



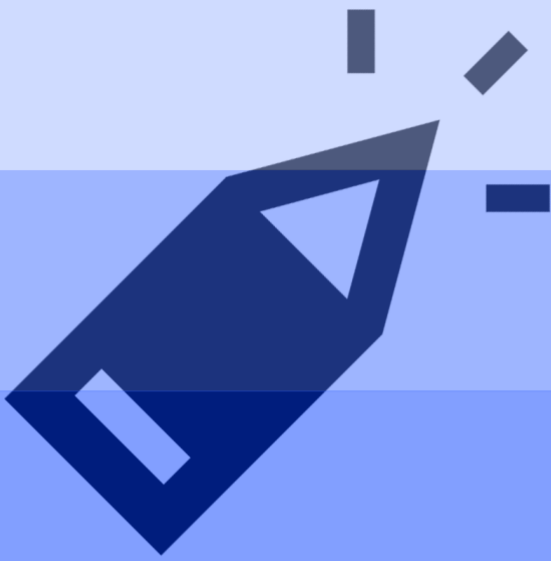
2022

Edu-Think-Tank

Scholarly Influence Rankings



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2022 Edu-Think-Tank Scholarly Influence Rankings

Jay P. Greene¹

Abstract: *Think tanks can influence policy discussions over the long-term by contributing to scholarly research on issues. This report presents a way of measuring the scholarly influence of education policy researchers at think tanks, and ranks those researchers and their think tanks by their scholarly influence. Matthew Chingos of the Urban Institute and Frederick Hess of AEI are tied for first place in this ranking, followed by Jay Greene of The Heritage Foundation. The Brookings Institution is ranked as having the most overall influence on education policy scholarship, followed by AEI and Heritage, which are tied for second.*

¹ Jay P. Greene is a senior research fellow at the Heritage Foundation as well as a managing senior fellow at the Educational Freedom Institute. The fact that Greene and the Heritage Foundation are ranked in this report may pose a conflict of interest. That conflict is mitigated by the fact that the report is being published by the Educational Freedom Institute (EFI), which is not ranked in this report, and was reviewed by Matthew Nielsen, who is the president of the board of the EFI. EFI was not included in the ranking because it does not have two education policy researchers whose primary affiliation is at EFI.

Education policy researchers employed at think tanks and advocacy organizations are properly focused on influencing policy. Typically, they influence policy with near-term efforts, including crafting and refining new proposals while educating policymakers and the public about their merits and defects. But think-tank-based researchers can also shape policy over a longer time period by influencing academic scholarship on these issues.¹ Effective think tanks and their research staff need to be attentive both to short-term tactics for influencing policy as well as invest in research that shapes scholarly discussion for longer-term influence.

Given the incentives and natural inclination to give greater priority to things that are more immediate over those further in the future, many think tanks may underinvest in scholarly research. Education policy scholar Frederick Hess of the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) made a similar observation, but in reverse, about universities: “The academy today does a passable job of recognizing good disciplinary scholarship but a pretty mediocre job of recognizing scholars who work to move ideas from the pages of barely-read journals into the national policy conversation.”² In the hopes of rectifying this imbalance, Hess created the Edu-Scholar Public Influence Rankings,³ which measure the extent to which education researchers based at universities are engaged in efforts that could influence public policy.

The “Edu-Think-Tank Scholarly Influence Rankings” in this report are also meant to balance the incentives to attend both to policy influence and scholarship, tailored to education researchers based in think tanks and advocacy organizations. This new ranking measures the scholarly influence of education researchers employed by think tanks so that those organizations can recognize who contributes to the long-term benefits of scholarly research. In addition to measuring the scholarly contributions of individual researchers, the measures are aggregated by institution so that think tanks that pay greater attention to producing influential research can achieve a desired balance between near-term efforts and longer-term scholarly activity.

