SPECIAL EDUCATION RESEARCH ON ASSESSMENT FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

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INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES
http://www.ed.gov/programs/edresearch/applicant.html

LETTER OF INTENT RECEIPT DATE: September 19, 2005

APPLICATION RECEIPT DATE: November 10, 2005, 8:00 p.m. Eastern time

THIS REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

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1. REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

The Institute of Education Sciences (Institute) invites applications for research projects that will contribute to its Special Education Research Program on Assessment for Accountability. For this competition, the Institute will consider only applications that meet the requirements outlined below under the section on Requirements of the Proposed Research.

For the purpose of this Request for Applications (RFA), students with disabilities are as defined in the "Individuals with Disabilities Education Act" as a child "(i) with mental retardation,

hearing impairments (including deafness), speech or language impairments, visual impairments (including blindness), serious emotional disturbance (referred to in this title as 'emotional disturbance'), orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, or specific learning disabilities; and (ii) who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services" (Part A, Sec. 602).

2. OVERVIEW OF THE INSTITUTE'S RESEARCH PROGRAMS

The Institute supports research that contributes to improved academic achievement for all students, and particularly for those whose education prospects are hindered by conditions associated with poverty, minority status, disability, family circumstance, and inadequate education services. Although many conditions may affect academic outcomes, the Institute supports research on those that are within the control of the education system, with the aim of identifying, developing, and validating effective education programs and practices. The conditions of greatest interest to the Institute are curriculum, instruction, assessment and accountability, the quality of the teaching and administrative workforce, resource allocation, and the systems and policies that affect these conditions and their interrelationships. In this section, the Institute describes the overall framework for its research grant programs. Specific information on the competition(s) described in this announcement begins in Section 3.

The Institute addresses the educational needs of typically developing students through its Education Research programs and the needs of students with disabilities through its Special Education Research programs. Both the Education Research and the Special Education Research programs are organized by academic outcomes (e.g., reading, mathematics), type of education condition (e.g., curriculum and instruction; teacher quality; administration, systems, and policy), grade level, and research goals.

a. *Outcomes*. The Institute's research programs focus on improvement of the following education outcomes: (a) readiness for schooling (pre-reading, pre-writing, early mathematics and science knowledge and skills, and social development); (b) academic outcomes in reading, writing, mathematics, and science; (c) student behavior and social interactions within schools that affect the learning of academic content; (d) skills that support independent living for students with significant disabilities; and (e) educational attainment (high school graduation, enrollment in and completion of post-secondary education).

b. *Conditions*. In general, each of the Institute's research programs focuses on a particular type of condition (e.g., curriculum and instruction) that may affect one or more of the outcomes listed previously (e.g., reading). The Institute's research programs are listed below according to the primary condition that is the focus of the program.

(i) *Curriculum and instruction*. Several of the Institute's programs focus on the development and evaluation of curricula and instructional approaches. These programs include: (1) Reading and Writing Education Research, (2) Mathematics and Science Education Research, (3) Cognition and Student Learning Education Research, (4) Reading and Writing Special Education Research, (5) Mathematics and Science Special Education Research, (6) Language and Vocabulary Development Special Education Research, (7) Serious Behavior Disorders Special Education Research, (8) Early Intervention and

Assessment for Young Children with Disabilities Special Education Research, and (9) Secondary and Post-Secondary Outcomes Special Education Research.

(ii) *Teacher quality*. A second condition that affects student learning and achievement is the quality of teachers. The Institute funds research on how to improve teacher quality through its programs on (10) Teacher Quality – Read/Write Education Research, (11) Teacher Quality – Math/Science Education Research, (12) Teacher Quality – Read/Write Special Education Research, and (13) Teacher Quality – Math/Science Special Education Research.

(iii) *Administration, systems, and policy*. A third approach to improving student outcomes is to identify systemic changes in the ways in which schools and districts are led, organized, managed, and operated that may be directly or indirectly linked to student outcomes. The Institute takes this approach in its programs on (14) Individualized Education Programs Special Education Research, (15) Education Finance, Leadership, and Management Research, (16) Assessment for Accountability Special Education Research, and (18) Research on High School Reform.

