

Foreword

Professional development schools (PDSs) are innovative institutions formed through partnerships between professional education programs and PreK–12 schools. They have a fourfold mission: the preparation of new teachers, faculty development, inquiry directed at the improvement of practice, and enhanced student achievement. PDS partners come together to share responsibility for all parts of their mission. Some believe that PDSs are potentially the most powerful innovation in teacher education. As hybrid institutions formed by university and school partners, they can bridge the gap between the sectors, and between theory and practice. They can facilitate renewal in both school and university as a result of knowledge shared in the partnership. Most important, they can enhance both teacher and student learning.

PDSs are often compared to teaching hospitals. Teaching hospitals are also hybrid institutions created in the early 20th century. As practicing professions, both teaching and medicine require a sound academic program and intense clinical preparation. The teaching hospital was designed to provide such clinical preparation for medical students and interns; PDSs serve the same functions for teacher candidates and inservice faculty. The basic precept in both settings is professional education through inquiry and a focus on client (student or patient) needs. The teaching hospital was a major instrument in the professionalization of medicine. PDSs can be an equally important vehicle for teacher professionalism.

In order to support this fledgling innovation, between 1995 and 2001, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) worked with hundreds of practitioners and teacher educators to design and field-test standards for professional development schools. Draft standards were developed based on extensive input from experts in the field.

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The draft standards were then piloted for three years by 16 diverse and representative PDS partnerships. The goal was to create standards that would strengthen and support PDSs, as well as be used to assess their progress.

There were several important outcomes of the NCATE work. First, a consensus emerged among educators about the definition and mission of a professional development school. Second, we refined and revised our knowledge of how professional development school partnerships function to achieve their mission. The field test helped us understand how PDS work blends the skills and knowledge of all partners and simultaneously supports professional and student learning. Through the self-studies and visiting team assessments we uncovered the central role of student achievement in the professional development school and we documented the important role of inquiry in PDS work. Field-test participants helped us to understand how inquiry, often the most overlooked part of the PDS mission, can be the vehicle for both professional development and new teacher learning. We observed how PDS partners use inquiry to determine students' needs, which in turn define curriculum for intern teachers and determine the professional development agenda for all faculty.

The PDS Standards have been broadly accepted in the community. They were endorsed by NCATE, and they are being used by both institutions and states to shape and assess their PDS partnership initiatives. The PDS Standards are also being used in research focused on measuring PDS outcomes for all learners. They provide a necessary framework for defining context or inputs in studies that seek to determine effects of PDSs on teacher quality and student learning.

This book represents another way in which the PDS Standards can be used to help partnerships move forward. We know that schools and universities coming to this work often need guidance as they form their partnerships. They need to know how to engage each other in building strong relationships and in learning how to share responsibilities that traditionally have not been shared. PDSs require the commitment of resources, and partners need to learn how to think differently about time, space, and expertise, as well as how to think collaboratively about financial support. PDS partners have to create new roles and structures to support their unique kind of work. At the same time, however, they must address the strains and stresses that they will naturally encounter as they work with new partners and maintain their traditional memberships and roles in their home institutions. This book is designed to provide much needed support to PDS partners as they encounter these and other challenges.

Dr. Teitel is well prepared to offer this assistance. He has a wealth of experience in working with PDS partnerships on just these kinds of needs.

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As a principal contributor to the PDS Standards Field Test Project, he also knows the PDS Standards well. In this book he has brought his experience and the Standards together. He uses the PDS Standards to frame approaches to PDS support and implementation—ensuring that partnerships will be guided by what is most important in a PDS in its earliest stages and throughout its development. Most important, this book will help PDS partners keep their focus on students' needs—the core of PDS work—as they take this journey together.

This book is important. The PDS Standards were designed to do the hard work of both supporting PDS development and assessing PDS quality. This book makes a significant contribution to that goal. It provides concrete suggestions for what PDS partners can do in developing, implementing, and assessing their partnerships, which are framed by the Standards and grounded in their core concepts. This kind of support can help PDS partnerships fulfill their enormous potential for revolutionizing teaching and the education of teachers, and supporting the achievement of all children in our schools.

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