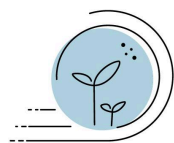




**Innovate**  
Public Schools

# High-Impact Tutoring: Family and Caregiver Toolkit

May 2024



NATIONAL STUDENT  
SUPPORT ACCELERATOR

*equalizing access to quality tutoring*

# High-Impact Tutoring: Family and Caregiver Toolkit



*Parent Leaders Building Power for Education Equity - Innovate Public Schools*

The National Student Support Accelerator and Innovate Public Schools created this tool to help families understand and advocate for high-impact tutoring in their communities. By equipping families with this tool, we aim to foster greater parent leadership and engagement with high-impact tutoring to support students across the nation.

The toolkit’s purpose is to:

- ✓ [Understand what high-impact tutoring is](#)
- ✓ [Contribute to your child’s success in school](#)
- ✓ [Empower yourself and other families to advocate and partner with schools](#)

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## Letter from Parents

Dear parents, caregivers, and families,

Like you, we are concerned about ensuring our children feel cherished, affirmed, and prepared for a lifetime of opportunity and choice. We believe the education system was not designed to serve all children, and the biggest barrier to having access to an excellent school is a lack of political will to improve the system. The voices and experiences of parents, families, and students should be elevated and centered in decisions about education.

Innovate is a non-profit that organizes thousands of parents throughout California. We are united in working to improve education for Black and Latino students, English learners, and students with learning differences. Our vision is to see all students succeed academically, socially, and emotionally so that they can realize their goals and dreams.

Students across the nation are falling behind and many are not prepared to succeed in college. In 2022, only 33% of fourth graders in the United States were proficient in reading, and only 36% were proficient in math.<sup>1</sup> And only 31% of eighth graders were proficient in reading, and 26% were proficient in math.<sup>1</sup> It is imperative we take action now to support students.

High-impact tutoring is a powerful strategy that can help students recover and thrive academically. As parent leaders in California, we have successfully advocated for and partnered with our local city governments and school districts to fund and scale high-impact tutoring. Our goal with this toolkit is for more parents to use their leadership to advocate for their student's and all students' needs.

This toolkit was created to equip you with the resources needed to: 1) understand how high-impact tutoring can help students recover and thrive, 2) contribute to your child's success in school, and 3) empower yourself and other families to advocate for high-impact tutoring.

In the spirit of transformation,

Innovate Parent Leaders from California

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<sup>1</sup> NAEP Report Cards: [Reading](#) and [Mathematics](#), Overall NAEP Achievement Levels, Grades 4 and 8, 2022.

## Understanding High-Impact Tutoring

### What is High-Impact Tutoring?

- ✓ Extra learning time is in a **small group or 1:1**.
- ✓ Tutoring happens at least **three times per week**, each usually lasting **30 minutes** (depends on child's age).
- ✓ The tutor and child build a good **relationship**. This helps them learn and enjoy tutoring.
- ✓ Tutors use **activities** and **quizzes** to check how the student is doing. This helps tutors figure out what to teach next.
- ✓ Tutoring is aligned with what the student is **learning in school**.
- ✓ Tutors get quality training and support.

While many people talk about the importance of tutoring, people have questions about what makes tutoring “high-impact.” This High-Impact Tutoring Toolkit, developed by the National Student Support Accelerator and Innovate Public Schools is designed to help families understand and advocate for high-impact tutoring.

High-impact tutoring is when a student gets extra learning time in a small group or one-on-one from a consistent, trained tutor as part of their school day. High-impact tutoring is often confused with “homework help” or reteaching, but neither of those leads to the same learning growth as high-impact tutoring. High-impact tutoring helps students learn the skills they need to become independent learners.

### Benefits for Students

Research shows that high-impact tutoring results in 4 to 15 months of additional learning.<sup>2</sup> Tutors give students personalized help to support what they are learning in school. Students who participate in high-impact tutoring can make big improvements in their schoolwork and how they feel about themselves. This helps them not just in school, but in life as they grow up.

When families understand how their child is experiencing tutoring, the tutoring is even more powerful in supporting student learning.

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<sup>2</sup> Nickow, A., Oreopoulos, P., & Quan, V. (2020). The Impressive Effects of Tutoring on PreK-12 Learning: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of the Experimental Evidence. National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper Series(w27476).



## Partnering and Advocating

Partnering with the district and community means working together with schools and community organizations to improve tutoring. Advocacy means speaking up for access to high-impact tutoring. Here are some ways to partner and advocate for high-impact tutoring.



Partnering with the district and community means working together with schools and community organizations to improve tutoring.

