

# **Are legislators more responsive to high quality evidence? A field experiment**

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# Introduction

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# Research Questions

- Do policymakers **give more credence** to high quality research?

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- Do policymakers **give more credence** to high quality research?
- Can policymakers **recognize** differences in research quality?

# Theory

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# Pre-existing literature

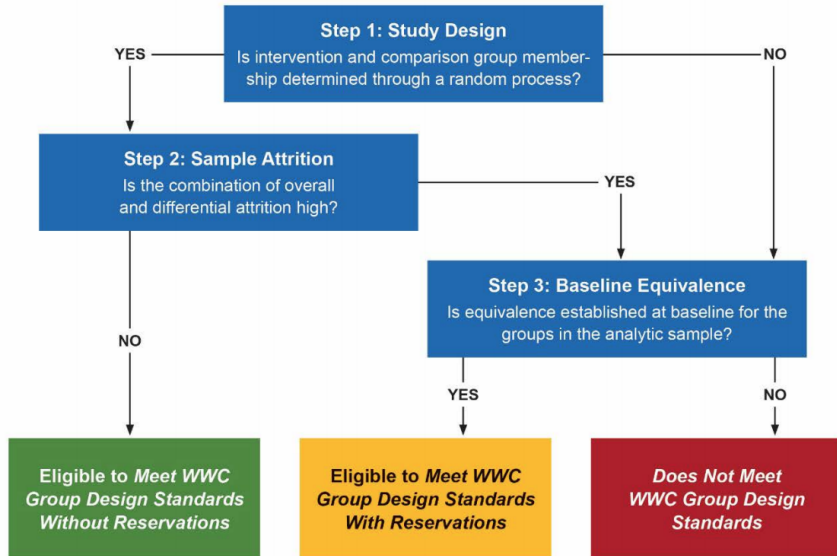
- Stuff here

# Evidence standards

- Evidence standards and descriptions already adopted in federal legislation.
  - Secondary Education Act, No Child Left Behind, Every Student Succeeds Act
- Department of Education standards.
  - Strong causal evidence
  - Moderate causal evidence
  - Low causal evidence
  - High levels of specificity, covering IVs, cluster-random assignment, RDs, and missingness/attrition.
- Department of Labor has adopted similar standards Figure

# DoE evidence standards

Figure II.1. Study Ratings for Individual-Level RCTs and QEDs





# Design

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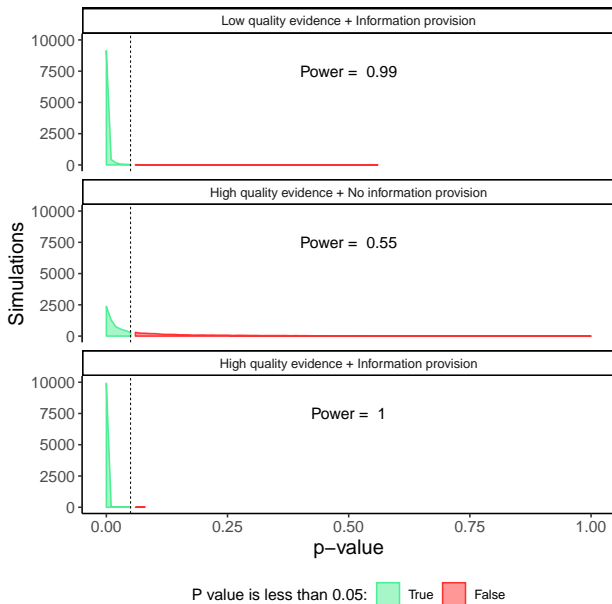
# Overview of experimental design

- 2x2 factorial design with two treatments:
  - Evidence standard (low vs. high)
  - Whether evidence standards are explained to policymakers

**Table 1:** Treatment arms: 2x2 factorial design

	<b>Lower Tier</b>	<b>Higher Tier</b>
<b>No information</b>	Control	High and no info
<b>Information</b>	Low and info	High and info

# Power analysis: state



## Conclusion

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# Questions

- Should we use a neutral or partisan policy proposal?
  - Partisan policy proposal might allow us to test legislator's motivated reason, but power issues.
- Suggestions for kind of organization to partner with?
- Federal, state, or local level?

## **Supplemental material**

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# Evidence tiers

ESSA's definition of "evidence-based" includes 4 levels of evidence. The top 3 levels require findings of a **statistically significant effect** on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes based on:

## (1) Strong

- At least 1 well-designed and well-implemented **experimental** study (i.e., randomized)

## (2) Moderate

- At least 1 well-designed and well-implemented **quasi-experimental** study (i.e., matched)

## (3) Promising

- At least 1 well-designed and well-implemented **correlational** study with statistical controls for selection bias

Required for school improvement plans funded by 7% set aside (Section 1003)

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Eligible for a priority under 7 competitive grants

The 4<sup>th</sup> level is designed for ideas that do not yet have an evidence base qualifying for the top 3 levels above. Given the requirement in the second bullet below to examine the effects of these ideas, this evidence-*building* level can be referred to as "under evaluation."

## (4) "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

Included for all other uses of "evidence-based"