

NAPDS Releases Policy Statement on Professional Development School

The National Association for Professional Development Schools released a policy statement, "What It Means to Be a Professional Development School," at its annual meeting April 12, 2008.

"The purpose of the statement is to share with the educational community the NAPDS's articulation of the term, 'Professional Development School,' said President Dr. Elliot Lessen. "This statement is not intended to be either an evaluation or a critique of the phenomenal work that has punctuated PDSs over the past 20 years but, rather, the association's recognition that there is a tendency for the term 'PDS' to be used as a catch-all for various models of school-university partnership work that may or may not be best described as PDS."

At an August 2007 summit, the association gathered educators from across the P-20 continuum, along with leaders from national education organizations, to hammer out Nine Essentials which define the PDS mission. The NAPDS encourages all those working in school-university relationships to embrace the Nine Essentials of PDS work communicated in this statement. The essentials are written in tangible, rather than abstract, language and represent practical goals toward which PDS work should be directed.

The nine required essentials of a PDS

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