Q: What does ESSA recognize as evidence?
A: The law acknowledges that evidence comes in multiple forms and that highly rigorous studies are not available for all types of interventions. As a result, it specifies four levels of evidence and encourages states and districts to use the most rigorous type of evidence available. The top three levels require findings of a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes:

- **Level 1 – Strong evidence:** At least one well-designed and well-implemented experimental (i.e. randomized) study.
- **Level 2 – Moderate evidence:** At least one well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental (i.e. matched control group) study.
- **Level 3 – Promising evidence:** At least one well-designed and well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias.

The fourth level is useful when the research base on a particular type of intervention is not well-developed and few or no rigorous studies are available. It consists of interventions that are developing and promising but do not yet have evidence qualifying for the top three levels.

- **Level 4 – Evidence-building and under evaluation:**
  - Demonstrates rationale based on high-quality research or positive evaluation that such activity, strategy, or intervention is likely to improve student outcomes;
  - Includes ongoing efforts to examine the effects of such activity, strategy, or intervention.

Additionally, the What Works Clearinghouse has curriculum etc. that meets the ESSA tiers of evidence: [https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/essa](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/essa)

Wallace published report in 2019 on how afterschool and summer programs meet the evidence based requirements:
