher than the mail or fax group (0.74). The Web group rated relevance (1.48) higher than the mail or fax group (1.27).

**Table C-7.—Users' mean ranking of important aspects of NCES publications, by response mode**

| Response mode | Mean ranking | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Accuracy | Relevance | Timeliness | Comprehen-siveness | Ease of understanding |
| Mail or fax | 1.90 | 1.27 | 1.27 | 0.74 | 0.81 |
| Web site | 1.50 | 1.48 | 1.35 | 0.91 | 0.74 |
| Telephone | 1.55 | 1.37 | 1.24 | 0.94 | 0.86 |
| Total | 1.69 | 1.36 | 1.29 | 0.84 | 0.79 |

*Comparisons of
responses to items
on NCES databases
and user tools, by
response mode*

Two aspects of NCES databases and user tools were examined to
determine if satisfaction levels differed by response mode: documentation
and accuracy (see tables C-8 and C-9). Results show that there was no
response mode effect, as evidenced by the absence of differences in levels
of satisfaction between the mail or Web respondents with either of these
aspects. Also, there were no differences in satisfactions levels for these
aspects between telephone respondents and either mail or Web
respondents except that telephone respondents were more likely to be
"very satisfied" with database documentation (41 percent) than either the
mail (12 percent) or Web respondents (13 percent). Also, a greater
proportion of telephone respondents were "very satisfied" with the
accuracy of NCES databases and user tools (45 percent) than the Web
respondents (18 percent).

**Table C-8.—Satisfaction with documentation of NCES user tools and
databases, by response mode (percent)**

| Response mode | Very Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied | Satisfied | Very satisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mail or fax | 1.09 | 8.24 | 11.50 | 67.41 | 11.76 |
| Web site | 2.15 | 7.36 | 18.40 | 58.84 | 13.26 |
| Telephone | 0.00 | 5.36 | 14.55 | 39.32 | 40.76 |
| Total | 1.32 | 7.45 | 14.58 | 59.71 | 16.94 |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer
Satisfaction Survey.

**Table C-9.—Satisfaction with accuracy of NCES user tools and
databases, by response mode (percent)**

| Response mode | Very Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied | Satisfied | Very satisfied |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mail or fax | 0.13 | 2.60 | 13.10 | 63.27 | 20.90 |
| Web site | 0.00 | 5.88 | 18.11 | 58.15 | 17.86 |
| Telephone | 0.00 | 0.80 | 11.05 | 43.51 | 44.65 |
| Total | 0.06 | 3.55 | 14.65 | 58.18 | 23.56 |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer
Satisfaction Survey.

The final database item analyzed by response mode looked for differences
in the mean rating of six aspects of NCES databases and user tools.
Because respondents were asked to rank only the top three aspects, it is
impossible to determine which one was the least important. Therefore, the
"mean" is derived by assigning a value of 3 to the aspect rated most
important, a value of 2 to the aspect rated second most important, a value
of 1 to the aspect rated third most important, and a value of 0 to the two
aspects not rated in the top three, and dividing the sum of these values by

the number of respondents who rated at least one aspect.

There were no differences in users' mean ranking of any of the six aspects of NCES databases and user tools by response mode (see table C-10).

**Table C-10.—Users' mean ranking of important aspects of NCES databases and user tools, by response mode**

| Response mode | Mean ranking | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Accuracy | Comprehen-siveness | Timeli-ness | Ease of use | Ease of Access | Documen-tation |
| Mail or fax | 1.83 | 1.07 | 1.00 | 1.17 | 0.58 | 0.33 |
| Web site | 1.81 | 1.28 | 1.19 | 0.92 | 0.48 | 0.31 |
| Telephone | 1.68 | 1.18 | 1.03 | 0.98 | 0.76 | 0.32 |
| Total | 1.80 | 1.16 | 1.07 | 1.05 | 0.57 | 0.32 |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

*Comparisons of responses to items on NCES services, by response mode*

Two aspects of NCES services were examined to determine if satisfaction levels differed by response mode: staff expertise and the search capabilities of the NCES Web Site (see tables C-11 and C-12). Results show that there were no differences in levels of satisfaction between the mail, Web, or telephone respondents with either of these aspects.