Families should get support to understand their child's grades and test scores. This can help show if the child is performing as expected for their grade. When families have the tools and information on how to help, it makes a big difference and helps them succeed in school. By sharing information about how kids are doing in school, it helps everyone work together to help them learn better. This includes sharing information about grades, where students are doing well, and where they can improve.

### Building Open Communication with Teachers

Families and teachers both have an important job: talking openly and working together to help your child do better in school. You can start by asking your teacher when they have time to talk, and then talking openly with your child's teachers. This could be a short conversation where you can share what you hope and worry about for your child. You can also talk about what you want your child to achieve and ask teachers how they can get there.

This [guide](#) explains when schools usually share information about a student's academic progress throughout the school year. It also has information about when schools usually partner with families and students on high-impact tutoring. Use the checklists and questions to stay informed throughout the year.

**Understanding and Supporting Your Child's Academic Growth**

This guide explains when schools usually share information about a student's academic progress and when schools usually partner with families and students on high-impact tutoring. Click on each hyperlink for detailed checklists and questions to stay informed throughout the year.

	August - September	October - November	December - January	February - April	May - June
<b>What's Happening in the School Year</b>	<b>Back to School: Get to Know Each Other</b>	<b>Parent-Teacher Conferences: Learn and Set Goals Together</b>	<b>Mid-Year Progress Reports: Monitor Growth and Progress</b>	<b>Parent-Teacher Conferences: Review Achievements and Set New Goals</b>	<b>End-of-Year Testing: Celebrate Achievements</b>
<b>Understand Your Child's Academic Progress</b>	Discuss your child's hopes and dreams Ask when progress reports are sent home Make sure you're on teacher & school distribution lists	Attend parent-teacher conferences Review your child's progress reports to understand their academic progress Identify opportunities for support, including high-impact tutoring	Review your child's mid-year progress reports to understand their academic progress If you don't receive them, ask your child's teacher or tutor Discuss how supports have been impacting your child's academic progress	Attend parent-teacher conferences Review your child's progress reports to understand their academic progress Identify opportunities for support, including high-impact tutoring	Discuss your child's academic achievements with their teacher or tutor Celebrate your child's academic achievements Determine what your child can do over the summer to continue making progress
<b>What's Happening in High-Impact Tutoring</b>	Tutoring begins in schools and afterschool programs	Participating students attend tutoring sessions consistently	Teachers and tutors share student progress Tutoring groups and participating students may change	Participating students attend tutoring sessions consistently	Teachers and tutors share and celebrate end-of-year student progress Schools and summer programs may offer high-impact tutoring
<b>Support Your Child with Tutoring</b>	Ask your child's school or afterschool program if they have high-impact tutoring available Ask what information they use to choose students for tutoring Ask your child and their teacher or tutor how you can support at home	Ask your child about how tutoring is going Make sure your child is attending all scheduled tutoring sessions Encourage your child to try their best in tutoring	Ask your child's teacher or tutor about how tutoring has helped them learn Ask your child and their teacher or tutor how you can change support at home if needed	Ask your child about how tutoring is going Make sure your child is attending all scheduled tutoring sessions Encourage your child to try their best in tutoring	Celebrate your child's academic progress Talk to your child about how tutoring supported their academic progress Ask your child's teacher or tutor what opportunities are available for summer learning, including high-impact tutoring

## Let's Talk Advocacy

Advocacy means speaking up for access to high-impact tutoring.

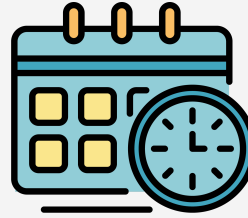
### Here are some ways you can advocate for your child:



Send an advocacy letter to your child's school district, principal, or teacher. Encourage other families to also send advocacy letters.



Read and understand student data using [greatschools.org](https://greatschools.org). Compare student achievement in your child's school with achievement in other schools in your state.



Schedule a meeting with your child's teacher and/or principal to discuss high-quality tutoring opportunities for your child. Below are a few questions you can ask.



See the "[Additional Resources](#)" section for even more ideas!

## Advocacy Letter Templates

Use these templates to develop your own advocacy letters to:

- [School District Leaders and School Board Members](#)
- [School Principal and Teachers](#)

## Questions to Ask

Above we talked about open communication, partnership, and advocacy around high-impact tutoring. Here's a list of questions you can ask to do all three!

