



FACT SHEET

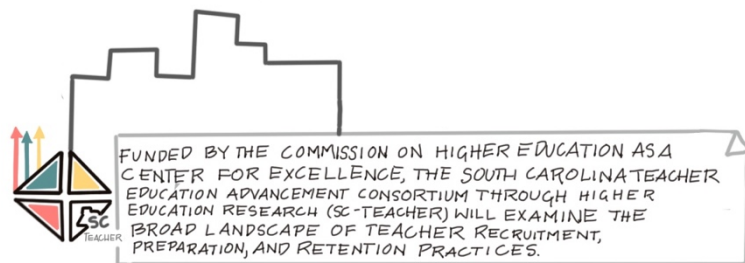
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOLS AS A MECHANISM
TO SUPPORT TEACHER RECRUITMENT, PREPARATION,
& RETENTION IN SOUTH CAROLINA

LISA JOHNSON, WINTHROP UNIVERSITY & CINDY VAN BUREN,
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA | SEPTEMBER 2019

OVERVIEW

The Professional Development School (PDS) movement has a deeply rooted history in the work of John Goodlad that started in 1984 when he published *A Place Called School*. Attesting that in order to improve schools and the work of teachers, a relationship had to exist between institutions of public education and teacher preparation programs. With continued support from accrediting bodies and professional organizations, the PDS model is used internationally as a structure to support school and university collaboration.

The context and mission of PDS sites varies; however, each has as its foundation the premise of shared goals for teacher preparation and professional practice through innovation and inquiry. That said, challenges remain for wide-spread investment and long-term sustainability. This is possibly due in part to a research base that is highly descriptive in nature, focusing on best-practice and small scale projects versus scientifically-based investigation. Three SC institutions are leading the way with this work and highlighting, through quantitative and qualitative studies, the significant advantages for both the university and the partnering schools. As a promising practice that has existed for almost 40 years, the potential impact on recruitment, preparation, and retention of teachers remains significant.



SOUTH CAROLINA

Three diverse institutions are utilizing PDS structures to support teacher preparation and professional learning. Although characterized by varying models and implementation structures, USC-Columbia (UofSC), Winthrop University (WU), and USC-Aiken (USCA) hold significant value in the partnerships each maintains with local schools. UofSC was a national leader in beginning the PDS movement and is in its 28th year, hosting sites in five school districts and 23 schools. In 2009, the Winthrop University-School Partnership Network was established and now consists of 10 districts and 50+ schools. WU provides flexible options for school involvement with opportunities for shared professional development among faculty, teacher candidates, and school personnel. Although smaller, USCA has found success in working with a small number of schools through a tiered PDS structure.

Research from South Carolina institutions suggests PDS models can (1) positively impact student achievement and (2) provide opportunities for pre- and in-service teacher learning. Impact on student learning often emerges from school and university faculty identifying a program and leveraging the partnership for both research and implementation support. Scholarly efforts from UofSC and WU to examine impact on teacher preparation in SC suggest the PDS model lends a “legitimacy” to candidate learning at the university and requires implementation of culturally and contextually relevant pedagogies. Finally, initial investigation on teacher retention in PDS maintains increased teacher knowledge and engagement in improving practice. Such increases lead to stronger self-efficacy and lower attrition (Hartman, Kennedy, and Brady, 2016).



RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Explore various funding models to support PDS implementation and sustainability

While school-university partnerships are diverse in how they are funded, financial resources are highly beneficial for both “start-up” and program continuation. Such resources vary from human capital to materials to professional development. Possibilities to investigate include state grants for establishing partnerships as well as collaborative university/school research, resources for possible reallocation of current funding streams, and strategies for building institutional/district support to grow and sustain partnerships beyond one-time projects or changes in leadership.

2. Engage in scientifically-based research on the long-term impact of teacher preparation in Professional Development Schools

The lack of scholarly activity in experimentally-designed studies continues to plague the PDS movement. Using established programs in SC, collaborative research should focus on comparison and longitudinal investigations in order to provide empirical data on PDS impact. Such data can provide the much-needed evidence to acquire funding from both public and private entities, establish PDS as a preferred model of teacher preparation and retention (in relation to both school and university standards), and help those engaged in PDS work tell the story of their impact.

3. Establish state-level collaboration and communication opportunities

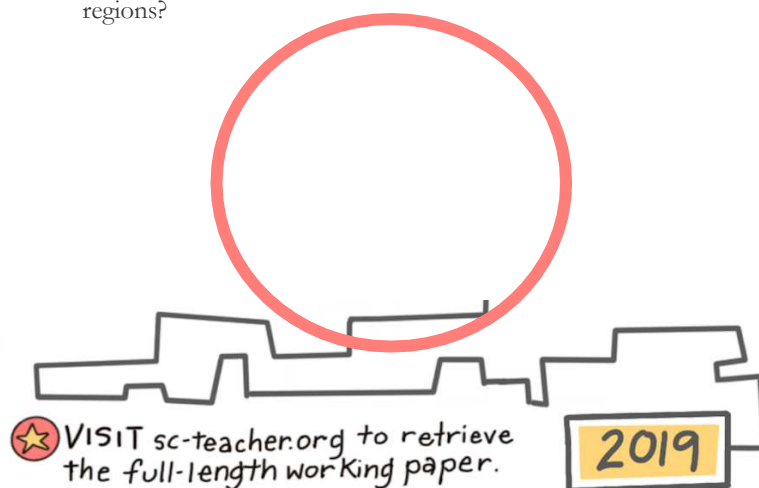
The work UofSC to initiate the National Association of Professional Development Schools (NAPDS) Annual Conference carries on today with partnerships from across the country gathering each year to address challenges and share best practice. That said, PDS work is highly contextual, and we often learn from those closest to our context (whether that be geographic, size, diversity, etc.). A state or regional gathering is needed to support conversations that address challenges and opportunities such as how to integrate PDS work into teacher education/program/school-based standards. These conversations can then be further explored and addressed through online resources such as those SC-TEACHER is creating.

4. Examine ways in which the PDS model can be better used to increase teacher recruitment, especially in middle and high schools

The majority of available literature and research related to PDS work does not include aspects of teacher recruitment. This is a lost opportunity. Given the engaged presence of university faculty in school settings and structures that facilitate university/school collaboration, initiatives that focus on recruiting students from PDS sites into the teaching professional is highly recommended.

5. Expand opportunities for schools not in close proximity to universities to be involved in PDS work

When considering the Nine Essentials of effective PDS implementation, having partnerships that are close in physical proximity leads to greater likelihood of success. Teacher candidates do not have to travel great distance for field experiences, and both school and university faculty can easily meet for professional development, project planning, etc. However, this means schools that are not within a relatively close distance to an institution of higher education lack access to the benefits of being in a PDS network. How can we leverage technology, flexible scheduling, housing options, etc. to open opportunity for schools in more rural and isolated regions?



ABOUT SC-TEACHER

The South Carolina Teacher Education Advancement Consortium through Higher Education Research (SC-TEACHER) is funded by the Commission on Higher Education as a Center for Excellence. SC-TEACHER will examine the broad landscape of teacher recruitment, preparation, and retention practices in South Carolina—and build and deploy a state-centric, longitudinal database system to understand statewide issues and best practices for establishing protocols and to maintain a data infrastructure necessary to answer key questions posed by policymakers and practitioners. SC-TEACHER’s work will inform Educator Preparation Programs, serve as an education research resource center, and provide evidence of effective teaching practices.

For more information, visit www.sc-teacher.org.