Applicants should be aware that some of the Institute's programs cover multiple conditions. Of the programs listed above, these include (3) Cognition and Student Learning Education Research, (14) Individualized Education Programs Special Education Research, and (15) Education Finance, Leadership, and Management Research. Finally, the Institute's National Center for Education Statistics supports the (17) National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Secondary Analysis Research Program. The NAEP Secondary Analysis program funds projects that cut across conditions (programs, practices, and policies) and types of students (regular education and special education students).

c. *Grade levels*. The Institute's research programs also specify the ages or grade levels covered in the research program. The specific grades vary across research programs and within each research program, and grades may vary across the research goals. In general, the Institute supports research for (a) pre-kindergarten and kindergarten, (b) elementary school, (c) middle school, (d) high school, (e) post-secondary education, (f) vocational education, and (g) adult education.

d. *Research goals*. The Institute has established five research goals for its research programs (http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ies/programs.html). Within each research program, one or more of the goals may apply: (a) Goal One – identify existing programs, practices, and policies that may have an impact on student outcomes and the factors that may mediate or moderate the effects of these programs, practices, and policies; (b) Goal Two – develop programs, practices, and policies that are potentially effective for improving outcomes; (c) Goal Three – establish the efficacy of fully developed programs, practices, or policies that either have evidence of potential efficacy or are widely used but have not been rigorously evaluated; (d) Goal Four – provide evidence on the effectiveness of programs, practices, and policies implemented at scale; and (e) Goal Five – develop or validate data and measurement systems and tools.

Applicants should be aware that the Institute does not fund research on every condition and every outcome at every grade level in a given year. For example, at this time, the Institute is *not* funding research on science education interventions (curriculum, instructional approaches, teacher preparation, teacher professional development, or systemic interventions) at the post-secondary or adult education levels. Similarly, at this time, the Institute is not funding research on measurement tools relevant to systemic conditions at the post-secondary or adult levels.

For a list of the Institute's FY 2006 grant competitions, please see Table 1 below. This list includes the Postdoctoral Research Training Fellowships in the Education Sciences, which is not a research grant program. Funding announcements for these competitions may be downloaded from the Institute's website at http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ies/programs.html. Release dates for the Requests for Applications vary by competition.

Table 1: FY 2006 Research Grant Competitions:

1 Reading and Writing Education Research
2 Mathematics and Science Education Research
3 Cognition and Student Learning Education Research
4 Reading and Writing Special Education Research
5 Mathematics and Science Special Education Research
6 Language and Vocabulary Development Special Education Research
7 Serious Behavior Disorders Special Education Research
8 Early Intervention and Assessment for Young Children with Disabilities Special Education Research
9 Special Education Research on Secondary and Post-Secondary Outcomes
10 Teacher Quality – Read/Write Education Research
11 Teacher Quality – Math/Science Education Research
12 Special Education Research on Teacher Quality – Read/Write
13 Special Education Research on Teacher Quality – Math/Science
14 Special Education Research on Individualized Education Programs
15 Education Finance, Leadership, and Management Research
16 Special Education Research on Assessment for Accountability
17 National Assessment of Educational Progress Secondary Analysis Research Program
18 Research on High School Reform
19 Education Research and Development Centers
20 Postdoctoral Research Training Fellowships in the Education Sciences

3. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH PROGRAM

A. Purpose of the Special Education Research on Assessment for Accountability

Through its program of Special Education Research on Assessment for Accountability (Assessment), the Institute intends to address questions of how assessments, measures of progress, assessment standards, and accountability provisions should be designed to capture and represent growth in high priority skills among children with disabilities. The long-term outcome of this program will be an array of assessment instruments and systems that are documented to have validity for students with disabilities.

For the purpose of this research program, students with disabilities are as defined in the "Individuals with Disabilities Education Act" as a child "(i) with mental retardation, hearing impairments (including deafness), speech or language impairments, visual impairments (including blindness), serious emotional disturbance (referred to in this title as 'emotional disturbance'), orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, or specific learning disabilities; and (ii) who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services" (Part A, Sec. 602).

