

onset. Then, as data is collected and analyzed, future studies and investigations can take shape in a manner that is responsive to the needs of all involved.

### Public Dissemination of Results

Essential 5 challenges and encourages participants involved in partnership work to collaborate on research projects related to the impact of their work. Further, the Essential encourages the sharing of results in multiple and varied publication outlets, in an attempt to demystify the misconception that research can only be shared at conferences and in articles. As an organization NAPDS aims to support this effort with multiple outlets including the journals *PDS Partners: Bridging Research to Practice*, a practitioner-oriented research-practice journal, *School-University Partnerships*, a research focused journal. Additionally, the organization supports *Stories from the Field*, which are shorter blog posts about PDS and partnership endeavors, as well as *Partnership Voices*, which are videos of individuals involved in partnership work. Lastly, NAPDS has a publishing partner Information Age Publishing, who supports individuals and groups of people who want to write or edit books on partnership work.

In addition to those publication outlets, this article provided examples of partnerships sharing their outcomes and partnership work with administrators from both school districts and colleges/universities, parents through newsletters, websites, or social media, and through informal conversations with others in education. We

strongly encourage your partnership to consider ways to effectively communicate the work and impact of your partnership to your school community. After all, our impact as a partnership is only strengthened when we share our stories and the impact that we are having on our students!

*Biographies of the authors of the NAPDS Second Edition of the Nine Essentials have been shared in previous articles.* ♦

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## Essential 6: Articulated Agreements – Foundation and Guidance for PDS Work

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### Introduction

Clearly written agreements between parties serve as crucial components in ensuring the creation, effectiveness, success, and sustainability of any partnership. Professional Development Schools (PDSs) are no exception. Highlighted in Essential 6 of both the original and updated versions of the National Association for Professional Development Schools (NAPDS) guiding statement document, *What it Means to Be a Professional Development School (NAPDS 2008; 2021)*, is the need for an articulated agreement to serve as a foundation of understanding among all parties involved.

As NAPDS approached the process of revising the original Nine Essentials (NAPDS, 2008), the input and perspectives of many individuals and groups were shared, reviewed, and considered. Many of those ideas and considerations are addressed in the revised edition, including in Essential 6: Articulated Agreements. Although the original Essential 6 (see Table 1) captured the essence of the need for partners to agree on various aspects of the interaction and collaboration between the college/university and P-12, it was agreed that this essential needed updating in several ways. From revision work, several key terms and concepts arose as needing to be clearly addressed in light of articulated agreements. These terms and concepts are included in the updated essential.

The full text of revised Essential 6: Articulated Agreements reads as follows.

PDS partners collaboratively create, review, and renew written articulated agreements. The document(s):

1. Identify the commitment of each entity,

2. Articulate the expectation that each partner will have an equal voice in decision-making, including in determining the content of the agreement(s), describe the roles and responsibilities of various individuals, and
3. Outline processes for developing, maintaining, and identifying desired shared outcomes to promote sustainability and renewal.

Renewed agreements(s) should reflect the evolution of the partnership (NAPDS, 2021).

Intentionally written in a way that communicates the spirit of aspiration, the revised Nine Essentials are not so prescriptive that they limit partnerships to certain formats or requirements. Instead, they are written to encourage PDS work that is sound and built on evidence-based practices that challenge those of us working in the PDS setting to focus on the needs of our particular learning communities as we plan, learn, and grow together.

**Table 1:** Comparison of original and revised Essential 6: Articulated agreements

Original Essential 6	Revised Essential 6
An articulation agreement developed by the respective participants delineating the roles and responsibilities of all involved.	A PDS requires intentionally evolving written articulated agreement(s) that delineate the commitments, expectations, roles, and responsibilities of all involved.

