



In-School Tutoring and Mentoring Final Report 2024-2025

About Inspiring Minds

Inspiring Minds delivers effective programs that build academic and social-emotional skills using a developmental relationships framework. Our programs are in four core areas: In School Tutoring and Mentoring Services, Workforce Development, Social-Emotional Learning, and Out of School Time Learning.

Mission: Inspiring Minds empowers students to succeed and thrive in school and life by developing trusted relationships with community members who are knowledgeable of the culturally responsive, academic, and socio-emotional needs necessary for student success.

Vision: Inspiring Minds is an antiracist organization committed to closing equity gaps based on race, ethnicity, first language, and economic status that impact RI students and families.

Anti-racism Definition: We actively identify and challenge inequitable systems, offering educational opportunities that center and amplify historically marginalized student voices and lived experiences while nurturing positive relationships that strengthen the overall educational community.

Strategic Plan Goals:

1. Strengthen community engagement & partnerships
2. Demonstrate commitment to become an antiracist organization
3. Create a system of continuous improvement to analyze the impact of inspiring minds programs
4. Allocate financial resources to ensure the future success of the organization

[Our full 2022-2025 Strategic Plan is available here!](#)

We serve a diverse population of students who are exceptional, intelligent, and resilient. We believe all students deserve an educational environment that fosters a sense of belonging and purpose that is shared with everyone who is part of the school community and the community at large. We recognize the impact that systematic barriers such as racism, poverty, housing insecurity, and hunger have on learning, especially in under-resourced schools. Therefore, we work in partnership with school districts, institutions of higher education, civic groups, and the community at large to provide quality programs that empower students to succeed and thrive in school and life.

While we serve students and youth from 5 to 24, we focus our tutoring and mentoring and out of school time programming efforts on our youngest students because we understand that the foundational skills learned in the early years are a crucial indicator of future success. For example, research has found that students who read by third grade are more likely to perform well in other subjects, and those who do not read at grade level in third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school. (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2010).

We also recognize the importance of cultivating a diverse teacher workforce; therefore, we offer programming to aspiring educators and youth workers- those young people who want to make a difference in our schools in the future. There is a large body of research that suggests there are significant benefits to a diverse teacher workforce. Teachers of color are more likely to set high expectations for students of color. (Ferguson, 2003) They bring cultural contexts when determining instructional strategies by introducing topics that students relate to while also bringing that lens to interpreting students' behavior. Further research indicates that having a BIPOC teacher increases the value students place on academic success. (Villegas, 2004) Most importantly, our participants recognize how meaningful it is; *"As a student of color myself who went to Providence Public Schools, I feel for them [students of color]. I am able to relate and I want to be there for them.."- An Explorer.*

We use an asset-based, developmental relationship model because it works. (Search Institute, 2020). Developmental relationships allow each person involved to experience care, challenge, support, shared power, and expanded possibilities. Developmental relationships help people grow. By nurturing self-expression, critical reflection, and social skills, they continually open up new possibilities for success and new opportunities to make a difference.

Highlights of Academic Year 2024-2025

Growth and Change at Inspiring Minds

This was a year of settling in with a core team that remained unchanged but for the addition of Stephanie van Sprang, Fund Development Manager, who joined us in January 2025. The leadership team participated in a series of workshops facilitated by Freedom Dreams to hone our work around antiracism, culminating in a definition that informs how we as an organization envision antiracism at our core and how we will design programming to center the vision. This definition made its way into our orientation ensuring that every tutor/mentor, Explorer, intern, and staff member engage in a reflection of antiracist principals in relation to their work with Inspiring Minds.

We cultivated and enhanced a variety of partnerships within the community. In-School Tutoring and Mentoring is proud to be a part of the Relationships at the Center mentoring initiative from the City of Providence, facilitated by MentorRI. Through this initiative, we participate in a community of practice, build networks, and receive technical assistance related to evaluation systems. As we enter into school year 2025-2026, we are also working with MentorRI's TA team to enhance our professional development offerings including our tutor/mentor orientation.

In School Tutoring and Mentoring also benefited from evaluation support from Brown's Data Science Institute and Brown's Watson Institute as well as from direct service hours from students and faculty of Sophia Academy during their first annual MLK Day of Service as a day on for students to give back to their communities.

