SECTION 4: EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES FOR LITERACY

WHAT ARE EBPs?

Most educators want to use tools and strategies that will help their students succeed - but how do we know which ones work? EBPs are "effective educational strategies supported by evidence and research" (ESEA, 2002). When used with fidelity, EBPs are tools that educators can use to improve classroom learning. IDEA and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) require schools use programs, curricula and practices that are based in extensive, scientific research that shows their effectiveness which would allow effective implementation of an MTSS program. The research base should have a sound design, provide high-quality data and involve peer review for each program or strategy that a school uses. According to ESSA, there are four tiers of evidence that can help guide educators in choosing appropriate practices and interventions for their students:

- Strong: supported by one or more well-designed and well-implemented randomized control experimental studies.
- Moderate: supported by one or more well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental studies.
- Promising: supported by one or more well-designed and well-implemented correlational studies (with statistical controls for selection bias).
- Demonstrates a Rationale: practices that have a well-defined logic model or theory of action, are supported by research, and have some effort underway by a state education agency (SEA), LEA, or outside research organization to determine their effectiveness.

Not all research can show the causal relationship between a program and literacy outcomes, but identifying the right practices that are most likely to support your students is critical for the program's success. Exploring and knowing the research in your chosen area can help build investment in chosen practices. The table below shows databases that can support the search for EBPs. Appendix C also provides a list of strategies and approaches broken down by literacy skills.

ORGANIZATION	DESCRIPTION
What Works Clearinghouse (WWC)	The WWC website provides searchable reviews of existing research in a wide variety of areas such as mathematics, literacy, science, dropout prevention, teacher excellence and working with English learners, among others.
Evidence for ESSA	This searchable website, developed by researchers at the Center for Research and Reform in Education (CRRE) at Johns Hopkins University, reviews math and reading programs for grades K to 12 to determine which meet the strong, moderate, or promising levels of evidence.
Ideas that Work	This resource from the Department of Education shares resources to support students in reaching the College and Career Ready Standards (CCRS) through EBPs. Their site shares ideas and resources for supporting academics and social emotional wellbeing.
Florida Center for Reading Research	This resource from Florida State University hosts a database of EBPs that support reading development.

For more information on EBPs, consult the IRIS Center's EBPs Modules. The next section will discuss why EBPs are important for educators and schools.

HOW TO SELECT AND USE EBPs?

Choosing which EBP to use with the wide variety of initiatives, practices and programs can be challenging. The databases outlined in the table above are helpful for discovering practices, alongside other factors that educators must consider. When multiple practices or programs seem to meet a school's needs, educators should consider contextual factors, including the school's population, staffing availability and professional learning needs and availability. In order for the practice to be effective, teams must consider and plan for these and other important contextual factors. Attention to detail and careful selection of the right practice involves deep analysis of each program within the context of the school and district.

Once schools have selected an EPB to use, schools must establish an implementation plan for use which includes monitoring or data collection. The school's instructional leadership team should contribute to this plan and all key stakeholders should be represented in its implementation. Dates of checkpoints to measure and evaluate implementation, key considerations and details of coaching, professional learning, training and implementation must be mapped out in alignment with the school calendar. For example, teams may schedule quarterly data reviews aligned to the term schedule. At these points of review, teams will determine which key things will stay the same and which are able to be changed, what additional trainings or coaching may be needed and how the plan will evolve. The model described here is also captured in the School Improvement Cycle pictured below.
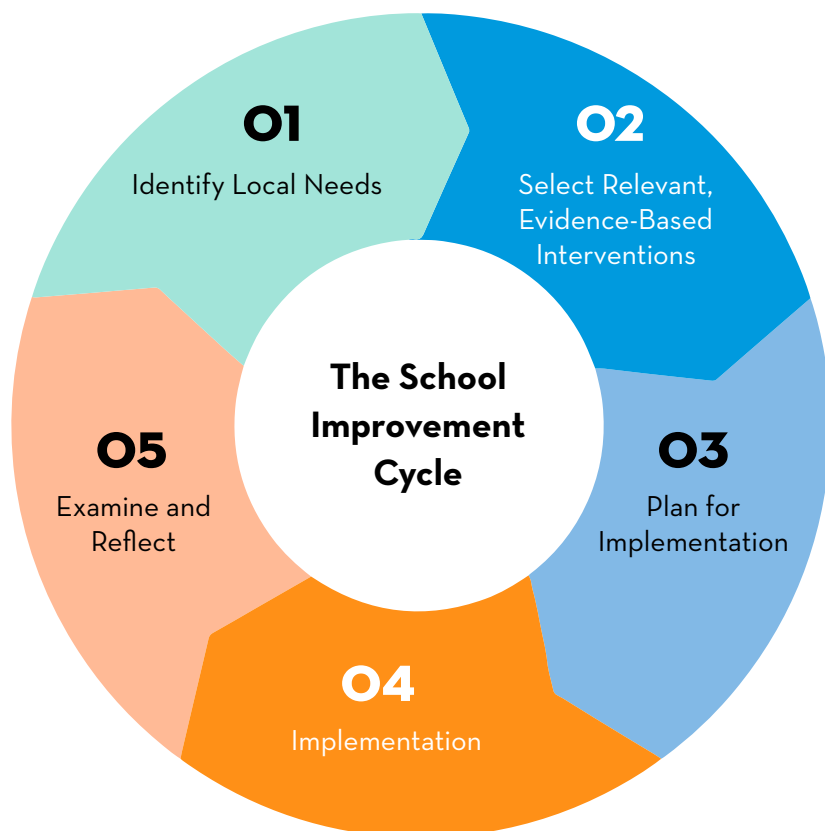
Under the ESSA, districts and schools have flexibility to choose interventions to improve student outcomes. District and school leaders are encouraged to choose evidence-based interventions that have been shown to improve student outcomes. By selecting interventions that have been rigorously studied and have improved student learning, district and school leaders increase the likelihood that student achievement will improve.

https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/midwest/pdf/blogs/RELMW-ESSA-Tiers-Video-Handout-508.pdf