



Tutoring
in the time
of COVID



An Ecosystem Map and Analysis of Community-Based Tutoring in Toronto



Partners



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Executive Summary

In the context of fears about learning loss and the growing achievement gaps resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, international researchers and governments have identified tutoring as a large-scale intervention with the potential to improve equity and offset the educational disruptions caused by the pandemic. Tutoring has been shown to be a particularly effective way to help underserved students who are most likely to have experienced the worst impacts of these educational disruptions. It also responds to the clear demand from students; for example, a 2017 Toronto District School Board (TDSB) survey found that one in five (nearly 7,000) students in Grade 7 and 8 and one in three (about 24,000) in Grades 9 to 12 reported having no one to turn to after school if they needed help with their homework “all the time or often.”

Yet, to date, there has been limited systematic research on the coverage, organization, and design of tutoring programs in Canada, especially of those programs and initiatives focused on meeting the needs of underserved students. Nor is there a common forum or community of stakeholders in place to support the improvement and scaling of tutoring initiatives in Canada.

This report was created to help fill those gaps and inform the community of stakeholders. It presents a map of community-based tutoring programs in Toronto, Ontario—Canada’s largest city. We define community-based tutoring programs as:

- > programs focused on the academic curriculum (not broader learning activities such as arts, sport, or leadership),
- > programs that are offered over multiple weeks or years (not one-off workshops or training events), and
- > programs that are offered on a no-fee or heavily subsidized basis.

The study explores the size, structure, and design of these programs, demonstrating a wide diversity of program types. It draws on recent analyses of student demand for academic support from the TDSB and the growing body of research evidence on effective, large-scale tutoring interventions to analyze strengths and opportunities for future tutoring interventions in Toronto.

Research design and definitions

The study uses an ecosystem mapping methodology, an approach frequently used in the non-profit sector to engage organizations in taking an inventory of a set of interconnected services, their challenges, and their assets in order to foster collaboration. The mapping is based on a survey sent to a group of 69 community-based tutoring organizations that were identified through an internet search, as well as institutional referrals from school boards and foundations. Thirty-nine organizations responded to the survey, for a participation rate of 57%. In addition to the survey, four organizations were selected to illustrate the diversity of programming and to seek insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by tutoring organizations.

Characteristics of the community-based tutoring ecology in Toronto

The study provided insights into the loose network of community-based tutoring services in Toronto, highlighting features of organizations and support for tutoring, as well as how these services are staffed, program design, and approaches to ensuring quality of services. Highlights of the findings include:

Size and organizational structure

- > 87% of community-based tutoring programs are offered by non-profit organizations. The remainder are hosted by tertiary educational institutions and by Ontario's public broadcaster, TVOntario (TVO).
- > The ecosystem is populated by a diverse mix of small-scale organizations with 20 or fewer staff (36%); medium-scale organizations with 21 to 100 staff (41%); and large-scale organizations with more than 100 staff (23%).
- > Organizations vary widely in terms of the number of students served, ranging from 20 to well over 100. However, only four of the organizations in our sample serve over 500 students at a time.

Funding and partnerships

- > 79% of organizations reported receiving funding from private sources (foundations, individual donations, and donations from the business sector), while 67% reported funding from government sources (44% provincial, 38% federal, and 28% municipal).
- > Almost all large tutoring organizations reported working in partnership with other community or public sector entities, including school boards, colleges and universities, libraries, settlement organizations, and community organizations. However, fewer than half of small and medium-sized organizations have such partners.

Who are the tutors?

- > 53% of participating organizations reported that all or most of their tutoring/academic staff are volunteers; 37% of organizations reported they mostly use paid staff; and 10% of organizations have some volunteers and some paid staff.
- > 82% of organizations reported using undergraduate students as all, most, or some of their tutors.
- > Only 13% of organizations reported using certified teachers as all or most of their staff; another 42% reported using some certified teachers.
- > 79% of organizations provide initial training for tutors; only 51% provide ongoing coaching and support.

Who received tutoring?

- > The most common age group served by the programs we surveyed are middle school and secondary school students. Fewer than half the programs serve students in the primary grades (1 to 3). Only a handful support adult learners.
- > More than half the organizations reported a specific focus on racialized and/or low-income communities. Smaller-scale organizations were more likely to report a focus on a specific population or group such as Indigenous or refugee students, while larger organizations reported a focus on low-income students.

Program design and delivery

- > **Timing:** The vast majority of organizations (90%) offer programming after school. Some (11 organizations) also provide programming during school hours.
- > **Areas of focus:** Math tutoring is the most common subject area (92% of organizations), followed by literacy (74%). Most organizations provide support for multiple subject areas, and only five specialized in single subjects. 82% of the organizations surveyed combine tutoring support with other activities, including recreation, mentorship, leadership skill development, etc.
- > **Use of structured curriculum:** Only a minority of programs use a structured curriculum during tutoring sessions (30%).
- > **Assessment:** Fewer than half the programs (44%) report conducting initial assessments to determine students' capacities and needs before starting the tutoring relationship.
- > **Frequency:** Most tutoring programs are sustained throughout the school year or semester, and most programs (79%) consistently match students with the same tutors, supporting positive relationship development.
- > **Location:** Programs reported an even split between school-based and community-based locations. Only five organizations offer online-only programming, two of which were established after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Two-thirds of organizations reported that they moved to online delivery during pandemic-related school closures.

- > **School and family outreach:** A majority of programs reported having regular communication with parents and families (74%); a minority communicate with teachers or schools (41%).
- > **Evaluation:** 85% of programs reported at least some monitoring and evaluation activities. However, because few programs assess student learning at the start of their programs, we know they are not able to measure impact.

A diverse ecosystem, with opportunities for improvement and expansion

The ecosystem map highlights the diversity of tutoring programs in Toronto, in terms of size, funding, and aspects of program design and delivery—and also the very loose supporting network surrounding this sector. The number of providers offering free tutoring services in Toronto is impressive, presenting a potential starting point for future improvement and expansion to meet the needs of students for more one-on-one support.

However, much more can be done to enhance the quality and availability of tutoring. As we have shown, tutoring programs can learn much from the burgeoning body of evidence on high impact tutoring programs. In particular, they can offer tutoring with greater frequency and ensure that it reaches children in younger grades. Because the programs surveyed rely heavily on volunteers,

programs may wish to spend more time on training and coaching and may want to introduce more structured curriculum for tutoring sessions. Furthermore, while the Toronto programs surveyed excel at communication with families, more might be done to ensure that tutoring programs complement and are aligned with what students are learning at school. Finally, there is room for better research and evaluation across the ecosystem, including through pooling of resources so that even small and medium-sized organizations can benefit.

We conclude with a call for a more coordinated and collaborative approach to the delivery of tutoring programs in Toronto and beyond. The diversity of approaches and models for tutoring across Toronto points to an important opportunity for tutoring organizations and other educational leaders to learn from one another and work together to improve systematic access to tutoring for underserved students. As such, a useful next step may be to establish a coordinated coalition or network to connect the different community-based tutoring and academic support service providers.

Introduction

In the context of fears around learning impacts and the growing inequities resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, international researchers and governments have identified large-scale tutoring initiatives as an approach that has significant potential to close gaps in learning outcomes, with particular relevance for underserved students (see, e.g., Gallagher-Mackay, Mundy et al., 2021; Kraft & Falken, 2020; Loeb & Kraft, 2020; Nickow et al., 2021; Oreopoulos, 2021; Slavin, 2020). However, while numerous tutoring organizations—both for-profit and not-for-profit—operate in Canada, there has been limited consideration of how partnerships between schools and community-based tutoring programs can be used to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and to address ongoing inequities.

To stimulate further dialogue about the potential for large-scale tutoring programs in Canadian contexts, this report presents unique, exploratory research on the ecosystem of tutoring and academic support programs available to students in Toronto, one of Canada’s largest urban jurisdictions. This report aims to lay the foundation for more systematic discussion of investing in tutoring programs in Toronto and across Canada. It also aims to inform the work of community organizations providing tutoring

and academic support programs, help to create greater awareness of different models and program design, and enhance collaboration among the ecosystem of community actors.

To date, there has been little systematic research on the coverage, organization, and design of tutoring programs in Canada, especially those focused on meeting the needs of underserved students. Using a survey tool and snowball sampling, this report identifies and explores the services provided by 39 providers of such tutoring programs in Toronto. It answers questions about the populations these programs serve; how they are funded, organized, staffed, and evaluated; and how they work with families and schools. This information is critical to fostering further efforts to improve and scale such initiatives.

The study is part of a suite of tutoring research and evaluation tools that have been produced through a collaboration between teams at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto, Wilfrid Laurier University, the Future Skills Centre, and the Diversity Institute at Ryerson University. It originated from questions that emerged when OISE and the Diversity Institute each launched volunteer-based tutoring initiatives to respond to the needs of students during the COVID-19

pandemic.¹ This report should be read alongside two companion pieces prepared for this project: a review of existing research on the effectiveness of tutoring (Gallagher-Mackay, Mundy et al., 2021) and a universal evaluation toolkit for tutoring programs (Proulx et al., 2021).

Study design and research methodology

An ecosystem mapping approach

This study was designed as an ecosystem mapping exercise. An ecosystem is a scientific concept that originated from the study of natural ecological systems. From a biological perspective, it is “a set of organisms interacting with one another and with their environment of non-living matter and energy within a defined area or volume” (Miller & Spoolman, 2009, as cited in Durst & Poutanen, 2013, pp. 2–3). Used in the non-profit sector, an ecosystem refers to a network of interconnected systems of organizations, people, technology, platforms, and content that are linked and interdependent (Cheinman, 2020). Students of social change view the understanding of organizational ecologies as a first step towards achieving outcomes not attainable by individuals or single organizations (Cheinman, 2020; Cook & Tönurist, 2020).²

1 The Diversity Institute’s “Study Buddies” program and the University of Toronto/Toronto District School Board’s academic support program.

2 Numerous tools and resources are available for ecosystem mapping, tailored to different types of problems (Cheinman, 2020). Two examples we draw on are the Centre for Social Impact’s map of the youth development sector ecosystem in New Zealand (Centre for Social Impact, 2018) and a mapping of library-based literacy programs in California (Chant, 2020).

Ecosystem mapping is a methodology that embraces this ecological approach, by providing a visual and narrative representation of an ecological system. An ecosystem map can be used to engage organizations in taking an inventory of challenges and assets in a specific sector or to foster collaboration (Smith, 2018). Some of its potential benefits include:

- > **Identifying strengths and gaps in service for improved efficacy:** As mentioned above, ecosystem mapping enables organizations to identify strengths and gaps in services, allowing for the development of strategies or policies to address larger systemic issues (Edsforth, 2014; Smith, 2018).
- > **Transparency/information sharing:** Creating a map of actors or programs in a given context enables key stakeholders to share information. It enables participants to see how different parts of the system are connected and creates a foundation both for their own learning and for future collaboration among key stakeholders (Cheinman, 2020; Seltz, 2020).
- > **Co-ordination and collaboration:** Ecosystem maps can be used to promote further collaboration and problem-solving across a group of organizations that have not previously worked in concert. It lays the foundation for joint strategizing, planning, decision making, and resource generation. It can also assist funders in allocating resources (Bloom & Dees, 2008; Smith, 2018).

Key research questions and definitions

- > This study seeks to answer the following research questions:
- > What do we know about students' need for tutoring services in Toronto, as well as patterns of use of tutoring services?
- > What organizations in Toronto currently offer ongoing tutoring or academic support programs in core academic subjects for free or at a minimal cost to families?
- > How are these programs funded, organized, and evaluated?
- > What populations do they serve? To what extent do they work with schools and families?
- > How does the ecosystem of community-based tutoring programs compare to what we know about successful tutoring and academic support programs?

