



**THIRD SPACE
LEARNING**

Funding Math Tutoring in 2026-27: A District Leader's Guide

A practical map of the funding still available for
high-impact math tutoring

District Leader Guide

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Introduction

In every math classroom, some students need something extra. A tutor working one-on-one on fractions. A small group catching up on number facts before state assessments. An interventionist a few afternoons a week. These are the students where funding decisions matter most, and where they're hardest to get right.

A lot has changed since most districts last sat down with an intervention budget. ESSER has ended. ED and DOL have entered interagency agreements under which DOL takes a greater administrative role in several federal education programs, while ED retains oversight and statutory responsibility. New grant competitions have opened. And federal and state priorities have sharpened around evidence-based, high-impact tutoring including the use of AI tutoring to support.

This guide is written for district leaders responsible for intervention strategy across their schools, and for the school principals putting that strategy into practice at the building level. It covers the federal, state, and competitive grant funding currently available for math interventions in the 2026-27 school year, what each pot can and can't be used for, and how to braid sources together so tutoring doesn't stop when one runs out.

Think of it as a practical map, built from current guidance, for district and school leaders who already know tutoring works – the real question is how to fund it, year after year, without the ESSER cliff.

"This innovative one-on-one maths tutoring solution offers an even more cost-effective alternative. The children are thoroughly enjoying the experience, and their engagement and focus are clearly evident."



Chris Harris, Deputy Principal
Admirals Academy, part of EMAT



At-a-glance funding decision matrix

Funding stream	Best tutoring use	Can fund direct tutoring?	Student group	Timing	Main compliance risk
Title I-A	Tier 2/3 academic intervention	Yes	Low-income schools or eligible students	School day, before/after school, summer	Schoolwide/targeted assistance documentation
Title II-A	Tutor training and coaching	Usually no	Staff	Before launch and ongoing	Supplement-not-supplant
Title III-A	EL-specific supplemental support	Yes, if EL-specific	English Learners	Flexible	Replacing required EL services
IDEA-B	IEP-aligned tutoring/support	Yes, if required by IEP	Students with disabilities	As specified	Charging general intervention to IDEA
Title IV-A	Academic enrichment/technology	Yes, if aligned	LEA-wide based on needs assessment	Flexible	Needs assessment and spending rules
Title IV-B	Out-of-school-time tutoring	Yes	High-poverty schools/communities	Non-school hours	Using funds during regular school day
REAP	Rural tutoring flexibility	Yes	Eligible rural LEAs	Flexible	Eligibility and AFUA election
Section 1003	School improvement tutoring	Yes	CSI/TSI/ATSI schools	Plan-dependent	Weak link to improvement plan

Why invest in math tutoring right now

The pandemic is almost five years behind us, but the math data tells a different story. The 2024 Nation's Report Card, released by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), showed that average 4th grade math scores were still 3 points below 2019, even after a small rebound. In 8th grade, scores were flat – no state or district made gains. Nearly 40% of 8th graders now perform below NAEP Basic in math, and only around a quarter are proficient or above.

Most worrying: for the bottom 10% of students, the pandemic-era learning gap grew 70% larger between 2022 and 2024. The students who were already behind have fallen further behind. They're the same students who lost ESSER-funded tutoring when the money dried up.

High-impact tutoring is one of the few interventions with consistent, large-scale evidence behind it. And district leaders are asking the same question: how do you keep it going once ESSER is gone?

What the research says about tutoring

The most influential meta-analysis on tutoring – Nickow, Oreopoulos and Quan (2024), published in the American Educational Research Journal – pooled 89 experimental studies and found an average effect size of 0.288 standard deviations. That's a large effect by K-12 research standards.

The same study identified the conditions that produce the biggest gains:

- ✓ Delivered by teachers or trained paraprofessionals, not volunteers or peer tutors
- ✓ Started in the earlier grades
- ✓ At least three days per week
- ✓ Held during the school day, not as an optional add-on

The Department of Education has since built these conditions into federal grant priorities. The FY25 Education Innovation and Research (EIR) competition named high-impact tutoring as a Competitive Preference Priority, and in 2025 the federal government allocated more than \$230 million to scaling and studying high-impact tutoring through EIR alone.

How much does math tutoring cost?

The cost of math tutoring varies widely by format, subject, and tutor experience. For high-impact district tutoring (small-group, evidence-based, three or more sessions per week), 2025-26 rates typically sit at:

- ✓ **Online tutoring:** \$40-\$80 per hour
- ✓ **In-person tutoring:** \$50-\$100 per hour
- ✓ **Specialist STEM and test-prep tutoring:** \$80-\$110+ per hour

For a sense of scale, one well-studied high-dosage math tutoring program in Chicago cost around \$3,800 per student over a single school year. Subscription-based one-on-one tutoring providers commonly charge \$520-\$760 per student per month for three sessions per week, working out to roughly \$5,000-\$7,500 per student per year. Multiply that across a cohort of struggling students and the numbers add up fast.

Three things bring the cost down without losing quality:

- ✓ **Virtual one-on-one models** widen the pool of available tutors and let districts match students to STEM specialists who might not be available locally. Delivery costs are typically lower than in-person models.
- ✓ **Trained paraprofessionals** are, according to Nickow et al., as effective as certified teachers in delivering structured tutoring, at a fraction of the cost.
- ✓ **Small-group or one-to-many models** lower the per-student cost further by serving multiple students with one tutor. Effect sizes drop with each student added to the group, so districts using this model should reserve it for students closer to grade level and keep one-on-one for students furthest behind.

