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**NORTH AMERICA  
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER**

September 2022

Good afternoon,

As students around the country are settling into a new school year, I am reminded of my time spent as a teacher in elementary school. Being a classroom teacher both inspired and frustrated me. I was inspired by the students, teachers, and families I worked with but discouraged by the system, which seemed to fail so many.

I left the classroom to conduct research on teaching and learning in hopes of helping more students. The next question I faced was, what do we do with the evidence the research is generating? J-PAL was my answer. In my current role as Associate Director of Policy at J-PAL North America, I am excited to work with researchers and decision makers to [use evidence](#) to shape education policy to benefit students, families, and educators.

Returning to school this year is marked by a new set of challenges and opportunities for students, many of whom have not had a “normal” year in three years. Many schools have transitioned back to pre-pandemic rhythms, and are now struggling to understand how to accelerate student learning.

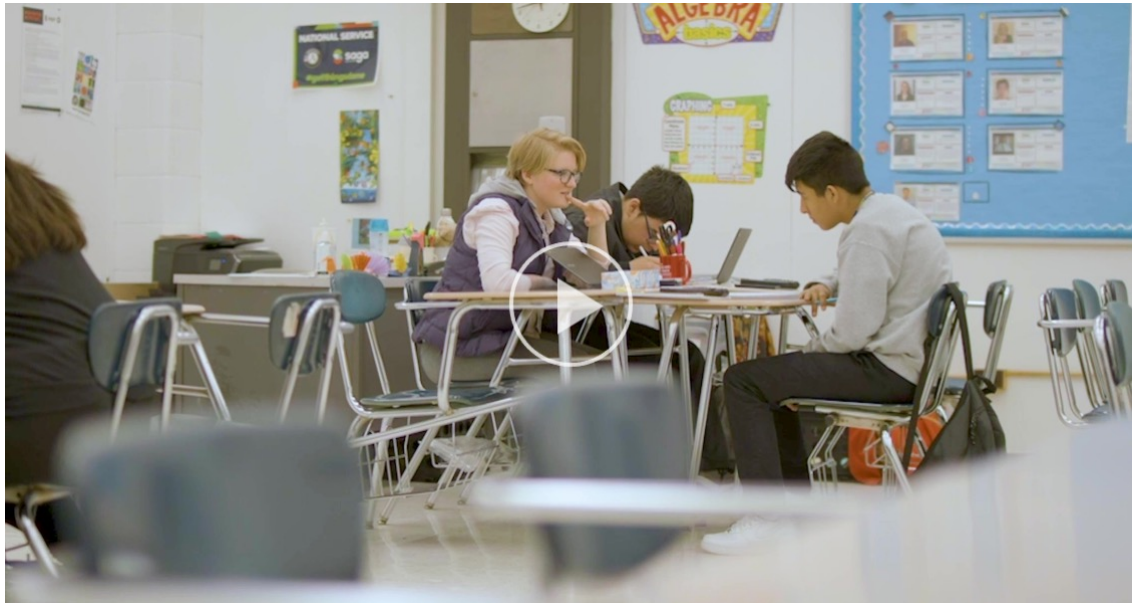
Earlier this month, the US Department of Education announced a major decline in reading and math scores among nine-year-old students compared to pre-pandemic scores. The drop in achievement scores [reversed 20 years of gains](#). While these results are sobering, rigorous research points to some interventions that can help. J-PAL’s [evidence review on high-impact tutoring](#) has demonstrated that such programs consistently improve learning outcomes for students. We are incredibly excited with the policy impact this evidence has had to date, particularly in states like California and Colorado, where the evidence review has informed state funding for tutoring programs. At the same time, education leaders face important and challenging questions, including how to structure programs, how to recruit tutors, and how to boost learning among the students who are far behind grade level. So we can’t stop here – there is more work to be done.

