Be the spark to Ignite Learning.
Every Number Counts

Student Enrollment
- 950 undergraduate and graduate students in fall 2022
- 22 countries from outside the United States represented

School Rankings*
- 32nd among all institutions nationally
- 23rd among public institutions nationally
- 1st among public institutions in Pennsylvania
- 17th for educational psychology

*U.S. News & World Report

Alumni Network
- 32K+ alumni in 87 countries worldwide

Giving (July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022)
- 1,604 individual donors
- $7.1M raised in gifts and pledges (a 5% increase over the previous year)
- 285 donors on the 2022 Pitt Day of Giving (a 50% increase over the previous year)

Research Impact
- $24M in newly awarded research dollars (a 53% increase over the previous year)
- 35 faculty members received grants (a 17% increase over the previous year)
- 58% success rate in grant proposals (twice as high as University of Pittsburgh average)

*U.S. News & World Report

Undergraduate and graduate students in fall 2022

countries from outside the United States represented

among all institutions nationally

among public institutions nationally

among public institutions in Pennsylvania

for educational psychology

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success rate in grant proposals (twice as high as University of Pittsburgh average)
This report is my annual update for the University of Pittsburgh School of Education. Our school has made tremendous strides in further advancing our commitment to engaging in teaching, research, and community-oriented work in ways that are humanizing, innovative, and impactful. Together, we are advancing our mission-vision to be a school of education that boldly stands apart from other schools and colleges of education, given our commitment to ignite learning, strive for well-being for all, and disrupt and transform inequitable educational structures.

Some notable highlights, among many others, from the past year include the following:

- As dean, I created, developed, and implemented the inaugural cohort of the Genius, Joy, and Love Summer Academy for high school students as well as the inaugural cohort of the Genius, Joy, and Love Institute for local educators. These efforts encourage Students of Color to pursue teaching as a valuable profession while also encouraging current educators to center racial justice and equity in their curricula.

- Following a national search, we hired exceptional new faculty members who will strengthen our capacity in teaching and learning, human development, education policy, and special education. I am very excited to welcome our new administrators: Eboni Zamani-Gallaher, professor and associate dean for equity, justice, and strategic partnerships; Khirsten Scott, assistant professor and director of the Western Pennsylvania Writing Project; and Jill Sarada, director of the Fanny Edel Falk Laboratory School and visiting assistant professor in the School of Education.

- For another year, the Pitt School of Education is ranked as the top public school of education in Pennsylvania by U.S. News & World Report. Additionally, we are 32nd among all schools of education nationally, and our educational psychology program is ranked 17th.

Undoubtedly, we are achieving these milestones because our community understands the value of collective, collaborative work. I am thankful for our students, faculty, and staff as well as our alumni, community and district partners, friends, and colleagues across the University for their valuable contributions to and continued support of the School of Education. I look forward to deepening our various partnerships as we realize and implement the promise and potential of our mission-vision.

All my best,

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

“...For another year, the Pitt School of Education is ranked as the top public school of education in Pennsylvania by U.S. News & World Report.”
School News

NEW PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

The pursuit of what’s next defines us. The University of Pittsburgh School of Education introduced new programs and initiatives this year to further its mission of being the spark that ignites learning within schools and across communities.

The Intersection of Technology and Learning
New for the fall 2022 term, the certificate program in critical technology and digital media for learning is aimed at building digital literacy for educators. The 12-credit graduate program is offered 100% online in a fully asynchronous format. Students will be prepared to create ideas using digital media and to integrate learning with technologies in ways that are fun, effective, forward thinking, humanizing, and equitable. Additionally, students will have an accelerated pathway into Pitt Education’s Master of Education program in curriculum and instruction, as all credits in the certificate program count toward that degree.

Fitness Center Opens for Pitt Employees
Pitt Education’s Department of Health and Human Development opened a new fitness center for Pitt faculty and staff this fall. Ignite Fitness (formerly known as Be Fit Pitt) is located at the Trees Hall Fitness Center and offers an open gym and fitness classes through its membership plan. Graduate student assistants in the school’s health and physical activity programs provide personalized fitness support.

