

Education Insights, Real-World Impact

THE CHALLENGE

Public education has never been more critical to advancing economic mobility and tackling our cities' largest challenges. But America's current education system is failing to give students – particularly students of color and the most economically disadvantaged – the foundation they need for future success. In large part, that's because of how we generate evidence about what works. Often, education research is done to districts and not with districts, therefore disconnected from the real-world challenges students, teachers, and school leaders face. That needs to change. Policies and programs must be designed in partnership with schools, rigorously tested in real classrooms, and built to scale in cities nationwide.

WHO WE ARE

The University of Chicago Education Lab is an independent nonprofit research organization that designs, tests, and scales programs and practices that advance learning and opportunity. In partnership with school districts, we conduct research and development to identify scalable solutions to our most pressing educational challenges. Our research does more than broaden scientific understanding – it translates into maximum real-world impact for students, nationwide.

HOW WE DO OUR WORK

Our team works closely with school districts to generate cutting-edge evidence in a classroom setting, identify promising programs that work at scale, and help policymakers and school administrators implement and expand these programs for real-world impact.



We advance learning through new approaches that personalize student instruction, which is increasingly important in settings serving diverse student populations. We also work on student-level interventions to address out-of-school barriers that impact student success, including the harms of trauma exposure, homelessness, and gun violence.

The Education Lab relies on philanthropic partners and individual donors to fund our research. We conduct our research for government and nonprofit entities at no cost to our partners.

Our research has already had significant large-scale impact: To date, Education Lab research has helped to generate more than \$120 million in public investment for highly-effective, evidence-based programs that have helped students.



The Education Lab is tackling many of the biggest problems that we face in public education. The work that we did together served as a blueprint for high-dosage tutoring, which became a response to learning loss after the pandemic.”

Dr. Janice Jackson, CEO of Hope Chicago
and former CEO of Chicago Public Schools

WHAT WE DO



Mentoring and Counseling Interventions

We partner with community-based organizations to identify and evaluate trauma-informed interventions, including mentorship and counseling programs, that surface and strengthen skills in students that help them navigate difficult situations and succeed in school.



Personalized Learning

We work in partnership with school districts to understand whether and how we can scale high-impact tutoring programs to reach tens of thousands more students without compromising effectiveness.



Post-Secondary Pathways

We work in partnership with Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and college success providers in Chicago to identify and co-design supports to support CPS students to achieve their post-secondary aspirations in college and career.



Restorative Practices

We partnered with CPS to evaluate the effects of RP on student behavior and provide a model of classroom management and a disciplinary system that works for interested school districts across the nation.



Student Re-Engagement

We work with school communities to reach youth who have become disengaged from school, reconnect them to school programming, and ensure they have the trauma-informed supports needed to thrive.



CONTACT US

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PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

Personalized Learning Initiative (PLI)

To combat unprecedented pandemic learning loss, the US Secretary of Education provided schools with billions of dollars and a plea to adopt one specific evidence-based solution: high-dosage tutoring, known since at least the 15th century at Oxford to be the best way to teach anyone anything. Our research team has shown that what works at Oxford can also work on the South and West sides of Chicago, doubling or tripling the amount Chicago Public Schools students learn per year. Yet in the US, there has been almost no progress in overcoming pandemic learning loss because districts have struggled to scale tutoring.

We have launched the Personalized Learning Initiative (PLI) to support the expansion of high-dosage tutoring across the country in partnership with local schools. We are providing partner school districts with:

- **Policy design of tutoring programs capable of serving large numbers of children.** Experience has taught us that tutoring works best when it: a) is embedded within the school day (so that students participate), b) uses paraprofessionals as tutors (to hold costs down and maximize scalability), and c) uses an individualized, structured curriculum (not just 'homework help').
- **Quick turn-around resources to fill urgent gaps.** Standing up a new type of tutoring program requires all sorts of new 'inputs,' such as paraprofessional tutors, that many districts haven't traditionally made use of. Because government budgets are set year to year and are typically slow to change, flexible philanthropic resources can be the difference between slow and rapid responses to unexpected emergencies - like the pandemic.
- **Performance measurement and feedback.** Our research team will work with districts to collect detailed measures of implementation quality and student learning. We will feed the results back to districts to strengthen tutoring design and delivery. We will also use data and analysis to help schools assign each student the intensity of tutoring support the student needs - but not more than that - to help as many students as effectively as possible given constraints on funds and tutors.