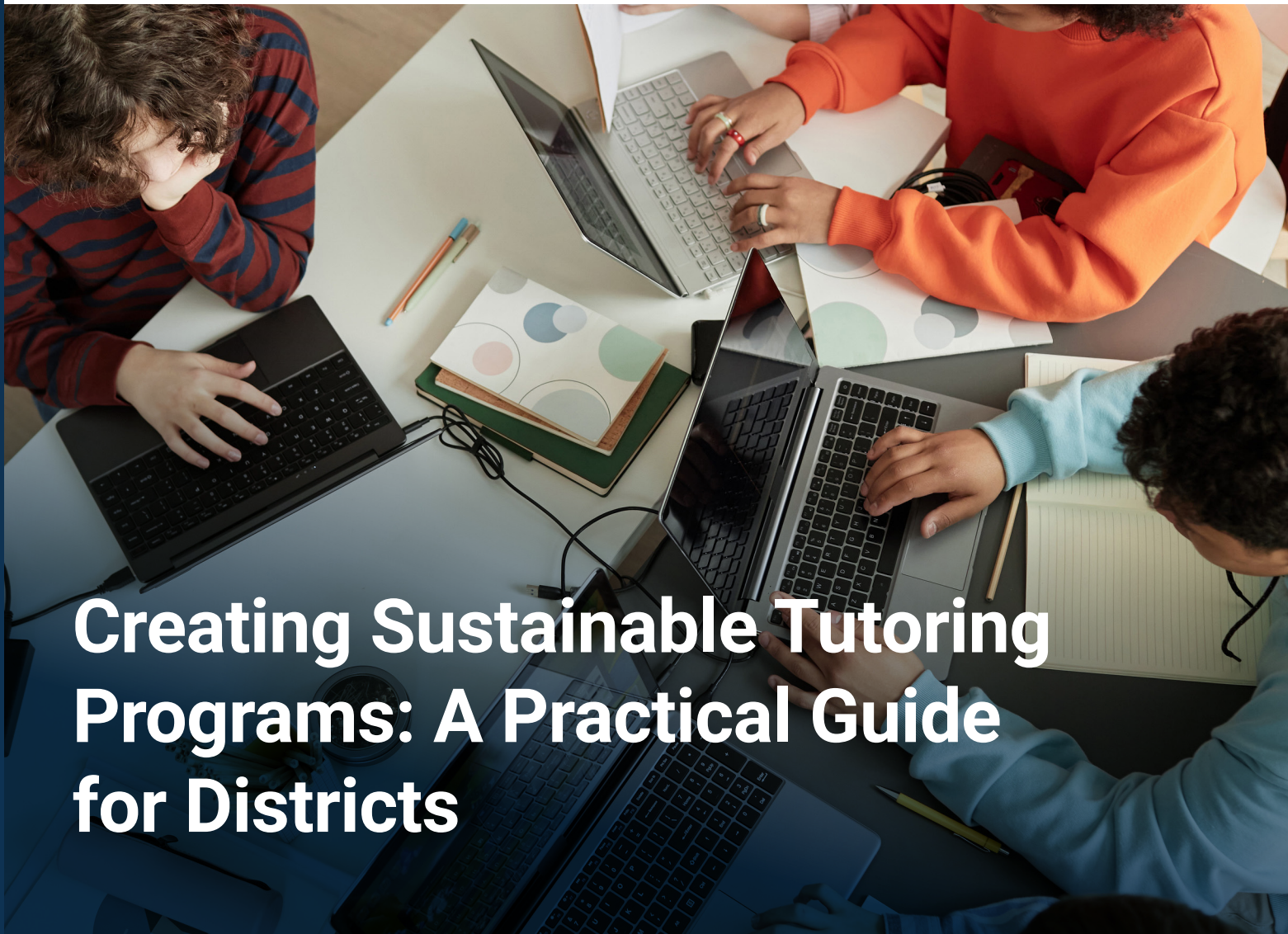




Creating Sustainable Tutoring Programs: A Practical Guide for Districts

Introduction

As more districts adopt tutoring, the question among leaders is increasingly no longer about whether these supports work, but how to implement them as a long-term strategy to provide more sustainable and targeted support.

Yet while research continues to support tutoring as an effective intervention, leaders still don't know how to launch them in a way that is sustainable, realistic and aligned to district capacity without overwhelming staff or disrupting the school day.

This white paper will explore how to initiate such a program by aligning models to existing staffing, scheduling, and logistical realities while building systems that can evolve gradually as participation and needs grow.

Key Takeaways for District Leaders

There Is No Universal Tutoring Model

Successful tutoring programs reflect district context rather than a one-size-fits-all structure.

Flexibility Can Reduce Friction

Flexible access models can help districts expand tutoring participation without creating additional scheduling and staffing burdens.

Start Small and Scale Intentionally

Districts do not need to launch fully mature programs immediately. Focused implementation and gradual expansion often create more sustainable outcomes.

Sustainability Matters More Than Speed

Tutoring programs are more likely to succeed long term when districts choose models that staff can realistically maintain.