Professional Development Enhancement

Professional development within In School Tutoring and Mentoring and the Explorers program has made significant gains under the direction of Kia Minor, who came onto the team in February 2024 and was promoted to Director of Career Development and Education in February 2025. Under her leadership, the Explorers program has become a strong cohort of aspiring educators and youth workers. Providence community members facilitated career development and personal growth trainings. The first annual Expert Career Panel was held with the expertise of local education leaders including a Providence Public School principal. All tutoring and mentoring participants had access to curriculum trainings from PPSD math and literacy coaches as well as a variety of trainings around supporting student and self social emotional needs, including creating space for emotional regulation, using person-first language, implicit bias, and the bimonthly antiracist book club.

Partnerships with Schools

We began this year with flexibility to best support our partner schools. Our start date was delayed due to a network breach in the district. We worked with volunteers to wait for them complete assessments to create small groups for tutor/mentors or to request volunteers to support whole class. When a partner school saw funding reduced due to budgetary issues, we offered a smaller cohort of tutor/mentors free of charge.

A highlight of this year was increased relationships with colleges for off campus federal work study (OCFWS) placements. Sixty-six people participated in OCFWS with Inspiring Minds, some of whom began as service learning placements, and almost all stayed through the full school year. These partnerships, especially the one between Providence College and Robert F. Kennedy Elementary, strengthened the community connections for schools and institutions of higher education and provided a more continuous tutor/mentor experience for our elementary students, incentivizing full year service commitments. Our community core remains a small and strong cohort, serving from the start to end of school year and providing consistency and deep learning opportunities for students.



Inspiring Minds Impact (July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025)

- Total number of people who served with Inspiring Minds: 552
- Total number of people attended Inspiring Minds orientation in 2024-2025: 405
- Total number of impact hours: 16,183
- Total number of impacts: 6,237
- Total number of inkind hours: 12,592

Capacity Building Volunteers

- Total Participants: 77
- Total Hours: 968

In School Tutoring and Mentoring Direct Support to Students

- Schools served: 14
- Elementary students served*: 733
- People served at schools: 394
- Sessions took place at schools: 4,687
- Hours of time were given directly to children: 11,933
- Teachers who requested tutor/mentors: 106
- Teachers assigned tutor/mentors: 102
- Teachers requesting/hosting tutor/mentors for the first time: 23
- Teachers who hosted more than 1 tutor/mentor: 67

Explorers

- Total participants onboarded: 51
- Total participants placed: 49
- Total hours: 4,610
- Total Sessions: 1,443
- Total hours direct support to students: 3350
- Total sessions direct to students: 961

Explorer Hours Paid Directly by Inspiring Minds (Real Skills for Youth and One Providence for Youth)

- Total Participants: 46
- Total Hours: 3222
- Total Sessions: 977

Explorer Off Campus Federal Work Study

- Total Participants: 9
- Total Hours: 997
- Total Sessions: 338

All Off Campus Federal Work Study

- Total Participants: 75
- Total Hours: 2533
- Total Sessions: 899

* Students are counted only if the tutor/mentor worked directly with the student in tutoring and mentoring groups- we estimate the total number of students impacted by our program is over 1,000.

In School Tutoring and Mentoring Impact by Elementary School

Tutor/Mentor Participation by School

School	#Tutor Mentors	#Tutoring Sessions	#Hours directly with students
Alfred Lima Elementary School (IM)	47	542	1511
Anthony Carnevale Elementary School (IM)	25	270	651
Asa Messer Elementary School (IM)	37	466	1040
Dr. Martin Luther King Elementary School (IM)	31	493	1090
Frank D. Spaziano Elementary School (IM)	36	364	1006
George J. West Elementary School (IM)	5	41	107
Harry Kizirian Elementary School (IM)	22	379	901
Lillian Feinstein Elementary at Sackett Street (IM)	4	106	217
Mary E. Fogarty Elementary School (IM)	2	69	226
Paul Cuffee Lower School (IM)	5	35	123
Robert F. Kennedy Elementary School (IM)	41	490	1206
Robert L. Bailey, IV Elementary (IM)	53	567	1743
Southside Elementary Charter School (IM)	33	280	751
Webster Avenue Elementary School (IM)	60	585	1361

Teacher Participation by School

School	#Teachers requesting tutor/mentors	#Teachers assigned tutor/mentors	#Teachers requesting for the first time	#Teachers hosting more than 1 tutor/mentor
Alfred Lima Elementary School (IM)	13	13	4	6
Anthony Carnevale Elementary School (IM)	6	6	2	4
Asa Messer Elementary School (IM)	13	12	5	8
Dr. Martin Luther King Elementary School (IM)	12	11	0	6
Frank D. Spaziano Elementary School (IM)	9	8	2	6
George J. West Elementary School (IM)	2	2	0	2
Harry Kizirian Elementary School (IM)	9	9	2	6
Lillian Feinstein Elementary at Sackett Street (IM)	2	1	0	1
Mary E. Fogarty Elementary School (IM)	2	2	0	0
Paul Cuffee Lower School (IM)	2	2	2	1
Robert F. Kennedy Elementary School (IM)	10	10	0	9
Robert L. Bailey, IV Elementary (IM)	11	11	4	9
Southside Elementary Charter School (IM)	5	5	3	5
Webster Avenue Elementary School (IM)	10	10	1	9

