We think.
We dream.
We lead with integrity.
School of Education by the Numbers

#1 in Western Pennsylvania (U.S. News & World Report)

#22 among education psychology programs nationwide

#28 among public institutions nationwide

#39 among all institutions nationwide (U.S. News & World Report)

Students

1,045 students enrolled in fall term 2020

55 international students from 14 countries

Alumni Reach

32,000+ alumni

87 countries where our alumni reside

460 students graduated in 2019-20

Giving

$2.9 million in gifts pledged in fiscal year 2020

1,423 donors in fiscal year 2020 (1.2% increase from 2019)

247 unique donors gave nearly $118,000 during the 2020 Pitt Day of Giving

Research Impact

$23.9 million in funded research for 63 projects in fiscal year 2020

21% increase in the number of faculty members with new awards

6 new grants exceeding $1 Million in funding

Some photos in this publication were taken prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and do not necessarily reflect current health and safety guidelines.
University of Pittsburgh by the Numbers

Rankings

#1
public university in the Northeastern United States
(The Wall Street Journal/Times Higher Education)

#5
among U.S. universities in competitive grants awarded to faculty by the National Institutes of Health

#18
among the nation’s top public colleges and universities
(U.S. News & World Report)

A Best College
for LGBTQ+ students
(Best Colleges, in partnership with the nonprofit organization Campus Pride)
"We ignite learning."

**Message from the Dean**

Undoubtedly, 2020 has been a difficult year for everyone in every part of the world. As members of our School of Education at the University of Pittsburgh, we recognize the pain, trauma, and devastation brought forth by the COVID-19 global pandemic and by the ongoing racial violence that harms the lives and communities of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and other People of Color. As a community of thinkers, educators, researchers, leaders, and change agents, we remain unwavering in our commitment to disrupt and transform inequitable educational structures.
We also remain invested in addressing how learning must be intertwined with health, wellness, and human development. In doing so, we seek to eradicate unequal, inequitable, and unjust practices and policies that harm and oppress people.

Daunting as these challenges may seem, we must remember that our nation’s current moment of racial injustice is part of a larger history of struggle, survival, organizing, and resistance. Against this backdrop, an extraordinary movement took centerstage in 2020, one led by people of various races, ethnicities, identities, ages, languages, professions, and religions. Collectively, people came together around a shared vision to enact more concrete ways to center antiracism, equity, and justice in our engagements with others inside schools, universities, communities, and in every context around the world.

As these significant events transpired, our School continued its leadership in educational equity and justice. In fact, our students, staff, faculty, and alumni examined education from an abolitionist framework. We turned to the work of educational researcher Bettina L. Love, an alumna of our School, who calls on each one of us to radically reimagine, refigure, and rebuild education; hence, her focus on “abolitionist teaching and the pursuit of educational freedom.” Then, we began to contemplate what it means to understand education in the same ways that the feminist, educator, and activist bell hooks understands it, as “the practice of freedom” itself. Drs. Love and hooks offered our School of Education frameworks by which to better engage students and each other in transformative learning. These frameworks and ways of being, becoming, and knowing in community with others were particularly important for our School. They align with our mission-vision, which grounds us in our investment to “ignite learning,” “strive for well-being for all,” “innovate and agitate,” and “commit to student, family, and community success.”

Even when we were required to shift to virtual teaching and learning in the spring semester 2020, our School committed to maintain our focus on well-being, on health and safety, on learning with and from communities, and on providing rich academic experiences to our students. In fact, some of the work, among so many others, that we accomplished in 2020 include the following things:

• A successful school-wide reorganization of our academic departments;
• An engaging and successful restructuring of staff units, roles, and responsibilities;
• A comprehensive, multi-million dollar renovation of our facilities on the 5th floor of Wesley W. Posvar Hall;
• Creation of the PittEd Justice Collective to more fully engage our School as well as our community partners in antiracist, justice work;
• Elimination of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores from our graduate admissions in favor of more holistic, equitable forms of assessment; and
• Being ranked in the Top 30 of public schools of education nationally and #1 in Western Pennsylvania.

It goes without question that we have been impacted by the pandemic and by the ongoing racial violence, economic uncertainty, and healthcare crises. However, we have not wavered in who we are: a School of Education community that leads with integrity and that embodies grace, kindness, and humility. These are the values that will continue to guide our school forward, especially as we more fully realize the importance and promise of equity and justice in education.

