Professional Development
Schools

Traditions, Standards, and Transformations

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Guiding Questions

- What is the history, purpose, and issues regarding professional development schools (PDS) as an effort for transforming teacher preparation and PK-12 schools?

- What is the state of affairs regarding research/inquiry “in and on” PDS as a national effort for collaboration towards the improvement of teaching, learning, and institutional renewal?
Background

A Nation at Risk (1983)
The Holmes Group

- A consortium of Deans of Education responding to criticism that teacher education was doing a poor job
- *Tomorrow’s Teachers* (1986)
- *Tomorrow’s Schools* (1990)**
- *Tomorrow’s Schools of Education* (1995)
School-University-Community Partnerships

- Teaching and learning for **understanding**.
- Creating a **learning community**.
- Teaching and learning for understanding for **everybody’s children**.
- **Continuing learning** by teachers, teacher educators, and administrators.
- Thoughtful **long-term inquiry** into teaching and learning.
- Inventing a **new institution**.
NCATE Definition of PDS

Innovative institutions formed through partnerships between professional education programs and P–12 schools.

Their mission is professional preparation of candidates, faculty development, inquiry directed at the improvement of practice, and enhanced student learning.

Professional development schools (PDSs) are real schools, often in challenging settings which have been redesigned and restructured to support their complex mission.
Standards & Developmental Guidelines for PDS

National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)

2001
NCATE PDS Standards Field Test Project (1998-2001)

- Internal Documentation
- External Validation
- Collaborative inquiry into problem or issues

Self-Study

Site Visit

Inquiry Project
Core Concepts

1. Time before the beginning
2. Integration of professional and student learning through inquiry
3. Placing students at the center of PDS work
4. Learning in the context of practice
5. Boundary spanning
Core Concepts

6. Blending of resources
7. Principal partners and institutional partners
8. The expanded learning community
9. The PDS as a standards-bearing institution
10. Leveraging change
Stages of Partnership Development

- Beginning
- Developing
- At Standard
- Leading
NCATE PDS Standards

I. Learning Community
II. Accountability and Quality Assurance
III. Collaboration
IV. Diversity and Equity
V. Structures, Resources, and Roles
Importance of the NCATE PDS Standards

Based on Grounded Theory

- Continuous improvement
- Partnership development
- Assessment process
- Teacher quality agenda

“Critical framework for conducting & evaluating research” (NCATE, 2001)
Challenges for PDS Standards

- PDSs as collaborative institutions
- Uniqueness of locality/context
- Varying stages of development
A FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCH ON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOLS

JEANNE TUNKS AND JANE NEAPOLITAN
Review of 400 abstracts in EBSCO host, 1988-2006

1991-1994: 78% descriptions/stories, ideas, & case studies

1997-2002: 13% surveys

Overall, PDS as a phenomenon presented in a well-documented, non-research based format.
Themes across PDS “Eras”


- **Functioning Era** (1995-2000): increase in surveys for assessing impacts, learning community, policies & standards (7%), diversity & equity (3%), comparisons (10%)

- **Accountability Era** (2001-2006): Return to qualitative methods with focus on context; only 6 quasi-experimental studies; no experimental studies
Towson Collaborative for PDS Studies

Invitational meeting of 12 nationally known experts in PDS research, policy, and practice

Representatives from universities and national associations, including AERA, NCATE, NAPDS, NNER

2-day retreat (October 30-31, 2009) sponsored by College of Education at Towson University
What do we know with certainty?

- PDS is “easiest” when it focuses on initial teacher preparation; more difficult when involving professional development of inservice teachers.
- Large number of implementation stories with little or no connection to theory.
  - e.g., PDS as Learning Community, Boundary Spanning, etc.—all difficult to measure.
What do we think we know—but need more evidence to be sure?

- Longitudinal studies of teacher candidates showing effectiveness of their preparation
- *Some* effects on in-service teacher development
- *Some* effects on student learning
What’s needed now?

**Institutional Research**
- Self-studies: How are we doing?
- Research within sites
- Research across sites/network

**Missing Perspectives**
- Parents
- Community agencies
What’s next?

Research on Diversity & Equity

Collaborative Multi-Institutional Research
Any Questions?

Thank you for your attention!