

Ed.

HARVARD ED. MAGAZINE

FALL 2016

**“Halfway through
the year I caught one
of my 12th-graders
cheating...”**

■ ETHICAL DILEMMAS & THE 21ST-CENTURY TEACHER



FALL 2016 ■ ISSUE № 155

Editor in Chief

Lory Hough
LORY_HOUGH@HARVARD.EDU

Creative Director, Ed.

Patrick Mitchell
MODUS OPERANDI DESIGN
WWW.MODUSOP.NET

Assistant Dean of Communications

Michael Rodman
MICHAEL_RODMAN@HARVARD.EDU

Contributing Writers

Andrew Bauld, Ed.M.'16
Jessica Lander, Ed.M.'15
Leah Shafer

Illustrators

Laurent Cilluffo
Daniel Hertzberg
Kevin Pope
Riccardo Vecchio

Photographers

Jill Anderson
Jonathan Kozowyk
Diane Levine
Ekaterina Smirnova

Copy Editors

Marin Jorgensen
Abigail Mieko Vargus

POSTMASTER

Send address changes to:
Harvard Graduate School of Education
Office of Communications
13 Appian Way
Cambridge, MA 02138

© 2016 by the President and
Fellows of Harvard College.
Harvard Ed. magazine is
published three times a year.

PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.



Contents

Fall 2016



“I think we’ll find it successful when we are able to bring personalized learning to any school that wants to do it.”

ADAM SELDOW,
ED.M.'03, ED.M.'08, ED.D.'10

Intro.

4

NEWS + NOTES FROM APPIAN WAY

Buddy the plush bison, p. 4 ■ Mayors take the lead in redesigning education, p. 7 ■ Alum gets personal at Facebook, p. 8 ■ A Harvard visit from a hip hop high school, p. 11 ■ Study Skills: Gladys Aguilar, p. 13 ■ Japanese student art from WWII finds a home, p. 14 ■ Why stressed students need more PDF, p. 16 ■ Donovan Livingston lifts off, p. 17 ■ AND MORE!

JONATHAN KOZOWYK

Features



20

Do the Right Thing. (But How?)

Educators are faced with difficult ethical dilemmas every day. Figuring out how to handle these situations is rarely, if ever, easy.

STORY BY
JESSICA LANDER, ED.M.'15

28

Scenes from an Open House

It's one of the few times each year when schools have almost all families in one place at the same time. So why are we blowing this annual back-to-school event?

STORY BY LORY HOUGH



DIANA LEVINE, DANIEL HERTZBERG, KEVIN POPE (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP)

Departments

CONVO. — READER FEEDBACK	2
GRAD. — ALUMNI NEWS + NOTES	43
CAMPAIGN	49

36

Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of a Video Game

Why one professor is bringing the Declaration of Independence into the digital age in an effort to reach young people.

STORY BY
ANDREW BAULD, ED.M.'16



Convo.

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



1 **ROBERT MORRISON, ED.M.'57**, a long-retired teacher and administrator, wrote to say he applauded our recent redesign of *Ed.* but urged us to devote more ink space to stories focused on public schools. He also asked that we offer stories that give advice to educators working with young people in mainstream classes who are labeled special education and need help keeping up. **"I work with a young man who will be going into high school next year, and I could sure use some help,"** he writes.

2 Our story "Where Are All the Teachers of Color?" received a fair share of comments on Facebook and Twitter, as well as longer responses, including a letter from **LOUIS DEFREITAS SR., ED.M.'71**, a 30-year teaching veteran of public schools who had a different experience than the students and alumni quoted in the story. As he writes, **"I was born and raised in Harlem. I have been black for 78 years. I taught in public schools for over 30 years, 25 of those years in the New York City public school system."** As a student, DeFreitas says he learned at schools where there were black teachers and at schools where all the teachers were white. **"At no time as a student did I ever feel neglected or disrespected by my teachers. I always felt that my teachers were about teaching every child. ... It was the teachers who loved to teach who got the best results."** He later taught in Virginia. "The children there were the same as the children I taught in New York City schools. They respected teachers who respected them and disliked teachers who did not want to teach." One suggestion? Future educators should watch the movies *Blackboard Jungle* and *To Sir With Love*. Both, he says, "offer people an understanding of what dedicated teaching is like."

3 In our winter 2016 issue, Jeff Wagenheim wrote about the growing interest among educators in the so-called soft skills that young people need that go beyond reading, writing, and arithmetic ("There's Nothing Soft About These Skills"). **EVE ODIORNE SULLIVAN, M.A.T.'66**, agrees with the content, adding, "There is nothing soft about these skills, to be sure." However, Odiorne Sullivan, founder of the Cambridge-based Parents Forum, also said that the conversation around skills shouldn't be left to educators alone. **"All parents, not only affluent ones, should be included in the conversation about social-emotional learning,"** she writes. **"Where are parent-ing education and parent peer support in this discussion? Missing, as is almost always the case. Sad face."**



OOPS ON US

In our summer story, "Where Are All the Teachers of Color?" we made a big no-no and forgot to credit two authors of the paper *The Challenge of Recruiting and Hiring Teachers of Color*: **NICOLE SIMON, ED.M.'12, ED.D.'15**, and **STEFANIE REINHORN, ED.M.'13, ED.D.'15**.

Past Tense

Our inaugural "Past Tense" piece in the summer issue promoted another 1960s graduate to recall her experience as a fledgling teacher. As **SHEILA TIELLI, M.A.T.'63**, wrote to us:

"What a jolt to my memory I received in reading Past Tense in Convo. My school was a junior high in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn. I started, fresh out of the M.A.T. Program, in late September, as a replacement art teacher. When I appeared the following Monday, the students couldn't believe it, as they had already changed teachers four times. I came to see the school as a warehouse for those for whom no one had expectations. They were waiting to turn 16 so that they could leave. There was an overall grey shabbiness, bars on the windows, the smell of urine in the stairwells, a policeman assigned to the block. The only special event I remember was a beauty contest, of all things, which served to increase the tension between black and Puerto Rican students.

"I was naive. I worked hard to motivate interest, staying after hours to assemble lesson materials. Yet often paper was crumpled and in the wastebasket before I finished passing it out. I once braved a field trip, but only once. Still, we had a relationship. In our bleak classroom we were stunned to hear the breaking news of the assassination of Kennedy. I first learned about the

Beatles from the kids, when they heard that I would be off to England the next year. Yes, because I left those kids. I felt so guilty. I cared about them, and they sensed it. By the end of the year, 'Hey, Teach' became 'Miss Martin.' That was my success. However, like Ms. Kovner, the sense of hopelessness was such that I had to save my sanity by leaving or, if I stayed, to lose my humanity by hardening myself.

"Five years ago, I returned for the first time, 'my' school now an elementary school. The remembered tiny asphalt playground is now non-existent, filled with portables. Is this possible? Apparently. Brownsville is still the worst area in the city in categories such as single parent families and early school leaving. All these years later, it still makes me want to cry."

CONNECT WITH ED.



[TWITTER.COM/HGSE](https://twitter.com/HGSE)



[FACEBOOK.COM/HARVARDEDUCATION](https://www.facebook.com/HARVARDEDUCATION)



[YOUTUBE.COM/HARVARDEDUCATION](https://www.youtube.com/HARVARDEDUCATION)



[INSTAGRAM.COM/HARVARDEDUCATION](https://www.instagram.com/HARVARDEDUCATION)



[HARVARDEDUCATION.TUMBLR.COM](https://www.tumblr.com/HARVARDEDUCATION)



[ISSUU.COM/HARVARD_EDUCATION](https://www.issuu.com/HARVARD_EDUCATION)



[MEDIUM.COM/@HARVARDEDUCATION](https://www.medium.com/@HARVARDEDUCATION)



LETTERS@GSE.HARVARD.EDU

Behind the Story

Lory Hough, Editor in Chief



After *Dilemmas of Educational Ethics* came out last spring, I knew I wanted to include a story in the magazine about the book or, more generally, about the subject, one I suspected most people didn't think much about: the ethical choices that teachers, principals, and other educators need to make. Sure, I knew there were *big* ethical issues, like teachers changing answers on standardized tests or getting too close to their students, but those examples were rare, I thought — instances that made splashy headlines in the news but that didn't affect most teachers. ¶ In one sense, I was wrong. After reading this book, I realized that *all* educators have to wrestle with ethical issues of some sort, often on a daily basis and usually without guidance. They rarely are the big ethical issues like system-wide cheating, but ethical issues that nevertheless can have big ramifications, especially for students, depending on how the teacher reacts. That's a lot of pressure. And it's personal. That's why, when planning this story, I knew it had to be written by a teacher. It's one teacher's experience, but I suspect it will resonate with anyone who works with young people.

Intro.

NEWS + NOTES FROM APPIAN WAY



The Book of Buddy

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU FIND INSPIRATION IN A CHOCOLATE BROWN, FLUFFY KIDS' TOY?

STORY BY LORY HOUGH

When opportunity knocks, even in the form of a plush bison, you grab it. That's exactly what **ILONA HOLLAND, ED.M.'85, ED.D.'91**, did a couple of years ago when she was having lunch with a friend, Grace Lee. Lee, the executive director of the non-profit National Park Trust, brought along toys for Holland's granddaughters: two stuffed brown bison named Buddy. Curious, Holland asked if there was a story to go along with Buddy, who serves as the trust's mascot. (The bison also happens to be the national mammal for the country.) When Lee said no, Holland's wheels started spinning.

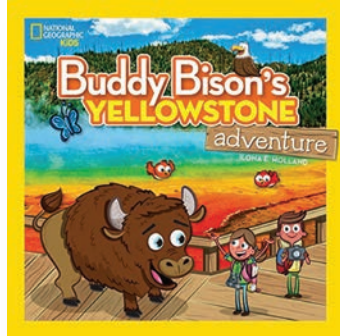
She had always wanted to write a children's book and, now retired from teaching at the Ed School after 14 years, she knew the timing was right. And so she proposed a story to Lee and the trust centered on Buddy. To her surprise, she was given the green light to move forward with a book.

Immediately she sat down and started thinking about what she wanted to write. Luckily, her years involved in formative evaluation for educational programs, including children's television shows like *Wild Kratts* and *Word Girl*, helped her avoid making a rookie mistake: jumping into the writing without knowing all the important details.

"With my previous work, I got to know how a show gets put together," she says. "I took that knowledge and was able to apply it to what the TV industry calls the 'bible'" — a guidebook containing all of the minute details about a show's characters and setting. "All that work gets done prior to the ▶

show, so I did the same thing for the Buddy story. I knew who these characters would be, even the names," before the story was even written.

With their Buddy bible in hand, Holland and Lee next approached the publishing team at National Geographic. "Having that bible made a huge difference," Holland says. "We were prepared for any question, and it really helped the folks at National Geographic get their heads around what we were trying to do." This phase of the process was lengthy, lasting a year and included pitch meetings to all of the key decisionmakers at National Geographic. It also involved research trips to Yellowstone, where Holland proposed setting her story, both in person and online.



"What a joy it is to have Google Maps," she says, talking about the research. "I was able to trace the trail I wanted my characters to take. I could see the actual shrubbery and the terrain. I was like, wow, I'm in my book!"

Holland also turned to park rangers for help — thankfully. At one point, her characters were walking on a particular trail. One of the rangers wrote back to say that trail had just been closed, indefinitely.

"They needed to give [the vegetation] a rest," she says. Knowing accuracy is important to any book, but particularly for an organization like National Geographic that has a reputation for getting details right, Holland went back to her story and rerouted the characters.

This past February, Holland published her 32-page book, *Buddy Bison's Yellowstone Adventure*, geared toward elementary school students. A mix of illustration and actual photos, the book is the story of a brother and sister who visit Yellowstone with their aunt, a ranger at the park, and have a chance meeting with Buddy when one of the kids gets lost. The book, with the iconic *National Geographic* yellow border, includes a journal entry from one of the characters, fun facts, and a history of the park. In July, it was featured on *Today with Kathy Lee and Hoda*. Holland says the book may eventually be bundled with the very thing that started this whole adventure for her: a chocolate brown, fluffy Buddy. LH



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT BUDDY: PARKTRUST.ORG/YOUTH-PROGRAMS/BUDDY-BISON



A BIG BOOST FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD

In May, the Ed School announced a renewed focus on early childhood development with the Saul Zaentz Early Childhood Initiative. Supported by a \$35.5 million gift from the Saul Zaentz Charitable Foundation — the largest gift in HGSE's history — the initiative will create a hub at the Ed School for work focusing on early childhood education. Dean James Ryan says the gift "is perfectly aligned with HGSE's mission of expanding educational opportunity and improving outcomes, especially for our most vulnerable children," and will complement the work already being done here by the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. The main focus of the center will be on how to design, implement, evaluate, and take to scale high-quality preschool programs in an effort to get all kids "kindergarten ready." This includes a new population-based study called the Harvard Early Learning Study, which will follow a cohort of 3-year-olds for five years and will be led by the initiative's directors, Associate Professor Stephanie Jones and Professor Nonie Lesaux, and the establishment of the Saul Zaentz Academy for Professional Learning in Early Childhood to work with educators in the field.

READ A Q&A WITH JONES AND LESAUX ON THE INSIDE BACK COVER. TO LEARN MORE, GO TO GSE.HARVARD.EDU/ED/EXTRAS



WISE WORDS

"[Civics] is not a priority."

Professor **Meira Levinson** on the decline of civics and history education in the country, in part because federal funding for civics education was stripped in 2011. (*Forbes*)

City Hall Joins Fight for School Change

WHEN IT COMES TO MAKING CHANGE IN SCHOOL, WE SHOULDN'T LOOK AT EDUCATORS ALONE TO SHOULDER THE BURDEN

STORY BY LORY HOUGH



WHEN DEAN JAMES RYAN SAT in Askwith Hall during the kickoff of the Education Redesign Lab's By All Means initiative in May with a group of six mayors from around the country, he said something that is at the heart of what makes the new initiative unique: When it comes to radically rethinking education in the United States, having mayors lead the way could make all the difference.

"You are, as you know, a critical part of this work," Ryan said. Professor Paul Reville, founding director of the Redesign Lab, agreed, saying that too often, we look solely at schools to "fix" the problems in education. But we shouldn't expect teachers and principals alone to shoulder the burden of making change. They are already overwhelmed, Reville said, plus they may not have the expertise or the authority.

"If we're going to get all kids ready for success," he said, stressing the words *all kids*, "it's

going to take a broader community effort."

This is exactly what the By All Means initiative is about. Over the next two years, the initiative will host a series of conferences at the Ed School, and work closely in the field with mayors and other city officials in six cities to create individual plans to tackle a specific childhood challenge. The cities — Oakland, California; Louisville, Kentucky; Providence, Rhode Island; and Salem, Somerville, and Newton, Massachusetts — will serve as labs as they test different methods of making deep change in schools and learning for all students.

Somerville Mayor Joseph Curtatone said that it's important for those working on the policy side in a city or town to break down silos and to see systems, like education, for what they truly are: hugely complex.

For this reason, said Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf, having mayors take a lead role in the By All

Means initiative makes sense because "for better or for worse, mayors fly at an altitude that allows us to see the interconnectivity" of what impacts kids and families. "Just as educators alone can't fix all of the problems in education, safety can't be delivered only by the police. Health care can't be delivered by just doctors and hospitals. No one system can do it alone."

Absolutely said Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer. "We need everyone jumping in." The question becomes, how do you get people to understand that what affects schools affects everything in a community. This was the challenge he faced when he tried to get local businesses invested in schools. Eventually, some did, but for various reasons.

"Some knew it was the right thing to do; others got engaged when we pointed out that this is your future workforce," Fischer explained. "We got them through the pocketbook."

Salem Mayor Kimberly Driscoll said it's also important to ask what it means when we say we care about kids.

"Everyone says, 'We want to help,' but how do we get a unified community vision and then get everyone to recognize that they need to play a role?" she said. "You need to have that shared vision" if you want to make change.

Reville admitted that all of this change and rethinking will take a lot of hard work and "is easier said than done." But, he added, "This is the most important work of the 21st century. This isn't miracle work. We're not naïve. But pushing the envelope is really important work for all of us. This is the start. We have a long way to go."



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE INITIATIVE AND THE LAB'S FUTURE PLANS: EDREDESIGN.ORG. TO WATCH A VIDEO OF THE BY ALL MEANS CONFERENCE: GSE.HARVARD.EDU/ED/EXTRAS

“I think we’ll find it successful when we are able to bring personalized learning to any school that wants to do it.”



