



Regional Government Strategy to Address Disparities in Access to Education Through the Elementary School New Student Admission System (SPMB) in Tanjungpinang City in 2025

Aditya Rizal Ramadhan¹, Novi Winarti², Khairi Rahmi³

^{1,2}, Universitas Maritim Raja Ali Haji

Corresponding Author e-mail: adiaja343434@gmail.com

Article History:

Received: 11-08-2026

Revised: 28-09-2026

Accepted: 28-09-2026

Keywords: education access
disparities; local government;
SPMB; elementary school;
Tanjungpinang

Abstract: *Inequality in access to elementary education in Tanjungpinang City is reflected in the uneven distribution of students across public elementary schools. While schools in densely populated areas experience greater enrollment pressure, SD Negeri 001 Tanjungpinang Barat continues to experience relatively low enrollment despite having adequate educational facilities and service capacity. This study aims to analyze the strategy of the Tanjungpinang City Government in addressing disparities in access to elementary education through the 2025 New Student Admission System (SPMB), focusing on goals, plans, programs, decisions, and effects. This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with purposively selected informants and supported by policy documents, school records, and demographic data. Data were analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that the local government has established equitable access as a primary objective and implemented capacity planning, public communication, inter-agency coordination, SPMB procedures, and technical guidelines to support fair and transparent student admissions. However, these strategies have not yet resulted in an equitable distribution of students across schools. The condition is influenced by differences in population distribution, family mobility, school preferences, and public perceptions of school quality. These findings indicate that student admission policies need to be integrated with demographic planning, school capacity, service quality improvement, and community engagement. From an Islamic economic perspective, strengthening equitable access to education is also relevant to the principles of justice (al-'adl) and public benefit (maslahah) in promoting social welfare. The study highlights the importance of integrating administrative admission policies with broader educational service strategies to achieve more sustainable and equitable access to basic education.*

How to Cite: Aditya Rizal Ramadhan, Novi Winarti, Khairi Rahmi. (2026). The title. *Ambidextrous Journal of Innovation Efficiency and Technology in Organizations*. 5(3). Pp 410-424 <https://doi.org/10.61536/ambidextrous.v5i03.682>



<https://doi.org/10.61536/ambidextrous.v5i03.682>

This is an open-access article under the [CC-BY-SA License](#).



Introduction

Access to basic education is directly related to the ability of local governments to ensure that every child receives affordable, available, and quality school services. Inequality in access arises when the number of schools, learning space capacity, population distribution, family conditions, and community preferences do not move in the same direction. Ananda (2025) positions access to basic education as a policy issue that cannot be resolved solely through the availability of schools. Service quality, distance, family capacity, and resource distribution also determine a child's opportunity to receive an education. Ariska Putri (2024) also shows that educational disparities are linked to income inequality and economic growth. This relationship makes equal access to education have consequences that go beyond the administrative matters of student admissions.

Decentralization provides regional governments with significant leeway to tailor education services to regional characteristics. Bida (2021) explains that decentralization can strengthen government responsiveness to local needs, but differences in capacity between regions can also perpetuate educational disparities. Zilfa (2016) emphasizes the importance of regional government management of basic education, as school needs are strongly influenced by local social, geographic, and demographic conditions. Mubin and Dian (2023) assess that educational autonomy must be accompanied by regional government capacity to manage quality, resources, and equitable service delivery. This framework is relevant for Tanjungpinang City, as the distribution of population and schools is not uniform across sub-districts.

Student admissions policies are one of the instruments used to regulate access. The previous zoning system was designed to bring prospective students closer to schools and prevent student concentration in schools deemed superior. Syakarofath et al. (2020) showed that zoning generated both support and resistance because the goal of equity clashed with family preferences for certain schools. Risna and Lisdahlia (2020) suggested that equity through zoning requires consistent implementation, communication, and resource support. Minsih (2021) found that public perception also determined responses to elementary school zoning policies. These findings demonstrate that distance regulations do not automatically eliminate established social preferences within the community.

The 2025 policy change introduced the term New Student Admission System (SPMB). Decree of the Minister of Primary and Secondary Education of the Republic of Indonesia Number 3 of 2025 emphasizes objective, transparent, accountable, equitable, and non-discriminatory student admissions (Aristawidya & Santoso Agus, 2025). The Tanjungpinang City Government then issued SPMB technical guidelines for the 2025/2026 academic year as a reference for kindergarten, elementary, and junior high school levels (Regulation of the Head of the Tanjungpinang City Education Office, n.d.). This change is important because the local



government does not only carry out administrative selection. The government also needs to ensure that admission regulations align with demographic needs, school capacity, and the goal of equitable distribution of education services.

