



Alma College Department of Education



Alma College Education Department Alumni Newsletter

Fall 2022

Dear Friends and Alumni,

We have started this academic year filled with so much gratitude and hope.

The education program was one of the three Alma programs that received 2022-23 national endorsement by the Colleges of Distinction. We couldn't have done this without you. Thank you for recommending your students, neighbors, and family members to study education through Alma College. Thank you to our clinical partners for being outstanding teacher educators. Your donations enrich our students' experiences - thank you, donors.

Our new PK-6 major, now in its second year, is thriving. We are seeing more secondary and elementary teacher candidates excited about becoming teachers. Non-certification education majors are working hard to pave their way to become educators outside the classroom, school psychologists, speech pathologists, or social workers. Our last cohort of the "old program" elementary education majors, now juniors, are preparing to take their teacher certification exams (ZG) before MDE ceases to offer the test for the old program in September 2026.

Eligible teacher candidates at Alma College will soon benefit from the state's future educator fellowship and student teaching stipend. We are very excited for our teacher candidates to get this aid as they prepare to serve in the schools.

As you will read, our students are engaged in summer undergraduate research in education. Education faculty are excellent teacher educators who are also keeping active scholarship agendas. We are receiving great support from program graduates and friends. Our motivation for this work matches the bright colors on this beautiful campus. It is wonderful here at home; we hope you can visit soon.

Your fellow proud Scot,

Jessie Store

Dr. Jessie Store (Department Chair)
storejc@alma.edu

New Faculty:

We are excited to announce that [Dr. Beth Spinner](#) has joined the Alma College Education Department team as a literacy teacher educator. Beth recently earned her Ph.D. from Western Michigan University, and before that, she earned an MA and BA from Michigan State University. She has taught English Language Arts in several schools in the mid-Michigan area. Her research focuses on supporting English teachers as they teach reading and writing in meaningful and relevant ways. She



has published several book chapters including in the *Handbook of Research on Writing Instruction Practices for Equitable and Effective Teaching*, *Teacher Reflections on Transitioning from K-12 to Higher Education Classrooms*, *Handbook of Research on Supporting Social and Emotional Development Through Literacy Education and Foundations in Written Communication: Strategies, Behaviors, Success*. She serves as the college co-chair for the Michigan Council of Teachers of English. Beth and her family love to travel and camp in the beautiful state of Michigan. We are very pleased to have Dr. Spinner in our Alma family!

Faculty Activities:

[Dr. Brian Hancock](#) was recently awarded over [\\$200,000 by the National Science Foundation](#) for his forthcoming work supporting preservice elementary teachers' science learning.

Future Scots:

Do you know a future Scot who is interested in teaching? Please continue to recommend

Brian is joined by Dr. Amanda Harwood (Biology and Environmental Sciences at Alma College) as a co-P.I. Additionally, in March, Brian traveled with Jack Poling, an undergraduate secondary mathematics teaching major at Alma, to present their recent research on science teachers' professional development at the international NARST conference in Vancouver, B.C.

Alma College to students considering a career in education through the [Ambassador Program](#) and encourage them to talk with one of our [faculty members](#) during a campus visit!



[Dr. Peggy Yates](#) worked with the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) producers over the past year to curate and instruct the series, [High Leverage Practices for Paraeducators](#), a free training for paraeducators in the CEC learning library. She was appointed by the Michigan Department of Education to the State Board of Education Special Education Advisory Committee. In

Spring 22, Dr. Yates taught the course *Teacher Leader* in which she traveled to Disney World with 34 Alma College Education Majors to study Universal Design for Learning throughout Disney Parks and attend the Imagination Campus seminar Techniques of Teamwork. It was magical.

[Dr. Beth Spinner](#) recently helped organize and facilitate the Michigan Council of Teachers of English (MCTE) annual fall conference. She serves on the executive board as the College Section Co-Chair. As part of this role, she also presented at the conference. She conducted a discussion with preservice teachers, veteran teachers, and teacher educators from around the state that focused on how MCTE can best support teachers entering the field.

Alumni Giving:

We would like to give a special *thank you* to **Susan Hillman ('81), J. Brian Hancock, and Thaddeus ('79) and Connie ('78) Nowak** for their donations to the Alma College Education Department. Our past donations have been used to purchase Michigan Test for Teacher Certification vouchers to help reduce or eliminate the cost for students entering the profession, as well as to provide our current students and alumni with professional development opportunities over Alma's homecoming weekend. Thank you for continuing to support our work with future educators!

Professional Development:

Our annual professional development was held on September 23, 2022. This year our amazing presenters were Stacy Luberda-Criner, superintendent of Alma Public Schools, and Ann Sheffer, Assistant Principal of Richardson Elementary School. Both Stacey and Ann engaged attendees in learning about Structuring for Success Using a PBIS Framework. During this session participants learned about MTSS alongside practical strategies for behavioral management in the classroom.

Student Spotlight: Hannah Fleming



Hannah Fleming is our student spotlight for Fall 22. Hannah is currently student teaching and

pursuing honors in education. While at Alma College, Hannah participated in an undergraduate research experience with Dr. Store and further developed her research as a senior thesis. Inspired by her experiences, Hannah's research investigated the relationship between socio-economic status and academic achievement. She has presented her research in multiple forums including at Honors Day in Spring 2022.

Congratulations for your great accomplishments, Hannah!

We want to hear from you!

Do you know an Alma College Education Department graduate that you feel should be highlighted in our newsletter? Do you have a new teaching/education position (or other good news!) that we can share with our alumni community? Will you be on campus in the coming weeks or months? Feel free to e-mail [**Dr. Brian Hancock**](mailto:brian.hancock@alma.edu) (hancockb@alma.edu) or [**Dr. Jessie Store**](mailto:jessie.store@alma.edu) (storejc@alma.edu) - we want to hear from you!



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