

Section 8601 of the Every Student Succeeds Act: Evaluation Plan for Fiscal Years 2019 and 2020 Appropriations

Institute of Education Sciences (IES)

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The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) was most recently reauthorized in December 2015 by the Every Student Succeeds Act (P.L. 114-95), also known as ESSA. Subsection (a) of Section 8601 authorizes the Secretary to reserve up to 0.5 percent from most ESEA programs to carry out evaluation activities, such as: (1) conducting comprehensive, high-quality evaluations of ESEA programs that primarily use methods to permit the strongest possible causal inferences; (2) studying the effectiveness of ESEA programs and their administrative impact on schools and districts; (3) disseminating findings from Section 8601 evaluations; (4) evaluating aggregate short- and long-term effects and cost efficiencies across ESEA programs and related Federal programs; (5) improving the quality, timeliness, efficiency, and use of information related to ESEA program performance; and (6) assisting ESEA program grantees with activities that help support the conduct of high-quality evaluations under Section 8601. In addition, Section 8601(d) of ESSA states that:

The Director of the Institute of Education Sciences, shall, on a biennial basis, develop, submit to Congress, and make publicly available an evaluation plan, that—

(1) describes the specific activities that will be carried out under subsection (a) for the 2-year period applicable to the plan, and the timelines of such activities;

(2) contains the results of the activities carried out under subsection (a) for the most recent 2-year period; and

(3) describes how programs authorized under this Act will be regularly evaluated.

This document is the third such plan submitted to Congress. This plan focuses on all evaluations to be supported by Section 8601 funds appropriated in FY 2019 and FY 2020. All evaluation plans are publicly available on IES's [website](#).

I. Planned Use of Section 8601 Evaluation Funds

Funds that are set-aside from an ESEA program under Section 8601 can be used to support evaluations related to that program. They can also be pooled with 8601 funds set-aside from other ESEA programs and then used to support a broader set of evaluations. Evaluations supported with pooled funds typically relate to multiple ESEA programs, programs whose 8601 set-aside is too small on its own to support a high-quality evaluation, or programs such as Title I that do not have an 8601 set-aside.

FY 2019: The total amount of 8601 funds from FY 2019 to be spent on evaluations is \$ 21,547,402. Of this amount, \$13,089,413 is from pooled funds and \$8,457,989 is from individual program funds. Consolidated funds appropriated in Fiscal Year 2019 are available to be obligated for evaluation activities from July 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020.

FY 2020: The total amount of 8601 funds from FY 2020 to be spent on evaluations is \$ 20,596,437. Of this amount, \$11,904,150 is from pooled funds and \$8,692,287 is from individual program funds. Consolidated funds appropriated in Fiscal Year 2020 are available to be obligated for evaluation activities from July 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021.

Table 1 lists each new evaluation activity with a brief description or continuing and recently completed evaluation activities with a link to the study's description and timeline. Estimated costs from FY 2019 and FY 2020 funds are included broken down by source. Detailed funding in fiscal year 2020 does not add up to the total at the bottom of Table 1 because funding for yet to be awarded individual contracts are not included.

Table 1. Summary of Proposed Activities and Estimated Costs

Activity Title	Fiscal Year 2019			Fiscal Year 2020		
	New or Continuing?	Pooled	Individual	New or Continuing?	Pooled	Individual
Accountability and School Improvement						
<u>Impact Study of Strategies to Accelerate Math Learning.</u> <i>Turning around low-performing schools remains a complex task, and an even greater priority in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. This study will test the effectiveness of promising improvement strategies designed to accelerate student learning in Title I schools—such as those that use innovative education technologies to supplement math instruction. The study(ies) will be conducted in a large number of sites to not only determine whether the strategies work but for which types of students and schools. This evaluation will be procured in FY 2021.</i>	-	-	-	N	*	-
<u>Trends in School- and Student-level Outcomes Based on Requirements under ESEA Title I-A.</u> <i>Accountability for school and student progress is a key element of Title I, which funds supplemental academic support and learning opportunities for approximately 25 million children. This study will use data reported by states to the Department to examine trends in academic subject proficiency and the extent to which gaps are narrowing among students with the greatest needs (e.g., low income) and their peers. The study will also examine trends for schools with the greatest needs—those implementing comprehensive and targeted support and improvement plans. This study will be procured in FY 2021.</i>	-	-	-	N	*	-
<u>Study of How Interagency Data Exchanges Support Identification of Students in Foster Care.</u> <i>Title I requires States to report on academic achievement and graduation rates separately for students in foster care. The U.S. Departments of Education and Health & Human Services (HHS) both encourage, but do not require, interagency exchanges of data on foster care child at the state and local levels. This study will investigate the administrative impact of this reporting requirement on SEAs and LEAs, including the extent to which the use of data exchanges between child welfare and education agencies may improve the effectiveness—and reduce the burden—of reporting on this important student subgroup. This study will be procured in FY 2021.</i>	-	-	-	N	*	-

Activity Title	Fiscal Year 2019			Fiscal Year 2020		
	New or Continuing?	Pooled	Individual	New or Continuing?	Pooled	Individual
Implementation of Key Federal Policies in the Wake of the Coronavirus Pandemic	N	\$1,227,466	-	-	-	-
Evaluation of Title I Pilots That Provide Flexibility Under the Every Student Succeeds Act	C	\$1,486,111	-	C	\$142,311	-
Study of School Improvement Plans and Their Implementation (formally titled: Evaluation of School Improvement under Title I of ESSA: Key Aspects of Early Implementation)	C	-	-	C	\$300,000	-
Implementation of Title I/II-A Program Initiatives	C	\$ 563,150	-	C	\$2,500,000	-
Impact Evaluation of Departmentalized Instruction in Elementary Schools	C	\$3,667,824	-	-	-	-
Teachers and Leaders						
Impact Evaluation of Teacher Residency Programs	N	-	\$2,745,989	C	-	\$3,028,052
Study of Title II, Part A Uses of Funds	C	-	\$470,695	C	-	\$925,598
Impact Evaluation to Inform the Teacher and School Leader Incentive Program	C	-	\$1,000,000	C	-	\$900,000
Implementation Evaluation of Teaching Residency Programs	-	-	-	C	-	\$1,637
Literacy						
Impact Evaluation of Training in Multi-tiered Systems of Support for Reading in Early Elementary School	C	\$1,003,025	\$754,305	C	\$2,500,000	-
Student Support and Academic Enrichment						
Evaluation of Full-Service Community Schools	N	\$1,025,304	-	C	\$2,228,212	-
The Effects of a Systematic Approach to Improving Quality in Afterschool Programs: An Impact Evaluation to Inform the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) Program	C	\$1,060,005	-	-	-	-
Choice and Parent Engagement						
Implementation of Statewide Family Engagement Centers Program	N	\$500,000	-	-	-	-
Impact Study of Magnet Schools	C	\$ 155,482	-	-	-	-
Impact Evaluation of Parent Messaging Strategies on Student Attendance	C	\$396,416	-	-	-	-

Activity Title	Fiscal Year 2019			Fiscal Year 2020		
	New or Continuing?	Pooled	Individual	New or Continuing?	Pooled	Individual
Support for English Learners and English Language Acquisition						
Impact Evaluation of Approaches for Supporting English Learners . <i>English learners are particularly vulnerable to learning loss during disruptions to the education system, in part because remote instruction may provide less real-time feedback from teachers and fewer opportunities for engaging families. It is therefore more critical than ever to build evidence on how to help mitigate delays in English proficiency and improve mastery of academic content for this growing group of students. This study will evaluate the effectiveness of one or more promising policies or practices used by states, districts, or schools that provide programs under Title III. The study will be procured in FY 2021.</i>	-	-	-	N	-	*
Implementation Evaluation of the Title III National Professional Development Program	N	-	\$640,975	-	-	-
Supporting Title III Data Quality . <i>This work is to inform data quality improvements for the Title III Government Performance and Results Act indicators.</i>	N	-	\$146,730	C	-	\$300,000
Study of Educational Policies, Supports and Practices for English Learners: Implementation of Title III and Social and Emotional Learning (formally titled: Title III Implementation Evaluation and Impact Feasibility Study)	C	-	\$1,945,126	-	-	-
Asian American Pacific Islander Data Disaggregation(D2) Initiative	C	-	\$754,169	C	-	\$730,437
Review of Extant Data on Exiting English Learner Students with Disabilities . <i>This study examines the research about exit from EL status for English learner students with disabilities and uses data from a small number of districts and states to compare the time it takes to exit for students with and without disabilities. It will also examine the relationship between exit criteria and post-exit performance on state assessments of math and English/language arts.</i>	C	-	-	C	-	\$49,657
Cross-Cutting Topics						
Study of State and Local Uses of Federal Education Funds	C	\$ 21,247	-	C	\$ 733,627	-

Activity Title	Fiscal Year 2019			Fiscal Year 2020		
	New or Continuing?	Pooled	Individual	New or Continuing?	Pooled	Individual
Evaluations of State Education Programs and Policies . IES held a special grant competition in 2015 for states seeking support to evaluate major education improvement strategies using experimental or quasi-experimental designs. Three states and their research partners received funding.	C	\$ 1,983,383	-	-	-	-
Total:		\$13,089,413	\$8,457,989		\$11,904,150	\$8,692,287

N = New Activity; new studies include a short description and indicate timing of funding needs with an “*” for those yet to be awarded C = Continuing Activity

Pooled = Section 8601 pooled funds; Individual = non-pooled funds from an individual program’s Section 8601 set-aside

II. Results from Section 8601 Evaluations

The links provided for ongoing studies are to summary profiles that include information on the status of the study and findings from released reports.

Brief status reports are provided below for the studies described in the [prior evaluation plan](#) that have released reports or that are no longer included on the current plan because no additional funds are needed from FY20.

