



k12Tutoring

FOR SCHOOLS

Case Study Pulaski County Public Schools

**K12 Tutoring Supporting Students in Meeting
State Standards for Reading and Math**

February 2024

Who Is Pulaski County Public Schools and What Challenges Were They Facing?

Pulaski County Public Schools (PCPS) is a public school district in Pulaski County, Virginia, serving approximately 4,361 students across nine schools. Under the leadership of Superintendent Robert F. Graham, the district encompasses five elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school.

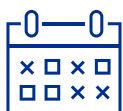
Pulaski County Public Schools faced major challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic impacting student learning and overall academic progress. The shift to virtual and hybrid instruction during the pandemic revealed and intensified existing issues while also creating new obstacles to student success. These challenges prompted the district to make some changes that aligned with the goals of the ALL In Virginia initiative.

The top challenges the district faced included:



Learning loss and academic gaps

PCPS recognized the significant learning loss among students due to the COVID-19 pandemic



Chronic absenteeism and inconsistent attendance

Chronic absenteeism became a major concern when students missed extended school periods, especially during virtual and hybrid learning. This lack of consistent attendance made it challenging to re-engage the students and close any learning gaps.

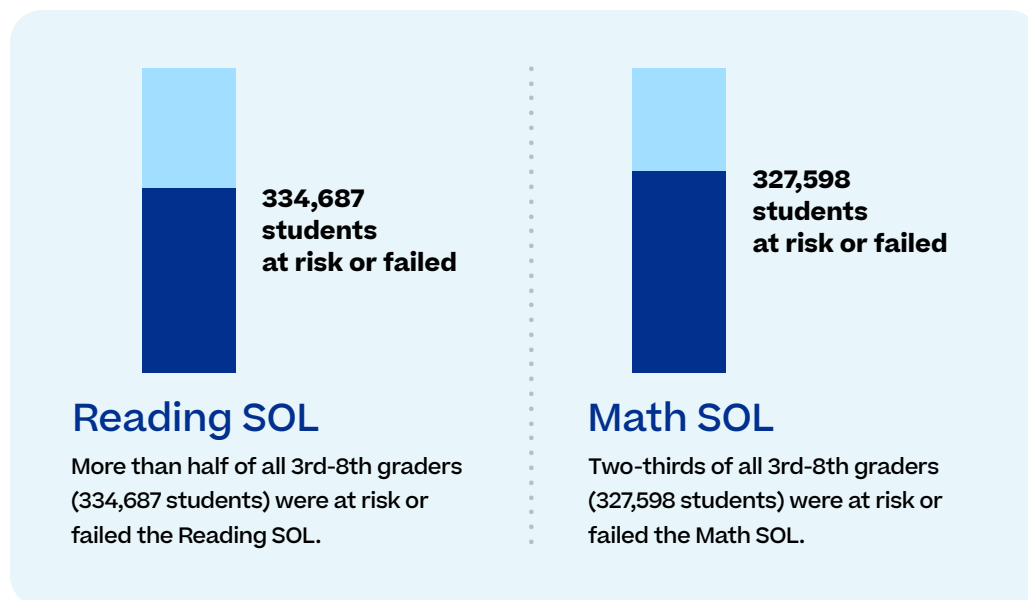
To help close these gaps,



PCPS used its funding from the ALL In Virginia initiative to provide high-impact tutoring and targeted academic support to accelerate student learning and recovery.

How Was Learning Recovery Funded?

On September 8, 2023, Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin, Secretary of Education Aimee Guidera, and Virginia Superintendent of Instruction Lisa Coons released 2022-23 Standards of Learning (SOL) scores that highlighted a significant statewide learning crisis:



These results highlighted the ongoing learning loss caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to the creation of Virginia's ALL In Tutoring Plan. This statewide initiative provided funding for intensive, high-dosage tutoring to help effectively bridge learning gaps and focus on:

- Small group instruction of three to five students.
- Frequent tutoring sessions (five days weekly for a sustained period).
- Alignment with classroom curriculum for consistency and reinforcement.
- An accelerated model that teaches grade-level content while closing gaps.
- Personalized instruction tailored to individual student needs.

