



Tightening Up Title I

The Implementation and Effectiveness of Supplemental Educational Services

A Review and Recommendations for Program Improvement

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Introduction and summary

The 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, or ESEA, created Title I federal funding to help provide all students with an equal opportunity to receive the highest-quality education possible. Providing tutoring for struggling students is one of many possible uses of Title I funds. Other uses include teacher professional development, computer labs, instructional materials, teacher assistants, and more.

ESEA was renamed the No Child Left Behind Act, or NCLB, when it was reauthorized in 2002. NCLB aimed to close the achievement gap in public education. It requires public schools that have not made adequate yearly progress on test scores for at least two consecutive years to offer parents of children in low-income families the opportunity to receive extra academic assistance, otherwise known as supplemental educational services, or SES. SES consists primarily of tutoring offered outside the regular school-day hours. Consistent with the intent of the law to promote accountability, flexibility, and choice, SES is implemented at the local level and draws largely on the private sector to offer eligible students a range of choices for free tutoring outside of regular school hours.

No new federal monies were allocated to support the delivery or management of SES. The law lays out criteria and guidelines for state and local educational agencies in approving SES providers, arranging for their services, and managing contracts and financial systems. School districts with eligible schools are obligated to set aside 20 percent of their Title I funding for SES and to measure provider effectiveness in increasing student achievement.¹

In arranging for SES, state and local educational agencies are able to draw on a fairly well-established market of after-school tutoring programs. As SES expanded tutoring opportunities for low-income students a substantial number of diverse organizations entered the market to compete for available SES funds. They advertise widely varying hourly rates, tutor qualifications, tutoring session length, instructional strategies, and curriculums.²

The flux in the SES vendor market is considerable. Many smaller organizations enter and leave after attracting few students, while others have rapidly expanded their share of students served. Some school districts have also operated their own SES programs, though as this is conditional on the district making adequate yearly progress, district roles as providers also come and go. The substantial year-to-year fluctuations complicate state and local educational agency efforts to comply with NCLB requirements in identifying organizations that provide services consistent with state and local instructional programs and withdrawing approval from providers that fail to increase student academic achievement for two years.³

In theory, parents and students should be holding SES vendors accountable through their choices of providers. They ostensibly use information distributed by school districts and SES providers to identify the best provider to meet the children's needs. Students who become aware of their eligibility may choose to register for SES with a specific SES provider, and SES providers invoice the school district for the number of hours SES students attend, up to a maximum per-student dollar allocation.

The more effective providers would increase their share of students attending SES over time if the program worked as the law intended. The service agreement between a district and its SES providers is, effectively, a cost-reimbursement contract, however, with no performance contingencies. In addition, only state educational agencies, not districts, have authority to approve SES providers and establish program criteria, such as an acceptable student/tutor ratio for providers to meet.

The fact that SES takes place outside of the regular school classroom and that instructional practices are known to vary significantly—not only between providers, but also within the same provider depending on the setting and specific tutor—further challenges state and local agency efforts to acquire knowledge of SES content and effectiveness.

Patricia Burch and Annalee Good point out that the features of SES that are key to its effectiveness—activities and resources used in instruction, the nature of interactions between students and providers, and institutional and structural elements that influence tutoring practices—are among the least visible to states and school districts.⁴ That said, after-school study and tutoring programs have long been in operation, including federally funded programs, and there is a large body of research on their implementation and effects, include studies specifically focused on SES.

In this paper, we review studies on the effects of SES on student achievement and update the evidence on what makes SES effective or why it fails. We do this by drawing on expanding district evaluation efforts and the published literature in this area as well as our own recent and ongoing multisite, multimethod studies of the implementation and effectiveness of SES.

In particular, we address these key questions:

- Who attends SES and for how many hours?
- What are the estimated effects of SES (from our study and others), and how do they compare to those of alternative interventions?
- What is happening in an invoiced hour of SES?
- What policy changes or levers might improve SES?

