

*University of California Santa Barbara 2023-2024*

# ReLAUNCH

**The Annual Research Magazine of the Gevirtz Graduate School of Education**



## JEDI Project

**Receives record-breaking \$5.3 million grant to train school psychologists**

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Photo courtesy of the Santa Barbara County Education Office

## Major Grant Awards Funded in Fiscal Year 2022-2023

Principal Investigator	Project & Sponsor	Total Award
<b>Shane Jimerson</b>	Preparing Professionals to Promote Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) in Mental Health Services at School <i>Assistant Secretary for ED Elementary &amp; Secondary Education</i>	\$ 5,369,111
<b>Amber Moran</b>	SBCEO Residency Implementation Project in Teacher Education <i>Santa Barbara County Education Office</i>	\$ 3,800,000
<b>Sarah Roberts</b>	CAREER: Understanding the Routinization of Mathematics Language Routines (UR-MLR) <i>National Science Foundation</i>	\$ 1,102,829
<b>Karen Nylund-Gibson</b>	BCSER: Institute on Equity-Oriented Mixture Modeling for Discipline-Based Education Research Scholars <i>National Science Foundation</i>	\$ 999,345
<b>Karen Nylund-Gibson</b>	Applied Mixture Modeling Training Workshops and Resources for Education Researchers <i>ED Institute of Education Sciences</i>	\$ 799,964
<b>Tim Dewar</b>	CSMP One Time Learning Acceleration Funding (OTLAF) <i>UC Office of The President</i>	\$ 493,500
<b>Alison Cerezo</b>	Health Effects of Intersectional Stigma Among Sexual Minority Women <i>National Institute of Health Alcohol Abuse &amp; Alcoholism</i>	\$ 416,567
<b>Amber Moran</b>	SBCEO Capacity Project <i>Santa Barbara County Education Office</i>	\$ 228,779
<b>Katherine Maynard</b>	Addressing Basic Needs Equity Gaps at the University of California, Santa Barbara <i>UC Riverside</i>	\$ 199,994
<b>Jill Sharkey</b>	Secure Families/Familias Seguras: Evaluation of Violence Intervention & Prevention in Santa Barbara County <i>Community Action Commission of Santa Barbara County</i>	\$ 177,487

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#### COVER PHOTOGRAPH

The JEDI Project team from left to right: Shane Jimerson, Arlene Ortiz, Jon Goodwin, Erin Dowdy.  
Photo by Jeff Liang '15

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## JEDI Project Receives Record \$5.3 Million Grant to Train School Psychologists

BY KEITH HAMM '94 *Originally published in UCSB's The Current*

Over the past decade, the impacts on the mental health of school-age children have been piling on — from social media and mass shootings to coronavirus and climate change.

In short supply, however, are the school psychologists who can support the healthy development of children. To help fill gaps in mental health services, the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) has granted \$5.3

million to professor and principal investigator Shane Jimerson and faculty collaborators Erin Dowdy, Arlene Ortiz and Jon Goodwin in the Department of Counseling, Clinical and School Psychology to prepare the next generation of school psychologists and related professionals. The grant is the largest award in Gevirtz School history.

Jimerson has titled the program the JEDI Project, emphasizing its focus on promoting justice, equity,

**The JEDI team (left to right): Shane Jimerson, Erin Dowdy, Arlene Ortiz, and Jon Goodwin. Dowdy, Ortiz and Goodwin, along with Michael Furlong (inset photo at right) comprise the METRICS team.**

diversity and inclusion. The project will prepare professionals from diverse backgrounds to contribute to mental health services for K-12 students, including students from

Photograph by Jeff Liang

culturally, linguistically and racially minoritized groups. These marginalized groups are often the most impacted by systemic and racial trauma and the least likely to receive needed mental health services.

“The JEDI Project is both timely and important, as school psychologists working to promote social, emotional, behavioral and mental health present a tremendous opportunity to support all children,” Jimerson explains.

Youth mental health in the U.S. has reached crisis levels. In 2021, a national state of emergency in children’s mental health was jointly declared by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and the Children’s Hospital Association. In 2022, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that more than four in 10 teens expressed feeling

persistently sad or hopeless and that one in five contemplated suicide. And according to a federal study released in February 2023, the numbers among teen girls are even more troubling, with about six out of 10 feeling constant sadness. Nearly one in three teen girls expressed having suicidal ideations, up 60% over the past decade.

“We appreciate the increased capacity this grant provides so that we may prepare more school psychologists than ever before at a time of such pressing need,” says Jeffrey Milem, the Jules Zimmer Dean’s Chair of Gevirtz Graduate School of Education. “This JEDI Project embodies the core values of the Gevirtz School, namely our insistence upon collaborating  
*JEDI continued on page 4*

## Gevirtz Team Collaborates on METRICS to Expand Mental Health Workforce

BY MARIA ZATE

As part of a national effort to improve school mental health services, the Gevirtz School at UCSB along with three other universities have been awarded a four-year, \$10.4 million federal contract from the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) to launch and operate a national center to expand the K-12 school-based mental health workforce of psychologists, social workers, counselors, and other practitioners.

UCSB, along with University of Wisconsin Madison, University of South Florida, and University of Iowa, will contribute school mental health expertise and resources to ensure the success of the new center called METRICS (Mental Health Evaluation, Training, Research, and Innovation Center for Schools).

The team from the Gevirtz Department of Counseling, Clinical and School Psychology includes professors Erin Dowdy, Jon Goodwin, Arlene Ortiz, and professor emeritus Michael Furlong.

“We are excited to collaborate with other leading institutions and scholars focused explicitly on school mental health. We recognize the tremendous need, both locally and nationally, to invest significant energy to improve the well-being of children and youth in the place they are most likely to receive mental health services,” Dowdy says.

“Our hope is to shift the conversation away from a focus on distress and towards an emphasis on wellness and student strengths,” Goodwin explains. “We hope that

our work on METRICS will be focused on prevention and early intervention, prior to students having significant symptoms of distress.”



Michael Furlong

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, schools across the country have seen an increase in mental health concerns among their students, according to the Department of Education (DOE). The American Academy of Pediatrics and other national child and

adolescent health care organizations in 2021 declared a national emergency in child and adolescent

**“Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on child and adolescent mental health have heightened awareness of the need to increase the availability of prevention and intervention services, particularly in school settings.”**

~ MICHAEL FURLONG

mental health and emphasized the need for expanded school-based mental health care.

In May 2022, the DOE reported that 70% of public schools saw an increase in the percentage of their students seeking mental  
*METRICS continued on page 4*

## SUPPORTING YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

*JEDI continued from page 2*  
with interdisciplinary and community partners to conduct impactful, respectful and equitable service and research.”

The DOE funding for JEDI will support upward of 50 school psychologists over the next five years, a threefold increase in the Gevirtz School’s typical output.

By design, the project’s graduate students will combine classroom studies with hands-on training at several Santa Barbara County public schools that have high numbers of students experiencing chronic absenteeism, homelessness and other socio-economic disadvantages.

Santa Maria-Bonita School District, for example, serves more than 16,000 K-12 students, 91% of whom are socio-economically disadvantaged, with a homeless rate of 14% (more than 2,300 students). Districtwide, 20 school psychologists serve students at a ratio of one for every 833, respectively, compared to the one-per-500 ratio recommended by the National Association of School Psychologists.

Other educational agencies within Santa Barbara County to be served by the project include Lompoc Unified, Carpinteria Unified and the Santa Barbara County Special Education Local Plan Area.

Jimerson highlights the Gevirtz School’s strong collaborations with many schools and its contributions to students and families over the years.

“We’re not just now deciding to do this; this is what we have been

### The DOE funding for JEDI will support upward of 50 school psychologists over the next five years, a threefold increase in the Gevirtz School’s typical output.

doing for the past two decades,” he adds. “The resources we’ve been able to secure are really a reflection of the expertise and knowledge we’ve established that’s now highly salient, highly sought after and highly invested in.”

The \$5.3-million JEDI Project award comes on the heels of a \$2.7 million DOE grant awarded to Jimerson, Dowdy and Mian Wang

in 2021 to prepare scholars in advancing equity in mental health services and train school psychology and special education experts to contribute to the next generation of professionals. Known as Project TEAMS, that initiative is funding doctoral students at UCSB and Boston University.

“Building upon collaborative efforts throughout the past two decades, these recent awards

recognize and further advance the high-quality scholarship and graduate preparation that the school psychology faculty at UCSB contributes within the local community, and at the state, national and international levels,” Jimerson says. “These efforts are essential to further support and promote the well-being of children in our schools and communities.”

*METRICS continued from page 3*  
health services at school since the start of the pandemic, with 76% of schools also reporting an increase in staff voicing concerns about their students showing symptoms of depression, anxiety, and trauma. The Centers for Disease Control reported that between 2011 and 2021 past-year chronic sadness (lasting two or more weeks) increased from 36% to 57% for female- and 21% to 29% for male-identifying adolescents.

Fortunately, the DOE is making large investments in programs designed to increase the number and diversity of mental health professionals in schools. In spring of 2023, the Gevirtz School received a \$5.3 million grant from DOE for the JEDI Project to train school

psychologists and other professionals to promote justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in mental health services at schools.

“METRICS will provide needed support to other school-based mental health and mental health services professionals, which are focused on increasing the number of mental health providers in schools, like the JEDI project,” says Ortiz.

The National Association of School Psychologists estimates that 65,000 more school psychologists are needed to provide students with adequate and equitable mental health services, and there are similar shortages of school social workers and school counselors. METRICS will contribute to the national initiative to strengthen school mental health

services by supporting nearly 300 grants totaling more than \$188 million awarded by DOE over the past two years to education agencies, school districts, and universities.

“Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on child and adolescent mental health have heightened awareness of the need to increase the availability of prevention and intervention services, particularly in school settings,” says Furlong. “Clearly, a prerequisite to providing increased mental health services in schools is to increase the pool of qualified providers. This project aims to support educational agencies and training programs and universities’ vital efforts to recruit and train the next generation of school mental health professionals.”



Joanna Hendrix is a special education teacher at Ralph Dunlap Elementary School in the Santa Maria Valley.

## Residency Implementation Grant Helps Recruit and Retain Teachers in High-Need Roles

BY YURIKO CHAVEZ '24

**W**hile California’s teacher shortage won’t be going away anytime soon, a \$1 million grant from the state’s teacher credentialing organization will go a long way to

attract and retain dozens of teacher candidates in Santa Barbara County.

The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) presented the award to the Santa Barbara County Education Office

(SBCEO) and the Gevirtz School to fund the SBCEO Residency Implementation Project in Teacher Education, and 37 graduate students have received funds for the 2023-2024 academic year. The Gevirtz School is eligible to reapply for the funding over the next three years for a potential total award of \$4 million in financial aid for students.

Santa Barbara County’s high cost of housing makes it incredibly challenging for graduate students to find a place to live and support themselves while earning their teaching credentials. And it’s even

*Continued on page 6*



Victoria Harvey

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more difficult to bring in future teachers interested in hard-to-fill roles.

The ultimate goal of the Residency Implementation grant is to recruit and retain graduate students enrolled in the Gevirtz School's Teacher Education Program in fields experiencing the most severe shortage of educators. These areas include special education, bilingual authorization, and single subject in STEM. The project also will target candidates who plan to work in Santa Barbara County schools and who reflect the county's diverse student population.

"One of our biggest hopes is that this will alleviate the financial burden of paying for school and living expenses," says Victoria Harvey, the director of the Teacher Education Program. "This grant is essential for recruiting high quality teacher candidates who will contribute to the diversity of Santa Barbara County's teacher workforce and serve in high-need areas."

Janelle Lopez, a Los Angeles native and an aspiring special education teacher, is a recipient of a Residency Implementation grant. She was inspired to pursue bilingual teaching after tutoring her young cousin, a native Spanish-speaker.

"At that time, he was failing in reading English. I was the only person who could help him," Lopez shares. "That showed me there are a lot of other kids who come from [Spanish-speaking] homes where even though their families really



Janelle Lopez

want to help them, they literally can't."

As a graduate student, Lopez's schedule consists of 12-hour days: Her mornings begin at 7 a.m. working in an elementary school, and her day ends at 7 p.m. after her TEP class.

Lopez is grateful that the grant lightens her financial burdens and allows her to have a better sleep schedule, a balanced diet, and enough funds for transportation.

"When it comes to my experience in the classroom and my relationship with my students, I can fully invest my

**"One of our biggest hopes is that this will alleviate the financial burden of paying for school and living expenses."**

**~ VICTORIA HARVEY**

time and my energy on my academics and on my teaching," she says.

She reflects on the cultural bonds she has made with the students in the classroom as they discussed a Mexican dish, *chilaquiles*, or realized that they share the same ethnicity: "There's just a different kind of connection that you can make with them from being bilingual."

Another recipient of the Residency Implementation grant is Sutter



Sutter Munizich

Munizich who is also focusing on special education.

Munizich, who was born and raised in Santa Barbara, had his first experience working with special needs students when he was in the sixth grade. For six years, he participated in Peer Buddies, a summer camp where student volunteers are paired with special needs children to help them with social and communication skills. "I just kind of fell in love with special education," he recalls.

As his mother and grandfather were both educators, Munizich says he always felt surrounded by positive examples of teachers. However, it wasn't until he worked as a paraeducator at Dos Pueblos High School that he realized teaching would be his career path as well.

Munizich admits that despite his passion for special education, he had concerns about the possibility of becoming "burned out" by the lower salaries and long hours that teachers-in-training can experience.

