

Appendix A. Key Terms for SASS

The following terms are defined as they apply to the 2003–04 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS).

Affiliation stratum. SASS uses 17 categories into which all private schools are divided based on religious or nonreligious orientation/affiliation. These categories are Catholic—Parochial, Catholic—Diocesan, Catholic—Private, Amish, Assembly of God, Baptist, Episcopal, Jewish, Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Mennonite, Pentecostal, Seventh-Day Adventist, Other Religious, Nonsectarian—Regular, Nonsectarian—Special Emphasis, and Nonsectarian—Special Education.

Base weight. This is the inverse of the probability of selection including all sampling, the inverse of the initial probability of selection (termed the initial basic weight), subsampling, or adjustments to the probability of selection due to schools determined to be splits or mergers during field operations. These adjustments to the initial probability of selection are called the sampling adjustment factor. The base weight is defined as the product of the initial basic weight and the sampling adjustment factor.

Capacity. The SASS questionnaires do not provide a definition for this term. A general definition is the number of students a building can accommodate without being considered overcrowded.

Certification. A license or certificate awarded to teachers either by the state or by another accrediting or certifying body to teach in a public or private school. The SASS surveys include five types of certification granted by the state: regular or standard state certification or advanced professional certificate; probationary certificate—issued after satisfying all requirements except the completion of a probationary period; provisional or other type of certificate given to persons who are still participating in what the state calls an “alternative certification program”; temporary certification—requires some additional college coursework, student teaching, and/or passage of a test before regular certification can be obtained; and waiver or emergency certificate—issued to persons with insufficient teacher preparation who must complete a regular certification program in order to continue teaching.

Common Core of Data (CCD). CCD is the Department of Education’s primary database on public elementary and secondary education in the United States. CCD is a comprehensive, annual, national statistical database of all public elementary and secondary schools and school districts, and contains data that are designed to be comparable across all states. The objectives of CCD are twofold: first, to provide an official listing of public elementary and secondary schools and school districts in the nation, which can be used to select samples for other National Center for Education Statistics surveys; and second, to provide basic information and descriptive statistics on public elementary and secondary schools and schooling in general.

Content area. This term is not defined in the SASS questionnaires. A general definition is a division or field of organized knowledge, such as English or mathematics.

Distance learning. The SASS School Library Media Center Questionnaire defines distance learning as programs in which lessons are taught via television, satellite, or computer network.

Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS). A longitudinal survey commissioned by the National Center for Education Statistics that is designed to monitor the transition of a national sample of young people as they progress from 10th grade through high school and on to postsecondary education and/or the world of work. ELS will follow the progress of a cohort of high school students over time with the goal of explaining how their earlier aspirations, achievement, and high school situation affect their postsecondary school lives.

Final weight. This is the product of the initial basic weight, sampling adjustment factor, separate adjustments for nonresponse at each stage of selection, and one or more stages of ratio adjustment to the frame or to independent sources. The final weight is used to produce weighted estimates from the survey data. See chapter 9 for details of the weighting procedure.

FIPS. FIPS stands for Federal Information Processing Standards and refers to a variety of codes for standardized reference. FIPS county and state codes are developed by the National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST) as numeric identifiers for each county and state in the United States; state codes are listed in the codebooks, while the county codes may be looked up in NIST publications. (For more information go to www.nist.gov.)

Full-time equivalent (FTE). Full-time equivalent (FTE) quantifies school district and school staff positions in proportion to a full-time position. For example, if a full-time teacher works 35 hours per week in school district X, then a teacher who works 21 hours would have an FTE of 0.6 in that school district.

Free or reduced-price lunches. A federally funded program to aid schools in providing an adequate lunch at school. Schools are reimbursed to provide meals to students, either free or for a reduced price. See the description of the National School Lunch Program.

Individual Education Plan (IEP). An Individual Education Plan (IEP) is required for all students with an identified disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Each public school child who receives special education and related services must have an IEP. Each IEP must be designed for one student and must be a truly individualized document. The IEP creates an opportunity for teachers, parents, school administrators, related services personnel, and students (when appropriate) to work together to improve educational results for children with disabilities.

Initial basic weight. This is the inverse of the probability of selection from the initial sampling procedure. In contrast, the **base weight** is the inverse of the probability of selection covering all sampling, including any subsampling or adjustments to the probability of selection due to schools determined to be splits or mergers during field operations.

Librarian. A librarian is a school staff member whose main responsibility is taking care of the school's library.

Library expenditures. Expenditures for information resources are divided into five categories: books, video materials, CD-ROM titles, current subscriptions in any format, and electronic databases. The SASS School Library Media Center Questionnaire also asks for total expenditures for all information resources, which may be greater than the sum of the five categories. Other types of library expenditures may include a professional collection, computer hardware and other communications equipment, and other audio-visual equipment. Expenditures may vary greatly from one administration of SASS to the next, due to the receipt of grants or gifts by school library media centers.

Library media center. A library media center is an organized collection of printed, and/or audio-visual, and/or computer resources that (a) is administered as a unit, (b) is located in a designated place or places, and (c) makes resources and services available to students, teachers, and administrators. A library media center may be called a library, media center, resource center, information center, instructional materials center, learning resource center, or some other name.

Library media specialist. A library media specialist is a school professional staff member who is state-certified in the field of library media.

Limited-English Proficiency. The SASS school questionnaires define limited-English-proficient (LEP) students as students whose native or dominant language is other than English and who have sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language as to deny them the opportunity to learn successfully in an English-speaking-only classroom. LEP students can be taught subject matter courses in a variety of methods such as using their native language; in English as a Second Language (ESL), bilingual, or immersion classes; and in English-only classrooms.

Local education agency (LEA). An LEA, or public school district, is a government agency that employs elementary or secondary teachers and is administratively responsible for providing public elementary or secondary instruction and educational support services. To be considered an LEA in SASS, the organization must be responsible for hiring and firing teachers and setting teacher salaries. Additionally, the organization should have a role in setting teacher and administrator professional development and training priorities.

Major or minor. A field of study in which an individual has taken substantial academic coursework, implying that the individual has substantial knowledge of the academic discipline or subject area.

Missing data. SASS is a fully imputed dataset. Consequently, the only survey items that lack responses are either those that are part of a skip pattern and should not have been answered by a particular respondent or write-in responses, which include data too specific to reasonably impute from another respondent's data. Data pulled from the frame (i.e., the Common Core of Data or the Private School Universe Survey) are not necessarily imputed for missing data. In these instances, a value of -9, indicating missing data, is provided for that variable.

National School Lunch Program. The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) is a federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. It provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to children each school day. School districts and independent schools that choose to take part in the lunch program receive cash subsidies and donated commodities from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for each meal they serve. In return, they must serve lunches that meet federal requirements, and they must offer free or reduced-price lunches to eligible children. School food authorities can also be reimbursed for snacks served to children through age 18 in afterschool educational or enrichment programs.

National School Lunch Program, Approved. To be approved for a free or reduced-price lunch, a student must meet the income eligibility requirements and must be enrolled in a school or district that participates in the National School Lunch Program. In addition, the student's family must fill out an enrollment form to apply for a free or a reduced-price lunch.

Private School Universe Survey (PSS). PSS is a biennial survey designed to collect data from all K–12 private schools in the 50 states and the District of Columbia. It is the universe from which the sample for the private school component of SASS is selected.

Salary schedule. The SASS questionnaires do not provide a definition. A general definition is a listing of teacher salary levels offered by the school or district on which a teacher’s salary is based. The schedule is often based on years of experience and degrees earned.

Sampling adjustment factor. In the weighting process for each SASS respondent, the sampling adjustment factor is applied to the initial basic weight to account for any additional circumstances affecting the probability of selection. The product of the initial basic weight and the sampling adjustment factor is the base weight. See the definitions for initial basic weight and base weight.

School. SASS defines a school slightly differently than the Common Core of Data (CCD). Both consider a school to be an institution or part of an institution that provides classroom instruction to students; has one or more teachers to provide instruction; serves students in one or more grades (1–12) or the ungraded equivalent; and is located in one or more buildings. It is possible for two or more schools to share the same building; in this case they are treated as different schools if they have different administrations (e.g., principals). It is with the definition of “administration” that SASS diverges slightly from the CCD definition of a school. For the purposes of SASS, the schools are separate if the grade ranges are autonomous from one another. For example, in a case of an elementary school where the principal reports to the high school principal who is also the district level superintendent, SASS would consider this one school, since the elementary school does not operate independently of the high school. CCD would consider these two schools since they have separate administrators.

School, alternative. Alternative schools serve students whose needs cannot be met in a regular, special education, or vocational school. They provide nontraditional education and may serve as an adjunct to a regular school. They fall outside of the categories of regular, special education, and vocational education, although they may provide similar services or curriculum. Some examples of alternative schools are those for potential drop-outs, residential treatment centers for substance abuse (if they provide elementary or secondary education), and schools for chronic truants.

School, high American Indian. High American Indian schools are public schools where 19.5 percent or more of the students are American Indian or Alaska Native, as reported in the 2001–02 Common Core of Data. This classification was used in stratifying the SASS public school sample in order to improve estimates of the American Indian and Alaska Native student population.

School, Bureau of Indian Affairs-funded (BIA). BIA-funded schools meet all school criteria and are funded by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. These schools may be operated by or under contract with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian nations, or private entities (e.g., Jesuit orders). Schools are reported as a BIA-funded school by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and offer services to Indian students. These may include day schools, boarding schools, previously private schools, cooperative schools, and contract schools.

School, charter. A public charter school is a public school that, in accordance with an enabling state statute, has been granted a charter exempting it from selected state or local rules and regulations. A public charter school may be a newly created school or it may previously have been a public or private school.

School, combined. A school is classified as combined if it has one or more of grades K–6 and one or more of grades 9–12; for example, schools with grades K–12, 6–12, 6–9, or 1–12 were classified as having combined grades. Schools in which all students are ungraded (i.e., not classified by standard grade levels) are also classified as combined.

School, elementary. A school is classified as elementary if it has one or more of grades K–6 and does not have any grade higher than grade 8; for example, schools with grades K–6, 1–3, or 6–8 are classified as elementary. Schools with only kindergarten or prekindergarten were not included in the survey.

School, private. A private school is a school that is not supported primarily by public funds (i.e., it is not a public school). It must provide instruction for one or more of grades 1 through 12 (or comparable ungraded levels) and have one or more teachers. Organizations or institutions that provide support for homeschooling but do not offer classroom instruction for students are not included.

School, public. A public school meets all school criteria; has an assigned principal or acting principal; receives public funding as primary support; provides free public elementary and/or secondary schooling to eligible students; and is operated by a local education agency or a contracted education program.

- Also includes *domestic* Department of Defense schools.
- Is considered a school by the state (or in the case of California and Pennsylvania by the county education office) in which it is located.

School, secondary. A school is classified as secondary if it has one or more of grades 7–12 and does not have any grade lower than grade 7; for example, schools with grades 9–12, 7–9, 10–12, or 7–8 are classified as secondary.

School, special education. Special education schools provide educational services to students with special physical or mental needs; that is, students with mental handicaps (e.g., mental retardation or autism), physical handicaps (e.g., hearing impairment), or learning disabilities (e.g., dyslexia).

School, traditional public. Traditional public schools are the subset of all public schools that are not public charter schools. They include regular, special education, vocational/technical, and alternative schools. They also include schools in juvenile detention centers, domestic schools located on military bases and operated by the Department of Defense, and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) funded schools operated by local public school districts. See also the definitions for public and public charter schools.

School, vocational. Vocational schools primarily serve students who are being trained for semi-skilled or technical occupations.

Teacher. A teacher is any full-time or part-time school staff member who teaches one or more regularly scheduled classes in any of grades K–12 (or comparable ungraded levels).¹ In addition to regular full-time teachers, the following types of teachers are also included:

1. itinerant teachers;
2. long-term substitutes who fill the role of a regular teacher on a long-term basis;
3. administrators, counselors, librarians, and other professional or support staff who teach any regularly scheduled classes; and
4. other part-time teachers.

Short-term substitute teachers and student teachers are not included.

¹ This definition differs from the one used for the 1987–88 and 1990–91 administrations of SASS. In those surveys, a teacher was defined as a school staff member whose primary assignment was teaching in any of grades K–12. School staff whose primary assignment was something other than teaching were excluded, even if they taught some regularly scheduled classes.

Teacher, itinerant. An itinerant teacher teaches at more than one school; for example, a music teacher who teaches 3 days per week at one school and 2 days per week at another.

Teachers, newly hired. Newly hired teachers are teachers who were hired by a public school district, public charter school, private school, or BIA-funded school for the 2003–04 school year. They included teachers returning from an unpaid leave of absence of one school year or more, but not short-term substitute teachers.

Title I. The SASS school questionnaires define Title I as a federally funded program that provides educational services, such as remedial reading or remedial mathematics, to children who live in areas with high concentrations of low-income families. Title I can be administered as a targeted assistance or school-wide program. A targeted assistance Title I program provides categorical funding to specific students identified as in need of assistance. A schoolwide Title I program refers to schools that use Title I funds to improve the effectiveness of the entire school.

Typology, private school. Private schools were assigned to one of three major categories (i.e., Catholic, other religious, and nonsectarian). Within each of these major categories, three additional subcategories were assigned. As a result, two typology-based variables exist on the private sector data files; a “3-level typology” (RELIG) and a “9-level typology” (TYPOLOGY). The categories and subcategories are

1. Catholic—parochial, diocesan, and private;
2. Other religious—conservative Christian, affiliated with a religious school association, and not affiliated with a religious school association; and
3. Nonsectarian—regular, special program emphasis, and special education.²

Ungraded students. Ungraded students are those who are not assigned to a particular grade level (kindergarten, 1st grade, 2nd grade, etc.); for example, special education centers and alternative schools often classify their students as ungraded. Students in Montessori schools are also considered ungraded if the school assigns them to “primary” and “intermediate” levels instead of specific grades.

Valid skip. An item that was not applicable due to a response to a previous item on the same questionnaire and was provided with a value of -8, indicating a valid skip. Certain survey items direct respondents to skip subsequent items based on their answers to the original item, or stem. For instance, if a respondent answered “No” to item 8a on the School Questionnaire (“Does this school have a kindergarten?”), he or she was directed to skip items 8b and 8c (respectively, “How long is the school day for a kindergarten student?” and “How many days per week does a kindergarten student attend?”) and to “GO TO item 9 below.” Because the respondent answered that the school in question does not have a kindergarten, subsequent questions about kindergarten students at that school were not applicable. In instances when an item should not have been answered by the respondent, a value of -8, which designates a valid skip, is applied to that variable(s).

² For more complete information, see NCES 92-082, *Diversity of Private Schools*, by Marilyn M. McMillen and Peter Benson, at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs92/92082.pdf>.

Appendix B. Questionnaire Availability

Online, Downloadable PDF Files

Questionnaires for every data collection component in every survey cycle since the first 1987–88 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) and the first 1988–89 Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS) are available online as downloadable PDF files at

<http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sass/questionnaire.asp>

Select the survey year of interest and then proceed to select the specific questionnaire to browse or download. The Teacher Listing Form is the form that gathers the data used to select the teacher sample. While no data for this form are reported publicly, the questionnaire form is available on the SASS website only for those interested in survey methodology.

In general, as the 4-year survey cycle advances toward the next data collection, the questionnaires will be posted online as they are finalized and sent to the printer. That is generally about 2 months prior to the data collection phase of the survey cycle. The next survey cycle is planned for the 2007–08 school year.

The portable document format (PDF) files of the questionnaires are also available on the *2003–04 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) CD-ROM* with Electronic Codebook. All of the 2003–04 SASS questionnaires are available on the restricted-use version (NCES 2007-313). No public-use version of the ECB will be produced.

All of the SASS and TFS questionnaires are in the public domain. All survey items may be copied by anyone who wishes to use them in another survey, without any restrictions.

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Appendix C. Report on 2001–02 SASS Pretest and Recommendations for 2003–04 SASS

This appendix contains a report prepared by the U.S. Census Bureau, and it is organized as follows.

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Purpose of the Pretest

The 1999–2000 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) began with sending questionnaires by mail to selected schools. Nonrespondents were contacted first by telephone, using the computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) instrument for all forms except the Teacher Listing Form, and ultimately by Census Bureau field staff. The 2001–02 Pretest featured a new data collection methodology, in which the initial contact with the school and all subsequent follow-up were conducted during personal visits by Census Bureau field staff. The purpose of the Pretest was to see if this new approach would be more timely, yield a higher response rate, improve data quality, and decrease costs.

Overview of Pretest Operations

Field operations for the Pretest began on October 1, 2001, and were completed by March 29, 2002. The Pretest was conducted with the assumption that personal visits to the schools by Census Bureau field representatives from the beginning of the survey would build relationships with schools; this would result in similar or better response rates in a more timely manner than the past collection methods of mailout, CATI follow-up, and field follow-up. The Pretest had several objectives, as follows:

- to use all information from the test to decide the best methods for data collection in the next full-scale SASS;
- to estimate the costs of using field staff in the full-scale SASS, using this new approach;
- to develop and test field materials and procedures that would be used with this approach;
- to observe effects on the schools' willingness to respond; and
- to test two methods of teacher sampling and data collection.
 - o Teacher Listing Forms were sent to the Census Bureau clerical processing staff, where sampling took place. The clerical processing staff labeled and mailed forms to respondents at schools. Field representatives conducted nonresponse follow-up in the spring.
 - o Field representatives selected teachers from the Teacher Listing Form, filled in the cover page of questionnaires, and conducted interviews in the fall.

The Pretest included two phases and two methods of teacher sampling and data collection. The first phase involved visiting 357 schools in the areas surrounding the Seattle, Atlanta, and Denver Census Bureau Regional Offices to complete the Teacher Listing Form, the appropriate questionnaires for schools and principals, and the school library media center questionnaire. In the first method of teacher sampling and data collection, the field representatives themselves sampled teachers from the Teacher Listing Form at half of the schools and left the appropriate teacher questionnaires for the selected teachers to complete. The field representatives either collected all the forms for the school at the end of this initial visit or made arrangements to either pick up completed forms at a later time or have them mailed to the Regional Office. The schools that did not have their teachers sampled on site received the second method for teacher sampling and data collection, and they were instructed to send their Teacher Listing Forms to the Census Bureau clerical processing staff for the teacher sample selection. The first phase was scheduled for completion on November 21, 2001, but the Regional Offices found that they could not meet this deadline with adequate response rates on all forms. Therefore, after consultations at a previously scheduled debriefing session, the Regional Offices were given until January 28, 2002, to complete this phase of the Pretest.

The second phase began on November 29, 2001, when the Census Bureau clerical processing staff made the initial mailout of the appropriate teacher questionnaires to the sampled teachers at their schools. Field follow-up of the nonresponding teachers began on February 5, 2002, and was completed on March 29, 2002.

Detailed Methodology

In order to determine whether or not the proposed data collection methodology would be beneficial, the Pretest needed to be conducted in a sufficient number of schools. A total of 357 schools in three Regional Offices were chosen. The characteristics of the schools included in the Pretest were designed to be representative of the national SASS sample. For example, an appropriate mix of large and small schools, urban and rural schools, and schools from groups or affiliations that were less or more likely to respond to SASS were used in this Pretest. In addition, the workloads given to the 21 field representatives were to approximate what each field representative would normally receive during a full-scale SASS, which was approximately 17 schools each. For half of the schools, field representatives sampled teachers in the field.

Detailed procedures and training were prepared for field staff to accomplish the work using the new data collection procedures. Field representatives' visits to schools were observed and, in addition, field representatives kept detailed logs documenting the time they spent and the activities they accomplished during the Pretest.

Staff followed the procedures outlined below.

1. Regional Office staff and field representatives were trained using training developed by Census Bureau headquarters staff:
 - o Three supervisors traveled to headquarters for a 1-day training session.
 - o Field representatives completed a 6-hour self-study.
2. Schools were mailed an advance letter in September 2001.
3. Field representatives contacted schools and made appointments. They selected a sample of teachers in designated schools and distributed questionnaires, logged all time and travel required for contact and visits, and documented what worked and what did not. They visited each school to
 - o verify status of the school and find out if any actions with the school district or county were required before data collection could begin (contacting their supervisor for instructions on how to handle split or merged schools);
 - o drop off (or complete on-the-spot) the Teacher Listing Form, the appropriate questionnaires for principals and schools, and the school library media center questionnaire;
 - o present critical school staff with SASS objectives and timetable;
 - o go over appropriate grade ranges to report for that school;
 - o complete a form that designates the contact name, phone number, e-mail address, and location of the staff member responsible for filling out each questionnaire;
 - o discuss plan for contacting selected teachers and document details; and
 - o meet with each contact and document plan for completing questionnaire (this may include getting a listing of teachers from school in lieu of filling out the Teacher Listing Form).
4. Field representatives attempted to arrange three or four of these visits in a 2-day period. Observers from the Census Bureau, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), and the Education Statistics Services Institute sometimes accompanied field representatives to these schools.
5. Field representatives conducted telephone follow-up to check on the status of forms. Depending on circumstances, a field representative may have decided to
 - o conduct telephone interviews to complete forms; or

- o make another visit to the school to pick up completed forms and/or complete remaining forms in person.
- 6. In general, follow-up efforts continued until the Regional Office achieved response rates greater than or equal to the 1999–2000 national response rates.
- 7. Again, field representatives logged all time and travel required for contact and visits (if any), and documented what worked and what did not.
- 8. For schools that had their teachers sampled by Census Bureau clerical processing staff, questionnaires were mailed to teachers in November. The Regional Offices mailed second questionnaires to nonresponding teachers in January 2002. Field representatives conducted nonresponse follow-up beginning in February. Again, field representatives logged all time and travel required for contact and visits (if any), and documented what worked and what did not.
- 9. Census Bureau clerical processing staff keyed all Teacher Listing Forms.

School Sample

The 1999–2000 sampling programs were rerun with a different start, resulting in a new sample of approximately 14,000 public and private schools. Using the Regional Office code, schools were extracted in the three test Regional Offices. Field staff looked over the lists of schools and selected field representatives to work on the test, including experienced field representatives, some of whom had worked on SASS (just as in a full-scale SASS). Field staff, along with Census Bureau analysts and sampling staff, selected schools by hand so that each field representative had a realistic SASS workload. The sampling staff attempted to include schools with the following characteristics:

- urban and rural;
- large and small student enrollment;
- some schools with definitional issues; and
- private schools with different affiliations (if it is decided to include these schools).

Within each field representative’s workload, like-kind schools were matched, with one designated for field representative sampling and the other for sampling by Census Bureau clerical processing staff.

Materials Developed and Tested

- *Advance letter to school.* This letter included the Regional Office 800-telephone number to call with any questions. Regional Office staff referred questions to Census Bureau analysts as necessary.
- *Field representative manual.* This included sections on overview of procedures, initial visit to school, teacher sampling procedures, follow-up procedures, and detailed instructions on questionnaires (for each of the principal, school, school library media center, and teacher questionnaires).
- *Field supervisor training.* This 1-day training consisted of individual presentations, mostly based on the field representative manual.
- *Field representative self-study.* This self-study training was provided to all field representatives and took between 6 and 12 hours to complete.
- *Action flowchart for initial visit.* This flowchart provided a list of scenarios and solutions to cover out-of-scope schools, school district and county issues, and issues with the school’s grade range.

- *School contacts form.* There was a control form for each questionnaire that the field representative used to record contact information about the respondent for that questionnaire.
- *Time and actions log.* These logs were for field representatives to record their actions and the time spent at each school.

Evaluation

The evaluation of the proposed methodology was to be based on debriefing sessions in December, cost analysis, observation reports, field representative logs, response rates, and examination of completed questionnaires.

Summary of Results and Recommendations

After reviewing the Pretest results, the methods used in the Pretest were recommended for adoption for the 2003–04 SASS. The results are summarized briefly below. The sections following the summary provide a detailed discussion of the results. The final two sections, “Notes from the Supervisors’ SASS Debriefing” and “Comments from SASS Field Representative Debriefing Conference,” contain the summary of feedback obtained from Regional Office staff and field representatives, respectively, at a centralized debriefing session conducted December 3 and 4, 2001, in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Timing. The survey products could be completed 6 to 8 months earlier by using the new methods. Data collection would begin in October 2003 and be completed by February 2004, that is, 4 months earlier than the previous SASS. Staff could begin working on processing specifications 4 months earlier if the work involved in preparing the CATI instruments were eliminated.

Response. The response rates on the Pretest were lower than the rates achieved on the 1999–2000 SASS at the school level, but higher at the teacher level. The lower school-level rates occurred because several schools that may have participated in a full-scale SASS refused to participate in the Pretest. Field staff anticipated that response would at least be maintained at the same level and would probably improve in the future when SASS is a full production survey rather than a Pretest.

Data Quality. As with response rates, the Pretest did not demonstrate a clear improvement in data quality. However, there were indications that the Teacher Listing Form data were less problematic and that a few items on the other SASS questionnaires may have had better item response rates than previously.

Findings: Timing

Timing of Data Collection

Census Bureau field division staff requested that the three participating regions preselect a group of field representatives to participate in the SASS Pretest. Census Bureau sampling staff selected a full sample of schools using the 1999–2000 sampling frame, and then used the field representatives’ physical location as a basis for selecting the specific sample of schools. (This will not be repeated for the full-scale SASS.) The field representative training guide was written during the summer of 2001 and consisted of a self-study only (no classroom session). This training package will be used as the basis for the training used for the full-scale 2003–04 SASS.

The fall of 2001 time frame for the SASS Pretest appeared to work well despite heavy survey demands that faced the Regional Offices for other one-time projects that occurred concurrently. Originally, data collection was planned to start in mid-September, but because of the events of September 11, 2001, this

was delayed roughly by 2 weeks. In addition, the school district portion of SASS was not conducted as part of the Pretest, and sometimes when the district participates the schools feel that they have “permission” to participate as well. For this reason, some schools chose not to participate but said they would have participated if it had been a full-scale SASS. A key timing element for the full-scale SASS will be school district contact and approval prior to initial school visits.

Fieldwork for the questionnaires assigned in the fall was scheduled to be completed by November 21, 2001. In fact, staff needed additional time to complete the work, because several schools or respondents were unwilling to participate in the survey during the first several weeks, and additional follow-up efforts were needed. In order to achieve adequate response rates, the Regional Offices were given until January 28, 2002, to complete this phase of the Pretest. Field staff members were confident that a time frame of October through February is achievable. Under the mailout/CATI/field methods used in previous rounds of SASS, data collection continued up until schools closed for the summer.

An element that will improve timing in the future is the conversion to Regional Office Sample Control (ROSCO). In the Pretest, staff developed an MS Access database for Regional Office staff to use in controlling assignments. While the system contained all of the relevant information, the system did not have “real-time” links directly to the field representatives to monitor work. The Regional Offices only knew whether a completed questionnaire had been received. Supervisors had to contact field representatives to determine the status of work not yet received, making it difficult for the supervisors to monitor the progress of field representatives. ROSCO will provide all field staff with the current status of all assigned questionnaires, allowing for more proactive supervision.

Timing of Work on Processing Specifications

Under the mailout/CATI/field methods used in previous rounds of SASS, Census Bureau analysts first worked on preparing all procedures for the mailout activities that began at the start of the school year. From September through January 2001, staff prepared the CATI instruments and procedures. Staff began working on the SASS processing system in February 2001. By eliminating CATI, staff would be able to begin work on processing specifications in the fall months, which was expected to accelerate processing activities by approximately 4 months.

Findings: Data Quality of Teacher Listing Form

Census Bureau sampling staff reviewed the Teacher Listing Forms that were completed in the Pretest to determine if the quality of these forms differed from the quality of the forms completed during the 1999–2000 SASS. Table C-1 displays the results of this review in terms of the number of errors found.

Table C-1. Number of errors found in Teacher Listing Forms, by sampling procedure: 2001–02

Teaching listing outcome and type of error	Total	Number sampled by Census Bureau clerical processing staff	Number sampled by field staff
Total Teacher Listing Forms reviewed	357	180	177
Refusals	38	17	21
Out-of-scope	12	6	6
Types of errors			
Grade range incomplete	10	6	4
Grade range missing	2	0	2
Subject incomplete	3	0	3
Subject missing	2	1	1
Subject and grade range inconsistent	3	2	1
Teaching status incomplete	1	0	1
Teaching status incorrect	2	0	2
Teaching status missing	2	1	1
Ethnicity missing	6	1	5
Experience incomplete	2	2	0
Experience incorrect	1	1	0
ESL incorrect	8	4	4
Teachers from wrong grade ranges	3	2	1

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) 2001–02 Pretest.

Since some Teacher Listing Forms contained more than one type of error, in general approximately 90 percent of the forms appeared to be error free. This compared favorably with 1999–2000, when approximately 80 percent of all the sample schools' forms contained no error.

A few of these errors are worth discussing further. Eight schools reported all or nearly all of their teachers as English as a Second Language (ESL)/Bilingual. It is not clear whether or not this situation can realistically happen. Further investigation is needed to determine if these ESL/Bilingual teachers classified themselves as such on the teacher questionnaire. If there is some confusion, the Census Bureau would recommend revising the wording of the form. In addition, only three of the potential definitional problem schools reported teachers covering the wrong grade range, which represents approximately 5 percent of the potential definitional problem schools. The incidence of this is much reduced from the 1999–2000 SASS, when an approximate minimum of 10 percent of the schools with a potential problem with their grade range reported the wrong grade range initially. Consequently, the new procedure of having the field representative meet with a school official to discuss the grade range issue resulted in a considerable improvement in the quality of the Teacher Listing Form reporting for the definitional problem schools. A related problem is found in the two schools that reported teacher status incorrectly. A school may have many teachers who are employed full time, but only teach part of the time in the selected grade range. This distinction appears to have been made successfully to the affected schools in general, with the exception of a few cases. This problem is less severe than reporting teachers who do not teach in the selected grade range, since the teacher's full-time or part-time status does not affect the eligibility of teachers for sampling or the probability of selection.

Investigation of Definitional Problem Schools

Census Bureau sampling staff investigated schools in the Pretest that had potential definitional problems. The school questionnaire data were reviewed and compared to the Common Core of Data (CCD) as well as to the Teacher Listing Forms. These schools were located in Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota. Of the 53 schools selected in these states, 2 refused the survey, 3 were out-of-scope, 32 appear to have reported correctly (i.e., their responses matched the information on CCD), and 16 reported incorrectly (enrollment or teacher counts or both). Of the 16 reporting incorrectly, 13 had filled out the Teacher Listing Form correctly, and 3 had made the same mistake in filling out the Teacher Listing Form. The implication is that about 33 percent of the definitional problem schools are reporting incorrectly on the school questionnaire even though most reported correctly on the Teacher Listing Form. This school questionnaire error rate is quite high and fairly comparable to the error rate observed for these schools in the 1999–2000 SASS. It appears the improvement in the Teacher Listing Form did not extend to the school questionnaire.

One hypothesis was that the field representative initially met with the principal to explain the definitional problem, and then another staff member who was unaware of the problem filled out the school questionnaire. However, of the 13 schools that reported correctly on the Teacher Listing Form and incorrectly on the school questionnaire, at 9 schools the Teacher Listing Form and school questionnaire were completed by the same person and only at 3 schools by a different person (for one survey, the respondent could not be determined). This compares to the three cases where both forms were completed incorrectly, in which two cases were completed by the same respondent and one by a different respondent. There appears to be no evidence that the lack of improvement to the school questionnaire was due to miscommunication within the responding school. The wording of item 7a—“K–12 enrollment” may be problematic for respondents. However, this alone was not entirely the cause, since several questionnaires were internally inconsistent; item 3e—“Is the grade range on the cover correct?”—was marked “yes” and then item 6—“grades offered”—was marked inconsistently. Additional research needs to be undertaken to determine ways to get this particular class of respondents to report the correct grade range.

Findings: Data Quality of School, Principal, School Library Media Center, and Teacher Questionnaires

Staff reviewed most of the completed questionnaires to assess the quality of the data. They first looked at how completely the questionnaire was filled out. Next, they tallied item nonresponse and, in most cases, compared it to the item nonresponse from the 1999–2000 SASS. For the school and teacher questionnaires, they also examined consistency between some of the items on the questionnaire. These assessments are presented below for the school, principal, school library media center, and teacher questionnaires.

School Questionnaires

The majority of the school questionnaires (74 percent) were returned with all of the correct items completed (table C-2). Approximately 7 percent of the questionnaires were returned with most of the items complete, but with some items left blank because skip patterns were not followed correctly. More commonly, there were situations where most of the items were completed but some items were intentionally left blank (14 percent). There also existed situations where most of the items were complete, while partial sections were left blank (4 percent). Approximately 1 percent of the questionnaires were returned partially completed.

Table C-2. Number and percentage of school questionnaires, by completeness of questionnaire: 2001–02

Completeness of questionnaire	Number	Percent
Total	278	100.00
All items complete	207	74.46
Most items complete: blanks due to skip patterns	19	6.83
Most items complete: blank (intentional)	39	14.03
Most items complete: partial (sections) skipped	10	3.60
Partially complete (stopped)	3	1.08

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) 2001–02 Pretest.

In terms of specific item nonresponse, the items that were most commonly left blank were student absentee/attendance, race of the students, teacher compensation, student average daily attendance, and capacity items (table C-3). Comparing the item nonresponse rates with the 1999–2000 SASS nonresponse indicates an increase in the response rate for most of these items (table C-3). For several items a comparison was not possible because the response rates for these SASS 1999–2000 items were reduced as a result of the imputation process.¹ These item response rates are denoted with a superscript 1. When compared to the 1999–2000 SASS response rates, three of the items (graduation, enrollment, and race of students) had a lower response rate in the Pretest.

¹ In computing final item response rates, an item is considered “answered” if the imputation flag = 0, meaning no changes were made to the item. For some items, respondents had provided an answer, but it was adjusted and given an imputation flag. For example, on the school file, enrollment is broken out into categories of race. Many or all of these categories may have had an original answer. However, if the sum of these categories did not exactly match total enrollment, then many or all of the race categories may have been ratio-adjusted so that the sum would match the total. Each of the changed values would receive an imputation flag. No imputation was done to field test data.

Table C-3. Item nonresponse (in percent) on school questionnaires in 1999–2000 SASS compared with 2001–02 Pretest: 1999–2000 and 2001–02

Item	Frequency	SASS 1999–2000 response rate	Pretest 2001–02 response rate	Difference
11a Absentee/attendance	14	68.05 ¹	94.96	26.91
39b Free lunch/reduced lunch	7	82.21 ¹	97.48	15.27
11b Average daily attendance	10	81.85 ¹	96.40	14.55
† Teacher compensation	10	82.3 ¹	96.40	14.10
42 Individual Education Plans (IEPs)	3	85.25 ¹	98.92	13.67
8 Number of male students	1	88.99	99.64	10.65
34 Teachers absent	1	93.04	99.64	6.60
12a Capacity	12	90.76 ¹	95.68	4.92
37 Number of computers	5	93.56	98.20	4.64
35b Teacher employment questions	1	95.24	99.64	4.40
27 Parent involvement	1	95.88	99.64	3.76
18 Special programs	1	96.94	99.64	2.70
33f Number of teachers	3	97.62	98.92	1.30
2 Contact information/name/phone	5	†	98.20	†
33 Race of teachers	7	97.74 ¹	97.48	-0.26
26a Graduation	3	99.21	98.92	-0.29
7a Enrollment	6	99.76	97.84	-1.92
9 Race of students	14	97.99	94.96	-3.03

† Not applicable.

¹ The response rate for this SASS 1999–2000 item was reduced as a result of the imputation process.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), 1999–2000; U.S. Census Bureau, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) 2001–02 Pretest.

When evaluating the data quality of these forms, the consistency of the responses was also tested. For the school enrollment items, item 7a, which asks for the total number of students enrolled, was checked for consistency with item 9f, which is the sum of the entries broken down by race. Fifteen of the total 278 responses were inconsistent. Item 32g, which asks for the total number of full-time and part-time teachers, was checked for consistency with item 33f, which sums up the total number of full-time and part-time teachers broken down by race. There were 30 inconsistent responses (table C-4).

Table C-4. Consistency of responses on school questionnaires, by item and method of evaluation: 2001–02

Item and method of evaluation	Frequency of inconsistent responses	Percentage of consistent responses
<i>School enrollment: Is 7a consistent with sum 9f?</i>	15	94.60
<i>Number of teachers: Is 32g consistent with 33f?</i>	30	89.21

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) 2001–02 Pretest.

Principal Questionnaires

The majority of the principal questionnaires (88 percent) were returned with all items completed (table C-5). Approximately 3 percent of the questionnaires were returned with most of the items completed, but with some items left blank because skip patterns were not followed correctly. More commonly, there were situations where most of the items were completed but some items were intentionally left blank (6 percent). Approximately 1 percent of the questionnaires were returned with most items completed,

while partial sections were left blank. Two percent of the questionnaires returned indicated the school had no principal.

Table C-5. Number and percentage of principal questionnaires, by completeness of questionnaire: 2001–02

Completeness of questionnaire	Number	Percent
Total	278	100.00
All items complete	244	87.77
Most items complete: blanks due to skip patterns	8	2.88
Most items complete: blank (intentional)	17	6.12
Most items complete: partial (sections) skipped	4	1.44
Partially complete (stopped)	0	0.00
No principal	5	1.80

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) 2001–02 Pretest.

In terms of specific item nonresponse, the items that were most commonly left blank were the dismissal of teachers and the salary items (table C-6). When compared to the 1999–2000 SASS response rates, these two items (dismissal of teachers and salary) had a lower response rate in the Pretest. Comparing the item nonresponse rates with the 1999–2000 SASS nonresponse rates indicated an increase in the response rate for the other items.

Table C-6. Item nonresponse (in percent) on principal questionnaires in 1999–2000 SASS compared with 2001–02 Pretest: 1999–2000 and 2001–02

Item	Frequency	SASS 1999–2000 response rate	Pretest 2001–02 response rate	Difference
29 Age	1	97.55	99.64	2.09
27a Race	1	97.71	99.64	1.93
17 Percent teaching at standards	2	97.99	99.28	1.29
18 Dismissal of teachers	3	99.26	98.92	-0.34
25 Salary	12	99.83	95.68	-4.15

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), 1999–2000; U.S. Census Bureau, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) 2001–02 Pretest.

School Library Media Center Questionnaires

The majority of the school library media center questionnaires (81 percent) were returned with all items completed (table C-7). Approximately 1 percent of the questionnaires were returned with most of the items completed, but with some items left blank because skip patterns were not followed correctly. More commonly, there were situations where most of the items were completed, but some items were intentionally left blank (10 percent). Approximately 1 percent of the questionnaires were returned with most items completed, while partial sections were left blank. Seven percent of the questionnaires returned indicated the school had no library.

Table C-7. Number and percentage of school library media center questionnaires, by completeness of questionnaire: 2001–02

Completeness of questionnaire	Number	Percent
Total	284	100.00
All items complete	229	80.63
Most items complete: blanks due to skip patterns	3	1.06
Most items complete: blank (intentional)	29	10.21
Most items complete: partial (sections) skipped	3	1.06
Partially complete (stopped)	0	0.00
No library	20	7.04

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) 2001–02 Pretest.

In terms of specific item nonresponse, the items that were most commonly left blank were item 22, which covered dollars spent, book totals, etc., and item 36, concerning the number of books checked out (table C-8). This item had lower response in the Pretest than in the 1999–2000 SASS. Comparing the nonresponse rates for other items listed above with the 1999–2000 SASS nonresponse rates indicated an increase in the response rate for most of these items. For one item a comparison was not possible because the response rate for the SASS 1999–2000 item was reduced as a result of the imputation process.² This item response rate is denoted with a superscript 1.

Table C-8. Item nonresponse (in percent) on school library media center questionnaires in 1999–2000 SASS compared with 2001–02 Pretest: 1999–2000 and 2001–02

Item	Frequency	SASS 1999–2000 response rate	Pretest 2001–02 response rate	Difference
25 Dewey Decimal System	1	81.04	99.65	18.61
36 Number of books checked out	8	90.09	97.18	7.09
35 Number of students	2	96.17	99.30	3.13
2 Capacity	3	96.11	98.94	2.83
29a Scheduling	1	97.73	99.65	1.92
10a Volunteers	2	99.74	99.30	-0.44
22 #22 (dollars spent, book totals, etc.)	23	93.94 ¹	91.90	-2.04

¹ The response rate for this SASS 1999–2000 item was reduced as a result of the imputation process.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), 1999–2000; U.S. Census Bureau, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) 2001–02 Pretest.

Teacher Questionnaires

The majority of the teacher questionnaires (75 percent) were returned with all items completed (table C-9). Approximately 2 percent of the questionnaires were returned with most of the items completed, but with some items left blank because skip patterns were not followed correctly. More commonly, there were situations where most of the items were completed but some items were intentionally left blank (21 percent). There also existed situations where most of the items were complete, while partial sections were left blank (2 percent). Less than 1 percent of the questionnaires were returned partially completed.

² In computing final item response rates, an item is considered “answered” if the imputation flag = 0, meaning no changes were made to the item. For some items, respondents had provided an answer, but it was adjusted and given an imputation flag. For example, on the school file, enrollment is broken out into categories of race. Many or all of these categories may have had an original answer. However, if the sum of these categories did not exactly match total enrollment, then many or all of the race categories may have been ratio-adjusted so that the sum would match the total. Each of the changed values would receive an imputation flag. No imputation was done to field test data.

Table C-9. Number and percentage of teacher questionnaires, by completeness of questionnaire: 2001–02

Completeness of questionnaire	Number	Percent
Total	531	100.00
All items complete	396	74.58
Most items complete: blanks due to skip patterns	11	2.07
Most items complete: blank (intentional)	113	21.28
Most items complete: partial (sections) skipped	8	1.51
Partially complete (stopped)	2	0.38
Only few items complete	1	0.19

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) 2001–02 Pretest.

In terms of specific item nonresponse, the items that were most commonly left blank were salary, contact information, and year of birth (table C-10). When compared to the 1999–2000 SASS response rates, field, state certification, and year of birth had lower response rates in the Pretest. Comparing the nonresponse rates for other items listed above with the 1999–2000 SASS nonresponse rates indicated an increase in the response rate for most of these items. A comparison was not possible for two items because the response rates for these SASS 1999–2000 items were reduced as a result of the imputation process.³ These items are denoted with a superscript 1.

Table C-10. Item nonresponse (in percent) on teacher questionnaires in 1999–2000 SASS compared with 2001–02 Pretest: 1999–2000 and 2001–02

Item	Frequency	SASS 1999–2000 response rate	Pretest 2001–02 response rate	Difference
51 Hours spent teaching	1	77.15 ¹	99.81	22.66
11 Other degrees	2	94.59 ¹	99.62	5.03
65a Race	3	96.57	99.44	2.87
62b Salary	52	90.00	90.21	0.21
19a First year teaching	2	99.56	99.62	0.06
68 Contact information	105	†	80.23	†
12 Field	1	99.86	99.81	-0.05
13a State certification	1	100.00	99.81	-0.19
67 Year of birth	13	99.5	97.55	-1.95

† Not applicable.

¹ The response rate for this SASS 1999–2000 item was reduced as a result of the imputation process.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), 1999–2000; U.S. Census Bureau, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) 2001–02 Pretest.

In evaluating the data quality of these forms, the consistency of the responses was tested. It was determined that responses were inconsistent if in the year the teacher began teaching (item 19a), the teacher was younger than 18 years of age (item 67). Seven such responses were inconsistent (table C-11). The second set of responses was inconsistent if the year the teacher began teaching at that school (item 5) was before the teacher’s first year of teaching (item 19a). There were nine inconsistent responses. The

³ In computing final item response rates, an item is considered “answered” if the imputation flag = 0, meaning no changes were made to the item. For some items, respondents had provided an answer, but it was adjusted and given an imputation flag. For example, on the school file, enrollment is broken out into categories of race. Many or all of these categories may have had an original answer. However, if the sum of these categories did not exactly match total enrollment, then many or all of the race categories may have been ratio-adjusted so that the sum would match the total. Each of the changed values would receive an imputation flag. No imputation was done to field test data.

field the teacher indicated to teach was inconsistent if classes taught in item 38 differed significantly from the appropriate teaching field or code in item 12. Seventeen responses were determined to be inconsistent. Lastly, consistency in responses was tested by determining if item 1a, the teacher's main assignment, was consistent with assignment status determined by the Teacher Listing Form. Six responses were inconsistent.

Table C-11. Consistency of responses on teacher questionnaires, by item and method of evaluation: 2001–02

Item and method of evaluation	Frequency of inconsistent responses	Percentage of consistent responses
<i>Year teacher began teaching</i> : Inconsistent if year teacher began teaching (item 19a) occurred when teacher younger than 18 (item 67)	7	98.68
<i>Year teacher began at that school</i> : Inconsistent if year the teacher began at that school (item 5) is before first year of teaching (item 19a)	9	98.31
<i>Field in which teacher teaches</i> : Inconsistent if classes taught (item 38) differ significantly from indicated teaching field/code (item 12)	17	96.80
<i>Main assignment (Item 1a)</i> : Use Teacher Listing Form to determine assignment status	6	98.87

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) 2001–02 Pretest.

Findings: Pretest Response Rates

Response rates from the SASS 2001–02 Pretest both at the national and the Regional Office level are listed below in table C-12. Staff handled 360 cases, 120 at each of the three regional centers (Seattle, Atlanta, and Denver). Twenty-nine field representatives were trained: 9 each at the Seattle and Denver offices and 11 at the Atlanta office.

Table C-12. Pretest response rates (in percent), by Regional Office and questionnaire: 2001–02

Questionnaire	National response rate	Regional Office response rates		
		Seattle	Atlanta	Denver
Teacher Listing Form	88.1	83.8	91.5	89.2
Principal	84.4	81.2	88.8	83.2
School	83.0	77.8	88.0	83.3
School Library Media Center	84.8	78.9	87.0	88.5
Teacher	86.7	87.4	92.6	80.2

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) 2001–02 Pretest.

The Pretest response rates are compared to the 1999–2000 SASS response rates in table C-13.

Table C-13. Comparison of response rates (in percent) in 1999–2000 SASS and in 2001–02 Pretest, by questionnaire: 1999–2000 and 2001–02

Questionnaire	SASS 1999–2000	Pretest 2001–02	
		All Field	Mailout/Field
Teacher Listing Form	91.0	88.1	†
Principal	88.8	84.4	†
School	86.4	83.0	†
School Library Media Center	93.5	84.8	†
Teacher	82.4	86.7	89.5

† Not applicable.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), 1999–2000; U.S. Census Bureau, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) 2001–02 Pretest.

It appears that the Pretest had lower response rates than the previous SASS at the school level (Teacher Listing Form, principal, school, and school library media center) but higher responses among teachers. The higher teacher response suggested that the Pretest methods may be more effective at reaching teachers. The teacher half-sample that received their questionnaires first by mail, followed by field follow-up, had the highest response. However, the length of the data collection time-period was significantly longer, which may account for the higher rate when compared to the fall Pretest teacher cases.

The lower school level responses did cause concern, but may also be explained. In the Pretest, 17 of the 360 schools (nearly 5 percent) refused entirely, but indicated that they might have cooperated in a full-scale survey rather than a test. Seven of these schools were in one school district.

Field staff members anticipated that response at least would be maintained and probably improved in the future when SASS is a full production survey and not a pretest. The involvement of senior field representatives was not originally part of the SASS Pretest. Senior field representatives are local first-level supervisors who assist the field representatives with difficult cases and provide additional training if needed. All three Regional Offices used senior field representatives on refusal conversion during December and January to raise response rates. Involving senior field representatives from the beginning would enable supervisors to target refusals early and to assist field representatives when needed.

The general feeling in Field Division was that the cooperation improved because of the personal visit with the principal. Field representatives were able to meet directly with school staff and solicit cooperation with the support of the principal. At that point they knew whether cases would need some extra follow-up. With the traditional mail/telephone/field, field representatives never received the support of the principal or knew that cooperation would be difficult to gain. This cooperative relationship enabled the field representatives to have better access to the schools, which resulted in smoother dissemination of forms to the teachers, librarians, and other school personnel.

The NCES identification badges were helpful in some cases and should continue for production.

Findings: Costs

It was estimated that the cost of the 2003–04 SASS using the field-based methods would be somewhat higher than using the mail/telephone/field methods. The main differences in cost between the two methods were as follows:

- The field-based data collection method was likely to cost more than the methods used in previous administrations of SASS. While the field-based methods would eliminate the costs of postage and CATI and would shift the bulk of data collection from early 2004 to late 2003, the personal visits to all schools resulted in greater costs overall.
- Under the field-based method of data collection, staff would likely spend less time on data processing. The initial visits to the schools would determine right away if schools were in-scope or out-of-scope and resolve any other school definition issues. During prior SASS data processing, staff had to do a significant amount of work to resolve data problems that occurred because these issues had been discovered later in the process. Also, there was some indication that there may be improvement in data quality, which could reduce the amount of time to resolve edits and imputations.

Notes from the Supervisors' SASS Debriefing

After the fieldwork was completed, Census Bureau headquarters staff held a meeting with the field supervisors to discuss every aspect of the field procedures in order to identify what changes needed to be made for the full-scale survey. The following sections document the discussions on staffing, controlling the work, cost, staff training, timing of data collection, and correspondence.

Staffing

Supervisors had a difficult time staffing for this test due to other program commitments.

Asking for “experienced” field representatives made staffing more difficult, since many of the other programs also were calling for “experienced” field representatives.

Senior field representative availability was also limited due to other program commitments.

In looking forward to 2003 the supervisors saw fewer problems. It was their opinion that this year was rather unique with regard to work in the field.

Headquarters needed to allow more flexibility to the program supervisors to run the survey. This should not be a problem in 2003 since it would be a regularly run survey.

Controlling Work

There was no way that the Regional Office was able to truly control or even know at any particular time what the status of the field representative work was.

The combination of mail back and pick up was good in one respect—it gave flexibility to the Regional Office, the field representative, and the schools. However, this combination contributed to the difficulty in controlling the work being done by the field representatives.

One of the suggestions made for 2003 was using time frames (phases) for the return of the various forms.

The use of ROSCO in 2003 will enable headquarters to develop a more comprehensive control system that will enable the Regional Office to better control the forms and also be more user friendly.

Cost

Supervisors did not detect any areas where they thought the field representatives were working inefficiently.

Training

Field representatives did not understand sampling very well. (Since computer-assisted personal interviewing [CAPI] will be used in 2003 this will not be a problem.) However, the field representatives and supervisors will need to be able to explain sampling well enough when asked.

