The Teacher Issue
A Special Report
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A SPECIAL REPORT

The Teacher Issue

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

The "Girlhood" story in our winter 2019 issue about middle school girls generated a lot of interest. One question raised by a few readers stood out: "What about boys," they wanted to know. It's a great and important question. Middle school is difficult for all kids, absolutely, and we hope to tackle a story about boys at some point in the future. However, this story, given some of the very specific issues girls and women still face, felt very targeted at adolescent girls, and so we decided to keep a tight focus. But we hear you, readers: Middle school is no picnic for our boys and many stories could be written about their experiences! Also related to the story, another reader pointed out that we failed to mention two groundbreaking and influential works done by Professor Carol Gilligan (now at New York University) when she was teaching at the Ed School, including an essay she published in the Harvard Education Review 1977 called "In a Different Voice: Women's Conceptions of Self and of Morality," as well as her 1982 book, In a Different Voice. Our apologies to Professor Gilligan on our oversight!

The issues we cover in the magazine are covered elsewhere at the Ed School, including on our website, in Usable Knowledge, and through the EdCast podcast series. Here are a few recent related pieces you can find at gse.harvard.edu:

- A story in Usable Knowledge called "Preventing Gender Bias" gives parents and caregivers tips on countering stereotyping when their kids are still young.
- Related to our feature story on Assistant Professor Tony Jack, the EdCast talked to Jack about ways that colleges confute access and inclusion.
- Just in time for this issue’s story on rural teachers, a story on the school’s website announced the launch of the National Center for Rural Education Research Networks by the Center for Education Policy Research and hosted a related rural ed AskForum with.

Are you interested in keeping up with free, easy-to-digest, usable education research? Check out: www.gse.harvard.edu/uk

Wondering how you can become part of the conversation? You can comment on what you’re reading in the magazine, or tell us what you’d like to read, in a couple of different ways:

1. Send an email to our letters account: letters@gse.harvard.edu. Add comments on the school’s main Facebook page when a story is posted (@HarvardEducation) or on the school's Twitter page (@HarvardEd).
2. We'd love to hear from you, so reach out and let us know what’s on your mind.
3. Usable Knowledge

Past Tense

By the late 1980s, according to "Education and the New Breed," a story in the magazine's spring 1989 issue, the students coming to the Ed School to become teachers were changing in response to the times. The War on Poverty, summer riots, the Vietnam War—these were just a few of the factors influencing incoming students, wrote CHESTER FINN, M.A.T.'79, Ed.D.'70, a doctoral student who was on leave and working at the White House under Daniel Patrick Moynihan, and David Blumenthal, a Harvard College senior and Harvard Crimson reporter. As they wrote:

“The bright naive graduate of a ‘Seven Sisters’ college is no longer a typical student in the M.A.T. Program at Harvard. Neither is the naive graduate of a small-but-respectable midwestern men’s school. What is gone is the naive. In the past few years, the ranks of entering students at HGSE has been swollen by growing numbers of young people hardened by experience, the veterans of long months in undergraduate volunteer programs, VISTA summer community organization projects, or the Peace Corps. A second visible contingent is fresh from student protest movements. SDS, draft counseling agencies, and the whole media of ‘radical’ activities. Even more visible is another cluster, the newest edition of student protest movements, SDS, draft counseling agencies, and the whole media of ‘radical’ activities. Even more visible is another cluster, the newest

We don’t do a lot of theme issues here at Ed. There are just too many interesting, individual stories that we want to cover and trying to group them into themes can feel limiting. So why did we do a theme on teachers for this issue? It felt like the right time, given the ongoing teacher strikes that have become national news, the importance of teachers and teaching emphasized at the Ed School, and the huge stack of teacher-related stories sitting in a folder on my desk. (Yes, that would be paper printouts.) Honestly, the problem wasn’t deciding to do or not to do a theme on teachers. The problem was deciding which stories to include in the feature well. When it comes to writing about teachers, there are literally hundreds of stories that could—and should—be written. In the end, we went with a mix of feature stories, plus shorter pieces represented by a small schoolhouse icon, that we thought were timely, timeless, and about time. We hope they serve teachers well. 

Behind the Cover

Lory Hough, Editor in Chief

Camera Ready:特长

Pasta Tense

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Assistant Professor Jarvis Givens is flipping through a spiral notebook he still has from his 11th-grade honors U.S. history class. He reads aloud notes from a lecture his teacher gave on slave culture, pointing out key phrases he had written down, like “slaves developed subcultures” and “done in secret.” “I didn’t remember those things until I started looking through my notebook,” he says, “but when I’m writing about fugitive pedagogy” — the focus of his current research and his forthcoming book — “these are the same questions I see my 15-year-old self engaging in.”

The reason the notebook has been unearthed is not only that it resonates with his research, but also because that same U.S. history teacher, the one who started him on the path (unknown to him then) toward a Ph.D. and academia, is now his student. This past fall, Tauheedah Baker-Jones joined the Ed.L.D. Program at the Ed School as a doctoral student. She found out she got into the program shortly after Givens accepted his professorship.

“We got to celebrate that moment together,” Baker-Jones says.

This Harvard reunion wasn’t the first time they had seen each other since they were both at King Drew Magnet High School in Los Angeles. The two had remained close over the years, after Baker-Jones made a promise to Givens and the other students in her history class: Although she was leaving California to teach in her home state of New Jersey, she would help them with college applications and come back for graduation. And she did.
**Grading: What are we actually talking about?**

We mean the way teachers evaluate, describe, and report student performance. Although no one can argue that grading is only a software-driven, end-of-term calculation, a teacher’s grading system is implicated throughout her work every day. For any task that we ask of students, we have to decide: Should the student’s performance on the task be included in the grade and, if so, for how much value? Teachers’ answers to these questions are based on deep-seated values and ideas about what we each believe students are supposed to learn, how students are best motivated, and what our role and relationship to students should be. Because grading is rarely addressed in graduate training or certification programs, each teacher must create grading policies on her own. What’s wrong with deducting points for work turned in late? This approach combines both academic and nonacademic information in the grade and creates what author Susan Brookhart calls “grade fog” — we’re not sure what the grade means because we’re asking it to communicate too much disparate information. A student who writes an A-quality essay but hands it in late gets her writing downgraded to a B, and the student who writes a B-quality essay turned in the deadline receives a B. If you wish to distinguish those two B grades, although those students have very different levels of content mastery. The second problem is that in traditional grading, many commonly used grading categories invite biases. For example, when we include a student’s behavior in a grade, we’re imposing on all of our students a narrow idea of what a “successful” student is. Why don’t more educators question grading practices? Teachers work under incredibly difficult conditions. They are asked to serve in so many roles besides teacher, and yet they must adhere to layers of mandates and requirements. The grade is one of teachers’ last remaining islands of autonomy, perhaps the most concrete and respected symbol of their expertise and judgment. When we suggest that their grading practices could be improved, it’s no surprise that teachers often react with suspicion and defensiveness. Many administrators have cautionary tales of when they tried to broach the subject with teachers and were met with emotional reactions and perhaps even threats of formal complaints and union grievances.

**What does work?** Equitable grading has three pillars: accuracy, bias-resistance, and intrinsic motivation. Graders must accurately reflect only a student’s academic level of performance, exclude nonacademic criteria (such as behavior), and use mathematically sound calculations and scales, such as the 0-4 instead of the 0-100 scale. Grading practices must counteract institutional biases that have historically rewarded students with privilege and punished those without, and also must protect student grades from our own implicit biases. Our grading must stop using points to reward or punish, but instead should teach students the connection between means of learning and the ends — how doing homework is valuable not because of how many points the teacher doles out, but because those actions improve a student’s learning.
Looking for Lights

WHY ONE TEACHER DECIDED IT WAS TIME TO RUN FOR PUBLIC OFFICE

Last fall, I sat in a fifth-grade classroom to model a guided reading lesson as 20 teachers watched. The students were required to miss PE. You can imagine how thrilled they were to be reading with me instead. One student in particular, Jesse, was furious. Jesse represents the hundreds of students in my career and in each of our classrooms whose lives give them every reason to be angry, even without a lady who does not know taking his PE time to read. The Jesses of our public schools are why I became a teacher.

I began by sharing my understanding of their frustration, promising to move as quickly as possible. This worked for 3 of the 5 students. The fourth came along fairly quickly. But not Jesse. He sat, arms folded, eyes down. I introduced the skill of inference, where a reader applies what they know to the text to make a new idea; students began reading, and I planned to do individual conferences. The teachers looked wide-eyed to see how I would handle this student, some secretly hoping to see their inability to meet the Jesses of their classrooms validated. But it is this moment I had learned to live for as an educator.

I read with one student and then walked around to where Jesse sat, kneeled down, and whispered in his ear, “I know you want to be at PE. I am trying to get you there quickly. I also know you are smart, and I cannot let you miss out on this learning. To go to PE you will have to tell me an inference you make from the reading. I know you can do it. Do you want to go now or later?” Jesse did not respond. I came back a few minutes later. “This page is really cool because there is a tiger with some interesting characteristics. Can you read it to me, so you can learn and get to PE?” He slid the book to his chest and began reading quietly—the first glimpse of our coming “hallelujah” moment, a moment where we see what each person is capable of if given a chance.

He finished the page, and I said, “Is there anything in the text you find interesting?” He pointed to where the text read, “The tiger growls with clenched teeth.” I asked what inference he could make and held my breath. “The tiger is aggressive.” Hallelujah.

“Jesse, that is a brilliant word. Can you share your inference with the group?”

“Sure,” he said with a sly smile and a straight back.

I pulled the group together and said, “Jesse has a really smart inference to share.” The teachers looked at each other, the students side-eyed their grumpy colleague, and in a moment of pure light, Jesse said, “On this page, it says the tiger grows with clenched teeth, and I made the inference that the tiger is aggressive.” There was an audible gasp; Jesse smiled; the students raised their eyebrows. We finished the lesson and still had 20 minutes left in PE.

This moment shows the power of a teacher, where we do what it takes to bring out a student’s best version. It is this responsibility that led me to the classroom, where I did that every day with children, one hallelujah moment at a time. But along the way I realized hallelujah moments are needed throughout people’s lives.

What about the man who has been laid off after 20 years on an assembly line? Do we say, “Too bad,” or do we give him a chance to be the best version of himself? Or the woman who made a mistake at age 17 and finds herself released from prison at 25. Do our policies make it so that one mistake ruins her life, or do we help her find her brilliance? It is my belief in the light of each person and our collective responsibility to help their lights shine that led me to the classroom and now leads me to our state capitol here in North Carolina. Shine on, Jesse, shine on.

Ashton Wheeler Clemmons was elected to the North Carolina General Assembly in November.


Photograph by Jillian Clark
The Zucks
WHY PUBLIC SERVICE MINDS DOCTORS, LAWYERS, AND BUSINESS PEOPLE COME TO THE ED SCHOOL

MICHAEL KOCHIS, ED.M.’19, was just barely out of middle school when he knew he was going to become a doctor. So why, then, did he decide to take leave from his studies at Harvard Medical School, after finishing his third year, to spend 10 months in the Specialized Study Program at the Ed School?

“I was excited to have the chance to step out of the medical bubble and look at things from a different perspective,” he says. “That chance was possible because of the Zuckerman Fellowship program, and the Harvard Kennedy School, and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

Kochis is one of two fellows attending the Ed School this year; HANNAH NOISETTE, E.M.B.A. ’18, a lawyer, is the second. The goal of the program is for students to leave the comfort zone of what they already know and “become leaders for the common good.”

“That’s why Kochis is here. Although he knows he’ll become a practicing physician, most likely a general surgeon, it’s not enough to be trained just for the medical side of his job.

“Nontechical skills are being recognized as more important for doctors,” he says. “That includes research, understanding what it means to lead, and being a better communicator. He’d also like to teach other physicians someday, and so learning about leading was key to choosing the Ed School.

“I also wanted to learn about educational theory,” he says, “and I’ve gained a much better awareness of how teaching and pedagogy can be optimized and leveraged within the clinical environment. I’m inspired to think how can we do this differently or better, not just the way we’ve always done it.”

“Zuck” fellows, as they are known, gain these skills formally by taking classes across Harvard and attending weekly leadership workshops. There’s also a field experience: In January, students went to Montgomery, Alabama, and Atlanta to meet with policymakers and local leaders. They also met with staff at the Equal Justice Initiative and the Southern Poverty Law Center.

These kinds of experiences, and being based at an education school, says Noisette, a recent Harvard law graduate, have helped her focus on his interest: equity and inclusion.

“Being at the Ed School has let me dig deeper into the how and the why around these issues and has pushed my thinking,” he says. “I was already looking at education from the equity and adequacy lens, but I wasn’t looking at it as from the perspective of economics or of the family. This is where being a Zuckerman Fellow helps. We learn from one another, and we all bring different backgrounds to solve serious and critical problems.”

Noisette plans on working in the law world once he graduates, most likely centered on education law.

“So much of my heart is in education,” he says. “No matter what is being talked about, it always takes me back to education. If young people aren’t given the tools to be active, engaged citizens, everything policymakers and reformers come up with is that much harder to make happen.

When we think about challenges of equity, we have to look at housing, jobs, and legislation, of course, but we also have to look at schools.”

“My work on the legal side of public service is crucial, but I also wanted to add the human side, especially for people of color, LGBTQ community members, and women. They are problematic to deal with in the real world but present an extra challenge when they happen in schools.

When ALICE LOU, ED.M.’17, was just starting out as a sixth-grade science teacher, she often encountered the kind of language between students and teachers with students that, while not overtly racist or sexist, nevertheless left her with a bad feeling, and in the moment, she didn’t always know the right way to respond.

“I was constantly encountering these sticky situations,” Lou says. “I knew a student had said something or I had said something that I should address because the implicit message could grow to be harmful, but I didn’t know the right language. I wished I had more time to think, but then it felt like the moment had passed.

It was while taking Associate Professor Karen Brennan’s Designing for Learning by Creating class (T550) that Lou, a member of the Technology, Innovation, and Education cohort, began creating a tool that would prepare educators for dealing with microaggressions in their classrooms. What she designed was Upstander, a free app comprising examples of microaggressions that teachers can use like flashcards to practice their responses. Categories include gender and sexuality, race, class, and more.

A card on Upstander might offer a scenario where a teacher overhears students saying, “That’s so gay.” The deck guides the user through questions to think about. For users who are unsure, the app also provides external resources for further reading for each scenario.

Be the Upstander
AN ALUM-CREATED APP HELPS EDUCATORS ADDRESS MICROAGGRESSION

STORY BY ANDREW BAULD, ED.M.’15

They can be small and almost unnoticeable. A casual comment, joke, or even a compliment. Perhaps it’s the mispronouncing of a name or the assigning of a task that reinforces stereotypical gender or race roles.

Microaggressions are everyday behaviors that add up to daily indignities for people of color, LGBTQ community members, and women. They are problematic to deal with in the real world but present an extra challenge when they happen in schools.

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“The think of microaggressions as these everyday verbal and nonverbal acts that communicate discriminatory intent, even if they aren’t intentional.”

Lou had the chance to lead Upstander with classmates and faculty in T550 and said the feedback helped her refine the user experience.

“T550 really helped me piece together what it would look like and scaffold it for teachers at all levels, from the first-year teacher to someone who has been in the classroom for a long time,” she says. The app offers two modes. One that is meant for individual practice. The other mode is Team Practice. Reflecting on the burden that is often placed on teachers of color and women when facilitating diversity and inclusion professional development, this mode allows administrators to use Upstander collaboratively during staff meetings.

After completing the prototype at the Ed School, Lou launched the app with the help of a $10,000 grant from 4.0 Schools, an education innovation investment group in New Orleans. Since going live, she has received positive feedback and hopes to make the app more accessible by expanding to other platforms and allowing teachers to add their own scenarios.

Lou is currently earning her Ph.D. in social studies education from Columbia University, studying pedagogy that supports youth activism. Although that work isn’t directly related to microaggressions, she sees a connection between her research and Upstander.

“Being comfortable and empowered to address a microaggression,” she says, “is a pathway to seeing yourself as someone who can make change in your school community or your community.”

ANDREW BAULD IS A FREQUENT CONTRIBUTOR TO ED.
2018–19: School Year Rewind

AN A TO Z REMINDER OF THE MEMORABLE EVENTS AND ISSUES FROM THE PAST ACADEMIC YEAR

A

The student-run ALUMNI OF COLOR CONFERENCE was held again in March. This year’s theme was “Homecoming: Past, Present, Future.”

B

SAN I-KI MOON, former secretary-general of the United Nations, stopped by Professor Fernando Reimers’ class in October and offered advice about the importance of education for refugees.

C

CONSCIOUS HARVARD, a project launched in the fall by President Bacow’s Innovation Fund and hosted by the Ed School, not only invited members of the Harvard community to comment about their experiences of being anti-Harvard, but also storytellers shared their personal stories at this year’s DOUBLE TAKE events.

D

Eight storytellers shared their personal stories at this year’s DOUBLE TAKE events.

E

ENCOURAGING WORDS left on a white board in Gutman on the Wall of Encourage-ment included “you are awesome,” “a pells belly,” and “keep pushing, it will pay off.”

F

GUTMAN’S RENOVATIONS dominated the campus scenery this academic year.

G

HARVARD PAN-ASIAN GRADUATE STUDENT ALLIANCE hosted a two-day event on campus about being an Asian identity and stereotypes.

H

The new school year included a NEW ORGAN: professor and former academic dean Bridget Terry Long.

I

KAREN K AND THE JITTERBUGS held a free concert for Ed School families in October, complete with bubbles and bass player bunny slippers.

J

L

LENTILS, courtesy of Professor Fernando Reimers, were on the menu in October at the first official HGSE Team Cuisine Potluck Dinner for students.

K

MARTIN LUTHER KING BOULEVARDS across the country, and the role they play in helping to shape their neighborhoods, were the focus of a course called Beloved Streets: Race and Justice in America.

L

The YULE BALL, the school’s student fall formal, brought dancing and dress-up to the Hyatt Regency in November.

M

The student-run YULE BALL, the school’s student fall formal, brought dancing and dress-up to the Hyatt Regency in November.

N

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O

In September, students quickly realized the OSA SCOOPEFEST that grad school includes not just lectures and papers but something much sweeter: ice cream.

P

The Ed School community celebrated the new Harvard PRESIDENT LARRY BACOW in the fall with welcome signs and jump shots.

Q

QUICK: The adjective many master’s students (about to be graduates) would use to describe the pace of their academic year at the Ed School!

R

RESEARCH took center stage in March at the annual Student Research Conference.

S

The new school year included a NEW ORGAN: professor and former academic dean Bridget Terry Long.

T

TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE was held on November 20. Members of HGSE, queer, and the Office of Student Affairs displayed a banner with the names of people killed by transphobic violence over the past year.

U

UNDERGRADS need not apply. In October, the inaugural Harvard Grad Fest held at the newly opened Smith Campus Center was a chance for grad students and their families to meet people outside their schools.

V

VOTING and the midterm elections were a big topic on campus and included the Harvard Votes Challenge, a university-wide effort challenging students to do their part to increase voter registration and participation among eligible students.

W

X

Halloween was X’TRA SCARY this year when students took a haunted happenings scavenger hunt.

Y

Z

ZIAUDON YOUSAFZAI, the father of Malala Yousafzai, spoke in December to students on campus about being a change maker in education.
A group of four friends sit at an oval table on the third floor of the Gutman Library. Instead of gathering over a cup of coffee, as most friends might, they are gathered around a large microphone and a tangle of wires. Ed.L.D. students Shana Peeples, Adria Chavarin-Lopez, Jim Mercer, and Adam Parrott-Sheffer are talking about the importance of storytelling as a political act. But this isn’t the usual Ed School conversation about education as a force for change. This conversation will be recorded, edited, and downloaded in the form of a podcast for listeners across the country.

Without much prior knowledge of podcasting, they drew on their backgrounds to bootstrap the project together. Mercer was a DJ and has a nephew who is into recording, so he’s in charge of sound and creativity. Parrott-Sheffer on early childhood education. Without much prior knowledge of podcasting, they drew on their backgrounds to bootstrap the project together. Mercer was a DJ and has a nephew who is into recording, so he’s in charge of sound and creativity. Parrott-Sheffer on early childhood education.

“The biggest compliment will be if, years from now, we’re given the opportunity to participate in a podcast that’s still going on here and that’s a wide reach and is something that focused on their area of expertise. Peeples took on what makes an effective teacher. Chavarin-Lopez looked at leadership sustainability. Mercer focused on leadership development. Parrott-Sheffer on an early childhood education.

Though the podcast is gaining an audience, all four students will be starting their residencies in 2019, and finding time to sit and talk will be challenging, Parrott-Sheffer says, but worth it. “Even if it wasn’t being recorded, the conversations have been so valuable. On some level, it’s almost just selfish — we get together and chat. Those sorts of things make the stuff like getting it uploaded worthwhile.”

The group is confident that future Ed.L.D. students will continue these conversations. “The biggest compliment will be if years from now, we’re given the opportunity to participate in a podcast that’s still going on here and that’s a wide reach and is something that focused on their area of expertise. Peeples took on what makes an effective teacher. Chavarin-Lopez looked at leadership sustainability. Mercer focused on leadership development. Parrott-Sheffer on an early childhood education.

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The Succulent Society, as posh as it sounds, actually started as a bit of a joke. “Being from California, I love my succulents — so much so that I was talking to another student about how I was thinking about using them as centerpieces for my West Coast wedding next year,” says RACHEL EISNER, ED.M’19, an Education Policy and Management student. “My roommate Danielle interjected and asked us what succulents were. Though she was serious, it became a running joke between us, and I told a few people that I needed to create a succulent club to help educate the East Coast on their woeful lack of greenery knowledge. To my surprise, many people responded with excitement and enthusiasm to the idea, and thus the Succulent Society was born.” In time, the club would meet, usually at someone’s apartment, as a way for students to relax and have fun around a no-stress activity related to succulent plants. At the first meeting, they painted flowerpots and learned how to replant. Students later shared clippings from their plants with one another. Asked why specifically succulents and not another type of plant, Eisner says the main reason is that they are low maintenance. “A group of us immediately bought plants in our first few weeks here, and just as immediately they all began to die because who has time to take care of a high-maintenance plant with our high-maintenance schedules.” She says, “We went with succulents because they have the ability to self-propagate and require very little care.”
Aaliyah El-Amin, Ed.M.’13, Ed.D.’15, Lecturer

WHAT ARE YOU CURRENTLY READING? Octavia Butler’s Wild Seed.

WHAT DREW YOU TO IT? Octavia Butler is everything. I have read many of her books, but somehow missed the Patterenist set. Butler was a genius at storytelling, confronting blackness, and offering both a searing critique of society and systems of oppression and painting a vision for the possibility of a new world. She was my first introduction to good science fiction and to Afro-futurism. So, I have always admired not only her skill and wisdom as a writer, but also her profound strength as a black woman. I read an article about her once where they published a list she made for herself of everything she wanted to achieve. Everything on that list, written in her handwriting on a lined piece of paper, she made happen. If I were a novelist, I would want to write with her spirit. If I were living my best life, I would live with her strength.

FAVORITE BOOK FROM CHILDHOOD? Soul on Ice.

FAVORITE BOOKING SPOT TO CURL UP WITH A BOOK? By myself: in my bed, wrapped in my blanket. With my niece: anywhere when she says it is a good time to read.

FAVORITE SPOT TO CURL UP WITH A BOOK? From childhood, I liked to read to them, but what they liked to hear. Some of my kids’ favorites were Bud, Not Buddy; The Skin I’m In; The BFG; The Lighthouse Keeper’s Bird House; The Wonderful Wizard of Oz.

FAVORITE BOOK THAT CHANGED THE WAY YOU SEE THE WORLD? Dark Horse

FAVORITE BOOK YOU READ TO YOUR STUDENTS WHEN YOU TAUGHT: A Wrinkle in Time, Anne of Green Gables, I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Judy Blume.

NEXT UP: We Want to Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom

GHOSTS IN THE SCHOOLYARD: Eyes on Race

EYE Ewing, Ed.D.’13, Ed.D.’16, knows Chi-


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The headlines for the past year have been dominated by stories about a group that often doesn’t dominate the news cycle: teachers. We read (and continue to read) pieces about teachers striking all over the country. There were stories about teachers-turned-activists and teachers running for — and winning — political office. Many stories focused on teachers struggling to make ends meet, and polls about American parents who don’t want their children to become teachers for just that reason. Teacher shortages, teacher unions, teacher diversity, teachers armed — the list was nearly endless. This issue of Ed. continues some of those headlines as we focus our feature stories and many of our shorter pieces on the group that we know is the most important factor in students doing well: our teachers.
grams like the one at the Baldwin is becoming stronger and stronger over time. Over the past several decades, research has shown that good preschool programs for three- and four-year-olds can have significant positive effects on children’s literacy, language, and mathematical skills; and on their ability to regulate themselves and interact successfully with peers. Two important decades-long longitudinal studies, the Carolina Abecedarian and Perry Preschool Projects, have shown effects not just on academic skills but on life outcomes. The students enrolled in these intensive programs, over time, have been more likely to complete school, have earned higher wages, and have been less likely to commit crimes or use drugs.

Policymakers and researchers, including those at the Ed School’s Saul Zaentz Early Education Initiative, are also coming to understand that the early childhood years, before children go to kindergarten, represent a “sensitive” period when children’s brains are both more receptive to positive learning environments and more vulnerable to negative experiences than at any other time. However, in a 2007 paper put out by the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University and the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, the authors highlighted “a persistent tolerance in our society for poor-quality care and education in the early childhood period” even though “research shows that staff knowledge and skills are among the most important determinants of the impact of early childhood programs.”

As those words suggest, there’s a wide gap between the importance of a high-quality education during the preschool years, the knowledge that teachers are the main drivers of quality, and the willingness of our society to invest in those teachers. As the Zaentz Initiative points out, only two in 10 children have access to a high-quality early education experience.

When it comes to salary, the median wage for all childcare workers is $10.72 per hour, according to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (naeyc), and includes home care providers and preschool teachers in all settings. “These suppressed wages come at a significant cost to taxpayers,” the organization reports. More than half—53 percent—of workers in the industry receive public assistance of some kind to support their own families.

Meanwhile, in most states the only requirements for teaching young children are a high school degree and a background check. While there is debate over whether having a bachelor’s degree should be required for early education teachers, experts agree that teachers do need a base of knowledge about brain development, along with many other skills, including the ability to teach using play, to
support children at different stages of development, and to spur the complex thinking and problem solving young children are capable of with the right scaffolding. As Rhian Evans Alvini, the CEO of Net4Kids, puts it: “You can’t pluck someone off the street; they need background knowledge to feel comfortable teaching them to children. And you’re expecting them to do something as simple as feeding for peanuts. To me it verges on the insane. And that’s not even taking into account the background knowledge to feel comfortable teaching them to children.”

Amy O’Leary, who directs Early Education for Harvard Ed, who is the early childhood director for the city of Cambridge, says, “You’re asking teachers to be educated on child development, on child development science, to have a basic foundational background knowledge to feel comfortable teaching them to children. And you’re expecting them to...”

According to a report by the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, “our system of preparing, supporting, and rewarding early educators in the United States remains largely ineffective, inefficient, and inequitable, posing multiple obstacles to teachers’ efforts to nurture children’s optimal development and learning, as well as risks to their own well-being.”

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The preschool system in the United States is characterized by a lack of rigorous career pathways for very low teacher-student ratios that cost up to $1,200,000, to free preschool education built into local public school systems, to community-based preschools in the local YMCA, to a family program in a grandmother’s living room.

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We learn about these features — the critical ingredients...
could be certified at three different levels, drawing
from the same core competencies but at different
depth. In Massachusetts, Hagan pointed to the
state’s Care for All initiative, a grant encouraging community
colleges to expand offerings in professional development
education—‘in other words, to “figure out on-ramps” for those in the field. One such on-ramp would be a coordinated pathway to an associate’s degree in early education, which would involve a handful of online courses in foundational topics that would be accessible and affordable for people in the field.

Two cities in Massachusetts have been testing curriculum and access to high-quality
programs while providing more professional sup-
ports for teachers than they otherwise would have, with the help of outside funding into the system. Cambridge is in the third year of a pilot program through which families are offered need-
based scholarships to private preschools in the city. As part of the program, the centers may sign on for their teachers to receive a significant amount of professional development, coaching, and culture classes, helping them to work their way up in the field. In its first year, Cambridge gave 23 scholarships to children
at eight different centers. Next year, the program will expand to 60 students at 16 sites.

Ellis, who is running the program for the city, points out that “what we do around the professionalization of the field is quite unique in the sense that we’re giving parents the opportunity to make a meaningful difference in the lives of their children, to teach them the room, time, and space to really provoke their thinking in meaningful ways, they produce great stuff, but teachers need time to document it, and it’s not in the form of quick, constrained skills.”

In addition, while it’s obviously good that public preschool programs can be certified at three different levels, drawing some outside funding into the system will involve a handful of online courses in foundational topics that would be accessible and affordable for people in the field.

Sachs recognizes that public preschool programs may not be right for all children—for instance, parents may need more child care hours or want a smaller setting for their children. But the goal is that the quality of the experience is consis-
tent. “If the child is not going to the Baldwin [school] and their family chooses Head Start, we make sure that Head Start offers the same quality experience.” That’s the commitment.

There are several arguments, from both the family perspective and the worker perspective, for a mixed-delivery system, drawing on many types of settings. While public schools provide a strong foundation in literacy and numeracy skills, most public schools principal don’t have experience in early education, and the pressure that public schools feel to test can drive even to the preschool level, to the detriment of young children’s learning experiences.

“Principals are under a lot of pressure to prove that children are producing outcomes,” Sachs says. “So they look for the easy things for children to produce. If you ask important questions, give them the room, time, and space to really provoke their thinking in meaningful ways, they produce great stuff, but teachers need time to document it, and it’s not in the form of quick, constrained skills.”

In addition, while it’s obviously good that public preschools are able to pay teachers at a higher level, that pay level pulls teachers from other parts of the system as teachers with bachelor’s degrees migrate toward the higher-salaried jobs. Ellis says of his experience working with centers in Cambridge, “In our 15 sites, there are three pro-
grams for teachers of three- to five-year-olds; they can’t find them with a BA willing to work for this kind of money. We’re working with the very best...you lose the teachers, there’s a high turnover.”

Lastly, early education programs serving largely those who work in community-based centers, are more diverse than any other group of educators in the United States. Maintaining and creating a vi-
cient ecology of high-quality community-based care is one way to support this vulnerable part of the workforce.

As Bouffard explains, “There’s really valu-
able and vital workforce set group...and it’s not in the form of quick, constrained skills.”

In addition, what is the only way we’re going to get to the heart of that question is that teachers are not necessarily college-educated; many come from low-income backgrounds; many have a primary language other than English. And we don’t want to set our teachers on a different track than the one we want to tell people that what we do around the professionalization of the field is quite unique in the sense that

Sachs says. “We don’t want to put up standards that mean we’re going to lose our young people...We want to make sure that we’re not being able to assign a value to what people already know and do.”

Policy experts also talk about the “childcare trilemma”—trying to find that difficult balance between quality, accessibility, and affordability. “It’s a three-legged stool,” Denis explains. “You want teachers to get paid well, parents can only afford; much of the way that’s done is the third leg is the quality piece.”

Many argue that the only way to provide high-quality care in a sustainable way is to stabilize the system, whether through local funds, state funds, or federal dollars—winds—providing funding for the whole of all three. As Allens of savoir-faire, “It’s what we know is that parents can’t pay more and educators can’t be paid less, it’s a fundamental decision about the marketplace of early learning. If indeed our society wants kids to have a shot at quality education, then we believe the public sector plays a role in that marketplace.”

Some, like Anita Moeller of Massachusetts’ Dep-
artment of Early Education and Care, talk about how different the landscape would be if early childhood education were considered a right, as is K-12 educa-
tion in this country.

“If early education was an entitlement, and if we found a way for them to support it as such, we would be in a different place,” she says. “I sympa-
thize with parents who try to support their kids as best they can; I sympathize with programs trying to support parents as best they can with what they have. We have to combine all our answers.”

Lastoux points out that there is already a great deal of public money and investment going into the system. “Every year, across every state, millions of dol-
ars are spent on childcare in one way or another,” she says. “There’s a real deal of public money and investment going into the system.”

She says. “But it also may be about understanding what those funds are: In 2017, only 12 percent of all those who work in community-based centers, are more diverse than any other group of educators in the United States. Maintaining and creating a viable ecology of high-quality community-based care is one way to support this vulnerable part of the workforce.

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The Middle of Somewhere

The unique strengths of rural communities and why more teachers should consider working in them

STORY BY ELAINE MCARDLE

N THE WAKE OF DONALD Trump’s 2016 presidential win, many political pundits and the media made pronouncements about rural America — where voters chose Trump by a 27-point margin — including that rural America is white America, and voters supported Trump because he appealed to their racist and nativist tendencies.

But rural educators say there’s a fundamental misunderstanding about rural America that continues to be perpetuated by people who know little about it, and to really understand rural America, the best place to start may be its schools.

“Rural communities often get overlooked by teachers for the glamour and glitz of larger metropolitan areas,” says Kathryn Whitefield, Ed.M. ’19, who has taught in both New York City and more recently, Helena, Arkansas. “The reality is that teachers are needed more in these rural schools than any other place. It doesn’t mean that students do not deserve quality teachers everywhere, but cities like Chicago and New York will never have problems drawing individuals to teach and live there.”

More so than in urban areas, where other institutions hold a dominant role, rural schools often are the nerve center of rural communities. When rural schools thrive, so do the towns and regions around them, says Maria Tieken, Ed.M. ’09, Ed.D. ’15, author of Why Rural Schools Matter and associate professor of education at Bates College in Maine.

Rural schools and communities have a number of strengths that outsiders typically overlook, including a very strong sense of community and lots of opportunity for teachers and other educators looking to make a difference.

“One thing I tell people all the time is, ‘If you’re not into Trump and you have ideas about certain people, the most radical form of social justice is to embrace the people you don’t have the kindest feelings about,’” says SKY Marietta, Ed.M. ’13, Ed.D. ’12, who in 2015 moved with her family from Cambridge to Harlan County, Kentucky, the area where she grew up, in large part to care for her dying mother.

Marietta says she and her family, including sons Harlan and Perry, and husband Geoff Mar- etta, Ed.M. ’13, Ed.M. ’11, have opportunities in Appalachia they could never have in Cambridge. They were able to buy a historic building downtown, used in part for community events, and work with their neighbors on a variety of education programs. She also likes the socioeconomic diversity to which their children are exposed and sees this as a plus for teachers considering moving to a rural community.

“The biggest reason I would urge someone to work in a rural area is that you have so much to learn. It would expand your understanding of the country,” Marietta says, “because I can guarantee that very few people [outside of rural areas] work with kids whose parents are coal miners who voted for Trump.”

Media understanding of this important part of America “is limited,” she says. Even a recent story in The New York Times about Harlan County, while “good,” missed something very important, she says. “They left out the hopefulness.”

Wide Variety

From Appalachia to the Mississippi Delta to Midwest farmlands to native lands, rural schools serve 9 million students across the country, according to the Ed. School’s Rural Education Alliance, a student group that provides awareness of and support for rural education. Just as rural communities vary greatly depending on their geographic and cultural contexts, so do rural schools.

“There’s a saying: When you’ve seen one rural school, you’ve seen one rural school,” Tieken says. Yet policymakers often apply a one-size-fits-all approach that is devastatingly ineffective, even harmful, especially when they assume that urban and suburban education policies will succeed in areas
where, for example, there is no internet service or no easy way to travel across vast distances.

Outsiders usually misunderstand the essential role that local schools play in the wellbeing of rural areas, where they are central to community cohesion and pride, as Tieken details in Why Rural Schools Matter. That’s why the trend of closing small rural schools in favor of sending students to neighboring urban schools is perplexing, says Tieken, who is currently studying the effects of school closures on three predominantly African American communities in the Mississippi Delta. While there is scant evidence that transporting students to regional schools is hurting students, Tieken says, it’s currently affecting the effects of school closures on rural areas.

The growing racial diversity is one of the biggest challenges facing rural schools, and yet “no one is talking about it,” Tieken says. This oversight is an enormous missed opportunity, she adds, because her research shows that “schools can be really important forces for either promoting equity or furthering inequality. I think rural schools are uniquely situated to promote racial equity, not only in the educational opportunities they offer but as community centers where people interact across racial lines. “We need to capitalize on that opportunity.”

The Draw

Marietta is not afraid to make a bold statement that rural schools may shock her Ed School colleagues. Despite Harlan County’s many problems, including few jobs and the opioid crisis, “people are much happier here,” she says, “because of the strong bond among residents and the strong sense of belonging and care for each other.

Twenty days after Marietta and her husband moved to Harlan County, a “radical” decision that perplexed their friends, she says, Marietta’s mother died of cancer. “People here embraced and loved us and supported us in a way that defined anything I’ve known in rural areas.” As educators, we should be getting behind those good efforts and listening to people who live in rural areas and seeing the strengths that what’s going well and how can we support that.”

Changing Demographics

As rural areas and rural schools are white, and in many areas that is true. But about 20 percent of the nation’s 50 million rural residents are people of color, Tieken says, and in some areas, including the Deep South and on tribal lands, people of color and Native people predominately live in rural areas. Even in traditionally white areas, there is also a growing number of immigrant students, says STACI CUMMINS, Ed.M.’19, co-founder of Educators Alliance for Racial Equity, who worked for three years at the St. Francis Indian School on the Rosebud Indian Reservation in South Dakota.

“Some are really, really good work happen- ing in rural places,” Tieken says, including around black and Latino families. As educators, we should be getting behind those good efforts and listening to people who live in rural areas and seeing the strengths that what’s going well and how can we support them.”

The Hardship

Despite the many benefits of teaching in rural areas, there is also hardship. Access to services such as good healthcare, not to mention a gym or full-service grocery store, often travails long distances. It can be hard for a young teacher to have a vibrant social life, and for partnered teachers, it can be a challenge to have a partner to take a job. And rural teachers earn, on average, $11,000 less per year than urban teachers and $35,000 less than their counterparts in rural areas, if they pledge to be- long to a Rural School and Community Trust 2017 report.

The past several years have witnessed a serious nationwide teacher shortage in rural areas, and the number of teachers in many rural areas is particularly daunting, according to American Federation of Teachers. In 2017, the American Federation of Teachers found that 60 percent of rural teachers were in high-poverty schools. The past several years have witnessed a serious nationwide teacher shortage in rural areas, and the number of teachers in many rural areas is particularly daunting, according to American Federation of Teachers. In 2017, the American Federation of Teachers found that 60 percent of rural teachers were in high-poverty schools.

Numerous studies show that most teachers re- turn to work in the areas where they grew up, so no answer may be increasing the homegrown pipeline.

Most teachers are likely to teach within 10 miles of where they graduated high school,” she says. Last year she worked with MARIEL NOVAS, a second-year Ed.L.D. candidate and educator, on a plan for expanding homegrown educator pipelines through residency-based and performance-based licensure models. Based on their work, the American Policy Institute. The shortages are worst in special education, math, science, and bilingual education, the institute found, and in high-poverty schools.

For rural areas — so many of which are high- poverty — the struggle to recruit and retain skilled teachers is particularly daunting, according to American Federation of Teachers. In 2017, the American Federation of Teachers found that 60 percent of rural teachers were in high-poverty schools. The past several years have witnessed a serious nationwide teacher shortage in rural areas, and the number of teachers in many rural areas is particularly daunting, according to American Federation of Teachers. In 2017, the American Federation of Teachers found that 60 percent of rural teachers were in high-poverty schools.
Who Are You Here for?

At the end of last summer, on stage at orientation, Dean Bridget Terry Long told the 739 new students what an impressive bunch they were. Addressing the “imposter syndrome” many graduate students bring with them when they arrive on Appian Way, Long reassured them that they each belonged at Harvard. But she also asked the students to consider an important question: What about the people who aren’t here?

“You didn’t come to HGSE just to get an education for yourself,” she said, “but to improve the lives of those who can’t be here.” She went on to say, “Whatever your greatest wishes and aspirations are, I hope they are greater than you. You are here to make a real and lasting difference, and there is a whole world that is eagerly waiting for you.”

With this sentiment in mind, we asked 10 current master’s students who are teachers to think about Long’s question and to answer another: Who are you here for?

Harmonie Coleman

I am here for my students — unequivocally. They are the best part of my day, every day. I look at them and see an abundance of tomorrows. I’m here for my parents, my little brother, my aunts, uncles, and cousins. My grandparents were born in the 1940s. They graduated from high school and immediately became members of the workforce, housewives, and mothers. My grandmothers dreamed of my life, my talents, and my good health long before my parents resolved to bring me into the world. I am a primary benefactor of their love. My victories are theirs, too. I’m here — at this powerful place of privilege and prestige — because of them, and now I teach for them.

This year, one grandmother will welcome her 82nd trip around the sun; the other will celebrate her second heavenly birthday. Minnie Coleman Gevedon and Sharon Louise Johnigan Pinkston, this is for you.

Harvard Ed.

Mark Dennis

My work ultimately comes back to me. I teach to promote the growth, healing, and self-actualization of my students, but that is also a part of my own growth healing and self-actualization. The work that I challenge my students to do on themselves is also the work that I push myself to do. During my year at the Ed School, I have spent a lot of time thinking about the ways in which community colleges can serve not only as spaces for personal and professional growth, but also as individual and communal healing spaces. The highest compliment I have received as an educator was from a student who said, “Your class felt like a semester-long support group.”

As I think about returning to my campus community, I’m reflecting on ways that I can cocreate not only classroom space that feels this way, but ultimately departments, divisions, and institutions that promote the healing and betterment of the whole person, their families, and communities.

Harvard Ed.
Woojin Kim
Who am I here for? My parents. Who could have known that these two immigrants from Korea would stumble upon each other in the States, work in construction and food services, and have a child end up at Harvard? As Min Jin Lee, author of Free Food for Millionaires and Pachinko, points out, in researching her third novel, many Koreans place a high value on education and will go to great lengths to attain it for their children. A degree from Harvard, for my parents, reassures them that their sacrifices were not for naught. A degree from Harvard indicates job security for their own children when theirs was not always as certain. A degree from Harvard brings my parents honor, and I hope that my life continues to do so as I teach students and colleagues, as I learn for my own personal and professional growth, and as I, deo volente, seek every individual’s fullest flourishing on this side of eternity.

Valencia Tilden
I was home, in Gallup, New Mexico, for the summer of 2017. I sat with my mom at a restaurant. A young Navajo boy came to our table with beautiful earrings to sell. In one hand he had his earrings, in his other his “spinners.” I asked about his spinners, and he lit up with excitement, telling me how he saved money for them, but wasn’t able to get the one he hoped for because he had to help his family with gas money. I asked him about school. The excitement drained from his eyes. In that moment, I knew that I wanted to do whatever I could to be a part of the change in our local schools to see our Native youth excited about learning, proud of their culture and identity, and filled with a hope for the future. I wanted for that young boy to have every opportunity to help his family and his community and achieve his dreams.
I often reflect on why I chose a program that focuses on urban education. I was born and raised in rural Arkansas, and sitting in courses, trying to explain what it means to teach in rural America, has been more frustrating than I can articulate. When I think of families in towns where schools have been closed and they commute on buses for more than an hour to school each way, every day, it is beyond heartbreaking. I am here for the resilient people and students of the Mississippi Delta who are often forgotten in our talk of equity and education. I owe much to my community and especially the educators from whom I have had the privilege to learn, many of whom were never fortunate enough to sit in ivory tower classrooms. They remind me that my place here as an African American male math teacher is a direct product of those forgotten people and communities of the Delta. I owe them so much.

Our work is based in Uru, a remote village at the foothills of Mt. Kilimanjaro, where I lived and worked alongside 7,000 people who were living on less than a dollar a day, with no access to running water or electricity. The vast majority of children do not begin schooling until the age of six or seven, which is well past the most critical years for child development. Between the total absence of an academic foundation and the trauma and violence to which many of them are exposed, these children are at risk of falling further into the cycle of poverty that they were born into. I am here for these children. I am here because I believe that education is the answer. I believe that a strong foundation in life will allow these children to not only become architects of their own futures, but it will also empower those around them to lead their country to a better and brighter tomorrow.
Whenever I'm in need of motivation, I reread messages my former students scrawled in Sharpie all over a T-shirt on the last day of school. Many students seized the opportunity to critique my sense of humor. Ashley reminded me, “Your jokes are super corny but you’re lit like a lamp,” while Asinya advised, “Get some new material.” Others, like Amadi, urged me on to “do amazing at Harvard and achieve bigger and better things.” Her message is inspiring and, in a way, impossible: Since my first year of teaching, I’ve known there’s no bigger and better thing than working and learning alongside my students every day. I’m here because a literature class isn’t just about the books my students read, but about the stories they tell as change agents in their lives beyond the classroom.
I was in high school when I decided to be a teacher. I didn’t have a clue about what I was going to teach, where, or to whom, but I was certain there was no better way to make my life meaningful. Throughout my education, many of my teachers inspired me to be the best version of myself, and I wanted to do the same for others in the future. That dream became a reality five years ago when I began my teaching career as a lecturer in psychology. I’m here thanks to all the students I have had in the past, but I’m also here for all the students I will have in the future. Every semester I have the chance to make a difference in the lives of my students, just like my teachers have made a difference in my life. That is a huge responsibility, and I want to be up to the challenge.

Johanny Canada-Hlatshwayo

I am here first and foremost for me. I was a leader who was leading without having a clear understanding of what I stood for. I am here because I put off coming to Harvard for too long, and I wanted to know it was still a possibility. I came to focus on being a learner, find out what makes me who I am, and how I can help others see their true potential. As a mother, I am here to let my children know they can truly do whatever they set their minds to. I am learning how influential past experiences have been in shaping my life. In my courses, I am finding opportunities to deeply explore how these experiences continue to shape the leader I choose to become. I am becoming increasingly aware of challenges my own children could be facing as young American-Afro-Latinx students and of some of the indicators we, as teachers, might be missing in order to best support how our students learn. I hope to continue to develop the “me” that’s waiting to emerge and to find opportunities to help others do the same.
AST SEPTEMBER, TIME MAGAZINE ran a story called “I’m a Teacher in America.” Focused on teacher pay, the issue offered three different covers, each featuring a photo of a current teacher and a few lines of text explaining what that teacher was doing to stretch paychecks and make ends meet. There were second jobs, renting small apartments — even donating blood plasma to cover an electric bill. Inside, the story further documented the financial reality for many public school teachers across the country: skipping doctor visits, ignoring broken teeth, stretching out $20 for spending money after bills are paid, driving with a broken windshield or calling in sick when the car is out of gas, praying that the aging car battery holds up a bit longer, missing out on a friend’s wedding, not registering a kid for Girl Scouts because there’s a fee. Not having kids at all because they are so expensive.

Some of these scenarios might seem extreme — and they certainly aren’t the reality for all 3.2 million teachers working in public schools across America, especially in areas where school-based jobs are the most steady jobs in town — but these scenarios point to a problem that casts a dark shadow over this country: Given what’s at stake, teacher salaries are not what they should be. Not by a long shot. In fact, accounting for inflation, teachers are actually making less than they used to, despite a growing and more diverse student population and higher-than-ever expectations for what students should be achieving.

Perhaps it’s no wonder then that there have been nearly a dozen teacher strikes in cities and states across the country since the beginning of 2018, starting with West Virginia’s Red for Ed walkout. In places like Arizona, Oklahoma, North Carolina, Washington, California, and, more recently, Denver and West Virginia (again), teachers and supporters took to the streets, pushing for a range of demands: smaller class sizes; more nurses, counselors, and support staff; less severe disciplinary measures for students; overall school budget increases. There was also one common ask that was part of nearly every protest: higher pay for teachers.

The public, for the most part, has been supportive. A 2018 PDK poll found that 73 percent of Americans surveyed said they would back up teachers in their community if they went on strike for more money, and 78 percent of public school parents — those most affected by walkouts — agreed. The poll also found that 66 percent believe that teacher salaries in their communities are too low; just 6 percent say they are too high.

