

HIGH IMPACT TUTORING

by ExpandED Schools

**HIGH-IMPACT
TUTORING IN
NYC: LESSONS
FROM A
CITYWIDE
INITIATIVE**



HIGH-IMPACT TUTORING IN NYC: LESSONS FROM A CITYWIDE INITIATIVE

Building a Sustainable Model for Academic Recovery and Equity
February 2026

Purpose & Audience

The purpose of this report is to provide a comprehensive review of the first three years of the New York City High-Impact Tutoring (HIT) initiative. This document offers a roadmap to transition the initiative from a temporary pandemic-recovery measure into a permanent, scalable infrastructure for educational equity. The report is primarily intended for key decision-makers and funders, including New York City Public Schools' leaders, government policymakers, and private philanthropic partners. It also serves as a guide for other districts seeking to replicate this public-private partnership model for academic support.

Appreciation

High-impact tutoring only succeeds when young people, their tutors, teachers, school staff, tutoring provider leaders, and families work tirelessly and optimistically to build skills and celebrate success. This report honors all of these individuals' hard work and dedication.

About ExpandedED Schools

ExpandedED Schools is a nonprofit organization committed to closing academic opportunity gaps by increasing access to enriched educational experiences for under-served youth. As an organization, we are dedicated to ensuring that all young people in New York City have access to enriching programs that affirm their identities, teach them valuable skills, and spark new possibilities in and out of the school day. In order to achieve this mission, ExpandedED provides K–12 programs with curricula and support; trains educators; and advances the sector through policy and research.

Contact

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2022, New York City Public Schools introduced an evidence-based high-impact tutoring (HIT) initiative to provide targeted academic support to students. Initially funded by COVID-relief dollars to address pandemic-related instructional gaps, the initiative balanced adherence to evidence-based quality standards with the flexibility and local decision-making needed to be successful in New York City's diverse school system.

Over the first three years of implementation, the initiative has evolved from a crisis-response pilot program into a scalable solution demonstrating consistent positive growth in academic achievement, social and emotional growth, and school engagement. This report includes key lessons learned and six recommendations to move HIT from a pilot initiative to a permanent and fully integrated part of the New York City educational landscape.

Key Findings

High-impact tutoring is effective

Data on reading and math progress from participating NYC students confirms that HIT is a valuable addition to existing student support systems. Math students averaged 1.5 years of progress in a single academic year, while literacy proficiency saw a 13% point average yearly increase, according to iReady and Acadience assessments, respectively.

School ownership drives sustainability

School-level decision-making and design to develop a model that meets evidence-based standards strengthens the impact and sustainability of the program and leads to stronger school commitment.

Public and private funds are important

The initiative demonstrated that public and private funds play distinct, symbiotic roles. Public funds provide scale while private funds ensure continued attention and support for program quality, innovation, and evaluation along with capacity-building for tutors and tutoring providers.

A variety of tutoring implementation options helps meet local needs

In a district as complex and diverse as New York City Public Schools, offering a variety of implementation options is essential for programmatic success.

Recommendations

Sustain partnerships that facilitate scale

Leverage partnerships to centralize complex logistics and ensure consistent quality of tutoring partners, thereby streamlining complex processes so that HIT can be seamlessly integrated into school ecosystems.

Deepen the integration of high-impact tutoring within the multi-tiered system of supports framework

Ensure high-impact tutoring is explicitly included within the multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) framework, clarifying for schools how HIT may be used to bridge instructional gaps and provide additional practice and skill development without displacing core classroom learning.

Transfer the responsibility for quality monitoring to community school districts

Implement a scaffolded plan to gradually shift the responsibility for quality monitoring from external supports to district personnel as internal capacity and readiness grow.

Scale the initiative to close access gaps and ensure equity across the city

Expand the initiative to reach students in new districts that have historically lacked access to HIT resources.

Expand the academic scope beyond the initial pilot grades

Move beyond the initial strategic focus on K-2 Literacy and 6-8 Math to target other years where students are most vulnerable, with the long-term goal of reaching 20% of all K-12 students.

Secure expanded public investment to guarantee student access

Secure increased, baselined state and city funding to meet the demonstrated demand from educators, ensuring that a student's access to this intervention is determined by their academic need rather than their school's fundraising capacity.

THE CASE FOR HIGH-IMPACT TUTORING

Background and Context

As school districts across the country grappled with the significant instructional loss precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, research emerged from Brown University's Annenberg Institute that offered an answer: High-Impact Tutoring (HIT). HIT is a research-based intervention method that has been shown to significantly boost academic outcomes for the at-risk student populations who need this support most (Robinson et al., 2021).

