



PDS Partners



**NAPDS President,
Chris Perkovich**

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A Message From the President

Chris Perkovich, Paul T. Wright Elementary School, Malta, IL

Dear Colleagues,

My heartfelt thank you to all NAPDS members as I am delighted to serve as your President this year! I have learned much in my year as President-Elect and therefore want also to thank all members of our Executive Council and Board of Directors. Since my warm welcome as President-Elect, they continue to support and to guide me through my first actions as President. I am honored to be a member of an organization that respects and nurtures the knowledge base of all participants within the P-20 spectrum.

At last month's annual meeting, held in Orlando, Florida, there were so many enthusiastic P-20 educators committed to the NAPDS mission of student achievement and professional collaboration. NAPDS continues to grow. At the 2003 PDS Conference our first discussions included 550 attendees. Since that time we have grown to our 2008 totals of 1150 attendees. Interest in our 2009 meeting in Daytona Beach, Florida, promises even further growth.

NAPDS wants to be relevant to all of our needs and we most certainly want active participants from the P-20 spectrum. If you believe relevance is a natural outcome of understanding mutual goals, then we need your help. NAPDS would like to know how our organization can be more relevant to the needs of the P-12 educator. Please consider sharing your successes (and frustrations!) through our media: our newsletter, our journal, or a presentation at a PDS conference. By sharing an article or presentation on how your school partnership works, all P-20 stakeholders will benefit.

Even as we look back upon the success of our annual meeting, it's not too early to consider participating in the upcoming NAPDS-sponsored forum, *A National Leadership Forum on the Nine Essentials of PDS Work*, August 3-4, in New Orleans, Louisiana. The forum will encourage educators to discuss and to share the ways in which PDS relationships across the nation approach their partnership work.

Best regards,
Christine Perkovich, President, NAPDS

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What It Means to Be a Professional Development School

*A Statement by the Executive Council and Board of Directors of the National Association for Professional Development Schools**

“The NAPDS invites individuals involved in school-university partnerships to share this statement with colleagues in the spirit of continuous improvement. By coming to terms with the challenges and opportunities inherent in this statement, we can collectively fulfill the vision of this remarkable and distinct partnership we call PDS.”

The purpose of the following statement is to share with the educational community the National Association for Professional Development Schools’ (NAPDS) articulation of the term “Professional Development School.” This statement is not intended to be either an evaluation or a critique of the phenomenal work that has punctuated PDSs over the past twenty years. Rather, the association recognizes that there is a tendency for the term “PDS” to be used as a catch-all for various models of school-university partnership work that may or may not be best described as PDS. Thus, the intent of this NAPDS statement is to assert the *essentials*, or fundamental qualities, of a Professional Development School.

The NAPDS encourages all those working in school-university relationships to embrace the nine *essentials* of PDS work communicated in this statement. The *essentials* are written in tangible, rather than abstract, language and represent practical goals toward which PDS work should be directed. For those in established PDSs, some aspects of current work will be confirmed while other aspects may be identified as needing attention. For those aspiring to establish PDSs, we offer this statement as a useful guide for their work.

The NAPDS invites individuals involved in school-university partnerships to share this statement with colleagues in the spirit of continuous improvement. By coming to terms with the challenges and opportunities inherent in this statement, we can collectively fulfill the vision of this remarkable and distinct partnership we call PDS.

In an attempt to come to a common understanding of what it means to be a PDS, the NAPDS Executive Council and Board of Directors gathered twenty-two educators in August 2007 for a two-day Summit on Professional Development Schools entitled “En Route to a Common Understanding.” The participants in the summit, which was held in New Orleans, were all experienced with PDSs and represented not only the P–20 continuum but also a number of professional education associations that have played active roles in the PDS national initiative. The conversation produced agreement on nine *essentials* that the NAPDS maintains need to be present for a school–university relationship to be called a Professional Development School. Without having all nine, the relationship that exists between a school/district and college/university, albeit however strong, would not be a PDS. How individual PDSs meet these *essentials* will vary from location to location, but they all need to be in place to justify the use of the term “PDS.”

The nine required *essentials* of a PDS are:

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.

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What It Means to Be a Professional Development School

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Included in the full text of the statement, the NAPDS posits narratives for each of the nine required *essentials* of a PDS to assist with the differentiation between PDSs and other forms of strong school–university partnership. *Essentials* 1 through 5 establish the philosophical underpinnings for PDSs, while *essentials* 6 through 9 describe the logistical requirements of a PDS relationship.

The NAPDS Executive Council and Board of Directors assert that these nine *essentials* are integral to the philosophies, policies, and processes of Professional Development School partnerships. The NAPDS has a responsibility as a steward for the PDS movement to encourage all PDS stakeholders to articulate their own unique relationships within a framework that allows P–20 educators the opportunity for a common understanding of what it means to work in a PDS partnership. As conveyed, these nine *essentials* allow for multiple variations in PDS work while maintaining some consistent expectations irrespective of the idiosyncratic nature of individual PDS partnerships. Armed with this common understanding, PDSs have the opportunity to forge their own individual policies and processes based on their own contextual needs, safe in the knowledge that they can describe the ways they have adhered to the nine overarching *essentials*. These *essentials* afford and encourage flexibility while maintaining some common assumptions.