All my best,

Valerie Kinloch, PhD
Renée and Richard Goldman Dean
School of Education
Global Impact

The University of Pittsburgh School of Education is making a transformative impact on education all over the world. Our engagements span the globe and continue to grow each year through the innovative and life-changing work of our talented students, faculty, and alumni.

“We address how national, global, social, and technological change impacts learning.”
Featured Alumni

Silver Francis Oonyu (MEd ’12) operates a school for blind children in his native Uganda. Called the Silver Memorial Inclusive Learning Center, or SMILE School, it teaches approximately 200 children how to use adaptive tools such as braille, mobility equipment, and assistive information technology. Oonyu received the 2019 Sheth International Young Alumni Achievement Award from the University of Pittsburgh Center for International Studies.

Mary Catherine Reljac (EdD ’16) was named superintendent of the Fox Chapel Area School District. Located approximately 10 miles northeast of downtown Pittsburgh, the nationally recognized, award-winning district draws students from six municipalities.

Safiyyah Scott (MEd ’15) received a Fulbright award to complete original research in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. She examined the motivations and challenges of Saudi women who are considering study abroad programs in other countries. Saudi Arabia sends the fourth-most international students to the United States, according to the Institute of International Education.

Kellie Ware-Seabron (MS ’06) was named executive director of the Pittsburgh branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). She previously worked as the equity, diversity, and inclusion policy analyst for Pittsburgh City Council.

Jirada Wudthayagorn (PhD ’00) received the Outstanding Research Study Beneficial to Society Award from Chulalongkorn University in Thailand. The award recognizes her creation of a foreign language placement examination that assesses students’ English language proficiency while also being culturally responsive to Thai students.

Student Spotlight

Reema Manshi is a first-year student in the Master of Education in applied behavioral analysis program. Born and raised in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, she aspires to use the knowledge gained at the University of Pittsburgh School of Education to improve programs for autistic children in her home country. She is a recipient of the Your Job and Scholarship award from Saudi Arabia.

Why did you choose to pursue an MEd in applied behavioral analysis at Pitt Education?

“The two things I like the most are the program’s curriculum and the school’s reputation. I like that the curriculum covers all seven subjects and the supervision hours that I need for certification in applied behavioral analysis.”

What would you say to someone who wants to work with autistic children?

“The most important thing is to believe in them. Give them the opportunity and the time to change their challenging behaviors. Keep practicing. For a lot of children, they just need the time to practice their skills. Working with autistic children has taught me patience and allowed me to challenge myself. I feel happy when I achieve a goal with the child’s behavior. The children give me an opportunity to be more human.”

What are your future goals?

“We don’t have a master’s program in applied behavioral analysis in my home country, so I hope to bring back the knowledge from Pitt Education and share it to improve programs for autistic children in Saudi Arabia. It’s not about my personal goals; it’s about my community goals.”

School Adds WeChat Channel

In an effort to improve international student recruitment, the school created a WeChat channel. Through WeChat, we are seeking to bolster ongoing communications with prospective students in Asia, particularly in China.
School Updates

Five new faculty members hired this past year are further strengthening our knowledge in educational equity and justice. They build our capacity for teaching, research, and community engagement in the areas of abolitionism, liberation, decoloniality, antiracism, rural education, higher education, and research-practice partnerships.

Faculty Spotlight

Sabina Vaught has joined Pitt Education as professor and inaugural chair of the new Department of Teaching, Learning, and Leading. Vaught was most recently at the Walter Chapin Simpson Center for the Humanities at the University of Washington, where she was a scholar in residence working on two major book projects. Prior to that, she was chair of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at the University of Oklahoma (OU) Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education. While at OU, she established the Indigenous education focus, founded the Carceral Studies Consortium, and built the Women and Girls Across Gender Initiative. Before her tenure at OU, Vaught was a faculty member at Tufts University, where she served as director of the Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; Africana Studies; and Educational Studies Master of Arts programs and was interim chair of the Department of Education. She also was cochair of the Consortium for Graduate Studies in Gender, Culture, Women, and Sexuality, a cooperative effort of nine universities housed at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Vaught’s research considers carcerality and liberatory knowledge movements broadly and the race-gender labor and conquest relationships among schools, prisons, and insurgent communities specifically. Her teaching has extended to include adult and juvenile prisons for women and girls, where she has facilitated feminist studies study groups.

