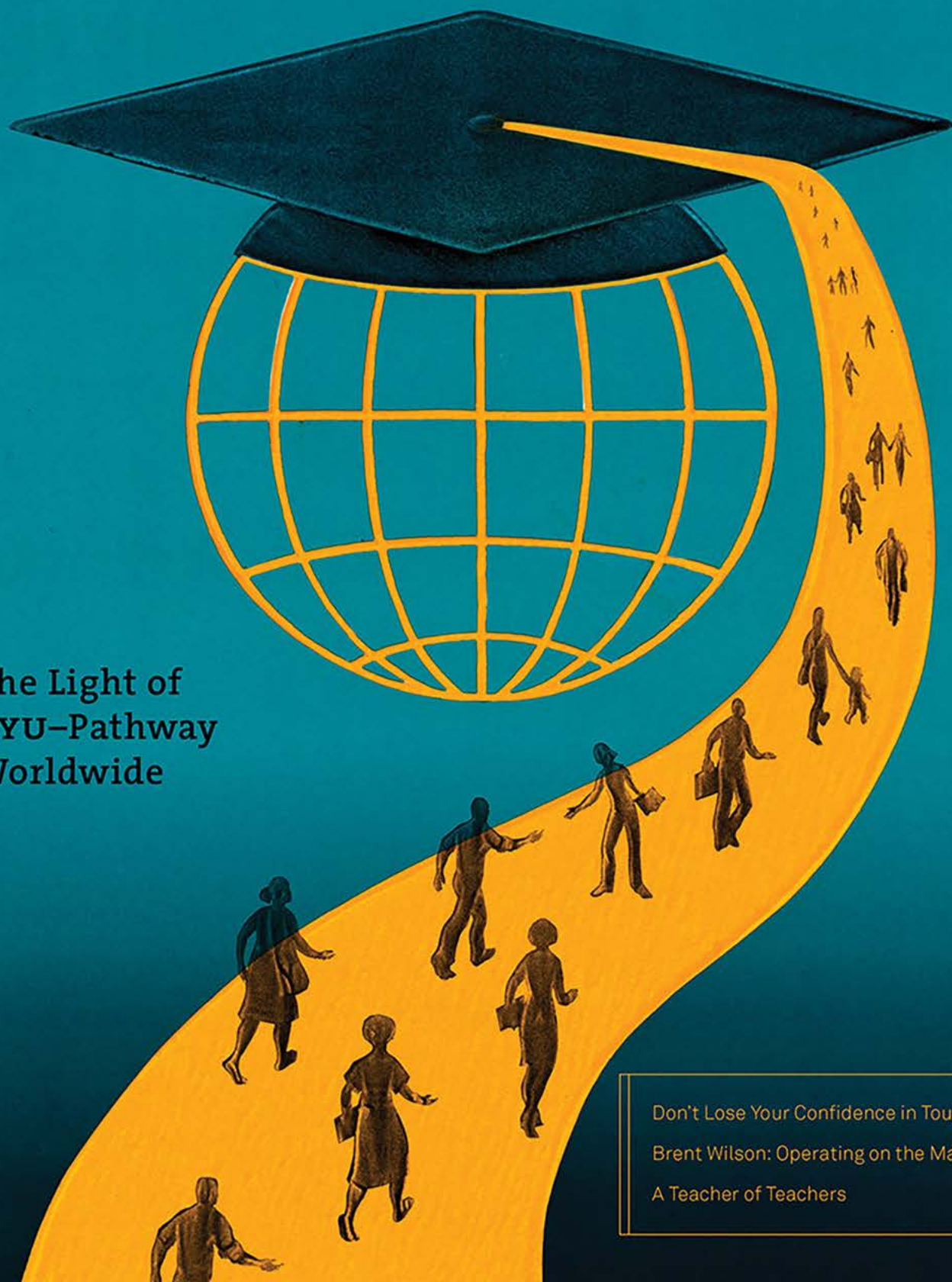


# m

MCKAY TODAY  
FALL 2017

DAVID O. MCKAY SCHOOL OF EDUCATION BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY



## The Light of BYU-Pathway Worldwide

Don't Lose Your Confidence in Tough Times  
Brent Wilson: Operating on the Margins  
A Teacher of Teachers

## Message from the Dean's Office



*In this increasingly complex world, education is one of the most important acquisitions of life. And while it is true that more education will generally lead to the opportunity for increased temporal rewards, the greater value of increased knowledge is the opportunity it affords us to be of greater influence in accomplishing the Lord's purposes.*

—ELDER CRAIG A. CARDON

This edition of *McKay Today Magazine* presents timely messages largely focused on access to education and the various educational pathways available as we seek or make available those opportunities. "Lighting the Pathway" chronicles the inspired move to broaden the Church Educational System from a strictly spiritual focus to one that includes secular education that advances learning in all areas. We hope this article on the creation of BYU-Pathway Worldwide will increase readers' understanding of this new and important pathway to education being opened to men and women worldwide.

Another article in this issue is taken from a convocation talk given by a local school district superintendent on April 28, 2017. In his talk, Paul Sweat highlights the significance of choosing a career in education. Readers will find his admonitions to be confident in their preparation and purpose in being educators to be both validating and inspirational!

Brent G. Wilson, the 2017 David O. McKay Alumni Achievement Award recipient, is highlighted in an article focusing on his path as a professor in education and human development. Wilson talks about the tension he has been aware of as he has encountered those along the path who have seen things differently than he and other "free thinkers."

Other articles in this issue include accounts of inspiring learning, the return of the education policy and social foundations master's degree focus in the Department of Educational Leadership and Foundations, the challenges of digital communications versus traditional communication in academic settings, the frustrations experienced by classroom teachers being assigned to teach subjects they were not formally prepared to teach, possible connections between aggression and autism, and the first annual LDS Educators Conference, held in July 2017. We hope that you will enjoy this issue of *McKay Today Magazine*.



LYNNETTE B. ERICKSON

*Associate Dean*



# CONTENTS

## DEPARTMENTS ▼

2 SCHOOL NEWS

4 INSPIRING LEARNING

22 ALUMNI HAPPENINGS

18



## FEATURES ▼

6

LIGHTING THE PATHWAY  
*Barbara Morgan Gardner*

14

CONFIDENCE ALONG THE PATH  
*Paul Sweat*

18

BRENT G. WILSON:  
A LOYAL MAVERICK  
*Charlene Renberg Winters*

6



14



## HIGHLIGHTS ▼

24 A TEACHER OF TEACHERS

VOLUME 13  
ISSUE 2

PUBLISHER  
Mary Anne Prater  
EDITOR  
Cynthia Glad  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR  
Shauna Valentine

COPY EDITOR  
Karen Seely  
ART DIRECTOR  
Olivia Knudsen  
EDITORIAL ADVISOR  
Al Merkley

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS  
Andrea Christensen  
Madison Houghton  
Camilla Rowe  
Michael Sackley  
Janine Swart

# School News

The McKay School is continuously producing outstanding research and events. For more school news, please visit [education.byu.edu/news](http://education.byu.edu/news).



## Brain Stem Volume Linked to Autism Aggression

New research from BYU's autism experts is providing clues into the link between aggression and autism—clues the team hopes will eventually lead to more effective intervention. In the study, published in *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, researchers report a correlation between aggression and brain stem volume in children with autism: the smaller the brain stem, the greater the likelihood of aggression.

This is significant because “the brain stem is really involved in automatic activities—breathing, heart rate, staying awake—so this is evidence that there is something core and basic in this connection between aggression and autism,” said BYU clinical psychology PhD student Kevin Stephenson.

BYU's Autism Connect team was started three years ago in the McKay

School. It now includes researchers from other colleges on campus and collaborators beyond BYU. Studying aggression is Autism Connect's “overarching agenda,” said Terisa Gabrielsen, McKay School assistant professor of school psychology, “because it impacts families' quality of life so significantly. If we look long-term at things that affect the family the most, aggression is one of the most disruptive.”

In addition to a number of other studies planned or in process, the team is interested in exploring further how the brain stem is connected functionally to other areas of the brain, “because usually the brain doesn't work from just one area. It is a network of areas that all work together,” Stephenson said. “So if one area is disrupted, it is likely that other areas are disrupted as well.”

## To Type or Not to Type? That Isn't Really the Question

Schoolchildren have become accustomed to digital communication but haven't necessarily learned to switch off the habits formed in casual communication when using digital media for academic purposes.

“Today's youth actually are writing much more frequently and for a greater variety of purposes than youth in the past, and that is a good thing,” said Royce Kimmons, a McKay School assistant professor of instructional psychology and technology. “But we need to help our students develop the ability to think and write formally in certain contexts.”

Technology in school writing is now a reality, and there are both pros and cons to digital composition. For a study recently published in *Computers and Composition*, Kimmons and coauthors measured some of the differences between handwritten work versus work typed on a Chromebook. The Chromebook essays had higher rates of capitalization errors and text speak, but they also had fewer spelling errors and were written at a higher grade level.

Kimmons urges educators to embrace this technology and tailor their teaching accordingly in order to best help their students. “It is here, our kids are using it, and now we just have to take what they are doing that is good and make it into something better.”

## STAY CONNECTED!

MCKAY SCHOOL ONLINE [education.byu.edu](http://education.byu.edu)

SCHOOL NEWS [education.byu.edu/news](http://education.byu.edu/news)

ALUMNI NEWS [mckayalumni.byu.edu](http://mckayalumni.byu.edu)

SUBSCRIBE [education.byu.edu/news/subscribe](http://education.byu.edu/news/subscribe)

SOCIAL MEDIA



## Misplacing Science Teachers

Ryan Nixon spent four years studying matter, energy, and the universe—and learning how to teach those and other physics-related concepts. In his first year as an eighth-grade teacher, he hit a roadblock. He was supposed to teach his students geology: something he hadn't learned about since, well, eighth grade.



Ryan Nixon

Nixon, now a McKay School assistant professor of science education, recently teamed up with colleagues from the University of Georgia to explore



the rates and predictors of secondary science teachers who teach classes out of their field. Their research revealed that just 36 percent of new science teachers are teaching only in their trained subjects. “When you are a new teacher and you want a job, you take the job the principal gives you,” Nixon said. “And if you are assigned out of field, maybe you figure it out and do a good job with it, but it makes your life difficult.”

Though the problem has its roots in a number of areas, including vague policy, Nixon believes important change can come when administrators are aware of the issue. “I wonder if administrators really realize it is a problem. ‘You are a science teacher—why does it matter? Teach whatever,’” he said. “But when it comes down to it, administrators need to say, ‘My teachers need to be where they can teach best.’”

### LDS Educators Conference

More than 120 people from around the world attended the first annual LDS Educators Conference in July 2017, and officers were elected for the new LDS Educators Association.

Keynote speakers were John S. Tanner, president of BYU–Hawaii, and Elder Tad R. Callister, the Church Sunday School general president. “LDS education is about shaping or molding individuals. Education in the Church is much less about transmitting information than it is about developing transformation,” Tanner said. “It is about helping people become something, not just knowing things.”

The purpose of the conference was to challenge educators who are members of the Church to consider the relationship between their covenants and their professional practice. Various professionals also presented at the conference, including

Mossi White, child and public education advocate; Alan Wilkins, director of the BYU Faculty Center; and Mark Woodruff, assistant to the commissioner of education and secretary to the LDS Church Board of Education and Board of Trustees.

“I have visited schools in all 50 states and several foreign countries. I have seen both the worst and the best,” shared White. “In these challenging times it is imperative that our children receive their education in the best of schools. We must not fail. Our futures depend on it.”

Association officers include LeGrand “Buddy” Richards, president; David Boren, president-elect; Barbara Morgan Gardner, vice president-elect; and Scott Ferrin, secretary to the board. They will plan the next conference and discuss additional directions that the association will take in the future. Learn more at [education.byu.edu/laseducators](http://education.byu.edu/laseducators).

### Policy Program Is Back

The education policy and social foundations program, a rigorous two-year master's program, hasn't been available since 2009 but resumed this fall.

The policy-focused track enriches the educational leadership and foundations program by addressing the larger social, political, and cultural contexts in which schools operate. It will prepare students to contribute to education change, policy, and research on a local, national, and global scale.

“We want to increase our influence in terms of shaping the direction education goes, not only in Utah but also nationally,” said policy committee associate chair Donald Baum. “We really see it as an opportunity for students who have interests in education and who want to make a difference in education but don't plan on being teachers or school administrators.”

Check out [mckayalumni.byu.edu](http://mckayalumni.byu.edu)

- McKay alumni spotlights
- Rediscover BYU
- Articles on leadership
- Thoughts on teaching

AND  
MUCH  
MORE



# Inspiring Learning

"I hope we inspire our students to learn. And I hope that learning leads to inspiration."

—President Kevin J Worthen

## FIVE DEGREES OF PREPARATION *BS, MPH, MSW, and two PhDs*

For Heidi Vogeler, education is more than a degree—it is five of them. Vogeler is on track to finish her academic career at BYU in August 2020 with one undergraduate degree in human development, a master's degree in public health and another in social work from the University of Utah, and two PhDs—one in educational inquiry, measurement, and evaluation (EIME) and the other in counseling psychology.

During her time in the EIME program, Vogeler took a class from counseling psychology and special education chair Lane Fischer. He told her, "There is more to you. There is more to you than what you are doing. You are not just a numbers person. You are a people person. You are a counseling psychologist."

As a result of the conversation, Vogeler ended up in two McKay School PhD programs at the same time: EIME and counseling psychology. Fischer encouraged Vogeler to com-

pete in the three-minute thesis competition held at the McKay School, where she presented on trauma in partners of those with a sexual addiction. She won the competition and received second place at the university level.

"I have been so blessed by my education at BYU," Vogeler said. "The gospel has been so much a part of my education, and they are so intertwined. I have just been so grateful to be at BYU to be able to integrate the gospel into my own academic path. It has been awesome, and it has been a really huge privilege."



BRADLEY SLADE

## International Award

BYU's Open Education Group received the 2017 Excellence in Research Award from the international Open Education Consortium in recognition of the more than 30 peer-reviewed papers the team has published since 2011—with seven just in the last year.

Graduate students Olga Belikov, Bob Bodily, Tarah Ikahihifo, Troy Martin, and DeLaina Tonks work on the research under the mentorship of counseling psychology and special education chair Lane Fischer, ancient scripture professor John Hilton III, and adjunct McKay School professor David Wiley. The team also sponsors research fellows around the country—this year 27 of them—funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

"We love researching together with these students," said Fischer. "Students are the primary beneficiaries of our work. They are most adept at maximizing the benefits of new technologies. Students are the future of this research and its application to enhance education for all people."

With an increasing number of educators and students using open educational resources (OER), which are both free and open access, the group finds it rewarding to explore the challenges and benefits of the open resources movement. "There are people who have to choose between buying a textbook for a class and buying food for their child," Hilton says.



PHOTO COURTESY LANE FISCHER

PhD student Tarah Ikahihifo has been working with the BYU group for a year. Ultimately, she hopes, "OER could revolutionize higher education and provide better opportunities for people who might otherwise drop out. If you can alleviate one source of stress or tension, maybe that is the relief they need to be motivated to keep going."

## The David O. McKay School of Education Alumni Society

OUR GOAL: TO KEEP MCKAY ALUMNI **INFORMED, INVOLVED, AND ENGAGED**



Is your contact information up to date?  
(See insert!)



# A Voice of Change, Hope, and Positivity

By Dina Budeiri ('17)

Why Brigham Young University? That is a question I have been asked repeatedly during the past four years. It never failed to make me think about the journey I embarked on the day I applied for the BYU Jerusalem Center scholarship. As a Palestinian Muslim from Jerusalem—a city so beautiful yet extremely exhausted from years of endless struggle—I have been fortunate enough to receive the best education possible, even though I come from a part of the world where obtaining a high-level education is not the reality for many people.

I was born to parents who believed in the importance of education and its impact on our development. They sacrificed a lot in order to provide me and my five siblings with the most important weapons of our time: good education and open hearts. At times my daily journey entailed going through checkpoints with hours-long waits and degrading conditions. As much as my parents wanted me to stay by their sides, they encouraged me to seize any educational opportunity, whether locally or internationally, that came my way to help build a better reality for myself and the generations to follow. I was lucky to be one of three Palestinian students accepted for the scholarship.

Throughout my BYU experience I got the chance to grow academically, spiritually, and culturally. Being a part of a student body in which the majority of students are devout members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has given me a reason to reflect on

my own religion—a religion of peace and kindness. I also got to meet people from different parts of the world who taught me a lot about myself and the universe we share. The people I met at BYU conformed with the vision my parents had always tried to share with me—one of coexistence, compassion, and excellence.

While at BYU, I participated in Model United Nations conferences and study abroad programs to learn about global issues and to explore new cultures and perspectives. I served as the president of BYU's National Student Speech-Language Hearing Association, working with my fellow officers and faculty members to organize events to help students learn about our field. These experiences and others have equipped me with the knowledge I need to realize a vision of Palestine's future that I can share with other young Palestinians—a promising future of a free, safe, self-reliant state in which no child grows up without shelter, education, or health care. My personal commitment toward fulfilling this prosperous image of Palestine is to work as a speech-language pathologist and audiologist who helps people communicate and overcome their disabilities—thus greatly impacting their lives forever.

As a young woman, I share with my fellow students an increased level of anxiety as we witness an unprecedented level of hate, fear, polarization, and uncertainty. However, I am beyond confident to say that my story at BYU is one that is based on the embracement and acceptance I witnessed as a young Muslim

female in Provo, Utah. I left my country hoping to represent a voice of change, a voice of hope, and a voice of positivity. And here I am today, a proud BYU alumna representing these voices and adding my voice of gratitude for the years I spent at BYU and for the priceless friendships and acquaintances I encountered while living there.

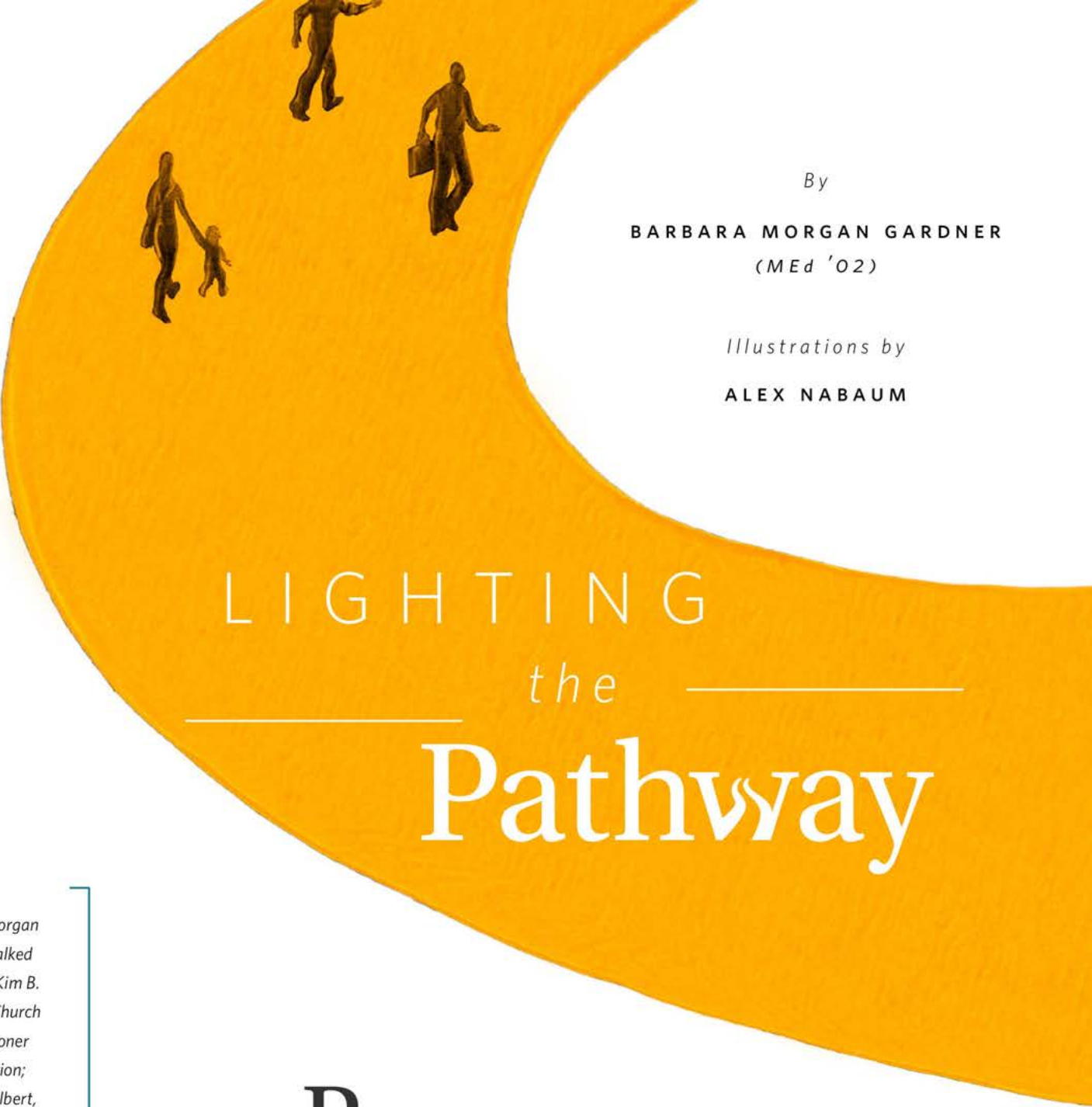
# RISE

Your story didn't end at graduation.

SHARE YOUR STORY AT [RISE.BYU.EDU](http://RISE.BYU.EDU).







By

BARBARA MORGAN GARDNER  
(MED '02)

Illustrations by

ALEX NABAUM

LIGHTING

the

# Pathway

Barbara Morgan Gardner talked with Elder Kim B. Clark, the Church commissioner of education; Clark G. Gilbert, the newly called BYU-Pathway Worldwide president; and others to learn about the new Church education plan and what you, as a McKay School alumnus, should know about it.

**P**resident Dieter F. Uchtdorf declared February 7, 2017, to be “a very special day for the Church Educational System and a day of hope and joy for many of our young people worldwide who are seeking to educate themselves and prepare for a successful livelihood.” On this day the First Presidency and Church Board of Education announced the creation of BYU-Pathway Worldwide (BYU-Pathway). This organization expands PathwayConnect, formerly known as BYU-Idaho’s Pathway program, which began in 2009. BYU-Pathway and its programs provide students around the world with a low-cost option to earn college credit toward a certificate or degree while remaining in their own area. For example, PathwayConnect students meet in local groups and work through online courses.



### EMPHASIZING EDUCATION

The LDS Church has always been involved in the education of its members. Over the years the Church Educational System (CES) has provided both secular and spiritual education to its members throughout the world, including stake academies in highly LDS populated areas in the late 1800s and early 1900s and the approximately 100 K–12 and normal schools in Mexico, South America, and the Pacific Islands in the mid-1900s. As the Church continued to grow and expand internationally, however, Church leaders decided to focus on the spiritual education of its members and leave secular education for a time, with few exceptions, to local governments and individuals. As a result, over the last few decades the seminary and institute program has become well established throughout the world, institutions of higher education have become well established, and the Church's infrastructure and manpower have laid the groundwork for further educational expansion.

After years of monitoring and analyzing international education needs, as well as evaluating the Church's infrastructure—including buildings for seminary and institute students, income levels of members, leadership skills, etc.—Church leaders slowly began to get more involved in the higher-education needs of their members.

In his April 2001 general conference address, President Gordon B. Hinckley declared, "Where there is widespread pov-

erty among our people, we must do all we can to help them to lift themselves, to establish their lives upon a foundation of self-reliance that can come of training. Education is the key to opportunity." He then announced the establishment of the Perpetual Education Fund, which provides funding and support for young adults to receive desperately needed educational opportunities. We now see that this program is only a part of Church leaders' continued inspiration about providing greater access to higher education for wider populations.

In fact, during his own 1971 inaugural address as president of Ricks College, Henry B. Eyring said, "We must also find ways for this college to serve young people whose needs are shaped by a great variety of cultures and situations and who may not be able to come to this campus. . . . We will find direct ways to move the blessing of education—the struggle for perfection—from this campus out into the lives of men and women everywhere."

David A. Bednar, nearly 30 years later, during his BYU–Idaho inaugural address, stated, "It will be necessary for us . . . to serve *ever better* the thousands of students we have on campus while simultaneously reaching out to bless the lives of tens of thousands of young Latter-day Saints throughout the world. . . . We must learn how to assist and bless institute students and other LDS youth in Rhode Island and Rome while effectively serving our students on campus in Rexburg."

Finally, in his inaugural address as president of BYU–Idaho in 2005, Kim B. Clark declared, "I believe that at BYU–Idaho we must learn to use new technologies and develop methods, materials, programs, and concepts that not only can be applied to our students on and off our campus, but also can be effectively and efficiently applied by others across the Church and, indeed, across the world. I am convinced that this university is in this valley where our pioneer heritage is deeply ingrained, where the people are humble and faithful, so that we can be a proving ground of great fidelity for education that will bless the young people of the Church worldwide."

