

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT LAB

IMPROVE LITERACY OUTCOMES FOR STRUGGLING STUDENTS THROUGH FAMILY ENGAGEMENT



FASTalk, Families and Schools Talk, is a tool for schools to engage families in improving literacy outcomes for all students, including English learners and students with disabilities.



FASTALK IS EASY & IMPROVES LITERACY OUTCOMES

“FASTalk is very easy for the teachers. There is no work involved whatsoever and it is tied to our curriculum.”

- Tracey Tucker, Elementary Teacher

FASTALK ENGAGES DIVERSE FAMILIES IN STUDENT LEARNING

Parents receive simple activities by text in their preferred language to support at-home learning. FASTalk supports 100+ languages!

FASTALK BRINGS TIER 1 CURRICULUM INTO THE HOME

Activities are aligned with the academic calendar and supports Tier 1 ELA curriculum in K-5. Messages are sent automatically!

HOW DOES FASTALK WORK?

FASTalk messages are:

- **Pre-loaded and pre-scheduled**, providing an **easy way for teachers to share key information with parents** about what their child is learning in each ELA Guidebook unit, and how they can help at home; and
- Support automated **2-way message translation between teachers and families** in parents' home language.

Here is an example of a week's text messages aligned with a unit on the American Revolution:

MONDAY

From Ms. Lee: Your child is prepping for a debate about the American Revolution. Let them be the “teacher” & ask them to teach you something they learned.

WEDNESDAY

From Ms. Lee: Putting what they learned in their own words helps your child retain new info. Respond by paraphrasing: “I hear you saying that...”

FRIDAY

From Ms. Lee: I value your feedback! Please let me know if you tried this week's activity. Reply:
1: yes
2: not yet

FASTALK IN LOUISIANA

The Louisiana Department of Education selected FASTalk to develop messages aligned with ELA Guidebooks in grades 3-5 and pilot in SPDG schools in **Calcasieu, East Baton Rouge, Pointe Coupee, Jefferson, Sabine and Algiers Charter Schools**. Our team developed parent-friendly text messages that were reviewed by the Guidebooks team and available in 100+ languages. Since September, FASTalk has rolled out in 97 classrooms in 21 schools across Louisiana.



FASTALK IS SUPPORTING STUDENT LITERACY OUTCOMES ACROSS THE STATE

Currently, **685 families across Louisiana are receiving weekly text messages to support their child's academic success** through Family Engagement Lab's FASTalk (Families and Schools Talk) tool. Throughout the school year, families will receive 24 messages during each Guidebook unit.

EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Now used in 29 classrooms in five SPDG schools, FASTalk is helping schools engage diverse families in their child's learning, including a large and growing Spanish-speaking population.

"FASTalk, to me, is going to be everything. Send me every text message possible. Education is important in our household."

- Parent, LaBelle Aire Elementary School

SABINE PARISH SCHOOL BOARD

FASTalk is used in all seven elementary schools. Teachers see FASTalk increasing parents' support of learning, and students more confident in the classroom.

"With ease and efficiency, FASTalk helps teachers connect parents/caregivers with their children by providing a simple, engaging, conversational stem to stimulate children's thinking and dialogue about their learning in the reading/language arts classroom."

- Bridget Corely, Elementary Programs Supervisor

TEACHERS SEE FASTALK MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE CLASSROOM



"We're on the American Revolution, so, I asked, 'Why did the English settlers come to America? They were in search of...?' One student said 'liberty' and usually they say, 'freedom.' Liberty was one of the vocabulary words on the text messages and I knew his mom had responded! He's one of my lower performing students so it was really cool to know he and his mom were reinforcing what we were learning at home. So, I'm really enjoying FASTalk!"

