



NATIONAL STUDENT
SUPPORT ACCELERATOR

equalizing access to quality tutoring

NSSA TOOL

High-Impact Tutoring: Higher Education Institution Playbook

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This toolkit would not be possible without the expertise of many higher education institutions and tutoring program leaders across the country. The National Student Support Accelerator would like to thank and recognize the dedicated leaders who provided guidance, real-world examples, and feedback on this toolkit. A full list of contributors appears [here](#).

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Welcome

[Research](#) shows that [high-impact tutoring](#) is unusually effective for accelerating K-12 student learning. In fact it is more effective than other interventions that have been tested and is effective across grade and content levels. High-impact tutoring occurs in numerous ways including in district or school developed programs, partnerships between districts and tutoring providers and partnerships between districts and higher education institutions (HEIs). HEIs have the particular potential to combine the benefits of tutoring for K-12 students with benefits for tutors, who, as college students, are developing skills and learning about future employment opportunities.

This Playbook aims to support HEIs in partnering with school districts to offer high-impact tutoring services. While HEI staff members are the primary audience, state educational officials, school district staff, and school administrators can leverage many of the resources in the Playbook.

The Playbook draws from research and from the deep knowledge of experts from higher education institutions, districts, tutoring programs, and elsewhere across the country. It is one of several interrelated research-backed tools the National Student Support Accelerator (NSSA) provides to make it easier for HEIs, states, districts, schools, and nonprofits to develop and implement high-impact tutoring programs with quality. You will find references in this Playbook to these additional Accelerator tools:

[District Playbook](#) – extensive set of practical tools for districts to build or buy a tutoring program, including many resources to address how to implement the program.

[Research Agenda](#) — synthesis of tutoring research highlighting the drivers of impact.

[Toolkit for Tutoring Programs](#) — extensive set of practical tools for practitioners and districts that want to develop or improve a high-impact tutoring program.

[Tutoring Database](#) — searchable database of over 250 tutoring programs that allows districts and schools to identify potential tutoring providers. Click [here](#) to add your information to this database.

Why should HEIs consider high-impact tutoring partnerships with K-12 Districts?

What is High-Impact Tutoring?

This Playbook describes how Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) can effectively partner with K-12 districts and schools to implement a high-impact tutoring program and why it is worthwhile to do so. First, though, we define what high-impact tutoring is and how it differs from other less effective types of tutoring.

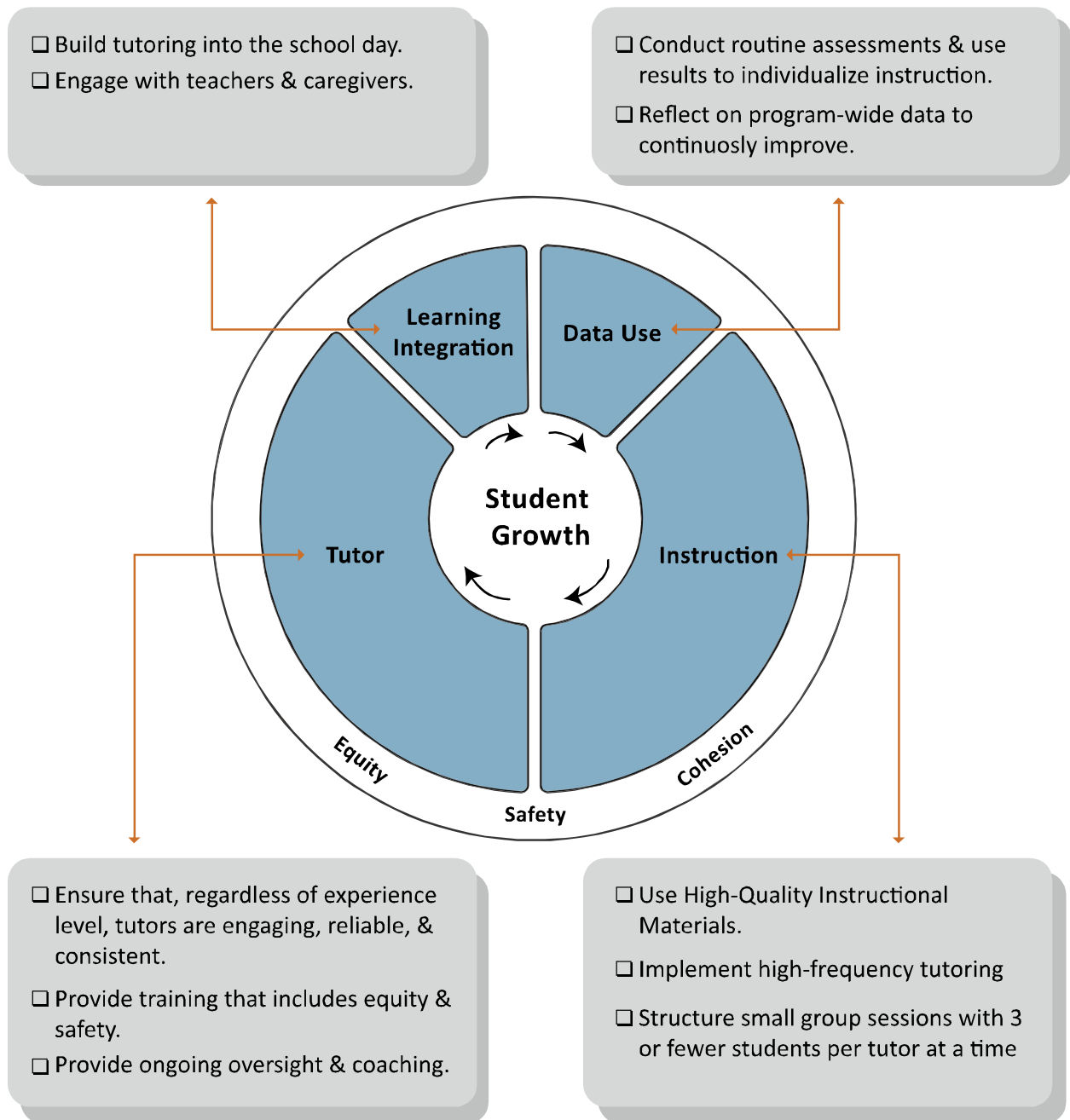
[High-impact tutoring](#) is tutoring that has directly demonstrated significant gains in student learning through state-of-the-art research studies or tutoring that has characteristics proven to accelerate student learning. High-impact tutoring responds to students' individual needs and complements their classroom curriculum.

High-impact tutoring programs share certain key model elements:

- Tutors use high-quality instructional materials in high-frequency sessions (a minimum of 3 times per week, for a minimum of a semester and preferably a full school year), with three or fewer students in each session;
- Tutors are engaging and reliable, receive ongoing coaching, and are well-trained, including on issues of equity and safety;
- Tutoring is built into the school day and engages teachers and caregivers;
- The tutoring program uses data to individualize instruction and continuously improve program design.

You can read more about these [key elements](#) — which the National Student Support Accelerator identified after an extensive review of existing research and best practices. The graphic below provides a high-level overview of the four model-specific elements of high-impact tutoring.

Elements of High-Impact Tutoring



How does a HEI - District High-impact Tutoring Partnership work?

Successful partnerships between HEIs and Districts can take many forms as long as high-impact tutoring research-backed elements as outlined [here](#) are included. Different contexts across HEIs

and districts lead to different optimal choices for each partnership. Our research identified three primary partnership models:

- **Recruitment Model** - driven by a district or school to recruit tutors for their internally-developed tutoring program. In Recruitment Model partnerships, the district typically designs and operates the tutoring program and partners with the HEI to recruit and sometimes train and coach the tutors. The district gains a steady supply of tutors and the tutors have the opportunity to build skills and explore education as a career.
- **Educator Pipeline Model** - driven by the Educator Preparation Program (EPP) of a HEI to provide meaningful classroom experience for their EPP candidates. In Educator Pipeline Model partnerships, the HEI may design the program (including the curriculum), train and coach the tutors while the district identifies the students and organizes the time and space for the program. This approach provides educational benefits for teacher candidates including the development of instructional skills and their knowledge of students and schools. It is also a service that HEI institutions can do for their partner schools, building connections that can help in other aspects of the programs such as for student teaching and supervision.
- **Community Engagement Partnership Model** - driven by the desire for both the HEI and the district to form a mutually beneficial partnership. In the Community Engagement Partnership Model, a group within the HEI reaches out to the local district for community engagement purposes or the tutoring program is an outgrowth of an existing community engagement effort between the district and the HEI with the roles of each partner chosen based on strengths and needs.

Potential HEI Benefits of a High-Impact Tutoring Partnership with a K-12 District

Increases Career Exploration Opportunities

For many current HEI students, being a tutor may be their first “real” job. Tutoring is mutually beneficial: the tutors provide support to younger students while gaining early career development for themselves.

HEI students enrolled in teacher preparation programs may gain additional opportunities to deliver rigorous instruction through tutoring and meet their contact or clinical hours. This arrangement can provide significant benefit to participating students, as the real-world experience of high-impact tutoring supports their educational goals and development of professional standards.

Expands the Teacher Pipeline

HEI students who work as tutors and are not initially enrolled in a teacher preparation program may choose to pursue a teaching career as a result of serving as a tutor.

Boosts College Graduation Rates

Some existing programs report higher graduation rates for students serving as tutors such as [this example](#) from Peer Power in Memphis, TN.

Builds Community Engagement

Many HEIs have as part of their mission to serve their local community. Tutoring provides a concrete, scalable opportunity to fulfill this mission and engage their students in meaningful work.

Funds Infrastructure

HEIs may apply to be a registered vendor with a school district, enabling them to potentially secure sustainable funding and subsequently build infrastructure for their program.

Increases Research Opportunities

HEIs may have greater opportunities to engage in faculties' research agendas aligned with the tutoring program.

Potential District Benefits of a High-Impact Tutoring Partnership with a HEI

Increases Student Learning

Rigorous research shows that high-impact tutoring is unusually effective for accelerating student learning. High-impact tutoring improves students' sense of self-efficacy and growth mindset and fosters a love of learning, which [research has demonstrated](#) increases scores in the tutored subject, and even across other classes.

In fact it is more effective than other interventions that have been tested and is effective across grade and content levels.

Improves Educational Equity

High-quality tutoring has long been available to well-resourced students. But low income students and students of color have rarely had access to the kind of intensive tutoring that works. By expanding access through districts and schools, tutoring becomes available to students with greater need and fewer resources. High-impact tutoring also has a track record of closing the achievement gaps between racial groups: [in Chicago](#), for example, a high-impact tutoring program narrowed the Black-White Math test score gap by almost a third in a single year.

Supports School Engagement

Through high-impact tutoring, struggling students build a relationship with a consistent adult who champions their learning success. High-impact tutoring programs have increased school attendance and engagement.



Boosts Graduation Rates

Early literacy and secondary math are critical predictors of students' academic and postsecondary outcomes. Students [who are on track to read proficiently by the end of 3rd grade](#) and who are able to pass their 9th grade courses (of which math is often the most challenging) are four times more likely to graduate from high school than their peers who do not hit these benchmarks. Either one of these measures is a stronger predictor of high school graduation than race, family income, or standardized test scores; high-impact tutoring can boost them both.

Provides Access to Cutting Edge Instructional Pedagogy

When universities provide high-impact tutoring programs, university faculty may more easily provide high quality training and coaching to tutors, improving the overall quality of instruction delivered to students.

Builds College-Going Culture

Students and schools participating in tutoring may have greater access to the local college campus, enabling K-12 students to experience elements of the higher education environment and feel a greater connection to post-secondary education. For older K-12 students, HEI tutors also may provide a positive “near-peer” relationship and empower students to see themselves as future college-goers.

Creates a Renewable Source of Tutors

HEI tutoring partnerships may provide access to a greater number of part-time tutors in a tight labor market, increasing the number of K-12 students that benefit from tutoring.

How to Use the Higher Education Institution Playbook

Purpose

What is the purpose of the Higher Education Institution (HEI) Playbook?

This HEI Playbook aims to help HEIs understand and prioritize the critical elements of the design, planning, and implementation of high-impact tutoring programs for K-12 students while also providing resources and tools to help with common challenges that programs face in implementing these practices. The Playbook is designed to support both launching a new tutoring program and improving an established one.

Who is the intended audience for the HEI Playbook?

This Playbook is designed for HEI's currently partnering or interested in partnering with K-12 schools and districts to implement and/or improve high-impact tutoring programs. While HEI faculty and staff members are the primary audience, school district leaders, state educational officials, and school administrators will also be able to leverage many of the resources in the Playbook.