### GOING AFTER THE 66 PERCENT

With this charge in mind, Church educational analysts held focus groups in 2009 at three pilot sites: Nampa, Idaho; Mesa, Arizona; and Manhattan, New York, to determine the needs of the 66 percent of LDS young single adults that were not enrolled in college throughout the United States. The three main reasons found for why they were not enrolled were financial concern, fear, and lack of accessibility to higher education.

"In effect," Clark G. Gilbert, one of the early founders of the BYU–Idaho Pathway program and now the newly assigned president of BYU–Pathway, explained, "these young people and many older people perceived themselves as standing at the edge of a canyon with a big gap between them and the other

side with no way across. We set out to design Pathway to bridge that gap.”

BYU–Idaho’s Pathway program, now officially titled PathwayConnect, commenced in 2009. It was designed as a low-cost educational opportunity that combined online courses with local gatherings. Three locations throughout the United States were chosen, with 50 students enrolled in the program. These students committed to taking one religion class and one academic class—math, English, and life skills—each of their three semesters. The program took one year to complete and made it possible for students to move on to professional certificates and degrees.

During that same year, President Henry B. Eyring, speaking as a member of the First Presidency and as a board member for the Church Educational System, stated at J. Lawrence Richard’s inauguration as president of LDS Business College, “Education will not be confined to classrooms or even to campuses as we have come to love them. . . . The changes in technology will make it possible to reach any student anywhere in the world.” He also said, “I can’t see the full vision of that yet, but I know it is coming. It will allow us to make changes, both within a campus and across the Church, to extend the blessings of learning, of warm associations, and of the influence of the Holy Ghost.”

As the Pathway program was halfway through the first semester, without any hard data to back up his proposal, Kim B. Clark, president of BYU–Idaho at the time, asked the executive committee to expand Pathway by adding two international sites—in Puebla, Mexico, and Christiansborg, Ghana—and later eight additional sites in the United States. The board approved his proposal on November 11, 2009, to research the possibility of international expansion. The need for international sites for Pathway became obvious, and expansion started almost immediately. Now, as commissioner of Church Education, Elder Kim Clark concluded, “Clearly the Lord is hastening his work.”

By 2014, five years after its inception, the original Pathway program had met and exceeded expectations. It had served 24,357 students from 38 states and 21 countries with 227 total operating sites throughout the world.

## LAUNCHING A WORLDWIDE INITIATIVE

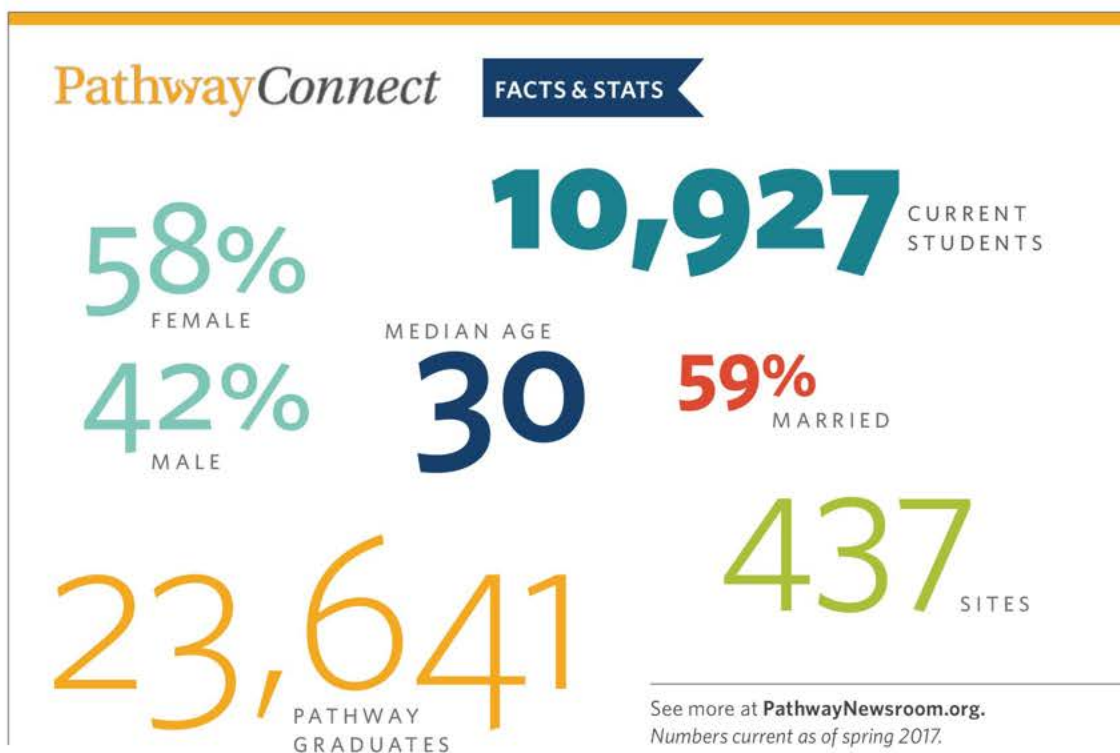
In November 2015 the Church Board of Education formalized efforts with a new policy that stated in part: “The Church Educational System will seek to provide opportunities for education to the members of the Church wherever the Church is organized.”

“For many years,” Elder Clark said, “CES was known for providing primarily religious education. It is the Church Educational System, and we are involved in every aspect of Church education.”

The implementation of this initiative provided the impetus of the expanded higher-education system introduced in February 2017 that is now known as BYU–Pathway Worldwide. According to BYU–Pathway president Clark Gilbert, BYU–Pathway Worldwide is made up of three primary components:

- 1 The historical BYU–Idaho Pathway program, now called PathwayConnect
- 2 Coordination of all CES online certificate and degree programs
- 3 English language training

Regarding the English language component, Elder Clark emphatically stated, “There is no way we could have done any of this without BYU as a partner.” He continued, “Professors at BYU have a direct role in this program. Because of the expertise of many BYU professors, we have an English assessment



instrument that we provide at no cost to students around the world that draws on the expertise of BYU professors.”

President Gilbert also added, “It is impossible to overstate the extremely important role BYU plays in the success of BYU–Pathway Worldwide. BYU is the flagship brand for higher education in the Church. BYU provides the halo over not only BYU–Pathway Worldwide but over all of the CES schools. BYU has played both a direct and an indirect role in the creation, implementation, and evaluation of BYU–Pathway Worldwide.”

BYU–Pathway Worldwide is not accredited; rather, the online degrees are granted from BYU–Idaho, with other CES schools contributing courses. According to President Gilbert, “All four Church schools of higher education plus seminaries and institutes have been involved in this organization and have supported it in different ways.” He continued, “This partnership has been absolutely miraculous.”

### FINE-TUNING THE PROGRAMS

As to be expected, not everything about BYU–Pathway’s implementation has run smoothly. “One of the biggest constraints to growth,” President Gilbert explained, “is the English language ability of students. As we have traveled throughout the world to the various sites, we have learned that more than half of our international students don’t even have the basic English skills to start the three-semester PathwayConnect program.”

Retention, as is the case with most universities, is also a constraint. Compared to other universities, especially online programs, the success of PathwayConnect is impressive. President Gilbert said, “About half of the students who start PathwayConnect complete it. Of that group, more than 85 percent go on to receive more education and have an improved job. That is the education and career side. Students who complete PathwayConnect have an average of a 3.0 GPA or higher. Ninety-five percent of these students report significantly improved spiritual growth, and 99 percent would recommend it to a friend.” Even so, President Gilbert added, “We are working to strengthen completion and retention rates for all our students.”

By the spring of 2017, more than 61,000 students had enrolled in PathwayConnect since its BYU–Idaho inception. And PathwayConnect now serves students from 71 countries



**ADEOLA GBADEGESIN**  
Kosa, Ghana

**Adeola Gbadegesin**, from Kosa, Ghana, is a PathwayConnect graduate now majoring in business with a minor in web development from the BYU–Idaho online degree program. Pathway has made it possible for him to achieve a higher-education degree in a country where it is incredibly expensive to do so. “Pathway has really been a miracle for me. It creates an opportunity to be able to interact with other students while learning. Its primary objective is to build disciple leadership,” said Gbadegesin.

This program has changed Gbadegesin’s life, as well as the lives of the other 299 Pathway students in Ghana. Gbadegesin has enjoyed the focus on learning, both temporally and spiritually, and he hopes to see the program continue to develop around the world.

and 43 states. The median student age is 30, and 59 percent of them are married. Of these students, 42 percent are male and 58 percent are female. There are 437 sites, with continued expansion. Half of the sites are in the United States or Canada and half are in other international settings.

Perhaps one of the greatest measures of success for students is the increase of hope in their lives. “PathwayConnect is a tremendous spiritual rescue tool and has become not only a path to education but a path back to the Church,” said President Gilbert.

In a break from the traditional model of Church schools, students enrolled in PathwayConnect initially do not need an ecclesiastical endorsement, do not need to pay an application fee, and do not need to have taken a standardized test. In addition, tuition in the United States is a mere \$69 per credit—five times less than at a public college. The students must, however, have high-speed internet and must commit to attending local meetings every Thursday night. Students who complete PathwayConnect may continue to take future certificate- or degree-seeking courses online from BYU–Idaho for the same low price. However, the students must eventually receive an ecclesiastical endorsement prior to being admitted to the degree programs at BYU–Idaho.

When asked why any of this matters to him, President Gilbert responded, “On a personal note, I had the blessing of attending BYU. That experience changed my life forever. It



**WENDY FLORES**  
Lima, Peru



**AMBER WILD**  
Cumberland, Rhode Island

**Wendy Flores** is a Pathway student in Lima, Peru. She has a long commute from Cieneguilla, the city she lives in, to her classes in Lima. Traveling this distance is a weekly sacrifice that she is willing to make to further her education. “My Pathway instructors were amazing and very beneficial because they helped me improve my English skills, build on my talents, and also increase my testimony of Jesus Christ,” said Flores.

Flores hopes that other members of the Church will be brought to the Pathway program so they can receive blessings from it as well.

**Amber Wild** knew that she wanted to return to school. She attended Rhode Island College prior to serving her LDS mission. When she came home, she married her high school sweetheart, and they then had their first child. As a result, Wild didn’t get to go back to school as soon as she had originally hoped. Fortunately, she heard about the Pathway program, and it ended up being the perfect fit for her. “It is such a blessing to be able to add to my education and get my degree at this time in my life,” Wild shared.

Pathway has helped Wild in many ways. It has taught her excellent time management principles that she uses daily as a mother, wife, and student. She has also noticed an increase of the Spirit in her life. She said, “It is not just recommended that you learn by the Spirit; it is absolutely necessary.”

helped me grow more confident. It was personally transformative in who I became. It is very clear that this is something the Lord has planned for a long time. He built institutes and had them stretch throughout the world. He knew BYU–Idaho would be the place where Pathway would be developed and piloted and had the right people at the right place at the right time to make it happen. I feel humbled that I could be involved in it. I really feel like we are part of something important the Lord is bringing to pass.”

**BARBARA MORGAN GARDNER** is an assistant professor of religious education at Brigham Young University and the LDS chaplain at large for higher education. She completed her master’s degree in educational leadership from the McKay School of Education and her PhD in instructional technology from Utah State University. She taught seminary and institute for almost a decade and worked in the Research Information Division, in Curriculum Development and Evaluation of CES, and in Church Schools. She also served as the institute director and seminary coordinator in Boston, Massachusetts. Her research interests include international Church education, religious outreach, and women in religious leadership.

■ For a fully referenced version of this article, please go to [education.byu.edu/news/magazine](http://education.byu.edu/news/magazine).

## HOW CAN MCKAY SCHOOL ALUMNI GET INVOLVED WITH THE CHURCH EDUCATION PROGRAMS?

There are many opportunities right now for work and service in PathwayConnect and BYU–Pathway Worldwide.

### ► Serve as a Missionary

Join the 2,282 people now serving as Pathway missionaries. Inform prospective students. Guide them through enrollment. Mentor, encourage, and motivate the students. Two-thirds of the current missionaries are in the United States or Canada, and one-third are in other international areas.

### ► Be an Instructor

Spend about 10 hours a week on a typical, predeveloped course. A master’s or higher degree as well as prior teaching and related work experience are preferred. You must reside in one of 26 U.S. states where Pathway is approved to hire. Training is provided.

### ► Refer a Friend

Tell others about opportunities for students, instructors, and missionaries.

Learn more about all of these opportunities at [pathway.lds.org](http://pathway.lds.org).



## #BeATeacher

---

Students, faculty, and staff gathered to celebrate learning and to celebrate teachers on the lawn in front of the McKay Building. The T-shirts are part of a campaign to promote teaching with other university education programs throughout the state.



# CONFIDENCE

---

*along the path*



---

*photography by Bradley Slade*





*Your decision to embark on a  
career in education is significant.*



*Don't lose your conviction  
when times get tough and  
Lucifer distracts you.*

BY PAUL SWEAT

In 1877, a 17-year-old young man by the name of Benjamin Cluff Jr. was working as the city librarian in the small town of Coalville, Utah, located 65 miles east of Provo. Young Benjamin, who had grown up the son of a carpenter and farmer, had felt the pull to do something different than his father. He was excited for the opportunity to become the librarian and delighted at the thought of perusing all the books the library held.

After working in this capacity for a time, growing his thirst for knowledge to even greater heights, Benjamin packed a small bundle of clothing and an umbrella and set out on foot for the recently established Brigham Young Academy in Provo. His father, who had established a good farm in Heber Valley, offered Benjamin one-third interest in that farm if he would stay and help run it. This was after he had left Coalville but before he had begun his studies at the Academy.

To this generous offer Benjamin replied, "If you release me to go to school, I will never ask you for assistance." Keeping to his word, Benjamin not only enrolled as a student but also took a job as a custodian at the Academy to make ends meet.

After some time as a student, Benjamin traveled east for higher education at the University of Michigan. After completing his degree, he traveled back home to Utah, returning to the Academy in 1892 as a member of the faculty. He later became the third principal of BYA. Under Benjamin's direction and leadership, Brigham Young Academy officially became Brigham Young University in 1903, making Benjamin Cluff Jr. the first president of this magnificent university. This remarkable life path that started with Benjamin as the school custodian and ended with him as the university president is not just for the history books. Similar paths are present today.



BENJAMIN CLUFF JR.

You, like Benjamin Cluff Jr., have been led away from the many other career paths you could have chosen to that of becoming an educator. Benjamin Cluff Jr. had a great work that he was meant to accomplish. His rejection of his father's offer of one-third interest in the family farm not only transformed his life but the lives of thousands

of people—including you and me, as graduates of this university. The most exciting part about that notion is the tremendous journey each of you has before you—a path that is replete with opportunities to change the lives of hundreds and even thousands of students for good.

**GO FORTH WITH CONFIDENCE!  
BELIEVE IN YOUR OWN SELF-EFFICACY**

I love educators. I love working with them, and I love watching them work with students. One of the primary reasons I love them is for their strong, ever-present attitude of self-efficacy. Yes, you as educators believe in your ability to do good and believe in your ability to change the lives of children. You believe in your own self-efficacy, or you wouldn't be here. As I look out across these rows of graduates, it gives me goose bumps to consider your cumulative potential to do good and to change the lives of so many children who will end up in your classrooms.

You are about to become a part of the greatest institution this country knows: K-12 education! Public education gives every student throughout the land the opportunity to improve his or her station in life.

This work will not be easy; it will be the most difficult work you have ever done. It will also be the most rewarding.

You are well prepared! I know this firsthand; I know that you are the best of the best. I have a message for each of you today: Go forth with confidence!

**TRUST IN YOUR ABILITIES, YOUR  
TRAINING, AND YOUR INSTINCTS**

To help me properly convey this message, I turn to the words of Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, a current apostle and the ninth president of this university. On March 2, 1999, on this campus, he delivered a devotional entitled "Cast Not Away Therefore Your Confidence." The title itself—words spoken by the apostle Paul (Hebrews 10:35)—conveys a strong message. The message is that the leaders of the Church, the prophet, and our Savior and Heavenly Father all want us to go forth with confidence; they

want you as new teachers to trust in your abilities, your training, and your instincts.

I can assure you that the superintendents, principals, fellow teachers, and students with whom you will work are excited to have you. We welcome your youthful exuberance, your penchant to try new things, and your willingness to work together on a team. We also welcome the fact that who you are as a person will become part of the school culture you are about to join.

The BYU–Public School Partnership that my district, Wasatch County School District, is a part of has five commitments that we hold together as a group. They are

1. **civic preparation**
2. **engaged learning**
3. **equitable access for all students**
4. **stewardship in school and community**
5. **commitment to renewal**

We as administrators strive to provide an organizational framework that will enable you as teachers to actually do this very important work. Access to knowledge and engaged learning are important concepts for us. For you, these concepts will be a big part of your daily work—and often a daily struggle. Yes, those first days and first years can be extra tough. Teaching is a difficult profession, but, like most things in life, the greater the struggle, the greater the reward.

