Department of Education

INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES

Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Request

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For carrying out activities authorized by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, the National Assessment of Educational Progress Authorization Act, section 208 of the Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002, and section 664 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, [$573,935,000] $675,883,000, which shall remain available through September 30, [2016] 2017:[1] *Provided,* That funds available to carry out section 208 of the Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002 may be used to link Statewide elementary and secondary data systems with early childhood, postsecondary, and workforce data systems, or to further develop such systems:[2] *Provided further,* That up to $6,000,000 of the funds available to carry out section 208 of the Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002 may be used for awards to public or private organizations or agencies to support activities to improve data coordination, quality, and use at the local, State, and national levels[3] [: *Provided further,* That $137,235,000 shall be for carrying out activities authorized by the National Assessment of Educational Progress Authorization Act].[4] (*Department of Education Appropriations Act, 2015.*)

NOTE

Each language provision that is followed by a footnote reference is explained in the Analysis of Language Provisions and Changes document which follows the appropriation language.

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Analysis of Language Provisions and Changes

Language Provision	Explanation
[1] …[$573,935,000] $675,883,000, which shall remain available through September 30, [2016] 2017:	This language provides 2-year availability of funds for the account. This language is needed to facilitate the planning of long-term programs of research and to accommodate cyclical surveys and assessments.
[2] *Provided*, That funds available to carry out section 208 of the Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002 may be used to link Statewide elementary and secondary data systems with early childhood, postsecondary, and workforce data systems, or to further develop such systems:	This language provides the authority to use funds to expand Statewide longitudinal data systems to include postsecondary and workforce information and information on early childhood.
[3] *Provided further*, That up to $6,000,000 of the funds available to carry out section 208 of the Educational Technical Assistance Act of 2002 may be used for awards to public or private organizations or agencies to support activities to improve data coordination, quality, and use at the local, State, and national levels.	This language provides the authority to make Statewide longitudinal data systems awards to agencies and organizations, in addition to State educational agencies, in order to further the purposes of the program.
[4] [: *Provided further*, That $137,235,000 shall be for carrying out activities authorized by the National Assessment of Educational Progress Authorization Act]	This language specifies the amount of funding available for the Assessment program. The language is not required in order to provide a specific level of funding for the program.

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Appropriation, Adjustments and Transfers
(dollars in thousands)

Appropriations/Adjustments/Transfers	2014	2015	2016
Discretionary:			
Appropriation	$576,935	$573,935	$675,883

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Summary of Changes
(dollars in thousands)

2015	$573,935
2016	675,883
Net change...	+101,948

Increases:	2015 base	Change from base
Program:		
Increase for Research, Development, and Dissemination to support expanded research and dissemination activities.	$179,860	+$22,413
Increase for Statistics to support a wide range of activities, including collecting administrative National Postsecondary Student Aid Survey data every 2 years, re-initiating the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study Birth Cohort, and developing a study on college loan performance.	103,060	+21,684
Increase for National Assessment to support the current schedule of assessments, which include transitioning the 4th and 8th grade national and State assessments in reading and mathematics to a digital-based platform.	129,000	+20,616
Increase for Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems to provide funding to support new grant awards.	34,539	+35,461
Increase for Special Education Studies and Evaluations to provide needed support for a new study of preschool special education practices.	10,818	+2,182
Subtotal, increases		+102,356

Decreases	2015 base	Change from base
Program:		
Decrease for National Assessment Governing Board to reflect need to focus on key activities.	8,235	-408
Subtotal, decreases		-408
Net change		+101,948

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Authorizing Legislation
(dollars in thousands)

Activity	2015 Authorized	2015 Actual	2016 Authorized	2016 Request
Research and Statistics				
Research, development, and dissemination (ESRA, parts A, B, and D, except section 174)	$0^{1,2}$	$179,860	0^2	$202,273
Statistics (ESRA, part C)	$0^{1,2}$	103,060	0^2	124,744
Regional educational laboratories (ESRA, section 174)	0^2	54,423	0^2	54,423
Assessment				
National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEPAA, section 303)	0^2	129,000	0^2	149,616
National Assessment Governing Board (NAEPAA, section 302)	0^2	8,235	0^2	7,827
Research in special education (ESRA, part E)	0^3	54,000	0^3	54,000
Statewide longitudinal data systems (ETAA, section 208)	0^2	34,539	0^2	70,000
Special education studies and evaluations (IDEA, section 664)	0^3	10,818	0^3	13,000
Total definite authorization	0		0	
Total appropriation		573,935		675,883
Portion of request not authorized		573,935		675,883

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[1] Section 194(a) of the Education Sciences Reform Act provides that not more than the lesser of 2 percent of the amount appropriated to carry out the Act (excluding amount appropriated for the Regional Educational Laboratories) or $1,000 thousand shall be made available for the National Board of Education Sciences and that the National Center for Education Statistics shall be provided not less than its fiscal year 2002 amount ($85,000 thousand).

[2] The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2009. The Administration proposes to continue funding this program in FY 2016 under appropriations language.

[3] The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2011. The Administration proposes to continue funding this program in FY 2016 under appropriations language.

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Appropriations History
(dollars in thousands)

Year	Budget Estimate to Congress	House Allowance	Senate Allowance	Appropriation
2006	$479,064	$522,696	$529,695	$517,468
2007	554,468	N/A[1]	N/A[1]	517,485
2008	594,262	535,103	589,826	546,105
2009	658,247	615,747[2]	642,442[2]	617,175
Recovery Act Supplemental (P.L. 111-5)	—	250,000	—	250,000
2010	689,256	664,256	679,256[3]	659,006
2011	738,756	659,006[4]	722,756[3]	608,786[5]
2012	760,473	620,903[6]	609,788[3]	593,664
2013	621,150	593,664[7]	618,661[7]	562,612
2014	671,073	N/A[8]	652,937[3]	576,935
2015	637,180	N/A[8]	579,021[9]	573,935
2016	675,883			

[1] This account operated under a full-year continuing resolution (P.L. 110-5). House and Senate allowance amounts are shown as N/A (Not Available) because neither body passed a separate appropriations bill.
[2] The levels for the House and Senate allowances reflect action on the regular annual 2009 appropriations bill, which proceeded in the 110th Congress only through the House Subcommittee and the Senate Committee.
[3] The level for the Senate allowance reflects Committee action only.
[4] The level for the House allowance reflects the House-passed full-year continuing resolution.
[5] The level for appropriation reflects the Department of Defense and Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011 (P.L. 112-10).
[6] The level for the House allowance reflects an introduced bill.
[7] The levels for the House and Senate allowances reflect action on the regular annual 2013 appropriations bill, which proceeded in the 112th Congress only through the House Subcommittee and the Senate Committee.
[8] The House allowance is shown as N/A because there was no Subcommittee action.
[9] The level for the Senate allowance reflects Senate Subcommittee action only.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FISCAL YEAR 2016 PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

(in thousands of dollars) Account, Program and Activity	Category Code	2014 Appropriation	2015 Appropriation	2016 President's Budget	2016 President's Budget Compared to 2015 Appropriation	
					Amount	Percent
Institute of Education Sciences						
1. Research and statistics:						
(a) Research, development, and dissemination (ESRA I-A, B and D)	D	179,860	179,860	202,273	22,413	12.461%
(b) Statistics (ESRA I-C)	D	103,060	103,060	124,744	21,684	21.040%
2. Regional educational laboratories (ESRA section 174)	D	54,423	54,423	54,423	0	0.000%
3. Assessment (NAEPAA):						
(a) National assessment (section 303)	D	132,000	129,000	149,616	20,616	15.981%
(b) National Assessment Governing Board (section 302)	D	8,235	8,235	7,827	(408)	-4.954%
Subtotal		140,235	137,235	157,443	20,208	14.725%
4. Research in special education (ESRA, Part E)	D	54,000	54,000	54,000	0	0.000%
5. Statewide longitudinal data systems (ETAA section 208)	D	34,539	34,539	70,000	35,461	102.669%
6. Special education studies and evaluations (IDEA, section 664)	D	10,818	10,818	13,000	2,182	20.170%
Total	D	576,935	573,935	675,883	101,948	17.763%

NOTES: D = discretionary program; M = mandatory program; FY = fiscal year

Accounts are shown under the administering office that has primary responsibility for most programs in that account; however, there may be some programs that are administered by another office.

Detail may not add to totals due to rounding.

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Summary of Request

The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) supports research, data collection and analysis activities, and the assessment of student progress. IES serves as a leader in the Department of Education and works with other Federal agencies to develop standards for research, improve the use of evidence in grant competitions, and reduce burden and improve quality through the use of administrative data in evaluations and research. The Administration requests $675.9 million for this account for fiscal year 2016, an increase of $101.9 million over the 2015 appropriation.

The Administration requests $202.3 million for research, development, and dissemination, an increase of $22.4 million from the 2015 appropriation. This investment in research is critical because high quality information about effective practices is essential for improving education, providing valuable insight into how public dollars could be better used to improve student outcomes. The funding will provide support for building a high-quality evidence base for what works in education, as well as provide support for IES dissemination efforts to ensure that the evidence base informs practice both in the field and also in the Department. Included in the request is increased funding for research related to early childhood education and funds to enhance the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC).

For Statistics, which provides funds to support the collection, analysis, and reporting of data related to education at all levels, the Administration requests $124.7 million, $21.7 million more than the 2015 appropriation. The request would allow the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) to support the collection, analysis, and dissemination of education-related statistics in response to both legislative requirements and to the particular needs of data providers, data users, and education researchers. The increase would provide $8.7 million to re-initiate the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Birth Cohort, $2 million to support an international study of early childhood education, $4 million to collect administrative National Postsecondary Student Aid Survey data every 2 years, $2 million to support the School Survey on Crime and Safety and the School Crime Supplement, $4 million to support a study on student loan repayment and defaults, and $1 million to support statistical work on the My Brother's Keeper initiative.

The Administration requests $54.4 million for the Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) program, the same as the 2015 level. The RELs serve as a necessary bridge between education research and practice, with an emphasis on providing technical assistance on performing data analysis functions, evaluating programs, and using data from State longitudinal data systems for research and evaluation that address important issues of policy and practice.

A total of $157.4 million is requested for Assessment in 2016. Of this amount, $149.6 million would provide support for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and $7.8 million would support the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB). The requested funding for NAEP would allow for the 2017 4th and 8th grade national and State assessments in reading and math to transition to a digital-based platform, the expansion of the Trial Urban District Assessment, and the conduct of grades 8 and 12 assessments in U.S. history, civics, and geography assessments in 2018.

The Administration requests $54.0 million for Research in Special Education, the same as the 2015 level. The requested funds would support programs of research, including research intended to improve the developmental outcomes and school readiness of infants, toddlers, and

young children with disabilities; improve education outcomes in core subject areas for children with disabilities; improve social and behavioral outcomes; and assist adolescents with disabilities to be college- and career-ready.

The Administration requests $70 million for the Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems program, an increase of $35.5 million from the 2015 appropriation. The request would support new awards to States to allow them to improve data systems and ensure that data are available to answer key policy questions about financial and resource equity, teacher preparation, early learning, and college and career readiness. Funds also would support awards to public and private agencies and organizations to improve data coordination, quality, and use at the national, State, and local levels.

The request includes $13.0 million for Special Education Studies and Evaluations, an increase of $2.2 million. IES supports a range of evaluations that are designed to provide information about which programs and practices are effective and ineffective and thereby provide concrete guidance for educators and parents. At the request level, four of these studies would receive funding from the 2016 appropriation: Evaluation of Preschool Special Education Practices, State and Local Implementation of IDEA 2016, Impact Evaluation of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior, and Post High School Outcomes for Youth with Disabilities.

Research, development, and dissemination
  (Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, Parts A, B, and D)

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2016 Authorization: 0[1][2][3]

Budget Authority:

	2015	2016	Change
	$179,860	$202,273	+$22,413

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[1] The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2009. The Administration proposes to continue funding in FY 2016 under appropriations language.
  [2] The authorizing law provides that not more than the lesser of 2 percent of the amount appropriated to carry out the Education Sciences Reform Act (excluding appropriations for the Regional Educational Laboratories) or $1.0 million shall be made available for the National Board for Education Sciences (NBES).
  [3] The authorizing law requires that of the amount appropriated for the Education Sciences Reform Act (excluding appropriations for the Regional Educational Laboratories), the National Center for Education Statistics shall be provided not less than its FY 2002 amount ($85,000 thousand).

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Authorized by the Education Sciences Reform Act (ESRA), the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) supports research and development that is both rigorous and relevant to the needs of educators and policymakers. As these investments have begun to yield promising and significant findings, IES has also transformed the way that the Federal Government disseminates research information, translating complex methodological and statistical details into information that can be more easily understood and applied to classroom instruction and policy decisions. IES also continues to work with the field to help States, districts, and schools access available evidence to make more informed decisions through traditional evaluations and more timely quick-turnaround evaluations.

IES includes four national centers: The National Center for Education Research (NCER), the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE), and the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER). The Director of IES is responsible for coordinating the activities of the centers, establishing and maintaining peer review standards, and ensuring that all publications are based on sound research. The National Board for Education Sciences (NBES), which is funded from the Research, Development, and Dissemination (RDD) appropriation, is composed of private sector leaders as well as researchers and educators. Its responsibilities include approving priorities and peer review procedures and providing guidance to IES.

IES receives funding under seven programs in the IES account; one of those programs, RDD, provides funding for NCER and NCEE. NCEE also receives funding from the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) and Special Education Studies and Evaluation programs within the IES account, as well as evaluation funding from other programs within the Department.

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NCER conducts sustained programs of scientifically rigorous research that build an evidence base in education to drive better decisions and lead to more effective practice. Activities within NCER are organized around focal research topics such as reading and writing, early learning, mathematics and science education, effective teachers and effective teaching, and education systems and policies. Since its authorization in 2002, IES has awarded over 800 grants and contracts to build a diverse NCER research portfolio that includes national research and development centers, field-initiated research projects, education research training projects, field-initiated evaluations of State and local programs and policies, and research on statistical and research methodology. Research activities help to improve education quality and improve student achievement, particularly for students at risk of academic failure. Many NCER projects help inform education decisions and are leading to better education practices across the country. For example:

- Studies to evaluate the effectiveness of curricula designed to teach math to preschool children found that the curricula strengthened children's math skills and reduced the math achievement gap between lower- and middle-income children. The research contributed to the development of resource materials on math instruction for the Head Start Program's Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/practice/curricula/MKandS.html) and to a What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) Practice Guide on Teaching Math to Young Children (http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide.aspx?sid=18). In addition, WestEd, in partnership with the University of Oregon, Westat, and a consortium of LEAs in California, drew upon the research to write a successful 2012 Investing in Innovation (i3) grant application, and is using the funds to expand an early mathematics curriculum to 38,000 pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students.

- A study of Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR), an intervention for struggling adolescent readers that helps students develop metacognitive awareness and learn specific strategies associated with reading comprehension, showed that CSR yielded positive outcomes for many at-risk students, including English Learners and students with learning disabilities, as well as for average and high-achieving students. In response to these findings, Denver Public Schools is incorporating CSR into a middle school curriculum that will serve 15,000 students (http://www.csrcolorado.org/en/).

- A 2006 research grant funded an evaluation of Early College High Schools, an initiative designed to increase the number of students who graduate from high school and are prepared for postsecondary education. The evaluation found significant positive effects on the number of high school students who completed rigorous college courses and were on track for high school graduation. In 2014, North Carolina New Schools received an i3 grant for a scale-up project to serve over 13,000 students (http://www2.ed.gov/programs/innovation/2014/ncnewschools.pdf).

NCER also funds research training programs to help develop a steady supply of researchers dedicated to the pursuit of finding solutions to problems in education. The pre-doctoral training program has trained over 700 students and the postdoctoral program has trained 114 fellows since they were launched, and nearly all of the fellows who completed their training are leading or contributing to education research projects as employees of universities, research firms, or government agencies. NCER also funds programs to help early- and mid-career education

researchers upgrade their skills and learn new methods. Recent training areas have included randomized control trials and quasi-experimental design as well as cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness analyses.

NCEE supports evaluation, technical assistance, and dissemination. The Center conducts evaluations of the implementation and impact of key Federal education programs, through both traditional and quick-turnaround studies, and serves as a standards and validation body for education evaluations. Funding for NCEE program evaluations comes from other programs and is not part of the request for RDD. NCEE is also responsible for translating research findings into information that is accessible to education practitioners and for enhancing the use of evidence by policymakers and practitioners through the WWC, the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), the National Library of Education, and the Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs). Funding for the WWC, ERIC, and the NLE are part of the RDD request. Funding for the RELs program is requested elsewhere in this account. These programs work with NCES, NCER, and NCSER to promote and make accessible the results of their work.

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were:

	(dollars in thousands)
2011	$199,796
2012	189,787
2013	179,860
2014	179,860
2015	179,860

FY 2016 BUDGET REQUEST

The Administration requests $202.3 million, an increase of $22.4 million over the 2015 appropriation, to support its investments in research, development, evaluation, and dissemination through an expansion of support for research and enhancement of WWC activities. These investments build a rich evidence base on what works in education and make this evidence more accessible to practitioners and policymakers. The requested funds would enable IES to sustain its efforts to develop and identify interventions and approaches that are effective for improving student learning and achievement from early childhood through postsecondary and adult education so that SEAs, LEAs, and schools are equipped with the information and tools needed to deliver a high-quality education to all children.

The Department's request would enable IES to invest approximately $45 million in new research awards in fiscal year 2016. This investment in new research is critical because high quality information about effective practices is essential for improving education and providing valuable insight into how public dollars could be better used to improve student outcomes. The funding will provide support for building a high-quality evidence base on what works in education, as well as provide support to IES dissemination efforts to ensure that the evidence base informs practice both in the field and also in the Department.

