NC Education Corps

JLEOC Meeting

February 3, 2026

What we'll cover

- **The Challenge:** an early literacy crisis

- **Our Response:** help schools implement in-person high-impact tutoring for K-3 students striving to master foundational reading skills

- **Our Results:** summary statistics and report on student gains

- **Next:** recurring funding and clear standards for tutoring programs

The Challenge

An early literacy crisis

2 out of 3 students in the U.S. are performing below grade-level in reading by the 4th grade

NC K-3 students have made progress in literacy since implementing the Excellent Public Schools Act of 2021

NC K-3 Early Literacy Assessment Results vs. Students in Other States
Beginning of Year (BOY)

Source: NC Department of Public Instruction

Yet 42-67% remain below grade-level based on DIBELS

NC K-3 Early Literacy Assessment Results vs. Students in Other States

Beginning of Year (BOY)

% of students scoring at/above benchmark

Kindergarten: 37%, 40%, 37%, 28%, 33%, 33%
Grade 1: 47%, 50%, 50%, 48%, 52%, 53%
Grade 2: 50%, 52%, 53%, 50%, 54%, 56%
Grade 3: 50%, 53%, 54%, 50%, 5%, 58%

Legend:
- 2022-23 BOY Other
- 2023-24 BOY Other
- 2024-25 BOY Other
- 2022-23 BOY NC
- 2023-24 BOY NC
- 2024-25 BOY NC
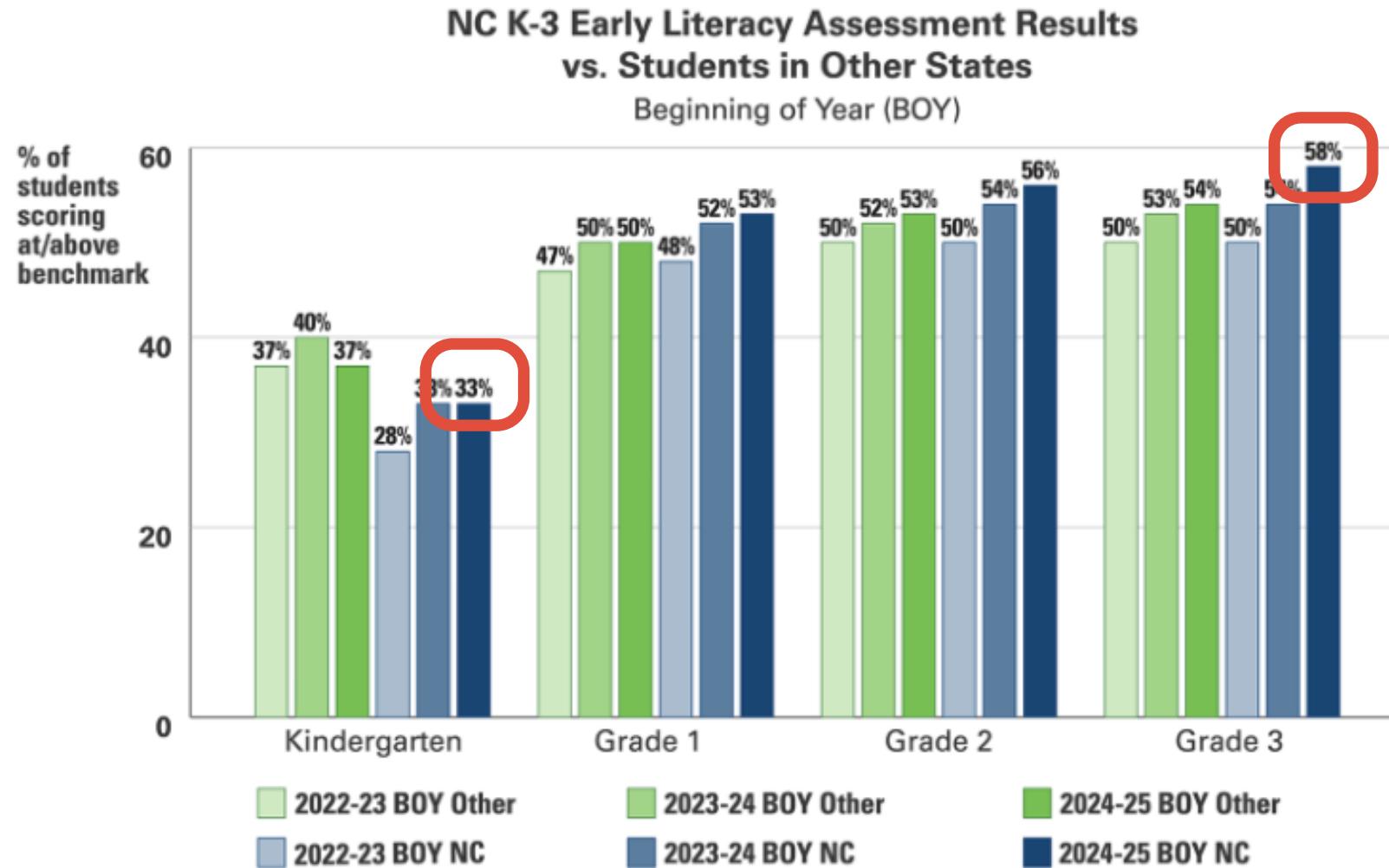
Source: NC Department of Public Instruction

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50% of NC K-3 students is roughly

230K kids
(and future workers)

1x Gaston County

2.5x Burke County

2.9x Franklin County

(or 3x B of A Stadium)

And NC literacy numbers are worse when looking at college- and career-ready measures
This is bad for students, their families, and North Carolina's future

Advancing Academic Readiness for Lifelong Success

KEY
- MET/EXCEEDED 2030 GOAL (green)
- 1%–10% AWAY FROM 2030 GOAL (blue)
- 11%+ AWAY FROM 2030 GOAL (red)