Virginia allocated \$418 million in state and federal funds to support districts implementing tutoring programs. PCPS used its funding to partner with K12 Tutoring.

**\$418
million**

How Did Pulaski County Plan and Implement Tutoring?

Recognizing the urgency of addressing student learning gaps, PCPS allocated 70% of its ALL In Virginia funds to tutoring services with K12 Tutoring, prioritizing students in grades 3 through 8.

While launching across all elementary and middle schools on a tight timeline created early coordination challenges, K12 Tutoring and PCPS quickly addressed them by improving communication and aligning expectations, leading to a smoother roll-out in the spring.

Key steps in their tutoring plan included:

Identifying at-risk students:

Based on the cut scores from the High-Intensity Academic Tutoring Playbook, over 1,400 students from PCPS (more than 80% of the 3rd-8th graders) qualified for tutoring.

1,400
students
qualified

Embedded tutoring into the school day:

Tutoring was integrated into the school day, with elementary schools using Power-Up time and Middle Schools utilizing Extension time.

Prioritizing immediate support:

PCPS started the program with a focus immediately on 855 students who failed their reading and/or math SOL in Spring 2023 and 3rd graders with a vertical scaled score equivalent to a Spring 2023 failure.

855
student
focus

Aligning instruction to student needs:

Using Virginia state test scores and quarterly benchmarks from the Comprehensive Instructional Program, PCPS identified key skills and content to target in tutoring sessions.

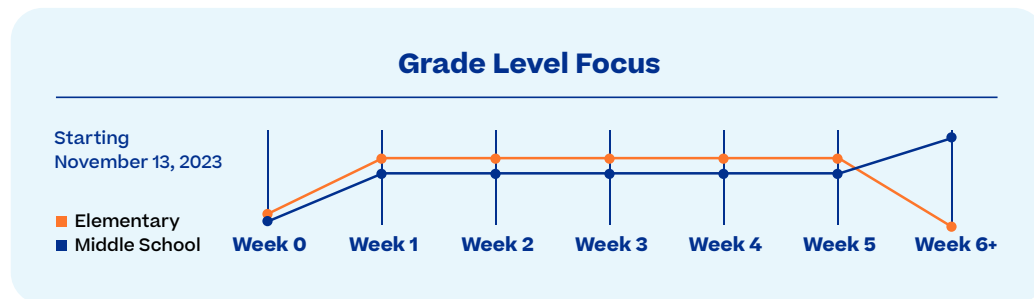
Formed targeted tutoring groups:

Students were grouped by SOL failures, subject(s) needed, and group allowances to stay within a 1:5 tutor-student ratio.

1:5
ratio

Program Rollout and Focus

Tutoring began the week of November 13, 2023, and continued for about five weeks until winter break, covering all five elementary schools and the middle school. At the end of this period, PCPS shifted its focus exclusively to Pulaski County Middle School, as it had the greatest academic need and demonstrated the most significant growth in certain subjects and grade levels.



The tutoring sessions were led by K12 Tutoring's team of certified teachers with active credentials, using a dedicated virtual classroom platform designed for effective online instruction. Students worked in small groups with the same tutor for each session, allowing for consistency and relationship-building. Using instructional materials from K12's Virginia state-standards-aligned curriculum library, lessons focused on targeted skills identified by the district. Instruction was focused on helping students to close gaps between their current proficiency levels and the grade-level content taught in their classrooms.



**Certified teachers
with active credentials**

**Small groups with the
same tutor each session**

What Impact Did the Tutoring Program Have on Student Achievement?

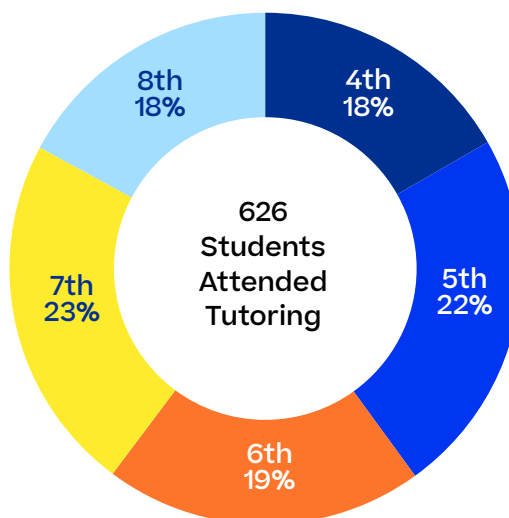
Between November 13, 2023, and February 16, 2024, PCPS students completed over 4,000 math and ELA tutoring sessions. 870 students participated in the program, which offered 14 different session start times ranging from 10:45 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. to accommodate scheduling needs. 212 tutors met daily with a consistent group of students, establishing strong relationships and guaranteeing continuity of instruction.



