



## Module 1: People

*We all know that having the right people in the right place at the right time can have a huge impact on creating a healthy school environment. As school leaders, how do we know who the right people are? And how do we strengthen relationships among everyone so that our efforts to make our school healthy are sustained? Social network analysis helps.*

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## Align this module to your needs and resources

*The steps in this module will help you to use social network analysis to learn about the key people and relationships that can support implementation of the WSCC model. You may be wondering how you can do this work on top of all your other responsibilities. This module was designed so that you can choose the range and intensity of the activities that you want to complete.*

The chart on the next page outlines three different options from which you can choose. The options build on one another, allowing you to learn slightly more about your social network as you move from Option A to Option C. Use the chart to understand the time, resources, and knowledge or expertise your school or district needs to accomplish each option and to select the option that is best suited to your needs and capacity.

Want to explore other ways to minimize the time and resources needed? Consider focusing on one or a few schools at a time. Limiting your network boundary (read more on page 18) to one or a few schools can lighten the load and create a more manageable process, whichever option you choose.

Concerned about having the right knowledge or expertise? Consider working with an external partner or consultant (read more on page 20). An individual or team can help you manage all or a few of the processes needed for each option.

To view and select the option that works for you, **TURN TO NEXT PAGE** →

## Select the option that works for you

	OPTION A	OPTION B	OPTION C
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	Build a roster of people who may be able to help you implement the WSCC model	Survey each person on your roster to understand how frequently they communicate with and are trusted by others	Create a map to visualize the flow of information through the social network and to identify facilitators and barriers to spreading information
<b>ESTIMATED TIME NEEDED</b>	1 week	1 month	2 months
<b>ESTIMATED RESOURCES NEEDED</b>	1 person to lead and participate in planning (1–2 hrs/day) 10–12 participants in roster process	1 person to lead and participate in planning (1–2 hrs/day) 20–30 participants in survey process	1 person to lead and participate in planning (1–2 hrs/day)
<b>TYPE OF EXPERTISE NEEDED</b>	Familiarity with Excel for information organization Ability to use Google Forms (with guidance) Familiarity with email	Familiarity with Excel for information organization and analysis Ability to use Google Forms (with guidance) Familiarity with email	Familiarity with Excel for information organization, analysis, and presentation Ability to use online data program (with guidance)
<b>OUTCOMES</b> Identify individuals who are nominated by their colleagues as being visible and active in the school or district community	●	●	●
Measure frequency of communication or level of trust each key influencer has with others in the social network		●	●
Map the flow of information across the social network			●
Identify facilitators or barriers to spreading information			●
<b>READ MORE ABOUT THIS OPTION ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES</b>	<a href="#">introduction</a> , p18–20 <a href="#">data collection process</a> , p22–23 <a href="#">analysis process</a> , p25	<a href="#">introduction</a> , p18–20 <a href="#">data collection process</a> , p24 <a href="#">analysis process</a> , p26	<a href="#">introduction</a> , p18–20 <a href="#">data collection process</a> , p24 <a href="#">analysis process</a> , p27

# QUICK START GUIDE

I want to understand how we can build a team of people to implement the WSCC model. What are the key things I need to know and do?



## 1. LEARN KEY CONCEPTS

Before you get started, you'll need to understand a few basic concepts related to social networks and how they can be analyzed.

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## 2. DEFINE YOUR SCOPE

Then you'll need to decide whether you're going to implement the WSCC model at one school, multiple schools, or district-wide, and how detailed an analysis you're going to conduct before implementing the WSCC model.

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## 3. BUILD YOUR ROSTER

No matter how you define your scope, you'll need to develop a list, or a roster, of possible partners to help you implement the WSCC model.

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## 4. ADMINISTER YOUR SNA SURVEY

Once you identify your potential partners, you'll want to survey them so that you can understand the structure of key relationships and the flow of information within your school or district.

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## 5. ANALYZE AND INTERPRET YOUR RESULTS

Using the tools enclosed in this module, you'll learn how to choose the strongest team to implement the WSCC model.

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## 6. READ ABOUT THIS WORK IN ST. LOUIS

Read the case study to learn how a team of researchers, educators, and community partners used social network analysis to identify key influencers who could help implement a healthy schools approach in two St. Louis school districts.

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# LEARN KEY CONCEPTS

## People matter

*Although it's not entirely clear who first made the below famous statement, we all know that it's true. It's especially true in trying to get people to do anything new or different. You have to reach the right people with your ideas and persuade them not only to try it themselves, but also to encourage others.*

This toolkit is built, in part, on the recognition that for schools to make the WSCC model work, they will need to identify the people who have the ability to be its advocates and take action. The toolkit gives school leaders a method for identifying these people. Sheer intuition, experience shows, is not enough. Instead, this toolkit shows how to use **Social Network Analysis (SNA)**, a well-established social science technique, to uncover the relationships among individuals. As you think about incorporating the WSCC model into your schools, you can use SNA to identify key influencers in all the potentially relevant categories of participants – district leaders, school administrators, school staff, teachers, parents, students, and community partners.



Once they're identified, these people can provide crucial help with the promotion and implementation of the WSCC model.



A list of additional SNA resources is available in the [Appendix](#).

This part of the toolkit will help you understand the key concepts behind SNA, and then show you how to use it in your school or district to assemble the team of advocates you need to bring the WSCC model to life. We also describe how SNA was completed in two school districts in St. Louis.

Let's start with a story inspired by our work in St. Louis. This story could take place in any school and demonstrates how putting the right people in the right place at the right time can make an enormous difference in creating healthy environments for learning and development.

TURN TO NEXT PAGE →

**“There are three kinds of people in this world: Those who make things happen, those who watch things happen, and those who ask, ‘What happened?’”**

**AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SCHOOL YEAR,** Middle School Principal Jeff Fox gathers his entire staff, including aides, secretaries, custodians, bus drivers, and cafeteria workers, to explain that like teachers, they, too, are educators.

