

# BRAIN FUTURES

*Translating Science to Advance Human Potential*



Sarah Sparks/*Education Week*, Rosalyn Rice-Harris/Council of Chief State School Officers, Baltimore City PreK Teacher Berol Dewdney (Maryland), Scott Palmer/*EducationCounsel*, Englewood Public School District Superintendent Robert Kravitz (New Jersey) at the National Press Club, September 18, 2019

We are excited to announce the launch of BrainFutures policy initiative to improve student outcomes through the adoption of brain fitness programs in schools. This campaign is part of a nationwide movement to emphasize the connection between youth brain development, school success and life outcomes.

In partnership with The Kennedy Forum, we released *Brain Fitness and Executive Function: Evidence-Based Interventions That Improve Student Outcomes* at the National Press Club on September 18. Together with education and neuroscience leaders, teachers and school administrators, key government agencies and activists, we discussed our analysis of the evidence-base for cognitive training and mindfulness programs to improve executive function skills of working memory, self-control and cognitive flexibility among students. You can view the event video [here](#).

The report examines the science and outcomes of classroom-based brain fitness programs that have been adopted in over 7,200 schools across the country. Outcomes among the programs that met our threshold for inclusion include: a four-fold increase in pass rates on reading tests, 28% higher grades in core subjects and a 60% decrease in behavioral issues.

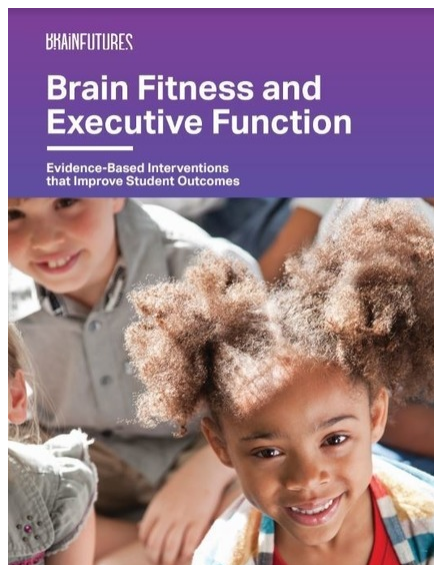
Please take the time to read our [executive summary](#) and you will see that the evidence is clear: **We can enhance outcomes for all students if every school in the nation adopts an executive function skills training program.**

Please join with us in the coming months to advance this worthy goal for our children.

Sincerely,

**Linda Raines**  
CEO, BrainFutures

**Karen Alexander**  
Program Director, BrainFutures



**[Brain Fitness and Executive Function: Evidence-Based Interventions That Improve Student Outcomes](#)** details the importance of foundational executive function skills - working memory, inhibitory control, and cognitive flexibility - on academic performance and how classroom programs can help improve those skills. These skills are inextricably linked to social emotional learning (SEL). This report is part of a nationwide movement to emphasize the connection between youth brain development and life outcomes.

Of immediate use to educators and school leaders, the report presents a vetted set of brain fitness programs that meet the evidence-based standards of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The report highlights classroom interventions specifically because they allow all students to engage in the program together without stigmatizing those with the greatest deficits.

The report analyzes 29 brain fitness interventions already being used in schools, including cognitive training programs, mindfulness tools, and executive function skills curricula. Each program was assessed against a set of rigorous standards established by the [BrainFutures' advisory group](#). Those programs have yielded proven outcomes for students, including:

- Increases in proficiency on state-mandated standardized tests and school-administered tests
- Reductions in disruptive school behaviors
- Increases in prosocial behaviors

**The Call to Action:** all schools should adopt brain fitness programs and ensure that executive function training is a standard component of teacher certification programs.

Visit BrainFutures' website to read the [full report](#) and access an in-depth analysis of existing brain fitness programs.

#### **About BrainFutures**

BrainFutures is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to assessing and advancing the practical application of neuroscience research to maximize human potential. Breakthroughs in our understanding of the brain have the potential to improve learning outcomes for children, maintain sharp thinking as we age, optimize functioning at work, and enhance treatment for a mental health or substance use problem. Since 2015, BrainFutures has provided rigorous analyses of new brain health research to share how advances can positively affect all areas of life. To learn more about BrainFutures, please visit [www.brainfutures.org](http://www.brainfutures.org)



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