

Preparing Teachers for a Global World: The SUNY Buffalo State International Professional Development Schools Consortium

Pixita del Prado Hill, Elementary Education, Literacy, and Educational Leadership, SUNY Buffalo State

Susan McMillen, Mathematics, SUNY Buffalo State

Wendy Paterson, School of Education Dean, SUNY Buffalo State, United States

Tamara Irupé Álvarez Sepúlveda, Directora de Carrera Pedagogía en Inglés, Universidad Mayor, Chile

Patricia Thorndike Suriel, Mariposa DR Foundation, Dominican Republic

Sarah Ludwig Ross, 3 Mariposa Montessori, Dominican Republic

Manfred Kupper, Department of English Pedagogy at the Institute Nürtingen, Germany

Karen Alejandra Zuniga Ayala, Moriah School, Honduras

Richelle Hicks, Moriah School, Honduras

Maina Kaleba, Open University, Zambia

ABSTRACT: The SUNY Buffalo State Professional Development Schools Consortium is honored to have been selected as one of the recipients of the 2018 Award for Exemplary Professional Development Schools Achievement for its international PDS partnerships. Beginning with one school partner in 1991 in Western New York, the SUNY Buffalo State PDS Consortium has grown to include partnerships with dozens of school/community agencies locally, nationally, and globally. The Consortium leadership is grateful for the collaboration with its partners and for the recognition by NAPDS.

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

Educators and policymakers agree that U.S. education must create world-smart students with knowledge of other cultures and other languages, able to contribute and cooperate on a global scale (Stewart, 2008). Research has demonstrated the value of interaction with culturally diverse peoples and places to expand teacher candidates' understanding of diversity. International travel provides a unique opportunity for growth in intercultural understanding because it includes physical and psychological challenges that engage the cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains (Cushner, 2007; Egeland, 2016; Santoro & Major, 2012). The specific impact of international field experiences for teacher candidates has been to challenge preconceptions about those with cultural differences, to expand understanding about possible structures for schools and classrooms, and to foster individual and professional growth (Pence & Macgillivray, 2006; Willard-Holt, 2001). Schools of education are urged to make this opportunity available to teacher candidates as a way to increase the skills needed to enter

21st century classrooms in an interconnected world (Cushner, 2007).

Demographics that are rapidly shifting toward greater racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity in the Greater Buffalo region have presented new educational challenges in our community. These local realities are consistent with current educational research, leading the SUNY Buffalo State PDS Consortium to expand its borders and create the International PDS (IPDS) program, a program of short-term, faculty-led study away opportunities for teacher candidates (<http://schoolofeducation.buffalostate.edu/ipds>).

Essential 1: Mission and Equity

The Buffalo State PDS Consortium has extended its sphere of influence from one school collaborator in 1991 to over 100 school/community partners in 31 Western New York districts, New York City, Houston, and across five continents. During a

typical semester, our teacher candidates are actively involved with 40-45 partner schools. Responding to demographic changes in our city and beyond, the Buffalo State PDS Consortium expanded its commitment to support the development of children, teachers, and faculty to be global citizens.

Ever mindful of the NAPDS Nine Essentials (Brindley, Field, & Lessen, 2008) and the CAEP Standards (2013), the Buffalo State PDS Consortium has designed formal structures and governance systems to ensure that we meet our mission to benefit all members of the Consortium while also providing flexibility to respond to the specific needs of each school partner and more effectively prepare new teachers (see figure 1). Situated one of the poorest cities in the U.S., the Buffalo State PDS Consortium has always worked to prepare teachers for high need schools; however, in recent years with the arrival of many refugee and immigrant groups, the Consortium recognized the need to provide both new and seasoned educators with on-campus, local, national, and international experiences to be more fully prepared to teach in any classroom.

The cultural and linguistic mismatch between teachers and the P-12 school children they serve is widely discussed and cited. At Buffalo State, our teacher education program and the schools with whom we partner reflect the national educational context of a teaching force that is largely white and monolingual while classrooms are increasingly ethnically and culturally diverse and multilingual spaces. In their coursework, our teacher candidates study structural inequalities, reflect on their privileged status, learn strategies to promote multiculturalism, and develop culturally responsive pedagogical skills. However, it is through school-university partnerships that our teacher candidates, college faculty, and school-based educators engage in clinically rich practice to develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to work in all communities, all classrooms, and with all children.

