



Final Report

2017 to 2024

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Executive Summary

Established in 2017 with a \$3.4 million gift from the George & Betsy Sherman Family Foundation, the Sherman Center for Early Learning in Urban Communities (Sherman Center) was designed and operated for 7.5 academic years. With \$500,000 funding an endowed professorship and \$2.9 million allocated to operations, the center aimed to empower schools, families, and communities in Baltimore to prepare young children for lifelong success. The Sherman Center focused on multidisciplinary research, leadership development, and partnerships to advance early childhood education in urban settings.

The Sherman Center was led by two Directors during its tenure—Drs. Mavis Sanders (2017–2021) and Jennifer Mata-McMahon (2021–2024)—and supported by an Assistant Director, program staff, faculty researchers, graduate assistants, and student workers. Governance was provided by a Steering Committee (SC) and a Campus Advisory Committee (CAC), which played critical roles in program development, implementation, and evaluation.

The Sherman Center’s vision and mission were guided by a Theory of Change (TOC) framework emphasizing three focus areas:

1. **Partnerships** for program design and implementation.
2. **Multidisciplinary research** to advance the early childhood field.
3. **Professional and leadership development** for educators and administrators.

Over its operation, the Sherman Center collaborated with five Baltimore City Public Schools, two Judy Centers, a public library, and three UMBC programs to deliver seven innovative projects. These initiatives supported pre-service and in-service educators, families, and leaders, all informed by the latest research and best practices.

Central to its mission, the Sherman Center produced and shared new knowledge in early childhood education through faculty awards, research conferences, and scholarships for undergraduates pursuing early literacy.

Starting in 2022, the Sherman Center conducted evaluations of its key programs, including the Diverse Books Project (DBP), Families, Libraries, and Early Literacy Program (ELP), and Teacher Summer Institute (TSI). External evaluators also assessed the Maryland Early Childhood Leadership Program (MECLP) and the Literacy Fellows Program (LFP). Evaluation findings on the Sherman Center’s website demonstrate significant program impacts and guide future best practices.

Through strategic partnerships, impactful programs, and a commitment to advancing the field of early childhood education, the Sherman Center has made a lasting contribution to Baltimore City’s educational landscape.

Sherman Center Overview

History

The Sherman Center for Early Learning in Urban Communities (Sherman Center) was established in the fall of 2017 with a generous gift to UMBC of \$3.4 million from the George & Betsy Sherman Family Foundation. The gift was to be distributed over 5 years. Five hundred thousand dollars were allocated to fund an endowed professorship of early childhood education and \$2.9 million for the operations of the Sherman Center. This funding allowed the Sherman Center to operate through the fall of 2024 for 7.5 academic years. With the vision of empowering schools, families, and communities to prepare Baltimore's children for lifelong success, the Sherman Center's mission centered on furthering multidisciplinary research, professional and leadership development, and partnerships with schools, families, and communities to assist in building a strong foundation for learning for young children in Baltimore City while developing best practices early childhood education for urban settings.

Governance and Committees

The Sherman Center was led by a Director and governed by a Steering Committee (SC) comprised of the Provost, the Vice President of the Office of Institutional Advancement (OIA), and the Dean of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences (CAHSS). It also convened a Campus Advisory Committee (CAC), which included faculty and staff across different departments and support offices at UMBC. The SC met once a semester with the Director, and the CAC met monthly with the entire Sherman Center staff and was instrumental in program development, implementation, and evaluation over the years of operation. Notable CAC members from its inception were Drs. Linda Baker (Psychology), Jeff Leips (Biology), Michele Stites (Education), Chris Curran (Public Policy), James Bembry (Social Work), Anita Komlodi (Information Systems), and Ms. Rehana Shafi (Sherman Scholars Program), and Marie Lilly (Community Engagement).

Personnel

The Sherman Center hired two Directors, Drs. Mavis Sanders (2017-2021) and Jennifer Mata-McMahon (2021-2024); an Assistant Director, Dr. Shana Rochester (2020-2022); a Program Coordinator, Melissa Bailey (2018-2022); a Program Director for MECLP, Liran Laor (2021-2022); an Advisory Chair for MECLP, Louise Corwin (2018-2023); two joint-position Faculty Researchers, Drs. Jennifer Mata-McMahon (2018-2021, Associate Professor, Education) and Karrie Godwin (2020-2023, Assistant Professor, Psychology); thirteen graduate assistants; and seven student workers. Personnel was fully funded through the Sherman Center's budget, except for some MECLP personnel supported through external grants.

Theory of Change

With the support of the CAC, the Sherman Center developed its vision, mission, and Theory of Change (TOC), providing the organizational structure and guidance for its growth and sustainability. The TOC comprised three main areas of focus, identified by color: partnerships

through which programs were designed and implemented (gray), multidisciplinary research and scholarship supporting the early childhood field (red), and professional and leadership development (yellow). The findings in this report are organized and presented following the TOC framework, identifying initiatives under each of the three main areas by color.

Partnerships and Programming

Over the years, the Sherman Center partnered with 5 Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPS), 2 Judy Centers, 1 Public Library, and 3 UMBC centers and programs to develop and implement programming. The Sherman Center developed and implemented seven programs with these partners to serve early childhood in-service and pre-service educators, BCPS students, Judy Center families, and early childhood education leaders and administrators. Current research, policies, and practices informed all programs.

Research and Knowledge Dissemination

Producing and disseminating new knowledge in the early childhood education field was at the core of the Sherman Center's mission. Research goals were met through research awards for faculty and doctoral students, research faculty hires, and the Sherman Center Research Conference. The Sherman Center also managed and awarded a scholarship to support undergraduate students interested in studying and advancing work in early literacy. The funding for this scholarship award stemmed from the donation of two UMBC alumni, Donna Helm ('70) and Louise Goodrich Izat ('70).

Program Evaluation

In the fall of 2022, Sherman Center faculty researchers and members of the CAC began a program evaluation for three of the leading programs: the Diverse Books Project (DBP), the Families, Libraries, and Early Literacy Program (ELP), and the Teacher Summer Institute (TSI). The Literacy Fellows Program (LFP) had been evaluated in 2021 by Drs. Claudia Galindo and Susan Sonnenschein. The Maryland Early Childhood Leadership Program (MECLP) had been evaluated in 2022 by an external evaluation consultancy firm. The summary results of the evaluations and the impact and outcomes per program are included in this report in each program's section. The complete evaluation reports can be found on the Sherman Center [website](#).

Sherman Center Theory of Change

The Sherman Center for Early Learning in Urban Communities seeks to build a strong foundation for lifelong learning and academic success by connecting theory, evidence, and practice.

PARTNERSHIPS.

Collaborating to expand resources and opportunities for young learners, birth to eight.

Activities: Diverse Books Project; Families, Libraries, and Early Literacy Project; Literacy Fellows Program; Breathe2Think

MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP.

Producing and disseminating new knowledge on early childhood education policies and practices.

Activities: Faculty Recruitment, Faculty Research Award, Doctoral Student Research Award, Sherman Center Research Conference, Childhood Literacy Scholarship



PROFESSIONAL AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT.

Building professional knowledge and leadership in early childhood to promote transformational change.

Activities: Teacher Summer Institute, Maryland Early Childhood Leadership Program



**SHERMAN
CENTER**

for Early Learning
in Urban Communities

PARTNERSHIPS

The Sherman Center executed its mission by implementing initiatives through research-practice partnerships with five Baltimore City partner schools. These partnerships constituted the TOC first area of focus, providing professional learning opportunities for early childhood education stakeholders who worked closely with young students, such as pre-service teachers, in-service teachers, and families. The following pages provide an overview of four Sherman Center partnership initiatives: the **Diverse Books Project (DBP)**; the **Families, Libraries, and Early Literacy Program (ELP)**; the **Literacy Fellows Program (LFP)**; and **Breathe2Think (B2T)**. The table below summarizes the delivered programs, the collaborating partners, and the outreach accomplished per year of operation.

Year	Programs	Partners	Outreach*
2018	DBP	2 schools (Curtis Bay and Lakeland)	50 Teachers 1250 Students
2019	DBP ELP LFP	4 Schools (Bay Brook, Curtis Bay, Lakeland and Maree G. Farring) 2 Judy Centers (Curtis Bay and Lakeland) 1 Library (Enoch Pratt Free Library) 1 UMBC Center (The Shriver Center)	53 Teachers 1325 Students 101 Families
2020	DBP ELP LFP	5 Schools (Arundel, Bay Brook, Curtis Bay, Lakeland and Maree G. Farring) 2 Judy Centers (Curtis Bay and Lakeland) 1 Library (Enoch Pratt Free Library) 1 UMBC Center (The Shriver Center)	39 Teachers 975 Students 36 Families
2021	DBP ELP LFP B2T	5 Schools (Arundel, Bay Brook, Curtis Bay, Lakeland and Maree G. Farring) 2 Judy Centers (Curtis Bay and Lakeland) 1 Library (Enoch Pratt Free Library) 1 UMBC Center (The Shriver Center) 2 UMBC Programs (Sherman Scholars Program and Early Childhood Education Program)	50 Teachers 1250 Students 80 Families
2022	DBP ELP LFP	5 Schools (Arundel, Bay Brook, Curtis Bay, Lakeland and Maree G. Farring) 2 Judy Centers (Curtis Bay and Lakeland) 1 Library (Enoch Pratt Free Library) 1 UMBC Center (The Shriver Center)	53 Teachers 1325 Students 44 Families
2023	DBP	5 Schools (Arundel, Bay Brook, Curtis Bay, Lakeland and Maree G. Farring) 1 Community Organization (WEE Nation Radio)	56 Teachers 1400 Students
2024	DBP	5 Schools (Arundel, Bay Brook, Curtis Bay, Lakeland and Maree G. Farring)	53 Teachers 1325 Students
Total	4 Programs	12 Partners	354 Teachers 8850 Students 261 Families

*Teacher numbers were aggregated from the DBP and LFP participants.
Student numbers were estimated per average class size of 25 students per class.
Family numbers were aggregated from Lakeland and Curtis Bay participants.

