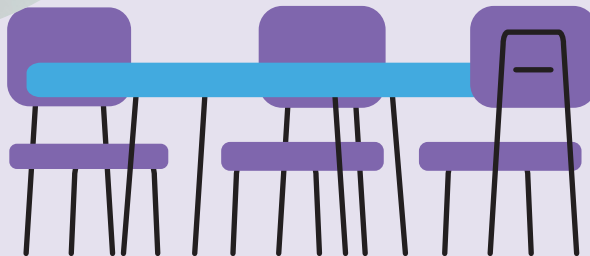


To Address Pandemic and Teacher Shortage Impacts, SFUSD Students Need Tutoring Now

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Innovate
Public Schools

SFUSD students need tutoring now

More and more students are disconnecting from school and falling further behind. SFUSD district and school leaders are running out of time to help students recover and thrive. The district is also running out of time to spend millions of dollars in recovery funds it received. **This brief outlines why tutoring is needed and effective, what the funding and policy opportunities are, and families' recommendations for implementing high-quality tutoring across the district.**

Decades of research show that tutoring is a very effective strategy for addressing learning loss and accelerating learning.^{1,2} Tutoring that happens in small groups with regular, frequent sessions can [increase learning by up to 10 months](#). It is also one of the most cost effective recovery strategies schools and districts can consider.³

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It is also clear that many families want more tutoring, especially small groups and one-on-one tutoring. Tutoring is known to accelerate learning gains and is a great resource to address learning loss and opportunity gap that has been exacerbated by the pandemic. Parent leaders are advocating for individualized academic and socio-emotional support for students. Families want to ensure low-income students of color, students with special needs, and English learners have access to tutoring resources that will help them fully recover from the pandemic. SFUSD has received over \$11 million in Expanded Learning Opportunity Program (ELO-P) funds. Families want to ensure this funding is directly available to community-based organizations providing essential after school services and tutoring.

Background: Funding and policy landscape to mitigate learning loss through tutoring

In the [Learning Loss Blog Series](#), we shared the devastating impacts of learning loss on low-income students of color and students with special needs. Now, we would like school district leaders and elected officials to focus on solutions to address learning loss and help students thrive long-term. There are many strategies to accelerate learning. Innovate

Public Schools parent leaders believe tutoring is the most important and effective right now. Tutoring supports recovery, social-emotional wellbeing, and preparing students to thrive as independent learners. However, tutoring is a resource that has not been available or accessible to all students. We believe that high-quality tutoring is an

ongoing public investment to support low-income Black and Latino students. This is an opportunity to rebuild education with strategies that work in the 21st century.

SFUSD has received over \$11 million in ELO-P funding in 2021-22. Much of that funding is intended for evidence-based recovery strategies like tutoring and expanded learning opportunities. Last year alone, SFUSD received \$39 million in Expanded Learning Opportunity Grant (ELO-G) funding, which was recovery funding from the state that districts must spend on supplemental learning strategies and supports such as tutoring, extending instructional learning time, and credit recovery. Currently, it is unclear how SFUSD has spent any of their ELO-P funds or release plans for its use. It is important that these funds reach students most impacted by the pandemic (e.g. English Learners, low-income students, and students with special needs).⁴

How parents and researchers define high-quality tutoring

Parent leaders from Innovate Public Schools in San Francisco have been organizing to expand access to tutoring for high-need students in SFUSD. In the aftermath of the pandemic, many families began searching for tutors for their children, but could not find enough quality, affordable options in their community. Hiring a private tutor is out of reach for the majority of Innovate families, making tutoring deserts a significant challenge that has been exacerbated by the pandemic. Parents are clear that they want and need tutoring for their children to help them catch up, recover, and thrive. They are also clear they do not want homework help. They want well-trained tutors to meet regularly and consistently with their children (at least 2-3 times per week) one-on-one or in small groups (no more than 4). They want tutors to use high-quality instructional materials that supplement learning that happens in the classroom and accelerates their students' progress.

The research on best practices underscores what parents are looking for in high-quality tutoring programs. Based on a review of research and best practices, the following are 5 key elements of effective tutoring:⁵

1

Consistent, trained tutors. A variety of tutors can improve student outcomes. This includes tutors from a range of backgrounds— college students, teachers, peers, and retired teachers. The most effective tutors are teachers and paraprofessionals. Paid and trained tutors are also more effective. There should be some incentive for the tutors. Tutors are skilled at relationship building, consistent, and knowledgeable about content. Tutors receive ongoing training and coaching and have clear lines of accountability.



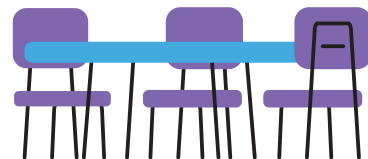
2

Tutors with socio-emotional attention and relationship building skills. Socio-emotional attention between tutors and students helps increase engagement and motivation. Training will help tutors connect with students and handle the socio-emotional needs of students from all backgrounds— especially those most impacted by the pandemic. Research suggests that strong tutor-student relationships play an important role in effective tutoring. Effective relationship-building strategies include: a) working with the same tutor over time, b) tutors intentionally spending time to build strong relationships as a part of their sessions, and c) matching students with ‘similar’ demographics as students (such as background or race).



3

Instruction is high-dosage, using high-quality materials, and in small groups (no more than 4) High dosage tutoring, which is defined as 3 or more sessions each week, is most effective. Each tutoring session can be anywhere from 10-60 minutes each day. The more tutoring sessions per week, the more effective tutoring will be.



