DISTRICT PARTNERSHIP
TOOLKIT

OVERVIEW

DO YOU NEED MORE TUTORS, COACHES, MENTORS, SERVICE COORDINATORS, OR ADVISORS TO HELP STUDENTS THRIVE IN SCHOOL AND BEYOND?

School districts can use resources provided by the American Rescue Plan (ARP) on partnerships with in-school and out-of-school time service providers to address the impact of COVID-19 on students, families, educators, and communities.

The five holistic, evidence-based student supports outlined by the National Partnership for Student Success (NPSS) are all eligible for funding through ARP: tutors, mentors, student success coaches, wraparound service coordinators, and post-secondary transition coaches. The NPSS is a public-private partnership committed to providing the supports that will help our students succeed. The NPSS supports a nationwide three-year effort that brings together experienced organizations to recruit, screen, train, and engage an additional 250,000 caring adults.

This tool is specifically intended to assist districts as they consider where and how to bring more tutors, mentors, coaches, student support coordinators, and post-secondary transition coaches to schools and demonstrate how the NPSS can help deliver these high-impact supports for students, especially the students of color or students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds most impacted by the pandemic.

VISIT THE NPSS WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION ON EACH OF THE FIVE SUPPORT ROLES.

Specifically, district leaders can best take advantage of this opportunity by taking the following three steps:

(1) Identify Priority Student Needs,
(2) Decide How to Deliver Supports, and
(3) Design or Identify Quality Student Supports.

This tool details key considerations and links to high-quality resources for each step. Designing these partnerships thoughtfully will set up districts, schools, and partners for more effective implementation, ultimately increasing outcomes for students.

THIS RESOURCE WAS BUILT IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE FOLLOWING CONTRIBUTORS.

AASA
THE SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION

EducationCounsel
Policy | Strategy | Law | Advocacy

THE CENTER FOR EDUCATION MARKET DYNAMICS

NATIONAL STUDENT SUPPORT ACCELERATOR
equalizing access to quality tutoring

STEP 1: IDENTIFY PRIORITY STUDENT NEEDS

District vision and goals should drive the prioritization among potential supports and the creation of partnerships. As a first step in determining which of the five NPSS student supports are most relevant, districts should check the alignment between any new supports with the district's existing priorities and consult a wide variety of data and stakeholders including community members to inform decisions.

Helpful data include, among other things:

- Local or state formative and/or summative assessment results;
- Attendance data including on chronic absence;
- Existing needs assessments and strategic plans, such as Title 1 Schoolwide Needs Assessments/Plans, CSI/TSI school improvement plans, LEA or SEA strategic plans, and ARP ESSER state and local plans;
- Results of newly conducted needs assessment processes that gather input from students, families, school staff, and community partners; and/or
- Assessments of successful existing programs or supports.

The results of data reviews and needs assessments should help districts develop desired outcomes and serve as a guide for identifying the particular types of programs and/or partnerships to design and implement.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

District Need Assessment Tool *from National Student Support Accelerator*

State Needs Profiles *from National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments*

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR TEAM & YOUR DATA TO DETERMINE SUPPORT NEEDS

General Questions
- What data is already available (or could be reasonably collected) to help answer the following questions?
- Are there substantial numbers of students who would benefit from an additional caring adult supporting them on a daily or weekly basis?
- In the areas where you need additional student supports, do you need to find additional people power beyond your existing staff and partners?

Tutoring and Mentoring
- Have large numbers of students had their academic progress significantly impacted due to the pandemic? Is this greater in some grades or among some student groups?
- Is chronic absence a significant challenge? Is it high among a substantial number of the students whose academic progress was significantly impacted?

Student Success Coaches
- Would teachers benefit from additional capacity in their classrooms providing holistic, individual or small group support?
- Are schools in need of additional whole school climate support?

