



## Connecticut High Dosage Tutoring (HDT) Program LEA Grant Recipient Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Since the launch of the Connecticut High Dosage Tutoring Program last fall, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) has received and answered an array of questions from participating HDT Local Education Agencies (LEAs) regarding scheduling, hiring and training tutors, program implementation flexibilities, instructional materials, lesson quality monitoring, student and family engagement, evaluation of HDT program successes, and HDT fund management. These questions and responses have been compiled by topic as a resource to schools with HDT programs funded by the CSDE HDT grant.

For more questions not addressed in this document, please reach out to the CSDE HDT team: John Scianimanico ([john.scianimanico@ct.gov](mailto:john.scianimanico@ct.gov)), Charles Kenyon ([Charles.Kenyon@ct.gov](mailto:Charles.Kenyon@ct.gov)), and/or Ellen Scholtz ([improveyourschools@gmail.com](mailto:improveyourschools@gmail.com)).

### HDT Scheduling for Middle and High Schools

**1. What type of scheduling is most conducive to implementing an HDT program at the middle school and/or high school level?**

Schools have scheduled tutoring for students during study halls, 30-minute homeroom periods, regularly occurring intervention or What I Need (WIN) blocks, and electives like music and art. Most LEAs have adopted a pull-out model where students leave a class to attend tutoring, but some have found it logistically simpler to offer tutoring on a push-in basis, particularly for students receiving special education. The CSDE strongly discourages scheduling tutoring during Tier I and core instruction classes.

**2. Can HDT stand as an elective course?**

Yes. Some LEAs are also offering it as a credit-bearing course at the high school level, so long as the tutoring is happening under the direction of a certified educator.

**3. What does teacher-tutor collaboration look like and when should this occur to ensure the highest quality instruction, with a mindfulness of teacher-contracted work hours?**

Some LEAs with a Math Coach or HDT Leader position have scheduled regular communication and collaboration time with the tutor(s), with a focus on reviewing student progress through exit tickets, ensuring lesson objectives align with current math instruction, and analyzing student work. LEAs without a Math Coach have included a



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classroom teacher stipend in their HDT grant application for any collaboration meetings between the tutor(s) and the core classroom teacher.

#### **4. Is there a minimum number of weeks for students to receive HDT?**

There is no minimum, but the CSDE strongly recommends that students receive at least one full semester (or 18 weeks) of tutoring.

## Hiring and Training Tutors

#### **1. What sources can my HR department tap to find tutors?**

In addition to contracting with an approved vendor from the [CSDE Approved Tutoring Organizations List](#), LEAs may also hire locally-sourced tutors with experience in education or teaching. LEAs are using grant funding to directly hire interventionists, retired teachers, paraprofessionals, or local university students majoring in education.

#### **2. How are tutor salary or hourly rates calculated?**

Tutor vendors set the hourly rate when supplying their tutors to an LEA, though LEAs may negotiate tutor rate as necessary. LEAs who hire part-time or full-time tutors set their own rate based upon district policy and the budget entered into their grant application.

#### **3. What should initial and continuous training for tutors look like?**

Some LEAs have built in an orientation day preceding the tutoring start date. The orientation includes introduction to staff and students, touring the school, identifying the tutoring space, and reviewing instructional materials and schedule. LEAs have invited HDT tutors to participate in continuous staff development focused on math instruction. This aligns classroom instruction to the expectations of the district's curriculum and instructional methods, such as the Gradual Release of Responsibility model.

Some tutor vendors provide their own initial and continuous training as a part of the tutoring contract. This training often includes critiquing previous lessons, and reviewing new curriculum, and giving program and diagnostic assessments.

#### **4. Can my LEA contract with more than one tutor vendor? If the partnership is successful, can my LEA contract with a vendor beyond the end date of the HDT grant?**

Yes, LEAs may contract with more than one vendor and/or use a combination of a vendor and their own locally sourced tutors. Under current federal guidelines, the grant funding must be obligated by September 30, 2024 and expended by January 28, 2025. As of now,



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any partnership with a tutoring organization beyond these dates will need to be supported with an alternate source of funding.

**5. Which tutor vendors can supply bilingual tutors?**

We recommend reviewing the [CSDE Approved Tutoring Organizations List](#) for a detailed description of the offerings on all the approved vendors.

**6. What is the deadline for hiring tutors or other staff supporting this project with grant funding, and how does it differ if the tutor is a full-time employee vs. a contractor?**

Grant funding for tutors or project staff who are full-time employees of the LEA is available until September 30, 2024. For tutors procured through a contract, funding is available through January 28, 2025.

## Program Implementation Flexibilities

**1. Please describe how an HDT summer learning program would look like considering the evidenced-based model for implementing a successful HDT program?**

LEAs may use the funding for summer learning, so long as the same CSDE guardrails (30-minute sessions, 3 sessions a week, one tutor for every four students, etc.) are followed. LEAs will be required to submit data on students participating in a summer HDT program to the CSDE.