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At the request level, IES would fund $6 million in new early childhood research. The research would be supported through awards under the 2016 competitions, which would indicate that the Department was inviting proposals that address topics in early childhood education. The Department anticipates that much of the early childhood research would be conducted either through a focused research network or through a National Research and Development (R&D) Center. (Both of these competition types are discussed below.) Support for early learning has been a key Administration focus: Ensuring high-quality early learning opportunities for all children in America so that they enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school and in life yields benefits that far outweigh the costs of the investment. To support States and communities in this work, the Administration is requesting targeted increases in early learning research and evaluation across the Government to yield crucial information on children's early life experiences and help determine which models and practices are most effective at improving child outcomes. In addition, the Administration's 2016 request for the Department of Education includes an increase of $500 million for Preschool Development Grants in the School Readiness account to help States develop and expand high-quality preschool programs in targeted communities. An increase in the RDD program would allow IES to support new research on early learning that would help ensure that teachers and education leaders had sound, evidence-based information about effective practices.

Also included in the request is increased funding to enhance the WWC to better meet the needs of practitioners and policymakers and ensure that practice in both the field and the Department is evidence-based.

IES funds only highly qualified applicants and makes final decisions about the level of support for each research competition once it has completed peer review and identified which applications will be funded. For that reason, we are not providing estimates of the 2016 funding amounts for each research competition, but we do provide descriptive information on each of them below.

In order to provide the flexibility IES needs to plan and administer a regular cycle of research competitions, the Department requests that funding be available for 2 years, as it has been in previous years.

National Center for Education Research (NCER) Programs of Research

NCER is now developing its plans for its 2016 research competitions. In recent years, NCER has held five types of grant competitions: Education research grants, national research and development centers, research training grants, grants for statistical and research methodology in education, and partnerships and collaborations focused on problems of practice or policy. To determine funding priorities for future competitions, staff held Technical Working Group meetings with education researchers and practitioners from around the country and solicited public comments through the IES Web site. Staff also discussed priorities with the NBES and with officials within the Department of Education. Based on these discussions, IES plans to launch three new research competitions in 2016:

- *Low-Cost, Quick-Turnaround Randomized Control Trials.* Policymakers and practitioners increasingly rely on randomized control trials for evidence on the effectiveness of education programs, but they are sometimes frustrated by the expense of these trials and the long wait

for results. While some studies require extended follow-up (e.g., to determine whether an intervention for 9th graders leads to more high school graduates), others may be completed in less time if the outcomes of interest can be captured within a semester or school year. Advances in State and local education data systems also allow researchers to collect and analyze data more quickly and cheaply than in the past. This is a growing area of interest for policy-makers, researchers, and practitioners (http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2014/07/30/how-low-cost-randomized-controlled-trials-can-drive-effective-social-spending). Under this new competition, IES will invite proposals for randomized control trials that can be completed within a short time frame (e.g., 18 months or less) and under $200,000. In the spirit of quick turnaround, IES will also develop an expedited review process for these proposals.

- *Research Networks Focused on Critical Problems of Education Practice.* Traditionally, NCER has awarded most of its grant funding to field-initiated studies, but recent feedback from researchers and practitioners who met with NCER to discuss future needs suggested that while such funding is important, identifying research priorities and encouraging cooperation among researchers tackling similar topics also is key. Areas identified included research on the pedagogical practices that are most effective in raising academic achievement among primary and secondary school students and the implementation and effectiveness of universal pre-K programs and the Next Generation Science Standards. Under this new competition, NCER will invite proposals from researchers who are committed to addressing topics identified in the competition announcement. For each major topic, a research "hub" will be established to support the exchange of ideas and coordination of newly launched projects. The ultimate objectives are to encourage efficiency, spark creativity, and build a body of evidence on critical education topics. At the request level, IES would fund $6 million in new early learning research; the research would be conducted largely through a research network or through a National Research and Development Center.

- *Pathways to Education Research Training Program.* Like many other professions, the education sciences have struggled to attract researchers who reflect the economic, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the Nation at-large. Under this new initiative, NCER will invite proposals for training activities that will build a more diverse pipeline of education research scientists. Possible strategies may include workshops designed to introduce students or faculty members from underrepresented groups to the education sciences and available fellowships; paid internships for undergraduate or master's degree students to work on IES-funded research projects; or guided exploration of courses in the education sciences by qualified undergraduates, with supplementary advising from faculty or student mentors.

At the request level, NCER also plans to maintain its support for previously-awarded grants and invite new proposals for five existing competitions: Education Research Grants, Research Training Programs in the Education Sciences, Statistical and Research Methodology in Education, Partnerships and Collaborations Focused on Problems of Practice or Policy, and Small Business Innovation Research. The level of funding and number of grants for each program is based on available funds and the quality of applications received as rated by panels of scientists. As noted above, IES is developing plans for supporting additional early childhood research; such work could largely be carried out through a research network or through a

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National R&D Center. Only proposals that receive outstanding or excellent ratings may receive funding.

- **Education Research Grants.** This program supports field-initiated research projects and accounts for over half of NCER's grant-making. In fiscal year 2016, NCER will invite proposals on the following topics:

  - Reading and writing;
  - Mathematics and science education;
  - Cognition and student learning;
  - Effective teachers and effective teaching;
  - Social and behavioral context for academic learning;
  - Early learning programs and policies;
  - English learners;
  - Postsecondary and adult education;
  - Education technology; and
  - Improving education systems—organization, management, and policy,

  Researchers may conduct a variety of projects based on their research goals:

  - Exploratory *research projects* identify factors and conditions that are associated with academic achievement in order to build knowledge of how education programs operate, generate hypotheses for future testing, and contribute to development of interventions that can improve student outcomes.

  - *Development and innovation projects* create potent and innovative interventions to address continuing problems that the nation has not yet solved (e.g., achievement gaps between lower- and higher-income students) and emerging problems and challenges (e.g., integrating new technologies into classrooms in ways that support student learning and achievement).

  - *Efficacy and replication projects* examine whether fully developed interventions produce a beneficial impact on student outcomes when implemented in authentic education delivery systems like schools or classrooms. These projects often involve technical assistance and close monitoring by the research team to make sure the interventions are implemented with fidelity.

  - *Effectiveness studies* determine whether fully developed interventions with prior evidence of efficacy produce beneficial education outcomes when implemented under routine conditions (e.g., if a district implemented an intervention on its own without special support from the developer or research team).

  - *Measurement projects* support research to develop and validate surveys, tests, and other instruments used for screening, progress monitoring, and outcome assessments.

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- **Research Training.** Through its pre-doctoral and postdoctoral training programs, NCER supports grants to institutions of higher education to develop programs to train graduate students and researchers to conduct exploratory research, implement rigorous evaluation studies, develop and validate tests and measures, and contribute to the advancement of knowledge and theory in education. Five pre-doctoral training programs are currently in place, and up to five additional grants will be awarded following the fiscal year 2015 grants competition. For fiscal year 2016, NCER will invite new proposals for postdoctoral training, methods training for early- and mid-career researchers, and the Pathways to Education Research Training Program mentioned above.

- **Statistical and Research Methodology in Education.** A critical aspect of IES's mission is to provide education scientists with the tools they need to conduct rigorous applied research. This program supports the development of new statistical and methodological approaches to research, the extension and improvement of existing methods, and the creation of other tools that would enhance researchers' ability to conduct high-quality research and evaluation projects, regardless of whether these projects are directly funded by the Federal government. Recent grants have supported efforts to improve value-added models for evaluating teacher performance, and to facilitate use of state longitudinal data systems by researchers through the development of better techniques for safeguarding individual student information. Support for the development of enhanced methodologies for conducting low-cost, quick-turnaround randomized control trials could be supported through this program.

- **National Research and Development (R&D) Centers.** R&D Centers are intended to contribute significantly to the solution of education problems in the U.S. by engaging in research, development, evaluation, and national leadership activities aimed at improving the education system and, ultimately, student achievement. Each R&D Center conducts a focused program of research in fields which are under-investigated and are of interest to education policymakers and practitioners. For example, recent grants have supported new research on strategies to improve college readiness among students entering community colleges and less-selective four-year institutions, and on the implementation and effectiveness of gifted and talented programs for children and youth. Ten R&D centers are currently active. IES anticipates launching a new Virtual Learning Laboratory in 2015 to take advantage of the opportunities that online and blended learning strategies provide in order to better understand and improve student outcomes.

  As noted above, at the request level, IES would use 2016 funds to fund a focused research network or a new R&D Center on early learning.

- **Partnerships and Collaborations Focused on Problems of Practice or Policy.** This program supports research partnerships between researchers and practitioners to address high-priority research questions of State and local education agencies. Education agencies are expected to work with researchers to design studies, gather data, and adopt and disseminate the results. Three funding opportunities are available to help partnerships plan and initiate new projects, conduct research focused on supporting continuous improvement, and perform rigorous evaluations of State and local education policies and programs.

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- **Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR).** This program awards contracts to qualified small businesses to conduct innovative research and development projects focused on education technology. Small businesses can receive Federal funding for two phases of research and development. Phase I awards are designed to determine the scientific or technical merit of ideas by testing the feasibility of a technological approach; Phase II awards are designed to expand on the results of Phase I projects and to further pursue their development. Phase II awards require a more comprehensive plan for research and development and must include a description of the commercial potential of the education technology. Small businesses may also submit applications for "Fast Track" awards that combine Phase I and Phase II activities.

NCEE Dissemination Activities

What Works Clearinghouse (WWC). The WWC (http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/) was established in 2002 to serve as a central and trusted source for scientific evidence on what works in education. To date, the WWC has reviewed more than 10,000 studies and published more than 550 intervention reports that assess the rigor of research evidence on the effectiveness of interventions in topics such as reading, mathematics, dropout prevention, early childhood education, and students with learning disabilities. Other products and services provided by WWC include user-friendly practice guides that provide research-based recommendations to educators and practitioners to address instructional challenges within schools and classrooms. The WWC helps inform the work of the Department's wide-ranging technical assistance network that includes the RELs, Comprehensive Centers, Equity Assistance Centers, and the Office of Special Education Program Technical Assistance Centers, which are organized by the Department to provide high quality support to SEAs, LEAs, and schools that is accessible, comprehensive, and relevant.

The WWC is seen as a leader in the systematic review of education research studies, and the WWC standards have been integrated into the Department's work to implement more evidence-based grant competitions. The 2016 request includes an increase to enhance the WWC in order to expand dissemination efforts to better meet the needs of practitioners and policy-makers as well as to accelerate study reviews to help ensure that SEAs, LEAs, schools, and practitioners have access to the most up-to-date evidence.

IES awarded new contracts for the WWC in 2013. With these contracts, IES is expanding the WWC to review studies in postsecondary education, enhance the WWC Web site, and improve communication and dissemination efforts so that research is accessible to a wide range of audiences while continuing to review individual studies, produce intervention reports, and update standards across the entire WWC. One example of a strategy for communicating the WWC's work is through thematic information campaigns, which are publicized through email blasts and on Twitter, Facebook, and the WWC Web site. In 2014, the WWC undertook campaigns on College Access, Classroom Behavior, Early Childhood Instruction, What Works in Math, Literacy, and Back to School. The WWC also released practice guides in e-book formats and provided new supplementary materials, including short summaries of guides. To meet demand for more information on how to meet WWC standards, IES offered a webinar on Designing Strong Studies, in which 400 individuals participated. A link to a video of the webinar is available at http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/news.aspx?sid=18.

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Based on feedback it has received from WWC stakeholders and potential users, IES efforts to enhance the WWC are guided by the following:

- *Audiences need to be clearly defined and specifically targeted with products and outreach*. In some cases, this means developing informal partnerships with outside organizations, or offering webinars targeted to specific groups.

- *The WWC needs to show audiences how to use its materials.* One strategy is providing online videos to demonstrate instructional strategies (http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide.aspx?sid=15); another is using webinars (http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/event.aspx?sid=36) to showcase WWC resources that teachers and administrators can use to inform decisions and improve their craft.

- *Products must be shorter and available in a variety of formats.* IES now produces practice guide summaries and videos, and has developed a prototype one-page "evidence snapshot" that uses graphics to summarize WWC findings, including the contexts in which an intervention was tested.

- *Intermediary organizations are essential.* The WWC relies heavily on the RELs to conduct workshops based on WWC materials. For example, REL Mid-Atlantic hosted a "WWC Practice Guide" series of webinars in 2013−2014; in November 2014, REL Southeast conducted a professional development day for teachers in Dade County, Florida, based on a practice guide; and REL Southwest is developing a professional development kit for school-based professional learning communities that will enable teachers to apply recommendations from the English Learners practice guide.

- *Web sites need constant refreshing.* The internet is changing rapidly, and users expect improvements to enhance usability.

- *Content needs to be updated quickly.* A new database will enable auto-updating of Intervention Reports as new studies become available.

Education Resources Information Center (ERIC). The mission of the ERIC online system (http://www.eric.ed.gov) is to provide a comprehensive, easy-to-use, searchable online bibliographic and full-text database of education research and information. During 2014, ERIC revised its selection policy to strengthen its focus on education research, continued improvements to products and services, and realized cost savings, while increasing use of ERIC. ERIC has taken on an additional role in responding to the Presidential directive for agencies to provide open access to federally funded research. In 2014, IES and ERIC staff negotiated agreements with the publishers of the mostly frequently used peer-reviewed education research journals that will enable IES to offer full-text versions of publications resulting from federally funded education research at no cost to the public through the ERIC Web site within a year of publication. With more than 300,000 visitors daily, ERIC is already the most visited Web site operated by the Department. Through these and other enhancements, IES is continuing to improve the ERIC user experience through a simpler, more powerful search functionality and easier linkages to more full-text peer reviewed education research publications.

National Library of Education (NLE). The NLE serves as the Federal Government's primary education information resource to the public, education community, and other government

agencies. Information services are critical to enable the Department to use data to make decisions and build evidence of program effectiveness. In 2014, IES continued its efforts to better align library resources with Department priorities and needs. IES implemented a new collection policy for the NLE, examining data on historical patterns of usage and consulting with stakeholders to procure new journal subscriptions. In addition, the new NLE staffing contract better aligns personnel to Department needs, while reducing contractor personnel costs by 9 percent annually.

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (dollars in thousands)

Measures	2014	2015	2016
Research activities:			
Education research grants			
New grant awards	$28,533	TBD	TBD
Grant award continuations[1]	62,739	$65,000	$42,678
Total	91,272	TBD	TBD
National research and development centers			
New grant awards	3,035	TBD	TBD
Grant award continuations[1]	10,325	9,556	7,294
Total	13,360	TBD	TBD
Research training			
New grant awards	2,435	TBD	TBD
Grant award continuations[1]	2,409	6,345	7,244
Total	4,844	TBD	TBD
Statistical and research methodology in education			
New grant awards	2,354	TBD	TBD
Grant award continuations[1]	753	2,885	1,993
Total	3,107	TBD	TBD
Partnerships and collaborations focused on problems of practice or policy			
New grant awards	6,096	TBD	TBD
Grant award continuations[1]	7,316	7,673	5,524
Total	13,412	TBD	TBD

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PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (dollars in thousands)

Measures	2014	2015	2016
Research initiative on reading for understanding			
Total grant award continuations	$22,916	0	0
Low-cost, quick-turnaround randomized control trials			
New grant awards	0	0	TBD
Research networks focused on critical problems of education practice			
New grant awards	0	0	TBD
Subtotal, research grant activities	**$148,911**	**$150,689**	**$169,865**
Small Business Innovation Research Contracts	7,481	7,500	7,500
Dissemination Activities			
Educational Resources Information Center	3,676	4,137	3,300
What Works Clearinghouse	10,158	9,317	12,500
National Library of Education	2,089	2,100	2,100
Dissemination/Logistical/Technical Support	2,886	3,321	3,011
Total	19,777	17,874	20,911
Peer review	**3,650**	**3,650**	**3,650**
National Board for Education Sciences	$41	$147	$347
Total	**179,860**	**179,860**	**202,273**

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NOTE: Amounts listed as "TBD" are still to be determined. The number and size of new research awards will depend on the quality of applications received.

[1] Includes only continuation costs for grants awarded to date. Actual 2016 continuation costs will be higher due to the continuation costs for new 2015 awards.

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PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures, and performance targets and data; and an assessment of the progress made toward achieving program results. Achievement of results is based on the cumulative effect of the resources provided in previous years and those requested in fiscal year 2016 and future years, as well as the resources and efforts invested by those served by the program.

The Department established new measures for NCER in 2014.

Goal: Transform education into an evidence-based field. Decisionmakers will routinely seek out the best available research and data in adopting and implementing programs and practices that will affect significant numbers of children.

Objective: *Raise the quality of research funded or conducted by the Department.*

Annual Measures

Measure: The percentage of projects that result in peer-reviewed publications.

Year	Target	Actual
2013	Baseline	69%
2014	72%	73
2015	75	
2016	78	

Additional information: Peer-reviewed publications are an expected product of all research projects. NCER has been funding research projects since 2002. Given the lag from time of award to completion of the study and publication, the denominator for each reporting year will be the cumulative number of research grants that had been funded through the end of the fiscal year 3 years prior to the reporting year. (Grants that would not be expected to result in peer-reviewed publication, such as research training grants, summer training grants, and non-research study projects are not included.) Thus, for 2013, the total number of projects (the denominator) is 509, which is the total number of research projects funded across all NCER programs from fiscal year 2002 to fiscal year 2010. The number of these projects with peer-reviewed publications was 353. NCER gathers information about peer-reviewed publications through the annual grantee reports and records the publications in the IES Catalog of Education Research (ICER) database. Reporting on this measure will be cumulative. Data for fiscal year 2015 will be available in November 2015.

