



American Economic Association
Committee on Economic Statistics and Committee on Government Relations

Dr. Matthew Soldner
Acting Director, Institute of Education Sciences, and Acting Director, National Center for Education
Statistics
Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20202
Re: Docket ID: ED-2025-IES-0844

Dear Dr. Soldner,

We are writing on behalf of the American Economic Association's Committee on Government Relations and the Committee on Economic Statistics in response to the Department of Education's Request for Information on Redesigning the Institute for Education Sciences. Established in 1885, the AEA is a non-profit, non-partisan, scholarly association that promotes discussion and publication of economic research. It is comprised of over 17,500 economists from academia, business, and government. CGR is charged with representing the interests of the economics profession in Washington, DC, and other locations around the country, without taking a position on questions of economic policy or on any partisan matter. AEASat promotes AEA member access to current, detailed, useful data and statistics provided by the federal government and other sources.

In the development of plans to redesign the IES, our primary concern is with continued availability of key education data collected by the National Center for Education Statistics. Education data collected by and made available through NCES play a critical role in helping to improve the condition of education across the United States, which is in turn essential for building a dynamic, well-prepared U.S. workforce with skills that match the needs of an advanced industrial economy. Parents need access to information on the quality of the education available to their children at the different schools they could attend, whether public, private, or charter. State and local policymakers benefit from being able to compare resources and student achievement at their schools with those of other schools, which helps them identify successful education policies adopted in other states and find ways to effectively improve their own. The availability of timely, relevant, nationally comparable data on higher-education options is especially important for students and their families trying to choose institutions that will prepare students for successful work lives and arrange affordable financing.

Key areas of data collection that NCES has been responsible for, and on which state and local policymakers, parents and students, and education researchers depend, include:

- *National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)* – the only nationally representative, ongoing assessment of student learning that regularly measures 4th and 8th graders’ progress in reading and math.
- *Common Core of Data* – a comprehensive, regularly updated database on all 100,000 public primary and secondary schools in the United States, which provides data on enrollments, funding, staffing, and student achievement for each school and school district.
- *National Teacher and Principal Survey* – the only nationally representative survey of primary and secondary teachers and principals in the United States, which tracks changes in the teaching workforce (educational backgrounds, credentials, years teaching, years at the current school) and working conditions (class sizes, hours, salaries, perceived school problems).
- *Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)* – a comprehensive, regularly updated database on all colleges, universities, and technical and vocational schools that participate in federal student financial aid programs, which provides data on enrollments, graduation rates, faculty and staff levels, institutional revenues, and financial aid. IPEDS also collects key data for the *College Scorecard*, which students and their families value highly when making decisions about higher education, so that discontinuing IPEDS would impair the Scorecard data.
- *National Postsecondary Aid Survey (NPSAS)* – a periodic nationally representative study of students attending all types of post-secondary institutions, which combines survey and administrative data to accurately characterize how students finance their education. NPSAS also forms the backbone of other surveys, including *Beginning Postsecondary Students* and *Baccalaureate and Beyond*, which provide key evidence on outcomes of public investments in higher education and the ability of student borrowers to successfully repay their loans.

In addition, the Department of Education has provided grant support to build and expand *State Longitudinal Data Systems*, which help states compile their education data so that it can be used by state-, district-, and school-level decision-makers and teachers to make data-driven decisions to improve student learning.

Research relying on these data has provided essential insights for program administrators, policymakers, and families on issues such as the shift in enrollment from smaller public colleges and universities towards larger state flagship universities, the effectiveness of online job training programs, and the decline in elementary school students’ math and reading proficiency after COVID, particularly among schools that were closed for longer. None of these insights would have been possible without federal collection of education data.

The availability of timely, accurate, comparable data on schools at all levels across the United States is essential for developing effective education policies that can improve student outcomes. Continued federal collection of education data is therefore essential to achieving real improvements in the quality of the education that American students receive. In developing plans to reconstitute IES, we urge the Department of Education to prioritize arrangements for continuing collection of federal education data, giving decision-makers at every level access to the data needed to advance student success, economic growth, and national competitiveness.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this important issue.

October 15, 2025

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kenneth R. Troske".

Kenneth Troske, PhD
Chair, AEA Committee on Government Relations – on behalf of the committee
University of Kentucky
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A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Karen Dynan".

Karen Dynan, PhD
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