

**A Change to Scheduling Tutoring
Sessions between Tutors and
Students through a Sign-In System**

For:

Pathways to Education

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VOLUNTEER SIGN-IN SCHEDULING

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Abstract

Pathways to Education is a program that introduces students in high school who are currently in need of aid in the school setting to resources and aid that will provide them with the necessary tools needed for success. The program includes a variety of benefits including financial support, educational support and emotional support. With the recent rise of the pandemic, Pathways to Education has decided to maintain tutoring sessions through online sessions. The change to adapt tutoring sessions scheduling time will not only provide students and volunteers with more diverse scheduling times, but also improve the quality of the tutoring sessions for both the students and volunteers. Additionally, the new system for scheduling will offer a predictable time structure for all parties involved (staff, volunteer and student).

Introduction

Importance of Student Engagement in Learning

Student engagement is a vital part of learning, especially for individuals who are apart of Pathways to Education. According to Unifyed, student engagement builds better relationships with other students, staff and faculty, which helps to understand the content (Unifyed). This improved relationship enhances their skills which are necessary for driving change, and improving learning. With the new sign-in system, students are able to be provided with volunteers geared towards their specific needs. The new system builds important relationships between the tutor and the student to facilitate better learning. Thus, Pathways to Education will be able to provide more efficient and effective learning in the future, improving the reputation of the organization. The report focuses on how often students finish their work during the tutoring session, how often sessions are cut short due to lack of available tutors in a

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specific subject areas, preferred time for volunteers to sign up for tutoring sessions, preferred time for students and volunteers to host tutoring sessions, and required subject areas students most require aid in. These questions will be explored through interview questions, survey results and research primarily focused on the “Effective Practices for Online Tutoring” by Bean V. Michelle, et al.

Methods of Virtual Tutoring

Online tutoring come in a variety of forms, including asynchronous and synchronous learning. Asynchronous learning includes flexible times of learning, based on the student’s availability, while synchronous learning includes coordinating times of availability with all parties involved, including the student, volunteer and staff. The tutoring may be delivered through various applications including zoom, blackboard, discord, collaborate, etc.

Success of Virtual Tutoring

Virtual tutoring is a method of education which often comes with many benefits. According to a report on the value of online tutoring, it proactively creates opportunities to engage students with their community, and gain assistance in learning multiple disciplines. On average, students report that they retain information better and more effectively when obtaining aid from a tutor or a peer (Highly). On average, students perform better on their subjects and feel more motivated to learn when in a supportive setting. It is thus imperative to provide not only good service of tutoring, but also to build trust within the student, in order to better their success.

Data Section

Effectiveness of Virtual Learning in a...

Group Setting

Group work can be an effective method to motivate students, and encourage active learning. However, due to the introduction of an online medium, communication between students becomes dulled and interrupted. Online discussions require instructors to moderate the discussion activities and this requires time. In a primarily asynchronous learning environment, this can be tedious and time-consuming for instructors. The development of collaborative online discussions requires instructors to include sufficient time for learner discourse and moderation. To ensure learner success, instructors must actively work to ensure discussions are engaging and lead learners to high-quality learning outcomes. Much effort is spent on collaboration between students, and often, softer voiced students may be intimidated to ask for aid. The study found that students are less likely to ask for aid in group environments as opposed to one-on-one sessions, on average.

One-on-One Setting

Unlike the group setting, the one-on-one setting allows students to obtain more specialized help and provides a closer connection. According to the study, students in a one-on-one environment are more likely to ask for aid than students in a group setting of one or more peers. Thus, the one-on-one setting is overall more effective in teaching students in a virtual setting.

Scheduling Practices and Results

Interview results from Surrey Branch of Pathways to Education

Based on the interview with GM Melissa Lee, Vice GM Brenda Lao, and scheduling manager Ferrell Docherty, pathways to education is aware of improvements that can be made to aid their students, volunteers and staff. According to interviewees, on average, “five hours are spent on scheduling per week”, not taking into account additional hours required from spontaneous changes to the schedule (Anonymous Interviewee). In a similar line, the schedule changes almost daily, whether by the request of the student or volunteer. “Although the schedule is able to shift substantially to the needs of both the student and volunteer, it becomes much more worrisome to schedule”, says one of the interviewees. “It can take up to an hours time to ensure that a student or volunteer will be coming to a session, which greatly increases the stress involved when managing the schedules and time”, says another interviewee. Lastly, All interviewees supported the implementation of a sign-in system for virtual tutoring, to alleviate stress of scheduling for students, volunteers and staff. Additionally, staff provided feedback that the sign-in system would be beneficial to the students as volunteers are able to more suitably match the subject needs of the student.

