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- Lessons from the Field -

AmeriCorps + High Impact Tutoring = Student Success

Wednesday, May 4, 2022 | 3:00 – 4:30 PM ET
Transcript

**Cindy Carraway-
Wilson:**

Good afternoon, everyone and welcome to today's Lessons from the Field webinar, AmeriCorps + High Impact Tutoring = Student Success. On behalf of the US Department of Education, we are so pleased to have you join us today. In fact, we have just over 325 people registered for this webinar and expect more people will be joining us shortly. Thanks to all of you who are already online with us. My name is Cindy Carraway-Wilson, and I'm a training specialist for the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments or NCSSE. NCSSE is funded by the office of Safe and Supportive Schools within the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. To learn more about NCSSE and to access a wide range of resources that address school climate and conditions for learning, we encourage you to visit our website.

To give you a sense of what our website looks like and the content it contains, we share here an image of our homepage on the right along with some of our most popular products on the left. Please note that all the materials you see today, including the slides, referenced resources and a recorded version of this webinar will be available on the events webpage within this website. Some of the items, including the slides and speaker bios, have already been posted. Please also note that you can access previous lessons from the field sessions by visiting the webinar series webpage, which is also listed here on this slide. Before I review the agenda and briefly overview the speaker today, I'd like to quickly tell you who's in the room with us based on the information you shared with us when you registered.

You can see from this slide that the first two categories represent just over 50% of the audience. The other category includes a wide variety of individuals, including AmeriCorps staff, McKinney-Vento specialists, various community based nonprofit organizations, federal staff, parent liaisons and specific student support personnel, such as nurses, school counselors, psychologists, and social workers. After completing this introduction, we'll be kicking off today's event with a brief welcome from the Department of Education with a nodding too. Then we'll move into a contextual overview provided by Dr. Mary Hyde and then into two round tables.

The first round table will be a discussion about the AmeriCorps Seniors program while the second round table will focus on AmeriCorps State and National spotlights. Toward the end, the moderators and Dr. Hyde will reflect on what they heard and provide a summary of key points before we close the webinar. As you can see from this slide, we are joined today by a slate of speakers with a great depth of experience and the ways in which high impact tutoring supports students and the ways that AmeriCorps volunteers support school staff and the students, especially as they work to address learning loss. You will have a chance to hear from each of these speakers today. And as noted on the bottom of this slide, all the speaker bios are available on the event webpage for your reference. It's now my pleasure and honor to introduce Ms. Ruth Ryder, Deputy Assistant Secretary in the US Department of Education. Ruth.

Ruth Ryder:

Thanks, Cindy. Let me also welcome you all to today's webinar, AmeriCorps + High Impact Tutoring = Student Success. This is the 20th webinar in our Lessons from the Field series highlighting strategies and practices to address hot topics in education today. In today's session, we are so pleased to collaborate with our friends at AmeriCorps to showcase two AmeriCorps programs, AmeriCorps Seniors, a program that engages volunteers age 55 and older to serve their communities and AmeriCorps State and National, a program that provides grants to nonprofits, faith, and secular community based organizations, public agencies, tribal nations, and institutions of higher education.

These programs provide Americans young and old with opportunities to serve as AmeriCorps members in communities across the country. As schools, districts, and states continue to recover from the pandemic, it's important to explore evidence based approaches to address learning loss experienced by students. One approach is to deploy high impact tutoring and partnership with AmeriCorps that supports staff at the local level to address the social, emotional, mental wellbeing and academic needs of all students.

In this session, you will hear local perspectives on the what, how and why of instituting a high impact tutoring program. You will also hear the benefits of partnering with AmeriCorps and implementing evidence based strategies and

approaches. I also want to share that consistent with federal regulations that govern grants and agreements, and that's in 2 CFR and also the AmeriCorps statute and regulations, a U.S. Department of Education grantee or sub grantee may use program funds as matching funds for AmeriCorps program.

The U.S. Department of Education fully supports and encourages state and local partnerships with AmeriCorps programs, including many activities in supportive student learning and success that are appropriate uses of education funds. The department recently issued a letter to this effect, and you can find the full text of the US Department of Education's letter on this issue on our website. And we'll add that link into the chat now.

Thank you again for joining us today. You know that we know that you will find this Lessons from the Field webinar informative to the work that you do. Now, I'd like to introduce Dr. Mary Hyde. Dr. Hyde is a community psychologist with more than 20 years of research, evaluation and training experience in social and human services. At AmeriCorps, Dr. Hyde is responsible for advancing the evidence base for national service programs and fostering a culture of evaluative thinking within the agency and within the field. You can read more about Dr. Hyde and the rest of our speakers on NCSSE's website, which is now posted in the chat. Over to you, Dr. Hyde.

Mary Hyde:

Thank you, Ruth. And it's a pleasure to be here today. So good afternoon or good morning, depending on what time zone you're sitting in today. We're really excited to be here today and to share with you some critical lessons from the field based on our experience here at AmeriCorps. Any conversation about high impact tutoring and student success must be grounded in evidence. As educators, you all understand and appreciate the importance of continuous assessment and measurement. At AmeriCorps, we also recognize the value of evidence based practice. In partnership with state and local educators, National Service has helped students achieve academic success for decades now. How do we know this? The evidence says so. Our approach to building effective evidence based tutoring programs is visualized here in the slide in front of you. We view evidence building as an iterative process and work with our partners to demonstrate outcomes and impacts.

For example, if you are in an early design phase, we work with you to think about the evidence that can inform that design. If you're in the middle of implementing, we work with you to develop evidence to see if you're implementing according to plan, according to the design. If you're starting to explore the types of outcomes you want to demonstrate, we work with you around that type of evidence. If you have a more mature tutoring model, we work with you to maybe look at some comparative data to see if you can say with more confidence that the changes in student outcomes you're seeing are

indeed because of the efforts that you're making. While this slide doesn't fully show the dynamic nature of this process, we certainly have a video on our website that can show you that. But I also want to point out that it doesn't necessarily go from one end to the other.

You may find yourself having a very mature tutoring model, but you think that you might need to modify it. Maybe you're serving a slightly different population of students. Maybe you're thinking about bringing your program to another community that might be different than the one that's demonstrated success in. That just means you kind of go back down to another block that you see here, and you go back to a different form of evidence so that you can test a slight change in your model or perhaps an altogether different model. In other words, we meet partners where they are, and we align our evidence building efforts with the program life cycle that you find yourself in.

We also support our partners in the evidence building enterprise with training and technical assistance, including the resources highlighted on this slide. If you look underneath the pinkish purple boxes here on your screen, I'll walk you through a couple of examples of the types of resources that we've developed so we can work in partnership to develop evidence about these important tutoring programs. For example, the organizational capacity assessment tool is a tool that your school or your organization could use to think about what type of capacities you have to manage volunteers to recruit volunteers, to help come in and supplement the activities going on in your school or in your community.

It also helps you assess whether or not you're ready or to what extent you are ready to develop evidence around the program that you're implementing. At the other end of this sort of swoop that you see on your screen is the scaler tool, which is a more recent interactive resource linked web-based tool that you can also find on our website. This tool is again for any organization or school district that is thinking about taking an evidence-based program, maybe looking at your own program and trying to assess what kind of evidence you have or where you might fall along this continuum and taking it to another community or expanding it in your community.

