Tutoring Landscape Assessment

Prepared by ASSET Inc.

Summary

In January 2022, ASSET entered the new year with big aspirations. Funding from the Richard King Mellon Foundation, The Heinz Endowments and The Pittsburgh Foundation fueled ASSET's journey with testing its pre-service educator tutoring model, while at the same time embracing a leadership role with the Pittsburgh Learning Collaborative (PLC), a group of 70+ organizations which came together to figure out actionable solutions in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

One topic that quickly rose to the top was tutoring. With students out of school and experiencing learning disruptions for more than a year, the demand for low cost or no cost tutoring appeared much greater than the available supply of tutors. For those from lower socio-economic status, the impact was felt the hardest.

To gain better insights and establish a dialogue across like-minded organizations, ASSET led the Tutoring Workstream of the PLC while also contributing to the available tutoring corps.

Along the way, ASSET learned some hard truths and busted some myths. This landscape assessment will outline those discoveries and suggest ideas for a path forward.

Starting with a common definition

What is tutoring?

Like many things, people have different ideas about what tutoring is and, more emphatically, what it is not. To set the stage for the work, ASSET tapped into the National Student Support Accelerator (NSSA) out of the Annenberg Institute at Brown University, which focuses on high-impact tutoring. This definition grounded the work of the tutoring workstream, providing a common understanding of what high-impact tutoring looks like.
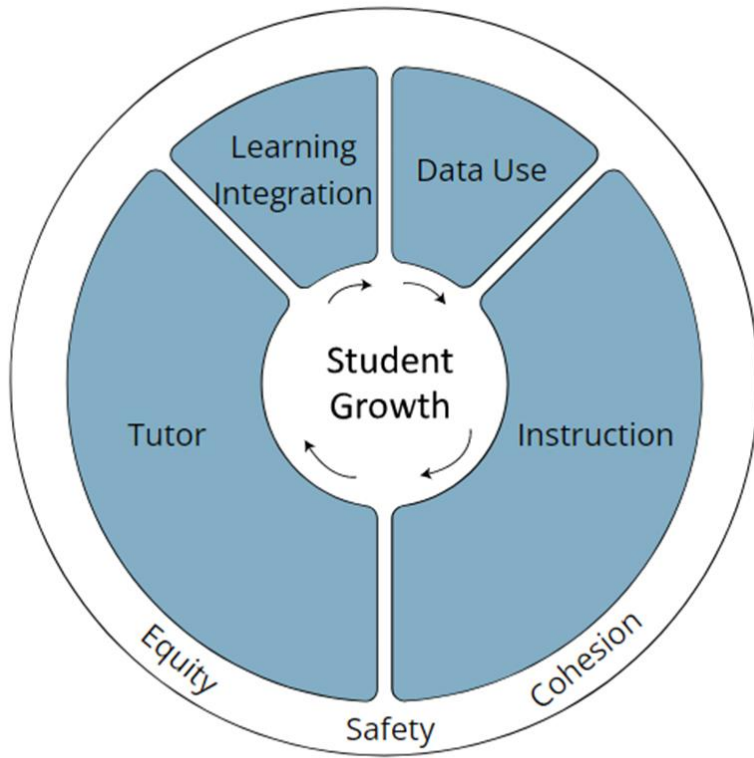
What is High-Impact Tutoring?

- **One-on-one or small group**
- **Goal driven**
- **Leads to substantial learning gains**
- **Supplements classroom experiences**
- **Responds to individual needs**
- **Complements existing curriculum**
- **Accelerates learning through:**
  - substantial time each week (3x/week)
  - a consistent tutor who is supported by ongoing oversight and coaching
  - sustained and strong relationships between students and tutors
  - close monitoring of student knowledge and skills
  - high-quality materials

From the National Student Support Accelerator, a program of the Annenberg Institute at Brown University

PLC Tutoring Workstream
Coordinated Community Collaboration

VISION: Every student who needs a tutor has access to one (PLC priority)

GOAL: Build a tutoring corps of 200 tutors, connect schools and families

Workstream Culture:

- Collaborative dialogue in a safe space

- Fact finding

- Trust and consensus building

- Sharing resources

- Problem solving

- Optimizing existing programming

- Celebrating micro wins

Tutoring Workstream Outputs

- ✓ **Monthly meetings**, which included group share, guest speakers, give/get, resource sharing, national perspective
- ✓ Identified short-term **needs**, long-term **wants**, and **roadblocks**
- ✓ Developed a "**Continuum of Support**" which illustrated the range of support services OSTs were providing
- ✓ A **resource map** to showcase the resources and stakeholders
- ✓ Curated list of **free tutoring resources**
- ✓ **Educator and parent feedback** on tutoring
- ✓ Reflections on **wins**, **lessons** and **ongoing needs**
- ✓ **Recommendations**

Tutoring Workstream Needs / Wants

Short-Term Needs

- Tutors
- Turnkey Resources
- Collaboration across Orgs
- Relationships & Networking
- Trends / Data
- Student-Focused Programming

Long-Term Wants

- Recruitment & Staffing
- Multi-Lingual Resources
- Communication & Collaboration with PPS
- Asset Mapping
- Accessibility
- Quality Programming

Roadblocks for OST Tutoring

STAFFING TRAINING RECRUITING SCHEDULING RESOURCES TECH

Tutoring Workstream Continuum of Support

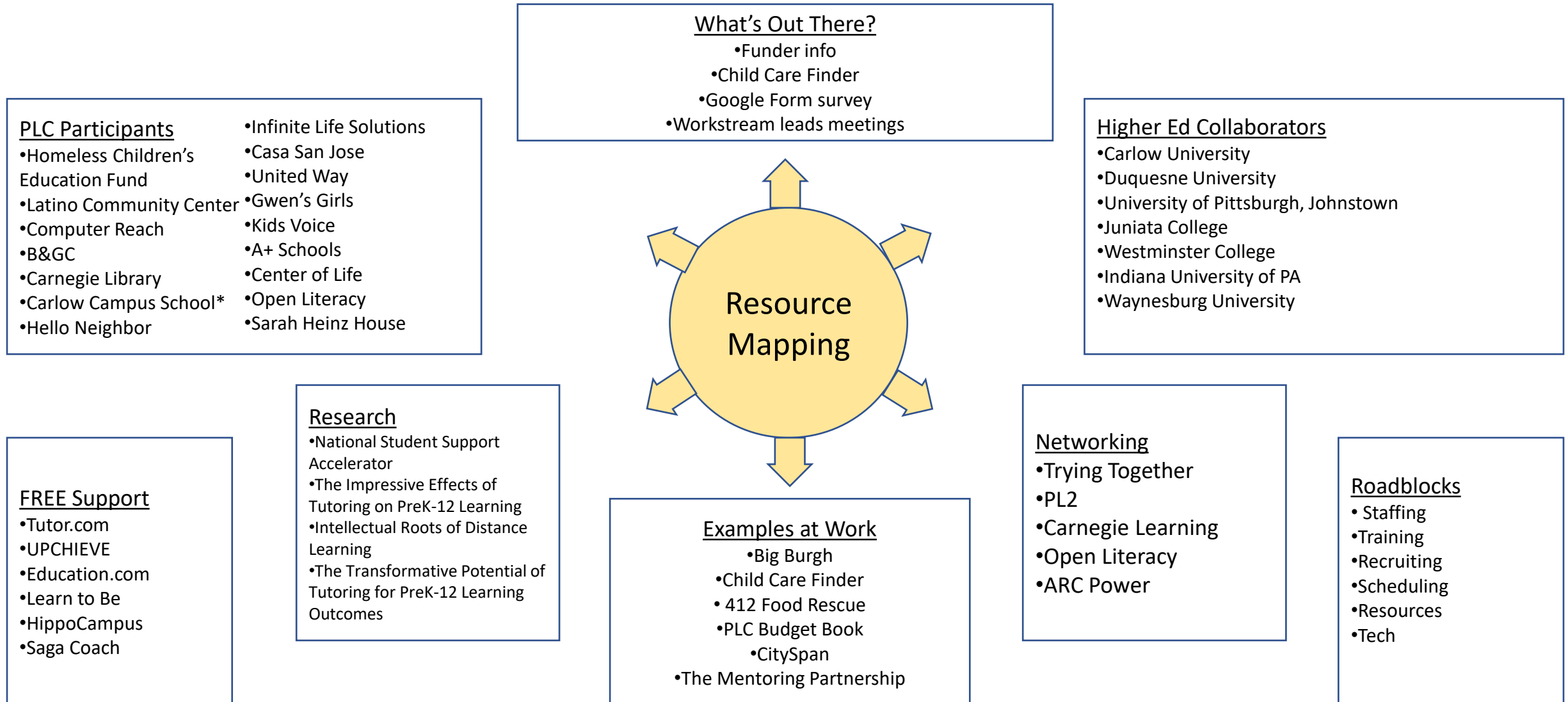Phone A Friend → Homework Help → Enrichment → Mentoring → High Impact Tutoring