We conclude with recommendations for program and policy change to make SES more effective in light of the expected reauthorization of ESEA and Title I this year.

Our basic recommendations include:

- Students participating in SES need to get more hours of higher-quality and appropriately differentiated instruction for SES to be effective.
- States and school districts need to better monitor and control service quality and delivery and take a closer look at what online providers are doing in an hour of SES instruction.
- SES resources should be directed primarily to students in lower grades, students who are English language learners or who have disabilities, and those who are most severely underperforming in school.
- School districts, SES providers and their tutors, and regular school-day teachers and parents need to better coordinate their efforts to increase the success of SES in raising student achievement and closing achievement gaps.

Participation in SES and its impacts

Since SES began school districts have been under pressure to comply with federal requirements to make SES available to as many eligible students as funding allows and to assess vendor effectiveness in increasing the achievement of participating students. Some school district accountability and evaluation units attempt to measure program effectiveness and in some cases SES provider efficacy. Both district staff and researchers, however, face numerous challenges to properly evaluating student- and vendor-level SES effects.

One of the biggest challenges is that who gets tutored in SES programs and for how long is influenced by a variety of factors, including student and family characteristics and program administration.

Participation in SES is voluntary among students eligible for SES. NCLB requires school districts to use the same data to determine eligibility for SES that they use for making within-district Title I allocations—historically they use information on free school lunch eligibility—and school districts are required to notify families of their children’s eligibility and the availability of approved SES providers. Districts have to establish additional criteria to determine which eligible students get access to services if more students are expected to sign up for SES than there are funds available to serve them (preferably before registration opens). But not all students decide to follow through in attending with a chosen provider even if they are eligible and given the opportunity to register for SES. And some stop attending before their total SES dollar allocation is expended.

Differences exist between SES-eligible students who register and attend SES and those who do not for a number of reasons. Students more frequently absent during the regular school day, for example, are more likely to forego an after-school option. Analyses from our multisite study show that the percent of days absent in the prior school year is one of the most consistent, negative predictors of both registration for SES and SES attendance across the study districts. We also found that one of the most consistent, positive predictors of SES registration and attendance is whether the SES-eligible student attended SES in the prior school year.

As long as one can measure differences such as these in students who register/attend and those who do not, they can be adjusted in estimating SES effects. If those registering and attending differ in ways that are not observed or measured and that relate to student achievement—in the level of encouragement they receive from regular school-day teachers, for example—generating accurate estimates of SES effects may instead prove very difficult.

Our research also shows that it is important to separately model and account for the multiple stages of SES selection—registration, attendance, and the number of hours attended—because the influence of student characteristics differs across them. For instance, we find across multiple sites and years that whites, Hispanics, and Asians are significantly *less* likely to register for or attend SES. But if they attend they are significantly more likely than African Americans to attend 40 or 60 hours. English language learners, or ELL students, are more likely to register and attend more hours than non-ELL students.

Ideally we would like to know the added value of each additional hour of SES attended. Put another way, what number of hours of SES do students need to attend before we start to see effects on their reading and math achievement?

To estimate this statistically, we need to have sufficient numbers of students attending a range of SES hours. In practice, the number of hours students attend SES is influenced by factors such as the rate per hour charged by SES providers and the dollars allocated per student by districts for SES, as well as student and program characteristics.

One school district in our multisite study, for example, allocated approximately \$1,300 per student for SES while over 70 percent of the participating students received SES from a provider charging \$75 or more per hour. The maximum hours of tutoring a SES provider could offer a student at this rate per hour and per student allocation was about 18 hours over the school year.

Across the districts in our study, we observed the same peaks (or clumping) of students in the number of hours they attended SES, with the largest peaks close to 0 or 20 hours (depending on grade level), and smaller spikes around 40 and 60 hours of SES attended. The implication is that we are able to more reliably estimate SES effects at these common thresholds or levels of attendance where there are sufficient numbers of students observed (using rigorous methods that effectively adjust for selection).

