

# PENN GSE

Spring 2019

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World of  
Opportunity

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Learning, Sharing,  
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THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION MAGAZINE | UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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**On the cover and below:** Penn GSE's global impact touches preschool classrooms in Greater Accra, Ghana (pictured on the cover, photo by Nana Kofi Acquah) and schools on coffee farms in the mountains of Nicaragua (pictured below, photo courtesy of Seeds for Progress Foundation). See page 6 to learn more.

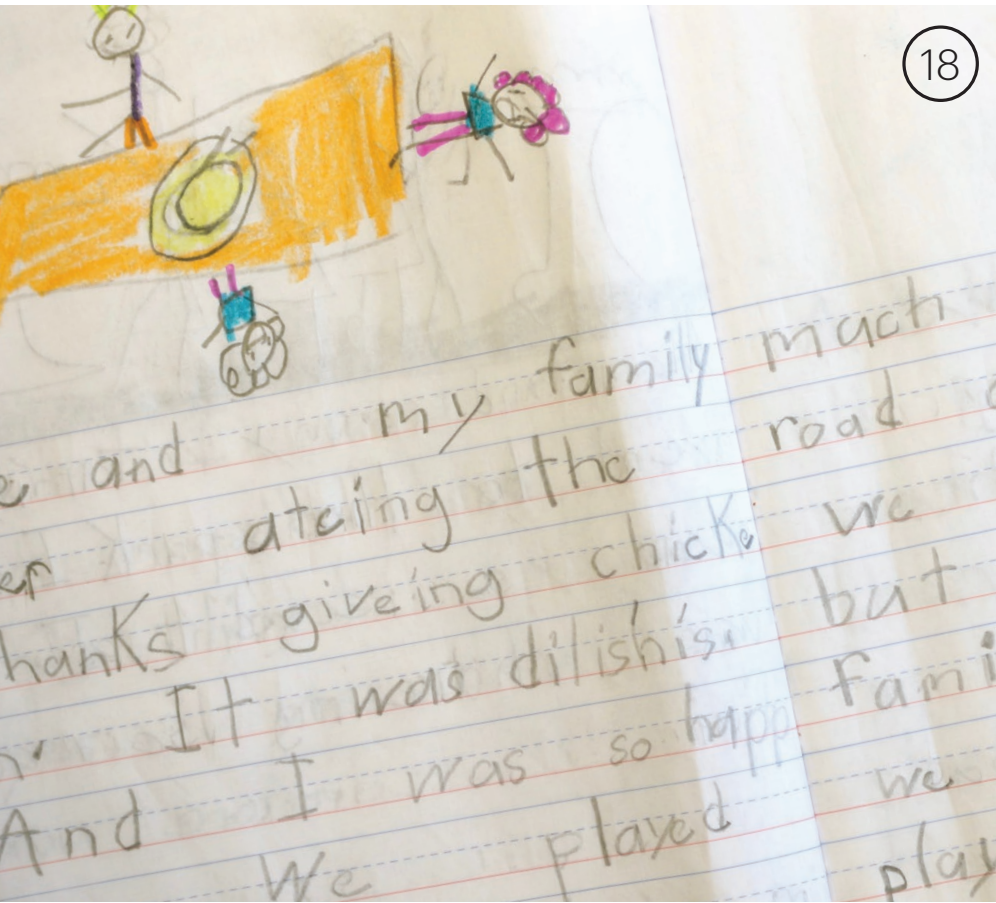


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# Letter from the Dean

Dear Alumni and Friends,

During the past academic year, I have been inspired by the opportunity to see education in a variety of settings around the world while traveling to lecture about

teaching and learning in the twenty-first century. In Norway, I learned how an instrument I developed is being used to study the quality of teaching in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden, and I visited the University of Oslo, where I gave the 2018 Helga Eng Lecture. In Singapore, where I spoke as the 2018 CJ Koh Professor at the National Institute of Education, I witnessed an impressive example of national investment in teachers.

I visited the Education Affairs Office at the Crown Prince Court in Abu Dhabi and the Knowledge and Human Development Authority in Dubai to learn how education in the United Arab Emirates is preparing students for a new knowledge economy. In Dubai I also saw the impressive secondary school being built by Arcadia Education CEO Navin Valrani, W'93, GED'18. A graduate of Penn GSE's Education Entrepreneurship program and a member of our Board of Overseers, Navin is committed to a mission of expanding educational access.

The challenges and opportunities of preparing teachers, leaders, and underserved students are not unique to the United States, and in our interconnected world it is essential that educators view themselves as part of a global community and conversation. As a world-class graduate school of education that is preparing the next generation of transformative educators and leaders, Penn GSE has long embraced a global perspective.

Penn GSE's research-based approaches, mutually beneficial partnerships, and dynamic graduates make the School a global leader in education. In locations near and far, our faculty, students, and alumni take part in an ongoing cycle of collaboration, innovation, and problem solving to make education both effective and available to learners of all ages.

Our work around the globe keeps us at the forefront of innovation in education, as you will see in this issue. The cover story on page 6 and the alumni feature on page 12 show how the research, practices, and leaders we produce are contributing to all levels of education on multiple continents. In our own backyard of Philadelphia, we are similarly engaged through a range of work that includes one of our most longstanding efforts, the Philadelphia Writing Project, highlighted on page 18.

As we begin envisioning the next chapter of our global engagement, there are some exciting developments to report. A new incentive grant, part of an effort to expand our students' global experiences, will encourage faculty to redesign their curricula with a global focus. Recent recruitment efforts have yielded faculty with international perspectives, including Assistant Professor Krystal Strong, whose studies of Africa you will read about on page 8, and one of our newest hires, Amalia Dache-Gerbino, who will bring her expertise in educational access and the African diaspora to Penn GSE, beginning in the fall semester, as an assistant professor of higher education.

At its core, education is about developing students' knowledge and perspectives so that they can better understand and contribute to the world—and eventually take responsibility for their own lifelong learning. I am proud of the work that the Penn GSE community does every day to produce the informed, engaged global citizens of the future.

Pam Grossman

Dean, Penn Graduate School of Education

George and Diane Weiss Professor of Education

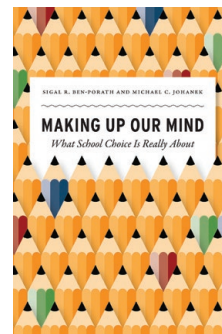
## FACULTY BOOKSHELF



Sigal R.  
Ben-Porath



Michael C.  
Johanek



**Making Up Our Mind:**

**What School Choice Is Really About**

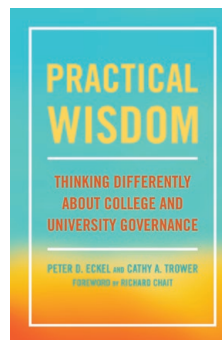
By Sigal R. Ben-Porath and Michael C. Johanek

Published April 2019 by University of Chicago Press

This book seeks to reframe the national conversation about school choice in the United States. Instead of asking whether to have school choice, the authors ask how the nation's mixed market for schooling can be best structured and what the country hopes to accomplish through the mix of choices available to parents. Dr. Ben-Porath is a professor in the Literacy, Culture, and International Education division at Penn GSE. Dr. Johanek is senior fellow and director of Penn GSE's Mid-Career Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership.



Peter D.  
Eckel



**Practical Wisdom:**

**Thinking Differently About College and University Governance**

By Peter D. Eckel and Cathy A. Trower

Published November 2018 by Stylus Publishing

Copublished with *Inside Higher Ed*, this book provides insights for trustees and administrative leaders of higher education institutions. The authors encourage readers to reflect upon their work and think more intentionally in order to improve the governing practices of colleges and universities. Dr. Eckel is senior fellow and director of leadership programs in the Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy (AHEAD) at Penn GSE.

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

## FACULTY AWARDS & HONORS

**Ryan Baker** (1) received the 2018 Educational Research Award from the Council of Scientific Society Presidents. **H. Gerald Campano** (2), with coauthors María Paula Ghiso and Bethany Welch, received the 2018 David H. Russell Award for Distinguished Research in the Teaching of English from the National Council of Teachers of English, given for the book *Partnering with Immigrant Communities: Action Through Literacy* (Teachers College Press, 2016). **Wendy Chan** (3) has been awarded a 40 for 40 Fellowship from the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management. **Nelson Flores** (4) has been appointed to the editorial board of *Multilingua* and received the James E. Alatis Prize for Research on Language Policy and Planning in Educational Contexts, awarded by The International Research Foundation for English Language Education, for his paper "What counts as language education policy? Developing a materialist anti-racist approach to language activism." **Rand Quinn** (5) has been appointed to the editorial board of the journal *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*. **Amy Stornaiuolo** (6), with coauthors Anna Smith and Nathan Phillips, received the 2018 Arthur Applebee Award for Excellence in Research on Literacy from the Literacy Research Association, given for the article "Developing a Transliterations Framework for a Connected World." **Dan Wagner** (7) has been appointed to the editorial advisory boards of *Global Comparative Education*, the *International Journal of Educational Development*, and *Comparative Education Review*. **Sharon Wolf** (8) has been named an editorial board member for the *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology* and received the Early Career Award from the Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness.

Faculty headshots on pages 3 to 5 courtesy of Goldenberg Photography, Candace diCarlo, and Darryl W. Moran Photography





# News Briefs

## Penn GSE Ranked #2, Reaching New Heights in U.S. News & World Report Rankings

Penn’s Graduate School of Education has moved into the #2 position in *U.S. News & World Report’s* 2020 rankings for graduate schools of education—the School’s highest ranking ever. The ranking marks the fourth consecutive year Penn GSE has been in the top 5. Penn GSE also had its best year yet in the specialty rankings from *U.S. News & World Report*. For twelve years running, Penn GSE’s leadership in the world of education policy has been reflected with top 10 positions—the Education Policy Division remained #6 nationally, and the Higher Education Division moved up to #7. For a second year, Penn GSE’s Education Administration programs made the specialty rankings. Also debuting as top-ranked areas of strength were Penn GSE’s work in Educational Psychology and Curriculum. “We’re thrilled to be ranked among the very top schools of education in the nation,” said Dean Pam Grossman. “The rankings are simply one way our impact is measured. On a daily basis, I hear about the exceptional work being done here at the School and about how our extraordinary faculty, students, staff, and alumni are working to create educational opportunities locally, nationally, and globally.”

RANKED

#2

by US NEWS & WORLD REPORT



Photo by Elisabeth Reinhardt

## John Fantuzzo and Laura Perna Elected to the National Academy of Education

Penn GSE professors **John Fantuzzo (1)**, Albert M. Greenfield Professor of Human Relations, and **Laura W. Perna (2)**, James S. Riepe Professor, have been elected to join the National Academy of Education (NAEd). The pair join Penn GSE Dean Pam Grossman, Professor Vivian Gadsden, former Dean Andy Porter, Professor Emerita Diana Slaughter-Kotzin, and Penn President Amy Gutmann, a secondary faculty member of Penn GSE, in the Academy. NAEd members are elected on the basis of outstanding scholarship related to education.

## Vibrant, Colorful Designs from Philadelphia Students Reflect Penn GSE’s Mission

Artwork created by students in Philadelphia’s Strawberry Mansion High School, Chester A. Arthur School, and the Juvenile Justice Center was formally unveiled on the first floor of Penn GSE’s 3700 Walnut Street building in February. The works (3) were added after members of the GSE community voiced a desire for the space to reflect the School’s work with children and its dedication to social justice.

## Penn GSE Partnership Schools Make Philadelphia’s “Best and Most Promising” List

Three of Penn GSE’s closest partnership schools made The School District of Philadelphia’s “Best and Most Promising” list this year, with West Philadelphia’s Penn Alexander named the

top-scoring K–8 school in the city. Henry C. Lea School moved up in all categories and is now rated in the “Reinforce” tier, the second-highest category. Kensington Health Sciences Academy was also recognized for three years of steady progress.

## Catalyst @ Penn GSE Advances Innovation

Catalyst, Penn GSE’s new center for innovation, built upon the School’s history of leadership in education innovation by advancing a number of initiatives this past year. Working with practitioners, Catalyst led three short-cycle inquiries to help school leaders address emerging issues of practice. In the fall, Catalyst partnered with the Aditya Birla Education Academy to offer a customized version of the VOLT (Virtual Online Learning and Teaching) certificate program to teachers in India. This spring, Catalyst expanded its reach by presenting its first education entrepreneurship certificate program at Wharton San Francisco. To honor the tenth year of the Milken-Penn GSE Education Business Plan Competition, Catalyst has enhanced the program by naming semifinalists and providing them with opportunities to more fully develop their ventures before applying to a final round of judging. “Catalyst continues to serve the needs of practitioners and education innovators alike through our innovative programs in entrepreneurship, professional development, research to practice, and more,” says Catalyst Executive Director **Michael Golden (4)**.