DIVERSE BOOKS PROJECT (DBP)

In response to teachers’ expressed need for culturally diverse books and a growing recognition of the importance of diverse children’s literature for young readers, the Sherman Center launched its Diverse Books Project (DBP) in April 2018. Drs. Nancy Shelton and Kindel Nash, UMBC experts in the field of children’s literature, curated a selection of over 60 books for the project in 2018. This collection was augmented over the years, based on teacher request and further expert curated selections. In 2024 the collection had 128 titles including a multitude of diverse topics, languages, characters, illustrations, and authors.

Each grading period, early childhood educators from the Sherman Center’s partner schools, had the opportunity to review 15 of these books, initially located in a designated space in their schools (the “Book Nook”) and later, online, through video read-aloud and book reviews, and request one to six copies of two books for their classroom libraries.

The goal of the project was to ensure that early childhood educators had access to high quality diverse children’s books, and information about their effective use, and expanding the mandated curriculum. Partner schools for the DBP included Arundel Elementary School, Bay Brook Elementary/Middle School, Curtis Bay Elementary School, Lakeland Elementary/Middle School, and Maree G. Farring Elementary/Middle School.

In 2023, the Sherman Center entered a partnership with WEE Nation Radio to provide additional resources for teachers participating in the DBP. This collaboration produced several children’s book author interviews and read-alouds that were aired weekly on WEE Nation Radio and then archived on their Podcast and YouTube channel for teachers to continue to use and share with students and their families.

The table below summarizes the number of partner schools, books distributed, participating teachers, teacher feedback, and program cost per year of operation.

Year	Partners	Books Distributed	Teachers / Educators participants	Samples of Teacher Feedback	Cost*
2018	2	257	37	<p>“My class has loved all the books we’ve read. Thank you!” – <i>Sarah English, 1st grade teacher, Lakeland Elementary/Middle School</i></p> <p>“I’m so excited to be growing my bilingual library!” – <i>Emma Safarty, 1st grade teacher, Lakeland Elementary /MiddleSchool</i></p> <p>“I’m so excited to use these books.” – <i>Sarah Lakarosky, 2nd grade teacher, Lakeland Elementary /Middle School</i></p>	\$4,000.00
2019	4	250	43	<p>“Thank you for providing this resource.” – <i>Lisa Rosser, Pre-K teacher, Maree G. Farring Elementary/Middle School</i></p> <p>“I plan to incorporate this into module 4 grade 3 to make connections between emotions,</p>	\$6,500.00

				<p>inspiration and art.” – <i>Rachel Zuckerman, 4th grade teacher, Maree G. Farring Elementary/Middle School</i></p>	
2020	5	127	29	<p>“I selected [Separate is Never Equal (2014) by Duncan Tonatiuh and My Princess Boy (2010) by Cheryl Kilodavis] because they touch upon topics that are relevant in today’s classroom. Both of the texts that I chose are about social issues that my students should learn about.” – <i>Megan Chester, Special Educator, Lakeland Elementary/Middle School</i></p> <p>“I selected [I am Every Good Thing (2020) by Derrick Barnes and You Matter (2020) by Christian Robinson] to help our students understand how important they are and that they do matter. I want to continue working on [socioemotional learning] components for our students who are struggling.” – <i>Melinda Moody, Director of Early Childhood Education, Maree G. Farring Elementary/Middle School</i></p>	\$4,000.00
2021	5	192	36	<p>“I [choose Just Ask! Be Different, Be Brave, Be You (2019) by Sonia Sotomayor and Rafael Lopez and You Matter (2020) by Christian Robinson] to diversify my class library and read aloud options [with books] that may not be in the curriculum.” – <i>Shontelle Capers, Kindergarten Teacher, Arundel Elementary School</i></p> <p>“I have a lot of students in my class [whose] parent were born elsewhere and some of them may have been born elsewhere also, [A Different Pond (2017) by Bao Phi and The Thing About Bees: A Love of Bees (2019) by Shabazz Larkin] will be good for them to relate to.” – <i>Jennifer Green, Prekindergarten Teacher, Bay Brook Elementary School</i></p> <p>“Benny Doesn’t Like to Be Hugged (2017) by Zetta Elliott will help [my students] understand that it’s okay to be different and how to be friends with someone for who they are.” – <i>Anu Grover, Kindergarten Teacher, Curtis Bay Elementary School</i></p>	\$6,500.00

2022	5	644	45	<p>“These books [Just in Case: A Trickster Tale and Spanish Alphabet Book by Yuyi Morales (2008) and What Will You Be? by Yamile Saied Méndez and Kate Alizadeh (2021)] are reflective of my student backgrounds. I will use these stories to learn more about my students and help them set goals for themselves and advocate for their needs.” – <i>Megan Chester, Special Education Teacher, Lakeland Elementary/Middle School</i></p> <p>“The first one [Rene has Two Last Names by René Colato Laínez and Fabiola Graullera Ramírez (2009)] features Latino characters and cultural issues that my students could relate to; the second one [I Am Every Good Thing by Derrick Barnes (2020)] speaks to students' being proud of who they are.” – <i>Mechele Bandler, ESOL Teacher, Bay Brook Elementary School</i></p>	\$8,500.00
2023	5	912	56	<p>“I have ESOL students in my class and love to have books for them that are about them and [that we can] share with their families.” – <i>Juanita Eustace, 1st grade teacher, Arundel Elementary School</i></p> <p>“I selected these books because they are relevant for the student population I teach. These books will encourage and inspire my young students.” – <i>Kathryn Higgins, Prekindergarten teacher, Maree G. Farring Elementary/Middle School</i></p>	\$20,000**
2024	5	537	53	<p>“These books are beautiful and I feel my students will relate to the text and pictures.” – <i>Kathryn Higgins, Prekindergarten teacher, Maree G. Farring Elementary/Middle School</i></p> <p>“I will use this book during our morning meeting SEL. This book will help them and encourage them to make good choices in school and do their best.” – <i>Clarissa Evangelista, Kindergarten teacher, Bay Brook Elementary School</i></p> <p>“The Diverse Books Project is very helpful with supporting scholars about diversity.” – <i>Colethia Williams, Kindergarten teacher, Arundel Elementary School</i></p>	\$6,500.00
Total	5	2,919	299		\$56,000.00

*Cost was estimated based on the budget and number of books distributed per year.

**The increase of cost in 2023 is due to the partnership with WEE Nation Radio.

Evaluation of the DBP:

The Diverse Books Project provided 299 teachers in urban schools with critical resources to help create more inclusive classrooms. The program distributed over 2,900 copies of books to educators, substantively enhancing the diversity of classroom libraries. The Diverse Books Project was evaluated through archival analysis and a retrospective study. These two studies provide information about the factors that contributed to teachers' book title selections (Study 1 & 2), their intended and actual use of the provided books (Study 1 & 2), and teachers' retrospective evaluation of the program's impact (Study 2). The findings from these studies indicate that the Diverse Books Project was perceived as a beneficial program for both teachers and students. The data did not reveal any significant areas of concern. Nevertheless, potential recommendations for program revisions are provided, as program implementation is an iterative process.

Research Report 5. (2024). [Evaluation of the Sherman Center Diverse Books Project](#) by [Dr. Karrie Godwin](#), [Praveen Kumaraveln](#), [Ana Katrina Aquino](#), [Dr. Linda Baker](#), and [Dr. Jennifer Mata-McMahon](#)

FAMILIES, LIBRARIES, AND EARLY LITERACY PROGRAM (ELP)

The Families, Libraries, and Early Literacy Program (ELP) was designed in 2019 in partnership with the Curtis Bay Elementary School Judy Center, the Lakeland Elementary/Middle School Judy Center, and the Enoch Pratt Free Library in response to a need to further the supports offered to families with children birth to 3 years, in preparing their children for kindergarten.

ELP introduced Judy Centers' parents and caretakers of young children to the excellent services and resources available through the Enoch Pratt Free Library system and facilitated their regular use of the system to promote their children's language and literacy development. In addition to encouraging families' use of the library to create literacy-rich home environments, the Sherman Center also provided families with books from its Diverse Books Collection to enhance their home libraries.

Staff at the Sherman Center, Lakeland and Curtis Bay Judy Centers, and the Brooklyn Branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library designed and implemented gatherings with families both in person and virtually at school and community-based locations to share books and information, and model activities to promote early literacy and kindergarten readiness, while also fostering young children's love of reading and family literacy engagement at home. Given the linguistic diversity of the families, the gatherings were designed and delivered in both English and Spanish.

The table below summarizes the number of events, families reached, books distributed, focus themes, kindergarten readiness as perceived by the parents, and program cost per year of operation.

Year	Total Events	Families Reached	Books Distributed	Theme(s)*	Perceived Kindergarten Readiness**	Cost***
2019	8	101	178	Storytelling Learning Math and Science Kindergarten Readiness and Cooking	N/A	\$12,000.00
2020	4	36	113	Bath Time and Bedtime Exploring the Outdoors	4.5	\$8,000.00
2021	10	80	222	Promoting Socioemotional Development Using the Five Senses Learning about Animals Mindfulness and Emotional Wellness, Kindergarten Readiness in the Kitchen	4.5	\$14,000.00
2022	4	44	96	Storytelling through Art Learning about Animals	4.33	\$8,000.00
Total	26	261	609		4.44	\$42,000.00

*Every year, new themes were added to the recurring rotation in the curriculum.