Results of Volunteer and Student Surveys

Current Scheduling vs. Surrey results

According to the interviewers, the current scheduling system in other branches of Pathways to Education, slightly differ from the methods used in the Surrey branch. The method used in the other branches include a daily update log of available timeslots for the following day for students and volunteers to apply to, in order to assign their availability for the following

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sessions. This greatly differs from the Surrey model where sessions are planned months ahead, and adjustments are made based on a case-by-case basis. Scheduling is more finite for the volunteers and students when able to plan tutors days in advance; however, when students wish to add or change their times of availability this method is challenging. Thus, volunteers, students and staff have showed disagreement to the current methods to scheduling.

Student and Volunteer Satisfaction

Similar to the results described above, both students and volunteers showed interest in changing the current methods of scheduling. Students want to book sessions beyond the listed dates. As a result, more volunteers are required at a moments notice, in order to provide to the students who, require aid. Students report less than optimal learning conditions during their tutoring sessions. Additionally, volunteers have shown to prefer a sign-in system with a day's advance notice, over a month-advance schedule.

Summary of Results

Students showed that the majority of participants at Pathways to Education, attend 3 to 4 tutoring sessions per week. This follows with the following question which found that most students would prefer to attend three to six tutoring sessions per week. Overall, the student experience at Pathways to Education seemed mixed, with at least 30% of students stating that they are undecided. Similarly, students also showed mixed results in the effectiveness of tutoring sessions. With 30% stating that they are experiencing negative results at Pathways to Education, 50% stating that they are happy or satisfied with Pathways to Education, and 20% stating that they are undecided. Surprisingly, the survey shows that an alarming 58% of students voted that

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the amount of tutoring sessions is too little per week. Lastly, 52% of students stated that they are not satisfied with the current scheduling for tutoring sessions.

