

# SRI International

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## **NATIONAL LONGITUDINAL TRANSITION STUDY-2 (NLTS2)**

### **STUDY DESIGN, TIMELINE, AND DATA COLLECTION PLAN**

#### **SRI Project 10492**

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NLTS2 is being designed under Task Order 18 to SRI International and the Research Triangle Institute under the Office of Special Education Programs' Initiative to Link Research and Practice to Improve Results for Individuals with Disabilities.

## CONTENTS

1. Introduction .....	1-1
2. NLTS2 Timeline .....	2-1
3. Data Collection Plan .....	3-1
Data Collection Components .....	3-1
Parent Telephone Interview .....	3-1
Youth Telephone Interview .....	3-3
Direct Student Assessment .....	3-4
Student Interview .....	3-5
Teacher Survey .....	3-5
School Program Survey .....	3-5
Transcript Request .....	3-6
School Background Survey .....	3-6
Content of Data Collection Instruments .....	3-7
Pretesting .....	3-7
Obtaining Consent .....	3-32
Identifying Schools for School-Level Data Collection .....	3-32

## TABLES/FIGURE

Table 2-1	NLTS2 Data Collection Timeline .....	2-2
Table 2-2	Extended NLTS2 Timeline .....	2-3
Figure 3-1	NLTS2 Conceptual Framework .....	3-2
Table 3-1	Example of Table Format that Will Be Used to Describe Content of Data Collection Instruments .....	3-8

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) of the U.S. Department of Education has commissioned a design for the National Longitudinal Transition Study - 2 (NLTS2), which is being developed by SRI International, with support from Westat.

As part of a comprehensive OSEP program of longitudinal research related to the 1997 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA '97), NLTS2 is intended to involve a large, nationally representative sample of students in special education who are ages 13 through 16 and in at least 7<sup>th</sup> grade when the sample is selected (fall 2000). Information generated from NLTS2 will represent special education students of this age nationally as a group, each federal special education disability category, and each single-year age cohort. Information about students will be collected repeatedly as they move through secondary school and as they transition from high school to adult life. The study will focus on such factors as secondary school experiences and performance, postsecondary education and training, employment, independent living, and social adjustment. Thus, NLTS2 will revisit many of the topics addressed in the first NLTS, designed and conducted by SRI from 1984 through 1993, as well as examine new issues for youth in transition.

This report describes current plans for the study design, timeline, and data collection plan.

## 2. NLTS2 TIMELINE

The National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 is expected to be a 10-year effort that will involve three main data collection components:<sup>1</sup>

- Parent/youth telephone interviews. Parents will be contacted for telephone interviews about youth's experiences and outcomes. Youth who are capable of completing a telephone interview will be interviewed about their experiences and outcomes. (A written and/or Web version of the youth interview for those unable to respond over the phone is being considered.)
- Direct assessments and in-person interviews.
  - Direct assessments. The academic performance of students will be measured, in part, through a direct assessment of each youth while he/she is still in secondary school. Assessments will be performed by on-site professionals (not the students' teachers) who are recruited and trained for that purpose (e.g., the district's psychologist).
  - Student interview. The assessment event also will be a time to collect a limited amount of interview information directly from students.
- School data collection.
  - Teacher survey. For each individual student, data will be collected from the teacher of the first academic class of the day about the classroom practices and the student's performance in that classroom.
  - School program survey. The special education teacher or other school staff member who is best able to describe each student's overall school program will be surveyed for information about the student's school program and performance more broadly (e.g., instructional settings that comprise the student's whole school experience, vocational education and transition planning experiences, accommodations received).
  - School background survey. Principals will be asked to provide information on the characteristics of the schools and data on aggregate measures of school performance.
  - Transcripts. Transcripts are an important source of information on courses taken, grades, and attendance. Annotated student transcripts that describe the students' full course taking pattern will be collected.

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to these known data collection components, the design team also is exploring whether the client database of the state-federal vocational rehabilitation program could be accessed for study participants who become clients of that program.

Parent interviews will be conducted in the spring/summer<sup>2</sup> of years 1, 3, 5<sup>3</sup>, 7<sup>4</sup>, and 9 (school years 2000-01, 2002-03, 2004-05, 2006-07, and 2008-09), which will enable analysts to plot trends over time in factors covered in the interviews. Youth interviews will be conducted in the spring/summer of years 3, 5, 7, and 9. Student assessments/interviews and school data collection will be conducted in years 2 and 4 (school years 2001-02 and 2003-04). Transcripts will be collected in years 2, 4, 6, and 8 for students who were still in school since the previous data collection. Data analyses will be conducted as each wave of data is completed, with the final year of the 10-year project being devoted to comprehensive analyses of the full longitudinal data set.

Table 2-1 summarizes the planned data collection activities over the 9 data collection years of the study. Table 2-2 depicts greater detail regarding the timing and sequencing of data collection.

<b>Table 2-1 NLTS2 TIMELINE</b>										
	<b>Year 1</b> 2000- 2001	<b>Year 2</b> 2001- 2002	<b>Year 3</b> 2002- 2003	<b>Year 4</b> 2003- 2004	<b>Year 5</b> 2004- 2005	<b>Year 6</b> 2005- 2006	<b>Year 7</b> 2006- 2007	<b>Year 8</b> 2007- 2008	<b>Year 9</b> 2008- 2009	<b>Year 10</b> 2009- 2010
Parent telephone interviews	★		★		★		★		★	
Youth telephone interviews			★		★		★		★	
Direct assessment/ student in-person interviews <sup>5</sup>		★		★						
Teacher survey		★		★						
School program survey		★		★						
School background survey		★		★						
Transcripts		★		★		★		★		
Analysis	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★

<sup>2</sup> The study contractor should make every effort to contact parents before the close of the 2000-01 school year. However, because of potential delays in recruiting the student sample, some interviews may need to be conducted during the summer.

<sup>3</sup> Parent interviews might not be collected in years 5 and 7 for youth who are 18 and older, able to complete phone interview on their own, and who do not live at home. If there are research questions that only the parent can answer, the parent interview will be conducted for all years, otherwise parents will be interviewed in years 5 and 7 only if youth are younger than 18 or unable to respond to an interview on their own.

<sup>4</sup> See footnote 2.

<sup>5</sup> Direct assessment/student interviews will be done once for each student; students aged 16 to 18 in year 2 of the study will be assessed in year 2, those who are younger than 16 in year 2 will be assessed in year 4 when they are 16 or 17 years old.

**Table 2-2  
EXTENDED NLTS2 TIMELINE<sup>6</sup>**

<b>Parent interviews, Wave 1 (Assumed start date, January 1, 2001)</b>	
1/1/01 (1)	Receive OMB clearance
1/01-3/01 (1-3)	CATI programming
2/02-3/01 (2-3)	Develop interviewer training materials, train interviewers
3/01 (3)	Send lead letters to parents
4/01-6/01 (4-6)	Interview parents/guardians
5/01-8/01 (5-8)	Mail survey to parents unable to be reached for phone interview. Follow-up activities
4/01-9/01 (4-9)	Process data
9/01-1/01 (3-13)	Analysis
<b>Direct assessments, Wave 1</b>	
8/01-10/01 (8-10)	Prepare/adapt assessor training materials
10/01-12/01 (10-12)	Recruit direct assessors
12/01-1/02 (12-13)	Train assessors.
2/02-6/02 (14-18)	Conduct direct assessments and student interviews.
3/02-8/02 (15-20)	Process data
8/02-1/03 (21-15)	Analysis
<b>School data collection, Wave 1</b>	
10/01-11/01 (10-11)	Mail Enrollment Status Report to last known school attended by each sample student Follow up on nonresponses.
10/01 (10)	Contact original LEA for current school information for students for whom do not have school information
2/02 (14)	Lead letter to principal, include brochure and enrollment status report form for students no longer enrolled
3/02-5/02 (15-17)	Mail school survey data collection packets to principals. Follow up on nonrespondents
4/02-8/02 (16-20)	Process data from the three school surveys and transcripts
8/02-12/02 (20-24)	Analysis
<b>Reporting, Wave 1<sup>7</sup></b>	
2/02 (14)	Draft report of parent interview data submitted
4/02 (15)	Final report of parent interview data submitted
1/03 (25)	Draft report of wave 1 school survey data submitted
3/03 (27)	Final report of Wave 1 school survey data submitted
5/03 (29)	Draft comparison report (with NLTS) submitted
7/03 (31)	Final comparison report (with NLTS) submitted

<sup>6</sup> Months are actual months, assuming a January 1, 2001 start date, followed by contract months in parentheses).

<sup>7</sup> Note that there is no reporting of Wave 1 direct assessment data. The direct assessment database will not be complete until both waves of data have been collected (Year 4). A report of findings from the complete database will be reported at that time. There also will be no reporting of transcript data in Wave 1. Transcripts will be collected only when youth have reached high school and not all youth will have done so in Wave 1.

