

Chapter 23

Developing a More Systematic Approach to Professional Development School Partnerships: The Case of PDS Efforts at a Large Urban University

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ABSTRACT

In this chapter, the authors describe the growth and development of a Professional Development School network between a large urban university and its school partners. This partnership included a variety of grade levels, ranging from Pre-Kindergarten through High School (PK-12). This chapter provides a historical overview, decisions that shaped the current status of PDS partnerships, and provides implications for systematic approaches to PDS partnerships.

OVERVIEW

Professional development schools are innovative institutions formed through partnerships between professional education programs and P-12 schools (NCATE, 2001, p. 1).

Professional Development School Partnerships have developed from long-running recommendations for educator preparation programs to systematically collaborate with PK-12 school partners (NCATE, 2001; The Holmes Group, 1986, 1990). These partnerships have mutual benefits

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to both teacher preparation programs and PK-12 schools, including rich practicum and research settings for Colleges and Universities, and for PK-12 schools to benefit from the expertise and knowledge base provided by university education professors (NCATE, 2001).

In their *Standards for Professional Development Schools* document, NCATE (2001) wrote: “Educators in both schools and universities point to the gap between research and practice, and to the poor articulation between professional preparation and the real world of school reform. P-12 and university educators seek to develop the linkages that allow universities and schools to benefit from the relationship that is created between them.” They go on to talk about the mutual problem solving process that both university and PK-12 faculty can participate in as they share their expertise through collaborative projects.

Further, the new Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) Standards (CAEP, 2013, p. 6) provide a call for teacher education programs to continue to leverage Professional Development School partnerships to provide “high-quality clinical practice are central to preparation so that candidates develop the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions necessary to demonstrate positive impact on all PK-12 students’ learning and development.”

THE NINE ESSENTIALS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOLS

Seeing a need to delineate and provide further structure about what constitutes Professional Development Schools, the National Association for Professional Development Schools (NAPDS, 2008) wrote a document entitled *What it means to be a professional development school*. This document details the essential components of

PDS partnerships. Below we list the nine essential characteristics that NAPDS outlined in that document.

1. A comprehensive mission that is broader in its outreach and scope than the mission of any partner and that furthers the education profession and its responsibility to advance equity within schools and, by potential extension, the broader community;
2. A school–university culture committed to the preparation of future educators that embraces their active engagement in the school community;
3. Ongoing and reciprocal professional development for all participants guided by need;
4. A shared commitment to innovative and reflective practice by all participants;
5. Engagement in and public sharing of the results of deliberate investigations of practice by respective participants;
6. An articulation agreement developed by the respective participants delineating the roles and responsibilities of all involved;
7. A structure that allows all participants a forum for ongoing governance, reflection, and collaboration;
8. Work by college/university faculty and P-12 faculty in formal roles across institutional settings; and
9. Dedicated and shared resources and formal rewards and recognition structures.

These nine essential characteristics outlined by NAPDS provide universities and PK-12 institutions with broad guidelines of components that should be included when forming, maintaining, and revisiting PDS partnerships. In this chapter we describe the history, development, and growth of a PDS partnership between a large College of Education and PK-12 school partners.

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