(1) *Implementation Study of State Supports under Title I for Reducing School Dropouts*. The main objective of this study is to describe state and district efforts to reduce the number and percentage of students who drop out of school, and how states support districts and schools to provide effective transitions to reduce dropouts. Data were collected through surveys of all 50 states and DC and a nationally-representative sample of districts during the 2017-18 school year as part of the [Implementation of Title I/II Program Initiatives](#) study. The study will also report recent trends in state-level dropout rates. Data collection is complete, and report preparation is underway. Results are expected in 2021.

(2) *Implementation of Title I/II Program Initiatives*. This study began in 2011. The main objective is to provide relevant data on the implementation of programs and policies related to Title I and Title II-A of ESEA at three points in time: 2013-14 (implementation under NCLB and ESEA flexibility), 2017-18 (transition to implementing ESSA), and 2021-22 (full implementation of ESSA). All three data collection years include surveys from all 50 states and DC, as well as a nationally representative sample of districts. Two data collection years also include a sample of schools and teachers within those districts.

A second report, titled [The Transition to ESSA: State and District Approaches to Implementing Title I and Title II-A in 2017-18](#), was released in December 2020. This report was based on data collected during the 2017-18 school year. Key findings include:

- Most states had not significantly changed their content standards by 2017-18, and districts increasingly provided supports, such as standards-aligned instructional materials, to implement them.
- States broadened the measures they used to identify struggling schools, while more districts reported that these schools implemented activities to support improvement, particularly teacher professional development.
- States and districts increasingly used performance data as a means to support effective teaching.

Although the survey was intended to collect data for 2020-2021, the coronavirus pandemic delayed implementation to 2021-2022. Survey development for the 2021-22 data collection is underway. Results are expected in 2024. For more information about the evaluation, see its [study profile](#).

(3) *Impact Study of Feedback for Teachers Based on Classroom Videos*. This study began in 2016. The main objective is to examine the implementation and impact of ongoing, individualized coaching for teachers based on video observations of their classroom practice. Report preparation based on data

collection for the 2018-19 school years is underway on a study sample of 107 schools in 14 districts from across the nation. Results are expected in 2021. For more information about the evaluation, see its [study profile](#).

(4) *Academic Language Intervention Impact Study*. This study began in 2015 and is taking place in 70 schools across the nation. Its main objective is to examine the implementation and impact of an academic language curriculum on classroom instruction and on academic language skills and general reading outcomes for English Learners (ELs) and disadvantaged non-EL students. Schools assigned to the treatment group implemented the academic language intervention in 2017-18. Report preparation is underway, and results are expected in 2021. For more information about the evaluation, see its [study profile](#).

(5) *National Implementation Study of Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants (Title IV-A)*. This study began in 2019. Its main objective is to provide relevant data on the implementation of programs and policies related to Title IV-A of ESEA. Although data collection was intended for 2020-2021, the coronavirus pandemic delayed implementation to 2021-2022. Data collection in 2022 includes a survey of all 50 states, DC, and Puerto Rico, as well as a nationally representative sample of grantees. Preparation of data collection instruments are underway, and results are expected in 2023. For more information about the evaluation, see its [study profile](#).

(6) *Evaluations of State Education Programs and Policies*. IES held a special grant competition in 2015 for states seeking support to evaluate major education improvement strategies using experimental or quasi-experimental designs. Three states and their research partners received funding: [California](#), to evaluate the effects of implementing a system that provides college-readiness information to high school students; [North Carolina](#), to measure the impact of a state program to provide multi-tiered support to improve the performance of its 75 lowest-performing schools; and [Tennessee](#), to examine the effects of a teacher evaluation and voluntary mentoring program to improve teaching practices and student outcomes across the state. Results for: California are expected in 2022; North Carolina are expected in 2021. Abstracts for the evaluation grants are available at the links above.

III. Planning for New Evaluations

Section 8601(a) authorizes the Secretary to reserve funds from most ESEA programs to carry out a range of evaluation activities. If the Secretary elects to reserve funds for one or more programs, the following factors are considered when deciding which evaluations to propose and conduct:

- *Congressional requirements.* This can in part be signaled by the statutory language in ESSA related to evaluation of a particular program. For example, some programs have an explicit requirement for an evaluation. Some programs allow for (but do not necessarily require) an evaluation. In addition, the Department will respond to evaluation requirements in annual appropriation bills and reports.
- *President's budget and policy priorities.* The Department will respond to the need for rigorous evaluation evidence on the implementation and impact of the President's budget and policy priorities. These priorities are informed by, and contribute to, the Department's learning agenda consistent with the Evidence Act.
- *Locally-driven needs.* This can be identified through periodic discussions with program staff at the Department who administer ESEA programs and have frequent contact with grantees at the state and local levels.
- *Feasibility.* Section 8601(a) prioritizes high-quality impact evaluations that permit causal inference, studies of the effectiveness of programs and their administrative impact on schools and local educational agencies, and others. The design of individual programs affects how they can be evaluated, including whether the most rigorous evaluation designs can be used.
- *Prior Evaluations.* Programs that have never been rigorously evaluated may take priority over those that have. In particular, the Department is committed to evaluating smaller ESEA programs over time.