

# *the* Statewide Standard

2020



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
*Illinois State University*



Parker Duwelius '19, educator and entrepreneur, helps develop product to assist students with special needs

# *the* Statewide Standard

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### **Publications staff**

Dr. James Wolfinger, dean and professor

Dr. Stacey Jones Bock, interim associate dean

Molly Davis, '09, M.S. '11, director of constituent relations

Andy Read, assistant director of marketing and communications

Tommy Navickas '08, M.S. '14, communications strategist

Nick Erickson, copy writer/editor, University Marketing and Communications

Jeff Higginson '92, graphic designer, University Marketing and Communications

Sean Thornton '00, M.S. '17, graphic designer, University Marketing and Communications

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Illinois State University  
College of Education  
Campus Box 5300  
Normal, IL 61790-5300

**[Education.IllinoisState.edu](http://Education.IllinoisState.edu)**

For address changes,  
please call (309) 438-2294.

# Message FROM THE DEAN



**G**reetings from the College of Education! This spring presented us with unique and trying times. Like all great educators, however, the faculty, staff, and students at Illinois State adapted to the times and made the best of a difficult situation. Instructors kept teaching, students kept learning, and staff supported all of our endeavors. In the end, my first year at Illinois State has been deeply gratifying, and I am honored to share this year's *Statewide Standard*, which highlights a number of the great projects we are launching in the college.

This past fall, we approved our exciting new strategic plan, which will guide teaching, research and service in the college through the year 2024. This year we've made strides toward achieving a number of our strategic goals, including working to address the teacher shortage, increasing retention rates by planning for a new student success center and diversity officer, and strengthening partnerships with colleagues in pre-K-12 school systems and community colleges.

In this edition, you will see some of the great work of alumni educators, faculty, staff, students, and donors who are leading the nation in advancing the teaching profession. Each of these stories demonstrates how we are working together, guided by our strategic plan, to further the field of education and prepare the highest quality teachers and administrators.

I hope you will find these stories inspirational and that you will connect with us in the near future. I would love to hear your story and learn about the great work you are doing in the field. Please feel free to reach us via email at [Education@IllinoisState.edu](mailto:Education@IllinoisState.edu).

With Redbird Pride,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "James Wolfinger". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "James" being more prominent than the last name "Wolfinger".

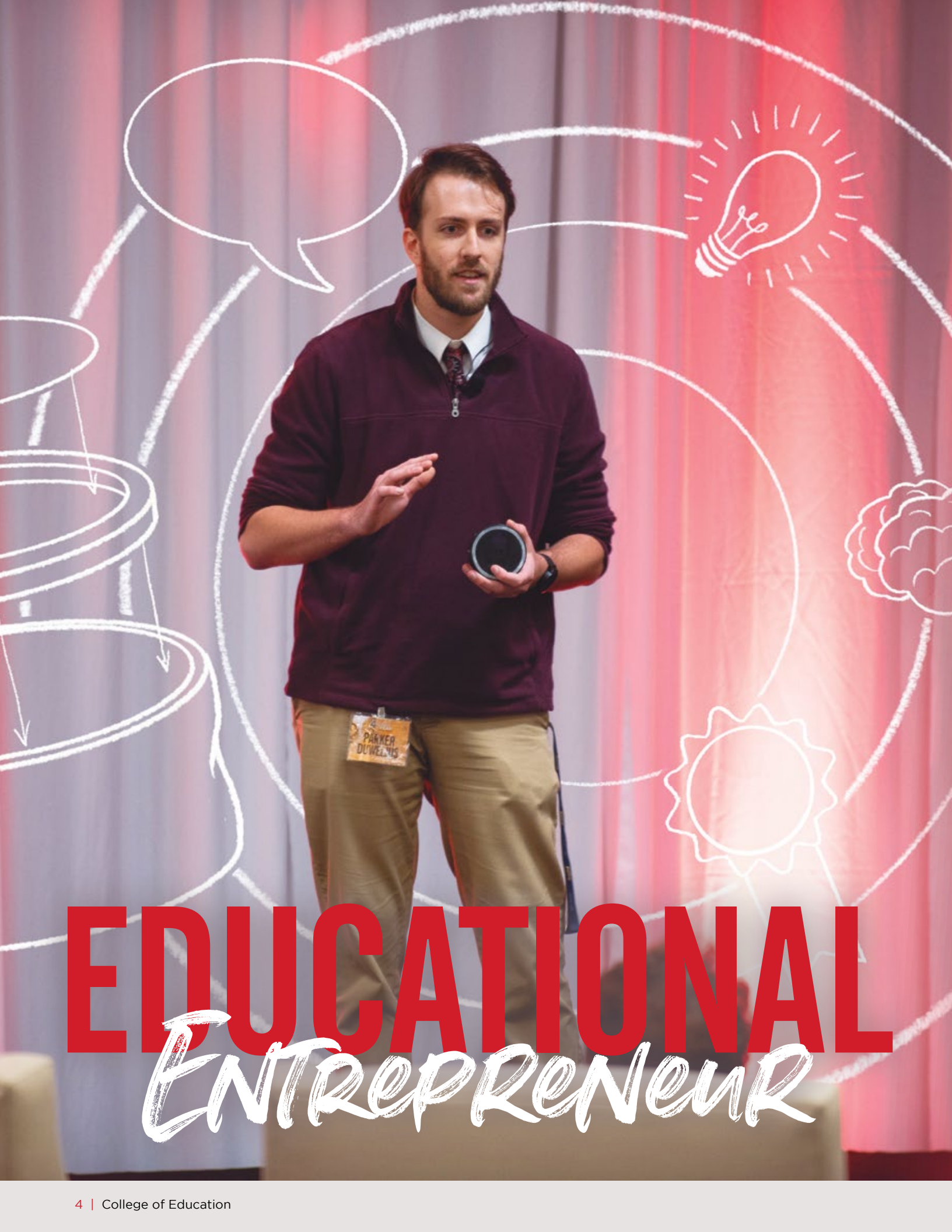
**James Wolfinger**

Dean and Professor  
College of Education

## Strategic Plan (2019-24)

- Support, recruit, and retain educators (faculty and students) who work to eliminate systemic inequities and promote inclusion in education.
- Develop and support innovative, exceptional, and globally minded educators and administrators.
- Build partnerships that reflect a shared commitment to excellence in educator preparation.
- Provide a supportive and engaging graduate student experience.
- Affirm the reputation of the College of Education as the leader in educator preparation.





