

## **Non-standard English at School: Can Targeted Funding Improve Student Achievement?**

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### **Abstract**

We investigate the effects of providing British Columbia school districts with supplemental funding to support the language development of students who speak a non-standard English dialect. In practice, the students funded under this policy are almost exclusively students who also self-report Aboriginal identity. Exploiting the staggered uptake of this funding across school districts, we find that the policy substantially improved the reading scores of Aboriginal students. This policy gives school districts wide latitude in how the funds are used. While our results therefore offer little guidance to educators who are developing specific programs and services, they demonstrate that supplementary funding for non-standard dialect speakers, along with district-level program development, can be highly effective.