The condition of Tanjungpinang City shows the pressures on educational services differing between regions. Data from 2025 shows that East Tanjungpinang District has 27 public elementary schools with 12,006 students, while West Tanjungpinang has 13 public elementary schools with 3,111 students. Bukit Bestari has 18 public elementary schools with 5,104 students, and Tanjungpinang City has 13 public elementary schools with 2,362 students. These differences indicate an unequal distribution of students. Inequality is increasingly apparent when schools in some areas lack students, while other areas face a much larger population and need for educational services. Kurniawati (2022) reminds us that educational issues are closely related to the distribution of facilities, service quality, and support for educational staff.

Tanjungpinang City has also faced elementary school closures due to extremely low student enrollment. Kepri (2023) reported the closure of SD Negeri 002 Tanjungpinang Barat and SD Negeri 015 Bukit Bestari. This case demonstrates the policy risks when population distribution and community interests are not balanced with school locations and capacities. Winarti (2023) found that zoning policies in Tanjungpinang have not succeeded in achieving full equity in access and quality. The research also noted schools with overcrowding and schools losing students. These local findings provide a strong basis for assessing student admissions policies not only in terms of procedural compliance but also in terms of the government's strategy in responding to real inequalities.

State Elementary School 001 West Tanjungpinang serves as a clear example of this issue. School data from 2025 recorded 10 first-grade students, out of a total of 109 students from grades I to VI. The school also reported that the enrollment in the previous school year was only around seven new students, when the total student population was around 115. The discrepancy stems from different recording dates, but both point to the same issue: low enrollment. This situation is related to the region's demographics. West Tanjungpinang has a population of 41,660, significantly lower than East Tanjungpinang's 127,750.

Several previous studies have addressed various student admission issues, but none fully address the needs of this study. Darya (2020) evaluated the implementation of the PPDB (School Admissions) in Balikpapan City through a survey covering 26 elementary schools and 23 junior high schools. The study highlighted the online system, outreach, networking, and registration timelines. This focus is crucial for assessing operational aspects, but local government strategies have not been analyzed as a continuum connecting goals, plans, programs, decisions, and impacts. Sabrina and Ishak (2020) used a qualitative descriptive approach to evaluate high school zoning in Pekanbaru. Differences in educational levels and authority structures make their findings insufficient to explain the issues facing elementary schools, which are the responsibility of district or city governments.

Minsih's (2021) study in Serengan District, Surakarta, used a qualitative descriptive approach through questionnaires, interviews, and documentation to discuss the implementation, community perceptions, and impacts of zoning at the elementary school level. The study was robust in describing community perspectives, but local government strategies were not

prioritized. Harianti and Sukma (2024) examined SMAN 1 and 2 in Blitar City through interviews, observations, and documentation using the Van Meter and Van Horn implementation framework. The results demonstrated the influence of standards, resources, communication, agent characteristics, and the policy environment. The focus on high schools differed from elementary schools at the city level in terms of authority and student acceptance.

Winarti's (2023) study provides a similar perspective, taking place in Tanjungpinang City. This qualitative descriptive study used William Dunn's evaluation theory to assess the impact of the PPDB zoning system and found that equitable access had not been achieved and that the impact varied across regions. The study remained within the framework of the PPDB zoning system before its transformation into SPMB in 2025 and focused more on impact evaluation. Building on these findings, this study positions local governments as strategic actors and explores the process from goal setting to policy impact. Charles O. Jones's framework is used to examine the relationship between goals, plans, programs, decisions, and impacts as part of a series of local government strategies (Jones, 1996).

Discussions on educational disparities have also expanded to encompass broader scope. Aulia Rahmi et al. (2025) highlight the impact of zoning policies on unequal access to basic education in the digital era, while Ananda (2025) discusses the issue of access to basic education from a policy perspective. Both studies strengthen understanding of inequality, but fail to explain how city governments adapt student admission policies to varying population distributions and school conditions. A case-based study in Tanjungpinang is needed to reconcile policy design with implementer experiences, demographic conditions, and community preferences.

A public policy framework helps frame these issues. Dunn (1998) describes policy analysis as a process that connects problem formulation, action choices, implementation, and evaluation. Cudai and Guntur (2019) emphasize that public policy needs to be assessed through its objectives, actors, resources, implementation, and resulting consequences. Jones (1996) provides a more operational tool for this research through five strategic elements: goal, plan, program, decision, and effect. These elements allow the analysis to move from what the government wants to achieve, what is planned, actions taken, decisions made, to changes that occur after the policy is implemented.

Referring to these issues, this study aims to examine the Tanjungpinang City Government's strategy in reducing the gap in access to education through the 2025 Elementary School New Student Admission pathway, through a review of objectives, plans, programs, decisions, and their impacts. This study provides an academic contribution to the discussion of local education policy by linking student admission strategies and demographic conditions. From a practical perspective, the research results can be used as evaluation material for the Education Office so that the determination of capacity, socialization, school coordination, and student admission decisions do not stop at administrative order, but also consider population distribution, public trust, and strengthening the quality of schools that lack students.

