



*Research
Memorandum*

School Recruitment

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Abstract

This memorandum presents a comprehensive view of what is entailed in school recruitment efforts as it applies to educational research, delineates specific characteristics that differentiate the recruitment of K-12 schools from other recruitment efforts, and discusses the varied approaches to the recruitment of K-12 schools. The suggestions highlighted here are a synthesis of a wide range of experience with school recruitment by ETS research staff. Several local teachers and administrators also provided their insights regarding the process. The results serve as documentation of the logistical considerations involved and suggestions for future research endeavors.

Key words: school recruitment, K-12 schools, educational research studies

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Introduction

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has presented a number of concerns for school districts across the country. This act mandates the implementation of statewide reading and mathematics assessments by the 2005–2006 school year. Science testing must be completely designed and implemented by the 2007–2008 school year and occur at least once in the elementary, middle, and high school years (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 [NCLB], 2002). The act also calls for continued professional development and increased accountability for teachers and paraprofessionals. Because of this, a range of opportunities for ETS has opened in the K-12 arena. ETS's business units have begun to respond to these opportunities, and groups within the research and product development divisions must be prepared to provide support for these initiatives. ETS can be an asset in supporting schools' efforts to assess students accurately and appropriately, aggregate the information accordingly to meet state standards, and align curriculum to state standards and assessments so that the curriculum meets students' needs. In order to do so, however, ETS researchers must establish ongoing relationships with school districts both locally and nationally.

The purpose of this paper is to identify and discuss different approaches to recruitment of K-12 schools in ETS research studies. A variety of considerations must be well thought-out when recruiting participants for any project including, but not limited to, (a) overall logistical considerations, (b) study-specific considerations, (c) incentives for participation, and (d) recruitment approaches. This paper will highlight specific characteristics that delineate the recruitment of K-12 schools from other recruitment efforts. The information presented here is a synthesis of the wide range of experience with school recruitment brought to ETS by its diverse staff. Several local teachers and administrators were also contacted for their input regarding these issues.

Overall Logistical Considerations

Several major questions arise whenever school recruitment takes place and should be considered prior to any contact with school administrators. These questions center on two major themes: available resources and the association of the ETS name with high-stakes testing.

Resources

The first questions asked by anyone within the educational system when they are invited to participate in any research study are usually, “What are we expected to contribute at what cost?” and “What involvement does this entail?” Money, resources, and time are in short supply within K-12 schools. Use of school resources in a study, such as classroom space, school equipment (e.g., photocopiers), and administrative help, should be kept to a minimum. The amount of teachers’ time, if not meant for professional development, should be used sparingly in the study. Researchers also need to be aware that often space is inadequate at schools. If any needed resources can be obtained off site, researchers should do so before going to a school. If this is not possible, it may be appropriate to find a means to compensate schools and staff for their willingness to participate. ETS may contract with the school for reimbursement of resources or for contribution of other resources to the school, or, if a study requires significant time from the teachers, ETS may agree to pay for a portion of that time. A second avenue may be to provide teachers with a stipend for time spent in the study outside of normal school hours. These alternatives may lighten the pressures placed upon teachers, administrators, and districts. Researchers should prepare a list of the required resources and share the list with the school in order to discuss feasibility of the proposed study and possibilities for collaboration.

The ETS Name

Many people may be hesitant to begin a working relationship with ETS. This is due to the association of ETS with only high stakes testing such as the Praxis™, the GRE®, and the SAT® and not with areas such as formative assessment, teacher professional development, and English language learning. This sometimes negative identification is pervasive, so time must be allocated for informing school administrators of the wide range of expertise at ETS and the broad possibilities for partnership. Thus, initial contact with school administrators involves more than discussing logistics and compensation over the phone. It may include several meetings, sharing staff vita and publications, and having in-depth discussions with groups of teachers.

School officials often have concerns about the possible consequences of participating in an ETS study such as confidentiality issues and the implications of the school not producing the results sought in the study. Schools are more likely to be interested in working with ETS if the partnership activities address concerns that are vital to the school, as well as to ETS. Information,

products, and research being proposed for K-12 classrooms should be delineated from the work being done for specific clients (i.e., the College Board). The apprehensions of school officials must then be acknowledged and the position of ETS as researchers should be carefully and clearly defined.

Study-specific Considerations

A number of issues must be considered in advance when conducting projects or studies that involve school recruitment. These considerations, which will vary from study to study and project to project, significantly impact the recruitment process. In this section, important issues such as the influence of time lines on a project and the effects of sample sizes and target populations are discussed.

Time Lines

Both ETS researchers and schools abide by time lines relative to a work agenda for the upcoming fiscal or school year. It is important to establish an appropriate working time line that will accommodate both ETS's project needs and the school's availability. Because a school's schedule is constrained by various and sometimes unpredictable circumstances, it is important to be flexible within these limitations and be prepared to handle schedule delays and changes. Many school districts are so overwhelmed by internal or state mandated research and testing (i.e., pilot and field testing items, curriculum, and programs) that even if they are interested in participating with an outside research organization, they may not be able to give you access for a full calendar year.

To deal with the various challenges in planning a research collaboration, any project involving school recruitment should include an internal project plan outlining the time lines for production of field prototype products, scheduling of school visits and pilot tests, analyses of pilot and field data, and production of field test reports (DiBello, 2002). A second type of time line should be developed in order to share ETS's plans with the various participating school systems. This time line should include the types of projects researchers are interested in pursuing, the timetable for collecting data and information, and the type of information that will be presented to the schools.