Research methodology

After a review of existing literature on the need for and availability of tutoring services in Toronto, our research progressed through four phases in order to create a map of the community-based tutoring and academic support ecosystem in Toronto.

STAGE 1: IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL ORGANIZATIONS

As noted above, we could find no systematic list or directory of information about such services. The only existing research on

tutoring programs in Canada is focused on fee-based/for-profit programs (Aurini & Quirke, 2011; Davies & Aurini, 2004) or program-level evaluations (see Gallagher-Mackay, Mundy et al., 2021 for a summary). Thus, a first step was to identify the population of organizations providing such services. To do so, we used a referral identification method and snowball methodology, seeking information from:

- > two large Toronto public school boards (Toronto District School Board and Toronto Catholic District School Board) that have partnered with numerous organizations to provide additional academic support to students at their local schools
- > four foundations that offer grants for community-based projects in Toronto (Laidlaw, United Way of Greater Toronto, Toronto Community Foundation, and the Shaw Foundation)
- > post-secondary institutions that support volunteer tutoring or academic support programs at local schools
- > referrals from any of the above and from the public using social media (e.g., Twitter)
- > internet searches using the terms "Toronto" and "tutoring," to supplement the referral identification method

With these combined sources of information, 636 community-based organizations were initially identified as offering some form of academic support to children and youth within the City of Toronto.

The next critical step was filtering this list of organizations to ensure that they met the study's criteria for inclusion, namely:

- > the programs focused on the academic curriculum (not broader learning activities such as arts, sport, or leadership, however important these goals are)
- > programs were offered over multiple weeks or years (not one-off workshops)
- > programs were offered on a no-fee or heavily subsidized basis

Initially, 84 organizations from the broader list were identified as matching the study's criteria using program descriptions derived from web-based searches. However, after multiple rounds of filtering and receiving feedback from organizations, the final number of included organizations was reduced to 69 (see Appendix A for a complete list).

STAGE 2: SECTOR SURVEY

An online survey was designed to collect core information about each of the identified organizations. Taking approximately 10 minutes to complete, the online survey was comprised of 33 questions in four sections (organization, program design, staffing, and students served). An effort was made to ensure that survey questions addressed key dimensions of program quality identified in recent evidence reviews of large-scale tutoring programs, including funding sources, staffing, student clientele, frequency and mode of delivery, program structure, and staff training (Nickow et al. 2020; Robinson et al., 2021; Gallagher-Mackay, Mundy et al., 2021).

In late March 2021, 84 organizations were invited to participate in the survey through an email from the project's principal investigator (see Appendix C). Within a week, approximately 25% of the organizations responded. Multiple follow-up attempts were made to organizations, which included finding new or alternative contact information, messaging through social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, and making second- and third-round contacts via emails and phone calls (see Appendices D and E). In total, the online survey was open for 57 days.

Despite additional efforts, 30 organizations that met our inclusion criteria did not participate in the survey. Of these, 24 organizations could not be reached, one declined to participate, and five did not complete the survey despite their initial agreement to participate. A further 15 organizations were excluded from the analysis because information provided in their survey response indicated that they did not meet our inclusion criteria: 14 organizations indicated that they did not offer any programming related to tutoring or academic support, and one organization was a fee-for-service operation.

Thus, the final analysis considered a total of 39 out of 69 eligible organizations, representing a response rate of 57% of eligible and invited study participants.

This is a healthy response rate for a voluntary online survey, particularly one conducted during the height of closures associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. As a point of comparison, a recent pan-Canadian study of

youth mentoring (Church-Duplessis, Hackett, Rae, & Basharat, 2021) conducted between April and September 2020 with the co-operation of the Ontario Mentoring Coalition (an established regional network), captured 55 mentoring service providers in Ontario. Considering their sample size of 55 programs across Ontario, the sample of 39 Toronto-based organizations covered in this current study is robust.

STAGE 3: SHORT INTERVIEWS

In the last stage of data collection, a few organizations were selected for short phone interviews to allow us to explore some of the wide and varied approaches to tutoring taken by different organizations in terms of size, delivery models, student clientele, funding, and other dimensions. The representatives of these sample organizations were interviewed individually and asked to expand on program details and share their key success stories.

STAGE 4: ANALYSIS

Data collected from the surveys was analyzed to discover trends in various aspects of program organization, design, size, population of focus, and financing. Interview data was used to develop an exploratory account of the variety of scope and content of the 39 tutoring programs. To answer our final research question, *“How does the ecosystem of community-based tutoring programs compare to what we know about successful tutoring and academic support programs?”* a final step in our analysis involved comparing the trends in

programming found through the Toronto survey to recent international evidence on effective tutoring for elementary and secondary education.

Study limitations

This study is the first of its kind to be conducted on not-for-profit, community-based tutoring in Canada. It faced several limitations, which we hope can be remedied through later extensions of the ecosystem mapping initiated by this study.

First and foremost, despite our extensive efforts, the lack of any systematic source of information about tutoring programs in Toronto made identification and recruitment of survey participants challenging. We believe our final list of 69 organizations is a good starting point, but there is no available baseline to assess how comprehensive it is within the Toronto context.

Second, though the survey had a healthy response rate of 57%, the ecosystem map presented in this study would have benefited from more complete information about all 69 of those organizations identified as meeting our inclusion criteria. There is little doubt that the timing of the study affected this response rate: the survey was conducted at a time when most organizations had moved to home-based work and were pivoting to online provision of a service in high demand due to school closures.

The policy context of tutoring in Toronto

Toronto is one of the most diverse cities in Canada, with significant and intersecting inequities along lines of race, immigration status, poverty, and disability. Large-scale survey data from the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) highlights the diversity of students, which is far greater than among the broader population in Canada. This data also indicates a significant self-reported need for assistance that far outstrips availability of community resources. While use of tutoring is fairly common, groups with the highest need of assistance are less likely to have access to tutoring.

Demographics of the public-school population in Toronto

While the Canadian Census includes statistics on the demographics of Toronto's residents, such as ethno-racial diversity, immigration background, and socio-economic status (City of Toronto, 2017), it does not include granular data on public school students. The TDSB's Student and Parent Census, a system-wide survey that is conducted every five years, is the most detailed information available on students and families. The TDSB serves 72% of Toronto's 345,000 elementary and secondary public school students.

According to the latest (2017) TDSB's Student and Parent Census, almost three-quarters (72%) of students are from racialized groups, plus a small percentage who are Indigenous. Three-quarters (75%) of the students have one or both parents

born outside of Canada. A key indicator of socioeconomic status (SES) in education is parental occupation. Nearly half (45%) of the student population has parents working in clerical, trades, or non-remunerative positions, associated with lower SES (Yau, et al., 2018c).

Out-of-school academic and homework support needs

DIFFICULTY OF HOMEWORK AS A BARRIER TO HOMEWORK COMPLETION

Nearly half (47%) of middle school and 60% of secondary school students cited difficulty of homework as one of their barriers to homework completion (Erling et al., 2019). About two-fifths found homework difficulty a challenge all the time or often. This challenge was identified more frequently among Indigenous (44%) and Southeast Asian (31%) students at the secondary school level than among the overall high school population (25%) (Erling et al., 2019).

STUDENTS NEEDING AFTER-SCHOOL ACADEMIC/HOMEWORK SUPPORT

Similar proportions of middle school (51%) and secondary school (59%) students indicated a need for after-school help with their homework all the time, often, or sometimes. In fact, 14% of these students reported needing such assistance all the time or often. Indigenous and Latin American students were more likely than other racial/ethnic groups to express a need for such

help all the time or often (24% and 19%, respectively). In middle school, students from the lowest SES grouping were almost twice as likely as their counterparts in the highest grouping to report needing after-school assistance all the time or often (17% versus 9%) (Erling et al., 2019).

PARENTS/CAREGIVERS AS SUPPORT

Over half of middle school students (55%) reported having parents assist them with their homework all the time or often. In high school, students were more likely to turn to their friends (48%) than to their parents (29%) for help all the time or often. White students were much more likely to have parents available (67%) than students of other racialized groups, particularly those of East Asian and Southeast Asian descent (41% and 36% respectively). The SES disparities in this respect were also noticeable. While nearly two-thirds (65%) of students from families with the highest SES background³ reported that their parents assisted them with their homework all the time or often, only 43–47% of students from lower SES family backgrounds received comparable help (Erling et al., 2019).

3 High SES was defined by the TDSB in this survey as students whose parents or guardians were in professional or senior management occupations; lower SES students were those whose parents worked in unskilled clerical or trades positions, as well as those whose parents were non-remunerative (i.e., non-income earners).

NO ONE TO TURN TO FOR SUPPORT

The 2017 Student and Parent Census from the TDSB also reveals that one in five (nearly 7,000) students in Grades 7 and 8 and one in three (about 24,000) students in Grades 9 to 12 reported having no one to turn to after school if they needed help with their homework all the time or often. Indigenous (40%) and Southeast Asian (39%) students were most likely to be in this situation, and the likelihood was also slightly greater among students from the lower SES backgrounds (Erling et al., 2019).

Use of tutors

Paid tutors: About one in seven (about 15,000) students in Grades 7 to 12 had paid tutors to help them with their homework all the time or often. The likelihood of having paid tutors was higher among South Asian students (21%) but lower for most other racialized groups, especially Southeast Asian, Latin American, and Indigenous students (between 6% to 8%) (Erling et al., 2019).

Free tutors: Approximately 1 in 14 (about 7,000) students in Grades 7 to 12 reported having regular access to free tutors (in school, in the community, or online) to support them with their homework. At the secondary school level, white students (4%) were least likely to use free tutors, while Indigenous and Black students (11–12%) were most likely to do so (Erling et al., 2019).

In sum, important large-scale research that integrates data on students' backgrounds, students' need for academic support, and the availability of tutoring demonstrates a great demand for additional academic support. This is especially true among vulnerable student populations. Relative to the expressed need for support, a small percentage of students has access to tutoring offered in their schools or in the community. Fee-based private tutoring—disproportionately accessible to families with greater means—is more than twice as prevalent as free tutoring, the latter of which is more likely to be accessible to students with greater socioeconomic challenges. This context is essential background for understanding the tutoring ecosystem in Toronto.

Organizational Survey Findings

The survey findings reported in this report are based on responses from 39 organizations and programs⁴ that indicated that they offered tutoring and/or academic support services to elementary and/or secondary school students (see Table 1 for the list of participating organizations/programs and their key characteristics).

Most (87%) of these participant organizations offer a combination of tutoring/academic support *plus* other programs such as mentoring, leadership development, and computer skills training. Only five organizations reported offering *only* tutoring or academic support services.

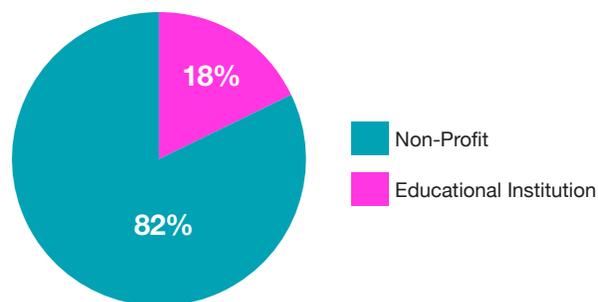
Detailed findings about these participating organizations and programs are presented narratively in the section below and are later summarized in a graphic table that can be found at the end of this section.

About the organizations

Types of organizations

Most (32) organizations participating in this survey were non-profit, (one specifically served Indigenous peoples, and two were faith-based). The remaining eight participating organizations were educational institutions providing tutoring as a type of community service or experiential learning opportunity. These providers included universities and an independent school (see Figure 1).

