



THE MEASUREMENT, EVALUATION, STATISTICS, AND ASSESSMENT DEPARTMENT

Invite you to Attend the Final, Public Dissertation Defense for:

Bercem Akbayin

Titled:

The Treatment Effect of City Connects on Exiting Limited English Proficiency Status for English Learners

The defense will be held on

Monday, November 20, 2017 at 10 am,
in
Campion 306

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Henry Braun (Chair), Dr. Laura O' Dwyer (Reader),

Dr. Eric Dearing (Reader)

Abstract

The City Connects program views out-of-school factors as barriers to a student's thriving in both cognitive and non-cognitive domains and seeks to address these barriers first by identifying each student's strengths and needs and then by providing a tailored set of prevention, intervention, and enrichment programs. Underlying the program is the assumption that provisions of high-quality resources and individualized services will enable children to be cognitively, socio-emotionally, and physically prepared to thrive in school.

This study's purpose was to estimate the treatment effects of the City Connects on English learners' (EL) likelihood of exiting Limited English Proficiency (LEP) status. ELs comprise a student subpopulation most at-risk to fail academically, and exposure to the program was hypothesized to improve their likelihood of exiting LEP status earlier than otherwise. A series of one- and two-level discrete-time event history analyses were conducted on the main analytic sample and its two sub-samples. As participation in City Connects is at the school-level, school-level matching was used for sub-samples 1 and 2 and propensity score weightings were applied at the student-level for all three samples. Additionally, fitted hazard probabilities, survival probabilities, cumulative hazard rates, and median lifetimes were estimated.

Lastly, a sensitivity analysis was conducted to examine whether estimated treatment effects were robust to the presence of unobserved selection bias.

The results indicated that ELs receiving the City Connects were significantly more likely to exit LEP status earlier than their peers in comparison schools. For a typical student in a City Connects school, the median lifetime was shorter and translated into a gain of at least one half of a year in grade in mainstream classes. Also, all the models suggested that approximately 10 percent more City Connects students exited LEP status by the end of fifth grade than did comparison students. Findings highlight the importance of City Connects, suggesting that ELs entering mainstream classes earlier could translate into important academic and non-academic gains, such as increased self-confidence and better academic achievement.