When establishing these time lines, several things must be considered: prior review of research projects, parental consent, state and district testing, and follow-up with schools.

Prior review of research projects. Just as ETS research projects involving data collected from human subjects undergo review by the committee for prior review of research projects, similar processes take place within some school districts. The process and length is contingent upon each school district's administrative hierarchy. The hierarchy of potential districts should be taken into consideration, especially when planning for a large-scale study.

A school district's review of a proposed project can occur at different times and in different manners depending on the hierarchy of the district you are working with. For example, some districts will hold their own human subjects review and/or require a separate proposal be submitted according to their specifications. In some cases no research can be conducted or even considered until a proposal has been submitted and a review completed. Another process involves the presentation of all potential research projects to the school board. Board members then review and approve or reject each proposal. Regardless of the type of hierarchy and/or processes found, provisions within the time line should be made in order to satisfy the time and/or information requirements of the specific district or districts with which you are interested in working.

State and district testing. The month in which testing is to take place will be a large factor in the decision-making processes of any school district. Most states mandate testing during April and May and many districts supplement the state testing with their own assessment program. During this time, schools, teachers, students, and parents are under tremendous pressure due to the standardized testing taking place, and it is unlikely that researchers would be granted access to students. If a project's needs require access to students during these months, teachers may become more protective of their students' time and be unwilling to take time away from daily classroom learning, making the recruitment process more difficult.

Parental consent. This can be obtained in a variety of ways, including sending an informed consent form home with the student, mailing information about the study to the student's home, or attending school events such as parent-teacher conferences, back-to-school nights, and PTA meetings. Although more time-consuming, attending meetings where parents will be present may be a constructive use of time. This allows both parents and teachers to voice

any questions or concerns they may have regarding participation in the study and fosters the development of a partnership with the broader school community.

Follow-up with schools. The time line delivered to the schools should include dates for field or pilot testing and professional development as well as dates for when information about the results of the study will be available for presentation. Schools will need to know if they should expect a report on the findings, a workshop for the teachers, or an open forum where concerns can be addressed and questions answered. The amount and type of follow-up should be discussed and agreed upon before a study begins.

Sample Size Considerations

The target population and the number of schools and students needed must be considered in relation to the specific project or projects at hand. For each of these concerns, general recruitment guidelines and characteristics of schools or districts are discussed.

Target population. The target population needed for a study will vary according to the research questions the study seeks to answer. Studies may call for students of different age and proficiency levels, ethnicities, or socio-economic status (SES). The recruitment process will need to vary for each type of demographic. Specific questions researchers could consider when planning for recruitment include: Are we interested in students or teachers of a specific ethnic group, SES group, or age? And if we can find only one subgroup among the many needed, what schools can provide the others?

Once these questions have been answered, the characteristics of specific schools and school districts must be considered. If the researchers' objective were to recruit from all grade levels, then district-wide cooperation would be very beneficial. Other characteristics may differ between and within school districts. For instance, some school districts will be much larger with more students per grade level per school. Another concern may be the ethnicity of your sample. The ethnic makeup may differ depending on whether recruiting involves urban, suburban, rural, or private schools and in which region of the country recruiting occurs. All of these population demographics need to be taken into consideration before any contact is made.

Number of schools. The number of schools needed for each study will vary, but the number needs to be determined in order to create an initial contact list. Based on past experiences of researchers within ETS, the number of schools that agree to participate and that

actually follow through tends to be between 20% and 30% of those contacted. If, for instance, access to 50 schools is needed, then a list of 170–250 possible schools should be generated. With recent changes in the educational environment, however, the number of schools who choose to participate in research projects may be lower and the number of schools on an initial contact list may need to be increased. For example, initial contacts for the fourth grade reading motivation study (Wang, Gentile, & Mifsud, 2003) began with over 70 schools and school districts. Although approximately six school principals out of the contacted schools followed up with enthusiasm, the final decision was contingent on higher administrative approval. The principals felt the study would benefit their schools, teachers, and students, and time was available to participate. However, the superintendents from each district decided against participation because of testing and time constraints. As a result, of the six who initially expressed interest, none participated. Due to changes in the educational environment and the current business needs of ETS, future recruitment efforts may need to be more extensive than previously instituted. Therefore, it may be necessary to contact more schools and allow for more time to establish these effective and important working relationships.

Number of students. The number of students needed in a study can also play a role in deciding how many schools to contact. The size of specific schools can be an important factor since schools range anywhere from 30 to 300 students per grade level. The number of students within a grade level at each school can sometimes be predicted by the location and type of school. For example, private and parochial schools often have much smaller class sizes and, therefore, have fewer students who can participate.

A second consideration in determining the number of schools to contact is mandatory parental consent. Even if access is granted to a school or school district, no student can participate in a study without a signed parental permission slip. In one instance, researchers conducted a study at a large urban middle school, where 1,500 students were enrolled (Witkowski & Dibello, 2003). Approximately 50 parental consents were received. Assuming that teachers sent home a permission slip with every student, this is a return rate of about 3%. Some reasons behind the low return rate were that the study was performed during the last week of school, the teachers were not well informed about the project, and students had recently finished their state testing. These are all things that could be accounted for and corrected in future attempts. In comparison, a fourth grade reading motivation study that involved parental consent

as well as parent surveys had an average participation rate of over 90% across seven schools. This success was due, in part, to teacher and principal support for the project and strong follow-through by the researcher. In general, a low return rate, though not acceptable for our purposes, is common for survey mailings (e.g., Nielsen, Harris, or Gallup polls) and/or parent permission mailings. As suggested earlier, any type of face-to-face contact with parents and teachers could be extremely helpful in obtaining a higher return rate, which may serve to increase the value of any research endeavor. An analysis of the typical number of students who participate in a study as well as the typical number of students per school can help to estimate the number of schools that should be contacted.