**Table C-11.—Satisfaction with NCES staff expertise, by response mode (percent)**

| Response mode | Very dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied | Satisfied | Very satisfied |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mail or fax | 3.34 | 2.86 | 7.57 | 49.26 | 36.98 |
| Web site | 6.67 | 1.01 | 7.08 | 40.70 | 44.55 |
| Telephone | 0.00 | 0.00 | 4.13 | 54.89 | 40.98 |
| Total | 3.69 | 1.73 | 6.74 | 47.76 | 40.08 |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

**Table C-12.—Satisfaction with search capabilities of NCES Web Site, by response mode (percent)**

| Response mode | Very Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Neither Dissatisfied Nor satisfied | Satisfied | Very satisfied |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mail or fax | 6.31 | 6.94 | 3.82 | 50.40 | 32.54 |
| Web site | 8.99 | 7.82 | 12.35 | 44.89 | 25.95 |
| Telephone | 2.81 | 2.72 | 6.01 | 49.10 | 39.35 |
| Total | 6.49 | 6.35 | 7.22 | 48.23 | 31.72 |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

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# Appendix D: Weighted Number and Percent of Respondents for Selected Survey Items, by Customer Group

**Table D-1.—Respondents using NCES compendium publications**

| Strata | Adjusted population size | The Condition of Education | | The Digest of Education | | Projections of Education Statistics | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Weighted N | Percent | Weighted N | Percent | Weighted N | Percent |
| Total | 40,455 | 10,646 | 26 | 12,581 | 31 | 8,316 | 20 |
| Federal policymakers | 188 | 119 | 63 | 135 | 72 | 58 | 31 |
| State policymakers | 408 | 207 | 51 | 243 | 60 | 177 | 43 |
| Local policymakers | 19,501 | 4,549 | 23 | 5,354 | 27 | 3,658 | 19 |
| Academic researchers | 19,022 | 5,296 | 28 | 6,204 | 33 | 4,021 | 21 |
| Education associations | 247 | 143 | 58 | 151 | 61 | 108 | 44 |
| Education journalists | 390 | 113 | 29 | 159 | 41 | 79 | 20 |
| NEDRC users | 699 | 219 | 31 | 335 | 48 | 215 | 31 |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 NCES Customer Satisfaction Survey.

**Table D-2.—Respondents using NCES user tools**

| Strata | Adjusted population size | Electronic Codebook | | Data Analysis System | | Common Core of Data (CCD) | | Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Weighted N | Percent | Weighted N | Percent | Weighted N | Percent | Weighted N | Percent |
| Total | 40,455 | 1,448 | 4 | 1,645 | 4 | 1,555 | 4 | 1,538 | 4 |
| Federal policymakers | 188 | 19 | 10 | 20 | 11 | 14 | 7 | 17 | 9 |
| State policymakers | 408 | 33 | 8 | 46 | 11 | 48 | 12 | 61 | 15 |
| Local policymakers | 19,501 | 384 | 2 | 750 | 4 | 501 | 3 | 701 | 4 |
| Academic researchers | 19,022 | 818 | 4 | 720 | 4 | 849 | 4 | 588 | 3 |
| Education associations | 247 | 12 | 5 | 19 | 8 | 14 | 6 | 20 | 8 |
| Education journalists | 390 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 2 | 14 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| NEDRC users | 699 | 82 | 12 | 81 | 12 | 115 | 16 | 149 | 21 |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 NCES Customer Satisfaction Survey.


**Table D-3.—Respondents using NCES services**

| Strata | Adjusted population size | Requested info from NCES staff | | Ordered from ED Pubs | | Visited NCES Web site | | NCES Electronic Catalogue | | NAEP Summary Data Tables | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Weighted N | Percent | Weighted N | Percent | Weighted N | Percent | Weighted N | Percent | Weighted N | Percent |
| Total | 40,455 | 5,212 | 13 | 4,391 | 11 | 6,218 | 15 | 3,139 | 8 | 3,438 | 8 |
| Federal policymakers | 188 | 93 | 49 | 49 | 26 | 89 | 48 | 42 | 22 | 46 | 25 |
| State policymakers | 408 | 154 | 38 | 103 | 25 | 174 | 43 | 87 | 21 | 88 | 22 |
| Local policymakers | 19,501 | 1,733 | 9 | 1,691 | 9 | 2,014 | 10 | 1,117 | 6 | 1,299 | 7 |
| Academic researchers | 19,022 | 2,540 | 13 | 2,181 | 11 | 3,318 | 17 | 1,664 | 9 | 1,725 | 9 |
| Education associations | 247 | 96 | 39 | 62 | 25 | 95 | 38 | 44 | 18 | 46 | 18 |
| Education journalists | 390 | 113 | 29 | 45 | 12 | 132 | 34 | 25 | 6 | 82 | 21 |
| NEDRC users | 699 | 483 | 69 | 260 | 37 | 396 | 57 | 160 | 23 | 152 | 22 |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 NCES Customer Satisfaction Survey.

# Appendix E: Open-Ended Items

The 1999 questionnaire included extensive opportunities for respondents to make their own comments in addition to the specified answer categories. There were spaces on the mail questionnaire and text boxes on the Web version, and telephone interviewers asked for additional comments at the same points. All the Web comments were captured in a database, but the comments on mail and telephone questionnaires would have required keying by the data entry subcontractor. The experience of the 1997 survey had indicated that processing and analyzing all the open-ended comments would be resource-intensive. NCES selected two open-ended items for tabulation and analysis, based on the volume of responses and the potential usefulness of the answers. The table below includes all the open-ended items that had 30 or more comments. Analysis of the two selected items follows.

**Table E-1.—Number and percentage of responses to open-ended items\* (unweighted)**

| | Total | | Distribution of responses by mode | | | | | |
| | | | Mail/Fax | | Web | | Telephone | |
| | No. | Perc. | No. | Perc. | No. | Perc. | No. | Perc. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Section A: Questions About Awareness of NCES and NCES Publications** | | | | | | | | |
| A6d. Comments on NCES compendium publications | 155 | 6 | 59 | 38 | 62 | 40 | 34 | 22 |
| A7a7. Comments on educational assessment publications | 108 | 4 | 36 | 33 | 53 | 49 | 19 | 18 |
| A7b6. Comments on national longitudinal studies publications | 75 | 3 | 36 | 48 | 27 | 36 | 12 | 16 |
| A7c5. Comments on library publications | 41 | 2 | 24 | 59 | 13 | 32 | 4 | 10 |
| A7d9. Comments on elementary and secondary education publications | 104 | 4 | 40 | 38 | 46 | 44 | 18 | 17 |
| A7e7. Comments on postsecondary education publications | 98 | 4 | 49 | 50 | 33 | 34 | 16 | 16 |
| A8asp. Comments on Issue Briefs | 51 | 2 | 21 | 41 | 19 | 37 | 11 | 22 |
| A8esp. Comments on Directories | 40 | 2 | 26 | 65 | 8 | 20 | 6 | 15 |
| A9goth. Other aspects | 43 | 2 | 16 | 37 | 25 | 58 | 2 | 5 |
| A11asp. Comments on obtaining NCES education information indirectly from other sources | 41 | 2 | 25 | 61 | 13 | 32 | 3 | 7 |
| A11bsp. Comments on not needing NCES publications in your work | 47 | 2 | 26 | 55 | 10 | 21 | 11 | 23 |
| A11csp. Comments on needing different levels or types of information than NCES provides | 55 | 2 | 30 | 55 | 9 | 16 | 16 | 29 |
| A11fsp. Comments on NCES publications being outdated | 49 | 2 | 33 | 67 | 12 | 24 | 4 | 8 |
| A11gsp. Comments on NCES publications being difficult to use | 32 | 1 | 18 | 56 | 8 | 25 | 6 | 19 |
| A11hsp. Any other reason [for not using NCES publications] | 131 | 5 | 63 | 48 | 28 | 21 | 40 | 31 |