## Penn GSE Undertakes Building Design Process

Since October Penn GSE has been undertaking the schematic design process of the School’s building expansion project, working with Ann Beha Architects. Part of the *Extraordinary Impact Campaign*, the project aims to bring the majority of the School’s degree programs into a central location with flexible, technologically advanced learning spaces. Faculty, staff, and students have given input at town hall meetings about the plan to link the School’s central location at 3700 Walnut Street with neighboring Stiteler Hall, add a new entrance and four-story student pavilion, create a two-story adjoining building with classrooms and an innovation lab, and ensure full accessibility. *See page 25 to learn more about the Campaign.*

■ Associate Professor **Manuel S. González Canché (5)** and Assistant Dean of Faculty Affairs and Diversity **Jessie Harper (6)** are inaugural directors of a new school-wide center at Penn GSE called HEARD: The Hub for Equity, Anti-Oppression, Research, and Development. The Center aims to draw together students, faculty, and staff committed to equity and anti-oppression scholarship, and to provide opportunities for continuing learning.

■ **Kate Kinney Grossman (7)**, director of the Urban Teaching Apprenticeship Program, has been granted \$182,368 by the Philadelphia School Partnership for incubation of coursework and fieldwork that supports pre-service teachers in the Urban Teaching Apprenticeship Program to enact project-based learning and use design thinking approaches in their classrooms.

■ Professor **Nancy H. Hornberger (8)** has been named Honorary Doctor of Arts, 2018, by Umeå University in Sweden in recognition of her international work in support of Indigenous language revitalization, beginning in Peru in the 1980s and most recently in Sweden. Dr. Hornberger has also received the 2019 Charles A. Ferguson Award for Outstanding Scholarship from the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, DC, on the occasion of its 60th anniversary.

■ Professor of Education and Sociology **Richard M. Ingersoll (9)** has updated his longitudinal study on the elementary and secondary teaching force. In the new edition of *Seven Trends: The Transformation of the Teaching Force*, Ingersoll

finds that America’s schools are hiring more teachers than ever but struggle to keep them in the profession. He shows that students are more likely to have teachers who are beginners and that those teachers are more likely to be women and minorities. “The teacher workforce has been transformed over the last thirty years,” says Dr. Ingersoll, Board of Overseers Chair of Education. “If we want to improve student performance, we must understand this new reality.”

■ Lori and Michael Milken President’s Distinguished Professor **Yasmin B. Kafai (10)**, with co-principal investigators Orkan Telhan of PennDesign and Karen Hogan of Biorealize, has received a \$99,855 grant from the National Science Foundation for the project “Learn.design. compute with bio: A Workshop for Connecting Computational Thinking with Synthetic Biology Applications in K–16 Education.” Kafai has also received a \$97,000 grant through Google’s Computer Science Education Research Awards for the MADE (Music Art Design with Etextiles) program to introduce students in career and technical education to more advanced computing concepts.

■ The Center for School Study Councils, directed by Dr. **Harris Sokoloff (11)**, celebrated its 75th anniversary on April 30 with a day of workshops featuring internationally recognized curriculum developer Dr. Heidi Hayes Jacobs and keynote speaker Dr. Nancy Gutierrez, president and CEO of New York City Leadership Academy. The Center fosters professional learning partnerships with public school superintendents, working with more than seventy-five school districts in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware.

■ Seven researchers from Penn GSE, plus another Penn faculty member with a secondary appointment at GSE, made *Education Week’s* 2019 Edu-Scholar Public Influence Rankings list, which recognizes scholars whose work shapes public discussion around education. Penn GSE’s Dr. **Howard C. Stevenson (12)**, Constance Clayton Professor of Urban Education, broke into the 2019 list. Also featured are Professors Vivian Gadsden, Marybeth Gasman, Pam Grossman, Richard Ingersoll, Laura Perna, and Jonathan Zimmerman. Angela Duckworth, a professor of psychology with a secondary appointment at Penn GSE, was also recognized at #14.





→ Penn GSE's partnership with Nazarbayev University spans ten years. The world-class research institution has produced 2,721 graduates. Photo courtesy of Nazarbayev University



CREATING A

# WORLD of OPPORTUNITY

Penn GSE Partners for Global Impact

by Juliana Rosati

Can a model for improving schools in one country be adapted to propel nationwide reform in another? How can a newly independent nation build a brand-new research university? How can preschool be strengthened on a national scale? Through an array of international partnerships and projects, Penn GSE is tackling these and other formidable questions to forge new paths and set new precedents for meaningful change in education.

“Penn GSE is deeply committed to approaching education from a global perspective,” says Penn GSE Dean Pam Grossman. “The School maintains a stellar international student body, provides a range of international learning opportunities for our students, and undertakes groundbreaking research and practice around the world.”

According to Penn GSE Senior Fellow Alan Ruby, founding director of the School’s Global Engagement Office (GEO), a global perspective is not an option but a necessity in education. “As educators and leaders, most of our students are going to participate in globally connected economies, whether in the United States or abroad,” says Ruby.

With international students from forty-four countries comprising 23 percent of the student body, Penn GSE represents a global community. Various degree programs, including the International Educational Development Program (see “Working on the Ground”), prepare students to shape education in international and multicultural settings. Across the School, students also participate in and learn from the research and

practice that more than 70 percent of faculty are undertaking internationally. Encompassing a wide network of partnerships and collaborative scholarship, this work is the result of long-term effort. “Faculty including Drs. Nancy Hornberger, Dan Wagner, and Kathy Hall built the foundation of Penn GSE’s global footprint over the course of more than three decades in settings as diverse as China, France, India, Morocco, New Zealand, Panama, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and South America,” says Ruby.

According to Ruby, global work by faculty emphasizes transparency, mutual benefit, and respect for difference. Transparency ensures that the work will contribute to the field of education at large, not just a single institution or government. “We want the results of our research and practice to be publicly available for review and critique,” says Ruby. A focus on mutual benefit means cultivating a two-way exchange with international partners. “We should expect to learn as much as we teach,” says Ruby. “Similarly, we should respect difference—sometimes challenge and question it, but understand that someone holds a point of view because it matters fundamentally to them.”

↓ A large-scale training effort in Ghana encouraged teachers to make their students active participants in the classroom. Photo by Nana Kofi Acquah



↑ The Semillas Digitales (“Digital Seeds”) program has yielded improvement in multiple subjects and skills for students in coffee-growing communities of Nicaragua. Photo courtesy of Seeds for Progress Foundation



In locations around the globe, Penn GSE faculty are engaging in work with the potential to transform early-childhood, K–12, and higher education in a variety of contexts. The stories below offer some highlights of this work.

### Working on the Ground

Penn GSE's International Educational Development Program (IEDP) has developed close relationships with an extensive list of leading international development agencies. These afford Penn GSE students opportunities for internships that are unique worldwide and provide high-impact, on-the-ground experience. "IEDP's international internship program has become recognized globally as providing exceptionally well-trained students for improving education in low-income countries," says Daniel A. Wagner, IEDP director, professor, and UNESCO Chair in Learning and Literacy.



Ghana's Ministry of Education

## AFRICA

### *Improving Early Childhood Education and Mapping Political Change*

Considered a global leader in early childhood education, Ghana offers two years of public schooling, known as kindergarten, prior to first grade. Yet the quality of instruction in kindergarten classrooms has hampered schools' potential to prepare children for primary school. When Ghana's Ministry of Education and the nonprofit organization Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) sought to better implement a forward-thinking curriculum for the early years, they engaged Penn GSE Assistant Professor Sharon Wolf, C'06, to co-lead a large-scale training effort.

"A review led by the government concluded that many kindergarten teachers within the school system were trained to be generalist teachers and not prepared to focus specifically on kindergarten," says Bridget Gyamfi, senior policy and implementation manager at IPA.

Dr. Wolf collaborated to create a five-day training program and deliver it to approximately 320 teachers at 160 schools in the urban region of Greater Accra, working with colleagues from Penn and New York University, Ghana's National Nursery Teacher Training Center, and the nonprofit organization Sabre Education. The training, which benefited 2,650 students, encouraged teachers to make children active participants in the classroom. "In Ghana, and a lot of developing countries, the teacher typically leads the instruction and the children are mostly passive listeners," explains Wolf. "We know this is not really how anyone learns best, but younger children especially need to be manipulating materials and participating in activities."

The training also aimed to reduce corporal punishment, which is widely used in Ghana. "Often teachers don't have other

tools," Wolf says. "A big part of the training focused on positive behavior management strategies." Such strategies included developing a set of classroom rules that everyone agrees to follow.

The training was evaluated over a three-year period. The outcomes of surveys, classroom observations, and assessments with children set forth in scholarly articles by Wolf and her colleagues bode well for the possibility of training teachers on a larger scale. Quality of instruction, children's school readiness, and teacher retention all improved measurably. The government has incorporated much of the training into its new national framework for early childhood teachers, and Gyamfi and her colleagues are considering how the practices can be spread to more teachers. "We want to understand how to apply the training in rural settings so that we can think of scaling it up more broadly," she says.

Wolf, a Jacobs Foundation Research Fellow for 2018–2020 and a recipient of the Early Career Award from the Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness, aims to address a worldwide need. "About 89 percent of the young children in the world live in lower-income countries," she says. "That's a huge percentage of our future global population. Increasing access to high-quality early education can really change children's trajectories."

Penn GSE Assistant Professor Krystal Strong's work in Africa carries international implications in another area—the role of education in political change. Imagine trying to study without electricity or teach without receiving a regular paycheck. At college campuses in many African countries, such problems rooted in infrastructural and governmental shortcomings prompt demonstrations, boycotts, and strikes by students and staff. With funding from a Small Grant from the Spencer Foundation, Dr. Strong has compiled a map that documents more than one thousand unique protest activities in higher education throughout Africa. She views these events as part of a larger phenomenon.

"There has been a sharp increase in movements for social change around the world over the past decade," she says. Strong sees the disruption in Africa as resulting from a continent-wide tension between a

old guard of aging political leaders and a total population that is the world's youngest, with roughly 70 percent reported to be under the age of thirty. A proliferation of leadership training programs aimed at African youth is also a byproduct of this tension, Strong suspects. Through another project she is documenting global leadership academies developed during the past decade for young Africans. "These programs suggest that we can educate a new class of leadership into existence," Strong says. "I'm very curious about what these programs intend to do, what the participants expect, and what the outcomes are."

An anthropologist by training, Strong is writing a book about the nexus of education and political change in Nigeria. Through her work she aims to increase Africa's presence in discussions of the larger educational and political landscape. "These are really interesting processes that should be a part of our research and understanding of similar dynamics around the world," she says.

## LATIN AMERICA

### *Creating Sustainable School and Professional Development*

Penn GSE's involvement in Latin America includes a new master's program in literacy, thought to be the first in Mexico, and an educational leadership network touching Chile, Uruguay, and Argentina (see "Advancing Literacy and Leadership"). In Nicaragua, a ten-year partnership known as *Semillas Digitales* ("Digital Seeds") has yielded improvement across twenty schools in coffee-growing communities—and produced a model that can be implemented at a larger scale in and beyond Nicaragua.

A decade ago, Duilio Baltodano, W'70, president of CISA Agro, part of the Mercon Coffee Group, sought a way to improve education in the primary school his family built at their coffee farm in the mountains of Nicaragua. He was gravitating towards a plan to introduce laptops in schools when Penn GSE Professor of Practice Sharon Ravitch, GR'00, learned of his plans. Noting that new technology would not be successful without an investment in professional development and broader school reform, Dr. Ravitch recommended that Baltodano consider a

teacher-focused approach to create lasting change across the curriculum while also introducing technology.

"I suggested a more comprehensive, sustainable reform model where teachers have professional development—and then ultimately can become teacher mentors for the next school, and so on," Ravitch says. Impressed with this vision, Baltodano initially provided funding for Ravitch and a team to work with seven of Mercon's schools over a three-year period.

"We saw that this idea could be very transforming because the method of education in Nicaragua is very traditional," says Baltodano, who founded the Seeds for Progress Foundation with his brother J. Antonio. The foundation supports Mercon's corporate social responsibility programs by implementing Digital Seeds in Nicaragua and other coffee-producing countries.

Ravitch and her team took a "participatory" approach to develop the Digital Seeds model, meaning they engaged teachers as active collaborators to determine their knowledge, resources, and needs, developing solutions to challenges together. "I'm not an expert on what those teachers know and need—they are," explains Ravitch, who previously used participatory methods to help teachers and educational leaders in Haiti reconstruct their schools after natural disasters. "Teachers were very much critiquing the curriculum, telling us what worked and what didn't," she says. The Digital Seeds model similarly places students in an active role in the classroom, departing from the schools' previous reliance on traditional lecture-format instruction. To ensure that the approach would be relevant to the cultures and regional norms of each school and community, Ravitch and her team customized the model to each site.

Evaluations of the program reveal student improvement in areas including attendance, grades, reading, writing, math, critical thinking, and civic and moral development, as well as teacher progress in the knowledge,



Nicaragua's Semillas Digitales "Digital Seeds"

### Advancing Literacy and Leadership

A new master's program in literacy, thought to be the first in Mexico, has resulted from a collaboration with the University of Guadalajara led at Penn GSE by Professor H. Gerald Campano. In Chile, over 1,500 educators have completed a joint certificate program in educational leadership offered by Penn GSE and Pontifical Catholic University of Chile. Penn GSE Senior Fellow Michael C. Johaneck leads the School's work with that program and a related school leadership network based at Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, the Catholic University of Uruguay, and the Catholic University of Cordoba in Argentina.

skills, and capabilities to implement the curriculum. Given the results after three years, Baltodano provided support to expand Digital Seeds across all schools supported by Mercon through the Seeds for Progress Foundation. A process of monitoring, evaluation, and follow-up ensures that the program has a positive and ongoing impact.



“Having the support of Sharon Ravitch and Penn GSE has been extraordinary from day one,” says Baltodano. “Their passion and commitment to the program, and more importantly, to the education of the children in the coffee communities, is shown in the growth and success of Digital Seeds.”

That success has been the result of a long-term partnership. Ravitch expresses gratitude for the Baltodanos’ commitment to supporting rigorous methods and lasting change over quick results. “The fact that they were so patient for a number of years while we built this program is tremendous and rare,” she says.

Because Ravitch and her team successfully replicated and customized the Digital Seeds model across schools, the program holds significant potential to be implemented on a larger scale. Baltodano, who recently introduced Digital Seeds in Guatemala, envisions bringing the program to more communities in Nicaragua, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, and exploring how it can take root in other countries that are part of Mercon’s global reach. “This project deals with a great need in the world, which is improving education where the system is not capable of providing opportunity for the people,” he says. “By promoting a different methodology, we find that teachers within the system can do wonders.”



Kazakhstan’s  
Nazarbayev  
University

## ASIA

### *Transforming K-12 and Higher Education Nationally*

Tasked with implementing federal education reform in India on a scale unprecedented globally, Dr. Venkatesh Kumar of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) in Mumbai was intrigued by the model Ravitch developed in Nicaragua. In 2017 a formal five-year partnership began, bringing Penn GSE into TISS’s efforts to transform K-12 and higher education, as well as corporate social responsibility, across a nation of more than 1.3 billion people. Given that Nicaragua is roughly the size of one Indian state, the difference in scale is vast.

“It’s really about teamwork and collaboration, and viewing all partners as knowledge partners,” says Ravitch. Supported by a Fulbright Fellowship, she is adapting the Digital Seeds model of participatory school and professional development customized to the culture of each site. It will be used across India’s twenty-nine states and seven territories in two initiatives: RUSA (*Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan*), which aims to improve the quality and infrastructure of the country’s 359 state public universities, and CALEM (Centre for Academic Leadership and Education Management), which seeks to improve K-12 education.

Partnership and collaboration are particularly relevant themes in light of the history of British rule in India, which ended in 1947. “We’re trying to build something very different from the impositional or neocolonial models of the past,” says Ravitch, who is also conducting participatory research for TISS’s work in corporate social responsibility. Says Kumar, “Sharon’s expertise in participatory community building, participatory methods and frameworks, participatory evaluation, and measurement and evaluation has helped us to rethink our methods and has allowed us to engage in new ways that are more equitable,

Photos courtesy of  
Nazarbayev University

representational, and emancipatory.”

Other Penn GSE faculty, led by Professor Matthew Hartley, are participating as thought partners in RUSA as Kumar’s team manages accountability and resources on a massive scale.

“The plan is quite ambitious,” says Dr. Hartley, who is Penn GSE’s associate dean for academic affairs. “The government has identified certain goals that they want institutions to achieve and provided them with resources, and the institutions have to demonstrate that they’re using the resources to make these positive changes.”

Kumar’s team is also identifying a set of high-performing universities to be developed into exemplary “institutions of eminence” through additional funding. As contributors to this effort, Hartley and Alan Ruby have drawn upon their experiences shaping a university meant to set a new standard in another nation—the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Ten years ago when Kazakhstan was preparing to establish Nazarbayev University (NU), the nation’s first research-intensive English-language university, officials looked to academic leaders and scholars at Penn for support, setting the stage for an enduring partnership.

“Building a new university from scratch is not for the faint of heart,” says NU Provost Ilesanmi Adesida. “It’s a post-Soviet country, so lots of processes and policies have to be established, especially of academic freedom, academic integrity, and university autonomy.”

Former Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev, who took office shortly before the country declared its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, conceived of NU as a world-class research institution that would spur national economic development. Around the time of the university’s launch in 2010, a Kazakh team traveled to Penn for a weeklong course in administration and governance that helped shape the new university’s charter and board of trustees.

As the university faces the challenge of moving beyond Soviet-era norms in higher education and a curriculum largely dictated by the Ministry of Education, Penn GSE faculty provide perspective and advice. NU, which has been granted a significant amount of independence from the Ministry, is meant to set a new precedent for autonomy

and excellence. “We want to lead the way for other institutions, not only in the country, but also in Central Asia,” says Dr. Adesida.

As other institutions in Kazakhstan follow suit in achieving greater autonomy, Penn GSE faculty are working with a research team from NU to track the process. “Some leaders are very excited about the possibility of having greater freedom to set a strategic direction for their institutions,” says Hartley. “Others feel this is a brave new world in which they aren’t yet comfortable.”

Penn GSE faculty also mentor leaders, faculty, and doctoral students at NU’s graduate school of education, helping the school grow and become self-sustaining over time. “We’ve worked with the university to develop the school from an empty building,” says Penn GSE Senior Fellow Peter Eckel. “We help them think about establishing their curriculum, faculty, research capacity, and institutional strategy and policies.”

Having produced 2,721 graduates so far, NU represents an important part of Kazakhstan’s future. “We want to contribute through research to an innovation ecosystem within the country and in Central Asia. And our main goal is to produce young people who can become leaders in their fields and compete anywhere in the world,” says Adesida.

## Looking Ahead

Penn GSE’s international impact helps to realize the global aims of the University, according to Dr. Ezekiel J. Emanuel, Penn’s vice provost for global initiatives.

“GSE’s work abroad not only illustrates Penn’s commitment to deliberate and thoughtful global engagement, but also exemplifies the University’s longstanding manner of unifying theory and practice,” he says. “To meaningfully understand and better the world, we have to be out there learning from the challenges and opportunities it presents.”

As the School shapes a strategy for the next chapter of its global engagement, the Penn GSE Global Engagement Office has established an advisory committee of faculty, staff, and students to explore new opportunities. And last fall Dean Pam Grossman

### Improving Digital Literacy

Last fall, Penn GSE’s Virtual Online Teaching Certificate Program partnered with the Aditya Birla Education Academy to improve how teachers in India use technology. “We will help teachers develop their digital literacy so they can help their students cultivate twenty-first-century skills,” says VOLT Program Director Betty Chandy.



lectured on the future of education in Norway and Singapore and met with government leaders and members of the Penn GSE community in Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

“On an international scale, education holds the potential to reduce poverty and disease, foster peace and equality, and create sustainable economic development,” says Grossman. “In our interconnected and diverse world, Penn GSE’s commitment to the global education community will only increase in importance and impact.” ■



# Changing the Face of Education

PENN GSE ALUMNI MAKE AN IMPACT AROUND THE WORLD

by Lini S. Kadaba

With more than sixteen thousand alumni working in ninety-four countries, the Penn GSE community reaches far and wide. Whether building international models of education or considering diverse cultural contexts, graduates are shaping education around the world and in multicultural communities in the United States. Here, four alumni discuss their work in a global landscape that encompasses higher education in Chile, creative expression in Nepalese schools, leadership training at multinational companies in the Czech Republic and Denmark, and instruction across languages and cultures in Philadelphia schools.



Photos by Rolando Oyarzun (top) and Srijanalaya (bottom)



For Sharareh Bajracharya, GR’05, bringing the arts into public schools in Nepal is about more than pretty pictures. Srijanalaya, the nongovernmental organization she chairs and cofounded in Kathmandu, uses art to empower students in underfunded and rural schools.

## Using the Arts to Strengthen Learning

“We want to offer children the opportunity to express their cultures and identities, as well as a tool to question the world around them,” Bajracharya says. While Nepal’s population includes 125 ethnic groups speaking 123 languages, a legacy of social stratification in the country has marginalized many cultural identities. Access to education in Nepal has expanded dramatically during the



When José Antonio Guzmán, GRD’13, left Santiago, Chile, in 2010 to pursue studies in the United States, he wanted to learn best practices of American universities and bring them back to the up-and-coming Universidad de los Andes (UANDES), where he worked as vice

## Shaping the Vision of a University

president of academic affairs. He set his sights on Penn GSE’s Executive Doctorate in Higher Education Management program after completing a master’s at Harvard University. Guzmán liked the Penn GSE program’s tight focus on data-driven decision making and pragmatic ideas. “Though I am very interested in research, I am more of a practitioner in many ways,” says the former lawyer who became president at the nonprofit, private UANDES soon after completing his Ed.D. “I wanted to learn how to run a university.” Guzmán says the imprint of his time at Penn GSE is visible all around UANDES, home to approximately 8,700 undergraduate and 2,000 graduate students. He has implemented new ideas and reaffirmed other practices, recently earning a renewed contract for a second five-year term. Based on his Penn GSE dissertation about strategies for fostering quality teaching at Chilean universities, Guzmán introduced teaching prizes and funding akin to research grants. “It’s about creating an environment where faculty members understand their work is appreciated by the rest of

the university and valued by students,” he says. Guzmán also expanded the curriculum of UANDES beyond its previous professional focus, increasing liberal arts classes and adding minors. “Things are changing very fast in terms of skill sets required for the jobs of the future,” he says. “A strong general education prepares students with flexibility and the ability to meet change over time.”

He also made student life a priority, funding programs such as sports and student organizations—typically

scarce in Chilean colleges, according to Guzmán. “I think a very strong student experience outside the classroom is an important part of education,” he says. In other areas, Guzmán’s Penn GSE experiences gave him confidence in the university’s existing structures. Like many institutions in the United States, the 128-acre UANDES has a planned campus in one location and a board of trustees that governs and appoints leadership. It is rare for Chilean universities to have a single campus, he says, and older institutions in the country have presidents and deans elected by the faculty. “I wanted to have the argument to defend the way this university was organized,” he says. “During my time at Penn GSE, I reaffirmed my conviction that our campus and governance models are key features of UANDES.” As he looks ahead, Guzmán’s focus is on nontraditional ways to deliver education (massive open online courses, for one) and expanding UANDES’s endowment. He has turned to his Penn GSE cohort for advice. “We’re in touch almost every day,” Guzmán says. “It gives you some perspective. You are not alone in addressing problems.”

past fifty years, but dropout rates remain high, particularly among girls and children from poor families. Bajracharya wants to better engage the most vulnerable students and provide learning opportunities that would not otherwise be available to them. Bajracharya points to her doctoral studies in education, culture, and society at Penn GSE as having provided the foundation for her work. “It has determined and shaped the way I want to approach education in Nepal,” she says. A particularly influential course was Culture/Power/Identities. “It prompted me to consider the latent assumptions and ideologies that shape systems,” she says. As part of her studies, she examined Nepal’s history to understand how local traditions and languages had been overlooked by the national education system.



After graduating from Penn GSE, Bajracharya returned to Nepal, where she had spent much of her childhood. She pursued her longtime interest in art, earning a BFA in studio and arts education at Kathmandu University in 2011 and cofounding Srijanalaya in 2013.

The fifteen-member organization's Art-in-School program focuses on bringing the creative arts into the formal education system in Nepal. Through month-long trainings, Srijanalaya's art educators work closely with administrators and teachers to integrate the arts into subjects such as math, science, social studies, and language arts. Another key program, ArtWorks! Let's Play Together, began after the devastating 2015 earthquake in Nepal as a way to help children heal through psychosocial support. Srijanalaya's art educators travel to government schools in remote communities of the mountainous nation to engage the students and teachers in

visual, performing, and language arts workshops.

A hallmark of Srijanalaya is its broad definition of the arts to include not only painting and drawing, but also indigenous dance and music. One activity is a poetry competition in which children create lyrics to a melody in their community mother tongue, making poems through the local practice of song improvisation. While recent educational reform in Nepal aims to bring minority languages into classrooms in the early grades, progress has been slow, and most schools still rely on Nepali and English language instruction. The poetry activity energizes the students and affirms their identities by drawing on their cultural knowledge, Bajracharya says.

"The task is no longer daunting, and they enjoy the process a great deal," she reports. "We believe our approach helps bridge the gap between what children learn at home and at school."



**Back in 2004, learning leader Robert "Bob" Demare, GRD'14,** was in the Czech Republic running his newly established employee coaching company when he says he caught a lucky break. Courier company DHL was consolidating its European information technology operations and

Demare tackled a challenge he faced at work—capability building for managers of large projects in technology organizations. His work with senior leaders at DHL helped drive the company's efforts to improve employee engagement.