**Table 2-2  
EXTENDED NLTS2 TIMELINE (Continued)**

<b>Parent/youth interviews, Wave 2</b>	
1/03-3/03 (25-27)	Reprogram CATI for Wave 2
3/03 (27)	Send lead letter to parents and youth about upcoming interview
4/03-6/03 (28-30)	Conduct interviews
4/03-10/03 (28-34)	Process interview and family survey data as it is received, in preparation for analysis
5/03-8/03 (29-32)	Mail survey to parents/youth unable to be reached during phone interview phase. Follow-up mailings
4/03-9/03 (28-33)	Process data
9/03-1/04 (33-37)	Analysis
<b>Receive OMB clearance (second application)</b>	
1/04 (37)	Receive second OMB clearance
<b>Direct assessment, Wave 2</b>	
10/03-12/03 (34-36)	Recruit assessors
12/03-1/04 (36-37)	Train assessors
2/04-6/04 (38-42)	Conduct direct assessments and student interviews; supervise and support assessors. Assessors will mail completed materials weekly to SRI
3/04-8/04 (39-44)	Process data
8/04-1/05 (44-49)	Analysis
<b>School data collection, Wave 2</b>	
8/03-9/03 (32-33)	Mail School Report Form to families to identify school student will be attending in the fall or last school attended; follow-up activities
10/03-11/03 (34-35)	Mail Enrollment Status Report to last known school attended by each sample student, follow-up activities
2/04 (38)	Lead letter to principal, include enrollment status report form for students no longer enrolled
3/04 - 5/04 (39-41)	Mail school survey data collection packet to principals; follow-up activities
4/04-8/04 (40-44)	Process data
8/04-1/05 (44-49)	Analysis
<b>Reporting, Wave 2</b>	
2/05 (50)	Draft of overview report submitted to OSEP
4/05 (52)	Final version of overview report section 4 submitted
3/05 (51)	Submit draft report of direct assessment data
5/05 (53)	Submit final report of direct assessment data
5/05 (53)	Draft special topic report 1 submitted (school programs)
8/05 (56)	Draft special topic report 2 submitted to OSEP
7/05 (55)	Final version of special topic report 1 submitted
10/05 (58)	Final version of special topic report 2 submitted

**Table 2-2  
EXTENDED NLTS2 TIMELINE (Continued)**

<b>Parent/youth interviews, Wave 3</b>	
1/05-3/05 (49-51)	Reprogram CATI for Wave 3
3/05 (51)	Send lead letter to parents and youth about upcoming interview
4/05-6/05 (52-54)	Conduct interviews
5/05-8/05 (53-56)	Mail survey to parents/youth not reached for phone interview. Follow-up mailings
4/05-9/05 (52-57)	Process data
9/05-1/06 (57-61)	Analysis
<b>Transcript collection, Wave 3</b>	
1/06-2/06 (61-62)	Mail School Report Form to families to identify school student will be attending in the fall or last school attended; follow-up activities
3/06-6/06 (63-66)	Mail Transcript Request to schools currently attended by students or last attended by students who have left school since 203-04 school year; follow-up activities
<b>Reporting, Wave 3</b>	
4/06 (64)	Draft of overview report Wave 3 submitted
6/06 (66)	Final version of overview report submitted
5/06 (65)	Draft special topic report 1 submitted to OSEP
7/06 (67)	Draft special topic report 2 submitted to OSEP
7/06 (67)	Final version of special topic report 1 submitted
9/06 (69)	Final version of special topic reports 2 submitted
<b>Receive OMB clearance (third application)</b>	
1/07 (73)	Receive third OMB clearance
<b>Parent/youth interviews, Wave 4</b>	
1/07-3/07 (73-75)	Reprogram CATI for Wave 4
3/07 (75)	Send lead letter to parents/youth about upcoming interview
4/07-6/07 (76-78)	Conduct interviews
5/07-8/07 (77-80)	Mail survey to parents/youth not reached for phone interview. Follow-up mailings
4/07-9/07 (76-81)	Process data
9/07-1/08 (81-85)	Analysis
<b>Transcript Collection, Wave 4</b>	
1/08-2/08 (85-86)	Mail School Report Form to families to identify school student will be attending in the fall or last school attended; follow-up activities
3/08-6/08 (87-90)	Mail Transcript Request to schools currently attended by students or last attended by students who have left school since 203-04 school year; follow-up activities



**Table 2-2  
EXTENDED NLTS2 TIMELINE (Concluded)**

<b>Reporting, Wave 4</b>	
4/08 (88)	Draft of overview report Wave 4 submitted
6/08 (90)	Final version of overview report submitted
5/08 (89)	Draft special topic report 1 submitted to OSEP
7/08 (91)	Draft special topic report 2 submitted to OSEP
7/08 (91)	Final version of special topic report 1 submitted
9/08 (93)	Final version of special topic reports 2 submitted
<b>Parent/youth interviews, Wave 5</b>	
3/09 (99)	Send lead letter to parents/youth
4/09-6/09 (100-102)	Conduct interviews
4/09-10/09 (100-106)	Process interview and family survey data as it is received, in preparation for analysis
5/09-8/09 (101-104)	Mail survey to parents/youth unable to be reached during phone interview phase. Follow-up mailings
4/09-9/09 (100-105)	Process data
9/09-1/10 (105-109)	Analysis and writing
<b>Reporting, Wave 5</b>	
4/10 (112)	Draft of overview report Wave 4 submitted
6/10 (114)	Final version of overview report submitted
5/10 (113)	Draft special topic report 1 submitted to OSEP
7/10 (115)	Draft special topic report 2 submitted to OSEP
7/10 (115)	Final version of special topic report 1 submitted
9/10 (117)	Final version of special topic reports 2 submitted

### **3. DATA COLLECTION PLAN**

The NLTS2 data collection plan is designed to collect in-depth longitudinal information on the secondary school and postsecondary experiences of 13- to 16-year-olds who are in at least 7<sup>th</sup> grade and receiving special education services at the beginning of the 2000-2001 school year. Because NLTS2 is intended to be far reaching in terms of the conceptual domains that it will address, data will be collected from multiple sources using several data collection methods. Instruments to be used in data collection are in the process of development. Whenever possible, items from instruments used in other studies, especially the Special Education Elementary Longitudinal Study (SEELS) and NLTS, will be used to maximize the extent to which NLTS2 data can be compared with other national databases, with earlier NLTS findings, and with the experiences of students in SEELS.

Below, we describe the general approach to each NLTS 2 data collection component. We then outline the content of each data collection instrument in terms of the domains of the NLTS2 conceptual framework and the specific research questions that each will address. Discussion of approaches to the issues of obtaining parental consent for data collection and identifying schools attended by sample students conclude this section.

#### **Data Collection Components**

##### **Parent Telephone Interview**

All parents/guardians will be interviewed during years 1, 3, and 9 (see study timeline). As instruments are developed to reflect the NLTS2 research questions, a decision will be made about whether all parents, or only a subset of parents, will be interviewed in years 5 and 7. If there are questions that only parents can answer that are felt to be necessary to collect in years 5 and 7, as well as other years, the parent interview will be continued for all parents, otherwise parents will be interviewed in years 5 and 7 only if their children are younger than 18, still in school, or unable to respond to an interview on their own.

The NLTS2 conceptual framework (Figure 3-1) holds that a youth's historical information, such as age when disability was first identified; household characteristics, such as socioeconomic status; and a family's level and type of involvement in school-related areas influence student outcomes. Parents/guardians are the most knowledgeable about these factors. Some questions either can only be answered by parents (e.g. parents' expectations of the future, reflections on how the youth has "turned-out") or best answered by parents (e.g. receipt of services).

