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MCKAY TODAY  
FALL 2020

DAVID O. MCKAY SCHOOL OF EDUCATION | BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

## Growing Racial Equity in Classrooms

P. 12

Serving Students in a Pandemic: What Research Reveals p. 6

Charting a Path "Back to School"—for Teachers p. 8

Building Leaders by Honoring Heritage p. 22





BRADLEY SLADE

## FROM THE DEAN



I, as well as others in the McKay School, have been saddened by instances of recent racial discrimination at BYU and across the world. In response, the McKay School has created a Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging Statement. Faculty and staff participated in the creation and refinement of the statement, which was approved by the Administrative Council in November 2020. All those in the McKay School have been encouraged to use this statement along with *The Mission of Brigham Young University*, *The Aims of a BYU Education*, and the McKay School mission statement as foundations upon which initiatives may be established.

### MCKAY SCHOOL OF EDUCATION DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING STATEMENT

The David O. McKay School of Education is committed to fostering an environment that values diversity, promotes equity, and invites belonging for all students, faculty, and staff as we strive to fulfill Brigham Young University's mission "to assist individuals in their quest for perfection and eternal life."<sup>1</sup>

We recognize the divine worth of each child of our Heavenly Parents, and we endeavor to accept each other with understanding and respect for our differences. Christ's example inspires our approach to learning, teaching, and leadership. As educators, we actively seek to overcome biases that limit people's educational opportunities. As fellow human beings, we consciously seek to embrace all people "regardless of their race, gender, sexual orientation, or other distinguishing feature."<sup>2</sup>

Recognizing there is work to do, the McKay School of Education invites all students, faculty, and staff to join in our commitment to a culture of love and unity. Together, we must humbly heed our prophet's admonition "to lead out in abandoning attitudes and actions of prejudice, . . . promote respect for all of God's children,"<sup>3</sup> and teach others to do so.

We look forward to living and working in greater harmony with all. We invite you to join us in these efforts in your homes and communities and as part of your profession.

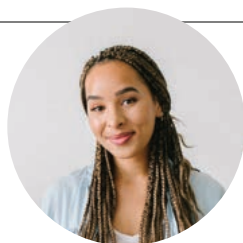
*Mary Anne Prater*

**MARY ANNE PRATER**

Dean

#### NOTES

1. *The Mission of Brigham Young University* (4 November 1981).
2. Kevin J Worthen, "The Process and Power of Hope," BYU devotional address, 8 September 2020.
3. Russell M. Nelson, "Let God Prevail," *Ensign*, November 2020.



**THE COVER ART FOR THIS ISSUE** was created by Melissa Tshikamba, a 2019 BYU illustration graduate who was drawn to the idea of the beautiful things that can grow when children work and learn together. "Children, because of their youth, are kinder. They're more open-minded. They don't have these built-in biases," Tshikamba said. "Children are already anti-racist." Tshikamba incorporates nature into many of her works. "When we're creating this tree together, we're all connected and we're all intertwined." See more at [tshikamba.com](http://tshikamba.com).

COURTESY MELISSA TSHIKAMBA

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# School News

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

## School Psychology Students Honored with Awards

► **School psychology graduate student Christopher Mosqueda was awarded the 2020 Minority Student Scholarship of the Utah Association of School Psychologists (UASP).** Each year the UASP recognizes exceptional minority school psychology students in Utah. Today, Mosqueda stands as a proud Chicano American, but he was not always as confident in his heritage.

Growing up, Mosqueda internalized racist ideas about Latinos. For years he was embarrassed about his ethnic

identity, and reconnecting with his heritage forced him to have uncomfortable conversations with himself about race and prejudice. As a school psychologist, he hopes to help others have those hard conversations, though his approach is less that of a social justice warrior and more of a social justice diplomat: "It is important not to call people *out* but to call people *in* and invite them to learn."

Mosqueda has been eager to counsel students during his internship with Jordan School District this fall. "I am really excited to counsel students," he said. "I feel like that is a strong suit for myself—just speaking with them, talking through their problems with them, and just being there."

► **School psychology graduate student Leah Hardy has been awarded the prestigious APA Minority Fellowship.** Hardy is the second BYU student to receive the award and one of only a handful of students across the country each year to receive the fellowship.

The fellowship offers financial support for a year, a yearlong APA membership, and training and network

opportunities. Hardy is being funded specifically by the STAY Fellowship, which will prepare her to provide substance abuse and mental health services to youth ages 16 to 25.

Hardy relishes the challenges of school psychology. She said: "Each student differs in their needs and style of learning, which makes it kind of similar to detective work for me. I have to put on my critical thinking hat and try to figure out what could help the student. It is exhilarating."



COURTESY CHRISTOPHER MOSQUEDA, COURTESY LEAH HARDY

## STAY CONNECTED!

CHECK OUT OUR ACCOUNTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA:



Comments or updates for the magazine?  
[mckaytoday@byu.edu](mailto:mckaytoday@byu.edu)

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

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

## THREE MCKAY SCHOOL PROFESSORS RETIRE



David McPherson



Vance Randall



Timothy Morrison

This year the McKay School bade farewell to three professors who collectively served the university for more than 80 years. Their contributions to the McKay School cannot be adequately put into words, but here are some highlights from their careers in education.

**DAVID MCPHERSON**, Communication Disorders, has been a dedicated graduate mentor and university leader, serving 12 years as a department chair and twice as graduate coordinator. He hosted numerous department social events over the span of decades. In 2004, David received the Humanitarian Award from the American Academy of Audiology, and in 2015 he received the Honors of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, his profession's highest award.

**VANCE RANDALL**, Educational Leadership and Foundations, served in many roles in his department, including eight years as chair. He has also served the McKay School and the university on various committees, including the Rank and Status and the Education

Measurement and Inquiry Committees. Randall also worked as a legislative fellow for Senator Orrin G. Hatch. He wrote three books, seven chapters, and 30-plus peer-reviewed articles.

**TIMOTHY MORRISON**, Teacher Education, has made numerous significant contributions to the BYU–Public School Partnership and has influenced literacy instruction in local school districts. He served as Teacher Education associate chair from 2010 to 2016, as chair of the Early Childhood and Elementary Partnership Advisory Council, and as a member of the Center for the Improvement of Teacher Education and Schooling (CITES) Professional Development Coordinating Council. In 2016 he received the Benjamin Cluff Jr. Award for Educator Preparation.

## Christopher Dromey Earns Prestigious ASHA Fellowship



Christopher Dromey, chair of the Communication Disorders Department (ComD), has received the 2020 Fellowship of the Association Award from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), one of the organization's highest honors.

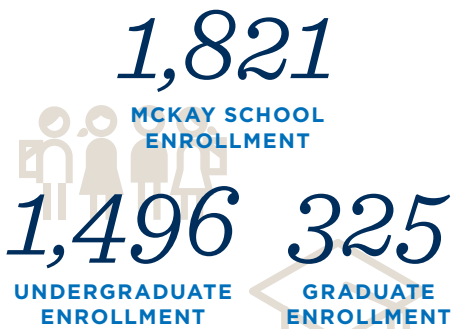
Dromey is the fourth BYU professor to become an ASHA fellow, along with faculty emeriti Bonnie Brinton, Martin Fujiki, and David McPherson.

Dromey has taught in the McKay School since 2000, serving twice as department chair. Speaking about his second round as chair, Dromey said, "The exciting thing this time is we have so many new faculty. Our department is a very different place than it was 10 years ago." The department is home to 11 full-time faculty—six of whom were hired in the past three years.

With an energetic group of faculty and ComD students who "seem to get better every single year," the department chair summed up his professional life at the McKay School in three words: "Life is good."

Coming soon: **a new podcast for McKay School alumni!**  
Sponsored by the **BYU Latter-day Saint Educators Society**, the *Seek Learning* podcast will feature interviews with McKay School faculty, focusing on the practical and gospel-based application of their research. Watch for *Seek Learning* in your podcast app.





**16-59**  
Student Age Range

**87**  
FULL-TIME  
FACULTY



NAMED AFTER DAVID O. MCKAY, EDUCATOR AND NINTH PRESIDENT OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

ESTABLISHED IN  
**1984**

**240**  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**200,378**  
31% OF UTAH STUDENTS

**5**  
DISTRICTS

*Alpine*  
SCHOOL DISTRICT

*Jordan*  
SCHOOL DISTRICT

*Nebo*  
SCHOOL DISTRICT

*Provo City*  
SCHOOL DISTRICT

*Wasatch County*  
SCHOOL DISTRICT

**882**  
STEM FAIR  
STUDENTS

**105**

Endorsements  
Earned in

- Reading
- Gifted and Talented
- Math

**BYU**

David O. McKay  
School of Education

2020-2021

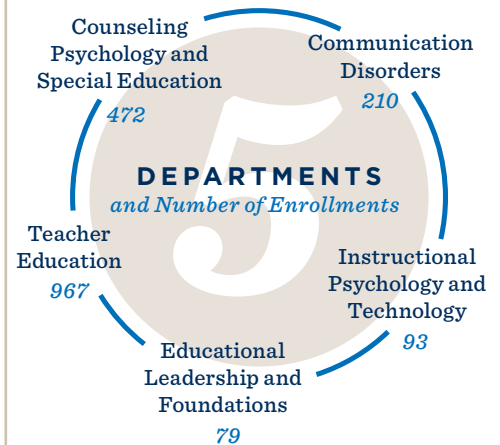
MCKAY SCHOOL THEME 2020-2021

*And the Lord called his people Zion,  
because they were of one heart and one mind,  
and dwelt in righteousness; and there  
was no poor among them.*

—MOSES 7:18

**50,356**

TOTAL LIVING ALUMNI



**\$1,330,060**

MCKAY SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
Scholarship Money Awarded

BYU-Public School  
Partnership

2020-2021

**5** COMMITMENTS

- 1** Civic Preparation and Engagement
- 2** Engaged Learning Through Nurturing Pedagogy
- 3** Equitable Access to Academic Knowledge and Achievement
- 4** Stewardship in School and Community
- 5** Commitment to Renewal

ANNUAL ATTENDANCE AT  
Programs and Conferences

**1,150** **160**  
Instructional Leadership in the 21st Century Leaders Associates

**140** **70** **145**  
District Associates Principals Academy Instructional Coaching Academy

Beverly Taylor Sorenson  
**BYU ARTS PARTNERSHIP**

**13** **100,000**  
Years Old Students Impacted

**5,075** **100+**  
Teachers Have Participated BYU Students Have Participated

THE CENTER FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF TEACHER EDUCATION AND SCHOOLING serves the BYU-Public School Partnership divisions: Professional Development, Education Support, and Education Research.





Laura Howard supervises her fourth-grade class at Westmore Elementary in Orem, Utah. Howard said the pre-intern workshop helped her stay on top of preparing six lessons every day.

# The Power of Planning

McKay School Professors Create Pre-intern Workshop

Effective planning is foundational to success in the classroom. But for many teaching majors who opt for a yearlong internship, staying on top of six lessons every day for an entire school year can be overwhelming.

“Once a school year starts, teachers are super, super busy,” said Teresa Leavitt, associate professor in the Teacher Education Department. “And unfortunately, planning is something that is easy to let slide.”

Leavitt and associate teaching professors Cecilia Pincock and Kathie Mackay have developed an intensive workshop to set interns up for success. For two days in the spring, “pre-interns” meet with experienced teachers to study grade-specific standards and develop a “curriculum map” for the upcoming school year. Pre-interns are then given two more days to work together to develop lesson

plans. “By working together, we can have lots of units of study put together,” said Leavitt. “We have a framework and we have a starting point—and we are so much further ahead than if we did not have these planning days.”

*“It really helps them be contributing members and feel like they are more on par with their colleagues.”*

—CECILIA PINCOCK

These collaboration days also have immediate benefits: whereas most interns will only know other interns within their district, this workshop connects interns across districts, giving them a wider support group, come fall. The workshop also gives students a

deeper understanding of the standards they are expected to teach, which has helped many students feel more confident in the district- or school-level planning days.

Pincock said, “It really helps them be contributing members and feel like they are more on par with their colleagues, instead of just being brand-new teachers coming in, not really knowing what is going on and just going along with the flow.”

This year, 63 pre-interns participated in the workshop, but these planning days do not just benefit teaching interns. Leavitt observed that the program has a “trickle-down effect”: 63 interns will be better equipped for their first year of teaching, and their 25 to 30 students will have a better learning experience. Effective planning is not only a key to success but a gift that keeps on giving.

# Effects on Education: Research Explores the Pandemic's Impact

*Faculty projects look at decision-making dilemmas, building support communities, innovative ways to connect, and teaching with help from Twitter.*

McKay School faculty are contributing research, reason, and recommendations to the national conversation about educational challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Here is a look at some of their latest work.

## How to Act When Any Action Carries a Cost

Without adequate science-based preparation for a pandemic, educational leaders risk “making uninformed and unwise decisions,” concluded a group of authors studying the dilemmas faced by educational leaders when these types of crises arise.

“The Leaders’ Dilemma: P-20 Response to the Threat of a Pandemic” appeared in the *Journal of Education Human Resources* and was written by McKay School associate professor Spencer Weiler with Matthew Birnbaum of the University of Northern Colorado and Philip Westbrook of George Washington University.

Drawing on research from previous pandemics and epidemics, plus work on crises like school shootings, the article showed that schools face wrenching choices in times of sustained crisis: take proactive action to try and avert the emergency (overreact) or take little

action in the hope that crisis warnings are overblown (underreact).

The key is to have plans that provide not only specific pandemic responses but also warnings to avoid potential but identifiable pitfalls. “Act based on clear guidance from public health officials rather than responding to stakeholders’ emotional and political pressures,” the authors wrote. “Leaders should also limit actions that focus on specific individuals, thus mitigating the potential infringement of individual legal rights.”

## Scaffolds of Support Build Online Learning

Educators planning online or blended courses for this fall have scrambled to engage with and support students in these formats. As described in “Academic Communities of Engagement” in *Educational Technology Research and Development*, to maximize success, a student must have support from a “course community” of peers, teachers, and administrators and a “personal community” of family, friends, and social contacts.

Written by McKay School IP&T professors Charles Graham and Richard West, doctoral student Kristian Spring,

Jered Borup ('13) of George Mason University, and Leanna Archambault of Arizona State University, the article examines blended and online learning through the Academic Communities of Engagement (ACE) matrix.

“Specific sources of the academic support, though important, are secondary to ensuring an appropriate level of support for all three dimensions of student engagement,” the authors wrote.

Here are the article’s key suggestions:

- ▶ Specifically invite parents to engage in students’ online and blended learning.
- ▶ Boost supports for non-tech-savvy people in the student’s personal community.
- ▶ Recognize that needed support “can vary substantially, based on characteristics of both the student and the course.”
- ▶ Plan extra support for students inexperienced in online learning and for those who “lack self-regulation abilities.”