New Undergraduate Teaching Major
Recruitment is under way for the inaugural class of the Bachelor of Science in teacher education program at Pitt Education. Launching in fall 2023, the program will provide an undergraduate pathway to teacher certification for students seeking to enter the teaching profession. Students have the option of pursuing different content areas. For grades 7-12, the choices are English, math, science, and social studies, and for grades preK-12, the choices are special education and world and heritage language education.
New Faculty

BOLDLY GROWING OUR COMMUNITY OF SCHOLARS

We are proud to welcome talented new scholars for the 2022-23 academic year. Hired after a national search, they help us in our mission to push boundaries as we innovate and agitate in the pursuit of new knowledge.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND POLICY

Richard Benson is an associate professor in Black radical traditions in urban education and the associate director of the school's Center for Urban Education. He previously was an associate professor in the education department at Spelman College, the nation's oldest historically Black college for students who identify as women. Benson has a PhD in educational policy studies and an MEd in instructional leadership and educational studies, both from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; an MA in inner-city studies education from Northeastern Illinois University; and a BA in sociology and political science from Saint Xavier University.

Joshua Bleiberg is an assistant professor in quantitative policy. He recently completed work as a postdoctoral research associate at the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs at Brown University. Before that, he served as a graduate research assistant at Vanderbilt University and worked as a research analyst at the Brookings Institution. Bleiberg holds a PhD from Vanderbilt University, an MEd in education policy and management from Harvard University, and a BA in political science from Vassar College.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Sirry Alang is an associate professor in Black communities and social determinants of health, a position initially supported by Pitt's Race and Social Determinants of Health Cluster Hire initiative. She joins the school from Lehigh University, where she was associate professor of sociology and health medicine and society and served as chair of the Health Justice Collaborative of the Institute on Critical Race and Ethnic Studies. She holds a PhD in health services, research, and policy from the University of Minnesota Twin Cities; an MS in health services research from the University of Minnesota School of Public Health; an MA in sociology from Lehigh University; and a BSc in sociology and anthropology from the University of Buea in Cameroon.

Benjamin Gordon is an assistant professor in clinical exercise physiology. He joins the school from Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania, where he was an assistant professor in the area of exercise science. Gordon was also a faculty fellow in Slippery Rock's College of Health, Engineering, and Science Living Learning Community. He has a PhD in biology from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, an MS in clinical exercise physiology from East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, and a BS in exercise science from Western Michigan University.
DEPARTMENT OF TEACHING, LEARNING, AND LEADING

Martez Files is an assistant professor in Black studies in teacher education, a position initially supported by Pitt’s Race and Social Determinants of Health Cluster Hire initiative. Files joins the school from the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), where he was an adjunct professor in the African American studies program. He also worked as a graduation coach for the university’s GEAR UP Alabama program. He has his substitute teaching license in Alabama and his Instructional I certification in social studies for grades 7-12 in Pennsylvania. Files earned his PhD in educational studies in diverse populations at UAB, his MAT at Brown University, and his BA in African American studies and history at UAB.

Watufani Poe is an assistant professor of language, literacy, and culture. He was hired during the 2020-21 faculty search cycle; however, he began at Pitt Education this fall after completing a prestigious one-year postdoctoral fellowship at Amherst College in the Department of Black Studies. Poe holds a PhD in Africana studies and an MA in Africana studies and history from Brown University and a BA in Africana studies from Swarthmore College. He is a scholar of the Black queer diaspora and Black Latin America, and he previously completed a Fulbright Scholarship program in Brazil.

Phillandra Smith is an assistant professor in special education and critical disability studies. In May 2022, she earned her PhD in special education from Syracuse University, where she also served as a graduate research assistant. Among her projects was a study on elementary student writing in the mathematics classroom and course accommodation procedures for students with intellectual disabilities. Smith earned her MS in exceptional student education from Barry University and her BS in microbiology from the University of the West Indies.

