

EBITE RESOURCE GUIDE

Searching for Evidence-based Interventions (EBIs): Focus on ESSA Levels 1 & 2

Purpose

The information in this guide aligns with the second step in the Cycle of Continuous Improvement—Select an Intervention. The four [ESSA Levels \(or Tiers\) of Evidence for Evidence-based Interventions](#) provide a framework to help users evaluate EBIs for use in their continuous improvement work. This guide will provide an overview of searching EBI clearinghouses and a suggested search strategy with a focus on finding academic EBIs at [ESSA Levels 1 and 2](#) using the [Ohio Evidence-Based Clearinghouse, What Works Clearinghouse](#), and two other clearinghouses.



Figure 1. Continuous Improvement Cycle

How to Use this Guide

This guide presents a suggested strategy for using three EBI clearinghouses to find ESSA Levels 1 & 2 interventions that align with your team's school improvement goals. Here are some suggestions for using this guide.

1. Consult this guide after you have already completed the first step in the Cycle of Continuous Improvement. You should have already identified needs which includes determining root causes and creating at least one SMART goal (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic, **T**imely; see the EBITE Resource Guide #06 for more on SMART goals). You should have collected key information about your local context and be ready to select an intervention that aligns with your SMART goal and local context.
2. Read this guide all the way through before starting your search and use the links provided in the text to learn (or remember) key concepts.
3. When you're ready to start searching for ESSA Level 1 & 2 EBIs, have this guide open in another screen or print out to have with you as you search so you can follow along with the screen captures of the search process.
4. Keep in mind that there are many EBI clearinghouses and that each may operate differently than the ones discussed in this guide. The search strategy suggested here should be used as a model for creating your own search strategy to use with other EBI clearinghouses (see Resource list at the end).

What are ESSA Levels 1 and 2 Interventions?

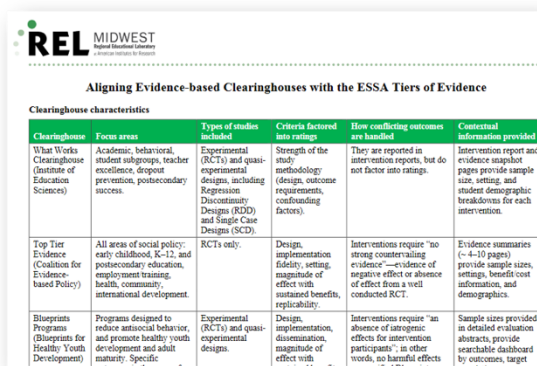
The ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) is a U.S. federal law that governs K-12 education policy and emphasizes evidence-based practices to improve educational outcomes for all students. Under ESSA, evidence-based interventions are categorized into four tiers (or levels) based on their level of evidence determined via research studies conducted on the interventions. These

tiers are known as "ESSA Levels" and EBIs categorized as Levels 1 and 2 are deemed to have the strongest evidence for effectiveness based on a review of findings from experimental research (Level 1) or quasi-experimental research (Level 2).

It's important to note that ESSA Levels 1 and 2 are desirable for evidence-based interventions when making decisions about education policies, funding allocations, and program implementations. These levels prioritize interventions that have a solid research base and have demonstrated positive effects on student learning and achievement. By relying on evidence-based interventions, schools and policymakers can make informed decisions about the programs and strategies that are likely to yield the best results for their students.

What is an EBI Clearinghouse?

Evidence-Based Intervention Clearinghouses are searchable databases of intervention programs that have been designed and researched for their ability to solve specific educational problems. These databases are usually web-based and include detailed program information and summaries of research evidence on EBIs. There is some common information across clearinghouse, but there is still great variation in the depth of information provided on each EBI, the specific areas of focus (academic, non-academic), information provided on the research studies that are included and even how they classify the strength of the EBI. Arguably the most popular clearinghouse is the [What Works Clearinghouse \(WWC\)](#) managed by the Institute for Educational Sciences. Many other clearinghouses link back to the WWC, but may or may not use the same evidence "rating" classifications to categorize the EBIs in their database. The sample search strategy below will demonstrate this.



Clearinghouse characteristics		Types of studies included	Criteria featured into ratings	How conflicting outcomes are handled	Contextual information provided
What Works Clearinghouse (Institute of Education Sciences)	Academic, behavioral, student subgroups, teacher excellence, dropout prevention, postsecondary success.	Experimental (RCTs) and quasi-experimental designs, including Regression Discontinuity Designs (RDD) and Single Case Designs (SCDs).	Strength of the study methodology (design, outcome requirements, confounding factors).	They are reported in intervention reports, but do not factor into ratings.	Intervention report and evidence snapshot pages provide sample size, setting, and student demographic breakdowns for each intervention.
Top Tier Evidence (Coalition for Evidence-based Policy)	All areas of social policy: early childhood, K-12, and postsecondary education, employment training, health, community, international development.	RCTs only.	Design, implementation fidelity, setting, magnitude of effect with sustained benefits, replicability.	Interventions require "no strong countervailing evidence"—evidence of negative effect or absence of effect from a well conducted RCT.	Evidence summaries (~4-10 pages) provide sample sizes, settings, benefit cost information, and demographics.
Blueprints Programs (Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development)	Programs designed to reduce antisocial behavior, and promote healthy youth development and adult maturity. Specific	Experimental (RCTs) and quasi-experimental designs.	Design, implementation, dissemination, magnitude of effect with	Interventions require "an absence of antagonistic effects for intervention participants", in other words, no harmful effects	Sample sizes provided in detailed evaluation abstracts, provide searchable dashboard by outcomes, target

Figure 2: Screenshot of REL Midwest Crosswalk (Source: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/regions/midwest/pdf/eventhandout/ESSA-Clearinghouse-Crosswalk-Jan2018-508.pdf>)

Searching for ESSA Levels 1 & 2 Interventions: A Suggested Strategy

The variation of information provided necessitates using a search strategy that involves several databases for effective selection of EBIs to consider. The search strategy we suggest involves the use of four clearinghouses to find ESSA Levels 1 and 2 academic interventions: The [Ohio Evidence-Based Clearinghouse](#), [Evidence for ESSA](#), the [Pennsylvania Evidence Resource Center](#), and the [IES What Works Clearinghouse](#) (WWC) along with tips for searching for non-academic interventions. In the sample strategy provided, assume that your team has a SMART goal that is focused on literacy for students in grades 6-8. Below are the steps to explore literacy interventions for middle school students and choose one to examine in depth. *NOTE: We recommend that you begin with the OEBC and use the WWC toward the end of your search strategy, but any other clearinghouses may be used in place of the others and in any order that makes sense for your needs.*

Sample Search Strategy Steps

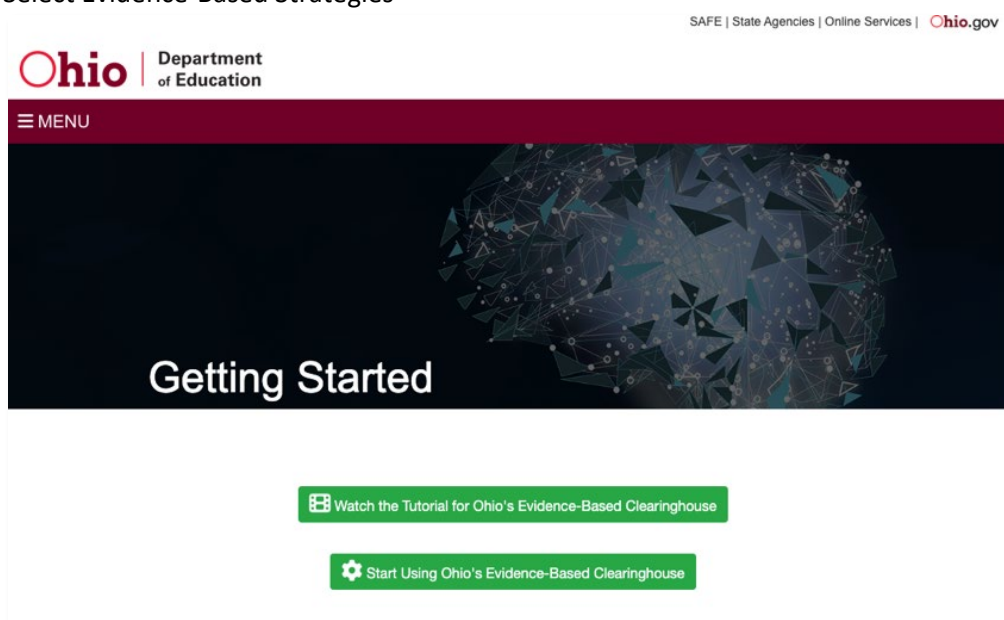
Follow the steps below to walk through a sample search strategy for finding an EBI. This exercise can be used as an exercise to familiarize yourself with using EBI Clearinghouses. You may also substitute an EBI of your choice in place of the one we examine below. Before you begin, be sure to have this guide open

on another screen as you walk through the steps below. REMINDER: Assume that your team has a SMART goal that is focused on literacy for students in grades 6-8.

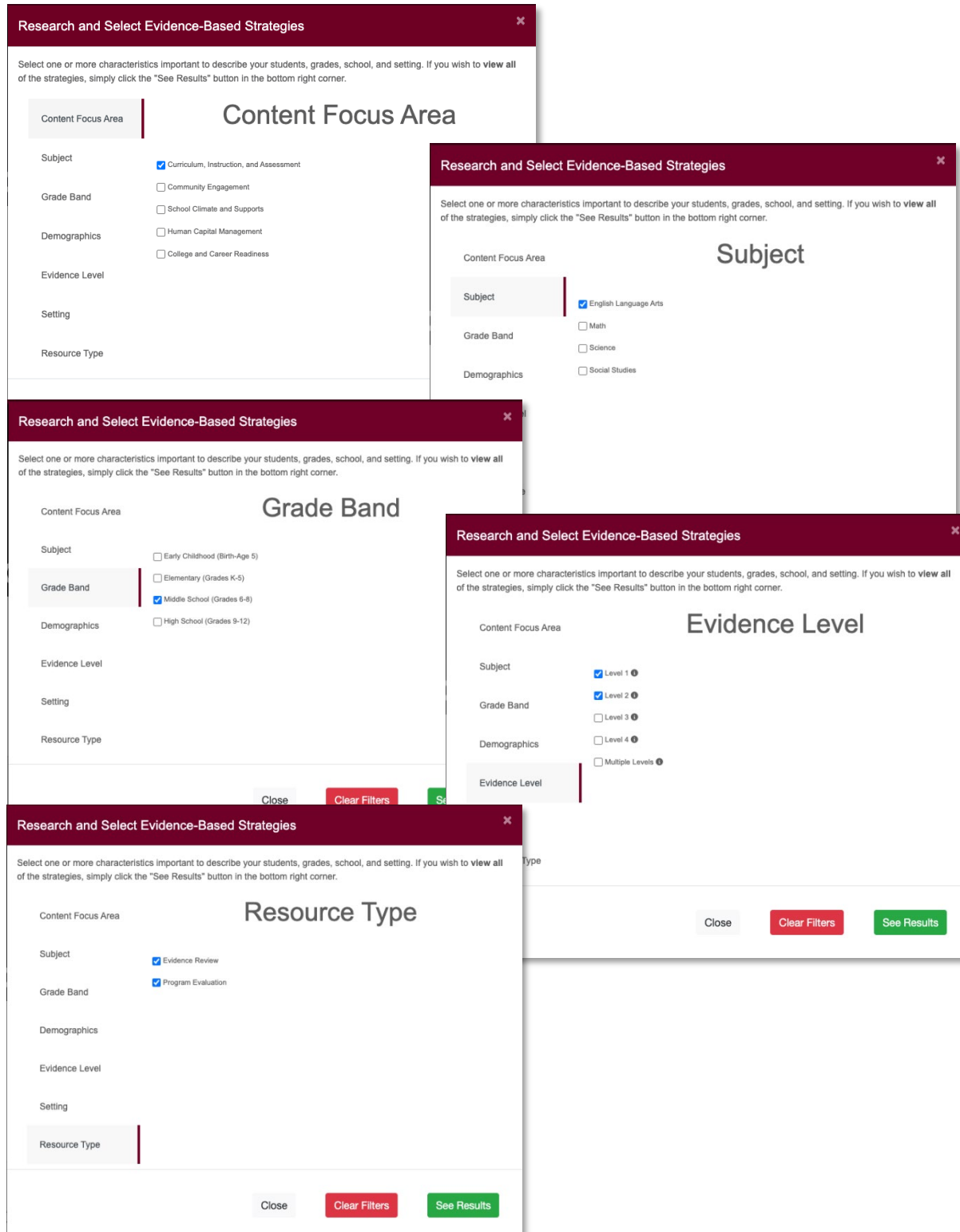
1. Go to OEBC: <https://essa.chrr.ohio-state.edu/home> and click "Getting Started" to move to the "Getting Started" page.



2. Click on "Start Using Ohio's Evidence-Based Clearinghouse and a box will pop up, "Research and Select Evidence-Based Strategies"



- In the box, “Research and Select Evidence-Based Strategies” you will be able to set filters for your search. For this search, we are looking for ESSA Levels 1 & 2, curriculum interventions with evidence for effectiveness for middle school English Language Arts. Opt for both Resource Types. Click “See Results.” NOTE: Additional filters allow you to limit by Setting and Demographics. More on this later.



Research and Select Evidence-Based Strategies

Select one or more characteristics important to describe your students, grades, school, and setting. If you wish to **view all** of the strategies, simply click the “See Results” button in the bottom right corner.

Content Focus Area

Subject ☒ Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Grade Band ☐ Community Engagement

Demographics ☐ School Climate and Supports

Evidence Level ☐ Human Capital Management

Setting ☐ College and Career Readiness

Resource Type

Research and Select Evidence-Based Strategies

Select one or more characteristics important to describe your students, grades, school, and setting. If you wish to **view all** of the strategies, simply click the “See Results” button in the bottom right corner.

Subject

Content Focus Area

Subject ☒ English Language Arts

Grade Band ☐ Math

Demographics ☐ Science

☐ Social Studies

Research and Select Evidence-Based Strategies

Select one or more characteristics important to describe your students, grades, school, and setting. If you wish to **view all** of the strategies, simply click the “See Results” button in the bottom right corner.

Grade Band

Content Focus Area

Subject ☐ Early Childhood (Birth-Age 5)

Grade Band ☐ Elementary (Grades K-5)

☒ Middle School (Grades 6-8)

Demographics ☐ High School (Grades 9-12)

Evidence Level

Setting

Resource Type

Research and Select Evidence-Based Strategies

Select one or more characteristics important to describe your students, grades, school, and setting. If you wish to **view all** of the strategies, simply click the “See Results” button in the bottom right corner.

Evidence Level

Content Focus Area

Subject ☒ Level 1 ⓘ

Grade Band ☒ Level 2 ⓘ

Demographics ☐ Level 3 ⓘ

☐ Level 4 ⓘ

Evidence Level ☐ Multiple Levels ⓘ

Research and Select Evidence-Based Strategies

Select one or more characteristics important to describe your students, grades, school, and setting. If you wish to **view all** of the strategies, simply click the “See Results” button in the bottom right corner.

Resource Type

Content Focus Area

Subject ☒ Evidence Review

Grade Band ☒ Program Evaluation

Demographics

Evidence Level

Setting

Resource Type

Close Clear Filters See Results

- The results page will show only the records that meet your filters. Scroll down and notice that there are 12 EBI records--several Level 1 EBIs, a Level 2 EBI and an EBI that is denoted as "Multiple Levels." *NOTE: Use fewer filters to get more results.*
- Click on the name of the "Level 1" intervention "Achieve3000" to learn more about it.

Research and Select Evidence-Based Strategies

Filters

Number of records based on filters: 12

[Clear Filters](#) [Filter Results](#)

Content Focus Area ▼

- ☒ Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment (3,432)
- ☐ Community Engagement (14)
- ☐ School Climate and Supports (14)
- ☐ Human Capital Management (1)
- ☐ College and Career Readiness (1)

Level 1

Achieve3000-Secondary

Achieve3000 offers digital, supplemental literacy programs for grades 2-12 and includes differentiated content to build student fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing across content areas. [Learn More](#)

Level 1

Comprehension Circuit Training (CCT)

Comprehension Circuit Training uses content delivered to students on tablet computers to teach reading comprehension skills. [Learn More](#)

Level 1

Intelligent Tutoring for Structure Strategy (ITSS)

Web-Based Intelligent Tutoring for the Structure Strategy (ITSS) is a supplemental web-based program for students in grades K-5. [Learn More](#)

- You will navigate to a very brief overview of the major focus and components of the EBI. Notice in the table, it tells you which database this entry will link to. In this case, the entry links to [Evidence for ESSA](#). Click on the EBI name (highlighted in blue) to navigate to that database and learn more about Achieve3000.

Level 1 Strategy

Achieve3000-Secondary

Achieve3000 offers digital, supplemental literacy programs for grades 2-12 and includes differentiated content to build student fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing across content areas. The student instructional routine is designed to build key literacy capacities and college and career level critical thinking skills.

Clearinghouse	Subject Area	Grade Band	Evidence Level	Content Focus Area	Setting	Demographic
Evidence for ESSA	English Language Arts	Middle School; High School	Level 1	Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	---	---

[← Back To Results](#)

Level 1

Achieve3000-Secondary

Achieve3000 offers digital, supplemental literacy programs for grades 2-12 and includes differentiated content to build student fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing across content areas. The student instructional routine is designed to build key literacy capacities and college and career level critical thinking skills.

Are you sure you want to leave the ESSA Clearinghouse?

You will be redirected to a new tab.

[Cancel](#) [Yes, let's go!](#)

Clearinghouse	Subject Area	Grade Band	Evidence Level	Content Focus Area	Setting	Demographic	Resource Type
Evidence for ESSA	English Language Arts	Middle School; High School	Level 1	Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	---	---	Program Evaluation

- Click "Let's Go!" to be taken to the Achieve3000 entry in [Evidence for ESSA](#).

8. Once you reach that page, take a moment to read through the information provided on Achieve3000. Notice that the “ESSA rating” is listed as “Strong” and also, make note of other details provided in this clearinghouse.
9. Notice, in the bottom right corner of the light blue box under “Detailed Overview”, there is a link to Key Studies. Click that link to open a small pop up box containing the citation(s) of the research studies that provide the evidence.
10. Click the link “What Works Clearinghouse” to navigate to the [WWC](#) to find the entry in that clearinghouse.

11. Once at the WWC, you will need to search for the Achieve3000 EBI in the WWC. Type it into the search box. Use the dropdown selections to filter to “Literacy” and select the “Middle School [6-8] grade band.
12. Click “Search” to navigate to the Achieve3000 entry in the WWC.
13. Your search result will be a page of different documents about Achieve300.

14. Notice that the WWC provides more details on the research evidence and that the “Highest Evidence Tier” for Achieve3000 is “Tier 2-Moderate” which is different from the prior two clearinghouses we used!

15. Find the first two bold green headings names in the right-hand column and click the first one (in bold, green font) to view the “Evidence Snapshot” for Achieve3000 for improving Adolescent Literacy.

NOTE: Also, the last two segments are links to WWC’s “Review of Study” which is a review and evaluation of the actual research study conducted on the Achieve3000 Intervention.

16. On this page you will see a detailed overview of the intervention, a link to download the Intervention Report, effectiveness ratings, population information, and scroll down to see additional resources. Explore these resources in detail.

Findings

Outcome domain	Effectiveness Rating	Grades	Evidence Tier
Comprehension	3 out of 5	2-5	Tier 2 Moderate
Literacy Achievement	5 out of 5	2-8	Tier 2 Moderate

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Summary of all Research Settings and Samples that Met Standards

Race

Race	Percentage
Asian	14%
Black	16%
White	35%
Other or unknown	70%

Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Percentage
Hispanic	40%
Not Hispanic or Latino	60%

Gender

Gender	Percentage
Male	50%
Female	50%

Free & Reduced-Price Lunch

Free & Reduced-Price Lunch	Percentage
Free & Reduced-Price Lunch	42%

English Learners

English Learners	Percentage
English Learners	77%

Note: This summary only includes data from studies that reported sample information. The Intervention Report may include evidence from other studies that met

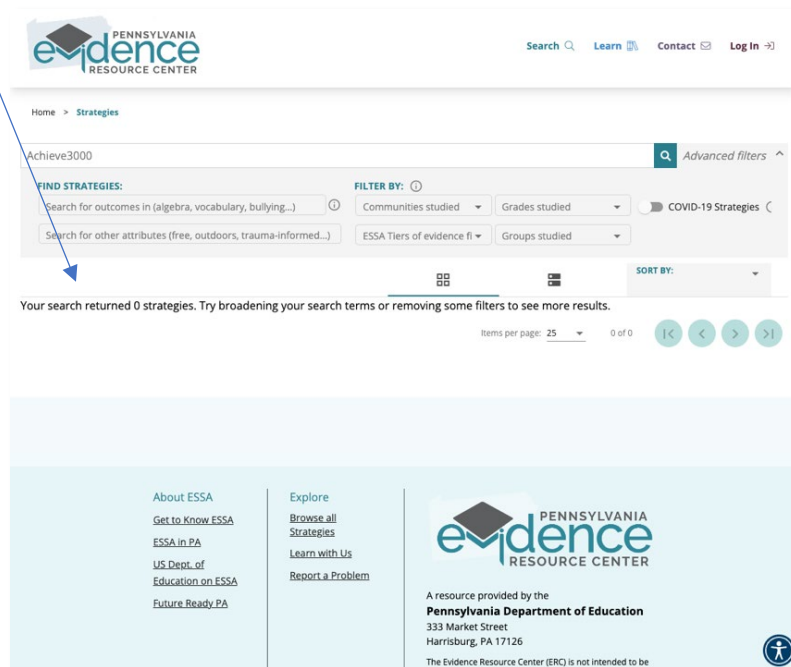
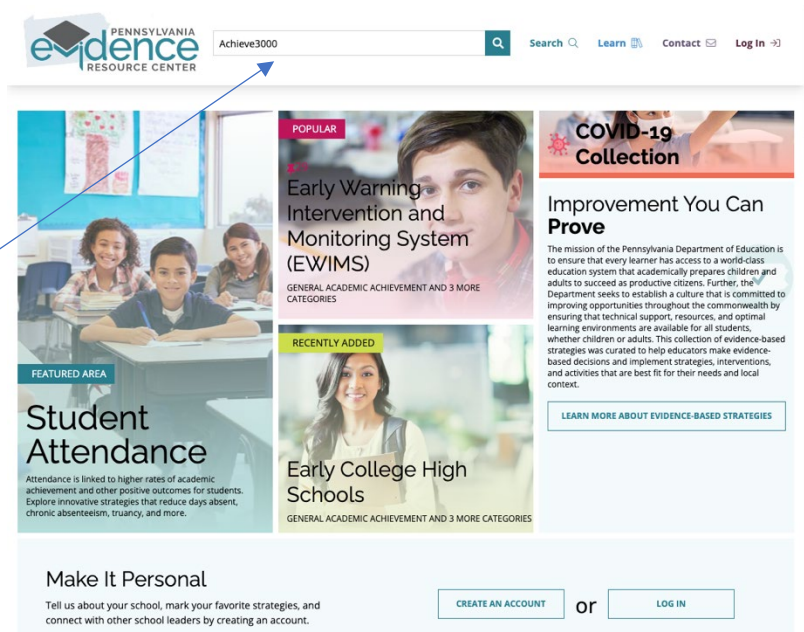
17. After exploring the WWC entry, let's try to search for this EBI in one more clearinghouse—the [Pennsylvania Evidence Resource Center](https://evidencecenter.pa.gov/)

18. In the search box at the top, type in Achieve3000. You'll notice that your search revealed no results. It isn't uncommon to find that certain EBIs to be missing from one or more clearinghouses.

To Remember

These databases are being updated by different organizations that do not all use the exact same criteria and protocols for inclusion of EBIs. This is yet another reason why it's important to search several clearinghouses in your process of finding potential EBIs.

In an actual situation, you would use several databases to search for and explore several interventions to discuss with your team about how well the EBIs fit your population's needs and context for implementation.



Resources

- [Clearinghouse Crosswalk](#) from REL Midwest - Shows a list of clearinghouses that provide similar types of information on EBIs.
- [Evidence Tiers and WWC Rating](#) – Contains information resources on the study ratings used in the What Works Clearinghouse.
- [EBITE Clearinghouse List](#) – From the EBITE website—a list of EBI clearinghouses

Video Resources

Watch this short (8:35 minute) tutorial on how to use the *Ohio Evidence-based Clearinghouse* (OEBC)

- <https://essa.chrr.ohio-state.edu/getting-started>

This longer video (49:24 minutes) from the Institute of Education Sciences reviews how schools can use the *What Works Clearinghouse* to search for interventions that match ESSA Tiers/Levels of Evidence

- [Using WWC Resources to Identify Interventions that meet ESSA Tiers of Evidence](#)

This next brief video (4:36 minutes) from the Institute of Education Sciences reviews how to use additional resources from the *What Works Clearinghouse* to find what works in literacy instruction

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UQaDm76c6Bw>