

Executive Summary: Leveraging Technology for Scalable High-Impact Tutoring in Illinois (Section C)

Purpose

This paper explores the collaboration between Pearl, a pioneering technology firm, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), and academic researchers from the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) to leverage a scalable platform for state-wide evidence-based High-Impact Tutoring. It outlines the successful integration of the Pearl platform with research-driven methodologies under the guidelines of Stanford's National Student Support Accelerator, aimed at designing, launching, and scaling an expansive tutoring initiative across the state. This collaboration represents a sustainable model for merging technology, education policy, and academic research to address the challenges of delivering equitable, high-quality tutoring programs.

Challenges and Technological Response

The COVID-19 pandemic underscored significant educational challenges, including learning loss, inequitable access to resources, mental health strains, and the necessity for effective virtual learning solutions. Pearl and their holistic platform, developed in alignment with the National Student Support Accelerator at Stanford University, emerged as a key response. By enhancing platform functionality like tutor-student matching algorithms, integrating comprehensive data collection tools, and facilitating seamless system integrations, Pearl addressed critical infrastructure needs for large-scale tutoring efforts, showcasing the role of technology in navigating the educational landscape, accelerated and induced by COVID-19.

Data Collection and Compliance

Pearl's data collection paradigm aligns with NSSA's comprehensive tutoring effectiveness measures, encompassing demographic, attendance, dosage, social-emotional learning (SEL) data, and pulse checks. Additionally, the platform's design complies with TQIS standards, supporting essential aspects such as tutor selection and training, program effectiveness, formative assessments, and ADA compliance. Notably, Pearl extends its data collection to include demographic profiles, ensuring that tutoring programs are analyzed through the lens of equity and inclusiveness.

Impactful Results

The Illinois Tutoring Initiative (ITI), powered by Pearl's platform, underscores technology's potential to enhance educational outcomes significantly. Key results from the 2022-23 academic year include:

- Demonstrated student growth in reading and math, with tutored students consistently outperforming their peers.

- High levels of student engagement, with 90% reporting positive experiences.
- Increased tutor self-efficacy, attributed to Pearl's comprehensive training and feedback mechanisms.
- Data-driven decision-making capability, enabling real-time program adjustments.
- Scalable impact, with over 57,700 tutoring sessions facilitated across diverse districts, evidencing Pearl's capacity to manage and enhance wide-scale educational initiatives.

Conclusion and Future Directions

The collaboration between Pearl, ISBE, and academic researchers from IBHG provides a scaleable blueprint for integrating technology with evidence-based tutoring to address educational challenges amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic. This initiative illustrates the critical role of data-driven technology in bridging educational gaps, leveraging Pearl's platform to operationalize research-backed practices for scalable, impactful tutoring. As the educational landscape evolves, this model highlights the importance of rigorous evaluation and the sophisticated integration of data tools, setting a precedent for educational renewal and the transformative potential of technology in post-pandemic education.