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May 4, 2021

New Tutoring Coalition Launches Effort to Deliver Services To 4 Million Children in the 2021-22 School Year

ProvenTutoring offers school districts a path forward to address the pandemic's effects on learning and support children struggling with reading and math

BALTIMORE – A new coalition of more than a dozen established tutoring programs launched this week to help schools nationwide meet the needs of students whose struggles with math and reading worsened during the pandemic. Known as ProvenTutoring, the coalition seeks to rapidly scale up research-backed, high-impact tutoring programs to serve students performing far below grade level in Title I schools across the U.S. With an influx of funding from the American Rescue Plan and in partnership with school districts across the nation, ProvenTutoring programs seek to serve 4 million children in the 2021-22 school year.

To help school districts match programs that best fit the needs of their students, the coalition has a website – ProvenTutoring.org – to serve as a one-stop-shop for more information about their highly effective programs. ProvenTutoring member organizations, who in some cases offer more than one program, are: AARP Foundation; Future Forward; Lesley University and The Ohio State University; Lindamood-Bell; Benedict Silverman Foundation; University of North Carolina; Success for All Foundation; University of Oregon; Reading & Math, Inc.; Fuchs Tutoring; and Saga Education. The programming offered by these organizations supports reading tutoring in kindergarten through sixth grades and math tutoring in kindergarten through 10th grades.

Prior to the pandemic, many children in the U.S. already struggled to meet grade-level expectations. During the pandemic, as many schools went virtual for months, the situation worsened as many students were not able to fully engage with online school because of internet, device, and other challenges. An analysis by McKinsey in December shows that students on average started the 2020-21 school year about three months behind grade level in mathematics. This trend didn't play out equally across demographics, however. White students were about one to three months behind, and students of color were three to five months behind.

"If you are concerned about equity in the U.S., ProvenTutoring should matter to you. Lower-income students and students of color have suffered the most from COVID-related school building closures," said Amanda Nietzel, spokesperson for ProvenTutoring. "Not only do we know that that tutoring works, but we know the specific elements that make tutoring programs most effective."

Extensive research shows that one-on-one and small group tutoring has been proven to be the most effective way to deliver support to students. Effective tutoring programs can make a large difference in a short amount of time. The effect size of a ProvenTutoring program is +0.41 in reading and +.030 in math, whereas the effect size of summer school on reading is +0.06 and on math is +0.02. According to the late researcher and ProvenTutoring co-founder Robert Slavin, the effect sizes of these programs could translate to a gain of 20 points in reading and 15 points in math on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

“All of our ProvenTutoring partners are committed to those key principles and to scaling up services to reach as many children as possible in partnership with school districts across the country,” Neitzel added.

ProvenTutoring stands out because each of its members offers highly rigorous programs that follow evidence-backed best practices and have research to show their effectiveness. These tutoring programs have been evaluated in studies that meet the evidence standards of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) at the Strong, Moderate, or Promising levels. Information about ProvenTutoring programs and their results are now available at ProvenTutoring.org.

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ProvenTutoring is a coalition of organizations that provide high-effective tutoring programs to support students across the U.S. It was founded by Robert Slavin and Nancy Madden of Johns Hopkins University as a nonprofit subsidiary of the Success for All Foundation. The website, ProvenTutoring.org, helps educators learn about and access tutoring programs proven in rigorous research to substantially increase the achievement of students performing far below grade level due to COVID school closures or other factors.

Robert Slavin passed away suddenly just before the launch of ProvenTutoring. The coalition will continue to be led by Nancy Madden and her Success for All Foundation colleagues.