

# TAKE FLIGHT 2023

Education, Equity, and Excellence



Capt. Barrington Irving interacts with Camp Adventure students and instructors. His Flying Classroom activities were the highlight of Camp Adventure, a Summer camp program.



**BALL STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

Teachers College

# Contents

- 3 Letter from Dean Marri
- 4 Expectations of Excellence
- 6 Faculty Focus
- 8 Muncie Community Schools Partnership
- 9 Burris Laboratory School
- 9 Indiana Academy of Science, Mathematics, and Humanities
- 10 Student Features
- 11 Alumni Feature



**ON THE COVER** Ball State teacher education candidates and veteran teachers from Burris and Muncie Community Schools act as both mentors and role models at Camp Adventure. This 4-week program provides an exceptional learning experience and stands in contrast to typical, high-cost Summer camps. On June 27, 2022, Capt. Barrington Irving, the youngest and first Black man to fly solo around the world, came to Muncie to interact with the Camp Adventure students and instructors and work through Flying Classroom activities.

## Teachers College External Funding Through the Years

Fiscal Year	External Dollars Received	Number of Awards
2022	\$6,563,437	51
2021	\$3,846,644	47
2020	\$3,540,044	67
2019	\$8,716,296	57
2018	\$3,072,238	59
2017	\$2,062,627	39
2016	\$3,464,962	52
2015	\$1,976,480	42
2014	\$1,993,576	35
2013	\$1,578,774	22
2012	\$2,902,224	34
2011	\$3,104,868	38

Figures via Ball State's Sponsored Projects Administration

## CLASSROOM EXPERIENCES

624

Hours (minimum)  
over 4 years

50

Hours as a  
freshman



Opportunities  
to interact with  
students all 4 years



Grow in level of  
interaction and  
responsibilities

The information presented here, correct at the time of publication, is subject to change. Ball State University practices equal opportunity in education and employment and is strongly and actively committed to diversity within its community. MC-5220 23



In August 2022, five Ball State University faculty and one alumnus traveled to New Cairo Egypt in partnership with the El Rabwa Network. They explored topics including strategies related to classroom management, 21st century skills, designing engaging learning environments, and teaching students with a second language.



*"Our faculty and staff continue to work tirelessly to ensure our students and alumni are prepared and supported, so they are ready to face the challenges of modern education."*

*—Dean Marri*

In the past few years, the teaching profession has been tested like never before. Across the country, school systems are experiencing an unprecedented teacher shortage that we, as preparers of the next generation of educators, must attempt to address. Our faculty and staff continue to work tirelessly to ensure our students and alumni are prepared and supported, so they are ready to face the challenges of modern education. Here are just a few steps we are taking to address these challenges.

We are playing a major role in a first-of-its-kind apprenticeship program which supports Indiana's educator pipeline. To participate, students can enroll in the five-year apprenticeship program beginning their junior year of high school. Participating apprentices will receive instruction from Ball State during their time in high school through dual enrollment courses. Students participating in Indiana's first registered apprenticeship program will also earn multiple education-related certifications, as well as work at local after-school programs such as the Boys & Girls Club, where they will earn tangible, hands-on experience.

To assist students with the transition to higher education, our faculty developed a Jump Start program for incoming Teachers College (TC) freshmen. Participants in this program moved into their residence hall early to become familiar not only with campus, but also the local community. The community tour was specifically geared toward future educators, with an emphasis placed on showing how educational resources are clustered in the community.

We continue to connect with educators in the field to offer programs to assist growth. Our new Future Teachers Network connects high school instructors of cadet teaching courses with Teachers College faculty for support and professional development of their students.

In the face of the rise of online and hybrid teaching, we reacted quickly to develop an asynchronous online course to help educators successfully teach remotely. In the first year alone, nearly 4,000 educators participated in this online summer professional development.

Teachers College was recently awarded a \$1.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education for its project, "Civic Renewal through Education for Agency" (CREATE). In cooperation with Muncie Community Schools, a team from Ball State will develop an innovative approach to instruction, student learning, and professional development in civics that will integrate American history, geography, government, and media literacy.

These are just a few quick highlights of the exciting things that are occurring at Teachers College every day. We hope you enjoy reading several of these stories from our faculty, students, and alumni.

Chirp! Chirp!

*Anand R. Marri*

**Anand R. Marri**

Dean, Teachers College | Ball State University

# Expectations of Excellence

Three Ball State graduates are using their doctoral degrees and media visibility to inspire Indiana students to maximize their potential. By JB Bilbrey, MA '19 MA '20

**E**ducators have a responsibility to set an example for the next generation.

That is the mission of Teachers College doctoral graduates Drs. Jeremy Coleman, Brian Dinkins, and Jason Smith, lifelong friends who are working together to change the landscape of education in Indiana.

