



**BUFFALO STATE**  
The State University of New York  
Fall 2024 Edition

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOLS



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Created by Janinna Farragher PDS Graduate Assistant



**Dr. Pixita del Prado**  
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Professor,  
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Literacy, and  
Educational Leadership



**Dr. Sherri Weber**  
PDS Co-Director  
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Elementary Education,  
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## WELCOME FROM THE DIRECTORS

We hope you enjoyed the beautiful fall weather and are ready for winter!

The Buffalo State University’s Professional Development Schools (PDS) Consortium has been busy this fall. We kicked off the semester with our PDS Conference. It was well attended, and we had a wonderful audience with spectacular presentations. The 2024 New York State Teacher of the Year, Zachary Arnez, spoke about the power of music and relationships in the classroom.

Our next event was the annual Teacher Tailgate, where students have the opportunity to learn about the wide range of teacher education programs, international travel opportunities, teacher education organizations and much more. It was well attended, and the students enjoyed pizza while learning about what Buffalo State University has to offer.

Fall also brought some travel. We had the privilege to accompany a group of Elementary Education and English Education students to Edgecomb, Maine to observe reading and writing content at the Center for Teaching and Learning. We hope to visit CTL next October with another group of enthusiastic students!

As we approach the time of year of celebration and reflection, we here at PDS are reminded of how fortunate we are to have the support of such tremendous partners and faculty and administration who are passionate about making teaching the very best that it can be.

Take care,

Sherri and Pixita

PDS Co-Directors

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**Professional Development Schools**  
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The Professional Development Schools (PDS) Partnership between the School of Education and the Teacher Education Unit (TEU) at SUNY Buffalo State and participating schools is a collaborative effort. The partnership is dedicated to college faculty, school administrators, practicing teachers, and teacher candidates exploring effective practices to: (a) cooperatively mentor teacher candidates and provide close connections to authentic classroom practice; (b) promote shared professional development for all constituents; (c) impact student learning; and (d) research innovative and best educational practices.

VISIT US ON THE  
WEB:

[pds.buffalostate.edu](http://pds.buffalostate.edu)

## INTRODUCING THE NEW AND RETURNING PDS REPRESENTATIVES

As a new year approaches, we would like to take the time to recognize our amazing team of PDS student representatives. They have the important jobs of working with PDS to help organize and run events, advocate for professional development for teacher candidates, and present their research at the upcoming NASUP conference. PDS helps our students build their resumes, develop their teacher candidate voices, and take advantage of opportunities for professional development and networking.



Janinna Farragher  
PDS Graduate Assistant

Janinna has been the PDS Graduate Assistant since 2023. Janinna has participated in many events and programs including NASUP, Buffalo State PDS conferences, BOCES panels and IPDS Dominican Republic, Costa Rica and Italy. She is finishing her graduate program in Technology Education and is looking forward to teaching in Western New York.

Research presentation at the 2025 NASUP conference in New Orleans, Louisiana:  
**“Let’s get Digital: Exploring Technological Literacy in Italian Classrooms”**  
 This study will be exploring how Italian schools aim to foster digital and technical literacy.



Jarrett Whipple  
SOE Graduate Assistant

Jarrett has been a PDS representative since 2023. Jarrett works as a graduate assistant for the Elementary Ed and School of Education offices while earning his master's in English education 7-12. Jarrett has participated in PDS events such as conferences, Teacher Tailgates, and BOCES panels. Through PDS, Jarrett also became an intern at the Center of Teaching and Learning in Edgecomb, Maine.

Research presentation at the 2025 NASUP conference in New Orleans, Louisiana:  
**“The Student Studio: Empowering Youth Voice Through Multimodal Composition”**  
 This study seeks to examine the impacts of independent multimodal composition on students, how classrooms engaged in this work are structured, and the accessibility of this work in a variety of classrooms.

## INTRODUCING THE NEW AND RETURNING PDS REPRESENTATIVES



Hailee Cipollina  
PDS Representative

Hailee has been a PDS representative since 2022. She is a senior in the Exceptional Education department with a concentration in Spanish, and working towards her microcredential in American Sign Language. Hailee has been an enthusiast in all things PDS. She traveled with IPDS to the Dominican Republic in January 2023 and to Zambia in May 2023. She has participated in NASUP, PDS conferences, IPDS panel discussions and has been a IPDS student ambassador for many years.

Research presentation at the 2025 NASUP conference in New Orleans, Louisiana : **“The Importance of Inclusive Playgrounds at Schools and in the Community”** This study examines the important benefits that inclusive playgrounds have on children with disabilities, their families, peers and the community in and out of school.



Sarah Pratt  
PDS Representative

Sarah has been a PDS representative since 2023. She is a senior majoring in the early childhood/childhood education. Sarah expects to graduate in the spring of 2025 and is excited for all the new opportunities she will have. Sarah has participated in PDS events such as conferences, NASUP, Teacher Tailgates, and was a leader in the education club, BPE.

Research presentation at the 2025 NASUP conference in New Orleans, Louisiana : **“Board Games are Not Boring!”** This study will explore how board games can aid in social emotional learning, student development and academic achievement.

## INTRODUCING THE NEW AND RETURNING PDS REPRESENTATIVES



Dariana Candelario  
PDS Representative

Dottie is one of our new PDS representatives this year! She is pursuing a degree in Special Childhood Education with a concentration in Spanish. Dottie hopes to use her PDS experiences to continue building her passion for bringing high-quality education to our bilingual and bicultural communities. This year, Dottie has participated in the PDS conference, Teacher Tailgate and other events.

Research presentation at the 2025 NASUP conference in New Orleans, Louisiana: **“Cycle of Inspiration: The successes of a non-traditional student.”** this study explores the experiences and successes of non-traditional college students with a special focus on the role of the Belle Center.



Mya Jones  
PDS Representative

Mya is also one of our new PDS representatives this year! Mya is a senior majoring in early childhood education. Mya hopes to continue her education by getting her master's in Literacy and then go on to become a literacy specialist in a school setting. This year, Mya has participated in the PDS conference, Teacher Tailgate and will be traveling with IPDS Dominican Republic in January 2025.

Research presentation at the 2025 NASUP conference in New Orleans, Louisiana: **“Beyond the Classroom: What educators need to understand about child maltreatment to ensure successful learning”** This study will explore how educators can create a healthier classroom environment by learning the impacts of child maltreatment on students.

## BECOME A PDS REPRESENTATIVE

**We are looking for more talented leaders to join our PDS team!**



Our candidates...

- Are current students in any Buffalo State education major (secondary, K-12, exceptional, childhood, early childhood education).
- Will be participating in field experience and/or methods courses.
- Possess leadership qualities and the ability to work as a part of a professional community as evidenced by employment or volunteer experiences.

**We encourage all professors to invite potential teacher candidates to apply!**

For more information visit our website <https://pds.buffalostate.edu> and look at all the wonderful work PDS representatives have done through the years.

**Apply here!**

Or email: Pixita del Prado Hill / [delprapm@buffalostate.edu](mailto:delprapm@buffalostate.edu)

Sherri Weber / [webersm@buffalostate.edu](mailto:webersm@buffalostate.edu)



## TEACHER TAILGATE 2024

On October 8th, PDS and the School of Education hosted the annual Teacher Tailgate. This year we had over thirty different partners and programs. Students from all different educational departments were invited to enjoy pizza, drinks and games while visiting tables.



Teacher Tailgate is an annual open house gathering of education students, staff, and faculty to extend relationships across academic boundaries and share information and opportunities with teacher candidates. Buffalo State and PDS partners invite various education departments, programs and organizations to showcase information and resources that cater to teacher candidates across the campus for free. This event was created to allow students to explore opportunities both in and outside of the Buffalo States campus. Students can gain valuable information on professional opportunities at the local, national and international level.



By Janinna Farragher

## PDS 2024 LEADERSHIP AWARD

The Buffalo State Professional Development schools had the honor of congratulating several individuals on their outstanding contributions to our schools and partnerships. Among these awards is the PDS Leadership award presented to Dr. Keli Garas-York.



Keli has made a profound impact serving as PDS Director and Co-director. She is known for her dedication to literacy and creating strong partnerships between the Buffalo State PDS and National Association for School-University Partnerships by serving on the NASUP Board as well as several committees. She has maintained strong partnerships with local schools and now works internationally with schools in Colombia, Brazil, and Italy.



After publishing and editing numerous articles and chapters about the Buffalo State PDS, she was invited by SUNY Press to write a book titled “*School-University Partnerships: The Professional Development Schools (Pds) Approach.*” We congratulate Keli on all of her accomplishments.

Congratulations Keli!

By Janinna Farragher

## PDS CONFERENCE 2024 LEADERSHIP AWARDS

During the PDS conference this year, we recognized several individuals who have shown remarkable leadership both at Buffalo State and beyond as PDS partners.



Rachel Nati  
&  
Alex Bianchi

*Recipients of the PDS Leader of Leaders Award*

Rachel Nati and Alex Bianchi are amazing alumni of Buffalo State and the PDS. Alex was a childhood education major and served as an Undergraduate PDS Student Representative. Rachel was a special education major and literacy specialist candidate and then served as the PDS Graduate Assistant. Today, they are wonderful teachers at Franklin Elementary in the Ken-Ton district. Their commitment to connecting Franklin with Buffalo State makes a difference in the preparation of candidates who will become leaders in their own classrooms and who will impact hundreds of children. We thank Alex and Rachel for all of their hard work and their years of dedication to helping the next generation of teachers. Congratulations!



## PDS CONFERENCE 2024 LEADERSHIP AWARDS



### Shania Mitchell

*Recipient of the PDS Leader of Leaders Award*

Shania Mitchell is a 2023 graduate from the Buffalo State MIITC program. Shania has contributed and participated in IPDS Italy as a graduate student and the inaugural IPDS Spain Experienced Education Exchange program as an active teacher last February. She is now a first grade teacher Buffalo Academy of Science Charter School. Shania has shown her ability to continue her travel and education by creating an innovative international program at Buff Sci as an opportunity for colleagues to travel to Central America, promoting educational opportunities and cultural exchange.

Shania brings enthusiasm and positivity to all endeavors, creating an engaging and supportive learning environment. She emanates poise, positivity and joy to everyone around her. Her demonstration of exceptional leadership skills is recognized by being awarded the “Leader of Leaders Award”. Congratulations!

By Janinna Farragher

## BUFFALO STATE UNIVERSITY PDS CONFERENCE 2024

On October 4th, 2024 the Buffalo State Professional Development Schools hosted their annual Conference in the Campbell Student Union. A staple of every fall semester, the PDS conference brings together the wide community of PDS partners ranging from school teachers, administrators, campus faculty and staff, SUNY colleagues, and teacher candidates to engage in a collective discussion surrounding our shared field of education.



This year we were honored to celebrate and host the 2024 New York State Teacher of the Year Award recipient Zachary Arenz. Admired by students and teachers alike, Zachary works as a music teacher in the Rochester City School District. Committed to his students' growth, he seeks to develop them, not only as music students, but as human beings. Seeing a need for further support, Zachary started his own community closet within his classroom to provide clothes and other personal items for students who need them. Zachary strives to create an equitable and supportive classroom environment which reflects his students' identities and needs, stating, "I try very, very, very diligently to have books that look like my students, to have books that match the topics I'm teaching. My education philosophy is that if you see yourself in your learning, you're going to learn." In his support for his students and greater community as a whole, Zachary exemplifies the teachers we seek to support at Buffalo State University.

## BUFFALO STATE UNIVERSITY PDS CONFERENCE 2024

The 2024 PDS conference represents another great success in empowering teachers, administrators, students and more from across the Buffalo area to come together and deepen their knowledge and understanding of the great field of education.



## PDS CONFERENCE 2024



### *Poster Presenters*

#### **Shannon Budin**

Calling all Classroom Teachers & School Leaders: Feedback on Teacher Performance Assessment Needed

#### **Molly Eldridge**

Learn about the Buffalo Teacher Resource Center!

#### **Faculty: Tamara Horstman-Riphahn, Angela Patti and Pamela Schuetze**

#### **Students: Janinna Farragher, Anna Puchalski and Selen Yucel**

From Costa Rica to Career and the Impact of an IPDS Program



## PDS CONFERENCE 2024

### *Session 1 Paired Concurrent Presentations*

**Andrew Hashey, Mary Lavin, Mwansa Mukalula Kalumbi, Sitwe Benson Mkandawire and Gabriel Walubita**

Nurturing an International Education Partnership between Buffalo State and the University of Zambia

**Sitwe Benson Mkandawire, Gabriel Walubita and Mwansa Mukalula Kalumbi**

Analyzing the Education Systems in Selected African Countries: Structure, Policies, Financing, and Administration



**Mike Jabot**

A Phenomenon Driven Example of Computational Thinking

**Dianne McCarthy**

Using the Principles of Building Thinking Classrooms to Make Math Fun for Teachers and Learners

**Jennifer Reichenberg, Michelle Gallagher, Robyn Kuchta and Gina Dudkowski**

Increasing Confidence in Teacher Candidates: A Multi-Semester Learning Community Strategy

**Lisa Brosnick, Alayla Ende, Dave Henry, Julie Henry, Corinne Kindzierski, and Jennifer Reichenberg**

Elevating our Pre-service Teacher Mentors: Providing Effective Professional Learning Opportunities for Mentor Teachers



## PDS CONFERENCE 2024

### *Session 2 Paired Concurrent Presentations*

#### **Gabriel Walubita, Sitwe Benson Mkandawire, and Mwansa Mukalula Kalumbi**

Improving Individualized Education Plan Effectiveness in Zambian Schools

#### **Andrew Hashey and Shannon Budin**

Video-based Reflection: A Tool for Pedagogical Growth

#### **Gabriella Loewer, Clare McKeone and Julianna Owczarczak**

Using a Classwide Mystery Motivator Intervention to Improve On-Task Behavior During Writer's Workshop: Writing Rockstar!

#### **Joleen Dimitroff and Maria McGrath**

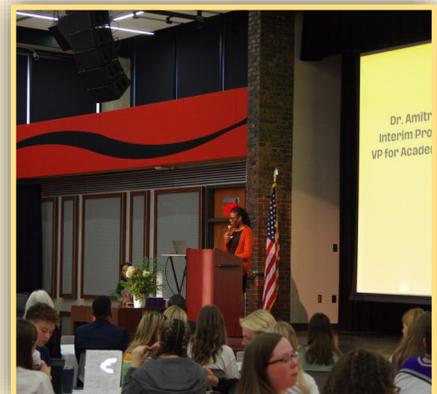
The Benefits of Using Peer Mentors to Improve the Learning and Outcomes for All Students

#### **Jennifer Reichenberg, Michelle Gallagher, Jonathan Nguyễn, Michelle Moore and Gina Dudkowski**

A Mentor Academy Supports Teacher Professional Growth Throughout the Career Span

#### **Elizabeth Kuttesch**

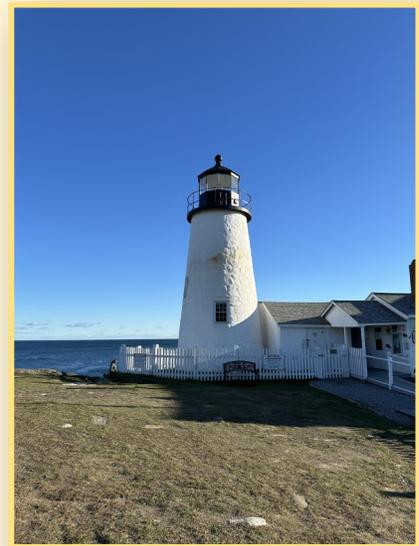
Unpacking Academic and Linguistic Demand



By Jarrett Whipple

## A FALL VISIT TO THE CENTER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING IN MAINE

In October, Sherri Weber, Pixita del Prado Hill, and eight Buffalo State education majors traveled to Edgecomb, Maine, a small New England town about an hour north of Portland. The group spent four days observing at the Center for Teaching and Learning.



CTL provides instruction to students in grades PreK-8 using a workshop model developed by Nancie Atwell who is an alumna of Buffalo State. The profits from Atwell's book, *In the Middle*, were used to start CTL in 1990. CTL is a demonstration school that provides interns a chance to see Atwell's book come to life in the classroom. Its mission is to promote the development and dissemination of authentic, joyful methods for teaching across the curriculum. The school seeks to teach and influence both a cross-section of children of mid-coastal Maine and, through the intern program, speeches, and publications, classroom teachers throughout the U.S.

## A FALL VISIT TO OUR CENTER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING IN MAINE

The Buffalo State interns (two elementary education and six English education students) had the chance to observe classes firsthand and navigate the dynamic classroom environment, allowing them to understand the workshop process in depth. Based on their observations, they were able to discuss their questions with the CTL teachers and review student portfolios. Beyond the classroom, students and professors participated in thoughtful discussions about their insights and how these could be relevant to their own teaching practices.



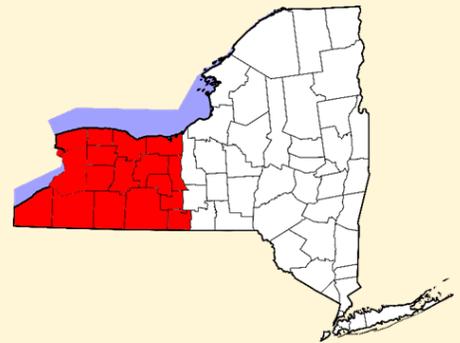
The Buffalo State interns were genuinely captivated by the sense of joyfulness that filled each classroom. They learned a great deal about how important it is to establish an environment where children feel safe and are seen as readers and authors. The interns were able to observe grades 1-8 in their grade bands as well as outside of their majors which helped them further see that CTL's pedagogical stance is seamless from one grade to the next.

By Sherri Weber & Pixita del Prado Hill

## GLOBAL BOOK HOUR

To extend its reach internationally, the Buffalo State Global Book Hour (GBH) has been partnering with the International Graduate Program for Educators (IGPE) to connect children in Western New York with children in Brazil through an annual author study.

The 2024-2025 GBH theme is “Storytelling and the Natural Wonders of the World,” so GBH is linking the study of the Amazon and Niagara Rivers through discussion of the book, *Lipe e Tom Mundo Afora (Lipe and Tom Around the World)* by Dany Proença.



With the help of their respective librarians, third graders at South Buffalo Charter School and the School of Nations in Brasilia will read Proença’s book while learning more about these two important rivers. The children will read additional informational texts to support Knowledge-Building (as recommended by the NYS Literacy Briefs). The children will share what they learn through Google Slides presentations.

By Pixita del Prado Hill

## STEM NIGHT

Glendale Elementary School's STEM Night on November 20, 2024, was a resounding success, with 39 students and their families enjoying an evening of hands-on learning. The event featured engaging rotations, including the Nerdy Derby, led by Glendale's science teacher, EDU 313 Liaison, and NYS Master Teacher Emeritus, Mrs. Cheryl Aldrich, and supported by Buffalo State's Master Teacher Program and Mrs. Rapsinski and Mr. Minervino's EDU 313 Science Methods students, where participants designed and redesigned cars to navigate a challenging track. Dr. Sarah English and the Sweet Home High School Chemistry Club sparked curiosity with exciting chemistry investigations, and families also explored robotics with Families Aimed Toward Excellence (FATE). Glendale's Math Coach and EDU 316 Liaison, Mrs. Molly DiPirro, guided students through the Synergy Challenge, combining engineering and math. Glendale students and their families played Math Mania games with Mrs. Bair's EDU 316 Math Methods students, taking materials home to continue the fun. The EDU 316 and EDU 313 students also provided vital support from beginning to end by helping set up materials, offering support to students (and families) during the sessions, and helping with the cleanup. It was truly a team effort! A special thanks to the Sweet Home Central School District and Glendale Elementary School's Principal, Mrs. Karen DeLaPlante, for being an enthusiastic supporter of Buffalo State PDS and both the EDU 316 and EDU 313.



By Liza Blair

## IPDS ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Current and upcoming travel:

- Fall 2024 Student Teaching in Medellín, Colombia
  - o Please follow the blogs of the participating student teachers
- January 2025 IPDS
  - o Travel to Cabarete, Dominican Republic
  - o Travel to Torremaggiore, Italy
- Spring 2025 Student Teaching in Siena, Italy
- February 2025 Experienced Educator travel to Medellín, Colombia
- Summer 2025 IPDS travel to Chile, Germany, and Zambia

### Exploring new partnerships:

- Under development: IPDS Kenya for summer 2026
- Possible student teaching at the School of Nations in Brasilia, Brazil
- Possible development of a School Leader travel program

**Save the date: Beyond and Back on April 9th from 4:00-5:30pm  
in the Technology Building Room 160**



## TEUPAC

The Buffalo State Teacher Education Unit Professional Advisory Council (TEUPAC) is open to all PDS Consortium stakeholders including school leaders, classroom teachers, teacher education faculty, and teacher candidates at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

The group meets each fall, spring, and summer semesters by Zoom to include as much participation as possible. PDS updates, announcements, and new initiatives are shared. Discussion of teacher education assessment practices provides insight from stakeholders in the field to help improve our programs and candidate outcomes. The bulk of our meeting is spent discussing common issues of concern across our school-university partnerships.

**Please join us for the next TEUPAC meeting – your perspective is valued, and we seek your input!**

· March 13th at 3:00 pm on [Zoom](#)

## SAVE THE DATE & THANK YOU!

**TEUPAC meeting** : Thursday, March 13th at 3:00pm on [Zoom](#)

**Be a Bengal Be a Teacher event** : Wednesday, March 19th, 9:00am-1:00pm

**Beyond & Back IPDS event** : Wednesday, April 9th, 4:00-5:30pm

**PDS Conference** : Friday, October 3rd, 2025 - Call for proposals opens March 1st, 2025.



We would like to thank everyone who contributed to the writing of this semester's newsletter. We thank you for all of your hard work and dedication to PDS and look forward to working with you all next year!

