In her book, *The Measure of Our Success: A Letter to My Children and Yours*, Marian Wright Edelman writes: “South Carolina is my home state and I am the aunt, granddaughter, daughter, and sister of Baptist ministers... and caring Black adults were buffers against the segregated and hostile outside world that told us we weren’t important. But our parents said it wasn’t so, our teachers said it wasn’t so, and our preachers said it wasn’t so. The message of my racially segregated childhood was clear: let no man or woman look down on you, and look down on no man or woman.” Edelman goes on to describe not being able to “play in public playgrounds or sit at drugstore lunch counters and order a Coke,” and because of this painful reality, her “Daddy built a playground and canteen... In fact, whenever he saw a need, he tried to respond.”

Edelman’s words, written some 27 years ago, are necessary reminders for us all that the fight for freedom, justice, and equality and the fight against an oppressive economic, educational, and political system are long from being won. However, like her father, we should all have an unwavering commitment to respond to, be responsible for, and be responsive to the needs of other people. And one way to engage in this work is with and through education. For as Edelman asserts, “education is for improving the lives of others.” When we understand education as an investment in other people’s lives and communities, then we can more fully realize that it is also an investment in our lives. At the same time, we can more fully view education as not simply a “passport to the future,” but as an engaging, loving, and critical way for people to connect and to be connected, for people to learn and to love, for people to be liberated and inspired, and for people to become free to be who they want to be. Education, then, is for freedom. Education is freedom.

My belief that education is freedom is inspired by Marian Wright Edelman just as much as it is inspired by Shirley Chisholm, Fannie Lou Hamer, Septima Clark, June Jordan, Audre Lorde, and among many others, Toni Morrison. The notion that education is freedom is grounded in creativity and imagination, in joy, struggle, love, the act of dreaming, and the hopeful possibilities that can result from an investment in freedom. It is this type of education that we must commit to as members of the School of Education at the University of Pittsburgh. From our work with communities and schools to our partnerships with children, youth, families, teachers, and administrators, we have to understand that “education is for improving lives” in order for all of us, especially minoritized peoples, to thrive.

Welcome to a new academic year! It is my desire that this year will be full of hope, possibilities, curiosities, love, and joy. Let us enter it committed to the belief that education is, indeed, freedom!

All my best,

Valerie Kinloch
Renée and Richard Goldman Dean
University of Pittsburgh School of Education

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“Education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it.”

—Marian Wright Edelman, 1992
We are committed to student, family, and community success.

Students
1,073 students enrolled to begin the fall 2019 semester
74 students are from 11 countries outside of the United States

Alumni
32,000+ alumni
87 countries where our alumni reside

366 students graduated in 2018-19

Giving
$4.5 million in gifts pledged in fiscal year 2019

135% increase in participation by School of Education alumni and friends for the 2019 Pitt Day of Giving

Education/Research
$26.5 million in funded research for more than 50 projects in fiscal year 2019

6 new graduate programs introduced in urban education, health and physical activity, and STEAM education (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math)

135% increase in participation by School of Education alumni and friends for the 2019 Pitt Day of Giving

At right: Educators gather for the Center for Urban Education Summer Educators Forum.
New Programs

In order to remain at the forefront of education, the Pitt School of Education has introduced several new degree and certificate programs for graduate students. The programs help to achieve our mission of striving for the well-being of all students and advancing educational equity.

Doctor of Education in Urban Education—intended for experienced education professionals who seek advanced training for leadership positions, which can include curricular leadership, school district leadership, out-of-school learning organizations, university outreach/extension, and work in other educational contexts.

Doctor of Philosophy in Urban Education—provides training to highly qualified scholars in K–16 urban education with an emphasis on supporting students’ deeper understanding and application of law, policy, the social and cultural contexts of education, and evaluation and research methods within urban contexts.

Master of Science in Clinical Exercise Physiology—focuses on preparing students for clinical and research careers with an emphasis on the study of how exercise and physical activity can prevent and treat chronic health-related conditions.

Master of Science in Health and Physical Activity Programming and Promotion—provides students with the training, skills, and knowledge to both develop programs and promote health and physical activity in a variety of settings, including the workplace, schools, communities, and medical settings.

Master of Science in Health and Wellness Management—offered jointly with Pitt’s Joseph M. Katz Graduate School of Business, this program provides management and business skills in the area of health and wellness. Students complete courses in health and physical activity, accounting, financial management, and marketing.

