BRAVING THE NEW WORLD OF STEM EDUCATION: THE PARTNERSHIP PERSPECTIVE

JANNA DRESDEN, PH.D.

PRESENTATION AT THE THIRD ANNUAL UGA STEM INSTITUTE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

APRIL 5, 2014
INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS ON PARTNERSHIP WORK

• You can’t have a partnership
• Without a partner
THE STORY OF ‘TEACH TO LEARN,’ A STEM PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN UGA AND THE CLARKE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

BEGINS WITH THE STORY OF THE UGA & CCSD PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
BACKGROUND ON THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL DISTRICT (PDSD)

• Open-ended meetings began in January of 2008
• In 2008-2009 we visited other school-university in partnerships in Illinois, Wisconsin, South Carolina and Georgia
• In August of 2009, J.J. Harris Elementary Charter School opened as a PDS
• In 2011 expanded to a Professional Development School DISTRICT
UGA/CCSD PDSD TODAY

- 11 schools actively involved: 5 Elementary Schools, 3 Middle Schools, 2 High Schools, and The Early Learning Center

- 6 Professors-in-Residence at 5 schools plus 1 District-wide Professor-in-Residence

- 20 College of Education courses taught on-site at schools

- ~500 COE students taking classes, in field placement or student teaching at Professional Development Schools each semester
PDSD REGULAR MEETINGS

• School level meetings

• COE PDSD faculty meetings

• Coordinating Council

• Monthly Executive Committee meetings
• Goal was to improve retention rate and quality of early career science and math teachers in CCSD middle and high schools

• Supported by a Georgia Innovation Fund grant (federal Race to the Top)

• $850,000 over 2 years (2012-2014) and just received a no-cost extension for one more year (until June 2015)

• Combined a residency program for newly certified teachers (or those nearing completion of certification) with an induction program for Early Career Teachers (in 1st three years)
TEACH TO LEARN PARTICIPANTS

• 13 Teacher Coaches
• 19 Early Career Teachers
• 12 Teacher Residents
• COHORT FACILITATORS:
  • Dr. Sally Zepeda, Teacher Coaches
  • Dr. Amy Peacock and Ms. Glenda Huff, Early Career Teachers
  • Dr. Ryan Smith, Teacher Residents
TEACH TO LEARN PROGRAM ELEMENTS

- Teacher-Coach and Teacher Resident co-teaching
- Teacher Resident responsible for classroom so that TC could work with Early Career Teacher
- Planning meetings for all members of the triad
- Professional learning
  - Bi-weekly seminars for teacher-residents
  - Monthly sessions for early career teachers and teacher coaches
  - Professional Learning Days
    - Workshops
    - Science Day visit to UGA labs
PRELIMINARY LESSONS LEARNED—THE PROGRAM WORKED BEST WHEN:

- Teacher-Coaches were only responsible for mentoring one Early Career Teacher
- TC, ECT and TR (triads) shared common planning time and taught the same subject and grade level
- Emphasis of professional learning was on content and pedagogical content knowledge
- Professional learning was directed at triads rather than at cohort groups
- There was time to develop trust (so that true collaboration could take place)
- Flexibility allowed for modifications
PARTNERSHIP WORK REQUIRES

• Time
• Tenacity
• Trusting and trustworthy behavior
CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS

- **Emergent**—Based on
  - The needs and interests of the participants
  - The interests and capacity of those involved

- **Organic**—Created by the people doing the work

- **Dynamic**—Constantly changing

- **Collaborative**—Planning and decision-making is shared at multiple levels within and across institutions
YOU HAVE TO HAVE A PARTNER
BEFORE YOU START TO DANCE