

To: Faculty Planning Group for School Engagement Initiatives
From: Janna Dresden
Date: July 21, 2008
Re: Year End Up-date

First, I would like to thank you all for your participation in one or more meetings of our group during the past academic year. We have accomplished a lot since January and I wanted to send you a summary of our work to date.

We held open monthly meetings in January, February and March. At these meetings we discussed our vision for education; specifically we focused on our goals for the education of students in schools, our goals for the preparation of teacher candidates and our goals for research rooted in practice. At each meeting we considered whether and how a Professional Development School (PDS) might facilitate meeting these goals. At each meeting we decided that the PDS concept merited further investigation.

In April, Dr. Noris Price, Associate Superintendent for Instructional Services, Dr. Mark Tavernier, Director of Teaching and Learning, and Dr. Monica Knight, Director of Student Achievement and Educational Equity, all from Clarke County School District, presented current information about the district along with their plans and goals for the future.

Also in April, Dr. Bruce Field, director of the Professional Development Schools Program at the University of South Carolina, met with several small groups and also gave a lecture which provided an overview of the goals and essential characteristics of Professional Development Schools.

On June 12, representatives from most of the teacher education programs in the College of Education and from the School of Art met with representatives from the Office of the Vice-President for Public Service and Outreach, from OneAthens, and from Clarke County School District to discuss whether or not to move ahead with plans to start a Professional Development School. The meeting was facilitated by Anneliese Singh from the Department of Counseling and Human Development Services. The 21 participants at the retreat unanimously and enthusiastically agreed that we should work together to begin planning for a Professional Development School.

On July 9 at a meeting of the OneAthens Education Implementation Team, Jim Simms, Superintendent of Clarke County Schools, announced that he would consider the possibility of an elementary charter school at the Danielsville Road site based on the Professional Development School concept. It was noted at this meeting that the development of an elementary charter PDS does not preclude the development of middle and/or high school Professional Development School that is not a charter.

In the fall we will meet again to review our progress and plan our next steps. Anyone who is interested will be welcome at this meeting. Be watching for an announcement and plan to attend and bring your colleagues!

