

The Value of Partnerships as a Mechanism for Systems Change:
The Florida Experience (1974-2006)

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ABSTRACT

The value of collaborative regional professional development partnerships as the mechanism for implementing a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD), a mandate of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 1997, in one state was investigated. The historical organizational case study examined this issue from the perspectives of those initially and currently involved with regional professional development partnership implementation. Participants included individuals representing three different perspectives (i.e., state education agency, institutions of higher education, and local education agency) A qualitative case study research design was used to gain in-depth information from varied sources about participants' views of Florida's system of personnel development prior to the implementation of regional professional development partnerships, as well as the perceived value of the regional professional development partnerships from those who were currently involved. Data sources included interviews and a review of relevant documents. Data analysis incorporated the process of inductive analysis which allowed themes of the study to emerge from the data. Conclusions drawn from the study's findings included: (1) the critical importance of leadership, (2) the importance of relationships, (3) the developmental nature of partnerships, (4) readiness, roles, and responsibilities, (5) benefits and barriers, and (6) the importance of institutional memory and active involvement.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

During the summer of 2001, I was hired by the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, to serve as Project Coordinator of the Florida Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD). For the first time in my career I was given an opportunity to gain a perspective on education from the state level, as all of my prior experience had been at the local level as special education and general education teacher and school administrator. My desire to work in a position providing a state-level perspective grew from both the need to be challenged by something I had not yet experienced and a desire to understand the field of education from a broader vantage point. Not knowing what CSPD stood for or what the scope of work would involve, I accepted the position. While some might see this decision as risky, I intrinsically knew it would provide me with the experience I was seeking. Upon accepting the position, I immediately sought answers to the following questions: (a) What is a CSPD and in which law was it mandated? (b) What does it look like in Florida? (c) How is it funded? (d) With whom will I be working? (e) Where will I be working? (f) What will I be doing on a day-to-day basis? and (g) How does the CSPD affect students with disabilities?

As an enthusiastic professional, I began by asking my direct supervisor questions. He immediately told me that CSPD in Florida is very complex and thus difficult to explain in twenty-five words or less. When I pressed for more information, he handed me the 2001-2002 completed Florida CSPD grant application. He told me I needed to review the entire document, assuring me that it would reveal all the answers to my questions.

Upon first glance, I wondered what I had gotten myself into, due to the sheer size of the notebook. Slowly wading through the document page by page, highlighting things I thought were

important, flagging items I did not understand, I finally made my way to the end of the grant.

The following reflects my understanding at that point in time:

1. The Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) was a legislative requirement which all states implement, as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 1997, a federal entitlement law. It was up to states to determine individually how they would implement the CSPD provisions of IDEA, although federal regulations required specific components to be a part of each state's plan. Components included personnel standards; needs assessment; pre-service preparation; evaluation; continuing education; technical assistance; evaluation; and the dissemination of knowledge of promising practices derived from research, materials, and technology. This requirement was included in the law to ensure an adequate supply of qualified personnel, including general educators, special educators, related-services personnel, and leadership personnel.
2. In Florida, the Department of Education's Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services received funds from the federal government to implement IDEA. While the federal government did not earmark specific funds to be used to implement a CSPD, Florida decided to use part of the IDEA funds it received from the federal government. These funds were called "flow-through dollars" and Florida used them to implement activities that would meet CSPD requirements. These dollars are called "flow-through" funds because they flow from the federal government to the states.
3. Florida provided flow-through funds through a non-competitive discretionary grant to fund a state level discretionary project that would oversee nine smaller, regionally based discretionary projects that would be responsible for the implementation of activities that

would meet the legislative requirement. The nine regionally based projects were called regional professional development partnerships or PDPs. Each of the nine projects would have a separate annual non-competitive grant application process and each would be funded equally. Each PDP would have a coordinator who would be responsible for facilitating the project activities and would be physically located at one of the nine state universities. Each of the universities was called a fiscal agent. This structure allowed for the coordinator of each project, usually a university faculty member, to work with stakeholders concerned with personnel development (i.e., recruitment, preparation, and retention) in each of their regions at a grassroots level. Stakeholders included district special education and general education administrators, student services professionals, parents, teachers, college and university professionals, advocacy group members, and early childhood professionals. Each of the nine regional professional development partnerships had a local advisory council made up of local stakeholders. The local coordinator was primarily responsible for serving as the facilitator of local advisory council meetings, ensuring activity implementation, keeping accurate fiscal records, and was ultimately accountable for the work of the project.

Although I finished reading the 2001-2002 grant application over four years ago, I continue to learn new information about CSPD and the implementation of regional professional development partnerships in Florida. During my tenure with the project I learned that states have implemented the CSPD legislative requirement in many different ways. This led me to wonder if regional PDPs are of value as mechanisms for implementing activities that meet the requirements of the CSPD legislative requirement, especially considering the amount of money that has been

spent on partnership implementation targeted at systems change. It is this aspect that is the focus of this study.

Background

“Providing a free and appropriate public education to every student so that each becomes a contributing member of a community can only happen if we maintain a highly skilled workforce.” (Murray, 2001, p.1)

Prior to the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA), Public Law 94-142, 1975, and its subsequent reauthorizations and amendments, the majority of children with disabilities were not served in a public school setting. The field of special education personnel preparation as it is today did not exist. When P.L. 94-142 was enacted, it mandated that each child with a disability be provided a free, appropriate public education (FAPE). Federal, state, and local education agencies struggled initially to implement all requirements of the law and mainly focused on procedural requirements that were only one part of the total system (Duncan, 1980). Although mandated in the law, the goal of ensuring an adequate supply of highly qualified personnel for children with disabilities was naturally not the main focus of their efforts.

As implementation continued, states began to realize there were not enough qualified personnel available to meet the needs of children with disabilities. The writers of the law anticipated a considerable need for adequate numbers of highly qualified personnel, which was the reason the CSPD section of the law was included from the beginning (H. William Heller, personal communication, June 2004). Over time, these personnel shortages have intensified, currently reaching crisis levels in some areas (Porter, 2000).

From the passage of the EHACA in 1975 until 2004, states were required to implement a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) that would “ensure an adequate

supply of qualified personnel, including general, special educators, related services personnel, and leadership personnel” (IDEA, 1999, C.F.R. § 330.380 [a] [2]). In implementing a CSPD each State Education Agency (SEA) were required to coordinate and facilitate recruitment, preparation, and retention of qualified personnel among state agencies; local education agencies (LEAs); all public and private Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs); and parent and advocacy organizations (§ 300. 382). Ultimately, the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, considered CSPD to be the principal vehicle for planning and implementing required teacher training, as well as training of support personnel (Schofer, 1980). Duncan (1980) noted the importance of this goal for providing a free, appropriate public education, stating, “A state’s CSPD should by its very structure have an impact on the provision of a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) for the handicapped,” one of the major aspects of the Act (p.12).

Although CSPD was a requirement of the law, it was never implemented by states in a way that the writers of the law intended. Attorney Tom Gilhool (as cited in Crockett & Kauffman, 1990) stated the CSPD is “the ‘state of the art imperative’ and a provision that has for too long been ignored by states” (p.80). He also noted that “Justice Rehnquist in the Rowley decision calls this section of the statute a clear statutory directive and places it at the heart of the act” (p.80). Furthermore, he emphasized that “It’s time for us to turn toward directly enforcing this ‘state of the art’ imperative of the Act” (p.80).

In studying the status of CSPD implementation in all 50 states, Schofer (1980) stated that “the need for supplementing the CSPD requirements with ‘authority’ was cited as a major assistance need that the OSEP could provide” (p. 36). Also noted were possible roadblocks limiting or impeding the intent of fulfilling the CSPD section of P.L. 94-142. Roadblocks

included: (a) lack of understanding of the importance of CSPD, (b) limited time and resources, (c) fiscal restrictions (i.e., lack of specificity in funding CSPD), and (d) lack of commitment on the part of any one agency or individual associated with CSPD.

Another problem states faced with the implementation of this part of the IDEA was that CSPD was never defined in the law or regulations; rather, it was presented as a set of separate parts (i.e., personnel standards; needs assessment; pre-service preparation; continuing education; technical assistance; evaluation; and the dissemination of knowledge of promising practices derived from research, materials, and technology). States had little guidance from the legislation on how to implement a CSPD. The legislation provided a set of separate parts that were intended to comprise a system. However, the parts provided nothing more than a simple framework.

Over time, states have grappled with how to connect the various parts of the intended system. These pieces do not fit easily together because each part has developed as its own unique sub-system, with its own boundaries, environment, culture, and closely held beliefs about why and how it is successful. To move beyond their strongly held beliefs about their individual systems so that they would be able to think about how their sub-system functioned within a broader, more comprehensive system, people involved with CSPDs had to be willing to work towards a new vision that included how the parts of the system could best be connected to form a system that was more comprehensive (Riffle & Smith-Davis, 1991).

In an attempt to respond to the requirements of a CSPD, some states utilized collaborative partnerships as a mechanism for connecting the various parts of a personnel development system. Since the mid-1980s there has been a dramatic increase in collaborative partnerships as catalysts for change among state agencies, schools, colleges, community organizations, and businesses (Mattson, 1997). The National Science Foundation has emphasized

the role of collaborative partnerships in science, technology, engineering, and math education. The National Research Council and the U.S. Department of Education have also stressed the use of partnerships (National Research Council, 2001). The basic premise of collaborative partnerships is the acknowledgment that by working together in partnerships, organizations might produce better outcomes than working alone (Melaville & Blank, 1991). In particular, collaborative partnerships are especially useful for addressing issues of systems change because they are designed to reach across traditional boundaries within and among communities and organizations (Padgett, Bekmeier, & Berkowitz, 2004).

In 1994, with guidance from the National Institute on CSPD Collaboration, a project funded by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), Florida began the work of forming collaborative regional partnerships responsible for implementing activities to ensure an adequate number of qualified personnel. The Florida Department of Education's Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services began by forming a state committee of school district special education administrators and faculty members from Florida's public and private colleges and universities to talk about specific personnel needs throughout the state, as well as possible solutions for these needs. It was the recommendation of this committee that regional PDPs be implemented as the mechanism for meeting the CSPD mandate. The regional partnership model was selected because of the local control factor, which was appealing to both groups of stakeholders on the committee, as universities were located in each region of the state and could meet locally (i.e., at a specific physical location) with their district special education administrators. Local control allowed for flexible activity selection that was truly based on the needs of the individual region. In trying to create a vision and a plan, the committee visualized a grassroots system of personnel development, where professionals interested in personnel

development could come together within their “community” to discuss issues related to ensuring adequate numbers of personnel, as well as increasing the quality of personnel serving students with disabilities. This way of work in Florida was originally established in the early 1990s through a strategic plan developed in collaboration with the Commission on Education Reform and Accountability, the Education Standards Commission, and the Florida Department of Education’s Bureau of Student Services and Exceptional Education. This plan challenged Floridians to assume greater local responsibility for decisions made about education in their communities. The assumption was that

[t]he most informed suggestions come from those closely allied with individual schools and school districts. School governance moved from a top-down approach to one that utilized collaborative partnerships between students, parents, community members, and school staff. In regard to personnel development, the assumption was that “traditional forms of personnel preparation, historically set forth in state mandates, rules, and regulations, are giving way to greater local autonomy. As with school-based decision-making, informed decisions about local needs for personnel preparation and continuing education can and should be made by local stakeholders in Florida (CSPD State Plan, 1996, p.12).

As the personal experience and related literature presented in the opening section of this chapter demonstrates, implementing CSPD is more complex than one would think. Many states have struggled to create an effective system of personnel development, reporting disconnects between pre-service and in-service activities, teacher credentialing and licensure, and general education reform initiatives (Federal Resource Center for Special Education, 2001). There have been no national models available for states to emulate, and very little can be found in the

literature regarding the use of partnerships as the mechanism for change used to implement a comprehensive system of personnel development. Bergquist, Betwee, and Meuel (1995) noted that implementing partnerships aimed at systems change takes a long time. Therefore, this topic has not been studied because these partnerships have not been around long enough. In Florida, regional PDPs aimed at systemic change have been in existence for 11 years. By studying their implementation from the vantage point of the stakeholders initially involved as well as those who are currently involved, essential information could be added to the literature. Therefore, there is a need for a greater understanding of the use of partnerships as the mechanism by which states work to make changes to their state systems of personnel development.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to describe regional special education professional development partnerships as the mechanism for state-level systems change from the point of view of those who initiated the partnerships and those who are currently involved. The goal of the study is to understand if regional professional development partnerships as the mechanism for implementing the CSPD mandate in Florida were of any value to those involved and if they thought partnerships had any affect on the state's system of personnel development. The following broad questions guided the study:

1. How did Florida implement a CSPD prior to regional professional development partnerships? Why was the regional model selected to implement Florida's CSPD?
2. What benefits did initial and most recent implementers of Florida's regional PDPs believe they derived and what barriers existed? Based on the benefits and barriers, do initial and most recent implementers believe the partnerships were of any value?

3. Do those participants who were most recently involved with the implementation of Florida's regional PDPs think that anything about the State's system of personnel development changed due to the implementation of the PDPs? In particular, have relationships among the people involved changed as a result?
4. What did Florida's regional professional development partnership implementation look like prior to, during the initial, and most recent stages from the perspective of those involved? In retrospect, what lessons can be learned from Florida's 11-year experience that might be helpful to other states involved in implementing partnerships targeting systems change?

Brief Description of Methods

In order to understand if using regional professional development partnerships as the mechanism for implementing the CSPD mandate in Florida were of any value to those involved and what their perceptions were regarding the effect of the partnerships on the state's system of personnel development, a qualitative study of an organization's history was conducted. Data was provided through interviews with those initially involved in the implementation of Florida's Comprehensive System of Personnel Development and those who have been more recently involved, as well as through a review of relevant documents.

Delimitation and Limitation

Qualitative research is conducted in a natural setting where the researcher serves as the instrument of data collection. The researcher attempts to make sense of the phenomenon under study through interpreting the insights people bring to it (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). To qualitative researchers, meaning is the essential concern (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). They are interested in how different people make sense out of their experiences and try to capture those

perspectives accurately. A qualitative approach will produce a trove of rich, descriptive data, which should allow the investigator to build an in-depth understanding of the value of regional PDPs as the change mechanism for a state system of personnel development.

Although all research studies have limitations, this study is limited in one particular way—it is a historical study, one that relies on sources that may not be available to gain enough depth for a rich, thick description. Additionally, interviews have been conducted with people who were involved more than 11 years ago and information will be presented based on their perceptions of this time period. It was important to conduct an initial inventory of people and documents to determine if there sufficient data exists so that an acceptable piece of work can be created. It was also necessary to confirm the perceptions of participants with other sources such as relevant documents.

Significance and Contributions of the Study

Perhaps the most significant potential contribution of this study is to the academic literature on regional partnerships as the mechanism of change to a state's system of personnel development in special education. According to Karasoff in Jones (1998), "Little is known about the impact of [educational] partnerships; therefore, the evaluation of collaborative efforts needs further exploration" (p.32).

This study will help to inform the work of federal, state, and local education professionals by examining the history and context of regional partnerships as the mechanism of systems change in special education during 11 years of implementation of Florida's regional PDP model. Berquist et al. (1995) stated that what has not received attention in most of the literature on collaboration and partnerships are the problems of maintaining a partnership and the changing nature of partnerships. Most partnerships are not together long enough or do not receive

continued funding after the initial stages of implementation to be able to research what happens to maintenance and change (O'Brien-Libutti, 1997). Studying the context from the perspective of those involved during the initial stages of implementation, as well as those involved in the developmental stages after initial implementation, could result in a better understanding of how to support and maintain partnerships. This, in turn, could lead to desired system changes.

Additionally, Padgett et al. (2004) stated that most partnerships described in the literature have been organized at the local level. Johnson, Zorn, Ka, Lamontagne, and Johnson (2003) also stated that little research exists in the literature that directly relates to interagency collaboration at the state level.

These statements illustrate that the application of collaborative partnership models to state and national levels has been rarely described in the literature. Considering that many of the decisions, policies, and plans affecting education are made at these levels, there is a great need for research in this area. The intent of the proposed study is to examine this issue by looking at how one state developed and implemented a federally funded state-level systems-change project through the use of regional PDPs and determining if the partnerships were of any value.

Stipulation

In the section that follows, I discuss a stipulation of this study. A stipulation can be defined as a condition, but in the context of this study, I intend to use the second definition of the term: the factors of circumstances that affect the situation, a condition, or requirement (Webster, 1989). By describing the conditions that affected the design, implementation, and subsequent findings of this study, I am giving the reader information necessary for judging the quality of the investigation.

Researcher's Relationship to the Topic

I was employed with the Florida Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) as Coordinator of Research and Program Development under the direction of the Project Director, from July, 2001 through September, 2005. The purpose of the Florida CSPD project is to provide technical assistance and support to Florida's nine regional PDPs, which are responsible for carrying out the CSPD sections of the 1997 Individual with Disabilities Education Act regulations (§300.381 – 382). During my tenure, I had the opportunity to review the annual proposals of all regional PDPs through a peer-review process and to communicate with regional PDP coordinators about implementation of each partnership's activities. On more than one occasion during my tenure with the project, I made site visits to all nine regional partnerships in my role as a Florida Department of Education representative at their regional advisory council meetings. This role was one of curious observer and supporter.

My general interest in the field of education as well as belief in the ultimate goal of ensuring an adequate number of highly qualified personnel to work with students with disabilities predated my work with the Florida CSPD Project, but it was in my capacity as the Coordinator of Research and Program Development that I became interested in state-level systems-change initiatives and regional PDP collaboration. Certainly my work with the project caused me to question many things about the way CSPD was implemented, not only in Florida, but around the nation.

Definition of Terms

To provide the reader with specific terms and their definitions, I offer the following definitions, which will be used throughout the study. I have also included a list of acronyms used throughout the study. This list is located in Appendix A.

A *system* is a whole both greater than and different than the sum of its parts. The parts are interconnected and interdependent and result in more than just a cause-effect relationship (i.e., changes in one part of the system lead to changes among all parts of the system and to the system itself) (Patton, 1990). “A system exists in a context and is responsive to changes within the context through feedback loops” (Tanner, 2004, p. 19). Systems are both purposeful and goal-oriented: “The performance of a system is not the sum of the independent effects of its parts; it is the product of their interactions” (Gharajedaghi & Ackoff [1985] in Patton, 1990, p. 79).

Systems change is a concept that has emerged in the field of education during the last century. As with most general concepts, it is defined and used in different ways by different people and in different contexts. For the purpose of this study, systems change is defined as a planned process that results in improved outcomes to a defined system, consistent with an originally created vision, and involves active ownership of the change process by stakeholders (Riffle & Smith-Davis, 1991).

Collaborative Partnership for professional development is a deliberate process involving shared, committed leadership for the purpose of achieving the mutual goal of continuously improving the preparation of professional educators and paraprofessionals. Partners, drawn by a shared vision and united for common goals, enter into new, interdependent relationships requiring shared resources. These relationships, when grounded by shared trust and responsibility, allow for creative and dynamic alternatives that exceed the limitations of individual partners or organizations (Jones, 1998).

Theoretical Framework for the Study

The theoretical framework applied to this study draws on the literature from systems-change theory. I chose this framework to investigate how states have used the mechanism of

partnerships to implement systems-change projects related to state systems of personnel development and the CSPD mandate. The theoretical framework will provide focus and boundaries to the study by limiting the scope of the inquiry. The elements of the framework are presented in detail in Chapter 2.

Overview of Chapters 1, 2, and 3 of the Proposal

This research involved a qualitative, historical organizational case study. Data was provided through interviews with professionals involved with the initial implementation of regional PDPs in Florida as well as professionals who are currently involved, and a review of relevant documents. Continuous data collection and analysis provided a description of regional PDPs as the mechanism for implementing the CSPD mandate in Florida from the perspective of those involved. Their perceptions regarding the effect of the partnerships on the state's system of personnel development is also described.

Chapter 1 includes an introduction to the study; the purpose, significance, and contributions of the study; delimitations and limitations regarding the researcher's relationship to the topic; definition of terms; and the theoretical framework for the study. Chapter 2 provides a review of the related literature, which describes the problem in its current context, and a description of the structure of Florida's CSPD. Theoretical literature and professional commentary about collaborative partnerships as the mechanism for state-level systems change in education were reviewed. Eight research studies focusing on collaborative partnerships as the mechanism for state-level systems change in education were critically analyzed and synthesized. Chapter 3 describes the methodology used in the study, including an explanation of the study's design, the sampling procedures, the data collection and management procedures, and the data analysis procedures. Chapter 4 describes the findings that emerged from the collected data.

Chapter 5 provides conclusions drawn from the study, implications, and ideas for future research.

References and appendices are included following Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter examines the literature related to collaborative professional development partnerships as the mechanism for state-level systems change in the field of education. This topic is important for several reasons.

First, states and localities are required by the IDEA to ensure an adequate supply of qualified special education, regular education, and related-services personnel. Collaborative regional PDP implementation is one way states can meet this personnel development requirement.

Second, since the 1990s, major federal educational legislation and policies have provided specific mandates and incentives encouraging local and state partnerships for improving the quality and quantity of personnel providing services to student with disabilities as a mechanism for systems change. Examples of such mandates and incentives include the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, NCLB (2001), and IDEA (1997). Developing regional collaborative PDPs could help states to meet the requirements of these and similar mandates.

Third, there continues to be a critical shortage of special education personnel to serve the growing population of students with disabilities (Porter, 2000). Implementation of collaborative professional development partnerships may help to improve the personnel development system so states can ensure an adequate supply of qualified personnel to work with students with disabilities (Riffle & Smith-Davis, 1991).

Purpose of the Review

The primary purpose of this chapter is to examine literature in the field of education related to collaborative PDPs as a mechanism for state-level systems change, specifically in a

state's system of personnel preparation. There is a primary guiding question for this review: How have collaborative PDPs as a mechanism for making change to a state system of personnel development been implemented in the field of education? In order to provide background and to answer this question, I first consider the following: (a) the need for systems change in education; (b) an overview of systems theory; (c) systems thinking; (d) systems thinking in education; (e) strategic planning; (f) strategic planning and the CSPD; (g) federal leadership and support that encourage partnerships as a mechanism for state-level systems change; (h) legislative foundations that establish the need for partnerships as a mechanism for systems change in education; and (i) a description of Florida's CSPD, including its structure. Next, I critically analyze and synthesize eight chosen research studies. I discuss conceptual and methodological issues in the body of research. Then I consider the potential needs for future research in the area of collaborative professional development partnerships focused on personnel development in the field of education as a mechanism for state-level systems change.

In order to accomplish this review of literature, I conducted computerized database searches of ERIC, the electronic card catalogs of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute State University and the University of South Florida libraries, Pro-Quest Digital Dissertations, and the Google search engine. I identified additional sources in references located in texts, book chapters, journal articles, brochures, and dissertations related to partnerships in education targeting personnel development. In reviewing the literature on educational collaborative partnerships in general, I used search terms including, but not limited to, comprehensive system of personnel development, partnerships, collaborative partnerships, systems change and partnerships, evaluation of partnerships, interagency collaboration, state-level partnerships, networking, inter-organizational partnerships, and personnel preparation models in education.

Prior to searching the literature, I set specific parameters for selection of studies for the review. First, studies were to be conducted with partnerships that had a wider focus than the school, local community, or school-university level and were to be conducted within the field of education only. Second, studies were not included that focused on interagency collaboration within the early childhood service delivery system; the nature of this kind of collaboration has a direct and significant impact on the services provided to families and children, and therefore such a collaboration is inherently different than the collaboration in the partnerships studied. Third, studies that looked at the effectiveness of the actual collaborative processes utilized by partnerships were also not considered because the focus of the proposed study is on the changes to a system of personnel development and not on the actual processes involved in collaboration. Specific consideration was given to studies that provided a direct relationship to the CSPD mandate of IDEA.

The Need for Systems Change in Special Education

Riffle and Smith-Davis (1991) discussed the need for systems change in their review of internal and external pressures facing both general and special education. Noted pressures included shortages of personnel for special education and related services, dramatic changes in the school population, the collapse of children's services, fiscal influences, new services for infants and toddlers, and changing philosophies of special education. "The essential issues for the states in the 1990s are leadership, futures-oriented management, and change"(p. 8). Now more than ever, with the enactment of NCLB and the 2004 reauthorization of IDEA, there are considerable demands being placed on teachers, especially teachers of students with disabilities, to meet requirements for being highly qualified. States continue to grapple with shortages of

personnel for special education; at the same time, they are forced to meet accountability deadlines for placing a highly qualified teacher in every classroom.

The IDEA 1997 reauthorization specifically stressed the importance of personnel development by making requirements and offering suggestions for states as they worked to meet the mandates of the personnel development sections of the law. Rude, Murray, and Stockhouse (1998) described the need for systems change in education, and specifically special education, in regard to personnel development.

In the development of the education reform agenda it has often been unclear where special education fits into the bigger picture of systemic change. The call for educational systems to provide a talented, dedicated, well-prepared teacher for every learner poses a challenge for the ongoing professional development of educators. Clearly the demand for schools and teachers to perform at increasingly higher standards must be addressed through effective systems of personnel development. (p.47)

The National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE), a not-for-profit corporation that promotes and supports education programs for students with disabilities, has the primary goal of “support[ing] education reform through systems change efforts resulting in improved educational systems for all children, with a strong focus on the inclusion of children with disabilities” (Rude et al., 1998). In 1990, NASDSE funded the Professional Development Academy: Enhancing Collaborative Partnerships for Systems Change Project, which was aimed at providing technical assistance to states in creating and maintaining collaborative partnerships between State Education Agencies (SEAs), colleges and universities, and local school districts so that a system for ensuring the adequate preparation and continuing education of all personnel concerned with the education of students with disabilities. Funding of this type of project at the

federal level reflects the need for on-going systems change in regard to personnel development. Rude et al. stated, “There is a need for high-quality professional development, with rigorous and relevant content, strategies for implementation, collaborative partnerships, and ongoing support” (p. 48).

Systems Theory

Systems change has its foundations in systems theory. Stemming from the field of biology, systems theory was developed in the 1940s by biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy (Heylighen & Joslyn, 1992).

Systems theory involves problem-solving in an effort to improve systems in a fashion similar to the way an engineer seeks to improve a mechanical system. In direct contrast to traditional forms of analysis that seek to study things by taking them apart, systems change theory focuses on how the set of elements that comprise a system interact with one another to form a whole that seeks to create a different and unique outcome (Aronson, 1998). Therefore, changes in one part of the system will bring about changes in another. The interaction that takes place between the components of a system is causal and directional (Clayton & Radcliffe, 1996). The interactions between components of a system have control functions and dependent functions. At some point in time, these interactions between components end up looping back and affecting (either indirectly or directly) the component that initialized the interaction, creating communication feedback loops (Clayton & Radcliffe, 1996).

The principles of General Systems Theory (GST) apply to many different fields seeking to explore self-sustaining “open systems,” including education (von Bertalanffy, in Franklin, Streeter, & Warren, 1998, p. 357). Open systems are systems that have the ability to change

through interactions that take place among the components that comprise the system; closed systems have unchanging or stable components (Clayton & Radcliffe, 1996).