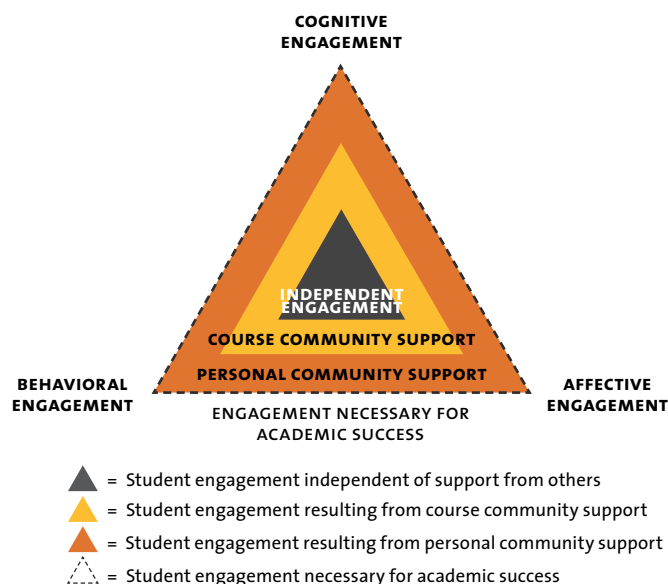
In a related article in the *Journal of Technology and Teacher Education*, “Supporting Students During COVID-19,” Graham, Archambault, and Borup, along with McKay School instructor Cecil Short and Alpine School District learning coach Michelle Jensen, shared two case

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!*



studies showing that during the pandemic, the ACE framework helped teachers focus on support that truly promotes student success.

For example, the researchers found that mass emails, while informative, did little to drive engagement. On the other hand, personal contact—via email, phone calls, or video—was highly effective. Asking meaningful questions, giving parents reports on student engagement, and even making whimsical efforts such as hosting Zoom scavenger hunts, were also effective.

“One legacy of the COVID-19 pandemic should be increased efforts to not only prepare teachers to meet the current demands but also a recognition of the impor-

tance of creating a teacher workforce that is prepared to support students in blended and online environments,” the researchers wrote.

### Non-Live Video Drives Student Connection

When education rushed to online learning this year, many assumed that school would look like it always has, just from a distance. In reality, online classes were different: a blend of live meetings, recorded resources, and communication tools.

One of the most effective of these, found researchers in “Thinking Beyond Zoom” in the *Journal of Technology and Teacher Education*, is asynchronous video—think Marco Polo rather than

Zoom. Authors West, Borup, Archambault, and Patrick Lowenthal of Boise State University outlined the limits and potential of using asynchronous video in teaching.

Asynchronous video—Flipgrid, VoiceThread, EdConnect, and so on—offers easy access, even on mobile devices. Instructors can create “threads” centered on course content, student well-being, frequently asked questions, and progress updates. Seeing these threads on video helps instructors to increase connections and “to easily sense frustration and excitement”—vital insights that boost teacher effectiveness.

“One student described that this was exactly what she needed at that moment—the ability to reach out, see each other, and support one another,” the authors wrote.

### Tweets Sub in for Faculty Support

What do teachers do without the faculty lounge? Who do they approach to vent, ask questions, or philosophize when that colleague they are used to nudging during faculty meetings is behind a Zoom screen somewhere?

They might go on Twitter, according to researchers in the article “#RemoteTeaching and #RemoteLearning” in

the *Journal of Technology and Teacher Education*. McKay School IP&T professor Royce Kimmons, Jeffrey Carpenter of Elon University, Daniel Krutka of the University of North Texas, and Torrey Trust of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst analyzed more than 10,000 teacher tweets posted in March and April using the hashtags #RemoteTeaching and #RemoteLearning.

These hashtags, both massively popular this year, are “affinity spaces” for educators to access emerging knowledge, find emotional support, and “develop their distance pedagogies,” the authors wrote. Tweets are “a potential treasure trove of resources, ideas, and insights.”

The authors suggest schools create online spaces to support teachers’ growth and well-being and offer opportunities for teachers to expand their learning networks.

“Teaching is inherently emotional work, and this has been accentuated by the strain COVID-19 has placed on educators and students,” they wrote. “Sometimes what educators need most are spaces to support each other.”

**BYU** | CONNECT

#### JOIN BYU CONNECT

Mentor BYU students and post job opportunities. It is a great place to stay connected with fellow Cougars!

[connect.byu.edu](https://connect.byu.edu)



# RETURNING *to a Teaching Career*

BY CYNTHIA GLAD

ILLUSTRATED BY ABIGAIL WHITE, '23

We talked to educators about reentering the teaching profession after a break—often for family reasons. Here is a compilation of stories and tips for those ready to hit the blackboard—or the SMART Board—once again.





## Is Your Teaching License Current?


Over and over, alumni emphasize the importance of keeping that teaching license current. But as life happens, many people let theirs lapse.

"Once their teaching license has expired, it is really up to the whims of their particular state as to the process of renewal," said Brandan Beerli, supervisor of the McKay School's Education Advisement Center. "This is the same for transferring a license from one state to another. All that we can offer is an institutional verification."

### TIPS TO RENEW OR TRANSFER YOUR LICENSE

 To renew a teaching license, contact the department of education in your state of residence and follow their process for licensure renewal.

 To transfer a Utah license to a different state, you will need to submit an institutional verification from BYU. You can do this by completing the Release of Information request on the McKay School website ([education.byu.edu/advisement/release](http://education.byu.edu/advisement/release)). Individual states may have different procedures and mandates for license transfers. Do not assume that "license reciprocity" between Utah and another state means the process will be hassle-free—or cost-free.

 While the state of Utah has had no licensing fees since the legislature began covering the cost in July 2017, and several other states waive the costs of licensing, you may encounter fees for background checks, sending transcripts, etc. Utah's process can all be done online, but each state is different.

**J**ulie Griffin, BS '92, sat by her husband's hospital bed and heard the doctor say he was not going to make it. "I made up my mind that night in the hospital that I was going to be prepared, she said."

That was in 2012. Griffin had graduated from the McKay School in elementary education in 1992 and had taught second grade full-time until 1997, when her second child was born. While welcoming three more children over the next few years, Griffin continued substituting and volunteering in schools. She always intended to return to full-time teaching at some point and even accepted a post as a long-term substitute in the school her children attended. That is when her husband got very ill with Crohn's disease.

"It is hard," she said of getting back into the profession full-time. "I had let my certification lapse." Griffin definitely did not feel prepared to become the sole financial provider for her family, but that necessity seemed imminent.



Her husband made it through that night in the hospital, and then he made it through some more nights. He was hospitalized for four months and is now in remission. Griffin continued teaching part-time for six more years while raising their children and helping her husband recover. This year she returned to a full-time class of sixth graders.

While the details of her story are unique, Griffin is not alone. She is one of many teachers, primarily women, who take breaks from teaching full-time. Then, perhaps years later, they need a reentry plan.

Griffin is very grateful for her principal, who helped her recertify while her husband was recovering. She said, "The process was clear, but I did not look at it closely enough. The things I had been doing counted. I had 200 points!"

Griffin's advice for those taking a break is "Get involved at your local school. You can volunteer. Get your toes wet. It counts. If you are considering going back, ease yourself into it. There is a lot you will learn by getting involved."

