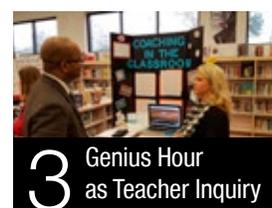


FALL 2016 VOLUME 8, ISSUE 1 **IN THIS ISSUE:**



Collaborative professional learning into inquiry

Engaging in a school-university partnership is an ongoing process of reflection and development. In fact, the nine essential characteristics of all Professional Development Schools (PDS), as determined by the National Association of Professional Development Schools (NAPDS), include ongoing and reciprocal professional development for all participants, and a shared commitment to innovative and reflective practice. During our 5th year as a PDS, we determined that these particular essentials were areas in which we would like to improve and grow.

In our PDS Mission Statement, we state that we will “improve the quality of education for all students by engaging in shared inquiry focused on teaching and learning.” We decided that this process of shared inquiry would allow us to systematically provide insight into classrooms and schools in order to see where improvements could be made.

We began the process in October 2015, when the Office of School Engagement arranged for **Dr. Nancy Fichtman Dana**, Professor of Education at the University of Florida, to speak at our annual PDS Workshop. She came highly recommended as a speaker on the topic of teacher inquiry. Her talk energized us and showed us the potential for using teacher inquiry to respond to students’ needs and as a way for teachers’ voices to be heard.

Following up on this introduction to inquiry, faculty and administrators from both the Clarke County School District and the College of Education gathered on July 25, 2016 for an all-day workshop with Dr. Dana to learn

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New Camp DIVE program launches to prevent ‘summer slide’

The first year of Camp DIVE (Discover, Inquire, Voice, & Explore) was a tremendous success. The camp was a collaboration among the Clarke County School District (CCSD), the UGA College of Education (COE), and over a dozen Athens community organizations. Held at Clarke Middle School during the month of June, Camp DIVE was free to 80 K-8 students from CCSD and provided them with engaging and enriching experiences while UGA students were able to earn course credit or gain valuable volunteer experience.



As an outgrowth of the established PDS partnership between CCSD and the COE, Camp DIVE was designed to help prevent the ‘summer slide’ phenomenon. Research has shown that a large chunk of the well-known achievement gap is the result of the different opportunities available to students during the summer—some families simply cannot afford to send their children to summer camps or provide other experiences that are possible for families with greater financial resources. The Camp DIVE

planning team hoped that the new summer program would give all children exposure to new ideas and experiential teaching strategies that would keep them engaged with academic content during the summer.

Jennifer Mundy, a graduate student in the department of educational theory and practice, noted that Camp DIVE succeeded in its mission and gave “the campers a chance to have fun while continuing to learn during the summer.” Fellow graduate student **Kortney Kurtz** commented on how the child-centered, hands-on activities impacted the children, “The campers really came with excitement each and every day.... We even got to slide down a hill in a student made spaceship!”

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Cover Photo: **Gretchen Thomas** (second from left), instructor in the department of career and information studies, and UGA undergraduate student **Quintessa Williams** work with 3rd-5th grade campers in a Camp DIVE “Makerspace” class. Photo Credit: Wingate Downs

PDSD celebrates 5 years of a district-wide partnership

On April 28, over sixty members of the Professional Development School District (PDSD), gathered to celebrate five years of district-wide partnership, which began when the UGA College of Education and the Clarke County School District (CCSD) signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOU) in April 2011. The PDSD now involves every school in the district with thirteen schools actively involved through a combination of clusters of student teachers, on-site courses, and Professors-in-Residence.

The celebration dinner took place at Trumps Catering and included a keynote address by **Dr. Carl Glickman**, Emeritus Professor in the College of Education. Glickman encouraged the partnership to continue working toward “democratic learning” environments where, among other things, students are actively engaged in solving problems and demonstrating their learning in public settings. “You can’t close academic achievement gaps unless you close student engagement gaps,” he said.

Other remarks included **Xernona Thomas’** reflections as the longest-serving Professional Development School principal at J. J. Harris Elementary School. **Dr. Kat Raczyński**, District-wide Professor-in-Residence for School Climate, honored the work of **Jasia Clark**, a Clarke Central High School senior who initiated the first annual Districtwide Bullying Prevention Essay Contest.



