

Appendix A

District Recruitment Materials

Fast Response Survey System (FRSS) 110: Use of
Educational Technology for Instruction in Public Schools
– Preliminary Activities

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National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)
U.S. Department of Education



U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences National Center for Education Statistics

**JUSTIFICATION FOR THE FAST RESPONSE SURVEY SYSTEM (FRSS)
SURVEY ON USE OF EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY FOR INSTRUCTION
IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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Justification for the Fast Response Survey System (FRSS) Survey on Use of Educational Technology for Instruction in Public Schools

Title of Study

Use of Educational Technology for Instruction in Public Schools

Researcher Contact Information

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in the U.S. Department of Education is conducting this FRSS survey to provide information about the use of educational technology for instruction in public schools. The NCES Project Officer is Christopher Chapman. Westat, a social science firm located in Rockville, Maryland, is administering the study under contract to NCES.

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Data Collection Schedule

Data collection is scheduled to start in January 2020 and continue through June 2020. A *First Look* report on the results is scheduled to be released in summer 2021.

Justification

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), within the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) of the U.S. Department of Education (ED) is using the Fast Response Survey System (FRSS) to conduct a survey on use of educational technology for instruction in public schools. The Office of Educational Technology (OET), at ED, requested that NCES conduct this FRSS survey.

The expanding use of technology affects the lives of students both inside and outside the classroom. For this reason, the role of technology in education is an increasingly important area of research. While access to technology can provide valuable learning opportunities to students, technology by itself does not guarantee successful outcomes. Schools and teachers play an important role in successfully integrating technology into teaching and learning. The purpose of this FRSS survey is to collect nationally representative data from public schools about their use of educational technology for instruction.

NCES is authorized to conduct the FRSS survey by the Education Science Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C. §9543). NCES has contracted Westat to collect data for all stages of this survey.

Only national-level aggregate statistics will be published from this study, and no school or district names will be included in study reports or statistics.

Significance of the Study and Benefits of Participation

This study is being conducted in response to a request from the Office of Educational Technology (OET). OET developed the National Education Technology Plan (NETP), which sets a national vision and plan for learning enabled by technology. The NETP focuses on using technology to transform learning experiences with the goal of providing greater equity and accessibility. The purpose of the FRSS survey is to collect information from public schools about their use of educational technology for instruction.

All districts and schools ultimately benefit when good data help legislators and administrators make good decisions. The ability of NCES to provide this important information is contingent upon the voluntary participation of sampled schools; participation of these schools is dependent upon their districts' approval. Because your district and your schools represent themselves and many others like them, your participation is crucial for producing high quality information. By participating in this survey, you will ensure that information about your district's schools is included in those decisions. The data your schools provide will better inform and help to shape future education policies.

Your district will be notified when NCES releases the report, which will be available to the public on the NCES website. The NCES publications page is <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch>.

Research Questions and Questionnaire

The purpose of the FRSS survey is to collect information from public schools about their use of educational technology for instruction, with a focus on equity and access. The questionnaire collects information about the following research questions.

- What is the availability and quality of computers available for student instructional use?
- Are there district- or school-provided computers assigned to individual students (1:1 programs), and are students allowed to take these computers home?
- Does the district or school provide mobile hotspots for students to take home for Internet access?
- Does the school have broadband Internet access in the instructional areas of the school?
- How reliable is the Internet connection in the instructional areas of the school?
- What supports do teachers have for integrating technology into instruction?
- What kind of technical support for educational technology (e.g., troubleshooting/maintenance for hardware, software, or networks) is available at the school?
- What is the access to and quality of professional development in using educational technology available to teachers at the school?
- What types of online resources does the district or school provide for teachers to use in their instruction?
- What are the barriers or challenges faced by students and teachers in the school in using educational technology?
- Are there policies about technology use at the school?

Description of Sample and Response Burden

A nationally representative sample of 1,300 regular public schools was drawn from the 2016–17 Common Core of Data (CCD) public school universe file. The questionnaire is limited to three pages of items readily available to school principals or designated respondents within the school, and can be completed by most respondents in about 30 minutes. Questionnaire packages, including information needed to access the online version of the survey, will be mailed to sampled schools in January 2020. Follow-up for nonresponse will be conducted by mail, email, and telephone and will begin about 3 weeks after the questionnaires have been mailed to the schools. Nonresponse follow-up is used to prompt school respondents to complete the survey online or on the paper form (the latter to be mailed or faxed to Westat upon completion).

Overview of Data Collection

A package with a questionnaire, cover letter, and web information sheet will be mailed to the principal of each sampled school. The cover letter includes contact information in case of questions. The web information sheet is included in the mailing to provide information about the option to complete a web version of the survey. On the cover of the survey and in the cover letter, respondents are assured that their participation in the survey is voluntary and that all of the information they provide 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 (20 U.S.C. §9573 and 6 U.S.C. §151). If a completed survey is not received from a school within 3 weeks after the initial mailing, the principal will receive a brief telephone call prompting them to return their survey via the web, fax, or mail.

Data Analysis Plans and Publications

The *First Look* report will be released on the NCES website in the summer of 2021, and will include explanatory text and tables. Sampled schools will be notified when NCES releases the report. Survey responses will be weighted to produce national estimates. Tabulations will be produced for each data item. Cross-tabulations of data items will be made with selected school classification variables, such as school enrollment size, community type (locale), geographic region, and poverty level.

Westat Institutional Review Board (IRB) Review

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Institute of Education Sciences (IES), U.S. Department of Education (ED), has contracted an independent research firm to administer this study for them. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the research firm conducting the study (Westat) has reviewed and approved the study. The Westat IRB approved the study under expedited authority as a modification to the previously approved Fast Response Survey System (FRSS), pursuant to the human subjects regulations under 45 CFR 46.

Consent

Participation by individuals is voluntary. The respondent cover letter and questionnaire state that participation in the study is voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating in the survey.

Assurance of Confidentiality

Data collected on the survey will not be released to the public with institutional or personal identifiers attached. Data will be presented in aggregate statistical form only. In addition, each data file undergoes extensive disclosure risk analysis and is reviewed by the NCES/IES Disclosure Review Board before use in generating report analyses and before release as a public use data file. Respondents will be assured that their participation in the survey is voluntary and that all of the information they provide 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 (20 U.S.C. §9573 and 6 U.S.C. §151). The data are owned by the U.S. Department of Education and as such cannot be provided for review to schools, school districts, and their boards prior to publication. The data are presented in aggregate form, and no credit will be given to individual respondents, schools, or districts because their identities are protected.

Data security is a priority for ED and Westat's study staff. All Westat staff members working on the study are required to sign the NCES Affidavit of Nondisclosure, as well as Westat's confidentiality pledge. Access to data processing and storage facilities is restricted to authorized personnel at all times; access to the web versions of the questionnaire are ID and password protected with a secure socket layer (SSL) protocol. In addition, the network administrator for the study has established additional security features. The study systems, including the web versions of the questionnaires, have passed ED's extensive Certification and Accreditation security process.

References

Additional information about education technology resources can be found in the following documents.

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