

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION














































































CONNECTIONS

COVID-19

*A Closer Look at
EdCat Involvement*

Fall 2020

This chart is for information purposes only. Please check the graduate catalog, contact the department, or visit coe.k-state.edu/academics/graduate-programs/.

 = Online	Master's	Ed.D.	Ph.D.	Certificate	Endorsement
Department of Curriculum and Instruction 785-532-5904 ktaylor@k-state.edu					
Master of Arts in Teaching – Elementary (K-6)	 				
Master of Arts in Teaching – Secondary Agriculture (6-12)	 				
Master of Arts in Teaching – Secondary English/Language Arts (6-12)	 				
Master of Arts in Teaching – Modern Languages (PK-12)	 				
Master of Arts in Teaching – Secondary Social Studies (6-12)	 				
Curriculum and Instruction		 			
Master of Science Areas of Specialization:					
Elementary/Middle Level					
Middle Level/Secondary					
Reading/Language Arts					
World Modern Languages					
Reading Specialist	 				 
Educational Technology	 			 	
English as a Second Language	 				 
Learning Skills/School Improvement	 				
Mathematics Education	 				
Teaching Civics and Government	 				
Teaching and Learning (Secondary Licensure in Portfolio)					
Department of Educational Leadership 785-532-5535 edlea@k-state.edu					
Adult Learning and Leadership	 	 	 		
Adult Learning				 	
Leadership Dynamics for Adult Learners				 	
Qualitative Research				 	
Community College Leadership		 			
Educational Leadership	 				
Social Justice Education				 	
Department of Special Education, Counseling and Student Affairs 785-532-5541 secsa@k-state.edu					
Academic Advising	 		 	 	
College Student Development					
Counselor Education and Supervision					
School Counseling					
Student Affairs in Higher Education					
Special Education	 				
High Incidence Special Education					 
Low Incidence Special Education					 
Teaching Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder					



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CONNECTIONS

FALL 2020

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Greetings from Dean Mercer

March 17, 2020.
That's the date our profession changed forever.

On that day, Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly announced school buildings would close for the remainder of the school and learning would move to remote delivery to mitigate exposure to COVID-19 and protect students and families.

There was uncertainty. There was fear. A massive social-emotional and academic challenge was placed at educators' feet. Yet – swirling within this storm of concern and worry – there was also great potential.

What have we learned from this? What seemed impossible became possible, and here are just a few examples of how K-12 schools jumped into action by:

- Pivoting our state's half-million students from in class to remote learning in just 10 days;
- Providing meals to students; and
- Bridging the digital divide by providing packets to students who didn't have Internet access.

There was discomfort in all of this, but it also fueled teachers' legendary creativity, problem-solving and team work. The same occurred in the College of Education.

That's why we've devoted this entire edition of "Connections" to what we did in response to COVID-19. While our faculty fielded calls from tense alumni and tended to the needs of nervous future teachers, they:

- Conducted a research project to provide data about what kind of support teachers needed;

- Created a digital community for P-16 educators and parents to help with online learning;
- Provided professional development sessions for Manhattan-Ogden USD 383;
- Developed an online workshop that encompassed technology, pedagogy and equity; and
- Devoted professional development sessions to COVID-related issues.

Yes, our profession has changed forever and more importantly – so have we. We've all achieved more than we thought possible as we challenged ourselves and supported our colleagues. Through the laughter, the uncertainty and frustration, we taught.

We have also learned that taking care of ourselves is important. Self-care is not selfish; it is necessary to be able to take care of others. For me, that is being outside surrounded by nature. The quiet soothes my soul and rejuvenates my resolve to support others.

The changes the pandemic brought are going to be with us for the foreseeable future and beyond. Some students have struggled in the remote learning environment while others have flourished. Education – whether it be delivered in person, hybrid, synchronous or asynchronous – is entering a new period. What remains constant is our commitment to social justice and reaching all students.

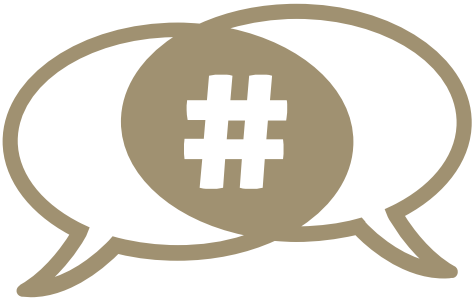
Fortunately, we now know we're equipped to seize the opportunity in front of us and will emerge even stronger than we realized we were on March 16, 2020. I am proud of our faculty and staff for serving as models for our students as they changed delivery mode of classes. Like students everywhere, EdCats turned to their teachers to support them during this time of massive uncertainty.

We are impacting the future of education...together.

DMercer

EDCATS
Educators Powered by Purpose

CPSI devotes professional development sessions to COVID-inspired topics



What could be timelier and more relevant than professional development inspired by COVID-19?

That's precisely why the [Council for Public School Improvement](#), or CPSI, selected topics to address some of teachers' most immediate needs: personalized learning; Trauma Smart® training; motivating and managing disinterested students; and learning disguised as fun.

"Based on conversations with our steering committee, teachers and school counselors and backed up by our white paper research project, we knew teachers wanted support," said Tonnie Martinez, CPSI executive director. "For CPSI, that came in the form of addressing critical topics that had mass appeal."

The two sessions for the fall semester addressed personalized learning and trauma informed teaching.

Brenda Vogds, director of the Institute for Personalized Learning for Wisconsin educators, presented **"Personalized Learning: A Journey Toward HyFlex, Learner-Centered Education"** in September. Educators were equipped with new strategies and action plans to implement immediately based on individual learner readiness, strengths, needs and interests.

Brit Broshous, licensed clinical social worker, presented **"Trauma Smart® Training: Reaching and Teaching Through Trauma Smart Awareness"** in October. Broshous explained educators can't prevent students from experiencing trauma, but they can help them cope and recover.

"There were several amazing takeaways from Brit's presentation, but two really stood out to me," Martinez said. "One was understanding that students who come from chaotic situations are looking for any way to gain control. The other was H.A.L.T. – a memory tool to stop and think before you react to a student who is disruptive or getting on your nerves."

H.A.L.T. stands for am I (or they) Hungry? Angry? Lonely? Tired?

UPCOMING SESSIONS

[Brian Mender](#) will present **"Motivating and Managing Hard to Reach, Disruptive, and Uninterested Students"** on Feb. 4.

Mender was plagued with severe undiagnosed ADHD and reading difficulties. He was a defiant and disruptive student. During his senior year, he started gambling, and the next five years were a vicious cycle of lying, cheating and stealing to feed his addiction. He has been clean for nearly 20 years and is a teacher, presenter, international keynote speaker and co-author of six books.

On March 2, [Tara Martin](#) will present **"#BookSnaps: Learning Disguised as Fun!"** Join us for this interactive session where you'll discover the science, creation and impact of #BookSnaps. Strategies engage both hemispheres of the brain and increase retention. Martin, a K-State graduate, has become a social media sensation and her #BookSnaps strategies are engaging students across the U.S.A. and in 17 countries.

CPSI professional learning sessions are open to everyone. Individuals may [register for a spring event](#) on our website. [District memberships](#) include reduced conference rates.

Questions? Contact Tonnie Martinez at tonnie@ksu.edu.

"We knew teachers wanted support. For CPSI, that came in the form of addressing critical topics that had mass appeal." – Tonnie Martinez, CPSI executive director