NEW FACULTY LEADER
Associate Dean for Equity, Justice, and Strategic Partnerships

Eboni Zamani-Gallaher is a professor and the School of Education’s new associate dean for equity, justice, and strategic partnerships. She joins us from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where she was a professor in higher education. Additionally, she is executive director of the Council for the Study of Community Colleges, which is now based at the School of Education. Zamani-Gallaher holds a PhD in educational organization and leadership from the University of Illinois and an MS in general experimental psychology and a BS in psychology from Western Illinois University.

At Pitt Education, she will advance our schoolwide strategy for centering equity, justice, and strategic partnerships; partner with colleagues to further deepen our teaching through equitable perspectives; strengthen existing programmatic offerings and propose new ones; and reimagine our larger justice-directed scope of work and engagements.
A HISTORIC MOMENT

Jill Sarada (MAT ‘94) is the new director of the Fanny Edel Falk Laboratory School, a K-8 independent school on the University of Pittsburgh campus that is affiliated with the Pitt School of Education. She is the first woman to serve as Falk’s director since the school was founded in 1931. Sarada has worked at Falk for the entirety of her professional career, beginning as a student teacher and then continuing as a kindergarten teacher before moving into administrative roles as director of admissions; assistant director for elementary grades; and, most recently, interim codirector. Sarada also is a visiting assistant professor and Doctor of Education student at Pitt Education.

I want to not only be known as the first woman director; I want to be known for the work I do as the first woman director.

Jill Sarada, director of Falk Laboratory School
ADVANCING LITERACY

Khirsten Scott is the new director of the Western Pennsylvania Writing Project, a teacher-centered professional development program that aims to strengthen literacy among teachers and students. Scott was an assistant professor in the Department of English in Pitt’s Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences before joining Pitt Education in fall 2022 as an assistant professor of language, literacy, and culture. Scott’s literacy-oriented contributions are many. She is the director and cofounder of DBLAC (Digital Black Lit and Composition), a virtual and in-person community offering writing support for Black scholars, and she is the lead organizer of HYPE (Homewood Youth-Powered and Engaged) Media in Pittsburgh.
FACULTY ACCOLADES

Associate Professor Gina Garcia received a 2022 University of Pittsburgh Chancellor’s Distinguished Research Award in the Junior Scholar category. She was recognized for her nationally known research on Hispanic-serving institutions. Garcia also received the 2021 Creating a Just Community Award from the University of Pittsburgh. She was celebrated for her work in creating space with and for Latinx students, faculty, and staff at Pitt.

Associate Professors Christopher Kline and Sharon Ross were recognized as fellows of the American College of Sports Medicine at the organization’s 2022 Annual Meeting and World Congresses.

Assistant Professor Heather McCambly received a 2022 Outstanding Dissertation Award from the American Educational Research Association. Her dissertation was titled “Change Agents or Same Agents? Grantmakers and Racial Inequity in U.S. Higher Education.”

Professor Leigh Patel was elected to the National Academy of Education, the preeminent honorific society for scholars and educators who make outstanding contributions to the education field.

Assistant Professor Xu Qin received a 2022 National Academy of Education and Spencer Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship. The fellowship supports her research in causal mediation and causal inference methods in educational programs.

Associate Professor and Department of Teaching, Learning, and Leading Chair Cassie Quigley received a 2022 University of Pittsburgh Sustainability Award for her work in codeveloping multidisciplinary courses based on environmental justice. Along with Danielle Andrews-Brown of Pitt’s Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences, she developed two courses as Freedom Seminars offered at the School of Education.

Professor Ming-Te Wang received the 2022 Mid-Career Award for Research Excellence from the Society for Research on Adolescence. The award recognizes scholars whose work enhances the well-being of youth.

Associate Professor Shannon Wanless received a 2022 University of Pittsburgh Chancellor’s Distinguished Public Service Award for her humanizing, equity-driven work in the Office of Child Development, which she directs.
STUDENT RECOGNITIONS

Chetachukwu Agwoeme and Christopher Wright, PhD students in urban education, were invited to present their research on anti-Blackness in higher education at the 2022 American Educational Research Association annual conference. They both wrote scholarly papers analyzing the institutional responses of higher education institutions following the murder of George Floyd Jr. by police in May 2020.