2030 Goal

Measure	Current	2030 Goal
NC Pre-K Enrollment	57% (2024)	75%
College- & Career-Ready in Reading	31% (2024)	73%
NAEP Fourth Grade Reading	30% (2024)	42%
College- & Career-Ready in Math	37% (2024)	86%
NAEP Eighth Grade Math	31% (2024)	42%
Chronic Absenteeism	27% (2023)	11%
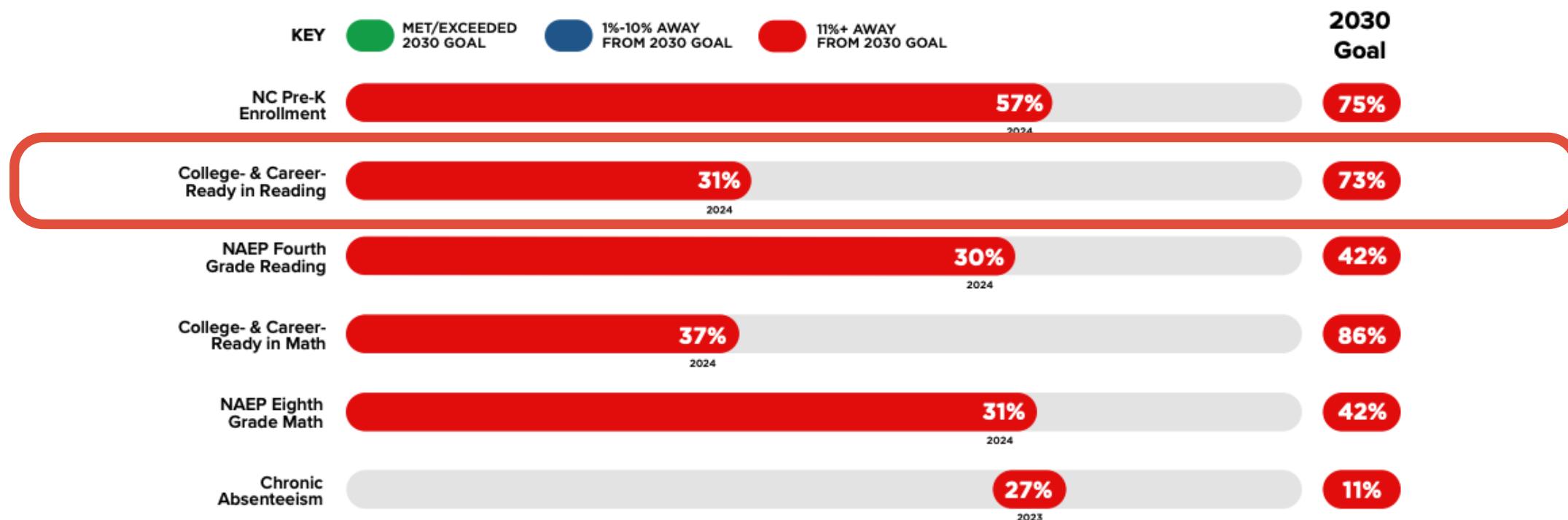
Source: myFutureNC, 2025 State of Educational Attainment Report

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Our Response

Help schools implement in-person high-impact literacy tutoring for K-3 students striving to master foundational reading skills

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Struggling students need more personalized, targeted instruction time

- **Strong core classroom instruction (Tier 1 instruction) is essential**, and LETRS training and regional literacy coaches made this stronger

- **But teachers alone do not have time or energy to provide targeted small group instruction (Tier 2 instruction) to the number of students who need it** to reach grade-level reading benchmarks

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Support high-impact tutoring

High-impact tutoring outperforms all other interventions to help students reach grade level

Figure 2. Academic Interventions by Effect Size

Tutoring has an outsized impact when compared with other interventions meant to help students reach grade level.
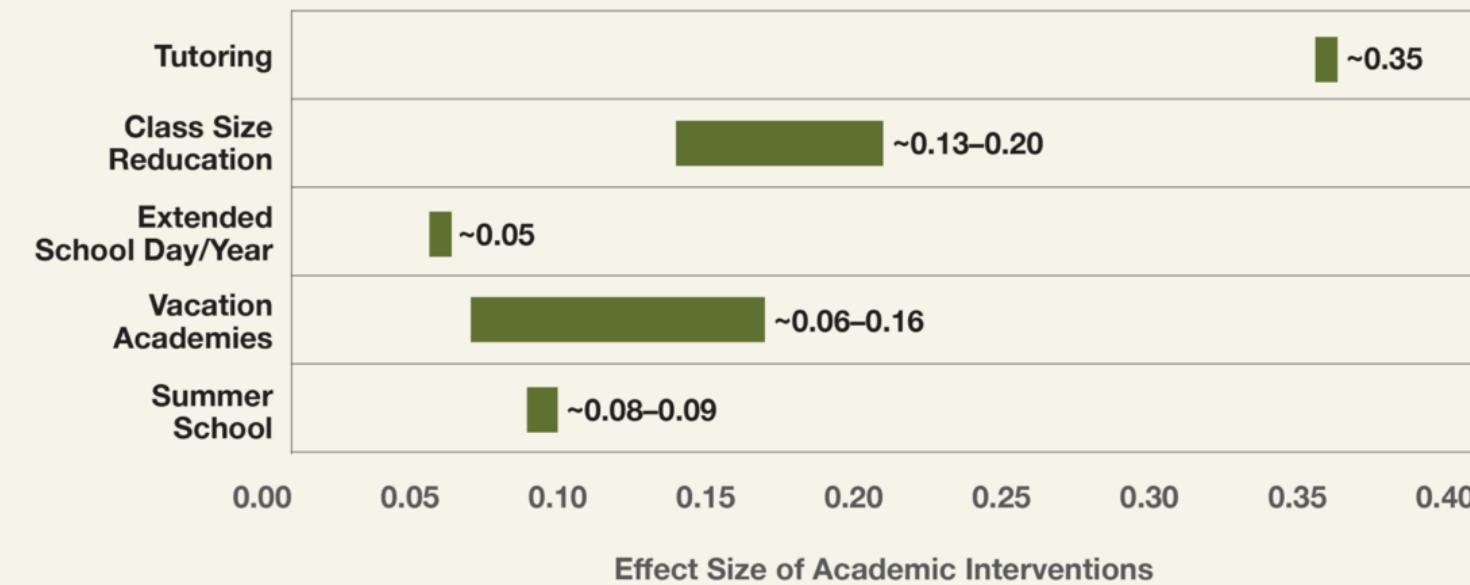
Tutoring: ~0.35
Class Size Reducation: ~0.13–0.20
Extended School Day/Year: ~0.05
Vacation Academies: ~0.06–0.16
Summer School: ~0.08–0.09

Effect Size of Academic Interventions

Source: National Association of State Boards of Education

What is high-impact tutoring?

