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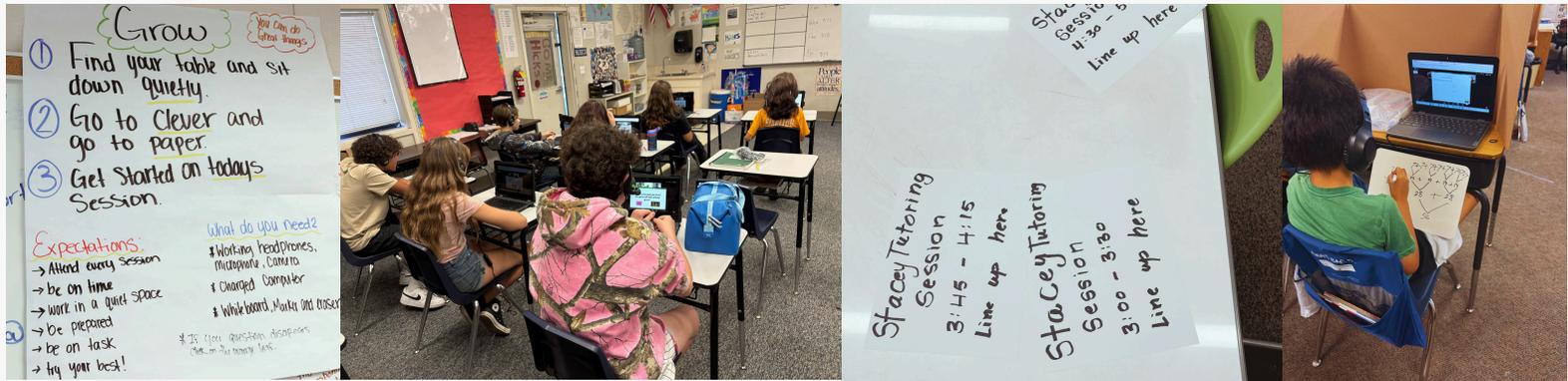


From Paper Edu. On a mission to deliver the *best* outcomes to the *most* students.

HIGH-IMPACT TUTORING (HIT) BUYER'S GUIDE

What to look for (and look out for) when choosing a HIT provider, vendor evaluation form, FAQ's and more.





Why High-Impact Tutoring (HIT) Matters Now

Districts face increased pressure to accelerate learning with fewer resources—and many are still unwinding the effects of well-meant but low-impact digital interventions. Schools were flooded with dashboards and adaptive tools that promised scale and insights but often delivered low usage, shallow data, and extra work for educators.

High-impact tutoring (HIT) stands out because it restores what automation replaced: real connection, instructional continuity, and accountable learning moments that actually move achievement.

But the quality of HIT programs varies widely. This guide offers a clear, objective structure districts can use to evaluate providers and make confident, defensible investments grounded in evidence—not promises.

What HIT is. What HIT isn't.



High-impact tutoring includes:

- Consistent tutor-student sessions
- Small groups (1:1–4:1)
- At least 3 sessions per week, at least 30 minutes each
- Alignment to district pacing and classroom instruction
- Structured lessons and ongoing progress monitoring
- Integration into the school day whenever possible

High-impact tutoring is NOT:

- Homework help or ad hoc support
- Fully automated or software-only interventions
- Rotating tutors with inconsistent delivery
- One-size-fits-all curriculum unaligned to district instruction

The **5 Criteria** Every District Should Use When Evaluating HIT Providers



Evidence of Academic Impact

- Independently validated gains e.g. ESSA evidence for the HIT program (note: some vendors may conflate ESSA validations)
- Transparent and custom reporting tied to student growth delivered during and after the HIT program



Tutor Quality

- A U.S.-based tutor workforce with rigorous hiring standards, required training and ongoing PD – not independent contractors
- Scheduling continuity (i.e. same tutor scheduled for every session for a particular HIT cohort)



Program Design & Fidelity

- Research-backed and ideally NSSA-certified with Gradual Release, Scaffolded Instruction, Culturally Responsive Teaching methods
- Curriculum and pacing alignment; custom-made learning content that has a direct reinforcement of classroom teachings