It's a tool that's there to help you figure these sort of questions out and guide you through those sort of decision making points. In between, you see some other examples of the type of resources we provide. We have an evaluation assessment tool that looks at your evaluation readiness. We work with our partners to look at their evaluation plans and help them implement their plans. We have an online library, which we call the AmeriCorps Evidence Exchange. So if you're thinking about what type of tutoring program you might want to design or implement or modify, there's examples there of other people's lessons

learned in the form of either full blown research reports or in other types of resources like webinars or things like that.

All of this is to say we work hand in hand with any one of our partners to ensure that they're practicing evidence based practice and using evidence based strategies no matter where you are in the program life cycle. Today, we will hear directly from our National Service partners as they share what they've learned about helping students succeed in their communities, Oasis Tutoring, Early Learning Corps, Reading Corps and Math Corps are high impact tutoring programs that illustrate the types of evidence based practice AmeriCorps co-creates with our partners at the state and local levels.

**Cindy Carraway-
Wilson:**

Thank you, Mary. It was so helpful to hear about the steps programs could follow to bring their work to that space of being evidence based and emphasizing the importance of implementing in such a way that we're building that evidence from the start over time. With this framing, I'm so pleased to introduce to Atalaya Sergi, Director of AmeriCorps Senior, to kick off our first round table. Atalaya.

Atalaya Sergi:

Thank you, Cindy and thank you to the deputy assistant secretary in the Department of Education for inviting AmeriCorps to share how our resources can support your students. I'm excited to share how AmeriCorps Seniors supports children in their academic and social development. AmeriCorps Seniors is a grant making office in the AmeriCorps agency. We fund local community based organizations and nonprofits to engage older adults in service. In our education focused projects, volunteers are recruited from the community to serve the children, families, and educational institutions of that community. I've seen firsthand, while overseeing the Foster Grandparent program and staff, the power of this intergenerational community connection as volunteers are able to strengthen and bridge between families and schools. In addition, AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers volunteer for an average of eight years providing stability and consistency to children and becoming an asset to school personnel and teachers and an asset that teachers can depend on.

Volunteers are supported both in person and virtually throughout the pandemic. And our grantees, project directors and volunteers are ready and willing to serve you and your students. AmeriCorps Seniors has four program models, two of which support education. I just want to share a bit about each. The AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program is an intergenerational program that engages volunteers ages 55 and over in National Service to provide one-on-one mentoring, tutoring, and social emotional support to children.

Volunteers serve an average of 20 hours per week, primarily in elementary, middle, and early education classrooms. They also serve hospitals and juvenile corrections institutions. Typically, we have about 19 to 22,000 volunteers and 300 plus projects across the country. Our RSVP program engages people aged 55 and older and allows them to apply their skills, talents, and experience to addressing a wide range of community needs. A primary area that RSVP volunteer serve in is education, supporting children from pre pre-K through 12th grade. Just like the Foster Grandparent program, these volunteers make year long commitments to students and project directors work with district and schools to determine the volunteers weekly schedule.

We typically have around 18 to 20,000 volunteers annually in RSVP focused on education. Here you can see some statistics on our Foster Grandparent and our RSVP programs. In both of these programs, volunteers are trained in the support they are providing. The program utilizes research based and research informed methods and best practices. They also work with schools and districts to integrate their volunteers into training and professional development opportunities. Our AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers begin their service with an orientation to their school and classroom, understanding from teachers what skills children need to support and with an action plan. You may be able to find an existing Foster Grandparent or RSVP project in your community by using our Pathfinder tool. And if you want to develop a program, as Mary mentioned, we can support you in that as well.

I'm excited for you to hear from one of our AmeriCorps Seniors model projects today. Now I'd like to turn the AmeriCorps Seniors presentation over to Elizabeth Pawlowski, National Director of Tutoring, Partnerships and Expansion for Oasis Institute and Dr. Jason Sefrit, Superintendent of the City of St. Charles School Districts in St. Charles, Missouri. Oasis Institute is an AmeriCorps Seniors grantee and engages older adults in their tutoring program, serving students in a variety of school districts. And Dr. Sefrit and his district have integrated AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers from the Oasis tutoring program into the fabric of his school community. I'm excited for you to hear from them. Elizabeth.

Elizabeth Pawlowski: Thanks, Atalaya and we're so proud to be here to showcase our program, just a little bit about our tutoring program and how we've been able to really partner with AmeriCorps Senior for student success. Just a little background on the Oasis intergenerational tutoring program, we started in 1989 and we really train older adults that are placed in an in-school program one-on-one with the children as tutors, as mentors, and as friends. Children that benefit most are those children that are on the bubble, not necessarily receiving other resources or services, but they may be losing ground on at a grade level in reading. Children are selected by the teachers and the parents actually have to give parent permission and then they're paired with an Oasis volunteer. It's much

more than an academic supplement. The program focuses on building confidence and self-esteem making the students feel better about their reading skills and just their overall academic skills.

For many children, this may be the only consistent role model that they have in their life and it really helps them build positive behavioral choices. What makes our program different? And again, we've been around for 33 years, we build strong relationships. The year long one-on-one relationship between the volunteer and the student is key and as I mentioned, maybe the only consistent role model the child has. The relationship sets the tutoring apart from other tutoring mentoring programs in that it's intergenerational. And it allows the older adult to really utilize their years of experience and background to help mold those children. Also, we consider ourselves evidence informed in that continuum. The six step approach to literacy was developed by educators specifically for Oasis Tutoring 33 years ago. It includes language and reading activities that spark a child's interest and create an environment where students set goals and they also align with the state learning standards.

Additionally, we provide in-depth volunteer training. We don't just send those volunteers into the school, we provide them with 10 to 12 hours of intense training and how to work with the students. Also, we have ongoing support. Our tutors are given professional development opportunities and ways to interact with other tutors in the school district throughout the whole school year. And our volunteers stay. Oasis consistently has a national volunteer retention rate of 80%, which compared to our national retention rate on average is about 67%. So after 25 years of successfully implementing this program and intergenerational way in 13 states across the United States, Oasis applied for and received an AmeriCorps Senior RSVP grant for both the urban and suburban counties surrounding our national headquarters in St. Louis, Missouri. This grant allowed us to hire a full-time grant manager, which at the time happened to be me, provide additional resources and trainings for the program, and really allowed our tutors to be part of something much larger in the AmeriCorps family. As part of the performance requirements for the grant and the school district share our pre and post reading scores.

And that really has helped us form our literacy model over the years. And since 2014, we have expanded that particular first one to include six additional grants in rural Missouri, and also an urban program in Illinois, right over the river. And we've hired six staff people. And it really has allowed us to expand our reach beyond the urban areas into what I like to call low resourced areas of the state. In 2020, as a direct response to the pandemic, we developed a virtual tutor option where we paired Zoom and an online reading platform that allowed our tutors to still stay engaged with their students while keeping them safe at home. The students were quite familiar with this platform. The older adults were able

to learn more about their own technical skills and intergenerational connections happened. This option was not for everyone.

We realized right away that technology issues, bandwidth issues, digital divide issues that we needed to do something else with our volunteers. And we also developed a pen pal program where older adults were matched with second grade students in the St. Louis area that wrote Finley letters back and forth as part of their in school curricula. We've kept both of these as options because we realize that our in person tutoring program may look a little bit different going post pandemic. And also based on our feedback from school partners, we've updated our tutor training materials to include social emotional component and we are just in the process of piloting an early reading tool kit to reach the youngest of our students.