Incentives for Participation

After determining the sample-size considerations, the next issues researchers should address are the needs of the school district and how to make this study beneficial to all involved. When recruiting, researchers should remember that a partnership should be reciprocal. Administrators, teachers, students, and parents are under tremendous pressure from the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB, 2002) and already feel overwhelmed and overtested. In establishing an effective partnership with schools, ETS may need to provide schools with support that goes beyond the scope of the research study, such as offering technical expertise, presenting study results related to the school's key issues, and providing professional development opportunities for teachers. This may also include acting as a liaison between the school and other educational resources, addressing pedagogical issues, assisting with grant proposals, and giving other forms of assistance. While working towards productive partnerships, researchers should try to accommodate the school's needs while remaining within the cost and time constraints of a study. Researchers should make explicit the details and promises prior to the study and their impact for both ETS and the school. Researchers should never make unrealistic promises or create expectations that cannot be met in an effort to get agreement from schools.

Professional Development

Many school districts are very committed to continued teacher professional development. This commitment can come from many different levels including the principal, school district, or state and may involve a wide array of diverse opportunities for teachers. Often different school

systems are looking for new ideas and speakers to give workshops within the various areas of education. With the diverse staff at ETS, this is one area in which we could provide helpful information and experiences for the teaching staff in school districts. Internal negotiations and cross-divisional collaboration may result in innovative opportunities for all involved.

Professional development, when paired with research, can change the way in which a school district views participation in a research study. However, this type of remuneration can and should be made explicit prior to the development of a contractual partnership between ETS and a school or school district. The contract developed should include all estimates for time, cost, and services to be provided by both ETS and the participating schools.

Assessment Within Curriculum

ETS can also provide assistance to the school districts by providing information regarding the implementation of assessments within the curriculum. As per the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB, 2002), each state must develop standards for learning and assessments that reflect student performance. Many times teachers are told that they must assess student progress to ensure curriculum concerns are being met. However, teachers do not always have the necessary training to know how to obtain and/or how to use this information. ETS can contribute to this effort in various ways. By forming partnerships between business units within ETS (e.g., Elementary and Secondary Education formally known as K-12 Works) and various divisions within research and product development (e.g., the Center for Learning & Teaching Research) ETS can develop resources to guide teachers in the implementation of formative assessments, professional development, and new and creative approaches to instruction. We may also be able to guide teachers' use of curriculum and assessments in order to adhere to the individual state and district standards. This can be accomplished through reports regarding student performance, validity studies on the effectiveness of curriculum, and perhaps information about noncognitive aspects of education (e.g., self-efficacy, motivation, and parental influence on student learning).

Teacher and Parent Involvement

Not only do the schools need to agree to participate in a study, but also teachers and parents need to be actively involved and interested. Involving teachers in the planning,

preparation, and implementation of the study is an important step. Two often made mistakes are excluding the teachers and making them feel forced to participate. For the relationship to be as productive as possible, teachers should be excited and actively involved in the project. A major problem faced by teachers is the time commitment needed to participate in a study. One way to address this concern is to provide teachers with a list of common questions and answers concerning the study. This may aid teachers in situations during which the questions or concerns of parents are discussed. Another approach is to provide the parents with researcher contact information so that concerns and questions are addressed directly by the researcher and ETS appears more approachable. The contact can be anyone actively involved in the project (i.e., the primary investigator or a research assistant) who can handle concerns that may be raised throughout the duration of the study.

If a study requires a considerable time commitment from the teacher, one way ETS has compensated teachers in the past is through payment of a stipend. In the Pathwise[®] study (Gallagher & Thompson, 2002), teachers were offered a \$100 stipend for their participation. Compensation of this sort can give the teachers a vested interest in the study and the study results. Compensation can also include providing gift certificates, books, and/or other support materials, which teachers may find useful but are not within the school's budget.

In addition to schools and teachers, the study must also be attractive to parents. The goals, major steps, and outcomes of the study should be presented clearly to the parents. In particular, the parents' information regarding the study needs to explain how participating is a valuable use of their child's time and would warrant time away from classroom learning. Without this explanation, parents most likely will not return the informed consent form. Parents should be given feedback in a fashion appropriate for all education levels at various points throughout the study. If the study involves reading motivation, telling parents 2 years later that the students in a fourth grade classroom were not motivated to read is virtually pointless. Too much time would have elapsed for any corrective action to be taken. Instead, before the school year is over, providing a brochure for parents that highlights the ways in which they can help motivate their children to read is very useful and helps reinforce that the research partnership involves the broader school community.

