Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
Evidence and Federal Funds

CEO Institute

August 17, 2018
Session Objectives

1. Describe the purpose of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) as it relates to federal funded interventions
2. Learn how City Schools and MSDE interpret ESSA and how implementation can affect various stakeholders
3. Understand the ESSA evidence levels and their funding implications
4. Leave with awareness of resources and processes to secure ESSA evidence level determination
What is ESSA?

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into federal law on December 10, 2015. It replaced the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 and updates accountability requirements for states and districts. ESSA requires that all federal funds (Title I, CSI/Priority, grant funds) only be used to fund evidence-based interventions.
Why the change?

• ESSA requires states and districts to use evidence-based interventions - activities, strategies, programs, and interventions that have been scientifically shown to move student achievement.

• Doing so will lead to stronger student outcomes at more reasonable costs, since activities are more likely to be successful with specific populations.

• Past practices may have chosen programs with uncertain or even negative outcomes for students and schools.
ESSA Evidence-Based Interventions - Definition

This is a new term that is defined within ESSA as an activity, strategy, or intervention which:

- (i) demonstrates a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes based on [one of three levels of evidence, or]
- (ii) 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 includes ongoing efforts to examine the effects of such activity, strategy, or intervention.
ESSA Evidence Levels – Completed Studies

Level 1: Strong Evidence
- At least 1 well-designed and well-implemented experimental study (i.e. randomized) links the intervention to the outcome.

Level 2: Moderate Evidence
- At least 1 well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study (i.e. matched) links the intervention to the outcome.

Level 3: Promising Evidence
- At least 1 well-designed and well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias links the intervention to the outcome.
Level 4: Demonstrates a Rationale

• Provides a **logic model/theory of action** that is research-based

• An **effort to study the effects** of the intervention is happening either as part of this intervention or is underway elsewhere

None: No Rating

• Does not meet any of the other levels of evidence
## What Level of Evidence is Needed for Title I Funding?

### CSI/Priority Title I Funds
- Must have a completed study
- Study showed a **statistically significant** effect between an intervention and control group
- Design of study must take into account demographic differences between groups
- Meets ESSA Evidence Levels 1 (Strong Evidence), 2 (Moderate Evidence), or 3 (Promising Evidence)

### All Other Title I Funds or Other Federal Funds
- Must have a completed study or a study in process
- MSDE **strongly encourages** use of activities with a completed study (Levels 1 – 3)
- If a study is in process, then OAA must have documentation that the study is in process (e.g., Institutional Research Board (IRB) approval, contract with an evaluation firm, research design with identified researchers)
- If a study is in process, then a research-based rationale or logic model must exist that suggests the intervention is likely to improve a student outcome
- Meets ESSA Evidence Levels 1 (Strong Evidence), 2 (Moderate Evidence), 3 (Promising Evidence) or 4 (Demonstrates a Rationale)

### Other Funds
- Other funding sources may have ESSA evidence level requirements (including most federal grants)
- No ESSA Evidence Level requirement unless specifically stated by the fund source
City Schools' ESSA Evidence Process Overview

Consult City Schools' ESSA Evidence Catalog

If **IN** Catalog and **MEETS** level:
- Eligible

If **IN** Catalog but does **NOT MEET** level:
- Either school must select new vendor/intervention
  - OR
  - if vendor has updated evidence have them submit to **essaevidence@bcps.k12.md.us**

If **NOT IN** Catalog:
- Either school must select new vendor/intervention
  - OR
  - have vendor submit evidence to **essaevidence@bcps.k12.md.us**
City Schools ESSA Evidence Catalog

- OAA has developed a City Schools ESSA Evidence Catalog.
- This is available on City Schools’ website and will be updated frequently.
- When reviews are completed, OAA completes and shares the ESSA Evidence Review Confirmation with the vendor.
- Existing reviews can be requested by e-mailing essaevidence@bcps.k12.md.us. Please provide the name of the vendor and product in question.
ESSA in action: Examples

Three principals want to implement a literacy tutoring intervention in a district middle school using Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) grant funds. All vendor products are Board approved and match the scope of the proposed service and population.

- Principal A wants to use a vendor called LEARN and a program called "Read with Me."
- Principal B wants to use a vendor called Book Worms and a product called “Reading & Leading."
- Principal C wants to use a vendor called Reading Down the Street.
ESSA in action: Vendor Steps

All vendors should first consult the City Schools ESSA Evidence Catalog to see if their company and chosen program had already been reviewed and given a level by OAA.

- **LEARN**’s "Read with Me" is in the Catalog as a level 2. The service can be purchased.

- **Book Worms’** "Reading and Leading" is not initially in the Catalog, and the vendor then provides OAA their logic model and the plan for a current study in progress for “Reading & Leading." OAA grants a level 4 for the program. Services cannot be purchased with CSI funds, but general Title I funds can be used.

- **Reading Down the Street** is not in the Catalog, and currently has no plan to study their effectiveness and has no data collected. If submitted to OAA, OAA would grant **No Rating** for the program. Services can only be purchased with non-federal dollars (e.g., general funds, outside grants, etc.), and principals might look elsewhere.
How Vendors Submit Requests

- All requests for reviewing an intervention need to be submitted to essaevidence@bcps.k12.md.us
- Complete submissions will be reviewed within 2 weeks of submission
- The submission must include:
  - The name of the vendor and the product
  - The evidence. Examples include:
    - Links to existing reviews on a clearinghouse, such as Evidence for ESSA (https://www.evidenceforessa.org/) or the What Works Clearinghouse (https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/).
    - Completed studies.
    - The logic model/theory of action of the intervention, as well as documentation of an in-progress study (examples include Institutional Research Board (IRB) approval, contract with an evaluation firm, or a research design with identified researchers).
    - Requests that do not have any accompanying evidence will receive a level of No Evidence and therefore not be eligible for federal (including Title I) funding.
Procurement Implications

- Just because a vendor is Board approved does not automatically mean that the intervention can use Title funds or other federal funds.
  - City Schools is in the process of including ESSA evidence level information in future Board-approved procurement items.

- Just because an intervention meets ESSA Evidence Levels does not automatically mean that the intervention meets other Procurement policies and procedures, Board approval, and other federal, state and local laws.
Procurement Implications

- Any use of Title funds or other federal funds must meet ESSA Evidence thresholds. There is no minimum amount.
  - Priority/Comprehensive Support and Improvement Funds (CSI) funds can only be spent on interventions that meet Levels 1 (Strong Evidence), 2 (Moderate Evidence) or 3 (Promising Evidence)
  - All other Title and federal funds can use Levels 1, 2, 3, or 4 (Demonstrates a Rationale), although MSDE strongly encourages the use of interventions that meet Levels 1, 2 or 3
- Approved Purchase Orders are always required before work can be performed
K12Buy Review Process

- K12Buy approval queue includes the grant manager.
- The grant manager must review every requisition charged to a grant to determine if all programmatic and compliance requirements are met.
- Title I Staff Specialists in the Office of Data Monitoring and Compliance complete this review for Title I funds.
- Review process for Title funds must include verification that the ESSA evidence-based requirement has been met.
Vendor Next Steps

• Review the City Schools ESSA Evidence Catalog for your product(s)

• If not currently listed or have updated evidence, submit evidence to OAA (essaevidence@bcps.k12.md.us)

• OAA will review within two weeks of submission
Comments or Questions?

Please contact essaevidence@bcps.k12.md.us if you have any questions, comments, or concerns.
Appendix
ESSA Evidence Review Confirmation

Vendor Name:
Product or Service Name:
Component:
Target Groups:
Description of Services:
Outcomes:
Source Type:
Source:
Study Design:

Check if Yes

Do the outcomes reviewed align with the proposed product or service?
Does the study correct for selection bias?
Does the study provide evidence of a statistically significant positive effect?
Is a study in progress? (If yes, explain below, including IRB info if appropriate)

Study in Progress Info:
ESSA Rating: (Priority Funds require a Rating of Levels 1, 2 or 3. General Title I Funds require a Rating of Levels 1, 2, 3 or 4)
☐ 1 - Strong Evidence
☐ 2 - Moderate Evidence
☐ 3 - Promising Evidence
☐ 4 - Demonstrates a Rationale
☐ No Rating - No Evidence

Evidence Comments:
Website:
Date Last Reviewed:
Reviewer:
Review Form #:

Baltimore City Public Schools
ESSA Evidence Levels – Level 1

Characteristics of a Level 1 study:

- The study had an experimental group and a control group. The students in each were randomly assigned. Only the experimental group received the activity. All conditions were otherwise identical. The experimental group saw a statistically significant positive outcome relative to the control group.

