

Industrial Actions in Schools: Strikes and Student Achievement

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Abstract:

Many jurisdictions ban teacher strikes on the assumption that they negatively affect student achievement, but there is surprisingly little research on this question. The majority of existing studies make cross section comparisons of the achievement of students who do or do not experience a strike. They conclude that strikes do not have an impact. I present new estimates of this impact of strikes using an empirical strategy that controls for fixed student characteristics at the school cohort level, and a sample of industrial actions by teachers in the province of Ontario. The results indicate that teacher strikes in grades 5 or 6 have negative, statistically significant impact on test score growth between grade 3 and grade 6. The largest impact is on math scores: 29 percent of the standard deviation of test scores across school/grade cohorts.

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