Third Space Learning takes a different approach. US schools pay a fixed annual price based on enrollment, regardless of how many tutoring sessions are delivered:

One-on-one sessions per week	Cost per year with other providers*	Cost per year with Skye**	Average saving
20	\$45,540	\$5,000 - \$15,000	69%
40	\$91,080	\$5,000 - \$15,000	85%
80	\$182,160	\$5,000 - \$15,000	92%
100	\$227,700	\$5,000 - \$15,000	94%
200	\$455,400	\$5,000 - \$15,000	97%

* Based on an average price of \$69 per session running for a 33-week school year

** Fixed yearly cost for Skye is based on school size

The fixed model gives district budget holders certainty about year-on-year tutoring costs, and the per-student cost falls as more students are supported across the school.



Federal funding in 2026: what's changed and what hasn't

For 2026-27 planning, districts should work from enacted FY26 appropriations and SEA allocation guidance, while monitoring federal restructuring and future budget proposals as risk factors. The FY26 appropriations package largely maintained current K-12 funding levels, with small reported increases for Title I, Part A and IDEA Part B. The President's FY26 request proposed major consolidation and eliminations, but those proposals should not be treated as the operating baseline. The federal funding picture has shifted more in the past 18 months than in the previous decade. For district leaders, the headlines that matter are these.

What's stayed the same

- ✓ **Title I, Part A is fully funded** and remains the largest federal K-12 formula stream and a primary source for tutoring in eligible schools. Districts should use final SEA and LEA allocations, not national averages, when building 2026-27 budgets
- ✓ **The major ESEA Title programs (II-A, III-A, IV-A, IV-B) are all live** for the 2025-26 and 2026-27 school years
- ✓ **IDEA Part B funding** continues, with FY26 allocations released to states on July 1, 2026
- ✓ **Federal grant priorities have sharpened** around evidence-based, high-impact tutoring – the FY25 EIR competition named high-impact tutoring as a Competitive Preference Priority, and more than \$230 million was allocated through EIR in 2025 to scale and study it

What's changed

- ✓ **ESSER is finished.** The final obligation deadline passed September 30, 2024. Late liquidation extensions closed March 28, 2026. Districts can no longer rely on ESSER for 2026-27 tutoring spend.
- ✓ **The Department of Education is being restructured.** ED and DOL have entered interagency agreements under which DOL takes a greater role in administering several federal education programs. ED retains oversight and statutory responsibility, while DOL supports functions such as grant administration, competitions, technical assistance and program integration..Several interagency agreements have faced legal and political challenge. Districts should follow current ED and SEA grant guidance rather than assuming program rules have changed.
- ✓ **Title I, Part C (Migrant Education) is proposed for elimination** in Trump's FY26 budget, a \$428 million cut.
- ✓ **A “skinny budget” proposal** would consolidate 18 federal education programs into a single block grant. McKinney-Vento (homeless education) is among the programs at risk of being folded in.
- ✓ **Federal grant timing has become less predictable.** Title III funding releases were delayed in summer 2025, creating cash-flow gaps for some districts.

What it means for districts

The big federal funding streams are still there. Tutoring is still allowable spend in nearly all of them. But the administrative picture is shifting fast, and districts that braid multiple sources – formulas, competitive grants, and state-level funding – will weather the volatility better than those relying on one or two streams.

“The sessions offer tutoring on specific concepts, standards and skills targeted to exactly what they need, which is what makes it so successful”



Liz Avery, Math Instructional Coach,
Renaissance Academy Charter School of The Arts (NY)



Your core federal funding options

The federal options for funding math tutoring fall into eight main streams. Each one has different eligibility rules, different allocation amounts, and different rules on how the money can be spent. The cards below cover the essentials for each.

Supplement, not supplant

This phrase appears across nearly every federal funding stream below. It means federal funds must add to what your district is already paying for with state, local, or other federal money – not replace it. If your district was already covering tutoring out of the general budget, you cannot simply swap that spend for Title I, Part A funds and redirect the savings elsewhere. Federal auditors look for evidence that the federally funded activity is genuinely additional, not a back-door substitution. When designing a tutoring program supported by multiple streams, document what each stream is paying for and confirm that none of those activities would have been delivered without the federal money.



Title I, Part A (ESEA)

The largest federal aid stream for K-12 education and the most flexible source for tutoring spend. Now being administered via Department of Labor agreements, but funding levels and eligibility rules are unchanged from prior years.

- ✓ **Who's eligible:** LEAs and schools with high concentrations of low-income students. Schoolwide programs run at 40%+ of students from low-income families. Around 46% of US schools qualify.
- ✓ **How much:** Largest federal K-12 formula stream. National averages are useful context only – LEA allocations depend on formula children, poverty data, state factors and hold-harmless rules. Use final SEA and LEA allocation tables, not national averages, when building 2026-27 tutoring budgets. Four grant streams sit under Title I, Part A: Basic, Concentration, Targeted, and Education Finance Incentive Grants.