Academic data continues to reveal that students are behind in critical foundational skills, particularly in early literacy and middle school math. According to the 2024 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), students in New York State remain below pre-pandemic levels in fourth grade reading and eighth grade math, which are critical indicators of future academic success. Furthermore, NAEP scores show that more than half of Black and Latinx students in New York scored 'Below Basic' in both fourth grade reading and eighth grade math (EdTrust - NY, 2025). These scores underline the reality that New York students have not recovered from pandemic-era educational disruptions and are in desperate need of academic support.

The Origin of the NYC HIT Model

In 2022, TNTP was engaged by private funders to complete an analysis of the current academic landscape in New York City and national tutoring models and develop a blueprint to scale effective tutoring citywide (TNTP, 2022). The study determined that citywide scale was best achieved through a formal public-private partnership using an "Engaged Coalition" model, where an education intermediary organization manages quality control and supports logistics of program implementation. This structure would allow the district to leverage public funding for citywide reach while an external partner could work with tutoring providers, school teams, and other stakeholders to customize implementation for each school community and build capacity. Additionally, TNTP's analysis concluded that academic support would be most effective for students in early literacy and middle school math, because previous tutoring efforts had been most effective in these areas.

Following the study, ExpandedED Schools was selected as the intermediary to manage the HIT initiative due to its trusted standing within the NYC education ecosystem and its expertise in school-community partnerships that help students develop socially, emotionally, and academically. ExpandedED was tapped to offer programmatic guidance to partnered schools, research policy and funding solutions to continue to scale HIT across NYCPS, and provide educator career development support.

FUNDING

Developing a sustainable infrastructure for academic recovery required a strategic public private partnership.

Public Funding

The initiative launched with a commitment of \$15 million in federal COVID-relief (ESSER) funds from NYCPS, allocated in \$5 million increments over the first three years. However, in the spring of 2024, as federal relief windows closed, the final \$5 million of ESSER funding became unavailable. Following targeted advocacy to the City Council, the initiative successfully transitioned from temporary federal relief to sustainable local investment, securing a \$4 million allocation for the 2024-25 school year (City of New York, 2024). As of the FY26 Adopted NYC Budget, this funding has now been baselined by the city at \$4 million per academic year through FY29 (City of New York, 2025). These public funds are distributed by NYCPS directly to school budgets to cover direct service costs—specifically tutor provider contracts and tutor wages—with an average cost of approximately \$1,000 per student (National Student Support Accelerator, n.d.). Additionally, demonstrating significant local buy-in, some participating schools have chosen to supplement these central allocations with their own funds to maximize the number of students served. However, while these funds can serve as a bridge during administrative delays, schools ultimately rely on dedicated central funding to sustain the full 10-12 week tutoring cycle required to drive measurable academic impact.

Private Funding

Private philanthropy has played a distinct and critical role in developing our citywide HIT initiative by committing funding to the operations of the backbone organization, ExpandedED Schools, for the initiative's first five years. Private contributions have allowed the intermediary to drive quality assurance, program design, management and support, and evaluation. Funders also served as thought partners and advocates for the program to ensure steady implementation amid transitions and long-term sustainability of successful practices.