Research Methods

This research uses a qualitative descriptive approach because the study's objectives

focus on understanding local government strategies, policy implementation processes, and the reasons explaining differences in results between regions. Ruhansih (2017) explains that a qualitative descriptive design helps researchers describe phenomena based on field conditions and the relationships between elements that emerge in the data. Waruwu (2024) positions a qualitative approach as the right choice when researchers require in-depth explanations of experiences, processes, and meanings formed within the social environment. This approach is appropriate because SPMB strategies cannot be explained solely through student enrollment figures.

The research location is in Tanjungpinang City, Riau Islands Province, focusing on the case of SD Negeri 001 Tanjungpinang Barat and the involvement of the Tanjungpinang City Education Office. The school was selected based on low new student enrollment and a smaller student population compared to the school's capacity. The case study is used to examine the relationship between government decisions, demographic conditions, community preferences, and the sustainability of school services. The unit of analysis is the Tanjungpinang City Government's strategy to address disparities in access to education through the 2025 Elementary School Enrollment Program (SPMB).

Informants were selected purposively. This technique allows researchers to select individuals with direct knowledge and involvement in the research object. Akin et al. (2026) explain that the selection of qualitative informants requires consideration of the relevance of experience and the ability to provide in-depth information. Six informants were involved in the study, consisting of the Head of the Elementary School Student Section at the Education Office, the Elementary School SPMB administrator at the Education Office, the principal of SD Negeri 001 Tanjungpinang Barat, a teacher and school administrative staff member, and two parents of students. This composition provides the perspectives of the government, school administrators, and service recipients.

Primary data was obtained through semi-structured interviews. Interviews focused on establishing equity goals, the capacity development process, outreach programs, coordination between the Education Office and schools, implementation of the SPMB program, technical decisions, and the impacts felt by schools and parents. Hansen (2020) explains that qualitative interviews allow researchers to explore reasons, experiences, and contexts not always evident in documents. Questions remain focused on the research focus, but informants are given space to explain their experiences in detail, so data is not limited to short answers.

Secondary data came from SPMB policy documents, technical guidelines from the Education Office, student data, population data, and school documents. Nilamsari (2014) explains that document studies are useful for supplementing interview data and tracing administrative evidence related to research events. Documents are used to verify the consistency between informant statements and written data. This source also helps identify discrepancies between formal school capacity, population size, and actual student enrollment.

Data analysis followed the flow of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing as developed by Miles et al. (2014). Reduction was carried out by selecting information directly related to the five elements of Charles O. Jones' strategy. Data were then grouped into objectives, plans, programs, decisions, and impacts. The grouping results were presented in thematic descriptions and relevant tables. The final stage connected information between

informants, policy documents, school data, and population data to obtain consistent conclusions. Sinaga (2025) emphasized that qualitative analysis requires systematic data organization so that relationships between themes can be explained logically.

Data validity was maintained through source comparison. Information from the Education Office was compared with information from the principal, teachers, and parents. Interview data was also matched with school documents and population data. This principle aligns with Patton's (1987) view that using diverse sources helps strengthen the accuracy of understanding a phenomenon. The study did not employ statistical generalizations. The results were aimed at explaining the strategies and conditions found in the context of Tanjungpinang City, specifically the case of SD Negeri 001 Tanjungpinang Barat.

Results and Discussion

Overview of disparities in access to education at SD Negeri 001 Tanjungpinang Barat

Disparities in educational access are evident in the imbalance in student numbers across regions and the low enrollment rate at SD Negeri 001 Tanjungpinang Barat. The school still has sufficient classroom space, teaching staff, and service capacity, but the number of applicants has not yet reached capacity. This situation results in suboptimal utilization of school resources and demonstrates that the availability of facilities alone is insufficient to achieve a balanced student distribution.

School data shows the composition of students by class group, gender, and number of students. These details are presented in Table 4.2 to demonstrate the occupancy rate of each class.

Table 1. Number of Students at State Elementary School 001 West Tanjungpinang City

NO	Rambel Name	L	P	Amount
1	Class 1	9	1	10
2	Grade 2	7	11	18
3	Grade 3	7	13	20
4	Grade 4	11	10	21
5	Grade 5	11	5	16
6	Grade 6	14	10	24

Source: West Tanjungpinang City School Data 2025

Table 1 shows the total number of registered students, 109. Grade I has the lowest enrollment, at 10 students, while Grade VI has 24 students. The differences between classes reinforce the finding of declining new student enrollment. School informants explained that the low number of prospective students is related to the decline in young families living near the school, the mobility of parents working outside the city, and families choosing other schools they consider more attractive.

