

PittEd

University of Pittsburgh School of Education Summer 2021

Racial Injustice:

New Justice Collective Takes Action



Contents

PittEd

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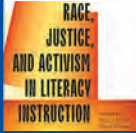



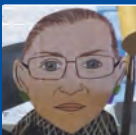


Design

Office of University Communications
and Marketing

On the Cover:

The University of Pittsburgh School of Education is undertaking new efforts to address systemic racism and anti-Blackness.

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

	School Briefs	2
	Up front: Milestones, student spotlights, and popular reading materials	4
	Dispatches	7
	Feature: More Than Words	8
	Feature: Game On	14
	Classroom Spotlight	19
	Student Forum: Spotlight on Justice	20
	Alumni News & Notes Spotlight on Giving	25



Sparkling Joy in Learning

Because I love listening to, sharing, and exchanging stories, I open this message with a story. In February, Alexandra Delale-O'Connor, a second grader at O'Hara Elementary School near Pittsburgh, selected me as the subject of her Black History Month project. She explained that her teacher had invited her class to select an influential leader with direct ties to Pittsburgh to research, write about, and present on. Her teacher had provided the class with an extensive list of influential leaders—among them were Ella P. Stewart (the first Black woman to graduate from the University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy), photographer Charles "Teenie" Harris, playwright August Wilson, entertainer Leslie Odom Jr., literary artist and executive Celeste Smith, WQED executive Darryl Ford Williams, and civil rights lawyer and scholar Derrick Bell—and I was at the top of Alexandra's list.

Alexandra told me that my voice is memorable. She had heard it many times over the last year—during large-group Zoom meetings with members of the Pitt School of Education

community and in research sessions with her mother, Lori Delale-O'Connor, a faculty member in our school. (I can still hear Lori telling me, "You don't have to do this. You are too busy. Just say no!") But how could I say no? A second grader had self-selected me to study, explaining that she could think of "nobody else doing so much in education."

Alexandra's project also represented a decision to focus on the School of Education and the work we do. As educators, we spark joy in children, youth, and adults. We ignite a love of learning, creativity, freedom dreaming, and truth telling. We reimagine education and our roles as educators. We work to ensure that our schools, community programs, and health and wellness systems recognize, nurture, and love (as opposed to marginalize, dehumanize, and harm) human beings. As our school's mission-vision indicates, we "strive for well-being for all," "teach with and for dignity," and seek to "disrupt and transform inequitable educational structures."

The articles in this edition of PittEd magazine demonstrate how our school is carrying out this important work.

When Alexandra selected me for her project, I felt encouraged to stop, pause, and reflect on the work that I am doing in relation to the work that our students, faculty, staff, and alumni are doing in the region, throughout the nation, and around the globe. Alexandra also motivated me to remember why this work matters to all of us, especially to the youngest of us. Thank you, Alexandra, for once again sparking my joy, and thank you for asking me to consider the larger implications of our work—for equity and because of justice—in this current moment and beyond.

My very best,

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

Goodbye GRE

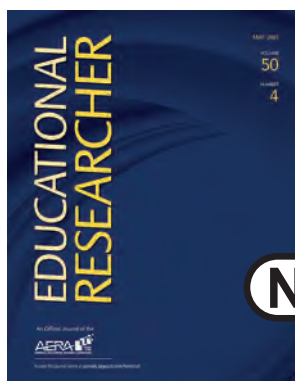
In fall 2020, the University of Pittsburgh School of Education eliminated the GRE from its graduate program admissions requirements. The decision applies to nearly all programs, including PhD and EdD. The only exception is a master's degree in wellness management offered jointly with Pitt's Joseph M. Katz Graduate School of Business.

"Moving forward, our school community will engage in holistic reviews and humanizing evaluations of applications that will allow us to recruit, retain, and collaborate with a more diverse, engaged, and talented group of students," says Valerie Kinloch, Renée and Richard Goldman Dean.

The school joins many universities across the country—including more than 90 graduate programs within Pitt—that have removed the GRE requirement. Critics contend that the exam is a barrier to access to education and a poor indicator of future student success.

"The GRE has been found to underpredict graduate school outcomes for minoritized students and to weakly predict graduate school outcomes for any student," says T. Elon Dancy II, the school's associate dean for equity and justice and Helen S. Faison Endowed Chair and executive director of the Center for Urban Education.



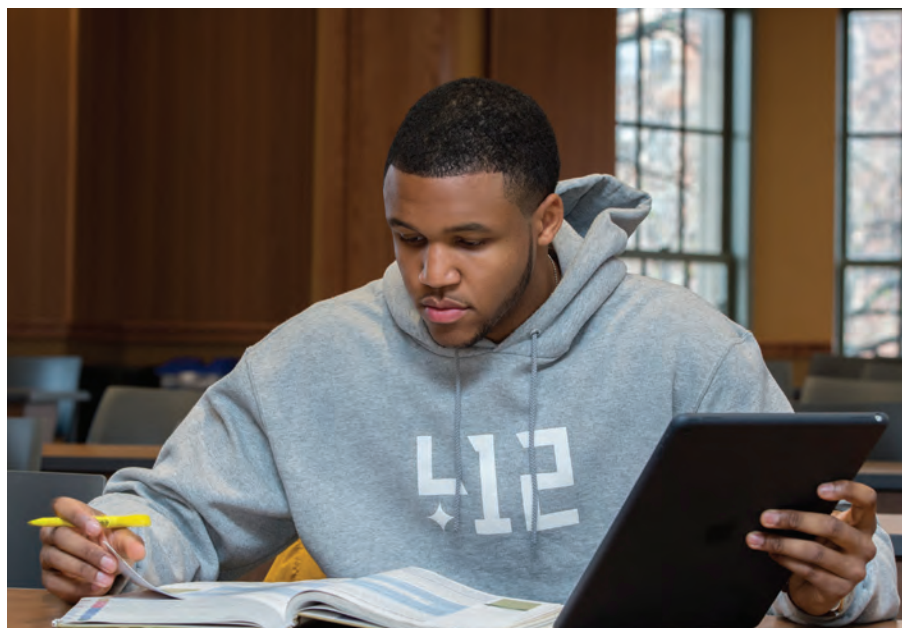


NER

Journals Find New Home

The Pitt School of Education is the new administrative home of two prominent research journals in education:

Educational Researcher and Negro Educational Review. The journals, both of which are housed in the school's Center for Urban Education, publish scholarly articles from a wide range of disciplines in the education field. Educational Researcher is a journal of the American Educational Research Association and publishes articles of general significance to education. Negro Educational Review critically examines issues related to the experiences of Black people across the African diaspora. The journal was founded in 1950 to address the systemic discrimination against Black scholars during the Jim Crow era.



Ready to Learn Something New?

In an effort to stay at the leading edge of education, the University of Pittsburgh School of Education has created two new master's degree programs: the Master of Education (MEd) in curriculum and instruction and the MEd in pre-K-12 special education. Both programs are now accepting applications and will begin classes in fall 2021.

The MEd in curriculum and instruction, which will be offered fully online, is designed for K-12 teachers in the early stages of their careers. The 30-credit program provides advanced training in instructional methods, with a special emphasis on equity, literacy, and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics). For Pennsylvania teachers, the program provides three valuable career credentials: It meets Act 48 continuing education requirements, provides a Pennsylvania Department of Education STEM endorsement, and confers a master's degree.

The MEd in pre-K-12 special education provides a pathway for people from all academic backgrounds—even those outside education—to become special education teachers. The 33-credit program fulfills the requirements of the Pennsylvania Department of Education for all grade levels. Through the comprehensive curriculum, students will learn how to effectively teach children with disabilities. The program is open to anyone with a bachelor's degree.

