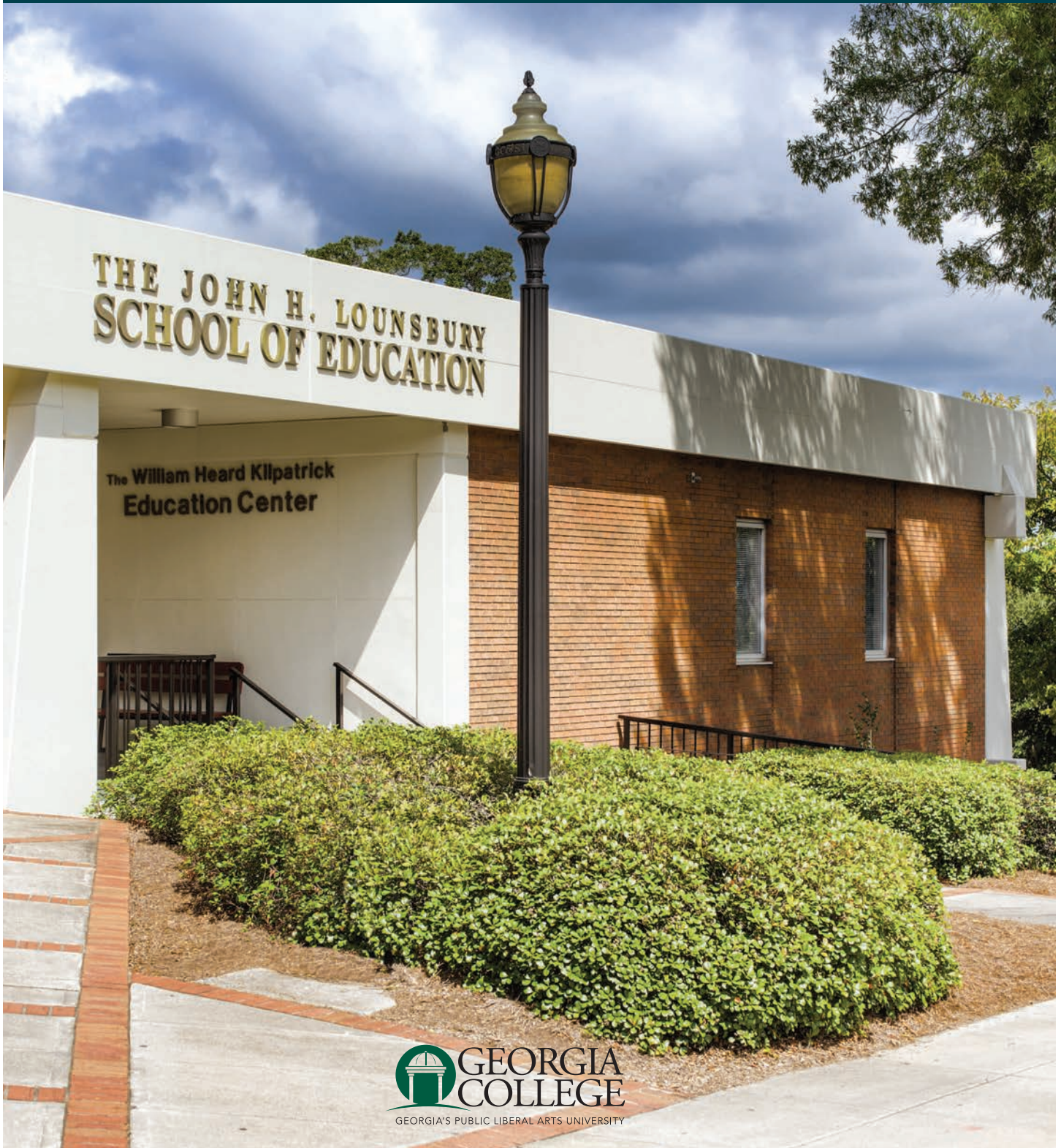


JOHN H. LOUNSBURY COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2021





JOHN H. LOUNSBURY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
NEWSLETTER
SUMMER 2021

Dean
Joe Peters

Editors
Shanquita Lewis
Victoria Fowler

Photo Credits
Anna Leavitt
Shanquita Lewis



Campus Box 70
Milledgeville, Ga. 31061

gcsu.edu/education

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DEAN'S MESSAGE



I recently received good news that our enrollment continues to grow, even during the current pandemic. This is good news since there is a growing shortage of substitute and regular teachers in Georgia. I believe one reason we continue to grow is that the College of Education continues to provide responsive programming to assist teachers and school professionals in achieving their goals. Recent changes such

as moving the M.Ed. in Early Childhood Education, the M.Ed. in Middle Grades Education, the M.Ed. in Special Education, and the Ed.S. in Special Education, to completely online help accommodate teachers interested in furthering their careers.

Another important graduate program initiative is our partnership with the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) on a federal grant to prepare Middle Grades STEM teachers. The grant pays teacher candidates a regular teacher's salary and district benefits for the first year as candidates take online classes and participate in classroom activities. The next two years of the program, the district hires these participants as regular teachers.

