The University of South Carolina Professional Development School Network: Twenty Years of Effective Collaboration

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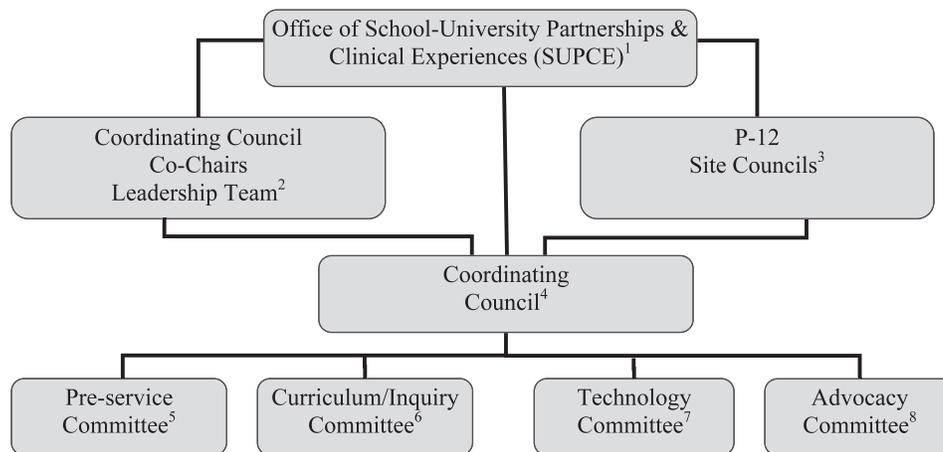Margo Jackson
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ABSTRACT: The 2010 Professional Development Schools National Conference recognized the University of South Carolina's Professional Development School Network for its outstanding collaborative accomplishments, naming it as a recipient of the National Association for Professional Development School's 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.

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

The University of South Carolina's (USC) Professional Development School (PDS) Network was born in the early 1990s as a collaborative venture between the university and 11 public schools in Columbia, South Carolina. By the mid-1990s, another 6 schools had been added to the Network's membership, and USC and its 17 partners were actively pursuing the same goals that could be evidenced in PDS sites across the nation: preparing pre-service educators, enhancing the professional growth of in-service educators, working collaboratively to investigate best practices and the results of those best practices, and improving

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│  Office of School-University Partnerships & │
│     Clinical Experiences (SUPCE)[1]        │
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| Coordinating Council Co-Chairs Leadership Team[2] | | P-12 Site Councils[3] |

Coordinating Council[4]

| Pre-service Committee[5] | Curriculum/Inquiry Committee[6] | Technology Committee[7] | Advocacy Committee[8] |

University of South Carolina Professional Development School Network Organizational and Communication Framework

[1]The office charged with coordinating the overall relationship between the university and the PDS sites. Headed by the Executive Director of School-University Partnerships and Clinical Experiences.

[2]The leadership team for the Coordinating Council consisting of one P-12 administrator, one P-12 teacher, one USC faculty member, and the Executive Director of SUPCE.

[3]The leadership team at each PDS site consisting of, at a minimum, the school principal (or the principal's designee), the Clinical Adjunct, and the USC Liaison.

[4]The decision-making body for the Network. Consists of one representative from each PDS site, plus USC faculty representatives.

[5]A venue for discussing the university's professional education programs and for offering suggestions for the refinement of those programs. Consists of one representative from each PDS, plus USC faculty representatives. Co-chaired by one P-12 and one USC representative.

[6]A venue for sharing teaching and learning practices across the Network. Consists of one representative from each PDS, plus USC faculty representatives. Co-chaired by one P-12 and one USC representative.

[7]A venue for sharing technology practices across the Network. Consists of one representative from each PDS, plus USC faculty representatives. Co-chaired by one P-12 and one USC representative.

[8]A venue for discussing current educational issues relevant to the Network and for engaging the broader community in an examination of those issues. Consists of one representative from each PDS, plus USC faculty representatives. Co-chaired by one P-12 and one USC representative.

