IN FOCUS:
Improving Math and Science Education

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE
» Fresh Perspective on Neuropsychology
» Promoting Diversity Among Teachers
Mathematics and science education has become a major priority for the College of Education as the nation strives to address critical shortcomings in the K–16 system. See page 18.

Spring awakening: Tulips bloom behind IM Sports-Circle on campus.
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We are all too well aware of the economic challenges facing this country, and especially here in Michigan. The state of the current global economy and even the short-term projections will affect all sectors of our society, including higher education. As is the case with almost every institution of higher education across the country, Michigan State University must plan for budget reductions. Public institutions, in particular, are faced with budgetary tensions resulting from declining state support and the consequential impact of tuition increases on students and their families.

We in the College of Education are certainly planning and preparing for budget reductions but also realizing that we must keep in mind our priorities and the strategic investments we have made. We know we will have to make difficult decisions, but we believe that we can work together, manage for the future and be strategic in our choices.

We aim to preserve what is important, valued and core to our mission. At the same time, we will not simply look for ways to cut back; we will additionally look for opportunities for growth, identify new sources of revenue and find ways to work even more efficiently and effectively. We want to stay future-focused and maintain progress toward our goals.

I assure you that this college will continue to be strong and a source of pride for this university and our faculty, students and alumni. In this issue of the New Educator, you will read about “Newsmakers”—faculty and projects that are focused on critical issues related to education policies and practices. These articles reflect some of our priorities in making a difference in the quality of K–12 education and the national priority of improving mathematics and science education. This occurs through initiatives such as increasing the number of mathematics and science teachers, adopting rigorous standards in the curriculum and providing access to high-quality teachers for all students. For this issue, we specifically asked scientists, educational leaders and education scholars to share their perspectives on improving mathematics and science education. Our faculty is actively engaged in research in these areas as well as in policy discussions and debates at the state and national levels. We take great pride in the quality and work of our faculty, our students and our graduates. This college is making a difference, and we will not waiver from that commitment and obligation.

As you receive this copy of our magazine, you may wonder about its future in light of cutbacks. Indeed, we are transferring some of our publications and communications to online-only formats, but I receive a great deal of appreciation from our readers about the value of this magazine and being able to read it in print form. Thus, we will continue to publish the New Educator, and we will continue to maintain its high quality as it also conveys the standards of our college.

I thank you for your commitment to the future of this college. I invite you to write me with your questions or comments. We value your feedback and insights.

Carole Ames
Early Inspiration: Special Education

I feel a little strange writing to a publication I did not know existed until today. Although I have been contributing to my alma mater since the '70s, I have been outside the loop of communication. I read with interest about people who have made a difference, as well as excellence in teaching. But, since I never received the magazine before, I don’t know if you ever paid tribute to Dr. James Crowner.

In 1962, when I was a sophomore and had to declare a major, I took a personal preference test and ended up at Dr. Crowner’s office. He spoke with me to find out my background, and discussed with me how he felt my interests in life blended with my interests as demonstrated by the test I had recently taken. He then explained to me what special education was (Public Law 94-142 was still many years away). It sounded good, and I “signed up.” He told me that special education was the “education of the future,” and that I would be able to move to any area of the country and then look for a job, rather than look for a job and move to that city.

As many know, Dr. Crowner was right. I tracked him down about 15 years ago, at Southern Illinois University, to thank him. Of course he did not remember me, but I wanted him to know how much he meant to me. Now, I want you to know, too!

Bob Lilienthal, Gilbert, Ariz.
Retired principal and special education teacher; B.A., special education, 1965

*James Crowner received his Ph.D. from MSU and served as an assistant professor in the College of Education from 1958 to 1965. He left to join the College of Education & Human Services faculty at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale and retired in 1988.

Powerful Poetry Work: Keep It Up!

EDITOR’S NOTE: This letter was originally sent to College of Education faculty members Laura Apol and Janine Certo, whose poetry-related work was featured in the last New Educator.

I cannot tell you how excited I was to see your feature in the New Educator. I was downright thrilled to hear that you are building recognition for poetry as a valuable scholarly enterprise within the COE. That’s remarkable—kudos to you both!

After graduating from MSU, I headed to Chicago and taught middle school students for several years. I moved on to district-level staff development then finished my career working with Motorola on a national school leadership initiative. It was a great run, and I loved nearly every day.

And . . . I wove poetry into every possible corner I could. The success I had with middle school students and poetry led me to share ideas at state and national conferences. As a staff development coordinator, I made sure that poetry was always an option for teacher development. And, as a facilitator and designer for Motorola, I used as many poetic quotes as I could get away with!

I really don’t know why, I’ve just always been blessed with extra-sensory poetry antennae. And now that I’m retired and living in the South, I have joined the South Carolina Poetry Society, found a writing group and am taking my own work more seriously. All of this to say that I still spend my summers in Michigan and, as a former COE grad, I’d love to: talk poetry with you, volunteer in any capacity, fly up and read at the April Trillium, share my stories with undergrads, whatever . . .

Dear professors, I have taught; I write; I know. And I’m just so happy that you’re up there generating enthusiasm—and quantifiable data—for the cause.

Michelle Ott, Florence, S.C.
Retired educator/administrator; B.A., elementary education, 1971

Disparities Among Schools: We Need More Data

I read with great interest and approval the New Educator (Fall 2008/Winter 2009) article by Professor David Arsen on the disparity between urban and more affluent suburban public schools. The information as presented quantifies what most concerned observers recognize by simply driving by or walking the halls of urban (read inner city) schools. The obvious conclusion comes to clear fruition when that same observer makes the sometimes short drive to contiguous suburban districts.

As the promise engendered by the decision of Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas (1954) fades into the shrouds of history, leading teacher preparation and educational research institutions such as MSU should continue to generate crucial data depicting the widening disparity of opportunity for our nation’s children based on race and socioeconomic status. The natural course of action by leading colleges of education, as that at MSU, should be to continue to produce potential solutions for legislators and governmental policy officials to consider and hopefully implement. The fastest method to ensure equality of opportunity in America is to ensure that all children have access to a quality education beginning with preschool. Colleges of education should be encouraging our most talented teacher preparation students to seriously consider urban teaching and living options. By doing so, new educators would demonstrate true commitment to the families they would serve.

Tom Sampson, Lansing, Mich.
Retired principal and current chair, Olivet College Education Department; Ph.D., education, 1980

What do you think about when you read this magazine? Or, what would you like to share with fellow alumni, colleagues and friends? We hope to hear from more of you. Write to Nicole Geary at ngeary@msu.edu or 518 Erickson Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824-1034.
Kinesiology Connections with China

Department of Kinesiology Chairperson Deborah Feltz visited six of China’s major kinesiology-based colleges and universities last fall with colleagues from the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC), a consortium of research universities including the Big Ten and the University of Chicago. During the summit, she gained firsthand knowledge about China’s institutions for training kinesiology professionals, established relationships with colleagues and participated in early conversations about several promising exchange opportunities.

Michigan State University will likely be among the U.S. campuses to host a delegation of leaders from the participating Chinese institutions, including the Beijing University of Sport, this fall. Feltz and her CIC peers have also agreed to accept short-term study visits from Chinese graduate students and consider hosting undergraduate students for up to an academic year of full-time study. They hope to obtain similar opportunities for their own U.S. students, and they are exploring scholarly exchange activities, such as visiting lectures, joint research and affiliated faculty positions.

“We feel strongly that this visit was historical and will be of great benefit to our programs and the kinesiology programs in China,” Feltz said. “We have already received several applications from Chinese graduate students for study in our doctoral program.”

Feltz also has been asked to return this fall to lecture in sport psychology.

She is among nine participating CIC chairs and deans in kinesiology led by Li Li Ji, kinesiology chairperson at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.
One of China’s most prestigious youth performance troupes made a special stop in Lansing during their four-city tour of the United States, thanks in part to the Confucius Institute at MSU and its director Yong Zhao. More than 700 people, including local K–12 students and families, filled Pattengill Middle School’s auditorium Feb. 2 to see the free show, which featured an impressive mix of costumes, dance and martial arts by students from Renda Middle School in Beijing. This opportunity to experience Chinese culture was also sponsored by the Lansing School District, the Michigan Association of School Administrators and Chinese Language Council International.

MSU’s Confucius Institute was named a Confucius Institute of the Year for a second consecutive time in December 2008. The honor, presented by Chinese Language Council International (or Hanban), recognizes MSU for providing some of the world’s best opportunities to learn Chinese language and culture to students of all ages. Online at confucius.msu.edu.
Along with 20 doctoral degrees, the College of Education also conferred 41 bachelor’s degrees and 90 master’s degrees for the fall 2008 semester. Here, Shenita Brokenburr, who received her Ph.D. in higher, adult and lifelong education, is congratulated by advisor John Dirkx.

DOCTORAL DEGREE RECIPIENTS

Fall 2008

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*Dual major with Psychology
Department of Kinesiology Gets New Research Space

What once was 3,500 square feet of old metal lockers and yellow concrete block (top right) is now a lively suite of offices and research labs inside IM Sports-Circle. By summer, MSU’s exercise science faculty will be eagerly taking over the transformed space and, they say, the wealth of possibilities it brings.

The $820,000 renovation project represents one of the most dramatic changes to the building since a major addition was constructed in the 1950s.

“This is huge for us,” says assistant professor of kinesiology Karin Pfeiffer who, along with professors James Pivarnik and Joey Eisenmann, has conducted studies on the health-related effects of physical activity in cramped, somewhat make-shift rooms. “To have somewhere that looks professional is a bonus.”

Kinesiology department Chairperson Deborah Feltz said the new space also will facilitate more collaborative research projects among the physiological and behavioral-focused faculty members.

Families who participate in Human Energy Research Laboratory experiments will find themselves surrounded by brighter colors in a more comfortable, climate-controlled environment (below right, under construction). The space itself also can accommodate more state-of-the-art equipment and flexible research formats. Features include an exercise testing room that can be divided in half, a clinical exam room, a physical activity assessment room, confidential data storage, conference space and five faculty offices with prime views of the W. J. Beal Botanical Garden.

MSU agreed to allow half of the women’s locker room space at IM Circle to be removed for the remodel and replaced the building’s remaining locker room ceilings in the process. Eric Mulvany, who oversaw the project, said the university saved about $10,000 by recycling old metal pan ceilings and lockers removed during demolition. Work began in September.

“This is a drastic improvement for (the Department of Kinesiology),” Mulvany said. “It’s more than night and day.”
Schools throughout the Midwest now have an opportunity to join a global network for sharing best practices in education reform, thanks to Michigan State University.

Leaders from the College of Education recently established MSU as the first U.S. hub for iNet—or International Networking for Educational Transformation—which links more than 5,000 schools in 40 countries with a range of online and face-to-face resources for learning about school improvement such as forums, workshops and study tours.

The university introduced iNet to hundreds of teachers and administrators during the third annual Internationalizing Michigan Education Conference on Feb. 27 at the Kellogg Center. At least 150 Michigan schools have already joined iNet.

“Schools around the world, no matter what their system, have many of the same challenges,” said assistant dean for K–12 outreach Barbara Markle, who spearheaded an agreement with the London-based organization that allows MSU to enroll schools, host iNet events and more. “iNet gives educators a base from which to exchange ideas and really learn from one another. It has the potential of bringing some new, proven ideas into American education.”

Although groups of schools in Georgia and Massachusetts have previously developed iNet networks, MSU’s effort has already created the largest concentration of participating U.S. schools.

A delegation of educators from the United Kingdom, including leaders of iNet and its parent organization Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, spent a week visiting schools and interacting with educators in the Lansing and Grand Rapids areas before attending the conference. Head of iNet Sylvia Paddock said they experienced just a taste of the richness and diversity Midwestern schools can contribute to iNet’s international community.

“The prospects are endless, really, because I’ve seen it happen in other places,” she said. “This could be a model to roll out in other states if we get it right here.”

Adopting Global Perspectives

Markle first learned about iNet after attending one of its powerful conferences in Beijing in 2005. She soon began exploring possibilities for connecting Michigan schools and traveled to the U.K. to talk with iNet leaders and tour British schools this fall. Jim Ballard, executive director of the Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP), and educational administration faculty members Susan Printy and BetsAnn Smith joined her on the trip.

MSU University Distinguished
Professor Yong Zhao had already been involved as one of seven worldwide academic advisors to iNet. He said there are many opportunities for teachers and principals to establish one-to-one connections with peers overseas.

“But (iNet) is probably the only organization in the world that promotes school-wide connections across national boundaries,” he said. “It’s important for schools to adopt a global perspective, and yet many do not have the resources to explore on their own.”

Educators who attended the 2009 education conference, “Where Globalization Meets School Improvement: Linking and Learning with Schools around the World,” learned about how other countries are addressing school improvement through iNet partnerships, as well as practical ways to internationalize their curricula with perspectives from Asian, African, Latin American and Middle Eastern nations. Many of them said they would consider paying the annual iNet access fee to broaden their building’s perspectives on school improvement.

“We are moving toward globalization and we have to help our kids become global citizens,” said Cheryl Adkins, principal of Holmes Middle School in Flint, Mich. “Their competitors are no longer the kids in the next school—they are the children around the world.”

| ABOUT iNet       | www.ssat-inet.net |
| JOIN THROUGH MSU | www.education.msu.edu/kt2 or (517) 353-8950 |
Dozens of Detroit schools striving to improve student achievement now have direct support from Michigan State University’s distinguished pool of education researchers.

