

PENN GSE

Spring 2016

ALUMNI CREATING
OPPORTUNITY
THROUGH EDUCATION
page 6



Promoting
Racial Literacy
page 12

Building School
Leadership
Teams
page 16

Feeding A Journey

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THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION ALUMNI MAGAZINE | UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

THE OPPORTUNITY ISSUE

The Life of an Education Entrepreneur / page 20
College Readiness Tips / page 31

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UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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THE OPPORTUNITY ISSUE

[CONTENTS]

2 Letter from the Dean

[NEWS]

3 Faculty Bookshelf

4 Faculty Awards & Honors and News Briefs

[FEATURES]

6 **Creating Opportunity Through Education**
Penn GSE Alumni Lead the Way

12 **Facing the Moment**
Professor Howard Stevenson on
Racial Literacy

15 **Penn GSE in Philadelphia**
Interactive Map Highlights
Work Throughout the City

16 **An Opportunity for Change**
Bringing Distributed Leadership
to a Struggling District

19 **A Bright Future**
New Board of Overseers Chair David Roberts,
W'84, on Penn GSE's Second Century

20 **Imagining What's Possible**
The Life of an Education
Entrepreneurship Student

[NOTEWORTHY]

23 Know Your EAA Board

25 Alumni Notes

[RECESS]

31 5 Tips for College Readiness

Letter from the Dean



Dear Alumni and Friends,

Cultivating educational opportunity for all students is a theme that is central to the mission of Penn GSE, and one that has long been near to my heart. Throughout this issue you will see stories of the ways in which our alumni, faculty, and students are making opportunity available to others through education. The experiences of my parents showed me early in life how important such opportunities can be to future trajectories.

Like so many in the United States, I am the child of an immigrant. My father came to this country from Harbin, China, at the age of nineteen to further his education. The U.S. government supported his education through undergraduate and medical school at the University of California, in return for his service in the military. He went on to become a professor of pediatrics at the University of California, San Francisco, and the chief of pediatrics at San Francisco General Hospital, training hundreds of residents and founding the San Francisco Child Abuse Council. The government's investment in my father's educational opportunity paid off many times over.

My mother grew up in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Because of the influence of teachers on her own life, she hoped to become a teacher herself. However, her family needed the money she had saved for college,

so she became a nurse instead. She worked at Bellevue Hospital in New York City and earned her RN, but never lost her desire for a college education. After ensuring that all four of her children completed college and volunteering in college counseling at our high school, she applied to San Francisco State University. When she received her degree in health education at the age of fifty-six, you never saw a prouder graduate—or prouder children of a graduate. She used her degree to help others, after finding a job providing health education and advice to seniors.

Both of my parents deeply valued the opportunities that education makes possible, and were committed to helping others attain them. At Penn GSE, our work is all about unlocking opportunity through education. We accomplish this through groundbreaking partnerships that benefit children and families, programs and centers dedicated to forging new pathways to learning for students of all ages, highly relevant research that translates into action to improve education, and the overall global impact of the School and our more than 15,000 alumni.

As you will see in this issue, two special initiatives are bringing key areas of our impact and potential to the forefront: our interactive “Penn GSE in Philadelphia” map and an exciting cross-Penn collaboration known as the Penn Futures Project.

The map, highlighted on page 15 and located at <https://phillymap.gse.upenn.edu>, shows the remarkable scope and depth of our work in all catchment areas of The School District of Philadelphia—work that is creating a national model for partnerships between research universities and urban school districts.

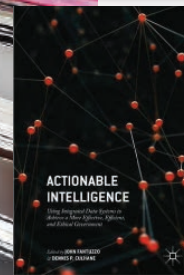
While the map details a longstanding and constantly growing commitment of the School, the Penn Futures Project is a new, joint effort between Penn GSE, Penn Nursing, and Penn Social Policy and Practice. The deans of our two partner schools and I quickly discovered a shared passion for supporting children and families when we joined Penn in 2014-2015. As you will read on page 5, this bond has resulted in three pilot projects to support youth and communities by leveraging cross-professional collaboration.

At Penn GSE, we like to say we are a small school with a big impact. I hope you will be moved and inspired by the examples of our impact throughout this issue. I also hope you will join us on May 13, 2016, when we recognize outstanding alumni accomplishments at our Education Alumni Awards & Celebration of Teachers during Penn's Alumni Weekend. Please visit www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni/events for details on this annual tradition honoring the tremendous contributions of the Penn GSE community.

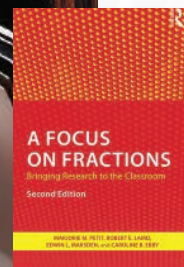
Pam Grossman
Dean, Penn Graduate School of Education
George and Diane Weiss Professor of Education

Bookshelf Spotlight

Actionable Intelligence: Using Integrated Data Systems to Achieve a More Effective, Efficient, and Ethical Government
Edited by **John Fantuzzo** and Dennis P. Culhane
Published November 2015 by Palgrave Macmillan
As founders of Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy (AISP), Drs. Fantuzzo and Culhane have partnered with school systems, cities, municipal governments, and states around the country to improve social services through the use of “big data.” This volume sets forth their national model for integrated data systems, building on their groundbreaking efforts to better understand children's educational achievement in Philadelphia. Fantuzzo is the Albert M. Greenfield Professor of Human Relations and director of the Penn Child Research Center at Penn GSE. Culhane is the Dana and Andrew Stone Chair in Social Policy at Penn's School of Social Policy and Practice.



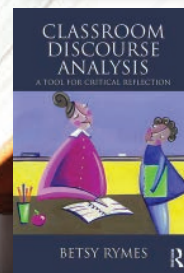
A Focus on Fractions: Bringing Research to the Classroom, Second Edition
Marjorie M. Petit, Robert E. Laird, Edwin L. Marsden, and **Caroline B. Ebby**
Published 2016 by Routledge



Reason and Rigor: How Conceptual Frameworks Guide Research, Second Edition
Sharon M. Ravitch and Matthew Riggan, GR'05
Published January 2016 by Sage Publications



Classroom Discourse Analysis: A Tool for Critical Reflection, Second Edition
Betsy Rymes
Published December 2015 by Routledge



Names in **bold** are members of the Penn GSE faculty.

FACULTY BOOKSHELF



Ebony Elizabeth Thomas Picks

The Year's Top Children's Books



An expert on multiculturalism in children's literature, Penn GSE Assistant Professor **Ebony Elizabeth Thomas** recommends the ten titles below as the Best Picture Books of 2015 for their portrayals of issues like race, class, and gender.

“Children's literature shapes the terrains of our imaginations from our earliest years,” says Thomas, a book reviewer for the *Los Angeles Times*. “If today's children grow up with diverse books and media, they will create a more just and equitable world in the future.”

The Amazing Age of John Roy Lynch
Chris Barton; illus. Don Tate

Drum Dream Girl: How One Girl's Courage Changed Music
Margarita Engle; illus. Rafael Lopez

In a Village by the Sea
Muon Van; illus. April Chu

Jake Makes a World: Jacob Lawrence, a Young Artist in Harlem
Sharifa Rhodes-Pitts; illus. Christopher Myers

Last Stop on Market Street
Matt de la Pena; illus. Christian Robinson

Mama's Nightingale: A Story of Immigration and Separation
Edwidge Danticat; illus. Leslie Staub

The New Small Person
Lauren Child

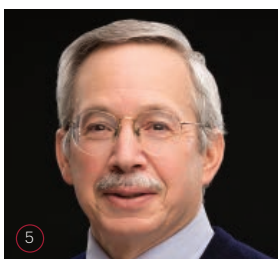
The Night World
Mordicai Gerstein

Sidewalk Flowers
JonArno Lawson; illus. Sydney Smith

Water Is Water
Miranda Paul; illus. Jason Chin

Visit www.gse.upenn.edu/news/archive to find Thomas's top picks for Young Adult Fiction and Comic & Graphic Novels.

FACULTY AWARDS & HONORS



Faculty headshots courtesy of Goldenberg Photography and Darryl W. Moran Photography

Marybeth Gasman (1) and the Penn Center for Minority Serving Institutions are launching Pathways to the Professoriate, an unprecedented \$5.1 million program supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Intended to increase the number of Hispanic professors on campuses across the United States, the program will prepare students from Hispanic Serving Institutions for Ph.D. programs.

Richard M. Ingersoll (2) received the Advancements in Research Award at the first Teacher-Powered Schools National Conference in November 2015. Held in Minneapolis, Minnesota, the conference was sponsored by the Teacher-Powered Schools Initiative, a collaborative project of Education Evolving and the Center for Teaching Quality.

Laura W. Perna (3) will lead a project with the College Promise Campaign, funded by Civic Nation, to develop a comprehensive database of College Promise programs, which aim to increase access to higher education. The project will also make recommendations and develop a three-year research agenda.

News Briefs



■ Penn GSE has risen to 6th in *U.S. News and World Report's* 2017 rankings for schools of education. In improving from 7th, the School placed within the top 10 for the fifth consecutive year. In addition, Penn GSE specialty programs continue to be rated among the best in the nation. The Higher Education Division moved up from 5th to 4th. The Education Policy Division again placed within the top 10, at 8th. The work of these divisions can be felt in the research and recommendations that shape policy on the local, national, and global levels.

■ As recent events have spurred difficult conversations across the country about race and racism on college campuses, Penn GSE's Professor **Marybeth Gasman (1)** and Professor **Shaun R. Harper (4)** have been called upon to offer their expertise on these issues. The two have been quoted widely in national media outlets, with Dr. Gasman appearing in *Inside Higher Ed*, *U.S. News & World Report*, and *The Huffington Post*, and Dr. Harper in *USA Today*, *The Washington Post*, and two Associated Press stories picked up by more than 10,000 media outlets. Gasman and Harper have also led School-wide conversations at Penn GSE about race and racism.

■ In response to the nation's teacher shortage crisis, educational and legislative groups across the country have invited Penn GSE's Professor **Richard M. Ingersoll (2)**, Board of Overseers Chair of Education, to offer his expertise on teacher supply, demand, and quality. In recent months he has spoken before the National Conference of State Legislators Capitol Forum in Washington, DC; the American Educational Research Association Scholars Retreat in Santa Fe, NM; the Tucson Values Teachers Let's Talk Ed Summit in Tucson, AZ, and various other groups.

■ Penn GSE Professor **Daniel A. Wagner (5)** spoke about learning, literacy, and sustainable development at the Pontifical Academy of Sciences within the Vatican in Rome, Italy, in November 2015, addressing how education can help poor and marginalized populations worldwide in the face of global change. His talk was part of a workshop entitled "Children and Sustainable Development: A Challenge for Education." At GSE, Dr. Wagner is the UNESCO Chair in Learning and Literacy and is director of the International Literacy Institute and the International Educational Development Program.

Penn GSE Joins Three-School Initiative to Launch Penn Futures Project



Photo by Goldenberg Photography

From left: Deans John L. Jackson (Penn Social Policy and Practice), Pam Grossman (Penn GSE), and Antonia Villarruel (Penn Nursing) put their common passion for supporting children and families at the heart of the Penn Futures Project.

Penn GSE Dean Pam Grossman has joined forces with the deans of Penn Nursing and Penn Social Policy and Practice (SP2) to launch the Penn Futures Project (PFP), a unique cross-Penn collaboration to improve the health and well-being of youth and families in Philadelphia and beyond.

Penn Nursing Dean Antonia Villarruel, SP2 Dean John L. Jackson Jr., and Dean Grossman announced in February that they are investing \$30,000 to launch cross-school pilot projects aimed at working in partnership with communities to improve the lives of children and families. Vincent Price, provost of the University of Pennsylvania, agreed to match the contribution, making a total of \$60,000 available for PFP work.