- ✓ **Allowable tutoring uses:** Schoolwide programs (any student in a Title I school can benefit) or targeted assistance (specific struggling students). High-impact tutoring, before- and after-school programs, summer interventions, and supplemental instruction are all allowable.
- ✓ **Watch out:** In-house tutors and paraprofessionals running Title I programs must meet state qualification requirements. External tutoring providers do not. Spending must be documented and tied to school improvement plans.

Title II, Part A (ESEA)

Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants. Funds the professional development of teachers, principals, and other school leaders – the people who run or oversee tutoring programs.

- ✓ **Who's eligible:** All LEAs receive Title II, Part A allocations, with amounts based on a formula that weights student population and poverty.
- ✓ **How much:** Allocations vary widely by district size and demographics. State and district allocation pages are the best place to check 2025-26 and 2026-27 figures for your LEA.
- ✓ **Allowable tutoring uses:** Training and coaching for teachers and paraprofessionals who deliver in-house tutoring. Formative assessment design and use. Job-embedded, evidence-based PD. Title II, Part A cannot usually fund the tutoring sessions themselves, but it can fund the people delivering them.
- ✓ **Watch out:** Funds must supplement, not supplant existing state, local, or other federal funds. Activities must be tied to evidence-based practice and student achievement. Small rural districts eligible for REAP can use the Alternative Fund Use Authority (AFUA) to spend Title II, Part A money flexibly on Title I, Part A activities, including direct tutoring – more on this in the REAP card.

Title III, Part A (ESEA)

English Language Acquisition State Grants. Supplemental funding to help English Learner (EL) students reach the same grade-level academic standards as their peers, including in math.

- ✓ **Who's eligible:** LEAs with English Learner students. Allocations are based on the number of EL and immigrant students enrolled, drawn from US Census and state data.
- ✓ **How much:** Varies significantly by district demographics. Title III releases were delayed in summer 2025, creating short-term cash-flow gaps in some districts – worth factoring into 2026-27 timing assumptions.
- ✓ **Allowable tutoring uses:** Supplemental tutoring or intensified instruction for English Learners where the service addresses EL students' language-access and academic needs and does not replace the district's civil rights obligations. After-school tutoring. Supplemental texts and instructional materials. Professional development for EL educators. Dual enrolment programs for older students.
- ✓ **Watch out:** Funds must supplement, not supplant. Title III cannot be used to fulfill an LEA's obligation under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act or the Equal Educational Opportunities Act. Tutoring funded through Title III must focus specifically on EL student needs.

Title IV, Part A (ESEA)

Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE). A flexible block of funding covering three content areas: well-rounded educational opportunities, school conditions for student learning, and the effective use of technology.

- ✓ **Who's eligible:** LEAs that received a Title I, Part A allocation in the prior year. Minimum allocation of \$10,000 per LEA in 2025-26.
- ✓ **How much:** Allocations vary widely. LEAs receiving \$30,000 or more must complete a triennial needs assessment and split funds across the three content areas: at least 20% on academic enrichment, at least 20% on safe and healthy student conditions, and a portion on personalized learning experiences supported by technology. Equipment and infrastructure spend is capped at 15%.

- ✓ **Allowable tutoring uses:** Math enrichment programs, edtech-delivered tutoring, personalized learning platforms, and one-on-one or small-group academic support. Funded either through the academic enrichment portion or the technology portion.
- ✓ **Watch out:** The needs assessment requirement is binding for any LEA receiving \$30,000+. Build it into your planning timeline. Funds must supplement, not supplant.

Title IV, Part B (ESEA)

Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC). Funds out-of-school time academic enrichment, including tutoring, for students attending high-poverty schools.

- ✓ **Who's eligible:** LEAs, schools, and community-based organizations serving students who attend high-poverty schools. Title I status is not required, but eligibility weighting favors schools with high concentrations of low-income students.
- ✓ **How much:** \$1.3 billion released by ED in July 2025 for the FY25/26 cycle. State allocations vary; reimbursement grants to local sites range from \$50,000 to \$400,000 per year, depending on the number of students served.
- ✓ **Allowable tutoring uses:** Before-school, after-school, weekend, and summer tutoring. Math and reading enrichment, homework help, and supplemental instruction outside the regular school day. Family engagement and parent education programs are also allowable.
- ✓ **Watch out:** Programs must operate during non-school hours – this is not a fund for in-school tutoring. Competitive sub-grant process at the state level, so application timelines and criteria vary by SEA.

 IDEA, Part B

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part B. Federal funding for the education of children with disabilities aged 3-21, including tutoring and related services tied to a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

- ✓ **Who's eligible:** All states and LEAs serving children with disabilities. Allocations are made on a census-based formula tied to the number of eligible children receiving special education and related services.
- ✓ **How much:** FY26 allocations released to states on July 1, 2026, with annual state applications due May 20, 2026. District-level amounts vary by special education enrollment.
- ✓ **Allowable tutoring uses:** Tutoring, supplementary aids, assistive technology or paraprofessional support when the service is required to implement a student's IEP and meets federal, state and local allowability rules. District special education and finance teams should approve costs before they are charged to IDEA. Professional development for staff providing IEP-aligned tutoring is also allowable.
- ✓ **Watch out:** Funds cannot be used to provide services that all students, regardless of disability, are already entitled to receive. A service appearing in an IEP does not automatically make it an allowable special education cost; check state and federal regulations before committing spend.