Bertalanffy wanted to develop a general theory for attacking scientific problems (initially biological) that did not seem to work using the methods in typical reductionistic theory. He believed that there was a better way to understand problems than by merely reducing a biological system, such as a plant or animal, to its parts (such as organs or cells). According to Bertalanffy, systems theory instead accepts that each identifiable component is related to other parts. The entire system works together, but each sub-system is identified by the unique activity that occurs within it. The human body is an example of this type of system.

Systems Thinking

Some authors such as Senge, Checkland and Howell, as well as Gharejedaghi, have applied systems theory to systems thinking as a way to solve complex problems (Weeks, 2001). Systems thinking is the process of thinking using systems ideas to solve real-world problems (Currie & Galliers, 1999). Examples of areas in which systems thinking has proven of value include the:

1. Complex problems that involve helping many actors see the big picture.
2. Reoccurring problems or those that have been made worse by past attempts to fix them.
3. Issues where an action affects (or is affected by) the environment surrounding the issues, either the natural environment surrounding the issue or the competitive environment.
4. Problems whose solutions are not obvious. (Aronson, 1998, p. 1)

Systems thinking is used to solve problems at the ‘what to do’ and ‘how to do it’ level. Systems thinking has been used specifically in situations that involve a high degree of complexity and human involvement that are not very predictable and do not easily incorporate mathematical analysis. Systems that have a high degree of predictability and are susceptible to mathematical analysis are known as ‘hard’ systems. On the other hand, ‘soft’ systems focus on learning about the systems involved in order to gain deep insights into a problem situation, not on correctness and optimum performance (Kowszun, 1992).

According to Kowszun (1992), Checkland developed a methodology known as Soft Systems Methodology (SSM). Checkland developed this methodology after working with organizations and initially applying the hard systems methodology and realizing it would not work. He specifically applied the SSM to organizational problems, manufacturing performance, and service marketing. This methodology involved a 7-step process:

1. The problem situation unstructured.
2. The problem situation expressed.
3. Root definitions of relevant systems.
4. Conceptual models.
5. Comparison of Step 4 and 2.
6. Definition of feasible desirable changes.
7. Action to solve the problem or improve the situation.

Systems Change in Education

Applying the concepts of systems change, Anderson (1993) defined six key elements of systems change within the field of education and showed how each of the elements goes through stages of change on a continuum. The elements are: (a) Vision, (b) Public and Political Support,

(c) Networking, (d) Teaching and Learning Changes, (c) Administrative Roles and Responsibilities, and (d) Policy Alignment. Of particular importance to this study is the element of networking. In addition to the six key elements of systems change, Anderson proposed a six-stage model indicating that changes in the elements takes place over time and can be divided into stages characterized by progress toward full systemic change. These stages include the following:

1. Maintenance of the old system, which is characterized by maintaining the old system as it was originally designed, lack of recognition that the system is outdated and in need of being in tune with the realities of the current world. The status quo is kept, new structures are not built, and new ideas are not formulated.
2. Awareness that change is necessary, which is characterized by multiple parties becoming aware of the need to change the current system but being unclear about what to do to make the change happen.
3. Exploration of the kinds of changes possible, which is characterized by leaders and decision makers looking for new ideas and models on which to build a new system. New ideas and new ways of leading are tried, generally in low-risk situations.
4. Transition from old to new, which is characterized by the involvement of a larger number of stakeholders, including leaders deemed critical to the change process, who are becoming committed to the vision and purpose. New strategies and ideas are tried in situations viewed as high-risk.
5. Emergence of new infrastructure, which is characterized by new elements of the system being incorporated and operationalized. New ways of work are generally accepted.

6. Predominance of the new system, which is characterized by the alignment of most components of the new system and support by key players in the system. Leaders begin to envision a system that is even better than the newly created system.

According to Anderson (1993), networks or partnerships, one of the six elements of change, look different at each stage of the change process.

At the Maintenance of the Old System Stage, partnerships are seen as “one-shot and supplemental” (p. 16). At the Awareness Stage, there is a realization that partnerships are needed and an integral part of the network. Stakeholders in the system also see the need for a long-term commitment and investment in partnerships. At the Exploration Stage, information sharing occurs, many entities join forces to establish joint networks, and new partners are added to already existing partnerships. During the Transition Stage, networks are viewed as long-term features, discussion on how to best support networks occurs, and groups not associated with a network see the networks as a source of empowerment. At the Emergence of New Infrastructure Stage, networks are seen as credible and a good source for obtaining information. Multiple partners have aligned and are moving towards the established vision. In the final stage, Predominance of the New System, people want to be a part of the established networks because these networks are a major source for acquiring relevant and needed information that they could not get anywhere else. They are also seen as a vehicle of communication throughout the system. Networks at this stage share in decision making and power.

Anderson’s (1993) model provides a framework for understanding what partnerships look like at each stage of the systemic change process. Although networks and partnerships are only one element of change on the continuum of change Anderson proposed, it is a valuable model for understanding the 11-year implementation of Florida’s regional PDPs. Having used Anderson’s

model to understand where partnerships are on the continuum of change after 11 years of implementation, stakeholders, policy makers, and leaders should be better able to understand if utilizing a regional partnership model is of value in implementing a state system of personnel development.

Systems Thinking and Strategic Planning

The stages involved in Checkland's methodology (Kowszun, 1992) and Anderson's (1993) model incorporate systems thinking. Like Checkland's seven-step process involving systems thinking, strategic planning involves comprehensive data gathering, interpreting, evaluating environmental influences, exploration of a range of alternatives, and a focus on the implications of decisions and actions for all parts of the present system and for future conditions (Riffle & Smith Davis, 1991). Anderson's model consisted of elements of systemic change that interact on a continuum throughout the change process, and although not an actual strategy, like strategic planning, they are similar in that they both involve a process that incorporates systems thinking and systems change. Strategic planning is the strategy that uses the elements Anderson proposed to move stakeholders in an organization through the change process. As they utilize strategic planning, Anderson's model helps organizations understand where the different elements of an organization are on the continuum of change.

In strategic planning, a reference point is established through a common mission or purpose statement. With this as the point of reference, the next step in strategic planning is to look at the complex relationships that comprise the system and the resources that are applied to determine how these relationships could be changed to provide greater effectiveness. Next, contexts and conditions are examined through the use of external and internal scanning as well as institutional memory to evaluate the status quo and how it could change (Murray, n.d.).

The strategic planning process utilizes systems thinking but is very different from the traditional long-range planning that is conducted in isolation from the system's stakeholders. Strategic planning is an open system in which action plans are developed and are directly linked to the characteristics of the system. Riffle & Smith Davis (1991) provided information on how strategic planning that engages people in systems thinking can be used to implement a state's Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD).

Strategic Planning and the CSPD

Strategic planning that incorporates strategic thinking has been applied both conceptually and practically to implementing a state's CSPD through the efforts of the Council of Exceptional Children's National Institute on CSPD Collaboration, a project funded by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). Developing a mission or purpose statement is the first step in the strategic planning process utilizing strategic thinking. Conceptually, this process should allow parts of the CSPD system to be organized around the same mission or purpose statement. If this alignment occurs the parts of the system will begin to function strategically within their own organizations to achieve the vision of the future because of the connection (i.e., cause-effect relationships) between the vision and what parts of the system actually do.

The second stage of the strategic planning process addresses the need to look at the system comprehensively. In this second stage, the environment is scanned in order to determine the parts, players, and linkages of the system. "The system is the sum of all of the endeavors, interest, forces, mechanisms, resources, and people who should interact on issues that influence the supply and quality of personnel" (Riffle & Smith-Davis, 1991, p. 27) in creating a CSPD.

Third, strategic planning takes into account the relationships among the parts of a system. With regard to a state's CSPD, relationships exist between both the political as well as

programmatic parts of the system. Relationships help to determine whether people will support change as well as the introduction of new players that can work to support the overall mission or purpose.

Finally, another part of strategic planning is information flow as it relates to the decision making that affects all parts of the CSPD system. Information on internal and external influences that affect the system and data on personnel related to supply and demand (as well as quality of the personnel serving students with disabilities) should be considered. When parts of the system are provided with information, they will be better able to move towards the established mission (Riffle & Smith-Davis, 1991).

In the next section, partnerships as a mechanism for state-level systems change that utilize the process of strategic planning and strategic thinking to implement a state's system of personnel development will be described so that the reader has a firm grounding in the concept of partnerships as it relates to the proposed study. Federal leadership and support encouraging partnerships as a mechanism for state-level systems change will be discussed first, followed by an overview of the legislative foundations that establish the need for partnerships as a mechanism for systems change in education. Florida's Comprehensive System of Personnel Development including its structure and a conceptual model of a CSPD within a larger system as portrayed initially by Riffle & Smith-Davis (1991) will then be presented.

Federal Leadership and Support for Encouraging Partnerships

In the early 1980s, prior to becoming the United States Secretary of Education in 1992, Governor Richard Riley of South Carolina attempted to formulate his state's comprehensive reform plan, the Education Improvement Act. Governor Riley formed collaborative partnerships that included the business community, parents, major education associations, and the state

department of education. This effort included regional forums that allowed many people to have an opportunity to respond to the goals recommended by a state planning council. Smaller regional groups developed strategies to meet the determined goals. Trained Speakers Bureau members made more than 500 presentations around the state on the need for improvements in the education system, asking for assistance with this effort. As a result of Governor Riley's efforts, students improved their test scores, more students obtained jobs and went to college, and they doubled their participation in advance coursework in high schools (U.S. Department of Education, 1995).

After being recognized nationally for his work in improving education in South Carolina, Riley was chosen by President Bill Clinton to be Secretary of Education. Riley (n.d.) stated, "I prefer partnership to partisanship" (p.1). With regard to teacher quality, Riley stressed that, in order to make education better, partnerships should be developed with teachers and colleges. With this in mind, he established the U.S. Department of Education Professional Development Team in 1994 and appointed Terry Dozier, who became Special Advisor on Professional Development, to serve as Chair of the team. The Professional Development Team was tasked with examining the best available research and exemplary practices and to develop professional development principles that could guide teachers and policymakers nationwide.

The result of this effort was a publication titled "Principles of High Quality Professional Development," issued in 1994 (Riley, 1996). The principles are based on the assumption that teacher education is a career-long process, one that does not end with graduation from college. The principles are also based on the belief that high-quality professional development should incorporate all of the stated principles, not just a chosen few. Related to the collaboration that takes place in the regional partnerships being studied, and, of particular importance to this study,

is the specific principle that addresses collaborative planning by those who will participate in and facilitate the development of professional development. The principles were published in the *Federal Register* in December 1994 and disseminated widely to individuals and organizations with an interest in education (*Goals 2000*, n.d.). The 10 principles of highly qualified professional development are listed below:

1. Professional development focuses on teachers as central to student learning, yet includes all other members of the school community.
2. Professional development focuses on individual, collegial, and organizational improvement.
3. Professional development respects and nurtures the intellectual and leadership capacity of teachers, principals, and others in the school.
4. Professional development reflects best available research and practice in teaching, learning, and leadership.
5. Professional development enables teachers to develop further expertise in subject content, teaching strategies, uses of technologies, and other essential elements in teaching to high standards.
6. Professional development promotes continuous inquiry and improvement embedded in the daily life of schools.
7. Professional development is planned collaboratively by those who will participate in and facilitate the development.
8. Professional development requires substantial time and other resources.
9. Professional development is driven by a coherent long-term plan.

10. Professional development is ultimately evaluated on the basis of its impact on teacher effectiveness and student learning, and this assessment guides subsequent professional development efforts.

In his statement before the House Committee on Education and the Workforce Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education, Training, and Lifelong Learning, Dozier (1977) emphasized the need to develop, expand, and strengthen partnerships between educational organizations and agencies to support high quality professional development so that everyone involved could work as colleagues towards the same goal of educating all children. He stated:

Professional development works best when it is part of a system-wide effort to improve and integrate the recruitment, selection, preparation, initial licensing, induction, ongoing professional development and support and advanced certification of educators and other personnel. The nation must move beyond piecemeal, fragmented approaches to personnel development to creating frameworks for policy and practice that comprehensively and coherently connect the different stages of a career in education to national, state, and district education goals. (p. 4)

The need for partnerships was recognized as a result of this effort. Since this initiative, partnerships have been authorized by legislation or stipulated through policy, and some have been supported by the U.S. Department of Education through special discretionary funding. According to Mattson (1997), “These partnerships take various forms and have a variety of organizational structures” (p. 6).

In 1990, the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) funded a project called the National Institute on CSPD Collaboration, which is a specific example of a federally funded project in support of state-level collaborative partnerships and directly linked to this study. The

National Institute for Comprehensive System for Personnel Development (CSPD)

Collaboration's efforts consisted of providing training and support to leaders of State Education Agencies (SEAs), Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs), and Local Education Agencies (LEAs), and other significant stakeholders. The goal of the Institute was to build collaborative regional professional development partnerships to establish and organize a state's special education CSPD as an effective vehicle for change. During the tenure of the project, the National Institute for CSPD Collaboration worked with more than 40 states and territories to develop a CSPD strategic plan. Those involved with the training of state teams believed that a successful state CSPD would have a state-level leadership committee in place from its inception in order to effectively determine personnel needs, and, through strategic planning, meet those needs. The concept of regional professional development partnerships in Florida as the mechanism for implementing the state CSPD developed out of this federal initiative (Council for Exceptional Children, n.d.).

Legislative Foundations That Establish the Need for Partnerships in Education

Since the early 1990s, federal legislation, policies, and strategic planning initiatives have both mandated and encouraged state and local partnerships to improve the quality of personnel in the field of education. Legislation (including the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, the No Child Left Behind Act, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) requires that relationships be created across categorical programs and between state and local agencies, institutions of higher education, and community organizations. The assumption underlying these initiatives is that, through partnerships, the preparation of educational personnel will be improved so that higher standards for all children can be achieved.

The first legislation that will be discussed is the Goals 2000: Educate America Act (P.L. 102-227), which has a national goal addressing professional development and objectives that promote partnerships. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 (P.L. 107-110) will be discussed next. The NCLB reauthorized and amended the Elementary and Secondary School Act of 1965, which was the largest source of federal aid to K-12 schools. This section ends with a discussion of the IDEA, which has promoted partnerships for implementing personnel development activities for professionals that served students with disabilities from 1975-2004 through its CSPD provisions.

Goals 2000: Educate America Act

On March 31, 1994 the Goals 2000: Educate America Act was signed into law. President Clinton viewed this law as a national response to reform education within the United States. Through this legislation the federal government pledged to form a new and supportive partnership with states and communities in an effort to improve academic achievement across the nation, where education has primarily been a function of local government and the responsibility of the state (Goals 2000: A Progress Report, 1996). According to Secretary Riley (1996), Goals 2000 was designed to encourage states and communities to raise standards to promote collaborative efforts between schools and institutions of higher education to advance teacher training.

Goals 2000 links directly to eight national education goals. Secretary Riley (1996) affirmed that the national goals must send a loud message that teacher preparation and that continuing professional development play an essential role in education reform. Goal 7 of the national education goals as outlined in its objectives, specifically mentioned establishing

partnerships as a mechanism to provide and support professional development programs. The objectives for this goal included the following:

(iii) States and school districts will create integrated strategies to attract, recruit, prepare, retain, and support the continued professional development of teachers, administrators, and other educators, so that there is a highly talented workforce of professional educators to teach challenging subject matter; and

(iv) partnerships will be established, whenever possible, among local education agencies, institutions of higher education, parents, and local labor, business, and professional associations to provide and support programs for the professional development of educators (Goals 2000: Educate America Act § 3., Title 1, § 102).

In addition to Goals 2000, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 (P.L. 107-110) also promotes partnerships as a way to attain high quality professional development.

No Child Left Behind Act

The NCLB (P.L. 107-110), which reauthorized and amended the Elementary and Secondary School Act of 1965, was signed into law by President George W. Bush on January 8, 2002. As in the Goals 2000 Act, a strong emphasis is placed on the importance of teacher quality in improving student achievement. The NCLB specifically called for partnerships among state, local educational agencies, and state agencies for higher education, and other eligible partners to improve personnel development. These partnerships are required in order to ensure that all teachers of core academic subjects are highly qualified by no later than the end of the 2005-2006 school year.

Through Title II, Part A of the Act, the Improving Teacher Quality State Grants Program provides nearly 3 billion dollars a year to states to support the efforts of partnerships (U.S.

Department of Education, 2004). These funds are to be used to prepare, train, and recruit high-quality teachers and principals capable of ensuring that all children will achieve high standards. SEAs, LEAs, state agencies for higher education, and other eligible partnerships are required to take the following actions:

1. Increase student academic achievement through strategies such as improving teacher and principal quality and increase the numbers of highly qualified teachers in the classroom and highly qualified principals and assistant principals in the schools.
2. Hold local education agencies and schools accountable for improvements in student academic achievement. (NCLB, 2001, § 2101 [1] [2]).

The partnerships must use the funds to conduct professional development activities in core academic subjects to ensure that highly qualified teachers, paraprofessionals, and principals have subject-matter knowledge in the academic subjects they teach, support, or supervise, including knowledge of computer-related technology to enhance instruction. The thrust of the implementation is on the use of scientifically based professional development strategies that have proven to be effective in increasing student academic achievement.

In addition to Goals 2000 and NCLB, since 1975 the IDEA has promoted partnerships as the mechanism for providing professional development for personnel serving students with disabilities through its CSPD provision.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

The IDEA (originally known as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975) was signed into law on June 4, 1997 by President Bill Clinton. The Act continued to reflect the need for requirements of a CSPD. It stated:

Each state agency must develop a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) which ensures an adequate supply of qualified personnel (including general and special educators, related service personnel, and leadership personnel). The System includes personnel standards, needs assessment, pre-service preparation, evaluation, continuing education, technical assistance, and the dissemination of knowledge and promising practices derived from research, material, and technology. Each State Education agency (SEA) or Lead Agency under the law must coordinate and facilitate efforts among the state agencies, local agencies (LEAs), all public and private Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs), parent and advocacy organizations to recruit, prepare and retain qualified personnel. (IDEA, 1997, § 612 [a] [14])

The purpose of this section was to promote comprehensive professional development programs to ensure that persons responsible for services to children with disabilities have the necessary knowledge and skills. It was believed that through the use of partnerships involving SEAs, LEAs, all public and private IHEs, and parent and advocacy organizations, this purpose would be realized.

Also included under Part D in the 1997 amendments to the IDEA, the law authorized State Improvement Grants, a new set of competitive grants aimed at improving the results of children with disabilities. The purpose of this part is to assist SEAs and their partners in reforming and improving their systems, including their systems for personnel development, for providing educational, early intervention, and transitional services. The State Improvement Grant section identified contractual and optional partners that the SEA could involve. This section stated:

[E]ach state applying for a State Improvement Grant must develop an improvement plan that describes a partnership agreement specifying the nature and extent of the partnership among the SEA, local educational agencies, and other state agencies involved in, or concerned with, the education of children with disabilities, and the respective roles of each member of the partnership; and how such agencies will work in partnership with other persons and organizations involved in, and concerned with, the education of children with disabilities, including the respective roles of each of these persons and organizations (U.S.C, Title 20, Ch. 33, Subchapter IV, Part A § 1452).

Although the language stated that SEAs could utilize a variety of strategies to meet the goals of the grant, the IDEA required that 75% of the funds be used to ensure an adequate supply of qualified personnel, signifying the federal government's commitment at that time to making personnel development a priority through the special education statute (Mattson, 1997).

On December 3, 2004 President George W. Bush signed and reauthorized the IDEA of 2004 (P.L. 108-446). Substantial changes were made in the new law as reauthorized and amended in regard to personnel development and the CSPD requirements. In the IDEA 2004, Congress reported that the availability of an adequate number of qualified personnel is critical (a) to effectively serving children with disabilities, (b) to assuming leadership positions in administration and direct services, (c) to providing teacher training, and (d) to conducting high-quality research to improve special education.

Congress also reported that “high quality, comprehensive professional development programs are essential to ensure that the persons responsible for the education or transition of children with disabilities possess the skills and knowledge necessary to address the educational and related needs of those children” (IDEA, 2004, § 650 [5] [A-D] and [6]).

Although Congress repealed the requirements that states have a comprehensive system of personnel development and made major changes to state requirements with respect to personnel qualifications (IDEA, 2004, § 612 [a] [14]), it established State Personnel Development Grants (IDEA, 2004, § 651) as a tool to increase the supply of qualified personnel serving students with disabilities.

State Personnel Development Grants (SPDG) were established for the purpose of assisting SEAs in reforming and improving their system of personnel development in early intervention, education, and transition services in order to improve results for children with disabilities. In order to be considered for a SPDG, SEAs must describe a partnership agreement that is in effect for the period of the grant. The agreement shall specify the nature and extent of the partnership described in accordance with Section 652 (b) of the IDEA and the respective roles of each member of the partnership. They must also describe how the SEA will work with other persons and organizations involved in, and concerned with, the education of children with disabilities, including the respective roles of each of the persons and organization.

A description of how the proposed strategies and activities are coordinated with activities supported by other public entities as well as how they will align the state's personnel development plan with the application submitted under Sections 1111 and 2112 of the NCLB legislation must also be provided (IDEA, 2004, § 652). Although this is a major change in the law, the importance of partnerships as a mechanism for improving state systems of personnel development continues to be emphasized.

Florida's CSPD: Regional Professional Development Partnerships

Building on the work of Riffle-Smith Davis (1991), I have sought to conceptualize the CSPD system in the state of Florida through a graphic representation. This representation is an

effort to provide the reader with a sense of structure of the system to which the proposed study is referring. Although a graphic provides a conceptualization, it is in no way meant to over-simplify the complex system being discussed. See Figure 1.1 for a visual conceptualization of Florida's Comprehensive System of Personnel Development.

Florida's Comprehensive System of Personnel Development Regional Professional Development Partnerships were established in 1993-1994 at the recommendation of the statewide Florida CSPD advisory Council, and the Florida Department of Education (DOE), Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services (BISCS). For a graphic regional configuration of Florida's nine Regional Professional Development Partnerships, see Figure 1.2.

The original purpose of the regional PDPs was to implement the state's personnel development system requirements by addressing the needs of individual school districts in their specified regions. The Florida DOE and BISCS provided financial support for the implementation of regional PDPs by initiating a new Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Discretionary Project. This funding provided support to Florida's state universities, specifically their Departments of Special Education, to implement regional PDPs. Table 1.1 compares funding amounts for 1994-1995 to current funding. This comparison shows project growth as well as a 94% increase in funding for implementing the regional partnerships provided during Year 1 as compared to Year 10 (*The Chronicle*, Spring 2003).

With training and guidance from the National Institute on CSPD Collaboration each Regional Partnership formed a Regional Council comprised of stakeholders that were committed to working collaboratively to meet the personnel needs within their region. The National Institute for CSPD Collaboration was initiated through the auspices of the Council for Exceptional

Children in 1990 and utilized the process of strategic planning specifically developed for teams of people who wanted to create collaborative partnerships for professional development.

The components of this process include (a) strategic planning directed toward creating a future that could be, rather than reacting to a future that will be; (b) the consideration of the process of strategic planning as being as important as the product, because the process is designed to create understanding, consensus, and commitment through the interactions of leaders and stakeholders; and (c) strategic plans that are sufficiently broad, in order to provide flexibility, and sufficiently specific, in order to provide direction for functional and operational planning (Murray, n.d., in *Professional Development Partnerships Across and Within Systems*, p.1).

Initial training from the National Institute on CSPD collaboration involved educating key regional PDP stakeholders in the strategic planning process. According to Murray (n. d.), the strategic planning process is circular, continuous, and deliberate, and uses the degree to which the established vision is obtained as a measure of success or failure, as well as for an indicator of the direction of future activity.

Phases in the strategic planning process include the following:

1. Developing proposals, which includes developing a common vision, scanning the environment, identifying the problem, identifying barriers and opportunities, and selecting priority goals.
2. Detailing plans, which includes developing outcome-oriented objectives, identifying strategies and developing action plans, building an accountability system, and developing an implementation plan.
3. Implementing the plan, which includes monitoring outcomes (Murray, n. d., p.3).

The Florida Department of Education continues to provide funding through the IDEA discretionary grant process to support regional PDPs as they develop and implement collaborative personnel development plans. These action plans are reviewed and updated annually and submitted to the Florida Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services in order to receive funding. The plans integrate state personnel development initiatives into the nine professional development partnership regions. They support collaboration among regional partners. These partners include (a) school personnel, including teachers, district exceptional student education and general education administrators, and student services professionals; (b) FLDOE personnel, including staff whose function is to address educator standards, educator certification, recruitment and professional development, and exceptional student education; (c) parents; (d) Education Standards Commission members; (e) college and university professionals; (f) advocacy group members; and (e) early childhood professionals. This regional collaboration has been undertaken to produce personnel development programs consistent with the needs of local schools and school districts so that a state system of personnel development can be sustained.