Implementation & Operational Lift

- Pre-launch logistical support; partnering on student cohort selection, student session locations, technical preparation
- Ideally, onsite support during day 1 of program launch
- Vendor should handle all tutor scheduling



Scalability: Schools, Grades, and Subjects

- Scale without compromise; live-virtual via user-friendly programs
- Supports diverse student groups with different needs across grades, subjects, and sites
- Scales continuity, not just tutoring

Vendor Evaluation Form

Questions to ask when evaluating high-impact tutoring programs



Evidence & Validation

Rating

Do you have ESSA-aligned evidence specifically for your high-impact tutoring program?

Doesn't meet

Partially meets

Meets



Has this tutoring program been validated by any third-party research organization (e.g., NSSA, university partners)?

Doesn't meet

Partially meets

Meets



Has your organization published any findings, peer-reviewed or otherwise, on student outcomes from this program?

Doesn't meet

Partially meets

Meets



Tutor Model & Staffing

Rating

Do you use independent contractors (ICs), W-2 employees, or a mix for your high-impact tutors?

Doesn't meet

Partially meets

Meets



What percentage of sessions are delivered by the same tutor for each student group over a full cycle?

Doesn't meet

Partially meets

Meets



Tutor Quality

Rating

Describe your full hiring process for tutors, including background checks, fingerprinting, subject assessments, mock lessons, and qualification requirements. Which steps are mandatory?

Doesn't meet

Partially meets

Meets



Are all tutors U.S.-based?

Doesn't meet

Partially meets

Meets



How many hours of required training do tutors complete annually, and how much of it is observed, coached, or assessed?

Doesn't meet

Partially meets

Meets



Vendor Evaluation Form Continued

Content & Instructional Design

Rating

How is tutoring session content created? Please specify whether it is, your own proprietary curriculum, AI-generated, purchased from a third party, or custom-aligned to our district's pacing, standards, and materials.

Doesn't meet



Partially meets



Meets



If content is aligned to district materials, who performs that work (role, qualifications), and how often is it updated?

Doesn't meet



Partially meets



Meets



Data, Reporting & Decision-Making

Rating

What data do we receive weekly, monthly, and at the end of the cycle?

Doesn't meet



Partially meets



Meets



What decisions can educators realistically make using your data, and what are the limitations of your reporting?

Doesn't meet



Partially meets



Meets



Implementation, Rollout & Support

Rating

During rollout, what responsibilities fall on district staff (teachers, principals, coordinators) and what responsibilities fall on your team?

Doesn't meet



Partially meets



Meets



Who creates schedules, rosters, and attendance workflows — district teams or your team?

Doesn't meet



Partially meets



Meets



What on-site or real-time support is provided during the first week and throughout the year?

Doesn't meet



Partially meets



Meets



What are the most common implementation challenges districts experience with your program, and how do you address them?

Doesn't meet



Partially meets



Meets



FAQ



What makes tutoring “high-impact”?

High-impact tutoring follows a research-backed structure: consistent tutors, small groups, frequent sessions, aligned instruction, and ongoing progress monitoring.

Does HIT happen during the school day?

In-school delivery typically produces higher attendance and stronger outcomes. While after-school tutoring can work, it struggles with consistency—one of the essential ingredients of HIT.

How long does it take for HIT to show impact?

Most programs see meaningful growth within 8–12 weeks when fidelity is high and attendance is consistent.

What role should teachers play in HIT?

Teachers aren’t meant to run HIT, they’re meant to feel the lift from it. A strong program frees teachers to target-teach the students who need them most.

Can we run a high-impact tutoring program in-house?

Yes, districts can run HIT in-house — but it’s usually better suited for Tier 1 ad-hoc support. In-house teams rarely have the capacity to guarantee tutor continuity or maintain the scheduling, staffing, and fidelity required for true HIT. Most districts find that while they can offer short-term or supplemental help, an in-house model doesn’t scale reliably.

Is HIT MTSS-aligned?

Yes, many use HIT for targeted support. Look for a program with robust progress monitoring and end of program evaluation for best alignment.

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Outcomes, earned and validated:

