

Littera

High-Dosage Tutoring Roadmap for K-12 Districts

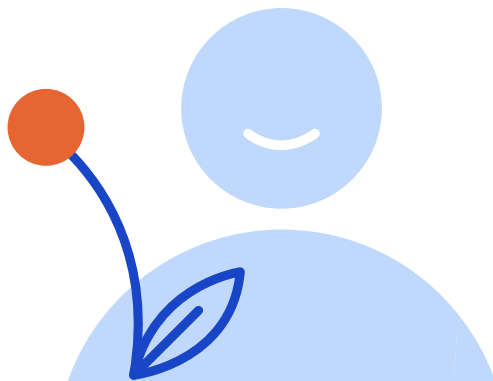
Introduction

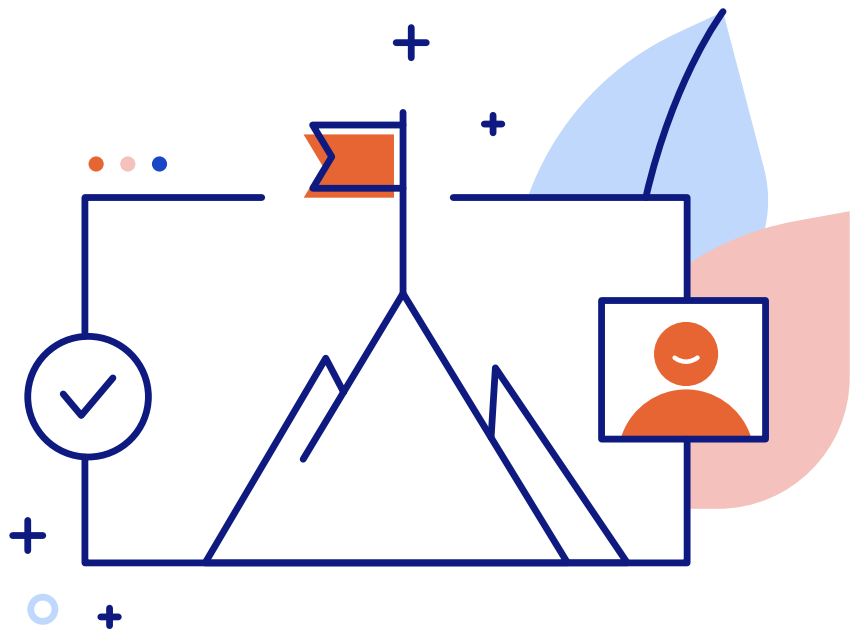
When the COVID-19 pandemic prompted a historic shutdown of US schools in the spring of 2020, national, state, and district leaders speculated that the disruption could last anywhere from a few weeks to a few months. The disruption lingered for 18 months encompassing the entire 2020-2021 school year with the devastating impact of the pandemic now a major focus in K-12 education. With the hope of summer learning opportunities in progress and better health conditions just around the corner, many district stakeholders are determining the extent to which the pandemic affected teaching and learning during this strange and stressful time.

With a vast amount of research emerging on the impact of COVID-19, it is clear that even with the best efforts of so many education professionals, the teaching and learning response to the pandemic – remote and/or hybrid learning models - resulted in unfinished learning, disrupted learning or mitigating learning loss for students in the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years. Particularly concerning is the research pointing to the more severe impacts experienced by black and brown students and students in poverty as a result of the pandemic response to teaching and learning.

Many districts are looking at tutoring and academic support programs as a strategy for accelerating learning for students. Tutoring is a well-researched and evidence-based option for students allowing districts to employ flexible implementation strategies and a student-focused approach to accelerating learning and closing learning gaps to mitigate the effects of the pandemic and improve students' learning, growth, and achievement.

This ebook will provide K-12 school districts with a roadmap to implementing their own vision of academic support programs using the Littera Academic Support Platform.





Research

Research from the [Annenberg Institute at Brown University](#) shows that tutoring programs that are well integrated with K-12 district instructional practice get the best results. The team at the Annenberg Institute even suggests that it can “foster a collective commitment” to tutoring since all students would receive tutoring regardless of academic standing.

Further research from the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) highlights the particular benefits of tutoring that is embedded as part of the school day and tutoring that is delivered by teachers and paraprofessionals. Their research shows that teacher-led tutoring is more effective because teachers are already aware of their student’s academic achievements and what students need to learn or relearn.