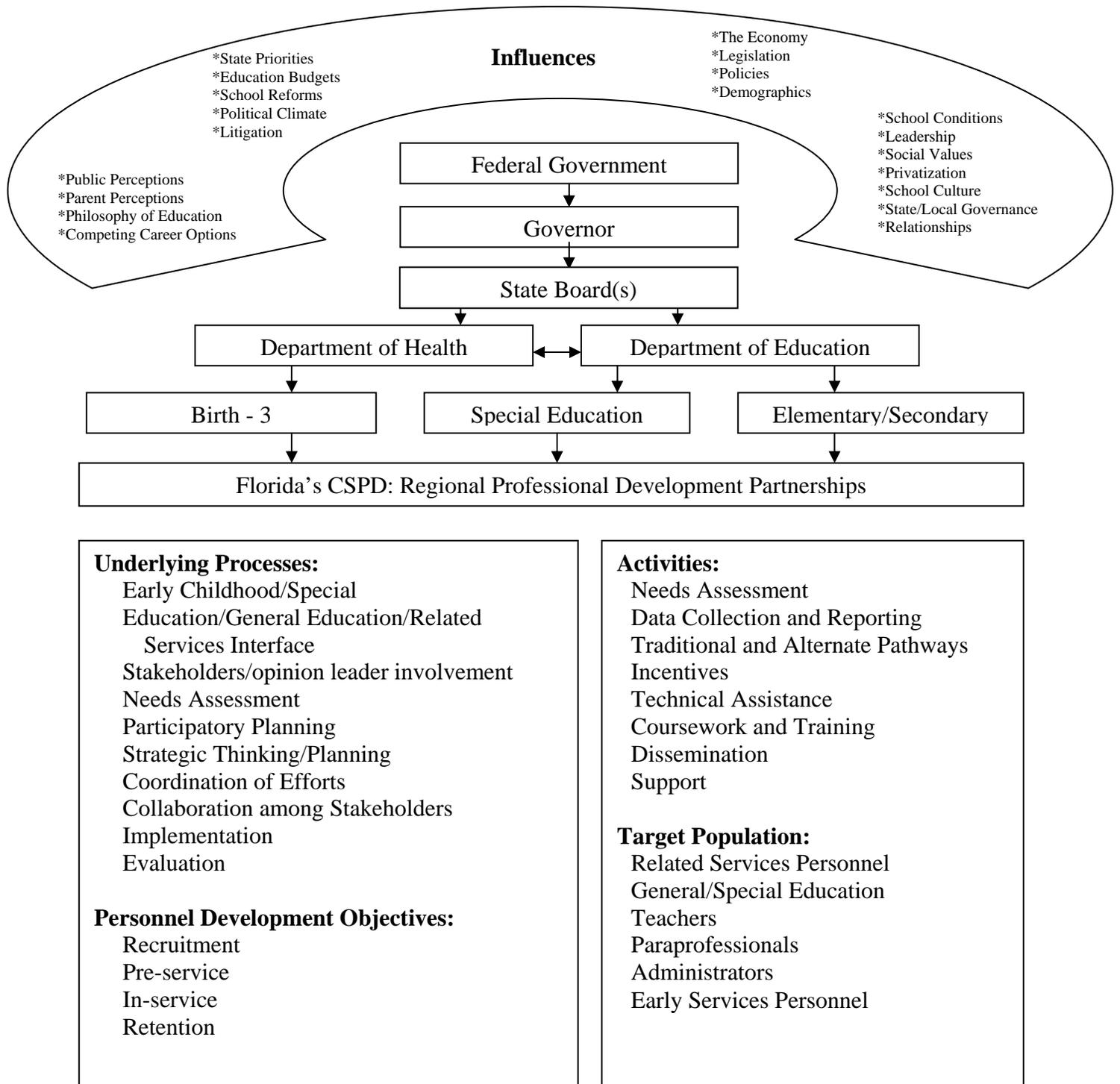


Figure 1.1

Visual Conceptualization of Florida's Comprehensive System of Personnel Development in 2005

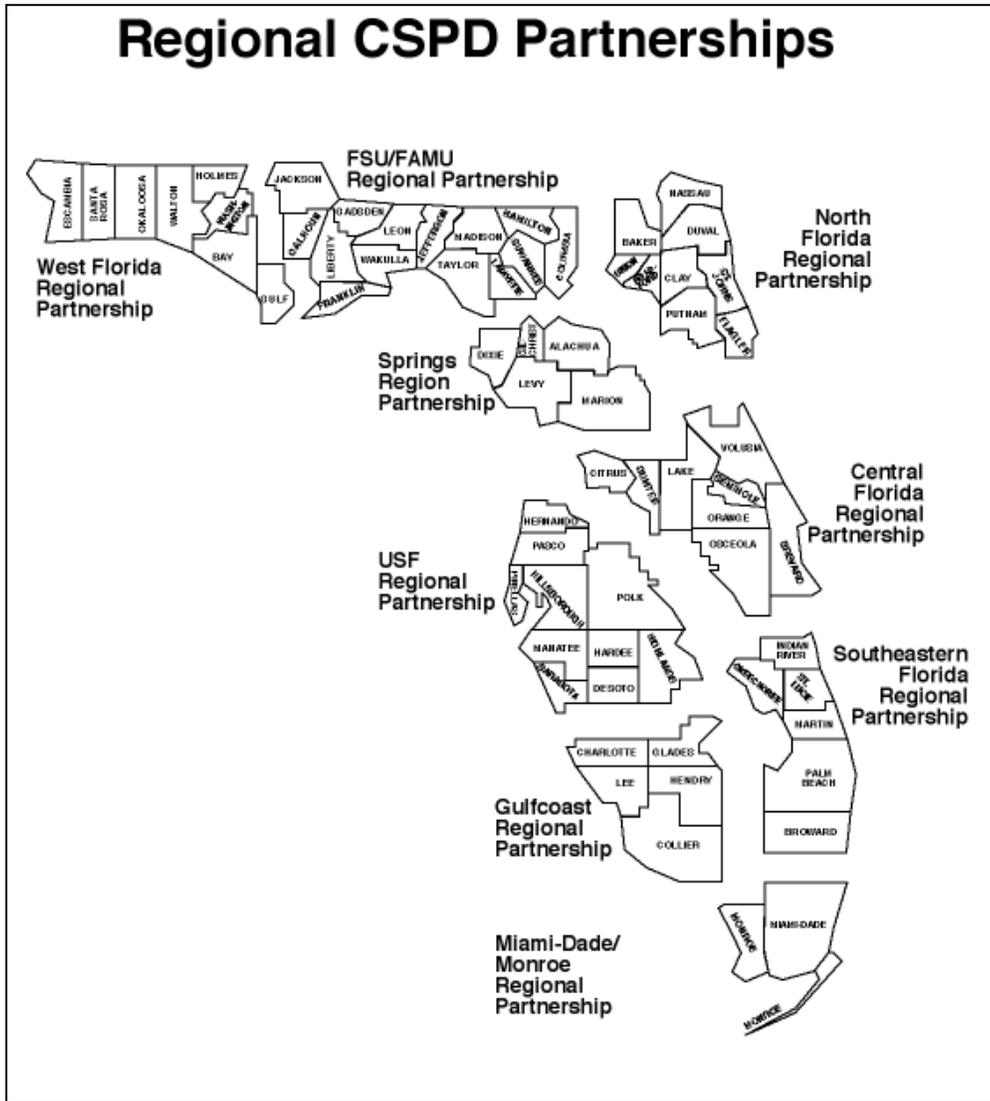


Figure 1.2.

Florida's Regional CSPD Partnerships: Current Configuration

(Source: Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, Information Clearinghouse, 2005)

Table 1.1

Regional Professional Development Partnership Funding (1994 - 1995) and (2004 - 2005)

1994-1995	2004-2005
8 Regional Professional Development Partnerships Funded	9 Regional Professional Development Partnerships Funded
Total Funding = \$30,000 X 7 = \$210,000	Total Funding: \$388,000 X 9 = \$3,492,000

In August of 2001, Florida's Regional Professional Development Partnership responsibilities were expanded as Florida was awarded a State Improvement Grant (SIG) with funding from the OSEP. The focus of Florida's responsibilities is Goal 3 of the SIG, which sought to increase the state's capacity to recruit, prepare, and retain qualified personnel to provide special education and related services for children with disabilities. Florida's nine regional PDPs serve as the mechanism to be used in addressing the goal.

A year later, the Florida Department of Health (DOH) Children's Medical Services's Early Steps program (an early intervention agency funded by the IDEA) was awarded a General Supervision Enhancement Grant (GSEG) funded through OSEP. In this unique collaborative effort between the state's lead agency for early intervention and the Department of Education, Florida's regional PDPs provided professional development on specific high-priority topics to personnel serving infants and young children with disabilities from the ages of birth to five.

In May 2004, the Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services at the Florida Department of Education (now the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services) provided funding for a Pre-Kindergarten Technical Assistance and Training System (TATS), which utilized the regional PDPs as the mechanism to deliver training and technical assistance to personnel who provide services to pre-kindergartners with disabilities and their families.

In July 2004, the Florida Department of Health, through its Early Steps program (an entirely restructured Infants and Toddlers system), utilized the regional PDPs and a new statewide service delivery model to provide training to local early intervention teams. Through the Early Steps program, the Florida Department of Health provided resources and materials to support the training as well as provide a staff member in each of the nine regional partnerships.

The Early Steps staff coordinated and collaborated with each of the CSPD Regional Partnership Coordinators in an effort to address the new birth-20 system of personnel development.

Over the past 11 years, Florida's regional PDPs have evolved as the mechanism through which Florida's CSPD activities have been implemented. The partnerships continue to exist in an effort to meet the state's personnel development system requirements. They continue to utilize collaborative, grass-roots planning, design, and implementation in what is now a birth-20 system. State universities continue to serve as the fiscal agents for the nine regional PDPs where they are physically located.

Research Studies Addressing Partnerships

This section of the review addresses how states have utilized collaborative partnerships as the mechanism of state-level systems change in education. First, the rationale for including studies for review is discussed. Next, a brief synthesis of the studies' purposes, samples, and methodologies is provided to give the reader an overview. The eight research studies that focus on collaborative partnerships as the mechanism of state-level educational systems change are then presented and critically analyzed. The review addresses general conceptual areas relevant to the topic of collaborative partnerships as the mechanism for state-level systems change in education. It also addresses the following questions: What does the research tell us regarding partnerships targeting systems change? What are the essential characteristics, benefits, and barriers of partnerships? What impact have partnerships had on the systems they were targeted to change? These areas of inquiry serve as the organizational structure for the analysis and synthesis of studies in this section.

Research Studies Included for Review

Specific parameters for selecting the studies for the review were set prior to searching the literature. First, studies were to be conducted with partnerships that had more than a school, local community, or school-university focus and were to be conducted within the field of education only. Second, studies were not included that focused on interagency collaboration within the early childhood service delivery system because these collaborations address service provisions to individuals rather than systems-change efforts. Third, studies were not included that specifically looked at the effectiveness of the actual collaborative processes utilized by partnerships because the focus of the proposed study is on the changes to a system of personnel development and not on the actual processes involved in collaboration. Specific consideration was given to studies that provided a direct relationship to the CSPD mandate of the IDEA.

An Overview of the Studies Included

Descriptions of the eight studies included for review appear in Appendix B. The studies are arranged alphabetically by first-listed authors' last names for ease of location. This table briefly summarizes (a) author and year of publication; (b) purpose of the study, (c) methodology and sample used, and (d) major findings related to partnerships as the mechanism for state-level systems change for each study. Readers are encouraged to refer to the table for details of the studies selected for review.

Purposes. Researchers have studied various aspects for partnerships as a mechanism for state-level systems change. Some looked at collaborative efforts of partnerships (Padak, et al., 1994; Russell & Flynn, 2000). Others examined the implementation of partnerships as a part of program evaluation efforts (Jones, 1998; Kingsley, O'Neil, & Usselman, 2002; Kleinhammer-Tramill, Kelly, & Gallagher, 1996). Seven of the eight studies identified essential elements of

successful partnerships (Danzberger, 1990; Galligani, 1990, Padak et al., 1994; Russell & Flynn, 2000, Tafel, & Eberhart, 1999, Tushnet, Bodinger-de Uriate, Ito, Manual, & Clark, 1996, Jones, 1998). In addition, Tafel and Eberhart (1999) sought to determine state-level strategies to improve systems in statewide partnerships targeting improved student performance.

Samples. Data were collected from those involved in an educational partnership focused on systemic change. Padak et al. (1994) studied partnerships that included university personnel, public school personnel, and corporate partners. Tafel and Eberhart (1999) studied partnerships that involved state higher education coordinating and governing boards. The Tushnet et al. (1996) study included key participants from each of five Educational Partnership projects, which varied greatly in composition depending on the specific project. Klienhammer-Tramill et al. (1996) involved 53 persons from eight partnership projects from institutions of higher education, including a dean of education, chairs of teacher education programs, acting deans, department chairs for colleges and schools of education, special and general education faculty members, and K-12 educators. Three of the studies involved the specific projects in their entirety (Danzberger, 1990; Galligani, 1990; Jones, 1998). One study, a review of the partnership literature, included authors of 11 articles written on partnership projects from across the nation (Russell & Flynn, 2000). Another study involved 30 evaluation and education experts in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (Kingsley et al., 2002).

Methodologies. Qualitative research methods were used predominantly in these studies (Danzgerber, 1990; Galligani, 1990; Jones, 1998; Klienhammer-Tramill et al. 1996; Padak et al. 1990; Tushnet et al., 1996; U.S. Department of Education, 1996,). Of the six studies that were qualitative, two involved the use of interviews as well as document reviews (Klienhammer-Tramill et al., 1996; Tushnet et al., 1996). Klienhammer-Tramill et al. (1996) also completed 11

participant observations at meetings related to partnership activities. Padak et al. conducted interviews only, and Galligani, Danzberger, and Jones conducted only document reviews. Three of the nine studies used a combination of methods to include surveys including open-ended questions (Russel & Flynn, 2000), surveys and site visits (Tafel & Eberhart, 1999), and one study used a Delphi panel and case-study methodology (Kingsley et al., 2002).

Partnerships Targeting Systems Change: What Does the Literature Tell Us?

Project descriptions or evaluations of discrete components of partnership projects encompass most of the available literature. However, from these descriptions and evaluations, there is consistency across all types of partnerships in different locations, targeted at different goals for the essential elements of effective partnerships. The following section analyzes studies that provided information on the elements of partnerships targeting successful systems change.

Essential Components, Benefits, and Barriers of Partnerships

Danzberger (1990) conducted an eight-part descriptive analysis of 18 Education Partnership projects funded through the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement for the purpose of describing the history and context of partnership building so that funders and supporters of partnership activities could become more informed, and examining successful prototypes or models of educational partnerships so that the developmental nature of partnerships can be recognized. Projects supported by the Educational Partnership Program (EPP) in the states of Alaska, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington were included in the study. The EPP supported partnerships between public school, higher education, and agencies from the private sector encouraging excellence in education. Research questions addressed the following issues:

1. What is the funding, the target population, the project focus, the project objectives, the project description, the type of activities, the type of new products and materials to be developed, and evaluation plan?
2. What are the major categories of common project elements?
3. What are the partnership structures?
4. What are the common questions across partnerships in terms of development and operations of partnerships, project activities, and project results?
5. What are the components of successful partnerships?

The last question was of particular interest to the present study.

In this study, document reviews included the project title, funding data, project partnership, target student population, project focus, objectives, project description and activities, new products and materials to be developed, evaluation plan, and contact persons and Department of Education project officers. Minutes of partnerships meetings, correspondence among all participating parties, telephone and personal contact logs for the project director(s), lead persons within each partnerships organization, and persons with on-site responsibility for project activities were also reviewed.

From the review of documents, eight individual sections of the analysis were created.

The eight sections included the following elements:

1. Summary of descriptions of the projects.
2. Matrices reflecting a visual scan of all projects.
3. Projects' evaluation plans.
4. Major categories of common project elements.
5. Partnership structures.

6. Suggestions and common questions across the projects.
7. Project activities on elements suggested for special observation.
8. Some thoughts about dissemination.

Components of successful partnerships were noted in Section 5. Components included (a) involvement by top-level leadership, (b) grounding in community ideas, (c) effective public relations, (d) clear roles and responsibilities, (e) racial-ethnic involvement, (f) strategic planning, (g) effective management and staffing structure, (h) shared decision making and interagency ownership, (i) shared credit and recognition, (j) appropriate and well-timed resources, (k) technical assistance, (l) formal agreements, (m) action and frequent success, (n) patience, vigilance and increased involvement, and (o) local ownership.

The limitations of using partnerships were also noted. These included the following factors:

1. The interconnectedness of the system limits reform at any one level due to problems that the change causes at different levels of the system.
2. There is a tremendous amount of time and labor connected with the tasks involved in partnerships targeted at systems change.
3. It is extremely difficult to measure progress or recognize success due to unclear, often abstract, or unrealistic missions that partnerships have.
4. The structure of systems change initiatives is often unmanageable, thereby making process more important than product and planning more important than implementation.
5. The focus on clients is often lost and systems change is sought for its own sake.

Implications of this study are found both in the components of partnerships thought to be successful, as well as the limitations that were noted. For partnerships having educational change as their mission, leadership at all levels is extremely important, as is the need for partnerships to

build and maintain support for their efforts from a wide variety of stakeholders. Successful partnerships utilize a strategic planning process and have leaders or managers who are familiar with several systems so that communication between several organizations and institutions can take place. In order to endure, the partnership must meet the needs of the people involved. If the partnership is not of benefit to each person or the organization they represent, or if the partners do not believe they have a hand in the decision-making process, then the partnership will not survive. Finally, if developed through outside grants (i.e., those disseminated by state or federal agencies), a partnership will not survive unless the initiative becomes locally owned—that is, the locality must show a commitment, either in matching dollars or by completely funding the initiative. Also of interest to the proposed study were the three categories that framed the work of the partnerships in the projects. The study of the work of partnerships could be organized around the development and operation of partnerships, the impact of partnerships on project activities, and the effect of partnerships on project results.

Galligani (1990) conducted a comprehensive program evaluation of the curriculum enhancement projects. From 1984-1987 and again in 1987-1990, Galligani participated in the California Academic Partnership Program (CAPP) in order to examine characteristics contributing to effective partnerships, successful methods for achieving curriculum enhancement goals, methods for reaching specific project goals, and unintended outcomes of partnership implementation. The evaluation also outlined recommendations for effective partnership relationships. Partnerships from 20 California Curriculum Enhancement projects during the first funding cycle (1984 and 1987) were included in the study. Projects were designed to develop academic partnerships between secondary and postsecondary institutions and improve the academic preparation of students. This program was created by the California state legislature in

1984. The legislature provided funding for these projects so they could be established throughout the state. This study utilized written reports, collected from each of the 20 California Curriculum Enhancement Projects, which provided answers to the following questions:

1. What is the best way to realize an effective partnership? What is the best administrative structure? What is the best way to promote postsecondary faculty working with a schools' faculty? What are the best incentives for inter-institutional cooperation and how may interested faculty members be identified?
2. What is the best way to assist schools and school districts to enhance their curriculum?
3. What is the best way to target academic preparation efforts for underrepresented students?
4. What is the best way to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs?
5. What is the best way to institutionalize (i.e., continue) the partnership effort?
6. What is the best way to disseminate information about the project, both within project institutions as well as to external audiences?
7. To what extent can the California Academic Partnership Program Advisory Board, director, or evaluator provide help?
8. What unintended outcomes have occurred as a result of these projects?

Content analysis of the written reports was conducted via an evaluation workshop that included at least one team from each project and a trained facilitator, selected from various educational segments involved in CAPP. Specific tactics used in the analysis included noting patterns and themes as well as clustering like items. The data responses were formatted beneath categories which were the same as the research questions. Once common elements were ascertained from the data, they were placed into primary and secondary categories. Characteristics were

determined to be ‘primary’ if they had at least eight of the projects making a similar response. In order to ensure that the analysis was accurate and coincided with the perceptions of those creating the written reports, each CAPP Director and evaluation facilitator was given the opportunity to suggest where there were gaps in the information presented or errors in terms of the interpretation of the data.

Major findings of the study focused on effective administrative structures, promoting faculty-to-faculty interactions, enhancing school curriculum, communicating effectively, involving parents, sharing costs, and ensuring institutionalization. It concluded with a list of 10 essential elements which contribute to effective partnerships:

1. Clear establishment of goals that are recognized and developed together.
2. Mutual trust and respect.
3. Sufficient time to develop and strengthen relationships.
4. Quality and commitment of individuals.
5. Continued and constant interaction between top management and involved staff and faculty.
6. Willingness to recognize and understand different cycles and languages of various educational segments.
7. Periodic formative evaluation.
8. Shared responsibility and accountability.
9. Crisp lines of communication.
10. Recognition of the evolutionary process of change.

The implications of this study to the proposed study are found in both the methodology used and the elements that contribute to effective partnerships. Qualitative methods allowed for

those involved in the partnerships to share their perceptions regarding several different components of the way of work in their partnership. This led to a list of essential elements of successful partnerships that may be of value to states and localities that may be considering utilizing the partnership mechanism. Also of importance is the specificity of how administrative structures of a partnership should function. This included the importance of developing an advisory committee that meets frequently, has representation from each entity comprising the partnership, and includes a person with some level of budgetary authority. The committee should see its role as providing direction for planning, implementing, coordinating, and communicating. The chair of the committee should be rotated among all involved parties, showing shared leadership. Each person or organization involved should have some clear responsibility and authority for the implementation of the project's activities. Goals and objectives should be developed by the partners together, and benefits of the partnership for each person or organization should be stated.

In a 3-year evaluation of the perspectives of participants involved in educational partnerships on the development of partnerships, Padak et al. (1994) conducted semi-structured interviews by trained research assistants, at the convenience of the persons being interviewed. Answers to the question regarding the partners' perceptions of critical issues for success of a partnership were gleaned from an interview study conducted in three stages: after only a few months of participation, after 18 months of participation, and after 3 years of participation. Partnership participants involved in the U.S. DOE-funded Cooperative Alliance, which focused on the development of effective partnerships to facilitate high-quality educational programs for tomorrow's technology-based communities, were included in this study. Three agencies –Kent State University, Cleveland Public Schools' Center for School Improvement, and International

Business Machines EdQuest Corporation – as well as other participants from other partnerships embedded within the project, were included in the study. In Year 1, 22 Joint Partnership Advisory Council (JPAC) members, consisting of representatives from the partners of the project, were interviewed. Representatives included community agencies, businesses, local community colleges, and state Board of Regents in the Cleveland area. An analysis of the 22 interviews was conducted after several months of partnership activity and yielded three domains: definitions of “partnership,” critical features for success, and potential results of the partnership effort.

Year 2 of the study was conducted on the assumption that the partners' perceptions of the critical features of partnership success might change as they progressed in their work together. The study used interview data from 15 individuals who had been involved with the project for 18 months. Analysis of interview data revealed six domains. The six domains included (a) partnership framework, (b) evaluation, (c) people, (d) resources, (f) project goals, and (g) project impact. Comments regarding the first domain, framework, accounted for over one-third of all the comments. The project framework included comments about “ ‘smooth and successful functioning,’ which informants viewed as ‘due to greater cooperation,’ ‘less protectionism of individual agendas,’ and hard work among all key stakeholders to help the group identify common goals and learn to function together” (p. 7). They also noted that when new members joined the partnership it caused certain delays.

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A comparison of stakeholders’ perceptions from the two studies was made prior to the third-year study. Changes in perceptions in the areas of evaluation and specific aspects of the project were not noted in Year 1 of the study but were noted in Year 2. Year 2 data seemed more complex than Year 1, although there were some similar features. These features included a strong value for communication and leadership and that change for the partnership was inevitable.

Year 3 of the study included interviews with all persons on the JPAC. Thirteen individuals had been involved since Year 1 and three were new members. Respondents represented included personnel directly responsible for the project (n=7), only one respondent serving on the JPAC (n=1), community agencies (n=6), business (n=1), and state board of regents (n=1). Interviews ranged in length from 30-60 minutes and were tape-recorded and later transcribed for analysis. Semi-structured interview questions focused on perceptions of project goals, views of strengths and weaknesses of the partnership, and comments about personal involvement in the project. Questions regarding key elements and barriers to success of the partnership were also considered. Three researchers completed the data reduction and analysis process and involved identifying data congruent with the research goals. The software program

Ethnograph was used to search the interview data for portions relating to the focus of the study. Pertinent portions of the text were then coded and analyzed for patterns. Inductive analysis revealed the initial domains and the constant comparative method was used to refine the study's findings.

Year 3 of the study supported earlier findings but specifically mentioned the importance of the leadership role. “Effective leadership included organizational and planning skills along with the ability to recognize talents of others and facilitate their use” (p.17). Comments regarding partnership framework accounted for 71% of all comments and 50% of the comments in the people domain came from community members. Sub-categories of the partnership framework domain included evolution, communication, and collaboration. Evolution addressed goals, commitment of the partners and agencies, and support for the institutionalization process. Communication was seen as both a strength and a weakness. A key ingredient for partnership success was that project goals be aligned with other city, state, and national reform efforts. The people domain also yielded sub-categories: (a) ownership, (b) attendance, (c) roles, and (d) activity.

Implications of this study are found in its developmental nature of studying partnership implementation over a 3-year period of time. This study showed that interview data was different, especially between Year 1 and Year 2, indicating that partnerships do evolve through stages. They were particularly different in the complexity of information they produced for the interviews as well as the type of content discussed. For example, evaluation was never mentioned in Year 1 but was mentioned in Year 2. The number of comments that contributed to the project framework domain showed that the nature of partnership work and the processes involved are just as important as the goals and outcomes of the project.

Russell and Flynn (2000) reviewed the literature to determine variables of collaboration in educational partnerships. The sample consisted of 11 projects across the nation, from public and private colleges and universities in partnerships with P-12 schools; other departments and units on campus and business, government, and community groups from each of the articles reviewed in the literature. One survey per project was completed by the authors, who wrote about them in the literature. The survey was used to determine which variables, out of the 26 variables found in the literature, were factors in the success of their own collaborative partnership effort. Open-ended questions were also asked regarding any other important factors not included in the list of 26 variables. Mean ratings for factors contributing to successful partnership collaboration were provided and rank ordered.

Out of 26 variables that were found, 6 were found to be essential by the respondents that participated in the study's survey. Six factors receiving the most support for having contributed to the effectiveness of partnership collaboration included (a) willingness to listen to other partners, (b) mutual respect, (c) long-term commitment, (d) frequent communication, (e) flexibility in ways of working together, and (f) careful selection of partners. Other factors not in the review of the literature, but stated by respondents in open-ended comments included (a) trust building, (b) creating a broader collaborative vision, (c) demonstrating opportunities for rewards, and (d) sustaining the project after initial funds are depleted.

This study showed that successful collaboration is a complex, time-consuming relationship process. It was noted that the journey of building collaborative relationships is equally important to reaching the goals of the actual project and that as much time (if not more) can be spent on the processes involved in collaborating as in the implementation of actual project activities (i.e., process versus product). Sustainability of the partnership after funding stopped

was mentioned, but it was not clear what factors influence partnerships to continue and to be sustained over time, even if funding goes away.

Tafel and Eberhart (1999) conducted a 50-state survey of states' higher education coordinating and governing boards, as well as site visits to 6 states in an effort to obtain a better understanding of the linkages being developed in statewide P-16 partnerships that were aimed at improving student performance. The authors did not state how many states responded to the survey. Site visits were conducted in Colorado, Georgia, Maryland, Ohio, Washington, and Wisconsin. The purpose of the site visits was to determine how K-16 systems were structured and implemented and what was working and why. Policies and initiatives as well as the process for achieving goals and the extent to which goals were being met were also targeted.

Results included a set of common key ingredients in building a K-16 statewide agenda in the development and maintenance of partnerships among educational organizations. First, specific goals must be established and must be based on mutual concerns of both K-12 and postsecondary education: "Goals must not remain on paper; rather they should be jointly promoted and implemented by committed leaders" (p.15). Second, creating a successful statewide network should start with the firm commitment of state-level leadership, involve staff and others who may not have known each other previously, promote efforts to share responsibility, build trust, and avoid turf struggles. Partners should foster a win-win attitude. They should be able to identify their particular role and recognize how they would benefit by being part of the partnership. Partnership members must also find incentives to sustain themselves. In the partnerships being studied, states had developed a formal mechanism to link K-12 and higher-education boards, thereby facilitating communication, trust, effective working relationships, and the development of common agendas. Finally, comprehensive data systems

should be developed to identify systems gaps that can be used to inform new policy. In three states, data specifically related to student progress and remediation was employed to highlight policy issues related to student transitions and mobility throughout the education continuum. In the state of Ohio, there was a disconnect between the K-12 and post-secondary systems. In three states, teacher preparation was central to K-12 educational improvement and to the K-16 system.

Implications of this study are found in the comprehensive nature of the partnerships it studied, since the partnerships were examples or non-examples of successful statewide networks. Of particular note is the need for support from leadership, the focus on the process part of partnership work and its importance in the overall success, and the issue of sustainability of partnerships over time. Partnerships were seen as formal mechanisms for people to obtain information and connect with a larger system.