Photograph by Jonathan Kozowyk

It Just Got Personal

ALUM ADAM SELDOW HELPS FACEBOOK PARTNER WITH TEACHERS TO HELP STUDENTS LEARN THE WAY THEY WANT TO LEARN

STORY BY LORY HOUGH

IT WASN'T UNTIL HE WAS getting his doctorate at the Ed School — after West Point, the Army, classroom teaching, years overseeing technology in schools, and two master's degrees — that [ADAM SELDOW, ED.M.'03, ED.M.'08, ED.D.'10](#), realized he really wasn't engaged in learning unless something totally grabbed his attention.

He wondered, “What’s wrong with me?” But of course, the answer was nothing. As Seldow eventually realized, he just learns in a different way.

“I find something that really piques my interest, and I dig deep.” Looking back, he says, “That was my first foray into personalized learning.”

His latest foray is an initiative to bring personalized learning to the masses as head of education partnerships at Facebook. For the past few years, Facebook has partnered with California-based Summit Public Schools on an online personalized learning platform called PLP. Initially, Summit developed its own digital tool to customize instruction at each of its 10 charter schools. During a visit to a school with Summit CEO Diane Tavenner, Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg was impressed and asked to meet the engineering team behind the customized tool. Tavenner's response was, I'll introduce you to him. Zuckerberg was shocked that the team con-

sisted of one person and said he wanted to help. And one way to do that was to provide Summit with something Facebook already had: good engineers.

The revamped PLP tool, which was created with much input from teachers, was initially piloted just in Summit schools. Last year it was offered to 19 other public schools around the country as part of something called Summit Basecamp. This past summer, for the first time, the tool was made available to any teacher who wanted to use it, free of charge. Geared toward middle school and high school students, PLP lets students customize and take more ownership of their learning while teachers act as instructional coaches and mentors.

What's unique, Seldow says, is that the tool first asks students to create an individual plan and set personal goals. A short-term goal might be to read for 60 minutes each day. A long-term goal could be to attend a certain college.

“It's designed to show students, even as young as middle school, that your actions now are going to impact your future,” Seldow says. “It's very much about backwards planning.”

As students continue to use the tool throughout the year, they can track how their work, all project-based, is contributing to their goals. Based on that feedback, they can tweak and fine-tune

what they're learning and progress at their own pace. In some ways, Seldow says, it's a complete change in culture: Teachers don't lecture in front of the classroom, test students, and then move on to new material. Instead, they work individually with students.

“The tool is built for the pioneering teacher who has ideas but hasn't found a path forward,” Seldow says.

Using student performance data that is generated by the tool, teachers can view how each student in a class is progressing and then provide targeted one-on-one feedback. At the beginning of a project, a teacher can even see what a student has planned and then give out-of-the-gate input, rather than just waiting for a finished project to be submitted.

Asked how Facebook will know if the PLP initiative is successful, Seldow says they'll know if the culture in a school changes.

“We'll know if the students are able to learn the way they want to,” he says. “And I think we'll find it successful when we are able to bring personalized learning to any school that wants to do it.”



LISTEN TO AN EDCAST WITH SELDOW TALKING MORE ABOUT PERSONALIZED LEARNING: [GSE.HARVARD.EDU/ED/EXTRAS](#). CHECK OUT THE PLP HOME-PAGE: [APP.MYSUMMITPS.ORG](#)

THE MAKING OF

Lecturer Terry Tivnan

As Terry Tivnan noted in a piece he wrote last fall on Medium, he's been at Harvard a long time. More than five decades to be precise, starting as an undergraduate at the college and eventually teaching "big courses" at the Ed School on educational research and statistics. He remembers learning under famed dean Ted Sizer and the days when Larsen was filled with first-graders from the overcrowded Cambridge Public Schools. Still, when asked to write about his long career, he thought, "I have almost nothing to say." But sure enough, he started writing and 1,500 words later, he found his story.



1948

I was born and grew up in Salem, Massachusetts, the Witch City. My early teaching experience was giving directions to visitors looking for the Witch Museum or the [House of the Seven Gables](#). Biggest influence on my path? There were lots of educators in my family. My father was a school principal in my hometown, so all of my teachers knew me and my family. (That nudged me toward good behavior in school.) My older siblings set high standards for the rest of us, but they also made school easy for me because they were always talking about what they were learning. I got a head start on almost everything.

1965

I was lucky to attend Harvard College. I met friends who combined being very smart with being very friendly. I loved courses in psychology and child development. My professors included [Jerome Bruner](#), Robert Brown, George Miller — all world-famous scholars — and I got to meet Beatrice Whiting, who was not an official professor because she was a woman, but she later became one of the first female tenured professors at HGSE.



1968

I discovered HGSE. Dean [Ted Sizer](#) was teaching a course about public education, and he graciously let me, a lowly undergraduate with no formal experience in education, join the class. I learned that HGSE was a special place at Harvard.

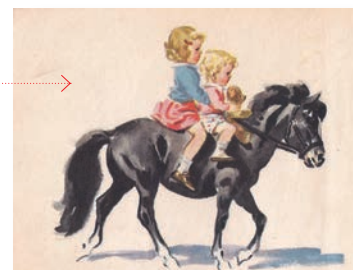


1969

The M.A.T. Program at HGSE — studying to become a teacher was so exciting! Virtually the entire HGSE was involved in that program. The interests ranged from kindergarten through grade 12, so some students were learning to become high school math teachers, some were working on middle school social studies, and some of us, like me, were learning about [beginning reading](#) in elementary school. Almost everyone was combining coursework with practice teaching. "So what is your placement?" was an instant conversation starter. Or even better: "So have you taught a lesson to a real live class?" Everyone was nervous about moving from observing classes taught by master teachers to being the one at the front of the room. We knew we had a lot to learn!

1970

Fun fact: I got to do some of my practice teaching right in [Larsen Hall](#). The Cambridge Public Schools were crowded, and Harvard provided a bit of help by allowing a first-grade classroom on the lower level of Larsen. What fun it was to have a classroom of first-graders right here on Appian Way. It put everyone in a good mood. The children loved being in the Larsen Hall castle. We took field trips to Gutman Library. We should try this again!



Away went the pony.
Away went Jane and Sally.
Away went Tim.
"Oh, oh," laughed Sally.
"This is fun.
This is a good ride.
A good ride for Jane.
A good ride for Tim.
And a good ride for me."

1970

Teaching first grade! Fun, exciting, demanding, and exhausting. It was an amazing experience. I was lucky to be with a supportive principal (thank you, Don Pierson) and wonderful teacher colleagues. Lots of field trips and project-based learning. Lots of nonworksheet math lessons. Lots of creative ways to teach reading and writing.

TIVNAN: TOM KATES; OPPOSITE: NICK VICEK

1974

Back at HGSE in the doctoral program. I loved Professor Dick Light's statistics course, and I was lucky to become one of his TFs the following year. I enjoyed all of the research courses and discovered I was good at translating and interpreting research ideas so they could be tools for colleagues doing education research. For me this was another kind of teaching.



1980

Someone was needed to teach a course at the Ed School on research methods, and I was asked to do it. I was worried that teaching a course might delay progress toward my own [graduation](#), but Professor Courtney Cazden carefully pointed out to me that this was a special opportunity and I would be wise to accept. I am glad I listened to her advice.

2016

Fast (fast) forward, I am very proud to have taught courses that have been popular for students getting started in statistics and research. I love my [big courses](#). We have new statistical software and apps for teaching our students, but many of the fundamental ideas are the same as those that were part of my courses years ago. My background teaching first grade always comes in handy. Every year I learn something new about research and statistics from my students. I hope they get to learn something about how to be a [good teacher](#).



HIP HOP HARVARD TEACHES ONE SIZE MOS DEF DOESN'T FIT ALL

When Audrey walked up to the mic on the stage of Askwith Hall and started telling her story, a story that included memories of abuse and getting kicked out of several schools, she had to stop a few times to compose herself. It wasn't because she was nervous — it was because she felt so strongly about her time as a student at the High School for Recording Arts in St. Paul, Minnesota. "Finally," she told the crowd, "people who treated me like I was their own." This past spring, Audrey was part of a group of students and administrators from Hip Hop High, as it's known, who visited the Ed School for two days to share stories and make music. The school offers at-risk young people from the St. Paul area a chance to earn a high school diploma while learning about the music business. The school includes two onsite professional recording studios. More than 90 percent of the students, including Audrey, have had rocky pasts at other schools. At any given time, 60 percent are homeless or from highly mobile families.

While at Harvard, the students not only spoke and performed in Askwith, but also spent time at an on-campus studio in Harvard Yard where they recorded a new song, "In the Morning," with the help of [MIKE LIPSET, ED.M.'16](#), who was a student at the Ed School at the time and who helped organize their visit. Lipset worked at Hip Hop High prior to coming to Harvard. Asked what lessons educators could learn from the students and the work being done at Hip Hop High, Lipset says:

- 1) Culturally relevant education may not look or sound like what you think it should. What assumptions are you making about the ways young people should be educated?
- 2) Strong relationships between students and educators can mean the difference between dropping out and graduating from high school.
- 3) Vocational/technical education can enrich the delivery of the Common Core.
- 4) When you believe in and value the talents and sources of knowledge your students possess, you receive the gift of watching them change the world.
- 5) School choice means different schools offering different kinds of learning opportunities for different people. There is no one-size-fits-all answer in education. LH

WATCH "IN THE MORNING," THE VIDEO THE STUDENTS MADE: [GSE.HARVARD.EDU/ED/EXTRAS](https://gse.harvard.edu/ed/extras)

WHAT WOULD YOU ASK THE CANDIDATES?

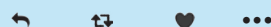
Anyone following the presidential campaign has heard a lot about gun control, the economy, and, well, the candidates themselves, but we've all heard very little about another important topic: K-12 education. This isn't a new slight, as Associate Professor Martin West pointed out recently at the annual Education Writers Association summit. Historically, education hasn't been a big issue on the campaign trail.

"As a result, the candidates haven't been forced to say much about where they are" on education issues, West said.

With that in mind, we asked *Ed.* readers on Facebook and Twitter to tell us: If you could ask the candidates to address one education issue, what would it be? Not surprisingly, there was little consensus, however, three responses did come out on top: equity, early childhood, and school funding. Here are a few other responses:

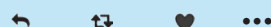
 **Emily Maloney**
@emalongey100

Teacher evaluation, specifically surrounding inclusion of students' standardized test scores.



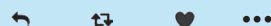
 **Jennie Treeger Bowen, Ed.M.'96**
Just Now • via Facebook

The privatization of public education



 **Kranky Keith**
@keithRydzik

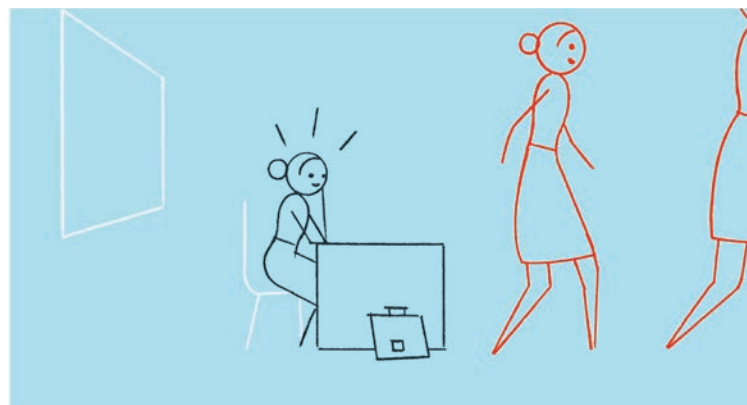
To end #segregation of our public schools by both race and socio-economic status.



WISE WORDS

"I think it fills a role that doesn't exist right now."

Lecturer **TODD ROSE, ED.M.'01, ED.D.'07**, director of the Mind, Brain, and Education Program, commenting on advanced digital tutors created by *Sesame Street* and IBM that can interact with preschoolers and assess their individual skills and learning needs. (*USA Today*)



Deliberately Developmental

STORY BY LEAH SHAFER

STUDENTS DON'T HAVE TO BE the only ones with revitalized learning in the new school year. Teachers may have finished their formal education years ago, but in the post-school decades, adult brains can continue to develop. As they enhance the growth of students, teachers can also work to ensure that they keep developing and learning.

But what if your school is not the kind of organization that deliberately puts employee growth at the center of the agenda? What if you want to grow in your job — professionally and personally — but your school doesn't seem to value it or doesn't have the resources to promote it?

A recent book written by several from the Ed School, including Professor Bob Kegan and Lecturers **LISA LAHEY, ED.M.'80, ED.D.'86**, **MATT MILLER, ED.M.'01, ED.D.'06**, and **DEBORAH HELSING, ED.D.'03**, makes the argument that you can still prioritize growth. Offering strategies they developed after watching several companies in action, the authors of *An Everyone Culture: Becoming a Deliberately Developmental Organization* say any worker can concentrate on personal growth and spread a similar mindset to colleagues. Here are four ways to be, as the authors explain in the book, "deliberately

developmental" in school or in any workplace:

► Become "developmental buddies" with a co-worker. Set aside time regular time to chat. Instead of offering each other advice, ask each other how you're both progressing in achieving your goals.

► Create an "immunity-to-change map" of your goals. To do this, set a goal, list the behaviors that have been stopping you from achieving that goal, and then ask yourself what scares you when you imagine yourself not exhibiting those behaviors.

► Seek small-scale, regular feedback. Ask co-workers to provide feedback on a specific assignment or on your performance during a meeting. For example: "I'm working on being more welcoming of perspectives that are different than my own. Can you let me know how I do listening and responding during our next team meeting?"

► Look for role models. Notice how colleagues and leaders you admire seek feedback, model behaviors that you value, and invest in the growth of those around them. Then ask to talk to them about their approach to learning and growing in the workplace.

LEAH SHAFER IS A STAFF WRITER FOR THE USABLE KNOWLEDGE PROJECT.

Illustration by Laurent Cilluffo

STUDY SKILLS

Gladys Aguilar, Ph.D.

Growing up, Gladys Aguilar spoke in two worlds: Spanish at home with her parents, who had moved to the United States from Mexico when she was a toddler, and English at school in Los Angeles. The two worlds rarely mixed.

So when Aguilar's homeroom teacher asked her to give the sixth-grade graduation speech, the 11-year-old wrote it the way she had every other school assignment: in English.

"My teacher read the speech and said, 'Great. Now write it in Spanish.' I was so surprised and reminded her that I speak English. She said something beautiful, something that changed who I was: 'Of course I know, but I want your parents and the other parents who speak Spanish to hear your speech.' This valorized who I was and still inspires me daily."

It even inspired her to leave the classroom after 17 years as a bilingual elementary school teacher in Los Angeles County to start the Ph.D. Program at the Ed School. Based on what she was experiencing at home with her two bilingual sons, and at school with her mostly Latino students, she says she realized that one area sorely lacking in research — and in usable knowledge for teachers — is how best to serve the academic and socio-emotional needs of students whose home language is not English. Part of the problem, she acknowledges, is that there is no one type of bilingual student.

"Some bilingual students are exposed to two languages at home and speak both. Others speak one language exclusively at school, one at home," she says, like she did. Others, like her two sons, increasingly resist speaking both languages at home as they grow older or when they start to sense that some home languages (like French) are considered "high status" while others are less respected. Older students may react differently to instruction than younger students.

"For these reasons, it's a complex issue and one that is a hard area to research and develop curriculum for," she says. Yet, as the percentage of non-English-speaking U.S. households has increased more than 140 percent since 1980 and is projected to grow even more, Aguilar says research into what students require and how teachers can help them succeed is needed now more than ever. "We have an increasing number of children who are bilingual," she says, "and we're seeing more school leaders who are aware of the educational landscape and are wondering what they are going to do to help their teachers." LH

Photograph by Jonathan Kozowyk

ART EXCHANGE STUDENTS

PIECES CREATED BY JAPANESE STUDENTS AFTER WWII FINALLY FIND THEIR WAY TO HARVARD

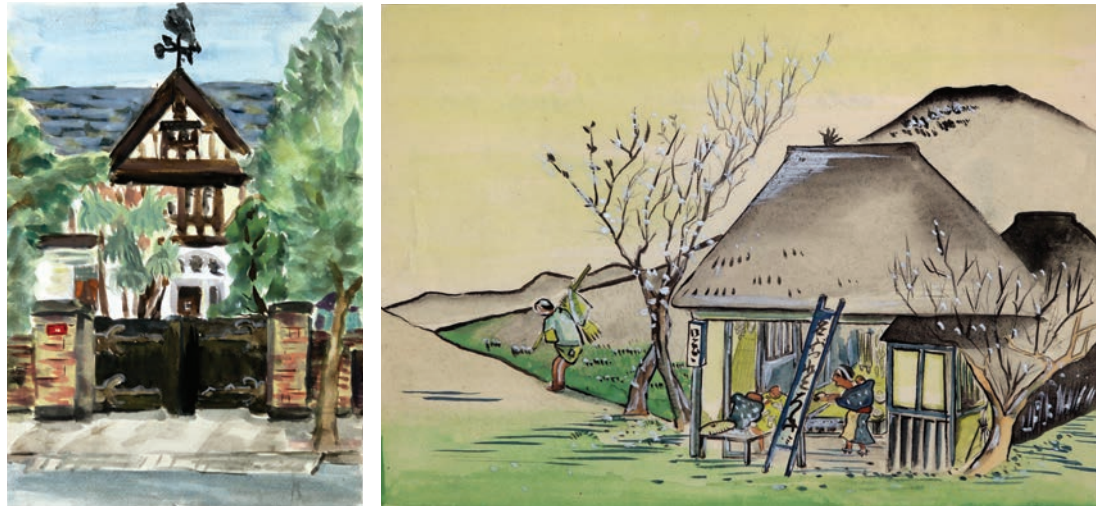
Fran Fergusson doesn't exactly remember her father, **FRANCIS DALY, ED.D.'47**, talking about the massive art project he coordinated in partnership with Yukio Isaka, a Japanese school psychiatrist, between students in Japan and students in the United States just after World War II ended, but she always knew the collection existed.

