



Project ALIGN: An Opportunity to Improve Fifth-Grade Reading, Writing, and Vocabulary

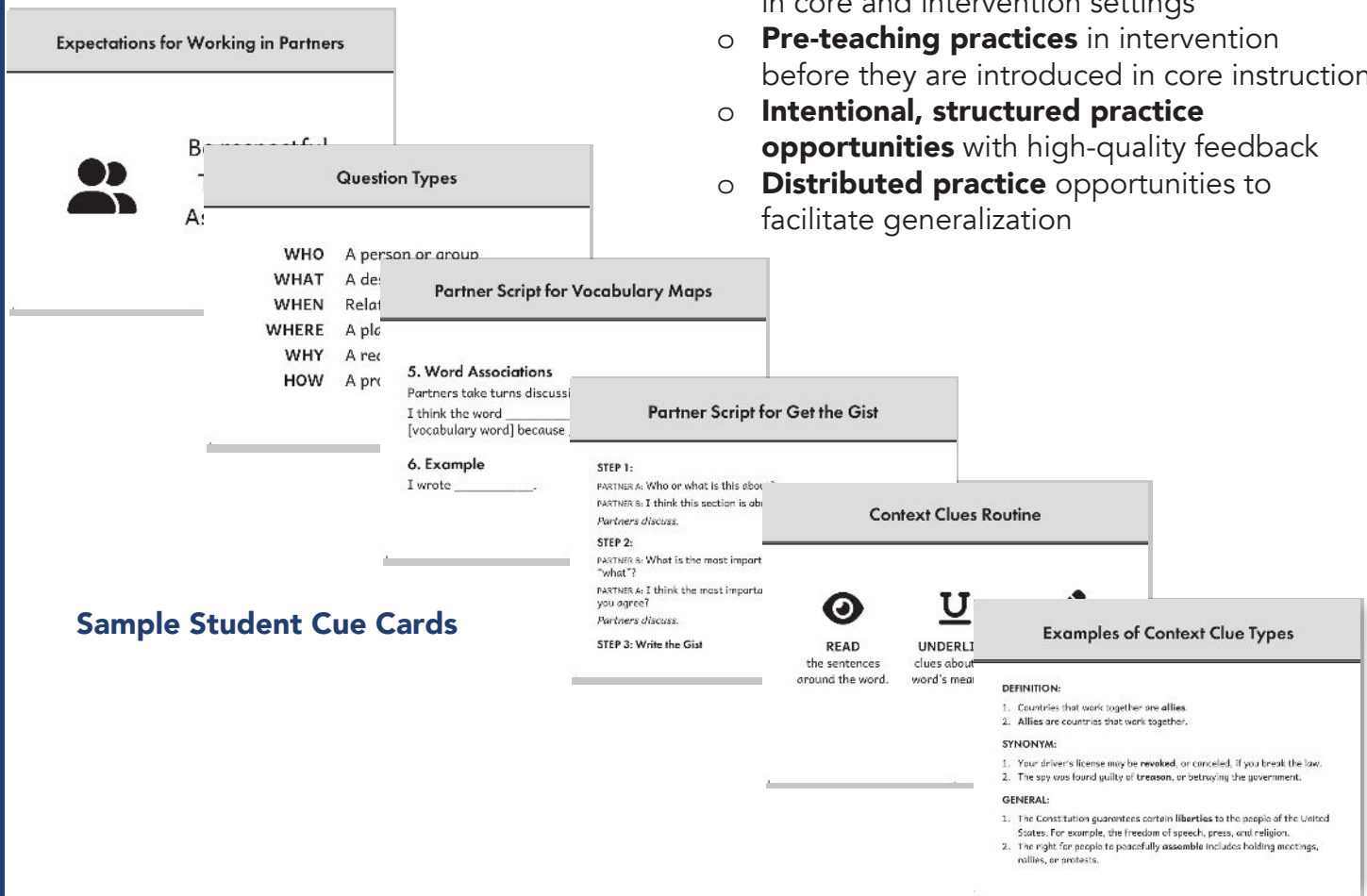
We invite you to collaborate with The University of Kansas and The University of Texas at Austin on a **U.S. Department of Education-funded project**. The goal of this project is to find out if students with reading comprehension difficulties do better in reading and learn more content when provided the same reading comprehension practices in core English language arts/reading (ELA/R) and small-group reading intervention. We hope to build a **partnership** with you so we can work together to **improve the reading comprehension, writing, vocabulary, and content knowledge of students with reading difficulties** in your school.

What is Project ALIGN?

- ALIGN is a research project conducted by The University of Kansas and The Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk at The University of Texas at Austin in partnership with KC Metro and Central Texas school districts.
- A total of 72 elementary schools, up to 432 teachers, and up to 864 fifth graders will participate in ALIGN between 2024 and 2028.
- Project ALIGN will compare students' performance across 3 groups:
 - **Aligned Group:** Teachers implement Project ALIGN Lessons in core ELA/R and small-group reading intervention
 - **Nonaligned Group:** Teachers implement Project ALIGN lessons in core ELA/R and their typical instruction in reading intervention
 - **Business-as-usual Group:** Teachers provide typical instruction in core ELA/R and reading intervention

Why is aligned instruction important?

