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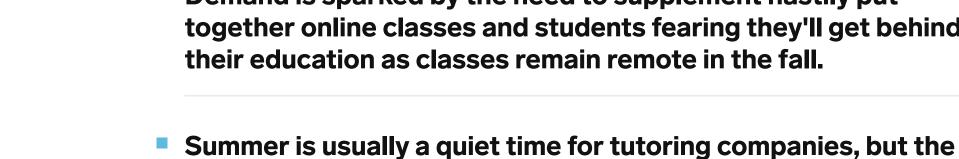
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## Private tutoring companies have seen demand for their services soar through the summer as parents fear their kids $f(\boxtimes)(\cdots)$

Kseniya Ovchinnikova/Getty Images Tutoring companies like eTutorWorld, TutorMe, and Tutor.com have seen increases in purchases for their online tutoring services during the pandemic. Demand is sparked by the need to supplement hastily put together online classes and students fearing they'll get behind in their education as classes remain remote in the fall.

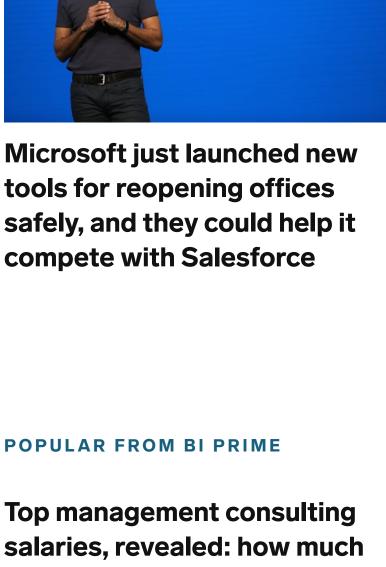


- number of new customers at eTutorWorld increased by 43% from the first quarter of 2020 to the second quarter. Teachers and experts warn that the rise in tutoring services will create a learning gap between wealthy and low-income families.
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Bea Lennon said school had already been challenging for her 17year-old daughter when the pandemic hit. She's dyslexic, and learning Algebra remotely among a class of 30 students proved to be impossible.

So far, Lennon has paid \$409 for 20 one-hour sessions.

her," she said.

kids' school learning.

meet that demand.

"Math is really hard for her. Doing it online was the worst," said

eTutorWorld to help her daughter with Algebra over the summer.

"It's a lot of money, but I don't have a choice. It seems to be helping

As parents grow concerned about the quality of a hastily assembled

online education, many of those like Lennon who can afford it are

hiring online tutors from private companies to supplement their

Lennon, who lives in Portsmouth, Virginia. So she hired a tutor from

**COVID-19 fuels a growing market** According to a June report by market insights and analysis company Research and Markets, analysts predict that the US private

tutoring market will grow by \$7.37 billion by 2023. A July report by

examining the market impact of COVID-19 also indicated that the

global market for private tutoring, currently estimated at \$173.4

TutorMe, an online tutoring platform for high school and college

students that provides 10,000 tutors available on demand in over

marketing research publisher Global Industry Analysts, Inc.

billion, is projected to reach \$279.3 billion by 2027.

300 subjects, has seen a 300% increase in users since mid-March, the company reported. "We're seeing demand from parents across the board to get that one-

He added that the company is continually onboarding tutors to

on-one support," said Myles Hunter, TutorMe's CEO and cofounder.

Tutor.com, which partners with institutions like school districts, universities, and libraries to offer tutoring services, similarly

conducted over 457,000 tutoring sessions from March through June

— a 40% increase over the same period in 2019, according to Sandi

"Not every parent is an expert in Algebra," White said . "We were one

During a time of transition and disruption, she added that tutors

built student confidence. "They feel there's someone to help them

Business in the summer, which is often a quieter time for tutoring

companies, continues to be brisk. Megan Stubbendeck, managing

director at ArborBridge, which provides tutoring to roughly 1,500

students a year, said with camps and summer jobs cancelled,

parents "need to fill students' time and they're doing that with

She said that tutors are constantly looking for ways to keep their

students engaged by finding an interest in their personal lives and

The momentum continues off season

White, Tutor.com's vice president and general manager.

of those resources they felt they could turn to."

and encourage them," she said.

private tutoring online."

then bringing that into the tutoring session. For example, if a student is interested in a video game, the tutor could assign an essay exercise to research the game's production, history, and links to

other games to help the student practice academic research or

Teachers, she said "are trying hard," but she argues that it's difficult to retrofit an in-person learning environment "into something it wasn't built to do."