Regional inequality and population distribution

Population differences play a key role in explaining student disparities. Areas with larger populations have a broader base of potential students, while areas with smaller populations face a more limited number of school-age children. The 2025 population data in Table 2 demonstrates these differences across sub-districts in Tanjungpinang City.

Table 2Population Data for Sub-districts in Tanjungpinang City in 2025

No	Subdistrict	Total population
1.	Bestari Hill	51,350 people
2.	East Tanjungpinang	127,750 people
3.	Tanjungpinang City	19,200 people
4.	West Tanjungpinang	41,660 people
Amount	Tanjungpinang City	239,960 people

Data Source: Central Statistics Agency (BPS) 2025

Table 2 shows that East Tanjungpinang has 127,750 residents, while West Tanjungpinang has 41,660. The difference of 86,090 residents strongly illustrates the differences in population bases between the regions. This distribution helps explain why capacity policies that rely solely on classroom capacity are insufficient to achieve equitable student enrollment. Planning needs to link school capacity to the number of families and school-age children actually residing in the service area.

The objectives of local government strategy

The Department of Education has established equal access as the primary goal of the SPMB. Government informants explained that every child is expected to have educational opportunities regardless of economic status or location. Another goal is to balance student numbers so that school services can be utilized more effectively. Schools understand this goal and implement student admissions according to technical guidelines.

A shared understanding of the goal of equity has not yet been equated with student distribution. The government and schools share the same goal, but Elementary School 001 Tanjungpinang Barat still experiences a shortage of applicants. Demographics and family preferences limit the SPMB's ability to balance student numbers if the policy relies solely on admissions mechanisms.

Capacity planning, socialization, and coordination

Capacity planning is conducted using data on classroom space, teacher availability, facilities, the number of prospective students, and school conditions. The Education Office requires schools to submit capacity reports before admission begins. This mechanism prevents a uniform maximum number of students from being set. The school where the study took place confirmed that coordination regarding study groups and capacity exists.

Planning also included outreach through schools, social media, official announcements, and parent communication groups. Parent informants reported easier access to information on schedules, requirements, and registration steps. Communication was relatively good, reducing

administrative confusion. Coordination between the Education Office and schools was also carried out through meetings and assistance when challenges arose.

A well-designed plan hasn't yet resulted in a fully balanced student distribution. School capacity has been adjusted to internal capacity, but the number of prospective students around SD Negeri 001 Tanjungpinang Barat remains low. Public awareness campaigns have improved the community's understanding of the SPMB procedures, while school selection decisions continue to be influenced by reputation, quality of instruction, the school environment, and recommendations from family and social circles.

SPMB implementation program and community communication

The government program includes the implementation of the SPMB (Student Selection for Vocational High School Entrance Exam), outreach, and collaboration with schools. Implementation follows technical guidelines that regulate the schedule, requirements, admission pathways, capacity, and selection process. School informants stated that administrative stages can be carried out according to the Education Office's directives. This program provides procedural certainty and makes the admission process more orderly.

The outreach program expanded public access to information. Parents received explanations through schools, social media, and WhatsApp groups, making the registration schedule, requirements, and stages easier to understand. This successful communication helped streamline the SPMB process, but it did not automatically translate into equal distribution. Parents' choices were still influenced by assessments of the school's quality and reputation. Collaboration between the Education Office and schools also made procedures more uniform, although it still failed to address the demographic and social factors that determine the number of prospective students.

Implementation decision and determination of capacity

The regional government's decision is implemented through SPMB technical guidelines and the determination of each school's capacity. This decision provides a common basis for schools to admit students in an orderly, transparent, accountable, and non-discriminatory manner. The Education Office considers capacity determination crucial to prevent student overcrowding in some schools and student shortages in others.

The case of SD Negeri 001 Tanjungpinang Barat demonstrates the limitations of capacity-based decisions. The school accepted the capacity determination based on classroom conditions and teaching staff, but enrollment remained below capacity. Administrative decisions failed to balance distribution because the number of prospective students, family relocations, and school choice were not fully under the control of the SPMB mechanism.

Impact of strategy on equity and services

The government's strategy has had a positive impact on regular enrollment and ease of access to information. Schools share common guidelines, the public is aware of schedules and requirements, and coordination can be established when challenges arise. This impact is crucial for service governance because it reduces procedural uncertainty.

The impact on equitable distribution of student numbers remains limited. State Elementary School 001 Tanjungpinang Barat continues to face low enrollment, while several other schools remain the community's top choice. Parental feedback indicates that the quality of learning, the school environment, family recommendations, and the school's reputation remain important considerations. This suggests that the transparency of SPMB information aids the enrollment process, but is not sufficient to change family choices.

Social and demographic factors exacerbate these conditions. Some children live with family members because their parents work outside the city, while some young families choose to live in other areas. Changes in population composition reduce the potential student base near schools. The SPMB strategy has managed to regulate the admissions process, but it has not been able to change the population distribution or eliminate the disparity in community trust in schools.

Discussion

SPMB as a strategy for equal access

The local government has implemented Charles O. Jones's five-element strategy, although the results of each element have not been equally strong. Equity goals have been formulated, plans have been developed, programs are underway, decisions are being issued, and administrative impacts are beginning to be seen. Jones (1996) defines strategy as a chain linking goals with policy consequences. This connection is crucial because success cannot be measured solely by program implementation. Final results need to be continuously reviewed to assess the policy's ability to achieve equity goals. The events in Tanjungpinang demonstrate that more orderly implementation does not automatically lead to a balanced distribution of students.

These findings align with Dunn (1998), who emphasized that policies need to be assessed through their outcomes and consequences, not just implementation compliance. Cudai and Guntur (2019) also explain that policy analysis requires a link between objectives, government actions, implementing actors, and impacts. The SPMB provides the government with the tools to regulate who can be accepted and through what mechanisms, but it lacks direct authority to alter population distribution. Therefore, equity strategies need to be expanded to education service planning, linking student enrollment, demographic mapping, school quality, and projected learning space needs.

These findings corroborate Winarti's (2023) research, which showed that equitable access in Tanjungpinang has not been achieved and the impact of zoning is unevenly distributed. The difference lies in the focus of the study. Winarti assessed the impact of the zoning policy through an evaluation framework, while this study explores the government's strategy following the change to SPMB in 2025. The analysis shows that obstacles to equity are already apparent from capacity planning. School capacity has been calculated, but the number of prospective students and demographic changes have not been the primary basis for balancing student distribution.

Analysis of the Suitability of School Capacity with Regional Demographic Characteristics

The difference of 127,750 people in East Tanjungpinang and 41,660 in West Tanjungpinang demonstrates that educational service needs cannot be treated uniformly. Determining capacity, which only considers classrooms, teachers, and school facilities, yields administrative capacity figures, but these figures do not necessarily reflect the number of prospective students available. Nila Rahmi (2022) emphasized the importance of strategic planning to align school resources with educational needs. In the case of Tanjungpinang, population data needs to be aligned with data on school-age children, residential growth, family migration, and multi-year enrollment trends.

Bida (2021) points out that educational decentralization creates space for local policies that better align with regional needs. This space fails to maximize its benefits if planning still uses overly general metrics. City governments have close access to school data and settlement changes. This capacity should enable micro-projections of service areas. Zilfa (2016) also positions basic education management as a regional function that requires adjustments to local conditions. The use of more detailed demographic data will help governments distinguish schools that require additional capacity from those that require strategies to increase their attractiveness.

The experience in Tanjungpinang also relates to Darya's (2020) findings in Balikpapan. Darya demonstrated that the implementation of the PPDB (School Enrollment Program) requires outreach, system readiness, and capacity management. The similarities are evident in the importance of clear admissions governance. The difference is that issues persist in Tanjungpinang, even though the primary obstacle is not the network or registration mechanism. The greater pressure stems from the imbalance between population location and school capacity. These findings broaden the discussion of PPDB or SPMB from technical issues to educational service planning.

The school closures that occurred in Tanjungpinang reinforce the urgency of demographic planning. Kepri (2023) recorded the closure of two public elementary schools after student enrollment dropped significantly. Decisions such as school closures have consequences for assets, long-term access, and the government's ability to respond to future population changes. The government needs to avoid responding only after student numbers have dropped sharply. A warning system based on birth trends, the domicile of school-age children, housing developments, and enrollment numbers can provide time for intervention before schools lose their student base.

Dynamics of Policy Communication and Family Preferences in School Selection

Interview results indicate that outreach through schools, social media, and WhatsApp groups helps parents understand the SPMB requirements and stages. This finding supports Risna and Lisdahlia (2020), who identified communication as a crucial element in achieving educational equity through zoning policies. Harianti and Sukma (2024) also found that interorganizational communication impacted clarity of objectives and policy implementation. Tanjungpinang demonstrated similar benefits. Coordination between the Education Office and schools reduced procedural variations and provided a channel for resolving administrative issues when they arose.

Clarity of procedures is not enough to change public preferences regarding schools. Minsih (2021) found that public perceptions contribute to the impact of zoning at the elementary school level. A similar situation is observed in Tanjungpinang. Parents not only seek information on how to register but also consider learning experiences, teacher reputation, the school environment, family recommendations, and the school's image. SPMB information addresses administrative needs, while confidence in school quality is shaped by broader experiences and social information.

Syakarofath et al. (2020) explained that the pros and cons of zoning stem from the intersection of equity goals and the interests of families choosing schools deemed the best. Similar tensions persisted after the policy's terminology was changed to SPMB. The government can determine admission pathways, but it's not easy to erase the social stigma surrounding favored schools. Therefore, communication needs to evolve from schedule socialization to quality communication. Less popular schools need to openly display their performance, learning programs, student activities, teacher services, and school environment to provide a more balanced basis for public assessment.