Meet organizations where they are. Provide supports to implement elements of high-impact tutoring

The tutoring workstream created a snapshot of the engagement and resources uncovered.

What's Out There?
•Funder info
•Child Care Finder
•Google Form survey
•Workstream leads meetings

PLC Participants
•Homeless Children's Education Fund
•Latino Community Center
•Computer Reach
•B&GC
•Carnegie Library
•Carlow Campus School*
•Hello Neighbor
•Infinite Life Solutions
•Casa San Jose
•United Way
•Gwen's Girls
•Kids Voice
•A+ Schools
•Center of Life
•Open Literacy
•Sarah Heinz House

Higher Ed Collaborators
•Carlow University
•Duquesne University
•University of Pittsburgh, Johnstown
•Juniata College
•Westminster College
•Indiana University of PA
•Waynesburg University

Resource Mapping

FREE Support
•Tutor.com
•UPCHIEVE
•Education.com
•Learn to Be
•HippoCampus
•Saga Coach

Research
•National Student Support Accelerator
•The Impressive Effects of Tutoring on PreK-12 Learning
•Intellectual Roots of Distance Learning
•The Transformative Potential of Tutoring for PreK-12 Learning Outcomes

Examples at Work
•Big Burgh
•Child Care Finder
• 412 Food Rescue
•PLC Budget Book
•CitySpan
•The Mentoring Partnership

Networking
•Trying Together
•PL2
•Carnegie Learning
•Open Literacy
•ARC Power

Roadblocks
• Staffing
•Training
•Recruiting
•Scheduling
•Resources
•Tech

Free Tutoring Resources

Throughout 2022, ASSET researched, curated and shared free tutoring resources for members of the Tutoring Workstream. This proved helpful for those organizations looking for a variety of options to serve their constituents.

Tutor.com Learning Suite - Authentication

- Live tutoring online via chat or voice
- Available through Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh with a library card
- Noon-Midnight
- Other study and test prep resources available
- Submit a paper for review (12-hour turnaround)

Homework & Test Prep Help in Pittsburgh - Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh

- Free homework help and test prep resources with a library card

Browse Educational Resources | Education.com

- Free worksheets, games, activities with creation of account
- Search by grade, subject, topic or standard
- Guided lessons available with upgrade (currently 50% off at $60/year)

National Student Support Accelerator

- Tutoring Toolkit and Database with comprehensive resources for those interested in implementing high-impact tutoring.

Free Online Tutoring and College Counseling (upchieve.org)

- Free tutoring and college counseling with an account set up
- Connect with an academic coach via chat/whiteboard in 5-10 minutes

Free Online Tutoring - Learn To Be

- Available 9am-9pm PST, no appointment necessary
- Create a free account to access online sessions utilizing a microphone and whiteboard
- Students work with the same trusted tutor for as long as it takes to achieve their goals
- Partnering opportunities

HippoCampus - Homework and Study Help - Free help with your algebra, biology, environmental science, American government, US history, physics and religion homework

- Watch tutorial videos for a variety of subjects, including algebra, American government, psychology and history
- Best suited for high school students
- Website requires Adobe Flash Player to view the videos

Saga Education – Saga Coach for Tutors

- Free online training for tutors

For additional perspective, ASSET surveyed 57 educators, including 8 who provided in-depth phone interviews. Most educators had 10+ years of experience and work at public and charter schools in the Pittsburgh area.

