

# Mary Madison Smith

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## Education

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**Vanderbilt University** – Nashville, TN  
Ph.D. Education Policy and Leadership

*Expected 2025*

**University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill** – Chapel Hill, NC  
B.A. Psychology and Management and Society, Minor in Public Policy  
(*Highest Distinction, Highest Honors*)

2018

## Research Interests

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Transitions from high school to college and career; community colleges; career and technical education (CTE); research-practice partnerships; mixed methods; quasi-experimental methods; policy evaluation

## Selected Research Experience

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Vanderbilt University, Peabody College; Nashville, TN

2020–Present; Graduate Research Assistant

- Conduct quantitative evaluations of career and technical education finance using state and federal datasets in collaboration with Dr. Shaun M. Dougherty
- Collaborate with state and local higher education groups in Tennessee on mixed methods evaluations of support programs for community college students through work with Dr. Carolyn J. Heinrich
- Conduct mixed methods analyses of early postsecondary opportunities for high school students through research-practice partnerships with Metro Nashville Public Schools and the Tennessee Education Research Alliance in collaboration with Dr. Sean P. Corcoran, Dr. Marcy Singer-Gabella, Dr. Erin Henrick, Dr. Abbey Loehr, and Dr. Laura Booker

American Institutes for Research; Arlington, VA

2018–2020; Research Assistant

- Author and review sections of annually-released publications for the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) such as the Condition of Education and the Nation's Report Card
- Replicate the published results of NCES national assessments using R and Stata
- Coordinate workflow internally and with federal clients

2017; Research Assistant Intern

- Review and edit web-based and print reports for the NCES and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill Department of Psychology and Neuroscience

2016–2018; Undergraduate Research Assistant

- Contribute to research on social psychology including assisting with lab experiments, data collection, and data analysis within Dr. Kurt Gray's Mind Perception and Morality lab and Dr. Keith Payne's Inequality and Discrimination lab.
- Contribute to research on adolescent developmental psychology including assisting with data collection, and data analysis through Dr. Beth Kurtz-Costes's Motivation and Identity lab and the Raising Grateful Children study headed by Dr. Andrea Hussong and Dr. Jennifer Coffman.

2017; Gil Internship Program, Research Assistant Intern

- Contribute to literature reviews on positive youth development program curricula for the MAPSCorps project in the UNC Center for Health Equity Research

## **Publications**

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### **Peer-Reviewed Articles**

Dickason, C., Heinrich, C., and **Smith, M.** (2024). Delivering on the Promise: The Role of Supplemental Promise Programs in Reducing Barriers to College Success. *The Journal of Higher Education*. 95(1). 92-119. DOI: 10.1080/00221546.2023.2195770

Dougherty, S. and **Smith, M.** (2025) At What Cost?: Is Technical Education Worth the Investment? *Education Finance and Policy*. 20(1). 85-109. DOI: 10.1162/edfp\_a\_00418

### **Working Papers**

**Smith, M.** and Dougherty, S. (2024) *High School Career and Technical Education Finance: Impact of State-Level Policy Changes*. EdWorkingPaper: 24-1071. Annenberg Institute at Brown University: <https://doi.org/10.26300/e6xs-py44>.

Dougherty, S., **Smith, M.**, and Kelly, B. (2023). *Rural Early Childhood Programs & School Readiness: An Evaluation of the Early Steps to School Success Program*. EdWorkingPaper: 23-842. Annenberg Institute at Brown University: <https://doi.org/10.26300/z9sn-jx38>. (Under review at *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*)

### **Research and Policy Briefs**

Mader, N., **Smith, M.**, Powell, R., and Pines, A. (April 2024) *Supporting Online AP Learners: An Implementation Study of Tennessee's AP Access for ALL Program*. Research brief produced through

the Tennessee Education Research Alliance (TERA): <https://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/tera/college-and-career-readiness/ap-access-for-all-implementation/>

Dougherty, S., Nelson, M., **Smith, M.**, Corcoran, S., and Chin, S. (March 2024) *Why EPSOs Matter: Preliminary Analysis of EPSO Completion and Student Outcomes in MNPS High Schools*. Research brief produced through the Nashville Partnership for Educational Equity Research: <https://nashvillepeer.org/publications/why-epsos-matter/>

### **Other Publications and Reports**

Hussar, B., Zhang, J., Hein, S., Wang, K., Roberts, A., Cui, J., **Smith, M.**, Bullock Mann, F., Barmer, A., and Dilig, R. (2020). *The Condition of Education 2020* (NCES 2020-144). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. <https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2020144>.

### **Manuscripts in Progress**

**Smith, M.** and Castillo, M. *What Really Works? A Systematic Review of Literature on Initiatives to Increase Equity in Early Postsecondary Opportunities*.

**Smith, M.** *Ready for What? A Mixed Methods Study of College and Career Readiness Accountability Policy in Tennessee*.

**Smith, M.** *Balancing Act: A Qualitative Analysis of Time Poverty among Part-Time Community College Students*.

**Smith, M.** *The Impact of International Baccalaureate and Cambridge Advanced Programs on College Outcomes*.

## **Presentations**

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### **Peer-Reviewed Conference Presentations**

\* Denotes authors/presenters listed in alphabetical order

**Smith, Mary M.** (2024, November). *Ready for What? A Mixed Methods Study of College and Career Readiness Accountability Policy in Tennessee*. Poster presentation at Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management Fall Research (APPAM) Annual Conference, National Harbor, MD.

**Smith, Mary M.,** Dougherty, Shaun M. (2024, April). *Career and Technical Education Finance: Impact of State-Level Policy Changes*. Paper presentation at the American Educational Research Association Annual (AERA) Conference, Philadelphia, PA.

- Heinrich, Carolyn, **Smith, Mary M.**, DeLoach, Cara (2024, March). *Extending the Promise: Student Experiences with Supplemental College Promise Programs*. Paper presentation at the Association for Education Finance and Policy (AEFP) Annual Conference, Baltimore, MD.
- \*Hughes, Katherine, Flack, Clare, **Smith., Mary M.**, Smith, Tara (2023, November). *Cost Studies of CTE: Considerations and Recent Examples*. Symposium presentation at the Association for Career and Technical Education Research (ACTER) Annual Conference, Phoenix, AZ.
- Smith, Mary M.**, DeLoach, Cara, Heinrich, Carolyn (2023, April). *Extending the Promise: Student Experiences with Supplemental College Promise Programs*. Paper presentation at the Council for the Study of Community Colleges (CSCC) Annual Conference, Chicago, IL.
- Smith, Mary M.** (2023, March). *Getting Ready for College: Advanced Coursework in High School and College-Going*. Paper presentation at the Association for Education Finance and Policy (AEFP) Annual Conference, Denver, CO.
- Smith, Mary M.** (2023, March). *Career and Technical Education Finance: Impact of Policy Changes*. Paper presentation at the Association for Education Finance and Policy (AEFP) Annual Conference, Denver, CO.
- Smith, Mary M.** (2022, March). *Impacts of Non-Degree Credential Incentives on Secondary Career and Technical Education*. Poster presentation at the Association for Education Finance and Policy (AEFP) Annual Conference, Denver, CO.
- Dougherty, Shaun M., Brunner, Eric J., Ross, Stephen L., **Smith, Mary M.** (2022, March). *Are Technical High Schools Worth the Investment? A Cost-Benefit Analysis*. Paper presentation at the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management Fall Research (APPAM) Annual Conference, Austin, TX.
- Dickason, Christine, Heinrich, Carolyn, **Smith, Mary M.** (2021, November). *Closing the Gap for Underserved College Students: An Evaluation of Pilot Supplemental Promise Programs*. Roundtable session at the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) Annual Conference, San Juan, PR.
- Dougherty, Shaun M., Brunner, Eric J., Ross, Stephen L., **Smith, Mary M.** (2021, April). *Are Technical High Schools Worth the Investment? A Cost-Benefit Analysis*. Paper presentation at the National Education Finance Academy Annual Conference, virtual conference.
- Park, Bitnara J., Cobanoglu, Ayse, Correa, Samuel A., **Smith, Mary M.**, Ji, Grace (2021, April). *Relationship Between Students' Affective and Mathematics Motivation Factors and Mathematics Achievement*. Paper presentation at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Annual Conference, virtual conference.

Dougherty, Shaun M., **Smith, Mary M.**, Woods, Colby (2021, March). *Estimating the Returns to Educational Expenditures on Technical Education*. Paper presentation at the Association for Education Finance and Policy (AEFP) Annual Conference, virtual conference.

Redford, Jeremy, Huo, Howard, Forster, Diana, **Smith, Mary M.** (2019, August). *Characteristics of Academically Resilient Students at Kindergarten Entry*. Poster presentation at the annual convention of the American Psychological Association, Chicago, IL.

**Smith, Mary M.**, Vuletich, Heidi A., Kurtz-Costes, Beth (2018, April). *Caregiver and Teacher Expectations Predict GPA and College Search Behaviors in African-American Adolescents*. Poster presentation at the Society for Research on Adolescence Conference, Minneapolis, MN.

### **Invited Presentations for Policymakers or Practitioners**

*Leveraging Research to Improve EPSO Participation, Completion, and Success* (2024)  
Presentation to Metro Nashville Public Schools.

*Supporting Online AP Learners: An Implementation Study of Tennessee's AP Access for All Program* (2024) Presentation to the Tennessee Department of Education.

*Findings from an Evaluation of the Nashville Flex and Nashville GRAD Programs* (2024)  
Presentation to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, Tennessee College Access and Success Network, Nashville Chamber of Commerce, and Nashville State Community College.

*Why EPSOs Matter: Preliminary Analysis of EPSO Completion and Student Outcomes in MNPS High Schools* (2023) Presentation to Metro Nashville Public Schools.

### **Awards**

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2024-25	AERA-NSF Grants Program Dissertation Grant <i>Award amount: \$27,500</i>
2024	Emerging Education Policy Scholar <i>Thomas B. Fordham Institute and American Enterprise Institute</i>
2020–Present	Russell G. Hamilton Scholarship <i>Vanderbilt University</i>

### **Professional Affiliations**

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Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE)  
Association for Public Policy and Management (APPAM)  
Association for Education Finance and Policy (AEFP)  
American Educational Research Association (AERA)

## Professional Service

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2024	Conference Proposal Reviewer <i>American Educational Research Association (AERA) 2025 Annual Conference</i>
2023	Conference Proposal Reviewer <i>Council for the Study of Community Colleges (CSCC) 2023 Annual Conference</i>
2020–2021	Graduate Student Representative <i>American Educational Research Association (AERA), SIG 99: NAEP Studies</i>