

iTutor Academic Intervention Impacts Thousands of South Carolina Students

2017-2021



Richland School District Two is a suburban school district located in Columbia (Richland County), South Carolina. Serving more than 27,000 students in Pre-K through 12th grade, Richland Two has 41 schools and centers: 20 elementary schools, seven middle schools, five high schools, four magnet centers, a child development center, alternative school, student innovation center, adult education center, and charter high school.

During the past four years, iTutor has partnered with Richland Two to extend classroom instruction beyond the school day to more than 15,000 Richland Two students. iTutor and its certified Educators have delivered continuity and instructional expertise in the safety of school or student homes via 1:1, small group, or whole class instructional models. iTutor's aim: to help Richland Two target instructional gaps, keep students current on coursework, and pave the way for them to achieve academic goals as quickly and effortlessly as possible.

As shared by two Richland Two families:

"My family and I truly appreciate the assistance received, as our children are truly benefiting from the services that iTutor provides"

"I would like to thank Richland II for having this program because since my child started with iTutor, she has learned so much and her grades have shown that this program has been very beneficial. I hope you have this program next year and years to come."

iTutor and Richland Two: A Successful Four-Year Partnership

- Varied funding sources:
 - District funds
 - GEAR UP grants
 - DoDEA grants
 - Magnet School grants
 - ESSER financing
- High level of district administrator and family satisfaction with iTutor programs
- iTutor services delivered:
 - Extra help tutoring
 - AVID tutoring
 - Homebound instruction
 - Alt Ed Academy
 - STEM Workshops
 - Test Prep- ACT, SAT, and Accuplacer
 - Homework Help
 - College and Career Readiness

In the Beginning, Extra Help Tutoring

iTutor's partnership with Richland Two kicked off in 2017, with a GEAR UP-funded engagement that had iTutor state-certified Educators providing "extra help tutoring" to Richland Two students -- starting with a large cohort of ninth graders -- in a variety of subjects during the school day and after school.

iTutor's live, personalized extra help instructional support gave Richland Two schools the option to remediate learning gaps on an individual, small group, or whole class format. A parent of a Richland Two 9th grader remarked on the support that it is a *"great service to provide to students without an extra cost to parents."*

After testing the waters with tutoring in 2017 through the GEAR UP grant, project director, Kristin Seay, quickly realized the benefit of working with iTutor, *"whatever your instructional needs, iTutor can meet them. The subject doesn't matter, the time doesn't matter. iTutor will find the right teachers for your students to deliver consistent, high-quality instruction. iTutor is a philosophy of doing education in a new way: a way that's going to meet the needs of our students."*

Advancement Via Individual Determination Program Reduces Class Size

The next year, iTutor began working with Richland Two to ensure the success of the district's established "Advancement Via Individual Determination" (AVID) -- a college readiness program designed to help students develop the skills they need to be successful in college. AVID places special emphasis on growing writing, critical thinking, teamwork, organization, and reading skills.

Since 2018, iTutor has worked with Richland Two to ensure the success of the AVID program by training iTutor Educators to teach Socratic learning groups of students within an AVID class staffed by a district teacher. This co-teaching has reduced class size, thus personalizing the AVID learning experience for all students.

Richland Two Turns to iTutor for Homebound Instruction, Alternative Education, Test Prep Support

The mandate of homebound instruction can be a significant challenge for school districts to fulfill. In 2018, Richland Two asked iTutor to provide synchronous homebound instruction on its virtual platform to dozens of their homebound students.

Once enrolled, the Richland Two students -- many of whom have a medical or behavioral reason for being at home and unable to attend classes at school -- immediately received homebound services across subjects and iTutor managed all operational and academic proceedings, all the while reporting on student attendance, behavior, and academic progress.

iTutor's success during its first year of Richland Two homebound instruction support led to year over year renewals (via funding from the district's budget), up to and through the present day. *"Just by the sheer reduction in parent complaints that come to my office, I can tell that iTutor is effective with the District and the families,"* remarked, Ms. Katinia Davis, Chief Instructional Support Services Officer.

The following year, Richland Two students receiving an alternate pathway to graduation via the District's Alt Ed Blythe Academy required elective classes to earn credits towards promotion and graduation in 2019. The students were provided highly reinforcing choices to select from and received academic credit on these electives that they would have otherwise lost.

Since 2019, Richland Two has also implemented various forms of iTutor's proprietary test prep program, Triemity. The District has opted to capitalize on the suite of offerings to prepare students for high stakes testing including ACT, Accuplacer, PSAT, and SAT. Funded by GEAR UP grants, the iTutor test prep programs have been offered in both asynchronous and synchronous formats in five high schools serving more than 300 seniors.

iTutor Offers STEM Instruction, Homework Help, and Summer School in the Wake of COVID-19

During the devastation of COVID last year, one of Richland Two's high schools offered rising 8th graders a virtual summer STEM camp funded by a GEAR UP grant. iTutor managed the program and provided materials for hands-on learning; students engaged in project-based learning from the safety of their home in subjects such as Anatomy, Physiology, and Robotics.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Richland Two used federal funds designated for COVID-19 relief to retain iTutor to support students with live, online homework help in ELA and Math each day, six days a week, including Sunday afternoons, with academic support aligned to Richland Two curricula and following South Carolina state standards.

