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Clayton County Public Schools

Clayton County Public Schools (CCPS) is a large Georgia school district just south of metro Atlanta. The district was closed for in-person learning for a full year-and-a-half during the pandemic; they piloted tutoring in 2020, in the midst of this closure. The program has continued and expanded as the district re-opened during the 2021-22 school year. We spoke with **Angela Hutton**, CCPS's Intervention Lead, and **Dr. Tonya Clarke**, Coordinator of K-12 Mathematics, about the initiative. As an "on-demand" program, it's distinctive in its model and ethos from most other district tutoring initiatives we've profiled thus far – but it's been enthusiastically received by CCPS students, teachers, and parents. Below, we summarize the district's experience with tutoring over the past two years.

CCPS by the Numbers

TOTAL POPULATION

52,149 students

68 schools

RACIAL & ETHNIC MAKEUP

- 69% Black
- 23% Hispanic
- 8% Other

% OF STUDENTS WHO ARE ENGLISH LEARNERS

10%

FUNDING PER STUDENT

$11,790

% OF STUDENTS WITH FREE AND REDUCED MEALS

98%

All district data is from NCES, as available in September, 2022, and has been aggregated by CEMD. In some cases, districts themselves corrected or adjusted a number for us.

Tutoring Program Overview
The Vitals

Model

On-demand. Students initiate sessions by logging onto the platform and requesting tutoring at their own discretion. The service is available **24 hours a day, seven days a week.** It's free, with no restrictions on how often students use it.

Program Type

The program is administered by an **external partner**, Tutor.com.

Student Group(s) Prioritized

The 2020 pilot targeted a cross-section of **15 elementary, middle, and high schools identified as highest-need** based on GA state standardized test outcomes. It has now expanded to all 68 Clayton County schools. Individual students are often encouraged by teachers to take advantage of tutoring, but **usage is not compulsory and is predominantly student-driven.**

Grades Served & Subjects Covered

Tutoring is available to **all grades, for all subjects.**

Session Timing

Timing is **highly flexible.** Some teachers leverage Tutor.com as a sort of "built-in remediation," and students log in during the school day. But the lion's share of student access takes place **after school**, often when students are struggling with homework and/or digesting the day's academic content.

Delivery Method

Sessions are **virtual and one-on-one**. Students begin by specifying a problem, task, skill, or topic that they need help with. They then match with a tutor (they can request a consistent tutor) for a live, virtual session right away.

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Program Journey
From Decision-Making to Outcomes-Monitoring

Deciding on Tutoring

CCPS launched the tutoring program in a moment of urgency: during its period of pandemic-induced at-home learning. "We knew," Hutton told us, "that we needed to put something in place, something to counter the learning loss." The 15-school pilot prioritized CCPS schools that were struggling most, and by the end of the year it was regarded as a great success in terms of the number of students reached and their responses. This energized the district to scale the program to all 68 of its schools in 2021-22.

Setting Requirements

Given the context of the pilot, the district was drawn to the "as-and-when-needed" nature of Tutor.com. CCPS wanted all ages of students to be able to access help with any topic, at any time – especially at home – and Tutor.com offers this range and flexibility. Even when the context shifted to predominantly in-person learning, they were so satisfied with Tutor.com that they didn't feel compelled to consider other vendors.

Implementing

Keys to successful implementation have been, as Dr. Clarke told us, a district "champion" for the program in Hutton, as well as key "point people" charged with leading the initiative on the ground. Each school has three implementation leaders, who can train teachers and students on the platform; facilitate sessions; crack technical problems; and encourage usage where/when it could be most helpful. The district also mandates several "all-student sign-in days" during the school year, to ensure every student can navigate the program and appreciate how to leverage it.

Monitoring Outcomes

The primary metrics that CCPS tracks are student participation rates – i.e. who is logging in, how often – and their qualitative responses to the sessions (each session concludes with a brief survey). Both have trended very positively over time; Dr. Clarke commented, "What we noticed in the data was not only were the number of student logins increasing – and they were increasing exponentially – but the student responses to them were overwhelmingly positive." During the first year of district-wide implementation, about 90% of all CCPS students used tutoring services at some point; and 99% of student survey responses indicated that the session had meaningfully helped them with the topic at hand. In the future, CCPS also plans to track trends in student grades and how they relate to student engagement with tutoring services.

The on-demand nature of the program means that the facts of where students are requesting help, how often, and in which subjects is powerful data in itself. Hutton described a case, for example, of a particular school where student requests for geometry tutoring were overwhelming: big majorities of the geometry students at the school required tutoring in the subject. District administration used this data point to intervene at the school and offer professional development.

On the whole, Dr. Clarke said, the best outcome of the tutoring initiative has been the sense of an academic lifeline that it has offered students at a trying time. "They felt like they had someone there when they needed help," she said. "If they were away from school and struggling, they could reach out. And they felt like the tutors could break down the concepts, and really spend time with them – the time that they needed until they got it."

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"What would you do differently?"
Top Tips from CCPS

STREAMLINE THE TUTORING PLATFORM WITH OTHER TECH PLATFORMS VIA "SINGLE SIGN-ON".

When CCPS launched its tutoring program, students had to access the Tutor.com platform with a unique username and password. Hutton reported being inundated with daily calls about forgotten passwords and questions about how to log in – and an instant, dramatic increase in student usage when CCPS moved to a "single sign-on" model, with Tutor.com embedded as an icon on Clever, the district's main digital learning platform.

EVEN IN A FLEXIBLE, "ON DEMAND" MODEL, FIND WAYS TO ENCOURAGE REGULAR STUDENT ENGAGEMENT WITH THE TUTORING PROGRAM.

Though CCPS was pleased that such a large majority of students took advantage of tutoring services at some point during the year, in 2022-23 they hope to see more consistent usage among students. They plan to enlist school leaders and teachers in an overt effort to ensure that students who most need tutoring engage with it, likely by expanding dedicated time for tutoring during school hours.

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