- National data suggest students with reading difficulties struggle to read and understand grade-level texts.
- Students often receive small-group reading intervention in addition to core instruction. However, **intervention** typically addresses **different content** and **skills**. This **limits practice opportunities** and **generalization of skills**.
 - On the other hand, **aligned instruction** provides:
 - **Consistent** use of **evidence-based practices** in core and intervention settings
 - **Pre-teaching practices** in intervention before they are introduced in core instruction
 - **Intentional, structured practice opportunities** with high-quality feedback
 - **Distributed practice** opportunities to facilitate generalization



Gist-to-Summary Organizer

UNIT 2: • LESSON 16

The Boston Massacre

ALIGN

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The Boston Massacre

ALIGN

Gist 1

Gist 2

Gist 3

Gist 4

}

Summary

Topic Sentence

Supporting Details

Concluding Sentence

Vocabulary Map

UNIT 2: • LESSON 15

Samuel Adams and the Sons of Liberty

ALIGN

Before Reading

1. Word

Patriot

2. Definition

Underline the important words.

someone who was determined to fight the British for American independence


4. Context

Circle the correct sentence.

A. The colonial **Patriots** united against the British government to protect their rights.

B. The Math Club has **Patriots** who love to solve math problems.

3. Image



After Reading

5. Word Associations

Choose two related words.

A. enemy
B. loyal
C. traitor
D. support

6. Example

Write a sentence or definition that uses the word.

7. Turn and Talk

If you lived during the American Revolution, would you be a **Patriot**? Why or why not?
"If I lived during the American Revolution, I would/would not be a **Patriot** because _____."

Teacher Feedback on Project ALIGN

"Teachers are currently receiving a lot of training on phonics and fluency intervention, but many teachers have students who can decode and read fluently and need the next step. ALIGN provides that next step in that students are building vocabulary, background knowledge, and learning trans-ferable comprehension skills and strategies.

The materials align with the fifth grade Social Studies and ELA standards and content for Kansas, so it provides a way to integrate ELA and Social Studies that is not only supported by research but helps teachers address the common problem of 'How do I fit everything in?'.

The format of the ALIGN teacher manual and student book are engaging and user-friendly."

- 2023 Kansas History Teacher of the Year

What occurs in each group?

	Aligned Group	Nonaligned Group	Business-as-usual Group
What occurs in core ELA/R?	36 <u>ALIGN</u> lessons delivered by each school's ELA/R teacher(s) 2x/week	36 <u>ALIGN</u> lessons delivered by each school's ELA/R teacher(s) 2x/week	Typical instruction provided by school
What occurs in small group reading intervention?	54 <u>ALIGN</u> reading intervention lessons delivered by each school's intervention teacher(s) 3x/week	Typical reading intervention provided by school	Typical reading intervention provided by school

What are the project activities?

Aligned Group:

- The **fifth-grade core ELA/R and intervention teachers** will receive an initial professional development and two follow-up sessions provided by the research team.
- Teachers and students will receive ALIGN materials at no cost.
- The fifth-grade core ELA/R and intervention teachers will teach ALIGN lessons during the 18-week implementation period (2x/week in core; 3x/week in intervention).
- The research team will provide individualized coaching for each teacher to support implementation.
- Students with reading difficulties will be pretested and posttested.

Nonaligned Group:

- The **fifth-grade core ELA/R teachers** will receive an initial professional development and two follow-up sessions provided by the research team. **Intervention teachers** provide typical instruction.
- Teachers and students will receive ALIGN materials at no cost.
- The fifth-grade core ELA/R teachers will teach ALIGN lessons during the 18-week implementation period (2x/week in core).
- The research team will provide individualized coaching for each teacher to support implementation.
- Students with reading difficulties will be pretested and posttested.

Business-as-usual Group:

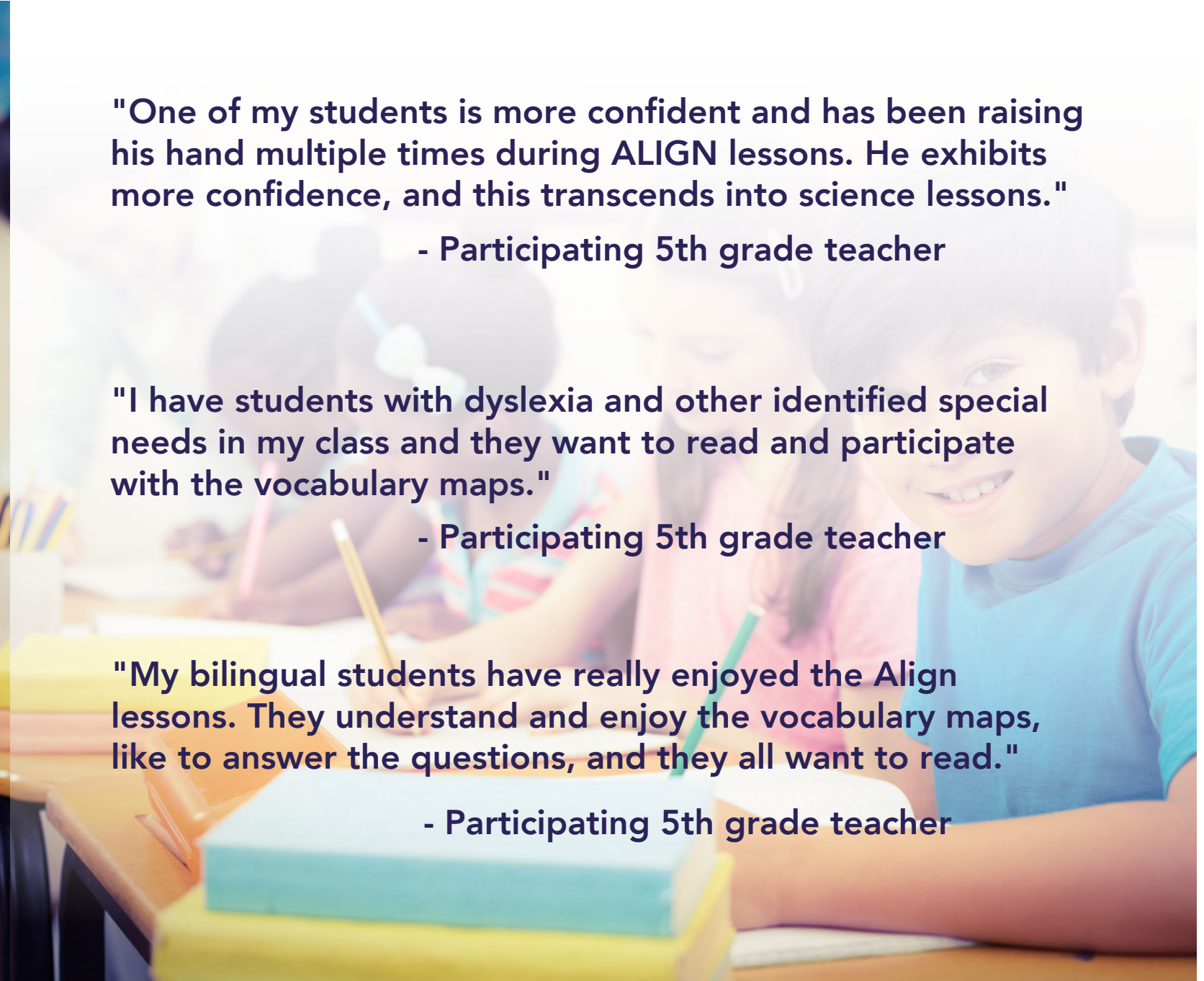
- The **fifth-grade core ELA/R and intervention teachers** provide typical instruction.
- Students with reading difficulties will be pretested and posttested.





What does this mean for my school?

	Project Tasks
Research Team (KU & UT Austin)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide all PD sessions to core and intervention teachers in the aligned group and core teachers in the nonaligned group. • Provide all teacher and student materials at no cost. • Provide ongoing implementation support (via observations with feedback). • Administer individualized assessment at pretest. • Distribute teacher stipends. • Upon request, provide summative report to the school at end of project. • Observe all school rules and policies and respect teachers' time and instruction.
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist with collecting parent consent forms. • Assist with scheduling PD sessions, pretesting, and posttesting. • Administer group assessments once for pretesting and once for posttesting. • Audio-record lessons for implementation fidelity and coaching feedback. • Complete brief teacher surveys and provide students' demographic data and prior year's state reading test scores (with parent permission).
School & District Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide access to schools, teachers, and students (with parental consent). • Adhere to the school's assigned condition (Aligned, nonaligned, business-as-usual instruction). • Allow audio-recording for implementation fidelity and coaching feedback. • Assist with scheduling PD sessions.

A background image showing a group of young students in a classroom setting. They are sitting at desks, some looking at papers and others looking towards the camera. The image is slightly blurred and has a warm, yellowish tint.

"One of my students is more confident and has been raising his hand multiple times during ALIGN lessons. He exhibits more confidence, and this transcends into science lessons."

- Participating 5th grade teacher

"I have students with dyslexia and other identified special needs in my class and they want to read and participate with the vocabulary maps."

- Participating 5th grade teacher

"My bilingual students have really enjoyed the Align lessons. They understand and enjoy the vocabulary maps, like to answer the questions, and they all want to read."

- Participating 5th grade teacher

What are the next steps?

We will answer questions and provide additional information if needed. Please do not hesitate to contact one of our team members from The University of Kansas or The University of Texas at Austin.

With your approval, our project team would like to meet with your fifth grade whole-class ELA/R and intervention teachers to notify them of their invitation to join us.

We look forward to collaborating with you.

Dr. April Soberón

Project Director (KU)

Office: 785-864-0894

E-mail: asoberon@ku.edu

Christy Murray

Co-Principal Investigator (UT Austin)

Office: 512-517-9993

E-mail: christymurray@austin.utexas.edu