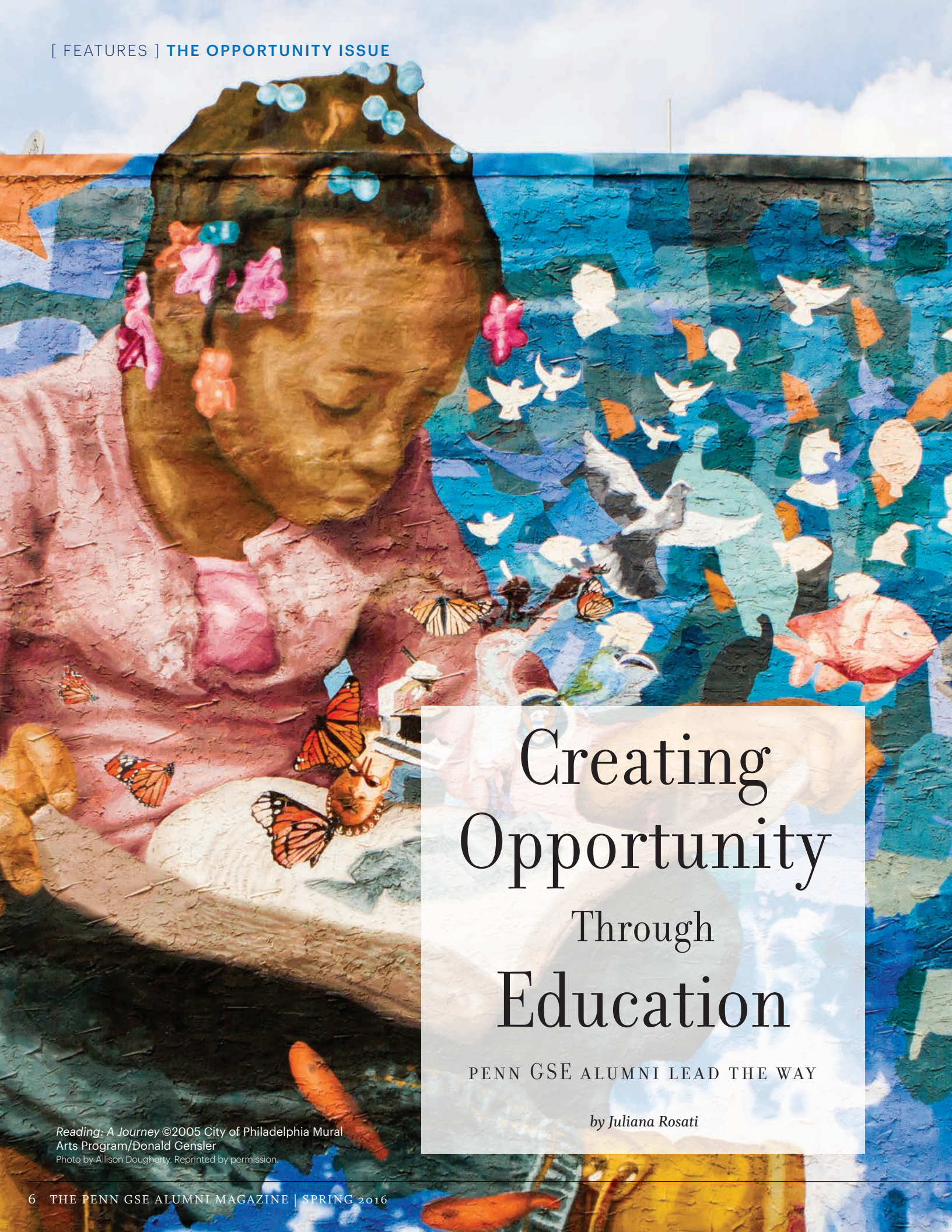
"We are committed to finding ways to work with community members and other professionals to create greater opportunity for all of our children," says Dean Grossman, the George and Diane Weiss Professor of Education. "The challenges facing our youth go well beyond the schoolhouse, and these projects represent a unique opportunity to leverage the collective wisdom of the Penn community and beyond to invest in children and communities. Cross-professional collaborations promise to better prepare GSE, SP2, and Nursing students to work together on behalf of children and families."

The three projects selected for Penn Futures grants, expected to commence this spring, will partner with a local health sciences high school to prepare professionals who work with youth, harness the power of cross-city agency data to create new solutions for children in poverty, and prepare practitioners to work with vulnerable LGBTQ youth.

The idea for the joint effort sprang from the common interests of the three deans, all of whom joined Penn for the 2014–2015 academic year. The three quickly identified a common passion for improving the health and well-being of children and families. In the fall of 2015, they asked faculty members from across their schools to come together for a meeting to share the work they were doing in the community, and over 50 Penn faculty attended. The faculty were invited to find commonalities across schools, initiate cross-school collaborations, and create high-impact funding proposals for the deans.

"The challenges facing our community cannot be solved by any one discipline, school, health system, or community," says SP2 Dean Jackson, a Richard Perry University Professor. "It's for this reason that we have partnered to work across Penn and across Philadelphia's landscape of community organizations, local businesses, government agencies, and other entities to develop innovative, multi-disciplinary solutions to some of the most pressing problems. I am excited to see the social change we can bring about by combining our energy, expertise, and passion."

Says Villarruel, Professor and Margaret Bond Simon Dean of Nursing, "Health is shaped not only by genetics and behavior, but also by access to health care and opportunities for healthy choices, which are largely a function of socioeconomic factors, including neighborhood environments, income, education, and social support. We must address issues comprehensively by looking across these factors and investing in solutions that will make Philadelphia a healthier, safer, and more equitable city for our youth." ■



Creating Opportunity Through Education

PENN GSE ALUMNI LEAD THE WAY

by Juliana Rosati

Reading: A Journey ©2005 City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program/Donald Gensler
Photo by Allison Dougherty. Reprinted by permission

Education has a unique power to open doors throughout life— to intellectual exploration, successful employment, informed citizenship, and more. But far too often, devastating obstacles stand in the way of learning. Across the country and around the world, Penn GSE’s more than 15,000 alumni are leading the way to increase opportunity for students of all ages. Their work builds hope and creates solutions to problems like insufficient funding, unidentified learning needs, poverty, and gaps in educational quality and availability. Here are just a few of their stories.



Helen Gym, C’93, GED’96
City Councilwoman
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Fighting for Change in Public Education

To Helen Gym, C’93, GED’96, if the quality of American public education is at stake, so are the values at the heart of our democracy. “The promise of public education in the United States has represented a unique approach to building a just and inclusive society,” says Gym. “Our public schools are meant to take all children, no matter what their background, and give them the tools and environment they need to grow into their fullest selves.”

In the face of Philadelphia’s chronic school budget woes, Gym has become perhaps the city’s fiercest advocate for traditional public schools and the role of communities in strengthening them.

Described by *Philadelphia Magazine* as “relentless, whip-smart, meticulously prepared, and utterly fearless,” she is determined to take community support to the next level in her new role as a Philadelphia City Council member.

“We’re proud to have overcome a destructive narrative that writes off our schools as failures, and to have built instead a dynamic grassroots movement that fights for a greater vision for public education,” says Gym, who was elected in November 2015. During the past decade, she has organized parents across the city to raise their voices through Parents United for Public Education, an activist group she cofounded.

Parents United has helped parents protest excessive class sizes, scarce school nurses and counselors, and other circumstances resulting from the lack of stable funding for Philadelphia schools. In December 2015, the state took action to fix curriculum problems in four schools in response to a lawsuit from the group regarding insufficient school resources across the city.

“Philadelphia is grappling with the fact that it is the poorest large city in America, and it is in a state that is the worst in the nation in terms of the funding inequity between the wealthiest and poorest districts,” says Gym, mother of three children in district schools. “We live with the consequences of that every day.”

She says her run for office was inspired by the closure of two dozen Philadelphia schools in 2013, a growing tide of community activism, and the value she places on municipal politics.

“I saw more organizing than ever happening in faith communities, around kitchen tables, in school yards, and in civic

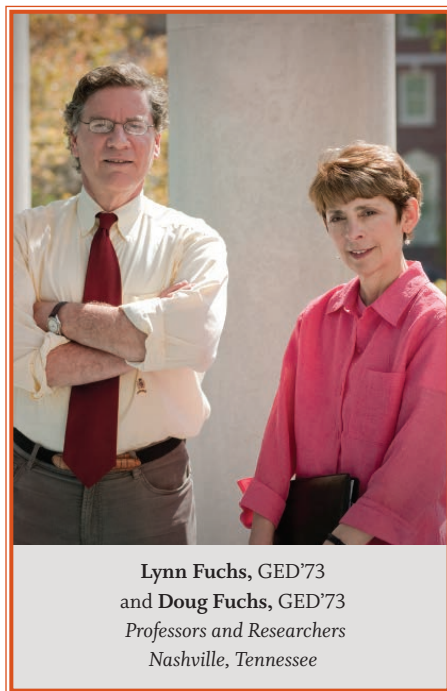
associations. It felt like we had built political power beyond ourselves, and it was time to take this movement to City Hall,” says Gym.

She credits Penn GSE with providing a breadth of knowledge that has served her well in multiple roles. Gym enrolled in GSE’s Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) program while teaching full-time at Philadelphia’s James R. Lowell Elementary School. “My time at Penn GSE

“We’re proud to have overcome a destructive narrative that writes off our schools as failures, and to have built instead a dynamic grassroots movement that fights for a greater vision for public education.”

was an incredible opportunity to understand education from multiple vantage points and explore the relationship between research and practice,” she says. “Throughout my work, it has helped me to think about education in a fuller way.” That work has included activism with Asian Americans United and founding roles with both the *Philadelphia Public School Notebook* and the Folk Arts–Cultural Treasures Charter School in Chinatown.

The first Asian American woman to serve on the City Council, Gym begins her four-year term with school funding at the top of her agenda, and a sense of hard-won hope. “Schools have the opportunity to be the greatest anti-poverty effort our society can undertake,” she says. “It’s time to rebuild faith in our public institutions and the role communities play in driving the public will to make big things happen.”



Lynn Fuchs, GED’73
and Doug Fuchs, GED’73
Professors and Researchers
Nashville, Tennessee

Discovering How to Teach Every Child

Invisible obstacles thwart education when students’ particular learning needs and disabilities are not fully recognized and understood. Drs. Lynn Fuchs, GED’73, and Doug Fuchs, GED’73, imagine a day when customized interventions can ensure that every child learns.

“Millions of kids are learning virtually nothing because the seriousness of their problems is grossly underestimated or unknown,” says Doug. “We’re knee-deep in trying to figure out which learner characteristics and which academic interventions seem to go hand in hand, moving in the direction of tailoring education to the individual student.”

“I think you could rightly describe what we’re doing now as ‘personalizing’ education, in the way that some medical practitioners and researchers talk about personalizing medicine.”

International leaders in the study of learning disabilities and named to a list of fourteen revolutionary educators by *Forbes* magazine in 2009, the husband-and-wife research team have already changed how children with learning problems are taught throughout the country. Their advances in curriculum-based measurement have given teachers tools to track student progress and vary instructional approaches based on data. They played a leading role in developing RTI (Response to Intervention), a program that provides early screening for learning differences and intensive tutoring that can put some struggling students back on track for general classrooms. Their programs in PALS (Peer Assisted Learning Strategies) use peer tutoring to meet a range of learning needs in reading and math.

“These interventions and practices are offered in a low-cost way to schools, and there’s documentation that their implementation produces better learning outcomes for children,” says Lynn, who holds the Dunn Family Chair in Psycho-educational Assessment at Vanderbilt University’s Peabody College in Nashville, Tennessee.

Despite the success of the pair’s methods, a large category of students nationwide remains unresponsive to intervention. The couple’s current line of research aims to help these students.