So if a huge majority of people surveyed say they support higher salaries for teachers and would get behind them if they walked out over the issue, then why are teachers forgoing doctor’s visits and donating blood plasma just to stay afloat? If lifting teacher pay has become a major talking point on the presidential campaign trail by Democratic hopefuls like Kamala Harris, Beto O’Rourke, and Elizabeth Warren, then why are teachers in 17 states, like South Dakota, Mississippi, Oklahoma, West Virginia, and Colorado, paid less than $50,000 a year on average and teachers in another 19 states paid in the $30s, according to the most recent figures released by the National Center for Education Statistics?

It’s a complicated issue, starting with the bottom line — school funding. Even though many states have increased K-12 funding since the end of the 2009 recession, including a 4 percent increase last year, according to the Center on the Budget and Policy Priorities, average teacher pay in 39 states declined between 2010 and 2016. The increased funding in some states has been used to pay down pension obligations, hire new staff, and reprioritize previously laid off, with teacher paychecks seeing little change. But beyond bottom lines, there are also other reasons why pay has stayed low. ARIELLE ROCHLIN, ED.M.’13, a fifth-year social studies teacher at Campbell High School in Smyrna, Georgia, says society’s perception in this country about what it means to be a teacher is one of them. Yes, as surveys show, the public generally supports teachers, she says, but often only in theory. “Teachers don’t feel seen or appreciated. The words come out empty when there’s no action,” she says. “If people really valued and understood what it took to be a teacher, the pay would follow.”

Part of that understanding is that we think we know what it means to be a teacher because we’ve all been students, and what we think is that teaching can’t be that hard. It’s why it wasn’t uncom-
development classes during the summer, usually on 12 months instead of 10. Some teachers, in order to opt to have their regular paycheck spread out over at least some portion of the summer writing and or work a nonteaching job — or both. Most spend public imagines. According to summer may mean a couple of laidback months, those who have a partner or spouse who also works, full of individual school districts get paid parental in 1800, 90 percent of American teachers were actually in 1989–1990, 1999–2000, and 2009–2010. But what has teachers do work is never done,’” he says. “In addition to the emotional toll of the work that we do is hard to enforce this perception.” Teachers Have It Easy. Teachers Have it easy because raising taxes was just about as unpopular as the idea of the teaching profession, glorified the female teacher. Even Horace Mann, another hugely influential teacher. When I was at the Ed School, we Secretary of Education, glorified the female teacher. Tarnowicz says teachers often internalize this. “In my time,” Catherine Bheecker, further cemented the low-pay-is-fine argument when she said that men working in schools would be better off employed in the mills, where they could earn a higher wage to support a family, while a “woman needs support only for herself” — a false assumption that still exists today. Until recently, many working-class wives also laboring on farms, in factories, or taking on domestic jobs. In the 19th century, women were seen as having the ability to take on roles they otherwise would not. Even Horace Mann, another hugely influential education reformer of the time and the nation’s first secretary of education, glorified the female teacher. “As a teacher of schools...how divinely does she come, her head encircled with a halo of heavenly light, her feet sweetening the earth on which she treads,” he wrote in 1853 in A Few Thoughts on the Powers and Duties of Woman, a series of lectures that’s a job I wouldn’t want,’” he says. “But on the other hand, another friend helped his mother buy a house. He was paying her mortgage. I couldn’t do anything to help my parents who, at that point, had fallen on hard times. Teaching doesn’t offer that. That’s unfortunate.” Another factor contributing to low pay is that teaching has long been considered “women’s work” — and therefore a second, less important income in some households. “When you look at the teaching profession in the United States, most teachers were, and still are, women,” Tarnowicz says. “Historically, workers in this country have been denied the full social, economic, and political privileges that other groups have enjoyed. And when a woman is in a female career,” was sentenced to school savings, and an individual’s status quo. I am sure of education that, hey, we can pay teachers 30 percent as much and this is going to be a great thing for the taxpayer.” The emotional toll of the work that we do is hard to quantify back then as it is now. So what we see is a sort of alliance between politicians and education reformers in the early 20th century to redefine teaching as a female profession. They did this in a couple of ways that ultimately didn’t work: First, women, she says, are supposed that women are more moral in a Christian sense than men. And they depict men as sort of alcoholic, intemperate, sort of flash in the pan. The resulting teacher workforce engaged in the riots that school teaching should be compulsory, that parents should be forced to send their kids to school, and public education should be universal, they had to come up with a way to do this basically in an affordable manner. Katrina (35.5 percent), and Oklahoma (35.4 percent). And today we know that 76 percent of the state’s women are still in the teaching profession — “elevate the condition of woman.” The false assumption even then, Goldstein writes, with someone who is not only a bachelor’s, they also have to pass a battery of tests that are themselves expensive,” she said. Powers and Duties of Woman, with the biggest gaps are three that saw walkouts in the 1990s.” Theirs is a world where the stakes are so high. ‘Aren’t you doing things for the children?’” She says. “We’re supposed to be an honorable profession. When I was at the Ed School, we maintained that to do that thing, teachers shouldn’t have to make the choice between making a difference and making a living.”
There are heroes all around us, and it feels there are heroes that have been created about public schools in our country that is not helpful," he said. "We can't have it both ways. You can't say, 'Yeah, education is great, but I don't want my kid to become a teacher.' It's problematic for our country.

Yuan’s family felt exactly this way when he decided to go to Harvard—and continue working as a teacher. In his EdTalk, he recalled the day he got his acceptance email from the Ed School.

“I was ecstatic, and naturally the first person I wanted to call was my dad, and I did," he said. "But I didn't get 'that's my boy.' No, not even 'a good job, son.' Instead, my dad had only one thing to say: 'Why would you go to Harvard to be a teacher?' To anyone working as a teacher, the answer would be, that's exactly why you go to Harvard, or any other college. As the research consistently demonstrates, going back to the 700-page 1966 Coleman Report, commissioned by the U.S. Office of Education, the most important factor in student performance—beyond curriculum, beyond the school building, beyond family experience—is high-quality teachers. A more recent Stanford University study found that teachers have higher cognitive skills, and their students perform better in math and reading, in countries that pay teachers more.

As Rochelin says, “My educational philosophy is we hire good teachers and leave them alone. And follow-up with a paycheck worthy of their hard work. And it’s possible to do both. As Elissa Behrstock Sherratt, vice president of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and on the board of the Teacher Salary Project, notes, “It's time to pay teachers so low 'is a public perception issue and a political will issue.’” (Despite recent candidates talking about teacher pay on the campaign trail, the issue has been championed by politicians going back to the 1960s, when Richard Nixon and John Kennedy backed increases during their debates.)

But real action on this teacher pay can happen, Behrstock Sherratt says. For example, in Singapore, a country touted for high student academic marks, a teacher's pay once was low and the profession wasn’t highly respected, she says, until the government, realizing in the early 2000s that they needed a more educated population, got the public and politicians onboard, raised teacher salaries, and in turn made the field more competitive.

“They took all the things we talk about here in the United States and requested the money, got the money, and put a plan in place,” Behrstock Sherratt says. “It can be done if you have the political will.”
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46
35x724.
42x70
1990–1999
DAVID LUSTICK, ED.M.’89  
FREDERICK GREENE, ED.M.’84  
ED.D.’79  
MARGARET CESARIO, ED.M.’79  
MARTIN HUNT, ED.D.’76  
EDWARD TAYLOR, ED.M.’75  
JAMES SLATTERY, ED.D.’74  
SALLY LUNT, ED.D.’74
1980

1981
David Sortino, Ed.M., recently published A Guide for Parents: 10 Ways to Help Your Child Learn: Understanding the Brain from Infancy to Young Adulthood. He is the director of the Harvard Global Resource Center at Harvard University, which aims to provide families and educators with high-quality resources to support children’s learning.

1982
Brian Izen, M.A.T., was appointed to serve as a consultant for Rutgers University at the inauguration of Larry Bacow, Harvard’s 29th president. Izen is an active and influential student at Harvard. He is the founder of the social media company Black Walths White Minds by Mitch Mang. 

1983
Karen Kupel, Ed.D., was asked to serve on a federal panel for Rutgers University at the inauguration of Larry Bacow, Harvard’s 29th president. Kupel is an active and influential student at Harvard. He is the founder of the social media company Black Walths White Minds.

1984
In Memory

In Memory

1985
David Gordon, Ed.D., recently published In the Last Year: Understanding the Brain from Infancy to Young Adulthood. He is the director of the Harvard Global Resource Center at Harvard University, which aims to provide families and educators with high-quality resources to support children’s learning.

1986
Karen Pajewski, Ed.M., was appointed to serve as a consultant for Rutgers University at the inauguration of Larry Bacow, Harvard’s 29th president. Pajewski is an active and influential student at Harvard. He is the founder of the social media company Black Walths White Minds.

1987
John Miller, M.A.T., recently co-wrote the International Handbook of Educational Policies. Miller is a professor in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, Canada.

1988
David Sortino, Ed.M., recently published A Guide for Parents: 10 Ways to Help Your Child Learn: Understanding the Brain from Infancy to Young Adulthood. He is the director of the Harvard Global Resource Center at Harvard University, which aims to provide families and educators with high-quality resources to support children’s learning.

1989
Teresa Michel-Joseph, Ed.D., became vice president for advancement at the University of Redlands in California. In October 2018, she graduated from the Ed School, and Joseph was named President of Bethany College in Bethany, West Virginia. She has taught French at Wellesley Middle School in Wellesley, Massachusetts, since 1998. Mignonne Poland, Ed.D., was appointed as the director of the education sector outreach manager for the California Complete Count Census 2020 by the Office of Gov- ernor Jerry Brown. 

1990
Lisa Childress, Ed.D., recently published The Twenty-First Century University: Developing a Strategic Framework for Internationalization. This book identifies what successful universities are doing to overcome challenges and engage faculty in the internationalization process.

1991
Fred Birken, Ed.D., is on the board of directors of the Akai Kua Charted School in San Francisco, a historic public school at the Univer- sity of Hawaii Laboratory School. Tasha Johnson, Ed.D., was ap- pointed to the board of directors of the National Association of School Directors. Johnson is the senior director of the Character Development Learning Institute at the national office of the YMCA, where she currently works as the executive director of the National Association of School Directors.

1992
Bella Brett, Ed.D., a former director of career services at the Ed School, retired from her consulting group as a skills and career services evaluator and in a new role as a writer and artist. Her new book, “Finding Your Float- ing World,” was published in September 2018 by She Writes Press.

1993
Veronica Guerrero-Maca, Ed.M., was appointed as the president of the Latino/Hispanic School, a private school that focuses on education for low-income students. The school is the first to serve students who meet federal income guidelines. It is located in Miami. The school is an example of the type of education model that Vernon McFarland advocates in his book, “Toward a New York Times bestselling author, was recently named President of Bethany College in Bethany, West Virginia. He was a Harvard Business School graduate and a former member of the Harvard University Board of Overseers.

1994
It was recently co-edited the recent handbook of the international handbook of research in education. It was recently co-authored by Richard J. Shavelson, Ed.D., and David H. Berliner.

1995

1996
Rebecca Bloome, Ed.D., recently published Career Challenges and Opportunities for Teachers to Educate Whole Students with Connie Chun. 

1997
David M. Goldberg, Ed.D., recently published Graduating from the Ed School, an independent school that supports and advocates for the Khan Academy in Mountain View, California. Reckon with their interest in learning more about Khan Lab or in teach- ing and internships at the university. Kim Klinholm school.org

1998
Kimberly Dow, Ed.D., recently took on the role of head of the middle school and upper school at Khan Lab School. The school is located in Mountain View, California. In October 2018, she graduated from the Ed School, and Joseph was named President of Bethany College in Bethany, West Virginia. She has taught French at Wellesley Middle School in Wellesley, Massachusetts, since 1998. Mignonne Poland, Ed.D., was appointed as the director of the education sector outreach manager for the California Complete Count Census 2020 by the Office of Gov- ernor Jerry Brown. 

1999
Lisa Childress, Ed.D., recently published The Twenty-First Century University: Developing a Strategic Framework for Internationalization. This book identifies what successful universities are doing to overcome challenges and engage faculty in the internationalization process.

2000
Nouvelle Hendrisch, Ed.D., joined Fordham (Massachusetts) Public Schools in April 2017 as the vice president of the Department of Education and School Improvement. Prior to her role as a counselor at the Ed School, Hendrisch was a counselor at the University of Illinois Laboratory School. Hendrisch is the senior director of the Character Development Learning Institute at the national office of the YMCA, where she currently works as the executive director of the National Association of School Directors.

2001
Colin Reimer, Ed.D., recently earned his Doctorate of Educa- tion from Northwestern University. He is currently working as a principal at Saint Mary’s College of California in Moraga, and is actively involved in statewide teacher professional development, and research and writing on education policy.

2002
Tyler Lewis, Ed.D., was named head of school at Kimball Union Academy, a boarding school in Meriden, New Hampshire, starting in July 2010. Currently, he is head of Bishop’s School in Shaker, Brookline, Massachusetts.

2003

2004

2005
Nathan Glazer, 1932–2019  Nathan Glazer, considered to be one of the foremost urban sociologists in the country, and a professor emeritus at the Ed School, was named President of Bethany College in Bethany, West Virginia. He was a Harvard Business School graduate and a former member of the Harvard University Board of Overseers.

2006
Erica Boyd, Ed.D., recently served as the Director of the National Assessment and Examination Center with the Department of Education, Science, and Sport in Geor- gia, her home country.

2007
Todd Ross, Ed.D., recently published Don’t Rely: Achieving Success Through the Pursuit of Fulfillment. Ross is a new- 

2008
Urban Sociology, and then became leaders in their communities.

2009
Erica Mosca, Ed.M., is the founding director of Leaders in Training, a Las Vegas-based nonprofit that empowers future stu- dents to get into college, graduate, and then become leaders in their communities.

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2012
Erica Mosca, Ed.M., is the founding director of Leaders in Training, a Las Vegas-based nonprofit that empowers future stu- dents to get into college, graduate, and then become leaders in their communities.
The Ed School first established the Alumni Council Award for Outstanding Contribution to Education in 1985 in order to recognize graduates who have made a significant mark on the field of education. Based on nominations submitted by the larger alumni body, the school’s Alumni Council selects one recipient each year, and honors that individual with the award at the school’s Convocation ceremony in May. In thinking through who they will honor, the council considers:

• how the nominees have conducted their work in the field of education above and beyond the basic requirements of their professions,

• how far-reaching their impact has been, and

• whether they have had a consistent track record of continued dedication to education-focused issues.

The most recent recipient is STELLA FLORES, Ed.M. ’02, Ed.D. ’07, an associate professor of higher education at New York University (NYU) who was named “One of the Top 25 Women in Higher Education and Beyond” in Diverse Issues magazine in 2017.

What Is the Alumni Council Award?

Stella Flores speaks with NYU students last year.

Floreo, a scholar of diversity and equity, was chosen for the award because of her career devotion to improving college access and success for underrepresented and low-income students. As an associate professor at the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development at NYU, Flores also serves as associate dean for faculty development and diversity and director of access and equity at the Steinhardt Center for Higher Education Policy. In her work, using quantitative methods to examine large-scale databases in grades K-20, Flores investigates the impact of state and federal policies on college access and completion for underserved student populations.

The HGSE Alumni Council is a group of volunteer representatives of the school who provide a valuable connection between the school and its growing body of alumni. Members work to strengthen the relationship between the school and its alumni through engagement and outreach, including event development and support, admissions recruitment, strengthening volunteer opportunities, and broadening alumni networks. Members serve as both representatives of the larger alumni body and as sources of information for the Office of Development and Alumni Relations.

Continent Still the First

Vanessa Monterosa, Ed.M., is co-chair for digital citizenship with the International Society for Technology in Education. Monterosa is also a program and policy specialist with the Los Angeles Unified School District’s @Tech_FTW.

WANT TO SUBMIT A CLASSNOTE?

Have you recently graduated (again)? Did you get married (again)? Land a great new job (of course, again)? We want to know, so that everyone at the Ed School can share in the good news! Send your updates to classnotes@gse.harvard.edu.

WHAT IS THE ALUMNI COUNCIL AWARD?

Grad. Harvard Ed.

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Curious which alumni have won the award in the past?
Read the full list online at gse.harvard.edu/alumni/council/recipients

Want to nominate a graduate for next year’s award? You can start by filling out the nomination form at gse.harvard.edu/alumni/council/nomination

Questions? Contact HGSE Alumni Services at gse_alumni@harvard.edu, or call 617-496-3605