

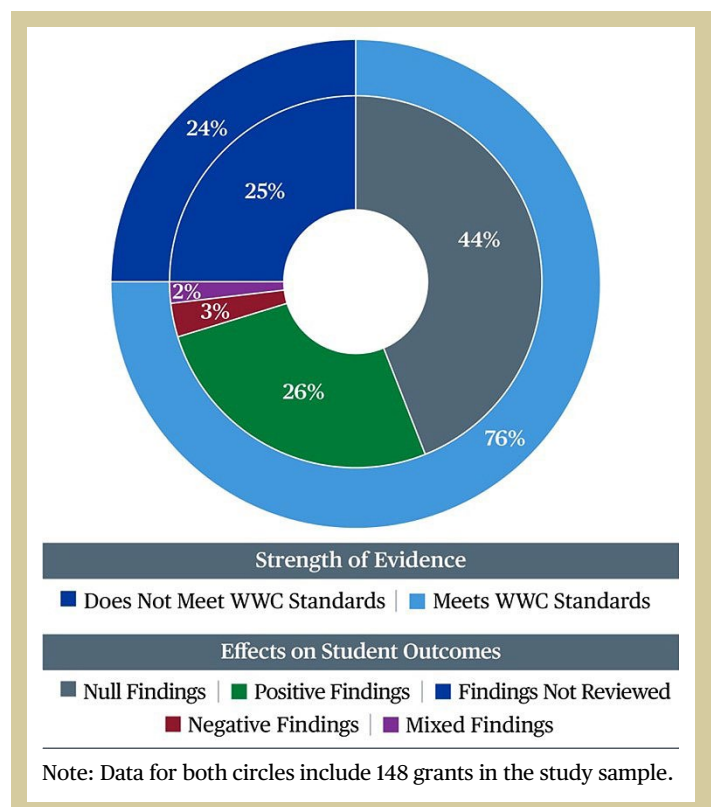
# Federal Efforts Towards Investing in Innovation Through the i3 Fund: A Summary of Grantmaking and Evidence-Building

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Finding and expanding the use of innovative educational strategies that work is important to help improve student learning and close equity gaps nationwide. The Investing in Innovation Fund (i3) was a key U.S. Department of Education (Department) program explicitly focused on these goals. Between 2010 and 2016, i3 invested \$1.4 billion in 172 grants to universities, school districts, and private non-profit organizations. Grantees were required to fund independent evaluations that would meet high standards for quality. The Department reviewed 148 completed i3 evaluations to understand the key components of the grantees’ educational strategies, assess the quality of the grantees’ evaluations, and summarize what the evaluations found.

## Key Findings

- The most commonly implemented strategies involved professional development for educators to improve instruction or reform schools.*** The objective for thirty-six percent of grantees (53 grantees) was improving curricula and instruction. An additional 26 percent (38 grantees) focused on turning around struggling schools. Most grantees (80 percent; 119 grantees) reported that delivering professional development to classroom teachers was a key activity to achieve their objectives.
- Grantees largely met the i3 goal of producing rigorous evidence about their educational strategy.*** Seventy-six percent of the i3 evaluations (112 evaluations) met the Department’s expectation for grantees’ evaluations to meet What Works Clearinghouse evidence standards.
- However, few of the educational strategies were found to improve student outcomes in grantee sites.*** Twenty-six percent of i3 evaluations found at least one positive effect and no negative effects on student academic outcomes (39 grants).



The core goal of the i3 Fund and its successor, the Education Innovation and Research (EIR) grant program, is to identify innovations that work and take them to scale. Learning about and from these programs is critical if they are to achieve their full potential and yield the benefits students so desperately need.