

# Education Matters

Inclusive  
Civically Engaged  
*Democratic* SUSTAINABLE  
Effective Collaborative  
ENGAGED *Socially Just* Diverse  
REFLECTIVE *Ecological*  
Innovative Student-Centered



► C.L.A.S.S.  
pg. 13

# Director's Corner



Welcome to this edition of *Education Matters!* Boy, what a year this has been! As we all know, the COVID-19 pandemic caused quite an upheaval in the world, creating lots of uncertainty. As a result, it's an understatement to say that we have all been on a wild ride of change and growth! In late March 2020, the University, as well as our public-school partners, relocated our offices and classrooms to our home offices and we quickly pivoted to online teaching and learning formats. Our technology skills rapidly grew by leaps and bounds, and we determinedly identified new and innovative ways of engaging and connecting with our students. Was this always smooth and easy? Absolutely not. But we did it, and we did it even better as time went on.

We've all come through the experience with a renewed sense of our educational beliefs, with significantly enhanced knowledge of technology tools and pedagogy, and increased adaptability, flexibility, and resilience.

Our faculty, staff, supervisors, and school partners worked tirelessly to support our teacher candidates as they taught fully online, and again as they re-entered the schools to deliver both hybrid and fully face-to-face learning models while supporting enhanced safety protocols. This support will, of course, continue as our teacher candidates engage in full-time, face-to-face student teaching this fall, and as the University transitions back to pre-pandemic operations.

In this newsletter you will learn what we've been up to during this period of distance learning. You'll be introduced to our amazing office staff and wonderful new faculty member. You'll learn about our mobile classroom project, and the goal of bringing educational programming out to our partner districts. You'll learn about our exciting grant-funded projects, our new Certificate in Educational Technology and Distance Learning, rural education initiatives, our Preliminary Administrative Services Credential (PASC), the technology professional development session our candidates experienced, and much more!

As you read this edition of our newsletter, you will see that, in spite of the challenging year it has been, we still have much to celebrate. We are eager to return to pre-pandemic life and are so excited for the continuing work we have planned with our students and school partners. We are looking forward, as ever, to new beginnings, and we are so thankful for your continued partnership on our journey!

Sincerely,

Dr. Rebecca Justeson

Director, School of Education



Connect with us  
on social media!

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# The School of Education

by: Megan Mann

Over the past two years, there have been many changes in the School of Education department office. Whether it be new faces or familiar faces in new positions, we would like to introduce you to our valued team of staff members.

## **Amanda Taylor, Credential Advisor**

Amanda has worked with the School of Education since April 2017, and since then has been in three different positions. As credential advisor, she meets with perspective students to advise them on the aspects of obtaining a credential. She also meets with in-program candidates who have questions about their schedule and enrollment. Amanda graduated from Chico State with a bachelor's in psychology and a minor in career and life planning. Currently, she is working toward a master's degree in social science with an emphasis in career and academic advising. Amanda has a passion for helping others and setting up students for success. She loves being a part of School of Education.

## **Jana McQueen, Administrative Support Coordinator**

Jana McQueen was raised in Paradise but spent 19 years living in Massachusetts after serving in Germany. She came back to the North State with her husband in 2013 and is glad to be here, working on campus and getting to know everyone in the School of Education.

## **JoAnna Murrietta, Administrative Support Assistant**

JoAnna joined Chico State in 2018 and serves the School of Education in an administrative support assistant role. As a Northern California native, JoAnna feels right at home on campus and has a deep appreciation for its renowned beauty and friendly, close-knit community. She most enjoys working for an establishment that supports ongoing personal and professional development and a teamwork-oriented environment. Outside of the office, JoAnna loves lacing up her shoes and traversing the local hiking trails, biking, and nature and landscape photography.

## **Laura Loriano, Field Placement Coordinator**

Laura Loriano is the field placement coordinator for the school of education. Before joining the SOE in 2017, Laura was director of volunteer services at Passages, placing older adult volunteers in Butte County elementary schools through the Foster Grandparent Program. In her spare time, Laura enjoys volunteering for youth organizations, playing the didgeridoo and Scrabble. Laura is a proud Chico State alumni with 20 years of service to the University and Chico State Enterprises.

# Updates

## **Megan Mann, Interim Field Placement Coordinator**

Originally from Colusa County, Megan moved to Chico in 2012 to pursue her bachelor's degree in English and never left. She is currently finishing her master's degree in English with an emphasis in creative writing and hopes to become a published author one day. Having joined the department in August 2019, Megan has been facilitating the Service Learning transition from CAVE (now know as Early Field Experience) and recently switched to working on field placements. When not at the office or working on her master's degree, you can find Megan walking around our beautiful campus, browsing one of Chico's bookstores, or spending time with her family. She loves cows, freshly baked chocolate chip cookies, and working with everyone in the School of Education!