In an era where remote learning was mandated, we now have more research on online or virtual tutoring effectiveness. **A study from Italy** measured the effectiveness of an online tutoring program in middle schools that provide free individual tutoring to disadvantaged students during lock-down. The study showed that the online program substantially increased students’ academic performance (by 0.26 SD on average) and significantly improved their socio-emotional skills, aspirations, and psychological well-being.

The research shows that tutoring can help close learning gaps caused by the pandemic and accelerate learning in many other ways.

Operational Challenges

Tutoring has long been shown to be an effective means of accelerating student learning, but implementing a high-quality high-dosage tutoring program for a K-12 school district comes with many barriers: cost, access, and disconnection from the classroom instructional program and intended outcomes are just some.

Even before the onset of the coronavirus, tutoring programs faced many hurdles that prevent students from receiving the help and guidance they need. From logistical problems to challenges in identifying the students who need tutors the most, establishing these kinds of organized tutoring programs is much easier said than done. Districts have struggled to match students with tutors, faced difficulties when it comes to scheduling, and even failed to gather enough constructive feedback to make sure that the existing programs are even helping where help is needed.

The operational challenges that districts face mean that most districts still do not offer systemic, high-dosage tutoring to students that need academic support. In this void steps the traditional business-to-consumer tutoring services that deal directly with students' families. Private consumer-purchased tutoring is a \$50B business in the United States, which means that for those families that can afford private tutoring they are buying it en masse. This duality between rich and poor further exacerbates the digital divide, the opportunity gap, and the performance gap putting disadvantaged students even more at risk.

District Tutoring As A Strategy For Completing Unfinished Learning

One in three of all high schools in the U.S. requires academic tutoring for its students, and 8% of U.S. high schools made academic tutoring a requirement. Among those schools that made tutoring a requirement, 95% of students required tutoring to make up for learning loss that had negatively impacted their grades. Among schools with tutoring programs, 95% said they provided tutors in person. Compare this to only 6% that offered remote tutoring. Students who receive tutoring tend to have a higher overall success rate compared to those who don't.

By providing visibility and quality control of diverse tutoring programs and placing them in the hands of district personnel, districts can manage their tutoring programs and address unfinished learning opportunities. In a district tutoring model, teachers can use input from these tutoring programs to focus and improve instructional outcomes in the classroom, prevent greater learning loss, and accelerate learning.

Roadmap To Launching Your District Tutoring Program

Start with Your Instructional Strategy

Effective tutoring should be connected to district instructional programming and aligned to learning standards and outcomes. District coordinators should spearhead tutoring programs and be responsible for sourcing tutors, managing scheduling and logistics, choosing high-quality curriculum and materials, and maintaining training and ongoing feedback for tutors.

This will allow districts to tailor tutoring programs to student's needs as identified and measured by the district's core instructional program and gain crucial buy-in from the school community to support a permanent change connected to the existing instructional program, rather than a fly-by-night program disconnected from classroom instruction and lacking coherence to student achievement expectations. These programs can provide a student experience disconnected from the core instructional program and are dropped on a district from above, disappear after a year or two, and have had minimal impact on student achievement as measured by district and state assessments.

A district tutoring strategy should provide the flexibility adding the potential to enhance the district's academic program and support by allowing districts to use their own data, curriculum, and content to make sure tutoring has the greatest impact because of its relational power to the classroom expectations.



Use District Data To Identify Students

School districts don't have to guess which students would benefit from tutoring; they have all the data they need to identify students and slot them into the right academic support program. With the proliferation of digital teaching and learning tools and a generation of digital assessment data available - districts have the capacity to identify students' instructional support needs and to design and align their tutoring programs accordingly to improve performance and growth outcomes.

Any district-led tutoring program should use the district's assessment and feedback data to identify students for tutoring. More importantly, districts have the opportunity to use and analyze the data obtained from the tutoring program to determine what is working and to further identify additional strategies to meet the needs of students.

Combining data that is generated by tutoring programs - program length, tutor-student ratio, frequency, dosage - with improvement and performance data from students in those programs, tutoring can create a new class of student data feedback which has a huge potential to inform a continuous improvement cycle. This new analytical lens can lead to improved delivery of tutoring complementing the success of the overall instructional model for a district as measured by student outcomes.

Tutoring From The Core

For many schools and districts, tutoring is focused on availability, providing access to qualified tutors for secondary students looking to complete classroom assignments or to prepare for tests. Those types of programs are important to schools and districts but don't address systemic unfinished learning challenges or the needs of younger students who need acceleration of core skills in literacy and numeracy.

High-quality district tutoring programs must be designed to integrate with the people, processes, and tools your district already uses; in short tutoring should be a seamless extension of your instructional strategy.

