

PATHS to Tutor Act: Frequently Asked Questions

Partnering Aspiring Teachers with High-Need Schools to Tutor Act of 2021

What is the PATHS to Tutor Act?

The “Partnering Aspiring Teachers with High-Need Schools to Tutor Act of 2021 (PATHS to Tutor Act)” is legislation introduced in Congress on February 25, 2021 by a bipartisan coalition of senators led by Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Sen. John Cornyn (R-TX) with, Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Sen. John Cornyn (R-TX), with Sen. Chris Murphy (D-CT) , Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME), Sen. Chris Coons (D-DE), Sen. Mike Braun (R-IN) and Sen. Roger Wicker (R-MS).

It would expand access to high-quality tutoring through a \$500 million competitive grant program disbursed to local partnerships of educator-preparation programs, K-12 schools, and community organizations. Priority would be given to local consortia that plan to support students in high-need or hard-to-staff schools by mobilizing tutors who are postsecondary students enrolled in educator-preparation programs.

How would the PATHS to Tutor Act benefit students?

The PATHS to Tutor Act would provide academic and social-emotional support to children in high-need and hard-to-staff schools, directing resources to students who are most in need. Data suggest that the pandemic is exacerbating educational inequities, [disproportionately affecting](#) Black and Latinx students, and children in low-income communities. Tutoring must align to local standards and curriculum and incorporate evidence-based, social-emotional learning practices, trauma-informed practices, and culturally and linguistically responsive practices.

Why does the PATHS to Tutor Act prioritize future teachers to serve as tutors?

Mobilizing future teachers as tutors makes efficient use of taxpayer’s dollars by meeting two needs at once — a national tutoring program supports students and simultaneously creates authentic clinical opportunities for future teachers. Often, aspiring teachers need to gain hands-on experience to meet graduation or licensing requirements; high-quality tutoring programs can meet this need.

Future teachers have also received specialized training in education, making them [better](#)



[qualified](#) to tutor students than individuals without a background in education. Finally, future teachers add capacity to the education workforce and reduce the burden on in-service teachers.

Who may serve as a tutor?

Priority is given to partnerships that mobilize tutors who are postsecondary students enrolled in educator-preparation programs. Tutors may also be recent graduates of educator-preparation programs; individuals serving as paraprofessionals or teaching aides; and fully certified and licensed educators, such as a recently retired teacher or an educator providing tutoring before or after school, or during the summer. Tutors may supplement, but cannot supplant, existing school staff.

How would funding from the PATHS to Tutor Act be disbursed and used?

Local consortia — including educator-preparation programs, K-12 schools, and community organizations — may apply for competitive grants awarded by the US Department of Education. Funded consortia may use grant awards to match and train tutors, provide stipends to tutors and mentors, purchase instructional materials, cover transportation costs, and provide meals and snacks to students. Consortia may propose high-quality tutoring programs that run before, during, or after a school day; during the summer; or during school vacation weeks.

How does the PATHS to Tutor Act define high-quality tutoring?

The PATHS to Tutor Act requires programs to be grounded in evidence-based, [high-dosage](#) tutoring practices. Tutoring must:

- Occur 1:1 or in small groups of no more than four students
- Include multiple sessions each week
- Match content- and grade-specific tutors and students
- Align to local curriculum and instructional materials

Tutors must receive training and be paired with experienced educators who can provide feedback and ongoing professional support.



Does the PATHS to Tutor Act change existing clinical teaching requirements?

No. Each state sets its own clinical teaching requirements. Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, many states have added flexibility into their requirements — for example, including virtual instruction and tutoring outside of schools as allowable experiences — but those rules continue to be established by state policymakers. State policy will determine if tutoring service funded by the PATHS to Tutor Act will satisfy pre-service clinical requirements.

How would the PATHS to Tutor Act benefit future teachers?

The PATHS to Tutor Act would provide authentic opportunities for future teachers to build relationships with students and deliver individual and small-group instruction, gaining practical experience they'll need to lead a classroom of their own. Research shows that teachers who have high-quality early field experiences perform better later on. Research also shows that teachers who train in high-need schools are more likely to build teaching careers in those schools. By partnering aspiring teachers with high-need schools, the legislation strengthens the pipeline of future teachers.

Additionally, the PATHS to Tutor Act creates financial support for future teachers by allowing successful completion of a tutoring placement to qualify for national service educational awards granted by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS).

How would the PATHS to Tutor Act benefit early-career teachers?

Early career teachers who are fully licensed and certified and/or recent graduates of educator-preparation programs may serve as tutors. The PATHS to Tutor Act would create a critical safeguard for early career teachers who have earned federal TEACH Grants by allowing tutoring service funded under the legislation to satisfy TEACH Grant requirements. This would reduce the economic burden on early career teachers and ensure qualified teachers remain committed to America's highest need schools.

The legislation does not change the core service requirement of the TEACH Grant program, which requires individuals to serve as full-time teachers in high-need schools for four out of eight academic years after program completion. However, through the academic year 2022-23 the legislation would allow tutoring service funded under the legislation to count towards the service requirement.



How would the PATHS to Tutor Act benefit the country?

The program would provide extra academic and social-emotional support to vulnerable children while strengthening the country's pipeline of future teachers.

This extra support for students is likely to be a key component of the country's long-term economic recovery from the pandemic. [Research](#) suggests that unfinished learning related to COVID-19 would lead to an average annual earning loss of **\$110 billion** for students nationwide. This will disproportionately disadvantage Black and Latinx students, and children in low-income communities: their average lifetime earnings lost due to COVID-19 disruption is expected to be double the amount lost by their white or more affluent peers. For these vulnerable children, the PATHS to Tutor Act would provide critical tutoring resources to address unfinished learning.

