

Friends of EDL Newsletter

Summer 2025 Issue

Welcome to the second Department of Educational Leadership newsletter! We launch this biannual newsletter to cultivate our connections with YOU – our current and former students, faculty, community partners, and friends. Each newsletter will share relevant news, resources, and spotlight some of the amazing people and projects in our department.

In this Summer 2025 Issue, you'll find:

- Introduction to the new EDL Program Coordinator, Ms. Jessy Zukosky
- What can Educational Leaders Do in an Era of Mass Deportations?, by Dr. Gerald Wood
- The Power of Connection: Why Professional Networks Matter for Educational Leaders, by Dr. Melissa Sadorf
- Student Spotlight on Mr. Salvador Lopez
- Alumni Spotlight on Dr. Jesus Chamberlain
- Online Success Coaching for Graduate Students
- Call to Action: Follow us on Social Media

We hope you enjoy this second issue of our Friends of EDL Newsletter, and we also hope you'll share it with your colleagues and community. Please reach out to the EDL Chair directly with any feedback or other ideas for connecting with us: Dr. Angelina Castagno, angelina.castagno@nau.edu

Introducing the New EDL Program Coordinator!

By now most of you know that Jennifer Offutt retired from NAU in early June, 2025. Jennifer supported countless students during her 19 years in EDL, and we wish her all good things during her retirement in Iowa! We didn't waste anytime bringing Jessy Zukosky into the EDL family, so get to know a little about Jessy below.

My name is Jessy Zukosky, and I am the new Program Coordinator for the Educational Leadership Program at NAU's College of Education. I obtained my MEd in Educational Leadership, Community College/Higher Education emphasis, and a Community College Teaching and Learning Graduate Certificate from NAU. I have several passions,



but my foremost passion is volunteering at the Flagstaff Family Food Center where I have been actively involved since 1997.

My hobbies include cooking, hiking, reading, traveling, and foraging. I enjoy exploring forests and the woods searching for edible plants and mushrooms. In addition to a plant identifier app, I have recently subscribed to Rock Identifier, an app that will assist me in identifying various types of rocks, crystals, and minerals, which is very useful in Arizona. 😊

I am multilingual and am currently learning the Swahili language with the hope of one day traveling to Africa, which is my dream. I have three daughters who are all professionals and live independently (I am an empty nester). I make it a point to face time with them every evening as I miss them dearly. I am excited to be in this new role and strive to perform to the best of my abilities.

New Cohorts Launching + Other Degree Opportunities

PK12 Cohorts and Degrees: In addition to our online degree options, we're also doing exciting work with site-based and theme-based Principal-prep cohorts!

- The East Valley cohort is still accepting applicants, is an accelerated degree model, and includes in person, weekend classes once or twice a month taught by current and former school leaders in the East Valley region.
- The Rural cohort is fully online with once-per-week, evening zoom classes taught by current and former rural school leaders. The Rural Cohort is at capacity, but let us know if you'd like to be added to the waitlist.
- We're partnering with the International Alliance Group (IAG) to recruit teachers affiliated with IAG into an MEd cohort to begin in October 2025. If you work with any IAG teachers, please help us spread the word!
- We're also working on developing a Phoenix West Valley cohort to begin January 2026, so stay tuned for more information on that!
- And finally, students in our Tucson region cohort are on track to graduate May 2026. We're so excited to see this group progress through the program, and we're grateful for the Tucson-area school leaders who have been supporting this cohort!

CCHE Cohorts and Degrees: in addition to our online CCHE degree options, we're continuing a partnership with the Maricopa Community College District, and we're working on starting a site-based cohort for the northern part of the state!

- The Maricopa Community College cohort is still accepting applications to begin in August 2025, so be sure to apply (or tell your colleagues to apply) soon! This is available for employees of MCCCDC, and the classes are taught by current MCCCDC leaders and our NAU CCHE faculty. Classes are online with once-per-month in person meetings at Gateway Community College. Our inaugural MCCCDC cohort is on track to graduate in December 2025, and we're excited to celebrate the completion of their MEd!
- We're working with Coconino Community College to develop an MEd cohort for folks in the northern part of our state! Stay tuned for more details on this opportunity, which we hope to launch in January 2026.

Please let your colleagues know that NAU's Department of Educational Leadership provides a number of flexible and highly relevant degree programs!

What Can Educational Leaders Do in an Era of "Mass" Deportations?

By: Dr. Gerald K. Wood

On February 18 of this year, NAU's Department of Educational Leadership hosted a webinar entitled "Supporting Undocumented Students & Families in Precarious Times" to bring attention to how undocumented and mixed status families were experiencing the current context and widespread ICE raids. The conversation shined light on parents and educators who need more support as they make decisions (e.g. whether to stay or self-deport) and about how their families and communities will respond to the ongoing raids. The ICE raids have led to heightened levels of fear and anxiety and contributed to increased absences in schools and workplaces (Lambert & Thornton, 2025). These raids and mass deportations will continue to impact both the fabric and the funding of our schools. Educational leaders need to find new ways to respond to the tactics that are being used by the administration, which are forcing young people and their families into the shadows.

