Foreword

For more than two-and-a-half decades, Professional Development Schools (PDSs) served as beacons of hope, charged with improving teaching and revitalizing the profession. Today’s PDSs evolved thanks to the efforts of early reform-minded individuals, most notably John Goodlad, Linda Darling-Hammond, and other forward-thinkers, including the Holmes Group, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy. In an attempt to improve teaching and learning, scholars and policymakers called for widespread changes in the field to counteract the findings cited in the 1983 landmark study, *A Nation at Risk*. Policymakers recommended many shifts in educational practices including the professionalization of teaching, the creation of career ladders along with differentiated roles for master teachers, and the overhaul of teacher preparation programs as critical first steps in a comprehensive reform agenda. Among the recommendations cited was a movement to create school-university partnerships as a powerful tool to redesign the profession.

The Holmes Group, one of the original reformers, emerged as the driving force behind the notion of school-university partnerships. This nationwide coalition of education deans declared in *Tomorrow’s Teachers* (Holmes Group, 1986) and *Tomorrow’s Schools: Principles for the Design of Professional Development Schools* (Holmes Group, 1990) the need for K-12 school leaders to engage in serious partnership with institutions of higher education for the purposes of reform in teacher education and the simultaneous renewal of the teaching profession. The suggested goals and system-wide changes recommendations made by these early reformers set the stage for a transformative educational agenda and our current model of professional development schools.

PDSs bring the critical aspects of teaching into the forefront of practice through the creation of professional learning communities. In doing so, PDSs become the epicenter of innovation serving as places to prepare future educators, support practicing teachers, conduct educational research, and improve student achievement. These powerful entities provide a rich context for educators to study their work. And as learning laboratories designed to examine practice, PDSs create environments where pre-service teachers, practicing teachers, college faculty, and P-12 students come together under one roof to engage in the inquiry process that ignites improvement.

PDSs have surpassed the initial expectations envisioned decades ago for school-university partnerships. In this era of Common Core State Standards, APPR, and decreased funding revenue, PDSs continue to function as dynamic settings for unpacking the rich and varied experiences that constitute the world of teaching and its byproduct, learning. The editors of this book bring together a cross-section of PDS practitioners to highlight the transformative work taking place in schools nationwide and aboard. Section authors describe various methods of engagement in practitioner inquiry to foster collaboration and reflection among stakeholders. The diversity of their work represents the unique perspectives of
classroom teachers, pre-service teachers, school leaders, and university faculty with a common focus grounded in transformative change. Regardless of whether it is through the practitioner or researcher lens, each author makes a compelling argument for the varied ways in which PDSs support continuous improvement and inform practice.

The book’s four comprehensive sections identify key areas of interest for practitioners and researchers involved in PDS initiatives. Section 1 provides examples of PDS partnerships at various stages of development building strong collaborations to maximize the growth of all stakeholders. Section 2 examines how PDSs leverage their resources to meet the needs of various populations within the partnership, including English Language Learners, at-risk learners, PreK-12 students, and pre-service teachers. Section 3 further describes the ways PDSs continue to meet student needs through the creation of discipline specific pedagogies to enhance learning outcomes for all members of the PDS community. Finally, Section 4 closes with PDSs supporting content area instruction to promote student achievement, implement Common Core State Standards, and strengthen pre-service teachers’ and practicing teachers’ self-efficacy and professional practice.

The rich assortment of chapters highlight the collective wisdom of PDS folks “on the ground” impacting the field. These leaders are responding to the challenges faced by the educational system in creative, thought-provoking ways. Their work provides a context for unpacking the teaching and learning cycle in authentic settings. Through their analysis of practices, programs, and initiatives at specific sites, readers gain a deeper understanding of the multi-layers of collaboration, risk-taking, and trust needed to facilitate successful PDS partnerships. Furthermore, they present readers with an array of possibilities to consider for replication or future study in other PDSs. The authors expertly make a case for the transformative nature of PDS work and inspire others to continue its mission to affect change. As these authors passionately remind us, after two-and-a-half decades PDSs have kept the promise to improve teaching and revitalize the profession.

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REFERENCES