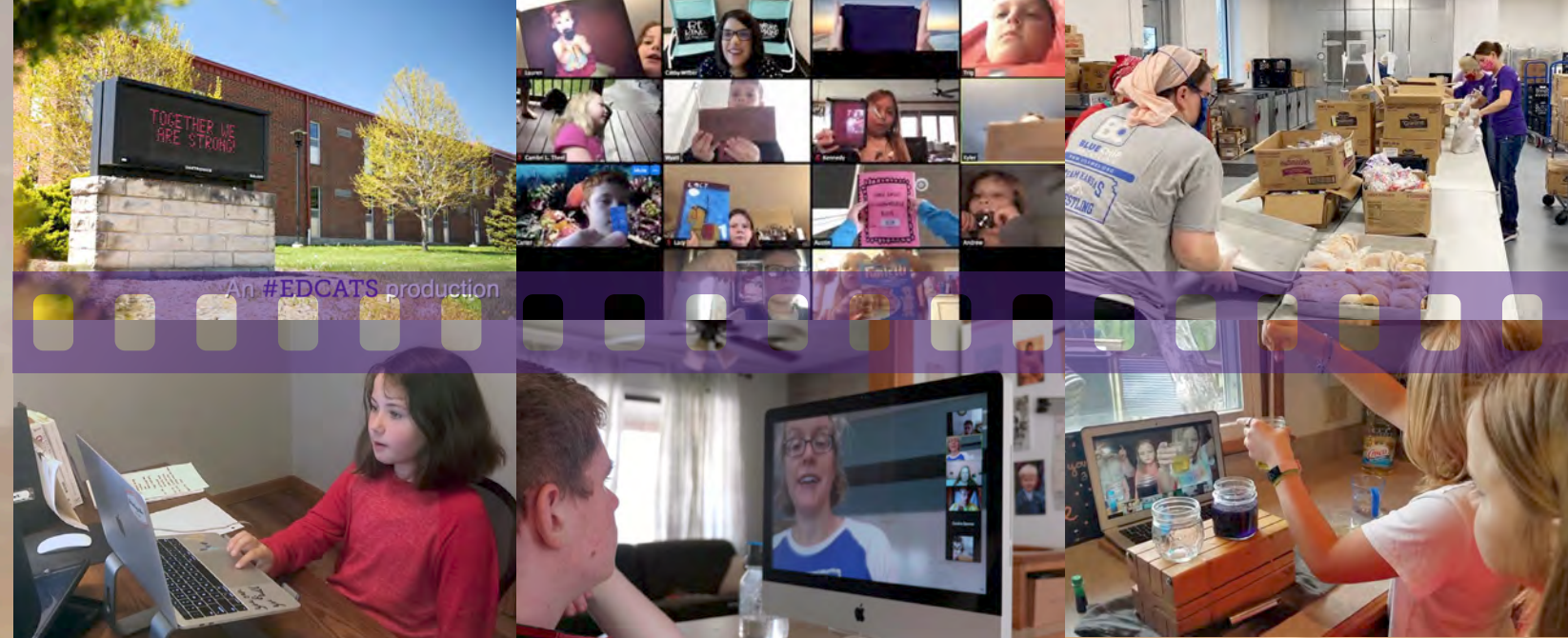
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K-State film about school district's transition to online teaching goes viral

A 13-minute video produced by the College of Education chronicles one rural Kansas school district's transition to remote teaching because of COVID-19.



"If ever there was a teachable moment about the true heart and soul of schools, this was it." – Dean Debbie Mercer

WAMEGO

"Wamego's Response" was posted on the college's Facebook page and reached nearly 30,000 people in its first 24 hours. It opened with national news stories about school closures then segued to the Wamego Public Schools.

Debbie Mercer, dean of the K-State College of Education, said it was imperative to capture this historic event for the public and future teachers alike.

"If ever there was a teachable moment about the true heart and soul of schools, this was it," Mercer said. "There is so much that happens inside a school that people never see, and this film pulls back that veil and reveals just how much work, preparation, planning, worry and heart it requires to educate and care for students."

Randy Watson, Kansas commissioner of education, said the film also offered a chance to celebrate educators.

"What a wonderful video, tribute and storytelling of what we have just been through over the last 60 days," Watson said.

Tim Winter, Wamego Public Schools superintendent, explains in the opening the district serves 1,600 students from Wamego and the neighboring communities of Louisville and Belvue.

"Our teachers and staff, administration... it's really quite amazing how they came together and in one week's time, we went from being a traditional school to being completely online," Winter said. "Our teachers are working very hard to meet their students' needs, maintain

relationships and make sure they are healthy, happy and doing well as best we can under these trying circumstances."

Heather Petermann, special education teacher at Wamego High School, recalls the moment she learned Kansas school buildings were closing.

"I was in the family room when my phone went off and I got a text saying school was going to be canceled for the rest of the year, Petermann said. "I just crumbled up and started crying because teaching the kids that I do, school is everything for my students. I saw their faces come before me, and just knowing that for my kids that are low functioning that have so many severe needs, they don't have friends reaching out, they don't have Snapchat, and I just remember seeing the word lonely come before me."

Rusty Earl, video producer for the K-State College of Education whose kids attend schools in Wamego, was motivated to make the film once he saw how the teachers and district addressed the crisis.

"Part of our inspiration for filming was watching the way my kids' teachers reached out the first week they started back remotely," Earl said. "There was so much care and concern for them. They were calling, emailing and even driving by the house to wave at the kids. We wanted to capture that as best we could. Our family is so grateful for our teachers during these troubling times, and we hope this story serves as a token of appreciation for good teachers everywhere."

The film is available on the College of Education YouTube Channel at:
tinyurl.com/ksu-coe-videos

Department faculty respond en masse to support teachers and students

By Todd Goodson

Chair and professor
assistant dean for
teacher education
and accreditation



In teaching, every day is unique.

We never know what awaits on the other side of the classroom door. Each new day, each new semester, and each new year brings fresh challenges and opportunities. It doesn't matter how many years we have invested in this work, something new and unforeseen is always just around the corner.

COVID-19 has called our nation's teachers to respond in unprecedented ways. The ways in which P-12 educators have reinvented their work in real time to serve families and children deserves our utmost respect and gratitude.

In short, I have never been more honored and more humbled to be part of this profession and to work alongside such a committed and dedicated group of educators.

The [Department of Curriculum and Instruction](#) is deeply interwoven with the larger P-12 community as our faculty members are highly experienced elementary and secondary teachers. We rely on our public school partners for the field experiences that give life to our licensure programs, and our alumni are teaching in schools throughout the state and the nation.

As such, COVID-19 touched our department and college in complex ways. When public schools are stressed, we feel that stress acutely in our department, and we feel a responsibility to respond, to both our current and former students.

Beyond moving our classes online, we worked diligently to address the needs of our future teachers engaged in field experiences. As the sites hosting our candidates pivoted to remote instruction, the faculty in curriculum and instruction scrambled to find alternative learning experiences to best approach the missing hours in classrooms.

Since that time, our faculty and our candidates have pushed the boundaries of what the term "field experience" really means in teacher education. While nothing replaces time spent in physical classrooms with students, we have learned much these last months.

We have also worked to respond to the many requests for support from the larger profession. The pages of this publication carry profiles of several of the activities of our faculty going that extra mile. As our alumni and colleagues in the educational trenches scrambled for resources, approaches and support, the faculty in curriculum and instruction mobilized to support their efforts.

Now that we have had a few months to adjust to a new normal, one where face-to-face instruction takes place in socially-distanced environments with hybrid components either in place or standing by. We have adjusted to smatterings of individuals in high school and college athletic venues, and we are constantly learning to better leverage the tools of remote learning and interaction in ever more powerful ways. Now is a good time to take stock of what we have learned and what long-term effects will remain when something like the old normal returns.

It has become abundantly clear to us in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction that the structures and systems being built out of necessity today will serve us well in some capacity tomorrow. We believe schools and schooling at all levels will integrate both face-to-face and remote instruction in ways we could not have imagined before the pandemic forced changes in our daily lives.

Our department answered the call to support the profession in many ways. I'll offer one example.

Several years ago, we launched the [K-12 Online Teaching Undergraduate Certificate](#). This is a 12-hour certificate program including three courses and a practicum and can be added to either our elementary or our secondary licensure tracks. At the time we launched this certificate program, it was viewed as an option for those who might want to teach in an online school.

Fast forward to today, and it is abundantly clear that all teachers need to be equipped to deliver effective instruction remotely. In addition to integrating attention to online pedagogy throughout our program, we have devoted additional resources to the undergraduate certificate in online teaching program, opening new sections of courses to make this track available to our students who have a powerful new appreciation of its importance.

Each year we conduct a survey of alumni, and they tell us what they found effective and offer suggestions to enhance our programs. The dominant theme of the survey administered last summer to our new graduates was both expected and striking.

They asked for more training in the area of online teaching.

Keeping in mind that most of these new alumni were about halfway through student teaching when their schools were forced to remote instruction, it is hardly surprising that online pedagogy is foremost on their minds.

It is also striking – in that in all the years of administering that survey – not one respondent had previously suggested we provide training in how to teach online.

Regardless, the message is received. Together – with the larger community of teacher educators – the department of curriculum and instruction is working to purposefully integrate strategies for equitable online teaching into our program.

At some point, the pandemic will become a memory, but it will leave behind schools – and educators – that are better connected to their students and families than ever before.

The exceptional faculty in curriculum and instruction are prepared to lead the way.

"I have never been more honored and more humbled to be part of this profession and to work alongside such a committed and dedicated group of educators."



College research reveals stressors with remote teaching and support teachers need

Perhaps no profession – aside from the medical field – felt the immediate effects of the pandemic as education.

For schools and teachers, it was a gut punch. For parents and students, it was a tremendous loss.

The impact was swift, severe and wrapped in uncertainty. Teachers – accustomed to guiding students through difficulties together – lost that ability in person. Yet, teachers were expected to move forward.

Stories circulated on social media platforms and in the news media about the challenges teachers experienced. They were numerous; however, data was needed to accurately assess teachers’ need and define the stressors concerning remote teaching.

In other words, how could we help?

A multidisciplinary team of College of Education researchers queried more than 800 teachers in rural, urban and suburban school districts and identified K-12 teachers’ top needs and challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. That data was presented to the Kansas Department of Education and the Kansas State Board of Education.

The results were published in the white paper [“Access, Engagement and Resilience During COVID-19 Remote Learning.”](#) Questions centered on four key areas: technology/access; student/parent engagement; educator resiliency; and social-emotional well-being.

The purpose of the study was to identify meaningful data for district administrators and policymakers for school reopening while informing K-State’s teacher preparation program. The survey was sent in May, about two months into the pandemic.

Debbie Mercer, dean of the K-State College of Education, noted Kansas schools were the first in the nation to announce closure due to the pandemic, which opened the door for substantive inquiry.

“Ten days. That’s how much time teachers and administrators had to move our state’s half-million students to online instruction,” Mercer said. “At the same time this immense transition was occurring, teachers themselves were dealing with uncertainties in their personal lives. Bottom line? Teachers need support.”

The findings revealed a myriad of strengths and weaknesses and identified universal needs for students’ social-emotional well-being, which

was the teachers’ top concern; broadband access, which was deemed a dire need by teachers; educator well-being; and strengthening engagement in diverse learning environments.

The survey revealed several bright spots, particularly in the area of engagement:

- Teachers reported that 69% of students were considered highly to somewhat engaged in learning.
- Among rural teachers, 36% reported a higher level of engagement with their students, while 27% of all teachers reported that their personal engagement with students had increased.
- Nearly two-thirds – 64% – of educators reported an increase in personal engagement with parents during the pandemic.

But in the social-emotional well-being and technology and access areas, the survey revealed some serious challenges.

Four out of 5 teachers – 82% – listed social-emotional well-being as their highest concern, and this was across all school classifications, from 1A to 6A, and in rural, suburban and urban districts.

“I fear a mental health crisis is coming,” said Jessica Lane, a member of the research team and an assistant professor of special education, counseling and student affairs. “The survey results give voice to the experiences of Kansas educators and underscore the need going forward for policymakers and administrators to address the mental health and social-emotional well-being of both our students and educators. It is critical.”

Lane’s conclusion is particularly striking when the teachers’ personal situations were addressed. Survey findings include:

- Two-thirds – 66% – of suburban and urban teachers were simultaneously serving as caregivers to either their children, other adults or the elderly. For rural educators, this number rose to 4 in 5, or 79%.
- Some economic insecurity was experienced by 36% of teachers.
- About 20% of responding educators faced food insecurity.

The shift to remote instruction revealed significant inequities concerning technology and access to the internet. The survey found that broadband and educational technology are not consistently available in Kansas, and when they are, that did not translate into in-home access. This required teachers and districts to provide varied forms of instruction.

Nearly 70% of teachers indicated their districts worked with local internet providers to coordinate reduced cost or even free internet. Nearly 50% reported their districts provided hot spots or worked with community partnerships to ensure access for their students.

Nearly two-thirds of respondents – 65% – used technology to provide continuous learning opportunities, while 30% reported the use of take-home packets for students and 5% listed other means of instruction.

It bears repeating: Teachers need support,” Mercer said. “The data are clear about the need for professional development and administrative support. And frankly, I am proud of the faculty in our college who – because of their strong relationships with K-12 teachers across the state – swiftly developed workshops and digital communities that addressed teachers’ needs.

The white paper is available for download at:
coe.k-state.edu/research/

“I fear a mental health crisis is coming.”

– Jessica Lane



The multidisciplinary research team members included:

- **Laura Bonella**, associate professor, K-State Libraries
- **Doris Wright Carroll**, associate professor of special education, counseling and student affairs
- **Morgan Jobe**, program coordinator
- **Marilyn Kaff**, associate professor of special education, counseling and student affairs
- **Jessica Lane**, assistant professor of special education, counseling and student affairs
- **Tonnie Martinez**, assistant professor of curriculum and instruction
- **Leah McKeeman**, assistant professor of curriculum and instruction
- **Cindy Shuman**, associate dean for research and external funding

Learning *from and with* each other...

“Considerably stressed.”

That’s how Marvin Wade, Manhattan-Ogden USD 383 superintendent, characterized district teachers when it was announced school would begin Aug. 26 as a new learning hybrid model. In addition, teachers needed to learn Canvas, the district’s new learning management system.

Wade and Debbie Mercer, dean of the College of Education, assessed the situation. The long-time Professional Development Schools partners developed a solution that blended specially designed professional development sessions with lessons learned from the Summer STEM Institute – the college’s and district’s annual collaboration.

“As partners, we learn from and with each other,” Mercer said. “We were asked to share our expertise because K-State faculty have taught online using digital resources for years. We assembled 11 sessions on a range of topics and offered them a couple of weeks before school started.”

The sessions – coupled with the heavy lift to proceed with the STEM institute online – magnified the partners’ 30-year Professional Development Schools relationship virtually overnight.

On Aug. 12, 280 educators, staff, librarians, social workers and interns took part in the sessions.

Paula Hough, executive director of teaching and learning for Manhattan-Ogden USD 383, said the professional development sessions provided training and much more, actually.

“I was able to join each session for a bit and was able to see smiles, laughter and collaboration,” Hough said. “It was such a relief to see that side of the educators again. It was a Thursday afternoon – two weeks before our educators were going to teach in an environment that was completely new to them.”

However, there was a group of USD 383 teachers who already had valuable experience teaching virtually. According to Lori Goodson, Summer STEM Institute coordinator and assistant professor of curriculum and instruction, or C&I, they would be instrumental in the district’s progress.

“USD 383 had amazing teachers who stepped up to take on the challenge, and those same teachers helped lead the way when the district had to switch to remote learning and hybrid learning,” Goodson said. “That close, decades-long association proved invaluable when the district made the pivot to remote learning and wanted to provide key support for its teachers in the form of professional development.”

Goodson said the institute’s successful pivot from in-person to online served as inspiration for the professional development sessions and what teachers could accomplish.

Each June, USD 383 teachers and College of Education faculty and future teachers led sessions on a variety of fun and fascinating STEM classes. But just like everything education-related, how or even if the institute would proceed, was up in the air.

Goodson said there were three compelling factors to hold the institute: 1. It was the institute’s 10-year anniversary; 2. A very special institute was already planned; and 3. Parents, educators and students wanted a positive summer experience, especially in light of COVID-19’s disruption to the school year.

Celebrating its 10th anniversary and after considerable back-and-forth, organizers decided to proceed virtually. Not only did it require

teachers to rethink their projects using items students could readily find in their homes, teachers had to tackle the technology. That laid the foundation to help their colleagues.

Hough said she appreciated the ease and clarity of the professional development sessions.

“Canvas was a daunting undertaking for the staff who had not previously used it,” Hough said. “Scott Finkeldei, though, shared his experiences and provided tangible strategies for implementation. Lori Goodson and Kaylee Myers shared insight from the Summer STEM Institute, for the first time, facilitated in a completely virtual setting. And Lotta Larson provided strategies on remote learning that went so well she invited our staff to another session.”

Wade and Hough expressed their gratitude for the college’s effort and expertise.

“The educators were overwhelmed, but these sessions helped them find their footing,” Hough said. “Dean Mercer took on the stress of the logistics – planning this professional development event and providing the Zoom links – for the educators. It was incredibly organized and so appreciated.”

Wade agreed.

“Thanks to the expertise and generosity of Debbie Mercer and the College of Education faculty, a stressful situation became more bearable for the staff of USD 383 – just when we needed it most,” Wade said.



“I was able to see smiles, laughter and collaboration. It was such a relief to see that side of the educators again.”