Foregrounding Literacy

The Office of Child Development has created the new Division of Literacy and Learning. The division will further help the office to fulfill its mission of improving the lives of children, youth, and families.

"Our goal for the Division of Literacy and Learning is to help trusted adults provide literacy and learning opportunities rooted in a child's intersectional identity," says division director Caitlin Forbes Spear.



Working under an improvement science framework, Pitt Education EdD students conduct research for projects tied to their own professional setting.



MILESTONES

EdD Centennial

The 2020-21 academic year is the 100th anniversary of the creation of the Doctor of Education (EdD) degree, according to the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED), a professional organization that is headquartered at the School of Education and serves more than 100 member institutions.

Jill Perry, executive director of CPED and an associate professor of practice at Pitt Education, traces the degree's origins to Henry Wyman Holmes, the inaugural dean of the Harvard University Graduate School of Education. "His goal was to create a degree that would prepare a new level of K-12 administration," says Perry.

After Harvard, Columbia University was next to add an EdD degree, and it quickly caught on from there. From the start, the degree was controversial. Some saw the doctorate as being for practitioners, while others saw it as being for researchers. "That was the beginning of the confusion of the EdD. Some schools adopted it as a professional degree and some as a research degree in education," says Perry.

For Perry, however, there is no debate: The EdD degree is a professional doctorate meant for senior-level professionals working in the field of education. Pitt Education follows that approach but supports people in a broad array of specializations. Working under an improvement science framework, students conduct research for projects tied to their own professional setting.

"The EdD degree is meant to use all the skills we have in schools of education—in terms of research and inquiry—but to apply the skills to practice. It is a change-focused degree. It creates change agents," says Perry.

One hundred years after the creation of the EdD, CPED is dedicated to the continued improvement of the degree in order to prepare scholarly practitioners who can positively transform the field of education.

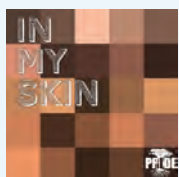
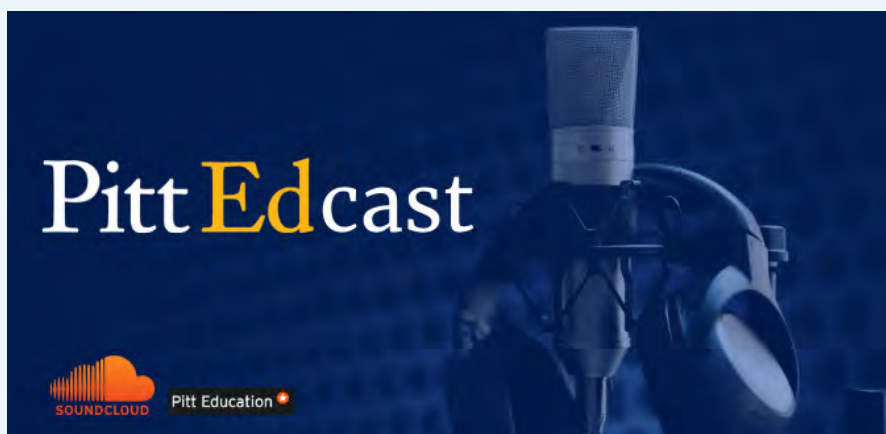
MEDIA CORNER

Playlist Suggestions

PittEdcast is a podcast produced by the University of Pittsburgh School of Education. Featuring

interviews with educators who are innovating and agitating for change, the podcast is focused on different dimensions of equity and justice in education. Recent episodes have covered topics such as talking about racism with children; rural education; the digital divide in education; linguistic justice for Black language, literacy, and identity; and abolitionist education.

Learn more at education.pitt.edu/podcast.



In My Skin is a podcast from the P.R.I.D.E. (Positive Racial Identity Development in Early Education) program of the school's Office of Child Development. Now in its second season, the podcast explores how children see race. The show asks how implicit bias affects children and what can be done to counteract it. Learn more at racepride.pitt.edu/in-my-skin-podcast.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Shattering Stereotypes for Pacific Islanders

Jarime Chaco recently completed his first year in the urban education PhD program at the School of Education. He identifies as a Pacific Islander and wants other young people like him to know that education can open doors to many fulfilling life pathways. His quotes have been edited for length and clarity.

What was your background before coming to Pitt Education?

Chaco: I grew up in San Diego, California, and Houston, Texas. In my Pacific Islander culture, it's expected for men to only do manual labor like landscaping or fishing or to join the military. With a lack of emphasis on education, I initially struggled through my own K-12 experience at under-resourced schools. When I graduated from high school, I didn't think I could go to college, so I joined the U.S. Air Force. I served for six years, including some time overseas. Later on, I decided I wanted a career as a civilian, so I went on to junior college and then eventually earned a Bachelor of Science in sociology at the University of Houston. Now, as a PhD student, I want to educate Pacific Islander kids about navigating education so that they might not have to struggle like I did.

What work are you doing as a writer?

Chaco: My advisor, Dr. Jason Méndez, asked me to be a contributing writer for his online magazine, Block Chronicles. He knew that I was interested in Pacific Islander populations, and he thought it would be a great match for the magazine's focus on equity and justice. I like that I'm getting to share narratives from other Pacific Islanders and highlight what they do to break the stereotypes.

What are your future goals?

Chaco: My goal with the PhD is to become an academic with a strong focus on teaching. Writing for Block Chronicles has also made me interested in creating works of counter-storytelling for kids. I'm looking into the idea of graphic novels that explain systemic oppression and use Critical Race Theory. I also hope to start a nonprofit organization that focuses on Pacific Islander students and other underrepresented populations in education.

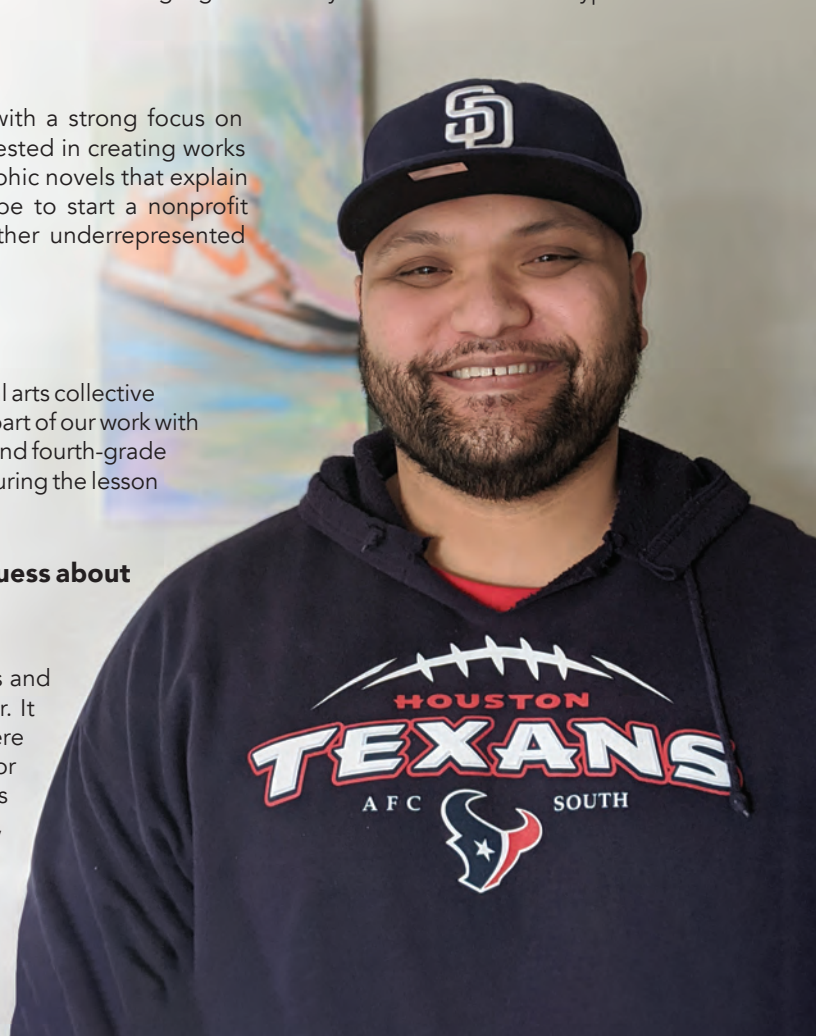
So far, what is your best memory at Pitt Education?