“I think you could rightly describe what we’re doing now as ‘personalizing’ education, in the way that some medical practitioners and researchers talk about personalizing medicine,” notes Doug, who holds the Nicholas Hobbs Chair in Special Education and Human Development at Peabody.

The work is difficult, and it takes the researchers into sometimes uncharted territory. “For students with severe learning deficits, interventions have to be developed in very careful ways to compensate for a large variety of cognitive and linguistic limitations,” says Lynn.

She and Doug began their formal study of education at Penn GSE after discovering a shared commitment to helping at-risk children. Seeking to gain classroom experience, both earned master’s degrees and teaching certifications at GSE, where today they are consultants to The Center on Standards, Alignment, Instruction, and Learning (C-SAIL), directed by GSE professor and former dean Andy Porter.

“It was an intellectually stimulating year, and we enjoyed it very much,” says Doug of their student days. The two learned from revered GSE professors, studying teaching with Jim Larkin, measurement with Andrew Bagley, and literacy with Morton Botel, ED’46, GED’48, GR’53. After graduating, Lynn taught at Stonehurst Hills Elementary School just outside Philadelphia in Upper Darby, and Doug taught at Wayne Elementary School in Radnor Township, Pennsylvania.

Throughout their research over the past three decades, the two have kept the realities of schools top of mind. They test their interventions in the Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, their primary research site, and strive to provide clear and practical instructions for teachers.

“School people juggle a lot of things, and the more complex the program, the harder it is to implement properly,” says Lynn. Adds Doug, “I think there’s an art and a science to creating programs that are effective and, at the same time, efficient enough to be used.”



Michael Sorrell, GRD’15
College President
Dallas, Texas

Empowering Urban College Students

When Michael Sorrell, GRD’15, became president of Paul Quinn College in Dallas, Texas, enrollment was dwindling, the campus was in disrepair, and the school was deeply in debt. In 2009, it was in danger of losing its accreditation. Today, the college is lauded for groundbreaking programs that are opening up lifelong opportunities for students.

The turnaround has been as bold as the path Sorrell took to his role. When he made Dallas his home as an attorney at a city law firm, he found again and again that the new friends he made were graduates of Paul Quinn, a historically

“We believe that we can teach you anything by incorporating your life and background into the lesson plan.”

Black college founded in 1872. Sorrell sought opportunities to support the college as a way of thanking his friends, and when the job of president opened up he applied at the age of thirty-five, with no experience in higher education.

“Predictably, I was not exactly greeted with an enthusiastic response,” he says with a laugh. “But my thought was, ‘you need a person who understands business, who understands relationships.’” Offered a spot on the board instead, Sorrell accepted the post and watched the college go through four presidents in five years until he was offered the top post at a time when he says no one wanted the position.

President since 2007, Sorrell has launched a series of dramatic initiatives to make Paul Quinn both effective and empowering for students from a variety of racial and socioeconomic backgrounds, but especially those experiencing poverty.

By adopting a “work college” model that assigns students jobs on and off campus, Sorrell has decreased tuition. “Students from Pell Grant backgrounds can graduate with less than ten thousand dollars of debt, and they get two forms of education—a real-world work experience, and a rigorous liberal arts experience,” he says. Classroom learning is tailored to have relevance to students’ lives. “We believe that we can teach you anything by incorporating your life and background into the lesson plan,” says Sorrell. “We can teach you poetry by analyzing Rudyard Kipling’s ‘If’ and discussing it in the context of your childhood in an inner city.”

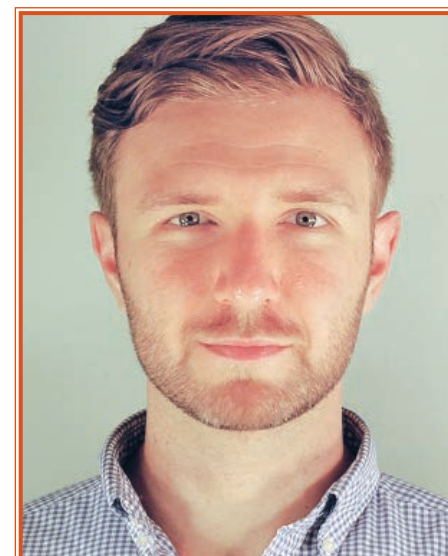
Sorrell worked to change students’ perceptions of their role in the community, turning the college’s abandoned football field into a student-operated organic farm. The farm donates and sells fresh produce locally, offering a needed product in an area considered a “food desert.” Sorrell explains, “The act of giving empowers you and begins to transform your narrative.”

Fully accredited and with an enrollment that has nearly doubled in five years, Paul Quinn has received the 2011 Historically Black College or University (HBCU) of the Year Award, the 2012 HBCU Student Government Association of the Year Award, and the 2013 HBCU Business Program of the Year Award from HBCU

Digest. Sorrell was named to the 2013 President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll.

A graduate of Penn GSE’s Executive Doctorate in Higher Education Management program, Sorrell undertook his doctorate while leading Paul Quinn. “The total experience was fantastic, and for all the degrees I’ve been fortunate enough to attain, I have a closer bond with my classmates from Penn GSE as a whole than I do from anywhere else,” says Sorrell, who studied work colleges for his dissertation. “They’re a set of people I can call and brainstorm with, who I know have my best interest at heart.”

Sorrell has the highest standards for Paul Quinn and its students. “My expectation is that our students will go out and change the world,” he says. Looking ahead, he makes it clear the school’s ascent is far from finished. “We’re trying to reinvent urban higher education,” he says. “To be frank with you, I haven’t even taken the best stuff off the shelf yet.”



Andrew Biros, C’10, GED’12
Charter School Developer
San Jose, California

Fostering Critical Thinking in the Classroom

When Andrew Biros, C’10, GED’12, undertook his student-teaching assignment in Penn GSE’s Teacher

Education Program, he found that too many of his pupils at University City High School in Philadelphia did not expect to be active participants in the classroom.

“All students, no matter what neighborhood they come from, should be empowered to ask questions, make meaning, and voice their own views, not just asked to record what’s on the board and spit it back on a test,” he says.

At Penn GSE, Biros learned to teach using the inquiry method. A student-centered approach, it encourages students to play a leading role in learning. “The teacher is a facilitator, a coach, a curator of curriculum who helps students ask the right questions and find the right resources to answer them,” says Biros, who attended GSE with a Leonore Annenberg Teaching Fellowship, considered the equivalent of a national Rhodes Scholarship in teaching. An inquiry methods teacher also strives to make the classroom relevant to the lives and backgrounds of the students.

Biros has championed this technique in two Philadelphia public schools and is now making it the focus of his work launching charter schools in California. At University

“We can begin to instill students with the notion that, ‘Yes, I can solve this.’ When people are empowered with that, what we can accomplish as a society will be endless.”

City, Biros mobilized his high school seniors to better understand problematic issues in their community. He asked them to generate questions and analyze data about low educational attainment, poverty, and crime, and arranged for then-Philadelphia mayor Michael Nutter, W’79, to visit his class and respond to students’ questions about how citizens and government can effect change.

The purpose of such projects, Biros says, is to prepare students for lives of active problem-solving. “We can begin to instill students with the notion that, ‘Yes, I can solve this,’” he says. “When people are empowered with that, what we can accomplish as a society will be endless.”

After graduating from Penn GSE, Biros worked for three years as a full-time teacher at the Kensington High School for Creative and Performing Arts, another public school in Philadelphia. There, he led efforts to redesign the school’s curriculum according to the inquiry method, working with colleagues including two former GSE classmates, Monty Ogden, GED’12, and Charlie McGeehan, GED’12. Their approach also emphasized technology, assigning every student a Chromebook laptop. “Students need the right tools so that they can be engaged learners and exhibit new understandings,” Biros says.

Since last summer, Biros has been developing charter schools in California with the support of the Silicon Schools Fund, a venture philanthropy foundation. To help launch a school in the established Alpha Public Schools network, which serves low-income communities, he has taken on responsibilities in management and operations in addition to teaching and curriculum development. In 2018, with support from Silicon, Biros plans to open his own school, the Collaborative Design Academy, slated to serve a diverse student population beginning with grades four and five and expanding through grade eight. Having worked in public and charter schools, Biros says he sees both as viable vehicles of educational progress. “What I care about is fostering unique and innovative school models,” he says. “I just want great schools, whether charter or public.”

Biros credits GSE with shaping his work through both the inquiry method and

close-knit relationships with his classmates. “It was probably the most vibrant year of my academic life,” he says. “To be able to teach in a school and then attend class with my cohort at GSE and reflect on our work was really special. When teachers go into their classrooms and close the door, it is incredibly isolating. But when they are able to reflect and collaborate together, it is incredibly powerful. That’s where real growth comes from.”



Shruti Bhat, GED’15
Early Childhood Development Consultant
Dhaka, Bangladesh

Reaching Children Around the World

Shruti Bhat, GED’15, wants to bring education to children in marginalized places and communities around the globe. In the mountains of Tajikistan and the urban slums of Bangladesh, she has applied the training of Penn GSE’s International Educational Development Program (IEDP) to make learning better for vulnerable young people.

The inspiration for her work roots back to her childhood. Moving from country to country due to her father’s job, Bhat devoted free time to volunteering as a tutor and classroom aide. “I always worked with children in the contexts of different coun-



“I feel that if we educate children and provide a more tolerant outlook for them, they can have the ability to change the future of their communities through their mindsets and actions.”

tries, and I absolutely loved it, but I never knew how to make it a career,” she says.

After earning her bachelor’s degree in accounting and marketing, Bhat worked for accounting firm KPMG. During a vacation, she volunteered with a nongovernmental organization in Costa Rica and learned about career paths supporting change in developing countries. From there, she decided to take such a path, seeking classroom experience by teaching English in Peru while applying to master’s programs.

“Penn GSE was my first choice,” says Bhat. “I was drawn to the IEDP professors, classes, and internship program. I was so excited when I got my acceptance letter.”

An IEDP course taught by Dr. Ameena Ghaffar-Kucher, GSE senior lecturer and IEDP associate director, set Bhat in the direction of her current work. Bhat and a group of her classmates worked remotely with the Aga Khan Foundation in Tajikistan to design a curriculum for children in a minority population known as the Pamiri. Bhat asked to continue this work when it came time for her to fulfill the IEDP’s international internship requirement, and Ghaffar-Kucher helped her

arrange to work onsite with the foundation in a mountainous region of Tajikistan bordering Afghanistan.

“Tajikistan is one of the poorest post-Soviet countries, and the area where the Pamiri live is poorer than the rest of the country,” says Bhat. “I visited schools and talked with teachers to hear firsthand what their challenges were. The IEDP prepared me to listen and get input from community members, because they are the experts on what they need.”

Bhat’s efforts resulted in an early childhood curriculum for teaching the national language of Tajik to Pamiri children, who are raised speaking a local dialect. Today the curriculum is being reviewed for approval by the government of Tajikistan, and Bhat has relocated to Bangladesh, where she works as an early childhood development consultant at the Aga Khan Foundation. Her role builds on her internship experience, focusing on curriculum development for forty early-childhood centers in urban slums throughout the capital city of Dhaka. The children, whose parents work primarily in garment factories, range in age from two to six.

↑ The six alumni highlighted here offer a snapshot of the ways Penn GSE’s more than 15,000 graduates have an impact across the country and around the world.

Map ©iStock.com/Jezperklauzen

“We want to ensure healthy conditions, and proper care and education for them,” says Bhat. When she is not developing learning resources for the centers, Bhat utilizes her accounting and marketing background to build an operational and financial sustainability plan for the centers with her colleagues at the foundation.