So again, this program was professionally developed 30 years ago. Things were a little bit different 30 years ago. At the time, we really focused on the most progressive theory of the day, which was the language experience approach. Of course, the methods, strategies, and materials included in the curriculum have completely evolved over the past 33 years. And really they do focus on and reflect current reading recovery practices. Over this at the end of the program, we participate in several research projects designating us as research based or evidence informed based really on current theories and education and best practices.

So I'm going to highlight a couple of those particular research studies that we were involved in. The first one, and you can see on your screen some of the outcomes of this highlighted research study, it really measured the impact of the Oasis intergenerational tutoring model in K through third literacy skills. This one came from Washington University in St. Louis, one of our big partners here in the St Louis area, utilizing the dynamic indicators for basic early literacy skills for the DIBELS assessment. We piloted with six schools in two urban locations that supplied benchmark data for students K through second grade. Some of those things are just highlighted here in the screen. Letter naming fluency, for example, 90% of the students had gains over the spring over the fall, phonem segmentation fluency again, 96% had illustrated gains for in the spring as compared to the fall, oral reading fluency 86% showed a gain.

So really the results were that looking at the data, the children who had the benefit of an Oasis tutor increased their reading comprehensions over time as merit as measured by the DIBEL in kindergarten, first grade and second grade. And that the Oasis tutors really made a positive impact in the development of proficient readers. So the second study on the slide was conducted by Maryville University in three school districts in St. Louis county, again, using pre and post test scores based on the AmeriCorps model. That is what we use as our

assessment tool. Scores were collected for students in the study. Some of them were considered, were working with Oasis tutors and of course there were some that were not to have a mix.

All the students who scored were reviewed, were considered struggling or at risk students, they were struggling and identified at the beginning of the school year as individuals who'd benefit from spending time with a tutor. The progress of the students was measured using the assessments. And again, the results showed that the Oasis tutors provide a really valuable support for struggling students and that 95% of them showed improvement in reading achievement. And also almost two thirds show the progression at a rate that is considered accelerated beyond the normal classroom experience.

Those just highlighting a couple of the studies, the research studies. In addition, because at Oasis we really focus on the older adults in the equation, we have been able to also focus on outcomes related to older adults. We received funding from the RRF foundation for aging in 2019 in conjunction with the Freeman Center of Aging at the Washington University in St. Louis campus. To really study the impact of volunteerism and the older adult population, specifically looking at social isolation, health outcomes, and how these affect very different subgroups, we looked at subgroups that we don't normally look at when we look at AmeriCorps and Oasis tutors, male volunteers, active caregivers, first time volunteers, volunteers who report feeling socially isolated and single and widowed volunteers.

We also looked at the effect of tutoring and civic engagement and the attributes of an Oasis program that really contribute to that high retention rate of volunteers. We were in a very unique position. As I mentioned, we received the funding in 2019, and we all know what happened in 2020, but we are in a unique position to pivot our research, to really look at the effects of online tutoring versus in person engagement, to really help inform best practices and contribute to the field of research.

Again, there was really no research on virtual volunteering, and we were proud to be part of this. The results of this study, I think that's been popped into the chat and we're published in the journal of Applied Gerontology. Was it a perfect model? Absolutely not, but it really was a way for us to keep our AmeriCorps volunteers engaged during a pandemic. While our tutoring program was considered evidence informed, we are actively seeking funding to move our program to an evidence based curriculum continuum. As our turning model evolves to the changing needs of the students, we continue to look for partnering school districts for feedback and evaluation. I have invited the superintendent of one of our longest partnering school districts, I believe it's 24 years this year, to join the call today to share his perspective on having

AmeriCorps Senior volunteers as an essential part of his student support team. Please welcome Dr. Jason Sefrit to the conversation.

Jason Sefrit:

Thank you so much, Elizabeth. And it's so good to be with you all today. And as you can see on the screen right now, I truly said that. The quote is "Oasis Tutoring is not just a program that is nice to have in our district, but it is essential to the success of our students." And I truly mean that. Three things that I just want to make sure everybody knows today about Oasis Tutoring and partnering with AmeriCorps is this, there is a need, there is a great partnership, and there are fantastic outcomes that come out of this tutoring. So the first thing is need, and obviously we're coming out of a pandemic and more than ever, our kids need help. They need help in reading. They need help in just human connection. They need to feel loved for, cared for and that's what our tutors do.

I walk into a school, I have 13 buildings, I'm in every school every week and I cannot go without walking four or five steps down a hallway without seeing a tutor and a student connected together reading a book and learning together. And it is just fantastic to see and it's powerful. Partnership, our local Oasis team is the best. The key is they have great volunteers and Mary Darling and the group that leads in the city of St. Charles Schools District does a fantastic job. As you can see, we have just an unbelievable group. You see a picture there with about 20, 30 people and sometimes that's a small group that gathers. Our leadership brings all of our tutors together once a month and we have lunches, we have breakfast. And they always have the superintendent, myself and our assistant superintendents come down and talk and really just empower our tutors to be a part of what we're doing.

We do not see this as an additional or something we have to do, or it's something nice to do. We see it as an extension, as a part of our core instruction and what we're doing to help kids. It's all about interventions. It's all about making sure kids get what they need. And these tutors are essential and making sure our kids get whatever they need every day. And these tutors have just done a fantastic job of, again, not only working on reading skills, because that's there. The evidence is there that they have helped through that and helped kids be more successful, but they're cared for and loved for, as you can see on this slide terms of some of the improvement we've seen. So the first point was need, the second point was partnership and the third is outcomes. And you can see our kids are learning and our kids are growing.

And we just couldn't be more proud of our program of our Oasis tutors, our volunteers. And I also believe our tutors are getting something out of this. I think they feel valued. I think they feel like they're being used in a great way for our kids. And so if I could just sum it out by saying, I do not see my school

district being successful without Oasis tutors, I just don't see it. And my job as a superintendent is to support and be a part of it. And so anytime I have an opportunity to get in front of our tutors or be a part of a tutoring session with the student, I jump in because I want to support everything we're doing within this program. So thank you for having me today. And I think Elizabeth, I'm going to turn it back over to you. We're going to talk a little bit about the partnership.

Elizabeth Pawlowski: Thank you. And again, our tutors love you too, and love the fact that you come and really support them from the top down at the district level. So Jason, we thought we'd just share some of the lessons learned. As I mentioned, this partnership started long before we had AmeriCorps Senior in the loop. We had a 24 year relationship with having tutors in the city of St. Louis School District, but having AmeriCorps and having the background and the actual additional resources and the staff have really made the partnership even stronger. So just a couple little points putting the right structure in place. As Jason said, we have a district facilitator that serves as a liaison between Oasis and the school district. That person is a volunteer. That person gives up her...

She's a retired member of the faculty there, and really just gives up her whole... On a part-time basis, she handles the program. But also she handles the overarching section of the program but then we also have active school building representation, typically a reading specialist who assists with the day to day placement of the tutors. So every elementary school building where we have AmeriCorps tutors, we have a reading specialist who gives those tutors, matches them with the student and works with them on professional development and really keeps the structure in place and answers any questions. Also training, as I mentioned earlier, we really focus on a 10 to 12 hour training for AmeriCorps Senior tutors and not just on the Oasis tutoring program and not on AmeriCorps, but also the needs in the school of the school district.

