



Year in Review

2024-2025 School Year



www.learningedgetutoring.org

From our Board

Lenetta Thomas



Dear friends and supporters of Learning Edge Tutoring,

My time with Learning Edge began nine years ago when friends of my family told me about how this special organization had helped their children. I have since tutored three years for the organization, I have been serving on the Board for the past six years, and my daughter Lena has been receiving tutoring for eight years. While Lena still receives tutoring support as a high school senior, she is now old enough to support her younger peers in the program, serving as a Program Assistant. Suffice it to say, we are Learning Edge Superfans.

We recently were reflecting on this journey our family has taken. Lena has had five different tutors! This turnover is not typical of the program as tutor-student pairs often stay together, but in Lena's case more tutors was not a negative. In fact, she had positive experiences with each of them. Each tutor added their own flavor to the experience, which left Lena with different valuable takeaways that have helped her grow into the amazing young woman she is today.

Over the years, I have also had the pleasure of watching the program grow and change. This year, for example, we expanded our Summer Enrichment Program to serve 28 students, we added a Math Specialist to support students, and we introduced Parent Cafés. I am always excited and proud to share how the work we do evolves to suit the needs of our students and families. Thanks for sharing in these efforts with us.

Sincerely,

Lenetta Thomas
Board Member



Who we are



Mission Statement

To strive for more equity in education by providing Chicago-area students who live in underserved communities free one-to-one tutoring and academic enrichment opportunities enhanced by caring, mentoring relationships.



Student Demographics*

112 students served in grades K through 12.



Students primarily come from the Austin neighborhood on Chicago's West Side.



92% of students are African American and 8% are Latino/a. Our Latino student population has steadily grown each year.

81% of students returned from the prior year.

84% of students are eligible to receive free or reduced lunch.

26% of students have an Individual Education Plan (IEP), meaning they qualify for extra accommodations and services in school.

*All data is based on the completion of the 2024-25 school year.

What we do



Our Program Offerings

One-to-One Tutoring: Students and tutors meet in person on a Monday, Tuesday, or Thursday evening. Students and tutors work on reading, math, and/or homework and meet for up to 30 weeks throughout the school year for 90 minutes each session. In addition to the evening program, Learning Edge has a partnership with St. Catherine-St. Lucy School, where we host a weekly on-site daytime program for its first- through third-grade students.

All measures
of reading
mastery have
improved
each year for
four years!

Ready Readers: For students in kindergarten through sixth grades, Learning Edge focuses on literacy. Following the completion of easyCBM reading assessments, students identified as working below grade level receive individualized reading plans to help improve their fluency, vocabulary, and/or comprehension. Our on-site Reading Specialist provides consultation and guidance to tutors, students, and parents.

Just the Facts Math: This program was developed by a math curriculum writer who was a Learning Edge volunteer. Students progress through a series of math packets that support the development of number sense, which research has shown leads to a better understanding of basic addition and multiplication math facts. This year, Learning Edge hired a Math Specialist who conducted customized assessments on first- through third-grade students to identify gaps in students' math knowledge.



Project Next Step: With the assistance of our Program Coordinator, students prepare for life after high school. They are provided with information about opportunities for college visits and career training programs, individualized free or reduced-cost summer academic and personal enrichment, and support in completing financial aid (FAFSA) and college applications.

Brain Food: Recognizing that good nutrition and learning go hand-in-hand, Learning Edge provides enrolled families access to fresh produce delivery through its partnership with Forty Acres Fresh Market, an Austin neighborhood-based grocery service. Families are eligible to receive biweekly deliveries from October through May.

27
families
received twice-
monthly boxes
of fresh produce.

Parent Café: This year, Learning Edge began its Parent Café program with one held in the fall and one in the spring. Facilitated by a child psychologist, families discuss topics related to their children's academic achievement in a casual setting that allows for sharing concerns, group problem solving, and identification of local resources.

28
students received
Summer Academic
Enrichment
scholarships.

Summer Academic Enrichment: Learning Edge offers families the opportunity to apply for up to \$500 toward attending summer programs, including art, sports, music, and academic subjects. This program is focused on assisting students in enhancing their learning development year round.

Summer Reading Program: This four-week program keeps our readers engaged and focused through the summer. Using poetry and common poetic devices, our students worked on letter sounds, vocabulary, and flow to work toward more fluency and automaticity in reading.

Mathnasium: Learning Edge has a partnership with the local Mathnasium to provide qualifying students with twice-weekly math support. This program is offered as supplemental tutoring during the school year and as a part of summer academic enrichment.



