



“Family engagement is a full, equal, and equitable partnership among families, educators, and community partners to promote children’s learning and development from birth through college and career.”

— KAREN MAPP, Ed.D., Harvard Graduate School of Education

What is the FAST Institute of Family Engagement?

The [FAST Institute of Family Engagement](#) trains educators to partner with families in support of children’s education and well-being by blending best practices in teacher training and family and community engagement into interactive workshops and coaching.

When schools and families are collaborating as partners, families feel empowered to advocate for their children and academic achievement among children increases. Specifically, the FAST Institute helps educators and schools to:

1. Build a welcoming school climate and culture that values and respects families as partners
2. Establish practices at the classroom and school-wide level which link family engagement to learning and academic success
3. Guide teams to engage families in culturally diverse settings, and bridge racial, class, cultural differences through an asset-based approach
4. Collaborate with family leaders to create and implement family-centered activities and services and engage with community organizations to build partnerships

Engaging in authentic, culturally responsive family engagement, involving families and communities in making decisions, and addressing innate power dynamics — while providing families an opportunity to connect with other families and the community — are critical to building trust and can foster a partnership between the family, school, and community to best support children to thrive.



Families & Schools Together (FAST) – Who We Are

[Families & Schools Together \(FAST\)](#) partners with community-based organizations and schools across the U.S. to provide family engagement programming through two different programs. For over 35 years, we have implemented our evidence-based, family strengthening and family engagement FAST Program that has been run in 48 states and over 20 countries.

More recently, we developed the FAST Institute of Family Engagement, rooted in the principles and values of our FAST Program, and aligned with the latest research in the field of family engagement to provide educators with training, coaching, and support on equity-focused family engagement best practices.

As a nonprofit, Families & Schools Together has transformed tens of thousands of lives and continues to evolve to best engage with our partners and providers, and the children and families whom they serve.

Mission

To nurture the inherent potential of every child by uniting families, schools, and communities.

Vision

A world where in every community, every child thrives.



FAST Institute Trainers & Team

FAST Institute Trainers and Coaches have extensive backgrounds working with schools and community organizations to promote positive family-school-community partnership, build trust, empower families, and engage educators across both early childhood and K-12 settings. Our Trainers live and work in different communities across the US and many are certified to train both our Institute and FAST Programs.



Robyn Sperling, Ph.D.



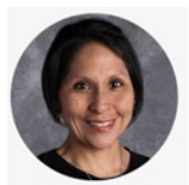
Christopher J. Daniel



Donetta Bracey



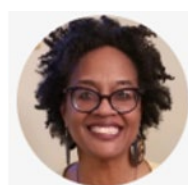
Darlene V. Byrd



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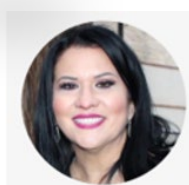
Nichole Christiansen



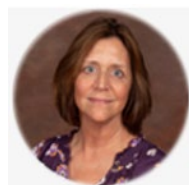
Marilyn Ruffin



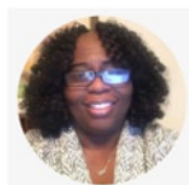
Glenda McMiller



Fabiola Avila



Cindy Janechek



Eira Yates



Marlen Perez

Components of FAST Institute

The FAST Institute can be tailored to the needs of a specific school, district, or organization. The FAST Institute is rooted in the research and approach outlined by Dr. Karen Mapp’s [Dual Capacity Framework](#), with a focus on building educator “4Cs” (capabilities, connections, cognition, and confidence) and aligned with NAFSCE’s [Family Engagement Core Competencies](#). Below is a description of the components of the program that can be selected and/or combined based on need. Talk with us to learn about our in-person and virtual options.

- **Assessment:** The Readiness Assessment provides guidance to teams on where they are strong and where they can look to improve in their family engagement work. Conducted both at the start and end of the year, the assessment can help track progress and growth and outlines areas for focus. The Readiness Assessment covers six domains related to family engagement, which match up with professional development topics.
- **Professional Development:** Interactive, hands-on training provides information, resources, and tools for educators and family engagement teams across a variety of topics, and allows time for problem-solving, data collection, and action-planning. Topics may vary and can be modified to support each individual site. See topics listed to the right.
- **Coaching:** Ongoing coaching, tailored to the specific site, provides accountability, guidance, and additional resources to guide teams in identifying barriers, collecting feedback and input from families, and creating and implementing action plans to build strong family-school partnerships.

Intro to Family Engagement

*Strengthening Classroom
Conditions for Family
Engagement*

*Empowering Families at
Parent-Teacher Conferences*

*Creating a Welcoming School
Climate*

*Effective Communication
Strategies*

*Bridging Race, Class, Culture,
Gender, and Examining
Implicit Bias*

*Family Engagement and
Advocacy*

*Collaborating with the
Community*

*Evaluating and Sustaining
Family Engagement Practices*



Impact of the FAST Institute

Research shows that partnerships between schools, families, and communities are a key strategy to improving student achievement, supporting children’s social-emotional well-being, and increasing school safety. Families feel valued as experts and empowered to advocate for their children’s education, and educators gain more positive views of their students’ families and feel more supported in their work with students.

In 2022, FAST received pilot funding from the Carnegie Corporation of New York to provide professional development and coaching to Parent Coordinators at 15 Milwaukee Public Schools. Initial project results showed that participants in the FAST Institute in Milwaukee demonstrated increases in:

- Knowledge about family engagement strategies
- Feeling confident about their ability to engage families
- Creating a family friendly environment
- Using engaging communication strategies to reach families
- Building their skills in family advocacy and empowerment



Participants also reported that their principals became more supportive of family engagement and, due to the participants' experience with the FAST Institute, principals saw family engagement as more of a priority.

How to get started with FAST Institute

The FAST Office is here to help you get started. We are happy to collaborate with you to determine what training is best for your school. Below are a few areas you may consider ahead of or in conversation with our staff. [Contact us](#) (or you can call 608-663-2382) to start the conversation and to learn more.



Audience: Think about what makes sense for your school/district/community. The FAST Institute can provide professional development to educators at one site, either all-staff or for a select group, or can be provided to educators from across multiple sites. We can also facilitate sessions that bring both educators and families together.



Schedule and Availability: Are you hoping for comprehensive support around engaging families and building partnerships? Or do you have time set aside for a specific date or time? What time will work for your audience (educators, families, community, etc.)? Starting from what you have available and what makes sense for the schedule of the school, site, educators, etc., can help determine what support might be best for you.



Needs: What does your school need? Are you hoping to provide educators or others with information, tools, resources they can begin to use immediately? Would you like to create a collaborative working group to support family engagement efforts broadly at your site and to develop family engagement goals and accompanying action plan? Depending on what your overall goal and needs are, different components of the FAST Institute (coaching v. professional development sessions) or some combination may better suit your school.



Funding: Though we wish it weren't true, frequently funding limitations may dictate what we can or cannot do. See below for more details on the cost of training as well as resources for accessing funding.

Budget and Funding Resources

The cost for the FAST Institute will vary from site to site, as the components can be added and combined in whatever structure will work best for your site. Feel free to reach out to the FAST Office to talk through a plan that will work for you. Below are some pricing guidelines to help you in budgeting for FAST Institute training.

Item	Cost	Detail
Readiness Assessment and Site Visit	\$300/site \$500/site with site visit	Cost includes sharing of assessment link both pre and post Institute; creation of reports to share with site highlighting areas for focus/growth and areas of strength. We may recommend a site visit, as well, depending on what training you request.
Coaching and Ongoing Support	\$3,800/site full year \$2,000/site half year	This will include access to a FAST Coach to work with you to identify a team, create goals, and establish an action plan. Coaching sessions can take place monthly or every other month and will be tailored to the specific needs of the site.
Professional Development Sessions	\$1,500/session (may vary)	Cost does not include travel for FAST Trainer for in-person training. Cost may vary slightly depending on details.

School-based funding sources for FAST Institute

There are several school-based funding sources that can be used to cover FAST Institute training costs. Please see below for additional details. Feel free to reach out to the FAST Office for more support in identifying funding opportunities.

Title I, Part A: Funds are used to provide academic support to students who need it most.

- Parent and Family Engagement is a required component of Title I, Part A programs.
- School districts that receive more than \$500,000 in Title I, Part A funds **MUST** reserve at least one percent (1%) for parent and family engagement activities. (School districts are allowed to reserve more than one percent.)

Title II, Part A: Funds are primarily for professional development activities that support students and help them meet academic standards

- Professional development may also include activities to help school staff effectively engage families and the community

Title III, Part A: These funds may be used for FAST Institute training if initiatives are supporting English Learners and their families.