

# **Fast Response Survey System (FRSS) 109: Teachers' Use of Technology for School and Homework Assignments - Preliminary Activities**

## **Appendix A District Recruitment Materials**

**OMB # 1850-0857 v.2**

**National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)  
U.S. Department of Education  
Institute of Education Sciences  
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**JUSTIFICATION FOR THE SURVEY ON  
TEACHERS' USE OF TECHNOLOGY FOR  
SCHOOL AND HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS  
(FRSS 109)**

March 2018

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## JUSTIFICATION FOR THE SURVEY ON TEACHERS' USE OF TECHNOLOGY FOR SCHOOL AND HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS

### 1. 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.

A copy of the Westat IRB memo is enclosed (see materials for the survey on Teachers' Use of Technology for School and Homework Assignments, item X).

### 2. Title of Study

Teachers' Use of Technology for School and Homework Assignments

### 3. Researcher Name and Source of Funding

Westat, a social science firm located in Rockville, Maryland, is administering the study under contract to NCES. NCES is conducting this FRSS survey as part of the IES response to the request in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)<sup>1</sup> to provide information about the educational impact of access to digital learning resources (DLRs) such as computers and the Internet outside of the classroom.

The source of funding for the study is the U.S. Department of Education.

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<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:cindygray@westat.com">cindygray@westat.com</a>
<b>Address:</b>	Westat, 1600 Research Boulevard, Rockville, MD 20850

### 4. Data Collection Schedule

Data collection is scheduled to start in fall 2018 and continue through spring 2019. Teacher list collection will begin in early fall 2018 and teacher survey data collection will begin in late fall 2018 and continue through spring 2019. A *First Look* report on the results is scheduled to be released in spring 2020.

### 5. Justification

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), within 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 teachers' use of technology for school and homework assignments. NCES is conducting this FRSS survey as part of the IES response to the request in the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA 2015, 20 U.S.C. §6301 *et seq.*) to provide information about the educational impact of access to digital learning resources (DLRs) such as computers and the Internet outside of the classroom.

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. Findings will inform IES as they report on the educational impact of access of DLRs outside the classroom. It will also offer insight on the types and availability of DLRs outside of the classroom.

ESSA provides guidance to state governments on how to receive supplemental federal funding for public education. As part of the ESSA legislation, IES is required to produce a report on the educational impact of access to DLRs outside of the classroom. Specifically, ESSA requests that IES conduct research in the five areas listed below.

1. An analysis of student habits related to DLRs outside of the classroom, including the location and types of devices and technologies that students use for educational purposes.

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<sup>1</sup> Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, 20 U.S.C. §6301 *et seq.* (2015)

2. An identification of the barriers students face in accessing DLR outside of the classroom.
3. A description of the challenges that students who lack home internet access face, including challenges related to student participation and engagement in the classroom and homework completion.
4. An analysis of how the barriers and challenges such students face impact the instructional practice of educators.
5. A description of the ways in which state education agencies, local education agencies, schools, and other entities, including partnerships of such entities, have developed effective means to address the barriers and challenges students face in accessing DLR outside of the classroom.

ESSA refers to the term “digital learning” as “any instructional practice that effectively uses technology to strengthen a student’s learning experience and encompasses a wide spectrum of tools and practices” (20 U.S.C. §7112 Definitions). However, for this survey, the main focus of digital learning resources will be computers and internet access.

The purpose of this survey is to collect nationally representative data from public school teachers about their use of computers and the Internet for school and homework assignments, and how their knowledge and beliefs about their students’ access to computers and the Internet outside the classroom affect the assignments they give. The survey will focus on information that can best be provided by teachers from their unique perspective and direct interaction with students.

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.

## **6. Overview of Survey Development**

NCES has contracted Westat for all stages of the survey. Westat will collect the information for NCES using the Fast Response Survey System (FRSS). Westat is responsible for development of the survey instrument, sample design and selection (school and teacher); teacher list collection and teacher survey data collection; telephone follow up; editing, coding, keying, and verification of the data; and production of tabulations and the report detailing the results of the survey.

Westat will collect lists of teachers from sampled schools in early fall 2018. Schools will be asked to provide lists of eligible teachers according to the instructions provided. These lists will provide the sampling frame to select teachers for the teacher survey.

