How can schools better support transgender students like Jacob if educators aren't getting the support they need?
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Our story on incoming faculty member Tony Jack, “Poor, but Privileged,” found in way to a lot of readers who felt the piece resonated with their own experiences growing up and going to college. As Toshia 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 EX-ACT 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 Hamp-tons. Growing up on my parents’ small farm surrounded by loving, proud, sometimes eccentric family, I never felt underprivileged.” However, Vana Zacharias, Ed.M. ’98, worried that research on the ad- vantage 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.”

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Past Tense

This nugget from our summer 2005 issue focused on theElemen-tary 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 2015 piece also focuses on former dean Frank Kep-pel, who elevated the federal role in education. As the story notes: A Time cover story from October 1995 describe 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 TedSizer, a former HIGE dean himself who is currently a vis-iting professor from Brown. “With

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 alumn 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 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.

Behind the Story

Larry Hough, Editor in Chief

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 name. We also misstated photographer Jillian Clark’s last name. We also misstated photographer Jillian Clark’s last name. We also misstated photographer Jillian Clark’s last name.
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 policymakers, 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 career. “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 songster.”

Waldo says that she has made a concerted effort to write songs that are “subversively feminist,” rejecting 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. “But even if it goes over their head, that’s the power of resonating with me.”

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**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**

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 Conference, including demographic data 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 publicly 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.”

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**Using Her West Coast Experience, Current Doctoral Student Stephany Cuevas Trains Educators and Activists on Ways to Be an Ally for Undocumented Students**

**STEPHANY CUEVAS, ED.M.’15**

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I N APRIL, DEAN JAMES RYAN PUBLISHED Waht Truly Matters 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 the tooth to me and headed back in that the answers are fairly predictable, at least on the surface.

In deciding that his family truly mattered to them, my father was not unique. I think most people who ask themselves what truly matters, in the grand scheme of things, would include family, friends, work, and perhaps kindness as things that are truly matter to them.

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 any one who asks this question would identify family, friends, work, and perhaps kindness as things that truly matter to them.

In April, Des Floyd, Ed.L.D., thought, ‘Why not create something similar for second-year school students but, instead of teaching law skills, present them with common experiences that teach compassion?’ Last spring, the Ed School 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 ask questions. It was a lesson he learned early after messing up a kid him Bristol, 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 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.”

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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 important that we knew how to occupy ourselves—count on others to do nothing 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 needy 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 worried that we would become literate in and about the world through Disney movies. During the year I was to be laid off from my teaching job, he appeared to be concerned about his kids like Owen who didn’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, 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 play a more in the role of midwives, birthing. The potential that’s out there—it’s vast.”
But That's a Girl Book!

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

STORY BY LORY HOUGH

He realized these studies had examined only the popularity of books, which kids actually read, and not the books they were checking out or the books that were actually reaching children. 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 and girls are encountering books about boys and girls differently. 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 9 percent have both male and female. In contrast, the books girls check out are 51 percent female only, 42 percent male and female, 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 ‘tomboy’ is less stigmatized than being ‘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.”
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.

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, Scallon enrolled in Senior Lecturer Kay Merseth’s undergraduate course, Dilemmas of Excellence and Equity in K-12 Education, where he reflected on his admissions experiences. “Every lecture widened my eyes to different disparities they faced. 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 Scallon, 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, H.A.T.G., Ed.D., ’92, 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,” Scallon explains. “We have access to 96,000 public schools; we have a huge base of kids who would love to be mentored; we have all the ingredients.”

“The weekend will be about what’s in the past, what’s the future, and what that means looking ahead at education.” Shamus.}

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.’84, D.O.’97, 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.”

In May, the Making 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.

Talk about the talk.

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Talk about the talk.
ON MY BOOK SHELF

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

THE THING THAT GREW UP IN ME: Two reasons. Like many Americans, the most recent election results were catalytic 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 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 SPOT TO CURL UP WITH A BOOK: I stretch out on the couch, usually with Nyro next to me. Sometimes he peeks his head onto my husband’s recliner with our dog, Nyro, at my feet. In Cambridge, I loved that he never experienced.

FAVORITE BOOK FROM CHILDHOOD AND WHY YOU LOVED IT: Although I read it a while back, I loved The Warmth of Other Suns by Isabel Wilkerson. In 2000, I reconnected with flowers, including Carla Shalaby, a former elementary teacher, shows readers what it means to be labeled a problem.

THE ED SCHOOL COMMUNITY AND YOU’VE RECENTLY ENCOUNTERED: Professor Hiro Yoshikawa, yet in the United States, there are huge problems in the “holistic guides of early-learning programs.” Some are mediocre, some hard to come by, others too expensive. Many existing models around those programs now show that even when teachers are trained at the high end, they still run into obstacles to quality early education and often abandon for making sure every child’s early learning is fully supported.

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

Maxine

Maxine

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.’08, the author of Troublemakers. Drawing on 25 years of teaching and research, Klau offers ways to fix K–12 education, starting with step one: correctly identify the problem and then own it.

MAX KLAU, ED.M.’00, ED.D.’08 A former City Year leader. Troublemakers is part of a summer reading assignment in 1965 and the “best and worst book I’ve ever read.” It was part of a summer reading assignment in 1965 and the “best and worst book I’ve ever read.” It was part of a summer reading assignment in 1965 and the “best and worst book I’ve ever read.”

THE WARMTH OF OTHER SUNS

by Isabel Wilkerson

A QUEST, A STUDY, A CALL TO ACTION

RACE AND SOCIAL CHANGE:

TO ACTION

MAX KLAU, ED.M.’00, ED.D.’08

A former City Year leader. Troublemakers is part of a summer reading assignment in 1965 and the “best and worst book I’ve ever read.”

TROUBLEMAKERS

by J.D. Vance

A Tale of Two Cities

by Charles Dickens

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.’08, the author of Troublemakers. Drawing on 25 years of teaching and research, Klau offers ways to fix K–12 education, starting with step one: correctly identify the problem and then own it.

JOHN MERROW, ED.D.’73 After four decades covering education in the United States at NPR and PBS, John Merrow, ED.D.’73, the author of Troublemakers, wanted to look at children, Shalaby, a former elementary teacher, shows readers what it means to be labeled a problem.

ADICTED TO REFORM

by John Merrow

TEACHING THE WHOLE STUDENT

by Edward St. John, and Christine Modey

CRADLE TO KINDERGARTEN: A NEW PLAN TO COMBAT INEQUALITY

by Christina Welland, Aye Chauhs, Tanya Montinsee, and Hiroshi Sato

The Warmth of Other Suns

by Isabel Wilkerson

FAVORITE SPOT TO CURL UP WITH A BOOK: I stretch out on the couch, usually with Nyro next to me. Sometimes he peeks his head onto my husband’s recliner with our dog, Nyro, at my feet. In Cambridge, I loved that he never experienced.

FAVORITE BOOK FROM CHILDHOOD AND WHY YOU LOVED IT: Although I read it a while back, I loved The Warmth of Other Suns by Isabel Wilkerson. In 2000, I reconnected with flowers, including Carla Shalaby, a former elementary teacher, shows readers what it means to be labeled a problem.
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 good will, 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 transgenders 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 JUSTIN KIM, ED.M.’13, 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.”

“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 GEORGINA MESSELL, ED.M.’13, adds that 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 LGBTQ+ 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 six,” 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 its schools, including Jacob’s, with JEFF PERROTTI, C.A.S.’95, 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, ‘Teach!’”

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—
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.

“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
There are a lot of areas where educators can help transgender students and be supportive of the full spectrum of gender identities. Here are several practical things that schools can do to support transgender students.

** Terminology:** Schools can start by making sure all school personnel, from teachers to janitorial staff, are up-to-date on key definitions like “gender,” “gender identity,” “gender expression,” and the importance of using the proper language.