Over sixty Clarke County School District and UGA College of Education educators attended the 5th Anniversary Celebration Dinner of the Professional Development School District at Trumps Catering in April 2016. Photo credit: Justin Evans



Dr. Carl Glickman, Professor Emeritus in the College of Education, gave the keynote address at the PDSD celebration dinner. Photo credit: Justin Evans

Collaborative professional learning into inquiry —continued from front

more about engaging in professional development through inquiry. We examined the role of inquiry in a PDS by considering what inquiry is, what it looks like, and how it might be structured within a PDS.

Inquiry is systematic, intentional study of one’s own practice. It differs from traditional professional development in that it is based on questions springing from real-world dilemmas, making it personally meaningful. It is action-oriented and seeks to “improve, not prove.” Investigating our own questions is motivating, and gives the researcher ownership over the process. CCSD **Superintendent Phil Lanoue** was attracted to the approach because, as he sees it, inquiry seeks solutions, and is one way to drive change from within.

The next steps of the inquiry process include collecting and analyzing data related to our question, sharing the results of our work with our colleagues, and then making changes and adjustments to our teaching practice in order to improve learning. Dr. Dana led us through the steps in this process, and showed us ways to seamlessly incorporate them into what we are already doing. She also showed us that this process may look very different at each school.

Office of School Engagement Director **Janna Dresden** also began a study of the PDSD’s attitudes about practitioner inquiry, in order to document the growth of our collective thinking over the next several years. Participants were asked to complete a brief questionnaire before the July workshop, which attempted to discern our prior knowledge about the topic.

At the September PDSD Coordinating Council meeting we collectively checked in with one another about how schools were progressing with their plans to begin the inquiry process. Representatives from each school had the opportunity to have conversations with their UGA partners about their wonderings and how they might begin to investigate them.

Groups examined the data from our July workshop about how PDSD partners currently view the inquiry process. School groups then discussed what the inquiry process might look like at their school, what supports would be needed, and what barriers would need to be overcome in order to begin to use inquiry as a tool for professional learning.

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Many groups reported that their schools are in the beginning stages of the process, and are starting with their leadership teams investigating their wonderings. Some groups realized that the RTI process blends very well with inquiry. Some schools have already put the inquiry process into their school improvement plans, and others are hoping that it can be useful in developing individual teacher learning goals. The inquiry process provides structure and accountability, and forces participants to look at the bigger picture, rather than focusing on “putting out fires.”

At the College of Education, the PDS Collaborative, which includes faculty and graduate students who work in PDS schools, has also been discussing ways we can support the inquiry work that is

beginning at our partnership schools. We also share ways that we are using shared inquiry with teacher candidates. Many programs are developing ways to include teacher inquiry as part of the practicum experience, so that teacher candidates will have experience with questioning and reflecting on their practice from the outset. A book study of Dana and Yendol-Hoppey’s *The Reflective Educator’s Guide to Classroom Research: Learning to teach and teaching to learn through practitioner inquiry* is giving us structure and a common language.

The PDS partners look forward to continuing to delve into inquiry together, supporting each other and working through challenges in this ongoing process.

Genius Hour as Teacher Inquiry: Investigating Problems of Practice

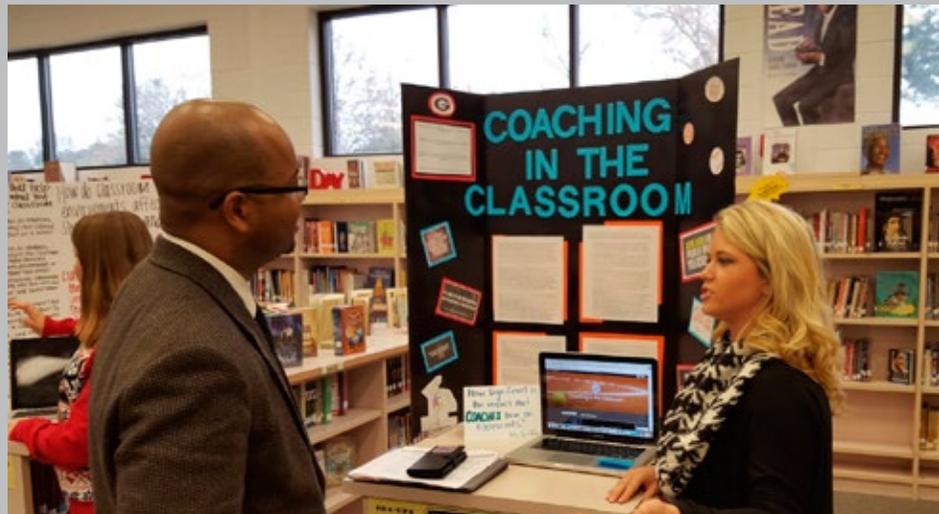
How can issues of social justice be integrated into a middle grades math classroom? How do extracurricular activities benefit students? How significant is the role that athletic coaches play in the lives of adolescents? These are just a few of the questions that middle grades teachers and teacher candidates investigated via the Genius Hour inquiry initiative at Hilsman Middle School (HMS) as part of the Professional Development School District (PDS) partnership.

Led by Co-Professors-in-Residence (PIR) **Kathy Thompson** and **Gayle Andrews**, the Genius Hour inquiry initiative provided opportunities for teachers and teacher candidates to investigate “passion projects”--issues or problems of practice related to young adolescents and teaching in the middle grades that they were passionate about researching.

The Genius Hour framework for inquiry, which is often used in K-12 classrooms, provides opportunities “for students to explore their passions...in the classroom” and “provides students a choice in what they learn” (<http://www.geniushour.com/>).

To share teacher candidates’ Genius Hour investigations with an authentic audience, the PIRs organized a Genius Hour Fair for HMS teachers to participate in during one of their weekly professional learning sessions. With the teacher candidates and their work spread out around the media center, HMS teachers traveled from one teacher candidate to the next listening to short presentations on the Genius Hour projects. During the presentations, teachers and teacher candidates engaged in thoughtful conversations about inquiry and the specific questions teacher candidates addressed.

While reflecting on the Genius Hour Fair experience, one teacher candidate commented, “Genius Hour allowed me time to try out different teaching strategies in the classroom and determine which strategies were effective and which strategies were not.”



At the Hilsman Middle School Genius Hour Fair, **Mark AQUI**, 7th grade math teacher, talks to UGA middle grades teacher candidate **Brale Griffin**, about her inquiry into “Coaching in the Classroom.”

The PIRs also solicited feedback from HMS teachers. Their input included such comments as, “It is good to see how thoughtful these upcoming teachers are. Every one of these presenters knew how they were going to apply their work in their future classrooms.” One HMS teacher summed up the Genius Hour initiative by noting that “Passion drives teaching, and if the passion I saw here this afternoon is any indication of our future, I think we have reason to be hopeful.”

During the Genius Hour inquiry initiative, Thompson and Andrews aimed to support practitioners and teacher candidates in navigating inquiry processes and improving their classroom practices, while simultaneously strengthening the PDS partnership through purposeful conversations about problems of practice. According to Thompson and Andrews, inquiry focused on problems of practice has the potential to make a positive impact on the quality of school experiences for students and educators, as well as inform everyone’s understanding of the teaching and learning processes that are at the heart of all educational endeavors.

PROFESSOR-IN-RESIDENCE PROFILE

Lou Tolosa-Casadont

at Oglethorpe Avenue Elementary School

This article is the tenth in a series of profiles of Professors-in-Residence (PIR) at Professional Development Schools in the Clarke County School District



“¡Buenos días!” exclaims **Dr. Lou Tolosa-Casadont**, as 21 Kindergarten children begin their day in **Ms. Londoño’s** colorful, Spanish-themed classroom at Oglethorpe Avenue Elementary School (OAES). These students are participating in a Dual Language Immersion (DLI) program that launched in the Clarke County School District (CCSD) this fall. The majority of instruction is in Spanish (80% of the day), including reading, writing, math, sciences, and social studies. To provide extra support for the transition to the DLI model, Dr. Tolosa-Casadont, a clinical associate professor in the department of language and literacy, became Professor-in-Residence (PIR) at the school in August 2016. She is one of 10 PIRs in the Professional Development School District (PDS).

