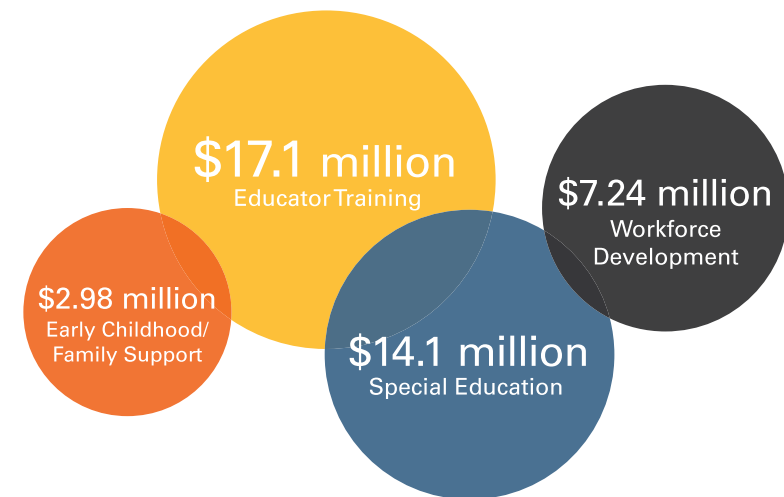


momentum

\$28 million External Funding FY19



Our research and community engagement are conducted with attention to issues of social justice, equity & diversity.



Dear Friends,

At the VCU School of Education, we continue to focus our work on meeting the educational needs of our state. Part of that is developing pathways to shrink the teacher shortage that has been plaguing

Virginia and the nation for years, particularly in urban, high needs schools in the Richmond area. This fall, we launched **five new undergraduate programs**, preparing students for teaching careers in early childhood education, elementary education, secondary education, health and physical education and special education. These programs will make an immense impact on the school as well as on our community in the years to come.

An additional pipeline of educators that we have recently received approval for is the new **Pathways to Teaching: Career Switcher Program**, which will make it easier for second career professionals who are interested in becoming teachers to enter the urban and high needs classrooms in a year.

Our **Innovative Teacher Pipeline** is also aimed at preparing teachers to best support educational excellence and equity particularly for Black and LatinX school children.

We continue to put all our efforts into meeting the needs of the children, families and communities that we serve. Thank you for all your support along the way.

Andrew P. Daire, Ph.D.
Dean, VCU School of Education

Cheryl Lewis Burke: Born to teach. Destined to lead.

Cheryl Burke is a fourth-generation educator who believes that “teachers are born, not made.” She earned her Master of Education in Educational Leadership with a Concentration in Administration and Supervision from the VCU School of Education in 1981. Promoted to principal of Chimborazo Elementary School in 1996, she retired in 2014 after 38 years of service to Richmond Public Schools (RPS). Today, she is the 7th District representative on the Richmond School Board.

What drew you to the field of education?

I come from a family of educators. My mother was a teacher in Powhatan County for 40 years and served on the school board following retirement for 12 years. My father was a graduate of Tuskegee Institute (now University) and studied under Dr. George Washington Carver.

All of my aunts were teachers. Whenever we had family gatherings, the conversation was always about school. When I sat in my mom’s class before school each day, I watched everything she did. Then in the evenings, I would gather my sister and doll babies in our basement and teach them, mimicking my mom.

The climate of the times that I grew up in also drew me to the field of education. When I grew up in Powhatan County, it was a time of racial segregation. Education was, and still is, the key to advancement for African Americans.

What were you doing prior to applying to the VCU School of Education?

I was teaching in RPS at Clark Springs Elementary. During that period, houses were being demolished in other parts of the city, and students in the Gilpin Court and Mosby Court neighborhoods were being rezoned to assignments at Clark Springs. The students challenged me to teach to meet their needs and learning styles. Lessons were taught using rhythm, field trips and lots of love. Those years were so rewarding. I share often that Mosby and Gilpin students afforded me a Ph.D. experience!

Dr. Murphy, the principal at Clark Springs, told me that she wanted me to attend a cohort meeting in administration and supervision that was being co-presented by VCU and RPS. I didn’t want to be an administrator or a supervisor; I wanted to teach. She convinced me to go anyway.



Cheryl Lewis Burke, Ph.D.

The meeting included an opportunity for members of the cohort to get a master’s degree to include classes on and off campus at an affordable rate. At my dad’s urging, I decided to apply.

After completing the program, what opportunities opened up for you?

I always enjoyed thinking about what RPS could achieve, not just that it was achieving something. After I got my master’s degree, I was tapped to be part of just about every leadership opportunity that arose. This eventually led to me being promoted to principal of Chimborazo Elementary School in 1996, two weeks before the school year began.

I went to the school after being promoted and met everyone. Then I walked out to the grounds of which trash, old tires, bottles, syringes and prophylactics were on the playgrounds. I stood there facing the blighted neighborhood and cried.