WELCOME NEW FACULTY

Eleanor Anderson is an assistant professor of research-practice partnerships. Her research centers on what makes some education initiatives stick while so many others fade away. She has examined the use of restorative justice practices in Chicago schools with a focus on understanding the day-to-day challenges of implementation and sustainable strategies. Most recently a research fellow at Northwestern University’s School of Education and Social Policy, Anderson worked with district leaders, funders, nonprofit staff, and teachers. “I’m excited about joining the school because I can see there is real intentionality here about impact and working collaboratively with schools and communities,” says Anderson.

Shanyce L. Campbell is an assistant professor of urban education and quantitative methods and is part of the school’s Center for Urban Education. Her research focuses on understanding how policies and practices influence access to quality learning opportunities for students marginalized by the educational system. Most recently, Campbell was a faculty member in the School of Education at the University of California, Irvine. She is currently completing a National Academy of Education and Spencer Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship. In the fellowship, she is “leading a study that examines how teacher preparation programs foster equity dispositions among teacher candidates.”

Josué Ricardo López is an assistant professor of decoloniality and equity studies in teacher education. His research interests include mobility, race, indigeneity, education, and schooling. His research also examines how education contributes to our ability as humans to live well. Prior to earning his PhD at the University of Connecticut School of Education, López taught at the elementary, middle, and high school levels in Connecticut public schools. “What is it that we require to live well? How does education—and schooling more specifically—help meet our needs and interests so we may live well? These are principal questions in how I approach decoloniality in education and schooling,” says López.

“We teach with and for dignity.”
Darris Means is an associate professor of higher education. Most recently, he was a faculty member at the University of Georgia Mary Frances Early College of Education. Means researches postsecondary education access and success for Black students, rural students, first-generation students, and students from low-income and working-class families, with a focus on how racism, classism, spatial inequalities, heterosexism, and other forms of oppression hinder educational equity. For Means, the topics of access and success have personal meaning. “I was a first-generation college student, and I also come from a working-class family where I had to overcome multiple barriers to make attending college a reality. It makes it much more special to be working with students like me,” says Means.

**A Heartfelt Goodbye**

Eighteen faculty and staff members retired from the school in 2020, including Director of Financial Operations Carole Bost, who served for 54 years. Bost joined the school on May 2, 1966, and she provided constant leadership and stability in the areas of human resources, operations, and financial management, especially as the school changed over time. According to Bost, “I have a real love for the School of Education and the people in it. I’m going to miss the people so much. I loved my job.” To honor her legacy and ensure that she always remains a part of the school, Dean Valerie Kinloch established the Carole Ann Bost Staff Development Fund. The new fund will provide financial support to staff members who want to deepen their commitments to equity, justice, and diversity while enhancing their job performance. It also will provide financial support to staff members who have an immediate need or unexpected emergency that presents a hardship.

“I have a real love for the School of Education and the people in it. I’m going to miss the people so much. I loved my job.”

—Carole Ann Bost

**New Senior Position for Equity, Inclusion, and Justice**

The Fanny Edel Falk Laboratory School hired Samantha Utley as its first-ever coordinator of equity, inclusion, and justice. In this senior-level position, she works with students, faculty, staff, and parents and caregivers in a variety of ways. She supports professional development, student admissions, curriculum development, and classroom instruction. Utley, former dean of students in the Duquesne City School District, is invested in educational equity. “The primary years are the foundation for students,” says Utley. “Reading, writing, math—if you don’t have those skills down in the first few years, you will struggle down the road. The same could be thought of with equity and inclusion. If we don’t instill that knowledge in our children, then as adults they will have deficit thinking and bias.”
Graduate Admissions Update

School Eliminates GRE Test Requirement

Effective fall 2020, the Pitt School of Education will no longer require Graduate Record Examination (GRE) test scores in its graduate school admissions. This applies to all graduate programs, including the PhD and EdD programs, with the exception of a dual-degree Master of Science in health and wellness management program offered in collaboration with Pitt’s Joseph M. Katz Graduate School of Business.

The GRE waiver is the right thing to do because:

• the GRE underpredicts graduate school outcomes for minoritized students and weakly predicts outcomes for every student;

• the GRE is disproportionately a barrier of entry for Students of Color, first-generation college students, and students from low-income backgrounds; and

• removing the GRE allows the school to engage in humanizing, holistic evaluations of applications that will allow us to recruit a more diverse, engaged, and talented group of students.
Schoolwide Reorganization Completed

The School of Education completed a comprehensive reorganization of its academic and departmental units this past year. Representing the largest changes to the structure of the school in more than 30 years, the reconfiguration strengthens the school in numerous ways. The enhanced structure encourages fertile cross-collaborations while also reducing inefficiencies, improving operations, and better aligning resources with strategic priorities.