How did we design the HEI Playbook?

This HEI Playbook builds upon the [National Student Support Accelerator's District Playbook](#) and [Tutoring Toolkit](#) and draws from [research](#) and the deep knowledge of experts from higher education institutions, districts, tutoring programs, and elsewhere across the country. Although this Playbook and the linked resources are fairly comprehensive, the Playbook will evolve regularly to include more tools and reflect new learning. If you have feedback or questions on the Playbook please submit them [here](#).

Suggested Use

Guidance for Designing and Implementing a New Tutoring Program

If your higher education institution (HEI) is starting a new tutoring program, the following steps may be helpful:

1. [Program Design](#)

We designed the resources below specifically to support the development of tutoring programs. Each recommendation includes links to our Tutoring Toolkit:



- Begin by reviewing [Model Dimensions](#) to understand the types of decisions needed when designing a new high-impact tutoring program.
- With the model dimensions and considerations in mind, you are ready to define your [Program Focus](#) (the grade levels/content areas) through conducting a landscape analysis to better understand the strengths, resources and needs of the district and schools with whom you intend to partner. The tools will guide you through [developing a value proposition](#) and [logic model](#) designed to address the program focus you identify.
- Your program focus, the needs of your K-12 partner and initial model dimension decisions will provide the foundation and context needed to then [estimate costs](#) and choose the remaining [model dimensions](#) that will result in a cohesive and effective high-impact tutoring program.

2. [Program Implementation](#)

- With a clear program focus, value proposition, initial model dimension decisions, and cost estimate, you can begin implementation. Each of the seven elements of High-Impact tutoring has specific implementation guidance and tools. The [Tool Appendix](#) within the [Tutoring Toolkit](#) gives the full range of tools associated with tutoring programs broadly, though this HEI Playbook provides resources specific HEI needs.
- Because the order in which a particular program will need implementation guidance and tools will vary based on its program focus, local community, and the resources already in place, you can use this Playbook in any order that supports the implementation of your specific program

Guidance If You Seek to Improve an Existing Tutoring Program

Many HEIs currently operate tutoring programs for local school districts. While these programs provide benefits for both students and tutors, we encourage existing programs to use the [Tutoring Quality Improvement System \(TQIS\)](#) self-assessment to understand where your program can more closely align to [Tutoring Quality Standards](#). Your self-assessment report is available immediately and will provide specific guidance, examples, and templates for improving your program. For additional resources to support specific areas of improvement, review the relevant sections of the [Tutoring Toolkit](#) and this HEI Playbook.

Priority Sections to Use by Partnership Model

Depending on the model of tutoring partnership your HEI is developing or growing, this toolkit has sections that may be more helpful than others. Below is a list of sections that are likely most relevant to each model of HEI tutoring partnerships with K-12 institutions:

-
- **Recruitment Model:** In this model, the district typically designs and operates the tutoring program and partners with the HEI to recruit and sometimes train and coach the tutors. Priority Toolkit Sections:
 - [Cost and Funding Considerations](#)
 - [Tutors: Recruitment and Selection](#)
 - [Tutors: Screening and Expectations](#)
 - [Tutors: Onboarding, Training and Coaching](#)
 - HEI Tutoring Program Profiles:
 - [Grand Valley State University](#)
 - [Wittenberg University](#)
 - **Educator Pipeline Model:** In this model, the HEI may design the program (including the curriculum) and train and coach the tutors while the district identifies the students and organizes the time and space for the program. Priority Toolkit Sections:
 - [School District Partnerships](#)
 - [Cost and Funding Considerations](#)
 - [Partnership Across Departments](#)
 - [Tutor: Recruitment and Selection](#)
 - [Tutor: Screening and Expectations](#)
 - [Tutor: Onboarding, Training and Coaching](#)
 - [Data Use: Program Effectiveness and Improvement](#)
 - [Data Use: Formative Assessment](#)
 - [Data Use: Student Progress Measure](#)
 - [Instruction: Session Content](#)
 - [Instruction: Session Structure](#)
 - [Instruction: Session Facilitation](#)
 - [Instruction: Relationship Building](#)
 - [SECTION 3: Challenges and Solutions](#)
 - HEI Tutoring Program Profiles:
 - [Georgia Gwinnett College](#)
 - [Wittenberg University](#)
 - **Community Engagement Partnership Model:** In this model, the tutoring program may be an outgrowth or one part of an overall partnership between the district and the HEI with the roles of each partner chosen based on strengths and needs. If the HEI is developing or growing this model, all sections of the toolkit are recommended for review.
 - HEI Tutoring Program Profiles:
 - [Grand Valley State University](#)
 - [Peer Power Program Profile](#)

Structure

This Playbook has four sections and a tool appendix:

Section 1: Program Design: This section contains guidance for making decisions about your program's model and determining its focus.

Section 2: Program Implementation: This section contains guidance for putting your program's model into practice effectively. It is subdivided into the four of the model-specific elements of high-impact tutoring: Tutors, Instruction, Learning Integration, and Data Use. The foundational elements of Equity, Safety and Cohesion are woven throughout the four model-specific elements and an overview is included in its own tab above.

Section 3: Challenges and Solutions: This section describes some of the typical challenges that arise and how programs overcome those challenges.

Section 4: Sample Higher Education Institution Tutoring Program Profiles: This section contains profiles of existing HEI Tutoring Programs to provide examples of the range of possible high-impact tutoring partnerships.

Tool Appendix: This is a comprehensive list of all the tools available, organized by the elements of high-impact tutoring.

Safety, Equity, and Cohesion

This Playbook has a separate section that includes relevant quality standards for each of the model-specific elements of Tutor, Data Use, Instruction, and Learning Integration. The foundational elements of high-impact tutoring - Safety, Equity, and Cohesion - are woven throughout all sections of the Playbook.

We provide an overview and the related standards for each of the foundational elements below:

Safety

Maintaining student safety is a top priority for any tutoring program. Programs should follow local, state, and federal laws to ensure student safety, as well as develop the capacity in staff and tutors to create a safe environment for students. Throughout this Playbook, you will find tools designed to support tutoring programs with ensuring student safety, from guidance for conducting background checks on prospective tutors to best practices for online tutoring and student data privacy. The [Tool Appendix](#) provides tools that highlight specific aspects of student safety.

Tutoring Quality Improvement Standards: Safety

Safety Protocols: The program has health, physical safety, and emergency management

protocols in place to provide an environment conducive to learning and fosters awareness and understanding of the protocols.

Data Privacy and Security: The program has reasonable data security infrastructure and data privacy policies and practices in place in order to keep student information safe.

Equity

Effective tutoring programs work toward equitable outcomes for students. Equity requires individuals at all levels of the tutoring organizations to critically examine their own biases and work together to create actively inclusive environments. Decisions regarding access and participation should also be rooted in equity. Throughout this Playbook, you will find tools designed to help programs put equity at the center of their practices.

All sections of the Playbook prioritize equity, whether in the foundational choices of program design, by selecting qualified tutors who reflect diverse communities, through providing training and support related to cultural competency, when determining data measures and collecting feedback from students and their families, or through providing rigorous and accessible instruction to all students. The work of striving for equity is never done, so we continually update our tools and resources to help programs embed equity in their decisions.

Tutoring Quality Improvement Standards: Equity

High-impact tutoring programs embed equity throughout their program; therefore, equity-related quality standards are included within each of the elements rather than as a stand-alone set of equity standards.

Cohesion

Cohesion refers to both the innovative leadership and high quality execution required to have a well-run organization and to the alignment of a tutoring program design with its vision and mission. In the Program Focus section of the Playbook, you will find resources to conduct a community landscape analysis, develop a value proposition grounded in equity, and ensure that the program's practices are aligned with its vision. Throughout the Playbook, tools consistently refer back to programs' Model Dimensions, providing insight into how their guidance might apply to different programs differently depending on their design decisions. Some tools support programs with specific Model Dimensions. Tools are also interlinked across sections, making it easier to identify ahead of time when a program team's actions and practices in one aspect of their work will shape (and be shaped by) their decisions and choices in another.

Tutoring Quality Improvement Standards: Cohesion

Program Design: The program is designed to successfully meet the needs of the community it serves.

Leader Role Clarity: The program has clearly defined roles and responsibilities for the leadership team, with particular attention to clearly defining tutor coaching responsibilities.

Leader Professional Development: Program leaders receive support to implement their roles with fidelity.

Organizational Culture: The program has a defined mission, vision, and set of organizational goals; and these guiding documents are aligned with the broader context and well understood by stakeholders.

A Note about Standards

Throughout the Playbook you will find reference to [High-Impact Tutoring Quality Standards](#). A team of researchers and practitioners developed these standards to align with each of the elements of high-impact tutoring. The Playbook includes standards related to each element. The standards are also the basis of the [Tutoring Quality Improvement System](#) which is a free tool for tutoring programs to assess how closely their program aligns with the standards and also provides recommendations, examples, and templates to help programs align their program more closely with the standards. We encourage all programs to use the TQIS as they develop their program and as a tool for continuous improvement.

Section 1: Program Design

Whether you are designing a new program or seeking to improve an existing one, deeply understanding your program's value proposition, logic model, and the landscape in which your program operates will help to focus your efforts. This analysis and resulting understanding will provide the foundation and context needed to design a cohesive, high-impact tutoring program.

We designed the resources below to support tutoring providers with developing tutoring programs, and may prove useful for HEIs working to set up new tutoring programs. The Playbook provides links associated with each recommendation from the [Toolkit for Tutoring Programs](#) or the [District Playbook](#):

- Begin by reviewing [Model Dimensions](#) to understand the types of decisions needed when designing a new high-impact tutoring program.
- Identify which stakeholders are critical to success and determine the best way to engage them now and throughout the process. Consider assembling a design team, task force, or other stakeholder group. [Assembling a Task Force](#) provides basic guidance and HEIs should also consider engaging faculty or staff members at your institution who oversee clinical placements and teach educator prep courses and administrators involved with work-study, student programming, budgeting, HR, and legal.
- With the model dimensions and considerations in mind, you are ready to define your [Program Focus](#) (the grade levels/content areas) through conducting a landscape analysis to better understand the strengths, resources and needs of the district and schools with whom you intend to partner. The tools will guide you through [developing a value proposition](#) and [logic model](#) designed to address the program focus you identify.
- Your program focus, the needs of your K-12 partner and initial model dimension decisions will provide the foundation and context needed to then [estimate costs](#) and choose the remaining [model dimensions](#) that will result in a cohesive and effective high-impact tutoring program.

Program Focus

Critical Questions

- Why and for whom is this tutoring program needed?
- How will these dimensions inform the partnerships needed across departments and/or organizations?
- Who are the stakeholders from your institution that could engage in the program design?

Implementation Checklist

- Understand the community strengths, resources, and needs through a landscape analysis and discussion with the school district with whom you plan to partner.
- Complete the [model dimensions questionnaire](#) to determine which other departments/organizations will be beneficial partners.
- Connect with stakeholders from your institution and your district partner that could engage in the program design based on the answers to the model dimensions questionnaire.
- Understand program costs and funding sources.
- Choose a model design based on:
 - Feedback from the landscape analysis and school district partner
 - Evidence-based research on effective tutoring programs
 - The constraints of the context in which the program is operating
 - Answers to your model dimensions questions

Implementation Tools

- HEI Specific Tools:
 - [HEI Model Dimensions Questionnaire](#)
 - [HEI Funding/Cost Tool for Planning a District Tutoring Initiative](#)
 - [Funding Sources and Cost Considerations for HEI Tutoring Partnerships with K-12 School Systems](#)
 - [Community Service Requirements in the Federal Work-Study Program](#)
- From Existing Resources
 - [Assembling a Task Force](#)
 - [Conducting a Community Landscape Analysis](#)
 - [Tutoring Program Model Dimensions and Planning Tool](#)
 - [Tutoring Quality Improvement System - Quality Standards](#)

Key Insights

Articulate the model dimensions based on a landscape analysis and understanding of your partner district needs. This foundational clarity will support program leaders to:

- Make purposeful and consistent model design decisions aligned with the program's value proposition.
- Prevent mission creep and make decisions that serve the needs of the community.
- Scale up quickly and make decisions about trade-offs without the program losing focus.

Design your program informed by research.

- While opportunities for further research remain, [a solid base of initial evidence](#) can guide program design. [The Tutoring Quality Improvement System self-assessment](#) can be used to see how closely your program is aligned to research.
- New programs lack impact data, but being able to highlight that specific model design decisions are based on research will help secure funding sources and build partnerships with school districts or other stakeholders.

