

PAPER

High-dosage tutoring:

A path for K-12 recovery

Growing research points to one strategy as K-12's best bet against the COVID-slide—tutoring. Learn how districts can do it right.

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Introduction

Research on high-dosage tutoring (HDT), generally defined as 1:1 or small-group tutoring at least three times a week, is substantial and compelling. Average effect sizes are among the largest of interventions in education.

As such, HDT programs are being touted as K-12's best bet for addressing the COVID-slide, accelerating learning, and aiding in long-term recovery—especially if the programs meet evidence-based criteria.^[2]

While HDT has the most robust base of evidence, it is challenging for districts to deploy on their own. Districts can ideally^[3] leverage funds for programs that help scale HDT.

The average effect^[1] of tutoring programs on academic achievement is larger than roughly **85%** of other educational interventions.

This is equivalent to moving a student at the **35th** percentile of the achievement distribution to the **50th**.

^[1] J-PAL. *The Transformative Potential of Tutoring for Prek-12 Learning Outcomes: Lessons From Randomized Evaluations*; 2020

^[2] Annenberg Institute at Brown University. *Accelerating Student Learning With High-Dosage Tutoring: Brief*; 2021.

^[3] SCORE. *Using ESSER II Funds To Accelerate Student Learning: COVID-19 Impact Memo*; 2021

Research on effective HDT programs

How can districts choose tutoring programs that are effective?

Research briefs from Annenberg Institute at Brown University^[1] and J-PAL at MIT^[2] outline the transformative potential of tutoring on K-12 along with key principles for doing it right. Learn the evidence-based criteria for effective HDT and how Paper aligns with them.

Criteria for effective HDT			
1	Frequency:	Three sessions per week, or 50 hours a semester, at minimum.	✓
2	Group size:	One-on-one and personalized is most effective.	✓
3	Personnel:	Teachers or paraprofessionals (e.g., college students) getting training and support.	✓
4	Focus:	Effective at all grade levels, particularly for those who have fallen behind or students from disadvantaged backgrounds.	✓
5	Measurement:	Data from tutoring sessions should be used to tailor instruction for individual students.	✓
6	Relationships:	Ensuring students have a consistent tutor over time may facilitate positive relationships* and a stronger understanding of learning needs.	✓
7	Curriculum:	Tutoring that is directly aligned with classroom materials and content allows tutors to reinforce and support teacher instruction.	✓
8	Scheduling:	Tutoring conducted during the school day can result in greater learning gains.	✓
9	Delivery mode:	Both in-person and online tutoring can be effective. Online tutoring can lower costs and better meet needs with a larger tutor supply.	✓
10	Prioritization:	School-wide tutoring programs can combat negative 'extra help' stigma around those that need tutoring.	✓

^[1] Annenberg Institute at Brown University. *Accelerating Student Learning With High-Dosage Tutoring: Brief*, 2021.

^[2] J-PAL. *The Transformative Potential of Tutoring for Prek-12 Learning Outcomes: Lessons From Randomized Evaluations*, 2020

How to choose effective HDT programs

Take a deeper dive into the 10 evidence-based criteria for selecting or creating HDT programs at your district.

Learn how Paper aligns with these criteria, meeting districts' need for research-backed, cost-effective, and personalized support.

1

Frequency

Tutoring is most likely to be effective when delivered in high doses: three or more sessions per week or intensive, week-long, small group programs.



Tutoring sessions on Paper are unlimited, and accessible 24/7—going way above the minimum recommended dosage.

2

Group size

Tutors can effectively instruct up to three or four students at a time. One-to-one tutoring is likely most effective but also more costly.



Both one-to-one and group tutoring is available to all students on Paper, with no variable costs. Districts get effective tutoring at a predictable [fixed rate](#).

3

Personnel

The skills required for tutoring are different from the skills required for classroom teaching—meaning a wide variety of tutors can successfully improve student outcomes if they receive adequate training.



All tutors are high-performing college students or professionals who are carefully vetted and trained.

Who are Paper's tutors?

4

Focus

Researchers have found tutoring to be effective at all grade levels. Evidence is strongest, for reading-focused tutoring for students in early grades and for math-focused tutoring for older students.



