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High-Impact Tutoring

EDITOR'S NOTE

High-impact tutoring can help students in their academic recovery journey and propel them forward. This Spotlight will help you examine research on getting the most out of tutoring programs; evaluate how tutoring can help with learning recovery; connect students with tutoring services; gain insights into how districts can introduce and scale up tutoring; discover recent efforts to improve the recruitment of tutors; and more.

Scaling Up Intensive Tutoring:
4 Studies to Know **2**

Tutoring or Remediation:
Which Learning Recovery Strategy
Is Most Popular? **4**

The Rise of Tutoring and Where
It Falls Short, in Charts **6**

6 Takeaways for School Districts
To Implement Effective Tutoring **8**

Online Tutoring Can Be Effective,
Research Shows **9**

Biden's Tutoring Initiative:
What Will It Mean for
Learning Recovery? **10**

OPINION

To Get Tutoring Right, Connect It
To the Classroom **11**

Published September 27, 2022

Scaling Up Intensive Tutoring: 4 Studies to Know

By Sarah D. Sparks

As districts finalize plans to spend federal pandemic relief money, high-intensity tutoring has emerged as one of the most popular approaches for helping students recover academic ground, but scaling up these programs can be costly.

As part of the Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness conference in Arlington last week, researchers highlighted issues education leaders should consider, both in scaling up intensive tutoring programs and in leveraging them to improve students' social-emotional development as well as their academic progress. Here are their takeaways:

1. Build vertical partnerships for tutoring

As part of its pledge to bring 250,000 tutors and mentors to K-12 schools by 2025, the Biden administration has highlighted initiatives like the \$10 million tutoring system in Guilford County, N.C., that matches students with tutors based on grades, testing, and absenteeism, among other criteria. But research suggests that while the high-intensity tutoring can be effective, it's also tough to sustain the staffing and time needed for 1-to-1 or very small group sessions daily or several times a week.

Brown University researchers Matthew Kraft and Grace Falken proposed that federally supported partnerships among K-12 schools and universities could provide both higher-quality tutors and more-stable programs using several different strategies, including:

- A high school elective class in which students tutor elementary grade children;
- College work-study credits for students who tutor in middle school and;
- Full-time AmeriCorps tutors.

To be most effective, Kraft and Falken found, the tutored students should be paired with the same tutor for a full year, meeting three or more times a week in groups of no more than four.



—iStock/Getty Images Plus

“There is quite a range of different barriers to engagement, but one that really stood out to us the most is the importance of the relationship between the tutor and pupil.”

LAL CHADEESINGH

Principal Adviser,
Behavioral Insights Team

2. Parent outreach is critical

In a forthcoming study of student participation in online tutoring, Carly Robinson of Brown University and her colleagues found general tutoring programs may run the risk of not reaching the students most in need of services. For example, the researchers found that students who had passed all their classes the prior year were twice as likely to take up

the offered tutoring, compared to students who had failed a course.

“Just offering education resources is probably not enough. We found that the vast majority of students are just not taking up even what is probably a very high-quality free resource, because student engagement is at such a low baseline,” Robinson said. “That’s important when we think about how we’re offering resources to students, especially in these pandemic recovery efforts.”

For example, the researchers found that when schools reached out to parents and students directly to offer students tutoring, there was more than 120 percent more participation among students who had already failed one class, compared to schools that simply announced that the tutoring was available generally but did not reach out to parents directly.

3. Focus on tutor-pupil compatibility

In a nationwide study of United Kingdom tutoring during the pandemic, researchers led by Lal Chadeesingh, a principal adviser of the Behavioral Insights Team, an international research group that studies “nudge”—or brief, low-cost—interventions in education and other social policy areas, tracked the engagement of students in more than 185,000 online tutoring sessions across the United

Kingdom. Using a brief survey, the researchers identified both students' and tutors' interests, hobbies, and values and shared areas of common ground.

They found no clear difference in the effectiveness of new versus experienced tutors, but students who were told about their tutor's common values and interests had more than 4 percentage point better engagement. In a 15-hour tutoring block, that meant well-paired students typically attended a half-session more than poorly paired students.

"There is quite a range of different barriers to engagement, but one that really stood out to us the most is the importance of the relationship between the tutor and pupil. This came through really consistently that where there was a good relationship, pupils were much more likely to engage and get more out of the tutoring."

He recommended that schools provide background and more time within academic sessions for tutors and their students to get to know each other.

4. Plan for building long-term gains

Intensive, personalized tutoring can be expensive, but research suggests it can also have long-term benefits. In two separate randomized, controlled trials, researchers with the National Bureau of Economic Research found tutoring could pay off in long-term gains for students.