Student Participation by School

School	Pre-K	K	1	2	3	4	5	Total Students
Alfred Lima Elementary School (IM)		18	5	18	6	5	37	89
Anthony Carnevale Elementary School (IM)		10		18	1			29
Asa Messer Elementary School (IM)	7	13	7	17	28	17		89

Dr. Martin Luther King Elementary School (IM)	18	7	43	15	7	20	1	111
Frank D. Spaziano Elementary School (IM)	20	9		8			29	66
George J. West Elementary School (IM)			5			4		9
Harry Kizirian Elementary School (IM)	10		10	10	9	17		56
Lillian Feinstein Elementary at Sackett Street (IM)							4	4
Mary E. Fogarty Elementary School (IM)			8					8
Paul Cuffee Lower School (IM)			4	1				5
Robert F. Kennedy Elementary School (IM)		28	6	5	28	10	6	83
Robert L. Bailey, IV Elementary (IM)		10	26	12	10	2		60
Southside Elementary Charter School (IM)		3		11	8	1	8	31
Webster Avenue Elementary School (IM)		28	14	12	19	2		75

In School Tutoring and Mentoring Participation by Higher Education Affiliation

Affiliation	Participants	Sessions	#Hours with students
Community Member	36	1015	2166.33
Brown University	13	239	618.26
CCRI	31	364	976.79
Johnson and Wales	4	82	483.92
MCPHS	1	21	72.38
Providence College	13	265	659.07
Rhode Island College	198	1757	3925
University of Rhode Island	98	944	3031.08

Professional Development Opportunities and Participation

Department	Workshop Name	#Participants
Explorers	Explorers Essential Skills Communication: Authentic Self facilitated by Sokeo Ros	12
	Explorers Essential Skills Teamwork and Collaboration: Social Dance facilitated by Rodney Lopes	18
	Explorers 1:1 Mentoring	25
	Explorers Group Mentoring	36
	Explorers Essential Skills Professionalism - 1 st Annual Expert Panel & Networking Mixer	19
	Explorers Essential Skills Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving facilitated by Coach Mel Moore	15
	Explorers Essential Skills Initiative and Self-Management facilitated by Tiffany Martin	16
Explorers Total		41
ISTM	Professional Development: Antiracist Book Club: The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story, Created by Nikole Hannah-Jones	5
	Professional Development: Antiracist Book Club: The Color of Water, By James McBride	4
	Professional Development: Antiracist Book Club: Wings of Red by James W. Jennings	16
	Professional Development: Creating Space in Classrooms for Emotional Regulation and Recharging	7
	Professional Development: First Aid & CPR Online course (Heartsaver)	17
	Professional Development: First Aid & CPR Skills Test	23
	Professional Development: Implicit Bias	5
	Professional Development: Importance of Representation and Inclusion in Books	11

	Professional Development: Intro to Mindfulness	9
	Professional Development: Literacy in Providence Schools: The ARC Curriculum	5
	Professional Development: Math in Providence Schools: The Eureka Curriculum	5
	Professional Development: Person First Language	5
	Professional Development: Relationship Closure VIRTUAL	27
	Professional Development: Supporting Multilingual Learners VIRTUAL	18
	Professional Development: Youth Mental Health First Aid Certification Course	8
	VIRTUAL Professional Development: Relationship Closure	33
ISTM Total		117
Total PD Participants		134

In-Class Support

Tutoring and mentoring is the largest and longest-running program at Inspiring Minds. Our tutors/mentors work as in-class support for Providence students in grades Pre-K through 5 who teachers identify would benefit from additional supportive adults during academic instruction and work. We recruit an estimated 400 volunteers and paid workforce development participants (Explorers) annually to do this work. Tutor/mentors are matched with students 1:1 or in small groups for synchronous learning to develop a trusting relationship and engage in structured activities-classwork or personalized lessons developed by the students' teachers. They work with students for a minimum of one hour per week during the school year, but most work 2-4 hours per week. Tutor/mentors also work with students during our KidsBridge Summer Learning Program.

