

Do Partnerships Matter? The Need to Examine the Influence of Partnerships on Student Learning and Teacher Inquiry

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Abstract: In the introduction to this themed issue of *PDS Partners: Bridging Research to Practice*, the Editors provide a rationale for individuals who are engaged in school-university partnership work to research and share their results related to the impact of partnerships on teaching and learning. The Editors also provide an overview to each of the articles in the themed issue.

KEYWORDS: mutually beneficial partnerships, professional development schools, reflective practice, school-university partnerships, student learning, teacher inquiry, themed issue

NAPDS NINE ESSENTIALS ADDRESSED:

1. A professional development school (PDS) is a learning community guided by a comprehensive, articulated mission that is broader than the goals of any single partner, and that aims to advance equity, antiracism, and social justice within and among schools, colleges/universities, and their respective community and professional partners.
3. A PDS is a context for continuous professional learning and leading for all participants, guided by need and a spirit and practice of inquiry.
4. A PDS makes a shared commitment to reflective practice, responsive innovation, and generative knowledge.
5. A PDS is a community that engages in collaborative research and participates in the public sharing of results in a variety of outlets.

PDS Partners: 2022 Themed Issue

Leveraging School-University Partnerships to Support Student Learning and Teacher Inquiry

Rationale for the Themed Issue

Welcome to our themed issue of *PDS Partners: Bridging Research to Practice*. The focus and title is School-University Partnerships to Support Student Learning and Teacher Inquiry. The issue includes 11 manuscripts that explore how school-university partnerships advance teaching and learning by supporting teacher inquiry and positively impact student learning. Scholars have called for research and examinations of how school-university partnerships can improve teaching and also influence student learning (Polly, 2017; Putman & Polly, 2021; Ridley et al., 2005; Tunks & Neapolitan, 2007).

Our hope is that this special issue helps to move the conversation forward to critically examine the question, Do Partnerships Matter? We ask this question in the current context of education with teacher shortages across the nation and a drastic increase in schools hiring unlicensed, lateral entry teachers, who are also called residents. Two years removed from the beginning of COVID-19 unfinished learning is plaguing schools and school districts, and school leaders are prioritizing actions and projects that are likely to improve student learning. That brings up the idea of school-university partnerships. If those of us who primarily work in teacher education programs wish to continue to have mutually beneficial partnerships with school partners in Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12 (PK-12), there is a need to document and disseminate research studies and success stories of school-university partnerships.

The Second Edition of the NAPDS Nine Essentials (NAPDS, 2021) includes a specific focus in Essential 5 related to engaging in collaborative research and sharing the results in a variety of results. A critical time has arrived for those of us involved in partnership work to be more deliberate and intentional about conducting research and evaluation of our studies and sharing the results with the broader educational community. Will you join us in this important work?

Description of the Articles

Section 1: Innovations in School-University Partnerships

The first five articles in this issue examine supporting school discipline through a restorative, wraparound approach, transforming a school into an inquiry-based school, preparing pre-service teachers to engage in family-centered practices and collaborations, building sustainability through collaborations and partnerships, and leveraging practice-based teaching to support teacher candidate growth. We begin with Hart and Butler sharing mitigation strategies for racial disparities in schools and reimagining the partnerships between school, university, and community. The authors show how using a Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships, originally developed by Karen Mapp can sustain, heal, and promote positive relationships. The next article in the special issue is from Stork, et. al and it examines the designing of an innovation school that transforms a traditional school into an inquiry-based school. Stork and colleagues enacted a categorial analysis of the perspectives shared by the School University partnership participants that worked collaboratively to design the school. In the following article, McCorkle, Jennings, and Cloninger provide context and overview for the importance of clinical experiences and partnership support for pre-service candidates to develop the skills needed to implement research-based practices for engaging families. In the next piece, Sterrett et al. illustrate the work of a school-university partnership using the three green pillars,

defined by the U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools award designation, to support sustainability education. In the fifth article, Polly and Colonnese share the work of two mathematics teacher educators implementing practice-based teacher education in their mathematics methods courses and discuss implications for future partnership work.

Section II: School-University Partnerships in the Context of COVID-19

The next section of this special issue includes three pieces that focus on student engagement and STEM learning within the context of the pandemic. Peña, Benitez Hemans, and Susholtz share a teaching collaboration that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. The collaboration was an ELA-art-mindfulness project that occurred before and during the pandemic. The authors share the takeaways from the work and plans for future collaborations. Wieselmann, Sager, and Binford highlight adaptations their school-university partnership made during the COVID-19 pandemic to engage students in a six lesson, integrated science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) unit that was built for hybrid use. Wieselmann and colleagues discuss the lessons learned and implications. Ding et al. share the impact of their university partnership with the area's school district and non-profit organizations to address the US Department of Education's call to provide learning recovery from the significant learning disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. They designed and are continuing to implement a collaborative project to support in-service and pre-service teacher candidates in using game-based learning, revising curricula, and attending to instructional effectiveness in middle school science classrooms.

Section III: School-University Partnerships in Mathematics and STEM Education

The next three articles in the special issue focus the work of school-university partnerships specifically in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education. Selmer and Lindstrom present their work on teaching responsively in the mathematics classroom. Within a professional development school, their study analyzes the pedagogical reasoning of experienced teachers' analysis of students' mathematical written work. They note that the responses fell across a continuum of responsiveness and offer implications for how to use these approximations of practice to develop instructional practices. In the next piece, Swars and colleagues detail a 5-year project of supporting elementary teachers as Elementary Mathematics Specialists (EMSs). The authors provide context, professional development design, and discussion around how the project supports the partnership in mutually beneficial ways. The final piece of our special issue offers insight on the experience of developing a shared instructional vision to develop a new STEM focused prekindergarten (pre-K) through eighth-grade public school. Wilhelm, Gravell, and Pinilla discuss the rounds of activity that supported the creation of an instructional vision. The collaboration included a partnership between a university, a school district, an international company with a local presence, and a community that would support and be supported by a research-practice partnership over an extended time.

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