Understanding ESSA Evidence

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

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

ESSA Defines Four Tiers of Evidence:

- **Tier 1—Strong:** Supported by one or more experimental studies
- **Tier 2—Moderate:** Supported by one or more quasi-experimental studies
- **Tier 3—Promising:** Supported by one or more correlational studies
- **Tier 4—Demonstrates a Rationale:** Practices that have a logic model, are supported by research, and have some effort of study underway

SECRET STORIES® is a brain-based solution to teaching phonics in a meaningful way. Aligned with the Science of Reading, it provides a supportive framework that is explicit, systematic and multisensory in its approach — one that is based on the brain’s systems for learning. Secret Stories® provides the logical explanations for letter sound behaviors that learners' brains crave. These logical explanations are shared in the form of “secret” stories; the secret reasons WHY letters make the many different sounds that they do. Based on a foundation of “universal” emotional connections and social experiences, each short sound story becomes a strong memory-holding template in the brain, providing an easily accessible framework for memory construction.

**Tier 2**

**PROMISING Criteria as Defined by ESSA**

- Demonstrates a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes
- Based on promising evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias

**How SECRET STORIES® Meets the Promising Criteria**

- Educators who utilized Secret Stories® as part of multi-modal phonics instruction had higher measures of student letter recognition and sound mastery in significantly shorter time frames as measured by standardized early literacy assessment measures.
- Educators who utilized Secret Stories® as part of multi-modal phonics instruction had higher measures of student phonics skill mastery and greater reading gains in significantly shorter time frames as measured by standardized early literacy assessment measures.

For more information, visit [www.TheSecretStories.com](http://www.TheSecretStories.com).
EVIDENCE & RESULTS


Research:


Evidence Summary

Secret Stories® brain-based approach is designed to support early and accelerated acquisition of phonics skills. Pilot evidence shows that students receiving Secret Stories® develop phonemic awareness much more rapidly, with most achieving "end of year" phonics goals as early as November of kindergarten year. (Graph A)

Examining student performance of reading skills through the use of a standardized assessment measure such as the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) indicates significant growth from fall to spring.

In year one, the number of students performing below goal level decreased from 96% to 13%, while the total number of students performing above goal level increased from 0% to 84% from fall to spring. (Graph B)

Year two data is equally strong with students performing below goal level dropping from 81% to 14% from fall to spring, and the number of students performing above goal level rising from 14% to 77%. (Graph C)

In the related study by Wright and Jacobs (2003), teachers implemented an intervention focused on phonological awareness and metalinguistic and metacognitive concepts. The metalinguistic component consisted of fictionalized explanations of the origins of certain phonological rules (e.g., the silent e at the end of a word is silent because it cannot reach the vowel with its arms). The metacognitive component taught students to develop a logical plan to approach reading and spelling. The focus on a metalinguistic and metacognitive approach consistent to the Secret Stories® approach meets What Works Clearinghouse Group Design Standards without reservations.