Student Motivation

Making the study interesting for the student is important to study outcomes. Sometimes this motivation can be as simple as allowing the students to have some one-on-one classroom time with a researcher. Students are often excited to share their ideas with other people, especially in a one-on-one situation. There are various other ways to motivate students, but these vary by age group. A straightforward way to motivate students is through a gift. One project gave every middle school student who participated a unique colored pencil (Baxter & Junker, 2001). This provided students with a writing utensil for the test and became a desired symbol of their participation in the study that was often the source of discussion among other students. Another way of motivating students is to provide a reward at the end of the study. An experimental reading project offered students points for reading books. The number of points awarded was determined by the difficulty of the book and whether or not the students could pass a computerized quiz. Students were then placed into one of six skill levels determined by the number of points they earned. When every student was performing at level 5, the class was rewarded with a pizza party. One teacher involved with this program stated, “Students in my class who would never pick up a book began reading, and others who are in a second grade reading group were taking up *Lord of the Rings*.” In second grade, a pizza party is a significant reward. At higher grades, other motivating factors may need to be considered. In the past, some local middle schools have offered “socials” as rewards for participation in events. Once a school or a grade achieved a certain percentage of participation, the students at each grade would be eligible for a dance. The last period of the day was left open, parent permission was obtained for the students to stay late, and the school was open for students to socialize and dance. At the middle school level, this was very motivating and most students brought back the parent permission forms so they could stay for the dance. Creativity is needed to develop the optimum method for encouraging student motivation.

Recruitment Approaches

Once an initial contact list has been developed, a number of steps should be followed for successful school recruitment. This section presents a number of steps derived from past approaches to school recruitment and the implications of these steps. Three general approaches for the successful recruitment of schools and student participants are also discussed.

Six General Steps for Recruitment

These six steps present a general outline for the process of recruiting schools. Appendix A provides a checklist for school recruitment outlining each of these steps, the documentation that should be prepared, and the actions that should be taken. Although given in chronological order, the order may change based on project needs or school district characteristics.

Step 1: Researching school hierarchies. The first step is to research populations and hierarchies of different schools and school districts through online sources and direct calls to schools or community borough halls. This can help to facilitate a better understanding of the community in which the schools serve. The schools that will be most useful to work with can then be determined.

Step 2: Determining an initial point of contact. It is important to find out whom within that school or school district should be contacted. In some areas, the principal or individual teachers may have authority to agree to a partnership, while in other districts the curriculum directors, testing specialists, or research assistants serve as the initial screening mechanism for all external projects. In other schools, the superintendent and/or the school board must be the first point of contact. Appendices B–D illustrate three different approaches depending on the initial contact within a district. Based on a generic school hierarchy, the line of communication is shown and the advantages and disadvantages to each method are explained. In general, it is usually most efficient to begin the recruitment process from the top down. (See Appendix B.) It must be determined if the school should be contacted or if access decisions are made at the district level. Once the individual in charge of approving access to a particular school is identified, that person should be the first contact. Although having contacts within a school (e.g., a math teacher) may be helpful, they often do not know the appropriate channels that must be navigated, and trying to work through them to gain access can be difficult. (See Appendix C.) Often a hierarchy may be more complicated than superintendent to principal to teacher. A number of individuals within a school district may need to be consulted on a project, and this must be accounted for during the recruitment process. (See Appendix D.) Each step in the hierarchy related to access decisions should be researched for each school or school district.

Typically, the information regarding access decisions is publicly available. School and/or school district web sites often provide the necessary information; this information, however, may not always be updated. Another valuable source of information is the support staff within the

schools. Administrative support are often familiar with the district's procedures for reviewing requests to conduct research studies in the schools and can direct you to the appropriate person and/or initial contact.

Step 3: Creating an initial contact letter. One of the most effective ways to obtain interest in a study is to send a solicitation letter describing the study to each of the schools with which you are interested in partnering. This should include an introduction to the project and a statement that informs the school that the materials and guidelines are subject to change based on the school's input and specific needs. Schools often want to be actively involved in planning these projects, and many times a study can be tailored to accommodate their suggestions or needs.

The initial letter should have a one-page summary of the study design or plan that outlines the goals of the study. This should be presented in a way that will appeal to the school district. It should contain an explanation of what you need in terms of participation, your time line (specifically what month you want to have the study), the specific and concrete feedback the school district officials will receive, and approximately when they can expect it. Finally, anything that will be donated to the schools in return for their participation, such as books related to the subject matter for teachers, materials for the classroom, or something as simple as pencils for the students who participate, should be mentioned. This one-page summary will explain how your partnership with the school will progress throughout the relationship. Appendix E shows an example of an initial contact letter that was used for recruitment of schools in the fourth grade reading motivation study (Wang, Gentile, & Mifsud, 2003).

Step 4: Preparing study materials. Once interest has been expressed, if feasible, actual study information and materials should be given to the schools. This should include protocols, testing packets, informed consent forms, a description of staff qualifications and backgrounds, and the proposed research guidelines. Also, the materials that will be sent home with the students should be shared with the schools for feedback. Language is one important consideration within these materials. Depending on the region, study materials may have to be translated into various languages including but not limited to Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Polish, Korean, and/or Russian. While English may be the primary language for the student, the parents may not be proficient in English. All materials that parents are required to read and sign need to be translated to ensure full participation of the students.

Step 5: Determining the type and amount of feedback. The feedback given to the district can be tailored to the specific needs of the district and can include a variety of information. Depending on the project, data can be aggregated to show school, district, or state differences. Presentations can be given to teachers, staff, and/or parents in order to show those involved what was learned during a particular project. A brochure with this same information can be created for parents, teachers, or students as can information for the district's web site or school newsletter. Study information should not be written in scientific terms but rather in a general and concise manner, easily understood by someone with a high school education. Discussion of feedback with participating schools should be planned for in advance.

Step 6: Finalizing plans within each school district. Once a school or district has agreed to partner in the research proposed by ETS, a contact person or persons should be established for both parties. Next, logistical plans should be presented and discussed between both parties, resulting in the formulation of a contract. The contract should be flexible in case of unforeseen changes.

