

# Fiscal Year 2024 Annual Evaluation and Evidence-Building Plan for the U.S. Department of Education

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



## U.S. Department of Education

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### March 2023

As part of the implementation of the *Foundations of Evidence-based Policymaking Act of 2018* (Evidence Act), the Secretary has determined the responsibilities for the Agency Evaluation Officer should rest with the Institute of Education Sciences' (IES) Commissioner for the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE).

IES is the independent, non-partisan statistics, research, and evaluation arm of the U.S. Department of Education. The IES mission is to provide scientific evidence on which to ground education practice and policy and to share this information in formats that are useful and accessible to educators, parents, policymakers, researchers, and the public.

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# **Fiscal Year 2024 Annual Evaluation and Evidence-Building Plan for the U.S. Department of Education**

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## Introduction

The U.S. Department of Education (Department) and its predecessor organizations have supported evidence-building for the purpose of improving outcomes for all learners for more than 70 years.<sup>1</sup> Over time, this work has included rigorous implementation, outcome, and impact evaluations; grants to researchers for basic science, applied research, and evidence synthesis; student assessments; and data collection in support of official statistics and performance improvement.

Many of the Department’s evidence-building activities are housed in its Institute of Education Sciences (IES), including its National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE), National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), National Center for Education Research (NCER), and National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER). However, a growing number of offices across the Department are engaged in work around evidence. Principal operating components with grant-making authority, such as the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE); the Office Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE); the Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE); and the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), collect and use performance data to improve their programs, and an increasing number are requiring grantees to conduct research or evaluation activities that build evidence about the outcomes and impacts associated with their work. Building and using evidence—be it in small ways or large—is everyone’s business at the Department of Education.

The *Foundations for Evidence-based Policymaking Act of 2018* requires agencies to detail a specific component of their evidence-building work—program evaluations—in *Annual Evaluation Plans*. In the Department’s Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 *Annual Evaluation and Evidence-Building Plan* (Plan), the Department summarizes all implementation, outcomes, and programs evaluations undertaken by NCEE. We include both new work that is under consideration for FY 2024 well as continuing activities begun in a prior year.<sup>2</sup>

## Organization and Contents of this Document

This Plan is organized topically, using categories that represent both common areas of focus in education research and long-standing programmatic interests of the Department. Within each topic area, we detail ongoing and planned evaluations. Activities are listed only once and are “cross-referenced” in other sections, where applicable.

For ease of aligning this work to the Department’s FY22-FY26 Learning Agenda, we crosswalk the Department’s significant evaluation activities in a table at the end of this section. Readers will note that

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, the *Cooperative Research Act of 1954* (Pub. L. 531).

<sup>2</sup> No part of this document represents a commitment by the U.S. Department of Education to award a new, or continue an existing, contract, grant, or cooperative agreement.

the Annual Evaluation Plan does not uniformly align with every aspect of the Department’s Learning Agenda.

In any given year, there will be significant evaluations that are beyond the immediate scope of the Learning Agenda. One reason for the expanded scope is that the Department has chosen to operationalize its obligation to include “significant evaluations” in the Plan by listing *all* its planned and ongoing program evaluations—including those that represent persistent problems of education policy or practice that were identified prior to the development of the Learning Agenda. This approach is consistent with our annual and biennial reporting of all program evaluations as part of our Annual Performance Report/Annual Performance Plan and the Institute’s Biennial Report to Congress, respectively, as well as a separate biennial report to Congress on the use of evaluation funds authorized under Section 8601 of the *Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015* (ESSA). A second reason is that Congress can require evaluation activities not aligned to the Learning Agenda, but the Department considers these efforts to be significant as well. Rarely, there may be aspects of the Learning Agenda for which there is limited work listed in this Plan. Most often, this is because federal evaluation resources have not yet been identified to address them.

The Department anticipates that, over time, its Annual Evaluation and Evidence-Building Plan will come to mirror its Learning Agenda. Wherever possible, the Department intends to use its Learning Agenda to guide decision-making about where to invest evidence-building resources. Additionally, the Department hopes to develop new mechanisms for building evidence, including new partnerships with external researchers that provide opportunities for answering questions of shared interest.

## How We Describe Our Program Evaluations

Each program evaluation described below is tailored to address a series of evaluation questions co-created by NCEE’s professional evaluators, Department staff, and external stakeholders. For each evaluation, we detail: (a) whether it is aligned to one or more of the Department’s Learning Agenda focus areas for evidence-building; (b) expected start and end date; (c) the issues, contexts, and problems that motivate the evaluation activity; (d) the evaluation questions it seeks to answer; (e) evaluation design and data sources; and (f) the publications and products that are expected to arise from the evaluation. Because each study is at a different phase in its lifecycle, the amount of information available about—and profiled for—each will vary.

Although each program evaluation is substantively different on most dimensions, there are some commonalities that, for the sake of parsimony, we describe here. These include common technical challenges and common approaches to disseminating evaluation findings to key stakeholders.

### Common Technical Challenges

The Department’s program evaluations typically face one or more of three challenges: (1) accessing administrative data that are necessary to generate high-quality evidence; (2) obtaining high response rates to surveys that are used as part of program evaluations; and (3) providing actionable evidence to stakeholders in a timely manner. We discuss each below.

Wherever possible, the Department relies on administrative data for its evaluation activities. The use of administrative data for evaluation activities can improve data quality, minimize respondent burden,

and reduce cost. Reliance upon administrative data for the purpose of understanding students, student outcomes, and education institutions is particularly compelling due to the Department's longstanding financial investment in the development of state longitudinal data systems (SLDSs), which increasingly link data from elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education to the workforce and beyond.

The Department can sometimes experience challenges accessing administrative data, be it held in SLDSs or with federal agency partners. Examples include legislation or regulation that allow access to administrative data for program operations or enforcement purposes but not for research and evaluation, or difficulties in definitively linking data about individuals or institutions across systems due to the absence of a common identifier. The Department is actively participating in efforts across government to develop privacy-preserving approaches to data linking and analysis, ensuring the protection of confidential information in its evidence-building efforts.

When administrative data are not widely available, the Department often must rely upon survey instruments to collect data directly from respondents including students, parents, and educators. It is well-known across the federal statistical community that response rates to web-based and other survey collections are in decline. The Department is not immune from this trend. The Department employs industry standard approaches to, initially, maximize response rates. This includes being cautious about the number and length of surveys the Department sponsors in an effort to reduce survey fatigue. The Department subjects data to rigorous non-response bias analysis to ensure that the data can support credible estimates and rigorous analysis. Should the downward trend in survey response rate continue, conducting high-quality program evaluations will become more difficult—particularly if administrative data that might serve as a substitute or proxy cannot be readily accessed.

Finally, providing stakeholders actionable evidence in a timely manner can be a challenge to program evaluators. Several factors can affect the timeliness of evaluations and other evidence-building activities, including: the time needed to procure independent evaluation services; the development of instrumentation used in an evaluation and meeting statutory requirements on information collection; gathering outcomes data, particularly on outcomes that may take several years to be observed (e.g., whether first-year college students complete a bachelor's degree); and analysis and reporting. The Department has sought to improve the timeliness of its evaluation efforts through more flexible contracting and by ensuring that evaluation reports focus on the results of greatest relevance to our stakeholders, including practitioners, policymakers, and others who could benefit from our work.

### **Common Dissemination Approaches**

IES follows a consistent approach to dissemination for the bulk of its evidence products, including findings from program evaluations, official statistics, and evidence syntheses. This includes:

- Developing shorter, more policy-relevant reports that are aligned to the needs and interests of various stakeholders (i.e., moving to a standard 15-page report for most studies, accompanied by 4-page study briefs and 1-page study snapshots);
- Internal briefings for the Department's policy and program leadership during a two-week period prior to a product's release by IES;
- Sharing products with relevant media outlets, subject to an embargo agreement, immediately before their release;

- Posting products to the Department’s website, and actively pursuing an agenda of website modernization that improves the ies.ed.gov user experience;
- Announcing the release of new products using IES social media, including its NewsFlash listserv (46,000 subscribers) and its @IESResearch Twitter handle (20,000 followers);
- Leveraging the Department’s Regional Comprehensive Centers and Regional Educational Laboratories to disseminate relevant products directly to regional, state, and local education stakeholders; and
- Presenting findings to conferences of relevant grantees, advocacy organizations, and education researchers, such as the annual meetings of the Council on Opportunity in Education, the National Association of ESEA State Programs Administrators, and the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management.

### **Crosswalk of Planned and Ongoing Program Evaluations to the Learning Agenda**

We list program evaluations underway or planned to begin in FY 24 associated with each of the major aspects of the Department’s Learning Agenda in the table below. We do not include anticipated studies in the table below, as specific research questions for anticipated studies have not been finalized. No part of this document represents a commitment by the U.S. Department of Education to award a new, or continue an existing, contract, grant, or cooperative agreement.

Note that several priority questions listed below are addressed by other evidence-building activities across the Department that are not “significant evaluations” and therefore are not listed here.

Focus Area	Related Significant Evaluations, And Link in Associated Page in this Document
<p>Area 1. Address the impact of COVID-19 on students, educators, and faculty (COVID-19)</p>	<p><a href="#">Evaluation of Full-Service Community Schools</a></p> <p><a href="#">National Evaluation of Career and Technical Education under Perkins V</a></p> <p><a href="#">National Implementation Study of Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants (Title IV, Part A)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Study of Strategies to Address Unfinished Learning in Math</a></p>
<p>Area 2. Promote equity in student access to educational resources, opportunities, and inclusive environments (Equity)</p>	<p><a href="#">Implementation of Title I/II-A Program Initiatives</a></p> <p><a href="#">National Evaluation of Title III Implementation</a></p> <p><a href="#">Study of the Impact of English Learner Reclassification Policies</a></p> <p><a href="#">National Implementation Study of Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants (Title IV, Part A)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Study of Strategies to Address Unfinished Learning in Math</a></p> <p><a href="#">State and Local Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act</a></p> <p><a href="#">Evaluation of Transition Supports for Youth with Disabilities</a></p> <p><a href="#">Study of District and School Uses of Federal Education Funds</a></p> <p><a href="#">Evaluation of Full-Service Community Schools</a></p> <p><a href="#">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</a></p> <p><a href="#">Evaluating the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program After the 2017 Reauthorization</a></p> <p><a href="#">Impact Study of Magnet Schools</a></p> <p><a href="#">Assessing Evidence of Effectiveness in Adult Education: Study of Career Navigator Training</a></p> <p><a href="#">National Longitudinal Study of 2019</a></p>



Focus Area	Related Significant Evaluations, And Link in Associated Page in this Document
<p>Area 3. Support a diverse and talented educator workforce and professional growth to strengthen student learning (Educators)</p>	<p><a href="#">Descriptive Study of Teacher Residency Programs</a></p> <p><a href="#">Implementation of Title I/II-A Program Initiatives</a></p> <p><a href="#">Impact Evaluation to Inform the Teacher and School Leader Incentive Program</a></p>
<p>Area 4. Meet students' social, emotional, and academic needs (Meeting Student Needs)</p>	<p><a href="#">Evaluation of Title I Pilots That Provide Flexibility Under the Every Student Succeeds Act</a></p> <p><a href="#">Study of Strategies to Address Unfinished Learning in Math</a></p> <p><a href="#">Evaluation of Full-Service Community Schools</a></p> <p><a href="#">National Evaluation of the 2019 Comprehensive Centers Program Grantees</a></p> <p><a href="#">Evaluation of Preschool Special Education Practices</a></p> <p><a href="#">Impact Evaluation of Training in Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Reading in Early Elementary School</a></p> <p><a href="#">National Evaluation of the Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) and Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy (SRCL) Programs</a></p> <p><a href="#">National Implementation Study of Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants (Title IV, Part A)</a></p> <p><a href="#">National Evaluation of Title III Implementation</a></p>

*Table continues next page.*

Focus Area	Related Significant Evaluations, And Link in Associated Page in this Document
<p>Area 5. Increase postsecondary value by focusing on equity-conscious strategies to address affordability, completion, post-enrollment success, and support for inclusive institutions (Postsecondary)</p>	<p><a href="#">Evaluation of Transition Supports for Youth with Disabilities</a></p> <p><a href="#">National Evaluation of Career and Technical Education under Perkins V</a></p> <p><a href="#">Assessing Evidence of Effectiveness in Adult Education: Study of Career Navigator Training</a></p>
<p>Area 6. Effectively manage federal student aid programs (Federal Financial Aid)</p>	<p><a href="#">Expanding Pell Grant Eligibility to Incarcerated Students: A Study of Early Implementers to Inform Roll Out of the FAFSA Simplification Act</a></p>

# Topic Areas

The FY 24 Annual Evaluation plan includes evidence building activities organized into the following topical areas:

1. [Behavior and Attendance](#)
2. [Early Learning](#)
3. [English Learners](#)
4. [Literacy](#)
5. [Parent Engagement](#)
6. [Pathways to Career or College](#)
7. [School Choice](#)
8. [School Improvement](#)
9. [Students with Disabilities](#)
10. [Teachers and Leaders](#)
11. [Technical Assistance](#)

# Behavior and Attendance

## *Significant Evaluations*

The Department has the following significant evaluations that will include work in Fiscal Year 2024:

- [Evaluation of Full-Service Community Schools](#)
- [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](#); listed below in the [School Improvement](#) topic area.

## Evaluation of Full-Service Community Schools

Priority Area	Expected Duration
Area 1. COVID-19 Area 2. Equity Area 4. Meeting Student Needs	November 2019 - June 2025

### **Background**

Children living in distressed communities face significant academic, social, and health challenges, many of which have been exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic. The Full-Service Community Schools program aims to address these challenges by funding coordination and expansion of a comprehensive set of educational and developmental services for students, their families, and the broader community. Grants typically go to school districts and community-based organizations. Since 2010, Congress has invested \$55 million in the program, which is authorized by Title IV of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Congress also mandated an evaluation of the program, which this study will inform.

### **Research Questions**

- To what extent do the Full-Service Community Schools grants extend the reach of the program model?
- How do grantees and grantee schools make progress towards implementing the Full-Service Community Schools model? What are grantees' common challenges, and how do they address them?

### **Design and Analytic Considerations**

This study will assess the ways in which implementation of the Full-Service Community Schools program is being carried out, which could lay the groundwork for studying the effectiveness of the grants in the near future. Data collection will include surveys of grantee organizations, grantee schools, and potentially teachers in grantee schools and annual performance reports to describe program implementation.

### **Publications and Products**

- The report is expected in 2025 and will be announced on <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

# Early Learning

## *Significant Evaluations*

The Department has the following significant evaluations that will include work in Fiscal Year 2024:

- [Evaluation of Preschool Special Education Practices](#)
- [State and Local Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act](#); listed below in the [Students with Disabilities](#) topic area.

## Evaluation of Preschool Special Education Practices

Priority Area	Expected Duration
Area 4. Meeting Student Needs	November 2013 -November 2023

### **Background**

Experiences in early childhood programs can help young children, including those with disabilities, develop skills important for later learning. But many children need help to strengthen their social-emotional skills and facilitate their engagement in classroom activities. Currently, there is limited evidence on how to effectively integrate these kinds of supports into the general curriculum, particularly in classrooms where children with disabilities are served alongside their peers as promoted by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This study will test the efficacy of a coordinated set of evidence-based strategies, with multiple levels of intensity depending on student needs. The approach includes programs for classroom-wide instruction of social and emotional skills and supports targeting children who demonstrate risk for social-emotional delays or persistent behavior challenges with the general preschool curriculum. If the efficacy study shows promise, a large-scale impact evaluation may be conducted in the future.

### **Research Questions**

- What training and supports did teachers receive? Are teachers able to implement a new approach that integrates targeted instructional supports for children who demonstrate risk for social-emotional delays or persistent behavior challenges with instruction for all children?
- What are the impacts of this approach on the classroom environment, teacher practices, and the social-emotional, behavioral, and language skills of children with and without disabilities in inclusive preschool classrooms?

### **Design and Analytic Considerations**

To help plan for the efficacy study, the study collected descriptive information in spring/summer 2015 on the programs, curricula, and extra supports available to children ages 3 through 5 identified for special education services. This collection was based on surveys of state agency staff coordinating grants and services under IDEA Part B Section 619 and a nationally representative sample of district preschool special education coordinators. The study randomly assigned 29 schools with inclusive preschool classrooms in three districts to either receive training and coaching support to implement the study's program integration approach or continue with the teachers' regular program and practices. The addition and integration of the programs began in 2019 and data on participating preschool students will be collected for 2 school years. These data include documentation of training to teachers, classroom observations to assess how program components are being implemented, teacher surveys, and measures of children's social skills.

### **Publications and Products**

Data tables have been released from the national surveys. The tables highlight how preschool special education programs are structured, where and when children with disabilities receive services, the extent to which children with disabilities are educated in schools and classrooms along with their

peers, and the curricula, programs, strategies, and practices used to support instruction of preschool children with disabilities. Tables also provide information on district-required qualifications to teach preschool and the professional development available to preschool teachers.

[Characteristics of Preschool Special Education Services and Practices](#) (August 2020)

A [restricted-use file](#) containing survey data is available for the purposes of replicating study findings and secondary analysis.

The report for the efficacy study is expected in 2023 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.



# English Learners

## *Significant Evaluations*

The Department has the following significant evaluations that will include work in Fiscal Year 2024:

- [National Evaluation of Title III Implementation](#)
- [Study of the Impact of English Learner Reclassification Policies](#)

## National Evaluation of Title III Implementation

Priority Area	Expected Duration
Area 2. Equity	September 2019 - September 2024

### **Background**

English learners (ELs) face disproportionate educational challenges because they must master subject-matter content while also developing English proficiency. Title III of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) provides funds to states and districts to help ELs attain English proficiency and to close the significant achievement gaps in reading and math between ELs and their non-EL peers. Some key aspects of Title III policy changed with the 2015 update to ESEA as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). These changes include shifts in state accountability for ELs' English proficiency and responsibility for determining which students begin and stop receiving EL supports, as well as a new district requirement to implement parent, family, and community engagement activities. This study will examine whether support for and implementation of EL programs among states, districts, and schools seem to align with ESSA's key changes and emphases.

### **Research Questions**

- Do policies appear to support ESSA's objective of promoting consistency within states in how EL students are identified and exited from services?
- What does the shift in EL accountability from Title III to Title I mean at the state and local levels?
- Do district policies and practices reflect an emphasis on using research evidence to select and support language instruction, as ESSA encourages?
- Do districts and schools appear to be responding to new Title III requirements for parent, family, and community engagement and outreach?
- To what extent are teacher preparation and professional learning efforts directed towards building capacity to meet the diverse needs of ELs as ESSA requires? outreach?

### **Design and Analytic Considerations**

This descriptive study is based mostly on surveys that will be conducted in Spring 2023 of all state Title III coordinators and nationally-representative samples of districts and schools. The evaluation also draws on existing data, such as information from ESSA state plans, the Common Core of Data, and the Civil Rights Data Collection. Responses to survey questions will be tabulated into descriptive statistics (such as percentages) and simple statistical tests (such as tests for differences between percentages).

### **Publications and Products**

The first report, which will examine the services and supports provided to ELs during the pandemic, is expected in 2023 and will be announced on <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

# Study of the Impact of English Learner Reclassification Policies

Priority Area	Expected Duration
Area 2. Equity	September 2021 - May 2024

## **Background**

Districts' reclassification of English learners (ELs) as English proficient is a high-stakes decision with implications for academic equity in the U.S. Since former ELs are no longer entitled to language supports, exiting EL status too soon can leave these students linguistically unprepared for success in mainstream U.S. classrooms. However, maintaining EL status for too long can compromise students' opportunities to learn academic content among their peers. The decision is complicated by lack of universal agreement on a definition for English proficiency and wide variation in reclassification criteria within and across states. To reduce variability in EL entry and exit procedures within states, the 2015 reauthorization of Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (the Every Student Succeeds Act, or ESSA) required states to develop standardized procedures. The shift to statewide standardization in exit procedures and the use of common English language proficiency (ELP) assessments in many states provide a unique opportunity to study the impact of reclassification nationwide. Of particular interest is assessing how impacts for students vary across contexts, such as the level of proficiency states require to exit, whether states consider factors other than ELP assessment scores, instructional policies (such as dual language or English-only instruction), policies for monitoring and serving former ELs, and characteristics of the EL population enrolled.

## **Research Questions**

- Did standardized statewide procedures, introduced to Title III under ESSA, result in more consistent application of reclassification procedures across districts within states?
- Does reclassification have an impact on the instructional opportunities and experiences of former EL students relative to students who remain ELs? How much do impacts vary across student subgroups and state and local policy contexts?
- Does reclassification have an impact on academic achievement and attainment for former EL students relative to students who remain ELs? How much do impacts vary across student subgroups and state and local policy contexts?

## **Design and Analytic Considerations**

This study will describe state and local reclassification policies and use a regression discontinuity design (RDD) to assess how these policies affect students' instructional experiences and outcomes. The descriptive analysis will be based on policy documents from state and local education agencies about their reclassification policies. The RDD analysis will rely on student-level educational data from state longitudinal data systems (SLDS). The RDD approach will compare students within each included district whose performance was just high enough to reclassify out of EL status with students in the district whose performance was just under the reclassification threshold.

The study aims to represent results for EL students nationwide by recruiting up to 30 states with the highest EL enrollment (these states include more than 90 percent of ELs in the United States). All districts within these states that meet the requirements of the RDD approach will be included in the study.

### **Publications and Products**

The report for the study is expected in 2024 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

# Literacy

## *Significant Evaluations*

The Department has the following significant evaluations that will include work in Fiscal Year 2024:

- [National Evaluation of the Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grants](#)
- [Impact Evaluation of Training in Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Reading in Early Elementary School](#)

# National Evaluation of the Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) and Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy (SRCL) Programs

Priority Area	Expected Duration
Area 4. Meeting Student Needs	May 2018 - December 2026

## **Background**

Boosting literacy among school-age children remains a national priority. Nearly one-third of students in the U.S. have not developed the foundational reading skills needed to succeed academically, with those living in poverty, those with disabilities, and English learners (ELs) especially at risk. Since 2010 Congress has provided funds for preschool through grade 12 literacy improvement efforts, including through the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy (SRCL) program and the newer Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) program. This study will assess the implementation of both CLSD and SRCL to determine whether states, districts, and schools use the grant funds as intended and to inform program improvement. In addition, the study will assess the effects of CLSD on instruction and students' reading achievement.

## **Research Questions**

- What is the impact of CLSD funding on student reading achievement in grades 3-5?
- Does CLSD funding affect grade 3-5 teachers' literacy instruction as intended, in ways that are linked to student achievement?
- How do trends in reading achievement differ for SRCL- and CLSD-funded schools versus similar non-funded schools?
- To what extent do SRCL and CLSD grantees carry out their efforts in ways that are aligned with the programs' goals - such as targeting disadvantaged students or using literacy programs and instructional practices that are comprehensive and supported by research evidence?

## **Design and Analytic Considerations**

To assess SRCL implementation the evaluation focused on the last 11 grantees funded (in FY 2017) and drew on: grant application reviews, state grantee interviews, surveys of all district subgrantees in Spring 2019, surveys of teachers in a representative sample of 500 funded schools (Spring 2019 and Spring 2020), surveys of principals in those sampled schools (Spring 2020), and collection of state reading/language arts assessment data. The evaluation also included reviews of programs commonly funded by SRCL to determine whether they are supported by rigorous evidence.

The CLSD evaluation includes the first two rounds of grantees funded in FY 2019 and FY 2020. To document program implementation, the evaluation includes interviews of all state grantees and a survey of all district subgrantees. To assess the program's impact, the study recruited and randomly assigned 120 schools to either a group that will receive CLSD funding right away or a group that will receive CLSD funding two years later. The experiences and outcomes of the two groups of schools

during the first two years will be compared using data from state reading/language arts assessments, school-level surveys, and video observations of reading instruction.

### **Publications and Products**

The first report for the study, which will describe SRCL program implementation, is expected in 2023 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

## Impact Evaluation of Training in Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Reading in Early Elementary School

Priority Area	Expected Duration
Area 4. Meeting Student Needs	September 2018 - November 2028

### **Background**

With a third of US students failing to develop foundational reading skills by 4th grade, calls have grown to renew the focus on this critical learning. Many elementary schools are seeking to move beyond basic good practice and adopt a more strategic approach to improve the quality of reading instruction and how struggling students are identified and provided with extra help. These efforts, often under the umbrella term *multi-tiered systems of support for reading* (MTSS-R), rely on outside training and technical assistance to strengthen core reading instruction for all students (Tier I) and the systematic and targeted use of supplemental supports for those who need it (Tier II). The U.S. Department of Education has promoted MTSS-R as a broad approach to school improvement and to addressing equitable access to learning opportunities, but seek to expand rigorous evidence about it. This study evaluates the effectiveness of two promising strategies. The strategies differ in the way they help teachers with instruction of the core curriculum and in how closely that curriculum is linked to the supplemental support. They also differ on whether the supplemental support pre-teaches the core curriculum or uses an alternative curriculum with lessons tailored to student needs.

### **Research Questions**

- Does the study's MTSS-R training and technical assistance (TA) affect students' reading skills and achievement, both initially and over time? Does it help students identified as struggling in reading make more significant gains? Do the effects differ across the two strategies?
- Are the effects on reading related to schools' experiences implementing the MTSS-R strategies, including the extent to which they carry out the strategies as intended and their use of key instructional practices?
- In what ways do these strategies affect the identification of special education students? What are their outcomes?

*Description continued next page.*



## **Design and Analytic Considerations**

Approximately 150 schools were randomly assigned to one of the MTSS-R training and TA strategies or to continue with their usual reading instruction and supports. The study's training and TA is being provided for teachers in grades 1 and 2 across three school years, 2021-2022 through 2023-2024. Data collection includes: (1) study-administered assessments of students in grades 1 and 2 to identify struggling students and to estimate effects on their foundational reading skills; (2) student records to estimate longer-term effects on these students' reading achievement, (3) staff surveys and observations of Tier I and II practice to provide information about instruction and the extent of staff training and TA; and (4) documentation of program implementation.

## **Publications and Products**

The first product for the study is expected in 2023 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

# Parent Engagement

## *Significant Evaluations*

The Department has the following significant evaluations that will include work in Fiscal Year 2024:

- [Evaluation of Full-Service Community Schools](#); listed above in the [Behavior and Attendance](#) topic area.

# Pathways to Career or College

## *Significant Evaluations*

The Department has the following significant evaluations that will include work in Fiscal Year 2024:

- [National Evaluation of Career and Technical Education under Perkins V](#)
- [Assessing Evidence of Effectiveness in Adult Education: Study of Career Navigator Training](#)
- [Expanding Pell Grant Eligibility to Incarcerated Students: A Study of Early Implementers to Inform Roll Out of the FAFSA Simplification Act](#)

## National Evaluation of Career and Technical Education under Perkins V

Priority Area	Expected Duration
Area 1. COVID-19 Area 5. Postsecondary	September 2019 - September 2024

### **Background**

Even with constant change in the nature of work and the economy, the education decisions students make today will influence their later career direction and success. Helping secondary and postsecondary students develop skills that have value in the workplace is the key goal of career and technical education (CTE). Congress has supported CTE for over a century, most recently through the reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act in 2018 (Perkins V). Many provisions of the prior Perkins Act remain, but Perkins V includes some changes designed to: (1) enhance CTE program quality through new mechanisms for program improvement and labor market alignment, (2) increase flexibility in Perkins funding and accountability, and (3) promote equity by expanding exposure to and participation in CTE for all students. Perkins V also requires IES to conduct this national evaluation to assess CTE programs under the new law.

### **Research Questions**

- How are CTE participation and outcomes changing?
- How, and to what extent, does current CTE implementation reflect key policy goals and objectives of Perkins V? What challenges do State agencies and local recipients face in administering and delivering CTE services, particularly the newly introduced provisions in Perkins V?
- In what important ways has CTE implementation evolved since the prior version of the Perkins Act?
- What CTE strategies and practices are effective and for whom?

*Description continued next page.*

## **Design and Analytic Considerations**

The national evaluation will draw on a variety of data sources and studies for its assessment of CTE, though the design is still being finalized. New surveys of all state directors of CTE and a nationally representative sample of district coordinators of CTE will be conducted in 2023 to collect information about Perkins implementation. Trends in CTE participation and outcomes will be obtained by analyzing other national data, including those from the National Center for Education Statistics, state-submitted Perkins V performance reports, and labor market repositories. To identify and report on the effectiveness of key CTE strategies, the evaluation will review rigorously conducted research where it already exists, and consider conducting new studies of CTE approaches deemed most critical to the field's improvement.

## **Publications and Products**

The study's first report is expected in 2023, and IES will report on results from the evaluation every two years. These publications will be announced on <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

# Assessing Evidence of Effectiveness in Adult Education: Study of Career Navigator Training

Priority Area	Expected Duration
Area 2. Equity Area 5. Postsecondary	September 2018 - December 2027

## **Background**

Improving the skills and career pathways of the many adults who struggle with literacy, numeracy, and English proficiency is the key goal of federal adult education policy. Title II of the 2014 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act encourages state agencies and local providers to find ways to facilitate postsecondary enrollment, credential attainment and higher earnings for the more than one million learners who participate in adult education programs. One promising approach is providing these learners with career navigators—dedicated staff whose role is to advise learners in career and college planning and to help them address challenges as they follow through on their plans. Navigators can be a significant expense for adult education providers, but the staff often receive little training despite their diverse backgrounds and thus may not be equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively guide learners. The study will test whether providing a promising model of training to navigators leads to improvements in their learners' postsecondary, employment and earnings outcomes.

## **Research Questions**

- Can providing training to career navigators improve adult learners' college enrollment and credential attainment rates? Can it improve learners' employment rates and earnings?
- What types of services do career navigators typically provide, and does the training change either the nature or intensity of services in ways that explain any impacts on learners' outcomes?

## **Design and Analytic Considerations**

This impact study will involve approximately 65 adult education sites. About half of the sites will be assigned by lottery to a group in which the site's career navigators will receive training provided by the study in Fall 2022. Career navigators in the remaining sites will not receive the study's training until after the study period is over. Using records obtained from the program providers and other agencies, the study will assess learners' college enrollment, credential attainment, employment status, and earnings at approximately 18 and 30 months after learners begin participating in the study. The study will also survey career navigators at the start of the study in order to collect descriptive information on the types of navigation services typically provided and to whom those services are typically targeted. Through the collection of service logs during the study, information to understand how the training might influence the navigation services provided and the targeting of those services will be obtained. This study builds on an earlier systematic evidence review that summarized findings from existing studies of adult education strategies and identified gaps in the knowledge base.

## **Publications and Products**

A snapshot titled [Adult Education Strategies: Identifying and Building Evidence of Effectiveness](#) was released in April 2021.

A practitioner brief on the knowledge and skills required of career navigators is expected in 2023 and will be announced on <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

## [Expanding Pell Grant Eligibility to Incarcerated Students: A Study of Early Implementers to Inform Roll Out of the FAFSA Simplification Act](#)

Priority Area	Expected Duration
Area 6. Federal Financial Aid	September 2021 – March 2024

### **Background**

Although enrolling in postsecondary education programs while in prison may reduce recidivism and improve the employment prospects of incarcerated individuals after release, the costs and availability of such programs can be barriers to participation. Making financial aid available to incarcerated individuals is one way to encourage more colleges to offer and promote access to prison education programs. To facilitate this goal Congress extended Pell Grant eligibility to incarcerated students as part of the 2020 FAFSA Simplification Act, which will be operational in 2023. This effort builds on an earlier pilot of the policy change conducted with 63 colleges by the Office of Student Financial Aid (FSA) under the Experimental Sites Initiative. The FAFSA Simplification Act requires the Institute of Education Science to conduct an external evaluation, which is intended to inform improvement of key activities under the new law.

### **Research Questions**

- What factors should colleges consider when deciding which postsecondary education programs to offer in prisons under the new provisions in the FAFSA Simplification Act?
- What practices and services do colleges think may encourage access to and success in Pell-eligible postsecondary education programs?
- What challenges may colleges face complying with reporting requirements under the new provisions in the FAFSA Simplification Act and how likely are they to limit college participation, either initially or over time?
- How expansive are Pell-eligible prison education programs likely to be under the FAFSA Simplification Act, given the experiences of early implementing colleges and students?

### **Design and Analytic Considerations**

This descriptive study will draw on the experiences of early implementing colleges and students who participated in a pilot of the policy change. The analysis will be based on surveys of participating colleges, data from annual reporting to the federal Office of Federal Student Aid (FSA), and interviews with approximately 40 colleges.

### **Publications and Products**

The report for this study is expected in 2023 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.



# School Choice

## *Significant Evaluations*

The Department has the following significant evaluations that will include work in Fiscal Year 2024:

- [Evaluating the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program After the 2017 Reauthorization](#)
- [Impact Study of Magnet Schools](#)

## *Significant Changes to Evaluation Activities Already Underway*

In Fiscal Year 2023, the Department paused its *Study of Access to Charter Schools* (SACS), described in prior Annual Evaluation Plans. NCEE determined the pause was necessary based upon its experience with an evaluation using a design like the one proposed for SACS. In that case, study quality was compromised due to low school-level response rates. NCEE is currently reconceptualizing the study's design, and will post an updated study profile to the Evaluation Division's "[Browse our Evaluations](#)" page when available.

## Evaluating the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program After the 2017 Reauthorization

Priority Area	Expected Duration
Area 2. Equity	January 2019–October 2026

### **Background**

Following two rigorous evaluations examining *if* the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP) works, there remains interest in understanding *how* it works. The only federally funded private school voucher program in the country, the OSP expands the set of school options available to low-income students in Washington, DC. However, the OSP is experiencing competition for students from a growing public-school choice sector, with participation possibly made easier with the introduction of a common application and admission lottery. This third congressionally mandated evaluation of the program will gather detailed information not included in prior evaluations to learn more about how the OSP is implemented and might be improved. The evaluation will also assess OSP participants' short- and long-term academic progress.

### **Research Questions**

- How strong is interest in the OSP following the 2017 reauthorization? What factors affect whether or not families apply for and use OSP scholarships and remain enrolled over time?
- How might the OSP be improved? How does the program operator carry out the key activities necessary to implement the DC OSP and how do they – and participating schools – help families overcome challenges in applying for and using scholarships?
- How do OSP students perform and progress on math and reading assessments? What are the long-term outcomes of participating in the program?

### **Design and Analytic Considerations**

This descriptive study will collect information using interviews and surveys with the program operator, all private schools in DC (both those that do and do not participate in the OSP), and approximately 1,400 parents and their 1,600 students who applied for OSP scholarships in spring 2021. The study will also collect administrative records that identify where students apply to and actually attend school, as well as student achievement data.

### **Publications and Products**

The first report for the study, a description of who applies for and uses OSP scholarships, is expected in early 2023 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

## Impact Study of Magnet Schools

Priority Area	Expected Duration
Area 2. Equity	September 2017 - May 2025

### **Background**

Decades after the Supreme Court declared racial segregation in public schools to be unconstitutional, concentration in schools by race, ethnicity, and poverty persists. The federal Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP) supports districts and schools in their efforts to reduce group isolation and improve student achievement through increased school choice options for families. MSAP schools seek to attract a diverse set of students and provide high quality academic programs, typically by organizing recruitment and instruction around one or more themes. With growth in school choice more broadly and specifically in magnet schools since 2000, it is important to understand how well these federally-funded schools achieve their goals and how they work. This evaluation takes advantage of new opportunities to rigorously assess MSAP schools but with low burden. It draws on lotteries most MSAP districts now use to admit students to their magnet schools. By comparing the achievement and school characteristics of applicants who were and were not given a seat by chance, the study will determine the impact of the MSAP and examine how specific school features relate to effectiveness.

### **Research Questions**

- Which districts receive MSAP grants and are they well targeted to those where improvement is feasible?
- Does enrolling in a MSAP school significantly shift students' experiences of diversity, including whether they have less racial/ethnic and socio-economic isolation than in schools they would otherwise have attended?
- Does enrolling in a MSAP school significantly improve students' educational experiences, including achievement and/or other relevant measures of student success such as persistence in school or graduation?
- Are particular features of magnet schools associated with greater success?

### **Design and Analytic Considerations**

This impact evaluation will include over 14,500 students who entered MSAP admissions lotteries in 2018 or 2019. Data will be collected for both students who were and were not offered placement, including district records containing student characteristics, enrollment, and test scores, and a survey of students' school principals about school organization and instruction. The academic progress and experiences of students in the two groups will be compared for the four years following their admissions lottery (through 2023).

### **Publications and Products**

A snapshot, titled [Drawing Across School Boundaries: How Federally Funded Magnet Schools Recruit and Admit Students](#), was released in January 2021. The next report will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

# School Improvement

## *Significant Evaluations*

The Department has the following significant evaluations that will include work in Fiscal Year 2024:

- [Evaluation of Title I Pilots That Provide Flexibility Under the Every Student Succeeds Act](#)
- [Implementation of Title I/II-A Program Initiatives](#)
- [National Implementation Study of Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants \(Title IV, Part A\)](#)
- [Study of District and School Uses of Federal Education Funds](#)
- [Study of Strategies to Address Unfinished Learning in Math](#)
- [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 Evaluation of Promise Neighborhoods](#)

## Evaluation of Title I Pilots That Provide Flexibility Under the Every Student Succeeds Act

Priority Area	Expected Duration
Area 4. Meeting Student Needs	September 2019 - September 2024

### **Background**

State testing has long been a cornerstone of federal education policy, but interest in reforming these assessments has been growing. Academic assessments can ideally serve multiple important purposes: diagnosing what students know in order to tailor instruction, assessing school performance for accountability, and monitoring both students and schools for improvement. To encourage the development of novel assessments that better serve all of these purposes, the Innovative Assessment and Accountability Demonstration Authority (IADA) program was created in 2015 to allow the U.S. Department of Education to exempt states from certain federal testing requirements if they agree to pilot new types of assessment systems. Congress mandated an evaluation of IADA. The evaluation will chart the progress of systems that began participating under IADA in 2018 and 2019 and identify lessons learned for developing and implementing new assessments that might be shared with other states.

### **Research Questions**

- What types of assessments are included under IADA and how much progress have the states made in developing and administering the systems through 2020-2021? What early implementation challenges did they face?
- Have the assessment systems been able to meet the core requirements of the federal pilot program? What were the key challenges to developing a new assessment system, piloting it, and scaling it up? How were the challenges addressed, and how did participation in the federal pilot program facilitate or impede the process?
- To what extent have teachers, principals, and other school leaders demonstrated a commitment and capacity to implement the system? How have they adapted to the new assessment system? Are practices related to instruction, professional development, and burden different under the new systems?

### **Design and Analytic Considerations**

This implementation study will examine IADA implementation in the first four pilot states (5 different assessment systems) based on states' IADA applications and annual progress reporting, interviews with state assessment directors, and surveys of participating districts, schools, and teachers. The four states are: Louisiana and New Hampshire (approved in 2018); Georgia and North Carolina (approved in 2019).

### **Publications and Products**

The first report for the study is expected in 2023 and will be announced on <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

## Implementation of Title I/II-A Program Initiatives

Priority Area	Expected Duration
Area 2. Equity Area 3. Educators	September 2011 - March 2025

### **Background**

Promoting equal access to high-quality schooling is a central goal of federal education policy. The Title I and Title II-A programs of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) further this goal by providing funds meant to help schools and districts better serve low-income students and improve teacher and principal quality. Some aspects of these two core programs, accounting for three-quarters of ESEA funding, shifted as a result of the law's latest update as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015. ESSA shifts authority over many education policies from the U.S. Department of Education to states and localities, while still retaining some federal requirements from prior law. How states and localities respond will determine whether ESSA supports educational improvement as intended. This study provides a national portrait of Title I and Title II-A implementation at three key points:

- 2013-14, under the prior version of ESEA, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, when a majority of states had received waivers from key requirements in exchange for commitments to specific reform principles, colloquially known as "ESEA flexibility."
- 2017-18, when states were transitioning to fully implementing ESSA's core components.
- 2021-22, when ESSA implementation is expected to be in a more mature phase, notwithstanding the coronavirus pandemic.

### **Research Questions**

- What strategies do states and districts use to help students meet state content standards?
- What types of assessments do states and districts use to assess student and school performance, and how are those assessment and other data used?
- How do states and districts identify and support their lowest-performing schools?
- How do states and districts evaluate educator effectiveness and assess equitable distribution of educators, and what supports are provided to improve educator effectiveness?

### **Design and Analytic Considerations**

National data were collected in 2013-14, 2017-18, and 2021-22. These data include surveys of all state Title I and Title II coordinators and nationally-representative samples of districts, and in some of the data collections, surveys of schools and teachers within those districts. The evaluation also draws on existing data, such as state-level student achievement data from Department data sources as well as information from ESSA state plans. Responses to survey questions will be tabulated into descriptive statistics (such as percentages) and simple statistical tests (such as tests for differences between percentages). These tabulations provide a snapshot at each time point, and describe aggregate changes over time.

### **Publications and Products**

The 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.

The first report, titled [Implementation of Title I and II-A Program Initiatives: Results from 2013-14](#), was released in January 2017.

A snapshot, titled [State and District Strategies to Reduce Dropouts](#), was released in September 2021.

A snapshot, titled [How States and Districts Support Evidence Use in School Improvement](#), was released in June 2020.

A [restricted-use file](#) containing de-identified data from the 2013-14 data collection is available for the purposes of replicating study findings and secondary analysis.

Additional reports and snapshots are expected to be published in 2023 and 2024 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

## National Implementation Study of Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants (Title IV, Part A)

Priority Area	Expected Duration
Area 1. COVID-19 Area 2. Equity Area 4. Meeting Student Needs	June 2019 - December 2023

### **Background**

Changes to education law in 2015 consolidated several programs to give states and districts greater flexibility in how they use federal funds. The resulting Student Support and Academic Enrichment grant program (Title IV, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)) tries to maintain the different purposes of the original programs by prioritizing and requiring spending in three broad areas: (1) providing students with a well-rounded education, (2) ensuring a positive school environment, and (3) improving and personalizing learning through technology. The new law also requires districts to consult with stakeholders, distribute Title IV-A funds to high-need schools and, in certain instances, to conduct comprehensive needs assessments and use evidence from research to pick strategies to fund. This evaluation will assess how this new program is being carried out across the country, particularly the ways in which it supports school systems as they seek to recover from the coronavirus pandemic during the 2021-2022 school year.

### **Research Questions**

- What guidance and technical assistance did states provide to districts to assist in local implementation of the Title IV-A program?
- How do districts decide how to use Title IV-A funds?
- What are the primary services and activities districts are implementing with Title IV-A funds?

### **Design and Analytic Considerations**

The study is descriptive. It will be based on a survey of Title IV-A coordinators from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico and a nationally representative survey of Title IV-A coordinators in 1,100 school districts.

### **Publications and Products**

The study's report is expected in 2023 and will be announced on <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.



## Study of District and School Uses of Federal Education Funds

Priority Area	Expected Duration
Area 2. Equity	October 2019 - July 2024

### **Background**

Federal funds account for less than 10 percent of K-12 education spending nationally but can play an important role, particularly in communities that are lower-income or have lower-performing schools. Although each federal education program has unique goals and provisions, they often allow funds to be used for similar purposes and services or overlapping populations. Congress provided state and local education agencies greater flexibility in their use of federal funds through the 2015 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). As the COVID-19 pandemic began to disrupt schools in 2020, Congress also created new programs to provide funding and flexibilities for states and districts to respond to the emergency. Because policymakers remain interested in how federal dollars are spent, this study will examine the distribution and use of pandemic relief funds and five "core" federal education programs that represent the vast share of the Department's K-12 grant making: Part A of Titles I, II, III, and IV of ESEA, and Title I, Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

### **Research Questions**

- How much did pandemic recovery funding contribute to K-12 education and did it reach local districts with the greatest need?
- To what extent do the core federal programs pay for similar things or support local education staffing?
- For which functions or types of costs do federal programs fill the greatest gaps in state and local funds?
- Did districts change how they used core federal program funds during and after the pandemic?

### **Design and Analytic Considerations**

This descriptive study is collecting detailed fiscal data from the data systems of a nationally representative sample of 400 school districts, including revenue, expenditure, and personnel and payroll data, for up to four consecutive school years: 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21, and 2021-22. In addition, the study is collecting data on federal funding allocations from states to school districts and is using existing fiscal data collected by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) to validate and complement study data.

### **Publications and Products**

The first report is expected in 2023 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

# Study of Strategies to Address Unfinished Learning in Math

Priority Area	Expected Duration
Area 1. COVID-19 Area 2. Equity Area 4. Meeting Student Needs	August 2021 - August 2027

## **Background**

The coronavirus pandemic led to substantial unfinished learning in math and an important debate about how best to address it. Traditionally, policymakers and educators have advocated a "broad foundation skill building" approach, which systematically reteaches all below-grade content where there are knowledge gaps. "Just-in-time skill building" has received attention more recently, including in the U.S. Department of Education's [COVID-19 Handbook](#). This alternative reteaches only below-grade content deemed most essential to understanding the current grade-level topic. But there is limited evidence on which approach is most effective for which students and which contexts. This evaluation will examine the effectiveness of adaptive technology products that deliver these two catch-up strategies in elementary schools, where teachers often struggle with how to teach math well and the benefits of using technology supports are understudied. The findings will provide valuable evidence, especially for low-performing schools identified under the Every Student Succeeds Act and their most underserved students.

## **Research Questions**

- Does regular use of adaptive technology products that provide catch-up instruction improve struggling students' learning? Do they work particularly well for math teachers in low-performing schools?
- Which catch-up strategy is more effective at improving struggling students' learning: "just-in-time skill building" or "broad foundation skill building"? What approach is best for students who begin the year especially behind, and for low-income and students of color?
- What below-grade math content is most strongly associated with successful learning of core fourth and fifth grade topics?

## **Design and Analytic Considerations**

This impact evaluation will assess the effectiveness of at least two adaptive math technology products, that provide a "just-in-time" and a "broad foundation" catch-up learning approach. Up to 150 schools nationally will be recruited in school year 2022-23 to participate in the study. Schools will select which of the technology products they wish to implement. Schools will be assigned by lottery to either implement their chosen product in fourth and fifth grade for two school years (2023-24 and 2024-25) or continue with typical practice. In each school that is assigned to implement the technology product, students will be assigned by lottery to implement the technology product using either the "just-in-time" or "broad foundation" skill-building approach.

Data collection will include: a teacher survey to examine the effects of the technology on classroom practice; data from the technology platform to examine the effects on student engagement and implementation; a study-administered math assessment; and district administrative data on students' math and reading achievement.

### **Publications and Products**

The study's first report is expected in 2024 and will be announced on <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

# 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

Priority Area	Expected Duration
Area 2. Equity	July 2019 - June 2025

## **Background**

The time students spend outside of school hours, including after school, can be important opportunities for their social and academic development. The 21st CCLC program intends to provide these opportunities by funding a broad range of academic enrichment activities in community learning centers, particularly for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. But little is known about the extent and diversity of recent program activities, or whether a systematic approach to support program quality could improve staff practices and student outcomes. This evaluation will produce a national picture of funded program activities and program improvement efforts and evaluate the effectiveness of a continuous quality improvement system aimed at improving staff practices to support students' social and emotional skills.

## **Research Questions**

- What are the impacts of the studied continuous quality improvement system on 21st CCLC afterschool centers' staff practices? What are the impacts on students' social and emotional skills and other school-related student outcomes?
- What are the challenges with implementing the continuous quality improvement system, and how are they addressed?
- What are the activities and services offered by 21st CCLC afterschool centers? How are they staffed and supported to meet local needs?

*Description continued next page.*

## **Design and Analytic Considerations**

To assess the effectiveness of the continuous quality improvement (CQI) system, approximately 100 21st CCLC afterschool centers were recruited to participate in an impact study. Half of the participating centers were selected by lottery to implement the CQI system supported by the study for two school years, and half continued their normally planned program. The impact study will compare staff practices and student outcomes for the two groups of centers. Information also will be collected on program operations and staff training and experiences with the CQI system. Data collection includes afterschool center director interviews, an afterschool staff survey, observations of program quality at each center, student survey and afterschool attendance records, administrative school records, and a school-day teacher survey. The national picture of program activities will be based on a survey of a nationally representative sample of 250 21st CCLC afterschool centers.

## **Publications and Products**

The study's report is expected in 2023 and will be announced on <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

# Students with Disabilities

## *Significant Evaluations*

The Department has the following significant evaluations that will include work in Fiscal Year 2024:

- [Evaluation of Transition Supports for Youth with Disabilities](#)
- [State and Local Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act](#)
- [National Longitudinal Transition Study of 2012](#)
- [Evaluation of Preschool Special Education Practices](#); described above in the [Early Learning](#) topic area.
- [Impact Evaluation of Training in Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Reading in Early Elementary School](#); listed above in the [Literacy](#) topic area.
- National Study of Special Education Spending (anticipated)

## Evaluation of Transition Supports for Youth with Disabilities

Priority Area	Expected Duration
Area 2. Equity Area 5. Postsecondary	September 2019 - November 2029

### **Background**

Students with disabilities continue to lag their peers in high school graduation, enrollment in postsecondary education, and employment more than a decade after the 2004 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Although IDEA requires states and districts to support student efforts toward their post-high school goals, there is limited evidence about which strategies are effective. This study assesses variants of an approach that the Department has promoted -- strengthening students' goal setting, planning, and self-advocacy skills and helping them apply these self-determination skills to their transition objectives. The first strategy is a more systematic and coordinated version of how schools commonly teach students these skills. The second increases the intensity, and cost, by not only teaching the skills but also providing individual mentoring to help students complete key steps toward their goals.

### **Research Questions**

- Is instruction in self-determination skills and how to apply them to transition planning effective in improving the intermediate and post-school outcomes of students with disabilities?
- Is offering individual mentoring along with self-determination skill instruction effective in improving the intermediate and post-school outcomes of students with disabilities?
- What is the added benefit and cost of providing individual mentoring support?

### **Design and Analytic Considerations**

This study will randomly assign approximately 3,000 high school students with an individualized education program who are two years from expected graduation. They will receive one of the study's transition support strategies or continue with the regular transition supports they receive from their school. Training on the study's transition support strategies and students' participation in the strategies will occur over two years, 2023-2024 and 2024-2025. Data collection will include (1) student surveys and student records to estimate intermediate outcomes, (2) administrative records on postsecondary participation and employment to estimate longer term outcomes, and (3) documentation of strategy implementation.

### **Publications and Products**

The first report from the study is expected in 2027 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

## State and Local Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act

Priority Area	Expected Duration
Area 2. Equity	September 2017 - December 2023

### **Background**

Federal policy has long played a key role in the education of the more than 1 in every 10 US children who are identified with a disability. But the context for those policies has been shifting. Recent court decisions, regulations, and guidance, students' increasing language diversity, and environmental and health issues like the opioid crisis are expected to influence both the extent of supports needed and the ways practitioners and officials work to meet those needs through early intervention and special education. This study will provide a national picture of IDEA implementation 15 years after the law was last updated. It will describe how states and districts have adapted their policies and practices to the changing landscape, comparing data from 2019 to data from a similar study conducted in 2009. This new information will lay the groundwork for an upcoming reauthorization of IDEA.

### **Research Questions**

- What are the state and local policies and practices related to identifying children with disabilities, promoting access to the general education curriculum and providing services?
- What key resource decisions do states and districts make to support children with disabilities, including funding for various activities and the hiring and retention of personnel?
- How have key policies and practices changed over time?

### **Design and Analytic Considerations**

This implementation study is descriptive, and its results will be provided in a series of topical reports. Data collection includes surveys of state administrators from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and territories receiving IDEA funding, as well as surveys of a nationally representative sample of 688 school districts and 2,750 schools about the 2019-20 school year.

### **Publications and Products**

The first report for the study is expected in 2023 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.



# National Longitudinal Transition Study

Priority Area	Expected Duration
Area 2. Equity	September 2010 - December 2024

## **Background**

Despite improvements over time, students with disabilities continue to face challenges in graduating and achieving other milestones towards independence after high school. The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) seeks to address these challenges by requiring schools to provide the supports students need to complete high school and pursue postsecondary education and work. This study will provide an updated national picture of students' paths through high school and beyond, as well as measure the progress youth with an individualized education program (IEP) have made since the most recent reauthorization of IDEA in 2004. The study will also provide the first direct comparisons of the in-school experiences and outcomes of high-school aged youth with and without an IEP.

## **Research Questions**

- How do the personal, family, and school characteristics and in-school experiences of youth with disabilities differ from those of youth not served under IDEA? (Volume 1; March 2017)
- How do the characteristics and school experiences of youth vary across disability groups? (Volume 2; March 2017)
- How have the characteristics and school experiences of youth with disabilities changed over time? (Volume 3; February 2018)
- How do the course taking paths of youth with disabilities compare to that of other youth?
- Are youth with disabilities achieving the high school and post-high school outcomes envisioned by IDEA, and how do their college, training, and employment rates compare to those of other youth?
- How do these high school and postsecondary outcomes vary with student characteristics, including their disability?

