

## **Family Academic Support Team <sup>TM</sup> Implementation**

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## **Project Funding Source**

K12 Managed Public Schools

## **Project Cost & Brief Narrative Budget**

Project program costs covered incremental staffing needs across 19 virtual schools to start a Family Academic Support Team. K12, Inc. can not disclose budget details.

## **Scope & Setting of Project**

The scope of the project was to successfully implement a Family Academic Support Team in 19 managed public schools within K12 with the goal of providing wrap-around supports to increase persistence in those students most at risk of dropping out and/or withdrawing from the program. FAST is an Integrated Student Support model that is data driven with the focus of re-engagement in the virtual school setting. FAST empowers students to overcome challenges—be they academic, social, emotional, medical, or otherwise—to succeed in school and beyond. This holistic approach includes early intervention, support services, and linking families to school and community-based resources. FAST members and teachers work with families to provide the extra help needed to enable students to stay motivated and on track. Data drives decision making. Data is analyzed throughout the referral process to monitor individual student progress and program efficacy.

## **Staffing Pattern of Project**

The FAST is responsible for two key areas which support student and family engagement: 1) starting students off strong and 2) keeping students on track.

### Team Responsibilities:

#### FAST Lead

- Team Management
- Services Oversight
- Implementation Fidelity

#### Family Engagement Coordinator

- Strong Start Onboarding Program
- Parental Involvement
- Enrichment Trainings
- Community Building

#### Family Academic Support Liaison

- Student/Learning Coach Support
- Intervention
- Action Planning
- Accountability

#### Family Resource Coordinator

- Mental Health Concerns
- Crisis Training & Response
- Community Referrals

### Family Compliance Liaison

- Attendance Tracking
- Chronic Absenteeism
- School Policy
- State Regulations

### Population Served by the Project

40% of K12's managed public schools were staffed and participated in the FAST pilot program. Pilot schools made up half of all students served by K12 schools.

A referral is the method by which the Family Academic Support Team becomes aware that a student and family are experiencing challenges that impact school engagement and academic performance. 13% of kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students enrolled in a given school were referred to the program based on a criteria of factors indicating a need for additional support determined by teacher, academic administration, or other school personnel.

### How the project originated

FAST was originally developed in 2010 as a pilot program at one of K12's virtual schools in Georgia due to significant number of students withdrawing and not meeting academic goals due to social, emotional, and/or medical issues. This program took steps to address these challenges by working closely with struggling students to teach behaviors conducive to academic success and by linking them to school and community resources. This resulted in improvement in retention and academic outcomes of students referred to the program.

### Issued and/or Needs Addressed by Project

- Dropout/Withdrawal
- Chronic Absenteeism
- Compliancy issues
- Lack of engagement in courses/classes
- Low/No Progress in courses
- Family Training/Support needs
- Family crises
- Social, emotional, or behavioral issues

### Desired Outcomes & Measurable Objectives

Goals of FAST:

- Develop the capacity of students and families from a strength-based perspective
- Help students stay on track through early interventions, wrap-around supports and engagement strategies
- Work through non-academic issues with students and families in order to remove barriers to school success
- Creates a positive, welcoming and supportive school climate during Strong Start and throughout the year that allow a range of opportunities for parental involvement
- Develop community partnerships in order to better support students and families with social, emotional, and medical issues

- Foster student connectedness and nurture student motivation
- Improve student retention to promote students to the next grade level and achieve on-time graduation

Measurable Objectives:

- >10% student population will be referred to the FAST program, with representation across all grade bands
- > 65% of referrals will receive individualized intervention and weekly contact by appropriate FAST member
- >65% of referrals will successfully exit program and remain engaged in school

### **Strategies or Interventions of the Project**

Strategies and interventions are categorized within two program goals 1) start students off strong and 2) referral case management.

**Strong Start:** Comprehensive onboarding program with the goals of ensuring students and families are ready to learn, trained in navigating systems, and establish positive schooling habits. Differentiated support indicators are predictive of a student's likelihood to persist in school and is used to facilitate support provided at the startup of school for new and returning students.

**Referral:** A referral is the method by which the FAST Team becomes aware that a student and family are experiencing challenges that impact school engagement and academic performance. FAST provides an additional layer of support through a tiered intervention process. Teachers or other staff submit referrals via the online FAST Tracker case management system. All documentation of student reason for referral, progress and interventions are accessible and maintained in the system. Both the FAST Team and student's teachers can monitor the student's intervention plan and progress.