Dr. Jeremy Coleman, '03 MA '13 EdD '21, describes the journey in terms of legacy: "We are not here because we have done magnificent things by ourselves. We are only doing what the folks that came before us did so that we could have this opportunity. Our mission is to lay the groundwork so that the next educators can come in and continue the work. ... We know what this means for our kids and students, seeing professionalized, educated black men at the doctorate level."

And their mission has received a lot of attention.

## Going Viral

In March 2021, Dr. Jason Smith, EdD '21, grabbed his clippers.

A student at Warren Township Schools, where Dr. Smith was principal, refused to remove his hat when asked to do so. Rather than turning to discipline, Dr. Smith engaged the student in conversation and discovered the underlying issue was the student's haircut. The student felt embarrassed about the line of his hair and Dr. Smith recognized the moment as an opportunity to show compassion.

He convinced the student that he knew how to cut hair and braved the winter weather to rush home to retrieve his clippers. As Dr. Smith fixed both the student's hairline and confidence, a colleague took a photo and posted it to Facebook. It took off.

"Dr. Smith set the world on fire," said Dr. Dinkins, EdD '21, describing the media frenzy that followed the post. The story was covered by local news stations, USA Today, CNN, and People magazine.

"We understand that we're not an anomaly," Dr. Dinkins said. "But we see a responsibility of using our voice, our stories, our narrative, and our passion to raise awareness that there are a lot of black men doing great work...so that future young people of color can say, 'You know what? I want to be an educator. I want to be a principal.'"

## Becoming the Three Doctors

All three went into the Ball State Teachers College doctoral program together, leaning on each other for motivation and support. Their first class was with Dr. Marilyn Quick, a Teachers College icon who has taught at Ball State for 20 years and has more than 40 years of experience as an educator in Indiana.

"We all were baptized by fire in her class. She is peak Ball State graduate school," Dr. Coleman said. "It's not an easy course, but if you make it through, you're Ball State material."

Dr. Quick relishes her reputation.

**Below:** Dr. Jeremy Coleman interacts with two students at Brookview Elementary School in Indianapolis, where he is the principal. Dr. Coleman is using a passion for excellence learned at Ball State to support and inspire his young students. (Photo courtesy of Dale Pickett Photography.)

**Right, top:** Drs. Brian Dinkins, Jason Smith, and Jeremy Coleman pose for a photo in front of student work inside Brookview Elementary School in Indianapolis, where Dr. Coleman is the principal. (Photo by Bobby Ellis, '13)

**Right, bottom:** A photo of Dr. Jason Smith cutting the hair of a student in his school. This is the photo that went viral on social media, garnering media attention for Dr. Smith's approach to leadership. (Photo courtesy of Dr. Jason Smith.)





"We never do anyone a favor to dummy-down and lower our standards. That doesn't get anyone where they need to get in life," she said. "You raise the expectations, and you say, 'There's no reason you can't do amazing work that makes a difference in the world.' And when you set the bar that high and people trust you, they'll live up to it. The world isn't going to change with mediocre work."

### **Mentoring in Memory of the Mentor-less**

All three of these educators can point to teachers, coaches, and principals throughout their lives who invested in them and set them on the path to be leaders in education. For Dr. Coleman, becoming an educator was less about who inspired him and more about those who never had a chance to be mentored.

"For me, it was a moment, a line in the sand, where I said I don't want anybody else to see their father in handcuffs, to see their brothers in the back of a police car. I don't want anybody else to have to live that life because I did," Dr. Coleman said. "And every day that I come to work, I think about the people that I know that didn't have somebody to mentor them, to believe in them. I just think, 'If only I could have been there for my brother, or my father, I could have been that person to mentor them, and maybe their life would have turned out differently.'"

By transforming one student's life, you can transform hundreds of lives connected to that student.

"That's what we need to remember: everyone needs one caring teacher along their path." Dr. Quick said. "It's one teacher who says, 'You're better; you have opportunities.'"



## FACULTY FOCUS

**Dr. Shu Su** earned a Ph.D. in Human Development and Family Studies from Auburn University in 2016. Her research takes a multidisciplinary approach toward understanding the role of parenting and peer relationships in youth social development at different life stages (i.e., childhood, adolescence, and emerging adulthood). Using longitudinal data, she discovered the role of parenting on the developmental trajectories of children's social problem-solving skills across kindergarten to third grade and published it in *Social Development*. Further, she explored the impact of parental cognitive and behavioral coaching in promoting youths' social and psychological adjustment. Her recent research project focused on how the COVID-19-related lockdown and quarantine brought new challenges and negative impacts on children's social development, and how parental social coaching and peer interaction could serve as a buffer role.

