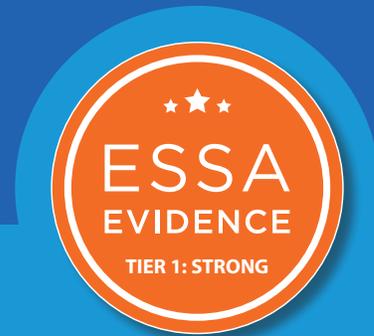


# Understanding ESSA EVIDENCE



In 2015, as part of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), Congress passed and the President enacted the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which replaced No Child Left Behind. ESSA encourages local and state educational agencies and schools to place a strong emphasis on evidence-based interventions, strategies, or approaches when purchasing and adopting solutions and services.

Within the law, evidence-based solutions are described as programs showing evidence of producing positive results on student outcomes. Specifically, the type of evidence backed by formal research and studies.

## ESSA defines four tiers of evidence:

### Tier 1—Strong:

Supported by one or more experimental studies.

### Tier 2—Moderate:

Supported by one or more quasi-experimental studies.

### Tier 3—Promising:

Supported by one or more correlational studies.

### Tier 4—Demonstrates a Rationale:

Practices that have a logic model, are supported by research, and have some effort of study underway.



**Sound Partners** is an explicit, balanced, phonics-based tutoring program that provides individual instruction in early reading skills. Using lessons specifically designed for tutors, paraprofessionals, and assistants, this research-based solution improves phonological skills, phonemic awareness, decoding, word identification, and spelling skills. **Sound Partners** also includes application of word-reading skills through storybook reading practice.



## STRONG Criteria as Defined by ESSA

## How Sound Partners Meets the Strong Criteria

- Based on strong evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented experimental study
- Demonstrates a strong and measured impact on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes

- ✓ Randomized controlled trial of students identified as benefiting from intensive additional reading instruction.
- ✓ Sample from 13 urban public schools.
- ✓ Study reported, and the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC), confirmed, positive and statistically significant effects measures of phonics, fluency, and comprehension.
- ✓ Additional studies confirm these findings.



RESEARCH  
EVIDENCE &  
RESULTS

### Published Studies:

Vadasy, P. F., & Sanders, E. A. (2011). Efficacy of Supplemental Phonics-Based Instruction for Low-Skilled First Graders: How Language Minority Status and Pretest Characteristics Moderate Treatment Response. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 15(6), 471–497.

Vadasy, P. F., & Sanders, E. A. (2010). Efficacy of supplemental phonics-based instruction for low-skilled kindergarteners in the context of language minority status and classroom phonics instruction. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 102(4), 786–803.

**Research:** [What Works Clearinghouse](#)  
[Evidence for ESSA: Struggling Readers](#)  
[Evidence for ESSA: English Learners](#)