Through the reorganization, the school
• replaced the school’s six academic units with three academic departments,
• created new training divisions to provide cross-functional support, and
• engaged in staff restructuring to improve personnel operations and function.

New Academic Departments

Each department in our school serves as an academic home for students, faculty, and staff in ways that support their learning, teaching, research, and engagement. Our new departments are as follows:
• Department of Educational Foundations, Organizations, and Policy
• Department of Health and Human Development
• Department of Teaching, Learning, and Leading

New Training Divisions

Training divisions are cross-functional by nature and provide operational expertise for academic programs. Our new divisions are as follows:
• Division of Research Training
• Division of Innovative Leadership
• Division of Undergraduate and Professional Training

“We commit to student, family, and community success.”
**Renovations Update**

**New Spaces Transform Posvar Hall**

Concurrent with the academic and administrative reorganization, the School of Education underwent a major physical renovation on the fifth floor of Wesley W. Posvar Hall. The renovation creates inviting, modern, and high-functioning spaces for students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

With the renovations, the school has added the following additions to our space:
- an expanded Dean’s Colloquium Room for large meetings
- an improved information technology suite
- a welcome center
- a new space for the Institute for International Studies in Education
- a school wellness center
- a student engagement suite
- new faculty and staff workspaces
- large and small study areas for students
- new office space for emeritus faculty

Additionally, the renovations resulted in more open areas for collaborations and more spaces filled with natural light.

Financial support for the project was provided by the University of Pittsburgh Office of the Provost.

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**Old Structure: Academic Units**

- Department of Instruction and Learning
- Department of Psychology in Education
- Department of Health and Physical Activity
- Center for Urban Education *
- Learning Sciences and Policy

**New Structure: Academic Departments**

- Teaching, Learning, and Leading
- Health and Human Development
- Educational Foundations, Organizations, and Policy
- Training Divisions Research Training, Innovative Leadership, and Undergraduate and Professional Training

* The Center for Urban Education continues to exist at the school as a preeminent center for research and community engagement.

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At right, the renovated lobby of Wesley W. Posvar Hall, home of the School of Education
New Positions Build Organizational Capacity

As part of our schoolwide reorganization, we created several new leadership positions.

Tinukwa Boulder is the inaugural director of innovative technologies and online learning in the dean’s office and an associate professor of practice in the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Leading.

T. Elon Dancy II was named associate dean in August 2020 and was promoted to executive director of the Center for Urban Education.

Leigh Patel served as the inaugural associate dean for equity and justice but has moved into a full-time position as professor in the Department of Educational Foundations, Organizations, and Policy.

Shederick McClendon is the inaugural assistant dean for student engagement.

Sarah Morgan is the inaugural director of human resources.

Courtney Ross, former administrative assistant in the dean’s office, was promoted to coordinator of strategic initiatives and special projects.

Rochelle Woods, who was previously executive director of administration, was promoted to senior assistant dean for operations, administration, and academic programs.

“We approach learning as intertwined with health, wellness, and human development.”
Cultivating Equity and Justice

Introducing the PittEd Justice Collective

On June 1, 2020, Dean Valerie Kinloch initiated the PittEd Justice Collective in response to the death of George Floyd while in police custody. The collective is a three-year working group that engages students, staff, faculty, alumni, families, youth, and district and community partners in antiracist, justice-directed initiatives. Members of the collective explore how our nation’s current reckoning with racial injustice and systemic oppression is situated within histories of struggle, survival, organizing, and resistance.

The collective is already making a profound impact. It has held six webinars attracting more than 3,000 registrants, has created a staff-oriented professional development group to cultivate engagement, and is initiating the regional Youth for Justice Dean’s Advisory Council.

Additionally, more than 130 individuals have pledged their continuing support of the collective, including faculty from Pitt’s Swanson School of Engineering, Graduate School of Public Health, School of Social Work, and School of Law; educators and school district leaders from K-12 schools across Western Pennsylvania; and educational practitioners and researchers from other universities across the country, including the University of California, Los Angeles; the University of Texas at San Antonio; and the University of California, San Diego.

