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NEWSLETTER

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## Senior Secondary Education of Migrant Children in China and Impacts of High School Entrance Examination Policies

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**T**O REALIZE THE GOAL OF UNIVERSALIZING SENIOR SECONDARY EDUCATION in the country across the board, China must pay special attention to the issue in underdeveloped regions and among underprivileged groups. This study aims to delineate the developments in senior secondary education for migrant children (children of migrant workers) in China, based on data from the China Migrants Dynamic Survey 2011-2018, and analyze the heterogeneous impacts of migrant children-specific high school entrance examination policies in various provincial administrative regions, using the difference-in-differences method.

### Research Findings:

- The high school enrollment rate in migrant children was noticeably lower than the national average, albeit the narrowing gap between the two. High school enrollment of this group underwent relatively greater growth rates between 2014-2017, with a slower one in 2018.
- High school entrance examination policies of greater levels of openness had more significant positive impacts on the high school enrolment rate in migrant children. Female migrant children, migrant children who moved to a different province than their native one, and those from low-income households were more sensitive to the influence of the entrance examination policies.

### Implications for Policy:

- It is preferable for all provinces to formulate more open and inclusive high school enrolment policies for migrant children, depending on their actual educational capacities. The policy of tying post-junior secondary education to household registration (Hukou) needs a substantive reform. Regions with low inbound flows of migrant population should be able to allocate resources for senior secondary education based on the population of compulsory education residents, rather than on the population with local Hukou.

- The local government needs to increase funding for education to reduce the cost of high school education for migrant children and decrease the incidence of migrant children abandoning senior secondary education due to economic distress.
- Additional support should be provided to educationally disadvantaged migrant households to ensure the right of their school-age children to education and halt the intergenerational transmission of educational opportunity deprivation.

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