What are educators saying about tutoring?

Educators believe tutoring serves many purposes: extra learning support, help with learning, time to practice, chance to build confidence.

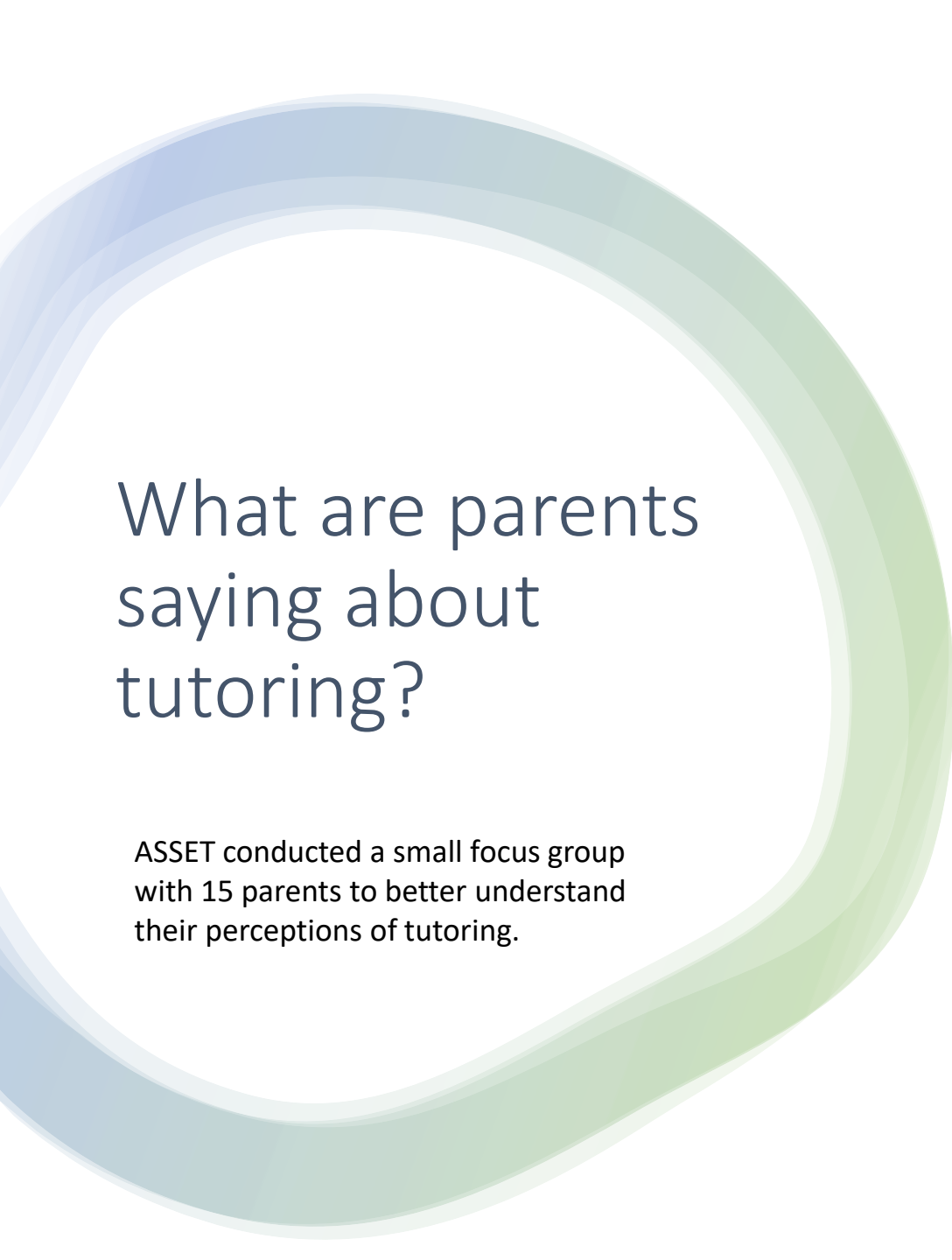Approximately 72% of educators surveyed believe tutoring has moderate to high impact.

Yet, less than 20% are referring students for tutoring on a frequent basis.

What are educators saying about tutoring?

Tutoring	Enrichment
Negative, deficit based	Positive, strength based
Remediation of topics already taught	Concepts to further learning
For students who are "behind" and need more support	For students who are "smart" and need extra challenges
Students need extra help on things they don't know and should know	Students are already successful and are moving on and extending and deepening their learning

words matter

"I think tutoring should not be used for even struggling students. Enrichment is better received and we as educators should enrich all learners."
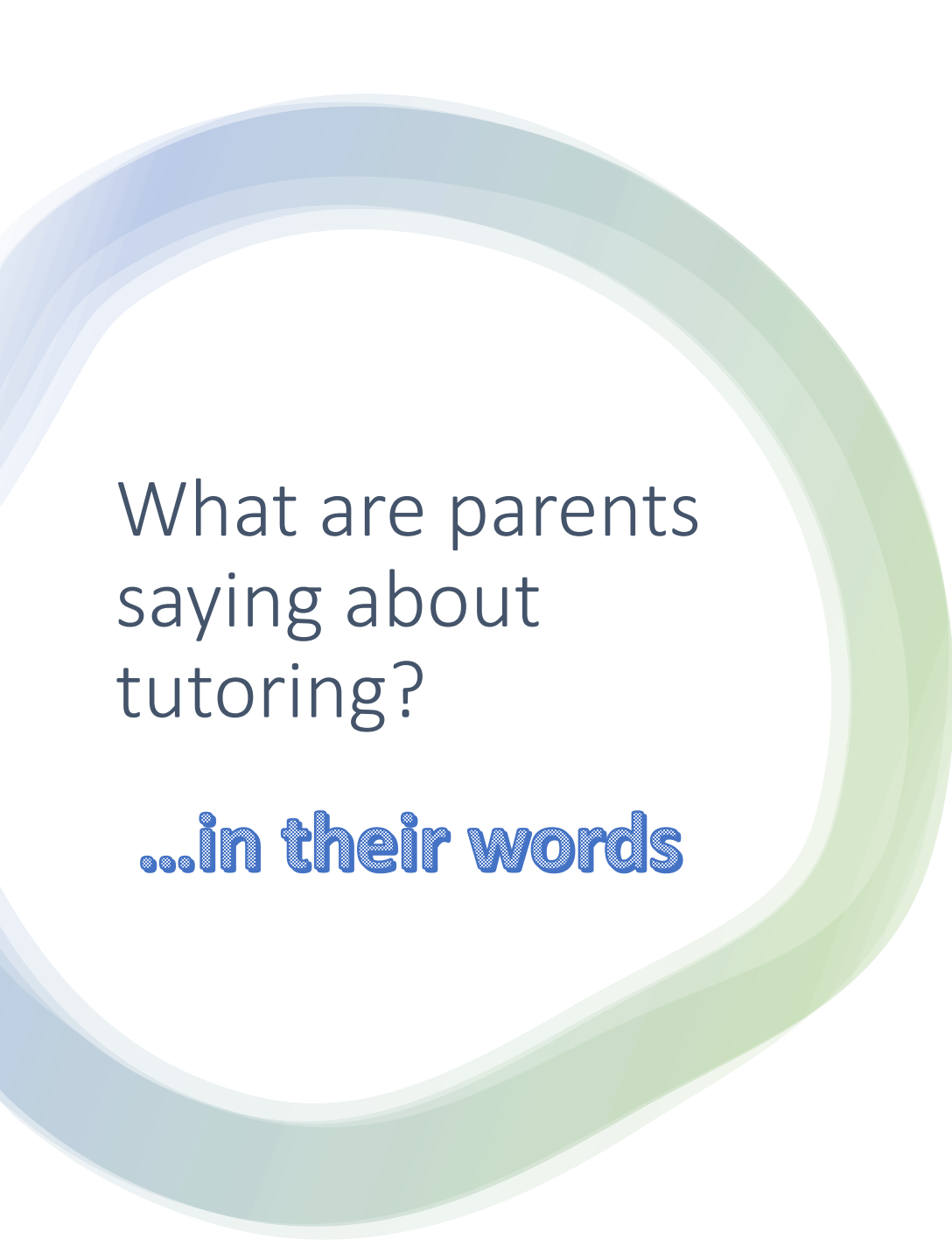
What are parents saying about tutoring?