Supervisors suggest that the 2003 supervisor training include the following:

- ROSCO;
- response rate expectations;
- refusal letter use (these need to be developed); and
- discussion of the paper intensity of this survey.

Supervisors also did not realize how paper intense the survey is. The point has been reached in Field Division where the majority of supervisors have either not worked a paper survey, or it has been so long since they have that they are not accustomed to what must be done in a paper survey.

The field representative training needs to spend more time on clarification of the definition of “teacher.”

Since this survey will involve a considerable amount of Regional Office control the supervisors recommended that the clerical staff be included in any future national training.

Timing

Timing was not good; however, the comment was also made that for 2001, “No time was a good time.”

For school districts the “starts and stops” made the flow of the survey more difficult.

They believe that in 2003 they could close out the collection process by the end of the year.

Discussion regarding 2003 close out produced a few different approaches:

1. Schedule a firm close out with the possibility of an extension for particular schools and/or school districts where considerable delays have been encountered that were outside the control of the field representative or Regional Office;
2. Close out the Teacher Listing Forms by the end of October (5 weeks), close out the school, principal, and school library media center questionnaires just before winter break. Since there will be more teacher forms, extend the teacher questionnaire close out until the end of January.
3. Set specific goals (percentage) that need to be done by certain predetermined dates. Let the final close out go into the next year.

Another suggestion was that specific time lines by school be set based on the time that forms were delivered to the school. Everyone agreed that this certainly would be more equitable with regards to time; however, it would be very difficult to accomplish.

Regional Office Correspondence

In order for Census Bureau headquarters staff to get a better idea of the problems encountered during interviewing, the supervisors agreed to send in all memos and other communication used to clarify procedures or instructions.

Comments from SASS Field Representative Debriefing Conference

After the fieldwork was completed, Census Bureau headquarters staff also held a meeting with the field representatives to discuss all aspects of the field procedures from their perspective. The following sections document the points that were made.

Scheduling and Principal Visit

- The preaddressed introductory letter to the principal should be sent to the field representatives so that it can be mailed at the most appropriate time. Many field representatives thought that the principal had received the letter but had forgotten about it because of the time differential between receipt of the letter and the field representative's visit.
- Have a distinctive color of the introductory letter's envelope, so that way the field representative could ask about the "red, white, and blue envelope."
- Some field representatives thought that it would be more effective to have the principal's name on the introductory letter. The major problem with that is that there is no way to get a reliable list of principals' names before the letters are prepared. Field representatives were confident that they could get names, but then there is a problem with how to get it on to the letter other than writing it. Other field representatives did not see a big advantage to the letter being personally addressed.
- There was a wide variety of persons who ended up as the "best contact." Many field representatives dealt with the principal directly, others with a vice principal, still others with an administrative assistant. Instructions need to emphasize the need for this flexibility.
- There was much discussion regarding the timing of when this survey starts. The discussion centered around the first visit, especially as it related to contacting the principal. The bottom line was that there probably is no "best" time or, for that matter, any "good" time. These are people who are terribly busy the entire time they are at the school.
- The field representatives pointed out that some of the time it was necessary to make personal contact with the person at the school district that has responsibility for surveys and getting their approval before getting permission from the principal.
- There was a variety of ways that the field representatives dealt with the first visit. Most called after the letter was received but before making a personal visit. They normally attempted to talk to or make an appointment with the principal. There were varying degrees of success expressed.
- Some schools are only reachable by a personal visit. The field representatives need to stress the importance of the school having a listing of teachers available when they arrive for their first meeting. Could an example of what is wanted be on the back of the initial letter?

- Other suggestions included having the letters sent from the Regional Office, having two different letters (one for elementary and one for secondary), and still others thought the discussion of the letters was over emphasized.
- There was also considerable discussion regarding whether it was best to have someone at the school send the various forms back to the field representative or Regional Office versus making a return trip to pick them up. This also appears to be an area where there are several successful methods. Certainly when long distances are involved it would be better to mail the forms. This is another area where there is need to emphasize flexibility of methods of returning surveys.
- For the most part the field representatives agreed that an envelope should be included with the teacher form. It should be sealable and marked “confidential.” The general agreement was that this method would improve the teacher response rate. This envelope also needs to be marked SASS so that when it gets returned to the Regional Office it gets routed to the correct area.
- Some of the field representatives would like to have the ability to have the envelopes mailed to their own homes. Although this would allow the field representatives to monitor what has been sent in, it would delay the check-in of the forms in the Regional Office.
- As far as completing the Teacher Listing Form, 13 of the 16 field representatives had no problem.
- Some field representatives thought the principal or secretary at some schools did not do a good job in seeing that the librarian received the school library media center questionnaire.
- The field representatives need to ensure that the librarian is at the initial meeting.
- The field representatives said that most schools had the forms completed by the agreed-on date of pickup.
- The introductory letter should include more graphics and fewer words.
- Design different kinds of introductory letters for different types of schools in the sample, for example, elementary, high school, large, small, urban, rural, etc.

Materials Other Than Forms

- The Regional Offices (field representatives and office) need the form that requests results of the survey to give to respondents.
- A number of schools mentioned to the field representative that they liked the Census Map that was given to each school.
- Leave some sort of incentive plan with the school, such as:
 - o lesson plan;
 - o map;
 - o brochure;
 - o pen (for all who complete forms); or
 - o thank you certificate.

- Several field representatives said that it would be nice if something could be given to the schools for participating. Suggestions included things like a Thank You letter, a pen, a certificate, etc.
- Most of the field representatives thought a fact sheet highlighting the results of previous surveys would be very beneficial. The NCES representative pointed out that such a brochure would be part of the survey when it goes to the field.
- The SASS overview form was well received.
- A flash card or instruction card showing in outline form who needed to do what would have been helpful.
- The use of the large zip lock bag with all materials for a school in it was universally well received.

NCES Badge (I.D.)

- Most all of the field representatives said the NCES identification card was helpful, although four field representatives did not use it at all and reported they had no real problems.
- Four field representatives thought it would be helpful if the NCES identification card had the field representative's picture on it. The rest did not think it would make a significant difference. (One field representative's personal note: "I believe we need to be careful in how we present the NCES card. We want to make sure we do not lead the field representatives to start using that card only. Field representatives need to keep in mind that although NCES pays for the survey, they are Census employees, not NCES employees.")

Response Rates

- Several field representatives reported that the fact that it was a test affected the response rate negatively. When polled, it affected a total of 17 schools, 7 of which were in the same school district.
- Although there was general agreement that there is no real good time to conduct this survey, several field representatives thought later in the year would be better. No consensus was reached on this, however.
- Everyone thought that a refusal letter would be helpful. Where it would originate and who would sign it were points of disagreement, however.

Interviewer Time per School

- Fourteen of the field representatives reported that it took less than 10 hours to complete all the work from one school. This includes organizing, calling a school in advance, travel, and interviewing.
- Three reported that it took between 11 and 20 hours to complete a school.
- Twelve of the 17 field representatives said that due to the uniqueness of this survey, they were not able to combine much of the work with other survey work.

Training

- Generally, the field representatives thought the training was satisfactory. However, there were areas, outlined below, where they thought it could be improved.
- Although the training went over all of the forms they thought more time could have been allotted to tying it all together.
- One practice exercise would have been helpful.
- Most did not think a classroom session was needed, but several thought a teleconference would have helped.
- The time allowed for the self-study was about 2 hours too short; they wanted 8 hours rather than 6 hours.
- Several got the impression from the self-study that they would need to track down each teacher, which is not the case.
- Many thought there was not enough emphasis on the timing of the different operations. For example, how soon after the initial visit should they start following up on the various forms?
- Training on sampling needs to be included so that the field representatives can explain why their schools/teachers are selected.
- The training needs to emphasize the flexibility of methods of returning surveys needed for the success of this survey. This survey is considerably different than many of the current surveys.
- Need to explain what is meant by edit. On some surveys the field representative conducts the interview, does a complete review (edit), and then calls back for missing information. Is this what is meant or something else?
- Grade range in some instances was a problem. The solution might be either more explanation in training materials or a clear instruction to the field representatives to call their supervisor if problems are encountered.
- The field representative instructions need to be expanded to include more information on how to handle part-time teachers and how to handle specialty areas such as audiologist, special education teachers, etc.
- Instructions need to be clear that the field representative will be asking the race/ethnicity item for each teacher listed on the Teacher Listing Form. This is very much different than any other surveys where race and ethnicity are asked of the household respondent.
- Training should include recent press releases. A few months prior to the SASS, headquarters staff should provide the Regional Offices with SASS press releases to hand to reluctant schools. Further, headquarters staff should train to pull or have the Regional Office provide internet information on how SASS helps the specific school district.

Forms

- Forms need to be redesigned to be more field representative friendly.
- Add the field representative name and expected pick up date to all the forms.
- On the teacher form add a space for teacher name and teacher line number.
- Put the information from the Commissioner of NCES on the inside front cover of every questionnaire.
- Put a thank you statement, Census Bureau clerical processing staff address, and e-mail information on the inside back cover of every questionnaire.
- Since it is the field representative's option to pick up the forms or have the respondents mail them, each form should have a check box for the field representative to use to indicate to the respondent what they are to do with that particular form. This field representative check box could be put on the inside back cover of the form(s) or in some other suitable location.
- It would be helpful if the 800 number was printed so it's more easily noticed. Also regarding the 800 number, it might be helpful to print it on the same page that the web page information is printed.

Appendix D. Report of Findings From a Test on the SASS Teacher Listing Instrument

The material in this appendix is organized as follows:

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Overview

In previous administrations of the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), a screening of schools to determine if they are in-scope or out-of-scope was embedded in the Teacher Listing Form and the school questionnaires. The screening process sometimes yielded inaccurate or inconsistent information about the school's status. For example, a private school might report that it is public because it receives tuition money from a public school district on behalf of some students. The methodology itself added significant time to the data collection. Although the SASS operation typically began in October, the last teacher questionnaires were mailed out in January, leaving little time during the school year for nonresponse follow-up. In an attempt to improve the screening process and reduce the time required to conduct the survey, a SASS Teacher Listing instrument was developed that could screen schools and select a sample of teachers from eligible schools. The instrument was designed to screen schools by phone for in-scope/out-of-scope status. Next, the field representative was instructed to set up an appointment with the school to collect the Teacher Listing Form. The field representative could then key the Teacher Listing Form into the instrument and a sample of teachers would be selected. This allowed the field representative to sample teachers and hand questionnaires to the selected teachers all in one visit to the school. In order to verify that the SASS Teacher Listing instrument and procedures would work in a field setting, a two-part test was conducted prior to the full-scale SASS administration. The test had several objectives, including the following:

- examining issues and problems with the SASS Teacher Listing instrument, including:
 - o determining whether respondents understand the intent and wording of the scope and grade range questions,
 - o determining whether the answer categories for each question are sufficient and verifying that paths exist to handle all of the possible scenarios,
 - o identifying where help screens may be needed, and
 - o testing the questions and procedures for obtaining lists of teachers;
- identifying how often the questions can be completed by phone;
- identifying who at the school is able to answer the questions; and
- observing field representatives administering the instrument to identify any deficiencies in their procedures or training.

Methods

One hundred and eighty schools in states likely to be problematic¹ (Oklahoma, Montana, South Dakota) and the District of Columbia (DC) metropolitan area (Virginia, Pennsylvania, DC, Maryland) were selected to participate in this test. In order to ensure a variety of scenarios were encountered (e.g., merged or split schools), some of the schools selected had their sample frame information altered (grade ranges or enrollment counts were modified to create discrepancies). Following normal SASS procedures, an advance letter was sent to schools prior to interviewing. Five field representatives and headquarters staff were trained to administer the SASS Teacher Listing instrument and conduct a debriefing with respondents about their experience. A standardized debriefing form was used to structure the feedback. Twenty cases in the DC area were selected for in-person visits.

¹ In past SASS administrations, it was more common to find a discrepancy between grade ranges on the Common Core of Data and actual grade ranges identified in SASS for schools in Oklahoma, Montana, and South Dakota than it was for schools in other states. (See sections on school collapsing in chapter 2 and “Appendix K. Details of SASS Frame Creation and Sample Selection Procedures.”)

Interviewers were able to conduct 15 of the 20 planned local interviews in the DC area. One school refused to participate in the test. The other four schools could not be contacted during the study time period. Of the 180 schools selected for telephone interviewing, 32 were contacted by researchers and completed the interview. A debriefing of research staff was held daily at the Census Bureau during which field representatives shared their observations about all aspects of the test with analysts and made suggestions about how the test could be improved. The test was conducted in early January 2003.

Key Findings

- The instrument was not able to handle breaks in grade range. For example, a high school that had a kindergarten would have needed to be reported as 9–12. It was recommended that grade range handling be improved to allow this flexibility.
- The instrument moved slowly during the keying operation. It was recommended that improvements be made to the performance of the Teacher Listing Form portion of the instrument.
- The instrument was successful at identifying in-scope and out-of-scope schools and collecting teacher lists from schools. It was recommended that a modified instrument be used in the full-scale SASS.
- The test indicated that Regional Offices should conduct a prefield clean-up operation of the listing file before field interviewing begins.
- The test identified many procedural recommendations, which are discussed below.
 - Training for field representatives should be modified to improve their understanding of how to use the instrument and contact schools.
 - Field representatives should review every Teacher Listing Form with a knowledgeable person at the school before keying the form into the instrument. During the pretest, field representatives did not check the quality of the Teacher Listing Form before leaving the school, which led to the inclusion of nonteachers in the sample.
 - Greater flexibility should be built into the instrument so that field representatives can change demographic fields such as name and address during the interview.

Limitations

This test was designed to focus on the SASS Teacher Listing instrument. The methodology of this test differed significantly from the full-scale SASS administration. For this reason, the findings of this test cannot be extrapolated to the full-scale SASS.

The test differed from a full-scale SASS in the following ways:

- The advance letter indicated that this was a pretest.
- Field representatives received an abbreviated, in-person training.
- Participants were informed up front about the debriefing.
- Only schools selected for an in-person visit were asked to complete a Teacher Listing Form.

The findings of this test should not be used to predict response rates or other outcomes for a full-scale SASS.

Recommendations

Recommendations from this study fell into three distinct categories: changes to training, changes to procedures, and changes to the instrument. The observations and recommended changes are detailed below.

Field Representative Training Recommendations

Observations	Recommendations
During the middle of the day, interviewers received a lot of busy signals or were unable to reach the principal.	Train field representatives that 7:45–9:00 a.m. or after 2:45 p.m. appear to be the best times to reach principals.
When the field representatives were unable to get all information about the teachers, they were unsure which items on the listing were the most important to try to get from the school.	Stress at field representative training the relative importance of stratification items (experience, race, classes, etc.)—it is more important to get names than to focus on these items.
Not all lists originally received at the school were complete.	Advise field representative to check the list before they leave the school to ensure that it is complete.
Field representatives felt that having background information about the school would help them gain cooperation before they visited/called the school.	Many school districts have websites with links to individual schools—this is a good place to find current information for school contacts. Address in field representative training.
Field representatives had difficulty reaching some principals/knowledgeable respondents by phone.	The initial contact may need to be in person if there is difficulty reaching the principal or knowledgeable respondent. Address in field representative training.
Field representatives unsure what to bring to the school.	Inform field representatives to bring all necessary school forms, information sheets, Teacher Listing Form, laptop, and envelopes addressed to the field representative or Regional Office.
Field representatives did not feel confident in the instrument/procedures for handling outlier scenarios (for instance, merged or split schools).	Have field representatives conduct two or three practice cases with various scenarios so that they get an opportunity to see most of the screens in the laptop. Address in field representative training.
Interviewers expected standard hot keys/shortcuts to work in the SASS Teacher Listing instrument.	Include a cheat sheet of working hot keys in training.

Procedural Changes

Observations

Not all scenarios that occur in the field can be handled through the instrument.

Respondents wanted a copy of the Teacher Listing Form before the field representative came to pick up their list.

Principals were not always available for their scheduled appointment.

Some problem schools (related to name, address, etc.—e.g., school has “program” in its name) were not identified until the call. Prescreening of these schools could speed fieldwork.

Schools wanted a way to contact field representatives after the visit.

Field representatives unsure how to handle the case where there are two principals with one campus (elementary and middle), with the same phone line and both listed as one school in sample.

Field representative unsure how to handle the case where the school changed location and name.

Need for a packet ready for Regional Office to fax to schools that ask for one (including letter, Teacher Listing Form, general information).

Recommendations

Regional Office will need a direct connection to Census Bureau sampling staff to settle issues with outlier cases (e.g., school has moved and changed names, school name and phone number do not match but each leads to a different school, etc.).

Provide faxable copies of Teacher Listing Form to Regional Office. Field representative will contact Regional Office and Regional Office will fax to school. Provide copy of Teacher Listing Form with the advance letter.

Make an appointment ahead of time with the principal. Call the day of the appointment to reconfirm. (Principals’ days change minute by minute based on what happens in the school.)

Identify potential problem in field-based edit and have Regional Offices conduct a clean up operation before sample is given to field representatives.

Provide business cards for field representatives.

Field representatives call the Regional Office. Census Bureau sampling staff will need to be contacted.

Field representatives call the Regional Office. Census Bureau sampling staff will need to be contacted.

Prepare packet for the Regional Office.

Instrument Changes

Observations

Need to be able to correct school name if field representative discovers that it is incorrect any time during the interview other than the beginning.

Instrument was too slow, especially with larger schools. This performance issue appears to be tied to duplicate checking functionality.

Need a way to pass the contact name from the case management system into the instrument.

Mailing address is automatically changed when physical address changes. Flow of address screens is awkward. P.O. box appears as physical address.

Field representatives need a way to verify entry at the end of keying.

Field representative unsure of procedures if teacher's name is entered incorrectly in instrument and effects this has on follow-up and Teacher Follow-Up survey.

Field representatives unsure of best way to categorize nontraditional classes (study habits, computer class, learning center, etc.)

Names are not collected/maintained early enough in the instrument. Field representatives forgot the names of some respondents.

Screens did not always flow in a logical order, especially when there were address or name changes.

Interviewers expected standard hot keys/shortcuts to work.

Recommendations

Create tab that will allow the field representative to update the school address, name, and contact names.

Have the instrument check for duplicate names at the end of the listing rather than during the listing.

Pass principal and other contact name information from case management into the instrument.

Provide option for field representative to change or keep both addresses from the same screen. Reword screens to make it easier to follow. P.O. box should not appear as physical address.

Total count by columns (i.e., number of new teachers, full time or part time) screen will be added to the instrument.

Name correction will be made by Census Bureau clerical processing staff.

Help screen should be created.

1. Ask for respondent/principal name earlier in the instrument.
2. Display name on the instrument.
3. Adjust instrument to record multiple contacts/respondents.

Need to review wording and flow for name and address change, split, and merge. The screens will be reworded/moved based on this review.

Enable standard hot keys to work in as many places as possible.

Appendix E. Report on SASS Cognitive Interviews of Teachers in Two Panels

This appendix contains a February 19, 2003, report that UserWorks prepared on the cognitive interviews it conducted to evaluate revisions to the 1999–2000 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) Public School Teacher Questionnaire. This report was done for the Demographic Surveys Division of the U.S. Census Bureau. The report contains the following material:

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Executive Summary

The Demographic Surveys Division of the U.S. Census Bureau hired UserWorks to evaluate revisions to the 1999–2000 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) Public School Teacher Questionnaire. UserWorks conducted a series of cognitive interviews (think-aloud sessions) to identify problems with comprehending the meaning and intent of the questions, the procedures to complete the survey, and sensitivity of questionnaire items.

Utilizing UserWorks' participant database and personal contacts of both UserWorks and Census Bureau analysts, 30 participants of varying characteristics were recruited. All taught in the greater Washington, DC-Baltimore metropolitan area. The questionnaire was broken up into two parts, or panels, which covered different topics and questionnaire items so that interviewees' responses could be thoroughly investigated and interviews could be kept within a reasonable time limit. Sixteen participants completed Panel A and 14 participants Panel B, for a total of 30 participants. Interviews were conducted at the participants' schools, various public places in the DC metropolitan area, and the UserWorks lab in Silver Spring, Maryland, between December 2002 and January 2003.

Participants were asked to think aloud but otherwise to complete the questionnaire as they normally would, in whatever order and with whatever degree of attention, thoroughness, and completeness would be natural for them, first using themselves and their experiences as a source of information. Concurrently, while working on each item and retroactively, after completing an item or related set of items, participants were probed regarding their responses to the questionnaire.

This report lists each question and its corresponding bulleted instructions or examples (“apple points”) and answer choices. Problems indicative of confusion with or misunderstanding with questionnaire items are presented along with less problematic “observations” of participant comments or behavior. In cases where questions in version 1 of Panel A were revised or added in version 2, a note to that effect with the altered answer choice or question is provided in context.

In just a few cases, participants found the wording of some questions confusing. When they did have difficulty answering a question, however, it was not because they failed to understand it but because the question did not neatly apply to their circumstance. For instance, elementary school teachers who taught reading as part of language arts, or who covered language arts issues in social studies, could not easily classify—and thus readily apportion—the time they spent on reading or language arts.

A more common problem was that participants, though certain of the meaning of an item, would differ from each other in their interpretations of that item. One teacher would recognize two or more alternative interpretations of the same item, or the teachers' interpretations would differ from what staff suspected was the intent of the question. An example of such an item would be the statement “I worry about the security of my job because of the performance of my students on state and local tests”; someone may disagree with it while still worrying about job security, or agree with it even if the students were performing well. Even when there was little debate over how a question should be interpreted, participants sometimes answered “yes,” “no,” “agree,” or “disagree” to an item for reasons other than those implied in the question. For instance, participants might agree that they use district standards because they are forced to, not because they wish to, or might deny that they receive state test scores if their students never take state tests to begin with.

Another common, overall problem was that teachers did not feel they had sufficient knowledge of current school practices and student status or memory of past events—such as their past college coursework—to

provide accurate answers. While they understood the questions, they would have rated very low their confidence in their answers.

A fourth common problem was that participants read instructions only for the information they felt they needed to complete each item. This tendency led them to overlook mandatory apple points, options lower in a list that might have been more relevant than those higher in a list, and qualifying information appearing at the end of a sentence. Many of our recommendations therefore involve rearranging or highlighting information in an existing sentence or dividing a sentence into two or more parts.

The greatest challenge for participants was calculating hours spent on activities. In part this was because they tended to classify their work time and professional development by number of classes taught and number of days per week worked, including half-day workshops, rather than by hours. However, the difficulty also stemmed from divergent interpretations of certain key phrases used repeatedly throughout the questionnaire such as “at this school,” “most recent full week,” “school-related activities,” “professional development activities,” “main teaching assignment field,” and “major field of study.” Several of our recommendations thus encourage more specific wording or explanation of these recurrent terms.

While participants had concerns with most questions on some level, the remainder of this executive summary highlights the most problematic areas and provides selected suggestions to resolve these “showstoppers.”

Panel A (Versions 1 and 2)

Item # and question	Recommendation
4a Which statement best describes the way YOUR classes (or sections) at this school are organized?	<p>Reword answer options so that, as in option 4 (team teaching), information describing students or mapping teachers to students is closer to the beginning of the answer choice than is course or subject information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You instruct several classes of different students most or all of the day in one or more subjects (such as algebra, geometry, music, history, government, and/or biology). [Answer Option 1] • You are an elementary school teacher who teaches only one subject (such as art OR music OR physical education OR computer skills) [consider enrichment or specialist or resource as a key term following “elementary”]. [Answer Option 2] • You instruct the same group of students all or most of the day in multiple subjects. [Answer Option 3] • [No change to Answer Option 4.] • You provide remediation or special needs services... OR You instruct selected students released from their regular classes in specific skills or to address specific needs (for instance, gifted and talented, special education, reading remediation, English as a Second Language). [Answer Option 5] <p>Consider allowing participants to denote “other” category or to describe “main” organization and “secondary” organization.</p>
6a During your most recent FULL WEEK of teaching, approximately how many hours did you spend teaching each of these subjects at THIS school?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divide apple point into separate apple points, rather than having one long, complicated sentence. • Consider asking about reading activities AND reading instruction, then asking how much time spent on other language arts activities outside of reading, so users will not have to extract reading time from various language arts activities. • Give examples as to what is included in English/Reading/Language Arts. • For preschool and kindergarten teachers, is prereading considered part of English/Language Arts/Reading? Should they count only formal instruction in reading?
6c Go to Section III— Educational Background on page 9. (6c only on Version 1; version 2 gives a skip instruction.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider an arrow pointing to skip instruction on same line (aligned with the left margin underneath) as 6b. • Consider putting the skip instruction within 6b: “Skip to Item 10a [(Section III—Educational Background)?] on page 9.” AND/OR include instructions: “STOP. Do NOT go to page 7! Please skip to item ... on page ...”
7 This school year, what is your MAIN teaching assignment field at this school, that is, the field in which you teach the most classes?	<p>Clarify if goal is to identify “most subjects taught” (e.g., three earth science classes vs. two general science classes vs. being just a 9th grade science teacher, 2-hour block of reading in a self-contained 2nd grade class where participant also teaches math, etc.) or elementary vs. middle vs. high school teacher who happens to specialize in some subject. (Also, consider putting this question below Question 9.)</p>
8 During your MOST RECENT FULL WEEK of teaching, how many separate classes (or sections) did you teach AT THIS SCHOOL?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclude study hall from apple points. • Consider use of “period” to distinguish subject from class. • Alternatively, rephrase question to indicate: “In your job assignment, how many classes are assigned to you?” AND “Count only once periods that meet more than once a week.”
9 Complete a line of the table below for each class (or section) that you taught during your MOST RECENT FULL WEEK of teaching at this school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify that respondents should list each period taught followed by the number of students in each period. • Consider updating codes in table 1 that this question refers to.

Item # and question	Recommendation
10/12c Was this degree awarded by a department of education, college of education, or school of education?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider allowing participants to check off whether and how degree was education related. • If “no” to 10/12c, point to a subitem that conveys, “If your degree was not from a department or school of education within your college (e.g., school of music), if your degree was not from a school or college of education within your university, did you take education-related courses (e.g., methods in teaching music) WITHIN that department, school, or college?” [Consider Question 14 here?]
10/12d What was your major field of study?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider recording minor or area of specialization. • Consider adding new education-related codes. • Consider adding apple point: “If the field of study name is not listed in Table 2, please choose the closest match.” • Consider adding a section to table 2 labeled “Combined Degree” with codes and field names that include both a specialty field and the word “education.”
13a Have you earned any other degrees?	<p>Of concern to participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add “In progress” to column B for earned degree status. • Add a new row to record credentialing and/or master’s equivalency. • Add a row for National Board certificate. <p>(NOTE: Until this point, participants did not know until seeing the table that they could record a second bachelor’s or master’s degree.)</p>
14 Have you ever taken any graduate or undergraduate courses in teaching methods or education?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a range of hours for participants to select. • Target this question more specifically to teachers who might have no education degree (perhaps after asking if participants have an education degree awarded by a college’s School of Education or a university’s College of Education). • If kept as is, offer examples (apple points) of the types of classes that count as methods or courses in education.
15–18a Do you have a [SECOND, THIRD, FOURTH] teaching certificate in this state? 15–18c In what content area is this certificate?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on area of specialization. (See 15–18c.) • Allow teachers to record elementary or secondary teaching certification and then area of specialization or endorsement.
20 How did you earn your initial teaching certificate? (Version 1) Thinking about all of the teaching certificates you have earned in any state, how did you earn your first certificate? (Version 2)	<p>Rephrase or add answer choice, “After I obtained Bachelor’s degree, but before I began teaching.”</p>

Item # and question	Recommendation
Observations on tables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants preferred to have tables in easy access to the referring questions, with the table on the left and the question(s) on the right; the less page flipping, the better. • UserWorks staff believes the revised layout of tables 1A and 1B will help future participants efficiently locate the codes, but staff did not have adequate numbers to test this against. • Where possible, UserWorks staff recommends reviewing the currency of the codes, and including new subitems. • Add new assignment codes or reword existing ones. • Replace “ESL/Bilingual” with “ESL or Bilingual.”

Panel B

Item # and question	Recommendation
3 In the past 12 MONTHS, did you participate in any of the following professional development activities?	Use larger font for 3 than for subitems; indent subitems so “past 12 months” carries down the page.
3a University course(s) taken towards recertification or advanced certification in your MAIN teaching assignment field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If it matters: “Include/exclude courses you are currently taking” • Reverse order of 3a and 3b THEN ask about recertification/advanced certification. • Include both general education courses and specialty area courses. • Define main teaching assignment field or replace with “subject or grade range you are primarily teaching now.” • If necessary, be more specific for even splits—the one they concentrate on more, or a more general category: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “subject you are primarily teaching now” ○ If you teach multiple subjects, pick a field that includes all of them. ○ If you teach multiple subjects, pick the one you concentrate on the most.
3b University course(s) in your MAIN teaching assignment field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggested wording: University course(s) in your MAIN teaching assignment field taken for your initial certification. • If you were not initially certified in the last 12 months, your answer may be “None.” Exclude courses taken for recertification or advanced certification.
3b Presenting at workshops, conferences or trainings	Add bullet: Include/exclude “in-service” presentations in your own school
3e Attending other workshops, conferences, or trainings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add bullet: Exclude conferences in which you were a presenter • Add bullet: Include/exclude “in-service” presentations in your own school
3f Individual or collaborative research on a topic of interest to you professionally	If definition of “research” matters, pick and choose how to restrict: Include/exclude finding information or articles for students in your classes; personal experiences you discuss in class; formal research on educational methods mandated by school system or coursework, etc.
3g Regularly-scheduled collaboration with other teachers on issues of instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclude administrative meetings • If “administrative meetings” means faculty meetings, use that term.

Item # and question	Recommendation
<p>4a In the past 12 months, have you participated in any professional development activities that focused on in-depth study of the content in your MAIN teaching assignment field?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace “professional development activities” with something more specific or say “Include/exclude in-service courses, faculty meetings, presentations you gave yourself, etc.” • Rephrase “In-depth study”; suggested wording: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “...focused on your main teaching assignment field and directed at teachers with some knowledge and experience” ○ “...specific to and concentrating on the subject(s) you primarily teach.”
<p>4a(1) In the past 12 months, how many hours did you spend on these activities?</p>	<p>If appropriate: “Include/exclude time spent doing course assignments, trying out suggestions in your classroom, etc.”</p>
<p>4a(2) Overall, how useful were these activities to you?</p>	<p>If appropriate, extend as follows: “... to you in your current teaching situation?” or “to you potentially?”</p>
<p>4b In the past 12 months, have you participated in any professional development activities that focused on uses of computers for instruction?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move “computers” to end of sentence to focus on applications • Suggested wording <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “...that focused on educational software students can use to explore concepts on computers” ○ “...that focused on teaching students how to use a computer” ○ “...that focused on using computers to prepare lessons, present material, calculate grades, etc.” • If appropriate: Do not include courses you listed in 4a.
<p>4c In the past 12 months, have you participated in any professional development activities that focused on reading instruction?</p>	<p>If appropriate: Do not include courses you listed in 4a.</p>
<p>4e In the past 12 months, have you participated in any professional development activities that focused on other topics not included in 4a–4d above?</p>	<p>If appropriate, move “not included in 4a–4d above” directly after the words “professional development activities.”</p>
<p>5 Are students assigned to your classes on the basis of achievement or ability level?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rephrase as “Does your school use students’ achievement or ability level as a basis for assigning them to your classes?” (Yes/No, not Either/Or) • Add “in some cases; please specify:___” OR ask “Are most of your students...” or “are some of your students...” OR provide answer options like “some classes” and “most classes” • For rewording above, “Does your school sometimes use...” • Add “Do not know” answer option. • If appropriate: “Answer ‘no’ if only students and/or their parents decide which level class they will take.”
<p>6 Do you use different groupings of students in your classroom to teach students who learn at different rates?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If appropriate add “in some situations; please specify:___” OR ask “do you ever...” or “do you at least sometimes...” OR provide answer options such as “often” and “infrequently.” • Rephrase to clarify emphasis, either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “When grouping students, do you select students who can all learn at the same rate to be in a particular group?” OR ○ “When grouping students, do you mix students who learn at different rates in the same group?” • If necessary, distinguish answer choices: “No, I do not group my students for this purpose,” from “No, I do not divide my students into groups.”

Item # and question	Recommendation
<p>7a Of all the students you teach at this school, how many have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) because they have disabilities or are special education students?</p> <p>9 Of all students you teach at this school, how many are of limited English proficiency?</p>	<p>For 7a and 9 add option “Information not available” or ask “To the best of your knowledge...”</p>
<p>11 Do you receive your students’ scores on state or local achievement tests?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove question from private school survey or ask about national tests or other tests. • Ask first “Do your students take state or local achievement tests?” • If appropriate, add bullet: Do not include national standardized tests such as the Iowa [specific name], SAT, etc. • If yes, rephrase: “Do you have access to your students’ scores on these tests?” [not “Do you receive” unless that’s the main issue] • Add answer options “sometimes” or “some of my students”
<p>12 To what extent do you use the information from your students’ test scores:</p> <p>12a To group students into different instructional groups by achievement or ability?</p> <p>12b To assess areas where you need to strengthen your content knowledge or teaching practice?</p> <p>12c To adjust your curriculum in areas where your students encountered problems?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have respondents skip question 12 if students do not take state or local tests and only state/local scores are at issue. • Specify “state and local test scores” again, or if national tests are included, say so; if it is just classroom tests, say so. • If Item 12 is intended to measure or may be interpreted as indicating to what degree teachers value the tests, remove a source of error in 12b & c by asking the questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Are these scores presented in a form you can use?” • “Are they available when you can use them?” • “Is the content of the state and local achievement tests relevant to the courses you teach?”
<p>13 To what extent do you use state or district standards to guide your instructional practice in your main teaching assignment field?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask instead “How big of a role do district standards play in guiding your instructional practice,” or “To what extent do you cover state or district standards in your instructional practice...,” whichever applies. • If important for drawing inferences from question 13, ask in addition how easy it is to apply state or district standards to one’s instructional practice.
<p>17e I worry about the security of my job because of the performance of my students on state and local tests</p>	<p>Rephrase to clarify intent: “The actual performance on state and local tests of the students I have now makes me worry about the security of my job.” OR “If my students were to perform poorly on state and local tests I would worry more than I do now about my job security.”</p>
<p>17f State or district content standards have had a positive influence on my satisfaction with teaching.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If this is really what is being asked, rephrase as, “I am more satisfied with teaching (a more satisfied teacher) thanks to (since the adoption of) state or district content standards.” Otherwise, rephrase as “I am satisfied with the state or district content standards,” or “I feel am a better (more successful) teacher owing to the adoption of state and district content standards.” • Add “not applicable” option.

Item # and question	Recommendation
17g I am satisfied with my class size(s).	If the issue is only whether they are too large, rephrase “My class size(s) is/are too large.”
18a The stress and disappointments involved in teaching at this school aren’t really worth it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a positive statement like “Teaching is worthwhile despite its stresses and disappointments” so respondents will be certain of what they are saying if they disagree. • Identify what “it” is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “the stresses and disappointments are not worth getting stressed out over or disappointed about?” ○ “being in teaching is not worth the stresses and disappointments involved?” ○ “the stresses and disappointments make me want to leave?” ○ “the stresses and disappointments outweigh the joys of teaching, of helping students learn?” ○ “the stresses and disappointments are not worth the money they pay me?” ○ “teaching is not worth what they pay me owing to the stresses and disappointments?”
18d If I could get a higher paying job I’d leave teaching as soon as possible.	Modify: “leave the field of teaching”
19a Tardiness 19b Absenteeism 19c Class cutting	No changes suggested if the items as currently written are needed as benchmarks against which to score other responses; otherwise ask instead about “egregious tardiness,” “rampant absenteeism,” “conspicuous class cutting.”
19f Vandalism 19g Use of alcohol	Rephrase initial question 19 as “To the best of your knowledge, which of the following activities do students at your school engage in” if appropriate to all lettered items; otherwise specify agent of each item, e.g. , “vandalism by students of the school” [not those from the local high school or college] and “student use of alcohol” [not by teachers or parents]
19n Widespread disorder in classrooms	Replace wording with “Teachers not in control of their classes” or “losing the attention of the entire class” if that is the intent of the question.
19o Student acts of disrespect for teachers	Consider “...other than verbal abuse” [exclude 19m]
19 overall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrict scope: “How often do the following problems occur among the students in your own classes?” OR • Offer “no basis for judgment” option OR Offer subjective frequency rating scale “extremely often, often, occasionally, hardly ever, never”
20b Pregnancy	Ambiguous for middle schools; specify student, teacher (or parent)
20e Lack of parental involvement	If distinction is significant, divide item into two: “parental interest in student achievement” and “parental responsibility and support for student’s learning”

Working Conditions (Panels A and B): Section IV, Items 21–23 (Panel A) and Section V, Items 14–16 (Panel B)

Item # and question	Recommendation
<p>Panel A Q22 and Panel B Q15</p> <p>During official school hours, how much time did you spend on the following school-related activities during your MOST RECENT FULL WEEK of teaching at this school?</p> <p>a. Student instructional time b. Scheduled school time for planning c. Other scheduled school time</p> <p>[The panel A question included two definitional bullets that were not included in the panel B question.]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine whether 22/15b should include ALL time spent planning, in which case it should read “b. All school time spent planning”; otherwise, a separate category should be added: “d. Additional school time spent planning (not scheduled planning periods.)” • Determine whether 22/15b should include ONLY time spent actually planning, in which case it should read “b. School time spent on planning”; otherwise, append the current wording with “...whether actually used for planning or not” • Include additional examples in 15/22b and 15/22c or create new categories showing where to classify other activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recess duty and other supervised recreation ○ Lunch (teacher’s own lunch time, which is not the same as lunch duty) ○ Staff, faculty, department, and committee meetings that take place during school (contract) hours ○ Creating, preparing, duplicating, and setting up materials ○ Cleaning up the classroom ○ Field trips during the school day ○ Parent conferences during the school day ○ End the list by saying “and other similar activities performed during official school hours” to emphasize that it is the time they are performed that determines whether they should appear in 15/22 rather than 16/23, not the nature of the activity.
<p>Panel A Q23</p> <p>Outside of official school hours, how much time did you spend on the following school-related activities during your MOST RECENT FULL WEEK of teaching at this school?</p> <p>a. Activities involving students b. Scheduled school time for planning</p> <p>Panel B Q16</p> <p>Outside of official school hours, how much time did you spend on the following school-related activities during your MOST RECENT FULL WEEK of teaching at this school?</p> <p>a. Activities involving students b. Activities NOT involving students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use as prime examples of a particular classification only items that are typical of that classification. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Most field trips occur during the day and would be official instructional time; transporting students to day trips would be official administrative time. ○ Parent conferences often happen during the day. ○ Most meetings happen during the day; one would not normally come before or after school on one’s own time to attend an optional faculty meeting. ○ “Preparing an IEP at home” would be better for 16/23a; ○ “Writing a school newsletter at home” or “PTA meetings” would be better for 16/23b. ○ Change wording of 23/16a apple point to “Including paid or unpaid coaching, acting as a club sponsor, etc.”

Item # and question	Recommendation
<p>Working Conditions overall</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change “school-related activities” to “work duties” in B15/A22 to signal that 15/22 is more restricted than 14/21. • Be sure also to change “school-related activities” in B14/A21 to “work duties and other school-related activities” so readers will not equate 14/21 with 16/23 only. [“school-related activities” sounds like “after school.”] • Keep “school-related activities” in 16/23; do not replace it with “non-academic,” since several items in 16/23b are related to academic classroom work or student academic performance, and several items in 16/23a (tutoring, sponsoring “It’s Academic” team or science fair projects) could be considered academic. • If the phrase “school-related activities” cannot be expanded in 14/21, remove the apple point in 14/21 and add an explanation after the instruction: “Consider ‘school-related activities’ to be anything you do in your capacity AS A TEACHER to help your students, their parents, your school, or other people or organizations, whether during school hours or before or after school or on weekends.” • Duplicate the apple points defining hours and reiterating what to include in items 22 and 23 of Panel A to items 15 and 16 in Panel B. • Make 14/21 the main question and indent questions 15/22 and 16/23 as subsections (part a, part b, etc.) under it to imply that the hours are related. • Word 15/22 and 16/23 as “Of the hours you reported in question 14 [or 21], how many were designated for X?” • If difference must be accounted for, add a question at the end of the section: For any hours you listed in 14/21 that you did not account for in either 15/22 or 16/23, please describe any additional professional activities and the number of hours you spent on them. [Activity / Number of Hours] • If the “scheduled school time for planning” category can be altered, change it to: School time spent planning, preparing, setting up or cleaning up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Include time spent on these activities during scheduled planning periods, during lunch, from when you must arrive until the first students arrive, and from when students leave until you are free to leave. • If it can not be altered, add another category under official school time: Unscheduled official school time used for planning, preparing, setting up or cleaning up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Include time spent on these activities during lunch, from when you must arrive until the first students arrive, and from when students leave until you are free to leave. • Do not expect accuracy for activities split across official/unofficial hours. • If respondents are not supposed to consider a typical week, add the wording “(even if NOT typical)” after “MOST RECENT FULL WEEK.” • If desired, include an instruction to round answers to the nearest whole hour.

Introduction

The U.S. Census Bureau is now in the process of developing revisions to the 1999–2000 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) public school teacher questionnaire. In an effort to develop questionnaire items that will accurately capture teachers' responses to these issues, the Demographic Surveys Division of the U.S. Census Bureau hired UserWorks Inc. to evaluate the SASS questionnaire by conducting a series of cognitive interviews (think-aloud sessions) to identify problems that can be corrected prior to the survey's official release.

The objectives of these interviews were

- to identify items which teachers might fail to comprehend, misinterpret, or interpret in different ways;
- to identify difficulties teachers might have following procedures (for instance, recognizing an instruction applied to more than one item, flipping pages to obtain information from tables, or skipping questions that do not apply to them); and
- to determine the sensitivity of the questionnaire items to unanticipated contextual factors such as the type of school or the teacher's background and dialect.

The interviews were also useful for suggesting where researchers are likely to draw unjustified inference from responses to the questionnaire or where variation in respondents' interpretation of items may be great enough to suggest the items' unreliability as measures of the phenomena they were designed to investigate.

Methods

Materials

To permit interviewees' responses to be thoroughly investigated while keeping sessions to a reasonable duration, the questionnaire was divided into two parts, or panels, and half of the interviewees were assigned to each panel.

Coverage of topics was as follows:

Panel A—

- General Information (background and work status);
- Class Organization (type of class and courses taught);
- Educational Background (academic degrees);
- Certification and Training (teaching certificates); and
- Working Conditions (how time is divided among a number of different school-related activities).

Panel B—

- General Information (background and work status);
- Professional Development (self-initiated and departmental learning activities as well as continuing education courses and workshops);
- Resources and Assessment of Students (including class questions pertaining to class assignment, student grouping, and teaching special populations);
- Working Conditions (how time is divided among a number of different school-related activities);

- Attitudes and Opinions (on other working conditions such as class size and cooperation in the department); and
- School Climate (additional opinions on quality of life at work issues and identification of problems in the school).

The first part, General Information (consisting of only two introductory questions), was the same on both panels; the purpose of this pared-down section helped participants adjust to the think-aloud procedure. A section of items labeled “Working Conditions,” regarding the number of hours teachers spend on various activities, appeared on both panels but with slight differences in wording on each of the two panels. There was no other overlap among actual items on the two panels, though there was significant overlap in coverage of topics. For instance, while panel A asked about education institutions and type of certification, panel B asked about actual coursework both in advanced degree programs and in subsequent professional development for continuing certification. Thus both panels asked questions about education and training. Both also asked about type and composition of classes (in the panel A section “Class Organization” and in the panel B section “Resources and Assessment of Students”). It was not within the scope of the project to investigate how items in panel A that discuss a certain topic might influence respondents’ perceptions of and responses to other items in panel B that discuss the same topic. It was also not in the scope to recommend how to organize or integrate questions on related topics appearing in the two different panels in the final version of the questionnaire.

Six attachments contain additional information. After a meeting in which UserWorks and Census Bureau analysts met to discuss the first 15 of 30 interviews, panel A was slightly altered in an attempt to increase comprehension and participants’ likelihood of following the correct sequence of items (attachment E-1). Owing to the lag time involved in formatting and printing the revised version of panel A, only two participants were given the revised version. Of those, a portion was probed for their opinion of the wording in the new panel, but none were asked to compare the new panel to the old panel.

A consent and nondisclosure form (attachment E-2) was prepared to obtain participant signatures assenting to audiotaping for research purposes. In signing this form, participants also agreed not to discuss with colleagues problems with the current questionnaire until the Census Bureau had the opportunity to make revisions based on participant input.

An orientation to the project (attachment E-3) was prepared for participants, as well as the probing questions to be used for each of the panels (attachments E-4 and E-5). The probes were designed to elicit user expectations and points of confusion (if any). Some probes were asked of all test users; others were used only if interviewers considered them relevant to participants’ responses or situations.

A screening questionnaire (attachment E-6) was also created for the participant recruiter to identify characteristics of the participant.

Participants

Utilizing UserWorks’ participant database and personal contacts of both UserWorks and Census Bureau analysts, 30 participants of varying characteristics were recruited. An e-mail was sent to prospective participants informing them of the study. To obtain a mix of participant characteristics representative of the teaching population for which the survey was designed, those interested were then asked the screening questions over the telephone.

Of those selected, most were public school teachers, though seven who taught at private schools were recruited in anticipation of the development of an additional questionnaire directed towards that population. Participants varied by gender (33 percent were males, higher than the 26 percent typical of the

teaching population according to the National Education Association), as well as by grades (prekindergarten through 12) and subjects taught, school location, and years of teaching and educational attainment. Some were involved with student extracurricular activities, others had special education or students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs), one taught students released from their regular classes, and a couple were involved in team teaching.

All participants taught in the greater Washington, DC-Baltimore metropolitan area. Participants were not asked to identify the school system in which their school was located; however, systems represented include a Department of Defense Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary School at Quantico, the District of Columbia, Virginia's Fairfax and Arlington Counties (including the Falls Church City school system), and Maryland's Montgomery, Prince George's, Howard, and Carroll Counties.

Sixteen participants completed panel A and 14 participants panel B, for a total of 30 participants.

Participants were interviewed by one of two employees of UserWorks. Interviews were scheduled between December 13, 2002, and January 10, 2003. Several factors were responsible for this length, such as intervening holiday vacations and snow days, the need for interviewers to travel to separate schools each day, and the fact that most teachers preferred to be interviewed after school or during their planning periods. The interviewers met frequently to discuss the progress of the interviews and their experiences with participants and items on the questionnaire, initially after practicing with each panel using two additional members of UserWorks staff as mock participants, and subsequently between the actual interviews.

Participants were given the option of holding the interviews either in their schools (the preferred option), in a public place convenient for them (such as a library, bookstore, or café), or in the UserWorks research lab. Most chose to be interviewed at their schools.

Interviews were audiotaped with participants' permission. Each participant was given \$30.00 as a thank you for offering his or her time. Most sessions lasted about 1.5 hours, though several sessions ran longer if participants were motivated, not worried about the time, and continued to volunteer information. None lasted more than 2 hours.

Procedure

Interviews were conducted at participants' schools, various public places in the DC metropolitan area, and the UserWorks lab in Silver Spring, Maryland, between December 2002 and January 2003. Interviewers took handwritten notes during the interviews to supplement the recordings. In several cases, portions of the recordings were of inferior quality owing to background noise from external sources. After the first few interviews, the interviewers asked for assurances from participants that a quiet place in which to conduct the interview would be available.

Upon arriving at the interview site, the test administrator signed in at the main office if the site was a school, met the participant, set up the tape recorder and other materials, read the introduction to testing (attachment E-3), obtained the participant's signed consent form to participate, and answered any questions that the participant may have had. If necessary for understanding, the interviewer provided an example of the think-aloud process. Participants were asked to think aloud but otherwise to complete the questionnaire as they would if they had been asked by an administrator to complete it on their own, in whatever order and with whatever degree of attention, thoroughness, and completeness would be natural for them, first using themselves and their experiences as a source of information. Participants were also asked to consider hypothetical teachers or teaching situations provided in a list of scenarios. In some cases participants were asked to read the scenarios aloud before applying the information to the

questionnaire item at hand. For simpler scenarios, when short of time, or when the interviewer was trying to better understand a specific point raised by a participant, the scenario was simply described by the interviewer.

Concurrently, while working on each item, and retroactively, after completing an item or related set of items, participants were probed regarding their responses to the questionnaire. General probes were used to encourage participants to think aloud and to understand participants' interpretations and determine how much of an item participants read or noticed on their own: "How did you arrive at your answer?" "Tell me about that." "What is this asking, in your own words?" More specific preplanned probes (in attachments E-4 and E-5) were used if participants had little to say about an item or were unable to articulate their concerns, as well as to elicit opinions of wording and situations which UserWorks or Census Bureau staff anticipated might prove problematic.

In the course of participating in the interview, most of the participants who initially appeared to be reading and completing the questionnaire rather casually and spontaneously began to attend more carefully to the language of the questionnaire and took more time before offering responses. Since all participants completed the items in the order they appeared in the questionnaire except when they followed or failed to follow directions to skip questions, UserWorks staff must assume that responses to later sections of the questionnaire are heavily influenced by interviewers' incessant requests that participants reflect on, explain, and elaborate on their responses.

After answering the final questions and offering their final overall opinion of the questionnaire, participants were paid and thanked for their time.

Cognitive Test Results

This section provides the results of cognitive testing of SASS panels A (versions 1 and 2) and B. The question is provided verbatim, along with bulleted instructions or examples ("apple points") and answer choices. In cases where questions in version 1 of panel A were revised or added, a note to that effect with the changed answer choice or question is provided in context of the original question or answer choice.

Following the text of each item, problems indicative of confusion with or misunderstanding of that item are presented along with less problematic "observations" of interesting or insightful participant comments or behavior. Where appropriate, counts of participants and their comments are provided to give perspective. For those items on the questionnaire that require no change, a remark to that effect is recorded.

For most of the problems that have been identified, however, recommendations are offered. The proposed recommendations appear BEFORE the elaboration of the respective problem to facilitate use of this document as a guide to potential revisions. The correspondence between a recommendation and its associated problem is further highlighted through the assigning to each problem a letter that is unique within the set of problems described for each item of the questionnaire. The same letter is used to identify the recommendation corresponding to that problem.

