

# LISA KESSLER

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## EDUCATION ANALYST

### Drive Participation, Simplify Recruitment, and Deliver Equity-Driven Insights That Matter

Analytical and mission-driven education consultant with progressive experience leading large-scale research projects, cultivating cross-sector partnerships, and delivering strategic insights that influence policies and programs. Adept in recruitment strategy, data collection, training, and stakeholder communications, with strong foundation in leadership and coaching. Proven success driving engagement in complex, multi-year federal studies, often in underrepresented or reluctant participants. Trusted partner to national agencies, state departments, and school systems, known for collaborative problem-solving, client-focused delivery, and dedication to equity.

Drive Participation, Simplify Recruitment, and Deliver Equity-Driven Insights that Matter

## CORE COMPETENCIES

- Strategic Planning & Implementation
- Cross-Functional Leadership
- Retention Strategy
- Education Policy & Research
- Stakeholder Relations
- Project & Program Management
- Remote Team Coordination
- Qualitative & Quantitative Research Experience
- Data Analysis

## WORK EXPERIENCE

**RTI INTERNATIONAL**, Orlando, FL

2016 to 2025

### Research Education Analyst

Lead end-to-end research activities, including coordinating cross-functional teams to launch data collection websites, developing client-facing reports, managing recruitment and information collection, and overseeing project close-out tasks such as publications and dissemination for large- and small-scale studies.

- Designed and led complex school and district recruitment campaigns for national studies funded by NCES and CDC, effectively balancing data requirements, equity targets, and field logistics, increasing participation +20% from previous year for struggling CDC project.
- Developed training manuals, outreach materials, and remote learning programs, preparing field teams for data collection across diverse education settings, while leading 18 remote staff across country.
- Championed strategies, including development of protocol for American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) participants adopted across 3 studies – resulting in first-time inclusion of AIAN populations in final data – improving involvement among schools historically hesitant to engage in research due to burdens from state assessments and staffing shortages.
- Led OMB clearance submissions, including budget, public-facing materials, and study protocols, ensuring compliance with federal regulations and timely approval for large-scale data collection efforts.
- Served as project lead for recruitment task on multiple national studies, including timeline management, staffing, budget planning, and issue escalation, reducing recruitment costs by transitioning training from in-person to online, implementing fully digital materials protocol, and increasing participation rates across research efforts.
- Partnered with data collection supervisors and programming staff to align field realities with project goals, supporting optimal execution of national recruitment and survey tasks.
- Added 73 schools to longitudinal panel during period of national recruitment fatigue, strengthening sample representativeness despite challenging study conditions.

- Co-authored peer-reviewed paper, delivering insights on how COVID-19 affected school research participation that was published in RTI Press.

**WESTAT**, Loudoun, VA

2016 to 2017

**Assessment Coordinator**, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

Served as primary liaison and logistics lead for standardized assessment administration across multiple middle schools to maintain compliance with protocols, streamline processes, drive continuous improvement, and minimize disruptions during fieldwork.

- Recruited, trained, and supervised team of 5 assessment administrators, delivering instructional guidance and performance feedback, maintaining quality standards, upholding testing integrity, and promoting consistent execution across school sites. Thoughts on this add? Yes this is fine.
- Achieved 100% completion rate, conducting scheduled assessments across assigned schools.

**LOUDOUN COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**, Loudoun, VA

2014 to 2017

**Substitute Teacher**

Managed classroom environments and communicated with school staff, administrators, and students. Demonstrated flexibility to varied school settings and supported inclusive classrooms with accommodations for those with IEPs or behavioral challenges.

- Delivered engaging, standards-aligned instruction across multiple grade levels and subject areas in elementary and middle schools during teacher absences, ensuring smooth transitions and strong learning outcomes.
- Maintained full instructional continuity, following detailed lesson plans and adapting on-the-spot to incomplete or missing plans with original content creation.

## PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

**ART INSTITUTES**, Atlanta, GA

**High School Representative**

**ORANGE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**, Orlando, FL

**Teacher**

## EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

**Master of Arts (MA)**, Educational Leadership, Argosy University, Atlanta, GA

**Bachelor of Science (BSc)**, Early Childhood Education, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL

**Florida Teaching Certificate**

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- **Languages:** English
- **Technical Proficiencies:** Google Workspace, Microsoft Office Suite, JIRA, Zoom, Alchemer, LMS platforms, Red Cap, Confluence, Salesforce
- **Interests:** Pitbull rescue advocate, advancement of women in STEM, and culinary exploration

## **ADDENDUM**

### **HIGHLIGHTED PRESENTATIONS**

- Spagnardi, C., Kessler, L., Lako, S., Christoper, E., (2023). The High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 2022 (HS&B:22): Pivoting Recruitment and Data Collection Strategies Through the Pandemic. Presented at the STATS- DC Data Conference in Washington, DC.
- Kessler, L., Harewood, C., (2024). American Indian and Alaska Native (AI / AN) Student Representation in Education Research: Strategies for Enhancing Participation and Inclusivity. Presented at SAPOR.