"I encourage all of you to be a positive role model to our students and engage them at appropriate opportunities," said Principal Fox. "Creating a healthy, happy, and thriving school is a team effort."

While working in the cafeteria during sixth-grade lunch, custodian Bob Roberts noticed a boy who seemed to always sit at a table by himself. Roberts approached the boy as he ate alone and started making small talk. Eventually the custodian learned that the boy, named Jack, was new to the school and having trouble making friends. Jack also said he missed his dad, who owned a heating and cooling business in Nebraska. He couldn't leave the state when the rest of the family moved to St. Louis a few months ago.

The next day at Jack's lunch period, Roberts asked the boy if he wanted to check out the school's heating and cooling system. The mere suggestion brought a smile to Jack's face, but he truly lit up when the custodian took him under his wing and showed him the ins and outs of the system.

**"I realized that my job is much more than sweeping the floors of the building and taking out trash. I, too, am an educator."**

— **BOB ROBERTS, CUSTODIAN**

As they talked, Roberts asked Jack if he had any interest in sports.

"My dad wrestled as a student," said Jack. "I think I would like to try out but, I just don't know. What if I don't make the team?"

Roberts later went to the wrestling coach and told him about Jack. The coach, in turn, reached out to the boy and invited him to try out.

A week or so later, Jack spotted Roberts in the hallway and excitedly told him that he had made the wrestling team. Soon after, Roberts saw that Jack had befriended some other boys on the team and was now eating lunch with them.

"I don't know if I would have said anything to Jack had Principal Fox not empowered me to do so," said the custodian. "I realized that my job is much more than sweeping the floors of the building and taking out trash. I, too, am an educator."

*Stories like this highlight the power in uncovering critical connections among the many people who make up a school community. All have the potential to contribute to creating a healthy and supportive environment, even if the word **health** isn't in their title or job description.*

## Social networks for education

*All organizations — schools and school districts included — are characterized by social networks, which are defined by the relationships among people within these organizations.*

These relationships can be described by organizational charts: Teachers report to principals who in turn report to superintendents, for example. But other aspects of the relationships among individuals in the organization are also important, and not nearly so obvious. Individuals vary greatly in how many relationships they may have within organizations. Some are trusted sources of information, others are not. Some are influential in their opinions, others less so. SNA enables organizations to make a thorough appraisal of these kinds of factors so that they can have the best chance of making change — in this case, implementing WSCC — in their organization.

### KEY CONCEPT: NODE

In describing the process used in SNA, you'll often see the word **node**. This word is used to refer to the social unit being analyzed. Although that unit can be anything from an organization like a school or company to a political party or a nation, we will focus in our analysis on people, specifically on the individuals in a school or school district.

As we do so, we'll examine the characteristics of these nodes — in other words, individual details such as name and years of work experience, and, more importantly, the role the individual plays in the school or network. Once a list of nodes in a school or network is compiled, additional questions will lead to an identification of those nodes, or individuals, who are highly trusted or influential in the network. These individuals are

called **key influencers**, and they are especially needed to implement the WSCC model.

SNA also allows for the development of a network map, in which the nodes can be represented as circles or dots and color-coded based on their characteristics. This map will help you see the patterns in the relationships among individuals in the same roles and across different roles in your school networks.

### KEY CONCEPT: TIE/RELATIONSHIP

**Tie** and **relationship** are terms used interchangeably in SNA. They refer to the social relationship that connects two nodes, or again, two individuals. For the implementation of the WSCC model, we will investigate two important aspects of these relationships: the amount of communication that characterizes them and the degree to which that communication is trusted by each party. Analyzing the ties between nodes first involves determining whether there even is a relationship, and then gauging the strength of that relationship by the degree of communication and the level of trust.

On network maps, ties are usually represented as lines between two nodes. Key influencers typically have a high number of ties to other nodes.

### WHAT IS A NODE?

A node is the social unit being analyzed. In this work, the node is an individual and is represented as circles or dots in a network map. Colors can be used to distinguish the role of each node.



### WHAT IS A TIE?

A tie is the social relationship that connects two nodes or two individuals. A tie is represented as a line between two nodes in a network map.



## KEY CONCEPT: DENSITY

Network **density** measures the number of ties among the individuals in a network divided by the total number of possible ties in the network. It is measured on a scale from 0 to 1. When there are no ties among individuals, the network density is 0; when everyone in the network is connected to everyone else, the density is 1.

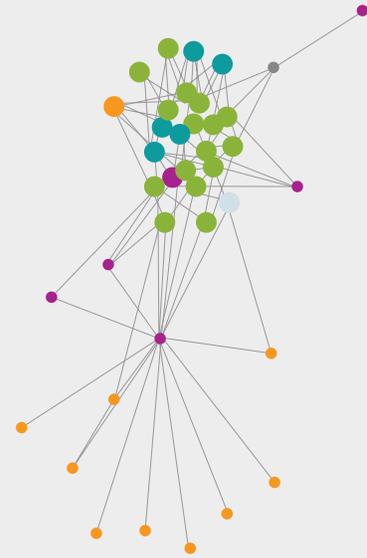
Social network density is important in implementing a program or model because social networks control the flow of information and new ideas.

When a network doesn't have enough links among its members, it can be difficult for new information to spread. There can even be individuals — those with relatively few ties or none at all — who are isolated completely. In contrast, networks that are too dense may be resistant to new information, especially from new members who are outside the network.<sup>6,7</sup> Every network is unique, and there are no hard and fast rules, but research suggests that network density between 0.3 and 0.5 may be an ideal range for program implementation.

### WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A LESS DENSE NETWORK?

A less dense network is one where people have few relationships with others in their community. A person, for example, may only know or communicate with one other person in their network.