IMPLEMENTATION

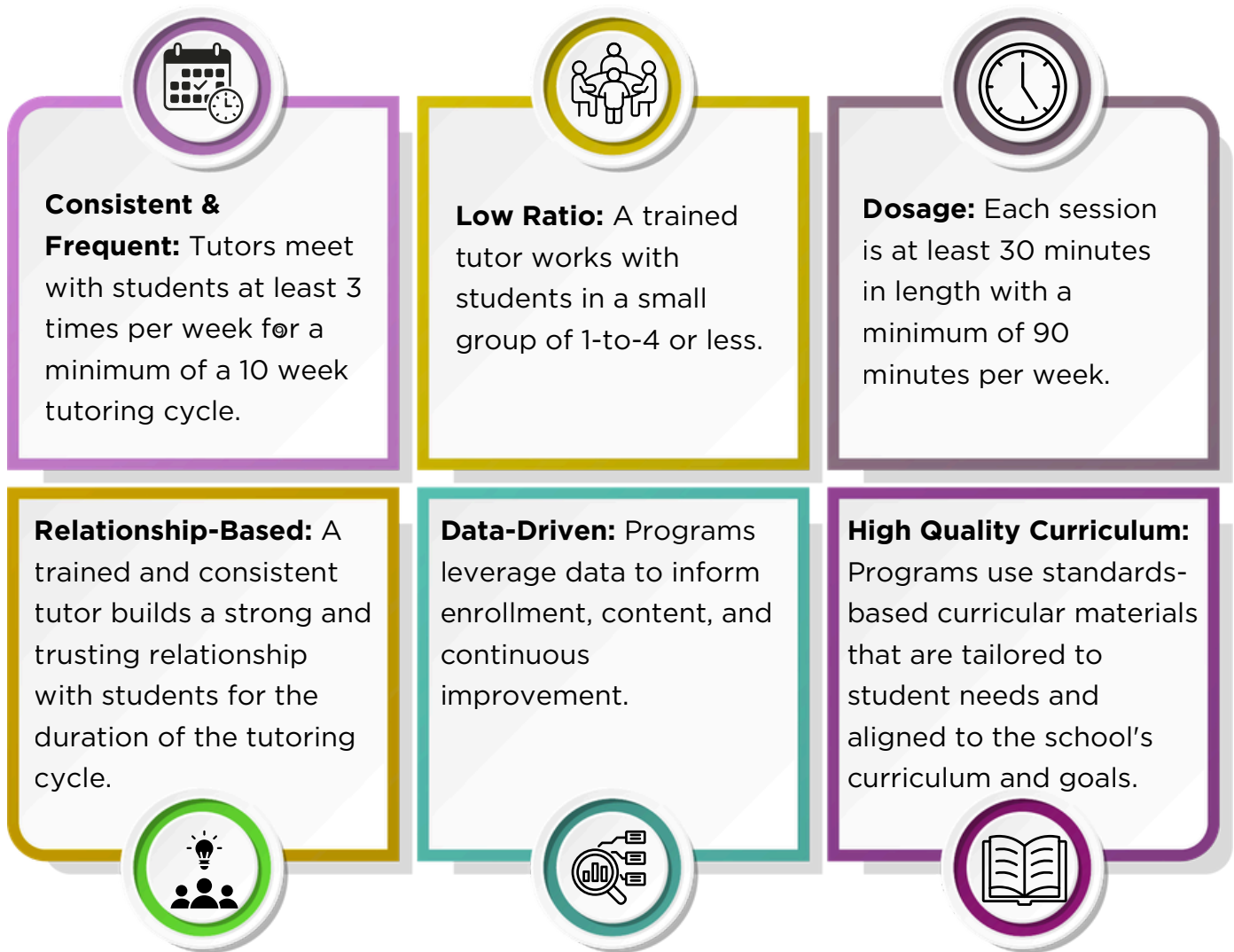
Building a citywide tutoring infrastructure required a balanced implementation strategy integrating the need for strict adherence to high-impact tutoring quality guidelines while incorporating the necessary school-level flexibility to accommodate New York City's diverse ecosystem.

To ensure scalability and access, tutoring in the initiative is delivered in various modalities including in-person, virtually with a live tutor working with a student on a device, and in hybrid sessions, where the mode may move between in-person or virtual. Additionally, the initiative strategically defined its target population as students who are just below grade level. This aligns with the definition of Tier II Supplemental Support within the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework. Tier II supplemental support is designed for students who have identified skill gaps but are positioned to reach proficiency with additional practice. Prioritizing this specific group allows tutoring to function as a powerful tool for acceleration (National Student Support Accelerator, 2023). Through the first three years of implementation, the initiative focused on intensive, individualized academic support to students in K-2 Literacy and 6-8 Math to facilitate content mastery.

Defining 'Effective' Tutoring

To ensure that tutoring is implemented with fidelity, ExpandedED, in partnership with NYCPS and TNTTP, developed the [NYC HIT definition and standards](#) that outline the necessary guidelines for establishing an effective HIT program. These standards are informed by research conducted at the National Student Support Accelerator, a program based at Stanford University that is spearheading the research into effective tutoring practices (this program was formerly based in the Annenberg Institute at Brown University). Unlike traditional tutoring that may be sporadic or classified as "homework help," high-impact tutoring is defined by evidenced-based parameters. Every school program was required to adhere to those standards. Outside of the standards, schools had flexibility. For example, schools were able to determine who would serve as tutors, so they could assess current staff capacity and flexibility and the pros and cons of bringing outside tutors into the school community. While evidence is clear that in-school tutoring is more effective than after-school tutoring models, researchers stressed that dosage was behind those findings--children in after-school tutoring typically do not receive as many tutoring hours as those in school. We offered schools flexibility in when tutoring occurred, stressing that dosage was critical whether the services were in, before or after school.

NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS HIT STANDARDS



Defining Roles and Responsibilities

To ensure successful implementation, NYCPS and ExpandedED Schools established a clear system to balance district oversight, school-level autonomy, and intermediary support.

A central team at NYCPS identified participating community school districts and dispersed public funds to schools. District Superintendents oversaw the initiative in their district by selecting the specific participating schools and setting the stage for school leaders to take ownership of execution. Once selected, schools maintained control over designing how to implement tutoring in their school and on-the-ground implementation.

ExpandedED acted as the operational backbone of the initiative, working with schools, districts, and the NYCPS central office to support implementation. ExpandedED vetted prospective tutoring agencies in order to create a [Tutor Provider Directory](#) based on criteria for effective tutoring. Those not included in the directory were given specific feedback in order to join in future years. Schools selected providers from this list. ExpandedED then partnered with schools to architect programs that integrated seamlessly into their unique schedules and staff make-up, with districts to ensure proper support and integration with other priorities, and with central NYCPS staff to ensure strong overall impact, use of public and private funds, and initiative-level planning.

Designing School-Level Plans

ExpandedED worked with central NYCPS staff to facilitate collaborative Design Sprints to help schools design their specific implementation model, as described below. ExpandedED coaches provided ongoing program management to ensure successful implementation.

Design sessions were collaborative planning periods where schools evaluated their students' data and began to design a tutoring program aligned to the citywide standards and their students' and schools' needs. With the guidance of their designated program manager schools made informed choices about:

- **Staffing** Using school-based staff vs. provider staff.
- **Content delivery** In-person, virtual, or hybrid.
- **Curriculum** School-based vs provider curriculum.
- **Scheduling** Push-in vs. pull-out, during the school day vs. before or after school.

Supporting Effective Implementation

Program managers conducted 2-4 site visits per school utilizing [curated rubrics](#) to guide their observation of each HIT standard. For example, program managers assessed whether tutoring programs were data-driven by assessing whether school staff identified appropriate students for HIT, whether assessment systems to track progress are in place, and how tutors use session data to inform subsequent sessions. Program managers provided feedback to school-based HIT teams, with suggestions to modify or pivot program model choices to best serve students (ExpandedED Schools, 2025). ExpandedED and district staff reviewed progress data and central staff assisted where needed to course correct tutoring plans.

Testing New Models

While the initiative described above focused on customization at the school level, the 2024-25 school year introduced a complementary pilot to one district designed to test a relatively low-cost option that could help with scalability. Utilizing Amira Learning, an AI-powered reading coach, this pilot offered all elementary students and schools in the district a technology-enabled alternative. The AI coach was integrated directly into classroom station rotations to provide immediate, automated feedback to individual students on their reading fluency. This approach enabled the district to evaluate how artificial intelligence might serve as a cost-effective tool for extending personalized literacy support to a broader population of students as a complement to a full-scale high-impact tutoring model.

Integrating HIT with Aligned City Priorities

HIT was introduced to districts around the same time as literacy and math changes to core instruction launched as part of NYC Reads and Solves. Many districts viewed HIT as an additional support to boost literacy and math progress. The 2025-26 school year marked further integration of high-impact tutoring into the city's flagship academic efforts. HIT is now more clearly defined within NYCPS guidance to districts and schools on Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), a framework for identifying and supporting students in need of additional support beyond universal classroom instruction. HIT programs are considered a supplemental support when they are in alignment with the curriculum and MTSS guidance given by NYCPS. This designation has clarified how HIT serves to meet students' needs without replacing core classroom instruction. This strategic integration is crucial for ensuring that young people receive appropriate support and that HIT is offered to students for whom tutoring can be effective, and moreover not given to students who need targeted intervention from certified teachers and other interventionists. This integration builds buy-in and sustainability with principals and school teams working to ensure every student receives the academic support they need to succeed (New York City Public Schools, 2025).

OUTCOMES

Students Served

From fall 2022 to spring 2025, 13,500 students across 123 schools in 12 community school districts received tutoring. Of these students 99% identify as students of color, and the cohort has significantly higher percentages of students in temporary housing, students with disabilities and multilingual learners than city averages. In the 2025-26 school year, the initiative projects reaching 6,500 students across 125 schools.

The initiative has demonstrated a steady expansion of reach since its inception. Launching as a pilot in the 2022-23 school year, the program initially served approximately 3,200 students across 65 schools. By the 2023-24 school year, the initiative grew to nearly 4,000 students in 80 schools.