## **Design and Analytic Considerations**

This descriptive study includes a nationally representative sample of over 400 districts and about 21,000 students. During Phase I of the study, survey data were collected in 2012-2013 from approximately 12,000 youth ages 13-21 and their parents, of which about 10,000 are students with IEPs representing each of the federal disability categories. The surveys asked students' background characteristics, health, functional abilities, and engagement in school, the academic supports they receive, and their expectations for and steps to achieve transitions beyond high school.

The current Phase II of NLTS 2012 follows the students through high school and beyond, relying on administrative data collected by the Department and other agencies. The study will obtain high school course-taking and completion information from school district records (to be completed in 2022) and postsecondary enrollment information from the Department's Federal Student Aid (FSA) records and the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) (to be collected 2022-2023). The study is also seeking to

obtain information on receipt of federal benefits and employment from the Social Security Administration (SSA) and the Department's Rehabilitative Services Administration (RSA). Administrative data will be linked with the 2012-2013 survey data to examine key steps in high school course-taking and completion, and youth's experiences with college, training, and employment.

### **Publications and Products**

Three related report volumes describing the survey information collected have been released (two on March 28, 2017 and the third on February 7, 2018). A brief summarizing the key findings from across the three volumes was released on May 15, 2018. Publications are listed below. The next product from this study is expected in 2023 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

# Teachers and Leaders

## *Significant Evaluations*

The Department has the following significant evaluations that will include work in Fiscal Year 2024:

- [Descriptive Study of Teacher Residency Programs](#)
- [Impact Evaluation to Inform the Teacher and School Leader Incentive Program](#)
- [Implementation of Title I/II-A Program Initiatives](#); listed above in the [School Improvement](#) topic area.

## [Descriptive Study of Teacher Residency Programs](#)

Priority Area	Expected Duration
Area 3. Educators Area 5. Postsecondary	September 2019 - June 2025

### **Background**

Teacher residency programs are rapidly increasing in popularity, as a potential way to address persistent inequities in student access to high quality teachers. This form of teacher preparation combines coursework with extensive on-the-job training in schools under the guidance of experienced mentors. The programs also typically place new graduates in hard-to-staff positions, most often in the same low-income or lower-performing districts where they trained. This approach may be promising, as underscored by recent changes in the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) which now allows states and districts to use Title II funds to support teacher residencies. But so far there is little systematic information about the specific strategies they employ or evidence that they are more successful than other ways of preparing teachers to work in high need schools. This study will provide an in-depth description of all current teacher residency programs in the United States and provide the first large-scale description of strategies used to improve the effectiveness and retention of teachers from these programs. Note that the focus of this study has shifted away from an impact study due to the challenges school systems face in recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Research Questions**

- Are the core features and strategies used by residency programs distinct from other teacher preparation programs and in-line with often stated program goals?
- What are the key recruitment strategies used to expand the quality and diversity of the applicant pool?
- How do residency programs prepare prospective teachers -- through coursework and classroom-based experiences -- to teach in underserved schools?
- What strategies do residency programs use to place graduates in traditionally hard-to-staff positions in the districts where they trained?

### **Design and Analytic Considerations**

Initial plans for this study included using random assignment and comparing student achievement and tenure in teaching for residency graduates and non-residency graduates to provide a reliable measure of the residency training's effectiveness. Due to difficulties associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, the initial study design was not feasible. Instead, the study will be descriptive, relying on interviews and surveys with the directors of all currently operating residency programs (about 160) across the country.

### **Publications and Products**

The first report for the study is expected in 2023 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

## Impact Evaluation to Inform the Teacher and School Leader Incentive Program

Priority Area	Expected Duration
Area 3. Educators	September 2018 - August 2025

### **Background**

Effective school leadership and teaching are at the heart of school improvement. Human capital management - the way in which a district makes and implements preparation, recruitment, hiring, placement, retention, dismissal, compensation, professional development, and tenure and promotion decisions - can play an important role in supporting effective educators. The purpose of the Teacher and School Leader Incentive (TSL) program is to develop and implement performance-based compensation systems or human capital management systems to improve student achievement. Grantees plan to implement multiple strategies, with a role for teacher leaders being the one strategy that is the most common among the 2017 awards. This mandated evaluation will provide implementation information from all 2017 grantees, with particular attention to teacher leader selection, roles, and supports. In addition, the study will estimate the impact on student achievement and teacher satisfaction and retention of using teacher leaders to improve student achievement.

### **Research Questions**

- What are the implementation experiences of the 2017 TSL grantees? What are their educator satisfaction, recruitment and retention experiences with TSL, particularly among those grantees funding teacher leader roles?
- What is the effect on student achievement, educator satisfaction, recruitment, and retention of a teacher leader role strategy? Is the teacher leader strategy cost effective?

### **Design and Analytic Considerations**

This is both a study of TSL program implementation and an impact study that will examine the effectiveness of a teacher leader role. Information on implementation will be based on 2017 TSL grantees, including the strategies they funded. For those grantees supporting a teacher leader role, information will include teacher leader responsibilities and their teaching load, the stipend amount, and how grantees select and train their teacher leader, the types of teachers targeted for support, and district and school contexts that facilitate or hinder the teacher leader role implementation.

In addition, a total of approximately 90 schools in 8 districts across the country were initially recruited to participate in an impact evaluation of funding teacher leaders for two years to support their peers using activities similar to that funded within the TSL grantees. About half of the schools within each district were assigned by lottery to implement the teacher leader model beginning in the 2020-21 school year. These schools will be compared to the other schools that are continuing with business-as-usual to estimate the causal impact of the teacher leader model on teacher and student outcomes. (Due

to measurement issues associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, student attendance, once a primary outcome for the study, will now be described through a set of exploratory analyses.)

Data collection will include: a TSL grantee survey in 2020 of all 14 TSL grantees receiving awards in 2017 to gather information about their TSL program; teacher and principal surveys to collect program implementation information as well as educator satisfaction and teacher recruitment activities and outcomes; teacher leader activity forms to provide information about teacher leader roles and activities; teacher and principal school assignment records to look at mobility and retention; and student administrative records to look at student outcomes.

### **Publications and Products**

The first report for the study is expected in 2023 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

# Technical Assistance

## *Significant Evaluations*

The Department has the following significant evaluations that will include work in Fiscal Year 2024:

- [National Evaluation of the 2019 Comprehensive Centers Program Grantees](#)

## National Evaluation of the 2019 Comprehensive Centers Program Grantees

Priority Area	Expected Duration
Area 4. Meeting Student Needs	September 2020 - October 2023

### **Background**

State and local education agencies face increased responsibilities resulting from both changes in federal law and the Coronavirus pandemic. The Comprehensive Centers program, funded by the U.S. Department of Education at over \$50 million per year, provides training, tools, and other supports to help these agencies carry out their education plans and take steps to close achievement gaps. The Centers' services aim to build individual and organizational capacity to help identify and solve key problems. This evaluation will examine the delivery and usefulness of the Centers' technical assistance, given new stakeholder needs and changes in the Center program that took effect with the 20 new grants awarded in 2019. Congress requires a periodic evaluation of the Comprehensive Centers program, with the results intended to inform ongoing program improvements.

### **Research Questions**

- What key educational problems are the Comprehensive Centers seeking to address? How has the pandemic shifted the program's emphasis?
- What services are Comprehensive Centers providing and what types of capacity are these services designed to increase?
- What are the perceived successes and challenges of program changes, including the shift in the number and geographic reach of the centers and new requirements to increase collaboration with the Department's Regional Educational Laboratories?

### **Design and Analytic Considerations**

This descriptive study of technical assistance delivered by the Comprehensive Centers will be based on document reviews, surveys of state agencies and school district staff in 2022, and interviews with Center directors.

### **Publications and Products**

The study's report is expected in 2023 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.