The Detroit-based Skillman Foundation selected the College of Education to operate its Good Schools Resource Center, starting Jan. 1, 2009. By accepting the two-year, nearly $2 million grant, MSU has committed to help increase the number of high-performing schools in Michigan’s largest city.

“This is a significant opportunity to build and support the capacity existing in more than 100 schools,” said Barbara Markle, assistant dean for K–12 outreach and executive director of the new resource center. “Our college is focused on helping principals and their teams improve teaching and learning across Michigan, and we pay special attention to the challenges of urban schools.”

The foundation’s Good Schools: Making the Grade initiative provides direct grants to public, private, religious or charter schools located in the city of Detroit. During the application stage, schools are identified as “emerging,” “aspiring,” “improving” or “high performing” based on nine indicators such as academic performance, attendance and strong leadership. The resource center provides tailored guidance and training to teachers, administrators and parents as they work toward meeting their school’s specific goals.

Program leaders at Skillman say research is crucial to that process. Too many elementary, middle and—especially—high schools are not meeting standards or improving significantly. With the expertise of College of Education faculty, Skillman officials say, MSU could help change the trajectory of student achievement in Detroit.

More than 15 MSU faculty and staff members with different types of expertise plan to be involved by conducting seminars and workshops, visiting schools, analyzing data, maintaining a new, interactive Web site of resources and otherwise consulting with educators as requested. The resource center is housed at YouthVille Detroit, a youth development facility where the College of Education has also worked with Detroit teens interested in becoming teachers. That program, the Future Teachers for Social Justice initiative, also received funding from the Skillman Foundation.

“The Good Schools Resource Center is an excellent opportunity to build on our enduring commitment to quality education for children in Detroit,” said Sonya Gunnings-Moton, assistant dean for student support services and recruitment. “The Skillman Foundation has set the stage for MSU and Detroit educators to share and apply promising practices in support of students who truly deserve our best efforts.”

ABOUT THE SKILLMAN FOUNDATION

Created in 1960, The Skillman Foundation is a private philanthropy whose chief aim is to help develop good schools and good neighborhoods for children. Though grants are made throughout metropolitan Detroit, most grants are directed at six Detroit neighborhoods—Southwest Detroit (Vernor and Chadsory/Condon), Brightmoor, Osborn, the Northend and Cody/Rouge—and toward innovative and successful schools throughout the city of Detroit. For more information, visit www.skillman.org.

ALL PHOTOS: PAUL ENGSTROM / SKILLMAN FOUNDATION
Susie Dina had been using computers in the classroom for five years by the time she realized—in one Michigan State University course—that she had been focusing more on the technology itself than on her students. This summer, the British-Lebanese woman plans to become one of the first 10 students to earn a certificate in educational technology from MSU in Dubai.

“The focus of any lesson should be the learner and the learner’s needs,” said Dina, who teaches English in the United Arab Emirates city. “This program is helping me transform into a teacher of the 21st century equipped with the know-how and the right tools.”

MSU’s 14-year-old Educational Technology Certificate Program has grown to serve nearly 2,500 practicing educators throughout Michigan, in Plymouth, England and online. Director Joseph Codde saw another opportunity to meet the technology-based training needs of teachers when MSU announced it would become the first North American university housed in Dubai’s ambitious “International Academic City.”

Since then, Codde and his colleagues have been working diligently to establish a foundation for collaboration with educational leaders in the region. The three-course program officially began in October 2008 and recruiting for a third cohort is now underway.

“We’re adapting a program that’s been extraordinarily successful,” said Richard Prawat, chairperson of the Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology and Special Education. More than 50 school districts in Michigan have collaborated with MSU to host face-to-face certificate courses for area educators on evenings and weekends or during summer break. Many participants apply the credits (9) toward master’s degrees in educational technology.

Although the Dubai program has yet to operate inside local schools, the core curriculum and principles have remained the same. Classes meet Saturdays on MSU’s new campus (below).

“Our program is focused on the pedagogical aspects of technology, new instructional techniques,” said Codde. “Teachers report that, whether or not they use technology, they become better teachers.”

Instructors are required to have K–12 teaching experiences, and they typically were MSU educational technology students themselves. Myra Khattab, outreach coordinator and instructor for the Dubai program, was a technology teacher in Dubai and received her master’s degree from MSU’s Plymouth-based program.

She and Codde are building relationships throughout Dubai to promote and adapt the program, which they hope will eventually play a larger role in supporting area educators.

“There is a tremendous opportunity to be part of a growing region of the world,” said Codde. “And to be part of an educational reform process where technology and teacher professional development can play a lead role.”

Joseph Codde has also coordinated educational projects in Algeria and other Middle Eastern nations. In March, he helped launch a pilot educational technology certificate program for pre- and post-service teachers in Beirut, Lebanon. The partnership between MSU and Lebanese American University is intended to foster skills for integrating technology in classrooms with a special emphasis on disparities faced by women.
Fourteen dedicated educators are now working toward achieving certification to teach Mandarin Chinese in Michigan’s public schools. By this summer, up to 20 more are expected to join them.

“This initiative helps address a severe shortage of Mandarin language teachers . . . It takes advantage of our high-quality teacher education program and the extensive network of schools the Confucius Institute already works with.”

That is good news in a state struggling to meet the public’s growing demand for learning Chinese language and culture. For Michigan State University, it’s another promising—and experimental—effort to produce high-quality instructors where they are needed most.

Launched in summer 2008, the post-baccalaureate Chinese Teacher Certification Program recruits and provides mostly native Chinese educators with a two-year track for meeting state requirements and, just as importantly, making a smooth transition into American school culture. Participants teach full-time in supervised elementary or secondary classroom placements across Michigan while taking courses via the Internet and videoconferencing and attending intensive summer sessions on campus.

“Just Getting Started”

Developing an innovative Chinese teacher certification program is a natural step for MSU’s College of Education, which has contributed significant research and support for teaching Chinese language and culture in schools through the Confucius Institute and U.S.-China Center for Research on Educational Excellence.

Steven Stegink of the state Department of Education said only two other Michigan teacher preparation institutions, Eastern Michigan University and Wayne State University, also now have state-approved certification programs in Chinese. Before the state administered its first test for Chinese certification in October, Stegink said, teachers could practice only under special, temporary licenses.

Yu Qiu, who teaches a Chinese immersion class developed in partnership with MSU, has been hoping for a convenient way to obtain full certification since she began teaching at Lansing’s Post Oak Elementary School under a temporary license three years ago. Now, MSU is helping the Chinese native achieve both job security and new skills to improve her practice.

“I’m very happy about this program, especially with the reputation of the College of Education,” said Qiu, who also is working on her master’s degree. “I feel like I’m under great pressure, so I want to do the job even better.”

Building (Existing) Talent

A small pool of traditional American undergraduates are beginning to pursue Chinese as a teaching major—including three admitted to the College of Education for this fall—but leaders say we can’t afford to wait. China’s rise
as a global economic power continues to drive interest in more young people understanding the nation’s culture and language.

“Spanish is widely taught throughout Michigan, for example, so there is a pipeline. Chinese is just getting started,” said Tom Bird, the program’s teacher education faculty leader. “We are responding to the need, and adapting as we gain experience.”

Some participants come directly from China to attend the program. Others are Chinese people who have naturalized as U.S. citizens or obtained permanent U.S. residency. Still other candidates are American citizens who have mastered the Chinese language as a second language. Most, but not all, have already completed teacher preparation programs, either in the U.S. or China, and many have advanced degrees. They also may choose to complete a master’s degree in the College of Education by adding to the existing 24-credit certification program.

The second cohort begins this summer; the first will finish by spring 2010.

MORE INFO
ed-web3.educ.msu.edu/te/postba/chinese
or call (517) 353-4325
Minnesota’s fourth-grade math scores jumped from mediocre to world-class after the state established rigorous standards influenced by a team of Michigan State University scholars led by William Schmidt.

While the United States saw a small increase in fourth-grade math scores from 1995 to 2007—remaining in the middle of the pack among the 16 countries that participated both years—Minnesota performed far better and now ranks fifth in the world, according to the 2007 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study, which was released in December.

Schmidt, a University Distinguished Professor of education and statistics, said Minnesota’s approach to success could be replicated by many other states attempting to boost math achievement. An architect of the TIMSS study, Schmidt worked closely with Minnesota education officials.

“Minnesota is now among the elite performers in the world,” he said. “It’s a story of, ‘Yes you can do it in the United States if you work at it.’”

The TIMSS study monitors math and science progress in fourth and eighth grades among countries around the world. About a dozen U.S. states have chosen to be evaluated in one or more years, although none has seen Minnesota’s level of success following the introduction of state standards, Schmidt said.

In 1995, Minnesota’s score in fourth-grade math was 516—one point below the United States’ score of 518 and not far above the average international score of 500. Singapore led all countries—and states—with a score of 590. Minnesota did not have state math standards in 1995. In 2007, after introducing standards, Minnesota’s score had risen to 554, placing it behind only Hong Kong, Singapore, Chinese Taipei and Japan. The U.S. score was 529.

“Minnesota had more than three times the gain indicated for the United States as a whole. They have left the U.S. behind.”

Andrea Henion

MSU Helps Minnesota Become a Global Leader in MATH

SCHMIDT SAYS STANDARDS LED TO IMPROVED TIMSS RESULTS

“Minnesota had more than three times the gain indicated for the United States as a whole. They have left the U.S. behind.”

MINNESOTA’S FOURTH-GRADE math scores jumped from mediocre to world-class after the state established rigorous standards influenced by a team of Michigan State University scholars led by William Schmidt.

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“Minnesota had more than three times the gain indicated for the United States as a whole,” Schmidt said. “They have left the U.S. behind.”

Minnesota developed a set of rigorous, coherent and focused math standards for the first time in 1997 and then a revised version in 2003. The development of these standards was informed
by the international benchmarking
Schmidt and his colleagues Kathleen
Wight, Richard Houang and Leland
Cogan developed in 1995. As a result,
math instruction at the elementary level
increased from about 30 minutes a day
in 1995 to 60 minutes a day in 2007 and
became more consistent across the state.

Fourth-grade teachers in Minne-
sota also reported devoting more time
on computation with whole num-
bers, fractions, decimals and number
patterns, which is the major focus of
fourth-grade math internationally. As a
result, they covered fewer nonessential
topics and achieved greater focus and
coherence.

In eighth-grade math, Minnesota’s
gain was also greater than that of the
United States as a whole. Minnesota’s
eighth-grade teachers reported spending
more than four times as much instruc-
tional time on algebra in 2007 than they
did in 1995. Algebra is the major focus of
eighth-grade math curriculum around
the world.

Mike Lindstrom, executive director
of SciMathMN, which received a state
grant to analyze the timss data, said
the work of Schmidt and his team has
been crucial in Minnesota’s drive to
become competitive internationally.
SciMathMN is a nonprofit coalition
that advocates quality K–12 science,
math and technology education.

“Minnesota cannot afford to
proceed in isolation; our students need
to be competitive on a global scale
and there are very few opportunities
to receive the kind of feedback on that
international perspective that TIMSS
provides,” Lindstrom said.

In science, Minnesota maintained
its position as one of the top perform-
ers, according to the 2007 study. The
state ranked near the top of the global
list in both 1995 and 2007, outperform-
ing the United States as a whole in
fourth- and eighth-grade science.

As in math, Minnesota did not have
statewide standards in science in 1995.

But Schmidt believes the state still ex-
celled in science because a “fairly decent
set of de facto standards” existed in the
form of an informal network among
science teachers.

“This adds credence to the argumen-
t that having a focused set of stan-
dards that are coherent and rigorous
and getting teachers on the same page in
terms of what should be covered is prob-
ably what really makes a difference,”
Schmidt said. “I believe we should set
these standards more universally, that
we should have common standards
for all kids—in all 50 states and in all
15,000-plus school districts.”

ON THE WEB
www.nces.ed.gov/timss

TIMSS Results / Grade 4 Mathematics

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COMPARISON WITH MINNESOTA

* Scores were rescaled for purposes of direct
comparison with the 2007 results.


MATH: WHAT’S THE PROBLEM?

William Schmidt talks about issues of curriculum, teaching and expectations that contribute to lagging U.S. mathematics achievement in a special multi-media report produced by the National Science Foundation. Also featured: Joan Ferrini-
Mundy, an MSU education professor currently on leave to work for NSF, and Deborah Ball, a three-time MSU College of Education graduate who serves as dean of the University of Michigan School of Education. Check it out at www.
nsf.gov/news/special_reports/math.
THE UNITED STATES does not have enough effective teachers—a problem that could be corrected partly by improving working conditions at low-income schools and determining the best forms of teacher recruitment, according to a national panel of experts led by Teacher Education Chairperson Suzanne Wilson.

The group outlined ways to improve teacher quality in November at a Washington, D.C. National Academy of Education forum that aimed to provide President Barack Obama and the new Congress a guide for school reform.

Wilson’s panel was one of six focusing on different areas of educational improvement. She and other speakers presented a portion of their research-based findings; the complete white papers were expected to be released this spring. The other areas for improvement are equity and excellence in American education; reading and literacy; science and math education; standards, assessments and accountability; and time for learning.

When it comes to recruitment, Wilson said the United States has a system of teacher preparation that includes multiple pathways into the profession.

Wilson said teacher turnover is “alarmingly high” at K–12 schools with high poverty rates. To address the problem, she said state and federal governments must not only offer salary incentives for successful teachers but also create better working conditions such as strong leadership by principals and better mentoring and professional development.