4

Tutoring is integrated in the school program. This creates equitable access and consistency for students. Tutoring programs that take place during the school day are most effective. Specifically, tutoring is effective when it is integrated with teachers, parents, and students’ academic schedules.



5

Data is used to regularly inform instruction and program improvement. Student data is used consistently to understand student strengths, needs, and progress. Program data is used to assess effectiveness at improving student learning and make adjustments based on these data.⁶



Actions SFUSD can take now

Below are recommendations for how SFUSD can leverage recovery funds available to implement high-quality tutoring that reaches students most impacted by the pandemic. We urge the Superintendent and district staff to incorporate these into the upcoming budget and curriculum priorities.

1 Prioritize highest needs schools and students most impacted by the pandemic and leveraging existing research of grade levels that are the most important academic milestones.

During the pandemic, students got different amounts and quality of instruction. Students from high-income families with access to technology, better support at home, tutoring, and other resources have the advantage to meet important academic milestones. Students from low-income families without the same resources are more likely to struggle in meeting grade-level milestones.⁷

Academic milestones, like learning how to read, are important skills for K-12, college, and beyond. When students are meeting California grade level standards, it means they have mastered the skills needed to effectively move onto the next grade. However, when students are not at grade level, they struggle in the next grades because they have not met academic milestones from their last grade.

Research has demonstrated that critical academic milestones take place in kindergarten, first grade, third grade, and eighth grade.⁸

2 Ensure that SFUSD provides high quality tutoring and prioritizes the highest needs students.

This includes Black and Latino, low-income students, students with special needs, and English Learners. The district should use guidelines from research in designing and scaling a tutoring program (see the five elements of high quality tutoring above).

An example of this is the Long Beach Unified centrally-ran tutoring program. Long Beach Unified contracted outside agencies to provide in-person tutoring before, during and after school with high-need students. The program will focus on supporting students who are two or more years below grade level in ELA (K-2) or Mathematics (3-5), and they are using iReady data to determine which students will be prioritized for those tutoring slots. Tutors range in experience and background from college students to retired teachers, but all tutors must go through training provided by the district and each vendor. The district outlined the following in defining tutoring services:	Small group size (no more than 5 students per tutor)
	High-dosage (minimum of 3 tutoring sessions per week)
	Consistent tutors so students build strong relationships with tutors
	Content is on-grade level and focuses on acceleration rather than remediation. Tutoring is aligned to the level and pacing of the coursework in math and reading so that students are receiving supplemental instruction
	9-week tutoring cycles
	Tutors are trained by vendors and the district
	A district liaison at every school site leading and coordinating tutoring services to ensure alignment, support, and quality

3 Design and develop a clear evaluation plan to track, monitor, and evaluate the effectiveness of tutoring programs.

Data is crucial to monitoring progress and impact. First, the district should use assessments (e.g., DIBELS assessment) to target students that need tutoring the most. The district should collect formative and summative assessments, and ongoing implementation data to monitor students' progress, assess effectiveness, and iterate and make improvements along the way. Formative assessment data provides tutors with timely feedback on each student so that they can further personalize instruction and address students' needs. This data should be made publicly available by fall 2022. The district will also need to develop a central system to monitor and track the implementation of the program across the district to track enrollment, participation, and student progress.

4 Partner with local nonprofit organizations to pilot and scale a high tutoring program in San Francisco.

Black and Latino students have historically fallen into the opportunity gap in SFUSD. With more than 49,000 students in public district and charter school, more than half of the students in SFUSD are low-income.⁹ SFUSD has over 14,500 Latino students and over 3,000 Black students. More than a quarter (27.5%) are English learners.¹⁰ Before the pandemic, very few students were on grade level in English and math. For example, in 2018-19, only two in 10 African American students were on grade level in math and only 3 in 10 Latino students were on grade level in math.¹¹ The pandemic exacerbated the challenges of low-income families in SFUSD. Many lost their jobs, faced food and economic insecurities, and lost their loved ones. All of these factors have an impact on a child's education during the pandemic.

Innovate parent leaders would like to see a cross-sector regional effort to expand tutoring to low-income students across SFUSD. Local tutoring providers are committed to expanding services in the region. SFUSD has millions of dollars in recovery funds it can leverage and could play a critical role in ensuring low-income students have access to high-quality tutoring. By starting out with a pilot dedicated to providing high quality tutoring for students most impacted and scaling up as it learns, the district can ensure it is intentional in building out a long-term solution for the entire district.¹²

Will SFUSD invest recovery funding toward a high-quality tutoring program?

- ¹ Robinson, C., and Loeb, S. (2021). [High-impact tutoring: State of research and priorities for future learning](#). Retrieved from Annenberg Institute at Brown University.
- ² Nickow, A., Oreopoulos, P., and Quan, V. (2020). [The impressive effects of tutoring on prek-12 learning: A systematic review and meta-analysis of the experimental evidence](#). National Bureau of Economic Research, NBER Working Paper Series, Working Paper 27476.
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- ⁶ Innovate Public Schools (2022). [10 Elements of High Quality Tutoring](#).
- ⁷ Innovate Public Schools (2021). [Why are Black and Latino students falling further behind?](#)
- ⁸ Innovate Public Schools (2021). [Students missed critical academic milestones during school closures](#).
- ⁹ California Department of Education, student enrollment files, 2021-22
- ¹⁰ California Department of Education, student enrollment files, 2021-22
- ¹¹ Innovate Public Schools (2018). [San Francisco Unified School District Spotlight](#).
- ¹² Gewertz, C. (April 18, 2022). With millions of kids on the line, can schools make tutoring work? *Education Week*.

