



## Greetings from the Dean

Dear School of Education Alumni and Community,

As we do everything in our power to stay at home to stop the spread of COVID-19 to our families, friends, neighbors, and community at large, we are developing new approaches for coping with our “new normal.” We are using what author Elena Aguilar of *Onward: Cultivating Emotional Resilience in Educators* calls our emotional resilience to thrive in the midst of challenges. We are facing our emotions about this pandemic and developing strategies that enable us to function productively, effectively, and often with a smile. I for one have found that Facetime with and videoclips of my grandchildren after a day of virtual everything academic reminds me of the beauty of children’s positivity and innocence.

Emotional resilience clearly describes our School of Education community. Our faculty and students have figured out at lightning speed how to transition to online teaching and learning. Whether at the undergraduate, graduate, or doctoral levels, students are living what we preach in educator and leadership preparation programs; that, the ability to be flexible and accommodating is paramount to effective teaching and leadership.

As with most if not all colleges and universities, our instruction for the remainder of this spring semester is online. This will continue through our Summer I semester which ends in June, with the hope that we can resume Summer II instruction with a combination of face-to-face, hybrid, and online instruction. Our commencement has been canceled for now.

We as a School of Education community continue to communicate and meet virtually to ensure that our students can complete course requirements so that they can graduate with their degrees when anticipated. We now know from NYSED that our Spring 2020 cohorts of student/supervised teachers and educational leadership candidates who have completed their program requirements will be able to get certified with alternate or no testing requirements, depending on the reopening of testing centers.

Although we are living through one of the most challenging times in our nation’s history, we are stronger than ever in our conviction to promote the best learning possible for the PK-12 students who will be taught by Manhattanville educators. We hope that you and your families can somehow transcend the seriousness of this virus so that you can once again participate in the types of family, academic, and social gatherings that you cherish.

With warm wishes,

Shelley B. Wepner

## A Research Project Preparing Teachers for an Unseen Calamity

In the Summer of 2019, Dr. Vicki Fantozzi, Associate Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Co-Coordinator of the Manhattanville College Center for Teaching Learning and Scholarship, began to talk to Ms. Jennifer Geskie, principal of Elizabeth Seton Children's School in White Plains and a student in the doctoral program, about Vicki's research into developmentally appropriate technology use. This conversation started an action research project with a small group of teachers at Elizabeth Seton Children's School. That fall Vicki, Jen, Debbie Quintano, and Michelle Posadas began investigating how they could use the school's available iPads in developmentally appropriate ways – little did they know the applications this would have for the school during the Spring of 2020.

The team worked together over the course of a year to explore the ways the iPad could be used to capture work in the classroom and communicate with families. The children used the iPad to take pictures of their creations and (using an app) audio recorded their voices describing the work they had done. They created class books about things they learned, recipes they made, and field trips they took. In what would turn out to be the most powerful tool, the teachers started using an app called SeeSaw to create private electronic portfolios so they could share a child's work, or pictures of children at school with families. Debbie and Michelle loved the way this app allowed parents a window into their child's day, especially in a school where many of the children ride a bus so parents do not see their child's classroom regularly. They felt the tool had powerful implications for building connections between home and school. The very next year the Elizabeth Seton Children's School launched SeeSaw as an app for every classroom to use to connect with parents.

Flash forward to March of 2020; all the classroom teachers in the school are successfully using SeeSaw. Vicki was invited back to the school to lead a workshop for the teachers. The aim of the workshop is to build on what teachers are already doing, and to train the speech therapists so they could also start thinking about how they might use SeeSaw as well as some other apps. The workshop ended up being prescient timing. When news of the mandatory school closure was announced by New York State Governor Cuomo, Elizabeth Seton Children's School had tools at their disposal for remote learning. The school further expanded its Seesaw training to include all their related therapists. By the time school closed, more than 40 professional staff were trained and equipped to use SeeSaw as a platform for remote learning. In their first week of remote learning, the school posted over 500 items to SeeSaw and received more than 400 parent comments. As the weeks have gone on families and teachers are learning to use the tool in new ways, with some families working with their children to post pictures or short videos from their homes. In a pandemic that has isolated everyone, the children at the Elizabeth Seton Children's School can still connect with their classroom communities.



From left, Jennifer Geskie, Francesca Battaglia, Dr. Vicki Fantozzi, Debbie Quintano, and Michelle Posadas after presenting at the National Association for Education of Young Children Conference

## The Student Teaching Experience during the COVID-19 Pandemic

As part of the Changing Suburbs Institute®, the School of Education has Professional Development School relationships with sixteen schools in eight Westchester County districts that have high populations of linguistically and culturally diverse students. The mission of these partnerships is to prepare teacher candidates, provide and support ongoing professional development for in-service teachers, and promote PK-12 student learning.

In this time of challenges and new experiences, the teachers and student teachers in the Manhattanville Professional Development Schools are finding innovative ways to teach their students. First and foremost, however, they are working to create classroom communities with social-emotional support for children during this difficult and uncertain time.

- 📖 Teachers are providing practice sheets and packets via Google classroom, depending upon the age group, and they are also asking students to participate in web-based programs for spelling, math computation practice, and reading comprehension. They monitor participation and provide feedback to the students through the class account.
- 📖 Manhattanville alumni teaching assistants are connecting with parents and students to see if there is anything their school district can do to help with the students engaging in online learning, particularly for those students who might be falling behind on account of the digital divide. Student teachers and interns have assisted with laptop distribution to families.
- 📖 Student teachers are continuing to work with their cooperating teachers as they have moved to online instruction. Through email and virtual chats, student teachers are working with their cooperating teachers to develop instructional content, monitor student work, and assess progress toward learning goals.
- 📖 Professional Development School liaisons joined teachers in attending professional development sessions to prepare for distance learning.
- 📖 Student teachers and PDS liaisons are invited to attend weekly virtual faculty meetings to stay abreast of the latest information from the school and district.
- 📖 Tech-savvy student teachers are offering technical troubleshooting and innovative ideas for cooperating teachers, their students, and their families as well.
- 📖 A teacher book club focused on social emotional learning that previously met at a coffee house, continues virtually using Google Hangout.
- 📖 Teachers have been volunteering at a mobile food pantry to bag up and distribute bags of groceries to families in need.

## Switching Gears from Student Teaching to a Full Time Job



Ashlee Milone, a teacher candidate at a Professional Development School (PDS) who is working towards a second certification in special education, was recently hired at a public school in the Bronx as a tiered support teacher for 1st grade students, providing virtual instruction. The story of how she found the job connection is an example of how our partnerships with Professional Development Schools position preservice teachers well for obtaining future jobs.

While working on her master's degree in special education in the evening at Manhattanville, Ashlee had a full-time internship at Bedford Hills Elementary School (Bedford, NY) that led into a 1st grade leave replacement position that ended in December 2019. She then moved into her student teaching placement for spring of 2020. A parent of one of the Bedford Hills Elementary School 1st graders, who is currently a principal of a public school in the Bronx, saw Ashlee's knowledge, teaching skills, and classroom management in action as his child's teacher and he was impressed. He asked Ashlee to interview for a position in his school after her student teaching semester was over.

As it turns out, with having to move instruction online because of COVID-19 closures, the Bronx school needed Ashlee sooner. In March 2020 she quickly interviewed and was offered a position. Ashlee is now planning lessons and assignments for small groups, creating videos and online resources for the students, offering feedback, and meeting virtually with the 1st graders to support them in reading, writing, and math.

## Manhattanville Ingenuity!

After reflecting that having document cameras at home would help them with video lesson recordings, student teachers in one seminar class experimented with creating hacks for making DIY document cameras with their phones, using Legos, large binder clips or other household items to hold the phones.



Here, Tina Bonacorso, a student teacher in a 3rd grade classroom, teaches a math lesson using a document camera that she created out of a camera tripod and rubber bands, and then splitting her computer screen so she could record herself writing math problems while explaining how to do them.

## Recognitions in the SOE Community



Dr. Rhonda Clements, Program Director and Professor for the Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy master's program, received the **Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Maine at Presque Isle** at their Fall 2019 Homecoming. This award is given to an alumnus who has received professional recognition that reflects positively on the University of Maine at Presque Isle.

Dr. Clements has authored or edited 11 books in the area of movement, play, and game activities for children and has written 50 articles concerning the need for physical play. She has presented at 70 national, international, state, and local conferences. She was one of eight national experts to contribute to Active Start: A Statement of Physical Activity Guidelines for Birth to Five Years, a document sponsored by SHAPE America. She is the recipient of the Early Childhood News' Director's Choice Award for the Let's Move, Let's Play product.

Dr. Clements is a past president of the American Association for the Child's Right to Play (IPA/USA), and has served as a training consultant to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The School of Education recently received the **2020 Best Practice Award in Support of Multicultural Education and Diversity from the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE)**. The award recognizes the School of Education's exemplary Changing Suburbs Institute®, which has prepared teacher candidates to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population since 2005. Dean Shelley Wepner accepted the award on behalf of the school on February 28 at the Marriott Marquis Atlanta Hotel in a ceremony at AACTE's Annual Meeting in Atlanta.