## **Pamela Dunlap, Assessment Analyst**

Pamela is a first-gen Chico State alumna from a huge family of more than 60 living members and so proud to have earned the first higher education degree on both her maternal and paternal sides. Pam was thrilled when a cousin joined her as Chico State alum several years later. Employed at Chico State since 2007, she's served in four positions—graduation coordinator, degree audit programmer, student records technical lead, and finally to the assessment analyst for CME/SOE. Pam has lived in eight rural towns and cities, all within 114-mile radius, with Chico having the largest population (the smallest was 329). Pam loves to tack big adventures on to every vacation, such as swimming with sharks in Oahu, and would love suggestions for new exciting activities!

## **Rachelle Sousa, Credential Analyst**

Rachelle is an Alumna from Chico State. She has worked in the field of education for 15 years and seven of the years has been as a credential analyst at Chico State. Rachelle is also the elected treasurer for an organization, Credential Counselors and Analyst of California, which has over 800 members throughout California. She is also the elected vice chair for Staff Council at Chico State. These two organizations really allow Rachelle to stay connected.

## **Rosa Rivera, Intern Coordinator**

Rosa Rivera joined our department in September 2019 as our intern coordinator. Her previous role on campus was with the Office of the Registrar as a graduation coordinator. She is a Chico State graduate and is currently pursuing her MA in social science with an expected graduation date of May 2021. Her ambition is to become a student advisor. Her passion is to practice holistic advising and supporting students during their college experience academically through a relational approach. Rosa was raised in Hamilton City and now resides in Orland with her husband and two daughters. Her leisure time is spent with family. They enjoy activities such as camping, off-road riding, and simply being out in nature.

# The School of Education

Welcomes....

Claudia Bertolone-Smith is an assistant professor in the School of Education. She has a PhD in curriculum and instruction with a specialization in mathematics education from the University of Nevada, Reno. She is passionate about the teaching and learning of mathematics and believes in the power of mathematical discourse! She currently teaches math and social studies methods to credential candidates, and an introduction to education course for undergraduates.

Her research interests include helping children understand how fractions work and investigating pre-service teachers' critical math learning experiences.

She has over 20 years of experience in the elementary school classroom and has instructed grades one through seven. When not teaching, Claudia might be found hiking and biking in the Sierra Nevada mountains or swimming laps at the nearby pool.



John Mouanoutoua is an assistant professor in the School of Education. He has been an education specialist for over 10 years and has served as a school administrator and a Rtl/MTSS consultant for inner city schools. Currently, he is the program coordinator for our Education Specialist Credential Program. He teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in the credential program and supports candidates throughout their credentialing and TPA experiences. His research interest consists of identifying academic interventions that are effective in meeting the needs of students within a MTSS framework.

When he isn't teaching, he is a venture eater and continues to explore what Chico has to offer. He is proud to be a Wildcat!



As an assistant professor, he earned the Academic Senate's 2019 Faculty Award for Excellence in University Service. In 2019, he also earned the California Council for the Social Studies' Diversity and Social Justice Award for his research and practice. Prior to becoming a tenure-track faculty member in the California State University system, he was a California public elementary school teacher and adjunct faculty member at public and private universities.

Browning Neddeau is enrolled in the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. He joined the Chico State, Chico faculty in 2019, jointly appointed in the School of Education and Department of Multicultural and Gender Studies. He serves as the associate director for the Northeastern California Preparation and Retention of Indian Educators (NorCAL PRIE) grant program. Additionally, he holds a position on the National Advisory Council for the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in American Higher Education (NCORE). Prior to Chico State, he was an assistant professor of education at CSU, Monterey Bay.

Catherine Lemmi is an assistant professor in the School of Education. She has a PhD in curriculum and instruction from the Stanford University and teaches literacy development to secondary credential candidates as well as "Equity and Access in Education," a prerequisite to the credential program.

Her research sits at the intersection of language, literacy, and science education. She is particularly interested in sociolinguistic ideologies and how they might influence teaching and learning. Prior to becoming a professor, Catherine worked as an English teacher in Japan, a substitute in Memphis, Tennessee (her hometown!) and a science teacher in Redwood City. She enjoys spending time with her 3-year-old son, Elliot, and camping in various locations across Northern California with her family.



# Welcome to S.O.E. Bretton Varga!



**B**retton A. Varga, PhD, is an assistant professor of history and social science at Chico State. Currently, he teaches "Access and Equity in Education," "Curriculum Theory and Practice: Social Studies," and "Subject Area Pedagogy II: Social Science." His research works with(in) critical theories of race, materiality, and temporality to explore how visual methods can be used to unveil historically marginalized perspectives and layers (upon layers) of history that haunt the world around us. When not playing golf or tag with his two daughters, Gwen, age 8, and Sawyer, age 6, Bretton can be found walking the family bulldog, Kubo, in Bidwell Park. He is looking forward to getting to know the Chico State community and is thrilled to part of such a wonderful and dedicated faculty!

# Outdoor Reimaging

By Ann Schulte



**W**e are pleased to announce that Jan Mathews, science teacher at Sycamore Middle School in Gridley, former credential candidate, and longtime mentor teacher for our students, has been named one of the 2020-2021 Celia B. Godsil Grants in Place Fellows. Each Fellow receives a grant from the Rural Schools Collaborative to support a place-based project, a professional development presentation, and an honorarium for the educator.

Jan's project is called "Outdoor Reimagining," and it will involve students and community members

working together to create a desirable and usable gathering space on their school campus. Students will create the plans, organize the labor, and complete the tasks needed to design and build this community area. Student-driven projects like this offer team-building and leadership opportunities and motivate students to make connections with each other and with community members. Through this project, Jan hopes students will learn how to create positive change in their community by starting right at their school. She is looking forward to creating a comfortable and safe space for her student community on her campus.

Jan is in her 18th year of teaching. One of her favorite things to do when she is not bird-watching or being outdoors is to bring humor and a sense of community into her classroom. She has been a Chico State partner and mentor teacher for much of her career and finds working with credential candidates rewarding and extremely beneficial to her own reflective practices

# Robert Noyce Scholarship

by Jennifer Oloff-Lewis

Jennifer Oloff-Lewis from the School of Education in conjunction with Brandi Aranguren, M.E. Matthews, and Anne Stephens from the College of Natural Sciences were awarded a \$1.2 million Robert Noyce Scholarship grant from the National Science Foundation in May 2018. The Robert Noyce Scholars program aims to encourage talented Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) majors and professionals to enter into the teaching profession and teach mathematics or science at the secondary level.

The new Noyce Scholarship program provides funding for both undergraduate and post-baccalaureate future math and science teachers. Undergraduate Noyce Scholars receive \$12,250 toward tuition and fees, and an additional \$2,000 to fund other extended learning opportunities, such as working in the Chico State Hands-On Learning (HOL) Lab, Chico State Summer Research Institutes, the Science Teacher Researcher (STAR) program, and the Learning Assistant (LA) Program. The credential or post-baccalaureate Noyce Scholars receive \$13,250 toward tuition and fees.

The Noyce scholarship has awarded \$283,500 to 18 Chico State students with scholarships from 2018–21. Laura Arriaza (2019–20), Andy Beronilla (2018–19, 2019–20) Daniel Caravez (2018–19), Nancy Diaz (2018–19), Jennifer Culver (2018–19), Yesica Espinosa (2020–21), Elizabeth Hensley (2020–21), Ashley Huang (2020–21),

Patrick Johnson (2020–21), Wesley Juel (2019–20), Teresa Gutierrez (2019–20), Deyci Lopez-Rangel (2019–20, 2020–21), He-Lo Ramirez (2019–20), Leandra Vazques (2019–20, 2020–21), Yami Velasquez (2019–20, 2020–21), Paul Weliver (2019–20), Kirk Williams (2018–19, 2019–20), and Isabel Yglecias (2019–20).

We will be awarding \$168,250 to 13 Chico State students next year. We are excited to announce the 2021–22 recipients of the Robert Noyce Scholarship award:

## Award Recipients

Caitlyn Chan

Yesica Espinosa

Elizabeth Hensley

Maxwell Hinchliff

Patrick Johnson

Armando Montejano

Jeremy Scherr

Quinn Spring

Carli Starkey

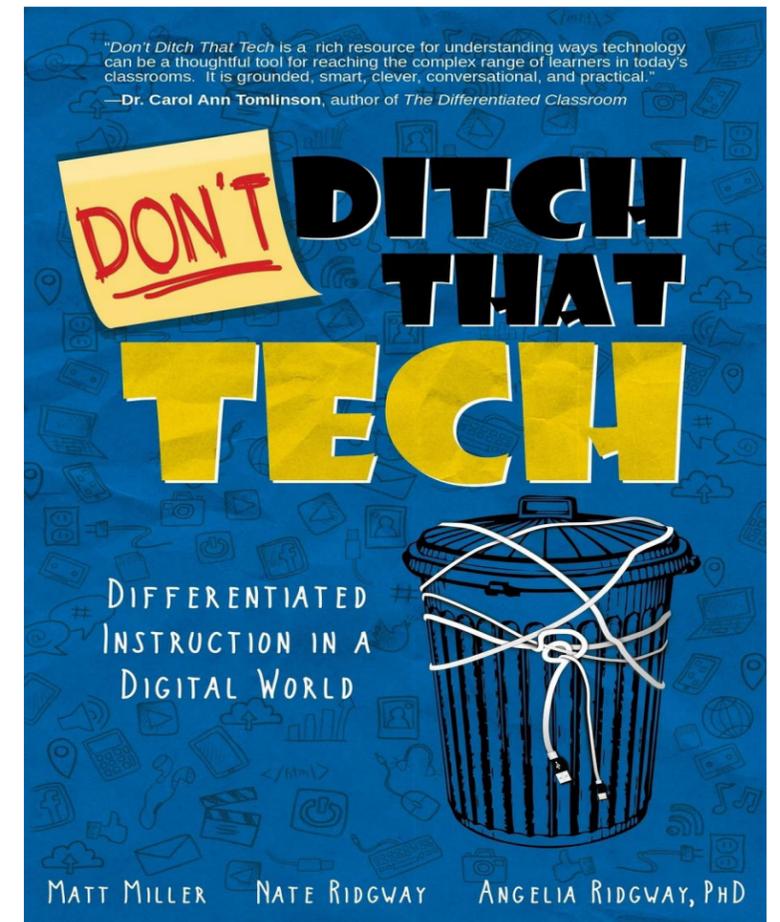
Yamileth Velasquez

Anna Weiss

Mai Xiong

# Technology Professional Development Session

On Wednesday, April 28, the School of Education provided a professional development session for teacher candidates on Teaching with Technology. Matt Miller, Nate Ridgway, and Angelia Ridgway, authors of the book, *Don't Ditch that Tech: Differentiated Instruction in a Digital World* provided a two-hour session for the SOE. The authors, pioneers in using technology in their public-school classrooms and college classes, showcased a variety of technology tools including Flipgrid, StrawPoll, Dotstorming, Jamboard, VoiceThread, penzu, Kahoot, Pear Deck, Digital Gallery Walk, Padlet, Classtime, Google Drawing, Google Forms, BackChannel Chat, iorad, Choose Your Own Journey Stories, Unsplash, IconsMania, Youtube, and Google Arts and Culture, to name more than a few. The presenters stressed the importance of matching one's instructional objective or broader educational goal with the specific application or technology used. While they acknowledge that technology can make lessons very engaging for students, they expressed that being a "cool tool" is not enough. They believe that the real instructional power comes through good decision making, which always includes being intentional about technology use. They advocate for thinking deeply about how technology will enhance student learning of the lesson objectives in maximally engaging ways!



# A New Mobile Classroom for S.O.E.

by Tal Slemrod

The School of Education, in partnership with the College of Communication and Education, is excited to share the development of a mobile classroom to support credential students, partner teachers, and K-12 students across our Northern California region. Tal Slemrod is leading the project, along with the Special Education faculty, to purchase and convert an RV into a mobile learning space. With students and partner districts placed all over the region, there is a need for the department and University to expand access to teaching credential students beyond the traditional university setting. The demands of school districts, specifically rural districts that have less access to credentialing programs and higher education institutions, are great, and we are excited about the new ability to support them. These districts are eager to form face-to-face partnerships with universities. Additionally, these districts may not have access to experts or resources to support their current credential students, K-12 students, and classroom needs and may not have university professional development as a source of new evidence-based programs. The mobile classroom will enable students and teachers to partner with the School of Education by accessing university experts, credential students, and technology resources.



# NorCal Educational Leader Consortium Grant

by Mike Gulbransen

Over the course of the past year, the School of Education has partnered with Humboldt State and Chico Unified School District to create the Northern California Educational Leadership Consortium (NorCal ELC) through a grant sponsored by the 21st Century School Leadership Academy and funded by the California Department of Education. The mission of NorCal ELC is to provide high-quality professional learning and support for school and teacher leaders in the 11 northernmost counties of California, the Shasta Region. We develop leadership knowledge and skills, promote continuous improvement systems, and connect educators with tools and resources for addressing equity-centered problems of practice to ultimately lead to better outcomes for children and youth in our largely rural region.

The NorCal ELC promotes the building of leadership capacity, the creation of a network of like-minded educators throughout the North State, and the belief that professional learning should be learner-centered and authentic-problem-focused by establishing a system of structures and supports that focus on team-driven problems of practice. These structures and supports include the creation of site, district, or county-based communities of practice that seek to address local issues that have been identified by the team and evidence by meaningful data. Each community of practice participates in winter and summer leadership institutes, weekly or bi-weekly team meetings, and monthly regional professional learning communities that allow them to work, share, and collaborate with other educators in the Shasta Region.

Each community of practice is led by a team leader who takes part in monthly leadership academies and individual one-on-one coaching from expert practitioners. This extensive system of support is intended to empower local educators who wish to do meaningful work on problems that are important to them and critical for their respective stakeholders.

Community of practice teams throughout the Shasta Region of the NorCal ELC implemented tests of change this spring with the intention of evaluating and determining the next steps for the 2021-22 school year. Some examples of the problems of practice they are addressing are the Dunsmuir team, which is focusing on raising student engagement through the setting of individual student goals; the Glenn County team, which is identifying and implementing change plans for systemic inequities; and the Butte County team that is developing plans for the integration of social-emotional learning through art instruction. These are just a few examples of the great work that the teams are engaged in as they seek to improve the educational settings for all students in the North State.

As the NorCal ELC moves towards year two of the three-year grant, they will be seeking to add more teams that represent the eleven northernmost counties of California, the Shasta Region. If you are interested in learning more about this program, visit our website at <https://www.csuchico.edu/norcalelc>.

