

Appendix K: Teacher Informed Consent Letter

Dear [insert teacher's name],

Recently, [principal's name] spoke with you about [insert school name]'s involvement in a study on classroom assessment. This study will be conducted by McREL (Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning). McREL is a non-profit research and learning organization. Our mission is to improve education quality through applied research and development.

McREL invites you to participate in a study of professional development in classroom assessment. The study will use a program called *Classroom Assessment for Student Learning (CASL)* (Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis & Chappius, 2004). *CASL* has been used in classrooms nationwide for more than ten years. The program has three important goals. The first is to identify learning targets from standards. The second is to bridge the gap between prior knowledge and grade-level expectations. The third is to use assessment to enhance student learning.

The purpose of this study is to determine if *CASL* can help raise student achievement. Your school will be randomly assigned to one of two groups.

- 1) **TREATMENT:** In fall of 2007, Grade 4 and 5 teachers will receive the *CASL* materials. Then, they will train with the program for a full school year, 2007-2008.
- 2) **CONTROL:** Grade 4 and 5 teachers will engage in professional development as usual using *any* program or activity that is not *CASL*. Each control school will receive the equivalent retail value of the *CASL* materials in order to balance the resources between the two groups.

Data collection is minimal and convenient for all teachers. Forms to fill out are brief, and most are online. We will assess teacher knowledge and collect student work samples three times during the 2-year study. All teachers will complete two surveys once per semester. One survey is on student involvement. The other is on professional development activities. Treatment teachers will complete one-page logs of their progress through the *CASL* program. Responses to this data collection will be used only for statistical purposes. The reports prepared for this study will summarize findings across the sample and will not associate responses with a specific district or individual. We will not provide information that identifies you or your district to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.

The study does not reduce instruction time. It is integrated into instruction. Students (with parent permission) complete a survey of motivation once per year. No additional student testing is involved. Achievement data are collected from state assessments.

Participation involves a number of benefits. You will receive a monetary stipend in increments for a total of \$300 by study end. You will have a chance to win an expense-

paid trip to a summer conference on classroom assessment. You will contribute to a high-visibility project on classroom assessment. Study results will allow you and others to decide if the *CASL* program is a good investment toward your student achievement goals.

McREL's policy for the protection of participants follows federal rules. Responses will be used only for data calculation. The reports of this study will not connect responses to a specific district, school, or individual. We will not identify you, your district, or school to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may withdraw at any time. However, if you withdraw, you will not receive the full stipend. If you have any questions about the study or your participation, please call or email the Study Director, Dr. Andrea Beesley. She can be reached at McREL at 303-632-5541 or by email at abeesley@mcrel.org. She may also be reached by mail at:

**Dr. Andrea Beesley, Study Director
Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)
4601 DTC Boulevard, Suite 500
Denver, CO 80237
McREL's Study of Classroom Assessment and Student Achievement
Teacher Informed Consent**

I read the information about the study purpose, procedures, and time frame. I also read McREL's promise of confidentiality. I understand that my participation is voluntary. I understand that I may withdraw at any time.

I understand that the purpose of random assignment is to study the causal effect of *CASL* on education. I understand that if my school is assigned to TREATMENT, I will use *CASL*. I understand that if my school is assigned to CONTROL, I will not use *CASL* until the study ends. I understand that the study runs for two school years, 2007-2008 and 2008-2009.

I received a copy of this form for my files. By signing this form, I agree to participate in McREL's study of *CASL*.

Teacher Name: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Teacher Signature: _____ Date: _____

Principal Investigator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please return this signed Informed Consent to:
Dr. Andrea Beesley, Study Director
Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)
4601 DTC Boulevard, Suite 500
Denver, CO 80237