Richland Two Superintendent, Dr. Baron Davis, shared his thoughts on launching the district-wide homework help solution. *"When we considered options for the best way to help support teaching and learning through the pandemic, we quickly turned to iTutor, which has been a trusted and proven partner to the District and our schools for more than four years,"* he said. *"We believe students and their families will enjoy and appreciate the live homework help sessions."*

iTutor put the homework help service in place across all 35 schools in the district, offering more than 6,000 hours of sessions focused on math and English language arts/writing support. Students logged in and met with their iTutor state-certified Educator in the company's virtual classroom after school hours to receive assistance on current classroom assignments.

Extremely satisfied with iTutor's support, Richland renewed the agreement, extending services for an additional 3,000 hours to finish out the 2020-2021 school year and, based on initial discussions with District leadership, plans are under development to continue this district-wide tutorial support for the 2021-2022 school year. According to school administrators, a key part of the decision to continue with iTutor was its superior customer service and the overwhelmingly positive feedback from parents who praised both the district's investment in their children and the services provided by iTutor.

Because Richland Two is keenly aware that students with disabilities have suffered dramatically during the pandemic, it has engaged iTutor to facilitate and teach summer school in 2021 with funding from the District and ESSER. The instruction will be divided into three core areas: ELA, Math, and Nonfiction text reading, with a focus on remediation and confidence building to prepare students for the 2021-22 school year. SEL will be integrated into all subjects as well.

iTutor College and Career Readiness Workshops Take Center Stage

Fearing that its high school students would be most negatively affected by the pandemic, Richland Two also turned to iTutor to help the District prepare those students for life beyond secondary education, whether they choose to pursue a college degree or enter the workforce.

Beginning in 2020, iTutor's College and Career Readiness workshops equip Richland Two students with the soft skills needed to present professionally during an interview, obtain and retain a job, communicate effectively with co-workers and supervisors, or prepare to compete in a more rigorous academic environment. For Richland Two GEAR UP grads whose college plans were delayed or de-railed by COVID, iTutor provided a positive alternate pathway to success during their "gap year."

Of the services implemented by iTutor before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, Richland Two Assistant Superintendent James Ann Sheley said, *"Working with iTutor has been a great experience for us! I have found them to be responsive with impressive follow-up and follow-through. Anytime that I have had a question or concern or appreciation, the response has been most professional. In addition, the classes that I have had the opportunity to observe have been outstanding! We are most thankful*

that our families have had this opportunity to participate in this unique and wonderful learning opportunity!"

Positive Family Feedback for iTutor COVID-19 Support

During COVID's disruption of traditional schooling, iTutor's certified Educators provided high-quality tutoring to more than 3,200 elementary students from the Richland Two School District in the Homework Help offering. The service offered families sessions six times weekly with a state-certified Educator providing remediation and instruction on academic subjects relevant to age and subject. In a mid-service

survey of the engaged families, 104 respondents shared their feedback on the support offered. Responses were overwhelmingly positive, with families profusely thanking the District and iTutor for the support. Among survey respondents, **90% of families shared high levels of satisfaction with the technology's platform's ease of use** for students in the elementary grades. A follow-up question asked parents and/or guardians if their student(s) benefited from the six-times weekly support with an iTutor Educator. One family respondent shared that *"since [their] child started with iTutor, [she] has learned so much and her grades have shown that this program has been very beneficial. I hope you have this program next year and years to come."*

The survey showed overwhelming agreement with that family's satisfaction: **87% of respondents shared high levels of confidence in their student's progress** due to the iTutor Educator's support. According to one parent, *"The iTutor service is great and the teachers are able to get real feedback from the students. My son actually likes the sessions."*

One of the main goals of iTutor's programs during the pandemic was to relieve parents and/or guardians from the stressors of homework support and management each night. When asked how much relief iTutor's Homework Help provided to each home's evening routine, **68% of respondents felt strongly positive about the impact** services rendered had **on their nightly routine**. One respondent felt happy that her daughter had *"been invited to participate. It takes pressure off of me to help her with concepts I'm not familiar with."* Another parent said, *"This is a great service, we as a family appreciate all that Richland 2/ iTutor's do to help our daughter on her path to success."*

iTutor and Richland Two: A Lasting Partnership

Deep, meaningful partnerships like that of iTutor and Richland Two are only possible when built upon the foundation of a trusting relationship. After years of collaboration, honesty, and willingness to try new ideas, the alliance between iTutor and Richland Two has grown dramatically while always focused on the perpetual center: The success of the students of Richland Two, South Carolina.

Family Feedback: Percent Strongly Positive

