

Introducing the 2026 McGraw Hill Pathfinder Award Winners

COLUMBUS, Ohio--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Three innovative educators who are charting new paths in education are being honored today as the newest recipients of the McGraw Hill Pathfinder Award.

Presented by [McGraw Hill, Inc.](#), a leading global provider of education solutions for preK-12, higher education and professional learning, the national award program is now in its fourth year and recognizes educators who have achieved meaningful improvements in student outcomes through innovative approaches to teaching and learning.

The 2026 McGraw Hill Pathfinder Award Winners are:

- **Sonja Capers, Language Arts Teacher, Paterson Public Schools, School 16 (Paterson, NJ)**
Ms. Capers transformed her middle school English Language Arts classroom into a creator-first multimedia lab where students produce digital books, commercials and games to demonstrate learning. By combining rigorous literacy instruction anchored in interdisciplinary units with supportive tools and student ownership, Ms. Capers says her approach drove an 85 percent increase in state assessment scores while helping students strengthen collaboration, confidence and real-world communication skills.
- **Michael McShane, MD, Associate Professor of Medicine, Penn State College of Medicine (Hershey, PA)**
Dr. McShane leads the LION Mobile Clinic, a community-embedded, student-led mobile health initiative that has expanded access to health care and resources to more than 1,000 patients in rural Pennsylvania. By engaging learners from medicine, nursing, business, agriculture and the arts, he prepares future professionals to collaborate across disciplines and operate within integrated, community-facing models of care. This transdisciplinary approach has provided real-world, experiential learning to more than 100 students.
- **Caycee Tyler, Department Chair of Natural Sciences and Biology Instructor, West Georgia Technical College (Carrollton, GA)**
Mrs. Tyler removes barriers to science learning through intentional, student-centered design. By integrating augmented reality technology, she enables students to explore science concepts through interactive 3D models and virtual dissections. Through a multimodal approach to instruction, she helps students develop competence and confidence, resulting in stronger lab skills, improved exam outcomes and increased engagement.

Each Pathfinder Award Winner receives a \$5,000 cash prize along with a one-hour Professional Learning Consultation from [CAST](#), a nonprofit learning design, research and professional services organization committed to making learning more inclusive for all.

For the first time, McGraw Hill has introduced a new Honorable Mention category, expanding the program to recognize 10 additional educators whose work exemplifies the spirit of the Pathfinder Award.

Honorable Mentions for the 2026 McGraw Hill Pathfinder Award include:

- **K–12:** Miriam McKinney, Quincy Junior High School (Quincy, IL); Olivia Rightley, Oak Park Elementary (Tampa, FL); Suzanne Woolfolk, Mountain View Los Altos High School District (Mountain View, CA)
- **Higher Education:** Doris Espiritu, PhD, City Colleges of Chicago School of Engineering (Chicago, IL); Jennifer Ripley Stueckle, PhD, West Virginia University (Morgantown, WV); Jessie Affleck, Georgia College & State University (Milledgeville, GA)
- **Post-Graduate Education:** Colette A. Waddell, PT, DPT, Winston-Salem State University (Winston-Salem, NC); Jed Wolpaw, MD, M.Ed, FASA, The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine (Baltimore, MD); Arindam Sarkar, MD, Baylor College of Medicine (Houston, TX); Mohd Shahid, PhD, Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science (North Chicago, IL)

"Our Pathfinder Award winners and honorable mention recipients exemplify the innovation and impact shaping education today," said Philip Moyer, CEO of McGraw Hill. "Across classrooms, campuses and communities, they are transforming lives and improving outcomes for students. Congratulations to this year's honorees and to educators everywhere who help students discover their own paths to success."

For more information about the McGraw Hill Pathfinder Award, visit: mheducation.com/about-us/pathfinder-award

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