

Working Together:
Enhancing Urban Educator
Quality Through School-
University Partnerships

A Volume in
Advances in Teacher Education

Series Editor
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University of North Florida

Advances in Teacher Education

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*Working Together: Enhancing Urban Educator Quality
Through School-University Partnerships* (2017)

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INFORMATION AGE PUBLISHING, INC.
Charlotte, NC • www.infoagepub.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Yendol-Hoppey, Diane, editor. | Shanley, Deborah, editor.
Title: Working together : enhancing urban educator quality through school-university partnerships / edited by Diane Yendol-Hoppey, Deborah A. Shanley, Darby C. Delane, and David Hoppey.
Other titles: Working together (Information Age Publishing)
Description: Charlotte, NC : Information Age Publishing, Inc., 2017. |
Series: Advances in teacher education | Includes bibliographical references.
Identifiers: LCCN 2016049503 (print) | LCCN 2017007334 (ebook) | ISBN 978-1-68123-730-5 (paperback) | ISBN 978-1-68123-731-2 (hardcover) | ISBN 978-1-68123-732-9 (ebook) | ISBN 978-1-68123-732-9- (EBook)
Subjects: LCSH: Education, Urban--United States. | Teachers--Training--of--United States. | Teachers--In-service training--United States. | College-school cooperation--United States.
Classification: LCC LC5119.8 .W67 2017 (print) | LCC LC5119.8 (ebook) | DDC 370.9173/20973--dc23
LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2016049503>

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Printed in the United States of America

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the children living in urban contexts who deserve educators across our nation who use innovative, cross-institutional partnerships to build bridges across racial and economic educational disparity.

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PREFACE

Audra Parker and Kristien Zenkov

Most teacher education scholars and practitioners have welcomed—maybe even celebrated—the recent spate of policymakers’ and researchers’ calls for considering school/university partnerships as a foundational structure of our work. Of course, these practice and policy cries for partnership are impacted by the challenging political and financial realities faced by universities and P–12 schools. As well, veteran partnership practitioners appreciate that such efforts always seem simple to conceive—ideas this good are easy to argue for—but particularly difficult to implement and sustain, as they operate across distinct institutions, which have similar but not absolutely aligned missions.

As we have argued and illustrated elsewhere (Parker, Parsons, Groth & Brown, 2016; Zenkov, Parker, Parsons, Pellegrino, & Pytash, in press), if the promise of school-university partnerships—including but not limited to PDSs and residency options—is ever going to be realized, our field needs much more than a solitary model of partnership. Rather, we require a range of pathways to such collaborations and the boundary-spanning elements and roles that will support these structures. And, perhaps even more importantly, we need scholarly considerations and pragmatic illustrations of the real and the ideal—how such structures are developed, of what they consist, how they are sustained, and the best of their potential. Diane Yendol-Hoppey, Deborah Shanley, and Darby Delane have edited a

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volume, *Working Together: Enhancing Urban Educator Quality through School-University Partnerships*, which addresses all of these ends—providing rich descriptions of a range of partnership pathways that are framed by research lenses. While the editors and authors of this important text are primarily reflecting on these examinations for urban settings, these clearly can inform every school-university context.

A PDS FRAME ON PARTNERSHIPS

Founders of the Professional Development School (PDS) movement, a model for school university partnerships, envisioned four purposes of these structures: (1) PK–12 student achievement; (2) teacher education; (3) scholarship cooperatively conducted by the full range of PDS players; and (4) the professional growth of all of these parties and the larger set of these institutions' constituents (Holmes Group, 1986, 1990). These objectives have been echoed by the 2010 findings of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Clinical Experiences and more recently by the numerous commissions of and charges issued by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), and the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE). Given the history and recency of these goals, we found it useful to use them as the organizing themes to discuss the contributions of—and the questions evoked by—the chapters of this volume.

Each of these chapters could be discussed across more than one, and perhaps all, of these themes, as each piece ultimately highlights the interconnected nature of these partnership purposes. All of these chapters represent and illustrate the “collaborative research” objective of PDSs and school-university partnerships, so we have not highlighted this quality in the remainder of this preface. By way of introduction we categorize each of the 10 chapters according to one of the three remaining PDS purposes—PK–12 student achievement, educators' professional growth, and teacher education.

PK–12 STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Addressing what is traditionally the most difficult objective of school-university partnerships—PK–12 student achievement—Syverud, Delane, and Raiser thoughtfully consider the question of “How can all university-based teacher education programs position clinical teacher preparation so that it directly impacts literacy learning for children living in poverty?” In “A Stone of Hope: Preparing Masterful Readers and Teachers in an

Urban Professional Development School,” the authors detail their social justice orientation and the rich ways in which their partnership supports an explicit impact on children’s literacy achievement.

We highlight this chapter first because of its consideration of the bearing of a partnership on PK–12 student learning, which is arguably the primary end of every educator. This chapter also raises—through its partnership structure rather than in its content—the question of what elements of school/university partnerships are most necessary and effective for such an achievement focus. The North Florida partnership on which these teacher educators and scholars report is a long-standing one, and we wonder if it is this multi-generational feature that best supports a partnership meeting the student learning objective.

Educators’ Growth

Three chapters most explicitly address the professional development goal of school/university partnerships, each with a particular emphasis on the growth of educational leaders. In “Developing and Sustaining the Gulf Coast Partnership: Possibilities, Successes, and Challenges,” Black, Mann, and Haines consider leadership among and across three distinct stakeholders—university faculty, school district personnel, and district professional development directors. Martin and Clark explore the professional lifespan of school leadership in their chapter, “Leaders for Tomorrow: Partnership With Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and the Educational Leadership Program at Winthrop University.” And, finally, in “The Mort Teacher Leader Academy: Developing Teacher Leaders for Urban Schools Together,” Burns, Johnson, and Roberts detail another partnership with an explicit equity focus, echoing other chapters’ considerations of school/university partnerships’ efforts to prepare teachers and administrative leaders for diverse, impoverished communities.

Ultimately, these chapters simultaneously consider broad notions of leadership and complicate traditional definitions of leadership that might exist across the institutions involved in partnerships. As well, these chapters raise the question of what are the most effective contexts for leadership preparation. Specifically, might such partnerships be the best sites for grooming leaders for challenging school settings, where effective leadership is especially important. Collectively, these manuscripts call on us to wonder if the primary goal of school/university partnerships could ultimately be the development of school leaders. And we are reminded that school-university partnerships might be one of the key ingredients in any successful and sustainable school reform efforts.

TEACHER EDUCATION

Six chapters thoughtfully consider school-university partnerships as a context within which teacher education can be situated. Robinson's "The Partnership for Instructional Excellence and Quality (PIE-Q)" and Allison and Iorio's "The Wichita Teacher Quality Partnership" both explore partnerships as the primary base for simultaneous renewal for all educators, across school and university institutions. In "A Partnership Between Brooklyn College-City University of New York and the American Museum of Natural History: Enhancing Teacher Preparation Through Informal Science Learning" and "The USF-Pepin Academies Summer Institute: Preparing Pre-service Teachers Within an Urban Charter School to Work With Students With Disabilities," Miele, Adams, Hoppey, Allsopp, and Hahn illustrate how community institutions and outside of the academic year activities can support alternative and particularly effective teacher education efforts. Finally, Corrigan, Beebe, Weber, Zenkov, and Semple in "Social Justice, Action Research, and New Partners: Evolving Notions of Impact in an Urban PDS/Residency Program" and Dennis, van Ingen, and Davis in "Urban Teacher Residency Partnership Program: A Partnership Between the University of South Florida College of Education and Hillsborough (FL) County Public Schools" highlight how partnerships can impact and engage with not just local issues but also with national reform agendas.

Collectively, these chapters raise the question about the central place such partnerships should have in the missions of universities with colleges/schools of education. These manuscripts also articulately remind us that pedagogy is the often unclaimed domain of educators, across our school and university contexts, and that school/university partnerships may be ideal for highlighting this expertise. We are called to wonder how teacher education, recruitment, and retention efforts would shift and become more effective if typically distinct institutions—schools and colleges/universities—operated as if these activities truly were shared objectives. Ultimately, these chapters remind us that the primary ends of school-university partnerships may be professional, as well as moral and ethical, in the form of enhancing the equity of our schools and, by extension, our communities. And that if we viewed teacher learning and clinical experiences across a better articulated continuum—one profession across schools and universities, across the career lifespan of each educator—perhaps both these partnerships' and traditional PDS objectives would be better met.

IN CLOSING

While we have discussed each chapter presented in *Working Together: Enhancing Urban Educator Quality Through School-University Partnerships*, as

situated with a primary focus on teacher education, professional development, or student achievement, we would be remiss if we did not highlight key tenets of school/university partnerships consistently seen across all chapters—tenets that are useful for university faculty and school leaders interested in establishing or enriching their partnership efforts.

First, school university partnerships take time, and in some cases, lots of time, to establish, nurture, and sustain. Many of the partnerships described in this book have an extensive history with clearly defined roles for all stakeholders. This serves as a powerful reminder that robust partnerships are not built in a day—or a year.

Furthermore, these chapters highlight the multifaceted nature of school university partnerships. These are not linear collaborations, but rather involve a multitude of school and university leaders, university faculty from a variety of programs, teachers, community partners, and students (PK–12 and university).

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the partnerships highlighted in these chapters use collaborative planning to engage in substantial educational reform. They tackle big problems in teaching, learning, and learning to teach—issues related to urban school needs, including poverty, racism, and hiring challenges, teacher quality, teacher retention. Each of the chapters is a key piece of the overarching message of *Working Together: Enhancing Urban Educator Quality Through School-University Partnerships*, school/university partnerships are essential structures for all stakeholders' efforts to serve diverse, often impoverished, urban communities. They are a foundational rather than an optional structure.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to express tremendous appreciation for our colleagues Amanda Laukitis, Caran Mullins, and Lynne Raiser who generously supported our team in gathering and assembling the manuscript.

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