The 2024-25 school year marks the most significant expansion to date, with the total initiative reaching approximately 6,500 students across 126 schools. In 106 of these schools, approximately 600 tutors provided intensive, relationship-based tutoring to 4,250 students with a central public investment of \$750 per student. Twenty schools implemented the technology-enabled pilot in District 14 utilizing Amira Learning, reaching an additional 2,200 students with additional expenses of \$16 per student above existing staff and classroom costs.

Middle School Math

The initiative used assessment data used throughout schools to measure progress of individual students. According to i-Ready Math Typical Growth scores, middle school math impact from tutoring was notably strong. **Participating students consistently outpaced standard growth expectations, demonstrating, on average, 1.5 years of progress within a single academic year.**

Elementary School Literacy

Similarly, literacy outcomes reflected steady, cumulative gains in foundational skills, resulting in a **13% point average yearly increase in the number of students performing at or above benchmark** according to Acadience reading benchmarks across 2023-2025.

LESSONS LEARNED

The journey from a pilot initiative to a citywide educational staple has been marked by continuous learning. Over the past four years, the HIT initiative has generated a wealth of operational knowledge. These lessons, drawn from quantitative outcome data and qualitative experience, offer a roadmap to move HIT from a crisis response to a sustainable feature of academic achievement.

HIT is a valuable addition to student support

The comprehensive data collected over the first three years of implementation confirms that high-impact tutoring is effective. Across both K-2 literacy and 6-8 math, participating students exceeded expected annual progress.

School decision-making leads to sustainability

Engaging schools through collaborative design helped ensure principals felt genuine ownership over vendor selection and scheduling (TNTP, 2022).

Tutoring thrives with public-private funding

Public and private funds serve distinct and important roles in the implementation and sustainability of HIT. Public funding provides the necessary baseline to ensure schools can implement HIT with fidelity and private philanthropy stimulates innovation and ensures capacity-building and operational agility.

A variety of tutoring implementation options helps meet local needs

In a district as complex as NYCPS, schools benefit from autonomy to select the operational structure that best fits their school community.

Tutoring curricula should align to high quality core instruction curriculum

Tutoring curricula should be aligned to high-quality school-day curriculum embedded in the science of reading and effective math instruction. HIT did not find that daily linkages between school-day content and practices to tutoring were necessary, but use of an effective structured literacy curriculum for early grades and high-quality math curriculum is critical.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE SUCCESS

To cement the gains made thus far and ensure that high-quality, personalized tutoring becomes a standard for every student who needs it we recommend deeper systemic integration, financial sustainability, and expanded educational equity across the city.

Sustain partnerships that facilitate scale

The public-private partnership has proven to be an effective structure for the launch of HIT in NYC. Going forward as the initiative achieves greater scale and saturation across districts, city leaders should continue to partner to ensure quality and gradual release of oversight to those in permanent positions. These functions include managing implementation logistics and budgeting; vetting and supporting providers that may be working in multiple schools and districts, and reviewing citywide data—allowing those implementing to focus on instruction and student support.

Deepen the integration of high-impact tutoring within the multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) framework

To achieve full integration, the district must continue aligning MTSS guidance with HIT implementation. Simultaneously, tutoring programs must adapt to ensure full alignment with the MTSS structure. This reciprocal alignment requires leveraging professional learning to help school teams distinguish between students who will most benefit from HIT as a supplemental support and those who require more acute interventions by certified teachers (New York City Public Schools, 2025).

Transfer the responsibility for quality monitoring to community school districts

As each district's internal capacity grows, the responsibility for quality monitoring should gradually shift from the intermediary to community school districts. This transition should be scaffolded, ensuring district superintendents and support teams are equipped to ensure tutoring quality. It is important to note that as districts assume greater ownership, they may choose to centralize certain elements of program design, such as tutor provider selection, to increase consistent practice within the district.

Scale the initiative to close access gaps and ensure equity across the city

Expansion to new districts should be data-driven with attention to schools that have large numbers of students best served by high-impact tutoring.

Expand the academic scope beyond the initial pilot grades

The initial decision to focus on K-2 literacy and 6-8 math was a strategic entry point, grounded in research identifying these areas as particularly successful in early implementation studies. Given the demonstrated capability of the current model and demand from schools, the initiative is well-positioned to expand into other grade levels where data shows students are vulnerable (TNTP, 2022).

Secure expanded public investment to guarantee student access

Increased public funding can be used effectively throughout the city for high-impact tutoring, improving outcomes for young people and bolstering short- and long-term academic achievement.

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