Chaco: Dr. Méndez and I work with Sons of the Boogie, a national arts collective that creates and curates content inspired by the South Bronx. As part of our work with this organization, we organized a break dancing lesson for third- and fourth-grade students in Pittsburgh. The joy and happiness on the kids' faces during the lesson gave me such a good feeling.

What is something interesting that people wouldn't guess about you?

Chaco: In 2009, I toured with Wide World Stage productions and got to perform all over China as a professional hip-hop dancer. It was kind of like Cirque du Soleil for hip-hop. Even though we were on a tight schedule, visiting China was definitely a highlight for me. My main dance experience comes from dance competitions and being a part of many dance crews in Texas and California, such as Marvelous Motions, Illovation, Wyld Styl, Unason, and Choreo Cookies.

For more stories like this, visit education.pitt.edu/news-and-media/student-spotlight.





READING LIST

An Educator's Guide to STEAM: Engaging Students Using Real-world Problems

By *Cassie Quigley and Danielle Herro

Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) in Practice: Defining 'Servingness' at HSIs

Edited by *Gina Garcia

Race, Justice, and Activism in Literacy Instruction

Edited by *Valerie Kinloch, Tanja Burkhard, and Carlotta Penn

Socialization in Higher Education and the Early Career: Theory, Research, and Application

Edited by *John Weidman and *Linda DeAngelo

The Improvement Science Dissertation in Practice: A Guide for Faculty, Committee Members, and Their Students

By *Jill Perry, Debby Zambo, and Robert Crow

* indicates School of Education faculty members

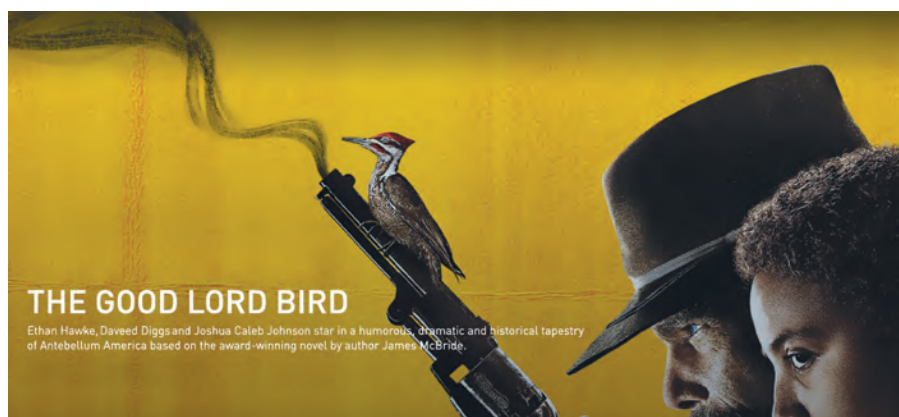
LIGHTS, CAMERA, KINLOCH!

Valerie Kinloch, the Renée and Richard Goldman Dean of the University of Pittsburgh School of Education, moderated a webinar with actor Ethan Hawke and author James McBride in September 2020. The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) sponsored a conversation about the book-to-film adaptation process in advance of the release of the Showtime limited series "The Good Lord Bird." The series is based on the book of the same name, which won the 2013 National Book Award for Fiction for its portrayal of abolitionist crusader John Brown through the eyes of a young Black protagonist recently freed from slavery.

Kinloch, who is president-elect of NCTE, guided the spirited one-hour discussion on the book's characters and major themes as well as its connections to modern-day efforts for racial equality, justice, freedom, and liberation for Black people.

"This story is just as relevant today as it was when John Brown, the real person, was fighting for the freedom of Black people," Kinloch said during the webinar, adding, "so how have we not gotten farther than when he died in 1859?"

Hawke, who plays Brown in the Showtime series and served as one of its executive producers, speculated about Brown's perspective: "I really think [Brown] would have thought that this nation would be purged by blood and then healed. And the healing has been so difficult and so slow, it's been shocking to me."



Home Sweet Office

Written by Greg Latshaw



Pictured, top row: **Valerie Kinloch**, Renée and Richard Goldman Dean; **T. Elon Dancy II**, associate dean for equity and justice, Helen S. Faison Endowed Chair, and executive director of the Center for Urban Education; and **Greg Latshaw**, director of marketing and communications. Middle row: **Tinukwa Boulder**, associate professor of practice and director of innovative technologies and online learning; **Kevin Crowley**, professor and associate dean for faculty and research; and **Rashee Ferguson**, admissions and recruiting manager; Bottom row: **Wesley Vaina**, director of admissions and enrollment; **Cassia Crogan**, assistant director of marketing and communications; and **Lynnea Lombardi**, master's student in higher education management, with her cat, **Silver** (named after the phrase "Every cloud has a silver lining" because she adopted him during the pandemic)

During the pandemic, members of the Pitt School of Education community have been conducting most of their work virtually. While the experience has been isolating at times, it also has given members of the community important insights into each other's lives. Students who before only knew their professors from the classroom and vice versa were now meeting each other's pets or watching each other's young children unexpectedly ask for snacks during meetings. Some faculty and staff worked from their dedicated home offices, while others set up work spaces wherever they could find a quiet spot—in attics, at kitchen tables, in sunrooms, in basements, and even in garages. Throughout it all, the Pitt Education community has never given up hope. We have stayed connected, kept learning, and remained committed to our work.

FIGHTING RACISMS



More Than Words

Written by Greg Latshaw

In the aftermath of the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota, which followed the murders of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and so many other People of Color, leaders of many U.S. institutions moved swiftly to issue position statements. Their statements condemned police brutality and systemic racism, called for unity, and reaffirmed commitments to diversity and inclusion. But were these words enough?

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

was compelled to do more. She knew her school needed not only to issue a statement about the murder of Floyd but also to intervene in more meaningful ways. So on June 1, 2020, when she released her own statement to the school community, she included a powerful call to action by announcing the creation of a new working group called the PittEd Justice Collective. Envisioned to last for an initial three-year period, the collective would comprise students, faculty, staff, alumni, and school district and community partners. Together, they would address anti-racism, equity, social justice, and wellness through a variety of internal and external initiatives.

In her message, Kinloch wrote, “Together, we will deeply explore how our current moment is situated within a history of struggle and survival, organizing and resistance, and how we can work toward a future that is equitable, engaging, and justice-directed.”

After the message was sent, many people from around the world called, texted, or emailed Kinloch to pledge their support to the PittEd Justice Collective. Hundreds of other people—including many educators from outside the University—signed up through the school’s website to join this effort. It was obvious to Kinloch that the formation of the collective was sparking something powerful within people.

