

An Investigation of the Benefits and Challenges of a New Professional Development School Partnership that Embedded the Three-Student Project

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ABSTRACT: Teacher candidates in one Professional Development School did make a difference in children's academic growth. This paper describes a mixed-methods study that investigated student achievement of elementary children after receiving interventions from teacher candidates and identified the perceived benefits and challenges of a new Professional Development School Partnership. Each teacher candidate was responsible for designing a Three-Student Project (3SP) (Tidwell, 2009) to support children in grades K-3. Candidates assisted mentor teachers with assessing students and identifying three children in need of academic or behavioral support. Based on the needs of the children, the teacher candidates designed and implemented interventions, and monitored 3SP students' progress. Quantitative data demonstrated academic gains for all of the children who received interventions. Perceptions of the benefits and challenges of the partnership, including the 3SP, were collected qualitatively through individual interviews of the building principal, mentor teachers, and teacher candidates.

Nine Essentials Addressed: #1/A comprehensive mission that is broader in its outreach and scope than the mission of any partner and that furthers the education profession and its responsibility to advance equity within schools and, by potential extension, the broader community; 4/A shared commitment to innovative and reflective practice by all participants

A Professional Development School's Teacher Candidates Raising Student Achievement Three Children at a Time

Working to meet more rigorous standards is a goal of both institutions of higher education and school districts. While school districts are charged with demonstrating students' mastery of core academic standards, teacher preparation programs are charged by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) "to ensure that effective partnerships and high-quality clinical practices are central to preparation so that candidates develop the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions necessary to demonstrate positive impact on all P-12 students' learning and development" (2013, p.6). Teacher candidates who are well-prepared are ready to assist classroom professionals with meeting the needs of all children and supporting them as they meet the requirements for their various grade levels. The goal of both institutions of higher education and school districts should be to create high quality teachers equipped with the necessary tools that lead to student achievement. Professional Development School (PDS) partnerships, which bring together institutions of higher learning and classroom professionals, create a dynamic team that is positioned to accept CAEP's challenge and meet core academic standards.

The mission statement of the PDS investigated in this study is the following: *The Professional Development School*

Partnership is designed to provide a web of collaboration that supports ongoing professional development for teachers and university faculty members, shares responsibility for the high quality preparation of future teachers, and results in student engagement and student achievement. The University and the School District are committed to advancing the education profession and raising student achievement through innovative and reflective practices, specifically by implementing the Three-Student Project (Tidwell, 2009).

Purpose

The underlying purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the documented and perceived benefits and challenges of a new Professional Development School (PDS) Partnership that embedded the Three-Student Project (3SP) (Tidwell, 2009). The University and School District are neighbors; however, there was no formal, sustained partnership with the School District and University's Early Childhood with Special Education (ECSP) Program. Due to the new Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) Standards for teacher education and the Pennsylvania Core Academic Standards for public school districts, the need for a professional development school partnership was identified by a University faculty member in collaboration with School District teachers and administrators. CAEP (2013) Standard 2 mandates that the provider of the teacher education program works with partners to design clinical experiences of sufficient depth, breadth,

diversity, coherence, and duration to ensure candidates demonstrate their effectiveness and positive impact on student learning. The Pennsylvania Core's five standards categories provide clear expectations that are aligned to future higher educational needs. These standards ensure that all students will be well-prepared to compete among their peers. The Pennsylvania Core's Standard 1: Foundational Skills focuses on early childhood and is a critical component of an effective and comprehensive reading plan which addresses the needs of all primary students. The University and School District implemented a PDS model in the 2014-2015 academic year to assist in meeting these standards.

It was important to study this new partnership to determine the feasibility of the 3SP and a continued relationship. Questions addressed were as follows:

1. What are teacher candidates', teachers', and the school principal's perceptions of the benefits and challenges of the Professional Development School's Three-Student Project?
2. What effect, if any, did the Three-Student Project have on student achievement on classroom assessments and/or behavior issues?

Literature Review

In his controversial report, *Educating School Teachers*, Arthur Levine (2006) proclaimed that it is time to redesign teacher education to produce more high quality educators "with the skills and knowledge necessary to raise student achievement to the highest levels in history" (p. 12). He suggested that teacher educators must prepare teachers for the "realities of today's classrooms" and "for a world in which the only measure of success is student achievement" (p. 104). In his conclusion, Levine recommended transforming teacher education into professional schools that focus on classroom practice.

Investigations into best practice in teacher education preparation suggest that promoting closer contact between higher education faculty and school district personnel, increasing field experiences, and connecting programs to academic standards show promise (Beare, Torgeson, Marshall, Tracz, & Chiero, 2012). Partnerships between school districts and institutions of higher education allow organizations to leverage their assets and expand their individual and collective knowledge bases (McCray, Rosenberg, Brownell, deBettencourt, Leko, & Long, 2011). However, implementing a significant educational change requires extensive and continuous time, resources, professional development, and implementation support across systems (Shroyer, Yahnke, Bennett, & Dunn, 2007). Creating effective school and university partnerships requires time upfront to establish ground rules, clarify the tasks to be undertaken, identify supports required for successful implementation, and ensure that a shared vision and mission exist between partners (Doolittle, 2008).

In her edited book *Professional Development Schools: Schools for Developing a Profession*, Linda Darling-Hammond (2005) stated adamantly that each school district and university partnership is unique and experiences its own challenges with implementation. Her book describes various models of Professional Development Schools and each is structured uniquely and developed to meet the needs of the university and the school district.

Best practices for early intervention provide learners who struggle with small group instruction (Jensen, 2006). Response To Intervention (RTI), more recently termed Response to Intervention and Instruction (RTII), is an evaluation model that enables school personnel to deliver sound instruction to students who might otherwise fail (Barnes & Harlocker, 2008). It is a data-driven, systematic way of identifying, defining, and resolving students' academic and/or behavior challenges. Steps in the RTI model include problem identification, problem definition, designing intervention plans, implementing the intervention, and progress monitoring and problem solution (Brown-Chidsey & Steege, 2010).

The Three-Student Project (3SP) (Tidwell, 2009) is related to the RTI model in that it is a data-based method of identifying and resolving children's academic and/or behavioral issues.

Tidwell first implemented the 3SP in an urban PDS setting and required collaboration between a pre-service teacher, classroom teacher, university faculty member, and when possible, a child's family member, in order to remediate or enrich students in need. Steps in the 3SP process are 1) assess and analyze data 2) identify three students 3) design a plan 4) work the plan 5) monitor the progress and 6) be accountable. Appendix A defines each step in the process and is given to all teacher candidates and mentor teachers at the partnering university.

Several benefits were identified by Tidwell as a result of the 3SP. Children received positive one-on-one interventions, built confidence in school and life, increased class participation, and developed strong student-teacher relationships. Teacher candidates got authentic classroom practice analyzing data, differentiating instruction to meet the needs of diverse children, and receiving mentorship from experienced, quality professional educators. Classroom teachers gained additional support from trained pre-service teachers to provide individualized instruction to children, and were able to teach with a smaller student/teacher ratio when the three students were pulled for interventions. Families benefited by receiving additional academic or behavioral support for their children and they received progress reports regularly.

The entire school community received accolades for higher academic achievement; in fact, the 3SP was credited by the building principal as reversing the achievement gap between African American and White students within Tidwell's urban district (2009).

In their research on theme-based models of PDSs, Antonek, Matthews, and Levin (2005) discovered that a theme-based partnership adds value to a PDS because university faculty members can share their expertise and research with teacher

candidates and practicing teachers. Themes that were implemented in their study included Paideia, environmental education, and English as a second language. The researchers concluded that in the theme-based model, children in their practicum sites received more individualized and differentiated instruction when pre-service teachers were in the classrooms. Although Response to Intervention (RTI) and the Three Student Project (3SP) are not themes, they relate to Antonek, Matthews, and Levin's theme approach due to the administrative support, willingness and expertise of classroom teachers, school based initiatives that support individualized instruction, and the ability of the investigator to conduct research at the PDS site.

The author based this study on the research provided within this literature review. It was past time for a change in the way teacher candidates were prepared, or not prepared, in the study's University to face the challenges of today's wonderfully diverse classrooms. A collaborative partnership was formed where both the University and School District, with the support of two small grants, provided the necessary time and resources to design and implement a PDS that embedded the 3SP and focused on student achievement and high quality preparation for tomorrow's teachers.

Methodology

Settings

The Elementary School in this project is in a semi-rural district and is designated as a Title I school. At the time of this study, 43% of students were considered economically disadvantaged with 47.6% receiving free or reduced lunches. The year prior to this study, one-fourth of the students were basic or below basic in reading and approximately one-fourth of the students were basic or below basic in mathematics. Almost 20% of the students were identified as students with special needs and had Individualized Education Plans. The students are predominantly White.

The University is one of several institutions of higher education in a state system. It was once a normal school and has a rich history of teacher education. The Early Childhood with Special Education Program is a relatively new program with approximately eighty graduates per year. Teacher candidates have been scoring consistently above the State pass rates on the teacher licensure examinations. Participants were all in their senior year at the time of this study.

During the fall semester, for the first ten weeks the candidates were in their PDS three half days and one full day per week while simultaneously taking courses at the University; then, they were in their school all day for the last five weeks. During their spring student teaching semester, they returned to the same classrooms all day for the first seven and one-half weeks.

Data Collection

Quantitative data were collected through children's assessments. All children in each early childhood education classroom participating in the PDS partnership were assessed using

standard district assessments as per standard classroom practice. Assessments included, but were not limited to, NWEA®, DIBELS®, i-Ready® Math, DRA®, and letter/sound and sight word recognition tests. As a result of the evaluations, three children in every classroom (plus one additional kindergarten child) were identified by classroom teachers and teacher candidates as needing academic or behavior support. Seven kindergarten students, three first grade students, three second grade students, and three third grade students were selected to receive the interventions. Their initial assessment results were coded by the teacher candidates and given to the investigator. Teacher candidates, in collaboration with the classroom teacher, investigator, and investigator's graduate assistant, designed interventions then provided those interventions to the children during the academic year. Children were assessed again at mid-term to determine if the interventions were working and whether or not the interventions needed to be continued and/or revised. Final assessments were conducted at the end of the teacher candidates' field experience. The final assessment data were coded and given to the investigator.

Qualitative data were collected through interviews of the building principal, mentor teachers, and teacher candidates. One principal, four teachers (one teacher went on leave prior to the end of the candidate's classroom placement), and five teacher candidates participated in the interviews. The building principal, teachers, and teacher candidates were interviewed by the investigator's graduate assistant to determine the perceived benefits and challenges of the Professional Development School (PDS) model with the Three-Student Project (3SP) (Tidwell, 2009). The graduate assistant recorded and transcribed all of the interviews. Teacher candidates' logs and final reports relating to the 3SP were reviewed and analyzed. These documents are part of the program's requirements for student teaching in a PDS.

Results

This section describes the results of the examinations of the quantitative and qualitative data and is based on student assessment scores, document reviews, and interviews. Sixteen children's academic assessment data are revealed in Tables 1 through 4 and described briefly in this section. There were only a couple of children for whom behavioral interventions were provided and the results are explained. Information from interviews of one principal, four early childhood classroom teachers, and five teacher candidates are revealed.

The Three-Student Project

The Three-Student Project (3SP) was first implemented in an urban PDS partnered with the same University. As stated earlier, remarkable results were documented from that PDS site (Tidwell, 2009). This study was designed to examine the effects of the 3SP within a PDS in a more rural setting. Pre-intervention baseline scores were collected in September unless otherwise

Table 1. Kindergarten 3SP Results

Student	Skill and/or Assessment	Intervention(s)	Pre- Intervention Score	Post- Intervention Score
KS1 ^a	On-Task Behavior	Give me 5	18	5
KS2 ^a	Sight Words Recognition	Phonics Flash Cards Word Wall	14/49	18/48
KS3 ^a	Mathematics Enrichment (i-Ready)	Reading Together Manipulatives Fact Families 100s Charts Story Problems	409	462
KS4	Letter Identification	Alphabet Cards Play Dough Race Track Letters	5 Uppercase 5 Lowercase	17 Uppercase 15 Lowercase
KS5	DIBELS	Picture/Sound Match Finger Spelling Alphabet Books Alphabet Puzzles	16	23
KS6 ^b	Letter and Number Recognition 1:1 Correspondence	Letter Puzzles Letter Cards Letter Books Race Track Alphabet Penguin Cards Ten Frame Cards Square Tiles	5 Letters Wrote 1-4 Identified 1-3	9 Letters Wrote 1-11 (skipped 3) Identified 1,2,3,4,5,7,8,9
KS7	Letter Sounds Word Recognition	Stretch Words Fluency Cards Homework Help	16 Sounds 0 Words	23 Sounds 5 Words

^aThese students were not identified for the 3SP until January.

^bThis student was an English Language Learner.

noted and post-intervention scores were collected in late-February or early March.

Table 1 illustrates the results of the 3SP interventions for the kindergarten children. One child improved behaviorally, one child was enriched in mathematics, and five children demonstrated academic gains in literacy. Note that one additional child was identified later in the process so that was an extra student added to one candidate's project.

First grade results are captured in Table 2. All three students were targeted for academic support. Two of the first graders made gains in all assessments except i-Ready Mathematics.

The lack of gain was attributed to the fact that the interventions were more literacy focused and RTI Mathematics did not begin until later in the school year. The third student had 40 unexcused absences during the intervention period; however, the child did show academic gains with sight word recognition.

Table 3 highlights the results of the second grade 3SP. All three children needed support with reading. One child did not improve in the DRA due to the intervention period not beginning until late October. That child did improve on the NWEA and DIBELS assessments. The other two children showed improvement on all three evaluations.

Third grade 3SP interventions began in September and data were collected at the end of January. Table 4 shows the results of the third graders' assessments. One child, TS3, was already at

grade level in reading; her interventions were more "social based" than academic. The other two children received mathematics interventions and achieved higher scores on the NWEA mathematics assessment.

Benefits of the 3SP. All 16 children who received interventions demonstrated academic and/or behavioral improvement. When asked to reflect on the academic and/or behavioral gains of their students as a result of the 3SP, all of the teacher candidates recognized gains. Many of the results were expected and seen in Tables 1-4; however, there were some unanticipated outcomes as a result of the one-on-one attention and support. One candidate was proud to report the academic gains of two of her students and the unanticipated outcome for another child. She stated,

One of my students started out at a 12 DRA level at the beginning of the school year and is now at an 18. Another one went up. . . I think she was at a 14 and is now at an 18 or 24. The other one didn't make gains on paper but I feel like he made gains socially. He is a lot more social with the other kids than he was at the beginning of the year. Even though that wasn't part of my plan, I think it's working. He actually plays with other kids during recess. He doesn't want to play alone any more. He speaks out in class. When I call on him in class he seems to actually be paying attention more.

Table 2. First Grade 3SP Results

Student	Skill and/or Assessment	Intervention(s)	Pre- Intervention Score	Post- Intervention Score
FS1	Math: Order	Number Line	14/20	60/60
	Math: # Rec	Flash Cards	23/30	60/60
	NWEA: Math	Coins	153	169
	i-Ready Math	Fact Families	382	379
	Sight Words	Dice	6/42	40/42
	NWEA: Read	Roll and Read	152	159
	DIBELS DRA	Buzz Game Practice Worksheets Books with Digraphs		19 Level 3
FS2	Math: Order	Number Clip Cards		0/20
	Math: # Rec	Flash Cards		60/60
	NWEA: Math	Coins Dice		21/30
	i-Ready Math	Buzz Game Practice		167
	Sight Words	Worksheets		391
	NWEA: Read	Go Fish Game		6/42
	DIBELS DRA	Books		150 18
FS3 ^a	Site Words	Visual Phonics BUZZ game Matching		Level 3 12/42

^aThis student was absent 40 days during the intervention period.

He really enjoys the one-on-one. He talks a lot more in the one-on-one.

Another candidate reflected,

With the one student, I wanted to work on counting and recognizing numbers and in this last round of testing, I could see that he could write and identify all numbers. One of the students, her goal was to get her homework done because that is what she struggled with at home. She wasn't getting the attention at home to do the homework so every day I would sit with her and help her get her homework done. I was like the homework mom I guess! We also worked on word fluency because she struggled with that. . .but I think doing the homework together was more beneficial than anything for her.

After describing the academic gains of two of her 3SP students, a candidate remarked,

The third student I took on was above the norm but she needed nurturing and a positive role model. Her issue was more behavior. I did see her gain in behavior, positive behavior, but then she slipped back and now she is kind of back to her old ways again. I don't know; she didn't need academic help so maybe my plan should have been more behavior. Academically, though, she's soaring!

One teacher candidate saw "huge academic gains" and was excited to share her results. One of her students was absent frequently but still made progress:

There were slight academic gains but I have seen an improvement in her. She's opened up a lot; she was a

Table 3. Second Grade 3SP Results

Student	Skill and/or Assessment	Intervention(s)	Pre- Intervention Score	Post- Intervention Score
SS1	DRA	DOLCH words Games Stories	12	18
	NWEA: Read		173	183
	DIBELS		33	57
SS2	DRA	DOLCH words Games Stories	16	18
	NWEA: Read		154	172
	DIBELS		49	79
SS3 ^a	DRA	DOLCH words Games Stories	8	8
	NWEA: Read		152	171
	DIBELS		24	35

^aThis student did not receive the first intervention until late October.

Table 4. Third Grade 3SP Results

Student	Skill and/or Assessment	Intervention(s)	Pre- Intervention Score	Post- Intervention Score
TS1	NWEA: Math	Flash Cards Games Puzzles Fact Families Word Problems	175	192
TS2	NWEA: Math	Problem of the Day Flash Cards Counters Dice Puzzles Word Problems	177	198
TS3	NWEA: Read	Read Book Journal Prompts Stop and Jot Questioning Character Chat	201	205

lot more shy. Now she's a lot more willing to try. And so I thought that was beneficial.

An additional candidate reflected on the great gains by students in the i-Ready mathematics program. Then, she highlighted the behavioral gains of one student:

One, we just did observations because of her behavior. She couldn't sit still and not talk and was off task the whole time. . . At the beginning of the semester I observed her. She was off task 18 times within 30 minutes. The teacher had to talk to her 18 times! When I did, like the middle, I just observed for the same time of day for 30 minutes and it was only 10 times. And when I did this past week, I only had to talk with her 8 times in 30 minutes. So she really did amazingly. . . We were focusing on behavioral gains, staying on task and it worked. We would practice staying on task when we were working like with sight words or math, whatever the topic was that week. So her gains were both academic and behavioral.

Mentor teachers also addressed the academic and behavioral gains, anticipated and unanticipated, by the children who were involved in the 3SP. One mentor remarked,

I believe they all showed gains in all areas from those interventions. Some areas are greater than others, of course, but ultimately all are showing gains. . . just having that additional opportunity to work with a caring adult. . . there's an intangible component there. I see gains. . . in both behavioral as well as academics because it's so intertwined, the academics and the behavior. One of the students she works with is an English second language student, and I see through her interactions with him more confidence, and it's just really helping him feel more secure about what's going on in the classroom.

A second mentor reflected on the results of the data and the carryover from academic achievement to behavioral gains:

We were able to look at the data and see where they started with their levels and see where they are now and they all made gains. And we could see that based on data! And in terms of behavior, well that just carried over into what the students are doing in class and how they are feeling about themselves as learners. They feel more confident in their abilities; it's backed up by data that they are making these gains.

Another mentor discussed the advantage of having support for students who would not otherwise qualify:

We had one little guy who didn't know a ton of his letters. Now he knows all of his letters! He didn't qualify for some of the other pull-outs because he didn't make the cut. He wasn't the lowest of the kids, but she was able to get him back up there. . .

The final mentor commented on the gains in the area of mathematics but also in the children's confidence levels:

I saw improvement. In fact, confidence levels improved and behavior, as well. They just became more confident and they just settled down a bit. They're more focused. They just seem to feel like they fit in better with the group.

When the principal was asked to describe the benefits to the children he perceived from the PDS partnership in general, he remarked,

The biggest one is the child study, the three child study. They're an at-risk group of kids. . . the whole academic thing is outstanding. What they get emotionally from having that young student teacher that everyone's chomping at the bit to get attention from is huge. A lot of these kids go home to a game station; that's what

they do. To be here and get that extra attention, well that's huge.

Challenges of the 3SP. As the above results indicate, the 3SP was a very successful component of this Professional Development School partnership. Teacher candidates, mentor teachers, and the building principal all saw clear, positive improvements in children's academic achievement and social and behavioral gains as a result of the interventions. There were, however, a few challenges to the implementation of the 3SP.

The first challenge was the result of an expectation from the University supervisor that the children's assessments would be completed the first week of school and interventions would start the second week. One mentor teacher addressed the unreasonableness of the expectation:

I think the biggest challenge would be how to get the ball rolling on the Three-Student Project. I think we started a little too early. I didn't even know my kids well enough to get a really good objective and goal to work with them.

Another mentor would also have preferred waiting to identify the children:

Looking at data from the year before is helpful, however, that can change over the summer. So I think classroom teachers need to be given some time to get to know their students before we identify the students that we want to have our girls or young men work with.

One of the candidates agreed saying,

I think waiting to identify the 3SP students...You might want to wait and see what [other services] they are identified for first and what Title services the student is going to receive before deciding about who to pull for the 3SP.

A second challenge identified by mentor teachers and teacher candidates was time to pull the children to perform the interventions. During the spring student teaching semester as the candidates' teaching loads increased it was difficult to find the time to work with children individually. One candidate reflected,

It was really hard to meet three students three times a week because you don't want to pull them during instructional time, and during play time they cry. At the beginning of the year we didn't want to pull them during nap/rest time so it was difficult trying to find time and figure out when to pull them for something that they need.

One of the mentor teachers also described a time challenge:

It's challenging because of my time...But I have to work through that, seeing as she was my first student

teacher. That might represent a learning curve for me...And learning how to manage time...just trying to manage the 3SP especially the second semester when they [candidates] have so many responsibilities and so many lesson plans to plan for and write and have the materials ready...

The third and final challenge identified was the implementation of the 3SP. Two of the mentor teachers thought a gradual implementation would be more beneficial to the children and to the teacher candidates. They recommended starting with one student, then picking up a second student, and eventually adding a third child.

Benefits and challenges surface in any new initiative. Fortunately, the principal, mentors, and teacher candidates who participated in this study were committed to the success of this partnership and through reflection, shared openly their feelings about the 3SP. Based upon the quantitative and qualitative data, implications will be discussed and conclusions drawn.

Discussion

The research questions for this study sought to examine the perceptions of the benefits and challenges of the Three-Student Project (3SP) embedded in a Professional Development School (PDS) and whether or not the 3SP had an impact on children's academic achievement or behavioral gains. Quantitative data illustrated that children did show academic gains as a result of the 3SP. Results of the qualitative interviews identified clear benefits and challenges of the 3SP in this PDS partnership. Academic, as well as behavioral and social gains were observed.

Children's assessment scores improved and behavioral issues lessened. Children were described as being more confident, more outgoing, and more focused.

Limitations

As with most studies, this one has limitations. First, because this investigation was conducted in a single site with relatively few participants, results are unable to be generalized. Also, since there was only one principal, it is difficult to keep his identity anonymous.

Additionally, the researcher had been a teacher and principal in the building site for several years prior to becoming a University professor and had a friendly relationship with some of the mentor teachers; therefore, some of the mentors may have been hesitant to provide negative information so as not to seem overly critical of the initiative.

Recommendations

The Three-Student Project (3SP) was a worthwhile project that made an impact on children. The steps in the 3SP (Appendix A) were appropriate and provided the necessary support to raise

student achievement. The following are recommendations for implementation based on the results of the study:

1. Allow at least three to four weeks at the beginning of the school year for the mentor teachers and teacher candidates to get to know the children and thoroughly assess their needs prior to starting the interventions.
2. Implement the 3SP gradually. Begin with one student then add the second, and eventually the third.
3. If scheduling time to meet with children is an issue, and two or more students need the same interventions, meet with pairs or small groups of students as opposed to always meeting one-on-one.

Conclusions

If we are in fact living in the world described by Levine (2006) where success is determined by student achievement then this Professional Development School (PDS) partnership can be deemed a success. The results of this study demonstrate that teacher candidates made a difference in the learning and development of the children. Perhaps the results were not as impactful as those in Tidwell's (2009) site but the Three-Student Project (3SP) was successful in an elementary school in a semi-rural school district. Anticipated outcomes were demonstrated in assessment data and unanticipated outcomes were observed in the daily interactions of children in a classroom community.

All four of the mentor teachers who were interviewed agreed to take PDS candidates and continue the 3SP for the next academic year. One mentor said, "I'd have trouble saying no because of all the goodness I see develop. . . I would because the benefits to all three of us - to the kids, to the University student, and to myself." Another mentor agreed by stating, "Absolutely, it is a relationship that is beneficial for so many." And a third teacher remarked, "Yes, yes, I can't wait!" The five teacher candidates all agreed, that looking back, if given the choice between the traditional pre-student teaching and student teaching experiences and the PDS model, they would all choose the PDS with the 3SP model. One candidate said,

Oh no question, PDS. Even going in and knowing the demands and the difficulty of those first ten weeks, I would do it again. I would do it again in a heartbeat and I would get other people to do it. . . I was able to connect theory to practice right away and what I was reading in the textbooks just made sense because I was seeing it every day.

Another candidate proclaimed, "This is the *best* way to become a teacher. I can't imagine doing it any other way."

The building principal committed to continuing the PDS and has doubled the number of placements for the next academic year. In response to being asked if he supported continuing the partnership he said, "Absolutely. Absolutely. . . this was a long time coming here. . . so many [people] benefit from this partnership." He was also asked what advice he would

give other districts who are considering PDS partnerships and he replied, "I *really strongly* would recommend a PDS relationship."

When asked why they enter the teaching profession, pre-service teachers often proclaim they want to make a difference in the lives of children. It can be readily concluded that the teacher candidates in this Professional Development School did make a remarkable difference in children's academic, behavioral, and social achievement. Although not without challenges, the Three-Student Project is clearly a worthwhile and valuable component of this Professional Development School partnership. One candidate summarized the PDS relationship well when she said, "But the benefits definitely outweighed the challenges ten to one. I just can't put it in words, it was so incredible." ^{SUP}

Appendix A

Three-Student Project (3SP) Summary

Teacher candidates will work with mentor teachers and faculty liaisons to identify students and implement the Three-Student Project. The Project is based on the classroom setting, age/grade of the children, and needs of the district; thus, it may be modified for different environments.

Literacy and mathematics should be targeted; however, an interdisciplinary approach is acceptable.

OBJECTIVE: Provide individual support to students who need academic and/or behavioral interventions to improve achievement.

STEPS:

1. **Assess and Analyze Data**
 - Use classroom and/or standardized assessments to identify students in need of support
2. **Identify Three Students**
 - Choose three students who need individual support. These may be students with IEPs, GIEPs, Behavior Plans, identified for Title I services, or any student considered to be at-risk of academic failure.
3. **Design a Plan**
 - Make a schedule to meet with students three or more days per week
 - Collect baseline data
 - Create an intervention plan (Identify skills, prioritize skills, develop various strategies to address each skill)
4. **Work the Plan**
 - During the first part of the fall semester, conduct at least three 15-minute sessions per week; during the

end of the fall and all of the spring semester, conduct at least four 15-minute sessions per week.

5. Monitor the Progress

- Analyze weekly formative and summative data from 3SP and classroom assessments
- Conduct periodic formal assessments (DIBELS, etc.)

6. Be Accountable

- Keep a log of all interactions with students
- Update regularly classroom mentor teachers (and other educators who work with your 3SP students such as the Title I teacher, regular education teacher, or special education teacher), children's parents/guardians, and faculty liaisons

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