Dylan Kapit, a PhD student in the special education program, received an LGBTQIA+ Endowed Research and Outreach Funding Award from the University’s Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences. It supports their project, titled Sex Education for Queer Autistic Learners.

Megan Orman, a PhD student in applied developmental psychology, received a Fulbright/National Science Foundation (NSF) Arctic Research Grant. She will travel to Iceland on a nine-month assignment to study how preschoolers there conceptualize nature and how teachers and schools support these connections to nature.

David Smith, a PhD student in social and comparative analysis of education, received a National Academy of Education and Spencer Foundation Dissertation Fellowship. It will support his research into the role of music in education among Indigenous peoples in Alaska. Smith also received a Fulbright/NSF Arctic Research Grant to support the project.
The most phenomenal aspect of the experience was watching the students grow,” says April Warren-Grice, a research associate in the Office of the Dean at Pitt Education, who served as the program coordinator for Genius, Joy, and Love. “To hear students say, ‘After today, you all really made me want to be a teacher,’ that, if nothing else, made me feel like we’ve done our part.”

The summer academy was announced in January 2022 to complement The Pittsburgh Promise’s Advancing Educators of Color Scholarship, which seeks to add at least 35 Black educators to the district over seven years.

During the academy, students—or, as Kinloch refers to them, “genius scholars”—had a packed schedule of field trips and guest speakers who provided advice, inspiration, and insight into the college experience and becoming a teacher.
In addition to the summer academy for PPS students, Kinloch partnered with the Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh to offer an eight-day institute for educators to help them engage in transformative visions of education. Throughout this program, called Genius, Joy, and Love: Liberating Educators’ Creative Capacities for Change, 11 Pittsburgh-area educators explored questions related to centering racial justice and equity through creative, innovative, and relevant curricula. Hosted at MuseumLab, each day included a workshop led by a guest speaker, an art or making activity, and an application lab for the educators to explore that day’s lesson in practice. The high school students joined the educators at MuseumLab one day for a joint workshop led by Kinloch. Kinloch explains, “Bringing our student scholars and educators together was intentional and driven by a desire for them to think and talk with each other and to design the future of education that centers equity and justice in theory but also in practice.”

Karing Coyne, a visual arts teacher who works at Pittsburgh Obama 6-12, took part in the institute because she wanted to discover new ways to demonstrate her own belief in her students’ inherent intellectual gifts. To her, spending a day with students who will be future teachers was an invigorating experience.

“After 20 years of teaching, in all the ways the failing of our educational system had begun to dishearten and break me personally, this institute has mended my broken heart and breathed new life into me and my outlook on my teaching,” Coyne says.

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

“Bringing our student scholars and educators together was intentional and driven by a desire for them to think and talk with each other and to design the future of education that centers equity and justice in theory but also in practice.”

“I think this program prepares us for more than just college and being an educator. It’s giving us valuable life lessons.”

“When I was growing up, I didn’t see one Black male teacher. I want to be a positive role model who’s there for the students.”

Vaughn Bryant, genius scholar who graduated from Pittsburgh Science and Technology Academy and is now a first-year student at Washington & Jefferson College
Support of students in the Justice Scholars Institute (JSI), a college preparatory program at the University of Pittsburgh School of Education, is being enhanced by a $540,000 grant from the Henry L. Hillman Foundation. The grant will support an expansion of operational capacity over the next two years that will allow for deeper engagement with students as they transition from high school to college.

Through JSI, high school students in the Pittsburgh Public Schools take courses for college credit through Pitt’s College in High School program. Participating students also engage in learning experiences that help them to understand the college transition, become engaged in their communities, and learn research skills that support understanding and address societal inequities.

Founded in 2016, JSI partners with students and teachers at Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy 6-12, Pittsburgh Perry Traditional Academy, and Pittsburgh Milliones 6-12 University Preparatory School. More than 80 students participated in the program during the 2021-22 school year.

“This is an exciting expansion of our work,” says Esohe Osai, an assistant professor at Pitt Education and founder and director of JSI. “This grant will enhance our efforts to support the partner schools in providing students with options for rigorous courses, which will give them a better chance at success once they get to college.”