Paper tutors support K-12 students in [all subject areas](#).

5

Measurement

Tutoring programs that support data use and ongoing informal assessments allow tutors to tailor instruction for individual students more effectively.



All tutors use the Socratic method to assess students' understanding and tailor instruction. Teachers get data insights to inform their approach.



We're starting to see patterns in what the kids are asking questions on, which informs ed services, which means we can readjust our scope and sequence and talk about instructional practices. We just have more information than we ever had before.

— Keith Irish
Assistant Superintendent,
Educational Services, South San
Francisco Unified School District

6

Curriculum

High-dosage tutoring that is directly tied to classroom content has the strongest evidence of effectiveness and allows tutors to reinforce and support teachers' classroom instruction.



Paper tutors act as 24/7 virtual TAs, supporting students in alignment with their teachers' classroom content and instructions.

7

Relationships

Ensuring students have a consistent tutor over time may facilitate positive tutor-student relationships and a stronger understanding of students' learning needs.



Everybody's worried about online safety—all of the safeguards that Paper has in place to ensure anonymity and student safety is really helpful.

— Dr. Ryan Smith
Assistant Superintendent,
Paramount USD, CA



We're committed to preserving the highest standards of digital safety. We ensure students have consistent support from tutors but intentionally do not build tutor-student relationships.

8

Scheduling

Tutoring interventions that are conducted during the school day tend to result in greater learning gains than those that are after school or during the summer.



Academic support is accessible during and after the school day. Teacher-focused resources are provided to help incorporate Paper into classroom instruction.

9

Delivery Mode

Both in-person and online tutoring can be effective. Online tutoring can help lower costs and provide stronger matches between students' needs and tutors' skill sets with a large tutor supply.



Paper's large team of virtual tutors means students can always get academic support that matches their needs, language preference, and other attributes.

10

Prioritization

Programs that target lower-performing students can create a negative stigma where tutoring is perceived as a punishment. Targeting by grade level or school can help show that tutoring is for everyone.



Paper helps districts combat "extra help" stigma by making it cost-effective for districts to provide tutoring support for all.



Paper's extensive platform has proved to be an invaluable resource for students of varying academic abilities and socioeconomic backgrounds.

— Dr. Greg Plutko
Superintendent, Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District, CA

Scaling HDT with Paper

Paper aligns with the evidence-based HDT model while also helping districts overcome its typical shortcomings—scale and cost. Districts partner with Paper to ensure all students get on-demand, 1:1 support from trained, professional tutors.

Students log on to Paper’s interactive platform and connect instantly with a tutor via a live chat function that allows them to seek homework help, writing feedback, and study support in any K-12 subject area.

Sessions can last for a few minutes or several hours, depending on the needs of the student. Help is available in English, Spanish, French, and Mandarin—24 hours per day, seven days per week.

“Like all schools throughout the country, our students have been experiencing academic deficiencies due to the COVID-slide. Our teachers are phenomenal and do a great job while at school, but some of our students need additional resources when they are home in the evenings and weekends.

We are partnering with Paper to provide our students and their families with a 24/7 online tutoring service to try and decrease the impacts of the COVID-slide.”



Brandon Bailey
Director of Educational Services,
Richland School District, PA



News feature: First PA district offers free 24/7 academic support

[View](#)



How South San Francisco USD is transforming their approach to extra help

[View](#)



Yakima School Board approves Paper for 24/7 access to tutors

[View](#)

Leveraging federal funds for HDT

COVID-19 relief money has provided a new opportunity for schools and districts to fuel equitable learning recovery, with programs such as HDT, summer learning, and whole-learner supports.

See some of the educational objectives of federal and state funding below:

- ✓ Addressing **learning loss** with **evidence-based practices**
- ✓ **After-school** programs and **summer** learning
- ✓ Supporting **students and families**, including in distance learning
- ✓ Addressing the unique **needs of underserved students**
- ✓ Aiding in substantive **student-teacher interactions**
- ✓ **Monitoring** student engagement, progress, and needs

Paper aligns with approved uses of the ESSA, CARES, CRRSA, and ARP Act.

[Read full guide](#)

The National Student Support Accelerator



NATIONAL STUDENT
SUPPORT ACCELERATOR



ANNENBERG
BROWN UNIVERSITY

The [National Student Support Accelerator](#), part of the [Annenberg Institute at Brown University](#), is devoted to translating promising research about how tutoring can benefit students into action on the ground.

Launched by a diverse community of education experts and scholars from around the country, the Accelerator provides comprehensive resources for schools and districts for implementing high-impact tutoring.

The National Student Support Accelerator **lists** Paper as part of their tutoring database of organizations offering tutoring, technology platforms, or academic interventions.



As part of a [research project](#) by National Student Support Accelerator, [Aspire Public Schools](#) has partnered with Paper. All students in grades six through 12 will receive on-demand, 1:1 support from professional tutors.

The partnership with Paper reflects the district's efforts to make up for learning loss and help students through personalized academic support. The research project will explore the impact tutoring services can have on academic achievement of students from underserved communities.

Other effective strategies for recovery

Besides HDT, The Hechinger Report outlined^[1] the following ways that districts nationwide are fighting learning loss.



Extended school year

Extending the length of the school year, launching summer and Saturday school programs to help catch students up academically.



Grade-level reading exposure

Keeping learning materials at grade-level and helping students work up to that level—shown^[2] to be more effective than reteaching content from earlier grades.



Partnerships with community organizations

Forming partnerships with local organizations such as literacy programs to support students and teachers.



Working on literacy at home

Encouraging parents and guardians to boost literacy outside school by reading books with children and making literacy-related activities^[3] playful.

^[1] [The Hechinger Report. 5 Ways Schools Hope to Fight Covid-19 Learning Loss; 2021.](#)

^[2] [McKinsey & Company. COVID-19 and Learning Loss—Disparities Grow and Students Need Help; Report; 2020.](#)

^[3] [The Hechinger Report. What Parents Need to Know About the Research on How Kids Learn to Read; 2020.](#)

Looking beyond the COVID-slide

The need to provide equitable learning support to struggling students is going to continue beyond the COVID crisis.

Instead of approaching tutoring as a short-term intervention for lost instructional time, educators can seize the current opportunity to make it a long-term part of the K-12 landscape.

It's also critical to recognize that the need to address pandemic learning loss fits under a much bigger need to transform education. For true recovery, K-12 leaders must ensure equitable, whole-child supports as a basis for learning—embracing practices that better serve all students and their communities.

A policy and practice brief^[1] from the California Collaborative on District Reform cites the science of learning and development to illustrate how equal focus on social, emotional, and cognitive well-being is the way forward for districts.

“I see tutoring as a way to address inequities in access to learning when we pivot to and from remote teaching—not as a silver bullet, but as a piece of a portfolio.”



Dr. Matthew A. Kraft,
Associate Professor of Education and
Economics at Brown University

Sources and additional reading



- ✓ [SCORE: Using ESSER II Funds To Accelerate Student Learning](#)
- ✓ [EdResearch For Recovery: Accelerating learning with high-dosage tutoring](#)
- ✓ [J-PAL: The Transformative Potential of Tutoring for Pre K-12 Learning Outcomes](#)
- ✓ [The 74: Tutoring Can Help Reverse COVID-Related Learning Loss. 6 Principles for Doing It Right](#)
- ✓ [Annenberg Institute at Brown University: Online Tutoring and Student Outcomes during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- ✓ [The California Collaborative on District Reform: Ensuring Whole-Child Well-Being as a Foundation for Learning](#)

Ready to take the next step?

See how you can use Title I, CARES, CRRSA, or ARP Act funds to provide high-dosage tutoring to every student.

Reach out

PAPER

Paper partners with K-12 schools throughout the U.S. and Canada to give every student an equal opportunity to excel academically. Our educational support system (ESS) provides learners with unlimited 24/7 homework help, writing feedback, and study support at a predictable fixed cost. Paper's specialized tutors deliver on-demand, 1:1 academic support in four languages across more than 200 academic subject areas—so students always have access to expert extra help exactly when, where, and how they need it.

**Learn more about
us at paper.co
or book a [demo](#)
of the platform.**