“Within the first couple months,” says Kinloch, “it became clear that the justice collective is more than a working group—it’s a movement. We are working collectively to make sure we live in a world that is fair, that is equitable, and that is about freedom for people. That’s a movement. A movement never ends.”

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—Dean Valerie Kinloch

Throughout the past academic year, the PittEd Justice Collective hosted a number of projects to advance the movement. It created a new project to enable graduate students to conduct research on anti-Blackness in higher education. It established new study groups for white people to examine how they can further commit themselves to anti-racist work. It sponsored a four-part film series and an African American read-in event during Black History Month. And it hosted webinars on equity and justice that reached several thousand participants from around the world. The PittEd Justice Collective also began laying the groundwork for the Youth-for-Justice Dean’s Advisory Committee that will collaborate with middle school, high school, and college students.

Additionally, the PittEd Justice Collective builds on Kinloch’s earlier decision to create a senior-level administrative position of associate dean for equity and justice in the School of Education.

Crystal McCormick Ware, coordinator of diversity and inclusion initiatives at Pitt’s University Library System, says that the PittEd Justice Collective is creating synergies where they did not exist before. She appreciates how it brings together people who are dedicated to equity and justice but don’t necessarily have them as part of their job title.


“It’s almost like a think tank for me,” says McCormick Ware. “We’re collaborating, we’re sharing ideas. We’re sharing information as opposed to harboring it. Lots of colleges and universities can get caught in their silos.”

Mobilizing Action in the School and Beyond

Two early programs of the PittEd Justice Collective are the Higher Education and Racism (H.E.A.R.) initiative and white co-conspirator study groups.

H.E.A.R. is a new opportunity for graduate students seeking to conduct research on anti-racism in colleges and universities, says T. Elon Dancy II, who in addition to being cochair of the PittEd Justice Collective also is the school’s associate dean for equity and justice and Helen S. Faison Endowed Chair and is executive director of Pitt’s Center for Urban Education (CUE). The project is offered in partnership with CUE and Juan Battle, Presidential Professor of Sociology, Urban Education, Public Health, and Social Welfare at the Graduate Center, City University of New York.

In the 2021 spring term, 14 graduate students completed research papers through H.E.A.R.

A photograph of three people walking outdoors on a paved path. On the left is a woman with long brown hair wearing a white button-down shirt and a long, pleated grey skirt. In the center is a Black woman with long black braids wearing a bright pink blazer over a white shirt and dark blue trousers. On the right is a Black man with short hair and a beard wearing a blue suit jacket over a white shirt and blue trousers. They are walking towards the camera. The background shows green trees and a brick building. A dark grey diagonal shape is overlaid on the top left of the image.

Get Involved in the Justice Collective

To join, visit education.pitt.edu/justice and complete the request-for-information form. Contact us at PittEdJusticeCollective@pitt.edu or make a financial contribution by contacting Michael Haas, director of development and alumni affairs, at mbh26@pitt.edu. Everyone is welcome.

From left, co-chair Courtney Ross, Dean Valerie Kinloch, and co-chair T. Elon Dancy.

Their papers examined the statements issued by college and university presidents in response to the death of Floyd and the global uprisings that followed.

“Presidential statements are a form of data understudied in the field of higher education that convey university values. How people narrate moments and movements, what they say, and what they don’t say, inform us about the thinking and responsiveness of colleges and universities to issues of anti-Black racism,” says Dancy.

For his research paper, Chris Wright, a doctoral student in urban education, explored themes of anti-Blackness in public statements by the leaders of Ivy League institutions in response to the death of Floyd. Wright had three key findings. First, many universities did not directly address Floyd’s death or the specific circumstances around it. (e.g., Did they refer to it as a death or a murder? Did they speak to how he was killed by a police officer?) Second, Wright found that many university presidents addressed the ongoing protests in terms of cautioning against the protests turning violent or causing destruction. The third finding was that virtually all of the university presidents used this moment to reaffirm their commitment to diversity and inclusion, which Wright calls into question.

“Elite institutions are especially important to look at because higher education in general is very top down,” says Wright. “There is a dark history associated with a lot of these institutions, and the remnants of that still exist today.”

Wright’s paper is part of a collection of H.E.A.R. papers being submitted for a special edition of an academic journal.



Another ongoing initiative of the PittEd Justice Collective are the white co-conspirators study groups.

The term “white co-conspirator” is based on a term that Bettina L. Love (MED ’02), the Georgia Athletic Association Professor in Education at the University of Georgia Mary Frances Early College of Education, explores in her best-selling book “We Want to Do More than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom.” Love describes co-conspirators as people who go above only being allies. They are willing to use their privilege to benefit others in the collective pursuit of freedom.

There were so many people who signed up for the study groups—more than 200, in fact—that 12 separate study groups were created. One member is Franki Sibberson, a retired teacher who taught for 33 years in an elementary school in Dublin, Ohio. Today, she is a literacy education consultant.

“For me, I feel like the application to my work has been constant,” says Sibberson. “A lot of my work has been on recognizing how centered

white authors are and how prevalent white representation is in elementary school classrooms. It’s been helpful to bring what others are doing back to my own community.”

Susi Long, a professor in teacher education at the University of South Carolina College of Education, facilitates one of the study groups. Her group meets every two weeks. They are reading “Caste” by Isabel Wilkerson and “Sister Outsider” by Audre Lorde and listening to the podcast “Seeing White.” Participants are exploring a range of topics, such as the invisible labor of Black faculty and staff; how people learn about, perpetuate, and can address white supremacy; and the impact of their silence. The participants include faculty, staff, and students from the School of Education as well as staff members from other Pitt schools and educators from outside the University.

“It’s really important for white people to adopt a co-conspirator mindset because our society has been designed to privilege us and benefit us,” says Long. “If we sit back and require our Black colleagues to do

University-wide Efforts

Among the initiatives:

- A one-credit course, Anti-Black Racism: History, Ideology, and Resistance, is now required for all Pitt undergraduate students. Professor Leigh Patel served on the committee that developed the course.
- The development of publicly available diversity dashboards to provide data by race for faculty, staff, and students as well as for student outcomes and vendor contracting.
- A reading guide, Anti-Racism and Social Justice, is offered along with a collection of books and other resources by the University Library System.
- Virtual events scheduled included a town hall series called This Is Not Normal: Allyship and Advocacy in the Age of COVID-19.

the work when, historically, whiteness has caused the oppression over the centuries, then we are shirking our responsibilities. We are lucky to be in positions as educators to take on the responsibility to play a role in change.”

Courtney Ross has taken this mindset to heart. Ross is the school’s coordinator of strategic initiatives and special projects. She also is earning her master’s degree in higher education at the school.

Ross says that being a co-conspirator has changed the ways she relates to people. When setting boundaries, she establishes hard lines for the things she is unwilling to compromise. For Ross, who grew up in central Pennsylvania in a predominantly white community, this sometimes means speaking up in situations with her friends and family.

“You’re not always going to be right, and nobody is perfect,” says Ross, “but if you are afraid to say something because you are afraid of being wrong, you are never going to make that change. It can be difficult to call out family and colleagues, but they know I’m not always coming from the place of ‘You’re a racist; you’re wrong.’ It’s ‘Hey, I know you may not have known that or what it means.’ It’s about giving them the context and how you can fix it.”

Looking to the Youth as Our Guide

According to Kinloch, the work of the PittEd Justice Collective has only just begun.

This past spring term, it joined with the school’s Office of the Associate Dean for Equity and Justice to co-sponsor a schoolwide mental and emotional wellness series. The workshops covered topics such as pandemic anxiety, trauma and stress, compassion fatigue, regulating emotions, and depression in Black Americans.

“We can’t just assume our students are getting the help they need wherever they are. We have to be proactive and say, ‘We know you are struggling,’” says Shederick McClendon, assistant dean for student engagement.

The next major initiative of the PittEd Justice Collective, according to Kinloch, will be to further develop the Youth-for-Justice Dean’s Advisory Committee.

Kinloch is working with principals and superintendents from a number of local school districts who have nominated students to join the youth advisory committee. She anticipates the committee consisting of middle and high school students as well as undergraduate and graduate students from the School of Education.

“Making space to allow young people to be leaders is what excites me,” says Kinloch. “They can lead all of us because they know what they want and what they need.”

DaVonna Graham, a doctoral student in the language, literacy, and culture program, will co-facilitate the Youth-for-Justice Dean’s Advisory Committee. She expects the students in the group to advise the dean on issues of equity and justice as well as on subjects like recruitment, retention, and making campus more student-friendly and welcoming.

“I notice sometimes when I’m in presentations outside of the school or maybe at other universities that I’m primed to listen for the equity and justice lens,” says Graham. “Not everybody is doing that. I realize how lucky I am as a doctoral student at the University of Pittsburgh to have a dean who says, ‘This is what we do here. This is the way we think, the way we act, the way we interact with each other.’”

Kinloch sees engaging young people as vital to what the PittEd Justice Collective will accomplish next. “Until we get to a place where we support, listen to, and follow young people and what they say, what they want, and what they need in education, until we get to that point, we’re not engaging in critical equity work,” she says.

Kinloch is committed to a future that goes beyond issuing statements and, instead, includes truly taking up the work.

“When I talk about the PittEd Justice Collective, I am not talking just about doing some research or teaching. I’m talking about a revolutionary, imaginative, and creative model for engaging in education differently,” says Kinloch. ■



Game On:

Student Teachers Adapt During Pandemic

Written by Cassia Crogan

Each morning, Eamon Sheehan plays a virtual game of chess to start his day. This ritual, which he began during the COVID-19 pandemic, helps him focus his mind and prepares him for the surprises the day may bring.

“I was part of my middle school chess club but hadn’t played in a long time,” says Sheehan. “I started to get a lot of invitations from friends to play after the Netflix series ‘The Queen’s Gambit’ came out. I ended up getting really into it. It is sort of how I wake up in the morning and turn my brain on. I’ll just play a couple of chess games.”

After he finishes his games, the chessboard squares on Sheehan’s computer switch

over to the squares of a Zoom grid filled with the faces of his students at Pittsburgh Allderdice High School. Sheehan, who is enrolled in the Master of Special Education with Academic Instruction Certificate program at the University of Pittsburgh School of Education, is their student teacher.





Lauren Skillinge and her virtual third-grade classroom.



Sheehan began his student teaching placement in fall 2020. Like his peers, he was caught in a seismic shift in how education is delivered worldwide due to the pandemic. Sheehan had to modify his syllabus, approach, and perspective to teach his students in a remote setting.

“It was clear the pandemic wasn’t going away. It was a little disappointing, but I felt prepared for it, and everyone was figuring out things together,” says Sheehan.

Even amid the pandemic, all students in Pitt Education’s teacher certification programs completed their required student teaching assignments.

To connect with his students and keep them engaged, Sheehan worked on building routines with them. He discovered new technology to make lessons more engaging and even started his own virtual chess club.

“I have the chess set up so that they play in teams. It has created a collaborative and fun classroom. There are opportunities for that in this virtual environment; it just takes a while to find them,” says Sheehan.

Building Relationships, In-Person and Remotely

Lauren Skillinge began her student teaching placement in a third-grade classroom at Pittsburgh Faison K-5 in fall 2020. Like Sheehan, she was apprehensive about her placement being online.

“At first, I had a very negative mindset,” says Skillinge, who is earning her teacher certification through the Combined Accelerated Studies in Education program. “I thought that it wasn’t going to be beneficial for the kids or for me. But I’m so glad that I stuck with it.”

Skillinge held restorative circles in her class each day. Restorative circles are a special time for everyone to be casual, to talk, and to get

Pandemic Calls for New Course

Pitt Education developed a new course this year, Online K-12 Teaching and Learning, to provide information about distance education theories, instructional design approaches, and online teaching strategies for different grade levels.

“I’m hoping that those who take the course will get a sense of how to design an online class. The goal isn’t to convince participants to love online teaching, but to break down the perception of it being impossible for those who may be uncomfortable with the new format.”

—Tinukwa Boulder, director of innovative technologies and online learning and an associate professor of practice in the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Leading.

to know each other. Topics have included sharing favorite foods; weekend plans; and imaginative things, like what you would wish for if a genie granted you three wishes.

“It is imperative to set aside time to get to know my students and for them to get to know me,” says Skillinge. “It has been a fun way to get them to be creative and engaged.”

Other student teacher experiences were facilitated through a hybrid teaching format, which combines online and in-person instruction.

Kurt Voss-Hoynes, who is enrolled in the Master of Arts in teaching program, did his

student teaching in an 11th-grade English classroom at South Fayette High School in McDonald, Pennsylvania.

“There was a lot to think through,” he says. “My mentor teacher and I spent all of our professional development time figuring out how to set up a classroom: where to stand, where a camera would go, how to pay attention to the kids physically in class but to also engage with the kids remotely.”

As a former full-time lecturer in composition and literature at the University of Miami, Voss-Hoynes was no stranger to the classroom. But still, he had to find ways to adapt to the new norms of a socially distanced and hybrid classroom setting.

“I had to be more of a mediator than I’m used to being,” says Voss-Hoynes. “That meant having to paraphrase what the kids in the classroom were saying so that the kids who were online could hear



Kurt Voss-Hoynes



Meredith Crocker and a display of her students’ work.



“There was a lot to think through. My mentor teacher and I spent all of our professional development time figuring out how to set up a classroom: where to stand, where a camera would go, how to pay attention to the kids physically in class but to also engage with the kids remotely.”

—Kurt Voss-Hoynes, a student enrolled in the Master of Arts in teaching program.

it. I had to insert my voice in the middle more than I normally would, but it was necessary, and it enabled everyone to engage with one another.”

Meredith Crocker, a student in Pitt Education’s vision studies program, also navigated the hybrid format during her student teaching placement at the Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children in Pittsburgh.

While teaching her second-, third-, and fourth-grade students, she had to adapt the lessons for those who are nonverbal in addition to having vision

impairments. As an added challenge, Crocker had to plan ahead two weeks in advance in order to get lesson materials to those students who were attending school remotely full time.

“I have found that, with in-person and remote learning, giving my students consistency and routine has been one of the most beneficial aspects of working during a pandemic,” says Crocker. “We start our morning with a morning group, which consists of attendance, a song to dance to for energy, the Pledge of Allegiance, days of the week/building our calendar, and the weather. I try

to keep the lesson and activity times consistent for our kids.”

Recognizing Inequities in Instruction

While disparities are always present in schools, they took on new dimensions during the pandemic.

“Racial and socioeconomic inequities have always been present in schools. We have to use what we have learned this year to improve schooling and avoid returning to ‘normal,’ which was never equitable,” says Michelle Sobolak, Pitt Education director of teacher and professional education and an associate professor of practice.

Teachers also have faced the difficulty of adjusting to teaching online.

“There has been a giant learning curve with switching modalities of teaching,” says Sobolak.

While this past academic year was anything but traditional for student teachers, it allowed them to learn a lot beyond the typical programming.