**Table E-1.—Number and percentage of responses to open-ended items\* (unweighted)—Continued**

| | Total | | Distribution of responses by mode | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | | Mail/Fax | | Web | | Telephone | |
| | No. | Perc. | No. | Perc. | No. | Perc. | No. | Perc. |
| **Questions About NCES Databases and User Tools** | | | | | | | | |
| B3e. Comments on NCES user tools | 87 | 3 | 45 | 52 | 26 | 30 | 16 | 18 |
| B5i. Comments on aspects of databases | 36 | 1 | 20 | 56 | 11 | 31 | 5 | 14 |
| B7asp. Comments on obtaining NCES education information indirectly from other sources | 33 | 1 | 16 | 48 | 13 | 39 | 4 | 12 |
| B7csp. Comments on needing different levels or types of information than NCES provides | 32 | 1 | 18 | 56 | 8 | 25 | 6 | 19 |
| B7fsp. Comments on not having the computer technology or technical knowledge necessary to use NCES databases and user tools | 38 | 1 | 26 | 68 | 4 | 11 | 8 | 21 |
| B7hsp. Comments on NCES databases and user tools being too difficult to use | 47 | 2 | 33 | 70 | 9 | 19 | 5 | 11 |
| B7isp. Any other reason [for not using NCES databases and user tools] | 112 | 4 | 54 | 48 | 34 | 30 | 24 | 21 |
| **Questions About NCES Services** | | | | | | | | |
| C4f. Comments on NCES services | 134 | 5 | 52 | 39 | 58 | 43 | 24 | 18 |
| C5g. Comments on selected Web site services | 50 | 2 | 22 | 44 | 22 | 44 | 6 | 12 |
| C6e. Comments on online data access tools | 48 | 2 | 24 | 50 | 21 | 44 | 3 | 6 |
| C8jsp. Any other reason [for not using NCES services] | 52 | 2 | 20 | 38 | 18 | 35 | 14 | 27 |
| **A Few Last Questions** | | | | | | | | |
| D2loth. Other purpose [for using NCES publications, databases, user tools, or services] | 99 | 4 | 34 | 34 | 51 | 52 | 14 | 14 |
| D3joth. Other source [for finding out about NCES publications, databases, user tools, or services] | 87 | 3 | 32 | 37 | 42 | 48 | 13 | 15 |
| D4sp. Names of organizations [other than NCES] and types of education information you have obtained in the past 2 years | 1,499 | 58 | 523 | 35 | 422 | 28 | 554 | 37 |

\* Items are only included in this table if they received 30 or more responses.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 NCES Customer Satisfaction Survey.

The first of the selected items was Question B3, *"We are interested in your use of the following NCES USER TOOLS. For each USER TOOL that you have used in the past 2 years, please indicate how satisfied you were with it. If you have not used the USER TOOL in the past 2 years, please indicate that."* The following user tools were listed:

- Electronic Code Book (ECB)
- Data Analysis System (DAS)
- Common Core of Data (CCD) CD-ROM User Interface
- Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) User Interface

The surveys for which ECBs and DASs are available were listed in a footnote on the mail questionnaire and on a pull-down menu on the Web questionnaire. After the IPEDS User Interface, the questionnaire had a lined section (mail) or text box (Web) for *"COMMENTS ON NCES USER TOOLS."*

The survey contractor developed a coding scheme for comments that included the general topic and the specific survey, if one was mentioned. Since some comments were lengthy and included more than one idea or concept, each could be assigned up to four codes. A total of 114 codes were assigned to the 85 separate comments.