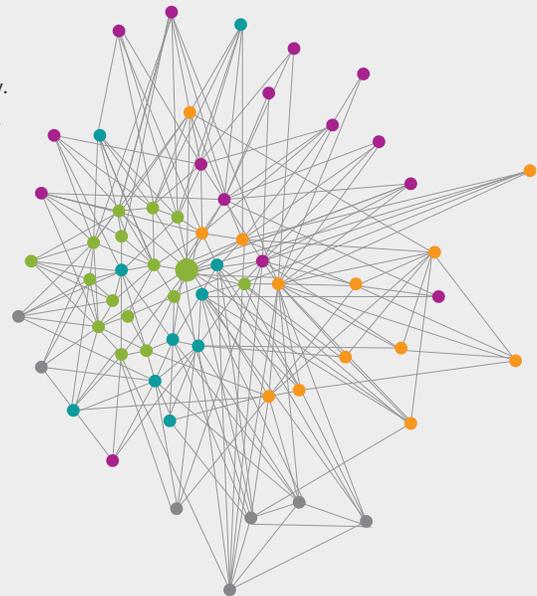
In a network map, a less dense network will have fewer lines (or ties), and individuals (or nodes) may have only 1 or 2 ties that connect them to others.



### WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A MORE DENSE NETWORK?

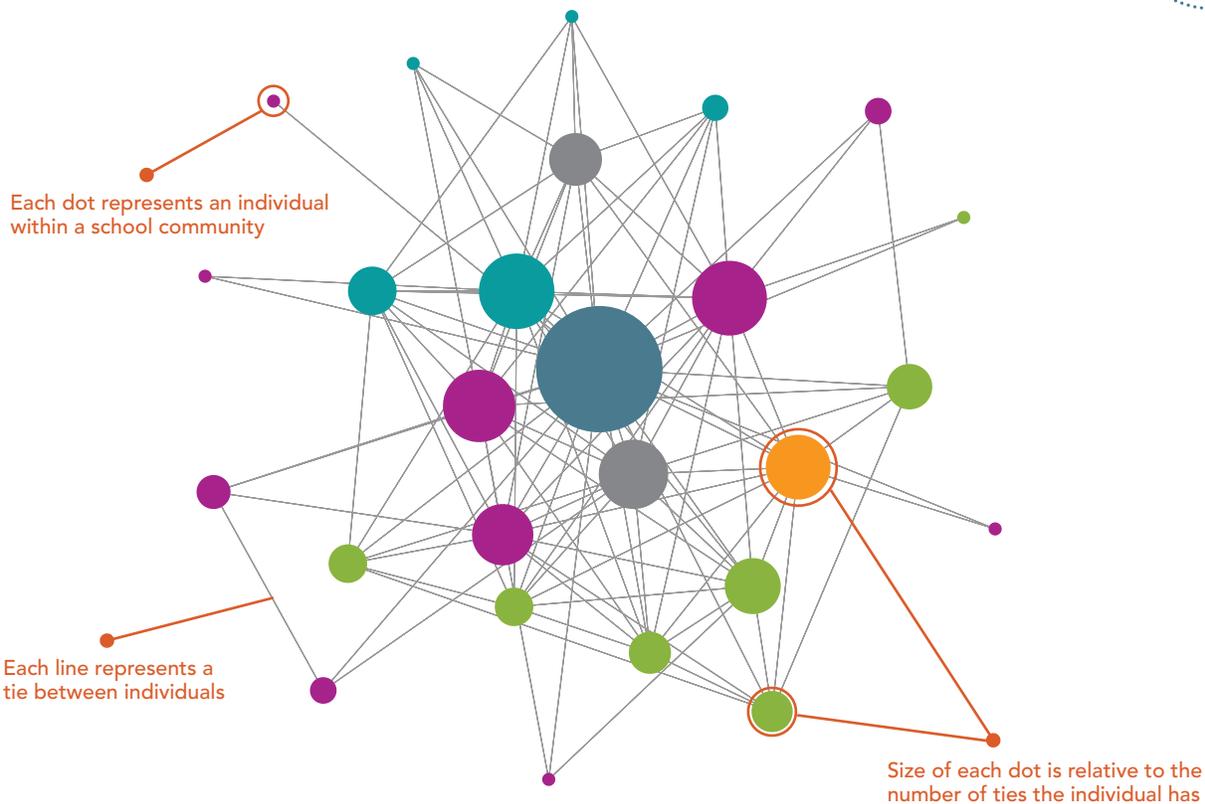
A more dense network is one where people have relationships with many others in their community.

In a network map, a more dense network will have many more lines (or ties), and often, individuals will have multiple ties that connect them to others.





## HOW TO READ A SOCIAL NETWORK MAP



Color of each dot represents the role of an individual

# DEFINE YOUR SCOPE

*Once you understand these key concepts of SNA, you're ready to define the scope of the SNA you will complete. That understanding will enable you to determine what kinds of resources you will need to identify the key influencers who can help you implement the WSCC model.*

## Define network boundary

*Are you going to implement the WSCC model at the level of the school building? If so, one building? Two? More? Or are you going to implement it across the district? These are the kinds of questions you need to answer first — because without defining your network's boundaries, you won't be able to determine whom to include in your SNA.*

If you're going to operate at the building level, then your network will include people connected specifically to that school. If you choose the district level, however, you'll need to consider whether your network will extend across all the school buildings in your district or just some of them.

Given what you know about your district and its schools, are there key individuals who are shared across schools? Then your network boundary may include all of the buildings for which implementation is planned. Or do you think there are key individuals at each school building to facilitate implementation? Then your network boundary may be distinct for each school building for which implementation is planned, and you will need to conduct this process separately for each of those buildings.

*On the next page, you have the opportunity to think through some questions that will help you identify which schools to include in your network boundary.*



## Select an SNA process level

*Having defined your boundaries for the project, your next step is to determine the kind of information you want to capture by using SNA.*

In general, SNA can help you identify key influencers who can implement the WSCC model. But there are three different processes by which you can identify these key influencers. Think of each process as a different level of SNA. Each level builds on the level before it, such that the first level must be completed in order for the second level to take place, and so on. The depth of information gathered and the amount of time and resources needed also increases with each successive level.