We thank our gracious colleagues from valued P–20 associations for their wisdom in the creation of these nine *essentials* as the central tenets of Professional Development School work. We trust that PDSs will use the nine *essentials* to shape their own commitments, visions, and strategic planning efforts. Moreover, we believe that these *essentials* will provide insight for all school–university partnerships seeking to extend further the scope and magnitude of their existing relationships so that they can build toward a PDS culture. By expressing common expectations for PDS collaboration, the NAPDS believes the PDS movement will continue to establish itself as the preeminent model for partnerships between P–12 schools/districts and colleges/universities.

*This statement was written on behalf of the NAPDS by Roger Brindley (Senior Editor of *School-University Partnerships*), Bruce E. Field (NAPDS Immediate Past President), and Elliott Lessen (NAPDS President). For a full version of this document, see www.napds.org. The full document will also be reproduced in the next NAPDS Newsletter and the next issue of *School-University Partnerships*.

“The NAPDS has a responsibility as a steward for the PDS movement to encourage all PDS stakeholders to articulate their own unique relationships within a framework that allows P–20 educators the opportunity for a common understanding of what it means to work in a PDS partnership.”

“Editors’ Corner”

Kristien Marquez-Zenkov, Editor, Cleveland State University

Jim Harmon, Assistant Editor, Euclid High School

Sarah Vogel Laschinger, Assistant Editor, Cleveland State University/Euclid High School

We are excited again to bring you reports of PDS news from around the country and from our National Association for Professional Development Schools. This issue again represents our commitment to the collaboration of PDS school and university representatives in sharing their work. For future issues we hope to hear more of the voices of PDS pre-service teachers and community members.

This issue is the third and last for our editorial team. When we assumed the editorial roles for *PDS Partners* with the September, 2007 issue, we made a commitment to building a team representing PDS in-service teachers, pre-service teachers, and university faculty. In August Sarah will be graduating from the Master of Urban Secondary Teaching (MUST) program—a PDS partnership between Cleveland State University and the Cleveland, Euclid, and East Cleveland school districts—and seeking her first full-time position as an English teacher. Jim will continue as a mentor teacher working with MUST through Euclid High School. And Kristien will be moving to George Mason University in August, where he will step into a role as a literacy faculty member and coordinator as well as a PDS liaison with an area high school. Jim and Kristien will continue as assistant editor and editor of *PDS Partners*, respectively, and we will be seeking a new assistant editor from the students in the George Mason pre-service PDS programs. We hope that you have found the three issues produced by our team to be informative and engaging. It has been an honor to share this work with you.

A PDS Portrait Worth a Thousand Words

Alison Rutter, East Stroudsburg University

“The Executive Council and Board of Directors ask that you share your progress in this effort to provide the necessary detail and life to the meaning of the essentials.”

As NAPDS Past-President Elliott Lessen, with Bruce Field and Roger Brindley, discussed at the annual meeting session, “The Nine Essentials of PDS Work,” each of our PDS partnerships is unique in the way it structures its individual partnership relationship, but all share the basic essential tenets. These core tenets are what distinguish our concept of educational partnership from others. During the presentation, we were asked to consider our own PDS partnerships and the way in which we each approach these *essentials* as a framework for discussion as well as self-analysis. In doing so, it may seem that some of the *essentials* lend themselves to a simple checklist of artifacts, but a deeper discussion and description is what will allow us to appreciate the richness of each of our contexts and have more informed conversations. Like most meaningful analyses, the resulting benefit will match the effort. This effort—and considering the deeper ques-

tions—is one we hope all will undertake.

The Executive Council and Board of Directors ask that you share your progress in this effort to provide the necessary detail and life to the meaning of the *essentials*. Your reports can provide guideposts for us all and help to keep the discussion among us all alive. For instance, you may find that your PDS excels at one or another of these *essentials* or that you are having difficulty addressing some of them. Sharing your successes, struggles, and examples may help another PDS partnership in another setting or lead to broader discussions across our partnerships, around the nation and across the globe that assist us all.

We are currently exploring various means to hold these conversations and provide a forum for them. Having said this, one way to communicate the way your PDS has

achieved success with an *essential* would be for you to craft a richly detailed “portrait” of it to be published in an upcoming issue of *PDS Partners*, our organization’s official newsletter. We hope that these portraits will encourage other PDS partnerships to both engage in analyses of their own programs and to recognize that there are multiple strategies for fulfilling the PDS agenda. This is a critical next step in providing substance to the *essentials*, so we hope to populate our next few newsletters with these descriptions. Please submit your “portraits” (in 1,000 words or less) to the editors of *PDS Partners* at pdspartners@csuohio.edu. If you are interested in writing such a portrait, but feel that you need some immediate support or guidance to do so, please feel free to contact the newsletter editors as well. The *essentials* will only become a living document when we recognize the faces in your substantive portraits.