The grant will enable the hiring of additional program coordinators and the development of a school-level academic support strategy for students in the College in High School courses. In addition, the funds will support development of a new strategy for extending support to JSI alumni after they begin college.
STRENGTHENING RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS AT FALK

The desire to facilitate more school-based research at the Fanny Edel Falk Laboratory School led to the establishment of a research coordinator role at the school during the 2021-22 academic year. Katrina Bartow Jacobs, associate professor of practice at the University of Pittsburgh School of Education, is the first to take on the new role to help grow the collaboration between Falk teachers and Pitt Education researchers.

“I’ve heard again and again from teachers at Falk that this research is something they want to do, but they often don’t have the direction or time,” says Jacobs.

The goal is to provide teachers with new opportunities to present at conferences, publish research in journals, and develop new skills as researchers and teachers.

“Falk is a school where we can try things out,” says Jill Sarada, director of the Falk School. “We strive to approach learning by asking questions, gathering and considering the evidence, and thinking with the mindset and the tools that research provides us.”

Middle school Spanish teacher Valerie Rossi worked with Jacobs on a project in which she prepared students for assessments of their language proficiency. By revising a rubric and supporting students through more independent practice, Rossi saw grades improve and students’ sense of success rise. She calls this collaboration a “dream partnership.”

“We bring different perspectives and have different experiences,” says Rossi. “It’s really helping my teaching practice, and it’s helping the students learn as well.”
CENTER FOR URBAN EDUCATION LOOKS “BEYOND THE CRISIS” IN EDUCATION

More than 650 educators, scholars, activists, and community leaders registered for the 2022 Center for Urban Education Summer Educator Forum, which was hosted online June 22-25. The conference included seven plenary sessions and two workshops centered around the theme Beyond “the Crisis”: Education for Local and Global Liberation.

“Our theme invited participants to think with us beyond current crises—about teacher shortages, anti-critical race theory policies, and COVID impacts—and into the long-standing struggle for a liberating education, locally and globally,” said T. Elon Dancy II, executive director of the Center for Urban Education and Helen S. Faison Chair in Urban Education at the University of Pittsburgh School of Education. “Together, we examined how we might develop and use our imaginative and creative capacities to reimagine education as a practice of freedom.”

Sessions included in-depth discussions about such topics as school leadership, policy contexts, homeschooling, the school-prison nexus, and food and environmental justice. A keynote address was delivered by Cynthia B. Dillard, dean and professor of teacher education at Seattle University College of Education. Additional speakers included faculty members from Columbia University; St. Thomas University; the University of Alabama at Birmingham; the University of California, Berkeley; the University of California, Los Angeles; the University of Cincinnati; the University of Georgia; and the University of Pennsylvania. In addition, there were several speakers from local organizations, including Brown Mamas; Center That CARES; the Empowerment, Awareness, & Training Initiative; Homewood Children’s Village; and Homewood Youth-Powered and Engaged Media.

Visit cue.pitt.edu/cuesef to watch the session recordings.
OFFICE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT REIMAGINES THE THREE R's IN EDUCATION

On their own, reading, writing, and arithmetic—the traditional foundations of American education—often aren’t making the grade in under-resourced public schools whose students are primarily Black and Brown children.

In response, the early elementary education cohort of The Pittsburgh Study was formed to focus attention on a complementary set of three R’s: reading, relationships, and racial equity. Since 2019, the Office of Child Development (OCD) has been part of The Pittsburgh Study to help more children thrive in reading at the kindergarten to third grade level. The work is directed by OCD Director Shannon Wanless and project codirector Shallegra Moye, along with Jennifer Briggs, Abby Chen, Amanda Cross, Sharon Geibel, Rhonda Hall, Caitlin Spear, and Meghan Orman.

One aim of the initiative is to infuse Allegheny County with high-quality, racially affirming picture books. Picture books can serve both as windows through which adults and children see into the lives of others and as mirrors revealing truths about themselves. However, racially affirming picture books are often missing from schools, libraries, and literacy programs. For example, a study by University of Wisconsin-Madison researchers found that less than 25% of some 3,100 picture books in their study depicted ethnically diverse characters.