The level that you select should be based on the information you need. If you need a quick and basic assessment of who in your network is recognized as communicative or otherwise knowledgeable and involved in school matters, then the **first level** may be right for you. This level requires you to **build a roster** or list of potential people from whom you will choose your team. The information you gather allows you to know how many times individual people are named by others as being communicative, visible, or active. Numerous recommendations may mean that an individual is a potential key influencer in the school or district.



..... **THINK ABOUT THE STAFF AND RELATIONSHIPS** that connect your district and its schools. Help yourself decide how you will define your network boundary by answering the following questions. Remember, there are no hard and fast rules about whether you should complete a social network at one school, multiple schools, or across all schools in your district!

1. Are key staff shared across multiple schools in your district? If key staff are shared across multiple (or all) schools in the district, consider including those schools in your network boundary.

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2. How does your district usually implement something new? At a school level? Or across the district? If your district makes change one school at a time, then consider using the same approach for defining your network boundary.

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3. Are there natural ways to group schools in your district? For example, are specific schools more closely connected because of where they are located? Or because they share a district leader? If there are natural groupings of schools in your district, this may be an easy way to define your network boundary.

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4. Are there particular schools that have champions that want to implement the WSCC model now? Schools that are ready and willing to implement the WSCC model may be good candidates for including in your network boundary.

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Based on your answers to these questions, how will you define your network boundary? One school? Multiple schools? All schools in the district? Use the space below to list the schools you want to include in your network boundary.

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If you need additional information about the nature of relationships and communications between people in your network, then consider completing the **second level** of SNA. This level involves **administering a survey**. The information from this survey allows you to answer the following types of questions: How frequently are people in communication with one another? To what extent do people trust those with whom they communicate? This provides additional information about how people within networks are connected and perceived.

If you need a more comprehensive assessment of how relationships are structured and how information flows within your network, then consider completing the **third level**. This level uses information collected in the survey to **develop network maps**.

These maps offer a visual display of the core influencers — the individuals, by name and category, who are visible, highly trusted, and in frequent communication with others — in each potential role (district leader, teacher, staff, parent, student, building administrator, and community partner). It also reports on network density, telling you how many connections each individual has in the network and giving you a sense of how easy or difficult it will be to share new information through that network. This gives you information beyond the individuals to detect the overall structure of your network.

*Which SNA process level meets your needs? Working by yourself or with a colleague, rate the statements on the next page to understand which processes you should pursue.*

## SELECT AN SNA PROCESS LEVEL THAT MEETS YOUR NEEDS



### Level 1

Create a list of people at your school or district who are potential key influencers



### Level 2

Assess the nature of relationships and communication between people in your school or district



### Level 3

Map out the way information flows within your school or district

## Decide whether to use internal or external resources

*Now that you have considered your network boundary and the level of SNA that you want to make, your next step is to consider whether you should conduct this process internally or externally.*

If you hire a team that specializes in SNA, they will conduct the entire process or a few key steps of each process for you. If, however, you conduct the analysis with resources internal to your school or district, then we suggest you designate someone who can lead and conduct the SNA process. We will call this person the SNA coordinator.

If you are going the internal route, your choice of an SNA coordinator is absolutely critical. It will be useful for this person to have:

1. Frequent communication with others in diverse roles in the school
2. High-level familiarity with school programs, policies, personnel, partners, students, and parents

3. Access to contact information for individuals in a school or district
4. Knowledge of any school or district policies for school-related data collection
5. Competency at using spreadsheets and online survey administration applications
6. Interest in the WSCC model
7. Time available to lead roster development and survey efforts (≥ 5 hours/week for a few months at a time)



Download an example of an [SNA coordinator job description](#) that you can use to recruit someone to help lead this work.



..... **THINK ABOUT THE SCHOOL** (or schools) you are including in your network boundary. This activity will help you determine what level of information you need to understand who is connected to whom and how information flows.

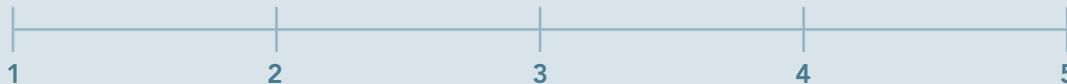
On a scale from 1 to 5, rate the importance of each statement below. A rank of "1" means that this level of information is not important. A rank of "5" means that this level of information is very important.

1. I need to know who in my school or district is seen as visible, active, and communicative.



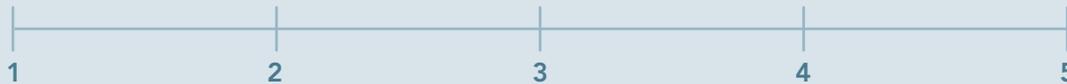
If you rated the statement above as a 3, 4, or 5, then consider completing SNA process level 1.

2. I need to understand who in my school or district is a key influencer (people who have many connections and are highly trusted).



If you rated the statement above as a 3, 4, or 5, then consider completing SNA process levels 1 and 2.

3. I need to understand how information is shared across my school or district.



If you rated the statement above as a 3, 4, or 5, then consider completing SNA process levels 1, 2, and 3.

# BUILD YOUR ROSTER

*No matter which level of network analysis you settle on, you're going to need to start by developing a roster — a list of the people to whom your SNA coordinator or external consultant will reach out to obtain the information you need. If you are working with an external consultant, the following processes will be handled by them. If you are relying on an individual in your school or district to coordinate the SNA, read on!*

Building the roster is an iterative process, like rolling a snowball. Your SNA coordinator gets the ball rolling. He or she compiles a list of 10 to 12 people who he or she considers to be in frequent communication with many others, trusted sources of school-related information, and coming from diverse roles within the school or district. An ideal roster might consist of two of each of the following: parents, students, community partners, school staff, school administrators, teachers, and district leaders (staff or administrators). Though the WSCC framework is concerned with health, it is important that the roster not be limited to individuals with explicit health-related roles, like school nurses or physical education teachers. Individuals in many different roles affect the varied components of health and well-being that are part of the WSCC model.

The SNA coordinator then adds the name, role(s), and contact information of the 10 to 12 people that he or she identified to a data file to keep track of the information. This information can be easily tracked using a template, like the Working Roster Sheet, or another Excel spreadsheet. The Working Roster Sheet will help you keep track of who has been nominated to your roster, how many times, and by whom.

After that, the SNA coordinator reaches out to those same 10 to 12 individuals and asks that they complete a Roster Survey to nominate 10 to 12 people who they consider to be in frequent communication, trusted sources of school-related information, and coming from diverse roles within the school or district. The SNA coordinator's nominees may identify the same people that the coordinator nominated, or they may nominate new people.

The names identified in each returned Roster Survey are added to the Working Roster Sheet. Then, after the Working Roster Sheet is "cleaned" to make sure no names are repeated, that all names are spelled correctly, and that all contact information is available, the SNA coordinator contacts the new nominees about filling out a Roster Survey to make additional nominations.

This same process — asking those who have been nominated to take a Roster Survey to identify others — is repeated until the roster for each school contains the names of as many as several dozen individuals or until new nominees stop coming in. The exact number depends on the size of the school or district.

When the SNA coordinator is satisfied with the roster, he or she transfers all the names from the Working Roster Sheet to a Final Roster Sheet, which is used to identify potential key influencers who can help implement the WSCC model.



Download the [Final Roster Sheet template](#).



See the [SNA Process Guide](#) for detailed instructions on how to develop your roster.



Read the [Case Study](#) to learn more about the Roster Survey and download templates to help you create a survey and recruit survey participants.

*It's your turn to brainstorm who you would nominate as being visible, active, and in frequent communication with others. On the next page, write down the names of 10 to 12 people. List their role and the WSCC components with which they closely align.*



Download the [Working Roster Sheet template](#).



# ADMINISTER YOUR SNA SURVEY

*If your school or district is interested only in a basic understanding of who in your network is recognized as communicative or otherwise knowledgeable and involved in school matters, then you can skip this section and start learning how to complete a [first-level SNA process](#). If you're not sure what SNA process level you are interested in, review the [Define Your Scope](#) section.*

The roster you just built is necessary, but it can only tell you so much. It doesn't tell you how frequently people in your network talk or how much they trust one another. This kind of additional and comprehensive information about the structure of relationships, who relies on whom, and how information travels in your network is important. It is especially important if you want to build a team of people who have the potential to influence others. This information is only available if you administer an SNA Survey.

In this survey, people on the roster are asked to provide information about how frequently they are in communication with everyone else on the roster and how much trust they place in that communication.

As was true with roster development, the SNA coordinator can create and distribute the SNA Survey using an online program such as Google Forms or through a paper survey. In either case, the SNA coordinator contacts individuals on the roster, provides them instructions about the purpose of the survey, and asks them to complete the survey within a given timeframe.

Unlike roster development, the SNA Survey only requires one round of surveying. Once the SNA coordinator has received survey responses from most people on the roster, he or she will enter those responses into the SNA Data Sheet.

## MESSAGES MATTER

The SNA Survey is more complex than the Roster Survey. It asks people to select the frequency with which they communicate with others on the roster and the level of trust they have for information shared by those individuals. Frequency is measured on a six-point scale, and trust is measured on a five-point scale.

 [Download a template to create a paper SNA Survey.](#)

 [Learn how to create an SNA Survey using Google Forms.](#)

The SNA Survey Email is an important opportunity to encourage stakeholders to participate and share their input. In this email, you want to make sure that you explain why stakeholders are being contacted. For those who completed a Roster Survey, it's also important that you clarify the difference between the Roster Survey and the SNA Survey.

The main points you need to include in the email are: your ask (to take a survey and indicate how they communicate with others), the timeline (usually 2 weeks), and how the information will be used (develop a list of people who can help implement a healthy schools model). Confidentiality is again an important point to include in the email, if possible.

Similar to the Roster Survey Email, it's important to select a messenger who is known and respected by stakeholders. If you're completing SNA at the district level, maybe your Superintendent can send out the email. At the building level, a principal is often a known and trusted messenger.

 [Download a template for an SNA Survey Email to help you invite participation in the SNA Survey.](#)

 [Download the SNA Data Sheet template.](#)

Be ready to identify who is in frequent contact with others and who is highly trusted. Those individuals who are both highly trusted and have lots of communication with others are considered the key influencers.

They have the potential to accelerate your efforts to influence others and gain support to build a healthy school environment.

 [View the SNA Process Guide for detailed instructions on how to administer your SNA Survey.](#)



# ANALYZE AND INTERPRET YOUR RESULTS

Now that you have collected information about your school or district's social network, you are ready to analyze the information. All three levels of analysis are described below. As a reminder, each level builds on the next one, allowing you to understand your social network in different ways. Your progression through the first, second, and third level of SNA processes should be based on what you need to learn and also what type of information you collected. If you're not sure what level is best for you, review the [Define Your Scope section](#).

## Process level 1: Use your roster to identify a list of potential key influencers

If you built a roster but did not collect SNA Surveys, then the first level of SNA processes is right for you. If you completed an SNA Survey, then skip ahead to [the second process level](#).

Recall that a roster is a list of individuals whom your SNA coordinator and others in your school or district identified as those who are communicative and otherwise informed about school-related information. Ideally, this list includes a diverse group of individuals who represent different roles in your school community. If your roster doesn't represent the critical people or roles in your school or district, consider returning to the [Build Your Roster section](#).

Once you are satisfied with your roster, simply count the number of times each person on the roster was nominated. Those individuals with numerous recommendations are recognized as highly informed, and they are potential key influencers in your school or district.

 [View the SNA Process Guide for detailed instructions on how to count the number of recommendations.](#)

 [Download the Working Roster Sheet.](#)

If you stop here, your next step is to select between 12 to 20 individuals with numerous recommendations and bring them together as the team who leads other WSCC implementation planning activities. Read more about these activities in the [Systems](#) and [Messages](#) modules.

 [Read the Case Study to learn more about how to share your findings and download templates to help you create a presentation.](#)

### THINGS TO CHECK BEFORE GETTING STARTED:

1. The roster includes people who have expertise in different areas of the WSCC model
2. The roster includes people who represent different roles
3. The roster includes recommendations from multiple people

### STEPS TO TAKE:

1. Count the number of times people are recommended
2. Select 12–20 people who have numerous recommendations
3. Bring these people together as a WSCC team
4. See our [Final Thoughts](#) to learn more ways your WSCC team can take action

### TOOLS TO USE:

1. SNA Process Guide
2. Working Roster Sheet

## Process level 2: Use your survey responses to identify a list of verified key influencers

*This process level will also allow you to explore specific information about how much those key influencers communicate with and are trusted by others.*

You might remember that the SNA Survey asks each person on the roster how frequently they communicate with others on the roster and how much they trust the information shared by those same people. As a reminder, it is important to collect SNA Surveys from at least 80% of the people on the roster. If you are missing surveys, consider returning to the [Administer Your SNA Survey section](#) and try a new way to increase the number of surveys that are completed.

Once SNA Surveys are collected, you can use the information shared to rank individuals who are most trusted and who are in most frequent communication with others in different types of roles. This ranking not only verifies individuals as key influencers, but it also illustrates how many people and with what level of trust each key influencer has the opportunity to influence.



View the [SNA Process Guide](#) for detailed instructions on how to complete this kind of assessment.



Download the [SNA Data Sheet](#).

Using this ranking, the next step is to select 12 to 20 individuals, depending on the size of your school or district, and convene them to implement the WSCC model. This group can help lead other aspects of the WSCC implementation planning, including activities described in the [Systems](#) and [Messages](#) modules.



Read the [Case Study](#) to learn more about how to share your findings and download templates to help you create a presentation.

In addition to leading planning activities, your key influencers can help you use the information from your SNA Surveys to explore more deeply those groups or people who were not identified as key influencers. You may realize that certain groups are missing from your key influencer list. For example: Are teachers part of your key influencers? What about parents and community partners? If you are missing groups, then you may need to identify other strategies to engage those who are missing.

You may also find some surprises: maybe people who you thought were influential were not identified as key influencers, or alternatively, people who you didn't expect to be influential were identified as key influencers. The survey responses give you a way to explore these results for more clarity. For example: someone who you thought was influential may only communicate with others on a monthly basis. They might be key influencers if they had more frequent opportunities to communicate.

### THINGS TO CHECK BEFORE GETTING STARTED:

1. At least 80% of the people on the roster have completed and returned a survey
2. All returned surveys have been entered into an Excel file or an online data file
3. All survey responses have been "cleaned"

### STEPS TO TAKE:

1. Create a ranked list of people based on level of trust and frequency of communication
2. Select 12–20 people from that list who communicate frequently with and are highly trusted by others in different roles
3. Bring those people together as a WSCC team
4. Explore information from the SNA Surveys in more depth
5. See our [Final Thoughts](#) to learn more ways your WSCC team can take action

### TOOLS TO USE:

1. SNA Process Guide
2. SNA Data Sheet

## Process level 3: Use your survey responses to create a visual map of verified key influencers and to explore specific information about the structure of relationships in your network

*The third and most robust level of analysis is a social network map. Building a network map requires you to collect SNA Surveys. If you haven't yet done this, return to the [Administer Your SNA Survey section](#) to get started.*

A network map gives you a visual picture of all the relationships among the people on your roster. It shows who is connected to whom, how often they connect, how much trust each person puts in the relationship, and the role of each person. It's remarkably useful in enabling your team to assess the strengths and weaknesses of your entire network, and therefore better understand the challenges you may face in implementing the WSCC model.

The map can also provide surprises. You might find, for example, that unexpected staff members are among the most connected, knowledgeable, and trusted individuals in the school community. In contrast, you might find that those with formal authority or particular positions are not as influential as one would expect.

**You will use an external tool, called NodeXL, to create a network map, visualize key influencers, and explore the structure of your network.**

 Explore information about the [NodeXL tool](#).<sup>8</sup>

 View the [SNA Process Guide](#) for detailed instructions on how to create a network map.

As noted above, these key influencers can become the team that helps implement the WSCC model, including leading activities described in the [Systems](#) and [Messages](#) modules.

 Read the [Case Study](#) to learn more about how to share your findings and download templates to help you create a presentation.

Your key influencers can also use the network map to explore the structure of relationships and communication patterns in your school or district. You may notice that people from the same school or role are clustered in a specific area of your network. This tells you that those groups have more frequent and trusted communication with one another and that your key influencers may need to identify opportunities to increase communication across roles or schools.

You might also notice that people are really spread out or there are few people in your network. This indicates that your network density — or the number of relationships among individuals in a network divided by the total number of possible relationships in the network — is low. This is just one of the measures that is associated with your network map and that your key influencers can explore.

### THINGS TO CHECK BEFORE GETTING STARTED:

1. At least 80% of the people on the roster have completed and returned a survey
2. All returned surveys have been entered into an Excel file or an online data file
3. All survey responses have been "cleaned," including making sure each person in your network map has a "unique" name

### STEPS TO TAKE:

1. Create a profile on NodeXL
2. Create a map of the social network for your school or district
3. Identify people in the map who have the most number of and strongest ties to others in the most diverse roles
4. Bring those people together as a WSCC team
5. Explore information from the network map in more depth
6. See our [Final Thoughts](#) to learn more ways your WSCC team can take action

### TOOLS TO USE:

1. SNA Process Guide
2. NodeXL tool

## FINAL THOUGHTS

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*Every school and district has people who are well-connected, trusted, and influence others. Now that you have identified the key influencers in your school or district, you are ready to bring these individuals together to help you accelerate efforts to create a school where every child is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged.*

Review Step 2 (“Identify a WSCC Coordinator and WSCC Team Leader,” pages 32–35) and Step 3 (“Assemble a District and/or School Team,” pages 36–41) of [The WSCC Model: A Guide to Implementation](#),<sup>4</sup> developed by the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD), to learn about specific roles and responsibilities that the individuals you identified can play to help implement the WSCC model in your school or district.

As you will see in the next two modules, the people, relationships, and communication patterns you uncovered using Social Network Analysis can also help you explore the systems and messages needed to implement the WSCC model.

A team of researchers, educators, and community partners worked from July 2017 through June 2018 to complete an SNA in two school districts in the St. Louis region.

To read how this work unfolded, [TURN TO NEXT PAGE](#) →

## Defining scope in St. Louis

### DEFINING NETWORK BOUNDARY

In St. Louis, each district completed a separate SNA, and there were some differences in how the work took shape across the districts.

Our team in St. Louis was interested in understanding who — at both the school building and district levels — were key influencers and could help implement the WSCC model. For this reason, we defined their network boundary to be those individuals connected to three specific schools in each district (one elementary, one middle, and one high school) and across the districts.

Completing an SNA at individual schools and at the district level increased the complexity of the work, but it also allowed us to see how people connect between schools within the district's existing structure. This approach was appropriate for the type of model being explored. We hit a few roadblocks, however, in the larger of the two districts where the large number and wide geographic distribution of schools in the district made it difficult to identify key influencers who had relationships with multiple schools.

An alternative to our approach would be to complete SNAs among sub-networks within the larger district. For example, we could have focused our SNA among schools that shared services or were feeder schools to one another.

### SELECTING SNA PROCESS LEVELS

With the support of grant funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, our team in St. Louis was able to partner with university-based SNA experts. These experts led the teams through all three process levels — from the creation of a roster, through administration of a survey, and finally to the development of network maps for all participating schools and each district. Differences in how these processes looked in each school and district are described in greater detail on the following pages.

### DECIDING WHETHER TO USE INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL RESOURCES

In St. Louis, a combination of internal and external resources were used. The SNA experts, who were based at a local university, led the work, and liaisons from each district helped facilitate each process. In one district, the project liaison role was filled by a Director of Curriculum and Instruction who was new to the district. In the other district, the liaison was the Assistant Superintendent in the

area of student supports and services and had been with the district for many years. One of the districts also appointed building-level liaisons at the three schools participating in the project. Building-level liaisons included a school secretary, a teacher, and a book clerk. The ways in which building-level liaisons helped facilitate SNA in their schools is described later.

The district liaisons played roles similar to that of a SNA coordinator. Their first task was to receive approval from the district's board for the project, including the SNA processes. Board approval required drafting a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that explained what was going to be done, who was going to participate, and what the roles and expectations of the district and its partners were.

In both districts, the process of describing what the project entailed was a critical step in communicating about the importance of SNA for implementing the WSCC model. The messages used in the MOU helped the team gain buy-in and support from district leadership.



### MESSAGES MATTER

Finding the right person to facilitate each step of the SNA is critical. SNA taps into the expertise and input of many people with diverse roles, so it is important that whoever is leading the work is familiar with and trusted by school and district stakeholders. It's equally important that this person is passionate about making schools a healthy place for learning and development.



See an [example of the SNA coordinator job description the team in St. Louis used to identify its project liaisons](#).

How you communicate about the value of SNA in implementing the WSCC model is important. If you need to get approval from district leaders or school board members for SNA, consider using an MOU to help explain what you will be doing, who will be participating, and how the information will be used.



See an [example of some of the language the team in St. Louis used in its MOU](#).

## Building rosters in St. Louis

Our team in St. Louis worked closely with school and district liaisons to develop a roster at each school. We started by reviewing the Roster Survey together to ensure that the instructions were easy to understand. It was also important that the email that went out with the Roster Survey was clear about how we would use the information shared. We were particularly concerned about this because the Roster Survey asks people to identify the names of others, which might be regarded as unusual, especially with the information being shared with a university team. Confidentiality — or the assurance that information shared in surveys will not be tied to the individual who shared the information — went a long way in overcoming these concerns.

After everyone was satisfied with the Roster Survey Email and the Roster Survey, we created the survey in two formats: online and paper. This way, individuals could complete the Roster Survey in whatever format was most convenient for them. Our team used **Qualtrics**<sup>9</sup> as its online survey platform, however, there are many programs that can support the development and administration of an online survey. **Google Form**<sup>10</sup> is a free, online program that is well-suited for this type of survey.

In St. Louis, the district liaisons and school principals started the process by filling out a Roster Survey to nominate people in each participating school and at the district level who were well-trusted sources of information and in frequent contact with others.



The research team collected the survey responses and worked with the liaisons to verify the name, role(s), and contact information of each nominee before adding them to the Working Roster Sheet.

Although the process of verifying information for nominees seems straightforward, our team in St. Louis found there were a few common issues. For example, a person may go by a nickname (Kim vs. Kimberly). This may seem like an unimportant difference, but it has a big impact on the accuracy of your analysis.



[Read tips for how to efficiently clean and verify information.](#)

Once names were added to the Working Roster Sheet, the research team emailed those people who were nominated in the first round of the Roster Survey. The email asked nominees to complete a Roster Survey, and gave them a 2-week timeline for completing it, either online, over the phone, or in person. Most people completed the survey online. A few completed the survey over the phone or in person, and in these instances, the research team entered the information into an online survey for the stakeholder. That way, all the information from surveys was ready in a single data file.

In our experience, the most effective way to reach people was through someone they trust. For example, we found that many more people completed a survey when a school or district leader sent an email inviting their participation.

The process described above was repeated in each school until the team and liaisons felt it had a balanced list of individuals who played different roles in the school community. Having building-level liaisons was particularly helpful in that they had intimate knowledge of when certain people were missing from the roster. They were also able to put the research team in touch with hard-to-reach individuals, like parents.