Preparing Teachers to Lead Shared Learning and Practice

Timothy Berkey, University of Houston-Victoria

Nora Hutto, University of Houston-Victoria

Many P-12 schools are realizing the importance of establishing professional learning communities and often encounter the challenge of helping teachers lead their colleagues in shared learning and practice. Teachers naturally experience difficulties as they attempt to come out of isolation and work together to improve teaching and learning. Those who step up to lead find themselves navigating through issues such as trust and commitment while attempting to collaborate on important work to help children succeed. Investing time with teacher leaders is essential and, as we have found, partnering with a university educational leadership program can strengthen the skill sets that contribute to leadership

of effective teams. At the University of Houston-Victoria we have employed the following components in our internship program for teachers preparing for leadership and offer these to schools in their work in developing team leaders:

1. Create several avenues for teacher leaders to learn and share together as they develop their skills. Leadership can be a lonely job and having a network of support will enable teachers to talk about their issues and learn from others who are going through the same experiences. All of our interns participate in online discussion groups. This allows them to journal their problems, seek ideas from others and release their feelings in

a safe environment. We ask interns to write at least one entry per week, but have found that once the conversation begins, many take advantage of this opportunity to share and learn from one another.

2. Provide each leader with an ongoing support team of a school administrator and an outside resource such as a university professor. New leaders need ready access to experienced leadership. Having an inside and outside resource gives teacher leaders varying perspectives to draw upon in developing their own strategies and styles. It also enables experienced leaders to serve as coaches.

3. Read and reflect together. As

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The PDS Conference: A Student's Perspective

Jesse McDowell, Clarke College

Three of my fellow students and I were given the unique opportunity to attend and present at the 2008 PDS National Conference. Whether we said it aloud or not, all of us felt some kind of doubt when we first arrived. As undergraduates, and three of us only juniors, we weren't sure that we really belonged in front of professionals in the field. When we started our presentation I thought, "Just act like a teacher." We walked into the lobby 45 minutes later with a new attitude. It turns out we didn't need to *act* like teachers after all. We *are* teachers.

It's interesting that this year's conference theme was "The Power of PDSs in Preparing Professionals." More than a mouthful of Ps, the message of this conference was clear and the experience affirming. Though we are PDS students, my colleagues and I felt comfortable participating in sessions and prepared to discuss our personal classroom experiences and philosophies. It's an incredible feeling to speak about differentiation of instruction as an experienced participant and share examples from our own classrooms. We felt like a real part of the professional world, and we are.

We've seen the advantages of a PDS in the real experiences it offers, including the conference representing it. The opportunity for the four of us to really get our feet wet in professional development is something that more pre-service teachers should

experience. As PDS students, at the conference we found numerous strategies to use in our classrooms when the time comes. We found affirmation of our training, a mind full of questions to chew on, and a great lead on answers. Mostly, we made contacts with other professionals who share our passion, debate our ideals, and are genuinely interested in our side of the story. They also know how to have a good time in Florida.

As much as pre-service teachers and PDS students benefit from conferences like these, the established professionals gain their share of rewards. They've seen in us that our system is working, that PDSs really are preparing professionals. Teachers and professors are sharing in our strategies, are also asking and answering questions, and are making contacts with their next generation. As we all know, when a teacher and student come to understand each other, both learn from the experience.

We want to thank the conference staff for creating this opportunity for us, and all of those who made us feel so welcomed. We saw here more than ever how powerful the PDS program is, and the genuine impact it has had on each of us. Mostly, we'd like to thank our professors for the incredible job they've done establishing our new PDS and preparing us for this conference. We couldn't have done it without you.



School-University Partnerships Submission

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Manuscript Submission
Guidelines
can be found at
www.napds.org.

Adjusting to PDS Growing Pains

One Early Childhood Program's Journey

Linda K. (Huber) Taylor, Ball State University

Chris Landon, Castleton United Methodist Nursery School

“But what happens when the relationship is sustained for a period of time? What can be done to keep the relationship from becoming stagnant? A timeline of one program's journey may help others see how to keep the relationship active.”

During the first year of the PDS relationship, a fair amount of time is spent in the decision-making process regarding what the school will provide for the University and what the University will provide for the school. But what happens when the relationship is sustained for a period of time? What can be done to keep the relationship from becoming stagnant? A timeline of one program's journey may help others see how to keep the relationship active.

In the first few years of the partnership, the University Liaison often suggested a research study he/she wanted to conduct or a presentation that he/she wanted to do with assistance from the PDS. Dur-

ing the second year of the partnership between Ball State University and Castleton United Methodist Nursery School (CUMNS Kids), the University Liaison and a colleague conducted a research study on quality care in early childhood Professional Development Schools (Clark & Stroud, 2001). Later research included parent perceptions of the implementation of “Advocate Teachers” for their children (Huber, 2003), and the PDS became a site for a larger study on a phonological awareness test that had been developed by a Ball State faculty member (Cassady, Smith & Huber, 2005). In November, 2001, the University Liaison, the director of the preschool program, and a teacher from that program par-

ticipated in a workshop presentation at a national early childhood conference to share information about the PDS relationship in preschool settings.

Perhaps a turning point where the PDS school staff began to feel more empowered with making decisions came when funding was made available for the University Liaison and two members from the PDS to attend the National Staff Development Annual Conferences in December, 2001 and again in December, 2002. Because a grant funded this opportunity, each PDS was required to develop a plan of action based on what was learned at the

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Partnering with Families

A Winning Strategy in PDS

Pamela Kramer Ertel, East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania

Dora Tartar, Pleasant Valley Elementary School

The East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania's Professional Development School strives to live out the motto, “PDS – where everyone is a learner.” We have developed service learning opportunities that have enhanced the learning of our PDS students, as well as the children and families in the school district. The goal of the PDS service learning program is to provide pre-service teachers with a meaningful service experience that meets the needs of the community in which the PDS pre-service teacher is engaged.