FRSS has established procedures for developing short surveys on a wide variety of topics. The techniques that we used to shape the survey design on FRSS 109, Teachers’ Use of Technology for School and Homework Assignments, include input from the NCES Quality Review Board (QRB), several rounds of feasibility calls, and a pretest.

We conducted three rounds of feasibility calls, each with fifteen or fewer respondents. With new surveys such as the survey on teachers’ use of technology for schools and homework assignments, the initial feasibility calls use an open-ended interview guide rather than a questionnaire. As rounds of feasibility calls progressed, respondents were asked to review, but not complete draft questionnaire items and ultimately a draft questionnaire. Conducting multiple rounds of feasibility calls systematically informed us about public school teachers’ use of technology for teaching, and also what they know about their students’ access to the Internet, computers, and other DLRs outside of school. The gathered information was used to draft a questionnaire, and in later rounds was also used to provide in-depth information on respondents’ perceptions of the draft survey and response burden.

The survey was pretested with teachers. Pretest respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire and participate in a telephone debriefing with Westat to provide feedback on the questionnaire. Completed questionnaires were collected by fax prior to the debriefing with each respondent. The purpose of the pretest was to verify that all questions and corresponding instructions were clear and unambiguous, to determine if the information was readily accessible to respondents, and to determine whether the burden on respondents could be reduced further. Changes to the questionnaire were made based on the feedback received from the pretest. The final questionnaire was submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and has been approved (OMB# 1850-0857).

## **7. NCES Review and Consultation by Persons Outside the Agency**

The NCES QRB members reviewed a draft list of questionnaire and discussion topics prior to the feasibility calls. Revisions were made to the list of topics based on input from the reviewers, and the list was used to develop an

interview guide for the feasibility calls.

Following the last round of feasibility calls, the QRB reviewed the draft questionnaire, and revisions were made based on their input. The revised version was used for the pretest. In addition to staff from NCES's Statistical Standards group, the Annual Reports group, and each of the three Divisions, the QRB also included staff from ED's Office of Educational Technology (OET) and the Policies and Programs Studies Service of the Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development (OPEPD); the U.S. Commerce Department's National Telecommunication and Information Administration; and the IBM Center for The Business of Government. The QRB members for this survey are listed below:

- Rafi Goldberg, National Telecommunications and Information Administration, Commerce
- James Collins, Office of Educational Technology
- Andrew Abrams, OPEPD (Policy and Program Studies Service)
- Dan Chenok, the IBM Center for The Business of Government
- Halima Adenegan, NCES (Assessment Division)
- Jamie Deaton, NCES (Assessment Division, NAEP)
- John Ralph, NCES (Annual Reports and Information)
- Tom Snyder, NCES (Annual Reports and Information)
- Mark Glander, NCES (Administrative Records Division, CCD)
- Chris Chapman, NCES (Sample Surveys Division, Longitudinal Branch)
- Amy Ho, NCES (Sample Surveys Division, Cross-sectional Surveys Branch)
- Marilyn Seastrom, NCES (Statistical Standards and Data Confidentiality)
- Kashka Kubzdela, NCES (Statistical Standards and Data Confidentiality)

## **8. Description of Sample and Burden**

A nationally representative sample of 2,000 regular public schools was drawn from the 2014-15 Common Core of Data (CCD) public school universe file. Westat will draw a nationally representative sample of approximately 4,000 teachers selected from lists provided by participating schools.

Westat will collect lists of eligible teachers from sampled schools. These lists will provide the sampling frame to select teachers for the teacher survey. The estimated time for compiling the list of teachers is approximately 20 minutes. Follow-up for nonresponse will be conducted by mail, email, and telephone, and will begin 3 weeks after the request for lists have been mailed to principals. Experienced telephone interviewers will be trained to conduct the nonresponse follow-up calls and will be monitored by Westat supervisory personnel. Telephone nonresponse follow-up is expected to take about 5 minutes and is used to prompt principals to complete the list and return it to Westat.

Once teacher lists are received and processed, an average of two teachers will be sampled from each participating school. The teacher questionnaire is limited to three pages of items readily available to teachers 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 teachers starting in late fall 2018 and continuing through spring 2019. 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 teachers. Telephone nonresponse follow-up is expected to take about 5 minutes, and is used to prompt teachers to complete the survey online or on the paper form (the latter to be mailed or faxed to Westat upon completion).