Through on-campus coursework and activities, teacher candidates begin to learn about the world through interactions with visiting international students and faculty. In their early field placements, teacher candidates participate in service-learning projects in the very diverse neighborhoods surrounding the campus. In methods courses, they are placed in a variety of schools that include culturally and linguistically diverse learners. By their senior year, they have opportunities to student teach in local urban, first-ring suburban, suburban, and rural partner schools as well as options to student teach in New York City and Houston, Texas.

Throughout their undergraduate and graduate school experience, teacher candidates are also highly encouraged to participate in the study away opportunities offered through our International PDS (IPDS) program which include the P-12 school partnerships listed below. Faculty and teacher candidates from universities in these areas also regularly visit the Buffalo State campus to bring the global experience full circle. These visitors participate in education courses and campus activities while completing clinically rich field experiences to connect with children, teachers, and building leaders in our partner schools.

Since 2012, the Buffalo State IPDS program has developed strong recruitment, application, selection, curriculum, and

SUNY Buffalo State PDS Consortium

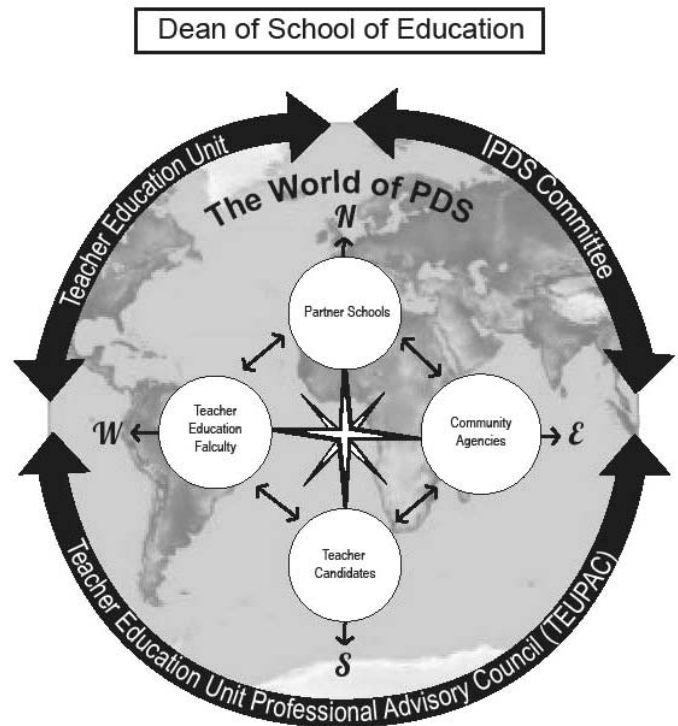


Figure 1. SUNY Buffalo State PDS - Diagram of Organizational Structure

instruction processes. In a short time, the IPDS committee has analyzed, merged, and systematized the best practices from each IPDS program. In addition, program leaders seek to construct a more purposeful process following our candidates' travels that will build greater sustainability of impact from these transformative experiences. With the award of a State University of New York Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI) grant in 2017, the Buffalo State IPDS designed new and more rigorous assessment strategies for program improvement, viability, and expansion to reach a greater number of students from all backgrounds and to extend the impact of the IPDS experience on campus. While we are still in the pilot stage of the project, preliminary findings indicate that students who participate in IPDS experiences develop increased empathy for language learners and are aware of a range of pedagogical supports for language learners. Moreover, they place the greatest value on the IPDS experience of working in schools (in classrooms with teachers and children). Initial results also indicate that participants hope to continue traveling and growing in the areas of language development and cultural awareness.

Essential 2: Preparing Future Educators for Active Engagement in the P-12 Setting

All Buffalo State teacher candidates participate in wide-ranging clinically rich PDS experiences from their first

