



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
CONTACT: Jeanette Kennedy
650-255-7611 or jkc_kennedy@yahoo.com

ALL STUDENTS MATTER DELIVERED INCREASED HOURS OF INDIVIDUALIZED TUTORING TO RAVENSWOOD STUDENTS DURING DISTANCE LEARNING

MENLO PARK, CA (June 15, 2021) - All Students Matter (ASM), a nonprofit devoted to working with the Ravenswood City School District to support educational equity and the success of students in East Palo Alto and eastern Menlo Park, has completed a successful year of providing individualized online tutoring to elementary school students who were distance learning from home. ASM was able to increase its average hours per teacher to support Ravenswood students with more one-on-one, individualized support than before the Covid-19 outbreak.

With campuses in the Ravenswood school district closed due to the pandemic from March 2020 until April 2021, students spent over a year in distance learning. ASM quickly adapted its in-classroom tutoring programs into an online format. In partnership with teachers, ASM's nearly 200 tutors worked with their students during school hours in online breakout rooms as well as outside of class time. The focus was on literacy, utilizing online books the student-tutor pairs could share on their screens. Overall, ASM's volunteers supported 45 teachers, providing 255 hours of tutoring every week for over 14,500 tutoring sessions to more than 450 students.

In ASM's annual survey, teacher responses emphasized individual attention for students and said it was more important than ever during distance learning. "The volunteers gave the students additional one-on-one time that they did not get as much of during distance learning," one teacher said. Another stated, "The ASM volunteers provided more support all around, they were another adult for our students to bond with and receive individualized attention from."

Students in the Ravenswood school district overcame numerous challenges this year. Many were learning from homes where siblings in the same room were also logged into their online classes and where internet bandwidth was low or intermittent. Some used phones instead of computers to complete school work. These and other challenges led to high absenteeism. Despite this, the students were resilient and determined in their efforts to connect with their tutors.

The experience of one ASM volunteer shows the flexibility and grit shown by many of the students. "My 2nd grade student Olivia was sometimes responsible during the school

day for taking care of her 2-year-old sibling. Sometimes when she was scheduled to read with me, she'd have to manage both tasks at once. She found creative solutions like inviting her sibling to sit in her lap during our tutoring session and listen to her read aloud to me," said long-time volunteer and Menlo Park resident Kerrin Meinhardt. Olivia's mother saw a real difference in her reading skills over the school year, telling Ms. Meinhardt in email, "Thank you for working with my daughter. I see the difference in her reading. She is more comfortable reading different types of books and she will now challenge herself to read more books that are at a harder level."

ASM volunteers showed flexibility and creativity in supporting teachers and students this year. Ms. Meinhardt, for example, joined her teacher on campus to sort leveled books and assemble monthly take-home packets for each student. Some volunteers discovered tools that worked well during online tutoring sessions and shared the techniques with others. For instance, volunteer Archana Patel of Atherton trained ASM volunteers on using an online whiteboard so students could write or type on their screens to practice spelling new words.

While ASM volunteer tutors always partner with teachers, new this year was the need to connect with parents in order to work with students outside of class hours. This new approach was led by ASM's Bilingual Family Liaison Fernanda Jiménez who focused on parent outreach throughout the year. Ms. Jiménez explained and set up tutoring sessions and helped troubleshoot technology and scheduling issues. With her help, about 25% of ASM volunteers were able to work with students outside of classroom hours when doing so during online classroom time was not possible. Ms. Jiménez's bilingual skills enabled her to connect easily with families so that their students could receive extra hours of targeted literacy support. Parents expressed many positive comments about the value Ms. Jiménez's work and of the tutoring their students subsequently received.

Volunteers were highly motivated to help students during the challenges of distance learning. "We saw more volunteers than ever take on multiple assignments and we provided increased tutoring hours per teacher. This was particularly important in helping to address learning loss that can result from the distance learning model schools employed most of the year," said Angie Holman, Executive Director of ASM. "We are thrilled to have over 30 volunteers who will continue to support and mentor their students throughout the summer, as an informal program through ASM."

About All Students Matter: Inspired by the belief that every child deserves an equal opportunity to learn, All Students Matter (ASM) has been sending trained volunteers to classrooms in the Ravenswood district since 2008 to help improve students' academic performance and self-confidence. ASM is unique because volunteers support the same teacher and students each week throughout the school year at no cost to the school district. ASM's dedicated, trained volunteers are a consistent, caring presence in the lives of the children they support. In Ravenswood City School District, about 60% of the students are English learners, about 90% are low income, and over 40% are in unstable housing or considered homeless. ASM supports students facing these challenges.
www.allstudentsmatter.org

###