ASSET conducted a small focus group with 15 parents to better understand their perceptions of tutoring.

Parents see tutoring as a time to practice, to receive extra learning support, to do homework, and study.

But most parents -- 80% -- believe tutoring is for students with failing grades.

Parents are receiving information about tutoring in a variety of ways, most notably from their school, as well as from family and friends in the community, and social media.

What are parents saying about tutoring?

...in their words

"Tutoring is more intimate and can allow to have more of a focus on the child."

"The inconsistency in the classroom with teacher turn-over and administration change doesn't allow for children to build the relationships that are needed for success."

"Tutoring is an opportunity for the child to receive one on one attention and also to allow the child a safe space to talk about any areas they need support in."

"I think all students can benefit from tutoring support even if they are not failing. Tutoring is structured much different now and has a different stigma around. The lack of access to tutors is an issue for receiving support."

"My son is great in math wasn't being challenged enough and his behavior started to be affected because of it. If he would have had a tutor to challenge him in areas that he needs support in and also areas he thrives in it would propel him to the next level."

The National Landscape

While the Tutoring Workstream was assessing the landscape in Pittsburgh, the national story echoed a similar narrative.

- U.S. Secretary of Education calling for 90 minutes of tutoring / week

- $122B ARPA funds distributed to states

- Only 1/3 of districts spending funding on tutoring

- Urging districts to allocate more funds to expand tutoring

T74

Ed Secretary Cardona Touts More Tutoring, Extracurricular Activities as Part of Vision for Schools to 'Level Up' After Two Years of Pandemic Disruption

January 27, 2022

By **LINDA JACOBSON**

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TALKING POINTS

U.S. Education Secretary Miguel Cardona delivered remarks Thursday at the department's Lyndon Baines Johnson

National Networks and Initiatives

Additionally, national organizations came into the picture, acknowledging that high-impact tutoring is not easy – and local operations can contribute to national solutions.

National Partnership for Student Success

- A public-private partnership between the White House – led by the Department of Education and AmeriCorps – and leading national education and youth-serving organizations
- A nationwide three-year effort that brings together experienced organizations to recruit, screen, train, support, and engage an additional 250,000 caring adults in roles serving as tutors, mentors, student success coaches, wraparound service coordinators, and post-secondary transition coaches
- Organizations can apply to be Supporting Champions (ASSET was selected)

Accelerate

- A nonprofit led by a consortium of partners and funders seeking to design, launch, improve, and scale high-impact tutoring efforts in the United States, and to build a community committed to impact and shaping the evidence base for tutoring
- Launched in 2022 to ensure historically underserved students have free and regular access to high-impact tutoring to accelerate student outcomes and well-being
- The initiative will fund and support innovation in schools, as well as support district/state education leaders, nonprofits, and other partners with technical assistance

NPSS Hub

The **NPSS Hub** at the Johns Hopkins Everyone Graduates Center is a cross-sector connector focused on helping national, state, and local efforts that bring evidence-based student supports where they're needed most. The Hub ties together school districts, state and local education agencies and collaboratives, federal agencies, philanthropy, and national and community organizations. It supports increasing access to and implementation of student support programs and promotes the identification and strengthening of community-based hubs. It supports programs' effectiveness by providing technical assistance and conducting research.

https://www.partnershipstudentsuccess.org/about/

Accelerate: Call to Effective Action

In April 2022, Accelerate launched a Call to Effective Action. More than 200 organizations across the country submitted proposals, with 31 organizations receiving financial support. The 2023 Call to Effective Action can be viewed at: accelerate.us

WINS, LESSONS AND NEEDS

At the end of 2022, the workstream met to celebrate successes, reflect on lessons learned, and identify ongoing needs.

