

Call to Renewal: Invention and Reinvention in the Brigham Young University-Public School Partnership

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ABSTRACT: During 36 years of continuous operation, The Brigham Young University-Public School Partnership has held fast to the values and principles on which it was based. All partners collaborate for excellence through efforts resulting in actions that benefit all participants and students. Though partners share goals and dispositions, many changes in societal conditions, and public education progress and policies have required additions, adjustments, and adaptations to stay current with the call to renewal that requires partners to frequently invent and even reinvent to revitalize organizations, individuals, and contributions.

Nine Essentials: Throughout this document, the *Nine Essentials of the National Association for Professional Development Schools* will be quoted and referenced as they are demonstrated in the text.

The invention and reinvention that have established and maintained the Brigham Young University-Public School Partnership (BYU-PSP) began in 1984, when John Goodlad, who had recently retired as dean of the Graduate School of Education at UCLA, learned that the College of Education at Brigham Young University was concerned about developing a stronger, more effective collaboration with the five proximate public school districts that were preparing the majority of the institution's teacher candidates. The dean of BYU's College of Education agreed with Goodlad's idea that a stronger working relationship joining the university and the districts would enable both to improve their work—that teacher preparation institutions and schools must “renew simultaneously” to significantly change both institutions (expressed later in Goodlad et al., 2004). With Goodlad's interest and personal guidance, the Brigham Young University-Public School Partnership was formally established, bringing representatives from the K-12 schools in five districts together with the College of Education as equal partners to mutually reinforce their goals of creating both exemplary teacher preparation programs and exemplary schools.

Collaboration for Mutual Benefit

Goodlad has often affirmed that having good schools requires good teachers, and having good teachers requires good institutions for preparing them (Goodlad, 1994). The following purposes from our mission statement support this focus of simultaneous renewal. We commit

- to develop programs, practices, and procedures to strengthen pre-service teachers and in-service teachers, and to collaborate in developing curriculum and conducting research to promote and support high standards of student achievement
- to extend the body of knowledge regarding effective educational practices and democratic principles within public education

- to study, research, gather data, evaluate, discuss, and implement best practices, programs, and policies including democratic principles and practices, into public education
- to promote cooperation including students, teachers, parents, administrators, researchers, and business and government leaders to promote academic excellence
- to secure cooperative and efficient action in advancing the common purposes of the members of the partnership; and
- to take reasonable and necessary steps to accomplish the purposes set forth

The partnership today still includes Brigham Young University, a private institution now enrolling 33,500. The five public school districts are the same, but presently employing approximately 600 administrators and more than 8,500 teachers, serving almost one-third of Utah's students.

Beginning with a focus on teacher preparation and expanded by multiple interests shared by the partners, the BYU-PSP has established a stronger and broader base for the continuing relationship. Time and resources have been invested in preparing educators, developing curriculum, conducting inquiry and research, exploring approaches and practices for instruction and increasing use of technology. But even with this stability of participants as well as values and interests, the BYU-PSP has experienced challenges to the partnership relationship. Also, the pressures of change in society and in public education have brought about complex issues in remaining relevant, effective, and meaningful for its participants. Goodlad understood that every school-university partnership was going to be unique and its differences would vary by its circumstances. He counselled people in school-university partnerships to “invent and reinvent their own missions and practices, given their own state, community, and institutional contexts” (Sirotnik et al., 2001, p. 19). Over the years we have found that the need to

maintain and improve our work has required not only significant effort and resources but willingness to reinvent. We have also learned that when changes are based on our core values and shared vision, this process of reinvention becomes renewal. Renewal is the central focus of our Partnership.

Call to Renewal

Renewal involves all participants. This regeneration connects individual purposes and commitments with the larger organization in ways that enable members to combine their energy and talents, passion and conviction, for a common purpose and find satisfaction in doing this. Continuous learning and improvement are pathways to renewal, and since both schools and educator preparation programs need change in order to improve, working collaboratively and renewing simultaneously benefits both. Authentic engagement in school and university renewal requires new skills and knowledge from both groups.

But change for improvement requires that participants differentiate what they will allow to change and what they will insist must remain the same. Continuous reflection defines the timeless character of a life or organization but also specifies components that need or ought to change. In the BYU-PSP we have five commitments that represent foundational beliefs and core ideals that guide the partnership's activities and help to shape and set its priorities. This shared vision keeps partners unified and aligned with basic partnership purposes and goals, sustaining them through difficulties and change. As a partnership we maintain our commitments to

- civic preparation and engagement
- equitable access to academic knowledge and achievement
- engaged learning through nurturing pedagogy
- responsible stewardship in schools and communities, and
- renewal

Preparing children and youth for a rapidly changing, unpredictable future requires institutions to operate from a solid foundation of beliefs and values, such as these, to maintain the capacity and the willingness to embrace change without losing their way. Educational renewal through partnerships allows us to retain and maintain these foundational things that matter most while promoting and embracing changes that will improve who we are and what we do. Kirk (1974) reminded us that “permanence and progression are not enemies, for there can be no improvement except upon a sound foundation, and that foundation cannot endure unless it is progressively renewed” (p. 10).

An example of the Partnership's commitment to excellence in simultaneous renewal is our thoroughly researched, video-anchored Teaching English Language Learners (TELL) program. TELL was developed by university experts in teacher education, second language acquisition, and linguistics; implemented and tested in public schools; and continuously revised, retested, and revised again. A cumulative series of courses has been produced,

with video segments featuring nationally acclaimed experts and relevant case studies. Quotations from the videos, lesson objectives and content, assignments, and discussion guides are included in the course texts written particularly for the program. The courses are presented both on campus and in schools where they are facilitated by experienced teachers with master's level ESL expertise. Successful completion of the program leads to an academic TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) minor for teacher candidates or TESOL endorsement for practicing teachers. The program was developed and has been continually implemented and refined by collaboration between school and university professionals.

In the remainder of this article, I represent several additional changes or reinventions that our partnership has undergone since 2012. At this time our partnership was awarded the NAPDS Award for Exemplary Professional Development Schools Achievement based on our adherence to the Nine Essentials of the National Association for Professional Development Schools and on changes we had made in our programs and practices to improve and strengthen our partnership. Since then we continue to follow the counsel and writings of Goodlad and his associates when reporting on the challenging work of partnerships:

The hard job was out there in the settings: the coming together of educators from the schools and the colleges and universities in equal partnerships to put real meat on the bones of the Agenda and to give it shape, character, and viability in the context of their own conditions and circumstances” (Sirotnik et al., 2001, p. 32).

Giving something complex like a school-university partnership “shape, character, and viability” requires invention and in the case of our partnership, reinvention. We built on partnership strengths of trust, shared vision, and willingness to collaborate and share resources.

The following sections relate examples of specific decisions, actions, and initiatives that have occurred in the BYU-PSP since 2012 in response to needed or desired changes made within the context of our determination to retain what was core to our relationships and our work. Background or situational details are provided when needed to show what was deemed important to remain in place. The Nine Essentials of the National Association for Professional Development Schools are quoted and referenced as they are demonstrated in the text.

Improvement of Leadership and Governance

Educator Preparation Program

Due to the size, diversity, and complexity of the programs across seven BYU colleges that participate in preparing teachers, and the resulting number of units involved in maintaining various

forms of accreditation and professional program approval, in 2014 the Educator Preparation Program (EPP) was established to coordinate these efforts. Leaders, committees, and other units within the EPP cooperate in overseeing unity and consistency within partnership efforts. These include majors in early childhood education, elementary education, special education, and all disciplines in secondary education (27 majors and 23 minors grouped into 20 programs across the seven colleges and four graduate programs). Approximately 3,000 educator candidates are served by over 200 faculty and staff, including 800 new teachers graduated per year.

The EPP Executive Committee works with the University Council on Teacher Education and three faculty councils to improve the program quality, facilitate faculty and staff efforts in working closely with candidates, and increase the preparation level of educators who will work in the schools. EPP helps educator candidates increase competent in promoting the five Partnership commitments as well as in applying the Utah Effective Teaching Standards in P-12 schools. These administrators conduct rigorous inquiry into the purposes, quality, and experiences of the preparation programs and collect data to represent the candidates' performance aligned with Partnership claims. Upgraded data collection and management systems have been created specifically and utilized to provide the needed evidence leading to continuous program improvements not merely to satisfy accreditation requirements. EPP annual reports are prepared, distributed, and discussed throughout the Partnership.

Interns and Hybrid Educators

All educator candidates are to be prepared to engage actively in the school community (Essential 2). They are assessed as they are developing responsible stewardship in their schools and communities by dedicating themselves to shared partnership purposes, continuous renewal, and high standards of competence and learner performance. Our elementary teacher candidate intern program exemplifies this concern for engaging candidates in school environments and communities. Under agreement with the state, a senior-year teaching candidate functions as an intern, teaching independently in a classroom for a school year and paid half a normal teacher's salary with benefits.

Close mentoring for interns is provided by a partnership facilitator from the school who collaborates with a clinical faculty associate from the university who assists both facilitator and intern. Clinical faculty associates (sometimes referred to as hybrid educators) are proven teachers selected from the Partnership districts and granted a leave of absence to work at the university, where they support candidates who are doing practicum teaching as well as those who are participating as interns in their districts. The salaries for interns and CFAs are provided by the university and district, administered to the CFAs in a manner that avoids interfering with benefits or retirement status.

Governing Board

The Partnership Governing Board consists of the superintendent of each of the five participating districts and the dean of the School of Education, with equal influence and voting privilege meeting monthly during the school year. The Governing Board reviews programs, sets direction for immediate and long-range objectives, approve policies, and oversee the partnership's financial operation. One of the superintendents acts as chair. A partnership executive director, who also directs the Center for the Improvement of Teacher Education and Schooling (CITES), the operational/implementation center of the partnership, handles matters such as budgets, planning and development, along with a stewardship to implement projects, proceedings, and transactions affirmed by the Governing Board.

Leaders Associates

Twice a year deans and associate deans from the school of education and the colleges of the arts and sciences that participate in preparing teachers, along with superintendents and central administrators from each of the school districts and staff members from CITES meet to participate in intense professional development as well as to make decisions and provide guidance and support to partnership initiatives. Thus, representatives of all partner units have a voice in monitoring and directing the partnership through this Leaders Associates program. As these leaders learn together, engage in considering the needs and direction of partnership activities, and meet with representatives of the partner organizations whose roles are similar to and different from their own, strong relationships are formed and maintained, and the trust level is high.

Strengthening Partnership Functions

Working together, BYU and the five school districts are able to improve the quality of education offered to all students, as well as renew the partner organizations and the individuals involved in the work. They do so by collaborating on educator preparation; engaging in the continuous development, inquiry and study of educational practices; and focusing energy and resources to improve teaching and learning.

Center for the Improvement of Teacher Education and Schooling

CITES fosters and sustains the collaborative, interactive nature of the McKay School of Education, the cross-campus departments of the arts and sciences, and the public school districts in implementing and carrying out its external functions. These three partners have similar goals and missions but accountability differs and they can become critical of one another. CITES was organized to facilitate systemic and meaningful collaborations. The Governing Board sets and articulates the vision; CITES implementing that vision in tangible forms, along with

contributing to additional solutions for the McKay School and the EPP. CITES is comprised of three divisions—professional development, education support, and research—and staffed by 12 full and part-time professionals. CITES responsibilities include five critical functions:

1. Professional development, under the Professional Development Coordinating Council, identifies, organizes and delivers for teacher candidates, practicing educators, and university faculty and administrators over 40 professional development and research programs, activities, initiatives and committees that the partners could not have provided alone.
2. Inquiry into issues and practices of pedagogy is made available to both university and public school personnel, with opportunities to conduct both research and evaluation, to sponsor seminars, and to publish results.
3. Programs initiation occurs as partners shared their needs, ideas, and commitments. The CITES structure facilitates cross-partner collaboration resulting in new knowledge and expertise.
4. Leadership requires governance and decision making that enables successful collaboration and shared responsibilities among partners, facilitated by various leadership and management committees.
5. A variety of services are required for implementation and institutionalization of renewal activities, including assistance with grant writing and faculty mentoring, as well as resources and support with budget and communications. CITES members typically develop and support academies and endorsements, and host conferences and symposia—all of “which provide ongoing and reciprocal professional development for all participants” (Essential 3).

CITES also assumes major responsibility for the “formal reward and recognition structures” (Essential 9) affirming the contributions of partner organizations and individuals. In addition, partnership anniversaries celebrating 10, 20, 25, and 30 years have been celebrated with reminders of the purposes, commitments, common values, and practices of the larger organization.

Additional Committees

Partnership collaboration and communication requires more personnel and specialties than CITES alone can manage. Accordingly, partnership advisory councils represent a diversity of professional knowledge, expertise, and relationships. Councils comprised of representatives from elementary and early childhood education, secondary education, and special education have been formed to hear the voices of all partners and promote “innovative and reflective practice” (Essential 4). Ideas are connected, relationships are facilitated, equity and trust are emphasized, and commitment to partner’s shared goals is

increased. Collaboration has been a hallmark and distinctive feature of the BYU-PSP since its inception.

Partnership Initiatives and Programs

A few of the BYU-PSP’s initiatives and programs are briefly described as typical of the nature and the breadth, depth, and extensiveness of the partnership contributions.

BYU ARTS Partnership

“Every child, every art” has become a motto for the Beverly Taylor Sorenson BYU ARTS Partnership as it has increased the quality and quantity of instruction, experiences, and appreciation of elementary students for visual arts, music, drama, dance, and media arts. Cally Flox, CITES assistant director, art education, emphasizes that “The arts place student voice and engagement at the center of any learning experience. Arts integration across the curriculum weaves complicated ideas that are distilled into meaning when students demonstrate learning through what they produce in the arts.” Conferences, workshops, event attendance, in-school performances, and BYU courses, bring the arts to 2,000 educators annually.

1. Each year Arts Leadership Academy meets with a select group of teachers for 10 days of training in arts production, arts pedagogy, and arts curriculum integration.
2. Each summer the Arts Express Summer Conference brings together 500 educators to participate in hands-on workshops led by nationally known as well as local artists and arts educators.
3. The Arts Rich Schools series invites principals to gather and observe excellence in the arts at various schools and to collaborate concerning strategies to improve school culture and student learning through the arts.
4. In the Arts Bridge program, 20 BYU teacher candidates with training/experience in an art form teach side by side in classrooms with elementary teachers. The candidates and the experienced teachers learn from one another: one in teaching children and the other in teaching an art.
5. With 16 credit hours of courses, pre-service or in-service teachers can earn the USBE Arts Integration Endorsement to attach to their teaching license.

The BYU ARTS Partnership programs continually innovate, refine, and implement strategies that promote integration of the arts into required curriculum areas as well as providing specific arts instruction while adapting to serve evolving district priorities. Teacher candidates, classroom teachers, arts specialists, and school administrators are enthusiastic about the results.

Research-Practice Partnerships

The Research-Practice Partnership Committee was created to bring researchers and practitioners together to benefit from each

other's knowledge and experience. The committee encourages work which (a) involves issues of educational practice, (b) is anticipated as long term—multiple rather than single studies, (c) shares organization, implementation, and authority among participants, and (d) enables individual data gathering and analysis with various approaches and methods.

Principals Academy

Rapid population growth in the partnership area has resulted in new schools needing new administrators. The partnership established the Principals Academy specifically to prepare new principals for the challenges they would encounter. Each year cohort groups comprised of principals from all of the school districts and representatives from the university attend seven sessions to prepare for school improvement needs, focus on current research, and confirmed best practices. In addition to working with educators from across the districts, participants are able to interact with acknowledged authors and presenters with specialization in areas such as student performance levels, school culture, change-focused leadership, data use, innovation, intervention strategies, distributed leadership, and professional learning.

Civic Education Initiative

One of the partnership's foundational commitments is to prepare students to assume civic responsibilities with informed and constructively reasoned judgment. We believe that schools are responsible for implementing programs and policies to develop knowledge, skills, understanding, and dispositions of contributing citizens. The Partnership has offered grants for experimentation or implementation of innovative approaches to civic preparation. For example, a Ben Franklin Academy was created by one of the districts to offer civic preparation training to school faculty and staff. Proposals that have been funded by the partnership were selected based on (a) their consistency in supporting partnership members' common vision for preparing active, responsible citizens and (b) their likelihood for continuation application. Attention to and efforts for partnership-wide civic education continue.

Positive Behavior Support

The Positive Behavior Support Initiative implements programs in schools for addressing students' social and emotional as well as behavioral needs. Research-supported programs adopted by university faculty members to implement and supervise in selected partnership school classrooms with volunteer faculty include: Strong Kids, an innovative social-emotional learning curriculum designed for elementary students; Strong Teens, an adaptation of this program for secondary students; and Class-Wide Function-Related Intervention Teams, a group-contingency classroom management program implemented in elementary and middle schools. The initiative also involves positive

classroom practices such as increasing the ratio of teachers' praise of appropriate student behavior to teachers' criticism and reprimands of off-task or disruptive conduct. Work of the PBSI has recently mentioned in the popular press; see for example <https://www.usnews.com/news/health-news/articles/2020-01-29/when-it-comes-to-classroom-performance-praising-kids-works-best>. The PBSI team recently received a large US Department of Education research grant to evaluate the implementation of Class-Wide Function-Related Intervention Teams in 144 classrooms across 24 middle schools in Kansas, Tennessee, and Utah.

Conferences

The BYU-PSP holds varied professional conferences that provide opportunities for partner groups and community participants to attend presentations by and meet with noted educational professionals from outside the Utah area. The partnership's Professional Development Coordinating Council, which includes representatives from all partner organizations in addition to CITES, provides organization and leadership. Regular conferences are the annual Instructional Leadership in the 21st Century, the Literacy Promise, the Learning Edge, Arts Express, Education and Law, Secondary Literacy Institute and Leaders Associates. Themes and topics are selected according to the situations, needs, and interest of the partners.

Partnership Stability

Mission, Vision, and Commitments

In recent years only minor changes have been made to our mission and vision, primarily to clarify terms used to articulate core values and purposes in ways that enable all to comprehend and recognize the organizational agreements that provide guidance and inspiration. Purposes that are shared and understood make the work meaningful as the university and the school districts work actively to "further the education profession" and "provide equitable educational opportunities as they teach and requiring equitable behavior in the classroom and, by potential extension, the broader community" (Essential 1).

The vision of the Partnership has been widely communicated, as partners' consistent collaborative inquiry, mutual reflection, and resulting positive change involving both university and public schools have promoted "active engagement in the school community" (Essential 2) by teacher candidates. When practicum students or interns are mentored and instructed by an experienced teacher of the classes where they participate and are supervised by master teachers from the schools who are temporarily participating as hybrid educators at the university, as discussed previously, they are involved in the daily, school community experience.

Partnership participants regard public education (a) as the cornerstone of a civil and prosperous democratic community; (b) as a public imperative, a moral endeavor, and a shared

responsibility for all members of society; and (c) as a right and privilege to be provided for all, including both academic mastery and personal development to maximize students' potential to participate fully and productively in society. All participants agree that the university must support schools by preparing educators (a) to master their disciplines, (b) to understand and implement curriculum and instruction that support their students' learning and development, and (c) to engage in ongoing research and inquiry leading to dialogue and action that directly benefit schools. The vision, mission, and core beliefs of the Brigham Young University-Public School Partnership are communicated and shared through the five partnership commitments, as introduced at the beginning of this article.

Longevity and Reliability

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the BYU-PSP is its longevity—more than 36 years of inventing and reinventing. Many education partnerships and other collaborative arrangements are unable to continue when critical leaders are no longer available. Our partners' strong dedication to renewal has been sufficient to ensure that the partnership continues beyond specific individuals' stewardship.

Since the beginning of the partnership, the superintendents in all the school districts have changed at least three times (a total of 20 superintendents), the McKay School of Education has had six deans, the arts and science colleges have experienced numerous changes, and Brigham Young University had had five presidents. The flexible structure and shared goals have enabled the partnership to move seamlessly through these leadership changes, with continued commitment of all necessary groups. Working across organizational boundaries with shared governance has not always been easy; ongoing trust and mutual respect require effort. Partnerships can be fragile structures,

easily damaged by daily concerns such as time investment or short-term efficiency. However, we have found that achievements and services made available through the Partnership are well worth the outlay.

Administering more than 40 professional development programs to benefit school and university personnel requires that partners combine their human and financial resources and share implementation responsibility. So much can be done for the benefit of many. We are proud of our programs' contributions to both preservice and inservice educators. We have accomplished much and are continuing to do much to fulfill our goal of simultaneous renewal of both educator preparation and public schooling. ^{SUP}

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