# C.L.A.S.S.

by Cheryl Ordorica

The Chico State CLASS (Computational Literacy Across Secondary Settings) Program is an accelerated, supportive master's degree pathway with a full-time, yearlong teacher residency in one of the following partner districts: Gridley, Live Oak, Red Bluff, Oroville, and Willows. This innovative program combines a Master of Arts in Teaching and a California teaching credential in English, mathematics, science, or special education. Some benefits include collaboration with a cohort of peers; implementing co-planning and co-teaching strategies; support from a university supervisor; and mentorship from an experienced teacher. Our CLASS Single Subject Cohort 1 includes the following dedicated, experienced mentor teachers: Liz Ayon, Nicole Berti, Ryan Clemensen, Mike Erickson, Molly German, Jan Mathews, Gabriela Rodriguez, and Kendall Smith.

We are wrapping up our first year, and stream-lining ahead in a virtual-hybrid fashion. Cohort 1 is successfully completing their degree June 2021. The phenomenal residents include: Ashley Huang, Joe Mello, Regan Lechner, Courtney Mognis, Coral Olynyk, Mark Root, and Katherine Zimmerman. Our Education Specialist and Master of Arts in Teaching CLASS Cohort 2 just started their coursework in January 2021 including Jessica Gorman, Ashley Green, Kayla Sanchez, and Summer Vereecke. We are so proud of our Residents! They have been amazing during these unusual times, and we are all dedicated to their development and success as future educators.



(CLASS Cohort 2021 Photo Including: Dr. Jennifer Oloff-Lewis, Dr. Jamie Gunderson, Dr. Mimi Miller, Zack Kincheloe, Summer Vereecke, Mark Root, Coral Olynyk, Courtney Mognis, Ashley Green, Jessica Gorman, Regan Lechner, Ashley Huang, Kayla Sanchez, & Joe Mello)

Feedback from our CLASS Residents:

## What are the benefits of the CLASS Program? by CLASS Resident (Cohort 1, 2020–21)

"Having the living stipend has been really helpful. Going through a rigorous program, especially in a pandemic, is stressful and with the stipend, money is not something that I have to worry about.

Having a cohort of people makes this experience amazing—Having people who understand what I am going through, especially with this unconventional teaching experience. I have a great relationship with my mentor. She really involves me in everything and it is the best co-teaching experience that I could ask for. She is also extremely supportive through this virtual teaching experience.

I know that she has a lot on her plate, but she has helped me grow a lot and has definitely helped me become more confident in my teaching abilities. I am happy that our workshop incorporated education technology resources. I think that given the situation that we are in, that I have been supported a lot in this unconventional learning experience."

## A CLASS Resident's Voice on Additional Support by CLASS Resident (Cohort 1, 2020-21)

1. "The CLASS program has so many benefits, it's amazing! Not only do I get academic and emotional support from my cohort and teachers, I am also financially supported by this program! I can focus on becoming the best teacher I can be without having to worry about things like rent.
2. The program has offered guidance and has offered tons of technological resources to help make distance learning successful.
3. At its core, this program is centered around ensuring our success as beginning teachers, and I'm so grateful for the opportunities and support given by everyone involved."

If you want to make a difference; invest in yourself; implement teaching strategies; collaborate with a dedicated mentor teacher; and receive a living stipend up to \$36,000, please contact Recruitment Coordinator/Graduate Academic Advisor Cheryl Ordorica to set up a virtual advising session at [cordorica@csuchico.edu](mailto:cordorica@csuchico.edu) or visit [classteachers.org](http://classteachers.org).

# Teachers Travel to Chico – Fulbright Teaching Excellence and Achievement

by Charles Zartman

School of Education Professor Charles Zartman, Jr., PhD, added a new responsibility to his longtime role of Director for the California State University, Chico Center for Bilingual/Multicultural Studies. He is now also the campus director of International Training Programs. The Fulbright-Teaching Excellence and Achievement (FTEA) Program was his first assignment in this new capacity. The FTEA participants arrived in Chico on January 28, traveled to Washington, DC, on March 10, and headed for home on March 13. The teachers (14 females and 8 males from Algeria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Burma, Chile, Georgia, Honduras, India, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mongolia, Mozambique, Peru, Russia, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, and Zimbabwe) received preparation in four areas—academic, cultural, instructional technology (IT), and field experiences in local schools. In addition, the teachers delivered a presentation at the CSU, Chico International Forum on February 25.

The Academic Component was provided by School of Education faculty members. Elizabeth Stevens, Frances Kidwell, Ann Schulte, Maris Thompson, Ben Seipel, retired faculty member Robert Kohen, and other local educators delivered over 100 hours of presentations on topics as varied as classroom strategies for secondary EFL students, lesson planning, service learning, access and equity, multicultural children’s literature, and inclusive language acquisition approaches. SOE faculty member Aaron Koch, supported by HFA faculty member Kim Jaxon, led the IT component. The FTEA teachers spent six days as visiting educators at Pleasant Valley, Hamilton, Las Plumas, Paradise, Inspire, and Fair View High Schools, and Bidwell Junior High School. The cultural component was led by School of Education Credential Program graduate and program manager Heather Hacking. She organized fun-filled itineraries to Sacramento, San Francisco, and Mt. Lassen.

