Mexico’s school underperformance, both in international and local assessments, has turned into a pressing issue for the country and for policy makers. This has triggered the development of research by academia and policy makers in an attempt to understand the effect of different characteristics in school performance (See De Hoyos, et al. 2010). However, a large percentage of the variation remains unexplained after controlling for different socio-economical and academic variables. The research project is therefore motivated by the desire to understand whether a planning analysis of neighborhood characteristics can help us better understand the residual currently unexplained by “traditional methods” in education and economic approaches. This thesis proposes to examine the relationship between neighborhood characteristics and academic performance in Mexico City’s high schools focusing in Gustavo A Madero Municipality (Delegación). The first part of the research is dedicated to estimating an education production function through a fix-effects model to estimate the effect of socioeconomic factors on the educational outcome. The second part of the research builds on geographical analysis to identify clusters of unexplained under/over performance, mapping information usually not analyzed spatially. These clusters are later analyzed through interviews and site visits. Evidence of neighborhood effects is proven to exist for the development of cognitive abilities at the high school level. These effects were found to be strongly linked to issues of transportation, street walkability and crime at the neighborhood level.

**Key words:** Mexico, Public upper-secondary education (*media superior / preparatoria*); Neighborhood effects, education production function, planning

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1Clear examples of this is the “Aliance for the quality of Education” (Alianza para la Calidad de la Educación) signed between four ministries of the national government and the Nation Teacher’s Union (that represents both middle and primary school teachers) - [http://alianza.sep.gob.mx/index_001.php](http://alianza.sep.gob.mx/index_001.php)