**Average score was derived from returning families' responses on the extent to which participating in ELP helped them to understand kindergarten readiness on a 5-point scale (where higher scores indicate greater helpfulness). ELP began in 2019. Thus, no returning families were surveyed this year. ELP was paused in the fall of 2022.

***Cost estimates include books, materials, and catering.

In exit surveys, families shared:

“Es maravillo que lo hagan porque así fomentan el hábito de la lectura gracias!!”
(It’s marvelous that you are doing this because this way, the habit of reading is fostered!)
(ELP Caregiver, 2019)

“Hermoso programa estoy muy feliz ahora. Comprendo más y mis niños están más preparados para el kindergarten. Gracias a todos los que hacen posible este evento.”
(Beautiful program. I am very happy now. I have a better understanding, and my children are better prepared for kindergarten. Thank you to all that make this event possible.) (ELP Caregiver, 2021)

“Soy nueva en el programa y estoy empezando aprender la importancia de leer libros.”
(I am new to the program and am starting to learn about the importance of reading books.)
(ELP Caregiver, 2022)

Evaluation of the ELP:

The results from the archival study analysis indicate that families regularly participated in ELP, with many returning to attend multiple sessions/years of the program. Participating families generally prioritized reading and reported regularly reading to their children despite reporting more limited use of their local library. Families also indicated that they regularly used the books and materials provided by ELP. Although more than half of the participants reported that their children’s reading habits had increased after participating in ELP, 30% reported their reading habits were unchanged. Given the small sample size, these data should be interpreted cautiously. In future research it will be important to obtain more objective measures of families’ reading habits and determine whether some families may benefit from additional support or resources beyond what was provided in ELP. A key goal of this initiative was to promote kindergarten readiness. On average, families tended to endorse that the program was helpful in supporting their understanding of kindergarten readiness.

Research Report 6. (2025). Evaluation of the Sherman Center Families, Libraries, and Early Literacy Program by [Dr. Karrie Godwin](#), Praveen Kumaraveln, Ana Katrina Aquino, [Dr. Linda Baker](#), and [Dr. Jennifer Mata-McMahon](#)

LITERACY FELLOWS PROGRAM (LFP)

The Sherman Center and The Shriver Center –UMBC’s service-learning and community engagement center– developed the Literacy Fellows Program (LFP) in 2018 to support English Language Arts (ELA) in prekindergarten through Grade 2 classrooms. Through this program, UMBC undergraduate fellows and volunteers engaged in weekly service at two Sherman Center partner schools: Bay Brook Elementary/Middle School and Curtis Bay Elementary School. In addition to engaging in weekly service, Literacy Fellows received a stipend and took on leadership roles in the program by:

1. recruiting and managing classroom volunteers for their host school,
2. enrolling in a practicum course taught by The Shriver Center to deepen their understanding of community assets and needs and
3. critically reflecting on their experience through end-of-semester reports.

The Sherman Center Research Faculty also facilitated professional development workshops to enhance Literacy Fellows’ literacy-specific knowledge each semester. Participating BCPS teachers and school liaisons received a stipend, and each teacher received a \$300.00 budget for literacy classroom materials. The Shriver Center provided transportation through UMBC vans for the Literacy Fellows and volunteers.

The table below summarizes the LFP’s services, identifying the number of participating fellows and volunteers, classrooms, hours of service, and program cost per year of operation.

Year	Fellows / Volunteers	Total Hours	Classrooms Served	Cost*
2018	14	284	13	\$11,000.00
2019	16	525	10	\$13,000.00
2020	20	241	10	\$13,000.00
2021	20	417	14	\$13,000.00
2022	9	204	8	\$10,000.00
Total	79	1,671	55	\$60,000.00

*Cost estimates include stipends for school liaisons, teachers, and fellows, as well as materials, T-shirts, and professional development workshop expenses.

When reflecting on their experience, the Literacy Fellows shared:

“Throughout the program, we had the chance to provide assistance to teachers in their classrooms and guide children through reading activities. The team normally succeeded in providing assistance and guidance to students when asked and successfully formed relationships with the students that made the experience worthwhile.” (*Bay Brook Literacy Fellows, 2018*)

“I think we all formed really close relationships with the students where they felt comfortable enough to work with us. Many students improved in the areas of reading comprehension and pronunciation working in small groups with us.” (*Curtis Bay Literacy Fellows, 2018*)

“The volunteers who worked with students and teachers at Bay Brook EMS this semester were engaged, flexible, and determined. They demonstrated unique traits not seen from past volunteers due to the experience being entirely virtual, this in itself was a major success. The volunteers enjoyed working with the students at Bay Brook; they participated in creating a positive learning environment as they worked hard to gauge and strengthen the various levels of reading and writing among students. Many of the tutors fulfilled leadership roles, as they were tasked with communicating with their assigned teacher regularly.” (*Literacy Fellow, Nihira Mugamba, 2020*)

“The key success experienced this semester was the involvement of the volunteers throughout the virtual environment. [...] Some of the key successes that were observed was the communication between the volunteers and the teachers. The first-grade classroom teachers were adamant at keeping the volunteers in the loop and notifying them of any changes such as school cancellations, and schedule changes. The students’ participation, and the teachers’ preparation, made the volunteers’ experience seamless.” (*Literacy Fellow, Nihira Mugamba, 2021*)

Teachers and principals were enthusiastic supporters of the program. One teacher stated:

“My students and I enjoyed having [the Literacy Fellow] in our room. She was very helpful and she offered her support when needed. My students really liked her and so did I.” (*Marlene Harris, Kindergarten Teacher, 2018*)

Evaluation of the LFP:

Teachers and fellows/volunteers were highly positive about the LFP. Both groups identified similar major strengths and weaknesses of the program. On the positive side, the fellows/volunteers enjoyed working with students on literacy tasks. Their assistance with the students allowed the teachers to give much-needed individualized attention to more students than when they were not there. Fellows/Volunteers also helped manage behavioral issues, formed meaningful relationships with the students with whom they worked, and served as role models for the students. In addition, some fellows/volunteers reported that working in urban schools increased their awareness of issues faced by those working in such schools as well as by the families whose children attend these schools.

The fellows/volunteers described the experience as an opportunity to give back to their community, and they felt proud because of their commitment to urban education. Despite teachers and fellows/volunteers being highly positive about the program, both groups reported there were significant weaknesses with the program. The teachers did not have time to train the fellows/volunteers. This was particularly critical because these fellows/volunteers were not teachers in training, and most did not have an educational background in teaching. The professional

development workshops were incorporated in response to this feedback. In addition, both groups thought that the amount of time fellows/volunteers spent in the classroom (two days, 90 minutes per day) was not sufficient. Reliability of transportation to and from the schools was also an issue. First and second graders in the LFP also were favorable about the program. They reported enjoying working with the fellows/volunteers and found it useful.

Research Report 4. (2023). [Evaluation of the Literacy Fellows Program and Stakeholders at Bay Brook and Curtis Bay Elementary Schools](#) by [Dr. Susan Sonnenschein](#) and [Dr. Claudia Galindo](#) ([appendices attached](#))

BREATHE 2 THINK (B2T)



In alignment with Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPS) inclusion of wholeness in their 2021–22 budget and in recognition of the need for spiritual and mental health support as teachers and students returned to in-person learning, the Sherman Center proposed the Breathe2Think (B2T) program in fall 2021. The main goal of B2T was to support and nurture the spirit of BCPS children and their pre-service and in-service teachers as they developed mindfulness to be better prepared for teaching and learning.

B2T, a Sherman Center programmatic initiative in collaboration with the Sherman STEM Teacher Scholars Program, specifically worked with scholars seeking certification in early childhood education. Fall 2021 saw the program's first iteration with a few Sherman Scholars (pre-service teachers) who designed and implemented a Mindfulness Project with the students in their internship site. The scholars received a stipend and a budget to purchase materials to implement their project. Materials used included children's books, fidgets, beany toys, breathing balls, diffusers and oil essences, music, videos, and glitter jars. The results were 100% positive for the pre-service teachers and the children they worked with. The participating scholars reported seeing changes in the children's behavior between weeks two and three of the six-week intervention project and observed impacts on the children's academic outcomes. The stories of specific children were compelling and showed how much a two to five-minute meditation practice can do for children ages three to six.

This program operated for one semester with a budget of \$5,000.00, including a stipend for participants, catering, materials, and books.

Feedback from scholars included:

Related to benefits received from practicing meditation:

“Sleep throughout the night without waking up, wake up less tired, less headaches, less stressed, made time to reflect on my thoughts/feelings, felt lighter.” (*B2T Participant, P1*)

“Less stressed. Lower anxiety levels. Connection to the world. Finding purpose.” (*B2T Participant, P2*)

Related to the Mindfulness Project benefits for students:

“It helped the students connect to themselves and focus on that moment in time.” (*B2T Participant, P2*)

PROFESSIONAL AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The second component of the Sherman Center's TOC was professional and leadership development, a cornerstone of expanding educators' knowledge and skills to implement effective work with young learners. The Sherman Center developed two main initiatives, **The Teacher Summer Institute (TSI)** and the **Maryland Early Childhood Leadership Program (MECLP)**, to build the capacity of early childhood educators and leaders to effect change. A third program was developed and implemented in 2020, the **Principal Institute Program (PIP)**, to support school administrators and those preparing to lead schools. The PIP program ran for only one year.

