

## **MORE SCHOOL FUNDING, LESS CRIME?**

Presenter: E. Jason Baron (Duke University)

Co-Author: Joshua Hyman (Amherst College), Brittany Vasquez (University of Michigan)

We examine the impact of increased public school funding on adult crime using two natural experiments in Michigan and a novel source of administrative records linking the universe of Michigan public school students to adult arrests. The first research design exploits plausibly exogenous variation in funding due to Michigan's 1994 school finance reform, Proposal A, which provided large increases in operational school funding to previously lower spending school districts. The second research design leverages the universe of close capital outlay bond elections for Michigan school districts from 1996 to 2004 in a regression discontinuity framework. In both cases, we find that increases in primary public school funding led to large reductions in the probability of being arrested as an adult. Our results are consistent with a human capital model of criminal development, where greater school quality led to increases in schooling effort, educational attainment, and opportunity costs of crime. We empirically rule out differential exposure to crime-prone peers as an important mechanism in our context.

## **DYNAMIC IMPACTS OF SCHOOL-BASED INTERNET ACCESS ON STUDENT LEARNING**

Presenter: Leah Lakdawala (Wake Forest University)

Co-Author: Kevin Kho (U.S. Food and Drug Administration), Eduardo Nakasone (Michigan State University and International Food Policy Research Institute)

We investigate the impacts of school-based internet access on standardized test scores in Peru, using over 2 million student observations from a panel of 23,318 public primary schools from 2007 to 2016. We employ an event study approach to identify effects up to 6 or more years after installation, exploiting variation in the timing of internet access due to a large-scale, national program. We find that internet access has modest, positive short-run impacts, but importantly, these effects grow over time. These dynamics underscore the value of using extended evaluation windows to allow the benefits of school-based technology to materialize.

## **GETTING STUDENTS TO STICK AROUND: THE EFFECTS OF COMPLETING AN INTRODUCTORY COURSE ON PERSISTENCE FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS**

Presenter: Marie Hull (University of North Carolina, Greensboro)

Co-Author: Dora Gicheva (University of North Carolina, Greensboro), Julie Edmunds (SERVE Center at University of North Carolina, Greensboro), Beth Thrift (SERVE Center at University of North Carolina, Greensboro)

This paper studies the causal impacts of withdrawing from and failing a course, relative to successful completion, on persistence for community college students. We leverage random assignment of students to instructors of online courses for identification. Withdrawing from a course reduces the probability of persistence by 26-29 pp, while the impact of failing is statistically indistinguishable from zero. For marginal students, withdrawing from one course often triggers full institutional withdrawal, which makes them less likely to return the following semester. Our findings reinforce the importance of academic momentum—staying in a course but failing may keep students attached to college.