P-12 student learning. Arriving at these over-arching goals was a lengthy process involving two full years of conversations that often centered on the reality that engaging in this collaborative venture was going to mean a shift in mission for all concerned. That is, the schools were going to move beyond their original mission of educating P-12 students by taking on the additional responsibility of assisting the university in preparing the next generation of educators, and the university for its part was going to move beyond its stated purpose of educating young adults by adding to its plate the shared stewardship of local public schools. The partners also expanded their individual missions by agreeing to examine their collaborative work mutually in systematic ways and to act on the results of those examinations to achieve their shared mission of enhancing student achievement.

Following the 2001 publication of the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) PDS Standards, the members of the USC PDS Network stepped back to examine the results of its 10-year collaboration in an effort to refine its mission further. That re-examination led to a new iteration of the Network in 2005 which adopted as its mission the preparation of "all learners for the future" and the promotion of "best educational practices, meaningful collaboration, and democratic ideals." While much of the new Mission Statement would also have been found in the earlier mission, beginning in 2005, all 12 schools (some of which had been part of the first Network and some of which had not) pledged to focus upon "democratic ideals." In fact, all

partners in USC's new PDS Network agreed to undertake an examination of the National Network for Educational Renewal's (NNER) Agenda for Education in a Democracy and to make that Agenda an integral part of their school cultures. Consequently, a commitment to the NNER's four Moral Dimensions: equal access for all learners, engaging in nurturing pedagogy, enculturating the young into a democratic society, and serving as stewards of the schools and school communities was added. In addition to expanding involvement in the local community, the USC PDS Network has also helped further the education profession by orchestrating over the course of 11 years the annual PDS National Conference and playing a key role in the creation and evolution of the National Association for Professional Schools (NAPDS). This commitment to enhancing the national educational dialogue has aligned well with the mission and scope of the USC PDS Network; and, in turn, its membership has

benefitted significantly from this educational outreach.

NAPDS Essential 8

Work by college/university faculty and P-12 faculty in formal roles across institutional settings

Prior to the 2005 re-design, most roles in the Network were more informal than formal. USC faculty were consistently present at each PDS site, but the work of those faculty while onsite varied significantly from school to school and the responsibilities and roles of the partners were based for the most part on decisions made by individual university and P-12 faculty engaged in unique personal relationships. The 2005 re-design retained this emphasis on personal connections but also added a structural framework by introducing into the collaboration a detailed contract outlining two specific and very

formal roles: the USC Liaison and the school-based Clinical Adjunct.

The USC Liaison at each of the 12 PDS sites is a university-based individual who carries three major responsibilities fulfilled through a minimum of 15 hours per week on site: collaborating with coaching teachers in the supervision of teacher candidates, working with the school's faculty and administration to identify and address specific professional development needs, and initiating and sustaining the school-driven examination of best practice. In their role as supervisors, the USC Liaisons mentor not only final semester teacher candidates but also those assigned to the schools in the semesters leading up to their final internships. The Liaisons also assist candidates in making connections between university coursework and the internship experiences, provide support for coaching teachers as they work with the candidates, lead pre-service and coaching teacher conferences and weekly meetings, provide additional coaching teacher training when appropriate, and upon occasion teach on-site pre-service methods courses that allow teacher candidates to practice what they learn in real time with real students. As professional development and best practice facilitators, the USC Liaisons serve as instructional leaders who provide professional growth opportunities for school-based faculty based on self-reported need. Recent examples include staff development on brain-based research, differentiated instruction, writing across the curriculum, and inquiry-based science lessons.

The Clinical Adjunct at each of the 12 PDS sites is a school-based individual (often an assistant principal or curriculum resource teacher, but occasionally a teacher) who uses his/her knowledge of the school to play the lead role in facilitating teacher candidate placements with appropriate school faculty. As a five-day-a-week presence in the school, the Adjunct also serves as an extra pair of eyes and ears in mentoring and assessing teacher candidate progress, particularly on those days when the Liaison is not present. The Clinical Adjunct also serves as the primary contact point between his/her school and the university, communicating with the school's staff and administration PDS Network activities.

