



Five UGA courses are taught at Clarke Middle School in the “Bulldawg Classroom,” a dedicated room for UGA instructors and students. The room is one of several ways principal Tad MacMillan is committed to the Professional Development School District partnership. PHOTO BY WINGATE DOWNS

Clarke Middle School principal elected to national position

Last April, Clarke Middle School principal **Tad MacMillan** was elected to the National Association for Professional Development Schools’ (NAPDS) board of directors by the organization’s membership. MacMillan has been actively involved with professional development schools work at both the local and national level for the past seven years.



MACMILLAN

“I am honored to be selected to serve on the NAPDS Board,” MacMillan said. “I am excited by the work of university-school partnerships, and I believe the best way to capitalize on those partnerships is to continue to learn from each other. K-12 schools can do so much more to fully leverage our partnerships with universities, and I look forward to our work together. It is an exciting time for professional development school partnerships.”

MacMillan will serve a three-year term on the board as one of the P-12 leadership representatives. He has attended and presented at the last four national NAPDS conferences and plans to present at multiple sessions again in March at the conference in Jacksonville, Florida.

Clarke Middle became a professional development school in 2011 with **Dorothy White**, associate professor in mathematics education, serving as the first professor-in-residence until 2013. The school’s

—continued on page 2

IN THIS ISSUE:



4 PROFILE:
Kat Raczynski



6 History made
in the sky



7 A visit to
Camp DIVE

New leaders, new energy in PDSD for 2017-18 school year

The Professional Development School District partnership between the UGA College of Education and the Clarke County School District experienced significant leadership changes at both the university and district levels for the 2017-18 school year.

School district changes

The Clarke County Board of Education hired a new superintendent, **Demond Means**, who started in July and is now a member of the Professional Development School District executive committee. Previously, Means was the superintendent of the Mequon-Thiensville School District in southeast Wisconsin.

“I am excited about the renewed purpose of the PDSD. The work of the PDSD will become more deliberate, research-based and intentional moving forward. The Clarke County School District is seeking to ensure that the PDSD’s work is aligned to our organizational focus on literacy, numeracy and social-emotional growth of all students,” said Means.

“In using the National Association for Professional Development Schools’ nine essentials, we are working to review current practices in place for the UGA-CCSD PDSD partnership. It is our collective vision to make our work more beneficial to pre-service teachers and the students of the Clarke County School District.”

Means has more than 23 years in education, having served as superintendent, assistant superintendent, university adjunct professor, director for human resources, principal, associate principal, assistant principal and social studies teacher.

Also new to the executive committee is **Monica Gant**, the new associate



MEANS



GANT

—continued on page 2

District changes and new roles for faculty in schools

—continued from page 1

superintendent for instructional services and school performance. Gant served as the district's executive director of secondary teaching and learning for two years prior to her promotion to this position.

"As a new member of the PDSD executive committee, I am most excited about our collective commitment to ensuring that our partnership work is aligned to our district areas of focus," she said. "Through our common vision, we have a tremendous opportunity through the PDSD to build the capacity of our staff to ensure success for our students."

Other new school district leaders connected to the Professional Development School District include **Carletta Noland**, the new executive director of elementary teaching and learning; **Michael Harris**, the new executive director of secondary teaching and learning; and two new middle school principals: **Tomas Ramirez** at W.R. Coile Middle School and **Makeba Clark** at Burney-Harris-Lyons Middle School.

New professors-in-residence

After teaching a UGA on-site course at Clarke Middle School last spring, **Amy Murphy**, a clinical assistant professor in the middle grades program, became a professor-in-residence at Clarke Middle School this fall. She brings her interests in culturally responsive classroom management, literacy practices across the content areas, and curriculum design to her work with Clarke Middle teachers. She also supervises practicum students and student teachers from the middle grades program at the school.

"I immediately knew Clarke Middle School was a special place when I first shadowed students in spring 2016 to learn what a day-in-the-life of a CMS student was like," said Murphy. "As a professor-in-residence, I'm excited to work alongside the school's passionate faculty to provide equitable and challenging learning opportunities across the curriculum."

Also this fall, **Sonia Janis**, clinical associate professor in the secondary



Amy Murphy, professor-in-residence at Clarke Middle School, teaches her UGA middle grades methods course on-site at the school. PHOTO BY WINGATE DOWNS

social studies program, began her role as the district-wide professor-in-residence for secondary social studies education. Previously, Janis worked as the professor-in-residence at Cedar Shoals High School for three years. In her new role, she works with social studies teachers at two middle schools and two high schools in the district.



JANIS

She supports her UGA social studies teacher candidates in classrooms as they lead small group and collaborative projects, such as the Social Studies Fair, with Clarke County students. She also mentors secondary social studies teachers in their role as mentors to her teacher candidates and partners with the school district's social studies instructional coach, **Laura Ambrose**, to provide professional learning.

Clarke Middle plays integral role in partnership

—continued from page 1

involvement has continued to grow and now includes professor-in-residence **Amy Murphy** (see story, above), five on-site courses, and more than 50 practicum students and student teachers from nine different programs hosted by mentor teachers.

"Our school culture is shaped by UGA—we believe that having more UGA students in the school gives our students a ready supply of academic role models, tutors, and interns," MacMillan said.

In addition to the deep level of involvement with the University of Georgia College of

Education, faculty and students from UGA's College of Agriculture, College of Veterinary Medicine, and College of Arts and Sciences support the school's garden and agricultural education. MacMillan has also been an active member of the Camp DIVE (Discover, Inquire, Voice and Explore) leadership team and hosted the camp at Clarke Middle in 2016.

MacMillan has worked in the Clarke County School District for 30 years as a reading teacher, a language arts teacher, a social studies teacher, an instructional coach, and a principal at the elementary and middle

school levels. According to MacMillan, the most rewarding part of his career has been the professional development school collaboration at Clarke Middle with professors and students from the University of Georgia.

"The professional development school makes me more aware of what research says and helps me think about where we're going as a school," he said. "The Professional Development School District has transformed my school."

For more information about NAPDS, see napds.org.



College of Education faculty members **Janna Dresden** (left) and **Kathy Thompson** presented at the first PDS South East Regional Vision for Education (SERVE) conference on Sept. 30 hosted by Georgia State University. PHOTO BY MATT FASIG

SERVE conference PDSD takes part in 1st regional event

On Sept. 30, 11 UGA faculty, graduate students, undergraduate students and Clarke County School District teachers, traveled to Atlanta to the first PDS South East Regional Vision for Education conference, known as SERVE.

SERVE is a new professional development school-focused organization and will be a regional affiliate of the National Association for Professional Development Schools.

The inaugural conference was hosted by Georgia State University, and the day-long event brought together colleagues from UGA, GSU, the University of South Carolina, Georgia Southern University, Albany State University, and Columbus State University, several school districts and visitors from South Africa.

SERVE provided a space for regional colleagues to share experiences from their partnership work and gain insight into the partnership work of others in the area. The UGA-CCSD partnership was well represented, with presentations offered during every session of the conference.

For UGA students, the opportunity to present work at SERVE was a rare treat, as most conferences require out-of-state travel. **Pam Shearer**, a second-grade teacher in Clarke County schools and 40-year teaching veteran who is pursuing her educational specialist degree at UGA, was excited about participating. "SERVE gave me the

opportunity to be inspired by educators who are making a difference at every level of education. I left challenged to be a difference-maker with my own students," Shearer said.

Gwendolyn Benson, associate dean for faculty development and partnerships at Georgia State University, said the conference was a great way to share and support the work of professional development schools. "We certainly met our initial goal by providing a regional platform for presentations, discussions, and suggestions for moving our PDS research conversation forward."

Plans are already underway for the 2018 SERVE conference, likely to be at the University of South Carolina.

PDS SERVE was established in direct response to professional development school practitioners in the Southeast, said **Susan Ogletree**, chair of the SERVE executive board and faculty at Georgia State.

"There are many new professional development school programs and because we believe it is important for all voices to be heard, we decided to establish PDS SERVE," she said. "It seeks to provide an affordable forum for K-12 teachers and principals, university clinical educators and students from both areas to present on educational research and best practices that are being researched/used in our professional development schools."

Kat Raczynski

District-wide professor-in-residence for school climate

Climate change

Researcher helps district set course for improved social-emotional development

Kat Raczynski, director of the Safe and Welcoming Schools project in the University of Georgia College of Education, became the Clarke County School District's district-wide professor-in-residence for school climate in fall 2015. Given that social-emotional development is one of the three focus areas for the district's new superintendent, **Demond Means**, the school climate expertise she brings to the partnership is a great fit.

"I'm excited to see how the social-emotional component of Dr. Means' vision develops as we all work to put supports in place that are best for kids," Raczynski said.

Her work is wide-ranging, with a focus on systems and processes that ensure that Clarke County students are getting the support they need for social and emotional growth.

Raczynski works closely with school climate data, such as attendance and discipline records, and surveys of parents, teachers, and students. "I really like gathering and analyzing in-depth quantitative and qualitative data that can inform administrator decision-making," Raczynski said.

Her projects also include targeted work as requested by schools, such as serving on teams for "positive behavioral interventions and support," a framework to support all members of the school community and address school climate through effective use of data, systems and practices. Within these teams, she is involved in action planning, setting priorities and monitoring progress toward school climate goals.

Raczynski is also a member of the district leadership team for positive behavioral interventions and support, and works closely with **Dawn Meyers**, associate superintendent of policy and school support services, among others.

"From helping to review policies around bullying, attendance, and discipline to working with schools around school climate and culture, Dr. Raczynski brings resources and feedback that strengthen



"I was thrilled to become a part of the PDS as professor-in-residence—it gave me a community in which to do my work, which has strengthened all that I do."

-Kat Raczynski

our schools and our district," said Meyers. "Her district-wide and systemic framework for safe and welcoming schools fits beautifully with where we are headed as a district. We are so fortunate to have her on our team."

One of the initiatives Raczynski started, together with former Clarke Central High School student **Jasia Clark**, is the Districtwide Bullying Prevention Essay Contest. Students in grades 6-12 write essays about Clarke County School District employees who create spaces where bullying doesn't occur. More than 120 essays have been submitted to the contest during the past two years.

"This contest celebrates successes and what is going right," said Raczynski. "My favorite part is sending all of the students' essays back to the people who were nominated—it's very meaningful."

Raczynski also frequently leads professional learning on bullying prevention, creating welcoming classrooms and schools, and social-emotional learning. For UGA pre-service teachers, she shares her expertise on building relationships in classrooms and making connections with students.

"I love doing professional learning with teachers, especially on these types of topics," she added. "Focusing on the strengths teachers have is refreshing and meaningful."

Prior to become a professor-in-residence, Raczynski had been asked to launch a pilot project to provide resources and support for the

school district on school climate issues, working primarily with two elementary schools (Gaines and Alps Road) and two middle schools (Clarke Middle and Hilsman). After a year, administrators invited her to share her expertise district-wide, so joining the Professional Development School District partnership was the natural next step.

"I was thrilled to become a part of the PSDS as professor-in-residence—it gave me a community in which to do my work, which has strengthened all that I do," she said.

As director of Safe and Welcoming Schools at the College of Education, Raczynski's broader mission focuses on research and outreach around creating positive school environments. She describes the work as "outward and community-facing with a focus on equity." This October, the sixth annual Safe and Welcoming Schools conference took place in Athens with more than 100 participants from across the state.

Raczynski also teaches graduate-level research methods and assessment classes, serves as a school climate specialist for the Northeast Georgia Regional Educational Service Agencies and contributes to research projects at the UGA College of Education's Center for Latino Achievement and Success in Education.

Raczynski earned three degrees from the UGA College of Education—her B.S.Ed. in social studies education and an M.A. and a Ph.D. in educational psychology (quantitative methods program). Since then, she has served the College in various roles, including working closely with former Dean **Arthur M. Horne** on bullying before it became an issue commonly discussed in schools. This year, she received the College's Arthur M. Horne Faculty Award for Community Engagement and Research, which is given to faculty who are engaged in work that affects the community.



Kat Raczynski worked with **Jasia Clark** (right), a former Clarke Central High School student, to develop the district-wide Bullying Prevention Essay Contest. Clark was honored for this work at the Professional Development School District Coordinating Council dinner in April of 2016. PHOTO BY JUSTIN EVANS



Kat Raczynski, a member of the Hilsman Middle School positive behavioral interventions and support team. At a recent meeting she presented on understanding trends related to student behavior data. PHOTO BY JUSTIN EVANS

Teamwork creates lesson that's made in the shade

College, school district partner for students' solar eclipse experience

Julie Luft, Athletic Association Professor of Mathematics and Science Education, led the University of Georgia College of Education's effort to raise money to buy solar eclipse glasses for more than 14,000 Clarke County School District students (and eight schools in other counties) from Lunt Optical in Tucson, Arizona. She also organized more than 75 science- and education-based faculty, graduate and undergraduate students to volunteer in Clarke County schools on solar eclipse day and share their passion for this important scientific event.

Other units on campus, including faculty from UGA's geography department, as well as **Carla Buss**, curriculum librarian in the College of Education, and **Ted Gilbert**, associate superintendent for district services, played a large part in making the day a big success.

Top: University of Georgia middle grades education teacher candidates and professor-in-residence **Kathy Thompson** (second from left) viewed the near-total eclipse with Hilsman Middle School students and faculty on Aug. 21. The group was one of many from UGA and the Professional Development School District to help with the district-wide viewing.

Left: **Julie Luft**, left, and **Carla Buss**. Luft helped organize the fundraising and distribution of thousands of solar eclipse glasses while Buss created lesson plans and other materials in the College of Education's Curriculum Materials Library.

Right: **Ted Gilbert** displays some solar eclipse glasses that were delivered to the Clarke County School District.



Workshop trains dozens of mentor teachers

On July 27, the Professional Development School District sponsored its annual Co-Teaching with Teacher Candidates Workshop for Clarke County School District mentor teachers. Offered each summer, the workshop trains mentor teachers in co-teaching strategies to best support their teacher candidates.

Based on the St. Cloud State University model, co-teaching involves sharing the planning, organization, delivery, and assessment of classroom instruction.

Bethany Hamilton-Jones, clinical associate professor in the department of communication sciences and special education, led the workshop for 31 Clarke County elementary and secondary mentor teachers.

Now in its sixth year, these workshops have trained more than 300 teachers in the district. Follow-up includes a pairs workshop, in



which mentors and teacher candidates meet to discuss ways to implement the co-teaching strategies they have learned.

Feedback from mentor teachers has been positive. One participant responded, "The session was great. It was a whole new way to think about student teachers, and I really felt ready after this training."



Top: UGA graduate assistant **Arynn Byrd** made paper mache masks with third-, fourth- and fifth-grade campers.

Right: Athens artist **Broderick Flanigan** created a spray paint art project with campers in sixth, seventh and eighth grade. He was one of many community members who volunteered at Camp DIVE in 2017.

PHOTOS BY KRISTEN MORALES



Camp DIVE makes a splash for a second summer

The Camp DIVE (Discover, Inquire, Voice and Explore) summer program, designed to reduce summer learning loss, had a second successful session this past June. Housed at Alps Road Elementary School, this multi-faceted collaboration between the Clarke County School District, the UGA College of Education and the Athens-Clarke County community epitomized the idea of a community of learners and a win-win environment.

Everyone who participated in the camp came away with a new appreciation for the power of experiential learning and contributed to the positive energy that characterized the month-long summer camp. Nearly 50 of the 75 Clarke County students who took part in 2016 returned in 2017, and the 80 students who attended this summer engaged in academically-focused enrichment activities along with field trips to Washington Farms, the Center for Human and Civil Rights, and Lanier World Water Park.

Campers in kindergarten through second grade took part in reading and writing workshops, math games, and a variety of play-based activities designed to foster feelings of self-efficacy and social skills. Designing and building scale models of “tiny houses” was a central

feature of the program for third- through fifth-graders, who also investigated scientific phenomena through hands-on experiments and literature-based writing and art activities like mask-making. The middle school students were members of book groups of their choosing and engaged in participatory action research about the meaning and creation of a community.

UGA undergraduate and graduate students served as volunteers, helping with breakfast and lunch, chaperoning field trips and sharing in the fun during the morning energizers. In addition, 62 UGA students earned course credit while they worked with the campers—students learned about the development of reading and writing in young children, the complexities of teaching history today, and supporting children’s interest in math and science.

The College of Education departments of language and literacy education, educational theory and practice, and communication sciences and special education sponsored Camp DIVE courses, which were taught by 14 faculty and graduate students. Six Clarke County School District teachers also taught at Camp DIVE, and four high school students in the early childhood education career pathway worked as interns.




College of Education
Office of School Engagement
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

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: Janna Dresden, Pat Waldrip, Ashley Nylin
 Email: coeose@uga.edu

www.coe.uga.edu/ose

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.

Fifth annual workshop helps build new partnerships

The fifth annual Professional Development Schools Workshop took place Oct. 24 with an energetic group representing eight universities and P-12 school districts from the Southeast.

The day began at the Georgia Museum of Art, where **Stacey Neuharth-Pritchett**, associate dean for academic programs at the University of Georgia College of Education, welcomed participants. **Janna Dresden**, director of the Office of School Engagement, and **Tad MacMillan**, principal of Clarke Middle School, related the story of how the Professional Development School District partnership began and how it works. **Demond Means**, new superintendent of Clarke County Schools, described his vision for the future of the partnership.

Participants then visited four schools and had the opportunity to visit an on-site class, observe practicum students in the field, and talk with mentor teachers, UGA faculty and school administrators. At each site visit, the group was able to see the different ways the partnership meets the needs of individual schools. Everyone emphasized the importance of building relationships, flexibility, communication, and reflection, which demonstrated the way professional development schools blend theory and practice.



As part of the PDS Workshop on Oct. 24, UGA instructor **Logan Garrett** (left) spoke about teaching her secondary school mathematics course at Clarke Middle School while UGA teacher candidates (from left) **Ralph Fuchssteiner**, **Lindsey Boozer** and **Cavana Epps** shared their learning experiences with middle school students as part of their course.

A working lunch at Clarke Middle School, with delicious food prepared by Clarke County culinary arts students, included a presentation by **Logan Garrett**, UGA on-site instructor in mathematics education, and three of her UGA students. Participants also observed UGA students working with small groups in eighth-grade math classrooms. The closing panel brought together six principals and professors-in-residence to discuss the successes and challenges of being involved in professional development schools.