Online Programs in STEAM Education—focused on preparing students to rethink teaching through the design and implementation of coursework that integrates the hard sciences with the arts and humanities. The new STEAM programs are offered as a stand-alone continuing education course and a 12-credit STEAM Certificate Program.

Global Impact

Sharing the World with Pitt Education

The Institute for International Studies in Education (IISE) is actively forging partnerships in research and education with leading schools of education around the world. This effort builds on the global focus of the Plan for Pitt and the School of Education’s goal to connect learning across cultural boundaries. Learn more at iise.pitt.edu.

Advancing International Education Research

In partnership with the University Center for International Studies and its Asian Studies and Global Studies centers, IISE held a research symposium on campus in September 2018. Professor Lunxuan Sun from Tianjing Normal University in China presented research on the limited effects of private tutoring related to junior high school performance in China. Pitt Education Faculty M. Najeeb Shafiq and Maureen McClure assisted in the research. Professor Huimin Chen from Beijing Normal University in China also presented findings from research on the effects of endowed chairs at top American research universities. Her project is aimed at influencing the funding policies of higher education in China. Professor Chen worked with Pitt Education faculty member Jean Ferketish.

Global Scholarship Exchange Grows

The Pitt School of Education’s Visiting Scholars Program, which is supported by IISE, was successful in admitting visiting professors and graduate students who represented a wider range of focus areas than in previous years. The home countries of our 17 visiting scholars included mainland China, Germany, Korea, and Pakistan. Our visiting scholars undertook research projects in collaboration with Pitt Education faculty on such topics as cross-cultural comparisons of education in the United States and China, the effects of technology on education, and reading and literacy program outcomes.

Emerging Partnerships

The Pitt School of Education is exploring partnerships with a number of institutions of higher education in China. The effort builds on Dean Valerie Kinloch’s visit to China in summer 2018 to discuss educational collaboration opportunities. This past March, Dean Kinloch hosted Associate Dean Wu Hewan of Shanaan Normal University School of Education, who visited Pitt’s campus and presented on “Education Trends in China.”

Pitt School of Education Dean Valerie Kinloch observed teaching in a school in China.
We approach learning as intertwined with health, wellness, and human development.

New Faculty Spotlight: Thomas Farmer, PhD

Thomas W. Farmer joins the school as a tenured professor who will serve as chair of the Department of Psychology in Education. With more than 25 years of experience in higher education, he was most recently a professor and associate dean for research in the School of Education at the College of William & Mary. He previously served on the faculties of Virginia Commonwealth University, Pennsylvania State University, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Cleveland State University, and the University of Illinois at Chicago.

As the author of more than 100 refereed articles in peer-reviewed journals and a principal investigator of dozens of grant projects, he is a prolific researcher in the areas of rural education, special education, the social development of children, bullying and aggression. The common thread across his research is his focus on the role of the environment in fostering student learning and development.

Farmer is currently working to establish a center for rural education at the Pitt School of Education, which will be known as the Community Collaboration on Adaptive and Responsive Education (CARE) for Rural Schools Center. The CARE for Rural Schools Center will provide services to rural schools in the region and contribute to making the University of Pittsburgh into a global hub for research about rural education. The project will build on Farmer’s role as director of the Rural School–Community Partnership Research Consortium.

New Faculty Members

April Chambers, Health and Physical Activity
Frances Mary D’Andrea, Instruction and Learning
Thomas Farmer, Psychology in Education
Esohe Osai, Psychology in Education
Maximilian Schuster, Administrative and Policy Studies

New Visiting Faculty

Loretta Fernandez, Instruction and Learning
Jonathan Mendez, Center for Urban Education
Keith Trahan, Administrative and Policy Studies and Director of the Collaborative for Evaluation and Assessment Capacity

Fond Farewells

Faculty member Francis Pearman left the school to join Stanford University. After more than 30 years at the University of Pittsburgh, Louise Kaczmarek retired from the Pitt School of Education this past year. Kaczmarek was an associate professor of special education who coordinated the Early Intervention Program. Her work focused on interventions and service delivery for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with autism and other disabilities.