Outcomes

Our Impact in Numbers



100% of students reported that their tutor helped them learn!

85% weekly attendance rate for both students and tutors.

66% of students maintained or improved their GPAs.

99% of students reported enjoying their time in the program.



Students in grade 1 improved their word reading fluency by 57%. In grades 2 through 6, 80% of students improved reading fluency and 45% improved vocabulary.

96% of parents surveyed reported having an 'excellent' experience at Learning Edge.

91% of volunteers surveyed reported having an 'excellent' experience at Learning Edge.



In grades 1 through 3, math skills improved by an average of one grade level.

100% of students in grade 12 (seniors) graduated from high school.



Competitive Edge



Using Games to Give One Student an Academic Edge

Silvia, a retired educator, was made for this work. She began her career in general education and laughingly remembered how “everybody always sent me the kids who didn’t behave well.” She moved into Counseling and Special Education, and whatever challenge each student presented, Silvia had a knack for getting them to enjoy learning.

Yara has been a student with Learning Edge since kindergarten. She struggled with reading and did not always enjoy tutoring. When they met, Silvia learned that Yara really enjoyed the games at the end of each session. Silvia said, “she’s a fierce competitor!” Silvia has used that knowledge to modify Yara’s work into games and to make learning fun every step of the way.

It helped them build a bond; Yara has had a few tutors, but Silvia has been the best fit yet! Yara explained how kind and patient Silvia has been, and the word “fun” came up again and again. Once a reluctant attendee, Yara recently asked if she could come to tutoring twice a week!

Silvia’s games help Yara relate to her school work in a way that translates to understanding and retention. In the two years that the pair has worked together, Silvia has seen immense growth in Yara, specifically in how she is able to break down the phonics of a word and reading with automaticity. With Silvia’s touch, Yara has grown as a learner and truly has a *learning edge* that helps her get ahead in school.



A Constellation of Stars



One Family's Story about their Learning Edge Experience

Like many of our families, Tishara and her husband, Jerron Sr., first heard about Learning Edge from extended family and decided to enroll their four children in tutoring. They hoped to ensure that each of their children would stay on top of his/her education before any problems arose.



It is working: Jayla (16), Jasmine (15), Jerron (13), and Jordyn (7), are academically engaged, hardworking, and accomplished. In the eleven years this family has been at Learning Edge, Tishara described having seen incredible measures of academic achievement—including when Jasmine graduated as salutatorian of her eighth grade class. But beyond high grades, Tishara spoke to how all four children have learned to advocate for their own educational needs, a skill that will help them throughout life.

Tishara said that Learning Edge is “not just a place to get your kids help. It builds friendship and camaraderie which lead to long-term relationships.” Each child has a unique relationship with their tutor. Tishara spoke about how tutors have been flexible and switched nights to keep up with her kids’ busy schedules, and how they’ve met with her kids over the summer, celebrated birthdays, and attended graduations.

What’s more, Tishara, who has always been an educational cheerleader for her own kids, has shared that passion with our community and beyond. She has run Learning Edge parent-to-parent seminars, giving pointers on what she does to support her kids’ academics at home. More recently, she began working as a special education classroom assistant and is dedicated to helping each child excel. Learning Edge is fortunate to have these educational stars in our midst!

Thank you

Volunteers, August 2024 to July 31, 2025



Collectively, our tutors provided more than 3,150 hours of free tutoring and mentorship in the 2024–25 school year.

Alex Adamski	Patricia Feeley	Daniel Knight	Mary Roucka
Drew Adamski	Megan Finkelman	Mary Sue Komaniecki	Tracy Rowan
Howard Anderson	Cheryl Flinn	Beth Kordick	Debra Ryan
Nancy Angel	Yesenia Flores Adame	Amy Lazzeretti*	Monica Saydah
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Andrea Bortscheller	Jami Harris	Suzanne McLeese	Amy Stearns*
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Ginger Brent	Julie Heger	Greg Meadors	Jay Swift
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Joe Crosetto	James Jankowski	Domenica Moroney	Camille Tomasello
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Jackie Eckholm	Alia Kirsch	Mallory Potter	
Bonnie Edwalds	Elizabeth Klein	Andrew Reed	
Jody Evenson	Ada Klein	Cathy Rennau*	
Stan Faust	Alma Klein	Gerri Rode	

*A special thanks to those who also serve in a volunteer capacity on our Board of Directors.

+A special thanks to those who have supported more than one student in the 2024–25 school year.

Thank you



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