**STAY THE COURSE—LUCIFER HIMSELF DOES  
NOT WANT YOU TO BE AN EDUCATOR**

Sadly, many trained educators choose to leave the profession early in their careers. The struggle becomes too great, and they leave before the rewards are evident. I plead with you to stay the course. You are badly needed; the children of America need you. Please remember back to that moment of enlightenment that originally set you on this path. Do not let a difficult day, week, or even year drive you away from what you have spent so much time preparing to do.

Let us return to the words of Elder Holland during his inspired address to the students of this campus. He said, "Don't assume that a great revelation, some marvelous illuminating moment, or the opening of an inspired path is the end of it." Elder Holland also said, "There is one who personifies

Just like Benjamin Cluff Jr.,  
you have an

## IMPORTANT LIFE'S WORK

awaiting you.

'opposition in all things' (2 Nephi 2:11) ... [who seeks] 'the misery of all mankind' (2 Nephi 2:18)".

Lucifer himself does not want you to be an educator; when the going gets tough, he wants you to doubt your career and drop out.

The example Elder Holland so eloquently used to demonstrate this point is that of Moses being taken up to an exceedingly high mountain where he saw God face-to-face and the glory of God was upon him. The scripture says that Moses "beheld the earth, yea, even all of it; and there was not a particle of it which he did not behold, discerning it by the spirit of God" (Moses 1:27). Elder Holland referred to this as one of the greatest accounts we have of any prophet's experience with divinity.

What happened next seems unbelievable. Lucifer himself showed up, demanding that Moses worship him (see Moses 1:12). The two had quite an exchange, but of course Moses wasn't having any of it. If Lucifer was so bold as to approach Moses after he had just seen God, it is easy to understand that Lucifer will certainly approach us before we are about to accomplish great things—even after we have made important life decisions and even after we have received personal revelation and have witnessed the opening of an inspired path before us.

Elder Holland went on to remind us that "we cannot sign on for a moment of such eternal significance and everlasting consequence without knowing it will be a fight—a good fight and a winning fight, but a fight nevertheless."

Then came this tremendous counsel from the apostle Paul:

*Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.*

*For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. . . .*

*. . . If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.*

*But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition.*  
[Hebrews 10:35–36, 38–39]

Graduates, just like Benjamin Cluff Jr., you have an important life's work awaiting you—yes, even great things to accomplish and many young lives to influence for good. But please know that "it will be a fight—a good fight and a winning fight, but a fight nonetheless." And also remember, "Cast not away therefore your confidence. . . . We are not of them who draw back."

Thank you, and may Heavenly Father bless you and your career in education.

*Paul Sweat, superintendent of Wasatch County School District, in Heber City, Utah, delivered this convocation address on April 28, 2017.*



---

# BRENT G. WILSON:

---

## A LOYAL MAVERICK

---





## BY CHARLENE RENBERG WINTERS

**W**hen historian Juanita Brooks investigated the deaths of an 1857 wagon train party at the hands of nearby southern Utah Mormon settlers, she took on a daunting task that would mark the rest of her life.

Brooks published her research in the 1950 book *The Mountain Meadows Massacre*, and, although her work today is considered a unique and substantial contribution to Mormon history, she was stigmatized by her decision to tackle such a controversial topic.

She felt isolated and suffered retributions. Brooks struggled with that, because as a believing member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, she did not want to lose those connections.

Her father, an old cowboy from southern Utah, suggested a possible pathway by describing the best way to herd cattle. His story provided the metaphor that University of Colorado Denver professor and McKay School instructional psychology and technology alumnus Brent G. Wilson applied in a BYU Homecoming lecture earlier this month. Titled “Riding Herd: Honoring our Educational Commitments,” his address accompanied his honor as the 2017 Alumni Achievement Award recipient from the David O. McKay School of Education.

“Juanita’s father said that when herding cattle, he never placed himself in the middle where you might get trampled,” Wilson said. “Herding from the back won’t work—they can ignore you. You need to stay on the side, calling and whistling and moving them along. Maybe even kick their hind ends if they need a little prodding.”

The seasoned rancher saw value in operating “kind of on the sides,” or on the margins. So does Wilson, a professor of information and learning technologies at the University of Colorado Denver (CU Denver) within the School of Education and Human Development.

Choosing to operate in the margins has risks that “come from never fully embracing the organization,” he explained. “If you want to contribute, be a part of things, but if you see a little differently than people around you, you are going to feel some tension.”

As an example, Wilson said that working in an urban university in a school of education whose mission is entirely about

# “BRENT WILSON

is a highly respected freethinker.

He is committed to helping people, regardless of whether it violates norms of the discipline or ruffles some feathers. He is personable, warm, and open, so even if some people do not agree with his intellectual ideas, they still hold him in high regard.”

—JASON MCDONALD



social justice makes him an insider/outsider. “I don’t fully fit anywhere completely,” he said. “I’m not strictly K–12 because my field of instructional design is also heavily adult-focused. Equity and social justice are important to our practice but have a different slant with technology. Our MA program is entirely online. Who could complain about cognitive psychology, rigorous refereed research, or, in my field, objectives-based lessons and systematic design of curriculum—unless those things get out of balance and become idols or distractions? This can easily happen in academia, and I have observed it.”

Wilson’s initial academic interest was psychology, but he also loved philosophy and studies of the human condition, literature, and the humanities. Those and other interests, along with his commitment to family and faith, have made it challenging to conveniently categorize his life.

“I am not able to compartmentalize very well, so I have never been 100 percent regarding strictly objective accounts of learning,” Wilson said. “Seeing how people grow and develop, I am always looking at the whole person. I like to see how people have their needs met and become competent in a rich and full-bodied way.”

Wilson values his choice to “belong to a professional community” and do his job with integrity “while also helping the organization make the moves it needs to improve.” That is what he has been doing for 30 years at CU Denver.

“Brent Wilson is a highly respected freethinker,” said Jason McDonald, BYU associate professor of instructional psychology and technology. “He is committed to helping people,

regardless of whether it violates norms of the discipline or ruffles some feathers. He is personable, warm, and open, so even if some people do not agree with his intellectual ideas, they still hold him in high regard.”

“We really appreciate Brent Wilson’s contributions to the field,” said Stephen C. Yanchar, McKay School associate professor of instructional psychology and technology. “He is an intellectual maverick who challenges assumptions and seeks different and better ways of doing things.” Yanchar adds that Wilson is well-recognized professionally—almost universally—in a good sense. “People who disagree with his ideas still appreciate him. He is cited far more than most professors and provides a good example of what academics should be. I look up to him that way. He loves ideas and likes to push things forward. He doesn’t care about personal recognition. That is largely immaterial to him, and I believe that is a great way to be.”

While Wilson may not seek personal acknowledgement, his credentials are impressive. His book *Constructivist Learning Environments: Case Studies in Instructional Design* left a mark in the 1990s as instructional designers found ways to make instruction more meaningful and authentic. He has published three other books, a proceedings volume, and more than 120 other articles, chapters, and proceedings papers.

After leading CU Denver’s educational technology program for more than 20 years, he now enjoys giving service to the university and teaching courses in instructional design, e-learning trends, action research, and professional learning and development. Of particular interest, however, is mentoring graduate students.

“Talk to any 60-year-old professor trained in their 20s and ask how the field has changed,” he says. “They will have had some sort of seismic experience that required retooling, recon-

sidering, and seeing new avenues of thought. You are fortunate when you encounter a bright, young, ambitious student and then together embark on a journey. You become reeducated.

“A good professor will usually look for students who have an agenda with preconceived passions and hopes,” he added. “I may interview someone, for example, who comes in with a background on how organizations change. That is not my field exactly, but it relates to my field. Using our different perspectives, we can find points where we can help each other. It is a sense of adventure. Most professors value collaborations, but because of the way our work is organized, many of our faculty interactions are administrative, and we don’t join forces as much as we would like. Usually my collaborations are more intense with students.”

McDonald felt such a connection with Wilson. “He was on my BYU dissertation committee and advised me occasionally through graduate school,” McDonald said. “As a professor from a different university, he had no employment obligation to me, but he was exceptionally generous with his time. We reviewed my work, and he offered great feedback. He was consistently available for phone consultations. I found him generous, kind, and sharp as a whip. He has a wide reputation as a freethinker. I think it is based on his research and a desire to help people become their best.”