The school said goodbye to retiring staff members: Maria Wilson (Department of Instruction and Learning) and Judith Bowlus (Health and Physical Activity). Additionally, Carol Capson, manager of payroll and personnel, retired after more than 50 years of dedicated service to the university. Her work, loyalty, devotion, and commitment to the school were unwavering in that time.

New Staff Members


New Staff Members

Excellence in Teaching

We strive to ignite learning through our emphasis on teaching with and for dignity.

Exploring Undergraduate Pathways for Teacher Certification

The Pitt School of Education is actively exploring the creation of a new undergraduate program in teacher education at the secondary education level and in special education. Presently, our school offers an undergraduate teaching minor and graduate-level teacher certifications through our Master of Arts in Teaching and Instructional I certification programs.

This past year, Dean Valerie Kinloch commissioned the Reimagining Teacher Education Ad Hoc Committee to examine the feasibility of initiating an undergraduate teacher education program. The committee members conducted a thorough analysis of existing undergraduate teacher education models by reviewing both regional competitors and innovative national programs.

The committee has proposed a program design in which a student can pursue a double major, although it will not be required. In this format, one of the student’s majors would be in a teacher education specialization (in full accordance with Pennsylvania Department of Education requirements) and the second major would be in a content discipline, such as mathematics or English. The Pitt School of Education hopes to form a close partnership with the university’s Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences.

According to the committee, the proposal would provide greater pathways for teacher certification. It would make teacher certification more affordable, which could have a particular impact on students of color and first-generation college students, whose viewpoints and experiences are critical in K–12 schools. It would also make teacher certification more accessible to transfer students.

The committee notes that an undergraduate teacher certification program would also provide more time for in-depth training in teacher education. Giving students opportunities to gain multiple majors at the undergraduate level could expand the number of qualified teachers, including STEAM–focused practitioners, which is of great need locally and nationally. The Reimagining Teacher Education Committee will continue its work this year.

Students Study Progressive Teaching in Italy

Pitt School of Education students studying teacher education traveled to Florence, Italy this past summer to observe innovative early childhood education practices in schools. The four-week study abroad experience, which was tied to six academic credits, featured a visit to the famed Loris Malaguzzi International Center for Reggio Emilia Teacher Training. The Reggio Emilia teaching approach was developed following World War II and helped to spawn the progressive schooling movement that emphasizes learning experiences rooted in community engagement. The Reggio Emilia model and the Montessori Method are inspirations for the constructivist teaching approach at our Falk Laboratory School.

Students visiting Acetaia San Matteo in Modena, Italy.

Students study progressive teaching in Italy

Equity and Justice Foundational to the EdD

The Doctor of Education (EdD) program at our Pitt School of Education is now guided by the principles of equity and justice across all levels of its curriculum, as opposed to placing them only within specific courses. According to faculty member Charlene Trovato, this grounding helps students to develop habits of mind that become part of the professional practice.

Our EdD students have had a broad effect on education in Western Pennsylvania. They are transformational leaders in K–12 schools, higher education institutions, government agencies, health organizations, and nonprofit organizations.

Recent doctoral dissertations of EdD graduates have produced a sustained focus on equitable educational change. Topics have included:

The role of school principals in creating inclusive schools

The perceptions of college admissions officers regarding college access for underrepresented students

The impact of racial identities on preschool students

The perceptions and behaviors of Black undergraduate students from the United States who are studying abroad

A review of an effort to use gamification to promote the study of the Spanish curriculum
Community Engagement Centers

In fall 2018, the University of Pittsburgh opened its first Community Engagement Center (CEC) in the Homewood neighborhood of Pittsburgh and is now in the process of opening a second CEC in the Hill District neighborhood. The CECs serve as communities through outreach and community programming initiatives and build a bridge between the University neighbors who traditionally have not had sustained opportunities to interact with Pitt. The Pitt School of Education has been working closely with both CECs to develop programming and outreach initiatives and will soon be housed within the space of these new centers. Learn more about these centers at cec.pitt.edu.

Museum Lab at Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh

Our Pitt School of Education has partnered with the Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh on its new initiative, Museum Lab, which is a space for older children (ages 10+) to explore creative outlets with cutting-edge technology, including 3D printers, cobots, and virtual reality. With new physical space within the Museum Lab, our school will be able to support graduate students and faculty to explore the relationships between the informal world of education, like museums, and the more formal world of education, like classrooms. These engagements, among others, will be important sources of information that can lead to critical dialogues for positively impacting the landscape of education and learning.

