

Ed.

HARVARD ED. MAGAZINE

How can schools better support transgender students like **Jacob** if educators aren't getting the support they need?





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Convo.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION: SEND YOUR COMMENTS TO LETTERS@GSE.HARVARD.EDU



1 Our story on incoming faculty member Tony Jack, “Poor, but Privileged,” found its way to a lot of readers who felt the piece resonated with their own experiences growing up and going to college. As Tosha Downey, advocacy director at the Memphis Education Fund wrote on our Facebook page, “This article is EVERYTHING. I attended an HBCU for undergrad and had the EXACT same doubly disadvantaged experience. It was eye-opening, but I was ready by grad school and law school! Thank you for the appropriate language and framing, Dr. Jack.” Vernelle Shura Edwards, another reader, wrote, “This is an excellent article. I never felt poor until I went to an overwhelmingly white historic college and met students who traveled to Italy for ice cream and summered in the Hamptons. Growing up on my parents’ small farm surrounded by loving, proud, sometimes eccentric family, I never felt underprivileged.” However, **IVANA ZACARIAS, ED.M.’09**, worried that research on the advantages of the privileged poor might be do a disservice to poor kids who go to public school. “I am not sure if it is the right approach to research,” she wrote. “It’s OK for institutional decisions about what colleges should do for each person. It may end up defending private high schools instead of emphasizing how to equip all students with the same resources along their compulsory education.”

2 From our winter 2017 issue, the cover story on boredom, “Bored Out of Their Minds,” continues to bring in letters and comments. Several readers zeroed in on Associate Professor Jal Mehta’s comment that engagement is key to overcoming boredom in school. Ana Maria del Pilar agreed but wondered, “What is the key to ‘engage’? Projects?” Pete Reilly wrote that in addition to engagement, you need empowerment. “Students who are empowered truly own their learning.” Another reader, Janice Antolik Vallow-Latin, said that there’s no one-size-fits-all definition for engagement. Insead, she wrote, “Figure out who your students are (each one), then decide what ‘engaging’ means/is for them — group and individual. This is a holistic task, also requiring a lot of meaningful minutia.”

3 We’ll give ourselves a little pat on the back. The magazine was recently awarded a national silver award in the general interest magazine category from CASE, the Council for Advancement and Support of Education. It also won for best redesign from the national UCDA Design Competition.



OOPS, WE DID IT AGAIN

We made a few mistakes in our last issue. Gigi Luk is an associate professor, not a lecturer, at the B.E.E. lab. We added an extra “e” to photographer Jillian Clark’s last name. We also misstated Senator Stan Rosenberg’s stance on charter schools. Rosenberg voted “no” on ballot question 2. And Jobs for the Future didn’t celebrate five years — the Pathways project did. Jobs celebrated 25 years!

Past Tense

This nugget from our summer 2005 issue focuses on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which we explore in this issue’s feature story on the role that the federal government plays in education. The 2005 piece also focuses on former dean Frank Keppel, who elevated the federal role in education. As the story notes:









A *Time* cover story from October 1965 describes Keppel as a “dark, slight, intense bolt of activity. In three short years in Washington, [he] has changed the Office of Education from custodian of highly forgettable statistics to the nation’s most energetic nerve center of academic ferment.” Before serving in Washington, however, Keppel was appointed dean of the Ed School in 1948 at the unheard-of age of 32. He lacked a graduate degree, or any coursework in education, but that mattered little to James Conant, Harvard University’s president. In Keppel, Conant saw an innovative thinker who would bring a new direction to the school. ... Keppel remained dean of the Ed School until he was called to Washington in 1962.

“Frank put the School on the map,” says Ted Sizer, a former HGSE dean himself who is currently a visiting professor from Brown. “With

Conant’s help, he raised money and attracted good people by being unconventional. Frank recruited people who were not predictable, who were interested in education and had a kind of chutzpah.”

That same creative approach would mark Keppel’s work on crafting ESEA, as well as the political maneuvering required to make it a reality. Appointed commissioner of education by President John F. Kennedy in 1962, Keppel entered an office that, in his words, “was regarded as a scut job with low standing and low reputation. The Office of Education was seen as a place to collect statistics and crank out a few formulas.” He made the move to Washington nonetheless, where a political environment suspicious of any federal involvement in education confronted him.

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TODD DIONNE

Behind the Story

Lory Hough, Editor in Chief



What made me pitch the idea for our cover story on transgender students and the kind of training educators get — or, more likely, don’t get — to support them? It was, as most good answers tend to be, partly for personal reasons. One of the families in the story lives in my city. Their children go to my son’s school. We share friends. After their son transitioned, the district held an open forum in the cafeteria on gender identification with Jeff Perrotti, a 1985 alum of the Ed School and director of the Safe Schools Program in Massachusetts. The forum was open to anyone but really geared toward parents. The superintendent said teacher training would follow, and I remember thinking, “How common is this, especially at the elementary level?” I knew I wanted to find out. As one mom in my story pointed out, “If stories aren’t told, if they don’t filter into the classroom, and if students” — and teachers and gym coaches and lunch staff — “don’t ever hear the word *transgender*,” nothing is going to get better.

Intro.

NEWS + NOTES FROM APPIAN WAY



From Harvard to Honky Tonk

A CHANCE CONVERSATION WITH A COUNTRY LEGEND CHANGES ONE ALUM'S CAREER

STORY BY **ANDREW BAULD**, ED.M.'16

We expect the Ed School to produce the next generation of great teachers, education entrepreneurs, and policy-makers, but for **LEAH WALDO, ED.M.'15**, her time on Appian Way, including one foot-stomping, memorable event, led her on an unexpected journey from Cambridge to Nashville to become a country musician.

It was truly a life-changing afternoon for Waldo as she sat in the audience of Askwith Hall in January 2015, listening to country legends Garth Brooks and Trisha Yearwood share stories of their own careers. At one point, Brooks described how after all his years performing he still got nervous before taking the stage.

For Waldo, it was a revelation. Despite having been a musician for much of her life, she herself had recently begun to struggle with severe bouts of stage fright.

"I began to get really nervous when I got on stage," Waldo says. "It got to the point where I'd shake, I'd get so nervous I'd drop my pick, I'd forget the words. My stage fright kept me from doing the thing I loved the most."

During the Q&A session, Waldo asked Brooks how he got over his nerves, not expecting it to become a chance to tackle her own fears firsthand. Brooks called her on stage, handed over his guitar, and invited her to perform in a "baptism by fire."

Since that day, Waldo has started taking the stage once again, performing under the name Elisa Smith. She's formed a band, The Tiny Little Lies, playing what she calls "outlaw honky-tonk" inspired by Hank Williams and Loretta Lynn. This past April she headed to Nashville to record her first album. She even brought a piece of that day with her: Brooks gave her his Takamine guitar after the performance, and she used it on the new record. ▶

As much as that chance meeting with Brooks gave her the courage to get on stage, Waldo credits her time as a member of the Arts in Education (AIE) cohort for the enormous inspiration in shaping her songwriting.

"I think my coursework at AIE really made me think a lot about storytelling," Waldo says. "I was surrounded by stories — from my classmates, my professors, and other folks I met along the way — and I learned to listen, which in turn made me a better songwriter."

Waldo says that she has made a concerted effort to write songs that are "subversively feminist," flipping gender norms on their heads. In one song, for instance, Waldo has the woman in the position of power driving a truck instead of just going along for the ride.

One project in AIE in particular inspired Waldo to start thinking about what subversive country music might look like. The goal of the assignment was to research an artist who influenced your life. On a whim, Waldo chose to look at Dr. Seuss.

"I read an interview with him where he talks about being subversive, how his message is couched because if the moral of the story is obvious, then no one will want to pay attention," Waldo says. "That idea really resonated with me."

Waldo says she is particularly hopeful her lyrics will have an impact on her male listeners, who currently make up the majority of her fan base.

"It's funny that men like the songs, but they don't realize the female is in the position of power," Waldo says. "But even if it goes over their head, that's the power of subversion, and maybe eventually it's something that will get into their heads."

Once the new record is done, Waldo plans to go on tour around New England and eventually make her way down to the Carolinas and Virginia. It's been a surprise path, but in many ways, AIE, and in particular the program's faculty director, Senior Lecturer **STEVE SEIDEL, ED.M.'89, ED.D.'95**, prepared her for this new career.

"Steve often stressed the importance of allowing time to wonder and see where those wonderings take you," Waldo says. "I think Steve helped me to recognize that oftentimes the things that you create lead you to places you would not have otherwise gotten to."

ANDREW BAULD IS A NEWS OFFICER FOR ARTS AND HUMANITIES IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO NEWS OFFICE.

WISE WORDS

"It helps students see the value and meaning of schoolwork."

Professor **Nancy Hill** on the importance of parents helping their kids understand the link between education and future goals. (CNN)



IT WAS THE MOST AMAZING AMAZING Race ever for **SCOTT FLANARY, ED.M.'10**. In June, this self-described superfan of the CBS reality adventure show was announced the winner of the 29th season, along with his teammate, Brooke Camhi. *Ed.* caught up with Flanary, a campus recruiter, to talk strategy, TV fame, and spending the prize money.

YOU TOOK A LEAVE FROM WORK? I once told my boss that I was a huge reality show fanatic and if I were ever cast on a show, I'd need a leave of absence. She agreed. When the time came, I let her know I was cashing in on my "need to leave." (I was speaking in code because I was bound to a nondisclosure contract.) I returned to work days after the race finished and couldn't say a word for nearly a year.

PRIOR YOU BUILT SCHOOLS WITH BUILDON. HOW DID THIS HELP IN THE RACE? I partnered with buildOn in 2014, Nicaragua, and 2015, Malawi. I'll

go on trek again this November to Senegal. I was given the opportunity to immerse myself in a culture unlike my own. I learned what it was like to leave the comfort of my routine and be comfortable with the unknown. I'm not great at foreign languages, so to have the confidence to know that I could still learn to communicate with others, usually with sign language and basic words, really set me up for building confidence in other areas.

WAS IT WEIRD TO WATCH YOURSELF ON TV? At first it was a little weird to see myself on one of my favorite shows, but then I fell into the excitement of watching myself relive all these memories. It can get frustrating to watch them edit out some of your best moments (such as persuading teams to do what I wanted), but they certainly tell the best story on screen regardless. I wanted to be a strategic player, skilled at using his superfan status to trump the competition, and I think I succeeded!

ON THE SHOW, YOU SEEMED VERY PATIENT. ARE YOU NORMALLY A PATIENT PERSON? Impatience was one of my weaknesses going into the race. I quickly learned that I needed to turn this around to support Brooke because her success equaled my success. I couldn't win *The Amazing Race* if she didn't win *The Amazing Race*. Luckily this has parlayed into my non-race life: I have more patience with people overall.

HAVE YOU SINCE HEARD FROM ANY ED SCHOOL PROFESSORS? Bridget Terry Long is a fan! She was my favorite professor, and it was so fun to receive live texts as she watched the show with her boys. I remembered she was a reality TV fan, so when the cast was announced, I was sure to let her know she had to tune in.

DURING THE RACE, YOU ALWAYS HAD A NOTEBOOK. WHY? I knew a memory challenge would likely appear in the final leg. To prep, I wrote down every clue word-for-word along with

team placements, check-in greeter names and descriptions, both detour options, and who completed the roadblock on each leg. Brooke had the same mindset, so we shared notes and memorized everything during pit stops. We even memorized each other's first impressions of each other and everyone else. We were prepared! As you can tell from the Wrigley Field challenge, our preparedness allowed us to get in and out of that challenge quickly: 15 minutes.

NEXT ON YOUR BUCKET LIST? Now I want to try my hand at *Survivor*! I'm a fan of the CBS trifecta (*Amazing Race*, *Survivor*, *Big Brother*) because I love the strategic game component. Outside of reality television, I just got a promotion at work and will soon relocate to Seattle.

THE PRIZE MONEY! HAVE YOU PUT A DOWN PAYMENT ON A HOUSE YET? I'm paying off my Harvard loans first (haha) and then investing the rest before I find the house that's perfect for me.

New and Promoted Faculty

One new faculty member joined the Ed School this year, and several familiar faces on Appian Way were also honored with promotions.



► Professor **Nonie Lesaux** was promoted to academic dean.



► **JAMES KIM, ED.M.'98, ED.D.'02**, **PAOLA UCCELLI, ED.M.'93, ED.D.'03**, and **Stephanie Jones** (bottom left) were promoted from associate professor to professor.



► Assistant professor **Roberto Gonzales** was promoted to professor.

► **Adriana Umaña-Taylor** joined the Ed School in July as a professor. Prior, she was a professor at Arizona State University.

“How do we make ourselves visible allies to undocumented students, and what does it mean to not only *say* we support undocumented students and their families, but publically and visibly *show* that support?”



UndocuAlly 101

USING HER WEST COAST EXPERIENCE, CURRENT DOCTORAL STUDENT STEPHANY CUEVAS TRAINS EDUCATORS AND ACTIVISTS ON WAYS TO BE AN ALLY FOR UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS

STORY BY LORY HOUGH

WHEN CALIFORNIA NATIVE STEPHANY CUEVAS, ED.M.'15, a current doctoral student, moved to the East Coast in 2012, she was more than familiar with the term “undocuAlly,” which basically states that someone has made a commitment to be a visible ally to undocumented students and their families. Having lived in California in a predominantly Latino community, and having been a student at University of California, Berkeley, where the topic of immigration predominates, she had heard the term often.

Cuevas was surprised, then, when she moved to the East Coast in 2012 to start the Ed.D. Doctoral Program, how infrequently she heard the term undocuAlly and how few mandatory courses local universities offered on how to support undocumented students. She decided she could help.

“I was a college adviser in Oakland (California) public schools, and I was always trying to find ways to support students,” she says. “Around my second year here, I said, I have this experience, so what can I do to help?”

She developed a workshop that would address what she believes is key information all educators should know about undocumented students and their families. In 2014, she debuted the information at the Ed School’s Alumni of Color Con-

ference, including demographics about this population and key definitions. She also talked about research that showed what life was like for undocumented students, highlighting the stresses the group faces, such as anxiety caused by fear of deportation.

“I then walked through state and federal policies that impact undocumented students,” Cuevas says, including *Plyer v. Doe*, the national DREAM ACT, and DACA. “I believe that this is the baseline information that educators need to know in order to begin to discuss what it means to be an ally to this population.”

Since then, the workshop has morphed into an undocuAlly 101 training that Cuevas has presented at K-12 schools, at colleges, and at a social justice conference in Boston. She even worked with the Harvard Chan School of Public Health, tweaking the material for students who would eventually work in the health sector.

“This shift in context included detailed information about the impact of an undocumented status on health and the services available,” she says.

At her trainings, Cuevas also introduces to her audience the undocuAlly term.

“How do we make ourselves visible allies to undocumented students,” she asks, “and what does it mean to not only *say* we support undocumented students

and their families, but publically and visibly *show* that support?”

One way to do this, she says, is to post supportive signs and stickers on doors and in hallways — something made popular by the LGBTQ movement.

“The immigrant rights movement has learned a lot from the LGBTQ community in this way,” she says. “For example, there are signs you can print out that say you’re welcome here. The purpose is to not only show visible support, but to also signal to students that there are people in that organization that are willing to help them in any way they can.”

No matter how educators decide to support undocumented students, Cuevas says they must first do their homework.

“As educators, we leverage great power and can often serve as a bridge between students and different systems that may be difficult to understand or navigate,” she says. “Using this position of power to seek information and advocate for students and families is essential now more than ever. Educators should inform themselves about the resources available for undocumented and immigrant populations and connect with them. Educators are not expected to know how to address all the questions, but they should know where to go to and who to direct families to if necessary.”

What Truly Matters

AN EXCERPT FROM DEAN JIM RYAN'S NEW BOOK



IN APRIL, DEAN JAMES RYAN PUBLISHED *Wait, What?* based on his 2016 Commencement speech. The book, which landed on *The New York Times* best-seller list, discusses the importance of asking, and listening for, five simple but important questions. In this excerpt, Ryan remembers his dad hitting baseballs to him and asks the question, “What truly matters?”

Throughout the spring and summer, we would spend hours together, him hitting ball after ball for me to field and occasionally giving me advice, which one time included, “Okay, just give the tooth to me and head back out there,” after I had misjudged a line drive. “It was just a baby tooth,” I remember him later telling my (slightly horrified) mom.

As he got older, my father grew sentimental, and he would get

quietly emotional at momentous occasions like graduations and weddings. When I graduated from college, he said, with tears in his eyes, that he guessed I must have learned a thing or two fielding baseballs in the backyard. He meant it half-jokingly, but it was also his poignant way of acknowledging that he hadn’t gone to college himself and of expressing his hope that he had nonetheless helped me along the way.

The baseball line became a running joke between us, which he repeated when I graduated from law school and whenever I started a new job or reached some sort of milestone. In 1997, a year before my dad died, I received an offer to teach law at the University of Virginia. Katie and I were new parents at the time. When I called my parents to tell them about the offer from UVA, my father predictably said I must have learned a lot by playing base-

ball with him in the backyard. I thought about our son, Will. Instead of just laughing off my father’s remark, as I usually did, I told him, not knowing it would be my last chance, “I actually did learn a lot, Pop. I learned what it means to be a good father.” I tried to say more, but he choked up and handed the phone to my mom.

In deciding that his family truly mattered to him, my father was not unique. I think most people who ask themselves what truly matters, in the grand scheme of their lives, would include family in their answer, regardless of how they define family. In fact, this last of the five essential questions is a bit different from the others in that the answers are fairly predictable, at least on the surface. My guess is that just about anyone who asks this question would identify family, friends, work, and perhaps kindness as things that truly matter to them.

Illustration by Simone Massoni

STUDY SKILLS

Des Floyd, Ed.L.D.

You’ve heard of moot court? The activity at law schools where students simulate court proceedings as a way to turn the theoretical into the practical? DES FLOYD, ED.L.D., thought. Why not create something similar for secondary school students but, instead of teaching law skills, present them with common experiences that teach compassion? Last spring, the classroom activity, called Care Court, earned Floyd a finalist slot in the Dean’s Challenge, a contest where Ed School students worked alongside Making Caring Common to develop simple education ideas that promote empathy.

Floyd says he used a similar exercise when he wanted his Florida middle and high school students to understand that it’s okay to question things. It was a lesson he learned early after moving as a kid from Boston, where he attended a progressive public school, to a traditional middle school in Florida that didn’t encourage questions from students.

“It was the first time I went to a school where the desks were in a row and students were encouraged to be silent,” he says. “Everything said order, control, and compliance.”

In contrast, Care Court encourages not only questions, but also lots of back and forth. It’s a safe space for students to actively think through real-life situations that happen both in and out of school and where the issue, not the student, goes on trial.

“Take bullying,” he says. “With bullying, lots gets lost because students are afraid to speak up or they think it’s just when something really bad happens.” But bullying can be seemingly innocent, like making fun of someone online.

For example, “a student is walking through the hall and someone takes a photo without them knowing, alters the image, and shares it,” he says. “Others laugh and make fun of the student. With Care Court, instead of just punishing the student who took the photo, you put the issue on trial.”

Working in small groups (Floyd likes to say that in life, no one works alone), students first decide who is going to take on what role. Investigators gather details. Perspectives take on the perspective of those involved, asking questions like, how might putting yourself in the other person’s shoes make you feel? Reporters decide how the case could read in the newspaper. And judges talk over how the case might get decided based on evidence. Floyd stresses that students, no matter what role they take on, need to constantly ask, “Are we thinking through the challenge?” LH

Photograph by Jonathan Kozowyk



THE MAKING OF

Lecturer
Vicki Jacobs

This fall, Lecturer [VICKI JACOBS, C.A.S.'80, ED.D.'86](#), took over as faculty director of the Teacher Education Program (TEP) following Kay Merseith's retirement from the position. We wondered how Jacobs, who had been serving as faculty director of the Specialized Studies Program since 2015, found her way to teaching and to the field of education. Jacobs sat down with *Ed.* to talk about her path, which included almost missing her first teaching interview, and dreams of becoming a folk singer.

Hometown?

I was born in Cleveland, Ohio, but we spent a good number of years in Columbus while I was growing up. We lived by a river. At night, we listened for the freight trains passing, and in summer, we would sneak raspberries from a neighbor's patch. I could ride my bike anywhere I wanted, singing Broadway show tunes at the top of my lungs.

One thing about your childhood that had an impact on where you are today.

My mother used to say to my sisters and me that it was more important that we knew how to occupy ourselves than count on others to do so for us. So I read a lot. Once, when I was sick and had to stay in bed, I read at least the first three volumes of the *Golden Book Encyclopedia*. I was pretty nerdy very early on.

Any teachers in your family?

I come from a fairly long line of well-educated women. My father, who was smart and wise, never attended college, but the women on my mother's side did — including my grandmother and her sister. My sisters and I grew up understanding the urgency of education. All three of us earned master's degrees, and all three of us began doctoral work (although I am the only one who completed hers). My father was probably a little bewildered by it all. When we set off for college, he told each of us that we could major in anything we liked as long as we could find employment when we graduated — as a nurse, teacher, or secretary. My older sister and I became teachers. My younger sister applied her education in microbiology and public administration.

Did you want to be a teacher when you "grew up"?

Yes, I was one of those kids who lined up a row of neighbors to teach them. In third grade, I wanted

to teach kindergarten. In middle school, I wanted to teach elementary grades. In third grade, my teacher told me I asked too many questions; I vowed that, if I ever were to teach, I would never tell that to a student. In fact, I am fond of telling my current students that if they leave HGSE with more but better defined or different questions than those with which they came, they will have succeeded in their studies well.

How did you end up in Massachusetts?

My senior year in college, my parents moved outside of Springfield, Massachusetts. I had just graduated with a teaching degree and a fierce determination to be a famous folk singer. The Midwest in me wasn't ready for New York City. Boston was closer to my family, and the music scene was much more inviting at the time.

What was your first teaching experience like?

I actually lost the directions to the interview for my first job en route to the school. (They were on a piece of paper that literally flew out the window.) The first year was tough. My student-teaching experience had been barely supervised, the book room at my new school was virtually empty by the time I could access it, and I didn't know my teaching assignments until three days before school began. It was learning by doing, and I'm just fortunate (and grateful) that the students were so forgiving. Every once in a while, I still hear from a former student who finds me online. And even as we have all aged, I always know a former student because they are the only ones who call me Miss Jacobs.

How did you start focusing on literacy?

The year I was to be laid off from teaching (because of a reduction in student enrollment), the school's reading specialist came by to let

me know that whatever I had been doing in one of my composition classes was having an appreciable effect on the students' reading development. Staunchly believing I was not a reading teacher (and not particularly wanting to be one), I had no idea why. As a result, I began my doctoral work in what is now called "language and literacy" wondering how comprehension and composition could possibly be interrelated as cognitive processes. It's a complex and enduring question that I never tire of.

You eventually started teaching at the Ed School.

During my second year of doctoral work, I was asked to teach a four-week module that had been called Reading in Secondary Schools. I agreed with the condition that I could change the title to Reading and Writing in Secondary Schools. In four sessions. It was the first course at HGSE that addressed writing. The module I currently teach, Teaching for Inquiry: What's Literacy Got to Do With It?, reflects the evolution of my thinking about content teachers' complicated relationship with literacy. I wish I could go back and tell my younger self about the critical role that literacy does play in helping students become literate in and about academic disciplines.

As the new TEP director, your hope is...

...that our youngest teachers understand the urgency of education and its practical, political, and personal implications. That they understand that teaching is a *practicing* profession. And that to become the teacher-leaders and change agents they should be, they need to become meta-cognizant about and prioritize their purposes and the kind of teaching, learning, and leadership those purposes require — remembering to keep their students at the center of it all. All the time.



Life, Animated

LAST SPRING, PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING JOURNALIST RON Suskind sat down with the *Harvard EdCast* to talk about his latest book, *Life, Animated*. The book focuses on his son Owen, now a young adult, who was diagnosed with regressive autism as a toddler and rediscovered language and ways of dealing with the world through Disney movies. During the *EdCast*, Suskind talked about kids like Owen who don't necessarily give teachers what they are looking for. Educators, he said, need to see this not as a deficit, but as just the way these kids are.

"That's what we're finding with education. In a way, it's much more complex but, at its core, much simpler than we've often thought," he said. "Find their passion, help them turn it into a pathway. Feed into it the basics of how we learn and what we need to learn, and the individual kid ends up doing a lot of your work for you. And that's a nice lesson. It doesn't make teachers any less. It helps them be more in the role of midwives, birthing. The potential that's out there — it's vast."



LISTEN TO THE EDCAST AT:
[GSE.HARVARD.EDU/ED/EXTRAS](https://gse.harvard.edu/ed/extras)



“Why is this happening and what should we make of it and should we care?”

Associate Professor **Martin West**, discussing how students in the only federally funded school voucher program scored lower than peers not in the program. (*The Washington Post*)

10 YEARS OF SCRATCH
IN SCHOOLS

BY KAREN BRENNAN AND [WILHELMINA PERAGINE](#), ED.M.'13

THE SCRATCH PROGRAMMING LANGUAGE AND ONLINE COMMUNITY CELEBRATES its 10th birthday this year. Millions of children from around the world have used Scratch to make interactive media and share it with others. To celebrate this milestone, our team at the Ed School — in collaboration with teachers from around the country — asked hundreds of public K–12 students, “What would you tell your friend about Scratch?” There was a wide range of responses from the students, but we noted common words and phrases. Here are the top 10 words kids used to describe their experiences, with an example response.

- 1. EXCITEMENT** It's a place of discovery and excitement. And what I love most about it is I can create anything I imagine and share it with a whole community of amazing people. – Ninth-grader
- 2. IMAGINATION** I love Scratch because you create things from your imagination. You take what's in your imagination and you make it real. – Fourth-grader
- 3. PLAY** I can told them that it's so fun and it's so happy, so you can play. – Kindergartner
- 4. COOL** It's so exciting when you're making a big game and you fix the final bug. I remember my friend and I were working on a platform game called *Robo's Quest*, and it took us six hours to bug-fix it. When we finished it, we cheered. It was really cool to see all our work come together! – Sixth-grader
- 5. LOVE** I love to play basketball, so it's exciting to make a game in Scratch that relates to what I love to do. – Sixth-grader
- 6. HAPPY** Scratch means many things to me. It means to be happy, to be exciting, and expressing my feelings when I make projects. – Fourth-grader
- 7. EXPRESS** Scratch has made me a creative person 'cause I get to create whatever I want in Scratch, from a game, to a video, to something like a music video. It helps you express yourself. – Seventh-grader
- 8. PROUD** Scratch means to me that you can feel creative about yourself, proud about yourself, and excited about what you made. – Third-grader
- 9. CREATIVE** I really like it because my teacher gives me the assignment and says, “Be creative!” And I'm just literally like, “Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes!” I pour myself out into my coding. – Sixth-grader
- 10. POSSIBILITIES** It's one of the greatest websites I've ever been on. There are endless possibilities and endless creative ideas. – Fifth-grader

KAREN BRENNAN, AN ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AT THE ED SCHOOL, STARTED SCRATCHED, AN ONLINE COMMUNITY FOR EDUCATORS TO SHARE SCRATCH STORIES AND RESOURCES. **WILHELMINA PERAGINE** IS A SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER FOR SCRATCHED.



But That's a *Girl* Book!

A DISSERTATION EXPLORES THE GENDERED READING HABITS OF YOUNG BOYS AND GIRLS

STORY BY LORY HOUGH



THE MORE JOSEPH MCINTYRE, ED.M.'10, ED.D.'17, read to his baby daughter, the more he realized that most of the books were about boys — to the point that he began to switch the genders of main characters.

“It made me wonder how things looked in children’s literature as a whole,” he says. While a student in the doctoral program, McIntyre began analyzing existing research. Previous studies found ratios of male-to-female central characters in picture books of 1.5:1 to 2:1. However, he realized these studies had treated all books in their samples equally. As he continued his doctoral research, which eventually became his dissertation, he says, “I thought there was room for a new perspective” that took into account the popularity of books. “If popular books have more male central characters than unpopular books, then the books which kids actually read, and which presumably shape their understandings of gender, may be even more disproportionately male than scholars realized.”

He was right. Studying 435 highly popular children’s picture books sold between 2012 and

2016, he found that the ratio increased to 3.8:1.

“That means that almost four out of every five books that kids read have male central characters,” he says. “The books that actually reach children are even more disproportionately male than previous research has actually found.”

McIntyre wanted to take the study one step further and see who was actually reading what. He looked at books checked out in two elementary schools in a single district in a southeastern state over 2.5 years. He took 1,000 students and coded up to five checkouts for each student, for a total of 4,968 checkouts representing 3,518 unique titles.

What he found was that boys check out books with male central characters much more than girls. About 77 percent of the books boys check out have only male central characters, 14 percent have female central characters, and 8 percent have both male and female. In contrast, the books girls check out are 51 percent female only, 42 percent female only, 42 percent female only, and 7 percent both.

“So there’s evidence that on average girls are encountering

a good number of characters of both genders while boys are almost only encountering books about boys,” he says. That preference for same-sex characters grows from second to fifth grade. “In particular, boys in fifth grade almost only check out books with male central characters.”

When asked why this might happen, McIntyre says that wasn’t part of his research but cites researcher Elizabeth Dutro’s work that found that reading “girl books” is more threatening for boys than reading “boy books” is for girls.

“Similar to how being a ‘tom-boy’ is less stigmatized than being a ‘sissy,’” he says.

With this data in mind, McIntyre says adults should be more intentional in exposing kids, especially boys, to books with female central characters, and school libraries should actively consider gender and race in selecting books.

“I suspect that there are a lot of parents who want their boys to grow up respecting and appreciating girls and women,” he says, “and exposing them to stories about girls and women could be a good way to start.”

