



Education Service Providers

Educator's Summary

Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center **American Institutes for Research**

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Best Evidence Encyclopaedia
Empowering educators with evidence

In recent years externally developed and research-based whole school improvement models have been used increasingly to raise pupil achievement. This trend has been driven by the recognition that school improvement efforts are complex and require a co-ordinated, systematic approach that addresses every aspect of a school.

Education service providers (ESPs), or education management organisations, are businesses (sometimes not-for-profit) that work with schools to help them implement these comprehensive reforms. They offer schools and districts services such as the following:

- Curriculum design
- Professional development
- Pupil assessments
- Financial and operational management
- Facilities management
- Human resources management

This review summarises research on education service providers, and was conducted by the Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center (CSRQ) at the American Institutes for Research. They reviewed *all* available research on the seven largest US ESPs which collectively serve 350 US schools*, in order to establish what we know works. (NB One of these ESPs, Edison Schools, is also available in the UK). They were then able to assess and compare the effectiveness of these organisations. Descriptions and ratings are listed further down this summary.




The results of the review show that with the exception of Edison Schools, there was very limited evidence on pupils' achievement outcomes in schools managed by ESPs.

The full report (which this review summarises) is available at www.bestevidence.org.uk



*Overall, 20 US studies (17 on Edison) were identified as eligible for full review, and nine (all Edison) met standards. Of these, seven were rated "conclusive," two "suggestive."

Programme Ratings


Listed below are current service providers, grouped by strength of effectiveness. Within each group programmes available in the UK are listed first, and then the remainder in alphabetical order.

Key to Programme Ratings	
	Very Strong: At least 10 qualifying studies, with at least 5 rated "conclusive" and 75% of outcomes significantly positive, with an overall mean effect size of $ES=+0.25$. "Effect size" is the experimental-control difference divided by the standard deviation.
	Moderately Strong: 5-9 qualifying studies, with at least 3 rated "conclusive," and 51% to 75% of outcomes significantly positive, with an overall mean effect size of at least $+0.15$.
	Moderate: 2-4 qualifying studies, with at least 1 rated "conclusive," and 26% to 50% of outcomes significantly positive, with an overall mean effect size of at least $+0.15$.



	Limited: 1 qualifying study, with 1-25% of outcomes significantly positive.
	Zero: No qualifying study outcomes were significantly positive.
NR	No Rating: No qualifying studies

Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness

Rating	Programme	Type	Description	Contact / Website
	Edison Schools		Edison offers tools and resources to enable school improvement, programmes to support and help manage change, and support over time from experienced educational advisers , Their aim is to provide schools with focus, ideas and capacity. Their recommendations are based on research into best practice.	UK website: www.edisonschools.co.uk (Training available)



Zero

The Leona Group - www.leonagroup.com
Mosaica Education - www.mosaicaeducation.com
National Heritage Academies - www.heritageacademies.com
SABIS Educational Systems - www.sabis.net
White Hat Management (HOPE Academies) - www.hope-academies.com

NR No Rating (No information available)
Imagine Schools

Review Methods

For its quantitative analyses of overall achievement, CSRQ identified the education service providers serving the largest numbers of schools and districts in the US. They then did an extensive search for all types of studies that evaluated these programmes. The evaluations' validity was rated as inconclusive, suggestive, or conclusive. Conclusive studies met the following criteria:

- Schools using each programme had to be compared to equivalent control groups
- Schools had to have pre-test scores or other baseline measures
- The outcome measures had to be reliable and valid
- The study duration had to be at least one year



To be considered “suggestive,” a study had to meet the same standards, but could have up to two “non-critical threats to validity.”

CSRQ also looked at evidence in three additional areas:

- Additional pupil outcomes
- The model's design based on research
- Services and supports provided to schools

The Full Report

- The full report, which this review summarises, was produced by the Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center (CSRQ), American Institutes for Research. The full report is available at www.bestevidence.org.uk.