Table E-2 summarizes these codes by general topic and valence (positive, neutral, negative).

**Table E-2.—Comments on NCES user tools, by topic and valence**

| Topic | Valence | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Positive | Neutral | Negative | |
| General | 8 | 10 | 20 | 38 |
| ECB | 2 | 0 | 3 | 5 |
| DAS | 0 | 0 | 5 | 5 |
| CCD CD-ROM | 4 | 0 | 10 | 14 |
| IPEDS CD-ROM | 0 | 0 | 6 | 6 |
| Other tools | 1 | 3 | 2 | 6 |
| Requests | 0 | 12 | 0 | 12 |
| Use of user tools | 0 | 26 | 2 | 28 |
| Total | 15 | 51 | 48 | 114 |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 NCES Customer Satisfaction Survey.

As might be expected, negative comments outnumbered positive ones by over three to one: customers who were satisfied with the NCES user tools presumably were less impelled to issue compliments than those who were dissatisfied were to complain. "General" comments included those that did not mention a specific user tool, such as those with references to "these" or "the above." "Requests" include recommendations for information to add and suggestions for other features, such as the following: "I would find it easier to have a flat file and do the filtering and summarization with my own software"; "Easier access to all the data that is collected in the surveys would be helpful"; "It would be helpful to have a file layout that I could print out." The "use" category includes comments on who uses the user tools or how they are used by the respondent, such as: "I am not a frequent computer user but my staff accesses info for me"; "Don't find IPDES useful for my purposes;" "Satisfied with SPSS code and text files."

In table E-3, comments are classified by user tools to which they applied and by the general evaluation expressed.

**Table E-3.—Comments on NCES user tools, by tool and nature**

| Nature of comment | User tool | | | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | CCD | IPEDS | |
| | General | ECB | DAS | CD-ROM | CD-ROM | |
| Easy to use/convenient | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 4 |
| Helpful/good info | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 4 |
| CD ROMs convenient | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Not compatible with Mcintosh | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 3 |
| NCES staff helpful | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Inaccurate | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Needed NCES help [to use] | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Hard to use/navigate | 8 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 20 |
| Limited access | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Not enough detail | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Out of date | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 7 |
| Too much missing data | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 NCES Customer Satisfaction Survey.

"General" comments did not refer to specific user tools. The principal complaint that emerges from this table is that the user tools were difficult to access and hard to navigate.

The second question for which open-ended responses were tabulated was C4: *"We are interested in your use of a select group of NCES SERVICES. For each SERVICE you have used in the past 2 years, please indicate how satisfied you were with it. If you have not used the SERVICE in the past 2 years, please indicate that."* The following services were listed:

- Requested information from NCES staff by e-mail, mail, fax, or telephone
- Ordered NCES publications or databases from the Education Publications Center (ED Pubs), the Department of Education's new ordering service
- Requested information from the National Education Data Resource Center (NEDRC)
- Requested information from the Department of Education's toll-free number
- Visited the NCES Web site

After the Web site item the questionnaire had a lined section (mail) or text box (Web) for *"COMMENTS ON NCES SERVICES."*

As for question B3, a coding scheme was developed for comments that included the general topic and the specific survey, if one was mentioned. Since some comments were lengthy and included more than one idea or concept, each could be assigned up to four codes. A total of 162 codes were assigned to the 133 separate comments.

Table E-4 summarizes the responses by service and valence.