B. Background for the Assessment Program

As a function of the No Child Left Behind Act, all students with disabilities are now included in academic assessments that are used for accountability purposes. Students with disabilities participate in general assessments, with and without accommodations. In addition, three types of alternative assessments are used for students with disabilities who cannot participate successfully in general assessments: (a) alternative assessments based on grade-level standards, (b) alternative assessments based on modified academic achievement standards, and (c) alternative assessments based on alternate achievement standards for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Critical topics that need to be addressed include (a) determining the predictive validity of general assessments for students with disabilities (i.e., do such measures predict later success of individuals with disabilities), (b) determining the effects on reliability and validity of different test accommodations, (c) developing and validating alternative assessments that are aligned with grade level state standards, and (d) developing and validating alternative assessments that are aligned with alternate standards. Systematic information and data on the technical adequacy of alternative assessments in general, and specific types of alternative assessments in particular have yet to be established. Moreover, research is needed to address the conceptual, technical, and psychometric issues underlying the development and validation of alternative assessments for individuals with disabilities.

In addition to the validation of general assessments with and without accommodations for students with disabilities, and the development and validation of alternative assessments, the Institute encourages applications to conduct research that addresses the reliability and validity of various measures and models of student growth for students with disabilities as alternatives or additions to current status measures of proficiency under state accountability systems. The Institute is also interested in research on the design of general assessments that promotes the widest accessibility of the assessment to students with disabilities.

4. REQUIREMENTS OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH

A. General Requirements

a. *Interventions/assessments intended for individuals with disabilities*. This competition is restricted to research directed to individuals with disabilities, as previously defined (see Section 1. Request for Applications).

b. *Applying to multiple competitions.* Applicants may submit proposals to more than one of the Institute's FY 2006 competitions. Applicants may submit more than one proposal to a particular competition. However, applicants may only submit a given proposal once (i.e., applicants may not submit the same proposal or very similar proposals to multiple competitions or to multiple goals in the same competition).

c. *Applying to a particular goal within a competition*. To submit an application to one of the Institute's education research programs, applicants must choose the specific goal under which they are applying. Each goal has specific requirements.

d. *Inclusions and restrictions on the Assessment research program.*

(i) For the FY 2006 Assessment competition, applicants must submit under Goal Five. The numbering of goals is consistent across the Institute's research programs. The Assessment program only supports Goal Five.

Goal Five is to develop and validate assessments, measures of progress, assessment standards, and accountability provisions designed to capture and represent learning of high priority skills among individuals with disabilities.

B. Applications under Goal Five (Measurement)

a. *Requirements for Goal Five (Measurement) proposals*

(i) *Purpose of Goal Five proposals*. Through Goal Five, the Institute intends to support the development and validation of (a) alternative assessments based on grade-level standards, (b) alternative assessments based on modified academic achievement standards, and (c) alternative assessments based on alternate achievement standards for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Applicants may propose to develop and validate new assessments, to modify and validate existing assessments, to validate existing assessments for use with students with disabilities, or to determine the effects on the reliability and validity of different test accommodations for students with disabilities.

(ii) *Requirements of proposed assessments*. Applicants under Goal Five should propose to develop assessments that can be used in education delivery settings for students with disabilities from **kindergarten through high school**. Applications that would be appropriate for consideration under Goal Five include, but are not limited to: (a) proposals to develop new assessments; (b) proposals to modify or adapt existing assessments; and (c) proposals to adapt assessments originally designed and used for research purposes for broader use in instructional settings.

Applicants must provide a compelling rationale to support the development and/or validation of the proposed assessment (i.e., why invest in research on this particular assessment in the context of other existing assessments and/or the need for assessments in other areas?). Reviewers will consider the strength of theoretical foundation for the proposed assessment, the existing empirical evidence supporting the proposed assessment, and whether the proposed assessment duplicates existing assessments. In developing or choosing assessments, researchers should keep in mind the pragmatic constraints (e.g., number of students, limited class time, time required to train teachers to use the assessments, costs) that teachers and administrators will consider to determine whether the instrument is a viable option for use in classrooms and other education

delivery settings. Applications should provide sufficient description of the proposed assessment and how it could be utilized within education delivery settings for reviewers to judge the practicality of the proposed assessment for purposes of accountability.