Post pandemic things look a little bit different. We know some of our tutors are coming from a place that's different than they've ever been before. And we're all kind of in a recovery mode. In evaluation, as part of the MOU with the school districts, the memorandum of understanding, we ask that we have the pre and the post reading scores so that we can see what it looks like. In addition, we ask our tutors, we ask our principals, we ask the district facilitator and the teachers, how is the program? What is it looking like?

We have an annual meeting where we kind of give feedback and see what can we do to help and what are the key elements that can help us. Communication, and I think if you take a look at the city of St. Charles School District websites and social media, you guys do a great job of really promoting the partnership that we have. And I know that tutors love being invited to board meetings and different opportunities to share what they've learned too. So I think that the

partnership, the communication evaluation, the training and putting the right structure in place was really made for a great partnership with us.

Jason Sefrit: It has.

Elizabeth Pawlowski: Do you have anything else to add?

Jason Sefrit: No. It just, again, I hope people can feel it through the screen on how everything that we've talked about so far is really happening in our schools. And we can't do that without our Oasis tutors. And so, again, it's a necessity that we need to have our tutors and our parents work with our kids for them to be ultimately successful. And I just thank you for letting us be a part of today and also part of the partnership that we have.

Elizabeth Pawlowski: Thank you so much. And Atalaya, we'll turn it back over to you.

Atalaya Sergi: Thank you, Elizabeth and thank you, Dr. Sefrit for sharing the impactful change AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers are making for the children and the staff in the city of St. Charles School District through the Oasis Tutoring program. Thank you for joining us today. I am going to turn things over to my AmeriCorps colleague, Sonali Nijhawan.

Sonali Nijhawan: Wonderful. Thank you so much, Atalaya and thank you to Emily and Dr. Sefrit, our AmeriCorps Seniors partners for highlighting the incredible ways in which Oasis Tutoring is having meaningful impact in schools. I for one I'm very inspired. Hello everyone. I am thrilled to be joining you here today with my colleagues from AmeriCorps, AmeriCorps, Seniors, and the Department of Education. As has been shared, my name is Sonali Nijhawan and I serve as the director of AmeriCorps State and National. I'm excited to be joining you for this important conversation on the role AmeriCorps can play in partnership with all of you to support student success.

As it's already been shared, AmeriCorps is the federal agency for service and volunteerism in America. We provide opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to give their time and talent to strengthen communities across the country. Working hand in hand with thousands of local partners, AmeriCorps brings people together to solve problems, expand opportunity, strengthen communities, and unite our nation. Our AmeriCorps State and National program engages Americans in intensive service with a focus on economic opportunity, education, environmental stewardship, disaster response, healthy futures, and veterans of military families.

Our members help students learn to read and stay on track in school. They rebuild communities after disasters. They provide financial literacy training and do so much more. During their service, our members receive a living allowance,

they earn money for college and gain valuable skills to jumpstart their careers. Every year, AmeriCorps members, along with our AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers support students in nearly 12,000 public, private and charter schools across the country. We serve in large cities, small towns, and everywhere in between. With over 50% of our AmeriCorps State and National programs, supporting education outcomes, our members are able to support students, families, communities, schools, districts, and states to deliver the needed resources and supports to ensure student success.

Today, we have brought one of our national grantees Ampact, an organization that runs evidence based and evidence proven programs like Early Learning Corps, Reading Corps and Math Corps that provide high dosage tutoring in schools and communities across the country. I'm excited to welcome Lindsay Dolce, Chief Advancement Officer for Ampact to share more about their programs and to introduce you to their local district and county partners who can share more about their partnerships and what this looks like in their schools. Lindsay, I'll pass it to you.

Lindsay Dolce:

Thank you so much, Sonali. Good afternoon, everyone. As Sonali said, my name is Lindsay Dolce. I use she, her pronouns and I serve as the chief advancement officer at Ampact. I'm going to share a little bit today with you about our program, but I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge and thank our partners at AmeriCorps and the Department of Education for the incredible resources that they provide us. Without their support, none of what we do is possible. So just to ground in a little bit, and Sonali shared some of this, I think it's important to note that AmeriCorps nationally is more than 75,000 people serving in communities everywhere in the United States and in Puerto Rico. Founded in 1994, some people like to refer to it as Domestic Peace Corps, but I think it's worth noting that more than 1.2 billion hours of service have been completed nationally by AmeriCorps members in the United States.

I think it's also important for me to share just a little bit with you about our program and our vision. So Ampact is an organization that has been implementing a variety of educational AmeriCorps programs for a number of years. Our vision as an organization is that there is a future where all children are proficient readers by the end of third grade and algebra ready by the end of eighth grade. I think this is important to note because we think in terms of how our students meet educational milestones, probably very similar to most of you who are in the education space. Sometimes I say I feel a little like I'm preaching to the choir here, but I think it's important for you to hear how we envision our work complimenting what's already happening in schools. So our programs, and I'll share a little about each one of these, meet a variety of different targets.

Our Early Learning Corps model provides both numeracy and literacy skill building for our youngest learners in the pre-K space and for those of our friends in California in the transitional kindergarten space. Our Reading Corps model is established to support our students from our age three target all the way up through third grade with evidence-based literacy skill building. And our Math Corps model now supports students age three through grade eight with numeracy skills and in the later years, very robust tutoring around building math proficiency to be algebra ready by the end of eighth grade. As we think about all of these different tools, several things are important to note, Dr. Mary Hyde talked at the very beginning of the webinar about evidence and about the importance of having evaluation. We certainly do value this and through a great partnership with our friends at AmeriCorps did our first external evaluation in 2014. All of those studies, including the ones I'm going to reference here and in the next slide can be found on our National Science and Service collaborative website, which has been shared in the chat.

This is a critical piece of our work. In fact, I might say, it's the cornerstone of what we do. And that we know for certain that what we are doing in schools works and help students achieve their goals. We think that's important as good stewards of both federal, state and private resources. So what you see here are just some highlights from our first evaluation as well as our second evaluation conducted by NRC at the University of Chicago. We studied both our work in Minnesota, where everything started and in other states where we implemented and replicated our models, including Miami, Florida, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

In our reading studies, we found that our students who received Reading Corps made more than a year's progress during a single school year. 99% made growth on important literacy skills and of course you can read that 77% of our K3 students exceeded their target growth. It's important to note that we don't just do external evaluations, but on an annual basis, we benchmark all students in all programs, fall, winter and spring to assess how they grow throughout the year. It's important for us to know, but it's also important to our school partners to be able to track student success and to know that the investment they're making in our program in their school is yielding results.

Additionally, we've done some studies about our Math Corps model and two separate external evaluations funded by the Brady Education Foundation and Arnold Ventures, formerly the Laura and John Arnold Foundation in partnership with an external partner at the University of Minnesota, we found that our Math Corps students were two times more likely to achieve math fact fluency and two times more likely to meet end of year math benchmarks. We think these studies are exceptionally promising and what's, I think, even more impressive in some ways is that we hear from our partners that they see this in

action in every single school where we operate. I also just want to note that again, these studies are published on our website, and if you're interested in talking more about them, the contact information for our key researchers who are part of this can be found on our website, and I know they would love to talk to you.