One other role essential to the success of the Network is that of Coaching Teacher. The district-university contracts cite, as one of the "duties and responsibilities" of each school. the provision of "a critical mass of school faculty to work effectively with USC teacher education candidates throughout their college academic program." In addition, the contracts also state that, "The college will provide priority consideration for school faculty to participate in paid practicum and internship experiences, grant-funded initiatives, and teaching and committee assignments in the college." One role that has evolved out of this particular commitment is that of Practicum Instructor, a school-based educator who serves as the chief facilitator and instructor-of-record for early on-site practicum (non-internship) experiences. This role is sometimes taken on by the same person serving as the Clinical Adjunct, but it is more often assumed by yet another teacher or administrator in the school, both to ease the load on the Clinical Adjunct and USC Liaison, however, perhaps more importantly, to provide opportunities to expand the number of school-based personnel directly involved in Network responsibilities.

NAPDS Essentials 6 and 7

An articulation agreement developed by the respective participants delineating the roles and responsibilities of all involved AND a structure that allows all participants a forum for ongoing governance, reflection, and collaboration

The Organizational and Communication Framework of the USC PDS Network serves as the basis for on-going collaboration, reflection, and communication between the 12 school sites and between those sites and the university. At the heart of that structure is the PDS Coordinating Council, the decision-making body for the Network that meets for two hours every other month, with the meeting location rotating on a voluntary basis from school to school. Discussions at the Coordinating Council meetings cover a wide range of topics and issues

including, for example, the university's program assessment system, the availability of re-certification letters for Coaching Teachers, meeting the needs of individual PDS sites, and planning for university-sponsored P-12 participation in the PDS National Conference. Faculty and staff from all 12 PDS sites are active participants in these conversations and also play key roles in the Coordinating Council's four standing subcommittees as they have tackled such issues as the re-introduction of undergraduate programs in early childhood and elementary education and the expectations of the P-12 schools in terms of teacher candidates' knowledge of and preparation in classroom technology.

Collaboration, reflection, and communication have also been enhanced through a number of very special public events that resulted from discussions either at the Coordinating Council or through the work of the subcommittees. For example, in January 2005, at the urging of the Curriculum/Inquiry Committee, USC's PDS Network co-sponsored the USC Inquiry Expo held at the Koger Center in downtown Columbia, South Carolina, sharing with the community the positive work being done in local schools. In the next two years, under the guidance of the Advocacy Committee, the Network again engaged the public in two major local forums: a June 2006 Primary Candidate Forum on Public Education featuring all state-wide candidates for Governor and State Superintendent of Education, and a February 2007 Public Forum on School Choice. Both events grew out of the Network's promotion of democratic ideals and public engagement as exhibited in its Mission Statement. With the 2010 election year approaching, the Advocacy Committee began planning for yet another Candidate Forum on Public Education and hopes to work with the South Carolina Association of School Administrators to make this event even larger and more successful than the last.

In addition to the collaborative work accomplished through Coordinating Council meetings and subcommittee initiatives, Network communication and reflection are also enhanced through *Partnership Proceedings*, the Network newsletter published twice a year by the Office of School-University Partnerships and Clinical Experiences (SUPCE) and designed to inform schools of initiatives underway across the Network. Co-edited by the Executive Director of SUPCE and one of the Network's Clinical Adjuncts, the newsletter recently began theming its issues, with the Fall 2009 edition focusing on "The Evolution of Our Partnerships." Invited articles on the roles of the Clinical Adjunct and USC Liaison as well as teachers candidates' experiences within the PDSs were published alongside pieces on a professional book study initiative at one elementary site, an editorial on "The Impact of Obama's Education Plan," and an open invitation to participants in the Network to both respond to the editorial as well as to submit news-based and/or reflective pieces for upcoming issues.