(iii) *Methodological requirements*. Applicants should detail the proposed procedures for developing the assessment instrument (e.g., procedures for determining construct validity, for selecting target items or problems to be used in the assessment, for assessing difficulty of selected items or problems, or for obtaining representative responses to questions). Applicants must clearly describe the research plans for assessing the validity and reliability of the instrument. Applicants should describe the characteristics and size of samples to be used in each study, procedures for collecting data, measures to be used, and data analytic strategies.

b. *Personnel and resources*. Competitive applicants will have research teams that collectively demonstrate expertise in (a) content area, (b) assessment, (c) implementation of and analysis of results from the research design that will be employed, and (d) working with teachers, schools, or other education delivery settings in which the proposed assessment might be used. Competitive applicants will have access to institutional resources that adequately support research activities and access to schools in which to conduct the research.

c. *Awards*. Typical awards under Goal Five will be $150,000 to $400,000 (direct plus indirect cost) per year for up to 4 years. Larger budgets will be considered if a compelling case can be made for such support. The size of award depends on the scope of the project.

5. APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Application forms and instructions for the electronic submission of applications will be available for the programs of research listed in this RFA from the following web site:

https://ies.constellagroup.com

by the following date:

October 7, 2005

6. MECHANISM OF SUPPORT

The Institute intends to award grants for periods up to 5 years pursuant to this request for applications. Please see specific details for each goal in the Requirements of the Proposed Research section of the announcement.

7. FUNDING AVAILABLE

The size of the award depends on the scope of the project. Please see specific details in the Requirements of the Proposed Research section of the announcement. Although the plans of the Institute include this program of research, awards pursuant to this request for applications are contingent upon the availability of funds and the receipt of a sufficient number of meritorious

applications. The number of projects funded under a specific goal depends upon the number of high quality applications submitted to that goal. The Institute does not have plans to award a specific number of grants under each particular goal.

8. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Applicants that have the ability and capacity to conduct scientifically valid research are eligible to apply. Eligible applicants include, but are not limited to, non-profit and for-profit organizations and public and private agencies and institutions, such as colleges and universities.

9. SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

Research supported through this program must be relevant to U.S. schools.

Recipients of awards are expected to publish or otherwise make publicly available the results of the work supported through this program. Beginning July 1, 2005, the Institute asks IES-funded investigators to submit voluntarily to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) an electronic version of the author's final manuscript, upon acceptance for publication in a peer-reviewed journal, resulting from research supported in whole or in part, from IES. The author's final manuscript is defined as the final version accepted for journal publication, and includes all modifications from the peer review process. Posting for public accessibility through ERIC is strongly encouraged as soon as possible and within twelve months of the publisher's official date of final publication. The Institute's request is aligned with the Public Access Research Policy of the National Institutes of Health. Details of the Institute's request are posted on the Institute's website at http://www.ed.gov/ies.

Applicants should budget for one meeting each year in Washington, DC, with other grantees and Institute staff. At least one project representative should attend the two-day meeting.

The Institute anticipates that the majority of the research will be conducted in field settings. Hence, the applicant is reminded to apply its negotiated off-campus indirect cost rate, as directed by the terms of the applicant's negotiated agreement.

Research applicants may collaborate with, or be, for-profit entities that develop, distribute, or otherwise market products or services that can be used as interventions or components of interventions in the proposed research activities. Involvement of the developer or distributor must not jeopardize the objectivity of the evaluation. Applications from or collaborations including such organizations should justify the need for Federal assistance to undertake the evaluation of programs that are marketed to consumers and consider sharing the cost of the evaluation, as well as sharing all or a substantial portion of the cost of the implementation of the product being evaluated (e.g., sharing the cost of textbooks for students).