TEACHER SUMMER INSTITUTE (TSI)

Sherman Center partner schools have significant English Learner (EL) populations. To help build teachers' capacity to better serve these and all students, the Sherman Center Teacher Summer Institute (TSI) was developed in 2018 with a professional development focus for teachers working with young ELs. Twenty early childhood educators from Lakeland and Maree G. Farring participated in the first iteration of the TSI. A four-day institute held at UMBC's Albin O. Kuhn Library. Kristina Robertson and Amy Faust Fraser, English language educators and outreach specialists for WIDA, provided professional development and individual teacher consultations.

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Pamela Brillante, *Supporting Young Children with Disabilities in the Classroom*

Professional Development Facilitators: Kristina Robertson and Amy Faust Fraser, *Planning for Language-based Lessons with English Learners in Mind*

In 2019, the TSI held its second iteration in person on campus. Dr. Jennifer Mata-McMahon provided a two-day professional development workshop for 35 teachers from four of our partner schools, facilitating translanguaging for ELs in early childhood classrooms. The TSI was a four-day event that included a children's book author as the keynote speaker, research presentations, and makers day sessions for resources and curriculum development.

Keynote Speaker: Derrick Barnes (Author of *The King of Kindergarten* and *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut*), *The Relevance of Diverse Books for Early Learners*

Professional Development Facilitator: Dr. Jennifer Mata-McMahon, *Translanguaging in the Early Childhood Classroom*

In response to COVID-19 restrictions, the TSI was held virtually in the summer of 2020. Fifty-one early childhood teachers at our five partner schools and UMBC faculty, staff, and guests attended the four-day event focused on promoting young children's socioemotional development. The two-day professional development workshop was facilitated by Patricia Jennings with a focus on compassionate teaching in trauma-sensitive classrooms.

Keynote Speaker: Sandra Evers-Manly (Author of *Raised Up by Mrs. Manly & Her L's*), *Promoting Young Children's Socioemotional Development through Diverse Books*

Professional Development Facilitator: Dr. Patricia Jennings, *Trauma-Sensitive Classrooms and Children's Socioemotional Development*

In 2021, the Sherman Center hosted a hybrid TSI for 40 early childhood educators from our five partner schools, UMBC faculty, staff, and guests. Dr. Michele Stites delivered the professional development workshop on differentiated instruction and inclusive education.

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Zetta Elliott (Award-winning author of *Benny Doesn't Like to Be Hugged* & *The Boy in the Bubble*), *Beyond Good Intentions: Crafting Inclusive Picture Books for Young Readers*

Professional Development Facilitator: Dr. Michele Stites, *Inclusive Early Childhood Education and Differentiated Instruction*

In 2022, the Sherman Center resumed offering the TSI in person, gathering 13 educators from our five partner schools, UMBC faculty, staff, and guests at the UMBC Albin O. Kuhn Library. The professional development workshop was facilitated by Dr. Angelique Jessup, focusing on working with families of diverse children.

Keynote Speaker: René Colato Lainez (Author of *René has Two Last Names*), *Reading and Teaching Using Picture Books that Reflect the Identity and Culture of Our Students*
 Professional Development Facilitator: Dr. Angelique Jessup, *Family Engagement in Your Classroom: Building Trust, Activating Equity, and Fostering Collaborative Relationships*

Aside from the professional development workshop, keynote speaker address, and research presentations, the TSI offered teachers a stipend for participation, requested classroom materials, photocopying services, and makers day sessions to develop resources and lesson plans in preparation for the upcoming school year. The TSI was paused in AY 2022-2023.

The table below summarizes the TSI’s modality, number of participating teachers, institute theme, and program cost per year of operation.

Year	Modality	Teachers / Educators involved	Themes	Cost*
2018	In-person	20	Planning for Language-based Lessons with English Learners in Mind	\$62,000.00
2019	In-person	35	Translanguaging in the Early Childhood Classroom	\$93,000.00
2020	Virtual	51	The Trauma Sensitive Classroom: Building Resilience with Compassionate Teaching	\$90,000.00
2021	Hybrid	40	Inclusive early childhood education and differentiated instruction.	\$100,000.00
2022	In-person	13	Promoting collaborations with families of diverse children to support learning.	\$ 30,000.00
Total		159		\$375,000.00

*Cost includes keynote speaker and workshop facilitator expenses, materials, teacher stipends, event setup, and catering.

In exit surveys, participants shared:

“This was one of the best professional developments I have ever received. Being in an environment with ample materials, lunch, parking, and a stipend made me feel valued in my profession. I truly believe it elevated me in my practice this week. The timing of the PD was excellent as well, the end of the summer is time when I feel refreshed and inspired to execute new ideas.”

“I so appreciate the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues from my school as well as Lakeland. I got new ideas to use this year. I am so thrilled to have the time and available materials to create instructional materials for the upcoming year.”

“Thank you so much!!! I enjoyed the presentations so much. I think the presenters were extremely knowledgeable in current student-based strategies and it was really helpful. I really enjoyed all the time that I had to collaborate with my teammates and use the supplies provided by the Shermans and UMBC”

“The Sherman Center always values our time, supports us with so many amazing resources, and truly reenergizes me for the upcoming school year!”

“I really enjoyed the breakout groups with my school and being able to bounce ideas off each other.”

“I really enjoyed the sessions with Patricia. I felt that I learned a lot about how trauma works and how we as teachers can best respond and support students.”

“I loved the topic and the speaker, and I loved how we had breaks in order to help us with the virtual aspect of this year’s summer institute. Also the \$300 worth of supplies-amazing!!!”

“I feel that [the TSI] has helped me to think about the next year in a positive light.”

“The small group tasks and Jamboards were an engaging way to do the activities. I always leave feeling inspired and ready to put these strategies into action.”

“Zetta [Elliott]'s talk on the book industry and its effect on the production of diverse books was very eye opening.”

“. . . exceptional speakers who used adult learning strategies; the hands-on approach to walking away with a product (lesson plans, ideas, discussions, etc.); . . .and of course the respect and appreciation that you show in the way you approach us, the empathy for the challenges, the humor, and the amazing outpouring of materials I loved the topic of family engagement and the presenter. Would love to hear from her again.”

“Everything was awesome. I enjoyed Monday and meeting and listening to Rene. The guest speaker on Tuesday and Wednesday was amazing. She really opened my eyes and mind about connecting with families.”

“The ample time and resources for preparing lessons and classrooms, Angelique's workshop on family engagement, Mr. Colato-Lainez's presentation.”

Evaluation of the TSI:

The evaluation of the TSI included an archival analysis of five years of program data as well as a retrospective study. Across evaluation studies (Study 1 & 2), teachers' responses affirmed their positive regard for the TSI. Teachers reported a general perception that the programming increased their domain knowledge, confidence, and enhanced their pedagogical practices. While the existing

data does not allow linking participants' responses from Study 1 to those who completed the retrospective survey in Study 2, it is of interest to note that in Study 1, the domain that teachers reported having the lowest prior knowledge in, translanguaging, was the same domain in Study 2 in which teachers overwhelmingly reported increases in their pedagogical practices following the TSI. There was also overlap across studies in the components of the TSI that were viewed as being particularly beneficial - in both Study 1 and 2, the programming (e.g., presentations, workshops, speakers) was noted as a helpful aspect of the TSI.

One limitation of the work is that it relies on self-report (and in Study 2 retrospective self-report) as no direct measures of teachers' prior/post knowledge, behavior, or pedagogical practices were obtained to triangulate teachers' self-reports. This limitation will be important to address in future research in which a systematic program evaluation can be conducted. Nevertheless, these studies provide an important foundation and offer insights into the experiences and perceptions about the TSI, which may serve to guide the redesign of the program, help ensure its sustainability, and inform the creation of partner programs beyond the Baltimore area that will enhance professional development offerings for early childhood educators.

Research Report 7. (In preparation). Evaluation of the Sherman Center Teacher Summer Institute by [Dr. Karrie Godwin](#), Praveen Kumaraveln, Shahin Hossain, [Dr. Linda Baker](#), and [Dr. Jennifer Mata-McMahon](#)

MARYLAND EARLY CHILDHOOD LEADERSHIP PROGRAM (MECLP)

The Maryland Early Childhood Leadership Program (MECLP) is an initiative of a team of policymakers, education experts, and national advisers focused on developing and supporting early childhood leaders and practitioners. MECLP focuses on improving outcomes for underserved and vulnerable children from birth through age eight. In creating opportunities for diverse leaders in early childhood education, MECLP hopes to position Maryland as the vanguard in developing strong early childhood leaders nationally.

MECLP, established in 2018 and housed in the Sherman Center at UMBC, was a workforce initiative to accelerate cross-sector early childhood leadership. The program consisted of a graduate course on ECE leadership offered at UMBC and a community of practice for current and former MECLP Fellows that offered ongoing learning and coaching opportunities. MECLP also convened an Advisory Committee monthly to spearhead the program. The committee was co-chaired by the Sherman Center Director and Louise Corwin, the founder of MECLP.

MECLP's first course, SHER 601 – Leading for Change in Early Childhood Education, built on the research-based course developed by Dr. Anne Douglass, founder, and executive director of the Institute for Early Education Leadership and Innovation, University of Massachusetts, Boston, and incorporated key competencies tailored to the specific needs of Maryland's early childhood community. The Leading for Change course provided in-person daylong learning sessions, guest presentations, asynchronous online learning sessions, and individual and small group projects. Each MECLP fellow was expected to complete a capstone project on an issue specific to early childhood education in Maryland.