According to the measures collected here, the Brookings Institution has education researchers with the greatest scholarly influence, followed by the American Enterprise Institute and the Heritage Foundation, which are tied for second place. Among individual researchers, Matthew Chingos of the Urban Institute and (appropriately enough) AEI’s Frederick Hess are tied for having the most scholarly influence, followed by this author of The Heritage Foundation.

A detailed set of results for all 14 think tanks and the top 20 individual researchers of the 80 that were examined can be found in Tables 1 and 2, respectively.

¹John W. Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1984).

²Frederick Hess, “The Five-Tool Scholar,” *Education Next*, January 16, 2017, <https://www.educationnext.org/the-five-tool-scholar/> (accessed August 26, 2022).

³Frederick Hess, “2022 Edu-Scholar Public Influence Rankings,” *Education Next*, January 12, 2022, <https://www.educationnext.org/2022-edu-scholar-public-influence-rankings/> (accessed August 26, 2022).

Table 1 Scholarly Influence Rankings by Organization

Final Rank	Organization
1	<i>Brookings</i>
2	<i>Heritage</i>
2	<i>AEI</i>
4	<i>Urban</i>
5	<i>EdChoice</i>
6	<i>New America Foundation</i>
7	<i>Fordham</i>
7	<i>Center for American Progress</i>
9	<i>TPPF</i>
10	<i>Manhattan</i>
11	<i>ExcelinEd</i>
12	<i>John Locke Foundation</i>
13	<i>Cato</i>
14	<i>Reason</i>

Table 2 Scholarly Influence Rankings by Researcher

Final Rank	Researcher	Organization
1	<i>Frederick Hess</i>	<i>AEI</i>
1	<i>Matthew Chingos</i>	<i>Urban Institute</i>
3	<i>Jay Greene</i>	<i>Heritage</i>
4	<i>Michael Hansen</i>	<i>Brookings</i>
5	<i>Corey DeAngelis</i>	<i>American Federation for Children</i>
6	<i>Ulrich Boser</i>	<i>Center for American Progress</i>
7	<i>Lauren Bauer</i>	<i>Brookings</i>
7	<i>Brad Olsen</i>	<i>Brookings</i>
9	<i>Kristin Blagg</i>	<i>Urban Institute</i>
10	<i>Michael McShane</i>	<i>EdChoice</i>
11	<i>Lindsey Burke</i>	<i>Heritage</i>
12	<i>Andy Smarick</i>	<i>Manhattan</i>
13	<i>Jon Valant</i>	<i>Brookings</i>
14	<i>Adam Tyner</i>	<i>Fordham</i>
15	<i>Nat Malkus</i>	<i>AEI</i>
16	<i>Mauriell Amechi</i>	<i>New America Foundation</i>
17	<i>Tomás Monarrez</i>	<i>Urban Institute</i>
18	<i>Jonathan Butcher</i>	<i>Heritage</i>
19	<i>Katharine Meyer</i>	<i>Brookings</i>
20	<i>Beth Akers</i>	<i>AEI</i>

Methodology

I measured scholarly influence primarily by using information collected through Google Scholar. For all researchers who have created a Google Scholar profile, Google automatically calculates three measures of scholarly influence: the total number of times that the researcher's work has been cited, the h-index⁴ (the maximum number of publications by that researcher that have been cited at least that number of times), and the i10-index (the number of publications by that researcher that have at least 10 citations). Google calculates these measures over the entire career of a researcher as well as for the most recent five years of scholarly influence. To standardize the comparison so as not to advantage older researchers, I relied on Google Scholar's three measures of scholarly influence that cover the past five years. For researchers who have not created Google Scholar profiles, these three measures had to be calculated manually. All data were collected on August 15 and 16, 2022.

In addition to Google Scholar measures, whether each researcher had earned a doctorate was recorded based on the biography on the think tank web site. Information on doctorates was used to compute aggregate rankings for think tanks but was not part of the ranking of individual scholars. That is, the extent to which think tanks hired researchers with doctorates was part of measuring that organization's scholarly influence, but an individual researcher whose research was widely cited would not be penalized for not having a doctorate.