## Looking for an Endorsement Boost?

It may help if a returning teacher studies for an endorsement, either before or after starting work. These are available through BYU and other universities, and they have obvious benefits, said Barry Graff, associate director over professional development in the McKay School's Center for the Improvement of Teacher Education and Schooling.

"Endorsements make the teacher a bit more of an expert in a given area," Graff said. "You go deeper into research, theory, and practice than you would in your undergraduate experience or through some traditional teacher professional development in a district."

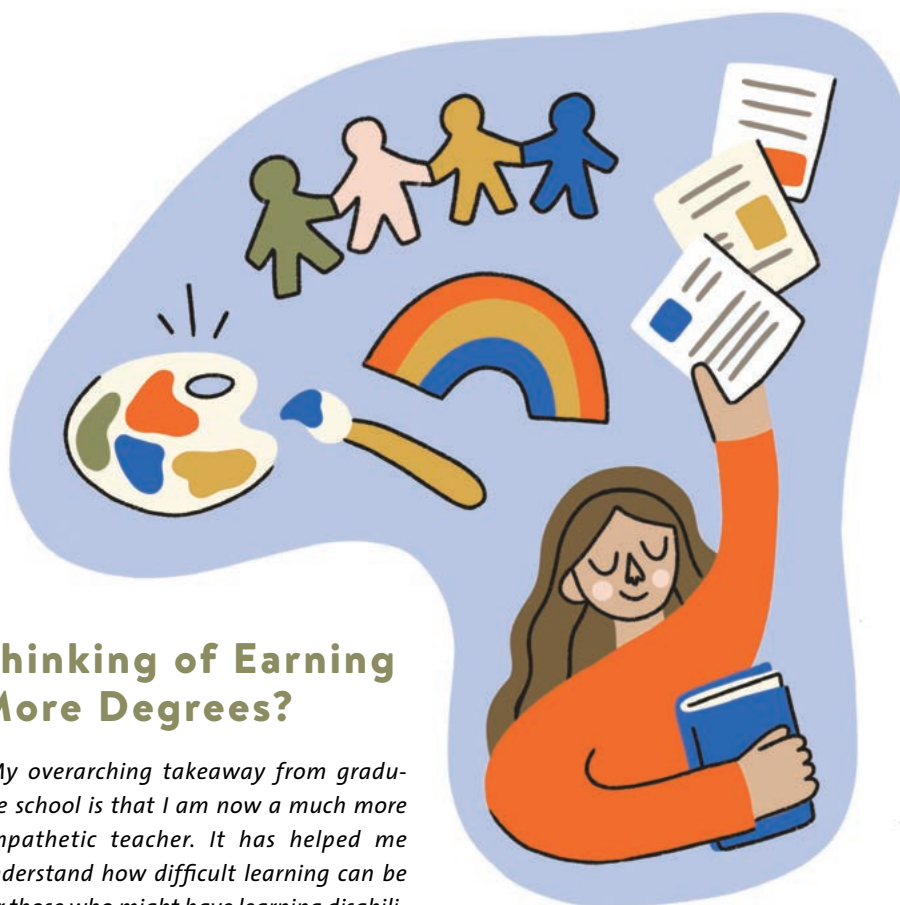
There is also a salary incentive, he added: "Teacher pay scales have steps and lanes, and with graduate credit, you can move across the lanes and make more money."

Endorsements are intended to be earned by experienced educators, according to Graff, rather than undergraduates. "Most endorsements are four to six courses, usually of three credits each. At BYU they run for two years during fall and winter semesters and spring term—September to June."

### ENDORSEMENTS OFFERED BY BYU

- K-12 reading
- Utah elementary math (K-6)
- Gifted and talented
- STEM
- Arts integration

Learn more by messaging [alena\\_allred@byu.edu](mailto:alena_allred@byu.edu) or by calling 801-422-4646.



## Thinking of Earning More Degrees?

*"My overarching takeaway from graduate school is that I am now a much more empathetic teacher. It has helped me understand how difficult learning can be for those who might have learning disabilities. And I knew that in terms of salary, I was as far as I could go."*

—Ingrid Shurtleff, teaching certificate, '07; MS, special education, '20

### GRADUATE DEGREES OFFERED BY THE MCKAY SCHOOL TO ENHANCE YOUR EDUCATION CAREER

- MS**—special education
- MEd**—educational leadership, with an emphasis in school leadership or education policy studies
- MS**—instructional psychology and technology
- MA**—teacher education
- EdD**—educational leadership
- EdS**—school psychology
- PhD**—educational inquiry, measurement, and evaluation
- PhD**—instructional psychology and technology

## Need a Less Intense but Still Useful Boost?

Join the BYU Latter-day Saint Educators Society conference each summer. It is for all teachers, including but not limited to

- K-12 educators
- Higher education educators
- Educational leaders
- Seminary and institute personnel
- Ward and stake teachers
- Prospective educators

The society offers a platform in which Latter-day Saint educators—guided by a personal testimony and commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ—can network together, share research findings and successes, discuss challenges, and offer support and encouragement to one other.



## TRICIA GALER

*early childhood education and  
elementary education, '95*

**Rexburg, Idaho**

- She taught three years in Ohio and Wisconsin before her children were born.
- Because of volunteer work with a school arts program, she was recruited to teach an elementary art methods class at BYU–Idaho. She then added other courses.
- She is now in her fifth year back in a fourth-grade classroom.
- Her biggest concern as she returned to the classroom was Common Core state standards. “I had been teaching about these things in one of my campus classes, but the actual transfer of that to my own practice was daunting.”
- “We have a big need for teachers who are in a more mature stage of life ready to commit to a career in the classroom.”
- “I saw with my [BYU–Idaho] students so often that the main driving force was ‘I just love kids.’ What you have to love also is learning. You have to be a reader and constantly curious. It is not an easy thing to engage children in this day when technology is so ever present in their lives. Modeling that kind of curiosity and wonder about the world is so important to do.”



## INGRID SHURTLEFF

*postbaccalaureate teaching certificate, '07;  
MS, special education, '20*

**Provo, Utah**

- She used her travel and tourism degree from 1989 until 1990, when the first of three daughters was born.
- “When I decided to go back into the workforce, I felt very little confidence. I did not have any good skills that I needed. I look back and realize how much more confidence I have now.”
- She started working part-time with English language learners at her children’s school in 2001.
- She earned a special education postbaccalaureate degree and teaching license in 2007.
- She taught at Amelia Earhart Elementary in 2006, then Provo Peaks Elementary, and then Timpview High. She now works as an instructional coach for special education teachers in the Provo City School District.
- “Figure out what excites you, what you are passionate about, or what you really want to learn to do. Then start learning about it! The internet can be a positive tool for expanding your knowledge about the things that interest you. Topics that may not have been too interesting to you when you were younger may begin to surface as you go through more life experiences.”



# Color in the Classroom

Education Is a Laboratory  
for America's Confrontation  
with Racism and a Place to  
Find Possible Solutions

**T**he issues and questions surrounding racism have echoed in classrooms across this country as students have returned to school this fall. Brigham Young University has formally begun a process of better understanding the hurtful impacts of racism, privilege, and bias on campus, and recommendations are being made to address those harms. The same process is happening at the McKay School. Here is some of what we know and some of what we are working on to make positive change.

ILLUSTRATED BY MELISSA TSHIKAMBA

“  
Brothers and sisters,  
please listen carefully to  
what I am about to say. God does  
not love one race more than  
another. His doctrine on this matter is clear.  
He invites *all* to come unto Him, “black and white,  
bond and free, male and female” [2 Nephi 26:33].  
I assure you that your standing before God is  
not determined by the color of your skin. . . .  
I grieve that our Black brothers and sisters the world over  
are enduring the pains of racism and prejudice. Today  
I call upon our members everywhere to lead out in  
abandoning attitudes and actions of prejudice.  
I plead with you to promote respect  
for all of God's children.

—PRESIDENT RUSSELL M. NELSON, “LET GOD PREVAIL,” ENSIGN, NOVEMBER 2020



## “HOW IS THIS EQUITY?”

BYU Graduate and Researcher Shares Challenges That Children of Color May Face at School

BY STACEY KRATZ

**“Agency is the ability and privilege God gives us to choose and to act for ourselves. Agency is essential in the plan of salvation. *Without agency, we would not be able to learn or progress or follow the Savior*”**

—GOSPEL TOPICS, S.V. “AGENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY,” CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST, [CHURCHOFJESUSCHRIST.ORG](http://CHURCHOFJESUSCHRIST.ORG)

To people of faith, agency is so fundamental a principle that it is taken for granted. “We often talk about [agency] as something that just exists,” said Jennifer Adair, associate professor of education at the University of Texas, who delivered the McKay School’s 2020 Cluff

Lecture this past spring. “Agency, or at least the enactment of our agency, has as much to do with power as it does our own choices and accountability. . . . Racism, to me, is one of the great evils that prevents white people from progressing,” Adair said. “White people are largely responsible for the perpetuation and horror that racism brings, and we are responsible for stopping it.”

Adair, a 1999 BYU anthropology graduate, has spent years studying hundreds of school classrooms in several states. Her work has been influenced by economist Amartya Sen, who argued that people’s freedom to use their agency and their ability to live meaningful lives should be considered as important as national income in measuring a country’s development.

“  
We thought, naively, that when people watched the film, they would respond with, “Oh, this is so amazing! I wish we could do that at our school.” That is not what happened. And what happened was relatively shocking to us.

—JENNIFER ADAIR

Adair wanted to test this idea in schools. She knew she could find classrooms brimming with choices—classrooms in which students were allowed to hold discussions, move around the room, and help direct their own learning. She also knew she could find classes full of students of color and/or immigrants.

The trick? Finding a classroom that contained both. Most of the dynamic, engaging classrooms Adair observed in California, Arizona, and Texas were made up of “predominantly white and middle- or upper-class kids.” But in most classes of immigrant children and students of color, the children were “walking in strict, rigid lines, hands behind their backs, ‘bubbles’ in their mouths, and sitting down for 30 minutes. . . . There is so much control in those spaces. And I thought to myself, and have been thinking ever since, how is this equity?”

Adair and her team finally found a class in which first graders of color were also allowed to fully express their agency. And what a classroom it was: students talked and sang while they worked, initiated inquiries, experimented, and worked through conflict. They were eager and engaged. And they did this without direct intervention from their teacher.

Adair and her team spent a year observing the class, ultimately producing a 20-minute “day-in-the-life” film. They then showed the film to parents, faculty, and first graders at other demographically similar schools.

“We thought, naively, that when people watched the film, they would respond with, ‘Oh, this is so amazing! I wish we



could do that at our school,” Adair said. “That is not what happened. And what happened was relatively shocking to us.”

Teachers who viewed the film liked the children’s ability to solve problems on their own. Parents admired the students’ kindheartedness. Then there were the reactions of the children in those racially diverse first-grade classrooms: “One hundred kids in many cities, different regions, different schools, and different classrooms all had the same exact reaction to this scene, and their reaction was that those kids were very bad,” Adair reported.

Children thought the filmed students were misbehaving, Adair said. “They reacted with, ‘No, sit down! . . . The teachers tell us what book to take out! They are not following the rules! He needs to sit down!’ Over and over they would say these little phrases that you know they did not make up on their own.”

It did not make sense, Adair thought. Why would adults express admiration for the class while children were horrified? She followed up, exploring the roots of the students’ reactions. Those were revealed in chats with children such as the one Adair calls Diego: he told her that students in his class could not teach and help one another “because our teacher gets mad.”

## FREE RESOURCE AIMS TO HELP TEACHERS BUILD EQUITY IN CLASSROOMS

Many teachers want to make their classrooms more nurturing to students of color, and a team of McKay School faculty and students want to help.

The McKay team is creating a research-based open educational resource (OER): *Making Meaning: Fostering Equitable Learning for All in My Elementary Classroom*, at [edtechbooks.org/equitable\\_teaching](https://edtechbooks.org/equitable_teaching).

“Culturally responsive training for teachers is sometimes vague and difficult to measure, which makes it hard for educators to improve,” said IP&T graduate student Brenton Jackson in a video introducing the project (“*Making Meaning*” in the Classroom: Developing an Open Ed Resource for Equitable Teaching, 18 June 2020, [youtu.be/pdDozOeGUAo](https://youtu.be/pdDozOeGUAo)). “*Making Meaning* . . . breaks up equitable teaching into a series of practices that are defined and measurable.”

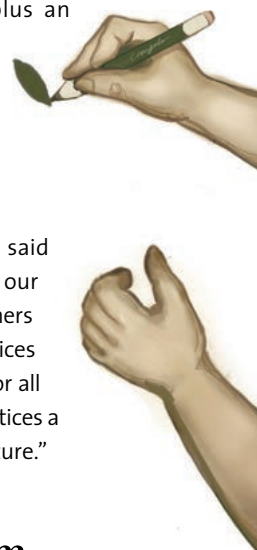
The free online guidebook will consist of nine chapters, or dimensions, gathered into three domains: Life Applications, Self in Group, and Agency. Based on the Classroom Assessment of Sociocultural Interactions (CASI), it is a self-assessment rubric developed by a team including Bryant Jensen, associate professor of teacher education at the McKay School. CASI is being adapted into the *Making Meaning* guidebook by a team of graduate students led by Jensen and IP&T assistant professor Royce Kimmons.

In each chapter of *Making Meaning*—two chapters plus an introduction are available now, with another set to come online by December—users encounter a central practice (say, language use), see the benefits of building equity into that practice, and find example practices to try themselves. The team is recruiting teachers, particularly those in Title I schools, to help create and update the guidebook.

“Culture is more than just holidays and recipes,” Jackson said in the video introduction. “Culture is a central part of each of our identities—part of the invisible backpack that students and teachers carry to school each day. We believe that equitable teaching practices help to bridge the culture gap and remove barriers to learning for all students. And we hope this resource will help to make those practices a little more accessible as teachers invest in a more equitable future.”

*Culture is a central part of each of our identities—part of the invisible backpack that students and teachers carry to school each day.*

—BRENTON JACKSON



This type of response was “so dominant,” Adair said, that she and her fellow researchers decided to go back to the children’s teachers.

“We found something we had missed the first time through, analytically,” she said. “It turns out that what [the educators] said was, ‘We like the practices in the film, but they will not work in our school. They will not work for our kids.’”

To explain this, the teachers said “relatively negative” things about their own school communities: that students did not have the “right vocabulary” or that their families were lacking.

“The craziest part is that they made positive assumptions about the families in the film that they watched for 20 minutes,” Adair said. “They never met the parents. They assumed by what the kids were doing that they must have amazing families that were super educated.”

The bottom line, Adair said, was that teachers in many school systems she studied behaved as if they did not see agency as a basic right of certain students but as something they must earn.

