

North Springs Elementary School and the University of South Carolina: A Partnership That Works

Denise Barth
Sally Catoe
Pamela Powell
North Springs Elementary School

Gena Brigman
Bruce E. Field
University of South Carolina

ABSTRACT: The 2009 Professional Development Schools National Conference recognized the professional development school relationship between North Springs Elementary School and the University of South Carolina for its outstanding collaborative accomplishments, naming it one of the three recipients of the first-ever National Association for Professional Development Schools Award for Exemplary Professional Development School Achievement. This article describes the work of this very special school–university partnership, focusing on how the collaboration is rooted in the nine essentials of professional development school work.

The University of South Carolina (USC) began its work with professional development schools (PDSs) nearly 20 years ago when it launched a network of 11 PDSs. That network quickly expanded to 17 PDSs in six Columbia-area school districts and thrived throughout the 1990s; yet, like many such relationships nationwide, it encountered the almost-inevitable obstacles of changing personnel, shifting resources, and waning interest. Recognizing the need to reexamine the work of the network, the school- and university-based partners committed themselves to a rigorous and time-consuming self-study that began in 2001 and that, by 2005, resulted in a new iteration of the partnership, consisting of 10 PDSs (and 12 by 2007). North Springs Elementary School, which had not been a part of USC's

original PDS network, was welcomed into the network in 2005 and has been an invaluable partner ever since.

In this article, we describe the efforts of the USC–North Springs partnership as they relate to the nine essentials of the National Association for Professional Development Schools (NAPDS). Specifically, we detail the work of North Springs Elementary, as embedded within the USC Professional Development School Network (USC PDS Network).

NAPDS Essential 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.

North Springs Elementary School is located in northeast Columbia, and it is one of 35 schools and centers in Richland County School District Two, one of the fastest-growing districts in South Carolina. The school houses more than 700 students from a variety of ethnic and racial backgrounds in Grades preK–5, and its faculty and staff are committed to “empowering [children] to reach their maximum potential while acquiring the skills to become lifelong learners and responsible citizens by providing challenging learning experiences in a caring environment.”¹ The decision to initiate a PDS relationship with the University of South Carolina was driven in part by the belief that this schoolwide mission could be immeasurably enhanced through collaboration with the university and through a blending of these school-based goals with the USC PDS Network’s commitment to “preparing all learners for the future through the promotion of best educational practices, meaningful collaboration, and democratic ideals.”

These mutually compatible missions—and, in particular, the shared dedication to responsible citizenship and democratic ideals—are woven throughout the school culture. In the 4 years that North Springs Elementary has been a PDS in partnership with USC, the teachers (as stewards of the teaching profession) have adopted the view that the entire school is responsible for the growth of future educators. Teachers interact with teacher candidates, the university liaison, and the clinical adjunct in a variety of venues, including faculty meetings, professional development presentations, committee meetings, the sharing of materials, the welcoming of candidates as classroom observers, and, most notably, the schoolwide Celebration of Teaching. The faculty has incorporated character (i.e., citizenship) education and community outreach through service learning activities so that future teachers can participate in programs that reach far beyond the classroom walls. In addition, one of the school’s teachers cochairs the PDS network’s Advocacy Committee, which in recent years has hosted two community-

wide forums: one for the 2006 primary candidates for state superintendent of education and governor and the other, in 2007, on the much-discussed subject (at least in South Carolina) of school choice. The school’s principal, Denise Barth, participated in the NAPDS Leadership Forum on the Nine Essentials in the summer of 2008, which extended our community involvement to the national level. She also participated in numerous principal panels at the university to answer questions posed by teacher candidates, because she believes that participating at all levels of teacher development is important to the profession. Although the mission statement of the USC PDS Network includes the recognized overriding goals of PDS work in general—that is, preparing future educators, providing professional development for current educators, and engaging in mutually beneficial research/inquiry—it also calls on members of the network to integrate into their school cultures the National Network for Educational Renewal’s Agenda for Education in a Democracy. North Springs Elementary faculty have firmly embraced the precepts of democracy and equity in teaching, in the character education that they have developed schoolwide, in their commitment to service learning, and in their development of future teachers. Two examples of this commitment include having students assist adults in completing voter registration forms and the school’s successful push to have 100% of the faculty registered to vote.

NAPDS Essential 2

A school–university culture committed to the preparation of future educators that embraces their active engagement in the school community.

The North Springs commitment to democracy and equity are equaled, if not surpassed, by the school’s successful integration of teacher candidates into every aspect of the school community. In the 2007–2008 school year, faculty expanded the physical boundaries of that community (and further enhanced their professional vision and confidence) by including two USC teacher candidates as inte-

gral participants in a presentation at the 2008 Professional Development Schools National Conference in Orlando, Florida. That presentation focused on 22 ways that the school–university partnership enhances the professional experiences of teacher candidates and thereby ensures that they are part and parcel of the North Springs community:

1. *Scavenger hunt.* Teacher candidates new to North Springs learn the layout and other special features of the school by participating in a scavenger hunt. In the process of completing this activity (usually as a group or in pairs), the candidates meet key persons who can assist them throughout their time at the school (e.g., the media center specialist and the instructional technology specialist). The rules indicate that they may ask anyone in the school for help—parents, teachers, aides, custodians, and students.

2. *Yearlong internship split between two different grade levels.* Developed in collaboration between USC’s PDS sites and the university, this practice allows teacher candidates to interact with students at different grade levels while becoming a part of the school culture. Assignments are made by the clinical adjunct and the principal, matching known teacher strengths to candidate descriptions (as provided by each candidate). During the first semester, the candidates are in the school part-time and at the university part-time (or in school sites nearby) taking classes. They complete a 3-week immersion period in their assigned classroom (near the end of the semester), planning and teaching at least one lesson a day. By the second semester, teacher candidates are an integral daily part of their assigned classroom, and they plan and teach a thematic unit lasting 3 weeks toward the end of the semester. They also complete individualized inquiry projects that are submitted to their university seminar instructor and presented to the school faculty.

3. *Participation in grade-level planning.* Teacher candidates participate as part of the grade-level team, which allows them to utilize the expertise of other teachers at the grade level and so gain multiple perspectives. They also receive status as “part of the team” and are

able to experience firsthand the collaboration that it takes to create meaningful experiences for children.

4. *The Celebration of Teaching.* This 2-day schoolwide event involves teachers’ volunteering to showcase lessons and teacher candidates’ choosing 5 classrooms a day in which to observe (from a selection of at least 15, covering all grade levels and subject areas, including related arts, physical education, and special-needs classes). At the end of the 2nd day, the university liaison facilitates an open debriefing session with the teachers and the candidates to answer questions and to talk about why teachers made various instructional choices. The teacher candidates are especially appreciative of this effort; it also sends the clear message that all the teachers in the school, whether formally hosting a teacher candidate or not, have a responsibility to help these candidates succeed. North Springs has had consistent positive feedback from candidates and teachers throughout the first 2 years of this event.

5. *Debriefing after lesson observations.* Candidates and teachers debrief after the Celebration of Teaching and after individual classroom observations. Doing so helps the teacher candidates reflect on what they have done, as well as what they have observed; it also helps them process the thinking that goes on before and after lessons are taught. The relaxed atmosphere of the debriefing sessions encourages candidates to ask questions not only about the lessons they observed but about classroom management and other areas of interest. These sessions also promote teacher reflection about what they do and why they make the choices they make; it encourages them to examine alternate choices as well. In addition, the university liaison and the clinical adjunct review faculty and teacher candidates’ feedback to a short survey, to make meaningful changes for the following year.

6. *Collaboration with other teacher candidates.* Teacher candidates are placed in cohorts, and they have multiple opportunities to collaborate with one another. For example, they must complete a long-range plan and design a field trip. Although their inquiry projects are

individualized, they are encouraged to work together to discuss one another's ideas and findings. In addition, North Springs brings the candidates together for a MAT (master of arts in teaching) Chat each week to discuss difficulties and successes and to offer further assistance from teachers at the school.

7. *Guest speakers.* Special presentations are provided throughout the semester to assist the teacher candidates. For example, the instructional technology specialist demonstrates uses for the SmartBoards used in each classroom, and the media specialist displays and discusses the variety of books in our professional library (specifically set up for teacher and teacher candidate use).

8. *MAT Chat.* This informal weekly meeting of the teacher candidate cohort assists candidates in planning and in processing the multitude of tasks that teachers are asked to perform both in and out of the classroom. The university liaison leads the sessions, and they frequently include teachers, who participate in their focused discussions.

9. *Discussions with former candidates (now teachers).* North Springs Elementary commonly hires USC teacher candidates who have completed their internships at the school or in other Richland Two schools and so finds it helpful for current candidates to talk with and receive encouragement from recent graduates of the USC program. In this forum, candidates receive informed support even if a teacher is not a mentor. The school's philosophy is that every teacher has something of value to share and that teacher candidates are free to glean information from whomever they choose. Almost half the school's faculty have one or more degrees from USC, and even more teachers have taken USC graduate courses.

10. *Inquiry projects.* In their final semester, teacher candidates are asked to design, research, implement, and analyze a question related to classroom teaching. Topics that candidates recently researched include behavior management models and their effectiveness, brain growth research and its use in a second-grade classroom, and the analysis methods for first-grade reading skills and their implications.

Teacher candidates receive assistance in their research from classroom teachers, university professors, the university liaison, the clinical adjunct, and the media specialist. Teachers always take an active interest in these projects and look forward to the presentations.

11. *Presentation to the faculty.* Although the inquiry projects have their own merit, so does the presentation of research to the faculty, which adds importance to what the teacher candidates have done. The teachers benefit as well by hearing about current research and asking the experts questions. This is not done as a test; rather, teachers demonstrate genuine interest—in fact, there are typically 20 to 30 teachers in attendance for this voluntary after-school event. It once more demonstrates to candidates that North Springs teachers are committed to lifelong learning, obtaining new strategies, and learning new theories throughout their professional careers.

12. *Résumé creation.* The North Springs principal and a former USC professor assist teacher candidates with the development of their professional résumés. They provide examples and suggestions, and they volunteer their time to go over each résumé with the teacher candidate to ensure its quality.

13. *Interview portfolio.* Teacher candidates often want to take a large album of all their experiences to a job interview. The clinical adjunct and university liaison work with them to cull out repetitive materials and to create a small document that includes a few items that can stimulate conversation with a prospective administrator and that can be left behind for review.

14. *Social interaction.* Teacher candidates are welcomed as an integral part of the faculty. They are introduced at the first faculty meeting and are always incorporated into general faculty activities, both on and off campus. They also have school e-mail addresses so that they can receive all the faculty notices and invitations.

15. *Mock interview.* The principal meets with the teacher candidates in their last semester to talk with them about how to prepare for an interview, sharing with them the kinds of questions they can expect in an interview.

She conducts a mock interview with each candidate and then reviews her interpretations of the candidate's answers so that she or he can understand how answers are analyzed. The candidates have especially appreciated this addition to their professional preparation.

16. *Service learning.* North Springs is committed to schoolwide service learning directly linked to curriculum standards. Teacher candidates are assimilated into that culture and commitment, and they gain firsthand experience in using this strategy to make learning meaningful for children. When children use what they have learned to help others in the community, they link the learning to their feeling of empowerment, thereby making the learning significant. This is a compelling strategy for future teachers to utilize.

17. *Teacher instructional fair.* Teacher candidates participate with the North Springs faculty in the district's day of teacher-led professional development. They choose from a multitude of presentations so that they can gain expertise from teachers across the district and in areas of personal interest or need.

18. *Technology training.* Because North Springs is a leader in technology use for the classroom, special effort is made to introduce teacher candidates to the different uses available to them. In addition, given that they may not begin their careers in schools with this much available equipment, they are taught how to develop grant proposals to assist their future schools in attaining these special tools. Learning new technologies allows the candidates to have a broader scope of teaching methods. They learn not only the technique but the reason behind it: research skills that will benefit them even in schools with limited equipment.

19. *Thematic units.* Given that much of the school's teaching is developed around themes, candidates learn how to create and utilize thematic strategies. They learn that every time that a child can make a connection between new ideas and current knowledge, the child's learning is strengthened. Thematic units in all classrooms help to make learning interesting and beneficial at all levels. Because many of these units include service learning,

students and candidates have the opportunity to examine the strong link created when students use what they have learned to create a positive experience for others.

20. *District reception.* Teacher candidates are encouraged to take advantage of the district's reception held in their honor each semester. Participation in the event affords them personal contact with the district's personnel director and with other important district staff. Even if they choose to apply to a district other than Richland Two, these receptions provide candidates with greater confidence and a reference point for future interviews.

21. *Superintendent's Faculty Advisory Committee.* School representatives take the teacher candidates to one of these meetings so that they can begin to see how the school system is managed as a whole. They begin to understand the bigger picture of how schools work in concert with one another, and they examine issues common to all schools. This practice extends what they have learned at the university in a manner that will help them find their place in whatever school they choose to begin their teaching careers.

22. *School board meeting.* Second-semester teacher candidates attend a school board meeting so that they can be introduced to the board and so that they will enlarge the scope of their view of teaching beyond the classroom and beyond the school. New teachers are often left in isolation and thus rarely develop this vision of the system as a whole. Attending a school board meeting and then following up with a MAT Chat session to discuss what they observed adds yet another element of active participation in the broader school community.

The North Springs–USC PDS partnership clearly goes above and beyond the typical internship experience. At both the school level and the university level, partnership participants are dedicated to preparing the best-qualified new teachers because, in the process of preparing teacher candidates, they are also preparing district office personnel to expect that teachers who emerge from this collaboration are ones whom they will want to keep in the district. The district office therefore interviews

them before interviews are opened up to other candidates; it also courts North Springs candidates, to encourage them to stay in the district. The district even hosts two social/recruitment events a year specifically for the partnership candidates.

NAPDS Essential 3

Ongoing and reciprocal professional development for all participants guided by need.

Whereas attention to the preparation of teacher candidates is an integral part of the North Springs–USC PDS partnership, the school and university also collaborate to provide professional development for current faculty and staff. When USC launched its new iteration of PDSs in 2005, it asked each PDS site to send a four-person team (an administrator, the university liaison, the clinical adjunct, and a community member) to two out-of-town extended-weekend sessions, to begin examining the National Network for Educational Renewal’s Agenda for Education in a Democracy. By holding the sessions in a locale removed from Columbia, the organizers thought they could not only get the undivided attention of participants but also provide them with a setting that would allow them the opportunity to comfortably and informally share ideas. In the months and years following those introductory sessions, North Springs’ four-person team has brainstormed ways to make the network’s tenets an integrated part of the school community and so broaden the understanding of those tenets by a growing number of faculty. In June 2009, USC held a follow-up session for additional members of the PDS network, and North Springs sent seven of its faculty/staff to that event.

Although North Springs has a number of professional development opportunities available for all teachers and teacher candidates, the two activities that set the school apart from other schools are the Celebration of Teaching (described earlier) and the orange-slip presentations (so named because teachers receive orange slips for presenting and attending, which they can use to meet district in-service requirements).

The orange-slip presentations occur whenever a teacher or a group of teachers has materials and information to share with others. Teachers schedule an hour after school, plan a presentation, and invite faculty, teacher candidates, and administrators. Topics range from activities to help English-as-a-second-language students succeed in the classroom, to special math techniques, to activities dealing with the implications of brain growth research on classroom teaching. Plans are under way to have USC faculty join these presentations, as presenters and as participants. North Springs teachers receive professional development credits both for presenting and for attending these workshops. The Celebration of Teaching and the orange-slip professional development opportunities encapsulate the partnership’s philosophy—namely, that teachers have valuable ideas and materials to share with fellow teachers and teacher candidates. In addition, teacher candidates become guest speakers to the faculty in their orange-slip presentations of their inquiry projects. This is usually the most highly attended nonrequired professional development activity of each semester. In addition to attending these activities, North Springs teachers and administrators frequently attend after-school teacher candidate meetings to provide special information on a topic or to answer questions about such issues as résumés, interviewing techniques, teacher research, and behavior management. Upon request, USC professors have also provided special workshops for the teachers, including three presentations about building community, the first two of which inspired teachers to develop a schoolwide character education program. Finally, the university partnership has allowed teachers to take advantage of the learning experiences provided through presenting at the National Network for Educational Renewal and PDS annual conferences, valuable growth opportunities for teachers and administrators alike.

NAPDS Essential 4

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

The North Springs–USC PDS partnership’s commitment to professional growth for teacher candidates and teachers plays out in the collaboration’s equal commitment to innovative and reflective practice. Whereas the Celebration of Teaching event is perhaps the most visible example of community-wide reflection, other elements of the school’s culture add to an appreciation of fundamentally sound practices that enhance student learning. Exit slips at the end of faculty meetings encourage teachers and teacher candidates to contemplate a variety of topics and actively respond to one another in idea-sharing opportunities. The school’s openness to parent–community participation demonstrates to teacher candidates the benefits of involving families and organizations to make learning richer for students. The commitment to developing a professional theme each year (e.g., writing across the curriculum, character education, and safety) models lifelong learning and professionalism for the teacher candidates. Each effort links the theory of education taught at the university with the real-world commitment to making learning meaningful for teachers and children. The university’s assigning teacher candidates inquiry projects as well as several reflective journal writings has had a spillover effect on North Springs faculty members; that is, teacher candidates talk with teaching teams about their ideas and put together information for their reflections and projects. Teachers have continued special strategies, as introduced by candidates, long after the interns have graduated. One teacher even commented that she had always wanted to implement writing centers in her early-childhood classroom but had never had the time to develop them herself. Once the teacher candidate developed them using information from university classes, the teacher decided to continue the practice. University professors have shared their expertise with candidates and school faculty in practices such as the development and purpose of morning meetings. Such shared vision has enabled candidates to try new things, and faculty members to embrace new practices, which in turn ben-

efits children as part of the overall and individual classroom communities.

NAPDS Essential 5

Engagement in and public sharing of the results of deliberative investigations of practice by respective participants.

North Springs’ unique partnership with USC has opened new ways for the school faculty to examine and share experiences and broaden their professional views. For example, North Springs teachers are encouraged to write grants to enhance learning experiences. Teacher candidates are brought into this experience as they participate in discussions and contribute ideas. In the 2007–2008 school year, teachers were awarded \$50,000 in grants to extend learning opportunities; the partnership with the university helped obtain many of those grants. School faculty also share their expertise in the teacher-led orange-slip professional development activities that take place several times each month. The schoolwide service learning emphasis, funded in part by a grant, has helped children utilize what they learn in the classroom, to make real differences in the school’s local community. Such experience empowers children; they remember the skills they learned to help them achieve the service. North Springs faculty have developed conference presentations and shared them within the school, as well as with other district schools, at in-service training events. They have also shared with schools beyond Richland Two by presenting the Celebration of Teaching model at an informational meeting held by USC for local schools outside the USC PDS Network. In addition, faculty have contributed articles to *Partnership Proceedings*, USC’s PDS and partnership newsletter, detailing special activities and events; North Springs teachers have themselves benefited by reading the articles submitted to the newsletter by faculty from other schools. The expertise of the entire group becomes extended by its reflecting (through the use of exit slips following faculty meetings and

conference presentations) and its sharing (what faculty learn at various conferences and through presentations to the school faculty). Reflection at all levels helps faculty improve teaching; it is an integral part of North Springs' best practices. It is also an essential part of the teacher voice that is employed to direct the annual school-year focus.

NAPDS Essential 6

An articulation agreement developed by the respective participants delineating the roles and responsibilities of all involved.

The philosophical underpinnings and practices of the North Springs–USC PDS partnership described in Essentials 1–5 were made possible through the previously mentioned self-study that the USC PDS Network undertook between 2001 and 2005. One of the more invaluable products resulting from that self-study was detailed articulation agreements signed between USC and each of its PDS schools. (In actuality, the agreements were signed between USC and each school's district office because no PDS relationship would succeed without the approval and support of the district office.) The agreements are binding legal documents that call for 3-year relationships renewable upon the written consent of both parties. They were arrived at through conversations among school, district, and university representatives, and they delineate the duties and responsibilities, as well as the financial contributions, of the school, the district, and USC's College of Education. These include, on the part of the school, providing a critical mass of faculty to work with teacher candidates, active participation in the governance of the PDS network, hosting (whenever possible) on-site courses for teacher candidates, committing to a schoolwide examination of the National Network for Educational Renewal's Agenda for Education in a Democracy, providing a dedicated physical space for the university liaison, and the naming of a school-based clinical adjunct to work with the university liaison in coordinating the relationship. Duties

and responsibilities of the College of Education include the following: providing school faculty with free leadership training on the National Network for Educational Renewal, with at least one free professional development course (or equivalent experience) in each 3-year cycle, and with free training on mentoring beginning teachers; giving school-based faculty priority consideration for participating in paid practicum and internship experiences, grant-funded initiatives, and teaching and committee assignments in the College of Education; providing school-based faculty with a limited number of free registrations for the annual Professional Development Schools National Conference; allowing PDS sites to bank tuition reduction credits earned for working with teacher candidates; and paying one half the annual salary of the USC liaison and clinical adjunct, with the school district agreeing to pay the other half. Further information related to the governance and structure of the PDS network is provided in the discussion of NAPDS Essentials 7 through 9.

NAPDS Essential 7

A structure that allows all participants a forum for ongoing governance, reflection, and collaboration.

The USC PDS Network is governed through a Coordinating Council consisting of representatives from the university and each of the 12 PDS sites. The council meets every other month throughout the academic year, with each meeting's agenda set by the Co-Chair Leadership Team, comprising one preK–12 administrator, one preK–12 teacher, one USC faculty member, and the executive director of the Office of School–University Partnerships and Clinical Experiences (SUPCE). Coordinating Council meetings allow PDS participants to collaborate with professionals from other schools and to reflect on progress relative to other partnerships in South Carolina and throughout the nation. They also allow time for ongoing collaboration on the day-to-day necessities of running a PDS, and they provide an opportunity to share

broader concerns about network issues and the state of education in general.

In addition to having the Coordinating Council in place, the structure of the USC PDS Network includes four subcommittees: a preservice committee to assist in refining USC's teacher education programs, a curriculum/inquiry committee as a venue for sharing teaching and learning practices across the network, a technology committee for sharing technology practices across the network, and an advocacy committee for disseminating information about current educational issues and for engaging the broader community in an examination of those issues. Each subcommittee consists of one representative from each PDS and is cochaired by one preK–12 teacher and one USC representative. As noted earlier, North Springs Elementary has been particularly active in the advocacy subcommittee, and representatives from North Springs have similarly played significant roles in the broader Coordinating Council meetings. North Springs also conducts school-specific meetings that involve the executive director of SUPCE, program directors, the university liaison, the clinical adjunct, and school administrators. The information gleaned from these various conversations has positively extended the school's service to parents and the overall community.

NAPDS Essential 8

Work by college/university faculty and preK–12 faculty in formal roles across institutional settings.

The role of USC has been central to North Springs' PDS success. The executive director of the network, Dr. Bruce Field, visits the school at least once a semester to evaluate the program and to address any concerns. In addition, he communicates several times a month via e-mail, to provide feedback on immediate issues or concerns or to answer questions; he is indeed a part of the school. Whereas Dr. Field provides what might be termed *big picture oversight* of the North Springs–USC PDS partnership, the real work in maintaining the positive rela-

tionship rests in the hands of the two individuals whose formal roles as university liaison and clinical adjunct are detailed in the articulation agreement. As the university liaison, Gena Brigman collaborates with university professors to coordinate coursework and university requirements with school experiences. As a university presence in the school at least twice a week, she observes and evaluates candidates as they teach, meeting with them immediately afterward to analyze their lessons. She also works with mentoring teachers to address concerns and to assist with teacher–teacher-candidate conferences. In addition, she works closely with the school's clinical adjunct, Sally Catoe. Dr. Catoe is a full-time classroom teacher who devotes time after school to the PDS program and to teacher candidates. She is the go-to person for candidates and teachers when the university liaison is not at the school. With the counsel of the principal (Denise Barth), the clinical adjunct and university liaison make teacher candidate placements in the school and develop professional opportunities for teacher candidates and faculty. The university liaison and the clinical adjunct work in tandem with the executive director of SUPCE and with curriculum area instructors to ensure high-quality professional development, research, and candidate placements and to troubleshoot problems when they arise. The university liaison has worked to plan and formalize the Celebration of Teaching as well as other efforts, such as the schoolwide service learning initiative and the character education program. Professors in the USC College of Education have also provided expertise in helping to create Family Math Night and Family Reading Night. Conversations with both university professors and other PDS network affiliates within the system have helped to create a stronger model for teaching democracy. The USC College of Education is currently working to create additional professional development opportunities for the school, in the form of a course for teachers and teacher candidates and/or a series of 1-hour workshops to be offered on a rotating basis by various faculty from USC.

NAPDS Essential 9

Dedicated and shared resources and formal rewards and recognition structures.

The 2005 reiteration of the USC PDS Network included, as one of its foundational cornerstones, acceptance of the fact that successful school–university partnerships are based in part on a mutual sharing of dedicated resources. USC and North Springs Elementary School have therefore worked together to provide each other a variety of resources. The shared assets include money, building space, and expertise. As noted earlier, Richland Two and USC’s College of Education contractually share the financial responsibility for the university liaison and clinical adjunct. The district, school, and college also provide mutual support in a number of other ways, with the school providing a physical space for the university liaison as well as meeting space for private and group teacher candidate meetings. North Springs has also hosted teacher candidate cohort seminar sessions and PDS Coordinating Council meetings. For its part, the College of Education has provided (as already noted) an array of professional development-based expertise.

In terms of rewards and recognition, SUPCE recently began providing each teacher who worked with a final-semester teacher candidate a wall plaque recognizing him or her as a USC coaching teacher—the goal is to eventually have a plaque outside each classroom at North Springs. The college and the district have also worked together to encourage the South Carolina State Department of Education to accept the time spent by classroom teacher mentors as recertification credits. In addition, the contract between the college and the district provides tuition reduction credits to each mentor teacher for continuing education coursework at the university—with, as noted earlier, the opportunity for faculty to bank those credits for use by other members of the North Springs community. On a personal note, the dean of the College of Education always includes the principal, clinical adjunct, and university liaison in his invitation to the college’s annual holiday reception, thereby allowing the school participants to get to know additional

members of the USC faculty in a relaxed setting. A much-appreciated resource that the College of Education, through SUPCE, has provided as a reward for involvement in the PDS network is the paying for teachers to attend, as well as present, at national conferences. This not only recognizes their accomplishments as a school but enables the group to share with the faculty new ideas garnered at these events. One special resource and recognition experienced in collaboration with USC in 2008 was the request by teacher candidates across the USC PDS Network to hold their master’s degree hooding ceremony at North Springs. It was a special occasion that, perhaps because of its success, reoccurred in 2009.

Conclusion

North Springs Elementary School and USC were honored to have been recognized by the National Association for Professional Development Schools through the association’s Award for Exemplary Professional Development School Achievement. Partnership participants appreciate the recognition but simultaneously acknowledge that what they are most proud of is the support and experience they provide for each teacher candidate to become the best teacher possible. When a teacher candidate has struggled, faculty have worked together to determine his or her strengths to build on so that the candidate can define his or her own style and teaching potential. Together, USC and North Springs faculty provide mentorship, modeling, collaboration, and a bigger picture of what teaching is about. North Springs has embraced the concept that each teacher candidate belongs to everyone in the school. Therefore, all teachers, including the eight National Board–certified teachers on staff, share their expertise freely with each candidate. The candidates leave with more than just classroom experience; they leave with a portfolio of strategies, a base of teaching research, and a concept about how classroom teachers fit into the bigger view of school and district policies and practices. They also leave with an insightful understanding of state and

national education policies and a clear view of teaching as a profession. North Springs faculty are also proud of their work with the teacher candidates who did not initially find success in other schools and who, through time in the North Springs PDS environment, developed into excellent teachers. North Springs teachers provide candidates with multiple styles and ways to approach teaching, along with the encouragement to continually work at becoming better. Because of the school's pride in its contribution to training future teachers, the North Springs leadership team consistently hires a number of the candidates who have completed their internship at the school.

One final aspect of the North Springs–USC partnership that elicits significant pride is the school principal's active participation in all aspects of the relationship. Denise Barth regularly attends partnership meetings, shares her expertise in panels for education classes at the university, assists with the preparation of local and national presentations, leads the faculty in discussions about the partnership, and is generally the chief advocate for the school's ongoing collaboration with USC. Educators familiar with the history of the nationwide PDS initiative know well that PDSs do not succeed without the genuine and steady commitment of a school's administration. This particular partnership works, in part, because it is led by an educator who believes that preparing future teachers is both a responsibility and a privilege and who shares with her faculty an appreciation that a PDS relationship is a gift both given and received. ^{SUP}

Notes

1. See <http://www.richland2.org/content.aspx?id=13108>.

Denise Barth is principal of North Springs Elementary School in Richland School District Two in Columbia, SC. She has presented at the PDS national conference the past 3 years. She has 25 years experience in both teaching and administration in public elementary and middle schools.

Sally Catoe is lead teacher for a science, technology, engineering, and math magnet within North Springs Elementary School. She is also the USC Clinical Adjunct in charge of all internships at the school. Dr. Catoe has 26 years of teaching experience, including 3 years as an associate professor at Ball State University, and has been actively involved with PDSs for 20 of those 26 years.

Pamela Powell is a fourth-grade teacher at North Springs Elementary School in Richland School District Two in Columbia, SC. She has presented at three PDS national conferences. A former PDS intern herself, she strongly supports the fundamental beliefs guiding PDSs.

Gena Brigman served as the USC liaison at North Springs Elementary School from 2005 through 2009. A former middle and high school language arts teacher, she earned her M.Ed. from the University of South Carolina.

Bruce E. Field is executive director of school–university partnerships and clinical experiences in the University of South Carolina's College of Education. He was the inaugural president of the National Association for Professional Development Schools and remains actively involved in the association. A former high school history teacher, he earned his Ph.D. in U. S. history from the College of William and Mary.