FIGURE 1
Types of Organizations



⁴ One organization offered two distinct programs and thus had two entries in the survey.

Scale/size of organizations

The survey asked respondents to indicate the number of tutoring/academic service staff⁵ in their organizations. Based on a mid-range calculation,⁶ it is estimated that the 39 participating organizations/programs combined have approximately 2,450 tutors or academic support staff members, including both volunteers and paid staff.

Using the tutoring staff size of each organization as a proxy, respective operations were categorized into three levels:

- > small scale, with staff of no more than 20
- > medium scale, with a staff size of between 21 and 100
- > large scale, with staff of more than 100

As illustrated in Figure 2, this survey captured a relatively even spread of different scales of operations. The bigger proportion (41%) is made up of medium-scale operations, followed by small-scale (36%) and large-scale (23%) operations. Further analysis indicated that non-profit organizations were more likely to be small or medium scale, while educational institutions were more likely to be medium or large scale (see Figure 3).

FIGURE 2
Scale of Operations

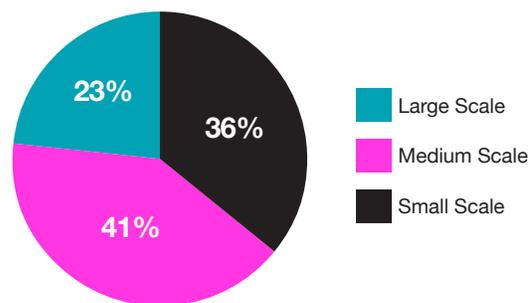


FIGURE 3
Scale/Size and Type of Organizations

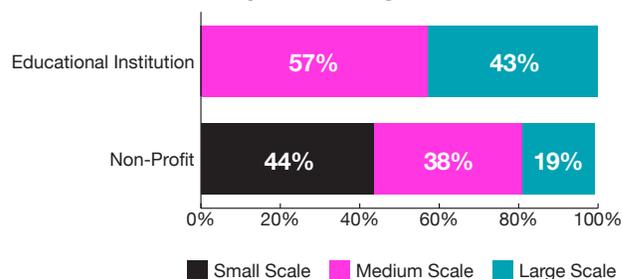
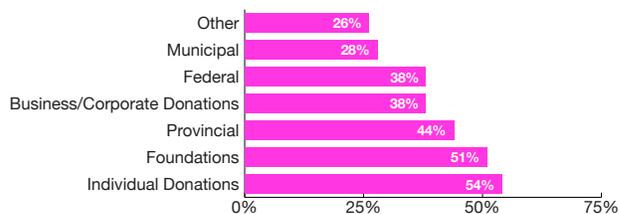


FIGURE 4
Funding Sources



5 This included only staff who directly delivered the tutoring or academic support service.

6 For this calculation, 200 was used as the maximum for the last number-range option.

FUNDING SOURCES

Nearly three-quarters (74%) of the organizations in the ecosystem map receive some form of external funding. As shown in Figure 4, the two most common sources of funding for this sector are individual donations and foundations. Our study does not provide information about the magnitude of funding received from each source. Other funding sources included provincial grants, business/corporate donations, and federal grants. About one in four of the participating organizations reported that they received funding from the municipal government, while another one in four supplemented their funding with community fundraising, and three organizations charged a small service fee for their programs.

These various funding sources are grouped into three major types for further analysis:

- > Private funding (e.g., foundation, individual, and business/corporate donations)
- > Government grants (e.g., from the federal, provincial, and municipal levels)
- > Other sources (e.g., community fundraising and other service fees)

As illustrated in Figure 5, nearly four in five of the participating organizations receive funding from private sources. Two-thirds of the organizations also receive government grants, and a smaller number of the providers rely on community fundraising or service fees. A further breakdown shows some variations in the funding patterns by scale of operations (see Figure 6).

FIGURE 5

Sources of Funding (Aggregate)

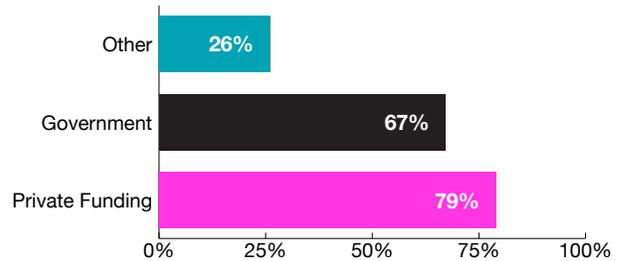
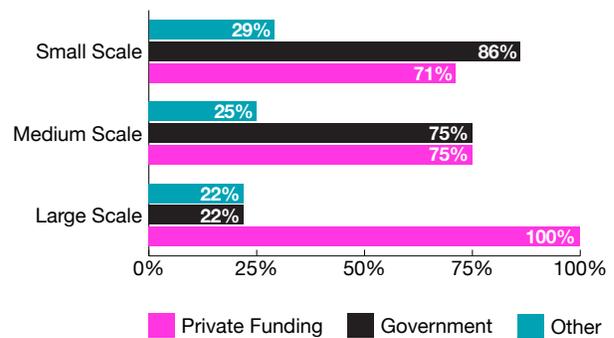


FIGURE 6

Funding Sources versus Scale of Operations



- > All large-scale organizations receive multiple sources of private funding, mainly from business/corporate donations, individual donations, and foundations. One of these large organizations supplements their funding with government grants, and another one with community fundraising.
- > All but one medium-scale organization rely solely on either private funds (mainly foundations and business/corporate donations) or government grants (mainly from the provincial and/or the federal levels).

- > Comparatively, small-scale organizations are less likely to have access to private contributions, particularly those from businesses or corporations. While a few receive some financial support from individual donors and foundations, their programs are much more likely to be funded by municipal and provincial governments and, to a smaller extent, by the federal government.

ADDITIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Half of the organizations surveyed in this study reported having additional partners to help boost service promotion, collaboration, resource sharing, and/or funding. A closer look indicates that the odds of having additional partners is much higher among the large-scale organizations. For instance:

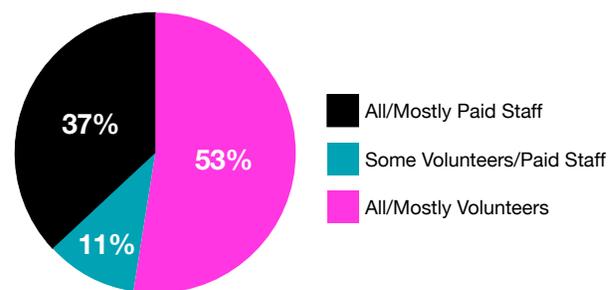
- > All but one of the large-scale organizations reported having additional partners, such as school boards, the Ministry of Education, universities and colleges, public agencies (e.g., libraries, community centres, housing or settlement organizations), and corporations (e.g., Manulife Financial).
- > Among medium-scale organizations, less than half reported having additional partners, which included school boards, the Ministry of Education, universities, foundations (e.g., United Way), and corporations (e.g., Bank of Montreal).
- > Similarly, less than half of the small-scale organizations indicated having such additional partners as school boards, universities, City of Toronto, Toronto Community Housing, and foundations such as United Way

About tutors and academic support staff

PAID VERSUS VOLUNTEER STAFF

It is evident from the ecosystem survey that volunteers constitute a large share of Toronto’s community-based tutoring/academic support workforce. As shown in Figure 7, over half (53%) of the participating organizations reported that all or most of their tutoring/academic support staff are volunteers.⁷ Over a third (37%) reported that all or most of their tutoring staff are paid,⁸ and four organizations reported that their staff is made up of both volunteers and paid staff.⁹

FIGURE 7
Paid versus Volunteer Staff



7 Six of these organizations had honorariums for some of their staff.
 8 Two of these organizations also paid some of their staff with honorariums.
 9 It should be noted that three of these organizations also had honorariums for some of their staff, and one had honorariums for all or most of their staff.

Further analysis shows some nuances associated with the scale of organizations (see Figure 8):

- > Among small-scale organizations, about three in five pay all or most of their academic support staff, and the remaining two in five solely or mostly rely on volunteers.¹⁰
- > In two-thirds of medium-scale organizations, volunteers¹¹ make up all or most of their tutoring staff along with some being paid staff. Only a third of medium-scale organizations pay all or most of their academic support staff.
- > For the nine large-scale organizations, seven use volunteers as all or most of their tutoring staff, with two also having some paid staff. Only two of the large organizations pay all or most of their tutoring/academic support staff.¹²

STAFF BACKGROUND

According to the survey, undergraduate students make up a large share of the tutoring/academic support workforce. As shown in Figure 9, most (82%) of the participating organizations engage undergraduates as all, most or some of their staff.¹³ The majority of the programs also

- 10 Some of these small-scale organizations offer their volunteers an honorarium.
- 11 A few of these medium-scale organizations pay an honorarium to their volunteers.
- 12 This organization is TVOntario, which pays all or most of its staff, and the other is Upper Canada College's Summer Program with mostly paid staff.
- 13 Thirteen of the participating organizations engage undergraduates as all or most of their tutoring staff, and 18 other organizations engage them as some staff.

engage graduate students, non-teaching professionals, certified teachers,¹⁴ and student teachers as all, most, or some of the tutoring staff. Fewer organizations have retirees or middle/high school students on their tutoring/academic support staff. Further analysis reveals some variations in workforce patterns according to the scale of the organization (see Figure 10).

FIGURE 8

Paid versus Volunteer Staff by Scale of Operations

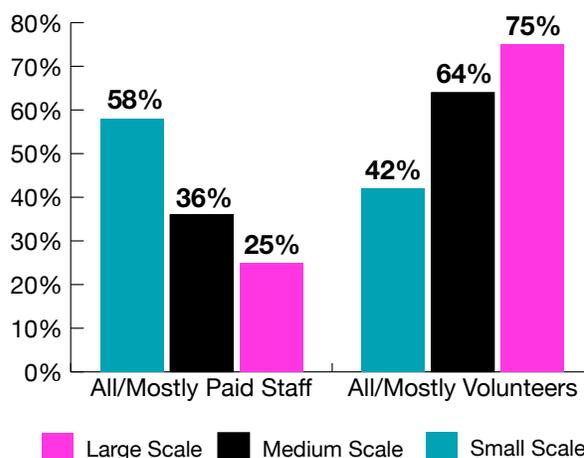
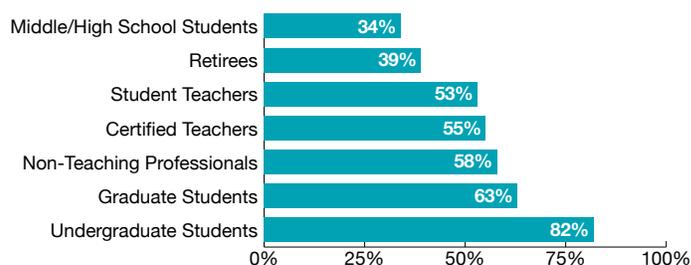


FIGURE 9

Background of Tutoring Staff (all, most or some)



- 14 Only five organizations engage certified teachers as all or most of their tutoring staff, and 16 organizations engage them as some of their staff.

- > For small-scale organizations, it is most common to have undergraduates, followed by graduate students and non-teaching professionals as their tutoring/academic support staff.
- > While most medium-scale organizations also have undergraduates on their tutoring staff, the majority have graduate students, student teachers, and certified teachers in their tutoring workforce.
- > For large-scale organizations, about two-thirds have undergraduates and/or certified teachers, and slightly over half have student teachers on their tutoring/academic support staff.

