District FAQs

Who is conducting the study?
The study is being conducted by SRI International and the Lawrence Hall of Science with funding provided by the National Science Foundation (NSF). The NSF is funding this study to better understand how newly designed science curriculum materials can support the teaching and learning of the NGSS. While ASMS curriculum materials are the focus of this independent study, the publisher and distributor of ASMS, Amplify Inc., are not partners in the study and thus are not involved in the research.

What are the benefits of the study?
Two big benefits to districts are that (1) the NSF grant will pay for the full curriculum package plus professional development for grade 7 and (2) all 7th grade science teachers who participate will receive a stipend for their participation in the study. Additionally, your district will receive a study report on what we learn about student achievement outcomes and effective teaching practices from using Amplify Science.

How do I know if this study is a good fit for my district?
If your district has 3 or more schools serving 7th grade; you have adopted the CA integrated model; and you are considering adoption of curriculum materials that are aligned with the NGSS.

How many other school districts will be participating in the study?
A total of roughly 5 districts will be involved. The study will include about 40 schools total.

My district is already planning on piloting another curriculum next year – can the 7th grade science teachers in the comparison schools use other curriculum materials?
Yes, it will be fine for the 7th grade teachers in the comparison schools to use other curriculum materials and this could be other NGSS approved materials. As part of our study, we will keep track of the range of materials that teachers use.

Will we be able to get copies of the data or reflection tools that you use and collect?
We are designing new assessment tasks that will be aligned to the CA NGSS performance expectations. The tasks will be part of two summative assessments that we will use during the study; one to be given to all students across all participating schools (i.e., treatment and comparison schools) after they complete the physical science instructional sequence and the other to be given after students complete the life science instructional sequence. We will report back district-level data on student achievement (we are not analyzing or reporting individual classroom outcomes). At the end of the study year, we will be happy to allow the district and teachers to use the assessment tasks in their future instruction. Also, we can share with you (at the district level) the NGSS-focused classroom observation protocol so that you can see the aspects of NGSS instruction that we are focused on — and we will be happy to share with you the outcomes of the observations which are to describe best teaching practices related to NGSS instruction. This information could be helpful at the classroom and district levels.
Will you be collecting any individual student data, and, if so, will the identity of individual students be protected?

We will need to collect individual student assessment data and some other student data from the district (e.g., gender, prior test scores). This data will be de-identified and individual student identity will remain anonymous to the analysts. Numeric IDs are assigned by the research team to student data so that we can link performance across the two assessments. This de-identified data becomes the data for the large-scale analysis.

What if any impact will the PD have on staff time? Will this mean the district needs to find subs for participating teachers at any time during the year? What will be the timing of the initial PD?

The PD will be provided by the Lawrence Hall of Science and it is the PD package that is typically provided when a district adopts Amplify Science. The package is 2 days of summer PD followed by 2 days of PD during SY 2018-19 (one is late Fall/Winter - focus on physical science; the other is late Winter - focus on life science). The grant will provide stipends to teachers for summer PD attendance and cover sub costs or hourly rate (depending on district policy or preference) for the two school day PDs. If a district prefers, we could hold the school year PDs on a Saturday and provide stipends to teachers for their time. This is something we are happy to discuss with districts. Note that this same PD will be offered after the conclusion of the study to the comparison schools for summer 2019 and SY 2019-20 at no-cost to the district.

Do you have a website?
https://tinyurl.com/asms-study

Who do I contact if I have further questions?

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