

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

“Just Do It!” Bruce E. Field, University of South Carolina

Two years ago a group of seventy-five educators responded to a call for a conversation about the need for a national association for Professional Development Schools. Meeting at the 2003 PDS National Conference, the group overwhelmingly agreed that PDS educators need more than an annual conference if we truly want to learn from each other and use our collective experiences to enhance student learning. I remember very clearly the comment of one participant in that conversation who, in the first ten minutes of the discussion, put what most of us were thinking in simple terms. “We all know we need this,” he said, “and so let’s just do it!”

Since that first meeting, a team of planners representing eleven states and fourteen institutions has worked in impressive harmony to “just do it.” The result is the inauguration at this year’s PDS National Conference of the National Association for Professional Development Schools. It is an ambitious initiative, full of promises and expectations, but having watched the planning team’s work and having received additional support from throughout the nation, I am confident that those promises and expectations will be fulfilled. Chief among them is a commitment to broad-based participation, for I also remember another participant in that 2003 dialogue reminding us to “include P-12 faculty and staff in every element of the association’s work.” She was concerned, and rightfully so I believe, that educational organizations too often end up with college and university faculty overshadowing P-12 school-based educators. I remember turning to her and saying, “Trust me, if we don’t do what you’re asking, there really is no need for us to even continue this dialogue.”

The dialogue has continued, and the newsletter you hold in your hand represents our first attempt to include everyone in the conversation. Its format is at the moment fluid, just as PDSs are often fluid and ever-changing. And so we welcome your contributions to future issues and, in addition, your suggestions for how

the newsletter can best be structured to help us achieve our collective goal. That goal, as one member of the planning team put it at our first meeting following the 2003 conference, is to “enhance our capacity to do our work.”

The NAPDS promises to keep that goal front and center in the months and years ahead, and we soon will be providing you with information about other mechanisms (a website, a knowledge repository, and a refereed journal) which will assist all of us in achieving that goal. As you begin to receive and work with each of these tools, we again ask that you provide us with feedback that will help us best serve your PDS needs.

As we move in this exciting new direction, the annual conference will continue to serve as a cornerstone of our work. The conference has grown exponentially in recent years, and the enthusiasm which has greeted this year’s inauguration of the association suggests that that trend will continue. We anticipate a record one thousand plus attendees from approximately forty states in 2005, and we encourage you to take advantage of this healthy presence of PDS faculty to pick each other’s brains so you can return home with both new ideas and a commitment to continuing the dialogue throughout the year. As you do so, please remember that the association is committed to helping you with your work in any and every possible way. Just let us know how we can “do it.” ■

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NAPDS HAS FIRST OFFICIAL MEETING

The 2005 conference will mark the birth of the National Association for Professional Development Schools, with membership in the association included in this year’s conference registration fee. A core of committed educational leaders has worked for two years to create the association, and we believe it will add immensely to the PDS dialogue we continue in the future.

On Friday, March 18, 2005 at 4:30, we hope you will attend the first official meeting of the NAPDS. At this meeting we will elect and install officers, and share background information, and a vision for the future before the GALA RECEPTION to celebrate this inauguration. ■

NAPDS CHARTER MEMBER T-SHIRTS

A one time offer! Look for them on sale now for \$10.



KNOW YOUR OFFICERS



Interim President

Bruce E. Field is the Executive Director of the Office of School-University Partnerships and Clinical Experiences in the University of South Carolina's College of Education. He oversees the work of the seventeen P-12 schools that comprise the USC PDS Network. Bruce earned undergraduate and masters degrees in United States history at East Carolina University

and was a high school history/social studies teacher in Wyoming, Illinois, and Virginia before earning his PhD in history at The College of William and Mary. From 1993 to 2001, he taught at Northern Illinois University and coordinated that university's secondary history and social studies certification programs before taking his current position in the Fall of 2001.



Interim Treasurer

Bryan S. Burgin is a native of Columbia, South Carolina. A graduate of the University of South Carolina, Bryan currently serves as Director of Conferences for USC's College of Education. In this role he develops, produces, and manages state, regional, national, and

international conference for the University, state agencies, state associations, and other organizations. Bryan received the Outstanding Continuing Education Professional Award from the South Carolina Association for Continuing Higher Education for 2004-2005.



Interim Vice President

Cheri Jefferson is a Mentor Teacher for The Howard County Public School System in Maryland. Cheri earned her undergraduate degree in English from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. She earned her masters in Teacher Leadership from Johns Hopkins University and Administration Certification from Loyola College, Maryland. Cheri taught secondary English for twelve years. She began her relationship with PDS programs in 1993 and with UMBC to develop a four-school,

multi-level PDS partnership in 1999. In 2001, Cheri became Howard County's full-time facilitator for PDS. This involved collaborating with eight universities and placing more than 370 interns a year in forty-four school sites as well as serving as county liaison for all involved in the program. Cheri helped establish state-wide PDS standards. Currently, she is facilitating an Action Research project with sixteen PDS teachers studying elementary writing programs.



Interim Secretary

Roger Brindley is an associate professor at the University of South Florida, where he teaches early childhood and elementary preservice and inservice teachers. An Englishman, he moved to the U.S. twenty years ago and worked as an elementary school teacher prior to earning his doctorate from the University of Georgia (Go Dawgs!). Roger is presently an editor for two teacher education journals and was the 2003 Recipient of the University of

South Florida President's Award for Faculty Excellence. He has been a PDS liaison and works with PDS school faculty and administration to research the PDS movement and the work that PDS practitioners do. He is constantly impressed with the teachers he interacts with in the PDS, and working with these skilled professionals inspires him to bring their situated knowledge of the profession back to his work at the university!

DOCUMENTING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PDSS

Georgia Southwestern State University has been awarded a three-year FIPSE grant to establish a system for documenting and disseminating information on the effectiveness of Professional Development Schools in improving teacher quality and retention, as well as student learning and achievement. Six additional partners (AACTE, AASCU, NEA, the Maryland State Department of Education, the University System of Georgia, and Towson University) are collaborating on the project, one element of which is a web-based

data collection system. Representatives of these organizations, as well as others, including NCATE, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, ASCD, and the National Network for Educational Renewal, were recently invited to serve on the National Consortium Advisory Board, the body which will review and advise on the project's development. The National Association for Professional Development Schools is pleased to announce that the NAPDS accepted the invitation to join these other agencies on the

Advisory Board, with interim president Dr. Bruce Field participating in the first meeting of the group at the AACTE national conference this past February. ■

Visit:

<http://education.gsw.edu/soe/grants.html> for more information. You can also contact Dr. Mary Gendernalik Cooper, the Project Director, at coopermg@aol.com.



Teacher Researchers and School - Wide Reform **Fran Greb**

A five-year formal relationship frames the work of this PDS Liaison and Knollwood Elementary School in Parsippany, N.J. Knollwood is a K-5 school serving children whose first language at home includes Spanish, Mandarin, Gujarati, Farsi, Korean, Russian, Japanese, and French. This school/university partnership has developed inquiry projects, action research, and grants focused on preparing students to live in a social and political democracy. According to Linda Darling-Hammond (1994), PDS partnerships, "Allow school and university educators to engage jointly in research and the rethinking of practice, thus creating opportunities for the profession to expand its knowledge by putting research into practice and practice into research" (p.1). Teachers at Knollwood are living Darling-Hammond's words by daily implementation of research into practice. At this time the focus of the work is the development of social skills through a Responsive Classroom approach developed by the Northeast Foundation for Children. This approach creates an environment in which social skills can be lived and learned. It is rooted in the belief that children learn best in relationship with others. Through an Inquiry Project Grant (IPG) from MSU, teachers received one-day and week-long training in the philosophy and pedagogy for implementation of the Responsive Classroom approach. Implementation of the approach began with

collection of data utilizing the Social Skills Rating Scale (SSR), a nationally normed behavior rating scale by Gersham and Elliot, which assesses the frequency of childrens' social skills. The sub-scales include cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control. Presently, the Responsive Classroom approach is entering its second year of implementation. An observer could walk into a classroom and see students engaged in morning meetings, greetings, community building activities, and sharing of experiences. Through sustained study and research, we are encouraging teachers to function as a community of learners while students are learning and practicing social skills. This work is rooted in the philosophical orientation of the Responsive Classroom approach which states that the, "Responsive Classroom approach to teaching is that how children learn to treat one another is as important as what they learn in reading, writing and arithmetic," (Charney, 2002, p. 413.) ■

References

Charney, R. (2002). Teaching children to care, Greenfield, Mass. Northeast Foundation for Children.
Darling-Hammond, L. (1994). Professional development schools, New York: Teacher's College Press

Fran Greb is an Associate Professor - Montclair State University (MSU) & PDS Liaison

PDS: At the Core of True Professional Development - A Principal's Perspective **Michael McAuliff**

How many binders do you have collecting dust on your bookshelf from what I call those "one shot" wonders: conferences or workshops that glossed over sometimes important educational issues, but more than likely the latest fad in what seems to be a never ending educational reform movement? How many school district sponsored "professional development" offerings have you sat through only to forget the topic six weeks later? These types of one-time hit or miss activities are not professional development. True professional development (in education) needs to be sustained and focused on the continual development of those skills vital to being a successful teacher. One such strategy for accomplishing this is when P-12 teachers engage in teaching prospective teachers how to be good teachers. How better to develop oneself professionally than to engage in the professional development of

someone else toward a common goal. Put more simply, teachers teaching prospective teachers to become good teachers causes those teachers to be better teachers. When you work in a Professional Development School with aspiring teachers, you have to be "on" at all times. The complexities of teaching in the 21st Century have increased dramatically just in the past twenty years, from an increased emphasis on accountability, to taking on more non-traditional societal issues while maintaining a focus on student achievement, to unfunded mandates. Teaching is no longer about "keeping school" but about continual professional growth and development. Therefore, P-12 teachers who work with pre-service candidates, student teachers or interns relative to developing the requisite skill sets it takes to be an effective teacher in today's public schools are engaged in continual professional development in its truest

sense. If my school district's professional development budget were to be slashed and I don't ever send a teacher to another workshop or conference or if my district decides to abolish in-service "staff development" that would be fine by me. For Parish Elementary School will always engage in what I believe to be true professional development as long as we continue to grow and nurture the productive relationship we have with our university partner (Oswego State University) as we work collaboratively to improve the professional preparation of prospective teachers and subsequently the academic achievement of our K-5 students. ■

Michael McAuliff is Principal of Parish Elementary School in Parish N.Y. Parish Elementary School is in its sixth year as a PDS in partnership with Oswego State University.

A Journey Through Golden Doors

Jennifer Ramamoorthi

"The doors we open and close each day decide the lives we live," **Flora Whittemore.**

The most important door I ever opened was the day I sat anxiously awaiting the Wheeling Professional Development School (PDS) information session. As I heard Jo Nancy Warren explaining the inner workings of the PDS, I knew I was about to start an amazing journey.

Participating in the PDS was a bumpy ride. There were many late nights revising lesson plans, early morning group project meetings, and countless hours developing an effective behavior management plan. These bumps were steamed over by the many successful lessons, inspiring professional development classes, and smiling faces of my students.

Another important door I opened was when I accepted a position as a middle school teacher in

Wheeling School District 21 a month before my college graduation. It was a wonderful feeling walking across the stage to receive my diploma knowing I had a job. Without the PDS I am not sure if I would have been able to walk across the stage with such confidence.

The foundation that PDS has given me has helped me open several doors over the past seven years of my teaching career. I have presented at conferences such as the Illinois Association for Gifted Children, worked as an Instructional Specialist, and have been able to give back to the PDS in mentoring several aspiring interns. My confidence, array of experiences, and driving ambitions all lead back to the beginning of this great journey, being a PDS intern. My future goal, to come full circle and co-lead the PDS in Wheeling! ■

BOOK REVIEW



Traditions, Standards, & Transformations: A model for Professional Development school Networks

Edited by Jane E. Neapolitan, Thomas D. Proffitt, Cheryl L. Wittmann, and Terry R. Berkely, (Peter Lang, 2004)

This book tells the story of the Towson University PDS Network, which serves more than 105 schools in the metropolitan Baltimore and surrounding areas. It describes the development and implementation of state and national standards for PDS, accountability, and sustainability issues, and impacts on the roles of faculty and teachers. It also provides information for institutions that face the complexities of PDS work for connecting policy with practice. The Towson project examines the "how to" of professional development schools and some of the impacts of teaching and learning. ■

HATS OFF TO YOU

THANK YOU for joining us at the National Association for Professional Development Schools Conference.



SEE YOU NEXT YEAR!

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