Matthew Springer, Ph.D.

Managing Partner, Basis Policy Research



Matthew (Matt) is a co-founder and Managing Partner at Basis Policy Research, with over two decades of experience leading large-scale research, evaluation, and technical assistance projects in education policy — advising governments, shaping policy, and moving leaders and the field forward at every level.

At Basis, Matt leads the firm's strategic vision and external relationships — partnering with government leaders, foundations, and policymakers to shape the research and evaluation agenda that drives the firm's work and lasting change in the communities it serves.

Matt advises public leaders and government agencies at the highest levels, including the U.S. Department of Education, the U.S. Government Accountability Office, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). His international work has taken him to federal governments in China, Mexico, and the United Kingdom. His research is widely published in education and policy journals and has been featured in major news outlets, including *The New York Times*, *Time Magazine*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *National Public Radio*, and *ABC World News Tonight*.

Before rejoining Basis in 2024, Matt held the prestigious Robena and Walter E. Hussman Jr. Distinguished Professorship at the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill (2018–2024) and served as a tenured professor of public policy and education at Vanderbilt University (2006–2018). Early in his career, he was a high school teacher and administrator in upstate New York — a foundation that continues to shape his approach to research, policy, and practice.

Matt serves on the Board of Directors of the Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness (SREE) and on the editorial boards of the *American Educational Research Journal* and *Educational Researcher*.

He holds a PhD in Education Finance and Policy from Vanderbilt University and a BA in Psychology and Education from Denison University, with honors.

Select Research

Springer, M.G. (2023). You Get What You Pay For? Why We Need to Invest in Strategic Compensation Reform. *Peabody Journal of Education*, *98*(1), 66-82. https://doi.org/10.1080/0161956X.2023.2160110

Springer, M.G., Swain, W.A., and Rodriguez, L.A. (2016). Effective Teacher Retention Bonuses: Evidence from Tennessee. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *38*(2), 199-221. https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373715609687

Springer, M.G., Rosenquist, B.A., and Swain, W.A. (2015). Monetary and Nonmonetary Student Incentives for Tutoring Services: A Randomized Controlled Trial. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, *8*(4), 453-474. https://doi.org/10.1080/19345747.2015.1017679

Springer, M.G., Pepper, M.J., and Ghosh-Dastidar, B. (2014). Supplemental Educational Services and Student Test Scores: Evidence from a Large, Urban School District. *Journal of Education Finance*, *39*(4), 370-403. https://doi.org/10.1353/jef.2014.a546720

Christopher Candelaria, Ph.D.

Senior Researcher, Basis Policy Research



Christopher (Chris) is a Senior Researcher at Basis Policy Research, where he specializes in school finance, using quasi-experimental methods to help policymakers and education leaders understand how resources are allocated and whether those choices expand opportunities for students. He also brings these methods to studies across Basis's portfolio, from educator compensation and school choice to workforce development.

Chris's research looks at the effects of school finance reforms, educator compensation, and staffing decisions, and it examines how these effects vary across states, districts, and schools. He currently leads Basis's work to design, develop, and implement a new weighted student funding formula in North Carolina, and he has advised policymakers in Tennessee and Alabama on school finance policy and reform. His work has been funded by the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, the William T. Grant Foundation, and the Gates Foundation. It has been published in *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *American Educational Research Journal*, *Education Finance and Policy*, and *Economics of Education Review*, and featured in *The New York Times* and state and local news outlets.

Before joining Basis, Chris was Research Director at Think*Tennessee*, a nonpartisan think tank, where he led applied research on education policy from early childhood through postsecondary education. Earlier, he was an Assistant Professor of Public Policy and Education at Vanderbilt University's Peabody College, where he also directed the Master of Public Policy program. He began his career as an economic research associate at the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco. Chris serves on the advisory boards of EdFund, which connects school finance research with state policymakers, and the SPEND Initiative, which supports national school spending data.

Chris holds a PhD in Education with concentrations in the economics of education and education policy, an MA in Economics, and a BA in Economics with a minor in mathematics, all from Stanford University.

Select Research

Candelaria, C. A., Nienstedt, L., Ainsworth, A., Penner, E. K., & Liu, Y. (In Press). Should They Pay, or Should I Go? Differential Responses to Base Salary Increases. Forthcoming at *Education Finance and Policy*. https://doi.org/10.1162/EDFP.a.493

Candelaria, C. A., Shimozaki, K. K., Crutchfield, A. N., Angileri, S., & Chen, C. (2025). Pandemic Resource Allocation and the Spending Priorities of School Leaders. *Teachers College Record: The Voice of Scholarship in Education*, *127*(8), 99-109. https://doi.org/10.1177/01614681251381445

Candelaria, C. A., Fazlul, I., Koedel, C., & Shores, K. A. (2024). Weighting for progressivity? An analysis of implicit tradeoffs associated with weighted student funding in Tennessee. *Economics of Education Review, 103*, Article 102600. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2024.102600

Candelaria, C. A. & Shores, K. A. (2019). Court-Ordered Finance Reforms in the Adequacy Era: Heterogeneous Causal Effects and Sensitivity. *Education Finance and Policy*, *14*(1), 31-60. https://doi.org/10.1162/edfp_a_00236