

Public Comments Received During the 30-day Comment Period

February 2018

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

ED-2017-ICCD-0138

Comments on FR Doc # 2018-00638

Document: ED -2017-ICCD-0138-0015

Name: Mark MacCarthy

On behalf of the Software & Information Industry Association (SIIA), I write in support of the Fast Response Survey System (FRSS) 109: Teachers' Use of Technology for School and Homework Assignments. This collection will provide valuable information to policymakers, educators, and other stakeholders on how technology is used inside and outside of the classroom.

As background, SIIA is the principal trade association for the software and digital information industries representing software companies, data and analytics firms, information service companies, and digital. Members of the Education Technology Industry Network (ETIN) of SIIA work with K-12 schools and institutions of higher education nationwide to develop and deliver education software applications, digital instructional content, online learning services and related technologies.

As the Department looks to improve the quality and clarity of the information collected, SIIA urges the Department to include school demographics when releasing the results of the survey. We suggest survey recipients not include online schools as it is clear by the design of the draft the survey is intended for traditional brick-and-mortar schools.

SIIA encourages the Department to include survey questions related to the use of computers versus mobile technology, whether or not the school has staff, full- or part- time, dedicated to deploying technology in the classroom, whether students and teachers receive technology training, the amount of time dedicated to such training, and the level of satisfaction with the support they receive from the training, the use of learning management systems by school officials, parents, and students inside and outside of the classroom, and the type of assignments assigned to students for completion through technology (readings, quizzes, essays, etc.).

Thank you for your attention to these comments. SIIA and our member companies look forward to working with the Department to improve student outcomes. Please don't hesitate to contact Sara Kloek, Director of Education Policy, at 202-789-4448 or at skloek@siia.net with any further questions or requests for further information.

Sincerely,

Mark MacCarthy
Senior Vice President
Public Policy

Dear Mr. MacCarthy,

Thank you for your feedback posted on February 16, 2018 responding to a 30-day request for comments on the Fast Response Survey System (FRSS) 109: Teachers' Use of Technology for School and Homework Assignments – Preliminary Activities. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) appreciates your interest in the FRSS survey. I have provided a response to your comments below.

Characteristics of schools are included on the NCES sampling frame for the survey. These characteristics include variables such as school enrollment size, instructional level of the school, community type (sometimes referred to as urbanicity), geographic region, and poverty level. Selected variables will be used for the survey analysis and report. Online schools that are in the sampling frame are considered regular public schools, and as such, will have a probability of selection for the school sample.

We agree that the topics you mention are important ones to explore. However, this survey has a very specific focus and

mandate. This FRSS survey is being conducted as part of the NCES response to the request in the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 to provide information about the educational impact of access to digital learning resources such as computers and the Internet outside of the classroom. The FRSS survey will collect nationally representative data from public school teachers about their knowledge and beliefs about their students' access to digital learning resources outside the classroom, and how this affects the homework assignments they give and the assistance they provide to students with limited access to technology outside of school. The survey focuses on information that can best be provided by teachers from their perspective and direct interaction with students. The additional information you suggest would be useful and interesting to collect in addition to the questions in the public comment materials. However, in order to limit burden on respondents and improve response rates, FRSS collections are limited to 3 pages of questions. We need this much space to address the original research question, unfortunately.

However, I wanted to bring to your attention that NCES, in general, regularly includes questions in its various surveys (<https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/>; and <https://datainventory.ed.gov/>) related to technology in education, and continually research and evaluate what questions should and can be included in each of our surveys. The ultimate decision is driven by the utility of the resulting data, the availability and cost feasibility of collecting them, and the space on the survey given data needs across all domains of interest. Below I provide a couple of examples of NCES surveys that collect relevant data.

For example, in the spring 2016 (fifth-grade) data collection for the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study Kindergarten Class of 2010–11 (ECLS-K:2011), we asked parents how often do they use a computer or any other electronic device to find out about their child's grades, homework and other school assignments and projects, and to communicate with their child's teachers and administrative staff by email.

On the upcoming 2019-20 National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS), we will be asking schools about the number of full-time and part-time technology specialists at their school. This question was also part of the 2015-16 NTPS, and data on the number of FT and PT technology specialists for the 2015-16 school year are available at https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ntps/tables/ntps1516_20180119002_s1n.asp. The 2015-16 NTPS also asked earlier career teachers about how well prepared they felt to use computers in classroom instruction: https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ntps/tables/ntps1516_20180119001_t1n.asp. We plan to include this item again in the 2019-20 NTPS.

And the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) student, teacher, and school administrator questionnaires currently capture: (a) access to technology (we distinguish between laptop/tablet/smartphone), (b) internet access, (c) whether teachers receive technology training, (d) frequency (not time) in which teachers attend technology training, (e) frequency (not time) in which teachers use technology to complete specific math/writing tasks, and (f) number of full- and part- time teachers.

Sincerely,

Chris Chapman
Associate Commissioner
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