### **Timeline of Project**

The duration of this project was one full academic year (2015-16), but is still ongoing. Extended program launch is in Year 2, and we are currently planning for full launch in Year 3.

### **Special Conditions, Expertise, or Skills Required to Carry Out Project**

A comprehensive national implementation plan was developed, consisting of the following three categories:

1. Professional Development
  - Role-Specific
  - Professional Learning Community
  - Synchronous and Asynchronous Training
  - Hands-On and Virtual Support
2. Analytics
  - Manage Data
  - Establish and Track Metrics
  - Communicate Dashboards

3. Program Development
- Consultation Model
  - Problem Solving
  - Assist with Staffing

**Outcomes, Results, and Achievements of the Project**

66% of students served were successfully exited from FAST and transitioned to sustainable school supports. Additional positive results around academic performance, intervention plan implementation, welcome notes, persistence and early intervention were determined.

Chart 1: Academic Improvement for FAST Referrals

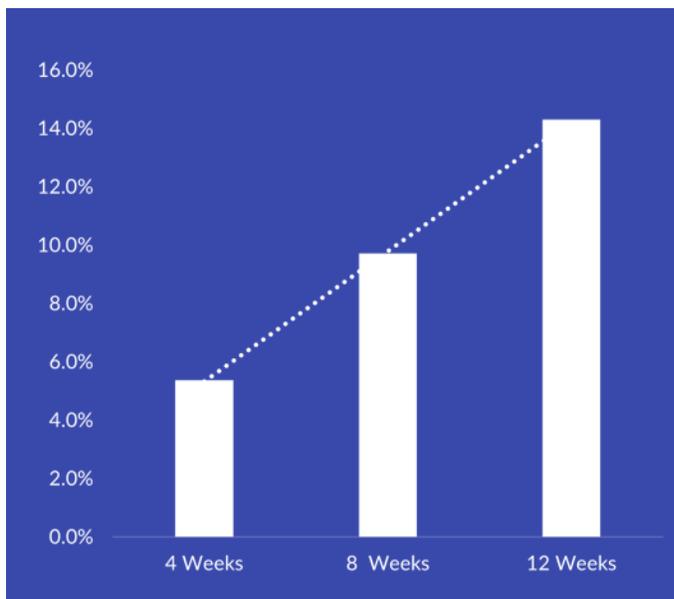
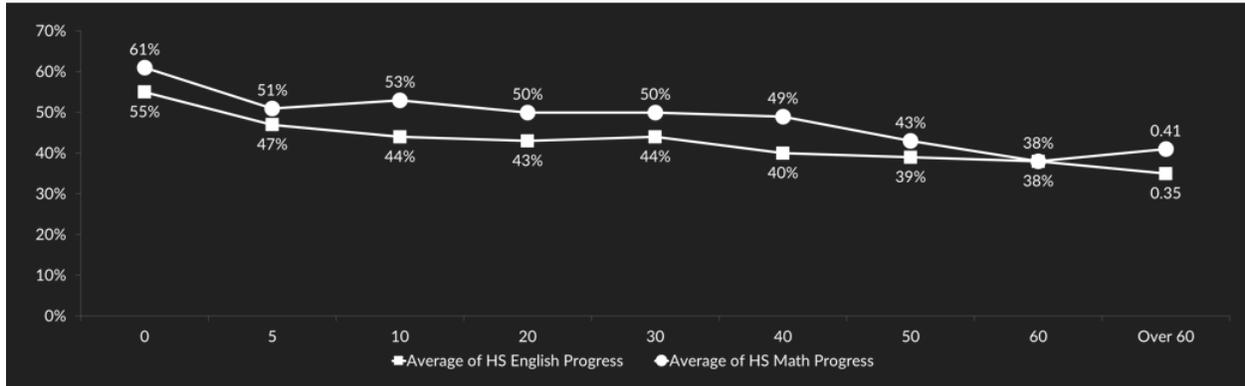


Chart 1 shows that student progress continues to rise after working with FAST, as measured by intervention plan date and each week thereafter. Most cases are closed within a few weeks, but the positive effects of FAST can be seen months later, as indicated at the 12-week mark on the chart.