In the long term, she has big plans for the power of education in the world. Of Indian origin and deeply troubled by the conflict in Kashmir between India and Pakistan, Bhat often thinks about the role education could play in creating peace across national borders. “This may be very idealistic, but I feel that if we educate children and provide a more tolerant outlook for them, they can have the ability to change the future of their communities through their mindsets and actions,” she says. “Combined with health and other social services, I think education is one of the most powerful tools for change.” ■



Facing the Moment

Professor Howard Stevenson on Managing Racial Conflict Through Racial Literacy

interview by Juliana Rosati



Students and faculty at the Jubilee School in Philadelphia discuss the skills of racial literacy at a workshop led by Penn GSE Professor Howard Stevenson. Photos by Darryl W. Moran Photography

When racial differences are stigmatized or poorly addressed in the classroom, learning and the opportunities it brings are jeopardized. A painful moment may reverberate in the mind of a student or teacher for years to come. Recognizing this, more than one hundred public and independent schools and community health organizations across the country have sought the expertise of Penn GSE's Dr. Howard C. Stevenson, Constance Clayton Professor of Urban Education and Professor of Africana Studies. A clinical and consulting psychologist, Dr. Stevenson trains students and educators in racial literacy—the skills to identify and resolve racially stressful social interactions. We sat down with him to discuss the power of employing racial literacy in classrooms and beyond.



What is racial literacy, and why is it important?

Racial literacy is the ability to read and recast, or reduce and resolve, racially stressful encounters during face-to-face interactions. In general, people get overwhelmed, tongue-tied, and confused during racial conflicts, whether perceived or actual. They lose access to memory, stutter, and feel defensive and threatened. My team and I train people how to better respond, without overreacting or underreacting. We think this is the best place to begin addressing race-related inequities. Efforts to dismantle systemic racism through legal means are important, but they don't help

people of color to cope with the emotions of racial trauma, and they don't address how people in positions of authority should manage their behavior when they feel racially threatened.

How do you define a racial encounter?

It's really in the eye of the person involved. The range of what people consider a racially stressful moment varies tremendously. The conflict could be internal—you could be struggling with thoughts of what might happen in the presence of a person different from yourself. Or you could feel that you have been slighted or insulted because of your difference. Our work focuses on the conflicts that may arise in classrooms between students, or between students and teachers, and disrupt learning.

Much of your work focuses on children of color. How do you hope they will benefit from your workshops?

We want them to benefit in terms of both health and academic performance. We know that men and women who experience racism have a host of health risks, from high blood pressure to breast cancer to lower life expectancy. These risks seem to be related to chronic stress that disrupts sleep habits over time. Any kind of stress can have these effects, but racial stress tends to be something people don't talk about. We also know that students who worry about discrimination may not feel as smart as other students. If you feel that your difference, racial or otherwise, is stigmatized, it's harder to pay attention in class, persist at difficult tasks, and motivate yourself to be fully engaged. Over time, this leads to decreased academic performance.

What are some of the key skills of racial literacy?

Our overarching strategy is stress management and relaxation. We ask people to "calculate, locate, and communicate" when they are in an encounter. "Calculate" means to identify, on a scale of one to ten, how stressed you are in the moment. "Locate" means to pinpoint where in your body you feel the stress, the more specifically the better. "Communicate" means to recognize any self-talk that you may be doing during the experience. You could be thinking something negative like, "I can't handle this," or something positive like, "I know I can work my way through this." During these three steps, we also want people to breathe and exhale consciously. All of this is aimed at reducing stress quickly, ideally within sixty seconds. In threatening moments, people's brains go into lockdown. The more you can relax, the more you can access what you know. When you feel less overwhelmed, your decision-making opportunities become much clearer.

What do you do in your workshops with children of color?

We work with groups of students, primarily fifth through twelfth graders, to help them learn how to cope with racial trauma. The workshops address how students can take care of themselves not only during a face-to-face encounter, but also before and after one occurs. We teach students to reduce anxiety through calculating, locating, communicating, breathing, and exhaling. We also use other strategies—storytelling, journaling, debating, and role-playing. Let's say you felt that your teacher wasn't calling on you in class because of your racial background. Telling the story out loud and journaling about it help you to capture the emotions you went through and take your story seriously. Through debating and role-playing, we work with students to identify their fears and come up with healthy, assertive responses to the situation.

What are some examples of the responses students practice with you?

One student was interested in French, but she felt that because of her race the French teacher wasn't engaging with her. The student withdrew from the class to the point that she was willing to take an F. We taught her enough French to speak in the language when asking for help, thinking that this could impress the teacher and

change the nature of their engagement. The student was surprised by the teacher's positive response. We want teachers to have the racial literacy training that would prevent situations like this, but we also want students of color to have the skills to persist in being learners even if an educator doesn't understand them. In some situations, we work with students to practice what we call "healthy racial comeback lines." The chronic stress associated with discrimination comes partly from not knowing what to say in the moment, and then worrying afterwards about what you should have done. It's not just that you experienced a moment of rejection; it's that you didn't have any response to it, and that lingers in your mind and heart. The comeback could be as simple as saying "Excuse me?" with attitude in response to an insult from a classmate. Or it could be more elaborate. One student came up with a brilliant five-minute soliloquy to say in response to being called the n-word. It was about the history of the word, and spoken quickly so that the other person had no time to interrupt. The purpose is to empower students with a way to stand up for themselves; they don't have to use the comeback if it doesn't feel right. I tell students, "You don't have to say it. You have to practice it well so that you have a choice as to whether to say it or not."



skills of racial mindfulness and self-awareness. Your job as a police officer is to protect and serve. Why would that somehow be suspended when you're in the presence of Black or Latino youth?

Racial conflict in higher education has been receiving increased attention due to the recent student protests at the University of Missouri and Yale University. What have you observed about these conflicts?

I think universities are underprepared to understand how racial trauma is perceived and experienced by students of color. Over time, these traumas build up, and these student protesters are saying that they're not willing to wait until after graduation to deal with the impact of this. If a school has a mission of inclusiveness, but it hasn't tied any particular goals to it—such as greater diversity, support for students of color, or racial conflict management training for

faculty—then it's just a symbolic statement. Students are saying that this isn't good enough anymore.

You are launching a center at Penn GSE called the Racial Empowerment Collaborative. How will it take forward your work on racial literacy?

We will continue our workshops for students and educators, and launch a number of new initiatives. Postdoctoral Fellow Dr. Kelsey Jones, GR'15, and our research team are developing a children's magazine called *Reflections* to share the voices of children who have experienced racial trauma and help students to overcome these issues. Another new project, called EMBRace, is led by Postdoctoral Fellow Dr. Riana Anderson. EMBRace will teach parents of color how to manage the stress of having conversations about race with their children. Eventually we would like to develop a similar program for white parents.

We'll also be looking for ways to connect our efforts to the work of Dr. Constance Clayton, GRD'81. I am honored to hold the Penn GSE faculty chair in her name. She was the first woman and first African American Superintendent of Schools in Philadelphia, and has always been an advocate for children. She also advocates for the ways in which art with racial themes can educate the world, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art recently established the Constance E. Clayton Fellowship in her honor.

Why are the skills of racial literacy often underdeveloped?

Most people are afraid to talk about race. There are very few issues that people are so generally phobic to bring up. I think this is mostly because if it doesn't go well, you're going to feel uncomfortable, incompetent, and targeted. The most powerful coping strategy is to distract or be silent and hope that racial conflicts go away. But if people didn't avoid these issues, they could gain much more practice and confidence in dealing with them. With the skills of racial literacy, educators and students can improve school climates, strengthen relationships among teachers and students, and foster emotional and academic well-being. ■

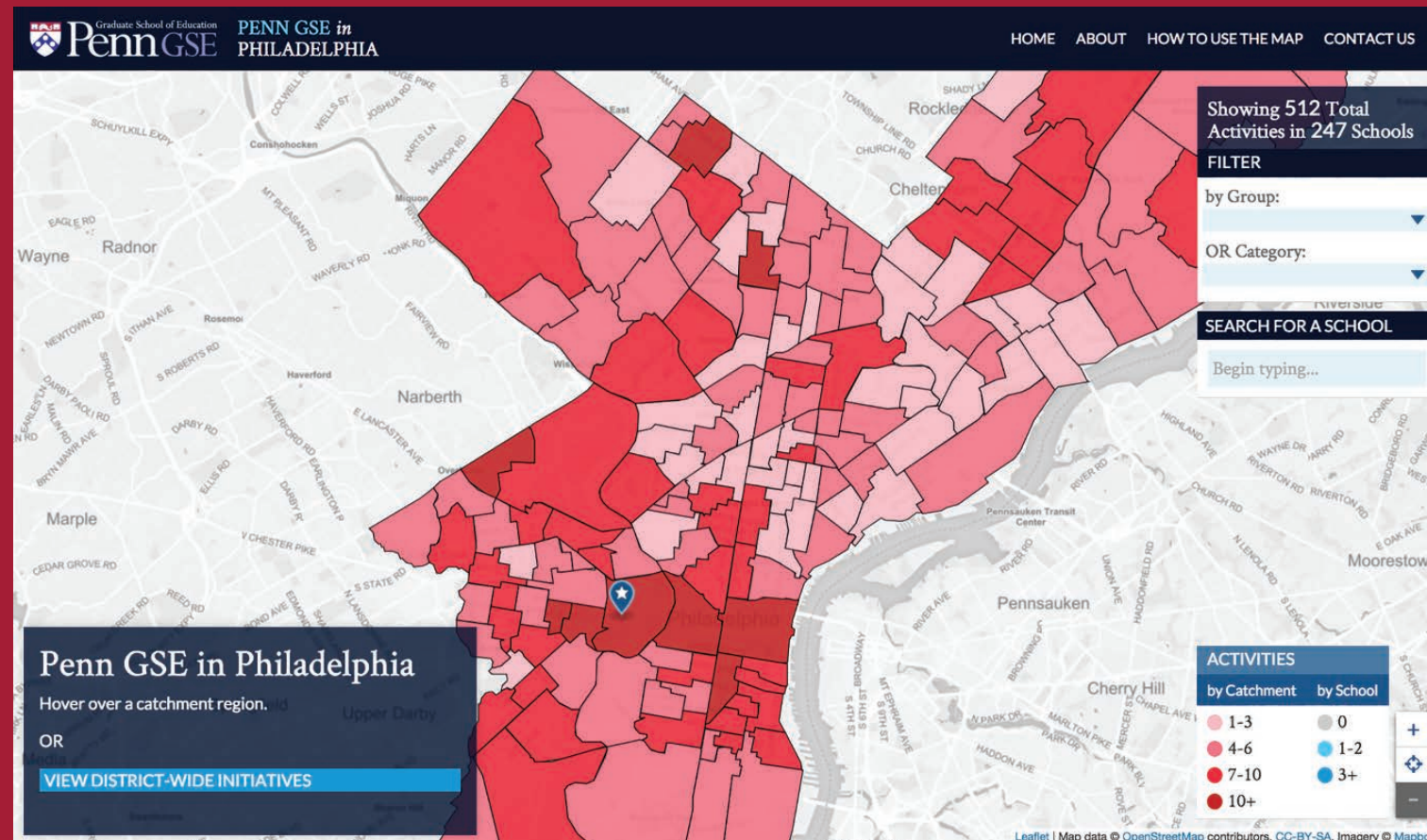
You also train teachers and administrators in racial literacy. What do you hope they will gain?

We use the same relaxation and self-awareness techniques to help educators recognize the emotional consequences around facing difference in the world. We want them to develop the tools to address rather than ignore racial encounters that may occur between students and with teachers in their classrooms. We also want them to practice racial mindfulness so that they are aware of how they behave in the presence of people different from themselves.

Teachers, regardless of racial background, should get training in racial conflict management throughout the year. There's no research to suggest that even if I believe in social justice, or if I believe that racism is wrong, that I will act without a sense of threat in a racial encounter. As with any other skill set, you have to practice to become competent at racial conflict management. The triumphs should be applauded and praised, and the mistakes or incompetencies should be held accountable—not shamed, but treated as areas to improve.