What it means: The intervention likely caused, impacted, or affected the outcome.

Signals of Level 1: Experimental testing conditions (“random assignment” “RCT” “gold standard”), strong causal language
Characteristics of a Level 2 study:

- The study had two groups. The students in each were not randomly assigned, but efforts were made to randomize. Only one group received the activity. All conditions were otherwise as identical as possible. The experimental group saw a positive outcome relative to the comparison group.

What it means: The intervention suggests, supports, or contributed to the outcome.

Signals of Level 2: Quasi-experimental testing conditions (“matching” “non-equivalent groups” “regression discontinuity”), strong suggestive language
Characteristics of a Level 3 study:

- The study did not have an experimental group and a control group. Some (or all) students received the activity based on pre-existing groupings or conditions. All other conditions that could affect the outcome were controlled for mathematically.

**What it means:** The intervention is related to, associated with, or predicts the outcome.

**Signals of Level 3:** Non-experimental testing conditions (“targeted intervention” or otherwise not stated), suggestive or relational language (“Students who received X scored Y,” without saying “X caused Y”.)
ESSA Evidence Levels – Level 4

Characteristics of a Level 4 logic model:

- The intervention has a logic model that is clear and effective, and connects the inputs to the activities and then to the outcomes, and the model is research-based. More guidance available here: https://ies.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=REL2015057

- Note that for Level 4, a study **must** also be in progress – and should meet the design requirements of Levels 1, 2, or 3. This study may be in progress with City Schools or with other district(s).

**What it means:** The intervention’s design is research-based but does not have formal evidence that it produces positive outcomes at this time.
Figure 6.1
Example Logic Model for a Schoolwide SEL Intervention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Short-term outcomes</th>
<th>Intermediate outcomes</th>
<th>Long-term outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative staff</td>
<td>Classroom instruction</td>
<td>SEL awareness</td>
<td>Increased student intrapersonal competencies</td>
<td>Improved classroom climate</td>
<td>Increased academic achievement and attainment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic staff</td>
<td>Schoolwide assemblies</td>
<td>Classroom lessons on competencies</td>
<td></td>
<td>Decreased disciplinary infractions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling staff</td>
<td>Practicing social and emotional competencies</td>
<td>Competency development opportunities</td>
<td>Increased student interpersonal competencies</td>
<td>Improved civic attitudes and behaviors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities</td>
<td>in classrooms and common areas in the school</td>
<td>Behavior modification in the classroom and other common areas in the school environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding for materials</td>
<td>Student assessment</td>
<td>Materials sent to parents on SEL skill focus at school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention materials</td>
<td>Family engagement to promote parent awareness of SEL intervention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contextual Factors: The school and classroom culture and climate may influence the quality of SEL interventions; important features of these cultures or climates are healthy relationships, instructional support, and classroom management. School discipline and academic standards may also influence SEL interventions. In addition, community norms, as well as district, state, and federal policy, may affect program implementation.

How OAA Reviews ESSA Evidence Submissions

- OAA will review the submission to determine:
  - What product or services are being reviewed – this is specific to each intervention.
    - Example: A vendor may have one program meet Level 2 requirements, and another program have No Evidence
  - Which level of evidence the program meets
  - For Levels 1 – 3, verify that there is a positive outcome and that the study is methodologically sound
  - For Level 4, documenting both the logic model/theory of action and the in-progress study
Good afternoon OAA,

My name is Jane Doe, and I am with Vendor X. Attached are our completed studies on our program, Y.

There is more information on our program at our website, http://samplewebsite

I believe this is what you are looking for but if there is anything else you may need, please do not hesitate to ask.

Thank you,
Jane Doe
Vendor X

(Attachments provided were the studies that had been completed)