



219 North Main Street, Suite 402
Barre, VT 05641 (p) 802-479-1030 | (f) 802-479-1835

Level of Evidence and the Arts

ESSA defines as "evidence-based" an activity, strategy, or intervention that demonstrates a statistically significant effect on improving student (or other relevant) outcomes based on strong, moderate, or promising evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented experimental or quasi-experimental study, or a rationale based on high-quality research findings or positive evaluation which suggests the intervention is likely to improve outcomes. States have flexibility to allow schools and districts to determine which evidence-based interventions are most likely to work in which contexts and with which students."

Source: Pathways to New Accountability Through the Every Student Succeeds Act 2016 (Linda Darling-Hammond, Soung Bae, Channa M. Cook-Harvey, Livia Lam, Charmaine Mercer, Anne Podolsky, and Elizabeth Leisy Stosich)

The following documents may be useful for developing an *understanding* of ESSA expectations for implementing evidence-based interventions, as well as for guiding the *selection* process:

For more information on the Level of Evidence Requirement:

- [Levels of evidence requirement](#) graphic from Results 4 America
- [Use of Levels of Evidence to Support Grant Funded Work in Schools](#) from the Vermont Agency of Education
- For more about Level of Evidence and the Arts see [Mapping Opportunities for the Arts: Tiers of Evidence](#) from Arts Education Partnership. This one-pager includes information related to the title funds with examples of arts studies.
- Full list of [Arts Ed Partnership resources](#) and one-pager summaries related to ESSA and the Arts.

Databases of arts education studies:

- [ArtsEdSearch](#) is the nation's hub for research on the impact of the arts in education. Browse research focused on the outcomes of arts education for students and educators.

Collections of studies in arts education:

- Title1arts.org offers a feature called [Identifying a Need](#). Use the matrix below to connect your school grade level and area of need. Click through on the button to see some recommended arts strategies, and the scientific research that supports them. Knowing the targeted arts strategies for your identified need will help you best utilize your arts specialist and/or choose an external partner for your schoolwide program.
- From Americans for the Arts:
The Every Student Succeed Act allows states to use multiple measures to assess school success, and state leaders are looking to measure progress. We know that factors such as school climate and culture and social and emotional learning affect both student and school success. However,

did you know that the arts can play a role in developing each of these areas? [See a summary of research](#)—you can use the arts as a strategy to improve your state’s most pressing measures of success. Studies are organized by elementary, middle, and high school and also by topics such as Student Achievement and SEL.

- [ESSA: Mapping the Opportunities for the Arts](#) from Arts Education Partnership offers an in-depth overview of the connections between the goals of ESSA and arts education as well as exemplar studies in arts education.
- From Education Commission of the States and Arts Ed Partnership, [Beyond the Core: Advancing student success through the arts](#) includes a collection of arts education studies that focus on deeper learning skills and student achievement.
- Review of Evidence: [Arts Integration Research Through the Lens of the Every Student Succeeds Act](#) from the Wallace Foundation and AIR is a comprehensive report detailing dozens of studies in arts education and how they align with the goals of ESSA and the tiers of evidence. Pages 13-18 contains opportunities for the arts within ESSA for Titles I, II, III, and IV with examples of eligible arts integration activities. Pages 25-36 display a list of studies involving students engages in arts integration that provides evidence for tiers I-IV. Appendix A, starting on page 57, provides more details about each intervention included in the review.

Individual studies in arts education:

- [Noncognitive Factors in an Elementary School-Wide Arts Integrated Model](#) found in the ArtsEdSearch database.
- This study from the ArtsEdSearch database, tested the hypothesis that the arts might provide upper-elementary students, who were still concrete thinkers, with a powerful means of envisioning phenomena that they could not directly observe. [Using arts integration to make science learning memorable in the upper elementary grades](#). This is a quasi-experimental study, which is a level 2 or moderate.
- [Investigating Causal Effects of Arts Education Experiences: Experimental Evidence from Houston's Arts Access Initiative](#). Researchers found arts-learning experiences benefit students in terms of reductions in disciplinary infractions, increases in compassion for others and improvements in writing achievement. Furthermore, arts-education experiences improve school engagement and college aspirations. More information is included in [Extra Arts Education Boosts Students' Writing Scores — and Their Compassion, Big New Study Finds as well as related studies](#).
- “Arts learning experiences benefit students in terms of social, emotional, and academic outcomes,” write researchers Dan Bowen of Texas A&M and Brian Kisida of the University of Missouri. [Investigating Causal Effects of Arts Education Experiences: Experimental Evidence from Houston’s Arts Access Initiative](#)
- [Findings from the Impact Study of Facilitated Single-Visit Art Museum Programs on Students Grades 4–6](#) is presented in a user guide containing study-related publications,

and tools designed to make the study's findings clear and accessible to a variety of audiences.

- [Study finds ensemble music programs positively affect students' character, competence](#) has found that ensemble-based musical instruction in an after school program positively affects the behavior and development of school-aged children.
- [Middle School Music and Theater Students Get Better Grades](#) states a rigorously designed, [decade-long study](#).