– Paula Hough, USD 383 Manhattan-Ogden

The sessions offered were:

- **“Developing Relationships and Engaging Students Through Online and Hybrid Learning Experiences”** by Mark Ellner, C&I teaching assistant professor;
- **“Applications and Resources to Consider When Working with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students and Families”** by Pedro Espinoza, C&I teaching assistant professor and diversity coordinator;
- **“Canvas Tips and Tricks for the Beginner”** by Scott Finkeldei, K-State director of academic and student technology;
- **“Remote STEM Instruction? For All Ages? Absolutely!”** by Lori Goodson, C&I assistant professor, and Kaylee Myers, C&I instructor;
- **“From Ecology of Care to Standards Based Instructional Outcomes: Strategies that Activate, Connect and Affirm”**

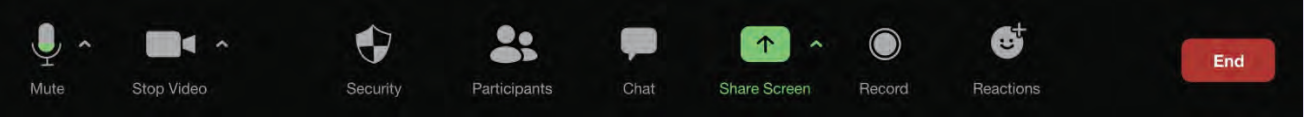
by Socorro Herrera, C&I professor;

- **“Social Emotional Learning in the Content Areas: How to Identify Red Flags”** by Judy Hughey, associate professor of special education, counseling and student affairs;
- **“Biography and Care: Bridging Classroom and Remote Teaching and Learning Context”** by Shabina Kavimandan, Center for Intercultural and Multilingual Advocacy project manager;
- **“Creative Tools for Project-Based Learning”** by Cyndi Kuhn, C&I instructor;
- **“Embracing Remote Teaching: Strategies for Engaging Students, Promoting Content Learning and Keeping Your Sanity”** by Lotta Larson, C&I associate professor;
- **“FlipGrid: More Than Just Video Response”** by Suzanne Porath, C&I assistant professor;

- **“Pandemic Pedagogy 101: Factors and Configurations for Effective Online Instruction and Learning”** by Deepak Subramony, C&I associate professor.

Sessions were so effective, they inspired more this fall:

- **“Introduction to Courageous Conversations about Race: Key Agreements in Preparation for the Book Study”** by Bob Hachiya, associate professor of educational leadership;
- **“Embracing Remote Teaching: Strategies for Engaging Students, Promoting Content Learning, and Keeping Your Sanity”** by Lotta Larson, C&I associate professor;
- **“Zoom Canvas Tips and Tricks for Teachers”** by Tuan Nguyen, C&I assistant professor; and
- **“Using Digital Tools to Support Literacy Learning”** by Suzanne Porath, C&I assistant professor.





Faculty blend technology, pedagogy and equity into summer workshop

A new perspective – and confidence.

That's what teachers said they gained from the Art of Online Teaching and Remote Learning – a six-week summer workshop that equipped teachers with new tools and strategies needed in the era of COVID-19.

Nearly 40 educators – both veteran and early-career teachers at elementary, middle and high schools as well as administrators – participated in the online workshop June 8–July 16. It was composed of three courses and educators could complete a fourth course – a practicum this fall – to earn a [K-12 Online Teaching Certificate](#).

Faculty members developed the nine-credit-hour workshop that covered three areas. Cyndi Kuhn, instructor, addressed technology; Brad Burenheide, associate professor, addressed pedagogy; and Pedro Espinoza, teaching assistant professor, addressed equity for all students.

Todd Goodson, professor and chair of the department of curriculum and instruction, said the class offered support for what has become teachers' "new normal."

"This course is a reflection of something we are so proud of at K-State and that's that our faculty has more than 1,000 years of K-12 teaching experience," Goodson said. "Not only does our faculty have an innate understanding of what teachers need, we had the expertise to develop this course quickly and cohesively, and its content was backed up by a research study conducted by our multidisciplinary research team."

Whether it was using bitmojis, learning to create videos or learning new strategies to teach all students, what emerged, by all accounts, was a renewed sense of confidence – especially in teachers with decades of experience.

The workshop had an interesting cross section of teachers – from one who was getting her first classroom this fall and

others with 25 years or more experience – and a few said they were thinking about retiring rather than tackle this. After the workshop, they reported feeling confident to face this "new normal" even though they'd been teaching the other way so long.

Kuhn said this was one of the most rewarding teaching experiences of her career and referred to the course as "busy, rich and rewarding."

"This was an amazing group of educators," Kuhn said. "They worked extremely hard learning new tools and techniques they could use to engage their students this fall. For me, the true power was in our discussions because we all learned from each other. I know they are using what they learned because so many of them enrolled in the fourth class to complete the certificate, and we talk regularly."

Burenheide was anxious to share "rock-solid pedagogy" based on his recent experience teaching civics at Rock Creek High School because he saw firsthand what it did for kids and teachers. Ultimately, this workshop may have retained highly experienced teachers.

"It was a wonderful experience for me as an educator as I drew upon my experience teaching with high school students and college students to best facilitate teachers who were facing unprecedented change," Burenheide said. "It was a challenge I relished and one that I think not only benefitted our participants, but myself as well."

Espinoza focused on identifying the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse and low SES students, parent and family involvement and differentiating instruction in an online environment.

"Many participants expressed their gratitude for introducing them to new and effective resources they could use in their classrooms to implement fun and interactive activities," Espinoza said. "What I found most rewarding was how much better prepared they reported feeling about implementing equitable strategies and the new tools they discovered to engage family members."

This course may be offered next summer, so watch for announcements!



Workshop Participants' Bitmoji Classrooms and Infographics

VOICES of EXPERIENCE

"I am excited to start the school year with some new tools to help make the learning more equitable for students. I also believe families will be excited to see how these tools work. I think this school year has the potential to be a great time of growth and learning for teachers as well. We will need to be innovative in the ways that we teach students and communicate with parents."

"I have a new perspective in which to view all students who come through my door, or on my screen."

"I took this class to help inspire some of my teachers. I have just finished my first year as an administrator and what a year! I wanted to help better prepare my teachers with ideas if we need to do online learning. Padlet and Flipgrid are two super easy tools that my tech-challenged teachers will really appreciate."

"Using technology in a classroom is a great way to differentiate learning. However, it has to be more than games. These courses have helped me learn of resources that I could use in a physical classroom or online and actually teach content."

"This workshop inspired me – but it also really made me feel like I now have some tools at my disposal. I was happy to see all of the apps, videos, and discussions out in the interwebs discussing how teachers can connect with students virtually."



ROBOTS:

Expanding learning opportunities in rural schools

IN A COVID-19 WORLD,

the timing couldn't be better with the awarding of three national grants for telepresence robots and drones to the College of Education's Rural Education Center, or REC. And it can all be traced to a situation that required an innovative solution.

The [Master of Arts in Teaching](#) program attracts graduate students from around the country and world, and one from the Georgia contingent experienced a challenge securing a local placement. Eileen Wertzberger, office of field experiences' coordinator, and Todd Goodson, department of curriculum and instruction chair, believed technology could be the answer.

They contacted a Clay County USD 379 administrator to see if the district would be willing to let the graduate student teach virtually using a robot. The answer was a resounding 'yes.'

The college purchased a robot, and the student teacher successfully completed her student teaching in a Clay Center elementary classroom in the spring of 2019. Interest was widespread, and the local newspaper – the Clay Center Dispatch – even ran an article about school's virtual teacher.

The overwhelming success of that experience triggered an extensive effort by the REC's leaders to provide similar technology to the state's rural schools to encourage and support distance learning. Amid the REC's efforts to submit a total of three grants, COVID-19 made distance learning a necessity as K-12 buildings in Kansas were closed in March, and learning shifted online.

Spencer Clark, REC director and associate professor of curriculum and instruction, and Lori Goodson, REC assistant director and assistant professor of curriculum and instruction, recognized the right technology could provide a critical link for both future teachers and students in rural schools. They wrote – and were awarded – two United States Department of Agriculture distance learning and telemedicine grants totaling \$597,494. The grants will impact 29 schools in 18 districts.

The funds will purchase 141 robots that will allow for a wide range of educational opportunities such as STEM, career and technical education, advanced placement or other courses, as well as ACT/SAT prep courses. This technology will bring qualified educators into rural classrooms to fill voids where budgets may not allow them to hire teachers for specific or advanced courses.

"Rural schools offer students incredible learning opportunities and extracurricular activities," said Debbie Mercer, dean of the College of Education. "However, they need more teachers and student teachers, and they'd like to provide even more opportunities for their students. This technology – paired with qualified educators – can bring new voices and experiences to rural classrooms, and we are elated to support rural districts and student success in such an impactful way."

In light of the pandemic environment, these grants also mean that teachers who are unable to teach classes face-to-face could potentially use a robot to still connect with their students. It also

allows opportunities for guest presenters to visit virtually or for students to have virtual field trips. While all of these are useful in a traditional classroom environment, the pandemic has magnified and added immediacy to the need.

"None of us could predict a pandemic," Clark said. "But these innovative grants can provide some much-needed support as schools find themselves needing more and more virtual options now and in the near future. We're excited that these grants – and the robots – can help fill a void that has arisen unexpectedly. The robots should expand the learning opportunities in those schools and help their students be prepared for college and beyond."

The initial grant focuses on schools represented in the REC's newly formed Rural Professional Development School Network, which is comprised of USD 220 Ashland, USD 379 Clay County, USD 482 Dighton, USD 474 Haviland, USD 215 Lakin, USD 480 Liberal, USD 438 Skyline and USD 240 Twin Valley.

"These districts have been instrumental as the REC strives to make a difference in rural communities," Clark said. "It only seems fitting that they will be the first districts to receive the robots."

But the REC has even more good news for rural schools. They've been notified they were awarded a third national grant that, among other elements, provides drones to schools for use in geo-teaching with the goal of increasing students' desire to pursue geoscience degrees and careers.

Additionally, the REC is awaiting a decision on a third robot grant which, if awarded, could add another 300 robots to schools throughout Kansas.

"These projects are designed to create a technological network that serves schools across Kansas," Goodson said. "The REC's goal is to address their needs, and these drones and robots provide such an opportunity."

And it all started with an online graduate student in Georgia who needed a student teaching opportunity.

"The creativity and leadership Spencer and Lori bring to the REC has been nothing short of inspiring," Mercer said. "Their problem-solving skills and innovation are the result of years of K-12 teaching experience and hard work in higher ed. We are very excited about what these grants mean for rural schools today and tomorrow."



This technology – paired with qualified educators – can bring new voices and experiences to rural classrooms. – Dean Debbie Mercer



A robot being used to teach virtually in a Clay Center elementary school

College of Education creates free Remote Learning P-12 community for educators, parents and school counselors

An idea has transformed into a growing digital community with nearly 1,200 members that covers about 50 subject areas and seven specialty areas.

Within a couple of weeks of the crisis caused by the Coronavirus and resulting disruption to schools across the state and country, Tom Vontz, professor of curriculum and instruction, developed and launched a free digital community for educators and parents.

The **Remote Learning P-12 community** is open to parents, teachers, principals, superintendents and school counselors – in Kansas and around the nation and world – and can be accessed through K-State’s **Global Campus**.

“This has really been a team effort,” Vontz said. “Several COE faculty members have donated their time and expertise to the project especially: Socorro Herrera, Robert Hachiya, Judy Hughey, Cyndi Kuhn, Lotta Larson, Suzanne Porath, and Kimberly Staples. I cannot thank them enough for the invaluable ways they enriched the community’s content and conversations.”

“Our K-State faculty and staff have been one of the silver linings of this pandemic,” said Debbie Mercer, dean of the College of Education.

Lessons have been learned along the way.

“There are a couple of important takeaways that have become clear from our remote learning community: One, there is not a magic plan that will insure success in online teaching; and two, there is no shortage of good ideas,” Vontz said. “Like almost every other aspect of education, effective remote learning requires a competent teacher to select the best ideas that apply to their situation and circumstance.”

These realizations brought about reflection on the college’s curriculum.

“All of the basic teaching skills we teach in the college – clarity of communication, asking interesting questions, active engagement, timely feedback – are even more important in an online environment,” he said.

Todd Goodson, professor and chair of the department of curriculum and instruction, believes this pandemic will touch and change many aspects of society.

“I suspect educators will learn some things from this crisis and take away a few innovations that will have lasting impact,” Goodson said. “Moments like this are game-changers for almost every aspect of society, including education institutions.”

Vontz invites veteran and educators and early-career teachers to join the community and to share it with their students’ parents.

“We are anticipating lots of new ideas as many K-12 teacher begin another semester of remote learning,” he said. “Experience is a powerful teacher.”

J. Spencer Clark, associate professor of curriculum and instruction, agrees with Goodson and believes this is a time for growth and, in the end, teachers and students will benefit.

“We don’t know when teachers and students will return full-time to their classrooms,” Clark said. “Our hope is that when they do, they are equipped with more online resources and tools that will enhance their face-to-face teaching and pedagogy.”

The community can be found online at:
remote-learning-p-12.mn.co/



Redesign schools get boost from ‘moonshot’

How did the Kansas school redesign “moonshot” prepare secondary schools for the pandemic? It put them lightyears ahead.

When the Kansas State Department of Education, or KSDE, launched its **Kansans Can School Redesign** “moonshot” in 2017, coronas – not the coronavirus – were part of the calculus. COVID-19 hit schools with a force the world has not since in the last pandemic rocketed across the Earth in 1918.

Change was thrust upon schools. So, how did secondary schools – already in the midst of tremendous change – navigate the fallout from of COVID-19?

Jay Scott, KSDE secondary school redesign specialist and K-State College of Education doctoral student, explored the subject in his journal article **“Redesign Resiliency: Kansas Secondary Redesign Schools Navigating COVID-19.”** It was published in **“Educational Considerations,”** a peer reviewed, open access journal published biannually by the K-State College of Education.

This issue was dedicated to Kansas school redesign, and Kansas Commission of Education Randy Watson served as lead author, and K-State College of Education Dean Debbie Mercer served as editor.

“We needed to document what was happening in Kansas by the people in the schools leading educators and students through this changing environment,” Mercer said. “State board of education members, KSDE redesign experts, superintendents, principals and student voices are heard in this issue (“Educational Considerations”) that will serve as historical documentation of this time. Redesign gave us a head start on the mindset needed for change.”

Scott said pre-pandemic he met monthly with leaders with secondary schools participating in redesign and increased meetings to twice a week due to the accelerated rate of change because of the pandemic.

“One theme emerged,” Scott wrote in his article. “Schools involved in the redesign project were making a fairly smooth transition to teaching and learning while school buildings closed.”

This begs the question: why?

“When you are challenged to rethink and reimagine every aspect of school, and then to actually implement and continually improve a new system of teaching and learning, there are naturally anxious moments full of stress,” Scott postulated in the journal article. “The redesign schools had already experienced high levels of stress by the time COVID-19 showed up and so, in some ways, they were more prepared to deal with the magnitude of change and its associated stress.”



Curtis Nightingale, Bennington JSHS principal, provided an example.

“Making quick, and in some cases, radical changes based on data and success factors and implementing those changes immediately, has been a staple of our process. So, when faced with the need to revamp our delivery, expectations, and curriculum, our staff did not flinch, our students put their heads down and went to work, and families had a sense of comfort knowing we could and would develop a plan that would work.”



School redesign: The movie

The K-State College of Education is so vested in Kansas school redesign it is producing a documentary with an anticipated release at the KSDE conference in October 2021. Six school districts will be featured. They are: Leavenworth USD 453; Coffeyville USD 445; Beloit USD 273; USD 482 Dighton Public Schools; Liberal USD 480; and Wellington USD 353.



Scenes from the 2021 School Redesign documentary in production

Educational leadership

during extraordinarily challenging times

By **Jerry D. Johnson**
Chair and Professor,
Lydia E. Skeen Endowed
Chair in Education

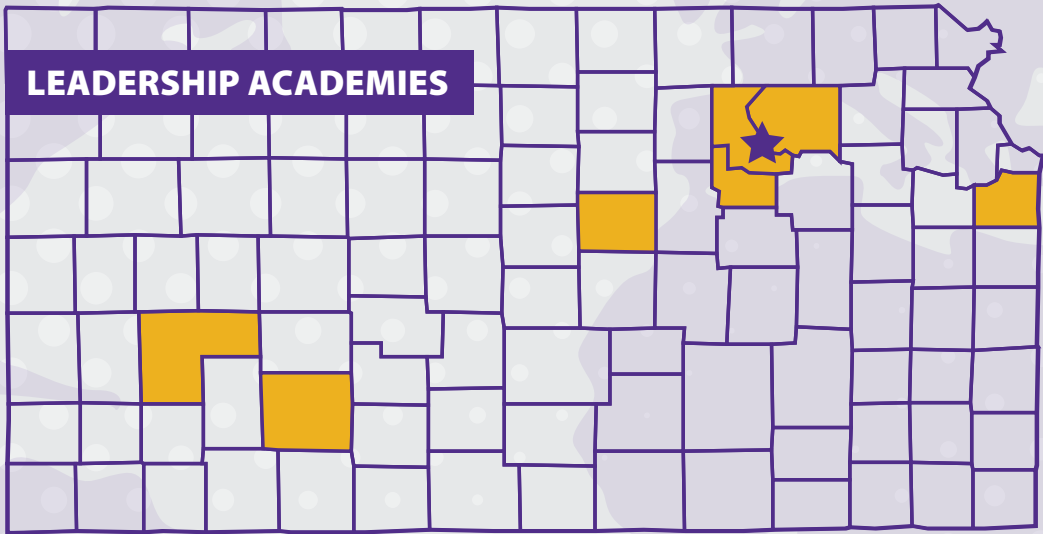


Seven months into my career at K-State and tenure as chair of the **Department of Educational Leadership**, everything changed when COVID-19 hit. It changed education around Kansas and the world – overnight. Educators and leaders were under unprecedented pressure, and our exceptional faculty members rose to meet a myriad of competing demands.

Specifically, the work in our department during the pandemic has focused primarily on: finding creative ways to continue to offer high quality programming to our constituents; and providing support, mentoring and technical assistance to those constituents as they were providing leadership in their own institutions and organizations during these extraordinarily challenging times.

While the various programs in the department serve varied student populations – K-12 educators and leaders, military educators and leaders, business and industry, not-for-profit, community college educators and leaders – they do so with a common set of principles. Most notably is the recognition that leadership is not a position or role but a collaborative activity and a responsibility to which everyone can and should contribute.

That recognition is especially important in these difficult times, and our faculty members have not only taught these principles but modeled and embodied them in all aspects of their work. Following are some highlights of that work for each program.



USD #443 – Dodge City
USD #457 – Garden City
USD #475 – Geary County
USD #383 – Manhattan-Ogden

USD #320 – Wamego
USD #305 – Salina
USD #501 – Topeka
USD #512 – Shawnee Mission



**When history happens,
leadership is needed.**

– Dr. Jerry Johnson

Educational Leadership

The **educational leadership program** – with its focus on K-12 school- and district-based leadership and its innovative educational leadership academy model – has modified its delivery. Yet, the program has maintained its commitment to merging theory and practice in context to develop teacher leadership within partner districts and building/ district leadership across the state.

Seven **leadership academies** were operational when COVID hit: Dodge City/Garden City, Geary County, Manhattan-Ogden/Wamego, Osage Nation, Salina, Shawnee Mission and Topeka. Ed leadership faculty and district liaisons made adjustments to accommodate safety precautions but continued to provide instruction, support for field-based application and mentoring for the educators enrolled in the program.

With the guidance and support of K-State faculty and district liaisons, program participants applied what they had been learning and practicing. They provided meaningful leadership to assist with the transition to online learning while meeting the needs of their students and families.

The program also started a new cohort of Ed.D. students in summer 2020. The statewide cohort includes teachers, principals, superintendents and special education co-op directors working and learning together in a blended delivery model.

Also related to K-12 school and district leadership, Dr. Hobart Harmon, senior research associate, and other faculty implemented a collaborative leadership forum that brought together rural school principals and



Harmon

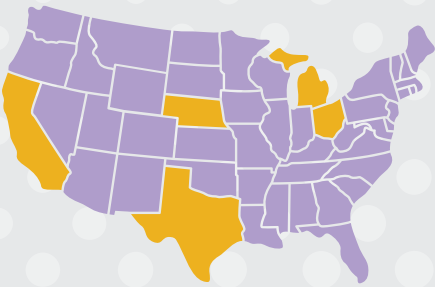
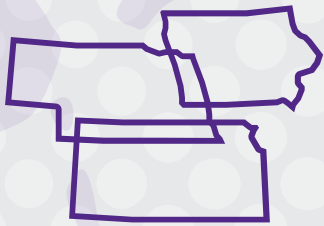
superintendents from Kansas, Pennsylvania and Queensland, Australia to discuss challenges, successes and lessons learned from leading during the crisis.

Adult Learning and Leadership

The **adult learning and leadership program** – with its focus on organizational settings – also modified its delivery for students in diverse settings such as the military, private industry and higher education.

Of particular note during the pandemic crisis, an Ed.D. cohort of community college leaders from Kansas, Iowa and Nebraska were integral to their institutions' responses. They drew upon capacities enhanced via the program along with the support of faculty to provide the leadership their community colleges needed.

Related, a series of site visits to Kansas community colleges have continued virtually as meetings with presidents to better understand needs and identify opportunities to provide support. These meetings grew from discussions among a statewide advisory board of community college presidents leading to additional collaboration, including the previously mentioned cohort and, currently, the development of a requested white paper on pathways to four-year institutions.



Community College Leadership Program

The **community college leadership program** is a cohort-based national program focused on developing executive leaders for community colleges. Designed as a hybrid with on-site delivery of the in-person components and a roster of instructors who are practitioner experts in the field, the program moved online with the advent of COVID-19 restrictions and has continued to be productive and responsive to student needs.

In the spring and summer, cohorts were operating in Ohio, Michigan, Texas and California, and new cohorts were initiated in Texas and California. A key strength of this program is the national network of retired, current and aspiring executive leaders in community colleges who are affiliated with the program in various ways – as alumni, friends or current instructors.

When history happens, leadership is needed. Equipped with decades of experience, the ed leadership faculty exuded the strength, confidence, and ethic of care needed to guide leaders and aspiring leaders through this difficult period.

K-State has a strong reputation of living its land-grant mission, and that's one of the reasons I wanted to be here. I never expected to see us tested in the way we have and to see K-State's mission put into action in quite this way, but I am pleased with our response and am exceptionally proud to be a member of the EdCat family.



Rural school leaders stress the importance of leadership and relationships during COVID crisis

“Adversity doesn’t build character, it reveals it.”

That famous quote by Kentucky novelist James Lane Allen may have been inspired by his experiences as a principal. Nearly two centuries later – and the adversity COVID-19 brought to schools – also revealed the importance of leadership.

The Department of Educational Leadership seized the opportunity to use virtual technology to bring together rural school leaders in Kansas, Pennsylvania and Queensland, Australia to share challenges and successes during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the remarkable differences between these communities – from the American Heartland to Appalachia to a coastal community near the Great Barrier Reef with a predominately Indigenous population – there were many commonalities.

All experienced challenges concerning students: engagement; struggling learners; technology; social-emotional and special education needs; and achieving trust, balance and buy-in with parents. There were also successes.

The “Collaborative Leadership Forum: Challenges and Successes of Leading Rural Schools During the Pandemic” featured two panels of school leaders that took place over Zoom in early July, which is winter in Queensland. The opportunity evolved after Hobart Harmon, K-State senior research associate and leader of strategic advancement at Appalachia Intermediate Unit 8 in Pennsylvania, returned from Queensland.

Harmon was invited to the Queensland University of Technology by Simone White, associate dean for international and engagement in the School (Faculty) of Education, where he spoke on innovations in rural education. While there, he also presented at the 35th national conference of the Society for the Provision of Education in Rural Australia, or SPERA, Queensland, which was hosted by the university. Following the conference, Brian O’Neill, SPERA president, took Harmon on a week-long tour of rural schools.

After returning, Harmon began exploring how relationships established during the visit with leaders of rural education and Queensland state education officials could foster a collaborative sharing activity among Kansas, Pennsylvania and Queensland educators.

“Then along came COVID,” Harmon said. “Learning about leadership actions during this challenging time could be part of what makes rural places different, particularly since public schools in Queensland are state schools; there is no local school board or a district superintendent to provide leadership.”

Jerry Johnson, chair of the Department of Educational Leadership and Lydia E. Skeen endowed professor, who has researched rural schools for more than two decades, recognized from conversations with Harmon how the pandemic could expose the value of highly qualified, intellectually nimble administrators.

“One of the concepts that came through so clearly in the panel sessions was the importance of leadership – not as a role, but as an activity that everyone can share in,” Johnson said. “I am so proud to be a faculty member in educational leadership because we’ve seen the strength and the power and the creativity in that work and what that means for children, families and communities.”

“You may look at COVID-19 as a challenge, but I look at the positives, and if one thing has really been highlighted, it’s the way we can use technology to overcome the tyranny of distance,” O’Neil said.

Student Internet access and availability of technology-enhanced learning devices and instructional resources were important factors as schools pivoted to online learning. Technology and innovation often went hand in hand in responding to the challenges of COVID-19.

Interestingly, one rural high school went old school with a touch of technology – and it was a hit. Joe Renzi was the lone administrator (superintendent and principal) of the 275-student K-12 Salisbury Elk-Lick School District when COVID-19 struck. The south-central Pennsylvania district’s “big win” was graduation.

“We were able to hold graduation outside on our baseball field,” Renzi said. “We borrowed a stage and bought big banner portraits of our 20 students and streamed it live on our Facebook page, which we’ve never done before. When it was all said and done, everybody liked everything we did so much – which we did out of necessity and trying to put a special touch to that necessity. Now, everybody wants to see that every year. Out of a tough situation came some special ideas.”

Johnson said rural leaders demonstrated creativity in leveraging their natural resources.

“Rural schools face unique challenges, but they possess unique assets too – unique strengths,” Johnson said. “How well we overcome those challenges and how successful we are depends in large part on leveraging those uniquely rural assets.”

One principal literally lured students to school.

Terri Byrne was the executive principal of the Mornington Island P-10 State School for Indigenous islanders in Australia’s Gulf of Carpentaria. The community was plagued with unreliable Internet access, health concerns, and poverty. Only 60 percent of students attended school before the pandemic.

“We set up a sunset activity,” Byrne said. “It was a fishing event where the kids could come down to the beach in the evenings and fish for a while – which they loved – and we could provide them some food to take home so at least we could touch base with those kids we weren’t seeing. There were teachers, teacher aides and volunteers from other organizations.”

While principal job descriptions are virtually the same, the multifaceted nature of the rural principals’ position added complexities.

Renzi’s experience was a great example. While his rural Pennsylvania district has since hired a high school principal, Renzi still serves as the superintendent, elementary principal, federal programs coordinator and technology director.

“The role of the rural principal is very different (compared) to the role of an urban principal,” O’Neill said. “Their role is so much beyond the curriculum leadership of the school. It’s very much a leader within the community, and there are a lot of unwritten expectations on the rural school principal.”

Despite the differences between these schools and their structures, a trend emerged.

“One of the outstanding things was the connection we’ve developed with families,” O’Neill said, as did many other principals. “So many have come back and said ‘I have a renewed appreciation from what you guys do.’”

Kansas Commissioner of Education Randy Watson participated in the two virtual panel sessions.

“You took this interesting time, made it operational and did it in a gracious way,” Watson said. “I was honored to listen to these stories.”

Allen Pratt, executive director of the National Rural Education Association, said no one could have foreseen the adversity of today’s COVID-19 pandemic and the intense challenges it presented. “But strong character and inspired leadership truly are being revealed as rural educators around the world work to meet those challenges and serve their students, wherever they may be,” Pratt said.

Johnson and Harmon acknowledge the need for more collaboration, innovation and research that can assist leaders in rural school settings. “And the collaboration needs to embrace the voices of local school leaders,” Johnson said.

With support from Debbie Mercer, dean of the College of Education, Johnson and Harmon are creating a video project with colleagues in Queensland that contains highlights from this international collaborative leadership project.

“Strong character and inspired leadership truly are being revealed as rural educators around the world work to meet those challenges and serve their students, wherever they may be.”

– Allen Pratt

Maintaining excellence in all we do...

By Christy Craft
Professor and interim
department chair



Craft



Hughey

When the pandemic hit, the faculty and staff

in the Department of Special Education, Counseling and Student Affairs, or SECSA, were determined to maintain excellence in all we do. We created powerful learning experiences for our students, albeit in some new ways, we conducted and published important educational research, and we served our college, the university and our professions by working on committees and sharing our expertise with others.

We also weathered challenges related to COVID-19 while navigating a leadership change, saying goodbye to a colleague and friend, celebrating faculty promotions, offering our successful school counseling camp in a virtual format, adding a master's degree to our online programming, launching a new online doctoral program and celebrating the arrival of new colleagues.

After 12 years serving as department chair, Dr. Ken Hughey stepped down from the role to begin his phased retirement. Dr. Hughey positively influenced – and wholeheartedly supported – many students, faculty and staff over the years. He was instrumental in the growth of the [master's degree in academic advising](#), in the conceptualization and development of the [Ph.D. in Leadership in Academic Advising](#) program and in the initiation and enhancement of many other programs and efforts within the department.

Perhaps the most heart-wrenching experience we faced this summer was the loss of Dr. Mickey Losinski, who passed away in June after a courageous battle with cancer. Dr. Losinski was the first College of Education faculty member featured in ["Seek,"](#) the university's research magazine, and was an inspiration to all. We offer our deepest condolences to his wife, Lisa, and to their five children. Dr. Losinski will be missed.

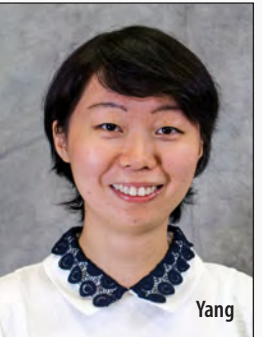
Prior to his passing, we celebrated Dr. Losinski's promotion to full professor, along with Dr. Lisa Rubin's and Dr. Lydia Yang's promotions to associate professor. We are proud of the ways they have represented the College of Education and value their expertise and productivity in their respective fields.



Mickey Losinski, 1972-2020



Rubin



Yang



In an effort to rise above challenges related to COVID-19, in May, the faculty in our school counseling and counselor education programs offered our School Counseling Camp in a virtual format. The theme, "Soaring to New Heights," was an apt descriptor of both the quality of the sessions along with the inspiration that emerged from the camp. This camp served as a form of respite for the more than 350 school counselors, counselor educators and other educational leaders who attended and worked so hard at the end of the 2019-20 academic year to transition their work to a remote format.

As we were "Soaring to New Heights" in our School Counseling Camp, we were also launching a redesigned master's program. Our special education faculty unveiled the new 30-credit hour, completely [online master's in special education](#) degree that can be completed in one year!

Some noteworthy aspects of this redesigned degree include the ability to add a [low incidence special education endorsement](#) to an already earned [high incidence endorsement](#) for only nine additional credit hours. Furthermore, those with an elementary license and endorsement can add the secondary level endorsement with just five additional hours. We are excited about what these changes mean for schools and districts.

Our launch of new programs did not stop there. Classes began this summer for the first cohort of 12 students in our new [Leadership in Academic Advising doctoral program](#), and the faculty hosted a virtual one-week residency experience for them this summer.

This program – thoughtfully designed with input from alumni and high-performing academic advisors and advising administrators across the country – filled a crucial niche by offering a terminal degree that ultimately serves to advance the profession. We invite those who are interested to watch for application information for our next cohort, which will begin in the summer of 2022.

Given the growth in our academic advising programs, we gratefully welcome Dr. Craig McGill. Dr. McGill earned his doctorate in adult education and human resource development from Florida International University and was one of the first graduates of our master's in academic advising program prior to doing so!

We are also fortunate to have Dr. Sean Bridgen and Dr. Karen Sullivan-Vance, two new associate directors with [NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising](#), to assist with our master's program in academic advising.

As the interim chair for the department, I am excited about all of our accomplishments, reasons for celebration and additions to our team that have occurred during the last six months – despite COVID-19!

We are compelled to continue the pursuit of excellence in all of our endeavors. To that end, I am honored to work alongside the other department chairs, the assistant deans, the associate dean, and Dean Mercer as we support our exceptional faculty and staff in an effort to provide the best possible educational experience for our students.

Go Cats! *Christy Craft*



McGill



Bridgen



Sullivan-Vance

School counselors serve as first line of defense in schools



Hughey

By Dr. Judy Hughey, associate professor of special education, counseling and student affairs

The K-State College of Education is dedicated to preparing future teacher and counselor educators to be effective school leaders in the traditional academic content areas and in the social-emotional domain.

Future Teachers

We are committed to the mental health and positive well-being of our students. The college is focused on recognizing and addressing the increased social-emotional and mental health issues of preservice students. By addressing the needs of preservice teachers, future teachers and counselors, school leaders will be more prepared to integrate social emotional learning with the P-12 students with whom they will be teaching.

Since COVID-19, the interconnected factors of isolation, employment concerns, home schooling, care of children, and/or health concerns have exacerbated and increased mental health issues. There are comprehensive initiatives and events occurring to promote positive mental health and preventing death by suicide.

Undergraduate teacher education and graduate school counseling curriculum includes building capacity and agency designed to:

- intentionally build and maintain connections with each student, having a personal regard for them as individuals through in-person and virtual or distance learning;
- incorporate trauma-sensitive and culturally responsive practices to be able to build positive relationships with all students;
- create school structures – including restorative practices –that ensure each student feels a sense of safety and belonging; and,
- create authentic partnerships that include youth, families, and communities for the purpose of fostering inclusive school climates where all students feel physically and emotionally safe, supported, challenged and capable regardless of the instructional setting.