Inside the building was poor lighting, poorly equipped furnishings and pungent odors. After I gathered my thoughts, I walked home and picked up my husband’s red pickup truck. I parked at the front door and loaded papers and items for trips to the city dump. My husband, family members, friends, staff and neighbors were so supportive.

We only had one business partner at the time – Central Fidelity Bank. I called on my cohort friends – we still keep in touch – as well as parents, faculty, staff and members of the community, and we formed over 300 different partnerships. These partnerships helped us do everything from having an outside classroom to buying musical instruments for our band.

Once Chimborazo Elementary attained full state accreditation and made adequate yearly progress on the SOLs, we raised donations from the community to arrange for 57 members of our faculty, staff and some parents to travel to the Bahamas for the weekend, which included a teamwork retreat.

Our last project before my retirement was completing the process for accreditation as an International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program. More than four years of commitment. Chimborazo is the only IB public school in the Metro Richmond area. It was a wonderful experience.

Portia Newman: ‘Everything I want – all in one place’

Portia Newman was born in Wilson, North Carolina. The first in her family to attend college, Newman is pursuing her Ph.D. in Education with a concentration in Educational Leadership, Policy and Justice at the VCU School of Education.



and Justice program is a beautiful combination of three things that I care deeply about: leadership, education policy and justice.

Education – particularly getting education right – is a revolutionary act of justice. All of the components of the program are necessary and critical in order to understand how leaders can innovatively enact change. This program allows me to combine my interest in diversity, equity and inclusion, with my leadership and learning practice. In short, it’s everything I want – all in one place.

What drew you to the field of education?

Like many of my friends, I started college with the idea that I wanted to be a doctor or a lawyer, not necessarily a teacher. In my sophomore year, I began to think more seriously about what I’d like to do. I knew I loved kids, and I really liked school. My advisor asked me if I had ever considered being a teacher. I told him I had not, so he told me to talk to a couple of people, and to not come back to him until I had really considered teaching as a profession.

Before returning to him, I decided to take a survey to see what my professional interests were. The results were clear: I should teach. My advisor agreed and told me he thought I’d love it. I applied to UNC’s School of Education and got into their Child Development and Family Studies program. My advisor was right, of course I loved it! I enjoyed working with students and families, and thinking deeply about the possibilities that come from quality education.

When you decided to pursue your doctoral degree, what made you choose VCU SOE?

VCU SOE’s Educational Leadership, Policy

Any tips for incoming students?

First, talk to students already in your program. We’re very willing to connect with anyone who’s interested. The Educational Leadership, Policy and Justice program, for example, welcomes people from several different backgrounds – higher education, social work and school administration, to name a few. It’s interesting to hear from students with varied backgrounds and experiences how they approach educational leadership, policy and justice.

Second, take the time to visit Richmond several times before starting your program. Multiple visits will not only help you learn about the city, they will give you time to learn more about the campus support services available to you, and where they’re located.

Continue Your Education Journey!

Enroll in a class as a non-degree student today! Learn from anywhere with our online courses or take evening classes on our Monroe Park campus. Learn more by visiting: soe.vcu.edu/non-degree.

Momentum Fall 2019

Editor: Diana Burkett, APR
Designer: Michael Lay

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Fall 2019

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Dean Daire urges immediate action to help schools

Testifying before Congress, Daire outlines recommendations to improve teacher preparation

Andrew Daire, Ph.D., dean of the School of Education at Virginia Commonwealth University, testified at the U.S. House Wednesday about how VCU is working to prepare high-quality, dedicated classroom teachers and encouraged Congress to support similar initiatives across the country.

“Immediate and innovative action is required to address the challenges in high needs and low-performing schools with families living in generational poverty and disparities in student learning outcomes,”



Dr. Daire speaks before the United States House of Representatives about the numerous challenges facing the nation’s schools.

said Daire, testifying before a joint U.S. House Education and Labor Committee subcommittee hearing on “Educating our Educators: How Federal Policy Can Better Support Teachers and School Leaders.”

“The challenges faced by many of our

schoolchildren, and in many of our schools, are not average and will not be met with average efforts,” Daire said in his prepared testimony. “We need to be bold and aspirational in our desires and efforts to address these challenges.”

Daire outlined a number of recommendations to improve teacher preparation, citing new and ongoing efforts at the VCU School of Education to expand pathways to teaching careers; to prepare teachers for the realities of today’s classrooms, particularly high needs and low-performing schools; and to focus not only on teacher recruitment and preparation, but also retention.

“The research is clear. The quality of the teachers in our schools is the most important school-based factor in student achievement,” Daire said. “With the changing demographics of our nation — Virginia public schools are now over 50% minority — we can no longer ignore the inequities that exist in providing well-prepared, effective teachers for all students, particularly minority students and those living in poverty.”