Think tanks and advocacy organizations with at least two education policy researchers were included in the rankings. The number of education policy researchers was determined by reviewing the job titles and biographies of the education policy staff as listed on each think tank's web site. Adjunct and visiting fellows as well as those whose primary affiliation and employment was with a different organization were excluded.

In total, 80 education policy researchers were identified across 14 think tanks or advocacy organizations.⁵ All 80 researchers were ranked in each of these three categories: total citations, h-index, and i10-index. Then an average of those three rankings for each researcher was calculated. The final ranking was derived by ordering from lowest to highest that average ranking for each researcher. By taking an average of the rank for each of the three Google Scholar measures, researchers are rewarded for the total number of citations for their work as well as for having more publications that are highly cited.

To calculate the ranking for think tanks or advocacy organizations, I calculated eight measures: (1) the average number of citations among education policy researchers at each think tank, (2) the average h-index for those researchers, (3) the average i10-index, (4) the percentage of education policy researchers at each think tank who hold doctorates, (5) the sum of citations for all education policy researchers at that think tank, (6) the sum of h-index scores for those researchers, (7) the sum of i10-index scores, and (8) the number of doctorates among their education policy research staff. By calculating the average as well as the sum for each of the four indicators—yielding a total of eight measures—organizations were rewarded both for the productivity of each researcher as well as the overall volume of research activity produced by having more researchers devoted to this issue.

⁴ The University of Michigan Library System, "Research Impact Metrics: Citation Analysis, H-Index Overview," <https://guides.lib.umich.edu/c.php?g=282982&p=1887449> (accessed August 27, 2022).

⁵ Corey DeAngelis was included in this list given that he has affiliations with the Cato Institute and the Reason Foundation, although his primary affiliation and employment is with the American Federation for Children, which does not currently have two education policy researchers on its staff and was not ranked as an organization.

Think tanks were ranked on each of these eight measures and then an average of those eight ranks was calculated. The final ranking of think tanks was determined by ordering the think tanks from lowest to highest in terms of their average of those eight rankings.

The raw data for each measure for each of the 80 researchers can be found in Appendix Table 1, and the raw data for each measure for each of the 14 think tanks can be found in Appendix Table 2.

Discussion

A sizable number of think tanks and advocacy organizations devote resources to education policy research by having at least two people on staff with that responsibility. The left-leaning organizations, however, have much larger education policy research staff than do the right-leaning organizations. The New America Foundation, for example, lists 20 education policy researchers on its web site. The Brookings Institution lists 12 education policy researchers, while the Urban Institute has 11. By contrast, AEI has five education policy scholars, the Fordham Foundation and The Heritage Foundation each have four, and the Manhattan Institute has two.

The left-leaning organizations tend to have less scholarly influence per researcher, but compensate for this by having more researchers. If organizations were ranked only by scholarly influence per researcher, Heritage and AEI would take first and second place, respectively, while Brookings would come in third. But given the larger size of Brookings, it receives the strongest rank when combining both per-researcher and cumulative measures. The New America Foundation would drop from sixth to 12th place if only considering scholarly influence per researcher.

When looking at the top 20 ranked individual researchers, most but not all have doctorates. The Brookings Institution has five of the top 20 individual researchers, while AEI, Heritage, and the Urban Institute each have three. No other organization has more than one researcher in the top 20.

As with all attempts to rank the productivity of individuals and organizations, the Edu-Think-Tanker Scholarly Influence Rankings are limited both by which measures of scholarly influence are considered, as well as by imperfection in how those measures are calculated. This report is meant to refocus attention among these organizations and their researchers on the extent to which they are engaged in long-term effective policy advocacy via scholarly influence, not to provide a definitive ranking. The discussion this report may spark can help think tanks and advocacy organizations working on education policy to achieve an appropriate balance between their near-term and long-term policy efforts.