Evidence on SES effects

Evaluations of SES and/or provider-specific effects are notably deficient in many states and school districts. Some states and districts rely only on information self-reported by providers or from relatively feeble data-gathering efforts such as parent satisfaction rates from voluntarily completed surveys (with very low and selective participation). Other districts attempt to make the best use of the data they collect on student SES attendance and provider invoices for operating SES to evaluate its effectiveness. Still, only a handful of the larger districts have the in-house capabilities to apply more rigorous approaches that account for student selection and other estimation problems.

In fact, some consistency in study findings can be found among the more advanced district evaluation efforts. Chicago Public Schools or CPS evaluations in 2003-04, 2004-05, 2006-07, and 2007-08 reported larger gains in reading and mathematics for students receiving at least 40 hours of tutoring and for students in grades 4 through 8 who were *not* ELL and who received *at least* 30 hours of SES tutoring.⁵

Consistent with other CPS findings, a Los Angeles Unified School District study found low SES participation, and “fairly small” program effects even among students with the highest levels of SES attendance. The effects were attributed primarily to improved performance by elementary students.⁶ In addition, studies in Minneapolis and Milwaukee Public Schools, where average SES hours attended are particularly low, did not find statistically significant, positive effects of SES participation.⁷

Matthew Springer and co-authors point out that very few studies rigorously adjust for differences in the characteristics of students who choose to participate in SES.⁸ They identify only four studies besides their own that did so.⁹ It is important to match up students who look similar in their characteristics in order to draw credible conclusions about SES effectiveness based on comparisons of students who participate in SES with those who forego the opportunity to attend SES.

That said, an important insight from the broader literature on after-school tutoring programs—which is consistent with that of SES evaluations to date—is that reaching some minimal threshold of tutoring hours appears to be critical to producing measurable effects on students’ achievement (as measured primarily by test scores).

Patricia Lauer and co-authors conducted a synthesis of research on out-of-school-time programs—specifically in response to NCLB requirements to offer SES—and found that effect sizes were larger for programs that were more than 45 hours in duration, though they became smaller for those longest in duration.¹⁰

In our own ongoing research estimating the effects of SES we find 40 hours of tutoring to be a critical threshold. Below 40 hours we do not identify any statistically significant effects of SES on students’ math and reading gains (as measured by changes in test scores). In addition, we find effects on both math and reading achievement for elementary students who receive at least 40 hours of SES but only gains in math for middle school students. Studies by Matthew Springer and co-authors and Ron Zimmer and co-authors likewise found more consistent, positive effects of SES on students’ math—versus reading—gains in their studies of SES in large, urban school districts.¹¹

Another common finding in studies of SES is that younger children—specifically, elementary school students—are more likely to attend SES (after registering for a program) and to attend more hours than middle school or high school students.¹² Unfortunately, some studies, including one that explored the effects of SES across multiple school districts (Baltimore, Chicago, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Palm Beach, Philadelphia, San Diego, and Washington, D.C.), did not estimate SES effects by grade level (or elementary, middle, or high school).¹³

Still, these studies did explore the potential *cumulative* effects of SES for students who attended more than one year. They found substantially larger effects on student math and reading test score gains associated with attending more than one year of SES. This suggests that more hours of SES are needed to produce larger program effects even if they occur over more than one school year.

This evidence, along with other corroborating findings in the studies discussed here, point to the essential role of the number of SES hours received in generating effects on students’ math and reading gains.

As indicated above, an important challenge in getting more hours of SES to students is the hourly rate SES providers charge. This, in combination with district (per-student) maximum allocations of SES dollars, limits the total number of hours of tutoring students can receive. State and local educational agencies do not have authority to proscribe or control the hourly rates charged by SES providers (other than district-operated ones), though they may specify a range.