Do you think such training could benefit people in other fields?

Yes. We think that a lot of the conflicts we're seeing in the news between police and young people of color are situations where the police are incorrectly interpreting the level of threat as endangering their lives. It's ironic that police are trained in how to de-escalate situations, but in so many of these cases, you see that even with that training, the first-level or mid-level attempts to de-escalate have not been used. There should be police training specifically about the



Penn GSE in Philadelphia
New Interactive Map Highlights 512 Activities in 247 Schools and Counting

Penn GSE Dean Pam Grossman sees Philadelphia as a microcosm of the challenges facing urban districts across the nation: waves of school reform, growth of charters, lack of school funding, and deep poverty, in the context of a richly diverse and diversifying student body.

"At Penn GSE, we're committed to putting our research to work to develop teachers, leaders, and resources that can help unlock opportunities for the children of Philadelphia," says Dean Grossman. "We partner with schools in small and large ways to work towards social justice—always endeavoring to leverage the expertise of the larger research university in service of a better education for all."

A new map on the GSE website shows how deeply the School's local engagement reaches. Visit <https://phillymap.gse.upenn.edu> to explore the searchable "Penn GSE in Philadelphia" map. It offers an interactive and evolving snapshot of the many ways that GSE students, alumni, faculty, and staff are answering the call to action and service in Philadelphia schools.

Hover and click your cursor around the map to see the efforts underway in school catchment areas throughout The School District of Philadelphia. Areas are color-coded based on the number of ongoing projects.

Use the map's filters to learn how thirteen GSE programs and divisions are contributing in seven categories: consultation, leadership, professional development, research, service learning, student programs, and training. Click the link in the lower left for a list of District-wide initiatives. ■

"We partner with schools in small and large ways to work towards social justice—always endeavoring to leverage the expertise of the larger research university in service of a better education for all."

— Dean Pam Grossman



AN OPPORTUNITY FOR CHANGE

Penn GSE's John DeFlaminis Brings Distributed Leadership to a Struggling District

BY JEFF FRANTZ

One afternoon last summer, as she listened to Dr. John DeFlaminis tell eight educators how he was going to transform their schools with distributed leadership teams, Danielle Brown felt a surge of adrenaline. This is what effective schools do, Brown remembers thinking. She had worked at such schools before, but not since moving to the York City School District to become principal of the McKinley K-8 School. Brown saw educators in York working hard, but not together, to serve their students.

That's why DeFlaminis, a prophet of distributed leadership in education and executive director of Penn GSE's Penn Center for Educational Leadership (PCEL), was called in. York, a city of 44,000 two hours west of Philadelphia, was once a manufacturing powerhouse. They made Peppermint Patties, Caterpillar engines, and barbells here. But the factories have largely closed. Despite an arts-driven downtown renaissance, poverty is high and jobs are scarce in many neighborhoods. In 2014, a fiscal crisis in the district and poor academic performance moved a state-appointed officer to ask a judge for the power to close York public schools and convert many of them to charters. That plan fizzled, but the underlying problems remained. "It was a crisis," says York City Superintendent Eric Holmes.

District administrators and leaders of the teachers union wanted to come up with their own plan for improving schools before another one could be forced upon them. Then they learned of DeFlaminis, and distributed leadership.

The concept of distributed leadership sounds simple: Rather than rule from the top, a principal creates a team with four to six teachers. They assess problems together, figuring out the needs of the students and the school, and the best way to address those needs. Eventually, each team member has his or her own team, so that leadership extends throughout the school. Advocates of this approach believe it improves schools in a sustainable way

← Rather than rule from the top, a principal using distributed leadership works with a team of four to six teachers to assess the school's problems.

Illustration ©iStock.com/DrAfter123

and leads to better student performance. By drawing on the leadership capabilities of professionals across the school, the institution maximizes its resources and puts its future into the hands of its entire staff, not just one leader whose departure could spell the end of key initiatives.

In practice, distributed leadership can be hard. People have egos, and power can

them. DeFlaminis says, "If teams can get into place, if you can build them as strong as they are capable of being, they will provide the support teachers need." Brown is already seeing that. At McKinley, the teams have decided to change the substitute teacher rotation to preserve planning periods, and have started to rethink professional development. Once her team

"If teams can get into place, if you can build them as strong as they are capable of being, they will provide the support teachers need."

be difficult to give up. But DeFlaminis has a track record of helping schools—many with too many students and not enough money—find the path. Together, the York City administration and the teachers union decided to bring DeFlaminis to York, in what may be the district's last best hope of avoiding a radical overhaul.

DeFlaminis started with an intensive two-week workshop for prospective teams in the summer of 2015. He has coaching sessions with the teams every month, and has brought in others from Penn GSE and PCEL, such as Professor Jonathan Supovitz; Dr. Harris Sokoloff, executive director of the Center for School Study Councils and the Penn Project for Civic Engagement; Dr. Bonnie Botel-Sheppard, GED'76, GRD'81, executive director of the Penn Literacy Network (PLN); Joseph Ginotti, director of PLN; and Professor Emeritus Charles Dwyer. PCEL's Dr. Jim O'Toole has been assistant director of all distributed leadership projects.

Teachers had to apply to be on the teams. The district was overwhelmed with applications. "There was a thirst to be involved and shake off the previous doubts about what was going to happen to the district," Holmes says.

As the teams develop, members are finding their roles. For years, according to Brown, teachers in York were given directives but little support for achieving

members have their own teams, she expects more breakthroughs. "For the first time," Brown says, "teachers are being treated as lifelong learners."

An Approach Born of Necessity

DeFlaminis discovered the value of distributed leadership firsthand. He was sitting in his office in 1987, deep in another 100-hour week as the new superintendent of the Radnor Township School District, when he realized taking the job might have been a horrible mistake. He arrived at the suburban Philadelphia district after a decade leading two intermediate units. He had a Ph.D. from the University of Oregon in educational administration. He understood educational theory. He understood how it worked in practice. And he understood he was drowning.

"I really had no idea what I was going to be up against," DeFlaminis recalls. "I didn't know the politics of it. DeFlaminis recognized that working singlehandedly wouldn't help him solve the district's complex problems; he would have to start thinking about leadership as a shared endeavor. He had four openings on his staff. With each hire, he found someone with skills or experience he lacked. Then he started empowering his staffers. Decision-

making in Radnor became a communal process. “If I was going to survive, I was going to have to give away leadership,” he says. “We were going to have to work as a team.” After a few years, principals in the district started to copy his model. The philosophy that guided his seventeen years as superintendent emerged.

After arriving at Penn GSE in 2004, he heard Northwestern University researcher James Spillane give a lecture on his study of Chicago schools that were empowering teachers as leaders. Spillane’s results on what he called distributed leadership backed up DeFlaminis’s experiences. DeFlaminis soon began designing a program for teaching distributed leadership in Philadelphia schools that the Annenberg Foundation would support with a \$5-million grant.

Around the same time, Linda Carroll became principal at Northeast, the largest high school in Philadelphia. Looking around the school, she was overwhelmed, exactly as DeFlaminis once felt. Structures weren’t in place to support students, and the communication between teachers and administration was rarely productive. Carroll heard DeFlaminis would be helping sixteen city schools create distributed leadership teams. She wanted in. “People

had to change the way they thought about the institution and become more accountable,” Carroll says.

DeFlaminis coached Carroll’s team in hard skills, like data management, and soft ones, like trust. It took time, but Carroll and her team were able to transform how decisions were made at Northeast. Teachers determined the types of professional development they needed, and the best way to receive it. Student performance improved, and so did staff morale.

Spillane believes DeFlaminis’s distributed leadership program should be considered the gold standard. “He knows the skills people need, and he’s found ways to give people those skills,” Spillane says.

The results stick. Years after DeFlaminis’s hands-on coaching ended, distributed leadership remains Northeast’s bedrock. The system helped keep the school afloat, Carroll says, when the worst of the budget cuts hit and Northeast was receiving an allocation of just \$5 per student. In the decade since the school adopted distributed leadership, only one teacher has requested a transfer out of Northeast, a turnover rate almost unheard of in Philadelphia. “We still have so many people here because of the culture we created,” Carroll says.



The Northeast story gives leaders in York hope. Like in urban districts elsewhere, many of the best new teachers leave York for the surrounding suburbs after gaining a few years of experience. “If people felt like they were part of the process, maybe we wouldn’t have lost so many promising teachers,” Holmes says.

Planting the Seeds of Change

York is not alone. Across Pennsylvania, school districts in other small cities are feeling similar financial pressures and staring at similarly low test scores and graduation rates. Parents and educators have heard talk about interventions and turnaround models. Cities around the country have tried the kinds of solutions originally proposed for York. Some succeeded. Some continued to struggle.

DeFlaminis’s work in York is still in its early stages. It takes a year to eighteen months for teams to really get a feel for what they are doing, and even longer for the culture to change within schools. A concurrent curriculum overhaul, which DeFlaminis is also involved in, will be crucial. Real results are still to come. But people are watching what’s happening in York. If distributed leadership can change the course of the district, it might be a model for other troubled districts.

It should be, according to Carroll. “It literally saved our school,” she says. “It’s still saving us.” ■

David Roberts, W’84, sees Penn GSE leading the charge to meet challenges and opportunities in education today. A senior managing director at investment advising firm Angelo, Gordon and Co. in New York City, Roberts is the new chair of Penn GSE’s Board of Overseers and the father of three Penn graduates, including high school English teacher Lauren Roberts, C’10. He begins his term as chair with three years’ experience on the GSE board and fresh perspectives gained from board roles at numerous corporate and nonprofit organizations, including Riverdale Country School in New York City, Success Academy Charter Schools, and startup company BridgeEdu. Currently Roberts is writing a novel about an investment banker working on Wall Street between 2006 and 2010. We sat down with him to discuss his perspective on education, and what lies ahead for Penn GSE.

A Bright *FUTURE* interview by Karen Doss Bowman

New Board of Overseers Chair David Roberts, W’84, on Penn GSE’s Second Century



Photo by Ginger Fox Photography

What does Penn GSE mean to you?

Penn GSE is producing the educators and leaders who will address the greatest challenges facing education today. For me, it’s important to contribute to my community and the larger world, and I feel that through my involvement with Penn GSE I am fulfilling that responsibility.

The theme of this issue of *The Penn GSE Alumni Magazine* is “Opportunity.” How can Penn GSE help to increase opportunities for young people in the face of growing inequality in our country?

Penn GSE is giving aspiring teachers the tools to meet the needs of underserved populations. It is also developing new approaches through policy to help improve high school graduation rates and college access. Looking ahead, innovation and entrepreneurship will be critical for the future of education in our country, and these have always been a strong hallmark of GSE.

What challenge in education today resonates most with you?

A huge issue from my perspective is the fact that teachers and other professionals in education are not given the proper amount of respect and acknowledgment. For example, I would argue that being a teacher is just as important as being a doctor or lawyer, or any other profession our society holds in high regard. The value of teachers’ work should be recognized accordingly.

What are you looking forward to about your role as Board of Overseers Chair?

I’m excited to work with Dean Pam Grossman and the entire Board to further GSE’s mission. Dean Grossman is very dynamic and energetic, and I think each of us on the Board sees a very bright future for GSE’s role in education and the world as the School embarks on its second century.

What has education meant in your own life?

I have a very curious mind. If I weren’t constantly learning new things, I’d feel as if I were withering. Graduating from The Wharton School was the end of my formal education, but I’m still learning all the time.

Why do you believe it is important to support Penn GSE?