To sustain the leadership journey of SHER 601 course completers, in 2021, MECLP initiated a Community of Practice (CoP) to support the Fellows' leadership skills and networking capacity. The CoP provides Fellows with opportunities to formalize, articulate, and advocate for their capstone projects by interacting with Maryland and national early childhood speakers on problems of practice germane to early childhood and their specific interests. MECLP's CoP included four intersecting elements:

1. A mentoring program that connects mentors and course completers (mentees) to support mentees with problems of practice and the implementation of their capstone project.
2. Leadership in Action Conversations invite Fellows to join with their colleagues and state and national experts to explore current events that affect the early childhood field.
3. The annual Leadership Institute engages the wider Maryland early childhood leadership community with essential topics in the field.
4. Webinars support the Fellows in promoting timely and critically important topics to improving the early childhood system in Maryland and beyond.

The table below summarizes MECLP's progress and outcomes through the years it operated in the Sherman Center:

Year	Outcomes
2018	Following focus group input and research in early 2018, the 14-member MECLP Advisory Committee began the design and implementation phase of a pilot leadership development program in October.
2019	<p><u>January</u>: Released a Request for Proposal (RFP) to identify vendor to develop an innovative learning model, content and training materials for MECLP’s leadership development curriculum.</p> <p><u>February</u>: Eight RFP submissions reviewed.</p> <p><u>March</u>: Institute for Early Childhood Education and Leadership (IEELI) at UMASS Boston selected to modify existing curriculum to meet MECLP’s identified competencies.</p> <p><u>May</u>: Application broadly released to identify early childhood professionals interested in becoming MECLP’s inaugural cohort fellows.</p> <p><u>June - August</u>: 44 applications received and reviewed; 20 candidates interviewed.</p> <p><u>September</u>: 14 inaugural cohort fellows selected representing the ethnic, geographic and affiliation diversity in Maryland’s early childhood system.</p> <p><u>December</u>: Kick-off and orientation of MECLP’s SHER 601 course.</p>
2020	<p>In summer 2020, MECLP received 31 applications for its second cohort of Fellows despite the challenges presented by COVID-19. Fourteen Fellows were selected from this excellent pool of candidates, representing Maryland’s diverse early childhood sector.</p> <p>In December 2020, the first cohort of 14 MECLP Fellows graduated from the course after presenting capstone projects reflecting what they learned and will continue to contribute to their organizations and the early childhood field in Maryland.</p> <p>As part of its continuous improvement process, MECLP commissioned The Policy Equity Group to develop an evaluation plan for the program. To hold MECLP accountable to its goals, the multi-year evaluation sought to address questions related to the quality and short- and long-term effects of its activities on Fellows, children, families, communities, and the early childhood system in Maryland. The plan outlined a “rapid-cycle iteration” approach to refine and incorporate lessons learned into the program design on an ongoing basis. The evaluation aimed at collecting quantitative and qualitative data from multiple data sources and at several time points.</p>
2021	<p>In September 2021, MECLP welcomed its third cohort, a diverse group of Fellows representing the unique fabric of early childhood practitioners in Maryland.</p> <p>Despite the constraints of COVID-19, MECLP continued to make strides toward shaping strong leaders, with the second cohort of 14 MECLP Fellows completing the SHER 601 course in December 2021. These Fellows presented their capstone projects to their colleagues, MECLP Fellows from Cohorts I and III, Advisory Committee members, and invited guests. The projects reflected their personal and professional growth and illustrated what they would continue to contribute to their organizations and the early childhood field in Maryland.</p> <p>To sustain the leadership journey of SHER 601 course completers, in 2021, MECLP initiated a Community of Practice (CoP) to support the Fellows’ leadership skills and networking capacity. The CoP provides Fellows with opportunities to formalize, articulate, and advocate for their capstone projects by interacting with Maryland and national early childhood speakers on problems of practice germane to early childhood and their specific interests.</p> <p>The 12-member Advisory Committee met six times and continued to operate through a workgroup structure guiding MECLP’s progress.</p> <p>In early 2021, MECLP commissioned two studies to understand the current state of ECE leadership in Maryland. <i>Filling the Early Childhood Leadership Gap in Maryland: Meeting the Challenges and Opportunities Ahead</i>, and <i>How Maryland Can Mitigate its Early Childhood Education Gap</i>.</p> <p>MECLP received two grants totaling \$300,000.00 in 2021, from the Division of Early Childhood in the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and the Trust for Learning. The Trust for Learning’s funding was used to expose MECLP Fellows to high-quality early learning environments through field trips, webinars, mentoring, and scholarships.</p>
2022	MECLP partnered with the Institute for Early Education, Leadership, and Innovation (IEELI) at UMass Boston to design and implement a yearlong Training of Trainers (ToT). The TOT prepares new instructors to teach and co-teach the Leading for Change in Early Childhood Education course. In 2022, the training course established protocols for certifying participants to instruct, support, and assess with fidelity to the core components of the curriculum as it graduated its third cohort of Fellows and welcomed cohort four.

To improve the MECLP experience for future cohorts and articulate the impact of program participation, MECLP contracted with the Policy Equity Group to evaluate the program. To support the implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, in 2022, MECLP was awarded its fourth grant from the Division of Early Childhood Development of MSDE for almost \$750,000.00. The grant allowed MECLP to continue to mitigate the state's current leadership gap by 1) improving the leadership capacity of early childhood educators, 2) increasing the diversity of ECE leaders across Maryland, 3) positioning Maryland as a leader in developing a strong ECE leadership system and 4) enhancing Maryland's workforce development strategies by creating an Early Childhood Leadership Hub.

As an offshoot of the MECLP grant and with the goal to support the ambitious expansion of pre-kindergarten throughout Maryland, a Lead Teacher Certification Planning Grant led by UMBC's Department of Education in partnership with Teachstone explored the feasibility of developing a competency-based education model that can become a lead teacher certification program for Pre-k in community-based settings.

Funding from the Trust for Learning strengthened the knowledge among early childhood leaders about the Trust's Ideal learning Environments and practices delivered through a two-part spring and three-part fall 2022 webinar series that featured Trust for Learning's experts facilitated by MECLP Fellows.

Significant Contributors:

Louise Corwin (Founder and Co-chair)
Liran Laor (Program Director)
Dr. Anne Douglass (Instructor)
Dr. Amanda Lopes (Teaching Assistant)
Advisory Committee members

Funding:

Funding for MECLP came from several grants from the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and support from the Sherman Center of approximately \$40,000.00 per year of operation. In the spring of 2023, MECLP and its remaining grants were transferred to the Shriver Center, where it is currently housed.

Evaluation of MECLP:

Maryland's national reputation as an innovator in early childhood education (ECE) is built on the state's strong foundation of ECE leaders at the program, regional, and state levels. Yet Maryland is on the precipice of a widening ECE leadership gap as one in four ECE leaders anticipates retiring or leaving the field within five years.

An evaluation of MECLP's first three cohorts (2019–2022) showed that the program effectively promoted the growth of individual ECE leaders while simultaneously contributing to collective leadership development and statewide ECE systems change.

MECLP builds leadership capacity across a wide range of settings and roles. Fellows included those working directly with children, families, and staff in ECE programs, as well as those in ECE system roles at the regional and state level, such as county early childhood administrators and coordinators.

MECLP Fellows reported statistically significant gains in competency levels as a result of their participation in the program. Notably, although all Fellows demonstrated growth, those who rated themselves lower on competencies entering the program showed the greatest gains.

MECLP helped Fellows “find their voice,” have greater confidence to engage in difficult conversations, assume higher positions, act as a leader and advocate for themselves and the early childhood field more effectively.

In exit surveys, Fellows shared:

“MECLP provided me with more confidence and belief that my professional experiences can provide a voice for change. It has convinced me that it is worth it to continue to advocate for the ECE field. I believe it has given me more confidence to pursue higher-level positions.” (MECLP Fellow, Cohort 2)

“MECLP contributed to my promotion shortly after the cohort. I was promoted from regional director for 6-8 programs to operations director for 26 programs and a more strategic role.” (MECLP Fellow, Cohort 1)

MECLP Evaluation prepared by Policy Equity Group, December 2023.

PRINCIPAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM (PIP)

The Sherman Center/Sondheim Scholars Principal Internship Program (PIP) was instituted in 2020 and led by Dr. Laura Hussey, Director of the Sondheim Public Affairs Scholars Program. The goals of the program were to provide:

- UMBC undergraduate students interested in public service and leadership with a meaningful experiential learning opportunity at a Sherman Center partner school and
- Sherman Center partners' school principals with support in completing assignments linked to their school's success.

To achieve these goals, the Sherman Center for Early Learning in Urban Communities and the Sondheim Public Affairs Scholars Program at UMBC collaboratively recruited and selected students for the Principal Internship Program. Selected interns were assigned to a partner school for the fall (September to November) and spring (February to April) semesters. The Sherman Center interns received a stipend of \$1,800.00 in three installments of \$600.00 in September, December, and May of the academic year, contingent on their successful completion of the internship.

Two interns were selected and participated in the program. Caroline Jiang interned at Curtis Bay Elementary/Middle School, while Christy Chae interned at Lakeland Elementary/Middle School.

The year of operation of this program had a budget of \$5,400.00. The PIP only operated through the 2020-2021 SY.

MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

Multidisciplinary research and scholarship were the third areas of focus of the TOC. Aiming to produce new knowledge on early childhood education policies and practices, the Sherman Center worked diligently to support the scholarship of members of the UMBC community by offering research awards to faculty and students, hosting research conferences, funding research studies, conducting program evaluations, and publishing findings reports. A cluster of faculty hires was also designed into the operations of the Sherman Center to advance research in the field of early childhood education. Finally, the Sherman Center administrated and granted a literacy scholarship award from UMBC alumni to students working to advance early literacy skills through the Literacy Fellows Program.

