



**NAPDS President,  
 Alison Rutter**

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## A Message From the President

*Alison Rutter, East Stroudsburg University*

Greetings!

We are on our way to another vibrant year for the NAPDS. The summer Leadership Forum cemented not only the overall commitment to our vision and use of the Nine Essentials, but helped us in determining ways we can best articulate and communicate them throughout the Association. In addition, we now have some new faces in our officers, a number of others who are eager to assist the Board with various projects, and an impressive list of PDSs submitting applications for our Exemplary PDS Award. The conference this March in Daytona Beach is also off to a fruitful start. Bruce Field, who continues to support the Association as Conference Committee Chair, has confirmed that we are expecting a strong turnout with both participation and number of presentation proposals being submitted. He also reports that a good number of new PDSs have submitted proposals. This is very encouraging as we hope this year's conference surpasses previous years' participation and productivity. We appreciate you realizing the importance of sharing with one another on the national level and making ours your conference of choice. Daytona Beach promises to be an invigorating venue for making new connections and renewing those made in years past. Once again, we will be offering workshops and invited discussions on Thursday morning and sessions Thursday afternoon to accommodate all of our interests. We look forward to seeing as many of you as can possibly join us.

We do, however, realize that our conference membership is just the tip of the proverbial iceberg of PDS and that a number of you cannot return each year for a variety of reasons. For those of you who cannot attend this year, we hope to encourage you to be actively involved nonetheless. An on-going membership allows you to still receive these newsletters as well as the two journals issues for the year. You will also still be included in our listservs, can follow along on our newly forthcoming discussions and news boards, and will receive the journal and newsletter. Another new way we would like to initiate PDSs to stay actively involved and increase activity at home is to subscribe to our bundled newsletters and journals. We have had a number of requests for these to be used for study groups or distribution to each of their sites so that a broader pool of PDS professionals can be involved in our work and hope to begin to offer this option soon.\* If you have ideas for other ways to help keep the membership fully involved, please let me know.

One of our foremost charges in this new year will be to continue the growth of the NAPDS. While we currently represent much of the United States and have international members, we want to ensure that all of those using the PDS nomenclature are included in our ranks and contributing to the success of our mission. Our work is too important to be fragmented. Please reach out to colleagues around your state, province or country who may be exploring the idea of PDS and encourage them to become involved. We also want to ensure that all of your PDS colleagues are involved in strengthening the overall PDS community. We hope that as you explore the Nine Essentials, overall involvement will grow and become increasingly more invested in our mutual goals. We are working to ensure that the NAPDS will continue to be the organization that welcomes and embraces all embarking on this quest for mutual partnership to improve all of our teaching and learning, particularly the learning of P-12 students.

Yours,

Alison L. Rutter

\*Please see our website at [www.napds.org](http://www.napds.org) for more information on these options.

# The IHE Liaison Viewed as an Active Member of the PDS Community – AKA: The “Doer”

*Barbara Schwartz-Bechet and Eva Garin, Bowie State University  
Mark Norman, C. Elizabeth Rieg Regional Special Center (posthumous)*

“Every partnership is unique and deserves the attention of at least one individual from each institution to be the liaison working towards and achieving shared and individual needs and goals.”

In order for any Professional Development School partnership to be successful, there must be interaction between and among constituents. Every partnership is unique and deserves the attention of at least one individual from each institution to be the liaison working towards and achieving shared and individual needs and goals. Van de Ven and Ring (2006) suggest that for relationships to grow between different organizations, trust and understanding must be conveyed between individuals within the organizations.

The partnership between C. Elizabeth Rieg Regional Special Center and Bowie State University (BSU) began before Professional Development Schools (PDS) became a concept. The partnership remains unique in concept by today’s standards of a PDS as it is not a site where more than one teacher intern is placed per year due to the population of students taught at C.E. Rieg. But the IHE liaison was and is a visible presence in the PDS site, continuing to work on strategic planning, professional development, and collaborative research.

## *Background*

C.E. Rieg is a school that provides innovative learning experiences to students with severe and profound disabilities. The children range in age from five to twenty-one. BSU began a partnership with C.E. Rieg in 1996 due to proximity and an interest rose by the then school principal and chair of the Education Department at Bowie State University. The current IHE liaison, an associate professor of special education, began working at Bowie State University in 1996 and was the “appointed go-between,” eventually becoming the IHE liaison between the two

institutions. The partnership initially involved the teaching of undergraduate courses at the special center and teachers from the special center guest spoke on the campus. The uniquely intriguing variable about the partnership is that Bowie State University did not and still does not have a program in severe and profound disabilities. Today, in Maryland, our work with professional development is guided by the document, *Professional Development Schools: An Implementation Manual* (MSDE 2003). By following those guidelines, the partnership was supported in 2001 by the present chair at Bowie State University, and individualized by the Bowie State University PDS Coordinator. In 2001, the principal, Mark Norman, enabled open-ended dialogue amongst all clients within both institutions. Mark welcomed the IHE liaison into his building and made the liaison feel part of the Rieg community.

## *Steps Taken to Create an Active PDS Partnership with a Unique Situation*

1. The IHE liaison adhered to Partnership Learning principles (Knight, 1997) which include active participation, dialogue, equality, reflection, interaction, choice, shared resources, and mutual learning.
2. Initiated open lines of communication: IHE attended bi-monthly meetings with Principal and/or PDS coordinator and staff at Rieg. Principal and Rieg PDS coordinator invited to meetings at Bowie. Use of email and telephone are continuous means of communication. Upon entering Rieg, the IHE liaison always felt welcome and greeted by all office personnel and many teachers, paras, and therapists.
3. Involvement of all members of

C.E. Rieg through grant-funded projects procured by the IHE liaison including students, teachers, and paraprofessionals.

4. Shared decision-making in placements of Bowie students to conduct observations or partial fulfillment of practicum or year long internships, book club selections, and in how to meet the needs of both institutions.
5. Equal use of both facilities which included equitable use of individuals’ time and the space of the buildings at both sites. Both institutions’ facilities were made available to one another with appropriate notifications.

## *Initiatives Created by the IHE Liaison and Their Outcomes*

1. Observing, training, providing feedback to teachers, provided training to paraprofessionals. Grant-funded project additionally resulted in a mastery of one goal per child per IEP (2006-2007), and para training resulted in 100% increase in data collection of students and 50% passing of ParaPro exam.
2. Increasing parent involvement through Principal Norman’s idea of Rieg University: Morning coffee and donuts and shared best practices with parents once a month (IHE liaison attended). Resulted in same few parents attending. Liaison next distributed flyers seeking parent input.
3. Individual meetings with IHE liaison by parent request: IHE liaison met with individual parents/families both at Rieg and at Bowie State University. Meetings also occurred via email and phone. 100% approval by parents of those who made their needs known to the IHE liaison.
4. Provided appropriate books for a book club for parents and one for the school faculty. IHE liaison

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## AKA: The “Doer”

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shared several books with Rieg faculty and collaboratively met to select a book that would be most meaningful. Resulted in selected faculty reading appointed chapters and piloted strategies found in those chapters. Shared results with other Rieg faculty at book club. Parents did not make use of the loaner books provided by and selected by the IHE liaison. Will seek to find an active parent to “sell” the idea of a book club and lead them.

5. IHE liaison procured space at Bowie State University where one 19-21 year old class from

Rieg came one day per week to “college” to take their vocational class on campus. IHE liaison and Bowie PDS coordinator have been instrumental in having the Special Prom for the Regional centers in our area take place at Bowie State University on a yearly basis.

6. IHE liaison has been instrumental in enabling students in both graduate and undergraduate courses to be placed for observational components of courses at Rieg during the regular school year and during the summer semester over the past 12 years.

The keys to a successful relationship between the IHE liaison and the PDS are to equally listen, hear, act, and work together, and have fun to achieve desired goals built on collaboration to develop growth in, among, and between all constituent parties. It matters not what type of Professional Development School—elementary, middle, secondary, or special needs—what matters is the action taken by individuals to become active members within each institution’s community.

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## Improving Student Interns’ Classroom Management During Clinical Experiences

Laurie A. Palmer, University of Delaware/Milford Professional Development School

One of the biggest struggles reported by classroom teachers and student interns during clinical experiences is classroom management. Classroom teachers perceive interns as lacking an understanding of classroom management and the strategies needed to be effective managers. Interns appear unsure of appropriate classroom management strategies or when to step in regarding management while in someone else’s classroom despite having instruction in effective classroom management. Through a small study by the University of Delaware/Milford PDS, we found that the problem had little to do with knowledge of management, but rather a lack of communication between interns and teachers about classroom management and interns’ understanding of their roles.

Although the problem seems complex, this study revealed very simple reasons for management struggles by interns. First is a lack of understanding by the interns of their roles and relationships

during their clinical experiences. This includes interns not seeing themselves as teachers, portraying themselves as teachers rather than university students, and wanting to be liked by or friends with their students. A second reason is the lack of the interns’ understanding of expectations for management. The interns appear to be unsure of the expectations for their role in management when the teacher is present during their lesson, or when the teacher is leading a lesson. Teachers and interns stated that they rarely discussed specific expectations and roles for interns’ management. Finally, teachers and interns felt that interns lack confidence and assertiveness when it comes to classroom management. Not that they didn’t have the knowledge, but were unsure of how and when to appropriately apply their knowledge. These initial results indicate that it isn’t a lack of knowledge of classroom management that leads to interns’ struggles, but rather a lack of understanding of expectations

and the interns’ roles in classroom management. With this in mind, the faculty designed a simple intervention to address this that includes directed, guided observations by the interns of the classroom management used in their classroom, an interview of their teacher using four basic questions, and a reflection on the management used in the classroom and their expected roles in it.

At the beginning of each clinical experience interns make guided observations focusing exclusively on the classroom management strategies used by their teachers and the reactions of different students to these strategies. The interns reflect on what they observe, trying to gain a personal understanding of their teacher’s classroom management style, the system in place, and how good management looks in their specific classroom. These guided observations make sure that interns specifically focus on the management system used,

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“One of the biggest struggles reported by classroom teachers and student interns during clinical experiences is classroom management.”

# Linking Hands, Heads, and Hearts...Building PDS Relationships

*Jamey Tobery-Nystrom, JoEllen Smallwood and Ken Witmer, Frostburg State University  
Jennifer LaBombard and Kathy Kaper, Washington County Public Schools*

*“It is the right personalities at the right time constantly considering each other with every decision made.”*

In an era of standards, procedures, and protocols the work of Professional Development Schools (PDS) is often about relationships. At least that has been our experience at the Frostburg State University-Washington County Public Schools PDS (FSU-WC PDS). We are going into our third year together. Ours is a dynamic bond leading us to building and sustaining a strong PDS relationship.

At the 2008 PDS National Conference in Orlando, Florida using our FSU Education Unit motto, “Linking hands, heads, and hearts,” as the framework, we presented on the topic of reinventing PDS relationships. In the state of Maryland, PDS standards have been fully developed and guide our work. In order to develop our new revitalized relationship we went to those standards and recognized that Standard IV: Organization, Roles, & Resources (MD PDS Consortium, 2002) was where our work would begin.

With our conference presentation we were able to illustrate what is making us a successful PDS partnership (e.g., WCPS sent

eight teachers to participate in this one presentation). We will try to put it into words here. It is the right personalities at the right time constantly considering each other with every decision made. Procedures, protocols, and standards are important, helping to provide structure, but people who are committed to the PDS process are the most necessary of ingredients.

As we all know, the larger the group of people the more difficult it is to effectively communicate. We were very aware going into our PDS relationship that communication was key. FSU College of Education and WCPS central office committed people beyond the PDS to the work. We plan professional development for teachers and teacher candidates, facilitate the placement process for teacher candidates, and do outreach with the community at large to spread the word about the FSU-WC PDS. FSU is an integral member of the School Improvement Team helping to set the goals for each school year. We are committed to sharing our work with others including attending

Board of Education, city council and county commissioner, and state level meetings. At the school level, there is a site coordinator for each school and a PDS Liaison from FSU. We work together on the logistical issues of the PDS including mentor teacher and teacher candidate issues. We have as a goal: the PDS Liaison will be seen as another stakeholder in that school.

In order to call our partnership a success we need to demonstrate that we are contributing to student achievement. We should pause here to cheer. There are gains in PreK-12 student achievement at our PDSs! This summer we met to crunch data looking for trends that point to the PDS relationship positively affecting student achievement. There are indicators we are looking into...stay tuned as this is next year's conference presentation. We are also excited to announce we have expanded our family, inviting a new elementary school to join our FSU-WC PDS. Like all additions, this will surely create new challenges but like all children there is the possibility of great rewards!

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## Cross Career Learning Communities at Work

*Patrice Dawkins-Jackson, Dunwoody Springs Charter School  
Julie Rainer-Dangel, Georgia State University*

Cross Career Learning Communities (CCLC) is a model of support for teachers to help them grow in the knowledge and skills necessary for teaching in a global society. Georgia State University (GSU), working with the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) Induction Project, developed Cross Career Learning Communities. This initiative was funded through a grant from the Wachovia Foundation. CCLCs

were developed to increase retention rates and quality of teaching in high needs schools, create learning communities and improve teacher satisfaction, and to ultimately increase K-12 student achievement and school performance. An extensively trained facilitator assists CCLCs and the collaborative work is guided by Critical Friends Group (CFG) protocols. CFG is a well-researched approach to collaborative groups or learning

communities and provides the structure to support teachers as they improve instruction and student learning in a trusting, long-term supportive environment. The Bridge and Professional Growth are two additional components that make this model extraordinary.

This project was implemented in 12 Professional Development Schools including Dunwoody

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# Do Professional Development Schools Reduce Teacher Attrition? Evidence from a Longitudinal Study of One Thousand Graduates

Nancy I. Latham, Illinois State University

To better understand teacher attrition and ultimately influence these trends, attrition is often studied from the perspective of the types of schools teachers leave, the individual characteristics of those who leave, and reasons they leave. In addition, very little PDS research exists which is either longitudinal or quantitative in regards to its examination of PDS outcomes. In response, this study examined teachers' persistence in the field as it related to their teacher preparation model.

Illinois State University has been working with school partners throughout Illinois to develop and maintain productive university-school partnerships for many years. Since 1996, approximately 1000 teacher candidates have participated in one of the university's Professional Development Schools at the elementary level across the state.

This study examined the effects of teacher preparation experiences on persistence in elementary

## References

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education employment in public schools in Illinois between 1996 and 2006. The topic was studied by mining previously collected data on the preparation of teachers and their entry into teaching upon graduation and persistence in teaching. Information collected included demographic information, academic information including GPA and state exam scores, and whether students entered as native students or community college transfer students. This information allowed results to be examined while controlling for various demographic and individual characteristics. The goal was to determine the impact of the preparation method on teacher attrition rates while controlling for relevant individual student characteristics.

The findings from this study were significant. PDS preparation versus traditional preparation significantly and positively influenced teachers' persistence in the field, even after controlling for their individual demographic and academic

characteristics. PDS-prepared teachers were significantly more likely to become employed in Illinois public schools than their traditionally-prepared counterparts. Moreover, PDS-prepared teachers had significantly fewer years out of the field. This research suggests that teacher preparation programs should begin to consider, as an important programmatic outcome, the persistence of their graduates in the field through a significant link between teacher preparation and professional persistence. They provide evidence to support the additional resources needed to deliver the PDS experience.

Currently this study continues, adding graduates from the traditional and PDS programs each year. We are currently working with our school partners to examine these findings both in light of the unique characteristics of each of our Professional Development Schools as well as the demographic and performance characteristics of the districts candidates become employed in and persist in.

*“PDS preparation versus traditional preparation significantly and positively influenced teachers' persistence in the field, even after controlling for their individual demographic and academic characteristics.”*

## “Editors’ Corner”

Kristien Zenkov, George Mason University  
James Harmon, Euclid High School/MUST Program PDS Partnership  
Shawn Washington, Shaw High School/MUST Program PDS Partnership  
Athene Bell, Manassas City School District

This issue of PDS Partners offers a particularly wide range of useful insights into how to engage successfully with Professional Development School partnerships. While we (your faithful editors) are mostly veterans of PDS work, we are amazed at how much we learn about how to rejuvenate and improve our own partnerships—just by reading these articles. We hope you will be similarly energized and enlightened. As we write we are also conscious of the upcoming annual PDS conference (in March of 2009), and we are excited about meeting as many past and potential newsletter authors as possible. Please note that the bulk of our newsletter articles are generated by conference presenters, so as you are finalizing your conference presentation you might think, too, about how to translate this information into a narrative or report about your work. The newsletter reaches a growing audience in the thousands, with copies delivered not only to NAPDS members but also to deans, superintendents, organizational leaders, and policymakers from around the United States and beyond. As always, we look forward to your thoughts about this issue of *PDS Partners* and to your contributions for future issues.

“To create a lens of common understandings, we must first begin with developing a common language that will guide the collective conversations.”

## Through the Lens of Common Understandings: Informing and Sustaining a PDS University-School Partnership

*Diane S. Calhoun and Karen S. Wetherill, University of North Carolina-Wilmington*

### *Creating a Systems Approach*

A PDS relationship is complex, challenging, and requires a deep commitment to personal, professional, and systemic growth. To create a lens of common understandings, we must first begin with developing a common language that will guide the collective conversations. These conversations must be straightforward and encompass a well-established set of guiding tenets that help appreciably improve both teaching quality and levels of learning. Fullan, (2005 p. ix) states that, “Sustainability is the capacity of a system to engage in the complexities of continuous improvement consistent with deep values of human purpose.” These “deep values” are the fundamental qualities that feed our systemic partnership work and make us passionate and productive.

### *A Well-Established Set of Tenets*

Co-developing tenets that establish

intentional processes helps ensure a common language and build capacity for successful systemic relationships. Fullan (2005, p. 11) suggests that “capacity building throughout the system at all levels must be developed in concert, and to do this will require powerful new system forces.” Several guiding tenets and intentional processes for the Watson School University-School partnership are:

- Involving all partners in partnership design, implementation, and evaluation
- Connecting partnership efforts across a continuum of educator development
- Sharing common goals, objectives and commitment to implementation
- Promoting a common approach to coaching/supervision
- Integrating school improvement efforts with partnership components
- Negotiating changes through shared trust, beliefs, and purpose

### *The Power of Creating Intentional Processes*

Rick DuFour’s work on Professional Learning Communities (2005) has greatly influenced the field of education. When educators engage in meaningful connections by working on problems with peers, they gain a sense of well-being moving them beyond what they could accomplish alone. This simple, yet powerful, intentional structure brings educators together valuing their voices and creating the greatest opportunity for professional growth.

### *Promoting a Set of Common Experiences*

All aspects of a systems approach must have high accountability. Simultaneous renewal, concurrent reforms in teacher preparation, and school transformation can best be brought about when schools

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## PDS in the Middle Grades: Shared Vision for Teaching and Learning

*Gail Hilliard-Nelson, Kean University*

Beginning in September of 1999, the New Jersey Consortium for Middle Schools (NJCMS) has brought focus and attention to the needs of middle level learners in New Jersey. Funded by the USDOE under the Title II Teacher Quality Enhancement Grants, this project encompasses many aspects of teacher preparation and retention in the middle grades. As lead partner, Kean University has collaborated with Rider, Rowan, and William Paterson Universities, and eight local school districts (Ewing, Passaic, Paulsboro, Perth Amboy, Piscataway, Millville, Wayne and Woodbury) to implement PDSs at

the middle level.

The PDS model in the middle grades offers a stronger clinical practice experience for teacher candidates and creates an opportunity for professionals in the schools, university faculty, and new teachers to grow together in professional learning communities. We have been engaged in recruiting students into PDS placements to improve their preparation and experience in middle grades. A video for this purpose was created at Kean and can be viewed at <http://kutv.kean.edu/Videos/PDS.html>.

Teacher preparation at the middle grades is unique and requires a focus not only on the content area required for certification, but also on understanding the developmental needs of young adolescents, an aspect often overlooked in traditional teacher preparation programs. In order to meet state certification requirements our PDS programs offer students a broad range of experiences in both elementary and middle grades. We have developed excellent collaborative relationships with our local school partners that create professional

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# Enhancing Communication Through Multiple Governance Structures

*Marcia Bromfield, Harriet Deane and Barbara Govendo, Lesley University  
Jennifer Ford and Traci Vecchiarello, Peabody Elementary School  
John Roderick, Baldwin Elementary School*

Lesley University has collaborated with the Cambridge Public Schools in developing Professional Development School models for more than fifteen years. Over the years, a variety of governance structures and informal practices have evolved to serve both communication and decision-making functions. These structures provide a voice for all constituencies involved in the partnerships and create a forum for communicating ideas that support effective teaching practices. Key leadership roles, such as the Director of Field Placement and Professional Partnerships, university liaisons, and school-based coordinators, make the governance structures work smoothly and facilitate fruitful communication. This article will describe these structures and roles and will provide examples of practices and activities that have resulted from the work.

The formal governance structures include a University Partnership Group, a PDS Leadership Team, cross-school subcommittees, school-based steering committees, an Internship Program Group, and school councils. The University Partnership Group meets monthly at Lesley; membership includes university PDS liaisons and coordinators of a variety of partnerships, as well as Field Placement Office staff and other involved faculty. This group shares information and brainstorms ideas about cross-partnership events and

initiatives.

The PDS Leadership Team, comprised of the principals, assistant principals, and school-based coordinators from the two schools and the Director, field placement staff, university liaisons, and associated faculty from the university, collaboratively determines priorities and practices and promotes cross-fertilization of ideas. During a retreat in June, based on the *Nine Essentials* of a PDS, we examined the current status of our PDSs, discussed plans and priorities for the next year, and established subcommittees to plan implementation of the work. The subcommittees focus on professional development, inquiry, enhancing field experiences, and renewing our mission statement.

School-based steering committees meet regularly and include representative school administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, and the university liaison, Director, field placement staff, as well as others when appropriate. These committees plan events for the school, such as university/school faculty book groups and school-based seminars; discuss field experience issues; and facilitate communication within the school.

School councils include representatives of all constituencies in the school and surrounding community, as well as the university liaison. The role of

the school council is to plan for the future of the school, with the success of the students being the ultimate goal. Partnership priorities are integrated into and support the School Improvement Plan. Participation of Lesley faculty on the council establishes relationships with members of the extended school community and has helped to nurture the mutual trust and ongoing communication that is vital to sustaining a PDS.

The Internship Program Group holds monthly meetings for all yearlong interns, the assistant principal, university liaison, and field placement staff. The group provides support to the interns and helps shape the policies and practices of the Internship Program.

In addition to facilitating decision-making through the governance structures, individuals in key roles support communication within the partnership through an annual Partnership Update and school news bulletins. They also share information through presentations to the Lesley and school communities and at state and national conferences. Regular meetings with interns, teachers, faculty, and administrators provide opportunities for communication, inform decisions and policies, and provide feedback for continuous improvement of partnership activities.

*“These structures provide a voice for all constituencies involved in the partnerships and create a forum for communicating ideas that support effective teaching practices.”*

## School-University Partnerships Submission

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Manuscript Submission  
Guidelines  
can be found at  
[www.napds.org](http://www.napds.org).

# A Northern PDS Experience

*Donna J. Forsyth, Brandon University*

*“Probably the most important factor that contributed to the success of the project was the integral involvement of the classroom teachers at Betty Gibson.”*

Professional Development Schools are relatively new in the Canadian context. The first Professional Development School (PDS) project in Manitoba began in 2007 as a partnership between Brandon University and Brandon School Division at Betty Gibson School, an inner city school with approximately 200 students in Brandon, Manitoba. The foundation for the project was established through the university’s and the school division’s participation in the National Network for Educational Renewal (NNER).

In the spring of 2007, the principal of Betty Gibson School submitted a PDS proposal to Brandon School Division’s senior administration, which had been exploring the possibility of a PDS project in discussions with the Dean of Education at Brandon University. The Betty Gibson proposal focused specifically on literacy instruction in the Early Years (Grades K-4). By June of 2007, Brandon School Division and Brandon University approved a PDS project, and in September of 2007, a university faculty member and the Betty Gibson School principal and staff began collaborating to work out the on-site details of the project. By January of 2008, a cohort of ten Brandon University pre-service teachers began their work in the Literacy PDS Project at Betty Gibson School. All of the pre-service teachers were in their final year of the B.Ed. (A.D.) program at Brandon University, with 18 weeks of general field experience already

behind them.

This project provided the opportunity for the pre-service teachers to take a “Diagnostic and Corrective Reading” course in a school setting rather than on campus, enabling them to apply the specific literacy assessment and instructional strategies they were learning about in the course. The class met every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon at Betty Gibson School over the course of an entire term. The first half of each afternoon session was devoted to the pre-service teachers working directly with students in small groups, or on a one-to-one basis, followed by a debriefing session with the university instructor and with each other, and then more coursework. The pre-service teachers had built-in opportunities to observe classroom teachers and literacy support teachers modeling effective assessment and instruction strategies. Most importantly, the Betty Gibson teachers provided each of the pre-service teachers with feedback and offered more ideas and strategies to try with students on their own.

In addition to the designated timetable on Tuesdays and Thursdays, pre-service teachers were required to dedicate at least another six volunteer hours of their time to working with students at Betty Gibson. Another requirement was for each pre-service teacher to contribute at least five postings to a blog. The purpose of the blog was to link the host teachers at

Betty Gibson, the pre-service teachers, the principal, and the university instructor through an information-sharing format that could connect us even at a distance. The blog provided a venue for reflection and feedback, especially in the days between face-to-face class meetings. An unanticipated outcome of the project was the strong collaboration and sense of learning community that developed among the pre-service teachers.

Probably the most important factor that contributed to the success of the project was the integral involvement of the classroom teachers at Betty Gibson. They were active participants in planning the organizational logistics of the project from the very beginning, they were excellent models and mentors for literacy instruction, and, most importantly of all, they were willing to be flexible around scheduling issues.

A sustainable Professional Development School partnership takes much longer than a year to develop, but this year’s experience has shown us that the foundations are in place. The next steps for the Literacy PDS Project involve coordinating field experience placements with the on-site coursework and practicum at Betty Gibson, planning action research projects, and fine-tuning assessment frameworks to determine the impact of the project on students, teachers, and pre-service teachers.



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Springs Charter School. At Dunwoody Springs Charter School (a GSU Professional Development School), new and experienced teachers as well as interns and student teachers participate in a CCLC, which provides face-to-face and online support and dialogue about their own teaching. Cross Career Learning Communities meet monthly, during the school day, in small CCLC groups to set goals, analyze student work, and plan for improved instruction. Norms are offered and created by the CCLC to set guidelines that we live by in the time and space that we share together. An environment of reciprocal mentoring is fostered through this approach, and teachers are empowered to collaborate and take ownership of each others' issues, dilemmas, and successes. With this approach, dialogue about implications for our own practice as educators is

discussed after the completion of each protocol. The Bridge ([www.teachersbridge.org](http://www.teachersbridge.org)) provides peer reviewed resources for teachers and allows online facilitation of protocols. Utilizing this resource, our CCLCs can also meet online, have threaded discussions, and maintain a direct alignment with the Georgia Framework for Teaching. The Professional Growth Plan (PGP) also aligns with the Georgia Framework for Teaching. This tool allowed the teachers to choose a domain upon which they wanted to improve. Once a domain is chosen, the teacher decides which level they are currently performing on and writes a plan of implementation to move to their desired level. What makes this tool so powerful is that after the teacher gives evidence of how they reached their target, it asks what steps you would take next. So, the cycle of learning and

growing is continual.

Cross Career Learning Communities (CCLC) transcend induction. Everyone is a learner in this environment—including novice and veteran teachers. The results have been remarkable. We retained the majority of our new teachers and hired three of the student teachers who participated in CCLCs. The feedback received showed that teachers felt supported, empowered, and heard. They had an outlet to share and learn from each other. This is what authentic learning and community is all about.

For more information about Cross Career Learning Communities, please contact Patrice Dawkins-Jackson via email at [dawkinsp@fultonschools.org](mailto:dawkinsp@fultonschools.org) or [pdawkins.jackson@gmail.com](mailto:pdawkins.jackson@gmail.com).

*“An environment of reciprocal mentoring is fostered through this approach, and teachers are empowered to collaborate and take ownership of each others’ issues, dilemmas, and successes.”*

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## Improving Student Interns' Classroom Management

(Continued from page 3)

allowing them to form a greater understanding and thus be able to effectively utilize the system when they are supporting their teacher and when they are teaching. The interns then conduct interviews with their teachers asking four specific questions:

- 1) What management system do you use in your classroom?
- 2) Do you use any specific management strategies with the class and/or specific students and if so, what are they?
- 3) What are your expectations for my role in classroom management when you are teaching?
- 4) What are your expectations for my classroom management when I am teaching?

We have found that the last two questions are the most important and the key to improving interns' management. These interviews force interns and teachers to establish communication regarding expectations for management. The teachers' expectations for interns' classroom management are abundantly clear after this interview. Finally, the interns use their observations and interview responses to write a reflective piece on their understanding of the classroom management system and strategies used in their classroom, and the expectations for their roles in classroom management when they are supporting their teachers' teaching and when they are leading a lesson. This asks the

interns to analyze all they have seen and heard and make a clear statement about the management used in a specific classroom and their expected roles.

Overall, the UD/Milford faculty, teachers, and interns have found that this simple activity improves the interns' effectiveness with classroom management. All are amazed that something so simple can help to solve such an important issue. This PDS partnership continues to use this strategy and look for more simple interventions to continue to improve interns' management during clinical experiences.

## CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR NEW SENIOR EDITOR(S): *SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS*

*School-University Partnerships*, the Journal of the National Association for Professional Development Schools (NAPDS) announces the search for the next Senior Editor\*. *School-University Partnerships* is a national blind-reviewed journal. The new Senior Editor would serve a four-year term starting April 1, 2009, replacing Roger Brindley (University of South Florida), who will end his four-year tenure in the spring of 2009. Roger will assist the new Senior Editor with the transition of editorship during the spring of 2009.

*School-University Partnerships* is published by the NAPDS as a service to members of the Association and others concerned with Professional Development Schools/partnerships between higher education and P-12 schools and their communities. Each issue contains articles written by both university and school educators, usually in collaboration with each other, and highlights policy and practice in the school-university partnership. The journal is published twice a year with a spring and fall issue. The journal includes an editorial team presently comprised of six P-12 and four university editors that oversee the review process. The editorial team liaises with seventy reviewers from the P-12 and university contexts.

The Senior Editor is responsible for overall management of all journal operations, determines and interacts with the Editorial Board and the reviewer pool, initiates and conducts communication with prospective authors, prepares the journal for the publication process and interacts with the journal publisher. The Senior Editor is expected to establish editorial policies, set expectations for authors, and maintain the acceptance criteria regarding manuscripts. Finally, the Senior Editor will consult with the NAPDS Executive Council and Board of Directors at each board meeting and will assist the Association with ongoing efforts to disseminate best practice and policy in school-university partnerships.

### *How to Nominate or Self-Nominate for the Senior Editorship.*

The qualified individual will have a research and/or practice background relevant to PDSs and school-university partnerships. Nominees for Senior Editor could work in either the P-12 or the university context and nominations of Senior Editors who represent both partners and would work together as a Senior Editor team are welcome\*. The application process must include a letter of interest and resumes/vitae for the nominee. The letter should include a statement of qualifications and educational experience particularly related to PDS/partnership work, the editorial experience and skills of the nominee, her/his vision for continuing the growth of *School-University Partnerships*, prior journal editing experience and detail the level of support (fiscal and physical) committed to them by the partnership. All nominations and self-nominations will be considered. Once all nominations are received, the outgoing Senior Editor, Roger Brindley, will liaise with the Executive Council and Board of Directors of the NAPDS to complete the review process. The new Senior Editor will be notified in early spring 2009.

To submit a nomination or self-nomination, please send all required materials electronically to Roger Brindley at [brindley@coedu.usf.edu](mailto:brindley@coedu.usf.edu) on or before Saturday, January 31, 2009.

\* The Executive Council and Board of Directors of the NAPDS would also entertain co-Senior Editor nominations. The details of this type of senior editing must be detailed in the proposal.

# Collaborative Action Research: Lessons Learned

Catherine Nelson and Lisa White-McNulty, University of St. Francis  
Mary LeGrand and Jane Richards, A. O. Marshall Elementary School

Joliet Public Schools District 86 and the College of Education at the University of St. Francis have established the Joliet Professional Development Schools Partnership (JPDSP). The partnership focuses on four cornerstones to guide our work: teacher candidate preparation, professional development, student achievement, and action research (Teitel, 2003). The district administration took the lead in generating interest among teachers to participate in the action research process. They purchased books for all teachers in JPDSP schools, and district staff presented the first information session.

Cathy and Lisa, the university faculty members, served as action research consultants, collaborating with in-service teachers at Farragut and A.O. Marshall Elementary Schools. The goal was to encourage in-service teachers to engage in systematic analysis of classroom data to make more informed instructional decisions. As consultants, we took a facilitative role, providing some expertise in the research process, while teachers contributed their expertise on classroom teaching as well as knowledge of their students.

The pilot began at the end of the 2004-05 school year, with an invitation to teachers to consider collaborating on projects of their choosing. Teachers had the summer to reflect on their most pressing classroom needs and decide whether to participate in the action research process. The process then unfolded in steps, beginning in September of 2005 with just-in-time workshops on the steps of the action research process, followed by work time on that specific step in the process. We developed action research plans during the first quarter of the academic year and began the data collection process during the second quarter. In between workshops, we communicated with each other via phone and email on an as-needed basis. Teachers showcased their completed projects at the end of the school year JPDSP celebration.

In reflecting on our experiences, we realized that the September-to-April timeline was too short to create a plan, collect, and analyze an adequate amount of data for the kinds of research questions teachers had. Feedback from the teachers also indicated that they wished for more regular meeting time with the consultants as they worked on their projects. To address these issues when planning for the next academic year, we decided to conduct the early workshops in the summer in order to have action research plans completed in August. This enabled teachers to begin to collect data, in particular baseline data, as soon as the school year started. We also scheduled monthly work sessions to facilitate sharing of progress and answering of questions that arose during the data collection and analysis phases. Table 1 shows the current timeline of the action research process.

Title	The Process	Action Research Tasks
Summer	Workshop: Overview of Action Research	Develop initial research questions
	Workshop: Literature Search	Review relevant literature and refine research questions
	Workshop: Data Collection	Develop data collection plan and complete Action Research proposal
Fall/Winter	Data Collection period	Collect data to answer research questions
	Monthly Work Sessions with teachers and consultants	Discuss progress, share preliminary findings, ask questions
Spring	Workshop: Data Analysis	Analyze data collaboratively with consultants
	Workshop: Presenting Findings	Complete reports, PowerPoint presentations; Present findings to colleagues, JPDSP celebration

Table 1. The JPDSP collaborative action research process timeline

At the end of the experience, Cathy and Lisa asked teacher-researchers how the Collaborative Action Research Process had impacted their classroom practices. Recently, Mary, a first grade teacher, and Jane, a technology specialist, offered these thoughts: "I can appreciate how changing the way I teach in one way can have a measurable impact on my students. This has influenced my planning and reflection as a teacher. I want to implement the initiatives that most benefit my students. Also, I try to (informally) evaluate my teaching in both qualitative and quantitative ways." Jane reported that "using action research as a tool to study my love of technology generated some expected and unexpected results. The expected result was that I answered my research questions and moved on to implementing some changes. The unexpected result was that I had insights into my teaching style and how that affects me as a professional. I need to give teachers and students the learning benefits of technology as well as how fun it is to use."

The Collaborative Action Research Process as presented here is an effective way to engage in-service teachers in classroom inquiry. The process encourages teachers to look at their classroom data in more systematic ways. It also allows teachers to become more reflective practitioners.

## References

Teitel, L. (2003). *The professional development schools handbook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

*"The Collaborative Action Research Process as presented here is an effective way to engage in-service teachers in classroom inquiry. The process encourages teachers to look at their classroom data in more systematic ways. It also allows teachers to become more reflective practitioners."*

## Patriot Initiative: A Unique University-School System Collaboration

*Lynne Mills and Nancy Land, Auburn University-Montgomery*

*“It seemed to be a natural fit for the leadership of the community to think about the value of a strong partnership with these universities.”*

Our journey begins in a small community in rural Alabama where cows graze in nearby fields, horses romp on dirt trails, and trees sway gently in the breeze. A few small two-lane roads divide the fields and seem to go on for miles without coming to a stop sign. Recently, power trucks roamed up and down those roads signaling to residents that growth is coming and their community is about to change.

Some older residents are not quite sure they are ready for new neighborhoods with smaller lots, more traffic, and additional taxes to pay for the things associated with a growing municipality. However, it is upon them and they are planning to not only survive but to flourish in every way. The biggest cheerleader is the town mayor, Dr. Gordon Stone, who encourages the community residents of Pike Road, Alabama to be optimistic about what is to come. He, along with the town council, has worked diligently to plan every possible detail of the future community ensuring that the area keeps its rural flavor and peaceful existence. Of course, one of the primary concerns of the community revolves around the proposed education system. Community residents do not want to invest more dollars into a mediocre school district. They want to be assured that the schools will provide a high quality education for their children. They want the small town feel of a school that also serves as a community center during nights and weekends. They want their children to grow up knowing the teachers, administrators, as well as most of the other children in the community. They want to feel ownership of their school and feel

that their voices are heard and valued. They want teachers who have advanced degrees and are experts in the field.

A unique quality of this community is its close proximity to four major universities in central Alabama. It seemed to be a natural fit for the leadership of the community to think about the value of a strong partnership with these universities. A Professional Development School system would be a way to ensure quality instruction for the children of this community. Therefore, the mayor and town council set about the task of forming lines of communication with all four universities and a tentative partnership was formed. A town council member, Rod Steindorff, became the Chair of the Education Committee and the meetings began. A stable and consistent group of university faculty members from each of the four universities (Alabama State University, Auburn University, Auburn University-Montgomery, and Troy University), along with a group of community leaders, have met now for two years. During that time, the primary emphasis has been to listen to each other and hear what each has to bring to the table and to gain from the partnership.

As university faculty lamented over the need for a high quality school environment to educate teacher candidates and community leaders yearned for a dynamic school that would meet the needs of all learners, it became apparent to the community leaders how valuable such a partnership would be. An interest in the definition of PDS and the value to all stakeholders began to develop. Most of the university faculty members

understood what PDS involved and helped orient the committee to various resources in the area. The NAPDS was included; in fact, the chair of the committee attended and jointly presented at the PDS National Conference in Las Vegas in 2007. Additionally, the committee read journals, perused websites, and established the first annual Education Summit in the community by bringing in speakers and experts in the PDS movement, including the President of the Holmes Group. The mayor and other community leaders also visited model PDS sites.

The planning committee became the Pike Road Educational System for Excellence in Teaching (PRESET) in 2007 and wrote a document for the community outlining an educational mission statement, philosophy, goals, and an explanation of university partnerships. Creating this document entailed long hours of meshing different philosophies. But, in the end, every stakeholder was excited and felt he/she had a voice in the plan. This document was disseminated throughout the community through the website and community meetings on various topics.

One of the biggest problems a community of this nature faces is that all work is generated from volunteers. Maintaining momentum at the early stages of building a city with little money is difficult at times. However, the stakeholders keep their optimism because they know that in the end, Pike Road will showcase one of the best school systems in the United States. For more information please go to <http://www.pikeroad.us/>.

(Continued from page 6)

growth opportunities for emerging teacher leaders as they teach their craft to teacher candidates and novice teachers. Maintaining the relationships needed to sustain the PDS is often challenging, requiring commitment and flexibility from all parties.

To further advance best practice in the middle grades, we have joined The National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform. In 1998, with input from many national education organizations, the National Forum created a set of criteria for assessing best practices in middle schools. These “Schools to Watch” (STW) criteria

address four critical areas for effective practice in the middle grades: Academic Excellence, Social Equity, Developmental Responsiveness, and Organizational Structures and Processes. The National Forum is the force behind the “Success in the Middle Act,” one of the many revisions to “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB), which is expected to allocate \$1 billion per year to states for the improvement of low-performing schools that contain middle grades.

The NJCMS has collaborated closely with the New Jersey Department of Education to implement the “Schools to Watch”

program in New Jersey. The statewide use of the STW criteria as a guideline for best practice in middle grades and the growing interest of the NJDOE in middle level education have been very important developments in our project. We have also benefited from a close working relationship with the New Jersey Middle School Association holding a statewide conference for the past three years, which now attracts over 400 educators. We believe that the attention and focus on middle level education will positively impact learning in the grades across the state.

“Maintaining the relationships needed to sustain the PDS is often challenging, requiring commitment and flexibility from all parties.”

## Through the Lens of Common Understandings

(Continued from page 6)

and universities work together. Promoting a set of experiences along a continuum leading to improving teaching and increasing student achievement is imperative. These experiences literally change the brains of educators to produce complex, intelligent behavior and continuously enhance professional judgment (Dennis Sparks in DuFour, 2005). A partial listing of such experiences follows:

- Partnership teacher and university supervisor preparation in a learning-

centered model

- Cycles of coaching and evaluation for developing key dispositions
- Ongoing professional development for university-school partners
- Collaborative university and public school on-site placement of interns
- Articulated roles and responsibilities for partnership agreements (district, site, teacher)

### Conclusions

Our PDS partnership has had many years to grow and flourish through consistent revisiting of three critical questions that may be beneficial to others: What are the common understandings that are articulated and make a difference in your PDS? How will you co-construct a systems approach that is built on a well established set of tenets? What powerful intentional processes does your PDS value and employ?

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# Successfully Unsuccessful: Strategies for Navigating Teacher Candidates Experiencing Difficulty

*Debbie Anderson and Amy Guiney, SUNY Potsdam*

*Jon Sovay and Patty Eldridge, Norwood-Norfolk Central Elementary School*

Recent data from our programs indicate that the reason behind approximately 75.4% of all unsuccessful student teachers is due to dispositional issues, and not due to content and/or classroom management issues as might be expected. There are many stakeholders to consider when working with struggling teacher candidates: students in the classroom; the sponsor teacher; school administration; the college supervisor; college administration; parents and communities of both the classroom students; and the teacher candidate. Throughout the process of documenting difficulties and counseling the candidate towards improvement, the importance of maintaining a strong and positive relationship with all of these stakeholders has been established as critical to ensuring future program success.

Early detection and identification of the issues needs to occur as a consensus exercise amongst all personnel supporting the student teacher. The communication between supervisor and sponsor teacher in particular, followed in a timely manner with the candidate teacher experiencing difficulty, is critical as issues appear, and especially when a pattern seems to have emerged. Initially it has proven to be a challenge to encourage supervisors and sponsor teachers to identify and discuss these dispositional issues with the candidate, as they are used to playing a predominantly supportive role and wish all teacher candidates to be successful. Experience has shown that the immediacy of

dealing with issues in a positive, professional manner ultimately assists the teacher candidate in the long term. Knowing this fact can encourage the principle players in this process to take responsibility and initiate swift action. Notifying college level personnel early in the process about emerging dispositional issues and keeping them informed of subsequent developments ensures everyone will be prepared should issues progress and require more serious intervention at the school.

At every stage of support for teacher candidates experiencing difficulty it is paramount to ascertain that the candidate truly is aware of the specific difficulties and the degree of seriousness of the concerns. Often when trying to be professional and positive with a teacher candidate, the candidate is reluctant to accept the seriousness of the message that the supervisor and sponsor teacher are attempting to convey. Documentation in writing during every stage of the process of dealing with difficulties is critical to ensuring clarity of communication with all involved. Establishing a set protocol for all stakeholders to follow when dealing with difficulties also ensures fairness for teacher candidates, while affording supervisors and sponsor teachers set methods and procedures to formalize their concerns.

Vitaly important is that the student teacher's self-esteem be considered throughout the process, in order to be able to make progress with the issues of difficulty without

the student teacher exhibiting defensive behavior and/or not accepting responsibility. Even when the issues seem clear and obvious upon initial examination, it has proven beneficial to obtain input from all the affected stakeholders' perspectives before finalizing a plan of action. It has happened that a significant piece of information surfaces from a stakeholder that influences the direction of the Professional Development Plan. In the end, student teachers are often relieved when others assist them in dealing with major issues that have been stumbling blocks for their success in the past. Even when the placement proves unsuccessful, student teachers can feel the pressure of trying to achieve a goal that was not working for them greatly reduced. If the process is fair and treats the teacher candidate with dignity, student teachers can be counseled appropriately into related fields connected to more appropriate personal interests, skills, and abilities, and school district administrators and sponsor teachers are willing to sponsor the School of Education again knowing there is an effective process for dealing with teacher candidate dispositional issues that emerge.

One sponsor teacher summarized her comments regarding teacher candidates experiencing difficulties, particular with dispositional issues. "[R]emember that they are doing the very best that they can, and they really deserve a lot of patience and understanding."

*"Vitaly important is that the student teacher's self-esteem be considered throughout the process, in order to be able to make progress with the issues of difficulty without the student teacher exhibiting defensive behavior and/or not accepting responsibility."*

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