

Appendix A: PDS History and Evolution

The birth of the elementary and secondary Professional Development Schools in the 1998-99 school year was the result of a long-term effort to build a trusting partnership between SCASD and Penn State's College of Education. Both school district and university believed that together, they could improve teacher education for new teachers entering the profession, continuing or in-service education for district teachers and Penn State teacher educators, and, most importantly, public school education for State College Area School District children.

The original partnership was initiated in December of 1994 when the two partners received funding through a series of Goals 2000 grants offered by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (Dana, Dana, & Hernandez, 1997; Dana, 1996; Dana, Myers, & Abrams, 1995). The grant, and additional funds provided by the school district and the university, supported the creation of a collaborative partnership that would be actualized through the establishment of Professional Development Schools. During the first year of the project, grant funds were used to establish a steering committee and an action team that developed a PDS framework. Year two (1995-96 school year) was characterized by the formation of study groups that began to implement various components of the PDS concept by collaborating on a number of smaller projects. For example, State College and Penn State collaborated on the offering of a summer reading program where university students and faculty worked on-site with teachers to provide elementary students with a summer reading tutorial. Through this experience, the Penn State students completed their coursework in the teaching of reading and writing and children's literature.

Although the idea of creating a professional development school was clearly advocated by both district and university leadership, the result of the first three years of the collaborative funded by Goals 2000 money was mainly the development of a relationship between the partners (Dana & Hernandez, 1997). Two areas that had not been focused on, and that needed explicit attention, were the conscious effort to reform the teacher education program and the emphasis on making teacher inquiry a central feature of the schools (Dana, 1998). Hence, Year III (1996-97 school year) was characterized by experimenting with student teaching at both the elementary and secondary level. The experimental student teaching focused on teacher inquiry. Over the next two years, four student teachers at Matternville and Ferguson Elementary Schools completed this experimental student teaching that revolved around engaging in teacher inquiry as an integral component of the student teaching semester. For a detailed report of this student teacher inquiry, please see Dana and Silva (2001).

The notion of a full school year, inquiry-oriented internship for prospective teachers with practicing teachers earning graduate credits for their work with interns crystallized when the local leadership team attended the initial Holmes Partnership Meeting. Hence, Year IV (1997-98) was characterized by a series of meetings between faculty at Penn State and teachers at two elementary schools (Ferguson and Matternville).

These district teachers and university faculty collaboratively created a vision for this Professional Development School Partnership characterized by “The Three E’s” which form the goals of the Partnership. Future meetings included the teachers’ active involvement in creating an intern selection procedure, planning and problem solving sessions, review of intern applications, interviewing potential interns, and matching interns and mentors. Teachers also discussed PDS issues at staff meetings and interacted with interns during school visits. Additionally, our capacity for mounting the program was enhanced as many of the teachers engaged in independent readings about PDS for university credit. A year of planning and capacity building resulted in the opening of elementary PDS sites. Elementary PDS sites were established at Matternville and Ferguson elementary schools where fourteen interns worked closely with mentor teachers throughout the entire 1998-99 school year.

The anticipated result of this pilot internship year at these PDS sites was the creation of a culture and teacher education program focused on co-reform and simultaneous renewal, largely through teacher inquiry. To symbolize the new roles and relationships that were being created through this budding PDS partnership, changes were made in the labels that have been used traditionally to refer to various roles in teacher education. Student teachers became interns. Cooperating teachers became mentors. Methods teachers and student teaching supervisors became Professional Development Associates (PDAs). PDAs co-teach methods courses, aid mentors in the classroom supervision of interns, visit school sites several times each week, conduct observations of interns, spend time with mentors, interns, and their children, serve as a resource for all members of the professional development school community, facilitate inquiry work, and plan and conduct seminars.

In the five years since the initial pilot internship sites were established, the elementary PDS program has evolved from 14 interns in two schools to 62 interns in all 10 elementary schools in 2004-2005.

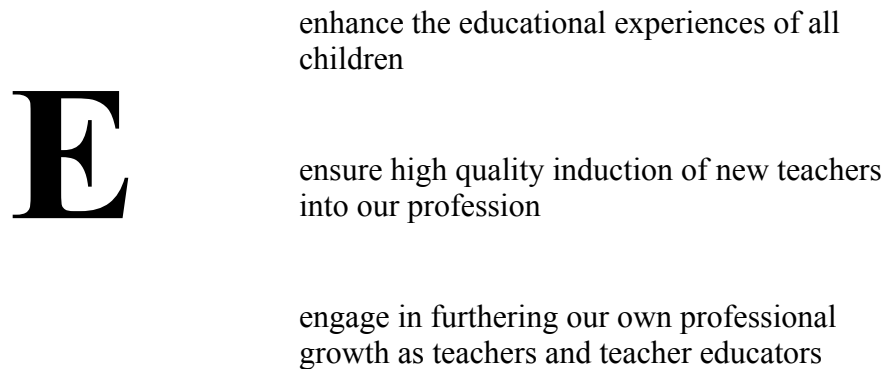
During the evolution of the program, the elementary PDS has been recognized with many awards including the following:

- 1) 2004 Best Partnership Award- Holmes Partnership
- 2) Invited Keynote Address – Holmes Partnership Conference 2003
- 3) Distinguished Program in Teacher Education 2002- Association of Teacher Educators
- 4) Outstanding Teacher Researcher Award – 2001 – Northeastern Educational Research Association
- 5) Outstanding Dissertation Award – 2001- Association of Teacher Educators
- 6) Lucent Technologies Foundation K-16 Partnership Grant.

Partnership Goals

Based on the six goals identified by the Holmes Partnership, The SCASD-Penn State PDS Partnership collaboratively conceptualized three main goals for the program, known to the partners as the “Three E’s:” (1) **E**nhance the educational experiences of all children, (2) **E**nsure high quality induction of new teachers into our profession, and (3) **E**ngage in furthering our own professional growth as teachers and teacher educators (See Figure 1). These goals have guided the actions and efforts of the partnership since their inception. While one component of the PDS, the undergraduate teaching internship, is focused primarily on the inquiry-based preparation of pre-service teachers to become “career professionals” (Holmes Group, 1986), the “Three E’s” also focus on the simultaneous renewal and professional development of the school and university based faculty involved in the partnership.

Figure 1. Penn State – State College Area School District 3 E’s



In addition to the Three E’s, the partnership’s efforts are guided by the collaboratively developed Teacher Education Conceptual Framework of Penn State’s College of Education. This framework represents the knowledge, skills, and dispositions expected of new teachers who graduate from this program. The framework is built upon a central node of Educators as Life-Long Learners, which emphasizes an inquiry focus for beginning teachers that allows them to be critically reflective about their work and the multidimensional contexts in which their work takes place. The inquiry basis for the PDS internship contributes greatly to the interns’ (and mentor teachers’) development as critically reflective practitioners. A key outcome of our program is that new teachers are well positioned to problematize practices of schooling, systematically study those practices, and take action for change based on such study. During the yearlong internship, mentors and interns develop a framework and abilities for engaging in teacher inquiry and conduct their own teacher inquiry projects. The focus and results of these projects are presented at an annual Teacher Inquiry Conference in May. The interns’ presentation of their work at this conference attests to their ability to critically reflect on and transform important aspects of schooling at the dawn of their teaching careers.

Appendix B: Acronyms and Abbreviations

CST - Curriculum Support Teacher. – This is a full time employee of the school district. There are two focus areas. Some CST's work with Language Arts and Social Studies curriculum. The other CST's work with the Science and Math curriculum. They help new and veteran teachers deliver the State College curriculum.

EMAT- The State College Elementary Mathematics Curriculum Guide that lays out the structure of the math curriculum and general expectations for student learning and growth.

Intern – The students from Penn State who have chosen to do their student teaching in the PDS setting.

IEP - Individualized Educational Program – Children who have been identified with special needs are required to have an IEP written. This document describes the special programming that may be needed in order for the student to be successful. Parents and school personal write and implement the IEP.

IST - Instructional Support Team or Instruction Support Teacher – This is a group made up of classroom teachers, the principal and specialists in each building. They help to monitor the needy students progress and possible entry into a special education program. There are specific teachers assigned as ISTs. They help to screen children or work with classroom teachers to help modify the curriculum for needy children.

Jumpstart – A one-week course in August for the interns. They begin coursework and begin to develop the relationships and culture of the PDS.

LAC - Language Arts Curriculum Guide – This is a guide written for classroom teachers by the district. It describes the various reading and writing levels in the district. It also describes the objectives of each level and the activities that can be done in order to meet those objectives.

Mentor – The classroom teachers who have chosen to work with the interns from the University.

NEA - National Education Association – the national teachers union organization. The State college local affiliate is referred to as SCAEA- State College Area Educational Organization.

PDA - Professional Development Associate – Technically anyone who works with the interns and mentors as an instructor in the professional development school is a PDA. Methods course instructors are PDA's. Classroom supervisors are also called PDAs. There are also two teaching positions in the district that are PDA positions. These are classroom teachers who have been released for the classroom in order to work as a "classroom PDA". They help to supervise the interns from the University.

PDD - Professional Development District - During the 2004 school year the State College Area School District became a Professional Development District when all of the elementary schools joined the PDS.

PDE - Pennsylvania Department of Education- The state organization that determines the standards and laws of the schools in Pennsylvania.

PDS - Professional Development School – Any one of the elementary schools in the district that collaborates with the University.