Leadership Team

Valerie Kinloch, Renée and Richard Goldman Dean
T. Elon Dancy II, Associate Dean for Equity and Justice; Executive Director, Center for Urban Education; and Helen S. Faison Endowed Chair
Courtney Ross, Coordinator of Strategic Initiatives and Special Projects

Focus Areas:

- Disseminate, discuss, and design interdisciplinary studies on equity, justice, and antiracism
- Collaborate with Pitt Education faculty, other Pitt colleagues, and school districts on justice teaching, with an explicit focus on pedagogies, practices, and assessments
- Design and propose a justice-defined scope of study for students in the Pitt School of Education
- Make recommendations for equity, justice, and antiracism for public education, higher education, and society
- Design a justice fellows program for faculty, staff, and students in the Pitt School of Education as well as with community partners

Get Involved

Visit education.pitt.edu to sign up for the PittEd Justice Collective or e-mail the group at PittEdJusticeCollective@pitt.edu.

“We disrupt and transform inequitable educational structures.”
“We forge engaged partnerships. We collaborate.”
Serving Students Amid the Pandemic

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the University of Pittsburgh School of Education rapidly adapted its operations to protect the health and safety of its community members. The core functions of the school—teaching and learning, research, health and wellness, and community engagement—were preserved in the remote format. 

“We strive for well-being for all.”
Remote Instruction

Following the standards and guidelines of the University, our faculty moved all courses to a remote learning format in March. In the unprecedented shift, faculty, staff, and students worked together to adjust to the new learning environment. Courtney Ross, a student in the Master of Education in higher education program and a staff member in the dean’s office, says of the experience, “I still feel like I’m learning and getting the content.”

Virtual Dissertation Defenses

Doctoral candidates completed their dissertation defenses online over Zoom. The first student to do so, Marijke Hecht, enjoyed being able to include more colleagues, friends, and family members in the experience than would have been possible had her defense been in person. “It was obviously very different from what I expected it to be, but there were also some nice aspects to it, too,” says Hecht.

Virtual Coffee Chats

PhD candidate Emily Koren came up with the idea for weekly virtual coffee breaks for students, faculty, and staff. Called Chat & Check-ins, they gave the school community a way to stay in touch and to socialize at a time of physical distancing.

Virtual Fitness Classes

Faculty member Renee Rogers led an effort by the Be Fit Pitt team at the school’s Healthy Lifestyle Institute to get people exercising safely from within their homes. They began hosting live workout sessions over Zoom four times a day, Monday through Friday, that were open to all members of the Pitt community. To date, thousands of people have attended the sessions.

Leadership in a Time of Crisis

Within the first few months of joining the School of Education as the inaugural director of innovative technologies and online learning, Tinukwa Boulder was immersed in addressing the significant challenge experienced by most U.S. colleges and universities: how to quickly shift all instruction to remote learning. She stepped up to design and colead a variety of workshops and training exercises to help faculty smoothly make the transition to online teaching.
Forging Engaged Partnerships

Forging engaged partnerships is a hallmark of the Pitt School of Education. We strive to work with and on behalf of others through projects, partnerships, and initiatives that benefit children and families. Some of this work is carried out by the school’s leading centers and institutes.

New Tutoring Program for Youth

PittEnrich is a new program that sends students in the Combined Accelerated Studies in Education and Applied Developmental Psychology programs to tutor in city schools and at the Pitt Community Engagement Center (CEC) in Homewood. They tutor students in first through third grades.

“We’re here to make reading and literacy fun,” says Ciara Bailey, a senior in the Pitt School of Education. During a Saturday morning session this past January, Bailey led a reading exercise with a small group of elementary school students. They played a game of Candyland but with a reading education twist: Students drew from the stack of cards, read the passage on the card, and moved their piece on the game board.

“PittEnrich is the perfect opportunity for students to teach while at the same time cultivate relationships with and learn from the Homewood community,” says Anna Arlotta-Guerrero, a Pitt Education faculty member who led the program.

The PittEnrich program is offered in partnership with the Gismondi Family Foundation, Pitt’s School of Social Work, and the CEC in Homewood.

Girls on the Run Offers Social and Emotional Growth

The Center for Urban Education’s Heinz Fellows Program supports K-12 students in the Pittsburgh Public Schools. During the 2020 spring term, Heinz Fellow Erica Roberts created a healthy lifestyle project for third-grade girls at Pittsburgh Weil PreK-5 in Pittsburgh’s Hill District neighborhood. She enrolled students in the Girls on the Run (GOTR) program at UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital. The 10-week after-school program is designed to inspire confidence in young girls through physical activity programs, culminating with a 5K run.

