Saga’s high-dosage tutoring model strives for increased persistence and achievement in math by leveraging adult-learner relationships and in-a-school-day, personalized tutoring sessions.

| OVERVIEW |

Saga’s mission is to help states and districts to strengthen student confidence and achievement in math—a leading cause of high school dropout. Saga Direct’s model for high-dosage tutoring prioritizes the academic and socioemotional needs of students in under-resourced schools by ensuring all students feel a sense of belonging and achievement. This model personalizes math intervention or acceleration through rigorous tutoring sessions scheduled during the school day. Highly trained tutors, called Fellows, act as mentors and work closely with teachers and families to support student growth within and beyond the classroom.

Saga Direct’s high-dosage tutoring model is provided to 6,000+ students, built within the school day. Saga’s Widespread Impact division also provides comprehensive services to schools and districts: a standards-aligned math curriculum, a specialized platform for remote tutoring, as well as support for implementation, fidelity, training of supervisors and tutors, onsite inspections, and program management. With Saga, students can receive up to 150 hours of personalized instruction as part of their school day—and that tutoring time yields up to up to two-and-a-half years of academic gain in just one academic year. ➤ Saga: See Our Story

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What Makes This Model Innovative?

**High Expectations with Unlimited Opportunities**
Saga Direct’s model works best when it is offered to large cohorts of students, such as whole grade levels or content areas. This ensures that academic support is normalized, removing the negative stigma around tutoring.

**Connection & Community**
Saga’s Fellows are mentors who work to build strong relationships with their students. Fellows often become a vital part of learning communities by remaining consistent, connecting with parents, training with teachers, and often attending school events.

**Customization**
Saga’s math curriculum is tailored to meet the specific needs of every learner. Fellows work closely with content teachers to align on objectives, and then tailor the Saga tutoring materials to ensure students receive personalized academic support and are appropriately challenged.

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**DESIGN**

**Goals**
Saga Direct focuses on leveling up on math skills and content aligned to grade-level standards in order to strengthen students’ sense of belonging in school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Math Learning &amp; Achievement</th>
<th>Students who consistently participate in Saga will show growth and higher achievement on the internal foundational skills assessments (FSAs), as well as perform dramatically better on end-of-course standardized assessments than in previous years and non-Saga students.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Persistence &amp; Confidence</td>
<td>Students gain confidence in their ability to overcome challenging academic programming well past middle and high school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspire Future Educators</td>
<td>A significant number of tutors who partner with Saga will shift their career plans to become full-time educators.</td>
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Experience
Saga’s model consists of daily, in-school math tutoring sessions that are personalized, help build confidence in academic achievement, and are supported by the power of human relationships. In addition to a traditional, in-person high-dosage tutoring model, Saga Direct also offers blended and fully online tutoring programs. Though the modalities and student-to-Fellow ratio differ across models, the key components described below remain the same. ▶ How it works

Tutoring Sessions
Sage’s tutoring sessions are embedded into the school day and must take place at least three times a week for a minimum of 30 minutes. Where possible, Fellows meet with their tutees daily in groups of two to four students that remain constant for the academic year. Fellows plan and execute student-centered learning activities focused on remediation or acceleration of rigorous, grade-level math content. Regular and routine learning activities include:
- An exploratory curriculum designed to heighten mastery, confidence, and critical thinking in all students.
- Review of, and support with, class content or difficult homework. Students can bring specific problems they struggled with in class, to work through with their Fellow and peers.
- Student-led discussions and other collaboration structures where student thinking, voice, and problem-solving is centered.
- Informal assessments and checks for understanding—to diagnose progress and mastery.
- Timely feedback on transferable thinking and problem-solving skills during and after sessions.

Relationship Building & Family Communication
Fellows and their student groups develop a trusting and cohesive group dynamic to support each other in and outside of tutoring sessions. Building trust and a sense of belonging can take the following forms:
- Fellows carry out formal and informal check-ins throughout the day in advisory sessions and during recess, lunch, or other flexible time during the day.
- Fellows build a strong connection with teachers and families to support students’ academic and non-academic goals and progress.
- Fellows attend their students’ extracurricular activities to show support and build trust with the community.
- Fellows work closely and productively with school-based educators to best collaborate on lessons and tutoring materials.

Supporting Structures
Undertaking high-dosage tutoring requires careful consideration and planning to ensure key supporting structures are in place—Saga founder offers a 4+2+1 Systems Perspective to evaluating a school or district’s conditions for implementation. ▶ 4+2+1 Systems Perspective

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Saga provides a curriculum where session materials are personalized and that offers various instructional strategies and include standards-aligned assessments.

