School Technology Needs Assessment (STNA)

Implementing STNA in Your School

If you decide that you have a question that might be addressed with data describing your school staff's perceptions about technology use, consider using the School Technology Needs Assessment (STNA, say, "Stenna"). The following checklist is provided to help you plan and implement your STNA in a way that will maximize its value, in terms of informing school-level planning for technology use.

Planning for STNA Use

❑ Convene whatever team is responsible for evaluation and/or technology planning in your school.

❑ Clarify and come to consensus on the questions about which your school cares.

❑ Review the STNA instrument and supporting documentation.

❑ Determine if STNA data will be useful in answering those questions.

❑ Determine who will be your school-based "STNA manager"; the person responsible for managing your STNA implementation.

❑ Develop a way to keep track of who has—and has not—completed your STNA. *The online system does not record each respondent's identity. It may also be useful to provide some sort of small incentive for completing the instrument, which takes about 20 minutes.*

❑ Determine how and when respondents will complete your STNA. *It has been our experience that it is not effective to simply email the STNA URL to staff members – we have seen 0% response rates using this approach. To assure a response rate high enough to have confidence in your STNA results (typically, more than 90% of all staff working with students), it is generally necessary to run respondents through the STNA in some coordinated way, like in a computer lab at the conclusion of or during a meeting or inservice training day.*

❑ It may be necessary to provide technical training for your staff, to be sure that they have the skills necessary to use a web-based survey instrument. *See Managing STNA Responses, below.*

❑ Communicate in advance with staff members about the purpose of the STNA, how it fits into school technology or evaluation planning, and how important it is that everyone completes the instrument. *Be sure that everyone understands that it is impossible to identify individual respondents among the STNA data; that data are reported only at the school level; and that STNA data will not be used to assign awards or sanctions to individual staff members or schools.*

❑ Define a plan for disseminating STNA findings to the entire school staff.

Initializing the Online STNA Instrument

❑ Determine the date on which you want your online STNA to open, and the date on which you want it to close.

❑ Determine how many staff members you expect will complete your STNA. *Note that you should include anyone who works directly with students—including but not limited to teachers, aides, and administrators.*

- ❑ Have the STNA manager email Daniel Stanhope (daniel.s.stanhope@gmail.com) or Jeni Corn (jocorn@gwced.ncsu.edu) at the Friday Institute and provide the above information. *Allow 3-5 working days for your STNA to be initialized.*

- ❑ Your STNA manager will receive a return email with the URL to your school's individualized STNA.

- ❑ It may be useful to create a shortcut or bookmark on the computers that will be used for STNA responses, to guide respondents to the correct URL.

Managing STNA Responses

- ❑ When your STNA opens, implement the plan your school developed to assure a sufficiently high rate of response.

- ❑ Have someone with appropriate technology skill available to support your school staff as they complete the online STNA. *The instrument does not require substantial technical skill but it is necessary that respondents know how to open a web browser window, and complete and submit online forms.*

- ❑ Using the tracking system developed during the planning phase, follow up with any slow respondents, guiding them through the process if necessary.

- ❑ Note that it is possible for a respondent to submit more than one set of answers. This is generally not an issue, since few really care to complete the instrument more than once, but it should be kept in mind as a possible source of error.

Using Your STNA Data

- ❑ When your STNA has closed, you will receive an email indicating your response rate, a note indicating whether or not the Friday Institute can certify that your results are likely representative of your entire staff, and a URL that links to your online STNA report.

- ❑ Convene the evaluation or technology planning team.

- ❑ Share the STNA report among planning team members, either by electronic means (with a data projector, for example), or by distribution of hard copies of the report page.

- ❑ Use the *Interpreting STNA Data* guide to assist school planning efforts.

- ❑ Make appropriate inferences from your STNA data. *It is critical to revisit the questions being asked at this point. STNA provides a lot of data and it may be possible to be distracted by issues other than those seen as important during the planning process.*

- ❑ Examine your STNA findings for surprises or unanticipated findings.

- ❑ Importantly, revisit and refine the questions that STNA data were expected to answer. *It is not at all unusual to discover that a primary finding arising from STNA data is that more data is required to really understand issues at hand*

- ❑ Consider next steps in the evaluation process. *It may be necessary for example to convene groups to discuss why staff members may have responded to STNA like they did, or the planning team might examine possible changes to program implementation based on findings.*

- ❑ Share your STNA findings with the entire school staff. *By doing so, buy-in will be encouraged, increasing the entire staff's involvement in the evaluation process and raising the likelihood of future participation in data collection activities.*