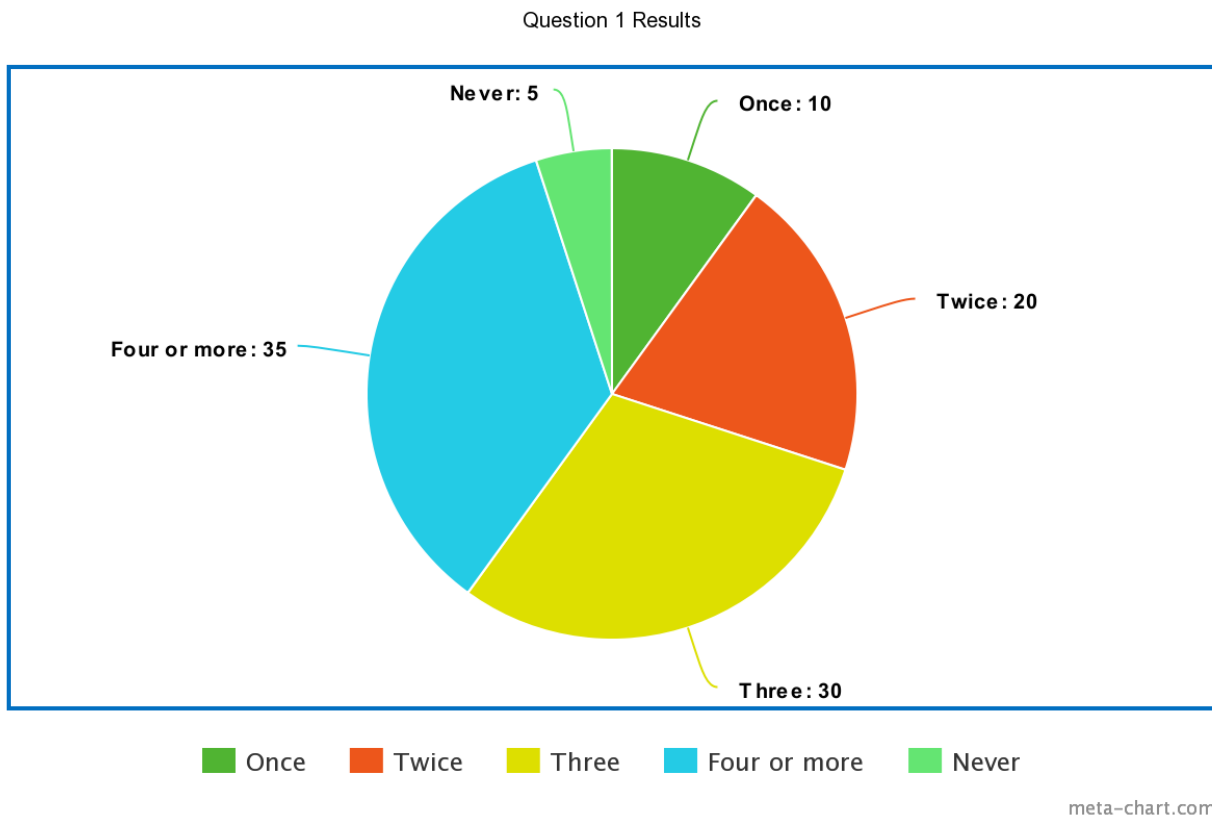


Fig. 1: Breakdown of survey responses to the average amount of tutoring sessions attended per week

1. Approximately, how many times do you attend the tutor session per week?

- Once a week (10%)
- Twice a Week (20%)
- Three times a week (30%)
- Four times or more a week (35%)
- Never (5%)

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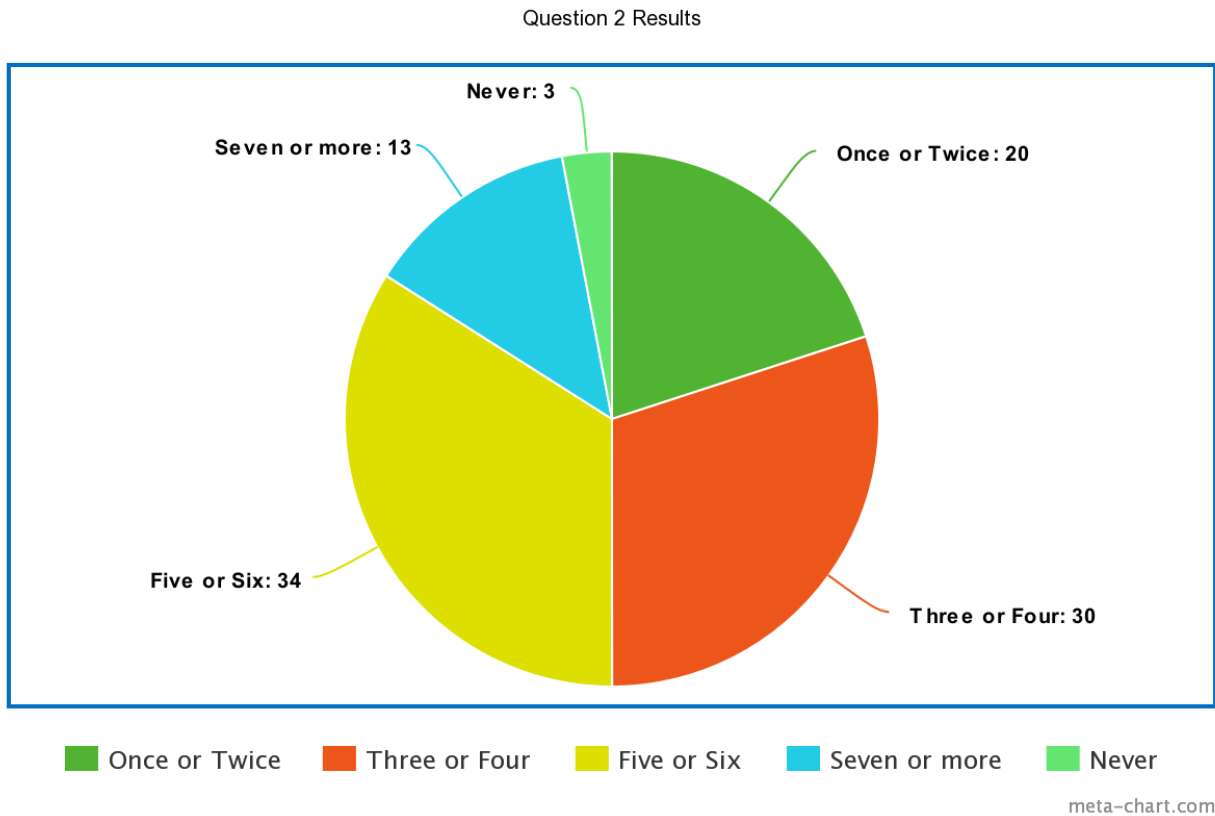