**Table E-4.—Comments on NCES services, by service and valence**

| Service | Valence | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Positive | Neutral | Negative | |
| General | 24 | 1 | 35 | 60 |
| NCES Staff | 18 | 5 | 4 | 27 |
| ED Pubs | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| NEDRC | 4 | 1 | 3 | 8 |
| 1-800 Number | 1 | 0 | 4 | 5 |
| Web Site | 15 | 2 | 12 | 29 |
| Requests | 0 | 9 | 0 | 9 |
| Use | 0 | 14 | 7 | 21 |
| Total | 62 | 32 | 68 | 162 |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 NCES Customer Satisfaction Survey.

"General" comments did not refer to any specific service. The following are some examples of general comments:

- "Very helpful. Data delivered quickly." (Does not indicate whether data were ordered from ED Pubs, NEDRC, etc.)
- "After much effort several times my staff and I gave up on contacting NCES by phone – no one could locate an easily accessible #." (Might apply to several services.)
- "Excellent."
- "Have had difficulty getting answers to questions regarding IPEDS finance survey. Also the information is not as useful since you went to separate forms for the public and privates." (Not certain who was contacted—NCES staff, NEDRC, etc.)

Although the general comments were more negative than positive, most comments about specific services were positive, especially those about NCES staff. Comments about ED Pubs and the 1-800 number were mostly negative but there were very few.

In table E-5, comments are classified by services to which they applied and by the general evaluation expressed.

**Table E-5.—Comments on NCES services, by service and nature**

| Nature of comment | User tool | | | | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Gen-eral | NCES staff | ED pubs | NEDRC | 1-800 no. | Web site | |
| Excellent/good work | 10 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 8 | 27 |
| General positive comment | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 10 |
| Responsive | 4 | 13 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 18 |
| Easy to use | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Customer service reps. responsive | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Sometimes rude, sometimes pleasant | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Sometimes responsive, sometimes not | 1 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Not responsive | 9 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 21 |
| Slow to respond | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Not much useful information | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 NCES Customer Satisfaction Survey.

"General" comments did not refer to specific services. Although there were many positive comments, there was also a large number of complaints about the responsiveness of the various NCES service provision avenues: that they were not responsive at all, were slow, or were inconsistently responsive. Almost all of the comments about the Web site were positive.

# Appendix F: Recontact of Nonrespondents

After completion of the data collection, we attempted to recontact a subsample of the nonrespondents. E-mail addresses were available for 488 nonrespondents, including addresses for persons not in the original e-mail half of the sample. Each was sent a short e-mail message asking for responses to two simple yes/no questions:

1. Before being contacted for this survey, had you heard of the National Center for Education Statistics?

2. Have you used any NCES printed or electronic publication, electronic or on-line database, or other NCES service within the past 2 years?

Of the 488 e-mails, 85 were returned as invalid addresses. From the remaining 403, replies were received from 149, or 37.0 percent. This is a reasonable response rate considering that there was only one e-mail message sent during this recontact effort to a group that had already failed or refused to respond to all of the appeals and follow ups (multiple mailings or e-mails plus telephone calls) of the full survey. Of the 149 who responded to the recontact, 9, or 6.0 percent, refused to answer the two questions.

There was no significant difference between respondents to the full survey and respondents to the recontact in terms of awareness of NCES. However, respondents to the recontact were significantly less likely to have used NCES publications, databases, or other services (see table F-1).

**Table F-1.—Comparison of responses to two questions asked during full survey and recontact (percent)**

| Stratum | Aware of NCES (percent "yes") | | Use NCES publications, databases, and services (percent "yes") | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Full survey | Recontact | Full survey | Recontact |
| All strata | 74 | 68 | 66 | 33 |
| Local policymakers | 70 | 73 | 59 | 28 |
| Academic researchers | 77 | 63 | 70 | 34 |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999 NCES Customer Satisfaction Survey.

Sufficient replies were received for analysis in only two strata, local policymakers and academic researchers. The results were similar to those for all strata: within these groups, awareness of NCES was not significantly different among respondents to the full survey than among respondents to the recontact; however, use of NCES products and services was significantly lower among respondents to the recontact.