"I'd go to Penn and get this strategic learning inoculation every few months," he says. "I'd come back and be so much more on my goal. It grew my confidence." Just as valuable, he

## Aligning Learning with Business Priorities

opening new headquarters in his backyard of Prague.

"I got a contract to join a team working to induct a thousand employees," says Demare, originally from London, Ontario. His work training DHL's staff opened up the opportunity for a management position in 2006. As he worked to maximize professional learning for DHL's information technology staff, Demare was savvy enough to realize it was time to invest in further learning of his own. He gained the company's support to pursue a Penn GSE doctorate in the executive-format PennCLO (Chief Learning Officer) program.

Demare chose the PennCLO program, considered a first-of-its-kind, for its focus on learning in the workplace. "It was about aligning learning with business priorities," Demare says. PennCLO students continue working as leaders and executives while pursuing the degree, attending weeklong intensive sessions on campus. They learn how to shape learning in professional environments by creating new models of employee education, communicating among different cultural groups, and making data-driven decisions—all increasingly important skills in a knowledge economy. For his thesis,

adds, was his cohort of classmates, a network that he continues to rely on.

After a stretch at technology company Honeywell, also in Prague, Demare moved in late 2018 to his current position as global head of functional development at the Copenhagen headquarters of shipping giant A.P. Moller-Maersk. At Honeywell, Demare led a team based in Asia, Latin America, and Europe and developed company-wide learning programs to improve business performance in emerging markets. At A.P. Moller-Maersk, his focus is on capability development for corporate functions such as information technology, human resources, and finance. Demare is taking an anthropological view of company culture in order to come up with professional development programs.

"I'm observing these little, interesting things you see in a company, like the way people conduct meetings," he says. It is a skill he learned at Penn GSE. As in his other jobs, Demare trusts that his Penn GSE background will open up new horizons. "I expect it will lead me to think of ways to approach learning that I never would have before," he says.

Photo by Lacey Michelle Photography



**Sydney Negus, GED'17,** spends much of her workday conducting research and evaluating programs in a diverse school district where more than one hundred different languages are spoken at home by students. She did not have to

Negus's intercultural perspective also aids her broader understanding of school settings. Last school year, she visited eight schools to evaluate the national Playworks TeamUp model, a program that trains school staff to improve recess experiences for students. Negus found that results varied from site to site, and what worked well often depended on the school's climate and staffing levels. Context mattered—

## Examining Education, Culture, and Context

travel far from Penn GSE to find this multicultural community and put her master's degree in intercultural communication to good use—Negus works as a research assistant for The School District of Philadelphia.

"The field of intercultural communications might seem internationally focused," she says, "but in our increasingly diverse society, and especially our school system, these skills can be applied at home as well."

In her role, Negus draws on her background in qualitative research methods to evaluate programs on site. This academic year, she is looking at Together Is Better, a program for English language learners being piloted in three schools. It pairs teachers of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) with general education teachers. The program keeps English learners in a general classroom, aiming to reduce the disruptions and isolation that can come from being taught separately while also helping native speakers.

"Strategies that are good for ESOL literacy are good for literacy in general," says Negus, a Bay Area native. For example, a teacher might review vocabulary before a lesson or jump-start students' writing by providing partial sentences to be completed. "These are structures that can help a struggling reader even if English is their main language," says Negus.

the fundamental lesson she learned in Penn GSE's Intercultural Communication program.

"A lot of class discussions were about how you can have the best educational theory in the world and write a program that sounds great based on all the best evidence-based research," Negus recalls. "But in the end, it has to happen in a real context with factors that affect things in ways you never could have anticipated."

Negus's interest in that tug between theoretical and practical is what attracted her to Penn GSE's program and its commitment to field work. As a student she honed her eye for context by exploring how the concept of professionalism was taught to minority students working toward a high school diploma and vocational certification at a Philadelphia school. She wanted to understand how career preparation would be delivered to students—for instance, would instructors help students build on their existing communication skills when teaching them to communicate professionally, and how would that affect students' trajectories?

"Being able to look at different cultures and how they interact is crucial," Negus says. "I think applying the lens in your own backyard is incredibly valuable." ■

Photo by Tommaso Cappelli



# Faces of Philanthropy

by Karen Doss Bowman



Penn GSE is at the forefront of expanding education’s reach and boosting its effectiveness for individuals and societies around the globe. As the *Extraordinary Impact Campaign* continues, Penn GSE is grateful to generous donors who are investing in the promise of the School’s people, programs, and partnerships. Here are three stories of support for the mission of Penn GSE.



Photo by Ryan Collier

## Preparing the Teachers of the Future

Penn GSE received \$8.6 million in 2018 to support its teacher education programs. This support includes grants for student scholarships and the development of innovative coursework and fieldwork for the School’s Urban Teacher Apprenticeship Program (UTAP). “At a time when other universities are backing away from their commitment to teacher education, Penn GSE is proud to be building and innovating around this crucial component of its mission,” says Dean Pam Grossman. Considered one of the nation’s foremost experts on teacher quality, Dean Grossman has raised over \$23 million for cutting-edge K–12 education and research since she joined Penn GSE in 2015. All of the School’s teacher education programs have been revitalized and reconceptualized under her leadership. UTAP’s ten-month program culminates in a master’s degree and faculty recommendation for the Pennsylvania teacher certificate. Students pre-

pare for careers as elementary, middle, or high school educators through a combination of coursework, a yearlong apprenticeship in a Philadelphia public or charter school, and professional mentoring. UTAP is part of the Collaboratory for Teacher Education at Penn GSE, which houses three distinctive master’s programs in teacher education, along with the new Project-Based Learning Certificate program, and serves as a hub for learning and research in the field. Grants for scholarships empower Penn GSE to recruit a talented and diverse pool of prospective STEM and humanities teachers. Grants for program support enable UTAP to remain at the forefront of a movement to prepare teachers to engage students in active learning that is deeply rooted in subject-area knowledge. Grant funding also enables Penn GSE to incorporate the techniques of active and project-based learning into UTAP and share best practices with the nation. “We are thrilled to see such strong momentum for Penn GSE’s efforts to continue shaping the future of teacher education and offer opportunity

and access to the finest students regardless of their financial situations,” says Dr. Grossman. “Teacher education programs have a critical role to play in diversifying the teaching workforce and in preparing educators for the classrooms of the future, which will rely increasingly on forms of content-rich, active learning.”



**Molly Rouse-Terlevich, C’90, GED’00, and Fabio Terlevich, WG’00**

## Supporting Problem Solving in Education

A believer in the transformative power of a high-quality education, Molly Rouse-Terlevich, C’90, GED’00, is drawn to the potential of Penn GSE’s work to break cycles of inequality and promote opportunities for every child to succeed.

“Penn GSE is trying to shift the dynamic of the American education system and reframe how we do education in every way—from how we use curricula and evaluate children’s learning, to how we fund education,” Molly says. “They’re trying to solve all of these problems and put education together in a new, effective way, like a Rubik’s Cube.” During her time as a student at Penn GSE, Molly experienced what she describes as the “multidimensional” nature of the School’s curriculum, research opportunities, and connections to urban schools. She was able to apply lessons learned in her classes by engaging in volunteer opportunities and through her work with Progressions School, an organization that serves children with emotional and behavioral challenges.

“I felt like there were lots of places in which the School connected the dots from the research, learning, and mastery of material to application and practice in a real-world setting,” she says. Appointed in 2011 to the President’s Advisory Committee on the Arts for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Molly currently serves on the Trustees Council of Penn Women, an international network of Penn alumnae, as cochair of the Programming Committee.

Consistent supporters of the Penn GSE Annual Fund, Molly and her husband, Fabio Terlevich, WG’00, recently contributed to Penn GSE’s Capital Expansion Project, which seeks to bring the majority of the School’s degree programs into a central location with flexible, technologically advanced learning spaces. Molly believes that having the School housed in one building will create a stronger, more cohesive community where students will thrive.

“It is important at a big university to try to have that sense of community and be a part of something that feels special,” she says. “The project will help create this identity where students feel part of something special, where the environment emphasizes a dynamic of thinking outside the box.”



**Jeff Goldberg, W’83, WG’89, and Nicole Goldberg**

## Advancing Cutting-Edge Teaching and Learning

Jeff Goldberg, W’83, WG’89, has a soft spot for the University of Pennsylvania. As president of the Class of 1983, he has been heavily involved since graduation in fundraising, community building, and planning events and reunions for his undergraduate class.

“I owe a debt of gratitude to Penn for the exceptional education and the doors the University opened for me,” says Jeff, a co-managing partner of The Milestone Group. “I had an amazing experience at Penn and the journey has never stopped.” About a year ago, he began exploring new ways to become involved with the University. A close friend told him about the accomplishments and far-reaching influence of Penn GSE, inspiring Jeff to devote time and energy to the School.

“Everything starts and stops with education, and teachers make a lasting impact on children’s lives,” says Jeff, a new member of the Penn GSE Board of Overseers. “If you can maximize that impact, you’ve created a great foundation for every child.” For Jeff’s wife, Nicole Goldberg, supporting Penn GSE was a natural fit. A former second-grade teacher in New York City, Nicole is passionate about education and about improving teachers’ professional development.

“Preparing those who are going to be teaching our children is so important,” says Nicole, who spent many years as a staff developer working with teachers in New York City. She points to Penn GSE’s work in teacher preparation for project-based learning as a sign of the School’s leadership and innovation. “Penn GSE is really looking to the future and thinking about how to move children forward to the next level of learning,” she says.

The Goldbergs have been devoted to educational causes, such as the Florence Fuller Child Development Center, which provides pre-school education to disadvantaged youth, as well as Saint Andrew’s School, where their three children attend. They recently committed to support the Dean’s Discretionary Fund at Penn GSE, which provides resources to meet the School’s priorities.

“I think Dean Grossman is one of the preeminent educators in the United States,” Jeff says. “She is really on the cutting edge, and she’s a dynamo. Our goal is to empower her and her faculty to develop innovative ways to educate that will make an impact locally, nationally, and internationally.” ■

To learn more about the *Extraordinary Impact Campaign*, see the campaign update on **page 25**, visit [www.gse.upenn.edu/support/extraordinary-impact](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/support/extraordinary-impact), or contact us at **215.573.6623** or [alumni@gse.upenn.edu](mailto:alumni@gse.upenn.edu).



