

network news

April 1999

Matt House, editor



Effective communication

Keys to success

By Roy Weaver
 Dean, Teachers College

EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS depend on clear, easily accessible, meaningful, and ongoing communication. From the outset, such communication has been a priority for the Ball State University Professional Development Schools Network (PDS Network) and viewed as a shared responsibility among participants.

Meetings of the Governing Board; the Institute for Community Education Development and School Improvement; university faculty and PDS Network adjunct faculty at school sites; and visits to school sites by the Director of the Institute for Community Education Development and School Improvement, university department chairs, and deans have provided an avenue for direct, face-to-face communication.

Printed materials explaining the governance system and how a school may become a professional development school have been distributed.

This issue of the Network Newsletter illustrates a critically important step. With the expertise of Carmel High School journalism students, under the guidance of adviser Tony Willis, a partnership site has assumed responsibility for creating and publishing vital information for the PDS Network.

This Newsletter will be available in printed and electronic form, linked via the BSU PDS Web site at <http://www.bsue.edu/teachers/services/pds/mainmenu.html>.

WEB SITE IMPROVES COMMUNICATION

The recent publication of the BSU PDS Web site has also enhanced the sharing of information. The site provides a directory of key participants, announcements, a description of PDS sites with links to their homepages (where available), a discussion group, as well as other information. While parts of the site are still under construction, the Web site is an important development in strengthening communication among Network members. Training has begun for expanding electronic communication via a system called, WellEngaged, which will encourage live, interactive discussion and conferencing for up to as many as 500 persons.

Carmel Schools reinvent teacher education

IN 1996 the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future published a report, *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future*.

According to this report, the single most important strategy for achieving America's education goals is that every student have "access to competent, caring, qualified teachers in schools organized for success." The Commission outlined a blueprint for recruiting, preparing, and supporting excellent teachers. Strengthening teacher preparation and professional development were major focuses.

Carmel Clay Schools is proud to be in the forefront of efforts designed to reinvent teacher education and professional development. By partnering with Ball State University we believe that we can accomplish the following:

- Improve the education of prospective and practicing teachers
- Strengthen knowledge and practice in teaching
- Strengthen the profession of teaching by modeling promising and productive relationships.

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Professionalism improves in professional development schools

By Ruth Swetnam
 Director, Institute for Community Education Development and School Improvement

THE PARTNERSHIPS between Ball State University and educational sites are making a positive difference. "We are improving our professionalism." This is what teachers, principals, and university liaisons are identifying as one of the significant results of becoming a professional development school.

The partnerships with the university have raised the morale of teachers. Ron Purtlebaugh of Mitchell Elementary

School says, "Since we began developing this PDS partnership the morale of our staff has been very high, even during last year when we didn't have a contract."

PRESCHOOL NOT VALUABLE IN PAST

At Castleton United Methodist Nursery School (CUMNS), teacher Donna Williams and Director Chris Landon talk about how preschool in our culture historically has not been valued, teachers have felt insecure and haven't felt appreciated.

Donna says, "The staff members feel proud to have been selected by the university as important in the teacher preparation process. The university partnership has validated what we are doing."

The partnerships are addressing the professional methods. Edna May, principal of T.C. Steele Elementary School, has

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Summer school opportunities exist

WOULD YOU LIKE to teach a summer enrichment course for students grades k-2 or 3-5? Minnetrista and Oakhurst are hosting the second annual "Kids Summer Spectrum" July 12-23, and proposals for classes are being accepted through February 20.

A stipend of \$200 (for teaching one 90 minute class for 10 days) or \$400 (for teaching two such classes) will be offered. For more information or to submit a proposal, call Angie Knight at (765) 213-3540, ext. 128.



Professionalism

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observed that teachers are stopping to think about why they do what they do in the classroom. She believes this partnership has caused a "consciousness raising." At Cowan Elementary School, liaison Kay Stickle talks about how the teachers are learning from the university students and changing the way they do things because they see the effectiveness of new methods. She has been working with the Cowan staff on rubrics, which are now used in the parent conferences.

BSU liaisons are teaching in elementary classrooms. Scott Popplewell teaches 5th grade students at Storer one day a week. Nancy Melsner substitutes in Forest Dale classrooms while the teachers share their expertise with the university students. Jim Stroud takes his experiences from CUMNS back to methods classes at the university.

Anderson on the move with participation

THINGS ARE HAPPENING at both Anderson High Schools in preparation for the 380/385 participation students for the upcoming second semester. Thanks to the leadership of AL Miller at Anderson HS, Jane Reams at Highland HS, their respective committees of interested and dedicated educators, and their respective administrators, these educators have planned, along with the help of the Ball State faculty - Bonnie Wible, John Strouse, and Glenn Peoples - an education experience for 25 BSU participants. The committees have surveyed their faculties to identify those interested in having a Ball State student in their classroom, have planned experiences for the students to participate in their respective schools including writing reflective journals. They have planned with their feeder middle schools, and have met to match the content areas of the participants with the teaching areas of those involved.

The committees have planned a mini training session for the participation teachers prior to the start of the second semester. The session will include introduction to the INTASC standards which will be a focus of the students' field experience, introduction to participation from the Ball State perspective, and introduction to participation from the Anderson perspective.

This session will be held on January 6th at Highland High School. The teachers will receive a profile of their student prior to the experience.

In conjunction with the participation course, another opportunity will be made available to the Anderson teachers

as professional development. There will be openings for those teachers who are interested in the 520/550 Computer Technology course that BSU students will be taking from 3-4 p.m. which will be taught in Anderson, on site. This course will help those who are novices with technology and will also help those who want knowledge in how to integrate technology into their classroom.

This is an important aspect of the PDS experience that not only do local educators provide the mentoring for participation students, but they also can participate in professional development activities provided by Ball State.

The goal for these two PDS sites is for future students who do participation at Anderson High Schools to do their student teaching there also. The students will already be familiar with the teachers, the students, and the operation of the school. The students will be able to take charge of the classroom earlier and with greater ease. This will help the students in the classrooms as well as the teachers.

This is an exciting time for all involved with this PDS project. The students are excited. The teachers are excited. The Ball State faculty are excited. All those involved will greatly benefit from this valuable experience. The knowledge and skills gained from this type of setting will greatly enhance the credentials of those pre-service candidates seeking employment. The participation by the cooperating teachers in this project will greatly enhance their skills through professional development and will increase the pride they have in their profession, knowing they have helped secure the future of the education profession. Our children deserve no less than the best qualified educators in front of the classroom - now and in the future. This experience will better prepare those educators and help ensure their success.

Delegation attends Holmes Conference

ONCE AGAIN, the Ball State PDS Network was highly visible at the annual Holmes Partnership Conference held in Boston January 29-31. Forty-three representatives from the Network attended the conference and participated in various work groups and role-alike sessions, working with others from around the country to advance the work of professional education and development through the professional development school model.

At the closing session, Ball State was recognized as one of only four universi-

ties that have placed documentation in the Holmes document web site. Some of these BSU documents were used as examples in unveiling the new web site. Visit this growing library of information about partnerships around the country at www.udel.edu/holmes/hpdf/. You will find lots of fascinating details about what other partnerships are doing.

Finally, as a result of feedback from local partners, we anticipate that Holmes will become more focused on providing more informative and practical sessions for local schools in the future.

WellEngaged Software Purchased to Improve Communication

THROUGH AN EDUCATE INDIANA GRANT we have been able to purchase WellEngaged Software to create our on-line community of learners. Dr. Denham Grey of GreyMatter, Inc. in Indianapolis will be our facilitator for discussions. The purpose of these discussion groups is to bring together educators interested in discussing Professional Development Schools, and to assist us in having intelligent, informative, and thought provoking conversations. These conversations can focus on the Professional Development School standards or any professional development conversation that you might deem necessary or interesting. This is an opportunity to exchange ideas, discuss important issues, share your feelings, and to create. This also allows us a way to storehouse common knowledge.

Each on-line community is divided into forums. A forum is usually organized around a specific subject or theme. Each forum is facilitated by Denham Grey who is responsible for maintaining

the forum area, helping keep conversations on track, and assisting new participants. Sometimes these forums have specific rules governing the conversations. Denham will assist you in applying the rules. Within each forum there may be several ongoing discussions. In order for you to participate in a discussion, you must enter a response. The responses are displayed sequentially by date and time of entry with the most recent response displayed last. You may only add your response to the end of the conversation at the bottom of the page.

In order for you to participate in these conversations, you must enter an on-line community using a worldwide browser including Netscape, Navigator 2.0 and higher, or Internet Explorer 3.0 or higher. Your browser must be able to display tables and frames, and accept "cookies" (the information packets that help the software keep track of the conversation you want to follow). Forums and discussion will be displayed on your

web browser. You may design a personal start page, which allows you to choose a wide variety of options including your user profile, favorite discussions, and display preferences.

We think that this is a great way keep in touch with each other as well as to increase professional development. We certainly can invite experts throughout the country to join in our conversations for a period of time or we may invite educators to participate from other Professional Development Schools. Your suggestions to any of these opportunities will be appreciated. To register for the WellEngaged discussions, please bookmark this URL: <http://discussions.wellengaged.com/WE/disussions.cgi/ballstate/loginregister>

If you have questions or are having difficulty getting registered, please contact Denham Grey at 317-375-8630. We look forward to hearing from you on-line.

Carmel Clay

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A very special thank you is extended to Tony Willis, journalism teacher and communications department chair at Carmel High School, and Matt House, CHS junior and PDS Network newsletter editor, for their willingness to produce the newsletter for the partnership. The newsletter will provide a forum for Ball State University's PDS sites to share activities and ideas that will strengthen and enhance our partnership efforts.

The first Family Science Night was held at T.C. Steele Elementary School in Indianapolis on Thursday, November 19, 1998. Sponsored by Ball State and hosted by the university students in Dr. Melissa Warden's Science Methods class, the evening invited parents, children, and other family members to participate in "hands-on; minds-on" science fun. Forty-four different investigations covering such diverse topics as electricity, magnetism, density, gravity, insects, fossils, and states of matter allowed more than 200 adults and children to ask questions and test hypotheses. The evening also included drawings for prizes and a plentiful supply of soft drinks and freshly popped corn. Judging by the reaction of all who attended, Family Science Night at IPS School 98 will be a recurring event!





President Worthen Visits Each Official PDS Site

During the past three months Ball State University President John Worthen has personally presented a document to each site in the Professional Development Schools Network.

The professionally framed document acknowledges membership in the Ball State University PDS Network and the Holmes Partnership and commitment to the Holmes Principles. The documents

are signed by the president and the dean of the Teachers College, Roy Weaver.

During each presentation President Worthen expressed appreciation for the support given the Ball State students who are preparing for the teaching profession. He recognized this partnership as one in which all involved in educating students can learn and improve while working together.

BALL STATE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOLS network news

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