“We know how to get new teachers with the potential talent into these schools, but we can’t keep them there,” Wilson said.

When it comes to recruitment, Wilson said the United States has a system of teacher preparation that includes multiple pathways into the profes-

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY education scholar Barbara Schneider was named director of a new national center created to advance educational research in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

With a team from the University of Chicago, Schneider received a five-year, multi-million dollar grant from the National Science Foundation to support and leverage the work of more than 320 education research projects across the country. The projects, which generate critical knowledge in the STEM disciplines, are funded by NSF’s growing Research and Evaluation on Education in Science and Engineering, or REESE, program.

While the new Center for Advancing Research and Communication (ARC) in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics will offer investigators technical help with research methods and design, the focus is to ensure their findings are communicated to a larger audience and used to improve teaching and learning in schools and universities.

Schneider, MSU’s John. A. Hannah Distinguished Professor in Education, said the United States must strengthen academic performance in science, technology, engineering and mathematics to compete globally and prepare students for the changing job market.

“ARC will increase the likelihood that opportunities for impacting policy and practice are not missed,” she said. “The work that comes out of the program can also generate new knowledge and new kinds of studies.”

ARC officially opened in October at the National Opinion Research Center, housed at the University of Chicago. However, Schneider will be conducting a line of research for the center at MSU. She will study how the collective knowledge gained at different stages of the REESE projects, which explore a wide variety of math and science-related learning issues from early childhood through higher education, can compel important changes in education policy.
tion. That includes the traditional method of earning teacher certification through a college or university and alternative methods such as Teach for America in which certification is acquired through two years of on-the-job teaching.

Wilson’s panel recommends that school districts, states and the federal government continue to experiment with a variety of teacher recruitment programs, but also collect data to improve programs that are promising and eliminate those that are not.

“What we don’t know is which of these recruitment and retention pathways gives us the best outcome,” Wilson said.

Wilson’s group also studied measures of good teaching, effective professional development and early career support. Those findings were expected with the complete reports late this spring.

The National Academy of Education initiative is supported through a grant from Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors in conjunction with its sponsorship of Strong American Schools, a nonpartisan campaign supported by The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Marc Lampkin, executive director of Strong American Schools, said the project is “guided by the best research in the field” and “will give the president and the 111th Congress a guide for much-needed school reform.”

Schneider also will work closely with colleagues at MSU, including four of the eight members on the ARC Board of Science Advisors:

- C. Konrad Gelbke, director of the National Superconducting Cyclotron Laboratory;
- Susan Masten, professor of civil and environmental engineering;
- Duncan Sibley, director of the Center for Research on College Science Teaching and Learning; and
- William Schmidt, University Distinguished Professor and principal investigator of Promoting Rigorous Outcomes in Mathematics and Science Education (PROM/SE).

Her co-principal investigators are Sarah-Kathryn McDonald (National Opinion Research Center), Larry Hedges (Northwestern University) and Colm O’Muircheartaigh (University of Chicago).

Parent Guides and other program materials can be downloaded at www.promse.msu.edu/mcsm. The Web site also has an extensive list of web resources for parents and children to assist at-home math learning.

“Mathematics Counts & Science Matters” is funded by Michigan State University and the National Science Foundation.

> Susan Pettit-Riley
How Can We Improve Mathematics and Science Education?

It’s been called one of our nation’s biggest weaknesses.

Many students emerge from K–12 education unprepared for today’s demands in higher education and the workforce, let alone for jobs in medicine, engineering, business—the positions we need to compete in a global economy. Our test scores are average at best in international comparisons and our schools face serious shortages of talented teachers in many parts of the country.

Mathematics and science education remains a critical focal point among College of Education faculty members, who make valuable contributions for improving curriculum, instruction and teacher preparation. The responsibility, however—and the challenge—also lies with colleagues across campus, on Capitol Hill and in countless classrooms and board rooms around the country.

This sampling of advice from conversations with MSU experts, plus Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction Michael Flanagan, takes us through a list of varied perspectives all worth addressing:

- Preparing dedicated teachers (and more of them) with deeper content-area knowledge;
- High-quality instruction that engages students in critical thinking and real-life applications;
- Curriculum that’s more focused, coherent, relevant and rigorous
- Opportunities for students to progress faster or in the most effective contexts, plus career-related encouragement;
- A commitment to research and assessment that helps us prove what works;
- And, ultimately, why this nation must exchange a culture of “can’t-do” disinterest for a vision that makes strong mathematics and science achievement a central, non-negotiable expectation.

Robert Floden (left), associate dean and University Distinguished Professor of teacher education, educational psychology and measurement and quantitative methods. He also is co-principal investigator of the Teachers for a New Era initiative at MSU.

Connected Content Knowledge

We in colleges of education should be working with our university colleagues in the mathematics and science departments, in areas connected to the K–12 curriculum, to use our best thinking about what mathematics and science knowledge is most important for teachers to have and then to do research that helps us determine whether our initial suspicions about that content knowledge actually hold up in K–12 classrooms . . .

The question, for math and science teachers, of what is most important to know in their content is critically important. Too often people go quickly to ‘Oh, they need to know more math or they need to know science,’ as if just taking additional courses would make them better teachers when the research is pretty clear that after a few courses, just taking more courses doesn’t make people more effective teachers. It isn’t just any old math or science knowledge they need—it has to be something that’s connected to the curriculum they are actually going to be teaching.

It’s surprising when people think that because you have a major in mathematics that you have a deep understanding and it would be trivial to do work with the kind of content taught in secondary schools. Mathematics majors don’t spend a lot of time probing deeply into algebra and trigonometry. But there are things that they could learn that would help them respond to students’ questions, learn what misunderstandings students might have and move beyond the surface of the topics they teach to a deep understanding. It’s especially critical for elementary teachers, where the amount of time they spend studying mathematics and science is typically small. It’s all the more important that we are spending the time we have with them (in teacher education) on the right things.
Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction Michael Flanagan, who implemented tougher high school graduation requirements in Michigan, with four years of math (including Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II) and three years of science (including Biology and Physics or Chemistry).

**Bold Steps, Statewide**

Math and science is our biggest weakness by far. Kids are lost without it in this global economy and the school districts weren’t doing it . . . I’m in favor of the (William) Schmidt approach, which is clearer, fewer, higher standards. We didn’t have as much clarity about that, but we do now. We are well on our way to having a road map of what you need to have all the way through elementary, middle and high school to succeed.

The challenge is we don’t have enough math and science teachers . . . We propose giving bounties to colleges of education for every math and science teacher they produce. Then, at the other end, there needs to be loan forgiveness or something that helps college students make that choice.

We also need to break the culture that some families don’t do math. It’s unbelievable. I heard it when we were unveiling the new requirements: “We are all horrible at math.” Well, tell your kid that and I can guarantee you he will be horrible at math. So the first step is at home. We also need counselors encouraging students, and teachers who offer different delivery methods because not all kids are going to learn in the traditional way . . . How much longer are we going to expect high school kids to learn physics at 7 in the morning? I’m giving “seat-time waivers” to districts with unique proposals for helping students achieve proficiency other than being glued to a seat. You can get funding in your district for a student sleeping in your math course, but you can’t get money, unless I approve it, for a kid becoming proficient in math online at 8 o’clock at night through Michigan State perhaps.

The bottom line is, what’s the downside of everyone getting the prerequisites? The world is tilted toward math and science; the innovations, the companies are all biotech and green and they are looking for talent. If we can make the point that we are leading the nation, that we can deliver individuals already at a higher level, even when they graduate from high school, those companies and jobs are going to come flooding in. Other states are falling asleep on this.

“Other states are falling asleep on this.”

**Take Science Seriously**

If I compare the United States to other countries, I think the most glaring issue is that in many industrialized nations, teachers can only teach science if they have a solid science education. And, to me, that means a master’s degree as a minimum. The second weakness I see, at least in parts of the country, is that the content of the science curriculum is argued or even manipulated by people who really don’t know anything about science. If science and non-science issues are mixed, that’s a serious problem.

. . . There is a shortage of well-trained high school graduates. Universities in the United States do very well in filling in the gaps for incoming students. But I think education at the K–12 level is too focused at times on simply bringing everybody forward. There are kids who are very talented in sciences and those need to be going on fast-track courses. That happens in the late stages in high school and I think that it should happen sooner. The same is true in mathematics. There has been a lot of experimentation over the years, but in the end, I think it is the ability to think scientifically and mathematically that we have to bring to kids at an early stage and in a way that allows them to really work at their own pace.

Probably everybody who is rising up to some prominence in the sciences has encountered in their life a teacher who caught their imagination. This requires people who are particularly dedicated, but dedication goes only so far . . . If you think about it, there is more talk about school athletics than sciences, which is an interesting phenomenon in this country. It doesn’t happen in other countries.

I think what we really need in order to make significant progress is a culture change and that may be very hard to do. Societies need to be educated and science-oriented, otherwise they don’t find their way in the modern world . . . It’s very important that people have at least a basic concept of what makes the world tick. I think the only way to do this is really elevating the stature of the science teacher.

C. Konrad Gelbke, University Distinguished Professor of physics, director of the National Superconducting Cyclotron Laboratory and designated director of the forthcoming Facility for Rare Isotope Beams or FRIB. (NSCL offers hands-on learning opportunities for secondary science teachers and students each summer through the long-standing Physics of Atomic Nuclei (PAN) program. Some 4,000 children also tour the nuclear physics facility annually. www.nscl.msu.edu.)
National Standards Needed

We know from all the international work that those countries that do well in mathematics and science achievement have focused, coherent and rigorous curricula. They center on a small number of topics at each grade level. They do this in a logical, sequential way and they move, in the middle grades, into more rigorous kinds of content: algebra, geometry, physics, chemistry—not arithmetic and rocks and body parts, which are often the curricula for our students.

I think the only way we can achieve this is through national standards . . . It is probably the only way we will ultimately become more competitive with the rest of the world. Secondly, we have a serious problem with equality as reflected in achievement gaps. The only way we can reduce those gaps is to reduce the curriculum gap, and in this nation, without national standards, different children get different opportunities to learn.

We need teachers who have strong subject-matter knowledge that’s backed up by pedagogical knowledge specific to the discipline they are teaching . . . Some would argue that this is the most important part, but I would challenge that a bit. What’s essential initially is to have a more coherent, focused curriculum. Until we have that, it’s going to be very difficult for us to prepare and support teachers because they are all teaching different things even at the same grade level, even in the same school building.

. . . The core of it all has to be the vision, the expectations, what we want our children to learn. This is what many other nations of the world recognize, and they put all their resources around that so that they have a system that fits together—how you prepare teachers, the textbooks, the assessments. School is about transmitting the skills, the knowledge, the mathematical reasoning and the scientific inquiry methods to future generations. If we don’t have a common view of that, we waste our time. We have a system that is chaotic and uncoordinated.

“We have a system that is chaotic and uncoordinated.”

Real Interest, Real Connections

For 100 years, we had a great run in engineering. But, if you look now at what’s happening around the world, our biggest sources of technical manpower are on the other side of the globe. China produces roughly 400,000 engineers a year, India produces 200,000 and the United States produces about 70,000. One can argue that the quality of U.S. students is different and hopefully better, but at some point we are going to start worrying about the impact of these numbers. The RAND Corp. conducted a survey of 1,000 children and found that a typical middle-schooler would rather clean his or her room and take out the garbage than study math or science . . .

. . . I think we have to get people who are genuinely interested in math and science into teaching positions, as opposed to people who want to teach and, “By the way, can you teach science?” You don’t find many people who are first trained in science or engineering getting into education. I think that has to happen. Also, there are truly talented people, people who have retired from the auto industry and other places, who can spend a day or two each week in schools . . . Michigan probably has more engineers per capita than any other state because of the auto industry.

. . . My fundamental desire is to connect science and math to reality. I think by making science and math real with hands-on work, students develop a liking for things. We spend an enormous amount of time in the middle schools building volcanoes. How many of us spend time in volcanoes? Not a whole lot, and yet if you ask a student what a typical electrical engineer builds or does, they have very limited information. I’m all for studying nature but there is also a man-made world that is fascinating. We’ve got to have a healthy dose of realism and when we do that, kids will get engaged.

Satish Udpa, dean of the MSU College of Engineering and professor of electrical engineering. (The College of Engineering offers a variety of educational programs for K–12 students, as well as teacher training programs. Visit www.egr.msu.edu/future-engineer/programs.)
Teacher Preparation Matters

For a long time, policymakers have missed the opportunity to have an effect on the most important link between curriculum implementation and pupil achievement: the quality of the teacher. I believe the main reason for this is the ongoing debate as to whether teachers are “born” or “made.” Programs of teacher preparation evolve around the notion that teachers are made; that teachers’ knowledge matters to future performance, and that the opportunities we provide teachers to learn to teach mathematics have an important impact on their quality.

The key idea of TEDS-M is to test this basic theory of teacher preparation using rigorous research methods and innovative data analysis techniques to provide policymakers and teacher educators with well-grounded evidence of what works and what doesn’t in our attempts at preparing teachers to teach mathematics . . . Because we know from the TIMSS and PISA (international) studies that pupil achievement varies across countries, we believe that teacher preparation varies in similar ways. Our goal is to uncover the characteristics of those systems where teachers are prepared to teach the ambitious mathematics curriculum taught to pupils in countries that are highly successful.

Being taught by a knowledgeable, capable mathematics teacher should be seen as a basic right among school children. Similarly, future teachers have a right to expect to be well prepared to teach mathematics when they finish their teacher preparation. It is unfair to ask a teacher to teach something that they have not been prepared to teach well.

Provide Equal Opportunity

The major problem with K–12 math and science education in the United States is that it is extremely uneven, more so than most of the developed countries in the world. We have some students who do extremely well and we have some students who do extremely poorly. While we are making small gains, our competitors in other countries are making huge gains. As a result, we are falling behind. If this continues, it creates a national concern that we will not have enough people in the fields of science, mathematics, engineering and technology to feed the marketplace . . .

The previous administration had a good idea in that it wanted to improve the skills and knowledge of all students. But the plan really failed because different states adopted different standards and some of them were so easy that the results were ridiculous . . . What we need to do is define what constitutes the essential knowledge and skills we want all our students to possess. It’s not difficult if we have the will to say, “This is what all students should know and be able to do, and we’re going to work to be sure that the programs in our schools are aimed at achieving these skills.”

We need to make sure that the same standards are being applied equally across the country. This is math and science. There is no reason in the world why math in one state should be different from math in another state. Other countries that are making significant strides in improving the skills of their students have defined standards that were basically developed in the U.S. by researchers and organizations, but they are not applied in this country.

We also need to make sure all students are provided meaningful instruction. The administration needs to provide incentives for states to utilize these rigorous standards that are defined at the national level, and we must make sure that students have qualified teachers whether they are in poor urban areas or rich suburbs. What students learn should not be determined by the socioeconomic status of their school district.
Suzanne Wilson, professor and chairperson of the Department of Teacher Education. Wilson also is the author of a 2003 book about the “math wars,” *California Dreaming: Reforming Mathematics Education*.

**Base Change on Better Data**

There has been increasing attention on mathematics and science achievement in the U.S. We know we have several problems: A public disinterested in or turned off from mathematics and science, teachers who themselves often do not have the strong content knowledge they need to teach their students about the relevance and wonder of those fields, and a policy environment in which the tests used to assess students’ understanding are truncated and only assess a very limited range of what we care about. Finally, there is no lack of pundits proclaiming what we “should” do.

Yet we’ve also made a lot of progress. We have an unprecedented commitment to gathering empirical evidence about what works and doesn’t. And we have well thought-out proposals for what students should learn and what teachers should know, in both mathematics and science. It is an exciting time to imagine large scale comparative studies that test proposals for teacher preparation and professional development, as well as mathematics and science instruction in K–12 schools.

But we need the intellectual and political will to develop good outcome measures—tests of both student and teacher understanding, as well as assessments of classroom practice—and to provide those comparative studies the time they need to produce the outcomes we most care about. Improving the system will take joint work across teachers, policymakers, educational researchers, teacher educators, mathematicians and scientists. And it will take an understanding that that the kind of systemic, widespread, deeply-rooted change we need will require taking a long view.

**Update Science Standards**

For many years now, there has been much talk about “standards-based reform” in science education, but our current standards have some serious problems as a springboard for reform. First, the current set of standards is scientifically out-of-date—they are based on science from 20 years ago and thus do not reflect the growth in scientific knowledge since that time. For example, most scientists 20 years ago still believed there was a “balance of nature” that assured long-term stability for the earth’s climate. Here’s a quote from our current National Science Education Standards: “While certain properties of the earth system may fluctuate on short or long time scales, the earth system will generally stay within a certain narrow range for millions of years.” Most scientists would not choose to say that anymore.

We’ve learned some new things about education, too. We have better ways to judge what’s appropriate for students of different ages, who come to schooling from different ethnic, cultural and educational backgrounds. And we are wiser about ways to assess student understanding that is sensitive to these diverse factors. We need to use this new educational knowledge to improve standards.

While standards are supposed to be built on important scientific and educational knowledge, these standards by themselves don’t provide teachers and students access to that knowledge. So we also need to reform our systems in which we teach and learn, and not just the standards that can guide our work.

Charles “Andy” Anderson, professor of science education and an associate director of the Division of Science and Mathematics Education, and Gail Richmond, associate professor of science education.
Foster Mathematical Thinking

I’ve seen far too much teaching of how you do things in mathematics and not nearly enough teaching of how you think about new mathematical situations. So, rather than imagining classrooms in which every child instantly raises his or her hand for help when given a new kind of problem, we need to help teachers develop the skills to create classroom climates in which students will dive into an unfamiliar problem and have the resources to begin to pick it apart in order to solve it.

. . . In addition to the time-honored focus on procedural fluency, we need to help students develop conceptual understanding and strategic competence. I want children to have strategies in their mathematical toolbox—to be able to say, “This is an interesting problem. I don’t understand it but I’m going to read it very carefully and see if I can’t figure out, first of all, what this problem is about and what a solution would look like.” We need continued professional development opportunities for teachers so that they walk away with the skills to engage students in learning mathematics that goes beyond the accumulation of techniques that you tuck into mental cubby holes and struggle to retrieve when you need them.

We also need to establish the expectation in this country that a new teacher who comes into your school district is, at the very best, a well-started beginner, and that teachers have the right to engage in continued learning throughout their entire careers. We need to build community within schools where teachers have the desire to learn and have time to come together as a faculty and discuss instructional strategies . . . Too often teachers are assigned a particular grade level and classroom and that’s their world. If that is their world, we are not going to make progress in educating children in mathematics. Their world has to include being really curious about what mathematics is being taught in the grade before and what mathematics is needed for success in the next grade.

Diverse, Proven Strategies

We need to capitalize on students’ interest in science by providing them with high quality instruction, challenging and engaging content, and articulating the value and importance of mastering mathematics and science skills for successful adult lives. Schools should reward outstanding instruction by putting a reasonable accountability system in place that identifies the learning needs of students. They also should implement proven strategies including new technologies that improve performance, such as deepening the knowledge base and direct instruction, and demonstrate how science and mathematics learning translates into career skills for multiple fields.

The new (presidential) administration should support a diverse portfolio of activities including high quality studies that examine how human beings learn and the pedagogical tools that can enhance it; create and assess promising interventions that improve academic performance and entrance into STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) careers; and undertake renewed efforts at improving teacher training and professional development targeted at mathematics and science learning throughout all levels of the educational system. Last, I think the government should launch an intensive public service campaign that promotes the value and importance of science and mathematics for our global society and the everyday lives of its people.
Mapping a New Landscape

Assistant professor Jodene Fine surveyed the rugged fields of Wyoming long before she reached the uncharted cutting-edge of educational neuropsychology.

Little did she know that life as a cartographer would eventually lead to a career in brain research.

“I think I’m doing the same thing—I’m just mapping the mind now,” said Fine, who came to work in the Center for Neurodevelopmental Study at MSU, where she is now associate director, three years ago.

“I’m asking the same questions about a different landscape.”

Ever-enthusiastic about entering new territory, Fine has studied why autistic youth struggle socially, what makes math-gifted minds tick and how differing reading skills affect the “main highway” of connectivity between brain lobes.

Now that she has joined the College of Education faculty, the licensed neuropsychologist says she is building a new bridge—between the worlds of neuroscience and education.

Like their peers around the country, faculty members in the MSU School Psychology Program have recognized a shift toward more preventative, biological-based practices as research in those areas improves. Fine, who was selected in a nationwide search, offered an ideal fit. She settled in last fall.

“There are very few people with her kind of expertise who are really concerned with schooling,” said program director and associate professor Evelyn Oka. “She fills a gap that none of us were able to address.”
From Ranchers’ Fields to Computer Screens

Fine grew up in L.A. and lived in Northern California for much of her adult life. But, for a short period in her 20s, she drove a pick-up truck among the eastern Rocky Mountains. She waited for ranchers to clear their fields of rattlesnakes so she could make detailed topographical maps for the U.S. Geological Survey.

She loved the smell and feel of cartography in a time when they did everything by hand—using ink on Mylar film, Leroy mechanical lettering—to pinpoint, for example, the location of polluted soil or groundwater.

“...it was a melding of art and science,” she said.

Fine knew it wouldn’t last long, however.

She was supervising a crew of cartographers for a company back in California when she suggested automating the mapping process with newly emerging desktop computers. When the CEO shot her down, she launched her own businesses and began building the software with a friend. A year later, she quit her job.

Companies all over the world—including her former employer—purchased the Geotechnical Graphic System that Fine developed to create digital representations of the earth.

“There was no sweeter check than from the company who told me I couldn’t do it,” she said.

It wouldn’t be the first time Fine left one profession behind to follow another passion, however. She sold the software rights after 12 years, in 1998.

A Restless School Psychologist

Fine first taught a special topics course that provides a broad introduction to neuroimaging and how to interpret neuropsychology research this spring at MSU.

School psychology leaders hope to complement the program’s ecological approach with other opportunities that help students see how biological aspects of youth development might influence assessment and intervention.

“We are connecting the things you see in schools with the processes that may occur before a child is even born,” Fine said. “They’ve never had the opportunity to really think about education this way.”

When she was a school psychology student herself, Fine said she felt restless. The mid-life career change gave her the opportunity, as she hoped, to make a difference in the individual lives of kids with various developmental disorders. Yet, in her case, that wasn’t enough.

“You learn a lot about how to help children, but not a lot about why they are the way they are,” she said. “I just wanted to know more and I thought it had to be based in the brain.”

So she chased down the “grandfather” of linking neuroscience to school psychology, George Hynd, now dean of the College of Education at Arizona State University.

Hynd told her about fellow pioneering scholar Margaret Semrud-Clikeman, and Fine soon hopped on a
plane to Austin, Texas. Her (uninvited) meeting with Semrud-Clikeman went surprisingly well. She later earned the University of Texas’s prestigious full-ride Harrington Doctoral Fellowship and her exhilarating quest for answers inside the skull began.

“It was like climbing a giant hill,” said Fine, who relied in part on her computer background to learn the programs and techniques for analyzing brain scans—her new maps.

A manuscript based on her dissertation about the links between reading and the corpus callosum was later published in the American Psychological Association journal *Neuropsychology*.

### Seeking Answers inside the Skull

Graduate students use different amounts and parts of their brain when they are challenged to mentally rotate a pair of block patterns—depending on their levels of math expertise.

In fact, those from language-based fields such as English and psychology show extra activity occurring in areas of the brain associated with both math and language.

With those pilot findings, Fine and Semrud-Clikeman plan to continue looking for clues that could inform new early interventions for children who have problems learning math.

“By the time somebody is in grad school, something about their brains is more efficient. We don’t know if it’s from extra training or also genetic predispositions,” Fine said. “The idea is to move down the development spectrum to see where the changes show up.”

Neuroscience has influenced practices for improving reading issues such as dyslexia, Fine said, but that hasn’t happened in mathematics yet.

It’s one of several frontiers she and Semrud-Clikeman venture into through their work at the MSU Center for Neurodevelopmental Study. Fine came from Texas as Semrud-Clikeman’s post-doctoral fellow to continue their collaboration and to assist her in founding the center in 2006.

MSU offered a welcoming environment for their research interests in the Department of Psychiatry, including access to MRI and FMRI equipment in the Department of Radiology.

Along with their research on math giftedness, the pair also has designed two ongoing experiments, with assistant professor of psychology and radiology David Zhu, that explore neurological data behind how children with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder respond to positive and negative feedback and why youth with high-functioning autism struggle to behave appropriately in social settings.

They pilot each study with typically developing adults and use a mock scanner to prepare participating children, including many from across the country and Canada, for the MRI experience. Their social competence study, for example, is measuring the brain activity of children with Asperger’s Syndrome and non-verbal learning disabilities while they observe videos showing other children interacting socially.

“We think the kids are using a language-based system to perceive social information,” rather than non-verbal cues such as body language, Fine said. “We think we’ll be able to see this in the brain.”

### The Education Connection

Fine expects to begin collaborating with College of Education faculty in disciplines tied to her current research, such as mathematics. She also hopes to expand the scope and prominence of the Center for Neurodevelopmental Study’s work.

But she is most excited about building connections between neuroscience and education issues through students.

“I don’t expect them to be neuroscientists. I expect them to know that there is a biological basis behind what they are studying,” Fine said, noting they could be studying post-traumatic stress, abuse, any psychological issue. “I’m the bridge because I can read the neuroscience.”

Oka said Fine’s contributions will get students thinking about this emerging segment of their field earlier or, if they are particularly interested, attract them to the program in the first place. The program offers educational specialist and doctoral degrees.

Doctoral candidate Andy Pham is one school psychology student whose career has already been influenced by exposure to Fine’s work. He participates in her research as a lab assistant and will begin an internship in pediatric neuropsychology at Virginia Beach City Public Schools this summer.

“Considering the neuropsychological aspects helps me to assess learning disabilities and also find new ways to intervene,” said Pham, who also took Fine’s course during spring semester. “In some ways, it’s overwhelming for students, but it’s also very fresh and new. It’s just fascinating to me.”
Associate Professor Randi Stanulis shifted the culture for cultivating new teacher support in Lansing’s urban schools by introducing a district-level, university-led induction model three years ago. Then her research demonstrated the comprehensive mentoring approach was successful: a recently published study of 24 beginning teachers showed that participating teachers made more significant instructional improvements in their first year than peers outside the program.

Now Stanulis is sharing “Launch into Teaching”—a product of the landmark Teachers for a New Era initiative—with a much larger school district in the Atlanta area and other educational leaders across the country. It could ultimately serve as a national model.

