



BUFFALO STATE
The State University of New York
Fall 2020 Edition

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOLS



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@buffalostatepds

Created by Andrea Minor, Graduate Assistant

WELCOME FROM THE CO-DIRECTORS



Dr. Pixita del Prado Hill
PDS Co-Director
Professor,
Elementary Education,
Literacy, and
Educational Leadership



Dr. Keli Garas-York
PDS Co-Director
Associate Professor,
Elementary Education,
Literacy, and
Educational Leadership
Program Director,
Literacy Specialist

While we have not maintained our usual fall schedule, the SUNY Buffalo State PDS has been busy in different ways. We cherish our relationships with school and community partners now more than ever. While times are challenging, we can still engage in mutually beneficial relationships that have a positive impact on all our stakeholders. Thank you to everyone who provided feedback through liaison committees, surveys, TEUPAC, and word of mouth about how PDS could assist during these trying times.

As a safe alternative to our annual fall PDS Conference, we developed a menu of professional development opportunities at:

<https://pds.buffalostate.edu/professional-development-pds-partners>

These sessions were planned in collaboration and with input from you, our partners. They are offered both synchronously (initially) and asynchronously (recorded).

We heard you when you said our teacher candidates would need to know how to meet the social emotional needs of P-12 learners. We worked with EducationHall to bring our stakeholders two keynote addresses dealing with trauma and resilience. EducationHall is the same company who helped us bring Wendy Turner to campus in March 2020.

We heard you when you told us our teacher candidates would need to be more familiar with remote learning techniques. We sought to provide professional development sessions in this area for college faculty to model for teacher candidates in their courses. We also offered sessions to student teachers and partners who were already working in schools and experiencing changes in the ways they were delivering instruction while focusing on building a community of learners and providing an engaging online learning environment.

The SUNY Buffalo State PDS is thankful to collaborate with FranklinCovey and the Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability, and Reform (CEEDAR) to widen professional development offerings. We are pleased to maintain relationships with our international partners through these professional development opportunities. It is so wonderful to see you all in the synchronous sessions!

Thank you to the many talented educators who contributed to the menu of professional development offerings during summer and fall 2020. We hope to continue our efforts, as the budget allows, during the spring 2021 semester. If you attended sessions, please be sure to complete the brief evaluation for each session at:

https://buffalostate.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3BIkvF37VyUp4p

In addition, please take a quick survey to share your current professional development needs and ideas.

https://buffalostate.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3PqN13mz1ZQhFad

Sincerely,
Pixita and Keli, PDS Co-Directors

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Welcome	1
Student Representatives	2
New Graduate Assistant	3
NYS Teacher of the Year Article	4-5
2020 PDS Partnership Highlights	6-8
“Engagement is Not A Unicorn” Article	9-10
“Project EASE” Article	11-12

Professional Development Schools
Bacon Hall 320
Buffalo State College
1300 Elmwood Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14222

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

PDS STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Many thanks for the important contributions of all teacher candidates involved in PDS. The work of the PDS Consortium would not be possible without their participation. Please help us welcome our new PDS Student Representatives.

Check out profiles about each of the Student Reps and our GA by visiting: pds.buffalostate.edu/leadership



Andrea Minor
Graduate Assistant



Brianna Smith
Student Representative



Shelbymarie Amos
Student Representative



Ashley Sutton
Student Representative



Ashley Bohne
Student Representative



Lindsey Brzozowski
Student Representative



Sydney Hensel
Student Representative



Holly Krupski
Student Representative



Klihtoo Paw
Student Representative

INTRODUCING THE NEW PDS/EELEL GRADUATE ASSISTANT ANDREA MINOR

This Fall, PDS and the Elementary Education, Literacy, and Educational Leadership (EELEL) Department is welcoming a new Graduate Assistant, Andrea Minor.

Andrea was born and raised in Honduras until she moved to the United States in 2013 to attend college. She earned a Bachelor's degree in Psychology with a minor in Studio Art from Mercyhurst University in Erie, PA. There she also earned a Master's degree in Special Education with a concentration in Applied Behavior Analysis and an Autism Endorsement. Andrea is now attending SUNY Buffalo State in order to earn another Master's degree in the Exceptional Education Department, 7-12 Generalist Master's Program, along with a Graduate Certificate in Bilingual Education.

Aside from working as a GA for PDS and the EELEL Departments, Andrea is also currently working in Behavioral Health Services for the Barber National Institute in Erie, PA, where she works as a Behavior Specialist Consultant.

Considering her interest in exceptional education and her current work experiences, Andrea will be conducting a research project on the way in which related services personnel can build rapport with clients/students through remote instruction.



When she is not working or studying, Andrea loves spending time with her husband, Lynn, and their two huge German Shepherds, Ava and Duke! She also enjoys listening to historical podcasts and finding things around her house that need to be fixed or renovated.

Andrea is looking forward to this new stage in her college career at SUNY Buffalo State along with working with PDS and the EELEL department, and all of the fantastic faculty, staff and students involved in the programs.

2020 NYS TEACHER OF THE YEAR ARTICLE

RACHEL MURAT

To view Ms. Murat's Keynote address prepared for the Buffalo State PDS Consortium, please visit:

https://buffalostate.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8jePfDeJEyJkedD

Jim Henson is quoted as saying "Kids don't remember what you try to teach them. They remember what you are." As teachers, we are so many things.

We are leaders.

We are a leader when we take the initiative to bring a new program or idea to our district or classrooms.

We are leaders when we model our love and continuation of learning for our students.

We are leaders when we model that being outside your comfort zone is where the magic happens.

We are caregivers.

We are caregivers when we see a student in need and quietly get them a backpack, a new pair of shoes, a snack or money for lunch.

We are caregivers when we put Maslow before Bloom. A student may not remember the content you teach them, but they will always remember how they were treated in your classroom.

We are caregivers when we set everything else aside and sit and listen to a student that has a story that needs to be shared.

We are caregivers when a student needs guidance with a life decision that may seem crippling at the time.

We are caregivers when we create food pantries for our students who live in food unstable homes.

We are advocates.

We advocate for our students with no voice.

We advocate WITH our students as they become leaders, both on and offline.

We advocate for our students by providing them with an authentic audience for their ideas and work. If we truly value their voice, we need to honor and share it. This is the only way they will learn to have confidence in their voice, and we are their biggest cheerleader!

We are a source of strength.

When we offer to help a struggling teacher or offer words of encouragement when one of our own is down, we become a source of strength for them. When we jump in because something needs to be done for the community, we become a source of strength for the district. When tragedy happens, we are a source of strength for our students as we adjust to our new normal.

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2020 NYS TEACHER OF THE YEAR ARTICLE

RACHEL MURAT

We are lifelong learners who seek out learning opportunities that will best enable our students to be successful in a world that is now skill driven and not task driven. As lifelong learners, we bring new strategies and a willingness to adjust to our changing demographics.

We are sources of positivity.

We model choosing kindness.

We model being the smile someone needs.

We model that one bad moment that happens during the day doesn't define the rest of the moments of the day.

We are tireless in our efforts to create a setting where all students feel safe, loved and valued. This is when the magic happens.

We know that students who feel those traits will go to the ends of the earth for us as they struggle with new concepts and content.

We are members of a community who plan fundraisers for staff and students facing unimaginable tragedy.

We are members of a community who chaperone dances, so our students have safe night time activities.

We plan community service projects to not only better our community but model our belief that service above self benefits everyone. We become a voice of reason in our community when tensions rise.

We are members of a community who help with flood, fire or natural disaster relief, even as we face hardship in our own homes.

We are connected educators who understand how important it is to model appropriate usage of devices and how to use social media platforms to not only promote positivity but to also engage our students with the world. We bring experts, authors, classrooms from around the world, etc. to our students. We are all these things because we love what we do.

We are important members of our classroom, building, district, community, state and nation. We work tirelessly each and every day to bring the world to our students and our students to the world.

We are also purveyors of words of wisdom and we often find ourselves imparting life lessons that are not found in the curriculum but are important in the development of the learners in our lives.

It might seem like they aren't listening, but they are. They are listening, watching and absorbing, so keep the life lessons coming.



- Rachel Murat

**SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP
HIGHLIGHT
BY: WENDY MCLEISH**

**Bennett Park Montessori School,
Buffalo Public Schools &
EDU 329- Early Childhood Methods
Course**



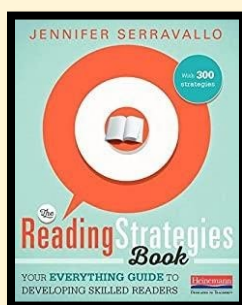
PDS Faculty Members, please be sure to document the great work of your School-University Partnership in a Power Point slide and send to delprapm@buffalostate.edu

SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY MINI-GRANT PROJECT

HILLSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

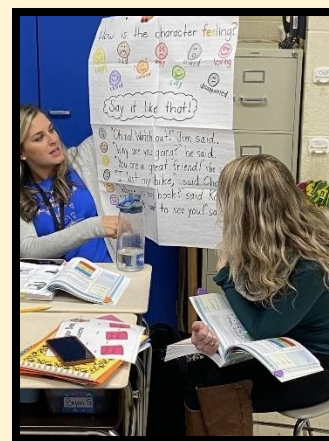
BY: PATTY GEORGE

As an instructor that brings junior participants to Hillview Elementary School in the Lancaster Central School District each semester, I am always trying to think of ways to support my PDS site. Hillview's talented teachers spend a great deal of time modeling best literacy practices for my JPs. They also mentor my students as they teach their first lessons. I am so grateful for their patience, kindness, and generosity. That's why last year I approached Hillview's principal, Amy Moeller, and second grade teacher, Jen Bandelian, about the idea of starting a teacher book club. Leading this professional learning community would be a way for me to show my gratitude while helping Hillview's teachers finetune their literacy pedagogy.



Through the generous support of PDS, Hillview was awarded a co-teaching mini grant. The grant was used to purchase copies of Jennifer Serravallo's text The Reading Strategies Book. District funds were used to purchase additional copies of the book and Lancaster provided professional development credit for teachers who volunteered to be a part of this professional learning community. Eighteen dedicated teachers signed up to participate!

Jen Bandelian (PDS liaison) and I worked to schedule six afterschool sessions. Buffalo State junior participants were invited to attend and partake in these sessions. Everyone was asked to fill out a simple Google survey listing what they hoped to learn through the book club. At each session, teachers gathered to discuss an assigned portion of the text and share teaching artifacts (anchor charts, graphic organizers, instructional materials) they created based on concepts in the book. Teachers provided their insights about the strategies in small groups. (The kindergarten and first grade teachers formed one group and the second and third grade teachers formed another group). After the small groups met, whole group sharing occurred. Minutes were logged at each session and photos were taken of the artifacts shared. All items



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SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY MINI-GRANT PROJECT

HILLSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

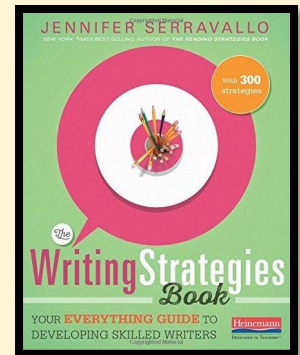
BY: PATTY GEORGE

were housed in a Google Classroom so teachers had easy access to materials and ideas. Junior participants added artifacts shared at the sessions to their literacy binders and used the strategies in lessons they taught at Hillview.



When instruction became remote in March of 2020 due to the pandemic, book club plans needed to be adjusted. Rather than meet face-to-face, the discussion took place on Google Meet. Teachers recorded a final video reflection on Flipgrid. They also completed another Google survey and shared how the book club helped them become better reading teachers. It was a huge success!

Hillview's professional book club is an excellent example of the strength of the PDS partnership. It brought together teachers, administrators, junior participants, and college faculty in a supportive setting to learn more about teaching children to read. In fact, the book club was such a success that plans are underway for next year's book club! Hillview teachers will be reading and discussing Jennifer Serravallo's text The Writing Strategies Book. I have no doubt it will be another fruitful PDS endeavor at Hillview!



Patricia D. George, Ed. M.

Lecturer

Co-Director of Global Literacy Engagement in the School of Education
Elementary Education, Literacy and Educational Leadership Department

SUNY Buffalo State

Bacon Hall 316 P

(716) 878-3564

“ENGAGEMENT IS NOT A UNICORN (IT’S A NARWHAL): MIND-CHANGING THEORY AND STRATEGIES THAT WILL CREATE REAL ENGAGEMENT”

To view the professional development session about Dr. Lyon’s book, please visit:

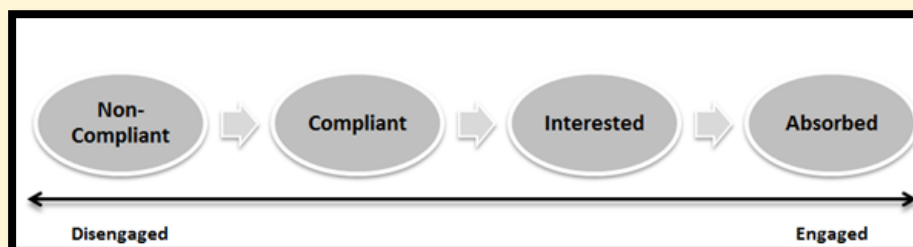
https://buffalostate.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_ewEv3pKtALaNsB

Several years ago, I started hearing the word “engagement” all the time regarding teaching and learning. Teachers were supposed to be designing engaging lessons. Students were supposed to be engaged in the learning. Administrators were supposed to be looking for engagement when doing their observations. Though the word was being thrown around, the more I heard it, the more I became concerned that just because we were using the same word, we were not saying the same thing.



In my new book *Engagement is Not a Unicorn (It’s a Narwhal): Mind-Changing Theory and Strategies that will Create Real Engagement*, I explain what engagement is so that we can finally have a common foundation on which to frame our conversations and actions related to engagement. On my website, www.lyonsletters.com, I have a blog post called, “The Narwhal of Education,” which explains a little bit about the title of the book and why I wrote it, but suffice it to say, the reality is that we use the term “engagement” all the time in education, but we do without taking the time to understand what we’re talking about.

If we don’t agree on what we mean, then it is impossible to agree on what we’re supposed to do with and for students. That also means that we have teachers who are creating lessons that they want to be engaging but they may be working really hard and missing the mark. It means that administrators go into classrooms with checklists in hand and count up kids who are on task as though being on task is akin to being engaged. It means we have created classrooms where “on task” means “engaged” so the bar of engagement is only as high as “do what you’re told.” I don’t know about you, but that doesn’t sound like an environment that fuels a hunger to learn.



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“ENGAGEMENT IS NOT A UNICORN (IT’S A NARWHAL): MIND-CHANGING THEORY AND STRATEGIES THAT WILL CREATE REAL ENGAGEMENT”

So what is engagement? I like to think of it as a continuum. In a nutshell, on the far left, you have non-compliance which is the highest level of disengagement; on the far right, is absorption, the highest level of engagement. Compliance is still disengagement and interested is the lowest level of engagement.

In short:

- **Non-Compliant:** Actively or passively refusing to do what was expected; insubordinate.
- **Compliant:** Doing the minimum of what was expected but only because there is a consequence (positive or negative) if it wasn't completed.
- **Interested:** Going beyond the minimum expectations because the task is stimulating and has momentary value. Generally speaking, the task is enjoyable but not something that would be done unless it was required and there was a consequence for (not) doing it.
- **Absorbed:** Getting so involved in a challenging task that the person doing it intrinsically wants to continue even s/he doesn't have to.

In my book, I describe each level on the Engagement Continuum in great detail, give examples of what each looks like in action, and provide strategies to help move from the left- to the right side of the Continuum. To achieve this, I also provide a 2x2 Engagement Matrix that explains that there are variables that are associated with each level of the Engagement Continuum that will cause a shift in one's level of engagement.

If there is nothing else, there are two takeaways I have for all educators now that I've been so immersed in this work. The first is that relationships matter first and most regarding learning. Those people who are not spending time working on their relationships with students, families, colleagues, etc. are spinning their wheels since people will work hard when they feel like their work matters to others. The second aha that I have is that in far too many classrooms, teachers overlook non-compliance with learning as long as the students are compliant with their behaviors. In other words, students quickly realize that as long as they are quiet and respectful, they can stare out of windows or never raise their hands or otherwise have their minds off without getting into trouble; there is a focus on behaviors rather than a focus on learning by both teachers and students. It is for this reason, we must create classrooms where learning is the priority even if engagement is louder, messier, and requires more movement than staying seated and raising hands. Now that sounds like an environment that fuels a hunger to learn to me!

Please follow Heather on Twitter @LyonsLetters and visit her website: www.LyonsLetters.com.

Heather Lyon, Ph.D.,

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction, & Technology
Lewiston-Porter Central School District

PROJECT EASE: HELPING OUR PROGRAM COMPLETERS THRIVE!

At the start of the Spring 2020 semester, many Buffalo State teacher candidates entered classrooms eager to complete their final program requirement: student teaching! Student teaching is an exciting time where for 15 weeks candidates get to plan and deliver instruction under the mentorship of a certified classroom teacher and with support from a college supervisor. The experiences of our 2020 student teachers had a drastic shift when in mid-March, COVID shutdowns hit New York State. Supervisors and many of our mentor teachers sprang into action to help ensure candidates were still able to meet their program learning outcomes, even if their final student teaching experiences varied from the norm.



As new skillsets and modified expectations in the P-12 environment arose, Buffalo State faculty realized that many candidates were likely to enter their first-year teaching with some lingering or unanswered questions or concerns. Thus, Project EASE was formed. Project EASE stands for “Encourage, Aid, and Support Educators”. Our desire, as faculty, is to EASE the transition from an unprecedented final “COVID semester” to a successful first year as a teacher or building leader by offering some informal mentoring, community building, and professional development, as needed.

In August 2020, we invited over 170 recent program completers to take part in Project EASE. Of the 170 invited, 35 graduates agreed to take part and were eager to receive some level of support for the upcoming school year. To date, approximately 15 faculty from across many education programs on campus have volunteered to take part in Project EASE and were integral in developing the ideas and offerings.

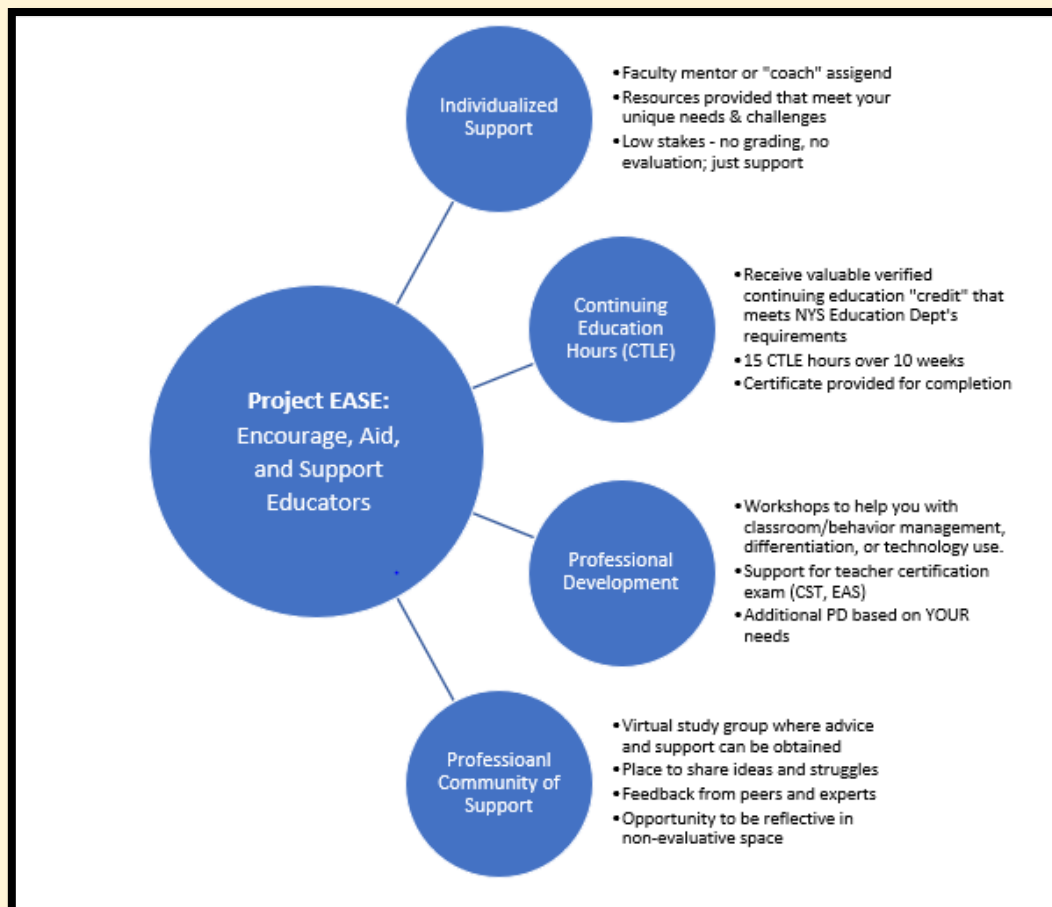
Currently, Project EASE offers daily “virtual drop in” sessions where a faculty member is available to answer questions, share ideas, or provide resources to any participant in need. We kicked off the school year with a webinar conducted by faculty titled: “Establishing a Consistent, Organized, and Respectful Learning Environment during Virtual Class Meetings” and will offer additional “mini-sessions” aimed at common challenges experienced by teachers across grades and content areas (i.e., keeping students engaged online, motivating students in the classroom, assessment in online environments, or other topics identified by our participants). In addition, project EASE participants are invited to attend any of the professional development workshops provided through the Professional Development Schools Consortium. Finally, we are exploring new ways to engage Project EASE participants, including more “just-in-time” support options such as group chats and easy to access group community forums.

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PROJECT EASE: HELPING OUR PROGRAM COMPLETERS THRIVE!

Our ultimate goal for Project EASE is to help our education graduates feel connected, cared for, and capable during their first year of employment. We seek to provide a bridge and some scaffolds of support to graduates as they transition from Buffalo State's classroom to their own classroom or educational setting. As to not overwhelm new teachers in what could be a very overwhelming time, our support is designed to be very low risk and flexible, while also offering a more formal option of continuing teacher and leader education (CTLE) hours, if desired.

Any recent education program graduate who is interested in taking part in the supports offered through Project EASE can contact Dr. Shannon Budin at gormlese@buffalostate.edu.



Thank you to all who contributed to the writing of the newsletter!