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Abstract

In the past few decades, the Chinese Ministry of Education has promoted “suzhi jiaoyu” (quality education) reforms. However, little is known about their impact. This paper evaluates an important component of the reforms that replaces using total scores with a letter grade system in high school admissions. I find that this change in student performance measurement achieved its intended goal of balancing learning across subjects but hindered high achievers with imbalanced performance. This paper also discusses how the measurement reform influenced the gender gap in achievements.

Keywords: Quality education; student performance assessment; education policy; incentives; gender gap.

JEL Classification Numbers: I21, I28.

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