NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL POLICY
STRATEGIC PLAN 2013–2017
Northwestern University began as one of the first institutions in what was then the Northwest Territory, providing education for those pioneering families who first settled the river valleys of Illinois, Ohio, Indiana, Wisconsin and Michigan. The challenges of that time and place were great. Education vied with the basic needs of the family for help with harvesting and daily life. K-12 education evolved in the form of a one-room schoolhouse where students of all ages learned together on many levels. While the one-room schoolhouse as an actual place is no more, we can still imagine such a space where learning is seamless, collaborative and knows no borders.

Now we are part of a global community, and the challenges to promote learning and development are even greater. Economies reflect a nation’s investment in the education of its citizens. Education systems inevitably require reform, and this calls for creative, innovative leaders and policymakers. Education depends on connecting the family, school, work and the community. While new technologies foster these connections, they are being invented and changing at a rate previously unimagined, presenting both challenges and opportunities.

In the School of Education and Social Policy (SESP) at Northwestern University, we embrace the new landscape of not just the “Northwest Territory,” but a global territory, and we pioneer in making things better. We seek to lead the way in using new technologies and designs for education to make learning a global priority. We want to put children’s health, well-being and development at the top of every policymaker’s agenda. We strive to make learning on a global level as seamless as it was in those days of the one-room schoolhouse, with a teacher who was so much a part of the local community. In order to do this, we will:

- **DEVELOP** a global perspective
- **PREPARE** a new generation of education leaders
- **LEAD** a bold rethinking of designing for learning
- **CREATE** innovative interventions to improve human lives
- **SHAPE AND EVALUATE** policies designed for impact
- **FOSTER** an engaged learning community

This plan for the School of Education and Social Policy articulates a set of strategies to advance these goals. Our work synchronizes with the interdisciplinary, global and community-oriented ambitions of Northwestern University. We will draw on the strengths of our faculty and the talents of our entire community.
A new faculty position in learning in the global context will amplify the School’s commitment to teaching and research with an international focus.

An Office of Global Initiatives will enlighten the SESP community about international issues and carry SESP’s work to worldwide audiences.

Enhancements to the curriculum will increase the international perspective of our students.

We will engage internationally with others to inform our work and extend the best of our resources and expertise to address critical human development, learning and education issues worldwide.

DEVELOP A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Students and alumni like Alexa Herzog (BS 2013), who studied abroad in Africa her junior year, and Mei Xi Ng (BS 2010), who investigates transformative education in schools around the world, want to make a difference globally.
PREPARE A NEW GENERATION OF EDUCATION LEADERS

We will inspire and educate our students to become leaders with the knowledge and drive to promote positive changes in policy and practice. These leaders will work to transform schools, workplaces, other learning environments, organizations and communities, and to influence the development of social and educational policy.

A new Center for Education Design and Leadership, joint with the McCormick School of Engineering and Applied Science, will use design-thinking expertise to tackle challenges in K-12 education.

A new master’s degree in teacher leadership will develop a cadre of education leaders, and fellowships will attract the most talented candidates.

Grants from the Hess Research Fund, Opportunities Fund and Practicum Assistance Fund will inspire and support undergraduates to gain research and leadership experience.

Award-winning undergraduate and graduate programs at SESP educate and inspire novice teachers like David Leb (SESP 2012) through innovative strategies such as professor Miriam Sherin’s discussion of classroom videos.
The Office of STEM Education Partnerships will design highly motivating, cutting-edge high-tech activities and curricula for K-12 students.

The Center for Connected Learning will design learning environments and tools for science education.

Next-generation learning spaces in SESP will meet the needs of 21st-century learners whose lives are permeated by technology.
CREATE INNOVATIVE INTERVENTIONS TO IMPROVE HUMAN LIVES

We will leverage our strengths in health and human development and in working with schools, families and communities to design interventions to promote healthy human development in multiple contexts and across the life span.

Dual-generation strategies offer children high-quality early education while their parents develop job skills, providing the ability to ensure economic stability for their family.

A new Laboratory for Innovation in Learning and Teaching and the Center for Talent Development will increase knowledge about and delivery of effective interventions for improving education.

Project Excite will enrich the learning of gifted minority students in Evanston schools and ensure they meet their potential.

Many SESP initiatives improve conditions for children and families. For example, Project Excite increases achievement for gifted minority students, and professor Emma Adam studies how stress affects health.
A new faculty position in health and education policy in emerging economies will increase our impact on developing policies to improve human lives.

The Urban Education Lab, with the University of Chicago, will continue to improve education outcomes by providing scientific evidence about which education strategies are most effective.

Through exchanges with international and domestic policy scholars, we will develop additional expertise and enhance our influence in shaping policy.

We will seek to make a positive difference in the lives of children, youth and families, and in schools and communities, by using cutting-edge research to understand the impact of current policy on practice and to influence the design of new policies.

In an effort to improve education policies, professor Jonathan Guryan investigates mentoring to prevent school dropout, and professor David Figlio researches school accountability, vouchers and standards.
FOSTER AN ENGAGED LEARNING COMMUNITY

We will promote engagement within the SESP community as well as with communities beyond the University. We will cultivate an inclusive culture, encouraging and valuing diverse perspectives to promote learning and development.

The new Office of Student Affairs is a model space for undergraduates infused with cutting-edge technology supporting collaboration and engagement.

Center for Talent Development scholarships will promote the learning and development of gifted students of limited means.

Promote 360, an undergraduate student organization, will support minority students through mentorship, social activities and advocacy.
The success of this strategic plan requires the involvement and commitment of every member of our community including students, parents, faculty, staff, alumni and friends. Together, we will invest in initiatives underway and promote new ideas and strategies for making things better. Join us in changing lives.