**Dr. Robin Phelps-Ward**, Associate Dean of the Graduate School and Assistant Professor of Higher Education, recently published an article in the *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice* on graduate student well-being and an edited book with Routledge entitled *The Power of Names in Identity and Oppression: Narratives for Equity in Higher Education and Student Affairs*. Her book centers name stories (i.e., personal narratives rooted in individuals' names) in an effort to help educators initiate, facilitate, and maintain rich conversations about identity and oppression. Her current research with the Action Research Collective (a team of graduate students at Ball State University) focuses on the experiences of graduate students from historically marginalized populations using participatory action research and photovoice methodologies.

**Dr. Gerardo Ramirez** is a first-gen student and draws heavily from his experience to inform his program of work that examines the impact of making hidden resources visible for undergraduate students. Instructors and administrators sometimes assume that students who come to college already know how to navigate the system, and students are actively encouraged to be independent. But the reality is that many students don't have the same access to cultural capital. And when university systems do attempt to teach cultural capital, they often do so in a manner divorced from context. Dr. Ramirez is conducting a set of intervention studies designed to evaluate the impact of teaching cultural capital to minoritized students. Thus far his work shows that teaching cultural capital can reduce the first-year dropout rate by over 30%.



**Shu Su**

Assistant Professor  
Department of Early Childhood,  
Youth, and Family Studies



**Robin Phelps-Ward**

Associate Dean of the Graduate School and  
Assistant Professor of Higher Education  
Department of Educational Leadership



**Gerardo Ramirez**

Associate Professor of Social Foundations  
and Multicultural Education  
Department of Educational Psychology



**Gilbert Park**

Associate Professor of Social Foundations  
of Education and Multicultural Education  
Department of Educational Studies

**Dr. Gilbert Park** is an Associate Professor of Social Foundations and Multicultural Education at the Department of Educational Studies. He has been serving as the Director of Ph.D. Program in Educational Studies and served as the President of Korean American Educational Researchers Association (2021-2) and the Fulbright Senior Researcher to the Republic of Korea (2014-5). Using Critical Multiculturalism as an analytical framework, he has been interested in the school experiences of students of color with a focus on Asian Americans and Asian immigrants and the potential of multicultural education to advance social justice in both American and global contexts. More recently, he has been exploring ways to better prepare current and future teachers for the challenges of today's increasingly diverse schools and society.



**Lisa Ruble**

Earl F. Smith Distinguished Professor  
in Special Education and Autism  
Department of Special Education

**Dr. Lisa Ruble** is an educator, researcher, and clinician. She has obtained more than \$4 million in federal funding for her research that aims to improve the quality of services for autistic children and adults. She has more than 75 publications and was nominated by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) as a member of the Effectiveness of Mental Health Interventions study section because of her scientific achievements. She is the codeveloper of COMPASS—the Collaborative Model for Promoting Competence and Success. COMPASS puts into practice how teachers, caregivers, and autistic students can work together to achieve high quality goals and plans to achieve the goals using personal strengths and environmental supports important for quality of life. With funding from the Institute of Education Sciences, Dr. Ruble is evaluating how to reduce special education teacher burnout.



**Kate Shively**

Associate Professor  
Department of Elementary Education

**Dr. Kate Shively** earned a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from Indiana University-Bloomington in 2015 with concentrations in Curriculum Studies and Learning Sciences. Dr. Shively's research explores experiences that aim to prepare elementary teacher candidates to teach in emerging learning environments. Furthermore, she examines how teachers perceive and apply professional learning. In 2019, Dr. Shively started to investigate effective methods for preparing teacher candidates to teach in online learning environments. When the pandemic closed schools, she designed and taught online elementary practica and led a team of educators and researchers in the creation of an online professional learning series. Most recently, she facilitated in-person K-12 seminars related to creating effective blended learning environments in Cairo, Egypt. Egyptian teachers will continue their professional learning, from a distance, as part of a year-long online initiative.



# Muncie Community Schools/ Ball State Partnership

In May 2018, the Indiana General Assembly adopted bold and innovative legislation to create a historic partnership between Ball State University and Muncie Community Schools (MCS). The legislation enabled MCS to take advantage of its relationship with Ball State, and it granted the district “all administrative and academic flexibility to implement innovative strategies.” That July, Ball State and MCS embarked on this partnership to transform the district into a national model for innovative, rigorous, and holistic education. This anchoring, citywide effort set a new precedent for the role higher education can have in K-12 schools and reaffirmed Ball State’s commitment to its community.

