

Continued Effort and Success: An Urban Professional School Development Program

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ABSTRACT: The PDS partnership between the Cleveland State University Master of Urban Secondary Teaching (MUST) program and the Cleveland School of Science and Medicine (CSSM) has an established history of preparing educators to teach in urban schools. Recently awarded the NAPDS Award for Exemplary Professional Development School Achievement, this partnership collaborates to train future educators by sharing vision, commitment, resources and knowledge.

NAPDS Essential(s) Addressed: #1/A comprehensive mission that is broader in its outreach and scope than the mission of any partner and that furthers the education profession and its responsibility to advance equity within schools and, by potential extension, the broader community; #2/A school–university culture committed to the preparation of future educators that embraces their active engagement in the school community; #3/Ongoing and reciprocal professional development for all participants guided by need; #5/Engagement in and public sharing of the results of deliberate investigations of practice by respective participants; #8/Work by college/university faculty and P–12 faculty in formal roles across institutional settings; #9/Dedicated and shared resources and formal rewards and recognition structures

Introduction

The Professional Development School program (PDS) between the Master of Urban Secondary Teaching (MUST) program at Cleveland State University (CSU) and the Cleveland School of Science and Medicine (CSSM) was honored to receive the NAPDS Award for Exemplary Professional Development School Achievement this past year. The partnership between the MUST Program and the Cleveland School of Science and Medicine has existed for seven years and was founded on the belief that today's urban teacher educators must be focused on preparing city teachers who are equipped to promote

urban students' academic achievement, will remain in urban locales, and will endeavor to improve the conditions of urban students' lives and communities. The relationship was guided by the NAPDS *Nine Essentials of Professional Development Schools* and has been mutually beneficial for both parties in the development of professionals who excel at making a difference in urban schools.

History of the PDS Relationship Between MUST and CSSM

The PDS between MUST and CSSM was founded on the belief that urban districts and

students need teachers who consider both how their practices can promote academic achievement and successfully influence city communities' engagement with the school, democratic processes, and the highest ideals of equity. The faculty members of CSU and CSSM participating in this PDS relationship further believe that urban education professionals must work to make a difference outside of the classroom and consider the social and political structures in which classrooms are embedded. The Cleveland State University MUST program, which was developed to prepare teachers for the urban setting, found a great partner in Cleveland School of Science and Medicine, a secondary school in Cleveland Metropolitan School District located in the urban center of Cleveland, Ohio.

About MUST

The Cleveland State University MUST program was developed to train teachers who would be prepared for and remain in urban settings. Its goal is to prepare thoughtful teacher-activists who actively address the effects of race, class, gender, and other differences on student achievement and their communities' well-being. Rather than accede to the intensified and under-resourced conditions of the urban classrooms, schools, and university in which it is housed, MUST has made responding to such challenges explicit in its definition of urban teaching and teacher education. Its founders recognized that any successful urban licensure option must continually shift the professions of both urban teacher educators and teachers so that they require these educators to take responsibility for addressing the intense conditions found in these settings. The MUST program founders fashioned an additional and unique set of urban and social justice-oriented teacher licensure outcomes upon which its students are evaluated. Students are evaluated on the principles of social justice, urban teaching, urban schooling and communities, and resilience, resistance, and persistence and must show proof of meeting these through teaching artifacts.

About CSSM

Likewise, the Cleveland School of Science and Medicine (CSSM) was formed to create the nation's best school of science and medicine and prepare students to be our next generation of leaders. CSSM, in collaboration with its partner institutions, offers a unique college-preparatory education for motivated, high-achieving students interested in entering science or health-related professions. The Board of Trustees, along with the principal and faculty, are dedicated to utilizing the region's unique resources to position scholars for success in life. CSSM prepares students for success in postsecondary education and careers in science, medicine and related fields through an intellectually demanding culture of innovative teaching and learning in partnership with the world-class medical institutions of greater Cleveland.

PDS Mission

The PDS mission embraced by the administrators and faculty of these two institutions requires the students of both institutions to be actively involved in their classrooms and communities to achieve excellence and equity. Members of the PDS are involved in research, internships and community service. Their work has been shared through presentations to parents in the school community, students and faculty at CSU, administrators throughout the school district, and participants at state and national conferences including NAPDS, the Association of Teacher Educators, the American Educational Research Association, the Holmes Partnership, and the Council of Great City Schools. The greatest impact of the program has occurred as graduates of the MUST program have been hired as teachers at CSSM and in urban schools in northeast Ohio and throughout the United States and shared their commitment to social justice and the education profession. With data collected from the first ten years of existence of the program, MUST has enjoyed a 95% hiring rate of its interns, including five teachers at CSSM.

A Shared Effort

Collaboration, reflection and regular communication amongst the participants are embedded in the structure of the PDS. From the CSU standpoint, collaboration is immediately evident with the process of matching the CSU interns at CSSM. Interns spend a day at the school prior to their summer field experience, during the semester before their full-year internship, observing teachers in their classrooms, discussing teaching philosophies and strategies, and meeting students. The interns and mentors then complete interview forms indicating their choices for the year-long MUST field experience. The core of this process is an intentional matching system that respects interns and mentors well beyond the traditional process of matching by location or convenience.

A clear example of the ongoing collaboration and reflection at the PDS is the MUST action research project. The pre-service teachers conduct a classroom-based research project during their two-semester field experience at CSSM to study their own practice and student achievement. The goal of the project is to develop research-based teaching practices that enhance student learning and encourage novice and veteran teachers to engage in conversations regarding the “evidence” from the study and its relationship to pedagogy and student learning. Additionally, the interns’ research is shared with the school faculty as a professional development activity. During the four years of the partnership, faculty members at CSSM demonstrated a clear commitment to classroom-based research as a key factor contributing to the success of their interns, their students’ achievement and their own practice.

Regular communication between the partners occurs both formally and informally throughout the year. The CSSM site coordinator attends monthly meetings at CSU to discuss current projects and concerns as well as future goals and additions to the partnership. Mentors, interns and the MUST coordinator

meet at the opening of each semester to determine goals for the PDS and the interns as well as clarify paperwork and procedural issues. The MUST coordinator and administrator meet regularly to share knowledge and resources on topics such as classroom management, strategies to improve instruction and achievement, and new topics for faculty research and professional development. Further, the current MUST coordinator is a member of the CSSM Board of Trustees and the Chairperson of the Academic Excellence Committee at CSSM. These roles provide monthly opportunities to meet with the CSSM administrator, faculty members, and board members to discuss key issues and programs related to the operation and success of CSSM.

CSSM shares its resources with CSU by providing office space for the MUST coordinator and hosting seminars for the MUST interns at the school site during their student teaching semester. The seminars are frequently taught collaboratively by the MUST coordinator and the CSSM administrator or faculty members. Faculty members are also invited to attend the seminars. Faculty members from CSSM have taught secondary methods classes in the past to MUST interns as well.

Multiple professional development activities are provided on a regular basis for all participants in the PDS. Waivers for graduate courses at Cleveland State University have been provided to mentors for continuing education. Research presentations by interns involve both interns and faculty in data collection and analysis to determine best practices in the classroom. Seminars are taught at CSSM for both interns and faculty members. CSU faculty members have provided mentoring workshops focusing on social justice practices as well as classroom teaching and mentoring skills for faculty members working with MUST interns. Attendance and joint presentations by faculty members from CSSM and CSU at national conferences provide opportunities for discussion, reflec-

tion, and brainstorming as well as professional development. These ongoing activities provide authentic professional development for all participants of the PDS, however, the most significant program of professional development at the PDS was the three-year faculty action research project that concluded during the 2009–2010 school year.

During the 2011–2012 school year, the MUST/CSSM PDS worked on three projects to help improve the work of the PDS. CSSM faculty, MUST interns, CSU faculty, and CSSM students worked together to write grant proposals for community health services that would be implemented in the greater Cleveland community. The mentors and administrator at CSSM and the MUST coordinator are working with faculty members at the PDSs at George Mason University and the University of Houston-Downtown to study and improve the process of matching pre-service and in-service teachers for field experiences to increase levels of excellence in teaching and student achievement during these experiences. Lastly, a team of teachers and the administrator of CSSM are working with the coordinator of the MUST program to develop a grant-funded program to match CSSM teachers with teachers in neighboring school districts to improve teaching strategies and student achievement on AP tests in all AP level classes. Together, CSSM and MUST are developing solutions to needs they see in their community to benefit future teachers, current faculty, and, most importantly, the students they serve.

The accomplishment of which this PDS is most proud is that we have indeed become a PDS, in current practice and authentic achievement. As a charter member of the NAPDS, CSU has worked diligently with CSSM to understand what it means to be a PDS, to implement each of the *Nine Essentials* of a PDS and create a vibrant, successful partnership committed to social justice, the success of all students, preparation of excellent future educators, and authentic professional development for classroom teachers and university

faculty. As a result of this accomplishment, the participants in this PDS have attained high levels of success and recognition for their work in their classrooms and communities.

As the work of the PDS continues, so does the challenge to better serve all of the constituents of the PDS. Edward Weber, administrator of CSSM, stated, “Certainly, the role of new high performance teachers is in great demand everywhere and the MUST program is the first place CSSM looks to fill our open positions. We have invested our time and talent into this successful model and in the years to come we have a sustainable pipeline for our own profession.” ^{SUP}



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