



Every Student Succeeds Act: Examining Graduation Rates, and School Performance Indicators

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Background

In 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act was passed as the reauthorization of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The policy cuts back on the federal role over education, allowing states more freedom to design their own academic plans. Instead of focusing on marginal increases toward proficiency, as devised under No Child Left Behind (2001), ESSA focuses on incremental improvements based on the needs of each school and subgroup.

To account for the English Language Learner (ELL) subgroup, ESSA includes a school accountability measure that shows their proficiency each year and also requires schools to identify and work with these students to improve their performance each year.

Research Question

Following the Every Student Succeeds Act, how have performance indicators impacted, if at all, impacted high school graduation rates?

Methodologies

- Miami-Dade and Hillsborough counties**
(Case selection - English Language Learner data)
 - Regression analysis

Education Data

- Florida Percent of Points Index by Subgroup**

Cleaning Steps

- CONCATENATE a unique school code that combines county number and school code, given duplicate codes.
 - Filtered out the following schools: elementary, middle, charter, special education, juvenile justice, and other alternatives.
- VLOOKUP to match graduation data, since FDOE reports this data retroactively.
 - Drop any schools without graduation rates for the current year and graduation rates of zero.

Model and Preliminary Findings

$$\text{High School Graduation Rates} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{English Standardized Test Scores} + \beta_2 \text{Math Standardized Test Scores} + \beta_3 \text{College and Career Acceleration} + \beta_4 \text{ELLs} + \epsilon$$

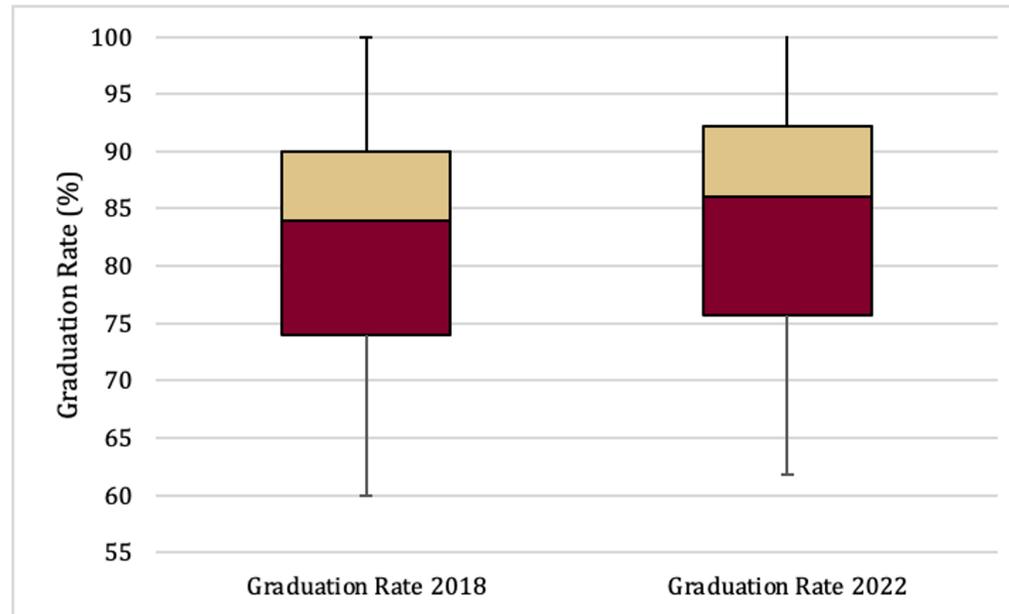


Figure 1. Box Plot Comparing English Language Learner Graduation Rates for 2018 and 2022

English Language Learners	
2018 (N=66)	2022 (N=64)
R-squared: 0.3869	R-squared: 0.3492
R-squared adjusted: 0.3572	R-squared adjusted: 0.3166
Standard Error: 8.3842	Standard Error: 8.9304
P-value: 1.05E-06***	P-value: 9.62E-06***

2018	Coefficients	Standard Error	P-value
Intercept	69.7709531	3.50521627	1.2759E-28***
ELA Achievement	0.35505014	0.14769133	0.01921907**
Math Achievement	0.10013274	0.13128837	0.44853855
College and Career Acceleration	0.0212014	0.04950475	0.66993874

2022	Coefficients	Standard Error	P-value
Intercept	64.8214639	4.1380545	7.178e-23***
ELA Achievement	0.07371613	0.1503069	0.62561318
Math Achievement	0.26709913	0.13753367	0.05682821*
College and Career Acceleration	0.14517524	0.06293555	0.02453892*

LEGEND: *p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

Policy Implications and Future Research

Data-driven decision making can help more efficiently allocate resources towards gaps and progress projections. How equipped is a state, in comparison to the federal government, to make decisions over education?

- How do plans compare to intervene in the lowest performing schools?
- How do strategies compare when selecting the degree of “challenging” academic standards to use?

As ESSA is more of a hands-off approach by the federal government, what are the potential management or transparency challenges that exist?

Limitations

The COVID-19 Pandemic creates a gap in the data for 2019-2021 as tests were not administered the first year and were opt-in the second. Potential for unobservable variables such as teaching practices. No access to student testimony or student level data.

References and Acknowledgments

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