EFFECTIVE PRINCIPALS

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Questions

• Is there substantial variation in principal effectiveness?

• Does the variation in principal effectiveness differ by the share of low income students in a school?

• Do more effective principals make better personnel decisions?

• Are “effective” principals more likely to leave high poverty schools?
UTD Texas Schools Project

- Stacked panels of students and staff
- Annual student testing
- Student demographic characteristics
- Information on staff

- Follow principals, teachers, and students in Texas public schools
- Very large samples: 7,420 unique principals and 28,147 principal-year observations in 1995-2001
Answers I

• Is there substantial variation in principal effectiveness?
  
  • Yes, and it is very large.
  
  • Effective v. ineffective > 4 percentile point gain in student achievement each year and for all students in school
  
  • Effect of individuals teachers larger but only for individual class
**Answers II**

- Does the variation in principal effectiveness differ by the share of low income students in a school?
  - Average effectiveness least in schools with highest concentration of poor kids
  - Variation in principal effectiveness is larger in high poverty schools
    - Wider range of principal abilities there? OR
    - More difficult so that ability is more important?
Answers III

• Do more effective principals make better personnel decisions?
  • Limited information, but, yes

• The more effective teachers replace a greater portion of teachers in grades where the gains in achievement are low.
Answers IV

- Are “effective” principals more likely to leave high poverty schools?
  - The least effective principals in all school settings are more likely to leave school.
  - In high poverty schools, the most effective also have high exit rate.
  - Unfortunate number of ineffective principals move to another principalship.
Further Questions

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