Fig. 2: Breakdown of survey responses to the average amount of tutoring sessions students would like to attend per week

2. Approximately, how many times would you like to attend the tutor session per week?

- a. Once or twice (20%)
- b. Three or four times. (30%)
- c. Five or six times. (34%)
- d. Seven or more times. (13%)
- e. Never (3%)

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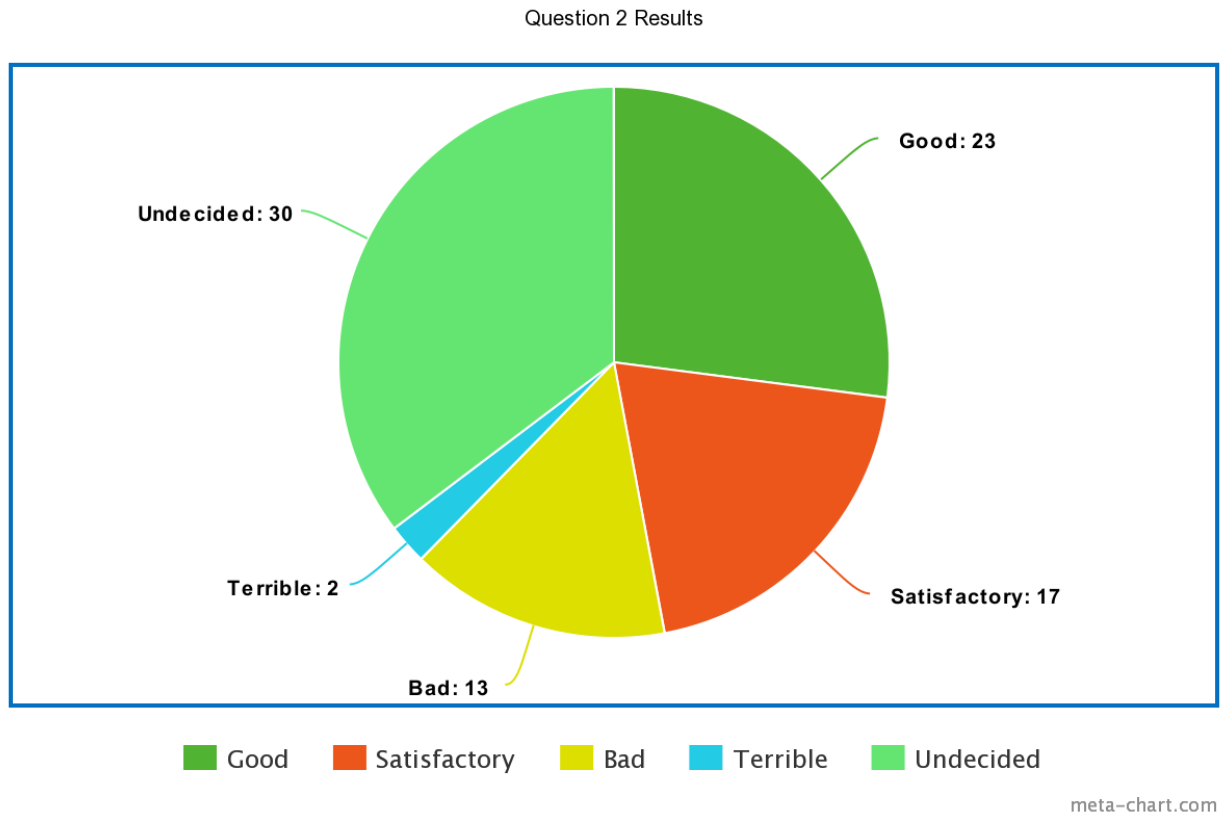


Fig. 3: Breakdown of survey responses to the experiences at Pathways during virtual tutoring.

