

# Guidance for Building Your High-Impact Tutoring Team

Designing, launching, and scaling a high-impact tutoring program depends on having a strong team guiding and implementing the program. One reason is that high-impact tutoring (HIT) programs are complex, and many partners are needed to manage all the program components. It is not enough to manage the individual pieces. For students to get a meaningful experience that builds on what they are learning every day during core instruction, high-impact tutoring programs need to be well-integrated into the daily routines and procedures of schools and aligned and coherent with the academic strategy of the school system.

This guidance document provides considerations for building a high-performing team to guide the design and implementation of a school system’s high-impact tutoring initiative. Underpinning this guidance are a few overarching principles:

1. What students learn through high-impact tutoring needs to be aligned to what they learn during core classroom instruction. In this guidance, we will refer to the alignment between classroom instruction and high-impact tutoring as “instructional coherence.”
2. No matter how comprehensive an external partner’s support is, school systems play a significant role in making
3. high-impact tutoring programs successful and need to have a dedicated team guiding the implementation effort.
4. External partners playing a substantial role in the program should adapt to the needs of the school system being served. To do this, external partners should be a part of the Central Team guiding the high-impact tutoring efforts.

## Considerations for Team Structure

The high-impact tutoring implementation framework highlights nine major components of implementation of a strong program. A strong team structure will ensure that (1) all areas are effectively designed and implemented, and (2) that the components result in a program that provides a coherent experience for students.

### High-Impact Tutoring Implementation Design Framework

Vision & Goal Setting	Student Needs & Opportunities	Community Engagement and Sustainability
Districts define the short- and long-term goals of high- impact tutoring and how it aligns with their broader vision and strategic plan.	Districts engage schools to establish criteria to determine student selection, schedule / timing of tutoring and the length of the program. This also includes thinking through how programs will scale to reach more students over time.	Districts inventory and assess community resources—including tutor pipeline development opportunities— and perceptions of tutoring. Sustainability and community buy-in is a critical component in the beginning phases of planning.

<b>Model Design</b>	<b>Content &amp; Curriculum</b>	<b>Tutor Pipeline Development</b>
Districts engage in program design, including mode of delivery, frequency and length of sessions, and student to tutor ratio for example.	Districts make critical decisions about the academic and social emotional content utilized in tutoring sessions. Impact relies on students engaging in content that will help them grow.	Tutor pipeline development involves both recruiting and training tutors. In partnership with schools, District leaders need to develop tutor recruitment, onboarding, and ongoing professional learning plan.
<b>Site Collaboration</b>	<b>Central Team</b>	<b>Data &amp; Continuous Improvement</b>
Whether tutoring takes place in school or at other community organizations, districts must build a strong relationship with the site and prepare a site leader to successfully manage tutoring efforts and communicate with stakeholders.	Managing an effective high-impact tutoring initiative is a team effort, and there are specific roles—such as data management, tutor development, and tutoring content—that need dedicated planning. Districts should define how necessary roles will be fulfilled and how the team will coordinate with broader district efforts.	Districts should develop a plan for regular program improvement that involves assessing reach, satisfaction, and impact. This includes collecting and maintaining high-quality data on tutoring sessions and a process for how this data will inform decision making and program improvement.

Even before team members can be identified, it is recommended that a school system asks two overarching questions:

- 1. Where should the program live within the school system?*

High-impact tutoring relies on strong relationships with schools, data systems, and content alignment, to name a few components. No one department in the school system supports all those functions. Additionally, high-impact tutoring programs will require consistent support and messaging from school system leaders and district leader’s workload should be constructed in a way that allows them to prioritize high-impact tutoring.
- 2. How ready are we internally to manage all the pieces of the program?*

Since school districts will have more connection to schools; will have the ability to navigate internal operating systems; and the ability to make key instructional decisions, they will need to manage certain elements of the program directly (see next section). However, some support can be provided by external vendors. Before any decisions about identifying external partners are made, a school system should assess what components it can and cannot manage effectively. External providers should be identified, strategically, to the needs of the school system.

## Considerations for Role of the School System

School system central offices are uniquely positioned to guide and manage their own high-impact tutoring programs. Some central office departments have direct lines of communication with school leaders, while others have the authority to make final decisions about instructional content. Others still, have access and knowledge of data systems essential for continuously improving HIT initiatives.

It would be a barrier for instructional coherence for external partners to take on certain roles on a high-impact tutoring team. We recommend that school systems directly manage the following aspects of their high-impact tutoring programs, and that the district leaders occupying each role be a part of centralized high-impact tutoring team working to make this initiative a priority and a success:

- *Vision and Goal-Setting:* HIT programs should be planned and monitored as a priority improvement effort and be regularly discussed in leadership meetings. Additionally, choices of which students to tutor should be made internally.
- *Overall Program Management:* For the program to be coherent, there will need to be a leader—situated in the central office—who can navigate the operations of a school system, who can manage contracts, and who can lead collaboration across school teams and external partners.
- *Data System Alignment:* While school systems may need to work with external partners to develop a unique data system to support tutoring, these systems will still need to integrate seamlessly with existing data and reporting systems within the school system.
- *Recruit and Support Employees as Tutors:* While external partners can recruit and support tutors from outside the system, someone working in the school system will need to be responsible for coordinating how employees working within the school system will be recruited, supported and hired.
- *Curriculum Decisions:* The school system's academic leaders will need to make an informed decision about which HIT materials best align with their school system's core instructional curriculum. These leaders will also need to be available to answer questions about content alignment that arise and adjust as needed.
- *School Relationships:* Each school will undergo change-management to successfully implement HIT programs and align them to systemwide improvement efforts for a coherent student experience. This requires an intensive amount of communication and support that only someone familiar with both the program vision and school system processes can provide.

Some school systems look for more comprehensive, full-service tutoring partners. Even in these partnerships, the school system is still best positioned to ensure instructional coherence. In fact, the overall manager of the HIT program will need to be in close communication with the vendors to ensure instructional coherence and respond to stakeholder's implementation needs and concerns in real-time.

## Considerations for External Partnerships

There are certain functions of HIT programs where school systems might need an external partnership if central teams are not able to manage them directly. The following five places are areas that could make sense for external partners to support. This list is not comprehensive, but it does reflect the biggest pain points systems we partner with have experienced:

1. *Data system development and management:* HIT programs require unique data systems that not only track tutoring-specific indicators of success but also serve as a resource for stakeholders supporting, and supported by, the program. While the data systems used need to be integrated into existing data systems, programs focused on scaling are considering new data-tracking systems to meet the unique needs of HIT programs.
2. *Curriculum content:* The curriculum school systems have selected for core classes may have resources available that can be used for HIT. If they do not, additional content will be needed to complement the design be identified.
3. *Tutor Pipeline:* To meet ambitious reach goals, school systems will need to rely on multiple sources of

tutors. While school systems can recruit and manage employees serving as tutors, it can be helpful to have external partners who not only find, but also support, tutors from outside the school system.

4. *Tutor Training:* Since training is how tutors learn about their role and its expectations, effective training relies on a clear vision of what excellent tutoring looks like. It may be helpful for having external support to develop tutor training and direct support of tutors, but the school system will still need a vision of what excellent high-impact tutoring will look like, to determine how campus operations will work, and tutor’s responsibilities for data- tracking.

## Criteria for Selecting External Partners

After school systems identify where they need support, it will be important for them to select partners that meet the needs of their HIT program. When selecting partners, we recommend making sure partners meet the following criteria:

Data System Development and Management	Curriculum Content
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The partner is willing to join a central team guiding HIT programs.</li> <li>2. The system has unique identification for tutors and students that can be easily synchronized with existing district systems.</li> <li>3. The system provides a way for students, tutors, teachers, school leaders, families, and site leads to provide continuous, qualitative feedback on their experience of the HIT program.</li> <li>4. The system has a simple way for tutoring data to be logged and reported.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Content is aligned to core instructional curriculum.</li> <li>2. There is enough content to cover at least 10, but ideally 20 weeks (about 4 and a half months) HIT instruction. Content is organized in discrete pieces that already are, or could quickly be adapted, to a 30-minute lesson format.</li> <li>3. The lessons can be delivered by a non-certified tutor.</li> <li>4. Materials are accessible, both in terms of language and ability for students and tutors to</li> </ol>
Tutor Pipeline	Tutor Training
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Partner is willing to join a central team for the HIT initiative and adjust based on feedback.</li> <li>2. Partner can find enough tutors to support school system goals.</li> <li>3. Partner is willing to provide ongoing communications and support for tutors they recruited.</li> <li>4. Partner provides a staff experience that encourages tutor retention, leading to improved student outcomes.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The partner has curriculum-specific knowledge of the selected curriculum.</li> <li>2. The partner can design a high-quality training experience that works within the school system's expectations and schedule for professional learning.</li> <li>3. Partner is willing to participate in a continuous improvement process to improve upon and update training content.</li> <li>4. Partner can either directly provide ongoing training to tutors, or provide those supporting tutors, with quality training resources.</li> </ol>

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