Saga prioritizes both breadth and depth in its math curriculum in order to best align with the standards of different states and different students’ needs. Lessons provide Fellows with instructional strategies, guiding questions, prompts, and practice problems to help ensure rigor. [Sample Lesson Plan] Anyone can access a bank of resources for free by signing up on the website. [Math Curriculum]

To best personalize content and skills for each student, Fellows are trained to choose lessons that are the best fit for their small groups. There is no specific sequence or order to follow as the curriculum is best implemented when aligned closely to the core teachers’ scope and sequence. And, for any and all Fellow-related needs, a remote curriculum team is available to answer questions and receive feedback.

Formal and informal assessments are an integral part of assessing whether additional supports are working. Saga administers internal foundational skills assessments (FSAs) and has programmatic goals related to student performance and growth. The curriculum also provides formal and informal assessment types, such as tickets to leave, practice problems, and checks of understanding. These are administered routinely in sessions.

Separate from the Saga Direct offering, Saga Education also offers one year’s worth of free math tutorial content on their website to anyone interested.

Saga’s high-dosage tutoring model should be offered to large cohorts of students in order to best support the normalization of tutoring across an entire community.

Saga’s high-dosage tutoring model proactively offers the program to a set range of students (e.g., to an entire grade level, to all students taking Algebra I, or to all students enrolled in 9th-grade math) to normalize receiving accelerations or interventions in school. This practice offsets any stigma around tutoring and provides a chance to build a culture around persistence in math.

Saga also supports schools to ensure students, teachers, school leaders, and parents are invested and engaged in the program. Program managers share achievement scores with teachers and school leaders, Fellows call home and provide progress reports and celebrate successes alongside families, and teachers and Fellows communicate around learnings about their students and content alignment. Fellows also become an integral part of the learning community and attend all school, departmental, and grade-team meetings.
Saga provides hands-on coaching and professional development to all Fellows.

Fellows are school-based tutors that lead small-group tutoring sessions, support students in and outside of the classroom, and collaborate with teachers and parents for student growth and success. Fellows also receive training around social-emotional support and mentoring in relation to building relationships with students, how to be an appropriate source of support, or how to provide critical and thoughtful feedback. 

Educator-Student Relationships

Saga manages the recruitment, hiring, and training of full-time AmeriCorps members through an internal recruitment team. Fellows can also be career-changing professionals or recent college graduates who are inspired by young people and want to support innovative and equitable education efforts.

Why We Serve  Service Year with Saga

Site directors oversee Saga’s high-dosage tutoring school sites and act as liaisons between the organization and schools. They oversee Fellows pre- and in-service training and coaching year-round, deliver professional development, observe and provide feedback on tutoring implementation, and support with content planning and instruction.

Coach Overview

Students’ schedules must reflect consistent full-period sessions that take place at least three times a week.

Scheduling is an important consideration for school leaders when constructing the master schedule. Saga recommends students experience at least 45 minutes or more of tutoring three times a week for the greatest gains.

The model is rooted in ease and access, so by incorporating it into a student’s schedule, it ensures students can attend without outside time commitments and builds practical routines and consistency. These sessions can be held in any open classrooms or flexible learning spaces in the school building.

Saga provides training and support for Fellows around responsibly integrating into school communities and engaging meaningfully with families.

Teachers, parents, Fellows, and site directors—as well as school leadership—must be aligned and invested to ensure Saga’s high-dosage tutoring model results in improved levels of student achievement and persistence.

Integrating Fellows into the community and school culture is essential. Fellows are trained to communicate directly with their students’ families to
provide students progress reports. 🖥 Serving Communities

With Saga's support, schools must plan to allocate funding for this model in the short and long-term.

Saga's high-dosage tutoring model prioritizes getting high results at a relatively low cost. Saga encourages schools and districts to plan around short-term funding streams such as federal grants, but also plans concretely for sustained long-term funding. Currently, tutoring programs (like Saga) can be funded through Title I of the Every Student Succeeds Act, and receive additional funding support through Title IV, Part A.

Their Saga Consult services can provide schools with customized budgets and funding planning.

IMPLEMENTATION

Supports Offered
Saga Education offers a variety of supports to implement high-dosage tutoring in your classroom, school, or district. In addition to the in-person model described in this entry, Saga also offers blended and fully online tutoring programs.