FACULTY RESEARCH AWARD (FRA)

The Sherman Center Faculty Research Award (FRA) was created to expand knowledge about policies and practices that enhance young children's learning in urban communities like Baltimore City. The application was open annually, in the fall, to all faculty who held academic appointments at UMBC investigating the field of early childhood urban education, with multidisciplinary approaches encouraged. Co-investigators could include individuals not affiliated with UMBC.

Year	Awardee	Other	Award
2018	Dr. Kindel Nash, Associate Professor of Early Childhood Education (UMBC), and Joshua Michael, doctoral student in the School of Public Policy (UMBC).	Multi-year study to investigate the effects of a literacy intervention, “Read Two Impress (R2I)” on the reading fluency and comprehension of second grade students at Maree G. Farring Elementary/Middle School.	\$52,000.00
2019	Dr. Susan Sonnenschein, Professor of Psychology (UMBC), and Dr. Claudia Galindo, Associate Professor of Education (University of Maryland, College Park).	Three-year study examining the implementation and effects of the Sherman Center/Shriver Center Literacy Fellows Program.	\$95,769.00
2020	Dr. Patricia Young, Professor of Education (UMBC), and Ms. Deborah Kariuki, Program Director of the Master of Arts in Education UMBC). Dr. Jane Lincove, Professor of Public Policy (UMBC), and Dr. Lieny Jeon (Johns Hopkins University), and Ms. Sarah Bollard (Baltimore City Public Schools).	Year-long study on using a Culture-based Computational Thinking Curriculum in Urban Preschools. Three-year study titled, “Judy Centers in Baltimore: Improving Data-Informed Decisions”	\$49,974.00 \$99,646.00
2021	Ms. Monica Dale, Music Coordinator and Adjunct Faculty of Dance (UMBC).	Year-long project titled, “The Effectiveness of MusiKinesis®, an Integrated Arts Experience, for Urban Preschool Children”	\$24,996.00
2022	Dr. Karen (Lujie) Chen, Assistant Professor of Information Systems (UMBC), and Dr. Chien-Ming Huang, John C. Malone Assistant Professor of Computer Science (Johns Hopkins University).	Two-year project titled, “Robot-Assisted Learning and Teaching for Whole Child: An Exploration in Early Learning in Urban Communities”	\$49,740.00
2023	Dr. Mirela Cengher, Assistant Professor of Psychology (UMBC).	Two-year project titled, “A Comparison of Simultaneous and Sequential Bilingualism in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)”, investigates which type of instruction is most effective for children on the Autism spectrum who are learning two languages.	\$50,000.00
2024	Dr. Karrie Godwin, Associate Professor of Psychology (UMBC).	Two-year project titled, “ <i>Student-Centered Design: Optimizing Instructional Reading Materials for Beginning Readers</i> ”, examines how the design of instructional reading materials affects children’s	\$50,000.00

	Dr. Amy Tondreau, Assistant Professor of Elementary Education (UMBC), and Dr. Shuling Yang, Assistant Professor of Elementary Education (UMBC).	attention to text and reading comprehension. Two-year project titled, “Amplifying Asian American Voices: In-Service Teachers’ Explorations of Picture Books Centering Asian American Characters.” This collaborative and interdisciplinary effort aims to engage classroom teachers of PreK-3 rd grade in professional development cycles.	\$50,000.00
TOTAL			\$522,125.00

The FRA ran for the seven-year duration of the Sherman Center’s operations and awarded a total of \$522,125.00 to UMBC faculty and colleagues from partner institutions to complete nine research projects advancing the field of early childhood education. Results from these projects were shared through [final reports](#) and various academic publications, journal articles, and book chapters linked on our [website](#) and listed below in the publications section. Projects awarded in 2022, 2023, and 2024 are ongoing.

DOCTORAL STUDENT RESEARCH AWARD (DSRA)

The Sherman Center established the Doctoral Student Research Award (DSRA) in the fall of 2021 as part of its initiatives to advance research and scholarship. The award aimed to expand knowledge about policies and practices that enhance young children's learning, ages three through eight, in urban communities like Baltimore City by supporting dissertation research on topics of interest to early childhood education, including (but not limited to):

1. Evaluation of new or existing school-based and out-of-school time learning interventions
2. School, teacher, family, and community factors associated with academic growth, socio-emotional well-being and/or positive behavioral outcomes for young children, and
3. The impact of school policies on family and community engagement in students’ learning processes and outcomes

The competition was open to all doctoral students at UMBC, who were eligible to submit applications for external support. Proposals for the DSRA could be made by individuals for up to \$15,000.00. Even though several submissions were received, after review, none of the applicants qualified for funding. However, the Sherman Center CAC recommended modifications to future award competitions, such as opening the funding mechanism to include doctoral students in the pre-dissertation phase and potentially expanding the target population to birth-12. The award was discontinued in AY 2022-23.

FACULTY HIRES AND RESEARCH STUDIES

The Sherman Center began its faculty recruitment in 2018 and successfully hired Dr. Jennifer Mata-McMahon, holding a joint appointment as Sherman Center Research Faculty and Associate Professor of Early Childhood Education in the Department of Education (2018-2021). Joint appointments lasted three years, after which the faculty member would transfer to their home department full-time. The second faculty hire was Dr. Karrie Godwin in 2020, Sherman Center Research Faculty and Assistant Professor of Psychology (2020-2023). Also in 2020, Dr. Shana Rochester was hired as Sherman Center Research Associate, representing the last faculty cluster hires. Dr. Rochester was appointed Assistant Director/Research Associate in 2021 and worked with the Sherman Center until fall 2022. The Sherman Center supported and funded the research advanced by these faculty members through the years they held the appointments.

Research Faculty, Drs. Jennifer Mata-McMahon (with Education), Karrie Godwin (with Psychology), and Shana E. Rochester (Research Associate) led projects to advance early childhood research. Dr. Mata-McMahon's project, which began in 2019, explored an expansion and evaluation of the Dual Language Program at Lakeland Elementary/Middle School. Dr. Godwin's primary projects investigated how 1) the design of books for beginning readers can be optimized to enhance attention to the text and reading comprehension and 2) the implementation and efficacy of "brain breaks" to support children's attention regulation and learning outcomes. Dr. Rochester's project assisted early childhood educators at Sherman Center partner schools in using multicultural picture books within their literacy instruction. These projects addressed essential aspects of early education practices, including supporting emergent bilinguals and using classroom instructional materials to support students' learning and improve literacy instruction.

Dual Language Program Evaluation: Advancing Bilingual Education in Baltimore City

In spring 2019, Dr. Mata-McMahon and her graduate assistant Laurel Burggraf-Bassett (doctoral candidate, LLC) partnered with Lakeland Elementary/Middle School's teacher, Ms. Ana Gabriela Salas, to evaluate the recently implemented Dual Language Program (DLP). Spearheaded by Ms. Salas, the program began with her Kindergarten class in AY 2016-17. By AY 2020-21, the program had scaled up to include pre-kindergarten classes through 4th grade, and the research project now welcomed graduate assistant Adebola Daramola (doctoral student, Public Policy). Joshua Michael (doctoral candidate, Public Policy) also contributed to the study with quantitative data analysis of students' mCLASS Text Reading and Comprehension (TRC) scores. Through interviews, focus groups, classroom observations, salient documents, and testing, data were collected during the first iteration of this project and were analyzed using Coburn's (2003) reconceptualization of scale as a guiding conceptual framework. This initial phase concluded in the summer of 2020, resulting in the [Sherman Center Research Report No. 1](#).

In 2021, the second iteration of the project began, completing online surveys, classroom observations, and attaining available test results, adapting the data collection to the ever-changing modalities of instruction due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In looking at the three cohorts from AY 2016-17 to AY 2018-19, qualitative findings point to the DLP as a beneficial program for students, both Latinx and African American, pertaining specifically to Spanish language proficiency,

academic performance across subject matters, and overall socio-cultural benefits for families, as well as the school community at large. The quantitative analysis indicated that while DLP students exhibited lower annual growth in English compared to their mainstream program counterparts, they showed higher annual growth than the native-English-speaking students when tested in their primary language of instruction (Spanish). Findings and recommendations based on the two cohorts from AY 2019-20 and AY 2020-21 were released in [Sherman Center Research Report No. 3](#). Graduate students Sabrina Williams (master's program, Organizational Psychology) and Shahin Hossain (doctoral student, LLC) also worked on the second phase of this project's completion. Aside from the research reports, [journal articles](#) and conference presentations were delivered to disseminate the findings of this work.

Attention and Reading Comprehension in Young Readers: Optimizing Beginning Reader Books

In her research, Dr. Karrie Godwin partnered with educators and families to explore how instructional materials can be optimized to better support attention and learning. Recently, her work has focused on the design of beginning reader books. Learning to read is a critical skill to master, as reading is considered a key gateway to future learning and success. Despite its foundational importance, many children struggle to become proficient readers. While there are a number of factors that may contribute to the difficulties children experience learning to read (e.g., ADHD, dyslexia, pre-reading skills gaps), we know much less about whether the design of beginning reader books may support or hinder children's early reading. Beginning reader books often contain bright, detailed, and colorful illustrations in close proximity to the text. Such design choices are likely made with a focus on aesthetics and increasing engagement but may inadvertently overlook the impact on children's slowly developing attention regulation system and emerging decoding skills. It is important to consider how we can create instructional materials that support attention and learning while also maintaining engagement.