“Agency is something that if they get certain training or they prove that they are ready, they will be able to use it,” Adair said. “But . . . that never really turns out to be true. You are in a constant cycle of proving you are worthy of being able to use your agency and your learning, but you almost never get there if you do not start out that way.”

This is a function, Adair said, of what philosopher Charles Mills calls the personhood-subpersonhood line: an impenetrable societal barrier between persons who are assumed to have full rights and privileges and subpersons who are forced to prove they deserve those same rights and privileges. The most pernicious aspect of this division, she said, is that powerful members of a society continually “move the line” to ensure that power stays concentrated with one group.

“Those children [in this study] are super compliant, and yet they still do not get to use their agency,” she said. “And because of that, in this early developmental stage, they think being a learner means being quiet. . . . It means not sharing your ideas, not asking questions, not being a leader, and not having different ideas than the adult in the room. Learning is something that is completely passive. And somehow all of these kids having these different learning experiences in these early grades are supposed to compete with each other.”

If this pattern continues throughout children’s school years, Adair warned, students will grow up with vastly different experiences than those of their peers who are able to express their agency at school. They will see education as controlling, even punitive, rather than as an opportunity to fulfill their full potential in life.

Adair said that when she saw the personhood-subpersonhood line in schools, she felt angry. She had to work through that and find a way to approach the subject lovingly.

“It seems weird in a research talk to talk about love, but maybe not here [at BYU],” she said. “I had to change my attitude about the teachers and educators I was trying to understand, and I had to build love for them instead of [anger]. When those two things shifted, everything opened up to me.”

Adair feels that achieving equity is “relatively simple” for individual teachers and larger school systems: recognizing agency’s importance and supporting the fact that all students, not just privileged ones, have the right to exercise agency at school.

“What does removing the personhood-subpersonhood line look like?” she said. “It looks a lot like this: Do people around us get to . . . share what they really think? Do they get to ask questions? Do they get to be their whole, full selves? Do they get to choose what they are working on? Do they get to choose what they are learning about, how they learn about it, and how they present that information?”

“And, really, it comes down to this: Are people in our spheres and in our influence able to expand their capabilities?”

“Public schools exist to provide access to education for all, which includes both academic mastery and personal development for the purpose of maximizing students’ potential to participate fully and productively in society. . . . The Partnership develops educators who are committed to and actively provide equitable access to academic knowledge and achievement.

—FROM THE VISION  
AND COMMITMENT  
STATEMENT OF THE  
BYU–PUBLIC SCHOOL  
PARTNERSHIP



## PROFESSOR AIMS TO DEFEAT PREJUDICE WITH PRACTICE

*Bryant Jensen's Work Focuses on Practical Solutions to Classroom Inequities*

BY STACEY KRATZ

Researchers around the world have been wrestling for years with issues of race in classrooms, Bryant Jensen among them.

But for Jensen, it is not enough to understand the problems. He wants to provide solutions.

"The field in general in equitable education has not grappled enough with the implementation challenge," said Jensen, an associate professor of teacher education in the McKay School. "It tends to position teachers as somehow barriers to implementation when they are not."

Jensen said his career has had two major areas of emphasis: (1) "What is equitable teaching and learning and what does that look like in different contexts?" and (2) providing better supports for teachers and schools as they seek to build more equitable classrooms.

"A lot of people have written about what culturally responsive, equitable, culturally sustaining pedagogies look like, but what schools have not engaged in as much is the

challenge of sustaining the implementation of those practices," Jensen said. "It is not a 'won't do' problem; it is a 'can't do' problem. Teachers need support and resources and evidence and guides to help them sustain implementation of equitable practices."

The challenge is easy to spot. According to a 2017 U.S. Department of Education report, 77 percent of teachers are women—almost 90 percent for primary school and just under 66 percent for secondary school—and 80 percent are white.

"Like lots of things in life, more of teaching is 'caught' than 'taught,'" Jensen said. "Our institutions were designed using privileged white, upper-middle-class ways of talking and thinking and socializing. We teach inequitably not because we are bigoted people but because we are cultural people, inevitably. We are part of the culture."



“It is not a “won’t do” problem; it is a “can’t do” problem. Teachers need support and resources and evidence and guides to help them sustain implementation of equitable practices.

—BRYANT JENSEN

## ETHNIC IDENTITY IN CURRICULUM

*A Path to Wholeness*

BY JENNY MEHNER

**E**thnic identity and physical activity may seem unrelated, but to physical education teacher education (PETE) graduate student Nathan Kahaiali'i, they contribute to the same goal: helping adolescents become confident, healthy adults.

This work represents the culmination of Kahaiali'i's journey toward embracing his own ethnic identity. As a child in a mostly Latino neighborhood in Arizona, Kahaiali'i assumed he was also Latino. When his family moved to Hawaii when he was six years old, he began to get acquainted with his own heritage.

The transition was not easy. Kahaiali'i said, "Uncles and aunties I had no memory of meeting before were giving me hugs and kisses, or *honi honi*—which made me feel extremely uncomfortable, not knowing that this was the common custom of Hawaiian culture. My culture."

"[In Hawaiian], *hapa* means half—in other words, not complete. And I definitely did not feel complete during my adolescence and into my young adult life."

*[In Hawaiian], hapa means half—in other words, not complete. And I definitely did not feel complete during my adolescence and into my young adult life.*

—NATHAN KAHAIALI'I

As an undergraduate at BYU–Hawaii, Kahaiali'i took a Hawaiian studies class, gaining appreciation for his culture and for himself as a "real" Hawaiian. Later, as he pursued a master's degree at BYU in physical education teacher education, he incorporated ethnic identity into his research.

Kahaiali'i studied more than 300 Hawaiian adolescents of various ethnicities. The teens were pedometers to track their physical activity and responded to surveys with statements such as "I have often done things that will help me understand my ethnic background better."

The study determined that students who embraced their ethnic identities were more positively motivated toward physical activity. Hawaiian teens in the study reported low participation in Hawaiian activities such as hula or surfing.

If physical education teachers incorporated these activities, Kahaiali'i concluded, students might feel more desire to be active and also connect to their heritage—something Kahaiali'i missed during his own adolescence.

Most credentialed teaching programs, such as BYU's, require that students "engage in diversity" in their coursework, he added. But this cannot fully equip students to teach equitably—that is something that may need to be "caught" on the job, with novice teachers seeing examples of equity, applying them in their own classrooms, and passing on their knowledge in turn.

"There are so many pressures on teachers right from the start," Jensen said. "The things I try to offer are more like in-service and ongoing support. The most meaningful professional teacher learning experiences happen on an ongoing basis in regular settings in which teachers can plan with their colleagues for ongoing practice."

Jensen has developed with colleagues across the nation several rubrics to help identify different aspects of equitable teaching, explain their importance, and provide concrete examples of best practices. These rubrics, he said, allow collaboration, idea sharing, and peer-to-peer learning among teachers. Teachers can see what works for colleagues and choose which dimension of equitable teaching to work on first.

One rubric is the Classroom Assessment of Sociocultural Interactions (CASI), an observation system that helps pre-K and elementary teachers measure the cultural aspects of interactions with students. CASI is broken into nine dimensions of student-teacher

interaction—language use,

peer collaboration, equi-

table expectations,

and the like—so

that teachers

can target spe-

cific practices.

"Teachers

should get

to decide,"

Jensen said.

"The profes-

sional learn-

ing required to

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ble practices requires

agency in teaching."