### **PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES**

- Carter, S., Griffin, J., Lako, S., Harewood, C., Kessler, L., Parish, E. (2024). The Impacts of COVID-19 on Schools' Willingness to Participate in Research. The Impacts of COVID-19 on Schools' Willingness to Participate in Research; Published in RTI Press

### **SELECTED PROJECTS**

Recruitment Task Leader, High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 2022 (HS&B:22), 2018 to 2025.

Nationally representative longitudinal study sponsored by National Center of Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of education, tracking educational and life outcomes of 9th-grade cohort through secondary school experience. Data from 9<sup>th</sup> grade data collection has been presented to Congress to help guide high school funding needs for the next 10 years.

- Oversaw recruitment strategy across regions to engage students, parents, teachers, counselors, and administrators, exceeding participation rates while keeping recruitment costs under budget through strategic hiring and digital outreach efforts.
- Hired and directed remote recruitment team, achieving 100% staffing coverage across all regions and increasing overall participation rates 20%.
- Coordinated with internal data teams and field operations, meeting all project deadlines while sustaining participation rates above target levels across multiple study cycles.
- Provided updates and insights to client, adjusting outreach efforts based on regional responsiveness and participation trends, resulting in all regions being successfully included in final data set.

Recruitment Task Leader, National Youth Tobacco Survey (NYTS), 2023 to 2024

CDC-sponsored public health surveillance survey focused on youth tobacco use, perceptions, and exposure to pro- / anti-tobacco messaging. Data was used to bring a lawsuit against JUUL manufacturer that marketed tobacco products to youth.

- Led recruitment of school districts and public health departments for participation in the nationwide survey, achieving full state representation.
- Managed contract staff across states, developed recruitment scripts, and implemented incentive logistics for classroom participation, attaining 85% classroom participation rate.
- Navigated refusals, negotiated access with district officials, and maintained adherence to project timelines and confidentiality standards.

Recruitment Task Manager, Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and International Computer Information and Literacy Study (ICILS), 2020 to 2023

International comparative assessments designed to benchmark US student achievement and computer literacy against global standards.

- Assisted in developing recruitment strategies targeting 4<sup>th</sup>- and 8th-grade schools for participation in both TIMSS and ICILS, contributing to improved response rates through in-person recruitment plan for lower-participating areas.
- Engaged state education agencies and NAEP coordinators in outreach activities and led series of webinars for state education staff, fostering buy-in and expanding access to key districts in opt-out states.
- Provided input on recruitment budgets and ensured appropriate staffing levels, supporting cost efficiency and recruitment

delays during peak collection periods.

- Helped build ~~an~~ online platform used to collect participation commitments and data logistics from education stakeholders, incorporating feedback and collaborating with programming and statistical teams, ~~to~~ optimizing usability.

Recruiter, Middle Grades Longitudinal Study (MGLS:2017), 2015 to 2020

A Multi-wave, nationally representative longitudinal study focused on middle-grade student development and educational pathways.

- Recruited ~~a~~ broad cross-section of schools during challenging periods of over testing and educator burnout, establishing nationally representative sample
- Facilitated in-person recruitment visits, securing participation, often from schools that had previously declined.
- Supported coordination between data collectors and recruiters, standardizing messaging and procedures between teams, leading to smoother field execution.

Education Analyst / Recruiter, Battelle Developmental Inventory Standardization (BDI-3), 2019

A National effort to standardize developmental assessments used in early childhood education.

- Hired and onboarded ~~a~~ team of psychologists and educators as independent contractors to conduct child assessments, building ~~a~~ reliable, credentialed field team that successfully completed all assessments prior to end of data collection.
- Combined traditional recruitment strategies with targeted social media outreach, expanding pool and accelerating family enrollment, meeting study targets ahead of schedule.
- Presented social media outreach strategy internally as model for other projects to adopt and learn from.

Recruiter, Bayley-4 Standardization, 2018

Standardization study of ~~a~~ diagnostic tool measuring early childhood developmental milestones.

- Recruited families across diverse communities and established data collection locations in accessible venues such as daycares and clinics, increasing participation among underrepresented populations and reducing no-show rates.
- Supported examiners with participant sourcing, paperwork, and site scheduling, ensuring timely assessments and smooth data collection processes.