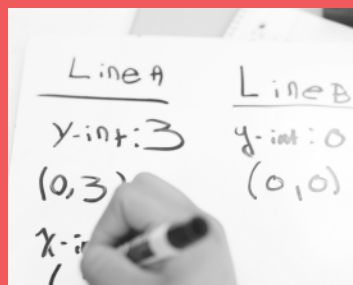
Researchers tracked more than 5,000 Chicago students in 9th and 10th grades, half of whom received individual tutoring through the district's Saga program, which cost \$3,500 to \$4,300 per student. Across the two studies, students who participated in the tutoring improved their math performance by 6 to 14 percentile points—an increase which other studies have associated with students earning \$900 to \$2,100 higher income per year by age 27. ■



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Bring High-Impact Tutoring to Your District



— Laura Buckman for Education Week

Published August 4, 2022

Tutoring or Remediation: Which Learning Recovery Strategy Is Most Popular?

By Sarah Schwartz

New federal data provide a glimpse into what strategies schools have used to support learning recovery, and which ones school leaders think are most effective.

The results show that while some research-tested models—such as intensive tutoring—have become popular, other strategies touted by prominent education groups haven’t gained as much traction. And schools report that the learning recovery methods they have been using have had mixed effects. That may partly be because both student and staff quarantines and absences continued to disrupt time in classrooms this past year, and schools reported high levels of teacher burnout.

The data are the latest results from the National Center for Education Statistics’ School Pulse Panel, a monthly survey on the effects of the pandemic on K-12 schools. Responses were collected in June from a nationally representative sample of public schools, with 859 respondents.

“It feels like there’s a bit of a story here that schools are working to catch students

up, but a lot of that’s happening on the margins, and there’s still a lot of opportunity lost during the actual school day. And that makes sense when you ... look at those data about student quarantines and absences,” said Bree Dusseault, principal and managing director at the Center on Reinventing Public Education, which was not involved with the study.

About three-quarters of schools said that student quarantines or chronic absences disrupted learning during the 2021-22 school year. (For more on the extent of absenteeism, see Education Week’s coverage of last month’s School Pulse Panel.)

And teacher vacancies portend a bumpy beginning to the next school year. As of June, public schools anticipated having 3.4 teacher vacancies, on average, for the 2022-23 school year.

These data suggest that even as schools have been open for in-person learning for a year or more, and as more districts are removing COVID precautions like masking, the ripple effects of the pandemic still have a real-time effect on student learning, Dusseault said.

“If [principals are] spending every day trying to get substitutes in the building and make new policies because new challeng-

es are arising, they’re unlikely to be able to create the system that prevents learning loss from happening in the first place,” she said.

Tutoring and remedial instruction among most popular approaches

Even so, these data show that schools are trying to enact academic recovery plans.

Remedial instruction—in which teachers go back to prior grades’ content to teach skills or concepts that students have missed—and sustained tutoring stood out as some of the most popular strategies.

High-dosage tutoring—one-on-one or small group instruction offered three or more times a week—is one of the most research-tested strategies for raising student achievement. The evidence base shows some of the highest effect sizes in education.

Consequently, high-dosage tutoring has become an oft-promoted solution to pandemic-related learning disruptions, with many states launching tutoring initiatives and philanthropic organizations funding tutoring projects. Last month, the Biden administration also announced an initiative to bring 250,000 tutors and mentors to U.S. schools.

Given these policy developments and advocacy, it’s not surprising to see that many schools say they’re using the strategy, said Bailey Cato Czupryk, vice president for practices, diagnostics, and impact at TNTP, which consults with districts on teacher training, instructional strategy, and other education issues.

But it’s less clear how well these tutoring programs are being implemented, said Cato Czupryk, who was not involved with the NCES study.

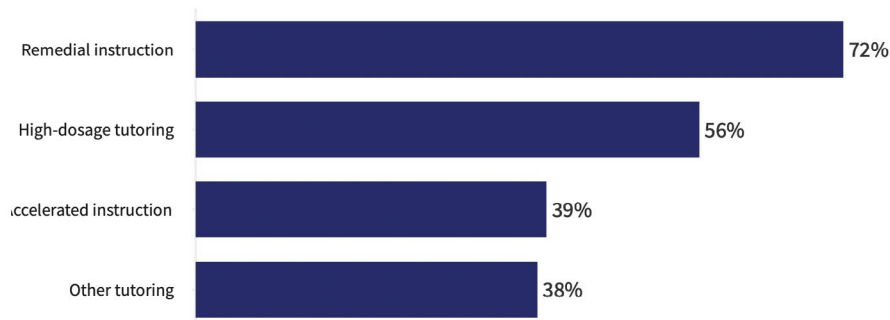
Among academic interventions that schools reported using, they reported high-dosage tutoring moved the needle the most: 43 percent said that the strategy was either “extremely” or “very” effective. Still, that means that more than half of schools using tutoring found it only “moderately” or “slightly” effective, or not effective at all.

