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How state policymakers support critical pandemic recovery services

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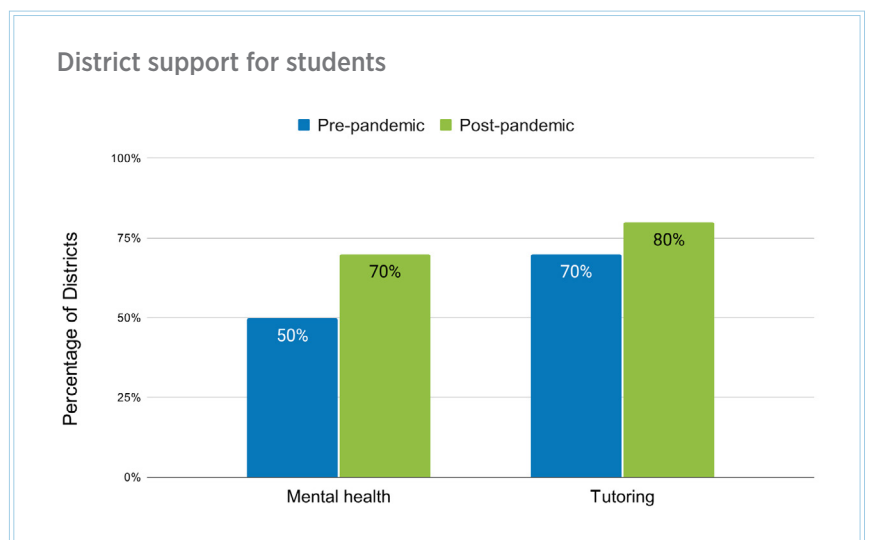
THE ISSUE

From tutoring to mental health programs, school districts are investing in new types of support for their students in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The question is whether these programs are effective and whether all students have access to the support they need.

WHAT WE FOUND

In June 2021 the American School District Panel found one in five districts planned to expand mental health programs, and one in ten planned to offer tutoring more frequently than before the pandemic (see chart).

In addition, one in five districts reported plans to spend more time during the school day on social-emotional learning.



WHAT POLICYMAKERS CAN DO

- 1. Offer high-dosage tutoring to students most at risk.** High-dosage tutoring is an evidence-based way to generate learning gains for students who have fallen behind. States can require that students most at risk—based on standardized test scores—receive high-dosage tutoring. For example, the Texas legislature passed [House Bill 4545](#) to establish requirements for accelerated instruction such as student-to-teacher ratio, minimum hours, cadence, and regulations on what kinds of instruction can be supplemented with the tutoring program.
- 2. Develop and support navigator organizations that connect parents and schools with key mental health, tutoring, or other service providers.** Students and families face potentially fragmented systems providing new mental health and tutoring services because they are offered in and out of schools. States can develop or support parent navigator organizations that understand students' and families' needs and connect them to resources.
- 3. Help districts develop new programs for student services that endure post-pandemic.** Districts are well positioned to provide critical services in and out of school but they may require support developing new systems and infrastructure for implementing these services. For example, the [Connecticut State Department of Education](#) is seeking ways to serve disengaged students by working directly with state behavioral-health care providers to develop third-party payer systems that fund school supports for students' mental and behavioral health needs.