



Accelerate's First Call to Effective Action

A Synthesis of Lessons Learned

BRIEF PREPARED BY

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Accelerate – The National Collaborative for Accelerated Learning



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The National Collaborative for Accelerated Learning



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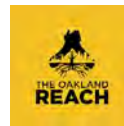
Progress Together

Acknowledgments

Accelerate would like to thank our partners at Mathematica for contributing their expertise and insights in the creation of this synthesis. We are grateful to work alongside Mathematica to share these lessons learned and appreciate their broader efforts to collect, analyze, and apply data to solve urgent challenges.

Thank you also to our grantees doing the important work of proliferating effective academic interventions and bringing evidence-based practices to scale. Special thanks to the Accelerate grantees featured in this report: ASSISTments, Ignite! Reading, The Oakland REACH, Once, OnYourMark, Reading Partners, Teach for America's Ignite Fellowship (TFA Ignite), and Tennessee (TN) SCORE.

Cover photo: TFA Ignite



About Accelerate

The National Collaborative for Accelerated Learning

Accelerate is a nonprofit organization, incubated and launched by the national nonprofit America Achieves, that seeks to embed high-impact tutoring programs into public schools now and for the long term. Launched in April 2022 with an initial fund of \$65 million, Accelerate funds and supports innovation in schools, launches high-quality research, and advances a federal and state policy agenda to support this work.

Accelerate is leading efforts to improve practice on multiple fronts, including as a lead technical assistance partner to the National Partnership for Student Success (NPSS). The NPSS is a joint partnership of more than 100 organizations, the U.S. Department of Education, AmeriCorps, and the Johns Hopkins Everyone Graduates Center formed to expand high-quality tutoring, mentoring, and other evidence-based support programs, with the goal of ensuring an additional 250,000 adults serve in these roles over the next three years.

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For more information, visit www.accelerate.us.

Table of Contents

I. The Call to Effective Action

II. Synthesis overview

III. Developing the school conditions for tutoring

A. Lessons learned about developing the school conditions for tutoring

B. Lessons learned about tutoring dosage

IV. Expanding the pipeline of tutors

A. Strategies to expand the pipeline of tutors

B. Lessons learned for recruiting and selecting tutors

C. Lessons learned for training and supporting tutors

V. Conclusion

VI. References

I

The Call to Effective Action

Accelerate awarded more than \$10 million in grants to [31 partners](#) to develop, scale, and evaluate sustainable, cost-effective tutoring models that could boost academic achievement for students.

In spring 2022, Accelerate issued a [Call to Effective Action](#) (CEA) in response to profound achievement gaps in the wake of the pandemic.

[Accelerate](#) recruited state education agencies, school districts, tutoring providers, researchers, and other organizations to support learning recovery across the country, particularly for underserved students. The grants supported innovative programs and research to address long-standing barriers to affordable, accessible, and sustainable living.

Grantees served over 300,000 students in more than 180 districts across 25 states. The CEA's focus on improving outcomes for historically underserved students is reflected in the characteristics of students served by grantees. Compared to students nationally, grantees in our portfolio, on average, supported a higher proportion of students of color, English Language Learners (ELLs), and those eligible for free and reduced-price lunch.

On average among the grantees:

- 83% of the students served were students of color¹;
- 29% of students were ELLs, nearly triple the national average of 10% ([NCES](#));
- 77% of students qualified for free or reduced-price lunch.²

In other characteristics, the students served by grantees looked similar to students nationally. For example, 16% of students across grantees were reported as having a disability, similar to the national average ([NCES 2023](#)).

Across the 2022-23 CEA portfolio, grantees offered tutoring in math or English language arts (ELA) to students in kindergarten through 12th grade—although most tutored elementary students. Literacy tutoring was more common in elementary grades, and math was more common in middle and high school grades. All but one grantee provided tutoring during the school day, and the majority of providers offered in-person tutoring. Virtual tutoring was approximately half as common, and some providers offered blended tutoring sessions.