** School Records:** Schools should consider adopting a gender-neutral approach to student records, including “gender markers” such as “X” or “V” for students whose gender is unknown or non-binary. This ensures that records can be cross-checked, so that a student isn’t given the wrong medication, for example.

** Pronouns:** Find out a student’s preferred pronoun. It seems like an easy request, but as Jeff Perrotti, the co-founder of MassEquality, says, “This is the most important microaffirmation they can give, and many people don’t take the time to do it.”

** Privacy:** Transgender students face unique challenges. For example, they may need to use different restrooms than other students, and they may be unsure about how to handle this issue. Educators should be trained to handle these situations with care and empathy.

** Curriculum:** Curriculums need to include discussions about the gender spectrum and transgender people. Branden Adams says that this would have helped him deal with some of his mental health struggles. “I think if there were more stories in my classes 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 taught and most questions would have already surfaced instead of me being the lab rat for everyone.”

** Kids:** “With kids I often say to me, I’m fine, but I can talk to you my parents maximize on the fact that you’re a student in support of the individual,” says the first day, “Here is my name. The single most important thing any person can do, however, is to know who’s transgender and who isn’t.”

** Feeling Safe:** All children should feel safe and be in school. But for transgender students, strong efforts to address bullying are often, unfortunately, lacking. Why is this? Schools should look beyond training just core staff. Teachers because students don’t spend all of their time in the classroom. It’s important to have a warm, friendly, and inclusive environment, even if it means working with other communities.

** Bathroom:** For many, the physical transition is perhaps the most important microaffirmation of a person’s gender identity. They need to feel comfortable and safe in their environment. Some students socially transition differently. Some do it instantly, some do it over several years, and others are supporting your child’s transition.

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"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." Brian Meisels says, "For my students, hearing from folks on the ground, 'who have come to speak in her classes,' has been critical.

"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."

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MINI 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 218-year history of giving “advice and consent” to cabinet-level presidential nominees.

Now that DeVos is several months into her tenure as the 31st secretary of education, both her supporters and opponents 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 one administration to another.

The civics and history lessons required to understand the federal government’s role in education are of course deeply interwoven and begin, as with so many things American, with the Constitution. That document makes no mention of education. It states in the 10th Amendment that “the powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, 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 their 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 example, 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 brinksmanship 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 K-12 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.

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 would be used (Title I money has to add to rather than replace locally provided education funding, for example). In 1972, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (now IDEA) ensured that students with disabilities would get the education they needed. 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 IDEA provisions, but following the release of the 1983 A Nation At Risk report, which pointed out poor student achievement and the technological brinksmanship of the Cold War, Congress passed the 1984 Education Act which included more robust provisions, and made unfavorable comparisons between U.S. students and those in other nations, old requirements were restored and new ones added.

Title I provides funds to schools with a large percentage of low-income students. Title VI provides aid for disabled children. Title VII allot funds for bilingual education. The amount of funding provided by esea was small at first—around 0.3 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.

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The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), NCLB's successor, placed a greater responsibility on 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 (NCLB) expired in 2007, but there was no Congressional consensus about the terms of its reauthorization. The administration, led by the Common Core standard. The administration’s budget proposal, which she would advocate for school choice and voucher programs, and while Trump praised school choice during a 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’s confirmation hearings about the extent to which she would advocate for school choice and voucher programs, and while Trump praised school choice during 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 $700 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 allocates an additional $2 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 Trump, 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. “The administration ordered a freeze on state evaluation 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 budget is only, however, a pipe dream if Trump pushes for it.