10. LETTER OF INTENT

A letter indicating a potential applicant’s intent to submit an application is optional, but encouraged, for each application. The letter of intent must be submitted electronically by the date listed at the beginning of this document, using the instructions provided at the following web site:

https://ies.constellagroup.com/

The letter of intent should include a descriptive title, the goal which the application will address, and brief description of the research project (about 3,500 characters including spaces, which is approximately one page, single-spaced); the name, institutional affiliation, address, telephone number and e-mail address of the principal investigator(s); and the name and institutional affiliation of any key collaborators. The letter of intent should indicate the duration of the proposed project and provide an estimated budget request by year, and a total budget request. Although the letter of intent is optional, is not binding, and does not enter into the review of subsequent applications, the information that it contains allows Institute staff to estimate the potential workload to plan the review.

11. SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

Applications must be submitted **electronically by 8:00 p.m**. **Eastern time** on the application receipt date, using the ED standard forms and the instructions provided at the following web site: https://ies.constellagroup.com

Application forms and instructions for the electronic submission of applications will be available by the following date:

October 7, 2005

Potential applicants should check this site for information about the electronic submission procedures that must be followed and the software that will be required.

The application form approved for this program is OMB Number 1890-0009.

12. CONTENTS AND PAGE LIMITS OF APPLICATION

All applications and proposals for Institute funding must be self-contained within specified page limitations. Internet Web site addresses (URLs) may not be used to provide information necessary to the review because reviewers are under no obligation to view the Internet sites.

Sections described below, and summarized in Table 2, represent the body of a proposal submitted to the Institute and should be organized in the order listed below. Sections *a* (ED 424) through *i* (Appendix A) are required parts of the proposal. Section *j* (Appendix B) is optional. All sections must be submitted electronically.

Observe the page number limitations given in Table 2.

Table 2

Section	Page Limit	Additional Information
a. Application for Federal Education Assistance (ED 424)	n/a	
b. Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED 524) – Sections A and B	n/a	
c. Budget Information Non-Construction	n/a	

Programs (ED 524) – Section C		
d. Project Abstract	1	
e. Research Narrative	20	Figures, charts, tables, and diagrams may be included in Appendix A
f. Reference List	no limit	Complete citations, including Titles and all authors
g. Curriculum Vita of Key Personnel	4 per CV	No more than 4 pages for each key person
h. Budget Justification	no limit	
i. Appendix A	15	
j. Appendix B	10	See restrictions

A. Application for Federal Education Assistance (ED 424)
The form and instructions are available on the website.

B. Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED 524)—Sections A and B
The application should include detailed budget information for each year of support requested and a cumulative budget for the full term of requested Institute support. Applicants should provide budget information for each project year using the ED 524 form (a link to the form is provided on the application website at https://ies.constellagroup.com/). The ED 524 form has three sections: A, B, and C. Instructions for Sections A and B are included on the form.

C. Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED 524)—Section C
Instructions for ED 524 Section C are as follows. Section C is a document constructed or generated by the applicant and is typically an Excel or Word table. Section C should provide a detailed itemized budget breakdown for each project year, for each budget category listed in Sections A and B. For each person listed in the personnel category, include a listing of percent effort for each project year, as well as the cost. Section C should also include a breakdown of the fees to consultants, a listing of each piece of equipment, itemization of supplies into separate categories, and itemization of travel requests (e.g. travel for data collection, conference travel, etc.) into separate categories. Any other expenses should be itemized by category and unit cost.

D. Project Abstract
The abstract is limited to one page, single-spaced (about 3,500 characters including spaces) and should include: (1) The title of the project; (2) the RFA goal under which the applicant is applying (e.g., development, efficacy); and brief descriptions of (3) the purpose (e.g., to develop and obtain preliminary evidence of potential efficacy of an intervention); (4) the setting in which the research will be conducted (e.g., rural schools in Alabama); (5) the population(s) from which the participants of the study(ies) will be sampled (age groups, race/ethnicity, SES); (6) if applicable, the intervention or assessment to be developed or evaluated or validated; (7) if applicable, the control or comparison condition (e.g., what will participants in the control condition experience); (8) the primary research method (e.g., experimental, quasi-experimental, single-subject, correlational, observational, descriptive); (9) measures of key outcomes; and (10) data analytic strategy.