One would expect that providers charging higher hourly rates would be delivering higher-quality tutoring services. In our current and prior research, however, we see little correlation between provider characteristics—such as student-teacher ratios, total hours offered, student attendance, curriculum design, and others—and hourly rates charged other than whether a provider is online.¹⁴

Further, in our ongoing study—including approximately 300 providers—we find that even when controlling for student selection into online vendors and the number of hours of SES students attend, students attending with online SES providers are less likely to gain in math and reading (relative to “offline” providers). This finding is disconcerting given that in our sample, online vendors charged significantly more for their services (\$24 per hour more) than other providers.

We now look at effect sizes because they are standardized and can therefore be compared across studies. An effect size is the change—measured in standard deviations—in an average student’s outcome that can be expected if the student participates in SES. A standard deviation tells you how different (or far away) a value is from a given average (for a given sample). So a larger standard deviation implies a bigger effect.

While there are some differences in estimated SES-effect sizes—for math and reading and across studies with different samples, treatment measures, and approaches to estimating effects—there is also clearly some congruence in findings.

The average increase in math test score gains of 0.09 standard deviations reported by Ron Zimmer and co-authors for students attending any SES is approximately the same that we find for middle school students who attend at least 40 hours of SES in our multisite study.¹⁵ The study by Matthew Springer and co-authors also finds increases in test score gains of about 0.09 standard deviations in mathematics (and 0.076 standard deviations in reading).¹⁶ In an alternative specification that accounted for those who registered but did not attend SES, however, they did not find statistically significant effects on reading for students attending SES (comparable to our multisite study results).

Our multisite study separately estimates SES effects for elementary school students. We find comparably sized effects for math and reading (effect sizes of approximately 0.06 standard deviations, range: 0.054-0.076) that are just slightly smaller than those for middle school students.

Summaries of the effectiveness of similar educational interventions that are targeted to elementary and middle school students and intend to supplement regular school-day instruction suggest that these effect sizes for SES are small. Based on effect sizes of similar supplemental educational interventions compiled by Carolyn Hill and co-authors from randomized studies and a meta-analysis of other meta-analyses, an estimated (one-year) effect size of 0.06 standard deviations is one-fourth to one-fifth the size of mean effect size estimates from educational interventions targeted toward elementary school students (0.23 to 0.33).¹⁷ Mean-effect sizes from randomized studies of interventions for middle school students, ranging from 0.27 to 0.51, imply the average SES-effect sizes range from one-tenth to one-third the size of effects of other similar educational interventions for these students.

At the same time, the findings on SES effects are very consistent with those reported for interventions more generally under NCLB that rely on standardized achievement tests to hold districts and states accountable for results. A National Academy of Sciences study concluded that school-level, test-based programs and incentives under NCLB have effect sizes, on average, of approximately 0.04 to 0.08 standard deviations, with measurable effects to date that are concentrated in elementary grade mathematics and are small in relation to expected improvements.¹⁸

Finally, to put these effect sizes into perspective with regular school achievements, we estimate that on average, *not including administrative costs*, school districts spend an amount equal to about 15 percent of their average annual per-pupil costs on SES (for hours of SES invoiced by providers). Using 0.06 standard deviations as the average gain from SES participation, this is equal to about 11 percent to 16 percent of the average annual gains in math (0.54) and reading (0.38) by third and fifth graders on nationally-normed tests.

What this means is that for elementary students—for whom studies are most likely to find statistically significant impacts of SES—SES is, at best, nearly as cost effective in producing student achievement gains as spending on regular school-day activities. In other words, the gains from participation in SES relative to average or regular school-day gains in math and reading are, at best—without full accounting of costs—approximately equal to or slightly less than those achieved with the same fraction of spending by schools districts on regular school-day activities.

What's happening during an hour of SES?

NCLB's intention was to facilitate as free a choice as possible for students and parents selecting SES providers and program types. Under the law, school districts cannot impose requirements on tutors, and the only authority they have in terminating a provider's contract occurs when the provider violates district policies or other such terms of a contract.