Questions to ask your school, principal, district, or program:

1. What tutoring programs are offered?
2. Who is eligible for tutoring? How are students selected?
3. Is there a tutoring program my child can participate in?
  - If not, why not and how might my child participate?
  - If yes, how do I enroll my child?
  - What can I do to support my child so they get the most out of it?
4. Is 1:1 or small group tutoring provided? Is tutoring provided in-person or virtually?
5. Are students paired with tutors or do the tutors rotate?
6. Are tutors receiving ongoing training and support?
7. Does tutoring take place during or after the school day? Is summer tutoring provided?
8. Is data being collected to measure program success?
9. Has the tutoring program been awarded the [NSSA Program Design Badge](#) showing the program is aligned to the research on what is high-impact?
10. What state or federal funding can you leverage to provide and scale tutoring?

[Download Questions to Ask.](#)

## Advocacy Examples

Below are inspiring stories of how parents successfully advocated for high-impact tutoring locally in their own communities.

### Parent Shield: Literacy is Freedom



*Started by Fort Worth native and Highland Hills neighborhood resident, Trenace Dorsey-Hollins, Parent Shield Fort Worth is a grassroots movement of parents, guardians, caretakers, and community members that strongly believe every child in Fort Worth should receive a high-quality education, inclusive of all students; which develops their potential and prepares them to be successful adults.*

### Top 10 Ways Parent Shield Organized and Advocated

1. Doing online research about their school's ratings
2. Asking teachers about their student's progress
3. Talking to other parents and sharing what they learned
4. Asking to meet with the mayor
5. Meeting at a "Mayor's Roundtable"
6. Developing a plan for the Literacy Clinics
7. Going door to door to ask families to join
8. Asking for funding to make a change
9. Continuing to tell other families what they're doing and how to get involved
10. Attending district board of education meetings to continue to advocate

*"Before it was not okay for parents to come and pull up a seat at the table and say, Hey, this is what our kids need...But we've really built a space to where parents are comfortable having seats at the table and the districts and city leaders are more accepting for us pulling that chair up."*

Trenace, Parent Leader, Parent Shield



## Parent Shield: Literacy is Freedom

In Ft. Worth, Texas, parent leaders initiated the Freedom July project through the Parent Shield “Literacy is Freedom” initiative. This effort began when a parent leader noticed a big difference between what parents thought about their kids' reading skills and the actual levels. She started a campaign to make children's educational progress clearer, understanding that report cards were not enough for a full picture.



The project introduced parent-organized literacy clinics over the summer. Kids participating took reading tests and met with teacher volunteers who worked with families to understand important insights into their children's literacy levels, insights that were missing from report cards with traditional letter grades. This method not only tested students' literacy but also gave parents the knowledge and tools needed for their children's success, creating a new standard for parental involvement and a strong effort to address students' learning needs.

One parent, after getting detailed and understandable data from a literacy clinic, was able to prevent her child from being mistakenly placed in a special education class. Parents in Ft. Worth are now able to work more effectively with schools, making sure their kids get the right support and help.

This initiative led to a key partnership with the mayor's office. After meeting with the mayor, parent leaders received funding to begin a high-impact tutoring program with the local Boys and Girls Club. This strategic approach unlocked the potential to provide thorough educational support, emphasizing the importance of community and institutional partnerships in tackling literacy challenges.

For more, read: [Literacy is Freedom](#)

## Innovate Public Schools: Not All Tutoring is High-Impact Tutoring

In Los Angeles, California, a group of determined parents embarked on a transformative journey to ensure their children received the educational support they deserved. Innovate Public Schools, an organization dedicated to empowering families for educational advocacy, became the catalyst for change when parent leaders came together to build a common understanding and advocacy campaign for high-impact tutoring.



Their mission was clear: to make high-impact tutoring accessible to all students, not just the small number of students that schools in the community had enrolled. The existing tutoring programs were either inaccessible or inadequate, leaving many children and communities at a disadvantage. The pandemic only exacerbated these challenges, with remote learning creating further gaps in educational equity.

### 3 ways Innovate Public Schools Parent Leaders Organize and Advocate



#### LISTEN

Meet 1:1 with other parents and talk about their children's learning experiences

Gather and ask parents what they want support for their students to look like

Hold online and in-person meetings to keep growing their parent community



#### LEARN

Research strategies (e.g., high-impact tutoring)

Develop materials to explain what high-impact tutoring is

Meet with researchers, tutoring providers, and district and city leaders to learn and identify what is possible



#### ACT

Ask schools how to access high-impact tutoring

Ask local mayors to fund a high-impact tutoring program

Ask district leaders to scale high-impact tutoring to reach more students

*“High Quality Tutoring I think is perfect for a student, because you have a relationship, a connection. The teacher interacts and sometimes even motivates the student... they feel confident.”*

Aida, Parent Leader, Innovate Public Schools




Undeterred, Innovate parent leaders sought solutions beyond the limitations of the school district. Recognizing that some of the tutoring opportunities for students were really homework help, drop-in tutoring, or had student groups that were too large, they researched and shared a clear definition of high-impact tutoring across their communities. Using Innovate’s organizing model (outlined in the graphic to the right), parent leaders met with dozens of community, district, and city leaders and experts to identify potential opportunities to fund and scale a tutoring program. They met city mayors from Huntington Park and South Gate and were able to persuade the cities to use their recovery funds to invest in high-impact tutoring.