Student Outcomes

This year, we continued collecting data on the number of hours of academic instruction by content area for each student. Teachers were asked to provide Inspiring Minds with the first and last names of students served and to collect written consent from their families. At the end of each shift, tutor/mentors were asked to record the names of their target students and hours spent on either ELA or Math per child.

With the support of interns and partners to collect, input, and analyze student academic hours, especially Brown's Data Science Institute, we developed a more accurate picture for the number of hours our tutor/mentors spent in ELA and math content with students. The numbers, however, rely on tutor/mentor direct input after sessions, which can be unreliable, with some having difficulty with the process. We hesitate to misreport, so will use our learnings this year to enhance our collection systems moving forward.

Tutor/mentors also conducted pre and post student attitude surveys to understand the impact of the program from the perspective of their students. In these surveys, 92% of students said they enjoyed working with a volunteer, 83% said they ask volunteers for help when the work is hard, 83% said they care about school, and 79% said they are confident they can learn new things. Our students' positive outlook on school is attributable to a culture created by our partner schools and teachers that welcomes community members in and finds additional opportunities for students to engage with supportive adults around academic goals.

Students from The Watson Insitutue's Evaluation class worked with the In School Tutoring and Mentoring team to build an evaluation tool for participating families. We are excited to begin using this tool during the 2025-2026 school year.

Explorers Program

Explorers is a paid workforce development internship for BIPOC and multilingual youth, ages 15-24, interested in "exploring" a career in education. Explorers receive 80 hours of hands-on classroom experience through In-School Tutoring and Mentoring and KidsBridge. In addition, our youth participate monthly in work readiness training to build essential and transferable skills needed for the workplace. We believe in supporting our Explorers' needs through 1:1 and group mentorship, and additional workshops to support them on their path to becoming educators. This year we partnered with Coach Mel Moore to deliver a workshop on problem-solving and critical thinking. Rodney Lopez hosted a Social Dance workshop where students learned the importance of teamwork, collaboration and scaffolded learning. Tiffany Martin ran a wellness workshop centered on self-care and initiative where students left feeling more confident in how to care for themselves and others. We also kicked off our first annual networking and panel discussion to help Explorers gain real-world professionalism experience.

Inspiring Minds' vision is to see our public school staff reflect the diversity of the students we serve. The Explorers program hopes to inspire youth to become educational leaders.

Explorer Highlights

As mentioned earlier, the Explorer cohort during Summer 2024 and through the School Year 2024-2025 were some of the strongest so far. From direct service to professional development and 1:1 and group mentoring sessions, the best way to learn of their experience is to hear directly from participants.

Summer 2024

"I had such an amazing and rewarding experience this summer! I'm so grateful for the entire Inspiring Minds team and am so proud of the kids!"

"I didn't expect to have made friends through this opportunity but I did! I explored the career pathway, built my resume, and made money. The most important thing was I learned! So much respect to all teachers."

"I had an amazing time working at this job. It was very educational, fun, reflective, and a great first job. I'll miss it so much!!"

Fall 2024

"I loved the training we did. I've been wanting to take Spanish dance lessons so I can dance during family/social gatherings, so this training was super helpful. I have all the same feedback that people had, how it was awkward at first, having to stand so close to people I've just recently met and look them in the eyes, but it was an overall fun experience. I think this was a great way to get to know everyone else, by all learning how to dance together. I also appreciated that everyone was willing to try it, even though they found it awkward or uncomfortable."

"Although this essential skills was a little on the heavier side, I really appreciated all that we learned. I'm grateful that Sokeo took the time to teach us about the healing journey, and it made me start thinking about going on my own healing journey. I also really appreciated that Sokeo was so open with his story. I also really liked the scenarios we did since it also puts everything we learned into perspective."

Spring 2025

"People often ask me why I do it. Why I choose to spend my days with children still learning how to properly hold a pencil, still figuring out how to compromise, still wiping tears over spilled milk or lost toys. And I can never do anything but smile and say "I just love it" because I don't think I could put the kind of love I have for this path of work into words. I recently committed to Arcadia University in Pennsylvania and will be pursuing early childhood education which is beyond exciting."

"I really enjoyed the panel! It was so great to hear from each and every one of these amazing people! I love how authentic they were and they didn't hide anything from us. It can be easy to try to paint this perfect picture about their careers or situations just so that others can be motivated to follow along this career path. Their authenticity and their stories allow one to not get blind sided and understand that their times where one will feel confronted, tired, even useless or may question "what's the next step from here", and it's okay to experience all those things but you need to keep going! I loved it, I gained a set of amazing advice!"