So far, the researchers have developed partnerships with many different people. They work with more than a dozen community-oriented literacy organizations, 35 education leaders, and more than 200 classroom teachers across six schools. Additionally, they have organized more than 100 community-of-practice sessions with adults across the county. The sessions provide moments for adults to have their beliefs challenged and skills developed in a relationship-based format. Furthermore, the staff members meet each month with the team of community leaders, parents, teachers, and advocates who hold them accountable for their part in bringing forward bold and meaningful change.

The goals are simple: Disrupt racism, see children read, and see children thrive.

Says Moye, “The biggest gift we have to offer is the ability to acknowledge our own positionality and how it’s showing up and influencing how we perceive the world. This is how we can then work through, connect, move past, and create the conditions for racial equity.”
Since fall 2019, the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) has been based at the University of Pittsburgh School of Education because of Professor M. Najeeb Shafiq’s appointment as the organization’s executive director. Shortly after he began his tenure, the COVID-19 pandemic hit. The global pandemic turned the world upside down and was a major threat to the viability of CIES, which has 3,000 members from 110 countries around the world.

“Outside of North America, CIES is the academic organization for anybody that does education-related research in other countries. Surviving the pandemic was tricky, but we have navigated those waters quite well,” says Shafiq.

CIES responded to the pandemic by shifting to modes of virtual engagement, such as webinars. In February 2023, CIES will host its annual conference, in person, in Washington, D.C., with the theme Improving Education for a More Equitable World. More than 4,000 people are expected to attend.

Shafiq is proud that CIES, with its international reach and acclaim, will continue to be hosted at Pitt Education for the foreseeable future. The agreement for him to serve as executive director has been extended until at least 2025.

Shafiq says that Pitt Education has a long legacy of educating international students who bring the lessons learned at Pitt to improve the education systems in their home countries.

“CIES being at Pitt Education once again makes us one of the most visible institutions around the world,” he says.
**FEATURED RESEARCH**

**Early Head Start**
Principal investigator Christopher Dunkerley received $4.6 million from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to continue administering this long-running home visiting services program. The program supports the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development of infants and toddlers by providing their parents or caregivers with training in how to be more self-sufficient in caring for the children.

**School Just Discipline Project**
Principal investigator Ming-Te Wang received $4 million from the U.S. Department of Education to implement, evaluate, and refine a schoolwide restorative practice program called the Just Discipline Project (JDP). JDP aims to improve students’ academic achievement by reducing racial disparities in school disciplinary practices and creating a fairer, more inclusive school climate.

**Content-focused Coaching on Reading Comprehension**
Principal investigators Lindsay Clare Matsumura, Richard Correnti, and Thomas Farmer received $3.8 million from the U.S. Department of Education to test the feasibility of a web-based professional development program for improving the quality of reading comprehension instruction and students’ reading skills. The work is focused on schools serving high numbers of minoritized students, English learners, and students living in poverty.

**Student Performance in Large Lecture-based Undergraduate Courses**
Principal investigators Kevin Binning and Linda DeAngelo received $2 million from the U.S. Department of Education to develop a systematic method for addressing the demographic-based discrepancies in the poor performance of students in large lecture-based courses at the undergraduate level. Evidence suggests that these types of courses contribute to large gaps in completion rates based on demographic variables.

**Practicing Mindfulness to Pass Undergraduate Physics**
Principal investigator Brian Galla received $1.4 million from the National Science Foundation to conduct field experiments on undergraduates enrolled in introductory physics courses to evaluate whether a brief mindfulness training program will help them to perform better in the course by reducing perceived psychological threat, boosting engagement, and enhancing physics learning and retention outcomes.
NEW LEADERSHIP FOR PITT EDUCATION ALUMNI SOCIETY

The new president of the Pitt Education Alumni Society is Robert Scherrer (EdD ‘09), executive director of the Allegheny Intermediate Unit, a regional education services agency serving the greater Pittsburgh area. As president, Scherrer seeks to increase engagement among alumni and will represent the school at alumni events. Formerly, Scherrer was superintendent of the North Allegheny School District and a principal at Pittsburgh Allderdice High School and the Pittsburgh Science and Technology Academy, both in the Pittsburgh Public Schools.