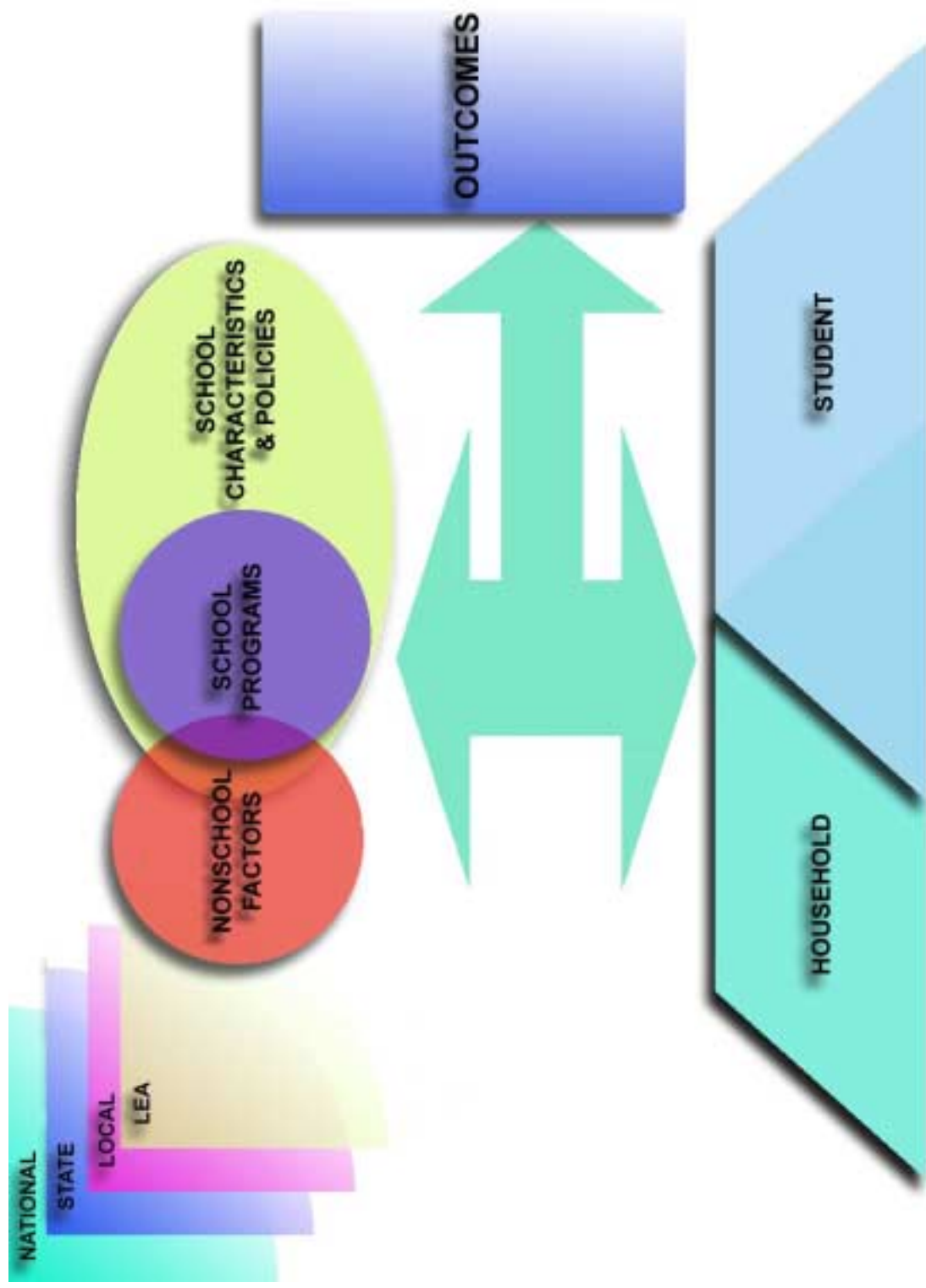


Figure 3-1 SEELS CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Given the size of the NLTS2 sample and the resources likely to be available for data collection, in-person interviews are not feasible. Computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) will be used for parent interviews. To eliminate the need for respondents to answer items that are inappropriate to the age, disability, or other circumstances of the household or youth, carefully constructed skip patterns will be programmed.

Parent/guardian interviews will begin with a screening section identifying the adult who is best able to talk about the youth and his/her experiences, who will be referred to here as a parent. If a parent is not sufficiently fluent in English to be interviewed and is a Spanish-speaker, a Spanish language version of the interview will be administered.<sup>8</sup> Appropriate follow-up procedures will be included to produce a high response rate.

In addition, aggressive efforts will be made to minimize any potential bias resulting from the telephone interview approach by developing methods of obtaining information for families without telephones. One effective approach is to develop a simplified mailed version of the questionnaire to be sent to households without telephones. This questionnaire also can be translated into multiple languages so that the sample can include families with adults who speak only languages other than English and Spanish. In addition, in communities with high nonresponse to the telephone interview, the contractor can be encouraged to employ field staff with cell phones who can go to the homes of nonrespondents and enable them to respond to the telephone interview.

Most of the questions from the wave 1 parent interview will be repeated in later waves. However, items that do not change with time, such as when the child was first diagnosed with a disability, will not be repeated.

Design assumptions are that the average telephone interview length is 40 minutes and that at least a 70% response rate is achieved.

### **Youth Telephone Interview**

Teens and young adults bring a unique perspective that cannot be obtained by interviewing their parents. Learning about the educational, social, employment and life experiences and feelings of youth with disabilities' directly from them becomes increasingly important as they grow older.

Youth will be interviewed by phone in years 3, 5, 7 and 9. During the year 3 parent interview, parents will be asked if youth are able to answer questions similar to those asked of parents by telephone on their own. If parents respond affirmatively, youth will be contacted to complete the youth portion of the interview.

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<sup>8</sup> Only an English-language version of the parent questionnaire will be cleared through OMB. The study contractor will be responsible for translating the parent questionnaire into Spanish and any other languages estimated to be represented sufficiently in the sample to justify the expense of translation.

As with the parent interview, CATI will be used for youth interviews. To eliminate the need for respondents to answer items that are inappropriate to the age, disability, or other circumstances of the household or student, carefully constructed skip patterns will be programmed.

If a youth is not sufficiently fluent in English to be interviewed and is a Spanish-speaker, a Spanish language version of the interview will be administered.<sup>9</sup> Appropriate follow-up procedures will be included to produce a high response rate. A mail questionnaire will be developed for administration to students who are hearing impaired.<sup>10</sup> Design assumptions are that the average telephone interview length will be 35 minutes and that at least a 70% response rate is achieved.

### **Direct Student Assessment**

The academic performance and social adjustment of students in their high school years can be important predictors of the postschool achievements addressed in the NLTS2 conceptual framework. To accurately assess academic performance, a direct assessment of a student's abilities by a trained on-site professional (other than the student's own teacher) will be conducted once during a student's later high school years. Students ages 16 to 18 in year 2 will be assessed at that time; those who are 14 and 15 in year 2 will be assessed when they are 16 and 17, in year 4.

We expect the contents of the direct assessment to build directly on development work conducted as part of the design of SEELS. Reading, mathematics, and social skills all are included as components of the SEELS assessment. In addition, we will explore with the NLTS2 Technical Work Group and the SEELS assessment work group the possibility of including assessment of selected life skills that are important to a successful transition.

One or more persons (depending on the number of students per community) to conduct direct assessments of students will be recruited through contacts with the school district special education director or, in schools with several students to be assessed, with the school principal. The study team will contract with these persons to conduct assessments during a specific time frame in the spring of the assessment years for a fixed fee per completed assessment (currently estimated to be \$50) plus compensation for orientation and training time. The names of students to be assessed and appropriate training materials and all available consent forms will be supplied to each assessor by the study contractor.

By the first wave of the direct assessment, some youth from all age cohorts will have dropped out of school, and some in the oldest cohort may have graduated. Although conducting assessments when students have left school will be challenging, it is important that direct

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<sup>9</sup> Only an English-language version of the youth questionnaire will be cleared through OMB. The study contractor will be responsible for translating the youth questionnaire into Spanish and any other languages estimated to be represented sufficiently in the sample to justify the expense of translation.

<sup>10</sup> As the design process continues, the potential of a Web-based survey for youth will be explored.

assessments be attempted with all youth so that all sample members can be included in analyses that employ assessment data. Payments of \$25 to youth who have left school are recommended in order to increase the response rate of this hard-to-reach population.

Assessments are expected to take an average of 45 minutes per student. Students who require significant accommodations or modifications in the assessment process will require more time to complete assessments.<sup>11</sup> A 75% completion rate is estimated.

### **Student Interview**

A brief in-person student interview will be conducted in years 2 and 4 at the end of each the direct assessment. Although parents and teachers will be asked about many aspects of the youth's life, the youth is usually the best respondent regarding feelings and aspirations. In addition, this in-person interview will make the student familiar with the study, which might positively predispose the student to participate in later youth telephone interviews.

Student interviews are expected to take 10 to 15 minutes, so that the entire assessment and interview experience can be completed in an hour per student, on average. As with the accompanying direct assessment, a 75% completion rate is estimated.

### **Teacher Survey**

The NLTS2 conceptual framework suggests the importance of the classroom experience in the lives of students, as well as the importance of behaviors and performance in the classroom setting. To obtain information on these domains, the teacher of the student's first academic period of the day will be asked to complete a mailed, self-administered questionnaire during years 2 and 4, for all youth that are still in school. The first academic period of the day was selected to obtain a range of subject matter classes and to avoid any possible bias in having a teacher or principal select the class to be described. In addition, the expectation is that students will be distributed between special education and regular education classes in the same proportions as naturally occurs among students.

The teacher survey will focus on the instructional techniques and curriculum that the teacher uses with the student, accommodations or modifications provided to the student, and the teacher's training and perceived competence in general and special education. It also will include a variety of questions regarding the student's classroom performance, both academic and behavioral. A 75% response rate is estimated.

### **School Program Survey**

The school program survey will be administered in years 2 and 4. The principal of each school attended by a sample student will be asked to identify the student's special education

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<sup>11</sup> Procedures will need to be developed so that information regarding needed accommodations can be provided to assessors in a timely fashion.

teacher. For students who have been declassified from special education and no longer have a special education teacher, the principal will be instructed to identify the person at the school best able to answer questions about the student's overall school program.

The purpose of this survey is to identify the student's accommodations, supports and related services; content of IEP goals; transition planning; overall school program and performance (e.g., achievement test scores); and vocational and other education experiences. This survey also will include questions about the special education teacher's experience and background, because s/he may be providing a range of services for the special education student. A 75% response rate is estimated.

### **Transcript Request**

Transcripts are the chief source of information on course taking, grades, and attendance. They will be collected for all students in year 2. In years 4 through 8, a transcript will be requested for each student who is still in school or who has left school since the last transcript request. Parents and/or youth interviewed in the spring of years 3, 5, and 7 will be asked whether the student is still in school. If the student is not in school, the respondents will be asked when s/he left school; a final transcript will be requested immediately for those students. If the student is still in school, the respondent will be asked when s/he is expected to complete school. For those who will complete school in the spring of the interview, a final transcript will be requested the following fall.