With her colleagues, Dr. Anna Fisher and Cassondra Eng, Dr. Godwin investigated whether the layout of beginning-reader books may create attentional competition between the text and illustrations and if we can redesign beginning-reader books to better support children's attention and, in turn, reading comprehension. They found that by simplifying illustrations (i.e., removing extraneous details unrelated to the text), children can better attend to the text, and reading comprehension improves. Dr. Godwin and doctoral students Freya Kaur and Praveen Kumaravelan and her collaborators are extending their work to examine how the text and illustration placement can be optimized. Preliminary results suggest that separating the text and illustration by placing the text adjacent to the illustration may be helpful for beginning readers. This work was partly supported by a National Science Foundation award (BCS-1730060). It produced several journal articles and conference presentations to disseminate findings.

Brain Breaks: Attention Regulation and Learning Consolidation and Instructional Uptake

Dr. Karrie Godwin, doctoral students Freya Kaur and Praveen Kumaravelan, as well as her colleague Dr. Amanda Moreno, are investigating the efficacy of brain breaks (i.e., short breaks

delivered in between instructional activities) to replenish children’s attention and support learning. The team conducted a national teacher survey and found that the vast majority (91%) of teachers use brain breaks in their classrooms, and the three most common break types were physical activities, videos, and dancing. Despite the widespread use of brain breaks, relatively little is known about whether brain breaks are an effective strategy to support attention regulation and learning, whether effectiveness varies based on break type, if there are individual differences in who benefits most from brain breaks, and what factors may facilitate their implementation. The team is currently investigating the potential benefits of different types of breaks that range from being more “task-free” to more active. Preliminary findings suggest brain breaks may be a useful instructional strategy that can help support young children’s attention replenishment and learning consolidation. Although there are many ways to instantiate a brain break, the present results indicate that taking a break may be more important than the particular type of break that is implemented. This line of work has important implications for educational practice. This work is supported by the Institute of Education Sciences awarded (R305A200522). Data collection is ongoing, and dissemination efforts are underway.

The Diverse Books Project 2.0: Supporting Early Care and Education Teachers’ Use of Multicultural Books Through University-Based Research-Practice Partnerships

Multicultural literature represents the cultural backgrounds of different people, and its use in elementary classrooms has been associated with students’ diversity awareness, perspective-taking, and comprehension skills. Multicultural picture books are ripe with opportunities to teach students how to be active agents in analyzing messages through critical discussions about social issues (e.g., ableism). The Diverse Books Project (DBP) 2.0 set out to support K-2 teachers’ use of multicultural books to promote children’s critical literacy skills, such as identifying how the book’s language and imagery reproduce (or disrupt) privilege, injustice, biases, and inequities. Led by Dr. Shana E. Rochester, Ms. Anika Aquino, graduate research assistant and doctoral student in UMBC’s Applied Developmental Psychology program, supported the project along with school leaders at Sherman Center partner schools and a Baltimore City Public Schools’ district administrator.

The DBP 2.0 comprised three project phases:

- **Phase I (Summer 2021)** involved a critical content analysis of multicultural picture books in the Baltimore City Public Schools’ (BCPS) K-2 English Language Arts curriculum and the Sherman Center’s Diverse Books Collection. Preliminary findings suggested that some critical multicultural picture books disrupt dominant narratives associated with people from marginalized identities in ways that promote allyship from former oppressors. For example, the characters that doubted William in the book ‘The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind’ by William Kamkwamba, Bryan Mealer, and Elizabeth Zunon (2012) believed that people with limited resources are powerless against natural disasters. By the end of the story, the doubters praised William for successfully building a windmill that supported his community.
- **Phase II (Fall 2021–Spring 2022)** was a pilot series of critical literacy professional development sessions to help educators (a) reflect on their beliefs and teaching practice related to different social

identities (e.g., gender), (b) analyze children’s literature from a critical literacy frame, and (c) develop critical read-alouds with school-based and grade-level colleagues.

- **Phase III (Summer 2022–Spring 2023)** included a quasi-experimental study of the critical literacy sessions’ influence on Sherman Center partner school educators’ critical literacy instruction, multicultural self-efficacy, and children’s critical literacy talk. This project was partly supported by the Foundation for Child Development’s Young Scholars Program and was transferred to Child Trends when Dr. Rochester left UMBC in the fall of 2022.

PROGRAM EVALUATION STUDY (PES)

Due to the conclusion of funding, the Sherman Center initiated a thorough evaluation of its programs and projects that had not yet been thoroughly reviewed in 2022. The goal was to generate findings and recommendations that could support their revival and sustainability through future funding opportunities.

The Program Evaluation Study (PES) was a retrospective study designed to provide insights into the potential benefits of three Sherman Center initiatives: the Diverse Books Project (DBP), the Families, Libraries, and Early Literacy Program (ELP), and the Teacher Summer Institute (TSI), by analyzing data and fielding online surveys with past and current participants. The evaluation was conducted by Drs. Karrie Godwin, Linda Baker, Jennifer Mata-McMahon, and graduate assistants Anika Aquino (doctoral student, Psychology), Shahin Hossain (doctoral student, LLC), and Praveen Kumaravelan (doctoral student, Psychology).

Archival Data: The research team compiled and analyzed the archival data and disseminated preliminary findings at the 2023 and 2024 Sherman Center Research Conference. Key findings from the evaluation of the ELP and the DBP initiatives were shared, respectively. There are archival data findings for each of the three initiatives in the research reports, and a summary of findings is presented in the evaluation portion of each initiative's section above.

Data Collection: surveys were developed and distributed to past and current program participants for each initiative. Data collection continued through Spring 2024; final program evaluation reports are available on our [website](#). The team is planning to submit the findings from the PES for publication in academic and practitioner-focused journals

The cost of the program evaluation was approximately \$60,000.00, covering the work of the graduate assistants and study participant stipends.

RESEARCH REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS

The Sherman Center published a series of research reports over its years of operation, from funded FRA projects and studies conducted by Sherman Center Research Faculty and graduate assistants. These projects also generated book chapters, journal articles, web-based articles, and pedagogical guides listed below.

Research Reports

Research Report 7. (In preparation). Evaluation of the Sherman Center Teacher Summer Institute by [Dr. Karrie Godwin](#), Praveen Kumaravelan, Shahin Hossain [Dr. Linda Baker](#), and [Dr. Jennifer Mata-McMahon](#)

Research Report 6. (2025). Evaluation of the Sherman Center Families, Libraries, and Early Literacy Program by [Dr. Karrie Godwin](#), Ana Katrina Aquino, Praveen Kumaravelan, [Dr. Linda Baker](#), and [Dr. Jennifer Mata-McMahon](#)

Research Report 5. (2024). [Evaluation of the Sherman Center Diverse Books Project](#) by [Dr. Karrie Godwin](#), Praveen Kumaravelan, Ana Katrina Aquino, [Dr. Linda Baker](#), and [Dr. Jennifer Mata-McMahon](#)

Research Report 4. (2023). [Evaluation of the Literacy Fellows Program and Stakeholders at Bay Brook and Curtis Bay Elementary Schools](#) by [Dr. Susan Sonnenschein](#) and [Dr. Claudia Galindo](#) ([appendices attached](#))

Research Report 3. (2023). [Lakeland Dual Language Program Study](#) by [Dr. Jennifer Mata-McMahon](#), Sabrina Williams, Adebola Daramola, Dr. Lance Kruse, and Shahin Hossain

Research Report 2. (2021). [Read Two Impress Plus](#) by [Dr. Kindel Nash](#) and Joshua Michael with contributions from [Dr. Jennifer Mata-McMahon](#), [Dr. Jiyeon Lee](#), and Kris'tina Ackerman

Research Report 1. (2020). [Lakeland Dual Language Program Study](#) by [Dr. Jennifer Mata-McMahon](#), Laurel Burggraf-Bassett, Ana Gabriela Salas, and Joshua Michael

Book Chapters

Rochester, S. E., and Mata-McMahon, J. (2022). [Promoting Kindergarten Readiness During Remote Learning Through Community-Based Family Literacy Sessions](#). In Fox, K. R. and Szech, L. (Eds.). *Handbook of Research on Family Literacy Practices and Home-School Connections* (pp. 101-124). IGI Global. DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-4569-3.ch007 ISBN: 9871668445693

Lee, J., Nash, K. T., Mata-McMahon, J., and Michael, J. (2021). [Developing their Best Reading and Writing Selves: Fostering Positive Literacy Identities for Bi/multilingual Students and Families in Baltimore, USA](#). In Wills, R., deSouza, M., Mata-McMahon, J., Abu Bakar, M., and

Roux C. (Eds). *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Culture and Identity from Early Childhood to Early Adulthood: Perceptions and Implications* (pp. 133-148). London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic. ISBN: 9781350157101

Journal Articles

Carvalho, P. F. & Godwin K. E. (2024). Comparing generating predictions with retrieval practice as learning strategies for primary school children. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/xap0000523>

Mata-McMahon, J., Williams, S., Daramola, A., Kruse, L., and Hossain, S. (2024). [Sustainability of a dual language program during and beyond COVID-19 challenges](#). *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*. DOI: [10.1080/13670050.2024.2417236](https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2024.2417236)

Mata-McMahon, J., Haslip, M. J., and Hossain, S. (2024). [How U.S. Early Childhood Educators Understand Children's Spirituality: A Framework of Essence, Origin, and Action](#). *Early Childhood Education Journal*. DOI: [10.1007/s10643-024-01642-8](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-024-01642-8)

Godwin, K.E., Kaur, F., & Sonnenschein, S. (2023). Teaching and learning during a global pandemic: Perspectives from elementary school teachers and parents. *Education Sciences: The Psychological and Educational Effects of COVID-19: Now and Then* [Special Issue], 13, 426. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13040426>

Godwin, K. E., Leroux, A., J., Scupelli, P., & Fisher, A. V. (2022). Classroom design and children's attention allocation: Beyond the laboratory and into the classroom. *Mind, Brain, and Education* [Special Issue], 16(3), 239-251. <https://doi.org/10.1111/mbe.12319>

Godwin, K. E., Leroux, A., Seltman, H., Scupelli, P. & Fisher, A. V. (2022). Effect of repeated exposure to the visual environment on young children's attention. *Cognitive Science* <https://doi.org/10.1111/cogs.13093>

Nash, K. T., Michael, J., Mata-McMahon, J., Lee, J., & Ackerman, K. (2022). [Singing the Same Song: Engaging Families in Read Two Impress Plus](#). *The Reading Teacher*, 76(1), pp. 34-41. DOI:10.1002/trtr.2114

Galindo, C. L., Sonnenschein, S., and Sanders, M. G. (2021). [A Case Study of a School-University Partnership Focused on Literacy and Educational Equity: Responding to COVID-19 in the Early Grades](#). *School-University Partnerships*, 14(3), pp. 17-42.