Math Tutoring

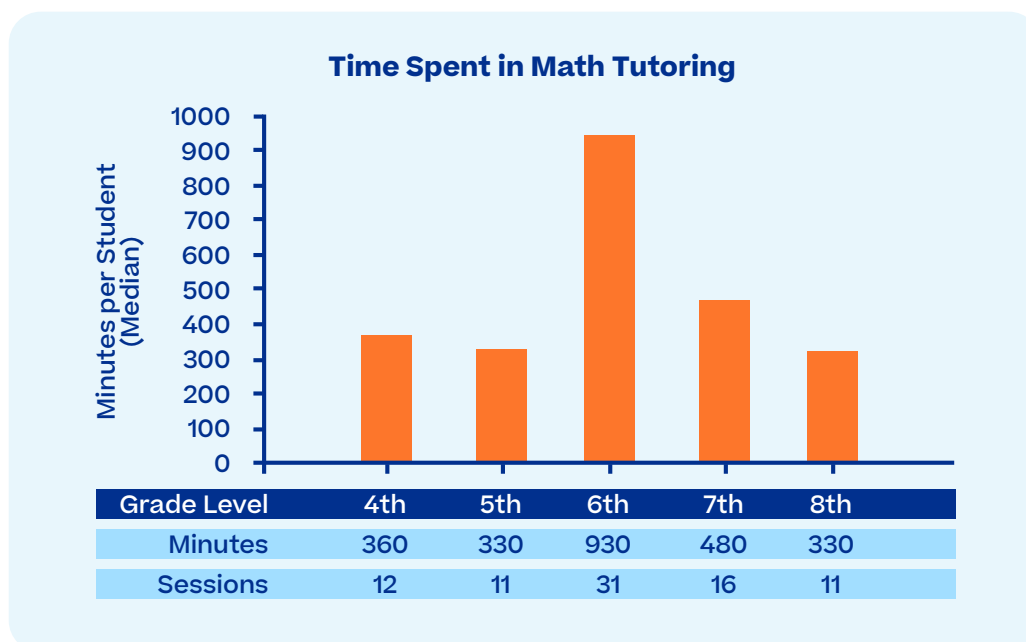
Participants

A total of 626 students in grades 4-8 attended math tutoring sessions. The largest number of participants came from 7th grade (144 students) and 5th grade (138 students). The remaining 4th, 6th, and 8th grades each contributed between 113 and 119 students.



Tutoring Time

Students received meaningful support, with average tutoring time per student ranging from 330 to 930 minutes (or 11 to 31 sessions) across grades 4–8.