In the Pleasant Valley School District, four years of longitudinal data, as measured by the DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Early Literacy Skills) indicated that 55-57% of the students entering kindergarten were at-risk or unprepared for school in the area of early literacy. Couple this with a half-day (rather

than full-day) kindergarten program and the need to provide home intervention is critical to the success of the students.

Studies show that children whose families engage in at-school and at-home activities make significantly greater gains in language scores as measured on subtests of vocabulary, story comprehension, and sequencing in story-telling as compared with those children without parent involvement (Jordan, Snow, & Porche, 2000). This formed the premise for the “Ready, Set, Read!” program. Parents of four-year olds, who would be incoming kindergarten students the next year, were invited to attend five after school workshops. The school district staff presented these hands-on informational literacy sessions. The sessions focused upon the following concepts: Book and Print Awareness, Letter Recognition, Vocabulary

Building, Sound Awareness, Written Expression, and Letter Sounds.

While the parents attended large and small group sessions, the PDS students worked with the four-year olds on literacy activities. The parent reactions were extremely positive about the sessions. They indicated that they learned valuable information about how to help their children with literacy and learning at home. This year following the implementation of the “Ready, Set, Read!” program, 44% of the students entered kindergarten at risk in the area of literacy, which was a significant drop over the previous four years. The rewards for the PDS university students were the experiences they gained in working with preschool students, their visibility in the school, and the integral role they played in this school community program.

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What's In It for Us

How Can Using Data Improve the PDS Experience for Universities, Teachers, and, Most Importantly, the Students We Serve?

Deborah Piper, Towson University

Susan Sergeant, Annapolis Middle School

Laura Kinnamon, Lindale Middle School

Jon Appelt, North County High School

Collaboration among educators is now more crucial than ever. The synergy created from our professional development school partnership enables us to improve student achievement and prepare effective new teachers because we share a common purpose and we value the collaborative thinking process. At the Spring 2007 PDS National Conference our presentation *“What’s in it for us: How can using data improve the PDS experience for universities, teachers, and most importantly, the students we serve?”* described how our partnership uses data-based decision making in the classroom. Through our PDS partnership, we have become a professional learning community.

Our partnership includes two middle schools and one high school in an urban/suburban area of Anne Arundel County, Maryland and the Master of Arts in Teaching Program at Towson University in Baltimore, Maryland. The middle and high schools serve a diverse student population. As reported by MdReportCard.org, over one-third of the students qualify for free or reduced meals, and an average of 15% require special education services. The schools enroll African-American, Hispanic, Asian, and Caucasian students in proportions that mirror Maryland state demographics. All three schools have struggled in recent years to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) goals and enable all students to meet county and state high stakes testing goals. Our work emphasizes the use of both formative and summative data to improve teaching and learning.

Data-based decision making drives

the work of our partnership. When teacher candidates become PDS interns, they spend over 140 days engaged in mentored induction during a fall-spring professional year. During each of the two semesters of their “professional year,” interns complete an “Evidence of Student Learning” report that documents their implementation of the “What—So What—Now What?” approach to instruction. We engage interns and mentor teachers in looking carefully at “What” they want the children to learn. Analysis of assessment data preceding and following instruction guides the teachers to plan the “So what?” or instructional interventions. Equally important is the planning of future instruction based on the “Now what?” part of the thinking. Our model is informed by the critical questions posed by DuFour (2004) and strives to be a professional learning community that focuses on student learning and is accountable for results.

Interns describe the content standards they will teach, design a pre-test to measure student learning prior to instruction, design instruction based on pre-test data, implement instruction and collect daily formative assessment data, adjust instruction based upon formative assessments, and analyze post-test results to understand student learning and the impact that their instructional decision-making had on the learning process. Mentor teachers collaborate with interns throughout this process, and mentors are now using the pre-post approach to instructional design after their interns have left their classrooms. As a demonstration of the reciprocal impact of the PDS partnership, mentors also are us-

ing data to design and modify instruction in order to improve student learning at the classroom level.

School improvement efforts are also supported by the partnership. Dr. Ron Thomas, Associate Director of the Towson University Center for Leadership in Education, has worked with school leadership and content area departments to analyze school level data and guide school improvement efforts. Dr. Thomas collaborates with building administrators and departments to analyze student assessment data and plan instructional interventions. The university coordinator for the partnership regularly attends School Improvement Team (SIT) meetings and the partnership steering committee ensures that partnership activities support school improvement goals.

So what’s in it for us? When interns use data to plan and reflect upon instruction, they have evidence to describe the success of their efforts, and this motivates and sustains their growth as pre-service teachers. In-service teachers benefit from the opportunity to refresh their skills in standards-based instructional design and assessment, and they see the pay-off in increased student performance on classroom and benchmark assessments as well as high stakes tests. Most importantly, the students we serve are able to learn more and to demonstrate greater achievement on county and state testing requirements. Each of us holds a crucial element for improving student achievement; we cannot exist without the other. The collaboration makes the difference.

“The synergy created from our professional development school partnership enables us to improve student achievement and prepare effective new teachers because we share a common purpose and we value the collaborative thinking process.”

Reference

DuFour, R. (2004). What is a “professional learning community”? *Educational Leadership*, 61(8), 6-11.

A Family Affair

Multi-faceted Strategies for Continuing Success

*Laura Blood and Judith Cheek, Relay Elementary School/University of Maryland Baltimore County
Mildred Ferris and Vickie Williams, Arbutus Elementary School/University of Maryland Baltimore County
Sue Small, University of Maryland Baltimore County*

“The PDS strategic plan is guided by the needs of schools and children. PDS liaisons attend school improvement meetings. School faculty and administrators participate in PDS strategic planning.”

Six years after beginning the UMBC-Baltimore County Public Schools Professional Development School, we identify our three PDS schools and university partnership as a “family affair.” We use the metaphor to describe how powerful personal relationships built and now sustain the PDS, supporting growth of school and university faculty and our children. We offer multi-faceted strategies that emerged as we reflected on stories of teachers, interns, and UMBC faculty.

One of our strategies is to vary our PDS partnership meeting sites. The monthly meetings at alternating schools create the opportunity to include administrators, teachers,

interns, and other school personnel. A PDS Site Coordinator remarked that she gained “a better understanding of the teachers and the environments of other PDS schools and UMBC, so I am more committed to the PDS.”

The PDS strategic plan is guided by the needs of schools and children. PDS liaisons attend school improvement meetings. School faculty and administrators participate in PDS strategic planning. One liaison appreciated this collaborative process, indicating that “attending school improvement meetings made the school plans and needed PDS interventions concrete.”

The three schools have benefited

from UMBC’s resources. The Phoenix Dance Troupe and members of the women’s basketball team have enhanced the strategic plans of the schools by expanding importance of arts and physical education. UMBC faculty members serve as judges for school Stem Fairs. Plans for UMBC field trips are underway for the elementary schools. UMBC offers a highly successful summer camp for elementary students. “I love the UMBC Summer Camp,” exclaimed an elementary student. Free tickets to basketball games are another way in which students have the opportunity to explore the university. We have held first year seminars in the PDS schools. Teachers and administrators serve as guest lecturers.

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The 2008 Holmes Partnership “Nancy Zimpher Award for Best Partnership”

The Master of Urban Secondary Teaching (MUST) Program at Cleveland State University

Brigitte Bolgar, Lincoln-West High School

Karen Boyle, Euclid High School

Jim Heffernan, John Hay High School

George Massa, Shaw High School

Libbie Tompkins, Rhodes High School

At the 2008 Holmes Partnership Conference in Orlando, Florida, the Master of Urban Secondary Teaching (MUST) Program at Cleveland State University was honored with the “Nancy Zimpher Award for Best Partnership.” MUST is a Professional Development School program that has collaborated with our districts and schools for the past ten years. We serve as the school site coordinators in our respective buildings.

MUST prepares teachers for a career in secondary and K-12 education in our urban school districts. After completing this intensive 14-month program, many interns—nearly 30% of the program’s more than 200 graduates—have been

hired as teachers in our districts. Our MUST partnership has provided professional development to Euclid teachers in the areas of conflict resolution, literacy, poverty, social issues, and teacher research.

In addition, MUST is a partnership that helps to enhance the educational outcomes of students at our schools. The interns of MUST and the teachers who have subsequently been employed in our schools after completing MUST are making a relevant impact in the classroom. They are vibrant teachers who are creative, who are products of inquiry-based learning, and who possess 21st century technological and communication skills. These are traits that benefit our

students and ultimately will make a difference in their Ohio Graduation Test scores, their graduation rates, and their productivity as citizens.

The partnership has been a wonderful success in our schools. It is a partnership that is making a difference in the lives of students and future teachers. In addition to the dozens of MUST teachers now working in our schools, the program has sustained a better than 80% retention rate of its teachers during their first eight years in the profession. It is a program that we hope to continue for years to come because it works for our schools and teachers.

Taking A Chance With Action Research

D. Keith Enoch and Esther Lauderman, Williamstown Elementary School
Cynthia L. Gissy and Cynthia S. Kelley, West Virginia University at Parkersburg

“A disciplined process of inquiry conducted by and for those taking the action. The primary reason for engaging in action research is to assist the actor in improving or refining his or her actions.”

This definition of action research offered by Richard Sagor in *Guiding School Improvement with Action Research* (2000) was the premise for beginning a new endeavor involving action research with teacher candidates from West Virginia University at Parkersburg and in-service teachers from Williamstown Elementary School in Wood County, West Virginia.

Working from the perspective that there are different degrees of action research, we chose to begin our journey into action research by making it practical, making it doable, and working to embed it in practice. To do this would require the involvement of teachers, teacher candidates, and administrators. The research would take place in the real life of public school classrooms. Quasi-experimental research designs would be used in place of purely quantitative methods.

To begin, teacher candidates were assigned to complete a discovery paper on the concept of action research. They were responsible for exploring the concepts and principals of action research and then

sharing the information with their peers. The next step in the process involved a seminar presentation on action research offered by a WVU at Parkersburg instructor and the assistant principal from Williamstown Elementary.