Godwin, K. E., Seltman, H., Almeda, M.V., Skerbetz, M. D., Kai, S., Baker, R. S., & Fisher, A.V. (2021). The elusive relationship between time on task and learning: Not simply an issue of measurement. *Educational Psychology*, 41(4) 502-519. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410.2021.1894324>

Eng, C. M., Godwin, K.E., & Fisher, A. V. (2020). Keep it simple: Streamlining book illustrations improves attention and comprehension in beginning readers. *npj Science of Learning*, 5(14), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41539-020-00073-5>

Web-based Articles

[When Less is More in an Increasingly Busy World](#) (2020)

Nature: Behind the Paper. By Dr. Cassondra Eng, [Dr. Karrie Godwin](#), and Anna Fisher

[1 in 10 US students are English learners \(A case for expanding dual language programs for young children\)](#) (2020)

The Conversation. By [Dr. Jennifer Mata-McMahon](#)

[Parents can help kids catch up in reading with a 10-minute daily routine](#) (2019)

The Conversation. By [Dr. Kindel Nash](#) with contributions from Joshua Michael and Kris'tina Ackerman

Pedagogical Guides

Young, P. A., and Kariuki, D. (2022). [Kids Computing: A Guide for Parents & Caregivers](#). Sherman Center Faculty Research Award study.

SHERMAN CENTER RESEARCH CONFERENCE (SCRC)



In 2022, the Sherman Center proudly inaugurated the Sherman Center Research Conference (SCRC), focusing on promoting innovative early childhood education research conducted in Maryland. The goals of the conference were to (a) disseminate findings to a diverse audience of early childhood professionals, (b) encourage educators to participate in action research, and (c) promote collaborations among members of the Sherman Center community.

To accomplish these goals, resources were created and shared with educators, leaders, and practitioners to encourage refocusing practice into research. These were shared on our website and through online workshops. The daylong conference commenced with welcoming remarks from Dr. Antonio Moreira, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, and an engaging keynote presentation by Dr. Gilda Martinez-Alba, Assistant Dean and Professor of Education in the College of Education at Towson University. Baltimore City Public School educators, MECLP Fellows, Sherman Center Graduate Research Assistants, and Sherman Center Research Fellows and Faculty presented 12 engaging and thought-provoking projects as workshops, papers, and flash talks, our three available presentation modalities, to 25 attendees. They also engaged in the networking luncheon, facilitating conversations to induce future collaborations and partnerships among researchers, leaders, and practitioners. A video highlighting the event was compiled and posted on our website and social media.

In June 2023, the Sherman Center hosted the second iteration of the SCRC at the Skylight Room at UMBC. The keynote presentation was by Dr. Christy Tirrel-Corbin, Executive Director of the Center for Early Childhood/Early Childhood Special Education teacher preparation program at the University of Maryland. Her presentation, *Leveraging Research-Practice-Policy Partnerships to Mitigate Inequities, Childhood Trauma, and Educator Secondary Traumatic Stress*, highlighted how a systemic approach is essential in addressing inequities, childhood trauma, educator mental health, and educator retention. Six paper presentations, three flash talks, and one workshop were shared at the conference with 17 attendees, including topics such as robot-assisted learning, using postmodern picture books, understanding parents' and teachers' influence on racial-ethnic socialization, art integration for ESOL learning, fostering math learning through picture books, and nurturing children's spirituality in secular classrooms.

The 2024 SCRC was hosted on June 14th at the UMBC campus. This year's theme revolved around 'Innovative Approaches to Advance Early Childhood Education,' headlined by a keynote presentation from Dr. Claudia L. Galindo, a professor in the Education Policy program at the University of Maryland, College Park. Her keynote, titled *Taking an Equity Lens: Reconceptualizing Research on Latinxs' Schooling Experiences and Outcomes*, delved into multilingual students' learning experiences tied to social connections, diverse cultures, and home languages. The conference gathered 21 attendees, including Sherman Center partners, BCPS teachers, school leaders, MECLP fellows, doctoral students, and Sherman Center research fellows. It provided an arena for learning and professional development through engaging workshops and immersive paper presentations. The workshops that were presented included *A Love of Learning Begins at Home*, *Brain Break Preferences Among Children*, *The Power of an Idea*, *Racism in*

Children’s Music and Entertainment, and The Role of Feedback and Attention in Learning During Educational Instruction.

Additionally, six collaborative presentations at the 2024 SCRC featured *Archival Analysis and Retrospective Evaluation of the Diverse Books Project, Hands-On STEAM Learning Works for Students and Teachers, Bilingualism: Why and How We Should Teach Multiple Languages to Children with Disabilities, How U.S. Early Childhood Educators Understand Children’s Spirituality, Harnessing TPACK to Propel Ethical AI Usage in Early Childhood Education and Supporting Pre-K in Family Childcare.* These presentations sparked interesting questions and rich discussions among participants. The event also featured a networking luncheon, where researchers, practitioners, and partners explored future transdisciplinary collaboration. These events were shared widely across social media and received high praise from attendees, as evidenced by our exit survey.

The table below summarizes, by year, the number of attendees and presentations offered, the conference’s theme, keynote presenter and presentation title, and the overall cost for the event.

Year	Attendees	Presentations, Workshops and Flash Talks	Theme	Keynote Presentation	Cost*
2022	25	12	Promoting innovative early childhood education research conducted in Maryland	Dr. Gilda Martínez-Alba, Assistant Dean and Professor of Education in the College of Education at Towson University. Keynote title: <i>Research, Innovation, and Outcomes: Goal Oriented Achievement.</i>	\$6,000.00
2023	17	10	Innovation in Research as an Approach to Advance Early Childhood Education	Dr. Christy Tirrell-Corbin, Executive Director of the Center for Early Childhood/Early Childhood Special Education teacher preparation program at the University of Maryland. Keynote title: <i>Leveraging Research-Practice-Policy Partnerships to mitigate inequities, childhood trauma and educator secondary traumatic stress.</i>	\$6,000.00

2024	21	12	Innovative Approaches to Advance Early Childhood Education	Dr. Claudia L. Galindo, Professor in the Education Policy program at the University of Maryland, College Park. Keynote title: <i>Elevating Multilingual Latinx Elementary Students' Voices: Embracing Students' Funds of Identity and Critical Consciousness.</i>	\$6,000.00
Total	63	34			\$18,000.00

*Cost includes keynote expenses, materials, event setup, and catering.

CHILDHOOD LITERACY SCHOLARSHIP

In spring 2020, two UMBC alumni, Donna Helm '70 and Louise Goodrich Izat '70, generously donated a scholarship to honor their late professor, Dr. May Roswell. Dr. Roswell, a professor of French and German, was a founding UMBC faculty member, the architect of its modern languages program, and beloved by her students and peers.

In the fall of 2020, the Sherman Center selected the first recipient of the Childhood Literacy Scholarship, Ayodele La Veau. Ayodele, a double major in psychology and theater, is planning to pursue an art therapist career and is passionate about education and supporting others in the “process of learning and discovery.” Demonstrating this commitment, she served as a Sherman Center Literacy Fellows Program volunteer in the fall of 2019 and spring of 2020 at Bay Brook Elementary/Middle School. As a volunteer, Ayodele assisted students “in their literacy skill development, meditation, and mindfulness” and was gratified “to witness the effects of investing in children’s lives through healthy and safe learning environments.” Donna, Louise, and Ayodele had the chance to meet virtually via Zoom in October to discuss their mutual love of UMBC and children’s literacy development. The Sherman Center is honored to know these outstanding women and to build connections between UMBC’s current and past students.

In the fall of 2021, the Sherman Center selected the second recipient of the Childhood Literacy Scholarship, Daniela Caceres Bereau. Ms. Caceres Bereau, a B.A psychology major with a certification in industrial-organizational psychology has experience volunteering with a non-profit organization in Baltimore and implemented a “book per week” program with students “that aims to help them create a habit of reading.” Ms. Caceres Bereau believes in improving “children’s literacy development not only for the individual but for the community as a whole.”

The third recipient of the Childhood Literacy Scholarship, Manal Ibrahim, was selected in the fall of 2022. Ms. Ibrahim, an undergraduate biology and pre-medical student who wants to become a pediatrician, was interested in improving children’s health. She volunteered in the Sherman Center Literacy Fellows Program in partnership with the Shriver Center, working with first-grade students at Curtis Bay Elementary School.

In 2023, the Childhood Literacy Scholarship was transferred to the Department of Education for their selection and distribution of the award. The Early Childhood Education Program continues to administrate this scholarship to date.

The annual scholarship provided \$1,000.00 to each awarded student.