They love data. So that's a little bit about our external evaluation. What's also important to note is that we operate in 14 states right now with growth in more states on the horizon. I came to this work in 2012 as one of the first states who had the great privilege of replicating the Reading Corps model. I previously served as the executive director of Serve Colorado. And while I was in that role, we were looking for something exceptional to try and help our third grade reading scores in the state of Colorado. We were on a road trip and heard from some partners in Grand Junction. They said, "Well, why don't you just bring the Minnesota Reading Corps here?" And we thought, well, what is the Minnesota Reading Corps? We reached out and serendipitously at that time, a funding partner in the state of Minnesota said, "We would really love to see this work expanded into other states."

So it began in 2012 that we replicated that model in Colorado and in the district of Columbia. Since that time, our expansion has been obviously to 14 states. And as we head into the 2022, 23 school year, we will have more than 3000 AmeriCorps members serving nationally with Ampact. And not just in our education programs, I'll note that there are some other programs that we operate, but of course, today we're going to highlight and focus on education, which is really where we got our start and where we are very, very strong. So that's just a little view of where we are nationally. I'm going to tell you a little bit more about each of the program models so you just have an understanding of what it looks like on the ground. Our Early Learning Corps model supports again, students starting at age three. We operate in head start classrooms.

We're in community based childcare centers. We're in pre-K classrooms and school districts. We really operate in all sorts of different settings so long as it complies with our AmeriCorps requirements. And it means that tutors are embedded in the classroom throughout the entire day. They collaborate with the teaching team, which almost always includes a paraprofessional, a center director, maybe a specialist who's in the school, but they become a part of the fabric of the school if you will. So they spend their days working with students. And in those small group times, they take a group themselves and identify in collaboration with those individuals at the center or at the school, which students need some extra help in both literacy and numeracy. And then they spend their time working on those skills, as I mentioned, during the small group time.

But they're in the classroom throughout the entire day and it is the kind of support that we hear from our partners they just cannot afford to lose once they have it. In our K3 model, what you start to see is a little differentiation. So in order to reach the maximum number of students in a school, we know that dosage matters. And to achieve the dosage that we know gets results, our tutors work with students either one on one or in pairs throughout the day. They do that in 20 minute sessions and they have a caseload of somewhere between 15 and 25 students, depending on what year they're in service. We have lots of returning tutors. So if they're a second or third year tutor, they may be able to work with more students throughout the year. But we maintain those caseloads and think about keeping up with those caseloads through our use of a data management system that we developed early on in the process.

We're not so innovative when it comes to naming things. So we have a Reading Corps data management system and a Math Corps data management system, but I will tell you, those systems are essential to what we do. All of our school partners have access to those data systems as long as it remains compliant with FERPA. And what that does is allow our partners at schools to understand where the tutors are at in terms of the progression of our students. So, as I mentioned, they work with a caseload of up to 15 students. We have lots of tools in place for understanding if a student is moving. So we know mobility is often the issue, or if a student changes schools. We have a wait list of students. So we're always making sure that our tutors are maximizing their time and supporting as many students as possible.

Our goal is truly to help students build those foundational reading skills. And I would just note that our Reading Corps model is grounded in the science of read. When we start to think about our Math Corps model, it similarly was developed to support our schools. So starting in 2003, through 2009, we had our reading models in place. And then we started hearing from schools around the state of Minnesota that they really would love to have some help around math. Not that they had reading mastered, but that math was something where this program that we had designed to support them really could be impactful. So we began our journey of developing Math Corps in 2009. And like all of our program models, there's a significant amount of continuous improvement that happens over time. So each time we do one of those external evaluations, we learn something new and then we spend some time modifying or helping make the program stronger, particularly in how we reach students.

Math is a little different because it serves different students. In the K3 space, it follows our Reading Corps model. So the dosage is the same, 20 minutes a day, five days a week. In terms of our fourth through eighth grades approach, it's 90 minutes of tutoring each week because we want to make sure that we're flexible in terms of what the school day looks like. Again, in all three of these

models, we never pull students from core instructional time and we work with the school to find the pockets and the windows of time where tutoring really can supplement what's going on without distracting from core instruction. I would also add that our students are again, building foundational skills in math. And if you'd like to know more about that, you can also find that information in terms of some of the pieces that we use in the research studies, you'll see a listing of many of the practice interventions that we use.

So that's just a little bit about the models overall. In terms of who's a good fit for a tutor, I think many folks within districts like to hear that one of the things we do is we, as a program, Ampact, is responsible for recruiting, hiring, background checking, and then training and coaching AmeriCorps members over the course of the entire school year. That certainly doesn't mean that you don't have some responsibility and role in it, but we really work closely with you to make sure we find great people to support the students in your school. So I tell people the individuals who serve with our programs are age 18 to alive. We have a lot of different individuals who support our students and overall nationally about a third of our tutors fall into that recent high school or college graduate category, about a third are individuals, either returning to the workforce, so parents who students have started in school again, or individuals who are changing careers.

At the beginning of the pandemic, we experienced a large number of individuals who had primarily been in the restaurant industry who were looking for something different to do. And then about a third of our individuals are retirees who are seeking for some sort of way to continue to give back to their community and engage in a meaningful way. So that's just a little bit about that. Similar to Elizabeth, we know that there are some really important things that make our program go well and make sure that what we do works. The number one thing that I always start with to share with people is that we provide high quality training. Similarly to Elizabeth, before the pandemic, we did this in person and had really big convenings of people who gathered for training.

What we do now is through a learning management system, and it's actually brought a lot of strength to our program, I would say because it allows tutors to go back and train in different interventions throughout the course of the year as they need to if they would like to get a little more of a refresher before they start doing something different. Similarly, we train our tutors at the very beginning of the year. So they have a full week of training where they are understanding both the requirements of AmeriCorps, but more importantly, understanding what to expect when they arrive at the school and meeting with the staff and the individuals that they'll interact with when they get to the school. Again, those ongoing sessions and support are throughout the year.

The second piece of what we know works and what is a key ingredient to making our program model run is evidence based interventions. So that means that we really prioritize and rely on practice interventions utilized by our tutors that have a strong evidence based. Meaning we know that they work. Again, preaching to the choir here, so apologies for that. And then the other piece of what we do that really in our NRC study, one of our partners, Mark Hernandez, who was a principal investigator at NRC said, "This is the secret sauce of Reading Corps." So it's the layers of support we provide to tutors ultimately impacting students. So every tutor has what's called an internal coach. That person is at the school building. And as an employee of the school who is responsible for being a site supervisor, but also making sure that the tutors are successful in what they do. They provide observation support. They also provide coaching support. So as a tutor is beginning to provide those evidence based interventions, the internal coach observes them to ensure that they're implementing the model with fidelity.

All of our interventions are scripted. So it really is a pretty straightforward process. And we've created checklists that match every single intervention. So our internal coach is looking through that checklist to make sure the tutor is following that guide. The extra layer of support we provide is a coaching specialist. That individual is a member of our staff at Ampact, and they have an expertise in education or some sort of knowledge and understanding about what it takes to provide support around implementing these evidence based literacy and math interventions. Once a month, that coaching specialist is at a school observing the internal coach, observing the tutor, supporting students, and again, following the checklist to make sure that what's happening at the school is happening the way it's supposed to. External research is certainly great at telling us what we do works, but it only works if it's implemented with fidelity.

