



Building Back Stronger - Setting the groundwork for a district-wide tutoring program

Desert Vista High School | Ahwatukee, AZ

"We greatly appreciate the relationship we have with PeerSquared that facilitates the connection between our pool of highly capable peer tutors with a segment of students needing their services in this virtual world into which we've all been thrust. I believe **PeerSquared is instrumental in the success of our Desert Vista Peer Tutoring program** given that it provides a user-friendly format that seems to have been well received by our families. Thank you for working with us."

- Mr. Michael Deignan, Principal

Why PeerSquared?

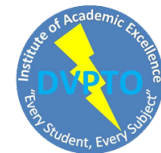
For the past nine years, Dr. Brian Johnson, a Spanish teacher at Desert Vista High School, has been building and improving his school's peer tutoring program. Dubbed the Desert Vista Peer Tutoring Organization, or DVPTO, the group of ~70 peer tutors between 9th to 12th grade assisted their peers before, during, and after school through in-person tutoring. But for the first time, it seems they might not be able to continue that tradition.

When the Tempe Union High School District announced that all schools, including Desert Vista, would be remote at the start of the 2020-21 school year, DVPTO needed a new method and medium to connect with potential tutees. At a school of 2,800 students, nearly all teachers and support staff were extremely supportive of peer tutoring. They were fully aware of the value of peer tutoring and the loss if it could not continue effectively during a time when students needed it most.

In the past, DVPTO has tried to offer online tutoring through an appointment scheduling platform for professional services. However, the platform, pricing structure, and use case simply did not align with that of an in-school peer tutoring program. Thankfully, PeerSquared's CEO, Michael Wang, had been in contact with Dr. Johnson since summer 2019. And through this relationship, it was decided that PeerSquared and Desert Vista High School would partner for the 2020-21 school year and provide our peer tutoring platform to all students, so peer tutoring could continue.



Desert Vista High School
#ThunderNation



Desert Vista Peer Tutoring
Organization

What Happened?

After a month of planning, DVPTO kicked off on August 20th, 2020 with a PeerSquared Tutor Orientation which covered the basics of online tutoring and using the tutoring platform. In total, 73 tutors participated across two Orientation sessions. When surveyed at the end, 75% of tutors said they found the Orientation helpful in preparing them to be better tutors and 87% said they would use PeerSquared's PCPR model designed to produce a more effective 30-min tutoring session.

When tutoring launched the following week, DVPTO began offering morning sessions from 7:30 AM to 8:30 AM, after-school sessions from 3:30 PM to 4:30 PM, and evening sessions from 4:30 PM to 10:00 PM. At one point, through the combined generosity of the tutors, DVPTO had the capacity to deliver 250 30-min sessions per week! PeerSquared contributed heavily to promoting peer tutoring through non-traditional channels such as the local Ahwatukee Facebook groups and social media in general. In the analysis on peer tutoring in the first quarter, 72 sessions were completed with an average satisfaction of 4.41/5.00 and nearly 60% of tutees coming back for a second session.

With what we gathered from the first quarter, PeerSquared and DVPTO began new initiatives to reach more students in the second quarter. Because of the overwhelming supply, DVPTO began to offer its services to nearby Akimel A-ai and Altadeña Middle School of Kyrene School District plus four other high schools in the Tempe Union High School District. During the expansion from November 2020 and February 2021, PeerSquared made various contributions to help the schools promote peer tutoring to new audiences through planning and designing social media outreaches, producing assets for the schools' websites, and participating in a "peer tutoring open house" for middle school parents. And in order to also increase tutee retention, PeerSquared began a "Student Success" initiative focused on understanding how students arrived at peer tutoring and sending email reminders to new users to complete their registration and book a first session.







Promotional flyer for Mountain Pointe High School


What was the Impact?

Though it may have arisen out of necessity, as online peer tutoring made its rounds across the Tempe Union High School District, many more school admins and district personnel became interested in the idea of a district-wide peer tutoring program. In March 2021, students began to join the "Tempe Union Peer Tutoring Program" as students from 5 out of the district's 7 schools came together in a never-before-seen community of learners to assist one another.

This past year was also a strong demonstration that online peer tutoring can still be very effective under guidance and continuous evaluation:

 **73 tutors**
 **164 tutees**
 **388 sessions**

✓ **73% of teachers noticed improved grades** 

✓ **50% of teachers noticed increased classroom engagement** 

For the 164 students who received tutoring through this program, many of them saw this resource as a lifeline to their tough homework questions and anxious test preparations. Though the number of students reached was ultimately lower than pre-pandemic, the foundations have been laid for peer tutoring to become even more accessible in the future.

Looking ahead to the 2021-22 school year, Tempe Union High School District has embraced the idea of a district-wide peer tutoring program and is anticipating 200 peer tutors serving approximately 6,000 students both in-person and virtually.



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About PeerSquared

PeerSquared is a public benefit corporation whose mission is to improve K-12 education through the power of students and their community. Just like in this program, PeerSquared builds peer tutoring programs where trained peer tutors provide relatable and effective academic support for students at or close to their age. Programs built by PeerSquared emphasize accessibility, sustainability, and systematic integration to improve grades and engagement.

Visit peer-squared.info to learn more.

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