

Developing a Rubric to Support the Evaluation of Professional Development School Partnerships

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ABSTRACT: This article describes the synthesis of the NCATE PDS Standards, the NAPDS Nine Essentials and the CAEP Standards to create a rubric that can be used to help PDS stakeholders develop, refine, and evaluate their partnerships. Implications and future directions on how to use the rubric are also shared.

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

Overview

The Potential of Professional Development Schools

Professional Development School (PDS) Partnerships offer potential as a fertile ground for simultaneously providing rich learning experiences for practicing teachers and teacher candidates, while also positively influencing the achievement of students from Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 (PK- 12) (Holmes Group, 1990). Research continues to show the positive influences of formal PDS partnerships, where colleges/universities collaborate with schools in order to support the processes of teaching and learning (Polly, Spooner, & Chapman, 2015). Still questions remain about the actual characteristics of a PDS partnership and how to best establish and evaluate the quality and impact of these PDS relationships.

The Development of Establishing Descriptions of Professional Development Schools

Both the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the National Association for Professional Development Schools (NAPDS) have spent time establishing standards and recommendations for Professional Development Schools. In this section we describe their efforts.

NCATE PDS Standards. NCATE started to address the issue of standards over a decade ago when they wrote the Standards for Professional Development Schools in 2001 (NCATE, 2001). The document describes five standards for PDS partnerships (Table 1). In the document each standard has its own rubric, which includes descriptors for multiple elements on a 4-level scale that includes Beginning, Developing, At Standard, and Leading. In the document the authors state that the creation of the NCATE PDS Standards was important because:

NCATE recognizes that PDS partnerships have the potential power to support continuous improvement in both schools and universities. The proliferation of school/university partnerships over the last several years has been, at the same time, heartening and disquieting. It is heartening because so many educators have recognized the potential of these innovative partnerships; it is disquieting because many PDS partnerships are such “in name only”. PDS standards, therefore, are intended to bring rigor to the concept of PDSs, so that its potential will not be lost. (NCATE, 2001, p. 2).

While formal research has not been conducted, the idea that existed in 2001 of PDS Partnerships being partnerships in name only remains concerning and a potential threat to the validity and promise of PDS work. While the rubric in the NCATE PDS Standards provided four levels of descriptors for each element, these Standards have not been revised since.

NAPDS Essentials of PDS Partnerships. In 2008, a group of national leaders associated with the NAPDS collaborated to create What it Means to be a Professional Development School (NAPDS, 2008), a description of nine essential characteristics of PDS Partnerships. The focus of each essential characteristic is listed in Table 1. With the support of NAPDS, the nine essentials gained major traction among those affiliated with NAPDS and PDS Partnerships in general and became commonplace among those doing the work associated with PDS partnerships. The authors of the document stressed the importance of each of the nine essentials by writing:

Without having all nine, the relationship that exists between a school/district and college/university, albeit however strong, would not be a PDS. How individual

Table 1. NCATE PDS Standards and NAPDS Nine Essentials

<i>NCATE Standards</i>	<i>NAPDS Nine Essentials</i>
I: Learning Community	1. Comprehensive mission to advance equity
II: Accountability and Quality Assurance	2. Embraces future educators' engagement in schools
III: Collaboration	3. Ongoing and reciprocal professional development
IV: Diversity and Equity	4. Shared commitment to innovative and reflect practice
V: Structures, Resources, and Roles	5. Engagement in and public sharing of results of investigations of practice
	6. An articulation agreement delineating roles and responsibilities
	7. Structure that allows ongoing governance, reflection, and collaboration
	8. Work by college/university faculty and P-12 faculty across institutional settings
	9. Dedicated and shared resources and formal rewards and recognition structures

PDSs meet these essentials will vary from location to location, but they all need to be in place to justify the use of the term "PDS." (NAPDS, 2008, p. 2).

Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) Standards

In 2014, NCATE merged with its fellow accrediting body, the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC), to become the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP, 2014). While PDS partnerships are not formally mentioned by name in the new CAEP standards, Standard 2 includes language about the need for teacher preparation programs to form and maintain strong partnerships with schools and community organizations to create effective clinical experiences to support educator preparation. More specifically, Standard 2.2. states:

Partners co-select, prepare, evaluate, support, and retain high-quality clinical educators, both provider- and school-based, who demonstrate a positive impact on candidates' development and P-12 student learning and development. In collaboration with their partners, providers use multiple indicators and appropriate technology-based applications to establish, maintain, and refine criteria for selection, professional development, performance evaluation, continuous improvement, and retention of clinical educators in all clinical placement settings (<http://caepnet.org/standards/standards/standard2/>).

Standard 2.2 refers to both the need for partnerships that demonstrate positive impacts on both candidates and future educators' development, but also a positive impact on P-12 student learning. These partnerships should be established, maintained, and refined through multiple data points that are collected and analyzed by educator preparation programs. Simply put, there is a clear need for universities/colleges who prepare teachers to use a systematic, data-driven process to set up and revise partnerships with P-12 schools.

The Need to Synthesize NCATE's, NAPDS', and CAEP's Work

The standards and recommendations that have been offered in the past two decades from NCATE (2001), NAPDS (2008), and CAEP (2014) provide a foundation for the descriptions and expectations of effective Professional Development School partnerships. NCATE provided actual PDS Standards and a rubric of performance levels which in turn allowed educator preparation programs and P-12 school partners to rate and evaluate themselves based on the rubric and NCATE PDS Standards. NAPDS' document fine-tuned the multiple dimensions of the NCATE PDS Standards and updated them with the list and description of the nine essentials of PDS work. Lastly, the CAEP Standards, although they do not mention PDS work by name, include language that supports partnerships between universities/colleges and P-12 schools.

While these three documents provide a foundation for PDS work, there is a lack of resources and processes to carry out the work that the CAEP Standards call for in terms of developing, refining, and evaluating PDS partnerships. That is, there is a need for an updated document and a systematic process for both educator preparation programs and P-12 schools to use in the evaluation and refinement process. In the next section we describe the process and characteristics of the rubric that we have created to support the evaluation and refinement work of PDS partnerships.

Creation of Our Rubric

Our process of creating a document to support the evaluation of PDS partnerships began by considering the benefits and drawbacks to both the NCATE PDS Standards and the NAPDS Nine Essentials. Although both provided thorough descriptions of what PDS partnerships should look like, we wondered how they might become more effective tools for evaluating our partnerships.

Our conversation focused on two foundational ideas that framed our work regarding the use of a rubric and the inclusion of the Nine Essentials for PDS partnerships. First, the rubric included in the NCATE Standards was in a format that allowed

stakeholders to complete self-evaluations or allowed other outside individuals or groups to evaluate PDS partner work. Second, the NAPDS Nine Essentials included the most recent consensus from national PDS leaders about what should be included in PDS Partnership. Based off those two ideas we felt that the most appropriate starting point was to create a rubric of levels like the NCATE PDS Standards that synthesizes the ideas from both the Nine Essentials and the NCATE Standards. A rubric was created for each of the Nine Essentials since each of these is a valued part of PDS work.

Within each rubric, language was adapted and modified from the standards and elements of the standards from the NCATE PDS Rubrics. Further the level headers are identical to the NCATE rubrics with the headers: Beginning, Developing, At Standard, and Leading. Table 2 shows an example of a rubric. The rubrics are still being revised in light of feedback at the 2015 NAPDS conference. The most current forms are available for feedback online at (<http://drewpolly.org/pds-rubric/>).

Future Directions for the Use of the Rubric

This rubric has potential to shape the future directions of individuals and groups involved in PDS work in multiple ways. These are organized based on these three purposes: the establishment of new PDS partnerships, the evaluation of current PDS partnerships by stakeholders, and the external evaluation and research of PDS partnerships. We detail each of these below.

The Establishment of New PDS Partnerships

In their infancy, new PDS partnerships between educator preparation programs and P-12 schools can use the rubric to look at each of the Nine Essentials and the elements within each essential. The conversations for this stage of PDS partnerships could focus on the following questions:

- What is the current status of the partnership on each of the rubrics?
- Which essentials and elements are priorities for each stakeholder?
- Which essentials and elements are foundational to achieve our priorities?
- What steps do we need to take to show growth on each of the rubrics?
- What data/evidence can we collect to document our work and our impact?

New PDS partnerships may be at the beginning or developing stage for most of the rubrics and understandably so. The primary use of the rubric is to have both partners collaborate to conduct a self-study or self-evaluation of the partnership. By collaborating on the self-study, each partner is aware of the others' strengths and areas of growth.

Upon establishing new PDS partnerships the rubric could also be used to periodically evaluate the progress of each of the

Nine Essentials to ensure that progress is being made. New partnerships may choose to hone in and focus on a few of the Nine Essentials as priorities instead of broadly trying to make progress in all nine areas. This, too, is acceptable for the early stages of PDS work until the partnership is firmly established.

The Internal Evaluation of Current PDS Partnerships

The rubric could also serve as a resource for the internal evaluation of current PDS partnerships by stakeholders. In PDS work the NCATE PDS standards have often been used by new PDS partnerships to begin collaborative efforts but seldom used to continuously evaluate and refine partnerships (Polly et al., 2015).

Current PDS partners can use the rubric to answer similar questions to the ones above:

- What is the current status of the partnership on each of the rubrics over time?
- Which of the Nine Essentials and elements are priorities for each stakeholder and which might be set-aside until a later designated date?
- Which essentials and elements are foundational to achieve our priorities?
- What are the next steps we need to take to show movement to the next level on each of the rubrics?
- What data/evidence can we collect to document our work and its impact?

The purpose of these questions is to do a periodic check of the PDS partnership in the spirit of continuous improvement. This work can be potentially powerful for both educator preparation programs and P-12 partners. It facilitates and enhances partners' abilities to intentionally gauge the status of their partnership and identify where improvements, such as in refining structures, allocating resources, and the designing of activities can be made.

It is also important that PDS leaders communicate to all stakeholders during this process. Many times PDS work is visible to primary stakeholders but not clearly understood by secondary and tertiary stakeholders (e.g., university-level and district-level administration). Reporting evidence-based outcomes to all stakeholders, especially those not regularly engaged in PDS work, can strengthen buy-in and support, thus helping to strengthen the partnership.

The External Evaluation and Research of PDS Partnerships

The rubric can also be used as a tool for the external evaluation and research of PDS Partnerships. In the NAPDS Nine Essentials document (NAPDS, 2008) the authors wrote that the name PDS has become an umbrella term for all school-university partnerships even those that are not very strong or in alignment with the Nine Essentials. From an external evaluation

and research perspective, evaluators and researchers can use the rubric to assess the status and impact of partnerships.

The question “What is the current status of the partnership on each of the rubrics?” would apply to this context. However, evaluators and researchers need to focus their work on the question, “What data/evidence documents the impact of the PDS project?” For that question to be closely examined, there is a need for evaluators and researchers to determine the exact research questions as well as the appropriate data sources and methods for collecting and analyzing data.

Concluding Thoughts

While the NCATE PDS Standards and the NAPDS Nine Essentials provided a foundation to establish characteristics of PDS Partnerships there is a need for a tool that will allow new PDS partners, established PDS partners, and external evaluators/researchers to evaluate and assess the status of the PDS Partnership. The rubric discussed here is a step towards providing such a tool for PDS stakeholders. We encourage you to view the entire rubric online and provide us with feedback on how to make the final revisions of it. ^{SUP}

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