Measure: The cumulative number of IES-supported interventions with evidence of efficacy in improving student outcomes.

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Year	Target	Actual
2011	44	45
2012	53	56
2013	67	67
2014	75	73
2015	82	
2016	82	

Additional information: Student education outcomes include both student academic outcomes and social and behavioral competencies. Student academic outcomes include learning and achievement in core academic content areas (reading, writing, mathematics, and science) and outcomes that reflect students' successful progression through the education system (e.g., course and grade completion). Social and behavioral competencies include social skills, attitudes, and behaviors that may be important to students' academic and post-academic success. This measure replaces two prior measures that looked at reading and writing and at mathematics and science. Those two measures mapped directly onto research programs competed from 2002 through 2004. Over the past decade, NCER has expanded the number of topic areas in which research is supported, so the new measure more accurately captures information on the breadth of topics supported.

Results of intervention evaluations typically are not available until the end of a grant award period. NCER submits the results (peer-reviewed publications and reports) to the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) for review. WWC-certified reviewers determine whether the evaluation meets the WWC standards with or without reservations, and whether the evaluation found the intervention to produce a statistically significant or substantively important positive effect for students on at least one relevant education outcome. Thus, the reported data are the cumulative numbers of interventions since 2002 with evidence of meeting WWC standards and having positive effects on student outcomes as determined by the WWC reviewers. Data for fiscal year 2015 will be available in November 2015.

Measure: The number of newly developed or modified interventions with evidence of promise for improving student education outcomes.

Additional information: Student outcomes include school readiness; achievement in core academic content areas (reading, writing, mathematics, science); social and behavioral competencies that support academic learning and post-academic success; and outcomes that reflect students' successful progression through the education system (e.g., course and grade completion; high school graduation and dropout; postsecondary enrollment, progress, and completion).

Since 2004, NCER has supported the development of new interventions and determined whether these interventions have promise to produce beneficial impacts on student education outcomes. This measure will reflect the cumulative number of interventions NCER has funded since 2004 through Development and Innovation projects that show promise for improving student outcomes. NCER will review grantees' final performance reports for completed research grants and determine the number of projects that have generated evidence of promise, using the Education Department General Education Regulations (EDGAR) standards for evidence of promise. To meet the standards, grantees must report pilot study evidence that the

intervention produced a statistically significant or substantively important positive association for at least one student outcome (0.25 standard deviation or larger).

The reported data will be the cumulative numbers of newly developed or modified interventions since 2004 with evidence of promise meeting EDGAR standards as determined by NCER, based on grantee final performance reports. NCER will establish the baseline for this measure using 2013 data.

Efficiency Measures

Measure: The average number of research grants administered per each program officer employed in the National Center for Education Research.

Year	Target	Actual
2011	38	35
2012	40	34
2013	41	31
2014	41	31
2015	40	
2016	40	

Additional information: The principal efficiency measure for IES is the ratio of research staff to research grants. In 2001, the Department's predecessor research organization employed 69 staff in its 5 national research institutes. Those staff administered 89 active research grants, or 1.3 per staff member. By 2007, 13 staff in the IES National Center for Education Research administered 417 active research grants with support from 4 staff in the IES Standards and Review and Grants Administration Staff offices. By 2011, staff monitored an average of 35 grants per staff member—a considerable increase from 2001.

In 2012 and 2013, NCER saw a slight decrease in the number of grants administered by program officers. In 2013, NCER had filled all open research staff positions for the first time, but was unable to fund as many new awards as it would have historically funded, due to budget cuts put in place by the sequester. At the same time, many of the awards made in fiscal year 2009 were closing out, leading to additional reductions in the number of grants being monitored by staff.

IES believes that the current number of research grants per program officer represents an appropriate level of oversight and capacity and that future targets should maintain this level rather than add additional grants.

Statistics
  (Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, Part C)

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2016 Authorization: 0[1][2]

Budget Authority:

	2015	2016	Change
	$103,060	$124,744	+$21,684

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  [1] The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2009. The Administration proposes to continue funding this program in FY 2016 under appropriations language.
  [2] The statute authorizes such sums as may be necessary for all of Title I, of which not less than the amount provided to the National Center for Education Statistics for FY 2002 shall be available for Part C, which is $85,000 thousand.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) is one of the 13 Federal statistical agencies and is the chief Federal entity engaged in collecting, analyzing, and reporting data related to education in the U.S. and, as such, makes a unique contribution to our understanding of the American educational system. NCES is one of four Centers in the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), which was established by the Education Sciences Reform Act (ESRA) of 2002.

NCES is authorized to:

- collect, acquire, compile, and disseminate full and complete statistics on the condition and progress of education in the U. S.;

- conduct and publish reports on the meaning and significance of such statistics;

- collect, analyze, cross-tabulate, and report data, where feasible, by demographic characteristics, including gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, limited English proficiency, mobility, disability, and urbanicity;

- help public and private educational agencies and organizations improve their statistical systems;

- acquire and disseminate data on U.S. education activities and student achievement compared with foreign nations;

- conduct longitudinal and special data collections necessary to report on the condition and progress of education; and

Statistics

- help the IES Director prepare a biennial report describing the activities of IES.

NCES may also establish a program to train employees of public and private educational agencies, organizations, and institutions in the use of statistical procedures and concepts and may establish a fellowship program to allow such employees to work as temporary fellows at NCES.

Statistical information collected by NCES contributes to the identification of needs in education, the development of policy priorities, and the formulation, evaluation, and refinement of programs. The authorizing statute requires the Commissioner of NCES to issue regular reports on education topics, particularly in the core academic areas of reading, mathematics, and science, and to produce an annual statistical report on the condition and progress of education in the U.S. Over the last few years, NCES studies have provided information to inform debate on issues such as preparation for higher education, college costs, student financial aid, high school dropouts, school crime, teacher shortages, teacher mobility and attrition, and the achievement of students in the U.S. compared with that of other nations. NCES coordinates with other Federal agencies when carrying out surveys to ensure that the information collected is valuable across the Government. For example, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services contributes to the Kindergarten Cohort of the 2010–11 Early Childhood Longitudinal Survey (ECLS-K), and the National Science Foundation has participated in the 2009 High School Longitudinal Study. Most work is conducted through competitively awarded contracts.

The Education Sciences Reform Act authorizes the National Board for Education Sciences to advise the NCES Commissioner, and the Board may establish a standing committee to advise the Center.

Five areas, each with a set of specific activities, make up the Statistics budget:

- Cross-sectional Studies provide extensive staffing, school safety, adult education, and other issue-specific data from public and private schools, staff, and households.

- Longitudinal Studies collect information on the same students over time. This information is a tool for understanding the processes through which individuals influence their education and education influences individuals, and can ultimately provide parents, educators, and policymakers with information to improve the quality of education.

- International Studies provide insights into the educational practices and outcomes in the U.S. by enabling comparisons with other countries. Interest in these studies has grown with the increasing concern about the Nation's global competitiveness and the role education plays in ensuring economic growth.

- Administrative Data Collections and Support include basic descriptive data collections from public schools at the elementary and secondary levels and from public and private postsecondary institutions, as well as activities that improve data standards and provide technical assistance.

- Cross-cutting Activities include items in the Bureau of the Census Current Population Survey, as well as activities designed to enhance the quality and usefulness of statistical data collections, key publications, information technology, and printing across NCES.

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were:

	(dollars in thousands)
2011	$108,304
2012	108,748
2013	103,060
2014	103,060
2015	103,060

FY 2016 BUDGET REQUEST

The Administration requests $124.7 million for Statistics, approximately $21.7 million more than the 2015 appropriation. The request includes funds for a broad range of surveys and activities that provide information on education at all levels. The Administration requests that funding be available for 2 years, as it was in prior years.

The increase requested for 2016 would allow the Department to collect critical and more timely information on a wide range of high-priority policy issues, including postsecondary educational costs and student progress, school crime and safety, and early childhood education. More specifically, the increase would fund the following:

- The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Birth Cohort of 2018 (ECLS-B:18) (http://nces.ed.gov/ecls/) will provide nationally representative data about early childhood development that will allow direct analyses of early developmental processes. NCES last conducted a birth cohort study beginning in 2001. These data have often been used and cited in existing early childhood research, but by 2018, children from the first ECLS-B sample will be entering into adulthood, indicating a need for more current data for researchers and policymakers to improve early childhood education services and outcomes. Funding for a new round of the ECLS-B is an important tool in increasing early learning research and evaluation to support States as they expand high-quality preschool programs to their communities under Preschool Development Grants. Approximately $8.7 million of the requested funding would support sample design and questionnaire development in 2016, as well as a large sample field test in 2017.

- The Early Childhood Education Study (ECES) (http://eces.iea.nl/) is an international study of early childhood education and its role in preparing children to learn and function in school and the broader environment. The Administration will use approximately $2 million of the 2016 increase to support ECES, which will provide an assessment of kindergarten children in the U.S. through surveys of parents, teachers, and school principals. The study is organized by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), and data collection is being planned for 2017.

- The National Postsecondary Student Aid Survey (NPSAS) (http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/npsas/) is a comprehensive study of undergraduate, graduate, and first-professional degree students that examines how students and their families pay for postsecondary education. While NPSAS provides data on student financial aid programs

necessary to make policy decisions and inform research, the data are only collected every 4 years, and as a result, the data do not always reflect the current student aid policy environment. The Administration is requesting $4 million of additional funding for NPSAS in 2016 to allow for the collection of administrative data every 2 years, ultimately allowing the data to better reflect periods of rapid economic or social change.

- The Student Loan Repayment and Default Study would help address the lack of information on student loan borrower choices and behavior, including better understanding why certain students and their parents default on education loan payments. Approximately $4 million of the Administration's request would support a nationally representative study of students and parents who default on education loans and comparison groups of students in good standing. Funding in 2016 would support questionnaire development and sample design work for a field test.

- The School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS) (http://nces.ed.gov/programs/crime/) and the School Crime Supplement (SCS) (http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ssocs/) provide the Administration with many of the statistics used to provide context when crises and tragedies strike our Nation's schools. SSOCS provides estimates of school crime, discipline, and disorder programs and policies from a nationally representative sample of approximately 3,500 public elementary and secondary schools, while the SCS collects information about school-related victimization, crime, and safety in public and private schools as part of a national survey of students ages 12 through 18 conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics. The Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools funded these data collections until 2012, when the office was reorganized and funding was discontinued for SSOCS and SCS. The next SCS data collection is scheduled to begin in January 2015 and will be supported by limited funding from NCES. The 2016 SSOCS will not be funded by NCES but has received temporary support from the U.S. Department of Justice. Given the need to continue these data collections to ensure accurate information on school crime and safety is available, approximately $2 million of the requested increase would support item review and development for the 2017 SCS and the 2018 SSOCS.

- The My Brother's Keeper (MBK) (http://mbk.ed.gov/) initiative was launched in 2014 to address persistent opportunity gaps faced by boys and young men of color. MBK included an extensive set of statistical indicators related to environment and family structure, education, jobs and earnings, health, and crime to highlight where problems exist, as well as a set of clearinghouses to disseminate information about programmatic interventions shown to improve conditions for youth in this country. Federal statistical agencies worked within existing resources to support the development of the indicators and the provision of related data. Specifically, NCES has supported the development of a basic dissemination Web site. Approximately $1 million of the requested increase would support more extensive use of existing federal data on health, nutrition, poverty, education, and economic opportunity to provide better indicators for highlighting problems and tracking improvements over time.

This additional investment in data collections will help ensure that the Department's policies on postsecondary education, school safety, and early childhood education are based on recent and relevant information. In addition, the requested funding would allow NCES to maintain its core activities, including:

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Cross Sectional Studies

- <u>Cross Sectional Studies</u>, which include a set of sample surveys that provide extensive data about public and private schools, staff, and households throughout the U.S., would receive approximately $22.5 million in 2016 for support of SSOCS, SCS, the Student Loan Repayment and Default Study, and the following surveys and activities:

- The <u>Adult Training and Education Study</u> (ATES) (http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2013/2013190.pdf), piloted in 2010, has collected information on sub-baccalaureate education and training for adults. NCES traditionally has only collected data on postsecondary certificates and degrees awarded through credit-bearing instruction in institutions of higher education that participate in Title IV Federal student aid programs. These institutions comprise only a portion of sub-baccalaureate education and training. The ultimate goal of this study was to develop a methodology to collect valid information on all postsecondary certificates and training, not just on those that are offered by traditional institutions of higher education. In 2015, ATES will be administered as part of the National Household Education Survey.

- The <u>National Household Education Survey</u> (NHES) (http://nces.ed.gov/nhes/) is designed to provide descriptive data on a wide range of education-related issues, including early childhood care and education, children's readiness for school, parent perceptions of school safety and discipline, before- and after-school activities of school-age children, adult participation in education and training for work, parent involvement in education, school choice, homeschooling, and civic involvement. Funding in 2016 would be used to evaluate and support NHES data processing. NCES is also developing content for future NHES collections that focus more specifically on kindergarten readiness, after-school activities of children through the 8th grade, and college planning of high school students.

- The <u>Fast Response Survey System</u> (FRSS) (http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/frss/) collects issue-specific data quickly and with minimum response burden from elementary and secondary schools and districts. Data collected through FRSS surveys are representative at the national level, drawing from a universe that is appropriate for each study. The FRSS collects data from State educational agencies and national samples of other educational organizations and participants, including local educational agencies, public and private elementary and secondary schools, elementary and secondary school teachers and principals, and public libraries and school libraries. To ensure minimal burden on respondents, the surveys are generally limited to three pages of questions and sample sizes are relatively small. One recent study was the 2012–13 survey on the condition of public school facilities, the report of which was released in March 2014.

- The <u>Private School Survey</u> (http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pss/), conducted every 2 years, provides information on the number of private schools, teachers, and students in the U.S. while providing a sampling frame for other NCES surveys. The survey, which includes all private schools, will next be conducted in 2015–2016.

- The <u>Schools and Staffing Survey</u> (SASS) (http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sass/), which was last conducted in 2011–2012, is an extensive sample survey that provides nationally representative information on K-12 public and private schools, principals, and teachers. The survey has been conducted every 4 years, but NCES is shifting SASS to a 2-year data collection cycle for the 2015–2016 school year administration in order to provide more timely

teacher and principal data. NCES is exploring strategies for collecting much of the school-level information through administrative data sources.

- The Survey of Earned Doctorates in the United States (http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/srvydoctorates/) annually collects basic statistics from the universe of doctoral recipients in the U.S. It is conducted by the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES) and the National Science Foundation (NSF), while being supported by NCES, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the National Institutes of Health, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Longitudinal Studies

Longitudinal Studies are designed to collect information on the same students over time. NCES supports a set of surveys that follow students over various age spans. The data from these surveys provide analysts with a tool for understanding how education leads individuals to develop their abilities, and can ultimately provide parents, educators, and policymakers with information to improve the quality of education. Under the 2016 request, funding for these longitudinal surveys would be an estimated $47.0 million. In addition to ECLS-B:18 and NPSAS, key activities include:

- The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 2010–11 (ECLS-K:11) (http://nces.ed.gov/ecls/) is the third in an important series of longitudinal studies that examine child development, school readiness, and early school experiences. The children in the ECLS-K:11 comprise a nationally representative sample selected from both public and private schools attending both full-day and part-day kindergarten in 2010–2011. The ECLS-K:11 will provide data relevant to emerging policy-related domains not fully measured in previous studies, which will enable researchers to study how a wide range of family, school, community, and individual factors are associated with school performance over time.

- The Middle Grades Longitudinal Study (http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/mgls/) will be the first longitudinal study to provide information on children's development in grades 6 through 8 and on factors associated with successful transition from elementary to secondary school. The study will include a nationally representative sample of 6th graders in the 2016–2017 school year, including oversamples of students with disabilities, and will focus on topics associated with students' high school readiness, inclusion, and math and literacy learning in the middle grades. The field test for the study will be conducted in early 2016, while baseline data will be collected in spring 2017 with annual follow-ups in spring 2018 and spring 2019.

- The High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSLS:09) (http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/hsls09/) collected data in the fall of 2009 from a sample of students in the 9th grade, a crucial transition year for most students and a critical grade in determining high school success. The second round of data collection was in the spring of 2012, when most of the student cohort was completing 11th grade. A short data collection occurred in the summer of 2013, when most cohort members would have finished high school, to learn about postsecondary plans and financing. The next round of data collection is scheduled for 2016. Subsequent waves of data collection will follow the sample members into college and beyond, providing

information on transitions from high school to postsecondary education or work. This data collection schedule will allow researchers and policymakers to learn if and how 9th graders' plans are linked to their subsequent behaviors and outcomes, from course-taking to postsecondary choices, and how these plans evolve over time. The study will also examine factors that are associated with students' success, with a special focus on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), curricular coverage, and at-risk students.

- The Beginning Postsecondary Student Longitudinal Survey (BPS) (http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/bps/) provides information on the progress of postsecondary students, following first-time postsecondary students through their postsecondary education and into the labor force. The third BPS cohort was based on the 2004 NPSAS, which collected information on students in 2006 and 2009, and did so for a final time in 2011. The fourth BPS is using the 2012 NPSAS as a base, with scheduled follow-ups in 2014 and 2017. These follow-ups will include revised strata for institution sampling to reflect the recent growth in enrollment in for-profit 4-year institutions.