So we prioritize these layers of support to make sure that students receive the best possible outcomes they can. So just a couple of notes, but we talked about a little bit, but our tutors are inputting data in our Reading Corp and Math Corps data management systems. And as they do that, there are charts and graphs created so that our team of individuals that you just saw meet on a monthly basis and look at the data about each individual student. Collectively, they're making decisions about what happens next for that student to ensure that they're progressing towards those benchmarks we're talking about.

So graduating from our program means they're reading at grade level or that they are on track to the algebra ready by the end of eighth grade. So this is just a sample of one of the charts that you would see and another one in terms of the growth target. That yellow line is the growth target and you see over time how the student is moving. So we're looking at a variety of different things. This

particular chart is related to math so we're looking at back fluency and additionally computational proficiency and conceptual understanding, but this is how we know how students are progressing and how we track that.

The other piece that we don't talk about necessarily as much, but I think is also incredibly important is what we see in student confidence. So individual students in classrooms who have received Reading Corps and Math Corps support experience a level of confidence that I think impacts the whole classroom. It really does seem to translate to just feeling more engaged and more able to participate in what's going on in class. And that means a lot, I think, to our students and our teachers. So you might be thinking, okay, well, great, you guys recruit all these tutors, but who can serve as a tutor?

So our minimum requirements are that an individual can speak, read and write English fluently, that they're 18 years old and they either have a high school diploma or a GED equivalent, and that they're a citizen or a lawful permanent resident in the United States. So the commitment that they make for that year of service as a part of AmeriCorps is a full year. And for us that's the school year. So we expect them to be at the school on school days and that equates to either 35 or 25 hours a week.

Additionally, they receive some perks for their service. So Sonali mentioned earlier that they receive money for tuition or for college. So individuals receive what's called an education award. And for our full-time tutors this year, it was the equivalent of \$4,546. If you're part-time, you see the number there. But one thing I want to note that I think is an undervalued resource, is that anyone 55 and older who serves in AmeriCorps can transfer that education award to the individuals listed there. And that is a huge gift to be able to give that to children, grandchildren, foster children and stepchildren. Additionally, we provide our tutors with a living stipend, which is the equivalent of \$15 an hour.

They're also eligible for health insurance, childcare assistance, student loan for parents, and then the education award that helps repay student loans or to pay tuition moving forward. They also receive a lot of training and professional development through their year of service. And we don't really put a price tag on that, but it's a pretty exceptional amount of training that they receive.

So just to give you a sense of what our national impact looked like in 2020, 2021, which is maybe a tiny bit misleading because it was a pandemic year. So similar to what Elizabeth mentioned, we had a lot of in person and virtual experimentation that year, but we had more than 1200 sites nationally, nearly 2000 members serving that year and more than 30,000 students were served. So that gives you just an overview of our program and what we do. And I think that what I'd like to do next is to get into sharing just a little bit with you about

some of our partners. So at this point in time, I would like to go ahead and introduce to you Shawonna Coleman. She serves as the executive director of Georgia programs, and she brings a depth of experience to the organization.

So prior to joining Ampact, Shawonna served as the director of evaluation at Junior Achievement of Georgia, where she managed the expansion of JA's elementary and high school statewide portfolio of financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and career readiness programs. Prior to that, she served as the director of Education Foundations and Academic Success at Boys & Girls Club of America. And she has experience as a teacher. She was an elementary and high school educator in Canton Public Schools in Canton, Mississippi, as well as Atlanta Public Schools in Atlanta, Georgia. So without further ado, I'm going to go ahead and ask Shawonna to join us.

Shawonna Coleman: Awesome. Thank you so much, Lindsay. Good afternoon, everyone. As Lindsay shared, I am Shawonna Coleman, the Executive Director of Georgia Programs with Ampact and I am so excited to be here with you today. And I also have the pleasure of being joined by Brooke Humphrey, who is the Executive Director of Curriculum for Fulton County Schools here in Atlanta, Georgia, who will be sharing her experience with Reading Corps.

Brooke has been with Fulton County Schools for 21 years and has served in many roles within the district. Currently, her scope of work includes high dosage, small group tutoring. Thank you so much, Brooke, for taking the time out to share your experience with Reading Corps and the benefits and impact that you foresee our program having in Fulton County Schools. What I would like is for you to share with us a little bit about your district.

Brooke Humphrey: Thank you so much. Fulton County Schools is a large district. We have 95,000 plus kids. We do have over a hundred schools within the district. We're kind of unique in that we're located in the Metro Atlanta Georgia area, but as Lindsay mentioned, Shawonna has worked at APS, Atlanta Public Schools. And so our county is the county in which Atlanta sits in, but we are both north and south of the city of Atlanta with 78 miles between two of our furthest schools north and south. So we have a very diverse district with a lot of varying needs across the district.

Shawonna Coleman: Awesome. Thank you for providing a little bit more information about your district. As you stated, Fulton County Schools is a unique district and you made it quite easy for us to partner. It has already been a seamless process for us, and especially with you using some of the same resources and having an identified need that made our interest in your district that much stronger. So if you don't mind, can you please tell us why Fulton County Schools decided that Reading Corps was the right program for your district?

Brooke Humphrey: I'd be happy to. Really, we had a couple of kind of introduction meetings with the Reading Corps. And one of the things that you guys really helped us with is figuring out how to get more tutors into our schools. We had with some of the federal funding coming in, kind of done some similar things to what Reading Corps already does in terms of, we put a K2 literacy coach in every building. We had a high dosage pair of professional who was tutoring in every building, but we really wanted to be able to do more than what we were currently doing and the Reading Corps really helped with that. As those of you on this call know, it's a lift when you add something like this, right? And there's nobody who's really set up in the district to take on that who's going to train these para pros. How are we going to make sure they do that? And so you guys really help bring a huge lift to our district because of the work you do in terms of recruiting, training and supervising those teachers.

And we've really found that everything that we've talked about and we're working towards really aligns with what the Reading Corps hopes to do. What your mission is really aligns to what we're trying to do. So we added those positions. We've also got all of our teachers, pre-K through five, as well as our six through 12 reading and ELA teachers going through letters professional development. So really trying to gain that background knowledge to be strong within the science of reading. So to have those two things kind of combine with everything that Reading Corps does, we just really have direct alignment with the support structures in place with wanting to have evidence based interventions for our students and being able to give more support to our schools to help as we try and really accelerate the learning for our students.

Shawonna Coleman: And just with you speaking of the literacy coaches that were already in your school, that was perfect for us as an organization when we reached out to Fulton County Schools. Already having that infrastructure in place was one of those top reasons that we felt Fulton County Schools was already a great match for Reading Corps. As you learned a little bit more about our program model, what is it that most excited you about bringing Reading Corps to Fulton County Schools?

