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Mission Acceleration: Summary of Evaluation Data for Fall 2021

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MISSION ACCELERATION

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Summary of Evaluation Data for Fall 2021

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document provides an overview of findings from the Fall 2021 semester evaluation data collection for the Mission Acceleration project.

BACKGROUND

The University of Mississippi's Center for Research Evaluation (CERE) serves as the external evaluator for the *Mission Acceleration* program ("the program"). The Center for Excellence in Literacy Instruction (CELI) at the University of Mississippi manages the program funded through GEER funds (Governors Emergency Education Relief funds) under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act). The program seeks to:

1. Positively impact academic outcomes;
2. Reduce the negative effects of the pandemic;
3. Increase the number of skilled reading Academic Guides (i.e., college-going tutors) in Mississippi;
4. Expand resources for parents to support reading development at home and
5. Increase the time a struggling reader spends on appropriate-leveled text.

The program offers targeted reading tutoring to students in grades K-5 and is currently in a pilot phase.

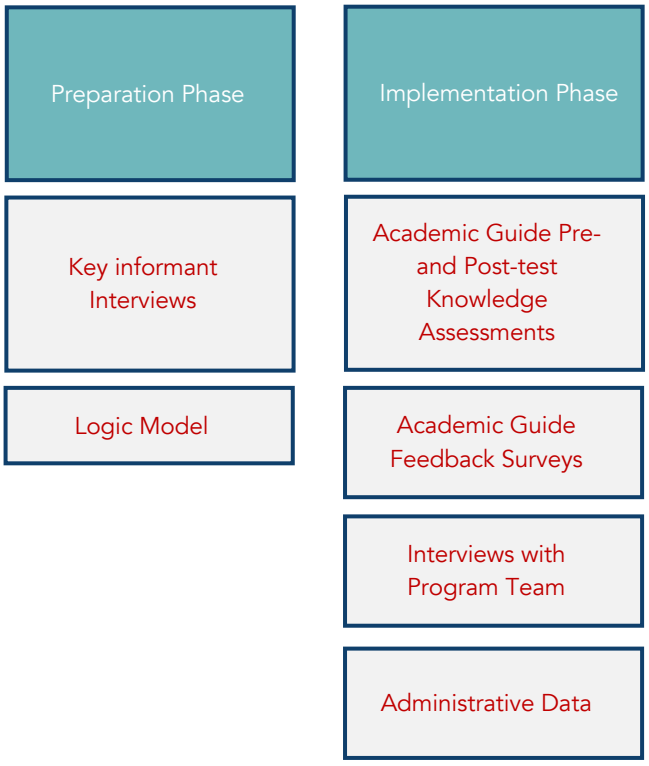
This report focuses on data collection and findings from the Fall 2021 Cohort. The purpose of this report is to provide feedback on program design, implementation and early outcomes, so that program leaders can refine the program for future semesters. To date, the evaluation has focused on the following key evaluation questions:

1. *Design & implementation:* How well was the Mission Acceleration program designed and implemented?
2. *Implementation—barriers & facilitators:* What were the barriers and facilitators to effective implementation?
3. *Outcomes:* To what extent did the program contribute to intended outcomes?

   The evaluation for the program utilizes a mixed methods design, incorporating four key phases: preparation phase, implementation phase, outcome phase and cost effectiveness study.

   Data collection thus far has included:

Figure 1: Data Collection Methods



FINDINGS

Using this mixed-methods approach, CERE derived the following high-level conclusions about the program's outcomes.

Scholars participating in the Mission Acceleration program experienced academic gains in reading.

- CERE calculated reading growth for each scholar who completed both pre- and post-testing by finding the difference in pre- and post-test grade level equivalence. Across the 105 matches, the **average reading growth per scholar was four months over an average of nine-weeks of program services**.
- The Mission Acceleration program **significantly increased the STAR Unified Scores** of the scholars by an average of 24.81 points (SD = 41.60).

Academic Guides believe they can positively impact scholar engagement.

- Academic Guides reported a **high level of efficacy towards scholar engagement** as measured by the Teacher Sense of Efficacy (TESE) towards student engagement subscale. AGs (n=38) reported an overall TESE mean score of 7.76 (SD = .888) on a scale of one to nine indicating that they believe they can influence student engagement more than "quite a bit."
- AG efficacy scores were also tracked over time. When comparing responses across time for AGs who completed the pre- and feedback surveys (n=16), we did not observe any significant (quantitative) changes in views about efficacy towards scholar engagement.
    - With that said, this could be due to (1) the small sample size and (2) the fact that AGs already held strong views about efficacy towards scholar engagement at the time of the first survey.
- Community Lead and Liaison interviews highlighted the **value of AG relationships with scholars (n=7, 100%)** and **level of preparation of AGs (n=5, 71%)**.

Program implementation varies across the project sites.

- The Mission Acceleration program design is **evidence-based** and **follows best practice research.**
- **Group size** (ratio of Academic Guide to scholar) and **tutoring session length** have the **greatest variability** across project sites. For examples, tutoring session length ranged from 35 to 70 minutes and group size ranged from one to six scholars.
- **Eighty-six percent** of scholars attending more than two tutoring sessions **completed both pre- and post- testing.** This reflects a **substantial improvement over the summer**, when only 60% of scholars who attended more than two sessions completed both pre- and post-testing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Continue implementation.** The program results in promising early outcomes in reading and social emotional learning for Mississippi students impacted by COVID-19.
- **Communicate program non-negotiables (i.e., what can and cannot be adapted in the program design) to community sites.** Clear expectations should result in less variability in program implementation. This will continue to have importance as future scaling takes place.

- **Continue to provide on-going support during Feedback Friday sessions for AGs and CLSSs.** Both groups see value in these meetings. Look for ways to differentiate sessions for CLs and SSs. This will have increasing importance as communities increase the number of program sites and CLs look to provide support. Anticipate that SSs might have differing needs based on amount of experience implementing MA program.
- **Implement a program monitoring schedule.** Periodic visits to sites will help with maintaining expectations for program implementation.
- **Set screening windows for STAR Reading and Early Literacy assessments.** Communicate this information with community sites and provide updates on progress towards 100% tested. This will result in more reliable data by which to make program decisions and target student support.
- **Facilitate a conversation around sustainability/ expansion of the program.** Community and site leaders are interested and willing to support planning around the future of the program. This could take the format of a planning committee or guiding coalition.
- **Explore value of AG experience in teacher preparation programs.** There is early evidence that both AGs and CLSSs see the program as a benefit to helping future educators gain experience.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BACKGROUND & METHODS

Summary

- Mission Acceleration aims to positively impact academic outcomes in reading and reduce the negative effects of the pandemic on the academic and social/emotional well-being for students in kindergarten through fifth grade.
- A multi-phase mixed methods evaluation of the project aims to (1) generate feedback on program design and implementation to inform ongoing decisions about design and implementation and (2) inform programmatic decisions in preparation for future scaling up.

