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NAPDS Exemplary Award Article

The Bowie State University PDS Network- We are Bowie Bold!

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The Bowie State University PDS Network- We are Bowie Bold!

As a two-time winner of the Exemplary Professional Development School (PDS) Achievement Award and the only historically Black college and university (HBCU) to be presented with this award, Bowie State University offers a unique perspective on the power of partnership. Bowie State, located between Washington, D.C. and Annapolis, Maryland is Maryland's first HBCU. BSU is an outgrowth of a school opened in 1864 in Baltimore, Maryland, by the Baltimore Association for the Moral and Educational Improvement of Colored People, an organization dedicated to offering educational opportunities for its Black citizens. BSU currently serves over 6,000 diverse students and graduates about 38 undergraduate education students yearly.

BSU first won Exemplary PDS Achievement Award in 2015, but this year's honor is particularly special, given the obstacles many educators and student interns faced with a shift to virtual learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Solid relationships within Bowie State's PDS network, built over more than 20 years, eased the move to online instruction.

Bowie State's PDS network (PDSN) is a collaborative partnership among seven elementary schools, two secondary schools (Middle and High schools) spanning two school districts; the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE); the College of Education; and the College of Arts and Sciences who work closely with our yearlong interns. In their yearlong placements with a PDS partner, student interns explore models of effective teaching and learning through mentoring, targeted professional development and best-practice sharing between PDS partners. All student interns also complete action research in their mentor teacher's classroom and present their findings to a panel of education experts, which advances the profession. Consistent with our institution's early history, as a PDS Network, we focus on the tenets of social justice and equity in all aspects of our collaborations.

Our commitment to the PDS model and the PDS 9 Essentials is at the heart of our collaborative partnership. Unique features of Bowie State's signature PDS program include: a three-tiered leadership program for educators who want to become mentors, a focus on culturally responsive teaching, rigorous assessment of interns'

performance, mentoring for interns in a virtual environment, and a host of scholarly publications written by BSU faculty and PDS educators.

Vision

Our network vision is:

- To create and sustain partnerships that use reflection practices such as journaling, inquiry groups, and action research to support our mission statement
- To use our partnership to explore challenges and opportunities to focus on our shared vision to promote social justice, equity, and culturally responsive pedagogies in all aspects of our work
- To provide opportunities and empower partners to serve in boundary spanning roles throughout our partnerships
- To have an organizational structure that provides opportunities for regularly scheduled meeting and events and formal roles to support these structures
- To continue our attention to shared financial and human capital resources shared by all partners
- To provide structures to engage partners to share their work between partners and on state and national levels and recognize our achievements as we problem solve our challenges

Key Leadership Roles Played by P-12 and Higher Education Stakeholders

What makes our BSU PDSN unique is that we work closely and collaboratively across two school districts and with MSDE. Each year faculty from the PDS sites and the university and yearlong interns attend and present at the Maryland PDS Conference. The BSU PDS Coordinator serves on the conference planning committee and recruited Rebecca West Burns (President NAPDS) and Michael Conzensa (Past President NAPDS) to speak at our 2019 state PDS conference. MSDE also sends a representative to our monthly PDSN meetings.

The two local school districts are represented by their PDS district liaisons at our monthly PDSN meetings. In addition, each school district offers professional development opportunities to the PDS site-coordinators, mentor teachers, and yearlong interns.

At the university level, PDS teachers have a variety of opportunities to serve in leadership positions including serving on university committees such as the Teacher Education Council, the PDSN monthly meetings, Summer Strategic Planning, and action research and portfolio panels. In

addition, they are involved in collaborative grants with the university and school districts, meet with program coordinators to redesign undergraduate programs, and teach methods courses in mathematics, reading and science because we have a policy that if there is not a tenure-track faculty member to teach a methods course, a PDS teacher will serve as adjunct faculty.

Each of our PDS sites has a teacher who serves as the site based PDS coordinator and liaison to the university. In addition, each site sponsors an inquiry group that functions at the crossroads of book club and action research. These inquiry groups have been a hallmark of our PDSN since 2003 and provide leadership opportunities and professional development to all teachers and yearlong interns in the PDS site.

Within the NAPDS organization, the BSU PDS Coordinator serves as Co-Editor of the peer-reviewed journal, *PDS Partners: Bridging Research to Practice*. A 5th grade teacher from one of our PDS sites serves as the Assistant Editor and worked collaboratively with a BSU doctoral student to co-edit our first themed issue, *For Teachers, By Teachers, About Teachers in PDS Partnerships*, Volume 15, Number 2, Summer 2020. In addition, BSU PDSN members are frequent presenters at the NAPDS Annual Conference, and three members (two PK-12) of our PDSN participated in the Nine Essentials Symposium in Atlantic City during the 2020 NAPDS Conference.

Shared Resources and Participant Recognitions Across P-12 and Higher Education

The BSU PDSN has a history of both human and financial shared resources. Each of the two school districts pays their site-based PDS coordinators a yearly stipend for their work. Both BSU and the districts provide a robust professional development program for these coordinators. BSU offers a 3-tiered mentor teacher series that includes three sets of four-session workshops led by PDS teachers and university faculty. Both school districts offer a stipend to teachers who take the first level course and teachers who complete our 3-tiered mentoring program receive a BSU certificate and award for PDS Leadership. The school districts also pay the teacher facilitators for co-planning the workshops with university faculty and serving as workshop leaders. The university pays one teacher a stipend who coordinates the paperwork and payments with the school districts. The university PDS coordinator works with both PDS faculty and university faculty to be sure that these workshops are meeting the needs of all constituents. She receives a two-course release from the university for her PDS coordination.

BSU pays the mentor teachers, and the school district supplements this payment by providing a stipend for the first part of the yearlong internship. In addition, the school districts support PDS summer strategic planning by providing payment for participating teachers, and the university provides meals. For inquiry groups, the university provides books and materials for PDS teachers and yearlong interns, and the school district provides curriculum workshop pay for after school meetings. PDS teachers serving as methods faculty receive adjunct faculty pay through the university and receive support from university faculty program coordinators who meet with them on a regular basis.

For the grants supporting PDS work, stipends are paid to participating PDS teachers and faculty. Professional development is offered to university (College of Education and College of Arts and Sciences) and school district partners. The university pays teacher candidate registration for the NAPDS Conference, and the PTO and principals fund registration for PDS teachers. Both the PDS sites and the university cover travel expenses for teacher candidates. The university funds PDSN member registrations for the state PDS Conference.

Both the university and school districts recognize and reward PDS partners in our network. Each year the College of Education sponsors a Star Awards evening. PDSN members are honored by the Dean and the university PDS Coordinator in presentations summarizing their work with the university and presentations of awards of appreciation. We also recognize students for such PDS recognitions as presentations at state and national PDS conferences and the Outstanding Action Research Award. In two cases, BSU PDS teachers were recognized by the school district as the Outstanding Educator of the Year (2015 and 2018), and these teachers who also taught methods courses for BSU were recognized by the college and the university. BSU's Center for Research and Mentoring of Black Male Students and Teachers regularly recognizes Black Male PDS site-coordinators and new teachers in our PDSN.

We celebrate our site-based PDS coordinators at monthly PDSN meetings and during summer strategic planning by recognizing their roles in our teacher education programs and by offering multiple pathways to leadership roles including adjunct faculty, mentor teacher workshops leaders, inquiry group leaders, university committee and panel members, PDS conference presenters and/or attendees, co-authors of articles and book chapters, and national leadership positions which we believe has had a positive impact on retention of teachers in our PDS sites (Garin, 2017).

Unique Partner Features

BSU PDSN is a small, close-knit learning community whose members support the advancement of the 9 Essentials and the State of Maryland PDS Standards that are based on

the previous NCATE Standards. We represent university faculty, PDS faculty, and state and school district liaisons and work across two school districts and across three undergraduate programs – elementary, early childhood/special education and secondary education.

The mission of the BSU PDS Network is to create and sustain a collaborative partnership that impacts student learning by exploring models of effective teaching and learning; facilitating extensive, clinically-rich yearlong internship practices for prospective teachers; conducting needs-based professional development; and sharing best practices among PDS Partners. BSU's unique PDS Initiatives include: (1) PDS Leadership Certificate via a 3-tiered program including Teach-Coach-Reflect, Advanced Teach-Coach-Reflect and PDS Leadership Workshop, (2) Focused professional development on culturally responsive teaching pedagogies (CRP), literacy, mathematics, science and technology, lesson planning, and student engagement, (3) Focused response to the new reality of mentoring and completing a yearlong internship in a virtual classroom, (4) Yearlong internship assessment through a performance-based electronic portfolio, (5) Multi-site monthly planning including extended Summer Strategic Planning, (6) On-Site Methods Courses (math, science and reading taught by PDS teachers), (7) Methods course assignments that are conducted in mentor teachers' classes while working with children during the courses held at a PDS site (e.g., reading clinic – which is rotated between PDS sites each semester, science club, and math club), (8) Attention to issues of equity and social justice, (9) State, Local and National PDS Leadership opportunities, (10) Co-authored articles, book chapters and studies, (11) Site-Based Inquiry Groups, (12) Action research conducted by teacher candidates and mentor teachers, and (13) A shared-mission across institutions.

The Bowie State University PDS Network and the NAPDS 9 Essentials

Our PDSN uses the 9 Essentials to guide our PDS work. Our work in two of these areas is highlighted below.

NAPDS Essential 4: Reflection and Innovation

Our PDSN has existed for over 20 years and has had ample opportunities to innovate and reflect. We have provided opportunities and instruments for change as we continue to explore, reflect, and recognize best practices collaboratively. Our innovative practices focus on the continuous learning of all partners in our Network with a keen eye toward reflective practices, PK-12 learning, and CRP that lead to equity and social justice.

Inquiry Groups as a Signature Program

Since 2003, our PDSN has hosted inquiry groups at each PDS site. Inquiry groups go far beyond

conversations held during the school day in grade level and department meetings and offer more formality than the collaborative and collegial conversations that normally exist in a PDS. They also integrate the less complex components of action research (Garin, 2017).

Each PDS site meets to identify areas that they would like to explore to enhance PK-12 learning through teacher learning and self-reflection. Site-Based PDS Coordinators bring their ideas for inquiry to PDSN meetings for discussion and sharing. One of our favorite meetings is when teams of teachers come to campus to explore the plethora of books from a book distributor that they can borrow to take back to their PDS site where they confirm their topic and chose a book to support their inquiry. It is not unusual for a PDS site to have multiple inquiry groups designed to address differing needs and interests. Inquiry group participants include any teacher in the PDS site whether they serve as a mentor teacher or not, teacher candidates, PDS Supervisors, and PDS Site-Based Coordinators. Our PDSN has read over 110 books since this initiative began.

Action Research as a Signature Program

While inquiry groups are less formal than action research, often the inquiry groups lead to mentor teacher and/or teacher candidate action research. PDS teachers who enroll in the second of our three Mentoring Workshops, Advanced TCR, learn about action research and conduct their own action research. This offers them the opportunity to speak from first-hand experience as they work with their teacher candidates. Over the years, we have been able to build a cadre of PDS teachers at each of the sites in our Network who are knowledgeable and use action research to inform their own teaching practices. Our teacher candidates conduct action research in their mentor teachers' classroom during the yearlong clinically rich internship. Discussions regarding the topic of their action research begin when their internship begins. While our interns conduct the action research, the mentor teachers and site based PDS coordinators participate in the construction of topics and research agendas.

The PDS sites host dress rehearsals for teacher candidates to share their action research before their final presentations held on campus. This way, other teachers in the school can learn about the action research taking place in their school. Teacher candidates feel empowered to present their action research on campus to panels comprised of PDSN members and program coordinators who provide feedback on a rubric co-constructed by both presenter and panel members. Through interviews, we have learned action research helps teacher candidates reflect on their own teaching practices. We have also learned that mentor teachers value the action research that the teacher candidates conduct and often change their own teaching practices based on results (Garin, 2017; Garin & Nowlin, 2018).

Linking Theory to Practice Through Project-Based Learning

Along with our mission to build a culture of inquiry to develop reflective practitioners and to address CRP, we also use grant opportunities to support our innovative and reflective practices that are based on mutually determined PDS participant and student needs while connecting theory to practice. In this section we present four funded grant proposals that further the tenets of Essential 4.

Strengthening Writing through Culturally Responsive Practices

This grant funded project (2014-2016) began with an inquiry group of 22 teachers focused on CRP for teachers who work in culturally, linguistically, and socioeconomically diverse schools. Teachers were guided through lesson planning sessions to incorporate their knowledge of CRP with writing and technology. The project culminated in the creation of video cases to demonstrate teacher learning. Participating schools were identified by numbers of limited English Proficiency and students receiving free or reduced lunch. Although the grant was originally written to target our entire PDSN, we learned that only one of our PDSs qualified. One of the benefits of this project was pairing our participating PDS with a neighboring middle school for the inquiry group. As a result of this partnership, the middle school became our new middle school PDS! In addition, our collaborations with Arts and Sciences faculty increased because one of the PIs on this grant was from the English and Modern Languages Department. This has resulted in increased momentum for our secondary PDSs. This grant paved the way to another research grant that focused on the diversity conversations between and among 10 preservice teachers; 5 from BSU and 5 from a Midwestern predominately white university. Conversations focused on social justice as well as stereotypes and biases. This resulted in a staged reading at BSU and ultimately to the creation of a play, *How Can I Say This So You Will Stay?*, that was performed at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

Preparing and Retaining Diverse, High-Quality Secondary School STEM Teachers

This grant, funded by the National Science Foundation and the Noyce Scholarship Program (2020-2024) provides internship opportunities, academic scholarships, pedagogical training, and mentoring activities to attract, prepare, support, and retain talented underrepresented minority secondary teachers in Maryland high-need school districts. The PIs on this grant include the BSU PDS Coordinator and the BSU Arts and Sciences Math and Science liaisons to education. Our Secondary PDS sites serve on the advisory board for this project. Scholarship recipients will receive training in best practices in tutoring, tutor students in our middle school PDS site, complete their yearlong internship in one of our secondary PDS sites, and participate in inquiry groups and action research. In addition, BSU students and faculty will attend and present at conferences, supported by grant funding.

Computer Science Teacher Educator Program

This project (2019-2021) funded by Maryland Center for Computing Education (MCEE) focuses on BSU faculty, PDS teachers, and teacher candidates by creating a learning community whose mission and vision is to become an exemplar first class university in teaching Computer Science Fundamentals in undergraduate and graduate programs of study and to promote a computer science, computational thinking, and teaching culture through collaboration on teaching computer science fundamentals. To date, participants have written lesson plans and kept reflective journals that were shared in a poster session on campus. In addition, we developed and revised the lesson plan format being integrated into science and math methods courses. Finally, we hope to develop a computer science education major collaboratively planned by Education faculty, Arts and Sciences faculty, and PDS teachers.

The Collaborative Video Lab: Enhancing Pre-service Teacher Experiences through CRP

This project took place during the 2017-2018 school year and included workshops on CRP for preservice teachers and mentor teachers. Preservice students created video journals and presentations on their reflections on aspects of CRP and shared them with mentor teachers and university supervisors. Workshops included topics such as growth mindset: embracing social media as an instructional tool to create positive learning environments for students; CRP classroom management and learning environments to support student learning; and using CRP to empower African American learners. Students filmed their journals to fulfill a student teaching seminar assignment and developed a collaborative rubric with supervisors and mentor teachers.

In summary, we believe that we are exemplary in our response to Essential 4, *A PDS makes a shared commitment to reflective practice, responsive innovation and generative knowledge*, because our PDS fosters collaboration between Education and Arts and Sciences faculty, PDS teachers and administrators, PDS site-based coordinators, teacher candidates, and community partners; our innovative and reflective practices focus on PK-12 learning; and these practices are sustained throughout our PDSN and include inquiry groups, action research, and attention to CRP.

NAPDS Essential 8: Boundary Spanning Roles

Professional development schools work best when there are clearly defined formal and informal roles assumed by individuals from both schools and universities. According to Garin & Burns (2020), "Boundary spanners are the heartbeat of any PDS. These are individuals who work across the institutional settings of schools and universities daily to ensure that the PDS functions and thrives" (p. 191). The BSU PDSN features many boundary-spanning roles, including PDS teachers

serving as adjunct faculty, PDS teachers teaching mentoring workshops, University faculty and PDS teachers co-authoring studies and publishing journal articles, PDS teachers and university faculty serving as co-editor and assistant editor of a journal PDS teachers and university faculty collaborating on conference presentations, and PDS teachers and university faculty creating and testing departmental surveys. What initially propelled our PDSN into having a collaborative spirit was the edict from a former dean that any methods course not being taught by tenure track faculty would be taught by PDS teachers. Over the years, methods courses have been taught on site at rotating PDSs where interns have worked with PK-12 students in a PDS reading clinic and math and science clubs. Just this year, our math methods course is being instructed for the first time by a PDS teacher who was an undergraduate in our elementary education program 16 years ago! These boundary spanning roles help link theory to practice and provide leadership opportunities for PDS teachers. We consider many of these boundary spanning roles as a way to reward members of our PDSN.

At one PDSN meeting, we established a task force to examine best practices in mentoring and because of their recommendations, the Teach-Coach-Reflect (TCR) workshop was developed and co-constructed by PDS teachers, university supervisors, and faculty. After three years, the PDSN decided to make this workshop mandatory for all mentor teachers of yearlong teacher candidates, and we moved to a trainer of trainers model. Currently, each TCR workshop is led by two PDS teachers, and each summer, workshop leaders and BSU faculty revise and update the workshops. When teachers began requesting a next level mentoring workshop, PDS teachers and university faculty collaborated on creating the next workshop, Advanced TCR, which focuses on co-teaching and action research. Teachers then asked for a third workshop focusing on PDS. The PDS Leadership Workshop content was co-constructed, and this workshop is led by the university PDS Coordinator. The major assignment for this workshop is to submit an article for publication in a PDS journal. We currently have two co-researched articles in progress, including a collaboration between the BSU PDS Coordinator and two teachers focused on mentoring in the virtual environment.

As more PDS teachers became comfortable with writing about their work, one of our PDS teachers was asked to be Assistant Editor of *PDS Partners: Bridging Research to Practice* and began working with the co-editors, one being the BSU PDS Coordinator. This teacher subsequently partnered with a doctoral student to co-edit the first themed issue of this journal, *For Teachers by Teachers about Teachers in PDS* (Nowlin & Ming, 2020). This issue is available for free in the Publications section on the NAPDS website (napds.org). Boundary spanning roles, while once challenging, have become a way of life for our PDSN.

Through the Pandemic and Beyond

Our PDS Network has grown and changed over the years, but our consistent collaboration as well as our institutionalized norms and resources have provided us with a stable partnership that has allowed us to weather the pandemic together and remain focused on what makes our PDS strong. Not only did we transition to online learning, but we also used this as an opportunity to conduct action research on PDS and the Pandemic and were awarded the Claudia A. Balach Teacher Researcher Award by the American Educational Research Association, PDS Research Special Interest Group (SIG) for our work. This study, *Mentoring in Times of Uncertainty* (Marshall-Kraus et al., 2021) was also published in the NAPDS Journal, *School University Partnerships* themed issue, *Teaching in Times of Uncertainty* (Helfrich et al., 2022) Especially influential were our monthly virtual PDS Network meetings and our virtual mentor teacher happy hours, which have continued throughout the pandemic. We look forward to where these collaborations will take us next.

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NAPDS Exemplary Award Article

A Mutually Beneficial Partnership: Salisbury University & Wicomico County Public Schools

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The individuals involved in the Professional Development Schools partnership between Salisbury University and Wicomico County Public Schools are grateful for the opportunity to share more about the work that led the National Association for Professional Development Schools to honor this partnership with a NAPDS Award for Exemplary PDS Achievement in 2021! This is the fourth time that Salisbury University (SU) has been honored for its P-12 partnerships since the award's inception, and the second time that Wicomico County Public Schools (WCPS) has been recognized. All PDS stakeholders in the SU-WCPS partnership share a sincere commitment to preparing the next generation of teachers and enhancing the learning of P-12 students, with a "we're all in this together" approach.

Partnership Institutions

Salisbury is a city in, and the county seat of, Wicomico County on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. The Eastern Shore is located on the Delmarva Peninsula between the Atlantic Ocean and the Chesapeake Bay. The major cities of Washington, D.C., Baltimore, and Philadelphia

can be reached in two hours from the region. The City of Salisbury is home to over 32,000 people, within the over 100,000 individuals residing in Wicomico County. Agriculture, poultry farming, and shipbuilding are major industries in the area. There are two post-secondary institutions located in Wicomico County: Wor-Wic Community College and Salisbury University.

Salisbury University

Salisbury University is a public institution and is part of the University System of Maryland. It began as the State Normal School for teacher preparation in 1925. Now, SU facilitates 46 undergraduate degree programs, 15 master's degree programs, and two doctoral degree programs for approximately 7500 undergraduate and graduate students. The University's Seidel School of Education offers undergraduate programs in early childhood education and elementary education, as well as a combined dual early childhood/elementary education program. It also offers P-12 programs in music education, physical education and ESOL, and secondary education programs in English, mathematics, history, biology, chemistry, earth science, physics, French and Spanish. The Seidel School also facilitates graduate and doctoral programs for practicing teachers.

Due to the State of Maryland's mandate that all interns complete their 100-day extended internships in a Professional Development

School (PDS), coupled with the fact that SU is located in a predominately rural region, the Seidel School of Education's regional PDS network spans seven Maryland counties and includes 39 schools. In conjunction with the University's rich history in preparing future teachers, its national reputation for its partnerships with public schools is exceptional. SU was honored with the NAPDS Spirit of Partnership Award in 2009, the Emerging PDS Leader award in 2018 and 2021, and the NAPDS Award for Exemplary Professional Development School Achievement in 2011, 2015, 2017, and 2021. The 2015 award highlighted the PDS work in Mardela Middle and High School, located in Wicomico County, while the most recent award in 2021 encompassed SU's partnership with the entire district.

Wicomico County Public Schools

Wicomico County Public Schools employs approximately 3,000 teachers educating 15,000 students. WCPS offers full-day pre-kindergarten, an elementary school magnet program, NexGen STEM academies for middle school students, and Career and Technology Education and Advanced Placement and dual credit courses for high schoolers. Supports for students include opportunities provided by State Department of Education and Title One funds. Wicomico County includes 26 schools and learning centers, 20 of which partnered with Salisbury University as Professional Development School and partner school sites at the time of the award.