“We created safe places where students could explore new interest areas and build confidence in themselves,” says Roberts.
Roberts and participating students were well on their way to achieving all of their goals until the COVID-19 pandemic became a reality. Physical distancing requirements led to the cancellation of the 5K run. Undeterred, Roberts worked with GOTR to develop a virtual 5K run that allowed students to complete the 3.1 miles within one week by walking, running, and/or skipping at home.

“Ten girls completed the virtual 5K, and a few of the girls sent pictures of them completing their run. This is just one of many examples of how people can make the best out of an unfortunate circumstance like the pandemic,” says Roberts.

Healthy Lifestyle Institute Supports Schools on the Move

The Healthy Lifestyle Institute provided small grants to 43 school districts in Southwestern Pennsylvania through the Schools on the Move program. The grants support a wide range of improvements, including the purchase of gym equipment, curriculum development, and the creation of new physical activity programming.

“It’s been amazing to see what creative teachers are able to do with just a little funding,” says John Jakicic, director of the Healthy Lifestyle Institute and Distinguished Professor at the Pitt School of Education.

The program provides grants of $500-$2,500 to support innovative school-based health and wellness initiatives. Among the funded projects in 2020 are the following:

• The Washington School District in Washington, Pennsylvania, used its grant funding to purchase new gym equipment for high school students with physical disabilities.
• The A.W. Beattie Career Center in Allison Park, Pennsylvania, plans to construct a jogging path and walking trail with activity stations around the school’s campus.
• The Butler Area School District will use its grant to purchase the Second Step Program curriculum for all of its kindergarten students.

HealthyCHILD Program Honored by Pitt

HealthyCHILD, a partnership of the Pitt Office of Child Development (OCD) and multiple early education programs, received a Partnership of Distinction Award at the University of Pittsburgh Community Engaged Scholarship Forum in March 2020.

The program aims to help teachers build skills to address classroom behaviors that often result from trauma, mental health challenges, and racial discrimination. The program has reached nearly 20,000 local children since 2015, disrupting the status quo and eliminating inequities in early childhood education.

During the pandemic, OCD’s Tracy Larson and her team of consultants moved their work online and continued to offer services.

“We learn with and from communities.”
Innovative Research

During the past year, the school generated nearly $24 million in new external grants, including six projects that exceeded $1 million dollars in funding.

By the Numbers

$23.9 million in new grant funding
63 grants awarded, a record high and up 17% year over year
33 faculty members with new awards (up 21% year over year)
6 new grants of $1 million or more

Top Funding Agencies Include
National Science Foundation
U.S. Department of Education
Pennsylvania Department of Education
National Institutes of Health

Featured Grants

Associate Professor and Office of Child Development Director Shannon Wanless received a $4.3 million grant from Allegheny County to continue operating Family Foundations Early Head Start. The program provides comprehensive child development and family support services to low-income families who have children from birth to age 3 and are located within high-risk neighborhoods in the greater Pittsburgh area.

Jennifer Iriti, a research scientist in the Learning Research and Development Center, received a $2.3 million grant from the National Science Foundation for a project to develop science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) pathways in the biotechnology, bioengineering, and biomaterials workforce for underrepresented or minoritized people in grades kindergarten through post-secondary education. The project will use the Bio+ Alliance Networked Improvement Community to remove access barriers; broaden student participation; and contribute to a diverse, globally competitive workforce.

Associate Professor Ming-Te Wang received a $1.5 million grant from the National Science Foundation for his research project, Student Engagement in Mathematics: A Longitudinal Study of Classroom and Psychosocial Process. The project will identify groups of students who are at greater risk for disengaging from math and forgoing STEM careers while also developing classroom interventions and teaching practices to improve student engagement.

Assistant Professor Tessa McCarthy received a $1.2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education for Project Certified Rehabilitation Counselors and Educators Supporting Transition Success. Over the next five years, the program will provide tuition grants for master’s degree students to become certified as teachers of students with visual impairments or rehabilitation counselors. It also will support a PhD student in vision studies.

Professor and Associate Dean for Faculty and Research Kevin Crowley received a $795,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to support the Climate Rural Systems Partnership (CRSP). CRSP is part of an ongoing research-practice partnership with the Carnegie Museum of Natural History. Through a network of local organizations, the program creates opportunities for rural Western Pennsylvania communities to have science-based discussions about human-caused climate change.