When asked about the program, Ms. Hacking added “When I was asked to join the team, I knew I would like working with international visitors. However, I had no idea how each of these people and their stories would give me a glimpse of the compassion that teachers provide worldwide. Each of the teachers in the program traveled great distances to reach Chico. But the real journey has been the interaction among each other and what they have learned about the American educational system, people from different countries, and themselves. I can’t believe I was paid to spend time with such amazing people. Watching our participants in the program learn, grow, and share

has been a gift I will never forget.” The program was visited by Marc Smith of the International Research and Exchange Board and Michael Kuban, senior program officer at the United States Department of State. Kuban commented that this year’s program received “high marks across the board,” and Smith mentioned FTEA participant comments were “heartwarming” in that they were so “overwhelmingly positive.”



# Why did you choose to teach rural?

by Randi Rovetto

## Why did you choose to teach rural? Why do you stay? What would you say to rural teachers entering the profession?

At age 18, I left my small rural neighborhood of Plumas Lake, California, for “bigger and better things.” As a first-generation college student, leaving my hometown for a university provided me with broader experiences and different perspectives that were not available in my small community. When I first arrived in Chico, California, I felt overwhelmed by the large city life of others. The busy life of downtown Chico felt like an endless lane of stores, the restaurants served food I have never heard of before and the people that occupied the city were more diverse than what I was accustomed to.

Although I was learning to live an entirely new lifestyle, to my surprise, Chico was still rural. The more I acquainted myself with this distinctiveness, the more I promised myself that I would never return to my old small town. I was captivated by the unlimited opportunities my college professors provided me with and I wanted to do the same for others. Throughout my undergraduate degree, I would reflect on my experience as a K-12 student.

I, like many others, wanted to erase the memory of my middle school experience. Not only was middle school awkward and confusing, but I also felt unmotivated, trapped, and limited as a student. The more I learned about educational philosophy, the more I realized that my community could have made middle school a better experience for me. That was the pivotal moment when I decided to become a middle school teacher. And even more specifically, I decided to return to the same rural school that I once hated tremendously to make a difference for the students still attending there.

As an 8th grade English Language Arts teacher, I strive to show my students, inclusivity, diversity, and endless possibilities through literature. I want to empower my students to develop a strong sense of voice by expressing their passions through writing. I quickly learned to teach without fear. There is no possible way to please every student and their families. There will always be pushback when teaching concepts that are new to a community but it is important to persevere! I was a product of a small community and felt trapped by my lack of exposure to content outside of my rural bubble. As a current educator in the same setting, I hope to give my students an entirely new experience.

## What was it like returning to teach at a school you once attended?

I could not have selected a better district to start my career as an educator. I returned to my old middle school in Plumas Lake, California. As you can imagine, my interviews, initial pieces of training, and my school's first few meetings of the school year were filled with jokes regarding my age, making my previous teachers feel “old,” “why would you return here??” etc.. I had no idea that my middle school teachers were so humorous! I still remember one of my favorite and most inspirational teachers, Mr. Williams, approached me a few days prior to my first day as an educator! He immediately asked, “Randi, oh my goodness! It is so good to see you. Are you graduating high school this year?” When I responded with a snarky remark about me being one of his colleagues now, I realized he was stuck on the fact that it has been eight years since I was a middle schooler. Another teacher of mine pulled me to the side for a one-on-one talk. We reminisced how I was “on the fence” of becoming a college graduate and dropping out of high school because of

my poor choices. As tears filled with his eyes, he let me know that he was thrilled that I made the right choices during high school. I was overwhelmed with the support I received from my fellow co-teachers. Previous teachers looked at me with confidence because they helped produce (“grow”) the teacher I have become. Other teachers, who were new to me, looked upon me for guidance. For example, I received many, “How did we run rallies when you were here” or “As a student, how did you like the way we approached this?” I only had one issue where the professional development presenter kept referring to me as “Randi” instead of “Ms. Rovetto” because of the age gap between me and most teachers who worked under her. It took her five times for her to address me as “Randi” in a whole-staff meeting before three of my previous educators corrected her. “It is Ms. Rovetto,” they said, “Please address her as a professional.” I was embarrassed by their need to step in but deeply appreciated them for having my back.

# Why did you choose to teach rural?

Continued

This was the warm welcome I received my first few weeks of returning to Riverside Meadows Intermediate School. It wasn't long before I realized that I was a product of them, the school, and their teaching. They wanted to see me succeed to reflect their own abilities.

