Do California LIHTC housing residents have access to quality schools?

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I. Introduction

FOCUS:
- California affordable housing projects location and school district quality
- Use the case of Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) projects
- LIHTC projects specifically are located in more income-diverse set of neighborhoods than other project-based affordable housing.

HYPOTHESIS:
- Affordable housing projects are located in lower quality school districts.

RELEVANCE:
- Results from this study shed light on the negative correlation between LIHTC housing in California and school quality.
- This will provide policymakers with relevant data to create more equitable educational policy recommendations.

II. Methods

DATA COLLECTION:
- CDE - School performance data (API and Dashboard)
- NHGIS & NCES - School district shape files
- NHPD - Active LIHTC housing project information

DATA MANAGEMENT:
- Connected projects to districts and vice versa (QGIS)
- Standardized the data form in the school performance data (STATA)

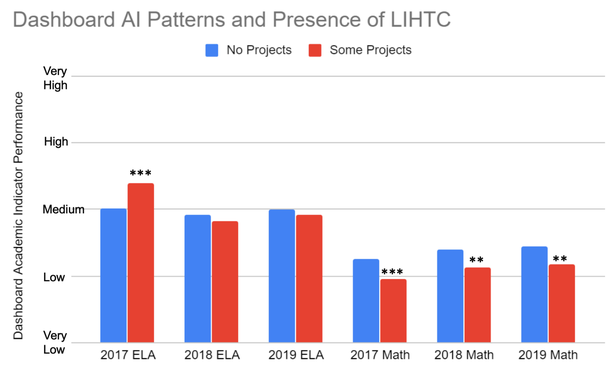
REGRESSION ANALYSIS:
- Created regressions between API and LIHTC housing and Dashboard and LIHTC housing within the district (STATA)
- Looked at the difference between districts with no projects vs. any projects
- Examined the effect on school quality of any additional number of projects in a district

III. Results

API (2003 – 2013):
- Clear negative correlation between API scores of districts with any # of projects vs. no projects at all. (Figure 1)
- Every additional project within a district shows lower API scores. (Figure 2)
- Generally, however, API scores trend higher, in districts with both none and some projects. (Figure 1)

DASHBOARD (2017 – 2019):
- Overall, Dashboard data showed a less clear correlation between district quality and presence of LIHTC projects.
- Academic Indicators for math, based mostly on new forms of standardized testing, showed negative correlation with LIHTC presence. (Fig. 3)
- Academic Indicators for English & Language Arts (ELA) did not show a clear pattern.

Figure 3 – Dashboard Academic Indicator and LIHTC



IV. Conclusions

- Dashboard data reporting may be too new and specialized to show a clear correlation between affordable housing and changes in school quality.
- However, API did show less disparity in the later reporting years, so there may be more access now than when API started reporting school quality data.
- Further research could look at school-specific quality that service projects vs. schools that do not.

POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATION:
- LIHTC housing siting criteria prioritizes proximity to schools, not school quality, but it should.

LIMITATIONS:
- Lots of inconsistency in the district names throughout both API and Dashboard reporting
- Various changes in what was reported, variables, data form, etc.
- Split districts that merged into unified districts

Figure 1 - API Scores in Districts with Some Projects vs. None

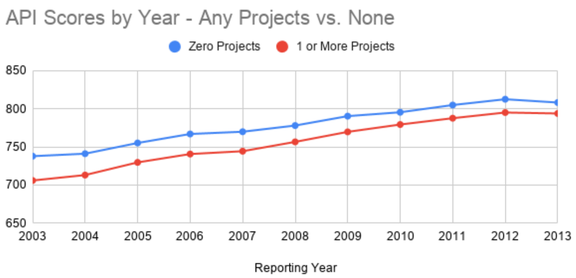


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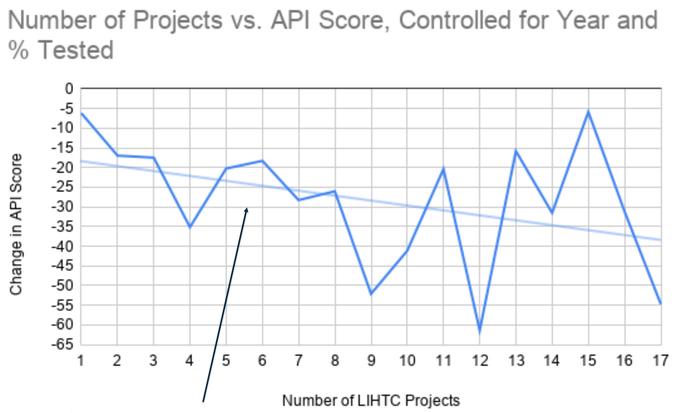
Figure 2 - Decrease in API Scores by # of Projects



Slope of the trendline is -1.25

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