About the students served by the programs

NUMBER OF STUDENTS SERVED

Respondents were asked to indicate the number of students they serve over a school year by selecting one of the number-range options: 0–20, 21–50, 51–100, 101–200, 201–500, or over 500. Depending on the scale of operation, the number of students served by the individual participating organizations ranged from more than 20 to more than 500 students. As illustrated in Figure 11:

- > the majority of small-scale organizations serve between 20 and 100 students
- > most medium-scale organizations serve no more than 500 students
- > all large-scale organizations serve over 100 students, and four of them serve over 500 students

FIGURE 10

Staff Background versus Scale of Operations

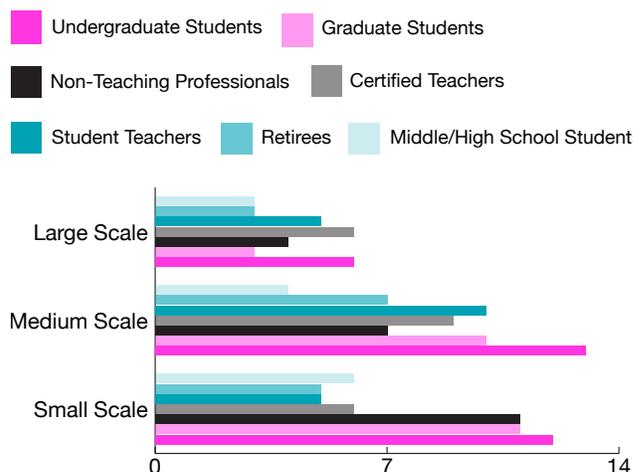
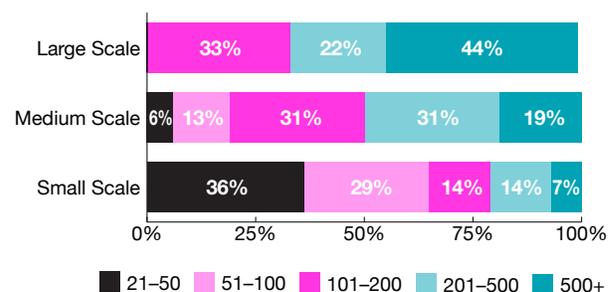


FIGURE 11

Number of Students Served and Scale of Operations



Unfortunately our survey only collected information on the number of students served using pre-selected ranges. This only allows for a crude estimate: based on the numeric ranges selected by survey participants, somewhere between 7,250 and 15,400¹⁵ students are served by the 39 organizations included in the study. Using a mid-range calculation, it is estimated that approximately 11,300 students are served.

15 For the highest number range (over 500), the maximum number used for this calculation was 1,000.

AGE GROUPS SERVED

The 39 participating organizations/programs combined serve all student age groups from kindergarten to Grade 12. The grade levels supported by most organizations are intermediate grades (Grades 7–8) and high school (Grades 9–12). On the other hand, as shown in Figure 12, comparatively fewer organizations serve younger children, including those in junior classes (Grades 4–6) and primary grades (junior kindergarten [JK] to Grade 3). A small number (7) of the organizations surveyed also provide academic support to adult learners (non-post-secondary).

BACKGROUND OF STUDENTS SERVED

More than half of the participating organizations reported serving mainly underserved and/or low-income communities. This finding is consistent with the TDSB’s Student and Parent Census data, which indicates that students from high-need communities are more likely than other students to receive free tutoring support. Some organizations, especially smaller scale ones, also reported serving other specific groups, such as girls, Indigenous communities, or refugee students. It should, however, be noted that a few organizations reported serving no specific communities or neighbourhoods.

About two-thirds of participating organizations reported that their service targeted students from certain backgrounds. As shown in Figure 13, these include low-income households (54%), followed by ethno-racial communities (44%), and

newcomers (33%). One in five of the organizations also reported specifically serving students with disabilities, including those with special education needs. Medium- and large-scale organizations are slightly more likely to focus on students from low-income households than small-scale organizations; the latter are more likely to serve specific ethno-racial communities.

FIGURE 12

Age Group of Students Served

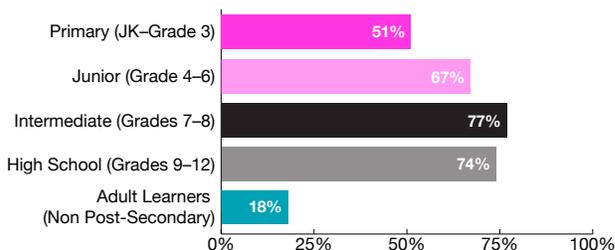
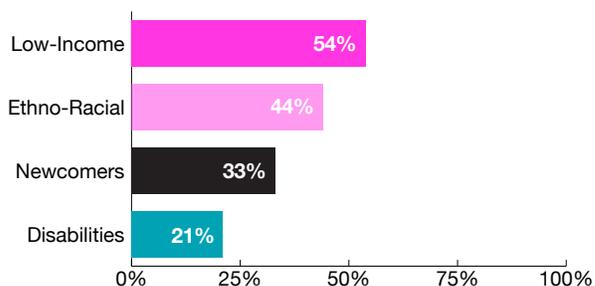


FIGURE 13

Specific Population



HOW INFORMATION ABOUT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES IS SHARED WITH FAMILIES AND STUDENTS

Most organizations reported that they share information about their programs to potential students or their families via two major channels: through schools or through outreach to community organizations.

As shown in Figure 14, nearly half of the organizations rely on both channels, a quarter rely on schools only, and another quarter rely on community outreach only. Some of the organizations in the ecosystem also promote their programs through other means, such as social media, word of mouth, and contacts within the school board. One organization reported sharing information about its programs directly via social media, mailing lists, and word of mouth.

About programs and services

MAIN CURRICULUM AREAS COVERED

Most organizations offer students support in multiple subject areas. Only five of the participating organizations focus on a single subject area: two focused on mathematics only, two on literacy only, and one on a second language only.

Among the various curriculum areas, mathematics is the most common subject covered by all but three of the participating organizations. The next most common subject is science and technology. Aside from the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) curriculum, other subject areas covered by the majority of the organizations include literacy and social studies. About half of the organizations also provide support in other languages, and a small number (6) cover other areas such as arts, computer skills, and learning skills.

FIGURE 14

How Programs and Services Were Promoted

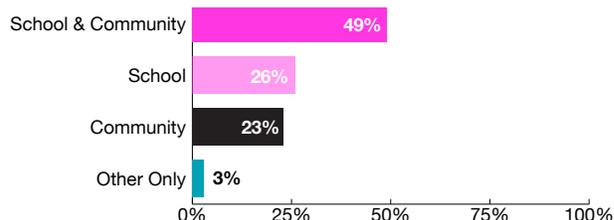
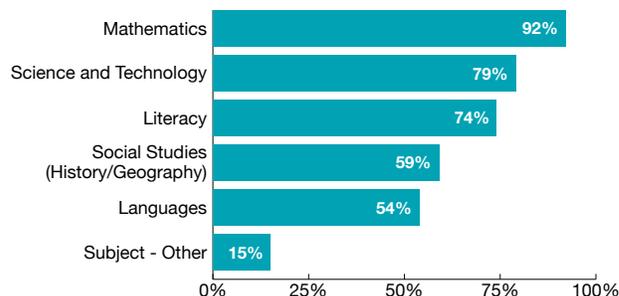


FIGURE 15

Main Curriculum Areas Covered



TUTORING LOCATION

The two most common locations for holding community-based tutoring/academic support services are school buildings and community settings. As shown in Figure 16, about half of the organizations normally (i.e., pre-pandemic, where applicable) provide services in a school building, and another half in a community setting. It should be noted that some of these organizations reported hosting their service or program in both school and community settings. Five organizations offer online programs only, at least two of which started after the pandemic-related lockdowns.

The survey also asked if the organizations had adjusted their services due to the COVID-19 pandemic. All organizations that offer in-person services reported making adjustments during the pandemic.¹⁶ Among these 35 organizations, over two-thirds pivoted to online modes, and the other third changed their services altogether.¹⁷ However, it should be noted that none of these organizations suspended their services during the pandemic-related lockdowns.

TUTORING TIME

Most organizations (90%) offer their programs after school. Some of these organizations also provide their services during school hours and/or on weekends or holidays. Two organizations offer their programs during school hours only, and another two organizations provide weekend programs (see Figure 17).

TUTORING FREQUENCY, DOSAGE, AND DURATION

Frequency, or dosage, of tutoring is strongly related to its effectiveness (Fryer, 2017; Nickow et al., 2020). High-dosage tutoring (three or more times per week) is almost twice as effective as tutoring that occurs weekly or less often. This survey shows that fewer than half (41%) of the organizations

16 It should be noted that participants were asked to respond to the survey questions according to their usual or pre-pandemic practices even if they had pivoted their delivery model during the lockdown.
 17 These included using a cohort system and safety protocols to limit attendees, shifting or extending their services to within school hours to help virtual school students, and adjusting to students' needs through various stages of closure.

FIGURE 16
Tutoring Location

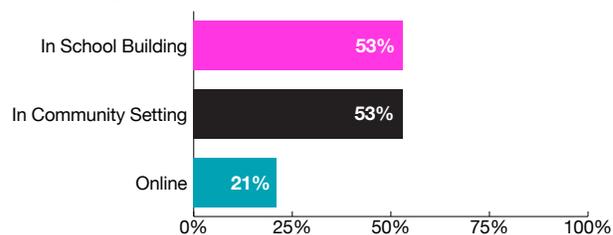


FIGURE 17
Tutoring Time

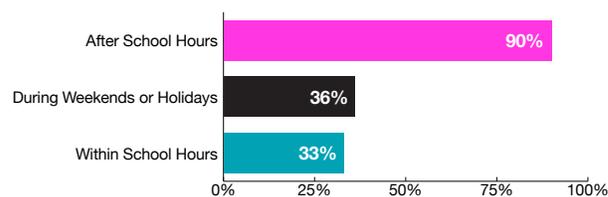


FIGURE 18
Frequency of Support

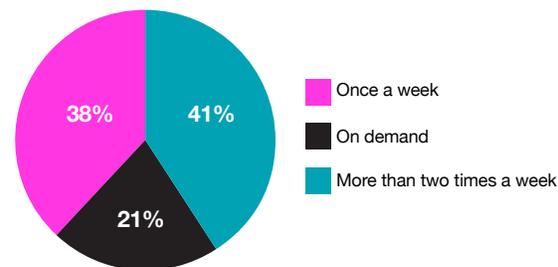
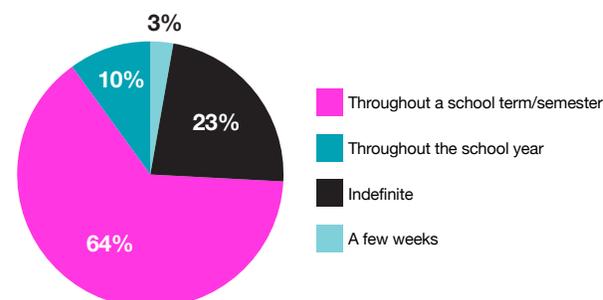


FIGURE 19
Duration of Tutoring Program



offer support to their students a few times a week, and another 38% offer their support once a week (see Figure 18). Eight organizations offer their services on demand.

Most participating organizations (74%) provide tutoring/academic support services throughout the school year, or at least for a school term or semester. Nine organizations reported that their academic support services are offered for an indefinite time, and one program is offered during the summer for a duration of a few weeks (see Figure 19).

ASSIGNED TUTORS

Programs that pair a student with the same tutor consistently may contribute to improved relationships and learning environments (Robinson, 2021; National Mentoring Resource Center, n.d.). Most organizations reported implementing this practice when assigning staff to students (see Figure 20). All small-scale organizations reported consistent assignments. About two-thirds of the medium-scale and three-quarters of the large-scale organizations also assign consistent tutors.