Problems with and recommendations that apply to SETS of lettered subitems or sections of the questionnaire AS A WHOLE rather than to individual items are offered at the end of each set or section under a heading "Item X Overall" or "Section X Overall."

I. General Information: Panels A and B, Items 1–2

This section asks for general information about participants' teaching and other experiences. (NOTE: It combines results from Panels A and B.)

Question 1: In what year did you begin teaching in THIS school?

- *If your assignment at this school has included a break in service of one year or more, please report the year that you returned to this school from your most recent break in service.*
- *Do not include time spent as a student teacher.*

__|__|__|__| Year

Observations: Participants who had difficulty or erred in answering the question included

- those who have a long teaching career with breaks in service but with salary and retirement credits; and
- those who had a long teaching career and taught at several schools.

Some participants wondered if “THIS school” referred to the school system, the school they were assigned, or where they happened to be physically located if completing the survey at one of several schools where they worked.

Recommendation a: As discussed at the 12/31/2002 debriefing conference, replace “THIS school” with the name of the teacher’s school, or ask:

“In what year did you begin teaching at the school where you currently teach all or most of your classes (receive your paycheck, etc.)?”

Problem a: Actual respondents may not be completing the survey at their school. Participants who currently taught only in one school but had taught in several schools in the past and were conducting the interview at UserWorks or in a public area did not know which school was “this school.” They suggested the question ask about their “current school.”

Recommendation b: Use an icon other than an apple to denote warnings that, if ignored, will produce erroneous data. Save apple icons for examples, helpful hints (e.g., “gifts to the teacher”).

To force respondents with breaks in service to address the issue, separate the question into two parts. Ask first for year they began teaching at the school, then about returning from breaks. If both parts are completed, treat the upper portion as just a worksheet and take the lower number on the page as the data point:

In what year did you first begin teaching at this school?

__|__|__|__| Year

If your experience at this school included any breaks in service of **one year or more** [use boldface type], please indicate in what year you returned from your most recent break in service:

__|__|__|__| Year

[Do not use the phrase “tenure at this school” in place of “experience at this school” since teachers interpret it as “job security.”]

Problem b: Apple points were not always read or read thoroughly by people to whom they applied. Some respondents either did not read supplemental instructions regarding breaks in service or if they did, they often provided start dates following breaks of service of less than a year.

Recommendation c: To make experienced teachers feel better and obtain more accurate data from teachers with breaks in service, ask first for their years of service over their entire teaching career. If data are actually being collected on when the teacher began teaching at this school, if it is not an introductory practice question, ask that question next.

Problem c: Teachers with a long teaching career feel invalidated if they had only spent a short time at their current school. Several teachers expressed surprise that they were not asked more demographic background questions. Experienced teachers thought the Census Bureau might not give their responses much credence if it appeared they had only been teaching at a school a year. They thought their extensive amount of experience should count for something.

Observations c: This problem is mentioned not solely out of concern for the teachers’ opinions towards the questionnaire. Concerns about how their teaching experience would be perceived led participants to enter erroneous data on purpose. Because three of the teachers who had a break in service felt question 1 did not permit them to indicate their extensive experience, they opted to enter the first year of their teaching career at their current school, knowing full well they could have entered a different year. One participant who was out of school for almost 2 years remarked that, “You would not know I had been teaching at this school for 15 years.”

Recommendation d: Add the instruction “If you teach at more than one school, please consider the school where you teach most of your COURSES,” and accompanying bullet points:

- If your instructional time is equally divided among schools, please consider your official main school assignment, that is, where you receive your paycheck.
- If your instructional time is equally divided among schools and you have no main school assignment, please consider the school where you spend most of your planning time.

Problem d: Teachers who currently taught at multiple schools were not sure which school they were being asked to consider.

Recommendation e: Provide advance notification that teachers will be asked to complete questionnaire and should determine when they began at the school.

If accuracy of year is important, consider asking teachers to enter a school year (fiscal year covering August/September of one year to July/August of the next) instead of a normal calendar year:

__|_|_|_|_| to __|_|_|_|_| School year

Problem e: Teachers could not recall start year. Two participants were not sure of the exact date when they began teaching at THIS school and they estimated the year. Both participants specifically stated that if the Census Bureau wanted exact dates, then advance warning or instructions to that effect should be provided.

One participant said it was easier to think of the school year when he started. He had started second semester but was not sure if he was hired in December of one calendar year or January of the next.

Recommendation f: If it is important to avoid this source of error, determine and indicate how teachers should interpret “school,” using one or more of the following as a guide:

If the school where you are currently teaching has

- separated from a larger school during your time there,

then consider your first year there to be when the separation occurred.

If the school where you are currently teaching has

- changed its name;
- merged with another school; and/or
- moved to another building during your time there;

then consider your first year there to be when you first began working on the same staff as other teachers who have also experienced this transition from start to finish in the same physical locations as you.

[Do not replace “working on the same staff as” with “working with” since teachers may have worked with current colleagues at other schools in the past.]

[Do not shorten to “experienced this transition” since teachers from the other merged school also experienced the transition.]

If the school where you are currently teaching has

- experienced a nearly complete turnover in staff; or
- been reassigned students from a different geographical region;

then consider your first year there to be when you first began teaching in the physical location where you currently teach.

Problem f: Participants did not know start date for a school if its attributes changed. Teachers whose schools had moved to a new building, been consolidated with other schools, and/or been renamed (in one case, all three at once) did not know whether the year in which they came to the original school or the year of the school's alteration or most recent incarnation was more appropriate.

Recommendation g: If it is important, define break in service more specifically, perhaps as follows:

Consider a break in service to be any period in which you EITHER

- temporarily left the field of teaching (maternity leave, travel, etc.); OR
- left the school where you are currently teaching to teach at another school or in another school system.

Problem g: "Break in service" was unclear to teachers who remained in teaching. Participants who left their current school and continued teaching but at a different location before returning to their current school did not know if their absence constituted a break of service because their retirement benefits were unaffected.

Question 2: How much time do you work as a TEACHER at THIS school?

- *Mark (X) only one box.*

- Full-time
- $\frac{3}{4}$ time or more, but less than full-time
- $\frac{1}{2}$ time or more, but less than $\frac{3}{4}$ time
- $\frac{1}{4}$ time or more, but less than $\frac{1}{2}$ time
- Less than $\frac{1}{4}$ time

Recommendation a: Contact various school systems' personnel departments to determine the most common decimal representations for part time work. If there is no common representation, use days instead of hours and ask instead of fractional time:

How many days a week do you usually work as a teacher? (Please round to the nearest half day) _____

- If your schedule varies week by week, please report the average number of days per week.

Problem a: Fractional divisions not used and not appropriate for describing amount of part time work. Several participants said they or their colleagues worked or had at some time taught part time, but that they had never described their time using fractions and would not know how to do so on a questionnaire.

Part of the problem is that some schools do not make these distinctions. At some schools, the only distinction made is full vs. part time, with no distinctions made among different levels of part-time work. In the Arlington system, apparently, one may only work full time or half time.

A related issue is the suitability of the representation. Fractions are inappropriate because they suggest a number of hours worked, whereas teachers are on salary and hours worked often vary by week, even for part-timers. One participant trying to make sense of the options wondered if $\frac{3}{4}$ time meant he had taken a quarter of the year off.

Of the participants who were familiar with any sort of system for calculating time for part-time teachers, all claimed their school system used decimals rather than fractions, usually to indicate how many days the teacher worked. For instance, a “point 4” teacher would work 2 days a week, while a “point 6” teacher would work 3 days a week. According to a participant at another public school, however, a “3 point 5” teacher worked $3\frac{1}{2}$ days per week at that school, suggesting the implementation of decimal notation may vary with the school system.

Recommendation b: It may be necessary at some point to specify whether work status should be determined by course load or by hours or days per week worked, since different respondents calculate this differently.

Problem b: Is work status determined by courses or by hours? Some teachers at one participant’s school teach fewer courses than the standard number of courses but have additional administrative duties and work full days at the school. It was not clear to this participant whether working “as a TEACHER” refers to the proportion of time spent instructing in the classroom relative to that spent by other teachers or to the number of hours worked relative to those of other teachers.

Uncertainty regarding whether status is determined by course load or workdays is also reflected in the responses of participants concerned about how the time of part timers is apportioned. According to one participant, a “point 2/point 8” teacher teaches 20 percent of his courses at one school, the rest at another. According to him, the actual number of hours spent at a school is irrelevant. According to other participants, however, a “point 2/point 8” teacher would teach 1 day a week at one school and 4 days a week at another school. For them, courses taught are irrelevant.

Observations: The problems and recommendations a and b above refer to only the most general cases. There is probably a great deal more variation in how part-time status is treated; for instance:

- At one participant’s school, the only part-time staff are substitutes.
- One participant, as a full-time long-term substitute, is hourly and chooses to work $\frac{1}{4}$ time.

II. Class Organization: Panel A, Items 3–9

This section asks about participants’ meetings with other teachers and the organization of classes in participants’ schools.

Question 3: In which grades are the students you currently teach at THIS school?

- *If you teach at more than one school, report only for the grades you teach at THIS school.*
- *Mark (X) all that apply.*

<input type="checkbox"/> Ungraded	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 rd	<input type="checkbox"/> 8 th
<input type="checkbox"/> Prekindergarten	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 th	<input type="checkbox"/> 9 th
<input type="checkbox"/> Kindergarten	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 th	<input type="checkbox"/> 10 th
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 st	<input type="checkbox"/> 6 th	<input type="checkbox"/> 11 th
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 nd	<input type="checkbox"/> 7 th	<input type="checkbox"/> 12 th

Recommendation a: Capitalize “STUDENTS” in question and follow up with a parenthetical “(not courses)” to discourage analysis by course. Capitalize “all” in second apple point to emphasize that all grades are of interest. To discourage analysis by teacher identity, clarify with an apple point: “If you teach a specific grade, such as 4th grade, be sure to include any students from other grades who are in your classroom.”

Problem a: Participants omitted grade levels of some students they taught. Some participants thought the purpose of the question might be to identify either the teachers themselves, by the grade levels they taught, or the courses they taught, by their grade level content, so they considered these criteria more than grade levels of actual students enrolled. Others listed the grades of only the majority of their students.

Observations: Some elementary school teachers thought of themselves as teaching grade levels, not subject areas, so a couple said they would not include students of other grades, such as remedial students repeating a class or precocious students attending their classes for enrichment. For example, one participant said if she had a 1st grader completing 2nd grade work in the 1st grade class, she would *not* mark 2nd grade in addition to 1st grade.

Some high school teachers thought of themselves more as teaching courses directed towards various grade levels than as teaching students at various grade levels. For instance, one said that if she had an 8th grader in her 9th grade class, she would look for an “8th grade AP (advanced placement)” option; if students in 12th grade were completing college-level work, she would look for “12th grade AP.” Another, who taught a course to 10th and 11th graders and marked both grades, was then probed for her rationale and revised her response to include 9th and 12th graders, since, she said, the course was open to them as well, but the classes were generally understood to be for 10th and 11th graders.

A third set of participants may simply have missed the instruction to include all grades taught. They assumed that they just needed to check grades “mostly”

taught. These included, for example, a participant who teaches mostly 10th grade but has one or two 9th graders enrolled.

Recommendation b: Revised phrasing to encompass concept of “Montessori or other school system without student grade-level assignments” in place of “ungraded.”

Problem b: Participants did not understand “ungraded.” The option to select “ungraded,” if it was noticed, confused participants because they did not know what it meant. If it was pointed out to participants, it seemed to contribute to their impression that they should describe the grades of their classes or their own specialty grades rather than the grades of their students.

The option should be reworded to encourage its use only in very special cases, since participants, particularly one who taught in both a middle and a high school, appreciated being able to enumerate the entire range or nonconsecutive set of grades of their students rather than feeling constrained to select a single option for multiple grades.

Observations: This confusion about the meaning and purpose of “ungraded” is a recurring issue, arising elsewhere in the survey. (See item 9.) The ungraded option may only apply to students at a school for the extremely disabled, students who could never reach grade 1, or to English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students in their first year, or to students in another educational program like Montessori.

It was not as significant in question 3 because participants did not need this option. Because the wording of the instruction uses the plural of grade (“in what grades...”), no participant appeared to feel restricted to choose one grade (despite the fact that several did so voluntarily, as described in problem a). Therefore, the issue of how to represent multiple grades with one answer option never arose for item 3.

Question 4a: Which statement best describes the way YOUR classes (or sections) at this school are organized?

- *Mark (X) only one box.*

You teach subject matter courses (e.g., math, history, music, biology) to several classes of different students all or most of the day. (Departmentalized Instruction)

You teach only one subject (e.g., art, music, physical education, computer skills) in an elementary school. (Elementary Enrichment Class)

You teach multiple subjects to the same group of students all or most of the day. (Self-Contained Class) (**Version 2 bolds “all or most of the day”**)

You are one of two or more teachers who teach multiple subjects to the same group of students. (Team Teaching)

You provide instruction (e.g., special education, reading) to selected students who are released from their regular classes. (“Pull-Out” Class)

Recommendation a1: Reword answer options so that, as in option 4 above (team teaching), information describing students or mapping teachers to students is closer to the beginning of the answer choice than is course or subject information:

- You instruct several classes of different students most or all of the day in one or more subjects (such as algebra, geometry, music, history, government, and/or biology)... [Answer Option 1]
- You are an elementary [enrichment? specialist? resource?] school teacher who teaches only one subject (such as art OR music OR physical education OR computer skills)... [Answer Option 2]
- You instruct the same group of students all or most of the day in multiple subjects... [Answer Option 3]
- [No change to Answer Option 4.]
- You provide remediation or special needs services... OR You instruct selected students released from their regular classes in specific skills or to address specific needs (for instance, gifted and talented, special education, reading remediation, English as a Second Language)... [Answer Option 5]

Problem a: Answer options appear to focus on the courses or subjects taught rather than the method of instruction. One participant's reaction sums up the nature of the confusion here: "The question should focus on how the classes are offered, not what is being offered." *As was the case throughout the survey, participants concentrated attention on the first few words of the answer options, reading only until they felt they understood each option.* As a result, several participants attended to the subjects in the examples in the first two answer options (e.g., art, music, physical education, computer skills) and made one or more of the following mistaken assumptions:

- Option 1 or 2 applied to them only if they taught one of those classes explicitly listed in the examples provided rather than some other subject not listed (like chemistry).
- They automatically qualified for option 1 or 2 if they saw a subject they taught listed in the examples.
- If they were to qualify for option 1, they needed to teach multiple subject matter courses, not just one.

Those who were under the third assumption, that option 1 stipulated that they teach multiple subjects, were uncertain as to whether they could qualify if they taught multiple subjects within the same department (e.g., algebra, geometry, trigonometry, consumer math), or whether they needed to teach in multiple departments of the school to offer "departmentalized instruction." More varied options would give readers a better understanding of the range of situations the fall under option 1.

The examples in option 5 also were not sufficiently varied to convince readers that they should base their choice on the mapping of teachers to students, not the specific course content. One participant mentioned that her school had a pull-out program for gifted and talented students, but the examples in option 5 seem oriented towards remediation only.

In addition, there did not seem to be an appropriate category for certain teachers of students with special needs. Several participants noted that they taught special education or ESOL students exclusively. In those cases, although they are mainstreamed, attending regular schools, the students are not “pulled out” for part of a class, but attend classes as part of a curriculum designed especially for them. These classes are “regular classes” for these students; they are not “released,” as in option 5.

These teachers were also uncomfortable with the other options. Most taught one or two subject areas such as reading and science to exclusively IEP or limited-English-proficient (LEP) students. In the sense that they shared these students with other special education or ESOL teachers teaching other subjects, such as math and social studies, they were team teachers (option 4). In their own opinion, they were subject matter teachers (option 1) whose department affiliation happened to be determined by the type of students they taught rather than the subject they taught. In the opinion of their school, however, they were ESOL or special education teachers, not subject matter teachers, who taught a “Self-Contained Class” of subjects all day to the same group of students, namely various sets of IEP or LEP students who came through their classroom (option 3). One participant’s school actually used the term “self-contained” to describe classes in which special education students were taught certain subject matter courses (e.g., geometry) but then were mainstreamed into regular (uncontained) classes. These teachers did not know how to classify themselves.

Recommendation b: Consider allowing participants to denote another category, to describe “main” organization and “secondary” organization. If appropriate for the desired definition, change option 4 (Team Teaching) to say “two or more teachers (not aides) in the same room simultaneously teaching multiple subjects to the same group of students....”

Problem b: The suggested answer choices and accompanying parenthetical labels did not match terms participants understood in their school system or did not match situations participants experienced. Several participants described situations where, for example, part of their day was self-contained with block times for reading/language arts and math, then departmentalized when students (as a whole) went to another teacher for science, physical education, and media. The same participant might teach science to other teachers’ classes for one or two periods. These teachers wanted to choose two options to describe the situation. Participants were also confusing an aide with a coteacher or could not find a means to adequately note that they had an aide in the classroom when teaching students who were mainstreamed.

Observations: Several participants noted that the phrases at the end of each of the answer choices, for example, Self-Contained Class, in parentheses, along with the preceding definitions in the answer choices, helped them to confirm the selection of a particular response. One participant mentioned that he had jumped to scanning those phrases after reading one or two of the longer descriptions since they were more concise. Two others read the long descriptions carefully as well as the parenthetical descriptions. When asked what they would do if provided only one of the elements—just the phrases or just the definitions—these participants said they would probably not change their answer.

Finding just one option that covered most situations proved problematic for some participants. Participants understood the meaning behind the answer choices, but some had some difficulty in limiting their choices to just one of those described in the answers. As in the case of the special education teacher who teaches in a tailored curriculum (she teaches geometry and career exploration), the curriculum is considered self-contained but the classes are departmentalized. In other elementary school cases, classes were somewhat self-contained but students also had departmentalized instruction for part of the day (music, physical education, art, science, media) depending on the day of the week; participants wanted to be able to record both situations.

Question 4b: Which box did you mark in item 4a above?

- Box 1 or 2 → Go to item 7 on page 7.
- Box 3, 4, or 5 → Continue with item 5 below.

Recommendation: In the second answer option, point arrow downwards to question 5 (directly below) to distinguish it from the pattern in the first answer option.

Problem: Several participants erred in the skip pattern and incorrectly continued to question 5. A couple did not select a box but correctly continued to question 5 or skipped to question 7. The right-facing arrow in the second option currently implies “forward,” suggesting the reader should continue to the next page. Fortunately, none who skipped correctly to question 7 returned later to attempt to complete 5 and 6.

Question 5: At THIS school, what is the total number of students enrolled in the class (or section) you taught during your most recent FULL WEEK of teaching?

- *If you teach two or more classes (or sections) per day, please enter the average number of students in a class (or section).*

__|__| Students

Recommendation: Rephrase stem to include the direction to average in the question.

Problem: Some participants were unclear what to record until reading the apple point on averaging. For example, one kindergarten teacher was unclear how to record her response for a.m. and p.m. classes until she read the apple point to average; otherwise, she would have combined the total number of students. Another participant has several small “classes” (reading groups of 5 students) and one large traditional class of 23. In her opinion, the average would not be accurate. To counter this situation, a participant suggested asking for low to high range of classes taught. One participant misinterpreted the question as asking for how many students were physically present.

Observations: Definition of “class” can vary from a small reading group to a “team” of 6th graders.

“Most recent full week” is generally understood to be a particular week with no snow days, no delays (in most cases), no early dismissals, no teacher in-service

days (in most cases), and no holiday parties. In practice, however, most participants defaulted to “typical, normal, or average” week, regardless of the time of year. Several music teachers, a coach, and a participant who taught horticultural science mentioned that, depending on the time of year when they filled out the survey, more time would be recorded for extracurricular school activities.

Question 6a: **During your most recent FULL WEEK of teaching, approximately how many hours did you spend teaching each of these subjects at THIS school?**

- *If you taught two or more subjects at the same time, apportion the time to each subject as best you can. Report hours to the nearest whole hour; do not record fractions or minutes. If you did not teach a particular subject during the week, mark (X) the “None” box.*

(1) English/Reading/Language Arts

Hours per week → **Of these hours, how many were designated for reading instruction? (Version 1)**
 None Hours per week
 None

Of these hours, how many were designated for reading instruction (Version 2)

Hours per week
 None

(2) Arithmetic/Mathematics

Hours per week
 None

(3) Social studies/History

Hours per week
 None

(4) Science

Hours per week
 None

Recommendation a1: Divide apple point into separate apple points, rather than having one long, complicated sentence.

- *Apportion the time to each subject as best you can if you taught two or more subjects at the same time.*
- *Do not record fractions or minutes; report hours to the nearest whole hour.*
- *Mark (X) the “None” box if you did not teach a particular subject during the week.*

Problem a1: Several participants remarked that there was a lot presented on the page. And, as explained in problem a2, they were apparently not able to distinguish the different instructions (e.g., the instruction to “apportion as best they could”).

Recommendation a2: Given that only two participants saw the version 2 copy, and it was not met with resistance, UserWorks staff suggests using it to help to break up the page. Staff suspects that with version 2, users will not feel they have to do as much work on a single subitem.

Consider asking first about reading activities AND reading instruction (or just time spent teaching reading, if more appropriate), then asking how much time spent on other language arts activities outside of reading, so users will not have to extract reading time from various language arts activities. For example, an elementary school participant wondered which parts of reading (e.g., phonics, directed book studies, read to aloud) should be included and whether reading included free reading time outside of reading. The aligned vertical format in version 2 could have an impact on the participant's understanding of the question.

Problem a2: Some participants remarked that it was difficult to break out the division of time because, especially in kindergarten and preschool, lessons were chunked, taught less formally and more informally, and lasted only for about 10 or 15 minutes at a time, but were greatly integrated with other subject matter. Apparently, they did not see the instruction to "apportion as best they could."

The elementary teachers had fewer problems with this because they devoted an hour or two per day specifically to English/Language Arts and that time would also incorporate teaching reading skills; however, one elementary school teacher did have problems calculating time in reading because she teaches language arts (writing, grammar) as part of reading. In addition, she incorporates social studies and science topics into her reading periods. She noted that she would have put down the reading periods as reading time, but it would have made it appear she spent very little time on language arts that was not reading.

A couple of participants who were middle school or high teachers wondered if Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) would count as Reading. One science/math teacher recorded .3 (for 20 minutes spent every week in DEAR) in Reading.

Recommendation b: Give examples as to what included in English/Reading/Language Arts.

Problem b: For preschool and kindergarten teachers, is prereading considered part of English/Language Arts/Reading? Should they count only formal instruction in reading?

Observations: Inconsistent use of "None" box by one participant who wrote in zero for reading and checked none for others. Another participant mostly correctly checked "None," but still erred by writing zero for Science, rather than checking "None."

One participant missed the arrow to the reading breakout question, until prompted. This participant wanted the question in two parts, which was reflected in version 2 of the panel.

Participants had fewer problems completing questions 2–4 because they were pretty straightforward. One participant did not include landscaping in science (he taught horticultural science) because he considered that a voc-tech course, not a science course.

A couple of participants wondered if, in their kindergarten or preschool classes, social skills were the same as social studies.

Question 6b: This school year, what is your MAIN teaching assignment field at this school, that is, the field in which you teach the most classes?

- Record the teaching assignment field code and name from Table 1 on page 6.

Code	Main teaching assignment field
_____	_____

Recommendation a: Clarify if goal is to identify “most subjects taught” (e.g., three earth science classes vs. two general science classes vs. being just a 9th grade science teacher, 2-hour block of reading in a self-contained 2nd grade class where participant also teaches math, etc.) or elementary vs. middle vs. high school teacher who happens to specialize in some subject.

Problem a: Participants were unclear on the purpose of the question. Was it to identify the most important subject/class taught or if participant identified self as 6th grade/middle school classroom teacher? Of those participants who had difficulty answering the question, several would identify (pre-)reading as the most important subject taught, even though they did not consider themselves reading teachers. They recorded kindergarten grade/code but then listed reading as the main teaching assignment field.

Recommendation b: See also discussion under Question 7.

Recommendation c: Revise instruction to refer to table 1 to refer to table 1A instead.

Observation: “Main teaching assignment field,” to most participants, implied a predominant subject taught (most said reading was **most important**) rather than status as a 4th grade/elementary school classroom teacher.

Question 6c: Go to Section III – Educational Background on page 9. (6c only on version 1; version 2 gives a skip instruction.)

Recommendation: Consider an arrow pointing to skip instruction on same line (aligned with the left margin underneath) as 6b.

Consider putting the skip instruction within 6b:

Code	Main teaching assignment field
_____	_____

_____ → “Skip to Item 10a (Section III—Educational Background) on page 9” AND/OR include instructions: STOP! Do NOT go to page 7. Please skip to item ... on page”

Problem: Half of all the participants at this point overlooked the skip to page 9. One participant erred in understanding the skip in 4b and did answer question 7 but continued to question 8. (Later, this participant was overly attentive, which confused him throughout the remainder of the survey). Two participants caught the skip they had missed after realizing that question 7 was the same as question 6b.

Observation: For some participants, “go” did not imply “pass over the items”; “skip” was a more directive term.

Question 7: **This school year, what is your MAIN teaching assignment field at this school, that is, the field in which you teach the most classes?**

- Record the teaching assignment field code and name from Table 1 on page 6.

Code	Main teaching assignment field
_____	_____

Recommendation a: See discussion under 6b.

Recommendation b: No recommendation.

Problem b: Several participants missed the instruction to skip from question 4b to question 7 or to skip questions 7-8-9 after completing 6b. Of those who did, they remarked that questions 6b and 7 were the same. Two participants completed question 7 but then skipped questions 8 and 9, saying that they did not apply.

Recommendation c: Add new assignment codes or reword existing ones. Replace “ESL/Bilingual” with “ESL or Bilingual.”

Problem c: An art teacher wanted a code for Photography, rather than using code 141, and then she mentioned that Visual Arts is the preferred term for this code (141). A music teacher wanted more specific options within Music, (e.g., choral or instrumental is the usual division). Another participant, an ESOL teacher, was confused by the use of “bilingual” in the ESL codes. She figured it out, but she was not sure what the difference was between “general” and “Spanish” or “other.”

Recommendation d: Revise instruction to refer to table 1 to refer to table 1A instead.

Recommendation e: Consider moving this question after item 9. (See “Observation” in Item 9.)

Observations: One participant said if (s)he taught at another school, (s)he would want to record classes taught at both schools, so (s)he would not seem like (s)he was not “working.”

One participant, after noticing that questions 6b and 7 are the same, wondered if the Census Bureau would fill in the codes. Another wondered if (s)he was being “tested.”

Several participants noted after seeing questions 6b and 7 (but not necessarily remarking that questions were the same and that they erred in catching the skip instruction) said that question 7 should ask about secondary teaching assignment.

One participant made a mistake when using the code for kindergarten; (s)he used K instead of 101.

One participant wanted to include all codes for classes he teaches. He created new boxes or indicated that new boxes would be needed for this purpose.

Question 8: During your MOST RECENT FULL WEEK of teaching, how many separate classes (or sections) did you teach AT THIS SCHOOL?

- *Do not include homeroom periods or study halls.*
- *If you teach 2 classes (or sections) of chemistry I, a class (or section) of physics I, and a class (or section) of physics II, you would report 4 classes (or sections).*
- *If you teach 3 music classes (or sections) to students at THIS school, and 2 music classes (or sections) to students at other schools, you would report ONLY 3 classes (or sections).*

__|__| Number of classes or sections

Recommendation a: Exclude study hall from apple points.

Problem a: Several participants noted that study hall is no longer used, but some described “labs” where students have the opportunity to do homework, such as in an ESOL-supported environment.

Recommendation b: Consider use of “period” to distinguish subject from class. Alternatively, rephrase question to indicate “In your job assignment, how many classes are assigned to you?” AND “Count only once periods that meet more than once a week” (or “Count each time you meet with a class during the week,” if that’s the intent.) In the examples under the instruction, show how to treat periods that meet several times a week.

Problem b: A couple of participants remarked that “(or section)” cluttered up the page. More importantly, several participants were still unclear how to record classes; the use of “in the week” implied that it would be a multiple of five. (Answers ranged from 3 or 4 to 25.) At least four said the question was ambiguous. Apple points are critical in answering the question correctly; the question otherwise would seem to ask how many times your periods meet in a week.

Observation: One participant was confused about the meaning of “homeroom”; the term in his school was “home base.”

Question 9:

Complete a line of the table below for each class (or section) that you taught during your MOST RECENT FULL WEEK of teaching at this school.

- *Record the subject name, subject matter code, and the grade level code from table 1 on page 6.*
- *The number of lines filled should equal the number of classes (or sections) reported in item 8.*
- *For classes with mixed grades, list the grade with the most number of students. (Version 2)*

- a. **Subject name**, e.g., English
- b. **Subject matter code**, e.g., 153
- c. **Grade level code**, e.g., 11
- d. **Number of students**, e.g., 33

Recommendation a: Clarify that respondents should only list each period taught followed by the number of students in each period (or else combine periods of the same subject on one line and list the total number of students for all such periods).

Problem a: Periods of the same subject were listed only one time with all students studying that subject summed together. One participant confused how many students to record for a class on English as 50 (instead of 2 at 25). Another participant recorded 75 for the World Studies class instead of 3 at 25. A third participant tutored two students in reading separately for 30 minutes each in one period, so she recorded two in column D. At least two participants had a double reading period and listed both of them twice, one as a language arts period and another as a reading period, even though the same students were taught.

Recommendation b: Consider updating codes in table 1 that this question refers to.

Problem b: One participant listed subjects first, and then went to the table to locate matching codes for those subjects, such as World History.

One participant suggested adding “career exploration” under voc-tech, as well as updating computer-associated voc-tech classes (e.g., omitting “keyboarding” and adding “computer technology”).

Another participant suggested reordering codes from general to specific subjects. Also, at this point in the survey, one participant was annoyed that his various classes in music (e.g., guitar, concert band), unlike various subjects in math, were not accounted for. The participant, who in item 7 had written in a specialty field that did not match the field code he selected, did not specify here the type of music class in column A because by this point he figured it did not matter.

Observation: One participant suggested emphasis should be on leading respondents from all the subjects they teach to the question he felt item 7 was really getting at, “Where do you feel your concentration lies?”; this participant, therefore, suggested moving question 7 under question 9. This reversal of question 9 in place of question 7 may help teachers to spotlight what their main teaching assignment field is after listing all the subjects they teach, if that is the goal. One participant who teaches at two schools wanted additional questions for his other school.

Six participants were unsure about the term ungraded or wanted to use an “MG” code to denote that their classes have multiple or mixed grades in them. Ungraded to them meant, “no grades are assigned in this class” so it did not seem like an appropriate or even a relevant choice. One participant assumed “ungraded” must be the nursery school grade prior to prekindergarten, since it appeared first in the list of grades. One participant who saw version 2 wrote in “9–12,” another left the column empty for those she did not know how to record, and another recorded 11th grade as the “major grade.” UserWorks staff did not have a sufficient sample to determine whether the new apple point in version 2 would clarify the mixed grades issue.

III. Educational Background: Panel A, Items 10–14

This section asks for information about participants’ academic degrees.

Question 10/12a: Do you have a [Bachelor’s/Master’s] degree?

Yes
 No → Go to item 13a on page 10.

Recommendation a: Consider adding venue to record double bachelor’s degree.

Problem a: Several participants remarked that it is not clear until question 13 that they can record another bachelor’s, nor is it clear how to record a double major.

Observation: Participants with a master’s equivalency from a state/local/county Department of Education wanted to complete master’s questions with reference to the generalized nature of the courses they’ve taken and the certificate they’ve earned.

Question 10/12b: In what year did you receive your [Bachelor’s/Master’s] degree?

__|__|__|__| Year

Observation: One participant was annoyed at having to recall year graduated, saying that it was so long ago and (s)he wanted to have advance notice of need for transcripts.

Another participant could not remember the exact year, so (s)he wrote mid-1980s instead.

Question 10/12c: Was this degree awarded by a department of education, college of education, or school of education?

- Yes
- No

Recommendation a: Consider allowing participants to check off whether and how degree was education related.

Problem a: Several participants had degrees awarded by a non-education academic unit of a college or university (e.g., School of Arts and Sciences, or College of Agriculture), but the degree did relate to education, for example Art Education or Agricultural Education. The wording of the question implied to them that their degree did not “count” as an education degree. One participant noted that her math degree was from a well-known college that was mostly known for its education program, but she had a strictly math Bachelor of Arts (B.A.).

Recommendation b: Reword question to give context to the academic units within a higher education institution, for example, “Did a university’s college of education or a college’s school of education award this degree?”

Problem b: Several participants were confused, calling the wording “ambiguous,” and interpreted part of this question as referring to a state/local/county department of education, especially among those who had master’s equivalency awarded by the state/local/county department of education. In addition, several participants remarked that they expected they would have had the option of choosing which of the three academic units awarded the degree, noting that “yes” seemed an inadequate answer.

Recommendation c: If “no” to item 10/12c, point to a subitem that conveys, “If your degree was not from a department or school of education within your college (e.g., school of music), if your degree was not from a school or college of education within your university, did you take education-related courses (e.g., methods in teaching music) WITHIN that department, school, or college?”

Problem c: Wording of the question does not cover all situations in which respondents receive education degrees. Respondents who answered fully understood the question, and those who answered “no” may have received a degree in education through taking education courses in their specialty field department (history) or school (School of Music). It may not be obvious whether to treat this situation as a full-fledged education degree, as issues of accreditation may arise.

Question 10/12d: What was your major field of study?

- Record the field of study code and the field name from Table 2 on page 8.

Code	Major field
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Recommendation a: Consider recording minor or area of specialization.

Problem a: Several participants with a master’s in secondary education wanted to record area(s) of specialization. For those whose programs crossed elementary/middle school boundaries, they wanted codes to reflect 1st through 8th grade endorsement, or prekindergarten through 3rd grade endorsement, or kindergarten through 12th endorsement.

Recommendation c: Consider adding new education-related codes.

Problem c: One participant had a Master of Arts (M.A.) in curriculum and instruction but did not like that she had to select “other” (136) from the education column. Another participant had an M.A. in Art Education and mentioned that it was different from an M.A. in Art.

Recommendation b: Consider relabeling general education codes by grade ranges.

Problem b: Grade level ranges in general education codes do not reflect actual certification. Currently many education programs train elementary education teachers to teach through 8th grade middle school and secondary education teachers to teach 6th through 12th grade. There is often no degree program for teaching the middle grades. The secondary education codes, by distinguishing “middle” from “secondary,” imply that the questionnaire designers think of “secondary” as the same as “high school.” A middle school teacher certified in “secondary education,” or “elementary education” might therefore justifiably feel that by listing her true certification as “secondary,” or “elementary” she would be implying she was teaching in grades outside of those she was trained in. Indeed, those whose programs crossed elementary/middle school boundaries, wanted codes to reflect 1st through 8th grade endorsement, or prekindergarten through 3rd grade endorsement, or kindergarten through 12th endorsement.

Recommendation c1: Consider adding an apple point for participants who cannot find their exact degree name:

- *If the field of study name is not listed in Table 2, please choose the closest match.*

Recommendation c2: Also, again assuming the intention of the item is to determine the name of the degree, increase the likelihood that respondents will find an exact match in table 2 by adding a section to table 2 labeled “Combined Degree” with codes and field names that include both a specialty field and the word “education.”

Problem c: If the purpose of item 10/12d is to help determine whether the respondent has an education degree, it does not succeed for all cases. Both the wording of the question and the set of options provided in table 2 encourage respondents to think of unofficial areas of expertise rather than official credentials. The phrase “major field of study” connotes concentration area for a bachelor’s degree and simply confuses master’s degree recipients, since having a “major” implies one has the opportunity to study something other than one’s major, which is not the case in most advanced degree programs. The division of table 2 into General Education and Subject Matter Specific areas forces respondents to choose

whether they studied education or a specialty area, when the focus of their program may have been on both equally.

Question 11a: What is the name of the college or university where you earned this degree?

Name of college or university

Question 11b: In what city and state is it located?

City State
 ____| ____|
 Located outside the United States

Recommendation: No change.

Problem: One participant was confused and thought this question pertained to question 10; she realized her mistake, erased her original answer, and wrote in the correct one. Of the participants asked about a hypothetical degree obtained overseas, all correctly noted they would enter the name of the city in which the degree was obtained in the space for “City” (and/or cross out State and write in country), and mark “Located outside the United States.”

Observation: One participant observed that her school’s name had changed and was able to include that in the name of the college field.

Question 13a: Have you earned any other degrees?

Yes
 No → Go to item 14 below.

Table headers:

- A. Degrees – include:
 - Vocational certificate
 - Associate’s degree
 - SECOND Bachelor’s degree
 - SECOND Master’s degree
 - Educational specialist or professional diploma (at least one year beyond Master’s level)
 - Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies
 - Doctorate or first professional degree (PhD, EdD, MD, LLB, JD, DDS)
- B. Have you earned this degree?
 - Yes → (points to C in next column)
 - No
- C. What was your major field of study for this degree?
 - Record the field of study code and the field name from Table 2 on page 8.

Code	Major field of study title
_____	_____
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D. What year did you receive this degree?
Year	

Recommendation a: Add “In progress” to column b for earned degree status. Alternatively, omit column d, and reword column b to “In what year was this degree received?”

Problem a: Three participants with degrees or advanced certificates in progress wanted to record that the degree or advanced certificate was in progress or nearly completed.

Recommendation b: Add a new row to record credentialing and/or master’s equivalency. Give example of educational specialist degree/certification.

Problem b: One participant who is a kindergarten/childcare provider has had two intensive training sessions lasting 90 and 45 hours, and she was concerned that her training credentials could not be recorded anywhere. Several participants in Maryland have or are in the process of completing a master’s equivalency that entitles them to a substantial raise in pay. The participants were not sure if this master’s equivalency (which included college courses as well as college-equivalency classes) could be classified as educational specialist. (One participant had two educational specialists “degrees” but used that and the Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies to record certificates related to music instruction.)

Recommendation c: Add a row for National Board certificate.

Problem c: One participant had obtained National Board certificate and one participant was in the process of creating a portfolio in anticipation of taking National Boards. Similar to the master’s equivalency, the National Boards offered participants a substantial raise in pay.

Recommendation d: Modify skip instruction to read, “If no, GO to item”

Problem d: One participant did not realize the arrow and skip instruction after the “No” answer choice in question 10a applied only to people who answer “No.” After answering question 10a, she went to question 13a and was unable to find a place to put her additional degree, her first master’s degree. She had a Master’s of Education (M.Ed.), but recorded it under “Doctorate or first professional degree” by writing in her degree.

Observations: Participants had no problems navigating the table itself, but did not know until seeing the table that they could record a 2nd bachelor’s or master’s degree.

One participant had an Associate in Arts awarded but opted not to record it because she “considered it part of my BA program.”

One participant incorrectly completed questions 10–12 because of confusion with the skip pattern. She had an M.Ed., but recorded it under “Doctorate or first professional degree” by writing in her degree.

Question 14: Have you ever taken any graduate or undergraduate courses in teaching methods or education?

- *Include courses you are now taking as well as courses taken to earn a degree and courses taken outside a degree program.*

Yes → **How many?**
 No

Recommendation a: Provide a range of hours for participants to select.

Problem a: Almost all participants said that it is hard to estimate (or obtain) the number of methods or education courses completed and/or that they would either prefer advance notice of the need for transcripts or they would have to resort to guessing. Several remarked it is difficult to think that far back, especially if they have been teaching for 20 or 30 years. One participant asked about the value of such a question.

Recommendation b: Target this question more specifically to teachers who might have no education degree (perhaps after asking if participants have an education degree awarded by a college’s school of education or a university’s college of education).

Problem b: Several participants said the question was ambiguous because all teachers with education degrees would have taken some methods or education courses. The question is very broad because it says, “ever taken,” which includes undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate coursework.

Recommendation c: If the question is kept as is, offer examples of the types of classes that count as methods or courses in education.

Problem c: As mentioned in problem b, at least four participants said the question is ambiguous and needed clarification in what should be considered a methods course. For example, should it have the words “methods” in the title of the course? One participant erred in not including courses taken while obtaining an M.A.; this person considered the question ambiguous and was not sure if C&I classes counted as methods or education classes.

Observations: One participant incorrectly skipped the question.

One participant said yes, but did not record a number, saying it was too many to think about.

Section III overall:

Problem: The section uses imprecise roundabout methods to get at the issue of whether teachers have been educated in what they are teaching. It is not clear why teachers are not directly asked if they are or are not teaching one or more

courses outside the field or fields in which they received their education. Perhaps it is assumed that some teachers might feel threatened by the question in cases where they are not teaching in the field in which they were trained and are not given the opportunity to explain why. To keep the survey quantitative, respondents could be asked to choose from explanations presumed likely or write in a reason. It may be difficult to avoid write-ins however, since certain reasons may have nothing to do with teacher preference or school scheduling demands. For instance, a teacher who initiates a class in Latin to encourage students to master roots, prefixes, and suffixes as well as ancient history may be less likely to have majored in Classics or foreign languages than in English or history.

The following are examples that stand out in the participant pool:
Categorization of degrees:

- One participant has an M.A. in Art Education, teacher certification in Art Education, and teaches visual arts and photography. Does her degree count in education or in art?
- One participant has a B.A. in Agriculture Education, certification to teach Agricultural Science, and teaches horticultural science (a subset of agriculture). For the purposes of the survey, does his degree count in education or in agriculture? He also has a master's equivalency focusing on education from the state of Maryland; is this integrated into the survey?
- One participant has a bachelor's and a master's in music education from a School of Music, with additional certifications (educational specialist) in performance and opera. For purposes of the survey, do his degrees count in education or in music?

Teaching out of area:

- A teacher with a business education master's degree (from screener; on the survey she classified it as secondary education), certification almost completed in special education, is teaching geometry and career exploration in a high school curriculum targeted to students in special education. At first glance, what she is teaching may seem out of area but "career exploration" is a business topic, and math is a business skill.
- A "kindergarten" teacher with no B.A., M.A., or teacher certification, is employed by a daycare center where she uses a kindergarten curriculum to teach 5-year-olds in the morning. (The afternoon session is mostly daycare.) She underwent mandatory training to be a lead teacher; the training consisted of two sessions, 90 hours and 45 hours. She has no way to show this credentialing process, so the survey can not determine what her educational area is.
- A Title I reading teacher is certified as an elementary school teacher. Depending on assessment needs, she may teach reading, remedial math, etc. At any one time she is not teaching general elementary education, but rather, an elementary specialty. Yet over the course of several years, she will have taught all general elementary education courses.

- Some elementary school teachers who teach multiple elementary school subjects are thus teaching in their areas of certification, elementary education, but the survey may not convey this since they put “reading” as their main teaching assignment field, thinking it the most important subject for young children.

IV. Certification and Training: Panel A, Items 15–20

This section asks for information about participants’ certification.

Question 15–18a: Do you have a [SECOND, THIRD, FOURTH] teaching certificate in this state?

- Yes (arrow points to question b)
 No → Go to item 21 on page 15 (for first certificate, in **Version 1**;
Version 2 directs participants to item 20)
 Go to item 20 on page 14 (for 2nd, 3rd, 4th certificate)

Recommendation a: Focus on area of specialization. (See 15–18c.)

Problem a: Participants were confused for several reasons:

- Question seemed to emphasize counting number of certificates renewed or advanced over teaching career.
- Several remarked that the questions did not distinguish between current or lapsed/expired certificates.

Question 15–18b: What type of certificate is this?

- *Mark (X) only one box.*

- Regular or standard state certificate or advanced professional certificate
 Probationary certificate (the initial certificate issued after satisfying all requirements except the completion of a probationary period)
 Provisional or other type given to persons who are still participating in what the state calls an “alternative certification program”
 Temporary certificate (requires some additional college coursework and/or student teaching before regular certification can be obtained)
 Emergency certificate or waiver (issued to persons with insufficient teacher preparation who must complete a regular certification program in order to continue teaching)

Observation: One participant remarked that her understanding of what the different types of certifications were did not match the descriptions.

Question 15–18c: In what content area is this certificate?

- Record the content area code and the content area name from Table 3 on page 11.

Code	Content area
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Recommendation a: Allow teachers to record elementary or secondary teaching certification and then area of specialization or endorsement.

Problem a: A few participants did not like the use of “general” in the tables because they did not feel it was accurate. In addition, while they were certified in elementary **education** (rather than “grade”) or secondary education (e.g., considered themselves a 6th grade classroom teacher), they wanted to record an area of specialization (such as science) or endorsement. The wording of the questions confused those teachers who had one certificate (one piece of paper) with several areas of specialization, such as math and earth science, and a reading endorsement. They could not readily ascertain that “teaching certificate” pertained to individual areas of specialization.

Recommendation b: Ensure that in the final version of the survey that tables are as close as possible to the referring questions.

Problem b: Two participants remarked about the amount of page flipping needed to record codes from the tables. It did not prevent them from completing the question correctly; however, they did suggest moving the tables closer to the questions, possibly on the same page as the question.

Observations: Two participants wanted a new code to record certification for grades prekindergarten through 3rd grade; currently no code covers early childhood AND lower elementary grades. Further, some teachers are certified for kindergarten or 1st through 8th, but no code covers that range, either.

One participant thought he already included this information, but he did admit to not fully reading questions and instead was just looking for a few key words to clue him in.

Question 19a: Do you currently hold ANY ADDITIONAL regular or standard state certificate(s) or advanced professional teaching certificate(s) in this state?

Yes
 No → Go to item 20 below.

Question 19b: How many?

Additional certificates

Recommendation: Move question 20 to its own page.

Problem: Most participants correctly skipped this question. One participant erred in responding to this, not paying attention that the first question was 19 and not 20. (In earlier skips, participants are referenced to item 7, which is the first question on page 7 or to item 5 after 4b, which is the first question after 4b.) Another participant marked “no” incorrectly followed the skip pattern and continued to question 20.

Question 20: How did you earn your initial teaching certificate? (Version 1)

Thinking about all of the teaching certificates you have earned in any state, how did you earn your first certificate? (Version 2)

- *Mark (X) only one box.*

- As part of a Bachelor’s degree program
- As a supplemental program to a Bachelor’s or a “5th year” program
- As part of a Master’s degree program
- After I began teaching, as part of an alternative program
- Before I began teaching, as part of an alternative program
- Through continuing professional development
- Other – Please specify _____
- I do not have any teaching certificates. (**Version 2**)

Recommendation a: Rephrase or add answer choice, “After I obtained bachelor’s degree, but before I began teaching.”

Problem a: One participant went back to college after obtaining a B.A. to obtain a teaching certificate. This participant was unsure what supplemental or alternative program referred to and was looking for interim stage between completion of B.A. and before teaching career began. Another participant worked with a state agency to determine what courses were needed after the B.A. was awarded in order to obtain teaching certificate. (This participant chose “other” as the answer, but had no idea how to specify the process.)

Recommendation b: Provide examples for “alternative program.”

Problem b: Participants were unclear what alternative program meant. When asked about something like Teach for America, some participants would consider it an alternative program, while some would not.

Observation: In considering what “initial certificate” meant, four participants were evenly divided in whether they would consider a temporary/emergency/provisional certificate as the first certificate.

One participant commented that the reworked version of the question posed no problem to understanding its intent when asked to explain what the question meant.

V. Working Conditions: Panel A, Items 21–23, and Panel B, Items 14–16

This section asks about the hours spent at participants' teaching assignment at THIS school. (Note: Findings for both panels are combined here to compare and contrast wording and participant behavior.)

Panel A
Question 21: **How many total hours did you spend working on school-related activities for this school during your MOST RECENT FULL WEEK of teaching?**

- *Include both official school hours and time spent working before school, after school, and on weekends.*

__|__|__| Total hours in the week

Panel B
Question 14: **During your MOST RECENT FULL WEEK, how many total hours did you spend working on school-related activities for this school?**

- *Include time during school hours and time spent working before school, after school, and on weekends.*

__|__|__| Total hours in the week

Recommendation: Add an explanation after the instruction: “Consider ‘school-related activities’ to be anything you do in your capacity AS A TEACHER to help your students, their parents, your school, or other people or organizations, whether during school hours or before or after school or on weekends.”

Also, to conserve space and save respondents’ time, remove the now redundant apple point in question 14. Respondents tend to ignore apple points unless they need clarification anyway, and this apple point is not a supplementary illustration but a mandatory instruction.

Problem: Participants were unsure about what types of activities should be considered “school-related activities.” Narrow interpretation of “school-related” as merely “instruction-related” led a minority of panel B participants to underestimate hours in question 14.

Several participants simply failed to read the apple point in item 14. These participants assumed that they should include only official school hours in the hours requested. Significantly, however, some interpreted the phrase even more narrowly and included only instructional time in question 14. One participant initially wondered if “sports” was a “school-related activity.” Because the previous section in panel B concentrates on classroom instruction, and because examples of activities are not provided in item 14, respondents may not realize until they encounter items 15 and 16 that they are supposed to include activities unrelated to instruction or management of students. When participants read “administrative duties” in item 15c and “coaching, acting as a club sponsor” in item 16a, some broadened their understanding of “school-related activities,” but they did not automatically return to question 14 to add more hours; they had to be led back to item 14 by the interviewer. Even the terms “coaching, acting as a club sponsor” do not necessarily clarify the scope of school-related activities,

which could include academic, community oriented, and special-interest non-academic activities.

Since respondents will always be involved in school-related activities that cannot be anticipated (e.g., working lunches; running errands—buying seeds and dirt for the school, not the classroom; monitoring nap time, play time, or recreational recess instead of lunch or the bus), it is probably best to offer as broad a definition of “school-related activities” as possible. Yet the definition should not be so broad as to include aspects of the teacher’s personal life that may involve school connections (e.g., having dinner with a friend who happens also to be a parent of a student in one’s class).

Observations:

Both sets of participants had trouble with the term “Most Recent Full Week,” but it did not seem to be affected by where in the sentence the phrase “during your most recent full week” appeared, or whether or not the words “of teaching” were included.

One panel A participant having reached this point was less inclined to take care in considering responses, so when she recorded hours worked in a week, she entered only those above and beyond the average week, later wondering if she should go back and change the total hours.

One Panel A participant erred by writing in 60+ hours after marking that he worked less than ¼ time. He mentioned that was the typical number of hours he worked when he was a full-time teacher, before he retired and became a permanent substitute teacher. He was still involved in teen club activities, however.