Mukul Agrawal, CEO and cofounder of eTutorWorld, agrees.

we are filling that gap," he said.

Teachers, he said, are not trained in remote learning, which he

argues isn't designed to work well in a large classroom setting. "So

The number of new customers at eTutorWorld increased by 43%

**Read more:** Wealthy parents are paying to have their kids homeschooled by professionals for up to 5 hours a day, and it shows how the pandemic is widening the gaps in America's education system

use of paid services — Andrew Bacher-Hicks, one of the authors, said he believes the results would be similar for tutoring.

high school students. Her nonprofit has 2,000 volunteers — from high school students to retirees — providing on-demand online tutoring. The number of students requesting tutor sessions jumped from 450 at the end of February to 900 at the end of June, and students are

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writing skills. They may also use math puzzles, spelling games, and interactive virtual science experiments that resemble the experience of an interactive science museum to make learning fun. Stubbendeck pointed to a recent study indicating that the typical summer learning loss will be more pronounced as a result of the migration to online learning.

from the first quarter of 2020 to the second quarter. He believes summer tutoring requests are driven in part by student and parent concerns about falling behind and not knowing when their schools will resume in-person interactions. Tutoring companies anticipate they'll remain busy, as major

recently announced plans to continue remote learning into the fall.

**Tutoring brings benefits but also promotes** 

Jackie Meier, who teaches math to seventh graders at Power Middle

teaching math online. She believes that tutors can provide valuable

Meeting one on one online with the 125 students she teaches "isn't

realistic," she said. At the same time, the situation has amplified a

"Some families can afford to provide their kids extra support and

some cannot, and so the achievement gap continues to increase,"

School in Farmington Hills, Michigan, said it's been challenging

personalized instruction during a time when students lack in-

Bracing for the continued demand, some tutoring companies are

districts, including those in Los Angeles and San Diego, have

planning to bring on more tutors; White expects to increase

Tutor.com's staff from 3,400 to 4,000 tutors by the fall.

inequality

she said.

during COVID-19.

person contact with their teachers.

long-festering issue of inequality.

Tutoring services aren't cheap. The fees for eTutorWorld range from \$20 to \$25 an hour, and Agrawal said the most common purchase is

10 hours of tutoring. Meanwhile, TutorMe tutors charge \$26 an hour,

while ArborBridge charges \$145 to \$160 an hour — but Stubbendeck

said that pro bono programs are available to families that need it

and that the company has doubled its number of these programs

A July 16 study released through the Annenberg Institute at Brown

University using high-frequency internet search data to determine

use of online resources once schools closed found more search

intensity in wealthier areas with better internet access. Though

these were primarily free resources — and the study didn't explore

Ethan Hutt, an assistant professor with the School of Education at

"Wealthy families will have access to enrichment. We'll for sure see

growing achievement gaps," he said. A June report by McKinsey &

Company found that learning loss amidst COVID-19 will likely be

the greatest among low-income Black and Hispanic students.

One nonprofit hopes to fill the learning

To address this problem, Aly Murray founded UPchieve in 2018,

which provides free tutoring in math and science to low-income

the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, said the current

situation will exacerbate existing inequalities.

gap with free service

"is about to get a lot worse."

asking for longer sessions, she said. She's hoping to work with thousands more students in the fall but

said she can only handle so many. She said that she hopes that as

the for-profit companies continue to see a surge in business that

they provide more free services to low-income students. Otherwise,

with limited options for free tutoring, she said, the opportunity gap

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