STAFF COMMUNICATION WITH OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

As shown in Figure 21, three-quarters of the participating organizations reported that their tutoring/academic support staff routinely communicate with students' parents/guardians or family members. However, fewer organizations reported that their staff maintain routine communication with teachers (41%) or with school personnel such as principals or guidance counsellors (44%).

FIGURE 20
Assigned Tutors

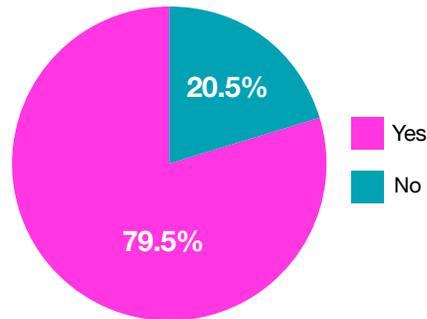


FIGURE 21
Staff Communication with Other Stakeholders

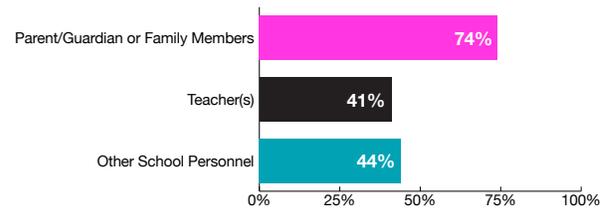
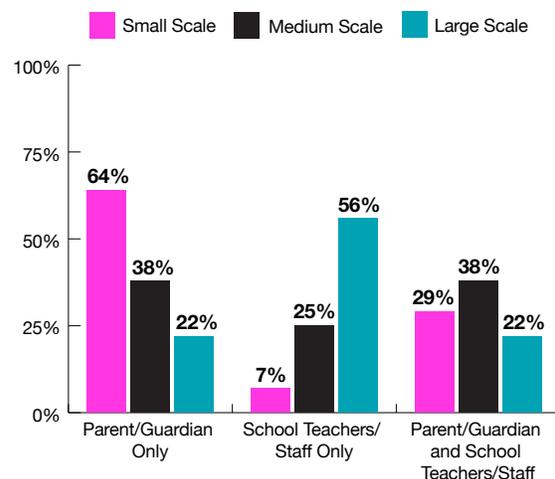


FIGURE 22
Staff Communication with Other Stakeholders by Scale of Operations



A closer look reveals some differences according to the scale of the organization. As shown in Figure 22:

- > All but one of the small-scale organizations reported that their staff maintain regular communication with their students’ parents or family members, and only a few also communicate routinely with teachers or school personnel.
- > While most medium-scale organizations reported that their tutors or academic support staff communicate routinely with parents or family members, over half of them also maintain regular communication with school personnel such as principals/ vice-principals or guidance counsellors.
- > On the other hand, the academic support staff of large-scale organizations are more likely to maintain routine communication with their students’ teachers than with parents or other school personnel.

The impact of connections with school personnel and students’ families— particularly for community-based programs—has not been extensively investigated in the quantitative literature.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

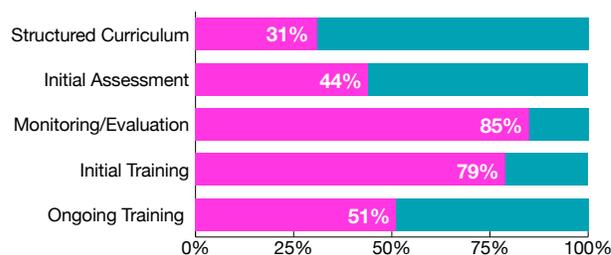
There is some evidence, of limited quality, that more structured programs are likely to be more effective at boosting academic achievement (Ritter, 2009; Beckett et al., 2009). The broader education literature emphasizes the importance of program elements such as assessing students’ capacities and needs and differentiating

instruction accordingly; monitoring progress at the individual and program level; and continual learning for educators.

The survey asked about program structure: whether an organization follows a structured curriculum, conducts an initial assessment of the student clients, monitors or evaluates its programs or service, and offers initial and/ or ongoing training/coaching to its tutors/ academic support staff.

Figure 23 shows that most organizations reported that they monitor or evaluate their services and offer initial training for staff. Fewer organizations reported that they provide their tutors with ongoing training or coaching or perform initial assessments with their student clients. Even fewer organizations reported following a structured curriculum.

FIGURE 23
Structural Features of Community-Based Tutoring/Academic Support Programs



It is worth noting that one in four of the small-scale organizations provide neither initial nor ongoing training/coaching for their tutoring/academic staff.

LEVEL OF PROGRAM STRUCTURE

To gain a sense of how structured the participating organizations are in regards to their tutoring/academic support program, the five structural features discussed above were used as proxy indicators to determine the level of program structure within the organizations. Organizations that have programs with at least four of the above five features were considered as having a **formal** program structure; those with three features were deemed to be **semi-formal**; and those with two or fewer features were considered to have an **informal** structure. As shown in Figure 24, this survey covers a fairly even distribution of these three levels of structure in programs, although the proportion of those with a semi-formal structure (36%) is slightly higher than those with an informal (33%) or formal structure (31%). Further analysis indicates some correlations between the scale of operations and the level of program structure. That is, small-scale organizations are more likely to run programs that are more informal in structure, large-scale organizations were more likely to run programs with a formal structure, while medium-scale organizations are somewhere in between (see Figure 25).

FIGURE 24

Level of Program Structure

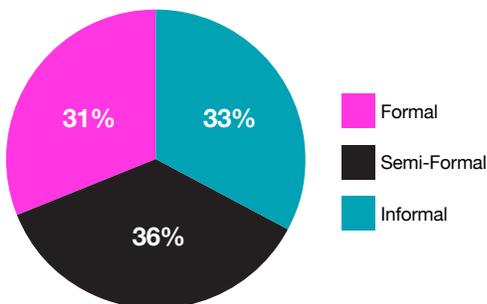
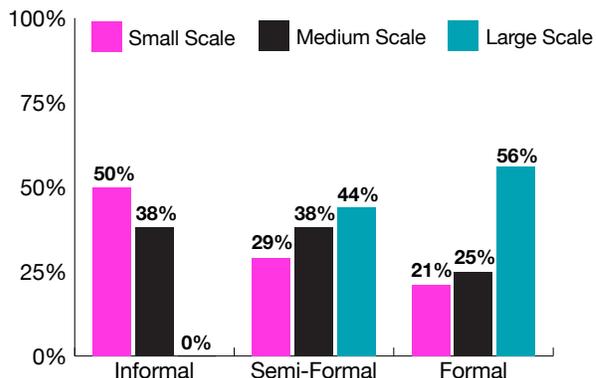


FIGURE 25

Level of Program Structure and Scale of Operations



Responses to open-ended questions

At the end of the survey, participants were given the opportunity to state any additional relevant information pertaining to their organization. Some participating organizations elaborated on program details (11), program needs (2), training (2), and changes in programming relating to the COVID-19 pandemic (3).

PROGRAM DETAILS

Most of the open-ended responses were about program details such as the number of years their programs had been running, types of services offered, and mission statements. Some also outlined the various steps involved in operating their programs. For example, one organization stated that they first began their programs by training their tutors, who were then paired with youths between the ages of 7 and 11 years old. The tutoring sessions, which were held

once a week for approximately an hour, were supervised by a certified teacher or adult working in another field.

PROGRAM NEEDS

Two respondents provided information related to program needs, specifically regarding the need for additional support and assistance with their program planning and development.

TRAINING

Other respondents elaborated on issues related to training. For example, one organization explained that their tutors are matched with retired educators to engage in ongoing training about learning strategies, teaching pedagogies, and student support.

CHANGES DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Three organizations commented on how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected their programming, especially in terms of difficulties related to technology and access. One organization stated that they worked with newcomers and refugees who faced language barriers and limited digital literacy. Another organization encountered challenges due to an increased need for staff and volunteer resources for initial onboarding, but emphasized new successes, such as closer relationships with students' families than before and more individualized support.

The table below provides a summary of how each program that answered our surveys participated in Toronto’s tutoring ecosystem, with an overview of organizational scale, funding sources, demographic focus, staff and volunteer composition, curricular coverage, and program structure.

TABLE 1
Ecosystem map of key organizations/programs and their characteristics, organized by staff size¹⁸

[🧑 JK-Gr3; 🧑 Gr4-Gr6; 🧑 Gr7-Gr8; 🧑 Gr9-Gr12; 🧑 Adult Learners]
 [Lit Literacy; Math Mathematics; Sci Science and Technology; SS Social Studies (History/Geography); Lang Languages; Oth Subject – Other]
 [🏠 In school building; 🏡 In community setting; 🖥 On-line]
 [🏛 Federal; 🏡 Provincial; 🏛 Municipal; 🏛 Foundations; 🧑 Individual donations; 🏢 Business/corporate donations; 🗳 Others]

Organization Name (Program)	No. of Students	Age Group	Specific Population Served	Curriculum Areas Covered	Service Location	No. of Tutors	All/Most Tutoring Staff	Funding Source(s)
Large Scale Programs (staff of more than 100)								
Frontier College (One-to-one tutoring, Clubs, Reading Circles)	500+	🧑🧑🧑 🧑🧑	Low-income, Disabilities, Newcomers, Ethno-racial	Lit Math Sci SS Lang Oth	🏠 🏡 🖥	100+	Paid Staff/ Volunteers	🏛 🏡 🏛 🏛 🧑 🗳
Licensed to Learn Inc. (Licensed to Learn)	500+	🧑🧑🧑 🧑🧑	No specific	Lit Math Sci SS Lang Oth	🏠 🏡 🖥	100+	Paid Staff/ Volunteers	🏛 🏡 🏛 🏛 🧑 🗳
START Science (STEM workshops)	201-500	🧑🧑🧑 🧑🧑	Low-income	Lit Math Sci SS Lang Oth	🏠 🏡 🖥	100+	Volunteers	🏛 🏡 🏛 🏛 🧑 🗳
TVO (TVO Mathify)	500+	🧑🧑🧑 🧑🧑	No specific	Lit Math Sci SS Lang Oth	🏠 🏡 🖥	100+	Paid Staff	🏛 🏡 🏛 🏛 🧑 🗳
University of Toronto-St. George (Tutoring, Mentoring)	101-200	🧑🧑🧑 🧑🧑	No specific	Lit Math Sci SS Lang Oth	🏠 🏡 🖥	100+	Volunteers	🏛 🏡 🏛 🏛 🧑 🗳
Upper Canada College-Horizon (School Year Tutoring)	500+	🧑🧑🧑 🧑🧑	Low-income	Lit Math Sci SS Lang Oth	🏠 🏡 🖥	100+	Volunteers	🏛 🏡 🏛 🏛 🧑 🗳
Upper Canada College-Horizon (Summer Program)	101-200	🧑🧑🧑 🧑🧑	Low-income	Lit Math Sci SS Lang Oth	🏠 🏡 🖥	100+	Paid Staff	🏛 🏡 🏛 🏛 🧑 🗳
Volunteer Readers Programme (Volunteer Readers Programme)	201-500	🧑🧑🧑 🧑🧑	Low-income, Disabilities, Ethno-racial	Lit Math Sci SS Lang Oth	🏠 🏡 🖥	100+	Volunteers	🏛 🏡 🏛 🏛 🧑 🗳
Working Women Community Centre (Mentoring/Tutoring)	101-200	🧑🧑🧑 🧑🧑	Ethno-racial	Lit Math Sci SS Lang Oth	🏠 🏡 🖥	100+	Volunteers	🏛 🏡 🏛 🏛 🧑 🗳
Medium Scale Operations (21-100 staff)								
Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (Homework Club)	51-100	🧑🧑🧑 🧑🧑	Low-income, Newcomers	Lit Math Sci SS Lang Oth	🏠 🏡 🖥	21-50	Volunteers	🏛 🏡 🏛 🏛 🧑 🗳

18 The scale of operations in this study is defined by the number of tutoring/academic staff, including volunteers, recruited by each organization/program: large-scale with more than 100 staff, medium-scale with 21 to 100 staff, and small-scale with no more than 20 staff.