While it is difficult to get accurate numbers, sources have suggested that anywhere from 44% of those detained have no criminal records (Debusmann Jr., 2025). Marcelo Gomes Da Silva, "an athlete, a musician, and an exceptional high school student with an infectious smile" (Acevedo, 2025) was stopped by ICE when he was on his way to volleyball practice in Milford, MA. ICE was looking for his dad. One high school student at Grover Cleveland High School was detained when he showed up to his immigration court hearing (Conrad, 2025). Ximena Arias-Cristobal, a 19-year-old college student in Georgia, was detained for a traffic stop, and charges were dismissed a week later because ICE stopped the wrong car (Silva, Sridhar & Gallo, 2025). Along with Mahmoud Khalil, a Columbia University student, and Rümeyşa Öztürk, a Turkish student at Tufts University, the administration has

targeted international students who have exercised free speech to weigh in on Palestine or have taken positions at odds with the administration. The use of unidentified masked immigration and law enforcement agents, the increasing reliance on rounding up immigrants who are attending their immigration court proceedings, the deportation of undocumented individuals without due process, and the criminalization of folks who are speaking up should serve as a cautionary tale that we cannot proceed in the same way as we have.

On January 20, 2025, the Trump administration rescinded guidance regarding immigration enforcement in so-called “sensitive areas” – schools and churches – thus allowing ICE to enter these institutions. Many school districts sent out explanations to families about how they would comply with ICE, often highlighting that ICE would need a warrant and families would be notified. While this was meant to reassure families, it may have failed to account for the fear families were experiencing in their homes, their workplaces, and their everyday lives.

In *The Sociological Imagination*, C. Wright Mills (1960/2000) invites us to consider the relationship between the personal troubles we experience as individuals and the public issues of our times. As we watch high school students stand in solidarity with their peers who have been detained by ICE, neighbors demanding the return of well-loved restaurant owners, and communities standing in defense of their families, friends, and neighbors, what can educational leaders do? Some ideas include:

- Create an environment that allows students and families to share their fears and anxieties.
- Develop networks of counselors and social workers to support families.
- Provide support to educators who may have few resources to support children and families.
- Identify and host immigrant rights groups and information-sharing events, and make this information available to families. One useful organization is the Immigrant Legal Resource Center:
<https://www.ilrc.org/about-us>
- Identify school community members who could attend immigration hearings with families to be in solidarity and document what is happening.
- When students or family members are detained, stand in solidarity with community organizing efforts.

As educational leaders, we must follow the lead of our students and our communities who have exercised their sociological imagination. In using a sociological imagination, we must also look to history for perspective and context. This is not the first time the United States has attempted mass deportations. In 1954, the Eisenhower administration claimed 1.3 million people, including U.S. citizens, were swept up in what was called Operation W*tb*ck. As the name of the operation suggests, the use of stereotypes and xenophobia played a critical role in how these roundups occurred. Although the Border Patrol tried to use the National Guard to round up immigrants, they were denied, but this operation did use military tactics much like we are seeing today (Blakemore, 2018).

Educational leaders must recognize these immigration raids, the attacks on birthright citizenship, the assault on free speech, and the fear and anxiety in immigrant communities as their own personal troubles. As late educator Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1970/2000) said, “authority must stand on the side of freedom.” Educational leaders must stand on the side of freedom. When an administration violates the constitution and erodes due process rights, what is our responsibility and ability to engage our students around civic education and democracy?

References:

- Acevedo, N. (2025). ICE arrest of H.S. student sends shock waves through a Massachusetts town.
<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/ice-arrest-high-school-milford-massachusetts-immigration-rcna210324?featureFlagAix=false>
- Blakemore, E. (2018). The largest mass deportation in American history.
<https://www.history.com/articles/operation-wetback-eisenhower-1954-deportation>
- Conrad, J. (2025). Another public school student in New York City detained by ICE, as immigration raids escalate.
<https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2025/06/14/hyew-j14.html>
- Debusmann Jr., B. (2025). Who has been arrested by ICE under Trump?
<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c86p821p660o>
- Freire, P. (1970/2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. 30th Anniversary Ed. Continuum.
- Lambert, D. & Thornton, L. (2025). “There was a lot of fear”: Central Valley immigration raids drive up absences in schools, study finds. <https://edsources.org/2025/immigration-ice-raids-impact-student-attendance/734892>

Silva, D., Sridhar, P., & Gallo, D. (2025). Georgia college student detained by ICE after being wrongly pulled over is granted bond. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/georgia-college-student-detained-ice-wrongly-pulled-granted-bond-rcna208057>

Wright Mills, C. (1960/2000). The sociological imagination. 40th Anniversary Ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

The Power of Connection: Why Professional Networks Matter for Educational Leaders By: Dr. Melissa Sadorf

In the day-to-day rhythm of school leadership, it's easy to become isolated—caught in the whirlwind of decisions, deadlines, and demands. But leadership was never meant to be a solo act. Whether you're a principal navigating instructional shifts, a district administrator balancing policy and practice, or a department chair supporting both students and faculty colleagues, building and maintaining professional networks is not just helpful—it's essential.

