

ESSA Levels of Evidence Worksheet

MCL 380.1280f (5) requires that by not later than January 1, 2026, the department shall publish a list of evidence-based Tier 1, class-wide elementary reading curricula and materials that are aligned with Science of Reading (SOR) methods that research has shown to improve literacy outcomes and help pupils achieve reading proficiency. Except as otherwise provided in this section, the instructional methods and curriculum resources described in this subsection must not include instructional methods or curriculum resources that minimize the importance of primarily using letter-sound information to decode or recognize unknown words, including, but not limited to, any of the uses of letter-sound information described in subsection (23)(c)(iii)(A) to (E), unless such instructional methods and curriculum resources are being used to confirm the meaning of unknown words after decoding has been attempted.

Overview

The ESSA tiers of evidence from the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) establish a rigorous four-tier framework for evaluating the strength of evidence supporting effective educational programs or practices. This framework is designed to guide states, districts, and schools in identifying curricular resources with proven efficacy where the robustness of research methodologies corresponds to higher evidence tiers. Materials that achieve higher-tier ratings offer increased assurance of their effectiveness. The following five factors support the determination of ESSA-level evidence.

- Study Design
- Results of the Study
- Findings from Related Studies
- Sample Size and Setting
- Match

This worksheet is based on what rigorous research indicates is the most effective way to teach reading and supports vendors in submitting ESSA-level evidence. In addition, the worksheet will guide the Curriculum and Materials Review Team (CMRT) in determining evidence for vendor submissions. The information submitted in this worksheet and the submitted research study will be reviewed to verify research quality.

Vendor Submission Information:

1. Vendors will complete the ESSA Level Evidence Worksheet (below). The selection of the ESSA Level Tier must match the submission of literacy materials. If multiple literacy programs are submitted, a separate worksheet for each submission must be included.
2. Vendors will self-select the ESSA level tier.
3. Vendors must include clear and comprehensive evidence for the tier selected. This includes research studies and evidence with the program materials. Vendors may link evidence to this worksheet for ease of access.
4. The Curriculum and Materials Review Team (CMRT) will review and verify the Tier selection and the evidence submitted to determine the final ESSA Level Tier.
5. For support, please visit <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/referenceresources/WWC-Standards-Handbook-v4-1-508.pdf>

Application Information

Name of Publisher

Product Title and Edition:

Publication Year:

Demonstrating ESSA Evidence

Vendors will select which ESSA Level they request review by checking the box. Vendors will respond to each of the five factors in the ESSA Level Tier Box

The **ESSA tiers of evidence** from the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) classify educational practices and programs as “tiers” based on the strength and quality of evidence supporting their effectiveness. These tiers guide educators in selecting evidence-based strategies for improving student outcomes. Based on the validity statement and research narrative submitted by the vendor, each program will be evaluated using the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Framework and demonstrated tiers of evidence per the bullet points below. Detailed and clear evidence must be provided to support the Committee for Literacy Achievement in verifying the self-reported score. Literacy series and materials will be given a score based on their tier level in accordance with the evidence provided. Direct links or resources that provide the most evidence supporting the rubric criteria will support the review process and help to substantiate the claimed score.

ESSA Levels of Evidence:

- Tier 1: Strong Evidence
- Tier 2: Moderate Evidence
- Tier 3: Promising Evidence
- Tier 4: Demonstrates a Rationale*

The Committee for Literacy Achievement prioritizes ESSA Tiers 1-3 levels of evidence because Section 35a (2) requires priority be given to series that already have a history of increasing student outcomes.

**An ESSA Tier 4 level of evidence indicates that the literacy series and materials do not yet have evidence of increasing student literacy outcomes and therefore will not be scored for that factor.*

Tier 1 Strong Evidence:

Tier 1 includes strategies and programs with high-quality randomized control trials (RCTs) or quasi-experimental designs showing statistically significant positive effects on student achievement.

Factor	Vendor Check Box	Committee Reviewer Notes
<p>Study Design At least one well-designed and well-implemented experimental study (e.g., a randomized control trial, meets peer review requirements).</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Study or studies are provided. Links provided are not behind a firewall.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The study was designed to support the program submitted by the vendor.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The study used a randomized control trial and meets peer review requirements. The vendor has identified where to find this in the study.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Narrative provided on study design.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Study or studies are provided. Links provided are not behind a firewall.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The study was designed to support the program submitted by the vendor.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The study used a randomized control trial and meets peer review requirements. The vendor has identified where to find this in the study.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Narrative provided on study design.</p>
<p>Results of the Study Show a statistically significant and positive (i.e., favorable) effect of the program on a student outcome or other relevant outcome.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Vendor outlines the statistical significance of the study (identifying pages is acceptable).</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Vendor outlines the statistical significance of the study (identifying pages is acceptable).</p>
<p>Findings from related studies Not be overridden by statistically significant and negative (i.e., unfavorable) evidence on the same program in other studies.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Vendor provides additional studies.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The studies provided are directly related to the program submission.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Studies share favorable results that indicate a compelling likelihood to increase literacy outcomes.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Vendor provides additional studies.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The studies provided are directly related to the program submission.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Studies share favorable results that indicate a compelling likelihood to increase literacy outcomes.</p>
<p>Sample Size and Setting Have a large sample (at least 350 participants) in more than one district or school. Michigan schools are a preferred example.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Vendor shows the sample size.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Vendor shares sample sizes that include multiple districts/Schools in Michigan.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Vendor shows the sample size.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Vendor shares sample sizes that include multiple districts/Schools in Michigan.</p>

Factor	Vendor Check Box	Committee Reviewer Notes
<p>Match Have a sample that overlaps with the populations in Michigan (i.e., the types of students served) AND settings (e.g., rural, urban) proposed to receive the program.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Vendor establishes that the sample overlaps in Michigan.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Vendor outlines the specific settings served in the study</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Vendor establishes that the sample overlaps in Michigan.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Vendor outlines the specific settings served in the study</p>

Tier 2 Moderate Evidence:

Tier 2 covers programs with well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental studies or correlational studies showing a positive effect with moderate evidence.

