

The Widening Achievement Gap Between Rich and Poor in a Nordic Country

Astrid Marie Jorde Sandsør (University of Oslo)

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We study a decade of achievement gaps for 5th, 8th and 10th grade students in Norway using administrative population data. Norway is a wealthy and egalitarian country with a homogeneous educational system, yet achievement gaps between students at the 90th and 10th percentiles of parental income and between students whose parents have at least a master and at most a high school degree are found to be large (0.55-0.93 and 0.70-0.99 standard deviations), equivalent to about 2-2.5 years of schooling, and increasing by grade level. Achievement gaps by parental income, but not by parental education, increased over the time period, underscoring the different ways these two SES components relate to achievement and the potential for policy to alter gaps.