# Policy Considerations for Tutoring

High-Impact Tutoring: An Equitable, Proven Approach to Addressing Pandemic Learning Loss and Accelerating Learning

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted schooling across the country, leading to substantial learning loss for students, especially for students living in poverty and from communities of color. In fact, 70% of parents are worried that reduction in learning during the pandemic will have a lasting effect, with 68% concerned about their child staying on track in school.[i]

We have an **urgent and immediate need** to provide additional support for K-12 students to ensure they are well prepared for the future.

Research shows that **high-impact tutoring** is one of the most effective academic interventions — providing an average of **more than four months of additional learning in elementary literacy and almost 10 months of additional learning in high school math**. Parents want tutoring for their children. In fact, the US spent approximately $47 billion on tutoring in 2020. Yet, traditionally tutoring has not been accessible to students with the greatest needs. ***Providing access to high-impact tutoring would be a strong step toward equalizing educational opportunities***.

High-Impact Tutoring Outpaces Other Learning Recovery Options
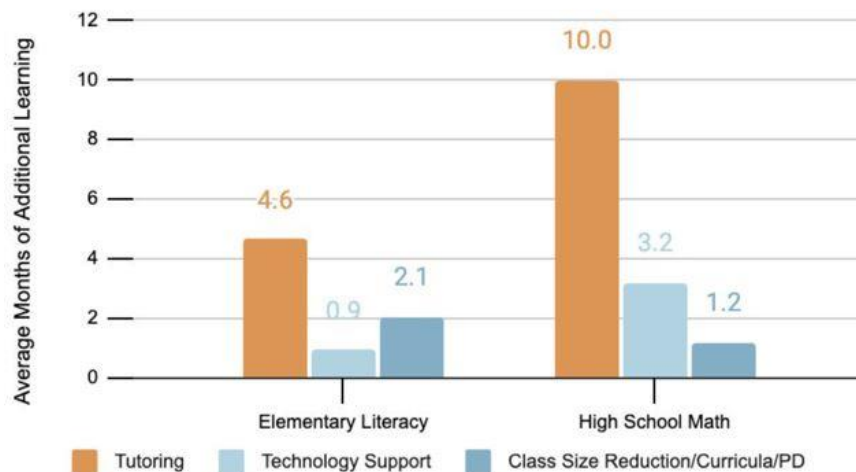
Not all tutoring is effective and previous attempts at scaling tutoring have led to reductions in quality and little benefits for students.[ii] While states are under tremendous pressure to act quickly, it is critical to act based on evidence to use limited resources effectively to provide students with what they need. *Research has shown that effective tutoring must be embedded in the school day, take place at least three times per week, prioritize building a relationship with a consistent, well-supported tutor, and use state-standard aligned, high-quality materials*.

As states confront COVID learning loss and consider options for moving forward, we strongly encourage them to consider high-impact tutoring to support students. We offer the following recommendations:

1. **Require tutoring programs to have either independent, experimental evidence of effectiveness at improving student learning OR these <u>five</u> features:**

   - **Tutoring should be embedded in existing schools either during the school day or immediately before or after the school day.** Embedded programs have a significantly higher likelihood of student attendance and reaching the students who need it most. School-based programs equalize access as all students are able to participate without additional cost for the students or transportation requirements. School-based programs do not require students to miss work or other activities outside of the school day.
   - **Tutoring sessions should include a minimum of three sessions per week.** For tutoring approaches to be effective, students have to spend a substantial amount of time working with their tutor. While the amount of time per session needed for effectiveness will depend on the program's content area and student age, students should receive a minimum of three sessions per week.
   - **Students should work with a consistent tutor who is supported by ongoing oversight and coaching.** The basis of effective tutoring is strong tutor-student relationships. Students should have a consistent tutor who is skilled at relationship-building. Tutors need initial training, oversight, ongoing coaching, and clear lines of accountability in order for the program to be effective.
   - **Data should inform tutoring sessions.** Tutors should use data to understand students' strengths and needs, and should build their sessions to focus on the needs. Tutoring programs should use data to assess their effectiveness at improving student learning and should make adjustments based on these data.
   - **Materials should be aligned with research and state standards.** The materials that tutors use with their students should be aligned with both state standards and research on teaching and learning and should be engaging for students and easy for tutors to use, given their training and experience. If classrooms are using high-quality materials, tutoring materials should build on those materials; if classroom materials are not high quality, tutoring materials should preference quality and standards-alignment over matching with classroom instruction.

2. **Provide funding for districts to support implementation and continuous improvements**

   - **Design and implementation should align with current evidence of best practices.** Funding for technical assistance for development can improve the probability of success.
   - **An evidence base of effective programs will help improve tutoring over time.** Funding for districts to assess and monitor tutoring program effectiveness will build the base of evidence.

Funding is available. Tutoring is an allowable use of COVID relief bill funds including the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund. Additional funding will likely be available through future COVID relief legislation.

Please see [Model State Legislation for High-Impact Tutoring](#).

The National Student Success Accelerator supports scaling high-impact tutoring with quality. For additional resources, tools, and technical assistance please contact Susanna Loeb at susanna.loeb@studentsupportaccelerator.org.

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[i] National Parents Union, December 2020 poll, https://nationalparentsunion.org/npu-polling/

[ii] No Child Left Behind's Supplemental Educational Services (SES) program invested heavily in tutoring; however, evaluations showed mixed results (see Heinrich et al., 2014; Zimmer et al., 2010). The few instances where SES positively impacted student learning tended to involve minimum dosage requirements, structured sessions, tutor coordination with schools, and more tutor experience (Heinrich et al., 2014).