 GEAR UP

Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs. A discretionary federal grant program for high-poverty middle and high schools, focused on preparing low-income students for postsecondary education – with tutoring as a core component.

- ✓ **Who's eligible:** Schools where at least 50% of the student body qualifies for Free and Reduced-Price Lunch (FRL). State and partnership grants are awarded on a six- or seven-year cycle, and serve entire student cohorts starting no later than 7th grade through high school graduation.

- ✓ **How much:** The administration requested \$398 million for GEAR UP in FY25, with around \$35 million earmarked for the Partnership competition. State GEAR UP grants are capped at \$5 million per applicant per year. The FY25 application window closed June 25, 2025; the next competition will be announced by the Department of Education.
- ✓ **Allowable tutoring uses:** In-school and after-school tutoring for grades 7-12. Mentoring. College preparatory and AP/IB programs. PD for tutors and instructors. Parental engagement programs. Scholarship and financial aid support.
- ✓ **Watch out:** GEAR UP is a competitive grant, not a formula allocation – not every eligible school will receive funding. The cohort model commits you to a specific group of students for the full grant period, so plan for sustained delivery rather than one-off interventions.



REAP (Title V, Part B)

The Rural Education Achievement Program. Two formula grants – Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) and Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) – designed to give small rural LEAs greater flexibility to fund local priorities, including tutoring.

- ✓ **Who's eligible:** Small rural districts that meet specific size and rurality thresholds. SRSA targets the smallest, most rural LEAs. RLIS serves rural districts with a high concentration of low-income students. The two programs split the REAP appropriation equally each year.
- ✓ **How much:** SRSA grants are capped at \$60,000 per LEA per year. RLIS allocations vary by district. The FY26 SRSA application window opened April 13 and closes May 18, 2026.
- ✓ **Allowable tutoring uses:** Direct funding of tutoring programs, tutor and paraprofessional training, edtech and instructional materials. The bigger win for many rural districts is the Alternative Fund Use Authority (AFUA): SRSA-eligible LEAs can spend their Title II, Part A and Title IV, Part A allocations on Title I, Part A, Title III, or Title IV, Part B activities instead, including direct tutoring delivery.
- ✓ **Watch out:** AFUA is opt-in – districts have to formally elect to use it. SRSA eligibility changes year to year based on student counts, so confirm current status before building it into a multi-year plan.

Grant funding beyond the formulas

Formula funding is the backbone of most district intervention budgets. Competitive grants are how districts and partner schools punch above their weight – funding new programs, scaling proven ones, and bringing in evaluation evidence that strengthens future bids. The grants below are some of the most relevant for math tutoring in 2026-27.

Title I, Section 1003 (School Improvement Grants)

Federal funds reserved for districts and schools identified as needing the most support. Allocated through state education agencies to districts with schools in Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI), Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI), or Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI) status.

- ✓ **Who's eligible:** Districts with at least one school identified for CSI, ATSI, or TSI under ESSA accountability. State education agencies set their own application criteria.
- ✓ **How much:** Section 1003 funds are reserved from a state's overall Title I, Part A allocation – typically around 7% of the state's Title I, Part A total. District allocations depend on the number and type of identified schools.
- ✓ **Allowable tutoring uses:** High-quality tutoring is explicitly named as an allowable use, alongside other evidence-based interventions tied to a school's improvement plan. States set their own provider requirements and quality criteria for tutoring funded through 1003.
- ✓ **Watch out:** Spending must be tied directly to the actions in your school's continuous improvement plan (DCIP/SCEP or equivalent). 1003 grants are time-limited, often awarded in annual cycles, so plan for sustained funding through other streams once the improvement period ends.

Education Innovation and Research (EIR)

EIR is best treated as a competitive scale-up or evaluation opportunity, not a core tutoring budget line. Districts should only build it into plans where they have the capacity to manage a federal grant, partner with an evaluator and meet evidence requirements. A federal competitive grant program that funds evidence-based programs to improve outcomes for high-need students. EIR allocated more than \$230 million for scaling high-impact tutoring in 2025, plus a further \$256 million in literacy grants announced in late 2025. The FY26 appropriations package reportedly reduced EIR by \$24 million to \$235 million, so it should not be positioned as a general replacement for ESSER.

- ✓ **Who's eligible:** State education agencies, LEAs, the Bureau of Indian Education, and nonprofit organizations partnering with schools or districts. Awards are made across three tiers – Early-phase, Mid-phase, and Expansion – with progressively stronger evidence requirements.
- ✓ **How much:** Up to \$15 million per project for up to 60 months, depending on tier. The FY25 Mid-phase and Expansion application window closed October 14, 2025; the next competition will be announced by the Department of Education.
- ✓ **Allowable tutoring uses:** High-impact tutoring is named as a Competitive Preference Priority in the FY25 EIR competition, with funding earmarked specifically for projects scaling individualized or small-group tutoring. Curriculum development, evaluation, and implementation support are all allowable.
- ✓ **Watch out:** EIR is highly competitive, especially at Mid-phase and Expansion. Most successful applicants partner with an independent research evaluator. More than 65% of recent EIR awards have gone to projects in rural areas – a positive signal for rural districts considering an application.