"I remember going through the 600-plus drawings and paintings and noting, at that early age, the games that were depicted, the clothes, the wonderful colors," says Fergusson, who recently donated the collection to Gutman Library. "Originally, as is documented in the materials I gave to Harvard, it was to be an exchange of drawings from Japanese and American students. The papers are silent on whether or not American student drawings were sent to Japan. And, as far as I know, there was no exhibition in the United States until now."

Rebecca Martin, the collections strategist and scholarly communications librarian at Gutman, says the collection is the library's first featuring art. "It provides us with an innovative chance to incorporate student artwork into teaching, learning, and research opportunities at HGSE."

Fergusson, a former president at Vassar College, says her father loved Japanese culture and was proud of his connection to the country, even during a period in U.S. history when anti-Japanese sentiment loomed large. She says he was also proud to have gone to Harvard, first as an undergraduate when he had to work his way through college as a "newsie" with United Press International, and then later getting his doctorate at the Ed School. That's why she says donating the art collection to Gutman, along with the rest of her father's papers, was easy.

"My father would have been so proud and happy to know that his papers are there," she says. "I'm thoroughly delighted that his papers and the artwork have found such a good home." LH



THE EXHIBIT, FROM *CRAYONS TO CALLIGRAPHY: AN EXHIBITION OF JAPANESE STUDENT ARTWORK, 1949–1951*, OPENED IN GUTMAN IN MID-MAY IN THE SPECIAL COLLECTIONS ROOM. WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE STUDENTS WHO CREATED THESE PIECES? GO TO: GSE.HARVARD.EDU/ED/EXTRAS

WISE WORDS

“Their wasted talent is a huge loss.”

Assistant Professor **Roberto Gonzales** writing in an op-ed following the Supreme Court's 4–4 decision in June that effectively bars deferred deportation for millions of immigrant parents. (*The Washington Post*)

Photographs by **Jill Anderson**

Have ESL, Will Travel

ED SCHOOL STUDENTS HELP TEACHERS AND ADULT LEARNERS PRACTICE THEIR ENGLISH ON THE GO

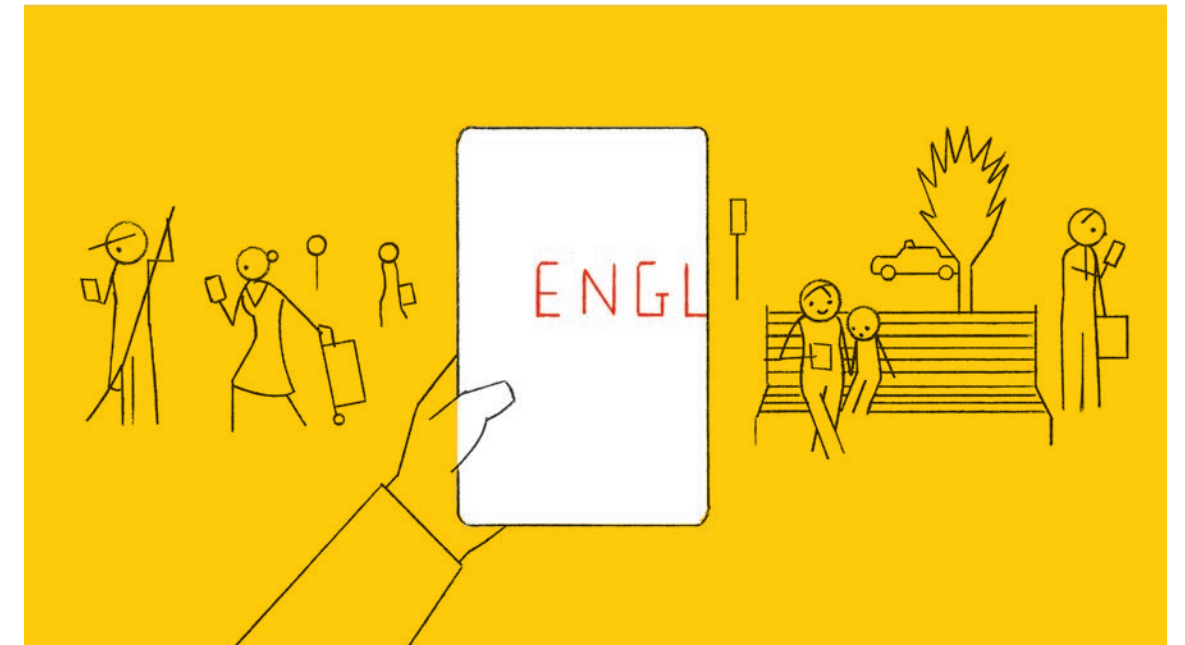
STORY BY LORY HOUGH

FOR MANY ADULTS, TRYING to learn English can be challenging, as **HEIDI LARSON, ED.M.'04**, and the Ed School students she mentored last year found out. Some adults don't have access to English-language learner (ELL) classes because of cost or distance. Others have access but, given the busyness of their lives, can't attend classes on a regular basis or focus fully on the material.

However, one thing most adult learners can easily access is a mobile device, like a smartphone or tablet. Knowing this, Larson started working last fall with students in two of Professor Chris Dede's technology classes, in conjunction with the Framingham Adult ESL Plus Program in Massachusetts. The group created a website called **ESL Mobile** that included digital resources like apps and online learning games that teachers can use with their adult students in class and students can later use outside of class. Larson says the need to help ELL teachers is great.

"Teachers spend enough time preparing for and teaching classes, and for many this is a second or a volunteer job," she says. "They may not be aware of the apps available on students' mobile devices, and they may not have time to research them."

That's where the Ed School students came in, researching



what's available for free online, including podcasts and apps, geared toward all levels—beginner to advanced learner. In some cases, the Ed School students customized the resources for a specific class or teacher's need. The result is that ELL teachers were given well-researched, readily available resources to use to better reach students, Larson says. The ELL students, in turn, were then able to learn on the go.

"They could practice on the bus, as they waited for their children, as they waited in line at the grocery store, or at home after they completed their assigned work," she says.

The material also allowed learning to be less abstract and more relevant, says one of Larson's students, **IVAN VALDOVINOS, ED.M.'16**, who remembers both of his parents taking ELL classes when he was growing up.

For example, Valdovinos created a module on parts of the body using an online learning tool called Quizlet, which allows users to make digital flashcards.

"I decided to create this module because when we visited the Framingham school," he says, "students told us that they decided to enroll [in the class] to learn material that would be useful in their daily lives."

Here are some of the tools you'll find on the **ESL Mobile** website:

- ▶ Customized online learning games (called Kahoots) to be used in class.
- ▶ Access to more than 30 self-quizz tools through Quizlet to improve memorization.
- ▶ Resources like YouTube videos to help students work on correct pronunciation.
- ▶ Podcasts to help with listening skills and comprehension.

CHECK OUT THE WEBSITE AND STUDENT BLOG: ESLMOBILE.ORG

Illustration by **Laurent Cilluffo**

Too Much on Their Plates

THIS PDF HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH ADOBE AND EVERYTHING TO DO WITH HELPING TEENS DESTRESS AND STAY HAPPY

STORY BY LORY HOUGH

IN HER NEW book, *Overloaded and Underprepared*, **DENISE POPE, ED.M.'89**, and her colleagues at the Challenge Success project at Stanford University, spell out something that seems especially important these days: Our fast-paced, high-pressure culture is working against kids being able to develop in a healthy, happy way. Just reading the sample high school student's breakneck schedule, printed on page 1 of the book's introduction, is enough to cause stress. This is especially true with teens from elite high schools, as Pope noticed after writing her first book on stressed-out kids. These kids, she says, "were getting in to high-achieving universities, and they didn't have the coping skills to handle the workload and the stress of the transition to college. The health centers were struggling to keep up with the large number of kids suffering from depression, anxiety, and suicide ideation."

But as Pope and her co-authors show in this new book, there are many simple strategies that can be taken to combat this. One example is making sure that all stakeholders in any student's life — teachers, coaches, parents, even the student — know the importance of something Pope calls PDF: playtime, downtime, and family time.

"We looked at the research for protective factors for kids — those things that every kid needs in order to thrive physically, mentally, and academically — and we boiled them down to three main categories for well-being," the authors write, which led to their mantra: "Every kid needs PDF every day."

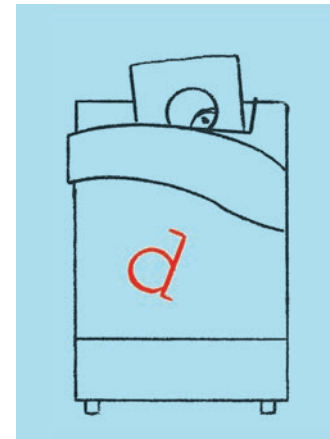
WHAT IS PDF?



PLAYTIME

Play, they write, is the work of kids. It's not just running around and yelling. Play helps kids solve problems, negotiate with others, and develop self-regulation skills. It can include unstructured activities like digging holes in the backyard or structured activities like joining a soccer team. For older kids, it can even include time hanging out with friends.

HOW TO HELP: Parents shouldn't overschedule their kids (or let high school students spend more than 15–20 hours a week on extracurriculars) and should let kids have more choice in their activities. Schools should build in more play time for all ages, especially just before intense moments, such as midterms.



DOWNTIME

Running from activity to activity can be exhausting. Kids need downtime — time not focused on structured play or academics, but time to do basically nothing. This includes listening to music, watching television, or taking a walk. It also includes sleep, something kids, especially older kids, don't get enough of.

HOW TO HELP: Parents should enforce bedtimes and remove social media lures like smartphones from bedrooms at night. They should resist telling kids to "do something" when they're lounging, seemingly doing nothing. This time allows kids to unwind and in turn become more productive. Schools should add in longer break periods and set aside classtime for reflection.



FAMILY TIME

It's important for students and the adults in their lives to know that family time is a "significant protective factor," the authors point out, and results in positive mental health and fewer at-risk behaviors for young people.

HOW TO HELP: Parents can make even simple things like family dinners a priority. Family rituals and traditions, like Friday night pizza or regular walks in the neighborhood with the dog, are also important to develop and keep up. Teachers should limit homework assignments over vacations and holidays and assign a few family-based projects over the course of the year like researching your family tree.

Illustrations by Laurent Cilluffo

BLOG WORTHY

A sampling of Ed School blogs worth reading



1

Assistant Professor Sarah Dryden-Peterson, Ed.D.'09

On the Brookings site, Dryden-Peterson explores global education and conflict. brookings.edu/experts/sarah-dryden-peterson/

2

Professor Howard Gardner

Gardner's thoughts on ethics and excellence in education, related to his Good Project. thegoodproject.org/author/howardgardner

3

Associate Professor Jal Mehta

In conjunction with education writer Robert Rothman, Mehta explores *Learning Deeply* on *Education Week*, with guest contributors. blogs.edweek.org/edweek/learning_deeply

PHOTOGRAPH BY JILL ANDERSON



LIFT OFF TAKES OFF

It started out with impressive numbers. Less than one day after **DONOVAN LIVINGSTON, ED.M.'16**, gave the Ed School's student convocation speech, where he talked in spoken word about no student being common and about education not being the great equalizer that it should be, nearly 1.5 million people watched a video of his *Lift Off* speech on Facebook.

And then things blew up.

Celebrities started tweeting about the speech, including Justin Timberlake, Jada Pinkett Smith, Piers Morgan, and Joyce Carol Oates. Hillary Rodman Clinton shared it on her campaign Facebook page. Within days, Livingston was being interviewed by NPR, CNN, *Good Morning America*, *People*, and *The Washington Post*. Less than a week in, 11 million people saw the video on Facebook and more than 500,000 on YouTube. Nearly 12,000 left comments on the Ed School's Facebook page. By the middle of the summer, the tweets and the shares and the likes were still going strong.

What did Livingston, who started a Ph.D. program this fall at the University of North Carolina, think of all of the hubbub? As he told an *ABC News* reporter, "I didn't know it would be so well received. Whenever you put yourself out there, especially with poetry, you're making yourself vulnerable," he said. "However it was received, I would've felt great at the end of the day because I was being myself, but the fact that it blew up the way it did is a humbling experience." LH



TO LINK TO THE VIDEO, AND TO SEE A LIST OF OTHER PUBLICATIONS THAT RAN STORIES, GO TO: GSE.HARVARD.EDU/ED/EXTRAS

ON MY BOOKSHELF

James Ryan, Dean

CURRENTLY READING: I have three books on my nightstand that I'm going back and forth between: *A Little Life* by Hanya Yanagihara, *Random Family* by Adrian Nicole LeBlanc, and *Respect* by [SARA LAWRENCE-LIGHTFOOT, ED.D.'72](#).

FAVORITE BOOK FROM CHILDHOOD: I read a lot of biographies of sports heroes when I was younger, including everything I could find on Babe Ruth. But the first book I remember having a real influence, insofar as it introduced me to the power of fiction, was *A Separate Peace* by John Knowles. I fell in love with that book, and it hooked me on literature. It helped that the book we read right before that one was *The Old Man and the Sea*, which made *A Separate Peace* seem even better!

BOOK YOU LOVE READING TO YOUR KIDS AND WHY: Our kids are all older and read on their own, but I loved reading just about any book to them when they were younger. The one I never tired of was *Goodnight Moon* because it has a very sweet rhythm. At the moment, I'm reading a poem every night with my daughter, who is 10. It's about as much time as she'll let me read to her.

IF YOU WERE TO GIVE A BOOK AS A GIFT TO SOMEONE, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY? This is a hard question to answer. I like to give books to friends and family, and what sort of book depends on the person. If they like fiction, I would think of stories that have stuck with me or made me think. I tend to like sad novels, so I would consider *American Pastoral* by Philip Roth or *We Were the Mulvaney*s by Joyce Carol Oates. If they were in their twenties, I would lean heavily toward *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* by Milan Kundera, which is one of the first philosophically oriented books I read that made sense to me — and made sense of the world to me. If they like nonfiction, I would think of great reads about fascinating people, like *West with the Night* by Beryl Markham or *King of the World* by David Remnick. If they were law and history nerds, like me, I would consider *Lincoln at Gettysburg* by Garry Wills.

FAVORITE SPOT TO CURL UP WITH A GOOD BOOK: I don't really curl up.

NEXT UP: *The Goldfinch* by Donna Tartt. LH

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

COMPETITION AND COMPASSION IN CHINESE SECONDARY EDUCATION

Xu Zhao

In *Competition and Compassion*, [XU ZHAO, ED.M.'07, ED.D.'11](#), a native of China, examines the genesis of academic competition between Chinese schools and between Chinese students, and what she sees as a lack of compassion that has led to high test scores and toxic levels of stress. As a result, she writes, education in China faces an unprecedented challenge to figure out how the learning experience can be both competitive and compassionate, rigorous and humane.



STYLING BY EVAN MICHAEL

RACE TO THE BOTTOM

Michael McGill

Focusing on the push over the past few decades to “save” the nation’s schools by applying rigorous business strategies, [Michael McGill, M.A.T.'67, C.A.S.'70, Ed.D.'72](#), a former superintendent, argues that corporate reform has actually weakened public schools, with narrower curriculums and a slashing of “nonessentials” like art and languages. Educators, he writes, feel demoralized. In a chapter called “Stop the Madness,” McGill offers concrete suggestions for change.

LOOKING TOGETHER AT STUDENT WORK

Tina Blythe, David Allen, and Barbara Schieffelin Powell

In this revised version of a book published 20 years ago, the authors, including [TINA BLYTHE, ED.M.'02](#), and [BARBARA SCHIEFFELIN POWELL, M.A.T.'65, ED.D.'70](#), set out to do what they did the first time around: provide tips and strategies for teachers and other educators to use when working together to examine and discuss student work. In this version, the authors have updated the research, provided new case studies, and included protocols — steps and structures — to help guide the collaboration.

FIFTEEN LETTERS ON EDUCATION IN SINGAPORE

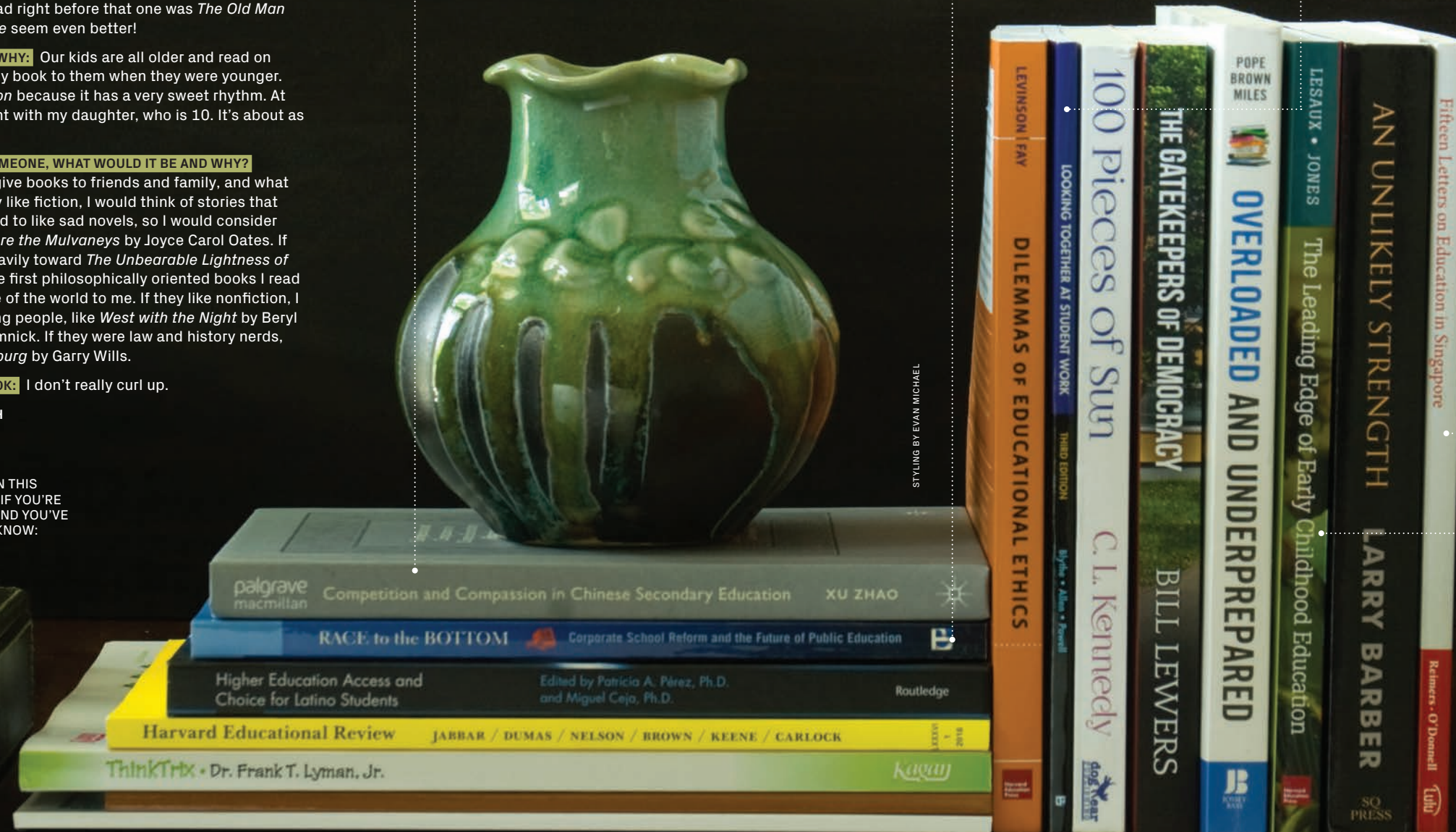
Fernando Reimers and E.B. O'Donnell

In the fall of 2015, a delegation of educators from Massachusetts traveled to Singapore to learn more about the country’s journey from developing nation to major manufacturing and financial center, with one of the most high-performing education systems in the world. From that visit, the team, including Professor [FERNANDO REIMERS, ED.M.'84, ED.D.'88](#), and current doctoral student [E.B. O'DONNELL, ED.M.'10](#), decided to write a series of letters, 15 in all, reflecting on what they experienced visiting schools in Singapore and to determine what lessons could be implemented here in the United States.

THE LEADING EDGE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Nonie Lesaux and Stephanie Jones

In 2014, Professor Nonie Lesaux and Associate Professor Stephanie Jones brought together 300 scholars, practitioners, and policymakers for a one-day conference to talk about early childhood education. Inspired by what they heard, Lesaux and Jones asked several attendees to write chapters focused on pressing issues in the field, including pieces on assessing the needs of bilingual learners, programs for students and their parents, and early intervention strategies.





YOUR STUDENT
IS BEING DISRUPTIVE
IN CLASS.

HE WON'T TALK.

HE WON'T LISTEN.

HE MESSES UP ANOTHER
STUDENT'S PROJECT,
ON PURPOSE.

YOU KNOW HE WANTS
TO DO WELL.

DO YOU REPORT
HIS BEHAVIOR OR JUST
GIVE A WARNING?

EDUCATORS ACROSS THE COUNTRY ARE FACED WITH **ETHICAL DILEMMAS** LIKE THIS EVERY DAY AND, AS ONE TEACHER SHARES IN A LOOK BACK AT HER FIRST YEAR TEACHING AT A LARGE URBAN SCHOOL, THEY DON'T ALWAYS KNOW HOW TO RESPOND.

Do the Right Thing. (But How?)

STORY BY JESSICA LANDER, ED.M.'15

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DIANA LEVINE



Halfway through the year I caught one of my 12th-graders cheating

on a U.S. history test about the Progressive Era. Nothing elaborate, but three separate times I watched as her eyes wandered to her neighbor's paper. Let's call her Anna. On each occasion I subtly walked over and quietly reminded Anna to keep her eyes on her paper. But when I went to grade, her answers were word-for-word identical to her neighbor's (they also happened, unfortunately for Anna, to be mostly incorrect).

What should I do? At the start of the year I had laid out explicit expectations: "If I catch you cheating, you get a zero." End of story. Though I had taught in a variety of schools and settings, both abroad and locally, this was my first year teaching at this larger urban public high school. I hadn't yet had to follow through on my rule.

Until recently, Anna had struggled in class; she seemed constantly to be texting or nodding off. But recently she had begun participating in discussions and regularly turning in assignments. Would her motivation dry up if she received a big red zero on her test? Yet I couldn't fail to address her choice to cheat.

Challenging decisions involving questions of ethics, justice, and equity arise every day in classrooms, lunch cafeterias, and principals' offices. Do you promote a student who is below grade level, but who might drop out if held back? Should a school participate in grade inflation because it will help their students get into college, even if it fails to give them an ac-



curate measure of their strengths and weaknesses? These are challenges that face educators with surprising regularity.

These decisions can alter our students' success in school and, in some cases, their futures. They are decisions not to be taken lightly and not to be made alone.

But rarely, it seems, do we speak openly about how to tackle these everyday dilemmas. Too often they remain private ruminations. Unlike hospitals, where doctors meet weekly to discuss vexing cases, many schools lack a regular forum or intellectual framework to meaningfully collaborate and debate hard challenges that arise in the classroom. Professor Meira Levinson and current doctoral student **JACOB FAY, ED.M.'14**, have tried to spark a conversation with their collaborative new book *Dilemmas of Educational Ethics: Cases and Commentaries*.

Levinson and Fay present six everyday school scenarios. For each they invited six scholars or educators to share thoughts and approaches for these difficult decisions.

Reading their book late this spring made me think back to the student I caught cheating. I remember agonizing over the long weekend, but by Monday it became clear. I needed to bring Anna into the conversation.

"What do you suggest I do?" I asked Anna after class. I laid out the predicament. She squirmed in her seat, puzzled and a little overwhelmed that I was seeking her opinion.

Anna tried pushing back: "I don't know. You decide." She wouldn't look at me. No, I insisted, I wanted her opinion. Tentatively: "You could forgive me. ...?" Of course, I told her, I had already done so, but she had cheated and owned up to cheating, so what was the appropriate consequence?

As teachers we are charged with nurturing, inspiring, and mentoring young people as they explore and fashion their identities. Our roles are not confined to conveying facts about our discrete disciplines.

I often find myself being a sounding board for my students as they learn how to tackle supporting a friend who is overworked, coming forward about bullying, standing up to a partner or, in the case of one quiet and thoughtful history lover, asking advice on how to speak to a girl he cared for.

We try to provide our students with not only the skills to tackle five-paragraph essays and long division, but to meet the challenging situations life throws their way. When we exclude our students from decisions that involve them, we pass up authentic opportunities to teach them how to grapple with hard questions and to take ownership of their choices.

After much debate, Anna suggested I deduct 20 points from her score. And together we decided that before the next test we would meet to discuss study strategies. When the next test came, Anna chose a seat far from her peers and particularly her friends. When she turned in her paper, she was smiling. Her final grade was markedly better.

In *Dilemmas*, Levinson and Fay have amassed an army of 36 educators to debate moral predicaments: Should a teacher report a student who she believes has stolen a pricey iPhone, knowing the likely consequence could be expulsion, felony charges, and jail time if convicted? How should a teacher include a girl who struggles with impulse control and can be disruptive in class? Levinson and Fay have asked professors of political science, criminal justice, philosophy, education, African American studies, and urban policy. They have included the thoughts of nonprofit leaders, charter school founders, and teachers.

Not included are the voices of young people. With this in mind, I decided to pose Levinson and Fay's problems to my students.



At lunch, my classroom fills with students often swapping snacks:

spicy Burmese fish for Vietnamese fish balls, or perhaps Brazilian sweets. While munching on hummus and pita myself one afternoon, I presented Levinson and Fay's dilemmas.

As I knew they would, my students took each in turn, mulling it thoughtfully and conferring. Kaleidoscopically, they examined the angles. For the girl with impulse control, should she be moved to a new group? one student asked. "No," another chimed in, "she wasn't trying to act out. She should still be included." "What if," one of my students suggested, "the teacher explained to the other students that she struggled with control, and they worked on strategies together?"

Every scenario I presented followed a similar pattern: My students agreed that the young people in question had to be included, that being part of the conversation would help address the problem.

"WHEN WE EXCLUDE OUR STUDENTS FROM DECISIONS THAT INVOLVE THEM, WE PASS UP AUTHENTIC OPPORTUNITIES TO TEACH THEM HOW TO GRAPPLE WITH HARD QUESTIONS — AND TO TAKE OWNERSHIP OF THEIR CHOICES."



I sat back, watching my students parse the nuances of each challenge, pressing each other to dive deeper. In their book, Levinson and Fay suggest different ways for their case studies to be used as jumping off points for discussions among faculty. But listening to my students, I wondered too if such challenges could also become regular lessons for our students — helping them to sharpen their minds on problems that exist in shades of gray.

Even more important, encouraging students and staff to share the burden of hard decisions has the potential to foster trust and create more just schools. By making decisions not only transparent but also inclusive can help teachers see students holistically, rather than focus on specific incidents of misconduct; we end up holding ourselves more accountable, just as we strive for our charges to do the same. And by engaging student voices, the entire community is more likely to believe in the legitimacy of the final decisions.



Late one winter afternoon, my upper-class students were sprawled across the floor

designing and coloring political party posters for a lesson on the impact of 1930s German propaganda. One young man — John, let’s say — refused to participate. He sat stubbornly to the side, brushing off the invitations of his peers. We talked quietly in the corner — me trying unsuccessfully to find out what was making him so upset. We discussed a strategy and a task he could take on, but five minutes later he was drawing designs on his hand. A team member asked for his help. Aggravated, John got up and deliberately stepped on their poster, leaving the dark outline of his sneaker.

I think back to when I taught in Boston with the nonprofit Citizen Schools extended learning day program. If a student acted out — threw a fit, cussed another student out — we had the option to send them to “Step Up.” Unlike detention, Step Up was a space and time for reflection. Students would have a chance to write about what had made them upset, to tell their stories. Then, collaboratively with

the teacher and sometimes other students, they came up with a strategy for addressing the conflict and a game plan for re-entering class.

The practice is an offshoot of a national movement away from punitive school policies and punishments to a practice and philosophy termed restorative justice. Rather than the suspension or expulsion, the approach invites students to be part of creating a solution, empowering them to take responsibility for their actions and solve school conflicts.

Yet at many schools, often with thousands of students, there are no such programs or approaches — and often too little time. If a teacher wants a disruptive student out of class, security escorts the student to an office, where he or she is often treated like a troublemaker and then sent to detention to sit silently for a period of time after the last school bell rings.

Not surprisingly, research shows that disciplining students by removing them from class has long-term negative outcomes on their academic success. A structure that addresses only the effect (John acting out) rather than the cause (why John acted out) does little to prevent a similar situation from happening the next day or next week. I have never felt comfortable sending my students out. Yet I struggle with the compromise — the possible negative impact on the rest of the class.

There are no easy solutions when schools lack the structures, dedicated staff, or financial resources to support students like John. But what if schools saw everyday dilemmas as bellwethers that reveal underlying school pressure points, where schools are falling short of successfully serving students? A number of the contributors in Levinson and Fay’s book highlight the need to dive more deeply into the causes of these specific predicaments presented in the six case studies. Having more open discussions would not only lead to more ethical decisions for individual students, but also could allow teachers to identify the systemic causes of these individual cases — and help schools begin to make sustainable change.

For example, a discussion starting with how to support John could quickly ripple outward: Why do we maintain traditional detention? What will students learn from the practice? Have we measured its effectiveness? What alternatives might be more effective? By asking these questions, we can begin to unearth the root causes of many everyday challenges, and begin to rework structural barriers that impede our students’ success.

Without being able to address the underly-

“RESEARCH SHOWS THAT DISCIPLINING STUDENTS BY REMOVING THEM FROM CLASS HAS LONG-TERM NEGATIVE OUTCOMES ON THEIR ACADEMIC SUCCESS. I HAVE NEVER FELT COMFORTABLE SENDING MY STUDENTS OUT.”

CASES IN POINT

As Professor Meira Levinson and doctoral student Jacob Fay, Ed.M.’14, point out in *Dilemmas of Educational Ethics*, the challenging ethical dilemmas that teachers and school leaders face “are not exotic problems; they are everyday dilemmas.” And they’re not limited to one area of the country or one type of district. “They (we!) are struggling with them in wealthy and in middle- and low-income schools; in rural, suburban, and urban districts; in magnet, regular, district, charter, parochial, and independent schools; along the coasts, in the American heartland, from south to north, and everywhere in between.”

Unfortunately, teachers and educators often have to wrestle with these challenging, sometimes heart-wrenching dilemmas on their own. That’s a big part of the reason why Levinson and Fay wrote the book: to provide a tool — usable case studies — for educators to read and use as they face their own ethical struggles. For additional thinking about the issues, each case study is followed by six responses written by people involved in the education field, including several faculty members at the Ed School.

So with so many potential dilemmas faced by teachers and other educators, how did they choose the ones they did for the book? As Levinson recently told the Harvard EdCast, “These are not the six most important cases or the only cases we need, but they seem to traverse a lot of important ground in education ethics, moving from the classroom to the school to the district and even the state level.”

THE CASES INCLUDE:

1. A struggling student and whether to promote her, knowing she might drop out altogether if not promoted.
2. How to balance the needs of a disruptive third-grader with mental illness and the needs of the rest of the students.
3. A new academic dean grappling with conflicting grading and grade inflation at a private school — and conflicting interests in the status quo.
4. Boston Public Schools’ new school assignment plan and potential pandering to middle class families in an effort to keep them in the district.
5. Whether to report a high school student suspected of stealing a teacher’s phone in a zero-tolerance school with possible criminal action looming.
6. How, if at all, should charter schools be compared to local district schools.

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

ing root causes, teachers are left to make uneasy compromises. I chose to keep John in the class, but had him work independently — making the call while juggling the needs of my other 19 students and knowing the bell was soon to ring. And while we continued our conversations — John and I — he continued to disrupt class throughout the year, and never was there time or the support to create successful sustainable strategies.



“Miss, I want to tell you, ...I’m pregnant.”

Rosie was a shy senior whom I had just begun to really know over lunches and afternoon conversations. Academically she had been struggling, missing school often and inconsistently turning in assignments. It was 50–50 whether she could scrape together the credits to graduate on time.

“Miss, I want to graduate,” she said, her voice quiet but determined.

I couldn’t agree with her more: It was vital that she graduate.

Without a diploma, Rosie would face substantial challenges. High school dropouts unable to compete for high-paying, high-skilled jobs, earn roughly \$9,000 less a year than classmates who graduate. Fewer than one in four teen moms receive financial support from their child’s father, and half of teen mothers who drop out live below the poverty line. The impact on her baby would also be substantial — a higher likelihood of early health complications, of reading delays and lower test scores compared to babies born to older moms.

I knew, though, that Rosie was not a statistic. She is smart and thoughtful and determined — and like many teen moms, deeply motivated. She needed to graduate. But to do so, she would need our help.

What should I do? A look at my grade-book confirmed that she was missing more than a dozen assignments including a major project and a test. Usually I maintained a one-week policy for submitting late work — at least a few of her assignments were a month overdue.

Rosie’s challenges are not unique. Many of my teenage students carry adult burdens. Some work as late as 3 a.m. on assembly lines to send money home to distant relatives, oth-

ers rush from school to cleaning jobs to pay for heating bills. I have students who struggle with loneliness for families and homelands that are oceans away. There are others who replay memories of war, refugee camps, and flight. Some play peacemaker in volatile homes. Still others — like Rosie would soon be — are parents themselves.

We can’t ignore these real-life concerns. As teachers, it is essential to appreciate and address our students’ outside lives.

We cannot lower our expectations. But as many of the contributors in Levinson and Fay’s book point out, and as I have experienced, we can be flexible and creative in supporting each individual student.

Rosie and I met the next day to create a plan. We mapped out what assignments she was missing. I printed out new copies. I explained that for her I would make an exception to my one-week policy. It was important that she do the work, demonstrate mastery, but if it took her longer than her peers, she would not be penalized. I also reached out to a library tutor, arranging a time for her to meet daily to work through classwork and homework for both my class and others.

Equality in education need not mean treating students uniformly. Truly equitable education means seeing an individual with specific strengths and also specific needs. It means recognizing the structures and barriers that get in each student’s way and being deliberate and persistent in seeking ways to help students overcome them.

Most importantly, it requires inviting a student’s community into decisions that impact their future. It means not making those decisions alone but rather reaching beyond the classroom and fully partnering with teachers, coaches, guidance councilors, families, and, most importantly, students themselves.

Slowly, Rosie’s assignments trickled in. On numerous occasions she would spend lunches in my room, head down, working away. Sometimes she would stop to talk. We spoke of her pregnancy, of her financial concerns. Once we made lists of baby names.

And then came graduation. Rosie turned in her last assignment only days before. Across the stage she walked, hair curled, nails polished, robe billowing.

I couldn’t have clapped any louder.

JESSICA LANDER, ED.M.’15, IS A TEACHER AND JOURNALIST. SHE IS A REGULAR CONTRIBUTOR TO THE USABLE KNOWLEDGE BLOG AND *THE BOSTON GLOBE*, WHERE SHE WRITES OP-EDS ON EDUCATION. SHE IS THE AUTHOR OF *DRIVING BACKWARDS*, AN AWARD-WINNING NONFICTION PORTRAIT OF A SMALL TOWN IN NEW HAMPSHIRE.

SCENES FROM AN OPEN HOUSE

WHY DO WE CONTINUE TO BLOW IT WITH THIS ANNUAL BACK-TO-SCHOOL EVENT? STORY BY LORY HOUGH



“HOW MANY OF YOU HAVE EVER BEEN TO A SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE?”

→ asks Senior Lecturer **KAREN MAPP, ED.M.'93, ED.D.'99**. Pretty much all hands in Askwith Hall go up. “And I bet you just can’t wait to turn off *Scandal* to go to another one.”

Based on the laughter in the room, the answer is clearly no. Although open houses are a rare chance for parents and caregivers to walk freely around the school and meet with educators, unfortunately, as Mapp points out and as the audience reaction clearly confirms, traditional open houses just don’t work.

They’re boring. They’re rushed. And they end up feeling a lot like cattle drives, as Mapp likes to say, with parents first crowding into the cafeteria to hear the principal talk for 20 minutes about rules related to bussing and attendance before being herded to classrooms where teachers usually talk about — guess what? — more rules.

“Do I get to learn, as a parent, a new tip or tool? Do I get to practice something that helps support my kid’s learning?” Mapp asks. “Not usually. Do the teachers get to hear from me about what I know about my kid that might help them be a better teacher? No.”

As a result, on any given fall night in the United States, “15,000 or more of these open houses occur, and we blow it,” Mapp says.

We blow it because open houses are not linked to learning and because they don’t do a good job of helping families make that initial connection to the people in the building. And as Mapp points out, when it comes to helping students succeed, relationships really matter.

RELATIONSHIPS ARE KING

This realization that relationships matter when it comes to student success is exactly why Mapp is now on a personal quest to revamp the open house in America — to make this time-honored back-to-school event a use-

ful tool for parents and teachers and not just something a school ticks off as “done” at the beginning of the year.

“It started with Trinity College,” she says, where she once worked as associate director of admissions. “I was asked to coordinate efforts to recruit a more diverse group of students to the college — racially, ethnically, and socio-economically. As I traveled and talked to young people, I started to ask, ‘What is it that led you to being so successful in school?’ I was struck by how many said it was my parents, and by parents I mean also aunts, grandparents, any adults who pushed them and told them they could do it. It was pretty powerful that almost every student I talked to mentioned one of these people. I talked to guidance counselors and said, ‘The kids are telling me adults are key.’ I asked what are you doing to get them, the adults, involved. They looked at me like I had three heads. They didn’t think family engagement was very helpful.”

But Mapp, who later served as a deputy superintendent for family and community relations in Boston Public Schools, knows how important it is. And schools, more often than not, aren’t doing as much as they could, or should, to engage families.

“We waste a wonderful opportunity with many of our events at school, and open house is just one of them,” she says.

Although there are lots of ways to engage families throughout the year, given that most open houses are fairly well attended (at least at the elementary level) and one of the first events of the school year — and sometimes the only face-to-face contact parents have with teachers — it’s critical that schools rethink their back-to-school night.

“It’s really the beginning of the relationship between home and school. It’s a partnership focused on the child’s learning,” Mapp says. “As a staff, if we said, ‘Here’s our first chance to engage parents,’ then surely open

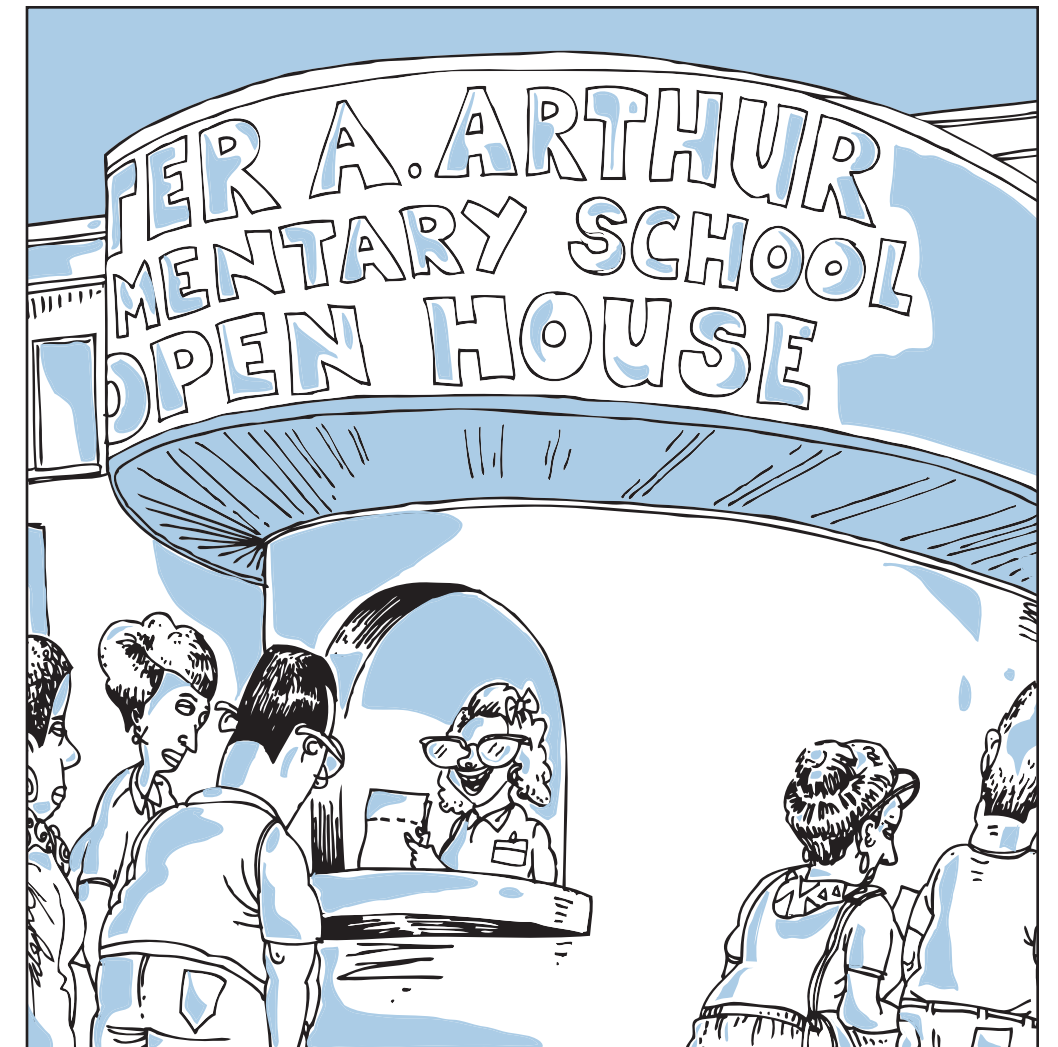
houses wouldn’t be planned the way they are now. They would be a much warmer, much more collaborative event and” — here she stresses the term — “linked to learning.”

Then why aren’t they? Why are most schools following the cattle-herding formula, leaving families with a ho-hum first impression and wondering the next year if they should even bother attending?

The main reason, Mapp says, is that “people don’t know how to do open houses” or family engagement in general. “Parents say they want to partner with schools, but they don’t know how. Teachers say they want to do better but don’t know how.” Even when family engagement became federally mandated when Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act stated that any Title 1 school had to develop an agreement, or “school-family compact,” describing how schools and parents would work together, there was no guidebook on how to do that. As the U.S. Department of Education noted in a statement to *Education Week* in 2012 about the mandate, “The approach to family engagement has been fragmented and nonstrategic, often constituting ‘random acts of family involvement.’”

Mapp says educators want to “do right” by families, “but their capacity hasn’t been built. We have not done a good job of training our practitioners.” As she writes in *Beyond the Bake Sale*, her first book on family-school partnerships, many teachers “tend to be more comfortable with helping families to be involved with their children at home than with engaging families in their classrooms and school buildings.”

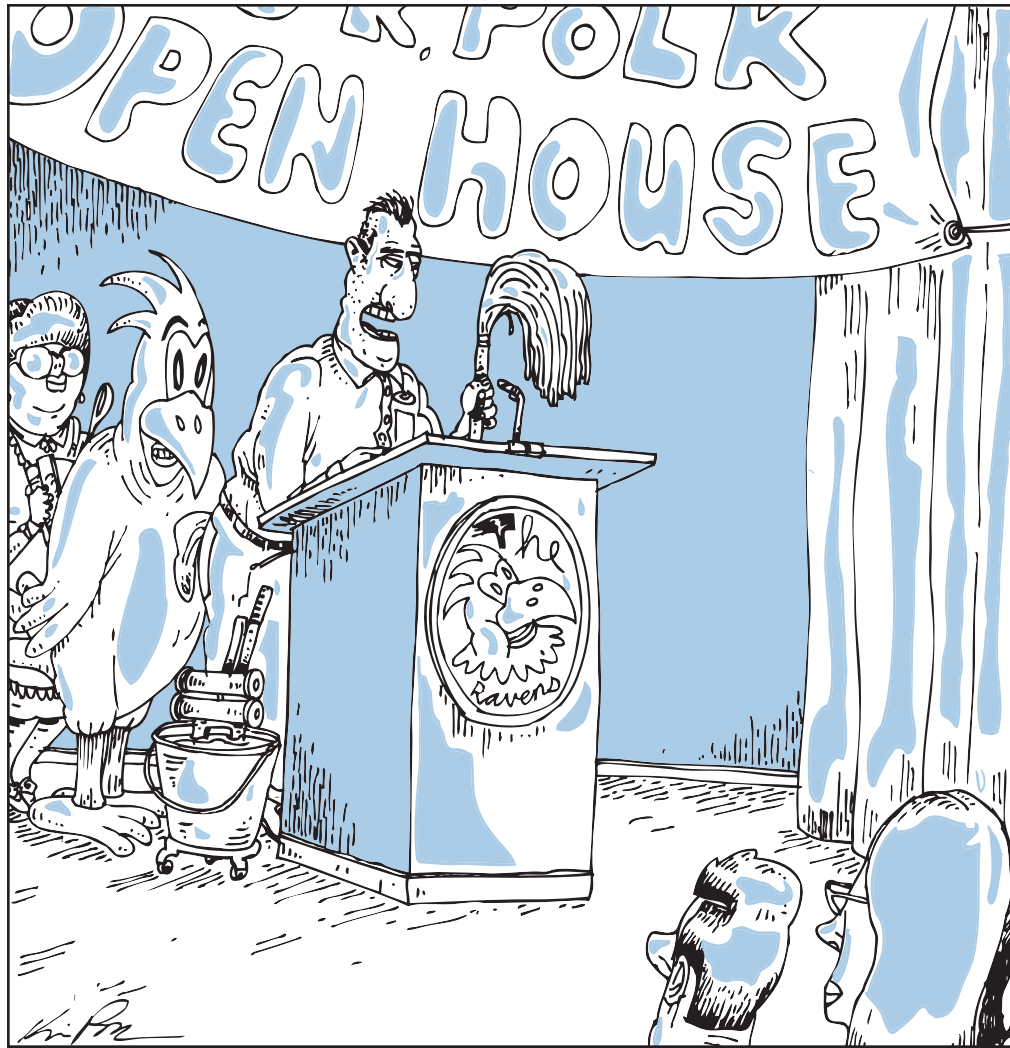
What holds them back? For starters, there’s mindset. Some educators, whether they admit it or not, don’t necessarily believe that parents want to be engaged or even want the best for their children. Some don’t recognize that their school culture is unwelcoming or that families feel like they are “bothering” school staff.



“Well, *technically* it’s free. But if you’re interested in spending *any* time with your kid’s teacher, you should definitely upgrade to our ‘A+’ ticket, which’ll put you right smack at the front of the line — *no* waiting.”

What ends up happening is what University of Washington Assistant Professor **ANN ISHIMARU, ED.M.'08, ED.D.'11**, a researcher on school-community relationships, calls a toxic cycle: Schools organize events, like the open house, and, if parents don’t show, conclude they just don’t care.

“A Somali mom I met recently put this so potently,” Ishimaru says. “She said, ‘Just because we don’t speak English doesn’t mean we can’t see. We know they [educators] are judging us.’ That’s what happens when parents don’t attend the typical open house or parent-teacher conference or they do attend once and then decide to be ‘too busy’ the next time.” Too often, as Ishimaru has found in her research and her work with the Family Leadership Design Collaborative, which looks at



“Hiya, folks. I’m Ralph, and I’m your emcee. My cohorts tonight are Rusty, our beloved mascot, and Estelle from the cafeteria. Before I dismiss you to your classrooms, let me tell you a little bit about what it takes to keep this school clean...”

racial equality in family engagement, teachers default to stereotypes about whole cultural, ethnic, or socio-economic groups of people. Worse case scenario, she says, “well-intentioned school events, like open houses, can actually inadvertently send the message that people are not good parents unless they passively support what educators and professionals say is best for their children.”

Mapp, in her forthcoming book due next spring and co-written with Eileen Carver, a Boston teacher, says this is why, when they work with schools on improving family engagement, “we start with thinking about the teacher’s mindset. What do you really think about the families in your class? Do you see them as resources or problems?” In order for family engagement to be effective, educators

have to believe that all parents have something to offer (regardless of education level or background), and they have to trust that what parents offer will be valuable. “Guess what? Families and communities have funds of knowledge that we need in order to be better educators,” Mapp says. “It can’t just be teachers and principals talking at the families.”

ELIZABETH CANADA, ED.M.’15, works with teachers every day as a family engagement coach for the Boston-based nonprofit 1647, which was named for the year the Massachusetts legislature declared that educating children is a community responsibility. She says families have to be a welcomed part of the team — but often aren’t.

“Unfortunately in education, we’ve gotten really good at working in silos,” she says. “We need to break those down.”

As Mapp writes in *Beyond the Bake Sale*, “The expression ‘Parents are their children’s first teachers’ is so widely used it has become a cliché, but it is true. We should view and treat parents as the experts they are.” Educators and parents “are two such important systems for kids — they have to work together.”

This sense of working together comes from developing a relationship — something everyone working in the family engagement field says is what parents crave.

“Parents tell us that feeling welcome and being treated with respect by school staff is the number one key to their connection with a school,” Mapp writes. “When school staff construct caring and trustful relationships with parents, treating parents as partners in their children’s education, parents are far more likely to become involved,” and, she says stay involved down the road.

Unfortunately, deep-seated layers of mistrust often develop between schools and families. Canada, remembering her days teaching, says at events like the open house, “Everyone is afraid of something. Educators

are worried that parents will think less of them. Young teachers worry parents will think they don’t know what they’re doing. Families are worried they’ll be judged. Both sides are nervous about what the other is thinking.”

Mapp says this mutual mistrust or unease “makes it very difficult to execute any strategies to improve outcomes for schools. Trust is like the lubricant that keeps all of the other things moving.”

Which is why Canada and her colleagues at 1647, including founder John Connolly, a former Boston city councillor, help teachers and families get to know one another with home visits that initially happen well before potentially tense events like the open house.

“The home visit flips the dynamic,” Canada says. “When I was a teacher, the classroom was my kingdom. That’s where I felt safe, where I was in control, where I could invite others in, but it was still my space. Home visits flip that power dynamic; teachers get out of the school and visit with families in their space, where families feel most comfortable.” She says this could be in a home or at baseball practice, in a park, or at a coffee shop. “Just not at the school. We are always asking families to come to us, to cross the academic threshold to meet with us — to come to our turf. Relationship-building home visits, scheduled in advance, allow us to meet with families in a non-academic setting to have authentic, positive conversations during which we get to know one another as people.”

At Gardner Pilot Academy in Boston, LIZ BYRON, ED.M.’08, a sixth-grade math teacher, says her school also makes it clear early on that each family is valued. Leading up to the open house, for example, every middle school family receives a personalized phone call from a teacher not only inviting them to the event, but also confirming attendance.

“If families are not able to attend,” says Byron, who is transitioning this fall to become

“Parents tell us that feeling welcome and being treated with respect by school staff is the number one key to their connection with a school.”

the school’s K–8 visual arts teacher, “we offer to meet with them on their own time to share the information they missed.” Over the course of the year, the staff also makes an extra effort to connect with harder-to-reach families. “For example, teachers complete a minimum of two home visits to families who have not been able to actively attend our out-of-school-time events,” says Byron. They also offer rides to events like open house to families that don’t have transportation.

At Whittemore Elementary in Waltham, Massachusetts, Principal EMMA HERZOG, ED.M.’14, has found that in all of the diverse schools where she has worked, open house is a key opportunity for staff to explain to parents how U.S. schools work while simultaneously building relationships.

“The majority of our students do not speak English at home. Most students speak Spanish, but we also have students who speak other languages, like Portuguese and Haitian Creole,” she says. “We use open house as a tool to help make all families feel comfortable and welcome and to build strong and lasting relationships. We also use open house as an opportunity to explain systems and structures, to explain what their students will be learning.” For parents and caretakers who come from different cultures or did not attend school in the United States, she says, “Open house gives us a chance to demystify how our school works.” Moving into her second year as principal, Herzog says she will be adding more translators at events like open house to cover all languages spoken by her families.

BUT WHY?

Why is all of this important? Research shows that family engagement improves student success at school. As Mapp wrote in her paper *A New Wave of Evidence*, students with involved

“If we don’t do these things, not only do we not engage families, but families stay away.”

parents — no matter their income level or background — earn higher grades, are more likely to attend school regularly, have better social skills, and are more likely to go on to college. One study found that elementary school students made greater and more consistent gains when teachers were “especially active” in their outreach to parents, which included face-to-face meetings, sending home material for parents to use to help their children, and calling home routinely with updates.

However, educators need to be mindful of when and why they reach out, Canada says.

“We do a great job of reaching out to families when something goes wrong but never positive calls,” Canada says. “We run out of time. We know that the things not happening well need to be addressed, so we do those things first.”

But educators need to think beyond the here and now, she says. “When you establish a positive relationship with parents, it saves you time later. If you have to reach out to a family to give bad news — say their child was throwing things — if this is the first time [they’re] hearing from [you], that message will be received differently” than if you’ve already created a trusting partnership with them.

Mapp also stresses that everything a school does, including engaging families, should be “linked to learning.” Many schools offer obvious ways to engage families that also improve academics — family math nights or tutoring sessions — but she says schools need to get into the mindset of connecting all of the activities that involve families to learning, including events like the open house or the spring concert, in ways that are both fun and useful.

Alice Drive Middle School in Sumter, South Carolina, has found a way, by offering not one, but two back-to-school events. **TREVOR IVEY, ED.M.10**, the assistant principal and a former third-grade and middle school science teacher,

says the change came in response to feedback that open house was boring and too hectic to accomplish much. They decided to host both an orientation and an open house. The orientation, held a week before school starts, is like a mini fair with stations that allow families to meet and mingle with staff, take student IDs, and learn about fun extracurriculars. Open house is held around mid-September, after relationships have been nurtured, and is more academically focused. It’s also student led.

Students individually prepare an electronic presentation to share with parents and caregivers regarding their current progress in the form of “glows and grows” — an assessment strategy related to strengths and challenges, Ivey says. “It also includes a synopsis of the data and their action plan for moving forward.” For students unable to attend open house, presentations are divided up during the school day. “The secretary takes a few, counselors have a group, career specialists, even the principals have a group of students they meet with who then present their data,” he says. “Even the head custodian.”

OTHER WAYS OF DOING

What are other ways that schools can improve on family engagement in general and open houses specifically? From her days working in Boston Public Schools, Mapp remembers one middle school in the district getting creative. They renamed open house to Family Fun Night. There was a jazz band playing in the lobby. The staff rolled out a red carpet for families to walk down as they entered the school, and kids were lined up along the carpet, taking pictures like paparazzi. The photos were later used to create a big family tree in the main hallway. When families branched off later to visit their individual classes, the teachers asked parents and caregivers specifically

to talk about their hopes and dreams for their kids. Those answers were eventually posted alongside the family tree.

“This night said, ‘We’re going to be a part of a team,’” Mapp says. “By doing this, it says I value your knowledge about your child.”

Ishimaru says schools can also design the event so that families have a chance to get to know other families and to begin to build relationships with each other, family to family. “In racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse contexts, that can sometimes begin more comfortably by ethnic/cultural/language group,” she says. On a practical level, schools can also stagger the open house, with one grade per night, allowing parents with multiple kids not to feel rushed as they race from class to class. Open house could be held off site or on the playground, becoming more of a get-to-know-you party, where the principal and teachers serve the families.

“I’ve also seen open houses where everyone wears big name badges and they have fun activities that let the teachers and parents get together to talk. The principal is saying this is the kind of relationship we want to have with you this year,” Mapp says. One high school she visited explained to parents that students would be learning how to craft an argument. But rather than just giving them another hand-out to take home, teachers gave parents an exercise to do on the spot. “Parents had to use evidence from around the school and make their own case for a particular argument,” Mapp says. “They got to explore what it meant to craft an argument and find evidence, exactly what was expected of their kids. This let them learn what the kids would be learning, but in a fun way.”

It’s these kinds of activities and this kind of engaging event that are “designed to really start the year off right,” Mapp says. “It says we care about you. We want your engagement.”

In the end, no matter what format an open



“We’ve got the kids’ open house this Friday, or the Swanson’s vacation slideshow of their cement factory tour — which I’m leaning towards.”

house — or any family engagement event — takes, Mapp says families should leave feeling excited about the year and have an understanding about learning goals. They should learn at least three or four things their child will know by the end of the year and they should definitely feel included.

“If we don’t do these things,” Mapp says, “not only do we not engage families, but families stay away.”

And when you don’t do these things, says Canada, you lose who the whole student is.

“You lose their full story when you’re not engaging families,” she says. “It’s like if you’re on a hockey team and you’re down two players — maybe they’re in the penalty box. You’re now a three-person team. That’s what education is like when we’re not engaging families. We lose the full team.”



TIPS FOR MAKING FAMILY ENGAGEMENT HAPPEN: GSE.HARVARD.EDU/ED/EXTRAS

LISTEN TO AN EDCAST WITH JOHN CONNOLLY ON HIS 1647 NONPROFIT: GSE.HARVARD.EDU/ED/EXTRAS

KAREN MAPP’S DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FRAMEWORK ON FAMILY ENGAGEMENT: GSE.HARVARD.EDU/ED/EXTRAS

Life, Liberty, AND THE Pursuit OF A Video Game

HOW ONE ED SCHOOL PROFESSOR IS HELPING KIDS BETTER UNDERSTAND THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

STORY BY ANDREW BAULD, ED.M.'16



ILLUSTRATION BY DANIEL HERTZBERG

Orville

thousand years in the future, the America we know today is a very different place. Ruled by a dystopian monarchy that has shut down all democratic institutions, a small group of dissenters struggle to keep historical records intact, but they possess only bits and pieces of the important writings that once made up the foundations of American government. The group sends a young girl, Briana, back in time to the beginnings of the American Revolution to try and restore democracy for the future. Her only aid: fragments of a long-forgotten and misunderstood document she must piece back together, something called the Declaration of Independence. ¶ This isn't the plot to the next Hollywood historical thriller, but the beginning of a unique new video game being designed by a team of educators, political philosophers, and software engineers at Harvard, led by Ed School Professor Danielle Allen.



"I think it is a good moment for a civics story that can connect different parts of the country."

PROFESSOR DANIELLE ALLEN

It might seem an odd direction for a political theorist who has published broadly in democratic theory, political sociology, and the history of political thought. But in an age where the life of Alexander Hamilton can be turned into a hit Broadway hip-hop musical, perhaps bringing the Declaration of Independence into the digital age might not be such a wild idea and, in many ways, is an ideal vehicle to make the declaration relevant and interactive for young people.

“A video game is a living product,” Allen says. “I think the biggest challenge thinking about a video game is actually trying to figure out what will be the sustainable organization that grows this over time. I think it is a good moment for a civics story that can connect to different parts of the country.”

Allen, a recently appointed professor at the Ed School, is also a professor of government at Harvard College and director of Harvard’s Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics. She holds Ph.D.’s in classics and government, is an opinion columnist for *The Washington Post*, and received a MacArthur Fellowship for her “ability to combine the classicist’s careful attention to texts and language with the political theorist’s sophisticated and informed engagement.”

This lifelong work teaching and writing about political philosophy culminated in 2014 with *Our Declaration: A Reading of the Declaration of Independence in Defense of Equality*. Allen wrote the book — which has since won several awards — in part to clear up several misconceptions about the declaration.

“As I worked on the book, one of the things I realized is that we actually have a lot of collective confusion about the text of the Declaration of Independence,” Allen says. “People tend to think the sentence ends after the first three clauses — ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness’ — and that’s a mistake.”

In fact, the sentence continues and provides the heart of the document, offering up a theory of revolution and arguing for the basic right of the people to alter their government when that government is not working.

In her line-by-line close analysis, Allen argues that we’ve lost touch with some of the most important aspects of the declaration. For instance, while most can recite the tenets of “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness,” she says that we have forgotten what comes before: “that all men are created equal.” As Allen writes in *Our Declaration*, “Political

philosophers have taught us to think that there is an inherent tension between liberty and equality, that we can pursue egalitarian commitments only at the expense of governmental intrusions that reduce liberty. ... Because we have accepted the view that there is a trade-off between equality and liberty, we think we have to choose.”

Orte

can feel the passion for the declaration in Allen’s writing and voice. This is not a preserved document to be observed through museum glass, but a still-relevant reminder of how we all might better live our lives. Still, while *Our Declaration* did much to bring to light the importance of the declaration, Allen believed she missed a crucial opportunity with the book to reach a middle-school audience. Her solution: a video game to give kids an active understanding of the document.

To trace the birth of a video game derived from one of America’s best-known yet often misunderstood political documents, you have to begin in a classroom at the University of Chicago, where Allen was teaching the declaration almost a decade ago. In particular, her night class for adult students retaught her exactly how powerful each of the document’s 1,337 words really is.

“Every teacher has had the experience when you can tell the whole class is completely engaged, and every single session on the declaration was like that,” Allen says. “There was a sense of urgency around it, and people kept drawing connections to their own life. There was a really palpable sense that what people were reading directly helped them think about things they were seeing and living through.”

Over the course of these sessions, however, Allen came to a painful realization. A basic tool that she saw as a means of social action to better understand the world when it is working and when it is not, the Declaration of Independence had been withheld from her students.

“I was blown away at the beginning of these sessions to discover that these night students — low-income people, mostly African American, some Latino, a couple white students — had never read the Declaration

WRONG, WRONG, WRONG

For the opener of this story, we used an iconic painting called the *Declaration of Independence* by John Trumbull, which hangs in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda and is on the back of the two-dollar bill.

We clearly manipulated the art.

As it turns out, we weren’t the first — Trumbull himself took liberties with the scene, as Emily Sneff recently explained in a post on Danielle Allen’s Declaration Resources Project website. Sneff, the project’s research manager, started her piece with the lyrics from a song about Trumbull that were eventually cut from the smash Broadway musical, *Hamilton*:

*You ever see a painting by John Trumbull?
Founding Fathers in a line, looking all
humble*

*Patiently waiting to sign a declaration,
to start a nation*

*No sign of disagreement, not one grumble
The reality is messier and richer, kids
The reality is not a pretty picture, kids
Every cabinet meeting is a full-on rumble
What you ‘bout to see is no John Trumbull*

So what’s the messy problem? The problem is that what most people see in this “pretty picture” never really happened. The members of the Continental Congress never came together in July to sign the Declaration of Independence with the Committee of Five — Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, Robert Livingston, and Roger Sherman — and definitely never presented the document as a group to John Hancock, president of the congress.

As one site about the painting points out, what we see is “wrong, wrong, wrong.” No such gathering took place, and it certainly didn’t happen on July 4. (The declaration was approved on July 4, but the signing didn’t start until a month later and continued piecemeal through the fall.)

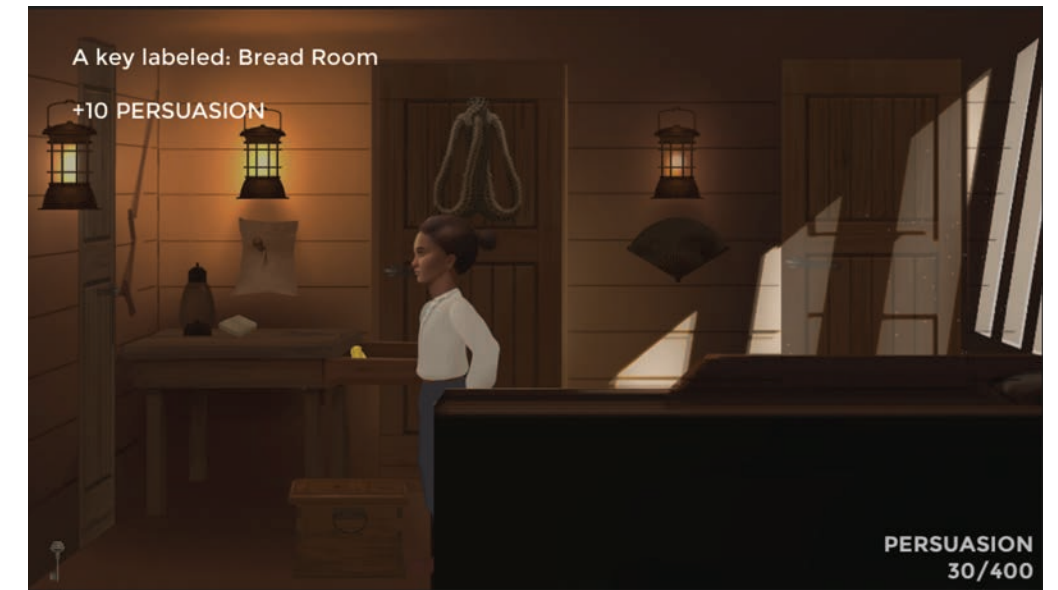
And as historians note, when the document was presented, Franklin likely wasn’t there, nor was Livingston, who opposed independence and never actually signed the declaration. Sneff writes that the painting, completed in 1818, is somewhat random in terms of who appears: 42 of the 56 signers are in it, plus another six who didn’t sign the document at all.

“Though Trumbull worked on the painting for years in hopes of including all of the signers, the lesser-known delegates and the ones who died in the decades just after the Declaration of Independence was signed didn’t make the cut,” Sneff writes. “Both Jefferson and Adams apparently advised Trumbull that, in cases where no portraits could be found to copy, the delegates should be left out rather than poorly represented.”

It appears that Trumbull also took creative license with the setting, the Pennsylvania State House, now called Independence Hall in Philadelphia. According to Architect of the Capitol, the federal agency in charge of maintaining the Capitol, the number and placement of doors and windows is different, and the furniture in the painting was more elegant than it likely was in real life — artistic decisions based either on a sketch that Jefferson gave to the artist when the two met in Paris years before to discuss the plan or, perhaps, based on Trumbull’s whimsy.

In one area, the painting is absolutely authentic and accurate: capturing the faces of some of the founding fathers of the country. As Trumbull wrote in his autobiography, *Autobiography, reminiscences and letters of John Trumbull*, his greatest gift with this painting was to preserve the likeness of those men “to whom we owe that memorable act and all its glorious consequences.”

READ SNEFF’S BLOG POST: DECLARATION.FAS.HARVARD.EDU



In this screen shot from *Portrait of a Tyrant*, Briana is in the captain’s quarters of the British *Gaspee* customs schooner.

of Independence,” she says. “It just felt like a travesty, especially since the whole point of the declaration is for people with grievances to have a way of articulating them and changing the world.” As she said on *The Diane Rehm Show*, when talking about her adult students, “Nobody else had ever made the suggestion that the text belonged to them.”

Now, Allen and her team will seek not only to bring the declaration to a wider audience, but to bring it to life. The video game, currently titled *Portrait of a Tyrant*, takes place between 1772 and 1776, leading up to the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The game’s main player takes on the role of Briana, a young girl from the future whose job is to piece together the declaration and help save democracy for the future.

“The purpose of the game in many ways is to tell the stories behind the grievances articulated in the declaration and to link them to the rights articulated 13 years later in the Bill of Rights,” says Gabe Turow, a game designer and the project manager for *Portrait of a Tyrant*. “The two documents tell one long story when read together, and we’re showing you how all the pieces relate through dialogues that are structured like puzzles, and the player has to identify which grievances are described by each story they encounter.”

Allen approached Turow to help design a game about the declaration, without anything much more specific than that. Turow says that Allen’s book was a huge influence in shaping the challenge of turning political philosophy into a

video game and organizing the game around the structure of grievances and rights.

“We want to give kids a rich, active understanding of the declaration,” Allen says. “The game turns around the grievances and the connection between the grievances and the declaration and the Bill of Rights. The rights are solutions to the grievances, and once you understand that connection, you can understand the logical structure of the Declaration of Independence.”

Turow says, “Danielle is one of the most naturally gifted teachers I’ve ever met. As smart as she is, what is amazing is how simple she makes complicated ideas.”

The game, which is being designed for students in grades 6–12, will let players traverse several historical events through increasingly difficult adventures to better understand the grievances of early Americans and draw connections to the real life impact of the declaration. Importantly, the game will stay true to Thomas Jefferson’s words.

“We are different on the landscape of historical video games in putting the text front and center,” Allen says. “We’re using the original language, we’re not converting to modern vernacular, and the whole purpose is to teach kids slow reading to understand the declaration.”

Portrait of a Tyrant begins with Briana transported back to the past, aboard a real historical British customs schooner, the *Gaspee*, just outside of Providence, Rhode Island. As she explores the ship, Briana eventually meets a smuggler, which leads to a discussion on unjust

taxes imposed by the British government. Apart from the historical accuracy of the discussion, the detailed environment of the ship is stunning.

“There was a lot of intense research about what would be seen in the rooms,” Turow says. “We built 3-D models based on the architectural plans and writings we had of this ship that burned down in 1772.”

Of course, the game won’t let young people or those unfamiliar with the text drown in details. The game will begin at an easy level, with just one or two grievances to tackle. Players will have the option to read the text in its entirety as well as to expand individual words to understand their meaning either in context or vernacular English. The goal is creating an engaging video game, not a textbook.

“We’ve got a chance to do something really cool,” Turow says. “We want it to be a good game. We worry about the pedagogy, but if we fail at the way we present this, there isn’t a point of making a game if it’s not fun.”

Emily Sneff, a research manager for Allen’s Declaration Resources Project, says that telling the real and exciting stories behind the Declaration of Independence is one of the main efforts of the video game.

“Creating a video game that literally transports students to the events surrounding the declaration, and causing them to interact with and hopefully empathize with historically plausible colonists, will allow students to see this list of seemingly outdated complaints with fresh eyes,” she says.

Current Ed.L.D. student **JEFF CURLEY**, another member of the *Portrait of a Tyrant* team, says, “Civics is about shaping and navigating systems to accomplish our goals as a society. Educational games offer a mechanism for students to learn and apply civics principals.”

Curley is no stranger to educational games. He is co-founder and executive director of iCivics, a nonprofit organization that offers games and other interactive resources to help students acquire civic skills. iCivics features a growing network of 115,000 educators and reaches more than 3 million students annually.

“Good educational games allow students to learn and practice specific skills that are critical for effective citizenship,” Curley says. “Through *Portrait of a Tyrant*, students will experience how to identify societal grievances, craft solutions, and argue for change — skills at the core of civic agency.”

Interestingly, at a time in education when the buzz is around concepts like STEM and 21st-century skills, it is perhaps a nearly 250-year-old document that holds the most relevancies for students today in regaining a deeper ap-



Briana standing on the upper deck of the *Gaspee*, docked in Rhode Island, in this screenshot from *Portrait of a Tyrant*.

preciation for civic engagement and a better understanding of the world they are entering.

“We are in a new phase because the Common Core, whatever its travails, has only three required texts: the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, and the Gettysburg Address,” Allen says. “For the first time there is a requirement across most of the nation that the declaration be taught in full as a text, so we are trying to build out resources to make sure the teaching around that is effective and reaches up into the space of civic agency.”

The video game is currently in the prototype phase. The team has applied for a National Endowment for the Humanities grant to finish the first chapter out of a proposed six-chapter narrative. If all goes to plan, *Portrait of a Tyrant* will be released as a mobile game sometime in 2019. For now, Allen will continue to bring awareness of the declaration and push for a better understanding of the whole document.

“To understand the declaration is to learn how to think about politics,” Allen says. “It’s not as if you’ve just acquired information and can check off boxes on a test. If you genuinely understand it, then I think you know what counts as a good political argument and that puts you in a position to tell the difference between good and bad political arguments. And that seems to me like a very important thing for us to recover in our contemporary circumstances.”

ANDREW BAULD, ED.M., '16, IS THE FOUNDER AND PRODUCER OF *THE PALETTE*, A PODCAST FOCUSED ON THE ARTS AND LEARNING.



FOLLOW THE DECLARATION RESOURCES PROJECT ON TWITTER @DECLARATIONRES

Grad.



“Receiving this award is a wonderful surprise, as it indicates that HGSE’s Alumni Council and institution recognizes this work and validates it as an important contribution to the field of education. This powerful recognition is not just for me, but celebrates collective work over time: my work with Native teachers, with tribal colleges and universities, and with tribal communities.”

TARAJEAN YAZZIE-MINTZ, ED.D. '02, CO-DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND SPONSORED PROGRAMS WITH THE AMERICAN INDIAN COLLEGE FUND. IN ADVANCE OF THIS YEAR’S CONVOCATION CEREMONY IN MAY, AT WHICH SHE RECEIVED THE ALUMNI COUNCIL AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO EDUCATION.

IN MEMORY

1940-1949

ARTHUR TIFFANY, M.A.T.'46

1950-1959

JOAN KELLER ALDEN, M.A.T.'51
 ABIGAIL KRYSSTALL, M.A.T.'56
 GERTRUDE HELEN CARES, ED.M.'58
 HAROLD LAY HODGKINSON, ED.D.'59

1960-1969

EMILY LOUISE RICHARD, GSE'60
 RICHARD RIENDEAU, M.A.T.'60
 JACK ROBINSON, ED.D.'60
 PAUL ZORN JR., M.A.T.'60
 DAVID CHAMPAGNE, ED.M.'61
 FREDRIC MISNER, ED.M.'61
 BLAINE CROOKS, ED.M.'62
 ANNE CONSTANT EWING, M.A.T.'62
 JAMES JOINER, ED.M.'63
 FRANK FIELD, ED.M.'61, ED.D.'64
 SHEILA LEIFER, M.A.T.'64
 NANCY MCLAREN, M.A.T.'64
 SANDI KINYON PEASLEE, ED.M.'64
 ARMINE THOMASON, ED.M.'64
 ANN HOWARD WILSON, ED.M.'65
 JOHN BURGESS III, ED.D.'67
 DORINTHE SACKS, ED.M.'62, C.A.S.'67
 JOAN HELPERN, GSE'68

1970-1979

JOHN DOUGHERTY, M.A.T.'71
 SUSAN WILLOUGHBY, ED.D.'72
 KATHRYN HESSERT-TUCKER, ED.M.'73
 SHARON PERRY, ED.M.'74
 SABINA HARRIS, ED.M.'62, ED.D.'79

1980-1989

LAMONT GONZALEZ, ED.M.'80
 TAYLOR MCLEAN, ED.M.'81
 JANE PORTER POTTER, ED.M.'81
 ELSIE APHORP, ED.M.'82
 KENNETH DOUCETTE, ED.M.'82
 HOLLY CYRUS ZEEB, ED.D.'85
 SHEILA HOADLEY, ED.M.'86
 MAUREEN TWOMEY, ED.M.'86
 CONSTANCE RICHARDSON, ED.M.'88

2010-2019

SAMAIYA EWING, ED.M.'14

1954

David Remley, M.A.T., taught in two high schools and at two universities and received a Ph.D. from Indiana University in 1967. He has published four books, all on historical aspects of the American West, including *Crooked Road: The Story of the Alaska Highway* and *Kit Carson: The Life of an American Border Man*.

1960

Frank Lyman Jr., Ed.M., a teacher and teacher educator, recently published *ThinkTrix: Tools to Teach 7 Essential Thinking Skills*.

1966

Bill Lewers, M.A.T., recently published *The Gatekeepers of Democracy*, a book of fiction. His two pre-

vious books, including *Six Decades of Baseball: A Personal Narrative*, are works of nonfiction.

1970

Barbara Schieffelin Powell, M.A.T.'65, Ed.D., recently co-wrote *Looking Together at Student Work* with David Allen and **Tina Blythe, Ed.M.'02**. (See page 19.)

1972

Michael McGill, M.A.T.'67, C.A.S.'70, Ed.D., director of the program for district leadership and reform at Bank Street Graduate School of Education, is founder of the Global Learning Alliance and a former superintendent in the Scarsdale Union Free School District. He recently published *Race to the Bottom: Corporate School Reform and the Future of Public Education*. (See page 19.)

1973

Connie Kennedy, M.A.T., a former superintendent, including in Detroit Public Schools, published a collection of vignettes about her life called *100 Pieces of Sun: Diary of a Potted Plant*.

John Merrow, Ed.D., received the Excellence in Media Reporting on Education Research Award in March at the annual American Educational Research Association conference. Throughout his 41-year education journalism career, Merrow has worked for NPR and the *PBS News-Hour*. @John_Merrow

1976

Tanya Hwart, Ed.M., the host of the syndicated show *Hollywood Live*, was named co-chair of the Caucus for Producers, Writers, and Directors. She is the first female and



Joanne Grady Huskey, Ed.M., celebrated the 20th anniversary of the school she co-founded in Chennai, India, the American International School of Chennai. The school opened in 1996 with 23 students. Today the school has 900 international students, preK through 12th grade. Last fall, Grady Huskey (center) published her book, *Make It In India*.

Inspirational. Practical. Grounded in Research.

Explore more than 70 programs for preK-12 and higher education professionals.

hgse.me/ppe_ed



Professional Education



first African American to head the 40-year-old organization. Hart is a former senior producer for Black Entertainment Television and has won four Emmys. @TanyaHollywood

Rashid Silvera, Ed.M., a *GQ* and *Essence* cover model, has been teaching social studies at Scarsdale High School in New York for more than three decades.

1977

Randie Gottlieb, Ed.M., recently published the *Multicultural Conference Planning Guide*, a how-to guide that includes everything from setting a budget to room setup.

1979

Steven Adamowski, C.A.S., is cur-

rently superintendent of schools in Norwalk, Connecticut. Prior, he worked for the Connecticut Department of Education and was superintendent in Hartford.

1980

David Podell, Ed.M., was appointed president of Massachusetts Bay Community College in Wellesley, Massachusetts, effective July 2016. Since 2008, Podell served as vice president for academic affairs and dean of the faculty at Marymount Manhattan College in New York.

1981

Diane Croft, Ed.M., stepped down as publisher of National Braille Press, where she worked for 34

years. Croft will be publishing under a new imprint, Interleaf Press, which will publish books on the psyche.

1985

Elizabeth Carlson, Ed.M., published *North Carolina String*

Masters: Old-Time and Bluegrass Legends, a book featuring seven prominent musicians from the state who pioneered old-time and bluegrass music. Carlson is the founder and education director of Carolina Music Ways, a non-profit group that educates school children about North Carolina's musical heritage.

Alec Lee, Ed.M., founder and executive director of Aim High, a free summer learning program for Bay Area, California, middle schoolers, was one of nine people honored at the White House in February as a "champion of change" in summer learning. Lee started Aim High in 1986, just after finishing his program at the Ed School.

Katherine Hall Page, Ed.D., received the Malice Domestic's Lifetime Achievement Award in on May 1, honoring her career writing what are known as traditional mystery books. Since the early 1990s, she has written 30 books, including 23 in the Faith Fairchild series. katherine-hall-page.org

1986

Frank Linton, Ed.M., recently published *The Observation Hive Handbook*, a book about installing and working with a honeybee hive at home.

William McKersie, Ed.M., was appointed superintendent of

THE 1-QUESTION INTERVIEW: ALEC LEE

Q WHAT WAS IT LIKE TO BE HONORED BY THE WHITE HOUSE?

A Being honored during our 30th anniversary was incredible. Aim High has always stood squarely at the intersection of academic rigor and encroachment and youth development. I firmly believe that summer is an opportunity to be different, a chance for youth to reinvent themselves and experience inspiring and creative learning environments. Aim High is all about opening doors for young people. It was such a validation to be recognized for our work. It gave me hope.

JOANNE GRADY HUSKEY

schools in Weston, Massachusetts, during a special meeting of the school board. He began his new position this past summer. Since 2012, he served as superintendent of Greenwich Public Schools in Connecticut. Prior, he served as associate superintendent for academic excellence for the Catholic Archdiocese of Boston and associate dean for development and alumni relations at the Ed School.

1988

Fernando Reimers, Ed.M.'84, Ed.D., a professor at the Ed School and director of the school's International Education Policy Program, recently co-edited *Fifteen Letters on Education in Singapore* with **E.D. (Nell) O'Donnell Weber**, Ed.M.'10, a current doctoral student. (See page 19.)

1989

Denise Pope, Ed.M., a senior lecturer at the Stanford University Graduate School of Education, is the co-author of *Overloaded and Underprepared*. (See page 16.)

1991

Ilona Holland, Ed.M.'85, Ed.D., in collaboration with the National Trust and National Geographic, recently published *Buddy Bison's Yellowstone Adventure*. (See page 4.)

1992

Maureen Binienda, Ed.M., is superintendent of Worcester [Massachusetts] Public Schools. Prior, she was assistant principal and then principal at South High School, also in Worcester, and a teacher.

1993

Lady June Hubbard-Cole, C.A.S., recently accepted a faculty position with Clemson University in the Eugene T. Moore School of Education. She continues to work as an associate professor with the Wheelock College International Program.

Susan Pickford, C.A.S., published *The Bassler Family in Focus Through Photos, Diaries, and Letters*, a book tracing her family history beginning in Massachusetts on the Mayflower. Pickford is a retired teacher.