Wraparound/Integrated Support Coordinators
- Are there additional needs–beyond academic and social emotional support–that students or community members may need to thrive?
- Are there groups of students whose physical and/or mental health or access to critical support systems was further impacted by the pandemic?

Post-Secondary Advisors
- Are all high school students receiving enough support to make informed post-secondary choices and complete all necessary application and financial aid materials?

STEP 2: DECIDE HOW TO DELIVER SUPPORTS

District teams should consider three approaches to building any of the NPSS student supports: within the district (In-House), by partnering with another program or provider network (Partner), or by stitching together components from internal and external sources (Hybrid). To decide among these approaches, consider the following:

In-House *You operate the program internally with no external partnerships because you have…*	Hybrid *You engage one or more external partners to provide a component(s) of the program because you have…*	Partner *An external partner operates your program entirely because you have…*
• Staff capacity and capability within the district to design and deliver programming • Ability to deliver program at the necessary scale • Existence of internal systems to collect data and measure impact	• Need for one or more components of the student support program that cannot be provided in-house • Ability to manage a process to piece together program components from internal and external sources (e.g., people-power, curriculum, training, etc.)	• Available high-quality, evidence-based partners and/or collaborative capacity in the community (see more information below) • Internal capacity necessary to establish strong collaborative practices with partner(s)

This helpful decision tree tool can be used to support consideration of which approach to take based on local capacity.

Resourcing Considerations
Regardless of whether you go with an in-house, hybrid, or partner model, another key consideration within Step 2 is to explore various funding sources to resource and sustain the NPSS-aligned supports you decide to provide. Holistic, evidence-based student supports are allowable and effective uses of American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds, and they are also allowable uses of other federal, state, and local funds that will continue to be available after the deadlines pass for spending federal recovery funds.

GUIDANCE ON USING ARP FUNDS

- **U.S. Department of Education FAQ on ARP Funds** (section C provides guidance on advancing educational equity in COVID-19 response and interventions for consideration)
- **U.S. Department of Education COVID-19 Handbook** (sections I and II cover building safe, equitable learning environments and addressing lost instructional time)
- Superintendent/principal toolkit from AmeriCorps on **Leveraging National Service in Your Schools**
- National Student Support Accelerator's **guidance on finding sustainable funding sources** and **using ARP funding for high-impact tutoring**
- Children's Funding Project **American Rescue Plan Funding Database** to find ARP funding in your community

Districts might also consider exploring the following to learn more about available funding opportunities to initiate and sustain these supports:

- The 50 State Afterschool Network has networks in all 50 states, which often provide information on funding opportunities.

- AmeriCorps has several resources with information on how to secure national service resources, outlined in this resource or through State Service Commissions.

- The Engage Every Student Initiative has a useful list of funding opportunities as well as other resources for out-of-school time here that may apply to nonprofit organizations, school districts, and state or local government agencies. This includes a funding database from Afterschool Alliance among many other resources.

- A comprehensive list of grant opportunities offered by the U.S. Department of Education are available here, with details by type of organization here.

- Local/regional/national philanthropic organizations

- Corporations with significant presence in the community

THINGS TO CONSIDER INCLUDING IN A CONTRACT OR MOU

If partnering with external providers, consider including the following elements in your partnership agreements:

- **Partnership scope and activities:** Describe in sufficient detail the goals and scope of the partnership, including roles and responsibilities for the partner and district

- **Communications:** Outline expectations regarding the methods and cadence of communication, including clearly outlining who will communicate and how with students and families and best practices for family and community outreach (e.g., interpretation and translation requirements)

- **Continuous improvement:** Establish how the partner and district will engage in mutual, ongoing planning and continuous improvement of the partnership, including regular reviews about progress against goals, and a process for mutually amending the partnership as needed

- **Performance assessment and data sharing:** Describe how data will be shared—by the district to the partnership to inform programming decisions and vice-versa to assess performance under the agreement—including the type of data and assessments, how the data will be accessed and used by partners and the district, and expectations around confidentiality

- **Program design elements:** Outline critical elements of the program including when and where services will be delivered, participation expectations, safety and attendance protocols, and other key considerations relevant to the partnership

  Note: National Student Support Accelerator has a tool that offers guidance on developing contracts you may want to consider.