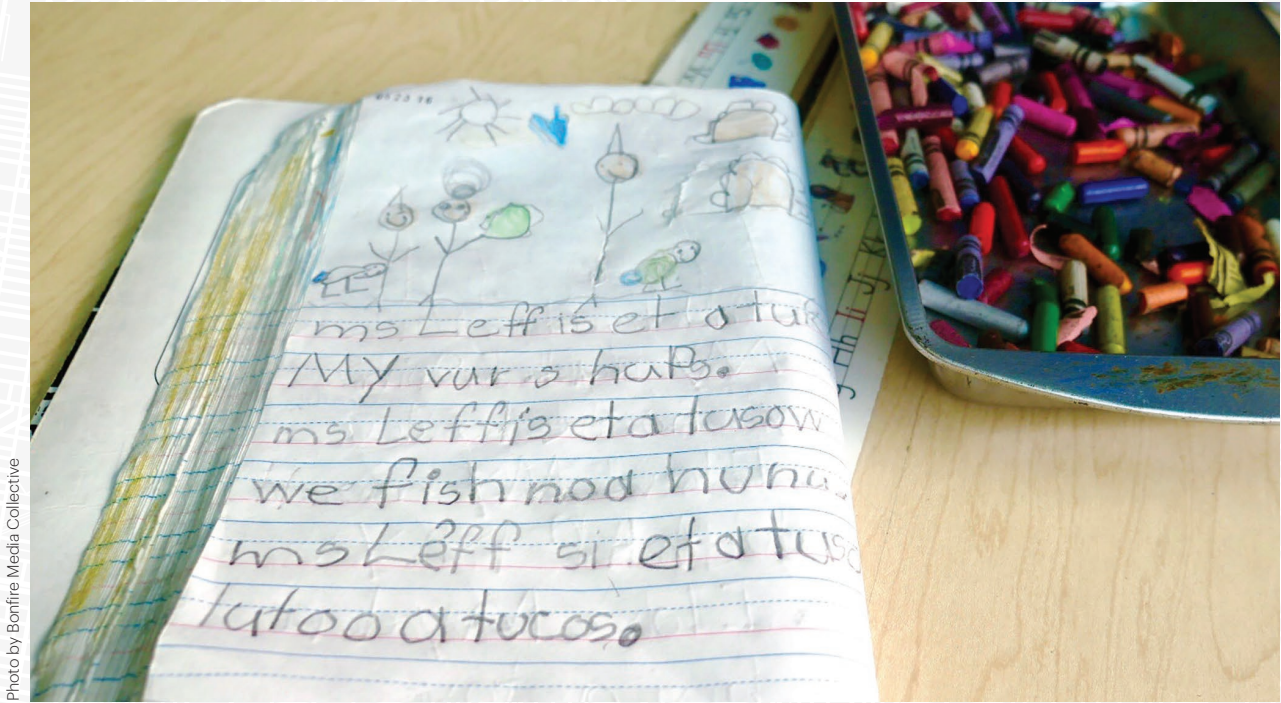


Photo by Bonfire Media Collective

# LEARNING, SHARING, AND MAKING MEANING

## Philadelphia Writing Project Advances Writing Across the City

interview by Juliana Rosati



Diane Waff  
C'76, GRD'07

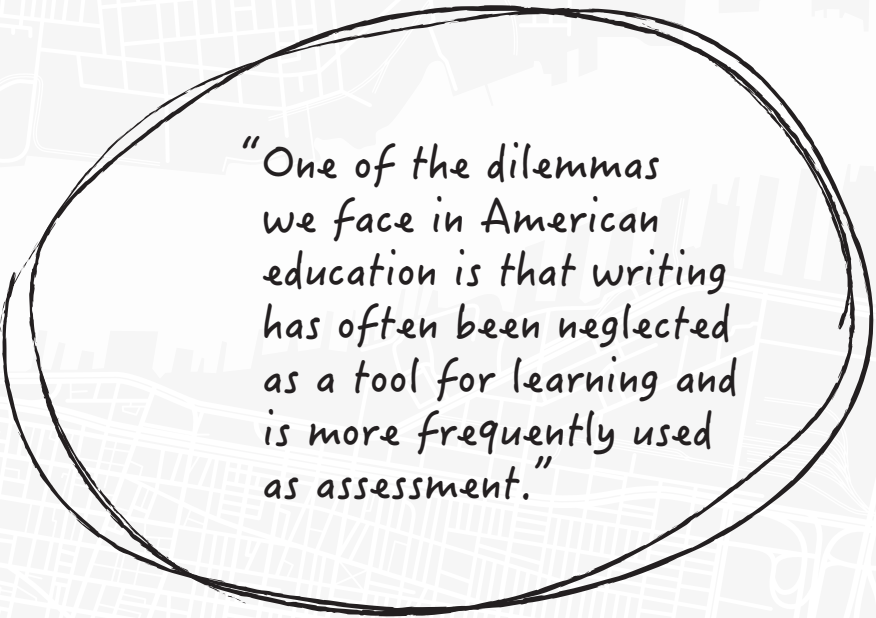


Judy Buchanan

As Philadelphia's most prominent teacher network since 1986, the Philadelphia Writing Project (PhilWP) has built an enduring legacy of supporting teachers in Philadelphia schools as they use writing to advance learning. In 2017-2018 alone, PhilWP teachers worked with more than 18,000 students in individual classrooms and provided opportunities for young people in an array of out-of-school youth programs.

Penn GSE Professor of Practice Diane Waff, C'76, GRD'07, is director of PhilWP, which is located at Penn GSE as one of 180 sites of the National Writing Project (NWP). We sat down with Dr. Waff and NWP Senior Associate Judy Buchanan, who retired as NWP deputy director in 2018 and formerly served as PhilWP director. Our conversation explored how PhilWP's longtime work is enriching K-12 teachers' and students' learning and how a new initiative by PhilWP is cultivating Philadelphia's youngest writers.

Headshots by Lisa Godfrey (top) and Darryl W. Moran (bottom)



"One of the dilemmas we face in American education is that writing has often been neglected as a tool for learning and is more frequently used as assessment."

**Q:** PhilWP's core work has built a growing network of more than eight hundred teacher consultants in the Greater Philadelphia region who enhance the teaching of writing. How do teachers join the network, and why is its work important?

**Diane Waff:** Teachers join our network and become PhilWP teacher consultants by completing our Invitational Summer Institute on Writing and Literacy, a two-week professional development program for pre-K through 12 teachers across subject areas. Our participants see themselves as people who can take up leadership roles. That can mean sharing their teaching practice with the teacher next door or more broadly within their school context. We ask Summer Institute applicants to provide a letter of commitment from their principal, stating that the principal will recognize the knowledge and expertise of the participant and help create opportunities within the school for the teacher to share their practice with other teachers. By reflecting upon the process of teaching and learning at the Summer Institute and bringing their insights back to their school communities, our teacher consultants have a far-reaching impact.

**Judy Buchanan:** PhilWP and the other NWP sites across the country are expanding K-12 students' access to high-quality writing instruction. One of the dilemmas we face in American education is that writing has often been neglected as a tool for learning and is more frequently used as assessment—give me a short answer to this question or write to this prompt. Students need the opportunity to improve their writing skills over time through a regular process of writing for multiple purposes, receiving feedback, revising, and publishing their work. At the university level, one of the areas in which students struggle the most is writing, and one of the biggest divisions is between young people who have had high-quality K-12 writing instruction and those who haven't. Students become more proficient at writing when they experience it from their earliest days as a way of making meaning through stories, poems, essays, and critical analysis.

**Q:** What ideas at the heart of PhilWP set its approach apart?

**DW:** At the Summer Institute, teachers come to think critically about how they can use writing to support learning in their school context. It really is an inquiry-driven institute—a set of questions informs the work each day. Whether you're teaching math or history or science, you're there to engage with your peers to explore how you can use writing to make your students' thinking visible. One of the things that Penn GSE Professor Emerita Susan Lytle, GR'82, the founding director of PhilWP, used to say is that when children write, they're writing about something. We want you to notice what your students are writing about. How are you using writing to advance learning? How are you using it to give your students a creative voice or a way to make a difference in their community? We also look at culturally responsive teaching—how can your teaching benefit from awareness of your students' cultural backgrounds?

**Q:** How does PhilWP's approach connect to the aims of the National Writing Project?

**JB:** Each NWP site across the country has teacher leadership institutes. They are anchored on university campuses and are locally flavored, and all are grounded in a real opportunity to think critically

↓ PhilWP helps teachers use writing as a tool to advance learning in Philadelphia schools.  
Photo by Tina Matczak

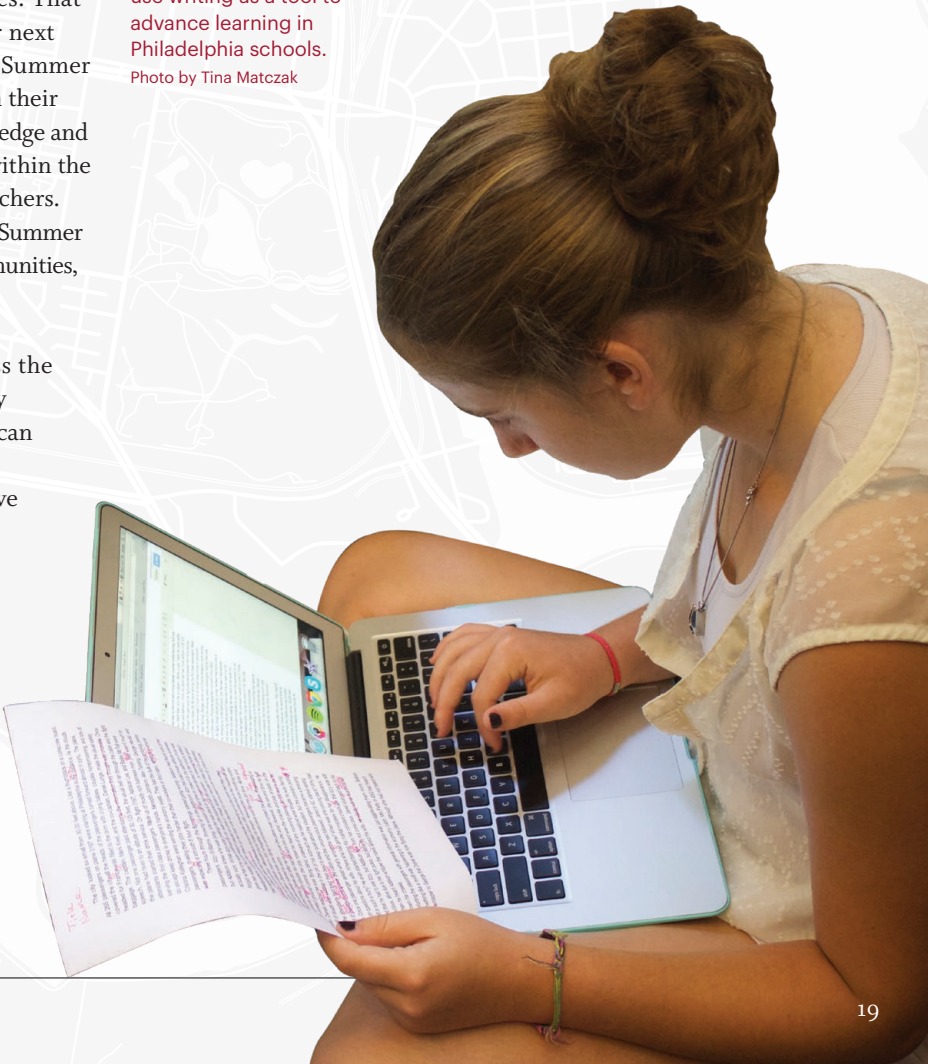


Illustration by Vectorstock.com/max776



*"Kid Writing developed in Philadelphia, and our hope is that we will be able to share this approach to working with young children on a broader scale in the city."*

about your own work in community with colleagues who are thinking about theirs. So much of teachers' professional lives outside of this kind of learning has been about being told what to do. At NWP institutes, you're reading and being informed by the larger knowledge that's out there. But you're also applying your own knowledge and expertise. And you're actually writing and sharing your work with your peers. Engaging in the practice of writing really helps you to teach writing more effectively, and that's hard to find time for in today's world.

**Q: How does PhilWP engage teacher consultants beyond their work in their schools?**

**DW:** Teacher consultants can participate in our advanced institutes, where they document their work throughout the year as they design writing experiences for their students. PhilWP creates various platforms for those participants to share their work. These include the Penn Ethnography Forum, the PhilWP Celebration of Writing and Literacy, and local and national conferences such as the National Council of Teachers of English. Teacher consultants also regularly participate in PhilWP's other initiatives as teacher mentors and coaches.

**Q: One of PhilWP's other initiatives is bringing an approach called Kid Writing to kindergarten and first grade in four Philadelphia schools. What is Kid Writing, and how are you helping schools to adopt it?**

**JB:** Kid Writing is a research-based approach to get children started in a strong and joyful way to become readers and writers. It integrates rigorous phonics instruction from the very beginning. First, children draw their story. Then they do "kid writing," writing as many of the letters and words as they can. The next step is "adult writing," where teachers help children read their stories aloud and write the full words, emphasizing the sounds. Finally, children share

their writing with the class and the teacher uses this work to discuss a skill the students need to learn.

Kid Writing was developed by Eileen Feldgus, GRD'95, who was a PhilWP teacher consultant. Her dissertation chair at Penn GSE was Marilyn Cochran-Smith, GR'82. Through her studies, Dr. Feldgus came to understand that the research-based evidence on early reading and writing suggested a different approach than the one she had taken as a kindergarten teacher. This led her to publish *Kid Writing: A Systematic Approach to Phonics, Journals, and Writing Workshop* (Wright Group Publishing, 1999) with another PhilWP teacher consultant, Isabell Cardonick. They wrote a newly revised edition, *Kid Writing in the 21st Century* (Hammeray, 2017), in collaboration with Dr. Richard Gentry. Dr. Feldgus does professional development with colleagues across the country, and Kid Writing has been adopted by many schools and districts.

**DW:** Kid Writing developed in Philadelphia, and our hope is that we will be able to share this approach to working with young children on a broader scale in the city. We began by introducing it to teachers at Frances E. Willard School a few years ago with funding from the National Writing Project. When we could show that students were writing more, having conversations about their writing, and producing journals that showed progression across the year, the William Penn Foundation funded us to develop that program further, and provided funding for the Philip H. Sheridan School to participate.

Based on the percentage of students improving at both schools, William Penn awarded us a four-year grant to work with multiple schools. Part of what has made us successful is bringing in a team of retired teachers who are PhilWP teacher consultants to provide coaching and mentoring to current teachers as they adopt Kid Writing. We've expanded our work to Solomon Solis-Cohen School and Gilbert Spruance School, and we'll soon add a fifth school. We also look forward to welcoming teachers from across the country to Penn GSE in June for a National Writing Project-sponsored institute on Kid Writing featuring Dr. Feldgus and current PhilWP teachers.

**Q: Diane, you work with students in Penn GSE's Reading/Writing/Literacy degree programs. How do GSE students interact with PhilWP?**

**DW:** There's a nice synergy. For their internships, I place our reading specialist candidates in the classrooms of PhilWP teacher consultants as well as the Kid Writing classrooms so that they gain experience working with professionals who envision reading and writing as connected. I think that's a real strength of our Reading/Writing/Literacy program and also a strength of PhilWP. In addition, since 1986 our PhilWP Scholars program has selected a PhilWP teacher consultant approximately once a year to take a leave of absence and become a full-time graduate student at Penn GSE through a fully funded fellowship. I was a PhilWP Scholar myself earlier in my career when I was a high school teacher in Philadelphia.

**Q: PhilWP offers an array of programs beyond those we've mentioned, including several that work directly with Philadelphia students. What are some highlights of your student programming?**



↑ High school students in the Project Write summer program find inspiration for their writing in history and architecture. Photos by Tina Matczak



**DW:** In collaboration with Independence National Historical Park, we host a two-week summer camp called Project Write every year for high school students. Our teacher consultants facilitate the camp with park rangers, and they use history and architecture as inspiration for creative writing. Many of the participants later come to campus during the school year for a program called Friday Night Writes, where they can refine pieces to submit to the national Scholastic Art and Writing Awards. I'm very proud that PhilWP is the regional affiliate for the Scholastic Awards. Every year we receive over 2,000 pieces of student work, and the number of Penn GSE students, staff members, alumni, and PhilWP teacher consultants who volunteer to read the submissions in the local blind judging process is incredible. It's a way that the University and the city come together to make the students feel proud of themselves as writers. This year a student from Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School will be celebrated at Carnegie Hall as a winner of one of the highest regional honors, the American Voices Medal, awarded by a panel in New York City.

**JB:** Another program is the Journalism Summer Camp, offered to middle and high school students through the Philly School Media Network, a partnership between PhilWP, The School District of Philadelphia, and the *Philadelphia Public School Notebook*. The program provides a way for young people to explore journalism in and outside of school and have their work go to a broader audience, which is important given that school newspapers and journalism classes have been casualties of budget cuts in most Philadelphia schools.

**Q: Why is writing such a powerful part of learning?**

**JB:** If you want good readers, you need to have good writers. Writing is an active way of learning and making meaning across subject areas. It helps us think critically and communicate to various audiences. At NWP, our focus is on preparing young people to succeed as writers, learners, leaders, and citizens. We envision a future in which every person is an accomplished writer, engaged learner, and an active participant in our interconnected world.

**Q: Tell me about a moment that brought home the meaning of PhilWP's work.**

**DW:** We brought a filmmaker into a school to capture some of our work for a video. There was this first-grade girl who said, "I've never been on camera before sharing my work." When she read her piece, she wasn't intimidated at all. It was just the most beautiful thing. A little boy in kindergarten described his story to us, and he was just so animated—his hands were moving, and he was really excited. I think that's the power of what we're doing. We're getting kids excited about learning, confident in their capabilities, and really passionate about their work. ■

Visit [www.gse.upenn.edu/philwp](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/philwp) to learn more about PhilWP.



# BRIDGING *the* GAPS by Joanna Corman



← Larry Thi (left) and Jasmine Forde (right) take interdisciplinary approaches to their studies in Penn GSE's M.S.Ed. in Education Policy program. Photos by Jay Gorodetzer Photography

Background by iStock.com/studiocasper

PENN GSE EDUCATION POLICY  
STUDENTS WORK ACROSS DISCIPLINES  
TO HELP CHILDREN SUCCEED

Jasmine Forde wants to use research on gray matter to shape education. A research coordinator at The Changing Brain Lab at Penn, Forde is a student in GSE's M.S.Ed. in Education Policy program. She aims to bridge a gap between psychology and education by turning research on the brain into policies that better support learning.

"Through my experiences in the lab, I became interested in the idea of making what we're learning in research more actionable," Forde says.

Focusing on brain plasticity—the brain's ability to change in response to external factors—researchers at the lab are investigating how aspects of children's environments may affect brain development and academic achievement. "This includes positive aspects such as cognitive enrichment, access to educational resources, and a good night's sleep, and negative aspects," Forde says. Adverse experiences have been shown to impair children's brain development, and Forde is particularly interested in understanding how environmental stresses associated with poverty—such as hunger and homelessness—may affect learning.

"We can apply that knowledge to policy, prioritizing interventions and programs that provide cognitive enrichment to support and enhance academic outcomes, especially for children whose environments put them at the greatest risk," says Forde.

Early life experiences prompted her interest in neuroscience and psychology, subjects in which she earned her bachelor's degree with honors at Temple University. Born in England to British parents, Forde experienced the stress of assimilating into a different culture at the age of four when her family moved to the United States for her father's job. She also faced the challenge of standing out due to her mixed-race background.

"Because I have never really fit into one specific group or category and experienced a variety of stressors in my childhood, I became really interested in how people develop overall and how different life experiences and environments influence that development," she says.

After taking one education policy course at Penn GSE, American Education Reform: History, Policy, Practice taught by Professor Jonathan Zimmerman, Forde chose to enroll in the master's program part-time while continuing her work at the lab. "The class was actually helping me develop as a person and influencing

"Because I have never really fit into one specific group or category and experienced a variety of stressors in my childhood, I became really interested in how people develop overall and how different life experiences and environments influence that development."

— JASMINE FORDE

my opinions and viewpoints," she says.

At Penn GSE, she has discovered a passion and voice for advocating for children, particularly those living in poverty. After graduating, she hopes to continue working in early childhood education research at a policy organization or a department of education to analyze how policies are affecting children up to age eight. Her long-term career goal is to work in an interdisciplinary policy setting.

About two dozen students enroll in Penn GSE's Education Policy master's program each year, typically pursuing the degree full time if they are not Penn employees like Forde. The program aims to equip students for leadership in research, government, or nonprofit roles, or for doctoral study. Courses address areas such as the economic, sociological, and philosophical aspects of education policy, as well as research methods and program evaluation.

"There's a range of knowledge we want students to gain, and we also want them to have a real-life applied experience," says Dr. Jonathan Supovitz, chair of the Education Policy division and professor at GSE. In a culminating experience, students perform research for real-world clients in the Education Policy Research Practicum, collecting and analyzing data to help educational organizations improve policy.

The opportunity to work with data is a strength of the program, according to Larry Thi, one of Forde's classmates. "Coming to Penn GSE challenges you to think in a data-driven mindset," he says. "You learn not only to be competent with data analysis tools and programs, but also to make sure your evidence is data-driven."

Like Forde, Thi is taking an interdisciplinary approach to his studies. He is pursuing his master's in education policy at GSE along with a master's in public administration through a joint-degree program with the Fels Institute of Government at Penn. Working in the nonprofit sector after earning his bachelor's degree in history from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, he, too, noticed gaps to be bridged. "There are holes in our system, and disparities and inequities," he says. "Many times, a nonprofit does some of the patch-up work to provide services where needs are not met. I decided to pursue public administration to gain skills, mindsets, and approaches to solving problems. Pursuing education made sense because it's been a passion of mine."



↓ Students in the Education Policy program are equipped to pursue leadership roles in research, government, or nonprofits, or to pursue doctoral study.  
Photo by Jay Gorodetzer Photography

“One of the things that’s been really affirming as a first-generation college graduate is that I can hold my ground. I can do the work. I can take advantage of all these opportunities.”  
— LARRY THI



Photos by Greg Benson Photography

Education, he says, has propelled him from poverty into the middle class. The first in his family to graduate from college, he grew up in a neighborhood where a path to higher education was not a given. One GSE course that had a lasting impact on Thi is Assistant Professor Sharon Wolf’s Risk, Resilience, and Prevention Science. In it, he learned about the resilience of adolescents, including those living in war zones. He wants to use this insight to help students understand that they have an innate power to overcome their circumstances and achieve their college and career dreams. It’s a lesson he has learned firsthand. His parents moved to the United States from Vietnam after the war. The oldest of three, Thi grew up in Philadelphia in the one-room basement of his aunt’s house, often sleeping with his siblings on the floor. His mother worked at a garment factory. When he was ten years old, his father died of a drug overdose. His mother always told him and his siblings that they had to pursue higher education. “We had no other options besides doing well in school,” he says. “I couldn’t get a good job without a high school diploma. I had to go to college. She always put that in my mind.”

Thi has found a sense of belonging at Penn GSE. “You get a great support network,” he says. “One of the things that’s been really affirming as a first-generation college graduate is that I can hold my ground. I can do the work. I can take advantage of all these opportunities. I can hold conversations with my classmates, with these other bright people. That’s been a big revelation.” While pursuing his degrees, Thi works part-time at the Philadelphia Academy of School Leaders, a nonprofit organization that aims to help school principals throughout the city become more effective leaders. He wants to help lift low-income students out of poverty, build welcoming school environments, and increase access to vocational programs. Immediately after graduation, he hopes to work at a school as a leader or teacher to get on-the-ground experience. In the long term, he sees himself working in a governmental role at the city or state level and later running for office. “I think about all the love and support I’ve received and the ability that I have to empower people and give them strength,” he says. “I want to be my mom for my students.” ■

## EXTRAORDINARY IMPACT

THE CAMPAIGN FOR  PENN GSE



To learn more about the *Extraordinary Impact Campaign*, or to contribute, visit [www.gse.upenn.edu/support/extraordinary-impact](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/support/extraordinary-impact) or contact us at 215.573.6623 or [alumni@gse.upenn.edu](mailto:alumni@gse.upenn.edu).

## Fueling Extraordinary Impact

*Launched publicly in April 2018 as a multi-year fundraising effort within the University’s Power of Penn Campaign, Penn GSE’s Extraordinary Impact Campaign is gaining momentum for priorities across the School. Support in the following areas is bolstering the School’s efforts to improve learning outcomes locally, nationally, and globally and shape the next century of education.*

**Scholarship and Fellowship /** With gifts totaling **\$4.9 million**, support for financial aid is strengthening Penn GSE’s ability to attract the most talented, dedicated students across programs. Scholarship and fellowship support helps transformative educators and leaders to keep their loans to a minimum as they prepare for careers in which they will impact countless learners globally.

**Programs /** Support totaling **\$9 million** has made it possible for Penn GSE to partner with The School District of Philadelphia to improve mathematics instruction in West Philadelphia schools, advance forward-thinking teaching approaches through the new Project-Based Learning Certificate Program, and launch Catalyst @ Penn GSE, the School’s new center for innovation.

**Faculty /** With **\$5.7 million** raised, support for faculty has produced four new endowed professorships at Penn GSE, ensuring the School’s ability to attract and retain a faculty of the highest caliber—scholars and professionals who enable Penn GSE to be a thought leader and produce the next generation of transformative educators.

**Research /** Penn GSE boasts the fifth-highest amount of research grant support, as a percentage of revenue, of any school at Penn. The current total of **\$39.5 million** raised during the Campaign has made it possible for faculty to shape the national conversation about STEM education, standards reforms, college affordability, child education and welfare, twenty-first-century skills, and more.

**Facilities and Technology /** The capital expansion project will bring the majority of Penn GSE’s degree programs into a central location with flexible, technologically advanced learning spaces. With great momentum, the School is moving towards facilities that will match the excellence of its vision for education in the twenty-first century.

**The Penn GSE Annual Fund /** Support for annual giving directly increases Penn GSE’s operating budget. The **\$1.9 million** raised for the Campaign has supported the ongoing work of faculty, staff, and students and provided the School with the financial flexibility to fund new opportunities and address new challenges.



# Alumni Notes

## About Penn Affiliations

At Penn, all alumni have an affiliation, or series of letters and numbers following their name to indicate the degree, school, and year of graduation. A master’s degree from GSE is represented as GED and an education doctorate as GRD. A philosophy doctorate from any school at Penn is represented as GR. An undergraduate degree offered by the School of Education until 1961 is represented as ED. The two numbers following the letters represent the year in which that degree was completed.

## 1940s

**Doris Longaker, ED’42**, is ninety-eight years old and retired three years ago. Previously she worked for forty years as a preschool teacher at New Gulph Children’s Center.

## 1950s

**Phyllis Seligsohn, ED’59**, is a docent at The Rosenbach Museum and Library. She has been retired and traveling the world for over twenty years with her husband, **Shel Seligsohn, W’53**.

## 1960s

**Paul Humber, C’64, GED’65**, is the editor of *The Lasting Bible* (CR Ministries, 2019). The book addresses how translations of the Hebrew word *olam* and the Greek word *aionios* affect understandings of time and eternity in the Bible.

## 1970s

**Bonnie Botel-Sheppard, CGS’74, GED’76**, is delighted to be part of Penn GSE as the executive director of The Penn Literacy Network. Established in 1981, the program is still going strong.

**David Fitzkee, C’75, GED’75**, has retired after twenty-two years of teaching law at the U.S. Air Force Academy. He previously spent twenty years in the U.S. Army, including four teaching law at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

**Alice Korngold, CW’74, GED’77**, consults to multinational corporations and NGOs. She has authored two books on sustainability and board governance, along with studies of the value of non-profit board service.

**Eric White, GED’67, GRD’75**, is executive director emeritus of the division of undergraduate studies and emeritus associate dean for advising at Pennsylvania State University. He wrote “Leadership in Higher Education: Insights from Academic Advisors” (*The Mentor*, 2019, Volume 21).

## 1980s

**Pratiti Basu-Sarkar, GED’88**, is working with a group of students to create story-based video games, aiming to incorporate the arts into education for children with disabilities.

**Anne-Marie Cuniffe, GED’89**, completed a certificate in college counseling and works as a college consultant at Greenwich Education Group in Connecticut, focusing on students with mild to moderate learning disabilities.

**Andrea Ettingoff, GED’79, GR’84**, is in her twenty-second year of working with Philadelphia’s premier behavioral health agency, Children’s Crisis Treatment Center, serving children who have experienced trauma and other challenges.

**Brian Friedlander, GR’88**, authored a laminated guide, “Amazon Alexa in the Classroom,” recently published by National Professional Resources, Inc.

**Margaret Mulqueen, GED’78, GR’84**, has a private psychology practice in Brookline, MA. She has published articles in *The Boston Globe* and *AARP* magazine as well as an essay in *Psychotherapy Networker* about coming to terms with a client’s death.

**Leslie Nicholas, GED’85**, is a trainer at Hollywood Studios in Walt Disney World and facilitates College Techniques of Teamwork, a program in Epcot.

**Stephanie Nislow, C’88, GED’89**, recently colaunched the OgStar Reading app. Designed to help beginning readers, English language learners, and dyslexic students, it has reached users in twelve countries.

**Shelley B. Wepner, GED’73, GRD’80**, recently cowrote “University Leadership of Professional Development Schools” (*Excelsior: Leadership in Teaching and Learning*, 2018, Volume 11, Issue 1) with Dee Gómez.

**Ana Zentella, GR’81**, presented keynotes at the College of Charleston in October and the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley in February. She contributed to *Questioning Theoretical Primitives in Linguistic Inquiry* (John Benjamins, 2018).

## 1990s

**Phyllis Brust, PT’75, GED’83, GRD’90**, cowrote a chapter of *Advancing Women in Academic STEM Fields through Dual Career Policies and Practices* (Information Age Publishing, 2018). A former career counselor, she has launched CareerMutt.com to help pet lovers learn about careers.

**Gail Fernandez, GED’91**, received her Ed.D. in community college leadership in 2018. She is dean of assessment at Bergen Community College in New Jersey.

**Althier M. Lazar, GR’93**, is a professor in the Teacher Education Department at Saint Joseph’s University. She coedited *Schools of Promise for Multilingual Students: Transforming Literacies, Learning, and Lives* (Teachers College Press, 2018).

**Margaret Linn, GR’95**, remains a faculty member at Swarthmore College. Her work within and outside of the college focuses on students with special needs. She also serves on the board of trustees of Delaware Valley Friends School.

**Gloria McNeal, GNU’75, GR’98**, is a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing, the highest honor bestowed by the discipline. She was recently named a Well-Being Champion by the AARP Public Policy Institute for improving health care access for underserved communities in Los Angeles County.

**Habib Nayerahmadi, GRD’90**, works for the Department of Health of the State of New Jersey as director of the psychology department at Ann Klein Forensic Center. He is proud to be a graduate of Penn GSE.

**Lisa Paglang, GED’96**, has been at Penn for the past twelve years working with international students in the English Language Programs. She enjoys her responsibilities in administration, teaching, and student advising, as well as the environment of Penn.

**Kristy Perry, GED’95**, is a tenured professor of English and English as a Second Language. She is pleased to be coordinator of new faculty programs at the community college where she teaches during the academic year.

**Carolyn Wilson, GED’91**, is in her twenty-eighth year as a school counselor and twenty-fifth as an adjunct instructor at Cabrini University. She is pursuing a graduate degree at Widener University and remains grateful for her experience at Penn GSE.

## 2000s

**Tracy Auerbach, GED’02**, has written several articles in trade journals and educational publications, as well as a young adult science fiction/fantasy novel, *The Sin Soldiers*, to be published by The Parliament House in July 2019.

**Deborah Bieler, GR’04**, wrote *The Power of Teacher Talk: Promoting Equity and Retention Through Student Interactions* (Teachers College Press, 2018). The book proposes that a commitment to equity in

the classroom can reduce attrition rates of both students and teachers.

**Kathryn Boettinger, GED’00**, has returned to the National Hockey League as director of hockey administration for the Vegas Golden Knights. She looks forward to assisting young learners as academic advisor and scholarship committee chair for the Vegas Junior Golden Knights.

**John Brewster, G’03, GED’03**, will retire in June after twenty-two years in the U.S. Navy, two years at Penn, and sixteen years teaching Latin and English at Strath Haven High School in Wallingford, PA.

**Michael Class, GRD’04**, is responsible for the faith development of students, faculty, and staff as chaplain to the Grand Traverse Area Catholic Schools in the region of Traverse City, MI.

**Rahshene Davis, GED’03**, assistant superintendent of The School District of Philadelphia, says the District is always in search of great talent to support its amazing students.

**Sandra Dean, W’59, GRD’06**, is a consultant to the Park City Public School District preschools in Park City, UT. She has facilitated an exchange to help the district learn from The Philadelphia School’s approach to project-based learning.

**Heidi Ebbesson, GED’08**, works for the Department of Defense as a language testing specialist and a test site manager for English language testing at U.S. embassies in the Middle East.

**Jennifer Glynn, GED’97, GR’03**, director of research and evaluation at the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, wrote the research report “Persistence: The Success of Students Who Transfer from Community Colleges to Selective Four-Year Institutions.”

**Dana Green, GED’02**, is a manager at Stanford University.

**Anthony Huh, GED’09**, is director of learning design and delivery at the American College of Financial Services. He leads the design, development, and

implementation of creative and forward-thinking learning solutions.

**Alan Joss, GED’04**, is celebrating his seventeenth year working in the field of immigration and third year with Berry Appleman & Leiden LLP. He and his spouse Darrick celebrate their tenth wedding anniversary this year.

**Romilla Karnati, GED’00, GR’08**, is a senior specialist at Save the Children, a role in which she provides technician assistance to countries in Africa and Asia. She is technical lead for programming for children from ages zero to three years.

**John F. Kucia, GRD’04**, vice president emeritus of Xavier University, coauthored *Leadership in Balance: New Habits of the Mind* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), which has become the foundation for the Medical Device Leaders Certificate program at Xavier.

**Jennifer Kuter, GED’02**, joined Friends Hospital as the director of the Greystone Program, a community residence serving adults with chronic mental health issues.

**Patrick Leahy, GRD’09**, will become president of Monmouth University in West Long Branch, NJ, in August. He has served as president of Wilkes University in Wilkes-Barre, PA, for the past seven years.

**Robert Muller, GRD’04**, is dean of National Louis University’s National College of Education in Chicago, which proudly hosted Penn GSE Dean Pam Grossman for a daylong event exploring core practices in teacher preparation.

**Natasha Murray, GRD’05**, authored “Making Imaginary Roots Real” (*Mathematics Teacher*, September 2018, Volume 112, No. 1), which is available online in both English and Spanish.

**Joseph Petrosino, GED’07**, specializes in consulting for special education, career and technical education, and pupil personnel services as chief academic officer of Educational Assurance Solutions.



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**Stephanie Raible, GED’07**, graduated with an Ed.D. in organizational leadership from Northeastern University in December. She was promoted to assistant professor and faculty director of social entrepreneurship at the University of Delaware in January.

**Monique Robinson, GED’08**, is celebrating three years as an early literacy specialist with The School District of Philadelphia. She previously traveled the world while teaching in Tokyo, Japan, and Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

**Allison Rodman, GED’09**, was named an Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) faculty member. Her book *Personalized Professional Learning: A Job-Embedded Pathway for Elevating Teacher Voice* will be published in May as ASCD’s Premium Member Book.

## 2010s

**Sahar Akhtar, GED’15**, cowrote “Understanding the Plight of Pakistan’s Education System and its Impact on Youth Development,” a chapter in *Adolescent Psychology in Today’s World*, Volume 3 (Praeger, 2018).

**Joseph Boselovic, GED’12**, is researching school segregation, education policy, and relationships between families and schools as a doctoral student in sociology at Johns Hopkins University.

**Wendy Castillo, GR’18**, is a lecturer at the Woodrow Wilson School of International and Public Policy, as well as a Harvard Strategic Data Project Fellow with the Overdeck Family Foundation.

**Gernissia Cherfrere GED’15**, thanks Penn GSE for providing her with foundational building blocks that she applies in her work. She says to trust the job search process, smile often, and network.

**Douglas Clayton, GRD’12**, runs talent management for satellite operator SES. He directed and produced an award-winning documentary, *Dovere for Camden*, and thanks the PennCLO program for inspiring his work.

**Mahesh Daas, GRD’13**, has been appointed one of two editors representing North America in the *International Journal on Construction Robotics*, published by Springer. His coedited volume *Towards a Robotic Architecture* (Oro Editions, 2018) was chosen by *Architect’s Newspaper* as the Top Tech Book of 2018.

**Gretchen Dobson, GRD’13**, is among the first International Education Leadership Fellows in the Department of Education, Planning, and Leadership at the University at Albany School of Education. The program is leading a new paradigm for professional development.

**Zhiqin Fang, GED’14**, cofounded CYA Education Consulting in 2017. The business provides professional consulting services for Chinese students who want to study abroad, aiming to bridge the gap between Chinese and Western cultures.

**Stephanie Fazio, GED’11**, has written her first book, the fantasy novel *Bisecter* (Syafant Press, 2019), and has other forthcoming novels.

**Rachel Garver, GED’10**, is an assistant professor of educational leadership at Montclair State University. She researches school safety and discipline, policies that attempt to promote equity, and the preparation of school leaders committed to social justice.

**Kalyn Higgins, GED’14**, is a full-time learning specialist at a private school in the Upper West Side of Manhattan. She provides supportive services for students with learning differences.

**Chimere Holmes, GED’15**, an ordained reverend and licensed professional counselor, was named one of the 2018 Women on the Move by *Main Line Today Magazine*. This cover feature highlighted twenty area female leaders who are making a significant impact in their fields.

**Irene Greaves Jaimes, GED’15**, has published her first book, *Lovescaping: Building the Humanity of Tomorrow by Practicing Love in Action* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing, 2018). She believes learning to love is the most important purpose of education.

**Lynette Kehoe, GED’18**, teaches fifth grade English language arts at a public charter middle school in South Seattle that seeks to transform educational outcomes and opportunities for students of color, as well as for low-income and immigrant students.

**Daniel Kent, GED’16**, is a research analyst at Research for Action in Philadelphia. He investigates promising policies and practices in higher education to close the equity gap for underrepresented students.

**Abraham Kou, GED’15, GED’16**, joined Thriveworks as a licensed clinician in group private practice, specializing in chemical dependency and trauma treatment.

**Hieu Le, GED’18**, is a CEO at G.A.P. Institute, a career development social enterprise in Vietnam that served over ten thousand students during its third year. He thanks the Education Entrepreneurship program at Penn GSE for helping him establish a sustainable business model.

**Aviva Legatt, GED’07, GRD’15**, was named a senior contributor at *Forbes*. She has become an executive coach for private sector leaders while continuing to serve students, families, and education startups as a college admissions consultant.

**Marc Mancinelli, GED’07, GED’08, GRD’14**, founded the South Jersey Data Leaders Partnership (SJDLP), a nonprofit organization that helps K-12 educators become confident data leaders in their schools. The SJDLP recently partnered with Catalyst @ Penn GSE to help educators use data effectively.

**Ellen Frank Martinak, GED’13**, is director of the Bridging the Gaps program at Penn, which links health-related services for vulnerable populations with interprofessional training for health and social service professionals.

**Philip McAdoo, GRD’15**, is an educator and advocate for LGBTQ youth, families, and educators. His dissertation, “Independent Queers: LGBTQ Educators in Independent Schools Speak Out,” highlights over thirty-five distinguished voices.

**Shaun McAlmont, GRD’18**, is president of career readiness education at K12 Inc., an education technology company that seeks to improve high school graduation rates by exposing students to career pathways and postsecondary education options.

**Jonathan McMillan, GED’18**, reports that he is president and founder of West Georgia College, an accreditation-seeking institution.

**Julia McWilliams, GED’11, GR’17**, has written *Compete or Close: Traditional Neighborhood Schools Under Pressure*, to be published by Harvard Education Press in May.

**Mari Meyer, GED’12**, has accepted the role of director, volunteer engagement and community impact, for the University of Chicago Alumni Association. She has spent the past six years at the university in leadership roles in alumni relations and development.

**Mina Mizumatsu, GED’12**, completed her Ph.D. in comparative and international education development at the University of Minnesota. She is associate professor at Tohoku University in Japan, where she promotes internationalization and professional development.

**Montez Paschall, GED’15**, works at the University of Massachusetts Boston, where he focuses on integrating the first-ever residential hall on a commuter campus.

**Payal Patel, GED’14**, has established reflective meditations to support rigorous math education in her classroom. She shares her work in mindfulness and meditation at schools, colleges, and conferences, as well as on her blog.

**Nelson Pham, GED’17**, started a new role as the multicultural program director at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He educates the campus community on how to better serve students of color and develop a more equitable space.