Teacher candidates were then paired with classroom teachers. In conjunction with the teacher, each candidate developed a research plan for the coming semester. The plan consisted of a research question/topic, literature review resources, an explanation of why the question was important, strategies to be used, the method of data collection, and a project timeline that coincided with the timeline established by the college instructor involved with the project. The plan was reviewed and approved by this instructor, the classroom teacher, and the assistant principal. Teacher candidates turned in informal progress reports throughout the semester. The culminating assignment for the project included a written report of findings and a formal presentation made to peers, school administrators, and college faculty.

There have been many lessons learned since the initial semester of implementation described above. Challenges encountered and conquered have included varied perceptions of action research, time restrictions, and buy-in from both teacher candidates and teachers. The action research project no longer brings about stress from stakeholders, but rather an understanding that learning from the research is beneficial for the classroom teacher, the teacher candidate, and the elementary school students. The experience is now viewed as “something meaningful” rather than “one more thing to do.” Trepidation has been replaced by greater enthusiasm, more creative and critical thought, and sound research projects that create better classroom practice.

Action research is now embedded into the curriculum and culture of the professional development school and the teacher preparation program. It is a benefit to all stakeholders and a journey we recommend to all professional development school partners.

“Working from the perspective that there are different degrees of action research, we chose to begin our journey into action research by making it practical, making it doable, and working to embed it in practice.”

Preparing Teachers to Lead Shared Learning and Practice

(Continued from page 4)

teachers meet more frequently, teacher leaders experience greater challenges. We have found it important to provide short readings at regular intervals so that teacher leaders can reflect on a wide variety of issues that connect with their experiences. An excellent source we recommend is *Leading Every Day* (Kaser, Mundry, Stiles & Loucks-Horsley, 2006) published by WestEd. Our interns read the one or two page topics and post a short reflection once a week. The feedback has been very positive and teachers express satisfaction

in reading about important leadership issues and practices.

4. Invite outside resources to provide customized workshops that help teachers sharpen their skills in working together as teams. Many universities are happy to provide their expertise in helping schools strengthen their efforts to embed professional learning communities as part of their school cultures. We have found that when schools use part of their professional development calendars to support team growth, teacher lead-

ers feel supported as well as affirmed.

All of these components can be coordinated according to the needs of the school, but ultimately we know that the success in helping teachers learn and share together will only be as great as the time invested in growing leadership throughout the school campus. Partnering with a university will make this endeavor stronger, more rewarding, and most importantly, more successful.

The NAPDS Award for Exemplary Professional Development School Achievement

Purpose:

The NAPDS Award for Exemplary Professional Development School Achievement recognizes a Professional Development School relationship for its ongoing contributions to the mission and vision of the National Association for Professional Development Schools in creating and sustaining a genuine collaborative partnership between P-12 and higher education which shapes educator leadership and practice.

Eligibility:

Nominees for the award must include, at a minimum, one school/district and one college/university that are in a formalized Professional Development School relationship. Nominations for the award are restricted to such relationships which support, through one or more individual memberships, the work of the NAPDS. Nominees must have had their PDS work presented at the PDS National Conference by one or more individuals at least once since 2005.

Selection Criteria:

Selection for the award will be based on the nine *essentials* of PDS work detailed in the April 2008 NAPDS statement titled “What It Means to be a Professional Development School.” (The full statement can be found at <http://napds.org>.) These nine *essentials* are:

- 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;
- a school-university culture committed to the preparation of future educators that embraces their active engagement in the school community;
- ongoing and reciprocal professional development for all participants guided by need;
- a shared commitment to innovative and reflective practice by all participants;
- engagement in and public sharing of the results of deliberate investigations of practice by respective participants;
- an articulation agreement developed by the respective participants delineating the roles and responsibilities of all involved;
- a structure that allows all participants a forum for ongoing governance, reflection, and collaboration;
- work by college/university faculty and P-12 faculty in formal roles across institutional settings; and
- dedicated and shared resources and formal rewards and recognition structures.

Award Submissions:

Applicants for the 2009 award should submit:

1. a copy of the relationship’s mission statement;
2. a copy of the relationship’s written articulation agreement;
3. a graphic representation of the relationship’s organizational structure; and

4. a statement no longer than 20 double-spaced pages (12 font) which addresses the PDS *essentials* by providing:
 - a. an explanation of how the PDS mission is broader in its outreach and scope than the mission of any partner and furthers the education profession and its responsibility to advance equity within schools and, by potential extension, the broader community;
 - b. a brief description of the formal and, if appropriate, any informal roles played by both college/university and P-12 faculty across institutional settings;
 - c. an explanation of how the organizational structure of the relationship encourages collaboration, reflection, and regular communication among participants;
 - d. a description of how resources are dedicated and shared across school/university and P-12 settings and how participants are formally rewarded and recognized for their contributions to the relationship;
 - e. a summary of the work of the relationship in preparing future educators in the 2007-2008 academic year, including an explanation of how the P-12 setting embraces the teacher candidates' active engagement in the school community;
 - f. a description of how professional development is provided on a regular basis for all participants;
 - g. a description of the relationship's innovative and reflective practices that are explicit, mutually determined by PDS participants, and demonstrably enhance student learning;
 - h. an explanation of how best practice is routinely examined and shared with others, both within and outside of the PDS relationship; and
 - i. with the *essentials* in mind, the accomplishments and achievements of which the PDS is most proud.