“Third Space Learning has solved the problem of not having enough time or resources to fill gaps in student learning.”



Liz Avery, Math Instructional Coach,
Renaissance Academy Charter School of The Arts (NY)



Accelerate (Call for Effective Technology and Evidence for Impact)

A national nonprofit funding evidence-building and implementation studies of tutoring and Edtech models. Accelerate is not a formula source districts can rely on for core tutoring – it is an opportunity for providers, researchers and school system partners testing tutoring and education technology models. Two main grant programs run alongside each other: the Call for Effective Technology (CET), focused on AI and Edtech, and Evidence for Impact (EFI), focused on tutoring evaluation.

- ✓ **Who's eligible:** Tutoring providers, edtech organizations, and school or district partners. Awards are highly competitive – the 2025 cohort drew more than 160 applicants and selected 14 grantees across both programs.
- ✓ **How much:** CET grants are awarded up to \$250,000 per project. EFI grant amounts vary depending on the scope of the proposed evaluation.
- ✓ **Allowable tutoring uses:** Implementation of tutoring or AI-supported tutoring tools in schools, paired with independent evaluation. Each grantee is matched with a research partner to assess fit, usability, and student outcomes.
- ✓ **Worth knowing for districts:** Independent evaluation underway. Third Space Learning was selected as a 2025 Accelerate Call for Effective Technology grantee. The grant is supporting implementation and independent study of Skye – Third Space Learning's spoken AI math tutor – in US schools. Districts partnering with Third Space Learning during this period are participating in research that will shape the next wave of evidence on AI tutoring. Accelerate grants of this kind require a school or district partner.

AmeriCorps and City Year

AmeriCorps is a national service initiative that places members in schools as full-time tutors, mentors, and after-school program staff. City Year is the largest education-focused AmeriCorps program, partnering with high-need schools across more than 25 US cities.

- ✓ **Who's eligible:** Public schools and districts in cities where AmeriCorps programs operate. Most placements are in Title I schools and other high-need settings.

- ✓ **How much:** AmeriCorps is partly federally funded with a 4:1 local/private match required. Schools contribute a per-member fee that varies by program. Federal funding for FY25 AmeriCorps grants (\$200 million for 2025-26) was withheld by OMB in July 2025, creating uncertainty for some local partnerships.
- ✓ **Allowable tutoring uses:** Direct in-school tutoring across English and math, after-school programming, mentoring, and small-group academic support. AmeriCorps members typically serve 11-month terms, providing sustained year-long support to assigned students.
- ✓ **Watch out:** AmeriCorps funding has been politically volatile in 2025-26 – check current grant status with your local provider before committing to a partnership. Schools partnering with City Year have shown strong outcomes (2-3× more likely to improve math scores than comparable non-partner schools), but the model requires sustained coordination from school staff.

Overdeck Family Foundation

A private philanthropic foundation focused on education research and evidence-building. Overdeck does not fund districts directly, but its grants underwrite many of the tutoring providers, research partners, and edtech tools districts already use.

- ✓ **Who's eligible:** Nonprofit organizations, edtech providers, research institutions, and intermediary funders like Accelerate. Districts benefit indirectly when their tutoring or edtech provider is an Overdeck grantee.
- ✓ **How much:** Varies widely. The foundation awarded more than \$10.6 million in Q1 2026 across 29 grants. In 2025, Overdeck committed \$4 million over two years to Accelerate to fund 10 randomized controlled trials of tutoring models, including in math and at the middle school level.
- ✓ **Allowable tutoring uses:** Most Overdeck funding flows to evidence-building, program scale-up, and research infrastructure for tutoring providers and intermediary organizations rather than to schools or districts.
- ✓ **Worth knowing for districts:** Tutoring providers funded by Overdeck typically have stronger evaluation infrastructure and published outcomes – useful when comparing providers and writing competitive grant applications that need to cite evidence.

How to maximize your funding

With ESSER gone and federal funding fragmented across more streams than at any point in the last decade, the districts that get the most from their intervention budgets are the ones that plan deliberately. Four habits make the biggest difference.

Braid your funding

The strongest funding plans braid two or more streams together to cover different parts of a single intervention. Braiding opens up programs no single pot would fund alone, and keeps them running when one source dries up or shifts.

Common braids for math tutoring:

- ✓ **Title I, Part A + Title II, Part A:** The first funds the tutoring sessions; the second funds the training and coaching of staff delivering or overseeing them.
- ✓ **Title I, Part A + Title III, Part A:** For schools with a high concentration of EL students, Title III, Part A supplements Title I-funded tutoring with EL-specific extensions.
- ✓ **Title I, Part A + IDEA Part B:** Title I, Part A covers general tutoring; IDEA Part B covers the supplementary aids and personalized support specified in IEPs.
- ✓ **Title IV, Part A + Title IV, Part B:** The first funds the in-school technology and academic enrichment piece; the second funds before- and after-school components.

Document each funding source separately in your spending records.

Federal auditors look for clean lines between streams – a single tutoring program supported by three pots needs three sets of clean documentation, not one blended ledger.

Choose intervention models that scale

Cost-per-student is one of the first numbers your district CFO will ask for, and it's the one that varies most by intervention model. The four common options trade off cost against depth of impact.