“It has been an exhilarating experience, an always different, go with it, be-in-the-moment kind of experience,” says Crocker. “It is good to have a steady plan, but this past year taught me that things are going to change, and it has helped me to see that and to be a little more easygoing.”

“Racial and socioeconomic inequities have always been present in schools. We have to use what we have learned this year to improve schooling and avoid returning to ‘normal,’ which was never equitable.”

Michelle Sobolak, Pitt Education director of teacher and professional education and an associate professor of practice.

The mentor teachers, parents, and Pitt Education faculty have expressed awe for the student teachers’ resilience and devotion.

“We are impressed with our students, who have persevered and finished their student teaching despite the challenging circumstances,” says Sobolak.

In a way, the experience of

PittEnrich Pushes on during Pandemic



PittEnrich, a tutoring program for elementary school students from Pittsburgh’s Homewood neighborhood, is a partnership of Pitt’s Schools of Education and Social Work, the University’s Community Engagement Center in Homewood, and community and school partners. The program continued in both virtual and in-person formats during the COVID-19 pandemic. Students from Pitt Education provided virtual one-on-one tutoring sessions in math and reading during the week to further support learning in addition to regular Saturday sessions. This program was made possible due to generous support from The Gismondi Family Foundation.

student teaching during a pandemic could be compared to the virtual chess games that Sheehan starts his day with and shares with his students: You can study, practice, and prepare for the game, but you won’t know exactly how to play each chess piece until the game begins. You must rely on your prior knowledge and be flexible.

While things weren’t always perfect about student teaching in a pandemic, Sheehan learned one truth that stuck with him:

“Your best is good enough,” he says. ■

Creativity Meets Coding

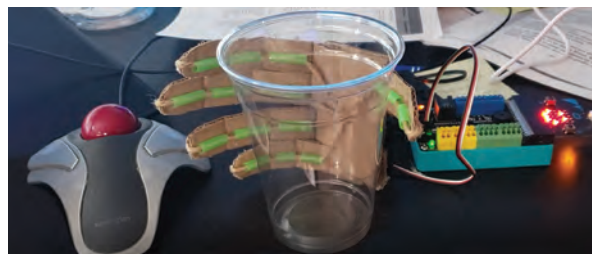
Written by Lynnea Lombardi

Robotics education often is taught through a competitive lens. Students receive predesigned kits that teach them to build and code robots while completing challenges or entering competitions. While this approach can engage some learners, it can be isolating for those who are traditionally left out of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) education, like girls and Students of Color. To make robotics education more inclusive, University of Pittsburgh School of Education faculty member Cassie Quigley is working to transform how it is taught to teachers.

"I want future teachers to know that robotics doesn't always have to center around a narrow, task-based challenge," says Quigley, an associate professor in and associate chair of the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Leading. "My goal is to shift the viewpoints of robotics education and to think differently about who does robotics so that the field is transformed."

Quigley applied this inclusive approach to robotics education in two online courses she taught this past year, Elementary Science Methods and STEAM Transdisciplinary Approaches. Her students included both preservice and current teachers enrolled in the school's Combined Accelerated Studies in Education program and STEAM education certificate program.

To provide robotic kits for students, Quigley partnered with BirdBrain Technologies, LLC.



Prosthetic hand designed for a lesson on the human body.

Through their assignments, the students made connections between science and art. The first assignment was to integrate poetry and robotics so that students would learn coding with an opportunity to be creative. Then Quigley assigned the students an open-ended prompt: Can you integrate robotics into another discipline? From this prompt, the students created many compelling lessons.

"I was in complete awe of their work," says Quigley.

Some students created robots of historical figures, like the late U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and William Shakespeare. One student built a model of a prosthetic hand for a lesson on the human body. Another student created an interactive map that lit up to show butterfly migration patterns. Each student's project was different, yet each one helped the students to exercise their creativity while gaining confidence in coding.

Emily Wichmann, an aspiring educator enrolled in the school's 12-credit STEAM certificate program, used Quigley's assignment as an opportunity to explore ideas for a classroom unit on space debris. Using the robotics kit, she built a model of a

satellite, complete with LED lights and a sound sensor, and brought it to life by animating it with code. Wichmann rigged the contraption to rotate with the sound of her voice.

As she thinks about her future work as an educator, Wichmann envisions leading an activity in which her students will research space debris, then write an origin story imagining how the objects got there and model the space debris with robotics.

"The assignment showed me that robotics is an excellent avenue for teaching and learning," says Wichmann.

Nancy Poteet, another STEAM certificate student, is a third-grade teacher in the West Shore School District in York County, Pennsylvania. She got the idea for her project after noticing the need for traffic control in her school hallways, where students were constantly bumping into each other. She built and coded a mini stoplight for her project.

"Learning about the process of robotics in a hands-on way was more impactful than if someone had just told me how to do it," says Poteet.

Quigley says the goal of the project was to make teachers feel more confident in teaching robotics to their students.

"That confidence will help them to bring robotics to the classroom, which increases access for youth," says Quigley. ■

Why Do You Feel Called to Be a Teacher?

Written by Lynnea Lombardi

People who identify as Black, Indigenous, and/or a Person of Color are highly underrepresented among K-12 teachers in the United States, making up only 20% of all teachers, according to the Institute of Education Sciences. Students in the Combined Accelerated Studies in Education (CASE) program at the University of Pittsburgh School of Education know the valuable perspective that these teachers can bring to classrooms. These five current CASE students share their inspiration for becoming teachers and what their hopes are for the next generation of students.





From left: Isabel Tashima, Marianna Gutierrez, Simeon McCray, Amanda Simms, and Aminna Waheed

"It is so important for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color to see themselves reflected in their teachers and school leaders. I saw myself in my grandmother, who was a principal, and my mother, who is a teacher. My hope is that I can pass on my passion for learning and teaching to students who might see themselves in me and think, 'That could be me!'"

—Isabel Tashima, Springfield, Virginia

"As a teacher, you form special relationships with the kids, and I feel like that's something we miss as adults. Adults have a hard time being vulnerable with each other, but kids are the opposite. Every single day has its winning moments."

—Marianna Gutierrez, Gaithersburg, Maryland

"I want to help young people realize and fulfill their potential in this world. I want to help students see school as a step toward their goals and dreams, not just as some obligation they have to attend every day for the first 18 years of their life. My goal is to cultivate students who love to learn. I hope to inspire students to use education as a tool to break generational curses and put themselves, their families, and communities in a better position for the future."

—Simeon McCray, Norristown, Pennsylvania

"I knew I wanted to become a teacher when I volunteered at an adaptive day camp for children with disabilities. I loved the joy and positive energy that the children brought. I have come to realize the profound impact Black teachers have on Black students, which has only strengthened my desire to be a teacher and to work with young Black minds. I want to be the warm Black teacher that I never had growing up."

—Amanda Simms, Severna Park, Maryland

"I want to show students that it's okay to speak two different languages. Growing up as a bilingual speaker, I could only speak English in my classes at school. When I have my own classroom, I don't want to separate students' home language and English."

—Aminna Waheed, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

CASE Program

In the CASE teacher preparation program, students gain both elementary school teaching and special education experience. The intensive five-year program features practicums and student teaching placements. Students graduate with a bachelor's degree in applied developmental psychology and a master's degree in special education and fulfill the requirements for the Pennsylvania pre-K-4 general education and pre-K-8 special education teacher certifications.

Social Justice Mathematics:

When $X + Y$ Equals Meaningful Change

Written by Greg Latshaw

I hate math." "I'm bad at math."
"Why am I learning this?" "I'll never use it in the real world."