Each year since, MCS and Ball State have come together to host an Academic Innovation Summit for the district’s more than 500 Muncie Community Schools employees, Ball State professors and community stakeholders. National thought-leaders energize and engage participants between hands-on sessions that explore innovative strategies to support student success and community wellbeing. Summits also create space for meaningful conversations with and among MCS educators.

Outcomes from the summit continue to inform the *Academic Innovation and Financial Viability Plan*

and MCS Strategic Plan. Both plans are a guide to transform MCS into a national model for innovative, holistic K-12 education. The summit—held each September—kicks off a year of ongoing professional development based on the pillars of the MCS Strategic Plan:

**Pillar 1:** High-Quality Pre-Kindergarten Education

**Pillar 2:** Recruitment, Development, and Retention of Educational Leaders

**Pillar 3:** Student-Centered Teaching and Learning

**Pillar 4:** Social and Emotional Learning (SEL); and Family and Community Engagement

In 2020, Ball State Teachers College led a University-wide initiative called the MCS-Ball State Connections Initiative. This program partners a Ball State college with an MCS school. Each Ball State college has a representative who attends semesterly meetings and helps coordinate and communicate about activities. Teachers College is partnered with North View Elementary School and Southside Middle School. Some activities include having Ball State faculty present at the first day of school, repair and preparation of the greenhouse and garden beds at Southside Middle, service at the schools for United Way Day of Action, and service at the Food Pantry at North View Elementary.

*MCS and Ball State have come together to host an Academic Innovation Summit for the district’s more than 500 Muncie Community Schools employees, Ball State professors, and community stakeholders.*



As a member of the International Association of Laboratory Schools, **Burris Laboratory School** is committed to developing, testing, and evaluating new methods of instruction for kindergarten through 12th grade. Our current leveled initiatives include research into purposeful play in elementary education, developing a transcurricular, inquiry based middle school curriculum, and implementing a senior Capstone experience to anchor student progression through high school. Schoolwide, we are exploring outdoor learning, virtual reality, and restorative practices as methods through which to sustain a culturally responsive learning environment that maximizes student growth through individualized instruction. As a department of Teachers College, we also engage in practices of teacher training and host University students, at all stages of learning, for clinical, practicum, and student teaching experiences.

### MICHELLE HARRIS

#### Burris Laboratory School | Instructor of Elementary Education (5th Grade)

Books have always played an important role in Michelle Harris's personal and professional life. She is always looking for "that book;" the one that is going to spark conversation, curiosity, awareness, and change. Last Summer, she was introduced to the book *Starfish*, written by Ball State graduate Lisa Fipps. The book, written entirely in free verse, tells the story of Ellie, a girl who learns that she deserves to take up space and be heard. After devouring the book in one sitting, Michelle knew that she had to get it into the hands of this year's incoming fourth- and fifth-grade students at Burris Laboratory School. In typical Michelle fashion, her enthusiasm and passion for this book was infectious. Her colleagues read the book, and everyone agreed that the themes of empathy and inclusion were exactly what their 10- and 11-year-old students needed to learn about and discuss to start the school year. Michelle reached out to Lisa on Instagram and a project was born. All fourth- and fifth-grade students received a copy of the book, and Michelle helped lead a poetry reading and writing unit at Burris.

To cap off this amazing book study and poetry unit, Lisa Fipps visited Burris and shared her experiences, as both an author and the writing process, with students across the K-12 school as well as Teachers College preservice teachers.



Consistently recognized as one of the best schools in Indiana and the nation, the **Indiana Academy for Science, Mathematics, and Humanities** is a unique public high school for high-ability students located on the campus of Ball State University. While predominantly a residential high school, the Academy does offer a non-residential (commuter) option. Students from anywhere in the state are eligible to apply for admission, and there is no cost for tuition. All Academy faculty are experts in their fields having a minimum of a master's degree with some also having doctoral degrees. Outreach to K-12 students and educators throughout Indiana and across the country is also an important part of the Academy's mission and expressed in a variety of ways including advanced online courses, enrichment programs, summer camps, and professional development experiences. As part of Ball State's Teacher College, the Indiana Academy is positioned within the state and beyond as a leader and resource for gifted education and talent development.