## **9. 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. Teachers 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 for the study. The study systems, including the web versions of the questionnaires, have passed ED's extensive Certification and Accreditation security process.

## **10. Overview of Data Collection**

For the study, there will be two stages of data collection. The first stage will be to collect lists of eligible teachers from the sampled schools, and the second stage will be to collect surveys from sampled teachers.

### **Teacher List Collection**

In early fall 2018, requests will be mailed to the principal of each sampled school. Schools will be asked to prepare a list of eligible teachers and send it to Westat by mail, fax, or email. The mailing for the teacher list collection will include a cover letter addressed to the principal, the Instructions for Preparing the List of Teachers, and a Teacher Listing Form for listing the names of eligible teachers.

Telephone follow up will begin 3 weeks after requests for teacher lists have been mailed to principals. Experienced telephone interviewers will be trained to conduct the prompt calls to encourage principals or their designees to submit a list of teaches via the mail, fax, or email.

### **Teacher Survey**

A package with a questionnaire, cover letter, and web information sheet will be mailed to each sampled teacher. 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, teachers are assured that their participation 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 teacher within 3 weeks after the initial mailing, the teacher will receive a brief telephone call prompting them to return their survey via the web, fax, or mail.

## **11. Data Analysis Plans and Publications**

The *First Look* report will be released on the NCES website in the spring of 2020, and will include explanatory text and tables. Schools with participating teachers will be notified when NCES releases the report. A public use data file will also be released on the NCES website. 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 classification variables, such as school enrollment size, community type (locale), geographic region, and poverty level

The FRSS home page is <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/frss/>.

## **12. Consent**

Participation by individuals is voluntary; in addition, the respondent can decide not to participate after he/she begins to answer questions. The respondent cover letter and questionnaire also state that participation in the study is voluntary. There is no penalty for non-participation or withdrawal from the survey.

## **13. Rationale Supporting Study Done During Instructional/Work Time**

Participation in the study by teachers could occur during or outside of the instructional/work day. The questionnaire is designed to allow respondents flexibility in when they respond. For example, they may respond using the web version or paper version, while at work or elsewhere. The average time required to complete a questionnaire is 30 minutes, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collected. We recommend that the questionnaire be completed at a time that is convenient to the respondent and does not interfere with other responsibilities.

## **14. Estimates of Annual Cost Burden to Respondents**

This study will not require respondents to record or maintain additional data outside of their current requirements. Hence, no additional burden on the part of school/teacher personnel will be required. Since the 3-page questionnaire is self-administered and completed by individual teachers, no space is required/requested from the school. No equipment costs will be incurred by participating schools and sampled teachers

## 15. Significance of the Study and Benefits of Participation

This study is being conducted in response to a request from Congress. The purpose is to collect information from public school teachers about their use of technology for school and homework assignments, and how their knowledge and beliefs about their students' access to technology outside the classroom affect the assignments they give. The survey will focus on information that can best be provided by teachers from their unique perspective and direct interaction with students.

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 and teachers; participation of these schools and staff is dependent upon their districts' approval. Because your district, and your schools and staff, 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 and teachers is included in those decisions. The data your schools and teachers provide will better inform and help to shape future education policies.

Your district will be notified when NCES releases the report, and when it will be available to the public on the NCES website. The FRSS home page is <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/frss/>

## 16. Management of the Survey and Resumes of Staff

NCES is using the Fast Response Survey System (FRSS) to conduct this teacher survey. The FRSS was established in 1975 to collect issue-oriented data quickly and with minimum response burden. The FRSS, whose surveys collect and report data on key education issues at the elementary and secondary levels, was designed to meet the data needs of Department of Education analysts, planners, and decision-makers when information could not be collected quickly through NCES's large recurring surveys. Findings from FRSS surveys have been included in congressional reports, testimony to congressional subcommittees, NCES reports, and other ED reports. The findings are also often used by state and local education officials.

Westat, a social science firm under contract to ED, is administering the current survey, under the direction of NCES. The survey will adhere to all NCES statistical, data collection, and publication standards and guidelines. The analysis reports will undergo the NCES review process, and no data will be released without approval by NCES.

