

Expanding the Professional Development School Model: Developing Collaborative Partnerships With School Counselors

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ABSTRACT: The Professional Development School (PDS) model, a successful collaborative partnership model between university teacher education programs and P-12 schools, focuses on “preparing future educators, providing current educators with ongoing professional development, encouraging joint school-university faculty investigation of education-related issues, and promoting the learning of P-12 students” (National Association of Professional Development Schools, 2008, p. 1). While this description of a PDS refers to educators in general and uses inclusive language, in practice the primary focus of PDS partnerships has been on teaching and teacher preparation. The purpose of this article is to explore the rationale for, opportunities in, and feasibility of expanding the model to include school counselors and to describe initial efforts at one university to integrate school counselor interns, school counselor mentors/on-site supervisors, and counselor education university faculty into the PDS partnership. This article demonstrates how this model meets the NAPDS Nine Essentials.

NAPDS Essentials 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; #4/A shared commitment to innovative and reflective practice by all participants; #5/Engagement in and public sharing of the results of deliberate investigations of practice by respective participants; #6/An articulation agreement developed by the respective participants delineating the roles and responsibilities of all involved; #7/A structure that allows all participants a forum for ongoing governance, reflection, and collaboration; #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

While Professional Development Schools (PDSs) have primarily focused on classroom teachers, teacher interns, and university teacher educators, some researchers have advocated for new ways to partner with other members of the educational team in order to create a model of learning and collaboration that is institutionalized into all aspects of the school culture. Doktor (2010) advocated for the expansion of PDS participants to encourage “special educators and related service personnel’s active engagement in PDS activities” (p. 7) in order to promote best practices in training teachers in inclusive classrooms. She argued that PDS contracts can include special education and allied service personnel in PDS activities and on advisory boards, and that university partners should promote delivery of specialized educational services as part of the general education curriculum.

Tilford (2010) supported including principals in the PDS partnership in new ways, including “a change in structure and culture from the traditional principal preparation model” (p. 60) to prepare principals to improve student learning and achievement through a new vision which includes improved teacher training. Clark and Horton-Parker (2002) advocated for placing school counselor interns in PDS schools in order to teach, model, and practice the collaboration with teachers, parents, administrators, and university educators that is vital to the functioning of effective schools and university Counselor Education programs. They argued that one of the benefits of this arrangement is the growth and change that can occur from educators coming together from different schools and different disciplines and university departments to share best practices. In the collaborative effort described here, we share the benefits of expanding our partnership to school counselors as we define individual roles and responsibilities.

The Role of the Professional School Counselor

Understanding the role of the school counselor is important in order to create a vision for how school counselors can be effectively integrated into a PDS partnership. The school counseling profession is undergoing a transformation nationally, and this transformation places school counselors squarely at the center of the educational mission of the school. Gone are the days when school counselors can work in relative isolation from other members of the educational team, reactively serving a narrow range of select students who seek out services or focusing primarily on administrative and clerical tasks, with little accountability for outcomes on student learning and development and on school-wide goals. Counselors must serve all students in a systematic way, with the end goal of promoting the academic, career, and personal/social development of *all* students. School counselors need to be accountable for student outcomes that support the school’s mission. Several organizations have influenced this central role of school counselors in working collaboratively as an integral part of the educational team to promote academic, career, and personal/social success for all students including the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs (CACREP), and the Education Trust’s National Center for Transforming School Counseling (NCTSC).

ASCA and CACREP: Setting Standards for School Counseling Programs and Counselor Preparation

ASCA recently published its third edition of the *ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs* (2012), which sets standards of practice for the school counseling profession. The ASCA National Model is also incorporated into the CACREP accreditation standards for

university school counseling programs (2009), in an effort to create a unified vision and voice for the profession. This standardization of training programs and school-based programs sets the stage for effective school-university partnerships. The ASCA National Model is comprehensive, developmental, systemic, and data-driven. Overarching themes central to school counselors' work include leadership, advocacy, collaboration, and systemic change (ASCA, 2012). The ASCA National Model outlines the foundation, management, delivery, and accountability components of a comprehensive school counseling program.

Foundation. The counselor's *beliefs* about and *vision* for students, as well as the *mission* of the school counseling program (which is connected to and supports the mission of the school) and the *student competencies* (what students should know and be able to do as a result of the school counseling program in the areas of academic, career and personal/social development), drive the program goals. The counselor's *skills*, *dispositions*, and *ethical standards* inform their practice. Together these form the foundation of the school counseling program.

Management. Management components include use of *counselor performance assessment*, *program outcomes*, and *use-of-time assessments*, as well as other tools to plan and manage the program. Tools include an *annual agreement* with the school administrator in order to align the program with the goals of the school, an *advisory council*, use of *school profile data and program results data* in program planning, *action plans to close achievement gaps*, *lesson plans*, and *program calendars*.

Delivery. School counselors implementing the ASCA National Model (2012) are expected to allocate approximately 80% of their time to direct and indirect service to students. Direct services include delivery of the *school counseling core curriculum* (classroom lessons and large group programs to promote academic, career, and personal/social development), *individual student planning* (career planning, academic advising, and assisting students with achievement of goals), and *responsive services* (individual and

small group counseling and crisis intervention). Indirect services include *referrals*, *consultation*, and *collaboration* with teachers, administrators, other school personnel, families, universities, and community service agencies.

Accountability. Today's school counselors need to focus on data, outcomes, and removing systemic barriers to success for all students. School counselors must collect and *analyze data to close achievement gaps*; *share results* regarding student achievement of academic, career, and personal/social goals; and *use data to continuously improve their programs*. Counselors are an important part of the educational team, working toward academic, career and personal success for all students (ASCA, 2012).

Transforming School Counseling

In addition to the ASCA National Model (2012) and the CACREP accreditation standards (2009) for university training programs, the Education Trust's NCTSC has influenced the direction of the profession.

The National Center for Transforming School Counseling promotes a new vision of school counseling in which school counselors advocate for educational equity, access to a rigorous college and career-readiness curriculum, and academic success for all students. Our mission is to transform school counselors into powerful agents of change in schools to close the gaps in opportunity and achievement for low-income students and students of color. (2012, p. 1).

The transformed school counselor has shifted the focus from solely counseling individual students who seek out counseling to removing systemic barriers through teaming, collaboration, advocacy, and leadership so all students can achieve academic success and graduate from school college- and career-ready. University programs training school counselors are aligning their curricula, instructional methods, field experiences, and working relationships

with community partners to support this new vision (Martin & Robinson, 2011).

Rationale for Including School Counselors in the PDS Model

The PDS Model and School Counseling: A Good Fit

Both the PDS model and the current professional conceptualization of the role of the school counselor emphasize collaboration, comprehensiveness, student advocacy, educational equity, data-driven best practices, and accountability for student outcomes, shared leadership, and creating a culture that advances the education profession. Incorporating school counselors and counselor educators into the PDS model can provide a vehicle for collaboration in achieving these mutual goals.

According to the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC, 2013), a partnership with school counselors can assist in efforts to meet the new state requirements incorporating PARCC. The goal of PARCC is to ensure that students in grades 3 to high school will be identified early to address academic deficits. This collaborative relationship will assist students to be better prepared to enter college or various careers with test scores or skills that are comparable to students in other states. The data from PARCC assessments will produce valid results that can be used to as one tool to evaluate the extent to which students can meet the rigorous demands of college coursework or careers.

School Counselors Can Enhance PDS Partnerships

School counselors and counselor educators bring a whole-school and whole-child perspective to the PDS partnership. They are working on school-wide student outcomes in academic, career, and personal/social areas and how these areas interact to affect student achievement.

This broad-based “big picture” approach can add a valuable perspective to the partnership.

At the same time, their specialized expertise in such areas as mental health, human development, prevention of high risk behaviors, social skills training, conflict mediation, career development, college planning, behavioral counseling, and individual and group counseling can be valuable areas of collaboration and topics for professional development for teachers. For example, teachers are spending an increasing amount of time on behavioral and mental health issues in the classroom. Counselors can collaborate with teachers to address mental health and behavioral issues together, and can offer professional development on specific strategies for assisting students with adjustment and success in the classroom despite these obstacles. During our 2012 Teacher Intern and Counselor workshop, an activity was conducted with both teachers and counselors to review issues that students are most likely to encounter while in school. The teacher interns were asked to decide which issues would they handle and which issues should be referred to the counselors. Surprisingly, teachers realized that they were spending more time on issues that should be referred to the counselors, therefore reevaluating their use of instructional time in the classroom.

PDS Partnerships Can Benefit the School Counseling Profession

A challenge in implementing this new vision of school counseling advocated by the profession and counselor training programs is to increase awareness of the transformed role of the school counselor and how it fits with the mission of the school. By including school counselors in the PDS model and increasing awareness of the transformed role of the school counselor among teachers, teacher educators, and administrators, school counselors will be in a better position to advocate for school counseling programs that focus on academic, career, and personal/social development, data-driven best practices, closing achievement gaps, and systemic solutions to school-wide goals.

A second challenge is the professional isolation of school counselors. School counselors are often either the only counselor in their buildings at the elementary level, or share responsibilities with one or two other counselors at the secondary level. Integrating school counselors into a truly collaborative model of professional development and into a PDS school culture can bring them into a central and more reflective, intentional, and fully functioning role within PDS schools.

School counseling is by nature an eclectic profession. School counselors have one foot in the counseling profession, and one foot in the education profession. They are counselors, but they are also educators. Nationally, only ten states require school counselors to have a teaching certificate or experience as a teacher without allowing substitution of a school counseling internship for teaching experience (American Counseling Association, 2012). Of the 94 school counseling students who graduated from our program between 2001 and 2014, only fourteen (14.9%) had instructional certifications, and only eight (8.5%) had any P-12 classroom teaching experience. Students receive some instruction in graduate school in the basics of teaching, lesson planning, and educational assessment, but this is secondary to their primary training as a specialist in counseling. School counselors can benefit from a partnership of educators so they can understand the school culture by experiencing it first-hand in a teaching-learning environment that is comprehensive, inclusive of counselors, and focused on collaboration to achieve positive student outcomes. PDSs can facilitate counselors' abilities to keep their feet firmly planted in both counseling and education.

First Year Experiences Integrating School Counseling into a Local PDS Partnership: Our PDS Partnership

The PDS partnership includes the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, Salisbury University, and Caroline, Somerset, Wicomico, and

Worcester county school systems in Maryland. In August 2012 we expanded our partnership to include school counselors and school counseling interns into some aspects of the PDS partnership. Following is a summary of the ways in which we included school counselors according to the Nine Essentials of PDSs (National Association for Professional Development Schools, 2008).

Essential 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.

In order to broaden our PDS mission to include school counselors, counselor educators and school counseling interns, the university's Education Department Chair and the university's PDS Coordinator invited the Counselor Education faculty member who coordinated the School Counseling specialization to join the PDS Coordinating Council in the fall of 2012. This provided an opportunity to discuss ways in which school counselors could be included in the partnership.

By taking a step toward inclusion of school counselors, counselor educators, and school counseling interns in the partnership, we added a broader dimension to our existing PDS mission. Including the important role of school counselors allowed us to add a valuable perspective to the advancement of the education profession and can lead to more comprehensive approaches to advancing student achievement and equity in schools. At the same time, we are advancing the school counseling profession by giving school counselors a place at the table so that they can have greater access to collaboration opportunities they need in order to effectively contribute to students, schools, and the education profession.

Essential 2: A school-university culture committed to the preparation of future educators that embraces their active engagement in the school community.

At the conclusion of the fall semester in December 2012, new school counseling interns were included in a day-long internship orienta-

tion program along with teacher educators. The training was coordinated and led by the university's PDS Coordinator. Teacher education interns and school counseling interns spent most of the day in professional development and orientation sessions together. The sessions prepared students for active, professional, and reflective engagement in their school sites. Session topics included: Professional Protocol, Punctuality, Professional Attire, Communication Skills, How Close is Too Close, How to Correct Inappropriate Behaviors, Protocol for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse, Issues in the Classroom, and Blood Borne Pathogens. Counseling interns met separately from teacher interns to review information specific to their programs, such as the internship manual, procedures, and course requirements. These sessions were led by the Coordinator of the School Counseling Specialization and the PDS Coordinator, respectively. All school counseling interns were included in the orientation, even if they could not be placed in a PDS school.

The state of Maryland does not require that school counseling students complete their internships in PDS schools. While placement of school counseling interns in PDS schools with excellent school counselor mentors would be ideal, there are some realities preventing its full implementation. Because there is generally only one counselor in each elementary school and two to three counselors in each secondary school, there are not enough counselors in PDS schools in our rural area who are willing and fully qualified to serve as mentors for the number of interns our program needs to place, without overreliance on the same mentors every semester. The Counselor Education program also needs to assure that interns are placed in school counseling programs aligned with the requirements for accreditation and with the profession's national model. As a result of these limitations, the university currently places school counseling interns in both PDS and non-PDS schools.

Nonetheless, we actively pursue opportunities for counselor interns to participate in PDS schools when other criteria for quality are met and when counselors in PDS schools agree to

mentor interns. In order to increase the number of high quality counseling internship sites at PDS schools that meet the university's accreditation standards, counselors at all PDS schools, including those who have not served as mentors, can be actively recruited to attend the PDS Summer Institutes. This would provide opportunities for the university to provide professional development for PDS school counselors on topics such as the ASCA National Model (2012) for school counseling programs, accreditation standards for internships, supervision skills, and more. Counselors who are able to provide high quality internship experiences as a result of the training could then serve as school counselor mentors.

Essential 3: Ongoing reciprocal professional development for all participants guided by need.

In the summer of 2012, school counselor mentors/on-site supervisors were invited to attend the annual two-day PDS Summer Institute. This collaborative activity allowed teacher educator interns and counselor interns to see the correlations within many of their duties and responsibilities. Eight school counselors were in attendance. Counselor Education faculty members planned two break-out sessions specifically for school counselors, in order to share research-based best practices with the school counselor mentors. Two in-service topics were discussed, based on needs identified by counselor education faculty from their experience placing interns in the schools. Counselor education faculty took the lead in the pilot year to identify topics for the counselors at the PDS Institute.

A primary concern was our inability to place interns in school counseling programs that provide the types of experiences endorsed by the ASCA National Model (2012) and required by CACREP. The first training session introduced school counselors to the ASCA National Model (2012) for School Counseling Programs. This was identified as a high need area because of a gap in training. Most of the counselors had not been introduced to this model in their training programs, which they may have completed years earlier. Funding shortages for

professional development and geographic isolation from metropolitan areas where many training opportunities were offered meant that many school counselors had not been exposed to the latest models in the profession through conferences and workshops at the state or national level. The result at some sites was a mismatch between what was being taught in the university Counselor Education program and actual school counselor roles and responsibilities (which differ by school and often were dependent on differing expectations of administrators in each school). Participants received the publication *ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs* (2012), on which the session was based.

The second session trained counselor mentors in clinical supervision skills for school counseling interns. School counselors do not receive training in their master's degree programs on how to do clinical supervision; these skills are historically taught at the doctoral level. Yet counselor mentors are expected to provide feedback on counseling skills and techniques during the internship. An overview of the *School Counselor Supervision Model: An Adaptation of the Discrimination Model of Counselor Supervision* (Luke & Bernard, 2006) was presented by two Counselor Education faculty members. It provided an easy to follow template for providing multiple levels of supervision for different types of skills and situations (individual and small group counseling, teaching, and program management).

School counselors also attended general sessions for all PDS participants. In these sessions, the counselors learned current information on relevant issues such as managing challenging behavior in the classroom, Common Core standards, technology applications in education, and special education updates. School counselors expressed appreciation for being included in the PDS Institute, and their inclusion was positively received by PDS participants.

Essential 4: A shared commitment to innovative and reflective practice by all participants.

The PDS workshop was a time to share commonalities with the educational environment. Teacher interns and counselors shared similar concerns regarding students. University students within the department of education and other departments mentored at a local PDS elementary school. Due to the various problems displayed by this at-risk population, teachers and counselor interns can implement innovative strategies that can meet the needs of this diverse community of challenged learners. We have recently added students involved in the AmeriCorps program to provide assistance to the students during the summer.

Essential 5: Engagement in and public sharing of the results of deliberate investigations of practice by respective participants.

We take pride in reading the wonderful accomplishments of many of our colleagues who submit journal articles to *School-University Partnerships* regarding the work they are doing in their schools. Our work has been presented at national, state, and local conferences. We have been featured in our campus newsletter. We hope to be known as a model program for adding school counselors to the PDS model by continuing to highlight many of our programs and establishing the vital components that bring us together.

Essential 6: An articulation agreement developed by the respective participants delineating the roles and responsibilities of all involved.

During our initial workshop we were able to share current perspectives and develop a list of duties and responsibilities for this model. Advisory meetings are held each semester, department meetings are held once a month, and the professional education unit council (comprised of mentor teachers, university supervisors, and PDS liaisons) is held twice a month. During these meetings, information is shared regarding the curriculum, best practices, technology, and ways to bring innovative lessons to the classroom with real-world examples to meet the needs of diverse learners.

Essential 7: A structure that allows all participants a forum for ongoing governance, reflection, and collaboration.

The Annual Summer Institute currently serves as a public forum for continued reflection and collaboration. Participants are able to present as well as enjoy the information presented from various disciplines. Professional development is an enriched atmosphere that is continuously filled with tools to aid the teacher and counselor educators. We are able to provide face-to-face informative sessions as well as webinars.

Essential 8: Work by college/university faculty and P-12 faculty in formal roles across institutional settings.

We invited a faculty member from the Counselor Education department, who also serves as Coordinator of the School Counseling Specialization, to serve on the PDS Coordinating Council. This faculty member also serves as the university supervisor for all school counseling interns. No formal roles beyond that of the mentor/on-site supervisor have been developed for P-12 school counselors.

Essential 9: Dedicated and shared resources and formal rewards and recognition structures.

Recently, university faculty members have been teaching more hybrid courses to accommodate the working student. Through the use of Dropbox, an online document-sharing program, valuable resources can be shared among colleagues within the various counties. Stipends are used to compensate the mentors for their service throughout the year. This year will be the first year that various site coordinators will be recognized for their service at the PDS Summer Institute.

Future Directions

In the future, school counselors will become equal partners in identifying professional development needs and offering their expertise as presenters at the PDS Summer Institute. While the counselor educators selected and presented the school counseling topics in the pilot year in order to help transition the counselors into the PDS Summer Institute, we plan to phase in increasing involvement of school counselors in both identifying needs

and sharing expertise. In the second year, we plan to ask all counselors to collaborate in leading a session by each bringing his or her “best practices” ideas to share informally in a roundtable format. This will provide counselors with a comfortable way to share their ideas without needing to present a formal session. In addition, we plan to survey counselors on their professional development needs in order to collaborate in setting the agenda. The following year, we will solicit formal presentations from counselors that may be of interest to other educators, including counselors, teachers, administrators, and university faculty.

As we work to more fully institutionalize the expansion of our local PDS to include school counselors and school counselor interns, we hope to include counselor interns along with teacher interns in the mentoring program at a local elementary PDS. We are also seeking additional counselor representation at the PDS Coordinating Council Advisory Meetings. Finally, we would like to encourage members to share their research and expertise beyond our local PDS Summer Institute. The PDS Coordinator and School Counselor Coordinator are planning to present at the NADPS annual meeting to share this model with other participants. Teacher and counselor interns will be encouraged to share their research through presentations at conferences and submission of articles for publication. ^{SUP}

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