Hopewell School District

Senior administrators from the Hopewell School District in Beaver County, Pa., are working with the Pitt School of Education to develop resources that center diversity, equity, and justice in education. The student population in the Hopewell School District is primarily White, and the senior leaders there recognize the value of fostering an environment that is inclusive and supportive of students of color and other underrepresented groups. The project began with a presentation given by Dean Valerie Kinloch on Pitt’s initiative and second CEC in the Hill District neighborhood. The CECs serve as centers of information that can lead to critical dialogues for positively impacting the landscape of education and learning.

Community Engagement: Building Synergy in the Community

We forgive engaged partnerships that allow us to learn with and from communities.

Community Engagement Centers

In response to the tragic shootings at the Tree of Life Synagogue, the Office of Child Development in the Pitt School of Education held an online book drive to collect materials for preschools, childcare, and daycare facilities in the affected Squirrel Hill and surrounding neighborhoods. The book list was carefully curated by early childhood education professionals and shared common themes of helping children manage trauma and fear and embrace diversity. More than 3,000 books were donated and distributed to help thousands of children. Thank you to everyone who participated in this meaningful initiative.

New Student Resources at Well Elementary School

The Heirs Fellows in our school’s Center for Urban Education recently helped administrators at A. Leo Weil Elementary in the Hill District to develop “The Eagles Nest,” a new space where students can “gather, learn, and soar.” Weil’s Closet is a resource room stocked with items of clothing, personal hygiene products, school supplies, and other materials meant to help students feel comfortable and secure. The Scholar’s Den is a quiet space where students can enjoy their favorite books and also access fun and engaging math materials, such as games and books of riddles. The Mini MakerSpace is an area that offers multi-sensory learning experiences to students by giving them access to materials and tools that allow for hands-on and visual learning.

Falk Laboratory School Community Engagement

In response to a gift from the trustees of the Falk Brothers Fund, the Falk Laboratory School developed new programming in the areas of equity, justice, inclusion, and diversity. The school hired an Educator in Residence for Diversity and Inclusion, who has formed partnerships with agencies and community organizations. For example, this past school year Falk students in seventh and eighth grade participated in a guided tour of the Hill District that was focused on the storied history of the neighborhood’s Black and Jewish residents. Students were asked to participate in this story by taking photographs that they felt told the past and present of the neighborhood’s story. The Falk Laboratory School hosted the second-annual Pittsburgh Alliance of University Schools Conference on Supporting Emotion and Mental Well-being: Birth to Adolescence in February 2019. The conference connected educators to experts in the Pittsburgh area, including Pitt School of Education faculty member Robert Gallen and Tracy Larson from the Office of Childhood Development.

Book Drive Helps Children Cope with Trauma

To learn how you can support our community engagement efforts, please contact Michael B. Haas, director of development, at mbh26@pitt.edu.
We pursue and produce knowledge that innovates and agitates.

**Featured Grants**

During the past year, faculty, students, and staff produced high-quality research in education and health—earning $26.5 million in grant funding from external sources.

Anthony Petrosky, Jennifer Russell, Chris Schnurr, Dana Thompson Dorsey, and several fellows from the Institute for Learning received a $7.4 million, five-year grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. They will investigate the creation of a Network for School Improvement that can close the achievement and opportunity gaps for Black, Latinx, low-income, and other traditionally underserved populations of students in the Dallas Independent School District in Texas.

John Kim received over $4.2 million from the Department of Health and Human Services to support the Family Foundations Early Head Start Program. The program provides child development and family support services to low-income families in local communities in Western Pennsylvania.

Debra Moore and the Department of Instruction and Learning received nearly $4 million from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for the Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment. The project will develop annual assessments in reading, writing, math, and science for the over 20,000 students who have significant cognitive disabilities and cannot participate in the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment.

Christopher Kline received over $1.5 million from the National Institutes of Health for the sleep study, “Reducing Sedentary Behavior to Improve Sleep: an Ancillary Study to the RESET BP Clinical Trial.” The research has the potential to impact behavioral medicine treatment recommendations and sedentary behavior guidelines.

T. Elon Dancy II and Lori Delale-O’Connor received an $850,000 grant from the American Cancer Society. They received the American College of Sports Medicine Citation Award. The award recognizes people who have made significant contributions to the fields of sports medicine or exercise science.

**Highlighted Organizations Providing Grants**

- National Institutes of Health
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- The Spencer Foundation
- National Science Foundation
- Grable Foundation
- Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
- The Heinz Endowments
- Pittsburgh Public Schools
- University of Pittsburgh
- US Department of Health and Human Services
- US Navy
- The Pittsburgh Consortium for Independent Schools
- The Pittsburgh Public Schools
- The William T. Grant Foundation
- The Spencer Foundation
- The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
- The Pittsburgh Public Schools
- The Heinz Endowments
- The National Institutes of Health
- The National Science Foundation
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- The Grable Foundation
- The Pennsylvania System of School Assessment
- The American Cancer Society
- The American College of Sports Medicine
- The Heinz Endowments
- The Pittsburgh Public Schools
- The William T. Grant Foundation
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- The National Science Foundation
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- The Grable Foundation
- The Pennsylvania System of School Assessment
- The American Cancer Society
- The American College of Sports Medicine
- The Heinz Endowments
- The Pittsburgh Public Schools
- The William T. Grant Foundation
- The Spencer Foundation
- The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
- The Pittsburgh Public Schools
- The Heinz Endowments
- The National Institutes of Health
- The National Science Foundation
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- The Grable Foundation

**Total grants received in FY 2018 and 2019**

The School of Education experienced a 10% increase in year-over-year grant funding.

- $25,000,000
- $10,000,000
- $22.2 MILLION
- $5.6 MILLION

**Featured Awards and Achievements**

Pitt School of Education Dean Valerie Kinloch was appointed a fellow of the American Educational Research Association, which is the leading professional organization representing education researchers worldwide. In addition, Kinloch was named vice president-elect of the National Council of Teachers of English, which is an organization dedicated to improving English and language arts instruction in the United States.

John Jakicic, founding director of the Healthy Lifestyle Institute, received the American College of Sports Medicine Citation Award. The award recognizes, and other new fellowship made significant contributions to the fields of sports medicine or exercise science.

The Center for Urban Education has been selected as the new home institution of the influential research education journal Educational Researcher—since 2019-2022. Dana Thompson Dorsey will serve as a co-editor and T. Elon Dancy II will be an associate editor.

M. Najeeb Shafiq was elected as the executive director of the Comparative and International Education Society, a professional association of educators and practitioners that studies international education practices. Our Pitt School of Education will serve as the home institution for the Office of the Director, and support will be provided by the Institute for International Studies in Education.

Kari Kokka was nominated by the Dean’s Office to apply for the William T. Grant Foundation Scholars Program. The organization invests in research that is focused on reducing inequality in youth outcomes and supports researchers who seek to bridge the gaps among research, policy, and practice. She will receive notification of the status of her application in Spring 2020.

Falk Laboratory School Director Jeff Suzik was appointed as a founding member and chair of the Commission for Accreditation for the Pennsylvania Association of Independent Schools. The organization serves more than 150 independent schools and represents nearly 1600 students. The appointment comes as he enters his second year as president of the Pittsburgh Consortium for Independent Schools.
Faculty Research Spotlight: Using Improvement Science to Raise Student Achievement

Funded with a $7.4 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, a team of researchers from the Pitt School of Education is leading a five-year school improvement project in Dallas, Texas. The researchers are seeking to improve the English language arts and writing skills of middle school and high school students in the district, who are primarily Black, Latinx, and/or low-income.

The researchers are applying the principles of improvement science—used in fields such as medicine—to elevate student achievement. Their goal is to improve student performance on a number of ninth grade on-track indicators that are predictive of students’ graduation rates as well as college and career readiness. The project makes use of data from early warning systems that can predict whether students are on track for high school and college success.

The researchers have already identified the root causes of the literacy issues in the school district, which are a lack of instructional rigor and equity in instruction. They have also begun working with school officials to begin implementing small tests of change that, when successful, can be scaled up. For example, a pilot program that offered mentoring support to students with high absenteeism rates proved to be effective in reducing their absences.

The project is a partnership of the Institute for Learning (IFL), Learning Research and Development Center (LRDC), Center for Urban Education, and the Dallas Independent School District. The Pitt research team includes faculty members Anthony Petrosky (project lead), Jennifer Russell, Chris Schunn, and Dana Thompson Dorsey, and IFL Fellows Rosita Apodaca, Denise Collier, Allison Escher, Sara Delmartino, and Glenn Nolly.

