State/District Leaders Learning Community Highlights

Strengthening Learning Communities

On May 9th, 19 school districts and charter management organizations, eight state departments of education, and seven community-based organizations came together to learn from colleagues in other locations with the goal of strengthening high-impact tutoring practices and increasing sustainability. Of the districts in attendance, four districts were just getting high-impact tutoring off the ground, seven were up and running, five are scaling, and one is scaling back to refine their implementation after an ambitious start. By far, math and reading were the most common subjects of tutoring in the participating districts. And while all grade levels have some access to tutoring, middle grades math and upper elementary reading were the most common. We were buoyed to learn that the descriptions of tutoring in these districts generally follow the evidence base with respect to frequency, group size and scheduling.

Sharing Knowledge and Planning for Future Inquiries

Attendees identified four key areas of challenge and opportunity in high impact tutoring: staffing, scheduling, student attendance, and data use. In groups they identified what they know about these areas, including the following:

- **Staffing** – People with a variety of backgrounds (teacher, para, college student, community member) can be strong tutors with sufficient training and curriculum. Money talks; paying tutors increases availability.

- **Scheduling** – Tutoring during the day has an increased impact because it is more consistent for students. Schedules can change to incorporate tutoring but it takes a change of mindset for many, especially at the secondary level.

- **Student Attendance** – Scheduling tutoring during the day helps attendance. Parent engagement and relationships with tutors are an important factor in student attendance.

- **Data Use** – Establishing a data plan before starting makes data tracking easier. Track inputs and student outcomes allows for an understanding of return on investments of student time and funding.

Sustainability of High-Impact Tutoring

To sustain high-impact tutoring in schools districts and states in attendance articulated actions districts, states, community organizations, and others could take to strengthen funding, staffing, buy-in, and the evidence base.

Actions to Support Sustainability

	Funding	Staffing	Buy-In	Evidence of Effectiveness
District	• Prioritize/ Audit existing usage/ leverage existing funds including existing federal funds (Title I, IDEA, etc.) • Advocate for inclusion in state funding formulas • Change funding strategy to outcomes-based contracting • Engage stakeholders	-Create a pipeline of tutors to teachers -Create framework for varied talent acquisition -Provide adequate training for tutors -Pay tutors -Include grant writers as staffing for tutoring	- State-level advocacy -Vertical communication & trust (from central administration to schools) -Communicate with families & students -Establish a strong vision & aligned purpose	-Ensure fidelity of implementation -Habitual data collection, consistent use of it -Clear timeline to collect evidence to show impact & connect to funding -Show attendance improvement and growth in formal assessments as potential evidence for effectiveness
Community Orgs	• Philanthropy as funders • Universities as partners • Community organizations educate the public and advocate for funding	-Establish tutor to teacher pipeline -Encourage families and community members as tutors -Establish partnerships with universities, businesses/ professionals, and volunteers	-Advocacy for funding (parents - tax payer $) -Strong purpose -Invest in success of tutoring → partner with district -Educate - Seek philanthropy - Work with providers	-Provide capacity where schools lack research/ eval team -Insist on transparency of programs and outcomes -Create demand for communication -Seek understanding of benefits to tutors (Do teachers stay if they have tutoring in preservice)? -Insist on provider data -Make data and research available to disseminate quickly
State	• Funding formulas (per student) • Policy/ legislation • State Education Agency (SEA) set-aside of federal funds	-Provide technical assistance and tutor training support -Support teacher residency programs -Encourage educator prep programs to include tutoring	-Districts share impact with the state -Use tutoring as a solutions to solve multiple problems	- Create clear standards for data collection and dissemination

Throughout the day, the district and state learning community considered questions of equity and coherence of systems, especially the coherence of K-12 and higher education systems that both develop teachers and may be sources of tutors. Going forward, this group would like to learn more about data structures to build evidence for programs and potential sources of funding for high-impact tutoring post-ESSER.