Preface

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

Professional Development Schools (PDS) and partnerships between universities and Pre-Kindergarten through 12th Grade (PK-12) schools have been advanced as a potential vehicle to greatly enhance teaching and learning in both the university and the PK-12 levels (National Council for the Accreditation in Teacher Education [NCATE], 2001; Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation [CAEP], 2013). While NCATE created standards for Professional Development Schools in 2001, there was still a great deal of ambiguity about what a PDS or successful school-university partnership entailed. Leaders in the National Association of Professional Development Schools (NAPDS) created a document called What it Means to be a Professional Development School (National Association for Professional Development Schools [NAPDS], 2008) in which the authors detailed nine characteristics of successful PDS partnerships. As that document gained traction through NAPDS members and teacher education programs, PDS partnerships started to become more formal in some institutions, while other institutions have partnerships with local PK-12 schools that are neither formal partnerships nor are called PDS partnerships. At the end of the day, it is not about the label of calling partnerships PDS, but rather that PDS partnerships, whether they use Standards from NCATE or recommendations from NAPDS, give both teacher education programs and PK-12 schools a common language to start from.

MY FIRST EXPERIENCE WITH PDS PARTNERSHIPS

During my own clinical work and student teaching experience in the late 1990s as a student at the College of William and Mary, my experiences were not formally referred to as a PDS, but I experienced the rich benefits of a partnership that was formed between William and Mary’s School of Education and the elementary school where I spent most of my time. During the spring of my junior year, I was placed at D. J. Montague Elementary School, a school which had anywhere from 10 to 20 college students working in the building in various capacities during each semester. During a clinical with Mrs. Lynda Heath, a third grade teacher, who had mentored over a dozen student teachers, I received a lot of support learning about how school works, fine tuning lesson plans, assessment strategies, and ideas for classroom management. The biggest benefit from that clinical experience is that the gaps were quickly filled between what I had learned in my methods courses on campus and the instructional strategies being used in schools. I remained at that school for my senior year and completed my student teaching
in a fourth grade classroom with Mr. Roy Turner, who had also mentored over a dozen student teachers and provided consistent mentorship and support. Directly from student teaching, I was blessed enough to walk into a long-term substitute teaching position until the end of the year and then a full-time teaching position the following year. While clearly hosting and mentoring college students alone does not make a PK-12 school a PDS, the type of mentoring that I received there is definitely a vital aspect. From the first time I set foot into the school, I was treated like and expected to act like a professional educator. There was constant feedback from every teacher and administrator that I worked with, and there was a strong communication line between the teachers at the school and my faculty through an assortment of feedback mechanisms. As a full-time teacher at D. J. Montague, I had the opportunity to pay it forward and host college students for their clinical experiences numerous times during my years as a classroom teacher. For an elementary school teacher, one of the most empowering experiences can be to have college students work in your classroom as your colleague as they hone their teaching skills and learn more about the teaching profession.

While my experiences being a teacher candidate and hosting teacher candidates was powerful, the strongest aspect of the partnership between William and Mary and D. J. Montague was a Preparing Tomorrow’s Teachers to Teach with Technology (PT3) grant. As part of the project, Montague teachers participated in professional development workshops about how to use more technology in our teaching, and teacher candidates participated in some workshops with us. The final culminating activity was for teachers to collaborate with teacher candidates to design and teach a series of technology-rich lessons in the classroom. The multiple groups of people led to the strength of the project, drawing on the expertise and knowledge of William and Mary faculty who facilitated the workshops, teachers who were mentoring teacher candidates while learning how to use technology more effectively in their teaching, and the teacher candidates who were learning about technology as well as how to teach. As a result of that project, anecdotally, teacher candidates developed a deeper understanding of planning and teaching technology-rich lessons, and teachers taught more technology-rich lessons than they had previously. That series of experiences laid the groundwork for PDS partnerships in my career and instilled in me the value of Professional Development School partnerships that simultaneously benefit PK-12 teachers and students as well as university faculty and teacher candidates.

OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

As we look to the future of education, I am excited about the number of these types of partnerships between teacher education partnerships and PK-12 schools, and this edited volume provides some excellent examples about how these partnerships have transformed both teacher education and PK-12 education. This book includes a collection of chapters all focused on the innovative and transformative work that university faculty members in teacher education programs are doing in collaboration with their PK-12 school partners and colleagues. The collection includes vignettes, theoretical perspectives, research studies, and broader manuscripts about partnerships between universities and PK-12 schools.

In the first section, “Examples of Professional Development School Partnerships,” the authors provide glimpses at the work of PDS partnerships on a larger scale. In the opening chapter, Steel, Shambaugh, Curtis, and Schrum provide a historical and current look at the Benedum Collaborative at West Virginia University, one of the longest running PDS partnerships in the United States. Steel and her colleagues provide insight into how PDS partnerships provide a natural context to continuously evaluate and refine
the work done in their teacher education programs and their local PDS partner schools. In the second chapter, Polly, Spooner, and Chapman detail the PDS Partnerships at UNC Charlotte as a faculty-led initiative in which partnerships are initiated and framed around the needs of the PK-12 partner schools and the interests of the schools and faculty liaisons. In the third chapter, Horn describes her own personal journey as a faculty member who gradually became more invested into the work of PDS partnerships. In the fourth chapter, Catelli, Jackson, Marino, and Perry describe how a PDS Partnership between Dowling College and the North Babylon School District provided a venue for holistic and comprehensive improvement for both the teacher education program and the local schools. In the fifth chapter of the section, Morewood, Taylor, and Hennen discuss how their PDS partnership facilitated ongoing learning for Morewood, a university faculty member, as well as Taylor and Hennen, teachers at a local elementary school. The last chapter of the opening section shares Smaldino’s and Luetkehans’s experiences refining the PDS Partnerships between faculty at Northern Illinois University and their PK-12 school partners.

The second section of the book, “Leveraging Professional Development School Partnerships to Meet Needs of Specific Populations,” provides specific examples about PDS partnerships that have been designed and implemented to address specific populations of students. The section opens with a chapter from Kolano and Childers-McKee, who discuss how PDS work has supported immigrant students in an urban school. The next chapter by Ahlgrim-Delzell, Zakas, Browder, and Rhyne provides a description about how faculty at UNC Charlotte and Special Education leaders from Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools formed a comprehensive partnership to meet the needs of exceptional students. Thornburg and Collins follow with their chapter, which focuses on how their PDS work has supported the placement of teacher education candidates in urban elementary schools. In Chapter 10, Siebert, Wyss, and Jackson describe how their PDS partnership allowed PK-12 teachers to share their expertise to teacher candidates through videos. The next chapter features Taylor and Clark’s description of how they have formed PDS partnerships to support their Early Childhood Education program at Ball State University as well as early childhood learning centers in the community. The section closes with a chapter from Putman, Cassady, Smith, and Heller, who describe PDS efforts to connect a Teacher Education program, schools, and community centers to support at-risk students.

The third section, “Designing Professional Development School Partnerships on Specific Pedagogies,” showcases how PDS projects have supported the implementation and use of various pedagogies and mechanisms for teacher support. In Chapter 13, Suh, King, and Weiss describe how they have implemented instructional rounds and lesson study to support teaching in a local elementary school. This is followed by Rock’s and Heafner’s chapter about how PDS supported service-learning initiatives at a few PDS partner schools. In Chapter 15, Üstünel, Koçman, and Dikilitaş describe efforts in Turkey to form PDS partnerships focused on critical reflection. The next chapter focuses on work by Popejoy, Good, Rock, and Vintinner to partner with PDS schools to create an intensive clinical experience for elementary education teacher candidates. The section closes with Polly’s chapter about a comprehensive, multi-year effort at one elementary school to support mathematics instruction.

The book’s final section, “Focusing Professional Development School Partnerships on Specific Content Areas,” includes examples about how PDS partnerships have supported instruction in various content areas. In Chapter 18, Kissel, Thunder, Tassell, and Hansen describe a partnership with a local school focused on writing across the curriculum. In the next chapter, Lynch-Davis, Salinas, Crocker, and Mawhinney describe how both mathematics educators and mathematicians collaborated with local school districts to support mathematics instruction. Chapter 20 features Dellinger-Horton and Green describing efforts around supporting mathematics teaching and learning efforts in an elementary school. In Chap-
ter 21, Lutz describes his efforts partnering with district leaders to support the implementation of new mathematics standards. In the final chapter of this section, Heafner and Spooner describe a reciprocal learning process and how it has supported teacher professional development at a high school-level PDS.

All in all, this edited volume provides a robust collection of chapters that provide examples and descriptions of a variety of Professional Development School partnerships. We hope that this book serves as a valuable reference for teacher education faculty, university leaders, school district leaders, and others who have an interest in PDS activities.

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REFERENCES