High-Impact Tutoring

Is	Is Not
With a consistent tutor	With a different tutor assigned each time
Relationship-focused	Question resolution-focused
Data-informed instruction	Homework help
Focused on acceleration	Focused on remediation
Regularly scheduled a minimum of three times per week	As needed
Accessible to all eligible students	Reliant on parents take up and/or pay for

NATIONAL STUDENT
SUPPORT ACCELERATOR

Source: National Student Support Accelerator

While high-impact tutoring is proven to accelerate student learning, it's hard for schools to implement well, at scale, alone

Common challenges schools face when implementing high-impact tutoring on their own:

Finding

Finding high-impact tutors when HR departments are swamped, and teachers have limited time

Training

Training and coaching paraprofessionals, aligned with state standards, MTSS framework, tutoring best practices
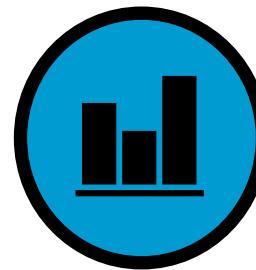
Tracking

Tracking and showing whom tutors work with, on what, for how long, and to what effect on foundational skill development

Funding

Identifying funds to pay for high-impact tutoring

With your support, NCEC launched a pilot program to address these challenges, in alignment with state priorities and national tutoring best practices

Following best practices, our program focuses on:

Frequency

3 tutoring sessions / wk, 30 minutes / session, in person, at school, during the day, for 10+ weeks
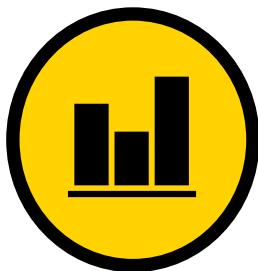
Measurement

Use mClass DIBELS to tailor instruction, Littera tutor logs to ensure consistency

Small Groups

Each tutor works with four or fewer students per group, consistently during the school year

Curriculum

Use high-quality curriculum from school to reinforce reading skills, aligned with SOR
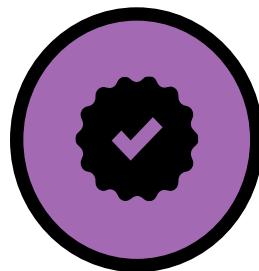
Trained Personnel

Pre-service training, ongoing coaching, monthly PD, coordination with instructional teams

View the National Student Support Accelerator and Accelerate websites for more information on best practices.

Our Results

A successful pilot

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Summary Statistics

Since 2021, we have:

### Recruited, trained, and supported 1,300+ corps members

- Caring adults, including retired teachers, parents and caregivers, college students, NC residents

- Who work mainly as part-time, paid employees of schools (up to 30 hours/week; $15-35/hour)

- To boost student learning and confidence

Who have tutored over 26,000 elementary schoolers

- Students who start the year below grade-level literacy benchmarks

- Matched to tutors by schools following BOY assessments

- Who benefit from targeted intervention support from tutors in person, during school, throughout year

Across 290 elementary schools and 33 NC counties

- Traditional public and charter schools

- Representing rural, suburban, & urban districts

- Mainly Title I schools (85% of schools supported Title I schools)

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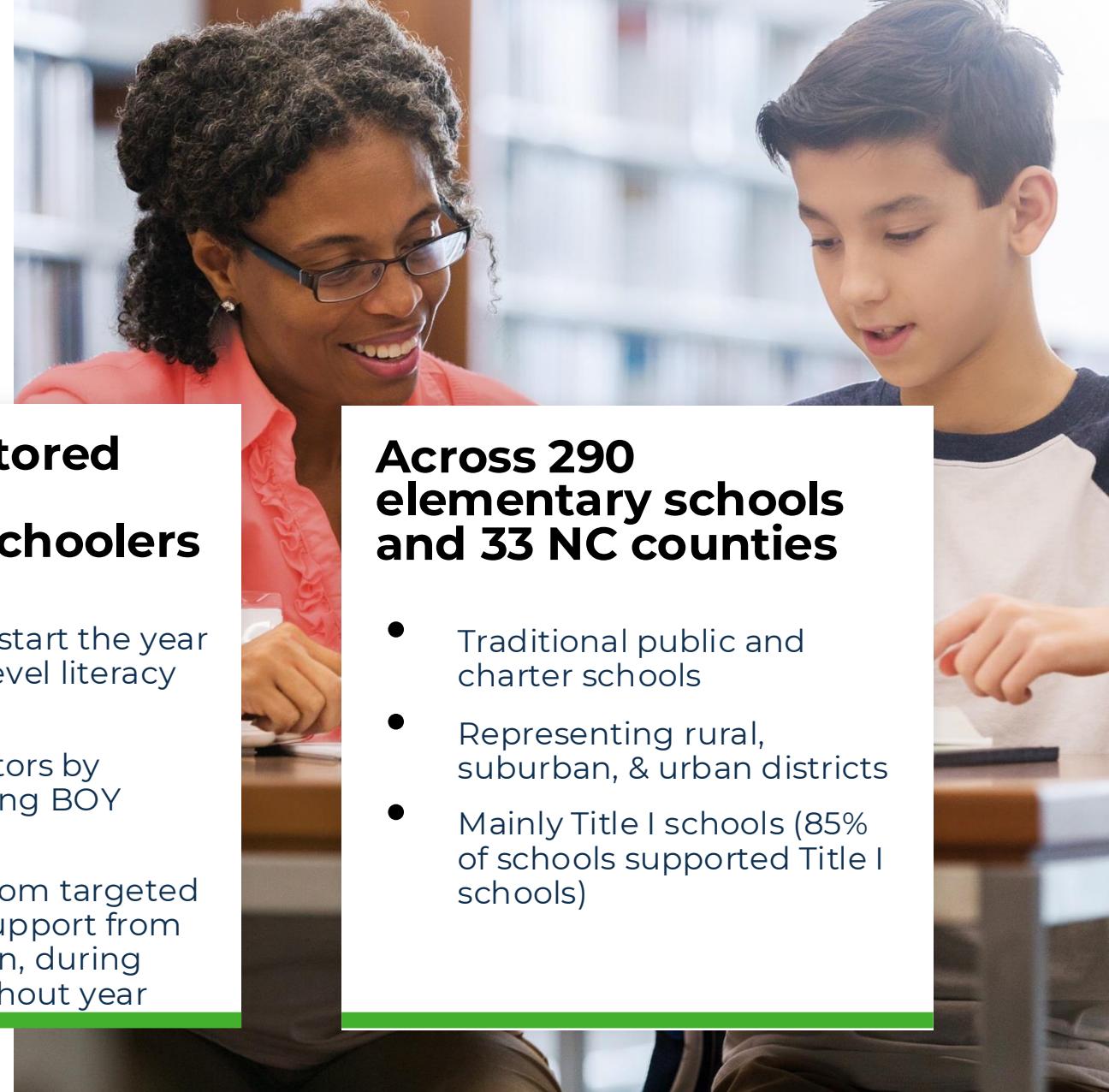
Our program works

