NATIONAL STUDENT SUPPORT ACCELERATOR

*equalizing access to quality tutoring*

# Tutoring Quality Improvement System Quality Standards

The TQIS quality standards are aligned with the Accelerator's Framework for High-Impact Tutoring and were developed by the TQIS Advisory Group. These quality standards will be updated regularly to reflect new learnings.

Each TQIS quality standard is grounded in research and categorized as one of the following:

- **Research-based**: This recommendation comes from a robust research base.
- **Research-informed**: This recommendation comes from some combination of studies of effective tutoring programs, inferences from analogous research settings, and practitioner insight.
- **Emerging evidence**: There is not yet a robust research base for this recommendation, but practitioners and researchers are highly aligned on its likely importance for quality.

**A Note about Equity**: Equity is one of the foundational elements of the Accelerator's Framework for High-Impact Tutoring. 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.

| Element | Characteristic | Quality Standard | Research Basic |
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| **TUTOR** | Tutor Recruitment and Selection | There is a clear recruitment and selection process that results in tutors with the skills and mindsets necessary to be successful in that program. | Emerging Evidence: There has not been research explicitly focused on the most effective way to recruit tutors. However, there is strong consensus among experts in the field that it is important for programs to have clear processes and standards for recruitment. |
| | Tutor Preservice Training | The tutoring program provides high-quality onboarding and training, tailored to program context. | Research Informed: In general, research shows that highly skilled educators have a greater impact on student achievement. Therefore programs that implement training to improve a tutor's |

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| | | | skill level may positively impact student achievement. |
| | Tutor Coaching and Feedback | The tutoring program provides ongoing support to tutors through observations, coaching, and two way feedback between the tutor and their coach. | Research Informed: In general, research shows that educators improve by receiving ongoing support and feedback. Practitioners argue that strong coaching structures are one of the most important drivers of quality. |
| **DATA USE** | Program Effectiveness and Improvement | The tutoring program has demonstrated a commitment to understanding overall program effectiveness and processes for ongoing improvement. | Research Informed: It is recommended that tutoring programs use data in their design and improvement process to increase program effectiveness. Implementing research-based principles, such as continuous improvement, may result in greater effectiveness. |
| | Formative Assessment | The tutoring program provides tutors with support to collect, analyze, and use formative assessment data to inform design of future sessions. | Research Based: Research on formative assessments in other settings suggests that they can provide valuable data for tutors to improve tutoring sessions and personalize instruction. Research suggests tutors need 1) time and support to review formative assessment data and 2) the ability to act upon it. |
| | Student Progress Measure | The tutoring program has a system for measuring individual student progress over time and responding to those results; measures of progress include both academic growth and adaptive indicators (i.e. student engagement; student confidence). | Research Informed: Tutoring programs can measure student progress over time by analyzing grades, assessment results and standardized test scores. Monitoring progress over time likely supports improvements in program design, tutor effectiveness, and instruction. Research on cycles of continuous improvement suggests measuring progress over time is a necessary practice for making improvements. |
| **INSTRUCTION** | Student Grouping | Students are strategically grouped by skill level or language need to allow the tutor to deliver relevant instruction to the full group. | Research Informed: Research on supplemental educational supports (not tutoring explicitly) suggests that grouping students by skill level or ability level may increase effectiveness. |
| | Tutor Consistency | Students receive consistent tutoring from the same tutor; | Research Informed: There is limited research on the effects of tutor |

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| | | any adjustments to groupings occur sparingly and strategically. | consistency on student achievement. However, there is evidence that suggests the practice of "looping" - students having the same teacher for multiple years - may positively impact student achievement. The general consensus is that it is beneficial for students to receive instruction from a consistent tutor. |
| | Student-tutor relationship | The tutoring program has an intentional strategy and supporting systems to build strong, positive relationships between students and tutors. | Emerging Evidence: There is not one perspective on the value or importance of the student-tutor relationship. The importance of the relationship depends on a program's mission, mode of delivery, tutor consistency and other factors. Nevertheless, it is suggested that tutors who are able to foster positive and professional relationships with students may lead to greater gains. |
| | High-Quality Instructional Materials | The tutoring program uses high-quality instructional materials that are user-friendly, rigorous and research-based. | Research Informed: HQIMs positively impact student achievement in the general classroom instructional setting. Therefore, it is suggested that the use of HQIM is also a strong factor in the success of tutoring programs. |
| | Instructional Practices | Tutors receive explicit training, modeling, and coaching related to the use of effective instructional strategies (e.g. strong questioning, lesson pacing, and modeling). | Research Informed: One driver for the strong impacts of teacher led tutoring might be their expert facilitation of learning. Providing all tutors with support in utilizing effective instructional practices is likely to increase the effectiveness of the program. |
| | 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. | Research Informed: The evidence base does not provide detailed information on the structure of specific tutoring interventions and how they affect student learning. However, students generally tend to benefit from a consistent lesson structure, procedures, and routines in educational settings. |
| | Dosage | The tutoring program provides each student with at least | Research Informed: Overall, tutoring interventions appear to be more |

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| | | three 30-minute tutoring sessions per week. | effective as the number of tutoring sessions per week increases. Although there is limited evidence on what the most effective combination of duration and frequency is, there is evidence that suggests how students learn and retain skills best. |
| | Ratio | The ratio of student to tutors in the program does not exceed 4:1. | Research Informed: There are multiple studies that suggest 1:1 tutoring has a greater impact on student achievement than any other grouping. However, research also suggests that tutoring is effective up to a ratio of 4:1. Some considerations when defining the student-tutor ratio are cost, resources and tutor type. |
| **LEARNING INTEGRATION** | Setting | The tutoring program occurs during the school day. | Research Based: Studies on tutoring programs found that the effects of programs conducted during the school day are roughly twice as large as those conducted outside of school. However, out-of-school tutoring programs can be effective if the necessary structures and systems are in place to ensure student participation and engagement |
| | Integration with School Schedule | If occurring during the school day, the tutoring program strategically considers the tradeoffs of students attending tutoring vs. other components of the day. | Emerging Evidence: There is not substantial research on how a tutoring program's integration into the school schedule affects student outcomes. However, stronger integration with the school schedule will indirectly impact other factors that support quality implementation, such as teacher-tutor collaboration, school operations, and minimizing barriers for students to attend tutoring sessions. |
| | Curricular Alignment | If classroom instruction is based on rigorous and high quality materials, the tutoring program aligns to classroom curricula. | Emerging Evidence: There are not substantial studies that show programs who make these efforts to align to classroom curricula are more effective than those programs do not. It is possible that students make more learning gains when the tutoring curriculum is aligned with and responsive to classroom instruction. |

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| | School and Teacher Engagement | The tutoring program regularly engages with school leaders and teachers regarding instructional alignment and student progress. | Emerging Evidence: While school-day tutoring programs appear to be more effective than out-of-school time tutoring programs, there is no evidence to suggest increased school engagement leads to greater impact. Nevertheless, experts suggest that strong tutor-teacher communication may result in greater curriculum alignment and updates on student progress. |
| | Caregiver Engagement | The tutoring program ensures regular engagement with caregivers and updates on student's progress. | Research Informed: There have been a number of studies that have shown caregiver involvement can positively impact student achievement. Therefore, it is suggested that tutoring programs proactively encourage tutors to engage with caregivers. |
| | Student Enrollment and Retention | The tutoring program has a defined approach to enroll and retain students; particular attention is paid to reducing barriers to participation. | Research Informed: Tutoring programs vary based on how students are chosen (i.e. required participation, opt-in or opt-out participation). While these different features have not been researched, it is suggested that required opt-out programs (where students are automatically enrolled unless parents actively ask that they not be enrolled) reduce barriers to participation. |
| **SAFETY** | Safety protocols | The tutoring program has all necessary protocols in place to keep students (and their data) safe and implements those protocols with fidelity. | Research Informed: There has not been explicit research conducted on the safety of tutoring programs. However, there is common consensus that tutoring programs cannot operate without making student safety and data privacy a pillar of their operations. |
| **COHESION** | Program Design | The tutoring program is designed to successfully meet the needs of the community it serves. | Research-Informed: Research on organizations generally suggests that programs that have a clear logic model and sense of what drives impact in their program may be more effective. This is likely true for tutoring programs as well. |

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| | Leader Role Clarity | The tutoring program has clearly defined roles and responsibilities for the leadership team, with particular attention to clearly defining tutor coaching responsibilities. | Evidence Informed: These recommendations are informed by research on high-functioning nonprofit organizations. |
| | Leader Professional Development | Program leaders receive support to implement their roles with fidelity. | Evidence Informed: These recommendations are informed by research on high-functioning nonprofit organizations. |
| | Organizational culture | The tutoring program has a defined mission, vision, and set of organizational goals; these guiding documents are aligned with broader context and well understood by stakeholders. | Research Informed: Research on organizations generally suggests that programs that have an aligned organizational culture with clear missions and goals may be more effective. This is likely true for tutoring programs as well. |