

# *Creating Active and Reflective Educators through CARE: A PDS Partnership between Federal Hocking Local Schools and OHIO University*

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**ABSTRACT:** Creating Active and Reflective Educators (CARE) is a Professional Development School (PDS) partnership between The Patton College of Education at Ohio University and Federal Hocking Local Schools (FHLS) in rural Southeastern Ohio. This partnership, which won the 2018 NAPDS Award for Exemplary Professional Development School Achievement, is one of the oldest in The Patton College of Education. It was founded on Dewey's principles of democratic and experiential education. As a PDS partnership, CARE recruits teacher candidates from Middle Childhood Education (MCE) and Adolescent-to-Young Adult (AYA) programs in the Patton College. These candidates must apply for program admission and then take additional coursework to participate. Candidates matriculate as a cohort, developing strong relationships and learning from others who are working together is similar democratic and pragmatic experiences. In this report, we provide an overview of CARE as an award-winning partnership framed by the National Association of Professional Development Schools nine essentials.

*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; 2. A school–university culture committed to the preparation of future educators that embraces their active engagement in the school community; 3. Ongoing and reciprocal professional development for all participants guided by need; 4. A shared commitment to innovative and reflective practice by all participants; 5. Engagement in and public sharing of the results of deliberate investigations of practice by respective participants; 6. An articulation agreement developed by the respective participants delineating the roles and responsibilities of all involved; 7. A structure that allows all participants a forum for ongoing governance, reflection, and collaboration; 8. Work by college/university faculty and P–12 faculty in formal roles across institutional settings; and 9. Dedicated and shared resources and formal rewards and recognition structures.

Creating Active and Reflective Educators (CARE) is a school–university partnership that was initiated in the late 1980s. Resulting from a small group of educators and Ohio University professors valuing an authentic partnership, classroom teachers and professors began working together to prepare prospective teachers. These educators met regularly to discuss common concerns and study progressive, democratic teaching styles. From these dialogues, CARE was developed. Making CARE unique are the candidate's ability to work multiple semesters with the same mentor teacher and the importance given to development of learning communities. As well, the partnership's mission and its operating principles

drive the program and its reliance upon Federal Hocking teachers and administrators to teach CARE courses. In this article, representatives of this partnership provide a report of this unique, award-winning partnership framed by the National Association of Professional Development Schools (NAPDS) nine essentials.

## **Mission and Operating Principles of CARE (Essential 1)**

As a clinical model partnership, CARE is supported by the Ohio University Center for Clinical Practice in Education in The Gladys W. and David H. Patton College of Education (PCOE).

The central purpose of the Center for Clinical Practice in Education is to foster and maintain outreach activities that connect the college to the community through Professional Development School Partnerships. The partnership strives to focus on the improvement of classroom teaching, student engagement, student and candidate learning, mentoring, and inquiry through the lens of democratic education. The partners are committed to the goal of high and equitable student achievement, to effective instructional practice, and to school structures that support student learning.

By working together to create new innovative programming through the mission and operating principles, CARE addresses 5 domains of practice: (1) social/cultural, (2) nature of the learner, (3) curriculum, (4) pedagogy, and (5) praxis and partnership. Since its inception, this partnership has grown to include three cohorts of students each year that work with and learn from Federal Hocking educators and CARE faculty that are experienced P12 practitioners. Candidates in CARE are placed with mentor teachers, often over two or more years with a goal of providing teachers with candidates who understand their teaching philosophy and the goals of the school (Federal Hocking is a member of the Coalition of Essential Schools and continues to actively integrate CES principles in the school's endeavors). Federal Hocking teachers and P12 students benefit from the deliberate overstaffing of FHLS classrooms that CARE provides. This model allows teacher candidates, mentor teachers, and P12 students to develop ongoing, long-term relationships, providing a distinctive model of instructional delivery.

Through an Annual Plan of Work, outlining school initiatives and how the PDS Partnership can best address and meet the needs of the individual school, CARE emphasizes a strong, positive impact on P12 student learning. Two ongoing examples of programming are (1) multi-year professional development focused on content-area literacy led by nationally-renowned leaders in the field, Daniels (2014; 2015) and Steineke (2002; 2016); , and (2) a five-year study of differentiated instruction led by Carol Ann Tomlinson (1999). The Tomlinson study is of critical importance given Federal Hocking's demographically diverse populations of economically disadvantaged and students with disabilities. With many of the candidates from suburban areas where student populations may not be as diverse, this focus aids them in learning to address the needs of all students. Other initiatives include explorations of current educational best practices, effective use of technology in the classroom, and an in-depth exploration of the 10 Common Principles of the Coalition of Essential School (CES), which include learning to use one's mind well; goals apply to all students; personalization; demonstration of mastery; and democracy and equity.

In addition to CES principles and Dewey's democratic theory, CARE also incorporates a strong community involvement component that stresses service to the community as well as the school. In recent years candidates have planned field trips to local businesses, state parks and community centers in which they have communicated with local representatives and

implemented the instructional activities leading to the visits. Activities have included helping to plan and chaperone Adventure Club canoeing and backpacking, operating an after-school program to develop a business and sell books for a local library, serving as assistant coaches for school sports, and supporting in the production of plays for the FHLS Drama Club. As well, candidates have worked with the university's Kids on Campus and the nearby Kilvert Community Center to preserve food for distribution to at-risk senior residents, worked the concession stand during sporting events, and organized a Community Service Day

With student learning and performance is always at the forefront, these CARE activities help to ensure Federal Hocking students are successful with learning through classroom projects and assignments, such as making presentations at local and national conferences, completing senior projects and internships, performing well on formative or summative assessment, and operationalizing service learning that impacts their communities.

## Summary of Work Relationship (Essential 2)

Mentor teachers from FHLS and university faculty from the Departments of Teacher Education and Educational Studies design and implement CARE curriculum that emphasizes democratic ideals in education (Dewey, 1916, 1938; Wood, 2005). In turn, teaching methods focus on learning-centered classrooms, collaborative curriculum development, cooperative learning, thematic and inquiry-based approaches, expeditionary learning, and project-centered formats. Activities during the past year that stressed community engagement included CARE teacher candidates working with Kids on Campus and the Kilvert Community Center to teach nutrition and preserve produce donated by local growers, which was then donated to the Kilvert Center.

Another important CARE activity has involved junior-year CARE teacher candidates co-teaching in the 7th grade elective course "Controversial Topics in a Democratic Society." Emphasizing progressive democratic practices, candidates planned and facilitated the course with the classroom teacher. Candidates rotated into the class for four-week periods in groups of 3-4. A team comprised of teacher candidates, the mentor teacher, PDS faculty coordinator, and middle school students presented the results of this work at the National Network for Educational Renewal conference, and were subsequently invited to present at the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Conference in Washington D.C.

In a related activity, two junior level CARE teacher candidates were invited to "take over" the fifth grade social studies program at one of the FHLS elementary schools. For 12 weeks, they develop curriculum, made lesson plans, and taught 3-4 days a week under the supervision of their mentor teacher. Similarly, sophomore and junior candidates also spent the year assisting band parents working in the football concession stand for home games; additionally, a senior teacher candidate served

as an assistant football coach and 3 junior candidates also assisted junior high football/basketball coaches during the year.

Recent activities have included a Whole School Day of Service Learning, during which CARE sophomores and their FHLS student partners worked with area agencies in need of service. The secondary school (grades 7-12) participated in this day of community engagement. Participants landscaped at the courthouse, worked with nursing home residents, and stocked shelves at local food banks. As part of their Advanced Democratic Methods preparation class in their junior year, CARE cohort members plan, teach, and assess a course entitled Inquiry in Action at Federal Hocking High School each fall semester. Candidates meet weekly with the mentor teacher and CARE faculty member in order to plan the upcoming week.

### Professional Development (Essential 3)

*Use of graduate tuition waivers.* The university supports mentor teachers pursuing advanced degrees through the use of the graduate tuition waivers. Each academic year the Center for Clinical Practice in Education at Ohio University receives Provost Awards for scholarship. From this, an allotment of tuition waivers can be utilized by mentor teachers in the PDS partnerships. Mentor teachers design credit-bearing professional development workshops and book clubs that are supported by PCOE graduate credit waivers. Additionally, teachers may opt to take courses at the university.

*Training.* The university supports annual professional development study groups with FHLS; these projects are developed based on the needs identified by CARE. For example, the Fed Hock Teacher Center is made possible by the use of PCOE teaching fellows to support identified needs in the areas of literacy strategies, classroom environment, and differentiation. These opportunities allow school partners, university faculty, and teacher candidates to gain valuable information through the PDS professional development activities. School partners and university faculty work together to better understand new federal and state education initiatives and to better implement the new initiatives in the schools. They also work together to plan how to best prepare teacher candidates for the ever changing educational environment.

*Mentoring teacher candidates and co-teaching.* The mentoring workshop and the co-teaching workshop were developed for teachers working with teacher candidates during their clinical experiences. Teachers work together to learn strategies for engaging teacher candidates and how to best utilize the time candidates spend in classrooms to provide more instructional opportunities for P12 students. The PCOE and the Department of Teacher Education offer workshops to teachers free of charge, and many mentor teachers from the FHLS have participated regularly. Collaboratively, these teachers and university faculty develop valuable mentoring and co-teaching resources to share with other teachers in the region and beyond.

*Conference presentations.* The PCOE and FHLS have maintained ongoing efforts to provide travel and conference

expenses for PDS mentor teachers, administrators, CARE teachers, and university faculty. This support has allowed individuals to attend the NAPDS conference, the NNER conference, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards conference, and other local conferences and workshops. Since 2013, teachers, teaching fellows, and faculty have attended the NAPDS conference to present the work being done through the partnership.

### Innovative and Reflective Practices (Essential 4)

CARE highlights reflection and student-centered approaches. Along with teaching for democracy, these foci shape the classroom practice of both FHLS educators and partnership candidates. Evidence of this is seen in the innovative practices throughout classrooms in this school-university partnership, specifically co-teaching, modeling, differentiation, and participatory learning. For example, junior candidates are given full responsibility in small-group co-teaching experiences. During this time, they develop inquiry projects for and with secondary school students that align to the students' interests, empowering both the candidates and the students. One such inquiry project resulted in faculty, candidates, and students presenting at two national conferences and at the university in a PCOE outreach forum.

Additionally, all candidates in CARE are required to understand child development and observe in early childhood classrooms even as middle childhood or AYA majors. This requirement is based in the belief that all teachers need to have an understanding of all ages of students not only those in their licensure band. Likewise, CARE requires students to take a number of courses in addition to the regular educator preparation program. Introduction to Democracy and Education; Introduction to Democratic Teaching Methods; Childhood in America - Birth through Elementary School; Childhood in America - Adolescent through Adult; and Advanced Democratic Methods.

Another important innovative practice in this PDS partnership is the cohort structure. All PDS candidates, including those in CARE, complete all of their related courses together in a cohort model, fostering collegial working relationships and supporting the social foundations of the program. Advancing through the program in a network ensures the candidates work daily in "an associated way" (Dewey, 1916) with likeminded, supportive associates.

### Best Practice Examined (Essential 5)

All PDS programming for CARE is done in collaboration with the FHLS. This planning is intentional and specific to the needs of both the school and its learners. Through the Center for Clinical Practice in Education, schools and faculty have multiple opportunities to engage in an ongoing reflective dialogue about programming and planning. Meetings across all PDS Partnership programs are held regularly; and all school administrators,

teacher liaisons, and mentor teachers are invited to be involved with The PCOE's Unit for the Preparation of Education Professionals (UPEP) meetings.

The partners collaborate and reflect on best practices in the schools and the university settings. They engage in ongoing dialogue, attend CARE faculty retreats, and engage in semester planning meetings. PDS partners have also sought opportunities to share this important work with districts across the region by participating in meetings and conferences outside of the Center for Clinical Practice in Education. By forging new relationships with institutions of higher education and schools outside of the immediate PDS network, the Center for Clinical Practice strives to share information while learning from others engaged in PDS partnership work. Other opportunities to share the work of CARE included visits from other institutions and NNER co-directors. Also, CARE has been showcased in videos for AACTE's *Research to Practice Spotlight*, (which began its series with three videos highlighting CARE), a 2014 AACTE clinical model video, *The Clinical Model of Teacher Preparation: A Partnership Between OHIO University and Federal Hocking Local Schools* for the 2014 AACTE Conference.

### Organizational Structure (Essentials 6 & 7)

Intentional structures (including the MOU/Articulation Agreement mentioned earlier) have been created to support the work of the partnership at all levels. The Center for Clinical Practice in Education and FHLSD both enjoy the benefits of close relationships and opportunities to work together to improve P-16 education for all. The Unit for the Preparation of Education Professionals (UPEP) serves as the CAEP-Affiliated tripartite organization of faculty and programs across Ohio University and its five regional campuses. Representatives from local partnering school districts, including the Federal Hocking Local Schools, serve on this committee along with faculty from all programs that prepare teacher candidates to be in the P12 schools.

In addition to the CAEP standards, UPEP has defined its own proficiencies and dispositions for teacher candidates. UPEP strives "to prepare leader-educators who share the commitment to serve society responsibly as change agents in meeting diverse human and social needs and to engage in lifelong learning" (Conceptual Core), and this work is done in partnership with university faculty and PDS school leaders.

The Communications and Connections (C&C) (2019) group, formed in 2006, includes superintendents, teachers, faculty, staff, and other educational partners. The mission that unites members of C&C is "to establish an aligned, agile, regional system of professional learning that meets the unique education needs of children and the broader demands of the global society" ([www.ohio.edu/education](http://www.ohio.edu/education)). This group has been instrumental in creating and analyzing data, resulting in the creation of six design teams that are currently engaged in ongoing inquiries: innovation in teaching, school based innovations, teacher residency programming in Ohio, technology in a global society, health and wellness and school leader academies. Federal Hocking, as well as other

PDS Partnership districts, have been active participants on the design teams since their inception.

With membership that includes PDS faculty coordinators and teacher liaisons, the PDS Steering Committee meets regularly to address PDS business and seek opportunities for collaboration amongst all programming. There are also PDS building-level steering committee meetings that are held in the schools with mentor teachers and administrators and a biannual PDS partnership meeting each term. During the pre-semester meetings, methods instructors are able to talk with teacher liaisons and faculty coordinators from each of the schools about their individual course expectations and course content. Teachers are then able to share information with instructors regarding curriculum and scheduling for the semester. These valuable conversations enhance the connection between the university and school partners, while strengthening the ties between theory and practice. These meetings are also extremely important because partners are able to reflect on programming and its impact on P12 student learning and teacher candidates.

Constant and effective communication is one of the most important components of this strong FHLSD PDS partnership with the Patton College. The Center for Clinical Practice in Education oversees the work of each PDS partnership and provides ongoing information to partners regarding programming. Faculty coordinators and teacher liaisons work together to provide leadership in each of the elementary PDS buildings and the secondary school PDS building. They also work closely with all stakeholders to carry out the work of the partnership to meet individual goals and reflect on programming and its impact on student learning and teacher candidate preparation. Partners benefit greatly from having opportunities to share individual PDS work, and PDS resources and programming ideas are often shared amongst the buildings in the district (see Figure 1). In addition, since CARE is very different from other partnerships in the Patton College, a *CARE Student Handbook*, a *CARE Advisors' Manual*, and a *CARE Mentor Teacher's Manual* have all been developed to clarify candidate responsibilities as well as partnership roles.

### Formal/Informal Roles (Essential 8)

The PDS Partnership with the Federal Hocking Schools spans two elementary buildings, the district secondary school, and two licensure areas in teacher education. It is important to note that school/university partnerships at Ohio University do not follow a single model, either in structure or in the framework of mission/purpose that guides the collaborations of any given partnership faculty. Rather, structures and frameworks have evolved in line with the interests and preferences of school-based teacher leaders and university faculty in the PDS partnerships.

Each PDS partnership at OHIO University has a faculty coordinator on campus who works with the teacher liaison in the partnership building. These positions are vital to the success of the PDS programming with the "Faculty Coordinator" being a position from the university and the "Teacher Liaison" being a classroom teacher from the school. Each position has specific

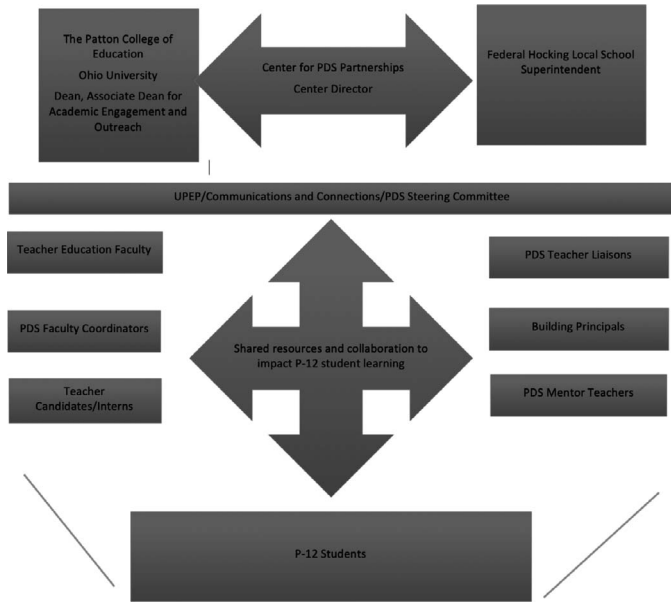


Figure 1. Diagram of PDS Partnership Organizational Structure

expectations, but they work together to provide support to PDS students, teacher candidates, and classroom teachers. CARE has two faculty coordinators who share the responsibility of facilitation: one teaches courses and works in the schools to support and mentor candidate placements and activities and the other facilitates the university requirements of course scheduling, meeting college requirements, communication with other college personnel, PDS programming, and other college responsibilities. The faculty coordinators are also responsible for collecting placement data and interacting with faculty on campus about candidate progress.

The teacher liaison advises candidates throughout the year, provides information and support for the PDS seminars, and provides information for mentor teachers regarding methods course expectations and candidate work. The teacher liaison organizes and oversees candidate intervention programming and other PDS activities in the school as well as communicates professional development requests for graduate credit waivers to The PCOE. The CARE Teacher Liaison also serves as the coordinator of the Federal Hocking Secondary School Teacher Center and is responsible for professional development activities for all school faculty. CARE candidates are invited to attend all teacher professional development held at the school as well as serve as co-presenters at workshops and conferences across the country. Because CARE feels strongly that candidates learn and implement progressive practices, the CARE teacher liaison also acts as the clinical educator for any candidate who completes an internship at Federal Hocking while also serving as a CARE faculty member, teaching foundational methods courses.

To support the work of each PDS partnership, a teaching fellow on a graduate assistantship (GA), a fully licensed teacher, is placed in the classroom of a teacher liaison to *job share* classroom responsibilities for the year, thereby releasing the

liaison part-time to coordinate and oversee site-based aspects of the program, facilitate mentoring relationships, and consult with faculty who are teaching partnership courses. The teaching fellow is a full-time graduate student in The Patton College, and the fellowship provides valuable teaching experience and an opportunity for inquiry and research. The teaching fellow is mentored by the teacher liaison.

Mentor teachers open their classrooms to teacher candidates for the PDS year and give them opportunities to be full participants in the classroom/school community while providing ongoing mentoring support. The CARE teacher education faculty, who are all current or retired faculty from FHLS, and other college faculty collaborate with the school partners to discuss clinical expectations and teaching opportunities in the PDS classroom. They also work together on innovative programming such as teacher candidate implemented intervention programming and inquiry/research projects. Also exclusive to CARE, teacher candidates are placed in the PDS for two years as they complete their teaching methods coursework and have opportunities that extend beyond the classroom to provide intervention programming and work with other school initiatives as listed earlier. PDS students benefit from PDS programming as they learn in classrooms with multiple adults, engage in intervention programming made possible with PDS resources, and participate in PDS activities and inquiry projects.

Other key roles involved in the CARE PDS Partnership include the district superintendent and school principals. The superintendent collaborates with district leaders and the university in the approval of the Memorandum of Understanding - Articulation Agreement for the partnership between The Patton College and the Federal Hocking Local Schools. The building principals (some of whom have served as CARE faculty) work with the faculty coordinator and teacher liaison to make decisions regarding the work of the individual PDS partnership and other PDS business in the school.

### Resources (Essential 9)

Annually, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is put in place. This agreement outlines the relationship between the university and the school district. It also defines the resource sharing that supports the work of the PDS partnership. Each spring, the FHLS partners interview PCOE teacher candidates for graduate teaching fellowships. These job-sharing assistantship positions enable the teacher liaisons to be released from their classroom duties to engage in partnership work and other school-related initiatives. In addition to providing an in-depth, year-long clinical field placement for teacher candidates to engage in work such as intervention programming, FHLS generously offer space or *partnership rooms* for teacher candidates to keep their belongings while in the school, eat their lunch, work in small groups, or meet for on-site PDS seminars.

The Fed Hock Teacher Center acts as the professional development hub for the faculty at the secondary school. Led by the PDS teacher liaison, the center provides regular and ongoing

support for both new and veteran teachers in the form of lesson planning assistance and feedback, bi-weekly professional development meetings for the entire staff, whole staff book studies, workshops, and maintenance of a resource library; it also organizes attendance at national and regional conferences that align with whole-school initiatives. As mentioned earlier, teaching fellows and CARE candidates are included in these PD activities. As FHLS hosts several visitors yearly, the center organizes tours and provides resources for these guests. School partners and university faculty also share expertise to both staff and candidates through professional development activities in areas such as literacy, differentiated instruction, classroom management, the Common Core, technology, collaborative learning, and other important professional topics. The PCOE recognizes the contribution of mentor teachers in several ways. Annually, in the spring, teacher mentors and university faculty attend a Teacher Gala where their contributions are recognized with college and university administrators and executives. At the end of each academic year, superintendents receive notification of teacher mentor contributions. CARE faculty and mentors are also invited to attend conferences with the college covering travel and registration costs.

### Major Accomplishments/Achievements of the PDS

The Center for Clinical Practice in The Patton College is strongly committed to a culture of collaboration and shared accountability between the FHLS and Ohio University (Essential 2). By fostering a joint commitment of positively impacting P12 students and preparing the best teacher candidates possible, the district and university work hand in hand to accomplish PDS goals. By providing in-depth clinical experiences for teacher candidates, authentic university classroom learning that mirrors what is happening in our schools, and shared professional development, the CARE partnership serves as a model that is three decades strong. Reflective practice and the sharing of innovative ideas for programming outlined above (Essential 4) maintain the clear focus on improving the continuity of experience for candidates. The Center for Clinical Practice in Education supports directly ongoing teacher development by providing graduate credit waivers to sustain professional development in Federal Hocking Local Schools. Along with providing PD opportunities for teacher candidates, mentor teachers, and university faculty to engage in together, the goals for both the school and university communities are met (Essential 3).

Finally, the MOU (Essential 6), the job descriptions for the PDS roles (Essential 8), and the ongoing opportunities to meet as a group and reflect on the partnering relationship and its innovative impact on P12 students and teacher candidates (Essential 7) ensure a strong working relationship between the FHLS and The PCOE's Center for Clinical Practice in Education at Ohio University. However, the most significant evidence of the partnership's impact is that FHLS employs many CARE graduates as full time teachers. Due to this continuity, educators are able to seamlessly move from candidate to

practitioner and even to becoming future CARE mentors where they help to continue a culture of teachers prepared for democratic education. <sup>SUP</sup>

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