## So, What is New in the Revised Essential 6 and Why?

With regard to changes in Essential 6, in particular, there are several aspects of the updated structure and wording that were changed or rearranged to emphasize particular ideas. Essential 6 is written with an emphasis on intentionality. In the revised Essential 6, it is clearly communicated that an articulated agreement between partners is a critical attribute of a PDS, not just a document that comes into being as a result of naturally occurring interactions between/among partners. Further, the Essential emphasizes the inclusion of commitments and expectations to be clearly addressed in the articulated agreement documents instead of solely focusing on “roles and responsibilities of those involved.” This includes recommendations that specific processes are clearly outlined.

The Revisions in Essential 6 come from a sincere belief that partnerships must be based on each partner having an equal voice in decision-making. Additionally, partnerships must engage in the action of continuous improvement and renewal in response to lessons learned, changes needed, and desires to strengthen aspects of the partnership.

## Key Terms Highlighted in Revised Essential 6

The second edition of the NAPDS Nine Essentials (2021) is supported through 14 key concepts. Essential 6 emphasizes two of them: articulated agreements and collaboration. Having *articulated agreements* in place and focusing on *collaboration* in all planning, decision-making, and implementation are fundamental to PDS work. These terms were defined in the following ways in the Revised Edition of the Nine Essentials (NAPDS, 2021).

### Articulated Agreement

*An articulated agreement is a written document (e.g., Memorandum of Understanding or contract) between a college/university and a P-12 school/district/division that outlines the structure and goals of the partnership and the expectations for each partner. Additional documents may include handbooks, policy manuals, glossaries, etc. (p. 17).*

An articulated agreement may take on various forms as a college/university and P-12 school/districts enter into PDS partnership. Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), contracts, and other documents may be used to define and describe

various aspects and agreements between the parties involved. Every PDS operates in a different context with a variety of attributes that must be considered from the perspectives, resources, needs, strengths, and values of both partners. Formalizing the partnership with a clearly written and communicated understanding is necessary for the success and sustainability of PDS work. Appendix A includes an example of a MOU.

It is imperative that the articulated agreement be created in collaboration through intentional shared decision-making, ensuring that the needs, conditions, expectations, and perspectives of all parties are considered, discussed, and attended to in the partnership document(s). As is clearly stated in *What It Means to Be a Professional Development School (2021)*, “...a PDS is not a model, but a set of community agreements arrived at through collaboration and sustained by a respectful, fair, and reciprocal approach to addressing priorities. Above all, a PDS labors to create conditions that benefit all learners” (p.10). The articulated agreement for a PDS should clearly define the community agreements of the PDS as noted above and communicate a strong commitment to collaboration to help ensure success, sustainability, and continuous renewal.

### Collaboration

*Collaboration is the action of P-12 and college/university PDS stakeholders to work together to achieve common goals.*

As groups worked together and various stakeholders in the Association contributed ideas to updating the Nine Essentials, the importance of shared decision-making and collaboration between and among colleges/universities and P-12 partners surfaced time and again. In order for a PDS to address and realize its goals, equal voice in decision-making is central to the overall success of a PDS partnership. Knowledge and expertise come in many forms and from a variety of experiences. It is the combination of experiences, perspectives, and ideas of both content experts at the university and “boots on the ground” experiences and reality of rules, regulations, and everyday school expectations of the campus/district perspective that help to make the PDS thrive. Everyone learning every day from one another in a true community of practice – that is the beauty of the clinical preparation of teachers in a true PDS.

## Impact of Revised Essential 6 on PDS Work

As noted as a Design Principle in the 2010 NCATE publication, *Transforming Teacher Education Through Clinical Practice: A National Strategy to Prepare Effective Teachers*,

Strategic partnerships are imperative for powerful clinical preparation [of teachers]. School districts, preparation programs, teacher unions, and state policymakers must form strategic partnerships based on the recognition that none can fully do the job alone.

Each partner’s needs can be met better by defining clinically based teacher preparation as common work for which they share responsibility, authority, and accountability covering all aspects of program development and implementation (p. 5).

Having clearly written articulated agreements as described in Essential 6 is a critical attribute of the work in strategic partnerships to help guide the partners in decision-making, have trusting and transparent relationships, and ensure that processes and procedures are in place to support consistency and clear understanding in aspects of the partnership deemed necessary for the PDS work to be meaningful and productive.

As colleges/universities and P-12 schools join to authentically tie theory and practice and provide a clinical setting in which preservice teachers will learn in a PDS, two distinct entities are merging to share ideas, space, resources, and much more. Although both entities may be enthusiastic about embarking on their new adventures and learning together, the merger is not as likely to be successful if there are not clear understandings, processes, and procedures, and trusting relationships established. Thus, the need for articulated agreements. The university, oftentimes, has traditionally been isolated in classrooms on college and university campuses as professors impart knowledge of theory and practice to their students to prepare them to teach.

The P-12 schools/districts have often been working without much interaction with institutions of higher education. They welcome teacher candidates into their schools to fulfill certification requirements, but are focused on state rules and regulations, high stakes testing, and student success in light of standardized testing results. Quality PDS work takes a lot of work, and it is not simple or easy to establish a partnership that addresses the needs,

values, and desired outcomes that are central to the goals of all parties involved.

With the revised wording of Essential 6, it is the hope of those who contributed to the efforts of updating it, that the way it is written and the content that the essential now includes, it will now provide more guidance and more clearly communicate the most critical aspects of the PDS partnership that need to be in place and agreed

agreements in one document with exhibits attached to describe PDS vision, goals, and structures, resource agreements, and descriptions of positions in the PDS work. Others may be more informal. It is also not uncommon to see the most legal aspects of a partnership addressed in a formal MOU or contract while other important aspects of the PDS are documented in more informal ways such as in policy and procedure handbooks.

teachers (if applicable) including the amount and time frame in which the stipends will be paid); 3) Outline of investments of both the college/university and P-12 school/district as applicable (e.g., investment of time, monetary resources, in-kind contributions, personnel); 4) Insurance requirements and assurances as required by the college/university and/or campus/district partners; 5) Details regarding parent/caregiver permission for video/pictures of students in classrooms necessary for candidates to fulfill their responsibilities to complete requirements for recommendation for certification in the State in which they are seeking certification; and 6) Expectations for candidates in the classrooms to which they are assigned with clear understanding of the assignments they must complete to fulfill program/state requirements to be certified/licensed upon successful completion of their educator preparation program.

## Making sure to have an articulated agreement for your PDS work is imperative.

upon by both partners to set the partnership up for success. A sincere effort was made to ensure that the updated Essential 6 did not come across as communicating that an obligatory agreement was key. It was, instead, written to communicate a spirit of collaboration, commitment, and desire for the objectives, goals, and values of all to be central to the work and efforts of the combined expertise, knowledge, and talents of all involved, all learners – whether they be professors at universities, administrators and teachers in the schools, preservice teacher candidates, learners in our schools, parents, community members, or others. Together we are always better. We can help each other to learn and better contribute to the field about which we are so passionate... training teachers of excellence who are confident and knowledgeable as they enter the classroom and able to support all learners.

### Deepening Your Learning

As has already been highlighted, articulated agreements of any kind, including but not limited to Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs)/contracts for a PDS, may be written in various ways depending on the needs and relationships between the university/college and the P-12 school/district. Some agreements include a more formal overview of the major policy and funding

For some partnerships, general counsel at the school/university and/or legal counsel for the P-12 school/district may need to vet the agreement(s) prior to it being formalized, particularly if the commitment of certain resources or insurance issues must be included due to legal requirements of either or both entities. It is also important to note that MOU/contract requirements may vary between states depending on legislative rules and regulations or policies of school districts or universities. Depending on the structure of the partnership, articulated agreements may vary in some ways from PDS to PDS within the same school district or in the same school district with various colleges or universities. In addition, one document may refer to another document(s) that clarifies expectations and agreements.

### Ideas to Consider in Creating or Strengthening Articulated Agreements

Items in MOUs or contracts should include the following aspects: 1) Purpose of partnership and overall commitment of all parties involved; 2) Specific commitments of each party regarding candidate placements in the schools (number of candidates, expectations of candidate performance, expectations of teachers serving as mentors to the candidates, stipends paid to mentor

The MOU could be enhanced with examples of exhibits such as: a) the mission and vision statement of the partnership, b) a description of roles and responsibilities of those involved in the PDS work, and c) a projected expense forecast of the financial contributions that each party has agreed to provide, if applicable.

In addition to the MOU, the partnership may create and maintain a policy and procedures handbook. Handbooks for PDS partnerships work best when they are viewed to be “living documents” that are reviewed on a regular basis throughout the year and adjusted in response to the needs and goals of each PDS. As an example, PDS Handbook of Policy and Procedures may include sections such as those described in Table 2.

One suggestion is to make sure that, in articulated agreements (MOU, policy manual, contract, policy and procedures handbook, etc.), both partners have outlined that the expectation that the university will have input (representatives participate in interviews) if the superintendent of a school district or principal at a PDS changes and that the P-12 school/district has representation on the interview team(s) if the Dean or PDS Program Director/University Liaison at the university changes. In addition, if all agree that candidates for positions that support a PDS should plainly

**Table 2:** Possible Sections for a PDS Handbook of Policy and Procedures

Mission and Vision	Candidate Reassignment Policy
Structural Organization of the Partnership	Diversity, Equity, and Social Justice
Description of Key Positions Including Titles and Roles and Responsibilities	Program Assessment
Partnership Governance (may include descriptions of Purpose and Authority of various governing groups as well as the composition, responsibilities/actions of each group)	Research – Action and Institutional Research Procedures (definitions, requirements, sharing of results, permissions)
Establishing and Retaining a Formal PDS	
Procedures for Selecting Personnel	Budget Reporting
Student/Candidate Placement Policy	Celebrations and Ways to Communicating about the Partnership

understand that the expectations will be for them to support the PDS, it is more likely that the new personnel will be happier, more engaged, and more committed to PDS work as they enter and become acclimated to the PDS environment.

### Creating or Updating PDS Articulated Agreement(s)

The following activity is meant to provide some ideas and guidance for PDSs as articulated agreements are created or reviewed and updated. (Caveat: The following activity suggestion is nothing new and comes straight from 29 years of experience in PDS work and from the heart. As with any other activity or decision, each PDS needs to identify format, organization, topics, and content that will work best for their situation and partnership as they create, review, and/or renew their articulated agreements for their PDS(s). Steps to engaging in this work might include some or all of the following ideas.

First, convene representatives who are committed to PDS work and represent various perspectives that will contribute to creating, updating, and/or renewing the articulated agreement(s). Ideas might include university and school administrators, teachers, university faculty members, teacher education candidates, P-12 students, parents, and community members. Be sure to include the big decision-makers once you have a general plan to pursue PDS work. Without their support, the likelihood of the PDS succeeding diminishes a great deal.

Prior to or during meetings provide a copy of the Nine Essentials (NAPDS, 2021) total document to everyone who will be participating in the meetings/conversations whether you are just creating a PDS or are assessing the work of an existing and/or established PDS. The revised Nine Essentials bring energy to the PDS work and are a valuable guide to decision-making and planning. As noted, the Revised Essentials are not prescriptive but are, instead, aspirational in nature, written to help those who seek to establish PDS sites at which all are learners interacting with one another to increase knowledge, share talents and

experiences, and implement an effective clinically based educator preparation program. Foci should include improvement of student achievement, preservice teacher development, district teacher development, and campus growth and success.

Conversations about the Second Edition of the NAPDS Nine Essentials could be as one group or in smaller groups to review the essentials and assess the campus/district current situation/progress in light of each essential. Each group should note ideas, concerns, and recommendations of aspects of each essential that may need to be addressed for the first time, need attention, or need updating.

Additionally, the group may benefit from participating in book clubs or reviewing articles about research related to Professional Development Schools. Both NAPDS journals have online themed issues with freely available articles and other issues of the journals are indexed in ERIC and ProQuest and available through Google Scholar. Additionally, NAPDS has posted a list of endorsed books on its website which could be used to provide a shared experience of reading and discussing aspects of PDS partnerships.

As partnerships begin to take action, consider establishing a task force to organize and prioritize the ideas collected to share with the planning group so that all ideas can be corroborated and make sure that the ideas communicate the perspectives of all involved to the extent possible. Solicit feedback from task force participants and others, as needed and applicable. Recommendations and suggestions can then be presented to the leadership of both the College/University and PK-12 district or school for consideration and approval. It may be beneficial to support ideas with research or examples from books or articles. Additionally, most MOUs or contracts are ratified with the signature of leadership from both the college/university and campus/district.

### Summary

Making sure to have an articulated agreement for your PDS work is imperative. Doing so will help

to ensure that the relationships, commitments, and agreements are clearly defined. With the agreement in place, you will be more able to easily refer to the documents as changes in personnel (especially leadership positions) take place and questions arise. There is no question that in today's world leadership and faculty/staff at all levels of both colleges/universities and schools/districts change often. As this happens, the history, knowledge, rationale, and commitment for the work that has been/is being done can easily be lost in the shuffle. Existing articulated agreements can help to communicate information and expectations to those who are new coming into a PDS and may not immediately have the experience or knowledge to contribute to the work, quality, and sustainability of the partnership. But they can learn!

It is also important to mention that one of the most resounding sentiments that was shared at every meeting at which so many worked diligently to revise the NAPDS Nine Essentials was the importance of those who are committed to creating, improving, and sustaining truly quality PDSs helping, supporting, and encouraging one another. It is not always easy as we deal with real world educational trends, policies, rules, regulations, and high stakes testing. But to those who have experienced the successes of PDS work and witnessed first-hand the benefits to pre-service teacher as they prepare to go out and influence the world, to student achievement at schools in which PDS is the model for learning by all, and to campus/district growth and success, it is - without a doubt - worth the effort. Enjoy your PDS work. To say it is rewarding and worth addressing the challenges is putting it way more than mildly! When implemented with fidelity, PDS partnerships make a difference - a very positive difference. ☺

*Biographies of the authors of the NAPDS Second Edition of the Nine Essentials have been shared in previous articles. ☺*

## Appendix A: MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN EXAMPLE SCHOOL DISTRICT AND EXAMPLE COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

This agreement is between Example Independent School District, ("ISD"), and ("Name of college/university"), through the [name of College or University] School of Education. ISD and [name of College or University] may each be referred to as Party or together as Parties.

### I. Purpose of Interagency Agreement:

The purpose of this agreement is to establish the best quality cooperative effort of providing instructional services to the Professional Development Schools, herein referred to as PDSs.

It is the intent of this agreement to:

1. Define the services to be provided by each Party.
2. Ensure that each Party assumes the responsibility to communicate with the other and share leadership responsibilities and by doing so ensure that available resources are utilized in the most effective manner.
3. Ensure that these cooperative arrangements between ISD and [name of College or University] are developed, implemented, and reviewed prior to the end of this agreement.



## II. Agency Responsibilities:

### 1. Responsibilities of [name of College or University]:

- a. Provide senior teacher education candidates from the School of Education to work as interns and/or junior teacher education candidates from the School of Education to work as teaching associates at all designated PDS sites.
- b. Provide freshman and sophomore education candidates from the School of Education to work as novice (freshman and sophomore level students) teacher candidates at PDS sites.
- c. Provide School of Education faculty to serve as university liaisons and/or resident faculty at active PDSs.
- d. If requested by ISD, maintain for itself and provide to Students or require that Students obtain and maintain appropriate general and professional liability insurance coverage in the amounts of at least [as may be required] per occurrence and [as may be required] in the aggregate, with insurance carriers or self-insurance programs approved by ISD in accordance with ISD bylaws, rules and regulations. A copy of the certificate of insurance shall be provided to ISD.

### 2. Responsibilities of the ISD:

- a. Provide employees to work as PDS Coordinators at all PDS sites.
  - b. Provide mentor teachers to act as supervisors of the teaching interns.
  - c. Provide clinical instructors to act as supervisors of the teaching associates.
  - d. Prohibit the disclosure of personally identifiable information, as defined by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), of [name of College or University] students without the prior consent of the students, and to limit ISD's use of such information only for the purpose for which it obtained such information from [name of College or University] or the student.
  - e. Maintain appropriate general liability insurance coverage [as required].
3. Exhibit A, attached hereto, defines and more fully describes the roles and responsibilities of the clinical instructors, mentor teachers, site-based coordinators, university liaisons and resident faculty. The term "partnership" and "partner" are not used herein in the legal sense; but rather, the terms mean affiliation and affiliate, respectively.
  4. Exhibit B, attached hereto, describes in greater detail the purpose, mission, and functions of the Professional Development School partnership between ISD and [name of College or University].
  5. ISD and [name of College or University] School of Education will jointly monitor the progress of each PDS Site-Coordinator, intern, and teaching associate. [Name of College or University] may gather general data pertaining to student performance in connection with the PDS project and may perform research related to that data, but the data will exclude individual students' names, personal information, and any other information that could identify the students.
  6. Exhibit C, attached hereto, describes the cost of the PDS project that will be shared between [name of College or University] and ISD, who as previously defined are equal partners in this agreement. [name of College or University]'s share is to be paid upon receipt of two separate invoices submitted by ISD no later than October in the fall semester and March in the spring semester of each school year. As part of each invoice, ISD will list the salary of each site-based coordinator assigned to this agreement, but to protect anonymity will not list the names of

each. It is the expectation that each site-based coordinator will receive the minimum salary indicated in Exhibit C (i.e., half of the Unit Cost per Year). [name of College or University] will pay a maximum of half of the Unit Cost per year for each site-based coordinator or half of each site-based coordinator's salary, whichever is less.

7. If ISD is unable to provide the full complement of mentor teachers and/or clinical instructors as detailed in Exhibit C to provide the appropriate learning experience for the interns and teaching associates, [name of College or University] may reduce the total fee paid to ISD by the unit cost for each mentor teacher and/or clinical instructor ISD cannot provide.

## III. Agency Information

### 1. Example Independent School District

#### Contact Person:

Name of PDS Liaison for the ISD  
Example I.S.D. Administration Building  
Address of I.S.D.

#### Person Responsible for Implementing Agreement:

Name of ISD Superintendent, Superintendent  
Example I.S.D. Administration Building  
Address of I.S.D.

### 2. Name School/College of Education

#### Contact Person:

Name of PDS Liaison from University/College  
Address of university

#### Person Responsible for Implementing Agreement:

Name of College/University/College Provost  
Address of the university

## IV. Effective Date and Term (Example, depending on year MOU is signed if the MOU is rolling):

This agreement will be effective on June 1, 2022, through May 31, 2023. This agreement will automatically renew on June 1, 2023, and be effective until May 31, 2024, unless either party gives written notice of its intent not to renew, which notice must be given on or before May 1, 2023. This agreement will again automatically renew on June 1, 2024, and be effective until May 31, 2025, unless either party gives written notice of its intent not to renew, which notice must be given on or before May 1, 2024. This agreement will again automatically renew on June 1, 2025, and be effective until May 31, 2026, unless either party gives written notice of its intent not to renew, which notice must be given on or before May 1, 2025.

The ISD and [name of College or University] agree to enter into the collaborative PDS initiative as outlined above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Provost, [name of College/University]

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Superintendent, [name of ISD]

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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