Recommended Approaches for Recruitment of K-12 Partnerships

Any of the following approaches may provide an initial route for the recruitment process. However, these are not exclusive or exhaustive. Other approaches may prove to be more effective as time goes on, and the combination of more than one approach may be necessary. The context of the K-12 community is changing, and ETS's role in it must change as well. In order to be effective, recruitment approaches must evolve along parallel lines.

Partnering with institutions of higher education. Partnering with education departments at local colleges and universities would allow us to network with various schools and school districts. Specifically, researchers at ETS can start with The College of New Jersey Professional Development Schools Consortium. Some initial contacts with this organization have been made (by Claudia Gentile). The College of New Jersey partners with approximately half a dozen school districts to coordinate professional development programs. A partnership with them could lead to access to an assortment of school districts in the immediate area. This may also be a fruitful route to follow in other areas of the nation where our researchers may not have as many personal contacts within school systems. Another advantage to working with these programs is the opportunity to work with preservice teachers. By partnering with institutions of higher

education, we may not only gain access to the K-12 arena but also to other important areas of the teaching profession.

Providing choices for partnering schools. Once specific time lines and projects have been approved, presenting various studies to school districts and allowing them to choose which would best fit their needs and restrictions would be beneficial to both ETS and the school district. One district may be especially interested in evaluating its reading program, while other districts may be concerned with mathematics performance. Allowing the schools to review the various proposed projects and select the ones that are best suited to their needs would be productive for all parties.

Working with individual teachers as research facilitators. A partnership with individual teachers who receive compensation for participation could save time and money on projects. The teachers could attend workshops and meetings to learn about the project activities, which would enable them to use study materials (e.g., pilot items, new technology, professional development) with their classes. Since entire classrooms could then use the materials immediately without the presence of a researcher, time and money would be saved. Teachers would have the opportunity to apply their new knowledge while gaining valuable experience in real world applications. Depending on the scope, type, and specifications of a project, teachers may gain insight into specific areas such as research, assessment, professional development, and/or curriculum development.

Concluding Remarks

“Reinventing the wheel” has become a popular catchphrase here at ETS. Often during the school recruitment process it is discovered that a previous or existing relationship with a particular school is in place. Reviewing an experience the school had with another researcher would save time and make the initial contact easier. For years, ETS researchers have been working with schools, yet little documentation remains. Aside from study findings outlined in research reports, ETS researchers need a central base in which they can locate a pool of schools to contact. This need is especially important now, with the increased focus on business opportunities in K-12 classrooms.

In an effort to conserve time and money, we suggest internal partnering between divisions at ETS to create an internal database/web site devoted to school recruitment. The

“school recruitment” site will house school contact information (hierarchy/system), demographics of the community that the school serves, and past study experiences including domain (math, science, English, etc.), nature of the study (test/activity), problems incurred, and overall success.

We suggest that ETS appoint a staff liaison whose primary role is to collect this information from current ETS researchers who have worked with school districts and post the information on the internal web site. The staff liaison will also approach school districts to see if they are interested in partnering with ETS for future studies. (The schools will be assured that they have not agreed to participate in any activities with ETS until they agree to a proposed study.) Once ETS institutes the partnership, the staff liaison will add the interested school district to a list on the web site.

Researchers can review the web site to find schools they would like to consider for their studies. A first contact between the researcher and the school will be set up by the staff liaison. Once interest for the proposed project has been established, the school contact and the current project director will communicate directly with one another. Since this is to be a reciprocal relationship, schools or districts should also be active in the design and development of possible research collaborations. This will present an opportunity for researchers and educators to establish a professional community.

In addition to the internal web site, it may be beneficial to set up an external site on <http://www.ets.org> that will allow schools to view the projects we are currently working on and make inquiries online about participation. The site would present an overview for each project and the benefits, time commitments, domains, tasks, and the remuneration offered to the schools. In addition, this site could provide an overview of speakers, professional development activities, and programs of instruction that ETS staff could offer for educators or students who participate in the studies.

Future efforts should go above and beyond many of the past school recruitment practices for studies at ETS, as the goal will be to build an ongoing relationship with school districts both locally and nationally. Previously, school contacts were made with the intention of requiring only commitment for the duration of the particular project. The new relationship, however, would include active and frequent contact with the school districts’ administrators, curriculum staff, and/or teachers who will be accessible for contact and willing to discuss possible

involvement in ETS research projects. These partnerships, regardless of duration, will provide avenues for ETS to gain insight into a number of markets. For example, ETS may choose to explore the feasibility of adaptive e-learning and various products that come from our assessment divisions. These efforts may then serve as a model for ETS in the future when developing enduring partnerships and relationships with schools and school districts.

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Appendix A

General Approach and Checklist for School Recruitment

Consult the complete memorandum for a comprehensive description of each step outlined below.

School Profile

Build a profile of a school by researching:

- The school hierarchy, specifically the structure of the school board and/or testing office (This can be ascertained through website information and/or phone interviews.)
- Community demographics
- Whether the school has a record of prior participation in ETS-sponsored projects
- An initial point of contact within the school or district (e.g., superintendent, research assistant, secretary, content area specialist)
- Process and approval guidelines for each school district (e.g., formal proposals, internal review boards)

Project Summary

Develop a brief project summary, typically no longer than one page. The purpose of this summary is to elicit an initial response from school districts; ETS can provide more in-depth information once a school district expresses interest in the project. The project summary should include:

- A description of the project and research design
- A description of the resources needed
- The project timeline
- A description of the activities involved (i.e., observations, interviews, and/or training)
- Staff contact information
- Description of the proposed incentives for participation

Study Materials Packet

Develop materials for the school that describe the study. The packet should include:

- A description of staff qualifications and background
- Informed consent forms and study protocols for the school's review
- Descriptions of and samples of instruments, materials, and/or instructional information to be used throughout the project
- Translations of student materials and parental information into appropriate languages (e.g., Russian, Korean, Spanish, Polish)

Incentives for Participation

Develop a list of incentives for study participants, including teachers, students, parents, and schools, as appropriate.

- | Teacher | Student | Parent | School | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates an appropriate recipient for each incentive listed below. |
| | | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates an inappropriate recipient for the incentive listed below. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Distribute brochures explaining relevant research or findings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Coordinate, prepare and facilitate relevant seminars or workshops |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Present study results to school boards, PTA meetings, and the broader community |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Professional development opportunities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Contribute textbooks, workbooks, computer programs, study materials, or other resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Present study findings in the form of a research report for the teachers, parents, school or district |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Contribute resources to plan and prepare school social events such as a pizza party or school dance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Donate gifts such as colored pencils or bookmarks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Provide compensation in the form of gift certificates and/or stipends |

Contractual Agreements

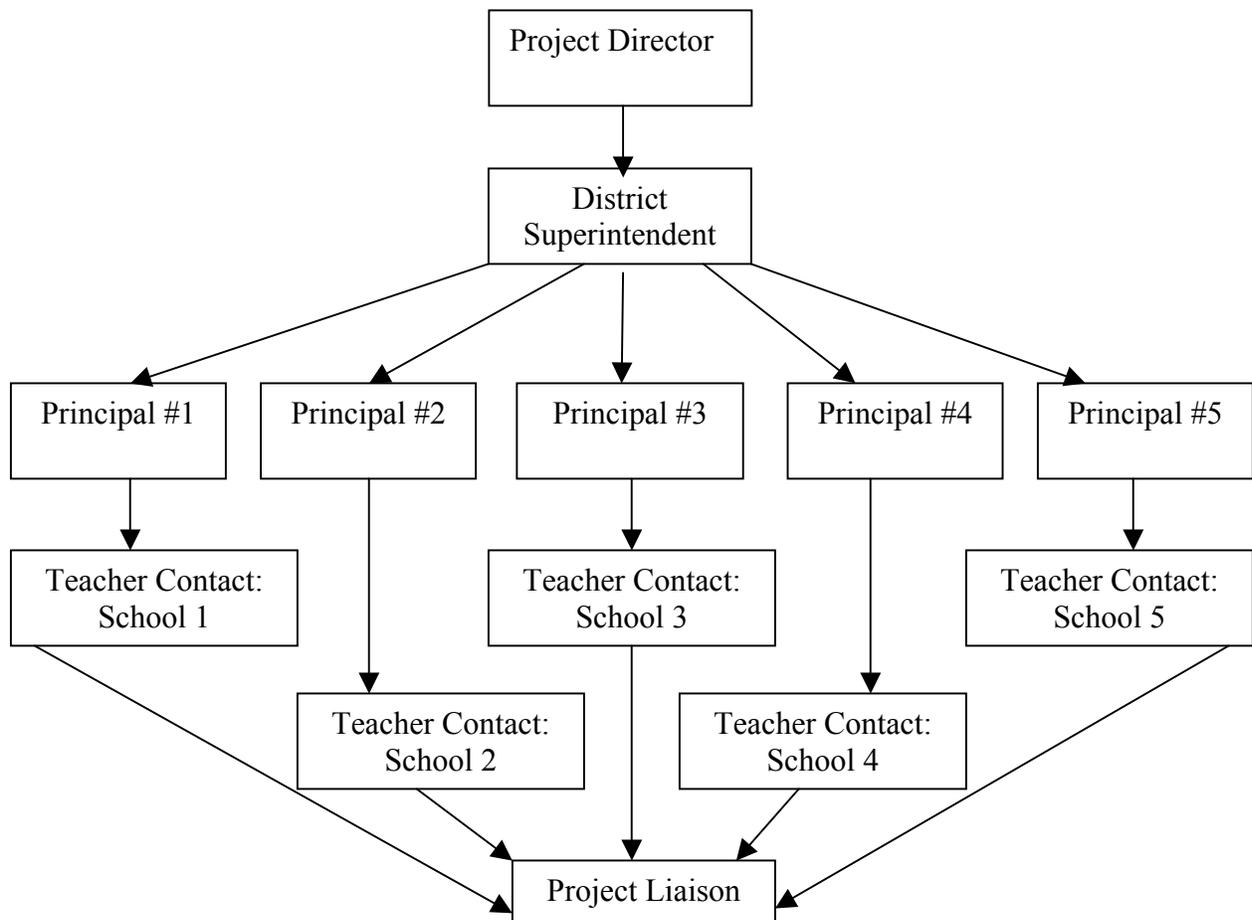
Develop a contractual agreement that concretely defines the relationship while remaining flexible in order to accommodate unforeseeable circumstances that may arise. The agreement should incorporate all concerns and finalized plans, including:

- An internal point of contact at ETS for school officials, teachers, and parents
- A list of school staff to assist in planning and coordination and to serve as the points of contact throughout the study
- Data collection processes, timelines, and all estimates for time, cost, and services to be provided by both ETS and participating schools.