Handyka (2023) emphasizes social participation as a crucial component of educational transformation. This idea is relevant because trust in schools cannot be built solely through circulars. The government and schools need to involve parents, school committees, and the surrounding community in service communications. Community forums, school visits, publication of achievements, and SPMB consultation rooms can foster closer relationships. These efforts are not merely promotional efforts. The goal is to reduce the information gap that allows long-standing reputations to continue to influence family choices.

Disparity in School Quality as a Challenge in Achieving Equality through SPMB

Parental preferences demonstrate that equitable access is closely linked to equitable quality. Kurniawati (2022) explains that low educational quality is influenced by differences in facilities, teaching staff, and management. Aulia Rahmi et al. (2025) also highlight the persistence of inequality in access to basic education when the quality of services across schools is unequal. If community perceptions of school quality differ significantly, region-based admissions policies will conflict with families' efforts to find schools deemed better.

Harianti and Sukma (2024) showed that differences in resources between schools in Blitar can hinder the goal of equity. Tanjungpinang exhibits similar symptoms, despite the different levels of education studied. SPMB can regulate student flow, but a school's attractiveness is still shaped by the quality of service perceived by the community. Government strategies need to link admissions policies with equitable distribution of teachers, facilities, school leadership, and relevant learning programs. Without strengthening quality, schools with low enrollments risk further losing public trust.

Ariska Putri (2024) links educational disparities to economic inequality. This relationship argues that equalizing quality should not be viewed as an additional policy. Families with greater resources have a wider choice of alternative schools, including those located further away or privately owned. Families with limited options are more reliant on nearby services. When quality differs across schools, the gap in choice can exacerbate

inequality. City governments need to ensure that less desirable schools continue to offer educational experiences that the community trusts.

Mubin and Dian (2023) emphasized that educational autonomy should be used to improve quality, not simply transfer administrative authority. Findings in Tanjungpinang support this view. Local authority over SPMB will be more meaningful if linked to school quality improvement policies. Enrollment data can be used as an early indicator to identify schools that are steadily losing interest. Declining enrollment over several years can provide the basis for service audits, community dialogue, and the development of improvement plans tailored to the school's needs.

Balance of Policy Flexibility and the Principle of Justice in the Implementation of SPMB

The SPMB technical guidelines provide certainty for schools and the community. Clarity of regulations is crucial for maintaining objectivity, transparency, accountability, fairness, and non-discrimination, as outlined in the 2025 policy direction (Aristawidya & Santoso Agus, 2025). The Regulation of the Head of the Tanjungpinang City Education Office (nd) serves as the operational basis, ensuring schools have a uniform reference. This strength must be maintained because policy flexibility must not transform into opaque decisions.

The need for flexibility arises when school conditions differ significantly. Schools with enrollment far below capacity require different responses than schools with high enrollment pressure. Kusumanegara (2010) explains that policies involve multiple actors and interests, so implementation design needs to consider the context and capacity of implementers. Indiahono (2009) also emphasizes the dynamics of policy that require adjustments as the environment changes. For Tanjungpinang, adjustments could include evaluating enrollment areas, strengthening relevant pathways, providing cross-school information services, or redistributing quality support.

Flexibility still requires data and verifiable criteria. The government shouldn't change rules simply because one school has a shortage of students. Evaluations should look at trends over time, changes in the number of school-age children, distance between schools, classroom capacity, and the impact on other schools. This approach keeps decisions rational and reduces the risk of shifting problems from one area to another. Dunn (1998) places consequence forecasting as a crucial part of policy analysis, so decisions should be tested for potential impacts before implementation.

Implications of Local Education Governance in Addressing Disparities in School Access

The study's findings demonstrate that disparities in access to basic education in Tanjungpinang stem from the interplay between admissions policies, demographics, family mobility, and public trust in schools. This focus broadens previous discussions, which focused largely on assessing the implementation or impact of zoning. Sabrina and Ishak (2020) evaluated high school zoning in Pekanbaru using a qualitative descriptive approach. Darya (2020) assessed the implementation of PPDB Balikpapan through a cross-school survey, while Minsih (2021) highlighted public perceptions in Surakarta. The Tanjungpinang study centered on a series of city government decisions and linked them to the loss of school student bases.

The distinction between administrative success and equity success is a key component of the research findings. The Tanjungpinang SPMB has provided clear regulations, more accessible information, and effective coordination. These achievements are not sufficient to demonstrate that disparities have been reduced. Equity needs to be assessed through the appropriateness of the number of school-age children, capacity, group occupancy, distance to services, and school quality. A more comprehensive measure would allow policy evaluations to more closely align with school conditions and community needs.

Ananda (2025) stated that the issue of access to basic education requires policies that combine affordability and quality. The Tanjungpinang findings point to the same need. The SPMB can be a gateway to equity, but the admission mechanism needs to be supported by the integration of population and school data, strengthening of less popular schools, communicating quality to the community, and annual evaluation of changes in student distribution. These steps would help the government respond to declining student numbers early before the problem escalates into a prolonged student shortage.

The governance implications are also quite clear. The Department of Education needs to use coordination meetings not only to communicate schedules and procedures, but also to discuss school occupancy data and demographic changes. Schools need a space to address the reasons for low enrollment based on local experiences. Parents need to be involved to understand the rationale for school selection. Data from these three sources can lead to more informed decisions than determining capacity based solely on physical capacity.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The Tanjungpinang City Government's strategy to address disparities in access to education through the Elementary School Enrollment System (SPMB) has been implemented through establishing equal access goals, capacity planning, outreach, coordination with schools, implementing new student admission programs, developing technical guidelines, and determining school capacity. These various steps have helped create a more orderly student admission process and facilitated public access to information related to the SPMB. However, its implementation has not been fully able to create a balanced distribution of students across schools. The condition of SD Negeri 001 Tanjungpinang Barat shows that the low number of applicants is not only related to the student admission mechanism, but is also influenced by population distribution, family mobility, and parents' tendencies to choose certain schools. The difference in population between East Tanjungpinang District and West Tanjungpinang District further demonstrates that efforts to equalize access to education require strategies that adapt student admission policies to the demographic conditions of each region.

Although this study provides a fairly in-depth overview of the implementation of SPMB and the issue of disparities in access to education, its scope is still limited to six informants, with a primary focus on the condition of SD Negeri 001 Tanjungpinang Barat. This coverage does not fully reflect the characteristics and problems of elementary schools throughout Tanjungpinang City. The demographic data used also only provides population figures by sub-district, thus not providing a more detailed picture of the number of school-age children by village or school service area. This situation makes it impossible to analyze the relationship

between the number of prospective students, the need for educational services, and the capacity of each school.

The research findings indicate the need for adjustments to local government strategies so that school capacity determination is not solely based on classroom capacity and available facilities. The Tanjungpinang City Education Office needs to consider the number of school-age children, residential development, annual enrollment trends, distance between schools, and the occupancy rate of study groups. Schools experiencing student shortages also require support to improve service quality and build public trust in school quality. SPMB socialization can be expanded from providing registration schedules and procedures to promoting the quality of services, school programs, teaching staff, and facilities available at each school. Evaluation of SPMB implementation also needs to assess changes in the number and distribution of students between schools so that the policy's success is not solely measured by the smoothness of the registration process.

Future research could include more public elementary schools in Tanjungpinang City to more clearly demonstrate variations in conditions across regions. Data on the distribution of the school-age population, residential location, distance from home to school, school capacity, and parental preferences could be used to strengthen the analysis of the causes of unequal student distribution. A mixed-method approach could also be applied to measure the influence of school distance, reputation, facilities, service quality, and family characteristics on parents' school choices. Studies comparing Tanjungpinang City with other regions could also broaden understanding of the relationship between demographic conditions, community preferences, and the effectiveness of SPMB in supporting equitable access to education.

References

- Akin, M. A., Rahman, U., & O. S. (2026). Teknik pemilihan informan dalam penelitian kualitatif: Strategi dan implementasi. *Nucl. Phys.*, 13(1), 104–116.
- Ananda, R. (2025). Kebijakan dan permasalahan akses pendidikan dasar. *Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar*, 10, 451.
- Ariska Putri, D. A. (2024). Pengaruh disparitas pendidikan terhadap ketimpangan pendapatan dan pertumbuhan ekonomi di Indonesia. *Parahyangan Economic Development Review*, 2(1), 29–46.
- Aristawidya, A. E., & Santoso Agus, R. (2025). Keputusan Menteri Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah Republik Indonesia Nomor 3 Tahun 2025 tentang Sistem Penerimaan Murid Baru, 6(6), 6.
- Aulia Rahmi, M., Ilha, M., & J., S. (2025). Dampak kebijakan zonasi terhadap ketimpangan akses pendidikan dasar di Indonesia pada era digital, 10(14), 6.
- Bida, O. (2021). Kebijakan desentralisasi dan disparitas pendidikan lokal di Provinsi Sulawesi Tenggara, 9(1), 50–56.
- Cudai, A., & Guntur. (2019). Buku analisis kebijakan publik. *Analisis Kebijakan Publik*, 1(1), 147.
- Darya, I. G. P. (2020). Evaluasi implementasi sistem penerimaan peserta didik baru (PPDB) di Kota Balikpapan, Indonesia. *Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan*, 20(1), 32–41.

- Dunn, W. N. (1998). Pengantar analisis kebijakan publik. Gajah Mada University Press.
- Handyka, M. A. (2023). Transformasi pendidikan: Strategi inovatif dalam peningkatan partisipasi sosial untuk membangun masyarakat yang inklusif dan berdaya saing. *JECTH: Journal Economy, Technology, Social and Humanities*, 1(1), 3–5.
- Hansen, S. (2020). Investigasi teknik wawancara dalam penelitian kualitatif manajemen konstruksi. *Jurnal Teknik Sipil*, 27(3), 283. <https://doi.org/10.5614/jts.2020.27.3.10>
- Harianti, L. N. S., & Sukma, L. N. (2024). Analisis kebijakan sistem zonasi untuk pemerataan pendidikan di SMAN 1 dan 2 Kota Blitar. *Foundasia*, 15(2), 27–37.
- Indiahono, D. (2009). Kebijakan publik berbasis dynamic policy analysis. Gava Media.
- Jones, C. O. (1996). Pengantar kebijakan publik (Public policy). Raja Grafindo Persada.
- Kepri, H. (2023). Penutupan sekolah dasar di Kota Tanjungpinang tahun 2023, 1(1), 1–3.
- Kurniawati, F. N. A. (2022). Meninjau permasalahan rendahnya kualitas pendidikan di Indonesia dan solusi. *Academy of Education Journal*, 13(1), 3–5.
- Kusumanegara, S. (2010). Model dan aktor dalam kebijakan publik. Gava Media.
- Miles, M., Huberman, A., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: An methods source book* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publication.
- Minsih, A. G. D. (2021). Persepsi masyarakat dan dampak sistem zonasi untuk jenjang sekolah dasar di Kecamatan Serengan Kota Surakarta. *Profesi Pendidikan Dasar*, 5(1), 20–27.
- Mubin, F., & Dian. (2023). Urgensi otonomi pendidikan dalam upaya meningkatkan mutu pendidikan di Indonesia. *Andragogi: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam dan Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 5(1), 71–79.
- Nila Rahmi, R. F. (2022). Implementasi perencanaan strategi dalam meningkatkan mutu pendidikan sekolah dasar, 1, 4–5.
- Nilamsari, N. (2014). Memahami studi dokumen dalam penelitian kualitatif. *Wacana*, 13(2), 177–181.
- Patton, M. Q. (1987). *Qualitative evaluation methods*. Sage Publications.
- Peraturan Kepala Dinas Pendidikan Kota Tanjungpinang. (n.d.). Petunjuk teknis Sistem Penerimaan Murid Baru jenjang taman kanak-kanak, satuan pendidikan dasar dan satuan pendidikan menengah pertama Kota Tanjungpinang tahun ajaran 2025/2026. Dinas Pendidikan Kota Tanjungpinang.
- Risna, & Lisdahlia. (2020). Analisis implementasi kebijakan zonasi dalam pemerataan pendidikan. *Mappesona*, 2(1), 20.
- Ruhansih, D. S. (2017). Metode penelitian deskriptif kualitatif dalam perspektif bimbingan. *QUANTA: Jurnal Kajian Bimbingan dan Konseling dalam Pendidikan*, 1(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.22460/q.v1i1p1-10.497>
- Sabrina, D., & Ishak. (2020). Evaluasi kebijakan sistem zonasi dalam seleksi Sistem Penerimaan Murid Baru (SPMB) tingkat sekolah menengah atas di Kota Pekanbaru. *Nakhoda: Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan*, 18(2), 92–103. <https://doi.org/10.35967/jipn.v18i2.7829>
- Sinaga, R. W. N. C. A. (2025). Kajian teoritis: Analisis data kualitatif. *Jurnal Edukatif*, 3(1), 36–45.
- Syakarofath, N. A., Sulaiman, A., & Irsyad, M. F. (2020). Kajian pro kontra penerapan sistem zonasi pendidikan di Indonesia. *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan*, 5(2), 115–130.



<https://doi.org/10.24832/jpnk.v5i2.1736>

- Waruwu, M. (2024). Pendekatan penelitian kualitatif: Konsep, prosedur, kelebihan dan peran di bidang pendidikan Marinduque. *Jurnal Penelitian dan Evaluasi Pendidikan*, 5(2), 200.
- Winarti, N., Rahmi, K., & Charin, R. O. P. (2023). Harapan pemerataan menghadirkan kesenjangan: Analisis dampak kebijakan sistem zonasi penerimaan peserta didik baru (PPDB) Kota Tanjungpinang. *Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan Widya Praja*, 49(2), 210–225.
- Zilfa, R. (2016). Desentralisasi pendidikan: Pengelolaan pendidikan dasar oleh pemerintah daerah. *JOIES: Journal of Islamic Education Studies*, 1(1).