# EDUCATIONAL ENTREPRENEUR

**S**pecial education alum Parker Duwelius '19 saw an opportunity to create an environment to help others develop deeper relationships with their peers while volunteering in a special needs classroom. This helped shape his outlook on life and led him to his passion for teaching and creating an inclusive learning environment. He put those to use and developed the Lumino Visual Timer to assist students in the classroom.

Those experiences, in addition to volunteering in his Teaching II class in high school, helped him realize his love for teaching and having an effect on young lives.

"I felt like I was making a difference in those students' lives, even if it's not on a big scale," Duwelius said. "I was making an actual individual impact on people."

Illinois State provided an environment to foster that mindset. Many of his high school teachers told him that if he wanted the best teacher education preparation and job possibilities, he needed to attend Illinois State University. After attending community college, he transferred to Illinois State into the Special Education, Specialist in Learning and Behavior program. That was the move he needed to be challenged and think creatively about using technology in the classroom.

## TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

As soon as he stepped into a classroom at Illinois State, Duwelius could feel similar passions from his professors.

"Dr. (Yojanna) Cuenca-Carlino, or Dr. C-squared as we called her, had a relentless energy that paired well with her relatable personality," Duwelius said. "She always said 'Remember that you are there for the students first' and that really stuck with me."

Duwelius started thinking outside the box for his pedagogy. During a class with

Dr. Tara Kaczorowski, he began to understand how technology could enhance his students' learning as she challenged him to try out a variety of new technologies in his lesson plans.

"Any time I introduced a new technology, Parker was always very engaged and always attempted to use it," Kaczorowski said. "They were teaching to their peers so it was a safe environment to try new things and he was always adventurous."

While studying in Studio Teach, he noticed a few 3D printers and quickly discovered that he could use the printers and the filament for free, and he soon incorporated a 3D printed model into his lesson plan.

That innovative and adventurous mindset and inspiration from his professors soon made a difference in wanting to develop the visual timer.

## DEVELOPING LUMINO

Duwelius had a nontraditional route to graduation and took a semester off to refocus and reorganize. During that time off, he worked at an autism day school as a paraprofessional in the suburbs of Chicago.

"My brother and I were both working at the autism day school and we noticed that the majority of the behavior issues were happening during transitions," Duwelius said. "So we took a holistic approach about why this was happening and

realized the students didn't have a clear expectation of when the transition was going to happen."

He and his brother started brainstorming a product to help with the transitions. Duwelius had the experience using the 3D printer at Illinois State and his brother liked DIY electronics. Together they developed Lumino Visual Timer, an individual timer that can be placed on a student's desk that uses a series of lights to count down to transition times. Knowing that traditional timers are noisy, their timer is all visual and communicates in a way that learners of all ages and abilities can understand.

During that semester off, Duwelius dove into product development. He bought a 3D printer, and together with his brother, tested many prototypes. Duwelius got involved in the entrepreneurial community in Naperville, took a basic business course, and developed the business plan.

In spring 2019, he did his field-based teaching in Plainfield. This placement allowed him to remain at home, stay connected with the autism day school, and continue to work with his brother on Lumino. When his final semester of student teaching started last fall, they had the product refined, the business plan completed, a crowdfunding campaign underway, and a drive to take the product to the next level.





## WINNING THE STARTUP SHOWCASE

By chance, Duwelius read an Illinois State student email newsletter that announced the Startup Showcase, sponsored by the George R. and Martha Means Center for Entrepreneurial Studies at Illinois State.

“I was already preparing a pitch and was deeply invested in building this business, so I figured, ‘why not?’” said Duwelius.

The Shark Tank-style event is an intense competition with a judging panel consisting of local business owners and entrepreneurs. The first round involved each of the 15 contestants giving their three-minute initial pitch, a poster display for investors, and dinner with local entrepreneurs. Each contestant had to return on the second day to learn who was still in the running for the top five spots.

The second set of pitches was in front of a large audience including many business owners, business classes, and interested community members. The five finalists were announced one at a time and each gave their larger pitch as soon as their name was called. Duwelius sat through four names and four speeches before he finally heard his name called as the last finalist.

“Each time someone went up there, I was getting more nervous because there were less spots,” said Duwelius.

Once he heard his name announced, he had about 10 seconds to process the excitement and nervousness before he had to get on stage for his final pitch.

He knew his speech well and came prepared with his prototype and business pamphlets in hand for each of the judges. After the first sentence of his speech, he was in the zone and excited to be talking about the product that he was so passionate about. Then the judging panel had 10 minutes for questions.

“They were softball pitches where I could really turn them into a good answer and clearly explain my business idea,” said Duwelius. “I was totally ready for those questions.”

Then the waiting and nerves began again. Every time he heard someone else get picked, he knew he had a better chance at the grand prize as the lower level prizes were announced first. Finally, he heard the second place name announced and knew that he had won the top prize of \$6,000 to put toward business development.

It was a culminating moment that helped validate his business idea and solidify that he was in the right field. Duwelius has a passion for helping provide access to education for individuals of all abilities. He came to Illinois State to pursue a teaching degree but left with so much more—excitement and knowledge for educational technology, confidence that he can persevere no

matter the circumstance, and a first-place finish in the Startup Showcase.

Duwelius graduated in December 2019 and is currently working at the autism day school and building his business with his brother. The prize money allowed them to put together a workshop and purchase additional 3D printers. They are working on launching their product to the marketplace soon.

“It feels good to connect that knowledge that I have as an educator to developing a helpful product for students,” said Duwelius. “Illinois State made me feel prepared and confident going into my first teaching job and sparked my passion for using technology creatively in the classroom.”





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## GET TO KNOW THE FACULTY, STAFF AND STUDENTS OF THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION (COE).

We sat down with a handful of members of the COE and asked five questions to find out a little more about them, why they do what they do, and what keeps them going.

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**DR. JAMES WOLFINGER**  
DEAN AND PROFESSOR,  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Just a year into this role, Wolfinger has found it everything that he wanted it to be. Having spent his previous 16 years at DePaul University, he knew that Illinois State was one of the few destinations that could lure him away. The job hasn't disappointed, as he points to the faculty, staff, and students all working together to achieve the mission of the college as a major asset that is unique.

### WHAT'S THE BIGGEST MISCONCEPTION PEOPLE HAVE ABOUT YOUR POSITION?

The nature of the work. Being an administrator and a dean, probably 90 percent of the work is dealing with people—understanding what their interests are, what they need to get their work done, how to bring resources together, and how to help them see the vision of the college and their role in helping us get there.

### WHAT ENERGIZES YOU AT WORK?

Every day we come here to prepare the next generation of educators for Illinois. We do that a thousand different ways around the college; the classes we teach, the programs we develop, the extracurricular programming, the preparation of principals, superintendents, curriculum specialists and everything else. Every day we come to work, knowing that is the mission of the place. That's almost a sacred trust we have with the state of Illinois that I take very seriously.

### WHO HAS INFLUENCED YOU MOST WHEN IT COMES TO HOW YOU APPROACH YOUR WORK?

Clara Luper was my freshman history teacher in high school. She was a leader of

the civil rights movement in Oklahoma City where I grew up. She taught her classes in a multicultural way before that was a commonly used term, and that really became a part of my thinking about the history of the United States and the way that classes should be structured to invite all students into that learning experience. From early in my career, I have held to this notion that education is about equity and inclusion and that all kids can learn. It's up to us as educators to figure out what they need and how to pick that lock. The content is important, but ultimately teaching is about the connections that you make with the students and your colleagues so that you're able to do great work on their behalf.

### IF YOU COULD HAVE ONLY THREE APPS ON YOUR SMARTPHONE, WHICH WOULD YOU PICK?

Pandora, StubHub, Waze.

### WHAT'S THE MOST UNUSUAL FOOD YOU'VE EVER EATEN?

Well, I lived in the South and I've visited Asia, so one that you can get in both places is pig intestine. It just goes by different names depending on where you are.



**DR. TERRY HUSBAND**  
**PROFESSOR OF EARLY CHILDHOOD**  
**LITERACY, SCHOOL OF TEACHING**  
**AND LEARNING**

Husband taught for 10 years in the Columbus City Schools and has now been at Illinois State University for another 10 years. In addition to teaching classes, Husband also supervises clinical students and student teachers in the Professional Development School program in Unit 5

and District 87 in Bloomington-Normal. He has varied research interests, including critical literacies in early childhood classrooms, teaching for social justice, and literacy development in black boys.

**WHAT'S A WORK-RELATED ACCOMPLISHMENT THAT YOU'RE REALLY PROUD OF?**

In 2019, I was awarded the College of Education Outstanding Teaching Award, which was a huge honor given all the tremendous faculty we have here.

**WHAT'S THE BIGGEST MISCONCEPTION PEOPLE HAVE ABOUT YOUR POSITION?**

Many people don't realize the science, theory, and skill that goes into being an effective early childhood educator. People have a tendency to assume that early childhood is nothing more than play time, circle time, naps, and snacks. While children definitely learn and grow in these activities,

it takes a special and sophisticated degree of skills, knowledge, and dispositions to educate children from birth to age 8 effectively and holistically.

**WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU KNEW MORE ABOUT?**

I wish I knew more about incorporating STEAM education in literacy classrooms. I think the arts in particular exist as assets that often go untapped.

**WHAT'S ONE THING MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU?**

One of my guilty pleasures is watching reality TV shows, especially *Real Housewives of Atlanta*, *Married at First Sight*, and *Below Deck*.

**WHAT'S SOMETHING THAT YOU'RE REALLY BAD AT?**

Fixing things around the house. I'm not very handy at all.



**LAURIE SEXTON**  
**TEACHER EDUCATION ASSESSMENT**  
**COORDINATOR, CECILIA J. LAUBY**  
**TEACHER EDUCATION CENTER**

Sexton has worked in a variety of roles within the College of Education for more than 31 years. In fact, Illinois State University is the only employer she's ever had. After graduating from the Department of Special Education in 1988, she worked at Metcalf Elementary School, University

High School, and the Department of Special Education before starting her current position in June 2019. She splits her duties providing support for the edTPA for the many teacher education programs in the college and throughout campus and coordinates key reporting of the Annual Assessment Review to maintain accreditation of programs.

**WHAT'S A WORK-RELATED ACCOMPLISHMENT THAT YOU'RE REALLY PROUD OF?**

Probably my staying power for so many years. Just kidding. It's really not just one thing, but if I had to point to one, it would be helping to re-focus the clinical experiences that deaf education students go through. Working as part of the team, we were able to help students connect what they learn in methods classes to their clinicals.

**WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU KNEW MORE ABOUT?**

The stories behind the people I work with and the students I support. I think when I know more about them, it helps me do my job better and I can build those connections. It makes my job even more rewarding.

**IF YOU COULD HAVE ONLY THREE APPS ON YOUR SMARTPHONE, WHICH WOULD YOU PICK?**

Weather Channel, Starbucks, YouVersion Bible

**WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE ITEM ON YOUR DESK (WORK-SPACE)?**

Definitely my coffee mug. I love my coffee in the morning, especially cold brew!

**WHAT'S SOMETHING THAT YOU'RE REALLY BAD AT?**

So many things. But I absolutely cannot carry a tune. No *American Idol* for me.





**BROOKE JENSEN**  
**JUNIOR MIDDLE-LEVEL EDUCATION**  
**MAJOR FROM YORKVILLE**

In addition to her busy class schedule working toward endorsements in language arts, math and science, Jensen serves as the president of the Collegiate Middle Level Association on campus. Her mother, an alum and educator, definitely put Illinois State on the radar when it came time for Jensen to choose a university. However,

once she came for a visit, Jensen knew this was where she wanted to be.

**WHAT'S A SCHOOL-RELATED ACCOMPLISHMENT THAT YOU'RE REALLY PROUD OF?**

I was recently nominated by the School of Teaching and Learning as its Bone Scholar, which is the highest university-wide honor for an undergraduate student. The selection process is pretty intense, so just being nominated is great.

**WHO HAS INFLUENCED YOU MOST WHEN IT COMES TO HOW YOU APPROACH SCHOOL?**

Definitely my mom. She has been a role model in her career, first as a teacher and then becoming an assistant principal and principal. She has attacked everything with integrity. Seeing her as someone who is innovative in the classroom and creating a culture of community is what I want to do.

**IF YOU COULD HAVE ONLY THREE APPS ON YOUR SMARTPHONE, WHICH WOULD YOU PICK?**

Pocket Schedule Planner app, Instagram, My Radar app

**WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE ITEM ON YOUR DESK?**

My Post-it Notes. I have probably 20 different colors in a variety of shapes and sizes. I love my Post-It Notes.

**WHAT'S SOMETHING THAT YOU'RE REALLY BAD AT?**

Walking. I trip over my own feet all the time. I can't walk on flat surfaces or elevated surfaces. I just fall! I used to swim at Illinois State, and in the pool, I was very coordinated. But being on land is not my strong suit.

# Urban Immersion

The **National Center for Urban Education** (NCUE) prepares future educators to thrive in diverse settings. NCUE's goals are to reduce human and capital costs due to high teacher attrition rates, prepare culturally informed and responsive teachers, and demonstrate the value of community-based partnerships.

**40 PERCENT OF STUDENTS** enrolled in the College of Education participate in NCUE clinical trips to urban partner schools annually. This represents over 12,000 ISU students who have visited urban partner schools through 511 clinical bus trips during the last 14 years of NCUE.

**OVER THE LAST FOUR YEARS,** students who participate in NCUE have an average GPA of 3.44 and score 10 percent higher than the national average on the edTPA.

**MORE THAN 200** ISU students have taken part in the Summer Teacher Education Partnership for Urban Preparation (STEP-UP) program within NCUE since its inception in 2010.

**STEP-UP FELLOWS** now teaching in partner public schools have a three-year retention rate of 70 percent and a 5-year retention rate of 65 percent. This 5-year rate rises to 74 percent for NCUE mentoring and induction participants. This is significant when compared to typical retention rates at Chicago Public Schools of 55-58 percent beyond three years, and less than 50 percent beyond five years.

To find out more about NCUE initiatives and partnership opportunities, visit [NCUE.IllinoisState.edu](http://NCUE.IllinoisState.edu), or email [mmzamud@IllinoisState.edu](mailto:mmzamud@IllinoisState.edu).

Greater Auburn Gresham Development Corporation Executive Director Carlos Nelson said, *"My love for this program and for Illinois State University is immense. It fits the desire to develop high quality, culturally competent educators for our urban communities."*





# PREPARING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE EDUCATORS

Equity and Diversity Cohort gives Redbird teaching candidates experience in urban settings

Illinois State student teaching candidate Kathryn McCormick was looking out to a diverse set of students coming from all different backgrounds while leading a small group lesson at Franklin Elementary School in Decatur. The activity required highlighters. Or so she thought. When McCormick, an aspiring teacher from Aurora, asked her students to take out their highlighters, she was met with blank stares. She quickly realized none of them had any.

That's the reality in some urban school districts. They can lack the resources of their suburban or rural counterparts. McCormick had to adjust accordingly. In doing this, however, she saw the students' enthusiasm to learn. By being present in an urban setting, she realized there was a misconception about students attending these districts.

"Going in, I think a lot of us had the perception that because they come from a low-income and Title IX school that they didn't care or didn't want to be there," McCormick said. "That was the most eye-opening thing to me is that every student I worked with wanted to learn and wanted to be there."

While always envisioning teaching in a suburban school district similar to the one she attended, McCormick sought to expand her skillset by immersing herself into a new community with a variety of demographics. Since the fall of 2018, College of Education and School of Teaching and Learning Assistant Professors Dr. Shamaine Bertrand and Dr. Erin Quast partnered with Decatur Public Schools. They co-created the Equity and Diversity Cohort to give students an opportunity to do just that with respect to social justice, equity, and restorative practice.

In their first years as faculty, Bertrand and Quast noted how they needed to focus teaching candidates' "re-introduction" to elementary education on issues of equity and diversity. They identified a need for qualified teachers in urban districts across Illinois that serve students of color and

students from low-income backgrounds. In coordination with National Center of Urban Education, they began searching for possible settings for the Equity and Diversity Cohort.

Bertrand was driving through Decatur and was struck by the number of minority children on playgrounds in addition to the clear lack of wealth compared to other parts of Illinois. According to census.gov, 30 percent of Decatur's population is not white, and nearly 22 percent of the population lives below the poverty line.

After an initial visit, Quast accompanied Bertrand on a trip to Decatur to create a partnership with the schools. They eventually did with Franklin Elementary and Dennis Lab School. Initial reception at Illinois State was strong, too. The initial cohort consisted of 30 teaching candidates.



Based on the first meetings with the prospective teaching candidates, Bertrand and Quast knew this could be a strong experience for future Redbird educators.

"For many of the students, this was the first time holding conversations that asked them to be critical of their own experiences and worldviews," Quast said. "It asked them to recognize the limitations

of their knowledge and how they have participated in inequitable systems."

More than 60 total students have been through the cohort in the first two falls of its existence.

Bertrand and Quast have made sure the prospective teachers lay the necessary groundwork so both they and the children in the classroom can mutually benefit. Prior to the program, the Illinois State assistant professors take their students by bus down to Decatur and tour the schools while stressing the importance of building relationships outside the classrooms. One of the common misperceptions, Bertrand said, is that parents in urban school districts aren't as invested in their children's education. But as Bertrand pointed out, some of those parents might be taking a second or third job and working at off

hours to provide financially. In order to truly relate to a child in any setting, teaching candidates must have an awareness of individual situations.

"We don't want our students to be naïve," Bertrand said. "We want to let them know that a lot of this really is heart and mind on your behalf. You really have to go in with a mindset that you want to





make a difference, and in order to do that, you are going to have to know the students that you teach.”

Redbird teaching candidate Danielle Thieman, who taught at Dennis Lab School last fall, took that to heart.

Describing herself as coming from an upper middle-class area with a predominantly white population, Thieman said she never realized there was a large issue with inequity in education because it did not affect her. In Decatur, she felt it was important to build personal relationships with her students so they felt more comfortable asking her for help and sharing their personal stories. She played with students at recess instead of standing with fellow teachers, and she also made a point to attend extracurricular events such as plays, music performances, and sporting events. This translated to being able to connect with children of all backgrounds in the classroom.

“First and foremost, we must realize that diverse students do not need to be

saved, rather, they need to be given the individualized tools to succeed,” Thieman said. “The greatest lesson I learned in this cohort is equity is not the same as equality, and educators must strive to make their classroom equitable across all levels.”

This cohort has now expanded locally. College of Education Hall of Fame inductee Dr. Diane Wolf ’89, ’92, ME ’94, Ed.D. ’15, the assistant superintendent of District 87 schools in Bloomington, saw an opportunity for students to gain this experience closer to the Illinois State campus.

The structure, according to Wolf, is that Redbird teaching candidates will be

placed in an elementary school and conduct their Illinois State classes at a District 87 school. Then, they will partner with teachers, many being Illinois State alums themselves, for their practicum experiences.

“As we prepare students for a world that embraces diversity and demands equity, we know that one way to do this is for our ISU student colleagues to be exposed to students from different backgrounds than their own,” Wolf said. “District 87 is proud to be a diverse district and embraces this diversity of races, socio-economics, beliefs, and income as a way for us to celebrate that every child brings a wonderful story into our schools.”

Also in Bloomington-Normal, some of the teaching candidates who spent time in Decatur transitioned to Unit 5 for their professional development school student-teaching experience, where Bertrand serves as site coordinator.

No matter where candidates end up from the Equity and Diversity Cohort, the versatility they learn in how to reach all

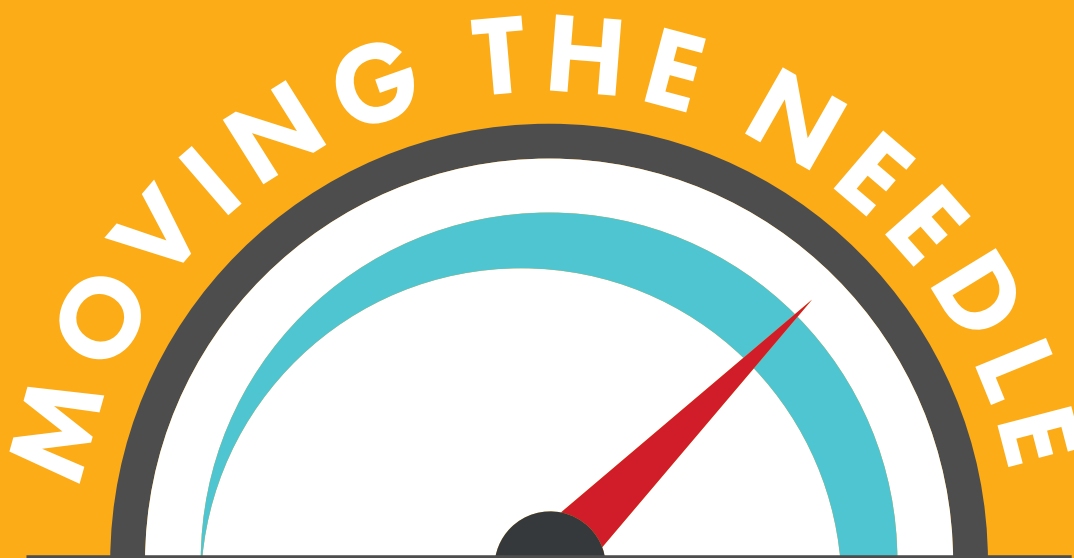
students has an immeasurable effect.

“Decatur has taught me what it means to be a culturally responsive educator, and I’ve learned that not only is it imperative that I teach that way but to also encourage my future colleagues to do the same,” said Illinois State teaching candidate Emma White, who taught at Franklin Elementary School in Decatur and is now at Unit 5’s Cedar Ridge Elementary School. “It’s not enough to be ‘color-blind’ or have a ‘one-size-fits-all’ motto, because that is not what the students of diverse backgrounds need in order to succeed.”

It’s especially important as the country itself has become more and more diverse. By the time candidates enter classrooms, that representation will be more present in suburban, urban, or even rural settings. According to a new Pew Research Center analysis of census data, 109 counties in 22 states have gone from majority white to majority nonwhite since 2000.

With the implementation of the Equity and Diversity Cohort, Illinois State teaching candidates are given the opportunity to experience the evolving demographics before they ever become full-time.





## Finding innovative solutions to prepare educators

The fact that the United States is experiencing a national teacher shortage is well documented and there are many contributing factors, including salary concerns, funding cuts, and attrition due to retirements. While Illinois State's enrollment in teacher education programs has held relatively stable when compared to other institutions, as a leader in preparing educators, the College of Education is focused on finding solutions to the issues.

### BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

One of the recent efforts to promote the profession by the College of Education (COE) is the creation of the Future Teacher Conference. In October 2019, approximately 350 students from 26 Illinois high schools came to campus for the inaugural year of this conference. The day informed and inspired these students about the process of becoming a teacher and what to expect after graduation as they enter the classroom. Students attended a variety of presentations covering topics such as navigating the college process, international teaching opportunities, high demand subjects, and urban teaching experiences. Teachers in the field, staff from Regional Office of Education No. 17, and Illinois State University faculty led the sessions.

The attendance of several representatives from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) underscored the importance of this event to promote the teaching profession. The conference is in direct alignment with the portion of ISBE's strategic plan that emphasizes the need to identify prospective teachers while they are still in high school. Also present at the conference were State Representative Dan Brady and State Senators Jason Barickman and Christopher Belt.

The idea for the conference came during numerous discussions in the College of Education and was organized by Kelli Appel, director of enrollment and transition services, along with a committee of faculty and staff from several areas of teacher education.

"We created this event to provide opportunities for students to explore areas of teaching, learn about the teacher shortage, and hear positive voices of teacher candidates and current teachers," Appel said. "Most students who attended the event confirmed that it enhanced their interest in teaching careers, so we are really looking forward to expanding it next year and beyond."

While initially promoted to schools with Educators Rising chapters and other future teacher pathways for its first year, the 2020 conference committee has secured facility options that will allow more schools to participate. Teachers who oversee a high school teaching related course or extracurricular group are eligible to register.



### WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Interested in signing up your group for the next conference?

Contact Kelli Appel at [ksappel@IllinoisState.edu](mailto:ksappel@IllinoisState.edu).

## RISING TO THE OCCASION

In an effort to get more students thinking about teaching as a profession, many colleges and high schools are creating student organizations for future teachers. Students at Illinois State University and University High School (U-High) have embraced one of these organizations, Educators Rising. Educators Rising, an initiative of Phi Delta Kappa International, is a national membership organization that is focused on promoting teaching and recruiting teacher candidates from diverse backgrounds. It also helps members connect with peers and experts to understand what it is to be a teacher and how to explore teaching. More than 43,000 students and 2,400 schools are currently participating in Educators Rising.

While the Illinois State chapter has only been a part of Educators Rising for two years, the group has existed as Future Teachers of America for several years. This new affiliation has proven to be a great experience for members to prepare for their future career, and the group now has access to a variety of digital resources, discussion materials, and microcredentials for professional development. The chapter hosts service projects, social activities, and guest speakers from the field to discuss important topics in education. In addition, they connect with local high schools, sharing experiences from their teacher preparation to give insight about the process and helping schools develop their own chapters.

U-High, one of the laboratory schools within the College of Education, started its own chapter this past school year. While still in its early stages, this organization has shown significant growth in numbers and involvement. Christine Paxson, curriculum director for the Laboratory Schools, and Tisha Ortega, Spanish teacher at U-High, helped



U-High's Educators Rising chapter visits the College of Education.

form the group and serve as its co-directors. Both love that this organization helps students see what it is like to be a teacher and provides insight into the process to get there.

So far, the group has been able to visit Illinois State's College of Education and has planned a variety of speakers and learning opportunities to help better understand the profession. They are also interested in developing partnerships with the Illinois State student chapter.

This chapter is well represented across all grade levels and is starting to garner more interest. In fact, during a recent prospective student open house, chapter members promoted the group to incoming freshman. A significant amount of these students indicated an interest in pursuing education as a profession.

"We have a unique opportunity to stress the importance of the profession and develop future educators." — Christine Paxson

### WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Interested in starting an Educators Rising chapter at your school? Visit [EducatorsRising.org](https://EducatorsRising.org) or contact [Education@IllinoisState.edu](mailto:Education@IllinoisState.edu) with any questions.



## A SEAT AT THE TABLE

Throughout the country, teacher preparation organizations are seeing the need for their members and teachers to be politically active. The College of Education recognizes the importance of being involved and is an active participant in the legislative process, especially at the state level. Faculty and staff participate in numerous state committees, including the licensure board, legislative liaisons with all public institutions, and a multitude of ISBE boards and task forces.

While the COE will work diligently to ensure the future of quality education in the state, there are opportunities for educators in the field to stay aware of current legislation and to provide their own input. It can be a challenge for teachers and administrators to sift through the hundreds of bills under consideration each session. However, many professional organizations provide a wealth of information about pending legislation and how it might affect the profession. In many cases, educators can simply sign up for an email listserv. Additionally, COE's social media pages will share information about upcoming bills.

Providing input on any bill can be done through submission of a witness slip, as seen on the link below. These slips are very important to help inform the committee regarding the prevailing

position on a specific bill. In some cases, no slips have been submitted on a bill, and the committee must make a decision without input from those with a vested interest.

Dr. Christy Borders, director of the Cecilia J. Lauby Teacher Education Center, is a member of numerous committees regarding pieces of educational legislation. One of Borders' favorite quotes is from Jane West, a well-known federal educational lobbyist, who referenced the importance of being politically active: "If you're not at the table, you're on the menu."



Dr. Borders, center, attending the Higher Education Reception at the Governor's Mansion.

"The best thing that can happen is for educators to become more civically minded, and be involved in that governmental process." — Dr. Christy Borders

**Illinois State University** has a long history of preparing quality educators and will continue to serve as a leader in promoting careers in education. Together with faculty and staff, current teachers and administrators, and students, we can prepare all educators to make a difference and advance the profession.

### WANT TO KEEP UP ON PENDING LEGISLATION?

Follow COE on social media for updates about bills of interest.

**Facebook:** [/educationISU](https://www.facebook.com/educationISU)

**Twitter:** [/educationISU](https://twitter.com/educationISU)

Check out the Witness Slip User Guide at  
([my.ilga.gov](http://my.ilga.gov)) [tinyurl.com/WitnessSlips](https://tinyurl.com/WitnessSlips)  
to voice your opinion.

# REINVENTING

*the*

## P-12 DOCTORATE



“If you really want to keep a \$20 bill safe, put it in your final manuscript. It will still be there waiting for you in 10 years,” one of Dr. Dianne Renn’s colleagues told her years ago.

Bleak anecdotes like this once described the fate of doctoral dissertations, particularly those completed for pre-K-12 leadership programs.

“Theoretical research was not consumable or useful for pre-K-12 leadership, and it was only helping the doctoral students if they had plans to pursue tenure-track positions,” she said.

When Renn became associate chair of Illinois State’s Department of Educational Administration and Foundations (EAF) in 2015, her top priority was to collaborate with faculty and school partners to increase the rigor and practicality of the program. One of the major changes involved aligning the course work and

dissertation with a model proven effective for preparing medical, law, and educational leadership professionals: The Carnegie Project for the Education Doctorate (CPED).

“CPED offered a way to talk about professional education in a way that has a clinical component, and that made much more sense for our students,” Renn said. “And students wanted it because it’s practical.”

Under the guidance of Renn and Department Chair Dr. Lenford Sutton, the new program received an overhaul.

The updates included moving from a Ph.D. to an Ed.D. classification; adopting a cohort model; bolstering equity and social

justice curriculum; and integrating Illinois' superintendent endorsement into the course work.

Perhaps most importantly, the revised program featured a new dissertation process that empowers students to research and address problems happening in their own school communities.

"The idea is, if we are preparing leaders who make change, why wouldn't we put the tools in their hands to facilitate this change?" Renn said. "We don't want them to rely on hiring professional development consultants. Instead, we're empowering them with the design engineering principles present in CPED to support equity, social justice, school improvement, and better outcomes for kids."

District-level leadership is praising the approach, including District 87 Superintendent Dr. Barry Reilly.

"The dissertation process really boils down to having an impact not only in your own building, but beyond that," he said. "I believe other leaders in education will benefit from their work, whether that's using the research largely 'as-is,' tailoring it to their own unique needs, or advancing research in their own setting."

## THE FIRST ONES

The initial CPED cohort finished its course work last fall. In contrast to many in traditional doctoral programs, most have already proposed or defended their dissertations, including Normal Community High School Principal Trevor Chapman.

He said researching a problem of practice in his own school helped him to progress in his research as quickly as he did.

"The work became very synonymous with the work I am doing in the building already," Chapman said.

Students in the new CPED model are encouraged to begin exploring their topics as early as their first or second years in the program. They also practice conducting cycles of inquiry during course work. This data-gathering approach is used by all students in the dissertation process, as well. It allows them to

get at the root causes of the problems happening in their schools.

"The faculty gave us opportunities that we probably would not have had elsewhere," said Sheridan Elementary School Principal Jenifer McGowan, a member of Chapman's cohort.

"They tailored assignments to help us grow, not just check off a standard they had to teach. They made it applicable to what we were doing and what we were interested in."

In lieu of comprehensive exams, CPED students are challenged to present their dissertation topic in the style of a TED Talk to faculty and students, followed by a written piece.

"This makes a whole lot more sense for a practitioner," Chapman said. "We don't typically write 150-page documents for people about a problem. What we typically do is to identify a problem and we talk to stakeholders and constituents in a relatable way."

The problem of practice Chapman examined was the disproportionality of students who were being disciplined at Normal Community. He found that black males were being disciplined at a much higher rate than all other populations.

To find out the causes of the problem, he formed and led an equity committee for his school. He later created a teacher leadership team to identify academic inequities occurring within the school.

## CREATING CARTOGRAPHERS

These dissertation efforts often blaze new trails on emerging problems facing most pre-K-12 administrators. As a result, they serve as handbooks that map the terrain sharing what to do—and perhaps what not to do—when leaders address problems of practice in their own school environments.

"As a practicing principal, I would have loved to have some examples from other principals saying, 'This is where I made a misstep in the process, this is what went well, and this is what I would recommend you to do, instead.' I didn't have that," McGowan said.

McGowan is hoping her work can have a positive impact for others in District 87. Her dissertation examines the socio-emotional supports needed for students at her school who have experienced trauma.

McGowan said her school has already experienced progress. In particular, Sheridan recently became a community school. This has allowed her fourth-grade staff to implement wraparound services that better support students and families.

"Trauma is not going away, so understanding what those needs are is going to be different in every school," she said.

## FUTURE PLANNING

Faculty and staff in EAF are also working to further strengthen the internship component of the doctoral program, as well. This work occurs during the first two years of the course work and provides students with the superintendent endorsement. The internship will involve sending CPED students in teams to conduct cycles of inquiries, usually in districts other than the ones they serve.

"Once that is up and running, the idea is for schools and districts to identify their specific need," Renn said. "That is the only way we will be able to effectively and ethically support them."

This program enhancement will also empower students to build upon their abilities to collaborate in teams, serve outside constituents, and understand the challenges facing different areas of leadership within educational communities.

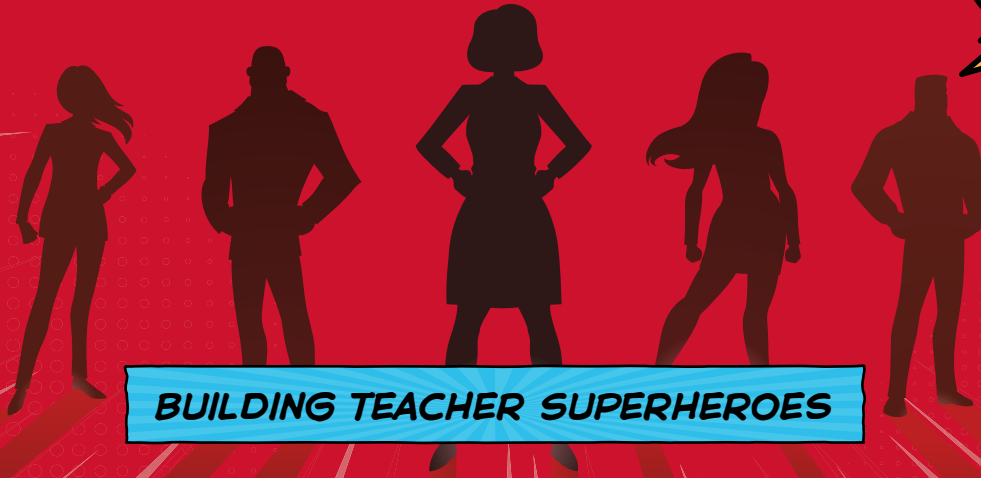
These efforts toward self-improvement are continuous. They also demonstrate how the faculty and staff in EAF are focused on preparing competent, impactful leaders whose \$20 and 2 cents are put to use outside the dusty pages of an unread manuscript.