WINS

- Individual student successes
- Re-building a program
- Increasing partnerships in the community
- Dispositions of tutors and students
- Students requesting specific tutors
- Seeing skills build over time
- Relationships building between student and tutor
- More connections with students and parents
- Having a forum to collaborate and share resources

LESSONS

- Turnover leads to pauses in programming

- Hiring is slow and difficult

- Programs are slow growing and require a lot of relationship building to meet people where they are

- Having a dedicated OST staff person on site for tutoring is key but not always possible

- For virtual tutoring, headsets and document cameras enhanced sessions

- Volunteer recruitment and retention is hard

- It's hard to maintain a stable tutoring schedule with unpredictable student circumstances

- Managing technology is a constant challenge

- It's difficult to find bilingual tutors

- Paying tutors helps, but funding is not always available

NEEDS

- General operating funding so organizations can sustain while trying to optimize tutoring programming

- Increased connection with schools

- Better ways to bridge communication between parents, school personnel

- Ways to access student data

- Help with keeping information up to date and accessible

- Ongoing relationship management

- Locating research to support programming decisions

- More parent/caregiver voices

Hard Truths

The Tutoring Workstream uncovered consistent themes that we have documented as our *hard truths* and *myths*

Homework help is expected; tutoring is wanted – there is middle ground

Scheduling is labor intensive and complex

Tech and wifi a continuous problem

Staffing is thin everywhere; turnover is constant

Tutor – tutee relationship building is key to success

Keeping program information up to date in a central hub is a heavy lift no one has time for – and things change constantly!

Important to build understanding of what a tutoring learning environment can be (not always a deficit)

Communication is critical for collaboration, but not everyone wants to "play in the sandbox"

Tutors who are compensated are more reliable and stick around longer

In-school tutoring is hard for most nonprofits to support, but there is value and opportunity in out of school spaces

Myths Busted

The Tutoring Workstream uncovered consistent themes that we have documented as our *hard truths* and *myths*

Myth	Hard Truth
In person is better than virtual tutoring	Virtual can and does work -- and reduces barriers like transportation and geographic location
Having computers means you can participate in virtual tutoring	Web cams, document readers, headsets, wifi also factor into student access
Tutoring is only for students with poor grades	Tutoring doesn't always have to be seen as a deficit model -it is personalized, one-on-one learning support
Success is determined by improved grades	Success also can look like relationship building, self advocacy, increased desire to learn, perseverance, choosing to come back to tutoring
"If you build it, they will come"	Tutor and student availability is unpredictable
Accessing tutoring information is easy	Program info is constantly changing to meet needs, and there are a lot of existing "hubs" to keep updated - this results in info not being up to date

Tutoring Workstream Recommendations

The path forward is slow-going and unpredictable; however, there are several recommendations that the workstream has offered to ensure the tutoring landscape in the Pittsburgh area continues to improve

Identify solutions for more efficient and reliable scheduling for organizations

Offer continued collaboration opportunities for organizations who want to be involved

Engage consistently with parents/caregivers to ensure their voices are heard and information is shared in the right spaces

Advocate for operational funding that offers organizational flexibility to be responsive and nimble amidst challenges

Final Thoughts…

- **The Pittsburgh education nonprofit and OST community are huge resources for schools and families seeking tutoring support**

- **There are no one-size-fits-all solutions --- or easy solutions**

  - OSTs have unique needs

  - Students have unique needs

  - Tutors have unique challenges

- **The Tutoring Workstream shows the power of nonprofits choosing to collaborate together**

  - Goal: 200 tutors => Actual: 240 tutors

  - Common understanding of what high-impact tutoring is

  - Organizational self awareness of individual program elements

  - Steps taken to optimize programming

  - Sharing resources and lessons learned saves time!

  - A safe space with trusted relationships allows collaboration to happen

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