At the undergraduate level, we continue to offer Early Childhood Education (Grades PreK-5), Middle Grades Education (Grades 4-8), and Special Education (Grades PreK-12). These programs are offered in a mentor-led, field-based cohort format where teaching candidates go through the programs as a group with a faculty member mentoring them throughout their program. These programs are field-intensive providing candidates a great deal of time in actual classrooms, so they are experienced when they graduate and are ready to take on their own classrooms.

At the graduate level, there is a fully-online Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.) programs for Secondary Education, Middle Grades Education, and Special Education. These programs can be completed before a candidate begins teaching, or after a candidate is hired as a teacher and needs a certification credential. For teachers who are already certified, in addition to the fully-online Masters Degrees in Early Childhood Education and Middle Grades Education, we also offer Curriculum and Instruction, Instructional Technology, Library Media, and Tier I Educational Leadership programs.

For those looking for a specialist degree, there are three fully-online programs including Teacher Leadership, Educational Leadership (Tier II), and Special Education. We also offer an Educational Doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction in a blended format.

For those seeking a credential, but not a degree, there are many options such as an Instructional Technology, Reading Endorsement, Educational Leadership, or Library Media certification-only programs as well as certificates in the areas of Dyslexia, Computer Science, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). Visit our website <https://www.gcsu.edu/education> for more information or contact our Graduate Programs Director, Shanda Brand, by phone at 478-445-1383, or by emailing shanda.brand@gcsu.edu.

Our short-term plans are to develop an Online Teaching Endorsement and a Masters Degree add-on for Georgia Teacher Academy for Preparation and Pedagogy (GaTAPP) participants who are certified by the Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESAs), but would like to add on courses to complete a Masters Degree.

Whatever program is chosen, candidates can be assured that our graduates are in high demand and continue to be sought after in the job market. I personally believe it is because we recruit motivated students who help each other in the cohorts, pursue excellence in their professional and personal lives, and feel free to share innovative ideas as they try them out in classrooms.

In other good news, our iPad initiative continues due to the generous support of our donors. All undergraduate cohort members receive an iPad to use in the program of study. Faculty and fellow students provide professional development and activities to promote teaching through technology. Also, our Makerspace is near completion. This area will have state-of-the-art equipment for students to learn current and emerging technologies so they can pass on these skills in school-based Makerspaces. If you would like to donate to help us continue the iPad and Makerspace Initiatives, please contact our Donor Engagement Officer, Emily Lim Boewadt, by email at emily.lim.boewadt@gcsu.edu or by phone at 478-445-5137.

Best wishes,

Joe Peters
Dean of Education
joseph.peters@GCSU.Edu

College of Education Highlights



Dr. Nicole DeClouette, Interim Associate Dean, received the Irene Rose Community Service Award. This award is a Celebration of Excellence Award presented by President Steve Dorman.



Dr. Marcie Peck, Program Coordinator for Teacher Leadership, received the Excellence in Online Teaching Award. This award is a Celebration of Excellence Award presented by President Steve Dorman.



Dr. Lyndall Muschell, Early Childhood Education faculty member, received the Craig M. Turner Excellence in University Service Award. This award is a Celebration of Excellence Award presented by President Steve Dorman.

The Special Education Faculty - Dr. Stephen Wills, Dr. Rob Sumowski, Dr. Roddran Grimes, Ms. Mary Hiller Crook, Dr. Kim Muschaweck, and Dr. Nicole DeClouette – received the Academic Affairs Teaching Excellence Award for a Department or Program. This award is a Celebration of Excellence Award presented by President Steve Dorman.



Dr. Rob Sumowski, Assistant Professor of Special Education and Program Coordinator for the Master of Education and Education Specialist programs, received the Council of Public Liberal Arts College's (COPLAC) Charles Dunn Award. This award recognizes faculty members who play essential roles in students' well-being and academic success. Dr. Sumowski was also selected as the 2021 First-Year Convocation keynote speaker.

Dr. Chris Greer



"I am producing and hosting a new show called View Finders for GPB here in Georgia. I have begun filming episodes with my co-host Jason, and the basic premise of the show involves exploring some of the most beautiful places in Georgia to photograph. Along the way, we talk to experts and learn more about the history, ecology, and other important educational components of each location. Some of this content will also be uploaded into the GPB Education portal for K-12 teachers to use in their classrooms. The show premieres next spring and will feature locations including: Cumberland Island, Blood Mountain, the Okefenokee Swamp, and the Chattahoochee River. It will air on PBS here in Georgia and will be available for streaming online. Here is a photo of Jason and I next to the car Subaru gave us for the show. They are one of several sponsors helping to make all of this happen."



Social Justice Dialogue Series

(SJDS): Given the multitude of challenges and constraints presented by the pandemic, the COE's Diversity Committee focused on ways to continue critical conversations around diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice in the virtual space. One such effort materialized in the

form of Spring 2021 book clubs as part of the committee's ongoing Social Justice Dialogue Series. Our committee intentionally chose three books that address issues of social justice at different angles - particularly as they relate to education. The books chosen were *The Warmth of Other Suns* by Isabel Wilkerson, *Between the*

World and Me by Ta-Nehisi Coates, and *We Want To Do More Than Survive* by Bettina Love.

