

College Readiness Outcomes of No Child Left Behind: A Critical Analysis

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Abstract : The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 was a major federal education policy that aimed to improve academic outcomes for all students in the United States. This study examines whether NCLB improved college readiness, measured by access to higher education, for different demographic groups. Using data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) from 2003-2008, regression analyses explore the relationship between gender, race, family income, and region with occupational education score. The results indicate that NCLB implementation had a positive effect on college access for women and Asian students compared to other groups. Higher family income was also associated with an increased likelihood of pursuing higher education, especially for families in the South. While NCLB intended to close achievement gaps, disparities in college readiness remained five years after implementation. Further research could examine longer-term trends and additional factors influencing the policy's effectiveness across student subgroups. This study provides evidence that simply holding schools accountable for test scores may not sufficiently improve equitable educational outcomes. More targeted support of disadvantaged groups may be needed to fulfill the goal of "no child left behind."

Keywords : no child left behind act, college readiness, achievement gaps, educational equity

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