Instead of trying to design a perfect program from the start, invest in opportunities for evaluating effectiveness and continuous improvement.

- As one program leader shared, "You could spend three years trying to build the most perfect tutoring program, but our current mindset is: We need to do something now. We need to build in ways to quickly understand what is working (and not working) and quickly course correct."

HEI Model Dimensions Questionnaire

Use these ten multiple-choice questions to design your tutoring program's Model Dimensions. Model Dimensions are the specific design choices a new tutoring program makes at the outset. Each choice you make should have a clear rationale supported by your Landscape Analysis and be made in consultation with your school district partner and internal task force/team.

1. How are you targeting your tutoring, and what is your articulation for why tutoring is needed?
 - Specific students are falling behind academically and need individual support, so we will help them.
 - Specific moments in the curriculum are make-or-break for students' academic success, so we will help them.
 - All students can benefit from tutoring, whether they are making up for learning loss or accelerating their learning.
2. Which content areas will your tutoring program address?
 - Literacy
 - Math
 - Literacy AND Math
 - Other: _____
3. Which grade levels will your tutoring program serve?
 - Grade 1 & Below
 - Grades 2-5 (Elementary)
 - Grades 6-12 (Secondary)
 - Other: _____
4. Where and when will tutoring sessions happen?
 - In school, during the normal school day
 - In a school building, but after the school day
 - Outside of school, after school or on weekends
 - Outside of school, during summer break
 - Other: _____

Note: The most effective programs hold tutoring sessions during the school day to increase attendance.

5. Who will decide which students receive tutoring?
 - Teachers will require their students to attend
 - Parents and families will sign their children up
 - Students themselves will voluntarily sign up
 - Other: _____
6. Which HEI students will be eligible to serve as tutors?
 - Any Student
 - Undergraduate Students only

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- Graduate Students only
 - Teacher Preparation Program Students only
 - Students earning credit through specific courses
 - Students earning community service credit
 - Other: _____

7. Where will tutoring take place?

- In person
- Online/virtually
- Bit of both (blended)
- Other: _____

8. How often will tutoring sessions happen?

- Once or twice per week
- Three to five times per week
- Variable (student, school or family choice)
- Other: _____

Note: Effective programs provide 3 or more tutoring sessions per week.

9. How many students will each tutor work with at a time?

- One student per tutor
- Two to four students per tutor (small groups)
- Other: _____

Note: Effective programs use a 4:1 or less ratio.

10. Will each student consistently work with the same tutor across multiple sessions?

- Yes, tutor-student pairings will be consistent
- No, tutor-student pairings will be inconsistent

Note: Effective programs use a consistent tutor-student pairing.

School District Partnerships

Critical Questions

- How does the higher education institution (HEI) high-impact tutoring partnership with the K-12 district add value to the school district?
- Where are opportunities to align with district priorities and existing strategies?
- What existing district programs best align with tutoring?

Implementation Checklist

- If launching a new partnership, determine which districts are seeking tutoring services. In addition to asking district staff in your local network about tutoring, consider searching for Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for tutoring services.
- If your local district is not actively seeking tutoring services, consider approaching district leadership to determine if there is an opportunity for the HEI to form a new partnership, particularly given the [extensive research](#) on the benefits of high-impact tutoring.
- For existing or new partnerships, review the district priorities and existing strategies to determine opportunities for greater alignment to district context.
- Determine opportunities for tutoring to occur during existing programs outside of Tier 1 core instruction.
- Establish regular cadence of ongoing partnership meetings to track progress.

Implementation Tools

HEI Specific Tools:

- [Guidance for Formalizing District Partnerships Through a Contract or MOU](#)
- [HEI and K-12 School Tutoring Program Meeting Topics](#)
- [List of On Campus Event Ideas](#)

From Existing Resources:

- [Aligning with District Priorities and Existing Programs](#)

Key Insights

Some HEI tutoring partnerships with K-12 districts begin with a local school connection, while others begin with a district-wide connection. Both the district relationship and the school relationship are important for successful partnerships as the program is implemented and continues to grow.

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- Formalizing partnerships through a contract or memorandum of understanding (MOU) helps clarify leader role clarity and can help ensure sustainable funding sources for tutoring services.
 - Ongoing meetings between the HEI and school district/site-based teams help address implementation challenges to ensure continuous improvement efforts occur.
 - Consider opportunities to engage K-12 students in campus activities at the higher education institution to foster their understanding of higher education opportunities in their local community.

Guidance for Formalizing District Partnerships Through a Contract or MOU

The purpose of this guidance is to provide HEIs seeking opportunities to partner with a school district with information about how to identify districts interested in and/or already offering tutoring services. By finding a point of contact and engaging your local district in a formalized partnership through a contract and/or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), HEIs are able to set clear expectations for what services they are able to provide to the school district and to identify what responsibilities the district staff must fulfill in order for the partnership to be successful for students. Furthermore, HEIs currently offering tutoring services to their local school districts shared that entering into a formal agreement or contract that stipulates the funding and resources each entity will provide has enabled them to provide more sustainable services for students, as it is clear that the HEI is not solely responsible for funding the tutoring program.

Identifying Interested Districts

Given the [extensive research](#) on the positive impact of high-impact tutoring, many school districts have some type of tutoring initiative occurring in their system. In order to determine the right point of contact in districts surrounding your HEI, consider reaching out to district leadership to determine what opportunities may exist to offer tutoring services. Current HEI tutoring programs shared the following ideas about how they identified interested districts:

- Determine whether or not a tutoring partnership and/or service learning project already exists between your HEI and the local school district to ensure you are able to build upon pre-existing structures and partnerships.
- If you or one of your colleagues already have a contact at the local K-12 district, ask them if they know who is in charge of tutoring and/or intervention services in the district.
- Search the district website for the department in charge of tutoring services. Frequently, this function will sit within the academic, teaching and learning, extended learning, or curriculum and instruction office.
- Search [BidNet](#) for current Requests for Proposals (RFPs) in your state. Individuals may set up free accounts to access these public records.

Formalizing District Partnerships through a Contract or MOU

Once the HEI has identified a district partnership and/or the district has connected with the HEI, there is an opportunity to formalize the partnership. This step can ensure clarity in the roles and responsibilities of each institution, determine the scope of the project and scale for a given year, and provide an opportunity to develop a shared funding model. Current HEI tutoring

programs shared the following tips for how they developed their contracts and formal partnerships with school districts:

- Ask your local school district how they currently contract for tutoring and/or intervention services, and if your partnership can be formalized through a similar process.
- Use the [HEI Funding/Cost Tool for Planning a District Tutoring Initiative](#) to understand and articulate the costs associated with running a quality high-impact tutoring program. Work in partnership with your local school district to determine available funding sources from each institution to ensure sustainable funding for the program.
- If you currently work with individual principals to offer tutoring services to schools directly, consider formalizing these partnerships through a contract and/or MOU with the school district to scale and sustain programming.

HEI and K-12 School Tutoring Program Meeting Topics

Once the partnership between the HEI and K-12 schools is established, regular meetings between the HEI and K-12 schools ensure that the partnership remains healthy and improves over time. Depending on the size and scope of the program, these meetings may occur between the leader of the HEI tutoring program and the leader of the district program for regular overall program reviews, between site-specific leaders (i.e., the tutoring leader at a school site and the coach/manager of tutors placed at the school) or both. This list of program meeting topics provides suggestions for the content of these meetings. Also see the [Building in Continuous Improvement](#) guidance for more detailed information on these processes.

General

- Review available data for students enrolled in the program. The guidance for [Developing a Performance Measurement Plan](#) and [Tutoring Survey Instruments](#) can support your thinking for how to ensure you have comprehensive data available for continuous improvement efforts.

Student Attendance

- Are there any concerning patterns of absences/tardies for students or tutors?
- How can we address individual student and/or tutor concerns?
- How can we address any classrooms and/or tutoring groups with inconsistent attendance?

Student Engagement

- How is each student engaging with the other students and their tutor?
- Do we need to take action? If so, what action is appropriate?

Student Progress

- Is each student progressing toward mastery of a topic?
- Is any specific student stuck? If so, what action should we take?

Teacher/Tutor Feedback

- Are teachers getting the information they need about student progress?
- Are tutors getting the information they need to meet student needs?
- Is there additional information that can improve student progress?
- What changes can we make in teacher/tutor communications to improve the sessions?

Technical Issues

-
- Are there technical issues that need to be resolved to improve the sessions?

Logistical Issues

- Are there logistical issues (e.g., space availability, supervision, transportation, etc.) that need to be resolved to improve the sessions?

List of On Campus Event Ideas

The purpose of this guidance is to provide HEI partners with ideas for how to engage K-12 students more broadly with the HEI community. This list is curated from practices shared by current HEI tutoring programs in local K-12 districts. Depending on the design of your program and your HEI campus, some of these ideas may be more relevant to your context than others.

- Invite tutees to participate in campus tours
- Host student athlete “Meet and Greets”
- Host an on-campus Read-a-Thon - this can also serve as a fundraising project
- Invite tutees to on-campus seasonal programming
- Invite tutees to attend an on-campus movie night with snacks/pizza
- Invite participating K-12 schools to partner with the HEI on service/volunteer projects (e.g., food drive)
- Host an on-campus day outside with yard games
- Invite tutees to attend an HEI sporting event

Cost and Funding Considerations

Critical Questions

- What costs are associated with our program design?
- What funding sources are available for this program?
- What does the higher education institution (HEI)'s leadership need to understand to ensure sustainability?

Implementation Checklist

- Based on the size, scope, and model dimensions of the program, estimate the total cost to run the tutoring program.
- Determine what funds are currently available to support the program, and where there might be opportunities to secure additional funding.
- Consider how to advocate for funding needs through new and/or deepened partnerships.

Implementation Tools

HEI Specific Tools:

- [HEI Funding/Cost Tool for Planning a District Tutoring Initiative](#)
- [Cost Considerations and Funding Sources for HEI Tutoring Partnerships with K-12 School Systems](#)
- [Example Fundraiser](#) (Peer Power Tutoring)
- [HEI Leadership Engagement](#) (to advocate supporting the HEI tutoring program)
- [Community Service Requirements in the Federal Work-Study Program](#)

From Existing Resources:

- [Funding Tutoring Programs](#)
- [Tutoring Cost Calculator](#)
- [GARE Racial Equity Toolkit](#) - Step #5: What is your plan for implementation? (p. 11)

Key Insights

Consider operating as a tutoring contractor for your local school district instead of as a volunteer organization.

- This model elicits shared funding and shared responsibility for high quality programming and outcomes
- Note: traditionally, teacher candidates cannot be paid as part of their practicum, though there are examples of teacher candidates tutoring students at their practicum site through other programs.



Consider multiple funding sources for covering the operating costs not covered through district funds.

- Leverage HEI resources to support the grant application process and building capacity of staff in the tutoring program.
- Consider applying for both public service and research grants.
- Partner with local philanthropic organizations to seek additional funding opportunities.
- Advocate for general fund allocations to support base funding to ensure program continuity.

Cost Considerations and Funding Sources for Higher Education Institution (HEI) Tutoring Partnerships with K-12 School Districts

This document outlines costs and funding sources needed to develop and/or grow a tutoring partnership between your HEI and a local K-12 school district. The amount and type of funding needed will be based on the model of your tutoring program. Use this [cost calculator](#) and [HEI-specific budgeting template](#) to understand your projected costs. This information is compiled from interviews with existing HEI tutoring programs.

Program Costs to Consider

Program costs depend on the model and type of partnership established with the school district for the tutoring program. This list of costs is divided into three main categories: staffing costs, onboarding and training costs, and additional program costs. Where relevant, the costs below include suggestions for offering in-kind support from the HEI to build upon pre-existing infrastructure within the HEI. These costs tend to recur on an annual basis, and therefore should be considered as part of multi-year planning.

- Staffing Costs
 - Tutor Wages/Stipend
 - support options include [federal work-study funding](#), [AmeriCorps funding](#), course credit, community service credit, educator preparation program requirement credit (clinical hours)
 - Program Management Staff Wages/Stipends (HEI staff to manage initiative internally)
 - support options include [AmeriCorps VISTA funding](#)
 - Program Support Staff Wages/Stipends (Coaches, Site Directors, etc.)
 - support options include hiring HEI faculty with instructional backgrounds to coach tutors with the option for course release time
 - Personnel Fringe Benefits

- Onboarding and Training Costs
 - Stipends for School-based Staff (tutor supervisors and/or coaches, program managers, logistics coordinators)
 - Curriculum and Assessments
 - support options include state, district or school of education existing materials, [Saga Curriculum](#) for middle grades math
 - Training Curriculum and Materials
 - support options include state, district or school of education existing materials, [Saga Coach](#) asynchronous training modules
 - Legal, Marketing, HR support



- support option includes shared university services
- Training Stipends for Tutors
 - support options include federal work-study funding, [AmeriCorps funding](#), course credit, community service credit, educator preparation program requirement credit
- Fingerprinting/Background Check Costs as required by the district and/or HEI
- Additional Program Costs
 - Technology Devices for Tutors and K-12 Students
 - Supplies (school supplies, communications about program)
 - Transportation to and from tutoring sites
 - Evaluation
 - support options include in-kind from the HEI
 - Other Costs

Additional tutor program roles that are usually covered by the district include space for tutoring, identification of students, training or informing the teachers/students/caregivers about the program, and oversight of the tutoring (some unions require).

Financial and Non-financial Sources to Consider

While each HEI accesses different funding streams, most HEI tutoring programs leverage a combination of multiple funding sources. HEIs can consider the financial funding sources below:

- [Use Federal Work-Study funds for paying tutors \(university students\) who qualify](#)
- Operate as a tutoring provider for your local district (formal contract in which the district pays the HEI for tutoring services)
- Apply for grant opportunities (philanthropic, public service, research grants)
- Apply for [AmeriCorps funding](#) to support tutors
- Apply for [AmeriCorps VISTA grant funding](#) to support administrative or program coordination aspects of the program
- Advocate for university funding as part of the HEI's community engagement/investment efforts
- See [Funding Tutoring Programs](#) to learn more

Non-financial support opportunities include:

- Provide community service credits for tutoring if your HEI has community service requirements.
- Provide course credit options that are open to all students. Such courses might be categorized as service learning, community-engaged learning, academic internships,

volunteer credit, public service credit, independent study, or special studies, or use similar terms. See examples [here](#).

- Provide course credit or clinical hours as part of an educator preparation program course for tutoring. See examples and guidance [here](#).
- Provide awards for student volunteers or formally recognize community-based work. See examples [here](#).
- Offer a co-curricular record as a pathway for undergraduates to receive recognition for significant achievements beyond academics. See examples [here](#).

Partnering for Additional Support

Beyond HEI resources, district resources, and grant opportunities, many HEIs partner with other nonprofit or community-based organizations for support, especially if tutoring occurs during out-of-school time.

Examples of Non-financial Support for Students who Tutor

Course Credit

The University of California, San Diego offers multiple pathways to community service in education (such as tutoring), via elective courses that can fulfill undergraduates' general campus graduation requirements as flexible elective units, as well as some major and minor departments' course requirements. These include:

[Academic Internship Program:](#)

- AIP provides [standard course numbers that function similarly to independent study courses, and provide lower division and upper division elective credits to undergraduate students of any major](#).
- Community-based academic internship opportunities are posted in a searchable online database, pointing students to schools and other organizations that are willing to host volunteers at their sites. Individual students may apply for a role with the community organization (e.g., becoming a tutor with a school), and enroll in the independent study credits through the university.
- In addition to being trained and mentored by a professional in the field (e.g., classroom teacher or tutoring coordinator), the undergraduate is supervised by a faculty member at the university (e.g., education professor), who agrees to support and guide their work during the course credit period.
- Students can enroll in AIP courses for multiple quarters and continue to earn credit for their academic internship.

[Thurgood Marshall College Partnership Schools Program \(PSP\)](#)



- PSP offers one course number (TMC 120) that is available three times throughout the school year, and provides upper division elective credit for undergraduates of any major.
- Undergraduates serve as classroom tutors, and are placed in a classroom at one of two partnership school sites.
- Undergraduates receive immediate site-based tutoring training from each partner school's volunteer coordinator. They also engage in ongoing fieldwork training, theoretical learning, and class discussion with their university instructor.
- Students can continue volunteering for credit beyond the initial TMC 120 course. Once the first course is completed, students can enroll in "special studies" course numbers that function similarly to "independent study," allowing them to continue their volunteer service while still earning elective units.

Volunteer or Community-based Work Recognition

Morehouse College offers service recognition opportunities through the [Bonner Office of Community Service](#). Forms of recognition include the President's Volunteer Service Award, President's Awards for Community Service and Social Justice, Volunteer of the Month, and Volunteer of the Semester.

HEIs can award [Presidential Service Awards](#) by becoming a [Certifying Organization](#).

Co-Curricular Record (CCR)

The CCR functions like a transcript that reflects a student's institutionally-verified activities in community service, leadership, or other approved CCR experiences. For example, see [Indiana State University](#), the [College of Southern Nevada](#), and the [University of California, San Diego](#).

HEI Leadership Engagement

Adapt this document to advocate for your HEI's support of a high-impact tutoring partnership with a local K-12 district.

What is High-Impact Tutoring and how do higher education institutions partner with school districts?

[High-Impact Tutoring](#) is tutoring that has directly demonstrated significant gains in student learning through state-of-the-art research studies or tutoring that has characteristics proven to accelerate student learning. High-Impact Tutoring responds to students' individual needs and complements their classroom curriculum.

Higher education institutions across the country have developed and are developing partnerships with school districts to accomplish two primary goals:

1. Support K-12 students with accelerating their learning through targeted, individualized instruction.
2. Provide students in higher education institutions with mission-oriented, meaningful career development opportunities in the local community.

Examples of successful programs include:

Why should our institution invest in this work?

Partnering with a K-12 district or school to provide high-impact tutoring is a mutually beneficial endeavor. Benefits to HEI students and institutions include employment and career exploration opportunities for students, research opportunities and tangible and impactful community investment for the HEI, and direct instructional experience for teacher preparation program students. Benefits to K-12 students and institutions include opportunities for students to receive instruction with strong instructional pedagogy to support student learning, to build a greater connection to their local college campus, and to develop positive “near-peer” relationships for older K-12 students.

How can the university financially support this work?

While there are [multiple funding sources available](#) to support payment of tutors, there are necessary costs associated with developing and sustaining a tutoring partnership that are ideal for the university to fund directly, particularly in the first 3-5 years of implementation. Those costs are both through direct funding for one or more full time staff members, depending on the design and scale of the program, to run the day to day logistics of the program, and for in-kind support from the university. Examples of in-kind support include shared university services (i.e., legal services, marketing, HR) and space for the program to operate (i.e., office space and rooms for tutor training).

What are the major costs we need to consider?



This [HEI Funding/Cost Tool for Planning a District Tutoring Initiative](#) includes a list of costs and funding sources based on interviews and feedback from existing HEI tutoring partner programs. The most major cost that the university should consider funding to ensure the program is successful is one or multiple full-time staff to plan and sustain the initiative with the district, at least for the first five years of programming.

If I am interested in providing greater financial support, what should I do next?

- Meet with the program staff that have been running the program or that have spearheaded the initiative at your institution to learn more about their needs.
- Leverage the HEI Toolkit for Tutoring Partnerships to support your program design and implementation.
- Aligned with the President's Call to Action and the work of [NPSS](#), increase the Work-Study allocation for community-based jobs to 15%.

Partnership Across Departments

Critical Questions

- How can higher education institutions (HEIs) best leverage existing structures to develop high-impact tutoring partnerships with their local K-12 districts?
- What are the functions best suited for a school or department of education within the HEI to fulfill?
- What are the functions best suited for a volunteer or community support office within the HEI to fulfill?

Implementation Checklist

- Determine which department within the HEI has or can build the staffing capacity to lead the development and implementation of the high-impact tutoring partnership with the K-12 district.
- Leverage existing structures within the HEI to build high-impact tutoring programs (i.e., how can existing work-study processes include and/or increase tutoring positions in local K-12 schools?).
- Consider how other departments within the HEI might be best situated to support components of the high-impact tutoring program (i.e., how can teacher educators support the training and coaching of tutors if the tutoring program is housed in a volunteer or community service office?).

Implementation Tools

HEI Specific Tools:

- [Recommended Division of Functions across HEI Departments](#)

From Existing Resources:

- n/a

Key Insights

Consider fostering a formal partnership across the school or department of education and volunteer or community support office at your HEI to maximize available resources.

- Formalizing the partnership across departments enables greater leader role clarity, one of the standards identified in the [Tutoring Quality Improvement Standards](#).
- If your HEI does not have both of these functions on campus, consider extending the partnership to a neighboring HEI that does have the function your institution does not have.

Recommended Division of Functions across HEI Departments

Aligned to [TQIS Quality Standards](#)

Interviews of HEI tutoring programs found that tutoring programs are typically led out of one of two departments within a higher education institution: the school or department of education, or the volunteer or community support office. This resource highlights potential roles across departments within an HEI. If your HEI does not have both of these functions on campus, consider determining the functions the HEI can sustain and the functions the school and/or district can sustain. In certain cases, there may be opportunities to extend the partnership to a neighboring HEI as well.

Schools or Departments of Education		Volunteer or Community Support Offices	
Instructional Functions	Resources	Operational Functions	Resources
<p>Tutor Recruitment and Selection: Identify skill and mindset selection criteria</p> <p>Tutor Onboarding: Lead instructional training & mindset exploration</p> <p>Tutor Coaching and Feedback: Coach tutors on instructional planning and delivery</p> <p>Data Use: Coach tutors on use of formative assessment and student progress measures to inform instruction</p> <p>Tutor Consistency: Provide clear</p>	<p>Annotation of CR-SE Facilitator Guide for HEI tutoring providers</p> <p>Ten-Session CRSE Facilitator Guide created by the NCY Culturally Responsive Education Working Group</p> <p>Sample Tutor Pre-service Training Schedule and Course Syllabus</p> <p>Professional Learning Toolkit for Early Literacy Tutors</p> <p>Tutor - Instructional Strategies</p> <p>James Madison University Sample</p>	<p>Tutor Recruitment and Selection: Determine how to hire tutors through existing university processes and funding sources (ie, work study)</p> <p>Tutor Onboarding: Lead operational training (ie, payroll process) and understanding of local community context</p> <p>Tutor Coaching and Feedback: Administer surveys for 2-way feedback between tutors and their K-12 site placement coordinators</p> <p>Data Use: Collect and</p>	<p>Recruitment Ideas for HEIs</p> <p>Setting Expectations with Tutors</p> <p>2x2 Feedback Form</p> <p>List of On Campus Event Ideas</p>

<p>expectations for tutors to attend their scheduled sessions</p> <p>Student-Tutor Relationship: Provide instructional strategies to support tutors in building relationships with K-12 students</p> <p>Instructional Practices: Provide training and coaching on use of instructional practices aligned with existing practices in the local K-12 school or district</p> <p>Routines and Structures: Provide training and coaching on use of instructional practices aligned with existing practices in the local K-12 school or district</p> <p>Leader Role Clarity: Engage with all stakeholders across departments to norm on which roles each member of the team is responsible for implementing</p>	<p>Syllabus: Practicum in Assessment and Reading</p>	<p>monitor data on program effectiveness and improvement efforts</p> <p>Student-Tutor Relationship - Provide engagement opportunities outside of tutoring sessions (ie, on-campus events for tutees)</p> <p>Dosage: Ensure schedules and budget align to recommended dosage of tutoring</p> <p>Ratio: Ensure ratio of tutor: student does not exceed 1:4</p> <p>Leader Role Clarity: Engage with all stakeholders across departments to norm on which roles each member of the team is responsible for implementing</p>	
<p>K-12 Institution Determine which students will receive tutoring services</p>			



Provide rosters for initial student grouping based on outcome data in the content area for tutoring

Partner with instructional staff from the HEI to provide instructional materials or review materials provided by the HEI program to improve alignment with in-school curriculum
Consider working with teachers and instructional leaders to collaborate on the delivery of training and onboarding for tutors to ensure contextual alignment with local teaching practices

Additional guidance for program implementation for K-12 districts is available in [Section 4 of the District Playbook](#)

Section 2: Program Implementation

With a clear program focus, understanding of value to the K-12 system where you're partnering, initial model dimension decisions, cost estimate, and secured funds, you can begin implementation. Each of the seven elements of high-impact tutoring has specific implementation guidance and tools. The [Tool Appendix](#) of the Tutoring Toolkit gives the full range of tools associated with tutoring programs broadly. This Higher Education Institution (HEI) Playbook provides resources specific to needs shared by HEI leaders that have developed and/or are developing tutoring programs currently.

Because the order in which a particular program will need implementation guidance and tools will vary based on its program focus, local community, and the resources already in place, you can use this Playbook in any order that supports the implementation of your specific program

For those seeking to improve an existing program, use the [Tutoring Quality Improvement System \(TQIS\)](#) self-assessment to understand where your program can more closely align to [Tutoring Quality Standards](#) and follow the guidance provided with your self-assessment report. For specific areas of improvement, review the relevant sections of the [Tutoring Toolkit](#) and this HEI Playbook.

The Program Implementation section of this Playbook is divided into the following subsections to align with the [Tutoring Quality Improvement Standards](#):

- Tutor
- Data Use
- Instruction
- Learning Integration

Tutor: Recruitment and Selection

Quality Standard

Tutor Recruitment and Selection: The program has a clear recruitment and selection process that results in tutors with the skills and mindsets necessary to be successful in that program.

Critical Questions

- What are the critical qualities for tutors in this program?
- How will the program recruit and select tutors to ensure a diverse cohort?
- How will the program recruit and select tutors to ensure they have the necessary skills?

Implementation Checklist

- Delineate clear responsibilities for tutors based on your program design and higher education institution's context.
- Articulate the knowledge, skills, and mindsets necessary for tutors to be effective and successful in their role.
- Distinguish between what you will select for and what you will train for and have a clear rationale for your choice.
- Establish clear eligibility criteria based on your program design.
- Design an application process to evaluate eligibility criteria and ensure a diverse set of tutors.
- Establish an intentional recruitment strategy for recruiting a diverse set of tutors with the necessary skills.

Implementation Tools

Higher Education Institution (HEI) Specific Tools:

- [Recruitment Ideas for HEIs](#)
- [Georgia Gwinnett College Tutor Job Description](#)
- [Earn, Learn, and Serve: Getting the Most from Community Service Federal Work-Study](#) (pps. 12-25 Principles of Good Practice in Community Service Federal Work-Study)

From Existing Resources:

- [Tutor Job Description Guidance](#)
- [Tutor Recruitment Strategy](#)
- [Tutor Selection Strategy](#)
- [Public Sector Jobs: Opportunities for Advancing Racial Equity](#) (pp. 9-14)

Key Insights

Proactively develop a recruitment strategy. It will save you time and serve as a roadmap for recruiting tutors.

- Your plan should cover how you will recruit potential tutor candidates and who is best positioned on your team to reach out to them. Determine who within the HR functions at your HEI and/or in your department will be able to support your work.
- Determine multiple application deadlines and set benchmarks for how many applications you'd like to receive at each deadline. Timing benchmarks around when new students enroll will help you leverage new candidate pools, increasing the number of tutors you are able to recruit.

Clearly define the essential tutor qualities that you are seeking, regardless of how selective your program's recruitment is. These essential qualities depend on:

- **The community served:** Community-specific competencies (like bilingualism or familiarity with learning differences) are crucial to a program's success serving its chosen community.
- **The value proposition:** Depending on the niche a program aims to fill, some qualities may be more important than others. For instance, a program whose value proposition is its exceptional academic rigor compared to other programs in the community would need to place a higher emphasis on recruiting tutors who will hold students to high expectations. Consult with faculty members on campus to determine what strengths your HEI tutoring partnership program may be able to foster as the program grows - there is likely deep expertise within your HEI community that you can leverage to improve the tutor and K-12 student experience.
- **The training provided:** Carefully consider what the program will select for versus what they will train for. Some programs select tutors with relationship-building soft skills, then provide training around both content knowledge and pedagogy. Others select tutors who are teacher candidates and embed teacher training course content into their training program. Consider including information about culturally responsive and sustaining education practices that will be part of training, such as those referenced in the [Tutors: Onboarding, Training and Coaching](#) section.

Clarify upfront your expectations for tutors to prevent tutor retention issues.

- Prospective tutors need a clear understanding of the program's expectations and the training it provides right from the start (i.e., during the recruitment and selection process) so that they know what to expect and can prepare appropriately. Programs have struggled to retain tutors when they fail to communicate concrete expectations for tutors until after tutor onboarding, particularly when HEI students are working to manage coursework in addition to tutoring responsibilities.

Consider the requirements that are most necessary if you plan to scale up significantly.



- The more selective the recruitment process, the harder it will be to recruit enough tutors in a short timeframe, so consider your plans to scale up the program when developing a recruitment and selection strategy. While some requirements are necessary, others may not be; the important thing is to establish which ones are which in a principled way.

Create a cohort of tutors that reflects the diversity of students being supported. Without a diverse candidate pool, a program cannot recruit a diverse cohort of tutors. To attract a diverse candidate pool:

- **Be explicit about your program’s prioritization of hiring tutors that reflect the diversity of their students and/or are part of the communities being served:** Potential candidates may not assume that this is important to your program. Make it clear on your website and in promotional materials that this is a priority and why.
- **Make the application process accessible:** The application tasks might be challenging to complete, but the directions should be easy to understand. The application itself should live on one platform, and completing it should not require too many steps. A convoluted application with confusing directions discourages qualified applicants from getting started. To increase diversity in applicants, consider following up with non-completed applications from racially diverse candidates.
- **Get input from stakeholder communities on where and how to recruit:** Students, parents and schools involved in other campus initiatives, HEI staff, other student organizations, and current tutors can be resources for tapping into pools of potential tutors. Some programs involve members of these stakeholder groups in their recruitment process (e.g., by having prospective tutors lead model sessions under interviewer supervision, then soliciting student feedback).
- **Recruit more tutors than you think you need.** Some tutors will miss scheduled sessions. Particularly with the busy and unpredictable schedules HEI students tend to keep, some tutors will consistently fall short of the program’s expectations (e.g., showing up on time) and may need to be counseled out of participating in the tutoring program. Dropoff is normal; plan for it ahead of time by “over-recruiting” at the outset. Consider tracking missed sessions by race, gender and first generation college student (at a minimum) in order to identify any institutional barriers that are contributing to tutors missing scheduled sessions. This is particularly important for retaining tutors of color and from marginalized communities.
- **Consider creating a “wait list.”** If you’ve reached your recruitment goals, use your last application deadline to create a wait list of tutors. This wait list may also serve as pre-screened candidates for upcoming semesters. Provide clear communication and be transparent about when they can expect you to reach out with available opportunities and training schedules. Also consider tracking these data by race and gender to ensure a diverse tutor pool.

HEI Tutor Recruitment Ideas

The purpose of this guidance is to provide HEIs with ideas for how to recruit university students to serve as tutors. These ideas are curated from current practices shared by HEI tutoring programs in local K-12 districts. Depending on the population of students you intend to recruit, some of these ideas may be more relevant to your context than others.

- Program staff recruit within disciplines (majors) through recruitment emails, signage across campus
- Program staff host informational sessions and tabling events on campus (and at fundraising events) to share information and collect sign-ups
- Current student tutors hold student information sessions, coffee chats and track sign-ups
- Leverage program social media platforms to amplify flyers, current student tutor spotlights
- Partner with HEI career and development officers to embed participation as a tutor as a co-curricular experience that compliments curriculum (e.g., Schools of Education)
- Connect with HEI internship and job online bulletin boards (e.g., Handshake) to post job descriptions



Tutor: Screening and Expectations

Quality Standard

Tutor Preservice Training: The program provides high-quality onboarding and training, tailored to program context.

Critical Questions

- What are the clear expectations to communicate to tutors during the hiring, training, and onboarding processes?
- How will the expectations of tutors be reinforced throughout the program?
- What is the typical length of the required screening (i.e., background check and fingerprinting) process for the local K-12 district?

Implementation Checklist

- Outline and implement all pre-entry legal requirements based on district, state, and institutional regulations.
- Outline a clear support and management structure for tutors, including who will observe and evaluate tutors.
- Delineate and communicate all expectations, policies, and procedures to tutors prior to the start of tutoring.
- Articulate a performance evaluation process to ensure tutors meet performance expectations.
- Leverage the expectations aligned to culturally responsive and sustaining practices on pages 26-28 of the [CR-SE Framework](#).

Implementation Tools

Higher Education Institution (HEI) Specific Tools:

- [Georgia Gwinnett College Tutor Job Description](#)
- [Grand Valley State University 22/23 Tutor Manual](#)

From Existing Resources:

- [Tutor Background Check Guidance](#)
- [Setting Expectations with Tutors](#)

Key Insights

Know the law (or, more realistically, get counsel from someone who does).

- Programs need to be aware of all legal requirements, which can vary based on district, state, and institution. Information related to state requirements can typically

be found via the state's Attorney General's Office. Programs should also check with partner school districts and other institutions to keep abreast of any additional requirements. Work with your HEI's legal counsel to determine if they are able to support, or if you will need additional budget to seek legal counsel from a 3rd party. Leave enough time to implement their advice, and plan to address any future changes in regulations or if the program expands to new districts. Devote particular attention to the various state laws around recording sessions, institutional policies around rights and rules, policies for student employees at your HEI, and federal confidentiality legislation (e.g., [FERPA](#)).

Set clear expectations for your tutors from the start.

- [Clear expectations](#) provide tutors with a benchmark for self- evaluation, a reference point when expectations are not met, and a way to hold tutors accountable. Because consistency is critical, expectations should not be set lightly; an advisory group or other responsible party should approve them. Programs should review and revise their policies and procedures regularly (both reactively and proactively). Programs should provide orientation for tutors on policies and expectations. Having all tutors sign off on the expectations prior to the start of the program establishes their importance in tutors' minds and provides legal cover if a tutor fails to meet them. Consider engaging the legal and HR functions within your HEI to support you with sharing these expectations with tutors to ensure expectations also align with student employee policies at your institution.

Tutor: Onboarding, Training, and Coaching

Quality Standards

Tutor Preservice Training: The program provides high-quality onboarding and training, tailored to program context.

Tutor Coaching and Feedback: The program provides ongoing support to tutors such as through coaching on the effective use of research-informed practices that foster academic success and overall [student well-being](#).

Critical Questions

- What expectations and processes will be set for tutors to ensure effectiveness and safety?
- How will the program train, onboard and coach tutors? Including, how will the program train tutors in being culturally responsive and sustaining tutors?
- How will the program empower tutors to understand the school and context where they will tutor?
- What pre-existing instructional expertise can the program leverage from the HEI campus, particularly from an educator preparation program?
- How can we best integrate the tutor's experience into their college experience?
- How can career exploration be built into the tutor's experience?

Implementation Checklist

- Delineate training content based on [Model Dimensions](#) and selection criteria for tutors.
- Consult with educator preparation program faculty and staff to build upon pre-existing knowledge and structures.
- Determine whether students may receive course credit for participation in training, or if training may be embedded in existing educator preparation courses. See examples of a separate for-credit course from [Peer Power](#) and how to embed content into an educator preparation program from [James Madison University](#) and [Deans for Impact](#).
- Establish a clear structure for pre-service and in-service training, including frequency, format, facilitator, etc. that works within a higher education institution (HEI) student's schedule.
- Include training to empower tutors to understand the school and context where they will tutor. Topics may include information on how to get to the school and into the building, meeting the program leader at the school site, taking a tour of the school where they will tutor, information about the school's student population, and training on the school's specific approach to education.

- Include training to support culturally responsive-sustaining education. See the [CRSE Facilitator Guide](#) and the [Annotation of CRSE Facilitator Guide](#) specifically for HEI tutoring providers.
- Collect feedback from tutors on training and incorporate insights and lessons from feedback to improve training effectiveness (2-way feedback).
- Where possible, track feedback on the program by race, gender, and socio-economic status, and then use this information to identify patterns and trends across groups and sub-populations.
- Ensure in-service training is responsive to performance evaluations, stakeholder feedback, and student performance data.
- Ensure HEI student tutors receive regular feedback on how they are planning for and delivering tutoring sessions, including opportunities to reflect on implicit bias and expectations for student achievement (see p. 26 in the [Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework](#) for more information)
- Build opportunities into pre-service and in-service training for career awareness and exploration.

Implementation Tools

HEI Specific Tools:

- [Annotation of CR-SE Facilitator Guide](#) for HEI tutoring providers
- Ten-Session [CRSE Facilitator Guide](#) created by the NCY Culturally Responsive Education Working Group
- [Sample Tutor Pre-service Training Schedule](#) and [Course Syllabus](#)
- [2x2 Feedback Form](#) from the Management Center
- [Wittenberg University Training Module 1: The Tutoring Session](#)

From Existing Resources:

- [Pre-Service Training Guidance](#)
- [In-Service Training and Support Guidance](#)
- [Professional Learning Toolkit for Early Literacy Tutors](#)
- [6 Ways to Address Unconscious Bias](#)
- [Saga Coach](#)

Key Insights

Have tutor training to fill any gaps between your selection criteria and your ideal tutor's qualities.

- Training decisions and selection decisions are related. Training should help tutors acquire whatever important qualities a program did not actively select for during recruitment.



- Model design decisions also influence training content. Programs with online delivery models will need to train tutors to use all features of the platform; programs with multiple students per tutor will need to train tutors to manage student behavior, programs with consistent tutors will need to emphasize relationship-building, etc.

Choose a frequency of training based on the tutor type and complexity of the program model.

- Tutors who receive more training will be significantly more effective than those who receive less, but program capacity and return on investment is also important to consider. Consider embedding training opportunities into other structures within the natural cadence of student life within your HEI. For example, consider offering the more intensive training during the summer and/or school intersessions to ensure student tutors can balance their coursework with the responsibilities of tutoring.

Provide training that empowers tutors to understand the school and context where they will tutor in order to strengthen the program's collaboration with the school site.

- By partnering with the school site to ensure tutors understand the local context, the program sends a clear message to all stakeholders that they value the unique context of the school.
- Empowering tutors to understand the school and context sets them up for ongoing collaboration with the program leader in the school.
- In existing models, school staff have led some of the site-specific training elements to ensure accuracy and to build relationships with staff working at the school.

Understand that regardless of tutor type or program model, pre-service training alone will not be sufficient.

- Even with the highest-quality tutors, programs need to look for opportunities to help tutors improve and resolve problems as they emerge in practice.
- Pre-service training can prioritize building knowledge, while in-service training should hone skills. An in-service support model involves individual observation and coaching, differentiated group coaching on specific skills, and/or peer support via sharing best practices.
- Many HEI tutoring programs also leverage teachers and/or leaders within the district where students are tutoring, in addition to faculty with instructional expertise. If there are guest speakers coming to campus to provide aligned learning opportunities, encourage and, if possible, provide incentives for student tutors to attend these events.

Provide tutor support, regardless of model design.

- While the specific support structures may vary from program to program, the need for support is universal. Rigorous recruitment does not mean you can not provide oversight and support: even competent and capable individuals perform better with supervision and support.

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- There are many ways to provide support depending on a program’s design. Support could mean a formal manager on the program’s staff (sometimes referred to as a “site director”), a “lead tutor” who has been deemed effective in the role and capable of training others, a teacher at a specific school site, or something entirely different, like using a technology platform that tracks whether or not tutors are meeting expectations. It could also involve a combination of these methods: for example, several lead tutors supervised by a formal manager could effectively oversee many more tutors than a single manager could alone. In a virtual environment, a teacher educator or faculty member may be able to model instruction for a large group of students and follow up with individual student groupings facilitated by student tutors in breakout rooms.

Trace student outcomes to root causes in tutor practices to identify training needs.

- Student academic data should inform tutor training. If students are struggling with vernacular misconceptions, for example, targeted training on anticipating and preventing these misconceptions by clarifying terminology could help tutors serve students better. Additionally, if the data indicates that lack of mastery of a prerequisite skill is the barrier for mastering the current standard, training tutors to identify missing prerequisite skills and build a remediation lesson should be considered. Faculty from your HEI with an instructional background may already have resources to support the development of such lesson content.

Seek feedback from tutors about their needs to customize training content.

- Students feel empowered and excited when they have agency in their own learning, and the same is true of student tutors. Soliciting feedback from tutors and providing training geared towards their self-identified needs not only helps them become better tutors, but also helps them feel supported and valued by the program. This will have additional benefits for the HEI students, impacting their success at the HEI in other areas such as academic success and persistence.
- Build opportunities for tutors to reflect on how their experience informs their potential career paths. Provide guidance on opportunities for students to continue exploring careers in youth-serving professions, such as teaching.

Data Use: Program Effectiveness and Improvement

Quality Standard

Program Effectiveness and Improvement: The program has demonstrated a commitment to understanding overall program effectiveness and processes for ongoing improvement.

Critical Questions

- What student and tutor outcomes represent the vision of success for the program?
- What data will the program collect to measure these outcomes?
- How will these data reflect a holistic understanding of students' and tutors' experiences?
- How do the measures address both the impact on K-12 students and the impact on HEI tutors?
- What processes will be in place to review and act upon collected data?
- How will these review processes promote equity and reduce bias?

Implementation Checklist

- Define measures of success in alignment with your logic model, including process measures of implementation and non-academic measures of impact.
- Develop and/or leverage existing tools to collect data on the identified measures, including both quantitative and qualitative data.
- Set benchmarks to monitor progress towards outcomes.
- Put systems in place for collecting data that can be disaggregated by race, gender, individualized education program statutes, home language, and other important factors to ensure equity of services.
- Consider using the [Tutoring Quality Improvement System](#) to assess overall program's alignment with [Quality Standards](#) as part of continuous improvement efforts.
- Meet requirements and use best practices for data privacy.

Implementation Tools

HEI Specific Tools:

- If you are interested in learning more about current research at other institutions or how to conduct a study at your higher education institution (HEI), contact: info@studentsupportaccelerator.org.

From Existing Resources:

- [Developing a Performance Measurement Plan](#)
- [Tutoring Survey Instruments](#)

- [Examples of Data Collection Tools](#)
- [Performance Management Plan Template](#)
- [Tutoring Quality Improvement System](#)
- [Quality Standards](#)
- [Student Data Privacy Guidance](#)
- [Building in Continuous Improvement](#)

Key Insights

Develop a holistic data collection strategy that includes non-academic measures of impact for both students and tutors.

- While academic improvement is the primary purpose of a tutoring program, it is not the only goal. Programs need to collect data across multiple dimensions to ensure that they are building students' overall well being and are serving students equitably. As a results they benefit from collecting data to evaluate student experiences with tutors, not just student academic growth. HEI programs should also set goals and collect data to assess progress on tutor outcomes.
- Programs should collect feedback from all stakeholders (students, families, teachers, tutors, and administrators) to understand and improve program impact at all levels. While achievement data and feedback from school partners is critical, programs should include student voices when evaluating program impact: tutoring programs exist primarily to serve students.
- These pre-developed [Tutoring Survey Instruments](#) can support the program's understanding of student and tutor experiences.
- Modeling use of comprehensive data measures will also support your student tutors with deepening their understanding of these practices, furthering tutoring as a career development opportunity for participating student tutors.
- Consider phasing the approach to data collection to ensure you are able to commit to the data you plan to collect. For example, you may begin with collecting feedback from 1-2 stakeholder groups during the first year of implementation, and then increase the number of stakeholder groups in subsequent years.

Set specific benchmarks with expected dates to help stay on track.

- Programs should set benchmarks with expected dates for all measures — not just for student growth, but also for aspects like student/tutor/teacher/parent satisfaction. Routinely reviewing data and comparing it to benchmarks helps programs understand where they are on-track or off-track; this is critical for establishing a data- to-action cycle of insights and iterative improvements. These processes will also support the program with communicating progress and improvements to funders, ensuring the HEI is able to sustain the tutoring program into the future.

Align routine assessments with session targets (and, ideally, with classroom curriculum).



- Well-aligned, routine assessments can help programs quickly identify student knowledge gaps and target upcoming sessions to meet specific student needs as they emerge.
- If partner schools have existing interim assessments, leverage those data to reduce the need for another assessment and assure that tutoring success is tied to outcomes the school and district sees as relevant.
- In order for formative assessments to result in more student learning, tutors need time and support to review the assessment and formulate a plan to address each student's needs.

Develop systems for visualizing data for stakeholders.

- Programs should develop in-house capability for distilling data so that information can be presented in a digestible and actionable format. Some programs may have databases and utilize software such as [Tableau](#) to visualize data, while other programs that operate at a smaller scale may find it sufficient to store data in well-designed Google spreadsheets. Consider reaching out to faculty and/or staff at your HEI with expertise in this area - there are likely data management and analysis software products already purchased by your HEI to use.
- Ultimately, the method chosen for visualizing data should allow for users to sort the data and easily extract insights.
- Programs should regularly gather feedback on their data collection and visualization systems and improve upon these as part of their continuous improvement processes. If your program has access to research assistants, consider working with them to support your program's data collection and measurement work.

Data Use: Formative Assessment

Quality Standard

Formative Assessment: The program provides tutors with support to collect, analyze, and use formative assessment data to inform design of future sessions.

Critical Questions

- How can the tutoring program use formative assessments already in place within the district/school?
- What resources and/or training do tutors need to administer and analyze formative assessment data specific to the content they are tutoring students on?
- How will tutors be supported in the use of formative assessment to inform design of future sessions?

Implementation Checklist

- Work with the district/school to determine what formative assessments are already in place for students to avoid over testing.
- As needed, supplement formative assessments already in place based on the specific content tutors are providing.
- Set benchmarks to monitor progress towards outcomes.
- As part of ongoing coaching work, analyze available formative assessment data with tutors to inform the design of future sessions.

Implementation Tools

Higher Education Institution (HEI) Specific Tools:

- [James Madison University - HEI Tutor Project Sample - Impact on Student Learning](#) - In this final course project, the HEI student teacher developed this presentation to share with the classroom teacher (where she was doing her field experience) how students progressed in the targeted literacy skills during tutoring.

From Existing Resources:

- Mathematics: [Tutor - Instructional Strategies](#) (see section on formative assessment)
- General: [Student Data Review Protocol](#)

Key Insights

Set specific benchmarks with expected dates to help stay on track.

- Programs should set benchmarks with expected dates for all measures — not just measures for student growth, but also for aspects like student/tutor/teacher/parent



satisfaction. Routinely reviewing data and comparing it to benchmarks helps programs understand where they are on-track or off-track; this is critical for establishing a data- to-action cycle of insights and iterative improvements. These processes will also support the program with communicating progress and improvements to funders, ensuring the HEI is able to sustain the tutoring program into the future.

Align routine assessments with session targets (and, ideally, with classroom curriculum).

- Well-aligned, routine assessments can help programs quickly identify student knowledge gaps and target upcoming sessions to meet specific student needs as they emerge.
- If partner schools have existing interim assessments, leverage those data to reduce the need for another assessment and assure that tutoring success is tied to outcomes the school and district sees as relevant.

Provide tutors with time and support to review the assessment and formulate a plan to address each student’s needs, in order for formative assessments to result in more student learning.

- Train tutors to review actual student work, not just quantitative student performance data.
- Analyzing student work will enable tutors to identify why students struggled with specific tasks or answered specific questions incorrectly. Tutors can pinpoint access issues, precision errors, and misconceptions; this information can then inform the structure, content, and facilitation of future sessions. This work will deepen their understanding of instructional practices common in school districts, furthering their career development in the case of students interested in becoming teachers.

Data Use: Student Progress Measure

Quality Standard

Student Progress Measure: The program has a system for measuring individual student progress over time and responding to those results, and the measures of progress include both academic growth and adaptive indicators (i.e., student engagement; student confidence).

Critical Questions

- How will collected data reflect a holistic understanding of students’ experiences?
- What processes will be in place to review and act upon collected data?
- How will these review processes promote equity and reduce bias?

Implementation Checklist

- Identify who is responsible for reviewing each type of data.
- Create and routinely use protocols for reviewing data and distilling insights to inform decisions.
- Review disaggregated data to ensure equity of services.
- Set up processes for communicating data (and the insights distilled from it) to relevant stakeholders.
- Make informed decisions and take action based on data, resulting in continuous improvements.
- Establish standards for effective implementation of the tutoring model and improve standards over time.

Implementation Tools

Higher Education Institution (HEI) Specific Tools:

- N/A

From Existing Resources:

- [Developing Routines for Regular Data Review](#)
- [Standard Data Review Protocol](#)
- [How to Gather Rigorous Evidence of Your Program's Effectiveness](#)
- [Early Planning Needed to Know Your Tutoring Program's Effectiveness](#)

Key Insights

Frequently review data in both formal and informal ways.

- This ensures that program leaders are consistently aware of what actually makes their program effective. Staying up-to-date on data insights not only allows leaders to work with tutors on the ground to make direct improvements, but also helps them maintain a clear understanding of which model design elements are most essential to the program's success.

Conduct an annual data review at the same time each year.

- This allows program leaders to consistently update their understanding of how effective each element of the program's model design actually is.
- Annual data reviews are critical for programs looking to innovate, allowing leaders to distinguish among model design changes that preserve what matters most and ones that abandon the core of what makes the program effective.
- For programs seeking to scale, an annual data review provides an opportunity to standardize core parts of a program so that it can be easily and faithfully replicated at scale.

Tell a clear story about the program's impact so far, such as [this example from Peer Power](#).



- Programs seeking to scale and generate new demand must be able to articulate the impact they have made in their communities. This story is what gets a program’s “foot in the door” with new partners at every level, from individual schools to entire school districts and statewide departments of education.

Disaggregate student data (by race, gender, IEP status, home language, etc.) to ensure equity.

- By reviewing data through demographic breakdowns, programs can identify opportunities for improvement and identify training needs to ensure tutors can effectively serve all students.

Consider conducting rigorous evaluations.

- [Rigorous evaluations](#) will provide evidence about what aspects of a program work and don’t work. These insights can improve efficacy and/or reduce costs.
- [Well-designed evaluations](#) can provide definitive evidence that a tutoring intervention helps students and can increase the demand and the likelihood programs receive external funding.
- Rigorous evaluations may occur in conjunction with researchers from the tutoring program’s HEI, or in partnership with another organization.

Instruction: Session Content

Quality Standard

High-Quality Instructional Materials: The program uses high-quality instructional materials that are user-friendly, rigorous, and research-based.

Critical Questions

- What academic content will tutoring sessions focus on?
- What materials will tutors use to deliver the academic content?

Implementation Checklist

- Review curricula and materials currently being used in the classroom.
- If materials used in the classroom are high-quality, assess whether existing supplemental materials can be used for tutoring or whether additional materials need to be sourced or developed.
- If additional materials for tutoring sessions need to be sourced or developed, work in partnership with the local school or district and tap resources at your HEI to ensure tutoring materials are high-quality, maintain rigor, and complement classroom materials to support student mastery.
- Focus session content of targeted learning goals informed by grade level standards, assessment data, and family and school input.
- Provide tutors with a consistent session structure that includes space for relationship-building, independent practice time, and formative assessment.
- If Student-Tutor Ratio is Small Groups: Use data in collaboration with the school to form purposeful, flexible small groups based on content needs.

Implementation Tools

Higher Education Institutions (HEI) Specific Tools:

- [Grand Valley State Literacy Micro-Credentials](#)

From Existing Resources:

- [Aligning Tutoring Curriculum to School Curriculum](#)
- [Personalizing a Tutoring Session](#)
- [Accessibility Checklist](#)
- [Tips for Creating Data-Informed Student Groups](#)
- [Guidance for Selecting and Implementing Early Literacy Instructional Materials for Your Tutoring Program](#)
- [PK - 8 Math Resource Library](#)



- [Saga Curriculum](#)

Key Insights

Provide tutors with a comprehensive curriculum to follow so that any tutor, even a substitute or a tutor on their first day in the role, can pick up a session plan and lead that session effectively.

- While some programs may choose to develop their own curriculum, it is not necessary to start from scratch. Programs can adopt standards-aligned, rigorous instructional materials (or even entire curricula) for tutors to adapt to fit their students' needs. This is particularly useful for HEI teacher candidates, as they will likely need this skill when they enter the teaching profession as well.
- If you choose to develop your own curriculum, finish designing the entire curriculum before the first tutoring session starts and align with relevant standards.
- Whether curriculum is developed or adopted, [ensure traditionally marginalized voices](#) are included to reflect diverse perspectives.
- In most cases, tutors' planning time is most effectively spent on optimizing implementation, selecting examples, and building deep knowledge of how to tutor, not on creating resources themselves.

Use a tutoring curriculum that complements students' classroom curriculum.

- If classroom materials are strong, your program should leverage these materials to plan session content. This alignment ensures that tutors are reinforcing the academic language and models of the classroom to support student learning. You may still opt to use a different curriculum than the classroom your program serves. Regardless of the materials, tutors will want to focus on addressing students' underlying needs, not keeping pace with the classroom work. However, the curriculum and materials that tutors use should align with the relevant standards, and you should sequence sessions to support the work students do in their classrooms.
- Many HEIs partner with their local school district to hire teachers and leaders to offer training on the curriculum the district uses for HEI tutors. This supports curricular alignment and takes some of the burden for curriculum professional development off of the HEI alone.

Tutors specify clear learning goals for each session.

- Both the tutor and the student need to be able to articulate the goal at every point in the session, and both need to be able to evaluate whether they have reached it by the end.
- Narrowing the focus of a session to a specific subtopic (e.g., decoding skills within literacy, or sourcing skills within writing) is an effective way to build in a steady stream of small victories that boost student (and tutor) morale and improve outcomes.

Tutors personalize sessions to meet an individual student's needs.

- Student productivity and growth increase if the tutor can identify the missing or incomplete skills that are holding a student back and focus remediation and acceleration on those specific skills.
- Leverage data from informal and formal assessments to help identify and target specific skill needs for particular students. Ask students themselves what areas are challenging.

Tutors focus personalized sessions on acceleration and include remediation when necessary.

- While students may need remediation on missing foundational skills, they will also need support to learn how to apply those skills to new, grade-level concepts to accelerate their learning going forward. Tutors must maintain a balance between the remediation and acceleration with each student.
- Connect instructional content with the lives of students by using culturally-specific examples that tap into their existing interests and knowledge.

Instruction: Session Structure

Quality Standards

Dosage: The program provides each student with at least three tutoring sessions per week, with ample time (usually a minimum of 30 minutes per session) for students to engage fully with the material.

Ratio: The ratio of student to tutors in the program is low and does not exceed 4:1.

Student Grouping: The program strategically groups students by skill level or language need to allow the tutor to deliver relevant instruction to the full group.

Routines + Structures: The program has consistent lesson structure, set instructional routines, and standard procedures to maximize learning. Tutor-specific modifications are intentional and informed by student needs.

Critical Question

- How should tutoring sessions be structured to ensure students master the content?

Implementation Checklist

- Ensure a consistent session structure with space for relationship- building, independent practice time, and formative assessment.
- Design the tutoring program to meet research-based dosage and ratio guidelines.
- Structure tutoring sessions to focus on targeted learning goals informed by grade level standards, assessment data, and family and school input.

Implementation Tools

Higher Education Institution (HEI) Specific Tools:

- [James Madison University Sample Syllabus: Practicum in Assessment and Reading](#) - (see p. 13 for lesson plan expectations and feedback structure)
- [Wittenberg University Tutoring Plan Template](#)
- [Wittenberg University Training Module 2: Tutoring Plan Template Guidance](#)

From Existing Resources:

- [Example Tutoring Session Structure](#)

Key Insights

Maintain a consistent tutoring structure from session to session.

- While content will change across sessions, session design and flow are most effective when they are consistent.

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- When session structure is routine, tutors will deliver more consistent and effective sessions. Instead of spending prep time internalizing directions and pacing, they can focus on content.
 - When students know what to expect, they can better internalize what is expected of them. Because each session has a consistent rhythm, students will feel safer and more engaged.

Groups students intentionally if tutors work with students in groups.

- Research suggests that grouping students based on their current skill level may be most effective (Zimmer et al., 2010).
- It also helps to pair English language learners together, particularly if their tutor speaks their native language. When your roster of bilingual tutors is limited, place them strategically.
- For students within small-group sessions who have larger skill gaps than other group members, tutors should strive to find one-on-one time with them to provide more personalized support.
- Depending on the length of the tutoring program, students may need to be re-grouped periodically. Students' relative skill levels change over time, so grouping students based on skill involves regularly reassessing students' skill levels and re-grouping them accordingly.
- Many HEIs partner closely with the school-based staff to determine how to group and regroup students. This provides opportunities for deeper partnerships and allows the HEI students to learn how teachers make these instructional decisions.

Instruction: Session Facilitation

Quality Standard

Instructional Practices: Tutors use research-based instructional practices aimed at fostering academic success and overall [student well-being](#).

Critical Question

- How should tutoring sessions be facilitated to affirm students' academic and personal identities and ensure students master the content?

Implementation Checklist

Design facilitation of tutoring sessions to promote the following best practices:

- Tutors reinforce the academic language and procedures of the classroom and hold students accountable for doing the same.
- Tutors appropriately use open-ended questioning to ensure students are articulating their understanding of the content.
- Tutors facilitate content clearly, correctly, and at an appropriate pace.
- Students engage with content using a variety of learning tools that promote productive struggle given their unique needs.
- Students experience multiple representations of new knowledge and repeated opportunities to apply new skills in order to solidify learning.
- If sessions are virtual:
 - Tutors use a digital whiteboard to support session facilitation and share content with students.
 - Student access is restricted to required applications as much as possible in order to reduce distractions.
- If your program tutors students in groups:
 - Tutors use student groups to promote dialogue and collaboration.
 - Tutors are trained to effectively facilitate student behavior management as needed.

Implementation Tools

Higher Education Institution (HEI) Specific Tools:

- [Grand Valley State University Tutor Observation Rubric for Coaches](#)
- [TutorND \(Notre Dame\) Observation Rubric](#)

From Existing Resources:

- [Facilitation Moves Checklist: One-on-One Tutoring](#)

- [Effective Facilitation Guidelines: Small Group Tutoring](#)

Key Insights

Session facilitation elevates student voice over tutor voice.

- Tutors are encouraged to ask open-ended questions and encourage student-led discussions to encourage and empower students to process ideas and solve problems independently.
- Prioritizing student voices isn't just about making students feel empowered. It's also a crucial strategy for making students' thinking visible to tutors. This real-time qualitative data about students' internalization of the session content helps make sure that tutors can catch student misconceptions and keep students on track to meet their goals by the end of each session.

Thoughtful preparation facilitates sessions that are effective for all learners.

- A well-prepared tutor can ensure that any learner can learn session content and materials. For example, a tutor might share multiple representations of content, supplying a variety of media and supplemental materials, or providing accessible technology.
- To help all students reliably access session content, tutors may offer an alternative option for each student task (such as a choice to share answers aloud or write them down for the tutor to check).
- Tutors are encouraged to look for opportunities to weave in tips about meta-academic executive functioning skills like planning, note-taking, and prioritizing.

Tutors set clear norms for discussions when students receive tutoring in groups.

- Student-led discussions about open-ended questions are powerful tools for engaging intellectual curiosity and elevating student voices. However, for these discussions to be equitable, respectful, and productive, tutors need to establish ground rules beforehand.
- All students have the right to feel comfortable expressing themselves, have concrete guidance for how to respond to peers with different viewpoints, and generally agree on group behavior norms.

Instruction: Relationship Building

Quality Standards

Student-Tutor Relationship: The program has an intentional strategy and supporting systems to build strong, positive relationships between students and tutors.

Tutor Consistency: Students receive consistent tutoring from the same tutor; any adjustments to groupings occur sparingly and strategically.

Critical Question

- How should tutoring sessions be structured and facilitated to build strong relationships?

Implementation Checklist

- Ensure tutor training and coaching reflect a motivating, asset-based approach and a growth mindset when students struggle.
- Match tutors to students using intentional and systematic methods.
- Train tutors to include specific strategies and activities that encourage getting to know one another.
- Based on interests, develop activities outside of regular tutoring sessions to build relationships between tutors and students.

Implementation Tools

Higher Education Institution (HEI) Specific Tools:

- [List of On Campus Event Ideas](#)

From Existing Resources:

- [Strong, Academically Focused, Tutor-Student Relationships](#)
- [Relationship-Building Activities](#)
- [Mentoring Mindset Training](#)
- [Mentoring Mindset Training - Facilitator's Guide](#)
- [Culturally Relevant and Inclusive Tutoring](#)
- [Cultivating a Growth Mindset](#)
- [Matching Tutors with Students](#)
- [Relationship Building Self-Reflection Tool](#)

Key Insights

Positive student-tutor relationships help to create successful tutoring sessions.

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- When students feel supported, they are more likely to engage in learning through productive struggle, achieve greater academic growth, and display fewer behavioral challenges.

Tutoring sessions are low-stress, high-trust environments where students' engagement and accomplishment lead to an authentic enjoyment of the academic content.

- Most tutors feel comfortable in classrooms. Many students do not. In particular, students who need skill remediation may find learning environments high-stress and unsafe by default, as missing fundamental skills can make traditional classroom engagement feel punishing rather than productively challenging. Tutors should remember this and work to build student trust.
- Building trust takes time and intentional effort. Program leadership and teachers need to support carving out time for tutors to cultivate relationships with their students and work hard to make learning feel engaging. This time and effort is not wasted, but some of the highest-value work a tutor can do. Helping students see learning as a positive and productive experience is paramount to a program's success.

Tutors take an interest in their students' lives outside the classroom and are supportive of students' culture in their sessions.

- To help make tutoring sessions a welcoming space that values and affirms all forms of difference, tutors should take time to understand each student and what they care about. Building this awareness will help tutors create a judgment-free space for all students.
- Tutors should help students access challenging concepts by using customized examples and content based on what students have shared about their learning styles, cultures and identities (see p. 27 in the [Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework](#) for more information).
- HEI institutions that invite K-12 students to campus to participate in on-campus activities are able to foster deeper relationships between the tutor and K-12 student.

Learning Integration: Stakeholder Engagement

Quality Standards

Setting: The tutoring occurs during the school day.

Integration with School Schedule: If occurring during the school day, the tutoring program strategically considers the tradeoffs of students attending tutoring instead of alternative uses of time.

Curricular Alignment: If classroom instruction is based on rigorous and high quality materials, the tutoring program aligns to classroom curricula.

School and Teacher Engagement: The program regularly engages with school leaders and/or teachers regarding instructional alignment and student progress.

Caregiver Engagement: The program ensures regular engagement with caregivers and updates on student's progress.

Student Enrollment and Retention: The program has a defined approach to enroll and retain students; particular attention is paid to reducing barriers to participation.

Critical Questions

- How will the program engage stakeholders to ensure tutoring aligns with classroom curricula?
- How will tutors leverage stakeholders to build their understanding of student needs to tailor tutoring?
- How will tutors build trust with stakeholders?

Implementation Checklist

- Identify stakeholder groups based on tutoring program design. Common stakeholders groups are students, families, school teachers and administrators and Higher Education Institution (HEI) leadership.
- Clearly communicate the program's model, purpose, and evidence to demonstrate alignment with students', families', teachers', schools', and HEI's needs.
- Set joint goals with all relevant stakeholders and establish a system for regular updates on progress.
- Make students, families, and schools aware of any terms or conditions for participation and actively seek affirmative agreements.
- Establish communication systems between stakeholders and tutors to ensure equitable collaboration and alignment with classroom curricula.
- Collect and act on feedback from administrators, teachers, parents and students to continuously improve effectiveness. Share actions taken with relevant stakeholders.
- If Setting is In-School:

- create program schedules that ensure 1) students are not removed from core instruction and 2) program staff can join teacher team meetings
- designate classroom space for program
- If Take-Up is Voluntary: identify strategies for recruiting students who would benefit from tutoring and actively provide information on its purpose and eligibility.

Implementation Tools

HEI Specific Tools:

- N/A

From Existing Resources:

- [Tutoring Program-School Communication: Kickoff Meeting Agenda](#)
- [Teacher-Tutor Communication: Kickoff Meeting Agenda](#)
- [Teacher-Tutor Communication: Continual Updates](#)
- [Tutor/Program-Family Communication: Crafting an Introductory Statement for Families](#)
- [Tutor/Program-Family Communication Continual Updates](#)
- [Tutor-Student Goal Setting Conferences](#)
- [Scheduling Sessions](#)

Key Insights

Programs identify stakeholders and establish why, when, and how the tutoring program/tutors will communicate with each stakeholder.

- It is critical for tutoring programs to identify stakeholders for regular communication. School administrators and teachers are best suited to inform if and how the HEI tutoring program will directly communicate with families. The design of each program will determine the stakeholders with whom it communicates. HEI leadership may be an important stakeholder to include in regular communications.
- The tutoring program will need to establish who will be in charge of communications with each stakeholder. For example, in some programs, tutors may communicate directly to families, while in other programs, the majority of family communication may be conducted by teachers. It is important to establish a communication plan upfront and share it with each stakeholder.
- Common tutor/tutoring program communication often includes:
 - Tutoring Program/Tutor communicates with school administration to facilitate student attendance and share regular updates on student progress
 - Tutoring Program/Tutor engages with teachers and school leadership to support tutors' understanding of student needs



- Tutor engages with teachers so that the tutor can share student progress and seek input from the teacher regarding what to focus on during tutoring sessions
- Tutoring Program engages with school leadership and relevant teachers to better understand the school's curriculum and how to complement this curriculum during sessions
- Tutor/Teacher engages with families so that families understand the expectations of the tutoring program and from whom they can expect communication

Programs engage in frequent, predictable, clear, dynamic communication with all stakeholders (i.e., students, families, teachers, and school administrators). Consider the following when planning stakeholder communication:

- The frequency of communication should be directly correlated to the frequency of tutoring. For example, if tutoring happens five times a week, weekly communication is likely appropriate. However, if tutoring is once a week, monthly communication may be appropriate. Soliciting feedback from stakeholders on the frequency of communication will allow you to adjust the amount of communication based on stakeholder input.
- Communication should be both regular and predictable. For example, a program that tutors students five days a week might do an end-of-the-week “wrap up” by either calling home or sending a progress report from that week.
- Establishing predictability helps to create routine for those responsible for the communication, and also ensures that stakeholders know exactly when they should expect updates.
- Communication should be accessible and free of jargon. Communicate with families when possible in their home language.
- Clear systems of communication should be established for all parties. For example, in a letter home, you will want to share ways that a family can respond to the letter, detailing all methods for contacting the tutor or teacher.
- Communication with all stakeholders ensures that everyone supporting the student is working together effectively and efficiently towards the same, jointly-set goal.
- Regardless of whether your tutoring program's main point of contact is families, school administrators, or students, all tutoring programs are more effective when other aspects of a student's life (i.e., home and school) positively reinforce what the student does during tutoring — and when tutoring reinforces what the student learns at school and home.

Tutoring is integrated into students' school and/or family lives in order to ensure curriculum alignment and cohesive student support.

- When the tutoring content aligns with the school’s curriculum, students can more easily connect tutoring topics to what they already know, resulting in higher retention of new ideas.
- When family, school, and tutoring are integrated into one cohesive support system for students, students can more easily make connections between their efforts in tutoring and success in class or at home completing independent assignments, helping them build a growth mindset.
- Determining how best to integrate tutoring into students’ lives will be dependent on the model design of each program. For example, if the program is located in a school, tutors may take advantage of opportunities such as connecting with students during lunch, or in- between classes. However, if the program is located outside of school, the program may find it worthwhile to encourage tutors to attend community events where they will be able to interact with families. Programs should consider what seems most appropriate based on the program design.

Strong, asset-based, culturally-responsive family and school relationships provide cyclical reinforcement for your tutoring program.

- Just as students have different needs, families and schools will also have different needs. Programs should build an understanding of the unique needs of each stakeholder and tailor their methods of engagement based on these needs. The better you know families, the easier it will be to engage them responsively. For example, knowing what times are best to call home based on family work schedules can ensure that you communicate with families at a time that works best for them.
- Students are more likely to engage when tutors establish a positive relationship that builds on students’ strengths, acknowledges their needs, and celebrates who they are.
- Tutors can work towards developing positive relationships with students by connecting with and learning from stakeholders who already know the students well. For example, tutors may want to learn from teachers about what typically motivates students in class, and what topics tend to interest them most. Tutors can learn from families about the child’s previous experience with school.

Strong stakeholder communication has a three-part structure:

- Kick-off Conversations. Start things off on the right foot. The tutoring organization should coordinate initial conversations among stakeholders. These conversations should allow for teachers, administrators, and families to learn about the program’s goals and logistics, ask questions, and set a vision for their own involvement in the program.
- Continual Updates. Keep all stakeholders on the same page. To keep that initial vision alive, share student progress updates at predictable intervals, but also reach out proactively as needed when students are not on track or agreements from the kick-off are not met.



- **Punctuated Reflection.** Set aside time to reflect on progress. Tutors should routinely pause throughout the program to formally discuss students' summative progress with all stakeholders (including students), listen to feedback, and adjust action plans as needed.

Section 3: Challenges and Solutions

The purpose of this section is to describe some of the typical challenges that arise and how programs overcome those challenges. While there is never a one-size-fits-all path to overcoming challenges experienced by Higher Education Institution (HEI) tutoring partnership programs with K-12 schools, the solutions offered come from the real-world experiences of leaders that have experienced these challenges in their own contexts. The information in this section comes from interviews with leaders of higher education programs working on tutoring programs in K-12 schools.

Common challenges and suggested solutions include:

Funding

- **Challenge:**
 - Existing HEI tutoring programs are rarely funded through significant (or any) general fund dollars from their HEI. Without a base of consistent funding, the tutoring program faces ongoing funding uncertainty which limits the ability to plan, execute, and scale effectively.
- **Solutions:**
 - Consider operating as a tutoring contractor for your local school district instead of as a volunteer organization.
 - This elicits shared funding and therefore shared responsibility for high quality programming.
 - Note: traditionally teacher candidates cannot be paid as part of their practicum, though there are examples of teacher candidates tutoring students at their practicum site.
 - Leverage grant writing resources on campus for support with applying for funding and building capacity of staff in the tutoring program.
 - Apply for philanthropic, public service, and research grants.
 - Specifically consider work-study and AmeriCorps funding
 - Advocate with your HEI leadership to provide base funding through the general fund to ensure program staff are able to plan and implement effectively. HEI leadership is often seeking ways to better engage and support the local community.
 - See additional funding considerations [here](#).

Overwhelmed Systems

- **Challenge:**
 - Overwhelmed systems in school districts and HEIs can lead to compromises in fidelity to tutoring programs and alignment to the [Tutoring Quality Improvement System - Quality Standards](#), resulting in poor tutoring program outcomes.



- **Solutions:**
 - Use the [Tutoring Quality Improvement System \(TQIS\)](#) self-assessment to understand where your program can more closely align to [Tutoring Quality Standards](#) and follow the guidance provided in your self-assessment report. For specific areas of improvement, review the relevant sections of the [Tutoring Toolkit](#) and this HEI Playbook.
 - Choose one program element or standard area at a time to improve, creating opportunities for ongoing, continuous improvement. Align the areas of improvement to your other strategic priorities.
 - Contact The National Student Support Accelerator at info@studentsupportaccelerator.org for additional support.
 - Engage with other HEIs to learn about their tutoring programs.

Logistics

- **Challenge:**
 - Logistical challenges, including scheduling and transportation, can overwhelm leaders of programs to the point that they pause on service delivery.
- **Solutions:**
 - Engage K-12 schools early. Programs that learn about scheduling needs in the semester prior to tutoring beginning are much more capable of ensuring tutors can attend programs.
 - Include a budget for transportation in your funding model.
 - Consider offering virtual tutoring or hybrid tutoring to lessen the burden required by transportation.

Coordinating Multiple HEI Departments

- **Challenge:**
 - Not one HEI in these interviews operated their program through a single department at their HEI. Generally, a single department within a university does not have all the resources to deliver a high-impact, sustainable tutoring program that accomplishes the full list of benefits. Tutoring programs are typically primarily housed in one of two places on a university campus, and sometimes programs are occurring simultaneously in both places. In both models, the department is challenged by not having what the other department offers.
 - Schools of Education deploy teacher candidates to tutor K-12 students, sometimes in conjunction with their field experience placements. Their instructional resources and support for tutors are strong, but they lack the operational infrastructure and staffing necessary to create sustainable programs with deeper connections to the university.
 - Volunteer or Community Support Offices hire tutors through work-study and/or other student employment funding sources to work with students in K-12 schools. Their operational infrastructure to hire tutors and connect them with the broader K-12 system is stronger, but they lack the

instructional resources and subject matter expertise to ensure tutors deliver high-quality instruction to students.

- **Solutions:**

- Consider fostering a formal partnership across the School or Department of Education and Volunteer or Community Support Office at your HEI to maximize available resources.
 - Fulfill instructional functions through the school or department of education.
 - Fulfill operational functions through the volunteer or community support office.
- If your HEI does not have both of these functions on campus, consider extending the partnership to a neighboring HEI that does have the function your institution does not have.

Section 4: HEI Tutoring Program Profiles

The program profiles below provide a few examples of the variety of ways in which a HEI - District tutoring partnership can be designed and implemented. If you would like to suggest a program to be profiled, please email info@studentsupportaccelerator.org.

NSSA Program Profiles

- [Georgia Gwinnett College](#)
- [Grand Valley State University's K-12 Connect](#)
- [PEER POWER Program Profile](#)
- [Wittenberg University](#)

Deans for Impact Educator Preparation Program Tutoring Profiles

Federal Work Study Program Profiles

- Retention and Collaboration: Indiana University – Purdue University Indianapolis's Office of Community Work-Study (pp. 60-66)
- “We Can Do More!”: Campus Community Collaboration at the University of South Florida (pp. 78-81)
- From Dysfunction to Coordination: America Reads at the University of Minnesota (pp. 94-97)
- Testing Tutor Training Effectiveness: Service-Learning at Fresno State (pp. 103-110)
- “I Found Out What I Want to Do”: Federal Work Study and Workforce Development at Central Piedmont Community College (pp. 120-124)