For tutoring to have the highest impact, it needs to be aligned with the rest of the instruction that students are getting throughout the day—and that’s not always the case in practice, Cato Czupryk said. For example, a 3rd grade student might be working on arrays in math class but a 1st grade skill related to fluency in tutoring.

“If I don’t see the connection between those two things, then they’re not going to be as effective as they could,” she said.

Supporting Pandemic-Related Learning Recovery: Additional Instruction

Percentage of public schools who utilized the following strategies



NOTE: Estimates represent all public schools in the survey.
SOURCE: Institute of Education Sciences

EdW

More popular among schools was remedial learning: going back to past years' content. Seventy-two percent of schools said they used this strategy. This is in contrast to the 39 percent that used accelerated learning, a strategy that attempts to keep moving students forward while shoring up skills and content that they might have missed in previous grades at the same time.

Some states, districts, and many education advocacy organizations have promoted accelerated learning as a pandemic recovery strategy. The goal is to make sure that every student still has access to grade-level content, even if they need additional support.

Advocates of this approach say that it's a way to drive equity in instruction. When students are in remedial lessons, their peers move on, widening the gap between the two groups. Studies have also found that teachers are less likely to give students of color, and particularly Black students, rigorous, grade-level work. Acceleration, its proponents say, can address both of these issues.

But these NCES data show that remedial instruction is more popular—and that schools rate acceleration and remediation as similarly effective.

Part of the reason might have to do, again, with bandwidth, said Dusseault, of CRPE. Schools are likely more familiar with a remediation approach, so supporting teachers to make the switch to acceleration would require time and resources—both in short supply right now, she said. (About half of schools in the survey said they provided teachers with professional development focused on learning recovery.)

"If I were in a classroom, and had heard about [acceleration] but hadn't gotten resources, it might just sound like another buzzword," said Cato Czapryk.

Depending on district policies this fall, quarantines may continue to disrupt class time for students in the 2022-23 school year, Dusseault said.

That underscores the need for districts to maintain (or develop) systems that account for that disruption—even as, she said, "we keep hoping the next school year is the next 'normal' school year."

The full survey results can be found [here](#). A few other highlights include:

- About half of all schools—52 percent—said that student trauma and experiences related to the pandemic were a cause of learning disruptions this past school year. Seventy-two percent of schools said they had provided students with mental health and trauma support.
- Three quarters of schools offered school- or district-run learning and enrichment programs this summer, and 70 percent offered summer school.
- From March to June, the percentage of schools requiring students to wear masks dropped again, from 22 percent to 15 percent. ■

Additional Resource

To view the charts that accompany this article, click [here](#).

Published May 11, 2022

The Rise of Tutoring and Where It Falls Short, in Charts

By Catherine Gewertz

The vast majority of school districts have set up tutoring programs to address unfinished learning, but they're serving only a small slice of the children who need it, a new survey shows.

The EdWeek Research Center study represents the most detailed national picture yet of how districts are using tutoring to bolster learning opportunities lost during the pandemic. Of all interventions, tutoring boasts a particularly strong research base, but it can be tough to put into practice in all the ways that research shows work best. The survey reflects that difficulty.

The survey of 1,287 district and school leaders and teachers was conducted online between April 27 and May 2. Only a small slice of districts said they're not offering tutoring.

They report that a hefty chunk of their students need tutoring, but only a small subset of those kids are participating.

Districts are focusing their programs heavily on math and reading, perhaps unsurprisingly, since federal accountability rests most heavily on those two subjects. But they're also structuring their tutoring to cover any subject where a child needs help, and reserving some focus, also, for science and social studies.

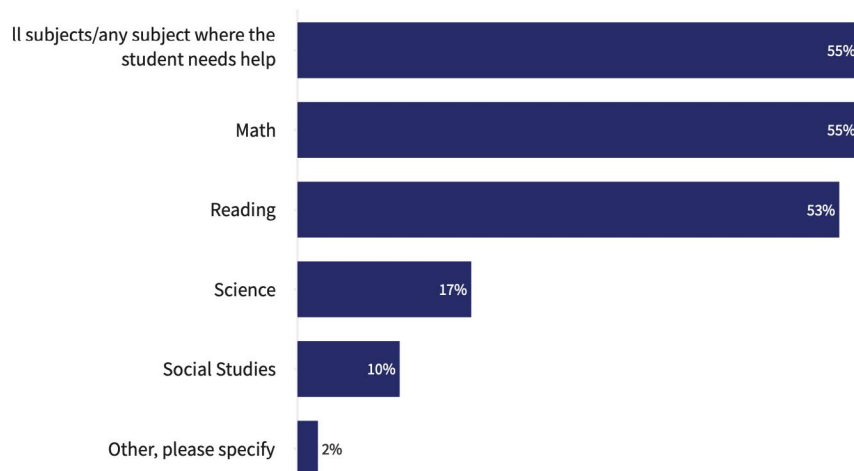
Tutoring programs are, by and large, being held face-to-face, but some districts are using online approaches. Most districts report that their in-person programs are held in groups of four or fewer, a key feature researchers say boosts effectiveness. But many districts conduct sessions in groups of five or more.

