

# PAPER



## Case Study

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# ***Over 1.5 School Years Worth of Tutoring Delivered in One Month at Paramount USD***



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— Dr. Ryan Smith, Assistant Superintendent, Paramount Unified School District

# Key takeaways and results

Paramount USD leaders were facing the challenges of providing scalable, personalized academic support to students, without putting further strains on their teaching staff.

They partnered with Paper to provide every student with 24/7, 1:1 tutoring support across 200 subject areas in English and Spanish.


The impact across the district was immediate. Students took advantage of thousands of hours of additional support at all hours of the day and night, setting them up for gains in writing, math, and other subject areas. Teachers' workload was lightened and parents' and guardians' stress was reduced.

- ✓ Students received **more than 1,900 hours of learning time through tutors**;
- ✓ Those hours equated to about **1.5 school years** worth of class time in just one month;
- ✓ **46% of students sought help on Paper outside school hours**, giving teachers a big break.
- ✓ All students part of the district's 88% Hispanic/Latino population had access to both English and Spanish-speaking tutors.

# About Paramount USD

Paramount Unified School District serves Paramount, CA a city of 54,000 within Los Angeles County that maintains a distinct identity and a strong sense of community. “Basically everyone in Paramount is a Paramount Pirate,” says [Dr. Ryan Smith](#), Assistant Superintendent of Paramount USD. “That sense of pride in the community has always been there.”

## Paramount Unified School District at a glance

	Enrollment	English Learners	Socioeconomically Disadvantaged
	<b>14,000</b> K-12 students	<b>25.8%</b>	<b>94.7%</b>

95% of students within the Paramount USD qualify for free and reduced lunch, and about 1/4 of all students are English language learners. “In some other districts, when students need extra help, what do parents do? They hire private tutors. In our community, with the students we serve, they don’t have those choices,” says Smith.

# ***The Dilemma***

## Students asking for help when it's not available

Students in Paramount depend on the school district to provide learners with the extra academic support they need to succeed. But despite the district's efforts to provide after school help, they still received complaints from parents and learners. According to Smith, "We'd hear things like 'I need extra help, but I can't stay after school. The bus is my only way to get home.' or 'I have a job,' or 'I have athletics.'"

Parents often asked if school could provide support early mornings, evenings and weekends, because that's when students are available. But the district found it challenging to appropriately staff extra help during those times—the hours teachers were available simply didn't overlap with the hours when students needed academic support.

"School communities have always struggled with the question of 'how do you make sure kids who need extra support receive it, and how do you personalize it?'" says Smith.

### **Covid amplifies the urgent need for academic support**

"And when Covid came, all those challenges were magnified 20x. Because everyone's home, everyone's trying to learn online. You need help at all hours of the day and night—but you can't get it. And it really does need to be personalized for what students specifically need help around.

Paramount's learners were urgently in need of more academic support than ever. Smith and his team knew they had a big challenge on their hands and wanted to act quickly to address it.

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**How do you make sure kids who need extra support receive it, and how do you personalize it?**

— Dr. Ryan Smith  
Assistant Superintendent,  
Paramount USD

**The stresses of Covid and distance learning were taking a toll on students, parents, teachers and administrators alike.**

# ***The Solution***

## A better approach to extra help

As they searched for a solution, Smith read an article about how [Superintendent Michael McCormick](#) and his team at neighboring [Val Verde Unified School District](#) were having success with learning support using [Paper's educational support system](#).

Paper provides learners with unlimited 24/7 homework help, writing feedback and study support at a predictable fixed cost. Specialized tutors deliver on-demand, 1:1 academic support in English, Spanish, Mandarin and French across more than 200 academic subject areas—so students can access expert extra help whenever and however they need it.

“When we came across Paper, what really intrigued us was—wow—you could have a 24 hour seven day a week resource with tutors that are really knowledgeable,” says Smith. “I’ve seen what kids are getting help with. It’s highly personalized. It’s pretty amazing.” Paper’s ability to provide academic support in Spanish as well as English was also of critical importance in supporting Paramount’s community which is 88% Hispanic/Latino.