- The Baccalaureate and Beyond Survey (B&B) (http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/b&b/) follows students who complete their baccalaureate degrees. Initially, students in the NPSAS surveys who are identified as being in their last year of undergraduate studies are asked questions about their future employment and education expectations, as well as about their undergraduate education. In later follow-ups, students are asked questions about their job search activities, education, and employment experiences after graduation. The most recent B&B was conducted in 2009 with a sample of 2008 bachelor's degree recipients from public and private postsecondary institutions; recipients were surveyed again in 2012 and a second follow-up is scheduled for 2018.

International Studies

International Studies (http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/international/) provide insights into U.S. educational practices and outcomes by allowing comparisons with other countries. Interest in these studies has grown with increasing concern about the Nation's global competitiveness and the role education plays in ensuring economic growth. International activities are a vital component of the Department's strategy for providing information to support education reform. Funding for the International Studies program is estimated at $18.2 million in 2016. Along with the ECES, surveys and activities include:

- The International Analysis funding supports a number of activities, including the Indicators of National Education Systems Project (INES), a cooperative project among member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to develop an education indicator reporting system. The goal of INES is to improve the comparability of education data across the 34-member OECD countries and to develop, collect, and report on a key set of indicators measuring the condition of education in these countries. The set of indicators includes measures of student enrollment and achievement, labor force participation, school and school system features, and costs and resources. The primary vehicle for reporting on these indicators is an annual OECD report entitled *Education at a Glance* (http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/). The United States plays an active role through participation in OECD working groups in formulating and reviewing indicators for the report.

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- The <u>Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies</u> (PIAAC) (http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/piaac/), which is sponsored by the OECD, is a household study assessing the basic skills and the broad range of competencies of adults around the world. In the U.S., the study was conducted in 2011–2012 and focused on cognitive and workplace skills needed for successful participation in 21st-century society and the global economy. Specifically, PIAAC measures relationships between individuals' educational backgrounds, uses of information and communications technology, and cognitive skills in the areas of literacy, numeracy, and problem solving. The PIACC assessment was conducted again in the U.S. from August 2013 through April 2014 to collect a supplemental sample of households, as well as a separate sample of adults in State, Federal, and private prisons.

- The <u>Program for International Student Assessment</u> (PISA) (http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pisa/), also sponsored by OECD, is designed to monitor, on a regular 3-year cycle, the achievement of 15-year-old students in three subject areas: reading literacy, mathematical literacy, and scientific literacy. While some elements covered by PISA are likely to be part of the school curriculum, PISA goes beyond mastery of school-based learning to include the knowledge and skills acquired outside of school. The survey had a special focus on reading literacy in 2000, on mathematical literacy in 2003, and on scientific literacy in 2006. This cycle has repeated since 2009. In 2015, PISA will also assess collaborative problem solving and financial literacy. An online International Data Explorer (IDE) is available that allows users to create their own tables and charts from available data (http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/international/ide/).

- The <u>Progress in International Reading Literacy Study</u> (PIRLS) (http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pirls/), which is sponsored by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), assesses the reading literacy of 4th graders and the experiences they had at home and school in learning to read. PIRLS was first conducted in 2001, next in the spring of 2006 and 2011, and is scheduled to be conducted every 5 years thereafter. PIRLS will next be conducted in spring 2016, with an expected data release in December 2017. An IDE is also available for this survey (http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/international/ide/).

- The <u>Teaching and Learning International Survey</u> (TALIS) (http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/talis/) is an international survey of teachers and principals focusing on the working conditions of teachers and the teaching and learning practices in schools. TALIS was first administered in 2008, when 24 countries participated. The study is conducted every 5 years and, in 2013, the U.S. joined 33 other countries in participating in TALIS. The next administration of TALIS will be in 2018 and will provide information to help countries identify policies that support effective teacher preparation, professional development, and instruction.

- The <u>Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study</u> (TIMSS) (http://nces.ed.gov/TIMSS/), also sponsored by the IEA, is a study of 4th and 8th graders' mathematics and science achievement in the U.S. and other participating nations. The study is conducted every 4 years, with the next data collection scheduled to begin in March 2015. The 2015 TIMSS will include an assessment of secondary students' achievement in advanced mathematics and physics. The study has gained the attention of educators, policymakers, and the public, spurring interest in improving middle school mathematics and

science learning and achievement. The TIMSS IDE allows users to create their own tables and charts using TIMSS data (http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/international/ide/).

Administrative Data Collections and Support

The Administrative Data Collections and Support category includes basic descriptive data collections from public schools at the elementary and secondary levels and from public and private postsecondary institutions, as well as activities that support improvement of data standards and technical assistance. The universe data also serve as the sample frames for sample surveys. Under the 2016 request, funding for administrative data collections would be an estimated $23.5 million. Key activities include:

- The Common Core of Data *(*CCD*)* (http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/), the Department's primary database on public elementary and secondary education in the United States, provides comprehensive, annual information on all school districts and public elementary and secondary schools (including public charter schools). The CCD contains basic descriptive information, including student enrollment, demographic, dropout, and high school completion data; numbers of teachers and other staff; and fiscal data, including revenues and expenditures. CCD data are available at the NCES Web site where users can construct custom tables using the "Build-A-Table" tool (http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/bat/). The CCD data collection is coordinated with the ED*Facts* Education Data Exchange Network (EDEN), which States use to report non-fiscal CCD data.

- The Common Education Data Standards (CEDS) (https://ceds.ed.gov/) project is a national collaborative effort to develop voluntary, common data standards for a key set of education data elements to streamline the exchange, comparison, and understanding of data within and across P-20W (Preschool, Grade 20 or Higher Education, Workforce) institutions and sectors. Funding for CEDS is also provided by the Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) program.

- The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System *(*IPEDS*)* (http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/) is a comprehensive collection system for postsecondary institutions, including all Title IV institutions. Components of the survey include: institutional characteristics, fall enrollment, completions, salaries, finance (including current fund revenues by source; current fund expenditures by function, assets, and indebtedness; and endowment investments), student financial aid, and staff. IPEDS also collects academic library statistics on a 2-year cycle from approximately 3,700 postsecondary institutions. Students and families make extensive use of IPEDS data to assist them in college choice through the NCES College Navigator Web site. Policymakers and researchers at the Federal, State, and local levels, as well as the media, use information from IPEDS to follow institutional trends related to postsecondary costs, enrollment and graduation rates, and financial aid. IPEDS retention and graduation rate data are also used for performance measurement in a number of the Department's postsecondary education programs, and its data on tuition trends and net price provide important information to key policymakers to shape discussions on student aid and access to higher education. IPEDS is conducted annually, although not all data are collected every year.

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- The Library Statistics Program (http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/libraries/) includes the Academic Libraries Survey and the School Library Media Center Survey. NCES collects information on library collections, expenditures, services, and staffing on a biennial basis from approximately 3,700 degree-granting postsecondary institutions. The most recent Academic Libraries Report was released in February 2014.

- The School District Demographics System (http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sdds/) is a Web-based resource that allows public access to school district demographic and related geographic data. The program also provides support for the Census Mapping project, which uses school district geographic boundaries to map census blocks to school districts, and for the Decennial Census School District Project, which allows users to view aggregated Census data for public school districts across the Nation.

- Technical assistance to Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (http://nces.ed.gov/programs/slds/) helps propel the successful design, development, implementation, and expansion of K-12 and P-20W longitudinal data systems. These systems are intended to enhance the ability of States to efficiently and accurately manage, analyze, and use education data, including individual student records. Statistics funding provides support to SLDS grantees through the CEDS and the Educational Data Technical Assistance Program (EDTAP).

Cross-cutting Activities

The Cross-cutting Activities category would receive approximately $13.5 million in 2016. Activities receiving funding would include support for MBK, as well as:

- Annual Reports and Indicators include three major annual statistical compilations of critical education indicators: The "Condition of Education" (http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/), the "Digest of Education Statistics" (http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/), and "Projections of Education Statistics" (http://nces.ed.gov/programs/projections/projections2021/). NCES also produces short-format statistical briefs on emerging issues in education.

- The Current Population Survey (CPS) (http://www.census.gov/cps/) is a monthly household survey conducted by the Bureau of the Census. Since the late 1960s, NCES has provided funding for a supplement that gathers data on enrollment in elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education and on educational attainment. NCES funds additional items on education-related topics such as language proficiency, disabilities, computer use and access, student mobility, and private school tuition.

- Funding for Data Development and Statistical Standards provides methodological and statistical support to NCES, as well as to Federal and non-Federal organizations that engage in statistical work in support of NCES's mission. Activities include developing standards that ensure the quality of statistical surveys, analyses, and products; coordinating the review of NCES products; and coordinating revisions to the NCES Statistical Standards.

- Information technology funding includes support for NCES Web servers and related activities, such as NCES Licensing and Inspection, NCES Logistics Support, NCES Web Support, and EDUCATE.

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- The Surveys and Cooperative Systems program provides support for a number of efforts to improve the quality, timeliness, and comparability of statistics used for education policymaking at all levels of government, including the National Forum on Education Statistics (http://nces.ed.gov/forum/about.asp), which is composed of representatives from NCES, other Department offices, and State and local educational agencies from the 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Department of Defense Dependents Schools. The program also includes funding for two National Postsecondary Education Cooperatives (NPECs) (http://nces.ed.gov/npec/): one focused on IPEDS and one on the postsecondary longitudinal and sample surveys. The NPECs bring together a wide range of representatives from the postsecondary community who work with NCES to improve the quality and utility of postsecondary data.

- Other activities include special studies to improve the quality and utility of assessments, including enhancements of survey methodology, assessment development, data analysis, and dissemination, as well as quality control procedures for NCES products. In addition, funding supports technical training for researchers who use NCES data along with non-technical information sessions for other users; obtaining expert assistance; interagency activities to improve statistical quality and data use, including the Joint Program in Survey Methodology and FedStats; and printing and publications.

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (dollars in thousands)

Measures	2014	2015	2016
Cross-Sectional Studies	$16,551	$16,551	$22,551
Longitudinal Studies	36,294	36,294	46,994
International Studies	15,800	15,800	18,184
Administrative Data Collections and Support	22,503	22,503	23,503
Cross-Cutting Activities	11,912	11,912	13,512
Total	103,060	103,060	124,744

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals and objectives, measures, and performance targets and data; and an assessment of the progress made toward achieving program results. Achievement of program results is based on the cumulative effect of the resources provided in previous years and those requested in 2015 and future years, as well as the resources and efforts invested by those served by the program.

NCES uses customer survey data to help identify areas where improvements are needed in the data collection and reporting systems. Specifically, NCES collects data from a random sample of visitors to the NCES Web site, who receive a "pop-up box" asking them to complete an online

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survey. NCES has set the target for each of the measures at 90 percent of customers reporting that they are satisfied or very satisfied.

NCES has used the same measures for a number of years, and during the next year will be collecting baseline data for a number of new measures to be implemented in fiscal year 2015.

Goal: To collect, analyze, and disseminate information on the condition of education in the United States and to provide comparative international statistics.

Objective: Provide timely and useful data that are relevant to policy and educational improvement.

Measure: The percentage of customer respondents satisfied or very satisfied with the following aspects of NCES data files.

Year	Ease of Understanding Target	Ease of Understanding Actual	Timeliness Target	Timeliness Actual	Relevance Target	Relevance Actual
2011	90%	91%	90%	89%	90%	94%
2012	90	90	90	87	90	93
2013	90	90	90	88	90	92
2014	90	88	90	87	90	91
2015	90		90		90	
2016	90		90		90	

Additional information: The 2014 NCES customer survey showed most users (88 percent) were satisfied with the ease of understanding of NCES data files. The survey also showed that a clear majority of users (87 percent), although slightly less than the target figure of 90 percent, were satisfied with the timeliness of NCES data files. NCES strategies for improving the timeliness of data and publications include online data collections that provide respondents with immediate feedback about out-of-range or questionable items, thus reducing the amount of time needed to edit the data and making them available sooner for analysis and reporting. NCES is also releasing products, including data files, on the Internet, which makes it easier for most NCES customers to obtain needed information quickly. In addition, IES has established timeliness goals for the release of data from NCES surveys.

The percentage of customers (91 percent) satisfied with the relevance of NCES data files exceeded the target (90 percent). NCES has devoted considerable effort to working with researchers, educators, and policymakers to ensure that data meet their needs.

Measure: The percentage of customer respondents satisfied or very satisfied with the following aspects of NCES publications.

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Year	Ease of Understanding Target	Ease of Understanding Actual	Timeliness Target	Timeliness Actual	Relevance Target	Relevance Actual
2011	90%	94%	90%	91%	90%	93%
2012	90	91	90	89	90	93
2013	90	91	90	89	90	93
2014	90	91	90	88	90	91
2015	90		90		90	
2016	90		90		90	

Additional information: NCES exceeded its targets for the percentage of customers who were satisfied with the ease of understanding or the relevance of the publications, but the percentage who found the NCES publications to be timely just missed the target. NCES policy is to solicit feedback from users to ensure that materials meet their needs, and it has established an efficiency indicator, discussed below, to track the timeliness of the release of information from its surveys.

Measure: The percentage of customer respondents satisfied or very satisfied with the following aspects of NCES services.

Year	Courtesy of NCES staff providing services Target	Courtesy of NCES staff providing services Actual	Timeliness Target	Timeliness Actual	Ease of finding information on nces.ed.gov Target	Ease of finding information on nces.ed.gov Actual
2011	90%	93%	90%	93%	90%	87%
2012	90	94	90	92	90	84
2013	90	93	90	91	90	85
2014	90	92	90	90	90	83
2015	90		90		90	
2016	90		90		90	

Additional information: Most customers were satisfied with the courtesy of the NCES staff providing services (92 percent) and the timeliness of NCES services (90 percent), but only 83 percent of respondents found it easy to find information on the NCES Web site.

A key component of NCES's mission is disseminating statistical information to its constituents. In 2007, NCES added three measures that help assess how well it is fulfilling this part of its mission. These measures—the average number of visits to the NCES Web site each month, the average monthly number of users of the NCES Data Analysis System (an online tool for analyzing NCES data sets), and the average monthly number of downloads of NCES reports— allow the Department to track use of NCES information.

Number of Web site visits: NCES recorded 1,445,053 Web site visits, on average, per month in 2014, an increase from 1,328,395 Web site visits in 2013. In 2012, NCES began using different software for counting the number of visits and the numbers are not comparable to those reported for earlier years. Use of the new software decreases costs and analysis time and excludes users from within the Department from the counts. The 2013 figure was used to establish the target (1,475,000) for 2014, which was not met.

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Number of Downloads of NCES Reports: NCES established a new target of 186,000 average monthly downloads for 2014 (an increase from the old target of 185,000). NCES exceeded the target in 2014, with an average of 357,023 monthly downloads.

One way in which NCES is attempting to ensure the accuracy of its work is by maintaining high survey response rates. High response rates help ensure that survey data are representative of the target populations, and NCES has set specific benchmarks for different types of studies (e.g., universe surveys, cross-sectional surveys, and longitudinal studies). When a survey response rate is lower than 85 percent, the NCES statistical standards require that NCES conduct bias analyses to help determine the effect of the low rate on the survey results. All NCES surveys in 2009 through 2014 either had an 85 percent response rate or higher or had nonresponse bias analyses conducted and weight adjustments, as needed.

NCES has also provided information on the number of the data collections for which the response rate was below 85 percent. In 2014, NCES released 13 reports that included 45 survey components. The response rates for 73 percent of survey components were 85 percent or above and the remaining 27 percent had nonresponse bias analyses conducted because their response rates were below 85 percent. This is substantially lower than in 2013, but the figures will vary each year depending on the surveys included. The nonresponse bias analyses, which were conducted for all surveys with a response rate of less than 85 percent, informed the nonresponse weight adjustments to help ensure published results accurately reflected the target population values.

Year	Number of Reports	Number of Survey Components	Number of Survey Components with Response Rates Below 85%	Percent of Survey Components with Response Rates Below 85%
2011	14	29	9%	31%
2012	9	18	2	11
2013	14	31	16	52
2014	13	45	12	27
2015				
2016				

NCES collects additional customer satisfaction information through the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) (http://www.theacsi.org/), which provides satisfaction scores based on samples of customers. The measure examines the extent to which respondents would recommend NCES to others and would rely on NCES in the future. The baseline for this measure, 74 percent, was established using 2008 data, and the 2010 value was 76 percent.

Efficiency Measures

NCES has adopted two efficiency measures. One of the measures looks at timeliness; the other examines cost per completed case (e.g., respondent).

The first NCES efficiency measure tracks the time it takes to release survey information. The efficiency measure addresses customers' concerns about the data timeliness and helps assess how efficiently NCES completes work in a timely manner. The goal is to release reports to the public within 12 months. However, for collections where the release date is determined by an

entity other than NCES (e.g., OECD for certain international studies), the release date will be the date the report is released to the other entity. In 2011 and 2012, all initial NCES releases were made within a 12-month time frame. In 2013, 88 percent of all initial releases met the target (14 out of 16 reports). In 2014, 92 percent of all initial releases met the target (12 out of 13 reports). The average time to release of the 13 reports in 2014 was 9 months, as compared to 10 months in 2013.

The second efficiency measure is the average cost per completed case (response unit) for selected surveys.

Measure: The average cost per completed case, adjusted for inflation.