Districts are struggling to deliver programs with another key feature linked to effectiveness: having students work with the same tutor week after week. Only one-third said all their students study with the same tutor regularly.

Timing can be pivotal for tutoring programs. They tend to get better participation when they happen during the school day, but fewer than half of districts said their programs are held during that time period, possibly because reworking the daily schedule to embed tutoring can be challenging.

Districts' tutoring programs lean heavily on their own certified teachers. No surprise there: They've got the pedagogical chops,

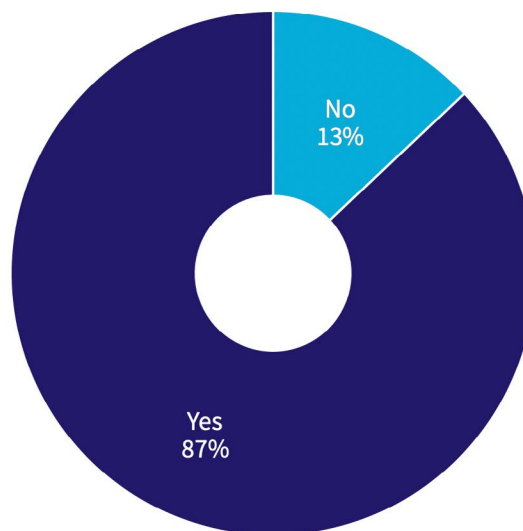
What subjects are the focus of tutoring programs in your district or school? Select all that apply.



*Results show responses from principals and district leaders.
SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center survey, May 2022

A Flourish chart

Is your district or school offering any tutoring to students this school year?



*Results show responses from principals and district leaders.
SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center survey, May 2022

A Flourish chart

and already-established connections with students. But they are also the most expensive option, which raises questions about program sustainability. Research has found that paraprofessionals, college students and others, if properly trained and supported, can also be effective tutors. But few districts are going this route.

Most districts focus their tutoring programs on students with the most academic need, but fully half make them available to anyone. A large minority requires tutoring for struggling students, but for most, it's optional.

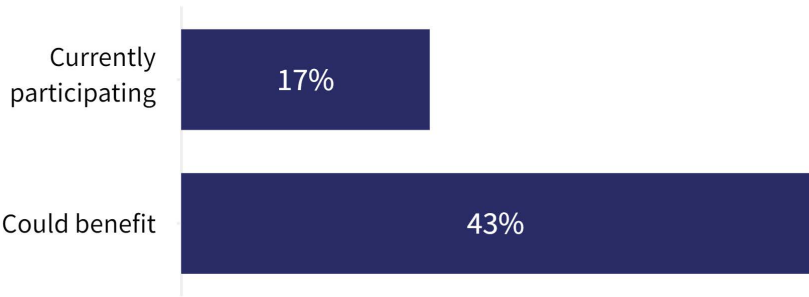
Few districts are weaving tutoring into the school day for everyone, even though some experts encourage this approach as a good way to improve instruction for all.

District and school leaders and teachers agree that tutoring is an effective intervention, although that picture gets more nuanced under the surface. While three-quarters said tutoring was effective, only one third agreed completely with that description. Four in 10 "somewhat" agreed.

Even though districts rely heavily on the most expensive option—their own teachers—to run their tutoring programs, cost was not among the challenges they cited most often. High on the list are students' and families' willingness to participate, and difficulty getting enough tutors. Transportation ranked high, too, probably because many districts hold their sessions outside normal school hours. ■

 **Additional Resource**
To view the charts that accompany this article, click [here](#).

What percentage of your students are participating in tutoring? And what percentage could benefit from tutoring?



*Results show responses from teachers, principals, and district leaders.
SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center survey, May 2022

 A Flourish chart

The Future of Tutoring After COVID-19:

Empowering Districts to Implement High-Impact Tutoring

During his State of the Union address this year, President Joe Biden acknowledged the devastating effect of unfinished learning on the nation's K-12 students. He urged Americans to help by serving as tutors. His broader education plan calls for high-impact, school-based tutoring programs that provide students personalized instruction from trained and supported tutors.

Research shows that high-dosage tutoring can significantly improve academic performance, retention, and graduation rates.

Some district leaders, eager to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on student learning, will heed the call by dedicating portions of their ESSER funds to tutoring programs. And with good reason—research shows that high-impact tutoring can significantly improve academic performance, retention, and graduation rates. In fact, one study found that the benefits extend beyond the course in which students receive tutoring, with failure rates in their other courses decreasing, as well.

The quickest way for districts to reap the benefits of the ESSER funds is to contract with outside providers, like the one led by Saga Education, to deliver evidence-based instruction to struggling learners. This will undoubtedly result in increased academic achievement—at the cost of tens of millions of dollars nationwide.