Frontlines (On the Frontlines of Education)	101-200		Low-income, Newcomers, Ethno-racial			51-100	Paid Staff		
Inner City Outreach (Inner City Outreach Homework Club)	51-100		No specific			21-50	Paid Staff/ Volunteers		
Law in Action Within Schools (Lab, Tutoring, Mentorship)	500+		Low-income, Newcomers, Ethno-racial			21-50	Paid Staff/ Volunteers		
LE Centre Franco (Euréka!)	500+		No specific			21-50	Paid Staff		
North York Community House (Citizenship Test Preparation)	21-50		No specific			21-50	N/A - Missing		
Oak Learners (Tutoring, Summer Skill Booster, Alternative Day School)	201-500		No specific			21-50	Paid Staff		
Ryerson University (Ryerson Study Buddy)	201-500		Low-income, Newcomers, Ethno-racial			51-100	Volunteers		
TNO (Tutor Me Please, Study Point & SWIS)	101-200		No specific			21-50	Paid Staff		
Toronto Foundation for Student Success (Tutoring)	500+		Low-income, Disabilities, Newcomers, Ethno-racial			21-50	Paid Staff		
Unison Health and Community Services (Pathways to Education)	201-500		Low-income, Disabilities, Newcomers			21-50	Paid Staff/ Volunteers		
University of Toronto and TDSB (Academic Support Program)	201-500		No specific			51-100	Paid Staff/ Volunteers		
University of Toronto-Robertson Program (Online Playful Math)	101-200		Low-income, Ethno-racial			21-50	Volunteers		
University of Toronto-Scarborough (Mentorship Program)	101-200		Ethno-racial			51-100	Paid Staff/ Volunteers		
Youth Assisting Youth (Tutoring, Literacy Program, ESL)	101-200		Low-income, Disabilities, Newcomers			51-100	Volunteers		
YouthLink (Pathways to Education in Scarborough Village)	201-500		Low-income			21-50	Volunteers		
Small Scale Operations (fewer than 20 staff)									
105 Gibson Centre (Youth Success Initiatives)	21-50		Newcomers, Ethno-racial			1-20	Paid Staff/ Volunteers		
Boys and Girls Club-East Scarborough (Raise the Grade)	21-50		No specific			1-20	Volunteers		

Boys and Girls Club-St. Alban's Club (Raise the Grade)	500+		No specific	 	 	1-20	Volunteers	
BridgeTO Youth (Academic support with emphasis in STEM)	21-50		Low-income, Newcomers, Ethno-racial	 	 	1-20	Paid Staff/ Volunteers	
Delta Family Resource Centre (Future explorers, SNAP Homework Program)	21-50		No specific	 	 	1-20	Paid Staff	
Jean Augustine Centre for Young Women's Empowerment (Tutoring)	51-100		Low-income, Disabilities, Newcomers, Ethno-racial	 	 	1-20	Volunteers	
Kids with Incarcerated Parents Canada (Mentorship Program)	51-100		Low-income	 	 	1-20	Paid Staff/ Volunteers	
Native Child and Family Services of Toronto (Tutoring, GED)	51-100		Ethno-racial	 	 	1-20	Paid Staff	
Scadding Court Community Centre (Tutoring)	21-50		No specific	 	 	1-20	Paid Staff/ Volunteers	
Stolen From Africa / Volé D'Afrique (Homework Helps)	101-200		Low-income, Ethno-racial	 	 	1-20	Paid Staff	
Success Beyond Limits (Success Beyond Limits Education Program)	201-500		Low-income, Ethno-racial	 	 	1-20	Paid Staff	
Warden Woods Community Centre (After-school program)	51-100		Low-income, Disabilities, Newcomers, Ethno-racial	 	 	1-20	Paid Staff	
Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre (Homework, Jobs, Leadership)	201-500		Low-income, Disabilities, Newcomers, Ethno-racial	 	 	1-20	Paid Staff	
West Neighbourhood House (Homework Help Program)	101-200		No specific	 	 	1-20	Paid Staff	

Note: No information about service location was provided by University of Toronto-Robertson Program (Online Playful Math).

Opportunities and Challenges: Profiles of Organizations Highlight Diversity in Ecosystem

In addition to the sector survey, informal informational interviews were conducted with four participant organizations to discuss their programming in more detail. The intent of these informational meetings was to highlight some of the program design details not captured in the survey and to explore the opportunities and challenges perceived by staff in the different programs. The four programs explored were:

1. beyond 3:30, an online tutoring program operated by the Toronto Foundation for Student Success in cooperation with the TDSB
2. Mathify, a tutoring program operated by TVO with funding from the Ontario Ministry of Education
3. On Your Mark, a program operated by Working Women Community Centre
4. Study Buddy, a tutoring program operated out of Ryerson University's Diversity Institute in collaboration with the Ontario Tech University, the Jean Augustine Centre, and the Lifelong Leadership Institute

While there is limited information available on tutoring programs in Ontario, the rigorous evaluation studies detailed in our evidence review (Gallagher Mackay, Mundy et al.,

2021) provide insights on two additional programs included in our survey: Licensed to Learn, a student peer tutoring program (Yau & Archer, 2011), and Pathways to Education, a mentoring and tutoring program for secondary students (Oreopoulos et al., 2017; Cumming, 2012).

Four program overviews

BEYOND 3:30

The **beyond 3:30 Tutoring Program** is an online tutoring initiative that forms part of an after-school program that has been operating for 12 years under the Toronto Foundation for Student Success (TFSS) in partnership with the TDSB. Beyond 3:30 began as a response to the need to support middle school students in 18 schools across Toronto's Neighbourhood Improvement Areas. The face-to-face program involves group-based after-school sports and art activities, small-group academic support, and a nutrition program. In response to pandemic-related disruptions, beyond 3:30 received funding from the Shaw Foundation in March 2021 to offer one-on-one online academic tutoring to up to 2,000 students in Grades 3 to 8, with a special focus on math (as well as other subjects).

Students in the beyond 3:30 program are recruited from families who are enrolled in beyond 3:30 after-school activities. Students receive about one hour of online tutoring per week at times convenient to the families. The program uses a video interface for tutoring sessions, mirroring traditional face-to-face tutoring formats. It has partnered with Jump Math and Visions of Science to develop a structured curriculum for its tutoring programs, but it also provides real-time homework support.

The beyond 3:30 tutoring program employs certified teachers and some volunteers from faculties of education teacher training programs to deliver tutoring. There is ongoing training for all volunteers, as well as supervision of the tutors by paid part-time staff. The face-to-face components of beyond 3:30 have been evaluated by the TDSB's research and evaluation unit (Yau et al., 2015). The TDSB is also currently conducting an evaluation that includes a new online tutoring program.

Program staff report that one of the major successes of the program has been the confidence that students develop as a result of academic support, leading to higher self-esteem. A major challenge has been recruiting students through a period that was marked by several shifts between face-to-face and online learning.

MATHIFY

TVO's Mathify is a free program that began in 2007 with funding from the Ontario Ministry of Education to provide ongoing math resources for teachers, and online,

one-on-one mathematics tutoring for students who need extra support. The program initially operated in partnership with two Hamilton school boards but has since expanded to six school boards across Ontario. In 2021, the Government of Ontario extended the program across the province to meet the needs of students during pandemic-related disruptions. It currently operates daily between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. and reports reaching over 70,000 Ontario students annually. Approximately 3,700 teachers also use Mathify to support their classroom instruction.

The tutoring component of the Mathify program is a drop-in program for students in Grades 6 to 10. Students who register for the program request "just-in-time" support for math problems or assignments. They are then provided with an online tutoring session. Students are not paired with tutors for continuous engagement. Tutoring sessions are delivered using an online interface with a whiteboard, voice interaction, and chat function that allows the math tutor and student to work together on a math problem or assignment uploaded by the student. Mathify has a strategic partnership with Brightspace, a tool that is provided equitably to all school boards. The program can be accessed through any device, including mobile devices, which enhances access for those families that may not have other devices available to them. A great deal of attention has been paid to privacy and security in the Mathify program: both students and tutors are registered under pseudonyms, and there is no video used to simulate face-to-face tutoring.

Mathify uses only certified math teachers for its tutoring program. While tutors do not follow a structured curriculum, their certification guarantees some familiarity with the Ontario math curriculum. In addition, Mathify also partners with educators from Ontario school boards, both to recruit students and to ensure teachers promote the program to students and feel comfortable using the online platform.

Staff report that the biggest success of the program has been to empower students to take charge of their own learning. Another success is that the program has expanded its reach across the province, which has been especially important during the COVID-19 pandemic. This was possible because the program was already delivered in an online format. Though we could find no public report on student numbers, staff believe that the success of the program is evident through the ever-increasing number of users, the increasing number of hours that users participate in the program, as well as the return of students to the same tutors for continued support, which suggests that relationships are being built through the platform.

One challenge identified by staff is engaging Indigenous and rural communities, members of which may be unaware of the program or may have trouble accessing a stable internet connection.

ON YOUR MARK

On Your Mark is a free tutoring and academic support program operated by the Working Women Community Centre

(WWCC). It was designed to respond to findings of a 1999 report on equity in Toronto schools that identified a high need for academic support for students from the Portuguese community. The program was later expanded to include students from the Hispanic community. On Your Mark received initial funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. It currently has partnerships with United Way, the Bank of Montreal, and several law firms. It also receives donations from individuals in the Latinx community. On Your Mark partners with the TDSB and the Toronto Catholic District School Board, both of which contribute \$30,000 in annual funding to support the program. The program currently serves about 200 students in Toronto.

On Your Mark has engaged approximately 200 university volunteers as tutors, some of whom are recruited from education programs at York University and the University of Toronto. The program provides one-on-one and small-group face-to-face tutoring after school or on Saturday mornings for at-risk students in Grades 1 to 12. To encourage relationship building and mentorship between tutor and student over the course of the school year, many of the tutors are of Portuguese and Spanish-speaking descent. Families are also engaged in the program through workshops and an orientation session.

While York University professors and students in the teacher education program volunteer to help train and develop materials to support the tutors, the program does not follow a structured curriculum. The tutoring component of the program is complimented

by a Parent Ambassador program that helps newcomer families understand the education system and support their children.

WWCC staff report that one of their biggest successes has been seeing seven graduates of the program return as tutors, ready to give back to the community. Parent testimonials also highlight improvements in student's homework completion and academic achievement, as well as increased confidence and a sense of school belonging. Families also report that the Parent Ambassador program has helped them better navigate their children's education and participate in school councils. New interest in the program has been expressed by the Somali community, and there are plans to expand the program to all newcomer groups with additional funding.

STUDY BUDDY

The Diversity Institute at Ryerson University's **Study Buddy Program** provides free, online one-on-one tutoring for newcomer and racialized K–12 students, particularly those who are Black, in the Greater Toronto Area and throughout Ontario. In response to research showing the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on families and the particular impacts on immigrant, racialized, and Black families, the program was launched in 2020 with community organizations. Tutoring is provided by student teachers under the supervision of certified teachers. Since its rollout in May of 2020, the program has facilitated more than 5,000 hours of tutoring support for more than 450 students.

Study Buddy has paired more than 200 teacher candidates, recruited from five Ontario university faculties of education, with nearly 300 families to provide tutoring support to their children. Through the program, teacher candidates gain experience applied toward their practicum requirements, gain experience with online learning, and receive specialized training in equity, diversity, and anti-Black racism. Community-based organizations supporting outreach include the Lifelong Leadership Institute, the Jean Augustine Centre for Young Women's Empowerment, Midaynta Community Services Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC), YWCA Toronto, Black Business and Professional Association (BBPA), Black Female Accountants Network (BFAN), Indus Community Services, KEYS job center, YMCA Sudbury, Nigerian Community of Greater Sudbury, Afro-Heritage Association of Sudbury, Multicultural Youth Center of Thunder Bay.

Tutors are supervised by certified teachers and meet with participating K–12 students weekly over several months at an interactive online whiteboard for one-on-one, subject-specific tutoring support. The following subject areas are typically included: Grade K–6, all subject areas; Grade 7–8 Science, Math, English, French; Grade 9–12 Math, Science, English, French. The program is supported by the Ontario Principals Association but is not directly connected to schools.

Study Buddy evaluation results have shown that student achievement and overall family well-being have improved

through the program. Parents report that, because of their experience with Study Buddy, their children are more confident in schoolwork, feel more supported and connected to school, and feel more in control of life. Parents also report that Study Buddy has reduced their overall family stress and has made them feel more hopeful about the future. The next phase of Study Buddy, which is already underway, involves it expanding into Northern and remote communities, providing support to organizations like the Nigerian Community of Greater Sudbury and the Multicultural Youth Center of Thunder Bay.

Discussion and Conclusions

In this section, we discuss key themes that emerged from our ecosystem mapping and observations, linking our findings to contextual features and the wider body of research on academic tutoring. We conclude with some recommendations for extending this research.

Strong and growing need for tutoring

As evident in the TDSB's 2017 Student and Parent Census, which surveyed over 70% of Toronto's public-school population, a sizable population of students in the city's public schools expressed the need for after-school academic support but had nowhere to turn to for assistance. This need was particularly strong among students from low-income households, immigrant families, and racialized communities. According to this Census, many students were unable to access homework support from parents and caregivers.

It should be noted that these Census findings were captured a few years before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. We imagine that these needs have been exacerbated by the prolonged pandemic and the impacts of 33 weeks of school closures and other disruptions (Gallagher-

Mackay, Srivastava et al., 2021; United Nations Sustainable Development Group, 2020). In this context, the unmet demand for academic support among school-age children and youth, especially in the historically marginalized communities, is great and likely growing.

Sector's diversity

The survey results reported in this study reveal great diversity among community-based tutoring/academic support services and programs in Toronto in terms of the types of organizations, the scale and structure of operations (which we link to staff size), the number of students and the population served, the curriculum areas covered, and the method of service delivery.

For example, while most service providers are non-profit organizations, some educational institutions (such as universities and independent schools) and a public broadcaster (TVOntario), also offer free tutoring/academic support services to elementary and secondary school students. A large majority of the organizations surveyed have multiple programs functions, of which tutoring is only one.

Furthermore, it is apparent in this study that the scale of operations of these service providers varies, with most being either small-scale (no more than 20 tutoring staff) or medium-scale (no more than 100 staff). Only about a quarter of these Toronto organizations are large-scale, with over 100 tutoring staff members. Depending on the scale of the operation, the number of students supported by these agencies could range from 20 to more than 500 students. It should also be noted that over half of the surveyed organizations identified serving mainly priority neighbourhoods, while a few support specific racialized groups, and a small number focus on newcomers and students with disabilities.

Toronto-based programs and the characteristics of effective tutoring

Another way to understand the ecosystem of service providers is to discern if gaps exist between the tutoring programs surveyed in our study and the characteristics of effective tutoring programs identified in the burgeoning research evidence on tutoring, summarized in the companion evidence review prepared alongside this study (Gallagher-Mackay, Mundy et al., 2021; Robinson & Loeb, 2021). Based on their review of high impact tutoring programs that have been rigorously evaluated, Robinson and Loeb (2021) point to the following five characteristics of program effectiveness:

- > high-dosage (i.e., three or more sessions of required tutoring per week)
- > a stated focus on cultivating tutor–student relationships

- > use of formative assessments to monitor student learning
- > alignment with the school curriculum
- > formalized tutor training and support

Some aspects of the tutoring programs we surveyed align to these practices, proven to be characteristic of highly effective tutoring programs. For example, most surveyed organizations reported desirable practices such as assigning the same tutor to students for the duration of their program; offering tutoring services to students throughout a school term or over the whole school year; providing initial training to staff; and communicating with parents/guardians or family members in an ongoing way.

However, some aspects of the surveyed programs diverge from the best practices recognized in existing research. Across the organizations we surveyed:

- > While most participating organizations do offer their services throughout a school year or school term, only two-fifths support their students more than two times a week, another two-fifths offer their programs on a weekly basis, and a fifth serve their students on demand.
- > More than half (56%) of the programs reported that they do not conduct initial assessments to determine students’ capacities and needs before starting the tutoring relationship.
- > Only 30% of the surveyed programs reported following a structured curriculum.

Our survey also suggests that existing programs may be falling short in the areas

of tutor training and support. About a quarter of the organizations in our study (mainly those with larger staff) have certified teachers or student teachers as all or most of their tutoring/academic support staff. For others, tutoring is mostly provided by volunteers. Most of these volunteers are university students. Many organizations also use non-teaching professionals, retirees, and/or middle and high school students as tutors. Considering these diverse staff backgrounds, tutor training becomes all the more essential. However, while most participating organizations reported that they provide initial training for their tutoring staff, only slightly more than half offer ongoing training or coaching for their tutors, which is associated with highly effective learning.

Our survey did not ask participants about the alignment of their tutoring programs to the formal school curriculum, and therefore we cannot comment directly on this aspect of program effectiveness. However, very few organizations reported maintaining routine communication with their students' teachers or with any school personnel such as principals or guidance counsellors (and this was much less likely for organizations with smaller staff sizes). The five highlighted programs use mixed approaches in this regard: most are responsive programs in which tutors rely on their familiarity with the Ontario curriculum to provide on-demand support for homework needs. Furthermore, while a recent meta-analysis suggests that "tutoring done at school in the context of the school day was more effective than tutoring done at home or after school" (Nickow et al., 2020), only one-third of the organizations in our survey offer their programs within

school hours. In terms of location, there is an almost even split between those using school buildings and those using community settings as their site of service.

We also did not ask survey participants about the degree to which they place an emphasis on building a strong tutor–student relationship. However, we do know from this study that most programs place a strong emphasis on communication with families: three out of four organizations reported regularly communicating with students' parents/guardians or family members, which is clearly a good thing for building home–school alliances.

It should also be noted that, according to the survey, the service providers in this sector seemed more concentrated in the middle and high school grade levels. At least three-quarters of the participating organizations support these age groups. This proportion is lower for the younger grades: for example, less than two-thirds of organizations serve junior grades (Grades 4–6), and only about half cater to primary grades of kindergarten to Grade 3. Though recent evaluations suggest significant impacts of tutoring for adolescents, there is also a strong and consistent body of literature demonstrating the long-term academic benefits of tutoring interventions at an early age, especially for children from vulnerable communities. This suggests that more attention to tutoring for younger ages may be needed in Toronto.

Need for sustainable funding

Funding support is essential for community-based tutoring services. Undoubtedly, limited financial resources limit the provision

of more robust programs in terms of, for example, providing more frequent services, hiring full-time professional or paraprofessional staff, offering more ongoing training and coaching, or expanding services to lower grades.

This study found that private contributions from individual donations, foundations, and/or business or corporate donations are a major source of funding for most participating organizations. While these private funds are essential, we should also be cognizant of the sustainability concern associated with a heavy reliance on private versus public funding. It should also be noted that smaller service providers have more limited access to philanthropic support, especially from businesses and corporations.

Government grants constitute an important source of funding for at least two-thirds of the surveyed organizations. However, a breakdown analysis indicates that only about two in five organizations receive funding from the provincial and/or federal governments, and only about a quarter are funded by the municipal government.

Secure and long-term sources of funding are critical for ensuring not only sustainability but also scalability of existing programs or services, especially in light of the growing demands associated with post-pandemic educational recovery.

Collaboration and research as next steps

The goal of this initial ecosystem mapping exercise is to identify, on the one hand, the

strength of diversity within the sector and, on the other hand, some of the gaps and challenges in practices among existing programs. As mentioned in the introduction of this report, one of the key functions of ecosystem mapping is to identify strengths and gaps in service in order to improve sector efficacy. In fact, given the challenges of identifying potential organizations for this study and the wide diversity of programs and organizations found in the survey in terms of structure, scale, funding, staffing, delivery modes, coverage, etc., we can infer that there is a high degree of isolation among service providers within the sector and a lack of an overall strategic or coordinating role in this landscape.

All of these issues point to the need for more coordinated and collaborative approaches to the delivery of tutoring programs in Toronto and beyond. Partnerships and sharing of information, practices, and resources, as well as potential joint planning and decision making among stakeholders within the system can certainly enhance collective efficacy. Hence, establishing a coordinated coalition or network to connect the different community-based tutoring/academic support service providers may be an important next step.

The diversity of approaches to and models of tutoring in the Toronto context also points to an important opportunity for organizations and educational leaders within the tutoring ecosystem to learn and improve access for underserved students. While most organizations in the study reported that they monitor and evaluate their programs, we found through a separate

evidence review that there are few publicly available evaluations of tutoring programs in Canada (Gallagher-Mackay, Mundy et al., 2021). Among these evaluations, few used learning outcome data to measure program effectiveness, and even fewer used experimental or quasi-experimental evidence to evaluate program impact. This is a common theme in the research on effective tutoring, which significantly underrepresents community-based tutoring programs. To help build on the existing practices of monitoring and evaluation in participating organizations and improve overall data around community-based tutoring, our team developed a Universal Evaluation Toolkit for Academic Tutoring Programs (Proulx et al., 2021) which includes guidance on both how and why questions for evaluations, as well as concrete recommendations for measures of academic and social outcomes.

Investments in such research are an important starting point for enhanced collaboration, program scaling to reach more students, and improved effectiveness of tutoring. We therefore conclude with a call for greater co-ordination across tutoring programs, both to expand research on the ecosystem of community-based tutoring/academic support beyond Toronto, and to invest in joint efforts around evaluation and program improvement. We hope our contributions—both through this ecosystem mapping exercise and through the publication of an open-source evaluation toolkit—help lay the foundation for such future collaboration.