As the honeymoon phase faded, I learned to pull away from the "traditional" ways of teaching that I learned from these educators - both as a student and as their colleague. Once my students figured out that I went to this "horrible and despicable place," they asked me why I returned. After much contemplating, I realized that my middle school years were the worst. My experience in middle school was daunting, confusing, and full of bad decision-making. I hung out with the wrong crowd, did not care about my grades, and attended "Friday night school" regularly. *Why had I returned to a place that I hated so much?*

Throughout my undergraduate years, I always dreamed of becoming an elementary school teacher. It wasn't until I reflected on my own experiences when I realized some middle schools were in desperate need of reform. Students are often unmotivated, parental involvement can

be low, behavior management is looked upon differently than elementary and high school, and emotions are just awkward. When entering the credential program, I realized this was the area that needed the most improvement. This is where real change can happen. This is where students deserve quality teachers the most. This is where I felt that I belonged. In response to my students, I told them that teaching at my own middle school felt like a way to redeem myself—to make up for the frightening student I was. I was never disrespectful to staff or rude during instruction. In fact, I always loved learning. I just needed a teacher to bring me back to reality and knock me into my senses. I needed a teacher to grab onto my passion for education and kindle that fire that drove me to college. I tell my students that I hope to be that teacher for them.

In terms of working with teachers that could not inspire me as a middle schooler, I am often reminded of how bad they made me feel like a student because they make me feel the same as an educator. There are some teachers that I am surprised still have jobs within the district. They walk around with the mentality that their experience enhances their quality as a teacher. This is difficult for me because not only do I see

flaws in their pedagogy as a colleague but I also recall mistakes they've made as my teacher. I know all teachers make mistakes but the ability to reflect on that and grow is crucial—some of my colleagues lack that skill. When it is time to collaborate with my old teachers, I notice now, three years in, that my opinion may not be as valued as one who came from a different district. They scoff and question my qualifications as an educator because they still see me as a frequently suspended middle schooler. This is a hard reputation to shake, but I hope that eventually my professionalism and worth as an educator will knock them of their beliefs.

My students love that I used to go to Riverside. They see this as something we have in common and it helps me build connections. We share "Riverside traditions," common experiences, and more. Plus, I remember the "hiding" spots for students to sneak away and do things they should not do. I remember where the "texting" zones are and how to get away with breaking minor rules. This comes in handy so students know that it is difficult to fool me.

Although it has its moments, I love working at the school I once attended. My colleagues are supportive, they guide me, and are open to helping me when I feel like I've failed because they want to see me succeed. I am in an environment that I know well, am comfortable in, and can connect with the students easily. My entire career isn't in Plumas Lake but it is a great place to learn and grow as an educator. Once I feel confident in my craft, I will eventually leave my little rural town located off a major highway to experience teaching outside my bubble. I look forward to the adventures ahead and expanding my horizons in academia but for now, I am happy with the blurred lined between student and faculty.

*Randi Rovetto*  
**Riverside Meadows Intermediate School**  
Plumas Lake Elementary School District  
8th Grade ELA Teacher  
*"Lead the life that lights the life of others."*  
-Socrates

# CIELO Co-Directors Present at United States Department of Education Program Directors Meeting

by Charles G. Zartman, Jr., PhD

Many federally funded grant programs had to pivot from traditional face-to-face professional development delivery models to virtual program offerings due to the COVID-19 pandemic. SOE Co-Directors of the Community and Instruction for Expanding English Learners' Opportunities (CIELO) Project Esther Larocco and Charles Zartman, were asked to share their experiences in managing that pivot at the Showcase Event of the 2020 US Department of Education OELA Directors Meeting on October 27, 2020.

Larocco and Zartman's presentation, "Lessons from the Field: Distance Learning and COVID-19" proved to be a powerful opportunity to connect with leaders in the field

and share important digital learning tools and strategies that were innovatively delivered to meet the unique challenges faced by educators during this pandemic.

The workshop series, Virtual Instruction for Emergent Bilinguals, and the year-long follow-up virtual lesson study sessions, highlighted customized design principles evident in every session (digital modes, explicit outcomes, meaningful connections and engagement, maximum comprehensibility, varied participation structures, differentiated assessments, and building community). More than 60 northern California teachers and Chico State Bilingual Authorization student teachers attended the workshop sessions. The prestige of this invitation as a model for other institutions of higher education to follow cannot be minimized.

# New Program: Educational Technology & Distance Learning

by Tal Slemrod

The School of Education, in partnership with Regional & Continuing Education, is excited to share the development of a new course-series program: Educational Technology and Distance Learning. With a growing reliance on distance learning and educational technologies, especially during COVID-19, there has been an immediate need for teachers to deliver quality distance learning instruction. Developed by Tal Slemrod, this new program provides professional learning opportunities that allow K-12 teachers in our region to build the necessary technology skills needed to deliver online instruction and provide potential solutions for both general and special education using educational technology.

This new program supports and incentivizes professional learning for teachers who have already earned their teaching credential. For new teachers (in California), this certificate provides, in part, the professional development required for induction (the process and requirements to earn full teaching licensure after initial licensure). For information, please contact Tal Slemrod, the program coordinator, or visit the program website: <https://rce.csuchico.edu/certificate-educational-technology>

# Preliminary Administrative Services Credential (PASC) Program

by Mike Gulbransen

The PASC program works with educators throughout the state to build the institutional knowledge and leadership capacity for those who aspire to become administrators in K-12 education. This year's cohort has engaged in numerous field-based learning experiences that prepare them to become transformational leaders on their respective campuses who build their knowledge and skills around the California Administrator Performance Expectations. These experiences include identifying equity gaps and facilitating communities of practice to ameliorate them, exploring the diverse makeup of learners in their communities, and engaging in a transformational change project that allows them to implement meaningful, authentic change in their educational settings.

