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EFP Takeaways

The Impact of Teacher Labor Market Reforms on Student Achievement: Evidence from Michigan

Background

In recent years, many states have enacted reforms to teacher-related laws and policies. In 2011, Michigan implemented a series of teacher labor market reforms that enacted new requirements for teacher evaluations, reduced tenure protections, and restricted the scope of teacher collective bargaining. Kaitlin P. Anderson, Joshua M. Cowen, and Katharine O. Strunk estimate the impact of these reforms on student achievement (test scores). Their work is published in vol. 17 issue 4 of *EFP*.

The Study

The authors use an event study approach and ten years of student- and teacher-level panel data from 2005-06 to 2014-15 from traditional public-school districts in Michigan. Specifically, teachers were not subject to the main slate of reforms until their district's pre-collective bargaining agreement (CBA) expired, so the event study approach exploits the plausibly exogenous timing of the CBA expirations and compares outcomes in treated and not-yet-treated districts.

For more details:

- View the [full issue](#).
- See the [full article in *Education Finance and Policy*](#).
- [Sign up here to receive future *EFP Takeaways*](#).
- Summary of:
Anderson, K., Cowen, J., & Strunk, K. (2022) The Impact of Teacher Labor Market Reforms on Student Achievement: Evidence from Michigan. *Education Finance and Policy*, 17 (4): 666-692.

Findings

The authors generally find that the reforms had no significant effects on student achievement or test score growth, with some differences by cohort. Specifically, while the first cohort exposed to reform generally had null or mixed effects, the second cohort exposed to reforms had more consistently positive effects for economically disadvantaged and underrepresented minority students. This may be due to more restrictive pre-reform collective bargaining agreements in this second cohort, relative to the first cohort.

In terms of mechanisms, although the vast majority of teachers in the state were rated effective or higher, districts that more frequently used lower evaluation ratings tended to experience greater reform-induced test score gains (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Estimated Policy Impact on Math Student Achievement