The University of Mississippi's Center for Research Evaluation (CERE) serves as the external evaluator for the *Mission Acceleration* program ("the program"). The Center for Excellence in Literacy Instruction (CELI) at the University of Mississippi manages the program funded through GEER funds (Governors Emergency Education Relief funds) under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act). The program seeks to:

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5. Increase the time a struggling reader spends on appropriate-leveled text.

The program offers targeted reading tutoring to students in grades K-5 and is currently in a pilot phase.

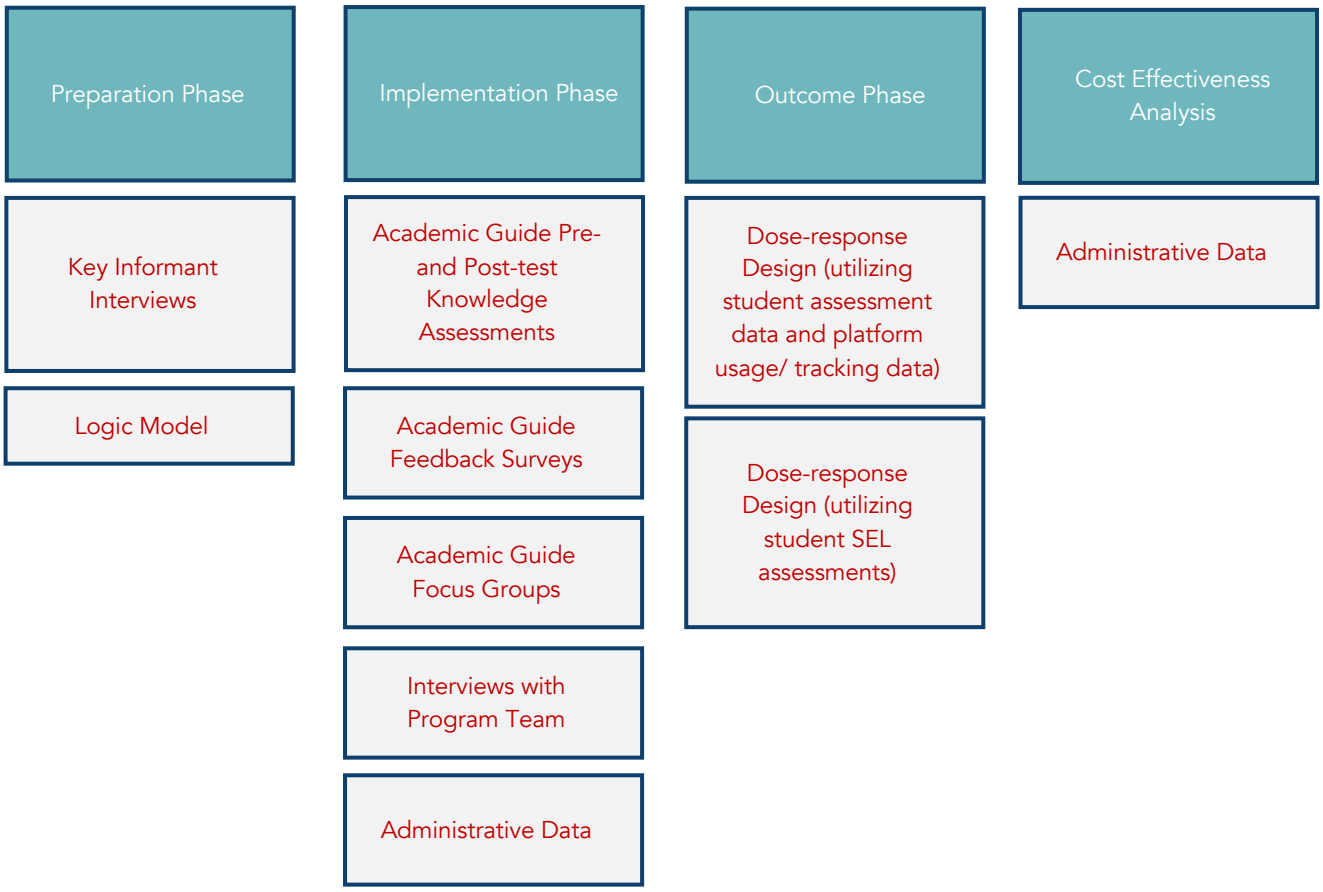
METHODS

CERE developed a mixed methods design that includes four key phases (see Figure 2). To date, we have collected data from:

- Academic Guide (AG) pre- and post-knowledge assessments;
- AG Feedback Surveys;
- Interviews with Community Leads, Site Supervisors and AGs and
- STAR Reading and Early Literacy Assessments.

In later phases we will report on the full set of evaluation activities.

Figure 2: Data Collection Methods



Surveys

- This CERE-developed series of surveys captured data on (1) AG knowledge of reading processes and pedagogy, phonemic awareness and morphology, (2) AG perspectives/ feedback on the training and support, (3) AG sense of efficacy towards student engagement, and (4) AG use of time. The program team developed the reading knowledge assessment items. We adapted the AG sense of efficacy towards student engagement items from Tschannen-Moran & Woolfok Hoy's (2001) Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale.
    - **AG Pre-Training Survey**: The pre-training survey (n= 43) collected data on (1) AG knowledge of reading process and pedagogy, phonemic awareness and morphology and (2)

AG sense of efficacy towards student engagement. This online survey was administered via Qualtrics prior to AGs completing training.

- **AG Post-Training Survey**: The post-training survey (n=29) collected data on (1) AG knowledge of reading process and pedagogy, phonemic awareness and morphology, (2) AG sense of efficacy towards student engagement, and (3) AG perspectives/ feedback on the training. This online survey was administered via Qualtrics following AG completion of training.
- **AG Time Survey**: This online survey collected data on how AGs spent their time on program activities over the course of the semester. This online survey was administered via Qualtrics during the first month of tutoring (n=34), during the third month of tutoring (n=31), and was embedded in the AG Feedback Survey (n=31) at the close of tutoring.
- **AG Feedback Survey**: The feedback survey (n=31) collected data on (1) AG knowledge of reading process and pedagogy, phonemic awareness and morphology, (2) AG sense of efficacy towards student engagement, (3) AG perspectives/ feedback on experiences in the program and (4) AG use of time at the end of the semester. This online survey was administered via Qualtrics at the close of tutoring.