Students express these sentiments about math regularly in American classrooms across the country. Kari Kokka, an assistant professor at the University of Pittsburgh School of Education, has heard them all. She is a former math teacher and math coach who taught in public schools in Berkeley, California, and New York City.

Kokka is part of a movement of educators who are infusing new vitality into math education by teaching it through a social justice-oriented lens. Known as social justice mathematics or teaching mathematics for social justice, this form of education connects different areas of math, such as ratios and proportions or geometry and algebra, to relevant social issues of the day.

Think of it like the word problems you had to solve in math class but kicked up a notch. Instead of finding the answers to made-up questions (How many marbles does Johnny have left? What time will Train B arrive?), math is applied to inequities occurring across society. Math lessons can analyze problems such as the food deserts that limit people's access to nutritious foods or the impossible circumstances of people living in expensive cities while working minimum-wage jobs. For some students, these lessons will echo the situations they are experiencing in their own lives.

“Social justice math is for everybody,” says Kokka. “It’s not only for students in historically looted communities to be able to advocate for the resources they need and deserve. It’s also for students of privileged backgrounds to analyze injustice and to then think about their role in seeking justice—for if we as a society are really seeking justice, then it requires the participation of everyone.”

Kokka has studied teachers’ implementation of social justice mathematics in both Title I public schools (federally funded schools with a high number of children from low-income families) and elite independent schools. She believes that the ultimate goal of this approach is to work toward equity, justice, and liberation.

Social justice mathematics builds on the work of the Brazilian educational philosopher Paulo Freire in critical pedagogy. Students are “learning the math in order to read and write the world,” says Kokka. Math provides them with the tools to understand these problems and to work toward equitable solutions.

Kokka is poised to take her work to the next level through a new \$996,000 grant she received from the National Science Foundation (NSF) for a five-year project. The project is called CAREER: Partnering with Teachers and Students to Engage in Mathematical Inquiry about Relevant Social Issues. In the project, Kokka will partner with a school to design professional development around social justice mathematics. She will then conduct classroom case studies and bring in a community partner to focus on how to address real-world problems. The resources created through the project will then be shared via a public website accessible to teachers all over the world.

“The NSF project really focuses on teacher learning. There aren’t many studies of how practicing teachers are learning how to do this and how they navigate the dilemmas they face,” says Kokka. This NSF

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Kari Kokka

grant builds on Kokka’s previous work, which has yielded several research papers, two other grants totaling \$2 million from the Spencer Foundation and NSF, and an open-source document on teaching social justice math that she curates and makes available to all teachers at bit.ly/SJMathScienceResources.

Michelle Cody is an experienced math teacher who has worked with Kokka. Cody teaches sixth grade at Willie L. Brown Jr. Middle School in San Francisco, California. In her classroom, Cody infuses social justice mathematics into lessons with a variety of Common Core math standards, including ratios, rates, expressions, equations, and absolute values.

“I want to make sure my students are able to use numbers to tell stories and understand how numbers shape lives and how we can make that change,” says Cody. “I’m not telling them what to do, what to say, what to feel. I’m exposing them to this truth, and it’s up to them how they show up and deal with it.”

Kokka incorporates social justice mathematics into the mathematics methods courses offered in the elementary and secondary teacher certification programs at Pitt Education.

As a student teacher, graduate

student Isabel Crain has developed lesson plans that incorporate social justice mathematics into her seventh-grade classroom at the Environmental Charter School in Pittsburgh. She taught rational numbers by applying them to the 2016 presidential election and taught probability through an exercise involving the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank.

“This form of teaching truly increases engagement. I hear from students who I normally don’t hear from,” says Crain, who is earning her master’s degree in special education and her Pennsylvania teaching certification in mathematics.

While social justice mathematics is more effective than traditional pedagogies, it does require more time to plan the lessons, according to Crain. There also is the potential for pushback depending on the subject matter. “Something I always grapple with is we can choose to use math as a tool for social justice and we can choose not to. Either way it is a political statement,” says Crain.

Kokka enjoys math and studied mechanical engineering as an undergraduate. Those interests converge with her lifelong commitment to social activism and community organizing. Within the School of Education, Kokka organizes an annual Black Lives Matter teaching



event and a social justice curriculum fair for teachers.

Fighting back against injustice is part of Kokka's family story. She is a fourth-generation Japanese American. During World War II, her family was unconstitutionally incarcerated by the U.S. government. Many years later, Kokka attended a Title I public high school, where she witnessed severe inequities in educational opportunities for students.

Kokka says that it is important for all students, and especially those from marginalized backgrounds, to have an equal opportunity to excel in mathematics. After all, there is a lot riding on it.

"I'm passionate about doing justice work in mathematics because math is the ultimate gatekeeper. Performance in math is connected to so many things in life. Mathematical analysis is essential to critical investigation of social issues," says Kokka.

She believes in the brilliance and power of young people to lead social justice movements and aims to support students and teachers taking action through her work. ■

Kari Kokka's five-year grant from the National Science Foundation will support the professional development of current teachers nationwide. The following is a tentative project timeline:

Year One: Co-design professional development with teachers

Year Two: Co-facilitate the professional development experiences

Year Three: Conduct classroom case studies with a smaller group of teachers that are more in depth

Year Four: Continue classroom case studies and bring in a community partner to work with students and teachers on helping them to take action on addressing relevant social issues

Year Five: Analyze data and create a website to freely share materials and resources for teachers

Jerry Longo

(MEd '68, PhD '81) was appointed president of the School of Education Alumni Society.



Reed Humphrey

(BS '74, PhD '86) was named acting provost of the University of Montana.

Donna Sanft

(BS '74, MEd '89) was selected for the Pitt Department of Athletics 2020 Ring of Honor in recognition of the impact she has had on Pitt Athletics over the years.

Chantee Earl (MAT '01, PhD '10) was also selected for the 2020 Ring of Honor.



Rebecca Pringle

(BS '76) was named president of the National Education Association (NEA). NEA represents 3 million educators and is the largest labor organization in the United States.

Shirley Biggs

(EdD '77), associate professor emeritus, was honored with a lifetime achievement award by NEED, a college access organization that has been serving high school students in the Pittsburgh area since 1963.

Janine Janosky

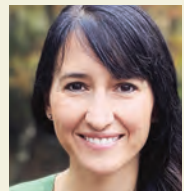
(PhD '86) was named president of Richard J. Daley College in Chicago.

Alaine Allen

(MEd '93, EdD '17) was named associate dean for diversity, equity, and inclusion for the Carnegie Mellon University College of Engineering.

Robin A. Leaf

(MEd '07) was promoted to director of strategic academic initiatives and accreditation at Pitt's Graduate School of Public Health.

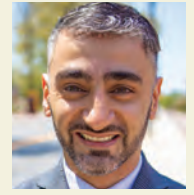


Kristin Davin

(PhD '11) received the 2020 Anthony Papalia Award for Excellence in Teacher Education from the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

Hatef Alavi

(MEd '11) is associate director of the Penn First Plus program at the University of Pennsylvania. The program supports students who face significant barriers to their college education.



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Shannon Finley

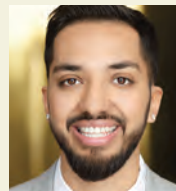
(MAT '12) received the Ivan and Mary Novick Award for Young Alumni Leadership from the Pitt Alumni Association during Pitt's Homecoming 2020 festivities. This award recognizes the accomplishments of recent graduates.

Natthapong Chanyoo

(PhD '13) was named dean of the Faculty of Liberal Arts at Mahidol University in Bangkok, Thailand.

Ashlie Prioleau

(MEd '13, EdD '20) is executive director of the ADVANCE program at George Mason University and Northern Virginia Community College.