The school will be asked to identify special education courses, to clarify course content for course titles that are not clear from the course name, and to indicate which classes included work experience/work study. A 75% response rate is estimated.

### **School Background Survey**

The school background survey, focusing on schoolwide characteristics and policies, will be conducted in years 2, and 4. The principal will be asked to complete a mail questionnaire that describes the general characteristics of the school and local school district, including, for example, the demographics of the school, student enrollment, grade levels served, and policies regarding special education services. Other school-related factors, such as the orientation toward special education students and organizational structure and availability of specialized services, may provide important contextual information for understanding the placement, provision of services, and outcomes for students in special education. A 75% response rate is estimated.

It will be important that the contractor for NLTS2 coordinate closely with the contractor for SEELS. Both studies will be conducting school background surveys in the same years, with potentially very similar instruments. Schools that serve students in both NLTS2 and SEELS should not be burdened with instruments from both studies.

## Content of Data Collection Instruments

The conceptual framework and research questions determine the development of the data collection plan and the content of the data collection instruments. Table 3-1 depicts the content areas and research questions that are included in each data collection instrument.

### Pretesting

All NLTS2 data collection protocols will be pretested as part of the design process. The pretest of all data collection protocols will take place in the spring of 2000. The purpose of the pretest is to ensure that the protocols and instruments function according to their design and to provide an opportunity to address problems that may arise during the pretest. In accordance with OMB requirements, instruments will be pretested with no more than nine participants each. As part of the assessment development activities included in the SEELS task, several different administrations of the direct assessment/student interview are currently planned for specific groups of students, including those with: (1) mild disabilities, (2) deafness/hearing impairments, (3) low vision/blindness, (4) cognitive disabilities, and (5) physical/health disabilities.

The following activities are included in the pretest:

- **Timing.** An important feature of the pretest will be to measure the amount of time that is required to complete each subsection of the surveys/assessments, as well as the entire time required. This information will indicate which sections need to be shortened or revised in the final product.
- **Comprehension.** Respondents will be interviewed to establish how easily they were able to understand instruments, both in terms of their directions and in the content and format of specific items.
- **Item characteristics.** For each item, an analysis will be conducted to ascertain whether: (1) the responses obtained are believable, (2) exhibit variations in responses, and (3) are appropriate for the students or settings at which it is directed.
- **Logical flow/skip patterns.** Respondents will be interviewed to establish whether the instruments flow logically from one section to another, or whether some revision could improve the flow.
- **Logistics.** The pretest will also test the logistics in terms of the sequence of activities that will be required for respondents to either respond or participate appropriately.
- **Accommodations.** In the case of the direct assessment, significant effort will be directed at providing a variety of accommodations so that students can participate. The pretest will thoroughly examine the degree to which the accommodations were implemented and the likely effects of their large-scale implementation.



**Table 3-1<sup>12</sup>**  
**NLTS2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

		Highest Priority	Desirable, Not Required
<b>YOUTH CHARACTERISTICS</b>			
	* What are youths' identified disabilities, as indicated by:		
*	• Disability category assigned by LEA.	☆	
*	• Parent report of "disabilities or conditions" for which student receives special education.	☆	
*	• Disabilities (including secondary conditions) noted in student's school record (including IEP).	☆	
	* What is the pattern over time of youth's disability classification/identification, including::	☆	
*	• Change in special education disability category.	☆	
*	• Declassification/exit from special education.	☆	
	• Self-identification as having a disability in young adult life (e.g., notify postsecondary education institutions/employer/agencies that youth has a disability)	☆	
*	• Disability classification of youth by adult service agencies.	☆	
*	* What are the implications of disability for youth functioning in terms of parent report of youth's ability to hear, see, use arms/hand, and legs/feet?		✓
*	* What are youth's strengths, in terms of parent report of athletic, musical, organizational abilities, etc.	☆	
	* What is the youth's special education and broader treatment history in terms of:		
*	• Parent report of age at which youth first received services for disability/condition.	☆	
*	• Parent report of whether youth received early intervention (if ages birth to 3 for first service).	☆	
*	• Parent report of youth receiving preschool special education (if before age 5 for first service).	☆	
*	• Parent report of when youth first had an IEP/received special education in school.	☆	
	• Parent's role in identifying the disability and initiating requests for special education services.	☆	
	• Past hospitalizations and injuries affecting student attendance at school.		✓
*	* What are youth's demographic characteristics, including: (parent report unless otherwise indicated)		
*	• Gender.	☆	
*	• Age.	☆	
*	• Ethnicity.	☆	

<sup>12</sup> Asterisks in the first column of the tables indicate items that also are included in the Special Education Elementary Longitudinal Study (SEELS).

**Table 3-1  
NLTS2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS (Continued)**

		Highest Priority	Desirable, Not Required
*	• Speak a language other than English at home; specific language spoken.	☆	
*	• School staff report of English proficiency.	☆	
	* When did the youth start school? How frequently have they changed schools?	☆	
	* How long have youth lived in the community?	☆	
	* What are the youth's aspirations/expectations for:		
	• Educational attainment (finish high school with diploma, attend postsecondary education)	☆	
	• Employment	☆	
	• Independent living	☆	
	* To what extent do youth report feeling pressured to: <sup>13</sup>		
	• Get good grades	☆	
	• Get into college	☆	
	• Fit in socially	☆	
	• Use drugs or alcohol	☆	
	• Be sexually active	☆	
	* To what extent do youth report they and their friends face problems with:*		
	• Doing poorly in school.	☆	
	• Having a difficult family life.	☆	
	• Violence in school.	☆	
	• Drugs or alcohol.	☆	
	• Not having enough to do outside of school	☆	
	• Unwanted pregnancy.	☆	
	• Sexually transmitted diseases.	☆	
	• Not having an adult to talk with about problems and decisions.	☆	

<sup>13</sup> \* Items come from the Shell Poll (Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc., 1999, Shell Education Survey, *Teens Talk to America*), providing national comparisons with youth in the general population.

**Table 3-1  
NLTS2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS (Continued)**

		Highest Priority	Desirable, Not Required
<b>HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS</b>			
	* What is the composition of households in which youth with disabilities live in terms of parent reports of: the following: (Track changes over time, e.g., marital status, household change, such as custody change, foster care change, moving among family members)		
*	• Relationship of adults to youth (e.g., live with both parents, no parents, foster parents).	☆	
*	• Number of adults and children.	☆	
	• Ages of children, to establish birth order of youth with disabilities.	☆	
*	• Whether other household members have disabilities.	☆	
*	• Marital status of parent/guardian(s).	☆	
	* What are the socioeconomic characteristics of households of youth in terms of parent reports of:	☆	
*	• Parent education level.	☆	
*	• Parent current employment (full/part time).	☆	
*	• Household income.	☆	
*	• Adequacy of transportation to meet household needs.		
<b>SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS—General</b>			
	* What are the schools like that serve students receiving special education in terms of:		
*	• Type (e.g., regular, special, magnet, charter, hospital, correctional facility).	☆	
	• Student body demographics:		
*	- Student enrollment; average daily attendance.	☆	
*	- Number of students with IEPs.	☆	
	- Number of students with 504 plans.	☆	
*	- Disabilities of students attending the school.	☆	
	- Number of students with IEP's who are from outside the district.	☆	
	- Aggregate standardized test scores.	☆	
*	- Aggregate number of suspensions/expulsions/arrests of students.	☆	

**Table 3-1  
NLTS2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS (Continued)**

		Highest Priority	Desirable, Not Required
*	- Number of students who are English language learners.	☆	
*	- Drop out rate, graduation rate, college acceptance rate.	☆	
	- College acceptance rate.	☆	
*	- Ethnic and language diversity.	☆	
	- Mobility.	☆	
*	- Percent of students eligible for free/reduced price lunch.	☆	
*	• Grade levels served.	☆	
	• Student capacity of the school relative to actual enrollment.	☆	
	• School schedule (e.g., extended school year, summer school, how early school starts).	☆	
	• Student mobility.	☆	
	• Average class size in general education academic classes, special education classes, vocational education classes.	☆	
	* What is the community context of schools that serve students receiving special education in terms of:		
*	• Population size and density (urban, suburban, rural).	☆	
	• Perceived safety of/risks in the community.	☆	
	• Availability of after school/youth development activities.	☆	
	• Availability of disability-related support services and organizations.	☆	
	• Availability of public transportation.	☆	
<b>SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS—School Climate</b>			
*	* What are the characteristics of principal leadership as indicated by staff report of such factors as the principal providing adequate support for teachers, frequently present in the classroom, using evaluation/feedback regularly and appropriately, sharing decision-making and problem solving?	☆	
	* How safe is the school, as indicated by:		
*	• Parent reports that students have been victims of threatening or violent incidents at school (i.e., fights, bullying).	☆	
*	• Staff perceptions of safety of the school.	☆	
*	• Principal reports of number of school-wide violent incidents.	☆	
*	* To what extent do teachers and principals report feeling pressure to have students succeed academically/focus on instruction as highest priority?	☆	