STEP 3: DESIGN OR IDENTIFY QUALITY STUDENT SUPPORTS

After (1) reviewing data and stakeholder input to identify what type of supports students most need, and (2) assessing the best way to approach providing those supports (via in-house, hybrid, or partner models), district leaders should then (3) carefully design or identify quality programs and practices to implement.

If partnering with another organization to deliver any part of your supports, the **NPSS Hub** can help identify local programs or networks offering evidence-based supports that that align with your district's objectives, context (both assets and challenges), and capacity to implement well.

Partnering with the NPSS Hub to Increase the Number of Students Receiving Quality, Evidence-Based Supports

If you decide to partner with external program(s) or provider networks to deliver supports, consider engaging with the NPSS Hub, which can help:

- Identify high-quality providers of student supports and potential partners in your area.
- Identify a local organizing partner to help coordinate services such as a local children's cabinet, provider network, county office of education, Mayor's office, local nonprofit organization or foundation, etc.
- Establish a connector event to bring principals and high-quality student support providers together to enable informed matches.
- Identify and establish partnerships with local universities and colleges to provide a source of additional people-powered supports.
- Offer no-cost technical assistance to your district, local government, and/or community-based nonprofits including guidance on how existing infrastructure and funding can be leveraged to launch and sustain evidence-based student supports.
- Serve as a connector to other experienced districts, nonprofits, or networks that can serve as thought partners or examples.

You may also consider connecting with state and local organizations to understand the full portfolio of available partners. Such organizations can include your <u>state service commission</u>, <u>state afterschool network</u>, <u>local provider network</u>, local chamber of commerce, existing youth-serving organizations (e.g., Boys and Girls Clubs, Big Brothers Big Sisters, 4-H, YMCA, Camp Fire, Girls Inc., etc., as well as community-based organizations), <u>state</u> or <u>local</u> children's cabinet, etc.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I'M DESIGNING OR PARTNERING WITH A HIGH-QUALITY PROGRAM?

To help establish shared understanding, common language, and clear expectations for quality learning opportunities provided by student support providers, the NPSS has developed <u>voluntary quality standards</u>. In addition to these voluntary standards, districts should consider exploring—and possibly aligning their own programs and partnerships to—the following resources on quality from NPSS technical assistance leaders in each of the five student support domains:

STUDENT SUPPORT AREA	DESIGN & QUALITY STANDARD RESOURCES
Comprehensive Overview	• NPSS Voluntary Quality Standards
Tutoring	• Tutoring Quality Standards • National Student Support Accelerator Tutoring Quality Improvement System
Mentoring	• MENTOR Elements of Effective Practice • School-Based Mentoring--National Mentoring Resource Center
Student Support Coaches	• Student Success Coach Program Drivers
Wraparound/Integrated Support Coordinators	• Boston College National Guidelines for Integrated Student Supports
Post-Secondary Transition Coaches	• Connect with National College Attainment Network for technical assistance or additional information.

Regardless of which NPSS-aligned student support category you prioritize, any program you design or identify to implement should include the following effective, evidence-based practices:

- Commitment to a positive youth development approach including a focus on relationships
- Strategies to create a safe and supportive environment
- Commitment to continuous quality improvement including continuous improvement goals
- Ability to coordinate student supports and activities with school staff and access and share data relevant to the supports being provided

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Tools and training from the Forum for Youth Investment's Weikart Center on **youth program quality.**

- Institute of Education Sciences **tool** to support states, districts or programs in building and using evidence to implement afterschool and summer learning programs

- National Afterschool Association **Core Competencies for OST Professionals**

- National Student Support Accelerator's **District Playbook**