We had 51 registrants for the discussions, which took place over Zoom in February, March, and April. All participants were provided a free copy of the book being discussed, if needed. Each book discussion was led by two members of our 2020-2021 diversity committee which included Dr. Rachel Bray, Dr. Paulette Cross, Dr. Dionne Lazenby, Dr. C. Emmanuel Little, Dr. Marcia Peck, and Dr. Suzanna Roman-Oliver.

The committee will continue such discussions in 2021-2022 after receiving a \$4,000 Inclusive Excellence grant to continue this work.

College of Education Programs Receive Continued Approval from Georgia Professional Standards Commission

The John H. Lounsbury College of Education teacher education and service and leadership programs received continued approval from the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC). Every seven years, programs in the state must submit reports to undergo GaPSC review. The team reviewed submitted materials and conducted a virtual visit in May 2021.

"It is quite remarkable when an Education Preparation Provider (EPP) receives a perfect review, with no areas for improvement and no stipulations, which is what the College of Education received," said Dr. Nicole DeClouette, interim associate dean of the College of Education. "The review team also noted the cohort program model as one of our strengths. This is evidence of the great work of College of Education faculty."

The "continued approval" indicates that the programs meet all six of Georgia Standards for educator providers and preparation programs.



Call Me MiSTER grant: The GC Call Me MiSTER program has received financial support from Georgia Power for the fourth consecutive year, with \$10,000 of funding for FY22. This support will primarily serve to provide scholarships for students in the program. Georgia Power began its partnership with our program in 2018, after learning more about Call Me MiSTER at a regional conference. We look forward to continuing to expand this partnership to shift paradigms for education throughout the state.

Mr. Wayne Grimes (Georgia Power Learning Power Education Supervisor) is pictured here presenting the \$10,000 check to Call Me MiSTER in February 2020.

Outstanding Partner in Teacher Preparation



In 2014, Dr. Noris Price was hired as Superintendent of Baldwin County Schools. From the beginning of her tenure, she has been a supporter of and advocate for the partnership between the school district and the College of Education at Georgia College. This year the partnership was further strengthened by her willingness to work with CoE personnel to collaboratively establish protocols and procedures in response to the COVID pandemic. Within this effort, Dr. Price held steadfast to her belief in the value of field experiences for both teacher candidates and P-12 students. Even in the midst of a pandemic, her support did not waiver. She is the deserving recipient of the 2021 Deana Burgess Award for Outstanding Partner in Teacher Preparation.



Georgia College collaborates with the Southeastern Regional Educational Board

The Georgia College collaboration with the Southeastern Regional Educational Board (SREB) to prepare teachers for rural areas of Georgia through the Middle Grades STEM MAT program is going strong! Cohort 2, of the three-year initiative, launched in June of 2021 and will complete in July of 2022. Cohort 1 completed the MAT Program in July 2021. From July 6-9, 2021, members of the first two iterations were treated to a powerful learning experience at Jekyll Island, Georgia, where they, their Partner Teachers, SREB staff, and GC Middle Grades faculty attended the Schools that Work conference. About 30 people in all were able to share their learning with colleagues and experts, anticipate and prepare for the future

of field experience and college coursework, and build positive relationships with others — in the engaging, relevant, equitable, and integrative manner that is the heart of middle grades education.

Photos show some of the highlights of the retreat. Residents from cohorts 1 and 2 received iPads and Swivl robots to assist them in videoing, using the video to reflect on their practices, and to document their growth. These enduring, educative experiences help pre-service teachers tie theory to practice, develop their STEM knowledge and reasoning capacity, and prepare them to implement effective pedagogies in their critical work with Georgia's young adolescents.



THUNDER LEARNS TO READ

Reading is a skill known as a building block of life and fundamental to society.

Teachers work hard to help children read early in their education, but many students face obstacles in their learning. It helps when they receive extra guidance and understand that anyone can face similar challenges with reading — even a famous furry friend.

Georgia College junior education majors spent several sessions during their spring semester working on-site at Lakeview Academy in Baldwin County giving students additional guidance and encouragement as they honed their reading skills.

"We are actually putting it into practice the different tips and skills that we've learned through our classes," said early childhood education major Erin Malone. "I think it helped that we were with the students only in the spring because we had a toolbox of all the things that we needed to know be a lot more impactful."

As part of their college course Literacy Assessment and Instruction: Dyslexia and Diverse Reading Profiles, teaching candidates tutored Kindergarten through second-grade students (K-2).

"This is the first time we've been one-on-one or in pairs with students to see where they are with their reading and use the assessments that we've been learning in class," said early childhood education major Katherine Funke.

The course is part of pilot program in the John H. Lounsbury College of Education, which aims to better prepare teacher candidates for reading education.