District staff who are responsible for the administration of SES contend that their hands are tied in monitoring providers. They also point out that SES tutors do not have to meet "highly qualified" standards or have specific training. Further, they allege that state educational agencies are lax in evaluating providers, setting minimum standards for tutoring quality or requesting essential information on applications for assessing and monitoring quality, or following through on district complaints about provider incompetence or misconduct. And with very few resources for program administration, let alone monitoring and evaluation, district staff are stretched to find time to observe SES providers and better understand what is taking place in an hour of SES for which districts are invoiced.

A distinguishing feature of our multisite, multimethod study of the implementation and effectiveness of SES is an in-depth qualitative component designed to define key elements of SES program models and to identify how policy and implementation potentially mediate or influence SES impacts. What do we see happening in practice (at the classroom level) in an invoiced hour of SES? How does this vary across different SES provider settings, districts, formats, and approaches to tutoring? And how does it relate to program effectiveness?

Because the law intentionally offers SES providers wide-ranging flexibility in the design of their programs, assessing program quality or fidelity to evidence-based practices is a somewhat elusive task. Still, considering the law and information specified in provider contracts with districts, some directives for content focus, location, and the use of research-based practices are clear.

For one, SES providers should make reading and mathematics the content focus of instruction, and instruction has to be provided outside of the regular school day. Providers are not required to offer services to students with disabilities, or SWD, or ELL students. But if providers offer these services the law requires them to be advertised, and districts are responsible for providing these services if no provider is able to or agrees to do so.

In addition, the law states that SES tutoring should be “high-quality, research-based, and specifically designed to increase student academic achievement” [Section 1116(e)(12)(C)]. In our study, we interpret “research-based” practices as best practices identified as making a measurable impact on student achievement by out-of-school-time or OST literature or content area specialists.

Best practices for out-of-school time tutoring and their use in SES

Little research exists on best practices specific to SES. Even so, prior research on OST programs tells us that high-quality programs are characterized by:

- Consistent and sustained instructional time
- Small grouping patterns (no larger than a student-to-teacher ratio of 10:1, but smaller is better)
- Curriculum that is content rich, differentiated to student needs, and connected to students’ regular school-day learning
- Instruction (or content delivery) that is varied (structured and unstructured, independent and collective), active (not desk time or worksheets), focused on skills development, sequenced to achieve skill development objectives, and explicit in its targeting of specific skills
- Positive relationships between tutors, students, and peers
- Teachers/tutors with both content and pedagogical knowledge and continuous support, as well as constructive evaluation, from their administrators¹⁹

To identify these best practices in SES sessions Burch and colleagues designed a standardized observation instrument to systematically collect information on teaching methods and instructional materials in use and to identify the impact of different formats, resources (curriculum materials, staffing), and instructional methods on students’ observed levels of engagement.²⁰

To date, Burch and colleagues have observed 99 tutoring sessions across a range of providers in five, large urban school districts in four states. The providers included online, in-home, in-school, and community-based tutors; for-profit, not-for-profit, district-provided, and faith-based organizations; providers with large market share (in terms of students served), two or more years of SES provision, and with higher-than-average levels of student attendance; and providers advertising services to SWD and ELL populations.

In general, the model of tutoring observed tended to take the form of traditional academic learning environments, with students being tutored in tested subjects—mathematics and reading—and typically instructed in a whole group format with more than one student and one focal activity.

In other words, rather than providing something innovative, active, and very different from the regular school day, SES was based on traditional forms of teacher-directed instruction.²¹ For instance, tutoring sessions of two or more students were structured into a single activity with no “opt-out” activity in about two-thirds of sessions observed. Research on OST argues, without qualification, for differentiated programming that responds to students’ different learning styles or needs.