- Emily Leone, 4th Grade ELA Teacher, Many Elementary

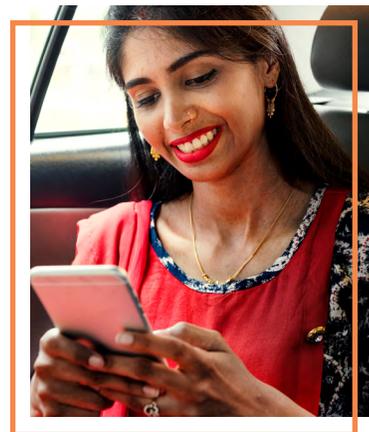
FASTALK SUPPORTS DIVERSE LEARNERS

FASTalk is designed to provide key supports for families of all students including diverse learners, such as English learners and students with disabilities.

ENGLISH LEARNERS: FASTALK TRANSCENDS LANGUAGE BARRIERS TO HELP EL STUDENTS ACHIEVE.

The percentage of English learners in Louisiana has nearly tripled since 2006. This trend is especially pronounced in East Baton Rouge, where parents and teachers have expressed a need for solutions that address language barriers and promote an effective partnership between parents and teachers.

FASTalk is **breaking down language barriers** by making it easy for teachers and families who do not share a common language to communicate and collaborate to support student learning. A recent evaluation found that FASTalk accelerated literacy gains by 0.5-1.1 months for all students, however, students whose parents do not share a language with their child's teacher exhibited **accelerated literacy gains of 1.6 to 2.8 months**.



STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: FASTALK SUPPORTS STUDENTS IN ACCESSING GRADE-LEVEL TEXT

FASTalk supports statewide efforts to **ensure that students with disabilities are in classrooms learning grade-level content alongside their regular education peers daily**. Currently, 205 families of students with disabilities are receiving weekly messages - and the number continues to grow. Through accessible, actionable tips and activities that are aligned with the Guidebook units, FASTalk allows parents to support their child in accessing grade-level ELA content at home.



FASTALK SHOWS EARLY IMPACT IN LOUISIANA

In November 2018, Family Engagement Lab conducted focus groups with families and teachers in Sabine and East Baton Rouge Parishes to gather feedback on FASTalk and learn more about teachers' and families' early experiences with the tool.

WHAT ARE PARENTS SAYING ABOUT FASTALK?

"I enjoy it [FASTalk] because as kids get older, you know less and less about what they're doing in class. When they're little, you get the Pre-K newsletter, but as they get older that stops. So this is nice because I have something to talk to her about."

- Parent, La Belle Aire Elementary School

"When I know what's going on in class, then I can confidently support my child's learning. If I have no idea what's going on, it's hard to make that connection. But if I know, or have an inkling of what they're talking about, then I can bring in our own activities."

- Parent, La Belle Aire Elementary School

"It's [FASTalk] helping me connect with her with what's going on in the classroom where I have a general idea, but now I can ask her some specific questions like, 'Well, tell me about..?' and she's all in. They just talk and talk about whatever. I know more about Napoleon now!"

- Parent, La Belle Aire Elementary School



WHAT ARE TEACHERS SAYING ABOUT FASTALK?

"I like how it's automatic, but if I want to add something special, then I can go in and do that as well."

- Shanda Brown, 3rd Grade ELA Teacher, La Belle Aire Elementary

"[FASTalk] is really neat. The kids are talking about it and they'll come back and say, 'my mom is asking me about...' and that's really exciting!"

- Lesley D. Vines, Many Elementary Schools

BRING FASTALK TO YOUR SCHOOL OR SCHOOL SYSTEM IN 2019-2020!

In 2019-2020, FASTalk will be supporting students, teachers, and families by aligning with Tier 1 curricula in grades K-2 and ELA Guidebooks in grades 3-5. Don't miss this opportunity to support student literacy achievement through an impactful, easy, and low-cost solution!

WHAT FUNDING IS AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT MY IMPLEMENTATION OF FASTALK?

FASTalk is easy to include in your school system's Super App for the 2019-2020 school year. Contact your Network coach for more information.

HOW CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

Contact Vidya Sundaram at vidya@familyengagementlab.org or 650-283-9779.