As one of the nation’s leading education schools, and one that is associated with a leading university, Penn GSE can be a great force for good. It is important to support GSE because it is at the forefront of meeting the challenges and opportunities in education today, particularly in our country. ■



↑ John DeFlaminis is the lead author of *Distributed Leadership in Schools: A Practical Guide for Learning and Improvement*, which will be released this spring by Routledge. Photos by John Whitehead Images



imagining what's possible

THE LIFE OF AN EDUCATION ENTREPRENEURSHIP STUDENT

by Manasee Wagh

Photos by Daniel Burkle Photography

It is Sunday afternoon, and the classroom thrums with the voices of dozens of students in Penn GSE's M.S.Ed. in Education Entrepreneurship program. In groups of four and five, they discuss the challenges of bringing education, business, and entrepreneurship together. Chris Parris is out of his seat and at the whiteboard, explaining his business idea to four of his classmates. The group wades through a list of potential obstacles that could make or break Parris's dream of putting more Boston public school students on a path to college.

"I'm trying to understand the problem of public urban education in Boston," says Parris. "The diversity of learners, coupled with a limitation of resources, often hinders student achievement." As director of the College Success Academy (CSA) for The Steppingstone Foundation, he wants to build on his organization's record of success to provide even more students with tuition-free academic, social, and emotional support outside of school.

Parris is part of a significant contingent of Education Entrepreneurship students who consider themselves "intrapreneurs," professionals who seek to create innovation and change from within established education organizations. Others in the program—the first of its kind in the nation—plan to work as entrepreneurs by launching new ventures.

"The program was crafted for working professionals committed to creating truly unique solutions in education," says Dr. Jenny Zapf, program director and senior academic fellow. "Our students will graduate having learned to apply entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, and tools to some of education's most pressing challenges."

Students come from many areas of education, from K-12 classrooms to higher education and policy. Others have backgrounds in technology, business, and entrepreneurship. At least a quarter of the students lead education nonprofits, as Parris does. The program's executive format, interdisciplinary structure, and collaborative environment are designed to bring diverse perspectives together to catalyze positive change in education.

"We developed this master's degree to provide new ways of building the innovation education ecosystem and supporting the creation and growth of entrepreneurs," says Dr. Barbara "Bobbi" Kurshan, executive director of academic innovation and senior fellow at GSE.

About halfway through the thirteen-month program, Parris reports that it is equipping him to make his organization the best it can be.

Preparing to Create Change

Over the course of the program, the students—who come from all over the country and many areas of the world—take rigorous courses and develop a culminating capstone project in preparation for launching their ventures. Parris's project will explore the best ways his organization can improve educational outcomes in a public school system where three out of four students are from low-income households, and the highest rate of public high school graduation was 66 percent in 2014.

← Student Chris Parris attends a weekend session of Penn GSE's Education Entrepreneurship program. As director of the College Success Academy for The Steppingstone Foundation, he works to improve educational outcomes in Boston public schools.



↑ Students listen to Penn GSE Associate Professor Janine Remillard during an Education Entrepreneurship class in Teaching, Learning, and Curriculum.

Also a trained classroom teacher and classical trumpet player, Parris discovered his passion for helping underserved students during four years at the Boston Arts Academy, where he was band and orchestra director as well as a college coach and SAT prep teacher. Today he is deeply committed to his organization's mission of providing rigorous programs with meaningful results for students.

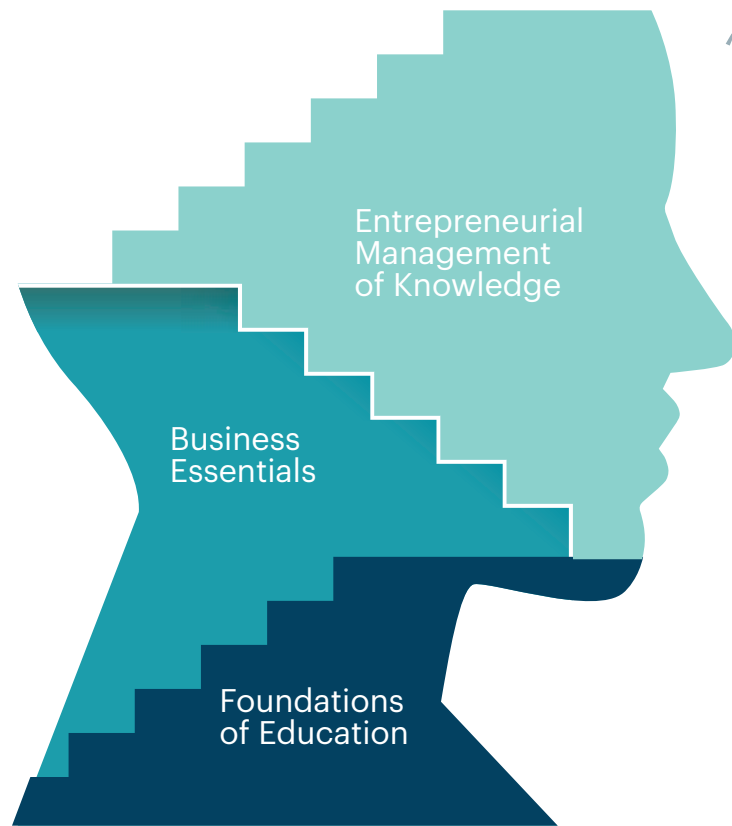
"You have to think about how students and teachers will experience your curriculum, from development to actual delivery in the classroom," he says. "You're called to make informed decisions based on whom you're serving, and why and how you want to serve them."

While many of his classmates' ideas focus on improving academic skills, some aim to support other factors that affect a child's ability to receive a good education, such as access to healthy food, social-emotional supports, or transportation. Others propose new approaches to learning and professional development.

Student Amirah Cummings wants to open a school that would nurture young children's natural ability to learn multiple languages, starting from pre-K and extending to 12th grade. Cummings, who speaks Japanese, Italian, and Spanish thanks to a childhood spent in different countries, comes to the program from a professional background in marketing and nonprofit consulting.

"This program has elevated my level of thinking," she says. "They asked us, 'What is your philosophy of education?' I had to dive deep into myself to figure it out."

Learning to create and accelerate change requires a rigorous academic schedule. The program's executive format brings students together for three weekend-long classes per semester, as well as an intensive ten-day session in the summer. On a typical course weekend, Parris flies into Philadelphia from Boston and arrives in time for the 3:00 p.m. start of Friday classes. He and his classmates work until about 8:00 p.m. and get up early on Saturday to dive into a ten-hour day. Classes end on Sunday at 3:00 p.m. As Parris waits for his evening flight home, he often puts together his agenda for the next day's staff meeting at CSA.



“That’s the beauty of the program. Strong theoretical underpinnings are grounded in practical application.”

Business Essentials courses build students’ business acumen, teaching them how to recruit management teams and create an effective strategy to market their ventures. Students learn that the crux of any venture is sustainability. “You have to have a balance between providing quality programming and surviving financially,” says Parris.

In Foundations of Education courses, students learn about the legacy of education in the United States, including how culture and society influence teaching and learning. “We examined philosophies of education in a way that strengthened my understanding of my organization and helped me to identify the instructional approaches that would be most effective in our classrooms,” Parris reports.

Entrepreneurial Management of Knowledge courses address how a new business idea is developed, from initial inspiration through the research and technology needed to support it. The courses help students cultivate their ideas for changing education. “We sharpened our ability to identify unmet needs in the education landscape and assess the viability of potential solutions,” Parris says.

To keep students in touch with the realities of the marketplace, guest lectures by working entrepreneurs complement the courses taught by GSE and Penn professors. “That’s the beauty of the program,” says Parris. “Strong theoretical underpinnings are grounded in practical application.”

The classroom serves as a laboratory and community where students can discuss challenges they face and experiment with potential solutions. Martha Rush, another student in the program, particularly appreciates how the students help each other reach their individual goals.

“My classmates are fantastic,” says Rush, a Minnesota high school teacher who is preparing to launch a consulting company to help improve student engagement and motivation. “While I’m presenting, their minds are going a hundred miles an hour, and when I’m done they have so many great suggestions. I never thought I’d have so many people give me ideas and input.”

According to Penn GSE Dean Pam Grossman, that creative process is at the heart of the program’s mission. “These are people who care deeply about education and how to improve it, who want to figure out what’s not working and make it better,” she says. “They’re creating what’s possible—not accepting things as they are.” ■

To learn more about the Education Entrepreneurship program, visit www.gse.upenn.edu/tll/ee or contact ayoungl@gse.upenn.edu.

↑ Through the three prongs of its curriculum, the Education Entrepreneurship program bridges the disciplines of education, business, and entrepreneurship.

School isn’t out when the weekend ends. In between sessions, students read course material, work remotely on group projects, and complete online courses, all while fulfilling the responsibilities of their jobs.

“The ongoing group work prepares us to work in this field beyond Penn, when we may be collaborating with colleagues in other parts of the country or world,” says Parris. “It also helps us to remain connected and take advantage of the network of our colleagues.”

Theory, Practice, and Three Fields

Later in the day, during an Economics of Education class, Parris presents his new financial model for expanding CSA’s reach. He talks about the points he’s working through, including the ideal student-to-teacher ratio, how costs per student are linked to implementation, and what kind of financial cushion CSA needs to sustain its mission for the long term. The class is part of the program’s Business Essentials component, one of three prongs in the curriculum, along with Foundations of Education and Entrepreneurial Management of Knowledge.

“The program sits at the intersection of education, business, and entrepreneurship,” says Dr. Martin Ihrig, who is academic director of the program, practice associate professor at GSE, and adjunct associate professor at The Wharton School. “It really bridges disciplines, because this is how innovation starts.”

Know Your EAA Board: Meet Three Alumnae Excited to Lead the Way

Last fall, a group of enthusiastic and energetic alumni were elected to the Education Alumni Association (EAA) Board of Directors to steer the organization on its newest course. These representatives plan to strengthen your ties to Penn GSE and fellow alumni with a variety of approaches. Here, three EAA Executive Committee members share their thoughts on helping GSE alumni have a positive influence on each other and the world.



Photo by Daniel Burke Photography



Photo by JFG Photography



INVITING YOU

“As a Board, we are but a small fragment of the GSE alumni community. My goal is to represent the Board and our robust alumni body by being transparent in the work that we do—and can do—through connecting alumni to the School, the Board, students, and each other. I invite alumni to reach out to us with updates, accomplishments, feedback, and suggestions to help inform our programming and opportunities.”

—Melinda Sweeney, GED’12, Higher Education, EAA President

INVOLVING YOU

“I joined the EAA Board of Directors to become more involved with GSE. Board membership has been a rewarding way to give back to the School. I hope to build and sustain our momentum by encouraging alumni to get involved with GSE in ways that make sense for them—whether it be networking, supporting current students, or contributing financially.”

—Sophia Li Ferry, W’02, GED’03, Teacher Education, EAA Vice President of Operations

ENGAGING YOU

“I would like to see the EAA engage broadly around the theme of equal educational opportunity. It would be great to brainstorm, both in small and large groups, some of the ways that we could engage fellow alumni in supporting city students, teachers, parents, and public schools. As alumni, I hope we will work together to help provide a quality education for all.”

—Jill Sunday Bartoli, GR’86, Reading & Language Arts, EAA Vice President of External Relations

All Penn GSE graduates are members of the Education Alumni Association (EAA).

Learn more about the EAA and alumni benefits at www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni or contact the Board directly at EAABoard@gse.upenn.edu.

EAA Board Executive Officers

The EAA Board is led by an Executive Committee. Along with Melinda Sweeney, Sophia Li Ferry, and Jill Sunday Bartoli, the following alumni serve on the committee:

Brittany Maschal, GED’06
Education, Culture, & Society
EAA Membership Director

Melissa Trotta, GRD’13
Higher Education Management
EAA Secretary/Treasurer

Sandra Burghgraef-Fehle, GED’91
Psychological Services
EAA Member Relations
Committee Chair

Jordan Tegtmeyer, GED’08
Higher Education
EAA Awards Committee Chair

Gerard Jellig, GRD’09
Educational and Organizational
Leadership
Communication Committee
Co-Chair

John (Trey) F. Smith, GED’09
Penn GSE Teach for America
Communication Committee
Co-Chair

Making Connections: The EAA Board of Directors

Members of the newly elected Penn GSE Education Alumni Association (EAA) Board of Directors gathered on December 9, 2015. Meeting for dinner near Penn at Harvest Seasonal Grill, they networked and shared ideas about connecting alumni to each other and the School. Earlier in the day, members volunteered at a celebration of literacy, science, and learning at the K-4 Philip H. Sheridan Elementary School in the Kensington neighborhood of Philadelphia.



Event photos by Daniel Burke Photography

Photo by Eli Zaturanski Photography

Alumni Notes

1960s

Joseph Wilson, GED'66, served as principal of Baltimore City College High School in Baltimore, MD, and Ithaca High School in Ithaca, NY. Under his leadership, both schools were routinely recognized by *Newsweek* as top schools, and Baltimore City College High School won awards including the National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence and a Gates/NASSP Breaking the Mold High School honor. In retirement, he has become an anti-fracking, pro-renewable energy activist.

1970s

Paul D. Dickler, W'70, GRD'76, recently took thirty social studies teachers to South Korea for the Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI) on a study travel tour grant. He has enjoyed his first ten years of retirement by working part-time at FPRI, the Transatlantic Outreach Program in Germany, Wilkes University, Penn State University, and other organizations. He is also a part-time farmer.

Vivian E. McIver, GED'73, recently published a children's book, *The Story of Ida Robinson* (CreateSpace, 2015), after spending over thirty years working with children in Philadelphia public schools and in church. Her book is a biography of the woman who founded the Mount Sinai Holy Church of America Inc. and became an ordained bishop at a time when it was unusual for women to serve in such roles.

Irving Pressley McPhail, GRD'76, was awarded a doctor of humane letters, *honoris causa*, by New Jersey Institute of Technology, where he delivered the commencement address. He also delivered the commencement address at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville College of Engineering. Both events occurred in May 2015.

Joan Poliner Shapiro, GED'71, GRD'78, is coauthor of *Ethical Leadership and Decision Making in Education: Applying Theoretical Perspectives to Complex Dilemmas, Fourth Edition* (Routledge, 2016), written with Jacqueline Stefkovich, a professor of education at Penn State University. In November 2015, the coauthors were named by Routledge as Authors of the Month.

Eric R. White, GED'67, GRD'75, published an essay in Volume 64, No. 4 (2015) of the *Journal of General Education* entitled "Academic Advising in Higher Education: A Place at the Core." He is executive director emeritus of the division of undergraduate studies and emeritus associate dean for advising at Penn State University.

Joan G. Whitney, CW'72, GED'73, GR'76, is executive director of the University Counseling Center at Villanova University, where she has been a psychologist for thirty-nine years. She also has a small private practice in Villanova, PA, where she works with adults experiencing life transitions and chronic illnesses.

1980s

Ellen Brooks, GRD'81, is the author of the essay "Dayenu," published in *Blue Lyra Review* in March 2014 and selected as a Notable Essay in *The Best American Essays 2015* (Mariner Books, 2015).

Judy Kaplow, GED'83, became a competitive rower after retiring from The School District of Philadelphia. In the past two years, she won four gold medals in Italy, three gold medals in Brussels and in Canada, and medaled in every Philadelphia regatta. She is a board member of the Vesper Boat Club.

Dawn Robin Miller, GED'84, was promoted to director of suburban county programs at Tabor Services Inc. She oversees all existing child welfare

programs for the agency and develops programs in neighboring counties. Partnering with Dr. Eric Weinstein, she formed D-town Holdings LLC, which manages Doylestown Psychological Services, a new private practice group.

Shelley B. Wepner, GED'73, GRD'80, is coauthor of the book *Literacy Leadership in Changing Schools: Ten Keys to Successful Professional Development* (Teachers College Press, 2016). She has also coauthored the journal article "Developing Deans as Effective Leaders for Today's Changing Educational Landscape" (*Journal of Higher Education Management*, 2015).

1990s

Gail G. Glicksman, GED'82, GR'97, became assistant dean for health professions advising at Bryn Mawr College. Previously, she spent fourteen rewarding years as chief health professions advisor and coordinator for graduate and professional school advising at Penn Career Services. She continues to speak, write, and teach about spiritual and cross-cultural dimensions of the experience of aging and illness.

Kenneth Hartman, GRD'94, was awarded the United States Army Outstanding Civilian Service Medal, one of the Army's highest civilian awards, and *South Jersey Magazine* named him to its Men of the Year list. Both 2015 distinctions recognize the success of Our Community Salutes, Hartman's nonprofit organization, which assists high school students planning to enlist in the armed services after graduation.

Amy Johnson, GED'97, launched Amy Johnson Consulting to focus on international and community development projects that strive to empower women and youth. This new venture allows her to combine her Penn GSE Intercultural Communication degree with more than two decades of experience in international development.

Erlinda B. Juliano, GED'93, teaches three courses of Filipino language at Penn Language Center and has been at Penn for more than twenty-five years. She is an active leader in civic and community work in the South Jersey area.

Eboney Kraisoraphong, GED'92, is vice president of strategic quality management at NorthEast Treatment Centers in Philadelphia. She is responsible for facilitation of strategic planning processes and efforts to further the agency's accreditation.

Winifred Lloyds Lender, GED'91, GRD'95, works part-time as a psychologist providing cognitive and behavioral therapy in Santa Barbara, CA. She serves as the Ethics Chair for the Santa Barbara County Psychological Association and is a member of the Crane Country Day School Board of Trustees, the Foundation for Santa Barbara High School Board, and the Storyteller Advisory Board.

Alinah Rashid Malik, GED'99, is a tenured assistant professor of developmental math at Bergen Community College in Paramus, NJ.

Lisa Morenoff, GED'98, teaches fifth grade at Capital City Public Charter School in Washington, DC, where she has taught various grades during the past twelve years. In 2013, she completed a second master's degree, this one in special education. She continues to develop expertise in analyzing students' mathematical misconceptions and misunderstandings, an interest sparked by Penn GSE's Dr. Janine Remillard.

Diane Sandefur, CGS'95, GED'97, has served at Penn for twenty-five years. Since 2002, she has been director of the Veterans Upward Bound (VUB) program within the Division of the Vice Provost for University Life. During this time, she has served on state, regional and national boards of directors, working with the Council for Opportunity in Education for seven years.

Laura (Josar) Zaharkis, GED'92, has worked as a parent educator and elementary and middle school counselor in rural Berks County, PA and



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New York, NY, and currently works with an at-risk population in the Allentown School District in Allentown, PA. She and her husband recently developed SCUTA (School Counselor Use of Time Analysis), a web-based application that maintains confidential notes and a running statistical record of counselors' activities.

2000s

Phaedrel (Faye) Bowman, GED'07, was nominated to her second term on the Common Council of the City of Norwalk, CT. She chairs the Health, Welfare, and Public Safety Committee, which oversees police, fire, health, early education, and other city services related to the well-being of Norwalk citizens.

Melissa G. Brewer, GRD'05, became superintendent of the Antietam School District in Reading, PA. She is a proud member of the first cohort of Penn GSE's Mid-Career Doctoral Program.

Dean M. Donaher, GRD'09, retired from the Bethlehem Area School District in Bethlehem, PA, after thirty years of service in a series of roles including teacher, assistant high school principal, high school principal, and director of student services. He has begun an at-large, four-year term on the Bethlehem Area School District Board of School Directors.

Lakesha Robinson Goff, GED'05, received her Ed.D. in Educational Leadership from the University of Georgia. Her dissertation explores novice teachers' perspectives on coaching conversations. She is currently serving in her first year as assistant principal at Centennial Academy, Atlanta's first conversion charter school.

Melissa Mordell Gomez, GED'97, GR'01, is author of *Jury Trials Outside In: Leveraging Psychology from Discovery to Decision*, to be published in 2016 by LexisNexis and the National Institute of Trial Advocacy.

Linda J. Hollenback, GED'06, recently launched Hollenback Consulting LLC, a consultancy that partners with clients to advance their careers and missions through professional brand and story development services.

Francis M. Hult, GR'07, along with **David Cassels Johnson, GR'07**, have published *Research Methods in Language Policy and Planning* (Wiley, 2015), a guide to research design from multiple methodological perspectives. The guide also includes tips for scholarly engagement with public policy.

Nicolle Hutchinson, GED'09, is founder and CEO of Gillingham Charter School, the first and only brick-and-mortar school of its kind in Schuylkill County, PA. A Title I school, Gillingham is the first public school to offer relational education, a pedagogy based on the humanistic framework of Charlotte Mason.

Alan Johnson Joss, GED'04, founded IMM APPs LLC, a company specializing in applications geared towards non-immigrant benefits, and designed OPT Calculator, an iTunes app. He plays the role of the advisor in *The Observer Effect*, an independent film to be released in the spring of 2016, and celebrated six years of marriage this past summer by traveling through Iceland.

Carrie Kries, GED'03, serves as CEO of Philadelphia Montessori Charter School (PMCS), the only public Montessori school in the city. During her five years in this role, PMCS has risen from its standing as one of Pennsylvania's lowest-performing schools to a ranking of ninth overall among 291 Philadelphia schools.

Joshua Levy, GED'00, was recently named Maine's National Association of Elementary School Principals Assistant Principal of the Year for 2016 by the Maine Principals' Association. The award recognizes his accomplishments

as a strong and innovative educational leader. Levy has served as the assistant principal at Harriet Beecher Stowe Elementary School in Brunswick, ME, for the past four years.

Michael Lowe, GED'09, was appointed principal of Cook-Wissahickon School, which is part of Neighborhood Network 6 in Philadelphia. The pre-K-8 school serves 475 children in the community of Roxborough.

Carol Vallone Mitchell, GED'92, GR'00, is author of *Breaking Though "Bitch": How Women Can Shatter Stereotypes and Lead Fearlessly* (Career Press, 2015). Based on her dissertation research and fifteen years as a talent management consultant, her book explores the unique profile of behaviors that top women leaders have in common. Dr. Mitchell was opening keynote speaker at the Iowa Women Lead Change 2015 conference.



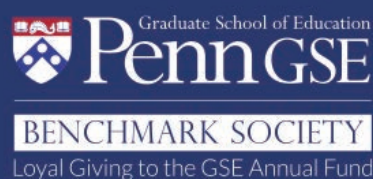
Photo by Brooke Slezak



“My experiences at Penn GSE enriched my life and helped shape my career. Investing in the future of quality education through annual giving is my way of saying thank you.”

—Mark C. Nagy, GRD'71
Member, The Penn GSE
Benchmark Society

To celebrate and recognize the value of consistent giving, The Penn GSE Benchmark Society honors donors who have given to our Annual Fund every year for the past three or more years.



To learn more, visit www.gse.upenn.edu/annualfund or contact:

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alumni@gse.upenn.edu

Erin (O'Connell) Turner, GED'06, is celebrating her fifth anniversary at Mastery Charter Schools in Philadelphia, PA. She currently serves as director of teacher recruitment.

Sally Tamburello Winterton, GRD'00, was awarded the title of professor emeritus by the West Chester University Council of Trustees in December 2015.

Martha Wright, C'80, GR'02, founded the Karamoja Education Outreach (KEO) in 2013. KEO works with local teachers in northeastern Uganda to provide mother-tongue language and literacy support for all grades at two local primary schools. During the past two years, Wright also served as a facilitator developing Karimojong language materials for USAID's student health and reading program.

Heather Zajdel, GED'09, is executing a Fulbright Distinguished Award in Teaching grant in the United Kingdom. Her research focuses on documentation and utilization of replicable aspects of school climate in order to reduce classroom problems associated with antisocial behaviors.