With the infusion of \$200,000 from two supportive mayors, they launched a pilot tutoring program that embodied their vision: small group sessions, frequent meetings, and continuous assessment to track progress. The success of the pilot program was undeniable, with students experiencing academic and social-emotional benefits from participating in high-impact tutoring. Parents could see and celebrate improvements their children experienced in their academic performance.

The parent leaders have now moved their advocacy efforts forward within their local district and schools. They continue to work to secure greater access to high-impact tutoring, sharing the transformative experiences their children experienced in the pilot tutoring program.

For more information: Read [Southeast LA Parent Leaders help launch regional tutoring initiative](#).

## Resources

LEARN AND SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT HIGH-IMPACT TUTORING	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Share the <a href="#">definition of High-Impact Tutoring</a> with other parents, caregivers, and your child’s school. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This document explains <a href="#">high-impact tutoring in greater detail</a>. It’s useful for talking with district leaders and board members about high-impact tutoring.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Read this <a href="#">FAQ on High-Impact Tutoring for Families and Caregivers</a> to learn more about high-impact tutoring.</li> <li>● Use <a href="#">this flyer to share the definition of high-impact tutoring</a> with other families.</li> </ul>
BOOST YOUR CHILD’S GROWTH	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Understand what students should be learning at each grade in order to be prepared for college and career by reading the <a href="#">Parents’ Guides to Student Success</a>. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The <a href="#">Readiness Roadmap</a> is also a great resource!</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Introduce your child to their new teacher so that they can best support your child right from the beginning of the year with the <a href="#">Dear Teacher Letter Template</a>.</li> </ul>
PARENT LEADER TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Attend parent leader training opportunities and learn how to organize with other families. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">Community Organizer Training Program (COTP) Bootcamp</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">COFI Center for Action and Learning</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">United Parent Leaders Action Network (UPLAN)</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## RESEARCH ON TUTORING



- Evidence- and research-based solutions to help families to advocate and organize for high-impact tutoring to support student learning.
  - [High-Impact Tutoring: Equitable and Effective Learning Acceleration](#) (National Student Support Accelerator)
- [Effectiveness of high-impact tutoring](#) (J-PAL North America)
  - This video [explains the findings from the research](#).
  - This video [explains research findings from Chicago Public Schools](#) on high-impact tutoring for high school mathematics students.
- [Tutoring for students with disabilities](#) (Blue Engine and SPED Strategies)
- [Integrating high-impact tutoring into MTSS processes](#) (National Student Support Accelerator). MTSS is a structure districts use to support students' individual academic and social emotional needs in collaboration with families.

## Acknowledgements

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- Sanam Jorjani, Oakland Literacy Coalition
- Sarah Carpenter, Memphis Lift
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- Carmen Rodriguez
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- Cynthia Segura
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- Joanne Abernathy
- LaQuisha Bryant
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- Tonya Craft Perry



**National Student Support Accelerator (NSSA)** is a program of the Stanford Accelerator for Learning and Systems Change for Advancing Learning and Equity (SCALE) at Stanford University. NSSA is devoted to translating promising research about how tutoring can benefit students into action on the ground. Our vision is that every K-12 student in need will have access to an effective tutor that champions and ensures their learning and success. NSSA focuses on three strands of work: catalyzing the field of tutoring by creating communities of practice, building consensus around standards, and coordinating research efforts; accelerating the growth of high-impact tutoring by providing open access tools and technical assistance to schools, districts and states interested in implementing tutoring and to tutoring providers interested in improvement; and engaging and activating stakeholders to build demand and ensure funding.



**Innovate Public Schools** is a nonprofit organization that builds the power and capacity of parents and families to organize, advocate, and demand high quality schools for their children. We believe the education system was not designed to serve all children, and that the biggest barrier to all children having access to an excellent school is a lack of political will to improve the system. We believe the voices and experiences of parents, families, and students should be elevated and centered in decisions about education. To learn more about how Innovate Public Schools organizes families locally and across the state visit [www.innovateschools.org](http://www.innovateschools.org).