Dean Valerie Kinloch received a $400,000 grant from a total award of $1 million from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for the Shifting Power initiative. The project seeks to change power dynamics in education research and development by centering the voices, knowledge, and expertise of Black and Latinx educators in educational research. The centerpiece of the effort is the creation of an innovative network of Educators of Color collaborating with researchers and learning scientists.
We pursue and produce knowledge.
Spotlight on Research

Understanding the Biology of Exercise

The National Institutes of Health have embarked upon their largest study of the effects of exercise on humans: a $170 million project involving 19 research sites nationwide, including the University of Pittsburgh. The Pitt team, which includes faculty from the School of Medicine, Graduate School of Public Health, and School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, is being led by the Healthy Lifestyle Institute (HLI) at the School of Education. Called the Molecular Transducers of Physical Activity, or MoTrPAC, program, the study seeks to understand the complex cellular processes that occur when human beings exercise. “The study seeks to answer two questions: Why is exercise good for you? And how can we move closer to precision health with activity and exercise?” says John Jakicic, Distinguished Professor at the School of Education and founding director of the Healthy Lifestyle Institute. The other Pitt School of Education faculty members working on the project are Renee J. Rogers, associate professor of health and physical activity, and Lindsay C. Page, associate professor of research methodology and research scientist at the Pitt Learning Research and Development Center. For the exercise study, HLI has begun its work of recruiting 380 healthy adults between the ages of 18 and 80 for physical activity tests at its facilities. Work on the study is expected to continue through 2022.

Developing a Center for Rural Education

Tom Farmer, professor and chair of the Department of Health and Human Development, is working with colleagues across the school to create a new academic center on rural education. The tentative name is the Community Collaboration on Adaptive and Responsive Education for Rural Schools Center. To begin this initiative, Farmer held an advisory workshop in December 2019 that was attended by more than 30 faculty members from the Pitt School of Education, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the University of Georgia, and Pennsylvania State University. The workshop featured sessions on workforce development, out-of-school learning, rural identities, and rural diversities. According to Farmer, the rural education center will build new partnerships that are responsive to the needs of students, their families, and the rural communities in which they live. Within a 50-mile radius of the Pittsburgh metropolitan area, there are thousands of rural towns in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia. “We’re here to ignite learning in rural education, and we’re here to do it collaboratively. The energy that is here in the School of Education around the mission-vision really needs to also be in rural education,” says Farmer.

“We commit to educational equity. We advocate.”
Honors and Accolades

Members of our school community receive national recognition for the positive impact of their work in the field of education. The following are a selection of honors received in the last year:

Associate Professor Lindsay Page received the 2020 Early Career Award from the American Educational Research Association (AERA). Honoring exemplary research and service in the education research field, AERA’s Early Career Award is given once a year to a scholar who received his or her doctoral degree within the previous 10 years. Page specializes in using quantitative methods to investigate education policy and economics questions.

Visiting Assistant Professor Jon-Philip “Jay” Imbrenda received the 2019 Arthur Applebee Award for Excellence in Research Literacy. The award is given annually to honor an influential article in literacy research published in a refereed journal. Imbrenda received the award for “Developing Academic Literacy: Breakthroughs and Barriers in College Access Intervention,” which appeared in Research in the Teaching of English.

Assistant Professor Tessa McCarthy received the 2019 Alan J. Koenig Research in Literacy Award from Getting in Touch with Literacy. Awarded to one person every two years, the national honor is one of the highest forms of recognition for educators of people with visual impairments.

PhD candidate Ashley Shafer won the national prize in the Society for Prevention Research 2020 Early Career Preventionist Network Student Poster Contest. Her poster, “Increasing Teachers’ Well-being and Capacity to Implement through a Community of Practice,” was based on her original research into the efficacy of a community of practice intervention for improving teacher well-being and their capacity to implement new teaching practices.

Two teachers at the Fanny Edel Falk Laboratory School received top awards in their fields. Art teacher Pam Armstrong received the 2020 Eastern Region Elementary Art Educator Award from the National Art Education Association and was named the Pennsylvania Art Education Association’s 2019 Outstanding Elementary Art Educator. Language arts and social studies teacher Cameron Barnett received the Carol R. Brown Creative Achievement Award for emerging artists, which is cosponsored annually by the Pittsburgh Foundation and the Heinz Endowments.
Alumni and Giving

2020 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD WINNERS

The Distinguished Alumni Awards are presented annually to celebrate the accomplishments of the outstanding alumni and students of the School of Education at the University of Pittsburgh. Originally scheduled for March 27, 2020, the ceremony was canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic. Recipients received their awards by mail and were honored through a tribute video.