**Hang Qin, GED’18**, founded a start-up company to build software that helps policymakers utilize data science to make predictions. He also aims to help the next generation of educators utilize data more powerfully.

**Callista Regis, GED’17**, teaches English language arts at a charter school in New York. Due to her success in communicating with parents, she trains staff in this topic and has inspired the school’s new initiative in parental involvement.

**Christina Riso, GED’14**, was appointed director of alumni engagement at Delaware Valley University in September. She oversees university-wide engagement efforts and strategy, including fundraising.

**John Rogers, GRD’17**, joined The Rise Fund. He makes social impact investments in K-12 and higher education in the United States and emerging markets.

**Ronnie Ross, GED’14**, is running for Virginia’s 27th Senate District after teaching for nearly a decade. His campaign focuses on issues including education, healthcare, and the environment.

**Olzhas Sakenov, GED’18**, started a new job as a consultant in Kazakhstan in January 2019.

**Keycee Salmacia, GRD’17**, cowrote “Learning to Walk the Walk of Continuous Improvement,” a chapter of *Data for Continuous Programmatic Improvement: Steps Colleges of Education Must Take to Become a Data Culture* (Taylor & Francis, 2018).

**Rachel Scheer, GED’10**, achieved National Board Certification in Literacy: Reading-Language Arts (early and middle childhood) from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

**Elizabeth Scheyder, ENG’87, GED’00, GR’12**, has been promoted to senior instructional technology project leader in the computing department at Penn’s School of Arts and Sciences. She looks forward to helping all of the departments across SAS to link technology and pedagogy.

**Dale Schmid, GRD’15**, wrote “Dance Entry Level Teacher Assessment (DELTA): Reframing Dance Teacher Preparation through Consensus Building” (*Arts Education Policy Review*, January 2019) and received the National Dance Education Organization’s Outstanding Leadership Award for 2018.

**Rosalyn Schorr, GED’17**, accepted a new position at Penn’s Perelman School of Medicine as academic affairs coordinator in the Medical Education Office, a role that aligns with her passions for institutional assessment and accreditation.

**Thomas Shea, GRD’18**, began a new position as assistant vice president of development for High Point University in High Point, NC.

**Carolyn Sloan, GED’17**, completed her second children’s book, *Welcome to Jazz: A Swing-Along Celebration of America’s Music*, due to be published in October by Workman Publishing. She is a music educator at The Berkeley Carroll School in Park Slope, Brooklyn.



**Joseph Sweeney, GRD'16**, is executive director of the How I Decide Foundation, an educational nonprofit dedicated to the belief that better decisions lead to better lives and a better society.

**Guan Wang, GED'15**, is continuing her doctoral study at The University of North Carolina Chapel Hill while working on an NIH-funded study of infant brain development. She also works for a Penn GSE alumni-operated education startup, EdwithU.

**Yunning Wang, GED'16**, has been working at Alibaba's International Core Business Unit since June. She manages a talent program, integrating resources for a new model of professional education.

*Submissions have been edited due to space constraints and magazine style guidelines.*

# Share Your News

Fill out our Alumni Notes form at [www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni/get-involved/submit-alumni-notes](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni/get-involved/submit-alumni-notes) to tell us your updates.

# GIVING THE OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE

"My experience at Penn GSE deepened my commitment to equal educational opportunity, to service in pursuit of economic and social justice, and to working collaboratively for the common good. Penn GSE gave me the knowledge and skills to explore, understand, and reduce the barriers that too many of our children face."

— **Jill Sunday Bartoli, GR'86**, Emerita, Elizabethtown College Member, The William B. Castetter Circle



[www.gse.upenn.edu/support/ways-to-give/planned-giving](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/support/ways-to-give/planned-giving)



Through more than three decades of teaching, research, writing, and civic engagement, Jill has worked to make a difference. With a gift to Penn GSE through her retirement plan, she helps the School's students and faculty have the opportunity to do the same.

# TIPS FROM THE EDUCATOR'S PLAYBOOK: DECISION-MAKING FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

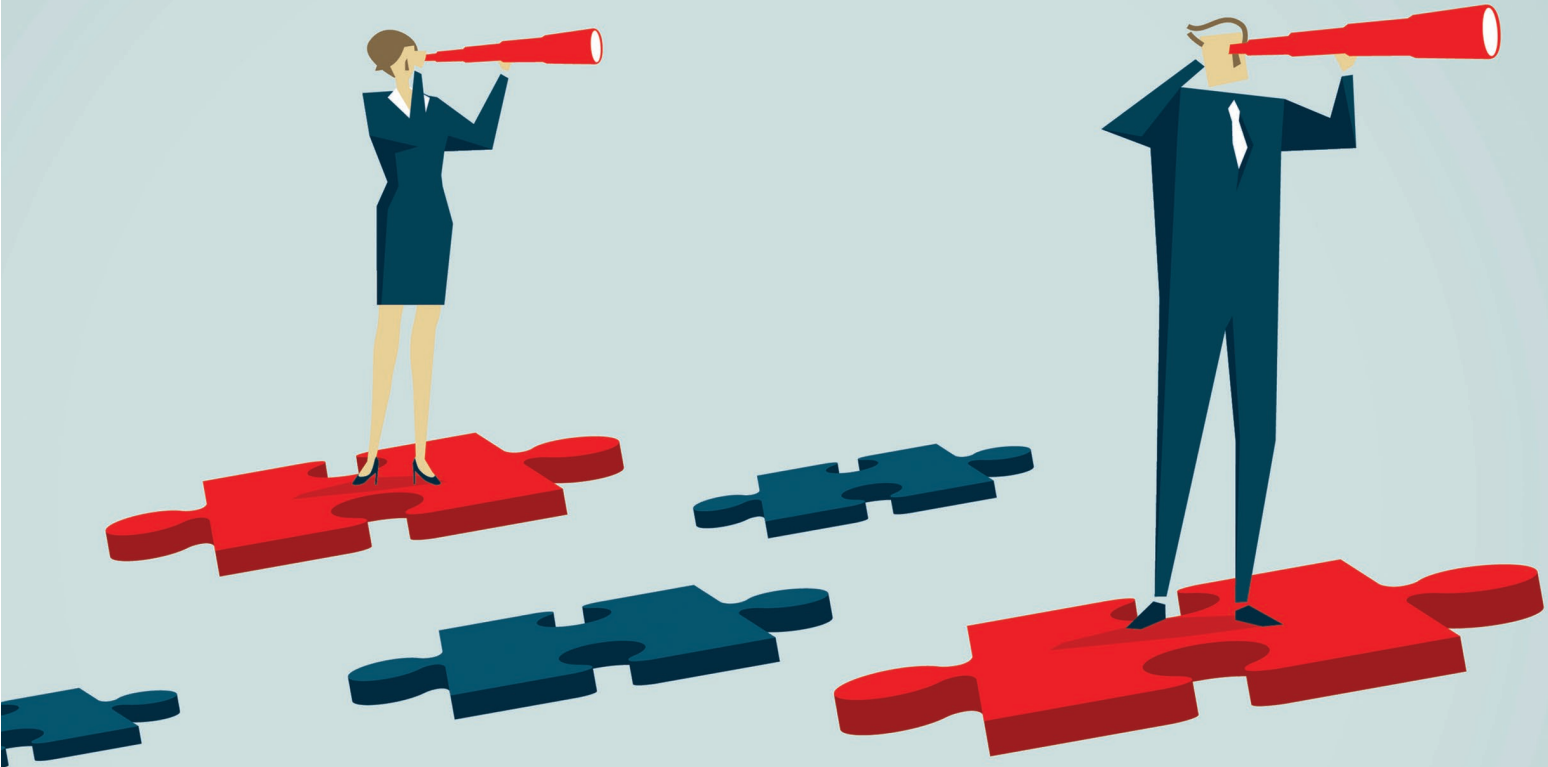
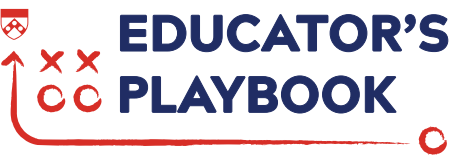


Photo by iStock.com/erhu1979

Leadership is largely a skill based on decision making. This is especially true in schools, where leaders have to balance the needs of diverse groups while making hundreds of decisions each week. Like all skills, leadership can be improved with practice and self-examination. Penn GSE Senior Fellow Mike Johanek, director of the School's Mid-Career Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership, suggests that leaders can begin sharpening their decision making by asking themselves three questions when a problem arises:



Penn GSE Senior Fellow  
**Michael Johanek**



University of Pennsylvania  
Graduate School of Education

## Is this really my problem?

Leaders can get trapped addressing minor issues that could be better handled by others in their organization. Sometimes this happens because they have—accidentally or intentionally—created an environment where faculty and staff feel they are expected to take even the smallest problems up the food chain, or fear not doing so. Other times, leaders get unnecessarily drawn into minor issues.

Remember that educational leaders can focus on only so many things at once. Generally, organizations function best when leaders focus on vision and priorities, communicating those clearly, and empowering the appropriate people to address other areas.

(continued on next page) →





## Want more advice for educators?

These tips are adapted from *The Educator's Playbook*, a monthly Penn GSE newsletter that distills faculty research into useful advice for K-12 educators.

Visit [www.gse.upenn.edu/news/subscribe](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/news/subscribe) to sign up.

## Am I looking at the right problem?

Suppose a parent complains to the superintendent about the job the middle school principal is doing. Maybe the principal really is the problem. But maybe the principal is the focal point for how the parent experiences a district-wide issue, such as a high-stress approach to standardized testing. If the superintendent can't discern the underlying issue, it will continue to affect parents across the district even if conditions improve in the school in question. Skilled leaders often pause before confronting a challenge. They examine the problem from multiple perspectives without assuming that it was framed correctly. They try to account for whatever role they might have in the problem, and the inherent biases that come with their position. A good first step can be to separate the complaint from the complainant. Then, ask how other people in the community might experience the problem. One final, routinely overlooked question: does anyone not see this as a problem, and if so, why?

## What kind of solution do we need?

Technical solutions are specific and targeted. The technical solution to a leaking gym roof would be to call a roofer. There is a temptation in education, though, to address every problem with technical solutions. For example, if parents aren't showing up to parent-teacher conferences, let's send out more snappy emails. But many problems school leaders face are actually adaptive problems. These, as researchers Ronald Heifetz and Martin Linsky wrote, "require experiments, new discoveries, and adjustments from numerous places in the organization or community."

In the parent-teacher conference example, parents may be disengaged because of perceived disrespect or condescension from the school, because of language barriers and cultural issues, or simply because of the competing time demands of multiple jobs. The school leader will have to understand the actual mix of causes in order to create a successful solution. Adaptive solutions take time, and trial and error, so leaders should be transparent and communicative as they work through them. Treat colleagues as partners in the resolution, perhaps by examining the situation in team meetings. Throughout the process, show the community that your stance is one of active, evidence-based inquiry into advancing the quality of student educational experiences. ■



## EXTRAORDINARY IMPACT

THE CAMPAIGN FOR  PENN GSE



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## Penn GSE Features Higher Education Leaders at HOMECOMING

Penn GSE highlighted leaders from across higher education at a panel discussion for alumni and friends during Penn's Homecoming Weekend on November 10, 2018. The panel featured Penn Provost and Presidential Professor of Law and Education Wendell Pritchett, Community College of Philadelphia President Donald "Guy" Generals, and three GSE alumni: Tarrant County College – South President Peter Jordan, GRD'10; Whittier College President Linda Oubré, GRD'17; and Widener University President Julie E. Wollman, GED'85. Held in Stiteler Hall, the event began with a welcome by Penn GSE Dean

Pam Grossman, who noted that the School's new spaces in Stiteler are part of a larger planned building expansion as part of the *Extraordinary Impact Campaign*.

James S. Riepe Professor Laura Perna, chair of the Higher Education division and executive director of Penn AHEAD, led the conversation, entitled "The Future of Higher Education." Dr. Perna asked panelists about some of the biggest challenges and opportunities facing their institutions today, including how to meet the needs of diverse student populations. Following the discussion, alumni and friends gathered for a reception.

Read more and watch the conversation in the Penn GSE Newsroom at [www.gse.upenn.edu/news](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/news) and save the date for Homecoming 2019 at Penn GSE on November 9.

Visit [www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni/events](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/alumni/events) to find upcoming alumni events.







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"The best gift that anyone can give to themselves or another person is an education. As a pediatrician, I have drawn upon the teaching skills I gained at Penn GSE to communicate with patients and mentor medical students. I contribute to Penn GSE because the School had a very positive influence on my life and I hope to help others share my experience."

— Henry (Hank) J. Lipsitt, MD, C'69, GED'70  
Benchmark Society Member

*Hank has given to the Penn GSE Annual Fund for over forty years. His loyalty helps Penn GSE have an extraordinary impact.*

**EXTRAORDINARY  
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