"In the state in general, there was a bit of a concern that new teachers were coming out not really ready to teach all of the fundamental components of reading," said Dr. Linda Bradley, professor of literacy education. "There's been a state push to pay attention to those fundamentals."

Historically known as a leader in teacher education in Georgia, the College of Education joined an effort to assess and rework their literacy courses. The university is one of 14 University System of Georgia (USG) Educator Preparation Programs participating in a pilot project to plan and implement projects to improve teacher candidate impact upon K-12 student learning in literacy and mathematics.

"We revised our literacy coursework for early childhood and for special education as a part of a pilot in the state," said Bradley.

"We developed a three-course restructured plan that emphasizes hands-on implementation with students in schools. Spring 2021 is the first offering of this course linking assessment and interventions on-site with groups of K-2 students."

That course brought college students to Lakeview for eight sessions of hands-on tutoring. Overcoming the challenges of the pandemic and working with school and county leadership, Bradley connected her students with 106 younger children to work on the fundamentals of reading.

In honor of their hard work and the end of the school year, the children received a special celebration during their last scheduled tutoring session. A book of their very own to take home written by Bradley and featuring Georgia College's mascot Thunder the Bobcat.

"It's a treat for every child who's come to tutoring this spring," said Bradley. "On their last day of tutoring, we celebrated each K-2 student, gave them a copy of the book and then read it together as a group."

The idea for the children's book "Thunder Learns to Read" came to Bradley several years ago. She teamed up with a professional illustrator Min McGlaughn for the project. In the book, the bobcat decides he wants to learn to read but faces a few challenges along the way.

"This is my first children's book. I have loved children's literature throughout my career. There is something really magical about the delight an outstanding picture book can bring as children and adults interact in reading together. Writing a children's book has been a goal of mine for many years, and the Thunder book began to take shape about four years ago. It is so exciting to work with an outstanding artist, to see a print version, and to read it interactively with children."

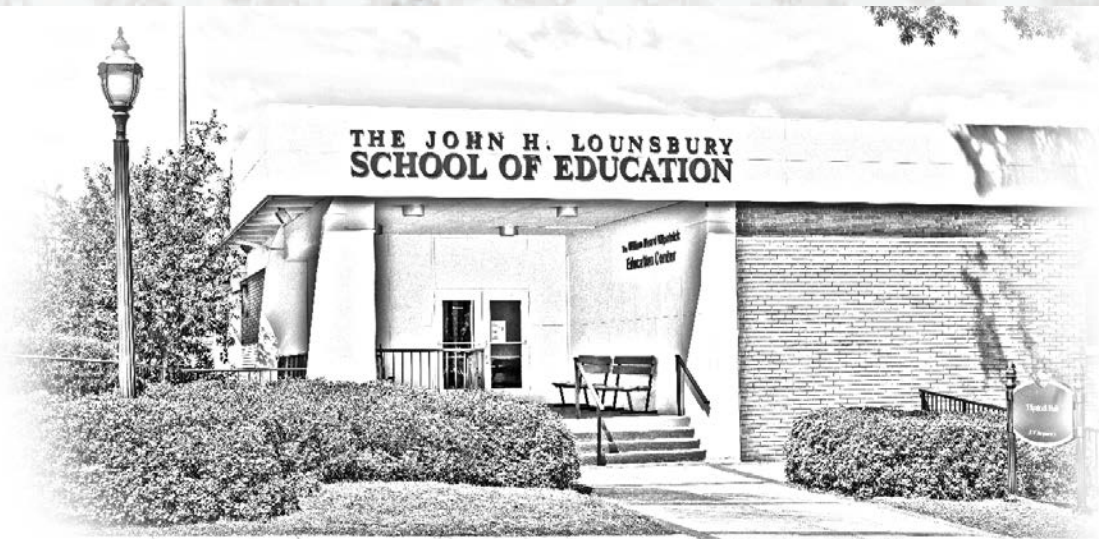
McGlaughn jumped at the opportunity to work on the project because she believed in its goal. Diagnosed with dyslexia at a young age, McGlaughn knew first-hand the struggles and frustrations many kids face. She hopes the book will encourage children that they too can tackle reading like Thunder.

In writing the book, Bradley tied in key concepts and tools she teaches her college students to help young children gain confidence in their reading abilities.

"We are thrilled to give copies of 'Thunder Learns to Read' to children and teacher candidates," said Bradley. "This book recognizes the complexity and significant challenge that learning to read can be. We want students who find reading tough to know how intelligent they are, and to know that teachers have tools that can help them grow stronger in their reading."

Capping off the end of the school year, the special reading and the gift of a book to take home helped celebrate a job well done by both tutors and students alike.

"It gave the young students the validation they need," said Malone. "They also got to celebrate, so it just showed them we are really proud of them and that they did a really good job this year."



College of Education Program Rankings

**TOP
30**

Georgia College ranked as one of the 30 Best Online Master's Degree Programs in Special Education for its Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program by onlinecollegeplan.com.