Brooke Humphrey: For me, very much in probably was our second conversation, we really started getting more into like the nitty gritty, right? Like how you progress monitor, what types of interventions you do with students. And since I'm in that curriculum world, those were the kind of things that really spoke to me. And what we found as we started to have conversation is we were really aligned in terms of what we see as great evidence based interventions, what we see as great progress monitoring tools, where it'd be like, oh, we use this and I'm like, "Oh, that's fine. We use that too." Like, so really for us, it creates a very seamless way to incorporate more support, but for our teachers to not be like, oh, I don't know what they're doing, or I don't know how they're monitoring

their progress. Like every piece of it is very familiar for our teachers and that was really exciting for us because sometimes right now, especially everything's a little bit more, right? You're just keeping adding more and more and more, and this was a way for us to provide more support without giving them more to do.

Lindsay Dolce:

Oh, I hate to be the party crasher, but I'm going to pause and interrupt you two just for a minute. Brooke, thank you for joining us. Shawonna, thank you for starting to facilitate the conversation. I feel like seven minutes go so fast, but we want to share just a little bit more about our work. So we're going to shift briefly and talk a little bit with our partners in Wisconsin. So I'm going to introduce briefly our executive director in Wisconsin, Itzel Galindo, who brings more than 15 years of experience as a bilingual educator, literacy coach and a school administrator.

As a school administrator, she expanded the school's dual language program to all elementary and middle school grades and achieved a three year consecutive five star school ranking in the city of Milwaukee. Itzel's firsthand experience with Wisconsin Reading Corps allowed for her to have a deeper understanding the program and she observed the impact on the reading development of her students. I think it's amazing to note that Itzel migrated to the United States at the tender age of four, and she has lived in the city of Milwaukee for over 35 years. Her experience as an immigrant and a language learner, I think attracted her to the field of education and literacy and gives her a unique experience. So with that, I'm going to turn it over to Itzel.

Itzel Galindo:

Gracias, Lindsay. Thank you for having me today and allow me to share about our work here in Wisconsin. Reading Corps began in Wisconsin in 2015 at one school district in the heart of Milwaukee and has grown to 57 schools across 11 urban, suburban and rural communities. Wisconsin Reading Corps has reached over 4,500 students and we are excited to reach even more. Next year during the 2022, 2023 school year, Wisconsin Reading Corps is projected to expand and partner with over 140 schools across 52 school districts and with the capacity to reach over 3,500 students in a single school year. Our program has been able to attract new school partners, but we are very proud to also maintain partnerships with returning schools. One of those value partners is the Racine Unified School District who we have collaborated with since 2018.

Currently, we have 20 AmeriCorps literacy tutors serving across 11 schools in the Racine Unified School District and supporting 334 students in their reading development. I'm excited to be joined today by Mallory Umar, who is the Assistant Director of Curriculum and Instruction for the Racine Unified School District in Racine, Wisconsin. Mallory has extensive experience in the field of education and has served in many roles, including as an educator, instructional leader and school administrator. Thank you Mallory for taking the time from

your busy schedule to share your experience with Reading Corps, its impact and our continued partnership. Can we start by having you share a little bit more about the Racine School of Racine Unified School District?

Mallory Umar:

Sure and thank you for having me. The Racine Unified School District is a beautifully diverse school district in Southeastern Wisconsin. We are about 30 minutes south of Milwaukee. We are an urban school district. We have 26 schools and serve about 17,000 students. Our USD is the fifth largest school district in our state. Our students are absolutely amazing. We have a very dedicated staff. Folks are working really hard this year to accelerate learning and Reading Corps has been an important part of that work.

Itzel Galindo:

The Racine Unified School District is an incredible partner. We are excited about the continued growth and support within the district. Mallory, please tell us why the Racine Unified School District continues to partner with Wisconsin Reading Corps.

Mallory Umar:

Absolutely. So in 2018, when we actually began our relationship with Reading Corps, we started with a few schools and ever since then we started adding more schools every single year. In fact, even midyear this year, we added two additional sites and I'm really excited to share that we are adding three additional sites. Next school year, our goal is to have 100% of our elementary schools served by Reading Corps and have Reading Corps tutors potentially as early as the 23, 24 school year. Reading Corps fits in really well with our multi-tiered systems of support model. Reading Corps tutors serve in that tier two instruction and provide that targeted instruction to students.

Reading Corps matches with the RUSD model because of the evidence based strategies and because of the research that's something that we really look for when we select programs. Additionally, the focus on data is something that is really aligned with our work. We have seen tremendous gains from our students working with Reading Corps and the folks at the Wisconsin Reading Corps organization. They've been absolutely fantastic, very responsive, and just continually mission aligned and supporting that literacy work in our district.

Itzel Galindo:

Wonderful. As your district gains this increased experience with the program model year after year, since 2018, what is something that most excites you about the program?

Mallory Umar:

I think it really comes down to the impact on students, right? That's why we are here. And Reading Corps is having a really big impact. In addition to the studies that you've conducted nationally, we've also conducted our own studies internally and we found that students who are serviced through Reading Corps actually are more likely to achieve their reading growth scores on the math test,

which is the assessment that we give three times a year. It comes down to impact. We know literacy is critical, especially right now in 2022. We know how important that is. And so Reading Corps, I'm excited that we continue to expand and that more students will have the opportunity to be serviced through the tutors.

Itzel Galindo: That is so exciting, Mallory. Thank you for identifying that study and sharing that students continue to grow, and there is a true impact with Reading Corps. As we wrap up today, Mallory, would you be able to provide some insight on how you see Reading Corps aligning with the wonderful work that you're already doing in the district due to the infusion of ESSER funding?

Mallory Umar: Sure. So as a part of our new strategic plan, early literacy is a major component. Using ESSER funds as well as district funds and we have really prioritized literacy and early literacy in our district, we've hired some additional interventionists, adopted new curriculum, purchased books for classrooms and resources, and we're expanding our partnerships like our partnership with Reading Corps. We've also added some additional partnerships. It really takes a village to do this work. This is a really big task and Reading Corps is a part of our village and we're really proud for that.

Itzel Galindo: Great. Thank you, Mallory. I'm so excited to continue our partnership with Racine Unified School District and be in nearly all elementary schools in the near future. Thank you for your time and for sharing.

Lindsay Dolce: Okay. So that's the most beautiful thing I think I've heard anyone say this week, it takes a village and we're a part of that village. Itzel, thank you so much. Mallory, thank you. Itzel asked a great question and Brooke, I'm going to ask you to pop back on camera for one second and just share if you don't mind, we have just a couple of extra minutes, but you are using ESSER funding as well to support Reading Corps implementation next year. Is that right?

Brooke Humphrey: Yes, we are. When we originally kind of planned out our ESSER funds, we really had like a five prong approach. And two of those pieces really tie in well. One was obviously the high dosage, small group tutoring, and the other was our extended learning and providing additional opportunities outside the school day. So we're using part of that funding to support those two branches or pieces of what we're doing.

Lindsay Dolce: Awesome. Thank you so much for highlighting that and thank you for joining us today. I know it's a busy time for all of our school partners, so I really appreciate it. With that, I'm going to hand it back over to Sonali and say thank you one more time to AmeriCorps and the Department of Education for giving us a chance to share a little about our village of work.

Sonali Nijhawan:

Well, thank you Lindsay and thank you, Shawonna, Brooke, Itzel and Mallory for being here with us today, for taking time away from your classrooms and your students and your AmeriCorps members to share the work of Reading Corps, Math Corps, and Early Learning Corps and Ampact as a whole. We are so grateful for your partnership and the work you do every day. I would love to invite my AmeriCorps colleagues, Mary Hyde and Atalaya Sergi to join me for a brief reflection on the conversations that we had today.