Interviews

- **Mission Acceleration Community Lead and Site Supervisor Interviews:** CERE invited all current Mission Acceleration Community Leads and Site Supervisors (CLSS) to participate in an in-depth interview focusing on their experiences implementing program activities this fall and to find out whether they thought they were making progress towards the program's goals. CERE sent interview invitations weekly for two weeks at the beginning of December via email.

13CLSS invited to interview

7 CLSS Interviewed

- **Mission Acceleration AG Interviews:** CERE invited a sample of current AGs to participate in an in-depth interview focusing on their experiences implementing program activities this fall and to find out whether they thought they were making progress towards the program's goals. CERE sent interview invitations weekly for two weeks at the beginning of December via email.

24 AGs invited to interview **9 AGs interviewed**

STAR Reading and Early Literacy Scores

- **STAR Reading and Early Literacy Scores for Scholars**: Scholars (i.e., K-5 student receiving tutoring) completed pre- and post-testing using Renaissance Learning STAR Reading and Early Literacy assessments. The STAR Reading assessment is a 34-item, standards-based adaptive assessment aligned to state and national curriculum standards that takes on average less than 20 minutes. STAR Early Literacy measures the early literacy skills of beginning readers in grades pre-kindergarten through third. STAR Early Literacy assessment is a 27-item, standards-based adaptive assessment, which is aligned to state and national curriculum standards and takes on average less than ten minutes. Community Leads proctored the STAR Reading and Early Literacy assessments at each project site. Scholars took the pre-test during the first week of the program and the post-test when programs concluded at their respective sites.

116 scholars* completed pre-tests

112 scholars* completed post-tests

107 scholars* had pre- and post-test matches

*Scholars attending more than two sessions

FALL 2021 ACTIVITIES

The program offered the following activities during Fall 2021. Program leadership held AG trainings in early August and September 2021 virtually. Note, this report covers activities held through December 2021.

FINDINGS

This section summarizes data relating to the following evaluation questions:

1. How well was the Mission Acceleration program **designed and implemented**?
2. What were the **barriers and facilitators** to effective implementation?
3. To what extent did the program contribute to **intended outcomes**?

EVALUATION QUESTION FINDINGS

We analyzed responses from the AG Surveys, CLSS and AG Interviews and the pre- and post-scores from the STAR Reading and Early Literacy assessments. For the AG Surveys, rated survey items consist of response options on a five-point scale (AG Training/Knowledge Use items) or nine-point scale (AG Efficacy in Student Engagement), where higher ratings reflect a higher level of agreement. Knowledge Assessment items on the AG Feedback Survey were multiple choice items scored one for correct responses and zero for incorrect responses. Time items were multiple choice. The Knowledge Assessment assessed three constructs: reading process and pedagogy, phonemic awareness and morphology. CERE analyzed CLSS and AG interviews by coding common themes across the interviews.

EVALUATION QUESTION 1

How well was the Mission Acceleration program designed and implemented?

Summary

- The Mission Acceleration program model adheres to high-dosage tutoring intervention design best practices.
- Mission Acceleration program implementation varies at the site level.
- AGs were primarily women, black or white and non-education majors.
- AGs left training knowledgeable about resources and prepared to implement resources.
- AGs possessed a high level of efficacy towards student engagement.
- AGs were not highly knowledgeable about reading instruction.

Design Best Practices

The Mission Acceleration program design provides the trifecta of support for struggling readers in grades K-5 (i.e., the perfect group of three components necessary to impact academic outcomes): 1) an evidence-based intervention with explicit, systematic academic assistance in

reading; 2) a digital platform to deliver appropriate texts for reading practice that can be monitored, assessed and used for parent/child/AG engagement; and 3) a meaningful connection with a role model for academic, social and emotional support. To combat pandemic-related learning loss due to extensive periods of time out of school or time spent learning asynchronously, this intensive program will span five academic semesters: spring, summer, fall 2021; and spring, summer 2022.

Figure 3. Mission Acceleration Model

Mission Acceleration is designed to be a high-dosage tutoring intervention. AGs meet with their scholars at least three times weekly, in small groups of three to four scholars for 45-60 minutes per session. The Mission Acceleration model occurs outside of the traditional school day and is in addition to, rather than replacing, Tier I and Tier II instruction that occurs inside the school. The program is designed to run for 10 weeks with a goal of each scholar receiving 30 hours of intervention.

1 AG to 3-4 Scholars

3 days per week

45-60 minutes per session

Evidence Base for Mission Acceleration Model

The design of the Mission Acceleration model is deeply rooted in best practice and relevant literature from the field. Robinson et al. (2021) list the following key designs principles for effective tutoring:

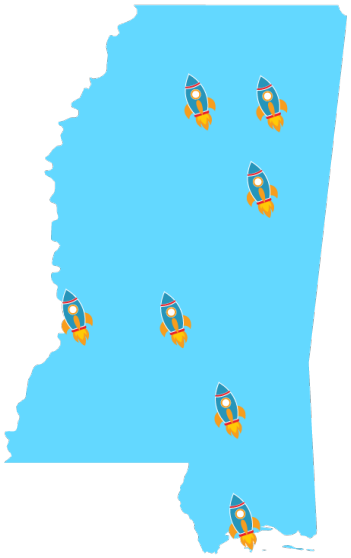
- Three or more sessions per week;
- Adequate training for tutors with ongoing support;
- High-quality instructional materials;
- In-person delivery (although there is emerging evidence for tutoring at a distance);
- No more than three to four students at a time;
- Consistent tutor;
- During school day interventions;
- Prioritization of students at low performing grades or schools;
- Ongoing data use and informal assessments and
- Early grades focus for reading interventions.

A strong evidence base supports high-dosage tutoring—defined as more than three days per week or at a rate of at least 50 hours over 36 weeks—as one of the few school-based interventions with demonstrated large positive effects on reading achievement (Fryer, 2016). Tutoring appears to be increasingly more effective as the number of sessions per week and number of weeks increases (Nickow et al., 2020; Robinson et al., 2021). The use of "paid volunteers" who are highly trained and provide support as compared to unpaid volunteers shows promise as an avenue for addressing learning loss (Slavin & Steiner, 2020). Additionally, DuBois et al. (2011) found that programs that have a mentoring component "show evidence of being able to affect multiple domains of youth functioning simultaneously and to improve selected outcomes of policy interest" such as academic achievement (p.57).