The Residency Implementation grant has provided "an immense feeling of financial relief," Munizich says, which allows him to live in the community he serves and to focus on bonding with his special education students at Aliso Elementary: "Overall, it makes the students' experiences that much better."

"These kids are so important to me, and I'm trying to make their future and education as good as possible," he adds. "I take great pride in that."

## Write, Rewrite, Repeat

South Coast Writing Project Celebrates Composition

BY JOYCE CHI '25

**T**he best teacher of a teacher is another teacher. That emphasis on teachers has guided the South Coast Writing Project (SCWriP) through 45 years of education, collaboration, and dedication to its mission of improving how writing is taught.

Established at UC Santa Barbara in 1979 by Sheridan Blau, Carol Dixon, Jack Phreaner, and Stephen Marcus, SCWriP began as an affiliated site of UC Berkeley's Bay Area Writing Project which was founded five years earlier.

"The Writing Project was a learning community of people who were learning just to improve their own teaching," Blau, professor emeritus in the Department of Education at Gevirtz School, explains. "They didn't get any extra pay for it. They didn't get any rewards for it. There was nothing in it for them except their own professional interest in teaching and caring about kids. That was what made the Writing Project different."

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From the very beginning, SCWriP emphasized the importance of teachers, as opposed to university researchers, to improve how writing is taught. Blau, Dixon, and Marcus were all affiliated with UCSB, but Phreaner was a beloved English teacher at San Marcos High School in Santa Barbara.

The founders of the Writing Projects at Berkeley and Santa Barbara were inspired by two seminal books by James Moffett: “Teaching the Universe of Discourse” and “Student-Centered Language Arts, K-12,” both published in 1968. Moffett believed that teaching composition should be grounded in deep thinking and reflection.

“[Moffett] was a genius beyond any other. His writing predicted everything that would happen for the next 50 years in composition,” Blau says. “It was a whole new way to think about language.”

Dixon, Gevirtz School senior lecturer with security of employment emeritus, brought to SCWriP her experience at UCSB and the University of Delaware directing reading clinics, which she says were much more interdisciplinary than the name suggests: “I’ve always believed that you don’t teach these things in isolation – that reading, writing, and speaking are all interwoven.”

**“Writing is not the kind of activity that one masters. There’s always something new to learn.”**

**~ TIM DEWAR**

SCWriP’s flagship program is the annual four-week-long Invitational Summer Institute in Composition and Critical Literacy, which brings together Central California teachers of different disciplines and grade levels to focus on composition-related research, methods and most importantly, experiences.

The first Summer Institute was held in 1979 with about 25 teachers in attendance. Most of them had over 10 years of teaching experience but were unfamiliar with the new ideas appearing in composition studies. “It was all experimental. It was all new for us and terrifically exciting,” Blau recalls.

Though nearly fifty years have passed since that first Summer Institute, it maintains the same ideals of “teaching writing as a process,” Blau says. Before coming to the program, participants are asked to prepare by writing about anything they wish for at least 10 minutes every day for 30 days. When they arrive at the Summer Institute, the first 30 minutes of each day are reserved for writing, which is then shared with groups to receive feedback.

That regular practice is important, says Tim Dewar, teaching professor in the Department of Education and Director of SCWriP. “Writing is not the kind of activity that one masters. There’s always something new to learn,” he explains.

At the end of the Summer Institute, participants examine these writings to witness their growth in content, technique, and experimentation. “We all participate as if we’re students,” Dewar notes, “we unpack what worked, what didn’t, and what modifications we



**Tim Dewar**

might make for our own teaching.”

It’s not just educators who are learning from the Writing Project. SCWriP has also hosted the Young Writers Camp since the summer of 1993 when several Writing Project teachers sought to work directly with

students. Young Writers Camp serves students, usually in 4th to 6th grade, who are passionate about writing. The camp also offers an opportunity for Summer Institute teachers to try out new techniques they’ve learned and to take on leadership roles.

Over the years, SCWriP has increased its involvement in research projects. One such example is the Santa Barbara Classroom Discourse Group (SBCDG), which was spearheaded by Dixon and Judith Green, a distinguished professor emeritus in the Department of Education. The SBCDG went to schools to study how classrooms fostered curiosity and inquiry, and the research it conducted has since been presented at conferences all over the world, expanding SCWriP to a global scale.

SCWriP participants also have branched out into other fields. Dewar says attendees are no longer just school teachers but in recent years have expanded to include poets, museum educators, dance instructors, and all who can reach various audiences beyond the classroom.

With so many lives touched and changed, the South Coast Writing Project remains committed to 50 more years of illuminating the education landscape to empower teachers, serve students, and cultivate writers who are unafraid to make sense of the world around them.