



Impact of COVID-19 school closures on test scores

Haeck, Catherine "Impact of COVID-19 school closures on test scores" *CRDCN research-policy snapshots*. January 2022

What the researchers did

The authors studied the achievement gap in reading, mathematics and science in students 15 years of age from families of different Socio-Economic Status (SES) at the national and provincial levels in Canada. The authors then consulted the literature on the impact of school closures on test scores to estimate the achievement gap related to COVID-19 school closures across SES.

What the researchers found

Test scores were consistently higher for 15-year-olds in higher SES prior to COVID-19. The achievement gap between the highest and lowest SES was equivalent to more than one year of schooling (at the national and provincial levels). There is an estimated additional 30% achievement gap between highest and lowest SES during COVID-19 related school closures in 2020.

RDC Datasets used

Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

Policy areas this research can inform

- Children and youth
- Education, training and learning

Policy implications of this research

School closures are known to have negative effects on the academic performance of students and on their likelihood of persevering in school. Socioeconomic inequalities between students can intensify these outcomes. Considerations regarding COVID-19 and school closures should take into account the negative impact of school interruptions within the context of inequalities in Socio-Economic Status (SES) and the resulting long- and short-term consequences. The academic achievement gaps between students in higher and lower SES present a long-standing issue that will need to be addressed during the pandemic and beyond.

Read the full article

Haeck, C. & Lefebvre, P. (2020). Pandemic school closures may increase inequality in test scores. *Canadian Public Policy*, 46(s1). <https://doi.org/10.3138/cpp.2020-055>