View the video at education.pitt.edu/alumni-giving/distinguished-alumni-awards.

Distinguished Alumni Award
Mary Ann Watson (MEd ‘67, PhD ‘69)
Clinical psychologist and professor, Metropolitan State University of Denver

Distinguished Pre-K-12 Educator Award
William Hale Kerr Jr. (EdD ‘94)
Retired superintendent and educator

Distinguished Early Career Award
Treg Campbell (MEd ‘12)
English instructor; Coordinator of Teacher Induction program; and Assistant Director of Prexie Musical Theater, Washington School District

Distinguished Student Leadership Award
Ashley E. Shafer (BS ‘14, MS ‘16)
Doctoral student in applied developmental psychology

Administrative and Policy Studies Departmental Award
Alphonse DeSena (PhD ‘79)
Retired program director, National Science Foundation

Health and Physical Activity Departmental Award
Reed Humphrey (BS ‘74, PhD ‘86)
Acting provost, University of Montana; dean and professor, University of Montana College of Health Professions and Biomedical Sciences; and professor and head, University of Montana Health and Medicine

Instruction and Learning Departmental Award
Gary R. Snyder (BA ‘85)
Retired principal, Princeton High School, and adjunct professor, Delaware Valley University

Psychology in Education Departmental Award
Leon E. Wiles (MEd ‘72)
Retired chief diversity officer, Clemson University

Outstanding Alumni PhD Dissertation Award
Eben B. Witherspoon (PhD ‘19)
Postdoctoral researcher, Learning Research and Development Center, University of Pittsburgh

Outstanding Alumni EdD Dissertation Award
Lauren E. Moran (EdD ‘19)
Director of student engagement and leadership, Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania

“We work for justice.”
Alumni Spotlight

EdD Graduate Named Vice Chancellor of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Pitt

Clyde Pickett, a 2017 graduate of the Doctor of Education program at the University of Pittsburgh School of Education, began his new role as Pitt’s vice chancellor for diversity, equity, and inclusion in July 2020. Since then, he has been working to make Pitt more welcoming and inclusive to all students—especially Black students and other Students of Color who at times may face discrimination based on their race.

Pickett credits the Pitt EdD program for helping him to grow as a higher education leader. At the time he enrolled in the program, he was working as the chief diversity officer of the Community College of Allegheny County in Pittsburgh. His Pitt EdD cohort exposed him to educational leaders from other areas, including K-12 education, who had insights from other work environments. It also gave him an inside look into the operations of the University of Pittsburgh through his interactions with professors and senior staff.

“Having the opportunity to work with colleagues in different settings, the chance to look beyond my own sphere and explore together, was a transformational experience,” says Pickett.

Powerful Talk Advocates for Abolitionist Teaching

The 2020 Pitt Education Alumni and Dean’s Lecture, featuring Bettina L. Love, was held virtually on September 30, 2020. Love’s presentation was based on her best-selling and critically acclaimed book, “We Want to Do More than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom.” The book also was selected as our School-wide Read for the 2019-20 academic year, and it sparked impactful conversations across the school community. More than 1,000 people registered for her engaging lecture, which was moderated by Dean Valerie Kinloch.

Love is the Georgia Athletic Association Professor in Education at the University of Georgia Mary Frances Early College of Education. She earned her Bachelor of Science at Pitt in 2001 and her Master of Education in elementary education at the School of Education in 2002.
SUPPORT THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

At the University of Pittsburgh 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 working professionals looking to advance their careers by becoming administrators in schools or community organizations, we strive every day to help them achieve their goals.

In order for our school to continue to provide 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 the School of Education 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 a number of other ways to invest in our school and our students as well:

- Endowed professorships and chairs attract and retain outstanding practitioners and researchers as faculty members.
- Fellowships attract outstanding students pursuing graduate work.
- Research funding advances the scholarly agendas of our faculty members.
- 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, that can generate income for both you and Pitt during your retirement years. Alumni and friends who are over the age of 70½ also can make charitable gifts directly from a traditional IRA without incurring federal income tax on the withdrawal.

Invest in Pitt Education

Contact Michael B. Haas, director of development, at mbh26@pitt.edu or 412-648-1789 to learn more about making a gift to the School of Education. Visit giveto.pitt.edu for more information.
School of Education

Mission-Vision Statement

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.