The key to achieving the results we all want from academic support and tutoring programs is ensuring that the academic support programs are connected to a district's digital curriculum, aligned to district instructional practice, and integrated with classroom instruction.

Flexible Delivery – Meet Students Where They Are

The pandemic has illustrated how important it is for K-12 districts to be proactive in their support for student diversity. In a student-centered model, districts embrace the idea that every student is different and brings their own learning style, strengths, and challenges to the classroom. This requires a differentiated approach to teaching, learning, and supports.

Extending the concepts of personalized learning to academic support programs means having the flexibility to support diverse delivery models. Some students will require an in-person tutoring model while others will thrive in an online model.

Achieving flexibility in the delivery model of academic support programs and tutoring is especially important for younger students. Dropping a teenager into an online tutoring program is much different than prescribing early literacy tutoring for a seven or eight-year-old. The variety of students' needs drives home the point that districts should invest in a flexible platform that provides the learning environment that supports the full diversity of student needs.

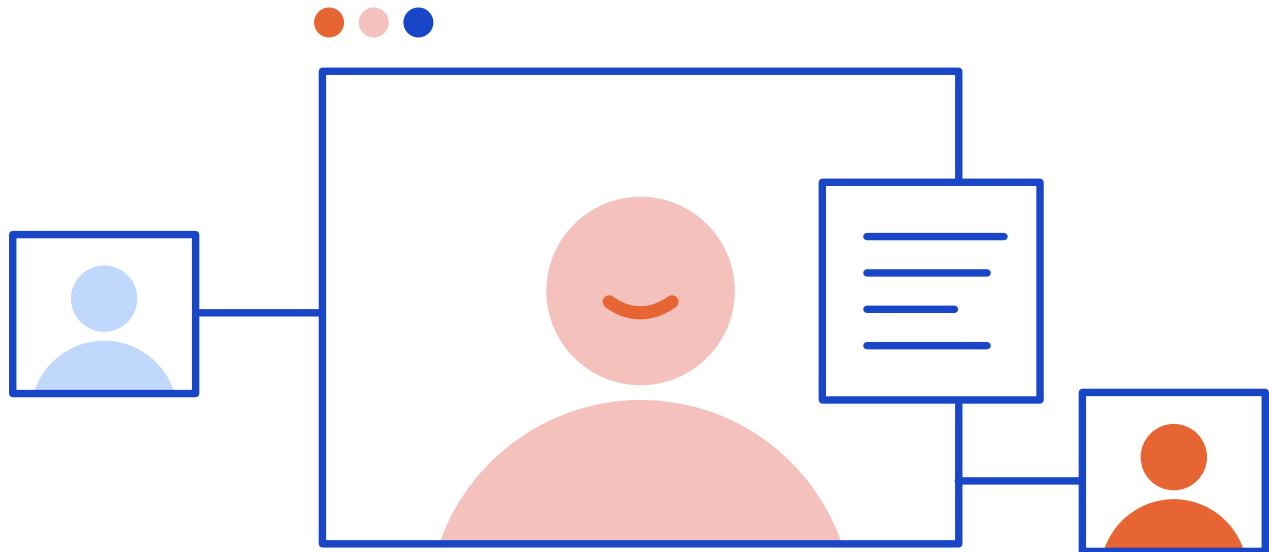
Empower Teachers With Information

The Littera platform enables classroom educators to assign tutoring sessions directly from standard classroom tools (like your district LMS). Teachers, who know students best, are empowered to define the focus of tutoring sessions and then get feedback from tutors and students. This approach enables a seamless experience for the student in terms of the focus of the tutoring session and the classroom instruction.

Track Progress With An Eye To Best Practices and Costs

The Littera platform captures feedback and data from your district tutoring programs. Tutoring data can then be ingested into district analytics tools to help measure program impact. Districts will be able to determine whether the tutoring is impacting students' learning and who may need even more supports to achieve the desired outcomes.

Closing



Why Littera

The COVID-19 epidemic highlighted and exacerbated the longstanding and systemic disparities in educational opportunities for kids along racial and socioeconomic lines. But with this incredibly strange and troubled time comes an opportunity to leap forward on supporting all students' individual academic needs.

We started Littera to enable equitable, high-quality, and cost-effective academic support for schools and districts of all sizes. We support the delivery of individual and small group sessions and leverage the data, curriculum, and technology districts already use.

District leaders already know that effective high-dosage tutoring is the best strategy for addressing unfinished learning. All that's left to do is get started — and district leaders are the ones best positioned to effect real change for their students.