In the end, the rosters looked different in each school. Some schools identified multiple parents and community partners, while other schools identified very few of these types of individuals. One school had a roster as large as 75 people, while others had much smaller rosters of about 40 people.



## MESSAGES MATTER

The Roster Survey Email is an important messaging opportunity. In this email, you want to be clear and concise. Everyone is busy, and short, clear emails help ensure that people read them and take action.

The main points you need to include in the email are: your ask (to take a survey and nominate individuals at your school or district), the timeline (usually 2 weeks), and how the information will be used (to develop a list of people who can help implement a healthy schools model). If you're able to maintain confidentiality of information shared, that's an important point to include in the email as well.

The messenger — or the person who sends out the email — is also important. Try to select a messenger who is known and respected by stakeholders. People will be more likely to respond to the survey if they feel connected or accountable to the person making the request.



See an [example of a Roster Survey Email](#) the team in St. Louis used when inviting people to participate.

The Roster Survey is pretty simple. It asks people to identify the names of individuals in different roles who are well-trusted sources of information and are in frequent communication with many others.



See an [example of a paper Roster Survey](#) the team in St. Louis distributed to school and district stakeholders.



Learn [how to create a Roster Survey using Google Forms](#).

Most of this work can be completed by the SNA coordinator using a free, online program called Google Forms.



View [more information about Google Forms](#).<sup>10</sup>

An external survey distributor — such as Qualtrics or SurveyMonkey — may also be used, but there are limitations in the free versions.



View [more information about Qualtrics](#).<sup>9</sup>



View [more information about SurveyMonkey](#).<sup>11</sup>



## Analyzing and interpreting results in St. Louis

*Experts in SNA led all analyses for the team in St. Louis. The information from these analyses was used and presented in a variety of ways. A few examples are provided below.*

### USING INFORMATION FROM THE ROSTER

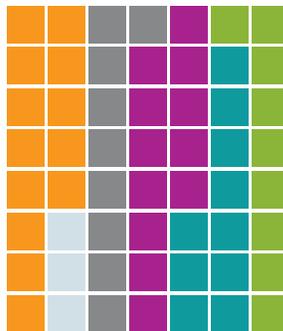
Our team in St. Louis produced basic counts of the number of times individuals were identified as being highly communicative after about 2 months of roster development. As described previously and in the [SNA Process Guide](#), we ranked people on the roster. This ranking — from highest number of recommendations to lowest — looked different across the schools.

For starters, the roster size ranged from 40 to 75 individuals across participating schools. The percentage of people listed on rosters who were teachers, staff, administrators, district leaders, parents, and community partners also varied between schools. In one school, as much as 40% of the roster was teachers, while only 19% of another school's roster was teachers. Variation like this was found for all stakeholder groups, but in general, administrators, community partners, and district leaders comprised lower percentages of the roster, and teachers, staff, and parents comprised higher percentages.

The roster rankings were never shared with individuals directly, but they were used to inform who was invited to participate in research and planning activities. For example, we selected potential follow-up interview participants from this list. Because the list included

### MESSAGES MATTER

The way that data and information are presented is important. A role distribution or “waffle” diagram — displayed below — is one way to present the number of individuals and roles that were identified on a roster. In this diagram, each square represents one person, and the color of the square represents that person's role.



Download a [template to create your own role distribution diagram](#).

individuals in many different roles, our team was able to identify a diverse group of people with whom to have in-depth conversations about WSCC implementation planning.

### USING INFORMATION FROM THE SNA SURVEYS

Our team in St. Louis used information from SNA surveys to create lists of key influencers at each participating school and across each district. Using the processes described previously and in the [SNA Process Guide](#), the team limited the SNA Survey data to include only those relationships that represented moderate frequency of contact (at least once per month) and moderate levels of trust (more than “a little” and “not at all”).

After limiting the data, we identified approximately 20 people who had the highest value of communication frequency and trustworthiness. Our team wanted to select a group that represented a diverse set of roles,

so we chose four individuals from each of the following categories: parents, teachers, staff, community partners, administrators, and district leaders. For most schools, there were not four administrators or district leaders from which to choose.

We presented the list of key influencers to district leaders as part of a report. Because the lists contained names of individuals, we did not share the lists with everyone, and the decision to distribute the key influencer lists beyond district leadership was left up to each leader.



Download a [template to create your own key influencer list](#).



## USING INFORMATION FROM THE NETWORK MAP

The social network maps for each school and district were very helpful to our team in St. Louis. We used them to facilitate deeper conversations about the structure of relationships in each school and district. The maps helped people discuss aspects of the network without focusing on specific individuals.

The discussion points of highest interest included:

- **Distribution of key influencers across the network**, meaning whether key influencers were located on the outside or inside of the network
- **Clustering of key influencers of similar and different roles**, meaning whether key influencers were in more frequent conversation with others in the same or different roles
- **Density of the network**, meaning how many of all of the possible relationships actually existed

Seeing the network maps prompted some people to discuss ways to improve network density and cross-role relationships. For example, one school that saw it needed to improve cross-role communication started exploring how they could broaden the people involved in their “care team” process. This process traditionally included social workers, counselors, and community service providers, but it did not include teachers or parents on a regular basis. In another example, a school that had low network density and few connections with district-level individuals wanted to create a contact list to facilitate easier lines of communication.

Both districts recommended re-creating the maps on a yearly basis as a way to track how networks change as individuals transition in and out of roles.

## MESSAGES MATTER

Network maps contain a lot of information, and they are not always easy to make sense of on their own. Distribution and clustering in a network is best highlighted by using different colors to represent different roles of individuals in a network. An example of a color-coded network is shared below.



 Get started and [create a network map](#) using NodeXL.<sup>8</sup>

 Once you’ve created your network, download a [template to present this network to stakeholders in your school or district](#).

A useful way to talk about network density is in relation to the “ideal” range of network density. A simple bar graph — as displayed below — can help with this.



 Download a [template to create your own density bar chart](#).

