

AN ANALYSIS OF LOCAL DISTRICT INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE STUDENT ABSENCE RATES
SUBSEQUENT TO PASSAGE OF THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT

by
LORI MYLES

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of Georgia Southern University in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
STATESBORO, GEORGIA
2010

Research Questions

“Have absence rates differed since the implementation of the NCLB Act and the subsequent changes in attendance policies?”

1. What were the absence rates of students prior to and subsequent to enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act?
2. What were the fundamental differences between the attendance policies from each Georgia county that was observed in this study?
3. Does severity of attendance policy correlate with, and predict, post-policy

Variables

- *Post-NCLB Absence Rate* = School mean absence rate post NCLB implementation (absence rate is percentage of students in school with 15 or more absences).
- *Pre-NCLB Absence Rate* = School mean absence rate prior to NCLB (absence rate is percentage of students in school with 15 or more absences).
- *Attendance Policy Mean* = Mean rating of severity of attendance policies adopted in school district on scale 1 to 5 with 5 indicating most severe.
- *School Size Mean* = Mean school size over period investigated.
- *Title I School Status* = 1 for Title 1 school and 0 for non-Title 1 school.
- *SES Free Lunch* = Mean percentage of students in school who qualify for free or reduced lunch.

Results

Table 4:2 Descriptive Statistics and t-test results for Mean Absences Across Districts by Policy Change Status

Outcome	Pre-NCLB Absence		Post-NCLB Absence		n	95% CI for Mean Difference	r	t	df
	Change		Change						
	M	SD	M	SD					
Mean Absences	12.77	6.40	9.71	5.04	189	2.49, 3.63	0.78	10.54*	188

*p < .05

Table 4:3 Correlation Matrix of Post-NCLB Absence Rate Variables

	DV Post- NCLB Absence Rate	IV Pre- NCLB Absenc e Rate	IV Attend. Policy Mean	IV Count of six Severit y	IV School Size Mean	IV Title I Schoo l Status	IV SES Free Lunch
Post-NCLB Absence Rate	1.00						
Pre-NCLB Absence Rate	0.782*	1.00					
Attendance Policy Mean	-0.15	-0.08	1.00				
Count of six severity	-0.05	0.02	0.782*	1.00			
School Size Mean	-0.12	-0.20	-0.02	-0.08	1.00		
Title I School Status	0.28*	0.31*	0.07	0.16	-0.23	1.00	
SES Free Lunch	0.45*	0.48*	-0.06	0.08	-0.19	0.75*	1.00
Mean	9.71	12.77	2.40	2.41	494.58	0.57	55.91
Standard Deviation	5.04	6.40	0.28	1.55	478.54	0.50	26.67
Minimum Value	0.55	0.45	1.59	0.00	38.75	0.00	0.00
Maximum Value	35.65	45.30	2.71	6.00	2994.25	0.50	97.61

* p < .05; n = 189 middle schools

Table 4:4 Regression of Post-policy Abs. Rates on Mean Severity Rating and District Factors

	Unstandardized		t	p-value	95% Confidence Interval	
	Coefficients				for B	
	B	Std. Error			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	4.507	2.217	2.033*	.043	.133	8.880
Pre-NCLB Absence Rates	.577	.041	14.11*	.000	.496	.657
Attendance Policy Rating	-1.560	.824	-1.892	.060	-3.186	.067
School Size	.000	.000	.876	.382	-.001	.001
Title 1 Status	-.196	.702	-.278	.781	-1.581	1.190
Percentage on Free/Reduced	.023	.014	1.623	.106	-.005	.050

Note. R²= 0.63, adj. R² = 0.62, F = 62.01*, df = 5,183; n = 189.

*p<.05