OnlineU.org's 2020 rankings placed Georgia College in the following categories:

#10

Most Affordable Online Master's in Teaching Degrees

#12

Most Affordable Online Master's in Education program

#24

Most Affordable Online Master's in Educational Leadership program

Study.com has published its 2021 rankings, and Georgia College ranked:

#11

Best Bachelor's in Special Education Degree Programs

#33

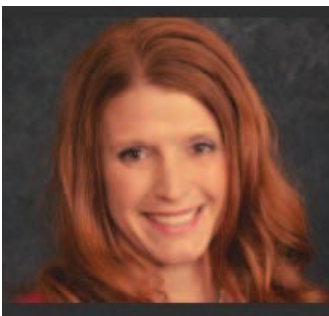
Best Bachelor's Degrees in Early Childhood Education

College of Education Alumni News



My Teacher is Tops

Ms. Molly Williams of Grayson, Georgia, has been a kindergarten teacher at Midway Hills Primary School in Milledgeville for three years. She received her Bachelor of Early Childhood Education in 2018 and her Master of Instructional Technology in 2020. What she has enjoyed most about teaching is the relationships she has formed with her students and their parents. Since the pandemic, the greatest challenge for Williams has been being able to check on her students' well being. It has also been difficult to give the one-on-one attention that her students may need. In September, she was surprised with the My Teacher is Tops Award by local news television station 13WMAZ. She was nominated by one of her virtual kindergarten students.



State Panel Presenter

Principal Liz Raeburn of Bryan County Middle School was one of our four panel contributors to the Georgia Association of Educational Leadership (GAEL) virtual summer conference. Raeburn is a candidate for the Ed.S. in Educational Leadership. As a panel contributor, Raeburn discussed her leadership in social justice at the school and emphasized self-awareness, starting small, and identifying champions for continuous improvements.

The first event was on June 23, 2020 to kick off the Social Justice Series for the summer presented by Dr. Stephen Peters and Dr. Mark Wilson. The panel featured two principals, one retired principal and current consultant, and one superintendent. The discussion and reflection were on three central questions:

- As a school leader, what is your role in promoting social justice at your school?
- How might I prepare my teachers to effectively discuss social justice and anti-racism in our schoolhouses?
- What might I do — and continue to do — to be a champion of social justice?

"Some of the things I openly discussed were

related to creating spaces for our staff and teachers to begin to have honest, authentic dialogue about the work necessary to dig into our implicit biases and do the work to model anti-racist work, behavior, conversations, and practices," said Raeburn reflecting on her experience on the panel.

"My main message to wrap up was study-struggle-focus," she continued. "It is imperative as leaders of schools that we are continuous in our work to read and reflect and dig deep into ourselves and our self-awareness. I personally, am here to get it right — not be right — and that is the work we need to do. Be a better human to all humans."

Last year's GAEL summer conference was attended by 790 educators in an open session and a second session for 89 school leaders and GAEL members from around the state. GAEL is the umbrella organization for state P-12 leadership organizations.

UNDER A Microscope

Written by Call Me MiSTER alumnus and fifth grade science and English language arts teacher at Wells Elementary School in Macon, Georgia, **Brian Bowman**. This article first appeared in the August 2020 edition of the Association of Middle Level Education (AMLE) newsletter.



An African American first-year teacher on perseverance and an unwavering focus on student success

The 2%. No, I am not referring to the milk. No, I am not referring to my phone battery. The 2% indicates the percentage of African American male educators in America. As most people are aware, African American males are severely underrepresented in the education system. This past year, I joined the 2%, and with this opportunity came grave responsibility.

I will always remember the weight that I felt on the morning of the first day of teaching. I was so overwhelmed with the fear of not being adequate for my students, being one of the few that looked like me, and not being treated fairly. But most of all, I questioned if I was what my students would need.

I also felt as though I would be under a microscope within the school and that I would have to prove myself to other colleagues, parents, and even some students because of my age and the color of my skin. All my worries and doubts slowly went to the back of my mind the moment I watched my students eagerly trickle into the classroom. I could see on their faces that they knew I was not like their other teachers.

Although I could see my students looking at me as the “cool and young” teacher, I was some of my students’ first male teacher or first Black male teacher. When I looked into their hopeful eyes, I knew this year would be monumental for them.

Within a couple of weeks, I noticed that many teachers were making comments about the group of students that were placed in my class. They made comments like, “I can’t believe they would give a group of students like that to you” or “good luck with that class.” It didn’t take long for me to realize that the students who were placed in my class had been labeled as some of the problem students within the grade level. I didn’t come to this realization based on the students’ actions, but merely by the comments of my coworkers.

The question that settled in my mind was, “Why was I being asked to be a disciplinarian first and a teacher second?” The unapologetic answer is... I am a Black male. Although these “troubled” students were placed in my classes and my coworkers tried to influence my view of these students, I realized that I understood what the students needed. They needed love. They needed someone not to judge them for what they did last year. They needed an authority figure that didn’t yell. They needed me.

It had not been long since I sat in the same seats at the

very same school of my students. I was able to relate to them in ways that other teachers could not.

Although I was happy to help all students (even those not in my class), some coworkers viewed me as their hallway disciplinarian. Having students sent to me from other classrooms to discipline or counsel created a challenge for me. There were times when I was forced to make a decision to continue teaching the lesson, assist this student in need, or say no to the teacher. What would you do? Are you a teacher who sends your “troubled” students to a teacher that you have deemed a disciplinarian? As a Black male teacher, I learned quickly how to deescalate a situation with a student and get to the root of the problem. I knew that the child wasn’t a troubled child or a problem child, the child was encountering a problem or was troubled by something.

If previous teachers looked at the students that I taught as if they were a problem, then the students probably believed them. So, I wanted to make sure my students knew they were capable of reaching their full potential. I decided to go into my classroom and tell my students something similar to what Rita Pierson stated in her TED Talk. I told them they were special and placed within

MY classroom because they were the best of the best. We came up with a classroom chant: when I said, “we are” my students replied with “the best.” Simple. Reciting this chant with my students invigorated them to be their best. Although data isn’t everything, my students’ scores grew the most in the whole school. I realized that the highest priority for my students was forming relationships and building their confidence. After that, everything else fell into place. I saw their attitudes change before my eyes. They were excelling in their academics and reaching their full potential.

They believed that they were the best and they became the best.

Although I feel as if I am under a microscope as a Black male teacher, I persevere each day so my students will see my strength. I strive for my students to see me as an encourager and someone who is approachable, and caring; rather than a teacher they are afraid of. I aspire to change the narrative and show my students a positive example of a Black male and not the stereotypes they see when they turn on the television.

Governor Kemp appoints Georgia Professional Standards Commissioners

In 2020, Georgia Governor Brian Kemp announced his new appointments to state’s Professional Standards Commission. Among those was **alumna Jordan Frobos**, who is an academic coach with Gainesville City Schools. She has been an educator with Hall County Schools since 1997, and she earned a bachelor’s and master’s degree in Early Childhood Education from Brenau University and her Ed.S. degree from Georgia College. She joins Georgia College’s Dr. Holley Roberts, former associate dean and

professor of Early Childhood Education and edTPA Coordinator, as two of the five new appointees made to the commission last year with ties to the John H. Lounsbury College of Education.

The Georgia Professional Standards Commission was created by the Georgia General Assembly on July 1, 1991, to assume full responsibility for the preparation, certification, and professional conduct of certified personnel employed in the Georgia public schools. Commission responsibilities have increased since 1991, to include such areas as supporting recruiting functions throughout the TeachGeorgia.org website.*

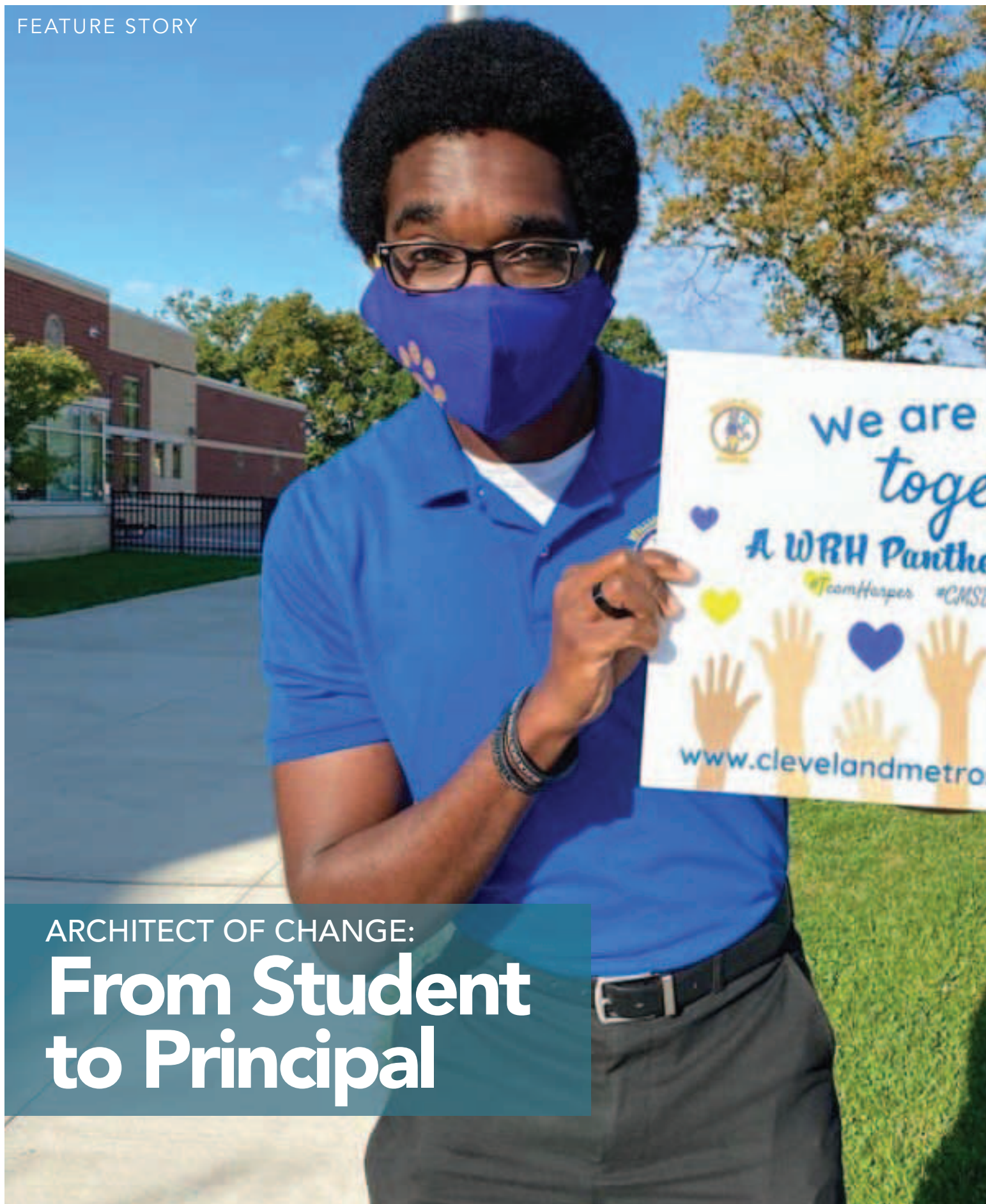
* <https://www.gapsc.com/Commission/About.aspx>



Alumna Katie Blum, a second grade teacher at Sugar Hill Elementary school, was named the Gwinnett County Public Schools district Teacher of the Year in December 2020. She has been employed as a teacher with Gwinnett county schools for five years.

“Although many students may remember little about their second grade year, my students will leave second grade with strengthened abilities to question and think critically, and most importantly, to believe in themselves to succeed,” Blum remarked in a news release.

Blum holds a bachelor’s degree in psychology and a master’s degree in teacher education from the University of Tennessee, and earned her specialist’s degree in teacher leadership from Georgia College.



ARCHITECT OF CHANGE:

From Student to Principal



Alumnus Dr. Ajayi Monell '08, '10, '13 truly believes he was born to be a teacher. He always wanted to be one and used to get a lot of practice with his siblings and as a Sunday school student leader in church. He would give out assignments and homework, and even had a grade book where he would grade his students based on a color-coded sticker system. For Christmas one year, he asked for and received a chalkboard as a gift. He has always gotten so much joy from seeing the stores stock up on school supplies when it came time for school to open up each year.

Born in St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, Dr. Monell comes from a family of educators. His grandfather was a principal, grandmother was a teacher, and many of his aunts and uncles also work in the education field. Although he never got a chance to see his grandparents in their element, he believes that teaching is in his blood.

As an undergraduate student, Dr. Monell majored in Mass Communication with a double concentration in Telecommunications and Public Relations. Although his undergraduate track was not the traditional route students take to become a teacher, his dream never died. He found great support from Dr. Anne Gormly, a now retired professor and former vice president and dean of facilities at Georgia College, when he told her about his dream to teach although he was a mass communication major. When Dr. Monell began the Master of Art in Teaching (M.A.T.) program in Secondary Education, he found further support from Dr. Cynthia Alby. He recalls how she was very straight forward in a loving way, and very supportive even through her critiques. He appreciates how she went above and beyond helping him, and how she created a family within her cohort.

As a teacher candidate in the M.A.T. Secondary Education cohort, Dr. Monell worked at Georgia College Early College, Baldwin High School and Oak Hill Middle School. After graduating from Georgia College, he began working at Carson Middle School in Greene County, Greensboro, Georgia. When Dr. Monell began at Carson Middle, he was often referred the black students who were deemed trouble. He recalls having to make it clear that he's not there to teach just the black students but all of the students. Although that was intimidating to do during his first year, he knew he had to stand up and let it be known that he has the power to influence all students, and he did just that. He made impacts on students who he never even taught. He would go to the alternative school three times a week and tutor students who weren't in his class. Even to this day, he keeps in contact with the students he mentored over the years. Every year, he attends the graduation of the students he taught in Greensboro. He also founded the Black and Gold Scholarship in honor of his fraternity, Alpha Phi Alpha, at Carson Middle School for graduating seniors from Greene County High School, and it has been in place for the past 11 years.

"Greene County is where I got my start and it will always be special to me," says Dr. Monell.

Dr. Monell received his Specialist in Educational Leadership in 2013 from Georgia College. In 2015, he moved to Cleveland, Ohio to become the assistant principal at Riverside Elementary School. He received his Doctorate in Teacher Leadership from Kennesaw State University in 2015. Also in 2018, he became the Cleveland Metro School District principal at William Rainey Harper Elementary School; his first year as principal was during the opening of this new school. Over the years, Dr. Monell has enjoyed many aspects of being an educator. He has enjoyed being the change as a black male educator – instilling positivity in his students and teaching them what success looks like when they live out their dreams. He has enjoyed being a positive role model and using his career as a way to push kids forward in life. Additionally, he has enjoyed being able to hear from past students and how they recall the things that were taught to them.