Accelerate's CEA supported efforts to scale-up high-dosage tutoring. There is strong evidence that tutoring individual or small groups of students during the school day at least three times per week for 10 or more weeks resulting in approximately 50 or more tutoring hours is effective in improving learning outcomes ([Nickow et al. 2020](#); [Robinson and Loeb 2021](#)). Nonetheless, we have yet to see it work at scale, as this type of high-dosage tutoring is costly and logistically challenging. For example, incorporating tutoring into the school day and recruiting and retaining enough high-quality tutors can be difficult.

¹ The average percentage for each demographic category across grantees is calculated by taking the mean of these percentages from each grantee, omitting any non-available values.

² The percentage of students eligible for a free or reduced-price lunch may be affected by schools that reported all or nearly all of their students as eligible even if the precise percentage was lower.

Accelerate aimed to reduce and eliminate these types of barriers by supporting organizations that developed innovative or road-tested approaches to scale-up tutoring while maintaining its effectiveness.

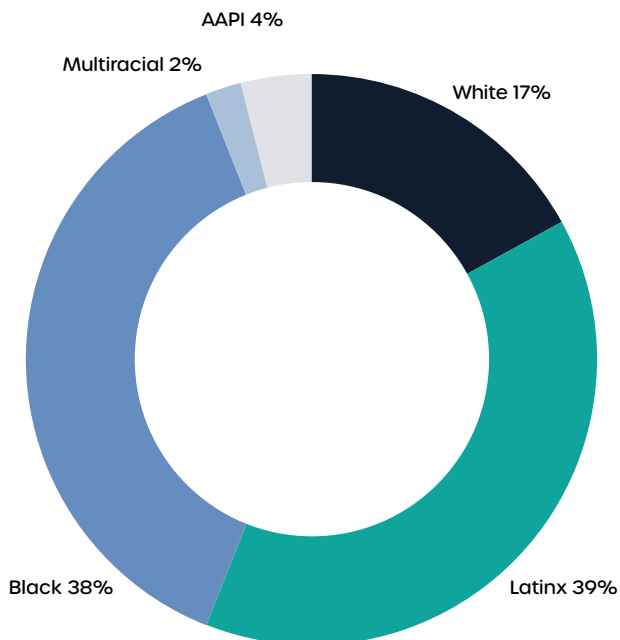
The CEA provided an opportunity to strengthen implementation and ensure historically underserved students received a sufficient amount of tutoring.

Grantees expected students to receive, on average, 3.4 sessions of tutoring per week for 43 minutes per session (totalling approximately 73 hours of tutoring for a 30-week period during the school year); across the portfolio, grantees reported that 72% of students received the intended dosage. In comparison, many tutoring interventions have struggled to deliver sessions close to the intended dosage.

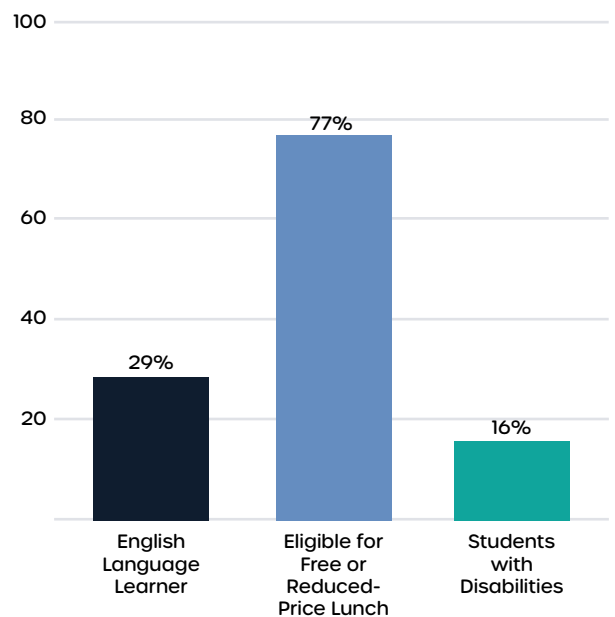
For example, a study of learning interventions during the 2021-2022 school year found that students received just 12-14 hours of math tutoring, on average, in districts that planned to offer 30-60 hours of math tutoring ([Carbonari et al](#)). In this same study, the average dosage of tutoring received by students across multiple school districts ranged from 4-10 hours ([Carbonari et al](#)).

Average Demographic Distribution at the Grantee Level

Race/Ethnicity of Students Served by Accelerate's Grantees



Characteristics of Students Served by Accelerate's Grantees



II Synthesis Overview

While there is ample evidence ([Nickow et al. 2020](#)) that high-dosage tutoring, when implemented with fidelity, results in positive student outcomes, schools and districts continue to struggle with incorporating tutoring during the school day.

This synthesis focuses on eight grantees who utilize a variety of tutoring approaches and contexts and describes lessons learned from their efforts to scale-up high-dosage tutoring with school partners across the country.

All eight of the grantees provided tutoring during the school day. Four grantees trained and supported tutors employed by districts (ASSISTments, The Oakland REACH, Once, and TN SCORE), while the other four employed their own tutors to serve in schools (Ignite! Reading, OnYourMark, Reading Partners, and TFA Ignite). Three grantees offered virtual tutoring, four offered in-person tutoring, and one offered both in-person and virtual tutoring. Six grantees focused on early literacy, and the other two focused on math or a combination of math and reading. The Table on page 6 summarizes the eight Accelerate grantees included in this brief.

Lessons learned in this synthesis are based on reports grantees submitted to Accelerate and virtual interviews with each grantee's leadership and implementation team.

In reviewing reports and interviews, we focused on strategies that multiple grantees described using and strategies that grantees adopted in response to specific challenges. We see these findings as similar to a case study. Lessons learned are suggestive and based on anecdotal reports from grantees and not a formal analysis of grant implementation or outcome data.

Finally, although student achievement and learning recovery were the ultimate focus of grantees' work, a critical first step was ensuring strong implementation of their tutoring models. Because initiatives to scale-up tutoring often face major implementation challenges ([Carbonari et al. 2022](#)), this synthesis focuses on lessons learned from grantees' efforts to scale-up their models. Grantees continue to build evidence of their impact on student achievement (initial evidence of impacts include [Loeb et al. 2023](#) and [Carbonari et al. 2022](#)).



Photo: OnYourMark

Accelerate Grantees in this Synthesis

Tutoring Provider	Subject Area	Grades	Tutoring Format	Source of Tutors	Tutoring Structure
ASSISTments	Math	3-5	In person	Paraprofessionals	Small groups (4 students) 30-minute sessions 5 days per week
Ignite! Reading	Reading	K-8	Virtual	Variety of sources	1-on-1 15-minute sessions 5 days per week
The Oakland REACH	Reading	K-2	In person	Community members	Small groups (2 to 3 students) 30-minute sessions 3 to 5 days per week
Once	Reading	Pre-K-K	In person	Existing school staff	1-on-1 15-minute sessions 5 days per week
OnYourMark	Reading	K-2	Virtual	Variety of sources	1-on-1 or small groups (2 students) 20-minute sessions 4 days per week
Reading Partners	Reading	K-4	In person/ Virtual	Community volunteers (AmeriCorps)	1-on-1 or small groups (2 to 4 students) 45-minute sessions 2 days per week
TFA Ignite	Math and Reading	K-8	Virtual	College students	1-on-1 or small groups (2 to 3 students) 30- to 60-minute sessions 3 to 4 days per week
TN SCORE	Reading	1-3	In person	Various backgrounds	Varied across districts

Note: We refer to grantees as “tutoring providers” for simplicity. TN SCORE provided technical assistance to help districts and schools design and implement tutoring aligned with a statewide tutoring initiative but did not provide tutoring services directly. The source of tutors for TN SCORE differed because each district had its own recruitment and hiring criteria. The source of tutors for Ignite! Reading and OnYourMark included gig economy workers, college students, seniors, and retired educators.

III

Developing the School Conditions for Tutoring

Efforts to expand high-dosage tutoring face many challenges. Addressing these challenges starts with ensuring schools have the conditions in place to support tutoring.

Many initiatives struggle with low student attendance or difficulty scheduling tutoring during the school day, among other issues ([Carbonari et al. 2022](#)). While district-level buy-in and support are often necessary to get through the door, the nuances of implementation are most keenly experienced at the school level. Committed school-level educators, staff, and administrators are imperative for the efficacy and sustainability of tutoring initiatives.



Photo: TFA Ignite



Photo: Reading Partners

Lessons Learned

About Developing the School Conditions for Tutoring

- Establish an early partnership with principals to secure their buy-in and adapt tutoring to each school's context.
- Establish a school-based point of contact to set up and manage tutoring logistics.
- Communicate with teachers early to develop their support for tutoring.
- Ensure schools have the space, technology, and staff needed to support tutoring.
- Ensure tutoring content meets the needs of students and complements or supports classroom instruction.
- Talk with curriculum developers about the curricular tools needed to align tutoring with classroom instruction.

Establish an early partnership with principals to secure their buy-in and adapt tutoring to each school’s context.

Principals have many competing priorities, but their support for a tutoring initiative helps ensure teachers and other school staff also prioritize tutoring. Five of the eight Accelerate grantees (Ignite! Reading, Once, OnYourMark, Reading Partners, TFA Ignite) highlighted the importance of meeting with principals first to secure their buy-in. During these initial meetings, providers established relationships with principals, outlined expectations for tutoring, and discussed how students would be selected for tutoring.

The meetings also provided an opportunity for providers to discuss how the tutoring program would be tailored to the school context and embedded within the schools’ existing goals and plans. For example, Once viewed its tutoring as more successful when principals incorporated it into their school-wide plans for student growth.

Establish a school-based point of contact to set up and manage tutoring logistics.

When principals prioritize tutoring, teachers and staff follow their lead, which is critical to managing the complex details of embedding tutoring within the school day. Six of the eight grantees (Ignite! Reading, Once, OnYourMark, Reading Partners, TFA Ignite, TN SCORE) highlighted the importance of identifying a school-based point of contact to set up and lead tutoring in each school.

These school-based contacts, including assistant principals, instructional coaches, department leads, and intervention coordinators, managed tutoring logistics like scheduling, identifying instructional space, ensuring that students arrived on time, and serving as the liaison between the school and tutoring provider. Two providers also used school-based points of contact to train tutors, oversee their work, and provide coaching to improve tutors’ instruction.

▼ Grantee Spotlight

TFA Ignite’s School-Based Trainers

TFA Ignite requires that each school provide an educator—called a Trainer—with the capacity and expertise to lead the tutoring program within the school. The Trainer is expected to be a veteran educator with strong content knowledge, relationships with other teachers, and the ability to spend at least five hours per week in the role beyond their other responsibilities (TFA Ignite compensates Trainers for their time). Trainers set the vision for tutoring in their schools, determine which students will participate, identify a space for tutoring, develop lesson plans for tutors, and observe tutors at least twice per semester to provide feedback.

Lessons Learned

About Developing the School Conditions for Tutoring

Communicate with teachers early to develop their support for tutoring.

Teachers often play a pivotal role in ensuring students attend tutoring, coordinating with tutors, and/or monitoring students' participation. Several providers noted that teachers needed to see the value of the tutoring to support students' participation.

Ignite! Reading described the importance of meeting with teachers before launching its program to explain the purpose of tutoring and to position themselves as partners with teachers. Ignite! also met monthly with teachers to discuss students' progress in improving their literacy skills. Reading Partners offered an open house to help teachers learn about their program's curriculum. Once shifted its approach to invest more time upfront in building teacher support for its tutoring process.

▼ Grantee Spotlight

Once's Focus on Teacher Buy-in

Some teachers initially were wary of Once's attempts to repurpose existing school staff for tutoring. For example, teachers wanted classroom aides to assist with classroom activities rather than tutor students; others were skeptical of whether school staff without educator credentials could provide high-quality tutoring; and others questioned the program's literacy curriculum.

In subsequent implementation, Once found that developing teacher buy-in upfront was critical for addressing these types of concerns. They communicated with teachers earlier in the implementation process and provided information about the program and its curriculum to develop their understanding and support for the approach.

Ensure schools have the space, technology, and staff needed to support tutoring.

Tutoring requires a quiet space where students can work with tutors and access technology needed for lessons. Multiple providers described challenges finding dedicated space in schools and holding tutoring sessions in classrooms, hallways, and libraries. The best space for tutoring differed across programs and school contexts.

For example, one virtual tutoring provider (TFA Ignite) found that background noise made it difficult for students to concentrate during in-classroom tutoring. Another virtual provider (Ignite! Reading) found that holding sessions in classrooms helped develop teacher buy-in because teachers could observe students participating in the tutoring.

In other cases, large groups of students participated in virtual tutoring in a library or computer lab. Virtual programs also required staff to transition students to the tutoring, log in to the platform, monitor students' participation, and troubleshoot technology issues.

Lessons Learned

About Developing the School Conditions for Tutoring

OnYourMark's School Conditions for Tutoring

OnYourMark emphasized the importance of certain school conditions for its literacy tutoring with early elementary students.

- Schools needed to identify a facilitator—such as a reading specialist or librarian—to assist students as they logged in to the tutoring platform and participated in lessons.
- When tutoring was held outside of the classroom, facilitators helped minimize the time needed for transitions by taking students to and from tutoring.
- OnYourMark also worked with schools to ensure they had the required technology and tested tutors' internet connections before hiring them.

Ensure tutoring content meets the needs of students and complements or supports classroom instruction.

When districts select tutoring programs, a key question is the extent to which the tutoring content aligns with the school curricula and supports classroom instruction.

Four of the eight Accelerate grantees (OnYourMark, Ignite! Reading, Once, Reading Partners) used their own literacy curricula to provide tutoring. These providers aligned their tutoring with the critical skills students needed to read instead of aligning with each school's reading curriculum.

Ignite! Reading and OnYourMark assessed students to identify gaps in their literacy skills and then focused tutoring on those specific skills. When the tutoring curriculum did not align with a school's approach, Ignite! Reading and Once met with teachers to introduce their methodology, explain its research base, and describe the types of reading skills it develops.

Ignite! Reading noted that its program was most successful with schools where its tutoring curriculum was aligned with the reading curriculum the school was using. Other providers aligned their content more closely to classroom instruction or the pre-requisite skills needed for upcoming lessons.

For example, TN SCORE created a [toolkit](#) on instructional coherence so districts could embed the tutoring into their curricula and their multi-tiered systems of support for students. ASSISTments created a crosswalk to align their tutoring with the school's math curriculum, and TFA Ignite's school-based Trainers developed lesson plans that aligned with teachers' classroom instruction.

Talk with curriculum developers about the tools needed to align tutoring with classroom instruction.

Two grantees sought to closely align their tutoring with content that was covered during regular classroom instruction. This approach created significant challenges because the school curricula did not provide resources that could be used easily by tutors. Their experiences suggest a need for curriculum developers or for states and districts to develop aligned curricular materials to support tutoring instruction.



Photo: Ignite! Reading

Lessons Learned

About Tutoring Dosage

- Set up a consistent schedule for tutoring and avoid scheduling sessions at the very beginning or end of the school day.
- Develop a tutoring schedule that accounts for school-year activities and interruptions.
- Protect the time of district and school staff who serve as tutors.
- Collect and track real-time data on tutoring attendance and dosage.

Set up a consistent schedule for tutoring and avoid scheduling sessions at the very beginning or end of the school day.

Integrating tutoring into the school day is a challenge given the time constraints of students, teachers, and tutors. To address this challenge, a few grantees first partnered with schools to schedule tutoring sessions and then found ways to make those times work for tutors' schedules. This approach allowed schools to adapt the schedule for their context and identify creative solutions, such as scheduling tutoring during existing intervention blocks. For example, TN SCORE helped districts and schools integrate tutoring into their multi-tiered systems of support and offered tutoring during intervention periods.

Other schools scheduled tutoring at different intervals throughout the day, which presented a challenge for part-time tutors, who generally preferred a single block of time. Multiple providers also noted that students were more likely to miss tutoring sessions at the very beginning or end of the day. So, they either avoided those times altogether or worked with staff to address timing challenges in order to improve tutoring attendance and increase tutoring dosage.

Develop a tutoring schedule that accounts for school-year activities and interruptions.

Typical school-year activities—such as field trips, assemblies, celebrations, state testing, and school closures due to inclement weather—affect the amount of tutoring students receive.

Some Accelerate grantees did not effectively account for these types of interruptions in their school year plans, which affected students' ability to participate in a sufficient number of tutoring sessions. Other grantees met with schools about scheduling and incorporated school-year activities in their planning.

Ignite! Reading asked school leaders to avoid scheduling celebrations and other events during tutoring time, when possible. Another solution includes planning for a higher number of sessions to ensure students receive sufficient dosage in the event of canceled or missed sessions.

Protect the time of district and school staff who serve as tutors.

As schools continue to struggle with staff shortages exacerbated by the pandemic, they often rely on school staff, including tutors, to fill a variety of roles within the school. This can lead to tutors being pulled away from tutoring for other tasks—especially when tutors are school or district employees (rather than employees of the tutoring provider).

Once, which worked with schools to repurpose school staff to serve as tutors, found that teachers were hesitant to give up the time of these staff. ASSISTments described how tutors were sometimes pulled away from their tutoring role to help address other needs.

To address this issue, grantees worked to build teacher buy-in to ensure teachers understood the benefits of tutoring and prioritizing staff time for tutoring. Once found that assigning each tutor a caseload of at least 10 students protected tutoring time. This level of caseload signaled tutoring as a central component of the paraprofessionals' workload and helped reduce the likelihood that they would be pulled into other roles at the school.

Collect and track real-time data on tutoring attendance and dosage.

Detailed attendance and dosage data allow providers to identify students who are not receiving enough tutoring, determine the cause, and develop strategies in response.

Reading Partners developed a system for tracking real-time tutoring attendance and used those data points to determine that students primarily missed tutoring sessions because of school absences, school day interruptions, tutor availability, and the time of day when tutoring occurred.

Providers that used online tutoring platforms could collect real-time attendance and participation data. Once used its online system to track the length of tutoring sessions, the amount of content covered in each session, and tutors' progress with each student.

While tutoring providers have little control over students' school attendance, their ability to document the challenge allows them to communicate any concerns with schools quickly. They can also proactively address challenges within their control, such as tutor attendance. For example, after OnYourMark noticed that tutor absences reduced tutoring dosage, it created a system to efficiently staff those tutoring slots with substitute tutors interested in leading extra sessions.



Photo: The Oakland REACH

Lessons Learned
About Tutoring Dosage

IV

Expanding the Pipeline of Tutors

The infusion of COVID relief funding in the wake of the pandemic led to a substantial investment in tutoring by school districts across the country ([FutureEd 2023](#)).

In response to the increased demand for tutoring, the U.S. Department of Education's National Partnership for Student Success sought to recruit an additional 250,000 tutors. Meeting this increased demand requires creative approaches to expanding the pipeline of tutors. Moreover, evidence points to the importance of providing tutoring in small groups of students ([Nickow et al. 2020](#)). To achieve these low tutor-student ratios, it is imperative to recruit and select sufficient tutors.

Several providers in Accelerate's first Call to Effective Action took a creative approach to source tutors. Some hired tutors themselves—often providing services virtually to expand the pool of potential tutors—while others helped districts recruit, train, and support tutors as district employees.

Although prior research has focused on four types of tutors—teachers, paraprofessionals, non-professionals, and parents ([Nickow et al. 2020](#))—Accelerate's grantees used strategies that blended and expanded these categories. Some trained parents and caregivers to serve as tutors in schools, which had the benefit of ensuring the tutors reflected the student population. Others recruited, trained, and paid gig economy workers to serve as virtual tutors. In general, well-structured tutoring models enabled a [wide range of people](#) to succeed as tutors, even those without a formal background in education. This section describes the strategies providers used to expand the pipeline of tutors and the lessons learned from efforts to recruit, select, train, and support them.



Photo: TFA Ignite

Strategies

To Expand the Pipeline of Tutors

- ▶ Leverage community-based organizations to recruit tutors locally.
- ▶ Repurpose existing school staff to serve as in-person tutors.
- ▶ Recruit college students considering a teaching career as tutors.
- ▶ Offer part-time, paid, flexible roles to recruit virtual tutors from the gig economy.



Photo: The Oakland REACH

Leverage community-based organizations to recruit tutors locally.

The Oakland REACH, a community-based organization, relied on its strong local networks and deep roots in Oakland to recruit community members as tutors.

They visited schools during drop-off and pick-up times to recruit parents and caregivers as tutors and found additional support at local family centers, churches, housing authorities, daycares, libraries, and social service agencies.

Rather than hiring tutors, The Oakland REACH guided interested community members through Oakland Unified School District's hiring process to become district tutors through a fellowship program.

Repurpose existing school staff to serve as in-person tutors.

Once partnered with principals to help them repurpose existing school staff as tutors. They worked with principals to look critically at the range of staff in the school—including both instructional and non-instructional staff—to determine if their time could be used more productively as tutors.

Included in Once's considerations were lunch monitors, paraprofessionals, assistant principals, and any staff member with potential flexibility in their schedules to serve as tutors. This approach requires principals and schools to be open-minded about how they utilize staff and prioritize staff time.

Recruit college students considering a teaching career as tutors.

Novice tutors, such as college students, can develop relationships with students and follow specific lesson plans to produce strong results. For example, TFA Ignite recruited college students using its existing network of recruiters who typically hire students into the Teach for America (TFA) corps.

TFA Ignite held recruitment events on college campuses and used social media to reach potentially interested college students. During recruitment events, former TFA Ignite tutors shared how tutoring served as a valuable onboarding experience for their teaching careers.

TFA Ignite selected tutors using the same competencies and rigor as its teaching corps, but expanded the criteria to account for the fact that tutors are potentially earlier in their college careers³ and are most effective when working with small groups of students.

Offer part-time, paid, flexible roles to recruit virtual tutors from the gig economy.

Two of Accelerate's grantees—Ignite! Reading and OnYourMark—relied heavily on individuals in the gig economy who were seeking part-time, flexible work. By offering virtual tutoring positions with flexible hours, these providers accessed a broader pool of potential tutors from a variety of locations and backgrounds.

Both providers reported that they recruited many candidates through online job sites such as LinkedIn and Indeed and through word-of-mouth. Ignite! Reading received over 10,000 applicants for its 600 tutoring slots, allowing them to be more selective in the hiring process. Both providers also found that many applicants had prior experience as virtual tutors.

³ TFA typically recruits college juniors and seniors for its teaching corps.

Lessons Learned

For Recruiting and Selecting Tutors

- ▶ Expand tutor recruitment efforts through partnerships.
- ▶ Recruit and select tutors who are interested in the longer-term goals of tutoring.
- ▶ Consider efficient ways to assess large pools of tutor applicants.
- ▶ Be intentional about recruiting racially and ethnically diverse tutors.



Photo: Ignite! Reading

Expand tutor recruitment efforts through partnerships.

Partnerships between tutoring providers and districts can maximize opportunities to access a larger pool of tutors.

The Oakland REACH partners with Oakland Unified School District to identify community members interested in tutoring, selects applicants who are a good fit, supports them through the district's hiring process, and then prepares them for tutoring. The organization noted the importance of collaborating with the district to help community members navigate the district's hiring process, which can be challenging with multiple steps and requirements.

Reading Partners works with districts to obtain dedicated space in schools for its tutoring, recruits and trains community volunteers to serve as tutors and AmeriCorps Fellows to serve as tutoring leaders, and oversees tutoring in schools. District partners gain access to Reading Partners' extensive recruiting network, including local businesses and community organizations.

Recruit and select tutors who are invested in the longer-term goals of tutoring.

Districts and states seeking to recruit tutors must fine-tune their materials to resonate with their target audiences. A few Accelerate grantees described how their approach to recruiting and selecting tutors focused on "the why" behind their tutoring efforts.

The Oakland REACH emphasized the number of kids struggling to read in Oakland and the opportunity for community members to be part of the solution by serving as tutors.

The two providers that recruited tutors from the gig economy selected candidates who were passionate about education and committed to supporting students. For example, Ignite! Reading asked applicants why they cared about tutoring and then prioritized applicants who were aligned with the organization's mission of teaching kids to read.

Consider efficient ways to assess larger pools of tutor applicants.

As tutoring initiatives scale up and seek to hire more tutors, efficient approaches are needed to assess and select tutors.

The two grantees that recruited broadly from the pool of gig economy workers used video-recorded and mock lessons to efficiently select tutors. After an initial application review, Ignite! asked a subset of applicants to video record themselves responding to a short set of questions (a "one-way interview") and leading a short teaching demonstration. Similarly, OnYourMark required a video-recorded interview and mock lesson to identify applicants who would be able to connect with students virtually (for its virtual tutoring).

Be intentional about recruiting racially and ethnically diverse tutors.

Given growing evidence that students of color benefit from being taught by teachers of color, tutoring initiatives must consider the racial and ethnic diversity of tutors ([Egalite et al. 2015](#); [Lindsay and Hart 2017](#); [Bartanen and Grissom 2019](#)).

The Oakland REACH addressed this challenge by recruiting community members who were parents, caregivers, or neighbors of students in the schools being served. Just as districts have struggled to diversify the teacher workforce, one Accelerate grantee described challenges in recruiting a diverse corps of tutors. The provider's approach of posting on job websites resulted in a pool of applicants who lacked sufficient diversity. Going forward, the provider plans to hire a director of tutor recruitment and seeks to build partnerships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Lessons Learned

For Recruiting and Selecting Tutors

Lessons Learned

For Training and Supporting Tutors

- ▶ Provide tutors who have limited teaching experience with a scripted curriculum.
- ▶ Strengthen tutors' instruction by providing individualized coaching and feedback.
- ▶ Address issues of tutor attendance early in training.



Photo: The Oakland REACH

Provide tutors who have limited teaching experience with a scripted curriculum.

Literacy tutoring provides states and districts an opportunity to expand access to instruction based on the science of reading.

Multiple Accelerate grantees hired tutors without prior teaching experience to provide early literacy tutoring based on scripted lessons. These curricula focused on specific literacy skills needed in kindergarten through grade 2 and were often linked to formal literacy assessments that allowed tutors to target specific skills with individual students. In most cases, these curricula were used for one-on-one tutoring to ensure tutors without teaching experience did not need to manage groups of students.

Strengthen tutors' instruction by providing individualized coaching and feedback.

There is evidence that individualized coaching and ongoing instructional feedback can improve teachers' instruction and student achievement ([Kraft et al. 2018](#), [Steinberg and Sartain 2015](#)).

Several of Accelerate's grantees provided individualized coaching—either weekly or biweekly—to support tutors. Two of Accelerate's virtual tutoring providers—Once and OnYourMark—had coaches give feedback to tutors based on video-recorded tutoring sessions.

In some cases, the providers partnered with literacy coaches who supported tutors as they worked through the literacy curriculum. OnYourMark assigned each tutor a coach who modeled instructional practices and set goals for tutor development during weekly coaching sessions. Once's coaches provided opportunities for tutors to practice using scripted tutoring curriculum and previewed upcoming lessons with tutors.

Address issues of tutor attendance early in training.

Multiple Accelerate grantees described tutor attendance as a challenge for achieving a high dosage of tutoring for students. As a result, these grantees sought to address attendance issues during their initial training sessions to prepare tutors.

The Oakland REACH required that new tutors complete an initial fellowship to learn how to serve as a tutor. New tutors had to meet an attendance requirement to complete the fellowship and begin tutoring.

OnYourMark added a staff member to help fill in for absent tutors, allowed tutors to pick up shifts for others who could not attend their sessions, and quickly followed up with tutors who missed a session.

TFA Ignite developed a system to track tutor attendance and created policies to incentivize tutors to attend their sessions.

V

Conclusion

The organizations awarded grants through Accelerate’s first Call to Effective Action offer valuable insights as states and districts expand access to tutoring for students facing the most significant academic declines in the wake of the pandemic.

The lessons in this synthesis highlight implementation hurdles known to arise when scaling up tutoring and offer potential strategies for addressing them.

Scaling tutoring requires a careful balance between developing programs for broad implementation and adapting them to local contexts. The featured organizations illustrate the challenges of embedding tutoring within the school day and underscore the value of sharing lessons learned from these efforts.

Accelerate is committed to developing a pool of proven tutoring models that significantly improve academic outcomes, particularly for historically underserved students who are not yet on grade level. Over time, we aim to build a robust pool of tutoring models that:

1. generate positive effects in rigorous research;
2. can be implemented with fidelity; and
3. are affordable.

Our vision is that school systems can easily identify the optimal models for the communities they serve; that these research-backed models innovate with an ongoing commitment to ensuring positive effects on student achievement; and that the full education ecosystem—including philanthropy, policy, and the private sector—collaborate to support the scale and adoption of the most effective tutoring models.



Photo: Reading Partners

VI

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