

Sam Abramovich graduated from Brandeis University with a Bachelors in Politics and received his Masters in Teaching from the University of Virginia. Prior to enrolling in the LSAP program, he researched the educational potential of video games and taught classes for the Center for Technology in Education at Johns Hopkins University. Before devoting himself to a career in education he worked at several dot-com's specializing in security software. With their move to Pittsburgh, Sam and his wife wonder how long before their daughter learns Pittsburghese.

David Frank originally comes from New York City and has a BS in psychology and MS in Applied Developmental Psychology from the University of Pittsburgh. David has worked on various longitudinal studies investigating contextual factors of child development including school and teacher effects on child outcomes as well as a project evaluating the implementation of a data-driven effort to increase student achievement in participant districts by providing access to and training on educational software that connects student information, curriculum and instruction. David is currently working with Professor Richard Correnti on a project collecting educational indicators to measure the health of the region's schools, evaluating a web-based mathematics resource for teachers and students, and examining the results of a quasi-experimental research project investigating the efficacy of three school improvement efforts.

Mary Ann Steiner's career has been shaped by 18 years spent at the Science Museum of Minnesota, establishing and running a center where teens developed and presented informal science experiences to public audiences in the museum and neighborhood settings. (see <http://www.smm.org/about/kayasc>). Her Master's program field study took her to Northern Ireland to help to establish museum-based youth programs. She has recently completed a two-year rotation at the National Science Foundation as a program officer for the Informal Science Education program. These experiences have led to her current research interest in the role that content-rich community resources can play in supporting community learning for people of all ages, and the ways community knowledge can inform the work of these same institutions. She joined UPCLOSE (<http://upclose.lrdc.pitt.edu>). Mary Ann holds an M.Ed. in Youth Development Leadership from the University of Minnesota (2007) and a BA from Bard College, in New York.

Miray Tekkumru-Kisa completed her undergraduate study in Primary Science Education at Bogazici University in Turkey in 2005. After her graduation, she joined the Department of Secondary School Science and Mathematics Education both as a research assistant and a masters student. In 2008, she received her masters degree; in her thesis she focused on developing a Science Center Learning Kit to improve student learning outcomes from an informal science setting in Istanbul and implementing the kit to measure its effectiveness in terms of student learning outcomes. She has had project and work experiences in teachers' professional development and in the improvement of learning environments in in- and out-of-school settings.

Laura Bray graduated Magnum Cum Laude from the College of New Jersey in 2005 with a B.A. in English. She recently received her M.A. in Education from Chestnut Hill College. While at Chestnut Hill College, Laura completed a thesis entitled, "The Silent Majority",

which examines the role of teachers in special education reform. In 2005, Laura was accepted into the Philadelphia Teaching Fellows, and spent two years teaching special education in the Philadelphia School District. During this past year, Laura taught special education science at Bensalem High School. Laura plans to further examine best teaching practices in special education, especially the implications of IDEIA and NCLB on special education and the policy-to-practice disconnect in special education reform. Aside from her studies, Laura is an avid reader, writer, passionate activist and horse enthusiast.

James Scherrer comes to the University of Pittsburgh from Los Angeles where he held an appointment with the Los Angeles Unified School District as a Mathematics Instructional Coach. Prior to this appointment, Jimmy was a fourth and fifth grade mathematics magnet teacher. He volunteers his summers teaching in Guatemala and currently collaborates with Pearson Achievement Solutions as a curriculum developer for their online graduate-level courses. Jimmy obtained a Master of Arts in Educational Administration and a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education with a minor concentration in mathematics. He holds an Administrative Services Credential as well as a Crosscultural, Language and Academic Development Certificate. In 2007, Jimmy recently received the Los Angeles City Teachers, Math Association's award for Excellence in Mathematics Education.