Implementation

During Fall 2021, Mission Acceleration operated in eight sites. Each project site occurred in a Campaign for Grade Level Reading Community across Mississippi (see Figure 3). One community opted not to participate in the Fall 2021 implementation of Mission Acceleration (Starkville).

Figure 3. Mission Acceleration Program Map



Across the eight sites that participated, program activities occurred in one of two settings— schools or community/religious organizations. At each site, Mission Acceleration worked with community partners to identify and recruit scholars to participate in tutoring. Below is a data snapshot of the fall 2021 Mission Acceleration program.

8 sites

40 AGs

145 scholars, 124 (86%) attending >2 sessions

98074 tutoring minutes

1902 tutoring sessions

The implementation of Mission Acceleration differed at each community site. Table 1 provides a summary of each site's delivery model. The greatest variance from the intended model occurred in group size and session duration. Program implementation varied on several dimensions:

1. Where program activities occurred (at a school, community organization or religious organization);
2. Format (in person or virtual);
3. Group size;
4. Session duration and
5. Session frequency.

Community Sites A, B, C and D's implementation followed the intended Mission Acceleration design with the least variance. Appendix A includes narrative descriptions of each site's implementation model.

Table 1: Site level implementation of the Mission Acceleration model

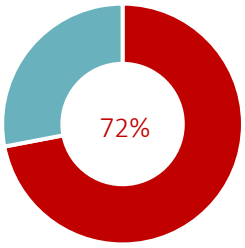
Implementation varied across sites.

Site	Setting	Format	Group Size3-	Avg. Session Duration	Session Frequency	Quantity AG	Quantity Scholars*	Scholar* Attendance Rate
A	community	in person	3-4	60 min	3 days a week	6	22	50% (15 of 30)
B	religious	in person	3-4	70 min	4 days a week	5	17	45% (18 of 40)
C	school	in person	3-5	45 min	4 days a week	4	16	59% (16 of 27)
D	school	in person	2-3	45 min	3-4 days a week	8	23	80% (24 of 30)
E	school	virtual	1	35 min	1-2 days a week	5	6	60% (6 of 10)
F	community	in person	4-6	65 min	3 days a week	3	19	43% (13 of 30)
G	school	virtual	2	45 min	3 days a week	8	14	43% (9 of 21)
H	school	virtual	2-3	40 min	2 days a week	3	7	43% (6 of 14)
MA	-	-	1-6	50 min	4 days a week	40	124	53%

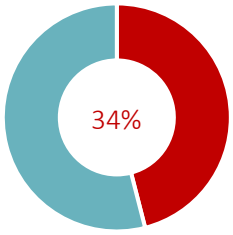
*Scholars attending more than two tutoring sessions

Academic Guides

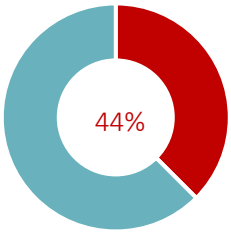
- Overall, 40 AGs (n=32) served as tutors in the program. These AGs were primarily women (72%), White (34%) or African American/Black (28%) and non-education majors (44%).



…identified as women, whereas 12% identified as men.



…identified as White. Additionally, 28% identified as African American/ Black, and 9 % as Hispanic/Latino.



…were non-education majors and 34 % were education majors.

- AGs reported largely positive feedback towards AG training, saying they left the sessions with increased knowledge of Mission Acceleration resources and indicating that they knew how to implement program components. Table 3 summarizes AG responses across the six items collecting training feedback.
    - The one area where responses were largely ambivalent was in regards to on-site training—50% of respondents did not find on-site training to have a balance of small group and informational sessions. This is likely a question that needs to be rephrased as most on-site training would have occurred in a one-on-one format, with an AG reaching out directly to a site supervisor for support.
- Having said that, AGs do not possess a high level of knowledge about reading instruction. We calculated a total Reading Knowledge score along with scores for Reading Process and Pedagogy, Phonemic Awareness and Morphology (see Table 2). Data indicated that AGs had the highest level of knowledge of Morphology, followed by Phonemic Awareness and Reading Process and Pedagogy.
- The mean total Reading Knowledge score was 57.5% (SD = 17.6), with 57% of AGs (n=17 of 30 who completed Reading Knowledge Assessment) scoring a 60% or higher. While this does contribute to the program goal of increasing the number of highly qualified reading guides in Mississippi, due to the scripted nature of the curriculum, a high level of Reading Knowledge may not be needed for AGs to be successful.

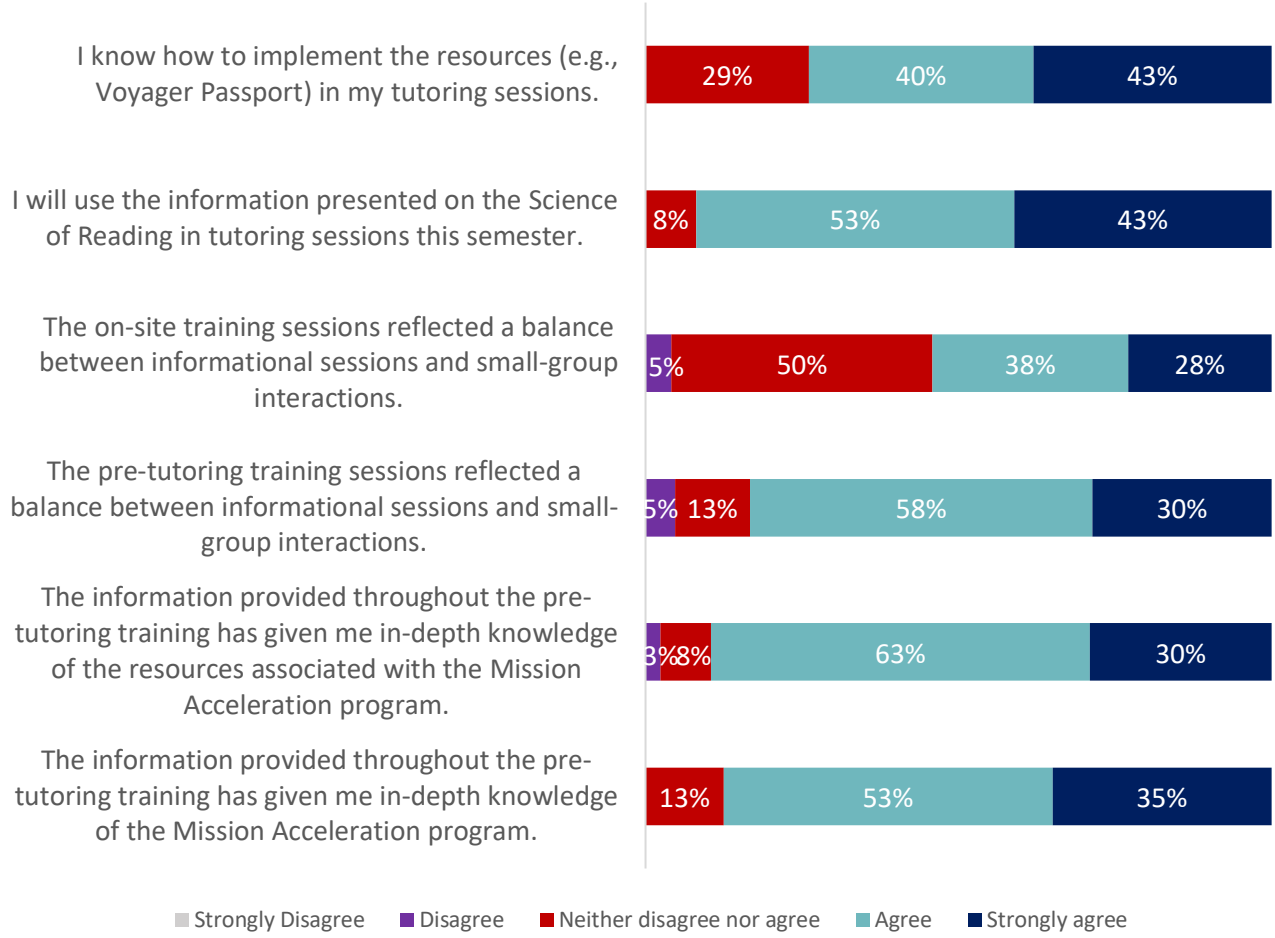
Table 2. Reading Knowledge Scores

Descriptive statistics for Reading Knowledge assessment.

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range	Minimum	Maximum
Morphology	64.3%	24.7	100	0	100
Phonemic Awareness	60.8%	26.0	100	0	100
Reading Process and Pedagogy	51.7%	22.3	100	0	100
Reading Knowledge	57.5%	17.6	69.2	23.1	92.3

Table 3. AG Training Feedback Summary

AGs left training feeling knowledgeable of resources and prepared to implement resources.

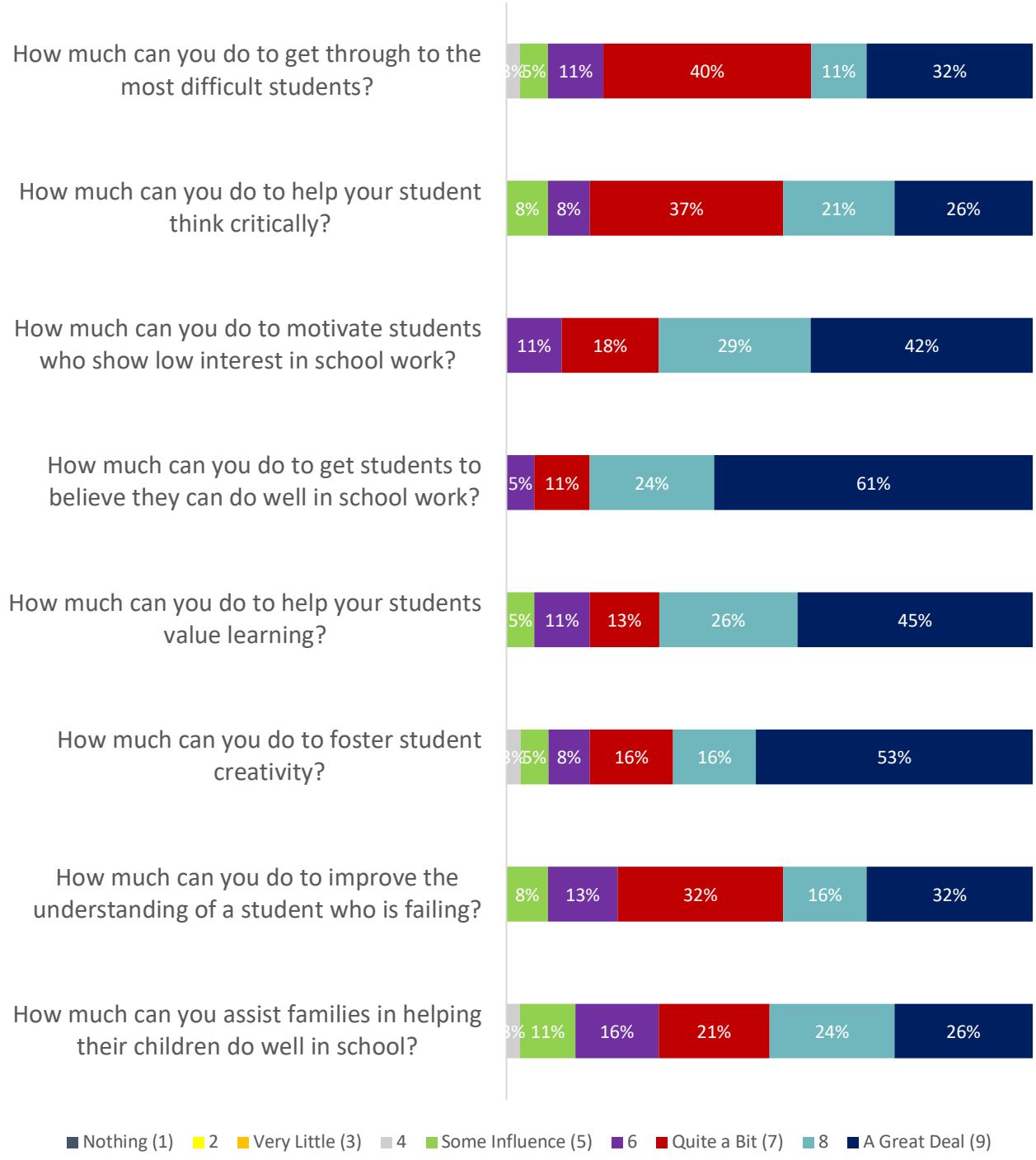


- AGs reported a high level of efficacy towards scholar engagement indicated by AG responses to the sense of efficacy towards student engagement subscale. AGs (n=38) reported an overall TESE mean score of 7.76 (SD = .888) on a scale of one to nine indicating that they believe they can influence student engagement more than "quite a bit."

- Of particular interest, AGs highest scoring item was *"How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school?"* with a mean score of 8.39 (SD = .887) on a scale of one to nine. Table 3 summarizes AG responses to the eight items on the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Subscale.
- AG efficacy scores were also tracked over time. When comparing responses across time for AGs who completed both surveys, we did not observe any significant (quantitative) changes in views about efficacy towards scholar engagement. With that said, this could be due to (1) the small sample size and (2) the fact that AGs already held strong views about efficacy towards scholar engagement at the time of the first survey.

Table 4. AG Sense of Efficacy Towards Student Engagement

AGs believe they have a great influence on Mission Acceleration scholar engagement.



EVALUATION QUESTION 2

What were the facilitators and barriers to effective implementation?

Summary

- The relationship between AG and scholar, AG level of preparation, curriculum and value of in-person tutoring are seen as key facilitators to MA success.
- CLSS felt it was easy to communicate with program leadership and highlighted the value of Feedback Fridays in learning from their peers.
- Access to technology and coordinating schedules were common barriers to implementing the Mission Acceleration program.
- Recruitment and availability of AGs as the program expands remains a key concern of communities.
- Value of the program for teacher candidates and sustainability/expansion of the program were emergent themes.

Implementation Facilitators

Mission Acceleration CLL interview responses reflect the following program components that CLL consider implementation facilitators: relationship between AG and scholar, AG level of preparation, support from MA leadership/value of CLSS Feedback Fridays, curriculum and value of in-person tutoring.

Relationship between AG and Scholar
Interviews N=7, 100%

AG Level of Preparation
Interviews N=5, 71%

Support from MA Leadership, Value of CLSS Feedback Fridays
Interviews N=5, 71%

Curriculum (Voyager Passport, MyON)
Interviews N=5, 71%

Value of In-Person Tutoring
Interviews N=5, 71%

When asked about which aspects of the Mission Acceleration program contributed the most to achieving Mission Acceleration goals, CLSSs highlighted:

AG LEVEL OF PREPARATION, (N=5, 71%)

For example:

- "They do a good job at preparing for the lessons and getting the point across to the students. I've seen them in action many times, and even other people who see them in action in the building are super impressed with the way that they deliver the instruction."
- "They were very prepared, very prepared. If we had a student that missed, the AG knew exactly where that student needed to start and they were ready for them."

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AG AND SCHOLAR (N=7, 100%)

For example:

- "I think that the greatest impact has been made with the relationships that the tutors have built with the students."
- "And then our AGs, the amount of dedication that they've had to the students, they've really had a personal bond with them and they want to see them succeed. It's not just getting that stipend at the end."

CURRICULUM (VOYAGER PASSPORT, MyON) (N=5, 71%)

For example:

- "MyON is amazing!"
- "You can tell that they are competing at home on their MyON, but in a friendly way."
- "I think Voyager Passport has been the best part…because it's just a script and you are following it and making sure that the students are following along."

LEVEL OF SUPPORT FROM MA LEADERSHIP, VALUE OF CLSS FEEDBACK FRIDAYS (N=5, 71%)

For example:

- "Friday check-ins have been very helpful to know what's going on."
- "They are very helpful to learn about what's happening in other communities and how they're addressing certain obstacles. As well as to hear about, share successes."

VALUE OF IN PERSON TUTORING (N=5, 71%)

For example:

- "We tried to do some of the virtual tutoring this summer, and it was just not successful at all. So, I really think that being the small group in-person tutoring is one of the most important things."

Implementation Barriers

Mission Acceleration CLL interview responses reflect the following Mission Acceleration program components that CLLs consider implementation barriers:

Access to Technology, Problems with Digital Platforms
Interviews N=5, 100%

Recruitment of AGs
Interviews N=5, 71%

Balancing Duties
Interviews N=5, 71%

Coordinating Schedules
Interviews N=3, 43%

CLLs also listed other barriers including:

- School based barriers (i.e., red tape, connecting with classrooms) (N=2, 29%)
- Infrequent AG low level of commitment (N=3, 43%)

CLLs highlighted the following aspects as barriers to achieving Mission Acceleration goals:

TECHNOLOGY ACCESS (LACK OF DEVICES, WIFI, DIGITAL PLATFORM) (N=5, 71%)

For example:

- "The internet may have not been working or different issues. You're also looking at the technological capacity of students."
- "I wish we had more dollars to support the technology, the limited technology capacity of our children here."
- "I mean, we probably spent 15 of our 30 minutes just trying to log in and get everybody settled in, and it was a nightmare."

COORDINATING SCHEDULES (N=3, 43%)

For example:

- "Most students were in 45-minute sessions. The number of times per week differed based on their virtual tutors. Some students had three times a week, some students had two times a week, some had four. As far as those days of the week, some students were consecutive days like Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Others may have been Tuesday or Thursday. And I think that kind of depended on the college students' schedule."
- "When we first started scheduling was a barrier because like I said, we started with a certain amount of tutors and then some things came up or some students were not able to come the same exact time every single day. So that was a barrier because I was afraid that I wasn't going to be able to use the tutors or give the students the specific time that they needed."

BALANCING DUTIES (N=5, 71%)

For example:

- "Sometimes, facilitating the program here and then my actual job in the school, they just kind of like butt heads. And sometimes I don't have time to do some of the things that I wish I were able to do."
- "Our liaisons were not easy to get in touch with, be that they were in the school system and had other responsibilities on top of Mission Acceleration."
- Your highly involved students are the ones signing up to do this kind of stuff. And so, it's not so much if it's really the only thing they're doing. I just worry that students are going to burn themselves out."

RECRUITMENT OF AGs (N=5, 71%)

For example:

- "It has been a struggle to get college-age students that are available."
- "For communities like mine in a college student desert…you're not going to have enough tutors to drive 45 minutes to get to your community four times a week for a service."

Additional Themes of Interest

Analysis of the CLSS interviews, also generated two additional themes of note – sustainability/expansion of the MA program (N=7, 100%) and the value of the AG experience for future teacher candidates (N=2, 29%). Sustainability of the program/expansion was one of only two themes that were present across all interviews. Participants were concerned with both sustaining the program after the initial funding is exhausted, but also with practical ways to scale the program at current sites. This was analyzed as one theme since the driver for both was increasing the number of Mississippi students who benefit from Mission Acceleration. The theme of value of AG experience for future teacher candidates was not as prevalent, but highlighted in the comments was the value of AGs being able to learn and practice techniques for intervention with small groups.