Tushnet et al. (1996) sought to determine the impact of funded educational partnerships through the U.S. Office of Educational Research and Improvement. Methods included identifying problems and successes in 5 of the 30 federally funded EPP projects. Selections were made because each of the case studies illustrated a particular focus of an educational partnership. The case studies were derived from two major sources of information, project-generated documents, including reports, local evaluations, and products. These sources were then used to show how partnerships developed over time. Cross-site analyses used the same sources of information. Annual on-site visits were also conducted, which involved observations of partnership events as well as interviews with key participants and recipients of services. Each of the partnerships had a different focus but all were considered to be a part of a systems change effort. Each of the case studies was organized with a general introduction, a description of the context, the initiation of the partnership, the implementation of the partnership, the progress of

the partnership over time, the impact of the partnership, and the extent to which the partnership's structures and activities were institutionalized. From the five case studies, problems and successes typical to educational partnerships were revealed. These included the following:

1. Outside funding stimulates action.
2. Each participating organization is challenged to change policies and procedures to accommodate a new way of working with others.
3. Partnership approaches require adaptation to fit each community, school district, and school.
4. Organizational mavericks may be a source of creative and meaningful programs, but they need support to strengthen and improve the program.
5. A shared vision and a deep commitment among partners can overcome weaknesses in program design and implementation.
6. Even if there is confusion about how the partnership structure relates to the program, the partnership itself can be institutionalized.
7. Leadership is a critical element in a complex partnership.
8. Leaders who reflect commitment to particular programs and processes may be more successful than leaders who see themselves as facilitators.
9. Identifying and solving problems using adaptive planning contributes to success.
10. Skilled and committed staff empowered to carry out partnership plans are an important element in project success.
11. A complex partnership can be strengthened by breaking it down into components.
12. Partnerships that aim to change various parts of a system simultaneously can contribute to sustained education reform.

Implications of this study are found in the problems and successes of the partnerships studied, the structure used to organize the case studies, and the inclusion of information on how partnerships progress over time. Leadership is again seen as a critical component to the success of a partnership, as are the process components of partnership work. The importance of adapting a partnership to meet the needs of those involved within the community of a partnership is also necessary for sustainability over time.

Jones (1998) looked at similarities and differences among five Professional Development Partnership projects funded in 1992 designed to form consortia or partnerships of public and private entities. The partnerships were developed to provide opportunities for career advancement or competency-based training for current workers at public and private agencies that provide services to infants, children, and youth with disabilities. The five projects provided written reports as a part of their project evaluation process and were considered case studies. The case studies included information on the stages of the project and lessons learned during the project's five years of implementation. Results of a cross-case analysis of the five projects included primary project impacts, why partnerships were created, and critical features of partnerships.

The diversity of the projects reported made it difficult to compare the impact of the projects. All projects expanded professional development opportunities. All five projects increased collaboration or strengthened existing working relationships among a number of agencies and organizations. While the data provided important evidence of the degree to which individual projects met their goals, there was little evidence of direct impact: how effective the project has been in improving actual skills or performances of teachers and other direct service personnel. Impact was also measured by changes or revisions to structures within "a system."

The targeted system differed among projects. The New York, Illinois and California projects all needed top-level buy-in and broad service support to affect the target system. This was accomplished through engaging highly placed administrators in the state higher-education system. None of the projects chose exclusive horizontal or vertical systems-change approaches. Various project activities supported across projects affected individual participants, fostered development of collaborative groups and resulted in new competencies, credentials, coursework, and other personnel development initiatives.

Partnerships were created for a variety of reasons in this study. Motivation for establishing a partnership can be complex and changes over time. Some chose to form partnerships more to maximize resources and opportunities than to systematically reduce fragmentation, produce change within cooperating organizations, or advocate for new structures (Illinois and North Carolina). Some chose to form partnerships in order to leverage change in existing training programs (California and Kansas).

Each project involved a variety of stakeholders who were initially central to meeting the locally established, individual projects goals. Due to political, fiscal, and other circumstances, individuals and group members and their roles were modified, although project goals never changed. In one partnership, the political climate dictated changes in key stakeholders. Initial partnerships, formed during the proposal writing stage, were loosely formed. Additional partners were identified to include stakeholders who could respond to very specific training needs. Several project directors noted that the 90-day proposal writing period was not conducive to the identification of stakeholders or the formation of true partnerships. As motivation and need shifted, so, too, did the degree to which partnerships that were formed reflected collaboration versus cooperation or coordination. Partnerships were influenced by project specific definitions

or interpretation of what constitutes a partnership. Only two partnerships specifically defined partnership. The definitions did not specify the type of structural or organizational changes that the projects hoped to achieve among their partners. It is not clear whether there was an understanding across all five projects of what a collaborative partnership should look like or achieve.

Critical features of the partnerships studied included shared vision and common goals, and changing governance structures and sharing resources. In regard to shared vision and common goals, all projects were stronger on establishing a shared set of goals among partners than on defining specific outcomes. None of the projects described a process for developing a shared vision or common cross-partner goals, and none specified outcomes related to a partnership. Overall, while each of the projects appeared to be successfully networked, cooperated, and brokered arrangements, which enabled them to meet critical personnel development goals, a larger vision of what the partnership should be was not entirely evident. Hence, there should be a focus on the process involved with partnership management in addition to a focus on the process used to implement activities.

In terms of the changing governance structures and the sharing of resources, partnerships differed in terms of shared responsibility, although each had a project director who was the grant recipient. Three of the five projects were governed by an advisory committee that focused on the internal goals of the project, and, in most cases, the committee included a subset of entities engaged in the partnership. In all projects, governance partners were involved in goal setting as well as overseeing and developing implementation activities. Responsibility of the project was vested in one place with one person, but some functions were distributed and shared. However, the degree of shared governance was not clear.

Overall, flexibility seemed to be an essential element of partnerships supporting a professional development system responsive to changing personnel needs. Accountability, resources, and responsibility for meeting shared goals seemed to create a climate of true collaboration. However, all of the partnerships studied faced challenges with how to foster shared accountability for the contribution each made and how it impacted the ultimate success. The authors attributed this to the external funding of the projects and accountability being placed on the one organization by the project director who maintained fiscal authority over the project. One barrier was noted regarding the impact that changes in key personnel have during the early stages of partnership implementation and the importance of having one person who serves in the role of facilitator in a partnership.

Implications of this study are related to the role of external funding and the sustainability of the project initiatives, and the development of similar partnerships in the future. Because these projects were complex and multi-faceted and often had competing goals, it may be unreasonable to expect them to sustain all of their activities over time. Sustainability is extremely important to consider, since the partnerships were all supported by federal funds that will someday cease. The developmental nature of partnerships was recognized, as was the need for partnerships to be able to adapt to local contexts, political needs and competing goals.

Klienhammer-Tramill et al. (1996) examined the implementation of the Kansas Project Partnership (KPP) objectives, which sought to improve teacher education through a statewide systems change effort. The project evaluator used naturalistic inquiry methodologies. The evaluator discussed procedures in detail with the KPP project director. Data collection included interviews with administrative and teaching faculty at the eight Kansas colleges and universities that participated in 25 sub-grant activities through the auspices of the KPP. Interviews were

conducted over a one-year period (1995-1996). All interviewees were informed of the purpose of the interviews and how data would be used to develop case studies describing the KPP efforts. Member checks were conducted and participants had the opportunity to modify the case studies prior to their submission to the Kansas State Board of Education. The interviews were tape-recorded and then transcribed. Observation and participation in 11 meetings related to KPP activities, as well as a review of all relevant documents were conducted. Fifty-three persons representing the eight participating institutions of higher education, including deans of education, chairs of teacher education programs, acting deans, department chairs from colleges of schools of education, special education and general education faculty members, and K-12 educators were all a part of the sample. Results were organized around common themes and issues related to the change process. Twenty of the 25 sub-grant projects focused on the goal of preparing general education personnel to teach students with diverse learning needs and noted the strategies used to address this goal. Strategy 1 included the following:

1. Developing partnerships within the field.
2. Using partnerships within the field of education to identify or validate a set of competencies for educating students with diverse learning needs.
3. Delivering competencies in general education classrooms.
4. Expanding delivery of competencies to other program areas such as administrator training.

Strategy 2 included efforts to stimulate collaboration between general education and special education faculty. Strategy 3 involved developing new courses or revising courses to deliver or field-test content. Researchers were unable to determine which strategies would lead to long-

term change after only 3 years of implementation. They also noted the more centralized the administrative location of projects the more systemic their efforts.

Implications of this study are found in the nature of state-level support that has been provided through various efforts and funding that has assisted in increasing sustainability over time. After only 3 years of implementation, there has been a determination that there is a need for more time to implement partnerships before it can be concluded that any of the strategies being used contribute to long-term change. Finally, the coordination between multiple institutions of higher education was unique amongst these partnerships, leading one to wonder how the nature of the partnership assisted in the process of bringing entities together for a common purpose when competition amongst partners is involved.

Synthesis. From the eight studies addressing essential elements and barriers, it is evident that successful educational partnerships that serve as the mechanism for systems change involve complex relationships and processes. Essential elements of successful partnerships appear to be somewhat consistent among partnerships in different locations and with different goals. Six of the eight studies emphasized the importance of leadership as a critical component of a successful partnership (Danzberger, 1990; Galligani, 1990; Jones, 1998; Klienhammer-Tramill, et al., 1996; Padak et al., 1994; Tushnet et al., 1996). All eight studies noted trust, respect, commitment, communication and vision as essential characteristics. Although there is some consensus on the characteristics of effective partnerships, what is not clear is how any of the partnerships defined success. Data from these studies did not indicate whether success was measured by the processes of partnership or by the ultimate outcomes to be reached.

These studies addressed the implementation of partnerships but they did not assess how using partnership as a mechanism impacted the project outcomes or the system they were

targeted to change. What is also not mentioned is whether incorporating these elements enhances the effectiveness and sustainability of these types of partnerships over time. It is also evident that the studies, being mainly program descriptions and project evaluations, lacked a clear description of the procedures used to collect and analyze the data, leaving the reader to question the overall results. Clearly, there is much work to be done in studying this issue through the use of sound data collection and analysis procedures.

In all eight studies discussed in this review, it is clear that there are essential elements of partnerships from which we can learn. However, there are also potential limitations and barriers. In the studies discussed in this section, the interconnectedness and the complexity of a system, as well as the difficulty of defining the system and then managing it, are seen as limitations and noted as possible barriers to success (perhaps even causing a partnership to lose its focus on its clients). What is also interesting are the barriers that are a result of the relationships and human component of this way of work. What is not clear from the literature is which management strategies are useful for managing partnerships which are used as a mechanism for systems change. It is unclear whether or not any one strategy is better than another at managing interconnectedness so that focus is not lost, time is better utilized, and success can clearly be measured. It is also unclear how to realistically create and implement a mission that is useful for measuring progress and success and how to determine the overall impact of the partnership on the system it is attempting to change.

Conclusions

The research studies reviewed for this paper represent the need for research in the area of partnerships as the mechanism for systems change in education. The research base is lacking in terms of methodology, since most of the available literature is composed of project descriptions

and evaluations and does not generally describe the actual impact of partnerships on systems. Current research provides information on the characteristics of partnerships as well as limitations and barriers. Additionally, since much of the current literature simply describes partnerships based on the perspective of persons connected to an agency or project over a short period of time, it would be worth studying the initial and recent implementation of state-level partnerships targeted at systems change over an 11-year period, since making change to a system does not happen quickly.

Research Considerations

The eight research studies reviewed in this paper provide insight into some of the aspects of partnerships as the mechanism for systems change in education. The research base needs to be broadened and continued as states continue to use partnerships as a mechanism for systems change. The studies in this review bring light to several conceptual and methodological issues that should be considered in future research of this topic. The following are suggestions for future research in this:

1. What value do partnerships as the mechanism for systems change have for those involved?
2. What are the benefits and barriers of partnerships used to target systems change perceived by those involved?
3. Is there a direct connection to partnership activities by the outcomes they seek, and the system they are targeting?
4. Are there unintended outcomes that occur in partnerships that serve as the mechanism for systems change in education?

5. Do relationships change as a result of partnership implementation? If so, what impact does this have on the system?
6. What lessons can be learned from one partnership that could be transferable to another?
7. What factors influence partnership sustainability over time?

Needed Research

Research reviewed in this chapter revealed that partnerships as the mechanism for state-level systems change have been studied mainly through program descriptions and evaluations. The studies have produced findings related to the essential components of partnerships and the limitations and barriers of partnerships. Although program descriptions and evaluations provide us with an overall picture of specific projects and cross-case analysis provides similarities and differences among projects, there is still much left to be uncovered in regard to the value of partnerships as well as how partnerships affect a system over time.

After reviewing the professional literature, it was determined there was a need to establish a more detailed picture of state-level partnerships that serve as the mechanism for change to a system of personnel development. Through qualitative methods that collect the perceptions and experiences from those involved in the initial implementation of a partnership as well as from those who are currently involved, it can be determined how partnerships affected a state's system of personnel development. There is a need to understand the initial context prior to partnership implementation so that it is clear what the system looked like prior to the implementation of regional PDPs. In order to accomplish this, I designed and implemented a qualitative case study. Through interviewing multiple participants and reviewing relevant documents, I was able to describe a system of personnel development and the perceived value of

professional development partnerships as the mechanism for state-level systems change in one of the seven largest states in the nation.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Ensuring an adequate supply of qualified regular education, special education, and related service personnel is an important goal and one that has traditionally been mandated by law through the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1997, § 300-381). States have used a variety of methods, models, and strategies to implement this mandate, including regional professional development partnerships (PDPs). The partnerships are a mechanism through which a state implements its CSPD activities in an effort to improve its system of personnel development. The review of literature revealed that utilizing partnerships as a mechanism to change a state system of personnel development is complex. Although the literature is clear on the essential elements of successful partnerships, it is also evident that there are limitations and barriers to using this type of mechanism.

As described in Chapter 2, research on partnerships used to implement statewide systems of personnel development is sparse and the theoretical base is lacking. Most of the available research provides information on characteristics as well as the limitations of and barriers to partnerships as the mechanism for systems change. It is evident from the studies reviewed that most of the current available literature is composed of project descriptions and program evaluations and does not address the impact of partnerships on a state system of personnel development. The professional commentary reviewed indicated the need for more research in this area. This is why the problem being proposed for study was selected.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to describe regional special education professional development partnerships as the mechanism for state-level systems change from the point of

view of those who initiated the partnerships and those who were recently involved. The goal of the study is to understand if using regional PDPs as the mechanism for implementing the CSPD mandate in Florida were of any value to those involved and if they thought partnerships influenced the state's system of personnel development.

Research Questions

The central question that guided the study is the following: What value does using regional professional development partnerships as mechanisms for systems change have for a state's system of personnel development, and in what ways does this type of mechanism influence a state's system of personnel development? The following broad questions also guided the study:

1. How did Florida implement a CSPD prior to regional PDPs? Why was the regional partnership model selected to implement Florida's CSPD?
2. What benefits did the initial and most recent implementers of Florida's regional PDPs believe they derived from their participation and what barriers existed? Based on the benefits and barriers, did the initial and most recent implementers believe the partnerships were of any value?
3. Do those most recently involved with the implementation of Florida's regional PDPs think that anything about the state's system of personnel development changed due to the implementation of regional PDPs? In particular, have relationships among the people involved changed as a result?
4. What did Florida's CSPD regional PDP implementation look like prior to implementation, during the initial implementation, and the most recent stages of implementation from the perspectives of those involved? In retrospect, what lessons

can be learned from Florida's 11-year experience that might be helpful to other states involved in implementing partnerships targeting systemic change?

Procedures

The following sections describe the design of the study, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures. The study is a qualitative design using case study methodology. The procedures outlined in this section give the initial structure to the process. Following Bogdan and Biklen's (1998) strategies for conducting a case study, components of the research design will be discussed.

Assumptions and Rationale for a Qualitative Design

A qualitative research design was chosen in an attempt to understand the meaning of events and interactions through a "dialogue with informants about their analysis of observed and reported events and activities" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 38). Gathering qualitative data from varied sources provided in-depth information about participants' views of Florida's system of personnel development prior to the initial implementation of regional PDPs as well as the perceived value of the partnerships to the state's system of personnel development from those who were more recently involved. Exploring this problem through a qualitative research design provided a needed description that illustrates how using regional PDPs as the mechanism for systems change can influence a state's system of personnel development.

The Type of Design

Given the nature of the research questions and the complexity of the subject of study, the design of the investigation utilized qualitative case study methodology. Yin (2003) defined case study methodology as

an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when, the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. The case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result, benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis. (p. 14-15)

Case study methodology is a highly adaptable research technique based on data collection methods that often include interviews, record reviews, physical artifacts, document reviews, and observation, as well as surveys and questionnaires (Yin, 2003). Data analysis techniques used in conducting case studies include pattern matching (Yin, 2003), content analysis, constant-comparative analysis, and modified analytic induction (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

Qualitative methods were employed in this historical organizational case study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 55) of the special education regional PDPs. This type of case study allows the researcher to focus on a particular organization and considers the organization's history to be highly important in determining what the environment was like prior to implementation, what changes occurred over time, and what the current environment is like. Data sources included interviews with people who participated in Florida's personnel development system prior to the implementation of regional PDPs, including original members of the state-level CSPD advisory council and Department of Education leadership personnel in the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services who supervised CSPD implementation. Interviews were also conducted with people who were currently participating in Florida's personnel development

system, including members of the state-level CSPD advisory council and Department of Education leadership in the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services who supervise current CSPD implementation. Existing documents including various written records on the implementation of CSPD in Florida were also reviewed.

Available Evidence

According to Bogdan and Biklen (1998), prior to doing this type of research, it is important to know who is available for interviews and what documents have been preserved so that it can be determined if there is sufficient evidence to conduct this type of study. As the researcher, I took this into consideration during the conceptualization phase of the proposed study. During January-March 2005, initial contact was made with key informants involved with the initial implementation of CSPD in Florida. Most of these individuals were not included as a part of the study's sample since their roles were different in nature than the sample being proposed. Specifically, they were involved with the initial implementation of regional PDPs in Florida, either from a national or state perspective and were not a part of the original or most recent Florida CSPD advisory council. Those individuals included in the proposed sample also served as key informants representing the state-level perspective in their role as FL-DOE BEESS leadership staff responsible for overseeing the implementation of Florida's CSPD. Selected key informants were able to assist in determining whether or not sufficient evidence existed in order to conduct the study.

Key informants included Karl Murray, the Project Director of the National CSPD Collaboration Institute at NASDE in the 1990s, who has since retired. Preliminary information was collected via email and a phone conversation with Dr. Murray. A phone call was made to Dr. Debby Houston, who participated on the CSPD advisory council in Florida prior to the

implementation of regional PDPs in her role as an ESE Director. Dr. Houston's role on the original council is important, as was her role as the Program Director for the Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services, Florida Department of Education, when her responsibilities included the supervision of CSPD during the initial implementation of the partnerships. Email correspondence took place with Ms. Doris Nabi, former Policy Analyst with the Florida Department of Education, who previously served as the supervisor of CSPD implementation since the initial provisions of CSPD were established in the 1970s. Email correspondence was also conducted with the original facilitators of the regional partnership model implementation in Florida: Dr. Harvey Rude, University of North Carolina; Dr. Steve Street, Minnesota State University; Dr. Beverly Mattson, RMC Research Corporation; and Ms. Jerri Ueberle, Global Interactions. To determine if obtaining documentation was an issue, Ms. Eileen Amy, responsible for special education monitoring with the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, and Ms. Arlene Duncan, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, Clearinghouse/Information Center, were contacted. Finally, communication took place with Dr. Cathy Hammond, Co-Director Florida State Improvement Grant, and Dr. Christy Riffle, External Evaluation Consultant to the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, Florida Department of Education. Following this initial inventory of people and documents, it was determined that there was sufficient availability of people and documents to provide enough information to conduct the proposed study.

Gaining Access and Entry

According to Bogdan and Biklen (1998), "the first problem to face in fieldwork is getting permission to conduct your study" (p.74). In my role as the Program Evaluator for Florida's State Improvement Grant Technical Support Project with the Florida Department of Education, I

have complete access to the people and documents needed to complete the proposed study. The State Improvement Grant Technical Assistance Project (formerly the Florida CSPD Project) maintains a database of contact information for more than 1,500 people around the state and nation who have ever been involved with the Florida CSPD Project since 1994. The database was established in the early part of project implementation and continues to be updated daily. Because the project is funded by the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, it was imperative to obtain permission to conduct the study from the Chief of the Bureau, Ms. Bambi Lockman. This was done via an initial email to establish myself and the study with Ms. Lezlie Cline, the Bureau Liaison and Program Administrator. I asked Ms. Cline for assistance in obtaining permission from the Bureau Chief and establishing the proper protocol. After this determination was made I followed up with the Bureau Chief and permission in writing was obtained (see Appendix C: Letter from the Florida Department of Education Granting Permission to Conduct the Study).

Indeed, it was also important to obtain permission from individual participants who were interviewed. In order to do this, a letter was designed which described the purpose of the study and data collection procedures to be utilized. Communication was established through an initial telephone contact with each participant, followed by an electronic transmittal of the informed consent letter. A follow-up email message was sent to establish a convenient time for the participant to be interviewed by a telephone or in person.

Setting and Study Participants

The primary sample included approximately 20 participants. I purposely selected participants from the original and most recent Florida CSPD Advisory Council lists according to the centrality and intensity of their relationship to regional professional development

partnerships and the Florida CSPD State Advisory Council. This selection was based on five years of first-hand knowledge during my work as the Coordinator for Research and Program Development of Florida's CSPD Project. I confirmed my primary sample with a key informant who has been involved with the Florida CSPD Project since its inception. A group of 68 people comprised the original and most recent Florida CSPD Advisory Council lists, including three people who were considered original, and recent FL-DOE BEESS leadership staff who supervised the state's CSPD implementation. Of the 68, 54 were female and 14 were male. Selected participants included individuals representing three different perspectives (i.e., state level, university and college level, and local level). Participants with a state-level perspective were considered original or recent leadership personnel from the FL-DOE BEESS leadership staff who supervised the implementation of Florida's CSPD. Participants with a university- or college-level perspective were individuals who were employed at one of the nine state universities and who served as the fiscal agent for a regional PDP. These participants had a great deal of experience with the implementation of a partnership as a principal investigator, project director, or coordinator. Participants with a local-level perspective were individuals employed in school districts as special education administrators, principals, or FL-DOE district-level discretionary project staff. This local-level perspective would also include parents, if they had a role on the State Advisory Council.

Once I began to conduct interviews, study participants could spontaneously suggest other individuals who were knowledgeable about the proposed topic of study. This sampling technique is known as opportunistic sampling, which allows the researcher to "follow new leads and takes advantage of the unexpected" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.28). One participant mentioned another individual he thought should be contacted for an interview, since that individual had

served in a state level position during the time of the initial implementation of the regional partnerships; he thought this individual could provide the study with additional details. A search for this individual revealed that she was deceased. After initial interviews were complete, I chose one person from each of the three categories (i.e., state-level perspective, university- or college-level perspective, and local- or district-level perspective) to conduct a final interview that allowed me to ask any clarifying questions or go more in depth on any issues of particular interest. For the final interviews, preference was given to study participants who had been involved with the implementation of regional professional development partnerships for the entire 11 years.

Assurance and Confidentiality

Each individual participant being interviewed was assured of confidentiality at the outset of the study. Before data collection began, written consent was obtained from the FL-DOE BEESS Bureau Chief as well as individual participants. Prior to the interviews, written consent was obtained from individual participants after explaining the purpose of the study, procedures to be utilized, and the proposed use of data collection. A consent form approved for use by the Institutional Review Board from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University was used.

Data Collection Procedures

Data in the form of interviews was gathered. The number of interviews and the types of documents to be reviewed was determined by the need to reach saturation for specific themes that emerged. Interviews were semi-structured with previously identified probes which allowed for additional information to be obtained that was not contained in the interview protocol. Prior to conducting an interview, each participant was asked to sign an informed consent form indicating their agreement to participate in the study based on the information provided. A copy

of the Informed Consent Form is included in Appendix I. I began interviewing in January 2006 and ended data collection in March 2006. Sample #1 included participants who were involved prior to the implementation of Florida's regional PDPs. Initial interview questions for this group are included in Appendix D. Sample Group #2 included participants who had recently been involved with the implementation of Florida's regional PDPs. Initial interview questions for this group are included in Appendix E. A final interview was conducted with one person from each of the three categories (i.e., state-level perspective, university- or college-level perspective, and local- or district-level perspective). Additional, clarifying questions that needed clarification were asked that provided depth to the obtained information.

Each interview was taped-recorded and transcribed verbatim for subsequent data analysis. Following each interview, a contact summary form was completed, as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1984). This one-page form identified the type of contact, the participant, and the date, and summarized the main points addressed in the interview and any impressions that seemed significant from my notes taken during the interview. An example of the contact summary form for interviews is included in Appendix F.

A review of relevant documents was also conducted. Documents included Florida's CSPD State Advisory Council meeting agendas and minutes, Florida's State Plan prior to regional partnership implementation, memos, OSEP monitoring reports relating to Florida's CSDP, Florida's State Improvement Grant performance reports, and CSPD Project applications and annual performance reports.

Data Analysis and Management Procedures

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), “how a qualitative study is managed from Day 1 strongly influences the kinds of analyses that can be done, and how easily” (p.43). To organize the large amounts of data that were obtained, I implemented the following procedures:

1. All interviews were transcribed by a professional transcriber and saved as Microsoft Word documents. Prior to completing the transcription, the professional transcriber was provided with instructions on format and commonly used acronyms. A copy of the instructions for the transcriber document is included in Appendix G. The transcriber was also asked to sign a confidentiality agreement stating that all research information shared through the interviews would be kept confidential. A copy of the confidentiality agreement is included in Appendix H.
2. Notes were headed with the assigned code name of the person being interviewed and the date of the interview, and were set up in paragraphs with lines numbered sequentially. Interviews were typed verbatim. I provided the transcriber with a list of instructions and information to aid in transcribing the interviews more accurately, such as the names of programs, acronyms, and names of documents discussed in the interview. An electronic folder was created and each interview was organized by date and name of person interviewed. A hard copy of each transcribed interview was kept in a notebook behind a tab noting the date of the interview and the participant’s assigned code name. This notebook was kept in a locked filing cabinet drawer.
3. All documents obtained were kept in file folders with the name of the file on the label of the folder as well as the complete reference for the item. All email correspondence

was printed and kept in a separate folder behind a tab indicating the assigned code name of the participant, which was stored in a locked filing cabinet drawer.

In order to ensure confidentiality and privacy I assigned each participant a code number for the purposes of recording and reporting data. I kept audio tapes, transcripts, and signed consent forms in a locked filing cabinet.

Data Analysis Procedures

Bogdan and Biklen (1998) describe data analysis as

the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials that you accumulate to increase your own knowledge and understanding of them and to enable you to present what you have discovered to others. Analysis involves working with data, organizing them, breaking them into manageable units, synthesizing them, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you tell others. (p.157)

The main goals of data analysis in this study were to identify categories that emerged from the data, although information was initially organized around semi-structured interview questions which allowed for some explicit codes to be evident prior to the collection of information (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 172-176). This process is known as content analysis. According to Patton (1990), “the purpose for classifying qualitative data for content analysis is to facilitate the search for patterns and themes within a particular setting or across cases” (p.384).

The process of inductive analysis was used, which allowed the themes of the study to emerge from the data. To complete the inductive analysis of the interview data, I first read the transcripts for each of the participants while considering what the participant is revealing about the system of personnel development in Florida and any information regarding relationships. As

I read the data, I made notes in the margins and coded any passages by highlighting and underlining them in different colors for different codes that (a) addressed an interesting perspective among participants, (b) stated something that other participants also stated, (c) shared something revealing that I had not thought of, or (d) clearly stated something of importance. Thus, I began creating codes based in the content of participants' interviews. Finally, I reviewed the content of each of the developed codes and based on the amount and quality of the data, I determined which codes were significant enough to be examined further. From this review, I identified themes and patterns. These themes will be presented in Chapter IV.

Addressing Trustworthiness

In designing and conducting this study I used strategies recognized in qualitative research to address trustworthiness. In the section that follows, I will describe each concept and why I will use them in the study. The concepts include credibility, transferability, and confirmability, and dependability. I will end this section with a table that provides an overview of the criteria and possible strategies for establishing trustworthiness that I used (See Table 3.1).

Credibility. According to Patton (1990), credibility depends on rigorous techniques and methods, who the researcher is, and a philosophical belief in the qualitative paradigm. Therefore, in order to establish credibility of the data, a method known as triangulation will be used. Triangulation alleviates single researcher bias and is a technique in which multiple perspectives or theories can be used to interpret data (Patton, 1990). Therefore, I compared the perspectives of participants from three different groups. Using the semi-structured interview protocol allowed participants to answer the same questions and subsequently will allow the researcher to establish credibility by comparing the data of multiple perspectives which will reflect "consistency in overall patterns of data from different sources and reasonable explanations for differences in data

from divergent sources contributing significantly to the overall credibility of the findings” (Patton, 1990, p. 467-468).

Transferability. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested providing a rich, thick description of the case being studied to improve transferability. This type of description helps readers to determine how well the study parallels their own situation. In Chapter IV, I provide this type of description of the case being studied.

Confirmability. Data collection and management procedures described earlier relate directly to addressing confirmability. The transcription of interviews, contact summary forms, and working files and notebooks has been kept to provide a record of the data collection and stages of analysis.

Dependability. All of the data collection techniques consider the researcher to be the primary instrument of data collection. Bogdan and Biklen (1998) pointed out, “the researcher’s insight [is] the key instrument for analysis” (p. 4). They also state that, because of this importance, the researcher should acknowledge any biases so that the reader can determine whether or not the biases of the researcher will affect the study’s findings. Therefore, the following researcher biases are revealed:

1. I am a white, middle class, single woman between the ages of 25 years to 35 years.
2. I attended public school in the United States.
3. During my professional career I worked with students with and without disabilities in public school settings at the elementary and middle school levels. I served as a public school administrator at both the district and school levels.
4. I was employed with the Florida Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) as Coordinator of Research and Program Development under the direction of the

Project Director, from July, 2001 through September, 2005. During my tenure, I had the opportunity to review the annual proposals of all regional PDPs through a peer-review process and to communicate with regional PDP coordinators about implementation of each partnership's activities. On more than one occasion during my tenure with the project, I made site visits to all nine regional partnerships in my role as a Florida Department of Education representative at their regional advisory council meetings. This role was one of curious observer and supporter.

5. I believe that all things can be improved by studying them, determining what works and what doesn't, and then improving things based on what works.
6. I like to be continually challenged and consider myself to be highly organized.
7. I have always, for as long as I can remember (and my parents would substantiate this claim), been inquisitive and needed to understand 'why' things are the way they are.

Strategies for establishing trustworthiness. In designing the study I used strategies recognized in the qualitative literature to improve trustworthiness. In this section, a description of the strategies for establishing trustworthiness is offered. In Table 3.1, an overview of the criteria for establishing trustworthiness described earlier and possible strategies for establishing trustworthiness are provided.

1. Triangulation is a process of comparing and contrasting different sources or types of data. Triangulation of data strengthens the credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the study findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Data sources, including interview transcripts and documents, will be used to search for evidence of supporting or conflicting statements and information.

2. Clarifying Researcher Bias is an important component of qualitative research, since the researcher is the main instrument of data collection. Therefore, it is important that the researcher's biases, beliefs, and assumptions that helped to create the study's design and analysis are disclosed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Disclosing this information helps to improve the credibility and dependability of the study. These issues have been addressed in Chapter 1 and in Chapter 3 of this document.
3. Member Checks involve having study participants examine study documents in an effort to confirm or correct the information. Lincoln & Guba (1985) stated, "Member checks are the most crucial technique for establishing credibility" (p.314). After conducting member checks, a researcher can state with a certain level of confidence that the information being presented accurately reflects the viewpoints of the participants in the study.
4. Authors have suggested that providing a Rich, Thick Description of the case being studies improves transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In a rich, thick description, "the voices, feelings, actions, and meanings of interacting individuals are heard" (Denzin, 1989, p.83). In an effort to provide a rich, thick description, final interviews were conducted with one person from each of the three categories (i.e., a state-level perspective, a university- or college-level perspective, and a local- or district-level perspective).
5. Audit Trails help to strengthen the reliability and confirmability of a study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). By providing an explanation on how participants are selected, data are collected, coding categories are derived, and decisions are made, an audit trail is created so that a reader can determine if the information being provided is understandable.

6. Contact Summary Forms are suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) as a strategy for increasing the trustworthiness of a study. A contact summary form was used to summarize time-limited data. It provided the opportunity to consider the main concepts of discussion, themes, issues, and any additional questions that need to be asked. Using this type of tool helped to increase the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the study by providing an immediate reflection from an interview of what was heard and understood.
7. Use of a Researcher's Journal during a qualitative study is discussed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as a way to increase trustworthiness. Keeping this type of journal not only provides an audit trail, but allows the researcher to include information about decisions that are made and personal thoughts, opinions, and feelings experienced during the course of the study. I maintained a researcher's journal throughout the course of the study. I used the journal to express my thoughts about how the study was progressing and how I was feeling about the study or the study participants.

Table 3.1

Criteria and Possible Strategies for Establishing Trustworthiness

Strategies for Establishing Trustworthiness	Trustworthiness Criteria			
	Credibility	Transferability	Dependability	Confirmability
Triangulation	X	X		X
Clarifying Researcher Bias	X			
Member Checks	X			
Rich, Thick Description			X	
Audit Trail		X		X
Contact Summary Form	X	X	X	X
Researcher's Journal	X	X	X	X

Chapter 3 described the methodology used in the study, including an explanation of the study's design, the sampling procedures, the data collection and management procedures, and the data analysis procedures. Strategies recognized in qualitative research to address trustworthiness were also provided. In the next chapter the study's findings will be delineated.

Chapter 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to describe regional special education professional development partnerships as the mechanism for state-level systems change from the point of view of those who initiated the partnerships and those most recently involved. The goal of the study was to understand if regional professional development partnerships as the mechanism for implementing the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) legislative requirement in Florida were of any value to those involved and if they thought partnerships influenced the state's system of personnel development.

Research Questions

There was a central question guiding the study: What value do regional professional development partnerships (PDPs) as mechanisms for systems change have on a state's system of personnel development, and in what ways does this type of mechanism influence a state's system of personnel development? The following broad questions also guided the study:

1. How did Florida implement a CSPD prior to regional PDPs? Why was the regional partnership model selected to implement Florida's CSPD?
2. What benefits did initial and most recent implementers of Florida's regional PDPs believe they derived from their participation and what barriers existed? Based on the benefits and barriers, do initial and most recent implementers believe the partnerships were of any value?
3. Do those most recently involved with the implementation of Florida's regional PDPs think anything about the state's system of personnel development changed due to the

implementation of regional PDPs? In particular, have relationships among the people involved changed as a result?

4. What did Florida's CSPD regional PDP implementation look like prior to, during the initial, and most recent stages from the perspectives of those involved? In retrospect, what lessons can be learned from Florida's 11-year experience that might be helpful to other states involved in implementing partnerships targeting systems change?

This chapter delineates the study's findings using the four major research questions as the basic organizational framework. First, a discussion of the findings related to how Florida implemented a CSPD prior to regional PDPs and why the regional model was selected is provided. Then, findings related to what Florida's regional professional development partnership implementation looked like during the initial and most recent stages from the perspectives of those involved is described. Next, the benefits and barriers that initial and most recent implementers of Florida's professional development partnerships believed they derived from their experiences are provided. Based on the noted benefits and barriers, the findings on whether or not implementers believed the partnerships were of value is presented. The section ends with the findings related to whether or not those involved in Florida's regional professional development partnerships believed anything about the system of personnel development changed due to the implementation of regional professional development partnerships. Interview data sources are referenced in the report using codes that identify the type of source (T= interview transcript) followed by letters and numerals that identify the participant and page number of the transcript.

Setting the Stage for Creating a State System of Personnel Development in Florida

In this section, the context at the federal level between 1960 and 1974 and the support provided to states for personnel development is discussed. Next, Florida's initial response to the CSPD requirement during 1975 – 1989 is described. Then, CSPD in Florida during 1990-1992 is detailed, as this period was a time of transition for Florida, marked by a new, visionary leadership, a new state level leader, and support from the National Institute for CSPD Collaboration. Through this national effort, the partnership concept began to emerge in Florida. This section ends with a discussion of the time period 1993-1995 when regional professional development partnerships were formed in Florida. The initial stages of partnership implementation, the planning processes, and what seemed to work and what seemed to be missing is described. To assist with understanding the different time periods presented in Chapter 4, Figure 4.1: *A Timeline of CSPD Implementation in Florida* is provided.

1960s - 1974: Federal Level Support to States for Personnel Development

In order to better understand Florida's implementation of a CSPD prior to regional PDPs, careful consideration should be given to what was happening at the federal level prior to the enactment of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) of 1975 and the CSPD section of this law. This consideration provides an understanding of the federal-level context in regard to special education at that time and therefore serves as a point of reference for understanding Florida's response to the CSPD section of the law. The field of special education was just beginning to be recognized. Its recognition as a field began with some struggles at the federal level, specifically in the U.S. Department of Education, the primary agency established to support states with their implementation of

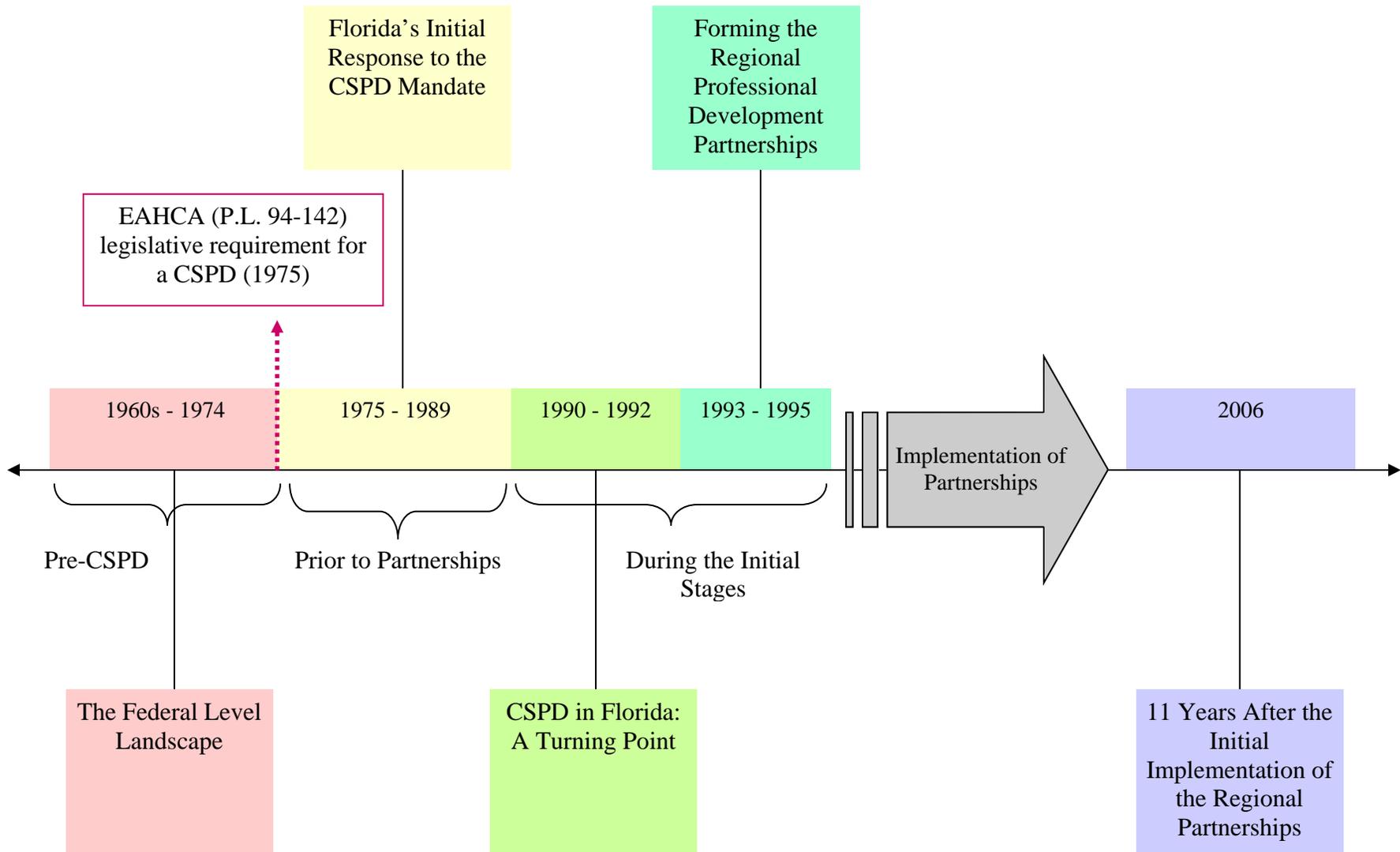


Figure 4.1. Timeline of Florida's Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) Implementation

public education. While several participants had long-standing careers in special education, one participant offered a unique perspective on the federal level context as he talked about his experience as an employee in the Office of Education (currently the U.S. Department of Education), Bureau of Education for the Handicapped (currently the Office of Special Education Programs [OSEP]) prior to the writing of EAHCA. His recollection briefly described what was happening in regard to structuring special education at the federal level during that time.

I was in the U.S. Office of Education for I guess about, almost seven years. . . . When I went there, special education was a part of the Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Education. . . . [T]hey developed, through an act of Congress . . . [what] was, at that time, the first ever legislatively created Bureau. . . . We were mainstreamed, but we were the last rung on the ladder in this Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Education. We had almost no voice and special education really was . . . in real bad shape. So, [several pioneers in the field of special education,] Sam Kirk and some other people, Lloyd Dunn, Ed Martin, and [many others] . . . got together with the legislative delegation and particularly a woman who worked for the senator out in West Virginia, Pat Forsythe, and some other people from New York, and the Kennedys, they started a group to get the bureau. . . . I hope somebody pays attention, those of us who experienced [the Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE)], we called it in the Bureau, “Bessie”; it was not a good experience, I can tell you that. We were an office in that bureau. [We didn’t have a voice] . . . when we set up the Department of Education, we had an Office of Education and we were the “E” in Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW). Only the Secretary of the HEW got to go to the cabinet meetings. Our Commissioner of Education didn’t get to go. He had to wait for the commissioner and hope that the commissioner

would communicate to everybody what our needs were. It wasn't until...it was decided under Jimmy Carter that we really needed a voice in the cabinet, [because] education was being left out. You talk about health up there and you talk about defense and everything, but you know, when do we get a chance to talk for ourselves? You've got to be at the table. So, they passed the Department, which gave us a Secretary position, which meant that our Secretary could sit around the table with the President and the other people who were making the decisions. That's what happened to us in the Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Education. We were just an office. We didn't even get to sit in the meetings with the Bureau because they had what they called branches. At that time, we had the Bureau and then the Bureau had divisions and then the Division had branches, and then we had an office, so that tells you how far down the line we were. So, our branch chief got in touch with the Division but we were in the branch and if the branch chief didn't want to tell the division chief our story, then he didn't communicate it. But, if the division chief didn't really like the branch chief, it didn't matter what kind of story was told, it never got presented at the bureau level. So, that's why they decided, hey, you're going to have to have your own bureau – become your own Bureau of the handicapped and get out of this so called BESE thing. (T/OU8/6)

Several important points to consider from this description include what it was like at the federal level when special education was just a small part of the larger general education Bureau, the struggle to have the voice of special education heard within the larger realm of general education, the need to have equal representation at the decision-making table, the location of one's office is within a large bureaucratic organizational structure determining whether or not one's voice gets heard, the power of positive relationships in determining if messages get

communicated within a large bureaucratic organizational structure, and the recognition that information must be communicated through many layers of a bureaucracy before decisions are made.

Although people involved in special education at the federal level struggled to have their voices heard and to create a foundation on which to build a newly recognized field, there was still work being done and support being provided from the federal level in regard to the development of special education personnel. Support was primarily provided through grant funding for creating and implementing special education teacher preparation programs. The same participant from above recalled how there were very few teacher preparation programs in existence during the late 1960s and early 1970s. In order to create programs, colleges and universities sought grant funding from the U.S. Department of Education. Grants submitted to the U.S. Department of Education for funding personnel preparation programs were not based on identified needs and reflected little, if any, stakeholder involvement. The following quote illustrates what was happening at the federal level in regard to support to the states for personnel development. The participant, an employee of the U.S. Department of Education during this time period, stated:

One of the things we used to do in Washington [was] review grants . . . and state departments would give a letter of support. A lot of times there was absolutely no degree of congruency between what the state [needs were]. Most of the institutions had almost the same kind of letter saying, there is tremendous need for [teachers of the] mentally retarded. Well, when you started multiplying that up, there couldn't have been that many people mentally retarded in the whole state of Florida. . . . You could just tell that nobody bothered to [address state-identified needs], and there was no indication that the local school districts had much to do

with it. . . . When you looked at it, it was kind of . . . fragmented . . . and what we were trying to do with a CSPD [in Florida], and what Dick Schofer and [others] were trying to do [at the federal level], was to get a plan that truly was an inclusive kind of state plan that would include all stakeholders. That even [included] parent groups. . . . We really had a reason for putting it [a CSPD] in there [EAHCA]; it was really to have good relationships between the local education agencies, state agencies, and the institutions of higher education. . . . [Prior to EAHCA, federal funding was provided for special education teaching programs. Prior to this funding being available], there were only about 14 or 15 colleges and universities involved with preparation of personnel for special education, and that was primarily leadership personnel [at the doctoral level] in mental retardation. [Through appropriated federal funding], we started about 180 programs for special education. (T/OU8/5)

This portrayal of the federal level provides some insight into how the U.S. Department of Education tried to support states in their efforts to increase the supply of personnel (especially leadership personnel) available to provide services to students with disabilities. This support was primarily financial in nature and was provided through competitive grant funding. The description also provides insight into the lack of available data systems on which to base personnel development programs during this time. At best, programs for training personnel seemed to be focused primarily on training for teachers of the students with mental retardation. Available data was limited due to a lack of data collection systems and most grants written by states used the same data to substantiate their needs even though it may not have been a true and accurate portrayal of their locale.

Florida's Initial Response to the CSPD Mandate 1975-1989

At the federal level, special education as a professional field was just beginning to emerge. In Florida, the first steps of the State to “accept responsibility for the care and education of handicapped children were taken long before. In 1883, the Legislature made provisions (Ch. 3, 450, Laws of Florida, 1883) for the establishment of an institution for the deaf, blind and dumb.” (Florida Department of Education, 1976, p. 41) However, it was not until 1968, in a Special Legislative Session on Education, that the Florida Legislature required each school board to provide appropriate programs of special instruction by 1973-74 (Florida Department of Education, 1976). According to the Florida State Plan for the Education of Exceptional Students (1975-1976), a document submitted annually to the U.S. Department of Education by the Florida Department of Education, in order to receive federal special education appropriations, this requirement provided “...increased funding for exceptional child instruction units as well as special funds for facilities, equipment and teacher training to fully implement the program in five years” (p.41).

With the passing of the EAHCA in 1975, special education became something states had to recognize, implement, and monitor if they accepted federal monies to educate students with disabilities. Education leaders at state Departments of Education initially responded to the legislation by focusing primarily on being in compliance with the EAHCA. They were trying to figure out how to put processes into place so services to students with disabilities could be provided within the established parameters of the public school setting. Initial implementation focused on the writing of procedural processes that would ensure the state was in compliance with the new law.

During this period, Florida was no exception in developing a statewide plan of educational programs for all children with disabilities within the state. Florida's plan was based on critical needs and gaps in the structure available to support special education on a wide scale. In 1975, Florida had less than 50% of (a) the adequate capacity for a statewide management and information system, (b) staff expertise in planning, (c) staff time to prepare documents, and (d) an assessment system, four essential ingredients for implementing a statewide special education program (Florida Department of Education, 1976). The focus of the plan addressed how the state would meet the basic requirements of the law (i.e., putting processes and procedures in place) and placed less emphasis on accountability and the quality of service. One of the study's participants, a veteran with career experience in personnel development, provided information on what was happening in the state of Florida during the initial implementation of the EAHCA. This participant described how Florida was focused mainly on processes and procedures during its initial implementation of EAHCA and placed less of a priority on personnel development issues.

. . . We were implementing the state plan as it was written and approved by the Florida Department of Education and submitted to the U.S. Department of Education. So, we were doing all the things on paper and to the best that we could, to meet the requirements of P.L. 94-142 at that point. . . . [W]hen you're faced with serving the kids every day, that becomes your primary focus and so we were moving into personnel development issues, but certainly hadn't gotten to any kind of what I consider quality planning and implementation of that. (T/OS1/4)

With the enactment of EAHCA, OSEP considered CSPD to be the principal vehicle to plan for and implement the preparation of teachers and other support personnel required for the implementation of EAHCA (Schofer, 1980). However, the decision-making process for what the

personnel needs were and how to best meet those needs was still in its infancy during the first years following the enactment of EAHCA in Florida. According to the Florida State Plan for the Education of Exceptional Students (1975-1976),

There are no systemic procedures within the State of Florida for determining the total manpower needs and training activities needed to provide for exceptional students. There are no coordinated procedures for planning and sharing Florida's training resources to meet the manpower needs for exceptional education...Without the continuation of state and federal training dollars for the preparation of teachers to meet critical shortage areas in manpower and the development of leadership programs to serve exceptional students, state operated or local school district programs could not be maintained at their present level of development nor could there be an expansion of programs to meet the full service goal. (pp. 175-177)

In the mid 1970s, the record suggested there was a lack of coordinated focus little, if any, joint planning between the State Education Agency (SEA), Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs), and Local Education Agencies (LEAs); and minimal implementation in regard to a comprehensive system of personnel development in Florida. The participants in this study confirmed this and suggested that this era can be characterized by poor relationships between the SEA, IHEs, and the LEAs. Data also suggests that Florida responded to the CSPD requirement primarily through an ineffective state advisory council in the late 1980s and inadequate SEA leadership.

Poor relationships. During the first years following the implementation of the EAHCA in Florida, the study's participants shared their view that relationships between the SEA, IHEs, and LEAs were characterized by poor communication and collaboration; mistrust; and a lack of

understanding about the unique and important role the SEA, IHEs, and LEAs had to play in developing a CSPD. One university participant talked about the negative perception he believed the SEA had of the IHEs during this time, perceiving them as only wanting money from the state to implement teacher preparation programs as opposed to desiring to become partners in educating students with disabilities:

There seemed to be a feeling in the Department [Florida Department of Education] that the universities were kind of out there doing their own thing. In other words, I don't think there was a real respectful relationship and looking at how everybody could fit together and help each other. I thought it was an adverse look at the university. I understand the universities didn't have a very good relationship at all with the Department--with the Bureau at that time. . . . [It seemed that the Bureau suspected the universities of] . . . looking for money, wanting a gravy train kind of approach. . . . They were only interested in the State department locally if they could get money or find ways that they could get grants . . . rather than really trying to hunker down and help them with some of the problems they had at the local level. (T/OU8/4)

Based on this description, the relationship between the SEA and the IHEs in Florida can be characterized as not being positive. Lacking a respectful relationship, both entities seemed to function in relative isolation from each other. If the primary reason IHE personnel engaged with the SEA was to get money for initiatives, then the relationship was nothing more than an exchange, lacking reciprocity, collaboration, and trust.

Many of the participants talked about a lack of mutual understanding regarding the important role each entity plays and the contributions each makes in developing a CSPD. This lack of understanding was shown by the IHEs being viewed by the SEA and LEAs as elitist and

out of touch with reality, while the SEA and LEAs were viewed by the IHEs as practitioners in the trenches, only using what was expedient rather than using best practices. One IHE participant described the relationships between IHEs and LEAs during this time period and the lack of understanding that existed:

There was division and mistrust between the school and the universities. I have lots of memories of going into a school district and being told . . . what was going on at the university was of little value to them. . . . [T]he school districts could be pretty harsh in their judgments, but the university really sometimes had little patience and little respect for the schools. So there was a lot of division between the two and not a lot of work was going on collaboratively. . . . Universities did their things and school districts did their thing and very rarely did they try to put them together . . . They did not see each other's worlds as being of great importance to the other one. (T/OU6/4)

A former special education director described what it was like to be in a district during the 1980s. Although there was a great need for the universities to provide support and adequate training for teachers, this did not necessarily happen.

I think one of the complaints that I had, and I know some of my counterparts did, is I really wasn't getting the universities to listen to what I needed a teacher to be trained in before they left the university. They [were] turning out teachers who had no behavioral classes, no classes on how to teach reading . . . yet they get in the classroom and the first year the two things that make teachers leave are they have no behavioral management skills [and they can't teach reading].... So they decide, . . . I don't know how to do this. . . . The other thing is that the universities didn't have enough teachers that they were turning out to meet the needs of the districts. . . . I had maybe three or four teachers every

single year that would leave because it wasn't what they thought it would be like. And if you're growing every single year, you've got to figure out a way to do this. The university would say we only have 120 hours in the school. . . . Then I said, well then, we need to look closely at the 120 hours. (T/OL15/11)

Another former special education director reflected a similar understanding regarding the need for the universities to provide support and adequate training for their teachers.

We had shortages in certain areas and regions of the state for which there were no plans that got implemented to try address those shortages, as well as to improve and address some of the issues that the districts had with personnel preparation . . . [For example,] I hired two people from a training program that I was very familiar with . . . [T]hey came to me not even beginning to know how to write an IEP. . . . I had to retrain those people. I was expecting more than that when they graduated from the preparation program. . . . When I expressed that concern to the department chair . . . I got really no response to that, and that was typical. So, the communication was very much lacking. There was no strategic planning. There were a few pockets . . . of people trying to work together, but [there was] a lack of understanding of the different systems that we were working in. (T/OS1/4)

Also contributing to the existence of poor relationships between the SEA, IHEs, and LEAs was the development of a teacher preparation initiative by the state. During the late 1980s, Florida was experiencing critical teacher shortages and struggled to ensure that its special education personnel were teaching in-field (i.e., teaching in areas for which they were licensed). Florida addressed the critical shortages by developing district-based training modules through a program called the Alternative Training Initiative (ATI). A university in the southern part of the

state was awarded state Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA), Part B discretionary grant funding to develop the ATI modules. However, according to several participants in this study, this effort was viewed by IHEs as a joint venture between the SEA and the LEAs to assist school districts with the supply and quality of their personnel serving students with disabilities. One state-level leader provided information on how some of the IHEs viewed the awarding of this funding to this university and the negative perception of other university personnel:

There was also some dissension that came to pass with the development of the alternate training initiative in the late '80s [when] the Bureau awarded the development of the ATI to the University of South Florida in Tampa, and there was a lot of dissension among the universities as to why the ATI program went to USF in Tampa. Then ATI [modules] were implemented in the districts to bring their folks who were out of field to being in field, so it was as if the University of South Florida was perceived as taking the FTEs out of the pockets of all the universities around the state. (T/OS2/6)

While the intentions of this effort were good, the impact that it had on the relationships between the SEA, IHEs, and LEAs was negative and, for IHEs, clearly set a precedent for the way SEA leadership personnel wanted to function. Some of the IHEs viewed this effort as a way for the SEA to eliminate their involvement with the preparation of special education teachers. As an example of this perspective, one IHE participant stated:

[T]he universities were asked to help develop the modules for the state and then the state took those modules and started to prepare people, really, kind of an in-service. . . . [T]he universities accused [the SEA] that the modules were not as good as a full blown...preparation program, and that initially when they started, they were going to put

the universities out of business. This was just another way for the State to have the local school systems do all of the preparation for their own personnel and the universities wouldn't have much of a role to play. It wasn't necessarily the quality of the modules, although that would be brought up, too. . . . [I]t was just that whole concept that the modules would be equal to a university experience. . . . [W]hen you look at it from the standpoint of where the people are in special education and the universities . . . without enrollment you're dead. . . . [I]f you're losing those [university] hours, those student credit hours to people who are in the modules, it is pretty tough to take. . . . There were some real animosities [because of the] modules for a long time. . . . I think a lot of universities were feeling that modules were taken away from them rather than it [being] just another way for the school system to say, 'Hey, we can do it better than you. You're not really reality oriented like we are.' (T/OU8/25)

This depiction of how the IHEs perceived the SEA and LEAs to be working against them suggests that the ATI initiative did little to bring the three entities together. There seemed to be a lack of understanding, respect and value for the important role each entity had in developing personnel. There were competing priorities: the first priority of the IHEs was to make sure they received enough money from enrollment so that they could provide high-quality teacher preparation, while the primary concern of the SEA and LEAs was ensuring that personnel gained the knowledge and skills to provide high-quality educational services to students with disabilities. These competing priorities created division, dissention, and mistrust among the three entities.

State advisory council. In addition to the poor relationships between the SEA, IHEs, and LEAs in Florida in the 1980s, data also suggest that Florida responded to the CSPD requirement

primarily through an ineffective state advisory council. In 1980, through the *Florida Annual Program Application for Part B of the EAHCA*, a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) was specifically addressed for the first time. According to this application, the state was to use its existing State Advisory Committee for the Education of Exceptional Education Students and an annual Spring Coordinators' Conference as the mechanisms for providing guidance on CSPD. The plan also stated that the state CSPD requirements should be met through an existing Teacher Education Centers (TEC), enacted by the Florida Legislature in 1973. The Teacher Education Center Act made preservice and inservice for all teachers (including teachers of students with exceptionalities) a joint responsibility, based on a joint utilization of resources through a collaborative funding process. However, it also stated that colleges and universities would have the primary responsibility for operating preservice programs and school districts would have the primary responsibility for operating inservice programs. Although this Act made joint responsibility a priority, the *Florida State Plan for Educating Exceptional Education Students* (1980) described two distinct systems, a preservice personnel development system and an inservice personnel development system, with a lack of overall coordination between the two systems.

In the *Florida State Plan for the Education of Exceptional Students for Fiscal Years 1981-1983* under Part B of the EAHCA, the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Education for Exceptional Students explicitly stated, "This three-year plan reflects significantly expanded Bureau efforts toward system coordination and training delivery," and listed the efforts it planned to take to improve its comprehensive system of personnel development. Included in the list is the establishment of an inter-disciplinary Bureau Training Liaison Committee with responsibility for overall coordination and evaluation of the CSPD. However, there are no

specific descriptions of who was to be included as members on the committee or how the committee would function. This committee was a sub-committee to one of the State Advisory sub-committees. The CSPD section of Florida State Plans for Fiscal Years 1984 – 1988 simply repeat the information contained in the 1981-1983 plan.

In addition to the Bureau Training Liaison Committee, the Bureau also organized an annual Spring Coordinators' Conference called the Administrator's Management Conference (now known as the Administrators' Management Meeting, or AMM) for school district special education administrators and college and university faculty. Several of the participants in this study talked about this annual meeting as the place where communication began to take place between the SEA, IHEs, and LEAs in regard to personnel development. One IHE participant recalled his participation at this annual meeting and how the SEA, IHEs, and LEAs would meet as separate groups. Through these meetings and discussions, the groups came to realize that there needed to be a forum where all three entities could communicate about common issues.

We talked to each other when we had AMM and AMC, we called it then. . . . We got together as university people and talked about common issues that related to us while the districts talked about their particular issues. So that's where it actually started where we were actually talking to each other and then we looked at each other and said we should be talking to special education directors and we should be talking to the state about some of these needs. The districts blamed [the IHEs] for not training enough. . . . But, often the discussion was on how the State is taking money away from training programs and in order for us to address some of the needs, some of the money has to be found somewhere. (T/OU7/8)

A former special education director provided her perception of the university's involvement in the annual statewide meetings:

. . . [T]he university personnel came to statewide meetings, but it was very sporadic and there were, even at those statewide meetings—like the Council for Exceptional Children or the DOE conferences—there would be separate meetings for the university personnel and the district personnel, and no real facilitated way for communication to occur between those groups. So, we vaguely knew who they were or you knew who the faculty members were for the program if you graduated from a state program, you know . . . those faculty members, or if you had a university program in your district, you might know some of those faculty members. (T/OS1/5)

A local education agency participant characterized the annual meetings as a forum for complaining and found them to be non-productive, “mostly a bitch and gripe. . . I didn't get a sense that there was a real unified approach to dealing with the statewide needs in special education.” (T/OL14/5)

This annual meeting was the state's effort to provide a forum for bringing together the SEA, IHEs, and LEAs for an update on issues, processes, and procedures. However, study participants who participated during this time suggested that these meetings did nothing more than keep people in their individual silos. There was little, if any, communication or collaboration among the three entities and an overall lack of a unified approach to addressing the issues, even though they were all attending the same meeting. At the very least, the state provided a forum for people to come together; however, it was more of a place for information sharing by the state and problem sharing with others representing similar agencies, rather than an arena for coordinated efforts to work together and problem-solve collaboratively.

In 1989, the Bureau of Education for Exceptional Students created a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) Oversight Committee (Florida Department of Education, 1989). The primary purpose for forming this Council was to bring together special education directors and university personnel to make recommendations to the Department of Education concerning personnel development for exceptional student education programs. At an annual Administrators' Management Meeting, professionals representing IHEs and LEAs were asked by SEA leadership personnel if they would participate as members of the CSPD Oversight Committee. According to the interview data, this council did little to build collaboration among the SEA, IHEs, and LEAs, due to the type of SEA leadership facilitating the Committee and the SEA-established processes and procedures. For example, according to one former state-level CSPD council member, not all members of the Committee had equal voting power, leading to a feeling of inequality among those participating:

There was dissatisfaction among the participants in that oversight committee, and I think the dissatisfaction primarily came from university personnel who were participating because the by-laws that were established for that first CSPD council did not provide voting power for the university personnel, [while] the ESE directors and the district personnel had voting authority. So, there was a very unbalanced system in place even though they were sitting around the table talking. You can't have a whole category not have voting authority and a council that's making a decision about personnel development. There was not equality of membership and it caused some bitter feelings, and I think that may be why the council came to an end in the late '80's, that there was such dissension because university folks thought why should we come and participate in this. There is no reason for us to be here. (T/OS2/5)

A former special education director who participated as a member of the state CSPD Committee commented on the lack of collaboration that existed between the SEA, IHEs, and LEAs and the type of leadership facilitating the CSPD Oversight Committee, which allowed meetings to turn into unproductive sessions.

We kind of knew...who the different groups were but we really did not have relationships that allowed us to communicate on a regular basis, and certainly didn't do any joint planning or collaboration. Any kind of collaboration that was done was [due to] valiant efforts on the part of one or two people from either the district or the university and I would say that those were rarely sustained over any period of time. If one of the people in the relationship was promoted or changed jobs, everything collapsed. So it was certainly hit or miss, and mostly miss. In fact, it was almost hostile. There was resentment on both [sides] because, you know, there was a lot of finger pointing, instead of...understanding what the issues were that all of the parties had to deal with and identification of barriers and ways to address those barriers. . . . Even with the CSPD council that existed, in my personal experience...it generally degenerated into a finger-pointing session. (T/OS1/9)

One participant from the local education agency who remembers being asked to be on a CSPD Oversight Committee after the initial Committee was dismantled and then reconstituted reflected on the negative feelings of colleagues about their participation on the original Committee:

I was attending at that time, I think they were semi-annual meetings with the Department of Education and the Bureau. . . . At that meeting, I was involved in a size-alike group ... and the State Director at that time came in to the meeting and indicated that they were reforming [the State CSPD Council]. I got a feeling from my colleagues [that] apparently there was not a lot of respect for that council as it had existed prior to 1992. I think it was

defunct. I mean, I wasn't even sure if they were meeting anymore, but people apparently dropped out. There [were] just not a lot of good feelings about how it was run, how productive it was, and people just – who had apparently been involved – were just not enthusiastic. So when they heard it was being reconstituted there was not a lot of enthusiasm about it. (T/RL14/2)

Being responsible for making sure that Florida was in compliance with the CSPD section of the law, SEA leadership personnel sought to organize a council that could come together to talk about the issues that needed to be addressed. Study participants involved at that time reflected their understanding of this council's functioning. This involvement was perceived, especially by the IHE members, as not being positive. Issues included inequality of membership, lack of enthusiasm, and poor leadership by the SEA in facilitating the meetings. During the late 1980s, the Committee was actually dismantled and then reconstituted. According to the State Plan for the Education of Exceptional Students (1995),

[t]he Florida Department of Education, Division of Public Schools, Bureau of Education for Exceptional Students has recently reorganized its Comprehensive System of Personnel Development Oversight Committee. The Committee has the responsibility for overseeing a comprehensive plan for personnel development needs and resources; changes in existing policy and rules affecting personnel development policy and fiscal policy; and providing recommendations based on reliable data. The CSPD Oversight Committee represents a broad and diverse group of stakeholders for personnel development in exceptional education. The Committee's role is to assure the development and implementation of policies and promising practices affecting personnel development to meet state, regional, and local needs. Since the CSPD Oversight

Committee was reestablished and their initial meeting was held on October 24-27, 1993, revisions in the development of the CSPD section of the State Plan will occur as a result of their continued work. (p.46)

Inadequate SEA leadership. In addition to the state advisory council being perceived as ineffective, interview data also suggested that there was inadequate SEA leadership to facilitate this work. Several of the participants in this study involved in personnel development prior to the implementation of the regional PDPs commented on the type of leadership provided by the SEA to implement a CSPD in Florida. The leadership was characterized as inadequate to implement a collaborative way of work, not facilitative, and heavy-handed. One IHE participant portrayed the SEA leadership negatively, as lacking an overall understanding of the unique and important role of each type of member on the CSPD Oversight Committee and leading in a controlling rather than a facilitative way.

. . . [S]ome people said it was because the person who was representing the State Department [that was] supposed to work with the universities had a chip on their shoulder. I don't know whether that was true or not, but I really think that the person they had assigned [CSPD to] didn't understand the whole nature of universities and what they do and how they do it and really why they do it.

. . . [T]he person who controls the purse is a pretty powerful person. . . . [I]t's no question that the money coming into the state is a whole lot more than the universities had. So, that person had an awful lot of clout and they could nurture you or they could kill you. . . . So, this person had a lot of power and used that power I think not in a very . . . equitable way and . . . had the universities [feeling as if], well, you better be nice to me or feel my wrath. So, I think there was a good part of that going on from the power positions of the

State. . . . [H]e who has the purse has the power. Two things give you power – information and resources.

. . . I think [the SEA] developed the plan and this person...developed the plan and said to the universities, this is our plan for personnel development. And this is how we want it done. I don't think the universities had much say in it at all. (T/OU8/10)

Another IHE participant also characterized the SEA leadership as not facilitating a collaborative way of work; rather, the leadership was more dictatorial.

What I think people felt like – what people in the universities, anyway, resented –was the fact that they felt like the Bureau was really too heavy-handed and forcing things the way they wanted it. They didn't feel as though the universities had a voice that was heard or responded to. It was the Bureau's agenda and the Bureau's decisions. So, there wasn't a valuing of the university for their knowledge. You always felt like it was going to be the way they (the SEA) wanted it...They had sort of come in with the agenda and sort of told people what was expected. I heard more than one person say when they were asked to sit on a board, 'I don't even want to do that, all you do is – you're just window dressing'.
(T/OU6/4)

Section Summary

This section depicts a time period when, federally, the field of special education was seeking to define its place within the larger general education arena. With the enactment of EAHCA in 1975, states were forced to meet many new requirements related to providing education to students with disabilities. During the first years of implementation, states worked to put many new and unfamiliar processes and procedures in place and primarily focused on being in compliance with the law. Findings from this study suggest meeting the requirements for

having a CSPD was not a high priority in Florida. As Florida began to put a process (i.e., a CSPD Oversight Committee) into place in 1980s that would, at the very least, meet the basic requirements of a CSPD, the state found that communication was lacking between the SEA, IHEs, and LEAs. There was mistrust, and relationships were weak or even non-existent, primarily because not only did the entities not know each other, but, even if they did, they did not understand each other's roles and therefore perceived little value in each other. People involved with CSPD during this time reported the existence of inadequate SEA leadership and suggested that this had more to do with a particular personality rather than a lack of any leadership in general. Finally, while the state tried to initially implement a CSPD Oversight Committee, it turned out to have negative repercussions as a result of the way the SEA leadership selected members, showed that they valued (or did not value) members, and determined specific issues to be addressed. Committee participants reported not feeling valued to the point where they wondered why they should even participate. One state-level participant was able to capture the true essence of the state's system of personnel development during this time period in Florida.

Universities were doing their thing; the Department of Education was doing their own thing, so there was some communication but not really very effective communication between the State Department, the local districts and universities in terms of the types of professional development that was going on. There was no system. The perception was that the universities did initial teacher preparation. The State did specialized preparation to meet federal mandates and priorities of the Department of Education, and the local school districts put into place their own staff development activities to support their teachers, and there was no real connection among the three. (T/OS2/4)

CSPD in Florida: 1990-1992 – A Turning Point

During the early 1990s, almost 15 years after the passing of EAHCA, three components aligned and served as the impetus for changing the way Florida responded to the CSPD section of the law. The three components included involving (a) a new visionary leader in discussions at the state level regarding personnel development, (b) a new SEA leader who had previously served as a Director of Special Education in a Florida school district, and (c) the funding of a federal project called the National Institute for CSPD Collaboration. Through this new visionary leadership involving a person with a collaborative leadership style who had experience at the federal, university, and school district levels and with a professional network, and the other two components, Florida's CSPD was able to move toward a more meaningful approach to creating a comprehensive system of personnel development.

New, visionary leadership. Many of the study's participants talked about the collaborative leadership that this new visionary leader provided as a key factor for moving CSPD toward a more collaborative way of work in Florida. This leader recalled coming to Florida and being involved in the forming of a CSPD Oversight Committee.

I moved here . . . in the fall of 1992, and at that time I knew a number of the people in the state. . . . So, when I came into the state, it wasn't that I was coming in as a stranger to a lot of those folks, and so I was here about a year and they decided that they wanted me to get involved with some of the statewide kinds of things, and they created a committee, really kind of a council for exceptional children, an advisory council. . . . Some local legislators [were involved and] as a consequence of that we talked about [many] things, CSPD being one of those. [Leadership personnel from the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education asked me to] get . . . involved with CSPD

and we started to talk about how that might be. Now, they had a CSPD – I believe they had a CSPD council because that’s what they asked me to chair . . . and I got to meet a whole bunch of other people from all over the state. . . . I think at the time, I kind of got a lot of folks [involved] who were primarily directors of special education and local education. . . . So, I think it was heavily oriented to the local education agency . . . and less to universities. (T/OU8/2)

This new, visionary leader provided collaborative leadership that was instrumental in igniting the spark that moved Florida in a new direction in responding to the CSPD requirements. This leader believed in the basic premise that together we can accomplish more than we can alone. Participants in the study stated that this leader was facilitative, a “people person,” and someone who made everyone feel welcome and important. One university participant stated, “[This new, visionary leader] was a major person in getting the first CSPD [started].” (T/OU9/9) This observation, while simply stated, was echoed by many.

Another IHE participant described this new, visionary leadership:

[CSPD] is something someone has to be responsible for and just like I had the responsibility for building trust and networking in my council and for our community, [this new visionary leader] took responsibility for that at the state level...and he did it extremely well, but it could have been a problem if it wasn’t for [this specific person] that did it. [He] was very well known by all of us in the state. We had worked with him before and he was very open. (T/OU9/23)

A former special education director described this new leader’s influence and no matter who you were, what role you played, or what agency you represented, he made you feel valued and respected as a professional.

I think [he] set the example when we started having our meetings for all of the partnerships because being part of that and seeing him, he never made me feel inferior. If anything, he always made me feel superior because I was out there with the kids. You know, that kind of got me to thinking, that's the expectation I need to have when I go to my local [partnership]. He was very down to earth, he didn't try to use big words, big terms. He didn't walk in and say, have you read such and such a journal? He would walk in and talk about concepts and procedures or practices and then say, have you all heard about this? He had a way [of introducing] it to make people feel comfortable about it and if we hadn't heard it, we could say, 'No,' and he was not going to say, 'Oh, well, aren't you reading these journals again?' There have been times when I have picked up the phone and called and asked questions, 'Is it true the university does this?' and he'd say, 'Let me find out and call you back.' He treated me as his equal, and I appreciated that. It was supposed to have been my expectation for the CSPD was exactly the way it operated at the state level it should operate at the local level. I really do commend [him] because I just really felt like he set the example and he was there, and you know, he didn't leave the meeting to go do something else. It was important that he be there for the...training and then lead us that first year or so, and I think that was great. (T/OL15/19)

New SEA Leadership. Several participants discussed a new SEA leader during this time who, like the new, visionary leader, was extremely instrumental in moving CSPD forward in Florida. This person came to the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Education for Exceptional Education, but had previously served as a Director of Special Education in a Florida school district. This practical experience, coupled with the leadership she was able to provide at the state level, assisted in bridging the gap between the two very different worlds of the SEA and

LEAs. One participant from a school district confirmed how important it was to have a leader at the Bureau who had practical experience as a school district administrator. This practical experience provided an understanding of what school districts were dealing with on a daily basis and was taken into consideration as decisions were made relevant to Florida Department of Education initiatives. It also provided the Department of Education with a realistic picture of the personnel development needs in school districts.

When people like [the new SEA leader] became part of the Bureau, [formerly] an ESE Director, then all of a sudden you had somebody saying, look, we need to pay attention to these calendars. We need to look at training that occurs in maybe July versus May, that kind of thing. . . . [I]t almost took one of us becoming a part of the Bureau for them to really understand why we couldn't drop everything and go. I would say, prior to that CSPD was really piecemeal and each district tried to put together their own training.

(T/OL15/6)

Another IHE participant reflected the same regard for this leader: "I think [the new SEA leader] with her name underlined, really saw the need for a comprehensive system of personnel development. So, there was a level of support for the Bureau for this process." (T/OS2/41)

Another IHE participant commented on the shift in the SEA leadership style as compared to previous leaders:

There was a real shift in leadership approach to [being] facilitative, what do you need, how can we. . . .I think in many ways the Bureau took a different stance from telling people what they had to do to really being a facilitator and how can we help, what do you need, and what do you think will work. And that was a dramatic shift. (T/OU6/16)

National Institute for CSPD Collaboration. With the new visionary's collaborative leadership style and a new SEA leader having a practical understanding of the personnel needs of school districts, Florida was prepared to work with the National Institute for CSPD Collaboration, a federal initiative that would bring technical assistance to the state so that it could authentically create a comprehensive system of personnel development. The goal of the Institute was to build collaborative regional PDPs to establish and organize a state's special education CSPD as an effective vehicle for change. During the tenure of the project, the National Institute for CSPD Collaboration worked with more than 40 states and territories to develop a CSPD strategic plan. Up until this point, states had little guidance on how to implement a CSPD. Initially, the federal project assisted Florida with formation of a state committee comprising school district special education administrators and faculty members from Florida's public and private colleges and universities. The purpose of this committee was to bring together stakeholders to talk about specific personnel needs throughout the state, as well as possible solutions.

The National Institute for CSPD Collaboration provided a forum for uniting key personnel from the SEA, IHEs, and LEAs through the creation of a new and improved CSPD Oversight Committee. Staff from the Institute involved with the training of state teams believed that if a state's CSPD were to be successful it would have at the foundation of its efforts a state-level leadership committee that could effectively determine the needs of personnel, and through strategic planning efforts would meet those needs (Council for Exceptional Children, n.d.). Participants in this study recalled how they were asked to be a part of this committee, and described what it was like to be a part of this initial effort. Participants remember being asked to participate by the Bureau Chief at an annual Administrator's Management Meeting. Participants

representing both IHEs and LEAs recalled key SEA leadership personnel asking for volunteers as opposed to assigning, or targeting any one particular individual within a group. This was a very different way of functioning, since in the past the SEA's key leadership personnel requested specific individuals to participate on the state committee and were much less democratic, causing friction, and, as one IHE participant stated, "...basing decisions on a 'who mom likes best' approach." (T/OU8/17)

An LEA participant described her experience of being asked to participate on the newly formed CSPD Oversight Committee:

I, at that point, was the chair [of one of the size-alike] groups, and . . . I remember them coming around to this group and . . . talking about this new change. No one else wanted to volunteer and since I was the chair, I said, I'll do it because I think it's important.

(T/OL15/3)

Emergence of the Partnership Concept

As Florida stakeholders worked with the National Institute for CSPD Collaboration Project to design and implement a system of personnel development to meet the state's needs, it began by re-establishing the CSPD Oversight Committee that would serve as an advisory committee to the state. The project provided training to the Committee in the strategic planning process which assisted the state in accurately identifying its personnel needs so meaningful planning could take place. According to the 1993 Amendments to the Florida State Plan,

. . . the Bureau of Education for Exceptional Students engaged constituents and stakeholders across the State in a process of participatory planning. The centerpiece of this process was a series of five regional forums held at various locations in the fall of 1990 (and a sixth forum for the Department personnel). At these facilitated forums,

individuals from various institutions, agencies, and levels of education for exceptional students identified, discussed, and prioritized needs that they believed should be addressed by Florida's CSPD. (p. 35)

During 1993-1994, through the same participatory process, based on identified needs, the size of the state, and its diverse nature, the CSPD Oversight Committee made a recommendation to establish regional Professional Development Partnerships. The partnership model was selected because stakeholders saw the partnership model as a way to improve communication and coordination between the SEA, IHEs, and LEAs and also as a way to improve the state's system of personnel development. An SEA participant recalled her experience as a member of the new State CSPD Council and described why the partnership model was selected:

When we saw the proposal from the national model, we saw that as a real possibility, as a way to improve communication and coordination [between] the universities, the districts. Everyone was concerned about improving communication and coordination; we just didn't know quite how to go about it and so we saw the model as a way to directly address those concerns. Secondly, it was a way to improve statewide implementation of a CSPD. It was intended to be a broad, systemic implementation, and, [since] Florida is a very large state with very large school districts, it would take a model that considers variations in systems within the larger system, it would take a model like that to really have some impact. And then, it also gave us a way to have common state goals that could address the statewide need, but could also give a framework for addressing the regional needs and issues. [For example,] rural districts were having trouble with one or two types of professionals with certain levels of skills to address— for instance, speech-language pathology and kids with the behavior disorders. We were having a great deal of trouble

recruiting personnel in those areas. Then we had some of the very large districts that could not find enough physical therapists and occupational therapists [or] an audiology person, or persons trained in Braille to address their populations of students. And so we had a lot of difference[s], [and] different pockets of need across the state, varying by region. And, so this model gave us a way to address both the state needs and some of the regional issues that were going on in the state. . . . [T]he number one thing we thought this model could do is improve the communication and coordination of effort and get people to do some joint planning. (T/OS1/7)

One IHE participant recalled the experience of being on the newly formed CSPD Oversight Committee and explained why the partnership model was selected:

When we sat around the table and had our first meetings as the council, one of the things we [discussed was] the funds that were there ought to be distributed statewide to meet statewide needs [for] personnel. When we started to look at that, then one of the first things we did is we actually went out and had people write proposals to deal with their particular problems and then we were going to review those proposals as a centralized group.

[W]hat we found is on our roof we didn't know a lot of the answers [to the personnel development issues around the state]. In other words, what Miami was facing is different than what the Panhandle faces. What Jacksonville is facing is maybe different than what somebody in the central part of the state might face, and what the rural people were facing is different than a county like Pinellas that's very urban, that's very urban, and the Tampa Bay region. So, one of the things we started to do was [discuss how] to divide [the] state up in some kind of form or fashion so that we get a better look at what these

things are because once the proposals came in, we didn't have the expertise to say whether that was really a realistic problem or not. . . . So, then we looked and . . . if we want to get universities and everybody else working together (we have a university in just about geographically dispersed across the state), why don't we put regions around those universities? That way we'll get the regions and the universities to talk together, and we'll also get the universities hopefully to help get more involved with the schools and better information . . . and we'll get from them what they really see as their needs. It might be that in this particular place they need to be dealing with preparing persons for severe and profound type of kids, where somebody else may be saying it's more for the mild or, you know, we want to go in this direction with learning disabilities, mild learning disabilities. But we didn't get that differentiation when we had this big group. Plus, it was just unwieldy. And so, you know the partnership [model] made an awful lot of sense to us as we sat around that table and we looked at where [we] were. (T/OU8/12)

An SEA participant recalled her experience of being part of the CSPD Oversight Committee and the impact the National Institute for CSPD had in Florida on personnel development. This recollection illustrates why the partnership model was appealing to the State CSPD Council. Again, stakeholders saw the partnership model as a way to improve coordination and communication between the SEA, IHEs, and LEAs. Stakeholders thought that, through improved coordination and communication, the SEA, IHEs, and, ultimately, the school districts that serve students with disabilities would benefit.

The National Institute for CSPD Collaboration was invited to Florida to train members of the Florida CSPD Council in the concept of strategic planning [and,] also in that process, [in] strategic planning for implementing regional professional development partnerships.

. . . [T]he members of the State Council were very impressed with the potential that regional partnerships would have for coordinating with the local [education agencies], with the university and with the state to really put a system of personnel development into place, a collaborative system to meet the needs of the district that would be of benefit both to the districts and the university, as well ultimately as being a benefit to the state agency. Strategic planning activities that were very popular in the early 1990s around the country and the process[es] that were developed by the Council for Exceptional Children were very well done and provided a nice roadmap [for] how to effectively strategically plan and benefit all stakeholders around the table. (T/OS2/9)

Section Summary

During the late 1980s there was still a disconnect between the degree of need related to the supply of qualified personnel to provide education and related services to students with disabilities and the level of importance the state placed on how it responded to this need. However, when three integral components came together during the early 1990's, Florida was able to begin to move forward with creating a comprehensive system. Through the re-establishment of the CSPD Oversight Committee, training in the strategic planning process, and a focus on collaboration, there was hope for improving communication and collaboration among the SEA, IHEs and LEAs so that Florida's system of personnel development could be improved.

Forming the Regional Professional Development Partnerships: 1993-1995

In 1993-1994, in an effort to impact critical teacher shortages, the Florida Department of Education's Bureau of Education for Exceptional Students developed regional PDPs statewide in order to enhance regional collaborative planning. The Florida Department of Education's Bureau of Education for Exceptional Students provided incentive funding for the implementation of

regional PDPs by initiating new Exceptional Student Education (ESE) IDEA, Part B Discretionary projects with the potential for additional funding to address personnel needs as identified in each regional plan. This funding provided support to Florida's state universities, specifically their Departments of Special Education, to implement regional PDPs. At the recommendation of the CSPD Oversight Committee, it was decided that these projects would be physically located at the state's public universities as opposed to school districts and that the universities would serve as the fiscal agent for the projects. Each university's catchment area (as defined in Florida Administrative Code [1994], Chapter 6C-8.002 [3] [b]) would be used to define the specific districts that would make a region. The 1995 Florida State Plan for Exceptional Education explicitly described why the partnership model was selected:

These partnerships are vital to effectively analyze personnel needs, ensure existing resources, and to enhance Florida's capacity to resolve critical personnel needs. These partnerships will involve stakeholders who are committed to the resolution of personnel needs in exceptional education and include representatives of the district exceptional education programs, Florida Diagnostic Learning Resources System, university training programs in special education, parents, the Department of Education, and business organizations. (Florida Department of Education, 1995, p. 45)

Not every one of the state's nine public universities applied for the funding at first. There were a total of five funded regional professional development partnerships in 1994-1995 (Florida Department of Education, 1995). One university in particular decided not to participate because the person in charge of the special education program believed that the university had a statewide focus and being involved in a regional configuration would limit them. The participant stated that

they [the university] perceived themselves to be the flagship university in the state and they didn't really want to limit themselves to a region. Their mission as defined by the legislature years ago was statewide. So, they didn't see that their mission should be fixed to a group of counties...and the chair at that time just said, 'We don't want to do that.'

[Surprisingly,] he had been a member of the State CSPD Council too. (T/OS2/13)

There were two universities in close geographic proximity that decided to combine their funding after the second year of implementation because they believed they could do more with a combined amount of money (Florida's CSPD Personnel Data Planning Book, 1993). The two universities actually worked with a third university, the University of West Florida (UWF), during the first year, but UWF decided they wanted to have their own partnership, and, during year two, the Bureau provided them with separate funding (Johnson, personal communication, August 24, 2006). An IHE participant described the nature of the two universities forming one partnership and how they decided to combine their funding:

Years ago, when we first started out, FAMU had a partnership and FSU had a partnership and they each had – I want to say one had seven districts and one had eight. And the money was only like \$30,000, that they got a piece [of]. And so, it was – they decided to join forces since they were both in Tallahassee. And they became the FSU/FAMU partnership and so then they got double funding. They got \$60,000 (T/OU11/16)

The funding at that time was \$30,000 per project and each of the projects had to match that amount. Several IHE participants reflected on how the universities provided the match. While some of the universities met this match through applying specific dollar amounts, others provided faculty time. The general perspective from most of the IHE participants interviewed was that the universities did not benefit financially from their initial participation in the

partnerships. In fact, they saw the amount of money as very small and therefore, the activities they were able to implement were minimal. One IHE participant stated,

IHEs as the fiscal agent had to provide matching funds. [We] used IHE faculty to meet the match. The IHEs perspective was that they got nothing out of it. The IHE wrote the proposal along with partnership from districts. [We] originally used money to implement a summer project, developed a resource directory, and the rest was used for planning time. [It] did not provide a lot of money, [and we] mainly had steering committees.

(T/OU10/2)

In addition to funding, the Bureau also provided support for each partnership through technical assistance. Facilitators from the National Institute for CSPD Collaboration were brought to Florida to provide support and training to the regional professional development partnerships in the strategic planning process. Funds were also provided for the establishment of a state CSPD project with a full-time Project Director. The intent of this project was to support the state and the regional partnerships in their effort to create a CSPD.

As a part of this study, three interview questions were asked that would provide information on the beginning stages of regional PDP implementation. One question asked what the collaboration between the partners looked like during the initial implementation stages. Another question focused on the planning processes experienced by participants involved in the initial implementation of partnerships. The third question asked participants how they would characterize the initial stages of implementation, and what they thought seemed to work, as well as what seemed to be missing. In the next section, I will discuss the themes that emerged from the answers participants provided to these questions.

Initial Stages of Collaboration. Although the SEA was very specific about the partners that were to be involved in the regional PDPs in order to receive funding, partnerships struggled with determining who the right players would be, as well as getting the right players to participate. One SEA participant explained this in an interview:

I: Some regions easily got the partners to the table, the right people . . . who were decision makers and resource allocators who came to the table at the partnership, and then other [partnerships] really struggled with that.

L: Why do you think that is?

I: Well, I think, first of all it was identifying who...they were.

L: Right. How did they decide that?

I: Well, in the invitation to participate, [the SEA] identified the types of people to invite. And so, I think that, first of all it was a person's interpretation of whether or not they were the right representative from their agency. And by agency I mean, university, school district, regular education, special education within a school district. . . . And then I think that it varied a good bit by agency, who the right person was in an agency. . . . For instance, in some universities, it would be the dean. In others, it would be the department chair. So, when [the SEA] did the initial explanation and invitation to participate, we . . . were perhaps, not as explicit . . . [in describing] those people real well. And so there was the description, our description, and then, the individuals' interpretation, plus the politics, internal politics within each agency, that brought people to the table. So sometimes you get someone who, on paper and politically look like the best choice to serve on the council or on the partnership, when, in fact, that wasn't the

mover and shaker. You know, the person that could get things done. And I think it just took a while to shake all that out; [it] took some trial and error. (T/OS1/15)

Although the SEA participant felt that maybe the SEA should have been more explicit in defining specific partners, an IHE participant felt that the SEA was too direct in defining the membership.

I guess the [SEA was] dictating the membership . . . the governance, the structure of governance. They were saying what you had to do. [Previously] in our region, the directors of special education – sort of got together as the convening council and they would identify needs and identify agendas. . . . [T]here were a lot of different ways people could work, but they really – they were running the show. (T/OU6/13)

Not only were there issues regarding who to involve, but those who did come to the table and participate reported a lack of trust, the protection of individual agency needs, and a reluctance to be involved (as they wondered if the amount of money provided by the SEA was worth the effort). In an interview, an SEA participant described some of the complaints the Bureau received as a result of the initial implementation of regional partnerships regarding these issues:

I: As a state level administrator, I often handled phone calls from ‘grumpies,’ disgruntled partnership members who needed to vent, who were frustrated, or who needed clarification. And I had to . . . write memos to explain what we were trying to accomplish and to encourage people to play well with others. And then, on occasion, when the state-level facilitators felt that they had done as much as they could do, I would occasionally make, either a call or a visit to a school district to talk with a superintendent, an assistant superintendent, or a special

education director, or to a university to talk with a dean or a department chair, and, not so much to be heavy-handed, but to help them come to an understanding about what [the SEA was] trying to accomplish and what they could do to help us do that, and how it would benefit them.

L: What were some of the issues or complaints that people had?

I: [S]ome of them were that the universities had all the money and the districts had no money, and the universities wouldn't bring their money to the table. So money was often an issue. Secondly, it was somebody won't address our problem, or that the districts want to do things that will take away an FTE from the university and thus harm the financial stability of the program. So, it mainly focused on policy issues and finances. (T/OS1/16)

An IHE participant recalled her experience: "There was a sort of suspicion and turf protection.... People didn't realize what they could get from coming together, that you could learn even if you were [a large district], you could learn a lot from [a small district]." (T/OU10/24) Another participant at the LEA level described the reluctance some people had about participating:

I would have some [ESE] Directors in my area say, 'I don't know that I want to go through with all this.' I would say, "You come over and sit with me and . . . you say what your concerns are and I'm going to back you.' If they did it and found out that the group was willing to listen to them, then they weren't concerned anymore. (T/OL15/20)

Many of the study's participants mentioned the small amount of money that was provided and how it did not allow the partnerships to do much in terms of activity implementation, initially. One IHE participant explained:

[I would characterize the initial stages as] growing pains. . . . A lot of us didn't know what CSPD was; at the beginning there was not much money, [and] we didn't know what to do with \$30,000. What can you do? You offer three or four courses to 10 students and you pay for their tuition, you pay for their books and you pay the instructor and there it is. It's gone, so we didn't do much. But as we got more involved and got more money, I think things started branching out and we started looking at different needs within each of the districts. But at the beginning, some people said it wasn't worth the effort because the money was very minimal. But, they were there, they came to meetings and they voiced their opinion and then, when it came to action, there wasn't much money to act.

(T/OU7/14)

Planning processes. There were varying perceptions of the initial planning processes experienced by participants, depending on the agency they represented. Participants representing the SEA talked about the processes the state put in place and assumed that, based on these processes and procedures, partnerships would meet their goals of creating partnerships that were well-grounded in the strategic planning process. One SEA participant stated,

We had some very specific activities that were carried out. First of all, we had systematic requirements written down, explained to everyone about what the partnership was expected to do, and . . . the purpose of it, what it is expected to do, and . . . the expected outcome for the partnership. And within that, [the SEA] had requirements for data analysis. . . . Everyone involved in the partnership would [bring] information to the partnership, and . . . they were supposed to go through a process of analyzing that data, and then, based on that data, make a plan for their region to address the issues that emerged from the data and from the concerns that the various constituents had. Now, that

was the process that was written down and they were expected to follow. We provided a good deal of support and facilitation to the partnerships in those early years. And people at the national level and Florida folks who had been trained in the partnership model served as facilitators to those partnerships and worked with them through the process. We had a meeting and we brought them together for meetings where they were in a place away from their job responsibilities so they could focus on partnership planning. And then...throughout the year [the SEA] provided targeted technical assistance. If they had questions, if they were struggling, you know, we would either bring a Florida facilitator back in and in some cases the national facilitators in to try to help them with that planning. (T/OS1/12)

In contrast to SEA participants, participants representing the IHEs characterized their experiences as intense, laborious, and time-consuming, thinking ‘who are they to tell us’ (T/OU6/10). One IHE participant described his perception of the strategic planning training as skeptical at first. He also described the support received from the national facilitators:

We had extensive training in collaboration. [The national facilitators] actually came around to the various [partnership] sites and did training on collaboration. They worked together, all maps and diagrams and all kinds of things. That’s their specialty. They came around and gave us these training sessions to assist us in working collaboratively and working effectively. I think we all looked at it with some skepticism at first, of course, who are these guys coming to tell us how to collaborate. . . . I think we took from it what we wanted. But it wasn’t [anyone’s] fault. There were some helpful ideas. . . . But we were polite and we were courteous and we gave them our attention, and they came and

did their painting and they left and we got something out of it, and whatever didn't apply, we just didn't pay any attention to it. (T/OU7/15)

Another IHE participant commented, “[R]egional partners did not respond well to the strategic planning process; we endured it.” (T/OU10/29)

The LEA participants shared their feeling that the initial planning process was refreshing and exciting. One LEA participant shared her memory of being involved with the initial strategic planning processes in her region and how everyone was treated as an equal:

[F]or the regional [partnership], I just remember us meeting and talking about how do we want to operate, how often did we want to meet, where do people feel comfortable meeting? And, it was kind of interesting in the beginning, [because] we had all these private universities. They may not always want to meet at the university [where the regional CSPD partnership is located]. So, we discussed and we ended up meeting at a university center. It was part of the university but it's not on the actual campus. People come in and you didn't have to get a security [pass], you didn't have to go through whatever the parking place is, and again, everybody's input was valued as to how we could operate, when we would meet, where, the time, what was the most convenient, because the whole issue was we want everybody here. We don't want to have a meeting and only have five of the 25 people there. Every spring we reviewed all that. Are we still comfortable meeting here? Do we want to go somewhere else? Are the times still convenient? Which I thought was real interesting, that they would review that every single year to make sure people weren't upset or concerned or worried about how we were doing it. [It was a sense of] letting your hair down. In the sense that everybody had to come to the table and come as a person, and not as a director of ESE.... So, our sign, it

just said which district you represented. It didn't have your name and whether or not you had a Ph.D., or an Ed.D. or whatever after it; it was just the district that you represented. Everybody was an equal. (T/OL15/25)

What seemed to work and what seemed to be missing? The majority of the participants focused on what seemed to be missing rather than what seemed to work during the initial implementation of regional partnerships. In general, participants' comments focused primarily on the importance of leadership either at the state or regional level. From the findings, it appeared that if the leadership was consistent over time, facilitative rather than top-down, and the specific leader had an established personnel network that assisted the partnership with being able to move forward, it was viewed positively. An IHE participant commented on the type of leadership provided by the State CSPD Project, saying, "[The State CSPD Project leader] was very good about saying what the limits were but not getting engaged in any struggle. I think this was very effective, so his leadership really made a difference." (T/OU6/14)

State-level leadership was extremely important, especially in providing the type of leadership style the regional leader could emulate. In one interview, one IHE participant involved with the partnerships described the initial implementation of partnerships and the importance of the regional leaders, especially if they had an established personal network with regional partners:

I: [T]he implementation was not equal around the state. There were some regions that really took off quickly and really moved forward in a very positive way in their collaborative planning and implementation of personnel development and staff development. . . . I attribute that to the leadership of the personnel of the PDP coordinators at the time.

L: And it really was due to their leadership style?

I: I think [a factor was] the respect that they had already earned in their regions in their communities. . . . [One PDP coordinator] already had a relationship with folks in the districts from prior experiences to the PDP. (T/OS2/21)

If there was a change in personnel (especially if there was a lot of turnover), or if the leader had his or her own agenda, or lacked facilitation skills, this was viewed as having a negative impact on the implementation of a partnership. The findings show that the state provided an example of the type of leadership needed at the regional level in order for the partnerships to be established and maintained. There were some regions where this type of leadership was reflected; however, several of the participants in the study mentioned that the regional leadership positions were assigned to IHE faculty and some viewed the work of the partnership as just another job responsibility that was assigned to them, or something they were given so they could use it as a part of the tenure and promotion process. Partnerships that had this type of leader seemed to have a good bit of turnover. One participant stated, “[I]n a couple of [regions] there was turnover of personnel. . . . It was very difficult as the leaders shifted and changed. . . . [W]e did have a number of changes that really set them back. Folks would just get to know the leaders and then they changed.” (T/OS2/28)

Another LEA participant described her experience with the early stages of partnership implementation and the turnover of leadership personnel:

When they first started there was not . . . a desire to do this on anybody's part. It was the state bringing people together, saying this is what we're going to do, kind of a mandate form. Then when people did their applications at various universities you got assigned to people who either wanted it or were assigned it. And so, you know, that linkage with the

districts had to be made and . . . our particular [partnership] had four different principal investigators. (T/RL20/13)

An IHE participant stated, “[In one region there was] a leader with her own agendas [who did] not really [promote] the concept of partnering but [focused on] what could she get out of the partnership in terms of enrollment for her own classes.” (TOS2/28)

Another LEA participant characterized her experience this way:

Rocky. . . . When we first started, we went from the university that had it, there was not a lot of follow-through with some of the things and it sort of passed from professor to professor and it was just sort of like lack of continuity, but we persevered and sort of worked though it, but it wasn’t a smooth process. (T/OS2/28)

Section Summary

The initial implementation of Florida’s regional partnerships was described in this section. During the initial stages of collaboration partnerships struggled with determining criteria for the right people to involve, even though the state provided a list of required partners. Once people became involved, the partners experienced a lack of trust, protection of individual agency needs, and the reluctance of some members to be involved due to the small amount of money provided by the state. The planning processes experienced by the study’s participants during this time are best categorized as varying in that the SEA, IHE, and LEA perspectives were very different in the way they remembered their experiences. The importance of leadership at both the state and regional levels was described by many participants as something that was either working or missing depending on the leadership style, skills or the priorities of the particular person serving in the leadership capacity.

Eleven Years After the Initial Implementation of Florida's Regional Partnerships

Over the past 11 years, Florida's Regional Professional Development Partnerships have evolved as the mechanism through which Florida's CSPD has been implemented. The partnerships continue to exist in an effort to meet the state's personnel development system requirements. There are nine state public universities that continue to serve as the fiscal agents for the Regional PDPs where they are physically located. The state currently provides each partnership with \$388,000 per year for implementing recruitment, preparation, and retention activities. Each of the nine partnerships now has a designated project coordinator who provides leadership to ensure that partnership activities are implemented and evaluated. The state has also continued to provide funding for a State CSPD Project (now the State Improvement Grant Technical Support Project) that provides support and technical assistance to the nine regional partnerships.

During this 11-year period, Florida's regional PDPS have been used as the state's mechanism for many other activities than those for which they were originally intended. They have served as the mechanism to address Goal 3 of Florida's State Improvement Grant (SIG). They have also been used to implement professional development for specific high-priority areas for personnel serving infants and young children ages birth-five with disabilities in collaboration with the Department of Health (DOH), Children's Medical Services, Early Steps (an early intervention agency funded by the IDEA), a use which occurred when the State of Florida was awarded a General Supervision Enhancement Grant (GSEG) funded through the U.S. Department of Education, Office of special Education Program (OSEP). When the Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services at the Florida Department of Education (now the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services) was provided funding in May of 2004

for a Pre-Kindergarten Technical Assistance and Training System (TATS), the Regional Professional Development Partnership mechanism was used to deliver training and technical assistance to personnel who provide services to pre-kindergartners with disabilities and their families. Regional PDPs were also used to implement training for local early intervention teams using a new statewide service delivery model in July 2004, in conjunction with the Florida Department of Health through its Early Steps program.

Participants who were originally involved with the implementation of the partnerships and are still involved, as well as those who became involved along the way and were currently participating, described the components of the current partnerships that seemed to be working , thereby allowing the partnerships to expand their responsibilities over the 11-year period. These components included collaboration, facilitative leadership, and the partnership mechanism as a regional forum for obtaining and sharing information.

Collaboration

One IHE participant was able to capture the sense of collaboration that existed 11 years after the initial implementation of the partnerships. This comment mirrored many other participants' comments: "Everyone holds the same philosophy of mutual respect and equality. . . . [W]e are in it and it is us." (T/RU13/12) Another IHE participant provided a description of the networking and collaboration that exists and how partners are committed to the process:

. . . I think it's that we've been able to develop over time a strong pattern or commitment, [a] stakeholder commitment to the collaborative process. There's buy-in . . . and that shows in the decisions that get made and the way that we work in our regional council. . . . It would be quite a bit different if there were not an underlying level of commitment. (T/RU12/5)

Several participants specifically talked about the connection and collaboration between IHEs and LEAs as being beneficial. One IHE participant specifically stated, “[T]he way that we’re connected with schools, the way we’re able to provide support for them [is very valuable].” (T/RU3/5) Another IHE participant echoed this same theme of connectedness: “[There is a] very strong networking and a very, very sharing kind of community.” (T/OU/9/11) An SEA participant also commented that what seemed to be working was the “connection between IHEs and school districts.” (T/RS5/5)

Leadership

The leadership provided by the SEA, the State CSPD Project, and the Regional Partnership coordinators was described by many participants. This leadership was described in terms of the style and skills of a particular leader, the level of support provided, and the consistency the leader was able to provide by serving in the position over time. One IHE participant commented on the current SEA leadership and how this was a distinct and positive change from the past:

I have seen positives and a distinct increase in direct involvement and visibility of the DOE, that level in the work of or regional partnership. So in other words, when I first started, the DOE was just an acronym. And now, increasingly I am so excited about the fact that DOE partners. [The current DOE Liaison,] for instance, directly meets with us, it's no longer [just] information sharing where they come and tell us what is happening there, and that's really useful and good. Increasingly using us as a window into what's really happening in our region, and where we can serve as a think tank and where they are more visible and very responsive. Even if there are things that we go, ‘could you just do this,’ and ‘no’ for a lot of reasons that can't happen, they are clearly supportive of our

work and that is really good. So the visibility and the direct involvement is really good. [Communication] not just through memos or just through information sharing, but through allowing us to think through issues with them and share whatever we have to say, and then you know, they are taking – I believe they are taking it seriously and helping our operation to be as effective as possible. (T/RU12/14)

Another IHE participant commented on the State CSPD Project Director’s leadership style as being a positive change from the previous type of leadership: “[The State CSPD Project Director’s] leadership has had a gigantic [impact]...in that because he wasn't heavy-handed and...he was very respectful... [H]e worked with groups and set the limits, but he would really work with people.” (T/OU6/21)

In addition, another IHE participant commented on the State CSPD Project Director’s leadership and specifically noted the importance of providing consistent leadership over time: “I think having stability with the leadership of the [state] CSPD Project over the past 11 years has been one of the strong points that has kept the Florida CSPD partnership as strong as it was.” (T/OU22/6)

One IHE participant specifically talked about the importance of the leadership the Regional Partnership coordinators provided. This participant stated, “It took a lot of commitment on the part of the [regional leader. She] had to spend a great deal of time nurturing that and building those personal relationships and that trust factor.” (T/OU9/14)

Obtaining and Sharing Information

Many participants in the study talked about the partnership mechanism as the place for obtaining and sharing information, and not just information related to personnel development issues, but a wide variety of topics. The LEA participants in particular talked about their

partnership mechanism as the one place where they could go and get information at one time from the state and the universities, as well as learn about what other school districts were doing. One IHE participant discussed the importance of the flow of information, directly from the state to the districts and the partnership providing the forum for this to take place:

[W]hat's really working well is the sharing of information we get, [the] kind of flow-through information that can get from the DOE through the role that the [State CSPD Project] has. [That level of involvement] keeps [regional stakeholders] aware that they're a part of a larger picture. I think without that, I think that we would be looking and operating and feeling very, very local and I think then local interests of our stakeholders would start to emerge, and it would become less collaborative, less cooperative and more competitive. . . . I think they feel tied to a much larger mission, [a] much larger vision and a larger picture. (T/RU12/5)

Another LEA participant stated, "PDP activities are one of the ways we find out what's going on and share with everybody. We're sharing and getting information." (T/RL18/8) One IHE participant noted the value of obtaining information to his role as a faculty member: "I also feel that I have benefited from knowing more of the up-to-date information from the Department of Education. As a new faculty member, I wasn't real aware of all the things that were occurring at the Department level." (T/OU22/3) Another LEA participant commented on why she participated in regard to the importance of giving as well as receiving information: "It provided an opportunity to get information about available resources and services that you wouldn't get otherwise. It also gives you a chance to combine resources for development of programs and gives you an opportunity to avoid duplication of services." (T/RL20/8)

In addition to describing what was working, participants also described what seemed to be missing. The majority of comments fell in to three categories, a lack of meaningful parent involvement, a decline in membership, and a need for alignment of all agencies within a region that have personnel development as a priority.

Lack of Meaningful Parent Involvement

Several participants talked about the need for parents to be not only involved in the work of the regional partnerships, but for that involvement to be meaningful. One parent participant described how she felt about her experience with being involved. She felt that professionals did not value the parent perspective and that there was poor communication, especially from universities. She also explained that there was no mechanism in place for new members to feel welcomed and valued. “I was the token parent, placed on the council to meet their grant requirement.” (T/RL19/14)

An IHE Participant also described a lack of meaningful parent involvement:

[W]ithin the partnerships, the other things that seemed to be missing was a strong parent component, that we have parents who are there in name but not always feeling as valuable probably as they could because some of the jargon that we use in special education is confusing to parents, and then some of the parents don't have a big interest in teacher recruitment activities. It is part of the problem that there's not really a clear role for parents. The system is a big one in not knowing any of the history of the project or of special education. A lot of what we do seems to build on that history. (T/OU22/10)

Another IHE participant reflected a similar understanding:

I know we had a tough time [in our partnership] trying to recruit parents. We always said that we are for the children, but we also wanted parent representation. And that was tough

trying to actually get parents to participate at these regional meetings. I think scheduling was part of it. I think parents either are too militant in their view and may not be embraced fully by the members. Or they are not well versed in the whole field, and when they get together with professionals who use jargon and use all kinds of fancy language, they may feel somewhat discouraged and will not continue their participation.

(T/OU7/22)

Decline in Membership

Several of the participants mentioned that although the partnership concept seemed to be working, they were seeing a sudden decline in member participation. One LEA participant talked about this decline:

The only thing I would have said in the beginning is it took a while to get everybody to the table. [W]hen we first started it wasn't all five districts [that chose to participate.] . . . When we would get back, I would call some of my counterparts and say, "Why weren't you there? You know, this is something you really need to put your time in," and then they would say, 'Well what am I going to get out of it', and we would talk about some of the ideas that had been bounced around. But once we could get people coming in, then I think it started moving. And now, that last meeting I went to, it looks like the attendance is not as good again, and I'm not sure why. I don't know if it's the time; I don't know if it's because ESE directors have so much on their plates, but the last couple of meetings I went to there was probably half the group there. That really upset me. For one thing, if I'm going to take off to come, I want everybody else to take off to come so it can be an effective meeting. (T/OL15/26)

An IHE participant echoed this same experience:

The whole partnership concept is working [but] I'm not sure it is working as well as it could. In other words, our membership has really been declining. I'm not sure [of] the reason for that. We used to have about 20 people attending; now we're lucky to get 10. I'm not sure whether it's because of the refocus[ing] that we've had within the last year on strictly training at the university level rather than inservice type stuff. (T/OU11/4)

Need for Alignment of all Agencies within a Region

Even though the current partnership mechanism brings together many different stakeholders within the same region, this configuration is based on one factor, the university catchment areas. Of the agencies that participate, many have different regional configurations based on different factors. This is especially true for the Bureau's IDEA, Part B funded discretionary projects, and many of the staff members on these projects are members of the regional partnerships. For example, within one regional partnership, there may be three Florida Diagnostic Learning Resource Centers (FDLRS) that participate because of different regional configurations. This is especially confusing for school district personnel who access services from all of the different projects. Alignment of resources within a similar geographic region was an issue mentioned by many of the study's participants. One local regional partnership member stated, [S]ome . . . coordination between all of the different agencies that are providing services [would be very helpful to district special education administrators. It would be helpful if we had the same districts and served the same people." (T/RU3/5)

Another IHE participant talked about the need to align the regional resources:

The fact that the discretionary project boundaries don't overlap or don't synchronize, and that again, is a reflection of in the past, the way Florida worked was that each

discretionary project was perhaps a silo unto itself. . . . So, it can only partially serve, [and] that really complicates [things], just the networking and the information sharing and the collaboration. So that is definitely I'd say very major; if Florida really wants to do some realigning and streamlining, that would be a top priority, I would say. (T/RU12/10)

In addition to participants describing what seemed to be working and what seemed to be missing, they also provided insight into the benefits they believed they derived from participating as a member of a regional partnership. They also described barriers they perceived to hamper or impede the efforts of the partnership.