Selection Criteria

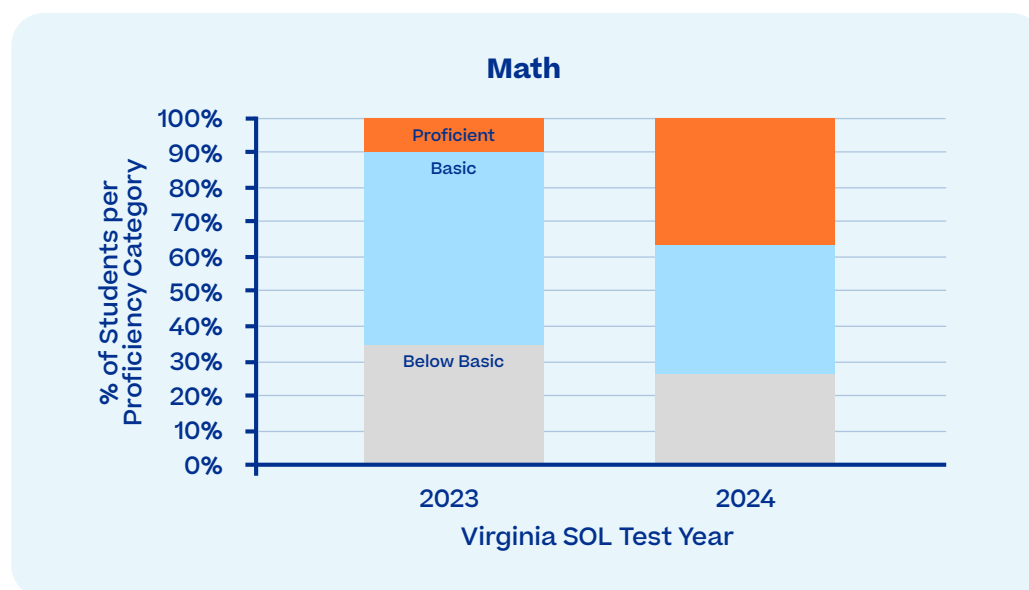
The students selected for tutoring had notably low performance on the 2023 Math Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments, scoring significantly below their peers and placing them at the lowest proficiency levels. This data-driven identification process ensured that tutoring was directed toward those most needing academic support.

| Selection for Tutoring Based on 2023 Proficiency Levels | | | |
|---|-------------|--------|---------------------|
| | Below Basic | Basic | Proficient/Advanced |
| Tutoring | 35.14% | 54.95% | 9.90% |
| No Tutoring | 3.54% | 5.49% | 90.96% |

Impact

The results of targeted tutoring for math showed notable improvement:

- By 2024, those who received tutoring improved by an average of 19 points on the Math SOL, while non-tutored students experienced an average decline of 2 points.
- 29% of the tutored students advanced to proficient levels and achieved a passing score on the 2024 SOL.
- An additional 12.46% of students moved from “below basic” in 2023 to “basic” in 2024, showing meaningful academic progress even if they did not yet reach proficiency.
- A significant positive correlation was found in math between tutoring time and performance in grades 4, 5, and 7*. For 4th-grade students, every hour of tutoring was associated with a 4.8-point increase on their 2024 SOL score.
- This relationship was not statistically significant for the 6th and 8th grades; nonetheless, the overall trend supports the effectiveness of high-dosage, targeted tutoring in accelerating student learning and closing achievement gaps.

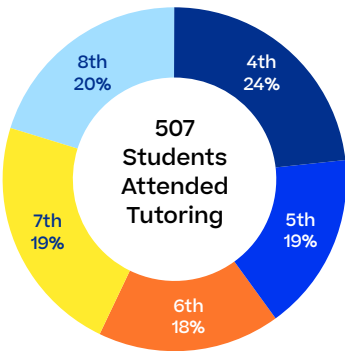


*Third-grade students were excluded from these analyses due to state testing regulations, as no 2023 baseline SOL assessment data was available for this group.

ELA Tutoring

Participants

A total of 507 students in grades 4–8 attended ELA tutoring sessions. The largest number of participants came from 4th grade (122 students) and 8th grade (101 students). The remaining 5th, 6th, and 7th grades each contributed between 91 and 99 students.

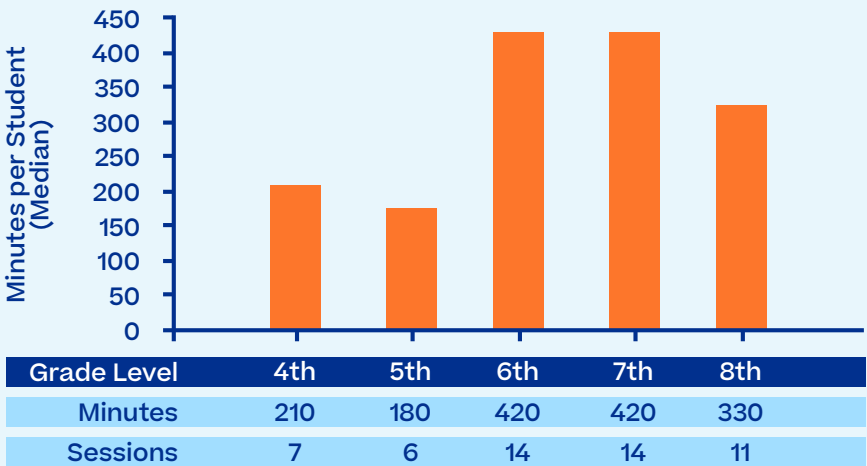


Tutoring Time

Students received meaningful support, with average tutoring time per student ranging from 180 to 210 minutes (or 7 to 14 sessions) across grades 4–8.



Time Spent in ELA Tutoring



Selection Criteria

The students selected for tutoring had low scores on their 2023 ELA Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments. These students had significantly lower scores than their peers, placing them at the lowest proficiency levels, signaling a clear need for academic intervention and additional support in reading and language arts.

| Selection for Tutoring Based on 2023 Proficiency Levels | | | |
|---|-------------|--------|---------------------|
| | Below Basic | Basic | Proficient/Advanced |
| Tutoring | 23.47% | 67.46% | 9.07% |
| No Tutoring | 1.01% | 5.24% | 93.50% |



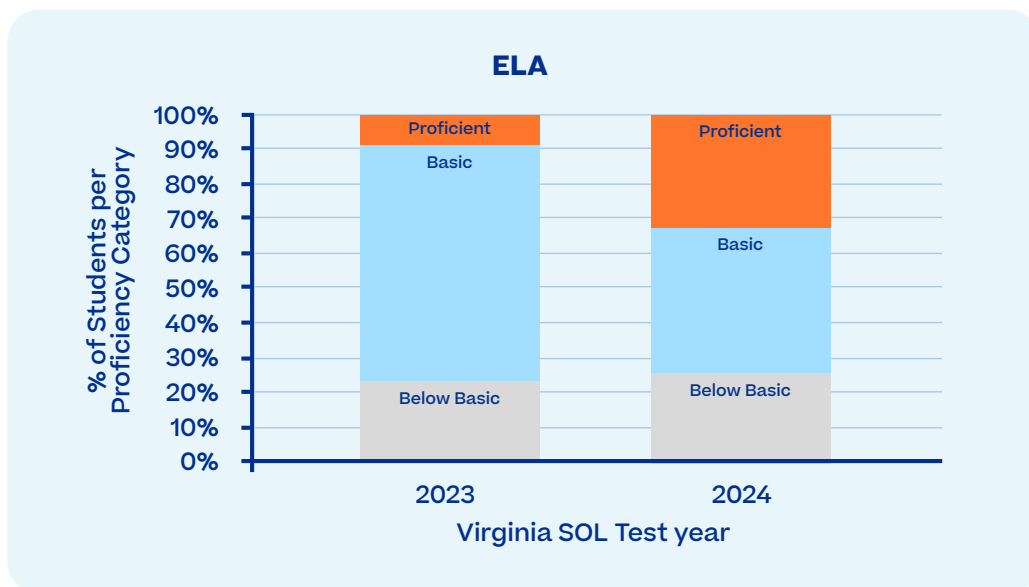
Impact

The results of targeted tutoring for ELA showed notable improvement:

- By 2024, those who received tutoring improved by an average of 10 points on the ELA SOL, while non-tutored students experienced an average decline of 5 points.
- Over 26% of tutored students* advanced to proficient levels and achieved a passing score on the 2024 SOL.
- An additional 9.66% of students moved from “below basic” to “basic” indicating steady progress toward proficiency.



While no statistically significant correlations were found between tutoring time and ELA SOL performance, the relatively low average tutoring time for elementary students (around 200 minutes total) may not have been sufficient to produce statistically significant gains. Nevertheless, the overall improvements demonstrate the positive impact of targeted tutoring on student achievement in ELA.



*Third-grade students were excluded from these analyses due to state testing regulations, as no 2023 baseline SOL assessment data was available for this group.

How Did Educators and Administrators Respond to the Initiative?

Educators and leaders from Pulaski County Public Schools shared positive reflections on the impact of the K12 Tutoring partnership, highlighting student growth, strengthened instructional support, and a collaborative rollout.