Year	Fast Response Survey System Target	Fast Response Survey System Actual	National Postsecondary Student Aid Study Target	National Postsecondary Student Aid Study Actual	Trends in Mathematics and Science Study Target	Trends in Mathematics and Science Study Actual
2008	$159.09	$158.68	$174.12	$166.98	NA	
2009	$159.09	$121.69	NA		NA	
2010	$159.09	$196.63	NA		NA	
2011	$159.09	$131.90	NA		$177.77	$132.59
2012	$159.09	$134.50	$174.12	$141.10	NA	
2013	$159.09	$142.50	NA		NA	
2014	$159.09	$256.00	NA		NA	
2015	$159.09		NA		$177.77	
2016	$159.09		$174.12		NA	

Additional information: Data are available for three surveys: the FRSS, NPSAS, and TIMSS. The three collections being monitored were selected because they have alternative modes of operation: the FRSS is a school-based mail survey, NPSAS is administered via the Internet with a computer-assisted telephone interview follow-up, and TIMSS is administered in schools. NCES calculates the average cost per completed case by dividing the total survey costs for data collection and processing by the final number of completed cases. The target is no increase from the baseline, which, in 2006 dollars, was $159.09 per case for the FRSS generic survey (spring 2006), $174.12 for the NPSAS Student Component (academic year 2003-04), and $177.77 for TIMSS (spring 2003). Data will not be available every year for NPSAS and TIMSS because they are on a 4-year cycle. The FRSS met its targets except in 2010 and 2014. In 2010, all but one of the surveys completed were arts surveys, which required significantly more nonresponse follow-ups and data clarification work than other surveys, which increased the costs. NPSAS met its 2008 and 2012 targets, and TIMSS met its 2011 target.

Regional educational laboratories
  (Education Sciences Reform Act, section 174)

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2016 Authorization: 0[1]

Budget Authority:

	2015	2016	Change
	$54,423	$54,423	0

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  [1] The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2009. The Administration proposes to continue funding in FY 2016 under appropriations language.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Regional Educational Laboratories (REL) program supports a network of 10 laboratories that work in partnership with State education agencies (SEAs), school districts, and other entities on using data and research to improve academic outcomes for students. Each of the RELs serves a specific region of the country (http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edLabs/regions/), with the fundamental mission of providing support for a more evidence-reliant education system.

RELs conduct applied research and evaluations, develop and disseminate products and processes based on the best available research findings, and provide training and technical assistance to SEAs, local educational agencies (LEAs), school boards, and State boards of education. These activities help build local and State capacity to use data and evidence to inform decisions, with the goal of improving education outcomes. The RELs are part of the Department's wide-ranging technical assistance network that includes the Comprehensive Centers, What Works Clearinghouse (WWC), Equity Assistance Centers, and Office of Special Education Programs Technical Assistance Centers, organized by the Department to provide high quality support to SEAs, LEAs, and schools that is accessible, comprehensive, and relevant as they rise to the challenge of ensuring a high-quality education for all students.

Allocation of resources amongst the RELs is based on the number of LEAs and the number of school-age children, as well as the cost of providing services within the geographic area encompassed by the region. RELs are funded via 5-year contracts with research organizations, institutions of higher education, or partnerships among such entities. The program is administered by the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance.

To build State and local capacity to use evidence, the RELs work with SEAs and LEAs on using data to understand the nature and scope of their specific educational challenges, accessing high-quality research to inform decisions, identify opportunities to conduct original research, and tracking progress over time using high-quality data and methods.

REL technical assistance takes a variety of forms, but the focus is always on using data and research to systematically understand and address real-world problems, and the RELs tailor technical assistance to the level of experience of the SEAs and LEAs with which they work. For example, RELs provide assistance to build capacity among State and district personnel to access their data; identify opportunities to use data to improve student achievement; conduct a wide range of types of research studies; and present research findings in clear, understandable formats.

The current REL contracts were awarded in fiscal year 2012 and include an explicit focus on supporting sustained, ongoing partnerships with stakeholders at the State and district levels. Under the direction of their regional governing boards, RELs identify priority topic areas on which to focus their activities. Much of the work is conducted through collaborative research alliances, which bring together educators, researchers, policymakers, and others to address each regional's high priority education needs. Each research alliance focuses on a particular challenge that has an actionable component such as college access and readiness so that the research and technical assistance are closely linked to a clear goal. There are currently 72 research alliances operating across the 10 RELs. Of these alliances, 32 include State and district representatives from a single State and 40 include members from multiple States.

Although the research alliances and regions are the primary partners of each REL, the Department also requires that RELs develop materials for national distribution through the IES Web site. In addition to reports and studies, these materials include tools (such as rubrics or data organizers) and technical assistance documents (such as PowerPoint presentations, workshop activities, and facilitators' guides) that can be used by others who are not directly involved in the RELs' work. Examples of products include the REL Northwest report on school discipline patterns in six Oregon districts (http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northwest/pdf/REL_2014028.pdf) and related video (http://relnw.educationnorthwest.org/oln-alliance) and webinar resources (https://www.relmidatlantic.org/content/identifying-and-addressing-discipline-disparities). These tools enable educators across the country to learn about school discipline and how they might use data to inform their efforts to address racial/ethnic disparities in disciplinary procedures and reduce overall discipline referrals.

The program statute also required that IES establish a system for technical and peer review to ensure that applied research activities, research-based reports, and products of the RELs are consistent with the rigorous standards applied to all other research grants and contracts administered by IES. Information on the process and standards IES uses to ensure REL products meet IES standards can be found at http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/peerreview/index.asp. Using IES standards ensures that primary users of REL research products, policymakers and practitioners, can be assured that REL research has met high standards for scientific quality, ensuring that the information is valid and reliable.

IES awarded a contract to evaluate the REL program in 2009. The evaluation is examining (1) how well the RELs respond to the needs of their regions by providing short- and long-term research assistance and evidence-based technical assistance and (2) the effectiveness of the

program's coordination activities across the RELs. The evaluation is discussed further in the Program Performance Information section of this request.

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were:

	(dollars in thousands)
2011	$57,535
2012	57,426
2013	54,423
2014	54,423
2015	54,423

FY 2016 BUDGET REQUEST

The Administration requests $54.4 million in fiscal year 2016, the same as the 2015 appropriation, for the REL program. The RELs serves as a necessary bridge between the research community and State and local education agencies by providing expertise, including training and technical assistance, to bring the latest high-quality research and proven practices into school improvement efforts. The RELs are part of the Department's coordinated program of technical assistance to support SEAs, LEAs, and schools in their efforts to ensure a high-quality education for all children. The requested funds would support the final year of activities under the 5-year contracts the Department awarded in December 2011.

The requested funds would support applied research, assistance, and training on the application of data and other evidence to address education problems, and the dissemination of the most current and credible research findings. Across the RELs, the requested funds would support ongoing work to help States and districts address critical issues such as dropout prevention; college and career readiness; teacher evaluation; and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education. Funds requested would also support an independent peer review of REL products and publications, which ensures they are technically sound, readable, usable, and relevant to the needs of education practitioners and stakeholders before they are disseminated. RELs also collaborate with other Federal technical assistance entities through efforts such as the State Support Initiative with the Comprehensive Centers.

One of the primary challenges facing SEAs today is the shift from a focus on compliance to building State capacity to lead education reform initiatives and support school districts and schools in delivering a high-quality education. Over the past 12 years, SEAs stepped up to the challenge by taking on stronger leadership and policy development roles and in response the Department has created a new Office of State Support designed to improve State-centered support across related Department programs. As part of that effort, the Department will enhance work to coordinate the activities of its major technical assistance programs, including the RELs and the Comprehensive Centers, as well as related activities such as the What Works Clearinghouse. The role of RELs in providing relevant and coordinated technical assistance is to assist SEAs, LEAs, and other educational entities with the use of evidence, including analyzing data to identify patterns, providing information on evidence-based strategies, and evaluating the effectiveness of various strategies, including use of quick- turnaround evaluations.

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Regional educational laboratories

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (dollars in thousands)

Measures	2014	2015	2016
Annual support for each REL:[1]			
Northeastern Region	$5,145	$4,884	$4,884
Mid-Atlantic Region	4,648	4,412	4,412
Southeastern Region	4,860	4,588	4,588
Appalachian Region	4,468	4,171	4,171
Midwestern Region	7,476	7,147	7,147
Central Region	5,177	4,964	4,964
Southwestern Region	9,448	9,160	9,160
Western Region	5,937	5,635	5,635
Northwestern Region	3,952	3,744	3,744
Pacific Region	3,463	3,287	3,287
Subtotal, Regional educational laboratories	54,573	51,994	51,994
Program activities:[2]			
Regional educational laboratory contracts	52,137	52,343	52,597
Independent review of REL plans and products	2,286	2,080	1,826
Total	54,423	54,423	54,423

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[1] Funding reflects estimated amounts obligated in the fiscal year, not the annual appropriation, and includes prior year carryover.
[2] The amounts show the estimated funding for each activity by year of the appropriation. Funds may be carried over into the next year.

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 established standards for the REL program. IES awarded the first contracts subject to these requirements in 2006, and the new contracts awarded in fiscal year 2012 continued to reflect those standards. The Department identified common performance indicators for its technical assistance programs that assess their quality, relevance, and usefulness. In 2014, the Department established two performance measures for the RELs:

Goal: Increase effective use of data and research, and capacity for use, among State and local education agencies.

Objective: Increase the use of data and research, and capacity for use, among members of REL research alliances.

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Measure: Annual rating of impact of REL research alliance participation on agency use of data and research.

Year	Target	Actual
2014		3.1
2015	3.2	
2016	3.2	

RELs are required by their contracts to survey research alliance (RA) members each spring and report the results to IES, using a common set of customer satisfaction survey questions approved by the Office of Management and Budget. This measure will average the RA members' responses to four survey questions to create a single score. These items are:

- Participation in this research alliance has increased my ability to use my agency's or organization's available data.

- Participation in this research alliance has increased my ability to conduct high quality research and evaluation.

- Participation in this research alliance has provided information that informed my agency's selection of programs and/or strategies related to this topic area.

- Participation in this research alliance has led my agency to design and conduct an evaluation study.

Performance data are analyzed by calendar year and are reported under the fiscal year corresponding to the last quarter of the calendar year; e.g., data reported for fiscal year 2014 were collected from January through December of 2013. During the course of the REL contracts, as research alliances mature and more research and technical assistance is conducted, the score on these items should increase. The baseline for this measure was set in 2014 and is a rating of 3.1 on a scale where 1 equates to "Strongly Disagree" and 4 equates to "Strongly Agree."

Objective: Disseminate research findings and methods, showing the relevance of the content for education policy and/or practice.

Measure: Annual participant rating of the quality and relevance of REL dissemination events, including online events.

Year	Target	Actual
2014		3.4
2015	3.5	
2016	3.5	

RELs also are contractually required to survey participants in each dissemination activity and report the data to IES. This measure averages participant responses to five survey items to create a single score for quality and relevance of dissemination activities; these items are:

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- The workshop/training was relevant to an issue currently facing my organization.

- The workshop/training provided opportunities to consider how to use research or effectively incorporate data into decision making within my agency or organization.

- I expect to apply information from the workshop/training in my work.

- I am satisfied with the overall quality of this workshop/training.

- The benefits of attending this workshop/training were worth the time I invested.

The baseline for this measure was set in 2014 using data collected during calendar year 2013 and is a rating of 3.4 on a scale where 1 equates to "Strongly Disagree" and 4 equates to "Strongly Agree." We expect that the quality of dissemination activities will increase in future years.

Other Performance Information

The Department began an independent evaluation of the REL program in 2009. The evaluation is addressing the following evaluation questions for each REL funded between fiscal years 2006 and 2011 and for the REL program as a whole:

- What activities did the RELs undertake to fulfill their missions?

- What were the technical quality and relevance of REL proposals and reports?

- How relevant and useful were the REL technical assistance products to the needs of the States, localities, and policymakers in their regions?

This descriptive study is relying on a combination of extant data, fiscal year 2010 interviews with REL directors, and fiscal year 2012 surveys of potential REL customers from State and local educational agencies. Panels of experts met during fiscal years 2010 and 2012 and rated the quality and relevance of REL Fast Response Project proposals and final reports and REL impact study proposals and final reports.

An interim report was released in September 2013 that provides information on the activities undertaken by the RELs and the quality and relevance of fast response projects conducted by the RELs (http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20134014/pdf/20134014.pdf). Preliminary findings show that these short-term research and technical assistance projects address education needs and inform policy and practice. Independent expert reviewers rated the project proposals and reports for quality and relevance, and both received a mean rating between "adequate" and "strong" for quality and between "adequate" and "relevant" for relevance. The final report, which the Department expects to release in early 2015, will provide information on the technical quality and relevance of impact study proposals and report.

Assessment
  (National Assessment of Educational Progress Authorization Act)

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2016 Authorization: 0[1]

Budget Authority:

Program area	2015	2016 Request	Change
National Assessment of Educational Progress	$129,000	$149,616	+$20,616
National Assessment Governing Board	8,235	7,827	-408
Total	137,235	157,443	+20,208

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  [1] The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2009. The Administration proposes to continue funding this program in FY 2016 under appropriations language.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), also known as "The Nation's Report Card", measures and reports on the status of and trends in student learning over time and by subject. By making objective information on student performance available to policymakers, educators, parents, and others, NAEP has become an integral part of the Nation's measurement of educational progress.

Assessment frequency is specified in the authorizing statute. The Commissioner for Education Statistics must conduct:

- National reading and mathematics assessments in public and private schools at grades 4 and 8 at least once every 2 years;

- National grade 12 reading and mathematics assessments in public and private schools on a regular schedule; and

- Biennial State assessments of student achievement in reading and mathematics in grades 4 and 8.

If time and resources allow, the Commissioner may conduct additional national and State assessments in the 4th, 8th, and 12th grades in public and private schools at regularly scheduled intervals in additional subjects, including writing, science, history, geography, civics, economics, foreign languages, and arts; may conduct 12th grade State reading and mathematics assessments; and may conduct long-term trend assessments of academic achievement at ages 9, 13, and 17 in reading and mathematics. Whenever feasible, information must be collected

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and reported by race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, disability, and limited-English proficiency. The NAEP schedule is publicly available at http://www.nagb.org/.

The National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) is responsible for formulating policy for NAEP. NAGB is composed of 25 voting members including Governors, State legislators, chief State school officers, a superintendent, State and local board of education members, testing and measurement experts, a representative of business or industry, curriculum specialists, principals, classroom teachers, and parents. The Director of the Institute of Education Sciences serves as an ex officio, nonvoting member of the Board. Using a national consensus approach, NAGB develops appropriate assessment objectives and achievement levels for each grade in each subject area to be assessed. The Assessment budget has supported the following major program components:

- National NAEP: The main NAEP assessments report results for the Nation and are designed to follow the curriculum frameworks developed by NAGB. They periodically measure student achievement in reading, mathematics, science, writing, U.S. history, civics, geography, and other subjects.

- State NAEP: State assessments address the needs of State-level policymakers for reliable data concerning student achievement in their States in reading, mathematics, science, and writing.

- The Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA): Begun in 2002, the TUDA provides information on 4th and 8th grade student achievement in reading and mathematics in a small number of urban school districts. Although participation is voluntary, demand from districts to be included in TUDA has significantly increased in recent years, with 21 districts participating in 2013.

- Long-term trend NAEP: In its long-term trend program, NAEP administers identical instruments from one assessment year to the next, measuring student achievement in reading and mathematics. These assessments do not evolve based on changes in curricular or educational practices.

- Evaluation and validation studies: Congress mandates that the Secretary provide for continuing review of the national and State assessments and student performance levels by one or more nationally recognized evaluation organizations. NAEP funds also support studies to examine critical validity issues involving NAEP design, interpretation, and operations.

In order to inform the American public about the performance of the Nation's students, NAEP produces a series of public audience and technical reports. All NAEP reports are available through the Internet (http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/). In addition, an online data tool (http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata/) allows users to create their own data tables with national and State data.

The statute requires biennial State assessments in reading and mathematics in grades 4 and 8 and requires reporting of NAEP results, where feasible, by disability and limited-English proficiency as well as by race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender. The Federal Government is specifically prohibited from using NAEP to influence standards, assessments,

curriculum, or instructional practices at the State and local levels, or from using NAEP to evaluate individual students or teachers or provide rewards or sanctions for individual students, teachers, schools, or school districts. In addition, the statute specifies that nothing in the law shall be construed to prescribe the use of NAEP for student promotion or graduation purposes, and that NAEP should not affect home schools. Maintenance of a system of records containing personally identifiable information on students is prohibited, and assessments must not evaluate or assess personal or family beliefs and attitudes.

The statute also ensures the Department's ability to maintain test integrity by allowing the NCES Commissioner to decline to release cognitive test items that will be used in future assessments for 10 years (and longer if important to protect long-term trend data) while continuing to provide for public access to assessment materials in secure settings. The statute requires that the public be notified about such access; requires that access be provided within 45 days in a mutually convenient setting; and establishes procedures for receiving, reviewing, and reporting complaints. The law provides criminal penalties for unauthorized release of assessment instruments.

The statute also mandates that participation is <u>voluntary</u> for students and schools, as well as for local educational agencies. Each participating State must give permission for the release of the results of its State assessment. However, under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), each State participating in the Title I program had to develop a State plan (ESEA, Title I, Part A, Section 1111) in which it agreed to participate in the biennial grades 4 and 8 reading and mathematics NAEP assessments beginning in the 2002–2003 school year, provided that the Secretary of Education pays for the costs of participation. Any State with an approved plan under section 1111 is deemed to have authorized the release of its grades 4 and 8 reading and mathematics NAEP data.

Funding levels for both NAEP and NAGB for the past 5 fiscal years were:

	(dollars in thousands)
2011	$138,567
2012	138,306
2013	131,070
2014	140,235
2015	137,235

FY 2016 BUDGET REQUEST

The Administration requests $157.4 million for Assessment in 2016, an increase of $20.2 million from the 2015 appropriation. Of this amount, $149.6 million would provide support for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and $7.8 million would support the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB). NAGB is responsible for formulating policy for NAEP and develops assessment objectives and achievement levels for each grade in each subject area to be assessed. The NAEP State-level assessments are held every other year, meaning that costs are considerably higher in some years and lower in others. The Administration requests that these funds remain available for 2 years, as they have been in

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recent years. Extending the availability of funds for an additional year allows the Administration the flexibility it needs to administer these assessments and spread out costs over time. In particular, the requested increase is not only essential for funding activities in 2016 but also for supporting necessary work in 2017.