“The last thing we want,” Hess says of school choice, “is for the least popular, most maligned leader in memory to become the advocate for an otherwise popular idea.” No one expects to see Hess’s assessment of the president, of course, but his concerns do illustrate how the reality of the Trump administration’s budget 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, political advocacy is only one part of a triangle. Politicians must also effectively frame the problem, and they must do so at a moment in history when the fix they are proposing is politically possible. For Lyndon Johnson, the problem was that the nation’s schools were not serving all students equally. The solution was for the federal government to distribute federal funds to schools in order to correct the balance. The political moment was when both Cold War anxieties and newly robust understandings of the importance of education changed the political climate. The result was a new federal role in education policy. Although the Trump administration has outlined a number of ambitious plans, it is unclear how any of its ideas will be translated to the American people and the possibilities of this unprecedented political moment will be seen.

BRENDAN PELSUE IS A WRITER WHOSE LAST PIECE 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
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 superintendents 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 4,000 day in Cambridge. Daytime temperatures are in the upper 70s. A trace of snow floated earlier. For four days, about a dozen educators and administrators worked in small groups, and more than 1,200 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.

In Florida, the Pews created the Mary and Robert Pew Foundation. 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. “Leadership comes of function. Trust is a function of integrity.”

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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 190,000 people. Its racial and ethnic mix is white, black, and Hispanic or Latino. That is in order (19 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 23 percent, followed by whites, 21 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 demographics — student numbers not reflecting the city’s overall numbers — is what she had learned in Florida.

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 achievement gap; ensuring inclusion of all students; implementing lessons learned with other district leaders and departments and schools; develop a plan for sharing 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.

“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 do layoffs and move people around. It was chaos in the district, and parents decided no more.”

Mary Jo Kuhlman, assistant superintendent of organizational learning in Grand Rapids, remembers learning of the Palm Beach/Harvard collaboration 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 pre-K-12 instructional support.

“Lee, Iacocca comes in and saves the day. 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.’

What 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. Is it 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 stated that participating school leaders and district leaders and district leaders and district leaders and district leaders, Family Engagement in Education, School Turnaround Leaders, and the Institute for Urban School Leaders.
The teacher asks them. They respond, “Yes!”

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 hands. They return to their seats.


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. Chatting, 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?

“Fairytales,” she says.

“Why not?”

“Why not?”

Teacher Kelly Leightner paces past desks. She has been doing this for 28 years. Most tables have four chairs. Some have two pencils in their fists. A few have three. The teacher asks questions. They only need a moment to answer, then go on to the next.


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“Fairytales,” she says.

“Why not?”

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 Dubois, 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 70 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.”

In these final moments of our HGSE time together, I want to remind you to remember. Remember the students and teachers and families who still your Carry the people next to you every day and honor that 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.

Grad.

Megan Red Shirt-Shaw, Ed.M. ’17, This year’s student speaker at Convocation, giving advice to her classmates.

Harvard Ed.

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1970
Francine Belton, 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. Belton is a retired physicist-engineer.

1977

1979
Anne Dichele, Ed.M., was chosen as Quinipiac College’s new dean of the School of Education. Dichele has been serving as interim dean since November 2018. 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 Tallo, Ed.M.’82, Ed.D., left Michigan State University after 20 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 faculty member.

1970–1979
REYNOLDS THOMPSON, M.A.T.’68
PAULA SCULLEY, M.A.T.’67
MARY LINCOLN, ED.M.’67
JAMES HOSIE, ED.M.’67
ALEXANDER SERGIENKO, ED.M.’62
HENRIETTE BINSWANGER, M.A.T.’56, ED.D.’66
DAVID STEADMAN, M.A.T.’61
L. DODGE FERNALD JR., ED.M.’57
LILY BOWKER, ED.M.’56
JAMES ROWE RANKIN, M.A.T.’55
GLORIA JONES, ED.M.’55
JOHN BROUGH, M.A.T.’55
FRANCES VIGLIELMO, M.A.T.’54
PAUL NOSSITER, M.A.T.’54
DAVID TYACK, M.A.T.’53
KATHLEEN HOOPES, M.’A.T.’51
MARY SULLIVAN, M.’A.T.’46
BETTY ABESH, ED.M.’46

1940–1949
IN MEMORY
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 Machu Picchu. Montes is dean of the dental school at San Juan Bautista University in Lima, where he also runs his own dental practice.