Nominations must be received electronically in the NAPDS national office (pdsconf@gwm.sc.edu) no later than Monday, October 6, 2008. Include on the nomination cover sheet:

1. the name, title, mailing address, phone number, and e-mail address for the individual serving as the Primary Contact;
2. the names and positions of all individuals who contributed to the writing of the application;
3. the names of all members of the partnership who are NAPDS members; and
4. the date(s) and title(s) of the presentation(s) and the name(s) of the presenter(s) for presentation(s) made on the work of the partnership at the PDS National Conference since 2005.

*Incomplete nominations will not be considered.

Selection Process:

The NAPDS Executive Council and Board of Directors will appoint an awards committee chaired by the NAPDS immediate past-president and consisting of 3 to 5 individuals, with balanced representation from the P-12 and college/university communities. The committee will recommend the winner of the award to the Executive Council and Board of Directors at their January 2009 meeting and, upon approval of the Council and Board, will publicly announce the winner at the 2009 PDS National Conference. The award winner will be featured in *School-University Partnerships*, the NAPDS journal.

Sustaining Viability in a Secondary PDS Collaboration

Cathy J. Siebert, Ball State University
Aaron Ayres, Anderson Highland High School

“To sustain viability in PDS collaborations, responding to the needs of all stakeholders in the partnership is imperative, especially as needs emerge or change over time.”

To sustain viability in PDS collaborations, responding to the needs of all stakeholders in the partnership is imperative, especially as needs emerge or change over time. As the Ball State University/Highland High School (HHS) partnership approaches its tenth year, Aaron researched and recorded our initiatives throughout the preceding years, enabling us to identify possible reasons for our longevity. Strengthening opportunities for pre-service teachers to translate theory into practice during field experiences and supporting the professional development of in-service teachers are continu-

ing themes evident in our collaboration.

Working closely with Cathy, the university professor/PDS liaison, faculty have designed and implemented curriculum to push pre-service teachers' development in a variety of domains of teaching. Three major initiatives that have developed over time include CARS (Curriculum, Action Research, or Service project), Special Education for General Education Pre-Service Teachers seminars, and Managing Anti-Social Behavior workshops.

Each of these initiatives grew out

of our recognition of areas in our pre-service teachers' preparation that could best be provided or enhanced by appealing to the expertise of practicing secondary teachers in the field. For example, in response to more inclusive general education classrooms, special educators from the high schools work with our pre-service teachers to help them acquire knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to ensure the success of *all* students in their classrooms. By capitalizing on the expertise and resources available at HHS, we are able to respond to emerging chal-

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Adjusting to PDS Growing Pains

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conferences, which required the PDS director and staff to contribute ideas. The PDS school representatives began to feel they had a stake in making goals become reality.

In the 7th year of the partnership, staff development took a new turn as the PDS school representatives took a leadership role in deciding the best way the University Liaison could be of assistance to them. These PDS school representatives decided to conduct training classes that occurred during the workday and asked the University Liaison to serve as a leader for one of the training courses. In addition to the director and an assistant director of the school, a classroom teacher

led a training class. Research data was collected the first and second years of this new format for staff development. Now in its third year of implementation, CUMNS Kids has involved even more staff in leading the professional development courses. This year the goal of one of the trainings is to have each teacher participate in action research.

For the last few years, the PDS site teachers would ask the University Liaison if she would conduct research based on a question the teachers wanted to pose. The goal this year is to have teachers ask their own questions and conduct their own action research. At the end of the school year a special

sharing celebration will be held where teachers will share their action research projects with each other.

In the beginning of the PDS relationship, the CUMNS Kids Director and the University liaison were looked to for guidance and leadership, and because the Director and the liaison have remained the same for several years, trust has been developed on both sides. Across these years the teachers have been encouraged to take leadership roles and have begun to see themselves in a more professional light. A strong framework has been laid and more growth is anticipated in the future!

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A Tale of PDS Growth

Fred Lemaster and Jean Morrow, Emporia State University
Jim Ochs, Lebo Elementary School

As we look back over the history of the development of the Professional Development School (PDS) model in our elementary teacher preparation, we are reminded of the opening line from Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*: "It was the best of times; it was the worst of times." Maintaining a PDS after leadership positions change can be a particularly challenging experience. Without support from new building or district administration the program could well be doomed. Therefore, it is vitally important that planning for continuation be well thought out and implemented.

The "worst of times" occurs when several key figures leave about the

same time and no prior planning for this eventuality has taken place. This happened in one of our PDS partnerships—the principal of the elementary school, the superintendent of the district, the curriculum director, and several mentors either moved to other districts or retired. Significant time must be spent in re-establishing partnerships when this happens.

The "best of times" occurs when persons departing from leadership roles along with remaining teachers and staff have developed a well-designed program in cooperation with the sponsoring university and have solicited support of parents and community. The program then

has a much better chance of continued success. From the university's perspective, providing professional development for site councils and parent-teacher groups, training for mentors, team teaching both in the university classroom and the P-12 classroom, and sharing supervisory and evaluation responsibilities for the interns help to create a strong bond between the PDS site and the university. We are further convinced that as parents and patrons become aware of the benefits to students and to improved academic performance throughout the building they then advocate for continuation of a strong PDS.