In addition, students attending SES who might learn best via project-based learning, arts integration, or links to community-based activities encountered few opportunities of this sort in our multisite study observations. Perhaps most troubling, however, very few tutors with training or experience in ELL or SWD instruction were present during tutoring, and with very few exceptions, neither curriculum nor instruction was tailored in any way to the unique needs of these students.

On a more encouraging note, tutors were observed engaging with students in a predominantly positive way across districts and formats. SES consistently occurred in small groups with tutoring sessions rating highly on indicators of best practices such as “provide constructive criticism;” “encourage participation from disengaged students;” and “listen actively and attentively to students.”

The observation instrument developed by Burch and colleagues also allowed for assessment of how consistent tutors were in their tutoring practices across an entire session and how much *instructional* time students were receiving. Irrespective of the format, students received less instructional time than what was advertised or invoiced by providers, though the magnitude of these differences

varied by format. In more than half of all observations with two or more students—primarily off-line, school-based settings—students that started a session were observed missing part of the session or leaving the tutoring session altogether, or students came in late. We call this “attendance flux.”

We confirmed through interviews with tutors and provider administrators that school-based SES programs often compete with other after-school programs for students’ time, and classrooms with multiple students required coordination and set-up that cut into instructional time.

Regardless, the quantitative and qualitative findings of our multisite study suggest that students are not getting enough hours of high-quality, differentiated SES instruction to produce significant gains in their learning. This is not a problem that will be resolved *only* by setting minimum hours standards for SES providers given that invoiced hours do not equal instructional time.

Recommendations for policy and program change in SES

Public support exists, including among many parents, for continuing an intervention in an ESEA reauthorization that provides free, extra academic assistance to struggling students. But the best available evidence to date suggests that SES has been minimally effective. It produces only small effects for a relatively small fraction of students, primarily elementary aged, who get a sufficient number of hours of tutoring.

Students participating in SES need to get more hours of *instructional* time, and they need to receive higher-quality and appropriately differentiated instruction. We offer the following recommendations for improving the effectiveness of SES that address the program design, the responsibilities of state and local educational agencies in implementation, and the front-line role of SES providers in delivering services.

States and districts need more levers of control over SES providers

The current division of responsibilities between state and local educational agencies for monitoring and accountability of SES providers is not working. The districts contract with and pay SES vendors to provide services, but they have no authority to set standards for tutor or service quality or minimum hours of SES per enrolled student or hourly rates charged.

Research shows a strong relationship between the intensity of SES—the number of hours attended—and its effectiveness, and SES provider hourly rates directly influence the number of hours of SES students can attend. The fact that we observed widely varying hourly rates across and within providers—with one provider charging less than half the rate per hour in one district than it charged in another—suggests that states and districts need to exert more control over hourly rates with the acceptable ranges they specify.

More generally, we recommend that districts be allowed and encouraged to negotiate performance-based contracts with SES providers that facilitate greater control over hourly rates and minimum SES hours provided. They also need more say in tutor qualifications and curriculum (particularly for serving ELL and SWD populations) and other programmatic and financial management factors.

States could similarly negotiate performance-based contracts with district-operated providers. Some fraction of Title I resources should be allocated to managing SES providers if performance-based contracts are to be effectively designed and managed.

Redirect SES resources toward students in lower grades and ELL and students with disabilities

Another consistent finding in district-based studies and other research is that participation and attendance in SES are significantly lower for high school students than for elementary and middle school students. To date, no studies have shown SES to be effective for high school students, and they show greater attendance flux as well.

Alternatively, we found that ELL students were more likely to register for and attend SES, and yet there was little knowledge of or accommodation for the special curriculum and instructional needs of ELL or students with disabilities in SES sessions.

These findings suggest a policy change that would redirect SES resources from the high school level to lower grades and toward new efforts and programming to better serve ELL and SWD enrollees.