1994

Alexios Kritas, Ed.M., an English teacher at Waldorf School in Garden City, New York, was honored in April as a distinguished teacher of 2016 by the Harvard Club of Long Island. Kritas also serves as the

co-adviser of the sophomore class and is a member of the school's diversity committee. This summer, Kritas released an album, *Diluvian Blues*.

Joelle Murchison, Ed.M., is associate vice president and chief diversity officer at the University of Connecticut. Murchison leads the university's diversity council. Before joining the university, she was vice president of enterprise diversity and inclusion for the Travelers Companies, Inc.

Betty Rosa, Ed.M.'93, Ed.D., was elected in March to be chancellor of the State Board of Regents in New York. During her career, Rosa has worked as a teacher, principal, and superintendent in the Bronx.

1997

Antonio Cicioni, Ed.M., currently living in Ushuaia, Argentina, writes that he would like to reconnect with Ed School classmates and friends: acicioni@untdf.edu.ar.

1999

Melissa Morse, Ed.M., writes, "I have not stayed in touch as much as I would have liked with those I went to grad school with, but I'm letting everyone know that I'm still alive." After graduation, Morse worked in development for a private school in Connecticut, at a performing arts conservatory, and for a small Montessori elementary school. "Most recently, I find myself working on my next career: I currently train guidance staff and school administrators on a computer program that is used as a counseling tool to promote college and career readiness."

Christine Pina, Ed.M., joined Miss Porter's School, a boarding and day school for girls in grades 9–12, as chief advancement officer. Since 2011, she served as vice president for institutional advancement at the University of Hartford.



Caitlin Robbins, the granddaughter of **Nancy Robbins**, Ed.M., reads *Ed.* to her cousin, Luna Robbins, in Denver, Colorado. "This was the beginning of Caitlin's Bat Mitzvah weekend," Robbins writes. "No greater time to focus on education."

Jeanine Staples, Ed.M., recently published *The Revelations of Asher*. Staples is an associate professor of education (literacy and language) and African American studies at the Pennsylvania State University. She is a board member of Penn State's African Research Center and was named a research fellow of the Social Science Research Institute/Children, Youth, and Family Consortium. jeaninestaples.com

2000

Patricia Perez, Ed.M., edited *Higher Education Access and Choice for Latino Students* through the Routledge

Research in Higher Education series.

2002

Tina Blythe, Ed.M., recently co-wrote *Looking Together at Student Work* with David Allen and **Barbara Schieffelin Powell**, M.A.T.'65, Ed.D.'70. (See page 19.)

Ruth Shoemaker Wood, Ed.M., was promoted to partner at Storbeck/Pimentel & Associates, an executive search firm specializing in higher education executive recruitment for colleges and universities, independent schools, and nonprofits. She lives in

Princeton, New Jersey.

Renee Spencer, Ed.M.'97, Ed.D., was promoted from assistant professor to full professor at Boston University. Spencer joined Boston University in the School of Social Work in 2002.

2003

Christina Tobias-Nahi, Ed.M., director of public affairs at Islamic Relief USA, in Alexandria, Virginia, traveled in April on an interfaith interagency assessment trip to Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey to research the plight of unaccompanied Syrian children and to make policy recommendations with the United Nations High Commission on Refugees to the United States government.

Susan Stuebner, Ed.M.'98, Ed.D., was named the ninth president of Colby-Sawyer College in New London, New Hampshire, effective July 1, 2016. Stuebner was vice president for development and alumni relations, enrollment, and college relations at Allegheny College since 2013. At Allegheny, she also served as chief financial officer, dean of students, director of human resources and athletics, and Title IX coordinator.

2005

Ronen Habib, Ed.M., teaches at Gunn High School in Palo Alto, California, and runs EQSchools, which provides social-emotional training to schools.

Nia Ujamaa, Ed.M., is a senior professional development specialist for Apple, Inc. She is also an advisory board member for their Distinguished Educator Program. Prior, she was an instructional technology specialist for the Mirman School for the Gifted Child in Los Angeles.

2007

Brittney Buckner, Ed.M., published her first novella ebook, *Leaving Grace*, on Amazon Kindle in February 2016. Buckner is director of the Organizational Development and Effectiveness Department at George Washington University.

Aviva Jacobs, Ed.M., was named a Schusterman Fellow this past spring. The recognition is given to those who see Jewish organizational leadership as an important way to create change in the world. Jacobs was a 2003 Teach For America (TFA) corps member in New Orleans and

THE 1-QUESTION INTERVIEW: CHRISTINA TOBIAS-NAHI

Q WHAT DID YOU NOTICE ABOUT THE PLIGHT OF UNACCOMPANIED SYRIAN CHILDREN IN TERMS OF SCHOOLING?

A The majority of Syrian children are out of school for myriad reasons: They have missed too much schooling, they don't speak the language of instruction, the "second shift" school programs are of poor quality, the teachers are found to be abusive, or the schools are too far, so it is not safe for them to get there (or to get home in the dark hours after "second shift" has ended). Another serious issue is that in most instances, parents or adult caregivers do not have permission to work in the host communities, so children are often the sole bread-earners. They are entering the informal workforce because they can get by checkpoints easier, because they are cheap labor, [or] because their little hands are more dexterous for working in a textile factory or on a farm picking agricultural products.

Education needs more people like you.

Help us find others who share your passion for education.

hgse.me/refer_ed

Learn to Change the World



CAITLIN ROBBINS

is currently a vice president on TFA's recruitment team.

2008

Whitney Soule, Ed.M., took over as dean of admissions and financial aid at Bowdoin College as of July 2016. Soule joined the admissions staff in the summer of 2008 as senior associate dean.

Priya Gersappa Nalkur-Pai, Ed.M.'03, Ed.D., recently accepted a position at Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts, as a career counselor. She was at the University of Pennsylvania as postdoctoral fellow. "I am thrilled to begin counseling students on their professional and academic goals. My research in achievement motivation inspired me to make a move to direct service in motivating students towards their full potential."

water engineering legacy through educational programs and exhibits. Prior, Elman worked at the Harvard Graduate School of Design and the Harvard Art Museums.

Chad Leith, Ed.D., a professor at Salem State University in Salem, Massachusetts, will serve as principal at the Horace Mann Laboratory School and will direct the partnership between Salem State and Horace Mann. Leith has been serving as interim principal since August 2015.

Geoffrey Walker, Ed.M., became the new headmaster this year at Fenway High School in Boston. Walker has been an education professional for more than 16 years, working as a teacher, program director, assistant principal, and principal. He also worked in several Boston public schools as the program director of the America SCORES Boston soccer and writing program. Later, he taught at both the McKay School and English High School. He served as the academic director at Madison Park High School, assistant principal at the Timilty, principal of the Rogers, and, most recently, principal of the Escola Americana in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil.

Xu Zhao, Ed.M.'07, Ed.D., recently published *Competition and Compassion in Chinese Secondary Education*. (See page 18.)

2010

Nell (E.B.) O'Donnell Weber, Ed.M., a current doctoral student, recently co-edited *Fifteen Letters on Education in Singapore* with Professor **Fernando Reimers**, Ed.M.'84, Ed.D.'88. (See page 19.)

2011

Barbara Elfman, Ed.M., recently joined the Metropolitan Waterworks Museum as executive director. The nonprofit is dedicated the preservation and interpretation of Boston's

2012

Nirmeen Abdulla Alireza, Ed.M., founded the Nün Academy in Jeddah,

Saudi Arabia. The K–12 school is based on personalized learning.

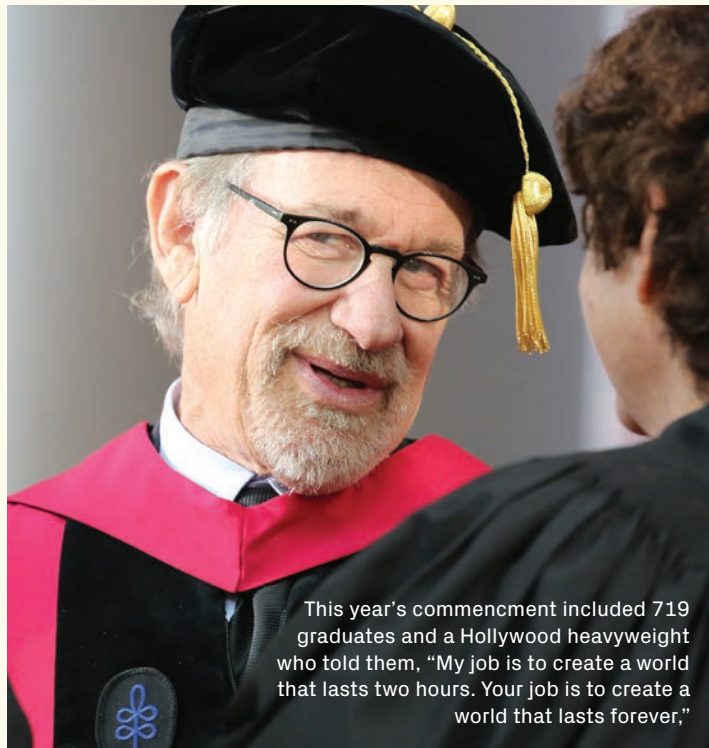
Alyssa Liles-Amponsah, Ed.M., recently had an exhibit of her American Mom Series paintings on display at the Columbia Public Schools Administration Building in South Carolina. The exhibit features images of women who have lost children to racially motivated violence, as well as excerpts of reflective writing by students from local public schools, includ-

ing one where Liles-Amponsah works as an art teacher.

2013

Beth Rabbitt, Ed.L.D., recently became CEO of the Learning Accelerator, a national nonprofit based in Princeton, New Jersey, whose mission is to accelerate the implementation of high-quality blended learning in K–12 school districts in the United States.

COMMENCEMENT 2016:
FROM DRUMMERS TO DIRECTORS



This year's commencement included 719 graduates and a Hollywood heavyweight who told them, "My job is to create a world that lasts two hours. Your job is to create a world that lasts forever."

JILL ANDERSON; MICHAEL RODMAN

ON ZAENTZ: A Q&A

This summer, after the school announced the creation of Saul Zaentz Early Childhood Initiative, the initiative's directors, Associate Professor Stephanie Jones and Professor Nonie Lesaux, sat down to talk about the impact the \$35.5 million gift from the Saul Zaentz Charitable Foundation will have on their work, on future educators who come to the school to study, and on the overall field of early childhood education.



Directors of the Saul Zaentz Early Childhood Initiative, Associate Professor Stephanie Jones and Professor Nonie Lesaux

Q WHAT IS THE INITIATIVE ABOUT?

A This initiative sets into a motion a coordinated set of high-impact actions, investments, and partnerships that will significantly increase the Ed School's capacity for research, innovation, outreach, and leadership development in early childhood education. The initiative has three interconnected components, which, as a cohesive set, attend to the pressing needs of today's children, particularly the growing population of those who experience adversity. The first core element is the Harvard Early Learning Study, which will begin with a representative cohort of 3-year-olds from across Massachusetts and follow them across their early childhood years. The study will examine their development and document their early learning experiences. The second element is an adult-focused strategy of professional learning, represented by the Saul Zaentz Academy for Professional Learning in Early Childhood. The academy will function as a go-to place for cutting-edge science about early childhood practices and strategies, and will be a vehicle for rapid-cycle dissemination from the Harvard Early Learning Study. The third element is focused on cultivating the next generation of early education leaders, and includes a fellowship program for incoming students enrolling in our master's and Doctor of Education Leadership programs.

tackle, head-on, the significant opportunities and challenges facing the early childhood field today. Across the country, communities are putting together ambitious agendas for dramatic expansion of formal learning opportunities in the years before kindergarten. This momentum holds great promise for the youngest members of our communities. The challenge is that the field is expanding with limited coordination and leadership, and with many fundamental questions still unaddressed. The Saul Zaentz Early Childhood Initiative will create a hub, a new kind of resource that can bring together this array of efforts while simultaneously generating and rapidly disseminating the knowledge needed for long-lasting impact on children and society.

Q WHAT ABOUT THE IMPACT ON FUTURE ED SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO COME HERE TO STUDY AND WHO THEN GO OUT INTO THE FIELD?

A The bedrock of the new Saul Zaentz Early Childhood Initiative is the next generation of early education leaders — policy leaders, thought leaders, and educator leaders. Future Ed School students, whether their programmatic experience is focused squarely or less directly on early education, will now be enrolled in a higher education institution that, in very concrete as well as symbolic ways, is organizing around the notion that the years before formal schooling are crucial. As such, all Ed School students will have access to courses led by new early childhood members of the faculty, to apprenticeships at the Saul Zaentz Academy for Professional Learning, and to research opportunities through the Harvard Early

Q WHAT IMPACT DO YOU HOPE THIS GIFT HAS ON THE OVERALL EARLY CHILDHOOD FIELD?

A The Saul Zaentz Charitable Foundation's extraordinary and inspiring gift will enable us to

Learning Study. Equally important, as the Ed School expands its commitment to the field of early education, the many students who come to Appian Way and benefit from this commitment will become part of a network of professionals across the early education sector who are contributing to today's ambitious early education agenda.

Q WOULD A LONG-TERM STUDY LIKE THE HARVARD EARLY LEARNING STUDY BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT A GIFT LIKE THIS?

A A developmental epidemiological study such as this one is crucial for the science of early childhood development to keep pace with the changing demographics of today's early childhood population — one that is increasingly diverse and growing up in an era of great economic instability. It is also the primary vehicle for developing a much-needed understanding of what early education models work for whom and under what conditions. To be sure, today's overall funding climate does not have the combination of will and resources to back this kind of work. What the Saul Zaentz Charitable Foundation has done is unique and inspirational — it is enabling the launch of a very large-scale study with the potential to generate insights akin to what the field of public health has produced because of population-based

research around pressing issues, such as heart disease and the impact of smoking or lead exposure on health and development.

Q HOW DO YOU SEE THE ZAENTZ INITIATIVE RELATING TO THE CENTER ON THE DEVELOPING CHILD?

A There are many ways in which the work of the Center on the Developing Child and the Zaentz Initiative are complementary and connected. The Center on the Developing Child is committed to advancing a broad agenda, including the critical influences of early experience on brain development, early learning, and lifelong health, with significant attention on the prenatal period and first three years after birth. The center's approach includes a research and development initiative called Frontiers of Innovation, which is designed to accelerate the generation and adoption of science-based innovations at scale. As we launch and engage in the Zaentz Initiative's several components, focusing on preK program improvement, policy, and advocacy, the center's expertise and ongoing work on the science of early development and adult capacity building will be invaluable. In addition to other opportunities, we expect Zaentz Fellows to also pursue internships at the center.

TO READ A LONGER Q&A, GO TO GSE.HARVARD.EDU/ED/EXTRAS

THE 1-QUESTION INTERVIEW:
ALYSSA LILES-AMPONSAH

Q WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO FOCUS ON THE MOMS?

A Because as a mother I could not imagine anything more terrifying than losing one's child in such a horrific way. I am interested in how mothers, fathers, families, friends, and the larger community carry on after these killings. These losses change the world in profound ways. I wanted to call attention to those who now have to live with this reality. alyslalilesamponsah.com



This Fall on Campus

REMEMBER HOW MUCH YOU LOVED GOING TO ASKWITH FORUMS?
HERE'S A LIST OF A FEW FORUMS COMING UP THIS SEMESTER.
YOU CAN WATCH THEM IN PERSON IN ASKWITH HALL ON CAMPUS
OR LIVE-STREAMED AT [YOUTUBE.COM/USER/HARVARDEDUCATION](https://www.youtube.com/user/harvardeducation).
FORUMS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

EDUCATION AS A HUMAN RIGHT: HANAN AL HROUB, 2016 GLOBAL TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Hear from Hanan Al Hroub, the recipient of the 2016 Global Teacher Prize and a secondary school teacher in Palestine.

SEPTEMBER 22
5:30 - 7 P.M.

LIFE, ANIMATED: AUTISM, ABLEISM, AND EDUCATORS

Pulitzer Prize winning journalist Ron Suskind will talk about about his book, *Life, Animated: A Story of Sidekicks, Heroes, and Autism*, and how he was able to reach his autistic son through Disney characters.

OCTOBER 6
5:30 - 7 P.M.

A CONVERSATION WITH JEB BUSH

A conversation between Jeb Bush, former governor of Florida and founder of the Foundation for Excellence in Education, and Ed School Associate Professor Marty West.

OCTOBER 13
5 - 6:30 P.M.

WHAT IS A GOOD CITIZEN AND HOW DO YOU CREATE ONE?

A post-election panel discussion on the challenges that confront American society as we struggle with diversity, divided parties, digital democracy, and the pressure for a more global perspective. In conjunction with the 42nd Association for Moral Education Annual Conference.

DECEMBER 8
5:30 - 7 P.M.