Educating during a pandemic presented its challenges for Dr. Monell. In the past, he has thrived off of seeing and interacting with his kids. He became an educator because of the kids and he really missed being in the building with them. He also missed being in the building with his staff, and found ways to support them so they'll feel less stressed. In the fall semester, after the schools remained closed due to the pandemic, Dr. Monell incorporated "Story Time with Dr. Monell" on Wednesdays to keep a connection with all of his students.

Dr. Monell believes anyone who is going into education should know that it's the most rewarding field because educators are so influential.

"Because you are teaching others," he said "make sure you are doing it for the right reason."

He believes that a teacher doesn't always have to be in the classroom, and that you can teach from anywhere. Dr. Monell asks himself at the end of the work day if he affected change that day. His first year of teaching is forever imprinted in his mind. Seeing the struggles his students faced in and out of the classroom impacted him and pushed him to work harder to make a difference and be the change. One of his class mantras was the following: "I will prove society wrong." Over the years, he has come to realize that kids will do well in school just to please their teacher, and if it takes that you should lean on it. He also learned that getting to know the kids on a personal level is important to truly reach them.

"If you teach, they will learn. If you care, they will change." – Dr. Monell



▲ "As a child, I dreamt of being a teacher but never in my wildest dreams did I see myself opening a brand new school. Today was our official ribbon cutting celebration. So blessed and honored to be in this position and this profession; one where I can help make dreams become reality."



First official day, with a building full of students, as Dr. Monell - Principal



Third group of students from Carson Middle School graduating from Greene County High School in 2019.

New College of Education Advisory Board chair takes students' needs to heart

Mike Rowland, '82, '87, worked with local youth early in his life. This experience inspired Rowland to become a teacher. So, he attended Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (ABAC) for two years, then finished out his post-education career at Georgia College. There he earned his bachelor of science and master of education in middle grades education.

"Georgia College had a reputation of having one of the better teacher preparation programs in the state," he said. "I knew it was the place for me."

Many of his political science professors influenced him including: Drs. Larry Elowitz, Mike Digby, and Jan Mabie.

"I look back on those courses and realize these professors championed experiential learning long before it became popular," he said. "In the College of Education (COE), Dr. Larry Bacnik taught the exceptional child course, and so much of what I know about learning strategies for special needs students came from his background and experience."

The number one takeaway for Rowland was the importance of being a subject matter expert.

"Not only did these professors know the subject matter, but they loved it," he said. "They knew how to make it interesting and challenged students to think. As an educator, I always wanted students to use the subject matter to think beyond the obvious."

One particular club Rowland belonged to both at ABAC and Georgia College gave him the foundation he needed to be a leader.

At ABAC, he led the student traffic court, where students who received tickets on campus could appeal their tickets before a student tribunal. Rowland applied this knowledge at Georgia College, where he collaborated with student and faculty leaders to start a traffic court.

"I didn't know it then, but that experience set the stage for a career that involved a number of 'change agent' experiences in K-12 education," he said.

What he enjoyed most about being a social studies teacher, middle school assistant principal and principal, high school principal and chief operations officer for a school system were the relationships he formed.

"I do not know of another profession where so many strong, meaningful relationships are developed between colleagues, parents and students," said Rowland. "Over a 39-year career, I still have valued connections that developed from those relationships."

He recounts an old saying in teaching circles that students do not care how much you know until they know how much you care.

"It sounds a little trite, but I think it should sum up why any person wants to become an educator," Rowland said.

"Caring about children, loving them for their individuality, championing their successes and unpacking their failures drove me to get out of bed every day."

Rowland finds the years he spent in a middle-grades, non-traditional alternative school setting particularly rewarding.

"So many children come to school from situations that are less than optimal," he said. "I remember those years as extremely challenging, but when a student beats the odds and graduates from high school, somehow the hard work dissolves into a proud memory."

Education holds a special place in Rowland's heart. As a father, watching his own children grow, learn, struggle, fail and succeed gave him a different viewpoint from which to see other parents' children.

"Parents do not keep their best kids at home and send schools their worst," he said. "Parents send us all they have. I believe every mother or father sends their child to school with the same hopes and dreams I had for my own children. That was a powerful lesson for me."

As chair of the COE Advisory Board, Rowland continues to have students' needs at heart. He also feels the purpose of the Advisory Board is two-fold: to help raise money for the College of Education and provide support, insight and feedback to college professionals charged with growing an elite teaching cohort.

"The first concept is easy; the second one is more of a moving target," Rowland said. "If we've learned one thing over the past year, it's the need to be flexible. Sometimes educators lose sight of that. If we had not embraced flexibility over the past year, the results could have been disastrous."

He looks forward to leading the charge of continuing preeminence for the COE.

"The individuals who serve on the COE Advisory Board are committed to both the education profession in general, and to Georgia College specifically," Rowland said. "I look forward to working with those who have a passion for seeing those institutions succeed and prosper."



JOHN H. LOUNSBURY COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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