## 1.5 Understanding of Security Risks

*[Aside from providing the boilerplate text regarding the laws that govern IES and Federal Privacy laws, there are additional aspects of individual studies that need to be included:*

* *Handling of PII (Also covered under data collection)*
* *Are data sensitive (drug, sex questions)? Although all data require confidentialization, sensitive data may require a more conservative approach*
* *Other special handling aspects of risk are covered under data collection, sampling, and data dissemination]*

### General Administrative Procedures for Disclosure Avoidance

Concerns about the disclosure of information related to individual respondents have increased dramatically over the past decade, particularly with easily accessible software and computers available to individuals that could facilitate respondent identification. New laws have been enacted since the Privacy Act of 1974 to further assure the protection of confidential data. The Education Science Reform Act of 2002 explicitly requires NCES to protect the confidentiality of all data collected from respondents in NCES-sponsored surveys. More specifically, the NCES standard 4-2, entitled “Maintaining Confidentiality,” provides the guidelines for limiting the risk of data disclosure for data released by NCES.

The question of whether the release of statistical data for public use may lead to the disclosure of the identity of individual units is a concern of long standing. Various authors have attempted to provide a precise technical definition of the concept of disclosure. Dalenius (1988) offers the following view: *If release of certain statistical information makes it possible to determine a particular value relating to a known individual more accurately than is possible without access to that data, then a disclosure has taken place. Because almost any data release provides some information about the individuals whose data are included, total avoidance of disclosure is impossible*.

All respondents participating in the [IES Study] do so with the assurance that their identities will not be disclosed. All employees handling the data have signed affidavits of data confidentiality. In accordance with best practices, names of respondents are removed from all materials at the appropriate time and are replaced by random identifiers. All materials containing PII are handled to safeguard the information.

The NCES disclosure statement has been placed in all of the questionnaires:

“U.S. participation in this study is sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), U.S. Department of Education. Your responses are protected by federal statute (P.L. 107-279, Title I, Part E, Sec.183). Your answers may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required by law. By law, everyone working on this NCES survey is subject to a jail term of up to 5 years, a fine of up to $250,000, or both if he or she willfully discloses ANY identifiable information about you.”