Tutoring With Purpose Starts With District Reality

Districts often begin tutoring conversations by focusing on the “best” model. However, successful implementation is less about selecting a universally superior approach and more about choosing a model that fits local conditions.

Tutoring programs can stall when districts underestimate the operational realities involved in implementation. Scheduling conflicts, transportation, staffing shortages, and coordination responsibilities can all create friction that limits participation and sustainability.

To avoid this, districts should focus on three priorities when launching a tutoring program:

- Target support to real student needs
- Choose an approach that is realistic for existing staff and schedules
- Build a model that is sustainable over time

Rather than viewing tutoring as a short-term initiative, districts must treat it as part of a broader long-term academic support strategy.

Choosing the Right Tutoring Model

When approaching the prospect of a tutoring program, there are two common approaches districts often consider—in-school, high impact tutoring and flexible, student-directed tutoring.

In-School, High-Impact Tutoring is embedded directly into the school day. This model can create strong instructional alignment and consistent participation, but it also requires significant coordination, staffing and protected instructional time.

Flexible, Student-Directed Tutoring allows students and families to schedule sessions independently outside the school day. This approach can expand access more quickly while reducing scheduling and staffing pressures on schools.

When choosing between both tutoring models, district leaders are encouraged to begin by asking:

- What scheduling constraints exist?
- How much staff capacity is available?
- How will students access support?
- What barriers can be removed early?

Neither model is inherently better than the other, however. Rather than searching for a universally ideal structure, districts are often better served by selecting those that reflect their staffing, scheduling, and student access realities. The goal is alignment, not perfection.



Building Over Time

Rather than attempting large-scale implementation immediately, districts are encouraged to begin with a targeted student population, establish routines, and then scale based on participation and outcomes.

Only after leaders have been monitoring the results for some time should the question of expanding the program be even considered, and any expansion must be done intentionally over time. Districts that approach tutoring incrementally are often more successful at sustaining programs long term.

District Spotlight: Chesterfield County Public Schools

One district that recently launched an ambitious initiative to expand its tutoring program is Chesterfield County Public Schools in central Virginia. Operationally, Chesterfield County benefits from a centralized implementation model for grades 3-12 via K-12 Tutoring. Through district-level rostering and management systems, the district oversees student access and participation while minimizing additional responsibilities for school-based staff.

By identifying clear participation patterns through platform usage data and booking analytics, the district was able to shape their long-term approach.

Findings included:

- Student bookings were distributed relatively evenly across Monday through Thursday rather than on one single day, with additional usage continuing into Fridays and weekends.
- Some students booked one-time sessions for assignment help or assessment review, while others established recurring sessions with tutors they connected with over time
- Students scheduled tutoring sessions before school, during evening hours, on weekends and even during holiday breaks.

Together, these trends helped reinforce the district's decision to maintain a flexible, student-directed tutoring model focused on accessibility, sustainability and consistent student engagement. The program's flexibility allowed students to seek support when they needed it most rather than limiting access to traditional school-day structures. As a result, students now often form strong connections with tutors they work with consistently, creating a more personalized and supportive learning environment.

Building Sustainable Tutoring Systems for Long-Term Student Support

As more district leaders realize the benefits of tutoring as a long-term support system, those that adopt realistic operational plans, align tutoring models to local capacity, and build programs gradually are often better positioned to sustain participation and expand impact over time.

K-12 Tutoring can help accelerate this shift from temporary tutoring efforts to a long-term, sustainable component of district academic support systems. While implementation models may vary from district to district, K-12 Tutoring's approach prioritizes flexibility, reduces operational friction, and creates accessible pathways for students to receive support.

Like Chesterfield County Public Schools in Virginia, districts that launch K-12 Tutoring with purpose—and remain willing to adapt as participation patterns and student needs evolve—are better equipped to deliver meaningful, long-term academic gains.

This white paper is based upon the Ed Talk “Launching Tutoring with Purpose: A Sustainable, Low-Lift Approach for Districts” with Coordinator of Instructional Technology Wes Dunnivant of Chesterfield County Public Schools in Virginia.

To learn more, [watch the Ed Talk](#).

Watch On-Demand

The Ed Talk and this white paper were produced by District Administration and sponsored by K12 Tutoring.

About K12 Tutoring

K12 Tutoring provides high-quality, flexible, and convenient online tutoring services designed to support every student’s academic journey. With state-certified tutors, personalized learning plans, and a broad range of subject offerings, K12 Tutoring helps students excel—whether they’re seeking advanced instruction or extra academic support. K12 Tutoring is a portfolio brand of Stride, Inc., a leader in online education. Learn more at tutoring.k12.com.

About District Administration

District Administration (DA) digital media serves the top K12 leaders for districts across the U.S. with strategic information on how to most effectively manage their school systems. DA helps administrators make informed decisions about best practices and research-based approaches designed to help them improve teacher quality and increase student achievement across their districts. DA brings journalistic excellence with in-depth reporting and analysis, as well as success stories that can be shared among peers from district to district.