But what happens when the ESSER money runs out in 2025? Do the tutoring programs and the life-changing assistance they bring end with it? Unfortunately, the answer in many cases will be yes, since not all districts can sustain the expense of using an outside provider for tutoring services. Educators could choose to see this looming funding cliff as a crisis. Instead, it's an opportunity that allows district leaders

to think differently about how they deliver tutoring to their students.

In a world beyond ESSER, the most sustainable and scalable strategy is for districts to train and coach tutors themselves.

That won't be as simple as hiring dozens of tutors and immediately turning them loose with students. High-quality tutoring requires a clear, consistent path for training tutors and program leaders, especially the high-impact kind.

Sadly, too many tutors don't receive sufficient pre-service training or, more importantly, ongoing coaching embedded in the day-



To be the most impactful, high-impact tutoring must align with what's happening in the student's classroom.



to day-job. Most tutoring initiatives treat professional development as an afterthought and fail to observe and evaluate their tutors. According to a January 2021 [report](#) from the Learning Policy Institute, “large, poorly trained, insufficiently compensated tutoring corps” are a waste of time and money that don’t “do enough to accelerate student learning.” It said the most impactful tutoring programs invest “in staff capacity building by providing quality training and ongoing support.”

To be most impactful, high-impact tutoring must align with what’s happening in the student’s classroom. It can’t happen without a cycle of training, coaching, and feedback for the tutors. Ongoing coaching involves tutors receiving consistent feedback from dedicated managers and real-time support with academic differentiation, all to reinforce ideas covered during training.

The bottom line is that districts can’t afford to launch large-scale tutoring initiatives without offering quality operational infrastructure and

wraparound support for incoming tutors and tutoring providers. That’s why they should develop strategies and coaching for in-house tutors or find an evidence-based partner to start and manage their programs.

Districts don’t need to provide a tutor for every student in every grade. But every student should have an opportunity to





Every student should have an opportunity to work with a school-based tutor at least once or twice while in school—most notably in early literacy and algebra.

work with a school-based tutor at least once or twice while they're in school – most notably in early literacy and algebra. [Researchers](#) are finding that tutoring, specifically high-impact tutoring performed in small groups of two to three students as part of the daily school day, is one of the most effective ways to accelerate learning and boost academic performance.

High-impact tutoring is one of the most impactful educational interventions available to districts; something backed up by reams of data and research. The time has come to invest in sustainable versions of these programs. There are millions of students waiting to discover their academic gifts.



[Learn How to Implement High-Impact Tutoring](#)



Published April 29, 2022

6 Takeaways for School Districts To Implement Effective Tutoring

By Catherine Gewertz

Tutoring is a strategy many schools are using—or considering—to help students catch up on learning that didn't happen during the pandemic. It has a strong research base to recommend it, but it can be tough to put into practice effectively. Here are some key takeaways as districts consider starting or scaling up tutoring programs:

Effective tutoring programs have certain key characteristics.

They're "high-dosage," or "high-impact," which means they happen several times a week for 30 to 60 minutes. Students work individually or in very small groups—three or four per tutor—and they work with the same tutor throughout the program.

Sessions held during the school day are ideal, but they can also work if they're held right after school. Tutors should be well-trained, work closely with their tutees' teachers, be armed with good, standards-aligned instructional materials, and know how to monitor student progress with data.

Online tutoring is an option, if it's done right.

Research emerging from Europe suggests that virtual tutoring can be effective.

“Investments in tutoring programs could also double as investments in the teacher pipeline.”

6 TAKEAWAYS FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVE TUTORING

But it must be designed according to research-based principals, such as working in very small groups, and maintaining a relationship with the same tutor throughout the program.

You don't have to rely just on your own teachers.

Districts are successfully using a mixture of paraprofessionals, tutors from outside organizations, and high school, college and

graduate students alongside their own certified teachers. The Guilford County schools in North Carolina offer an example of this strategy. The district has partnered with two local universities to beef up its tutoring ranks.

Your tutoring program might boost flow into the teacher pipeline.

Some districts, such as Guilford County, hope their tutors will catch the instructional teaching bug and build up the teaching ranks. That would mean that investments in tutoring programs could also double as investments in the teacher pipeline.

Such programs might also diversify the pipeline: Guilford deliberately partnered with a historically Black university to channel more teachers of color into its classrooms, and to reflect the diversity of its student population.

Start small, scale up slowly.

Many districts are trying to implement tutoring programs that are at much larger scales than those researchers have studied. Starting with subsets of students, or specific grades or subject areas, might help districts work out the kinks as they expand.

Build deep roots, not a quick one-off.

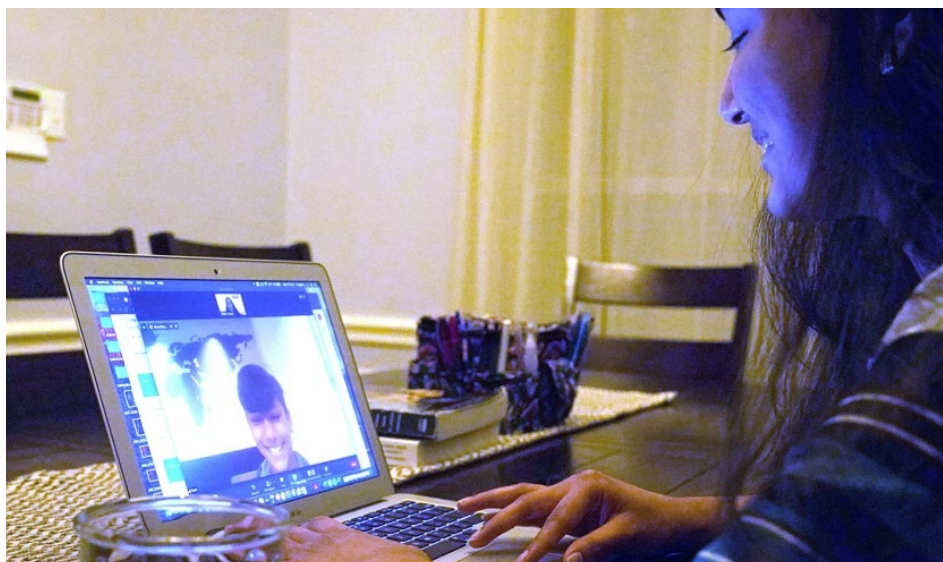
Some experts are urging schools to imagine tutoring as far more than a quick fix for students in academic crisis. As a permanent addition to schools' instructional strategies, tutoring could help schools support and challenge all students. ■

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Charvi Goyal, 17, holds an online math tutoring session with a junior high student in January 2021 in Plano, Texas.

Published April 18, 2022

Online Tutoring Can Be Effective, Research Shows

By Catherine Gewertz

School districts across the country are turning hopeful eyes to tutoring programs as a way to help children recover academically from the COVID pandemic. Research shows that well-designed face-to-face tutoring can be a powerful ally. But there was little evidence that it could be done effectively online.

That's starting to change. Two new studies from Spain and Italy offer encouraging signs that tutoring online can work to help children complete unfinished learning.

The findings are particularly noteworthy now, as schools search for as many good learning-recovery options as they can find. COVID-19 has not disappeared, and though the likelihood of widespread school closures appears to be low right now, it might not stay that way.

A paper published last month by researchers in Spain documents the effects of an online math tutoring program provided for about 175 socioeconomically disadvantaged students 12 to 15 years old in Madrid and Catalonia in the spring of 2021, when schools had reopened after COVID-19 shutdowns.

The tutors were math teachers who'd undergone 15-20 hours of additional training in

skills that included tutoring techniques.

Each tutor worked with groups of two students for eight weeks. After school, when students were at home, they went online to connect with their tutors for three 50-minute sessions per week. They worked on math skills and concepts, but the tutors also helped students build good work routines and supported their emotional well-being.

The researchers found that compared to a control group, students in the tutoring program had higher standardized test scores and grades, and were less likely to repeat a grade. They also were more likely to report putting increased effort into their schoolwork.

Researchers estimated that the rise in the students' grades was equivalent to the bump that six additional months of learning would produce.

Test scores, attendance, rise after tutoring program

A paper published in February 2021 focuses on an Italian tutoring program delivered by volunteer university students to middle school students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds in the spring of 2020, when schools were shut down.

The 523 tutors were from a Milan university; the 1,000 student recipients were from 76 schools all over Italy. The students completed online, self-paced training modules designed by pedagogy experts. Those same experts supported the tutors in their work during the program.

Each tutor was assigned to one student, and worked with that student for the entire program, connecting online three to six hours per week, for a total average of about 17 hours over the course of the program, which covered math and language arts.

Using pre- and post-tutoring tests and surveys, the researchers found the program improved students' scores on standardized tests, their attendance, the amount of time they devoted to homework, and their sense of well-being.

Those effects didn't vary by the type of device the students used; the impacts were the same for students who used smart phones as those who used laptops or other computers. But whichever device they used, effectiveness did drop for students who struggled to keep a good internet connection.

An American team of researchers, led by Matthew Kraft at Brown University, found only modest effects from an online tutoring program administered to Chicago middle school students in the spring of 2021. They theorized that impacts were small because students received only about three hours of tutoring over the 12 weeks of the program.

Interesting insights about online tutoring are emerging from a big research project based at Brown University's Annenberg Institute for School Reform. Launched in 2020, the National School Support Accelerator Project is working with 12 pilot sites around the country as they scale up different models of tutoring. The project has also built a range of support tools to help districts launch good-quality tutoring programs.

Annenberg Institute director Susanna Loeb, who supervises the Accelerator project, said its pilot sites are developing online and in-person models, structured in a variety of ways. Those building virtual programs have noticed that they tend to work better if the student is at school during online sessions.

The dynamics behind that effect aren't yet clear, but Loeb said it seems less important for the tutor to be on campus than for the student. If that model works, it could ease one of the biggest stumbling blocks in bringing tutoring programs to scale: hiring enough tutors.

A model in which tutors remain online, while students are at school, opens up the possibility of drawing on a national pool of tutors, Loeb noted. It could also help schools locate tutors with niche or harder-to-find skills. ■

—LM Otero/AP



—David Berner/AP

Published July 8, 2022

Biden's Tutoring Initiative: What Will It Mean for Learning Recovery?

By Libby Stanford

The Biden administration is positioning its new initiative to bring 250,000 tutors and mentors to American schools over the next three years as a way to help propel students to academic recovery in the wake of pandemic schooling disruptions.

It's the president's latest effort to combat the learning gaps highlighted and widened by COVID-19's impact on the nation's schools. The administration plans to increase coordination among districts and education organizations as they use existing COVID-19 relief funds to supply tutors and support recovery efforts.

The U.S. Department of Education will work with AmeriCorps and a group of education organizations to supply "tutors, mentors, student success coaches, integrated student support coordinators, and postsecondary education transition coaches" into schools, according to a fact sheet about the new initiative.

At the same time, the president called on school districts to use American Rescue Plan dollars to provide high-quality tutoring, after-school programs, and summer learning and enrichment opportunities.

Here's what educators need to know about the administration's latest tutoring initiative, the National Partnership for Student Success, and other recent efforts.

Building a pipeline of support

The new partnership brings together 75 education nonprofits and organizations, including professional associations like the National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, AASA, the School Superintendents Association, the American School Counselor Association, and service organizations like Big Brothers Big Sisters and Boys and Girls Clubs, to create a pipeline of volunteer support staff, including tutors, mentors, mental health professionals, and counselors, in schools.

AmeriCorps is tasked with leading the partnership by using \$20 million in American Rescue Plan volunteer-related funds to assist the nonprofits with recruiting and managing 250,000 additional volunteers. The partnership already launched a website where interested volunteers can sign up to participate and school districts can fill out forms to receive help.

"AmeriCorps members have shown that they can help school districts address the impacts of the pandemic, whether it's providing tutoring and mentoring or leading after-school programs and helping students apply for college or financial aid," AmeriCorps CEO Michael Smith said in a statement.

Tutoring as an academic recovery strategy is already widely used in districts. In a May survey of 1,287 districts, 87 percent told the

Education Week Research Center that they offer tutoring to students.

However, the presence of tutors doesn't always mean students are receiving intensive academic support, and schools often struggle to recruit and retain high-quality tutors. On average, districts reported 17 percent of their students were currently receiving tutoring in the Education Week survey. But 43 percent of students on average could benefit from tutoring, districts said.

The partnership could be a pipeline of support for districts struggling with staffing by bringing in volunteers that will offer academic tutoring, support student mental health, help students develop a pathway to graduation, and provide guidance for postsecondary education.

"As more Americans gain experience working in our schools, more will seek out roles as teachers and student support professionals," the White House fact sheet says.

Biden's call to action

The Biden administration also used Tuesday's announcement of the partnership to call on schools and school districts to direct federal funds toward academic support.

The White House highlighted high-quality tutoring, summer learning and enrichment, and after-school programs as three priority areas for American Rescue Plan funds, \$122 billion of which are directed towards education.

A June 7 Georgetown University study found that schools plan to spend about 25 percent of the money on academic recovery.

The White House fact sheet specifically cites the value of high-quality tutoring, summer learning, and enrichment in academic recovery.

To support such efforts, the Education Department will track schools' use of summer learning programs through monthly surveys published by the Institute for Education Sciences. The White House also released a new toolkit for cities, counties, and state agencies with information on how they can use federal funds to support tutoring, after-school, and summer learning programs in their communities.

The department has also created an interactive map so families can track how their schools are using the federal funds. The map goes hand in hand with the department's new National Parents and Families Engagement Council, an effort to promote parent voices in education.

The department also announced its new Best Practices Clearinghouse on Tuesday, a campaign to highlight states and schools that are using federal funds to support learning recovery and student mental health, according to the fact sheet. ■

OPINION

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To Get Tutoring Right, Connect It to the Classroom

By David M. Steiner & Ethan Mitnick

M eet Emma, a 4th grader. Last year, her school building was closed, and she attended only about half her distance-learning classes. Based on her performance on an assessment administered at the beginning of the school year, she is required to participate in a math-tutoring program to help her catch up. But instead of helping Emma feel more successful, tutoring creates additional stress. In class, Emma is learning about adding fractions with like denominators, but in tutoring, she's working on finding the area of rectangles. There is no connection to her classroom work, and as a result, tutoring isn't helping Emma.