3. How are your experiences at Pathways to Education during the virtual tutoring session?

- a. Excellent (15%)
- b. Good (23%)
- c. Satisfactory (17%)
- d. Bad (13%)
- e. Terrible (2%)
- f. Undecided (30%)

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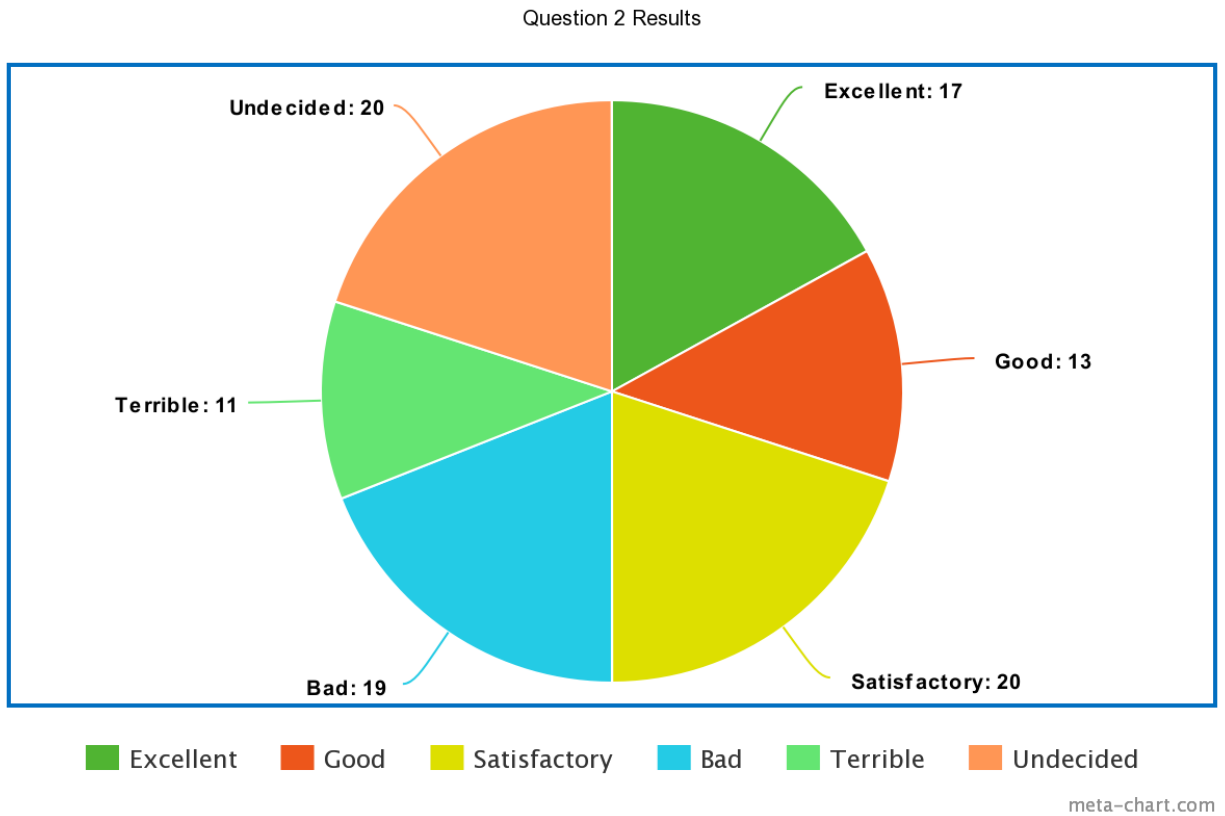