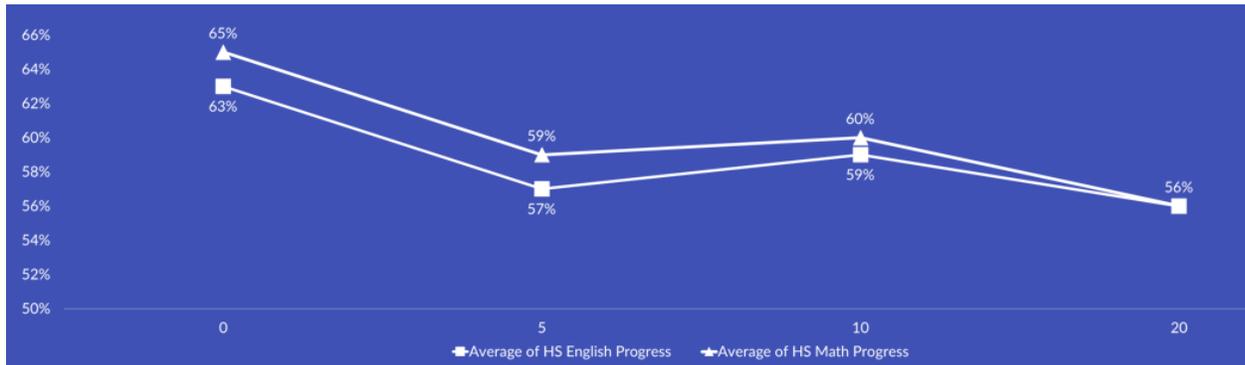
Chart 2: Time to Intervention Plan



As shown in Chart 2, the *Time to Intervention Plan* chart, the amount of time which passes between when the student being referred to the FAST program to the time in which the student has an Intervention plan (Back On Track plan) in place is a statistically significant predictor for High School Math and English/Language Arts course percent completion. The slope of this predictor is very small, near zero, meaning that there is a linear relationship between the predictor and outcomes, so an optimal time can be explored to ensure maximum impact. More research in the future will be done to determine the optimal time.

Data sample from Fall 2015.

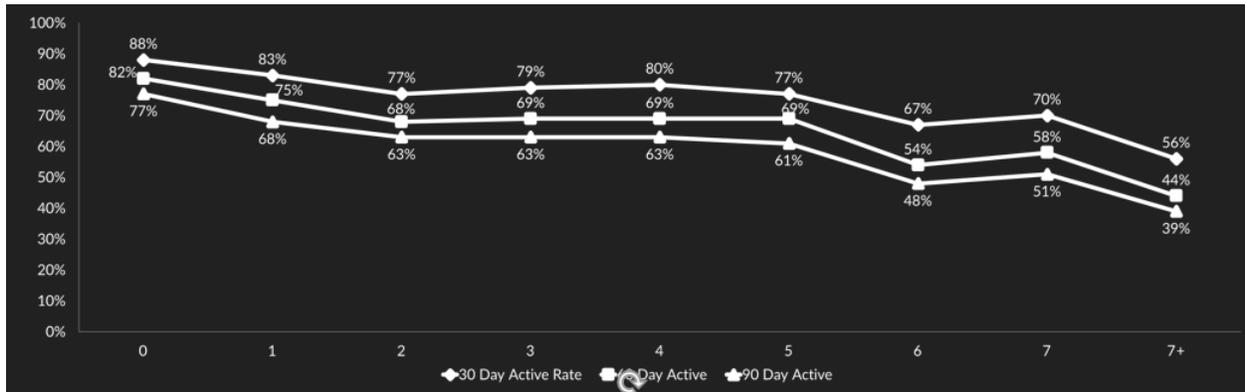
Graph 1: Time to Welcome Note



Graph 1 above indicates that the number of days that pass between a student's enrollment in school and the time in which a student receives a welcome contact is a statistically significant predictor for High School Math and English/Language Arts course percentage completion. The slope of this predictor is negative, meaning that the shorter the time between student enrollment and receiving a welcome contact, the more progress the student makes in math and English/Language Arts.

Data sample from Fall 2015.

Chart 3: Persistence & Early Intervention



The timing of when a student was referred to FAST has an impact on his/her persistence in school. Chart 3 shows a group of students who were identified as needing intervention and the speed to which that need was identified relative to disengagement behaviors impacting those students' persistence. This identifies the elapsed days between a student last logging into the online school and student's persistence rate within the school.

For students who last logged in on the day of the referral, 88% of them were still active in 30 days, but for students where it had been 7 days, 70% of them were still active at 30 days. This outcome underscores the need to be systematic about detecting students who need intervention and processing the referral and intervention to ensure that the program is reaching kids quickly. Data sample from SY 2015-16.

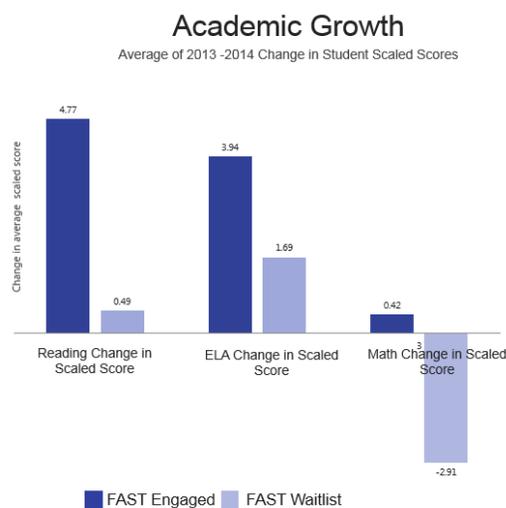
### How Outcomes Are Related to Schools Completion & Graduation Rates

FAST provides individualized support to students who are most at risk of not completing school and are showing signs of disengagement. Progress and course average data is used to determine effectiveness of FAST support and next steps for intervention. FAST intervention is always focused on driving academic achievement and persistence in the school program.

The 2015 K12 Academic Report examined initial outcomes of the pilot FAST program over the first four years, comparing academic growth results for students served by FAST to a similar group of students who were referred but on the waiting list for FAST support.

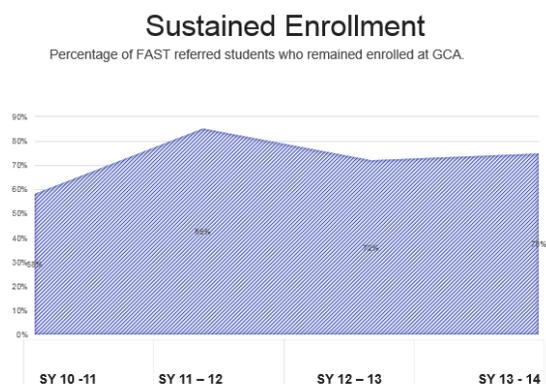
- As seen in Figure 1, from SY 12-13 to SY 13-14, all 4-10<sup>th</sup> grade students who were engaged in the FAST program achieved positive growth on state tests in reading, English/Language Arts, and mathematics. When examining average growth in scaled scores for SY 12-13 to SY 13-14, the growth of FAST participants exceeded that of students on the waiting list for FAST in all subject areas.
- Figure 2 indicates that FAST intervention has supported student persistence throughout the time of program implementation. In the first year (SY10-11), 58% of students remained in the program and completed school. By the 4<sup>th</sup> year (SY13-14) of implementation, 75% of referred students remained enrolled at the school.

**Figure 1: Academic Growth**



*\*Provided From 2015 CAO's Academic Report – Featured Program*

**Figure 2: Sustained Enrollment**



### **Current Status of the Project**

The project successfully completed Year 1 and has expanded in size and scope. The project is currently in the planning stages for Year 3 of program implementation.

### **My Role in Project**

I serve as the Program Director of Student Support Services/FAST and am responsible for national implementation and oversight.

### **Lessons Learned from Project**

After implementing the first year of this project at a national/district level, I have learned the importance of four key areas:

1. **Personnel:** Clearly defined roles and responsibilities are needed. Ensure the right skill sets for the positions and don't compromise. Re-evaluate training needs regularly.
2. **Communication:** Provide information upfront and early to all stakeholders. Plan rollout to administration, boards and school staff. Share actionable data for school use and subsequent tracking.
3. **Organization:** Homeroom model provides structure for prevention and referral process. Instill fidelity to program model and positions as defined.
4. **Culture:** Staff engage in open and honest discourse with a commitment to continuous improvement and problem solving. Use of evidence-based programs and promising practices.

### **Advice for other dropout prevention practitioners**

- Ensure all stakeholders have buy-in and sense of ownership
- Define and provide consistent expectations, transparency and accountability

- Be agile and responsive; act quickly to provide early intervention
- Create a plan for relevant training and professional development
- Trust the process