The requested funding for NAGB would allow it to carry out its responsibilities for NAEP, including selecting subject areas to be assessed; developing student achievement levels for each grade and subject tested; taking appropriate actions to improve the form, content, use, and reporting of NAEP; developing test objectives and specifications for assessments in each subject; handling the initial public release of NAEP reports; and developing and implementing procedures for the review of NAEP methodology, content, frameworks, reporting, and dissemination. NAGB's most recent activity involves studying the potential use of NAEP assessment data as indicators of whether students are academically prepared for education and job training opportunities after high school. In May 2014, NAGB released a culmination of these findings through the Nation's Report Card (http://www.nationsreportcard.gov/), detailing how the 12th grade NAEP reading and mathematics assessments can be used as an indicator of students' academic preparedness for college. More recently, in October 2014, NAGB contracted an academic preparedness research study to explore how the 8th grade NAEP reading and mathematics assessments can be used in evaluating students' progress towards college and career readiness. Additional activities NAGB has planned include special-focused reports that use NAEP results together with the contextual information NAEP collects on school policies and practices to inform discussions about improving achievement, and outreach activities to provide information on the Technology and Engineering Literacy assessment that was first administered in 2014.

NAEP funding for a particular fiscal year provides support for the analysis and reporting of assessments conducted in prior fiscal years, the administration of current year assessments, preparation for future assessments, and support for special studies. The current NAGB schedule of assessments includes:

- 2015 assessments: 4th, 8th, and 12th grade assessments in reading, mathematics, and science. The 4th and 8th grade assessments are conducted at the national and State levels, while the 12th grade assessment is conducted at the national level. State participation in 12th grade NAEP is voluntary; 13 States participated in 2013.

- 2016 assessment: 8th grade arts at the national level.

- 2017 assessments: 4th, 8th, and 12th grade national and State assessments in reading and mathematics. The writing assessment will only be conducted at the national level.

The requested funding for NAEP will allow NAGB to maintain its current schedule of assessments while implementing the following initiatives:

- Transitioning to Digital-Based Assessments (DBA): For the 2017 4th and 8th grade assessments in reading and mathematics, NAEP will be administered to students through digital-based technology. This innovation follows a trend in assessment delivery across the Nation as States transition to digital assessments. DBA has a number of advantages, including providing more fast-turnaround data on students' testing-taking strategies and

allowing students to demonstrate important skills in problem solving and analytical thinking through an enhanced platform and test items. For example, DBA is capable of including more interactive question types, such as simulations and graphing, allowing for the measurement of skills not as easily assessed by paper-and-pencil assessments. Funding for DBA supports technology costs, as well as two bridge studies to compare results using paper-and-pencil assessments to results using DBA. These studies are essential through the transition for maintaining the data trend of NAEP, which allows policymakers, researchers, and practitioners to compare student achievement in key subjects over time, one of the NAEP's most prominent features. The technology and bridge studies for DBA will ensure uniform testing conditions across schools in order to maintain the validity and reliability necessary for NAEP data integrity.

- Expanding TUDA: Since 2002, TUDA has explored the use of NAEP to report on the performance of public school students at the district level. These data provide useful information about how well a district performs relative to other urban districts and the Nation. In 2013, 21 urban districts participated, but more districts have requested inclusion in TUDA given its usefulness. The requested funding would allow for NAGB to meet the increased demand by allowing for 10 additional urban districts to be included in the 2017 TUDA.

- Conducting U.S. history, civics, and geography assessments in 2018: Given the higher costs of maintaining the current schedule of assessments, the Administration's requested increase would allow NAGB to conduct assessments in U.S. history, civics, and geography for grades 8 and 12 in 2018. In 2013, the year in which funds were sequestered, fiscal constraints led NAGB to postpone indefinitely the implementation of assessments for 4th and 12th grade students in U.S. history, civics, and geography as these assessments are not required in statute. In its explanatory statement regarding the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act of 2015, Congress stated that reducing the frequency of assessments in this area has limited its ability to track the progress of the American education system in addressing this significant area of need and advised NAGB to consider implementing these important assessments. The Administration also recognizes the need and importance for continuing assessments in these subjects to measure progress, particularly because previous assessments in U.S. history have indicated that fewer than one in four 4th, 8th, and 12th grade students are at or above proficient in history. The funding increase is necessary in order for NAGB to be able to maintain its current schedule of assessments, transition to DBA and expand TUDA in 2017, and conduct grades 8 and 12 assessments in U.S. history, civics, and geography assessments in 2018.

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (dollars in thousands)

Measures	2014	2015	2016
NAEP	$132,000	$129,000	$149,616
NAGB	8,235	8,235	7,827
Total, Assessment	140,235	137,235	157,443
Number of full-time equivalent permanent personnel associated with NAGB	14	14	14

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures, and performance targets and data; and an assessment of the progress made toward achieving program results. Achievement of program results is based on the cumulative effect of the resources provided in previous years and those requested in fiscal year 2016 and future years, as well as the resources and efforts invested by those served by this program. The Department is developing new performance measures to be implemented for fiscal year 2016. The following section presents the most current performance measures in use.

Since 2006, NCES has used an online survey of a random sample of visitors to the NCES Web site to assess customer satisfaction with products and services. Data are reported for the Statistics and Assessment programs as a whole and are presented in the Statistics justification.

In addition to these customer satisfaction measures, NCES collects customer service information through the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) (http://www.theacsi.org/), which provides satisfaction scores based on samples of customers. The ACSI measures the extent to which respondents would recommend the Nation's Report Card to others and would rely on the Nation's Report Card in the future. The baseline for this measure, which showed that 81 percent of respondents would recommend the Nation's Report Card to others and would rely on it in the future, was established using data for 2008. ACSI data will be collected approximately every other year. The figure for 2010 was 79 percent. Data for 2014 will be available in May 2015.

NCES established three measures—the number of visits to the NAEP Web site, the number of users of the NAEP Data Explorer (an online tool for analyzing NAEP data sets), and the number of downloads of NAEP reports—to allow the Department to track use of NAEP information. The baselines, which were established in 2008, were used as the targets for future years. NCES exceeded the targets for these measures in each succeeding year. In 2012, NCES changed the software used to track Web site visits and users of the Assessment Explorer data tool, and the data are not comparable with data from the prior years.

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Measure: Average month use.

Year	Web Visits Target	Web Visits Actual	Assessment Explorer Data Tool Users Target	Assessment Explorer Data Tool Users Actual
2012	Baseline	74,023	Baseline	7,612
2013	75,000	85,934	8,000	13,234
2014	76,000	82,000	8,000	51,000
2015	80,000		45,000	
2016	84,000		53,000	

The monthly averages for both measures exceeded the targets. In addition, there was an average of 34,000 downloads of electronic versions of NAEP reports each month in 2014, exceeding the target of 31,000 and an increase from 33,265 downloads in 2013.

Efficiency Measures

The following efficiency measures examine the actual time from the end of data collection to release of the initial national reading and mathematics assessments to NAGB. The goal is to ensure that NAEP results are available within 6 months of each reading and mathematics assessment, and the measure is an indication of how efficiently the Department is analyzing and reporting NAEP results. Because any year with new frameworks requires additional work to analyze the results (e.g., conducting trend studies and having achievement levels set by NAGB) and produce the final reports, NCES believes it is appropriate to exempt assessments with new frameworks from the efficiency measure calculations. This provides more comparable measurements from year to year, since different percentages of assessments may have new frameworks each year.

The measures are:

- The timeliness of National NAEP data for Reading and Mathematics Assessments.

- The percentage of NAEP reports on State-level reading and mathematics assessments ready for release by NAGB within 6 months of the end of data collection.

- The percentage of NAEP initial releases, excluding national and State reading and mathematics assessments, ready for release by NAGB within 12 months of the end of data collection.

Timeliness of National NAEP Data for Reading and Mathematics Assessments: NCES has committed to releasing National NAEP results for reading and mathematics to NAGB within 6 months of the end of data collection in any year in which there are not new frameworks. It met this goal for 2009 (4th, 8th, and 12th grade mathematics) and 2011 (4th, 8th, and 12th grade reading and mathematics). In 2009, the reading assessment had new frameworks, and the results for the 4th, 8th, and 12th grade reading assessments were released to NAGB in 12 months. NCES met the goal again in 2013, when 4th, 8th, and 12th grade assessments were conducted in reading and mathematics.

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Timeliness of State-level Reading and Mathematics Assessments: NCES also has committed to releasing State-level reading and mathematics assessments to NAGB within 6 months, except when the assessments have new frameworks. NCES met the goal: In 2009, the 4th, 8th, and 12th grades mathematics results were released in 6 months, and in 2011, both reading (4th and 8th grades) and mathematics (4th and 8th grades) were released within 6 months. (There was no 12th grade assessment in 2011.) The 2009 State reading results, which had new frameworks, were released in 12 months. NCES met the goal in 2013, when State assessments were conducted in reading and mathematics at grades 4, 8, and 12.

Timeliness of Other Assessments: NCES has committed to releasing results of all other assessments to NAGB within 12 months, except in years with new frameworks. In 2007, 80 percent of other initial releases that did not have new frameworks were released within that time period, and since then NCES has reported that all such assessments met that time schedule.

NCES is also examining the average cost per completed case (respondent) for the assessments conducted in odd years. The "odd year assessments" include the National, State, and urban district assessments in reading and mathematics, as well as selected other subjects, and represent a reasonably comparable set of assessments from one measurement year to the next.

Measure: After adjustment for inflation, the average cost per completed case for the assessments (in 2006 dollars).

Year	Target	Actual
2007	Baseline	$79.68
2009	$79.68	81.79
2011	79.68	90.54
2013	79.68	91.00
2015	79.68	
2016	79.68	

Additional information: NCES established a baseline of $79.68 in 2007, and set the outyear targets at this level. The goal is to have each case cost no more than in the base year, after adjusting for inflation. NCES did not meet the target in subsequent years. NCES, along with other statistical agencies, is experiencing increased difficulty in obtaining acceptable response rates. Increasing the response rates is expensive, with agencies needing to conduct more follow-ups than in the past, and to increasingly rely on incentive payments.

Other Performance Information

The Department completed an evaluation of NAEP in 2009 (http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~db=all~content=g915933415) that provides information on key aspects of the assessment. The study found that the assessment is well-run and of high quality, but it did identify possible areas for improvement. These recommendations included that the NAEP program should specify the intended uses of NAEP, identify unintended uses, and develop a validity research agenda around current and proposed uses. The study

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also recommended that technical documentation should be released at the same time as assessment results. In response to concerns regarding an organized program of validation research, NCES identified staff members who are focused on research and development and created a steering committee that is responsible for identifying emerging issues and making recommendations for a NAEP research and development agenda. In addition, NCES established a Technical Documentation Web site (http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/tdw/) that provides access to documentation for the assessment.

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Research in special education
  (Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, Part E)

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2016 Authorization: 0[1]

Budget Authority:

	2015	2016	Change
	$54,000	$54,000	0

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[1] The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2011. The Administration proposes to continue funding in FY 2016 under appropriations language.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Research in Special Education program supports research in critical areas of need, improvements to special education and early intervention services, and outcomes for infants, toddlers, and children with disabilities. The National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER), established within the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) in 2005, conducts sustained programs of scientifically rigorous research that focus on developmental outcomes for infants and toddlers with disabilities; school readiness; achievement in core academic content areas (reading, writing, mathematics, science); behaviors that support learning in academic contexts for students with disabilities or at risk for disabilities; and functional skills that improve education outcomes and transitions to employment, independent living, and postsecondary education.

Investments in the special education research grants program have led to a number of important advances in knowledge and practice that have improved education outcomes for students with disabilities. Past studies include:

- Learning Experiences – An Alternative Program for Preschoolers and Their Parents (LEAP). A 2006 NCSER-supported efficacy study of LEAP, a long-standing comprehensive intervention program for young children with autism, showed that participating preschool children with autism had improved cognitive, communication, and social skills (http://0-files.eric.ed.gov.opac.msmc.edu/fulltext/ED546791.pdf). The study was the largest experimental trial of an intervention program focused on early childhood and autism, and a follow-up study, also funded by NCSER, has preliminary evidence indicating that the LEAP model produces gains that persist over time. Over 100 sites are using LEAP, and the 2011 study was cited by the Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee as one of the 10 most significant autism studies of that year (http://iacc.hhs.gov/summary-advances/2011/index.shtml).

- Early Reading Intervention (ERI). A 2006 NCSER grant evaluated the efficacy of *Early Reading Intervention*, a widely-used commercial program designed for kindergarten children

at risk of reading difficulty. The study found that ERI had statistically significant effects on foundational alphabetic, phonemic, and decoding skills. A follow-up study compared the standard implementation of ERI to an enhanced version that adjusted instruction based on student performance data. The researchers found that frequently adjusting instruction based on students' strengths and weaknesses led to reading gains that were maintained in later grades (http://ecx.sagepub.com/content/80/1/25.full.pdf).

- Improving Mathematics Outcomes for Students with Disabilities. A 2007 NCSER grant used data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study Kindergarten Cohort of 1998−99 to examine mathematics performance over time and to identify practices that are potentially effective for preventing or remediating mathematics disabilities. The study found that use of more teacher-directed strategies, such as routine practice and drill, were significantly associated with gains in math achievement for students with math difficulties (http://epa.sagepub.com/content/early/2014/06/20/0162373714536608.full.pdf+html). The learning difficulties apparent in mathematics by the end of kindergarten reliably predict children's mathematics growth over the next 5 years of schooling. These results indicate that early intervention is as critical for mathematics as it is for reading.

- Improving Outcomes through the Use of Technology. Ongoing NCSER-funded research is using technology to tackle pressing problems in special education. For example, the *iSkills* program is a video repository of life skills tutorials for students with intellectual disabilities and autism. Designed to be delivered via handheld electronic devices, *iSkills* assists with direct instruction and self-instruction across several domains including independent living, employment, leisure, community involvement, and community navigation. Another intervention developed with NCSER funds, the *Social Competence Intervention for Adolescents*, is the school-based version of an effective clinic-based intervention designed to help students with autism spectrum disorders with recognition of facial expressions, sharing of ideas, conversational turn taking, recognition of emotions, and social problem solving. The study results indicated significant improvement on those targeted student outcomes (http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10803-010-0959-1#0). This intervention was adapted by another research team to be delivered via networked, 3D-based virtual learning environments for youth with no or limited access to face-to-face programs (*iSocial).* Development work on the 3D version is ongoing. However, preliminary results suggest that the *iSocial* approach shows some promise for improving student social behavior and interactions.

- On the Way Home: A Family-Centered Academic Reintegration Intervention Model. Adolescents with disabilities in residential or other out-of-home placements often receive services and supports for emotional, behavioral, and academic issues. These students make substantial progress but often face difficulties again when they transition from these placements. *On the Way Home:* A *Family-Centered Academic Reintegration Intervention Model* was developed to address this need. The research team reported improved transition outcomes and a reduction in the rate of returning to care for participating students (compared to non-participants) in a recent experimental study (http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2012.01.046).

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Research in special education

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were as follows:

	(dollars in thousands)
2011	$50,983
2012	49,905
2013	47,295
2014	54,000
2015	54,000

FY 2016 BUDGET REQUEST

The Administration requests $54 million for special education research in fiscal year 2016, the same as the 2015 appropriation. Funding supports a comprehensive program of special education research designed to expand the knowledge and understanding of infants, toddlers, and children with disabilities and answer questions about how children with disabilities develop and learn and how best to support their development through improved teaching and special education and related services. Continued investment in the long-term programs of research administered by NCSER is necessary to enhance the research base on what works and develop evidence-based practices and policies that will result in improved academic achievement, social and emotional well-being, behavior, and physical development for children with disabilities.

In order to provide the flexibility IES needs to plan and administer a regular cycle of research competitions, the Department requests that funding be available for 2 years, as it has been in previous years.

At the 2016 request level, IES would support approximately $35.5 million in continuation costs of grants awarded in 2015 and prior years and $16.7 million in new grant awards; an additional $1.8 million would support peer review, logistical support, and other activities. The actual amounts will depend on the results of the 2015 competitions.

IES is holding two competitions for awards in 2015:

- **Special Education Research Grants**. The Special Education Research Grants program supports research on topics that are relevant to the needs of students with disabilities, their families, educators, and policymakers, spanning from the early intervention needs of infants and toddlers with disabilities to transition outcomes for students with disabilities leaving secondary education.

  The program uses a topic and goal structure to divide the research process into stages by field for both theoretical and practical purposes. Applicants must submit proposals for one topic area and one goal. The topic areas for the competition are:

  o Autism Spectrum Disorders;
  o Cognition and Student Learning in Special Education;
  o Early Intervention and Early Learning in Special Education;

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- o Families of Children with Disabilities;
- o Mathematics and Science Education;
- o Professional Development for Teachers and Related Service Providers;
- o Reading, Writing, and Language Development;
- o Social and Behavioral Outcomes to Support Learning;
- o Special Education Policy, Finance, and Systems;
- o Technology for Special Education; and
- o Transition Outcomes for Secondary Students with Disabilities.

The goal areas are:

- o Exploration,
- o Development and Innovation,
- o Efficacy and Replication,
- o Effectiveness, and
- o Measurement.