“As the leading voice in educator preparation, AACTE represents educators throughout the U.S. who advance our profession through innovation, high standards, and leadership,” said Lynn M. Gangone, AACTE president and CEO. “For 24 years, AACTE has honored its member institutions, leaders, and individuals who make bold, exceptional, and revolutionary contributions to our field. The Changing Suburbs Institute® (CSI) program at Manhattanville College’s School of Education addresses the demographic changes in our students, which is occurring beyond historic urban centers to our suburbs throughout the country. No preparation program is exempt from preparing teacher candidates for increasingly diverse student populations throughout the entire country, and Manhattanville’s program serves as a model for other programs to emulate. As the recipient of a 2020 AACTE Award, Manhattanville College’s CSI program exemplifies best practice in our field.”



Linda Rivera Bradt, a doctoral student in the Orange/Ulster BOCES Signature Pathway Cohort 1, is the recipient of the **New York State Council of School Superintendents' 2020 Dr. Mary Barter Scholarship for Women and Minorities**. The award was established to promote and inspire women and/or minorities interested in the field of leadership. Linda is the District Director of Bilingual, ENL and World Languages in the Enlarged City School District of Middletown (NY).

In her acceptance speech, Linda said that she strives for “. . . true equity and opportunities in education and in educational leadership for women and minorities. My dream is simple, to serve others in a school community and to make a difference in the lives of those whose voices often go unheard.” She also says that Manhattanville College’s School of Education, “makes me feel like a unique part of an educational community. As a scholar, both on a professional and personal level, Manhattanville College creates a sense of inclusivity and family.”

---

## **Working at Home: A View from the SOE Staff**

*by Linda Putorti*

There is an expression, “When life give you lemons make lemonade!” It is a good thing that I like lemonade because I think I will be making a lot of it now! So how am I coping as an administrative assistant and assistant to the Dean in the School of Education by working from home? I will be honest and just say it is challenging. I never thought I could be a productive worker from home but after a few adjustments, I am managing quite well. My commute is much shorter, and lunch is included every day!!! But seriously now that everything is being done virtually, it is really not that bad. The first time I did a virtual meeting, I said to myself, “wow, need to figure out how to turn off the camera!!!!” I guess this will be the new “normal” from now on. I miss going to my workplace and seeing my amazing co-workers. But as long as we do what is necessary to prevent this virus from spreading then I will work from my “new” office space and do the best I can. Stay well, stay safe and stay connected!!!



**Consider taking a School of Education Summer I class!**

Classes begin May 26<sup>th</sup>

*All classes will be held online*

Visit [www.mville.edu/SOE](http://www.mville.edu/SOE) for information

## School of Education Events

Manhattanville College School of Education

PNWBOCES  
Putnam | Northern Westchester  
Service and Innovation Through Partnership

JOIN US AT OUR UPCOMING VIRTUAL INFORMATION SESSION

### The Manhattanville College Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership

With over 130 outstanding doctoral students currently enrolled and over 90 graduates, the Manhattanville School of Education and Putnam | Northern Westchester BOCES welcome you to learn more about our doctoral opportunities in Educational Leadership.

VIRTUAL INFORMATION SESSION  
THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 2020 - 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM  
REGISTER AT MVILLE.EDU/EDD TO GET THE ZOOM LINK

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT [WWW.MVILLE.EDU/EDD](http://WWW.MVILLE.EDU/EDD) AND REGISTER TODAY!



*The March 25, 2020 School of Education Distinguished Lecturer event with the Reverend Dr. Blaine Edele, pastor of the Union Memorial Church in Stamford, CT, unfortunately had to be canceled. However, the Rev. Dr. Edele has graciously created his presentation "The Benefits of Play for Adults and Children" for viewing online. Visit [www.mville.edu/SOEDistinguished](http://www.mville.edu/SOEDistinguished) to view!*

### Looking Forward to the Fall!

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| September 22 | <b>Changing Suburbs Institute® Educational Forum</b> – “ <b>Cultural Responsiveness for Diverse Learners</b> ” with keynote speaker Dr. Nancy Cloud, Professor Emerita, Feinstein School of Education and Human Development at Rhode Island College |
| October 14   | <b>Distinguished Lecturer Dr. Douglas Fischer</b> , Professor of Educational Leadership at San Diego State University   |
| November 3   | <b>Rose Institute for Learning and Literacy Professional Development Conference</b> – “ <b>Comprehension and the Creation of New Knowledge</b> ”  |
| December 5   | <b>Manhattanville Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala</b>   |