Teacher absenteeism in urban schools

James E. Bruno

Abstract

School reform efforts aimed at promoting equity and excellence at urban school settings are heavily dependent upon the quality of teaching personnel that are used to deliver the instructional program. Social Justice and other public policy issues related to equity and excellence at urban schools have begun to examine the impact that teacher absenteeism, and by extension the reliance on substitute teachers to deliver instruction, might have on educational attainment. This study combines school district data gathering mechanisms on teacher absence rates at school sites with Geographical Information Systems (G.I.S.) to map the association between a school's geographical environmental space and the propensity for teacher absence. The disparity between teaching resources as delivered by the school district vs. teacher resources as actually received by students in the classroom via teacher absenteeism is examined in the context of schools located in positive (high income) and negative (low income) geographical space. The study concludes that there is a strong association between the geographical quality of the school site setting, teacher absenteeism, and the reliance on substitute teachers to deliver instructional programs. Disparity in teacher absenteeism rates across large urban geographical areas threatens the promotion of equity and excellence in the schools by attenuating or lessening the effect of school resources to support instruction and amplifying the risk factors of students in the classroom.

Keywords

Geographic Location; High Schools; Institutional Characteristics; Secondary School Teachers; Urban Schools

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Discussion

about the author

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Professor James E. Bruno has taught at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) for over 30 years and is currently engaged in research dealing with a wide range of interrelated topic areas impacting on children and adolescents. These areas include the perception of time and human behavior, social justice and community well being associated with geographical space, time-space distortions for children and adolescents in a new world order, and the
Disparity in teacher absenteeism rates across large urban geographical areas threatens the promotion of equity and excellence in the schools by attenuating or lessening the effect of school resources to support instruction and amplifying the risk factors of students in the classroom. Full-Text. comments powered by Disqus. – OALib Suggest. Live Support Ask us anything. Submit. Sexual Harassment Urban School High School Teacher Bilingual Education School Official. These keywords were added by machine and not by the authors. This process is experimental and the keywords may be updated as the learning algorithm improves. Edwards, G. Teacher morale and absenteeism in LAUSD high schools. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1980. Google Scholar. Elliot, P. and Manlove, D. The cost of skyrocketing teacher absenteeism. Phi Delta Kappan 1977, 59(4), 269–271. Google Scholar. Goodman, V. B. Teacher absenteeism in LAUSD elementary schools. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1980. Google Scholar. Teacher absenteeism in the United States is much lower than developing countries. The estimated absenteeism rate lies between 6-8% which is reportedly rising and is of grave concern to the authorities. This estimate agrees with Clotfelter, Charles, Ladd and Vigdor (2007); Ehrenberg et al, (1991); Duflo, Hanna, and Ryan, (2008). The school in Northern Trinidad, like most other schools in the society, is plagued by the burning problem of teacher absenteeism. Being a member of staff, I realise that my colleagues exhaust their leave entitlement with impunity. Teachers are legally entitled to access their leave which forms part of their terms of employment and no one could justifiably denied them of that right.