The award sizes and project lengths vary by the type of project; for example, the maximum award for an Exploration project solely involving secondary data is $700,000 over 2 years, while an Effectiveness project can receive up to $5 million over 5 years. Information on the competition is available at http://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/2015_84324A.pdf.

IES anticipates making approximately $24 million in new awards in 2015. At the request level, it would be able to make additional awards in 2016, as well as support continuation costs of grants awarded in 2015 and prior years.

- **Research Training in Special Education: Early Career Development and Mentoring**. The research training program in early career development and mentoring provides grants to institutions of higher education to develop research training programs that help new investigators obtain the methodological, content, and grant writing expertise needed to build a strong line of research. An important aspect of the program is the requirement that the research and training be guided closely by a scientist experienced in the study of infants, toddlers, children, or youth with or at risk for disabilities, and/or their families or teachers. Applicants must address specific topic areas (the same areas as in the Special Education Research Grants competition) and one of three goals (Exploration, Development, or Measurement). IES plans to award not more than 5 early career awards in 2015; the maximum award will be $400,000 over no more than 4 years. Additional information on the 2015 competition is available at http://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/2015_84324B.pdf.

Both the Special Education Research Grants and Research Training programs were announced in April 2014, with applications due in August. Applicants will be notified by July 1, 2015.

The Research in Special Education program provides support for two additional grant areas: Special Education Research and Development Centers and a research initiative named "Accelerate the Academic Achievement of Students with Learning Disabilities."

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- **Special Education Research and Development Centers.** Special education research and development centers are intended to contribute significantly to solutions of special education problems in the United States by engaging in research, development, evaluation, and national leadership activities. Each center conducts a focused program of research in a specific topic area. As needed, each research and development center conducts additional research and analyses within its topic area and provides national leadership in advancing evidence-based practices and policies within its topic area. Unlike special education research grants that support a single research study, the research and development center grants support a focused program of research that may include several researchers working on separate studies that are designed to contribute to our understanding of a particular topic.

- **Accelerating the Academic Achievement of Students with Learning Disabilities Research Initiative.** In 2012, IES invited applications for a new research initiative on developing and evaluating interventions to accelerate the reading and mathematics achievement of 3rd through 8th grade students with or at risk for learning disabilities who demonstrate the most intractable learning problems. IES made one award under the A3 Initiative in 2013; this grantee will receive continuation funding in 2016.

Program funds also pay for peer review of new grant awards and logistical support. The Department anticipates announcing the 2016 competition on the same schedule as the 2015 competition; that is, the competition will be announced in the late spring of 2015, with applications due in late summer.

Research in special education

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (dollars in thousands)

Measures	2014	2015	2016
Research Activities:			
Special Education Research Grants			
New grant awards	$151	TBD	TBD
Grant award continuations	42,623	$19,629	$28,962
Total	42,774	43,777	46,053
Special Education Research and Development Centers			
New grant awards	0	0	TBD
Grant award continuations	6,367	6,473	4,197
Total	6,367	6,473	4,197
Research Training			
New grant awards	0	TBD	TBD
Grant award continuations	1,514	0	319
Total	1,514	TBD	TBD
Accelerating the Academic Achievement of Students with Learning Disabilities Research Initiative			
Grant award continuations	2,000	2,000	2,000
Other activities:			
Logistics and Analytical Support/Other	95	500	500
Peer review of new award applications	1,250	1,250	1,250
Subtotal, Other activities	1,345	1,750	1,750
Total, Research in special education	$54,000	$54,000	$54,000

NOTE: Amounts listed as "TBD" are still be to determined. The number and size of new research awards will depend on the quality of applications received.

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures, and performance targets and data; and an assessment of the progress made toward achieving program results. Achievement of results is based on the cumulative effect of the resources provided in previous years and those requested in fiscal year 2016 and future years, as well as the resources and efforts invested by those served by the program.

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The Department established new measures for NCSER in fiscal year 2014, which are discussed below.

Annual Measures

Goal: Transform education into an evidence-based field.

Objective: Raise the quality of research funded or conducted by the Department.

Measure. The percentage of projects that result in peer-reviewed publications.

Additional information: Peer-reviewed publications are an expected product of all research projects. NCSER has been funding research projects since 2006. As of 2013, 251 research projects have been funded. Given the lag from time of award to completion of a study and the publication of results, the denominator for each reporting year will be the cumulative number of grants that had been funded through the end of the fiscal year 3 years prior to the reporting year. Thus, the denominator for 2013 will reflect the total number of projects funded across all NCES programs from fiscal year 2006 through fiscal year 2010. For fiscal year 2014, the denominator reflects all projects funded from fiscal year 2007 through fiscal year 2011. Data will be collected through the annual grantee reports and entered into the Institute of Education Sciences Catalog of Education Research (ICER). Counts will be generated from ICER. The baseline will be established using 2013 data.

Measure: The number of NCSER-supported interventions with evidence of efficacy in improving education outcomes for students with or at risk for disabilities.

Additional information: Since 2006, NCSER has supported efficacy evaluations of fully-developed interventions to determine whether they produce a beneficial impact on student education outcomes. This measure reflects the cumulative number of interventions NCSER has funded that have demonstrated efficacy in improving student outcomes. Student education outcomes include school readiness for young children, and both academic outcomes and social and behavioral competencies for school-age students. School readiness outcomes include reading, pre-reading, pre-writing, early mathematics, early science, and social-emotional skills that prepare young children for school. Student academic outcomes include achievement in core academic content (reading, writing, mathematics, science), and behaviors that support learning for students with disabilities or at risk for disabilities from prekindergarten through high school. Additional education outcomes include developmental and functional outcomes that improve education results and transitions to employment, independent living, and postsecondary education for students with disabilities.

Results of intervention evaluations are typically not available until the end of a grant award period. Through grantees' final performance reports, NCSER identifies peer-reviewed publications and reports produced with grant funding that provide evaluation results describing improved student outcomes. In addition, NCSER updates grantee publications annually in the ICER database. NCSER will also review those updates to ensure that all publications of completed studies which examine causal impact are considered for review under this measure.

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NCSER submits these peer-reviewed publications and reports to the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) for review. WWC-certified reviewers determine whether the evaluation meets the WWC standards with or without reservations, and whether the evaluation found the intervention to produce a statistically significant or substantively important positive effect for students on at least one relevant education outcome.

Thus, the reported data will be the cumulative numbers of interventions since 2006 with evidence of meeting WWC standards and having positive effects on student outcomes as determined by WWC reviewers.

This measure replaces previous measures that reported findings separately for reading, writing, or language outcomes; school readiness outcomes; and behavior outcomes. Since 2006, NCSER has refined and expanded the number of topic areas in which research is supported, and the new measure more accurately captures the range of research now supported, including research areas such as mathematics and science that were not included in the old measures. The baseline will be established using 2013 data.

Measure: The number of newly developed or modified interventions with evidence of promise for improving education outcomes for students with or at-risk for disabilities.

Additional information. Since 2006, NCSER has supported the development of new interventions and determined whether these interventions have promise to produce beneficial impacts on student education outcomes. This measure will reflect the cumulative number of interventions NCSER has funded since 2006 through Development and Innovation projects that show promise for improving student outcomes. Student education outcomes include school readiness for young children, and both academic outcomes and social and behavioral competencies for school-age students. School readiness outcomes include reading, pre-reading, pre-writing, early mathematics, early science, and social-emotional skills that prepare young children for school. Student academic outcomes include achievement in core academic content (reading, writing, mathematics, science), and behaviors that support learning for students with disabilities or at risk for disabilities from prekindergarten through high school. Additional education outcomes include developmental and functional outcomes that improve education results and transitions to employment, independent living, and postsecondary education for students with disabilities.

NCSER will establish baseline numbers using 2013 data. The reported data will be the cumulative numbers of newly developed interventions since 2006 with evidence of promise meeting Education Department General Education Regulations (EDGAR) standards as determined by NCSER based on grantee final performance reports.

NCSER will review grantees' final reports for completed research grants and determine the number of projects that have generated evidence of promise. Evidence of promise must meet the EDGAR standards for evidence of promise. To meet the standards, grantees must report pilot study evidence that the intervention produced a statistically significant or substantively important positive association for at least one student outcome (0.25 standard deviation or larger).

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Research in special education

Efficiency Measures

Measure: The average number of research grants administered per each program officer employed in the National Center for Special Education Research.

Year	Target	Actual
2011	25	37
2012	38	40
2013	40	38
2014	41	
2015	31	
2016	TBD	

Assessment of progress: The principal efficiency measure for IES is the ratio of research staff to research grants. These data are collected from the official grant files for NCSER. Future targets have been decreased because of decreased grant awards in 2013 and 2014. Budget constraints led to a decrease in the number of grants IES was able to fund in 2013, and no research grant competitions in special education were held in 2014.

Although IES anticipates making new awards in fiscal year 2015, the 2015 target is lower than the 2014 target because the number of new grants funded in 2015 would have to be unusually high to account for the reduction in grants awarded in 2013 and lack of a grant competition in 2014. In addition, older grants have continued to be closed out as scheduled. This has resulted in an anticipated overall reduced number of grants administered per program officer in 2015.

Statewide longitudinal data systems
   (Educational Technical Assistance Act, Section 208)

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2016 Authorization: 0[1]

Budget Authority:

	2015	2016	Change
	$34,539	$70,000	+$35,461

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   [1] The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2009. The Administration proposes to continue funding this program in FY 2016 under appropriations language.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Section 208 of the Educational Technical Assistance Act (ETAA) authorizes the Secretary to make competitive grants to State educational agencies (SEAs) to enable them to design, develop, and implement Statewide longitudinal data systems (SLDS) to efficiently and accurately manage, analyze, disaggregate, and use individual student data, consistent with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. The goals of the program are to improve data quality, promote data linkages across States, encourage the accurate and timely generation of data for reporting and improving student achievement, and facilitate research to improve student achievement and close achievement gaps.

The grants are expected to help SEAs develop, expand, or improve data systems, and may support necessary training, technical assistance, and other activities to promote the effective use of data. Funds must supplement, not supplant, other State or local funds used for developing State data systems and may not be used to support ongoing implementation and maintenance of such systems. Grants are awarded competitively, based on the technical quality of the proposals.

IES has conducted five competitions to date. The first round of grants was awarded in November 2005 and the last round in 2012. To date, 47 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands have received awards.

The 2012 grants, which ranged in size from $2.6 million to $5.0 million for 3-year projects, were to support States' work in one of three priority areas:

- The design, development, and implementation of statewide longitudinal kindergarten through 12th grade (K-12) data systems;

- The development and linking of early childhood data with the States' K-12 data systems; or

- The development and linking of postsecondary and/or workforce data with the States' K-12 data systems.

Statewide longitudinal data systems

The 2012 awards included 9 grants to support K-12 data systems, 1 grant to support the development and linking of early childhood with K-12 systems, and 14 grants to support linking postsecondary or workforce data with the K-12 systems. IES plans to hold the next SLDS competition in 2015.

Beginning in 2008, the Department of Education Appropriations Act authorized the program to use a portion of the appropriation for activities to improve data coordination and use. In addition, the 2009 Appropriations Act authorized the use of funds for SLDS that include postsecondary and workforce information and the 2010 Appropriations Act added inclusion of information on children of all ages as an authorized activity. Since 2012, the Department has had the authority to use funds to link Statewide elementary and secondary data systems with early childhood, postsecondary, and workforce data systems, or to further develop such systems.

In every grant competition, the Department expects States to use funds to significantly improve the ability of data systems to provide appropriate, high-quality information, as governed by national and State privacy laws and regulations, needed to support education reform, improve instruction, and promote accountability. States should use funds to develop the necessary linkages with other agencies and States to provide information on high school completion, college completion, and workforce participation. Systems developed with support from the Department must also improve States' ability to report required data to the Department and should include information that will help assess the effectiveness of Federal education programs, including those for which the State is not a grantee. Finally, funded data systems must improve the ability to provide regular feedback to teachers to enable them to use data to improve instruction, allow State and local educational agencies to devise methods for identifying effective teachers and teaching practices, and provide accurate information about student and school progress.

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were:

	(dollars in thousands)
2011	$42,166
2012	38,077
2013	36,085
2014	34,539
2015	34,539

FY 2016 BUDGET REQUEST

The Administration requests $70 million for SLDS in fiscal year 2016, an increase of $35.5 million from the 2015 appropriation. The 2016 funds for this program would provide support for new grant awards in 2016, continuation costs of grants awarded in 2015, and national activities to improve data coordination, quality, and use.

At the 2016 request level, the following activities would be supported:

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Statewide longitudinal data systems

- Approximately $27 million would support continuation costs of grants awarded in 2015. With States having made much progress in using SLDS funds to develop their data systems, the Department anticipates structuring the 2015 competition to require States to address a small number of high-priority, data-use policy issues. Framing grants around one or two of the following use cases will ensure that States are not only continuing to build their data systems as needed, but also leveraging the data in their SLDS to strategically drive educational improvement for all students, particularly those that are high-need. For any use case, States must identify what data linkages needs they have, what reporting tools they will use to share information, and what resources, including professional development, they need to support data use by intended stakeholders. Fiscal year 2015 awards will be for 4 years, with States receiving, on average, $4.5 million in total.

  o Fiscal Equity and Return on Investment (ROI). Grants addressing this data use case will use school-level financial data to examine how funds are distributed across schools and how school-level investments relate to student outcomes.

  o Educator Talent Management. This data use case would allow States to develop comprehensive educator human capital data systems to help them understand the impact of various educator preparation programs and to provide personalized professional development to increase teacher effectiveness. Educator data would include preparation, performance, professional development, pay, and placement information and would be linked to student data.

  o Early Learning. States needing to better understand the availability and characteristics of early learning services provided in the State would apply to this data use case. States can apply for SLDS funds to link disparate early learning data to understand which children and families have access to early learning services and how these services impact later student outcomes.

  o College and Career. States applying under this data-use case would use grant funds to link K-12 data to postsecondary and workforce data, providing information from data linkages to students and parents in order to inform their postsecondary decisions and to administrators on the success of their graduates in college and careers to better align curriculum.

  o Evaluation and Research. Grants for the evaluation and research data-use case would build the capacity of States and districts to use SLDS for research and program evaluation in order to generate timely and meaningful information for improving accountability, assessment, and school support systems. Grants would fund research partnerships and/or increase the use of quick-turnaround evaluations to produce information in shorter cycles.

  o Instructional Support. This data use case would enable States to use data to create real-time instructional improvement systems that give educators the information they need on student learning in order to improve and personalize college- and career-aligned instruction and outcomes for students, particularly high needs students.

- Approximately $36 million would support new grant awards in 2016. States that receive awards in 2015 would be ineligible to apply for the 2016 competition. Depending on the

quality of applicants to the 2015 competition, the Department may choose to fund down the slate or to fund new applicants that come in under the use cases of highest priority, such as Fiscal Equity and ROI, Educator Talent Management, and/or Evaluation and Research. If the Department funds a grant competition in 2016, it will provide technical assistance to eligible States that applied for but did not receive funding in 2015.

- Approximately $1.1 million would support continuation costs for two State awards made in 2012.

- Approximately $6.0 million would support activities to improve data quality, coordination, and use. The SLDS program and its partners offer a wide and growing range of support to help State educational agencies design, develop, and use longitudinal data systems. Three ongoing activities would be supported:

  o The Education Data Technical Assistance Program (EDTAP) (http://nces.ed.gov/programs/slds/index.asp.) would continue to provide assistance to State educational agencies in the planning, development, expansion, and implementation of their longitudinal data systems. The program provides a broad range of support, including a public domain clearinghouse that provides a platform for States to share non-proprietary products developed for their statewide longitudinal data systems; best practice briefs; "collaboration communities," where staff from small groups of States work together to identify challenges, brainstorm solutions, and share best practices; webinars; listservs; and State-specific technical assistance. The Department anticipates that the 2015 grant priority areas will require an increase in technical assistance to address challenges in carrying out the projects.

  o The Common Education Data Standards project would support continued development of voluntary common data standards that help ensure the interoperability of data systems both within and across States for all levels of education, from early learning through postsecondary education and into the work force. This work is aligned with the grant priorities, including work around common fiscal accounting standards (https://ceds.ed.gov/) for school expenditure data systems.

  o The Privacy Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) would continue to serve as a valuable resource center to State and local educational agencies, the postsecondary community, and other parties engaged in building and using education data systems on issues related to the privacy, security, and confidentiality of student records. Additional information on the PTAC and resource materials is available on the website (http://www.ed.gov/ptac).

The Administration requests that funding for fiscal year 2016 be available for 2 years, as it has been in prior years. The Administration also requests the same language included in the 2014 appropriations act to allow awards to support activities to improve data coordination, quality, and use at the local, State, and National levels, as well as language that permits the use of funds for building links to early childhood, postsecondary, and workforce information.

The longitudinal data systems can serve as a vital source of information for educators and policymakers—and for parents and the public—on the performance of schools and students,

Statewide longitudinal data systems

and on the effectiveness of State and local education policies and practice. Longitudinal data are also key to helping educators examine student progress and outcomes over time. In particular, SLDS funds have been used to develop products and analyses that help drive educational change and innovation in States. For example, Minnesota's SLDS creates a high school feedback loop with postsecondary schools by providing information on the number of students attending, taking remedial courses, and graduating from postsecondary institutions. Georgia's SLDS allows educators and district staff to seamlessly access State-level assessment data and curriculum-related materials so information to help improve instruction is in one place. Both North Carolina and Mississippi have used SLDS grants to develop early warning systems that provide real-time information to teachers, principals, and counselors to ensure that at-risk students get the resources they need to succeed.