**I do not mean bringing in the expert and having a one-day workshop. I mean embedded teacher development in which teachers are studying their practice together in grade-level and subject-area teams.**

—BRYANT JENSEN

Jensen sees great promise in the idea of schools building communities of expertise in equitable learning and empowering teachers to implement those experts' best practices.

"The communal features of the CASI . . . are conversations with students that are much more dialogic. Students can share from their own lives and can ask unsolicited questions. They are positioned as authorities and are allowed to lead a discussion," he said. "Teachers should be able to do those same things! . . . They should be able to offer their insights and should be bona fide discursive partners. If teachers experience that with colleagues, they are much more likely to be able to sustain that with their students."

Implementing best practices for equitable classrooms is important work, but that is only part of Jensen's focus. He also is working on merging CASI and other rubrics with best practices in subjects like reading comprehension and STEM instruction. A curriculum in, say, science could be built equitably, with "culturally meaningful, socially just" practices an inherent part of the approach. This effort also helps Jensen open up more ways to "support teachers in implementing and learning those practices over time."

"In most schools they are not organized to have those opportunities. It is not just on teachers; it is on systems," he said. "This is all about building capacity, and that is hard work. And it is something that takes time."

Teachers must be a part of this process, he said, and "acknowledging that [inequities exist in education] does not mean teachers are not bona fide change agents. They have certain degrees of freedom, and those are expanded when institutions are expanded to support teacher learning.



"And I do not mean bringing in the expert and having a one-day workshop. I mean embedded teacher development in which teachers are studying their practice together in grade-level and subject-area teams."

Jensen is currently working with colleagues on an adaptation of CASI that includes socially just practices aimed at providing a more nurturing classroom experience for Black students—particularly Black boys. He also has worked with UCLA researchers on integrating equitable classroom practices and effective science instruction into one rubric. He said, "This work splinters and takes on other paths. It is wonderful!"

On a more personal level, Jensen has reached out to his fellow Church of Jesus Christ members on topics relating to race through essays and articles published in the *Ensign*, *LDS Living* magazine, and *Deseret News*.

"Once in a while I will feel a spiritual nudge to write for the Church of Jesus Christ community," he said. "I try to do so in a way that is consistent with Christ's gospel and to do so in a way that is reflective of Christ's love."

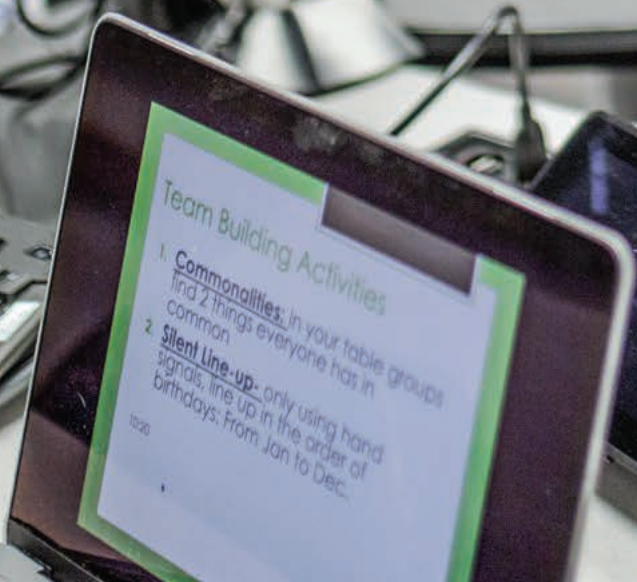
"We need to be anxiously engaged in this effort. We need to better understand the complementarities and synergies between gospel principles and the challenge and opportunity of eradicating racism."

“

As citizens and as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we must do better to help root out racism. . . .

One reason the recent protests in the United States were shocking to so many was that the hostilities and illegalities felt among different ethnicities in other nations should not be felt in the United States. This country should be better in eliminating racism not only against Black Americans, who were most visible in the recent protests, but also against Latinos, Asians, and other groups. This nation's history of racism is not a happy one, and we must do better.

—PRESIDENT  
DALLIN H. OAKS,  
“LOVE YOUR ENEMIES,”  
*ENSIGN*, NOVEMBER 2020





## A Peek in a Pandemic Classroom

Assistant professor Cecilia Pincock, '92, checks in with her online students during group discussions in a teacher education class this fall. Conducting fall semester classes during a pandemic altered the mechanics of teaching across the McKay School, with instructors using technology—and creativity—to connect with and nurture students, whether in person, through a screen, or, as in this classroom, both at once.



# Alumni Happenings

McKay Today helps connect you to your former classmates and teachers.

## Job Hunting During COVID-19

► **TRISTIN HAMPSHIRE, MS '20**

With a global pandemic causing widespread hiring freezes, April 2020 was “a weird time” to be entering the job market, said recent graduate Tristin Hampshire.

Luckily for Hampshire, her time in the Communication Disorders Department prepared her to handle an uncertain future. Her thesis chair, Doug Peterson, taught her to have a “changing-the-world mentality,” and her “remarkable” cohort, whom Hampshire calls her “best friends,” gave her the support she needed to navigate difficult times.

In addition, patients she met during her externship at the Provo Veterans Center taught her to always look on the bright side. Even as the veterans worked to regain swallowing, speech, and cognition skills, “they were the ones in the room cracking the jokes, lightening up the mood, and putting a smile on your face during therapy,” Hampshire said.

Armed with her education, her work ethic, and her positive attitude, Hampshire landed a job as a speech-language pathologist at South Jordan Elementary School, where she started this fall. Though she is unsure what the school year will look like, thanks to her McKay School education, she realizes that she is capable of great things.



## Building Leaders Through Latinos in Action

► **JOSE ENRIQUEZ, MEd '02, EdD '12**

Growing up in East Los Angeles after emigrating from El Salvador, Jose Enriquez learned how to make the most of what he had and to do what no one around him had done before. “You have to be creative; you have to take different angles,” he said.

Enriquez came to BYU as a full-ride wrestling athlete. He earned his bachelor’s degree in Spanish teaching and began pursuing a master’s in educational leadership. “Having practice in the day and research in the evening together was powerful because you got to see educational leadership in action,” said Enriquez.

After working as an administrator and director of student educational equity in two Utah districts, Enriquez moved to the Utah State Office of Education, where he oversaw Title III, which supports English learners, immigrants, and refugee students. Although Enriquez enjoyed the public school system, he wanted to maximize his potential and impact by helping the younger generation of students do the same: “They bring a lot of assets, but there is nothing in the public school system that allows them to showcase those assets.”

In 2001, Enriquez launched Latinos in Action (LIA), a nonprofit organization



designed to develop Latino students' talents and, more important, to use those talents to help others. One of the biggest benefits of LIA is its mentorship program. LIA high schoolers in 13 states visit elementary schools twice a week to tutor and positively influence younger students.

"We could teach students about Latino heroes, but instead we can create our own heroes from within," said Enriquez. Students learn how to plan service projects, run social activities, create assemblies and parent-teacher conferences, conduct meetings, and organize meeting agendas.

Enriquez credits the Educational Leadership and Foundations Department for his passion for education. "It was a door to the world of education and to really understanding what leadership in education looked like," he said. This allowed Enriquez to teach leadership skills to others. And the importance of research was also key: "Anyone can be a part of the conversation in academia. You just have to understand it, do the research, and add to it."

However, his greatest takeaways were relationships—both the ones he made and the ones he has helped others create through LIA. "What is most important are the people in front of you."