Launch into Teaching, or LIT, was originally conceived as a way to ensure that MSU teaching graduates continue using what they have learned about theory and practice in their own classrooms. Stanulis studies how novices learn to teach, particularly in the first three to five years when up to 50 percent of new teachers leave the profession, according to some estimates.

“Many times they say, ‘I don’t know what I’m doing tomorrow. I feel like I’m just surviving,’” she said. She believes too many schools simply send new teachers to district orientation sessions and (maybe) match them with veteran teachers who are poorly chosen and not trained properly. This is typical in states such as Michigan that have an unfunded mandate requiring each beginning teacher to have a mentor.

More effective mentoring practices can create better novice teachers, improve student performance and potentially curb teacher turnover, Stanulis said.

“It’s not that first-year teachers are unqualified,” she said. “You wouldn’t take a student who just graduated from medical school and have him perform surgery the next day. But that’s what we do with teachers: They graduate in May and in August they’re expected to do the same thing as someone who’s been teaching 10 years.”

Measuring the Impact

While new teachers’ conversations with mentors often focus only on emotional support and managing the classroom, Launch into Teaching is “super-focused” on improving instructional practices and, therefore, student learning.

Carefully recruited mentors—and their principals—also take more active responsibility toward meeting those goals by spending time observing new teachers in action and attending intensive, ongoing training themselves. Some mentors are then trained as coaches—meaning they can train mentors themselves and eventually make the program self-sufficient within the school system.

It’s a huge commitment—Georgia’s Fulton County school system released seven teachers from the classroom to act as full-time mentors when the program began there this fall—but it holds promise for districts struggling to raise teacher quality and keep new teachers from becoming discouraged.

“People need constant encouragement. I can’t say it enough,” said Shirley...
Hazlett, a former mentor teacher in Lansing School District. “To think that you can grow as a teacher in isolation is wrong.”

Stanulis’ study with Robert Floden, University Distinguished Professor and associate dean for research in the College of Education, determined that the mentoring program actually improved teacher effectiveness when it was tested in Lansing during the 2005–06 year. The findings were published in the March/April edition of the Journal of Teacher Education. With the positive empirical evidence, Stanulis has promising feedback from mentors like Hazlett who say the program re-energized their own practices and new teachers who fear they would have quit their jobs without it.

“I was starting to feel frustrated and alienated,” said fourth-year teacher Nicole Hurst, who worked closely with Hazlett. “She completely changed the way I think about my instruction—I just feel like a better teacher.”

Looking toward the Future

Unfortunately, Michigan’s economic troubles have limited Lansing School District’s ability to hire beginning teachers. Fulton County Schools, a district with many high-poverty schools, hires a large number of brand-new teachers and has provided the first opportunity for Stanulis to scale up the research. She is collecting data on student learning for the first time using a task that measures children’s high-level reasoning and communication skills. She’s also incorporating seven times more beginning teachers (86 compared to 12).

One of them, Creighton Bryan, left a corporate career to become a special education teacher in his early 30s.

“I didn’t like teaching reading because I didn’t really know how to do it effectively,” he said. “But my mentor, Cheryl Johnson, has helped me understand how kids at this level learn to read, and that’s become very exciting. I love it.”

On his own during the first year, however, Bryan said he felt ready to quit by the second or third month.

In Fulton County, as in many large districts, teacher turnover remains a problem. The school system loses about 1,000 teachers a year—or about 10 percent of its instructional workforce, according to Tawana Miller, the system’s director of Title I and school improvement. Miller worked closely with the MSU team to implement the mentoring program this year. The partnership will continue through at least 2011.

“Many new teachers are placed in an environment where it’s a do-or-die, sink-or-swim situation,” said Miller, who explains that she has “battle scars” from her first few years as a teacher. “It’s almost an impossible task.”

Resources for All

Meanwhile, MSU scholars led by Stanulis also have packaged their knowledge about supporting beginning teachers into online modules for teachers, mentors and principals. School districts, including Frisco Independent School District in Texas, contract with MSU to offer the professional development to their employees.

More than one million people have visited the ASSIST (Advocating Strong Standards-based Induction Support for Teachers) Web site. Also developed by MSU faculty, the free site gives new teachers, mentors and principals deeply layered links to tools and examples for classroom management, lesson planning, different learning styles and much more.

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Zimmer Shares Powerful New Research on Charter Schools

Students at charter schools graduate and attend college at significantly higher rates than students at traditional public schools, according to a RAND Corp. study led by associate professor of educational administration Ron Zimmer.

The study, which offers mixed overall results for charter school advocates, was released in March amid a national debate over President Obama’s endorsement of charter schools. Obama recently said he would oppose limits on the number of charter schools.

Zimmer and his colleagues are the first to conduct a longitudinal investigation of graduation and college-attendance rates at charter high schools.

They found that charter students are 7 percent to 15 percent more likely to graduate from high school and attend college than students at traditional public schools.

“These are some of the most positive results so far for charter schools,” said Zimmer, who came to MSU from RAND last fall. “It may suggest that evaluations up to this point have not been broad enough to capture what’s going on in charter schools.”

Zimmer said further research is needed to explore the factors behind the higher graduation and college-attendance rates.

Other findings from the study, which looked at eight U.S. locations:

• There is little evidence that charter schools are producing, on average, test score gains that differ substantially from those of traditional public schools.
• Charter schools do not generally draw the top students away from traditional public schools. In fact, Zimmer said students who transfer to charter schools generally have below-average test scores.
• Charter schools do not appear to substantially help or harm student achievement in nearby traditional public schools.

“This study provides evidence that charter schools might be moving in the right direction in terms of high school graduation and college attendance, but test scores and other outcomes might not be as promising,” Zimmer said. “So I think policymakers need to think more broadly about outcomes when evaluating how to proceed with charter schools.”

The first U.S. charter school opened in 1992. Since then, the number of charters has grown to more than 4,000 in 40 states, serving 1.2 million students, according to RAND, a nonprofit research organization based in Santa Monica, Calif.

The study examined charter schools in Chicago, Denver, Milwaukee, Philadelphia, San Diego, and the states of Florida, Ohio and Texas. It was funded by several nonprofit foundations, including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Joyce Foundation and the William Penn Foundation.

Zimmer’s co-authors were Brian Gill and Kevin Booker of Mathematica Policy Research, Tim Sass of Florida State University and Stéphane Lavertu and John Witte of the University of Wisconsin.

For more information: www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG869.

Zhao Honored for International Impact

University Distinguished Professor Yong Zhao received the 2009 Ralph H. Smuckler Award for Advancing International Studies and Programs during the university’s International Awards Ceremony April 1. The award honors faculty members who make a significant impact on international scholarship, teaching and public service at MSU.

Born in a rural village in China, Zhao established a career that led him to become the youngest University Distinguished Professor in MSU history and a member of the International Academy of Education. His byline can be found on more than 50 journal articles, 30 book chapters and 20 books. His MSU grants total $18 million.

Zhao’s international leadership is most evident in the linkages he creates between the U.S. and China. His Asian Pacific advisory work to the U.S. government led to a connection with the Sun Wah Foundation and the creation of the U.S.-China Center for Research on Educational Excellence. Through the center, he pioneered a bilingual immersion model for preschool and kindergarten students. Although there are many Confucius Institutes throughout the world, Zhao oversees the only one offering online Chinese language courses. He has spearheaded the development of an International Baccalaureate curriculum for online Mandarin, a program to prepare Chinese teachers for American classrooms and a unique virtual game for teaching Chinese called Zon.

Zhao also is one of the university’s most in-demand speakers. He has helped organize numerous study tours to China for key Michigan K–12 educators.

“Yong’s ambition, creativity, scholarship and leadership ability are all harnessed to his overall mission and vision in life, which is to advance the cause of international understanding and help young people throughout the world become the sort of global citizens who can meet the growing challenges of globalization,” his nominator John (Jack) Schwille wrote. “He is such... an inimitable asset to the university’s international work.”
Duke Wins AERA Early Career Award

Nell K. Duke, associate professor of teacher education and educational psychology, was presented with the 2009 AERA Early Career Award during the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting in San Diego this April. The prestigious honor, which also went to Michele Moses of the University of Colorado at Boulder this year, recognizes a scholar’s distinguished portfolio of cumulative research within the first decade after receiving a doctoral degree.

Duke, who earned her Ed.D. from the Harvard Graduate School of Education in 1999, has served as co-director of MSU’s Literacy Achievement Research Center, or LARC—the nation’s largest literacy research center—since its inception more than five years ago. Her own work focuses on early literacy development, particularly among children living in poverty. Specifically, she has expertise in the development of informational literacies in young children, comprehension development and instruction in early schooling, and issues of equity in literacy education.

Duke has received several awards including the National Council of Teachers of English Promising Researcher Award, the International Reading Association Dina Feitelson Research Award and the National Reading Conference Early Career Achievement Award. She is co-editor of the book *Literacy Research Methodologies* and co-author of five books, including the recent *Beyond Bedtime Stories: A Parent’s Guide to Promoting Reading, Writing, and Other Literacy Skills From Birth to 5*.

Duke teaches preservice, inservice and doctoral courses in literacy education at MSU, speaks and consults widely on literacy education and is an active member of several literacy-related organizations. She also has a strong interest in improving the quality of educational research training in the U.S.

As this year’s recipient, Duke is expected to present the Early Career Award Lecture at AERA’s annual meeting in 2010.


Elizabeth Heilman, associate professor of teacher education, is co-editor of *Social Studies and Diversity Teacher Education: What We Do and Why We Do It*, with Ramona Fruja Amthor and Matthew T. Missias, to be published in 2009 (New York: Routledge). Teacher education faculty members Janet Alleman, Anne-Lise Halvorsen and Avner Segall also wrote chapters.

Assistant professor of teacher education **Beth Herbel-Eisenmann** released her co-edited book with Michelle Cirillo, *Promoting Purposeful Discourse: Teacher Research in Mathematics Classrooms*, during the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) annual meeting in April. Each of eight secondary mathematics teachers who have collaborated on her career research project (which explores discourse that supports reflective inquiry) also wrote chapters.

**Gary A. Troia**, associate professor of special education, is the editor of *Instruction and Assessment for Struggling Writers: Evidence-Based Practices*, published in 2009 (New York: Guilford Press). Special education faculty members Carol Sue Englert, Cynthia M. Okolo and Troy V. Mariage also co-authored a chapter.

University Distinguished Professors **Jere Brophy** and **William Schmidt** and professor emeritus **Joe Byers** were selected as inaugural fellows in the AERA Fellows Program, which is intended to recognize American Educational Research Association members who have made sustained, outstanding research contributions. They were recognized during AERA’s annual meeting in April.

Associate professor of teacher education **Angela Calabrese Barton** was honored by Division G (Social Context of Education) of the American Educational Research Association with the 2009 Research Leading to the Transformation of the Social Contexts of Education Award. A team of scholars from across the country nominated Calabrese Barton for producing a body of research that has made an impact on the fields of science education and multicultural education.

Assistant professor of kinesiology **Joe Eisenmann** was appointed to a national task force working to address childhood obesity through hospital-based programs. Eisenmann will be conducting collaborative research on pediatric obesity patients treated at Helen DeVos Children’s Hospital in Grand Rapids, Mich., one of the 16 hospitals participating in the National Association of Children’s Hospitals and Related Institutions, or NACHRI, Obesity Focus Group. Eisenmann also is leading the organization’s national subgroup on assessment and research. (See www.childrenshospitals.net.)

**Kenneth Frank**, professor of measurement and quantitative methods, received a Fulbright Specialist grant to visit the University of Turku in Finland this March. The Fulbright Specialists Program gives leading U.S. scholars opportunities to collaborate with counterparts abroad on curriculum and faculty development, institutional planning and other activities. Frank shared his expertise on social network analysis by teaching a course and providing guidance to graduate students and faculty members.

Associate professor of teacher education **Elizabeth Heilman**’s recent book, *Reclaiming Education for Democracy: Thinking Beyond No Child Left Behind* with Paul Shaker, received the 2009 Exemplary Research in Teaching and Teacher Education Award from Division K (Teaching and Teacher Education) of the American Educational Research Association.

**John Metzler**, outreach coordinator for the university’s African Studies Center, received the 2009 MSU Award for Outstanding Service to Study Abroad. Metzler, who also has an adjunct appointment in the Department of Teacher Education, has led the College of Education’s study abroad program to southern Africa since the early 1990s. He also has been instrumental in adding international perspectives to teacher education courses.

Associate professor of special education **Susan Peters** was an invited speaker at the annual Education Summit of the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. The theme of the summit, held in November, was “Inclusive Education: The Way Forward.”

University Distinguished Professor of education and statistics **William Schmidt** was recently elected to the Board of Directors for the Albert Shanker Institute, a nonprofit organiza-
IN MEMORIAM

David Anderson, a specialist in the Department of Kinesiology for nearly 40 years, died Feb. 12, 2009 at age 74. Anderson received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from MSU. He was hired as a laboratory technician for the Human Energy Research Laboratory in 1960 and never stopped supporting its development. A quiet and generous person, he provided essential assistance to faculty members and students working on body composition measurements, statistics and many other laboratory procedures. Anderson also maintained the department’s reprint files of research articles and provided graphic artwork for publications and presentations. He continued to enjoy handball and paddleball at IM Sports-West after his retirement in 1998.