"The open-floor to talk to the panelists allowed me to more closely connect with the guest speakers and get opinions on more personal topics that I could not ask during the open questions section, such as how I as a more introverted college freshman could make connections within a generation of students glued to their phones. Overall, this panel was very enlightening and has allowed introspection on what I should do as I move onward in my college career!"

"I really enjoyed this session, even though I wasn't able to stay for the whole time. I thought that the panel of people had very good advice, both professional but also personal. I especially liked that they all encouraged us to find our why for going into the field we're going into."

"I really liked this essential skills training. I thought coach Mel did a really good job getting everyone comfortable and energized. He also gave really good advice when it comes to problem solving, which is that you should slow down and take a breath before trying to solve the problem. Now it's especially important because I feel like a lot of people are always at 100, so it's good to remind yourself to take a breather and slow down before doing something."

"Coach Mel's presentation was very informative and enlightening, and the group discussion he had us do was very good! Simon Says at the beginning was a lot of fun and was a very effective way to make sure we were alert and intently listening to his presentation! I left with a lot of valuable knowledge on how to more critically think and how to more effectively problem solve and I hope that, in time, I can become a natural problem solver and critical thinker."

"Since this was my first skills meeting for inspiring minds, I was unsure what to expect. I loved doing yoga, meeting new people, and taking time to notice the things I have in my life that mean a lot to me. After this training, I really want to spend time to myself thinking about things that I should be grateful for. By realizing them, I'll have a more positive outlook on life, which will then be reflected onto my life through experiences."

"The yoga was very similar to dynamic stretches I used to do during my high school track seasons, though it definitely did pose a challenge, since I haven't done anything track related in a few months. The food provided was amazing and the meditation after eating was soothing and eye-opening in the sense that it enlightened me that I should take more time for myself more often."

Participant Stories and Reflections

"Mrs. Dickerson comes to work with my students on Mondays, taking time out from her regular job to give to my kids. The children love to work in her small group! She has such a kind, calm, and encouraging way to explain their work to them if they are struggling with understanding or completing a task." - Teacher

"I interned as a sophomore in high school at an elementary school in Providence... I loved it. Inspiring Minds is an excellent program for children who need support and those who come from a different country where English is not their first language. That's hard. I know how that feels because I came to this country in 7th grade, and learning English at that age wasn't easy for me, but I did it, and I'm proud of it. I love that they are doing that now with kids because I didn't have that help back in 2019." - Undergraduate volunteering for credit

"I notice that students in between learning like to share details about themselves, I'll try to balance a time where we can speak freely and then be able to flow right back into work. I always feel bad having to redirect them when they get immersed in what they want to tell me." - Explorer

"This session made me feel so good! I couldn't stop smiling when a student told me "I finally did it on my own!" It was a huge achievement because I notice they have gotten super comfortable with me next to them, guiding them through the problems and watching them do it. However as I walk away, when I come back, they're on the same problem. So I stay next to them but I try to limit my feedback at times so they get that feeling that they're doing it on their own. They like having support, after a few times, I walk away and Finally, they solved a couple alone!! They were happy to tell me and this makes me glad because during tests and exams, they can't be guided." - Undergraduate volunteering for credit

"This session was amazing, I love working with the students! It's great to finish the year with them and seeing how much they have grown since January when I started. It's definitely getting bittersweet as some of them keep telling me that they don't want me to leave but I am so proud of them!" - Undergraduate volunteering for credit

"I tell everyone I got the best volunteers this year. Lynn, she already knows what to do! I don't have to give her activities, she takes a group of students and teaches them to read." - Teacher

"I think this session made my students feel happy and more confident in their reading abilities. Again, I am always so happy when I walk in and they are happy to see me! I am honored that I can inspire them and help them feel confident in their reading abilities." - Undergraduate volunteering for credit

"Each week I come it makes me want to do this career more and more. It's challenging but it's rewarding." - Undergraduate aspiring educator

"It inspired me because working one on one with a student really makes you feel like you made a difference. I created strategies for her to try to keep her focused on the tasks but also let her move a bit in the process." - Undergraduate aspiring educator

"I really enjoyed this session. I'm also really glad I got to talk about my experiences at Lima, especially with the students, and how shocked I was with their reading skills. I also enjoyed listening to everyone's stories about their students and classrooms." - Professional development participant

"This was a very informative meeting. I got to learn a lot about how to bring mindfulness to a classroom, and teach it to the kids!" - Professional development participant

"While the topics and discussions were very heavy, the discussions were important and insightful to help understand how to work with students, other people and even help ourselves work through our own traumas." - Professional development participant