## Distance Education Leadership and Distinguished Service Awards

► **ANTHONY PIÑA,**  
*BA '89, MEd '91*

Anthony Piña credits his mother, Teddi, for his love for online learning. While working on her degree, Teddi continually switched universities due to moves made for her husband's job. At each new school she had to meet different requirements and take a number of credits to establish residency.

Piña's mother died of breast cancer in 1996, before she could finish her bachelor's degree. Six months later, Piña developed his institution's first online course. "Once I did that, I realized that if my mother had had online courses available to her, she would have been able to finish her degree," he said. "I pledged from then on that I was going to move my career toward online and distance education, because I did not want anybody else to not be able to meet their goals because of distance or residency requirements."

At BYU, Piña earned his bachelor's in Spanish teaching in 1989 and his master's in educational psychology two years

later. He earned a doctorate in education leadership from La Sierra University in 2005 and a second master's in management from Sullivan University in 2016.

Piña has since developed and taught many online courses and codeveloped several online degree programs, including an online PhD. In 2019 he was awarded the Wagner Award for Distance Education Leadership at the Distance Learning Administration Conference as well as the President's Award for Distinguished Service to the Association for Educational Communications and Technology. He is the associate provost for teaching and learning for Sullivan University in Louisville, Kentucky, where he oversees online instructional design, curriculum development, and faculty training and does consulting work in online learning for institutions across the country.



Piña recently coedited his sixth book on educational technology and distance education leadership and has published more than 70 articles and professional publications. He sees technology as "power tools" that help educators build a house of knowledge. "Technology in the hands of a skilled teacher is like a power tool that enables good teachers to do what they do even more effectively," he said.



## Defining Opportunities— A Superintendent's Career and Experience with COVID-19

*"Amidst the constantly changing conditions of this pandemic, we have an opportunity to really look at how we structure education and focus on where we could channel our energies to help the most students have the most success."*

Anne Staffieri, '16, superintendent of Escondido Union High School District in Southern California, has spent more than 28 years in education. She has worked as a high school biology teacher, independent study program administrator, principal of an alternative high school, elementary principal, HR administrator, and superintendent for two school districts. As she surveys her career, she sees a series of "defining opportunities" rather than defining moments. From a school closure to a pandemic, she has seized each event as a chance to move forward—and lead others—with positivity and compassion.

### BECOMING AN EDUCATOR

Staffieri experienced her first defining opportunity as a college undergraduate. Coming from generations of physicians, she planned a career in medicine, but her mind changed during an internship in Mexico, where she volunteered in a hospital and taught English. Staffieri felt a kinship with those "providing education and providing lifelong skills" to students.

After her internship, Staffieri earned a bachelor's in biology from BYU and a master's in arts education curriculum from California State University. She later returned to BYU for a doctorate in educational leadership. For four years Staffieri commuted from San Diego to Utah every month, all while working and raising four children with her husband, Russ.

### DEFINING OPPORTUNITIES

One of Staffieri's most impactful defining opportunities came as principal of Valley Center Elementary. On the cusp of receiving the California Distinguished School Award—an impressive accolade for Staffieri's staff and the students—the school board voted to close the school after more than 75 years of operation. Instead of succumbing to anger or frustration, Staffieri's team decided to celebrate the time they had left.

"In life or in your career, you are always going to have things that are frustrating and hard to understand," Staffieri said. "Instead of focusing our energies on that anger, we focused our energies on celebrating our students and making that challenging experience something we could really learn from."

### FACING COVID-19

Staffieri sees another defining opportunity during the COVID-19 pandemic.



In March 2020, she and her team rallied together to ensure student success. Beyond closing campuses and transitioning to online learning, the team had to evaluate students' basic needs. With more than 70 percent of their students

living in poverty, as foster youths, or homeless, Staffieri prioritized providing meals to students.

The team also traveled door-to-door (in protective equipment) in April and May to check on students who had been absent from virtual classes. "We care about the students, and we care about their families," she said. "What we discovered on those home visits was amazing. Our presence really communicated a lot to students: that we did care and that we were there for the right reasons." Staffieri wants to continue home visits and welfare check-ins, "because it helps us to stay connected with the reality of what our students and families are facing."

Staffieri feels the pandemic is teaching her and her district to be more compassionate. "Teachers, students, parents, school board members, and community members—it has been challenging for all of us. I think relationships that we have with one another and the care and compassion we show to one another cannot be underscored enough," she said.

Despite its many challenges, Staffieri views the pandemic as yet another way for her and her district to grow: "This is an opportunity to think outside the box and set systems to really close those achievement gaps. We have an opportunity to re-create environments of learning with enhanced equity for all of our students, especially underserved populations, English learners, or special education students. We can turn things around."



## *Something More Than Themselves*

It may seem cliché to say that people who choose to teach are “heeding the call” or are driven by a “higher purpose.” But we witness this reality regularly at the McKay School. We pay tribute to those who are entering the teaching profession, especially now, with the many difficulties we are facing in our world.

Meet two elementary education students who are truly driven by something more than themselves:

“The field of education is a sacred field. There is nothing I desire more than to influence the lives of children for the better. I want my students to know that I undeniably believe in them and that I want them to believe in themselves with that same fervor. The desire for my students to reach incredible heights and to make a difference in their future employment, families, and communities burns like a fire at the core of my soul.”

—**Brianna Smith**, '22

“I love to teach. I feel it so deep inside of me that teaching is what I am meant to do. Every time I stand in front of a class or sit one-on-one with a student, I feel peace and passion for what I am doing. There are days I get so excited in one of my classes that I feel I might burst with the joy I feel toward teaching. I truly believe that Heavenly Father placed this desire within me to teach His children, and He has helped me develop my gifts so I can be the best teacher I can be.”

—**Elly Ferguson**, '21

This is the future we are seeing at the McKay School.

Every student in the teacher education program is required to complete a semester of student teaching or a full-time, yearlong internship. Working another job is virtually impossible. If you are searching for somewhere meaningful to give, this is a very good option. Any gift, small or large, is the right size.

[education.byu.edu/alumni/giving](https://education.byu.edu/alumni/giving)

With gratitude,



Michael Leonard

*Assistant Dean, External Relations*

*David O. McKay School of Education*



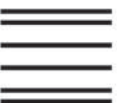


***Making a Personal Reentry Plan?***

*"When I decided to go back into the workforce, I felt very little confidence. I did not have any good skills that I needed. I look back and realize how much more confidence I have now."*

**—Ingrid Shurtleff, '07, '20**

**P. 11**



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# We Hear You

**Thank you** to those of you who have taken our survey. Your responses are valuable and are shaping our outreach efforts, including those of *McKay Today*. This magazine is for you!

We have learned that you enjoy **research coverage** (see page 6) and would like more discussion of **multicultural issues** (see page 12). And many of you would like help **getting back into teaching after a long hiatus** (see page 8).

While 88 percent of you prefer the print version of the magazine, many of you have requested an online version of the publication. We are gradually working with our hardworking web team to improve our digital offerings.

This kind of great feedback helps us provide meaningful and relevant content in future issues. Thank you!



BRADLEY SLADE

## DOUBLE “AIR HIGH FIVES”

Laura Howard, teaching at Westmore Elementary in Orem, Utah, shares “air high fives” with her students on the playground. It’s just one of the ways teachers and students are adapting normal practices to the realities of the pandemic.

*For more on this most unusual school year, see pages 6, 20, and 24.*

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# ALUMNI UPDATE

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