EVALUATION QUESTION 3

To what extent did the program contribute to intended outcomes?

Summary

- Scholars attending more than two sessions experienced average reading growth of four months during the nine-week program.
- Scholars experienced a positive significant difference in reading score between pre- and post- tests.
- CLLs observed social emotional learning gains as students formed relationships with AGs and peers.
- Eighty-six percent of scholars attending more than two tutoring sessions completed both pre- and post- testing. This reflects a substantial improvement over the summer, when only 60% of scholars who attended more than two sessions completed both pre- and post- testing.

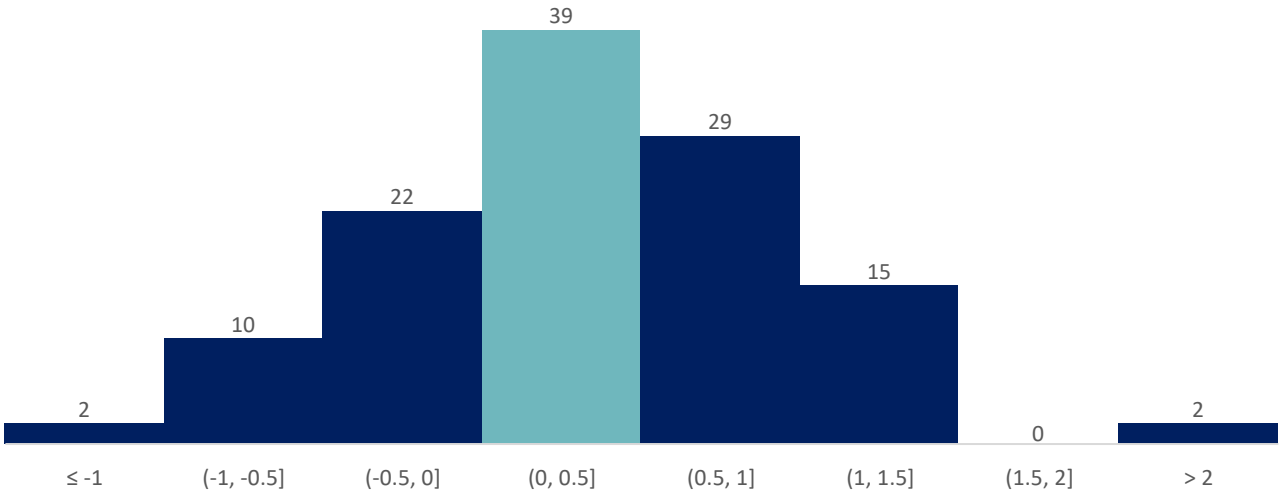
Reading Achievement

- Scholars completed STAR Reading or STAR Early Literacy assessments at the onset of the program (n=117) and at the end of the program (n=111). Pre- and post-test matches (n=107) of data were analyzed by conducting a dependent samples t-test. On average, scholars scored M_d =24.81 points (SD = 40.60) higher on the post-test. The dependent samples t-test revealed that this increase was significant, t (106) = 6.170, p<.001.

- We calculated reading growth scores for each scholar who completed both pre- and post-testing. Across the 107 matches, the average scholar experienced four months reading growth over the ten-week program. See Figure 4 for histogram of reading growth scores.

Figure 4. Reading growth scores.

The average reading growth was 4 months.



*.1 represents one month of growth.

- Table 5 summarizes the pre- and post- test data by community site. Eighty-six percent of scholars who who attended more than two tutoring sessions completed both pre- and post-testing. This reflects a substantial improvement over the summer, when only 60% of scholars who attended more than two sessions completed both pre- and post- testing.
- Site E and Site H, which did not experience growth, both met less frequently each week (1-2 weekly) and for the lowest two average dosages per student
    - Site E met one to two times per week for an average total dosage of 194 minutes per scholar.
    - Site H met twice per week for an average total dosage of 232 minutes per scholar.

Table 5: Site-level testing and reading growth.

Mission Acceleration scholars saw reading gains of 4 months during the 2 months of the fall program.

Site	Quantity Scholars (attending >2 session)	# Pre-Tested	# Post-Tested	# Matches	Pre- Mean GLE	Post-Mean GLE	Mean Reading Growth
A	22	22	20	20	1.5	1.9	4 months

B	17	15	14	14	2.0	2.3	3 months
C	16	16	13	13	1.2	1.5	3 months
D	23	23	23	23	3.8	4.2	4 months
E	6	6	4	4	2.7	2.7	0 months
F	19	19	17	17	2.8	3.2	4 months
G	14	11	13	11	1.4	1.8	4 months
H	7	5	7	5	1.9	1.7	- 2 months
MA	124	117	111	107	2.3	2.7	4 months

Positive Social-Emotional Learning Outcomes

Mission Acceleration CLL interview responses reflect positive scholar social-emotional learning outcomes over the course of the program. In future semesters, a short SEL survey will be administered to scholars periodically through program activities to collect data on scholar perceptions of SEL factors and how they may change as a result of participation in the Mission Acceleration program.

INCREASED MOTIVATION (N=4, 57%)

For example:

"I remember one of our students being on my radar list at the beginning of the year in terms of his behavior, but since he started to participate in the Mission Acceleration program something is different about him, like he has intrinsic motivation. And so not only him, it's just other students. They really enjoy getting with the tutors, learning the things that they're learning. And I can see that it has made a huge impact with those students and their motivation for sure."

INTERACTIONS WITH PEERS (N=4, 57%)

For example:

- "Their little grade level groups are super tight..and they interact a lot more with each other."
- "It had positive impacts on their eagerness to come."

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

- Scholars participating in the Mission Acceleration program experienced academic gains in reading.
- AGs believe they can positively impact scholar engagement.
- Program implementation varies across sites.
- Mission Acceleration should:
    - Continue implementation, as early findings are promising;
    - Develop and implement a program monitoring schedule to help maintain implementation expectations; and,
    - Establish a planning committee to help with thinking about sustainability of the program past initial funding.

The Mission Acceleration program presents promising early outcomes for students in Mississippi. Although the program faced several challenges, the data summary provides input to adapt. Key findings are presented below.