E. Research Narrative

Incorporating the requirements outlined under the section on Requirements of the Proposed Research, the *research narrative* provides the majority of the information on which reviewers will evaluate the proposal. The research narrative must include the four sections described below (a. "Significance" through d. "Resources") in the order listed and must conform to the **format requirements** described in section e.

a. *Significance (suggested: 2-3 pages)*. Describe the contribution the study will make to providing a solution to an education problem identified in the Background Section of this RFA.

Provide a compelling rationale addressing, where applicable, the theoretical foundation, relevant prior empirical evidence, and the practical importance of the proposed project. For projects in which an intervention is proposed (whether to be developed or to be evaluated), include a description of the intervention along with the theoretical rationale and empirical evidence supporting the intervention. For projects in which an assessment is proposed (whether to be developed or evaluated), include a description of the assessment and a compelling rationale justifying the development or evaluation of the assessment. (Applicants proposing an intervention or assessment may use Appendix B to include up to 10 pages of examples of curriculum material, computer screens, and/or test items.)

b. *Research Narrative (suggested: 13-16 pages)*.

(i) Include clear, concise hypotheses or research questions;

(ii) Present a clear description of, and a rationale for, the sample or study participants, including justification for exclusion and inclusion criteria and, where groups or conditions are involved, strategies for assigning participants to groups;

(iii) Provide clear descriptions of, and rationales for, data collection procedures;

(iv) Provide clear descriptions of and justification for measures to be used, including information on the reliability and validity of measures; and

(v) Present a detailed data analysis plan that justifies and explains the selected analysis strategy, shows clearly how the measures and analyses relate to the hypotheses or research questions, and indicates how the results will be interpreted. Quantitative studies should, where sufficient information is available, include an appropriate power analysis to provide some assurance that the sample is of sufficient size.

c. *Personnel (suggested: 1-2 pages)*. Include brief descriptions of the qualifications of key personnel (information on personnel should also be provided in their curriculum vitae). For each of the key personnel, please describe the roles, responsibilities, and percent of time devoted to the project.

d. *Resources (suggested: 1-2 pages*). Provide a description of the resources available to support the project at the applicant's institution and in the field settings in which the research will be conducted.

e. *Format requirements*. The research narrative is limited to the equivalent of 20 pages, where a "page" is 8.5 in. x 11 in., on one side only, with 1 inch margins at the top, bottom, and both sides. Single space all text in the research narrative. To ensure that the text is easy for reviewers to read and that all applicants have the same amount of available space in which to describe their projects, applicants must adhere to the type size and format specifications for the entire research narrative including footnotes. See frequently asked questions available at https://ies.constellagroup.com on or before June 27, 2005.

Conform to the following four requirements:

(i) The height of the letters must not be smaller than 12 point;

(ii) Type density, including characters and spaces, must be no more than 15 characters per inch (cpi). For proportional spacing, the average for any representative section of text must not exceed 15 cpi;

(iii) No more than 6 lines of type within a vertical inch; and

(iv) Margins, in all directions, must be at least 1 inch.

Applicants should check the type size using a standard device for measuring type size, rather than relying on the font selected for a particular word processing/printer combination. Figures, charts, tables, and figure legends may be smaller in size but must be readily legible. The type size and format used must conform to all four requirements. Small type size makes it difficult for reviewers to read the application; consequently, the use of small type will be grounds for the Institute to return the application without peer review. Adherence to type size and line spacing requirements is also necessary so that no applicant will have an unfair advantage, by using small type, or providing more text in their applications. **Note, these requirements apply to the PDF file as submitted**. As a practical matter, applicants who use a 12 point Times New Roman without compressing, kerning, condensing or other alterations typically meet these requirements.

Use only black and white in graphs, diagrams, tables, and charts. The application must contain only material that reproduces well when photocopied in black and white.