- ✓ **One-to-one in-person tutoring:** Strongest research evidence, but the most expensive and hardest to staff at scale. Typically reserved for highest-need students.
- ✓ **One-to-one online tutoring:** Same depth as in-person but typically cheaper and easier to scale. Tutor pool is national rather than local, which makes scheduling and matching to subject specialists easier.
- ✓ **Small-group in-person tutoring:** 1:3 or 1:4 ratios. Lower cost-per-student than one-on-one but with smaller effect sizes, especially for students furthest behind.
- ✓ **Tech-enabled or AI-supported tutoring:** Lowest cost-per-student. Effectiveness depends heavily on the underlying model. The best programs combine adaptive technology with human-led oversight; the weakest are essentially digital worksheets.

When comparing models for a specific student cohort, work out the cost-per-student-per-hour and the cost-per-student-per-year. A program at \$50 per hour delivering twice a week for 30 weeks is \$3,000 per student per year. A fixed-fee model covering the same dosage for unlimited students at one school may come in at a fraction of that.

Two questions to ask of any provider:

- ✓ What is the all-in cost-per-student-per-year, including setup, materials, and reporting?
- ✓ What is the marginal cost of supporting one additional student?

The second question often surfaces the difference between a model that scales and one that just looks affordable on paper.

Prioritize diagnostic-led personalization

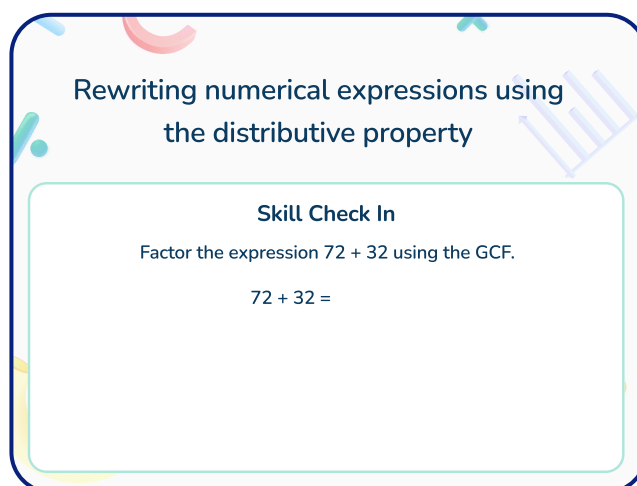
Tutoring funded with public money has to earn its place. The biggest waste of intervention budget is generic tutoring – sessions that follow a fixed curriculum regardless of what the student in the chair already knows.

The strongest tutoring models build a diagnostic into every session. Not just an assessment at the start of the program, but a short skill check at the start of each individual lesson, designed to surface what the student can already do and where the specific gap is. The lesson then teaches to that gap in real time, rather than working through pre-set content.

When evaluating a tutoring provider, ask:

- ✓ Is each lesson scaffolded around what the student knows at the start of that lesson, or is the content fixed in advance?
- ✓ Are diagnostic results used live to adjust pacing, examples, and questioning – or only reviewed at the end of a unit?
- ✓ Does the tutor have visibility on prior session data when planning the next session?
- ✓ How does the provider track misconceptions across sessions, and how is that data shared with classroom teachers?

A diagnostic-led model is more expensive to build but cheaper to run, because every minute of tutoring is targeted at the right thing. For districts braiding multiple funding streams, the audit trail it produces – what was taught, why, and how each student responded – makes the next round of grant applications considerably easier to write.



 Every Third Space Learning one-on-one tutoring session begins with a diagnostic skill check-in question

Build engagement standards into your tutoring contract

In the old model of intervention funding, district leaders chose a tutoring program and trusted that engagement would follow. With multi-year programs supported by braided funding streams, that's no longer enough. The strongest contracts make engagement a measurable line in the agreement, not an assumed outcome.

What to specify in your tutoring RFP or contract:

- ✓ **Dosage guarantee:** Sessions per week, minutes per session, total weeks per year. Research-backed targets are at least 3 sessions per week and 30+ minutes per session, sustained through the school year.
- ✓ **Attendance reporting:** Live or weekly attendance data, broken down by student. The provider should flag students at risk of falling below the dosage threshold, not wait for you to ask.
- ✓ **Tutor consistency:** The same tutor working with the same student week after week is one of the strongest predictors of engagement. Specify it in the contract, and ask how the provider handles tutor turnover mid-year.
- ✓ **Engagement signals:** How does the provider measure whether a student is actually engaged in their session, not just present? Look for evidence of student talk time, questions asked, and progress through the diagnostic.
- ✓ **Reporting cadence to school leaders:** Monthly or termly reports tied to the contract, covering dosage, progress, and any concerns flagged by tutors.

Strong contracts don't replace strong relationships. But they do give district leaders a way to hold providers accountable when engagement starts to slip, before the funding cycle ends and the data is too late to act on.

Questions to ask before procurement

A ten-question framework to put to any tutoring provider before signing a contract. Designed to move conversations from funding overview to decision support.

- 1 What is the all-in cost per student per year?
- 2 What is the marginal cost of adding 25, 50 or 100 students?
- 3 What dosage is guaranteed, and how is missed dosage recovered?
- 4 How are students selected, rostered and exited?
- 5 What evidence tier supports the model?
- 6 What data will principals receive each month?
- 7 How does the provider protect student data under FERPA and COPPA?
- 8 How are accommodations handled for students with IEPs or 504 plans?
- 9 What records will the provider supply for audit?
- 10 Who in the district owns implementation: curriculum, federal programs, school leadership or finance?