Along with building the foundations of knowledge necessary for an administrative credential, the PASC program also prepares candidates to become the next generation of leaders on the K-12 campuses of California. Through extensive peer collaboration, deep dives into critical issues of today's educational world such as Universal Design for Learning, Restorative Practices, and equity for all learners, and changing perspective to the "balcony view" of K-12 education, future administrators are growing their capacity to be the innovative, transformational leaders needed in today's world. The PASC program recognizes the need for today's administrators to be servant leaders, forward thinkers, and inclusive problem solvers that take the needs and voices of all stakeholders into consideration while successfully navigating their educational settings into the 21st century.

# Practicum Podium Field Placement Updates

by Megan Mann

The School of Education would like to express our deepest gratitude to our community partners in education. Your collaborative efforts have allowed us to continue to fulfill our mission of developing effective, reflective, and engaging professional educators in the face of a tumultuous year brought on by the global pandemic. We thank you for your continued support!

In the 2019–20 academic Year, the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) reported **385 candidates enrolled** in our five SOE Credential Pathways. The CTC also reported **329 program completers** for the 2018–19 academic Year (most recent available data for enrollees and completers). In the 2019–20 academic Year alone, **50 school districts and County Offices of Education** across Northern California supported SOE credential candidates.

In an effort to best support our credential candidates as Chico State and our partners in education moved to distance learning, the SOE did implement an Alternative Placement Group for the fall 2020 semester. Utilizing ATLAS (Accomplished Teaching, Learning and Schools), a database of lessons and teaching practices, candidates in the Alternative Placement Group completed observations, created lesson plans, and taught lesson plans to their peers. Approximately 30 candidates took part in our Alternative Placement Group for the fall 2020 semester, however we did not

have an Alternative Placement Group in spring 2021 as all of our credential candidates received traditional field placements within one of our valued partner districts.

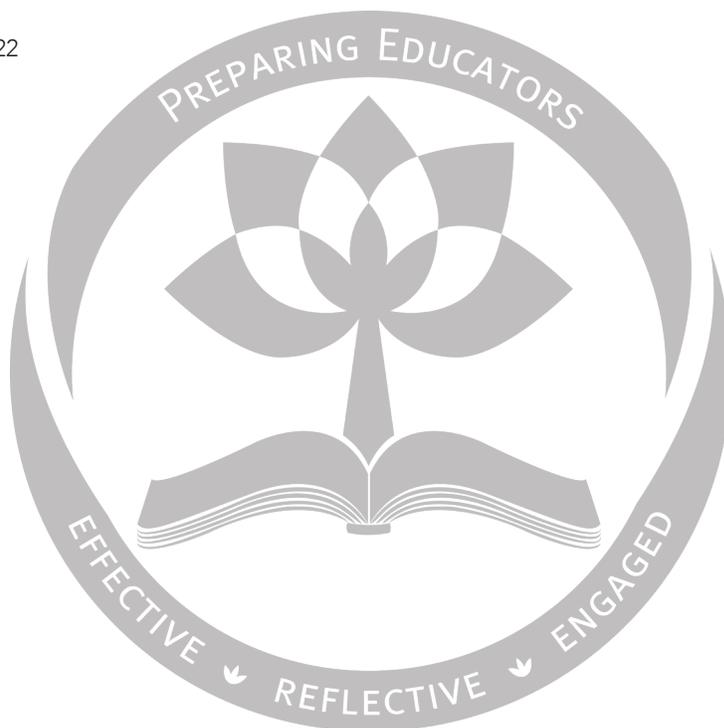
Looking forward to the fall 2021 semester, the SOE has seen an influx of applications to our Multiple Subject program, totaling over 100 applications by the February 15 deadline! The SOE has also identified key areas of great need for cooperating teachers in the following subjects: science (physics, biology, chemistry, foundational science, geoscience, etc.), music, physical education, social science, and education specialist (mild/moderate and moderate/severe). We invite accomplished educators to consider serving as a cooperating teacher and we would love to work with you!

If you are a prospective cooperating teacher or school site administrator within our local service area who would like to partner with us, please contact Megan Mann, Interim Field Placement Coordinator, at [mmann8@csuchico.edu](mailto:mmann8@csuchico.edu) for detailed information. To learn more about SOE Cooperating/Mentor Teacher qualifications and responsibilities, please visit our website at

[https://www.csuchico.edu/soe/\\_assets/documents/mentor-teach-qualifications-responsibilities.pdf](https://www.csuchico.edu/soe/_assets/documents/mentor-teach-qualifications-responsibilities.pdf).

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A Newsletter for School of Education Alumni and Friends of Chico State

# Education Matters

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The School of Education is proud to announce that Chico State's professional education programs meet the high standards of National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC).