

# ESSA Evidence Standards

## Understanding the Opportunities



Title I Professional Learning Institute

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# Today's presentation will provide an overview of

- Analysis of ESSA evidence standards
- ESSA's approach to evidence
  - Title I evidence requirements
  - Evidence tiers
  - Non-regulatory evidence guidance
- Using ESSA evidence standards in planning

# RAND analysis of ESSA evidence standards



## School Leadership Interventions Under the Every Student Succeeds Act

Volume 1—A Review of the Evidence Base: Initial Findings

Authors: Susan M. Grunert, Jeffrey C. Dwyer, and David...

**Key findings**

- Evidence base for school leadership interventions is limited and of low quality.
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The RAND Center for Education has analyzed the evidence base for school leadership interventions under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). This report provides an initial review of the evidence base for school leadership interventions under ESSA. The evidence base is limited and of low quality. The evidence base for school leadership interventions is limited and of low quality. The evidence base for school leadership interventions is limited and of low quality.

- RAND operationalized ESSA evidence standards in 2016 evidence review on principals (first to do so)
- RAND compared NCLB and ESSA evidence requirements (Appendix C in review)

[http://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR1550-2.html](http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1550-2.html)

# ESSA approach to evidence

- Evidence requirements for school improvement activities
- Minimum evidence requirements required
- Flexibility for states to set higher evidence requirements
- State exemptions from evidence requirements

# ESSA Title I evidence requirements

- LEA must develop for identified schools a plan to improve student outcomes that “includes evidence-based interventions”
- Title I, Section 1003 (School Improvement) limited to Tiers I-III (not Tier IV)

# ESSA: Definition of evidence-based (1)

## (21) **EVIDENCE-BASED.**—

(A) *IN GENERAL.*—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the term “evidence-based”, when used with respect to a State, local educational agency, or school activity, means an **activity, strategy, or intervention** that—

(i) demonstrates a **statistically significant effect** on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes based on—

(I) **strong** evidence from **at least 1 well-designed and well-implemented** experimental study;

(II) **moderate** evidence from at least 1 well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study; or

(III) **promising** evidence from at least 1 well designed and well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias; or...

# ESSA: Definition of evidence-based (2)

*(ii)(I) demonstrates a **rationale** based on **high quality research findings or positive evaluation** that such activity, strategy, or intervention is likely to improve student outcomes or other relevant outcomes; and*

*(II) includes **ongoing efforts to examine the effects** of such activity, strategy, or intervention.*

*(B) DEFINITION FOR SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES FUNDED UNDER THIS ACT.—When used with respect to interventions or improvement activities or strategies funded under section 1003 [Title I], the term “evidence-based” means a State, local educational agency, or school activity, strategy, or intervention that meets the requirements of subclause (I), (II), or (III) of subparagraph (A)(i).*

*[Sec 8101 (21) (A) (i) p. 289-90]*

# Tiers of evidence in ESSA

## Tier I (Strong)

- At least one well-designed and well-implemented experimental study (RCT)

## Tier II (Moderate)

- At least one well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental design (QED)

## Tier III (Promising)

- At least one well-designed and well-implemented correlational study controlling for selection bias

## Tier IV

- High-quality research suggesting activity is likely to improve student or other relevant outcomes
- Ongoing evaluation



# Not ESSA evidence

Design	Definition
<b>No Intervention</b>	
Descriptive statistics	Statistical analysis of patterns in data (e.g., levels of principal attrition over time, variation in principal value added scores)
Case study	Cases are purposefully selected to represent a construct (e.g., “effective turnaround principals”, “autonomous schools”); analysis aims to identify common patterns within or across cases; may include comparative case studies
Instrument development or validation	Analysis are used to create, revise, or validate a tool (e.g., a principal evaluation process)
<b>No Systematic Analysis of Evidence</b>	
Anecdote	The author provides an example or story illustrating positive results.
Policy analysis	Describes or analyzes policies as written, intended, or implemented; does not examine impact of policies

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# ED non-regulatory evidence guidance

	ESSA Legislation	Evidence Guidance	Guidance Source
Study size	Does not refer to sample size	Recommends large, multi-site samples	EDGAR, WWC
Context	Does not indicate whether study context matters	Recommends that sample and setting overlap with proposed site	Not specified
Flawed studies	Requires “well-designed and well-implemented” studies, but does not discuss how to handle flaws	Includes—but downgrades—somewhat flawed RCTs	WWC
Relevant outcomes	Does not specify eligible outcomes	Recommends focusing on student outcomes or outcomes associated with program goals	EDGAR
Important findings	Does not mention substantively important findings	Does not mention substantively important findings	EDGAR, WWC use substantively important findings
Body of evidence	Focuses on a single positive finding	Recommends that favorable findings not be countered by unfavorable findings	EDGAR, WWC

# Using ESSA evidence standards

- New opportunities to set direction for school improvement
- ESSA definition of “evidence based” broader than NCLB
- Guidance can help policymakers use evidence effectively

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