Earlier this summer, our tutoring work was cited by the Biden administration as a key piece of evidence in the White House’s announcement to expand high-dosage tutoring across the country. This announcement underscores the opportunity we now have to use federal funding through the American Rescue Plan Act to evaluate new and innovative tutoring models in order to better understand which models work best and for which students. You can follow our work to date on high-impact tutoring [on our website](#) and reach out to me

directly to let me know what you're working on. I'd love to talk.

Kimberly Dadisman

Associate Director of Policy, J-PAL North America



## Transforming Research into Policy Action: High-Impact Tutoring

The [White House's announcement](#) this summer about supporting student success continued a string of policy decisions by various actors that align with the strong evidence on tutoring. This announcement, encouraging schools to invest millions into tutoring, directly cited [J-PAL's meta-analysis](#) of tutoring studies and continued our efforts to [translate that research into policy action](#). Interests in tutoring have also emerged at a state level, facilitating our collaboration with [the California governor's office](#) and [Saga Education in New Mexico](#). As we continue working to harness what we already know and generate the next phase of tutoring evidence, [we invite you to join us](#).

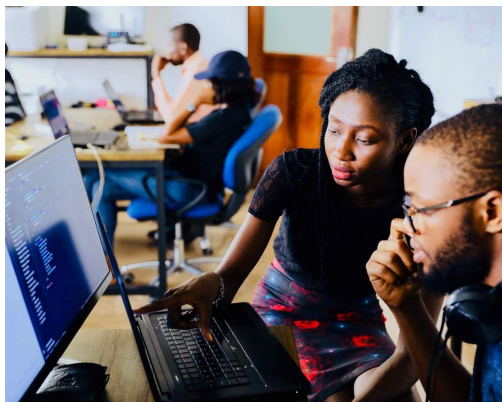


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## Implementing Evidence-Based Tutoring for High Impact: An interactive course

The US federal government and several states are dedicating pandemic recovery funds to tutoring. To maximize the effectiveness of these resources and the benefits for students, jurisdictions need to implement tutoring programs with fidelity to the evidence on what works. A new interactive learning path on [Implementing Evidence-Based Tutoring for High Impact](#) for education agencies and tutoring providers, developed by J-PAL North America and the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence, helps meet this need. [Dive in to the learning path](#) to explore user-friendly, easily accessible information on the elements of evidence-based programs and how to implement them.

## Beyond the evidence: Reflections from a past high school tutor

In this [blog post](#), J-PAL North America research associate [Lisa Smith](#) shares her experience as a tutor in Utah high schools while volunteering with AmeriCorps, where she saw several themes from the evidence on tutoring play out in her day-to-day work. For example, she highlights how she sought to build personal bridges of connection and communication with students, spending “just as much time teaching subject material as trying to build their confidence and belief that they were capable of doing just as well as any other student.” Lisa also reflects on how often she saw students, how she supported students who were English Language Learners, and how the program’s structure facilitated success for her and her students.

### FEATURED EVALUATION SUMMARY



Photo: Lewis Geyer | Longmont Times-Call

## Closing the Word Gap with Big Word Club: Evaluating the Impact of a Tech-Based

### FEATURED RESEARCH RESOURCE



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## From RCT data to survey instruments: how to find what you need on the J-PAL Dataverse

## Early Childhood Vocabulary Program

Vocabulary is critical to literacy development in early childhood, yet large disparities in vocabulary knowledge persist between children from high-income and low-income backgrounds. Researchers [evaluated](#) the Big Word Club, a classroom-based digital learning program designed to increase the vocabulary of young children, to assess the program's impact on children's receptive vocabulary. Participation in the Big Word Club increased students' knowledge and retention of words included in the program.

Data publication is a key tool in advancing open and transparent research practices that can enhance the ability of economics researchers to replicate and learn from data and enable exploration by students, policy partners, study participants, and others. [J-PAL's dataverse](#) contains data from more than 100 randomized evaluations, as well as analysis code, survey instruments, and other useful components. In this [research resource](#), J-PAL staff share guidance on finding and downloading materials in the dataverse and walk through how to use some of its tools.

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