Professional networks offer a space for perspective. They give leaders access to ideas beyond their own walls, helping them see challenges through a broader lens. A strong network can serve as a sounding board for new initiatives, a place to troubleshoot difficult decisions, or simply a space to find reassurance that you're not alone in the complexities of your role. They also serve as incubators for innovation. Hearing how another leader has tackled a similar issue—be it chronic absenteeism, community engagement, or staff retention—can spark solutions that might otherwise remain hidden. More than that, networks help keep leaders current. Educational trends, research, legislation, and best practices are constantly evolving; staying connected means staying informed. Perhaps most importantly, networks feed our resilience. Leadership can be emotionally demanding, and trusted professional relationships provide both encouragement and accountability. When cultivated with intention, these relationships become lifelines—especially in moments when the work feels heavy.

At NAU, our cohort model is intentionally designed to facilitate the creation and expansion of professional networks. Through shared learning, collaborative projects, and ongoing dialogue, our graduate students build lasting connections that support their professional journey long after coursework ends. These connections complement the relationships built through professional organizations, regional convenings, and leadership communities.

Make networking a priority—not because you have time to spare, but because you can't afford not to. Leadership is strengthened when it's shared.

Student Spotlight: Mr. Salvador Lopez

Salvador Lopez is a doctoral candidate in the Community College and Higher Education Leadership program who is studying how student involvement in clubs and organizations affects the development of Hispanic/Latine sense of belonging. Professionally, he is the Assistant Director of the Office of Leadership and Engagement, striving to help all Lumberjacks find their place at NAU. Salvador was one of this year's recipients of the Northern Arizona University President's Achievement Award, acknowledging his service to our institutional mission and his efforts to support student success. Salvador's professional role and his doctoral studies are tightly connected; he's how he describes his decision to join our doctoral program: "I wanted to continue learning more about various vectors of Higher Education so I could continue to become a better SA professional. I later realized that this could be achieved by completing a terminal degree, which led me to apply to NAU's program. This program has provided me with excellent learning opportunities, including in-person classes, cohort-based learning, and outstanding professors." In the CCHE



doctoral program, Lopez has learned how important it is to have supportive and present faculty aligned with a student's personal goals, and he wants to spotlight his dissertation chair Dr. Villarreal and the rest of his dissertation committee for modeling those values and helping him feel that he belongs in our program and is an important member of our community of scholars. When asked what advice Salvador would give to new incoming students, he shared this: "You will be challenged! Your classes will be taught by wonderful professionals/professors who really care about your growth and want to see you succeed. However, they want to make sure you learn the ins and outs of everything [and] they are doing it with love and care, even though you might think otherwise sometimes."

Alumni Spotlight: Dr. Jesus Chamberlain



Dr. Jesus Chamberlain works for the University of New Mexico's Center for Student Success in Albuquerque. As a practitioner researcher, Dr. Chamberlain's current focus is on Indigenous play in early childhood and its preparation for students' involvement in environmental and technical education. He is presenting on this research at the Indigenous Education Research Conference in April. As a member of the Institute for American Indian Education, Dr. Chamberlain works to support Indigenous education and its positive impacts on students' lives.

Reminiscing on his time in the Master's in Educational Foundations program, Dr. Chamberlain discussed the ways the program supported his research agenda and practices. "I can assuredly say that I would not be making impacts in Indigenous education, had I not had my foundation laid with great professors like Dr. Riemer, Dr. Wood, and Dr. Senese in the

Master's in Educational Foundations program. Educational Foundations nurtured my pedagogical lens and educational outlook, honed my research potential, and propelled me to complete my PhD in Curriculum and Instruction. My current work and the positive outcomes I have achieved are a direct outcome of studying in Educational Foundations. My Master's degree provided the platform for my PhD research and my career as an educator."

Dr. Chamberlain's advice: "I wish I would have known how important it is to take advantage of all the opportunities to showcase my research. I would make the most of these opportunities if given the chance to redo."

Online Success Coaching for Students!

In December 2024, NAU Online launched a brand-new Success Coaching team. The specialized team provides tailored support for fully online students from the time of initial enrollment through to graduation. Serving as student advocates, the success coaches help students set goals, overcome challenges, and connect with university resources to ensure their success. Through targeted proactive outreach, they address retention concerns and provide tailored support for the diverse and complex journeys that online learners bring to the university. As adult learner experts, the team is dedicated to helping students navigate barriers and achieve their academic goals. Students in online classes, and faculty who teach online classes, can connect with the Online Success Coaching team at nauonline.success@nau.edu.

Call to Action: [Follow EDL on Facebook!](#) @NAU Ed Leadership