Robert F. Graham, Superintendent of Pulaski County Public Schools

Superintendent Graham emphasized the importance of early intervention and shared compelling data on student outcomes:

“ Dependent on the grade level and whether it was reading or math, we have seen anywhere from a 13% increase to a 44% increase in students who have had tutoring, as opposed to those who did not. ”

He also highlighted the value of the K12 Tutoring delivery model:

“ When I heard that the tutors are certified, we could have them virtually and working on a 1:5 teacher-to-student ratio, it was a win-win for everybody. ”

Roxanne Souma, Coordinator of Secondary Education

Souma shared examples of dramatic student gains, including one 6th grader who made significant improvement between benchmarks:

“ Individual students have seen a lot of growth. There have been specific examples of a series of students that have had major gains. One 6th grade student in particular failed their 1st quarter benchmark and passed with flying colors with their 2nd, 9-week benchmark. ”

She also emphasized the strength of the working relationship with K12 Tutoring:

“ You couldn’t ask for a better partner. We have weekly meetings, and the team is always more than willing to help in any way they can. It’s been a wonderful, collaborative partnership. ”

Kallie Covey, 6th grade Teacher, Pulaski County Middle School

Covey emphasized the value of having live, certified teachers leading the sessions:

“ I think using certified teachers makes an entire difference. Just because you put a student in front of a computer doesn’t mean a student is going to learn. If a student is on the right track or on the wrong track, a live, certified teacher can guide them through that. ”

Beyond academics, she noticed a positive shift in how students engaged socially and emotionally:

“ One thing non-academic to measure: students who won’t answer questions and don’t really talk in class. These students felt a lot more comfortable. I saw them asking more questions and interacting with their peers and their teacher way more than they do in a traditional setting. ”

What Can Other School Districts Learn from Pulaski County's Approach?

Early coordination strengthens implementation

A well-organized launch process helped set the stage for success. K12 and PCPS worked closely to coordinate schedules, group students, prepare classrooms, and ensure all necessary equipment and supervision were in place. These upfront efforts created a solid foundation and helped ensure consistency across schools.

Teacher engagement enhances program impact

Ongoing communication with classroom teachers played a vital role in aligning tutoring with in-school instruction. Once teachers understood that tutoring was designed to support and reinforce their work—not replace it—they became valuable partners in the process. Clear communication and shared goals helped create a unified approach to student support.

Virtual tutoring can be highly effective

Tutoring was delivered by certified teachers using a custom-built virtual platform designed for real-time small-group instruction. Students met regularly with the same tutor, which helped build relationships and maintain continuity. Lessons were based on Virginia state standards and tailored to each student's learning needs, resulting in strong engagement and measurable academic progress.



Increased tutoring time leads to greater gains

PCPS data showed a clear connection between the number of tutoring sessions students received and their academic improvement. For example, in some grades, every additional hour of tutoring was associated with higher scores on state assessments. The results reinforce the value of sustained, focused instructional time.



Instruction should be tailored by age group

Tutors adjusted their approach based on the age of the students they were working with. Younger students tended to respond well to verbal interaction, while older students often preferred using chat and other digital tools in the virtual classroom. This flexibility helped maintain engagement across grade levels and allowed instruction to be more student-centered.



Strategic use of funding increases impact

Using ALL In Virginia funds, PCPS was able to prioritize students with the greatest academic needs and provide them with consistent, high-quality support. The district reached 870 students, many of whom demonstrated significant gains in proficiency and confidence.

Conclusion

Pulaski County Public Schools' partnership with K12 Tutoring demonstrates how strategic planning, targeted support, and collaborative implementation can make a measurable difference in student achievement. By prioritizing students most in need of support, embedding tutoring into the school day, and delivering consistent, high-quality instruction from certified teachers, PCPS created a model that not only improved student outcomes but also strengthened instructional capacity across the district.




The district's focus on early intervention, teacher engagement, and flexible implementation allowed the tutoring program to evolve and improve in real time—resulting in over 4,000 tutoring sessions, SOL score gains, and stronger student engagement.

As districts across the country continue to navigate post-pandemic recovery, Pulaski's experience offers a valuable roadmap: invest in what works, communicate clearly, plan intentionally, and meet students where they are. With the right approach, high-impact tutoring can be a powerful tool in closing learning gaps and re-engaging students in meaningful academic growth.





K12 is the leader in online education since 2000. K12 Tutoring provides personalized, flexible learning that helps students thrive.

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