

MARK STRAYER

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EDUCATION

Ph.D. Economics, Purdue University	Expected 2029
–First-year PhD student; core coursework in micro, macro, and econometrics	
M.A. Economics, Michigan State University	2025
–Completed first-year PhD core sequence in micro, macro, and econometrics	
Graduate Study, Master of Science in Statistics, American University	2016–2017
Master of Public Policy, University of Michigan	2010
–Paul A. Wright Scholarship	
B.A. Philosophy, Augustana College	2005
–Magna Cum Laude; Phi Beta Kappa	

FIELDS OF INTEREST

Labor Economics; Economics of Education; Public Economics

RESEARCH

Working Papers

“Doing More with Less? Right-to-Work Laws, School Productivity, and Student Achievement”

Abstract: This paper examines how Right-to-Work (RTW) laws influence student achievement and school resource allocation. Leveraging policy variation from the 2011–2017 adoption of RTW laws and implementing a border-county design, I compare treated counties with adjacent counties in non-RTW states using data from the Stanford Education Data Archive. To address staggered adoption and small numbers of treated units, I employ modern difference-in-differences estimators, including regression adjustment, synthetic difference-in-differences, and wild cluster bootstrap inference. I find that RTW adoption increased student achievement by approximately 0.06 standard deviations in the short run, with effects rising to 0.15–0.19 SDs several years post-adoption. These gains occurred despite substantial reductions in school resources: per-pupil spending fell by over \$600 within four years of adoption and up to \$1,436 in the long run. Results are robust across specifications; pre-trend evidence is more mixed for reading than for math. The findings highlight the complex relationship between labor laws, union power, school spending, and student performance.

Policy Reports and Publications

- “Map the Meal Gap 2022: An Analysis of County and Congressional District Food Insecurity and County Food Cost in the United States in 2020,” Feeding America, July 2022. *Key contributor.*

- “The Army UCX Claimants’ Initiative: A Formative Case Study,” Mathematica, September 2016. *Coauthor*.
- “Preventing School Dropout: Findings Report, School Dropout Prevention Pilot Program,” Creative Associates, September 2015. *Coauthor*.
- “Providing Services to Veterans Through the Public Workforce System: Descriptive Findings from the WIA Gold Standard Evaluation,” Mathematica, March 2015. *Coauthor*.
- “Characteristics of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Households: Fiscal Year 2011,” USDA Food and Nutrition Service, November 2012. *Lead author*.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Feeding America, Chicago, IL, Senior Research Analyst 2018–2023

- Technical lead for Map the Meal Gap; replicated and extended CPS- and ACS-based small-area estimation models.
- Oversaw all data cleaning, estimation, and QC for county- and district-level food insecurity measures.
- Technical lead on the State of Senior Hunger project, producing national and state-level food insecurity estimates for older adults.

Mathematica Policy Research, Washington, DC, Senior Programmer Analyst 2016

Mathematica Policy Research, Washington, DC, Research Analyst III 2010–2015

- Designed and executed quantitative analyses for the Army UCX Claimants Initiative; programmed all Stata analysis.
- Led analyses of school dropout interventions across four East Asian countries; coauthored USAID reports.
- Conducted workforce program impact analyses for veteran services using administrative and survey data.
- Developed rapid-turnaround simulations for USDA on SNAP program reforms and distributional impacts.
- Reviewed research rigor and evidence strength for U.S. Department of Education practice guides.
- Lead author for USDA’s SNAP household characteristics report; managed data preparation and report production.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Graduate Teaching Assistant, Purdue University 2025–present

- ECON 210: Principles of Economics** — Lead weekly recitation sections; develop instructional slides; create and administer quizzes.

–**ECON 451: Game Theory** — Grade exams and problem sets; proctor exams; support coordination with undergraduate TAs.

Graduate Teaching Assistant, Michigan State University

2023–2024

–**EC 301: Intermediate Microeconomics** — Grade exams and problem sets; assist students with understanding in economics help room each week.

–**EC 302: Intermediate Macroeconomics** — Grade exams and problem sets; assist students with understanding in economics help room each week.

AWARDS AND HONORS

Winner, Poster Presentation, 10th Annual KDSA Research Symposium, Purdue University 2025

–Poster: “Doing More with Less? Right-to-Work Laws, School Productivity, and Student Achievement”

Paul A. Wright Scholarship, University of Michigan

2008-2010

Phi Beta Kappa, Augustana College

2005