Students are making significant gains

2.2 more months of literacy growth compared to peers, based on a randomized control trial

M | YOUTH POLICY LAB

Our program model is nationally recognized

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NATIONAL STUDENT SUPPORT ACCELERATOR
TUTORING PROGRAM DESIGN
NC Education Corps
2024 - 2027

And our program is cost-effective

Our program is low cost and high return (based on "tutoring efficiency") compared to other programs, and costs are split between the State, schools, and others
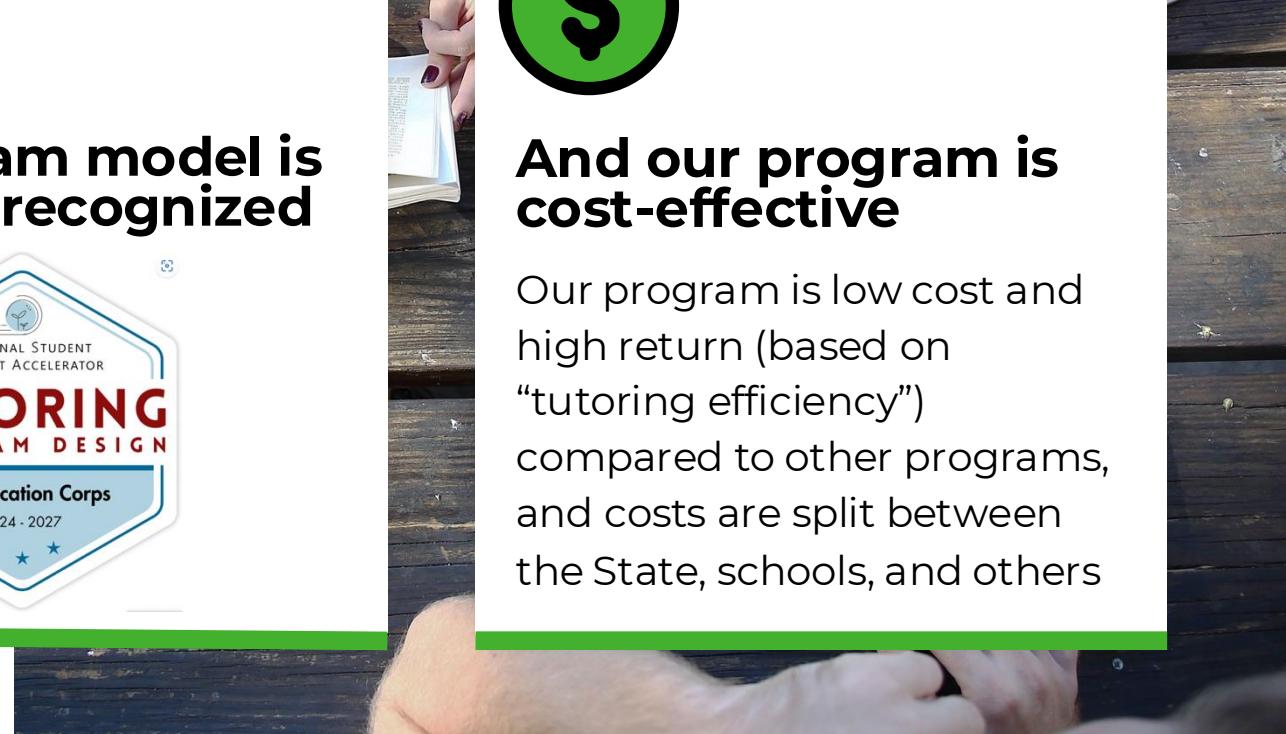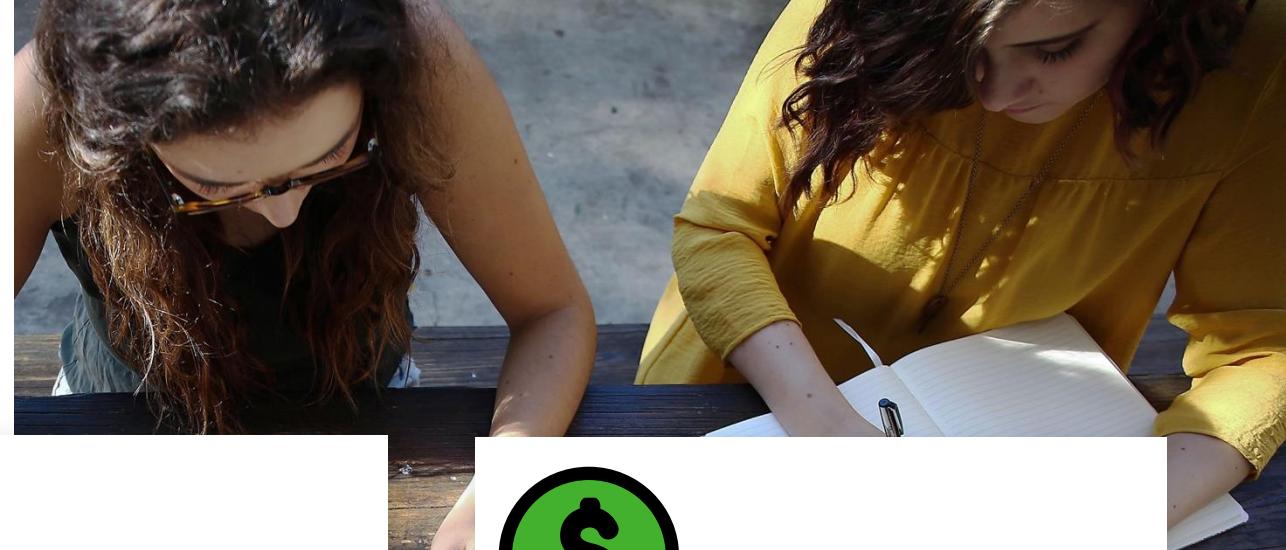
K-3 students receiving NCEC tutoring gain an additional 2.2 months of learning compared to peers based on RCT