What your finance and federal programs teams will need

District leaders don't just ask "Can this fund tutoring?"

They ask, "Can we defend this spend in monitoring or audit?"

Build the following into every tutoring program supported by federal money:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ✓ Funding source and student eligibility | ✓ Time-and-effort records where staff are funded |
| ✓ School improvement plan link | ✓ Attendance and dosage records |
| ✓ Procurement record | ✓ Invoices matched to delivered services |
| ✓ Evidence basis for the intervention | ✓ Data privacy agreement |
| ✓ Supplement-not-supplant rationale | ✓ Accessibility and accommodations record |

A district leader's funding checklist

A practical one-pager to work through before the 2026-27 school year. Each phase builds on the last, so work through them in order.

Phase 1: Audit your current funding

✓	Action	What to include	Owner
☐	List every funding source currently paying for tutoring or intervention	Federal Titles, IDEA, state grants, philanthropic grants, and any local levy funds	
☐	Map current 2025-26 spend per student, per program, per funding source	Two columns: what's coming in, what's going out. Surface where money is being spent on multiple things, or where cohorts are being supported by more than one stream	
☐	Identify any underused pots	Unspent Title IV, Part A allocations, REAP AFUA flexibility not yet activated, Title 1003 funds tied to identified schools – any of these can be redirected toward 2026-27 tutoring	

Phase 2: Plan for 2026-27

✓	Action	What to include	Owner
☐	Define the student cohort	Use NAEP, state assessment, and diagnostic data to identify exactly which students need tutoring, how many, and at what dosage	
☐	Match each funding stream to a specific need	Title I, Part A for Tier 2 tutoring. Title III, Part A for EL extension. IDEA Part B for IEP-aligned support. Avoid double-counting	
☐	Build the braiding plan	Document which streams cover which parts of the program – and where the audit trail for each will live	

Phase 3: Apply and lock it in

✓	Action	What to include	Owner
☐	Confirm formula allocations and timelines	Title I, Part A; Title II, Part A; Title III, Part A; Title IV, Part A and B; IDEA Part B – check FY26 SEA and LEA timelines	
☐	Submit competitive grant applications	EIR, GEAR UP, 21st CCLC sub-grants, REAP SRSA where eligible. Calendar the deadlines now	
☐	Tie spending to your school improvement plan	Federal auditors will look for the link between intervention spend and the actions in your DCIP, SCEP, or equivalent. Build it in from the start	

How Third Space Learning can support your district

Example: how a fixed-fee, school-scheduled tutoring model can fit a braided funding plan. Third Space Learning provides online one-on-one math tutoring for schools across the US and UK. Since 2013, we've delivered more than 2.1 million tutoring sessions to over 4,100 schools.

Skye, our AI math tutor, delivers structured, conversational one-on-one lessons aligned to grade-level standards. Every lesson is designed by qualified math teachers and follows a diagnostic-led approach that meets each student where they are.

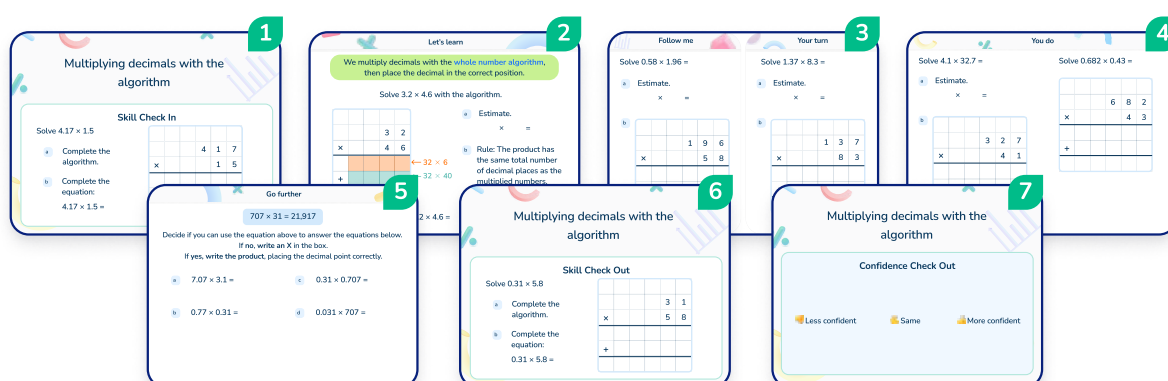
How Skye works

Every lesson with Skye follows the “I do, we do, you do” model classroom teachers will recognize – direct instruction, guided practice, then independent practice. Built-in adaptive teaching strategies include scaffolding, modeling, verbal reasoning, wait time, and rephrasing.

Each session opens with a Skill Check-In: a short diagnostic that surfaces what the student already knows. Students who demonstrate mastery skip the teaching and go straight to independent practice. Students who don't work through the full sequence, with the teaching scaffolded to their specific gap.

Throughout the lesson, formative assessment runs in the background. One wrong answer triggers a hint, two triggers more explicit scaffolding, and three triggers step-by-step modeling of the correct approach before moving on. A Skill Check Out at the end tracks progress over time and feeds into the next lesson's pathway.