1995–1999
THOMAS DONALDSON, Ed.M.’60
EDWARD OWEN, M.A.T.’70
DAVID STEADMAN, M.A.T.’70
HERNIE HAWKIN, Ed.M.’72
DAVID FER, Ed.M.’64
JOAN ZIPPER, Ed.M.’64
SARA ROSSO, M.A.T.’64
HEIDI KASS, Ed.M.’65
ALIENSE NORDEN, M.A.T.’65
CAROLINE HOFF, M.A.T.’77
HERMIE HAWKIN, Ed.M.’72
MARY LYNCH, Ed.M.’72
PAULA COLLEY, Ed.M.’72
REYNOLDS THOMPSON, M.A.T.’78

1979–1989
ROBERT CHERRY, GSE’71
GLINDA RAUSCHER, M.A.T.’71
CATHERINE ROSSER, Ed.M.’71
MARCUS SIMS, Ed.M.’71
KATHLEEN COSE, Ed.D.’72
KRISTINE KEISE, Ed.M.’72
HOWARD VAN NEST, Ed.M.’72
DAREN GREGORY, Ed.D.’73
MARGARET SHEARON, Ed.D.’73
NOTE: TO SEE THE FULL LIST, GO TO HSE.HARVARD.EDU/ED
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.

Unexpected Influence

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.

Q: YOU INCLUDED 16 PROFILES. WERE MOST ACADEMICS?

A: 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.

Q: THEY SAW POTENTIAL. IN WHAT WAY?

A: They saw potential. In some cases, it was obvious the success of Tribal Colleges. Today there are 37 [tribal] colleges enrolling 18,000 students. Women played a central role in making this happen. The book features four women who, in 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.

Q: WHAT IS YOUR HOPE FOR THE BOOK?

A: From the early 1940s through the 1960s, 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, the number of colleges and student enrollments had allowed considerable. Women had broken through the glass ceiling of the presidency and were becoming viable leaders across the country.

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

A: I found the answer to this question when I began to search for a common thread among all these women and, to be honest, 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 passion on the development of community college students, faculty, administrators, and national leaders.

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

A: Yes, 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.

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?

A: 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, in 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?

A: 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.
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.”

NUMBERING MORE THAN 300,000 MEMBERS STRONG, THE HARVARD UNIVERSITY ALUMNI COMMUNITY IS MADE UP OF A DIVERSE MIX OF HARVARD GRADUATES — INCLUDING ED SCHOOL ALUMS — WHO LIVE IN YOUR CITY, WORK IN YOUR FIELD, OR SHARE YOUR INTERESTS. TAP INTO THIS POWERFUL NETWORK BY LOGGING INTO THE HARVARD UNIVERSITY ALUMNI DIRECTORY TODAY!

TOP THREE REASONS TO CONNECT TO THE HARVARD UNIVERSITY ALUMNI DIRECTORY:

1. Network with alumni from the Ed School and across the university through the only verified, comprehensive listing of Harvard alumni.
2. Keep yourself up-to-date on the latest news and resources made available by the Harvard Alumni Association.
3. Update your contact information to hear about Ed School and Harvard University events in your neighborhood.

We want to hear from you! Just got a new job you want to tell us about? Want to help host an event in your area? Contact HGSE Alumni Relations at gse_alumni_services@harvard.edu.

How do you access the Harvard University Alumni Directory? Visit community.alumni.harvard.edu to access your profile using your HarvardKey. If you haven’t claimed your HarvardKey yet, claim it by visiting key.harvard.edu.

For questions or comments regarding the Harvard University Alumni Directory or your HarvardKey, contact the Harvard University Help Desk at 617-496-0559.
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/HARVAREDUCATION.

FOR AN UP-TO-DATE LIST OF EVENTS: 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.