**Panel A
Question 22:**

During official school hours, how much time did you spend on the following school-related activities during your MOST RECENT FULL WEEK of teaching at this school?

- *Official school hours include a minimum number of hours required to receive base pay.*
- *Official school hours do NOT include hours spent on activities for which you receive additional compensation.*

a. Student instructional time

__|__|__| Total hours in the week

b. Scheduled school time for planning

__|__|__| Total hours in the week

c. Other scheduled school time

- *Including time spent in homeroom, study halls, professional development, required meetings, lunch duty, bus duty, etc.*

__|__|__| Total hours in the week

Panel B
Question 15: **During official school hours, how much time did you spend on the following school-related activities during your MOST RECENT FULL WEEK of teaching at this school?**

a. Student instructional time

__|__|__| Total hours in the week

b. Scheduled school time for planning

__|__|__| Total hours in the week

c. Other scheduled administrative duties

- *Include time spent in homeroom, study halls, professional development, required meetings, lunch duty, bus duty, etc.*

__|__|__| Total hours in the week

Recommendation a: Change “school-related activities” to “work duties” in B15/A22 to signal that 15/22 is more restricted than 14/21.

Be sure also to change “school-related activities” in question B14/A21 to “work duties and other school-related activities” so readers will not equate item 14/21 with item 16/23 only.

Keep “school-related activities” in question 16/23; do not replace it with “non-academic,” since several items in question 16/23b are related to academic classroom work or student academic performance, and several items in question 16/23a (tutoring, sponsoring an academic team or science fair project) could be considered academic.

Problem a: One panel A participant suggested “school-related activities” may connote after school activities only, since “activities” are not as serious as real work. She suggested that where the survey is only asking about what happens during the workday it should say “work-related.” Other participants may have had similar interpretations. For instance, a panel B participant thought “school-related” meant “non-academic,” having to do with school but excluding the fine details of instruction.

Recommendation b: Exclude study hall from apple point in 22c.

Problem b: Several participants noted that study hall is no longer used, but some described “labs” where students have the opportunity to do homework, such as in an ESOL-supported environment.

Recommendation c: Include additional examples in questions 15/22b and 15/22c or create new categories showing where to classify other activities:

- recess duty and other supervised recreation;
- lunch (teacher’s own lunch time, which is not the same as lunch duty);
- staff, faculty, department, and committee meetings that take place during school (contract) hours;
- creating, preparing, duplicating, and setting up materials;
- cleaning up the classroom;
- field trips during the school day; and
- parent conferences during the school day.

End the list by saying “and other similar activities performed during official school hours” to emphasize that it is the time they are performed that determines whether they should appear in question 15/22 rather than question 16/23, not the nature of the activity.

Problem c: Participants carefully classified their time according to the examples in italics but when attempting to classify activities that were not listed, they had difficulty generalizing from the examples to a class of activities with shared properties that would belong in a certain category.

Such unlisted activities included time between when they were required to arrive and when students arrived or between when students left school and when teachers were required to leave. One participant wondered whether to include school-sanctioned holiday parties during part of class time. Kindergarten and preschool teachers wondered if and how they should account for the informal learning (free play).

It was not clear to participants whether “required meetings” was the same as faculty or staff meetings: one could be required to meet with the principal on occasion and one could schedule an extra faculty meeting other than regular monthly or weekly ones.

Participants were not sure whether to treat manual or clerical activities such as creation and duplication of materials for students’ use, setting up a room for an activity, and cleaning up materials after class as planning or preparation activities, which were often conceived as primarily intellectual or professional activities.

One participant wondered where to put daytime field trips, another daytime parent conferences, since field trips and parent conferences were listed only in question 16/23, not question 15/22.

Recommendation d: If participants will not yet have completed the professional development section, use more specific terms than “professional development” (e.g., “in-service classes”) or clarify whether “professional development” is to be limited to college courses and/or in services courses or includes other activities like faculty discussions.

Problem d: Several Panel A participants were not sure what professional development meant; they thought it meant afterschool (usually weekend) workshops, seminars, and other trainings they attended for college or Continuing Education Unit credit. If professional development includes in-service days or during-school trainings (or even presentations during staff or faculty meetings), participants wanted to know what would “count.” This was not a problem for Panel B participants, since they had just completed a section on professional development where the phrase was defined rather broadly.

Recommendation e: Determine whether item 15b should include ALL time spent planning, in which case it should read “b. All school time spent planning.” Otherwise, a separate category should be added: “d. Additional school time spent planning (not scheduled planning periods).”

Problem e: Participants were not sure where to put, and thus did not include, time during official school hours that they used for planning but which was not officially scheduled as planning time. This confusion contributed to participants’ listing more hours in item 14 than they were able to account for in items 15 and 16.

When probed as to whether there were any hours they included in item 14 that were not included in items 15 or 16, nearly half the participants mentioned up to an hour before and up to an hour after school when they were required to be in the building but when students were not so required. Several noted that they completed most of their planning at these times, since there were fewer distractions than during official planning periods, but they were not sure where to include these hours.

One participant, from a private preschool, said she was not officially assigned any planning time whatsoever. Rather than putting zero hours in question 15b, however, she listed the same number of hours there as she listed for preparation and grading in question 16b, since the planning time she had was what she could schedule for herself through carving out a little time from the day here and there.

Recommendation f: Determine whether 15b should include ONLY time spent actually planning, in which case it should read “b. School time spent on planning.” Otherwise, append the current wording with “...whether actually used for planning or not.”

Problem f: Participants were unsure how to classify scheduled planning time if they did not have the opportunity to use it for its intended purpose.

Participants often found themselves using their officially scheduled planning periods for purposes other than planning lessons, purposes such as monitoring make-up exams for students who were absent, tutoring students who were falling behind, taking calls from concerned parents, discussing students’ problems with other teachers, or trying to keep order among students in the halls. Most listed scheduled planning hours in question 15b but informed the interviewer that the question was a poor indication of the amount of time they spent planning during official school hours.

Panel A
Question 23:

Outside of official school hours, how much time did you spend on the following school-related activities during your MOST RECENT FULL WEEK of teaching at this school?

- *Include time spent working before school, after school, and on weekends.*

a. Activities involving students

- *Including coaching, acting as a club sponsor, field trips, tutoring, transporting students, etc.*

__|__|__| Total hours in the week

b. Activities NOT involving students

- *Including preparation, grading papers, parent conferences, attending meetings, etc.*

__|__|__| Total hours in the week

Panel B
Question 16:

Outside of official school hours, how much time did you spend on the following school-related activities during your MOST RECENT FULL WEEK of teaching at this school?

a. Activities involving students

- *Including coaching, acting as a club sponsor, field trips, tutoring, transporting student, etc.*

__|__|__| Total hours in the week

b. Activities NOT involving students

- *Including preparation, grading papers, parent conferences, attending meetings, etc.*

__|__|__| Total hours in the week

Recommendation a:

Expand examples in apple points. Working on a school newsletter, for instance, could be an example of item 16/23b, while developing individual education plans could be an example of item 16/23a. The phrase “acting as a club sponsor” could be expanded to “acting as a club or activity sponsor,” as suggested by a participant. Expanded examples in question 15/22 as suggested above should clarify confusion about official time before students arrive at school and after they leave school.

Use as prime examples of a particular classification only items that are typical of that classification. Since the majority of field trips occur during school days, not overnight or on weekends, “field trips” and “transporting students” should

initially appear as an example not in question 16/23a but in question 15/22. Question 15/22c should say, “Include time spent transporting students to and from field trip sites,” while question 15/22a should say, “Include instruction provided both in the school and outside on supervised field trips.”

Qualify conditions that would justify classification of activities that typically occur during school hours as outside of school hours. In 16a, rather than “field trips,” say, “portions of certain extended field trips.” Rather than “tutoring,” say, “before or after school tutoring,” etc.

Problem a: As in question 15/22, participants had difficulty categorizing activities that were not listed in the examples. They based their classification of activities on the italicized sample activities rather than on the boldfaced classification criteria, official school hours vs. other hours.

Some participants who noticed the terms “field trips,” “tutoring,” “preparation,” “grading papers,” “parent conferences,” and “attending meetings” in item 16 listed such activities in items 16a or 16b even if these activities occurred during official school hours. Their strategy was to find a match for each activity in one of the categories, not to classify the time and type of activity. They may have been influenced by the word “including” in the apple points in items 16a and 16b, which suggested these were the places to INCLUDE all instances of these activities, regardless of when they transpired.

One participant is a case manager for several special education students and spends much time in addition to her regular teaching duties catching up on students’ progress, counseling students, teachers and parents, and doing administrative work related to IEPs. She did not see these activities listed and did not know where to put them.

Participants wanted clarification about whether activities during contract hours (before and after students arrive) should be counted in question 23. For example, preparation time can take place during the half hour or so teachers have between the time they are required to show up to work and when students arrive, as well as after students leave and the official end of the teacher’s duty day.

One teacher suggested having checkboxes for other types of miscellaneous activities that teachers do, such as preparing and taking down class activities (e.g., the horticultural science teacher and the art teacher), doing clerical activities such as e-mailing or calling parents, working with other teachers, and acting as students’ case managers during unofficial school hours.

Recommendation b: Clarify what “meetings” in apple points mean, while simultaneously reiterating the official/unofficial distinction, for example, “faculty meetings held during school” vs. “before or after school faculty or PTA meetings.”

Problem b: One participant counted as hours spent “attending meetings” in question 23b hours she had already recorded as “required meetings” in question 22c. She was concentrating more on the examples than on when the meeting had occurred. Although the intent of the wording distinction may be to convey indirectly that

meetings in question 23b are outside school hours since they are not required, the distinction is too subtle to be perceived in a quick reading.

Observations: While two participants overlooked the apple points, several commented about them, saying on the one hand that there was a lot of detail to consider, but also that teachers should be alerted to read the question and examples carefully. In order to correctly answer the questions, it is important to read the answer points too; they are more than just tips.

Working Conditions overall:

Recommendation a: Use the apple points defining hours and reiterating what to include in items 22 and 23 of panel A. (These instructions were missing in items 15 and 16 in panel B.)

Make question 14/21 the main question and indent questions 15/22 and 16/23 as subsections (part a, part b, etc.) under it to imply that the hours are related. In addition, wording questions 15/22 and 16/23 as “Of the hours you reported in question 14 [or 21], how many were designated for X?” will likely prevent respondents from including more hours in items 15/22 and 16/23 combined than in item 14/21, a situation that would be difficult to interpret.

At the same time, UserWorks staff does NOT recommend forcing respondents to account for all the hours in item 14/21 when categorizing those hours in items 15/22 and 16/23, since participants felt some of their activities were not covered. Instead staff suggests adding a new question 17/24 at the end of the working conditions section if the resulting data would not be too cumbersome to handle:

For any hours you listed in question 14/21 that you did not account for in either question 15/22 or 16/23, please describe any additional professional activities and the number of hours you spent on them.

Activity	Number of hours
_____	_____
_____	_____

Regardless of whether this additional item is added, staff proposes eliminating the most common source of time unaccounted for by changing question 15/22 b from “scheduled school time for planning” to phrasing that includes unscheduled time:

- b. School time spent planning, preparing, setting up or cleaning up
 - Include time spent on these activities during scheduled planning periods, during lunch, from when you must arrive until the first students arrive, and from when students leave until you are free to leave.

If part b is to remain as is, a bullet point should be added to ensure that participants include this time regardless of how it is used:

- b. Scheduled school time for planning
 - Include any such time scheduled for you even you do not actually use it for planning purposes

In that case, item 15/22c should be relabeled as 15/22d and a new item 15/22c under item 15/22b added:

- c. unscheduled official school time used for planning, preparing, setting up or cleaning up
 - Include time spent on these activities during lunch, from when you must arrive until the first students arrive, and from when students leave until you are free to leave.

Problem a:

The numerical relationship between sets of hours was unrecognized by panel B participants, misused by panel A participants, and unrepresentative of actual hours spent for all participants.

Panel A participants seemed more aware of the relationship between hours in item 21 and those in items 22 and 23 than panel B participants were of that between those in item 14 and those in items 15 and 16, suggesting that the additional apple point clarifications in panel A were helpful. (Only one panel A participant seemed confused; this participant thought hours in item 22 should equal those in item 21.)

In panel B, nearly all participants listed more hours in 14 than in 15 and 16 combined. In panel A, many participants started down the same path, but because they more often realized the numbers should balance out, they altered numbers in question 23b to make the hours in questions 22 and 23 sum to those in question 21, and were reluctant to admit they might have left hours unaccounted for. When panel B participants were probed to describe any hours listed in item 14 not accounted for in items 15 and 16, they were able to account for all such hours as consisting of unscheduled time carved out either during lunch, right after their official day began, or right before their official day ended. Such time was sometimes used for planning and sometimes for creation, duplication, and disposal of materials for students' use.

Some panel A participants also mentioned they took unscheduled planning time, suggesting that more panel A participants would have recognized the same discrepancy if they had not attempted to manipulate the numbers to create the impression of consistency. For instance, one panel A participant who taught kindergarten/childcare worked full-time but subtracted out hours children were engaged in naptime, eating, and playing. She said she had no scheduled planning time, though she tried to plan during naptime. If she had been offered the option of including unscheduled planning time, she probably would have accounted for naptime.

Recommendation b:

If variant schedules should be excluded, append to "MOST RECENT FULL WEEK" the phrase "in which all classes were held for their standard duration." If variant schedules should be included, add an apple point for clarification: "If school was open all week but regularly scheduled classes were preempted or shortened, include that week."

Problem b: Panel B respondents were uncertain whether to classify as “full” weeks in which school is open all week but class schedules are altered or certain classes are not held. These participants were uncertain how to classify weeks in which certain classes were preempted by emergencies (such as a teacher’s funeral) or special occasions (such as holiday concerts and assemblies). When presented with a situation in which school is delayed two hours owing to icy roads but all classes are held for a shorter than normal duration, participants were not in agreement regarding whether to consider the week a “full” week.

Recommendation c: If respondents are not supposed to consider a typical week, add the wording “(even if NOT typical)” after “MOST RECENT FULL WEEK.”

Problem c: Respondents presume they are being asked to provide information on a typical week rather than the most recent full week.

Compounding problem: Most recent full weeks often ended as much as 4 or 5 weeks prior to the interview owing to Thanksgiving or Christmas holidays and snow days, so teachers could not recall details of those weeks.

It seems as though participants did notice the capitalized phrase appearing in each item. Participants read “MOST RECENT FULL WEEK” aloud, commented on it, and were probed on it. Yet they seemed to presume that the test makers were really interested in having them describe a typical week. One participant working in a nursery school with a number of part-time teachers noted that she had initially considered the word “full” redundant in her situation, assuming that since she was a full-time worker, all of her weeks were full weeks. She had concentrated instead on her typical week.

The problem was certainly compounded by the fact that the interviews took place after winter holidays and weeks with snow days, so that it was difficult for participants to recall the most recent week in which school was open all week. Unable to recall a full week, many participants simply fell back on their schematization of their typical weeks. Others tried to imagine what the most recent week would have been like had it been more complete: “Say I’d had classes this Monday; then....”

However, even participants who had recently experienced a full week and could recall the details of their schedule were concerned that the schedule might not be sufficiently representative. Some panel A participants asked if they really needed to describe an actual week and if they could not just use a typical week instead. When probed, panel B participants invariably said “full” meant to them “normal,” “typical,” or “usual,” never “complete” or “entire.” The term “full week” seemed to suggest that they should not describe an unusual or odd week any more than one that was incomplete. In several cases, during the most recent week in which the school remained open every day and/or all classes were held at their normal times for their full duration, the respondent’s schedule was nevertheless not typical, either with regard to student activities (e.g., holiday pageants and parties) or noninstructional responsibilities (e.g., no bus duty, extra final exams to grade). In such cases, the participant assumed the Census Bureau would not be interested in knowing his or her hours that week and would prefer the respondent to consider a more typical week. In such cases,

respondents appeared to interpret the phrase “most recent” as merely words of encouragement to make the not insignificant task of categorizing their time seem easier: “If this seems hard, just think back to your most recent week.” None entertained the notion that the Census Bureau might be interested in collecting a statistical sample of recent weeks including both normal weeks and outliers. Teachers whose weekly schedule alternated week-by-week or day-by-day (“block schedules”) attempted to average the hours of multiple equally typical weeks together. Those who did not have a regular schedule at all attempted to average the hours per week for each category over the entire school year. Though most gravitated toward the mode, the most common week in the year, one participant attempted to take a mean. *If an activity averaged out to less than 1 hour per week over the entire year, that participant omitted such activities.* A few made an effort to answer the question literally but then informed the interviewer that the data they were entering was not representative, that it provided a poor picture of their schedules, and that the wording of the questions should be changed so they could have the opportunity to enter more representative data.

Only one participant exploring the B panel, a music teacher from a school catering exclusively to the needs of severely disabled children, expressed no reservations about describing an unusual week, and her willingness to do so may have been motivated by an additional agenda. It was not that she felt she had no typical week or would have had to combine aspects of various weeks to arrive at a typical week. Rather, throughout the interview she had been making a point of how different her school, more like a hospital, was from normal schools and how certain questions did not apply to her. Having laughed repeatedly when responding to questions that seemed odd in the context of her school situation, she seemed to believe that the division of hours she could provide by describing an unusual week would help illustrate how different her school was from the norm.

Recommendation e: Change wording of 16a apple point to “Including paid or unpaid coaching, acting as a club sponsor, etc.”

Problem e: Participants were confused as to where to put paid time outside school hours.

A couple of participants were unsure whether they should include paid coaching time in 16a, since 16 appeared to describe unofficial activities and time spent voluntarily. One participant left this time out of both 15 and 16 since he considered it a kind of officially scheduled, compensated overtime but not a “scheduled administrative duty” as described in 15c.

Recommendation f: While there may be no way to remedy this problem short of adopting a different classification system for the hours, be aware that participants simply estimated hours for these tasks based on what seemed reasonable and sometimes had little confidence in their answers. If this is a real concern, one might want to add an item 15d asking respondents how many of the hours they listed in 15, if any other than lesson planning, were spent on activities that were continued outside of official school hours.

A place to put unscheduled planning during official school hours would also be helpful. 15c is not appropriate, since planning lessons is a professional task, not an “administrative” one, since unscheduled planning is not a “scheduled duty,” and since professional tasks are more akin to responsibilities than “duties.”

Recommendation g: Participants had difficulty estimating and assigning hours spent on certain activities which extended across official school hours into part of the day or evening outside those hours; it was not an important distinction in their lives.

When asked how they would classify hours in hypothetical Friday afternoons entirely devoted to planning, participants were unanimous in deciding the answer hinged on “when they were allowed to go home.” However, understanding a theoretical distinction is not all that is required to attend to that distinction in one’s own life.

As salaried, overtime-exempt professionals who were hired expecting to work greater than 40-hour weeks, participants had little incentive to track their hours. They therefore had difficulty judging how many hours were spent on activities such as faculty meetings, parent conferences, and field trips that straddled the boundary between official school hours and other hours. Unaccustomed as they were to tracking their hours, they did not stop in the middle of an activity to note that they had just gone “off the clock.” It seemed to them ridiculous that they should be asked to recall when during a meeting the school bell rang.

All participants experienced difficulty estimating hours if they engaged in activities that straddled the official/unofficial time boundary, but one participant counted the same hours in two categories to indicate that the distinction was meaningless. She did not receive any scheduled planning time, so she carved out official time during student naptime for some of her planning and stayed after school for additional planning. Not seeing a place for unscheduled planning during official hours, she did not attempt to divide her 5 planning hours between 15b (scheduled planning in official hours) and 16b (unscheduled planning during unofficial hours) but wrote the same 5 hours in both 15b and 16b to indicate that for her the only time that was scheduled for planning was her own discretionary time, that in her mind they were essentially equivalent.

Recommendation g: Including an instruction to round answers to the nearest whole hour.

Problem g: Participants wrote in partial hours using fractions or decimals.

Observations: One participant wondered how to record field trips that take place during school hours.

One participant asked, “If parent conferences occur during school hours, where is that time recorded?”

Several participants remarked that their time at school they consider school-related activities, even if they stay well into the evening. Is there a need to clarify activities on school grounds outside of contract hours versus all other activities regardless of location? One participant suggested that where teachers spend their time is also important to ask.

While two participants overlooked the apple points, several commented about them, saying on the one hand, there was a lot of detail to consider, but also that teachers should be alerted to read the question and examples carefully. In order to correctly answer the questions, it is important to read the answer points, too; they are more than just tips.

VI. Professional Development: Panel B, Items 3–4

This section asks about various professional development activities and their impact.

Question 3: In the past 12 MONTHS, did you participate in any of the following professional development activities?

Question 3a: University course(s) taken towards recertification or advanced certification in your MAIN teaching assignment field

Exclude courses taken for your initial certification in your main teaching assignment field or other teaching field(s).

Yes → How many?
 No

Recommendation a1: Clarify what to do with courses currently in progress.

Problem a1: Must classes be completed? A participant had registered for and begun a course and wanted to know if she could include it.

Recommendation a2: Specify whether to include general education courses:

- “Include both general education courses and specialty area courses”

Problem a2: Main teaching assignment field unclear regarding inclusion of educational methods courses. Participants with a specialization who taught one or more subjects in a middle school or high school could not tell if general education courses should be considered in their main teaching assignment field. Regardless of their major, they did not view their subject areas as simply “math” or “history” but as “math education” or “history education,” since what they were assigned to do was not to know, write about, or expound upon math or history but to teach it well. The issue may become more pronounced when questions from panel A are introduced, since teachers who describe themselves as education majors may tend to assume they need to include courses in education while those who have majored in subject areas may assume they should not.

Recommendations a3: Define the cumbersome phrase main teaching assignment field, but retain it. Most participants’ suggestions for alternative nomenclature such as “discipline” or “area of specialization” might be confused with educational or certification specialty rather than teaching specialty.

Alternatively, for clarity, adopt a participant’s suggestion to ask instead:

“In the last 12 months what courses have you taken for recertification or advanced certification in the subject or subjects that you are primarily teaching now?”

unless the item is to include courses for recertification or advanced certification in subjects they are NOT currently teaching.

Regardless, provide guidance on how to determine main teaching assignment field for teachers who divide their course time equally among subjects or teach all subjects.

Problem a3: Certain populations had trouble determining the main teaching assignment field. Preschool teachers, elementary school teachers, and others who taught multiple subjects were not sure what their main teaching assignment field was, and unlike panel A, panel B did not offer a definition such as “the field in which you teach the most courses.” Even had they been given such a definition, teachers in this group would have had difficulty deciding which courses were relevant, since many taught all subjects, dividing their time equally among them, and thus felt that any course related to education could be considered to be in their main teaching assignment field. This was also the case for a special education teacher without a specialty area, and even for a high school English teacher, who felt almost anything can be related to English or taught in English class through literature.

Recommendation a4: Consider rephrasing as “university or college course(s)” or “graduate courses,” whichever is appropriate.

Problem a4: One participant was not sure if university courses included courses taken at a small college. Another suggested “graduate” courses to distinguish them from undergraduate courses. However, most participants probed on the issue assumed that college and online courses should be included.

Question 3b: University course(s) in your MAIN teaching assignment field

- *Exclude courses taken for recertification or advanced certification.*

Yes → **How many?**

No

Recommendation b: Reverse the order of items 3a and 3b, but promote the apple point in 3b into the main instruction so it is not overlooked as supplemental:

“University course(s) in your MAIN teaching assignment field that were NOT taken for recertification or advanced certification.”

Add an apple point saying:

- *“If you are a new teacher, include courses taken towards your initial certification.”*

Alternatively, keep the existing apple point but make the item emphasize initial certification:

“University course(s) in your MAIN teaching assignment field taken for your initial certification.”

Add an apple point:

- *“If you were not initially certified in the last 12 months, your answer may be ‘No.’”*

Problem b:

Question order is confusing. The current ordering is admirably consistent with usability principles. Since the number of first-year teachers is a small proportion of the teaching population, teachers are more likely to have taken courses for recertification or advanced certification than for initial certification in the last 12 months, and teachers who have taken courses for more than one certification in the last 12 months will be rare indeed. It thus makes sense to put respondents at ease by asking first about the more common situation and follow with a question about the less common situation.

However, the ordering of the questions conflicts with the chronological ordering in respondents’ mental models of their educational experience. Some participants were confused by the fact that they were being asked first in “a” about continuing education and then in “b” about their initial or basic education. They thought that questions about initial education should come first and that therefore they may have misread something.

Another participant thought it odd that the first item, 3a, should only be concerned about something so specific as advanced certification when some teachers, himself included, just like to take courses to improve their knowledge, not because they are required.

Question 3c:

Observational visits to other schools

Yes → **How many?**
 No

Question 3d:

Presenting at workshops, conferences, or trainings

Yes → **How many?**
 No

Question 3e:

Attending other workshops, conferences, or trainings

Exclude conferences in which you were a presenter

Yes → **How many?**
 No

Recommendation e1:

Reword apple point as “exclude entirely...” or “exclude entire conferences...”

Problem e1: Overlap between d and e is still possible. A participant said he would have counted a conference in both d and e if he presented on only 1 day of the event and attended on the remaining days.

Recommendation e2: Specify in an apple point whether to include informal training during meetings, in-service courses, etc.:

- *“Include/exclude “in-service” presentations at your own school.”*

Problem e2: Confusion exists over whether to include workshops in their own school (in-service days) or trainings conducted at faculty meetings. Several participants initially assumed a narrow definition of professional development as courses or workshops, but when they got down to items 3f through 3j and realized that simply talking to a colleague could be considered professional development, they wondered if less formal training conducted as part of an administrative meeting would count in item 3d or 3e.

Question 3f: Individual or collaborative research on a topic of interest to you professionally

Yes
 No

Recommendation f: If the definition of “research” matters, pick and choose how to restrict:

- *“Include/exclude finding information or articles for students in your classes; personal experiences you discuss in class; formal research on educational methods mandated by school system or coursework, etc.”*

Observation f: Definitions of “research” and “topic of interest to you professionally” differ widely. Research might be anything from looking up students’ test scores to browsing the Internet in order to find an article for students to read to conducting library research to prepare a paper for presentation at a teachers’ conference. When probed, some indicated they did several types of research but had initially thought only one type should be included. Others thought the only type of research they performed should not be included.

For some, a topic of professional interest would have to be a topic in education such as how to improve scores on a certain skill or how to help students with a certain disorder. For others, a topic of professional interest could be one’s own trip to Europe, since it could motivate class discussion.

Question 3g: Regularly-scheduled collaboration with other teachers on issues of instruction

- *Exclude administrative meetings*

Yes
 No

Recommendation g: Define “administrative meetings” or replace it with a clearer term like “faculty meetings” if appropriate.

Problem g: Response may depend on interpretation of “administrative meetings.” A participant who interpreted “administrative meetings” as meetings that dealt with clerical or bureaucratic matters, issues other than curriculum and instruction (for instance, software for taking attendance), answered “Yes” since such collaboration often happened at faculty meetings.

Participants who interpreted “administrative meetings” as meetings with the administration of one’s department, hence faculty meetings, answered “No,” since it would be unusual to regularly schedule meetings that would exclude the department chair or team leader.

Both participants collaborated with other teachers on the same types of issues, but each offered a different answer. Other teachers also wondered what types of meetings were to be excluded, but were able to decide on an answer based on other contacts with colleagues.

Question 3h: Diagnosing individual students with other teachers (e.g., discussing specific students and arranging appropriate help)

Yes
 No

Observations h: Several participants noted that though they tried to identify problems, not just discuss them, they were technically unqualified to offer medical diagnoses and that to do so might anger parents and get the teacher in trouble. They nevertheless marked “yes” since they did “discuss students and arrange for help.” Most were comfortable with the wording “diagnosing individual students,” interpreting it as restricted to the activities suggested in the parentheses.

One participant suggested “diagnosing” implied there is something wrong with the student and suggested more neutral terms such as “discussing individual students’ problems with other teachers or colleagues.” “Evaluating” is not recommended, since it has misleading connotations of assessment.

Question 3i: Observing or being observed by other teachers in your classroom (for at least 10 or 15 minutes at a time)

Yes
 No

Recommendation i: Reword to force readers to read about the time stipulation before the sentence ends:

“Observing or being observed for at least 10 or 15 minutes at a time by the other teachers in your classroom”

Problem i: Parenthetical instructions are overlooked. Participants failed to read the 10- to 15-minute minimum and asked if they should include other teachers “popping in and out” of the classroom.

Observation i: One participant’s answer should not be taken as representing the policies for other teachers at his school or department because department heads are sometimes required to observe and mentor, while others at the school are not.

Question 3j: Acting as a coach or mentor to other teachers or staff in your school, or receiving coaching or mentoring

Yes

No

Observation j: Participants appreciated the **distinction between item 3i and 3j**, since observing or being observed by other teachers did not necessarily mean they offered each other advice afterwards. Teachers are apparently protective of their own autonomy in the classroom and reluctant to be perceived as telling each other how to teach. The distinction is particularly relevant for teachers who share a room and cannot help observing each other.

Recommendation j: Add an apple point instructing readers on whether to include or exclude student teachers or say “teachers or teachers to be” if they are to be included.

Problem j: There is uncertainty regarding student teachers. In several cases, inclusion of student teachers would change “no” answers to “yes” answers in this item and in 3i. However, teachers were hesitant to apply the item to student teachers, particularly for item 3j, since student teachers are not staff.

Question 4a: In the past 12 months, have you participated in any professional development activities that focused on in-depth study of the content in your MAIN teaching assignment field?

Yes
 No → Go to item 4b below.

Question 4a(1): In the past 12 months, how many hours did you spend on these activities?

- *Mark (X) only one box.*

8 hours or less

8–16 hours

17–32 hours

33 hours or more

Question 4a(2): Overall, how useful were these activities to you?

Not useful

Somewhat useful

Useful

Very useful

Recommendation a1: Consider restating “focused on in-depth study of your main teaching assignment field” as “...focused on your main teaching assignment field and directed at teachers with some knowledge and experience” if that is what “in-depth study” is intended to mean. Or, if the issue is not to include general training applicable to multiple fields, it might be appropriate to say “...specific to and concentrating on the subject(s) you primarily teach.”

Problem a1: There was disagreement over hours that qualify as “in-depth study.” Participants generally gathered that the phrase “in-depth” was meant to exclude casual overviews of material they had already learned in their initial courses in their fields, but this was by no means the unanimous view.

One participant said he would not consider attending a useful conference on the latest teaching methodologies in his field to be “in-depth” unless it had forced him to do some work (e.g., to memorize statistics supporting the method or to study the classroom materials used).

Another participant could not see how a course of 8 hours or less could be “in-depth,” since such a course probably would not require research and writing a paper. Another was even more vehement, saying one would have to take a sabbatical to do any “in depth study,” that in-service courses never go into much depth. However, this opinion was balanced by that of another who believed the typical half-day (4-hour) in-service courses are generally intensive and “cover a lot of ground.”

An additional participant, thinking of faculty meetings as professional development, said “in-depth study” would be impossible in her English department because they would all have to read the same work of literature and discuss it together at school, and no one would have time for this.

Recommendation a2: When panel A and panel B are combined, participants hopefully will recall the definition of main teaching assignment field from panel A and apply it here. However, as described in item 3a, the definition could be expanded to address teachers with multiple assignments of equal emphasis.

Problem a2: Participants had difficulty identifying “MAIN teaching assignment field.” Some participants found the term main teaching assignment field confusing and would have preferred something simpler like “your specific area of teaching,” but this wording would not have gotten at the issues of primary field or the field assigned regardless of what they like to teach, so UserWorks staff cannot support the proposed change.

Others were pulled in different directions by the term. A special education music teacher considered herself primarily a music teacher because everyone else in her school also taught special education, as this was a school for severely learning disabled and physically disabled students.

Question 4b: In the past 12 months, have you participated in any professional development activities that focused on uses of computers for instruction?

Yes
 No → Go to item 4c on page 6.

Question 4b(1): In the past 12 months, how many hours did you spend on these activities?

- Mark (X) only one box.

8 hours or less
 8–16 hours
 17–32 hours
 33 hours or more

Question 4b(2): Overall, how useful were these activities to you?

Not useful	Somewhat useful	Useful	Very useful
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Recommendation b: Move “computers” to end of sentence to focus on applications. Change wording to one of the following:

- “...that focused on educational software students can use to explore concepts on computers”;
- “...that focused on teaching students how to use a computer”; or
- “...that focused on preparing lessons, presenting material, calculating grades, etc. using computers.”

Problem b: Participants focus on “computers” and stop reading. Some participants miss the final phrase “for instruction” and include instruction in computers for their own use, for instance, to write lesson plans or calculate students’ grades.

Observation: Many have been trained in using computers several years ago, but the presumption now is that teachers are computer literate, and many school systems do not have the funds to purchase new software or connect classroom computers to the Internet. As a result, some teachers have little opportunity or incentive to take these courses.

Question 4c: In the past 12 months, have you participated in any professional development activities that focused on reading instruction?

Yes
 No → Go to item 4d below.

Question 4c(1): In the past 12 months, how many hours did you spend on these activities?

- Mark (X) only one box.

8 hours or less
 8–16 hours
 17–32 hours
 33 hours or more

Question 4c(2): Overall, how useful were these activities to you?

Not useful Somewhat useful Useful Very useful

Observation: Several school systems are now requiring courses in reading instruction of all teachers. Some teachers of subjects other than English in the higher grades think the courses themselves are useful for teaching reading but not for themselves: they are resentful of being asked to “make room for reading” in the classes they teach.

Question 4d: In the past 12 months, have you participated in any professional development activities that focused on student discipline and management in the classroom?

Yes
 No → Go to item 4e below.

Question 4d(1): In the past 12 months, how many hours did you spend on these activities?

- Mark (X) only one box.

8 hours or less
 8–16 hours
 17–32 hours
 33 hours or more

Question 4d(2): Overall, how useful were these activities to you?

Not useful Somewhat useful Useful Very useful

Recommendation: No problems detected.

Question 4e: In the past 12 months, have you participated in any professional development activities that focused on other topics not included in 4a–4d above?

Yes → Please specify _____
 No _____

- Recommendation e: Move “not included in 4a–4d above” directly after the words “professional development activities.”
- Problem e: Confusion regarding “other topics” vs. “other courses” leads to overlap with courses listed in item 4a. Participants who taught lower grades and had taken general education or subject matter courses which they considered part of their main teaching assignment field but with a different emphasis listed the putative topics of these courses in item 4e. For instance, a kindergarten teacher whose specialty was general education specified “science” in item 4e for a science education course she had listed in item 4a. An elementary school teacher specified “assessment” for a course in evaluation and testing she had also listed in item 4a.
- Question 4 overall:**
- Recommendation f: Specify what activities should or should not be included or be more specific (say “in-service courses” in place of “professional development activities”). If faculty meetings are a separate issue but also of interest, add a separate question such as “Has your staff gotten together to discuss....”
- Alternatively, under the first reference to “professional development activities,” specify with an apple point:
- *“Include/exclude in-service courses, faculty meetings, presentations you gave yourself....”*
- Problem f: There was uncertainty as to what activities are included in “professional development activities.” Since the preceding question 3 suggested a pretty broad definition of professional development, participants were not sure whether to include hours spent in university rather than in-service courses, in faculty meetings during which the issues mentioned in items 4a–4d arose spontaneously, in informal private meetings discussing these issues with other teachers, or even reading about these issues on their own.
- Recommendation g: Since UserWorks staff did not probe participants on this issue, staff is not sure how important it is, but it might be helpful to provide examples of activities that should or should not be included in calculating hours.
- Problem g: There is some uncertainty regarding whether to include supplemental enrichment and applications of training. Two participants mentioned they were unclear on whether the range of hours they selected for a given professional development activity should include time spent outside of the class on homework or trying out the course’s teaching suggestions on their own students.
- Recommendation h: If they should not have double listed their training, participants need to be informed of this, or main teaching assignment field needs to be described in more detail.
- Problem h: Overlap exists in course listings among item 4a and 4b or 4c. Participants whose main field involved computers or special education included the same hours twice in 4a and 4b or 4c. This was more common for teachers of the lower grades, who considered anything education-related to belong in item 4a.

- Recommendation i: Indicate if training sessions, which the participant herself taught, are to be excluded.
- Problem i: Should “participated in” include “taught”? One participant had taught courses on computers and wondered if she should include them in her hours of professional development.
- Observation a: This section was one of several areas where it would have been helpful if participants had been asked to have their records or transcripts available in advance.
- Observation b: Interpretation of “how many hours did you spend on” varied. Participants seemed to interpret hours as clock hours, not course credit hours. For instance, a participant said she would put the number of hours she attended classes, not the number of hours listed in a course catalog. If that question is also an issue, it might be better put “how many course hours did you take of....”
- Observation c: Hours as a unit of measurement varied. Most in-service courses are half-day or day courses, so participants thought more in terms of days of development than in hours.
- Recommendation d: Extend “Overall, how useful were these activities to you?” with “...in your current situation” or “potentially.”
- Observations d: There was variation in the definition of potential vs. actual “usefulness.” Most participants determined the degree of “usefulness” based largely on how much of the activity could be successfully applied to their own classroom. However, one participant mentioned that she could see the value in some development courses (on behavior problems) but could not apply them to her own students (who were high-achieving and well behaved). She seemed to want to separate usefulness to the teaching profession from applicability to her class. Another respondent said she had taken a course that was potentially useful but had rated it “not useful” because it was too short and she had not followed up on obtaining more training in that area.

VII. Resources and Assessment of Students: Panel B, Items 5–13

This set of questions asks about different types of students, the resources provided for teaching them, and participants’ use of student assessment scores.

Question 5: Are students assigned to your classes on the basis of achievement or ability level?

- Yes
 No

Recommendation a: Add “in some cases, specify: ___” OR
Ask “are most of your students...” or “are some of your students...” OR
Provide answer options like “some classes” and “most classes”

Problem a: No intermediate answer options. Participants who taught advanced placement or remedial classes as well as classes of mixed abilities did not know whether to answer yes or no.

Recommendation b: Rephrase as “Is either achievement or ability level a basis for how students are assigned to your classes?”

Problem b: Several participants insisted that this was an either/or question, so they could not understand why the answer options were “yes/no” rather than “achievement/ability.”

Recommendation c: Add “Do not know” option.

Problem c: Some participants did not know on what basis students were assigned to them.

Recommendation d: Indicate assignment “by teachers” and/or “guidance counselors” or “administrators” if important.

Problem d: Passive voice does not clarify who must do the assigning. In one school, students assign themselves to harder or easier classes based on how hard they want to work and what they think they can handle. The participant decided they were technically grouped as described in question 5 but was not certain.

Question 6: Do you use different groupings of students in your classroom to teach students who learn at different rates?

Yes
 No

Recommendation a: Add “in some situations, specify: ___” OR ask “do you ever...” or “do you at least sometimes...” OR provide answer options such as “often” and “infrequently.”

Problem a: No intermediate answer options. Some participants grouped students by ability for special activities but normally did not group students or grouped them on some other criteria such as age in preschool.

Recommendation b: Rephrase to clarify emphasis, either:
 “When grouping students, do you select students who can all learn at the same rate to be in a particular group?”

OR

“When grouping students, do you mix students who learn at different rates in the same group?”

Problem b: Homogeneous or heterogeneous rates are not specified. Some participants grouped students into high, middle, and low groups by reading ability; others mixed students of various ability levels in the same group to help each other learn; it was not clear which of these options was being asked about.

Recommendation c: Add “N/A” option or distinguish possible “no” responses; that is, “No, I do not group my students for this purpose” from “No, I do not divide my students into groups.”

Problem c: Those who do not use grouping may prefer answering “N/A.” Group instruction is not appropriate for certain curricula. A “no” answer presupposes teachers group students in other ways or for purposes other than instructing learners at different learning rates.

Question 7a: Of all the students you teach at this school, how many have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) because they have disabilities or are special education students?

Students
 None → Go to item 8 below.

Recommendation a1: If accuracy is important, request a percentage to the best of their knowledge rather than relying on an exact number or permit them to opt out by checking “Information not available.”

Problem a1: Information is not available to all teachers. Some teachers did not know the number of students but could estimate a percentage based on the likelihood that certain students would have an IEP. Some could obtain this information through a colleague. Others would have had to conduct name-by-name research in a lengthy database or did not know where to start. Since most teachers had only a few IEP students, a difference of one student may be statistically significant.

Observation: At least one participant entered single zeroes in the two leftmost boxes before a single digit response here and in question 9a.

Recommendation a2: Insert the word “currently” between “you” and “teach.”

Problem a2: A participant considered more than her current year’s students in answering this question.

Question 7b: Do you or these students receive the following types of support in your classroom?

Question 7b(1): Special aide or personal assistant

Yes
 No

Recommendation b1: Redundantly append “either for you, your classroom, or for individual students” to the current wording.

Problem b1: A couple participants were not sure if the aide was for the teacher or for an individual disabled student.

Recommendation b2: Revise wording to read, “support at various times in your classroom.” Do not remove “in your classroom,” since it is necessary to distinguish this type of support from external support.

Problem b2: Two participants could not relate students’ personal aides or assistants to the phrase “in your classroom.” They thought they might have the wrong concept of aide or assistant since a student aide would presumably follow the student around the school and not stay in the teacher’s classroom longer than one period.

Question 7b(2): Consulting/itinerant teacher

Yes
 No

Recommendation b3: Use a term more familiar to teachers, perhaps “special education resource teacher” if that title corresponds to the job function intended here.

Problem b3: Some participants were not sure what sort of teacher this was. There was general agreement that this person would have more special education training than an aide and would advise the teacher on individual students but not work directly with individual students. However, some did not know what “itinerant” meant and those that did thought the teacher referred to here might be an outside expert consultant who would not necessarily be physically present “in the classroom.”

One participant wondered if he should count himself, since he only had himself with which to consult. A special education teacher thought the question might not apply to her because she was already special education teacher, though not necessarily the official “resource” teacher (department head), and hence would never have another such teacher assigned to her.

Question 7b(3): Accommodations such as more time on tests or a behavioral management plan

Yes
 No

Observation a: “IEP” is not a term that can be used to describe all special education students. A participant had Section 504 students who required special accommodations but did not have individual education plans.

Observation b: A participant noted that (1) through (3) do not seem to include counseling services for emotionally disturbed students.

Question 8: In the last 3 years, have you had 8 hours or more of training or professional development on how to teach special education students?

Yes
 No

Observation: Teachers who have not had this training recently or are highly experienced and have not had training in a long time feel this question and question 10 suggest their knowledge is out-of-date and that they are less qualified than someone with more recent training. They do not believe training changes that much in 3 years.

Question 9: Of all students you teach at this school, how many are of limited English proficiency?

(Students of limited English proficiency are those whose native or dominant language is other than English, and who have sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language as to deny them the opportunity to learn successfully in an English-speaking-only classroom.)

Students
 None → Go to item 11 below.

Recommendation: (Same problem/recommendation as for item 7.) If accuracy is important, request a percentage to the best of their knowledge rather than relying on an exact number.

Problem: Information is not available to all teachers. Some teachers did not know the number of students but could estimate a percentage based on the likelihood that certain students would have be of limited English proficiency. Some could obtain this information through a colleague. Others would have had to conduct name-by-name research in a lengthy database or did not know where to start. Since most teachers had only a few LEP students, a difference of one student may be statistically significant.

Observations: One participant missed the phrase “native or dominant” and did not know whether to include her students born in the U.S.A. who spoke another language at home. It may be worth making “native or dominant” appear more prominent.

Two participants mentioned having non-native students with reading or writing problems in English (foreign sounding syntax or idioms) who had no trouble learning or communicating in her English-only class. They seemed to treat verbal and written skills as separate issues and may not have read the parenthetical description closely. One wanted separate questions for each.

Question 10: In the last 3 years, have you had 8 hours or more of training or professional development on how to teach students with limited English proficiency?

Yes
 No

Question 11: Do you receive your students’ scores on state or local achievement tests?

Yes
 No → Go to item 13 below.

Recommendation a: Rephrase: “Do you have access to your students’ scores on state or local achievement tests?” Add answer options “sometimes” or “when possible.”

Problem a: This presupposes that scores are available to be received. Some teachers do not receive the scores but can look them up should they wish to review them. Some receive last year’s scores for the current year’s students, particularly if there is no test in their students’ current grade level. If a student was not in that school the previous year, their scores may not be available. This is apparently a problem in an inner-city neighborhood school but might be true of affluent transients as well. An ESOL teacher who does not have her own classroom and who works with students throughout the school wondered to which students and scores the question was referring. If she had access to the scores, she certainly would not receive them together in a single package.

Recommendation b: Rephrase: “If your students take state or local achievement tests, do you receive (have access to) their scores?” Add “Not Applicable” to answer choices. Remove the question from the private school survey or ask about standardized national tests.

Problem b: This presupposes of existence of tests. Certain teachers (e.g., special education or kindergarten) cannot receive their students’ scores because their students do not take them.

Recommendation c: Append “, NOT national standardized tests” to the question if this is an issue. Alternatively, first ask “Do your students take state or local achievement tests?” and add an apple point:

- “Do not include national standardized tests such as....”

Problem c: Mistaking national private standardized tests for state or local achievement tests. Certain state and local achievement tests are sent to the county for internal verification that students are meeting standards but are not published to any statistical abstract or made available to teachers. Particularly if teachers did not have access to these tests, or if their district offered no such tests, they often mentioned national achievement tests by name and answered the question with regard to those.

Question 12: **To what extent do you use the information from your students’ test scores:**

Question 12a: **To group students into different instructional groups by achievement or ability?**

- *Mark (X) one box on each line.*

(For each question, participant could select:)

Not at all To a small extent To a moderate extent To a great extent

Question 12b: **To assess areas where you need to strengthen your content knowledge or teaching practice?**

Question 12c: To adjust your curriculum in areas where your students encountered problems?

Recommendation c1: If item 12 is intended to measure or may be interpreted as indicating to what degree teachers value the tests, remove a source of error in 12b and c by asking the questions:

“If you have access to students’ state or district achievement test scores, are these scores presented in a form you can use?”

“Are they available when you can use them?”

(answer choices: Yes/No/not applicable)

Place the questions between items 11 and 12.

Problem c1: This presupposes a usable and timely format. Participants thought marking “not at all” or “to a small extent” suggested they did not respect the test content, when in fact the scores may not have been in a form they could use. If they receive aggregate scores, either for the class or the grade level as a whole, they cannot determine needs of individual students. If the scores summarize performance on general areas of the exam like “verbal” and “math,” they do not know what skill areas they need to improve. If they receive item-by-item or skill-by-skill results but do not receive the actual test forms, they may have difficulty identifying students’ deficiencies. One participant said teachers in his school receive scores at the end of the school year when there is no longer an opportunity to make use of them.

Recommendation c3: Reiterate that it is state and local test scores that are at issue in item 12.

Problem c2: It was not obvious that only state and local achievement tests are being discussed in this question.

Recommendation c3: If the question must be separated out ask, “Is the content of students’ state and local achievement tests relevant to the courses you teach?” and offer a “do not know” answer option.

Problem c3: There is a presupposition of usable content in standardized tests. Standardized tests are often in basic skills like reading and arithmetic and may not relate to the curriculum of a specialist in a field like history or biology. Even a literature teacher may have little use for reading scores, since her classes may involve interpretation, not just comprehension.

Question 13: To what extent do you use state or district standards to guide your instructional practice in your main teaching assignment field?

Recommendation a: Ask instead, “How big of a role do district standards play in guiding your instructional practice,” or “To what extent do you cover state or district standards in your instructional practice...,” whichever applies.

Problem a: Does “extent” of “guid[ance]” refer to completeness of coverage of standards or to significance of standards relative to teacher’s entire curriculum? A participant said she was able to cover all the standards without giving them a central place in her teaching. She checked “to a moderate extent” since she emphasized other things.

Recommendation b: If important for drawing inferences from question 13, additionally ask how easy it is to apply state or district standards to one’s instructional practice.

Problem b: There is a presupposition of usable standards. An ESOL teacher had encountered different district standards for each student depending on their English proficiency, so it was not easy for her to use them as a general guide to teaching ESOL. Another teacher also said each student’s IEP was the standard for that student.

A science teacher wanted to comply with standards but could not do so owing to factors beyond his control like funding for materials.

Observations: Participants had reasons for using standards as a guide that did not necessarily reflect a positive opinion of the standards. Some participants were required to comply. One said she complied primarily in order to have externally generated objective benchmarks for performance regardless of their quality.

Unlike state achievement tests, state or at least multiple state (“Middle States”) standards may indeed apply to private schools, since, according to one private school teacher, compliance with such standards is required for accreditation and for compatibility with public university entrance requirements.

VIII. Attitudes and Opinions: Panel B, Item 17

This section asks about participants’ influence on staffing, budgeting and instructional policies, and their perceptions of various issues about teaching.

Question 17: Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

- *Mark (X) one box on each line.*

(For each question, participant could select:)

Strongly agree Somewhat agree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree
___ ___ ___ ___

Observation: Although participants sometimes wished they had the opportunity to display neutrality, most recognized the survey’s need to obtain an opinion on every point. Several who felt neutral about an item said that if a “neutral” option were actually offered they might be tempted to overuse it on items with which they had no strong feelings.

Question 17a: **Most of my colleagues share my beliefs and values about what the central mission of the school should be.**

Observation: A participant said many of her colleagues have not been there long enough to get a sense of the mission, so her disagreement has nothing to do with differences of opinion (beliefs and values), though it might have to do with poor communication of the mission by administrators and staff.

Question 17b: **The principal knows what kind of school he/she wants and has communicated it to the staff.**

Question 17c: **There is a great deal of cooperative effort among the staff members.**

Question 17d: **In this school, staff members are recognized for a job well done.**

Observation: Basis for judgment varied because if expectations for recognition are low, a small sign can count as significant recognition. Extra pay is rare. The only case of it a participant mentioned was recognition for extra time spent coaching a successful sports team. Appreciation in a faculty meeting or an occasional pat on the back from a principal is all most can expect. A nursery school teacher in an unsupportive environment said the only recognition she received was Christmas cards from a few parents.

Question 17e: **I worry about the security of my job because of the performance of my students on state and local tests.**

Recommendation e1: Rephrase to clarify intent:

“The actual performance on state and local tests of the students I have now makes me worry about the security of my job.”

OR

“If my students were to perform poorly on state and local tests I would worry more than I do now about my job security.”

Problem e1: Multiple interpretations of agreement are available:

- “I worry because if they were to perform poorly my job would be threatened.”
- “I worry because my students actually do perform poorly.”

No evidence of which interpretation might be more common is available because

- participants generally did not agree; and
- if they did agree, they were not probed for their interpretation since the interviewers did not wish to imply the teacher was incompetent.

Recommendation e2: Rephrase as suggested in the previous recommendation.

- Problem e2: Multiple interpretations of disagreement are available:
- “My job is safe because my students perform well.”
 - by chance—“I got lucky this year”
 - by willful design—“I prepare students well for tests” or
 - by obligatory design—“I have to teach to the tests.”
 - “My job is relatively safe because poor performance is not an issue.” (“Most of our students here are naturally high-achievers.”)
 - “My job is safe despite my students’ low scores.” (“Who else could they find to teach here [in the inner city]?”)
 - “My job is in danger for other reasons.” (“Funding for electives like music and art is being cut.”)
- The first couple of interpretations come to mind most easily for the interviewers, yet participants tended to represent all of these interpretations EXCEPT the first. The “by chance” and “by willful design” interpretations were not represented, and only one participant, by way of complaining about a test-oriented curriculum, suggested he had adopted the “by obligatory design” interpretation.
- Question 17f: State or district content standards have had a positive influence on my satisfaction with teaching.**
- Recommendation: If this is really what is being asked, rephrase as “I am more satisfied with teaching (a more satisfied teacher) thanks to (since the adoption of) state or district content standards.” Otherwise, rephrase as “I am satisfied with the state or district content standards,” or “I feel I am a better (more successful) teacher owing to the adoption of state and district content standards.”
- Problem: Confusing wording: Some participants seemed to think they were being asked whether they were satisfied with the standards or with their effectiveness in the classroom (their ability to teach effectively) rather than with their own work situation as a result of the standards’ having been implemented.
- Observation f1: Influence is indirect, through state-sponsored teaching materials. Several participants seemed to be thinking about the materials packets the state or district sends them to use in bringing students up to standards, not the standards themselves. One teacher who disagreed said she finds the materials cumbersome or difficult to explain to students, even if the standards themselves are admirable.
- Observation f2: Potentially not applicable: Some students, like the learning disabled, and some fields, like music, appear not to have any state or district standards to abide by, so participants felt the question was not applicable to them. An N/A option might be helpful.
- Question 17g: I am satisfied with my class size(s).**
- Observation g1: Potentially not applicable: A special education teacher who was at the moment working as a personal assistant for a single student was satisfied working with

only one student. However, she suspected the question did not apply to her since as a personal assistant she would never have had more than that one student. An N/A option might be helpful.

Recommendation g2: Rephrase as “My class size(s) is/are too large” if that is really the issue.

Observation g2: Several participants mentioned independently or agreed when probed, that class size could be too small if there are not enough students to generate discussion without one or two students dominating.

Observation g3: Answers may differ for different class compositions—a participant said more boys or LEP kids may make a small class more difficult to handle.

Question 17h: I am given the support I need to teach students with special needs.

Observation h1: Definition of “support” often included a special education or ESL resource specialist but varied widely, including emotional support from other teachers or parents in the classroom, volunteer tutors from outside the school, new technologies, large print books or books on tape, translation services for non-Spanish LEP students, research information sources on students’ disabilities.

Observation h2: Potentially not applicable: None of the answer choices were appropriate for teachers who did not have any special education students.

Question 17i: I make a conscious effort to coordinate the content of my courses with that of other teachers.

Observation: Teachers value cooperation but also autonomy. In some schools it is important that all teachers teaching a certain grade or course be teaching the same thing, but where it is not, teachers do not like to tell each other how to teach. Different approaches or content emphases are considered creative and innovative, not necessarily indicative of poor coordination.

Question 17j: The amount of student tardiness and class cutting in this school interferes with my teaching.

Observation j1: Teachers can have opinions about how circumstances affect people in the system other than themselves. A participant who thought the question was phrased as a criticism of students remarked that these questions are all about her, that the Census Bureau did not seem to care whether she thought these problems also hurt her students, and if so, how much. This feeling was consistent with another participant’s frustration that nothing was asked about his opinion of the effect of district and school board politics on his students.

Recommendation j1: Be wary of drawing any inferences from this question. Add a question about the amount of tardiness and absence in the teacher’s own classroom, not the school as a whole. Compare responses to the two questions.

- Problem j1: Greater tardiness and class cutting can actually result in less interference: Some teachers who disagreed experience a lot of tardiness and class cutting but have adjusted to the interruptions and to dealing with students who are frequently absent.
- Recommendation j2: If appropriate, ask instead about absences, late arrivals, and early departures.
- Problem j2: Some respondents may not count late arrivals and absences that result in the greatest interference as tardiness or class cutting: One participant said the source of the greatest interference are problems beyond students' control: late arrival, early departure, and absence owing to work responsibilities and commuting, leaving class for a school sports team meet, the need to visit colleges, or to take care of younger siblings or their own children.
- Observation j2: Potentially not applicable: In a private nursery school/kindergarten, parents bring their kids to school, so any tardiness is the parent's fault and does not count. Students are supervised all day so they cannot cut class. The participant put "strongly disagree" but meant "does not apply" since the situation presumed to occur could not occur.
- Question 17k: I sometimes feel it is a waste of time to try to do my best as a teacher.**
- Observation: Sometimes it is fatigue, the demands on teachers' time, or parents' lack of support that makes it difficult to do one's best, **not apathetic students or indifferent administration.**
- Question 17l: I plan with the library media specialist/librarian for the integration of library media services into my teaching.**
- Observation: Potentially not applicable: Some small private schools do not have a media specialist/librarian.
- Question 17m: I am generally satisfied with being a teacher at this school.**
- Recommendation: No changes.

IX. School Climate: Panel B, Items 18–20

These questions ask participants about the factors that contribute to the educational climate in their schools.

Question 18: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

- *Mark (X) one box on each line.*

(For each question, participant could select:)

Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Question 18a: **The stress and disappointments involved in teaching at this school aren't really worth it.**

Recommendation a1: Rephrase as one of the interpretations listed below, or create a more appropriate one.

Problem a1: Ambiguous reference; participants did not know what "it" was, so interpretations were wildly different and participants ended up confusing themselves when paraphrasing.

- "The stresses and disappointments are not worth getting stressed out over or disappointed about?"
- "Being in teaching is not worth the stresses and disappointments involved?"
- "The stresses and disappointments make me want to leave?"
- "The stresses and disappointments outweigh the joys of teaching, of helping students learn?"
- "The stresses and disappointments are not worth the money they pay me?"
- "Teaching is not worth what they pay me owing to the stresses and disappointments?"

Recommendation a2: Use a positive statement like "Teaching is worthwhile despite its stresses and disappointments" so respondents will be certain of what they are saying if they disagree.

Problem a2: The stress involved in understanding what one is agreeing to when disagreeing with a negated proposition is not worth it. Participants had trouble understanding that in saying they disagreed that something was NOT worthwhile, they were conveying that they agreed that WAS worthwhile.

Question 18b: **The teachers at this school like being here; I would describe us as a satisfied group.**

Observation b1: Two dimensions of satisfaction are possibly combined. A participant suggested the teachers could like being at the school without necessarily liking the group dynamics of being with each other. She suggested separating the two clauses into two separate subitems.

Observation b2: Satisfied can mean complacent. A participant suggested teachers who are doing nothing to help students may be happy to be left alone, collect their paychecks, and go home to their families instead of grading papers.

Question 18c: **I like the way things are run at this school.**

Observation c1: For whose benefit? A participant wondered if she should be considering the effect of how things are run on the teachers, the students, or the parents, since what is good for one group may not be good for another.

- Observation c2: Participants had different ideas of who was running things: some considered only the principal, others the “resource teachers,” “teach leaders,” or department chairpersons, others the public school system, others were thinking of how the school ran itself as a self-organizing system.
- Question 18d: If I could get a higher paying job I’d leave teaching as soon as possible.**
- Recommendation d1: Rephrase “leave teaching” as “leave the field of teaching.”
- Observation d1: When probed, a few participants thought the higher paying job could include teaching jobs. “Leave teaching” may have meant “leave this particular teaching job” to them, or they may not have read closely.
- Observation d2: One participant was not sure what “somewhat agree” or “somewhat disagree” would mean here. Would the respondent want to leave after giving generous notice? Would the respondent be debating pros and cons? Would it depend on the salary?
- Question 18e: I think about transferring to another school.**
- Observation e1: Some teachers had a specific school or district in mind; others who agreed had thought about transferring hypothetically or with an ideal school in mind.
- Observation e2: Question seemed designed to elicit negative response: A participant would have preferred to have been asked how often she thinks this, because, she said everyone thinks of leaving their current position on occasion.
- Observation e3: Answer depends on pros and cons of alternatives, which vary with age and experience level, not just satisfaction with teaching: Older teachers have a pension to look forward to; it seems they lose some contributions if they leave; younger teachers have more job options outside of teaching.
- Question 18f: I do not seem to have as much enthusiasm now as I did when I began teaching.**
- Observation: Potentially not applicable: The question presupposes some amount of teaching experience. A new teacher said he had not been teaching long enough to either maintain or lose enthusiasm.
- Question 18g: I think about staying home from school because I’m just too tired to go.**
- Observation: Question seemed designed to sabotage whatever good will teachers have established with the general public or make schools look like terrible places. Because participants said, everyone in every profession sometimes thinks about not going into work, it is impossible to answer honestly (“somewhat agree”) without suggesting teachers do not care about their jobs.

Question 19: **To the best of your knowledge how often do the following types of problems occur at your school?**

- *Mark (X) one box on each line.*

(For each question, participant could select:)

Happens daily	Happens at least once a week	Happens at least once a month	Happens on occasion	Never happens
___	___	___	___	___

Question 19a: **Tardiness**

Recommendation: Range of options for response to 19a and 19c might be partitioned more finely than “happens daily” to include “happens hourly,” but the change might still not pick up any differences and would not be applicable to 19b. Ask instead about “egregious tardiness,” “rampant absenteeism,” “conspicuous class cutting.”

No changes suggested if the items as currently written are needed as benchmarks against which to score other responses.

Problem: Question appears designed to elicit negative response. Most participants assumed tardiness, absenteeism, and in the higher grades, class cutting must happen daily in their schools even if not in their own classes, since these problems are part of life, just as they are in all large corporations, government, factories, etc. They assumed that if one person in a school of 3,000 was tardy, absent, or cut class each day, they had to put “happens daily.” To participants, putting these problems in a teachers’ survey seemed designed to exaggerate the problems in schools.

Question 19b: **Absenteeism**

Problem: See 19a above.

Question 19c: **Class cutting**

Problem: See 19a above.

Observation: Potentially not applicable: Elementary schools supervise students at all times, and the students cannot hide in such small buildings. Students in schools for the severely disabled cannot move around to cut class.

Question 19d: **Physical conflicts among students**

Question 19e: **Robbery or theft**

Question 19f: **Vandalism**

Recommendation: If appropriate say “vandalism by students of the school.”

Problem: Agent of the action not identified. In elementary schools, apparently, most vandalism is perpetrated by outsiders, older youths who return to the school after school hours, not by the school's students. Teachers did not know whether to consider this type of vandalism. The same might be asked of "robbery or theft," but since these problems were more rare than vandalism to begin with, participants did not mention them.

Question 19g: Use of alcohol

Observation: Some participants could smell alcohol on students' breath. Others said they could not tell and had to assume.

Recommendation: Say "student use of alcohol" if that is all that is intended.

Problem: Use by whom? At certain schools, this item made teachers think of their colleagues or students' parents, not the students. Such schools include not only those with low morale or severe student behavior problems, but all elementary schools.

Question 19h: Use of illegal drugs

Observation: Some participants knew how to recognize signs of illegal drug use. Others did not and thus they had no basis for judgment.

Question 19i: Possession of weapons

Question 19j: Physical abuse of teachers

Question 19k: Student racial tensions

Recommendation: Rephrase initial question as "To the best of your knowledge, which of the following activities do students at your school engage in" if appropriate to all lettered items; otherwise specify agent of each item, for example, "student use of alcohol."

Problem: Use of the word "student" in 19k through m but not in previous items suggests students are NOT the parties engaged in the actions described in 19a through j.

Observation: Potentially not applicable to schools where all students are the same race or to schools where students are considered by teachers to be too young to understand the concept of race (preschool, kindergarten).

Question 19l: Student bullying

Observation: For participants that were probed about this, this includes d, physical conflicts among students, as well as verbal intimidation and physical actions that are not conflicts, like shoving. For elementary school students, it might include smaller offensives like taking a pencil away from another student or ignoring the student.

Question 19m: Student verbal abuse of teachers

Recommendation: If the objective of having both questions is to determine indirectly the degree of disrespect for teachers that is not verbal abuse, better data might be obtained by asking directly for the frequency of “acts of disrespect for teachers OTHER THAN verbal abuse.”

Problem: Overlap with 19o: some thought m and o the same; others thought verbal abuse was only one form of disrespect, which might include ignoring the teacher, tearing up one’s exam in front of her, etc. One thought of name calling as verbal abuse but talking back to the teacher as an act of disrespect.

Question 19n: Widespread disorder in classrooms

Recommendation: Replace wording with “Teachers not in control of their classes” or “losing the attention of the entire class” if that is the intent of the question.

Problem: “Widespread disorder” connoted utter chaos and reckless behavior. Participants thought this question might have been intended to ask about “losing control of the classroom,” that is, deterioration of discipline, as opposed to general disorder, for instance, having students with messy desks. However to most it connoted dangerous acts in which students could hurt themselves and others: throwing objects or weapons, setting the room on fire, etc.

Question 19o: Student acts of disrespect for teachers

Problem: Overlap with 19m.

Question 19p: Gang activities

Observation: Interpretations differed, and included wearing provocative badges, gathering together to threaten or intimidate, and group violence or aggression on another group of students.

Question 19 overall:

Recommendation: (NOTE: It had been discussed at the December 31, 2002, meeting that this question is more suited for the Principals’ Survey. UserWorks staff agrees that these questions should be moved.)

If obtaining respondents’ impressions of the school’s reputation or guesses based on what they hear from other teachers is sufficient, the instructions for 19 need not be modified, but note that teachers in affluent areas may have an unrealistically favorable impression of their students (not knowing their honor students smoke marijuana) while those in poorer districts may overestimate the problems based on salient incidents (an isolated shooting by an outsider or disgruntled student). The effect of guessing cannot be easily discounted as “error” because there is no reason to assume in advance the distribution of responses will be unimodal, nor that the response frequencies in each of the five categories will approach anything like an ordinal normal distribution, since each of the categories describe different time ranges. Asking respondents to rate the

confidence of their answers, however, might help determine which answers are the more reliable, and obvious guesses could be excluded from the analysis. Alternatively, offering respondents the chance to say they do not know could discourage guessing. While an answer option “do not know” might be overused in cases of minor uncertainty, the answer option “no basis for judgment” should discourage uninformed guessing.

Staff suspects asking for subjective frequency ratings (“extremely often, often, occasionally, hardly ever, never”) might be easier for respondents, but the responses might not be comparable: one teacher may think a rare problem happens too often while another may think the same frequency of occurrence perfectly acceptable.

More accurate responses could be obtained by asking only about the teacher’s own students (“in your own classroom” might be too restrictive, since many problems may occur in the halls or lunchroom but manifest themselves in the classroom.) While some teachers will have only well behaved or badly behaved classes, student behavior patterns may still be more randomly distributed across respondents than their impressions of what happens to other teacher’s students and outside their own classrooms.

Problem: Teachers simply do not know the answers. While a few participants seemed to be answering based only on their own classrooms, most recognized the question was asking about the school in general. Unfortunately, the “best of [their] knowledge” of what goes on at their school outside their own classrooms is often minimal and, according to them, not to be relied on. For instance, if drugs, weapons, gang activities, etc. are forbidden in the school, students hide them, and teachers do not have much opportunity to see if they are actually present. One participant said he could not be expected to know what happens daily at a school of several thousand, nor know for certain that seemingly rare events never happen.

Observation: Some feared that because they had to base most of their frequency judgments on what happened in their own classrooms, the Census Bureau might infer that EVERY problem that they marked as happening frequently at their school was actually occurring in their own classrooms.

Observation: Participants suggested adding the following subitems to 19:

- parent disrespect for teachers;
- parent abuse or neglect of students;
- student or teacher sexual harassment or abuse of students; and
- subversive activities (by outsiders or students) such as calling in bomb threats.

Question 20: To what extent is each of the following a problem in this school? Indicate whether it is a serious problem, a moderate problem, a minor problem, or not a problem in this school.

- Mark (X) one box on each line.

(For each question, participant could select:)

Serious problem	Moderate problem	Minor problem	Not a problem
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Question 20a: **Teacher absenteeism**

Observation a1: This may be a serious problem not because morale or motivation among teachers is low but because there may be a teacher shortage, making it difficult to replace teachers on sick or maternity leave, recovering from an accident, etc.

Observation a2: Teachers do not interact much with colleagues outside their own department, so their answers may not reflect the true situation. One participant said he based his judgment on reports of teacher absences from students who seemed to be cutting class.

Question 20b: **Pregnancy**

Recommendation: Specify whether teacher or student pregnancy is meant.

Problem: Interpretation of who was pregnant varied depending on the age level of the teacher’s students. Middle school teachers thus had the most difficulty deciding how to interpret the item. Some participants inferred students were being referred to since item 20a mentioned teachers and item b did not, but the mention of teachers in 20a also alerted some participants to an ambiguity they might not otherwise have noticed.

One participant suggested parent pregnancy might also be a problem in that it meant they would soon have less time to spend with the child in school.

Observation: Teacher pregnancy did not seem to be as much of a problem as postdelivery teacher absenteeism owing to maternity leave. High school teachers suggested parental responsibilities of students, male or female, might be more of a problem for the teacher than pregnancy, though pregnancy and poor parenting might be more of a problem for students or their parents.

Question 20c: **Students dropping out**

Observation: Teachers cannot always tell if students have dropped out, particularly if a parent tells them the truant is going off to school every day.

Question 20d: **Student apathy**

Observation: One participant guessed that “apathy” meant “enthusiasm,” with the result that the answer choice she marked was the opposite of what she intended. “Student

indifference to learning” or “students’ lack of motivation” might have been clearer to her.

Question 20e: Lack of parental involvement

Recommendation: If distinction is significant, divide item into two: “parental interest in student achievement” and “parental responsibility and support for student’s learning.”

Problem: Two sources of parental involvement make item difficult to evaluate. Participants suggest parents may be very interested in knowing how their children are doing and in taking responsibility for their behavior and attendance, but these same parents may not be interested in, capable of, or free enough in the evenings to help their students learn, either through helping them with homework or providing an intellectually stimulating environment at home.

Observation: Three participants suggested parents can be overly involved, requesting special attention to their child even if it is not necessary, worrying about their children’s safety since September 11, 2001, even going so far as to accompany their kids throughout field trips or coming to school to monitor the halls for snipers.

Question 20f: Poverty

Observation: Participants differed as to whether they considered poverty a problem in itself (a financial drain on the school, a source of sensitivity and emotional trouble for students) or a potential cause for some other problems in item 20 (apathy, lack of parental involvement, unpreparedness, poor health).

Question 20g: Students come to school unprepared to learn

Observation: Participants differed as to how they interpreted “unprepared to learn.” Contributing factors included poor nourishment, low maturity level, poor prior academic preparation, unsupportive home environment, and no effort to bring supplies to class. A couple also mentioned overprivileged students.

“Unprepared to learn” thus overlaps with poverty, lack of parent involvement, and student apathy.

Question 20h: Poor student health

Observation: This was a minor problem for a participant not because poor health prevented a student from learning but because students with common colds came to school and got other students and teachers sick. This type of problem is probably not within the intended scope of the question.

Overall observation: Participants were not probed as to what considerations go into determining whether a problem is serious, moderate, minor, or nonexistent. Participants suggested something could be a problem for the teacher, for the student, for the theory of what education should be ideally, or for the reputation of the teaching profession once the survey is published. A teacher in a school for severely disabled students said that because certain problems are expected to be serious in her school, she might not think they are as serious as people outside might.

The same could be true of teachers who choose to work in schools with discipline problems. Seriousness may be relative to initial expectations.

X. Participants' Final Observations and Recommendations

This section contains an overall discussion of the tables within the SASS public school teacher questionnaire.

Throughout this section of the participants' reactions to the panel(s), UserWorks staff has highlighted specific instances where participants commented on the placement of tables, the layout of the tables, and the codes listed on the tables.

Regarding the location of the tables, two participants mentioned that they preferred to have questions and tables colocated; that is, the table being referenced (e.g., table 2) and the question(s) (e.g., questions 10, 12) should be "next" to each other on facing pages. Several participants remarked that they liked seeing the tables before the question (e.g., table 3 appears before questions 15–18) because it alerted them that the tables would be needed; a couple of participants actually perused the tables for a moment. In some cases, tables were "behind" the questions, as opposed to being placed on the left. One participant suggested putting the codes (into answer 6b) and questions on the same page, while two more suggested that the tables be placed at the end of survey, with one negating her comment by saying that would cause even more page turning. Staff does not think these latter two suggestions would be helpful because it would require truncating codes for the teaching assignment in 6b and participants would have to do even more page turning to locate the correct page/table.

Regarding the layout of the table, one participant volunteered that (s)he found the tables generally overwhelming. In a couple of cases, incorrect grade codes (e.g., K) were used in place of field codes (e.g., 101). When most participants were filling out grades taught (Question 9), they intuitively selected the correct grade without having to refer to the table. One participant, after being prompted, mentioned that (s)he did not even notice the table. Staff believes the revised layout of tables 1A and 1B will help future participants efficiently locate the codes, but there were not adequate numbers to test this against.

With regard to the codes, most complaints centered on the generalities participants felt when they were looking for a specific code (Choral Conducting) as opposed to a more general one (Music). Where possible, staff recommends reviewing the currency of the codes, and including new subitems. Also, this will help to alleviate participants' perceptions of "missing codes" as well as "mislabelled codes." In addition, one participant had a concern about recording her training (she worked in a kindergarten/daycare program) and there was no way to show that training.

Participants' final observations and recommendations, Panel A:

Observation: Three remarked about question 14 (the number of the courses taken), saying the question is too broad because it seems to ask about ALL general education classes; plus, for teachers who have had long careers, this number will be very large. (One participant suggested doing away with “how many?” and another suggested asking how many hours, rather than number of classes.)

Observation: One participant remarked that his time in items 21–23 was hard to figure out because his time was so varied (indicates thinking of “average, typical” week).

Observation: When asked about what topics or questions should be included, participants offered these suggestions:

- teacher aide, full- or part-time, to find out whether having an aide impacts extra time on teacher’s part before and after school;
- special needs, for example, speech, remediation, emotional/social/health/ educational needs;
- teaching career, not just the current situation;
- facilities and conditions;
- questions in the special education section that ask about alternative testing (e.g., SAT-9);
- team teaching;
- pay, monitoring staff, and the way teachers are treated;
- issues related to working conditions (e.g., personal relationships, administration, working climate, rate of pay, benefits), materials (school supplies, books, manipulatives), physical condition of the school building (leaks, deterioration, Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning [HVAC]);
- more questions about salary and level of satisfaction;
- in asking about how many hours are spent on a topic, physical education, foreign languages, and technical education were missing; and
- satisfaction with teaching, incentives for getting into teaching, perceptions before and after teaching experience.

One participant remarked that, in general, (s)he liked that the survey asked for opinions.

Observation: Three participants remarked on the questions about certification, with regard to those who do not have certification or who have had certification problems; for example, one participant wanted to make sure that information about her education and certification would not be personally identifiable.

Observation: At least two participants consistently folded the survey in half, so they could not take full advantage of tables appearing on pages across from those containing questions.

- Observation: With regard to having a survey overview:
- Two participants mentioned explaining the purpose of the survey in the introduction.
 - Three participants agreed (after the question was raised) that instructions should be included at the beginning regarding suggestions for materials to have on hand, (e.g., transcripts and student records). However, one participant remarked that teachers would be less likely to fill out the sections survey if that were the case.
- Observation: With regard to background information to complete the survey:
- Two participants remarked that they liked the bolded main questions, with the answer choices in plain font underneath.
 - Four participants (two of them older teachers) noted that they do not like the gray background with the light gray apple points because it strains the eyes.
- Observation: With regard to instructions in the survey:
- One participant disliked the arrows and wanted to know if they were examples or instructions.
 - One participant remarked that the skip instructions should be more obvious and directed.
 - Participant wanted more “direction” with tables... hard to find information, especially when their vocabulary differs (e.g., prereading is not included in the list).

Participants’ final observations and recommendations, Panel B:

- Recommendation: Indent lettered items under numbered items; use a larger or different shaped font for numbered items.
- Problem: Minimal visual differentiation of hierarchical structure of question. Some participants noted that since main and subordinate questions are in the same size font and at the same margin, it is not immediately obvious that general instructions at the top of a section may apply to questions on an entire page and into the next page.
- Observation: Several participants mentioned liking the option of writing comments in the white space at the bottom of some pages. One participant, however, said the empty space made the survey look too long and would have discouraged him from finishing it.
- Observation: Participants said it would help to refer to records for recalling courses they had taken, hours they had worked, and which students have which problems, but many do not keep such records.

Observation: Participants considered sensitive several items that might not be considered particularly personal:

- Questions that if answered honestly reflect poorly on every school (19a through c);
- Questions that seem designed to create the impression that the respondent is either lying or has a poor attitude (17k and 18e–g);
- Questions about alcohol, weapons, and drugs if the teacher is a user herself.

Observation: Participants offered the following as examples of the most difficult items:

- figuring division of work hours;
- conceiving of a typical or average week if you do not believe you have one;
- recalling courses from 3 years ago; and
- deciding whether they agreed or disagreed when they did not have a strong opinion either way.

Observation: Certain participants felt questions on the following topics should have been included:

- satisfaction with pay;
- the need to pay for their own continuing education;
- difficulties in obtaining certifications;
- support from administrators for problems with regular students and parents, not just special education or LEP support;
- support from administration on financial matters—pay, budget for new materials, availability of materials and response to requests, etc.;
- satisfaction with educational preparation for teaching, not just usefulness of in-service courses;
- satisfaction with amount of planning time;
- opinion of school board, school system;
- opinion about the level of discipline in school specifically, not just overall “kind of school”;
- more background demographics to let the Census Bureau know who is answering the questions;
- challenges of motivating students to learn; and
- why people responded as they did to questions in 17 and 18.

They would also have liked to know the purpose of the survey, how it would be used, and have received assurances of confidentiality with regard to parents and colleagues as well as administrators.

Attachment E-1. Changes in Panel A Version 2

The following items are included in version 2 of Panel A or are revised from version 1.

- Revised version number on cover page
- Question 4a, option 3, “all or most of the day” in bold
- Question 6a1 “of these hours for reading” moved underneath instead of on the side
- Prompt to page 9 (previous Question 6c) reformatted (6c no longer exists)
- Table 1 reformatted and relabeled to tables 1A and 1B
- Question 9 now refers to tables 1A and 1B
- Question 9 included new apple point about mixed grades
- Question 15a now points participants to question 20 if answer is “no”
- Question 20 is reworded
- Question 20 answer choice 8 is added

Attachment E-2. Consent Form/Non-Disclosure Agreement

UserWorks, Inc. is conducting this research study on behalf of the Census Bureau. The purpose of the study is to evaluate the proposed teacher questionnaire, which is part of the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS).

We would like your opinion about its user-friendliness and related issues. Any problems or confusion that you encounter during this study may be the result of the questionnaire's shortcomings. We would like your feedback and suggestions to improve the questionnaire.

Informed Consent

I, _____, freely and voluntarily give my consent to participate in this research study under the direction of UserWorks, Inc.

I understand that my participation is completely voluntary and that I may withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at any time.

I authorize UserWorks, Inc. to draw on the findings from this study, with the provision that my name will not be associated with any of the results, or released to anyone for any purpose. I have been given the right to ask questions concerning the procedures to be employed during this study and to have these procedures explained to my satisfaction.

The Census Bureau will conduct this field test for NCES as authorized by law (20 United States Code 9003, 9004, Section 405(b), and 9007, Section 408 of the National Education Statistics Act of 1994); the OMB control number for this study is **0607-0725**. This valid approval number legally certifies this information collection.

Nondisclosure

I understand that the questionnaire being tested is still preliminary and is not yet ready to be released to the public. I understand that I may not publicize, critique, or otherwise discuss or characterize the project until the Census Bureau officially releases the final questionnaire.

Audio Recording Release

Audio recordings made during this study will be used for research and evaluation of the SASS. Therefore, I understand that my work and opinions expressed during this evaluation will be audio recorded and listened to by the staff of UserWorks and Census. I further understand that UserWorks and Census may wish to use segments of these recordings to illustrate presentations offered to professional audiences.

I give my consent to UserWorks, Inc. to use my recorded voice for these purposes provided that my name will not be associated with the recording, that these recordings will not be released to any broadcast or publication media, and that these recordings will not be used for promotional purposes.

I have read and understood the consent form. If I wish, I may ask for and receive a copy of this form on the day of the study.

Participant's Name: _____

Date: _____

Witness Signature: _____

Date: _____

Attachment E-3. Interview Protocol

Thank you for your time today. We will be evaluating the proposed teacher questionnaire, which is part of the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), by having you complete and comment on the questionnaire. We are going to use your comments to give feedback to the developers of the survey. Your comments and thoughts will help make changes to improve it. UserWorks did not develop the survey, so please do not feel like you have to hold back on your thoughts to be polite. Tell us both your positive and negative reactions. And remember, there are no right or wrong answers. We are not evaluating you but rather how well the questionnaire works.

Before we get started, I would like to tape this interview so I will not have to rely on my memory later. If that's all right with you, please sign this consent form. It also tells you about the confidentiality of the interview.

>> Give consent form.

We use the tapes for purposes of analysis and to remind us of what occurred during a session. Any information you provide is confidential. Your name will not be associated with it. Only persons connected with the development project will have access to the tapes or other data that we collect. Clips from the tapes may be used in professional presentations about this work.

>> Thank participant and remind them they can stop the session at any time for any reason.

Purpose of the testing

Say, "We will be evaluating a part of the SASS questionnaire that is under development."

Say, "We are going to use your comments to give feedback to the developers of the survey. Your comments and thoughts will help make changes to improve it."

Questions teachers may ask

- **The cover page is blank; what goes there?** Assume there will be a printed bar code, school name, and school address on the cover. This questionnaire is usually mailed with other questionnaires to the school.
- **What information should I use?** Teachers should use their own information. The responses will not be used for survey purposes but provide an opportunity to help us think about what circumstances might come up so we can make sure the questions are appropriate.
- **Is there a specific private school teacher questionnaire? Why am I being asked to fill out a public school survey?** The SASS is very similar to the PSS and Census thinks feedback from private school teachers on the public school questionnaire can directly apply to the private school one.

>> Ask what words do not apply to a private school teacher during the course of the survey.

Procedure

- Hand the survey to the participant (be sure to have date and time written on cover page, as well as Participant #).
- Make sure participant has pen or pencil to work with.
- Have vignettes handy.
- Start audiotape.

Say, “This is NOT a test of your skills because we are evaluating the questionnaire. If you have problems do not feel bad; they do not reflect on you. Others are likely to have the same problems. Our goal is to try to identify and hopefully correct these problems. The questionnaire is not quite finished; it is a prototype.”

Say, “Please think aloud as you are completing the form—tell us what you are doing, why you are making selections, things that are confusing, and suggestions for improvement.”

Say, “In some cases I will ask you to role play some situations. Please respond as best you can, given the information and your experience.”

Say, “In some cases I will ask you to complete a question or a series of questions before asking your comments. Please try to work through the questions as if I were not here, and please only ask for help if you are stuck.”

>> Give think-aloud demo, if needed.

Think-aloud demo: Suppose you are an interviewer and you’ve been asked to evaluate a questionnaire about your occupation. One of the questions is “Which occupational group do you interview most frequently?” You have these three options:

- White Collar Executive or Clerical
- Blue Collar/Factory Workers
- Agricultural/Farm Workers

So you might think to yourself, “Gee I mostly interview people in retail stores and bars and restaurants, but I do not know if I’d call them blue collar/factory workers. Maybe agricultural for the grocery stores. I’m thinking maybe they want me to leave those out. Now I’ve interviewed quite a few plumbers, carpenters, and electricians, but those are professional skilled contractors; they are blue collar but I do not know that I’d call them factory workers. Now like today, I’m interviewing teachers; they are white collar I guess, but they are not executive or clerical. They would probably want me to include them. I guess that’s the only group that really fits so I’d have to check white collar. I’ve interviewed farm managers, too; I guess they are executives, not farm workers, so when you put it together that’s a lot of white collar people, but I think some people might just skip this question....”

Say, “Any questions before we start?”

Probing Questions

Process overview

Participants will complete the form in sections (based on admin direction) using their own information. Observe what they do. Remind them to think aloud. After they have completed a question or section, ask

appropriate probes (listed below). In some cases it may be necessary or appropriate to ask a question during the process.

General probes to ask to keep participants from falling silent or if there is obvious confusion:

- What are you thinking?
- What are you looking at?
- What are you reading/writing?
- Can you tell me more about that?

When ready to begin first task

As the participant begins to work on his or her answer to the question, remind them to think out loud.

Say, “Once you have found the information you are looking for please state your answer aloud, for the benefit of the audiotape. For example, say, ‘My answer is ---’ or ‘This is my final answer.’”

Note if the participant reads the question or part of it aloud. What are they reading? Do they seem confused about the wording? Are they using the apple hints?

Introductory questions to ask participants

Tell me about your teaching experience. How long have you taught? What do you teach?

Have you seen this questionnaire or one similar to it before? [If yes:] How does it normally come to you (e.g., interoffice mail, hand delivered, in your inbox)? In what form (e.g., with other school surveys)? Does it usually have your name on it? Do you return it to the office or mail it in yourself?

NOTE: Do not tell the participant which question to continue with, just say, “Now, let’s continue” because we do not want to tell them a skip pattern or influence the ordering of the questions they answer in case they prefer not to answer in order.

Attachment E-4. Interview Questions for Panel A

Question 1, “In what year did you begin teaching in THIS school?”:

Observe: Any confusion if they took a sabbatical, if there was a hiatus, etc.

Question 3, “In which grades are the students you currently teach at THIS school?”:

Probe: *What does this question mean in your own words?*

Probe (If not rushed for time, ask high school teachers): *If you had advanced middle school students from other schools taking your classes here, would you include them?*

Question 4a, “Which statement best describes the way our classes (or sections) at this school are organized?”:

Remind Participant: Remind them to tell you what they are thinking.

Observe: Do they even notice words in parenthesis after answer choices? How do they describe their own situation?

Postpone Questions: Wait until they have read and followed the skip instructions in 4b before asking follow-up questions on 4a.

Question 4b, “Which box did you mark in item 4a above?”:

Observe: Determine (and confirm orally on tape) where they go after reading question 4b, probe for reasoning ONLY IF they did NOT appear to follow instructions correctly: *How did you decide to go to item 7/5 rather than item 5/7?*

Say: *Thanks. I wanted to see where you would go next; I see you went to ..., but before we continue, I want to go back and ask you some things about this question (4a).*

Follow-up Probe (if they do not describe themselves): *How did you arrive at your answer for 4a?*

Follow-up Probe (if not sure about parentheses):

Describe in your own words what the terms in the parenthesis at the end of each answer choice for 4a mean. Let’s start with Departmentalized Instruction...

Observe: Does their interpretation of the parenthetical labels correspond to the way the descriptions preceding them?

Follow-up Probe: *Are you familiar with other teaching arrangements that are not listed here?*

Vignette 4b (HAND THEM A WRITTEN VERSION; use only if not pressed for time and they have not provided much insight into how their or other teacher’s situations mesh with the answer categories): *Suppose you and the other teachers in your elementary school have several learning stations in each classroom where a group of students can work together in groups and with a teacher’s aide on a particular subject. Students are rotated among the learning stations every hour within one classroom throughout the day. The learning stations are roughly equivalent in every teacher’s room. But because*

each teacher has a specialty area of expertise, students are rotated between teachers every 4 weeks so they get the benefit of each teacher’s knowledge. How would you answer 4a?

Question 5, “At THIS school, what is the total number of students enrolled in the class (or section) you taught during your most recent FULL WEEK of teaching?”:

Probe: *How did you arrive at your answer?*

Observe: Try to identify how many classes or sections they’ve included in their answer. If they put down more than 40 students, they may have added classes together to get the total.

Probe (particularly if answer appears totaled from multiple classes, not averaged):

What does this question mean in your own words? What does “Most recent full week” mean? What do the words “class” and “section” mean?

Question 6a, “During your most recent FULL WEEK of teaching, approximately how many hours did you spend teaching each of these subjects at THIS school?”:

Observe: For language arts teachers, attend to how they separate out reading instruction.

See if they put zero hours in the numbers box instead of or in addition to checking “none.” See if they just leave blank what they do not teach instead of marking “none.”

See if they put fractions or decimals points down.

See if they have trouble with interpreting “most recent full week.” Wait till they complete the question before probing.

Follow-up Probe: *What did the question mean in your own words? (If needed:) What does the question mean by “most recent full week?”*

Follow-up Probe: *How did you arrive at your answer? Describe any difficulties you encountered.*

Follow-up Probe: *Are there any missing categories?*

Follow-up Probe: *Where would you put computers classes?*

Follow-up Probes: *Do you ever use material on one topic to teach skills in another area? Was there any overlap among the hours you put down for each of the subject areas? (If so:) Where did this occur?*

Example: (Only if needed:) *For instance, schools that teach “Applications of Math” might combine “arithmetic/mathematics” and “science.” Some elementary teachers may use history books to teach reading.*

Vignette 6a-1: *Your 5th and 6th grade students all know how to read, but you are encouraging them to read more and to read more challenging material by assigning writing assignments and book reports on books for teenagers and adults. It takes your students time to read these books, so you’ve set aside a half hour a day when they can get started on their reading homework. Would you include any hours for reading or only for English/Language Arts?*

Vignette 6a-2: (Low priority; only if session is running ahead of schedule, ask ONE of the following vignettes, HAND OUT WRITTEN COPY): *You are an elementary school teacher. The county cannot afford specialty teachers for special subjects. You spend 2 hours a week teaching art and 2 hours a week teaching music in addition to teaching a period each of language arts, reading, math, social studies, and science. How would you complete this section?*

Question 6b, “This school year, what is your MAIN teaching assignment field at this school, that is, the field in which you teach the most classes?”:

Observe: See if they have trouble finding the table, and if they write their teaching assignment field in before checking the table to see what categories are available. If they write one that’s not available in the table, see if they change their answer once they see the table.

See if they are less likely to write in something before checking the table than are teachers who answer question 8, where the blank to write out the subject appears before the code rather than after the code. This should help us determine in which order to place the fields.

See if they find it redundant or annoying to have to write both the code and the name of the field that the code corresponds to on the table.

Probe: *Did you think what you wrote in the “main teaching assignment field” needed to correspond exactly to one of the fields listed on the table?*

Question 6c, “Go to Section III – Educational Background on Page 9”:

Observe: See if they look on page 9 for the rest of question 6c and if they return to work on page 7, questions 7 through 9, after completing a portion of page 9.

Probe: *What is this question asking or telling you?*

Question 7, “This school year, what is your MAIN teaching assignment field at this school, that is, the field in which you teach the most classes?”:

Remind Participant: Please tell me what you are thinking while you are working on these questions.

Postpone Questions: Wait until after question 9 has been completed before probing about questions 7 through 9.

(Choose one of the following vignettes, A or B:)

Vignette 7-a: *Suppose many of your students work or apprentice some mornings or afternoons so they can not take classes every day. You teach five classes of auto mechanics at this school twice a week (Tuesdays and Thursdays). What would your “MOST RECENT FULL WEEK” be? What would your number of classes be? What subject name and code would you use in question 7?*

Vignette 7-b: *Suppose you teach one junior band class every morning at Bonnacre Middle School. You then leave immediately for Fielin High, where you teach one section each of jazz band, concert band, madrigals, and chorus. Your principal at Bonnacre, knowing you are always in a rush to get to Fielin, has used interoffice mail to send a copy of this questionnaire to your office at Fielin, where you are now trying to complete it. What is meant by the phrase “AT THIS SCHOOL?” What number of classes (or sections) would you put down for question 8?*

Observe: How do they determine “this school?” Would they use the label on the outside of the booklet?

(B continued:) *Suppose that instead of completing it at your Fielin office, you’ve taken the questionnaire home and are now at home filling it out. What is meant by the phrase “AT THIS SCHOOL?” What number of classes (or sections) would you put down for question 7?*

Question 8, “During Your MOST RECENT FULL WEEK of teaching, how many separate classes (or sections) did you teach AT THIS SCHOOL?”:

Probe: *In your own words, what is this question asking?*

Observe: Try to determine if they think question 8 applies only to the main field they listed in question 7 (if they do not read the examples).

Question 9, “Complete a line of the table below for each class (or section) that you taught during your MOST RECENT FULL WEEK of teaching at this school.”:

Observe: DO THEY START WITHOUT THE TABLE? The order of the subject names and codes is designed to encourage users to write down the subject before looking for the code in the table. See if users write down a name that turns out not to have a code (e.g., Literature instead of English or Language Arts), or a name for which they can not find a code. See if they erase and change the name. See if they are confused when they find the presentation order of names and codes in question 8 does not match the order in the table.

Observe: WHICH TABLE DO THEY USE? Note whether the reader folds the booklet in half or lays it flat with both left and right side facing up. Watch which table they go to first, table 1, which will probably appear on the left page facing the questions, or table 2, which will probably appear on the page after question 8 in the booklet. If they go to the wrong table, probe to understand what they were thinking that led them there.

Follow-up Probe: *Did you think what you wrote for subject names under “9a” needed to correspond exactly to one of the fields listed on the table?*

Observe: HOW DO THEY USE THE TABLE? How smoothly can one refer to the table while writing on a different page? IMPORTANT: How easily can they find information in the table? Where do they get stuck?

Probe: *Are there any subject areas missing from the table that you think should be included?*

Probe: How did you arrive at your answers for the number of students?

Observe: Do elementary enrichment or pullout teachers need more rows for their answers?

(Choose one of the following vignettes, A or B:)

Vignette 9-a: *Suppose you teach two sections of 19th Century British Novel to 11th graders, with 20 students in each class, and two sections of Contemporary American Literature to 12th graders with 15 and 18 students in each class respectively. How would you complete question 9?*

Vignette 9-b (which would not be influenced by the example “English”): *Suppose you teach two sections of American History 1900 to the Present to 11th graders with 25 and 30 students, respectively, and one section of American Revolution to the Civil War to 10th graders with 18 students in the class. How would you complete question 9?*

(Postpone: Use this vignette ONLY if we do not get enough data from teachers of preschool, kindergarten, and grades 1–9 on whether they find and enter the proper grade code—PK, K, 01, etc. Otherwise use Vignette D instead:)

Vignette 9-c: *You are an elementary school general science teacher and teach two first grade classes of 20 students each, two kindergarten classes with 15 and 18 students respectively and one nursery school class of 12 students. How would you complete questions 8 and 9?*

Vignette 9-d: *You teach five classes of 11th grade history. Owing to a recent wave of immigration, your school is overenrolled so all your classes have the maximum number of students allowed in your district, which is 38. How would you complete question 9?*

Follow-up Probe for D: *Do you yourself teach the same course to the same grade level more than once a day? (If so observe whether they listed the same course more than once.)*

Question 10a, 12a, 13a, “Do you have a ___ degree?”:

Observe: Do they correctly skip questions when they answer “no?” on 10a, 12a, 13a?

Question 10b, “In what year did you receive your Bachelor’s degree?”:

Optional Vignette 10b (if time): *Suppose you have a B.A. in elementary education from a large state university. You received your diploma in 2000 but did not want to sit through what you felt were tedious graduation ceremonies. Later your grandparents wanted to see you graduate, so you attended the next semester’s graduation in 2001. Since there were too many graduates to hand out diplomas, all the graduates stood and were applauded. How would you answer question 10b?*

Question 10c, 12c, “Was this degree awarded by a department of education, college of education, or school of education?”:

Probe: What does this question mean in your own words?

Probe: What interdisciplinary programs that award education degrees might not be covered here?

Question 10d, “What was your major field of study?”:

Observe: Do they put down “education” as major field for degrees granted by education programs or do they put the content specialization part of the degree or both? (The goal is for them to put content area so analysts can determine if they are “qualified” to teach what they are teaching.)

Contingent Probe [if interviewer is uncertain]: *Is that an education degree?*

[If yes:] *Do you also have a Bachelor’s degree in a specialty field?*

[If yes again:] *Why did you list the education degree rather than the specialty?*

If you had not read question 10c, would you have put down the specialty field degree instead?

[If no:] *Do you also have a Bachelor's in education?*

[If yes again:] *Why did you list the subject area degree rather than the education major?*

Question 11a, “What is the name of the college or university where you earned this degree?”:

Optional Vignette 11a (if time): *You graduated from the India Institute of Technology in New Delhi, India. Later you got a second bachelor's degree from The University of Maryland in College Park, Maryland. How would you complete question 11a?*

Question 11b, “In what city and state is it located?”:

Optional Vignette 11b (if time): *Suppose you did decide to go with the India Institute of Technology in New Delhi, India for 11a. How would you complete question 11b?*

Question 13 Overall:

Observe: Do they do 13a, fill out the chart, and get to question 14 and wonder where 13b is (since it is a column header rather than a row header like 13a)?

Probe if they select “no” for column “b” but still complete columns “c” and “d” or just “c:” *Is this a degree you are working on now?* [If they fill in column d for this degree with a future or current year:] *Is that the year you expect to receive the degree?* [If yes to either or both questions:] *Is there a better way to suggest column c should only be completed for “yes” answers in column b? Do you think you would have completed column c for a “No” answer in column b if “No” were changed to “Not Applicable?”*

Observe: See if they list education under major field for vocational certificate.

Probe: *Describe to me the vocational certificates you've received.*

Optional Vignette 13 (if time): *You have received two certificates, one in 1993 that licenses you to do paralegal research and administrative work in a law office, the other in 1995 that allows you to do actuarial work (predicting survival rates) for an insurance company. You've also received a teaching certificate in 1999, long after you completed college. How would you complete question 13? And please explain your thought process.*

Optional Probe (if time): *Would it help if you were provided examples of vocational certificates? Should the instructions say not to include your teaching certificate if it should not be included?*

Question 13b:

Observe: Do they feel they've already answered question b in question a? Is it clear to them that “b” is actually asking whether each row describes the degree or one of the degrees that they said they completed in “a”?

Probe: *Would you include degrees received through courses taken online or through the mail? Are there any other degrees not listed here?*

Question 14:

Probe: *How did you arrive at your answer? Have you taken courses at various times in various programs? Were they taken to satisfy different goals? What were they?*

Probe: *Would you include courses taken online or through the mail? Are you currently taking any courses in these areas, and did you include those in your total? Did you include courses you took for the degrees you listed in questions 10, 12, or 13? [If not:] Why not? Were none offered in your education program? Did you think the question referred only to courses taken outside of a degree or certification program?*

Section III Overall:

Vignette 14-a: *You spent 5 years as an undergraduate and graduated with a double major in chemistry and environmental studies from the same university in the same year, 1988. Your education degree was at the master's level and was received in 1995. How would you complete question 10d?*

Probe (if they do not list both on the line): *Why did you put this major and not the other? Would you put the other major under question 13?*

(Choose Vignette B or C):

Vignette 14-b: *You took math courses at Snewty College, a very challenging and expensive liberal arts college in Bunk Haven, Rhode Island, but did not believe you could complete a math degree within 4 years. Your parents could not afford to pay tuition at Snewty beyond 4 years. So you graduated with a Bachelor's in English in 1986. The next year (1987), you returned home and completed a Bachelor's in math education at University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, where the math courses were easier and cheaper, crediting many of the courses you took at the liberal arts college towards this other degree. How would you complete questions 10 and 13?*

Vignette 14-c: *As a junior majoring in math, you left Snewty College in Bunk Haven, Rhode Island, in 1995 without completing your bachelor's degree to use your extensive technical and math skills to create the company Dotcom.com. Eventually you got bored creating computer programs and wanted to work with youngsters, but you felt you'd learned more on the job than you could get finishing your bachelor's. So you returned to school and obtained a master's degree in secondary math education in 2002 at University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, and are now teaching without a bachelor's degree. How would you complete questions 10 through 13?*

Question 15b, "What type of certificate is this?":

Probe: *Do the parenthetical descriptions correspond to the meanings you would assign to "probationary certificate," "temporary certificate," and "emergency certificate or waiver?" [If not]: How do they differ from what you understand these terms to mean?*

Probe: *Are there types of teaching certificates that do not appear among answer choices 1 through 5?*

Question 15c, "In what content area is this certificate?":

Observe: Do they use the correct table?

Probe (when looking at the table): *What are you thinking? What are you looking for?*

Probe (after answering): *How did you determine what answer to choose?*

Questions 15–18 overall:

Observe: Adherence to skip pattern

Question 19:

Observe: Does anyone who has listed fewer than four certificates in questions 15 through 18 say “yes” to 19a? If so, this indicates the question is misunderstood.

Probe after they’ve completed 19a and b: *How did you arrive at your answer? What does the question mean in your own words? [And if necessary:] What does “ANY ADDITIONAL” mean in this question?*

Follow-up Probe (reality check for anyone who really claims to have more than 4 certificates): What kind of additional certificate(s) do you have? Do they fit the categories in the “b” section of questions 15 through 18?

Question 20, “How did you earn your initial teaching certificate?”:

Probe: *What does “your initial” mean in this question? Which certificate are you thinking about in answering this question? Is the certificate you listed in 15b the one you obtained first? [If not]: Which certificate did you obtain first?*

Observe: Do they think a temporary or provisional certificate is an initial certificate, or only a “real” one?

Probe (Probably difficult to answer; ask only if they are confused about “initial”): *If the questionnaire writers are actually asking about the certificate listed in 15b, would this question make more SENSE if placed right after 15b? Would it be EASIER to answer if placed there? What do you think you would have considered your initial certificate if you had not been asked to list all of them in questions 15 through 18 first?*

Section IV Overall:

Probe: *Did you see the title for this section, “Certification and Training?” What do you suppose they mean by “training?” [If they do not know:] Is it nonacademic professional development? Would you consider the education you received for your certification to be “training?” All of it or some of it? What other learning opportunities have you had that did not contribute to the certificates you listed?*

Probe: *If you had brought a teaching certificate from another state to this state, would you include it in questions 15 through 18?*

Vignette 20: *You have a standard state teaching certificate from West Virginia but you no longer live there. West Virginia has a reciprocal agreement with your state of residence that allows you to teach in your state without getting recertified. You have not yet completed the formal paperwork to get a certificate from the state you live in. How would you answer question 15?*

Question 21, “How many total hours did you spend working on school-related activities for this school during your MOST RECENT FULL WEEK of teaching?”:

Probe: Please tell me what you are thinking as you work through this page.