BYU doctoral student Stephan Taeger agrees and has more than one reason to appreciate Wilson. “I published a small article and he read it,” said Taeger. “Out of the blue he emailed me and said he liked it and indicated we had some similar research interests. He asked if we could talk sometime—and we did. I marveled that I was speaking with an established scholar who was taking time for me. I found him personable, kind, and a great listener.”

Additionally, Taeger is using one of Wilson’s models as part of his dissertation. “What appeals to me is how Dr. Wilson is trying to take education from safe or standard designs to something transformative. He created a framework that provides learning experiences for students that move beyond getting knowledge in an efficient manner. His work provided an invaluable direction for my dissertation,” Taeger said.

Wilson’s professional path began at BYU, where he earned a bachelor’s degree in psychology in 1976 and a doctorate in instructional science and technology in 1982. “I stumbled into the field through part-time work as an undergraduate psych major,” he explained. “I was thinking in terms of clinical psychology, but the work on instructional projects steered me toward healthy people. I saw real possibilities in helping them benefit from good instruction within a strong curriculum.”

While his educational roots were planted firmly at BYU, he has adapted successfully to many changes in the field. Trained initially when behaviorism ruled and cognition was new to American education, he has embraced new views that have shaped his field.

“My thinking evolved from cognitive psychology in the 1970s to workplace performance in the 1980s,” he said. “I helped in the move toward constructivism and postmodern thinking in the 1990s to more pragmatic, eclectic thought with a focus on practice and experience in the 2000s. Today I am part of a continuing conversation on agency, identity, and theory-to-practice connections.”

Wilson’s current scholarship gives more attention and respect to everyday practices, lived experience, political realities, and enduring relationships. And he recognizes that as a scholar positioned at times on the margins, he must walk a careful line. “I think every one of us needs to be thoughtful about our contribution to organizations—along with the students and clients we serve,” he said. “CU Denver has been a wonderful experience with great colleagues, but we are not perfect. As a senior professor, my younger colleagues appreciate my occasionally speaking out. It is my modest way of riding the herd!”

*See more about Wilson’s Alumni Achievement Award lecture at [education.byu.edu/news/honored-alum-speech-2017](http://education.byu.edu/news/honored-alum-speech-2017).*



# Alumni Happenings

McKay Today helps connect you to your former classmates and teachers. To read more, visit [education.byu.edu/news/category/alumni](http://education.byu.edu/news/category/alumni).

“My professional success is partially a function of luck, but the part that is in my power owes to thinking expansively about what I could do with my degree.”

## DANIEL CROSBY, *Class of 2008*



PHOTO COURTESY DANIEL CROSBY

Daniel Crosby, counseling psychology alumnus, has found his place in behavioral finance. He is coauthor of a *New York Times* best seller and has been named one of the “12 Thinkers to Watch” by Monster.com, labeled a “Financial Blogger You Should Be Reading” by AARP, and placed in the “Top 40 Under 40” by *InvestmentNews*.

Crosby has shared research, findings, and experiences in TEDx talks and dozens of industry conferences each year and has authored three books and coauthored a fourth. The book he coauthored with Charles Widger, *Personal Benchmark: Integrating Behavioral Finance and Investment Management*, is a *New York Times* best seller. His latest book, *The Laws of Wealth: Psychology and the Secret to Investing Success*, was recently named the best investment book of 2016 and is currently being translated into other languages.

“My professional success is partially a function of luck, but the part that is in my power owes to thinking expansively about what I could do with my degree,” Crosby said. “Far too often students fall into easy paths when con-

sidering how to market themselves and use their degree.”

Crosby earned his bachelor’s degree in psychology in 2003 and then returned to BYU and earned a doctorate in counseling psychology in 2008 from the Department of Counseling Psychology and Special Education. He also studied at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, in a postdoctoral internship.

Crosby’s professional career began as an organizational psychologist. In this role he primarily conducted preemployment psychological assessments of potential bankers. He administered half-day exams that included lengthy interviews, IQ tests, and assessments of the congruence between a candidate’s personality and the requirements of the job.

It was while he was working with bankers that he learned of a field called behavioral finance—the intersection of investment management and psychology. As the son of a financial advisor, he was intrigued with this field and set out to learn more about it. He immediately knew he had found his calling.

“I see financial markets as a giant inkblot test against which the collec-

tive fear, greed, and exuberance of the masses play out. Nothing could be more fascinating,” said Crosby. Now well into his behavioral financial career, he is the founder and president of Nocturne Capital, where he does original research on stock market sentiment. He is not only a psychologist but also a behavior finance expert and asset manager.

“Managing money is more about controlling personal biases and thinking critically than anything else,” said Crosby. He discovered that the concepts he learned in the counseling psychology program are transferable to other fields. While in the program, he learned to let go of defensiveness, question his assumptions, and make hard choices—all of which are directly applicable to work he is engaged in today. He said, “I hope that I am proof that taking a nontraditional path can be rewarding.”

Crosby and his wife, Karina, live in Alpharetta, Georgia, with their three children.



*“Through my program I volunteered, observed, student-taught, and interned with at least 10 different schools and saw many master educators. I grew a vision for what I needed to master to become a powerful teacher.”*



**KARA ALDEN, Class of 2015**

“My class is run by the scholars—the students,” said Kara Alden, McKay School alumna, class of 2015. “I constantly ask myself, ‘Can I have a scholar teach or say this?’ I spend maybe 10 to 15 percent of my time in direct instruction and the remainder as a facilitator for the scholars teaching scholars.”

Alden believes in creating an independent learning environment for her fourth-grade students in which they can feel a sense of ownership for their education. She also tries to prepare them for future challenges. Her students present strategies, tutor each other, and create math rules and conjectures. Alden acknowledged that it has taken a lot of hard work, but at the end of the school year they have become independent, well-spoken, and confident.



Alden has taught first and fourth grades at Success Academy Crown Heights in Brooklyn, New York. Success

Academy is a charter school that draws many of its students from low-income families. Faculty and staff are dedicated to helping their students overcome the achievement gap that has historically kept many such students from attending college. Alden feels that she has become part of that purpose and loves working in a school where she feels she makes a huge difference.

“My degree in elementary education with an art education minor gave me a look at what high-level education looks like. Through my program I volunteered, observed, student-taught, and interned with at least 10 different schools and saw many master educators. I grew a vision for what I needed to master to become a powerful teacher. In my opinion, one of the most important aspects of excellence is never-ending study, reflection, and change,” Alden reported.

From her experiences in the McKay School and her internship in Washington, DC, she also learned the importance of flexibility and creativity. “I think one of the keys to happiness is change. You will be able to learn more and be a more interesting person if you allow new ideas into your life, your views to be challenged, and your mind to be changed!”

Placing a greater focus on the complexity of the individual and finding ways to diversify and teach to

individual needs is something that Alden appreciates. “I love that there is a greater focus on the arts in the classroom. My kids get to dance and make art and music every week,” she said.

Alden loves children; she jokes that her best friends are all 10 years old. And she loves learning. “You can’t be a teacher without first being a learner,” she said.

For the 2016–17 school year, Alden received the Excellence in Education: Teacher Growth Award at Success Academy. She was recognized for keeping her curriculum effective and challenging as she moved from teaching first to fourth grade.

“I was truly honored by this award,” said Alden. “I do feel like I have made significant growth as a teacher. Teaching can be such a thankless profession; sometimes we don’t get acknowledged and recognized by the other adults we work with. It felt deeply fulfilling to be recognized at the adult level for all the hard work I have poured into my scholars’ education.”

Despite the long hours and relentless work, Alden concluded that her current class is full of truly amazing and talented kids. In her own words, “I have the best job in the world.”

PHOTOS COURTESY KARA ALDEN

---

# A Teacher of Teachers

By Kevin Haws

---

*Professor Duane Merrell has a long history of inspiring his students in and out of the classroom as the students inherit his passion for teaching and mentoring. Through his advice and personal assistance, since 2005 Merrell has helped 236 students take up the mantle of teacher.*

**BYU PHYSICS TEACHING PROFESSOR DUANE MERRELL** is a master teacher and mentor, with more than three decades of teaching—high school and college—under his belt. When asked what he is most proud of, his response is telling. It was not being one of 16 educators in the country selected as a physics master teacher leader, getting the Utah Governor’s Medal for Science and Technology, or receiving the U.S. Presidential Award for Science Teachers. His immediate answer was, “These kids. I hope it has always been about them.”