- We've committed to accountability and continuous improvement since inception, and decided to have our impact evaluated in the most rigorous way possible – through a randomized control trial (RCT) – funded by Accelerate last year
- 867 students in the study. 312 in treatment group. All students were located in Title 1 schools. 6 of 9 Title 1 schools were also "low-performing" schools. 41% of students in the study Black or African American. 39% Hispanic. 11% White.
- The positive effects were highly concentrated among boys.
- Student gains do not appear to be affected by tutor background.

For full study results: University of Michigan Youth Policy Lab

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We're cost-effective and costs are shared

High-impact tutoring programs cost between $1,000-$4,000 per student per year. We've kept total cost per student between $1,100-$1,400 / year, with school districts, the State of NC, and philanthropy sharing the costs.

$650
School Partners

$550
NCEC
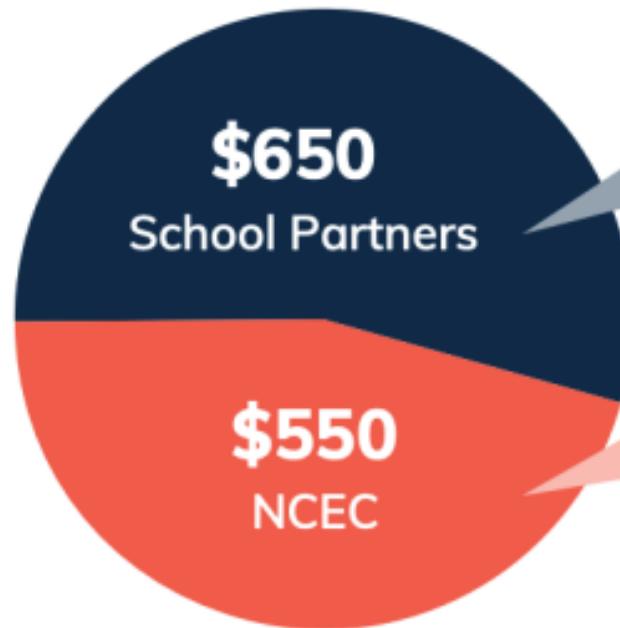
School Partners cover the hourly wage of tutors and associated administrative costs

NCEC contributes $550 of the $1,200 per student per year using a mix of public and private funds, which cover the costs of school partner and tutor recruitment, training and coaching, progress monitoring, program evaluation, and high-impact tutor implementation and reporting support

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What else?

- **Our program is popular among NC educators and parents**

- **And supporting high-impact tutoring is good politics**

- **More information in the Appendix on these topics**

While software programs can be useful for some kids, K-3 students struggling to reach grade-level benchmarks often struggle with them

NCEC tutors help K-3 students master foundational skills by keeping them engaged and motivated

School District Partners for 2024-25: 26

26 school districts representing all 8 DPI regions (majority in Tier 1 or 2 Counties); 453 tutors, 188 schools, 7,994 students

- Asheville City
- Chatham
- Cherokee
- Cumberland
- Durham
- Edgecombe
- Granville
- Guilford
- Hertford

- Hoke
- Johnston
- Jones
- Lincoln
- Montgomery
- Mt. Airy
- New Hanover (math pilot)
- Newton-Conover
- Orange

- Roanoke Rapids
- Rocky Mount Prep
- Scotland
- Surry
- Vance
- Wake
- Weldon City
- Winston-Salem