Associate professor emeritus Richard Gardner died Sept. 17, 2008 at age 77. Gardner was a faculty member in the Department of Educational Administration from 1973 until his retirement in 1993. He was dedicated to lifelong learning and taught classes on improving and promoting various types of adult training, such as those related to the automotive industry and human resource management. Recognizing his work as an excellent teacher and always-friendly advisor, Gardner received the College of Education’s Crystal Apple Award from a large number of former students and colleagues in 1996.

Donald Wilkening, a former associate professor in the College of Education, died Jan. 6, 2009 at age 75. Wilkening worked for the Instructional Media Center (IMC), a department that serves the campus community with technology and multimedia support services (now known as ATS Media Services), for a total of 33 years before retiring in 1993. As a top graphic specialist, Wilkening used his expertise to teach courses on the production and use of graphic materials for classroom instruction. He served as a coordinator in the IMC during the course of many technological advancements and maintained a part-time appointment in the Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology and Special Education. Wilkening received his Ed.S. in curriculum from MSU in 1969.

Annual Report Takes Top Honors

The College of Education received multiple honors in the 2009 ADDY Awards Competition for its 2007–08 Annual Report. The publication, which was designed by staff graphic designer Emily Brozovic (left), took home one of 80 Silver ADDY awards in the District 6 component of the creativity competition, which included 460 entries from Michigan, Illinois and Indiana. In the Lansing-area competition, the Annual Report also received a Gold ADDY, the highest designation, and was named Best of Show among all printed materials submitted to the local club, Mid-Michigan Creative Alliance. Along with Brozovic, the awards recognize communications manager Nicole Geary and Millbrook Printing of Grand Ledge, Mich. They go on to compete in the national competition in June. Visit www.aaf.org for more information.
When I first came to Chicago and walked into Shoesmith Elementary, I had no idea how much it could change my progression as a teacher candidate. I felt that I had already known the direction my life was headed, but now I see that I was completely wrong.

The day I realized the magnitude of this change was Election Day, November 4, 2008. My students were incredibly excited about everything concerning the election. We made signs, we held a school-wide mock presidential election, and we drew pictures and wrote sentences about the election in the weeks prior to November 4th. My mentor teacher presented both sides of the spectrum to the students. They read books on Sen. John McCain as well as Sen. Barack Obama, but the students only had eyes for Barack. They were inspired and driven to be a part of something bigger than them. My students are kindergarteners and they understood the greatness that this election inspired in their parents, their teachers and their community. In the days leading up to the election, the school was buzzing wildly. The children were bouncing off the walls expecting to see him jump out from behind a corner or pop into the cafeteria during lunch.

I arrived to school extra early on Election Day. I had the privilege of seeing President Obama and Mrs. Obama cast their votes in our gym. I can not express the excitement inspired in all of
us when we saw that man execute the most basic democratic right we have as citizens of this country.

My students came to school wearing vote obama t-shirts and pins with pictures of his face, and they described seeing him vote in our gym. This was real for them; they saw history being made as young impressionable 5-year-olds. My mentor teacher described to them that they could do anything in the world if they put forth the effort and told them that today stood as proof of that . . .

My students (and I) might be too young to understand the impact of this election, but Election Day 2008 will be a day we all remember and tell our grandchildren about. I have never felt luckier to be a part of something than I felt that day. It changed the way I will approach teaching and life.

Some people have moments in their life that changed them and made them better. This was my moment. Being there, surrounded by the other MSU interns and my students, made me feel that anything in this world really is possible.

***

. . . We heard Barack Obama was going to be voting at Shoesmith early in the morning before school started. Carrie, Melissa and I decided to leave our apartment at 6:45 A.M. to make sure we weren’t too late to see Obama vote. Our bus didn’t run that early so we walked the 11 blocks to the school, enjoying the unseasonably warm weather and stopping at Starbucks along the way. A few blocks away from the school, we saw the helicopters circling above and, when we rounded the corner, we saw the crowds of people and the long line of voters.

We entered the school and started looking out the windows. Melissa went to the teachers’ lounge to see if anyone knew when he would be arriving, but she yelled to us from the hallway that he was in the gym voting right then. We went to the gym doors, peered in the windows and were able to see Barack Obama and his wife vote as his daughters looked on.

When the Secret Service agents no longer allowed us to peel back the paper on the gym windows, we went to the special education office at the front of the building. This office was right next to the door that Obama entered and exited . . . We saw his daughters leave the school first. Then we heard Obama walking out of the gym toward the door. There was a large curtain set up to block off the hallway for him to walk through. One of the teachers yelled to him, “We love you, Obama!” and he yelled back from behind the curtain, “I love you, too!” Then, as we stood on chairs, we saw him walk out of the building with his wife.

. . . That night, I went to Grant Park, where the atmosphere was incredible. It was wonderful to see President-Elect Obama give his acceptance speech to a massive crowd of excited supporters. I was so far away that I was forced to watch him on the big screen . . . Therefore, the highlight of my day was seeing Obama up close at Shoesmith Elementary.

***

. . . The next day at school, the students came rushing into the classroom shouting that Obama had won! They were so ecstatic. All throughout the day, everyone at Shoesmith could not stop talking about how happy they were that he was elected. In our classroom, it encouraged the students to do work that they would not have wanted to do before, such as write stories and letters to him. The students were interested in what they were writing about. In the lunchroom, someone started a “Yes, we can!” chant and everyone was chanting along.

“Being there, surrounded by the other MSU interns and my students, made me feel that anything in this world really is possible.”

This experience is something that I will never forget. Just seeing the hope in the eyes of the people at Shoesmith and throughout Chicago has been incredible.

Melissa Shosey

ABOUT THE INTERNSHIP

The College of Education placed its first group of 16 teacher candidates in Chicago Public Schools for their fifth-year internship during the 2008-09 school year. Leaders expect to send a larger group of 25–30 interns to the Windy City this fall.
Propelling Peers, Rethinking the Future

STUDENTS SUPPORT SUCCESSFUL EDUCATION CAREERS FOR YOUNG BLACK MEN

Growing up with a single mother, Kaushik Sarkar longed to have a man to look up to. “I never had a black male role model in my life,” he said. “You want that leadership and you want that father figure and that role model.”

Once he got to Kalamazoo Central High School, however, he found a mentor in one of his teachers and from that experience decided he wanted to become a teacher himself.

Like many students in urban schools, Sarkar noticed a lack of responsible black men in the classroom. Today one of Sarkar’s main goals in life is to encourage other black men to get into the field of education. As an education junior at Michigan State University, he is one of the original members of the Black Males in Education Network, otherwise known as bmen—a group of peers with the same mission.

bmen’s 10 members form a growing support group for black male college students who are working toward becoming teachers. They also create a network of role models for young black students (who might also become teachers) through presentations and visits to Michigan schools.

Building on Urban Educators Program

Co-presidents Christopher Waston and D’Angelo Farmer initiated bmen in January 2008 as freshman roommates enrolled in the College of Education’s unique Urban Educators Cohort Program (UECP).

The program focuses on the distinctive challenges students in large cities encounter while attending public school systems. By starting during freshman year, UECP gives young aspiring teachers extra time and resources to understand the factors that may be distracting students in urban classrooms. A fourth cohort begins this fall.

Waston said he and Farmer, who are part of the second cohort, shared the same major and motivation to learn about urban teaching careers through UECP. They just didn’t feel there were enough efforts at MSU to reach and meet the needs of young black men.

“It’s important to me because college can be an intimidating place for people,” said Waston, who is now approaching his junior year. “The transition wasn’t that easy for me.”

He said the most important thing about bmen is that it gives members—most of whom are also in the UECP—a built-in support system for one another. The group meets to discuss common issues and classes as well as do homework together.

“Some people don’t have that support group around them,” Waston said. “It can discourage a person from moving forward and make them feel like they are all alone.”
Rationale for Reaching Out

Waston came from a background similar to Sarkar, in terms of not seeing many black men in his classrooms growing up. The Detroit native said he hopes the network will nurture college-aged and high school students into becoming role models for younger, black students.

The BMEN strive to find opportunities to share their message in both casual and formal settings, from after-school meetings to campus-wide conferences, as often as they can.

“It uplifts the African American community as a whole,” Waston said. “It shows other males of color in these urban areas that they can go to college and be successful.”

According to BMEN faculty advisor, Christopher Dunbar, Jr., only 1 percent of African American males who earn bachelor’s degrees go into education.

Dunbar, an associate professor of K–12 educational administration, said BMEN members are slowly helping to change the view of the teaching profession—especially in the minds of young people starting to develop aspirations for their future.

“We have all these boys who go through elementary school with no black male presence, period,” he said. “I think these guys are going out and talking to young people and saying teaching is an honored profession. And that’s what their belief is.”

The efforts of the BMEN have also created a trickle-down effect in terms of leadership, Dunbar said.

Some members mentored local high school students as part of an MSU research project last summer. Those high school students then tutored elementary school students in their school district.

“We do tutoring because we see that there is a lack of role models in our schools,” Sarkar said. “We believe if we can be positive role models for people younger than us, then they will be inspired to do the same.”

Recently, the group has also been meeting with black male high school students at Wainwright Elementary School in Lansing. In addition to bringing in guest speakers and talking about college life, the BMEN also bring food and play basketball with the students.

“We just want to show them that it’s possible to be successful and have fun,” Sarkar said.

A Dream in Progress

In addition to helping the community, freshman Mario Lemons said he’s proud to be part of BMEN’s positive overall image.

“Our appearance alone, our coming together and having this program giving back to the community in a positive way . . . it is breaking a lot of stereotypes,” he said.

As a Detroit high school graduate, Lemons also said he has witnessed the challenges of being a student in an urban environment. He can recall going to school when there weren’t books to fill the shelves, the electricity was out and there was graffiti all around.

“Those are things that affect the classroom setting,” he said. “Then there are students that don’t want to come to class because they don’t feel safe. I don’t let that shadow me from what the reality is; if school is not a safe, clean place to go to, then the students are disadvantaged. The resources are sub-par.”

Lemons said he came to MSU specifically for the education program and wants to become the superintendent of an urban school district some day. He is sure BMEN will continue to grow and make an even bigger impact on all students, from elementary through college.

“I want to start as a teacher to understand the system and how we should be trying to teach students in an urban setting,” he said. “I know to make a change you have to start from the inside out.”

BMEN members (from left to right): Christopher Waston, Mario Lemons and D’Angelo Farmer.

| CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION | MSUBMEN@gmail.com |

IN RECOGNITION

BMEN received the MSU Black Graduate Student Association’s 2009 Service Award for promoting academic excellence and community service within the black community.

THE GOALS OF BMEN

- To increase the number of Black males in the College of Education at MSU by recruiting high school students and fellow college students
- To increase awareness of social injustices that affect Black males
- To help in the personal development of members through participation in seminars, group activities and community outreach
- To ensure that all members remain in good academic standing with MSU’s College of Education

View a video highlighting their mission at www.youtube.com/user/MSUBMEN.
Fifteen doctoral students in the Higher, Adult and Lifelong Education program gained face time with experts on Capital Hill to discuss key policy issues last fall. Professor MaryLee Davis led their trip to Washington, D.C., which included visits with representatives from the American Council on Education (ACE), the Association of American Universities (AAU), the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (NASULGC) and the National Science Foundation. The students were also able to explore career opportunities and investigate how universities and colleges work with policymakers and associations.

Educational administration students studied international higher education policy in both South Africa and Great Britain during summer 2008. One of those groups, led by Ann Austin and Matt Wawrzynski, traveled to Nelson Mandela University in South Africa where they learned about African higher education and policy. John Dirkx took current and future HALE students to the University of Plymouth, where they connected with colleagues from the United Kingdom and explored European higher education policy. Colleagues from Nelson Mandela University visited MSU last fall in a reciprocal exchange, while Dirkx looks forward to expanding the U.K. experience for HALE students. Both trips were partially funded by the Center for Higher and Adult Education.

Maria Feldpausch’s freshman year at MSU didn’t last long before she realized she was passionate about adapted physical activity as a profession. The next year, she became one of the youngest teaching assistants to work in the Sports Skills Program for local residents with disabilities.

By senior year, those sessions in the Jenison Fieldhouse pool—the “highlight” of her week—accounted for only part of an impressive record of leadership and scholarship that earned Feldpausch three major awards. She received the Student Honor Award from mahperd (Michigan Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance), a Major of the Year title from naspe (National Association of Sport and Physical Education) and, most significantly, the sole title of Undergraduate Student of the Year from the national Adapted Physical Education Council.

Feldpausch finds inspiration in her older sister, Amy, who has autism.

“I grew up watching my mom and dad try to find atmospheres that were appropriate for her,” she said. “I know what many parents are going through and that motivates me.”

Along with coaching Special Olympics and maintaining a high grade-point average, Feldpausch organized her own research project to learn more about what kinds of activities teenagers who have autism prefer. That study, which used interviews and computerized icons of images such as sports and video games, showed only 3 of 20 participants prefer physical activities over sedentary options. Now she hopes to determine how that relates to overall youth trends, as well as how such information can be used to get more kids who are autistic moving.

She graduated in May and will begin a master’s program in occupational therapy at Colorado State University this fall.

“This population tends to be overlooked . . . and they are some of the most genuine people you will ever meet,” Feldpausch said. “Being able to meet them and help them gain a better quality of life is a very cool experience.”
Ashleigh Heck and Charlie Runyan, both first-year students in the Student Affairs Administration master’s degree program, won the Michigan College Personnel Association Case Study Competition. The competition, in which students give presentations on a pre-determined case study related to their field, was held Oct. 21 at Eastern Michigan University. Heck and Runyan competed against students from other student affairs graduate programs in Michigan. Visit www.mcpaweb.org.