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"Maintaining a PDS after leadership positions change can be a particularly challenging experience. Without support from new building or district administration the program could well be doomed."

A Family Affair

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UMBC faculty members provide professional workshops based on the schools' needs assessments. UMBC offered one needed course taught by a technology specialist from a PDS school. Responding to one of many learning experiences, a mentor teacher stated, "I am able to take advantage of professional development opportunities, collaborate with a wider professional community, and give my students the best opportunities through the assistance of UMBC interns..."

"Developing a survey based on Maryland's PDS standards was an

unbelievable professional development activity! We learned more about the standards and school priorities," expressed one faculty member. Analyses of the data are used to plan professional development and to collaborate on content priorities and outcomes. These analyses also allow us to identify school and university improvement needs and to recommend action research and positively impact student learning, subsequently strengthening the "family bond."

Using the "family affair" metaphor, one mentor teacher summarized,

"Things have come full circle for me. I was an intern at Relay, have mentored three student teachers in my classroom, and now serve as a co-site coordinator. I am among three Relay teachers seeking my Master's Degree from UMBC." Caring is powerful in building and growing PDS relationships; yet, like families, we needed resources and standards to sustain a collaborative partnership, move courageously into the areas of action research and inquiry, and positively impact teaching and learning for all stakeholders, especially the PreK-12 students.

Partnering with Families

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Another service learning program initiated in our PDS program is "Family Science Night." Each of our PDS pre-service teachers prepares an engaging, hands-on science activity for the event, which is then creatively displayed on tables throughout the room. The children select whatever activities

they'd like to do. The PDS university students guide the children and families through the activities. Each family receives a copy of all of the lessons and they are encouraged to try the activities at home. The evening includes door prizes and refreshments. This is an excellent learning experience as the chil-

dren learn to enjoy meaningful science activities, the parents learn how to help engage their children in these activities, and the PDS pre-service teachers learn about the importance of family-school interactions. PDS truly can be a place where "everyone is a learner" and "everyone is a winner."

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allenges in education.

We've also designed a different model of professional development for in-service teachers. Breaking from the traditional top-down model that arbitrarily defined corporation-wide professional development topics, in 2001 the HHS PDS initiated a teacher-driven model in which teachers identify topics and design projects that address their specific professional development goals. During the first year of this initiative, teachers pursued projects under umbrella topics such as Curriculum, Technology, Student Issues, Policies and Practices, and Grant Writing and Research.

Currently, teachers have focused their professional development in

one of the following three areas: Cultural Competency, Home/School Connection, and Technology and Curriculum. Yet, even within these narrower options, teachers still have a great deal of agency to define projects that speak to their specific interests or needs. For example, within the Home/School Connection and Technology option, some teachers designed projects to help them learn technologies that will assist them in strengthening connections with parents and guardians, while other teachers elected to pursue professional development in integrating technologies in support of classroom instruction. While the topics have changed over the years in response to emerging needs or corporation-defined foci, teacher choice remains central to their pro-

fessional development activities. Teacher buy-in remains remarkably high with approximately 98% of the faculty invested in initiatives that significantly contribute to the ultimate goal of increasing student achievement.

Sustaining healthy Professional Development Schools in times of increasing, and oftentimes competing, political and societal demands requires all stakeholders to think carefully and respond strategically to the needs of both partners—the university and the public schools. For more information regarding BSU/HHS initiatives, please click on the PDS Evolution link on the HHS PDS web site: <<http://www.acsc.net/hhs/hhspds>>.

"...in 2001 the HHS PDS initiated a teacher-driven model in which teachers identify topics and design projects that address their specific professional development goals."

A Tale of PDS Growth

(Continued from page 13)

A major goal of the present administration should be frequently and positively to stroke the PDS relationship both in the community and in the local media. A concerted effort to provide numerous opportunities for interns to participate in school activities attended by the public is another key element. Activities in which our interns are visible to parents and patrons include music programs, awards recognition programs, academic incentive

programs, and parent/teacher conferences.

Over time the community views interns in the PDS as a vital and integrated part of staff. We make certain our PDS participants are formally and publicly recognized. In addition we have solicited support through our site councils, which are composed of parents, business leaders, support staff, teachers, classified staff, and districts'

Boards of Education representation.

We are confident that even with a change in leadership immediate discontinuation of the PDS program would likely have unpleasant political fallout due largely to the professionalism of the interns and the strong working relationship with the university.

Write for the Journal of Teacher Research

Diane Corrigan, Cleveland State University/MUST Program PDS Partnership

The Journal of Teacher Research serves as a unique space for teachers, teacher educators, and other members of the educational community to share and learn from innovative ways of inquiring and writing about the art of teaching. We particularly encourage manuscripts that entail teacher research focused on teaching; address issues of equity, social justice and activism; value collaboration and partnership within the inquiry process; and honor multiple voices (students, parents, administrators, community members, etc.) Further information and guidelines for submission can be obtained by accessing our website: <http://coehs.csuohio.edu/jtr>.

National Association for



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