Appendix B

Flow Chart for the Recruitment of K-12 Partnerships: An Example of Top-down Recruitment

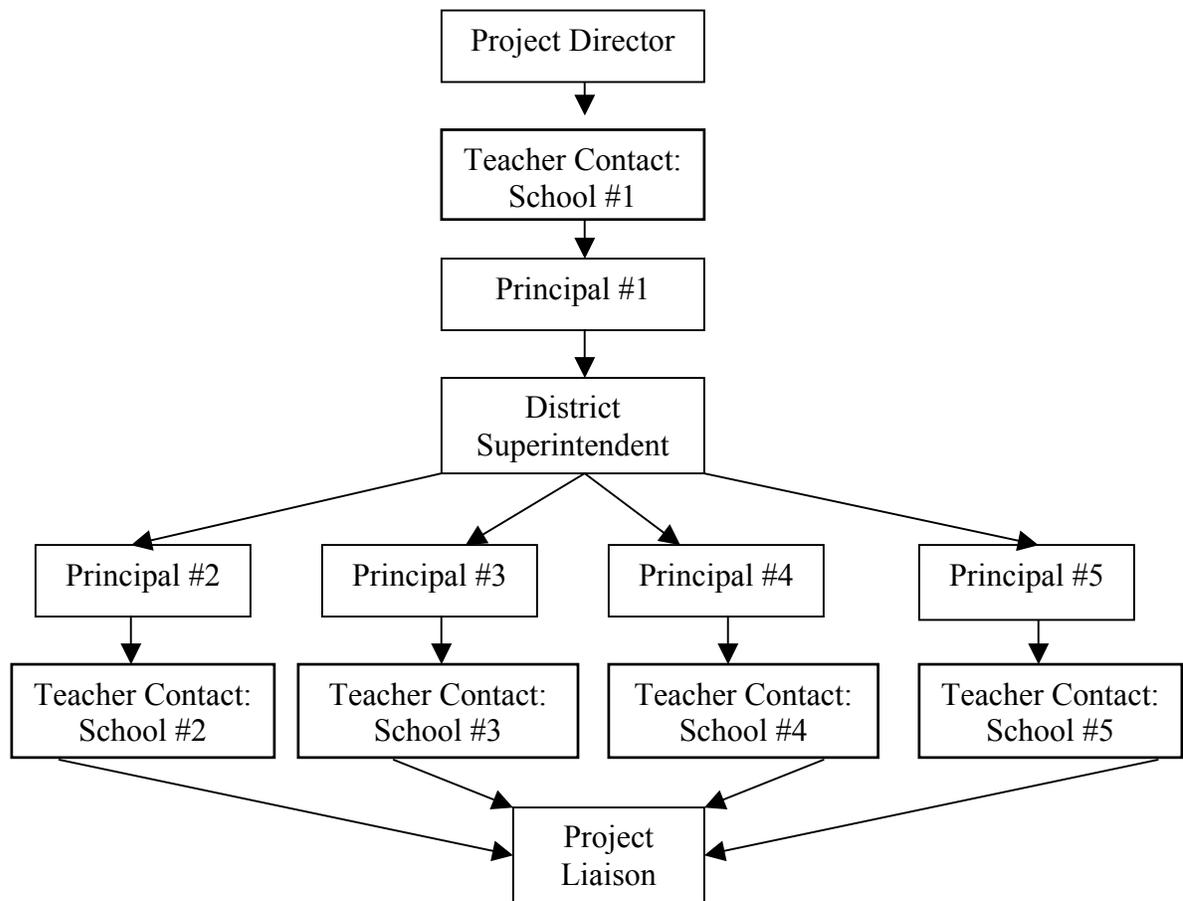
The diagram illustrates the order of contact and line of communications in the top-down approach for school recruitment. Depending on the district, recruitment begins with the individual responsible for access decisions. In this example, initial contact is made with the district superintendent and moves through the hierarchy of the school board/district (principal and then teachers). In other districts, access decisions may be made at the school level by a principal, research assistant, or testing director. Regardless of the hierarchy, recruitment in a top-down model begins at the highest level, and information is passed from there. This approach is beneficial because all appropriate communications will be in place prior to the commencement of the study. Difficulties may ensue if the principals and/or teachers feel forced to participate.



Appendix C

Flow Chart for the Recruitment of K-12 Partnerships: An Example of Bottom-Up Recruitment