# Preparing for the **FUTURE**

REAL HEROES  
DON'T WEAR  
CAPES, THEY  
TEACH!



## **STUDENTS DO WELL IN OUR PROGRAMS**

THE AVERAGE UNDERGRADUATE  
GPA IS 3.55 OVER THE LAST  
FOUR YEARS.



## **THEY GET JOBS UPON GRADUATION**

OVER 80% OF OUR STUDENTS  
ARE EMPLOYED IN PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS IN ILLINOIS OVER  
THE LAST TWO YEARS.



## **THEY ARE CONFIDENT TEACHERS**

97% OF ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY  
TEACHER EDUCATION GRADUATES  
REPORT THAT THEY WERE WELL  
PREPARED TO TEACH ALL ASPECTS  
OF THEIR DISCIPLINE WHILE  
PROMOTING RESPECT AND GROUP  
RESPONSIBILITY IN THE CLASSROOM.



## **THEY SUCCEED IN THEIR JOBS**

96% OF TEACHER EDUCATION  
GRADUATES FROM ILLINOIS  
STATE UNIVERSITY RECEIVED A  
"PROFICIENT" OR "EXCELLENT"  
TEACHER EVALUATION OVER  
THE LAST TWO YEARS.

## **TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS PEP DATA**

IN 2016, THE ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION BEGAN EFFORTS TO ENHANCE THE DATA FOR  
TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS, THROUGH THE PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATOR PREPARATION (PEP).

# Donor RECOGNITION

Individual donors have always been integral to the College of Education's success, especially during Redbirds Rising: The Campaign for Illinois State. Since its start, more than 7,100 donors have supported the college, contributing more than \$16.6 million for its initiatives and students.

Among them is Chris Marks '95. Marks committed \$25,000 to create the Jared Iman Washington Memorial Scholarship in memory of his friend, fraternity brother, and former educator Jared Washington '95, M.S. '99. Washington passed away in December 2018 at the age of 47. The scholarship provides for students pursuing elementary, middle, or secondary level teacher education.

"Jared was very intuitive when it came to learning. He understood the needs of students and was able to adapt his teaching style to meet those needs," Marks said. When Washington passed, the first thoughts of Marks and the brothers of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity were to the immediate needs and wellbeing of Washington's family—wife Tinishia, stepson Sekou, and son Khareem. The second thought was how to best honor his memory and legacy.

After initiating the scholarship, Marks was later able to attend a College of Education scholarship ceremony with Washington's family.

"Seeing the scholarship students walk across the stage really brings to life the donor experience," said Marks, who is especially grateful to have endowed the scholarship because it will live on into perpetuity as a lasting tribute to Washington.

Another donor, Kim Benziger '64, was inspired to create a College of Education scholarship after joining the American Association of University Women (AAUW). The organization, founded in 1885 by a group of female graduates, now gives out \$4 million in scholarships annually. Benziger heard one of the student recipients speak at an AAUW meeting. The student used her scholarship money to pay for babysitting for her two young children while she conducted research toward her Ph.D. at Argonne National Laboratory.

"The experience planted a seed for me," Benziger said. "I wanted to do something for students with no strings attached." She consequently created the Marla Kim and Robert A. Benziger Endowed Scholarship during the Redbirds Rising campaign to lift up nontraditional students enrolled in Illinois State's Educational and Administrative Foundations (EAF) program.

During the final year of the campaign, Nancy and Donald Watson '82 committed major gifts to establish two scholarships for education students. Their first \$50,000 contribution created the Betty Phillips Watson Fund in Special Education for students with demonstrated financial need. The scholarship honors Donald's mother, who earned a bachelor's and master's in special education after raising eight children on a farm outside Macomb.

The Watson's second \$50,000 contribution established the D. Gene Watson Fund in EAF. It enables faculty to further develop their skills through travel and research.



From left: Chris Marks '95, Tinishia Washington, Khareem Washington, and Sekou Woodard.

"I liked the idea of providing faculty the opportunity to network outside of their everyday environment," said Watson, who saw his father attend faculty conferences during the '70s when travel by plane was considered a luxury.

Thomas and Carole Barger also made a major gift during the campaign. The couple, along with Thomas' brother Carter, established the Thomas M. Barger Family Endowed Scholarship to support University High School, from which Thomas graduated in 1958 and Carter in 1961. The scholarship is named for Thomas and Carter's grandfather, who was a beloved U-High chemistry and physics teacher and confidant of Illinois State Normal University President Raymond Fairchild. The scholarship rewards students enrolled in physics or AP chemistry classes at U-High.

The College of Education is grateful for gifts from myriad donors that enhance its students' experiences.





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# REDBIRDS RISING

THE CAMPAIGN FOR  
ILLINOIS STATE

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the world is confronting uncertain and challenging times. Despite this, Illinois State is dedicated to keeping Redbirds learning and teaching. Your support of the College of Education equips our students with the tools they need to succeed. Leading-edge programs and talented faculty prepare educators to meet their students' evolving needs. Scholarships give life-changing support to Redbirds determined to cross the commencement stage.

## There are multiple ways to support the College of Education within its key funding categories:

- Expanding student support
- Attracting and developing top faculty
- Bolstering the Laboratory schools
- Reinventing our classroom learning spaces
- Solving problems in a complex world
- Sustaining excellence

Your investment in the College of Education sends a message to our students:  
**We're here for you, now and into the future.**

To learn more about College of Education funding priorities and make your gift today, visit **[Giving.IllinoisState.edu/opportunities/college-education](https://giving.illinoisstate.edu/opportunities/college-education)** or contact College of Education Director of Development Wilma Bates at (309) 438-4304 or **[wbates@IllinoisState.edu](mailto:wbates@IllinoisState.edu)**.

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