Michael Hughes, who is pursuing a master’s in educational technology from MSU in Plymouth, England, was selected as an Apple Distinguished Educator in December. The designation honors and connects educators from around the world who have expertise in using technology to increase student performance in the classroom. They provide assistance and best practices to peers and policymakers, plus valuable input to Apple Inc. Hughes is an English and social studies teacher in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Eric Jessup-Anger and Justin Micomonaco, two HALE doctoral students, recently collaborated with Douglas Estry, associate provost for undergraduate education and dean of undergraduate studies, to examine the transition and experience of first-year students at Michigan State University. Following a review of current scholarship and institutional assessment data, discussions with colleagues from across the Big Ten, extensive interviews with faculty, staff, and students, and consultation with a core committee of administrators, they developed a policy paper to guide institutional efforts aimed at enhancing the first-year student experience at MSU. The report was finalized in October, provost.msu.edu/planning/documents/Final_Fall_Orientation_Report_000.pdf

Marini Lee, a doctoral candidate in teacher education, received a one-year King-Chavez-Parks Future Faculty Fellowship from MSU to complete her dissertation. The competitive award intends to expand an inclusive talent pool for colleges and universities by expecting recipients to seek faculty or administration positions.

HALE doctoral student Kang Li, who is from China, received a 2009 Homer Higbee International Education Award from MSU International Studies and Programs. The award honors students who have enhanced international communication, understanding and cooperation at MSU through service activities.

Two graduate students completed domestic policy-related internships during summer 2008 with funding from the Center for Higher and Adult Education. Emily Miller, a doctoral student in higher, adult and lifelong education (HALE), interned with the Association of Governing Boards (AGB) of Universities and Colleges in Washington, D.C. She continued collaborating with AGB during the academic year on research related to faculty and institutional governance.

Jeff Grim spent summer 2008 working with the Michigan President’s Council after graduating with his master’s degree in student affairs administration.

Pamela Roy, a HALE doctoral student, received a research award from the GLBT Issues Knowledge Community of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators for her work on gender identity and South Asian transgender graduate students in the United States. She also received the S.C. Lee Best Paper Award from the MSU Asian Studies Center.

Katherine Sarow was honored with an MSU Board of Trustees Scholarship Award for seniors with the highest cumulative grade-point averages at each commencement. Sarow graduated in December with a bachelor’s degree in deaf education and a 4.0 GPA.

HALE doctoral student Norseha Unin received the 2009 David Merchant International Student Award for Achievement from the Executive Office of the Phi Beta Delta International Honor Society in Washington, D.C. Unin, who is from Malaysia, also serves as the graduate assistant for LATTICE, or Linking All Types of Teachers to International Cross-Cultural Education.

Jesse S. Watson, also a HALE doctoral student, recently received awards to support his dissertation research on white college students in non-white student groups from the NASPA Foundation (National Association of Student Personnel Administrators) and the American College Personnel Association’s Commission for Student Involvement.
We know that great things can happen when the MSU community bands together. In the last year alone, the university led the nation’s public universities in study abroad participation, opened one of the first North American college campuses in Dubai and earned a major grant to build the Facility for Rare Isotope Beams (Frib), which is expected to bring $1 billion in economic activity to Michigan. Many people from organizations on and off campus had a hand in those accomplishments.

I know great things can also happen when MSU alumni come together. Even if you are busy, even if you live thousands of miles from East Lansing, there are several, easy ways to stay connected with fellow graduates of the College of Education. Consider the collective pride and goodwill that can come from these examples.

LinkedIn
We now have an official alumni group on LinkedIn, a free professional networking Web site. All you have to do to start establishing links with College of Education alumni from around the world is create an account and join the group. Through discussion boards and other features, you can share career opportunities, learn about new ideas in your field and follow campus news and events. Imagine how powerful it can be to learn about hard-to-find jobs directly from fellow graduates or ask hundreds of caring Spartans for answers to a pressing question, all from your computer. Visit www.linkedin.com to check it out.

We Dare You
The MSU Alumni Association launched the We Dare You campaign with a goal to grow membership by 15 percent. The idea is to empower members from constituent groups like ours to recruit new members. Put simply, it’s a grassroots effort to remind you how much we need your help. If you know any College of Education alums that haven’t joined the association, why not nudge them to consider it? Show them the New Educator, ask them how their MSU experience supported their career. Send them to www.msualum.com and have them indicate the College of Education as their constituent group.

Rankings
Did you know the organizations that create national rankings of college and universities often consider measures of graduate satisfaction when they are rating institutions? These factors can include alumni association membership and alumni giving. In this way, staying involved with your alma mater extends beyond direct support for the university; it can build the institution’s overall visibility and reputation for success.

Of course, we would also like to see you in person at a College of Education Alumni Association event, such as the Homecoming Tent Party this fall. I will be stepping down as president of the Board of Directors this summer, but I have thoroughly enjoyed supporting the college in its efforts to meet today’s toughest educational challenges.

Kathryn Rodgers
Class of 1970 and 1974
Alumni Association Honors Two Alumni

These prestigious awards were presented at the college’s annual spring Awards Reception, which also honors more than 150 student scholarship winners, on April 3 at the Kellogg Center.

**Distinguished Alumni Award**

**Barbara Mieras**, a 1990 doctoral graduate in college and university administration, has been giving strategic leadership to Davenport College (now University) for more than 25 years. Moving through the ranks from associate dean of the Kalamazoo campus to vice president for admissions and marketing, Mieras increased overall enrollment and the number of programs. As vice president and eventually CEO and COO, she had oversight of 12 campuses and opened several of them as part of her strategic plan. In 1998, she became president of Davenport University-Western Region. Among her accomplishments was the institution’s largest capital campaign exceeding its goal. She also improved student retention and increased the foundation’s assets to over $9 million.

It is no wonder that her successful development efforts led to her current position as senior vice president for major gifts—in which she has raised more than $25 million for student scholarships, facilities expansion and academic program enhancements.

From her roots as a business education teacher in Hartford Public Schools to career education and placement coordinator of the Van Buren County Vocational-Technical Center, Mieras knew firsthand the benefits of education for the economic and personal gain of college graduates. This background prepared her well for her roles in connecting higher education with K–12 education and business.

Recognized as one of the 50 most influential women in West Michigan, Mieras has deep involvement in her community. She serves on numerous boards such as Founders Bank and Trust, Metro Health and the MSU College of Education Dean’s Advisory Board. She has been recognized with many significant awards including the MSU Crystal Apple, the Outstanding Educational Leadership and Professionalism award from the Michigan Business and Professional Association and the Michigan ACE Woman of Distinction in Higher Education award.

**Outstanding Alumni K–12 Teacher Award**

**Kraig R. Conyer** has distinguished himself as an outstanding adapted physical education teacher at Hinsdale South High School in Darien, Ill. He developed an award-winning Peer Partner Program in which regular education students serve as learning partners with special education students in adapted physical education settings. A 2000 baccalaureate graduate of MSU’s kinesiology program, Conyer began his first teaching job at Hinsdale South and, according to a site visitor, transformed the previously “self-contained and highly sheltered program for special needs students into one of inclusiveness, social dynamics and athletic activity.”

Conyer founded the school’s Special Olympics Program and has been instrumental in helping students develop leadership skills through the J. Kyle Braid Leadership Foundation and the Athletes Committed to Excellence programs, which help students make a difference in their school and community. Conyer has served as varsity baseball coach, assistant football coach and in several other coaching and mentoring positions.

Conyer is a fellow of the Illinois Golden Apple Academy of Educators. In 2007, he was selected from over 800 Chicago-area applicants as one of 10 recipients of the Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching. He is known as an enthusiastic, supportive and passionate teacher who inspires his students through words and deeds. He presses his students to go outside their comfort zones. Parents have expressed their appreciation for Conyer’s creation of an embracing community. One said, “My son has never felt so accepted.”
Before there was a large mural adorning Murphy Elementary School’s lunchroom, there was a small group of children that shared an interest. They wanted to learn how art can help change the world. But they and their facilitator, “Mr. Rob,” didn’t know where that would take them.

Week by week, idea by idea, student by student, their vision slowly evolved into a carefully planned and collective reminder of the future they hope to shape—high-tech cars, clear skies, happy faces.

And, while they were projecting their dreams through paint, results from a dozen other kid-led projects also were beginning to materialize—book sales, performances, a fund-raiser to preserve lighthouses and much more.

Clusters, as the Haslett, Mich. school calls its mixed-age, inquiry-based enrichment sessions, have doubled in scope and popularity since College of Education graduate Rob Ley introduced the concept with just five teachers and volunteers last school year.

This spring, Ley was one of 13 cluster facilitators and continued as leader of the nearly school-wide program—a fifth-year teacher with a fearless drive to make everyday education more meaningful.

“I like him,” said 9-year-old Audrey Noeker. “I like him because he lets us take charge of our learning.”

“Sometimes it feels like the whole world has been packaged and processed. It almost feels like the things that can really be the most meaningful are the ones overlooked in schools.”
Taking Risks, Building Relationships

In Ley’s classroom, every fourth-grader has a portrait on the wall, a personal water bottle on their desk and a respected voice in discussions about, say, the cost-benefit analysis of space travel or the physical forces in action during last recess.

Creativity abounds and unites the tight-knit group of 22.

They have neon green class T-shirts, dance moves they perform on cue and a mascot: the Flying Squirrels.

Ley starts the year with a summer book club and visits to every child’s home.

“The relationships I have with my students and their families are pretty fun,” he said, noting that he doesn’t use any reward programs. “It’s all relationship based.”

The 28-year-old received his elementary education degree from MSU in 2004 and completed his internship in the Haslett suburban school system, close to campus and his Okemos home. When the school district first offered him a full-time position, however, he turned it down.

“I knew I needed to get out and see new things,” he said. “I felt like there was more.”

On the plane ride back from interviews in Seattle, he heard about a teacher job fair in urban Asheville, N.C. On a whim, he drove all night to make it there in time.

There, he found the progressive, exciting learning environment he was searching for while working in a magnet school that follows the Foxfire principles, including a focus on making connections with the real world.

“The education I had at MSU really prepared me for where I wanted to be, critiquing the curriculum and taking some risks,” said Ley, who taught in Asheville for two years. “I didn’t feel like I needed to fall in line with what others were doing.”

Ley—who also leads hiking and cycling trips each summer—had to return to Michigan for major surgery and family support after a traumatic fall in the Swiss Alps.

He decided to stay and return to MSU for his master’s degree in curriculum and teaching, which he completed in 2007. Meanwhile, he landed his current job in Haslett.

Leading Change, Adding Authenticity

By then, a love for powerful teaching had really taken hold.

Ley looked for ways to make every lesson more instantly relevant and democratic for students, both inside and outside his classroom.

Principal Diane Lindbert agreed to incorporate clusters at Murphy Elementary School as a pilot program with interested teachers not long after Ley made his PowerPoint presentation about the idea, at her home in the middle of summer.

“It’s very important to me that teachers, within the state curriculum, feel empowered to try new things,” said Lindbert, who also received her B.A. and M.A. from the MSU College of Education. “Rob thinks very big. He really is a researcher, always looking for best practice.”

Clusters, a concept Ley borrowed from scholar Joseph Renzulli, offer a way to balance unique, authentic classroom experiences versus prescribed learning—without losing connections to critical skills and content areas.

The voluntary facilitators, which have included College of Education faculty members Janet Alleman, Elizabeth Heilman and Randi Stanulis plus graduate students, write open-ended cluster descriptions based on surveys of what students say they want to learn. Then, the groups of second-through fifth-graders set out to produce some type of product or service for a real audience over seven to eight weeks.

Work on the first round of projects, such as a school newspaper, an organic garden and a video about youth rights, continued during after-school sessions and into this school year.

“The kids and the teacher have a shared feeling of ‘We don’t know what’s going to happen,’” Ley said. “Anytime you increase kids’ involvement in the inquiry process, it takes longer. It gets messy, but they feel like they are contributing and doing something important.”
It’s also a huge community builder. Families work on weekly homework assignments, raise money through can drives and volunteer their time on Friday afternoons.

The cluster enrichment model can’t be found anywhere else in the Lansing area.

“There’s been great interest from the parents,” said Carrie Mowid, the mother of two Murphy students and a cluster facilitator. “I’m satisfied because it generates ideas within their own interests, and that motivates them.”

Ambition, Success

Ley hoped to oversee a project like clusters sometime before his career was over. He has already emerged as a teacher leader who can influence collaboration among colleagues and a cultural shift in the school community.

This teacher who built an “Organic Goodie Machine” to act out the economic dynamics of society in class, and who took on a mural project with no background in art, also went for his National Board certification this year, a grueling personal assessment and development process that few Michigan educators pursue. He expects to learn whether he will receive the designation late in 2009.

Ley also maintains close connections with MSU teacher education faculty to quench his thirst for professional knowledge. He is even co-authoring a book on making homework more meaningful with professors Janet Alleman and Jere Brophy and three others.

“It’s more work but it doesn’t feel like work,” Ley said of taking on challenges beyond the confines of the fourth-grade Flying Squirrels zone. “To me, I’m doing my hobby and my job at the same time. . . . When I am teaching authentically, I’m living authentically.”