Probe (ask only after questions 21–23 have ALL been completed): *How did you arrive at your answer? What does “most recent full week” mean in this question?*

Vignette 21 (present only after questions 21–23 have ALL been completed; ask as many subcases as you have time for; alternate subcases for different respondents): *What would be your “most recent full week” if you normally work 5-day weeks and*

- a) *it was Friday afternoon when you were answering this question?*
- b) *it was Friday morning when you were answering this question?*
- c) *it is Tuesday, and last week students had Thanksgiving off. The week before that was a 5-day week.*
- d) *it is Tuesday, and one day last week classes were delayed 2 hours owing to icy roads. All classes were held but all periods were shortened accordingly. The week before that was a 5-day week.*
- e) *it is Tuesday, and one day last week school closed an hour early. The last period of the day had started to meet but was canceled. The week before that was a 5-day week.*

Question 22, “During official school hours, how much time did you spend on the following school-related activities during your MOST RECENT FULL WEEK of teaching at this school?”:

Probe (ask after question 21 probes and only after questions 21–23 have been completed): *What does official school hours mean in your own words? Do you work the same schedule every week and every day of the week? [If not:] What varies? Is your schedule for your most recent full week typical of most weeks?*

Question 23, “Outside of official school hours, how much time did you spend on the following school-related activities during your MOST RECENT FULL WEEK of teaching at this school?”:

Probe (ask after question 22 probes and after questions 21–23 have been completed): *What does this question mean in your own words?*

Vignette 23: *Your school has added an hour to every student’s day Monday through Thursday to permit school to close at noon every Friday, thereby giving teachers more planning time during the day and a chance to spend more time with their families. You generally use these Friday afternoons between noon and 4 p.m. to grade the week’s papers and plan the next week’s lessons. Would you include this Friday afternoon time in 23b or in 22b?*

Section IV/V Overall:

Probe: *Does the phrase “total hours in the week” used in questions 21–23 mean something different to you than “hours per week” in question 6a?*

Observe: *Do the hours for 22 and 23 add up to those listed for 21? Did they make use of the hints and examples to distinguish official and nonofficial hours?*

Probe: *Are any of the hours you listed in question 21 not accounted for in questions 22 and 23? [If so:] What were your activities during those additional hours?*

Probe (If hours for 21 are fewer than for 22 plus 23): *Which hours did you not think to include in 21? Why was it difficult to think of these?*

Probe: *What if anything was confusing on this page? Would this page have been easier to complete if questions 22 and 23 had referred back to question 21? [If unclear:] For instance, “How many of the*

hours you listed in question 21 were spent during/outside of official school hours on the following activities?”

Probe: Is it clear where to put club sponsorships and coaching for which you do not receive additional compensation?

General Questions for the Questionnaire as a Whole:

What was helpful and unhelpful about the way the questions were laid out on the page? What suggestions do you have for presenting the questions better?

(Observe if they mention the apple icon as being inappropriate for instructions and directives.)

Were there questions that were hard to answer without referring to your records? If at the beginning of this booklet we were to advise teachers on the materials it would be helpful to have on hand before starting the questionnaire, what materials should be included?

What questions were most difficult to answer? Why?

What questions might some people feel uncomfortable answering? Why? Are some questions of a sensitive or personal nature? What questions do you think teachers might refuse to answer, or do you think would discourage teachers from mentioning their concerns? What questions might they answer in a way that does not reflect their true beliefs? Why? (If any:) What could we do to help them feel more comfortable with the questions?

What other questions do you wish we had asked about?

Attachment E-5. Interview Questions for Panel B

Question 3, “In the last 12 MONTHS, did you participate in any of the following professional development activities?”

Question 3a, “University course(s) taken towards recertification or advanced certification in your MAIN teaching assignment field” and 3b, “University course(s) in your MAIN teaching assignment field”:

Probe (after they finish answering 3b): *How did you arrive at your answer for 3b? How about for 3a?*

Probe: *Would you include courses taken in a small college with no graduate program among university courses? Why or why not?*

Probe: *Would you include university-sponsored online courses? What about courses from unaccredited institutions?*

Probe: *How do you interpret main teaching assignment field in this question? Is there another term your school uses to refer to something like a main teaching assignment field?*

Vignette 3-A (HAND OUT WRITTEN VERSION): *Suppose you received certification and began teaching for the first time 6 months ago. During the 6 months before that, you took the following courses at the University of Maryland:*

- *a general 3-credit course in methods of secondary education: “Theory of Curriculum and Instruction”;*
- *a 3-credit senior seminar on superconductivity; and*
- *a 6-credit student teaching internship/practicum in another physics teacher’s classroom.*

All three you used towards getting certified to teach physics. The semester before that you took two 3-credit physics courses, Electricity & Magnetism and Optics & Waves. You’d never been certified before. Since you received your certification, you’ve been taking an evening course at the local community college on diversity in the classroom as well as a 4-credit chemistry lab course so you can eventually get certified to teach chemistry as well. How would you answer section 3b? What about 3a?

Vignettes (Choose two of the following three vignettes and alternate among participants):

Vignette 3-B1: *If you teach half of your courses in Spanish, half in French, and are certified to teach both, which would you consider your main teaching assignment field?*

Vignette 3-B2: *If you were certified in secondary school geography and were originally hired to teach geography, but you actually teach most of your courses in earth science (geology, biology, environment), which would you consider your main teaching assignment field?*

Vignette 3-B3: *If you were hired to teach civics and government and you teach four civics sections, but you prefer to teach history, teach history whenever you get the chance, and pride yourself on and have received praise for the ancient history and advanced placement American history classes you started at this school, what would you consider your main teaching assignment field? Do you think your colleagues and/or your principal would agree with you?*

Question 3c, “Observational visits to other schools”:

Probe (after they finish answering 3c): *How did you arrive at your answer for 3c?*

Questions 3d, “Presenting at workshops, conferences, or trainings” and 3e, “Attending other workshops, conferences, or trainings”:

Probe (after they finish answering 3e): *How did you arrive at your answer for 3d? How about for 3e?*

Probe: *What is the difference between presenting and attending in these two questions?*

Probe: *Would you include training sessions, workshops, or conferences held at your own school? What if the training was something routine that did not involve any outside speakers, something that all principals, guidance counselors, or librarians at all schools in the county were required to provide for all the teachers in their school, for instance, something dealing with drugs in the classroom?*

Probe: *Would you include a training session conducted at a university or college? [If not:] Would you consider that coursework or education instead?*

Question 3f, “Individual or collaborative research on a topic of interest to you professionally”:

Probe: *What counts as research? [If needed:] Does filling in gaps in knowledge to prepare for mandatory lesson plans count? Studying other teachers’ or schools’ curriculum? Writing research papers? Writing articles? Finding something for the students to read? What else?*

Probe: *What counts as collaborative? [If needed:] Work done with other teachers? What about work you’ve done with a non-teacher friend? With a family member? With a student? The principal?*

Question 3g, “Regularly-scheduled collaboration with other teachers on issues of instruction”:

Probe: *What counts as an issue of instruction? Does choosing the curriculum to cover count, or only methods for conveying knowledge? Does classroom management count, for instance, how to instruct two groups in the same room?*

Question 3h, “Diagnosing individual students with other teachers”:

Probe: *What sorts of things are being diagnosed in this question? [If needed:] Learning disabilities? Behavior problems? Learning styles and how best to explain or demonstrate something to a student who is not disabled? Problems students are having at home? Would identifying gifted and talented students be included?*

Question 3j, “Acting as a coach or mentor to other teachers or staff in your school, or receiving coaching or mentoring”:

Probe: *Does mentoring and coaching a student teacher count?*

Question 3 Overall:

Probe: *If you taught at more than one school, would these questions apply to all schools you taught at?*

Question 4, “In the past 12 months have you participated in...etc.”—all portions:

Observe: Do respondents have trouble moving to the next question, suggesting they may be confused by the complex numbering scheme 4a(1) and 4a(2), etc.?

Probe (every time they reach a section with (1) in the left margin questions): *How did you arrive at that answer?*

Observe (probe further as appropriate during a section (1) at least once): How confident are they that they’ve chosen a range of hours that accurately reflects their experiences? Did they count the time spent commuting to and from or registering for professional development events or seminars?

Question 4b, “In the past 12 months, have you participated in any professional development activities that focused on uses of computers for instruction?”:

Probe (after the yes/no question, before (1) and (2)): *You answer yes/no because... [If needed:] What are uses of computers for instructions in this question? Does this include training to help you use computers in your classroom or to help the students use them, or both?*

Probe: *Would you consider computers that students use to tutor themselves or practice with computers for instruction?*

Question 4c, “In the past 12 months, have you participated in any professional development activities that focused on reading instruction?”:

Probe (immediately following the yes/no question): *You answer yes/no because... [If needed:] What do you think “reading instruction” as it’s used here involves? Does it include basic reading skills or things like improving comprehension and speed of reading for more advanced students?*

Question 4d, “In the past 12 months, have you participated in any professional development activities that focused on student discipline and management in the classroom?”:

Probe: *“You answer yes/no because...”*

Observe: Note if they think the question seem strange given that the last three questions were about an area of study but do not probe for this.

Question 4e, “In the past 12 months, have you participated in any professional development activities that focused on other topics not included in 4a–4d above?”:

Probe (if answered Yes): *If you participated in development in more than one additional area, how many hours did you spend on each of them?*

Vignette 4e: *If you participated in more areas than fit comfortably on the line below the instruction “Please specify” what would you do?*

Question 4, “In the past 12 months have you participated in any professional development activities that focused on...”—Overall Follow-up:

Probe: *For the questions labeled (2), how do you conceive of the differences between the descriptions “not useful,” “somewhat useful,” “useful,” and “very useful” in characterizing the training sessions?*

[Ask only if they have trouble explaining their decisions:] *Do you determine usefulness of a training session by comparing it to the average session in your experience or to your expectations for training? Is something useful something that leads to measurable improvement in student performance? To a better atmosphere in the classroom? To your confidence and comfort with the material? What sorts of benefits or detriments resulted from “in-depth study” of your content field? From professional development in computer instruction? From any training you may have received in reading instruction? What sorts of benefits did you derive or problems did you experience through gaining training in student discipline and management of the classroom? How did you arrive at a usefulness rating for each of these areas of professional development?*

Probe: *What do you feel counts as “professional development activities”? [Ask only if respondents unable to express themselves:] Instruction by outsiders? Peer teaching through in-service courses? In answering questions 4a through 4d, did you include professional development activities undertaken both individually and collaboratively. Why [or] why not?*

Questions 5, “Are students assigned to your classes on the basis of achievement or ability level?” and Question 6, “Do you use different groupings of students in your classroom to teach students who learn at different rates?”:

Observe: Do some suggest skipping question 6 if they answer no to question 5? Do other teachers treat them as separate situations, interpreting question 5 as referring to tracking, where each class constitutes an achievement or ability group?

Probe (after questions 5 and 6 have both been answered): *What does question 5 mean in your own words? How about question 6? Would other phrasing better convey what you think question 5 means? [If needed:] Is this question just about tracking or about something else?*

Vignette 5: *Suppose that your school makes every effort to group students by ability level. You are a foreign language teacher who teaches one class each of French I, French II, Spanish I, Spanish II, German I, and German II. Since there are only enough students interested in each language to offer one class in each level of each language, and since people who stick with a language tend to be better students, your first year language students range from low to high ability and achievement, but your continuing second year language students are very able and consistently high achievers. Based on this information, how would you answer question 5?*

Question 7a, “Of all the students you teach at this school, how many have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) because they have disabilities or are special education students?”:

Probe (after they answer 7a, before 7b): *How did you arrive at your answer? What does the question mean in your own words? What types of students with disabilities were you considering? [If needed:] Were you considering students with physical disabilities and learning disabilities? Why or why not?*

Question 7b, “Do you or these students receive the following types of support in your classroom?”:

Probe (after they complete 7b(1) through 7b(3)): *Where would you put other resources like parent volunteers? Should there be additional categories?*

Vignette 7b: *If a “special aide” travels to different schools, is that person also an “itinerant teacher?” Would you say “yes” to both 7b(1) and 7b(2)?*

Probe: *What do they mean by behavioral management plan in 7b(3)?*

Question 8, “In the last 3 years, have you had 8 hours or more of training or professional development on how to teach special education students”:

Probe: *You answer Yes/No because...?*

Observe: Do they have difficulty recalling education from 3 years ago and estimating hours?

Vignette 8 (for some participants wait to present this until after question 10; could be sensitive): *Suppose within the last 3 years you attended two 4-hour training sessions on this topic but you could not stay until the end of one of them. You feel you still got what you needed out of the course and have the notes on the portion you missed. Would you answer yes or no?*

Question 10, “In the last 3 years, have you had 8 hours or more of training or professional development on how to teach students with limited English proficiency?”:

Probe: *You answer Yes/No because...?*

Observe: Do they have difficulty recalling education from 3 years ago and estimating hours?

Vignette 10 (present only if not asked after question 8): *Suppose within the last 3 years you attended two 4-hour training sessions on this topic but you could not stay until the end of one of them. You feel you still got what you needed out of the course and have the notes on the portion you missed. Would you answer yes or no?*

Question 11, “Do you receive your students’ scores on state or local achievement tests?”:

Probe: *What students were you thinking about when you answered this question?*

Observe: Are they only considering the students with limited English?

Question 12a, “To what extent do you use the information from your students’ test scores to group students into different instructional groups by achievement or ability?”:

Probe: *Are there privacy or confidentiality concerns or restrictions that might prevent teachers from using students’ scores for assigning ability groups even though some might want to do so?*

Observe: Do they mention if they do not have the decision-making authority to assign ability groups? This might affect their answer for “Not at all” which could be “Not within my scope/not my responsibility/not within my power.”

**Question 12, “To what extent do you use the information from your students’ test scores to...”—
Overall Follow-up:**

Probe: *Do a, b, and/or c include using test scores to determine what remedial instruction needs to be offered? Is a separate category needed for that?*

Probe: *Do test scores help you identify language proficiency deficits? Would that go under a, b, and/or c, or would that be a separate issue?*

Probe: *How do you distinguish teaching practice in b from curriculum in c? Is there an overlap?*

Question 13, “To what extent do you use state or district standards to guide your instructional practice in your main teaching field?”:

Probe: *Are you happy with the state or district standards? Why [or] why not?*

Question 14, “During your MOST RECENT FULL WEEK, how many total hours did you spend working on school-related activities for this school?”:

Probe: *Please tell me what you are thinking as you work through this page.*

Probe (ask only after questions 14–16 have ALL been completed): *How did you arrive at your answer? What does “most recent full week” mean in this question?*

Vignette 14 (present only after questions 14–16 have ALL been completed; ask as many subcases as you have time for; alternate subcases for different respondents): *What would be your “most recent full week” if you normally work 5-day weeks and,*

- a) *it were Friday afternoon when you were answering this question?*
- b) *it were Friday afternoon when you were answering this question?*
- c) *it is Tuesday, and last week students had Thanksgiving off. The week before that was a 5-day week.*
- d) *it is Tuesday, and one day last week classes were delayed 2 hours owing to icy roads. All classes were held but all periods were shortened accordingly. The week before that was a 5-day week.*
- e) *it is Tuesday, and one day last week school closed an hour early. The last period of the day had started to meet but was canceled. The week before that was a 5-day week.*

Question 15, “During official school hours, how much time did you spend on the following school-related activities during your MOST RECENT FULL WEEK of teaching at this school?”:

Probe (ask after question 14 probes and only after questions 14–16 have been completed): *What does official school hours mean in your own words? Do you work the same schedule every week and every day of the week? [If not:] What varies? Is your schedule for your most recent full week typical of most weeks?*

Question 16, “Outside of official school hours, how much time did you spend on the following school-related activities during your MOST RECENT FULL WEEK of teaching at this school?”:

Probe (ask after question 15 probes and after questions 14–16 have been completed): *What does this question mean in your own words?*

Vignette 16: *Your school has added an hour to every student’s day Monday through Thursday to permit school to close at noon every Friday, thereby giving teachers more planning time during the day and a chance to spend more time with their families. You generally use these Friday afternoons between noon and 4 p.m. to grade the week’s papers and plan the next week’s lessons. Where would you include this Friday afternoon time?*

Section IV Overall:

Observe: Do the hours for 15 and 16 add up to those listed for 14? Did they make use of the hints and examples to distinguish official and nonofficial hours?

Probe: *Are any of the hours you listed in question 14 not accounted for in questions 15 and 16? [If so:] What were your activities during those additional hours?*

Probe (If hours for 14 are fewer than for 25 plus 16): *Which hours did you not think to include in 21? Why was it difficult to think of these?*

Probe: *What if anything was confusing on this page? Would this page have been easier to complete if questions 15 and 16 had referred back to question 15? [If unclear:] For instance, "How many of the hours you listed in question 14 were spent during/outside of official school hours on the following activities?"*

Probe: *Where to put club sponsorships and coaching for which you do not receive additional compensation?*

Question 17, "Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?":

a. Probe: *What is meant by what kind of school?*

b. Probe: *What is meant by cooperative effort?*

c. Probe: *What does recognized mean in this context? [If needed:] Praise? Merit pay? Some other sort of one-time monetary bonus?*

d. Probe (if they somewhat or strongly disagree): *Are other issues such as state funding more relevant to job security than test performance?*

e. Probe (may be sensitive): *In your own words, what is this question asking? [If necessary:] Is it asking whether you are worried about the potential for students' low scores to affect your job security, or is it asking whether you are worried that your own students' actual performance on tests may affect your job security? Is it asking about potential or actual scores?*

f. Probe: *What does positive influence mean? Can a positive influence be a significant detrimental effect or only an increase in the level of your satisfaction? [If needed:] Are the standards a major factor?*

g. Probe: *Could you ever have a class size that was too SMALL (rather than too large) and be dissatisfied with that? [If so:] How?*

Vignette 17: *Your school is overenrolled, and the administration permits 45 students per class. Many of the classes in the school are this large, including all of your classes last year. You got lucky this year and none of your classes are over 15 students. What would you put for question g? Would it help if the question said what time period to consider?*

h. Probe: *What is meant by support in this question? (Does the teacher have special needs students in class?) [If needed:] Does it include emotional support of colleagues, the principal? Staff support like teachers' aides, special ed teachers, librarians, guidance counselors, secretaries? Resources like copy machines, textbooks, library books, AV equipment? The general environment?*

i. Probe: *What is meant by coordinate the content in this question? [If needed:] Does it include team teaching? Having a common curriculum? Would it include balancing strengths and weaknesses by having each teacher teach their specialty and handing students off to another teacher the next year?*

j. Probe: *Suppose you have some students who must come to your class late because of jobs or from taking care of siblings. If this is your situation, you may have adjusted your lesson plans to take account of these problems, so they may not be as disturbing for you as for other teachers. How would you answer question j?*

k. Probe: *Is doing your best as a teacher even an issue in your school? If teachers have low morale, get little support from parents, and have a low opinion of the students, they may be more concerned about keeping control of the classroom than about doing their best as a teacher. For such teachers, doing your best as a teacher might be considered not a waste of time but a stupid thing to be concerned about, even irresponsible. Is that your situation?*

l. Probe: *Is there a librarian or media specialist in your school? What is the difference between librarian and media specialist?*

m. Probe: *Is your answer determined relative to what you know about other schools you could be teaching at or relative to what you would like teaching to be like?*

Question 17 overall, “Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?”:

Empathy Probe: *This is a list of issues we or the teachers we’ve interviewed consider important, but you should feel free to mention any important issue not on the list.*

Question 18, “Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements”:

Observe: Do they mention redundancy among items in 17 and those in 18?

(Before probing on this page, allow respondent to complete the entire page (a through g))

- a. Probe: *What does “aren’t really worth it” mean to you?*
- b. Probe: *What does “b” mean in your own words? Are these two ways of asking the same question, or are they two different questions separated by a semicolon? [If 2 questions]: What is the difference between the two questions?*
- c. Probe: *What does “the way things are run” mean to you? [If needed:] Is it policy set by the principal? How things evolve in the organization of the school?*
- d. Probe: *What is meant by a higher paying job in this question? [If needed:] Did you interpret the question as meaning a higher paying job in your subject area but not in teaching, or as meaning a higher paying job in school administration (principal, superintendent, school board worker)? Would your answer differ depending on your interpretation of the question?*
- e. Probe: *Would your answer depend on whether you could go to a completely different school district?*

Question 19, “To the best of your knowledge how often do the following types of problems occur at your school?”:

(Before probing on this page, allow respondent to complete the entire page (a through p).)

- a–b. Probe: *Who does this refer to? (Students, teachers, or both?)*
- f. Probe: *What sort of property does this include? [If needed:] Students? Teachers? The schools?*
- g–h. Probe: *Is this on or off school grounds?*
- k, l, o. Probe: *How would you describe things like racial tensions and bullying? What are “student acts of disrespect”? Do these seem to overlap with any other categories listed here?*

Follow-up Probe: *Are there any hostile, violent, or potentially illegal activities that are not covered here? [If needed:] What about parent harassment of coaches during games or of teachers during parent-teacher conferences? What about teacher misconduct toward students?*

Question 20, “To what extent is each of the following a problem in this school?”:

(Before probing on this page, allow respondent to complete the entire page (a through h))

- b. Probe: *Who were you thinking about when you answered this item?*
- f. Probe: *What or who does the term “poverty” refer to?*
- g. Probe: *What does unprepared to learn mean here? [Only if needed:] That parents do not help with homework? That last year’s teachers or schools were no good? That students are ill-disposed towards learning? That students are distracted from learning by concerns about home life? That they are not fed breakfast? Would you rate each question differently? Should these all be separate questions or should they be combined?*

Sections V and VI Follow-up Probes:

Were there situations where you really did not have a strong opinion either way, for instance in 20, neither agreeing nor disagreeing? How did you decide what answer to give in these situations? Did you have other favorable or unfavorable reactions to the rating scales used in this questionnaire?

General Questions for the Questionnaire as a Whole:

What was helpful and unhelpful about the way the questions were laid out on the page? What suggestions do you have for presenting the questions better?

(Observe if they mention the apple icon as being inappropriate for instructions and directives.)

Were there questions that were hard to answer without referring to your records? If at the beginning of this booklet we were to advise teachers on the materials it would be helpful to have on hand before starting the questionnaire, what materials should be included?

What questions were most difficult to answer? Why?

What questions might some people feel uncomfortable answering? Why? Are some questions of a sensitive or personal nature? What questions do you think teachers might refuse to answer, or do you think would discourage teachers from mentioning their concerns? What questions might they answer in a way that does not reflect their true beliefs? Why? [If any:] What could we do to help them feel more

comfortable with the questions? [If none mentioned or not recalled, show them questions 13, 17, and 20 and see if they recall them.]

What other questions do you wish we had asked about?

Attachment E-6. Screening Questionnaire

Appt. Date & Time: __,____@_____
Directions Sent: _____ Recruiter: _ Reminder Call: _

Bureau of the Census/Teacher Questionnaire Cognitive Interviews
B. Archibald, C. Steinberg – Test Administrators
Wednesday, December 11 – Wednesday, December 18, 2002
Thirty (30) Participants Needed
Various Locations; 1.5 hours; \$30.00

Name: _____

Male (Try to recruit 5–6) Female

Daytime Phone # _____

Evening Phone # _____

E-mail Address _____

1. Which of the following describes your occupation?

- Public School Teacher
- Private School Teacher (Recruit no more than 5)
- College or University Teacher (Terminate)
- Student Teacher (e.g., teacher-in-training) (Terminate)
- Substitute Teacher (no regular classes or classroom) (Terminate)
- Home Educator (Terminate)
- None of the above (Terminate)

2. What grade or grades do you teach? (Recruit a mix, including preschool and kindergarten) _____

3. What is the name of the school or schools you teach at? _____

NOTE: Recruit no more than 4 from the same school; try to recruit at least 2 who teach at more than 1 school)

4. Where is the school or schools located? _____ (Recruit a few in Northwest DC—Columbia Heights, Mt. Pleasant, Arlington, or Wheaton.)

5. What subject or subjects do you teach? _____ (Terminate if same subject as another recruit from the same school.)

6. How long have you been a teacher? _____ (Recruit 4–6 with less than 3 years.)

7. Are you involved in any activities involving students outside of school hours, such as club sponsorship, school plays, team coaching, tutoring, etc.?

- Yes (Recruit at least 6.)
 No (Go to question 9.)

8. What activities do you participate in? _____

9. Does your job include teaching selected students when they are released from their regular classes?

- Yes (Recruit 1–2.)
 No

10. Are both of the following statements true?

A) You teach more than one subject to the same group of students

AND

B_ At least one other teacher in your school teaches that SAME GROUP more than one subject.

- Yes (Recruit 1–2.)
 No

11. Do you teach special education or IEP students?

- Yes (Recruit 1–2.)
 No

12. What degree or degrees do you have and what subject or subjects did your major in? (Recruit a mix.)

Degree _____ Subject _____
Degree _____ Subject _____
Degree _____ Subject _____
Degree _____ Subject _____

NOTE: Try to include at least one who has a double major and at least one who majored in a subject they are not teaching.

13. Have you participated in a usability study, focus group or market research survey within the past 6 months?

- Yes (Terminate)
 No

14. Where will you be able to participate?

- Your school
 UserWorks facilities in Silver Spring
 A public location such as a library
 The Census Bureau in Suitland

15. The interview will be audiotaped. Only the team working on this project will use the tape and your name will not be associated with the tape or other data in any way. You will be asked to sign an informed consent form. Would you be willing to be audiotaped?

- Yes
- No (Terminate)

16. How would you like the directions to our office or to the Census Bureau sent to you?

- E-mail Address _____
- Fax Number _____
- Over Phone
- Not Needed

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Appendix F. Report on a Follow-up Cognitive Testing to the 2003–04 SASS Teacher Questionnaire

This appendix contains a report by the Census Bureau on follow-up research to the study described in appendix E. The following material is included here:

Background	F-2
Key Findings	F-2
Methods	F-2
Detailed Findings and Recommendations	F-3
Item 1c: Who Issued Degree	F-3
Item 1d: Codes for Major Field of Study	F-3
Item 3a: Additional Degrees	F-3
Item 4: Tests.....	F-3
Item 6: Coursework for Initial Certification	F-4
Form 1 Certification.....	F-4
Form 2 Certification.....	F-4
 Attachment F-1. Form 1 Protocol.....	 F-6
Attachment F-2. Certification Items from Form 2 Protocol.....	F-16

Background

A thorough study of critical items and proposed content for the teacher questionnaires was conducted between December 2002 and January 2003. (The study is described in “Appendix E. Report on SASS Cognitive Interviews of Teachers in Two Panels,” of the *Documentation for the 2003–04 Schools and Staffing Survey*.) The study recommended significant revisions to the certification and preparation for teaching items. In order to test these revisions, a small-scale cognitive test was conducted in March 2003. This report documents the methodology and findings from the test on the revised items that were proposed for inclusion in the teacher questionnaires.

Key Findings

Testing identified the following cognitive issues with the proposed certification items:

- Some respondents misunderstood the item on source of degree (i.e., “Was this degree awarded by a university’s College of Education or a college’s School of Education?”).
- Table 1 did not contain adequate codes for respondents who earned an associate’s degree in a general subject area.
- Testing questions (“Have you taken any of the following tests?”) suffered from recall issues for older teachers and redundancy issues for other teachers (i.e., the same test was reported in multiple items).
- The initial series on certification artificially distinguished between number of physical teaching certificates and number of areas in which a teacher is certified to teach. Additionally, the use of “endorsements” in this section confused many respondents.

Methods

Census Bureau analysts conducted this research from March 21 to 26, 2003, following a calling procedure. Schools were contacted by phone and asked to nominate a teacher to participate in the study. A questionnaire was then faxed to the school and an appointment was set for the researcher to call the teacher directly. A concurrent interview was conducted by phone following a structured protocol (attachment F-1). The probing questions used by the interviewer are listed on this protocol but were not included on the fax that was sent to the school. The interviewer was free to deviate from the protocol as required. The initial proposed certification questions were administered to three respondents. Form 1 was revised based on these interviews and an additional six interviews were conducted with Form 2 (attachment F-2). Interviews lasted 15 to 25 minutes. Characteristics of the participants can be found in table F-1. Teachers were offered a copy of *Schools and Staffing Survey, 1999–2000: Overview of the Data for Public, Private, Public Charter, and Bureau of Indian Affairs Elementary and Secondary Schools* (NCES 2002-313) as an incentive for participating in the study.

Table F-1. Characteristics of respondents in cognitive test on teacher questionnaire items: 2003

Respondent	State	Form	Respondent	State	Form
1	Pennsylvania	1	4	Kansas	2
2	Idaho	1	5	Washington	2
3	Louisiana	1	6	Utah	2
			7	Montana	2
			8	Wyoming	2
			9	West Virginia	2

SOURCE: *Follow-up Cognitive Testing to the 2003–04 SASS Teacher Questionnaire*, U.S. Census Bureau, 2003.

Detailed Findings and Recommendations

Item 1c: Who Issued Degree

The majority of respondents understood this item. The most common explanation was “did I get my degree in education?”

Respondent 1 was confused by “university’s college of education”—does this mean the department? She indicated that at the bachelor’s level the degree comes from the college, not the department.

Respondent 3 understood item “did I study in the college of education?” However, respondent 5 said “no” but she had taken education methods classes as part of her bachelor’s degree.

Respondent 9 had some confusion about this item. Partially due to the “or” statement—she thought it was asking if she got her degree from a college OR university in education. Despite this confusion she did answer correctly.

Recommendation: Add department of education to question stem.

Item 1d: Codes for Major Field of Study

Respondent 4 did not find general social science on list, and ended up choosing political science since that was the subject matter of many of his classes.

Item 3a: Additional Degrees

For three respondents (4, 6, and 9) the list did not have good matches for associate’s degree (general education and (2) associate of arts).

Recommendation: Add more general or other options for social science degrees.

Item 4: Tests

The testing section was problematic for many respondents. In some cases the same test was reported twice. The older respondents had difficulty recalling the name or nature of tests that they have taken.

Respondent 1 marked yes to state test (options a/b) because the Praxis was required by the state.

Respondent 2 almost marked yes because he took some tests (to teach Advanced Placement classes and basic technology skills), then he thought the question was interested in a test new teachers are now required to take in his state.

Respondent 3 took national teacher exam—once to become a teacher and once to become a principal. Did not see this option listed. (This may have been Praxis.)

Respondent 4 took a preprofessional basic skills test and a state subject matter test. Could not remember the names.

Respondent 5 took a test in 1991 in college before graduating that was required of people who wanted to become teachers. Did not know name of test.

Respondent 6 counted SAT as a test of basic skills in the state she is teaching in. She also had to take an aptitude test to continue in education program.

Respondent 7 took a test developed by the university and Office of Public Instruction (Department of Education). Initially, she was going to count this test but then decided not to, because it said “state” and the test was actually given by the university. She remembered taking the Praxis while in university and did not count this as the earlier test.

Respondent 8 marked yes to “a” because she had to take a test in college to pass. She thinks this was the CAT test (sounded like a department requirement).

Respondent 9 took a test senior year in college that she had to pass to go on to student teaching. The test was given by the university, but she thinks it was a state test.

Recommendation: Move Praxis test first.
Consider filtering out experienced teachers.
Revise state test options to be clearer (developed by state or required by state).

Item 6: Coursework for Initial Certification

Only one respondent had difficulty with this item.

Respondent 3 initially marked “-” through enrollment in individual courses. He realized it was part of a degree program and changed his response.

Form 1 Certification

Respondents 1 and 2 both had one physical certificate that covers two areas. They each handled reporting differently. One listed each as a separate certificate, while the other listed it as one certificate with an endorsement. Respondent 3 also had one certificate with three certification areas. He wanted to list all three in item c and then count his college minor (driver’s ed) as an endorsement. Both respondents who had a minor wanted to count that as an endorsement.

Recommendation: Revise to include more lines for certification areas and fewer certifications.

Form 2 Certification

Respondent 4—This form seemed to work well for this teacher. He has one certificate with many certifications. He mentioned that they have endorsements in Kansas but was not sure how they differ from certifications. He referred to his additional certifications as endorsements but listed them as certifications and said they were different from the endorsements we describe.

Respondent 5 had similar issues with certification and endorsement—at first she said that she would count English as an endorsement (it was her minor in college) but then as she thought about it, she considered the two equivalent. Essentially read question as—“what does it say on my certificate that I can teach?”

Respondent 7 thought that endorsement section was redundant—she had already told us about her certification. In her mind (and other respondents) they are similar to certification.

Respondent 8 had similar issues with endorsement.

Respondent 9 said she recently ran into problems because her endorsement did not enable her to teach certain levels because it was not the same as certification. However, she was unable to explain the difference.

Recommendation: Many certificates are endorsed with the teaching areas. In some states the endorsement is required for a minor area (for example, special education or elementary on top of any early childhood certification). Continue to ask the initial question as worded in Form 2, but change follow up to ask “in what content areas does this certificate enable you to teach.” Remove the endorsement item and add entry boxes for reporting additional areas of certification. Ask for one additional physical certificate to handle situations where someone has a waiver or other type of certificate, in addition to their first certificate. This will also allow for states where more than one certificate is issued to the same teacher.

Attachment F-1. Form 1 Protocol

Table 1. Major fields of study codes for questions 1, 2, and 3

<p style="text-align: center;">General Education</p> <p>Elementary Education 101 Early childhood/Pre-K, general 102 Elementary grades, general</p> <p>Secondary Education 103 Middle grades, general 104 Secondary grades, general</p> <p>Special Education 110 Special education, any</p> <p>Other Education 131 Administration 132 Counseling and guidance 133 Educational psychology 134 Policy studies 135 School psychology 136 Other non-subject matter specific education</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Subject Matter Specific</p> <p>Arts & Music 141 Art/Arts or crafts 142 Art history 143 Dance 144 Drama/Theater 145 Music</p> <p>English and Language Arts 151 Communications 152 Composition 153 English 154 Journalism 155 Language arts 156 Linguistics 157 Literature/Literary criticism 158 Reading 159 Speech</p> <p>English as a Second Language 160 ESL/Bilingual education: General 161 ESL/Bilingual education: Spanish 162 ESL/Bilingual education: Other languages</p> <p>Foreign Languages 171 French 172 German 173 Latin 174 Spanish 175 Other foreign language</p> <p>Health Education 181 Health education 182 Physical education</p> <p>Mathematics and Computer Science 190 Mathematics 197 Computer science</p>	<p>Natural Sciences 211 Biology/Life sciences 212 Chemistry 213 Earth sciences 214 Engineering 217 Physics</p> <p>Social Sciences 221 Anthropology 222 Area/Ethnic studies (excluding Native American Studies) 223 Criminal justice 224 Cultural studies 225 Economics 226 Geography 227 Government/Civics 228 History 229 International studies 230 Law 231 Native American studies 232 Political science 233 Psychology 234 Sociology</p> <p>Vocational/Technical Education 241 Agriculture and natural resources 242 Business/Office 243 Keyboarding 244 Marketing and distribution 245 Health occupations 246 Construction trades 247 Mechanics and repair 248 Drafting/Graphics/Printing 249 Metals/Woods/Plastics, and other precision production (electronics, leatherwork, meat cutting, etc.) 250 Communications and other technologies (not including computer science) 251 Culinary arts/Hospitality 252 Child care and education 253 Personal and other services (including cosmetology, custodial services, clothing and textiles, and interior design) 254 Family and consumer sciences education 255 Industrial arts/Technology education 256 Other vocational/Technical education</p> <p>Miscellaneous 261 Architecture 263 Humanities/Liberal studies 264 Library/Information science 265 Military science/ROTC 266 Philosophy 267 Religious studies/Theology/Divinity</p> <p>Other 268 Other</p>
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I. Educational Background Section: Items 1–7

This section asks about your academic degrees, preparation, and other formal training.

1a. Do you have a bachelor’s degree? If you have more than one bachelor’s degree, information about additional degrees will be asked in item 3.

Yes
 No → GO TO Item 2

1b. In what year did you receive your bachelor’s degree?

/ _ / _ / _ / _ / Year

1c. Was this degree awarded by a university’s College of Education or a college’s School of Education?

Yes
 No

What does this item mean in your own words? What degree did you receive?

1d. What was your major field of study? Record the field of study code and the field name from Table 1 on page 1.

Code / _ / _ / Major _____

Is the code on the list?

1e. What is the name of the college or university where you earned this degree?

a. Name of college or university

b. In what city and state is it located?

City _____

State _____

Located outside the United States?

2a. Do you have a master’s degree? If you have more than one master’s degree, information about additional degree’s will be asked in item 3.

Yes
 No → GO TO Item 3 on page 3

1. In what year did you receive your master’s degree?

/ _ / _ / _ / _ / Year

2. Was this degree awarded by a university's College of Education or a college's School of Education?

- Yes
- No

3. What was your major field of study?

Record the field of study code and the field name from Table 1 on page 1.
Code / _ / _ / _ Major _____

3a. Have you earned any of the degrees listed below?

- Yes
- No → GO TO Item 4

a. Degree	b. What was your major field of study for each degree? *Record the field of study code and the field name from table 1 on page 1	c. Was this degree awarded by a university's College of Education or a college's School of Education?	d. In what year?
(1) Vocational Certificate	Code / _ / _ / _ Major field of study title _____		Year _____
(2) Associate's degree	Code / _ / _ / _ Major field of study title _____		Year _____
(3) SECOND Bachelor's degree	Code / _ / _ / _ Major field of study title _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Year _____
(4) SECOND Master's degree	Code / _ / _ / _ Major field of study title _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Year _____
(5) Educational specialist or professional diploma (at least one year beyond a master's level)	Code / _ / _ / _ Major field of study title _____		Year _____
(6) Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies	Code / _ / _ / _ Major field of study title _____		Year _____
(7) Doctorate or first professional degree (Ph.D, Ed.D., M.D., L.L.B, J.D., D.D.S.)	Code / _ / _ / _ Major field of study title _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Year _____

Anything missing here?

4. Have you taken any of the following tests? Mark (X) one box.

a. A state test of basic skills in the state you are currently teaching in?

- Taken and passed
- Taken and have not yet passed
- Not taken

b. A state test of subject knowledge in the state you are currently teaching in?

- Taken and passed
- Taken and have not yet passed
- Not taken

c. A local district test of basic skills or subject knowledge in the district you are currently teaching in?

- Taken and passed
- Taken and have not yet passed
- Not taken

d. The Praxis Series Core Battery Test of Professional Knowledge?

- Taken and passed
- Taken and have not yet passed
- Not taken

e. The Praxis II: Subject Assessment?

- Taken and passed
- Taken and have not yet passed
- Not taken

f. An exam for National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification?

- Taken and passed
- Taken and have not yet passed
- Not taken

5. Have you ever taken any graduate or undergraduate courses that focused on teaching methods or teaching strategies? Include courses you are now taking as well as courses taken to earn a degree and courses taken outside a degree program. Do not include student teaching.

Yes → How many courses?

- 1 or 2 courses
- 3 or 4 courses
- 5 or more courses

No

Tell me how you came up with your answer. Were there any classes you were not sure whether or not to include?

6. Which of the following describes how you obtained (or how you are obtaining) the teaching methods or teaching strategies COURSEWORK needed for your INITIAL certification?

1__ Through an “alternative” program designed to expedite the transition of non-teachers to a teaching career (e.g., Teach for America, state or district alternative programs, or university alternative programs).

2__ Through enrollment in a bachelor’s degree granting program (B.A. or B.S.).

3__ Through enrollment in a master’s degree granting program (M.A., M.S., M.Ed., M.A.T.).

4__ Through enrollment in individual courses (not part of a program leading to a degree).

5__ No coursework in teaching methods or teaching strategies needed for my initial certification.

6__ Not currently certified or working towards certification. → GO TO item 8 on page 7

7__ Other, please specify: _____

In your own words what is this item asking? Tell me about the different response options.

7. Did you have ALL of the coursework needed for your INITIAL certification BEFORE you started teaching?

1__ Yes

2__ No

If a person received certification in a couple of states which would they report here?

Table 2. Certification content area codes for questions 8 through 11

<p>General Education</p> <p>Elementary Education 101 Early childhood/Pre-K, general 102 Elementary grades, general</p> <p>Secondary Education 103 Middle grades, general 104 Secondary grades, general</p> <p>Special Education 111 Special education, general 112 Autism 113 Deaf and hard-of-hearing 114 Developmentally delayed 115 Early childhood special education 116 Emotionally disturbed or behavior disorders 117 Learning disabilities 118 Mentally retarded 119 Mildly/moderately disabled 120 Orthopedically impaired 121 Severely/profoundly disabled 122 Speech/language impaired 123 Traumatically brain-injured 124 Visually impaired 125 Other special education</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Subject Matter Specific</p> <p>Arts & Music 141 Art/Arts or crafts 143 Dance 144 Drama/Theater 145 Music</p> <p>English and Language Arts 151 Communications 152 Composition 153 English 154 Journalism 155 Language arts 158 Reading 159 Speech</p> <p>English as a Second Language 160 ESL/Bilingual education: General 161 ESL/Bilingual education: Spanish 162 ESL/Bilingual education: Other languages</p> <p>Foreign Languages 171 French 172 German 173 Latin 174 Spanish 175 Other foreign language</p> <p>Health Education 181 Health education 182 Physical education</p>	<p>Mathematics and Computer Science 190 Mathematics 197 Computer science</p> <p>Natural Sciences 210 Science, general 211 Biology/Life sciences 212 Chemistry 213 Earth sciences 216 Physical science 217 Physics</p> <p>Social Sciences 220 Social studies, general 221 Anthropology 225 Economics 226 Geography 227 Government/Civics 228 History 231 Native American studies 233 Psychology 234 Sociology</p> <p>Vocational/Technical Education 241 Agriculture and natural resources 242 Business/Office 243 Keyboarding 244 Marketing and distribution 245 Health occupations 246 Construction trades 247 Mechanics and repair 248 Drafting/Graphics/Printing 249 Metals/Woods/Plastics, and other precision production (electronics, leatherwork, meat cutting, etc.) 250 Communications and other technologies (not including computer science) 251 Culinary arts/Hospitality 252 Child care and education 253 Personal and other services (including cosmetology, custodial services, clothing and textiles, and interior design) 254 Family and consumer sciences education 255 Industrial arts/Technology education 256 Other vocational/Technical education</p> <p>Miscellaneous 262 Driver education 263 Humanities/Liberal studies 264 Library/Information science 265 Military science/ROTC 266 Philosophy 267 Religious studies/Theology/Divinity</p> <p>Other 268 Other</p>
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II. Certification and Training: Items 8–12

This section asks you for information about your certification.

8a. Which of the following describes the teaching certificate you currently hold in this state? Mark (X) only one box

- Regular or standard state certificate or advanced professional certificate
- Probationary certificate (the initial certificate issued after satisfying all requirements except the completion of a probationary period)
- Provisional or other type of certificate given to persons who are still participating in what the state calls an “alternative certification program”
- Temporary certificate (requires some additional college coursework, student teaching, and/or passage of a test before regular certification can be obtained)
- Waiver or Emergency certificate (issued to persons with insufficient teacher preparation who must complete a regular certification program in order to continue teaching)
- I do not have any of the above certifications in THIS state. → **GO to end**

8b. Which of the following grade ranges does this certificate apply to?

- Elementary grades (Including early childhood, preschool, and kindergarten)
- Secondary grades (Including middle school)
- Ungraded
- Not applicable → Please explain:
- _____

8c. In what content area(s) is this certificate?

- For some teachers the content area may be the grade level (e.g., elementary general, secondary general, etc).
- Please record the content area code from Table 2 on page 6.

Code _____ Content Area _____

8d. In some states, a certificate may highlight separate endorsements that reflect coursework in specific content areas. Do you have any such endorsements attached to this specific certificate referred to in items 8a through c?

- Yes
- No → GO TO item 9

8e. What content areas have you earned endorsements?

Please record the content area code from Table 2 on page 6.

Code _____ Endorsement Content Area _____

Code _____ Endorsement Content Area _____

Code _____ Endorsement Content Area _____

9a. Do you currently have a second teaching certificate in this state?

- Yes
- No → Go to end

9b. Which of the following describes the teaching certificate you currently hold in this state? Mark (X) only one box

- Regular or standard state certificate or advanced professional certificate
- Probationary certificate (the initial certificate issued after satisfying all requirements except the completion of a probationary period)
- Provisional or other type of certificate given to persons who are still participating in what the state calls an “alternative certification program”
- Temporary certificate (requires some additional college coursework, student teaching, and/or passage of a test before regular certification can be obtained)
- Waiver or Emergency certificate (issued to persons with insufficient teacher preparation who must complete a regular certification program in order to continue teaching)
- I do not have any of the above certifications in THIS state. → GO to end

9c. Which of the following grade ranges does this certificate apply to?

- Elementary grades (Including early childhood, preschool and kindergarten)
- Secondary grades (Including middle school)
- Ungraded
- Not applicable → Please explain:

9d. In what content area(s) is this certificate?

- For some teachers the content area may be the grade level (e.g., elementary general, secondary general, etc).
- Please record the content area code from Table 2 on page 6.

Code _____ Content Area _____

9e. In some states, a certificate may highlight separate endorsements that reflect coursework in specific content areas. Do you have any such endorsements attached to this specific certificate referred to in items 9a through c?

- Yes
- No → GO TO item 10

9f. What content areas have you earned endorsements?
Please record the content area code from Table 2 on page 6.

Code _____ Endorsement Content Area _____
Code _____ Endorsement Content Area _____
Code _____ Endorsement Content Area _____

10a. Do you currently have a third teaching certificate in this state?

- Yes
- No → Go to end

10b. Which of the following describes the teaching certificate you currently hold in this state? Mark (X) only one box.

- Regular or standard state certificate or advanced professional certificate
- Probationary certificate (the initial certificate issued after satisfying all requirements except the completion of a probationary period)
- Provisional or other type of certificate given to persons who are still participating in what the state calls an “alternative certification program”
- Temporary certificate (requires some additional college coursework, student teaching, and/or passage of a test before regular certification can be obtained)
- Waiver or Emergency certificate (issued to persons with insufficient teacher preparation who must complete a regular certification program in order to continue teaching)
- I do not have any of the above certifications in THIS state. → GO to end

10c. Which of the following grade ranges does this certificate apply to?

- Elementary grades (Including early childhood, preschool, and kindergarten)
- Secondary grades (Including middle school)
- Ungraded
- Not applicable → Please explain:

10d. In what content area(s) is this certificate?

- For some teachers the content area may be the grade level (e.g., elementary general, secondary general, etc).
- Please record the content area code from Table 2 on page 6.

Code _____ Content Area _____

10e. In some states, a certificate may highlight separate endorsements that reflect coursework in specific content areas. Do you have any such endorsements attached to this specific certificate referred to in items 10a through c?

- Yes
- No → GO TO item 11

10f. What content areas have you earned endorsements?
Please record the content area code from Table 2 on page 6.

Code _____ Endorsement Content Area _____
Code _____ Endorsement Content Area _____
Code _____ Endorsement Content Area _____

11a. Do you currently have a fourth teaching certificate in this state?

- Yes
- No → Go to end

11b. Which of the following describes the teaching certificate you currently hold in this state? Mark (X) only one box.

- Regular or standard state certificate or advanced professional certificate
- Probationary certificate (the initial certificate issued after satisfying all requirements except the completion of a probationary period)
- Provisional or other type of certificate given to persons who are still participating in what the state calls an “alternative certification program”
- Temporary certificate (requires some additional college coursework, student teaching, and/or passage of a test before regular certification can be obtained)
- Waiver or Emergency certificate (issued to persons with insufficient teacher preparation who must complete a regular certification program in order to continue teaching)
- I do not have any of the above certifications in THIS state. → GO to end

11c. Which of the following grade ranges does this certificate apply to?

- Elementary grades (Including early childhood, preschool, and kindergarten)
- Secondary grades (Including middle school)
- Ungraded
- Not applicable → Please explain:

11d. In what content area(s) is this certificate?

- For some teachers the content area may be the grade level (e.g., elementary general, secondary general, etc).
- Please record the content area code from Table 2 on page 6.

Code _____ Content Area _____

11e. In some states, a certificate may highlight separate endorsements that reflect coursework in specific content areas. Do you have any such endorsements attached to this specific certificate referred to in items 11a through c?

- Yes
- No → GO TO end

11f. What content areas have you earned endorsements?
Please record the content area code from Table 2 on page 6.

Code _____ Endorsement Content Area _____
Code _____ Endorsement Content Area _____
Code _____ Endorsement Content Area _____

12. Do you currently hold ANY ADDITIONAL regular or standard teaching state certificate(s) or advanced professional teaching certificate(s) in this state?

- Yes
- No → GO TO end

b. How many?
/ / / additional certificates

Attachment F-2. Certification Items from Form 2 Protocol

(This section contains only the revised certification items used on Form 2. All other items remained the same.)

This section asks you for information about your certification.

8a. Which of the following describes the teaching certificate you currently hold in this state? Mark (X) only one box.

- Regular or standard state certificate or advanced professional certificate
- Probationary certificate (the initial certificate issued after satisfying all requirements except the completion of a probationary period)
- Provisional or other type of certificate given to persons who are still participating in what the state calls an “alternative certification program”
- Temporary certificate (requires some additional college coursework, student teaching, and/or passage of a test before regular certification can be obtained)
- Waiver or Emergency certificate (issued to persons with insufficient teacher preparation who must complete a regular certification program in order to continue teaching)
- I do not have any of the above certifications in THIS state. → **GO TO end**

8b. In what content area(s) is this certificate?

- For some teachers the content area may be the grade level (e.g., elementary general, secondary general, etc.).
- Please record the content area code from Table 2 on page 6.
- Report each content area for which you have full certification on the same certificate.
- Please report endorsements in item 12.

Code _____ Content Area _____

1. Which of the following grade ranges does this certificate apply to?

- Elementary grades (Including early childhood, preschool, and kindergarten)
- Secondary grades (Including middle school)
- K–12 or Ungraded

Code _____ Content Area _____

2. Which of the following grade ranges does this certificate apply to?

- Elementary grades (Including early childhood, preschool, and kindergarten)
- Secondary grades (Including middle school)
- K–12 or Ungraded

Code _____ Content Area _____

3. Which of the following grade ranges does this certificate apply to?

- Elementary grades (Including early childhood, preschool, and kindergarten)
- Secondary grades (Including middle school)
- K–12 or Ungraded

Code _____ Content Area _____

4. Which of the following grade ranges does this certificate apply to?

- Elementary grades (Including early childhood, preschool, and kindergarten)
- Secondary grades (Including middle school)
- K–12 or Ungraded

Are you familiar with the term endorsements?

Do the content areas on the table match with r's area of study?

Does content area item make sense?

9a. Do you currently have a SECOND teaching certificate in this state?

- Yes
- No → GO TO end

9b. Which of the following describes the teaching certificate you currently hold in this state? Mark (X) only one box

- Regular or standard state certificate or advanced professional certificate
- Probationary certificate (the initial certificate issued after satisfying all requirements except the completion of a probationary period)
- Provisional or other type of certificate given to persons who are still participating in what the state calls an “alternative certification program”
- Temporary certificate (requires some additional college coursework, student teaching, and/or passage of a test before regular certification can be obtained)
- Waiver or Emergency certificate (issued to persons with insufficient teacher preparation who must complete a regular certification program in order to continue teaching)

9c. In what content area(s) is this certificate?

- For some teachers the content area may be the grade level (e.g., elementary general, secondary general, etc).
- Please record the content area code from Table 2 on page 6.
- Report each content area for which you have full certification on the same certificate.
- Please report endorsements in item 12.

Code _____ Content Area _____

1. Which of the following grade ranges does this certificate apply to?

- Elementary grades (Including early childhood, preschool, and kindergarten)
- Secondary grades (Including middle school)
- K–12 or Ungraded

Code _____ Content Area _____

2. Which of the following grade ranges does this certificate apply to?

- Elementary grades (Including early childhood, preschool, and kindergarten)
- Secondary grades (Including middle school)
- K–12 or Ungraded

Code _____ Content Area _____

3. Which of the following grade ranges does this certificate apply to?

- Elementary grades (Including early childhood, preschool, and kindergarten)
- Secondary grades (Including middle school)
- K–12 or Ungraded

Code _____ Content Area _____

4. Which of the following grade ranges does this certificate apply to?

- Elementary grades (Including early childhood, preschool, and kindergarten)
- Secondary grades (Including middle school)
- K–12 or Ungraded

10a. Do you currently have a *THIRD* teaching certificate in this state?

- Yes
- No → GO TO end

10b. Which of the following describes the teaching certificate you currently hold in this state? Mark (X) only one box

- Regular or standard state certificate or advanced professional certificate
- Probationary certificate (the initial certificate issued after satisfying all requirements except the completion of a probationary period)
- Provisional or other type of certificate given to persons who are still participating in what the state calls an “alternative certification program”
- Temporary certificate (requires some additional college coursework, student teaching, and/or passage of a test before regular certification can be obtained)
- Waiver or Emergency certificate (issued to persons with insufficient teacher preparation who must complete a regular certification program in order to continue teaching)

10c. In what content area(s) is this certificate?

- For some teachers the content area may be the grade level (e.g., elementary general, secondary general, etc).
- Please record the content area code from Table 2 on page 6.
- Report each content area for which you have full certification on the same certificate.
- Please report endorsements in item 12.

Code _____ Content Area _____

1. Which of the following grade ranges does this certificate apply to?

- Elementary grades (Including early childhood, preschool, and kindergarten)
- Secondary grades (Including middle school)
- K–12 or Ungraded

Code _____ Content Area _____

2. Which of the following grade ranges does this certificate apply to?

- Elementary grades (Including early childhood, preschool, and kindergarten)
- Secondary grades (Including middle school)
- K–12 or Ungraded

Code _____ Content Area _____

3. Which of the following grade ranges does this certificate apply to?

- Elementary grades (Including early childhood, preschool, and kindergarten)
- Secondary grades (Including middle school)
- K–12 or Ungraded

Code _____ Content Area _____

4. Which of the following grade ranges does this certificate apply to?

- Elementary grades (Including early childhood, preschool, and kindergarten)
- Secondary grades (Including middle school)
- K–12 or Ungraded

11a. Do you currently hold ANY ADDITIONAL regular or standard teaching state certificate(s) or advanced professional teaching certificate(s) in this state?

- Yes
- No → GO TO end

How many?

/ ___ / ___ / additional certificates

12a. *In some states, a certificate may highlight separate endorsements that reflect coursework in specific content areas. Do you have any such endorsements attached to any of your current certificate(s) in this state?*

- Yes
- No → GO TO end

12b. *In what content areas have you earned endorsements? Please record the content area code from Table 2 on page 6.*

Code _____ Endorsement Content Area _____
Code _____ Endorsement Content Area _____
Code _____ Endorsement Content Area _____

Appendix G. Report on SASS Focus Groups

This appendix contains a report by ORC Macro concerning focus groups it held with public school principals and other knowledgeable respondents on Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) issues and question wording. The material is organized as follows.

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Introduction

ORC Macro contracted with the Census Bureau to conduct focus groups with public school principals and other knowledgeable respondents (primarily school secretaries). The purpose of the focus groups was to get respondent feedback on issues and the wording of questions that would be included in the Schools and Staffing Survey.

The specific tasks performed by ORC Macro under this contract with the Census Bureau included the following:

- assisted Census Bureau in development of a screener;
- recruited 48 respondents who met the requirements set out in the screener and were willing to participate in the groups (24 principals for two groups, majority from public schools, and 24 school employees who were knowledgeable about the school) for a “show rate” of 8 to 10 participants per group;
- assisted Census Bureau in development of a discussion guide;
- provided an experienced moderator to run the groups;
- conducted two groups at a focus group facility in Calverton, Maryland, and two groups at a facility in Towson, Maryland;
- paid principals \$150 and other knowledgeable respondents \$100 for participation in the groups; and
- provided an oral report and a top-line report that summarized the respondents’ recommendations for revisions to the questionnaire.

Following discussions between Census Bureau staff and ORC Macro project personnel, screeners were developed for both the Washington- and Baltimore-area groups to identify appropriate respondents. Participation was limited to public school principals and staff, and a mix of participants from different school districts was obtained. Copies of the screeners used for this project are provided in attachment G-1.

Recruitment

The initial contract suggested that respondents be recruited by offering incentives of \$50 per person. After a solid week of recruiting for both the Calverton and Towson sites, it was clear that full groups could not be recruited with such a low incentive. Thus, the incentive level needed be raised to the levels cited above. With the new incentive levels four groups were successfully recruited. (See attachment G-2.)

Unfortunately, the greater Washington/Baltimore area was hit by one of the largest snowstorms in history February 16 and 17, 2003, requiring the groups that originally had been scheduled for February 18 and 20 to be postponed. The rescheduled Baltimore group fell victim to yet another snowstorm, so the groups were eventually held on March 4 and 5.

Development of the Discussion Guides

The discussion guides were developed by the moderator Michael Long with the input and assistance of the Census Bureau client Andy Zukerberg. Copies of the discussion guides are included with this report in attachment G-3.

Composition of the Focus Groups

The focus groups were held in the Washington, DC metropolitan area and the Baltimore metropolitan area. Participants in the focus groups included principals and other knowledgeable respondents (secretaries, administrative assistants, and one assistant to the principal) from the following school districts:

Washington area

- District of Columbia
- Howard County
- Montgomery County
- Prince Georges County

Baltimore area

- Anne Arundel County
- Baltimore City
- Baltimore County
- Carroll County

Ten principals participated in the focus groups in each city, for a total of 20 principal respondents. Eleven people participated in the other knowledgeable respondent group in the Washington area, while 6 participated in the Baltimore area group for that population, for a total of 17 other knowledgeable respondents. Thus, the total number of persons involved in the focus groups was 37.

Strengths and Limitations of Qualitative Research

Focus groups are a qualitative research method useful for gaining individual perceptions and ideas which are difficult to obtain through quantitative research. Focus groups generate discussion that can lead to the expression of ideas and opinions which might not be expressed using other research methods. The selection of focus group participants is not based upon randomization or other population representative methods. Focus groups are not intended to provide quantifiable data, nor can data from focus groups be generalized to the entire population. The findings only reflect the ideas and beliefs of the focus group participants.

Within this context, an important point to consider is that in Maryland more power lies at the district level than it does in many other states. Therefore, some of the findings that come out of these focus groups regarding the relationship between schools and their districts may not be completely generalizable to the country as a whole. For example, principals in these focus groups reported that they have little control over the incentives that are used to recruit teachers to their school. This might be less true in other states where less power is centralized at the school district level.

Findings

Gaining Participation in the Survey

Participants in the “other knowledgeable respondent” sessions indicated that the most important information that they would consider in deciding whether to participate in the survey was the length of time it would require. Their second answer, which they said was nearly as important, was that they would want to know whether or not they were being required to do so by their district. Several participants were

confident that if their district did not require participation, their principals would not participate in the survey.

One participant indicated that she was more likely to participate in surveys in which some sort of incentive was provided. When asked how large the incentive would have to be, she commented that even a very small incentive would make her more likely to participate. Several other respondents agreed that even a small incentive would be an important gesture that showed that their time was valued.

Participants indicated that Mondays and Fridays were the days on which they and their principals would be least likely to be able to meet with a Census Bureau employee. Most also said, however, that their schedule was difficult to predict and that whether or not their principals would be available for a meeting depended on the events of that particular day.

Most participants suggested that the best time for a Census Bureau employee to come to their school would be in the late morning between 10:00 and 11:30 a.m. Again, however, most indicated that this was only a general pattern and that their principal's availability was difficult to predict.

Recommendations

If possible, try to garner support for the Schools and Staffing Survey at the district level; in many cases principals will be more likely to participate in the survey if they know that they are expected to do so by the district.

Try to schedule meetings with school personnel on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays in the late morning. However, be prepared for principals to occasionally be unavailable for these meetings because of unforeseen events.

Provide some sort of incentive (even one as small as a pen or pencil) for survey participants.

Terminology

When asked to define the word "paraprofessional" as it applies to a school setting, over half of respondents referred to someone who provides "support" or "assistance" for teaching personnel. The second most common answer was that a paraprofessional was someone who lacks the necessary certification, training, or college degree to be considered a professional.

Table G-1 shows participants' responses to a question that asked them to identify which school personnel were "paraprofessionals." The personnel that principals identified as paraprofessionals most often were teachers' assistants (18 of 19 respondents), special education aides (18), lunch aides (15), and administrative assistants (9). Very few principals identified guidance counselors, teachers, nurses, or librarians as paraprofessionals.

Table G-1. Are the following school personnel “paraprofessionals”?

School personnel	Staff who answered “yes”	
	Principals (n = 19)	Other knowledgeable respondents (n = 17)
Guidance counselors	0	2
Administrative assistants	9	8
Teachers’ assistants	18	16
Teachers	0	1
Special education aides	18	16
School nurses	2	4
Lunch aides	15	8
Librarians	0	2

SOURCE: *Report on SASS Focus Groups*, ORC Macro, 2003.

In the “other knowledgeable respondent” sessions, 16 of 17 participants identified teachers’ assistants and special education aides as paraprofessionals. Eight identified administrative assistants and lunch aides as paraprofessionals, while four or fewer said the same of nurses (4), guidance counselors (2), librarians (2), or teachers (1).

All participants indicated that the Average Daily Attendance of their school is a figure that is readily available to them. Most indicated that they could easily access this information on a computer, and that it could be calculated by week, month, quarter, or year.

Recommendations

Do not use the term “paraprofessionals” in the school or principal questionnaires without clarifying what is meant by the term.

Continue to ask about Average Daily Attendance in the school or principal questionnaires; participants will have little difficulty providing this information.

Overcrowding

When asked to brainstorm ways of measuring overcrowding in schools, the first method that was mentioned in all sessions was comparing school enrollment to building capacity. Some participants, however, warned that state and district officials have different methods of calculating building capacity.

Other measures of overcrowding that were brainstormed by participants were the number of teachers without their own classroom (“floating teachers”), the number of noninstructional areas that were used for instruction, the number of instructional areas that were used for instruction of a type other than what was intended (e.g., an art room used for a math class), the number of lunch periods in a day, student to teacher ratio, and average class size.

Many participants, particularly principals, did not feel that it was appropriate to use a school’s lunch schedule as a measure of overcrowding because too many other factors might dictate how the lunch schedule was structured. Principals disliked a proposed question that asked for an opinion as to whether a school was overcrowded; they felt that respondents to this question would be likely to overestimate overcrowding in the hope of securing more resources for their school.

After brainstorming their own measures of overcrowding, participants were given a list of proposed items from the survey and asked how well these items would measure overcrowding in schools. Participants felt that the best questions were those that asked about the number of nonacademic areas that were used for

instruction and the number of classroom spaces that were in portable facilities. They indicated that they would have no difficulty providing quantitative answers to these two questions.

Principals in the second session were given a question that asked how many teachers in the school did not have their own classrooms. Most felt that this would be a good measure of overcrowding, but felt that a better phrasing of the question would be to ask, “In this school, how many floating teachers are there who would otherwise have a classroom?” Principals indicated that “floating teacher” was a common term that everyone who worked in schools would understand. However, in the group of “other knowledgeable respondents” there was confusion among secretaries over the definition of a “floating teacher”; some thought that it referred to a substitute teacher that filled in for teachers who were sick.

Recommendations

When asking about overcrowding in schools, focus on questions that ask how many nonacademic areas are used for instruction, how many classroom spaces are in portable facilities, or how many teachers do not have their own classrooms.

When asking for the number of nonacademic areas that are used for instruction, also give participants the chance to report academic areas that are used for a type of instruction other than what is intended (e.g., an art room that is used for a math class.)

Do not attempt to infer information about overcrowding from data about the structure of lunch periods in a school.

Use the phrase “floating teacher” to refer to teachers that move from room to room. However, because this term is not understood by all school personnel, define it for respondents (e.g., “a teacher with a full-time course schedule who would normally have his or her own classroom but does not due to space limitations”).

Teacher Staffing

Principals were shown question 21 from the principal survey and asked whether they felt that the available six choices covered all of the possible barriers to dismissing a teacher. Overwhelmingly, principals felt that the biggest barriers to dismissal were the time that it takes to go through the dismissal process (which several indicated is over a year long) and the effort necessary to gather the necessary documentation about teacher performance. They did not feel that these barriers were clearly reflected in the six available choices.

A few principals felt that choice F (“dismissal is too stressful and uncomfortable for those involved”) was not a valid barrier to dismissal, since they believed that this stress and discomfort should never affect principals’ decisions. More, however, believed that this choice could indeed pose a barrier in some cases. Principals interpreted choice F in two ways. Some focused on the discomfort that might arise when they were forced to tell a hard-working teacher that he or she was incompetent. Others, however, referred to the stress that the dismissal of a teacher might place on the relationship between an administrator and the rest of the faculty. These two interpretations were sufficiently different that option F could probably be split into two choices.

Principals indicated that there were other factors that could constitute barriers to teacher dismissal that were not available as choices on question 21. One commented that a teacher shortage at a school might make it difficult to dismiss a teacher, while another suggested that teachers might have “political

connections” (e.g., with district officials) that would make them difficult to dismiss. Other principals mentioned that a teacher’s popularity among the student or parent body could be a barrier to dismissal.

When asked whether they would be able to answer questions about the incentives that were used to recruit teachers to their school, principals were divided. About half felt that because teacher contracts were handled at the district level, the district might use incentives of which they were unaware. Other principals were confident that they could identify all incentives that were being used by their district.

Principals were also shown question 42b from the school questionnaire, which asked which methods their school had used to cover teaching vacancies for the present school year. Most principals felt that the eight available choices covered all of the possible ways of covering vacancies. One pointed out that teachers could voluntarily opt to teach classes in another subject, which is not an available option on this item. Another mentioned that an increasingly common practice was hiring previously retired teachers; she agreed, however, that this practice could fall under choice A (“hiring a fully-qualified teacher”).

When asked whether they could answer a question about how difficult or easy it was to fill vacancies in different fields, principals overwhelmingly agreed that they could answer the question as it applied to their own school.

Secretaries who participated in the “other knowledgeable respondent” sessions were not able to answer very many questions about teacher staffing; for the most part they indicated that this was a part of school operations about which they did not know a great deal.

Recommendations

In question 21 on the principal questionnaire add another option: “Time and effort required to obtain necessary teacher assessment documentation.” Remove option C, as this will be covered under this new choice.

Also in question 21, divide option F into two choices: “Personal discomfort with dismissing a teacher” and “Resulting tension between principal and rest of faculty.”

Also in question 21, add two more options: “Shortage of teachers at school” and “Opposition from student and/or parent bodies.”

Ask questions about incentives used to recruit teachers on the district questionnaire, not the principal or school questionnaires.

Do not ask questions about teacher staffing on the school questionnaire; some of the personnel who are completing these questionnaires will not fully understand staffing issues.

Reword the stem for question 42b on the school questionnaire. The current stem defines a teaching vacancy as a position for which candidates are recruited or interviewed. However, principals in these groups indicated that their vacancies are often filled by teachers who are reassigned to them by the district. Since these teachers are neither recruited nor interviewed, none of these vacancies would be covered under the current wording of 42b.

Remove option F from question 42b. This option is out-of-place here, because having teachers teach classes in another subject would not necessarily “fill” a vacancy (unless these teachers’ courseloads were increased, which would be covered under option E.) The reason that option F is currently included, it seems, is to measure how often teachers are asked to teach outside of their specialty or area of

certification. However, this could be better measured in a different series of questions that did not relate to teacher hiring.

Principal Time Use

When principals were shown question 11 from the principal survey, they indicated that they found it very difficult to break the time they spent performing their job into different categories using percentages. The reason for this, they felt, was that so many of their activities could fall into more than one category; for example, walking around the halls could be considered both interacting with students and maintaining school safety. Some suggested that the question would be more informative if principals were asked to indicate both how their time was currently spent and how they would ideally like to spend their time.

Because principals in the first session had so much difficulty answering question 11 from the principal survey, in the second session principals were asked to evaluate different items relating to time use. When asked how many hours they spent on all school-related activities in the last full week of school, principals indicated that this question needed more clarification. For example, principals were unsure whether time at school should be counted if teachers or students were not present, or if time spent at school functions on weekends should be included. Principals agreed, however, that if the question were more explicit they would be able to answer it accurately.

Most principals were not able to answer a question that asked how many hours they were required to work to receive base pay; many indicated that no such figure was stipulated on their contract. Those principals that did answer the question calculated an answer by multiplying by five the number of benefit hours they receive for a sick or personal day. In general, however, principals indicated that this figure had no meaning for them.

When shown questions that asked them to give data from the “last full week of school,” principals in both sessions commented that at many points during the school year they could go a month or more without having a full week of school. Most indicated that their answers to these questions would likely be based on a “typical” week of school, rather than the last full week.

Principals found it very difficult to estimate the number of hours that they spent interacting with students because they were unsure what types of interaction to include. The biggest source of confusion was whether “informal” interaction, such as conversations that took place during lunch duty or in the halls, should be counted. Others remarked that because so many of their interactions with students last only one or two minutes (e.g., conversations in the halls) they found it difficult to aggregate these into a number of hours per week. However, principals agreed that it was important to include some measure of student interaction in the survey, and felt that if the question were clarified they would be able to answer fairly accurately.

Recommendations

Do not ask principals to estimate the percentage of their time they spend on different categories of activities, as was asked in the original question 11.

In order to get an estimate of the percentage of their work time that principals spend interacting with students, ask them (a) how many hours per week they spend on all school-related activities and (b) how many hours per week they spend interacting with students. However, provide further elaboration for both questions:

- In question (a) indicate that respondents should “include time spent outside of the school building, as well as time spent outside of school hours and on weekends.”
- In question (b) indicate that respondents should “include informal interactions with students, such as those that occur in the halls, during lunch periods, or at functions outside of normal school hours.”

Do not ask principals for the number of hours that they are required to work by contract; this figure seems to be meaningless to most principals.

National School Lunch Program and Title I

Participants in the other knowledgeable respondent sessions reported that the person who tracked the number of students who participated in the National School Lunch Program at their school was a cafeteria manager, an assistant principal, or a secretary. (In some cases, they reported that they kept these records themselves.) A large majority indicated that they could access this information easily, either from their computer system, a log, or by speaking to another person in the school.

Almost all participants reported that they would not be able to answer questions about how many students were eligible for free and reduced-price lunches. Most indicated that students’ eligibility was determined at the district level, so school personnel would have no way of knowing the students that were eligible but had not applied. As a result, some secretaries in these sessions did not even understand what was meant by “eligibility” for the lunch program; some suggested that all were eligible, since they could all fill out an application form.

Most participants who worked in Title I schools indicated that the person who tracked Title I information was a school administrator, such as an assistant principal. Most reported that if they needed Title I information to fill out a survey, they would be able to get it without difficulty. Because they could not access it directly by themselves, however, some secretaries commented that getting this information would be more difficult and would take more time than getting information about free and reduced-price lunches. Less than half of participants who worked in Title I schools understood the difference between targeted assistance and schoolwide Title I assistance.

Recommendations

Include on the school questionnaire questions about students who receive free or reduced-price lunches; the school personnel who will complete these questionnaires will have ready access to this information.

Do not use the school questionnaire to ask questions about the number of students that are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches; because student eligibility is often determined at the district level, school personnel will be unable to answer these questions.

Ask questions about Title I on the principal questionnaire rather than the school questionnaire; some personnel who fill out school questionnaires might not be knowledgeable about the program. In particular, at schools that receive schoolwide Title I services, administrative personnel who are not involved in school finances may not realize that the school is involved in the Title I program at all.

Testing

Participants in all sessions were very confident that their district knew about every assessment that takes place in their school (aside from assessments associated with an individual teacher’s class). In fact, most indicated that they received directions for how and when to conduct all assessments directly from their

district offices. However, several principals in the second group commented that while district officials would know which kinds of testing were taking place, they would not be knowledgeable about how these assessments were impacting the school program; questions about this impact would best be directed to the school or the principal.

Recommendations

Ask questions about the types of testing that take place either on the school questionnaire or on the district questionnaire; both groups will be able to provide the same information.

Ask questions about the effect of testing on school operations on the school questionnaire, rather than the district questionnaire.

Attachment G-1. Participant Screener for Focus Group Recruitment

The four screeners included here are those used in the original attempt to recruit participants.

Recruiting Goals—Office Staff (Washington area)

- The participant shall be a Secretary or Office Manager from a public school.
- Group shall be a mixture of age, gender, and ethnicity.
- Group shall be recruited from schools of various enrollment numbers.
- Group shall be recruited from various school districts.
- Group shall include office staff from elementary, middle, and high schools.

Scheduling

The schedule for the groups is as follows:

Date	Time	Participants	Location	Facility	Incentive
Wed., 2/12/03	6:00 p.m.	Secretaries	Calverton, Maryland	ORC Macro	\$50
Thurs., 2/13/03	8:00 p.m.	Secretaries	Towson, Maryland	AIM	\$50

- Participants will receive an incentive according to the chart above for their participation.
- Focus groups will last approximately 90 minutes each.
- Refreshments will be offered to participants in each group.
- The identity of the participants will remain confidential.

Hello Mr./Ms. _____, my name is _____, and I'm calling from ORC Macro, a research and consulting firm. We are presently working with the Census Bureau on a research project regarding schools. Could I ask you a few short questions for this survey?

1. (*Record gender*)

Male
Female

2. Are you currently the Secretary or Office Manager at school? (*If not, ask to speak to the Secretary or Office Manager*)

Yes --- **continue**
No --- **terminate**

3. Do you have a working knowledge of the various programs in your school such as the lunch program, Title I, attendance, content standards?

Yes --- **continue**
No --- **terminate**

4. (*Record estimated enrollment of school*) Would you say the enrollment of your school is:

- Less than 500 students
- 500–1,000 students
- 1,000–1,500 students
- 1,500–2,000 students
- More than 2,000 students

5. (*Record school district*) Is the school located in:

- Montgomery County
- Prince Georges County
- Howard County
- DC

The Census Bureau has asked us to get together with a select group of secretaries/office managers from schools in the greater Baltimore/Washington Metropolitan area to help them improve a survey instrument that they plan to use nationwide. We would like to invite you to participate in this select group if you are interested. The discussion will take place on Thursday, February 13, at 8:00 p.m. The discussion will last approximately 90 minutes and you will receive a \$50 incentive for your participation. Would you like to participate?

- Yes --- **continue**
- No --- **terminate**

I would like to send you a confirmation letter and directions to the facility. In order to do so, could you please tell me your mailing address and give me a phone number where you can be reached:

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone: _____

We are inviting only a few people, so it is very important that you notify us as soon as possible if for some reason you are unable to attend. Please call me at _____ if this should happen. We look forward to seeing you on Thursday, February 13, at 6:00 p.m.

Recruiting Goals—Office Staff (Baltimore area)

- The participant shall be a Secretary or Office Manager from a public school.
- Group shall be a mixture of age, gender, and ethnicity.
- Group shall be recruited from schools of various enrollment numbers.
- Group shall be recruited from various school districts.
- Group shall include office staff from elementary, middle, and high schools.

Scheduling

The schedule for the groups is as follows:

Date	Time	Participants	Location	Facility	Incentive
Wed., 2/12/03	6:00 p.m.	Secretaries	Calverton, Maryland	ORC Macro	\$50
Thurs., 2/13/03	8:00 p.m.	Secretaries	Towson, Maryland	AIM	\$50

- Participants will receive an incentive according to the chart above for their participation.
- Focus groups will last approximately 90 minutes each.
- Refreshments will be offered to participants in each group.
- The identity of the participants will remain confidential.

Hello Mr./Ms. _____, my name is _____, and I'm calling from ORC Macro, a research and consulting firm. We are presently working with the Census Bureau on a research project regarding schools. Could I ask you a few short questions for this survey?

1. *(Record gender)*

Male
Female

2. Are you currently the Secretary or Office Manager at school? *(If not, ask to speak to the Secretary or Office Manager)*

Yes --- **continue**
No --- **terminate**

3. Do you have a working knowledge of the various programs in your school such as the lunch program, Title I, attendance, content standards?

Yes --- **continue**
No --- **terminate**

4. *(Record estimated enrollment of school)* Would you say the enrollment of your school is:

Less than 500 students
500–1,000 students
1,000–1,500 students
1,500–2,000 students
More than 2,000 students

5. (*Record school district*) Is the school located in:

- Baltimore County
- Carroll County
- Anne Arundel County
- Baltimore City

The Census Bureau has asked us to get together with a select group of secretaries/office managers from schools in the greater Baltimore/Washington Metropolitan area to help them improve a survey instrument that they plan to use nationwide. We would like to invite you to participate in this select group if you are interested. The discussion will take place on Thursday, February 13, at 8:00 p.m. The discussion will last approximately 90 minutes and you receive a \$50 incentive for your participation. Would you like to participate?

- Yes --- **continue**
- No --- **terminate**

I would like to send you a confirmation letter and directions to the facility. In order to do so, could you please tell me your mailing address and give me a phone number where you can be reached:

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone: _____

We are inviting only a few people, so it is very important that you notify us as soon as possible if for some reason you are unable to attend. Please call me at _____ if this should happen. We look forward to seeing you on Thursday, February 13, at 8:00 p.m.

Recruiting Goals—Principals (Washington area)

- The participant shall be a Principal from a public school.
- Group shall be a mixture of age, gender, and ethnicity.
- Group shall be recruited from schools of various enrollment numbers. Group shall be recruited from various school districts.
- Group shall include office staff from elementary, middle, and high schools.

Scheduling

The schedule for the groups is as follows:

Date	Time	Participants	Location	Facility	Incentive
Wed., 2/12/03	8:00 p.m.	Principals	Calverton, Maryland	ORC Macro	\$50
Thurs., 2/13/03	6:00 p.m.	Principals	Towson, Maryland	AIM	\$50

- Participants will receive an incentive according to the chart above for their participation.
- Focus groups will last approximately 90 minutes each.
- Refreshments will be offered to participants in each group.
- The identity of the participants will remain confidential.

Hello Mr./Ms. _____, my name is _____ and I'm calling from ORC Macro, a research and consulting firm. We are presently working with the Census Bureau on a research project regarding schools. Could I ask you a few short questions for this survey?

1. *(Record gender)*

Male
Female

2. Are you currently the principal at school? *(If not, ask to speak to the Principal)*

Yes --- **continue**
No --- **terminate**

3. *(Record estimated enrollment of school)* Would you say the enrollment of your school is:

Less than 500 students
500–1,000 students
1,000–1,500 students
1,500–2,000 students
More than 2,000 students

4. *(Record school district)* Is the school located in:

Montgomery County
Prince Georges County
Howard County
DC

We would like you to participate in a group discussion on schools. The discussion will take place on Wednesday, February 12, at 8:00 p.m. The discussion will last approximately 90 minutes and you will receive \$50 incentive for your participation. Would you like to participate?

Yes --- **continue**

No --- **terminate**

I would like to send you a confirmation letter and directions to the facility. In order to do so, could you please tell me your mailing address and give me a phone number where you can be reached:

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone: _____

We are inviting only a few people, so it is very important that you notify us as soon as possible if for some reason you are unable to attend. Please call me at _____ if this should happen. We look forward to seeing you on Wednesday, February 12, at 8:00 p.m.

Recruiting Goals—Principals (Baltimore area)

- The participant shall be a Principal from a public school.
- Group shall be a mixture of age, gender, and ethnicity.
- Group shall be recruited from schools of various enrollment numbers. Group shall be recruited from various school districts.
- Group shall include office staff from elementary, middle, and high schools.

Scheduling

The schedule for the groups is as follows:

Date	Time	Participants	Location	Facility	Incentive
Wed., 2/12/03	8:00 p.m.	Principals	Calverton, Maryland	ORC Macro	\$50
Thurs., 2/13/03	6:00 p.m.	Principals	Towson, Maryland	AIM	\$50

- Participants will receive an incentive according to the chart above for their participation.
- Focus groups will last approximately 90 minutes each.
- Refreshments will be offered to participants in each group.
- The identity of the participants will remain confidential.

Hello Mr./Ms., _____, my name is _____, and I'm calling from ORC Macro, a research and consulting firm. We are presently working with the Census Bureau on a research project regarding schools. Could I ask you a few short questions for this survey?

1. *(Record gender)*

Male
Female

2. Are you currently the principal at school? *(If not, ask to speak to the Principal)*

Yes --- **continue**
No --- **terminate**

3. *(Record estimated enrollment of school)* Would you say the enrollment of your school is:

Less than 500 students
500–1,000 students
1,000–1,500 students
1,500–2,000 students
More than 2000 students

4. *(Record school district)* Is the school located in:

Baltimore County
Carroll County
Anne Arundel County
Baltimore City

We would like you to participate in a group discussion on schools. The discussion will take place on Thursday, February 13, at 6:00 p.m. The discussion will last approximately 90 minutes and you will receive a \$50 incentive for your participation. Would you like to participate?

Yes --- **continue**

No --- **terminate**

I would like to send you a confirmation letter and directions to the facility. In order to do so, could you please tell me your mailing address and give me a phone number where you can be reached:

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone: _____

We are inviting only a few people, so it is very important that you notify us as soon as possible if for some reason you are unable to attend. Please call me at _____ if this should happen. We look forward to seeing you on Thursday, February 13, at 8:00 p.m.

Attachment G-2. Recruiting Results for Census Bureau Focus Groups

Round 1 Recruiting: \$50 Incentive

Schools called	104
Principals recruited	2
Secretaries recruited	1

Round 2 Recruiting: \$100 Incentive for Secretaries
\$150 Incentive for Principals

Schools called	65
Principals recruited	11
Secretaries recruited	9

Once the incentive was changed, recruiting became much easier. The difficulty then became the date changes, making it necessary to call additional schools to fill the slots of those who could not make the new dates.

Attachment G-3. Moderator’s Guides

Moderator’s Guide: Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) Focus Group of Other Knowledgeable Respondents (2/20/03)

[NOTE: Before the focus groups begin, participants will fill out the Pre-Focus Group Questionnaire, which will ask them about the terms “paraprofessional” and “Average Daily Attendance.”]

1. Introduction of Moderator

- Independent consultant hired to moderate these discussions
- No vested interest in receiving any particular point of view

2. Ground Rules

- You have been asked here to offer your views and opinions; everyone’s participation is important
- No right or wrong answers
- It’s OK to be critical; if you dislike something or disagree with something that is said, want to hear about it
- Audio and videotaping/observers
- All answers are confidential, so feel free to speak your mind
- Speak one at a time
- No side conversations
- Location of bathrooms

3. Introduction of Topic

“The purpose of this focus group is for you to provide information that will be used to fine-tune questions on a national survey of schools called the Schools and Staffing Survey. This survey is conducted every 4 years by the Census Bureau and the National Center for Education Statistics. The survey gathers national data on teacher demand and shortages, teacher and administrator characteristics, school programs, and general conditions in schools.

Each year that the survey is conducted, the questions it asks are reviewed and adjusted to make sure that they are relevant and appropriate. The information you give tonight will help the test designers as they go through that process.

There are several types of questionnaires that will be delivered to schools as part of the Schools and Staffing Survey. One of these is designed to be filled out by someone at the school who knows a great deal about the operations of the school. Often this person ends up being an administrative employee in the front office. For that reason, we’re excited to get your perspective on these topics related to the survey.”

4. Participant Introductions

“Before beginning our discussion, I’d like to have you go around the table and introduce yourselves. Please give your first name only, and the school and district where you work.”

5. Title I/School Lunch Program

“The survey asks several questions about students that participate in the National School Lunch Program, which is the program through which students can get free and reduced price lunches.”

- Who at your school tracks data on how many students participate in this program?
- How easily available to you is this data?

“The survey also asks questions about students that receive Title I services. Title I is a federally funded program that provides educational services to children who live in areas with high concentrations of low-income families.”

- Who at your school tracks data on how many students receive Title I services?
- How easily available to you is this data?

[Hand out Sheet 1: Questions on Free and Reduced-Price Lunches and Title I. This sheet would contain questions 55a–d, 56, 57a–b, 58a–b from the school survey.]

“These are the proposed questions for the survey that apply to these two programs.”

- How easily would you be able to answer these questions?
- Are any of these questions unclear or confusing?
- How clear to you is the distinction between students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches and those that are approved for these lunches?

6. Overcrowding

“One of the topics that this survey addresses is how crowded schools are.”

- How do you know if your school is overcrowded?
- If you were trying to convince someone that your school was overcrowded, what evidence would you use?

Probe: How easy or difficult would it be for you to collect this evidence?

[At this point, moderator will hand out Sheet 2: Proposed Questions about Overcrowding. This sheet will have on it questions 10a, 12, 13a–c, and 14 from the school survey.]

“The survey designers have been experimenting with different methods of measuring crowding in schools. Do you think that these questions would be good measures of overcrowding?”

*Probe: Which of these methods do you think would work best?
Would this information be easily available to you?
How easy or difficult would these questions be for you to answer?*

7. Terminology: Average Daily Attendance

[NOTE: Depending on the responses of participants to the pregroup questionnaire, this section possibly could be omitted.]

“Before this focus group began you all filled out a questionnaire. One of the questions asked you how you would measure the ‘average daily attendance’ of your school.”

- Is this figure readily available to you?
- If not, how you would you calculate this figure?

8. Hiring/Firing (if time is short, possibly skip to Section 9)

“The Schools and Staffing Survey asks a number of questions about teacher staffing. Because of this, the sponsors of the survey are interested in learning in more detail about the process through which teachers are hired and fired.”

“Let’s begin by walking through the process of hiring a teacher.”

- At what point in the year are openings for the next year identified?
- How are candidates recruited?
- On what criteria are candidates judged? Who determines these criteria?
- Who is responsible for making hiring decisions? What role does the district have in these decisions?

“Now I’d like to walk through the process of dismissing a teacher. We are not interested in teachers who are dismissed because of budget cuts or declining enrollment, but those that are dismissed due to poor performance.”

- Who makes the first determination that a teacher should be dismissed?
- On what information is this decision based?
- After this decision is made, what steps must take place before the dismissal is finalized?

9. Gaining Participation in the Survey

“Finally, I’d like to ask you about the factors that would make you more or less likely to participate in the survey.”

- What information would you want to know before deciding to complete the survey and send it in?

“The survey process will work in the following way: A Census Bureau employee will first call your school to make an appointment to come in. At the appointed time, the Census Bureau employee will then come to your school, meet with school personnel including the principal, and distribute the questionnaires.”

- On which days of the week would it be easiest for you to meet with the Census employee when he or she came in to collect the form and discuss the survey?
- At what times in the day would it be easiest for you to meet with the Census employee when he or she came in to collect the form and discuss the survey?
- On which days of the week would it be best for the Census employee to meet with the principal about the survey?
- At what times in the day would it be best for the Census employee to meet with the principal about the survey?

Moderator's Guide: Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) Focus Group of Other Knowledgeable Respondents (3/5/03)

[NOTE: Before the focus groups begin, participants will fill out the Pre-Focus Group Questionnaire, which will ask them about the terms “paraprofessional” and “Average Daily Attendance.”]

1. Introduction of Moderator

- Independent consultant hired to moderate these discussions
- No vested interest in receiving any particular point of view

2. Ground Rules

- You have been asked here to offer your views and opinions; everyone's participation is important
- No right or wrong answers
- It's OK to be critical; if you dislike something or disagree with something that is said, I want to hear about it
- Audio and videotaping/observers
- All answers are confidential, so feel free to speak your mind
- Speak one at a time
- No side conversations
- Location of bathrooms

3. Introduction of Topic

“The purpose of this focus group is for you to provide information that will be used to fine-tune questions on a national survey of schools called the Schools and Staffing Survey. This survey is conducted every 4 years by the Census Bureau and the National Center for Education Statistics. The survey gathers national data on teacher demand and shortages, teacher and administrator characteristics, school programs, and general conditions in schools.

Each year that the survey is conducted, the questions it asks are reviewed and adjusted to make sure that they are relevant and appropriate. The information you give tonight will help the test designers as they go through that process.

There are several types of questionnaires that will be delivered to schools as part of the Schools and Staffing Survey. One of these is designed to be filled out by someone at the school who knows a great deal about the operations of the school. Often this person ends up being an administrative employee in the front office. For that reason, we're excited to get your perspective on these topics related to the survey.”

4. Participant Introductions

“Before beginning our discussion, I'd like to have you go around the table and introduce yourselves. Please give your first name only, and district where you work.”

5. Title I/School Lunch Program

“The survey asks several questions about students that participate in the National School Lunch Program, which is the program through which students can get free and reduced price lunches.”

- Who at your school tracks data on how many students participate in this program?
- How easily available to you is this data?

“The survey also asks questions about students that receive Title I services. Title I is a federally funded program that provides educational services to children who live in areas with high concentrations of low-income families.”

- Who at your school tracks data on how many students receive Title I services?
- How easily available to you is this data?

[Hand out Sheet 1: Questions on Free and Reduced-Price Lunches and Title I. This sheet would contain questions 55a–d, 56, 57a–b, 58a–b from the school survey.]

“These are the proposed questions for the survey that apply to these two programs.”

- How easily would you be able to answer these questions?
- Are any of these questions unclear or confusing?
- How clear to you is the distinction between students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches and those that are approved for these lunches?

6. Overcrowding

“One of the topics that this survey addresses is how crowded schools are.”

- How do you know if your school is overcrowded?
- If you were trying to convince someone that your school was overcrowded, what evidence would you use?

Probe: How easy or difficult would it be for you to collect this evidence?

[At this point, moderator will hand out Sheet 2: Proposed Questions about Overcrowding. This sheet will have on it newly drafted questions about overcrowding.]

- The survey designers have been experimenting with different methods of measuring crowding in schools. Do you think that these questions would be good measures of overcrowding?

7. Testing

“The next topic that I would like to discuss with you tonight is testing that takes place in your school.”

- Aside from tests and grades given by individual teachers to their own classes, what assessments are given in your school?
- What is the role of the district in administering state and national tests?
- Are there any assessments that take place in your school that the district does not know about?

8. Gaining Participation in the Survey

“Finally, I’d like to ask you about the factors that would make you more or less likely to participate in the survey.”

- What information would you want to know before deciding to complete the survey and send it in?

“The survey process will work in the following way: A Census Bureau employee will first call your school to make an appointment to come in. At the appointed time, the Census Bureau employee will then come to your school, meet briefly with school personnel including the principal, and distribute the questionnaires to be filled out at a later time...”

- On which days of the week would it be easiest for you to meet with the Census employee when he or she came in to collect the form and discuss the survey?
- At what times in the day would it be easiest for you to meet with the Census employee when he or she came in to collect the form and discuss the survey?
- On which days of the week would it be best for the Census employee to meet with the principal about the survey?
- At what times in the day would it be best for the Census employee to meet with the principal about the survey?

9. Terminology: Average Daily Attendance (if time allows)

“Before this focus group began you all filled out a questionnaire. One of the questions asked you how you would measure the ‘average daily attendance’ of your school.”

- Is this figure readily available to you?
- How would you calculate this figure?

Moderator’s Guide: Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) Focus Group of Principals (3/4/03)

[NOTE: Before the focus groups begin, participants will fill out the Pre-Focus Group Questionnaire, which will ask them about the terms “paraprofessional” and “Average Daily Attendance.”]

1. Introduction of Moderator

- Independent consultant hired to moderate these discussions
- No vested interest in receiving any particular point of view

2. Ground Rules

- You have been asked here to offer your views and opinions; everyone’s participation is important
- No right or wrong answers
- It’s OK to be critical; if you dislike something or disagree with something that is said, I want to hear about it
- Audio and videotaping/observers
- All answers are confidential, so feel free to speak your mind
- Speak one at a time
- No side conversations
- Location of bathrooms

3. Introduction of Topic

“The purpose of this focus group is for you to provide information that will be used to fine-tune questions on a national survey of schools called the Schools and Staffing Survey. This survey is conducted every four years by the Census Bureau and the National Center for Education Statistics. The survey gathers national data on teacher demand and shortages, teacher and administrator characteristics, school programs, and general conditions in schools.

Each year that the survey is conducted, the questions it asks are reviewed and adjusted to make sure that they are relevant and appropriate. The information you give tonight will help the test designers as they go through that process.”

4. Participant Introductions

“Before beginning our discussion, I’d like to have you go around the table and introduce yourselves. Please give your first name only, and the school and district where you work.”

5. Overcrowding

“One of the topics that the survey measures is how crowded schools are.”

- How do you know if your school is overcrowded?
- If you were trying to convince someone on the district or state level that your school was overcrowded, what data would you use?

Probe: How easily available would this data be for you? Who else in the school would be able to access it?

[At this point, moderator will hand out Sheet 1: Proposed Questions about Overcrowding. This sheet will have on it questions 10a, 12, 13a–c, and 14 from the school survey.]

- The survey designers have been experimenting with different methods of measuring crowding in schools. Do you think that these questions would be good measures of overcrowding?

*Probe: Which of these methods do you think would work best?
Would this information be easily available to you? How easy or difficult would these questions be for you to answer?*

6. Time Use

[Hand out Sheet 2: Proposed Question on Principal Time Use. This sheet will have on it question 11 from the principals' survey.]

“On this sheet is a proposed version of an survey item. I’d like you to take a couple of minutes to complete the question right now.”

- How easy or difficult was it for you to break your time up in this way?
- Did you answer this question based on what you did in the last week specifically, or on what you do in an average week?
- How would your answer to this question depend on the time of year?
- There are five different categories offered (a through e) plus an “other” category. What additional categories should be offered that are not?
- Are any of these categories irrelevant or unnecessary?
- Are any of these categories unclear or poorly phrased?

7. Testing

“The next topic that I would like to discuss with you tonight is testing that takes place in your school.”

- Aside from tests and grades given by individual teachers to their own classes, what assessments are given in your school?
- What is the role of the district in administering state and national tests?
- Are there any assessments that take place in your school that the district does not know about?

8. Hiring/Firing

“The Schools and Staffing Survey asks a number of questions about teacher staffing. Because of this, the sponsors of the survey are interested in learning in more detail about the process through which teachers are hired and fired.”

“Let’s begin by walking through the process of hiring a teacher.”

- At what point in the year are openings for the next year identified?
- How are candidates recruited?
- On what criteria are candidates judged? Who determines these criteria?
- Who is responsible for making hiring decisions? What role does the district have in these decisions?

“Now I’d like to walk through the process of dismissing a teacher. We are not interested in teachers who are dismissed because of budget cuts or declining enrollment, but those that are dismissed due to poor performance.”

- Who makes the first determination that a teacher should be dismissed?
- On what information is this decision based?
- After this decision is made, what steps must take place before the dismissal is finalized?

[Hand out Sheet 3: Proposed Questions on Teacher Hiring and Firing. This front of this sheet will contain question 21 from the principals’ survey.]

“This question would ask principals whether or not each of the options is a barrier to dismissing poor or incompetent teachers.”

- What barriers are missing from this list?
- Are any of these options unclear or poorly phrased?
- Are any of these options irrelevant or unnecessary?

[On back of Sheet 3 will be question 23 from the district survey.]

“If you look at the back of this sheet, you will see another proposed question for the survey. This question asks which types of pay incentives, if any, a district uses to recruit or retain teachers.”

- What types of pay incentives are missing from this list?
- Are these incentives given at the school or district level? Are there incentives given by the district that you might not know about?
- Are any of these options unclear or poorly phrased?
- Are any of these options irrelevant or unnecessary?

9. *Gaining Participation in the Survey (if time permits)*

“Finally, I’d like to ask you about the factors that would make you more or less likely to participate in the survey.”

- What information would you want to know before deciding to complete the survey and send it in?

“The survey process will work in the following way: A Census Bureau employee will first call your school to make an appointment to come in. At the appointed time, the Census Bureau employee will then come to your school, meet with school personnel including the principal, and distribute the questionnaires.”

- On which days of the week would it be easiest for you to meet with the Census employee and receive your form?
- At what times during the day would it be easiest for you to meet with the Census employee and receive your form?
- At your school, who would be the most appropriate person to contact to set up this appointment?

Moderator’s Guide: Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) Focus Group of Principals (3/5/03)

[NOTE: Before the focus groups begin, participants will fill out the Pre-Focus Group Questionnaire, which will ask them about the terms “paraprofessional” and “Average Daily Attendance.”]

1. Introduction of Moderator

- Independent consultant hired to moderate these discussions
- No vested interest in receiving any particular point of view

2. Ground Rules

- You have been asked here to offer your views and opinions; everyone’s participation is important
- No right or wrong answers
- It’s OK to be critical; if you dislike something or disagree with something that is said, I want to hear about it
- Audio and videotaping/observers
- All answers are confidential, so feel free to speak your mind
- Speak one at a time
- No side conversations
- Location of bathrooms

3. Introduction of Topic

“The purpose of this focus group is for you to provide information that will be used to fine-tune questions on a national survey of schools called the Schools and Staffing Survey. This survey is conducted every 4 years by the Census Bureau and the National Center for Education Statistics. The survey gathers national data on teacher demand and shortages, teacher and administrator characteristics, school programs, and general conditions in schools.

Each year that the survey is conducted, the questions it asks are reviewed and adjusted to make sure that they are relevant and appropriate. The information you give tonight will help the test designers as they go through that process.”

4. Participant Introductions

“Before beginning our discussion, I’d like to have you go around the table and introduce yourselves. Please give your first name only, and the school and district where you work.”

5. Overcrowding

“One of the topics that the survey measures is overcrowding in schools.”

- How do you know if your school is overcrowded?
- If you were trying to convince someone on the district or state level that your school was overcrowded, what data would you use?

Probe: How easily available would this data be for you? Who else in the school would be able to access it?

[At this point, moderator will hand out Sheet 1: Proposed Questions about Overcrowding. This sheet will have on it newly drafted questions about overcrowding.]

- The survey designers have been experimenting with different methods of measuring crowding in schools. Do you think that these questions would be good measures of overcrowding?

Probe: Would this information be easily available to you? How easy or difficult would these questions be for you to answer?

6. Time Use

[Hand out Sheet 2: Proposed Question on Principal Time Use. This sheet will have on it a newly drafted questions about the amount of time principals spend working per week, and the amount of time that they spend interacting with students.]

“On this sheet is a proposed version of a survey item. I’d like you to take a couple of minutes to complete the question right now.”

- How easy or difficult was it for you to answer this question?
- How would your answer to this question depend on the time of year?
- This question currently asks you how much time you spend interacting with students in any way. Do you think the question would be more informative if you reported separate amounts of time for different types of interaction with students?

7. Hiring/Firing

“The Schools and Staffing Survey asks a number of questions about teacher staffing. Because of this, the sponsors of the survey are interested in learning in more detail about the process through which teachers are hired and fired.”

[Hand out Sheet 3: Proposed Questions on Teacher Hiring and Firing. This front of this sheet will contain question 21 from the principals’ survey.]

“This question would ask principals whether or not each of the options is a barrier to dismissing poor or incompetent teachers.”

- What barriers are missing from this list?
- Are any of these options unclear or poorly phrased?
- Are any of these options irrelevant or unnecessary?

[On back of Sheet 3 will be question 23 from the district survey.]

“If you look at the back of this sheet, you will see another proposed question for the survey. This question asks which types of pay incentives, if any, a district uses to recruit or retain teachers.”

- Are these types of incentives given at the school or district level? Are there incentives given by the district that you might not know about?

[Hand out Sheet 4: More Proposed Questions on Teacher Staffing. This sheet will have on it a question about how open positions are filled.]

“This question asks principals to identify all the ways that teaching vacancies were filled at their school for the current school year.”

- Are there any methods of filling vacancies that should be included on this list but are not?
- Are any of these choices unclear or difficult to understand?

[On back of Sheet 4 will be a question about how difficult or easy it was to fill vacancies in different fields.]

“This question asks principals to identify how difficult or easy it was to fill vacancies in different fields for the current school year.”

- Would you be able to answer this question?
- Would your central district office be better able to answer this question than you?

“Now I’d like you to walk through with me the process of begin by walking through the process of dismissing a teacher. We are not interested in teachers who are dismissed because of budget cuts or declining enrollment, but those that are dismissed due to poor performance.”

- Who makes the first determination that a teacher should be dismissed?
- On what information is this decision based?
- After this decision is made, what steps must take place before the dismissal is finalized?

“Now let’s walk through the process of hiring a teacher.”