2010s

John Paul Brennan, GED'10, became associate dean of dual credit at Odessa College in Odessa, TX. He will work closely with area secondary schools to support students who are taking college-level courses at Odessa. Previously, he enjoyed four great years teaching biology and serving as a grade-level chair at KIPP Houston High School.

Katrina Burns, G'11, GED'13, is currently conducting occupational health research on academic laboratory safety at the University of Michigan. Her studies at Penn GSE have informed her understanding of how members of the non-science community serve as stakeholders and consumers of scientific research.

Duncan Busser, GED'13, serves on the faculty of The Grayson School, a new private school in Broomall, PA, for gifted children. As the school's K-3 lead

instructor, Duncan focuses on subjects that range from ancient civilizations, to higher-order algebraic thinking, to how to hold a pencil and quietly raise one's hand.

Abby Campbell, GED'12, was promoted to program manager at Harvard Global Health Institute.

Margaret Ferrigno, GED'11, defended her dissertation, "Perspectives from the Roof of the World: Tibetan Nomadic Perceptions of Climate Change," and earned her Ph.D. from Prescott College. She was promoted to the role of Chief of Party for the Bridge Fund to manage programs in Tibet and continues to grow her own nonprofit organization, The Pureland Project. She recently married Gabriel Nyantakyi.

Ahrin Gibbons, GRD'13, worked with community leaders and students to found and direct MedScouts, a program at Thomas Jefferson University that supports over fifty Philadelphia students in the areas of STEM enrichment and pre-medical studies. She led the program for over two years and now oversees it with a co-director.

Miles Rashaad Goodloe, GED'12, aims to increase the wealth of hungry mothers and financially challenged college students through his work. He is program coordinator of Pennoni Honors College at Drexel University, where he is also an adjunct faculty member. He serves on the board of the Dana G. How Social Service Fund, which helps support K-12 mentoring programs for West Philadelphia youth.

Amy Hecht, GED'03, GRD'12, coedited the publication *AVP: Leading from The Unique Role of Associate/Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs* (NASPA, 2016).

Christine Hernandez, GED'10, recently joined Mount Saint Mary's University in Los Angeles as associate director of women's leadership and student involvement.

Lora Kelly, GED'14, is excited to have recently signed a contract with the Upper Darby School District to teach

seventh grade math at Beverly Hills Middle School in Upper Darby, PA.

Jackie Li, GED'15, continues her work in international education with a new position as an international student advisor at Green River College in Auburn, WA. Jackie enjoys working with a large team and student body at the college, which is nationally ranked for international student enrollment.

Jennifer Margherito, GED'12, was appointed study abroad advisor at The College of New Jersey. She is eager to return to a role advising undergraduate students about the benefits of an experience abroad.

Deborah Olusa, GRD'14, launched an educational consulting firm, Olusa Associates LLC. She has begun her first project in Nigeria, where her firm serves as a connector for twenty-first-century e-learning solutions in K-12 public and private schools across the country. Solutions are customized to meet the diverse needs of each state, territory, or school district.

Elizabeth Park, GED'11, is pursuing a Ph.D. in urban education policy at the University of Southern California. She frequently shares her Penn GSE experience and knowledge in her USC class discussions and projects, and in her research.

Mike Quigley, GED'12, was named head of upper school at San Diego Jewish Academy. Mike has been an educator at the school for eleven years and most recently held the position of K-12 dean of faculty.

Rhiannon Schade, GED'12, and her husband, Michael, of Bernardsville, New Jersey, are proud to announce the birth of their first child, Daisy Schade, on April 11, 2015.

Elizabeth Anne Schopfer, C'13, GED'14, GED'15, recently accepted a full-time position as mobile response outreach counselor and case manager at Robins' Nest in Glassboro, NJ, a non-profit organization that works to protect children and strengthen families. Previously, she served as a special education counselor intern at Brookfield Elementary in Haddon Heights, NJ.



Photo by Tamya Velazquez Photography

Lindsay Sims, GED'15, recently completed her first semester in the Ph.D. in Education Sciences program at the University of Kentucky's College of Education. She shares knowledge gained at Penn GSE while teaching Education in American Culture, a course for upper-level undergraduate students.

Michael Sorrell, GRD'15, has been named the 2016 recipient of the Dallas Bar Association's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Justice Award.

A.J. Vervoort, GED'14, is currently working on his doctorate in higher and postsecondary education at Columbia University's Teachers College. He is putting his research to work at Columbia Business School, where he is an assistant director in external relations and development.

Marcus T. Wright, GED'14, recently became the undergraduate program and communications manager in the sociology department at Penn. He continues to teach as an adjunct professor of communications at Holy Family University.

Share Your News

Fill out our Alumni Notes form at www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni/alumni-notes to tell us your latest professional updates.

Honoring the Past by Supporting the Future

"From the day I met my husband, I knew he thought the world of Penn GSE. I established The Anthony Della Rezza Scholarship to carry on his name and support students at the school he loved."

—Dorothy Della Rezza
Member, The William B. Casterter Circle

Dorothy's husband, Anthony Della Rezza, ED'37, GED'38, taught languages in public schools for over thirty-five years. Dorothy chose to honor his memory and support future generations of Penn GSE students through a gift from her estate.



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Preparing Students for College: 5 Tips for Educators

You don't have to be a guidance counselor to talk with students about college. As an educator working with any grade level, you can encourage students to think about their aspirations—and how college can support them. In the process, you'll be connecting young people to lifelong opportunities.

Penn GSE professor Laura Perna is an expert on access to higher education. She offers these suggestions for helping students and their families prepare for college:

1

Be a matchmaker.

Help students match their desired career to an educational path. A student who wants to design and build things will likely need an engineering degree. Many jobs in government and business require law degrees. Although a four-year degree may not be the best choice for everyone, some postsecondary education is increasingly required to enter the workforce. All students should understand different career options and the education they require.

2

Give the forecast.

Talk to students about the demands of college-level work. Too many college freshmen arrive on campus unprepared for the academic workload. Emphasize to students that college courses will be more rigorous than high school classes—and encourage them to develop the skills they'll need. Keep yourself up to date on colleges' expectations by meeting with area college leaders.

3

Raise the bar.

Encourage students to push themselves by taking the most challenging, yet appropriate, courses when they move to the next grade level. Pay particular attention to students who don't have a family history of higher education. Honors and Advanced Placement courses, as well as advanced mathematics (at least through Algebra II), can be key to academic readiness for college. Advocate for these courses to be offered at your school, along with the support students need to succeed in them.

(continued on → next page)

Photo by Ginger Fox Photography

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“The path to college completion begins long before the decision to apply for admission in the senior year of high school.”

—Dr. Laura W. Perna



Dr. Laura W. Perna is executive director of the Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy (AHEAD) and James S. Riepe Professor at Penn GSE.

4

5

Make a recipe for success.

By mixing college-related information into the required curriculum, teachers can increase students' awareness of college, closing the knowledge gap especially when few counselors are available. For example, a math teacher could incorporate college costs into a lesson, addressing visible and hidden expenses, the availability of financial aid, and the pros and cons of student loans. For bonus points, share the information with students' families.

It's never too early to start.

Promote college readiness throughout the educational pipeline. The path to college completion begins long before the decision to apply for admission in the senior year of high school. No matter what grade level a teacher works with, it's important to talk to students and families about staying on track academically for college—and thinking about the financial resources available. ■

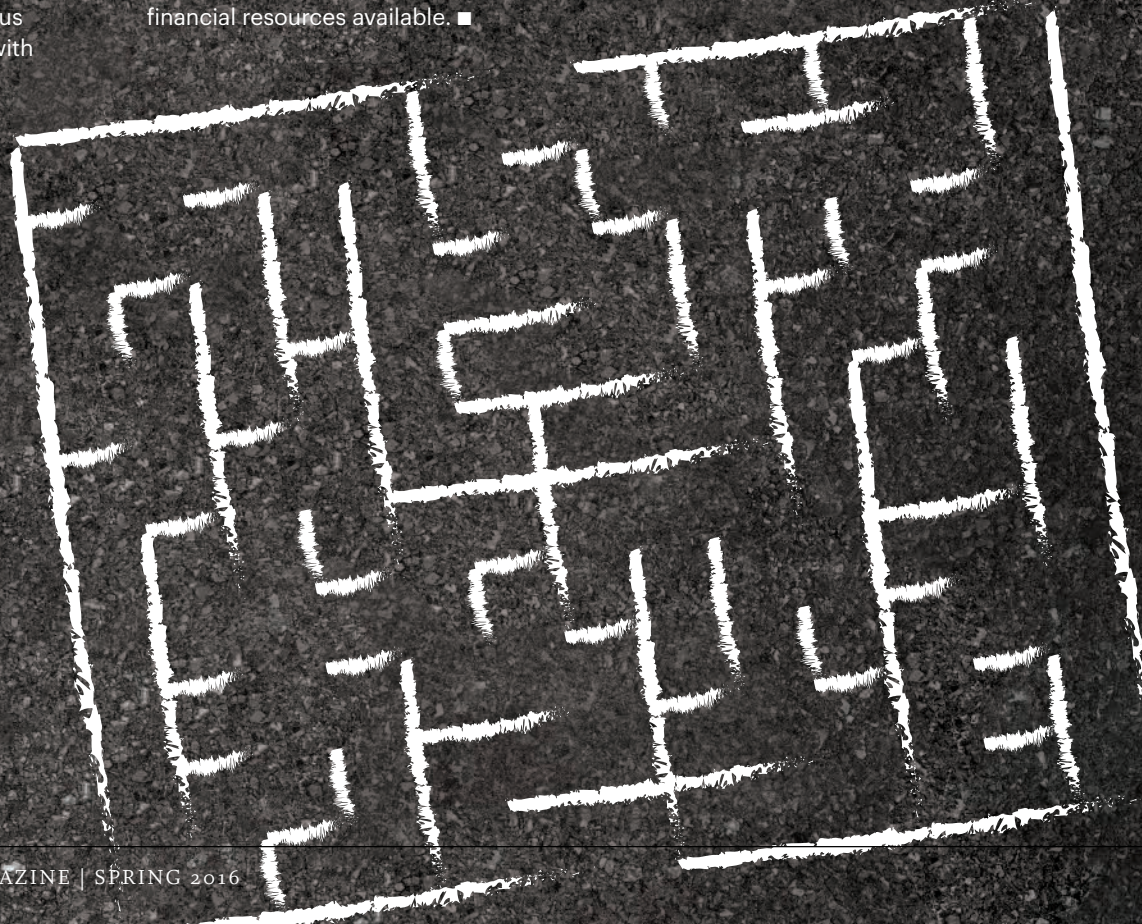


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Penn GSE Education Alumni Association Names 2016 Awardees

The Penn GSE Education Alumni Association (EAA) is proud to announce the recipients of the 2016 Education Alumni Awards. Intended to honor the accomplishments of GSE alumni and other education professionals, the awards recognize outstanding contributions to Penn GSE and the field of education.

Penn GSE Educator of the Year Award
Gregory J. Vincent, GRD'04

Helen C. Bailey Award
Kendall A. King, GED'93, GR'97

William B. Casterter Alumni Award of Merit
Julian A. McNeil, GED'09, WEV'11

Ethel and Allen "Buddy" Carruth Sustained Leadership in Education Award
Sydney Coffin, GED'00
Christine Hernandez, GED'10

Recent Alumni/Early Career Award of Merit
Noah D. Drezner, GED'04, GR'08

Photo by Steven Mimicola

The awardees will be recognized at GSE's Education Alumni Awards & Celebration of Teachers on Friday, May 13, 2016, during Penn's Alumni Weekend. Visit www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni/events for event details.



Photo by Allison Dougherty