ALUMNI NOTES

Secondary education graduate Melanie Bates (2007, social studies), was honored as a Rookie Teacher of the Year by the Fort Bend Independent School District in Sugar Land, Texas this spring. Bates began teaching sixth-grade at First Colony Middle School this school year.

Alex Bowers, who received his Ph.D. in k–12 educational administration in 2007, received the aera Outstanding Reviewer Award for 2008 from the American Educational Research Journal. Bowers is currently an assistant professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at the University of Texas at San Antonio.

Judy Huynh, who received her master’s in curriculum and instruction in 1992, was honored by MSU International Studies and Programs this spring with the Glen Taggart Award for Community Contribution to International Understanding. She is an active participant in LATTICE, or Linking All Types of Teachers to International Cross-Cultural Education, which provides professional development opportunities for educators through interactions with MSU’s international students and faculty.

Young Yee Kim works as a research scientist for the American Institutes for Research in Washington, D.C. She received doctoral degrees in educational policy and measurement and quantitative methods in spring 2008.

Sean Kottke, who received his Ph.D. in educational psychology and educational technology in fall 2007, fulfilled a long-time dream to appear on Jeopardy! last fall. Kottke took second place during the Dec. 11 broadcast of the TV game show. He is currently on the faculty of the Binda School of Education at Robert B. Miller College in Battle Creek, Mich.

Sally McClintock received a 2009 Globie Award for outstanding service to international students from the MSU Office for International Students and Scholars this spring. McClintock received her master’s in educational psychology (1978) and an Ed.S. in curriculum and administration (1987). She is the founder of LATTICE.

Melissa McDaniels, a 2008 Ph.D. graduate in higher, adult and lifelong education, is now serving as project director for MSU’s new grant from the National Science Foundation’s ADVANCE program, with Provost Kim Wilcox as principal investigator. MSU received the five-year, $3.9 million grant to enhance MSU’s ability to attract, retain and support women in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics disciplines. Visit www.adapp-advance.msu.edu for more information.

We need alumni notes!

Please let us know what you or your colleagues have accomplished recently—or at least what you’re up to. Send your news to ngeary@msu.edu.
With his dream to open an orphanage for poor children just months from reality, three-time College of Education graduate John Shinsky has set another major goal: raising nearly $2 million.

The long-time educator and former MSU defensive lineman was planning (at press time) to hop on a bike at the 50-yard line of Spartan Stadium April 25 and ride an amazing 2,000 miles to his developing orphanage site in Matamoros, Mexico. Two former MSU football teammates—Eljay Bowron, former director of the U.S. Secret Service, and Joe DeLamielleure, one of only two Spartans in the NFL Hall of Fame—were expected to join him on the 18-day trek beginning at MSU’s annual spring football game.

Six buildings have been constructed on the property since the groundbreaking in 2005. Shinsky expects to open “Ciudad de los Niños” in September and provide beds, meals, schooling and love for 40 to 50 children. Ultimately, he hopes to serve up to 120 abandoned or neglected kids from the surrounding, mostly impoverished community.

“These kids have no one to take risks for them,” Shinsky said. “Hopefully, someday I will be able to see a young person from the orphanage become a teacher, mayor or humanitarian.”

College of Education alum Kel- lie Dean of Dean Transportation has donated a bus and Dick Comar, another MSU education graduate, plans to be the bike team captain and assist the group. The journey is expected to end May 12.

MORE INFO
• www.orphanagefundraiser.com
• www.shinskyorphanage.com

Alum Launches 2,000-Mile Bike Ride to Support New Orphanage
Private philanthropy represents an enormous resource that has enabled the Michigan State University College of Education outstanding faculty and student body to excel at teaching and learning. This rich tradition of excellence is due, in part, to the numerous donors who have chosen to continue their support beyond their lifetime by way of a planned gift. The term planned gift represents a variety of arrangements that allow a donor the opportunity to make an impact beyond their lifetime... often in perpetuity. Also known as legacy gifts, planned gifts can provide discretionary funds to be used as determined by the dean of the college, or they can be designated to a specific use as directed by a donor’s estate or through an agreement with the college.

The most common planned gift arrangement—charitable bequest—is often simple to arrange. A charitable bequest is a gift made through your will or personal trust. Bequests are risk-free because you retain full use of the assets you wish to give throughout your lifetime and there is no out-of-pocket cost—an important consideration in a difficult economy. You can also change a bequest at any time to represent changing personal and family conditions.

The key to a meaningful charitable bequest, of course, is an up-to-date will. If you do not have a will, we encourage you to see your attorney to put your will in place. It is the only way to make certain your exact intentions are carried out upon your death, and it is the best way to protect loved ones and provide for the charities you care about.

Often, MSU alumni and friends choose to document their intention to make a future gift to the college. Documenting a future gift from an estate is not a binding legal obligation upon the donor or their estate and information remains strictly confidential. Documented planned gifts are important, as they allow the college the opportunity to recognize potential future donors today. This is also an important process for the donor as they can establish guidelines with the college development office, detailing wishes for the use of their potential future gift.

If you are interested in learning more about leaving a gift to MSU through your estate, please contact the development office at (517) 432-1983.

Michelle Mertz
Development Digest

**CHOICES WHEN PLANNING A CHARITABLE BEQUEST**

There are many choices when deciding what to give through a charitable bequest. A bequest can be specific property or assets, such as savings bonds, retirement assets or real estate. A charitable bequest can be a specific dollar amount or an amount expressed as a percentage of the total value of your estate, or the residue of your estate after commitments to family have been fulfilled.
Thirty professionals in education were honored for their outstanding careers during the 2008 Crystal Apple Awards dinner. Their friends, family members and colleagues gathered on Nov. 14 for an elegant evening at the Kellogg Center featuring an address from MSU Provost Kim Wilcox and tributes to each distinguished recipient.

The Crystal Apple Awards were established as a way for donors to recognize educators who played a significant role in their lives and who represent a commitment to the teaching profession. The opportunity to select a recipient is a benefit to donors in the College of Education Leadership Circle.

The 2009 event will be held on Friday, Nov. 20. If you are interested in selecting a recipient, contact Julie Bird, assistant director of development, at (517) 432-1983 or birdjuli@msu.edu.

NOMINATORS: David & Marcia Kapolka

NOMINATOR: Richard Lee Featherstone Society

Francis Bernier, founder, College Planning Consultants, Okemos and Lansing, Mich.
NOMINATORS: Gary & Marti North and Alan Coe

Peter D. Boyse, president emeritus, Delta College, University Center, Mich.
NOMINATORS: John & Joanne Fuller

Dorean Brazier, resource teacher, Okemos High School, Okemos, Mich.
NOMINATORS: Ann Austin-Beck & John Beck

NOMINATORS: Fred & Janet Tinning

David R. Coopersmith, Jr., seventh grade teacher, Highlander Way Middle School, Howell, Mich.
NOMINATOR: Elaine M. Tripi

Mary Drake Green, associate dean emeritus, College of Education, and professor emeritus, Department of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, Mich.
NOMINATOR: Janet A. Wessel
John S. Duley, associate professor emeritus, Justin Morrill College, Office of Learning and Evaluation Services, MSU.
NOMINATOR: Neil H. Cullen

Christopher Dunbar, Jr., associate professor, Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, MSU.
NOMINATOR: Sonya Gunnings-Moton

Joan Erickson, associate professor, Aurora University, Aurora, Ill.
NOMINATOR: Donna Forrest-Pressley

William Vernon Hicks, chairman, Department of Elementary and Special Education, MSU (deceased).
NOMINATOR: Cynthia Hicks-Orth

Brian A. T. Husby, associate professor, Department of Special Education, Aurora University, Aurora, Ill.
NOMINATOR: Donna Forrest-Pressley

Glenn Julian, professor emeritus, Miami University of Ohio, Oxford, Ohio.
NOMINATORS: Punya Mishra & Smita Sawai

Michael Kaufman, music director, Interlochen Center for the Arts, and band director, Grand Ledge High School (retired), Grand Ledge, Mich.
NOMINATORS: Melody & Bill Glick

Claudia Jane Knowles, retired director, Texas Education Agency, Austin, Texas.
NOMINATOR: Janet A. Wessel

Donald D. Koetke, senior research professor, Department of Physics and Astronomy, Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Ind.
NOMINATORS: John & Beth Hauenstricker

Irvin J. Lehmann, professor emeritus, Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology and Special Education, College of Education, MSU.
NOMINATOR: Sharif Shakrani

Laurie Mayes, assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, Hartland Consolidated Schools, Howell, Mich.
NOMINATOR: William Mayes

Tawana Derricotte Miller, director, Title I/NCLB compliance, Fulton County Schools, Atlanta, Ga.
NOMINATOR: Patricia A. Edwards

Paul Nilsson, art teacher (retired) and coach, Williamston High School, Williamston, Mich.
NOMINATOR: Deb Feltz

Frederick W. Obear, chancellor emeritus, The University of Tennessee, Chattanooga, Tenn.
NOMINATOR: MaryLee Davis

Juan R. Olivarez, president and chief executive officer, Kalamazoo Community Foundation, Kalamazoo, Mich.
NOMINATORS: Jacqueline Taylor and Barbara Mieras

Linda M. Petlichkoff, professor and LSE development consultant, Department of Kinesiology, Boise State University, Boise, Idaho.
NOMINATOR: Daniel R. Gould

Phyllis S. Pietka, instructor, Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology and Special Education, College of Education, MSU (deceased).
NOMINATORS: MSU special education faculty and staff

Mark D. Reckase, professor of measurement and quantitative methods, College of Education, MSU.
NOMINATORS: Tenko & Albena Raykov

Jaclynn C. Tracy, department head, Department of Leadership and Counseling, Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, Mich.
NOMINATOR: William Price

William F. Weatherhead, associate clinical professor, College of Osteopathic Medicine, MSU.
NOMINATORS: Shahriar Ghoddousi, Shamdokht Shams and Armita Ghoddousi

Philippa Webb, educator/faculty, Spring Arbor University, Spring Arbor, Mich.

Christopher W. Wheeler, professor emeritus, Department of Teacher Education, College of Education, MSU.
NOMINATORS: Jack & Sharon Schwille
OUR COLLEGE...

YOUR STYLE

check out the new college merchandise at

shop.msu.edu
Attention graduates of 1959 and prior!

In conjunction with the MSU Alumni Reunion Days, the College of Education will host a continental breakfast on June 5. Dean Carole Ames invites alumni and their guests from the graduating class of 1959 and prior to join her.

To register, visit www.msualum.com/reunion or call (877) MSU-ALUM (678-2586).

Questions? Contact Dr. Cassandra Book at the College of Education, at (517) 355-1787 or via e-mail at cassbook@msu.edu.

Registration deadline is May 20!

Friday, June 5
8-10 a.m.
Erickson Hall
ACCOUNTABILITY

What Happened to Balance, Behavior in Assessment?

In 1867, Congress established a Department of Education to collect “such statistics and facts as shall show the condition and progress of education in the several States and Territories.” Indeed, data on student achievement is not a new topic to educators but one that has received great attention in the past few years. While the public should hold its schools accountable for student progress, our current system, which relies almost exclusively on standardized test scores for reading and mathematics, cannot possibly accomplish the goal of informing the public on whether its schools are performing satisfactorily.

We must redesign our accountability system to include other measures of student progress, and precedence for doing so exists.

An important component in our accountability system is the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), which is given to a sample of students in every state on a regular basis. Since the 1960s, the federal government has been collecting student achievement data using this exam. Over the past 50 years, however, NAEP has evolved and today, it is almost an entirely paper and pencil test. But it need not be this way and in fact, its original format was far more comprehensive.

In 1962, the then-U.S. commissioner of education, Francis Keppel, asked John Gardner, president of the Carnegie Foundation, to form a committee to design a system for measuring what American students had learned. Gardner recruited a distinguished group of experts including Ralph Tyler, one of the nation’s most respected education scholars. Tyler’s ideas about assessment formed the basis for many of the committee’s eventual recommendations, including his belief that education evaluations should not rely solely on standardized test scores but “must appraise the behaviors of students since it is changes in these behaviors which is sought. . . .” To that end, the committee members designed an assessment which measured students’ ability to effectively use their skills and knowledge.

In civics, for example, students were asked questions that we expect to see on exams today such as having students identify ways that citizens can influence government. But students were also asked whether they had put such knowledge to use; NAEP interviewers asked young adults if they themselves had ever talked with or written to a government official about a civic issue. NAEP interviewers also assessed whether, in our diverse democracy, future citizens were being prepared to communicate effectively with others on controversial policy topics. NAEP observers watched groups of students (aged 13 and 17) work together to reach consensus on the five most important policy issues facing teens and make recommendations for how to resolve them. Observers watched for indicators that students were able to take clear positions, to give reasons for their point of view and to seek additional information helpful to completing the task.

In 1974, just a few years after the initial administration of NAEP, Congress cut NAEP’s annual budget in half, which resulted in the elimination of the more expensive assessment techniques. The elimination of this aspect of NAEP was almost entirely motivated by cost savings, not because such changes would improve the quality of test data.

NAEP can be an important component in a balanced accountability system if we revive the use of behavioral assessments and inform the public how samples of students in each state perform on these assessments. While accountability in education is needed, our near exclusive reliance on standardized test scores does not work. This is not because we do not know any better; it is because we have been trying to do accountability on the cheap.

“We must redesign our accountability system to include other measures of student progress, and precedence for doing so exists.”

>> REBECCA JACOBSEN, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF TEACHER EDUCATION

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