The 20-page limit does *not* include the ED 424 form, the one-page abstract, the ED 524 form and narrative budget justification, the curriculum vitae, or reference list. Reviewers are able to conduct the highest quality review when applications are concise and easy to read, with pages numbered consecutively.

F. Reference List

Please include complete citations, including titles and all authors, for literature cited in the research narrative.

G. Brief Curriculum Vita of Key Personnel
Abbreviated curriculum vita should be provided for the principal investigator(s) and other key personnel. *Each vitae is limited to 4 pages and should include information sufficient to demonstrate that personnel possess training and expertise commensurate with their duties (e.g., publications, grants, relevant research experience) and have adequate time devoted to the project to carry out their duties (e.g., list current and pending grants with the proportion of the individual's time allocated to each project).* The curriculum vita must adhere to the margin, format, and font size requirements described in the research narrative section.

H. Budget Justification
The *budget justification* should provide sufficient detail to allow reviewers to judge whether reasonable costs have been attributed to the project. It should include the time commitments and brief descriptions of the responsibilities of key personnel. *The budget justification should correspond to the itemized breakdown of project costs that is provided in Section C.* For consultants, the narrative should include the number of days of anticipated consultation, the expected rate of compensation, travel, per diem, and other related costs. A justification for equipment purchase, supplies, travel and other related project costs should also be provided in the budget narrative for each project year outlined in Section C. For applications that include subawards for work conducted at collaborating institutions, applicants should submit an itemized budget spreadsheet for each subaward for each project year, and the details of the subaward costs should be included in the budget narrative. Applicants should use their institution's federal indirect cost rate and use the off-campus indirect cost rate where appropriate (see instructions under Section 9 Special Requirements). If less than 75 percent of total indirect costs are based on application of the off-campus rate, the applicant should provide a detailed justification.

I. Appendix A
The purpose of A*ppendix A* is to allow the applicant to include any figures, charts, or tables that supplement the research text, examples of measures to be used in the project, and letters of agreement from partners (e.g., schools) and consultants. In addition, in the case of a resubmission, the applicant may use up to 3 pages of the appendix to describe the ways in which the revised proposal is responsive to prior reviewer feedback. These are the only materials that may be included in Appendix A; all other materials will be removed prior to review of the application. Narrative text related to any aspect of the project (e.g., descriptions of the proposed sample, the design of the study, or previous research conducted by the applicant) should be included in the 20-page research narrative. Letters of agreement should include enough information to make it clear that the author of the letter understands the nature of the commitment of time, space, and resources to the research project that will be required if the application is funded. The appendix is limited to 15 pages.

J. Appendix B (optional)
The purpose of Appendix B is to allow applicants who are proposing an intervention or assessment to include examples of curriculum material, computer screens, test items, or other materials used in the intervention or assessment. These are the only materials that may be included in Appendix B; all other materials will be removed prior to review of the application. Appendix B is limited to 10 pages. Narrative text related to the intervention (e.g., descriptions of

research that supports the use of the intervention/assessment, the theoretical rationale for the intervention/assessment, or details regarding the implementation or use of the intervention/assessment) should be included in the 20-page research narrative.

K. Additional Forms
Please note that applicants selected for funding will be required to submit the following certifications and assurances before a grant is issued:

(1) SF 424B-Assurances-Non-Construction Programs
(2) ED-80-0013-Certification Regarding Lobbying, Debarment, Suspension and other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace Requirements
(3) ED 80-0014 (if applicable)-Lower Tier Certification
(4) SF-LLL (if applicable) - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities
(5) Protection of Human Research Subjects assurance and/or Institutional Review Board certification, as appropriate

13. APPLICATION PROCESSING
Applications must be received by **8:00 p.m. Eastern time** on the application receipt date listed in the heading of this request for applications. Upon receipt, each application will be reviewed for completeness and for responsiveness to this request for applications. Applications that do not address specific requirements of this request will be returned to the applicants without further consideration.

