

# 5 Steps to choosing the right intervention programs



Students and educators have faced significant challenges due to interrupted learning and instructional shifts over the past few years. These changes across education have exacerbated an already existing achievement gap. To help support student needs, educators must provide vulnerable student populations with diverse intervention efforts for both math and reading.

As schools work to engage students—while striving to balance social-emotional and academic learning needs—there is a renewed focus on implementing intervention programs that:

- Engage and motivate students
- Accelerate learning
- Yield rapid results
- Provide evidence to demonstrate improved student outcomes

This guide offers five critical steps your district can take to inform intervention decisions and implementation.

## 1 Identify student needs, and determine stakeholder capacities

Engage all district stakeholders (teachers, administrators, families, students, community partners, etc.) to determine specific student needs. Consider gathering information via online surveys, personal interviews and focus groups. Compare current student outcomes with performance goals. Use this information to identify student achievement gaps and prioritize appropriately.

### REMINDER:

It is critical to determine your ability to implement a program with fidelity and certify sufficient resource allocation.

Take inventory of practices and interventions currently being used. Are any interventions not producing the desired results? Are tools or learning solutions going unused? Make sure you understand the current situation before looking to add a new intervention to your district's toolbox.

Once you understand current gaps and needs, analyze your district's capacity to implement something new. How much effort and time will stakeholders need to invest to make the initiative successful? Look at available funding, existing technology infrastructure, staffing needs, administration leadership support and scheduling requirements.

### QUICK TIP:

Choosing an easy-to-use, flexible and evidence-based intervention program will help maximize your return on investment.

## 2 Look for evidence-based interventions

Once you've identified the intervention your district needs, it's essential to select programs with quality efficacy research.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) encourages school districts to choose intervention programs with sufficient evidence to demonstrate that they improve student outcomes. Understanding evidence standards and knowing what to look for can help educators make informed choices about an intervention program's potential effectiveness.

### QUICK TIP:

The ESSA Tiers of Evidence is a great tool to narrow your search. Several clearinghouses can also help educators find evidence-based instructional programs.

Evidence for ESSA provides the most up-to-date and user-friendly review of research based on the ESSA tiers. The What Works Clearinghouse has started to align its evaluation process with the ESSA tiers, and the National Center for Intensive Intervention provides evaluations of other program components such as academic screeners.

In addition to referring to third-party sources, be sure to check out the program's own research to ensure it's not reliant on self-referential data. Proprietary company results and performance data should be correlated with a national metric, such as SBAC, PARCC or NWEA MAP, to be a compelling comparison.

### REMINDER:

No matter how you select a program, you'll find that interventions with rigorous evidence of effectiveness are more likely to produce successful results in your district.



### 3 Explore existing users' experiences

Educator support and stakeholder buy-in—from administrators to intervention specialists to classroom teachers—are among the most important elements of a successful intervention program. Review case studies, videos or testimonials from schools and districts similar to yours to ensure that key personnel favor the program.

Although many success stories from other schools and districts can point you in the right direction, consider piloting the program first to understand if it's right for you.

#### REMINDER:

Districts face a growing concern – limited staff availability. This can hinder educators' capacity to provide necessary personal instruction and support. The intervention program you choose should support efforts to increase stakeholder bandwidth and be flexible enough for students to use independently from home and in school.

### 4 Research the program's flexible implementation options

If school closures have taught us anything, it's that education has changed. A program's ability to adjust to instructional shifts easily is essential. When evaluating an intervention's flexibility, look for the following features:

1. Built-in communication tools between teachers and students
2. 24/7 web-based access from a variety of devices
3. Resources for parent and family engagement
4. Extensive reporting to maintain accountability
5. Easily accessible and responsive customer service

#### QUICK TIP:

Consider who will implement, monitor and measure program success. Then, look for testimonials from educators who have direct experience in these areas.

## 5 Implement with fidelity and use actionable data to inform decisions

Choosing a robust and evidence-based intervention program for your students is an important first step to help define student learning goals. But to achieve these goals requires another critical step: Students must use the program as intended – with fidelity – to ensure maximum results.

To increase fidelity and ensure a successful implementation of intervention programs, educators must:

- Select an intuitive program that can easily implement self-guided learning and offers professional development opportunities for teachers eager for extra support.
- Provide teachers with resources and ongoing coaching to use the program effectively.
- Monitor student, classroom, building and district performance data using program-based, real-time data reports.
- Adjust learning plans as needed to stay on track with expected growth outcomes.



## DreamBox Impact

Determining the right programs for your students requires a great deal of effort, with multiple stakeholders investing significant time. Take these five steps to help ensure that students have access to intervention programs that strengthen academic performance and build lifelong learners.

## Helpful Resources

1. [What Works Clearinghouse](#)
2. [Evidence for ESSA](#)
3. [ESSA Guidance: Using Evidence to Strengthen Education Investments](#)
4. [School Leadership Interventions Under the Every Student Succeeds Act](#)
5. [Evidence Review ESSA Tiers of Evidence: What You Need To Know](#)



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