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Appendices

Appendix A: List of identified organizations

- > 105 Gibson Centre
- > Agincourt Community Services Association
- > Albion Neighbourhood Services
- > Alexandra Park Community Centre
- > Birchmount Bluffs Neighbourhood Centre
- > Braeburn Neighbourhood Place
- > BridgeTO Youth
- > Canadian Center for Victims of Torture
- > CAUSE Tutoring
- > Center for Spanish Speaking Peoples (Teach2Learn)
- > Centre for Immigrant and Community Services (CICS)
- > Christie-Ossington Neighbourhood Centre
- > Community Youth Mentorship - University of Toronto, Mississauga
- > Delta Family Resource Centre
- > Discovery – University of Toronto, Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering
- > Dovercourt Boys & Girls Club
- > East Scarborough Boys And Girls Club
- > Eastview Neighbourhood Community Centre

- > Expansion via Access Programs University Fund: Enhancing Post-Secondary Access for Black, Indigenous and other Marginalized Youth through Embodied, Cultural and Community-Engaged Learning - University of Toronto, Faculty of Kinesiology & Physical Education
- > For Youth Initiative – Ryerson University
- > Frontier College
- > Frontlines Toronto
- > Inner City Outreach Homework Club
- > Jean Augustine Centre for Young Women’s Empowerment
- > Kids with Incarcerated Parents Canada
- > LAMP Community Health Centre
- > Law in Action Within Schools – University of Toronto, Faculty of Law
- > Le Centre Franco, Eurêka!
- > Licensed To Learn Inc. (L2L)
- > Malvern Family Resource Centre
- > Math Mentorship – University of Toronto, Department of Mathematics
- > Native Child and Family Services Of Toronto
- > North York Community House
- > Oak Learners
- > Parkdale/Central Toronto Academy Mentorship Program
- > Parsec Youth Network
- > Read2Rap
- > ReadUP Reading Clubs
- > Rexdale Community Health Centre
- > Scadding Court Community Centre
- > Spanish Speaking Education Network
- > St Stephen’s Community House Toronto
- > St. Alban’s Boys & Girls Club

- > **START Science**
- > **Stolen From Africa/Volé D'Afrique**
- > **Study Buddy – Diversity Institute at Ryerson University**
- > **Success Beyond Limits**
- > **The Neighbourhood Organization (TNO)**
- > **The Robertson Program for Inquiry-based Teaching in Mathematics and Science**
- > **The Spot-Jane Finch Centre**
- > **Toronto Foundation for Student Success**
- > **Toronto Public Library**
- > **TVO Mathify**
- > **Unison Health and Community Services**
- > **University of Toronto and Toronto District School Board Academic Support Program**
- > **University of Toronto Medical Society, St. George – The Saturday Program**
- > **University of Toronto, Scarborough – Imani Academic Mentorship**
- > **Upper Canada College – Horizons (After school tutoring)**
- > **Upper Canada College – Horizons (Summer program)**
- > **Voila Community Help**
- > **Volunteer Readers Programme**
- > **Warden Woods Community Centre**
- > **Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre**
- > **West Neighbourhood House**
- > **Woodgreen Community Services**
- > **Working Women Community Centre**
- > **Youth Assisting Youth/The Peer Project**
- > **Youth Association for Academics, Athletics and Character Education**
- > **YouthLink – Pathways to Education in Scarborough Village**

Appendix B: Survey form

A Survey on Community-Based Tutoring and Academic Support Services in Toronto

While there is a wide array of community based providers of tutoring, mentoring and after-school academic support providers in Toronto, there is no data about the number, size, scope, variety, funding, stakeholders, or structure of tutoring and academic support services in the city. With your co-operation and participation in this survey, we hope to collect the data to create an overview of the tutoring and academic support ecosystem in Toronto. This information will be helpful in promoting community-based academic support and tutoring services as a potential response to address the pandemic learning loss among children and youth, especially those from low-income households and underserved and diverse communities.

This survey should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact karen.mundy@utoronto.ca. Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

* Required

Important Notes

- > “Tutoring services” in this survey include any ongoing and direct academic support offered by agencies or organizations to students from kindergarten to high school. These services can also include those combined with other elements such as mentoring, coaching or social-emotional support, as long as they have an explicit curriculum-related component (e.g., literacy, numeracy, course subjects, homework completion).
- > This study does not include:
 - Non-academic learning or child/youth development programs (e.g., dance or music, playgroups or leadership groups), or
 - Short-term programs which are one-time events (e.g., workshops, or school visits).
- > We understand that due to the pandemic, most tutoring and academic support programmes have to be converted online delivery, or some services have been modified to provide more immediate supports related to children’s physical and mental needs.

**Please answer this survey if tutoring and academic support are a normal part of your activities, even if it is not offered in the usual way during the pandemic.

About Your Program and Organizational Home

1. Program Name(s) *

Please list all tutoring programs you offer.

2. Organization name/organizational host *

3. Organization type *

- Non-profit (regular)
- Non-profit (faith-based)
- Private (business)
- Post-secondary program
- Other

4. Additional partners: *

5. Funding sources (click all that apply): *

- Federal
- Provincial
- Municipal
- Foundations
- Individual donations
- Business/corporate donations
- Community fundraising
- Service Fees

6. Is there a contact person we could follow up with for further information (name and email)? *

About Your Tutoring and Academic Support Services

7. What services does your organization offer to students (Kindergarten to Grade 12)?

- Tutoring/academic support only
- Tutoring/academic support plus other programs
- Other programs only

8. What are the main curriculum areas covered by your tutoring or academic support program? (Click all that apply.) *

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Science and Technology
- Social Studies (History/Geography)
- Languages
- Other

9. Are tutoring services offered during school hours or outside of school hours? (Click all that apply.) *

- Within school hours
- After school hours
- During weekends or holidays

10. Normally (pre-COVID), where do your tutoring or academic support services take place? (Click all that apply.) *

- In school building
- In community setting
- At the student's residence
- On-line

11. During the pandemic/shutdown period, have there been changes to how you offer tutoring services?

- Yes
- No

12. What changes have there been to how you offer tutoring services? *

- Services suspended
- Services offered on-line only
- Other

13. How frequently can a student receive your organization's tutoring or academic support services? *

- More than two times a week
- Once a week
- On demand

14. What is the normal duration of the tutoring/academic program you provide for students? *

- A few weeks
- Throughout a school term/semester
- Throughout the school year
- Indefinite

15. Does your tutoring/academic support services follow a structured curriculum? *

- Yes
- No

16. Is there an assessment to determine students' capacities and needs at the start of tutoring/academic support relationship? *

- Yes
- No

17. Does your organization monitor or evaluate the tutoring/academic support services offered? *

- Yes
- No

About Your Tutors or Academic Support Staff

18. Normally, approximately how many tutors/academic support staff did your organization have working in Toronto? *

- Fewer than 20
- 21–50
- 51–100
- More than 100

19. Who are your tutors/staff?

	All/most staff	Some staff
OCT Certified Teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student teachers (i.e., those in teacher-education programs)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Undergraduate university or college students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Graduate level university students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students from middle and/or high school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other working professionals (non-teaching)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Retirees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

20. Are your tutors/academic support staff volunteers or paid?

	All/most staff	Some staff
Paid	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Volunteers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
With some honorarium	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

21. Do most of your tutors/academic support staff receive training? *

- Yes
- No

22. What kind of training do your tutors/academic support staff receive? (Click all that apply.) *

- Initial training
- Ongoing training/coaching

23. Do your tutors/academic support staff routinely communicate with ...? (Click all that apply.) *

- Parent/guardian or family members of their student client
- Teacher(s) of their student client
- Other school personnel (e.g., principals and guidance counsellors)

About Your Student Clients

24. Which age groups of students does your organization serve? (Click all that apply.) *

- Primary (JK–Grade 3)
- Junior (Grade 4–6)
- Intermediate (Grades 7–8)
- High School (Grades 9–12)
- Adult Learners (non Post-Secondary)

25. Normally, how many students does your organization serve in Toronto over one year? *

- Fewer than 20
- 21–50
- 51–100
- 101–200
- 201–500
- More than 500

26. Does a student usually work with the same assigned tutor?

- Yes
- No

27. How do students find out about your program? (Click all that apply.)

- From the school
- From community organizations
- Other

28. What specific communities or neighbourhoods does your organization mainly serve? *

- No specific communities or neighbourhoods
- Priority neighbourhoods (i.e., including underserved and/or low-income neighbourhoods)
- Other

29. Does your program focus on serving specific populations? *

- Yes
- No

30. What populations does your program focus on? (Click all that apply.) *

- Low-income households
- Students with disabilities including special education needs
- Newcomers
- Ethno-racial communities

31. If your program focuses on specific ethno-racial group(s), please specify the group(s).

Some Final Questions

32. Would you like to receive a copy of our final report and further information from our research? *

- Yes
- No

33. Is there anything else you think we should know about your program?

Appendix C: Initial email invitation

Dear Colleagues:

We are a research team based at University of Toronto, working in collaboration with the Diversity Institute at Ryerson University as a research lead for the Future Skills Centre. With your help, we are seeking to create an ecosystem map of community-based organizations and initiatives that provide tutoring and academic support services in Toronto.

Last week, we sent an email asking you or someone in your organization to fill in the following survey. If you are a funding organization, we ask that you forward the survey to organizations or programs you sponsor and support.

The survey should take about 5-10 minutes to complete. Please [click here](#).

Our goal is to promote better awareness of the availability and importance of academic support programmes for children and youth during the recovery from COVID-19, especially those from low-income households and underserved and diverse communities. We also seek to create a community of practice that can support improved and more widely available programming.

While we know there are a wide array of community-based providers of tutoring, mentoring and after-school academic support in Toronto, there is limited data about the number, size, scope, variety, funding, stakeholders, or structure of tutoring and academic support services in the city.

Please help us by forwarding this survey to any other organizations providing tutoring service, especially those focusing on assisting underserved communities. We would appreciate it if the survey can be completed by **Friday, April 6th**.

Thank you for your participation. We will be sharing our findings with you.

Karen Mundy, Principal Investigator and Professor, University of Toronto –
karen.mundy@utoronto.ca

Kelly Gallagher Mackay, Assistant Professor, Wilfrid Laurier University

Maria Yee-Man Yau, Senior Researcher

The Academic Support and Tutoring Programs for Equity in Greater Toronto and Ontario is a research project funded by the Government of Canada's Future Skills Centre», Programmes de soutien scolaire et de tutorat pour l'équité à Toronto est financé par le Centre des Compétences futures du gouvernement du Canada.



Future Skills Centre des
Centre **Compétences futures**

Funded by the
Government of Canada's
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Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

University of Toronto, Canada



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
OISE | ONTARIO INSTITUTE
FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION

Appendix D: Follow-up email invitation

This e-mail is sent on behalf of Dr. Karen Mundy.

Dear Colleagues,

This is a gentle reminder to request your participation in our online survey sent to you last week— please see our email request below. The survey should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. You can click [here](#) to open the survey.

If you are unable to complete the survey, please let us know by replying to this email so that we may remove you from our contact list.

Should you have any questions or need any assistance about the survey, please contact Tina Ta (tina.ta@mail.utoronto.ca) or Maria Yau (mariayeeman.yau@outlook.com).

Thank you. We're looking forward to receiving your completed survey by Monday, May 3, 2021.

Kind regards,

Karen Mundy, Principal Investigator and Professor, University of Toronto
karen.mundy@utoronto.ca

Kelly Gallagher-Mackay, Assistant Professor, Wilfrid Laurier University

Maria Yee-Man Yau, Senior Researcher

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Tina Ta (she/her)

Doctoral Student | Language and Literacies Education
Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto, Canada

Appendix E: Phone call follow-up script

(Before the interview, please familiarize yourself with the program/agency by reviewing their recent survey responses and/or their online information.)

Some Preambles

- > My name is //. On behalf of our research team, I'd like to thank you/your organization for participating in our recent online survey.
- > As you may already know, the goal of this research is to collect data and information for creating an ecosystem mapping on community-based tutoring and academic support services in Toronto.
- > Also, thanks for agreeing to participate in this short interview about your program. We'd like to showcase your program as one of the case studies for our research.
- > Please be assured that no personal names will be used in this report.

Interview Questions:

1. Can you tell us a little bit about the history of your program (Program Name)?
 - > the origin – why this program
 - > purpose or focus
2. Can you tell us a success story?
3. Has your program been facing any challenges? Explain.
4. Is there any potential for growth in your program? How?
5. What has helped your organization sustain this program for so long?
 - > Funding (from where)
 - > Any structural support – e.g., resource materials or facilities, training, monitoring and evaluation for this program
 - > Community partnerships and relationships – in terms of:
 - > recruiting your students (e.g., who, from where, and how);
 - > recruiting your staff, including volunteers (e.g., who, from where, and how);
 - > delivering, sustaining and/or expanding your program.

These partnerships/relationships can include:

- > other community agencies or community centres
- > institutions – e.g., universities, colleges
- > school boards, or local schools
- > families – parents and students