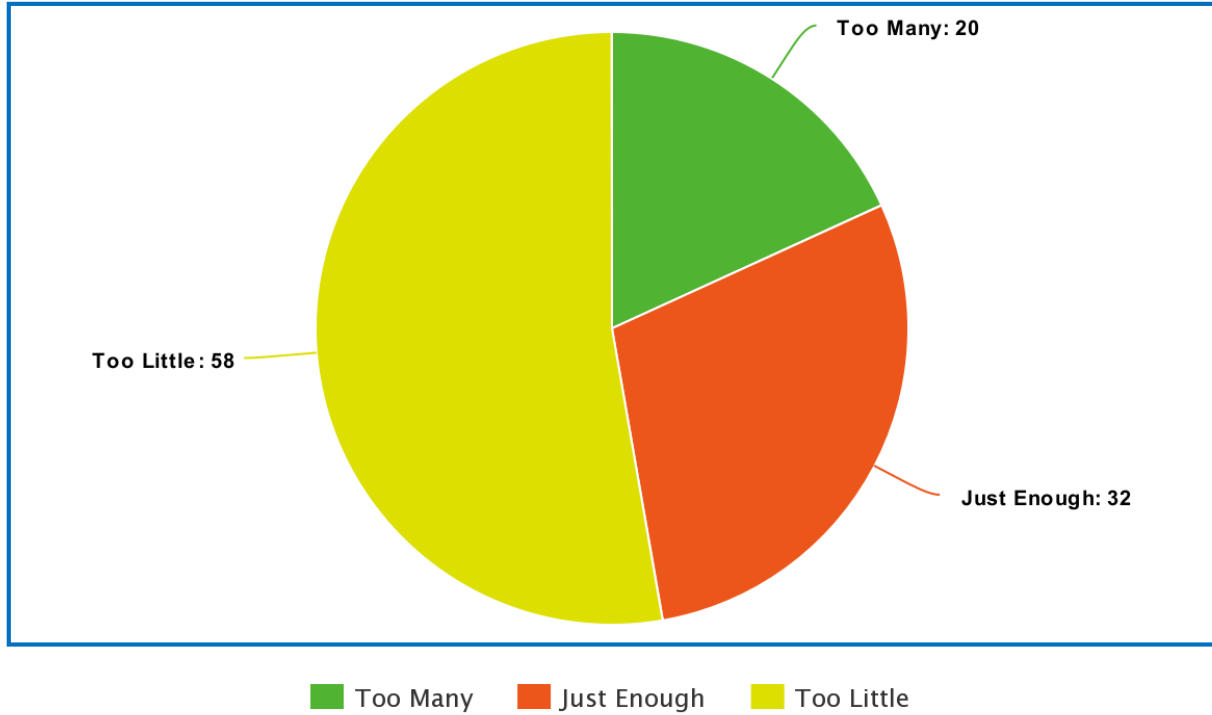
Fig. 4: Breakdown of survey responses to the effectiveness of virtual tutoring.

4. How effective are tutoring sessions?

- a. Excellent (17%)
- b. Good (13%)
- c. Satisfactory (20%)
- d. Bad (19%)
- e. Terrible (11%)
- f. Undecided (20%)