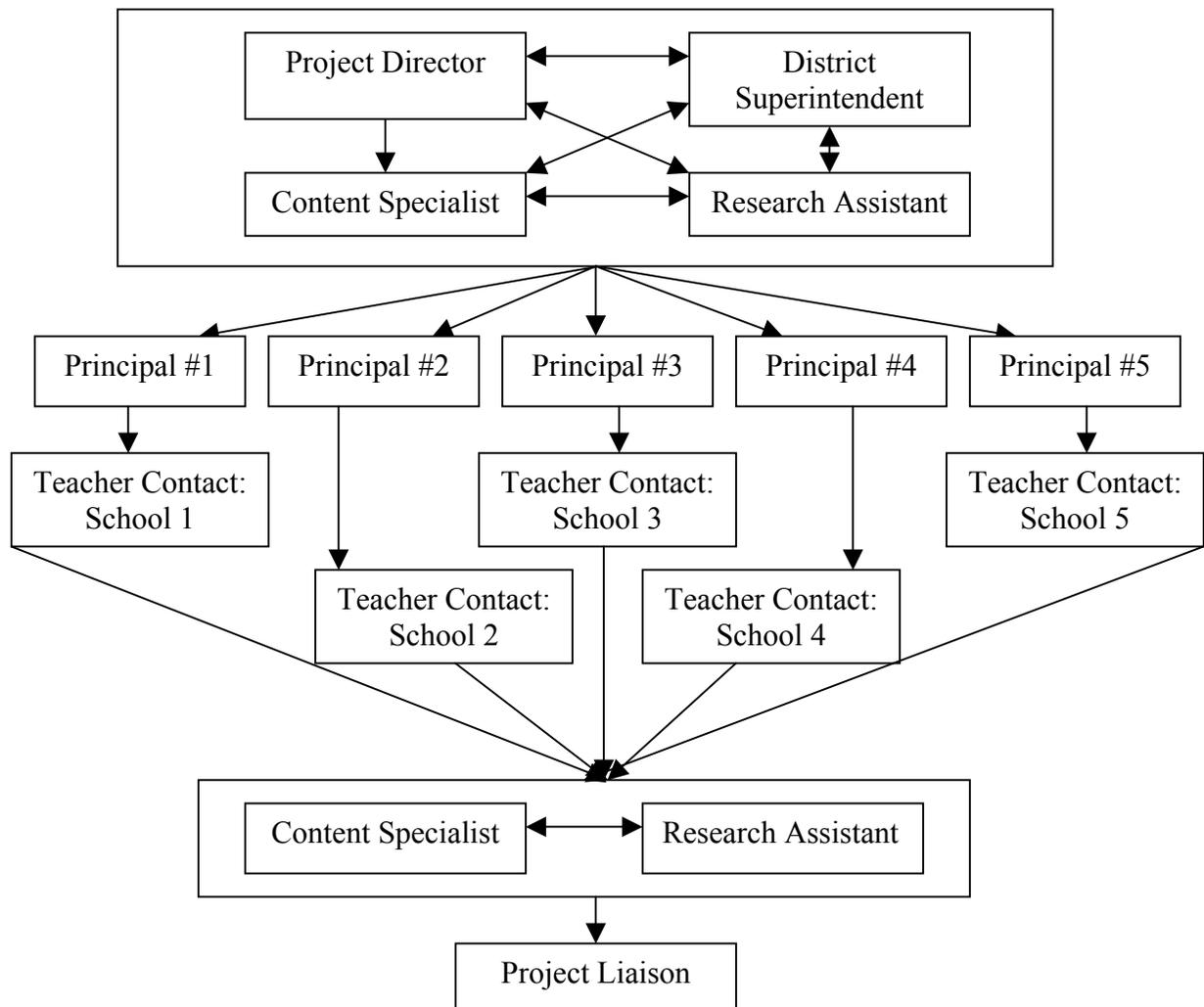
The diagram illustrates the order of contact and line of communications in the bottom-up approach for school recruitment. This example begins with a teacher contact and moves through the hierarchy of the school board/district (principal and then superintendent). The path of recruitment may vary depending on the structure of each school board. For example, one district may require that the testing specialist be consulted in place of the superintendent. This approach is beneficial because a teacher is involved in the planning, preparation, and initial contact for a project. Difficulties may arise if the teacher is unaware of appropriate channels for communication or the individual responsible for access decisions. After a district or school has agreed to participate, a teacher contact for each participating school should be appointed.



Appendix D

Flow Chart for the Recruitment of K-12 Partnerships: An Example of Nonlinear Recruitment

The diagram shows the line of communications in the nonlinear approach to school recruitment. This approach is unique because two or more individuals in administrative positions are responsible for access decisions, although working relationships may occur between several individuals at the highest levels of the hierarchy. For example, a project director may need to consult with a content specialist and a research assistant before interacting with individuals at lower levels (i.e., principals or teachers). Difficulties may arise when the hierarchy becomes extremely complex due to the numerous contacts, communications, and approvals that are required prior to a decision being made.



Appendix E

Initial Contact Letter

Helping Students Read Well: A Study of Fourth Graders' Reading and Motivation

Project Summary

This fall, we will be conducting a study about how students are motivated to learn to read well. The goal of this study is to understand the connection between students' reading motivation and parents' expectations and students' reading ability so that we can help students improve their reading.

In December, students will spend two 40-minute sessions participating in the study. These students will be asked to respond to two surveys about what motivates them to read and about how often and how much they read. They will also read an enjoyable set of stories and answer multiple-choice questions.

The parents of these fourth graders will also be asked to complete a survey about their involvement in their children's reading activities (such as going to the library, encouraging children to read, discussing reading with children).

We see this study as a chance to establish a working relationship among some of our reading researchers and your fourth-grade teachers. This study holds a number of benefits for your school as well as the participants. Below is a list of those benefits:

- We can provide specific information based on things such as gender or ethnic group, anything that would provide additional information for the school.
- As a way of thanking the participants, a set of books will be donated to each class that participates in the study, and special pencils and erasers will be given to each student.
- Our researchers are willing to meet with the PTA/PTO to discuss the study before and after.
- The results of this study, along with results from similar studies conducted in other states, will be summarized in a brochure. They will be presented in a way that connects them to the NJ state literacy standards. This brochure will also provide suggestions for ways parents can help motivate their students to become life-long readers. It will be developed and available for distribution in May of 2002.

Note: This is a research study, not an evaluation study. We are trying to improve what we, as educators, know about the connection between parents, students' motivation and their reading so that we can help our students learn to read better. Procedures will be used to ensure total confidentiality for students, teachers, parents and schools.