


# The FAST Study



## Feedback on Alignment and Support for Teachers (FAST) Study

### IMPORTANCE AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Over the last decade, most states have adopted new college- and career-readiness standards in math and English language arts (ELA) which call for the mastery of ambitious content and raise expectations for student success and classroom instruction. To **support teachers in the implementation of these new, challenging standards**, the Center on Standards, Alignment, Instruction, and Learning (C-SAIL) has developed the Feedback on Alignment and Support for Teachers (FAST) program.

The FAST program is designed as a partnership between instructional coaches and teachers to support them in fully understanding the college- and career-readiness standards in their state and how they can be implemented to foster learning for all students, including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWDs).

The FAST program is being piloted during the 2016-17 school year. Teachers already participating in

the pilot say the program is helpful for reflecting on instruction. We are now beginning a rigorous study to understand the impact of implementing FAST on instruction and student achievement.

C-SAIL is seeking partner districts to implement and test the FAST program over the 2017-18 and 2018-19 school years. The program is customized to support each participating district's state standards and materials and will address three questions:

1. How is the FAST program implemented?
2. Does the FAST program lead to greater alignment of teachers' content coverage with state standards?
3. Does the FAST program lead to increased student achievement as measured by state assessments?

## COMPONENTS OF THE PROGRAM

The FAST program includes three components:

1. **Personalized Coaching.** Teachers meet with FAST coaches, who are experts in math or ELA, both individually and as part of school-based, grade-level collaborative teams to discuss the content of their instruction and identify ways to strengthen the alignment of their instruction to state standards. The discussions focus on the topics that teachers are teaching as well as the level of cognitive demand required for students to master the standards.
2. **Resources to Support Reflection.** Teachers use instructional logs and video recordings of instruction to support reflection on alignment of instruction to state standards. The instructional logs are accessible on an online portal via computer or mobile device. Upon completing a log, teachers receive a real-time report on instructional alignment. Instructional videos are collected via study-provided video equipment and uploaded to the online portal. FAST coaches review videos and select short clips for reflection. The log reports and video clips form the basis of discussion and reflection with the FAST coach.

3. **Library of Resources.** The online portal includes a library of resources to support teachers in designing instruction aligned to state standards for all students. It includes instructional materials to be used during lessons, professional learning resources to promote understanding of what the standards require, and resources to support instruction for ELLs and SWDs. Teachers and FAST coaches examine these resources during their meetings.

## BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION

Schools and teachers selected by lottery to offer the FAST program will receive **free access** to the components of the FAST program. This includes research-based assistance in implementing instruction aligned to the standards for all students, including ELLs and SWDs. In addition, **participating teachers in these schools will receive stipends** to attend coaching meetings that occur outside the school day. Teachers in both FAST schools and business-as-usual comparison schools also **will be compensated for participating in data collection.** Finally, all participating districts, schools, and teachers will be part of this innovative research leading to improvements in elementary math and ELA education and student achievement. Participants will also be able to keep the video equipment at the end of the study.



**“Teachers need to be fully supported in implementing the rigorous content that college- and career-readiness standards demand.”**

**– Andy Porter, C-SAIL Director**

## STUDY ELIGIBILITY

The FAST program will be implemented with 4<sup>th</sup>-grade teachers in math and 5<sup>th</sup>-grade teachers in ELA. To be eligible, a district must have at least six elementary schools enrolling 4<sup>th</sup>- and 5<sup>th</sup>-grade students, with at least two teachers at each school in each of those grade levels.

C-SAIL will work with each participating district to identify at least six elementary schools interested in participating in the study. Among the participating schools, half will be assigned by lottery to participate in the FAST program. The other half will continue with business-as-usual.

## STUDY TIMELINE

Districts and schools will be selected by May 2017. The program will take place during the 2017-18 and 2018-19 school years. The components of the program will be introduced in stages, giving teachers an opportunity to become familiar with each component before moving to the next. Districts and schools will work closely with the study team to ensure participation and high-quality implementation of the full FAST program.

We will ask teachers in both the FAST and comparison schools to complete a survey in Fall 2017, Spring 2018, and Spring 2019. We will also compile student achievement scores for students in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades in the 2017-18 and 2018-19 school years.

**Participants will be compensated for their time.**

## Additional Information

For more information, contact Toni Smith, Ph.D. at AIR ([tsmith@air.org](mailto:tsmith@air.org) or 202-403-5926) or Andy Porter, Ph.D. at University of Pennsylvania ([andyp@upenn.edu](mailto:andyp@upenn.edu) or 215-300-6278).

## About C-SAIL

**The Center on Standards, Alignment, Instruction, and Learning (C-SAIL)** was established in July 2015 to provide an objective source of information on the implementation of the standards adopted by states. Funded by the Institute of Education Sciences of the U.S. Department of Education, C-SAIL is led by a team of researchers from the University of Pennsylvania, American Institutes for Research, the University of Southern California, and Vanderbilt University. Key partners include five states that are diverse in both their geography and their approach to college- and career-readiness standards: California, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Ohio, and Texas.

**Visit [c-sail.org](http://c-sail.org) to learn more.**

