We are excited to announce the launch of BriefFutures 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 the 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 these 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. These 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.