### MEGHAN RILEY

#### Indiana Academy for Science, Mathematics, and Humanities | Instructor of English

Meghan K. Riley is a faculty member in English at the Indiana Academy. Ms. Riley began her career in Flint, Michigan, as a secondary school and adult education teacher. Currently she is pursuing a Ph.D. in English Language and Literature at the University of Waterloo, and she has been the recipient of multiple competitive scholarships and awards, including the Ontario Trillium Scholarship and the Ontario Graduate Scholarship. Her research focuses on how shapeshifting characters in speculative fiction texts enact the tensions between essentialism and hybridity, as well as how speculative fiction tropes in popular mass media—such as cloning—often serve to reproduce historical inequities, rather than question them or reverse them. Meghan's publications include "*Your Body Has Made a Different Choice*," *Cognition, Coercion, and the Ethics of Consent in Octavia E. Butler's Lilit's Brood and Fledgling*." Last year, Meghan received a Bell Grant in support of a collaboration between her World Literature courses and another Academy faculty member's Speculative Fiction course. Meghan is delighted to be teaching a course on Speculative Fiction for the Academy this year.





## Student Project Creates Lab in a Bag

Cole Miller chose teaching to make a difference in the lives of students. He credits Ball State with preparing him for success. “My professors have given me resources and taught me life skills that extend beyond the classroom. Without my education at Ball State University, I would not be where I am today.”

With 100 hours under his belt and an impressive 4.0 GPA, Miller is a member of the Cardinal Teacher Core, where he connects with high school students interested in becoming teachers. He is also the director of the Lab in a Bag program through the ETHOS Innovation Center in Elkhart, Indiana.

Lab in a Bag is a take-home STEM series for families with students in K-6th grade. The program exposes students to STEM and demonstrates that STEM is all around them. Started in the summer of 2021 with 500 bags, the program has grown to reach nearly 2,000 kids. Miller’s team recently presented the Lab in a Bag program to top leadership in the Elkhart Community Schools. Since that meeting, they have been approached by two other school districts interested in the program.

## Breaking Barriers and Increasing Access

Sonina Hernández Mikkelsen didn’t always know her path would lead to a career in higher education. She was so active during her undergraduate career that it wasn’t until her third year that a mentor pointed her towards Student Affairs. It seemed like a perfect fit.

After graduation, graduate school seemed intimidating to the first-generation student. Luckily, Hernández Mikkelsen found a mentor who was an alumna of the Ball State Student Affairs Administration in Higher Education (SAAHE) program, and enrolled in the offering.

After completing her master’s degree in 2015, Hernández Mikkelsen worked as an academic advisor and once again turned towards continuing her education. In 2020, while balancing a full-time job, being a wife, and mom, she began work on an EdD in the Higher Education program at Teachers College.

Hernández Mikkelsen master’s and doctoral programs have focused on marginalized student populations, including the Latinx/e community. “This can range from experiences for international students, challenges, and successes for first-generation students, barriers for students of color, and the untold stories of undocumented students. I am excited for the potential impact my topic may have on students and their families.”



## Love of Learning Helps Stop Summer Slide

When Brittany Moran (BA '19) was in third grade, a teacher changed the course of her life. Mrs. Charles showed just how fun learning can be, and it instilled a love of learning in Moran that still shines to this day. She decided then that she wanted to be a teacher so she could foster this love of learning in others.

In the Fall of 2017, Moran learned about the detrimental impact of summer reading setback while participating in Schools within the Context of Community, an award-winning Ball State immersive learning program. She determined to find a way to address summer reading setback, and she started in her hometown of Palatine, Illinois. She met with the leaders of Partners for our Communities, and the Palatine Public Library, and they agreed to help implement her program with their resources, partnerships, and guidance. "Readers to Leaders" was born.

With the guidance of her Ball State professors and mentors, Moran spent hours planning and creating the program. She recruited and trained volunteers who could help. That Summer, they met with students and their families and paired students up with volunteers who had backgrounds in education.

"I was very happy with the results of the program," said Moran looking back on that first year. "The data I collected showed an increase in students' motivation to read as well as confidence in themselves as readers."

The local school district confirmed that all students in the program saw an increase in the reading test scores from the end of the previous school year. Moran's efforts had reversed the typical "Summer slide" that many lower-income students experience.

For her work with the Readers to Leaders program, and continued dedication to education, Moran was awarded the Ball State University Graduate of the Last Decade (G.O.L.D.) Award in 2022. Now, as a fourth-grade teacher in the MSD of Wayne Township, she hopes to bring a similar program to Indianapolis.





**BALL STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

Teachers College

2000 W. University Ave.  
Muncie, IN 47306