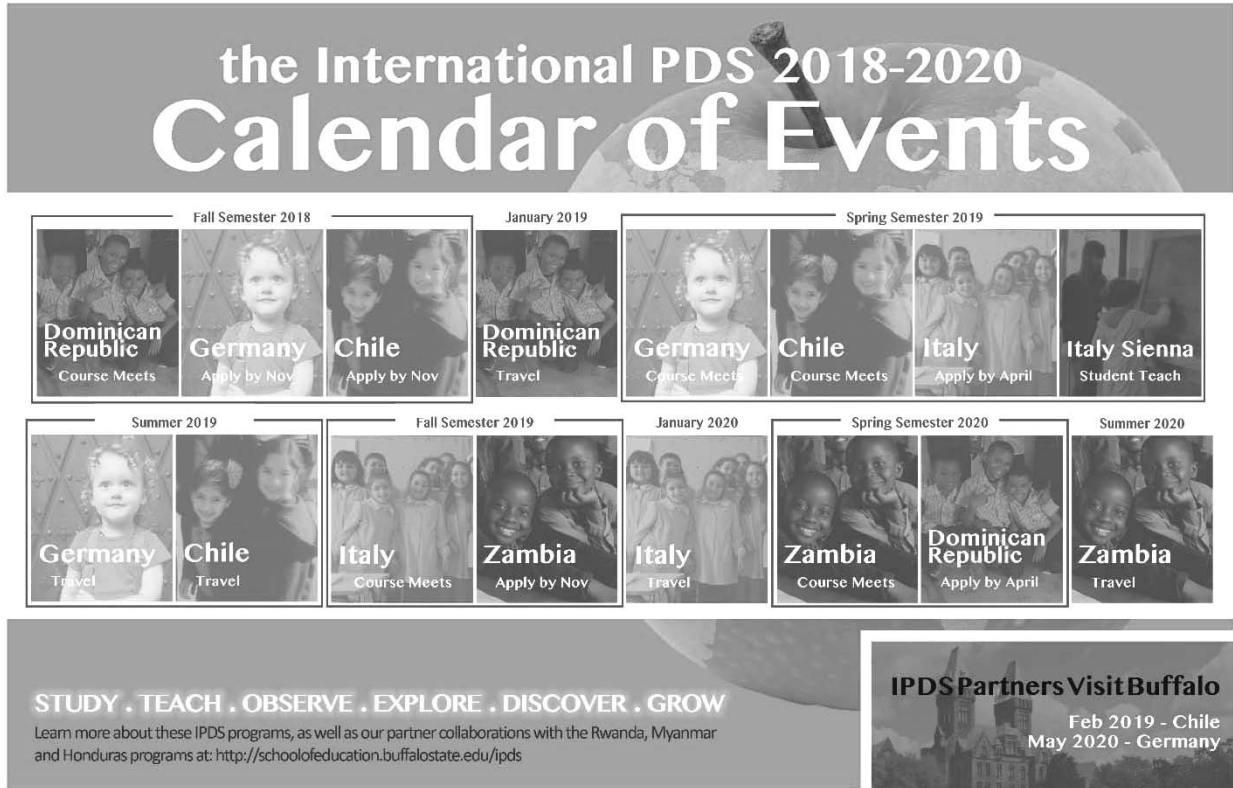


Figure 2. IPDS Calendar

education course through student teaching. The Buffalo State IPDS program is carefully orchestrated so that programs travel every other year during either the January or summer session. Each program cycle is one year to include (1) the recruitment of undergraduate and graduate candidates; (2) the application and interview process; (3) a preparatory course to build knowledge of the host country, prepare instructional materials for the classrooms of partner schools, build community among the travelers, and start a research project; (4) travel to the host country for clinically rich field placement, service-learning, reflection (through a travel blog), interaction with the partner university, language learning exploration to build empathy and pedagogical skills; (5) return to Buffalo to share reflections and student research and to welcome faculty and student visitors from the partner university. Figure 2 helps to explain the IPDS cycle.

Since 2012, approximately 180 teacher candidates and 22 faculty have participated in the IPDS programs. During the 2016-2017 academic year, the following IPDS programs were active: (1) Chile, May/June, 2017, 9 teacher candidates; (2) Dominican Republic, January, 2017, 15 teacher candidates; (3) Germany, June/July, 2017, 8 teacher candidates; and (4) Honduras, 37 teacher candidates in methods courses connected virtually throughout the year.

Essential 4: Innovative and Reflective Practices

To demonstrate how the Buffalo State PDS Consortium has established frameworks and practices to create opportunities for innovative and reflective practices to meet the needs of all constituencies we offer statements from our international partners and teacher candidates' blogs (see Table 1).

IPDS Chile Partner

From Tamara Irupe Álvarez Sepúlveda, *Directora de Carrera Pedagogía en Inglés, Universidad Mayor*: "The benefits of this partnership in our teacher education program goes beyond the exchange of multicultural experiences, educational field experiences and boosting the foreign language. It has allowed us to improve our own academic practice by observing different realities and strategies; identify strengths and weaknesses of our Study Plan in order to prepare a successful XXI Century teachers; develop and carry out the Global Book Project following the experience observed by our teachers at Buffalo with immigrant communities in Chile which have not been able to learn Spanish nor English and require help developing linguistic and cultural strategies for immersion. . . The impact of our partnership on the children and teachers from Chilean

Table 1. IPDS Locations, Program Descriptions, and Unique Features

<i>Location</i>	<i>Program Description</i>	<i>Unique Features</i>
Santiago, Chile	Three week faculty-led study away that includes Spanish language development at ECELA Language School and home stay; field placements and service-learning in P-12 schools; and interactions with education majors and faculty at partner university, Universidad Mayor.	Universidad Mayor education majors and faculty visit Buffalo for three weeks to participate in methods courses and campus activities; complete field placements at a bilingual (English/Spanish) PDS partner school; and make a campus-wide presentation about the Chilean education system.
Beijing, China	Program under construction.	Preliminary contact with Harbin Normal University to lead to the signing of an IPDS agreement.
Cabarete, Dominican Republic	A 2.5 week faculty-led study away that includes Spanish language development; service-learning and one-on-one partnerships with girls at the Mariposa DR Foundation; field placement at local public and private schools that mainly serve Dominican and Haitian children living in poverty.	A mentor teacher from a public Montessori PDS partner school in Buffalo, has traveled with the group to provide professional development to the 3 Mariposas Montessori School. The founder and director of the Mariposa Foundation visited our campus in spring 2018 to deliver a keynote address about the value of study away experiences.
Nürtingen, Germany	Three week faculty-led study away that includes German language development through home stay with newly certified teachers; field placements and service-learning in P-12 schools; and interactions with education majors and faculty at partner university, Staatliches Seminar für Didaktik und Lehrerbildung Nürtingen	Study away leaders include a retired German teacher from a local school district. Institute Nürtingen education majors and faculty visit Buffalo for two weeks in the spring semester to participate in field experiences in local PDS partner schools; attend Buffalo State methods courses; and live with host families.
La Esperanza, Honduras	Because of State Department travel restrictions, this is a virtual partnership. A faculty member travels regularly to collaborate with the IPDS school partner and connects to classrooms virtually for mathematics methods courses.	The 2015-2016 PDS Graduate Assistant worked as an elementary teacher at the IPDS partner school for the 2016-2017 academic year. Afterwards, she joined the Peace Corps to serve in neighboring Nicaragua.
Torremaggiore, Italy	A 2.5 week faculty-led study away focused on the arts exposes participants to Italian forms of education, and allows them to teach and support Italian children in their acquisition of English.	One of the study away leaders is a music education faculty member. An action research mini-grant includes the development of bilingual (Italian/English) children's books to be used in P-8 field placements.
Yangon, Myanmar	A 2.5 week faculty-led study away led by the Creative Studies Department. Participants work in a monastery school and support efforts of the nonprofit Free Funeral Services Society (FFSS) that provides free funeral services, health care, ambulatory service, organic food farming, and education.	One of the study away leaders is a community activist and leader in the Western New York Burmese community. Alumni are included as program participants.
Kigali, Rwanda	Three week faculty-led study away led by the Theater Department. Participants learn to use drama-based education tools for conflict resolution and then provide professional development to Rwandan teachers.	Participants are a mix of theater majors and education majors. An English education teacher candidate who traveled in 2015-2016 was awarded a Fulbright scholarship to continue her work in Rwanda for 2016-2017.
Oviedo, Spain	Members of the New York State Master Teacher Program (Western Region; housed at Buffalo State) traveled to Oviedo to begin partnership talks with Colegio San Ignacio, a K-12 school.	A team of secondary math and science teachers continues to collaborate via email and Skype. A second visit was made in January 2018 for reciprocal professional development.
Lusaka, Zambia	Three week faculty-led study away that includes field placements and service-learning in P-12 schools and orphanages; interactions with education majors and faculty at partner university, University of Zambia, and education officials at the Ministry of Education.	One principal from a partner school and one official from the Ministry of Education traveled to Buffalo to visit several of our PDS schools, participate in methods courses, and present at the PDS Conference. Buffalo State donated computers to Zambian partner schools.

Schools who have interacted with the Buffalo State teacher candidates is priceless.”

From a teacher candidate blog posting:

- [In Santiago, Chile] I am on other side - I myself am a language learner. As an educator, I am learning strategies and techniques that can be implemented in the classroom to help English language learners better understand and comprehend the material being taught. I never knew how it felt to be in a classroom where my primary language is not being used until taking Spanish classes [at the language school]. When I do not understand something that is being said in Spanish and get called on to answer something, I feel the nervousness and then anxiousness and I feel the tenseness take over my body. I am feeling how some ELLs feel while in school and it has really allowed me to learn more about how to teach students whose primary language is different than my own.

IPDS Dominican Republic Partner

From Sarah Ludwig Ross, Founder and Director of 3 Mariposas Montessori: “3 Mariposas Montessori (3MM) has benefited from the IPDS partnership with Buffalo State in various ways. . . .The teacher candidates worked and played with the 3MM children at school and ate lunch in their homes with their families. Through these one-on-one interactions with the Buffalo State participants our 3MM students and their families gained knowledge of the American culture, which dispelled a lot of their assumptions about the United States. . . .Additional benefits for 3MM are (1) that Buffalo State teaching professionals (program leaders) observed in our classrooms and provided us with positive feedback and helpful tips; (2) a Buffalo area Montessori teacher joined the groups and met with 3MM teachers to share new ideas and methods for working with the Montessori tools and with the children; and (3) after Buffalo State students observed and volunteered in the classrooms, they asked many questions about the Montessori philosophy, which brought a feeling of pride to the 3MM teachers that they were able to help educate our visitors. Finally, Buffalo State brought a number of incredibly beneficial donations 3MM’s way, which our staff and children continue to use on a regular basis. . . .They continue helping by making donations, introducing us to potential volunteers and donors, and following us on social media.”

From Patricia Thorndike Suriel, Director and Founder of the Mariposa DR Foundation: “As part of our mission is to create awareness of the girl movement on an international level, bringing educated university students to The Mariposa Center for Girls is an incredible opportunity to share our mission and vision; ultimately turning volunteers into champions for girls by the end of their visit. . . . In addition, because a major component of the program is to engage the Buffalo State participants in local schools, the MDRF’s efforts to facilitate these connections has strengthened our relationships with the

local teachers and principals and has given the MDRF service learning and community engagement volunteer initiative an increased focus on working in schools and with teacher education students and professionals. MDRF staff (program leaders and teachers) benefitted from the collaborative learning community that they naturally developed with Buffalo State volunteers.

From teacher candidate blog postings:

- I am thankful for my time spent in these classrooms as I feel that it has given me a new perspective on how important education is. Education is the driving force for so many different aspects of a child’s life and is ultimately the deciding factor of the quality of life that child will have in the future.
- I am leaving the Dominican Republic richer than I came. I am rich with knowledge. I am rich with kindness. I am rich with hope for the future. I know that so many people in this world are trying to make it a better place. With the passion in my heart and that thought in my mind, I know that great things can happen in my lifetime.

IPDS Germany Partner

From Manfred Kupper, Head of the Department of English Pedagogy at the Institute Nürtingen: “The benefit of the IPDS-Germany partnership to the Institute Nürtingen lies in a significant increase of applicants, who want to spend their Vorbereitungsdienst (“Preparation service” a.k.a student teaching and everything that goes along with it) at the Institute in Nürtingen and point to our offered opportunities, like the partnership with Buffalo State, as a reason. As a continuing partnership the exchange supports, in a broad way, the gain of intercultural competences on all participating parties. The insight into a foreign school system helps to open views on the current issues in the home classes. The life-long professional friendships and personal connections that have been forged, and accumulate with each exchange, help build a foundation for our interconnected future. The most efficient impact has been the original experience with native speakers. The opportunity to work with people who speak the foreign language taught by the host country’s classroom teachers. The children in the classrooms are thrilled to have an American visitor in their classroom—to be able to try out their English, to ask and answer questions, to learn first-hand about the culture behind the language (English) that will be a part of their learning from the early years through high school and beyond.”

From a teacher candidate blog posting:

- Teaching in a German school was one of the most amazing experiences of my life. I was able to see multiple different teaching styles from all of the teachers at that school and I have learned new management skills that I cannot wait to try in my own classroom. I have also learned so many incredible ways to teach students

English. I had the chance to feel what it is like to be an ELL in a general classroom. After experiencing this, I want to make sure all of my students feel included and have an equal opportunity to succeed.

IPDS Honduras Partner (virtual partnership)

From Karen Alejandra Zuniga Ayala, Director of Moriah School [translated from Spanish]: “I send my sincere and deepest thanks for your great generosity to our students and teaching staff. You provided so many supports such as books and materials for our children and young people as well as the computer lab equipment and training for the teachers. I appreciate the special attention you gave to students who have difficulty learning as they prepare to enter different universities in our country and beyond. All of the above has permitted us to realize our work to improve the educational quality for students.”

From Richelle Hicks, Primary Mathematics Teacher at Moriah School: “Math in Motion is a great way to get students to learn their basic facts. With Dr. McMillen’s help, I introduced math in motion to my second grade class and it was a great success. We even ended up expanding the idea to other classes too. We used it in third grade science when the students were learning how to classify animals.” Note: Math in Motion, math activities involving movement on floor mats, was originally developed as part of professional development provided in the Honduras IPDS. It has spread to over 100 teachers in Western New York schools through presentations at the PDS conference and Consortium meetings.

IPDS Zambia Partner

From Maina Kaleba, Lecturer of Open University in Zambia: “My visit to the United States of America in September 2016 was exciting and an eye opener. It was exciting in the sense that it was my first time to travel to the USA and therefore, it was a dream becoming true. I came into contact and interacted with people from various backgrounds. Such interactions promote unity, respect for each other’s culture, peace and love for one another. The annual Professional Development Schools conference (PDS) was very educative as it provides an opportunity to academicians to present papers and share best practices. This is important to one’s professional growth and development. The visits to various elementary schools exposed me to various teaching methods employed by teachers to the learners and the care that is given to the feeding programme which does not happen in Zambia...It is important to establish partnerships both locally and internationally because this promotes peace among countries and you learn best practices of other countries. Libala Primary School and the other four PDS partner schools in Lusaka have greatly benefited from the partnership. Our learners in all the five schools have gained invaluable social and cultural awareness thus broadening their world view. Teacher candidates had an opportunity to observe how Zambian Teachers teach and the

various methods employed when teaching. The teacher candidates introduced to our pupils to a strategically arranged cross cultural pen pal experiences in which three classrooms at Libala Primary became Penpals with three urban schools in the USA. The project was exciting to our learners.

From a teacher candidate blog posting:

- I have so many emotions, observations, thoughts, and feelings for everything I took away from visiting the school. However, the most shocking thing I witnessed was the students did not have pencil sharpeners and they were sharpening the pencils with their teeth and even their nails. Such a touching but needed experience. It makes me value and think about the small things we take for granted.

Nine Essentials Accomplishments and Achievements

We are proud that in 27 years the SUNY Buffalo State PDS Consortium has grown from one school to more than 100 school partners across five continents while staying true to NAPDS and CAEP frameworks and responding to the needs of its collaborating schools. We are also proud that since creating IPDS in response to significant changes in our community, IPDS has impacted the entire fabric of teacher education at Buffalo State. Mentor teachers, faculty, and teacher candidates from different countries travel to schools, orphanages, refugee camps, and community centers and create and benefit from shared experiences in language, culture, teaching, and learning. We look forward to growing and changing IPDS to more effectively prepare and support educators for a global world. ^{SUP}

References

- Brindley, R., Field, B. E., & Lessen, E. (2008). *What it means to be a professional development school*. Columbia, SC: National Association for Professional Development Schools (NAPDS).
- Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation. (2013). CAEP accreditation standards.
- Cushner, I. (2007). The role of experience in the making of internationally-minded teachers. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 34(1), 27-39.
- Egeland, P. (2016). How does international student teaching shape the participants? Professional and personal perspectives and decisions. *International Education Journal; Comparative Perspectives*, 15(2), 23-37.
- Pence, H., & Macgillivray, I. (2008). The impact of an international field experience on preservice teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 24, 14-25.
- Santoro, N., & Major, J. (2012). Learning to be a culturally responsive teacher through international study trips: Transformation or tourism? *Teaching Education*, 23(3), 309-322.
- Stewart, V. (2008). World-smart students. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 90(3), 203-205.

Willard-Holt, C. (2001). The impact of a short-term international experience for preservice teachers. *Teacher and Teacher Education*, 17(4), 505-517.



Pixita del Prado Hill is co-director of the SUNY Buffalo State Professional Development Schools Consortium and professor in

the SUNY Buffalo State Elementary Education, Literacy, and Educational Leadership Department.

Sue McMillen works with various secondary initiatives in the SUNY Buffalo State Professional Development Schools Consortium. She is a professor in the Math Department and a former president of the Association of Mathematics Teachers of New York State.