Mary Hyde:

Thank you, Sonali. I have three quick reflections at the risk of perhaps stating the obvious to anyone who has listened to this wonderful shared lessons learned discussion today. I really want to just focus back on why these two programs were identified today to share their lessons learned with you. It is clear that they take evidence evaluation, continuous assessment, and have embedded it deeply into all that they do, not just their upfront program design or their backend assessment of outcomes, but you heard from all of them about how this is just interwoven into their daily operations. As two examples, Elizabeth shared with us that in the middle of this pandemic, they decided that they needed to understand what the value of a virtual learning is. So those habits of using data and evidence were so fine tuned that she decided to do that study and say, okay, well, we had to pivot. We know what we were doing was working, but what about in this virtual environment?

So that systematic inquiry was just second nature. On the other side, we heard about the way in which that Reading Corps, Math Corps and Early Learning Corps has used evidence to take their work to scale to expand it across the country. The data, the data systems that was all handing glove in terms of what they used to make their decisions about where to take these programs. Their program monitoring is completely data driven. The second main point that I'd want to make that perhaps is not as obvious if you are focusing on the use of evidence and how these folks have embedded it into their daily operations is the way that this systematic assessment and inquiry allows you to have insight into the core components of your tutoring program. So you heard very clearly from everyone.

We know that we have to train our tutors. We know what we have to train them on. We know what it takes to manage our tutors. We know that our special sauce is the structure that we provide to our partners and to our schools. You heard that from both. That is very much part of that systematic assessment, understanding what it is that's getting you to your outcomes. And so I just wanted to make sure I highlighted that because that's the equal equation part of the story. And then the last point I would make before I handed her to my colleague, Atalaya, is that I think you also all heard very loud and clear that AmeriCorps is a wonderful resource.

It's not just some nice volunteers coming to your community, it is the power of this human capital, this human connection that is demonstrated through empirical research that it will have the effects that you want, not only for your students, but also for your tutors. I think Jason mentioned that he knows this is valuable for their tutors. Well, indeed we have evidence for that. There are benefits to not only your students, but also to those who tutor in your schools. So with that, I will hand it over and those are my reflections on what I've heard today.

Atalaya Sergi:

Thank you, Mary. So the things that really jump out to me are the funds that we provide through AmeriCorps State and National and AmeriCorps Seniors, both help to bring capacity in order to engage these volunteers and really coordinate with school personnel. Having spent the first 20 years of my career in school settings from pre-K all the way through college, I know the amount of work that you already have on you and the pandemic has really just increased that. So we are looking at these projects and programs and the funds that we have to be able to bring capacity to you. So you can hire someone who can help you with your recruitment, with your engagement, with your training or the projects will bring those capacity and staff to you to help you to make sure that we are reaching as many children with the one-on-one, the small group, the specific focus on their needs that we know makes a difference for them and particularly in this most crucial time.

The other thing that I wanted to highlight was just when Mary said our volunteers continue to get ongoing training throughout their time in the school setting, in the classroom and working with children. So it is not just when they start, they get an orientation or they get a training. Our projects, our directors are doing that throughout the school year, helping them to reflect on what they're doing, the service they're providing and understanding how they can help move children to the next level. They're also there to provide assistance with coordinating, making sure that our volunteers are in sync with what you are doing in your school, in sync with what the teacher is doing in the classroom, and that they are clear on where they are moving children to and what strategies are effective in doing that.

And the last thing that I would say is that particularly with the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, because they are living in the community, they are older adults who have built in credibility in their community. They know their community. I watch them in the Foster Grandparent Program I head, really, really bridge the gap between families and schools and really help their school become more of an integrated part of family life and of community life. So that is an intergenerational piece there that they bring with their service. So those are just some of the things that really jump to me about AmeriCorps Seniors and AmeriCorps State and National Programming. Sonali.

Sonali Nijhawan:

Well, thank you so much, Mary and Atalaya. It's always great to be the third person or the last person to share reflections because I feel like my colleagues have highlighted a lot of what I would also share. The two things that I will just add or emphasize are the capacity piece. The people power that comes with AmeriCorps, the caring individual, the eyes, ears, and someone to support in the classroom and beyond is so critical and so helpful and it is really an exceptional asset that I think AmeriCorps is able to bring to schools and to communities. And then I'll also say that caring individual, the extra set of eyes, ears, and just person also helps. And I think we saw this to accelerate the learning, right? And in a time when we're coming back to schools after two years of virtual learning and various types of learning, having programs that can help accelerate the learning and ensure student success is just so critical.

And the fact that it's all rooted and in evidence and growing evidence and that these programs are focused on continuously learning and advancing their impact is just really, for me, inspiring. I might be a little biased, but nonetheless, for me, it is inspiring. So I want to again, thank all of our guests for joining us today and I also want to just express AmeriCorps gratitude to the Department of Ed for the letter that they've shared on how dollars from the Department of Education can be used as match for our AmeriCorps program. So as Ruth highlighted, we are really, really excited to share that education funds can be used as match for AmeriCorps State and National grantees. We are extremely thankful to the Department of Education. I think we heard a little bit of that from Lindsay of their gratitude as one of our grantees.

So we're really thankful to the Department of ED for this memo and this acknowledgement of our work and of our partnership with all of you. Our colleagues and AmeriCorps Seniors look forward to sharing more on how this memo can support match for their programs as well and we'll continue to do our best to share that information with our partners at the Department of ED and with all of you. So I think some folks have asked about how can I learn more? If you're interested in learning more about Reading and Math Corps, you can contact Lindsay directly. I think her contact information is included. If you're interested in learning more about our AmeriCorps programs, there are opportunities for you to learn more and connect with all of us. So again, thank you so much and I will pass it to our colleagues at ed. I'll pass it to Cindy.

**Cindy Carraway-
Wilson:**

Thank you, Sonali and thank you to all of you speakers. You brought such amazing expertise and some great thoughts, and also I love the way you role modeled the partnerships among all of you. So thank you so much for being here today. As we close the webinar at this point, you'll see on this screen here now a link for a feedback form, and we encourage everyone who's attended today to take just a few minutes to give us that feedback about the session and

to share some topics and formats that you might prefer for upcoming webinars. In addition, please visit our website where today's presentation will be posted, and you can listen to an archived version of the presentation here, or share it with colleagues who might have interest in this topic.

You can also see all of the slides that the speaker shared along with links to the resources that were referenced in this session. As a reminder, we will be capturing all of the questions posted in the Q&A box so that we make sure that information is shared with the U.S. Department of Education to inform upcoming events in this Lessons from the Field webinar series.

I'd like to, again, thank everybody for being here today and a special shout out to all of the presenters who worked so wonderfully together today. And we want to thank all of our participants who engaged with the Q&A and attended the webinar. We're going to leave the Zoom window open for another five minutes so that people can click on the link to go to the feedback survey or if you like, go to the Q&A and provide additional questions. Our next lessons from the Field webinar will be conducted May 18th and we'll focus on strategies to support staff wellness. Please watch for that announcement coming soon. And we hope that you'll join us then. Again, we greatly appreciate your time today and thank you for all you do to provide students with safe supportive learning environments. I hope that we'll see you on a future Lessons from the Field webinar. Have a wonderful afternoon.