Grants funded in 2016 would continue to support data systems that help States meet reporting requirements (including data elements required for the U.S. Department of Education's ED*Facts* and the Consolidated State Performance Report); support decisionmaking at the State, district, school, and classroom levels; facilitate research needed to eliminate achievement gaps and improve student learning and educational productivity; and provide critical information on education to parents and the public. The improvements to data systems supported by 2015 and 2016 grant awards will also ensure that data are available to answer key policy questions about financial and resource equity, teacher preparation and support, early learning, and college and career readiness.

Statewide longitudinal data systems

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (dollars in thousands)

Measures	2014	2015	2016
Statewide longitudinal data systems development awards			
Grants awarded in FY 2012	$29,184	$1,552	$1,085
Grants awarded in FY 2015	0	26,987	26,987
Grants awarded in FY 2016	0	0	35,828
Subtotal	29,184	28,539	63,900
Awards to improve data coordination, quality, and use	5,303	6,000	6,000
Peer review of new award applications	51	0	100
Total	34,539	34,539	70,000

Number of Grant Awards

	2014	2015	2016
Statewide longitudinal data systems development awards			
Grants awarded in FY 2012	24	24	2
Grants awarded in FY 2015	0	25	25
Grants awarded in FY 2016	0	0	25

Range of Awards (Entire Grant Period)	Low	High
Statewide longitudinal data systems development awards		
Grants awarded in FY 2012	$3,034	$4,997
Grants awarded in FY 2015	750	2,000
Grants awarded in FY 2016	750	2,000

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Measures

The Department of Education has identified priority performance goals that will help measure the success of the Department's cradle-to-career education strategy, one of which is "make informed decisions and improve instruction through the use of data." One strategy for ensuring that data are available to inform educational decisions is supporting States' development and implementation of Statewide longitudinal data systems, and the Department has established three performance measures to assess progress. These measures assess progress of all States, not just the States with grants in the measurement years. The Department believes that assessing the progress of all States is appropriate, because the goal of the program is to ensure that critical information needed to improve student outcomes is available across the Nation. New grant competitions take into consideration areas where States are having difficulty making progress and establish competition priorities that help direct resources to areas where additional resources are necessary.

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Statewide longitudinal data systems

Measure: Number of States linking K-12 with early childhood data.

Year	Target	Actual
2012	Baseline	8
2013	12	19
2014	23	26
2015	27	
2016	29	

States are determined to have met this measure if they have the ability to track all public pre-K students into public kindergarten using the State longitudinal data system and by the inclusion of at least one additional source of early childhood data (e.g., Head Start or private pre-K) in the State data system. In 2012, 8 States had data systems that met the criteria, and by the end of 2014, 26 had met the criteria, exceeding the target.

Measure: Number of States linking K-12 with postsecondary data.

Year	Target	Actual
2012	Baseline	9
2013	21	25
2014	28	33
2015	34	
2016	36	

States are determined to have met this measure if they have the ability to link State K-12 student data to State data from public 2- and 4-year institutions of higher education. As of the end of 2014, 33 States had met the target for this measure, exceeding the goal for the year.

Measure: Number of States linking K-12 and postsecondary data with workforce data.

Year	Target	Actual
2012	Baseline	5
2013	10	12
2014	14	20
2015	22	
2016	25	

States are determined to have met this measure if they have the ability to track all public 2- and 4-year postsecondary students to, at a minimum, State employment records (e.g., State unemployment insurance systems.) In 2012, the baseline year, 5 States were able to link their K-12 and postsecondary data with workforce data, and in 2014, 20 States were able to do so, exceeding the target of 14.

Key barriers and challenges to meeting these measures include States' and districts' limited resources, State procurement practices, difficulties with cross-agency governance and data sharing, privacy issues, and concerns about the long-term sustainability of data systems without long-term Federal funding. Linkages to workforce data have presented challenges for States

due to the lack of a common identifier, the need to comply with multiple privacy laws, and the challenges of multi-agency coordination. To help overcome these challenges, the Department of Education has increased coordination with the Department of Labor and their Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI), which provides support to allow States to develop or improve their longitudinal workforce data systems and create linkages to education data.

Many States appear not ready to link early childhood data to their K-12 systems, as evidenced by the low number of applications in 2012 for the early childhood priority. To aid States, the Department is creating a series of best practice materials and held a privacy workshop for States on sharing early childhood data.

Specific activities to be undertaken by the Department over the next year include providing ongoing technical assistance to both grantees and non-grantees as they develop their State data systems; coordinating monitoring and technical assistance to States with both SLDS and WDQI grants through cross-program monitoring calls, joint site visits, technical assistance resource sharing, and conference presentations; and providing support for common education data standards to improve the utility of data for research and evaluation.

Special education studies and evaluations
  (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 664)

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2016 Authorization: 0[1]

Budget Authority:

2015	2016	Change
$10,818	$13,000	+$2,182

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[1] The GEPA extension expired September 30, 2011. The Administration proposes to continue funding in FY 2016 under appropriations language.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Special Education Studies and Evaluation program awards competitive grants, contracts, and cooperative agreements to assess the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the effectiveness of State and local efforts to provide special education and early intervention programs and services to infants, toddlers, and children with disabilities.

The statute authorizes the Department to support studies, evaluations, and assessments that:

- Analyze the results achieved by State and local educational agencies to improve services for children with disabilities;

- Analyze State and local needs for professional development, parent training, and other activities that can reduce the need for disciplinary actions involving children with disabilities;

- Measure educational and transitional services and outcomes for children with disabilities, including those from minority backgrounds; and

- Identify and report on the placement of children with disabilities by disability category.

In addition, the Department is required to submit to Congress an annual report that summarizes the studies and evaluations conducted under this authority; summarizes the research conducted under part E of the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, which authorizes research on special education; and analyzes and summarizes the data on children with disabilities that is required by section 618 of the IDEA.

The IDEA requires the Secretary to delegate responsibility for the administration of most studies and evaluations in special education to the Director of the Institute of Education Sciences.

Special education studies and evaluations

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were:

Fiscal Year	(dollars in thousands)
2011	$11,437
2012	11,415
2013	10,818
2014	10,818
2015	10,818

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FY 2016 BUDGET REQUEST

The Administration requests $13.0 million, a $2.2 million increase over the 2015 appropriation, to support studies, evaluations, and assessments related to the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IES supports a range of evaluations that are designed to provide information about which programs and practices are effective and ineffective for improving outcomes for children and youth with disabilities and thereby provide concrete guidance for educators and parents.

At the request level, four of these studies, which are discussed in more detail below along with other ongoing studies, would receive funding from the 2016 appropriation. The studies and estimated 2016 amounts are:

- Evaluation of Preschool Special Education Practices, $7.0 million;

- State and Local Implementation of IDEA 2016, $2.5 million;

- Impact Evaluation of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior, $2.0 million; and

- Post High School Outcomes for Youth with Disabilities, $1.5 million.

Additional information on these studies, as well as recent and ongoing studies that will not receive funding from the 2016 appropriation, is provided below. Additional information is available at http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/projects/evaluation/disabilities.asp.

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Special education studies and evaluations

Recently Completed and On-Going Studies

Study	Cost	Duration
Evaluation of the IDEA Personnel Development Program	$2,729,875 over 6 years	September 2007 to September 2013
Study of School Accountability for Students with Disabilities [1]	$3,626,218 over 7 years	February 2008 to February 2015
Evaluation of Response to Intervention Practices for Elementary School Reading [2]	$14,204,339 over 7 years	March 2008 to March 2015
National Evaluation of the IDEA Technical Assistance and Dissemination Program [3]	$2,995,352 over 7 years	September 2009 to August 2016
Study of Early Intervention and Special Education Services and Personnel [4]	$1,149,233 over 5 years	September 2010 to September 2015
Study of Transition Outcomes for Youth with Disabilities, Phase I	$24,093,418 over 5 years	September 2010 to September 2015
Evaluation of Preschool Special Education Practices, Phase I	$9,506,843 over 50 months	November 2013 to January 2018
Impact Evaluation of Training in Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior	$18,894,244 over 5 years	November 2013 to November 2018
Post High School Outcomes for Youth with Disabilities	$5 million from the 2014 and 2015 appropriations	Estimated award date: August 2015
State and Local Implementation of IDEA 2016	$500,000 for the base contract, with $2,500,000 for a data collection option that could be exercised in 2016	Estimated award date: July 2015

[1] The timeline has been revised. Last year we reported the study would end in February 2014.
[2] The timeline has been revised. Last year we reported the study would end in March 2014.
[3] The timeline has been revised. Last year we reported the study would end in September 2014.
[4] The funding and timeline have been revised. Last year we reported $985,601 over 3 years (September 2010 to September 2013).

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Evaluation of the IDEA Personnel Development Program. The Evaluation of the IDEA Personnel Development Program (PDP) was a descriptive study of the PDP national technical assistance centers and training grants. The study relied on a combination of extant data and new data collection from grantees and applicants between the fall of 2008 and the summer of 2010. Panels of experts rated the quality and usefulness of products and services from 12 national centers and the course-of-study components developed or significantly modified by training grant recipients. The final report, which was released in January 2014 and is available at http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20144007/pdf/20144007.pdf, provides information on the types of products developed and services provided by the national centers and expert ratings of the usefulness of selected products and services. A majority of these products and services were

Special education studies and evaluations

rated as being of "high" or "very high" quality and usefulness. The study also provides detailed descriptive information on the training grants.

<u>Study of School Accountability for Students with Disabilities</u>. The Study of School Accountability for Students with Disabilities (SWD) is using descriptive statistics to study patterns of school accountability across States and over time and to examine how school practices vary with respect to school accountability for the SWD subgroup. Data sources for the evaluation include extant data from the Department of Education's ED*Facts* database and 2011 surveys of principals and special education designees from elementary and middle schools in 12 states. An interim report was released in May 2012; an update with information through the 2009−10 school year was released in October 2013 and is available at http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20134017/pdf/20134017.pdf. The report provides information on the percentage of schools that were accountable for the performance of the SWD subgroup and the percentage of schools that missed making adequate yearly progress because of the SWD subgroup. A third report will be released in the winter of 2015.

<u>Evaluation of Response to Intervention (RtI) Practices for Elementary School Reading</u>. This study is relying on a combination of descriptive data collected from school staff and regression discontinuity methods to address three key research questions:

- What are the effects on Grade 1−3 reading achievement of providing intensive interventions to children who have been identified as at risk for reading difficulties?

- How do RtI practices for early grade reading vary across schools?

- How do schools experienced with RtI vary the intensity of reading instruction to children based on student benchmark reading performance?

The study is currently scheduled to end in March 2015.

<u>National Evaluation of the IDEA Technical Assistance and Dissemination Program.</u> The IDEA Technical Assistance and Dissemination (TA&D) Program is the Department's primary vehicle under IDEA for providing educators, policymakers, other service providers, and parents of children with disabilities with information on effective practices for meeting the needs of children with disabilities and their families. The national evaluation is designed to describe the products and services provided by program grantees, State and local needs for technical assistance, and the role the program plays in meeting these needs and supporting implementation of the IDEA. An interim report was released in October 2013 (http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20144000/pdf/20144000.pdf); key findings include that TA&D centers most commonly reported providing technical assistance on the topics of "parent and family involvement" and "data systems and use of data for improvement" and that State staff rated the majority of experiences they had with the TA&D centers as "very satisfactory." In addition, this analysis found some potential duplication of services provided by technical assistance providers; however, this analysis was unable to establish whether such cases were indicators of inefficiency or of complementary and coordinated services. A final report is expected to be released in October 2016.

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Special education studies and evaluations

Study of Early Intervention and Special Education Services and Personnel. The Study of Early Intervention and Special Education Services and Personnel is analyzing extant data on early intervention and special education service delivery and the personnel providing services. Key research questions include:

- How does early intervention service delivery vary across States?

- How do special education and related services received by children and youth vary over time, across States, and by school characteristics?

- How does the distribution of personnel providing special education services vary over time, across States, and by school characteristics?

The study is scheduled to end in September 2015.

Study of Transition Outcomes for Youth with Disabilities. This study, which is also referred to as the National Longitudinal Transition Study 2012 (NLTS 2012), is the third in a series examining the characteristics and school experiences of a nationally representative sample of youth with disabilities. NLTS 2012 focuses on students ages 13 to 21 (in December 2011) but also includes a small sample of students without disabilities to enable direct comparisons of students with and without individualized education programs (IEPs). It is part of the congressionally-mandated National Assessment of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004. The study collected baseline data in the spring of 2012 through the summer of 2013 on a nationwide sample of youth. The study is addressing such questions as:

- What are the personal, family, and school characteristics of youth with disabilities in public schools across the country?

- What regular education, special education, transition planning, and other relevant services and accommodations do youth with disabilities receive?

- How do the services and accommodations differ from those of youth not served under IDEA, including those identified for services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act?

- How do the services and accommodations for youth with disabilities vary with the characteristics of youth?

- How much have the services and accommodations of youth with disabilities changed over time?

Two reports are scheduled for completion in summer 2015.

Evaluation of Preschool Special Education Practices. IDEA provides funding to States to support special education and related services for children and youth with disabilities, including young children ages 3- to 5-years old, but limited information is available on the special education services and supports that young children are receiving and the preschool practices and interventions being used in programs across states. The objectives of the first phase of the evaluation are threefold: (1) to assess the feasibility of conducting an impact study of curricula or interventions promoting the literacy, language, and/or social-emotional skills of preschool-age children with disabilities; (2) to identify feasible study design options for an impact study; and

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(3) to prepare for the impact study, if deemed feasible to conduct. The feasibility work includes gathering descriptive data on current special education programs, services, and practices; these data are needed to identify interventions and practices to target in an impact study and to inform sampling. If IES identifies feasible options for conducting a study to examine the relationship between service receipt and outcomes for children receiving services under the IDEA Grants for Infants and Families program (Part C) and/or the IDEA Preschool Grants program (Part B Section 619), then it plans to award a contract for a 5-year impact evaluation in fiscal year 2017.

Impact Evaluation of Training in Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior. This evaluation, which was formerly known as the Evaluation of School-wide Positive Behavior Support, will examine the effectiveness of strategies for training school staff to effectively address problematic behaviors. Training school staff in supporting student behavior is becoming increasingly attractive to districts and schools as a vehicle for school improvement. Implementation of multi-tiered systems of support for behavior (MTSS-B) is an approach to improving school and classroom climate as well as student outcomes. MTSS-B is a multi-tiered, systematic framework for teaching and reinforcing behavior for all students as well as for providing additional support to those who need it, and over a third of U.S. districts report implementing multi-tiered systems of behavior support at the elementary school level. Although previous evaluations of the MTSS-B framework have found positive outcomes, such as reductions in the number of disciplinary referrals, these evaluations have been conducted on a relatively small scale. The study will address the following questions:

- What is the impact on school climate, school staff practice, and student outcomes of providing training in MTSS-B that includes universal supports (Tier I)?

- What is the impact on school climate, school staff practice, and student outcomes of providing training in MTSS-B that includes universal supports (Tier I) plus targeted interventions for at-risk students (Tier II)?

- What is the impact of additional training in targeted interventions for at-risk students (Tier II) for schools already trained in MTSS-B that includes universal supports (Tier I)?

- What are the impacts for relevant subgroups including students with at-risk behavior, students with disabilities, and teachers with less experience?

- Which strategies are correlated with improvement in student outcomes?

The randomized trial evaluation will be conducted in approximately 120 elementary schools located in a purposive sample of 12 geographically diverse school districts. The study will randomly assign schools to one of two promising MTSS-B strategies or to a business-as-usual control group. Data collection and analyses scheduled for the 2015−2016 and 2016−2017 school years will include information about fidelity of implementation; implementation challenges; and impacts on student behavior, achievement, and identification for special education.

Post High School Outcomes for Youth with Disabilities. Helping students, particularly those with disabilities, to complete high school prepared to pursue postsecondary education or begin productive jobs is a national priority. IDEA places emphasis on transition services focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of students with disabilities in order to

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facilitate their transition from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education and employment. The study, which is planned for award in the summer of 2015, would address such questions as:

- What high school courses do youth with disabilities take as compared with other youth, including youth identified for services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act?

- How does course-taking vary with youth characteristics, including disability category, age, sex, race/ethnicity, English Learner status, income status, and school type (including regular public school, charter school, career/technical school, special education school, or other State or federally-operated institution)?

- To what extent do youth with and without disabilities complete high school, enroll and persist in postsecondary education, and find employment?

- How do these outcomes vary across characteristics of these youth?

This new study will utilize administrative records data to follow a sample of youth with disabilities beyond high school. The sample for this study will focus on the youth who participated in the baseline study of the National Longitudinal Transition Study 2012 (NLTS 2012). The NLTS 2012 sample included a group of over 12,000 students ages 13 to 21 (in December 2011), including a small sample of students without disabilities.

State and Local Implementation of IDEA 2016. The Department plans to make an award in July 2015 to develop plans to collect descriptive information on the implementation of early intervention and special education programs at the State and school district levels. The contract will support the development of plans for a new data collection and descriptive analysis to inform research questions for an evaluation of the program. The Department anticipates that contract options to be awarded with 2016 funds would support data collection in 2016–2017 and 2018–2019 as well as report preparation.

IES also uses funds to collect additional information on students with disabilities through existing National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) data collections.

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (dollars in thousands)

Measures	2014	2015	2016
Impact Evaluation of Training in Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior.	$7,318	$8,718	$2,000
Post High School Outcomes for Youth with Disabilities	3,500	1,500	1,500
Evaluation of Preschool Special Education Practices		0	7,000
State and Local Implementation of IDEA 2016	0	500	2,500
Early Childhood Longitudinal Study: Kindergarten	0	100	0
Total, Special education studies and evaluations	10,818	10,818	13,000