**Table 3-1  
NLTS2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS (Continued)**

		Highest Priority	Desirable, Not Required
<b>SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS—Policies</b>			
	* What policies and practices related to special education are pursued by schools in terms of principal reports of:		
*	• Use of prereferral strategies/early intervention approaches.	☆	
*	• Team problem-solving related to students with learning problems.	☆	
*	• Referral process to determine special education eligibility.	☆	
	• Transition planning policies.	☆	
*	• Disciplinary policies.	☆	
*	• Grade retention policies.	☆	
*	• Inclusion in school-wide testing.	☆	
	• Graduation requirements.	☆	
	• Requirement for community service.	☆	
	• Access of students receiving special education to services provided to general student body, (e.g. parenting or safe sex education )	☆	
	* What is the school’s mission? Is it clearly articulated? Are students receiving special education explicitly or implicitly included in school’s mission?	☆	
	* What is the school assignment plan for the district/school? How does it apply to students receiving special education?		✓
<b>SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS-Resources</b>			
*	* What placement options are available at the school for students receiving special education?	☆	
*	* What other school or placement options are available in the district?	☆	
	* What services are available at the school for students receiving special education?	☆	
	* What types of courses are available at the school for students receiving special education, (e.g., vocational courses, tech-prep courses, life skills courses, community based options, AP courses)?	☆	
	* What types of transition planning programs are available at the school for students receiving special education?	☆	
*	* What programs operate at the school to support student learning and well-being (e.g., Chapter 1, Reading Recovery, Accelerated Schools, dropout prevention program, school-based health services, after-school enrichment activities, consultation for teachers)?	☆	
	* To what extent are paraprofessionals used as direct service providers to students?	☆	

**Table 3-1  
NLTS2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS (Continued)**

		Highest Priority	Desirable, Not Required
*	* What personnel resources are at the school to support student learning and well-being (e.g., reading specialist, school counselor, school nurse)?	☆	
*	* What is the ratio of students to support staff, (e.g., number of students served by guidance counselor)?	☆	
	* What specific special education interventions are in use at the school?		✓
*	* How large a student caseload is carried by special education teachers?	☆	
	* Extent of internet/computer access at school?	☆	
*	* Is professional development on special education issues provided to general education staff? Special education staff?	☆	
	* Does the school have a program involving general education students offering support to special education students (e.g. peer buddies)?	☆	
	* Does the school provide a case manager or service coordinator for special education students?	☆	
	• What kinds of school staff fill this role?	☆	
	• Does this person have a teaching load?	☆	
*	* What are the extracurricular resources available at the school?		✓
	* What is the extent of the school's connection to resources outside of the school, e.g., business community, independent living center, Ys)?	☆	
	* Do all buildings have ramps and other features of accessibility?	☆	
	* Is the school getting Medicaid funds for serving students? O.B. Porter funds?	☆	
	* What types of transportation is available for students, both those in regular and special education?	☆	
<b>SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS—Family Involvement Practices</b>			
*	* What actions does the school take to encourage/support family involvement in the school (e.g., provide transportation to IEP meetings, holding parent meetings at places convenient to the parent, providing child care for school-wide events or parent meetings)?	☆	
*	* Are parents involved in school-level decision making and program design?	☆	
<b>SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS-Reforms</b>			
*	* What school-wide reforms have schools implemented and how are students receiving special education included in them?	☆	
	* Are special education staff included on school improvement teams?	☆	

**Table 3-1  
NLTS2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS (Continued)**

		Highest Priority	Desirable, Not Required
<b>SCHOOL PROGRAMS—General</b>			
*	* What is the student’s current grade level?	☆	
*	* What are all of the settings in which the student spends the school day and how is his/her time distributed among them (from transcripts; reported by school staff.)?	☆	
	* Is there someone at the school that the student is connected with in a consistent, significant way (parent/youth reports)?	☆	
	* To what extent are students being served outside of their home district?	☆	
<b>SCHOOL PROGRAMS—Program Participation</b>			
*	* To what extent do students who had been in special education exit from special education over time?	☆	
*	* What are the other school programs in which students receiving special education participate (e.g., gifted and talented, Title 1)?	☆	
<b>SCHOOL PROGRAMS—Coursetaking (Transcript and/or School Staff Report)</b>			
	* What courses is the student taking, including		
*	• Subject matter.	☆	
*	• Sequence.	☆	
	• Difficulty.	☆	
*	• Special/regular education.	☆	
<b>SCHOOL PROGRAMS—Classroom Characteristics</b>			
	* What are the characteristics of (selected) classrooms in which students are instructed, as indicated by:		
*	• The number of students receiving special education.	☆	
*	• The number of students in general education.	☆	
*	• The number of teachers and adult aides.	☆	
<b>SCHOOL PROGRAMS—Curriculum and Instruction</b>			
	* To what extent are students receiving special education exposed to the regular education curriculum, as indicated by:		

NOTE: Items on coursetaking are available in SEELS only for middle and high school students.

**Table 3-1  
NLTS2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS (Continued)**

		Highest Priority	Desirable, Not Required
*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where students fall in a continuum marked by: 1) using same materials/textbooks as regular education students; 2) using a mix of materials/textbooks that includes some materials regular education students use and some that are special education materials or materials uniquely provided for the student's special needs, or 3) using all special education materials or materials uniquely provided for the student's special needs.</li> </ul>	☆	
*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where students fall in a continuum marked by: 1) curricular information is presented to the student in the same manner as to regular education students; 2) curricular information is presented to the student in largely the same manner as regular education students, with modifications; 3) curricular information is routinely presented to the student using strategies tailored to the student's special needs.</li> </ul>	☆	
*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The extent to which students receiving special education access services provided to general student body (e.g., drug abuse prevention, teen pregnancy prevention conflict resolution, (parent and school staff report).</li> </ul>	☆	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the characteristics of instructional practices used with students receiving special education in terms of school staff reports of:</li> </ul>		
*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How instructional time is used.</li> </ul>	☆	
*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specific instructional approaches.</li> </ul>	☆	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What vocational experiences does this student have in terms of school staff report of:</li> </ul>		
*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vocational courses taken (including content area, concentration in a skill area, etc.).</li> </ul>	☆	
*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vocational support services received (e.g., job readiness training, job placement).</li> </ul>	☆	
*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whether the vocational program for this student involves community-based or school-based work experience.</li> </ul>	☆	
*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amount of time in a typical week spent in vocational education/training.</li> </ul>	☆	
*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extent to which nonspecial education students are involved in class and other vocational settings.</li> </ul>	☆	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What life skills training experiences are included in curriculum for students in terms of:</li> </ul>		
*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kinds of training (e.g., home economics, parenting education, disability-related).</li> </ul>	☆	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extent to which to which life skills training is community based.</li> </ul>	☆	
*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amount of time in a typical week spent in life skills training.</li> </ul>	☆	

NOTE: Items on vocational experiences are available in SEELS only for middle and high school students.



**Table 3-1  
NLTS2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS (Continued)**

		Highest Priority	Desirable, Not Required
	* Is community service included in the student's curriculum and/or as an extracurricular activity supported by the school?	☆	
	• What kind of community service has the student done?	☆	
	• How much is involved?		
	• Was the community service activity chosen by the student or assigned by the school?		✓
	* Are other community-based experiences (other than community service and vocational training) included in the student's curriculum and/or as an extracurricular activity supported by the school?	☆	
<b>SCHOOL PROGRAMS—Student Assessment</b>			
	* How is the student's progress evaluated in terms of school staff reports of:		
*	• Student being included in regular classroom and school-wide testing.	☆	
*	• Students who are in regular classrooms being expected to work up to the performance standards of other students in the classroom.	☆	
*	• Students who are in regular classrooms being expected to learn/demonstrate the same skills as other students in the classroom.	☆	
*	• Grading standards/policies applied to this student.	☆	
	* Did student take the PSATs and SATs (parent or youth report)?	☆	
<b>SCHOOL PROGRAMS—IEPs</b>			
	* School staff report of what is the student's IEP like in terms of:		
*	• Who was involved in its development, including the role of the student, regular educators, etc.	☆	
*	• Whether there are goals in specified domains (e.g., social, reading).	☆	
<b>SCHOOL PROGRAMS—Transitions</b>			
*	* What preparation or support for the transition from middle to high schools do students receiving special education receive, as reported by school staff (for younger students in the sample)?	☆	
*	* What preparation or support for the transition from middle to high schools do students receiving special education receive, as reported by parent?	☆	

