KUPDS Kickoff Meeting

Our Annual Professional Development School Kickoff event took place on October 20, 2014 at Starside Elementary in the De Soto School District. This is where the Spring semester interns meet their clinical supervisors, site coordinators, and administrators over a light dinner before meeting as a group to discuss the placements and expectations. Food always brings people together, especially pizza!

The discussions cover topics such as building expectations, district guidelines, co-teaching, lesson plans, and who to contact with any concerns. Each school has their own introduction materials that they share with the interns. One intern said, “I’m glad I was given my own school handbook so I can refer back to it when needed.” Every year nervous interns make great first impressions and leave feeling so excited about their placements and welcomed by the school staff.

“Look at all of these bright future teachers.” “I’m looking forward to my intern!”
KUPDS Executive Council Meetings

The Professional Development Schools Alliance kicked off another school year with new administrators in five of our Professional Development Schools:

- Geoff Markos Principal at JC Harmon High
- Dustin Mortenson Principal at De Soto High
- Carla Allen Principal at Hocker Grove Middle
- Darcy Swan Principal at East Antioch Elementary
- Cho Wendling Principal at Merriam Park Elementary

In an effort to continue the collaboration between KU and the PDS, KU faculty present research and new instructional strategies during the meeting that can be implemented in classrooms. This year comes with a big challenge to define what the KUPDS Alliance will be in the future. The February 19th meeting devoted the majority of the time to working in teams to review and revise the PDS Handbook. The goal is to ultimately get the best interns.
in PDS to make the greatest impact on student learning and will provide an experience that will prepare them to work with students from poverty and culturally/linguistically diverse settings.

All members of the alliance were provided a copy of the book *Teacherpreneurs* by Barnett Berry for a Spring semester book study. Each school was assigned a chapter that will be discussed as a group at the last executive council meeting of the school year on April 9th. There will also be a Skype session with the author Barnett Berry during this meeting. Dean Rick Ginsberg will also be in attendance to share his thoughts on the future of our program.

**KCKPS Mock Interviews**

Because of the success of the mock/screening interviews, Kansas City Kansas Public Schools coordinated mock/screening interviews this February at the District Office. PDS and a few non-PDS students participated and were interviewed by principals and district office administrators. It was very exciting to see students all dressed-up and ready to make a good and lasting impression on the interviewer. It was very beneficial for the teacher candidates to participate in order to prepare for KU Education Interview Day.
PDS Pioneer Retiring

Dr. Sally Roberts, Associate Dean for Teacher Education and Undergraduate Programs, has been a great supporter of the PDS program and really made a difference with many decisions. She was able to implement a small grant back to the PDS for use with PDS related materials and activities. During the Executive Council Meetings, Sally made sure to share information from the KU administration side and took the voice of the council back to KU. She was aware of ongoing issues and challenges of the PDS program and actively sought to find a solution for all parties involved. It is with great pleasure we celebrate PDS successes with Sally! She will definitely be missed.

Introducing Dr. Kelli Thomas

Dr. Kelli Thomas will be replacing Dr. Sally Roberts beginning in the 2015-2016 school year. Dr. Thomas is from the Curriculum and Teaching department where she teaches elementary math education. She is also a big supporter of the PDS program and will keep the program going and improving. Kelli was able to attend the Professional Development Schools Conference for the first time. This was her introduction to what is going on in the PDS world. Kelli came back with many ideas that will benefit the KU PDS partnerships. We welcome her to the PDS Council.

National Professional Development Schools Conference 2015

The theme of this year's conference was Change Agents: The PDS Role in Advancing Equity in Education. The conference was held in Atlanta, GA, March 5-8. It was very fortunate that one of the PDS principals, Jeff Harkin (Liberty Memorial), attended and co-presented with Dr. Joe Novak. Their presentation, Collaborative Equity: A Joint Effort to Meet the Needs of All, was well attended. Many of the sessions were about teacher training to prepare future educators to work with students of poverty/culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Mentoring future educators was also represented in session choices as well as building your PDS relationships with universities and school districts to meet the needs of children as well as internship experiences. The conference provided new ideas to think about as we go forward in the years to come.
Greetings from the Professional Development Schools Program at the University of Kansas!

It is always a joy to take the time to reflect upon the growth and impact of the PDS program at the University of Kansas. We are currently finishing up year two of our redesign/reconstruction of our program. Participation in the PDS program has seen significant growth over these past two years. We have gone from 24 students in the program two short years ago to over 60 this past school year. With increased numbers in the traditional K-12 teacher preparation program, we have also welcomed participation from the Unified Early Childhood program as well as teacher candidates being trained in the UKanTeach program at KU. Prospects for the 2015-16 school year show additional growth. With the growth in intern and student teaching interest also comes the need to provide adequate spots in PDS. We have increased our number of participating schools in the PDS Alliance from 9 to 12 schools and look to add several more in the coming years.

The PDS program at KU has worked on a number of other initiatives within the framework of the existing program. Currently, we are placing students in PDS prior to their student teaching year. Students are completing early field experiences/practicums in PDSs. These same students are turning around in their senior year to request a PDS school for their student teaching experience. Another initiative has been the Co-Teaching model. This model has benefitted both the clinical supervisor and the student intern. Most of all, co-teaching strategies have benefited learning in the classroom.

Our PDS program has teamed together with the Special Education department in developing pilot focused on the concept of equity for all students. In year one, we have been gathering information and data to best implement a school-wide plan of design and implementation of effective learning for ALL students.

The PDS program at the University of Kansas is deeply indebted to our relationships with our PDS districts and schools in the Kansas City Kansas Public Schools, the Shawnee Mission Public Schools, the De Soto Public Schools and the Lawrence Public Schools. We are also appreciative of the untiring support of our Dean and his entire staff at the University of Kansas.

Joe Novak, Ed.D
Pilot Service Learning Project

This year is the first year to pilot a project that the student teachers chose in the fall that would benefit the students, community, or school. The pilot took place at JFK elementary in KCKPS under the leadership of Mrs. Canise Salinas. Student teachers that were placed at JFK for both fall and spring semesters came together to find a project that would make a difference in the lives of children. The project manager and leader, Juliana Edwards, worked tirelessly to get feedback and support from others. The first project was for the school to participate in the Harvester’s BackSnack program, which would have really helped out families. Unfortunately, there is a waiting list and the program will be implemented next school year 2015-2016. The interns at JFK include: Audra Jones, Katie Flippo, Allison Williams, Katherine Jackson, Nicole Rogier, Leah Mason, and Juliana Edwards. An alternative project was chosen for this school year.

Written by Mrs. Juliana Edwards, Intern, JFK Elementary School

Arriving to work each day, knowing that you will make a change in at least one students life, is enough to get anyone out of bed in the morning. It is also very rewarding to know that so many children look to you for support. But, I have found that when you become the support system to so many of these students, you also begin to worry about them. You want to make them feel safe and you want to make sure that all of their needs are being met. During my PDS internship I have placed much of my focus on meeting the needs of the students who need it most.

Throughout our school we have students who arrive in old, ripped, and stained clothing. While stained clothing is not necessarily a problem, I feel that shirts and pants that contain rips and holes may need to be addressed, especially if a student is wearing them every day. By reaching out to partners who support the school, speaking with the PTA, and asking teachers to think about the students who would best benefit from the drive, I have begun to put together "Clothing for Cougars". The selected students will receive donated items such a shirts, pants, and even socks. I hope if this project runs smoothly, it is something that the school can continue in future years.

Spring Seminars

During the spring semester, all PDS students take C&T 495, Developing the Teaching Portfolio, where they are prepared to successfully complete the Kansas Professional Teaching Portfolio (KPTP). What is unique to the PDS seminar is each class travels to a different PDS. Speakers are invited to speak on specific issues that are encountered by students and teachers and this provides a forum for discussions. Thank you for allowing us to host our classes in your buildings.
Extracurricular Knitting Club

One student at JFK elementary school, Juliana Edwards, decided to start a hand-knitting club open to all and any student that wanted to participate. She saw this as a way to expose students to different activities that they normally do not get the opportunity to do. The knitting club participants meet every Thursday morning before school. Our PDS students are already teacher leaders and finding ways to reach students and families.

“Students enjoy participating in the club, even if it does require them to wake up early. I love being able to teach knitting on Thursday’s because it allows me to see the students outside of classroom hours and has allowed me to build better relationships.”
Pilot Unified Early Childhood Same School Yearlong Placement

This was the first year that UEC students were able to take advantage of the PDS program. The student teachers were able to complete their fall primary placement in a PDS. There was one student, Natalie Teo, that piloted a yearlong placement at Merriam Park elementary school where she did her primary and Pre-K placement. If this goes well, it will be an option in the future.

Here is what Natalie Teo said about her experience:

“Being in the same school for a year really helped me learn more about the district and it gave me an advantage to the KPTP because I already had the information to start. This really gave me a head start on the KPTP and getting to know the school. I also got to know the staff really well and it helped me fit in very well. I did feel better supported but I think it also had to do with the staff at Merriam Park and the environment.

I also had the opportunity to experience being the only Pre-K classroom in the building and it was a different experience. It did make it a little harder to see other classrooms or experience being in a full Pre-K setting but I enjoyed getting the experience of being in an elementary school. It gave me the opportunity to be independent and yet supported.

Sometimes I do wish that I had done 2 different placements because it gives me more of an advantage job wise and experience wise. I would have been able to learn about a different district and the setting. I also wished I had chosen a more SPED like class so I really get to learn more about SPED but that was my choice to stay and I do not have any regrets because I got to be in a highly saturated ELL setting. There are pros and cons to being in the same school all year and it really depends on the student and how they want their experience to be like.

Overall, I had a wonderful student teaching experience and I would not have wanted it any other way. I would recommend staying and having 2 placements.”
Teacher Candidates in Action....

This 2014-2015 school year has had many great memories and some minor challenges. Teacher candidates agree that the PDS program definitely prepares you to work with all students, different personalities, and challenging environments, but all in all, everyone’s goal is to do what is best for their students. Teachers candidates will have memories to share with others for years to come.
More Memories....
And More Memories....
Voices from the field....

Clinical supervisors, school administrator, district administers, and teacher candidates were ask to provide feedback on their experiences in the PDS program. It is important for us to recognize what those actually doing the work think.

“Our intern has contributed to our learning environment by creating and implementing lessons plans that are: common core based, engaging to the students, and relevant to the students’ needs and interests. Her reflective abilities guide her to create and differentiate for the next lesson. Also, her technology skills are excellent and have impacted our students and myself.”

“All of us feel like a part of the staff. We are able to support each other in our endeavors. It is wonderful to see them in their element—in front of a whole class—since we have only seen each other during KU classes or with a few students.”

“Since I was placed as a 6th grade student teacher in the fall, and as a kindergarten teacher in the spring, I experienced both sides of the spectrum! The spring placement, being longer, was more in-depth and I had much more on my plate. (It was awesome, though!) I loved witnessing the crucial beginning of the year goal-setting for our class.”

“The benefit of the KU PDS program is a few things: The strong relationship between KU and the district, the organization of the program, strong communication among the students, their director, and the school as well as the educational background that each student brings.”

“We have shared many memorable moments. I do enjoy watching her face light up when one of the student’s light bulbs goes off!”

“We have a multitude of direct benefits from being a PDS. First, we halve our student/teacher ratio each semester we have a qualified teacher candidate in our rooms. We have access to on-going professional development with KU, and we have the opportunity to have a first-hand, in-depth look at quality teacher candidates that we can hopefully hire or refer on to the district for vacancies.”

“Having a KU PDS intern in my classroom, has been a wonderful experience. The KU interns I have worked with have been well prepared to work in an urban setting, excited to learn through experience, and are always willing to build relationships with the staff and students. The KU interns are fully engaged in the experience, and through this process, I have learned about myself as a professional.”

“Both of my placements were in PDS schools, so my experience is a little different. That begin said, both of the PDS schools I have been placed in are great communities full of an enthusiasm for student learning. My spring placement is a lot different than my fall placement because I am in a totally different school and district. This is nice though because I have gotten a great feel for the difference between two different districts located within roughly the same geographic location (KC Metro Area). That begin said, I have determined pros and cons of each building and district, but both of my placements have been amazing. My cooperating teachers have two totally different personalities, but I have learned so much from both of them and they are each responsible for a lot of my growth as a teacher.”

“Mr. H. has been a great asset to the room. He has brought a sense of humor and knowledge that has enhanced the students successful learning.”

“I think the KU PDS program is a great example of how a university and school district can partner for the common good. Both partners have a lot of strengths to share and can learn from one another. It just seems that the students from the PDS program are better prepared for the real world classroom. Both the PDS students and our schools have more confidence in meeting the needs of our students. I believe the PDS program is the best way to prepare our future teachers. I appreciate everyone at the university and district level who are involved with the success of the PDS program. It’s a true team effort.”

“It’s busy but rewarding. I enjoy processing classroom issues with my intern.”

“One memorable moment I have had during student teaching was with a particular student who struggled with math. I pulled him individually to work with multiplatives, and he said “I have never liked math until working with you”.”
More Voices from the field....

“My KU PDS intern contributes to the learning environment by developing creative and engaging lessons designed to meet the needs of students whose learning modalities differ. She also exudes positive energy as she is passionate about working with students and helping them achieve learning goals.”

“I have had a wonderful experience with my KU PDS intern this semester. I believe we have both grown as teachers. Our students have also benefited from having two teachers in the classroom.”

“My spring placement has been great, especially since it is longer, I feel like I belong and am accepted as a part of the teaching staff.”

“The KU students have all been very coachable and open to suggestions to help them grow. They participate in all professional development and have worked well with our students.”

“The school I am working at this spring is more of a challenge than the one I was at in the fall. All students have problems, of course, but the ones I experience with my students now are deeper. I feel like, since I am there more often and all day long, I have built relationships with my students that encourage trust. I also feel like I am fully welcomed at my school as an equal. I feel as if I am a real teacher, rather than a student still.”

“It is so wonderful having so many other interns in the building with me. I am at Central with 10 other interns, and I feel like I have such a solid support system. It is nice to be able to share experiences with others who are dealing with the exact same thing.”

“He’s provided variety in lesson design and a pleasant personality and attitude with which the students find favor.”

“I think the KU PDS program is the model for how all student teaching placements should occur. I think it benefits the teacher candidates as well as our school.”

“Not having been a PDS student myself, I was unsure of what to expect walking into a PDS relationship with KU. It has exceeded my expectations in every way and I have become an advocate for the program model. I have had the opportunity to directly hire graduates of the program, and they are some of the strongest teachers I have in the building.”

“As a PDS school, my teachers know what to expect from the students. They will receive ongoing support, professional learning and students who are passionate about the craft. The will also take away current trends and practices in education.”

“A memorable moment with my students and clinical supervisor was when I finally grew comfortable enough with moving down from 5th grade to 1st grade in regard to my teaching strategy and technique. I really struggled with this initially; thus, I was rigid and nervous when teaching my 1st graders and it took the fun out of learning the curriculum and material. The week where I finally grew into my 1st grade shell and felt I had a better handle on teaching at a slower pace was amazing. The students were more engaged in their learning and we were all able to enjoy ourselves and have fun while learning the required curriculum instead of just learning it because I have to teach it and the students have to learn it.”

“I am truly amazed by the students each year. They have come better prepared and ready to teach immediately. They are flexible, knowledgeable and eager to learn. The students of the program soak in every moment of the school day. They want to be involved and take on a hands on approach to reach all learners. I have truly enjoyed working with all the students of KU PDS.”

“I truly feel like a part of the Merriam Park family. I have seen how a staff grows closer and works together towards a common goal: student success!”

“One of the most memorable experience I’ve had with my students has been the day we were playing an online game. The point of it was to replace boring adjectives in a dating profile with more descriptive ones and then match the profiles to make the characters “fall in love.” The students were laughing and enjoying the activity, and one school-hating student said that it was his favorite English class ever. I love working with my cooperating teacher. We’ve built such a good relationship. Our almost daily struggle, to tame the tech in our room has definitely prepared me to be a real teacher!”
Thank You......

We would like to thank everyone participating in the KUPDS program. We wish our current 2014-2015 teacher candidates good luck in their careers and to be the leaders KU produces in the School of Education. We thank the clinical supervisors for being such great mentors and opening your doors to our teacher candidates. Thanks to the staff in your buildings for making our teacher candidates feel welcomed and for providing the little things that can easily be forgotten. You will never know how much of an impact you have made on them. Administrators, you are all amazing and we could not do this without you and your willingness to believe in the PDS program.

We are restructuring the KUPDS program and we cannot wait to continue strengthening our relationships with our districts and schools.

Drs. Joe Novak & Nicole Babalola