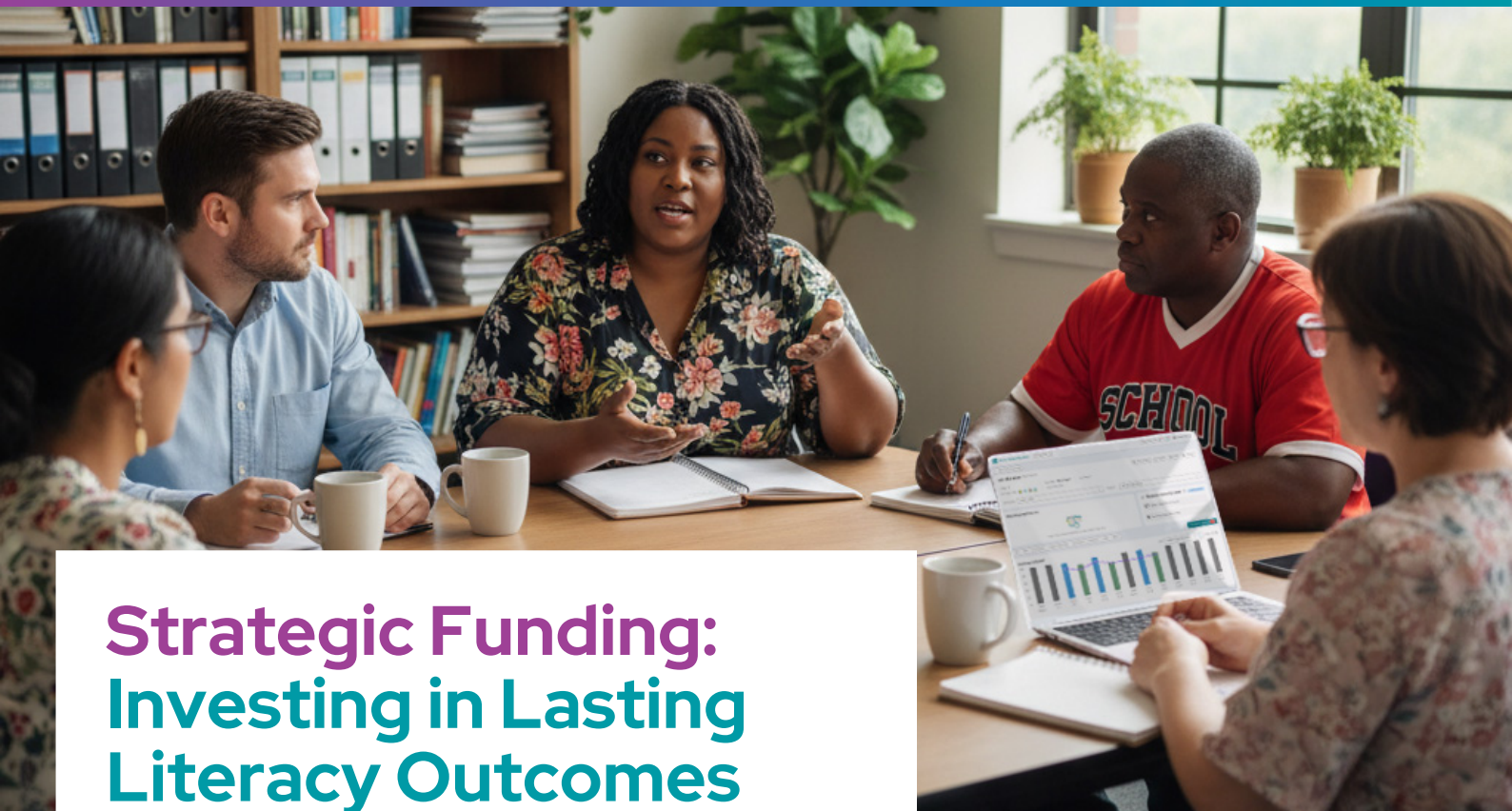




Strategic Funding: Investing in Lasting Literacy Outcomes

Align funding decisions with district priorities, evidence-based instruction, and long-term implementation

Schools with a D or F rating or a CSI or TSI designation often have access to funding for evidence-based school improvement. Choosing an intervention is only the first step. Lasting improvement comes from selecting a solution that aligns with district priorities, supports educators, and delivers measurable outcomes.

ESSA Section 1003



School improvement dollars allocated exclusively to CSI and TSI campuses. These funds legally require evidence-based interventions to unlock.

Title I



Supplemental funding built to support students who fall behind academic benchmarks, matching a targeted secondary reading intervention.

State Turnaround Grants



Specialized, state-level grants tied directly to active school improvement plans and rapid accountability rating recovery.

For turnaround campuses, this is not a discretionary add-on. It is the definitive, mandate-aligned move—the exact intervention line item state reviewers expect to see.

Leadership Insight

District and school leaders should be prepared to answer four key questions before committing funding to a literacy initiative.

- ✓ Does this investment directly address the needs identified in our data?
- ✓ Is the solution supported by evidence and aligned with state requirements?
- ✓ How will we support educators throughout implementation?
- ✓ How will we measure success and communicate results to stakeholders?

Evidence-Based and Independently Verified

For improvement plans, the evidence standard matters

While many programs claim a research foundation, federal directors require objective proof. The ESSA framework cuts through the noise, separating theoretical promises from sustained reading gains to give districts absolute institutional certainty.

THE ESSA EVIDENCE TIERS

Tier 1 · Strong
Experimental studies

Tier 2 · Moderate
Quasi-experimental studies

Tier 3 · Promising
Correlational studies

Tier 4 · Rationale
Logic model + ongoing study



To secure ESSA improvement funds, you must use evidence-based interventions—and the law strictly defines what qualifies. RGR aligns with these statutory situations, giving federal-programs directors the exact verification they need to approve investments.

When you build your plans on evidence that meets ESSA's Tier 1–3 standards, your applications clear state reviews faster and easily survive compliance scrutiny.

Independently Verified

[See RGR's impact →](#)

RGR's research base meets federal evidence standards under ESSA, including independent quasi-experimental studies showing sustained reading gains that continue into subsequent grades. RGR is also recognized by Evidence for ESSA at Johns Hopkins. For CSI and TSI improvement plans, this satisfies the evidence-based requirement.

Sources: ESSA Evidence Tiers (ED.gov) · RGR Research & Impact

Maximize Your Literacy Investment

Planning Checklist for District Leaders

Securing funding is an important milestone, but it's only the beginning. Lasting impact comes from thoughtful planning, strong educator support, and a clear strategy for measuring outcomes. Use these planning prompts to help your leadership team make informed decisions before, during, and after implementation.

Define the Need

Identify the literacy challenge your investment is intended to address.

- ☐ Clearly define the literacy challenge
- ☐ Identify the student data that supports the need
- ☐ Determine which students will benefit most
- ☐ Select the funding source aligned with overall goals
- ☐ Establish measurable outcomes that will define success

Plan for Sustainability

Develop a strategy that supports long-term implementation and growth.

- ☐ Align the initiative with district literacy goals
- ☐ Identify the resources & leadership support needed for long-term success
- ☐ Develop a sustainable literacy plan to follow through staffing or leadership changes
- ☐ Consider how the work will continue beyond the initial funding period

Support Educators

Provide educators with the training and support needed for successful implementation

- ☐ Plan for professional learning before implementation begins
- ☐ Provide ongoing coaching and instructional support
- ☐ Establish a process for onboarding new educators
- ☐ Promote consistent implementation across schools and classrooms

Measure Outcomes

Monitor progress and use data to guide continuous improvement.

- ☐ Identify the student outcomes and implementation metrics you'll monitor
(For example: screening data, student growth data, implementation fidelity)
- ☐ Establish a schedule for reviewing progress and making adjustments
- ☐ Communicate results with key stakeholders
- ☐ Apply findings future literacy investments & implementation efforts

District Literacy Implementation Tracker

A planning and reflection tool for district leadership teams

Use this tracker to monitor implementation, reflect on progress, identify challenges, and guide continuous improvement throughout your literacy initiative.

Student Outcomes

Are students making meaningful progress?

Key Metrics

- Universal screening results
- Diagnostic assessment growth
- Intervention progress
- Reading proficiency trends

Notes and Next Steps:

Support Educators

Are educators receiving the support they need?

Key Metrics

- Professional learning participation
- Coaching cycles
- New educator onboarding
- Implementation consistency

Notes and Next Steps:

Implementation

Is the initiative being implemented as intended?

Key Metrics

- Fidelity observations
- Progress monitoring completion
- Implementation milestones
- Identified barriers

Notes and Next Steps:

Leadership

How will you demonstrate success?

Key Metrics

- Stakeholder communication
- School board updates
- District reporting
- Sustainability planning

Notes and Next Steps:

LEADERSHIP REFLECTION

Every implementation review should end with three questions:

- What progress have we made?
- What barriers remain?
- Where should we focus next?