KEY FINDINGS

- Mission Acceleration program model adheres to high-dosage tutoring intervention design best practice.
- Mission Acceleration program implementation varies at the site level.
- AGs left training feeling knowledgeable of resources and prepared to implement resources.
- AGs possessed a high level of efficacy towards student engagement.
- However, AGs were not highly-knowledgeable of reading instruction.
- CLSSs see the Voyager Passport program, relationship between AGs and scholars, and level of preparation of AGs as key facilitators of Mission Acceleration program success.
- CLSSs felt it was easy to communicate with Mission Acceleration leadership and highlighted the benefit gained from attending Feedback Friday sessions.
- CLLs identified access to technology and scheduling as common barriers to implementing the Mission Acceleration program.
- Sites continue to be concerned about the recruitment or availability of AGs as the program expands.
- Scholars attending more than two sessions experienced average reading growth of four months during the ten-week program.

- Our analysis showed a positive significant difference in reading score, when comparing reading pre- and post- tests for scholars.
- CLSSs observed social emotional learning gains as students formed relationships with AGs and peers.
- Eighty-six percent of scholars attending more than two tutoring sessions completed both pre- and post- testing. This reflects a substantial improvement over the summer, when only 60% of scholars who attended more than two sessions completed both pre- and post- testing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings, the evaluation team suggests it may be useful for the project team to consider the following recommendations.

1. **Continue implementation.** The program results in promising early outcomes in reading and social emotional learning for Mississippi students impacted by COVID-19.
2. **Communicate program non-negotiables (i.e., what can and cannot be adapted in the program design) to community sites.** Clear expectations should result in less variability in program implementation. This will continue to have importance as future scaling takes place.
3. **Continue to provide on-going support during Feedback Friday sessions for AGs and CLSSs.** Both groups see value in these meetings. Look for ways to differentiate sessions for CLs and SSs. This will have increasing importance as communities increase the number of program sites and CLs look to provide support. Anticipate that SSs might have differing needs based on amount of experience implementing MA program.
4. **Implement a program monitoring schedule.** Periodic visits to sites will help with maintaining expectations for program implementation.
5. **Set screening windows for STAR Reading and Early Literacy assessments.** Communicate this information with community sites and provide updates on progress towards 100% tested. This will result in more reliable data by which to make program decisions and target student support.
6. **Facilitate a conversation around sustainability/ expansion of the program.** Community and site leaders are interested and willing to support planning around the future of the program. This could take the format of a planning committee or guiding coalition.
7. **Explore value of AG experience in teacher preparation programs.** There is early evidence that both AGs and CLSSs see the program as a benefit to helping future educators gain experience.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Site Descriptions

Site A

Program site A activities occurred at a community organization afterschool program. Scholars received in person tutoring in groups ranging from three to four participants per Academic Guide. Sessions lasted 60 minutes on average and occurred three days a week. There were six Academic Guides and 22 scholars (who attended more than two sessions) participating at the site. The scholar attendance rate was 50% and a total of 20 tutoring sessions were offered. Site A completed pre-testing for 22 students and post-testing for 20 students. The mean growth for scholars in the program was four months with a range of one months loss to 12 months growth.

Site B

Program site B activities occurred in a religious organization's afterschool program. Scholars received in person tutoring in groups ranging from three to four participants per Academic Guide. Sessions lasted 70 minutes on average and occurred four days a week. There were five Academic Guides and 17 scholars (who attended more than two sessions) participating at the site. The scholar attendance rate was 45% and a total of 40 tutoring sessions were offered. Site B completed pre-testing for 15 students and post-testing for 14 students. The mean growth for scholars in the program was three months with a range of nine months loss to 12 months growth.

Site C

Program site C activities occurred in a school's afterschool program. Scholars received in person tutoring in groups ranging from three to five participants per Academic Guide. Sessions lasted 45 minutes on average and occurred four days a week. There were 4 Academic Guides and 16 scholars (who attended more than two sessions) participating at the site. The scholar attendance rate was 59% and a total of 27 tutoring sessions were offered. Site C completed pre-testing for 16 students and post-testing for 13 students. The mean growth for scholars in the program was three months with a range of eight months loss to 12 months growth.

Site D

Program site D activities occurred during a school's instructional day. Scholars received in person tutoring in groups ranging from two to three participants per Academic Guide. Sessions lasted 45 minutes on average and occurred three to four days a week. There were eight Academic Guide and 23 scholars (who attended more than two sessions) participating at the site. The scholar attendance rate was 80% and a total of 30 tutoring sessions were offered. Site D completed pre-testing for 23 students and post-testing for 23 students. The mean growth for scholars in the program was four months with a range of 12 months loss to 25 months growth.

Site E

Program site E activities occurred during a school's instructional day. Scholars received virtual tutoring with one participant per Academic Guide. Sessions lasted 35 minutes on average and occurred one to two days a week. There were five Academic Guides and six scholars (who attended more than two sessions) participating at the site. The scholar attendance rate was 60% and a total of ten tutoring sessions were offered. Site E completed pre-testing for six students and post-testing for four students. The mean growth for scholars in the program was zero months with a range of one months loss to three months growth.

Site F

Program site F activities occurred in a community organization afterschool program. Scholars received tutoring in groups ranging from four to six participants per Academic Guide. Sessions lasted 65 minutes on average and occurred three days a week. There were three Academic Guides and 19 scholars (who attended more than two sessions) participating at the site. The scholar attendance rate was 43% and a total of 30 tutoring sessions were offered. Site F completed pre-testing for 19 students and post-testing for 17 students. The mean growth for scholars in the program was four months with a range of five months loss to 12 months growth.

Site G

Program site G activities occurred during a school's instructional day. Scholars received virtual tutoring in groups of two participants per Academic Guide. Sessions lasted 45 minutes on average and occurred three days a week. There were eight Academic Guides and 14 scholars (who attended more than two sessions) participating at the site. The scholar attendance rate was 43% and a total of 21 tutoring sessions were offered. Site G completed pre-testing for 11 students and post-testing

for 13 students. The mean growth for scholars in the program was four months with a range of four months loss to 23 months growth.

Site H

Program site H activities occurred during a school's instructional day. Scholars received virtual tutoring in groups ranging from two to three participants per Academic Guide. Sessions lasted 40 minutes on average and occurred two days a week. There were three Academic Guides and seven scholars (who attended more than two sessions) participating at the site. The scholar attendance rate was 43% and a total of 14 tutoring sessions were offered. Site H completed pre-testing for five students and post-testing for seven students. The mean loss for scholars in the program was two months with a range of three months loss to two months growth.