- At what point in the year are openings for the next year identified?
- How are candidates recruited?
- On what criteria are candidates judged? Who determines these criteria?
- Who is responsible for making hiring decisions? What role does the district have in these decisions?

8. Testing

“The next topic that I would like to discuss with you tonight is testing that takes place in your school.”

- Aside from tests and grades given by individual teachers to their own classes, what assessments are given in your school?
- What is the role of the district in administering state and national tests?
- Are there any assessments that take place in your school that the district does not know about?

9. Gaining Participation in the Survey

“Finally, I’d like to ask you about the factors that would make you more or less likely to participate in the survey.”

- What information would you want to know before deciding to complete the survey and send it in?

“The survey process will work in the following way: A Census Bureau employee will first call your school to make an appointment to come in. At the appointed time, the Census Bureau employee will come

to your school, have a brief meeting with school personnel including the principal, and distribute the questionnaires to be filled out at a later time.”

- On which days of the week would it be easiest for you to meet with the Census employee and receive your form?
- At what times during the day would it be easiest for you to meet with the Census employee and receive your form?
- At your school, who would be the most appropriate person to contact to set up this appointment?

Attachment G-5. Hand-out Sheets Distributed During Focus Groups

The sheets included here are as follows:

- Sheet 1: Questions on Free and Reduced-Price Lunches and Title I—This sheet was used in the other knowledgeable staff focus groups.
- Sheet 1: Proposed Questions about Overcrowding—This was sheet 2 in the other knowledgeable staff focus groups and sheet 1 in the first principal focus group. (The sheet used in the second principal focus group contained another question.)
- Sheet 2: Proposed Question on Principal Time Use—This sheet was used in the first principal focus group.
- Sheet 3: Proposed Questions on Teacher Hiring and Firing—This sheet was used in the principal focus groups.
- Sheet 4: More Proposed Questions on Teacher Staffing—This sheet was used in the second principal focus group.

Sheet 1: Questions on Free and Reduced-Price Lunches and Title I

- Question 1: Regardless of whether this school participates in the National School Lunch Program, around the first of October, were any students in this school ELIGIBLE for free or reduced-price lunches?
- Question 2: Around the first of October, about how many students in this school were ELIGIBLE for free or reduced-price lunches?
- Question 3: Does this school participate in the National School Lunch Program?
- Question 4: Around the first of October, how many applicants at this school were APPROVED for free or reduced-price lunches?
- Question 5: Around the first of October, did any students enrolled in this school receive Title I services at this school, or any other location? (Title I is a federally funded program that provides educational services, such as remedial reading or remedial math, to children who live in areas with high concentrations of low-income families.)
- Question 6: Is this school operating a Title I targeted assistance or schoolwide program?
- Targeted assistance program
 - Schoolwide program
- Question 7: How many students participate in the Title I program?
- Question 8: At which grade levels are students receiving Title I services? Check all that apply.
- Prekindergarten
 - Kindergarten
 - 1st
 - 2nd
 - etc.
- Question 9: Are students receiving Title I services in...
- a. Reading/Language Arts?
 - b. Mathematics?
 - etc.

Sheet 1: Proposed Questions about Overcrowding

Question 1: When this school was built (and if applicable, most recently renovated) for how many students was it designed? (Do not count temporary buildings.)

_____ students

Question 2: Does this school use common areas such as the cafeteria, gymnasium, or other nonacademic areas for instructional purposes to accommodate for an overflow of students?

- Yes
- No

Question 3: a. At what time is the cafeteria open to serve lunch to the FIRST group of students?
b. At what time does the cafeteria stop serving lunch to the LAST group of students?
c. How long is each lunch period?

Question 4: Do teachers have planning time in their own classrooms?

- Yes
- No

Sheet 2: Proposed Question on Principal Time Use

Question 1: During the last full week of school, approximately what percent of your work hours did you spend on the following activities?

- a. Administrative activities (e.g., managing school budget and calendar, monitoring teacher and student absences, reporting school progress to district officials)

_____ percent of my work hours

- b. Interacting with students (e.g., discussing personal and/or academic issues, discipline)

_____ percent of my work hours

- c. Activities related to teacher assessment and curriculum development (e.g., observing classrooms, implementing curriculum guides, recommending professional training for teachers and staff)

_____ percent of my work hours

- d. Maintaining school safety and supervising facility management (e.g., reporting dangerous activities to the police, conducting fire drills, supervising student drop-off and pick-up, ensuring proper use and operation of school equipment and supplies, communicating with maintenance staff)

_____ percent of my work hours

- e. Maintaining relationships with parents and the larger community (e.g., building relationships with local businesses and organizations, parents, and community leaders)

_____ percent of my work hours

- f. Other

_____ percent of my work hours

Sheet 3: Proposed Questions on Teacher Hiring and Firing

Question 1: Are the following considerations barriers to the dismissal of poor or incompetent teachers in this school?

a. Personnel policies

Yes

No

b. Termination decisions not upheld by third-party adjudicators

Yes

No

c. Inadequate teacher assessment documentation

Yes

No

d. Tenure

Yes

No

e. Teacher associations and organizations

Yes

No

f. Dismissal is too stressful and uncomfortable for those involved

Yes

No

Question 2: Does this district use the following pay incentives to recruit or retain teachers?

a. Signing bonus

Yes

No

b. Bonus for teaching in the same school for multiple years

Yes

No

c. Tuition reimbursement

Yes

No

d. Student loan forgiveness

Yes

No

e. Relocation assistance

Yes

No

f. Housing subsidies or rent assistance

Yes

No

g. Finder's fee for new teacher referrals

Yes

No

h. Subsidized meals

Yes

No

i. Subsidized transportation

Yes

No

Sheet 4: More Proposed Questions on Teacher Staffing

Question 1: For this school year (2002–03), were there teaching vacancies in this school; that is, teaching positions for which teachers were recruited and interviewed?

Question 2: Did this school use the following methods to cover the vacancies?

a. Hired a fully qualified teacher

Yes

No

b. Hired a less-than-fully qualified teacher

Yes

No

c. Cancelled planned course offerings

Yes

No

d. Expanded some class sizes

Yes

No

e. Added sections to other teachers' normal teaching loads

Yes

No

f. Assigned a teacher of another subject or grade level to teach those classes

Yes

No

g. Assigned an administrator or counselor to teach those classes

Yes

No

h. Used long-term or short-term substitutes

Yes

No

Question 3: How difficult or easy was it to fill the vacancies for this school year in each of the following fields?

	Not applicable at this school	No vacancy in that field	Easy	Somewhat difficult	Very difficult	Could not fill the vacancy
General elementary						
Special education						
English/Language arts						
Social studies						
Computer science						
Mathematics						
Physical sciences						
Biology or life sciences						
English as a Second Language (ESL), English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), or bilingual education						
Foreign languages						
Music or art						
Vocational or technical education						

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Appendix H. Results of the Cognitive Pretest on SASS Public School Questions

This appendix contains a report by the U.S. Census Bureau’s Center for Survey Methods Research on cognitive interviews held with respondents on questions from the Public School Questionnaire. The material is organized as follows.

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Background

This report reflects the evaluation by the U.S. Census Bureau’s Center for Survey Methods Research (CSMR) of the 2003–04 Public School Questionnaire from the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS). The purpose of this evaluation was to examine respondents’ reactions to both the new and revised questions, their ability to follow skip patterns in the self-administered form, and their knowledge of the requested information.

This evaluation followed a series of focus groups that were conducted by a contractor and are reported separately. (See “Appendix G. Report on SASS Focus Groups,” of the *Documentation for the 2003–04 Schools and Staffing Survey*.) Several changes to the questions were incorporated based on results from the focus group. These and further changes were investigated through cognitive testing. The following key concepts were examined through questions in the structured protocol:

- familiarity with the concept of Average Daily Attendance and ability to calculate;
- understanding and clarity of definitions for transitional kindergarten, transitional first grade, and library media center;
- quality of data gathered by new overcrowding questions;
- familiarity with special programs (e.g., International Baccalaureate and Specialized Career Academy) and understanding of American Indian and Alaska Native coursework;
- counts of substitute teachers as an indicator of teacher absenteeism;
- clarity of questions on technology;
- familiarity with the term Limited-English Proficiency;
- clarity of Title I and free and reduced-price lunch counts; and
- charter school identification.

In the next section, the methodology used to conduct the interviews is described. Following that, the results of the interviews are documented. The questions are presented in the order of their appearance in the questionnaire as it was tested.

Research Methods

In March and April of 2003, CSMR staff conducted cognitive interviews with 12 respondents in Maryland, Virginia, the District of Columbia, and West Virginia. An incentive of \$35 was provided.

Interviews ranged in duration from 45 minutes to an hour and a half and were audiotaped after gaining respondents’ consent. Since the form is self-administered, respondents were instructed to read aloud as well as think aloud while completing the questions. After each section, respondents were asked to stop and revisit earlier questions with the interviewer. Structured, as well as unstructured, probes were administered retrospectively, after each section. There were five sections, which ranged from 5 to 17 questions each. The interview was conducted in this manner to minimize disrupting the flow of the self-administered form while still gathering information on respondents’ answering techniques soon after the questions were answered.

A few questions were omitted from the cognitive test due to the fact that time was limited and these items were time-consuming and gathered administrative data. These were the counts of students and teachers by race and Hispanic origin and staffing counts. These questions have been used in the past and were not changed substantially (only formatting and the order of the questions had been changed at the time of the cognitive test) for the 2003–04 SASS. Respondents were simply told to skip these items during the

cognitive test. In the question-by-question review, the omitted questions are noted as missing items where they would have appeared.

A few questions in the survey were skipped by most respondents, thus were not tested as rigorously as the other items. These cases are noted. After discussing the concerns and recommendations with sponsors, some items were moved within the questionnaire or changed based on concerns that were out-of-scope for the cognitive test. These changes are not documented in this report because they were not a result of the cognitive testing.

Respondent Characteristics

Respondents from public schools in Maryland, the District of Columbia, Virginia, and West Virginia were interviewed. Six of the schools were elementary schools, four were middle schools, and two were high schools. One school was a public charter school; another was a magnet school. There was wide variety among the schools in terms of the student population, socioeconomic status, extent of English language fluency, number of students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs), and level of participation in the free or reduced-price lunch program.

Recruiting was conducted through school board offices and by contacting schools directly, and the interviews were conducted in the school offices. Ten of the respondents were school principals. Two were assistant principals.

General Findings

Both principals and assistant principals had no problems completing the items due to lack of access to information requested in the questionnaire. None of the respondents reported thinking that any of the questions were too difficult or sensitive.

One notable general problem was that respondents had difficulty with the skip patterns in the form. One respondent always took the skip, whether or not her answer corresponded to the skip pattern (e.g., whenever she saw the indication that a skip was available, she read it and skipped to that question). Other respondents answered questions that they were instructed to skip. Many respondents went back and read the instruction to skip only after they came to a question that did not logically follow their answer to the previous question. For this reason, it was recommended that careful attention be paid to any edits to the data. In all cases, respondents answered the first question in the series correctly; when they went on to answer questions that they should not have, these answers sometimes provided misleading data.

Question-by-Question Findings

I. General Information About This School

1. *Which of the following grades are offered in this school? Mark (X) all that apply. (Response options Kindergarten through 12th and ungraded)*

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

2a. *Around the first of October, how many students in grades K–12 and comparable ungraded levels were enrolled in this school (e.g., in the grades checked above in item 1)? Do NOT include prekindergarten, postsecondary, or adult education students*

__ Students

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

2b. *How many of these students were migrant students? (Migrant students are those who move from school to school because they are children of migrant agricultural workers, including migratory dairy workers and migratory fishers.)*

___ Migrant Students

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: Changed to make consistent with Items 1, 3, and 4. Added note not to include prekindergarten, postsecondary, or adult education. This question was reworded as follows:

Around the first of October, how many migrant students attended this school?

* Do NOT include prekindergarten, postsecondary, or adult education students.

* Migrant students are those who move from school to school because they are children of migrant agricultural workers, including migratory dairy workers and migratory fishers.

__ None OR / _ / _ / _ / _ / Migrant students

3. *Around the first of October, how many MALE students attended this school? * Do NOT include prekindergarten, postsecondary, or adult education students.*

___ Male Students

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

Item 4 was not tested.

5. *For this school year (2003–2004), what is the Average Daily Attendance (ADA) at this school?*

___ Students

Concern: Most respondents had these data available as a percentage. They had to convert them back into number of students. Some respondents did this, but others simply reported the percentage in the response

boxes (e.g., 94, 94.6). This resulted in extremely low ADAs in some cases, and a higher number of students attending than enrolled in others (because one of these schools had 600 students and the other had only 88).

Recommendation: For this school year (2003–04), what is the percentage of Average Daily Attendance (ADA) at this school?

Resolution: The question was changed as follows to request percentages rather than numbers:

For this school year (2003–2004), what is the Average Daily Attendance (ADA) at this school? (expressed to the nearest whole percent)?

__ % Students

6. *How long is the school day for students in this school? * Report BOTH hours and minutes, e.g., 6 hours and 0 minutes, 5 hours and 45 minutes, etc. If the length of day varies by grade level, record the longest day.*

__ Hours AND __ Minutes

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

7a. *Does this school have a kindergarten, transitional kindergarten, or transitional first grade? *Transitional (or readiness) kindergarten is an extra year of school for kindergarten-age children who are judged not ready for kindergarten. * Transitional first (or prefirst) grade is an extra year of school for children who have attended kindergarten but have been judged not ready for first grade.*

__ Yes

__ No → GO TO Item 8.

Concern: There is concern that kindergarten is being underreported, since the emphasis on transitional grades is very heavy. Several elementary school respondents, after reading the descriptions of transitional kindergarten and first grade marked “no,” even though they have kindergarten. They had forgotten that regular kindergarten is also included in the question.

Recommendation: These questions should be separated.

Resolution: This question was reworded as follows:

Does this school have a kindergarten?

*Include regular kindergarten as well as transitional kindergarten and transitional first grade.

7b. *How long is the school day for a kindergarten, transitional kindergarten, or transitional first grade student? * Mark (X) only one box.*

- Full day (4 hours or more per day)
- Half day (less than 4 hours per day)
- Both offered

Concerns: None

Recommendation: Make consistent with 7a.

Resolution: The question was revised to be consistent with 7a as follows:

How long is the school day for a kindergarten student?

7c. *How many days per week does a kindergarten, transitional kindergarten, or transitional first grade student attend? * If the number of days per week varies (e.g., some students attend 3 days per week and some attend 5 days per week), record the most days that a student would attend in a week.*

Days per week

Concerns: None

Recommendation: Make consistent with 7a.

Resolution: The question was revised to be consistent with 7a as follows:

How many days per week does a kindergarten student attend?

8. *When this school was built (and, if applicable, most recently renovated) for how many students was it designed? * Do not count temporary buildings.*

Students

Concern: This question asks for the building capacity when the school was built. Several respondents noted that the capacity had changed over time, even though the building itself had not changed. They reported receiving information from the facilities' manager, the board office, or other staff. Sometimes it was based on square footage, student/teacher ratios, or other factors. There are guidelines for determining building capacity that are subject to change.

Recommendation: Since this question invokes a possibly different aspect of capacity (e.g., historical capacity), this question should be revised. Given that there is a number for capacity that respondents can look up, it was decided to ask for the current capacity with the understanding that it may change from year to year.

Resolution: The question was revised to ask for current capacity as follows:

What is the current capacity of this school? * Do not count capacity of temporary buildings.

9a. *Does this school have one or more temporary buildings?*

- No → GO TO Item 10.
 Yes

Concern: This seems to be a good measure of overcrowding; however, it does not ask if the temporary buildings are currently being used for students. One school which had been overcrowded prior to redistricting still had a temporary building that was used for storage. The respondent reported this and gave a capacity for item 9b even though no students are housed there, and he stated that he is under capacity.

Recommendation: Does this school have one or more temporary buildings that are used as classrooms or office space?

Resolution: No change. This question does provide an indication of capacity. Temporary buildings, despite how they may be used, provide additional capacity for the school.

9b. *For how many students (was this/were these) temporary building(s) designed?*

- Students

Concern: Respondents almost always reported a typical class size (or the number of desks in the classroom) as the capacity for the temporary buildings. One respondent could not give an answer at all because one of the buildings is used for offices, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, gifted, tech support, art and music, so students come and go but no students are housed there.

Recommendation: How many classrooms are located in the temporary buildings?

Resolution: Made the current question consistent with question 8. It is of interest how many students could be housed in the temporary buildings, not how many are currently housed there. This deals with giving an estimate of possible capacity to compare to enrollment. Revised question as follows:

What is the current capacity of the temporary building(s)?

10. *Does this school use common areas such as the cafeteria, gymnasium, or other nonacademic areas for instructional purposes to accommodate for an overflow of students?*

- Yes
 No

Concerns: None. This new question performed well. Respondents were able to discriminate between areas that were used intentionally and those that were used due to lack of space.

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

11. *Do you have any teachers who do not have their own classrooms due to a lack of space?*

- Yes
 No

Concern: This seemed to work pretty well. There was some disagreement among respondents as to whether special teachers and part-time teachers counted. However, it did work well to discriminate those schools with no overcrowding versus those schools with substantial overcrowding.

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

12. *Does this school have a library or library media center? (A library media center is an organized collection of printed and/or audiovisual and/or computer resources which is administered as a unit, is located in a designated place or places, and makes resources and services available to students, teachers, and administrators.) (A library media center may be called a library, media center, resource center, information center, instructional materials center, learning resource center, or some other name.)*

Yes

No

Concern: Very few of the respondents read the notes, because they felt comfortable answering without reading them. The one person who did read it thought that some of the terms (e.g., resource center, learning resource center) were specific to special education, rather than regular education.

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

II. Admissions, Programs, and Performance

13. *What type of school is this? * Mark (X) the box that best describes this school.*

REGULAR elementary or secondary

Elementary or secondary with a SPECIAL PROGRAM EMPHASIS (such as a science/math school, performing arts school, talented/gifted school, foreign language immersion school, etc.)

SPECIAL EDUCATION - primarily serves students with disabilities

VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL - primarily serves students being trained for occupations

ALTERNATIVE - offers a curriculum designed to provide alternative or nontraditional education; does not specifically fall into the categories of regular, special program, special education, or vocational school - Please describe.

Concern: The one charter school respondent did not know there were later questions about charter schools, and he wanted to note here that he was a charter school. He answered “alternative” and wrote in “public charter.”

Recommendation: Either add an alternative for charter schools or instruct respondent how to answer (e.g., give an example where it is intended).

Resolution: Schools can be charter schools and vary along these dimensions. The screener question for charter schools (62) will be inserted after this question to allow charter schools to express their uniqueness. It will still be asked again as a screener prior to the other charter school items.

In an effort to make the question more specific, the question was reworded as follows:

Which of the following best describes this school's major program emphasis? *Mark (X) one box.

14. *Is this ENTIRE SCHOOL specifically for students who have been suspended or expelled, who have dropped out, or who have been referred for behavioral or adjustment problems?*

Yes
 No

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

15a. *Does this school have a magnet program? (A magnet program offers enhancements such as special curricular themes or methods of instruction to attract students from outside their normal attendance area.)*

Yes
 No → GO TO item 16 on page --.

Concern: One respondent thought that, by nature, charter schools offer special programs and should be included.

Recommendation: Instruct charter schools how to answer.

Resolution: See resolution to item 13. Charter schools are given the opportunity prior to this question to express their special programs.

15b. *Is this a school-wide magnet program in which all students in this school participate in the program?*

Yes
 No

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

15c. *Is this magnet program intended to encourage students of different racial or ethnic backgrounds to enroll in this school for the purposes of creating racial balance or reducing racial isolation?*

Yes

No

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

16. *Does this school have any special requirements for admission other than proof of immunization, age, or residence?*

Yes

No → GO TO item 18 on page --.

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

17. *Does this school use the following requirements for admission?*

a. *Admission test*

Yes

No

b. *Standardized achievement test*

Yes

No

c. *Academic record*

Yes

No

d. *Special student needs (e.g., students “at risk” or with disabilities)*

Yes

No

e. *Special student aptitudes, skills, or talents*

Yes

No

f. Personal interview

- Yes
 No

g. Recommendations

- Yes
 No

Concern: Not all respondents skipped correctly after item 16. Some consequently had difficulty with this item. For example, schools without admissions requirements had difficulty answering questions about using academic records and personal interviews—which they do use as part of the admissions procedure, just not as a criterion. Do edits correct for the wrongly answered items?

Recommendation: Ensure that edits erase data for item 17 if item 16 is marked “no.”

Resolution: The National Center for Education Statistics is going to evaluate this.

18. *Does this school receive performance reports from the district that cover such things as students’ scores on achievement tests or graduation rates?*

- Yes → GO TO item 20.
 No → GO TO item 19.

Concerns: All respondents marked yes to this item. They receive performance reports from the district, region, and/or state.

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

19. *Regardless of source, does your school have performance reports?*

- Yes → GO TO item 20.
 No → GO TO item 21.

Concern: Almost everyone in the test skipped this item.

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

20. *Does this school use these performance reports to -*

a. Evaluate the progress of students in this school?

- Yes
 No

Concern: A few respondents mentioned that they were not sure how to interpret this question. One indicated that performance reports do not determine the child's progression to or retention in a grade level, but he still answered affirmatively. Another respondent said no because teachers, not the school, evaluate the progress of the students.

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

b. Determine the next year's instructional focus?

Yes

No

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

c. Realign the curriculum, such as with content standards and/or other indicator criteria?

Yes

No

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

d. Inform parents and the community of the school's progress?

Yes

No

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

e. Prompt school-level initiatives for improvement?

Yes

No

Concern: Several respondents mentioned that they thought this was a repeat of a previously asked item (b or c).

Recommendation: Evaluate meaning and whether other questions gather the same data.

Resolution: No change

21. Does this school offer the following programs?

a. Programs with special instructional approaches (e.g., Montessori, self-paced instruction, open education, ungraded classrooms, etc.)

Yes
 No

Concern: This question was interpreted very broadly by respondents. There were “yes” answers for a multi-age (1st and 2nd grade) classroom, reading recovery, special education (use self-paced instruction).

Recommendation: Evaluate meaning of this question. “Special instructional approaches” is very broad.

Resolution: No change. It was determined that respondents could use their own judgment in how to interpret this.

b. Talented/gifted program (Designed for students with specifically identified talents or exceptional academic achievement)

Yes
 No

Concern: For high school, respondents wanted to know if honors or advanced placement (AP) classes counted, because that is their alternative for talented and gifted. Respondents were unsure whether a gifted resource teacher was sufficient to answer affirmatively.

Recommendation: Specify whether honors courses are included.

Resolution: These classes should be included. Revised wording to the following:

Talented/gifted program or honors courses

c. Immersion in a foreign language program (Curriculum is offered in a foreign language instead of English or in addition to English)

Yes
 No

Concern: Respondents from high schools counted their regular foreign language program as immersion (Spanish I–IV, etc.). An elementary school respondent marked “yes” because they use a video program that is in Spanish and teaches students a few words of Spanish. This is not immersion!

Recommendation: Program in which curriculum is taught in a foreign language.

Resolution: Changed wording to be more specific about what is intended, as follows:

Program in which at least half of the core subjects is taught in a foreign language

d. Advanced placement (AP) courses for college credit

Yes
 No

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

e. International Baccalaureate (IB) (An international curriculum certified by the International Baccalaureate Organization)

Yes
 No

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

f. Specialized career academy (Curriculum that integrates academic and vocational courses, organized around broad career areas)

Yes
 No

Concern: This may also over count. Schools with career programs sometimes marked yes, even though they did not have this type of academy.

Recommendation: In note, specify minimum requirements for a “program,” for example, how many courses or semesters, etc.

Resolution: This question was revised to be more specific about the fact that specialized career academies last over a period of years:

Specialized career academy (Multi-year curriculum that integrates academic and vocational courses, organized around broad career areas)

22a. Does this school offer any course(s) on American Indian or Alaska Native topics?

Yes
 No → GO TO item 23.

Concern: This item performed as intended. Respondents focused on entire courses offered in these topics. No one responded affirmatively, which is what was expected in the area under review.

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

22b. Which of the following courses are offered at this school?

a. American Indian or Alaska Native history

Yes
 No

b. American Indian or Alaska Native language

Yes
 No

c. American Indian or Alaska Native culture

Yes
 No

d. American Indian or Alaska Native arts and crafts

Yes
 No

e. American Indian tribal government or Alaska Native village government

Yes
 No

Concern: All respondents skipped this item.

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

23. Are the following programs or services currently available AT THIS SCHOOL for students in any of grades K–12 or comparable ungraded levels, regardless of funding source?

a. A program for students with discipline or adjustment problems

Yes
 No

Concern: Respondents interpreted the term “program” with different levels of formality. Some states have a special education program for students with behavior and/or emotional disorders. Some respondents reported these programs here, and one did not (but mentioned it here). Other respondents were unsure whether a regular discipline program should be included.

Recommendation: Specify wording to reflect intended meaning.

Resolution: Changed wording to indicate that a very formal program is intended by the question:

A separate, self-contained program for students with discipline problems

b. Medical health care services (Services provided by trained professionals to diagnose and treat health problems of students)

Yes

No

Concern: This question was interpreted very differently by respondents, especially with respect to whether or not a school nurse counts. Seven respondents explicitly included school nurses and four explicitly excluded them. Several respondents noted that nurses do not really diagnose.

Recommendation: Add a note as to whether school nurses should be included or excluded (or criteria for inclusion).

Resolution: Changed the wording to reflect that only services beyond what is provided by a school nurse should be reported:

Medical health care services beyond those provided by a school nurse (Services to diagnose and/or treat health problems of students)

c. Extended day or before-school or after-school day care programs

Yes

No

Concern: This seems to ask about two different programs. Extended day was interpreted by respondents as instructional time beyond the normal school day, presumably for students who are falling behind or are at risk. After or before school day care is for child care and not instruction.

Recommendation: Separate this into two questions.

Resolution: Separated into two questions as follows:

c. Extended day program providing instruction beyond the normal school day for students needing academic assistance

d. Before or after school day care programs.

24a. Does this school currently have a drug, alcohol, or tobacco use prevention program?

Yes

No → GO TO Item 25a.

Concern: The term “program” in this question seems to have a different meaning than in previous questions. It can include much more informal activities. Respondents were inconsistent in whether or not they included guidance counselors or health classes that deal with drug abuse.

Recommendation: Specify what type of program is desired.

Resolution: Moved to the principal questionnaire, near the school crime section. No change to question. Allowed respondents to use their own judgment.

24b. Is there a formal procedure in place to assess the effectiveness of this prevention program?

Yes

No

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: Moved to the principal questionnaire, near the school crime section. No change to question.

25a. Does this school currently have a violence prevention program?

Yes

No → GO TO Section III on page --.

Concerns: The same issues occurred here as with question 24a. Respondents were inconsistent as to whether they should include guidance counselors that deal with violence prevention. Similarly they did not know whether to include peer mediation or bullying programs for violence prevention.

Recommendation: Specify what type of program is desired.

Resolution: Moved to the principal questionnaire, near the school crime section. No change to question. Allow respondents to use their own judgment.

25b. Is there a formal procedure in place to assess the effectiveness of this prevention program?

Yes

No

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: Moved to the principal questionnaire, near the school crime section. No change to question.

III. Students and Class Organization

26. Does this school use the following methods to organize classes or student groups?

Concern: Respondents did not know what the reference period was for this question. Whether they were to report if these methods had ever been used or if they were current practices would sometimes make a difference in their answers.

Recommendation: Add a reference period.

Resolution: Revised the question to add a reference period as follows:

This school year (2003–2004), does this school use the following methods to organize classes or student groups?

a. Traditional grades or academic discipline-based departments

Yes
 No

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

b. Grades subdivided into small groups such as “houses” or “families”

Yes
 No

Concern: Several people mentioned teams, and answered affirmatively. Teams were used in middle and high schools for the core teachers of a grade and their students. For example, in one school the sixth grade is comprised two teams. Each team consists of four core teachers (English, Math, Social Studies, and Science) and the half of the sixth grade students.

Recommendation: Specify whether teams should be included, or, if not, be clearer about what houses and families mean and why teams would not fit here.

Resolution: Teams are appropriately included, and need not be mentioned in the item. No change.

c. Student groups that remain two or more years with the same teacher (e.g., looping)

Yes
 No

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

d. Interdisciplinary teaching (e.g., two or more teachers with different academic specializations collaborate to teach an interdisciplinary program to the same group of students)

Yes
 No

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

e. Paired or team teaching (e.g., two or more teachers are jointly responsible for teaching a single group of students)

Yes
 No

Concern: This was sometimes misunderstood as the same thing as interdisciplinary teaching.

Recommendation: Revise wording to increase differentiation from interdisciplinary teaching.

Resolution: Revised wording as follows:

Paired or team teaching (e.g., two or more teachers in the same class at the same time are jointly responsible for teaching a single group of students)

27a. Are academic intersessions or summer school activities provided at this school for students who need extra assistance to meet academic expectations?

Yes → GO TO item 28a.
 No

Concerns/Recommendation/Resolution: See next item.

27b. Are these programs offered for students enrolled in this school at another public school location?

Yes
 No

Concern: Many of the schools that were contacted have summer school at a central location for the school district each summer. The location rotates and is sometimes at the respondent's school and sometimes not, regardless of how many of their students will be attending. So, answers to items a and b will depend on the year they are asked and not on anything about the school itself. Respondents had a hard time with the skips here and many skipped b although they should have answered it and would, indeed, have answered it affirmatively.

One respondent got confused about the meaning of academic intersessions and interpreted it as including any instruction provided beyond the normal school day.

Recommendation: By combining the two questions and concentrating on the existence of these activities rather than their location, more accurate data should be gathered. Respondents all knew whether or not their students could attend summer school, and this was not always conveyed in the questionnaire due to inadvertently skipping item b (or generalizing item a to include other locations).

Because summer school is the more common of the two, the order should be switched.

Resolution: Revised the question wording to specify a reference period. Listed summer school activities first, and deleted reference to the location of the activities. Replaced the second question in the series with one that asks about the location of the activities. Moved this question and question 28a and b at the end of Section II near other questions about school programs. The series is as follows:

27a. For the last school year and last summer (2002–2003), were summer school activities or academic intersessions provided for students enrolled in this school needing academic assistance?

27b. (IF YES) Are these activities provided . . .

- 1) At this school
- 2) At another school
- 3) At both this school and another school

28a. *Are academic intersessions or summer school activities provided at this school for students who seek academic advancement or acceleration?*

Yes → GO TO item 29.

No

Concerns/Recommendation/Resolution: See next item.

28b. *Are these programs offered for students enrolled in this school at another public school location?*

Yes

No

Concern: This question had similar issues to item 27a, and the form should be consistent.

Another issue here was that by academic advancement or acceleration it was sometimes understood that a student could earn course credits or skip a grade by taking summer school. It was not clear to all respondents that activities for enrichment should be included.

Recommendation: Make this item consistent with item 27 and replace “acceleration” with “enrichment.”

Resolution: Revised questions to be consistent with revisions to item 27. Also, replaced “acceleration” with “enrichment.” The series is as follows:

28a. For the last school year and last summer (2002–2003), were summer school activities or academic intersessions provided for students enrolled in this school seeking academic advancement or enrichment?

28b. (IF YES) Are these activities provided . . .

- 1) At this school
- 2) At another school
- 3) At both this school and another school

29. *Are class periods scheduled to create extended instructional blocks of time at this school? (e.g., block scheduling)*

Yes

No

Concern: This seems to be only for middle and high schools; however, an elementary principal marked yes. It is unclear what this would mean in an elementary setting, although some respondents mentioned a 90-minute block for reading, which is not the intent of the question.

Recommendation: Use edit for elementary schools that disregards these data.

Resolution: No change

30. *Does this school use a calendar where number of days for students exceeds mandatory days per year?*

Yes

No

Concern: Respondents differed on how they answered this question pertaining to built in days for snow. When a school system, like DC, schedules a few extra days just in case there are snow days, respondents were unsure how to answer. Most respondents in this situation answered affirmatively.

Recommendation: Make this item clearer.

Resolution: Since the intent of the question is to identify schools with longer school calendars not counting snow days, added a note as follows:

*Do not consider days built in for weather-related closings.

31a. *Does this school use a year-round calendar to distribute school days across twelve months?*

Yes

No → GO TO Item 32.

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

31b. *Do all students attend on the same cycle?*

Yes

No

Concerns: None. All respondents skipped this item.

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

32. *Are the following opportunities available for students in this school?*

Concern: Items a–d are of primary interest in the high school setting, but other respondents tried to interpret them in ways relevant to their own setting.

Resolution: Added a filter prior to items 32 and 33 asking if the school offers grades 9, 10, 11, or 12. Moved item e, revised the question wording, and allowed everyone to answer it.

a. College credits offered through community colleges, colleges, or distance learning providers

Yes
 No

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

b. Work-based learning or internships, in which students earn COURSE CREDITS for supervised learning activities that occur in paid or unpaid workplace assignments

Yes
 No

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

c. Career learning, as a course or part of a course in which students learn about possible careers

Yes
 No

Concern: Respondents were inconsistent in whether they included providing a career day as career learning.

Recommendation: Specify how detailed the program should be. Rather than using the term course (which is usually for middle or high school), use the term curriculum (as a course or part of the curriculum).

Resolution: This is only of interest in schools that offer 9th–12th grades. The filter will eliminate the problem in elementary schools.

d. Job shadowing, in which students learn about a job by following the schedule of a person who holds that job

Yes
 No

Concerns: There is some concern about respondents reporting “yes” to this item if they have one day per year where students do job shadowing.

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change. This is less likely in a high school setting.

e. Distance learning, in which a course is taught primarily via television, satellite, Internet, or e-mail

Yes
 No

Concern: This item could apply to any age group.

Resolution: This item will be moved to Section II and reworded as follows:

Does this school offer any distance learning course(s), in which a course is primarily taught via television, satellite, Internet, or e-mail?

33a. LAST SCHOOL YEAR (2002–2003), were any students enrolled in 12th grade?

Yes
 No → GO TO Section IV on page --.

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

*33b. What percentage graduated with a diploma? * Do not include certificates of completion or attendance.*

/__/_/_/_/ %

Concerns: The one respondent who got this item could not answer, but thought the guidance counselor would have this information.

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

33c. Of those who graduated last year, approximately what percentage went to:

/__/_/_/_/ % Four-year colleges?

/__/_/_/_/ % Two-year colleges?

Concerns: The one respondent who got this item could not answer, but thought the guidance counselor would have these data.

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

IV. Staffing

Items 34–36 were not cognitively tested.

37. *On the most recent school day, how many SHORT-TERM substitute teachers were teaching at this school?*

Full-time	Part-time
/ ___/___/	/ ___/
___ None	___ None

Concern: The number of substitutes reported most often corresponded to number of teachers absent. Some respondents thought about the current school day in answering this question, and others referred to the last school day; however, no problems were anticipated. Most respondents indicated that a full-time substitute would be a substitute for a full-time teacher and a part-time substitute would substitute for a part-time teacher.

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

38a. *For this school year (2003–2004) were there teaching vacancies in this school—that is, teaching positions for which teachers were recruited and interviewed?*

___ Yes
___ No → GO TO item 40 on page --.

Concerns: None. Both principals and assistant principals felt comfortable answering this question.

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

38b. *Did this school use the following methods to cover vacancies?*

(1) *Hired a fully qualified teacher*

___ Yes
___ No

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

(2) *Hired a less-than-fully qualified teacher*

___ Yes
___ No

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

(3) Canceled planned course offerings

Yes
 No

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

(4) Expanded some class sizes

Yes
 No

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

(5) Added sections to other teachers' normal teaching loads

Yes
 No

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

(6) Assigned a teacher of another subject or grade level to teach those classes

Yes
 No

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

(7) Assigned an administrator or counselor to teach the class

Yes
 No

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

(8) Used long-term or short-term substitutes

Yes
 No

Concern: At this point, there may be some overreporting of use of long-term substitutes to include positions for which posting and recruitment had not occurred.

Recommendation: Add note: (Only include permanent teaching vacancies that were covered by a substitute.)

Resolution: This item was moved up to item 3 so the stem of the question would be more salient when answering. It is also a more likely solution than some of the other options.

39. How difficult or easy was it to fill the vacancies for this school year in each of the following fields? Mark (X) one box on each line.

	Not applicable in this school	No vacancy in that field	Easy	Somewhat difficult	Very difficult	Could not fill the vacancy
a. General elementary						
b. Special education						
c. English/Language arts						
d. Social studies						
e. Computer science						
f. Mathematics						
g. Biology or life sciences						
h. Physical sciences						
i. English as a Second Language (ESL), English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), or bilingual education						
j. Foreign Languages						
k. Music or art						
l. Vocational or technical education						

Concern: Most respondents did not discriminate correctly between “Not applicable” and “No vacancy.” Many used “Not applicable” for all positions they did not fill this year, even when they had those positions.

ESL teachers are not always hired at the school level. Sometimes the ESL teacher serves several schools in the district.

Recommendation: Combine “Not applicable” and “No vacancy.”

Resolution: Reordered questions 38 and 39 to cue respondents to think of all possible vacancies prior to asking how they were filled. Revised the wording of the question stem to be consistent with the response categories, as follows:

How easy or difficult was it to fill the vacancies for this school year in each of the following fields?

Revised the “Not applicable at this school” heading as follows:

No positions at this school.

V. Technology

40. *What is the total number of computers in this school?*

_____/_____/_____/_____/ Number of computers

None → GO TO item 45 on page --.

Concern: Many respondents did not initially consider office computers. Some changed the total when they remembered, others just voiced that they had forgotten them.

Recommendation: Add a note to include office computers in the total: Please include all computers in the school, including those in the offices.

Resolution: Added note as follows:

*Include computers used for both instructional and administrative purposes.

41. *How many of these computers currently have access to the Internet?*

_____/_____/_____/_____/ Number of computers

None → GO TO item 43 below.

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

42. *Do most students have access to the Internet through computers located at this school?*

___ Yes

___ No

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

43. *Of the total number of computers in this school (e.g., those in question 40), how many are used for instructional purposes? * Do not include computers that are used exclusively for administrative purposes such as record keeping or communication.*

____/____/____/____/ Number of computers

None → GO TO Section VI on page --.

Concern: Respondents were inconsistent in their handling of computers used only by teachers. Some people explicitly included them; others explicitly excluded them.

Recommendation: Evaluate whether this is an important aspect. Add note if deemed necessary.

Resolution: No change

44. *Which of the following statements best describes the person at this school who helps TEACHERS use technology for teaching students?*

- A district-level coordinator
- A principal or another school administrator
- A school-level coordinator who has no other responsibilities
- A full-time teacher
- A part-time teacher
- A library media specialist
- A parent, student, or other volunteer
- No one serves this function
- Another person, please describe

Concern: Some respondents marked more than one despite the instruction. One respondent mentioned that a contractor had this position and was not sure how to indicate this.

Resolution: One response category was altered and one was added. “A parent, student, or other volunteer” was changed to “A volunteer (parent, student, or other)” and “A contractor” was added. The wording was revised as follows to help emphasize that one answer is requested:

Which of the following best describes the ONE person who spends the most time helping teachers at this school use technology for teaching? *Mark (X) the one best description for that person.

- A district-level coordinator
- A principal or another school administrator
- A school-level coordinator who has no other responsibilities
- A full-time teacher
- A part-time teacher
- A library media specialist
- A volunteer (parent, student, or other)
- A contractor
- No one serves this function
- Another person, please describe

VI. Special Programs and Services

45. *Of students enrolled in this school, how many have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) because they have disabilities or are special education students? *Do not include prekindergarten, postsecondary, or adult education students.*

Students

None → GO TO item 47a.

Concern: Some respondents included students with IEPs for speech, while others did not. One explicitly stated that he needed to know whether they should be included, but did not include them in the end because, although they have IEPs, they are not considered special ed students.

Recommendation: Add a note: Include (or Do not include) students with IEPs for speech.

Resolution: Took the focus away from special education. Reworded the question as follows:

Of students enrolled in this school, how many have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) because they have special needs?

46a. *Does this school primarily serve students with disabilities? * If you marked "SPECIAL EDUCATION school - primarily serves students with disabilities" for item 15, then please mark "Yes" below.*

Yes → GO TO item 47a.

No

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

46b. *How many of these IEP students are in each of the following instructional settings? *The sum of entries in item 46b should equal the entry in item 45 above.*

All day in a regular classroom

Most of the day in a regular classroom (1–20 percent of the school day receiving special education and related services outside the regular classroom)

Some of the day in a regular classroom (21–60 percent of the school day receiving special education and related services outside the regular classroom)

Little or none of the day in a regular classroom (61–100 percent of the school day receiving special education and related services outside the regular classroom)

Concern: Respondents did not think in terms of the amount of time children spend in a regular classroom. This was a difficult question for most respondents. It was especially difficult to make this calculation because the percentages contained in the definitions are opposite of the wording contained in the categories. The percentages reflect time spent outside the regular classroom; the category wording reflects time spent inside the regular classroom. Students seem to spend all day in the class, spend most of the day but are taken out for 1–2 hours per week, are in the regular class for only a few subjects, are in the regular

class only for specialty classes (art, music, etc.) or spend no time in the regular class. Respondents used the categories differently as well.

Recommendation: Invert the example percentages to correspond with time in the regular class.

Resolution: Revised percentages as follows:

- All day in a regular classroom (100 percent of the school day)
- Most of the day in a regular classroom (80–99 percent of the school day)
- Some of the day in a regular classroom (40–79 percent of the school day)
- Little or none of the day in a regular classroom (0–39 percent of the school day)

47a. *Of the students enrolled in this school as of October 1, have any been identified as limited-English proficient? (Limited-English proficient (LEP) refers to students whose native or dominant language is other than English and who have sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language as to deny them the opportunity to learn successfully in an English-speaking-only classroom.)*

- Yes
- No → GO TO the NOTE preceding item 55 on page --.

Concerns: None. All respondents were comfortable with the term LEP.

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

47b. *How many limited-English proficient students are enrolled in this school?*

Students

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

48. *Are the following used to determine whether a student is limited-English proficient?*

a. *Information provided by parent*

- Yes
- No

b. *Teacher observation or referral*

- Yes
- No

c. Home language survey

Yes
 No

d. Student interview

Yes
 No

e. Student records

Yes
 No

f. Achievement test

Yes
 No

g. Language proficiency test

Yes
 No

Concern: Although placement is not always done at the school level, respondents generally had a good idea of what testing was done, or thought that the ESL teacher would have this information if they asked.

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

49. *Does this school have instruction specifically designed to address the needs of limited-English-proficient students?*

Yes
 No → GO TO the NOTE before 55 on page --.

Concerns: None

Recommendation : None

Resolution: No change

50. *Are limited-English-proficient students provided with the following types of language instruction?*

Concern: Due to issues with item B and in an attempt to make the item simpler and parallel to item 51, this series was reworded.

Resolution: Changed wording of the question as follows:

How are limited-English-proficient students taught English?

a. Instruction in English language using approaches such as ESL, structured immersion, or bilingual education

Yes
 No

Concerns: See above.

Resolution: Changed wording of the question as follows:

Using approaches such as ESL, structured immersion, or bilingual education

b. Instruction to maintain the students' fluency in his/her native language, such as Spanish lessons for Spanish speakers

Yes
 No

Concern: There is concern about overreporting in this question. Several respondents who have five or fewer limited-English-proficient students reported “yes” to instruction to maintain fluency, although this seems unlikely. Other respondents reported that Spanish students could take the regular Spanish courses in high school.

Recommendation: Make the item clearer.

Resolution: This item was deleted.

c. Instruction in regular English/language arts classrooms

Yes
 No

Concerns: See above.

Resolution: No change

51. *How are limited-English-proficient students taught subject matter courses such as mathematics, science, and social studies? Are they taught-*

a. In their native language?

Yes
 No

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

b. Using ESL, bilingual, or immersion techniques?

Yes
 No

Concern: There are distinct differences among the terms ESL, bilingual, and immersion. The difference between immersion and item c is not clear.

Recommendation: Clarify what it means to mark item b for immersion rather than item c.

Resolution: No change

c. In regular English-speaking classrooms?

Yes
 No

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

52. *Does this school require limited-English-proficient students to pass a test of English language proficiency to complete its limited-English-proficient program?*

Yes
 No

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

53. *Does this school provide the following services for parents with limited-English skills?*

a. Interpreters for meetings or parent-teacher conferences

Yes
 No

b. Translations of printed materials, such as newsletters, school notices, or school signs

Yes
 No

c. Outreach or referral services for limited-English-proficient parents

Yes
 No

Concern: In some cases these services would be provided if necessary, but the need has never arisen. Since there is no reference period in the question, this caused confusion for several respondents. Some respondents thought they should respond affirmatively if the district provided these services, others did not think this counted.

There is a possibility that schools without LEP students could offer these services to LEP parents. This question is not in the path of a respondent who does not have LEP students.

Recommendation: Does this school have the resources to provide the following services for parents with limited English skills? OR Does this school currently provide . . .

Ask this question of all respondents.

Resolution: No change in question wording. Respondents should use their own judgment. However, this question will be moved to follow question 54 and asked of all respondents. In the question stem, PARENTS will be capped to stress that this question is not asking about services provided to students.

54. *Are limited-English-proficient students in this school administered assessments once or more per year to determine their level of English language proficiency?*

Yes
 No

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

NOTE: Item 55 asks for the number of students enrolled in prekindergarten in this school. Previous items asking for student counts requested that prekindergarten students be excluded. Prekindergarten students are included here because they often receive National School Lunch Program and Title I services asked about in items 56–61.

55a. *Do you have any prekindergarten students?*

Yes
 No → GO TO Item 56.

55b. *How many prekindergarten students are enrolled in this school?*

/ _ / _ / _ /

Concern: Several respondents read the note, then skipped the item without answering “no” because it did not apply to them.

Recommendation: Place note after question in item 55, so that those to which it applies can read it, and it does not distract others.

Resolution: Revised the questions as follows, including the addition of a reference period to item b:
55a. Do you have any prekindergarten students? (Previous items asking for student counts

requested that prekindergarten students be excluded. Prekindergarten students are included here because they often receive National School Lunch Program and Title I services asked about in items 56–61.)

- Yes
- No → GO TO Item 56.

55b. Around the first of October, how many prekindergarten students were enrolled in this school?

56. *Does this school participate in the National School Lunch Program?*

- Yes
- No → GO TO Item 58.

Concern: One respondent misinterpreted this as a nutritional lunch program. There is concern that this could be an incorrect interpretation for those respondents who do not participate.

Recommendation: Add note: (e.g., the federal free and reduced-price lunch program)

Resolution: Revised question wording as follows:

Does this school participate in the National School Lunch Program (e.g., the federal free and reduced-price lunch program)?

57. *Around the first of October, how many applicants at this school were APPROVED for free or reduced-price lunches? *Report a separate count for prekindergarten students*

/ ___ / ___ / ___ / ___ / Prekindergarten students approved
 None

/ ___ / ___ / ___ / ___ / Other students approved (Kindergarten and higher)
 None

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

58. *Around the first of October, did any students enrolled in this school receive Title I services at this school, or any other location? (Title I is a federally funded program that provides educational services, such as remedial reading or remedial math, to children who live in areas with high concentrations of low-income families)*

- Yes
- No → GO TO Item 62.

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

59. How many students participate in the Title I program?

/ ___ / ___ / ___ / ___ / Prekindergarten students participating
___ None

/ ___ / ___ / ___ / ___ / Other students participating (Kindergarten and higher)
___ None

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

60. At which grade levels are students receiving Title I services? *Mark (X) all that apply. (Response options are from prekindergarten through 12th and ungraded)

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

61. Are students receiving Title I services in-

(1) Reading/Language Arts?

___ Yes
___ No

(2) Mathematics?

___ Yes
___ No

(3) English as a Second Language (ESL)?

___ Yes
___ No

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

VII. Charter School Information

62. *Is this school a public CHARTER school? (A charter school is a public school that, in accordance with an enabling state statute, has been granted a charter exempting it from selected state or local rules and regulations. A charter school may be a newly created school or it may previously have been a public or private school.)*

Yes

No → GO TO item 68 on page X.

Concern: Only one charter school was interviewed for this test. There were no problems with the other respondents answering “no” to this item.

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

63a. *When was this school’s charter granted? * Report month as a number, e.g., 01 for January, 02 for February, etc.*

__ Month ____ Year

Concern: The one respondent from a charter school was not sure when the charter was signed. He gave an estimate.

Recommendation: None

Resolution: Item was deemed unnecessary and deleted.

63b. *Who granted the charter? *Mark (X) only one box.*

- A school district
- The state board of education
- Postsecondary institution
- A state charter-granting agency
- Other - What is the name of the chartering agency?

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

64. *Is this charter school a newly created school or was it a pre-existing school? (Pre-existing means the charter school was originally a public or private school, or part of a public or private school.) *Mark (X) only one box.*

- A newly created school
- A pre-existing public school
- A pre-existing private school
- Don’t know

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

65. *When did this school start providing instruction as a public charter school? * Report month as a number, e.g., 01 for January, 02 for February, etc.*

__ Month ____ Year

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

66a. *Does this charter school provide support for home-based learning (homeschooling)? (Home-based learning or homeschooling is when parents or family choose to exercise the day-to-day monitoring of their children's education, which replaces full-time attendance at a campus school and is used to satisfy state compulsory education requirements.)*

Yes

No → GO TO item 67a.

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

66b. *Approximately what percentage of students enrolled in this school are home-based learning (homeschooled) students?*

___ Percent

Concern: This question was not tested on any respondents because it did not apply to anyone in our test.

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

66c. *At which location(s) are home-based learning students instructed? *Mark (X) only one box.*

At students' homes only

Both at students' homes and at school site

Other- Describe -

Concern: This question was not tested on any respondents because it did not apply to anyone in our test.

Recommendation: None

Resolution: No change

67a. Is this public charter school operated by an organization or company, other than a public school district, that also manages other schools?

- Yes - What is the name of the organization or company?
- No

Concerns: None

Recommendation: None

Resolution: It was determined that regular public schools could be operated by an outside organization, so this question should be asked of all public schools, not just charter schools. It was reworded as follows and placed in Section II:

Is this school operated by an organization or company, other than a public school district, that also manages other schools?

- Yes - What is the name of the organization or company?
- No

67c. Is this public charter school part of another public school district or local education agency (LEA)?

- Yes - What is the name of the district or LEA?
- No

Concerns: This question does not make much sense without item 67b, which was deleted previously.

Recommendation/Resolution: This item was deleted.