Oscar Patrón

(MEd '14, PhD '19) received an honorable mention for the Distinguished Dissertation Award from the Critical Educators for Social Justice Special Interest Group of the American Educational Research Association

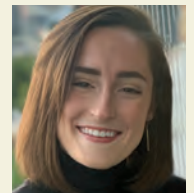
for his dissertation about resilience in gay Latino male collegians.

Mary Catherine Reljac

(EdD '16) was named superintendent of the Fox Chapel Area School District near Pittsburgh.

Mackenzie Brown

(BS '17, MEd '20) received a U.S. Fulbright Scholarship. She aims to improve student outcomes at a university in Laos and wants to plan community activities that integrate Western art practices with local artists.



Amanda Laichak

(PhD '18) was named regional vice president of Commonwealth Charter Academy.

Tchetchet Digbohau

(EdD '19) was appointed to the National Scholarship Providers Association board of directors.



Eben Witherspoon

(PhD '19) received the NARST 2021 Outstanding Doctoral Research

Award for his dissertation, "Localizing and Understanding Mechanisms of Gender Differences within Pathways Towards and Away From Science Degrees."

Melissa Friez

(EdD '20) was named superintendent of the North Allegheny School District near Pittsburgh and her start date is effective July 1, 2021.

David Beck

(EdD '20) was promoted to associate dean for interprofessional studies in Pitt's School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences. He also is assistant professor in and chair of the Department of Physician Assistant Studies.



Pickett is the former chief diversity officer of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System.



Clyde Pickett (EdD '17) was hired to serve as the new University of Pittsburgh vice chancellor for diversity, equity, and inclusion in July 2020. Since then, he has striven to make the University more welcoming and inclusive for all students, especially Black students and other Students of Color who at times may have faced discrimination based on their race.

Pickett is the former chief diversity officer of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System. In that role, he guided policy for the system's 54 campuses. Pickett was living in the Minneapolis area at the time that George Floyd was killed by police on May 25, 2020. In the ensuing days of protests against police brutality, Pickett helped to organize and lead

community-based discussions on how education can be a catalyst for change. He also participated in community cleanup projects in city neighborhoods.

"To see the outpouring of people who demanded an appropriate response was a transformative experience. The support was multigenerational, it was multiracial," says Pickett.

In his role as Pitt's highest-ranking diversity officer, Pickett says that he plans to address the underlying systems and structures of power. He believes that this approach will bring about meaningful and lasting change.

"Education is about informing, preparing, and negotiating change. It is about us being willing to examine policies and procedures at the University to advance social justice," says Pickett.

In Memoriam

James G. Greeno,

a former senior scientist at Pitt's Learning Research and Development Center and visiting and adjunct professor in the School of Education, died in September 2020.

Jon-Philip "Jay" Imbrenda,

a faculty member in the School of Education, died in February 2021.

Beatrice O. Pressley

(BS '59, MEd '62), a professor emerita at San Francisco State University, died in December 2020.

Patricia Rooney

(MEd '84), of the Pittsburgh Steelers football organization, died in January 2021.

Share Your News

Have you changed jobs or received a promotion? Let us know. Email us at soenews@pitt.edu. In addition to printing updates in the magazine, we share alumni news on the School of Education social media channels and through articles on the school website at education.pitt.edu/news.

DIFFERENT WAYS TO GIVE

Written by Greg Latshaw

The University of Pittsburgh School of Education is fortunate to have generous supporters whose financial gifts help students receive a high-quality education. As the stories of these alumni show, there are many different charitable giving options available.

Outright Gift: Nurturing Creativity and Play

Professor Emerita Karen VanderVen (PhD '75) is a big believer in the power of play and creativity—for adults as well as children. To create spaces for that to occur, she made a gift to name two new spaces in Wesley W. Posvar Hall. The money from this gift was given outright, meaning it could be put to immediate use. The rooms, which were created in a major building renovation in 2019, are the Karen and Ned VanderVen Creative Conference Room and the Karen and Ned VanderVen Creative Student Lounge. Both will contain an assortment of art and play materials; will display artwork from faculty, staff, students, and local schoolchildren; and are meant to be places of creativity, collaboration, and play for people of all ages.

"The themes of the gift are in promoting play, which is very timely in the pandemic now," says VanderVen. From her work in child development, VanderVen knows about the developmental and therapeutic effects of creative endeavors.

Would you like to learn how to maximize your gift?

Contact Michael Haas, director of development and alumni affairs, at mbh26@pitt.edu.



Giving Spotlight

Years ago, as a graduate student, she learned from famed child psychologist Margaret McFarland and other excellent faculty members who supported her and helped her to develop her interests.

In addition to her naming rights gift, VanderVen has made two other outright gifts to support the professional development of students. The gifts provide extra support in times of special need and encourage professional opportunities, such as travel to present at a conference.

"My gifts are a thank-you and appreciation for all that Pitt gave me, which was everything—in both my graduate student years and my long, happy professional life," says VanderVen.

Planned Giving Trusts: Establishing a Deanship

In 2014, Renée K. Goldman (MEd '65) and Richard Goldman (MEd '66, PhD '70) made a historic gift to establish an endowed dean's chair in their name at Pitt Education. Under the agreement, they made a cash gift and created two planned giving trusts.

The trusts—a charitable remainder unitrust and a charitable lead annuity trust—gave the Goldmans two distinct ways to fund their gift. The remainder unitrust allows the Goldmans to receive a percentage of the trust while they are alive. Upon their deaths, the remainder goes to Pitt. For the lead annuity trust, the opposite is true. Pitt receives a percentage from the trust while they are alive. After their deaths, the balance of the trust goes to their beneficiaries.

"For people like us, who are comfortable but not 'Bill Gates comfortable,' getting money back while we're alive on the one trust and having the core of the other trust going to our family made financial sense," says Richard Goldman.

The Goldmans took an extraordinary step in January by paying off the full amount of the cash portion of their gift early.



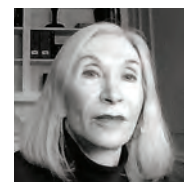
Richard and Renée Goldman

"We understood that Pitt and the School of Education can really use the money now during the pandemic, so instead of taking another 10 years or longer to pay off the gift, we did it now," says Richard Goldman. "Our goal is to be role models to encourage other donors at Pitt to do the same."

Estate Planning: Supporting Tomorrow's Teachers

Every year, Leigh Tanner (MEd '95, EdD '02) makes a donation as part of the annual Pitt Day of Giving. However, she wanted to make a larger impact that could last into perpetuity. Thus, Tanner, a visiting assistant professor at Pitt Education, made an estate gift to benefit the School of Education and Pitt's School of Nursing (to honor her late mother, Patricia Riley Tanner). Once bequeathed, her School of Education gift will support tuition and other educational expenses for graduate students of high merit.

"I realize the value of a good education and the importance of having effective teachers. I am very proud of the program we have here and want to make sure that it moves forward and that students can have the money to pursue a rewarding teaching career," says Tanner, who has taught in



Leigh Tanner

"I am very proud of the program we have at Pitt and want to make sure that it moves forward and that students can have the money to pursue a rewarding teaching career."
—Leigh Tanner

the school's social studies secondary education program for more than 20 years, drawing on her experience as a former teacher.

Beyond ensuring a bright educational future for teachers and the students they serve, Tanner also had a more practical reason for favoring the estate gift option: "The other thing I like is that as an estate gift, the University doesn't have to pay taxes on it. When I saw it was nontaxable, I said, 'There you go. It's perfect!'" ■

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.**



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