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Question 2 Results



meta-chart.com

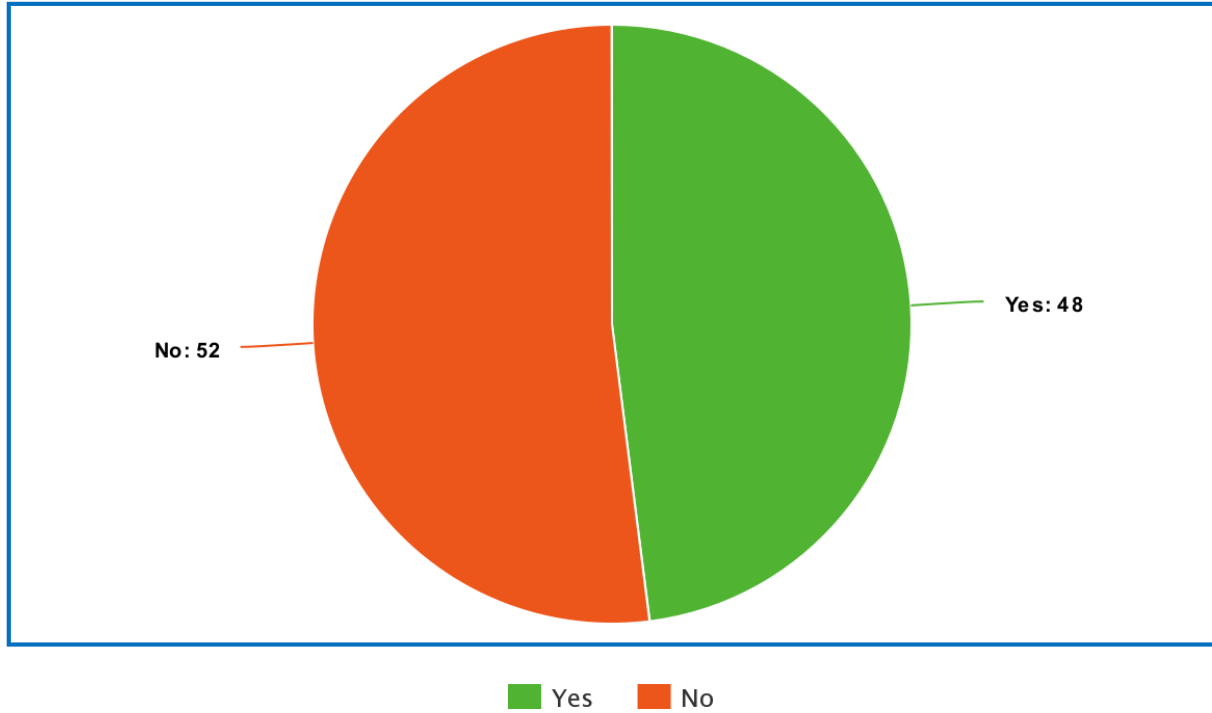
Fig. 5: Breakdown of survey responses to the amount of tutoring sessions per week

5. The number of tutoring sessions per week is?

- a. Too many (20%)
- b. Just enough (32%)
- c. Too little (58%)

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Question 2 Results



meta-chart.com

Fig. 6: Breakdown of survey responses to the satisfaction of students with the current scheduling modal.

6. Are you satisfied with the current scheduling for tutoring sessions?

a. Yes (48%)

b. No (52%)

Areas for Improvement

Suggestions on practices made by Surrey Branch Staff

According to Surrey branch employees, some suggestions they would like to see implemented include:

1. A weekly check-in system allowing volunteers to submit days of availability.
2. Scheduling to be planned on a weekly basis, rather than a month-long schedule. (This method is similar to the suggested sign-in system that is proposed in this report.)
3. One day noticed is required in order to implement a tutoring session.

Conclusion

Summary and Interpretation of Findings

Based on the findings, one-on-one sessions are the most effective learning tool in an online setting as it promotes relationship building, and better youth engagement in their learning, which has shown to improve retention of material and boost enthusiasm in learning. Based on the current system in place, it is clear that staff, student and volunteers wish to see change for a more flexible system that provides all parties with the plasticity they need in order to make the program as successful as possible. Such changes include a week-by-week or day-by-day scheduling system that promotes student and volunteer time flexibility. Additionally, staff wish to lay down ground rules on scheduling and cancellation of tutoring sessions in order to maintain order in the scheduling process.

Recommendations

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Based on these findings and interpretations, it is suggested that Pathways to Education adopt a sign-in system to facilitate the organization of tutoring sessions. Such would include setting up a website which will create time-blocks which will allow student and volunteers to assign times of availability. This would be open from a certain time during the day, to a certain time in the evening, allowing staff to email the finalized schedule before the start of the following day. This method will not only allow students and volunteers to establish their own schedules with more flexibility, it will also allow students to obtain the appropriate aid that they need in a particular subject. Additionally, the restructured system will ensure that staff will not need to spend extra hours hounding for volunteers or students in order to schedule an impromptu tutoring session. Thus, I believe that this system will not only benefit the needs of the student, staff and volunteers, but it will also showcase Pathways to Education as a flexible organization, willing to make change in order to better provide to the needs of their youth.

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