

# The Longer Students Were Out of School, The Less They Learned

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## **Abstract**

This paper analyzes school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic. Using robust learning data, the relationship between duration of school closures and learning loss is estimated. A series of controls introduced into the analysis fails to reduce the estimate of weeks closed as a determinant of learning loss. The longer students were out of school, the less they learned. The main lesson learned here is that if COVID continues as a low-intensity pandemic, or if a similar situation arises, keeping schools open should be a priority, as the evidence show that the benefits of school closures seemed to have been lower than the cost of learning losses.

**Keywords:** School closures, COVID-19 pandemic, learning loss