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RESPONSE OF JAEKYUNG LEE TO THE AUTHORS' REPLY

The October 30th response by the report's authors defends their earlier arguments about regression to the mean and also emphasizes on the difference between ECLS-K and their data. These issues are worth exploring further empirically. After all, my review explains that regression to the mean is a common problem and it happens with imperfectly correlated measures, but I did not say that it is an immutable law of nature. On this, we all agree.

However, these issues cannot be resolved unless the authors make their data public and let others analyze those data. The question of how much their study is subject to regression or other threats to validity is an empirical issue. The question of how much my ECLS-K analysis informs the questions about their analysis is also an empirical issue. Yet while the ECLS-K data are public and my analysis can be replicated, their data are not public and there is no direct way to scrutinize their study and confirm or disconfirm their findings and conclusions.

Regarding my criticism of their producing winners and losers through norm-referenced comparison, the report's authors argue: "When reporting on the status of students at a single point in time, average scale scores for the relevant group were reported as their corresponding percentile rank, based on large cross-state normative studies. Given that these percentile ranks referred to external norms, and not to the specific sample, the numbers of high achievers was not constrained." Given the fact that their own sample was a large quasi-national sample (in their words, "a large sample size, following students in more than 1500 elementary schools and 600 middle schools in almost 30 states"), this norm-referenced comparison is still likely to produce winners and losers in

their own sample as well. If the authors share the belief that developmental scales are more appropriate, why didn't they just use IRT scale scores instead of percentile ranks in order to measure and report academic progress of high-achievers, preferably against common learning standards? Whether intended or unintended, their choice of the percentile rank metric based on the national norm distorts the measurement of true academic progress for both high-achievers and low-achievers.