Every lesson is designed, reviewed, and approved by qualified math teachers before any student sees it. Skye delivers teacher-built lessons, not AI-generated content.





Why districts choose Third Space Learning

Predictable annual pricing. US schools pay a fixed annual fee based on enrollment: \$5,000 for under 200 students, \$10,000 for 200-500, and \$15,000 for 500+. The fee covers unlimited tutoring sessions across the school year, so the more students you support, the lower the per-student cost.

Diagnostic-led personalization. The Skill Check In means tutoring time is targeted at each student's specific gap, not spent on content they already know.

No additional teacher workload. Scheduling, lesson selection, and reporting are automated. Teachers receive progress data without having to plan or run sessions.

Safeguarding by design. Sessions are audio-only, school-scheduled, and recorded. All content is pre-approved, and safeguarding concerns are flagged automatically.

Independent evaluation underway. Third Space Learning was selected as a 2025 Accelerate Call for Effective Technology grantee. The grant is supporting implementation and independent study of Skye in US schools, with findings due to inform the next wave of evidence on AI-supported tutoring.

Red Flag

Report red flag

- ☐ Disruptive behaviour - mild
- ☒ Disruptive behaviour - severe
- ☐ Safeguarding
- ☐ Pupil distress
- ☐ School asks for lesson to be changed during the session
- ☐ Wrong pupil

 AI math tutor Skye reports any safeguarding issues immediately

How Skye maps to district funding streams

Skye fits neatly into several of the federal funding streams covered earlier:

- ✓ **Title I, Part A:** Schoolwide or targeted assistance interventions for low-income students. The fixed-fee model makes it straightforward to budget against per-pupil Title I allocations.
- ✓ **Title III, Part A:** Skye can be used for EL students alongside Title III-funded extensions, with diagnostic data flagging where additional language scaffolding is needed.
- ✓ **IDEA Part B:** Where tutoring is required to implement a student's IEP and meets allowability rules, Skye provides the consistency of tutor and pacing that many IEPs specify. District special education and finance teams should approve any IDEA-charged costs in advance.
- ✓ **Title IV, Part A:** As a tech-enabled tutoring solution, Skye fits within the technology and academic enrichment portions.
- ✓ **Title IV, Part B:** Skye may fit where tutoring is delivered as part of a before-school, after-school, weekend, summer or other out-of-school-time programme funded through 21st CCLC. Title IV, Part B is not a fund for regular in-school tutoring.

"Third Space AI tutoring has reinvigorated some of our most reluctant learners. They are engaged in learning twice a week for 30 minutes, and they are so excited that they ask their teacher to leave class a bit early so that they can get started. As students share their mathematical reasoning with AI tutor 'Skye' aloud, teachers and I get some insight into their thinking processes that help inform instruction in the classroom."



Ryan Lucas, Principal,
Governor's Ranch Elementary School, Colorado



Useful resources and references

Links to the federal pages, research, and organizations referenced throughout this guide.

Federal funding programs

- ✓ [Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs](#) – US Department of Education
- ✓ [Title II, Part A: Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants](#) – US Department of Education
- ✓ [Title III, Part A: English Language Acquisition State Grants](#) – US Department of Education
- ✓ [Title IV, Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment](#) – US Department of Education
- ✓ [Title IV, Part B: Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers](#) – US Department of Education
- ✓ [IDEA Part B](#) – US Department of Education
- ✓ [GEAR UP: Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs](#) – US Department of Education
- ✓ [REAP: Rural Education Achievement Program \(Title V, Part B\)](#) – US Department of Education
- ✓ [Education Innovation and Research \(EIR\)](#) – US Department of Education

Research and evidence

- ✓ [NAEP 2024 Mathematics Assessment Results](#) – The Nation's Report Card
- ✓ [10 Takeaways from the 2024 NAEP Results](#) – National Assessment Governing Board
- ✓ [The Promise of Tutoring for PreK-12 Learning: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis](#) – Nickow, Oreopoulos & Quan (2024), American Educational Research Journal

Grant funding organizations

- ✓ [Accelerate](#) – national nonprofit funding evidence-based tutoring and edtech
- ✓ [Overdeck Family Foundation](#) – philanthropic foundation funding education research and evidence
- ✓ [AmeriCorps](#) – national service initiative
- ✓ [City Year](#) – the largest education-focused AmeriCorps program

Tutoring strategy and policy

- ✓ [National Student Support Accelerator](#) – Stanford-based tutoring research and policy hub
- ✓ [FutureEd](#) – Georgetown McCourt education policy think tank, including state tutoring legislative trackers

Third Space Learning resources

- ✓ [Third Space Learning US](#) – tutoring approach, district case studies, and team contact



THIRD SPACE
LEARNING

Looking to improve your district's math results without stretching your budget?

High-impact tutoring from our spoken AI math tutor, Skye, helps districts achieve equity at scale by providing a high-quality one-on-one experience for every student.

- ✓ On average, 90% cheaper than other tutoring providers
- ✓ State standard-aligned lessons designed by qualified teachers
- ✓ Differentiated instruction for each student

93% of teachers feel Third Space Learning lessons helped their students achieve higher state test scores.

Speak to us

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