The ultimate objective of the project is to build up the capacity of the school district to continue to do the work on their own after the project is over.

Student Research Spotlight: Civic Learning for Gamers

Ron Idoko, a student in our Doctor of Education (EdD) program, is developing a mobile application to facilitate civic learning among college students via gamification. The idea emerged from his work as an instructor in the public service program of the University of Pittsburgh’s College of General Studies. He is now the diversity and multicultural program manager in Pitt’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

Open to all college students, Idoko’s mobile application would include modules to increase basic knowledge of historic and modern understandings of democratic principles and values. In particular, there would be an emphasis on developing students’ capacity to engage with diverse perspectives and people. Potential game modules include word scrambles, trivia, and role playing, and there are player incentives for submission speed and accuracy.

“The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education.”
—Martin Luther King Jr.
Healthy Lifestyle Institute Sparks Health and Wellness

The Healthy Lifestyle Institute (HLI) made a broad impact in stimulating new research across the University of Pittsburgh this past year and is moving forward with several community-driven projects. The HLI awarded about $100,000 in seed funding to Pitt faculty in 2018–19, which supported five projects related to how lifestyle factors impact health and well-being. Progress on the projects will be shared at the second annual Healthy Lifestyle Summit in December 2019. At that time, the recipients of the funding pool for this year will be announced.

In addition to this work, the HLI will solicit applications from local schools this year for its Schools on the Move program. The program provides funding to support innovative initiatives that enhance the health and well-being of students, teachers, and administrators at the school. The HLI is also working closely with the Pitt Community Engagement Center in Homewood to bring health and well-being initiatives to the community, including through the YMCA.

School Participates in National Research-Practice Partnerships Conference

With the goal of launching a national collective effort, the Pitt School of Education joined other leading universities for a national conference focused on the future of research-practice partnerships. The participating schools at the conference, which was hosted in the state of Washington in July 2019 by the National Center for Research in Policy and Practice, were Pitt Education, Stanford, Northwestern, University of California Irvine, University of Colorado Boulder, and the University of Washington.

Dean Valerie Kinloch led panel discussions on how the policies and structures of universities must change to support transformative models of community engagement. Of particular concern is the engagement of graduate student preparation for collaborative research. She was joined at the conference by faculty members Tom Akiva, Kevin Crowley, Lori Delale-O’Connor, and Jennifer Russell and PhD students Marijke Hecht and DaVonna Graham.

At the conference, participating schools discussed some common problems they encounter in their community-engaged initiatives and research-practice partnerships—two things that can be in tension with one another. A common theme that emerged among all participants was the importance of institutions of higher education improving their student and faculty recruitment and retention efforts, academic courses, and advising structures.

Scholarship Spotlight:
Gift Supports Childhood Special Education Educator

Lashon Blackwell (Class of 2019) works as a first-grade inclusion teacher at a charter school in Chicago. Every day, she strives to support the learning and well-being of her students. It’s a mindset she cultivated at the Pitt School of Education.

As a student, Blackwell earned a Master of Education with certification in special education. She was a recipient of the school’s Aimée Chesler Fredette Memorial Award. The award provided financial support that let her focus on her studies and research. But the award’s impact transcended its monetary value.

“It made me feel motivated to be the best teacher I could be by changing the lives of my students—and to also encourage others to always do the same,” said Blackwell.

Blackwell remembers Pitt Education fondly for its “family feeling.” At the time, she was a single parent, and her professors were accommodating when childcare options weren’t available. She said the school community was welcoming, compassionate, and consistently challenged her to think more deeply about what effect she could have on education.

“Pitt wasn’t just a university where I completed my Master of Education degree. Pitt was home,” said Blackwell.
Alumni and Giving

We think, we dream, and we lead with integrity.

Alumni Lecture Series

Our Pitt School of Education launched the SOE Alumni Lecture Series this past year to provide alumni, students, and the community opportunities to participate in the exploration of trending topics within education.

The inaugural lecture was held in January 2019 and was focused on “Educational Technology and Personalized Learning in the Classroom.” Presenters included School of Education alumni and Grable Fellows Bart Rocco and Bille Rondinelli, who shared their expertise on how the educational experience has evolved for students and teachers alike due to new technologies.