Virginia Hill (EdD ‘14) is vice president of the Pitt Education Alumni Society. She has more than 30 years of experience as an educator in Pennsylvania and is founding principal of the Environmental Charter High School in Pittsburgh.

John Wilds (MEd ’70, PhD ’78) is secretary of the Pitt Education Alumni Society. Now retired, he had a 34-year career at the University, most recently serving as assistant vice chancellor for community relations.

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD WINNERS

The School of Education recognized 10 alumni for their outstanding leadership across education, health, and human development at a ceremony on May 3, 2022, at the University Club. The information on the award recipients was accurate at the time of the awards.

Distinguished Alumni Awards

Marilyn Hoyson (MEd ’78, PhD ’83) is the chief operating officer of the Watson Institute in Sewickley, Pennsylvania. Previously, she worked at several intermediate units focused on educating children with special needs, including autism spectrum disorders and severe physical and cognitive disabilities.

The late David A. Squires (PhD ’78) dedicated his 45-year career in education to working with low-resource schools in urban and rural settings across the United States. He worked for Research for Better Schools in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and wrote the influential book “Effective Schools in Classrooms: A Research-based Perspective.” While an assistant superintendent for a K-8 public school in New Jersey, he developed the Balanced Curriculum approach to improve student achievement on standardized tests.
Distinguished Early Career Award
Adam Alvarez (PhD ’18) is an assistant professor of urban education at Rowan University in New Jersey. In his work, he uses various race-based analytic frameworks and methodological approaches to study how race and racism shape the social context of education across various settings.

Kalani M. Palmer (MS ’06, PhD ’13) is an associate professor in Indiana University of Pennsylvania’s professional studies in education department. She studies marginalized groups and cultural influences on development. Additionally, she is project director for Child Care Access Means Parents in School.

Distinguished Pre-K-12 Educator Award
Kenda L. Hammer (MEd ’81) is founder of and specialist at Hammer Educational Consulting, an organization she founded after an extensive career in early childhood education and community-based initiatives. Hammer was a kindergarten teacher and researcher in the Fox Chapel Area School District for more than 26 years and has worked as an adjunct professor at Pitt Education.

Department of Educational Foundations, Organizations, and Policy
Barbara S. Stengel (MEd ’79, PhD ’84) is professor emerita of education at Millersville University of Pennsylvania and Vanderbilt University. An advocate for innovative pedagogies in teacher education, she is the author of multiple books on education and is both the former executive director and president of the Philosophy of Education Society and president-elect of the John Dewey Society.

Department of Health and Human Development
Lynn Dale Housner (MA ’79, PhD ’81) is professor and associate dean emeritus at West Virginia University. His research studied the role of visual imagery in the acquisition of motor skills. In recognition of his contributions to the field, he was inducted into the American Academy of Kinesiology. Since retiring in 2013, he has coauthored a series of papers on integrating socialization into academic, advanced, and doctoral programs.

Department of Teaching, Learning, and Leading
Davonia D. Bryant (MAT ’08) is assistant principal at Gwynn Park High School in Prince George’s County, Maryland. She has led efforts to implement progressive, restorative discipline models for students and has created academies to support holistic student engagement and English language learners specifically.

Outstanding Alumni EdD Dissertation Award
Christian Alberto (EdD ’21) is director of admissions and enrollment management at the State University of New York College of Optometry. While leading the admissions, recruitment, enrollment, and orientation strategies at the school, he strives to ensure an equitable and inclusive process.

Student Leadership Award
Sendi Judith Estrada is a PhD student and a K. Leroy Irvis Equity and Justice Doctoral fellow at Pitt Education. Born in Chihuahua, Mexico, and the first in her family to attend college, she is pursuing research that focuses on equity and access for Latino/a/x students, student leadership, and Hispanic-serving institutions.
Pitt Education Mission-Vision

**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.