Preface

The purpose of professional development schools is to promote student learning. PDSs do that by improving schools, preparing new teachers in better ways, supporting the growth and development of all educators, and using inquiry and research to see what is working well and what is not. Given the wide gap in achievement among students of differing racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds in this country, PDSs have a special interest in promoting the learning of all students and reducing the achievement gap.

PDSs sometimes lose sight of their focus on improving student learning and get caught up in the complicated structural and organizational changes needed to make a PDS work. This handbook is organized and written to keep the focus on student learning, even as the handbook walks partnerships through the many structural, organizational, and instructional stages that must take place. This book is aligned closely with the *Standards for Professional Development Schools*, released in 2001 by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education. The Standards represent the clearest and most comprehensive summary of what it means to be a PDS, developed through a national research project and field-tested in 16 very different sites. The Standards are developmental and acknowledge the different stages that PDS partnerships go through. With some minor modifications (see Figure A.1), the Standards can be used to illustrate the building blocks of how PDSs can improve student learning.

FOCUSING THE STANDARDS ON STUDENT LEARNING

The PDS Standards are:

   I.   *Learning Community.* At the heart of the PDS, this Standard represents the teaching and learning activities, philosophies, and environments created in these partnerships.

   II.   *Accountability and Quality Assurance.* This Standard is the assessment of the partnership and its outcomes in ways that address the PDS's accountability to its various stakeholders.

   III.   *Collaboration.* This Standard addresses the partnership's formation and its development of an increasingly interdependent, committed relationship.

   IV.   *Diversity and Equity.* This Standard focuses attention on how the PDS prepares a diverse group of educators to provide opportunities to learn for all students.

   V.   *Structures, Resources, and Roles.* This Standard addresses how the PDS organizes itself to support and do its work.

   Figure A.1 shows these Standards aligned, with a focus on student learning outcomes.
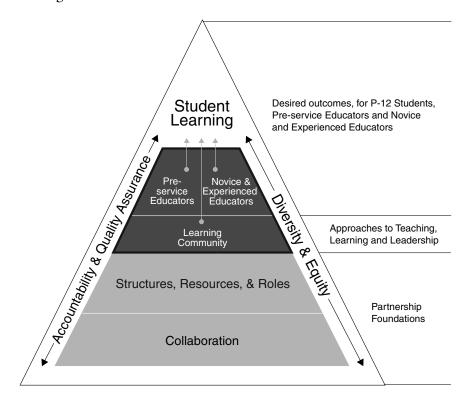

Figure A.1   PDS Standards Student Learning Pyramid

Figure A.1, the PDS Standards Student Learning Pyramid, places these Standards in relationship to one another. Standard III, Collaboration, and Standard V, Structures, Resources, and Roles, are foundational. They are necessary to build a PDS, but not sufficient. They represent the building blocks on which the all-important Learning Community (Standard I) rests. The changes brought about in the teaching, learning, and leadership environment of the learning community—the experiences of students and adults focusing together on improving student and adult learning—are what make the difference in PDSs. Student learning is enhanced in at least three ways in a PDS partnership:

- Through better preparation of interns and their enhanced roles inside and outside the classroom with PreK–12 students
- Through professional development and other experiences that the faculty, staff, and administrators at the school, university, and other partners have, engaging and focusing them on student learning
- Through the direct engagement of the PreK–12 students in an improved learning environment—improvements in curriculum and instruction as well as enhanced relationships inside and outside of class with interns, teachers, and other adults

The Pyramid places the remaining Standards, II and IV, running diagonally up the sides because attention to diversity and equity issues, and the use of accountability and quality assurance measures to assess the processes and products of the PDS, permeate all aspects of the partnerships and help maintain a focus on improved achievement for all students. The intersections this positioning creates between Standards help focus the PDS on what matters. For example, the intersection of Diversity and Equity with Collaboration focuses on how diverse the partners are and whether the PDS includes a range of partners concerned with equitable outcomes for children—parents and community agencies, for example. When this Standard intersects Learning Community, it raises the question of how issues of diversity and equity drive the content and process of the curriculum and instruction for PreK–12 students, interns, faculty, staff, and administrators at participating institutions.

Similarly, the Accountability and Quality Assurance Standard cuts through all the others, whether at the Collaboration level, ensuring accountability to the partnership's various stakeholders, including the accreditation of the participating institutions, or at the Structures, Resources, and Roles level, having the partnership use assessment to reflect on and improve its own processes.

At the apex of the Pyramid, impacts on students become paramount. The intersection of Diversity and Equity with the Assessment Standard (angling up from the other side) suggests the critical focus of PDSs on reduction of the achievement gap and evaluation of policies and practices to support equitable opportunities to learn for all students.

The use of the PDS Standards Student Learning Pyramid to organize this book does not suggest that the process of starting, sustaining, and assessing PDSs is a linear, one-way process. Some PDSs actually start with very little underlying structure or formal partnership agreements. They leap into learning community activities and only later go back to build the foundations needed for sustaining the work. However, the Pyramid does suggest that PDSs must address each of the aspects of partnership development expressed in the Standards and that each should be seen in relationship to one another and to its impacts on student learning. In this way, the Pyramid and the Standards become useful organizing tools for starting, sustaining, and assessing PDS partnerships.

WHY I WROTE THIS BOOK

For more than a decade, I have been involved in and committed to making the concept and promise of professional development schools a reality. As a researcher, I have documented the start-up and development of dozens of PDS partnerships; as a scholar, I have read and reviewed the literature on hundreds more. As a practitioner, I have been involved in starting and sustaining several partnerships between my own university and schools in Boston. As a consultant and speaker, I have talked with hundreds of people around the country and listened to their stories, challenges, and successes. I've seen and talked and read about PDS partnerships confronting all manner of tough issues. I have seen many succeed and begin to reap benefits for the students and adults in their partnerships. I have seen some founder, with relationships that limp along going nowhere or that end in the sadness and recriminations of an unpleasant "divorce." I have seen "paper PDSs" spring up overnight—places that look like traditional practice but call themselves PDSs—and I have worked closely with the PDS Standards Project to help establish some well-regarded standards for what it means to be a PDS.

Throughout this work I have developed the highest regard and respect for the thousands of parents, teachers, administrators, community members, and students who are making the PDSs across this country work. I am pleased to count many of them among my colleagues and friends and I dedicate this book to them and thank them for all they have helped me learn.

As a documentor, a consultant, and a speaker, I continue to learn a great deal from the PDSs I visit. I sometimes think of myself as a bumble-bee, traveling to different flowers, cross-pollinating ideas. What follows in this book are my gleanings. They are undoubtedly incomplete, and I invite feedback and comments from readers.

Over the past decade, I have developed a strong set of beliefs about what is important in PDS partnerships. These beliefs—some might call them biases—shape this book in many subtle and not so subtle ways, so let me try to express them.

- *PDS partnerships can and should be transformative.* John Goodlad (1988) talks about the "simultaneous renewal" of schools and teacher educational institutions through PDSs, and I am a believer. If partnerships settle with minor adjustments and don't get to improve the core missions of teaching and learning for all students, I don't think PDSs are worth the trouble.

- *Equity matters.* The Holmes Group, whose reports in the late 1980s and early 1990s provided important intellectual input into the PDS movement, made clear that PDSs need to play a critical role in addressing the inequities of our society and charged PDSs to not back away from or avoid their responsibilities due to the magnitude of the task. I think many PDSs have failed to engage that equity agenda, and much of the focus of my PDS work addresses the challenges and opportunities in high-poverty urban and rural settings.

- *PDSs should be beneficial for all partners.* I don't think you can sustain the kind of long-term partnerships that PDSs need to be unless they are benefiting all partners. I sometimes use the analogy to marriage in my thinking about PDSs, and having one partner set out to "fix" the other does not seem to me to be the recipe for long-term success and happiness with an individual or with organizations. Reciprocity and mutuality are essential.

- *Relationships are key, but systems and structures need to change for lasting impacts.* PDS partnerships work because of the strong interpersonal relationships that develop in them. These organic connections between and among people are necessary, but unless more formal organizational ties are made, partnerships will be unstable and susceptible to turnover.

- *Data and high-quality information are critical at all levels in PDS partnerships.* A range of data sources (including but not limited to test scores) is needed for the quality assurance required by external PDS stakeholders, as well as to shape the ongoing, internal decisions PDSs make when they test out new organizational and instructional approaches.

- *Leadership matters.* I define leadership broadly—it does not simply reside in the deans, superintendents, and principals with positional power, but also shows up at all levels of the partnering organizations. I think about (and invite readers of this book to think about) how the leadership tasks called for in this book get accomplished by a range of people in the partnering organizations and how spreading out the leadership tasks changes the ownership and improves the dynamics of organizational renewal.

- *Even though every context is different, the majority of the tasks and challenges facing PDSs are similar.* Most of my personal experience in PDSs has been in urban contexts, but speaking and consulting have brought me into contact with suburban and rural settings as well. I have come to learn that the equity challenges that drive my passion about PDSs not only take place in urban schools, but also exist in different ways in rural PDSs and even to some extent in suburban settings. And while I appreciate the different challenges faced in various geographic and cultural settings, I am convinced that much of the organizational work, the focus on student learning, the need to assess and use your assessments to shape what you do—much of what makes a PDS work in any context—is essentially similar and, I hope, is outlined for you in this book.

HOW THIS BOOK IS ORGANIZED

Chapter 1 is a short history of the PDS movement and an introduction to the Standards and to the convergence of what are now commonly accepted as the definitions and goals of professional development schools.

Chapters 2–6 use the ideas embedded in the five PDS Standards to organize the content of the book. Beginning with one of the foundational Standards, Collaboration, these chapters go on to address Structures, Resources, and Roles; Learning Community; Diversity and Equity; and Assessment, Accountability, and Quality Assurance. The format for each chapter organized around the Standards is as follows:

- *Overview and history:* This section describes and illustrates what the Standard looks like and how it might be met, drawing on the language of the PDS Standards and short illustrative examples. The overview includes some of the history and issues pertaining to the Standard.

- *Start-up tasks and challenges:* This section provides concrete examples of the challenges faced with this Standard in the early stages of partnership development.

• *Issues and challenges in sustainability:* This section picks up where the last stopped, moving into challenges faced in implementation and institutionalization.

• *Assessment:* This section has three parts. The first is a Quick-Check self-assessment framework—a series of questions that readers can use to quickly identify where their partnership is located developmentally for the issues discussed in the Standard. Next is an assessment template—guidelines I use with partnerships that are collecting and analyzing data on each Standard to report to internal and external stakeholders. Finally, I include excerpts from a detailed assessment framework developed for a multisite PDS partnership in the Boston area. This work-in-progress is being generously shared by this partnership as an illustration of what a detailed "real" assessment on this Standard would look like.

• *Toolkit:* This section includes specific examples and suggestions for helping readers get where they want to go with the Standard, including worksheets, ideas, and planning sheets that can be used for focusing discussions in partnership steering committee meetings.

• *Chapter resources:* This section offers a brief annotated bibliography of text and Web resources. In addition, it will refer you to http://pds.edreform.net, the PDS Development Portal developed by the National Institute for Community Innovations and edited by Douglas Fleming and myself. The portal provides updated text and Web resources as well as links to service providers that can assist you in planning for and implementing PDS development strategies.

This book concludes with Chapter 7, Next Steps for Strengthening Your PDS. This is an integration and planning document with suggestions on how to do the following:

• Use Quick-Checks to know where you are and where you want to go
• Use case studies to foster communication
• Conduct an informal self-assessment
• Conduct a formal self-study, using the NCATE PDS Standards
• Carry out self-study follow-up plans
• Work with the ideas of this book as part of a network

This book has two appendixes. The first addresses some of the special circumstances involved in applying the ideas in this book to multischool PDS partnerships. The second includes short case studies as triggers for improving communication in PDSs.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

- *This book can be read from the beginning in the order it is written.* This is recommended for beginning PDSs, which should find help in each chapter's background and start-up sections along with the related tools and resources. Novice partnerships may also benefit from looking ahead to where they hope to go, because this can shape and ease their transitions and next steps.

- *This book can be read as a reference manual.* Partnerships with questions about whether they are structured in the best way or are using their resources to maximum effect may turn right to the chapter on structures, roles, and resources. The Quick-Check and text sections should lead them to the tools and resources they need.

- *This book can be used as an assessment manual.* Embedded in each chapter are specific ideas for collecting and analyzing data on the Standard addressed, as well as the Quick-Check self-assessment that partnerships can use to locate themselves. A fuller discussion about assessment, types of measurement, and meeting the needs of various stakeholder audiences is included in Chapter 6.

A NOTE ON LEADERSHIP AND READERSHIP

Each chapter begins with the tasks and challenges associated with the topic (for example, start-up issues in partnership formation in the Collaboration chapter or sustaining challenges in addressing achievement gap issues in the Diversity and Equity chapter). For each task and challenge identified, I offer some suggestions for resources or ideas that might help address it. Short suggestions are presented in their entirety, in the Toolkit section of each chapter. Longer recommendations are referred to in the Chapter Resources section. I address my suggestions and recommendations to you as the reader, knowing full well that the readers of this book may vary widely in their positions or formal or informal leadership roles within their organizations. Some will be from schools and others from universities. Some will be parents or community members, or from other potential partnering organizations. The tasks and challenges identified in this book are faced by the organizations trying to partner to make PDSs work. To address them properly demands leadership from a variety of people. Some challenges can best be addressed by those in more formal authority, others by those with less authority who are closer to the partnership action. As my belief statements above indicate, I generally see a

blend of top-down and bottom-up effort as working best; where I call for a decision to do something, I generally think development of a consensus on that decision will be the best approach.

WHY IS THERE SO MUCH ABOUT ASSESSMENT IN THIS BOOK?

One of my deep beliefs about PDSs is the importance of having good, high-quality data and information-shaping decisions about PDS development, teaching, and learning. Accordingly, you will find detailed assessment suggestions throughout the book, not just in Chapter 6, which focuses on the Assessment and the Accountability and Quality Assurance Standard. In Chapter 2, you will be introduced to the Urban Teacher Training Collaborative (UTTC), a PDS partnership of Tufts University and three Boston Public Schools, Fenway High School, Boston Arts Academy, and Mission Hill School. To provide some real-world grounding, in each of the chapters based on the Standards, I include excerpts from an assessment framework I designed collaboratively with the UTTC.

The strong focus on assessment in the book comes with a word of caution, however. It is probably not feasible to take every assessment suggestion in this book and apply it to your PDS—certainly not all at once. If you tried to do it all, say in a year, you would probably be so overwhelmed with data collection, analysis, and application that there would be little time for anything else. So pick and choose among the assessment choices in the book. Figure out what makes the most sense for your partnership to pursue—what information should be gathered to answer some important questions about your PDS. Think about the long-term picture of where your PDS wants to go, and what it needs to know to get there, and think in the short term about what assessments you can conduct and use now, this year. I think assessments need to be *used*—thought about, discussed, used for decision making, and shared with various audiences—or they are not worth conducting. As you develop your plans for what assessments would be powerful at your site, you will find some practical suggestions on organizing and managing long- and short-term assessments in Chapter 6. I hope they help you sort through this, so assessment really helps improve and sustain your PDS.

FINAL ORGANIZATIONAL NOTE

Dean Corrigan of the Holmes Group once described PDSs like a fishnet—when you pull on one part by making a change, it inevitably tugs on other

sections. I found this to be true in organizing and categorizing this book. Many things are linked and I had to make choices about where, for instance, approaches to developing governance structures for partnerships should be. Is it part of the Collaboration chapter, or the first section of the Structures, Resources, and Roles chapter? It belongs in both, but I have tried to avoid redundancy and, where possible, have cross-referenced material.

I hope you find the book helpful and I welcome feedback and any suggestions.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My deepest thanks go to the thousands of parents, teachers, students, teacher educators, and other faculty and administrators who make professional development schools have a positive impact on the lives of students. What I know about PDSs I have learned from hundreds of you—those I have worked with in PDS networks, interviewed, or met at conferences or site visits, or whose publications and reports I have read. To respect your confidentiality, I have not named you or your partnership in the text. However, I hope that you see yourselves in this book—hear your stories, see reflections of your concerns, suggestions, and ideas—and that the book inspires and helps you to continue your work in much the same way you helped and inspired me to write it.

Particular thanks go

. . . to my friends and colleagues in the Massachusetts PDS Network, where we all learned together over the last decade what PDSs are and how to make them happen—Tom Del Prete, Bob Malloy, Kathy Gagne, Marcia Bromfield, Gerry Pine, Harriet Deane, Judy Finkel, Liz Gold, Vivian Troen, Kitty Boles, Carol Pelletier, Najwa Abdul-Tawwab, and especially my co-facilitator of that network, Karen O'Connor.

. . . to Marsha Levine, Roberta Trachtman, and, in fond memory, Ellie Churins, and all the others involved in the PDS Standards Project of the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, who showed me that standards matter and can be arrived at in a careful process of consensus building.

. . . to Van Dempsey and the Benedum Collaborative, who taught me so many things about organizing and structuring a large-scale PDS partnership, and who, after several years of trying, managed to make me realize that the equity challenges of rural schools are as great as those of urban schools.

. . . to the PDS working group at the National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching, which more than a decade ago welcomed