**2. How will block scheduling affect students who receive tutoring on an A-B schedule when dosage requirements change week-to-week?**

The minimum HDT dosage is a 30-minute session at least three times per week, regardless of whether students are on a block schedule or traditional daily schedule. LEAs experiencing difficulty with this model are encouraged to reach out to the CSDE HDT team immediately to arrange a solution compatible for the school schedule and grant requirements.

**3. Can a 30-minute HDT session occur during a 55-minute math class?**

The CSDE strongly recommends against scheduling HDT sessions during core instructional classes, including math classes, to minimize disruption to tier one instruction.



**4. Can we hold larger tutor to student ratios (i.e. 1:5 or 1:6) or hold 25-minute tutoring sessions if we have not secured all our tutors?**

No. The quality of the tutoring sessions (which includes 30-minute sessions in groups of no later than four students per one tutor) should not come at the expense of serving more students. With approval from the CSDE, schools may scale back the number of students they expected to serve until they have secured all their tutors.

## **Instructional Materials and Lesson Quality**

**1. What math programs and materials does the CSDE suggest for HDT sessions in grades 6-8? Grade 9?**

All programs and materials used in HDT sessions must align with state mathematics standards and district curricula. There are numerous math programs and materials available for LEAs to consider when choosing evidence-based and grade-appropriate math programs, which include:

- [National Center on Intensive Intervention](#)
- [Evidence for ESSA](#)
- [What Works Clearinghouse](#)

**2. What do other LEAs do to ensure lesson quality?**

District or school-based staff set aside time for informal observations. These informal observations provide direct information about lesson quality, lesson differentiation for learning levels, tutor-student actionable feedback, and engagement with lesson materials. LEAs contracting with vendors can provide this information to the vendor, which then communicates timely feedback to their tutors.

## **Student and Family Engagement**

**1. What should I expect tutors to do to ensure all students are actively engaged in lessons?**

Tutors should connect with their students to develop trusting relationships. Research has found that a consistent, reliable tutor can have a profound impact on student engagement and belonging during tutoring sessions. Tutors should provide direct, actionable feedback in a positive manner to each student, celebrating skillset successes along the way. Students should be actively engaged, as demonstrated by attention to tasks, asking or responding to questions, demonstrating how to solve problems with accuracy, and accepting corrections to ensure accuracy.



**2. What strategies have LEAs used to inform and engage families of the school's HDT program?**

Schools have adopted a variety of strategies to inform families of the new HDT program and of their child's selection to participate. Schools have hosted parent nights, sent letters home, and individually called parents of students participating in the program. Schools that engaged families early and framed the HDT program as an opportunity for students to accelerate in their mathematics education have experienced low attrition rates and received support from parents for their child to participate.

## Evaluation of Program Success

**1. What information do districts need to provide the CSDE at the end of the school year? At the end of the grant period?**

CSDE will collect, at a minimum, the following data on all students participating in a CT HDT funded program: student name, SASID, school, hours of tutoring received, tutor name/organization, and basic tutor demographic information. This data will be collected on a semester-by-semester basis.

**2. Should my school use proprietary benchmarking systems to monitor progress in HDT?**

When it comes to monitoring progress during the HDT program, districts and their tutoring partners should utilize more formative approaches. These include integrating those Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) that best align with the areas of instruction being addressed by the tutors, as well as using exit tickets, student work, teacher feedback in the regular classroom, as well as other formative measures. Note that the IABs as well as the Focused-IABs can be administered in standard and non-standard ways. Furthermore, the district can assign students to below grade-level IABs/F-IABs as necessary and appropriate, and also use them with students in high school. See [Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments \(ct.gov\)](https://www.ct.gov/deep/asp/smart-balanced-interim-assessments.aspx) for additional information about the Smarter Balanced IABs and F-IABs.

**3. How will the CSDE measure the success of HDT?**

The ultimate efficacy of this program for students in Grades 6-8 will be evaluated based on student growth on the Smarter Balanced summative assessment, and not on off-the-shelf, benchmark assessments. Students in Grade 6-8 who received HDT will be expected to demonstrate solid academic growth in Mathematics by achieving 100% of their growth targets on the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment. Students in Grade 9 students who received HDT will be expected to successfully complete their Grade 9 mathematics course with a B or better. Therefore, it is vital that the progress monitoring measures align to these expected outcomes in terms of content rigor and expectation.



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## Budget

**1. How do I draw down funds from eGMS for contracted services?**

Please connect with your LEA's budget officer or reach out to CSDE Director of Special Projects John Scianimanico ([john.scianimanico@ct.gov](mailto:john.scianimanico@ct.gov)) for support with drawing down grant funding.

**2. If I have surplus grant funding by the end of this current school year, what are my option?**

LEAs may choose to use the funding for a summer HDT program and/or to run or expand their fall 2024 HDT program.