**Table 3-1  
NLTS2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS (Continued)**

		Highest Priority	Desirable, Not Required
	* What is the student's postsecondary transition planning like in terms of school staff reports of:		
*	• Who is involved in planning (from within and outside the school, including the role of the student).	☆	
*	• Age at which planning began.	☆	
*	• Post-high school goals of student's educational program.	☆	
	• Service needs identified for after high school.	☆	
<b>ACCESS TO SERVICES</b>			
	* About how much effort does youth/do family members spend trying to get and managing services for youth?	☆	
	* From what sources do youth/family members get information about services that might be appropriate for youth?	☆	
	* What barriers to services are youth/family members experiencing?	☆	
	* What would help get past the barriers?	☆	
	* Are students on a waiting list for services?	☆	
<b>BENEFIT PROGRAM PARTICIPATION</b>			
*	* In what type of income benefit programs do youth participate? SSI, SSDI, TANF, other?	☆	
*	* What types of health insurance does youth have? Medicaid, private, other?	☆	
	* What does the health insurance cover? Medical, dental, vision?	☆	
*	* Is health insurance managed care?		✓
*	* Has the youth ever lost health insurance because of his/her disability?	☆	
*	* Have there been things the youth's health insurance wouldn't cover? What were they?		✓
*	* Who provides or pays for health insurance? Employer, parent/youth, public?	☆	
<b>RELATED SERVICES</b>			
*	* What do school staff report regarding types of related services students receive as part of their special education programs (e.g., speech therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy)? What are:		
	• Duration of services.	☆	
*	• Intensity of services.	☆	
*	• Source of services.	☆	

**Table 3-1  
NLTS2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS (Continued)**

		Highest Priority	Desirable, Not Required
*	* What do parent report regarding types of related services students receive that is <i>not</i> part of their special education programs?		✓
	• Duration of services.		✓
	• Intensity of services.		✓
*	• Source of services	☆	
	* To what extent do students receiving special education access services provided to general student body (e.g., drug abuse prevention, conflict resolution; parent and school staff report)?	☆	
	* Do services include help in learning to use and benefit from assistive technologies?	☆	
*	* Do students have a case manager or someone who coordinates services at school? Outside of school? Who is that?	☆	
<b>FAMILY INVOLVEMENT</b>			
	* What is the level of contact between the teacher and the student's family in terms of:		
*	• Parent report of attending IEP meeting(s).	☆	
*	• Parent report of involvement in development of IEP goals.	☆	
*	• Parent report of visiting the classroom (e.g., back to school night, parent conference, volunteering).	☆	
*	• School staff report of "how active is parent in student's education."	☆	
*	• School report of the number of times of contact with family not related to trouble.	☆	
	* To what extent do parents/guardians of students with disabilities engage in activities at home that support the educational and social development of students in terms of parent report of:		
*	• Checking student homework.		✓
*	• Talking to student about school.	☆	
*	• Providing a quiet place at home to do school work.		✓
*	• Providing computers at home for educational/recreations purposes.	☆	
*	• Having family rules governing youth behaviors (e.g., watching television, curfew).	☆	
	* What are parents' expectations for the student regarding:		
*	• Educational attainment (finish high school, postsecondary education).	☆	
*	• Independent living after high school.	☆	

**Table 3-1  
NLTS2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS (Continued)**

		Highest Priority	Desirable, Not Required
*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment.</li> </ul>	☆	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Has the family been through mediation or a hearing regarding the student’s special education program? If yes, what was the outcome?</li> </ul>	☆	
<b>USE OF ACCOMMODATIONS, ADAPTATIONS, ENRICHMENTS OR COMPENSATIONS</b>			
*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* What accommodations/modifications do staff report that the student receives in instruction and assessment?</li> </ul>	☆	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* What physical modifications are made to classrooms to accommodate students receiving special education?</li> </ul>	☆	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* What medical or other disability-related assistive devices do students use, including:</li> </ul>		
*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent report of student “regularly taking prescription medicine” for disability.</li> </ul>	☆	
*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent report of student taking medication that is administered at school.</li> </ul>	☆	
*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent report of whether student uses a medical device (e.g. oxygen mask), mobility device (e.g., wheelchair), sensory aid (e.g., hearing aid), communication aid (e.g., communication board).</li> </ul>	☆	
*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School report of whether student uses a medical device, mobility device, sensory aid, communication aid in the classroom.</li> </ul>	☆	
*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School staff report of whether student uses a device in the classroom that requires staff attention.</li> </ul>	☆	
*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School report of having an emergency medical plan for the student.</li> </ul>		✓
<b>RESULTS WHILE IN SECONDARY SCHOOL—Academic</b>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* What is the academic functioning/performance of students receiving special education as measured by:</li> </ul>		
*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A direct assessment of their reading and math abilities.</li> </ul>	☆	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A direct assessment of their academic problem-solving abilities.</li> </ul>	☆	
*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student’s grades in middle and high school (school records).</li> </ul>	☆	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scores on most recent standardized tests (school records indicating type and year of test and type of score), including PSATs and SATs.</li> </ul>	☆	
*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School staff report of student’s functional grade level equivalent in reading and mathematics.</li> </ul>		✓
*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent report on progress toward meeting IEP goals.</li> </ul>	☆	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School staff report on progress toward meeting IEP goals.</li> </ul>	☆	

**Table 3-1  
NLTS2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS (Continued)**

		Highest Priority	Desirable, Not Required
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student is on the honor roll.</li> </ul>		✓
*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School completion status (graduate with diploma, certificate, age out, drop out).</li> </ul>	☆	
	* What is the level of engagement in school of students receiving special education as measured by:		
*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School attendance (school records).</li> </ul>	☆	
*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School staff assessment of student's ability to stay focused on his/her work, participate in classroom discussions, and complete homework on time.</li> </ul>	☆	
*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student report of extent to which s/he looks forward to going to school/enjoys school.</li> </ul>	☆	
*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent/youth or school report of student dropping out.</li> </ul>	☆	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student takes advantage of student leadership opportunities.</li> </ul>		✓
*	* What are students' past academic experiences in terms of previous grade promotion and retention?	☆	
<b>RESULTS WHILE IN SECONDARY SCHOOL—Functional Skills</b>			
*	* What are the functional skills of students as measured by parent's report of student's ability to tell time, read common signs, count change, look up telephone numbers and use the telephone?	☆	
	* How well do students receiving special education communicate, as indicated by:		
*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent report of student's ability to make needs/feelings known through speech and other means.</li> </ul>	☆	
*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School staff report of student's ability to make needs/feelings known through speech and other means.</li> </ul>	☆	
	* To what extent do students receiving special education use computer technology, as indicated by:		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School staff report of student's ability to use computers as part of the instructional program (e.g., keyboarding ability, find materials on the Internet); actual computer use at school.</li> </ul>	☆	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent report of student's ability to use computers (e.g., to do school assignments, to play games, use e-mail); actual computer use at home.</li> </ul>	☆	
<b>RESULTS WHILE IN SCHOOL—Personal, Social, and Community Adjustment</b>			
	* To what extent are students receiving special education positively socially engaged, as indicated by:		
*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent's report of frequency of seeing friends, being invited over to others' home, receiving phone calls from peers.</li> </ul>	☆	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student's report of frequency of seeing friends, being invited over to others' home, receiving phone calls from peers.</li> </ul>	☆	

**Table 3-1  
NLTS2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS (Continued)**

		Highest Priority	Desirable, Not Required
*	• Student's report of loneliness.	☆	
	• School staff report of whether student has friends at school.	☆	
	• Student's report of "dating or going out."		✓
	• Whether friends, boy/girlfriend have disabilities.		✓
	• Parent reports of whether friends are a positive influence on students.		✓
	* To what extent do students receiving special education participate in organized group activities:		
*	• At school, as reported by parents/youth.	☆	
	• At school, as reported by school staff.	☆	
*	• In the community, as reported by parents/youth.	☆	
	• In ways that include the student with nondisabled peers, as reported by parents/youth.	☆	
	• In ways that include the student and/or parents with other youth with disabilities (e.g., Special Olympics) and families (e.g., family support groups), as reported by parents.	☆	
	* To what extent do students receiving special education get along with others, as indicated by:		
*	• School report of student's ability to control behavior in the classroom, get along with other students.	☆	
*	• Parent report of.	☆	
	• Youth report of whether he/she has a behavior problem at school involving students or teachers (e.g., fights).	☆	
	• Parent report of whether student's behavior creates problems at home.	☆	
*	• Whether youth is bullied/picked on at school.		✓
	• Whether youth picks on/bullies others at school.		✓
	* To what extent are students receiving special education personally well-adjusted, as indicated by:		
*	• Youth reporting feeling happy, cared about, confident, motivated, fortunate, bored, worried, angry, depressed <sup>14</sup>	☆	
	• Youth report of student having a positive self-concept/outlook as indicated in direct assessment.		✓
	• Youth report of student having hobbies/interests.		✓

<sup>14</sup> Items come from the Shell Poll (Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc., 1999, Shell Education Survey, *Teens Talk to America*), providing national comparison figures for the general population of youth.