Last spring, OAES parents could choose if they were interested in their child participating in the program, and in the fall, DLI began with one Pre-K class and two Kindergarten classes. According to Thomas & Collier (2012) and many other researchers such as Carrera-Carrillo & Rickert-Smith (2006), daily intensive immersion in the language throughout elementary school and subsequent schooling results in students becoming bilingual and biliterate. The school plans to add one to two DLI classes each year at every level, so next year

“I’ve learned that job embedded professional development is the most powerful and dynamic tool to provide feedback, exchange ideas, and see immediate growth, improvement, and change.”

-Dr. Lou Tolosa-Casadont

students who are currently in Kindergarten will be able to continue in the DLI program in first grade.

As a PIR, Tolosa-Casadont spends two to three days each week in the DLI classrooms helping teach the students and providing job embedded professional development to the three teachers, who are all first year teachers and native Spanish speakers. She started the year in the

Pre-K classroom where she modeled instruction for the teacher, **Ms. Fambro**, and helped to connect the Pre-K instructional expectations with the DLI program expectations.

According to Fambro, “I was very much inspired by Dr. Lou’s positive attitude in wanting to see me grow as a teacher and wanting to see the Dual Language Program succeed. She is a wonderful professor and is great with children. She was able to gain the love and attention of my students.”

Now she works primarily in the two Kindergarten classrooms with **Ms. Londoño**, **Ms. Marin** and their paraprofessionals. She facilitates small groups, models lessons, observes instruction and provides feedback, and also observes student-participation and reactions to instruction to ensure that the children are understanding the language, acquiring the concepts, and learning.

Kindergarten teacher **Ms. Londoño** (second from left) and **Dr. Tolosa-Casadont** assist students with writing in Spanish at Oglethorpe Avenue Elementary School. Photo credit: Andrew Tucker





“I’ve learned that job embedded professional development is the most powerful and dynamic tool to provide feedback, exchange ideas, and see immediate growth, improvement, and change,” Tolosa-Casadont reflected. “I enjoy seeing how much everyone involved with the program has grown and how far we have all come since August.”

“I have built very positive relationships with the teachers, and I appreciate the support and the trust that Dr. Dunne (principal) has given me and the program. She’s the one who has made this all possible,” she said.

Another part of her role as a PIR is teaching LLED 4530/6530 at the OAES campus and supervising the 19 COE TESOL & World Language Education undergraduate and graduate teacher candidates. These students take her methods course on-site and co-teach in pairs ESL or a world language in classrooms ranging from K to 5th grade to gain practicum experience in preparation for student teaching next semester.

In spring 2011, she reached out to **Dr. Scarlett Dunne**, Principal of OAES, who was very receptive to having UGA world language students at the school. Shortly after, Tolosa-Casadont placed and supervised teacher candidates at the school for their practicum experience first as part of the after-school program and then as an in-school program. In spring 2015, she taught her world language methods course on-site at the school and continued supervising teacher candidates as well. When the school began moving in the direction of becoming CCSD’s first Dual Language Immersion school, Tolosa-Casadont was a perfect fit for the role of Professor-in-Residence.

Her personal philosophy is that immersion in a language through cultural and linguistic instruction; speaking, listening, reading, and writing, is the best way to learn a new language. Tolosa-Casadont grew up in Montevideo, Uruguay, in a household that spoke multiple languages. At a young age she began learning her second language, Portuguese, by watching TV and traveling to southern Brazil while visiting her grandparents in Northern Uruguay. She began studying English at age 8 at a private institute, and later she studied French and Italian as part of her public school education. For years she considered becoming an English teacher and ultimately that dream motivated her to move to the United States when she was 20 years old.

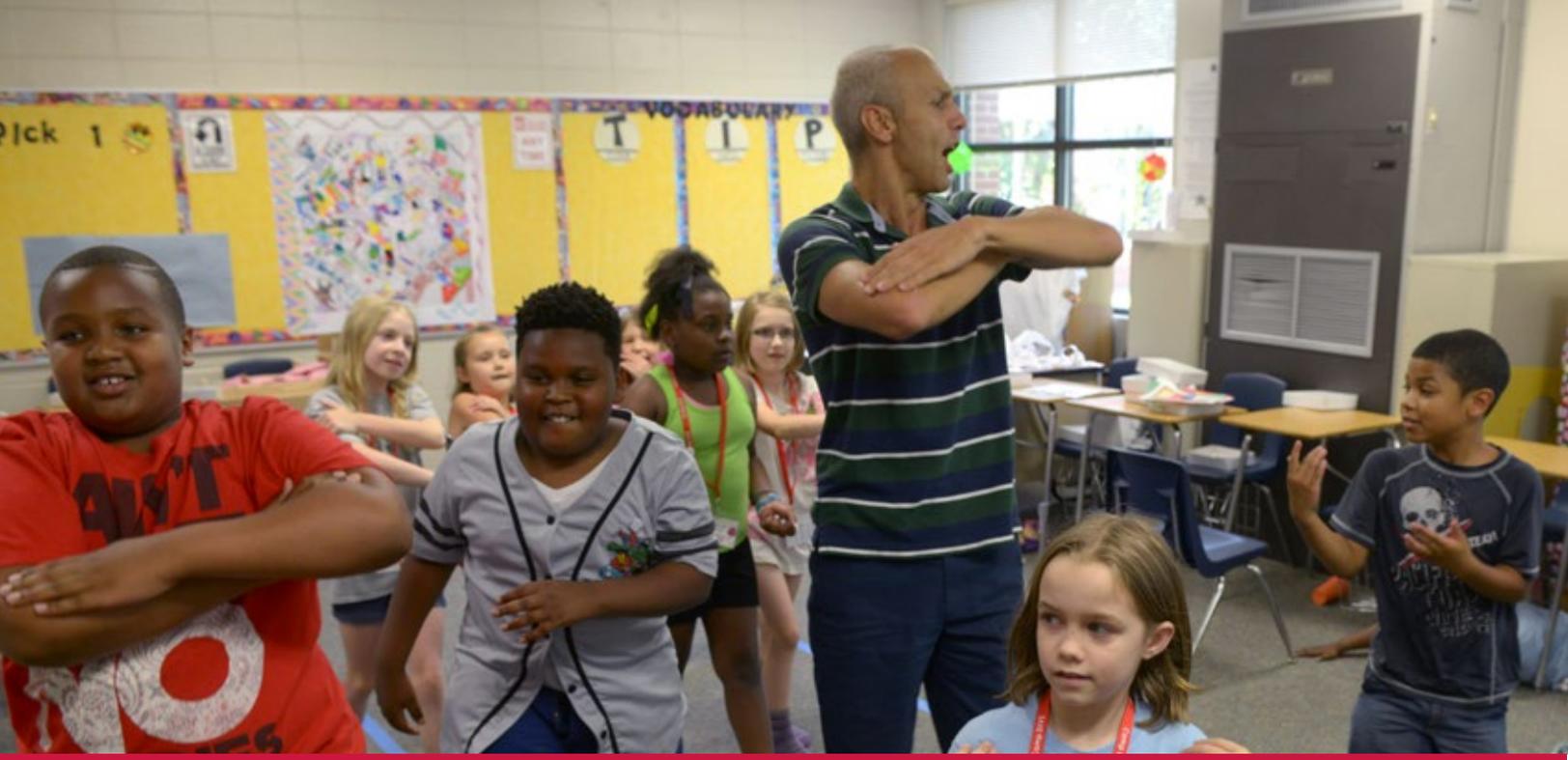
“Language has always been a part of my life,” she said, “my parents encouraged my siblings and me to continue learning English no matter how hard it seemed to us.”

Tolosa-Casadont became a faculty member at the UGA College of Education in 2011 after earning her Ph.D. from the department of language & literacy education at UGA. She is an associate clinical professor in this department and currently serves as the Program Coordinator for the World Language & TESOL Education Program, as well as the ESOL Endorsement. Previously she taught Spanish at all levels, elementary school through college, in both Georgia and Minnesota.

In the future, she envisions her role as a PIR as one of support inside and outside of the classroom, as well as providing professional development resources that will assist the DLI team and the larger OAES community. If the program expands within CCSD, she and the team will be eager to share all they have learned from this inspiring new program.

Top: Dr. Tolosa-Casadont debriefs with her UGA teacher candidates **Matthew Christmas** and **Summer Willingham** after they co-taught a Kindergarten lesson in Spanish. Photo credit: Andrew Tucker
Bottom: Dr. Tolosa-Casadont works with Kindergarten students in Ms. Londoño’s Dual Language Immersion classroom at Oglethorpe Avenue Elementary School. Photo credit: Andrew Tucker





New Camp DIVE program launches to prevent ‘summer slide’

—continued from front

The UGA students benefitted from the experience of Camp DIVE, too. As Mundy explained, “Camp DIVE was a great way to do something I love, working with children, while earning college credit.” UGA undergraduate students and graduate students pursuing masters, specialist, and doctoral degrees all worked together to create powerful experiences for the campers, and in turn had profound learning experiences of their own.

Kurtz was exuberant in her praise: “Camp DIVE was an extraordinary experience! I have never enjoyed teaching so much! I certainly cannot wait to go back next year!” **Courtney Shimek**, a student in the department of language and literacy education concurred: “Camp DIVE was such a gift to be a part of. Getting to spend time with the kids learning together, exploring new places, and making new friendships was the best way to spend the summer!”

Camp DIVE was also designed to enable UGA faculty to try out new and innovative teaching strategies based on their research while they helped their students gain a better understanding of the processes of teaching and learning. The camp-like setting and the opportunity to simultaneously engage with campers and UGA students made it possible for faculty to connect theory and practice in meaningful and exciting ways.

Dr. Kevin Burke, a faculty member in the department of language and literacy education stated that, “One of the unique--and generative--aspects of the summer experience with Camp DIVE was the chance to put graduate students in conversation and relationship

with youth through art. It was the best kind of challenging laboratory for exploring learning, community, and relationality.” And, Burke’s colleague, **Dr. Ruth Harman**, agreed that the experience, “expanded our horizons as educators and community members of Athens.”

As hoped, Camp DIVE was a fun-filled learning environment for everyone involved and we are busily planning for next summer!



Top: Dr. Fuad Elhage, faculty in the UGA Romance Languages Department, teaches Latin American dancing to 3rd-5th graders as part of Camp DIVE. Photo Credit: Wingate Downs

Bottom: Dr. Ruth Harman (left), faculty in the department of language and literacy education, and UGA graduate student **Heidi Hadley** build a Jenga tower with camper **Anterrion Foster** as part of the Youth Participatory Action Research course at Camp DIVE. Photo Credit: Wingate Downs

Bridging School-University Partnerships Across the Globe

As our partnership grows, so does our outreach. This fall, the Office of School Engagement welcomed faculty from Federation University in Ballarat, Australia and the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, Scotland. Both visits grew from interest in building, maintaining, and sustaining school-university partnerships, as well as the impact school-university partnerships initiatives have on pre-service teachers, experienced teachers, school leaders and teacher educators.

A quick google search of Professional Development Schools by **Dr. Amanda McGraw**, program leader of a Secondary Education M.A.T. program from Federation University in Ballarat, Australia, led her to our partnership. When Dr. McGraw read that the PDS had won an Award for Exemplary Professional Development School Achievement from the National Association for Professional Development Schools (NAPDS), she wrote to **Dr. Janna Dresden** to learn more about the partnership. After gaining support from her university to make a visit, Dr. McGraw traveled to UGA and spent a week in early September attending on-site courses, meetings, and events. She noticed interesting connections between the site-based approaches that have developed at both universities.

After Dr. McGraw returned to Federation University, she proposed continuing scholarly activity together related to school-university partnerships. To start, she, **Dr. Dresden**, **Erica Gilbertson**, and **Melissa Baker** are co-writing a chapter about site-based teacher education in the Australian Teacher Education Association's upcoming book, *Teacher Education Policy and Practice – Evidence of Impact, Impact of Evidence*.

In late October, the Office of School Engagement also hosted two faculty members from the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, Scotland. **Dr. Linda Brownlow** and **Catherine Whitley** attended the 4th annual PDS Workshop, where they had the opportunity to visit five schools. They also met individually with OSE members and with **Dr. Denise Spangler**, COE associate dean for faculty and staff services, as they hope to build an exchange program for their pre-service teachers with the COE.



Dr. Amanda McGraw, a Senior Lecturer at the Federation University in Australia, meets with members of the Office of School Engagement to discuss PDS research. (Pictured from L to R: **Erica Gilbertson**, **Pat Waldrip**, **Janna Dresden**, **Jori Hall**, **Amanda McGraw**).

Recent PDS Publications

Anderson, B., Grantham, T. and Hines, M. (2016) Lessons learned from teaching a service-learning course on minority student talent development. *Gifted Education Press Quarterly*.

Andrews, G., & Thompson, K.F. (2016). Relationships and context matter: Tales from a middle school-university partnership. In P. Howell, J. Carpenter, & J. Jones (Eds.), *The handbook of resources for middle level education, Clinical preparation at the middle level: Practices and Possibilities*. Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.

Dresden, J., with Blankenship, S. S., Capuozzo, R. M., Nealy, A. U., and Tavernier, M. D. (2016). What is a PDS? Reframing the conversation. *School-University Partnerships* 9(3), 64-80.

Dresden, J., Gilbertson, E., & Tavernier, M. (Spring, 2016). University of Georgia and Clarke County School District: Creating a Dynamic and Sustainable District-Wide Partnership. *School-University Partnerships*.

Hughes, H. E., Moulton, M. J., & Andrews, P. G. (2016). Learning through crisis and paradox in justice-oriented teacher education. *Middle Grades Review*, 1(3), Art. 4.



College of Education
Office of School Engagement
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Our Purpose:

The Office of School Engagement at the University of Georgia serves as a bridge between the worlds of theory and practice in P-16 public education to improve the educational experiences of students and the professional lives of educators.

Contact Us:

Janna Dresden, Director

629F Aderhold Hall

Phone: 706-542-8491

Email: jdresden@uga.edu

OSE Newsletter Writer and Editor: Erica Gilbertson

Guest Writers: Dr. Pat Waldrup, Dr. Janna Dresden,
Dr. Kathy Thompson, Melissa Baker

Email: ericag@uga.edu

www.coe.uga.edu/ose

Record numbers attend 4th annual PDS Workshop

On October 25, the Professional Development School District hosted its 4th annual Professional Development Schools (PDS) Workshop. Twenty-seven registered educators and sixteen additional local guests attended the all-day workshop, making this the largest workshop to date. Universities represented included Mercer University, Georgia College and State University, Valdosta State University, Armstrong State University, and the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, Scotland. School districts included Griffin-Spalding, Valdosta City, and Savannah-Chatham.

After a welcome from COE Dean Craig Kennedy, Dr. Janna Dresden, Director of the Office of School Engagement, and Dr. Mark Tavernier, Associate Superintendent for Instructional Services and School Performance in the Clarke County School District, gave participants an overview of the partnership.

Participants then spent the remainder of the day traveling to five schools to experience different aspects of the partnership. Cedar Shoals High School, J. J. Harris Elementary School, Hilsman Middle School, H.B. Stroud Elementary School, and Clarke Middle School offered experiences such as on-site courses, discussions with mentor teachers, observations of K-12 classrooms, and conversations with Professors-in-Residence.

The workshop concluded with remarks from CCSD Superintendent Philip Lanoue and a closing panel discussion with principals and Professors-in-Residence. Panelists answered questions and offered advice and lessons learned for teams in earlier stages of forming school-university partnerships.

PDSD launches fundraising campaign to strengthen partnership at all levels

The children of Clarke County benefit each year from the presence of hundreds of UGA students and their professors who work alongside the professional teachers in their classrooms. This is thanks to a **special partnership between the UGA College of Education and the Clarke County School District called the Professional Development School District (PDSD).**

The partnership is launching a campaign to raise \$5,000 by December 31 to support our ongoing professional learning and innovative programs.

Please visit our **PDSD Georgia Funder web page** and consider a donation to this worthy cause:

<https://dar.uga.edu/funder/campaigns/professional-learning-to-deepen-a-school-university-partnership>