School systems across the country are making major investments in tutoring. A recent review of school year 2021-22 district plans by the Center for Reinventing Public Education found that 52 percent of districts are planning to use federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funds to help students make up instructional time, and for many districts, this involves providing tutoring.

The research base tells us that, when done right, tutoring can significantly boost students' success. There is also powerful evidence that addressing unfinished learning should take a *learning acceleration* approach that focuses on strategically preparing students to tackle grade-level content rather than (impossibly) trying to remediate all missed content.

"Students are likely to learn more," write the authors of an EdResearch for Recovery white paper on high-dosage tutoring, "when their tutoring sessions complement and are responsive to their classroom grade-level instruction."

As educators who advocate such tutoring and work with states and districts to accomplish it, we know that a critical question is: How do we make tutoring connect closely to what is taught in the classroom? Without such a connection, Emma and many other students will be far less likely to benefit from tutoring.

School system leaders who are launching tutoring programs can take deliberate steps to fold core existing instructional resources right



—Collage by Gina Tomko/Education Week (Images: iStock/Getty Images Plus)

into their tutoring plans. Using high-quality instructional materials that are already the basis for classroom instruction in tutoring sessions helps streamline the work of leaders, teachers, tutors, and students while helping ensure that tutoring effectively accelerates student learning. Curriculum-based diagnostics such as Eureka Math Equip help identify critical content to reinforce in tutoring what will best prepare individual students for upcoming lessons. Additionally, using high-quality materials in tutoring benefits tutors and students alike because of the familiar look, feel, and instructional approaches of the materials.

Access to these materials helps guide all tutors' acceleration efforts regardless of their prior experience. Novice tutors can preview upcoming lessons and content from the curriculum with students, while more experienced tutors can leverage diagnostic data to identify students' unfinished learning and deliver individualized, just-in-time support.

Some high-quality materials providers such as Zearn Math and Amplify have already begun to create supplemental, aligned resources that are easy for tutors to use, such as scripts and step-by-step guidance. These tools help ensure that what students are working on in tutoring aligns with what they are doing in class. Even when their instructional materials are not yet adapted for use in tutoring, school and district leaders should still make a plan to use

these resources in tutoring.

Here are some specific steps that leaders can take to connect tutoring to classroom instruction. First, pay attention to details. For instance:

- Determine what you want tutors to focus on. Prioritize curriculum-embedded data sources. Identify diagnostic assessments from within your materials (such as the Eureka Math Equip mentioned above) that can be used to pinpoint the content to be taught and to monitor the efficacy of the tutoring. Establish a set of clearly defined milestones and goals including dates when you will review the data with the tutors for any mid-course corrections.
- Diagnostics may point to the need to reinforce foundational-skills math content and provide practice with decoding and vocabulary. In each case the skills should be needed for access to current grade-level work.
- Ensure tutors have access to the right materials. Whether digital or print materials, tutors need easy access to these resources. This may require a procurement process and assigning staff members to distribute print materials and/or logins to tutors.

Second, invest in your people. You can:

- Include tutors in teacher professional learning. Whenever possible, have tutors attend curriculum-specific professional learning and training alongside teachers. This will build a shared investment in the materials and better prepare tutors with the knowledge and skills they need to accelerate instruction.
- Hire a training partner/vendor. A trusted professional learning provider can conduct training and coaching for tutors on the instructional materials you are using, especially if your materials do not contain specific

resources for tutors. This may be available through your curriculum vendor or from external professional learning organizations.

- Identify and use in-house educators who can support your tutors. Teachers or leaders who have been trained on the curriculum can provide ongoing site-based support and coaching for tutors on the use of the curriculum or serve as tutoring-program supervisors.

Several agencies and organizations launching tutoring initiatives have taken steps to align their tutoring programs with core instruction. Here are two examples:

- The Arkansas education department's elementary and secondary division and Gary Community Ventures' Learning League (based in Colorado) are leveraging Zearn for use in their tutoring programs to accelerate classroom instruction. Tutors receive robust training from SchoolKit on Zearn.
- The Texas Education Agency has released a list of vetted tutoring content providers. The materials on this list align to the core instructional materials being provided as open educational resources to Texas districts as part of the TEA's COVID Recovery Supports. The result is a coherent package of high-quality materials for districts wishing to align their instructional materials to those used in tutoring.

In addition to streamlining their own efforts, when educators connect tutoring closely with classroom instruction and high-quality materials already used in classrooms, they can change the tutoring experience for students like Emma. Rather than being an exercise in frustration, tutoring that's classroom-connected boosts confidence and academic ability in and out of school.

That's when students get the full power of tutoring, an urgently needed intervention. ■

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