Factor	Vendor Check Box	Committee Reviewer Notes
<p>Study Design At least one well-designed and - implemented quasi-experimental study (uses control or experimental groups, but the design may have a partial or total lack of random assignment to groups (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Study or studies are provided. Links provided are not behind a firewall.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The study was designed to support the program submitted by the vendor.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Vendor has identified where to find this in the study.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Narrative provided on study design.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Study or studies are provided. Links provided are not behind a firewall.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The study was designed to support the program submitted by the vendor.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Vendor has identified where to find this in the study.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Narrative provided on study design.</p>
<p>Results of the Study Show a statistically significant and positive (i.e., favorable) effect of the program on a student outcome or other relevant outcome.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Vendor outlines the statistical significance of the study (identifying pages is acceptable).</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Vendor outlines the statistical significance of the study (identifying pages is acceptable).</p>

Factor	Vendor Check Box	Committee Reviewer Notes
<p>Findings from related studies Not be overridden by statistically significant and negative (i.e., unfavorable) evidence on the same program in other studies.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Vendor provides additional studies.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The studies provided are directly related to the program submission.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Studies share favorable results that indicate a promising likelihood to increase literacy outcomes.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Vendor provides additional studies.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The studies provided are directly related to the program submission.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Studies share favorable results that indicate a promising likelihood to increase literacy outcomes.</p>
<p>Sample Size and Setting Have a large sample (at least 350 participants) in more than one district or school. Michigan schools are a preferred example.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Vendor shows the sample size.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Vendor shares samples sizes that include multiple districts/Schools in Michigan..</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Vendor shows the sample size.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Vendor shares samples sizes that include multiple districts/Schools in Michigan.</p>
<p>Match Have a sample that overlaps with the populations in Michigan (i.e., the types of students served) AND settings (e.g., rural, urban) proposed to receive the program.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Vendor establishes that the sample overlaps in Michigan</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Vendor outlines the specific settings served in the study</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Vendor establishes that the sample overlaps in Michigan</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Vendor outlines the specific settings served in the study</p>

Tier 3: Promising Evidence

Tier 3 evidence under ESSA indicates that an intervention shows promising effectiveness based on at least one study, though the evidence may not be as robust as Tier 1 or Tier 2. The studies are typically well-designed but may lack larger sample sizes or broad replication. It suggests potential positive effects on student outcomes, but the evidence is still developing.

Factor	Vendor Check Box	Committee Reviewer Notes
<p>Study Design Well-designed and implemented correlational study, statistically controls for selection bias.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Study or studies are provided. Links provided are not behind a firewall.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The study was designed to support the program submitted by the vendor.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Study or studies are provided. Links provided are not behind a firewall.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The study was designed to support the program submitted by the vendor.</p>

Factor	Vendor Check Box	Committee Reviewer Notes
	<input type="checkbox"/> Vendor has identified where to find this in the study. <input type="checkbox"/> Narrative provided on study design.	<input type="checkbox"/> Vendor has identified where to find this in the study. <input type="checkbox"/> Narrative provided on study design.
Results of the Study Show a statistically significant and positive (i.e., favorable) effect of the program on a student outcome or other relevant outcome.	<input type="checkbox"/> Vendor outlines the statistical significance of the study (identifying pages is acceptable).	<input type="checkbox"/> Vendor outlines the statistical significance of the study (identifying pages is acceptable).
Findings from related studies Not be overridden by statistically significant and negative (i.e., unfavorable) evidence on the same program in other studies.	<input type="checkbox"/> Vendor provides additional studies. <input type="checkbox"/> The studies provided are directly related to the program submission. <input type="checkbox"/> Studies share favorable results, but the likelihood to increase literacy outcomes is unclear.	<input type="checkbox"/> Vendor provides additional studies. <input type="checkbox"/> The studies provided are directly related to the program submission. <input type="checkbox"/> Studies share favorable results, but the likelihood to increase literacy outcomes is unclear.
Sample Size and Setting	N/A.	N/A.
Match	N/A.	N/A.

The evidence worksheet was based on the Colorado Department of Education’s Evidence Worksheet.

Resources

- Overview video provided ([Understanding the ESSA Levels of Evidence](#)) to ensure understanding
- Aligning Evidence-Based Clearinghouses with ESSA Levels (Tiers) via REL Midwest: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/midwest/pdf/eventhandout/ESSA-Clearinghouse-Crosswalk-Jan2018-508.pdf>
- Adapted from the Colorado Department of Education. (2023). *ESSA Level Evidence Worksheet*. Retrieved from: [https://www.cde.state.co.us/fedprograms/evidence_based_interventions#:~:text=ESSA%20outlines%20of%20levels%20of,8101\(2 1\)\(A\)](https://www.cde.state.co.us/fedprograms/evidence_based_interventions#:~:text=ESSA%20outlines%20of%20levels%20of,8101(2%201)(A))