Philanthropic Support to the School of Education

In our School of Education, we ignite learning by being committed to students, families, and communities while centering educational equity, justice, and innovation in our work. Whether our students are undergraduates interested in becoming teachers or health care specialists or are professionals looking to advance their careers by becoming administrators in schools or in community organizations, we strive every day to help our students achieve their goals.

We are the number one school of education in the region, and we are ranked 34th in the nation, according to U.S. News & World Report’s “Best Education Schools” 2019-20 report.

In order for our school to continue providing the very best education—which attracts the very best students, staff, and faculty—we rely on the generosity and philanthropic support of our alumni and friends.

Philanthropic gifts to our School of Education help provide funding that directly impacts the daily lives of our students. Endowed scholarships continue to be one of our top priorities because they allow our school to attract outstanding students while providing them with enriching, engaged, and rigorous educational opportunities.

There are many other ways to invest in our school and our students:

- Professorships and chairs attract and retain outstanding practitioners and researchers as faculty
- Fellowships attract outstanding students pursuing graduate work
- Research funding advances the scholarly agendas of our faculty
- Unrestricted operating funds support our school as we meet new challenges

There are many excellent ways to make a gift to our school. For example, you can make gifts of cash, securities, and/or planned gifts, such as a charitable gift annuity, which can generate income, both for you and for Pitt during your retirement years. Alumni and friends who are over age 70 can also make charitable gifts directly from a traditional IRA account without incurring federal income tax on the withdrawal.

Invest in Pitt Education

Contact Michael B. Haas, director of development, at mba26@pitt.edu.

Distinguished Alumni Awards

The Pitt School of Education hosted its annual Alumni Awards on March 29, 2019 to celebrate the success of our alumni, students, and school. Individuals honored at the event included:

- Christina Gosark, PhD, Distinguished Alumni Award
- Julius Kitutu, PhD, Distinguished Alumni Award
- Timothy Hetrich, Distinguished Pre-K-12 Educator Award
- Ira Murray, PhD, Distinguished Early Career Award
- Patrick O’Toole, EdD, Administrative and Policy Studies Award
- Robert Spina, PhD, FACSM, Health and Physical Activity Award
- Tsipy Gur, PhD, Instruction and Learning Award
- Matthew Fasano-McCarron, PsyD, Psychology in Education Award
- Elizabeth LaGamba, EdD, Outstanding EdD Dissertation Award
- Ross Higashi, PhD, Outstanding PhD Dissertation Award
- Paulette Vincent-Ruz, PhD, Student Leadership Award

Back row from left: Ira Murray, Robert Spina, Christina Gosark, Valerie Kinloch, Tsipy Gur, Elizabeth LaGamba, Ross Higashi, and Adrianoth,. Front row from left: Matthew Fasano-McCarron, Patrick O’Toole, and Paulette Vincent-Ruz.
“Charitable giving is a great opportunity. You get a benefit now but leave a legacy for the future.”
—Ron S. (BA ’69, MEd ’73, PhD ’80)

We ignite learning. We strive for well-being for all. We teach. We commit to student, family, and community success. We commit to educational equity. We advocate. We work for justice. We cultivate relationships. We forge engaged partnerships. We collaborate. We learn with and from communities. We innovate and agitate. We pursue and produce knowledge. We research. We disrupt and transform inequitable educational structures. We approach learning as intertwined with health, wellness, and human development. We address how national, global, social, and technological change impacts learning. We shape practice and policy. We teach with and for dignity. We think. We dream. We lead with integrity. We are the School of Education at the University of Pittsburgh.

Mission-Vision:
The following statement is our new mission-vision. It encapsulates what we do, what we believe, and who we continually seek to become as members of the School community.

We ignite learning. We strive for well-being for all. We teach. We commit to student, family, and community success. We commit to educational equity. We advocate. We work for justice. We cultivate relationships. We forge engaged partnerships. We collaborate. We learn with and from communities. We innovate and agitate. We pursue and produce knowledge. We research. We disrupt and transform inequitable educational structures. We approach learning as intertwined with health, wellness, and human development. We address how national, global, social, and technological change impacts learning. We shape practice and policy. We teach with and for dignity. We think. We dream. We lead with integrity. We are the School of Education at the University of Pittsburgh.