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# Appendix G: Representative Standard Errors for Selected Percentages from the 1999 Customer Satisfaction Survey Report

| Question number and response | Standard errors | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | Federal policymakers | State policymakers | Local policymakers | Academic researchers | Education associations | Education journalists | NEDRC |
| **Publication questions** | | | | | | | | |
| A3. Percentage having used any NCES publications (bound or on the Internet) in the past 2 years | 1.25 | 1.89 | 2.11 | 1.66 | 2.03 | 1.17 | 2.84 | 2.52 |
| A7c3. Percentage very satisfied/satisfied response with Public Libraries Survey | 8.00 | . | 5.12 | 10.59 | 20.00 | 18.00 | 19.87 | 15.01 |
| A7a6. Percentage very satisfied/satisfied response with educational assessment publications | 1.37 | 1.69 | 1.99 | 1.43 | 2.32 | 2.40 | 3.48 | 3.92 |
| **Database questions** | | | | | | | | |
| B1. Percentage having used any NCES databases or user tools in the past 2 years | 0.80 | 1.89 | 1.99 | 1.01 | 1.34 | 1.06 | 1.79 | 2.62 |
| B7g. Percentage not having used NCES databases and user tools because NCES databases and user tools are outdated | 0.88 | 1.95 | 2.95 | 1.57 | 1.11 | 2.21 | 2.65 | 0.00 |

| Question number and response | Standard errors | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | Federal policymakers | State policymakers | Local policymakers | Academic researchers | Education associations | Education journalists | NEDRC |
| B7c. Percentage not having used NCES databases and user tools because you need different levels or types of information than NCES provides | 2.47 | 6.15 | 4.60 | 3.54 | 3.64 | 4.93 | 7.49 | 7.08 |
| **Service questions** | | | | | | | | |
| C2. Percentage having used any NCES SERVICE in the past 2 years | 1.01 | 2.44 | 2.24 | 1.20 | 1.75 | 1.31 | 2.78 | 2.27 |
| C4d. Percentage very satisfied/satisfied with requesting information from the Department of Education's toll-free number, 1-800-424-1616 | 2.69 | 15.69 | 6.41 | 2.94 | 5.43 | 6.54 | 6.65 | 4.33 |
| C4e. Percentage very satisfied/satisfied with visits to the NCES Web site | 1.36 | 1.99 | 2.41 | 2.72 | 1.92 | 2.21 | 3.98 | 1.45 |
| **Questions about customers** | | | | | | | | |
| D1. Percentage having used NCES publications, databases, user tools, or services? | 1.38 | 1.72 | 2.20 | 1.96 | 2.13 | 1.50 | 3.20 | 1.95 |
| D2k. Percentage having used NCES publications, databases, user tools, or services for giving speeches | 1.76 | 3.23 | 2.90 | 2.58 | 2.69 | 2.54 | 2.05 | 2.79 |

| Question number and response | | Standard errors | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Total | Federal policymakers | State policymakers | Local policymakers | Academic researchers | Education associations | Education journalists | NEDRC |
| D2j. | Percentage having used NCES publications, databases, user tools, or services for marketing, sales, or promotion | 0.86 | 0.00 | 1.63 | 1.58 | 1.09 | 1.79 | .94 | 2.60 |
| D3b. | Percentage having found out about the NCES publications, databases, user tools, or services they used from journal articles | 1.83 | 2.31 | 2.76 | 2.72 | 2.76 | 2.56 | 4.04 | 2.73 |
| D3f. | Percentage having found out about the NCES publications, databases, user tools, or services they used from ongoing contact with NCES staff) | 1.02 | 3.33 | 2.90 | 1.03 | 1.73 | 2.56 | 3.63 | 2.83 |
| D4. | Percentage having obtained education information from any organization other than NCES in the past 2 years | 1.29 | 2.44 | 2.32 | 1.76 | 2.05 | 1.88 | 2.42 | 3.04 |