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### **Funding from the city helps uplift the entire community**

Convinced they’d found a solution that would play a big role in providing academic support for Paramount’s students through Covid—and beyond—Smith presented Paper to Paramount USD Superintendent [Dr. Ruth Pérez](#). Pérez was in agreement with her team’s assessment. “The feedback we receive from parents often indicates that their students need more personalized support. Paper meets this need perfectly,” says Pérez.

# The Solution

Not only did Pérez believe Paper could help Paramount's students, but she also believed the service could uplift the entire community. As the steward of Paramount USD's close and long-standing relationship with the city of Paramount (formalized since 2002 as the [Paramount Education Partnership](#)), Dr. Pérez reached out to city leadership for their support. And the city came through.

"As part of the profound value we place on education, and in light of our long and sturdy partnership with the district, the city lent whatever support we could to this program without hesitation," says Paramount Mayor Peggy Lemons. By combining the city's CARES Act funds with the school district's, Paramount was able to fund the Paper project. Soon thereafter, they won [unanimous approval from the Paramount USD school board](#).



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— Peggy Lemons  
Mayor of Paramount, CA

## Launching an innovative solution for academic support

Paramount set September 28th as their official launch date. In the runup to launch, Smith and his team worked closely with the Paper implementation team to conduct training for school leaders and teacher leaders around Paper and how it works. Smith's team ran a campaign which included [social media](#), direct communications with parents, and a portion of the district website dedicated to the Paper rollout. The Paper team took the lead on training at each site in the district, and in holding periodic 'best practices' meetings with principals throughout the implementation and rollout.

"Paper makes it easy on teachers because beyond looking into the [Paper] portal to see what their kids are doing, it's not a burden on teachers at all," says Smith.

# Results

## Immediate positive impact for learners

### Within their first month of access:

- ✓ Students received more than **1,900 hours** of additional support;
- ✓ Those hours equated to nearly 1.5 school years of class time;
- ✓ **46% of extra help occurred outside school hours**, giving teachers a big break.

**“That’s a big success, to be able to say we have resources that can help a student when they need it, on demand,” says Smith.**

Within the first three months of deployment, more than 3,500 students had already accessed the Paper platform to get help in the form of on demand tutoring or writing feedback. In addition to classroom assignments, Paper tutors received college applications, internship applications, and even some cover letters to review.

### Poised for gains in writing and math

“The essay piece is huge,” according to Smith, referring to the detailed notes on grammar, structure and content provided by Paper’s expert writing specialists. “Students get feedback on essays in less than 24 hours, typically. It eases teachers’ workload and allows them to do more with their instructional time and beyond.” And, of course, more frequent feedback makes for better writers.

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# Results

Administrators and teachers also have access to comprehensive reporting and analytics around adoption and usage. “Our data tells us that beyond essay review, math is where kids really are asking for the most help,” says Smith. “Math instruction and math achievement in general has been a problem for a lot of districts—Paper being able to help students with that is something we’re really happy about.”

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**I don't see how we would ever choose to go back to a support service that doesn't provide on demand options.**

— Dr. Ryan Smith

## Confident in long term results

“Whether we're in Covid or not, the need for something like this has been there.” Regardless of model, I don't see how we would ever choose to go back to a support service that doesn't provide on demand options,” says Smith. “Never has there been a need I've had that Paper hasn't responded to right away. I would love for this to be a long-term partnership and arrangement.”



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*Paper partners with K-12 schools throughout the U.S. and Canada to give every student an equal opportunity to excel academically. Our educational support system (ESS) provides learners with unlimited 24/7 homework help, writing feedback, and study support at a predictable fixed cost. Paper's specialized tutors deliver on-demand, 1:1 academic support in four languages across more than 200 academic subject areas—so students always have access to expert extra help exactly when, where, and how they need it.*

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