Dr. Bae receives \$1M grant to improve STEM learning



A Virginia Commonwealth University School of Education professor has received a \$1.03 million National Science Foundation grant to strengthen science learning in urban middle schools by focusing on the scientific discourse that occurs in the classroom.

“This project is based on the idea that science talk is at the heart of science learning,” said Christine Lee Bae, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Department of Foundations of Education. “Specifically, the project aims to support science talk that productively builds upon and integrates diverse students’ knowledge and experiences, that in turn will promote equitable access to engagement, motivation and learning in science.”

The five-year Faculty Early Career Development Program (CAREER) grant, “Building on diverse students’ funds of knowledge to promote scientific discourse and strengthen connections to science learning in urban classrooms,” will take place at approximately 15 local middle schools and will employ a mixed-methods approach with a sample of approximately 18 teachers and 450 students.

“The study will promote ‘authentic scientific discourse’ as a critical feature of students’ participation in science practices,” according to the abstract. “In the context of this work, scientific discourse will refer to the spoken and written words, and gestures of students and teachers as they interact in science classrooms. This, in turn, would promote students’ science learning at higher levels defined in the Next Generation Science Standards.”



Christine Lee Bae, Ph.D.

SOE to begin offering five undergraduate degrees

The programs will lead to teaching licensures and are part of a statewide effort to address Virginia’s critical teacher shortage.

The VCU School of Education launched five new undergraduate degrees this fall, preparing students for teaching careers in early childhood education, elementary and secondary education, health and physical education, and special education. The programs are part of a statewide effort to address a critical shortage of teachers across Virginia.

“The big-picture goal of developing these programs is to address critical shortage areas in Virginia schools, and particularly urban, high needs schools in the Richmond area,” said Andrew Daire, Ph.D. dean of the VCU School of Education.

VCU’s programs were approved Thursday, June 20 by the Virginia Department of Education and on May 20 by the State Council

“Make It Real” Campaign surpasses endowment goal

Approaching our last eight months of the VCU School of Education “Make It Real” Campaign, alumni and friends have generously given nearly \$12M.

“Our alumni and friends are making a real impact on our future educators as they have surpassed the goal of \$7.5M by 160%. Not only does it make a profound impact on people, but it sends us a message that those closest to the school are saying keep the momentum going—make us proud,” said Dr. Andrew Daire, dean of the school.

With nearly \$4.8M given and pledged to our endowment, the generosity of many will nearly triple endowed funds that make a direct impact on students and faculty.

“We are encouraging more and more alumni to give to student scholarships as this is an

area that we want to see improve over the next few years, even as state funding falls woefully short and tuition continues to climb,” said Ed Kardos, executive director of Development and Alumni Relations at the school.

of Higher Education for Virginia. VCU is one of seven universities and colleges across Virginia that will initiate new undergraduate initial licensure degree programs. “I am pleased with the Virginia Department of Education and the State Council of Virginia’s decision to authorize establishment of undergraduate education majors in colleges and universities across the commonwealth,” said VCU President Michael Rao, Ph.D. “A quality K-12 education is transformational and the teacher shortage faced in Richmond and in many school districts across the commonwealth is critical. VCU School of Education — already home to a top-ranked graduate school — will excel in its preparation of future teachers dedicated to preparing our children with the quality education they deserve.”

We are seeing more and more alumni give from their estate. Planned gifts represent 30% of total raised in the campaign. These gifts allow alumni to give a larger gift than their annual support and direct it to an area that is most important to them. Many establish a named scholarship or other types of endowments like professorships. Endowments are funds in which the principal stays intact and provide an annual amount used as the donor directs.

“Donors tell me they feel a true sense of joy as they know their fund will support the school as long as the university exists,” Kardos said.

SOE launches new “Pathways to Teaching” program



The School of Education at Virginia Commonwealth University is offering a new program to provide career switchers with an accelerated path to becoming a teacher in Virginia, particularly in urban and high needs schools across the state.

The program, called “Pathways to Teaching,” was certified by the Virginia Department of Education and began classes this fall.

“VCU’s Pathways to Teaching program aims to engage, prepare and support success for experienced professionals who seek to transition to the classroom and provide quality education for students in urban and high needs schools,” said Joan B. Johnson, Ph.D., executive director of licensure and accreditation at the School of Education. “The pathways program cultivates a passion for equity and social justice in diverse urban and high need settings and develops talented career-changers to be effective and informed teachers.”

The 18-month program will provide instruction and support to participants as they navigate the pathway from preparation through induction and into ongoing, school-based learning. The program features a hybrid format that combines weekend coursework, one-on-one mentoring, and ongoing professional development to prepare teachers where they are needed most. The program will allow candidates who have full-time jobs to schedule night and weekend classes. Visit soe.vcu.edu for more information.