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Appendix

Appendix Table 1

Researcher Data

Organization	Researcher	Citations	H_Index	i10_Index	Phd
<i>AEI</i>	<i>Beth Akers</i>	263	5	4	1
<i>AEI</i>	<i>Frederick Hess</i>	2784	26	73	1
<i>AEI</i>	<i>Max Eden</i>	11	2	0	0
<i>AEI</i>	<i>Nat Malkus</i>	149	8	5	1
<i>AEI</i>	<i>Robert Podiscio</i>	3	1	0	0
<i>American Federation for Children</i>	<i>Corey DeAngelis</i>	851	17	28	1
<i>Brookings</i>	<i>Alan Berube</i>	8	2	0	0
<i>Brookings</i>	<i>Andre M. Perry</i>	48	3	2	1
<i>Brookings</i>	<i>Brad Olsen</i>	1465	15	16	1
<i>Brookings</i>	<i>Emily Markovich Morris</i>	1	1	0	1
<i>Brookings</i>	<i>Ghulam Omar Qargha</i>	0	0	0	1
<i>Brookings</i>	<i>Helen Shwe Hadani</i>	30	3	1	1
<i>Brookings</i>	<i>Isabel V. Sawhill</i>	87	4	3	1
<i>Brookings</i>	<i>Jon Valant</i>	173	7	5	1
<i>Brookings</i>	<i>Katharine Meyer</i>	186	6	4	1
<i>Brookings</i>	<i>Lauren Bauer</i>	825	16	19	1
<i>Brookings</i>	<i>Michael Hansen</i>	1244	20	29	1
<i>Brookings</i>	<i>Rebecca Winthrop</i>	90	3	2	1
<i>Cato</i>	<i>Colleen Hroncich</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Cato</i>	<i>Neal McCluskey</i>	9	2	0	1
<i>Center for American Progress</i>	<i>Jared C. Bass</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Center for American Progress</i>	<i>Marcella Bombardieri</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Center for American Progress</i>	<i>Rasheed Malik</i>	121	2	2	0
<i>Center for American Progress</i>	<i>Ulrich Boser</i>	1114	16	20	0
<i>EdChoice</i>	<i>John Kristof</i>	1	1	0	0
<i>EdChoice</i>	<i>Michael McShane</i>	432	12	15	1
<i>EdChoice</i>	<i>Paul DiPerna</i>	297	6	1	0
<i>ExcelinEd</i>	<i>Ben DeGrow</i>	19	2	1	0
<i>ExcelinEd</i>	<i>Cara Candal</i>	1	1	0	1
<i>ExcelinEd</i>	<i>Kymyona Burk</i>	3	1	0	1

Appendix Table 1 (cont'd)