Saga Direct
Cost Associated
This is Saga’s turnkey service tailored specifically to your school community and students’ academic needs. Saga Direct offers:

- Curriculum and assessments
- School-based site directors that coach tutors and support day-to-day implementation
- Recruitment, hiring, and training of Fellows
- Program and data management
- Continuous learning and improvement support measures.

Saga Direct incorporates the offerings below as part of its implementation with school partners. Each of these can also be bought or used separately.

Learn More

Saga Math Curriculum
Free
Saga offers its math curriculum free of charge to interested districts.

Learn More

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Saga Consult provides stand-alone advisory and consultancy services to schools, districts, or states seeking to implement Saga's high-dosage tutoring model—whether in schools, blended, or fully online. Saga Consult offers:

- Program design
- Curriculum & assessments
- Pre-service leader and tutor training
- In-service leader and tutor coaching
- Onsite checks for fidelity of implementation.

 Saga Coach

An online learning platform for Fellow onboarding and training. The virtual platform includes the following:

- Training for Fellows on relationship building, creating, and delivering rigorous tutoring sessions, and teaching to small groups online
- Self-paced lessons with built-in reflections.

 Saga Connect

Saga's unique online tutoring platform—created specifically for the integration of math tutoring into remote learning. This platform features:

- Audiovisual capabilities
- Chat features
- Math manipulatives
- Shared whiteboard space
- Function & expression keys
- Embedded Saga math tutoring curriculum

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Impact

Schools implementing Saga show overall positive academic gains as well as improvement in non-academic indicators, such as attendance. [Urban Labs, 2021]

- Students who participated in Saga's tutoring program experienced a 63% decrease in math course failure.
- Students who participated in Saga's tutoring program experienced a 25% decrease in non-math course failure.
- The program's high-dose tutoring provides an additional 1–2.5 years' worth of additional math gain per academic year.
- Implementing Saga is shown to increase student attendance by 18 days per academic year.
- Students continued to see persistent gains in math test scores and GPA a year or two after tutoring.

Contact

Maryellen Leneghan
Vice President for District Partnerships
mleneghan@sagaeducation.org

RESOURCES

See Our Story
This video is an overview of how Saga's mission and purpose impact young people and their learning.

How It Works
Watch a Saga Fellow speak about the transformative tutoring model, and its impacts on young people, in a TED-style talk at the University of Chicago.

The 4+2+1 Perspective

4+2+1 Perspective
This blog post was written by Saga's CEO and founder and provides a framework for sustaining a HDT program.
**Nana’s Lemonade Stand**
Explore a tutor-facing lesson plan annotated for instruction for 6th-grade math on ratios and rates.

**Martin Luther King Day 2021 - Why We Serve**
Dr. King recognized the power of service. He famously said, “Everyone can be great because everybody can serve.”

**Why you do serve?**
I had some very important indicators in my life during my K-12 education who really helped me love learning and want more from life. I know that for many, Saga Education provides that education we so desperately need to see happening.

**MLK 2020: Why We Serve**
This blog post spotlights Fellow quotes that exemplify how impactful and meaningful working with Saga can be.

**Serving Their Cities**
This blog post provides vignettes into how Saga Fellows become a part of the communities through service and volunteering.

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**Saga Curriculum**
Saga’s math curriculum can be accessed for free by signing up on their website.

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**Why Should You Consider a Service Year with Saga?**

- **You Care About Education:** Saga serves 7th-12th graders in underserved schools, and our Fellows work one-on-one to support them in achieving their educational dreams.
- **You Want to Make a Difference:** Saga looks to transform under-served communities through educational change.
- **You’re Driven by Success:** Saga educates students at risk of academic failure and helps them graduate high school, thereby changing the trajectory of their lives.

**Saga Consult: Setting Up Your Program for Success Guide**
This toolkit and guide provides key information and strategies for schools to consider when starting a high-dosage tutoring program in their district.

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**How does a positive educator-student relationship impact the learner?**
This blog post explains why near-peer mentorship is so impactful.

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**Overview of Saga Coach**
This video provides an overview of the features of Saga Coach, Saga’s online training platform.

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**Not Too Late: Improving Academic Outcomes Among Adolescents**
This Urban Labs report underscores the positive impact of Saga’s HDT program on children in Chicago public schools.
NYT: Could Tutoring Be the Best Tool for Fighting Learning Loss?
This New York Times article highlights high-dosage tutoring as a powerful intervention to combat learning loss.

NBC News: Tutoring program helps students get ahead during the school day
This NBC news video shares the impact of Saga at R.B. Stall High School in South Carolina.