**Table 3-1  
NLTS2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS (Continued)**

		Highest Priority	Desirable, Not Required
<b>RESULTS WHILE IN SCHOOL—Contribution and Citizenship</b>			
	* To what extent do students receiving special education abide by rules, as indicated by:		
*	• School records of suspensions, expulsions, other disciplinary actions.	☆	
	• Parent report of whether student has been involved with the criminal justice system (detained by police, arrested, incarcerated, sentenced to probation or parole).	☆	
	• Parent report of student being fired from a job.	☆	
	• Student report of being fired from a job.	☆	
	• Parent report of how manageable student is at home.	☆	
*	• School staff report of extent to which student follows directions in class.	☆	
*	* To what extent do parents report that students receiving special education are involved in volunteer/community service activities?		✓
<b>RESULTS WHILE IN SCHOOL—Responsibility and Independence</b>			
	* How independent are students receiving special education in terms of:		
*	• Self-care, as indicated by parent report of student’s ability to dress and feed oneself and handle toileting.	☆	
*	• Mobility, as indicated by parent report of student’s ability to get around inside and outside the house (e.g., individual mobility, use of public transportation, arranging rides with friends, having a driver’s license or learner’s permit for those 15 and older).	☆	
*	• Contributing to household management, as indicated by parent report of student doing chores (e.g., picking up own living area, making own lunch).	☆	
	* How do students receiving special education spend their leisure time, as reported by parents?	☆	
	* How do students receiving special education spend their leisure time, as reported by youth?	☆	
*	* Are students with disabilities supervised after school? What are their after school care experiences and needs (parent report)?		✓
	* To what extent are students receiving special education beginning to take on adult roles in terms of:		
*	• Employment, as indicated by parent report of working for pay outside the home (work study or competitive, type of work, hours worked, amount paid).	☆	
*	• Financial management, as indicated by parent report of student’s having own money (e.g., allowance), making small purchases.	☆	
*	• Having/fathering children, as reported by parents or youth.	☆	

**Table 3-1  
NLTS2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS (Continued)**

		Highest Priority	Desirable, Not Required
<b>RESULTS WHILE IN SCHOOL—Self-determination</b>			
	* To what extent do students demonstrate aspects of self-determination, as indicated by:		
	• Taking active/leadership role in IEP and/or transition planning meetings.	☆	
	• Youth expresses the belief that he/she has the power to make positive changes in his/her life.	☆	
	• Youth gives evidence of past and future planning.	☆	
<b>RESULTS WHILE IN SCHOOL—Physical health</b>			
	* How healthy are students receiving special education in terms of:		
*	• Parent’s report of student’s general health.		✓
	• Parent’s/youth’s report of student engaging in regular exercise.		✓
*	* To what extent do students receiving special education participate in risk behaviors, including smoking, gang activity, and substance use, as reported by students.	☆	
<b>RESULTS WHILE IN SCHOOL—Satisfaction</b>			
	* How satisfied do parents of students receiving special education report being with:		
*	• The student’s school.		✓
*	• The student’s overall school program.	☆	
*	• The student’s teachers.	☆	
*	• Level of involvement in the IEP and transition planning processes.	☆	
*	• IEP goals for the student being challenging, appropriate.	☆	
	• The student getting the support and services from the school that are needed to succeed in school.	☆	
*	• Transition activities (middle to high school for younger students, high school to postsecondary).	☆	
	• Youth’s after school activity/care arrangement.	☆	
	* How satisfied do students receiving special education report being with:		
	• The student’s school.	☆	
	• The student’s overall school program.	☆	
	• The student’s teachers.	☆	
	• Level of involvement in the IEP and transition planning processes.	☆	



**Table 3-1  
NLTS2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS (Continued)**

		Highest Priority	Desirable, Not Required
	• The student getting the support and services from the school that are needed to succeed in school.	☆	
	• Youth's after school activity/care arrangement.	☆	
	• Transition activities (middle to high school for younger students, high school to postsecondary).	☆	
<b>ADULT SERVICES AND SUPPORTS—Access</b>			
	* How much effort do youth/family members spend trying to get and managing services for youth?	☆	
	* From what sources do youth/family members get information about services that might be appropriate for youth?	☆	
	* What barriers to services are youth/family members experiencing?	☆	
	* What would help get past the barriers?	☆	
	* Are youth on a wait list for services?	☆	
<b>ADULT SERVICES AND SUPPORTS—Benefit Program Participation</b>			
	* In what type of income benefit programs do youth participate? SSI, SSDI, TANF, other?	☆	
	* Have youth lost benefits (TANF, SSI) because of welfare reform?	☆	
	* What types of health insurance do youth have? Medicaid, private, other?	☆	
	* What does the health insurance cover? Medical, dental, vision?	☆	
	* Is health insurance managed care?	☆	
	* Have youth ever lost health insurance because of their disability?	☆	
	* Have there been things the youth's health insurance wouldn't cover? What were they?	☆	
	* Who provides or pays for health insurance? Employer, parent/youth, public?	☆	
<b>ADULT SERVICES AND SUPPORTS—Employment-Related Services and Supports</b>			
	* Have youth identified themselves as disabled to access employment services, accommodations, or modifications?	☆	
	* What services and supports are youth perceived to need to facilitate employment?	☆	
	* What services have been sought?	☆	
	* What types of assistance do youth receive to facilitate employment?		
	• Ability/interest testing, career counseling.	☆	
	• Basic skill training , specific job skill training, retraining.	☆	
	• Job placement, job search skills, resume preparation, interview skills.	☆	
	• Supported employment; sheltered employment.	☆	

**Table 3-1  
NLTS2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS (Continued)**

	Highest Priority	Desirable, Not Required
• Job shadowing, job coaching.	☆	
• Apprenticeships, internships.	☆	
* What is the duration and intensity of services?	☆	
* Who provides the assistance to facilitate employment? Parent, youth, agency (specify), VR, employer?	☆	
* Who pays for the assistance to facilitate employment? Parent, youth, agency (specify), VR, employer?	☆	
* How important are the services perceived to be to the youth's well-being?	☆	
* How adequate are these services perceived to be?	☆	
* What accommodation, modifications, and supports are youth perceived to need to facilitate employment?	☆	
* Which have been requested?	☆	
* What accommodation, modifications, and supports do youth receive to facilitate employment?	☆	
* How adequate are the accommodation, modifications, and supports perceived to be?		✓
* Who do youth go to with problems at work?	☆	
* Do youth use Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)?		✓
<b>ADULT SERVICES AND SUPPORTS—Postsecondary Education Services and Supports</b>		
* Has youth identified him/herself as disabled to access accommodation, modifications, services, or supports to facilitate postsecondary education?	☆	
* What accommodations, modifications, services, or supports are youth perceived to need to facilitate postsecondary education?	☆	
* What has been sought?	☆	
* What types of assistance do youth receive to facilitate postsecondary education (e.g., tutoring, more time for taking tests, etc.)?	☆	
* What is the duration and intensity of assistance youth receive to facilitate postsecondary education?	☆	
* Who provides the accommodation, modifications, services, or supports? Parent, youth, agency (specify), VR, postsecondary education institution?	☆	
* Who pays for them? Parent, youth, agency (specify), VR, postsecondary education institution?	☆	
* How important are the services perceived to be to the youth's well-being?	☆	
* How adequate are the accommodation, modifications, services, and supports perceived to be?	☆	

**Table 3-1  
NLTS2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS (Continued)**

	Highest Priority	Desirable, Not Required
<b>ADULT SERVICES AND SUPPORTS—Residential Services and Supports</b>		
* What services or supports are perceived to be needed to facilitate the youth’s living arrangement?	☆	
* What services have been sought?	☆	
* Does the youth use the services of an Independent Living Center?		✓
• Which services?		✓
* Does the youth receive services in a residential setting outside the family home? In supported living program, group home, board and care home, correctional facility, other institutional setting?	☆	
• Which services?	☆	
• At what duration and intensity?		✓
* Does the youth use the services of a one-to-one personal care assistant?	☆	
* Who provides the services? Parent, youth, agency (specify), VR, other.	☆	
* Who pays for the services? Parent, youth, agency (specify), VR, other	☆	
* How important are the services perceived to be to the youth’s well-being?	☆	
* How adequate are the services perceived to be?	☆	
<b>ADULT SERVICES AND SUPPORTS—Other Services and Supports</b>		
* Is there a caring adult who provides support that “makes a difference” to youth? Who is that?	☆	
* What other services or supports are perceived to be needed to facilitate the youth’s participation in young adult life?	☆	
* What services have been sought?	☆	
* What other services do youth receive?		
• Mental health services, personal/group counseling, therapy, behavioral intervention, substance abuse treatment, psychiatric care provided to youth.	☆	
• Speech or communication services.	☆	
• Health care and health services.	☆	
• Social work services.	☆	
• Family supports services provided to youth’s family (e.g., respite care).	☆	

**Table 3-1  
NLTS2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS (Continued)**

	Highest Priority	Desirable, Not Required
• One-to-one paraeducator for living skills.	☆	
• Physical therapy.	☆	
• Reader or interpreter.	☆	
• Occupational therapy.	☆	
• Transportation/travel training/mobility training.	☆	
* Does youth receive probation or parole services? Which services?	☆	
* At what duration and intensity does the youth receive the services?	☆	
* Who provides the services? Parent, youth, agency (specify), VR?	☆	
* Who pays for the services? Parent, youth, agency (specify), VR?		✓
* How important are the services perceived to be to the youth's well-being?	☆	
* How adequate are the services perceived to be?	☆	
* What medical supports or other disability-related assistive devices do youth use (medical equipment, communication devices, optical devices or supports, mobility devices, etc.)?	☆	
* What community facilities and supports do youth use (e.g., library)?	☆	
<b>ADULT SERVICES AND SUPPORTS—Service Coordination</b>		
* Is case management or service coordination perceived to be needed to facilitate the youth's participation in young adult life?	☆	
* Has it been sought?	☆	
* Does the youth have a case manager or someone who provides consistency and coordination of services?	☆	
• Who is that?		✓
• Who provides the case management services (if other than a family member/friend)?	☆	
• Who pays for the case management services (if other than a family member/friend)?	☆	
* How important is the service perceived to be to the youth's well-being?	☆	
* How adequate is the service perceived to be?	☆	