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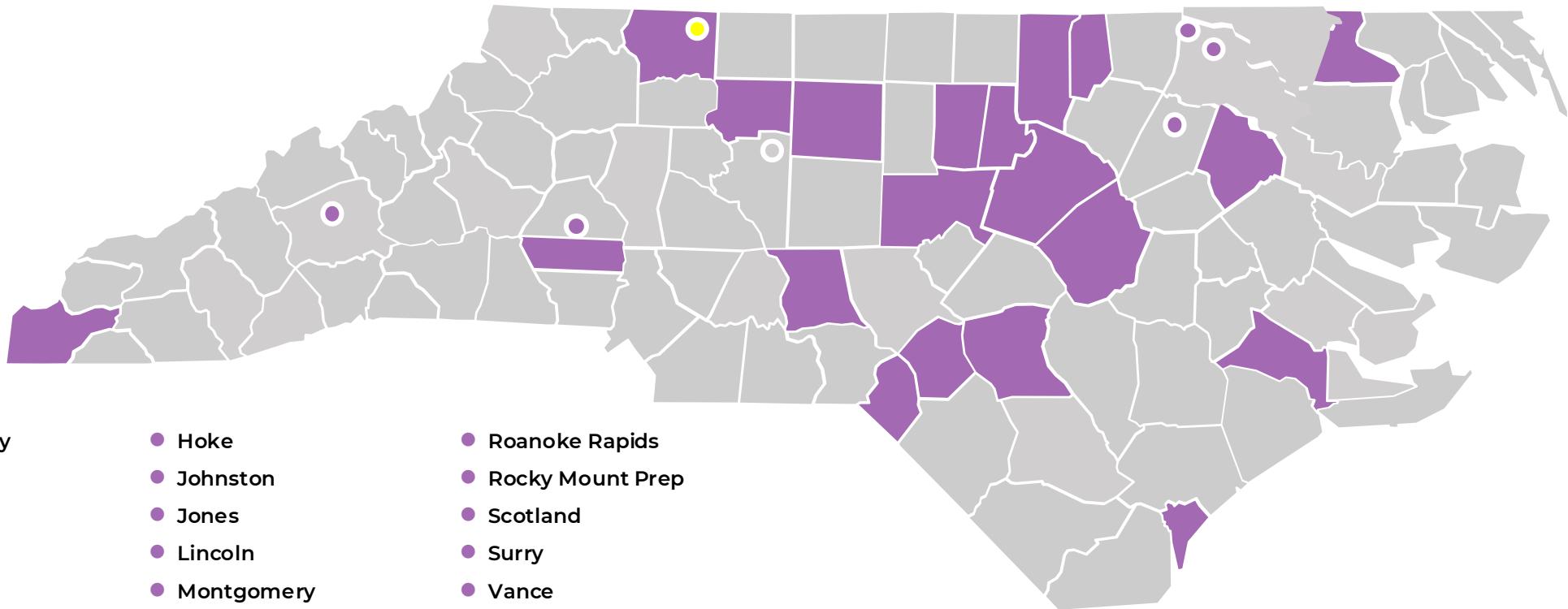
School District Partners for 2025-26: 11

11 school districts representing 6 of 8 DPI regions (majority in Tier 1 or 2 Counties), 117 tutors, 63 schools, 2.4k students

- Asheville City
- Chatham
- Granville
- Guilford
- Hyde (consultative)
- Lincoln
- Wake
- Orange
- Roanoke Rapids
- Watauga (Belk Foundation Grant)
- Winston-Salem

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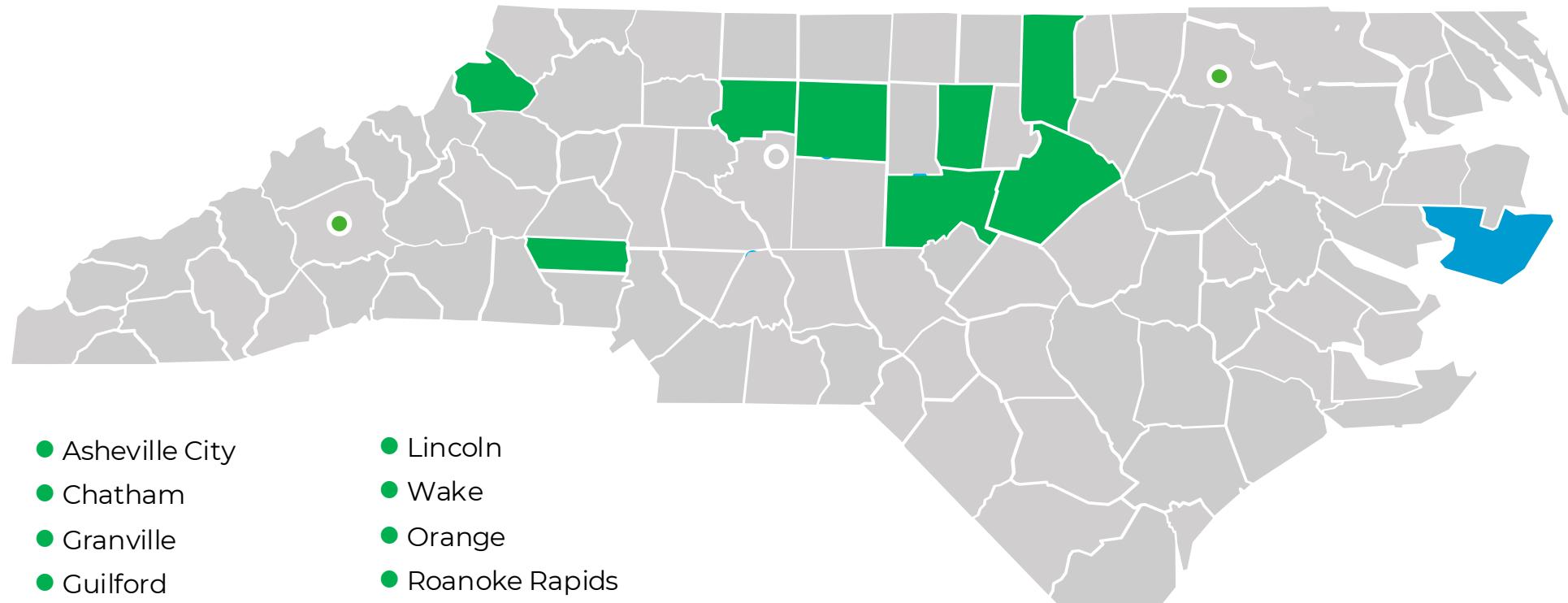
What's next

What's next?

- **Provide recurring funding for high-impact tutoring.**

- **Follow the lead of Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, and Tennessee by passing legislation that sets clear standards for tutoring program design, implementation, and reporting aligned to national best practices**
  - This can help generate better program/product comparison data and enable good stewardship of public funds
  - ALEC Model Tutoring Legislation
  - Accelerate Model Tutoring Legislation

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Thank you for your interest and support.

You make a big difference!

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Appendix

For anyone running for election this fall

KEY RECOMMENDATION: TALK ABOUT EDUCATION MUCH MORE

67% OF VOTERS BELIEVE ELECTED OFFICIALS TALK **TOO LITTLE** ABOUT EDUCATION

Source: 2026 Burson / Hunt Institute "Across the Aisle" Survey Results

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92% of likely voters polled reported that it is important to them that public officials and education leaders address students not reading at grade level

TOP EDUCATIONAL PRIORITIES

Voters are in alignment on education priorities.