Researcher Data

Organization	Researcher	Citations	H_Index	i10_Index	Phd
<i>Fordham</i>	<i>Aaron Churchill</i>	2	1	0	0
<i>Fordham</i>	<i>Adam Tyner</i>	161	7	6	1
<i>Fordham</i>	<i>Amber Northern</i>	6	2	0	1
<i>Fordham</i>	<i>David Griffith</i>	62	5	3	0
<i>Heritage</i>	<i>Jason Bedrick</i>	73	5	2	0
<i>Heritage</i>	<i>Jay Greene</i>	2644	26	59	1
<i>Heritage</i>	<i>Jonathan Butcher</i>	159	7	4	0
<i>Heritage</i>	<i>Lindsey Burke</i>	412	10	11	1
<i>John Locke Foundation</i>	<i>Robert Luebke</i>	0	0	0	1
<i>John Locke Foundation</i>	<i>Terry Stoops</i>	0	0	0	1
<i>Manhattan</i>	<i>Andy Smarick</i>	171	8	7	0
<i>Manhattan</i>	<i>Ray Domanico</i>	12	2	0	0
<i>New America Foundation</i>	<i>Aaron Loewenberg</i>	11	2	0	0
<i>New America Foundation</i>	<i>Abbie Lieberman</i>	14	3	0	0
<i>New America Foundation</i>	<i>Amaya Garcia</i>	32	3	1	0
<i>New America Foundation</i>	<i>Amy Laitinen</i>	15	3	0	0
<i>New America Foundation</i>	<i>Cara Sklar</i>	1	1	0	0
<i>New America Foundation</i>	<i>Elena Silva</i>	6	1	0	1
<i>New America Foundation</i>	<i>Iris Palmer</i>	26	3	0	0
<i>New America Foundation</i>	<i>Ivy Love</i>	23	3	0	0
<i>New America Foundation</i>	<i>Kevin Carey</i>	331	3	1	0
<i>New America Foundation</i>	<i>Laura Bornfreund</i>	11	3	0	0
<i>New America Foundation</i>	<i>Leslie Villegas</i>	34	3	2	0
<i>New America Foundation</i>	<i>Lisa Guernsey</i>	9	2	0	0
<i>New America Foundation</i>	<i>Lul Tesfai</i>	9	2	0	0
<i>New America Foundation</i>	<i>Mary Alice McCarthy</i>	11	2	0	1
<i>New America Foundation</i>	<i>Mauriell Amechi</i>	362	5	5	1
<i>New America Foundation</i>	<i>Melissa Tooley</i>	12	3	0	0
<i>New America Foundation</i>	<i>Michael Prebil</i>	10	2	0	0
<i>New America Foundation</i>	<i>Monique Ositelu</i>	10	2	2	1
<i>New America Foundation</i>	<i>Rachel Fishman</i>	88	6	3	0
<i>New America Foundation</i>	<i>Sophie Nguyen</i>	54	4	1	0
<i>Reason</i>	<i>Aaron Garth Smith</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Reason</i>	<i>Christian Barnard</i>	5	0	0	0
<i>Reason</i>	<i>Jude Schwalbach</i>	19	3	0	0

Appendix Table 1 (cont'd)

Researcher Data

Organization	Researcher	Citations	H_Index	i10_Index	Phd
TPPF	Andrew Gillen	9	2	0	1
TPPF	Erin Davis Valdez	3	1	0	0
TPPF	Michael Barba	10	1	1	0
TPPF	Vance Ginn	69	4	1	1
Urban Institute	Bryan J. Cook	0	0	0	1
Urban Institute	Dara Zeehandelaar Shaw	0	0	0	0
Urban Institute	Emily Gutierrez	15	2	0	1
Urban Institute	Erica Greenberg	130	7	4	1
Urban Institute	Grace Luetmer	27	3	1	0
Urban Institute	Jason D. Delisle	31	4	0	0
Urban Institute	Josephine Bias Robinson	0	0	0	0
Urban Institute	Kristin Blagg	573	11	19	0
Urban Institute	Matthew Chingos	3871	31	49	1
Urban Institute	Megan Gallagher	33	3	1	0
Urban Institute	Tomás Monarrez	145	7	5	1

Appendix Table 2

Organization Data

Organization	Average Per Researcher				Sum for Organization			
	Citations	H_Index	i10_Index	Phd	Citations	H_Index	i10_Index	Phd
AEI	642	8.4	16.4	0.60	3210	42	82	3
Brookings	346	6.7	6.8	0.92	4157	80	81	11
Cato	5	1.0	0.0	0.50	9	2	0	1
Center for American Progress	309	4.5	5.5	0.00	1235	18	22	0
EdChoice	243	6.3	5.3	0.33	730	19	16	1
ExcelinEd	8	1.3	0.3	0.67	23	4	1	2
Fordham	58	3.8	2.3	0.50	231	15	9	2
Heritage	822	12.0	19.0	0.50	3288	48	76	2
John Locke Foundation	0	0.0	0.0	1.00	0	0	0	2
Manhattan	92	5.0	3.5	0.00	183	10	7	0
New America Foundation	53	2.8	0.8	0.20	1069	56	15	4
Reason	8	1.0	0.0	0.00	24	3	0	0
TPPF	23	2.0	0.5	0.50	91	8	2	2
Urban	439	6.2	7.2	0.45	4825	68	79	5



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