TOOLS

Chalk

When we think of school, chalk is one of the first images that come to mind, even though blackboards aren’t used as much these days. And it’s no wonder: The white, powdery sticks, made from gypsum or calcium sulfate, have been used in classrooms across the country since the 1800s, when class sizes grew and teachers found it easier to teach using big slate blackboards at the front of the room rather than having students writing on individual tablets at their desks. By the 1930s, enameled steel greenboards started to replace blackboards, offering less glare and more stability than fragile slate. Eventually, dry erase boards and smartboards took over. Still, despite technological changes, there are those who continue to find chalk the quintessential classroom tool. At the practical level, it’s much cheaper than whiteboard markers, plus most classrooms already have chalkboards, so why replace them? Chalk is also preferred by some educators because they believe writing with chalk slows down the pace, allowing students to better follow the lesson and more easily take notes. And, if for no other reason, as one teacher said in an online blog in praise of chalk, using a chalkboard means the lights in a classroom have to be on. “It is seldom that students fall asleep when the lights are up,” he wrote, “but in a traditional lecture format, when the lights dim, the eyelids drop.” LH

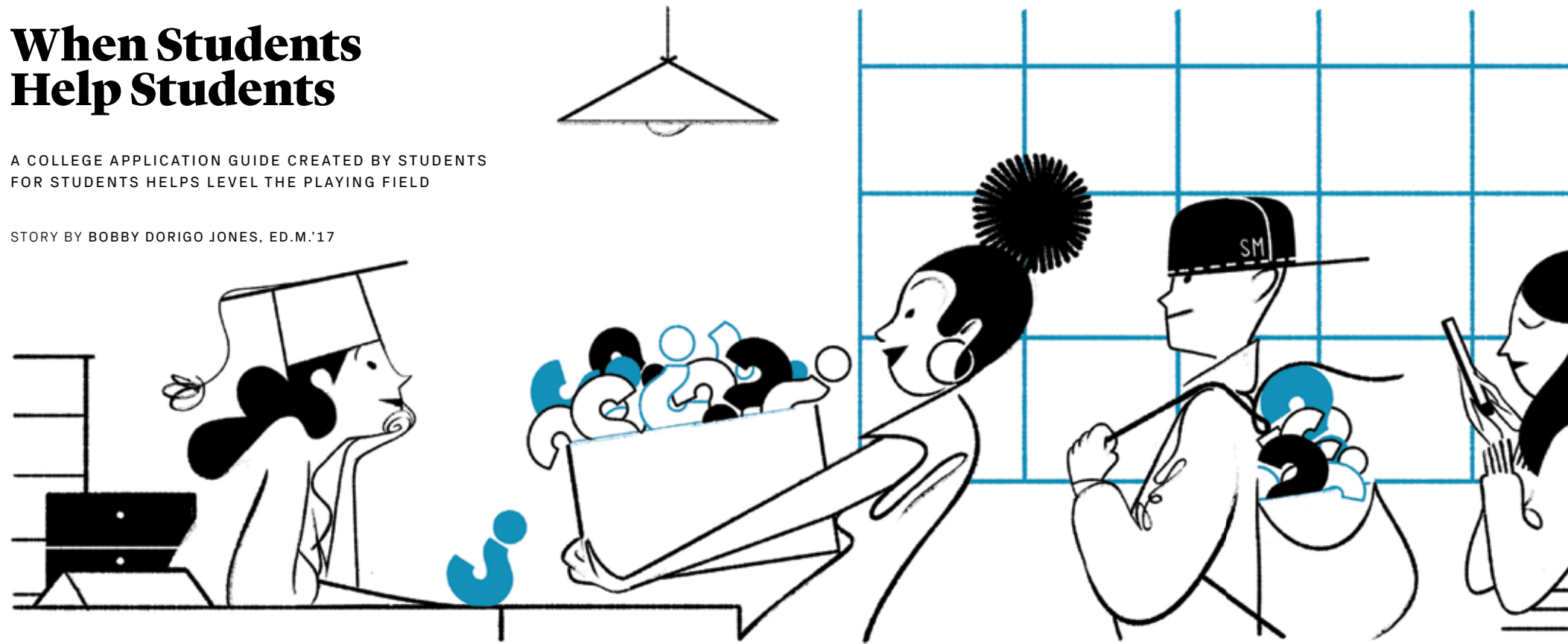


DO YOU STILL USE THE CHALKBOARD IN YOUR CLASSROOM? POST ABOUT IT ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE: [FACEBOOK.COM/HARVARDEUCATION](https://www.facebook.com/harvardeducation)

When Students Help Students

A COLLEGE APPLICATION GUIDE CREATED BY STUDENTS FOR STUDENTS HELPS LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD

STORY BY BOBBY DORIGO JONES, ED.M.'17



A PPLYING FOR COLLEGE IS ABOUT as tough as slaying a thousand-headed Hydra. College hopefuls negotiate everything from FAFSA forms to college visits before taking the postsecondary leap. Harvard College seniors Cole Scanlon and Luke Heine, recent survivors of the process, hope to make things less stressful through the Fair Opportunity Project, a college guide replete with insider advice on everything from essays to interviews and financial aid.

At Scanlon's Miami-Dade high school, 800 students shared one counselor. "It was everyone for themselves," he remembers. Heine, from Cloquet, Minnesota, population 12,050, didn't know one could study for the ACT until a weight room encounter. "It can't come down to a couple minutes of chance interaction. Had I not been super lucky to have done my wrist curls with this other guy," he says, "I might not have learned you could study for it."

The genesis for the project began last year. Between classes, both underclassmen worked on ways to break down admissions barriers they and other students faced. Heine surveyed 200 rural high school counselors on where kids struggled most, and wrote and sent a college guide to every principal in nine states. "It was the proto-guide," Heine says, "but at the end of the day, it only hit Midwestern states, and it only had my narrative, my perspective. I knew there was so much more we could do with this."

At the same time, Scanlon enrolled in Senior Lecturer Kay Merseth's undergraduate course, Dilemmas of Excellence and Equity in K-12 Education, where he reflected on his admissions experience. "Every lecture widened my eyes to different disparities in education and the complexities of financing, and public and private schools. It pulled me in."

Then one night, in Quincy Dining Hall, the two friends

forged an ambitious plan to merge these efforts to improve college admissions access. The product, the Fair Opportunity Project, would be distributed free online to every school district in the country, to anyone who wanted it. The 65-page guide was written and edited by a team of college students and other volunteers with a blend of experience.

"There is no profit motive," Scanlon says. "All the time we've put in is because we believe in it."

Heine says, "We're about getting kids what they need. We encourage kids to print it, distribute it, share it online."

The guide has been a powerful tool for school districts. In Patterson, California, Superintendent Philip Alfano had the guide translated into Spanish and sent it to every family to use alongside the district's comprehensive college readiness program. He also gave a translation for free to Scanlon, who sent it to districts nationwide.

"We were happy to translate it," Alfano says. "Approximately 40 percent of our students begin their formal education with us as English learners. The guide fits in nicely with our overall strategic vision of increasing the number of students who graduate high school with a postsecondary plan. This is a long-term commitment requiring a huge cultural shift."

MERSETH, M.A.T.'69, ED.D.'82, who serves as a project adviser, is hopeful for the project's future. "People come to me with all kinds of ideas, and the challenge is the plans are so broad and big and grandiose, and others are so narrowly defined," she says. "This is a very simple idea, filling an information gap. Information and knowledge are important, but you're not done. What's the next step?"

Heine agrees that more is needed. "The guide's a bouillon soup cube. All the information is packed in there. We need to

break that out and make it easier," he says. To do that, they're producing a video series and exploring a live, online mentoring model built on the best work done elsewhere. "We're going to do what we do best, which is be students, and learn from people in the space," Heine says.

They know from experience that nothing helps a student like personal attention. "We have a lot of people who would love to mentor," Scanlon explains. "We have access to 56,000 public schools; we have a huge base of kids who would love to be mentored; we have all the ingredients."

BOBBY DORIGO JONES IS A 2017 GRADUATE OF THE EDUCATION POLICY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM.



DOWNLOAD A COPY OF THE GUIDE: FAIROPPORTUNITYPROJECT.COM



PZ at 50

When Project Zero started at the Ed School in 1967, it had limited funds and only a few staff members, most part time or volunteer. At the time, founder Nelson Goodman used the word "zero" in the research center's title because that's how much firm knowledge about arts education he thought existed. Goodman wanted to change that with the new center. As he once wrote, "We viewed the arts not as mere entertainment, but like the sciences, as ways of understanding and even of constructing our environments, and thus looked upon arts education as a requisite and integrated component of the entire educational process."

Five decades later, Project Zero is bigger than ever, with an expanded research agenda that includes the nature of intelligence, understanding, creativity, and ethics, among other topics. This October, the organization will celebrate its 50th anniversary with two days of events, including sessions open to the public and livestreamed for those who can't make it to campus.

Although this is an anniversary celebration, Director **DANIEL WILSON, ED.M.'94, ED.D.'07**, says it's not only about Project Zero's history. "The weekend will be about what's in the past, what's the present, and what's the future, and what that means looking ahead at education." **LH**



FOR DETAILS ABOUT THE CELEBRATION, INCLUDING WHAT'S OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: PZ.HARVARD.EDU/50TH-ANNIVERSARY-CELEBRATION

Talk About *The Talk*

In May, the Making Caring Common project released a new report that suggests that many young people struggle forming and maintaining healthy romantic relationships, and that parents and educators often provide little or no guidance. The report, which included surveys of more than 3,000 adults and high school students nationwide, plus formal interviews and informal conversations, also found that teens and adults greatly overestimate the size of the "hook-up culture," and as a result, these misconceptions leave young people feeling embarrassed, ashamed, or pressured to engage in sex before they are ready.



READ MORE ON *THE TALK*: MAKINGCARINGCOMMON.ORG

ON MY BOOKSHELF

Deborah Jewell-Sherman, Ed.M.'92, Ed.D.'95, professor and former superintendent

YOU'RE CURRENTLY READING: *The Hillbilly Elegy* by J.D. Vance.

THE THING THAT DREW YOU TO IT: Two reasons. Like many Americans, the most recent election results were cataclysmic for me. As the campaign ensued, I realized that there was a large segment of Americans and American culture about which I knew very little. In fact, I'd come to know of people in South Africa more than I knew of white people in the rural South. The second is that my faculty colleague Mary Grassa O'Neill and I teach a course called Race, Equity, and Leadership (REAL), and in order to better understand how we've gotten to this post-election America, I knew I needed to better understand the other side of the racial narrative. This book is part of that learning as I "seek first to understand then be understood."

FAVORITE BOOK FROM CHILDHOOD AND WHY YOU LOVED IT: *A Tale of Two Cities*. It was part of a summer reading assignment in 1965 and the "best and worst of times" in 18th-century France seemed to parallel the '60s civil rights struggles, especially the 1963 killing of four little girls, who were about my age, in the Birmingham, Alabama, church bombing. I resonated with the feelings of poor people so aptly depicted in the novel and seemed to share and understand their rage as I witnessed injustices and brutality during the marches and protests shown nightly on the evening news. I hoped that I'd someday do something brave like Sydney Carton. While it hasn't cost me my life, I believe being an educator takes courage, along with wisdom and compassion. It's why my K-8 teaching license is the credential I most prize and it's the tool I've used to try to make the world better.

LAST BOOK YOU READ THAT SURPRISED YOU: Although I read it a while back, I loved *The Warmth of Other Suns* by Isabel Wilkerson. In 2000, I reconnected with my dad, whom I hadn't seen since I was four. He died the following year, and there was much I didn't know about him or, quite honestly, forgive. Reading about the great migration from the South, in his case from Georgia, opened my mind and heart to the great pain and challenges he and others experienced both in Atlanta and later in New York. It also reminded me of the privileges I've enjoyed that he never experienced.

FAVORITE SPOT TO CURL UP WITH A BOOK: In Richmond, I sit in [my late husband] Cornelius' recliner with our dog, Nyro, at my feet. In Cambridge, I stretch out on the couch, usually with Nyro next to me. Sometimes he peeks at what I'm reading; I laughingly think he's smart enough to be reading too.

NEXT UP: I'll be working on my own book, *Demography Isn't Destiny: A Leadership Quest for Excellence and Equity* this summer. Hopefully it'll be on everyone else's reading list next summer.

FOR A FULL LIST OF BOOKS FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE: GSE.HARVARD.EDU/ED/EXTRAS. IF YOU'RE PART OF THE ED SCHOOL COMMUNITY AND YOU'VE RECENTLY PUBLISHED A BOOK, LET US KNOW: BOOKNOTES@GSE.HARVARD.EDU

RACE AND SOCIAL CHANGE: A QUEST, A STUDY, A CALL TO ACTION

Max Klau

What's true about race and social change? It's a question that has "burned in my soul for decades," writes **MAX KLAU, ED.M.'00, ED.D.'05**, a former City Year leader. In his new book, Klau offers his personal observations on race, privilege, and social change, as well as his analysis of a series of research exercises he observed at Camp Anytown. Called Separation Exercises, the exercises attempt to simulate a segregated, hierarchical social system, Klau writes, in an effort to help young people at the camp challenge societal norms and who holds the power.

TROUBLEMAKERS

Carla Shalaby

When **CARLA SHALABY, ED.M.'09, ED.D.'14**, wanted to look at children's right to freedom, she asked fellow teachers to name young students who presented the most challenging behaviors in class, the kids who don't cooperate. "I needed the kids who sing the most loudly rather than those who follow orders for quiet," she writes. These troublemakers are not described as leaders, but are routinely tested, labeled, medicated, punished, and marginalized. Following the children, Shalaby, a former elementary teacher, shows readers what it means to be labeled a problem.

ADDICTED TO REFORM

John Merrow

After four decades covering education in the United States at NPR and PBS, **JOHN MERROW, ED.D.'73**, started to wonder about the nature and purpose of most attempts to change schools. What he realized is that most reform efforts have been directed at the symptoms, things like low graduation rates or dismal test scores. They're not addressing the root cause: that schooling is mired in the past and not suited for the 21st century. Using a 12-step approach, Merrow offers ways to fix K-12 education, starting with step one: correctly identify the problem and then own it.

CRADLE TO KINDERGARTEN: A NEW PLAN TO COMBAT INEQUALITY

Christina Weiland, Ajay Chaudry, Taryn Morrissey, and Hirokazu Yoshikawa

The period between birth and kindergarten is a critical time for child development, write the authors of *Cradle to Kindergarten*, including **CHRISTINA WEILAND, ED.M.'08, ED.D.'11**, and former Ed School Professor Hiro Yoshikawa, yet in the United States, there are huge problems in the "hodgepodge of early learning programs." Some are mediocre, some hard to come by, others too expensive. Many existing policies around these issues only "tinker at the edges." This new book diagnoses the obstacles to quality early education and offers a blueprint for making sure every child's early learning is fully supported.

TEACHING THE WHOLE STUDENT

David Schoem, Edward St. John, and Christine Modey

Teaching, write **DAVID SCHOEM, ED.M.'74**, and **EDWARD ST. JOHN, ED.D.'78**, still matters. And good teaching means teaching the whole student, which is what this collection of reflective essays by faculty members from across the country is about. The faculty involved "create engaged classroom environments that refuse to detach the brain and course content from the heart, soul, and spirit of the student." The result is that students find greater meaning in their lives, and, on a broader level, teaching the whole student "reaffirms colleges and universities as educational institutions, not corporations."



Photograph by Ekaterina Smirnova

You're a teacher, and you want your classroom to feel safe. You want your school to be a place where kids are happy and ready to learn.

But what happens when you don't know how to do that? When one of your young students is transgender and your training on how to support them is spotty at best?

Like Jacob's teachers, you figure it out.

Goodwill Not Enough

JACOB WAS ABOUT TO start kindergarten. A new school with new kids. But some of the kids were from his neighborhood and they might remember that Jacob had once been Mia, the second child of Mimi and Joe Lemay. ¶ Although the family was open in the community about Jacob's transitioning, Jacob didn't necessarily want to be outed in class — he just wanted to be Jacob, a boy with a spiky Mohawk who carried his stuffed Doggie everywhere. So when his parents met with teachers at the beginning of the school year, the teachers had a question: What should we do if someone does remember him as Mia? ¶ “What if someone says something? What if his older sister says something?” Mimi remembers the teachers asking. “We decided the teachers would say, ‘Oh, you made a mistake. His name is Jacob.’ We'd keep it simple.”

STORY BY LORY HOUGH PHOTOGRAPHS BY SCOTT NOBLES



From that first set of questions came more over time, making it clear that the teachers were still worried about what to say or how to act. What if someone asked about the so-called bathroom bill or about a transgender celebrity? Teachers wanted to do the right thing, Lemay says, but most had no experience with transgender students and few had any pre-service training around these issues.

“There was goodwill, but they didn’t always know what to do,” she says. “That’s why ongoing professional development is so critical.”

What about at other schools? Are teachers, counselors, and other educators who work with transgender kids getting that professional development? And even when they do receive training, do they really know what to do with it? As Lemay points out, “Even guidance is just a piece of paper.”

Unfortunately, most interviewed for this story point out that while transgender issues are certainly in the spotlight these days, training for educators specifically around supporting transgender students and their families hasn’t quite kept up.

“I think most educators are getting very little specific training pre-service or even in-service,” says **MICHAEL SADOWSKI, ED.M.’95, ED.D.’05**, referring to the time they spend in college or grad school, and then later once they’re in actual education jobs. Sadowski, author of *Safe Is Not Enough: Better Schools for LGBTQ Students* and on faculty at Bard College, adds, “Even LGBTQ issues in general are relegated to a small segment of a diversity class or a youth development course if they’re covered at all. A specific focus on transgender students is even smaller than that.”

JUSTIN KIM, ED.M.’13, a social studies teacher at the Tobin K-8 school in Boston, says he hasn’t received any specific training on how to support or understand transgender students from his district.

“Any understanding of transgender students comes from my own friends and research,” he says. As a result, “there is still a lack of general understanding of what being transgender means among many of the staff. Much of the media and general dialogue, when talking about inclusiveness, is around gay and lesbian students but stops there.”

Lecturer **GRETCHEN BRION-MEISELS, ED.M.’11, ED.D.’13**, addresses transgender issues in the graduate classes she teaches at the Ed School, including *Establishing Loving Spaces for Learning: Gender and Sexuality in U.S. Schools*. But for most of her students, this type of course is a first for them.

“Some have talked about it [at their schools], but it really depends on the state and the district,” she says. “In states that have been thinking and talking about how to support LGBTQIS+ and gender-nonconforming youth in particular, there is sometimes a very small level of training. I think the only folks

who get substantial training are folks who are in schools that have had a student transition.”

Sadowski attributes this to many things, including lack of time. “Some is the pressure of how long teacher training is. You’re getting a master’s in one year or principal training in two,” he says. “Often really important issues about young people can get lost, especially when schools are so driven by test scores. There’s a tendency, especially under that time pressure, to assume the issue is covered if there’s mention of LGBTQ one week during a course.”

Lemay sees this time crunch when she visits schools, including Jacob’s, with **JEFF PERROTTI, C.A.S.’85**, director of the Massachusetts Safe Schools Program for LGBTQ students. Perrotti travels almost daily to schools throughout New England to help with training, but, as Lemay says, “Jeff is stretched so tight. He’s given 40 minutes to cover all of the terminology, all of the statistics — basically as much as he can,” she says. “You run out of time to work out scenarios. It needs to be part of a bigger effort in schools.”

This bigger effort is impossible when trainings are one-offs or based only in theory, she says.

“The trainings are extremely helpful, but they can be what I’ve heard called drive-by training: Teachers show up, they take notes, they are interested, but it’s hard to apply in the classroom,” she says. “They’re scared. Teachers have asked me questions like, ‘What happens if...’ or ‘What if a kid says, Ewww’ or ‘My dad says transgender people are going to hell?’ I realized that training is an excellent way for the teacher to learn more, but do they ever have to face or work out these issues in reality?” When teachers ask her questions, Lemay says she’s found it helpful to relate it to what they already know. “I ask how they’d react to racism, ethnic and religious intolerance, or ableism. They have answers like, ‘Oh, I’d do this or that.’ I say, ‘Exactly!’”

Some teachers are actually limited in what they can say. Eight states (Alabama, Arizona, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, and Utah) have laws at the state or local level (often referred to as “no promo homo”) that expressly forbid educators from discussing LGBTQ issues in class in a positive light, or even at all.

Even when the atmosphere isn’t that restrictive, concern about pushback from parents is another rea-

“Any understanding of transgender students comes from my own friends and research. There is still a lack of general understanding of what being transgender means among many of the staff.”

JUSTIN KIM, ED.M.’13. A TEACHER AT THE TOBIN SCHOOL IN BOSTON



son training often doesn't happen, especially in the younger grades. A Google search from just the past couple of years pulled up hundreds of stories with headlines like, "Parent furious over school's plan to teach gender spectrum" and "Maine school under fire for reading transgender children's books to kindergarteners without telling their parents." But Sadowski says talking to all kids when they're young actually makes complete sense.

"Elementary students are well aware of gender identity, so this is actually a perfect time to get them engaged," he says. "Children have a lot to say about this, and they will. They're going to talk about gender anyway, so better it be guided by adults than based on the stereotypes they know."

For starters, Perrotti says schools can get books written for that level about how people identify themselves around gender. They can also keep the discussions simple. "You can use language like 'she has a girl heart in a boy body,'" he says. "That tends to be the language kids understand."

Educators should be age appropriate about any discussion, Sadowski says, and cites the work of the Welcoming Students organization, which offers lesson plans, professional development material, and family education focused not on sexuality, which is what usually prompts parent pushback, but on the harmful effects of bullying, understanding gender stereotypes, and family diversity.

"This is an age-appropriate way to talk to elementary students," Sadowski says.

Perrotti makes the comparison that, years ago, when we first started talking about different configurations of families or students, educators often worried about how to talk to young kids "about sex" when those kinds of discussions in schools didn't happen until at least fifth grade.

"Back then I said, 'What we do is talk about family, about love.' That was the conversation 15 years ago," he says. "Now people are asking the same question about transgender. You can say, 'We want everybody to be happy, and he's happiest being a girl.' We can say things like that. It's amazing how smooth that conversation can be."

But what happens when the conversations don't or can't even happen? When districts and schools worry too much about the headlines or parent concerns and they don't intentionally carve out time for on-going, comprehensive training for all staff? What happens when schools receive mixed messages about how to handle various issues, like the abrupt reversal by President Trump of President Obama's earlier guidance, which stated that Title IX protected the rights of transgender students to use the bathroom and locker room that match their gender identities?

"We say this is the no-flinch moment for school personnel. You can't be equal in some areas but not in all."

JEFF PERROTTI, C.A.S.'85, DIRECTOR OF THE MASSACHUSETTS SAFE SCHOOLS PROGRAM

For parents like Lemay, any educator your transgender child encounters — teachers, school psychologists, the bus driver — can become a liability.

"Families have had the Department of Child and Family Services called on them for supporting their child's identity," she says. "Especially in today's climate, that your child is going off to a school therapist for an hour — it's very important for families to feel that they have a basic understanding of what transgender is, at the minimum. I don't know if there's that understanding yet. That's very frightening for a parent."

The impact can be even worse for transgender students, turning school into a war zone, not a place to learn. According to *Harsh Realities: The Experience of Transgender Youth in Our Nation's Schools*, a report put out by GLSEN, a national organization dedicated to ensuring safe and affirming schools for LGBTQ students, transgender students face much higher levels of harassment and violence than other students, even higher than LGB students. Nearly 90 percent surveyed said they were verbally harassed at school because of how they expressed their gender, such as how they wore their hair. Of the surveyed, 53 percent reported being physically harassed, such as pushed or shoved, and 26 percent were physically assaulted at school — punched, kicked, or even hurt with a weapon.

Brandon Adams, an 11th-grader, transitioned during eighth grade. He was bullied on school grounds, in the hallways, and the bathroom. He was cyberbullied, receiving daily death threats.

"The bullying was verbal and physical," he says. "There was an attempted sexual assault by a fellow classmate, I was threatened on a school camping trip, and I was pushed and shoved into the wall, called a freak, tranny, dyke. I was cyberbullied for a year and a half. Police had to get involved. Not only were people threatening my life saying things like 'I dream of waking up with blood on my hands and you dead,' but there were cases where it was threatening the life of my family."

Adams had the help of police and two teacher allies, but not all transgender students feel supported. The GLSEN report found that a third of transgender students have heard school staff make remarks that were homophobic, sexist, and generally negative about someone's gender expression. For many of these students, their school lacked helpful



WHAT CAN EDUCATORS DO?

There are a lot of areas where educators can help transgender students and be supportive of the full spectrum of gender identity. For starters, they can evaluate (and then get rid of) all the ways that schools “gender” students. For example, in elementary school, instead of boy/girl lines, have kids line up by birthday or alphabetically. In high school, have all graduating students wear the same color gown. What are other areas educators need to consider?

► **Terminology:** Schools can start by making sure all school personnel, from teachers to coaches to lunch staff, are up-to-date on key definitions like cisgender and gender non-conforming and gender identity.

► **School Records:** Schools typically use the name shown on a student’s birth certificate. Some students socially transition at a young age and school records, including their “gender marker” — male, female — get updated, but what about kids who haven’t started to transition or their records haven’t been updated? “Records need to be cross-checked, so that a student isn’t outed,” Michael Sadowski says.

► **Pronouns:** Find out a student’s preferred pronoun. It seems like a small step, but as Jeff Perrotti says, it’s an example of a “microaffirmation” — a subtle acknowledgement of a person’s value. “For transgender youth, the most important microaffirmation is being called the name and pronoun you use. I can’t tell you the difference it makes. It’s huge. Small acts of kindness, these little things make a big difference.” And paying attention to pronouns doesn’t have to be limited to just transgender or gender-nonconforming students. All teachers and educators can share their preferred pronoun, Ethan Smith says. “It can be as simple as saying on the first day, ‘Here is my name. Here are my pronouns.’ That can be incredibly powerful.”

► **Sports:** About 15 states have adopted eligibility rules that explicitly allow transgender students to participate in school

sports that are consistent with their gender identity. Schools can also rethink traditional PE classes. Students at Chessie Shaw’s school in Melrose have been working with PE teachers to divide students into groups based on birthday month or clothing color instead of gender. They also noticed that their peers gravitate toward very gender-specific sports. They’re looking at activities that students will see as more welcoming to all regardless of gender.

► **Feeling Safe:** All children should feel and be safe in school. But for transgender students, strong efforts to address bullying are, often, lifesaving. Which is why schools should look beyond training just core teachers because students don’t spend all of their time in the class. “Common spaces like the hallway and playground are less regulated,” Justin Kim says.

► **Privacy:** Transgender students transition differently. Some do it publicly. As the *Schools in Transition* report from the National Center for Transgender Equality points out, when this happens, schools need to be prepared for genuinely innocent uncertainty from the school community. When students transition privately, they may only want a few school administrators to know. And that, says Isaac Taylor, needs to be respected. “We can’t assume we know all the transgender students in our schools. Students should have an expectation of privacy around their gender identity.”

► **Bathroom:** For many, the “bathroom issue” has become the issue connected to trans-

gender students. Unfortunately, as Perrotti points out, “It gets sensationalized. There’s a focus on the sexual aspect of a person. With transgender people, there’s a tendency to sexualize them and focus on their genitals, and that’s why the bathroom issue has been so loud.” But, he says, you don’t always know who’s transgender and who isn’t. “Gender identification is something you don’t know unless someone has told you.”

Which is why, Mimi Lemay points out, “transgender people have always used the bathrooms and it was a non-issue.”

Pushback over bathroom usage is really about the discomfort of other students, Perrotti says. “What I say in response is that discomfort often comes with learning something new. Much learning happens in those stretch moments.”

He says, “Safe signs and rainbow stickers are great, but the number one difference for transgender students is a school having an all-gender bathroom. It says, ‘You’re seen.’ Especially when we’re talking about people’s identity being steeped in silence, they’re looking for signs that a person or environment is accepting and safe.”

► **Curriculum:** School curriculums need to include discussions and stories about the gender spectrum and transgender people. Brandon Adams says this would have helped him. “I definitely think if there were stories in my classes or things in relation to gender in the curriculum, it would have made my social transition in middle school much easier because the topic would have been known and most questions would have

already surfaced instead of me being the lab rat for everyone.”

► **Family:** “Kids will often say to me, I’m fine, but can you talk to my parents? Sometimes the best way to support a student is to support the family,” Perrotti says. “The single most important factor is family acceptance. When that is there, a student is much less likely to abuse substances. They’re less likely to be bullied because they’re not putting themselves out as a target. That’s important. I talk a lot with schools about family. Family engagement is a huge issue for all students, but for this population, it can be lifesaving. A parent doesn’t have to be celebratory, but if you can move them even a little, the benefits are significant.”

Lemay knows this firsthand. “Supporting families is absolutely important,” she says. “It’s traumatic for a family to go through a transition, so if they have support from the school, that’s huge. Your kid is at school for such a big part of the day. To know the teachers, the principal, and others are supporting your child while they are at school is a huge relief.”

► **Involving All Students:** Perrotti says schools must involve all students in better understanding their transgender peers. “This is an opportunity to talk to all students about gender, gender roles, and how we’re all limited or how we all benefit when we talk about gender expression,” he says. “We use this concept of mirrors and windows. With mirrors, students need to see themselves. With windows, students also need windows into other communities.”

supports such as a gay-straight alliance or a school anti-harassment policy that specifically includes protections based on gender identity.

The result — at best — is missed school days, lower grades, and feelings of isolation from the school community. At worst, there’s depression and self-harm. According to a 2016 study by Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center, 42 percent of transgender youth age 12–22 report a history of self-injury, such as cutting. A 2015 report from the National Center for Transgender Equality and the Movement Advancement Project found that 40 percent of transgender people attempt suicide — nine times more than the general population.

Adams was among that group.

“I attempted suicide at one point because of how depressed I got,” he says. “Luckily I am still here.”

ETHAN SMITH, ED.M.’17, felt the same way. Smith was born as Emily but started to wonder by the time he was 7 or 8 why he had been born that way. He didn’t know how to describe the unease and never talked about it to anyone out of fear. Things got worse.

“When I was 11, I didn’t know exactly what was wrong, but I knew that I was unhappy living in the world the way I was,” he says. “I had just gone through puberty, which was confusing and did not feel right, and I contemplated suicide for the first time.” In a spoken word piece he wrote called “A Letter to the Girl I Used to Be,” Smith describes how he didn’t expect to make it to the age of 21. But then by 19, when he was a student at Berklee College of Music, Emily started to fade, and he started to transition. “It was complicated because in many ways, she was gone and that was certainly a loss to many of my friends and family, and those that were closest to me experienced this as grief,” he says.

Lemay says stories like these are exactly why she’s been so outspoken and why she wrote her own piece, “A Letter to My Son Jacob on His Fifth Birthday,” that landed her major media interviews.

“People sometimes wonder why are you doing this,” she says. “Even my superintendent, the first time I asked for permission for NBC to tape back in 2015, said, ‘aren’t you considering Jacob’s need for privacy?’ I said, ‘I do consider his privacy and check in with him every time, but ultimately, if I don’t say anything, then he’ll have no choice but to live in a closet. He’ll never be able to live out of a closet if people don’t understand that there are transgender children out there.’”

Luckily, the number of superintendents and principals who do understand this, and are starting to see the importance of providing quality training for their staff, is growing, at least in some places, including Melrose, Massachusetts, Lemay’s district. She says she realizes she is lucky that her superinten-

dent, as well as the school committee and her son’s principal, have all been supportive and eager to learn.

Since Perrotti started the Safe Schools Program in Massachusetts in the early 1990s, he’s seen more interest in offering targeted training on transgender issues at both the university level in the programs that prepare teachers and other educators and at the school district level.

“At the Ed School, for example, professors are intentionally incorporating this into their curriculum,” he says. “There are people intentionally making sure students are prepared. We also get asked to work a lot with pre-service teachers and counselors at local universities like Tufts, Boston College, Boston University, and Northeastern. It’s definitely increasing with the increased visibility. People are recognizing that they need to do this and politically there’s more support for this, so people are less afraid.”

At the school district level, he says requests for trainings have shot up this past year.

“The requests for technical assistance and training were double what we predicted,” he says. During the 2015–16 school year, the Safe Schools Program conducted 315 trainings and technical assistance sessions. In 2016–17, as of May, the number was already at 432. And as Perrotti points out, the requests are not coming just from high schools.

“Now it’s really preK–12, especially because transgender students are socially transitioning younger and younger,” he says. “It’s exciting, the different collaborations we’ve had, everything from afterschool programs to adult education. There are a lot of opportunities. For many years, there was interest in talking about different types of families and making sure those students felt included in schools, but now there’s a whole other wave, sometimes prompted by a student transitioning. It’s a great opportunity to talk about gender identity.”

It can even happen when a teacher or principal transitions. Asa Sevelius, the principal of a preK–8 school in Brookline, Massachusetts, came out to his school community in June. After first telling his staff, he sent an email to parents, which included guidelines on how to talk to their children about his transition. As he told *The Boston Globe*, “I don’t pretend to believe I am some kind of beacon, but if one kid thinks, ‘That’s cool, that’s just like me,’ that would be pretty awesome.”

CHESSIE SHAW, ED.M.’98, an eighth-grade counselor at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School in Massachusetts (Jacob’s district), says that in the past few years, her district has put a lot of effort into helping educators at all levels — elementary through high school — get the training they need. This was especially helpful when she previously worked at one of the elementary schools in the district as an adjustment counselor and started to work with a second-grader who was transitioning.

“At the time, most of the staff, including me, had never worked with a transitioning student before,” she says. “We worked closely with the family, and even though we were not very experienced, one thing that really helped us was always checking in with each other and using the question ‘Is this what’s in the best interest of the child?’”

ISAAC TAYLOR, ED.M.’14, a principal at North Middlesex Regional High in Townsend, Massachusetts, says training for his staff on transgender issues has helped them better understand not only the nuts and bolts — the laws and policies — but it has also provided space to increase their comfort level.

“For many of the staff, it came as a surprise that gender identity is often established at a young age,” he says. “Discussing this research provided a window for the faculty to begin to see and understand people with different identities.”

One of the most powerful parts of the training, especially in building empathy, was giving teachers the opportunity to meet a transgender student.

“Most of us have a close friend or family member who is gay, lesbian, or bisexual while far fewer have a close friend or family member who is transgender,” he says. “This can make it difficult to understand and support this group. Watching the staff engaging with this student, I could visibly see people relaxing in their chairs and soaking in the experience. Many of the staff also began experimenting with new language in their questions or observations, which increased comfort levels around the topic of gender identity and broadened the scope and range of the discourse.”

Brion-Meisels says, “For my students, hearing from folks on the ground,” who have come to speak in her classes, “has been critical.”

In 2015, Ed School students learned just how influential educators can be to their students when Kelsey Mayabb, a high school cheer squad coach in Kansas City, Missouri, spoke in the Askwith Forum about supporting Landon Patterson, a transgender student on her squad who had to wear the boy’s uniform for years before and after she officially transitioned. Patterson and Mayabb had been invited to speak at the Ed School as part of a new student speaker series, Out Front! LGBTQ Leaders to Learn From.

“When Landon said to me that she would only cheer if she could wear the girl’s uniform, not only was it my duty to do that for her, but also as an advocate for change in my building, it was my responsibility,” said Mayabb. “You do what you have to do for your kids because you love them.”

Perrotti says personal stories of how educators have dealt with these new issues are especially powerful when working with reluctant staff.

“One of the first courses I took at the Ed School was on small group dynamics. One of the first papers we had to write was on how people change. It really influenced my work,” he says. “When I’m dealing with resistant people, I give examples of what it looks like to be supportive. I give examples of someone who has also had questions. Nothing affects and changes people like hearing the experience of young people and parents. It resonates when they hear a parent say, ‘This is my journey.’”

On a recent trip to a school on Martha’s Vineyard, Perrotti included two transgender students and two parents. “I recognize that this will be the most valuable part of this training. It will reach people’s hearts. That’s central to our work. That’s why we have a student and parent speakers’ bureau with a dedicated budget.”

It’s why Brandon Adams became a student speaker for the Safe Schools Program.

“I believe in the personal effect,” he says. “You can’t really understand something by just reading a book. Experiencing it and seeing it is where you truly understand.” In doing this, he says he also benefited. “I learned that not speaking up caused more danger for myself and others. I’m not just speaking for myself; I’m speaking for those who are scared and those we’ve already lost because of bullying or discrimination toward them.”

As Lemay says, “If stories aren’t told, if they don’t filter into the classroom, and if students don’t ever hear the word *transgender*, the imposition is on the transgender student or the nonconforming kids to have to figure out how to deal with the bullying,” she says. “These things need to be addressed before an incident happens. And freeing transgender kids to be who they are helps cisgender kids, too. We’re all a mixed bag. ... For as long as this topic is a black-box topic, the burden of being ‘other’ is still on the transgender student and their families.”

To prevent this, schools need to make the time and effort to better train their staff.

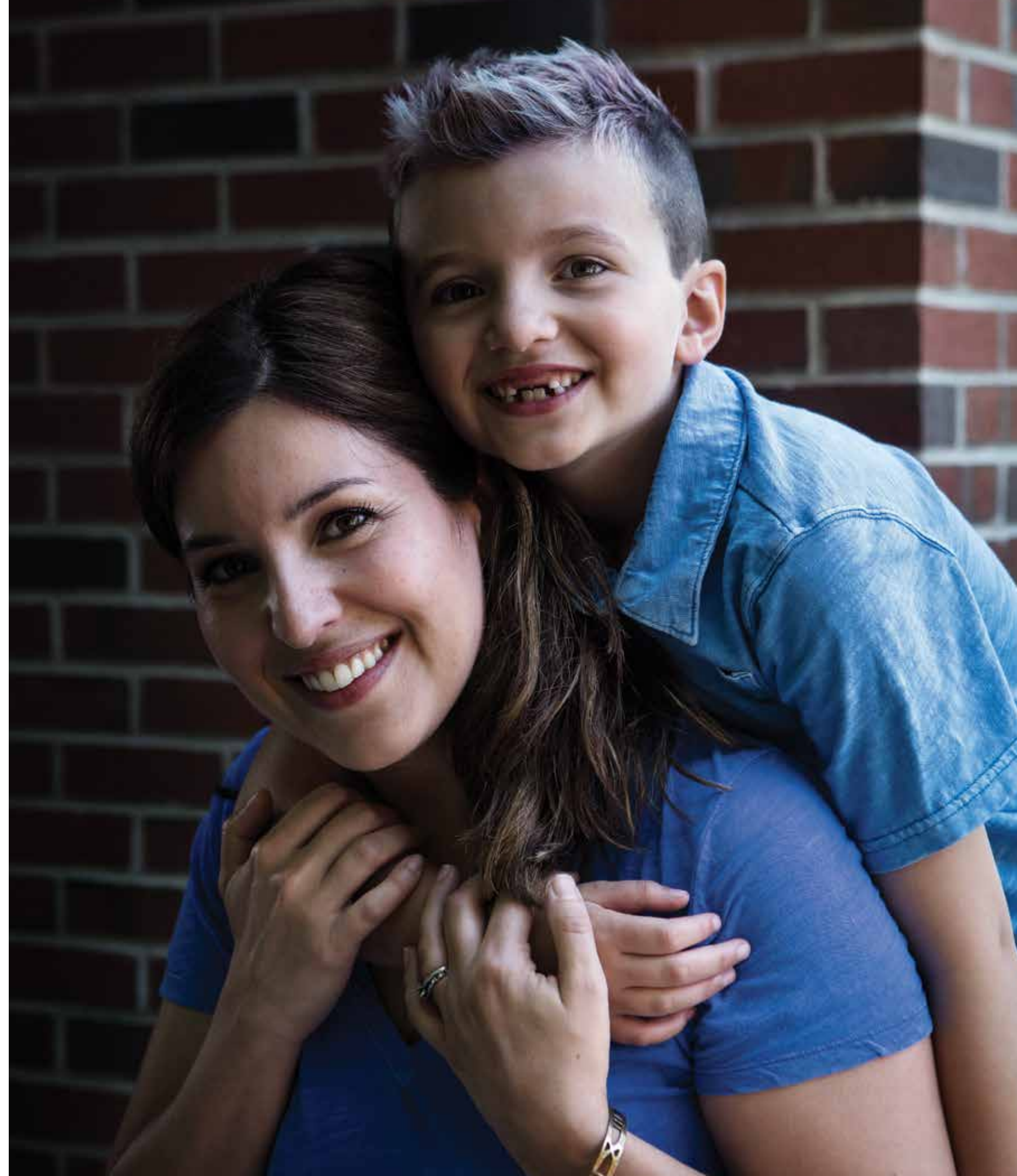
“To help transgender kids, you do whatever it takes because equal is equal,” Perrotti says. “We say this is the no-flinch moment for school personnel. You can’t be equal in some areas but not in all.”



LISTEN TO AN EDCAST WITH PERROTTI AT: [GSE.HARVARD.EDU/ED/EXTRAS](https://gse.harvard.edu/ed/extras)

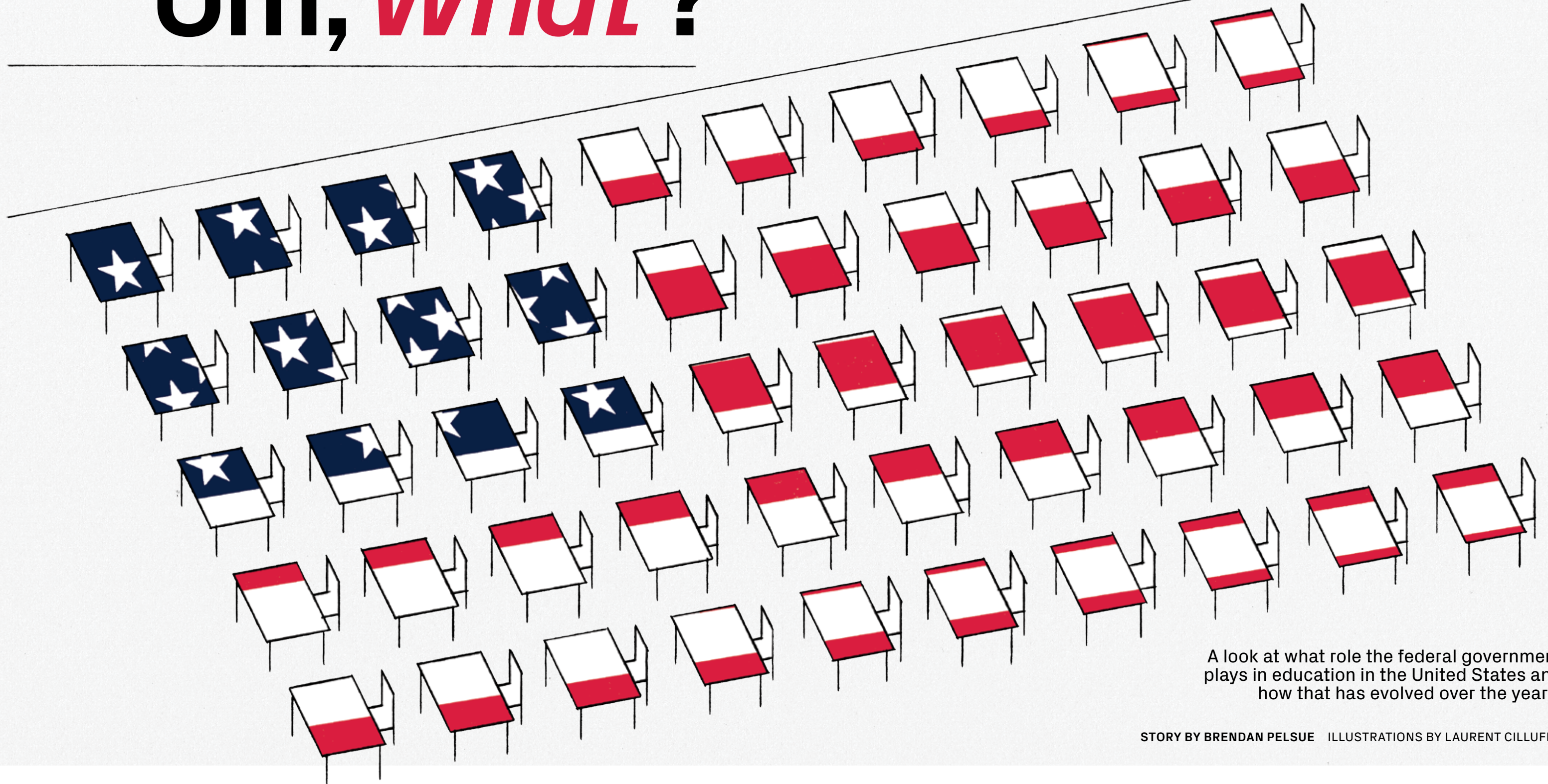
“If students don’t ever hear the word *transgender*, the imposition is on the transgender student or the nonconforming kids to have to figure out how to deal with the bullying.”

MIMI LEMAY (RIGHT) WITH HER SON, JACOB.



WHEN IT COMES TO EDUCATION, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS IN CHARGE OF ...

Um, *What?*



A look at what role the federal government plays in education in the United States and how that has evolved over the years.

STORY BY BRENDAN PELSUE ILLUSTRATIONS BY LAURENT CILLUFFO



Judging by her Senate confirmation process, Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos is one of the most controversial members of President Donald Trump's cabinet. She was the only nominee to receive two "no" votes from members of her own party, Senators Susan Collins of Maine and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska. On the eve of her confirmation vote, Democrats staged an all-night vigil in which they denounced her from the Senate floor. Following a 50–50 vote, Vice President

Mike Pence was summoned in his capacity as president of the Senate to break the tie for DeVos — a first in the Senate's 228-year history of giving "advice and consent" to presidential cabinet nominees.

Now that DeVos is several months into her tenure as the 11th secretary of education, both her supporters and detractors are paying close attention to the policies she is beginning to implement and how they will change the nation's public schools. Even for veteran education watchers, however, this is difficult, not only because the Trump administration's budget and policy proposals are more skeletal than those put forward by previous administrations, but because the Department of Education does not directly oversee the nation's 100,000 public schools. States have some oversight, but individual municipalities, are, in most cases, the legal entities responsible for running schools and for providing the large majority of funding through local tax dollars.

Still, the federal government uses a complex system of funding mechanisms, policy directives, and the soft but considerable power of the presidential bully pulpit to shape what, how, and where students learn. Anyone hoping to understand the impact of DeVos' tenure as secretary of education first needs to grasp some core basics: what the federal government controls, how it controls it, and how that balance does (and doesn't) change from administration to administration.

This policy landscape is the subject of an Ed School course, A-129, The Federal Government and Schools, taught by Lecturer [LAURA SCHIFTER, ED.M'07, ED.D.'14](#), a former senior adviser to Congressman George Miller (D-CA). Schifter has noticed that even for students who have worked in public schools, understanding the federal government's current role in education can be complicated.

"Students frequently need a refresher on things like understanding the nature of the relationship between the federal government and the states, and what federalism is," she says. With that in mind, the course begins with a civics review, especially the complicated politics of federalism, then

moves on to a history lesson in federal education legislation since the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, and finally to an overview of the actual policy mechanisms through which the federal government enforces and implements the law. Throughout, students "read statutes, they read regulations, they read court decisions," Schifter says — activities she believes are essential since there is no better way for educators to understand the law than to consult it themselves.

The civics and history lessons required to understand the federal government's role in education are of course deeply intertwined and begin, as with so many things American, with the Constitution. That document makes no mention of education. It does state in the 10th Amendment that "the powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution ... are reserved to the States respectively." This might seem to preclude any federal oversight of education, except that the 14th Amendment requires all states to provide "any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

At least since the Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954, this has been interpreted to give the federal government the power to intervene in cases of legally sanctioned discrimination, like the segregation of public schools across the country; to mandate equal access to education for students with disabilities; and, according to some arguments, to correct for persistently unequal access to resources across states and districts of different income levels. According to Associate Professor Martin West, the government's historical and current role in education reflects the conflicts inherent in these two central tenets of the nation's charter.

Before 1965, the 10th Amendment seemed to prevail over the 14th, and federal involvement in K-12 education was minimal. Beginning with Horace Mann in Massachusetts, in the 1830s, states implemented reforms aimed at establishing a free, nonsectarian education system, but most national legislation was aimed at higher education. For ex-



1867

First federal Department of Education created by President **Andrew Johnson**
(LATER RENAMED AN OFFICE)



Number of public schools in the United States

\$59,000,000,000

President Trump's proposed 2018 education budget. The 2017 budget was **\$68.2 billion**.
(THAT'S A 13.5% DECREASE.)



50,400,000

Number of students attending K-12 schools



ample, the 1862 Morrill Act used proceeds from the sale of public lands to establish "land-grant" colleges focused on agriculture and engineering. (Many public universities, like Michigan State and historically black colleges like Tuskegee University, are land-grant institutions.)

And then, in the late 1860s, the first federal Department of Education under President Andrew Johnson was established to track education statistics. It was quickly demoted to "Office" and was not part of the president's cabinet. It wasn't until the mid-1960s that the federal government took a more robust role in K-12 education.

The impetus for the change was twofold. The Supreme Court's 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, which mandated the desegregation of public schools, gave the executive branch a legal precedent for enforcing equal access to education. At the same time, the launch of the Soviet satellite Sputnik I (and the technological brinkmanship of the Cold War more generally) created an anxiety that the nation's schools were falling behind.

Those threads came together in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, a bill designed in part by Francis Keppel, then the commissioner of education (the pre-cabinet-level equivalent of secretary of education) and a transformative dean at the Ed School. The bill was a key part of Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty and has set the basic terms of the federal government's involvement in education ever since.

Rather than mandating direct federal oversight of schools — telling states what to do — ESEA offered states funding for education programs on a conditional basis. In other words, states could receive federal funding provided they met the requirements outlined in certain sections, or titles, of the act.

Title I provides funds to schools with a large percentage of low-income students. Title VI provides aid for disabled children. Title VII allots funds for bilingual education. The amount of funding provided by ESEA was small at first — around 2 or 3 percent of a district's budget, according to education historian and former Ed School dean Patricia Albjerg Graham — but too large for states to pass up. The incentives-with-caveats formula allowed the federal government to work around the 10th Amendment and have a greater hand in enforcing the 14th. It provided, in Graham's words, both the carrot of federal funds and the stick of their withdrawal.

Every major education initiative since 1965 has been about recalibrating the balance first struck by ESEA. Until 1980, the program was reauthorized every three years, each time with more specific guidelines about how federal funds were to be used (Title I money has to add to rather than replace locally provided education funding, for example). In 1975, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (now IDEA) ensured that students with disabilities are provided a free appropriate public education to meet their needs. This initial flurry of expansion culminated in 1979, under President Jimmy Carter, with the establishment of the federal Department of Education as a separate, cabinet-level government agency that would coordinate what West calls the "alphabet soup" of the federal government's various initiatives and requirements.

The Reagan administration briefly rolled back many ESEA provisions, but following the release of the 1983 *A Nation at Risk* report, which pointed out persistent inequalities in the education system and made unfavorable comparisons between U.S. students and those in other nations, old requirements were restored and new ones added.



The 2001 No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) marked a new level of federal oversight by *requiring* states to set more rigorous student evaluation standards and, through testing, demonstrate “adequate yearly progress” in how those standards were met. Flaws in the law quickly surfaced. Standards did not take into account the differences between student populations, and so, according to West, the Department of Education often ended up “evaluating schools as much on the students they serve as opposed to their effectiveness in serving them.”

When the Obama administration came to office, it faced a legislative logjam on education. NCLB expired in 2007, but there was no Congressional consensus about the terms of its reauthorization. The administration responded by issuing waivers to states that did not meet NCLB standards, provided they adopted other policies the administration favored, like the Common Core standards. At the same time, the Race to the Top program offered competitive grants that awarded points to states based on their implementation of policies like performance-based evaluations. The two programs were seen by many conservatives as executive overreach, and when ESEA was reauthorized in 2015 as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), NCLB standardized testing requirements were kept, but the evaluation and accountability systems meant to respond to the results of those tests became the responsibility of individual states. When DeVos was testifying before the Senate in January 2017, the federal government still had a greater hand in public education than it did at any point before No Child

Left Behind, but it had also recently experienced the greatest rollback in its oversight since an era of almost continual expansion that began in 1965.



Back in Schifter’s class, students grapple with simulated versions of the actual dilemma now facing the Trump administration: how to design and implement policy. For Schifter’s students, that means choosing between two final projects: a mock Congressional markup on an education-related bill or a mock grant proposal similar to Race to the Top. For Trump, it means navigating how education policy is shaped by all three branches of government.

Congress has the ability to write statute and distribute funds. If, for example, it releases funds as formula grants, which are distributed to all states on the same basis, it can ensure universal adoption of programs like Title I. Competitive grants like Race to the Top arguably make policy implementation more efficient: the executive branch can regulate, clarify, and be selective about its enforcement of the law. And judicial rulings can redefine what qualifies as implementation of policy, as the Supreme Court did in its 2017 *Endrew F. v. Douglas County School Dist. RE-1* ruling, a unanimous decision that interpreted IDEA as requiring that a disabled student’s “educational program must be appropriately ambitious in light of his circumstances.”



FIRST COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION

Henry Barnard, a former principal, superintendent, chancellor, and college president

(HE HAD THREE STAFF MEMBERS AND TWO ROOMS TO RUN THE AGENCY.)



1980

Congress renames it the Department of Education and makes it a cabinet-level agency under President **Jimmy Carter**

(ALSO IN 1980 RONALD REAGAN CALLED FOR DEMOTING THE DEPARTMENT TO A CABINET-LEVEL POST.)

2017

Representative **Thomas Massie**, in H.R.899, with one sentence, pushed again for abolishment: “The Department of Education shall terminate on December 31, 2018.”



15th

The secretary of education’s (currently **Betsy DeVos**) position in succession to the presidency

It seems the Department of Education’s approach under DeVos is still taking shape. Some of its actions have been swift and decisive. In February, the Departments of Justice and Education jointly announced they were rescinding the Obama-era guidance protecting transgender students’ right to use a bathroom corresponding with their gender identity.

In other areas, however, the department’s positions have been vague. On Inauguration Day, the administration ordered a freeze on state evaluation and accountability plans for schools, which under ESSA must be federally approved. In a February 10 letter to chief state school officers, however, DeVos said states should proceed with their proposals. If the department is lenient in its evaluation of these plans, it would amount to a de facto rollback in federal oversight because the Department of Education would be choosing not to exercise its powers to the full extent permitted by law.

Similarly, while there was much talk during DeVos’ confirmation hearings about the extent to which she would advocate for school choice and voucher programs, and while Trump praised school choice during an address to a joint session of Congress, it is still unclear what forms this advocacy will take. Many people had expected the administration’s tax plan to include a tax credit for donations to private school scholarship foundations.

The administration’s proposed budget, released in May under the title “A New Foundation for American Greatness,” calls for \$500 million dollars in new charter school funding—a 50 percent increase over current levels, but less than the \$759 million authorized over the first two years of the George W. Bush administration. The budget also allots an additional \$1 billion in “portable” Title I funding, meaning the money would follow students who opt to attend charter or magnet schools (currently it stays in their home districts). Under ESSA, however, much of what was once overseen by the Department of Education has now reverted to the states.

“Ironically, we will see an administration that will be reluctant to dictate specific policies,” says Professor Paul Reville, the Massachusetts Secretary of Education under former Governor Deval Patrick. This doesn’t mean, of course, that the Department of Education and the administration are unable to exert influence, but it appears they are planning to do so through cutbacks rather than new initiatives. Trump’s budget proposes a 13.5 percent cut in the Education Department’s 2018 budget, including a \$2.3 billion cut that would eliminate Supporting Effective Instruction States Grants, which fund teacher training and development.

And cutbacks in other areas could also affect students, since not all federal funding for schools comes from the Department of Education. For example, money for the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act, whose school lunch nutritional guidelines were

recently loosened by an executive order, comes through the Department of Agriculture. Public school employees like occupational and physical therapists bill much of their work through Medicaid, which also provides dental, vision, hearing, and mental health services. Programs like this are at risk in part because the administration’s proposed budget cuts Medicaid by \$800 billion dollars.

Beyond the budget specifics, there is also the power of the presidential bully pulpit. Reville cites evidence that the administration’s rhetoric on charter schools and vouchers has already put conservative state governments “on the move, emboldened by the new federal stance on choice.”

The administration’s budget is only, however, a wish list. The actual power to determine federal expenditures rests in the House and the Senate, and even in years of less drastic proposals, legislators often pass a federal budget that looks quite different from the one suggested by the president. Trump’s budget has received pushback, and for some education-minded conservatives, the administration’s advocacy on their behalf is unwelcome. **FREDERICK HESS, ED.M.’90**, director of education policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute, believes in school choice—but worries what will happen if Trump pushes for it.

“The last thing we want,” Hess says of school choice, “is for the least popular, most maladroit leader in memory to become the advocate for an otherwise popular idea.”

Not everyone agrees with Hess’ assessment of the president, of course, but his concerns do illustrate a basic idea about policymaking that Schifter has borrowed from political scientist John Kingdon and tries to pass on to her students. For any given idea to become a legal reality, the theory goes, policy proposals are only one part of a triangle. Politicians must also effectively prove the existence of the problem, and they must do so at a moment in history when the fix they are proposing is politically possible. For Lyndon Johnson in 1965, the problem was that the nation’s schools were not serving all students equally. The solution was for the federal government to distribute funds in a way that would correct the balance. The political moment was when both Cold War anxieties and newly robust understandings of the 14th Amendment made the changes possible. The result was a new relationship between the federal government and the states on education policy.

Although the Trump administration has outlined some first principles, both its ability to make its case to the American people and the possibilities of this unprecedented political moment remain to be seen.

BRENDAN PELSUE IS A WRITER WHOSE LAST PIECE IN *ED.* LOOKED AT GAP YEAR PROGRAMS.



What happens when teachers and other educators in a district are supported by a superintendent willing to make tough calls and a local company willing to invest money for ongoing PD?

STORY BY JOHN BARNES PHOTOGRAPHS BY TONY LUONG

A Grand Rapids Story

The statement hangs in the air.



The new year is not yet three days old. Outside, temperatures bottom in the teens. It is January 3, 2012, in West Michigan, 30 miles inland from the world's fifth-largest lake.

On this day, Teresa Weatherall Neal is not yet superintendent of one of the state's largest school districts. She is not yet interim superintendent. That will come the next day. She knows; the public does not.

Just two people gather at Grand Rapids Public Schools headquarters with her, trusted colleagues. A third top aide is attending business outside the building. This would be a small group.

"I need to transform this district, and to do that I need transformational leaders," she says.

Weatherall Neal's message, yet to be delivered to people outside this room: "I'm not just going to move chairs. I'm going to help you pack your bags."

About a 15-minute drive away, in the headquarters of Steelcase Inc., the world's largest office-furniture maker, discussions had already begun on how best to help the district with a history of up-and-down leadership. How could the district sustain a leadership change that would extend beyond current decision-makers?

How, too, could the district move the needle on student achievement, on high dropout rates, and on families getting frustrated with dismal numbers and jumping ship for other districts or competing charter schools?

The answer for Grand Rapids was a new superintendent intent on sustaining new leadership and a local nonprofit foundation intent on helping.

The method was a three-year plan that would send dozens of Grand Rapids school board members, cabinet administrators, principals, and teachers to programs at HGSE Professional Education on a range of issues, allowing them to step away from day-to-day responsibilities and think through the district's challenges.

× ×

Jump to five years later. It is March 24, 2017, a cool day in Cambridge. Daytime temperatures are in the upper 30s. A trace of snow floated earlier. For four days, about a dozen educators and administrators from the Grand Rapids Public Schools have been attending Race, Equity, and Leadership in Schools. Weatherall Neal is one of them.

Professor **DEBORAH JEWELL-SHERMAN, ED.M.'92, ED.D. '95**, is sharing condensed high points — the power messages — of a semester-long class she also instructs: Institutional racism is a problem in many unconsidered ways. Children react to it in ways adults do not consider. Issues of race have been present since the founding of America.

"We find ourselves in 2017 facing a whole host of issues, and not educating how we got there," says Jewell-Sherman, former superintendent of Virgin-

The Grand River flows through downtown Grand Rapids, Michigan, above. Previous pages: Campus Elementary, Grand Rapids University Preparatory Academy, and Gerald R. Ford Academic Center (top row), Sibley Elementary, Westwood Middle, Union High (bottom row).

"I need to transform this district, and to do that I need transformational leaders."

TERESA WEATHERALL NEAL, SUPERINTENDANT, GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ia's Richmond Public Schools and a core faculty member of the Ed School's Doctor of Education Leadership Program.

"Race in itself is a seminal issue in education," Jewell-Sherman says. "None of us knows enough of each other. We think we know a lot, but we make a lot of assumptions."

Catherine Gardner, associate director of preK-16 programs at HGSE Professional Education, sat in on many of the sessions in March and remembers this being a pivotal moment for the Grand Rapids contingent.

"You could almost see the puzzle pieces fitting together," Gardner says. "The conversation was just different. ... You could really hear the zeroing in. 'If we train principals and teachers to be leaders ... we really need this.' There was really this moment that it came together in a far more coherent way for them ... a much bigger vision of leadership and difference."

It was the same feeling that Jessalynn Radden had after she attended a four-day New and Aspiring Leaders institute at the Ed School in 2015. The lead teacher at Grand Rapids University Prep Academy, a 6-12 school, was among the district's first participants to attend a program at Harvard.

"That was so powerful to just be around so many people from all around the world," says Radden, who loops between sixth and seventh grades as a social studies teacher. "One of the best ways to learn is through dialogue."

Looking back on those 2015 sessions, Radden says she can easily remember specific talks and experiences that helped her assess her leadership style, made her more confident in expressing her opinions, and taught her how to transfer the experience to the classroom — skills that can be difficult to hone when you don't have time (or district support) to step away from the day-to-day of teaching.

"One of the sessions on reading reminded me of how powerful it is to give people a choice over reading," she says. As a result, "we began walking kids to our [city] library, something teachers had done before but lost sight of. It's small but something major, just to get kids reading again and to be excited about reading. We continue to talk about the culture of schools. We want to be able to have an experience where kids are able to express themselves."

The path to this moment — where educators were fitting puzzle pieces together and rethinking their leadership skills — was a long one. It would originate in a balmy climate, 1,400 miles from Grand Rapids.

× ×

The school district of Palm Beach County, Florida, is the 11th-largest district in the United States, enrolling more than 188,000 students.

It also became home to office-furniture magnate Robert Pew and his wife, Mary. The prominent Grand Rapids-area residents moved to North Palm Beach in 1999. Their personal wealth followed.

Pew led Steelcase, named for an early metal desk, to its pinnacle as the largest company of its kind in the world. Your office chair, your company desk, your cubicle, furnishings at your local school or hospital, there's a good chance they are from Steelcase. Pew was chair of the company for 25 years. He once told a protégé, "Leadership is a function of trust. Trust is a function of integrity."

In Florida, the Pews created the Mary and Robert Pew Public Education Fund, commonly known as the Pew Fund. Its mission: "To improve public education for disadvantaged children in Palm Beach and Martin counties by developing, testing, and implementing new strategies for learning."

Since then, the fund has awarded nearly \$24 million. For the past decade, a portion has gone to develop school leaders from Palm Beach County. Executive leadership, the school board, and community members have attended multi-day programs on a range of topics offered by HGSE Professional Education.

"The impact, individually, was an incredible capstone for them. [Harvard] gave them the courage to lead," says Louise Grant, executive director of the Pew Fund. "Cultures kind of change and become more cohesive." That common understanding "changed the way budget people on the operating side looked at the needs of the academic side. It was an aha! moment."

The Palm Beach County district has 187 schools and more than 12,200 teachers. There have been gains, which no one would attribute to a single effort, though Grant believes some were helped through the Harvard program.

For example, the graduation rate was 82 percent for the 2015-16 school year, up 3 points from the prior school year. (The rate includes all of the school district's high schools and independently run charter schools.) The district's strategic plan calls for a 90 percent graduation rate by 2021.

"It takes four or five years to measure changes in student achievement. Generally that's through standardized assessment pre- and post-tests like science, math, and reading," Grant says of the long process. "In a lot of our schools we are seeing improvements in reading."

And leadership?

"It's harder on leadership work to try and quantify it," Grant says. "I like it when we can quantify everything, but we can't quantify everything."

Still, building toward something matters greatly. As Ernest Hemingway wrote, "Today is only one day in all the days that will ever be. But what will happen in all the other days that ever come can depend on what you do today."

He also wrote, “When people talk, listen completely. Most people never listen.”

Julie Ridenour listened.

Ridenour is president of the Grand Rapids-based Steelcase Foundation, something of a cousin to the Pew Fund. A few years ago, Ridenour bumped into Grant. Details are hazy, maybe just a chat with two foundation leaders whose funds had similar genes.

Grant talked about grants. She mentioned the years-long practice in which the Pew Fund paid to send Palm Beach County educators to Harvard leadership programs through HGSE Professional Education. The conversation stuck. And Ridenour brought the idea home.

× ×

Grand Rapids claims one U.S. president, Gerald Ford; one astronaut who perished in the nascent Apollo program, Roger Chaffee; the current chief executive of Ford Motor Co., Jim Hackett; and the lead singer for the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Anthony Kiedis. Not in any order.

The city is the second-largest in the state, nearly 200,000 people. Its racial and ethnic mix is white, black, and Hispanic or Latino. That is in order (59 percent, 21 percent, and 16 percent).

The city also anchors a strong economic mix; exploding health sciences, new technology start-ups, and a strong manufacturing, finance, retail, and wholesale base. There is a major medical school, a triangle of three state universities within an hour apart, and nationally strong private colleges.

The city is growing; Grand Rapids Public Schools much less so. And the racial and ethnic makeup of its students do not reflect the city. It is the reverse. Latino students are in the majority, 36 percent. Blacks make up 32 percent, followed by whites, 23 percent, according to the Michigan Department of Education’s April 2017 report.

Educators know that the color of a student’s skin does not determine his or her ability to learn. But school choice in the district has led to lopsided demographics — student numbers not reflecting the city’s overall numbers. It’s also led to lower enrollment for the district’s traditional public schools. Thirty-nine percent of public school students in the city are enrolled in other districts or charters, a 2016 analysis by MLIVE.com news found. That does not include private school enrollments.

In recent years, enrollment in the Grand Rapids district was nearly 17,000 students, seventh-largest in the state. That is down more than 3,000 students from 10 years ago, though there are signs enrollment is stabilizing. Unfortunately, student losses have translated to financial losses for the district, as Weatherall Neal told MLIVE.com in 2016.

“Over the last 20 years, we have cut more than 1,000 jobs, closed more than 25 schools, and we’ve



“Over the last 20 years, we have cut more than 1,000 jobs, closed more than 25 schools, and we’ve cut a \$100 million from our budget. Every year we had to do layoffs and move people around. It was chaos in the district, and parents decided no more.”

TERESA WEATHERALL NEAL

cut \$100 million from our budget,” she said. “Every year we had to do layoffs and move people around. It was chaos in the district, and parents decided no more.” At one point, when more than 1,000 students left, she said it cost the district nearly \$8 million.

Where do the students go? Most enroll in other districts through the state’s School of Choice program, which allows parents to send kids to other schools either within their district or outside their district if space is open. They also enroll in competing charter schools. The Grand Rapids region is home to one of the largest for-profit, charter-

tion during a quarterly meeting of district officials and various philanthropic interests. Ridenour, the Steelcase Foundation president, told Kuhlman what she had learned in Florida.

The proverbial ball began rolling.

Ronald Gorman, who attended several of the programs at the Ed School, uses a distinctly Michigan reference to illustrate how great leadership needs to be sustained, but not with any one leader.

“Lee Iacocca comes in and saves the day. Right?” says Gorman, Grand Rapids’ assistant superintendent of preK–12 instructional support.

Yes, then no. Iacocca, the Big Three auto icon, is widely regarded as the savior of Chrysler Corporation in the 1980s. Iacocca had a philosophy about leadership. “You can do the work of two people, but you can’t be two people. Instead, you have to inspire the next guy down the line and get him to inspire his people.”

That did not happen. After Iacocca retired, Chrysler suffered what is seen as a subsequent lack of vision and changed ownership.

It is this need for a seamless transition of commonly trained and inspired leadership that is at the core of the Steelcase/Grand Rapids effort with the Ed School. It is the desire not to be a Chrysler, but something more akin to a sports car — high performance, head turning, state of the art.

In April 2015, the Steelcase Foundation approved \$597,000 for the district over three years for the Grand Rapids Public Schools Leadership Development program. The model is specifically designed to adapt the experiences of the Palm Beach County schools and the Pew Fund. The last payment was released on January 10 though an additional two years of funding are an option. In those three years, nearly 70 cabinet members, administrators, principals, and teachers attended a dozen programs.

The sessions were chosen by administrators based on Ed School recommendations. Project outcomes were also defined ahead of time. One important goal included building leadership by identifying roles and styles required to improve the “instructional core”; considering beliefs, cultural changes, and education strategies to promote high student achievement; reflecting on the effects of race, class, and culture within the district. Another goal states that participants would implement approaches to ensure inclusion of all students; implement practices to close the achievement gap; establish means for collaboration between district departments and schools; develop a plan for sharing lessons learned with other district leaders and to complement succession planning.

Programs in 2016 and 2017 included the Harvard Institute for Superintendents and District Leaders, Family Engagement in Education, School Turnaround Leaders, and the Institute for Urban School Leaders.

school empires in the nation, National Heritage Academies. It is also home to new U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos. The lifelong resident is a prominent school-choice advocate.

Against this backdrop, Palm Beach County came to Grand Rapids, and the school district went to Harvard.

× ×

Mary Jo Kuhlman, assistant superintendent of organizational learning in Grand Rapids, remembers learning of the Palm Beach/Harvard collabora-

In a December 2016 progress report to the Steelcase Foundation, the Grand Rapids district outlined early progress, particularly around professional growth. For starters, the year's 49 participants were polled and universally were enthusiastic about the programs. "The experience was inspiring, reflective, humbling," said assistant principal Harvey Crawley. David Dublis, a creative arts specialist, said, "It was rich with current and relevant information on how to improve the climate and culture in our school building. ... I was able to spend time reflecting on my own practice." And Mulonge Kalumbula, a world languages supervisor, said, "I was moved by Deborah Jewell-Sherman's session, which affirmed my belief that demography isn't destiny and that leadership matters."

During their time in the programs, attendees embraced concepts such as the three Ms — mission, mindset, and methods. Another popular concept was "the formulation of the problem is often more essential than its solution," first enunciated by famed physicist Albert Einstein.

And tangible results for the district? Graduation rates are up nearly 50 percent over the past five years, from 45 percent to 66 percent in 2016. That's still below the statewide average of 80 percent but improving. Dropout rates are down from 23 to 13 percent in the same period. Chronic absenteeism, a serious district problem, fell a reported 25 percent.

No one in the district attributes those numbers just to new and better leadership through HGSE Professional Education, saying it's too early in the process, but as Kuhlman notes, "Harvard changed the way we approach leadership, the way we approach great teachers and teaching."

Steelcase's Ridenour calls the improvements "low-hanging fruit," meaning among the first to be obtained. From that, she says, "We're starting to get some green shoots in the district."

× ×

Teacher Kelly Leightner paces past desks. He has been doing this for 28 years. Most tables have four kindergarten students, 27 total today.

The current lesson is about reading and writing, a dash of math tossed in, much more complex than a casual observer can follow.

This is the smartest class anywhere. That's what the children say. That's what they've been taught. The teacher asks them. They respond, "Yes!"

Justin has a sprout of brown, splashing, every-direction hair. His eyes are blue — not Caribbean blue, Pacific blue. He smiles and asks a visitor a question, and adds something more.

"I talk a lot," he says, in a true statement. The visitor responds, "I can tell."

The alphabet marches above his head. There are letters across a long wall, animals underneath



each letter. There is an elephant beneath an E. A cat for C. A dolphin swims left, not right, against the alphabet, for a D. A zebra, last in the alphabet menagerie, leads the characters.

Many children wear orange shirts, like a tiger, the school mascot. This is a uniformed school. Orange or dark blue shirts, dark pants or skirts.

Now is pencil-check time. Leightner was away the earlier Friday. There are few pencils in the green, plastic, herring-boned holder near the sharpener. She comments that a monster must have taken many pencils and that she will do a check at day's end. Perhaps half the children empty from their black seats. Some have two pencils in their fists. They return to their seats.

Leightner, who raises eight children of her own, threads her roughly six-year-old learners through their rubric. How to write a sentence. How to capitalize. How to punctuate. How does every single sentence end? A period? A question mark? An exclamation point? "Yes," they shout, and more.

It is "turn-and-talk" time. There are two girls and two boys at most tables, mostly black, many Latino. The students are problem-solving. Chatter, cacophony. This is learning.

At a middle table, Layla seems shy. She writes her sentence in pencil, then pauses. She needs a moment to concentrate, then finishes the sentence and is on to the next.

She is the superintendent's granddaughter. Her family chose to stay in the district.

"I want to be an author," she says in response to a visitor's question.

Writing about what?

"Fairytale," she says.

Why not?

JOHN BARNES IS A GRAND RAPIDS WRITER AND FORMER REPORTER AND EDITOR.

Grad.

"In these final moments of our HGSE time together, I want to remind you to remember. Remember the students and teachers and classmates who built you. Carry the people next to you every day and honor this amazing opportunity that we were so privileged to be a part of. ... To those who I've been privileged to know, I have put you in my heart HGSE, and I will always remember you."

MEGAN RED SHIRT-SHAW, ED.M.'17, THIS YEAR'S STUDENT SPEAKER AT CONVOCATION, GIVING ADVICE TO HER CLASSMATES

Illustration by Stanley Chow

IN MEMORY

1940–1949

BETTY ABESH, ED.M.'46
 MARY SULLIVAN, M.A.T.'46
 DOROTHY HAZARD, ED.M.'49

1950–1959

NORMAN GRIGGS, GSE'51
 KATHLEEN HOOPES, M.A.T.'51
 J. ROSSON OVERCASH, M.A.T.'51
 WILLIAM FORBUSH II, M.A.T.'52
 FRANK HELYAR, GSE'52
 ELIZABETH TAYLOR, ED.M.'53
 DAVID TYACK, M.A.T.'53
 PAUL NOSSITER, M.A.T.'54
 FRANCES VIGLIELMO, M.A.T.'54
 JOHN BROUGH, M.A.T.'55
 WILLIAM DEEBLE, ED.M.'55
 GLORIA JONES, ED.M.'55
 JAMES ROWE RANKIN, M.A.T.'55
 DEAN SEIBEL, ED.D.'55
 LILY BOWKER, ED.M.'56
 L. DODGE FERNALD JR., ED.M.'57
 WILLIAM MULCAHY, C.A.S.'57

1960–1969

THOMAS DONALDSON, ED.M.'60
 EDWARD OWEN, M.A.T.'60
 DAVID STEADMAN, M.A.T.'61
 HENRIETTE BINSWANGER, ED.M.'62
 DAVID FIX, ED.M.'64
 JOAN KEMPER, ED.M.'64
 SARA TODD, M.A.T.'64
 HEIDI KASS, ED.M.'65
 ALEXANDER SERGIENKO, M.A.T.'66, ED.D.'66
 CAROLINE HOPPIN, M.A.T.'67
 JAMES HOSIE, ED.M.'67
 MARY LINCOLN, ED.M.'67
 PAULA SCULLEY, M.A.T.'67
 REYNOLDS THOMPSON, M.A.T.'68

1970–1979

ROBERT CHARNEY, GSE'71
 GLENDA RAUSCHER, M.A.T.'71
 ARTHURLINE ROBERSEN, ED.M.'71
 MARIBEL SINGSON, ED.M.'71
 KATHLEEN COYLE, ED.D.'72
 KRISTINE KEESE, ED.M.'65, ED.D.'72
 HOWARD VAN NESS, ED.M.'72
 JUDITH GREGORY, ED.M.'73
 MARGARET SHEARON, ED.M.'73

NOTE: TO SEE THE FULL LIST, GO TO GSE.HARVARD.EDU/ED.

1970

Francine Bellson, M.A.T., recently gave a speech to the Society of Women Engineers conference in San Jose, California. Her presentation, "Space Shuttle Challenger: From Disaster to Hope," relayed a little-known story of how Silicon Valley engineering and K–12 education communities collaborated to help turn the January 1986 Challenger tragedy into a symbol of hope. Bellson is a retired physicist–engineer.

1977

Vincent Dixon, Ed.M., has owned a business running historical tours of Cambridge since the mid-1990s. In November 2016, Dixon challenged incumbent Democratic Senator Jason Lewis for the 5th Middlesex District Senate seat in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

1979

Anne Dichele, Ed.M., was chosen as Quinnipiac College's new dean of the School of Education. Dichele has been serving as interim dean since November 2016. She has been at the college since 1999, serving as director of the Master of Arts in Teaching Program and as a faculty member.

1987

Maria Teresa Tatto, Ed.M.'82, Ed.D., left Michigan State University after 29 years as a professor in the College of Education and moved to Arizona State University, where she is a professor in the Division of Leadership and Innovation and a professor of comparative education at the university's teachers college. She is currently leading the design of a Master of Education Program on global education and working on

several books. She writes that she is enjoying exploring her new state with her husband, Peter Hickman, and daughters, Lauren and Emma.

1988

Fernando Reimers, Ed.M.'84, Ed.D., published his recent book, *Empowering All Students at Scale*. The book includes tools to help students, teachers, and school leaders educate global citizens, including 60 lessons for grades K–12.

1990

Rick Hess, Ed.M., the man who does not sleep (says *Ed.*), has two new books: *The Every Student Succeeds Act*, co-written with Max Eden, a fellow at the Manhattan Institute, and *Letters to A Young Education Reformer*. Hess is director of education policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute.



Manuel Montes, Ed.M., recently visited Cuzco, Peru, with his son, Manuel Montes Jr., and friends from Boston. A Lima native, Montes took the group (and *Ed.* magazine) to the top of Macchu Picchu. Montes is dean of the dental school at San Juan Bautista University in Lima, where he also runs his own dental practice.

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Professional Education



1991

Marsha Danzig, Ed.M., published a memoir, *From the Roots: How I Beat Death and Learned to Live Again*, which explores serious illness through the lens of spirituality, poetry, and prose. She is a childhood bone cancer survivor, below-knee amputee, and kidney transplant recipient. Danzig developed a global yoga system called Yoga for Amputees.

Bella Wong, Ed.M., is the district superintendent and principal of Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School in Massachusetts, a position she has held since 2013. Prior, she was a science teacher and department coordinator at the high school. Wong also served as superintendent of Wellesley Public Schools.

1994

Ande Diaz, Ed.M., was appointed by Saint Anselm College as its chief diversity officer, a new position for the New Hampshire-based college. Diaz was associate provost for diversity and organizational development at Allegheny College in Meadville, Pennsylvania.

1998

Daniel Gonzalez, Ed.M., was promoted to shareholder at the Los Angeles office of the law firm Littler Mendelson. At the firm, Gonzalez focuses on federal and state labor and employment issues.

Makeeba McCreary, Ed.M., is managing director and senior adviser of external affairs for Boston Public

Schools. In her new role, McCreary is focusing on expanding the district's public/private partnerships and philanthropic community relations. Previously, McCreary served as chief of staff for Boston Superintendent Tommy Chang.

Elissa McLean, Ed.M., is the founder and owner of Express Fluency, a language school and teacher-training center in Brattleboro, Vermont. She is also a preK–12 teacher.

1999

Derek Boonisar, Ed.M., was appointed head of school at the Fenn School in Concord, Massachusetts. In 1995, Boonisar joined Fenn, an all-boys private school, as a Latin teacher, adviser, and three-sport athletic coach.

2000

Daryl Campbell, Ed.M., is the executive director of curriculum and instruction for the Decatur City School District in Georgia. Prior, he was a high school science teacher.

Bill Moss, Ed.M., was named the Council of Administrators & Supervisors 2017 Chairperson of the Year. Moss is the math and science chair for the Lawrence Union Free Public School District in New York.

2005

Max Klau, Ed.M.'00, Ed.D., published *Race and Social Change: A Quest, A Study, A Call to Action*, in March (see page 18). He is the chief program officer at the New Politics Leadership Academy.

2008

Andrea Tsang Jackson, Ed.M., was the 2017 artist-in-residence at the Canadian Museum of Immigration. She was also the recipient of the 2016 Etsy Canada Award for New Talent.

Gloria Montiel, Ed.M., received her Ph.D. this past May from Claremont Graduate University in Claremont, California. She was the first undocumented student to be approved for a Ph.D. in the university's 92-year history. She is currently a grant writer for Latino Health Access, a nonprofit in Santa Ana.

2010

Sara D'Alessandro, Ed.M., became a search consultant for Boston-based CommonGood Careers. Prior, she was director of educator initiatives with the Lawrence Public Schools in Lawrence, Massachusetts.

Mara Tieken, Ed.M.'06, Ed.D., was recently awarded the Donald Harward Faculty Award for Service-Learning Excellence. The award recognizes Maine faculty who integrate community or public service into their curriculum. Tieken is an assistant professor of education at Bates College. She is currently working on a multiyear project that explores the college aspirations and transitions of rural, first-generation students.

2011

Ben Keeler, Ed.M., was recently named vice principal for the middle school at the Advanced Math & Science Academy Charter School in Marlborough, Massachusetts. Prior, Keeler served as middle school dean of students.

Corinne Wainer, Ed.M., founder of YoGirls, a nonprofit that brings yoga classes to at-risk girls in New York



Jessica Honig-Gross, Ed.M., saved a copy of *Ed.* magazine from last summer to share with her daughter, Grace, now 16 months old.

City, recently started Shaktibarre, a yoga-and-barre studio in Brooklyn. @shaktibarre

2012

Nikolai Vitti, Ed.M.'06, Ed.D., was tapped this past spring to be the new superintendent of Detroit Public Schools. Prior, he was superintendent of Duval County Public Schools in Jacksonville, Florida.

2013

Phil Lee, Ed.M.'12, Ed.D., was promoted in August 2016 to associate professor at the David A. Clarke School of Law at the University of District of Columbia.

Beth Rabbitt, Ed.L.D., was awarded a \$1 million social entrepreneur grant from New Profit, a Boston-based venture philanthropy organization based. Rabbitt is the CEO of the Learning Accelerator, an organization that works to accelerate the implementation of blended learning initiatives across the country.

2014

Carla Shalaby, Ed.M.'09, Ed.D., a postdoctoral research fellow with TeachingWorks at the University of Michigan, recently published the *Troublemakers*, which was featured in *The Atlantic* in May. The book follows four young "troublemaker" students over the course of a year to see things from their point of view (see page 19). @CarlaShalaby

Jason Yamashiro, Ed.L.D., was named superintendent of the Dixie School District in San Rafael, California, starting in July. Since 2014, Yamashiro has been serving as superintendent of the Old Adobe Union School District in California.

2015

Jeremiah Newell, Ed.L.D., was hired by the Department of Education in Bermuda to develop a strategic plan for public education. Since 2015, Newell has been the chief operating officer for the Mobile Area Education Foundation in Mobile, Alabama. The foundation is a nonprofit that works to improve public schools in the area, particularly in making sure that all students are graduate ready.

Emily Sapienza, Ed.M., is an English and social studies teacher at the Zenith alternative education program of the Camden Hills Regional High School in Maine. Prior jobs include teaching English in Rome, working at the Pentagon, and serving as campus director for the residential program at the Wayfinder School.

2016

Rebecca Holcombe, Ed.M.'90, Ed.D., was reappointed secretary of education in Vermont. Holcombe has held the position since 2014. Prior, she taught social studies and science, served as a principal, and taught at the university level. @VTeducation

Q&A WITH ANNE-MARIE MCCARTAN, ED.D.'86

Earlier this year, Anne-Marie McCartan, the former executive director of the national Council of Colleges and Arts & Sciences and a 40-year veteran of various higher education positions, published *Unexpected Influence*, a series of profiles of women who helped shape the early community college movement. After the book came out, she spoke to *Ed.* about why she tackled this topic, what she discovered doing her research, and what surprised her the most.

Q INITIALLY, WERE YOU SURPRISED THAT THE NAMES TYPICALLY ASSOCIATED WITH COMMUNITY COLLEGES WERE ALL MALE?

A Actually, I started the research because I was perplexed by the fact that few women ever seemed to be prominently featured in community college histories, magazines, on national boards, or as organizational leaders. Since three women in the field were mentors to me, I knew there were some and that there must be others.

search for a common thread among all these women and, lo and behold, it appeared: All these women believed in the potential for human or organizational growth and development. Because community colleges were in their infancy and their students were often first-generation, there was ample opportunity to focus their passions on the betterment of community college students, faculty, administrators, and national leaders.

YOU INCLUDED 16 PROFILES. WERE MOST ACADEMICS?

A quarter of the women were on university faculties. These positions allowed them to research, publish, and speak and thus spread their influence in a way that an administrator in a community college might not have the time or opportunity to do.

THE WOMEN YOU CHOSE HAD TO HAVE MADE A CONTRIBUTION BY 1990. WHY THAT YEAR?

From the early 1940s through the 1980s, community colleges changed in every conceivable way — their size, types of students they served, their prominence, breadth of curricular offerings, and acceptance within the larger framework of American higher education. By the late 1980s, growth in the number of colleges and student enrollments had slowed considerably. Women had broken through the glass ceiling of the presidency and were becoming visible leaders across the country.

MOST OF THESE WOMEN WERE ATTRACTED TO THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE WORLD BECAUSE THEY SAW POTENTIAL. IN WHAT WAY?

I found the answer to this question when I began to

TWO OF THE WOMEN PROFILED HAVE CONNECTIONS TO THE ED SCHOOL, CORRECT?

K. Patricia Cross served on the Ed School faculty during the 1980s and Carolyn Desjardins spent 1985 at the Ed School on a postdoctoral fellowship.

WHAT SURPRISED YOU MOST WHILE WRITING THE BOOK?

I was astounded to learn that unbeknownst to me, American Indians had founded their own reservation-based community colleges throughout the West, Midwest, and Southwest. Women played a central role in making this happen. The book

features four women who, each in her own way, are credited with crucial contributions to making possible the success of Tribal Colleges. Today there are 37 [tribal] colleges enrolling 18,000 students.

WHAT IS YOUR HOPE FOR THE BOOK?

My fondest hope has already been realized — that the life stories and contributions of these remarkable women would be documented. Seven of the subjects are still alive, and it was with tremendous pride that I presented each of them with a copy of the book. None sought fame and fortune, but it feels good to know that they've made a difference in this world. LH



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GRADUATION DAY 2017



Rainy skies, sometimes coming down in buckets, didn't dampen Commencement Day for Ed School graduates this year. Highlights included adorable kids walking across the stage with family members, as well as graduates sporting decorated mortar boards. In his speech, Dean Jim Ryan urged students to lead with grace while student speaker MEGAN RED SHIRT-SHAW, ED.M.'17, told classmates to appreciate their student dreamers and light seekers. And at the Yard ceremony, legendary actor and honorary-degree-recipient James Earl Jones (below, seated next to Mark Zuckerberg) had the best advice of the day as he ended the ceremony with his famous voice and words: "May the force be with you."



MIKE RODMAN, JILL ANDERSON, CASEY BAYER

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This Fall on Campus

IF THESE FIRST FEW ASKWITH FORUMS ARE ANY INDICATION, THIS YEAR'S LINEUP OF SPEAKERS AND TOPICS ARE SURE TO GET THE CAMPUS INSPIRED AND TALKING. STOP BY APPIAN WAY TO WATCH THESE FREE EVENTS IN PERSON, OR, IF YOU CAN'T MAKE IT TO CAMPUS, WATCH THEM ONLINE AT: [YOUTUBE.COM/USER/HARVARDUCATION](https://www.youtube.com/user/HARVARDUCATION).

FOR AN UP-TO-DATE LIST OF EVENTS: [GSE.HARVARD.EDU/ASKWITH](https://gse.harvard.edu/askwith).

A CONVERSATION WITH CORNEL WEST

Don't miss dynamic speaker Cornel West, a professor at the Harvard Divinity School and in the Harvard Department of African and African American Studies.

OCTOBER 4
5:30 – 7 P.M.

CHANGES IN MIND

Harvard President Drew Faust, Ed School Dean James Ryan, and Ed School professors Howard Gardner and David Perkins will discuss changes in the mind and the role of schools. Part of HubWeek in Boston.

REGISTRATION REQUIRED TO ATTEND.

OCTOBER 13
5:30 – 7 P.M.

COLLEGE + ATHLETICS

Join Mark Emmert, president, National Collegiate Athletic Association; Christopher Howard, president, Robert Morris University; Susan Herbst, UConn; and Ed School faculty director James Soto Antony.

OCTOBER 16
5:30 – 7 P.M.

LEARNING TO CHANGE THE WORLD

Professor Fernando Reimers, Ed.M.'84, Ed.D.'88, and Associate Professor Sarah Dryden-Peterson, Ed.D.'09, will discuss their global work. Part of Worldwide Week at Harvard.

OCTOBER 27
12 – 1:30 P.M.