14. PEER REVIEW PROCESS
Applications that are complete and responsive to this request will be evaluated for scientific and technical merit. Reviews will be conducted in accordance with the review criteria stated below by a panel of scientists who have substantive and methodological expertise appropriate to the program of research and request for applications.

Each application will be assigned to one of the Institute's scientific review panels. At least two primary reviewers will complete written evaluations of the application, identifying strengths and weaknesses related to each of the review criteria. Primary reviewers will independently assign a score for each criterion, as well as an overall score, for each application they review. Based on the overall scores assigned by primary reviewers, an average overall score for each application will be calculated and a preliminary rank order of applications prepared before the full peer review panel convenes to complete the review of applications.

The full panel will consider and score only those applications deemed to be the most competitive and to have the highest merit, as reflected by the preliminary rank order. A panel member may nominate for consideration by the full panel any proposal that he or she believes merits full panel review but would not have been included in the full panel meeting based on its preliminary rank order.

15. REVIEW CRITERIA FOR SCIENTIFIC MERIT
The goal of Institute-supported research is to contribute to the solution of education problems and to provide reliable information about the education practices that support learning and

improve academic achievement and access to education for all students. Reviewers will be expected to assess the following aspects of an application in order to judge the likelihood that the proposed research will have a substantial impact on the pursuit of that goal. Information pertinent to each of these criteria is also described above in the section on Requirements of the Proposed Research and in the description of the research narrative, which appears in the section on Contents and Page Limits of Application.

Significance	Does the applicant make a compelling case for the potential contribution of the project to the solution of an education problem? For cases in which the applicant proposes to develop or evaluate an intervention, does the applicant present a strong rationale justifying the need to evaluate the selected intervention (e.g., does prior evidence suggest that the intervention is likely to substantially improve student learning and achievement)?
Research Plan	Does the applicant present (a) clear hypotheses or research questions; (b) clear descriptions of and strong rationales for the sample, the measures (including information on the reliability and validity of measures), data collection procedures, and research design; and (c) a detailed and well-justified data analysis plan? Does the research plan meet the requirements described in the section on the Requirements of the Proposed Research and in the description of the research narrative in the section on Contents and Page Limits? Is the research plan appropriate for answering the research questions or testing the proposed hypotheses?
Personnel	Does the description of the personnel make it apparent that the principal investigator, project director, and other key personnel possess the training and experience and will commit sufficient time to competently implement the proposed research?
Resources	Does the applicant have the facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources required to support the proposed activities? Do the commitments of each partner show support for the implementation and success of the project?

16. RECEIPT AND REVIEW SCHEDULE

A. Letter of Intent Receipt Dates: September 19, 2005

B. Application Receipt Dates: November 10, 2005, 8:00 p.m. Eastern time

C. Earliest Anticipated Start Date: June 1, 2006

17. AWARD DECISIONS

The following will be considered in making award decisions:
Scientific merit as determined by peer review
Responsiveness to the requirements of this request
Performance and use of funds under a previous Federal award
Contribution to the overall program of research described in this request

Availability of funds

18. INQUIRIES MAY BE SENT TO

Dr. David Malouf
Institute of Education Sciences
555 New Jersey Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20208

Email: david.malouf@ed.gov
Phone: (202) 219-1309

19. PROGRAM AUTHORITY

20 U.S.C. 9501 et seq., the "Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002," Title I of Public Law 107-279, November 5, 2002. This program is not subject to the intergovernmental review requirements of Executive Order 12372.

20. APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 77, 80, 81, 82, 84, 85, 86 (part 86 applies only to institutions of higher education), 97, 98, and 99. In addition 34 CFR part 75 is applicable, except for the provisions in 34 CFR 75.100, 75.101(b), 75.102, 75.103, 75.105, 75.109(a), 75.200, 75.201, 75.209, 75.210, 75.211, 75.217, 75.219, 75.220, 75.221, 75.222, and 75.230.

21. REFERENCES

Donner, A., & Klar, N. (2000). *Design and Analysis of Cluster Randomization Trials in Health Research*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Murray, D. M. (1998). *Design and Analysis of Group-Randomized Trials*. New York: Oxford.