C-SAIL FINDINGS THROUGH YEAR THREE
The Center on Standards, Alignment, Instruction, and Learning (C-SAIL) examines how college- and career-readiness (CCR) standards are implemented, if they improve student learning, and what instructional tools measure and support their implementation. Below are the most important findings to-date from our four research studies. For more information on C-SAIL, visit c-sail.org.

IMPLEMENTATION STUDY

- C-SAIL’s between-district analyses find the following consistent patterns of teachers’ instructional alignment to state content standards across Kentucky, Texas, and Ohio.
  - Teachers of English language learners (ELLs) have similar levels of instructional alignment as do math and English language arts (ELA) general education teachers.
  - Elementary math and high school ELA teachers cover more standards emphasized content than de- emphasized content. In contrast, elementary ELA and high school math teachers cover more de-emphasized content than emphasized.
  - Teachers of students with disabilities (SWD) consistently report less coverage of standards emphasized grade-level content than do general education teachers.

- Teachers’ buy-in to state CCR standards may be predictive of their instructional alignment. Preliminary analyses of teachers’ perceptions of state content standards using self-reporting reveal that high levels of authority—stakeholder buy-in—are predictive of higher instructional alignment among ELA teachers.

- In contrast, we find no relationship between teachers’ perceptions of power—systems of rewards and sanctions—and instructional alignment or student achievement. This finding is consistent across our partner states, geographic subgroups, across grades, and in both math and reading.

- States and districts increasingly characterize their approach to implementing CCR standards as support-oriented. This approach involves key stakeholders in designing, creating, identifying, and deploying a wide network of mechanisms to support standards implementation at different scales and signals a deliberate move away from compliance-oriented approaches, in part as a result of the transition from the No Child Left Behind Act to the Every Student Succeeds Act.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

- As districts seek guidance in supporting ELLs to meet CCR standards, states and national consortia, such as WIDA and ELPA-21, are taking a more active, centralized role in developing ELL policies. For example, the English Language Development (ELD) standards, developed by WIDA, parallel the general content standards and ELD assessments monitor language growth. A key focus of ELD standards and assessments is the more rigorous reclassification criteria, which helps ensure that ELLs are able to engage in grade-level content with few scaffolds before they are reclassified as fully English proficient and placed into mainstream classes without support services.

- Special education teachers are more skeptical than state and district administrators that CCR standards are relevant and achievable for SWDs. General education teachers share this skepticism.

MEASUREMENT STUDY

- Teachers reliably report on the content of their instruction, whether using short- (i.e. two weeks) and long-term logs or a semester-long survey. ELA teachers are better at consistently reporting than mathematics teachers. Thus, the reliability of semester-end surveys seems moderate to

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good. However, teachers’ ability to report on the content of their instruction for a *single lesson* is weak, as they tend to overreport both topics and cognitive demands.

- Weak reporting in the Measurement Study may be due to a lack of teacher training on how to complete the logs—early evidence from the FAST intervention suggests that teachers’ understanding of the survey and ability to complete it can improve over time with coaching and practice.

- Investigating the validity of teacher reports as an accurate description of what they taught over periods of time, such as a semester or full year, is more difficult and outside the scope of this study.

**LONGITUDINAL STUDY**

- **Nationally, CCR standards adoption was associated with small declines in student achievement as measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).**
  - This study assesses the effects of CCR standards by examining changes in NAEP scores after the adoption of the new standards relative to the pre-adoption trend, hypothesizing that states with weaker prior standards would show more improvement than states with stronger prior standards.\(^1\) This hypothesis was not supported, however, with effect sizes ranging from -0.11 to 0.06 standard deviations across subjects (math and reading), grades (4 and 8), and years (1 year, 3 years, 5 years, and 7 years after adoption). None of the effects were statistically significant except for the consistently negative effects for grade 4 reading and the negative effect for grade 8 math observed 7 years after the adoption of the CCR standards.
  - One possible explanation for the lack of positive effects of the CCR standards is that the new standards may not have been well implemented, given the various types of implementation challenges reported by states, districts, and teachers.

**FEEDBACK ON ALIGNMENT AND SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS (FAST) PROGRAM STUDY**

- **Teachers find the FAST program, developed by C-SAIL to support elementary school teachers to provide instruction aligned to their state content standards, useful after initial apprehension.**
  - Teachers reported finding the FAST program useful for understanding the essence of the standards and how they differ from teachers’ current practices.
  - After any initial apprehension about being video recorded, teachers find the videos particularly useful for reflecting on alignment to standards.

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\(^1\) The analyses were restricted to states that adopted the CCR standards in 2010. The rigor of their prior standards was determined based on the measures developed by Carmichael, Martino, Porter-Magee, and Wilson (2010) and Schmidt and Houang (2012). The new standards are assumed to present a stronger form of “treatment” for states with weaker prior standards than for states with stronger prior standards.

**References**
