



FAST Mission

The Formative Assessment for Students and Teachers (FAST) SCASS works to expand policy conversations about assessment, to put into place multiple assessments to serve their intended purposes, to use assessments to positively impact student learning, to meet the different needs of various users, and thereby to both measure and support high-quality learning for every student. The focus of FAST is rightly on the classroom and teaching and learning.

The definition for formative assessment adopted by FAST and the Council is:

“a process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students’ achievement of intended instructional outcomes.”

Centered on this definition, the FAST project has four subgroups – Policy, Professional Development, Research, and Technology - to elaborate upon this definition and to establish clear standards, guidance, and definitions for the effective design and practice of formative assessment in comprehensive, balanced, and coherent standards-based education systems.

FAST History

There has been substantial interest in formative assessment among U.S. educators during recent years. Increasing numbers of educators regard formative assessment as a way not only to improve student learning, but also to increase student scores on significant achievement examinations. To promote the use of formative assessment, the Council of Chief State School

Officers (CCSSO) created a national initiative. The initiative formally began in January 2006, when CCSSO formed the Formative Assessment (FA) Advisory Group consisting of measurement and education researchers including Jim Popham, Lorrie Shepard, Rick Stiggins, and Dylan Wiliam and state agency leaders from across the nation. (For a complete list of names see the paper titled “Attributes of Effective Formative Assessment”).

CCSSO also formed a new State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS) to implement the vision of the FA Advisory Group. The first challenge for the Formative Assessment for Students and Teachers (FAST) SCASS was to work with the FA Advisory Group to review the various definitions of formative assessment and related research. The FA Advisory Group and FAST SCASS devoted substantial effort to clarify the meaning of “formative assessment,” based on current literature, and determine how formative assessment may best be used by the nation’s educators.

In October 2006, FAST SCASS educators representing approximately 25 states agreed on the definition of formative assessment and it was subsequently approved by the FA Advisory Group. In the year following, the FAST SCASS and FA Advisory Group isolated the attributes that, based on the research and current literature, would render formative assessment most effective.

Goals for 08-09

- Identify and develop cost-effective, train-the-trainer systems for delivering high-quality

professional development for leaders and teachers

- Optimize communications and outreach strategies to promote the overall formative assessment literacy of policymakers, stakeholders, and the public through the intuitive, understanding of the direct connection between classroom formative assessment and learning.
- Continuing to build and extend a policy and implementation framework that can make formative assessments more effective as a component of a balanced and comprehensive learning and assessment system.
- Clarifying and strengthening the appropriate “systems” connections between assessment and curriculum, instruction, teacher quality, pre-service and in-service teacher and administrator education programs, school improvement, program evaluation, and accountability.

- Continuing to provide leadership and professional development opportunities, including facilitating an ongoing online collaborative community of practice, including state members, experts, and partners through CCSSO’s Communities site.