Chapter 14
Propelling Professional Development Schools Forward:
Collaborative Relationships to Revise Teacher Education Programs and Assessment Structures

Cynthia Benton
SUNY – Cortland, USA

Stephanie Falls
Homer Intermediate School, USA

ABSTRACT

This program study used faculty, administrator and teacher candidate participant interviews to examine expanded field experiences and action research effects on a Professional Development School (PDS) partnership. Specifically, the roles and relationships between public school and higher education members were examined in light of the effectiveness of the program and teacher candidate performance. Implications for higher education practices in PDS development, program design, faculty development and student learning are described. The PDS model has been embraced as a means to collaboratively develop teacher education programs that benefit student learning as well as to effectively meet licensure and academic requirements.

INTRODUCTION

Historically, innovations in the design and delivery of teacher education programs have been challenging and slowly implemented. The recent emphasis on redesigning programs using a Professional Development School (PDS) Model for institutions of higher education may be one which produces more immediate and transformative results. Using a PDS model, both public school and college personnel have redefined their respective roles in training new teachers and evaluating teacher effectiveness. We documented the ways a Professional Development School partnership between a comprehensive state college and a local

K-12 public school altered program delivery and assessment. The study examined a graduate program at a traditional, teacher training institution, focusing on student learning outcomes and classroom research rather than formal research goals and university-centered instruction.

The Residency Program for teacher certification featured in this chapter grew organically, when members discovered how the PDS structure benefited all participants, including: Institution of Higher Education (IHE) members, teacher candidates, faculty, Local Education Agencies (LEA), classroom teachers, and especially students in the classrooms. The partnership expanded over several years to feature a full-year Residency Program anchored in action research. Teacher candidates became part of the school district culture for an entire year, and following Polly's (2014) model, they interacted in a variety of roles at different grade levels, building their skills through practice and acting as part of the school community. Students, teacher candidates and the local school benefited from the approach. Elementary students benefited from the consistency of Master's candidates practicing long-term in the classrooms, which allowed for more small-group instruction to meet mandated curriculum requirements. The schools benefited from the action research projects implemented as part of the college curriculum. College candidates brought valuable ideas into the classroom and created an emphasis on best practices. The PDS partnership grew; risk-taking and innovation were a result of the positive school climate and the relationships developed among all the stakeholders.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND ASSESSMENT IN TEACHER EDUCATION

The assessment of teacher education programs has been a focus of education policy and fodder for public criticism in recent years. Teacher education innovations have historically focused on student teachers, notably the student teacher/cooperating teacher/college supervisor triad. Throughout the 20th century, teacher education increasingly expanded field experiences and assessments which were solely focused on the student teacher as a candidate and recipient of instruction (Allen, Perl, Goodson & Sprouse, 2014). It became clear that this model had limited usefulness as a way to introduce new teachers to the profession. The Professional Development School (PDS) model was initiated in the late 1990s at Kansas State University by a consortium of public school teachers, administrators and faculty (Allen et al., 2014). The defining feature of the program was its focus on K-12 student learning, rather than on teacher candidate experiences.

The PDS is characterized as a network of stakeholders engaged simultaneously in a growth process. Classroom teachers, preservice teachers and university supervisors interact frequently and collaborate to deepen their understanding of teaching and learning (Allen et al., 2014). The PDS approach to supervision and support of the student teacher includes implementation of co-teaching opportunities between the cooperating teacher and the preservice teacher, who most often share instructional duties. This model is also distinguished by an emphasis on shared professional responsibility for supporting the preservice teacher and assessments geared toward improving education for K-12 students (Allen et al., 2014).

Standard 2 from the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) Standards focuses on the importance of partnerships between P-12 schools and universities to enhance student learning and teacher candidate preparation (Parsons, et al., 2016). In the midst of discussions on how to improve partnerships between P-12 schools and universities, a number of institutions of higher education have pioneered unique school‑university partnerships. The PDS philosophy is used as a framework for supporting school‑university partnerships and the process for schools joining their PDS network. The PDS

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