



PAPER



High-impact tutoring:

A path for accelerated instruction

Growing research and new state requirements point to one key strategy for closing learning gaps this year—tutoring. Learn how Texas districts are giving their students the personalized help they deserve.

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Introduction

Research on high-impact tutoring (HIT), generally defined as frequent and 1:1 or small-group tutoring, is substantial and compelling. Average effect sizes for HIT interventions are among the largest in education—especially if they meet key evidence-based criteria.^[2]

As such, HIT is being touted as a promising solution for meeting HB 4545 statutory requirements and supporting students that require extra help following their STAAR or EOC assessments. Many educational leaders are even considering state- or district-wide implementations of HIT, given the fact that it has been shown to drive learning gains for all kinds of students.^[3]

But despite the robust base of evidence, HIT is challenging for districts to deploy on their own. Districts across Texas are grappling with the staffing, cost, and logistical hurdles that stand in the way of providing it alone. They can ideally leverage funds for programs that help scale HIT.^[3]

In this guide, Texas district leaders can find research insights, policy perspectives, and real examples of how districts can implement HIT programs that are scalable, equitable, and cost-effective.

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

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

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

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

^[3] Texas Education Agency. *High Impact Tutoring Toolkit*; August 2021.

Research on effective HIT programs

Not all tutoring is effective. How can Texas districts choose effective programs?

Evidence-based guidance from the Texas Education Agency^[1], Annenberg Institute at Brown University^[2], and J-PAL at MIT^[3] outlines the transformative potential of tutoring on K-12 students, along with key principles for implementation.

Criteria for effective HIT			
1	Frequency:	Three sessions per week, or 30-50 hours a semester, at minimum.	✓
2	Group size:	One-on-one and personalized is most effective.	✓
3	Personnel:	Teachers or paraprofessionals (e.g., college students) getting training and support.	✓
4	Focus:	Effective at all grade levels, particularly for those who have fallen behind or students from disadvantaged backgrounds.	✓
5	Measurement:	Data from tutoring sessions should be used to tailor instruction for individual students.	✓
6	Relationships:	Ensuring students have a consistent tutor over time may facilitate positive relationships* and a stronger understanding of learning needs.	✓
7	Curriculum:	Tutoring that is directly aligned with classroom materials and content allows tutors to reinforce and support teacher instruction.	✓
8	Scheduling:	Tutoring conducted during the school day can result in greater learning gains.	✓
9	Delivery mode:	Both in-person and online tutoring can be effective. Online tutoring can lower costs and better meet needs with a larger tutor supply.	✓
10	Prioritization:	School-wide tutoring programs can combat negative 'extra help' stigma around those that need tutoring.	✓

^[1] Texas Education Agency. *High Impact Tutoring Toolkit*; August 2021.

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

^[3] J-PAL. *The Transformative Potential of Tutoring for Prek-12 Learning Outcomes: Lessons From Randomized Evaluations*; 2020

How to choose effective HIT programs

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

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

1

Frequency

Tutoring is most likely to be effective when delivered in high doses: three or more sessions per week in 1:1 or small group programs. Under HB 4545, tutoring must be delivered at least weekly and for a total of 30 hours in the school year.



Tutoring sessions on Paper are accessible 24/7, going beyond the minimum dosage to help provide unlimited tutoring when, where, and as much as students need.

2

Group size

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



Paper offers 1:1 tutoring that is personalized to students' academic needs. Districts are able to provide cost-effective tutoring at a predictable, [fixed rate](#).

3**Personnel**

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



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

Who are Paper's tutors?**4****Focus**

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



Paper tutors support K-12 students in all subject areas.

5**Measurement**

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



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



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

— Keith Irish
Assistant Superintendent,
Educational Services,
South San Francisco USD

6

Curriculum

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



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

7

Relationships

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



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



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

— Dr. Ryan Smith
Assistant Superintendent,
Paramount USD

8

Scheduling

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



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

9

Delivery Mode

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



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

10

Prioritization

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



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



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

— Dr. Greg Plutko
Superintendent,
Placentia-Yorba Linda USD

Leveraging federal funds for HIT

COVID-19 relief funds have provided the opportunity for districts to close learning gaps equitably and embrace innovative ways to support teaching and learning.

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

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

Districts can use local ESSA, CARES, CRRSA, and ARP funding to provide high-impact tutoring to students through Paper.

[Read full guide](#)

State guidance for HIT



NATIONAL STUDENT
SUPPORT ACCELERATOR



ANNENBERG
BROWN UNIVERSITY

The [National Student Support Accelerator](#), part of the [Annenberg Institute at Brown University](#), is devoted to translating research on tutoring into action on the ground. Launched by a diverse community of national educational experts, the Accelerator provides comprehensive resources and a tutoring database for schools and districts looking to implement HIT.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) recommends that districts find tutoring providers via the [Vetted Texas Tutor Corps](#) and the [National Student Support Accelerator](#), both of which recognize Paper.



The Texas Education Agency (TEA) outlines that one approach to creating a HIT program in your district is to partner with providers in the state's new Vetted Texas Tutor Corps (VTTC) aimed at accelerating student learning.

[Paper is TEA-approved](#) as part of the VTTC, available to assist districts in meeting the statutory requirements under HB 4545 in addition to what districts across the state already do each year—ensure that all students get the level and quality of support they need to succeed.

For most Texas districts, staffing, cost, and logistical hurdles stand in the way of meeting these requirements. Districts are partnering with Paper to provide 1:1 unlimited tutoring from trained professionals that is evidence-based, equitable, and cost-effective.

With 24/7 on-demand tutoring available in four languages across all K-12 subject areas, students always have access to help when, where, and how they need it.

Other effective strategies for recovery

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



Extended school year

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



Grade-level reading exposure

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



Partnerships with community organizations

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



Working on literacy at home

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

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

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

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

Beyond HB 4545 and the COVID-slide

The need to provide equitable high-impact tutoring to struggling students is going to continue beyond the COVID crisis. Texas has taken a massive step in encouraging adoption of this level of individualized help to struggling students under HB 4545.

But educators everywhere know that this is just the first step toward providing personalized academic support to all students who need it. After all, tutoring isn't merely a remediation tactic. As part of a holistic educational program, it can help all students reach their full potential.

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

It's also critical to recognize that the need to address pandemic learning loss fits under a much bigger need to transform education. For true progress, K-12 leaders must ensure equitable, whole-child supports as a basis for learning—embracing practices that better serve all students and their communities. Evidence has already illustrated how equal focus on social, emotional, and cognitive well-being is the way forward for districts^[1].

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



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

Sources and additional reading



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

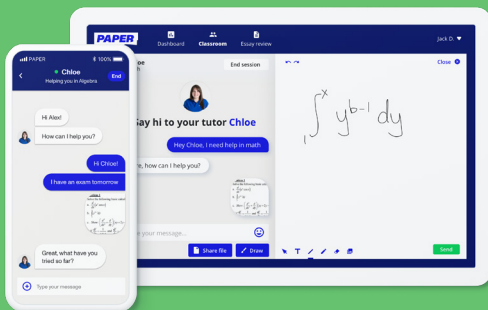
Ready to take the next step?

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

Reach out

PAPER

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



Paper helps students get ahead while reducing the workload on families and teachers. See our 24/7, unlimited high-dosage tutoring platform in action.

[Book a demo >](#)