Social-emotional learning, or SEL, is defined as the process through which children and adults learn to understand, manage and regulate their own emotions. The college is intentional in integrating SEL instructional content in undergraduate coursework. This includes teaching approaches, academic and behavioral supports and strategies to build meaningful relationships with students and families. It is designed to support the personal and professional growth by students’ SEL knowledge base and skillset.

All preservice education students also complete the [Jason Foundation's](#) suicide prevention educator module to earn a certificate in suicide prevention. A professional development opportunity was also held for all students and faculty on the topic of positive mental health.

Healthy coping strategies and implementing practices for P-12 students were shared for addressing stress and anxiety. The college’s curriculum places a high priority on a positive, strengths-based approach that promotes understanding of diverse identities, values, experiences and cultures.

The pandemic has heightened the need for school counselors to address the array of mental health issues exacerbated or caused by COVID-19 and the uncertainties it has ushered into students’ daily lives.

Future School Counselors

Anticipating the need for more school counselors several years ago, we began offering the [master’s in school counseling program at K-State Olathe](#) to make it easier for professionals to obtain the degree.

Today, the pandemic has heightened the need for school counselors to address the array of mental health issues exacerbated or caused by COVID-19 and the uncertainties it has ushered into students’ daily lives.

P-12 school counselors serve as a first line of defense in identifying and addressing student social- emotional needs within the school setting. The master’s in school counseling program, accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), prepares school counselors to be dynamic school leaders supporting students to nurture social and emotional competence, collaborate and cultivate a positive school climate.

School counselors recognize and respond to the need for mental health services that promote social- emotional wellness and development for all students. They advocate for the positive mental health needs of all students by implementing a P-12, standards-based comprehensive program that promotes academic, career and social emotional success.

While in our school counseling program, graduate students are taught to implement a program for all students that includes mindsets and behaviors. In many schools, the school counselor is the only counseling professional available to students and their families. School counselors deliver counseling and instruction that proactively enhances awareness of mental health; promotes positive, healthy behaviors; and seeks to remove the stigma associated with mental health issues.

The college supports students in the school counseling program and Ph.D. students in [counselor education and supervision](#) and current school counselors and counselor educators with outstanding professional development and consultation.

Annual School Counseling Camp

For seven years, the college has hosted a summer “camp” designed to provide professional development on hot topics in the field and to provide an opportunity for counselors to network and engage in self-care.

Our 2020 [School Counseling Camp](#) was held virtually and the theme was Soaring to New Heights. It featured nationally renowned keynote presenters and breakout sessions presented by school counselors and counselor educators addressing an array of P-12 (including self-care and professional) counseling topics. Approximately 350 attended the conference primarily from Kansas, but also with a significant number of counselors and counselor educators from across the country.

The K-State College of Education teaches and models how to foster a community that promotes healthy professional social, emotional and cultural competencies. Graduates in teacher and counselor education will be prepared to implement programs and best practices to create learning environments for optimal outcomes for all students.

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Turning inward, rolling up our sleeves, and embracing the challenges before us



Before the pandemic, Willie walks with College of Education EDCATS during the Fall 2019 Welcome Back event

Change has been the constant since March.

What hasn't changed is the pattern of excellence – expected and delivered – from the professionals in the **Center for Student Success and Professional Services**.

Like most organizations, COVID-19 disrupted our traditional methods of working with students, interacting with faculty and recruiting students to the college. We turned inward, rolled up our sleeves and embraced the challenges before us.

But how could we continue to support students when so much of our work is face-to-face? How could we attract quality students to K-State when we couldn't even give them a campus tour? When we were allowed to return to the office, how could we practice social distancing and provide quality advising to all of our students?

Here's how.

When we returned to the office in August after operating remotely for six months, our primary goal was to support students returning to campus for the fall semester. We created a schedule that ensured academic advisors were available daily for students wanting face-to-face interactions and that adhered to social distancing guidelines.

Before COVID, we traveled to high schools and community colleges for recruitment events, and for six months we transitioned to virtual-only environments. In August, we restarted our on-campus visit program – wearing masks and adhering to social distancing guidelines. It was exciting to once again welcome prospective students to beautiful Bluemont Hall!

COVID-19 forced us to get creative with our recruitment practices and our recruitment team led by Marcus Kidd has been extremely innovative in launching new and ingenious strategies.

We began hosting weekly Instagram live sessions and developing on-demand videos addressing issues and information specific to prospective students and even added a downloadable future EdCat podcast! These would be great resources for those of you working with teacher pathway programs. Just search @KSUEdCats across all media platforms to access our content.

For the first time, Education Symposium – the professional development day for future teachers – was held virtually and served double-duty as a recruitment event. Ana Mendonca, graduate student and event organizer, did an outstanding job of weaving fantastic content into the event for the more than 100 prospective students that participated. They interacted with K-State faculty and staff as well as participated in sessions and met the Kansas Teachers of the Year.

Despite all of the change and disruption we've experienced over the last nine months, there have been successes. I must admit, as the center director, what I'm about to share is particularly meaningful in light of COVID-19.

Each year, K-State students are asked to participate in an advising survey that evaluates several areas of the student's advising experience. Traditionally, the professional advisors in the College of Education rate very high. This year is no different.

The College of Education had the highest overall student satisfaction of any of the colleges on campus! A whopping 97% of students had positive responses in relation to their experience with their academic advisor. Digging deeper into the data, the academic advisors in the College of Education were rated the highest of all colleges in 12 of the 14 subcategories of advising.

The professional advising team of Sandra Avalos, Kelly Briggs, TJ Duntz, Mechelle Martinez and Di Murphy have done a phenomenal job of advising students and helping them manage the personal and professional uncertainties COVID brought into our lives.

We also had a very successful year in terms of enrollment management. This fall we saw another increase in our overall undergraduate enrollment! Our number of in-coming freshman remained steady and was one of the top three classes in terms of size in recent years. Our new transfer students continue to grow, and the fall of 2020 revealed the highest transfer class in recent years.



Academic advisor Kelly Briggs with an EDCAT pre-COVID-19



Call Me MiSTERS Ricky Gutierrez, Byron Lewis IV and Cristian Silvestre, pre-COVID-19

We've also been aggressive in creating and enhancing student support initiatives. Our Call Me MiSTER, or CMM, program received significant attention due to its overwhelming success. The mission of the CMM program is to increase the pool of male teachers from diverse backgrounds, and we are working hard to make that a reality.

In fact, the 2020-21 school year will have the highest number of MiSTERS in the program since we adopted the program in 2016! While that is exciting, it is just the tip of the iceberg. A generous donor read about the program and graciously provided financial support for scholarships, recruitment efforts and travel – when things return to normal.

Two new student support initiatives were also launched this fall: one for the educational studies program; and the other for the First To Teach program.

The education studies students are small in number but important and valued members of the EdCat family. We've developed opportunities for social engagement and community building so they can connect, network and share their educational and professional goals.

Education studies majors are pursuing a non-licensed degree in the field of education. They are not interested in teaching in the traditional classroom and would rather make an impact in areas such as education policy, youth services, museum/ zoo education, corporate training, etc.

Our second initiative was launched this fall as an effort to support first-generation college students. This program is designed to support the college's first-generation students through social engagement and academic preparation. First-generation students comprise 20% of the total enrollment in the College of Education, and they will play a key role in encouraging their future students to seek college degrees.

2020 has been a very unusual year but the response of the College of Education – and our EdCats – has been nothing short of inspiring. I am humbled to work with our outstanding administration, faculty and staff, and most importantly, our students who are powered by purpose!

Roger Schieferecke



Kansas State University College of Education

Dean Mercer issues assignment to EdCats: Practice self-care.



In video messages to EdCats at the halfway point in the semester, Debbie Mercer, dean of the College of Education, and Roger Schieferecke, assistant dean and director of the Center for Student Success, urged EdCats to develop self-care routines.

"Teachers give so much," Mercer said in her video. "It's in our nature. It's what we do. And the world expects it of us right now and needs it of us right now. I guarantee you the rest of your academic career and the first years of as a teacher will be much easier if you have a healthy self-care routine."

For Schieferecke, one way to destress was playing catch with his son Noah.



"Finish it strong," Schieferecke said to EdCats in his video. "Destress in healthy ways. You've accomplished great things to this point and the finish line to the semester is in sight. Stay focused. Stay motivated. We are proud of the way you've met the challenges of an extraordinary semester."

Mercer was unequivocal in her closing message to find what rejuvenates you.

"Consider that an assignment from your dean."