TUTORING: BUILDING AND SHARING EVIDENCE

J-PAL
ABDUL LATIF JAMEEL POVERTY ACTION LAB
NORTH AMERICA

At the federal, state, and local levels, policymakers and educators are grappling with how to address unfinished learning caused by Covid-19, which has further compounded race- and income-based educational inequities. To address this massive challenge, J-PAL North America is supporting the scale-up of evidence-based tutoring in partnership with education leaders across the United States.

THE ISSUE: UNPRECEDENTED UNFINISHED LEARNING

The United States is facing an unprecedented educational crisis in the wake of Covid-19. Even prior to the pandemic, millions of students in the United States were performing below grade level. Many of those falling behind were students of color or from low-income families. Starting out or falling behind peers in early grades can have long lasting impacts on one's academic career, creating persistent economic consequences that further entrench racial disparities. During the pandemic, students are estimated to have learned just 87 percent of the reading and 67 percent of math content that their peers learned pre-pandemic. In order to equitably combat Covid-related learning loss, we must invest in proven strategies for accelerating student achievement.

TUTORING: AN EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGY TO ACCELERATE LEARNING

A meta-analysis by J-PAL North America and affiliated researchers found that tutoring had consistently large, positive impacts on students across a wide range of program designs. Our summary of the analysis has garnered attention from federal and state officials who are utilizing this evidence and leveraging J-PAL's expertise to accelerate student learning in the wake of Covid-19.

PRESENT OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Many policymakers and education leaders are now turning to tutoring as a scalable, research-backed strategy to accelerate learning. The US Department of Education cited J-PAL's meta-analysis when recommending tutoring as a strategy to aid school reopening. States such as Colorado and California utilized the meta-analysis to allocate over $465 million to tutoring interventions. Additionally, the federal government has allotted billions of dollars to state and local education agencies to combat Covid-related learning loss. While this massive infusion of public funding has the potential to be transformational, we must ensure that education leaders utilize this funding to implement high-impact, evidence-based tutoring approaches that are actually proven to work.

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PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHT: CALIFORNIA

J-PAL North America met with the California governor's office to discuss actionable insights highlighted in our meta-analysis. These conversations directly influenced the inclusion of tutoring in the State's COVID-19 Relief and School Reopening, Reporting, and Public Health Requirements Act of 2021. Since the bill's passage, J-PAL North America has established itself as a trusted thought partner, providing ongoing consultation, resources, and support to the California State Board of Education (SBE), the California Department of Education, and various technical assistance providers across the state. J-PAL and SBE continue to work together to ensure that public funds for tutoring are being directed towards evidence-based approaches.

J-PAL NORTH AMERICA EDUCATION

J-PAL North America is a regional office of The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), a global research center working to reduce poverty by ensuring that policy is informed by scientific evidence. J-PAL North America's education team works to catalyze randomized evaluations and disseminate evidence on innovative tactics to improve student learning and expand access to quality education.

To learn more and support our work, contact Francesca Freeman at ffreeman@povertyactionlab.org.