Listed below are staff members providing leadership for the study.

**John Ralph**, Project Officer, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education.

**Chris Chapman**, Associate Commissioner of the Sample Surveys Division, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education.

**Laurie Lewis**, project director of the Fast Response Survey System, Westat (see below).

**Cindy Gray**, survey manager for the survey on teacher' use of technology for teaching (see below).

**Debbie Alexander**, operations director for the survey on teacher' use of technology for teaching, Westat (see below).

**Dr. Laurie Lewis** leads the Westat project team for FRSS. Dr. Lewis is a senior study director with more than 30 years of experience in supervising, conducting, and reporting on education research, with particular expertise in quick-response surveys. She has worked on FRSS since 1985 and has served as project director since 2002. She is proficient in survey research design and procedures; questionnaire development; data collection through mail, telephone, and web surveys; data analysis; and report preparation. As project director, she manages a large staff consisting of survey managers, survey operations staff, statisticians, systems staff, research assistants, and other support staff. She is also responsible for budgets and schedules and works with NCES and ED policymakers to identify and address their data needs. Her research has covered a broad range of elementary and secondary education policy-oriented issues, including alternative schools and programs, educational technology, after-school programs, distance education, and school facilities.

**Ms. Cindy Gray** will provide day-to-day management of the survey, under the direction of Dr. Lewis. Ms. Gray is a senior study director with more than 30 years of experience in survey research. Ms. Gray has managed web, mail, and telephone surveys of school districts, schools, teachers, postsecondary institutions, libraries, and other populations. On these projects, Ms. Gray has developed procedures and managed staff performing a variety of survey activities. Ms. Gray's experience includes methodological research and questionnaire design.

**Ms. Debbie Alexander** will provide day-to-day management and operations of the survey, under the direction of Dr. Lewis. Ms. Alexander is a senior study director with more than 24 years of experience in all aspects of data



collection and survey management. She has worked primarily in education research, coordinating web, mail, and telephone survey operations for studies of local education agencies, public and private schools, postsecondary institutions, state education agencies, students, and other populations. Ms. Alexander's experience includes development of data collection procedures, training and oversight of data collection staff, sampling, tracing, data coding and editing, data entry, receipt control, and file documentation. She has prepared training materials for telephone nonresponse follow-up and trained and supervised telephone interviewers. In addition, she has designed survey instruments, conducted data analysis, and written reports. Ms. Alexander has contributed to the recruitment, management, and maintenance of two national panels of postsecondary education institutions.

### **FRSS Publications**

Publications for the Fast Response Survey System may be found on the NCES website: <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/frss/>. Selected publications are listed below.

- Lewis, L., and Gray, L. (2016). *Programs and Services for High School English Learners in Public School Districts: 2015-16* (NCES 2016-150). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC.
- Gray, L., and Lewis, L. (2015). *Public School Safety and Discipline: 2013-14* (NCES 2015-051). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC.
- Alexander, D., and Lewis, L. (2014). *Condition of America's Public School Facilities: 2012-13* (NCES 2014-022). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC.
- Thomas, N., Marken, S., Gray, L., and Lewis, L. (2013). *Dual Credit and Exam-Based Courses in U.S. Public High Schools: 2010-11* (NCES 2013-001). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC.
- Queen, B., and Lewis, L. (2011). *Distance Education Courses for Public Elementary and Secondary School Students: 2009-10* (NCES 2012-008). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC.
- Carver, P. R., and Lewis, L. (2011). *Dropout Prevention Services and Programs in Public School Districts: 2010-11* (NCES 2011-037). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC.
- Carver, P. R., and Lewis, L. (2010). *Alternative Schools and Programs for Public School Students At Risk of Educational Failure: 2007-08* (NCES 2010-026). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC.
- Gray, L., Thomas, N., and Lewis, L. (2010). *Educational Technology in U.S. Public Schools: Fall 2008* (NCES 2010-034). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC.
- Gray, L., Thomas, N., and Lewis, L. (2010). *Teachers' Use of Educational Technology in U.S. Public Schools: 2009* (NCES 2010-040). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC.
- Gray, L., and Lewis, L. (2009). *Educational Technology in Public School Districts: Fall 2008* (NCES 2010-003). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC.