



BUFFALO STATE
The State University of New York

Spring 2026 Edition

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIPS



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Created by Hailee Cipollina, PDP Graduate Assistant

WELCOME FROM THE DIRECTORS



Dr. Pixita del Prado Hill

PDP Director
Professor,
Elementary Education,
Literacy, and
Educational Leadership



Dr. Jennifer Reichenberg

PDP Director
Associate Professor,
Elementary Education,
Literacy, and
Educational Leadership

Dear PDP community,

It has been an honor to be a part of the Buffalo State school-university partnership program over the past several decades, and I am grateful for the opportunity to have worked with so many wonderful teachers, school/district leaders, teacher candidates, and teacher education faculty. I am retiring from SUNY at the end of May and will be moving to Portland, Maine to be closer to my family. I am so happy that Dr. Jen Reichenberg will be stepping in to serve as the new PDP Director. Jen's commitment to collaboration and to the PDP frameworks is evident in many ways, and I know PDP will flourish under her leadership.

I wish you my best and thank you for all you do to support PDP.

- Pixita

I am honored to have the opportunity to build upon the tremendous legacy established by Dr. del Prado Hill and the previous PDP leadership in my new role as PDP Director. Since 1991, the Buffalo State PDP Consortium has fostered a spirit of innovation that has benefited children, families, teachers, school leaders, teacher candidates, university faculty, and community organizations throughout Western New York and beyond.

As we look to the future, I am eager to work alongside you to continue this rich tradition of creative collaboration. I invite you to join us for our annual PDP conference at Buffalo State on Friday, October 2 to learn more about the innovative partnerships and initiatives taking place throughout the PDP Consortium and to explore new ideas for how we can work together to support the needs of those you serve.

- Jen



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Professional Development Partnerships

Bacon Hall 320
Buffalo State University
1300 Elmwood Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14222

The Professional Development Partnerships (PDP) 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 university 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:**

pdp.buffalostate.edu

NASUP CONFERENCE & RESEARCH

In February 2025, the Buffalo State PDP traveled to Crystal City, Virginia to present and attend the annual National Association for School-University Partnerships (NASUP) conference. Attendees experienced multiple sessions and collaborative conversations highlighting the work being done to support school-university partners around the country.

Keep reading to find out what Buffalo State and our partners presented!



Pictured from left to right: **Joseph Cannizzaro**, English Education Graduate Assistant; **Dr. Wendy Paterson**, Dean of the School of Education and Applied Professions; **Hailee Cipollina**, PDP Graduate Assistant; **Dr. Pixita del Prado Hill**, PDP Co-Director; **Dr. Jennifer Reichenberg**, PDP Co-Director; **Jennifer Segura Lopez**, School of Education Graduate Assistant; **Gina Dudkowski**, South Buffalo Charter School Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; **Rachel Puccio**, South Buffalo Charter School Literacy Intervention Teacher

NASUP CONFERENCE & RESEARCH

Graduate Student Presenter: Joseph Cannizzaro, English Education

Looking Back To Move Us Forward:

How Zen Can Improve The Standardized Curriculum

This research explores how principles from Zen Buddhism—particularly Compassionate Awareness, Right Understanding, Right Action, and Beginner’s Mind—can humanize education.

Drawing from both philosophical scholarship and current research on scripted curricula, differentiation, and multimodal learning, this research critiques the rigidity of standardized systems that prioritize test performance over personal growth. Through classroom experience and interdisciplinary research, it argues for a more responsive, student centered model rooted in empathy and adaptability. Ultimately, the project investigates how integrating Zen-informed mindfulness into pedagogical practice can reduce suffering in the classroom, restore teacher autonomy, and cultivate students who see education not as a product, but a personalized experience.



“At the NASUP conference, I most enjoyed the session, *All Our Kids, Are All Our Kids*. The session examined how schools and universities alike can give back to the community and invest in the growth of their students and teachers. This really connected with my desire to craft authentic community engagement through meaningful experiences for students while also giving teachers opportunities for their own personal growth as well.”

“Attending the NASUP Conference gave me a powerful reminder of how meaningful community engagement can lead to lasting change. In a moment marked by teacher shortages and ongoing challenges to public education, this kind of community-centered work feels essential. It not only strengthens our programs, but nurtures the next generation’s sense of agency, possibility and purpose within education.”

NASUP CONFERENCE & RESEARCH

Graduate Student Presenter: Jennifer Segura Lopez, English Education

Project Based Assessments as an Alternative to New York State Regents to Better Serve Students

This research explores how we can use project based assessments (PBA) as an alternative to New York State Regent exams to better serve students. This was explored through the portrait of a graduate, and how New York State's new standards better align with PBA.

The research explored a study conducted in a college class comparing test scores and PBA scores, showing there was an increase in scores and student learning with PBA. It also looked into graduation trends from Lafayette High School, which uses a mix of PBA and standardized testing. It has been show that many students have a better chance of graduating from high school with the use of PBA. This research touched on self study reflections drawn during a student teaching placement.



“At the NASUP conference, I attended a Collaborative Conversations for preservice teachers. This session really helped me connect with other teacher candidates and educators. During this session I felt as though we were able to really help and support one another.”

“Attending the NASUP Conference has really opened my eyes into engaging in partnerships with universities in my future classrooms. It also showed me the amount of work and thought that goes into the programs that help elevate our educators.”

NASUP CONFERENCE & RESEARCH

Graduate Student Presenter: Hailee Cipollina, Special Education Early Childhood

How does facilitated dramatic play affect collaborative play skills in an early childhood self-contained setting?

This research is the start to master's thesis project where a group of special educators created an intervention to support a problem that is occurring in the classroom. The intervention selected was collaborative play skills between students in an early childhood self-contained setting. Through dramatic play, which allows students to act out real life scenarios through play, students are able to partake in collaborative play skills identified as, shared play episodes, cooperative turn taking and joint engagement. During the intervention, students will be taught the skills through explicit instruction of a social story highlighting these skills. The research is expected to show an improvement in the collaborative play skills during dramatic play.



“At the NASUP conference, a workshop titled “*Educator Hope, Wellness, and Resilience*”, really resonated with me. As educators and especially early career educators, I think it can be difficult to find time for yourself and your well-being outside of the classroom. We left with resources to support ourselves as well as identified the “marigolds” around us who help support us and help us grow.”

“Attending the NASUP Conference gave me reassurance that this is where I need to and should be. This conference surrounds you with passionate people who have a unique ability to spread joy and love for teaching in such powerful ways. Community building is an essential part to being a teacher and creating a new community of educators is something that I am lucky to have experienced.”

NASUP CONFERENCE & RESEARCH

Administrator and Faculty Presenters : Jennifer Reichenberg, Gina Dudkowski & Rachel Puccio

Teacher-Driven Curricular and Pedagogical Renewal: Leveraging a School-University Partnership to Address Literacy



We leveraged our school-university partnership to update K-8 literacy content and pedagogy in response to changes in the field fueled by the large, interdisciplinary body of research known as the science of reading. A team of K-8 teachers, administrators, and university faculty collaboratively built knowledge about research-based practices, engaged in a needs assessment, developed leadership and facilitation skills, and supported the school through self-sustaining, teacher-driven curricular and pedagogical renewal. This process allowed participants to enact boundary-spanning roles (Essential 8). This process also built continuity between campus-based literacy classes and fieldwork experiences for teacher candidates participating at the school (Essential 2).

Faculty Presenter: Wendy Paterson

Leadership Symposium: Panel Speaker

Elevate your institute's partnership impact at the NASUP Leadership Symposium. Collaborate with visionary leaders, acquire actionable insights to maximize partnership productivity, and emerge ready to inspire and lead impactful school-university collaborations.

Faculty Presenter: Pixita del Prado Hill

Collaborative Conversation Facilitator: University Faculty

This session is for EPP faculty members who are, or want to be, engaged in partnership work within local schools and communities. As partnerships are not "one-size-fits-all" models, come ready to learn about initiatives from colleagues at other institutions and how you can enhance your own partnership work.

NASUP CONFERENCE AWARD

Every year at NASUP, there are a number of awards given, one of them being the Emerging SUP Leader Award. This award honors student members of NASUP who demonstrate promise as leaders in the school-university partnership movement through work at NASUP and their home institution. At this year's NASUP conference, the Emerging Leader was awarded to our PDP Graduate Assistant, Hailee Cipollina! Hailee has attended 3 NASUP conferences before this year and has presented at a handful of local conferences as well. We are so proud of our Emerging Leader, Hailee!

“Hailee holds herself to exceptionally high standards as both a learner and as a professional,” said del Prado Hill. “She has been an excellent student and campus citizen, and the School of Education and Applied Professions is proud to see a student of her caliber enter the classroom as a teacher who is prepared to support and inspire all children.”



Click the link to read Buffalo State's article about Hailee and the Emerging Leader Award!

<https://suny.buffalostate.edu/news/buffalo-state-education-student-receives-national-leadership-award>

“Winning the Emerging Leader Award is incredibly meaningful to me,” Cipollina said. “I have such a passion for teaching and have always strived to cultivate strong leadership skills. I am honored that others have recognized my dedication, and I am truly grateful to Dr. del Prado Hill for her nomination and support.”

NASUP CONFERENCE & RESEARCH



Thank you to all participants for a job well done!

Please consider joining Buffalo State's
PDP team next year at the NASUP
conference in Dallas/Fort Worth on
March 11th-13th to share your
partnership work!

<https://nasup.org/>



PDP SPOTLIGHT

For the fourth summer in a row, literacy specialist candidates from the graduate literacy specialist program at Buffalo State will return to work with students from Cleveland Hill Elementary School as part of their 2026 summer literacy program. Over the past few years, we have worked with approximately 300 of their students. The school's dedication to the program helps with attendance as bussing, breakfast, and lunch for the children are provided.

We work closely with the school's assistant principal, Kelsey Kiblin. She welcomes the literacy specialist candidates into the school community immediately. She is very hands-on and supportive. She models the importance of getting to know the children and provides helpful suggestions to the literacy candidates. During the duration of the program, they are respected as teachers in the building. They even have bus duty and practice fire drills!

The school provides key data on the students, so the literacy specialists candidates can jump right into instruction. They build students' knowledge in preparation for their first unit of the new school year. The hope is that this frontloading will help increase student comprehension outside of the program. Along with select, research-based comprehension strategies instruction, writing and fluency instruction are part of the summer program. At the end of our weeks at the school, the children have a readers' theater performance to demonstrate their progress. Literacy specialist candidates also track students' progress and provide summative reports for parents and the school.

Some of our literacy specialist candidates were even hired at the school right after our program. We are so grateful to be part of the Cleveland Hill Elementary School's community if only for a few weeks. They are fabulous partners!



Written by Keli Garas-York

IPDP CHILE 2026: USS visits BSU

On January 30th, six students and one professor from Universidad San Sebastián (USS) (Puerto Montt, and Santiago campuses) arrived in Buffalo to start their two week trip. They spent their time in Buffalo visiting classes and workshops on our campus and met with the IPDP Chile cohort from Buffalo who planned to travel to Chile in April 2026.

The group also visited a number of schools while in Buffalo. These schools included admin/teachers who traveled to Chile with IPDP in April 2026. The USS group spent four days at Hoover Middle School. They also visited Como Park Elementary, PS89: Lydia T. Wright School of Excellence, Buffalo State Childcare Center, PS207: Lafayette International School, and East Aurora High School.



IPDP CHILE 2026: BSU visits USS

On April 3rd, three special education BSU students, three school leaders, one educational leadership candidate and two professors from Buffalo arrived in Santiago, Chile to start their 10 day trip. During the visit, the group from Buffalo worked with USS faculty and staff and visited local schools like Don Orione. The group participated in educational sessions with other educators from Chile to explore language learning.

The group from Buffalo took part in Spanish classes, hiking in the Andes Mountains, cooking classes to make empanadas, visiting coastal cities and taking part in Chilean dance classes. You can read more about the group's experience in Chile through their blogs

<https://buffalostateipdschile.weebly.com/blogs.html>



BE A BENGAL BE A TEACHER 2026

“It was truly inspiring to welcome future educators to our event. These high school students represent the next generation of educators. We were thrilled to see their enthusiasm and can't wait for them to be part of our campus community.”

- Dr. Kathy Doody



On March 18th, Buffalo State's Teacher Education Council and Admission's Office hosted the annual Be A Bengal, Be A Teacher recruitment event here on campus. Over 130 high school students from 10 WNY schools, attended the event to see Buffalo State's various education programs and resources, talk to university professors, and hear from current students in the programs. The inspiring panel gave the high school students insights into their time at Buffalo State, what it is like being a teacher and advice for entering college for the education profession. After the panel, the visiting students toured the campus and enjoyed lunch in the Bengal Kitchen.



IPDP BEYOND AND BACK 2026

On April 23rd, IPDP held their annual Beyond and Back event. This event allows students, alumni and faculty to share their global and service learning opportunities and experiences. Beyond and Back invites students who have yet to go abroad with IPDP as well as those who have gone abroad and are looking for another stamp in their passport. Beyond and Back features a panel of alumni as well as a poster session and information tables where past participants and program leaders share details and reflections about their IPDP experiences.



A huge thank you to our panelists for sharing your experiences and advice with future travelers and professors! Our panelists names, places of travel and link to blogs are below.

From left to right: **Jarrett Whipple**, Germany 2025; **Zoe Dudzic**, Medellin Student Teaching Fall 2025; **Orianne Simon**, Siena Student Teaching Spring 2024 & Rwanda 2023; **Hailee Cipollina**, Zambia 2023 & Dominican Republic 2023; **Allonda Richardson**, Chile 2026 & Zambia 2016

Find their blogs through our IPDP website <https://pdp.buffalostate.edu/international-pdp>

DR. DAVID HENRY

David Henry has been a leader in science education at Buffalo State for 26 years in both the elementary education and secondary science education programs. Dave taught math and science methods onsite at Williams Street school in Lancaster and Windermere Boulevard School in Amherst. He made this a true Professional Development School, collaborating with teachers and administrators to improve teaching and learning. Dave poured his heart into the science preparation for elementary teachers, believing that this is when children develop their first attitudes and aptitudes for science. He helped lead the Physics Teacher preparation program at Buffalo State for decades which was recognized as the largest producer of physics teachers in New York State and the Northeastern US. Each year, he organized the Physics Olympics where 100-200 high school students came to campus to vigorously compete in physics events. He currently serves as co-director for the Western Region of the New York State Master Teacher Program, which fosters a collaboration among selected outstanding K-12 STEM educators from over 50 school districts. His competence, commitment and collaboration have been an inspiration to his colleagues, and he will be sorely missed on campus.



Thank you Dr. Henry for everything you have contributed to Buffalo State!

Written by: Dr. Julie Henry

DR. WENDY PATERSON

Wendy Paterson received her master's of science in education with a certification of literacy from Buffalo State in 1976 and bachelor's of science in education from Buffalo State in 1975. She joined the professional staff from 1988-1997, faculty from 1997-2009 and Dean of the School of Education from 2012-2026. Wendy works closely with PDP, IPDP and IGPE here at Buffalo State. While at Buffalo State, Wendy developed the six priority areas for the School of Education: Curriculum Renewal, Border Crossing, A Shared Culture of Doing, Impact and Partnerships, Growth Mindset and Exemplars of Teaching. Wendy believes strongly in implementing creative student engagement during teaching. She also believes strongly that leadership is meant to motivate and inspire not to manage and control.

As someone who has worked closely with her this year, she practices these philosophies every day, and it has truly made an impact on me as a future educator and leader. Wendy has received many well deserved awards here at Buffalo State, including her most recent, the

Distinguished Alumna Award. Wendy teaches a class here at BSU called "Developing Literacy Through Literature." In this class, her students are using children's books to teach comprehension, word recognition, fluency, vocabulary, and writing. They integrate literature and themes across the curriculum with a focus on authors and illustrators; assessing students' literacy growth and needs including socio-emotional, cognitive, and socio-cultural concerns; selecting books and designing spaces that promote literary development and increase motivation to read; and so much more. This class has been coined the "Harry Potter" class because Wendy focuses on those books and several other classic children books, while creating potions, volcanoes and so much more to show her students what an engaging classroom looks and sounds like.



Dr. Paterson, you have been such an inspiration to me and many others here at BSU and in the Buffalo community. We wish you the best in retirement and will miss you at BSU!

Written by: Hailee Cipollina

DR. PIXITA DEL PRADO HILL

Pixita del Prado Hill has been an inspirational leader at Buffalo State for 27 years. As the director and co-director of the Professional Development Schools/Partnerships (PDS/PDP) Consortium at Buffalo State, Pixita has coordinated faculty teaching, scholarship, and service in collaboration with school partners. Under her leadership, PDS won national awards and produced numerous collaborative articles and books sharing new partnership practices. She also helped lead the expansion of PDS/PDP to the international stage, personally escorting students to work in schools to Chile and coordinating other faculty to take our students to 13 countries. This international work led to several awards for Buffalo State and has provided personally transformative experiences for 278 Buffalo State students. Pixita is absolutely committed to her teaching and has developed rich partnerships with Buffalo Public Schools that serve a diverse student population so that her teacher candidates have learned to be successful teaching bilingual and multilingual students who are English Language Learners. She models coteaching for her students through her respectful collaborative teaching with faculty from other departments and from the schools. Pixita is never afraid to roll up her sleeves and tackle a big challenge as evidenced by the Find Your Path Back to Teaching Initiative which led to dozens of new students coming to Buffalo State to complete their teacher certification program. She nurtures student leadership through her work with the Bengals Passionate about Education club, Graduate Assistants, and the PDS/PDP representatives who conduct research and present at national and local conferences each year. One of the most quintessential aspects of Pixita has been her generous nomination of colleagues and students for President's, Chancellor's, and national awards. Her nominations are so thoughtful and thorough that several individuals have received the notoriety they deserve through her nominations. She succeeds by lifting up and inspiring others and leaves a rich legacy at Buffalo State.

"Pixita, I have truly enjoyed working with you the past few years. You have shown me how to be dedicated and passionate about everything I do while also supporting others. Your enthusiasm for education and travel has impacted me more than I could ever express. You inspire me and have supported me immensely and for that I am beyond grateful."

- Hailee Cipollina



Dr. del Prado, we thank you for your hard work and dedication to BSU and PDP. We will miss you!

Written by Dr. Julie Henry

TEUPAC

The Buffalo State Teacher Education Unit Professional Advisory Council (TEUPAC) is open to all PDP 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 virtually to include as much participation as possible. PDP 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 visit <https://pdp.buffalostate.edu/teupac> for minutes from our past meetings.

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

July 14th at 10am on Teams

<https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/21314524132426?p=mHpz5OwcYjJ61VemDv>

IPDP ANNOUNCEMENTS

Student Teaching

- Siena, Italy (spring 2026)
- Brasília, Brazil (spring 2026)
- Medellín, Columbia (fall 2026)
- Stuttgart, Germany (fall 2026)

Experienced Educators

- Medellín, Columbia (February break 2027)

IPDP

- Italy (winter 2027)
- Dominican Republic (winter 2027)
- Zambia (spring/summer 2027)
- Germany (spring/summer 2027)

Visit the IPDP website to learn more and read the student blogs!

<https://pdp.buffalostate.edu/ipdp-alumni>



PDP CONFERENCE 2026

Join us on Friday, October 2nd for our annual PDP Conference! Make sure to submit your proposal by June 1st using the QR code below. We can't wait to hear about your research!

**2026 PDP
CONFERENCE**

**CALL FOR
PROPOSALS**

DUE JUNE 1



BUFFALO STATE
The State University of New York

Submit a proposal to share your school-university partnership work at the annual PDP Conference to be held Friday October 2, 2026 at Buffalo State!

Submit Online:
Scan QR code or visit:
<https://forms.gle/QXtr4gF1VteuEXHz6>



SAVE *the* DATE

2026 Annual PDP Conference!

Join us **Friday October 2nd** in the Buffalo State Social Hall! Come and enjoy free food and refreshments!



THANK YOU!



We would like to thank everyone who contributed to the writing of this semester's newsletter and thank you all for your hard work and dedication to PDP!

I am so grateful for the opportunity to be involved with PDP for the past 4 years. This PDP community at BSU has supported me and helped me grow into the educator I am today. I look forward to working with PDP as a mentor teacher in the future. I have loved being the PDP GA and will truly miss it all!

- Hailee Cipollina (PDP GA 2025-2026)