In his workshop classroom Merrell has a line of custom trim along the walls to insert photos of each student he has mentored since he started at BYU in 2005 (236 students to date). He can point to each face and tell their story. Recently outgrowing the length of three walls, he had another line of trim installed to accommodate the growing numbers of students he has helped prepare to be teachers. “I don’t want them to be surprised when they walk into teaching school the first day—even though they are going to be,” Merrell said. “Regardless of what I do, they are going to be surprised at how difficult, in some cases, this job is—given 30 or 40 kids in the classroom and making decisions that affect those kids’ learning.”

Merrell teaches in a way that is concrete. His lessons focus on practical application and demonstration of principles rather than simply spoon-feeding students information for them to regurgitate on a bubble sheet. For example, one of his lessons is called “Mission to Mars,” in which students have to protect a fragile egg through launch and landing, teaching them engineering and impulse momentum through experience.



“We model almost all of our teaching with activities that students can do,” he said.

Even after class is finished, Merrell doesn’t stop being a teacher. He assists budding teachers in finding work after graduation and offers advice and equipment whenever asked. Dylan Lyman, a former student and a physics teacher himself at Copper Hills High School in West Jordan, Utah, said, “I regularly told Merrell that I wasn’t going to teach. He would just smile and tell me, ‘We will see!’” Lyman continued, “As I have taught in the years since then, Duane is still available whenever I need or want him. He is a dear friend now and someone I regularly go to for advice about my job—sometimes more than I go to my own coworkers.”

Merrell wants to make a difference in the lives of students, and that clear desire impacts those learning from him, inspiring them to do the same for others. Merrell



Professor Merrell recently received another award: the **Karl G. Maeser Professional Faculty**

**in Excellence Award** on August 28, 2017, for his significant contributions to preparing the next generation of physics and physical science teachers.

does this in his classroom with instructive lessons and creative projects and after as well with advice and support to those he is inspired to teach. “I am really lucky that good kids come to BYU,” Merrell said. “I am even luckier that they choose to be teachers. I just like to help where I can.”

# A Lifetime of TEACHING AND GIVING

*Even when her days in the classroom were over,  
Myrna found a way to make a difference.*

**Myrna Fietkau** had been retired from teaching for just a few years when her father—also an educator—passed away and left her an inheritance. “I thought, ‘What am I going to do with this that is really going to make a difference?’”

It had been more than 40 years since Myrna—after graduating from Utah State University at the age of 21—had walked into her first classroom in a school in Layton, Utah. Nearly all of the 32 students in her class were the children of Hill Air Force Base employees, so kids would move in and out of her class in the middle of the year without warning—compelling Myrna to adjust and readjust her lessons for students of different abilities.

“I would stay until five or six every night, and then I would bring work home. It was a real challenge,” Myrna remembered. “My mom and dad were educators too, and they were good supporters. I just remember them saying, ‘Not every year is going to be like this.’ At the end of the year I only had five of my original students.”

The next year Myrna had a relatively normal second-grade class at a different school. But when that year ended, because the school had more second-grade teachers than were needed, she was told that she would need to change her teaching emphasis or find another school. Myrna said, “I talked to a teacher who told me, ‘Being a learning-disabilities teacher is much easier.’”

That advice ultimately proved false—teaching students with learning disabilities “wasn’t easier; it was just different”—but it led Myrna to the McKay School of Education to earn a learning-disabilities teaching certificate. Her time at BYU was brief, but the education she gained under professors Betty D. Harrison and Edith B. Bauer would be invaluable throughout her career. “The classes at BYU were small,” she said. “The teachers were good to work with, and there was always someone there willing to help.”

After leaving BYU, Myrna began working one-on-one with learning-disabilities students. She wasn’t assigned to lunch or recess duty, but she didn’t have a class picture or a devoted group of youngsters to say good-bye to at the end of the school year either. “With learning disabilities, you only see the children who are having problems,” she said. “It was a good challenge, and it was fun to see the progress they made. You would see this light click on and think, ‘Oh yes, hurray!’”

Still, she missed the regular rhythm of the classroom, so after 14 years she took a spot as a first-grade teacher and remained there until her retirement in 2005. Myrna loved being a teacher and spending her summers traveling the globe, but she was also intimately familiar with the challenges teachers face—the administration, students, parents, and outside pressures.

“I always think that if you are going into education, good for you,” she said. “Look what teachers are up against now: cell phones and the internet. They have to deal with so much more than I did.”

By the time she received the inheritance from her father, Myrna had already included BYU in her estate planning. But she wanted to do something more, something that would have a visible effect while she was alive. She set up an endowment at BYU that would bless an education student with a scholarship every year.

“I met one of the scholarship recipients over the phone,” she said. “She was delightful, and it was really fun for me to talk with her.”

Even after 37 years of devoting her time, talents, and creativity in the classroom, Myrna continues to give through her charitable donation—a legacy that will last for many years to come. “The scholarship,” she said, “is just a great way to give back and help some deserving person who needs it.”



BYU PHOTO

DAVID O. MCKAY SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Brigham Young University  
301 MCKB  
Provo, UT 84602

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
PERMIT NO. 49  
PROVO, UT



CAST NOT  
AWAY THEREFORE

*your  
confidence.*

— HEBREWS 10:35

BRADLEY SLADE



FEATURED AUTHOR

## James Dashner

Author of the *Maze Runner series*

Wednesday, March 28, 2018, at 6:30 p.m.

**James Dashner** was born and raised in Georgia but now lives and writes in the Rocky Mountains. He is the author of the #1 *New York Times* best-selling Maze Runner series: *The Maze Runner*, *The Scorch Trials*, *The Death Cure*, and *The Kill Order*. His newest series is The Mortality Doctrine: *The Eye of Minds*, *The Rule of Thoughts*, and *The Game of Lives*.

# STAY CONNECTED!

PLEASE DETACH HERE

## ALUMNI UPDATE

Please fill out this form if your address or name has changed, or send changes to [mckayalumni@byu.edu](mailto:mckayalumni@byu.edu).

NAME (FIRST, MIDDLE, LAST) \_\_\_\_\_ (MAIDEN NAME, IF APPLICABLE) \_\_\_\_\_ DATE OF BIRTH (MM/DD/YY) \_\_\_\_\_

SPOUSE \_\_\_\_\_ TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

STREET ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ CITY/STATE/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

GRADUATION DATE (MM/YY) \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

Are you currently employed in education?  Yes  No City/State/Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Your position (check all that apply): \_\_\_\_\_ Length of time: \_\_\_\_\_

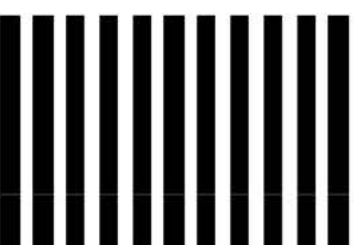
- Administrator  Counselor  Media Specialist  
 Resource Specialist  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Level:  Preschool  Elementary  Sign me up for McKay School News, the electronic MSE newsletter.  
 Secondary  College/University

To read McKay School News online, visit [education.byu.edu/news](http://education.byu.edu/news).



NO POSTAGE  
NECESSARY  
IF PAID  
IN THE  
UNITED STATES



**BUSINESS REPLY MAIL**

FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 1 PROVO, UT

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

David O. McKay School of Education  
Brigham Young University  
301 MCKB  
Provo, UT 84604-9950



The David O. McKay School of Education Alumni Society and the  
Brigham Young University–Public School Partnership present the 6th Biennial Conference

# The Literacy Promise

Opening Doors for  
K–12 Learners  
Ideal for All Teachers



**March 28–30, 2018**

**Salt Lake City, Utah**

Salt Lake Marriott Downtown at City Creek

## FEATURED PRESENTERS

- ▶ Wiley Blevins
- ▶ Katherine Bomer
- ▶ Doug Fisher
- ▶ Sam Glenn
- ▶ Gravity Goldberg
- ▶ Carol Jago
- ▶ Eric Jensen
- ▶ A.J. Juliani
- ▶ Penny Kittle
- ▶ Jennifer Nielsen
- ▶ Maria Nielsen
- ▶ Tanny McGregor
- ▶ Kipp Rogers
- ▶ Regie Routman
- ▶ Rachel Wadham
- ▶ Jeff Wilhelm
- ▶ Terrell Young

**Featured Author Keynote:**

**6:30 pm, Wed., March 28**

**Sessions March 29 & 30, 8 am – 3 pm**

## Register Today!

Individual conference fee: \$349. Team of 5 or more: \$299 each.

Registration is limited. See full registration details on back.

Register online after October 1, 2017 at [education.byu.edu/cites](http://education.byu.edu/cites)



**Appropriate for all content areas**