**Table 3-1  
NLTS2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS (Continued)**

		Highest Priority	Desirable, Not Required
<b>RESULTS AFTER SECONDARY SCHOOL—Postsecondary Education</b>			
	* To what extent do secondary school students receiving special education go on to postsecondary education when they leave high school?	☆	
	• What kinds of educational institutions do they attend (e.g., community college, vocational schools 4-year institutions)?	☆	
	• What is the nature of their training (e.g., field of study in college, self-development courses, vocational skills training)?	☆	
	• How intensively do they pursue postsecondary education, in terms of hours enrolled, credits attained, etc.?		✓
	• What is their pattern of enrollment in terms of age beginning, consistency of enrollment, years of attendance, etc.?	☆	
	* What is the academic achievement in postsecondary education of youth who pursue it when they leave high school in terms of degrees, licenses, or certificates to youth attain.	☆	
	* To what extent do dropouts from secondary school pursue and earn a GED after they leave high school?	☆	
<b>RESULTS AFTER SECONDARY SCHOOL—Employment</b>			
	* What are the employment experiences of youth after they leave high school in terms of:		
	• The types of jobs they find (i.e., competitive, supported, sheltered, self-employed, apprenticeship).	☆	
	• The kinds of work they do (e.g., retail sales, food service, Web page design).	☆	
	• The number of hours they work.	☆	
	• Wages and benefits they receive.	☆	
	• Stability of jobs (i.e., duration of jobs, number of jobs held).	☆	
	• Reasons for job change (e.g., laid off, temporary job that ended, chance for a better job).	☆	
	* To what extent do youth expect to improve their employment over time in terms of promotion to increased responsibility, improved wages? (Changes in wages and benefits also tracked through question above.)		✓
	* What are youth's job search experiences, in terms of:		
	• How employed youth found their current job (e.g., with support of family/friends, employment services, etc.).	☆	
	• How unemployed job seekers look for a job (e.g., with support of family/friends, employment services, etc.).	☆	
	* How well are youth progressing toward their employment goals/aspirations (aspirations are included under individual characteristics)?		✓

**Table 3-1  
NLTS2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS (Continued)**

		Highest Priority	Desirable, Not Required
<b>RESULTS AFTER SECONDARY SCHOOL—Personal, Social and Community Adjustment</b>			
	* To what extent are youth positively socially engaged, as indicated by:		
	• Frequency of seeing friends, receiving phone calls from peers, computer interaction with others.	☆	
	• Youth’s report of loneliness.	☆	
	• Youth report of “dating or going out.”		✓
	• Whether friends, boy/girlfriend have disabilities.		✓
	• What youth mostly does at lunch time (eat alone, eat in a room with other people but not interacting with anyone in particular, eat with others s/he interacts with during lunch, doesn’t eat lunch).		✓
	* To what extent do youth get along with others, as indicated by whether youth has a behavior problem that reportedly causes conflicts at work, school, or in the community?	☆	
	* To what extent do youth participate in organized group activities?	☆	
	• What kinds of groups?	☆	
	• In ways that include the student with nondisabled peers?	☆	
	• In ways that include the youth and/or parents with other youth with disabilities (e.g., Special Olympics) and families (e.g., family support groups), as reported by parents.	☆	
	* To what extent are youth personally well-adjusted, as indicated by:		
	• The extent to which youth report they feel happy, cared about, confident, motivated, fortunate, bored, worried, angry, or depressed.*	☆	
	• Having hobbies/interests.	☆	
	* To what extent are youth engaging in adult relationships, as indicated by:		
	• Marital status.	☆	
	• Having/fathering/parenting children.	☆	

\*Items come from the Shell Poll (Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc., 1999, Shell Education Survey, *Teens Talk to America*), providing national comparison figures for the general population of youth.

**Table 3-1  
NLTS2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS (Continued)**

		Highest Priority	Desirable, Not Required
<b>RESULTS AFTER SECONDARY SCHOOL—Responsibility and Independence</b>			
* How independent are youth in terms of:		☆	
• Self-care, as indicated by youth’s ability to dress and feed him/herself and handle toileting.		☆	
• Mobility, as indicated by youth’s ability to get around inside and outside the house (e.g., individual mobility, use of public transportation, arranging rides with friends, having a driver’s license).		☆	
• Youth’s living arrangement (e.g., in parent’s home, alone, with spouse or roommate, etc.).		☆	
• Contributing to household management in parent’s home, as indicated by youth doing chores (e.g., picking up own living area, making own lunch).		☆	
• Financial management, as indicated by youth having savings or checking account, credit card.		☆	
* How do youth spend their time (e.g., working, raising children, looking for work), including their leisure time (e.g., listening to music, playing sports, engaged in hobbies, watching TV, hanging out)?		☆	
<b>RESULTS AFTER SECONDARY SCHOOL—Self-determination</b>			
* To what extent do youth demonstrate aspects of self-determination, as indicated by::		☆	
• Youth exercising choice over where s/he lives, who s/he lives with, hiring of providers/attendants, services accessed.		☆	
• Belonging to disability advocacy or self-advocacy groups (e.g., People First).		☆	
<b>RESULTS AFTER SECONDARY SCHOOL—Functional Skills</b>			
* To what extent do youth use computer technology at home, work, and school?		☆	
* How well do youth tell time, read common signs, count change, look up telephone numbers and use the telephone use computer technology at home, work, or school?		☆	

**Table 3-1  
NLTS2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS (Concluded)**

	Highest Priority	Desirable, Not Required
* How well do youth communicate, as indicated by parent reports of youths' ability to make needs/feelings known through speech and other means.	☆	
<b>RESULTS AFTER SECONDARY SCHOOL—Physical health</b>		
* How healthy are youth in terms of:		
• General health.	☆	
• Emergency room visits in past year.		✓
• Overnight hospitalizations in past year.		✓
• Engaging in regular exercise.	☆	
* To what extent do youth participate in risk behaviors, including smoking, gang activity, and substance use, as reported by youth?	☆	
<b>RESULTS AFTER SECONDARY SCHOOL—Satisfaction</b>		
* How satisfied do parents of youth report being with:		
• Any adult services or supports provided the youth (e.g., through postsecondary school, VR, etc.).	☆	
• Youth's living arrangement, for those living with parent.	☆	
* How satisfied do youth report being with:		
• Their postsecondary education (e.g., good preparation for the future, services and supports received to succeed in school).	☆	
• Adult services or supports provided the youth.	☆	
• Employment (e.g., how well paid, how treated at work, chances for advancement, how well generally likes the job).	☆	
• Their living arrangement (e.g., where they live, the stability of the arrangement, those they live with).	☆	
• The quality and number of their friendships.	☆	



## **Obtaining Consent**

A concerted effort should be made to obtain consent for youth to be included in NLTS2. Parental consent should be sought when youth are less than 18 years old; additional consent from youth should be considered when they reach 18. To obtain parental consent, for example, at the completion of the parent interview the interviewer can describe the upcoming school surveys and direct assessment, and encourage the parent to authorize release of school information and permit his or her student to participate in the assessment. A brief form can then be mailed to the parent to return to the study contractor in a postage-paid envelope indicating agreement or refusal to have the student in the study. Similar procedures can be followed for consent from students who have reached the age of 18. Either active consent (a positive indication of consent) or passive consent (not indicating a refusal to participate) can be sought, or both. Students for whom no consent form is returned should be retained in the study.

The study contractor will need a letter from the U.S. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Office asserting that for purposes of NLTS2, the study contractor is an agent of the U.S. Department of Education; therefore, schools and school districts are permitted under FERPA to share information about students and from students' school records with the study contractor. This authorization will be sufficient in the majority of schools and LEAs to obtain information from teachers and school records about students.

## **Identifying Schools for School-Level Data Collection**

Parents will be asked during the year 1 and year 3 parent interviews whether their student is in school and, if so, the name and location of the school s/he attends currently and is expected to attend in the fall (2001-2002 for year 2 and 2003-2004 for year 4 school data collection). Schools will be contacted at the beginning of years 2 and 4 to confirm the student's attendance. If a student has moved, schools will be asked the reason the child left the school (e.g., transferred, dropped out) and the name and location of the subsequent school or district if the student transferred to another school. Newly identified schools will receive a letter describing the study, along with the student tracking questions asked of the initial school. As with all data collection efforts, appropriate follow-up procedures should be used to produce high response rates, including telephone follow-up with nonrespondents.

Having identified the schools attended by sample students, the study contractor will distribute the teacher questionnaire, the school program questionnaire, and the school background questionnaire to the principals at the appropriate schools, with a request that they pass along the teacher and school program questionnaires to the appropriate staff members for each student and complete the school background questionnaire themselves. The study contractor also will contact district-level personnel in the LEAs of schools attended by sample students to arrange to contract for persons to administer the direct student assessment to sample students. The contractor will recruit, hire, and train assessors in local communities. Assessors will make arrangements with youth, families, and schools to conduct assessments at the convenience of all parties.