Take a closer look at online providers

Online SES providers generally charge more for their services. This is possibly because they typically provide computers for instruction that their students are subsequently allowed to keep. Not surprisingly, the share of students signing up with online providers has grown as state and local educational agencies have generally cracked down on providers' use of incentives to attract students to their programs and encourage attendance. Offline providers are no longer able to offer comparably attractive enrollment incentives as the online providers who

can promise a computer. District staff expressed concern that some students attend online SES only long enough to “earn” the computer, and students get significantly fewer hours of instruction with online providers due to their higher hourly rates.

We recommend that state and local educational agencies undertake a thorough assessment of what online providers offer in an SES session—including quality and differentiation in the curriculum—and consider which criteria or key elements should bear on the hourly rate-setting of SES providers. This should be done in combination with their assessments of other providers.

Information gathered on provider performance on these criteria should be communicated widely to students and parents. Again, districts will need additional financial and technical support to undertake these evaluations and effectively disseminate the findings to students and parents.

Focus on the students who need the most academic help

Large urban school districts in particular are increasingly stretched to provide SES to all eligible students who sign up. It’s likely that in the absence of additional funding even fewer students will be served if policies are implemented to increase the number of hours a given SES participant attends, as we recommend.

Some districts have already had to establish additional eligibility criteria beyond stricter low-income requirements, and we further recommend that these criteria emphasize reaching those students who are most severely underperforming with adequate levels of tutoring.

Better coordination among SES providers and other parties

Finally, it will likely take greater coordination and communication between SES providers and their tutors, school administrators, regular school-day teachers, and parents to effectively serve these students most in need of extra academic assistance. Increased cooperation, transparency, and openness in program management at both state and local levels—which we saw taking root in some districts—will also be essential to improving SES effectiveness.

Conclusion

Our own research and other studies confirm a strong relationship between the intensity of SES, or the number of hours of SES attended, and its effectiveness. The intensity of the intervention is partly tied to the hourly rate charged for SES, which determines the number of possible hours of SES available to a given student. SES providers' use of time for instruction and student attendance flux likewise affect the level and quality of SES received.

Still, even among those receiving a level of tutoring necessary to generate effects, the magnitude of these effects is small as gauged by effect sizes for similar kinds of out-of-school-time interventions. Findings from observations of tutoring sessions suggest that the minimal effects may also stem from critical omissions in the quality and character of instructional practices. Among these critical omissions is programming that addresses the special needs of ELL and SWD students, a problem made more troubling by the fact that these students are signing up and attending SES at higher rates than other students.

We recommend program changes that should ultimately help students participating in SES get more hours of higher-quality and appropriately differentiated instruction. States and school districts need to take steps to better monitor and control service quality and delivery, and they also need to investigate what is taking place in instruction provided by online vendors, who operate the most costly and difficult to monitor programs.

In districts faced with increasingly stretched resources, SES should be directed primarily to students in lower grades, ELL and SWD students, and those who are most severely underperforming in school. To be successful in their service to students with the greatest need for academic assistance, school districts, SES providers and tutors, regular school-day teachers, and parents need to better coordinate their efforts to increase the instructional time received by students and the quality of SES instruction delivered.

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Endnotes

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- 21 Homework help and test preparation activities were present in some sessions but were not the dominant form of academic support.

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Carolyn Heinrich is the Sid Richardson Professor of Public Affairs and the director of the Center for Health and Social Policy at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin. Her research focuses on social welfare and education policy, public management and performance management, and social-program evaluation. She frequently works directly in her research with governments at all levels, including with the federal government on evaluations of workforce development programs, with states on their social welfare and child support programs, school districts in the evaluation of supplemental educational services and other educational interventions, and governments such as Brazil and South Africa on their poverty reduction and human capital development programs. In 2004, Professor Heinrich received the David N. Kershaw Award for distinguished contributions to the field of public policy analysis and management by a person under age 40. Prior to her appointment at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2003, Professor Heinrich was an assistant professor at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and held an academic research appointment at the University of Chicago. She received her doctorate in public policy studies from the University of Chicago.

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