Making investments in students and teachers is a priority. This includes hiring educators, improving workforce preparedness, and overcoming learning losses.

How personally important it is to you that public officials and education leaders address the issue?

■ Extremely important ■ Somewhat important **Net important**

	Extremely	Net important
Hire quality teachers	81	93
Teach real-world skills for the future workforce	78	92
Address students not reading at grade level	75	92

Source: 2026 Burson / Hunt Institute "Across the Aisle" Survey Results

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Popular support for tutoring among parents: NC poll

Need
- 57% of parents think their child faces some kind of challenge in Reading; 54% in Math.
- ~60% wish their child received more one-on-one help at school.
- ~60% also believe that a certified Reading or Math tutor would be beneficial for their child.

Access
- 53% feel like their children experience some kind of structural barrier to learning.
- 69% indicate that they would face hurdles to accessing tutoring if their child needed it – primarily cost and issues with transportation.

Current State
- Only 1/3 of parents report that their child is currently receiving tutoring for Reading or Math.
- Most of those parents are paying for it themselves (79% Reading, 67% Math), and 81% report that it is a financial strain on their household.

NCEC Support
- 79% of parents with a tutoring need were interested in enrolling their child in this program.
- 80% feel it is important that the program can continue across the state.
- 83% support state funding for NCEC tutoring.
- 88% believe that every school district should provide high impact tutoring for students who are below grade level.

What school partners are saying about us

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L3Iimuf69Mw

What students need to catch up varies: reading

Figure 1. Months of Schooling Required to Catch Up to Pre-COVID Achievement by Race/Ethnicity, Spring 2024

The figures show the months of additional learning that K-8 students will need to reach pre-COVID levels of achievement and the variance across race and ethnicity.
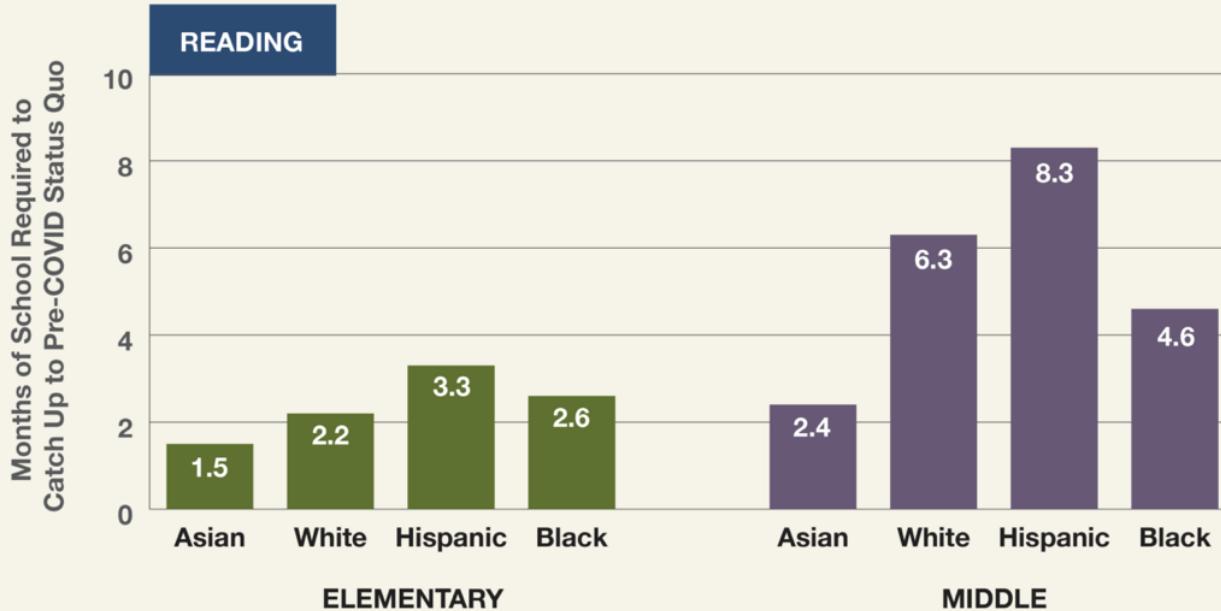
This also suggests that the earlier we help students catch up, the better. When students fall behind and it goes largely unaddressed, the problem tends to snowball.

Source: National Association of State Boards of Education

What students need to catch up varies: math

Figure 1. Months of Schooling Required to Catch Up to Pre-COVID Achievement by Race/Ethnicity, Spring 2024
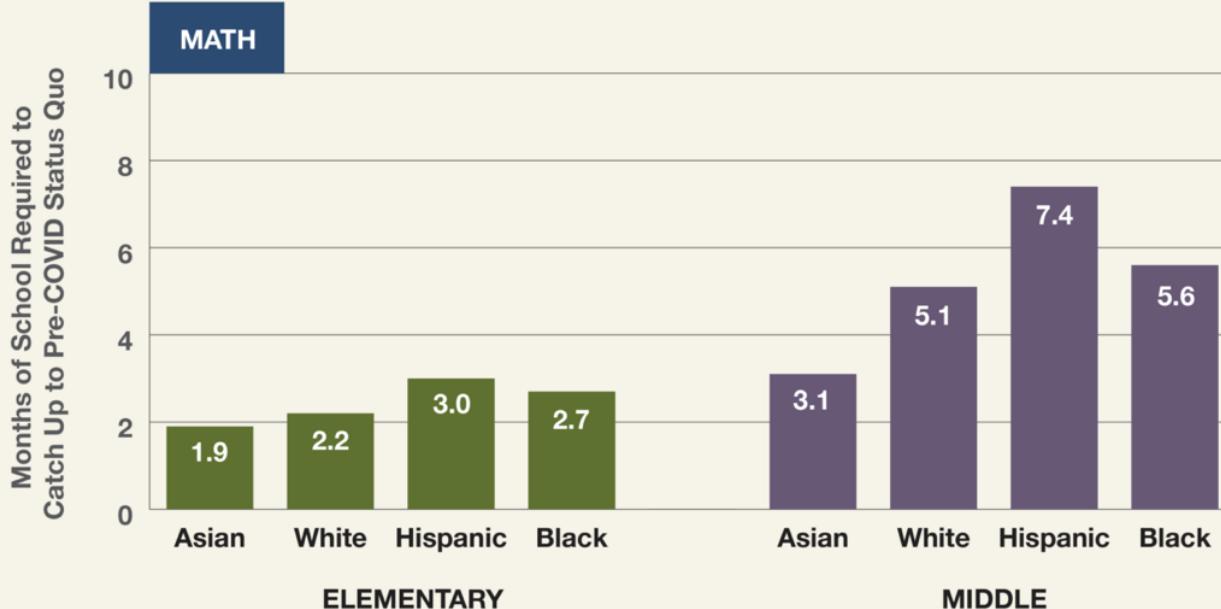
Source: National Association of State Boards of Education

Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework
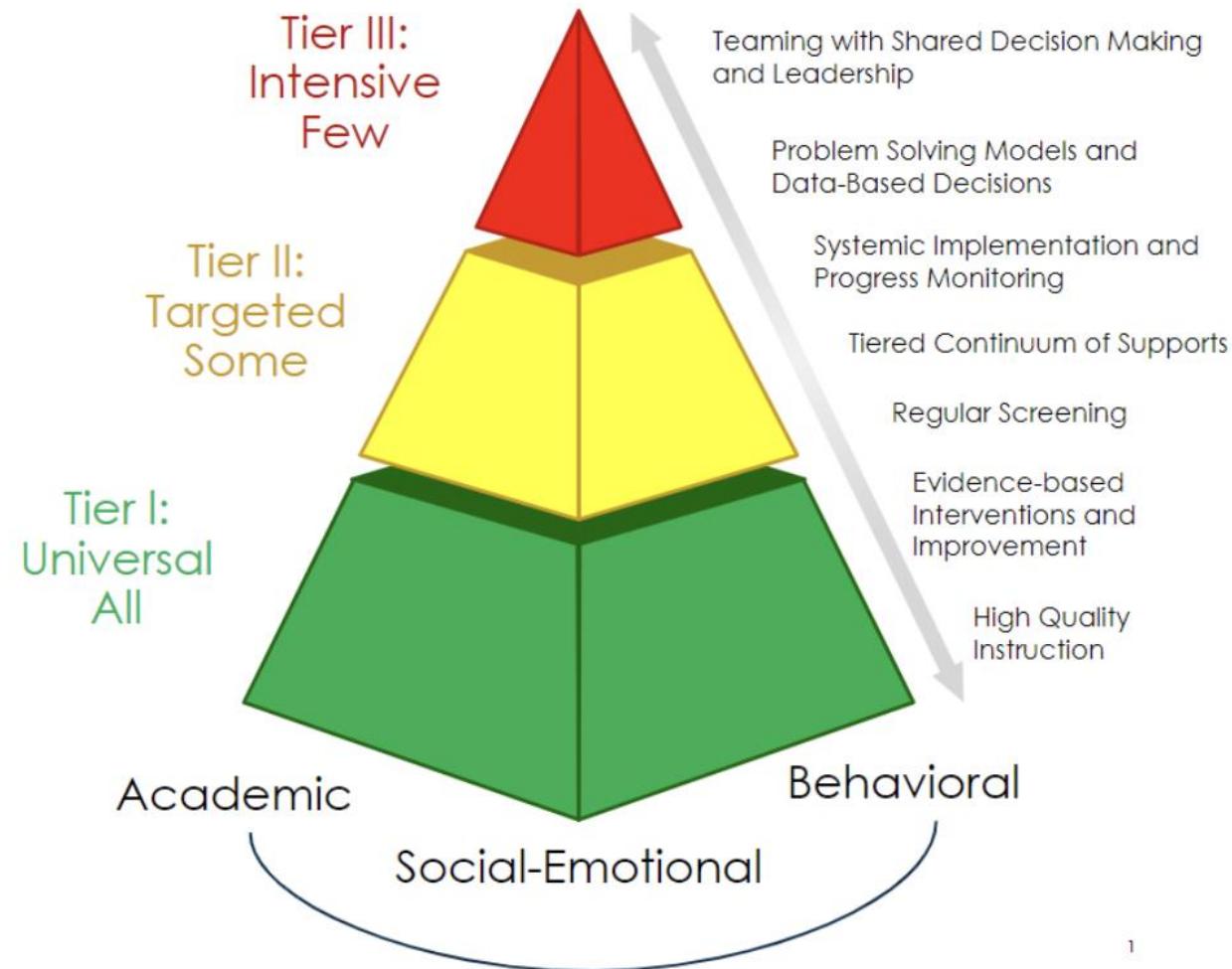
For more information on MTSS, check out the NC DPI website here.

Accountability: we track key metrics in real time to ensure quality tutoring across school sites
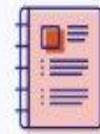

2 Programs

614.83 Completed Hours

414 Completed Sessions

428 Upcoming Sessions

1 : 3.38 Tutor : Student Ratio

26.73 mins. Avg. Session Length

100.00 % Tutor Attendance

87.66 % Student Attendance

Accountability: we track, alongside our school partners, weekly attendance and tutoring dosage for each student receiving NCEC-supported tutoring

This report provides the following information:

- student name
- week of tutoring
- sessions attended

Students that are receiving the intended dosage will show as green with 3 or more sessions within a week

Students that are receiving 2 sessions in one week show in yellow

Students that are missing sessions will show in red with 1 or less sessions

Comparing our program to alternate options

It's hard to compare, especially without clear and established reporting requirements for tutoring programs, but here's a way to think about investment options:

Education is like transportation: the point is to get people from Point A to Point B. There are multiple ways to do that, and the best option depends on the situation.

- Core vehicle
- Essential, full-time
- Classroom teacher
- For all students

- Uber
- Supplementary, part-time
- Human tutor (Education Corps)
- Best for students struggling to stay engaged and reach grade level, especially K-4 students

- Self-driving car
- Supplementary, part-time
- Software program, AI tutor (Khanmigo)
- Best for self-motivated 5-12 graders who have mastered foundational skills and seek advanced learning

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Advancing educational excellence through engaged community