While Network-wide activities are monitored and shared through Coordinating Council and subcommittee meetings and initiatives (and through communication from the Office of School-University Partnerships and Clinical Experiences), the important work undertaken at each of the 12 PDS sites is facilitated through periodic meetings of each school's Site Council. These bodies consist of, at a minimum, the school's principal (or principal's designee), the Clinical Adjunct, and the USC Liaison, but they typically include a number of teachers and other school staff members as well.

NAPDS Essential 9

Dedicated and shared resources and formal rewards and recognition structures

The 2005 redesign of USC's PDS Network included not only a focus on clarifying the Mission Statement but also a consideration of how resources could be shared more equitably between the university and school district communities. Months of intense conversations resulted in the decision to have financial support for USC Liaisons and Clinical Adjuncts shared equally by USC and the partner districts. The Network's contract/articulation agreement details this new balance of financial resources

but also reveals a dedication by the P-12 sites to provide each USC Liaison with a physical space within their respective schools as well as computer, telephone, and other resources that allow those individuals to perform their formal roles as lynchpins of the relationships successfully. On the university side of the equation, USC's College of Education has committed itself to providing free professional development courses (or equivalent professional development experiences) and free mentor training for P-12 faculty. The college has also conducted weekend-long orientations to the National Network for Educational Renewal for teams of representatives from each school site so those individuals can in turn begin to share the NNER Agenda within their broader school communities. In addition, for the past four years the Office of School-University Partnerships and Clinical Experiences (SUPCE) has provided total funding for P-12 faculty and their USC colleagues to attend and present at the annual PDS National Conference and has also provided occasional funding to support school-based presentations at other conferences, including annual meetings of the NNER and the National Council for Teachers of English. Finally, SUPCE has in the past two years purchased sets of school-selected books for three of the sites so they may participate in year-long examinations of best practice.

Another financial incentive offered to PDS sites by USC involves remuneration through tuition reduction for Coaching Teachers. P-12 teachers who work with USC teacher candidates at our non-PDS (Partnership) sites are rewarded by being given significantly reduced tuition for courses at the university; however, only those specific teachers who actually work with teacher candidates can redeem these credits. At our PDS sites, on the other hand, the tuition credits can be redeemed by any faculty member interested in taking a USC course, whether he/she has or has not worked directly with a teacher candidate. The rationale is simple: Since it is the PDS school community as a whole that mentors USC candidates, the school as a whole should be rewarded.

Beyond tuition credits, USC has also rewarded and recognized P-12 PDS faculty by hosting an annual holiday celebration and, in Spring 2008, an end-of-the-year reception recognizing all final semester Coaching Teachers. As an added benefit, in 2007–2008, we also began the practice of providing each final semester's Coaching Teachers with a wall/door plaque acknowledging their service to our teacher candidates. The halls and walls of all 12 PDS sites are quickly being filled with these garnet and black plaques, an expression of appreciation that the teachers cherish very much.

As for USC faculty who dedicate so much of their work to our PDS Network, they, too, have been recognized and rewarded for their efforts. While many of the faculty take on PDS initiatives as part of their regular course loads, others have gone above and beyond by adding a workshop or a class as an added part of their semester-to-semester responsibilities. They have been rewarded for these efforts partly through financial remuneration, but also through ever-increasing recognition of their contributions through the promotion and tenure process.

NAPDS Essential 2

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

Placements of teacher candidates obviously vary from year to year, but our work with these candidates in 2008–2009 was fairly typical of what we do year in and year out. The Office of School-University Partnerships and Clinical Experiences placed 1,950 teacher candidates (ranging from individuals completing very early practicum experiences through those completing their final semester of "student teaching") in 92 Columbia-area schools in the 2008–2009 academic year. It should be obvious that with such large numbers it is virtually impossible to place all of these candidates in our 12 Professional Development School sites. Yet what is remarkable is the willingness of the 12 PDSs to work with a significantly greater percentage of

these candidates than the non-PDS (Partnership) sites. For example, USC placed 380 high school candidates in a total of 18 schools, but exactly half of those 380 candidates were assigned to our 3 high school PDSs. At the elementary level, USC placed 1,240 candidates in a total of 54 schools, with 350 of those candidates assigned to our 9 elementary PDSs. (The other 330 candidates were middle level candidates placed in 20 schools, but USC has not yet developed a middle school PDS site.) The picture that results from these numbers is of a dozen schools where each semester a visitor would see between 20 and 30 USC teacher candidates actively engaged in the PDS teaching and learning community.

The active engagement of the candidates within their school communities is a significant strength of the USC PDS Network. While we treasure the work of our non-PDS (Partnership) sites in working with our teacher candidates (and frankly could not continue our work without their support), the degree to which USC teacher candidates become genuinely engaged in their school communities is significantly enhanced at the 12 PDS sites. Each of the 12 sites handles this aspect of our collaboration somewhat differently, but their individual and collective efforts have been recognized by the candidates themselves as making a real difference in the level of their professional preparation.

USC teacher candidates are embraced by the PDSs as full and active participants in deliberate, specific, and thoughtful ways. They typically begin their PDS experiences by attending a "meet and greet" session prior to the start of their work at the school. These sessions include a tour of the building, a meeting with faculty and administrators (and sometimes parents), and an orientation to the ins and outs of the ways in which at their particular school operates. By the time the semester begins, candidates have been provided school nametags and, in some cases, school e-mail addresses. They accompany their coaching teachers to all school-level team, curriculum, and faculty meetings, and participate as well in parent conferences. Many of them also accompany their coaching teachers to such district-wide events as school board meetings, workshops, and meetings focusing on instructional technology and textbook adoptions. Most candidates also take part in Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings and after-school programs and are involved in school-based community events such as book fair family nights, literacy nights, mother/son and father/daughter dances, and Boy's and Girl's Club activities.

Beyond their engagement in what might be termed the "logistical" side of an educator's life, teacher candidates in the 12 PDSs also participate in professional development alongside their in-service colleagues. At one site they took part in writing projects where members of the school faculty highlighted their personal writing in various displays throughout the year. At another site the candidates participated in weekly Spanish-English language classes, using bilingual skills to aid in translations among the monolingual speakers who participated. At yet another site they participated as equal partners in a book study and follow-up research data collection on brain-based strategies and their effectiveness on academic performance and character development led by that school's USC Liaison. Finally, teacher candidates from two other sites were included in their team presentations at the 2009 Conference of the National Association of Professional Development Schools (NAPDS).

In short, then, the PDS commitment to our teacher candidates is to immerse them as deeply as possible in the total school culture so that they understand and appreciate everything involved in the life of an educator; it seems to be working. As one elementary candidate said at the conclusion of her PDS experience, "In addition to providing me with best practice teaching knowledge, my school and USC also empowered me with the research and knowledge as to why we teach literacy and other areas the way we do. I truly believe that the teacher education program at the University of South Carolina . . . has set me and my colleagues on a path not only to be great life-long teachers, but to also be life-long learners who are leaders in our field."

NAPDS Essential 3

Ongoing and reciprocal professional development for all participants guided by need

The 2005 redesign of USC's PDS Network included a contractual obligation on the part of the College of Education to provide to each PDS site "at least one on-site professional development course or equivalent professional development experience per three-year PDS cycle, with the topic to be identified by school faculty and staff in collaboration with the USC Liaison and the Clinical Adjunct. The cost of the course will be borne by the College." In keeping with this commitment, USC faculty have offered a variety of professional development activities to the 12 sites, including the brain-based book study cited above, workshops presented to multiple schools on the use of Morning Meetings and the development of democratic classrooms, a year-long class on Best Practice in the Democratic Classroom, and a math course for teachers that may have been a factor in producing statistically significant growth in math achievement by that school's students. With the leadership of its USC Liaison, one of the 12 sites engaged in a three-year examination of the question, "When faculty and staff see themselves as writers, does student writing improve?" That same school, again under the leadership of the USC Liaison, also investigated the question posed by Sonia Nieto, "What keeps teachers going?" and is currently using a Critical Friends approach to support teachers during the "Tensions and Triumphs" of their first years in the classroom.

At two other elementary sites, USC faculty members who were not serving as USC Liaisons offered extensive professional development experiences for faculty of the schools. At one, the faculty member offered a year-long graduate-level science course to other faculty members, in which using inquiry-based methods in science instruction was emphasized. He also facilitated grade-specific meetings with teachers to assist them in planning and implementing standards-based activities in their classrooms. This same instructor taught his undergraduate science methods course on-site at the school so that his teacher candidates had the opportunity to integrate the content of the course into the classroom setting by working with small groups of students. The collaboration allowed classroom teachers themselves the opportunity to observe inquiry-based teaching strategies in action, thus helping them become more comfortable using these techniques in their own teaching. At the other site, another USC faculty member became the on-site supervisor for the school's reading interventionist. She visited classrooms to work with students, the interventionist, and the teachers and provided support for small groups outside of classrooms as well as coaching the interventionist one-on-one regarding strategies for meeting the needs of specific students. These conversations were powerful because the faculty had the opportunity to witness theory coming to life and imagine what it might look like in practice. As a follow-up to her work with the school, the USC faculty member also facilitated and supported the school's faculty through an inquiry of data-driven instruction. Then, she assisted educators there in determining and planning the focus for student instruction. In conjunction with the literacy coach, the district language arts coordinator, the USC Liaison, a graduate assistant, and a literacy coach from another school, the faculty member led the faculty and administration through a study of student data. Through this study and the related discussions, they were able to find some patterns in their data collection that needed to be considered carefully, plan a course of thinking/study, and then facilitate staff development sessions to enable them to become centered and begin working toward the same goal.

Professional development comes in many forms, and we are frequently reminded that it is reciprocal: from the university to the school and from the school to the university. Without question, the best expression of this reality is when P-12 teachers remark that they learn as much from the teacher candidates as the teacher candidates learn from them. We get particular joy when university faculty makes the same reference – noting that their time in the schools teaches them as much as the P-12 teachers

acquire through their relationship with USC. In truth, professional development per se does not even have to involve a specific course, workshop, or other specifically structured experience. For example, the Clinical Adjunct at one of our high school PDSs is fond of reminding all of us that the very best professional development earned by his faculty are the reduced-tuition courses earned through their mentoring of teacher candidates.

One final example of the unique nature of professional development comes from yet another of our high school PDSs, where the assistant principal and the USC Liaison have worked together to design a mentoring program for first and second year teachers known as Jump Start. Based on the teacher training postulates delineated by the National Network for Educational Renewal, Jump Start involves transitioning new teachers smoothly into the work place with a higher level of mentoring than that prescribed by state or district standards. The most critical area described over the years by both new teachers and teacher candidates has been classroom management. To meet this ever-present challenge, the assistant principal and USC Liaison meet several times a year with the new teachers to enable them understand the needs of students from very diverse backgrounds. New teachers have opportunities to meet with each other, the Liaison, and the assistant principal to discuss specific situations they encounter and to reflect on the way theses situations are handled. They then explore different ways to manage similar situations in the future or ways to celebrate success. While designed specifically as a mentoring mechanism for new teachers, the initiators of Jump Start have also included teacher candidates in these professional development conversations.

NAPDS Essential 4

A shared commitment to innovative and reflective practice by all participants

While the USC PDS Network has a common Mission Statement emphasizing meaningful collaboration and democratic ideals, we encourage all 12 sites to develop their own unique practices that are in keeping with their communities. For example, the Curriculum/Inquiry Committee plays a key role as a venue for sharing teaching and learning practices across the Network, and so educators often rely upon that body to enable them to refine the direction of their work. Committee sharing facilitated one of our elementary PDSs in structuring its three-year application process to become the first and only Paideia School in South Carolina (see http://www.paideiaschool.org). Other sites have relied on the Network for input as they have moved forward with their High Schools That Work, Integrated Thematic Instruction, and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) initiatives.

Recently, one of our elementary schools has been particularly active designing innovative strategies that have the potential to significantly enhance student learning. The faculty and staff, in collaboration with USC faculty, have implemented five academies within their building to meet the specific needs of the school's diverse population. The first of the five, Integrating Technology to Enhance the Curriculum, provides 4th and 5th graders the opportunity to learn in a one-to-one computing classroom. Instruction is based on a collaborative approach using various technological resources to teach the curriculum. The program is departmentalized and students loop together to the next grade level. The second, the Renaissance Academy, gives students in grades 2 through 5 the opportunity to learn using hands-on instruction tailored to individual needs, multiple intelligences, and the learning styles of students in a small group setting. The Single Gender Academy serves students in grades 3 through 5 with instructional strategies and assessments which are gender specific, and the Genesis Academy provides K-4 learners with an accelerated curriculum involving student-centered and student-led conferences, inquiry, project-based learning activities, field studies, book buddies, and reading and math differentiated instructional groups. Finally, the Student Leadership Academy empowers over 100 students to become positive role models in their homes

and communities. Students develop oral communication skills enabling them to conduct presentations at meetings, to serve as emissaries during community functions at the school and at other schools in the district, and to participate in service learning activities.

Educators at one of our other elementary sites have made an impressive commitment to the NNER Agenda and innovative and reflective practices by emphasizing character education, a synthesis of cultures represented within the school community, and the exploration of social justice in the school as well as the world. Toward that endeavor, one of the school's 5th grade students wrote a reader's theater presenting the plight of the people of South Africa and their daily struggles. Students facilitated every portion of this engagement from writing, to directing, to presenting for fellow students. Interest in this endeavor led to a fundraising effort to collect donations to purchase mosquito nets to send to South Africa. Very few things will demonstrably enhance student learning more than such hands-on, real world experiences.

NAPDS Essential 5

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

In early June of 2009, 50 university- and school-based representatives of the USC PDS Network participated in an all-day retreat held at one of our high school sites. The purpose of the retreat was, in part, to renew our commitment to the NNER Agenda, but in broader terms, it was a time to reflect upon the 2008–2009 academic year and to share with each other our responses to three questions: What are we doing well as a Network? What do we need to improve upon? What do we think we can reasonably accomplish in 2009–2010? The retreat was representative of a pattern in the USC PDS Network for constant self-reflection and sharing, a pattern that has helped us sustain the Network through 20 years of inevitable ups and downs that are to be expected in such a long-standing relationship.

The routine examination and sharing of best practices is an integral component of the USC Network, as we take advantage of multiple opportunities to reflect upon and share our successes and challenges both within and beyond the Network. At the school level, the PDS Site Councils keep everyone in the building abreast of PDS initiatives. One of the elementary sites has enhanced such internal sharing by creating Professional Learning Teams (PLT) as a vehicle for connecting teacher practice and student learning. PLT grade level teams meet weekly to work collaboratively and reflect upon the relationship between teacher practices and student outcomes. The PLT initiatives consist of each member serving a defined role, establishing "smart goals," conducting research, observing colleagues, and analyzing data results. At another elementary site, faculty members are encouraged to make "orange slip" presentations in which a teacher or a group of teachers have materials and information to share with other teachers. They schedule an hour after school, plan a presentation, and invite the faculty, teacher candidates, and administration to attend. Topics range from activities to help English as a Second Language students succeed in the classroom to special math techniques and activities to the implications of brain growth research on classroom teaching. Teachers receive professional development credits for presenting and for attending these workshops. This same type of school-wide sharing of research will also be found at all elementary PDS sites as early childhood and elementary teacher candidates are required to present the results of their semester-long inquiry projects to the school's faculty at the end of each semester.

At the Network level, the previously-referenced Coordinating Council meetings always include time for sharing; and, in recent years, we have included in most agendas for those meetings time for one of the twelve sites to offer a comprehensive overview of one or more of its primary initiatives. Thus, when one of our elementary sites was going through the process of becoming a Paideia school, the school's faculty and administration made a formal presentation to the Coordinating Council

explaining the Paideia model and the steps involved in the application process. We also routinely share our work through the Network newsletter, *Partnership Proceedings*, which is sent not only to the 12 PDSs but also to over 100 additional Columbia-area schools that work with the university's teacher preparation programs as Partnership sites. To educate these Partnership sites further about the work of the PDS Network and about USC's overall work in the area of teacher preparation, the Office of School-University Partnerships and Clinical Experiences hosts, in addition to our PDS Coordinating Council meetings, two additional meetings a year with all PDS and Partnership sites combined.

Besides sharing within individual schools and at Network-wide gatherings, members of USC's PDS Network have been a consistent presence at the annual PDS National Conference, sharing with colleagues from across the nation the results of their work. Every year since USC launched the conference in 2000, multiple teams from the Network have presented at the conference and have benefitted not only from feedback received at their presentations but also from having the invaluable opportunity to hear similar presentations from around the United States and, more recently, from around the world.

Conclusion

The University of South Carolina and its 12 Professional Development School partners are collectively proud of our complete body of work in the arena of school-university partnerships. That said, we are most proud of our work in three areas, the first of which aligns best with *Essentials 2* and *3* and was summarized in the words of one of our elementary PDS principals. While her statement at the time was intended as an overview of her own school's work, it applies across the Network as a whole. She said,

The faculty and staff are most proud of the fact that our intense and on-going relationship with the University of South Carolina has both contributed to the meaningful induction of new teachers into the profession and has also helped sustain our current corps of seasoned educators in their professional growth. Neither of these accomplishments would have been as manageable as they have proven to be without our PDS partnership with the University of South Carolina. We believe that the manner in which we integrate teacher candidates into our school community has made a real difference in the willingness of young people to enter and remain in the profession, and we are pleased that a number of them have ended up on our current staff. We also believe that the benefits the school faculty accrues from the PDS relationship, including tuition credits for teachers to further their professional knowledge, financial contributions to purchase and maintain classroom literacy materials, and the on-going presence of USC faculty on our campus have helped us continue our proud tradition of educational excellence.

In other words, we are proud of growing and sustaining a strong corps of professional educators.

Our second proudest accomplishment has been our ability to sustain the vibrancy of the USC PDS Network over time. Twenty years is a long time to sustain any kind of meaningful relationship, let alone one involving a revolving door of personnel and an ever-changing agenda of initiatives. However, in line with *Essentials 6* and *7*, we have succeeded in designing well-crafted articulation agreements and governance structures that have allowed us to overcome the inevitable ups and downs of partnerships and emerge with each new PDS iteration ever more confident in our abilities to work well with each other to achieve our mission.

Finally, we are extremely proud that USC and its PDS partners have made a significant contribution to the furtherance of the education profession, as highlighted in *Essential 1*, by taking a leading role in the expansion of the PDS initiative. Our facilitating of eleven consecutive PDS National Conferences has given educators throughout the United States and the world a setting for sharing their PDS work and learning from each other on an annual basis. In 2003, after hearing from PDS educators of their interest in creating another

venue for PDS dialogue, USC took the lead in orchestrating two years of discussions and planning that in 2005 resulted in the birth of the National Association for Professional Development Schools. We recognize that numerous individuals and institutions contributed to the evolution of this fast-growing and critically important organization, yet we also know that had USC College of Education Dean, Les Sternberg, not given his approval for year-after-year sponsorship of the national conference and had not also given USC faculty and staff the go-ahead to contribute time and resources toward the creation and sustaining of the NAPDS, PDS educators worldwide may not be as far down the PDS road as we are today. `SUP`

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