Benefits

In general, all participants shared their feeling that they benefited in some way from their participation in a regional partnership. Many participants talked about overall benefits such as improved relationships, collaboration, and communication, while other described specific benefits to the agency they represented.

Improved Relationships, Collaboration, and Communication. One university participant who was involved with the initial implementation of the partnerships described a time, after the first years of doing this work, when the IHEs had a realization about partnering: "If we [IHEs] don't do it with them, they could do it by themselves." (T/OU8/23) This participant characterized this period as a time when "roles and hats began to disappear and people began to focus on finding a solution to the problem." (p. 24) This characterization reflects an improvement over the poor relationships of the past. Through the work of partnership, people began to work together as a group, focusing on a common goal rather than protecting individual agency priorities or personal positions as noted in the past.

Many of the study's participants also described the level of trust, respect, and esteem for partnership members which had developed and saw this as a real benefit. One state-level participant captured this feeling by saying,

One of the biggest benefits [is] that each member of the regional council sees the world through the eyes of the other members of the council, and they learn – for example, district people learn some of the opportunities and barriers that university faculty have in terms of getting programs in place. University people learn about the opportunities and barriers district people face. I think everybody learns each other's perspective, and then as a result of the understanding that each has of the other, they can then better plan together. . . . But there are intervening variables that everybody has to deal with in their different bureaucracies that impede the partnering process. But I think that as folks learned what each other's intervening variables were, they brainstorm ways around them. (T/OS2/31)

Participants also described the connections, collaboration, and networking that partnerships provide as being a benefit to both individuals and the agencies they represent. One IHE participant described this benefit:

I think networking among the district people is valuable in that there's a lot of sharing of strategies and ways of addressing issues and interpretations and that kind of thing. Now that sharing is able to take place, it helps people to be more on the same page with each other because they're all trying to address the same issues. (T/OU10/25)

Another IHE participant shared a similar belief: “We all profited from the professional networking that went on, and that networking allowed us to do other things that weren't even CSPD-related.” (T/OU9/18)

Another IHE participant talked about the specific benefits of collaboration and communication:

They [regional PDPs] brought everybody together and that was real[ly] beneficial. Just seeing what was going on and communicating because even though [many] of the surrounding areas are very large, [with] a lot of people involved, people don't have time to find out what is going on in the different schools, universities, and so forth. So that was very helpful to get together. What we found is there's a lot of things that people are doing, little projects here and little projects there, and there's a lot to be gained just from sharing the information. (T/RL18/5)

Participants also provided information regarding the benefits their individual agencies received from involvement in the regional partnerships. Those who commented about benefits to the SEA focused on partnerships helping to provide an alignment around specific issues. One IHE participant stated, "Fragmentation was reduced" and another commented, "[The] state became more unified around similar issues." (T/OL14/14)

The benefits to the IHEs comprised the majority of comments. One SEA participant noted, "IHEs are more practical and the [partnerships] allow for a direct application." (T/RS5/3) Another IHE participant mirrored this remark: "Universities benefit from the collaboration with school districts. . . . [T]hey keep us connected and in touch. . . . [I]t provides universities with an environment to conduct research because a relationship exists." (T/RU13/11)

A few participants mentioned specific benefits to school districts. One LEA participant stated, "We had access to things that we wouldn't have had access to at all, in terms of advertising and spot commercials and the web pages. They also did surveys, just did a lot of things that we couldn't have done at a district level." (T/RL18/4) Participants also shared their

feeling that school districts “benefited through increased knowledge and skills of their personnel” as a direct result of the partnership structure and the activities that it was able to put in place. (T/OU11/3)

Barriers

Participants were asked to describe either internal or external barriers they believed to be present during their participation in a regional partnership. While there were a few comments about general barriers, most participants described specific agency barriers.

General barriers. One SEA participant identified a barrier as “a lack of understanding of how to measure the importance of partnerships.” Another IHE participant mentioned the annual (as opposed to multi-year) funding cycles as a barrier, saying,

Another barrier is the fact that the grants are annual grants. And every year I have issues with getting money in time in order to pay myself, in order to pay tuition; there are always issues that go on with that, in the fact that they are annual grants. If they were three-year grants it would help a lot. Five-year grants would be wonderful.... I mean basically, we're continuing a lot of the same activities year after year. (T/OU11/8)

Several participants specifically mentioned leadership as being a barrier, especially at the regional level. The concept of leadership as a barrier was captured in two ways: the type of leader and the negative effects of turnover in leadership personnel. One IHE participant described the type of leadership style that was not conducive to the building a sustaining of partnerships as being a barrier: “[A] leader [who] believes they have to be “in control” and “in charge” does not do well in this type of work.” (T/RU13/12)

In regard to change-over in leadership personnel as a barrier, one participant stated, “[With the change-over] in leadership [of our Superintendent, because he] did not see the real

benefit [of our agency] participating. He did not support the work of one of the partnership's major players, [so] the initiative fell to the wayside. [It was like you are] in vogue one day and out the next.” (T/OL17/10) This comment was particularly interesting in that the leadership mentioned was specific to the agency being represented, not just the leadership with the partnership or state-level leadership involved with CSPD. This shows that in order for an agency’s participation to be warranted, there must be support from top-level leaders.

Two participants specifically mentioned loss of personnel who worked with the partnerships over a long period of time and knew the history of Florida’s partnerships as being a barrier, noting in particular, how this related to the sustainability of the partnerships taking a long time to build. The importance of institutional memory in assisting new partners to “carry the torch” was described in the following way:

You have older people in the system in a lot of cases and at some point they're all going to, they're pretty close to the same age for some reason, and so you're going to have a massive loss of people who...[know] the history. The people that are running it do not seem to be preserving or themselves have little history of how we used to do business, and there's a real danger that the different pieces won't fit together once you start graying out and getting rid of people [who] exist right now. And in this case we are talking about how institutions meshed, how the public school system and the private school system and the training programs for the universities and various things all came together, [and] you're changing all of them so much that there's not only not a history with the institutions, but there's not going to be a history of how they interact and work together. That can be real hard to build back. (T/RL18/14)

Specific agency barriers. The majority of the participants mentioned barriers that were specific to a particular agency.

SEA barriers identified included its organizational structure, collaboration with other Bureaus within the organization, constant change in key personnel, and timeliness of funding. In regard to the organizational structure, one IHE participant stated, “There is inflexibility at the state [level]; the state organizational structure hinders timely and quick communication.”

(T/OU8/26)

Participants mentioned the need for the different Bureaus within the SEA organization to have better communication and collaboration. One IHE participant stated, “[There is a] lack of understanding each other’s roles; [the Bureaus within the SEA] do not know how to work together; they have separate laws. If you don’t get other Bureaus involved, they can become barriers to you.” (T/OU8/28)

Another SEA barrier mentioned was the constant change in key leadership personnel. The same IHE participant from above stated:

I think it’s just a matter of keeping the concept going. You know, the personnel changes that occurred and you’ve always got to worry if you go from one head of the Bureau to another, and then there was also some changing of the Bureau to something else, and you know, you had different kinds of people coming in the Commissioner’s office and so forth and what are they going to change? So there’s always that kind of dynamic tension on the system that’s a political one. And you worry about your friends, particularly in the State Education Agency, you know, are they going to be there tomorrow or are they going to be put into something else, some other kind of agency, and then what is the impact of that on us? I think there’s

always that kind of political kind of thing out there. It can be a barrier if you let it worry you.
(T/OU8/26)

Another SEA barrier mentioned was the timeliness of funding. An IHE participant described this barrier in the following way:

One of the main barriers that I had early on was the timeliness of funding arriving. That has improved over time, but it's still an issue and the funding not arriving on time just creates all kinds of you know, bureaucracy within the universities to have to do bridge funding to make sure staff members continue to get paid and things like that.

(T/RU22/11)

Specific IHE barriers included the organizational structure of the university and the focus on enrollment as a barrier to collaboration. In regard to the organizational structure, one SEA participant stated:

[The] structure at the university promoted isolation among different colleges. [It] promotes 'silo' thinking rather than innovation. [Universities] focus on who gets the money, which is doing the courses, who's teaching the courses. . . . [There is a] need to move from considering individual needs to sharing collectively for the good of the whole.

(T/RS5/3)

An IHE participant mentioned something similar: “[Universities] have a lot of procedural red tape; these are the challenges and restrictions of university work.” (T/RU13/15)

Another IHE participant described the university and its focus on enrollment as a barrier to collaboration:

. . . I understand that our state university system is a business but with the increased, and ongoing focus and ongoing pressure for FTE, [this] is really a barrier for collaboration. I

think [they need] to just think collegially and... have an open door and open arms and open hearts to any level of collaboration for the greater good. But what happens first in every conversation is, will this help our FTE? And there is such a history in our university system as with all our other systems; probably we're trying to move away from our competitive silo thinking to some real collaborative regional planning. So, the history, just that entrenched mindset and commitment to traditional programming, traditional students and the whole FTE thing . . . is lagging behind the rest of our regional thinking. . . . The fact that they can't come out from under the pressure of the whole FTE thing keeps them locked in. Like conflicting messages, be collaborative or you'd better get you individual FTE up, so do you really want to share programmatically with the private colleges or with one another? Not if they think it will steal potential students. (T/RU12/13)

Specific regional partnership barriers included leadership if it was viewed as poor, poor processes and procedures for determining needs and the associated equity issues, and wide geographic distances to be covered in order to participate in the partnership. Several of the participants mentioned leadership as a barrier, especially if the leader was thought to be lacking in skills to facilitate the partnership effectively or lacked an understanding of the partnership concept. One LEA participant described her experience with the partnership during a time when she believed the leadership to be lacking:

One particular year, the leadership was a little iffy. The leadership was a little weak actually for two or three years and that's why we finally ended up in one place. It was because it was an added responsibility for the people involved – it was difficult for them

to give it the attention that it needed. It's not that they were not capable people. It's just that it was another duty assigned. (T/RL20/9)

Another IHE participant talked about a partnership having a “leader who viewed the partnership as a badge of honor rather than mutual respect and honesty.” She also mentioned this same leader and how “turnover has devastating results on a partnership if there is no 'system' to guard against an attitude in direct conflict with the philosophy of the partnership.” (T/RU13/12)

Participants in the study also mentioned poor processes and procedures for determining needs and the associated equity issues as being a regional partnership barrier. One LEA participant characterized the process of identification of regional needs in her partnership as “The Lofty Dreamers versus the Implementers.” She stated, “[C]ertain people had status within the group and if they had an idea, everybody else would go along. The dreamer would come in and spin the tale and [the group] would go off on this yellow brick road and pretend it really happened.” (T/OL17/9)

An SEA participant shared his feelings about his experience with a specific school district in terms of how partnership activities were identified and how funds would be used. The participant attributed this to a “negative attitudinal barrier,” a change in leadership personnel in the district and therefore, a lack of institutional memory. He stated,

Not only has there been difficulty with [this particular ESE Director's collaboration] with the professional development partnerships but also with the FDLRS program and the programs in her area. What she wants to do is assure that her county is getting full due, but what she does is she insists that certain dollars be spent in her county. Well, with the professional development partnerships, that's really not quite how it works. It does not work based on “This county gets this percent of dollars because we have so many

children in schools and so many teacher who are out-of-field,” it's a collaborative, priority-driven process and it's not the dollars were assigned to you just because you're there. (T/OS2/37)

One factor that many participants mentioned as a regional barrier was the geographic distances they have to drive to be able to participate in their partnership. One participant captured her frustration with this issue:

[Take] the distance for my partnership. [We] have a large partnership with [many] school districts and it's quite a distance. If I traveled from one end to the other end, we're talking almost 300 miles, if you don't do something centrally – I mean there are still some of them [who have] to travel 150 miles even if we do something central. (T/OU11/7)

Another IHE participant mentioned the long drive to get to meetings in her region: “Long drives to attend meetings cause participation from one district to be low.” (T/OU6/23)

Section Summary

This section described what participants in the study believed to be working and missing in the implementation of Florida's regional PDPs. Participants specifically mentioned collaboration, facilitative leadership, and partnerships as a regional forum for obtaining and sharing information as components that seemed to be working. In terms of what seemed to be missing, participants noted a lack of meaningful parent involvement, a recent decline in membership participation, and a need for alignment of all agencies involved in the work of the partnership. Participants also discussed benefits they believed they received from their participation as well as any barriers they thought impeded the partnership.

In the final section, a discussion of whether or not the participants in the study believed the partnerships are of value is provided. Details on whether or not participants believed the

regional partnerships should continue are also provided. This section ends with a description of whether or not the participants believed anything about the state's system of personnel development changed over the 11 years due to the implementation of regional professional development partnerships.

Are Florida's regional partnerships of value?

Participants gave a unanimous 'yes' when asked whether or not they thought the partnerships were of value. The majority discussed the value in relation to the change and impact the partnerships have had on the state's system of personnel development over the 11 years.

Others talked generally about why they thought they were of value. One IHE participant stated:

It is a problem-solving model and I think that gives it added value. The regional partnerships are of value because it represents our commitment to change. It also gives us the ability and it supports our working smarter because while funds get tighter, we have to work smarter. They allow us to institutionalize the change process. It has become the way we work and there's value to that, so we're not just coming together when there is a crisis, but we're coming together to be proactive. (T/RU12/18)

An LEA participant described the value he believed the partnerships have:

I think they're definitely of value, and they may be one of our most critical mechanisms of providing information and data to the people who are making decisions or people who have the option of talking to people that are making the decisions. They may become the main way we have of providing information to people making decisions that is not dominated by the need to be cooperative and not say the 'Emperor has no clothes'. We have data and we can make data-based decisions and we can say something is wrong. (T/RL18/17)

Should the regional professional development partnerships be continued?

All participants stated that they thought the regional partnerships should continue. An SEA participant stated,

Yeah, I think they should be [continued] because that is our connection with the college level and we need to continue to do that. We can make a lot of changes if we can get in at the preservice level and not have to make those changes later. I think as endorsements and highly qualified [people] come on board and we're trying to get everybody aligned, they're going to play a very big role in helping us do that, and they need to be well aware of how they're preparing their teachers or what those teachers are lacking when they start to go out to work in schools. (T/RS5/7)

An IHE participant also shared her thoughts on why she thought the regional partnerships should be continued:

Yes, I think it works. I think that we're out there providing a way for teachers to get their certification, a way for people who are interested in special education to come in and get their degree, and if we're not there to do that I don't know that there is another vehicle to do that. I think that the way CSPD is set up because we have the regional partnerships, I think we're really able to address the needs that might not be [met], because even though everybody has a need, maybe in behavior, what the rural districts need is what...we can address differently than what we do for bigger districts. We can really personalize things, I think, and that's what makes it more effective. It is more personal and I think that's the key. It's like people in your region have somebody that they know and can call and ask questions, and find out about things whereas a State agency is more intimidating. (T/RU3/12)

One IHE participant described being at an annual State IDEA, Part B Discretionary Projects meeting and how people perceived the regional partnerships:

I saw that being reinforced today [at the annual State Discretionary Projects meeting] with having CSPD as the mechanism to bring people together. When we met today in our regional groups, CSPD seemed to be somewhat of the hub in which all people were connected, with the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD) project, with the Florida's Technical Assistance and Training System (TATS) project, with the Florida Diagnostic Learning Resources System (FDLRS) project, the Florida Inclusion Network (FIN) project, all have folks within the CSPD network, and while . . . I sit on some of their councils, like the FDLRS steering committee councils, I don't sit on any of the other ones with CARD or the Florida Inclusion Network. So it's nice to see everybody's coming together and has a stake in the CSPD partnerships. (T/OU22/26)

Another IHE participant provided a description of why she thought the partnership model should be continued:

I think it is really a transformational model. [It's] transformational by the fact that it's empowering. It empowers all the layers of stakeholders that we have, and our ESE directors now are, when they come to regional council meetings, they are actively looking for solutions and looking to parents and teachers and others in the universities. You know, they're looking outside of themselves. The districts are looking beyond themselves to help generate solutions, and as all our stakeholders are, and I think that it is just a phenomenal thing to have happen . . . and there's this givingness and there's a level of caring that is entering into all of the conversations, and I think that any model that can

generate that, [then] you get less resistance at the grassroots level when the people who are impacted felt that they have participated in the decision making. (T/RU12/16)

Even though all participants expressed their belief that partnerships were of value and thought they should continue because of the connections they provide for professionals around the state, when asked whether or not they would continue to participate if the funding for partnerships activities were to cease, participants' comments were varied. Comments tended to focus on the continuity and consistency of involvement that currently exists among the members and noted that if the funding were to cease, then a separation would eventually occur. One IHE participant stated:

[I]t would be more difficult. I think some of the relationships and some of the partnerships that have been built will be good as long as the people are there, the current people, [but] when they go, will other people be of the same value? Because what I see in the partnerships is, sure, money may be a coagulant but at the same time once you start working with each other, there's another kind of bond that comes. So I think a lot of the partnerships right now have people who are very pleased with [whom] they're working with and they like each other, and even without the money I think they would continue to work together because just of the fact that they have this regard for each other. But once any one of those parties change, I have a suspicion that the partnership will start to deteriorate. Unless somebody starts bringing up, okay, I'm going to be leaving or I'm going to be retiring and so forth and I'm going to bring up somebody to train and get to know, that kind of thing.

So I think the relationships that have been built will sustain them even without funding, but we live in a world where resources are very scarce, and you know, there's

only so much you can do without resources. So, I think if the funding ceased over time less and less of the partnerships would . . . fewer and fewer of the partnerships would be in existence because they do need some kind of sustenance. It can't all come from the people working together and so forth. There's some other catalyst that's kind of needed and just the kind of support they're getting together and so forth. (T/OU8/30)

The majority of participants talked about how limited funding would mean limited activities, which in turn would lead to limited involvement in partnership activities. Although most believed that people would still come together to collaborate and share information, the time spent to do this seemed to be measured against the amount of benefit they would receive. One SEA participant put it this way: "Partners would still come together to collaborate but the range of activities would be limited." (T/OU1/27) An IHE participant shared the same belief:

I think it's of value, but people's time . . . is extremely valuable and very limited. I definitely think the relationships that we built with our ESE directors out there would help us in that position or in that capacity. But as far as being together in a group . . . I don't know if they would come together to meet, but I do think that the ESE directors and the people on the council have built relationships that they would continue to use.

(T/RU3/13)

An LEA participant described something similar but specifically noted the importance of the regional partnership coordinator and their staff in getting the actual work done to complete the activities,

I don't know [if people would continue to come together] as much. I think it is a good activity and I think people see the point of it, but I don't know that people could do the day-to-day nitty details and actually pull something off. Because by the time I had to call

the university, the various members of the department set everything up, I couldn't do it. I don't have time to call everybody. So without somebody to call and set it up, I don't think any of the partners could, on their own, organize the partnership and if you don't bring everybody in, it becomes less and less effective. (T/RL18/19)

Change to the State's System of Personnel Development

Participants were asked if they believed that anything about the state's system of personnel development changed due to the implementation of regional professional development partnerships. While there were several general comments, the majority of comments described improved relationships, including improved collaboration among the SEA, IHE and LEA, as a result of the partnerships. A few of the participants described how their perspectives on the importance of the roles other partners play had been broadened. Two participants specifically mentioned how the planning processes once used have become a natural part of the way of work within the partnerships.

Improved relationships. One IHE participant talked about Florida's current system of personnel development in regard to improved relationships:

It is successful now because of the interpersonal relationships that exist, but also because the money is substantial enough that it encourages people to come together to make sure they 'get their piece of the pie.' People have a bigger mission . . . they see the overall picture. (T/OU10/30)

Another IHE participant, who was involved during the beginning stages of partnership implementation, made a "then and now" comparison: "I really saw [that] through those local partnerships [there was] just a dramatic shift in what took place in [Florida], from antagonism and lack of cooperation between school and universities to real community connections."

(T/OU6/19) One SEA participant specifically described the relationship that now exists between the universities and the school districts and the shift that occurred:

I believe that everybody understands their role and the university folks are looking at the districts as their customers. So they've become much more practical in their orientation because they have to be preparing personnel to meet the needs of the children in their local region, and they get input from their ESE directors or their FDLRS program people or other school district personnel to bring them, you know, if they were ivory tower dwellers, to bring them to the reality of what's practical. They have a whole other level of input that was not there before. (T/OS2/31)

One university faculty member described how his experience with the partnership provided him with a better understanding and a new perspective on the partnership model:

[W]hen I first started with the PDP project, it really did open my eyes to the dynamic roles that the special education directors play . . . and the multiple roles that they wear that I wasn't aware of as a new faculty member just entering the field. And to see that the ESE directors had a real good handle on curriculum, on disabilities and the various disabilities and the unique disabilities that don't often occur and things like medically involved students, the SP&P, the special policies and procedures, having such deep knowledge of that, and then psych services and how that falls under special education. It broadened my perspective of their role. (T/RU22/31)

An LEA participant shared this thought: “There's a lot more collaboration between the universities and the districts than there was prior to the partnerships. [Partnerships] gave the catalyst for having the groups come together.” (T/RL20/12)

Two participants specifically mentioned the change in the way regional partnership needs are now identified and planning processes are used. One LEA participant stated:

[Before], the university wrote the grant based on the university's needs and [it] was seen as a 'compliance' document. . . . Now they are more careful about getting people involved from each of the regions. Once representation was acquired, every representative gave input and started to be recognized as partners . . . then they began to prioritize regional needs and address concerns. . . . [R]ather than a lofty plan, there was respect for each others' input, leading to direct results with the implementation in the regions.

(T/OL17/11)

Section Summary

In this section, I discussed whether or not the participants in the study believed the partnerships are of value. The majority of participants discussed the value in relation to the change and impact the partnerships have had on the state's system of personnel development. Others talked generally about why they thought the partnerships were of value. I also provided details on whether or not participants believe the regional partnerships should continue. All participants stated that partnerships should continue because the connections they provide for professionals around the state. However, when asked whether or not they would continue to participate if the funding for partnerships activities were to cease, participants' comments were varied. The section ends with a description of whether or not the participants believed anything about the state's system of personnel development changed over the 11 years due to the implementation of regional professional development partnerships. The majority of comments described improved relationships, including improved collaboration among the SEA, IHE and LEA, and as a result of the implementation of regional professional development partnerships.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

In this final chapter, major conclusions from the study's findings are discussed in relation to the existing literature on collaborative professional development partnerships as a mechanism for state-level systems change. Questions for future research on the value of using the partnership mechanism for system change are proposed. The chapter concludes with recommendations to other states considering partnerships as a mechanism for implementing systems change.

This study examined Florida's regional special education professional development partnerships as the mechanism for state-level systems change from the point of view of those who initiated the partnerships and those who are currently involved. The goal of the study was to understand if regional PDPs as the mechanism for implementing the CSPD mandate in Florida were of any value to those involved and if they think partnerships had any affect on the state's system of personnel development. Chapter IV provided a description of how Florida implemented a CSPD prior to regional PDPs and explained why the regional model was selected to implement Florida's Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) from the perspectives of those involved. The findings in Chapter 4 and the existing literature on collaborative professional development partnerships as a mechanism for state-level systems change provided the basis for the following conclusions.

Conclusion 1: Critical Importance of Leadership

Klienhammer-Trammil (1996) emphasized the need for state-level leadership in working with initiatives that are sustainable over time. Danzberger (1990) and Tushnet et al. (1996) also emphasized the importance of the involvement of top-level leadership in developing and

implementing educational partnerships targeted at systems change. The literature suggests that strong SEA leadership is needed to support initiatives that bring together different entities within a system. Without this leadership, entities function within their individual environments without any clear, coordinated linkages to other parts of the system.

Chapter IV described the type of leadership participants felt was provided by the SEA prior to the implementation of Florida's regional CSPD partnerships. This leadership was characterized as inadequate, not facilitative, and heavy-handed. The study's findings suggested that although there was a leader in charge at the state level (i.e., there was top-level leadership), it was the type of leadership provided and the personality of the person leading that led to minimal implementation, poor relationships among participants, and a general lack of enthusiasm. Giles (1980) suggested that when stakeholders have concerns involving effective coordination in the work of these types of partnerships, it is due to a lack of clarification of the SEA's role, as well as differing perspectives on who should have the ultimate decision-making authority. In order for relationships between the three entities to evolve towards a more collaborative way of work, the SEA must be able to move away from a traditional top-down approach to leadership, involving the characteristics of power, persuasiveness, and the ability to take unilateral action to change its entire role structure in order to experience the duality of partnership and sharing of power.

According to Chrislip and Larson (1994), an effective leader must guide and coordinate the decision-making process in developing and implementing partnerships:

The power of position is of little help in this world of [partnerships], nor are the traditional, hierarchical, political, confrontational models of leadership. Those who lead collaborative efforts must rely on a new vision of leadership and new skills and behaviors

to help communities and organizations realize their visions, solve problems, and get results. (p. 38)

There was an overall lack of a coordinated effort for implementing a CSPD in Florida in the late 1980s; however, in the early 1990s three components came together at the same time to provide the leadership and direction for addressing the states' CSPD. These three components were described in detail in Chapter IV. While the literature does not address these specific components, it does confirm that a clear commitment from state-level leadership is extremely important in this type of work (Tafel and Eberhart, 1999). The literature has also recognized the importance of having a person such as a new, visionary leader who can provide not only a certain type of leadership, as well as the vision and appropriate facilitation for initializing partnerships. Grobe (1993) discussed not only the importance of having top-level leadership, especially in the beginning stages of partnership development, but also stated:

Partnerships generally begin because a school or community leader with an idea or a vision starts the process. This individual, sometimes called a broker, convenes a series of meetings with various players which result in commitments to do something about the issue. Over time, this individual generally allows authority and ownership to shift, either to a broad-based group or project staff, or both. The initial broker, a neutral convener knowledgeable about several organizational worlds and able to help partners bridge differences and set common goals, is an important player, yet few partnerships survive and grow if leadership does not expand beyond a single individual. (p.23)

Conclusion 2: Importance of Relationships

The literature suggests that historically, relationships between state education agencies, institutions of higher education, and local education agencies have not been positive in regard to

meeting the educational needs of students with disabilities (Tanner, 2005, p.160). These three entities have often worked in very distinct, separate systems from each other even though they have been working towards a common goal. Study participants and documents related to the time period prior to regional PDPs in Florida described the lack of communication, collaboration, mistrust, and a lack of understanding about the unique and important role of each entity (i.e., the SEA, IHEs, and LEAs) had to play.

As described in Chapter IV, the Alternative Training Initiative (ATI), an initiative implemented by the Florida Department of Education in conjunction with school district partners to address the critical teacher shortages, hindered the collaboration between the SEA, IHEs, and LEAs because the IHEs saw it as a way for the state to do away with university teacher preparation programs (or, at the very least, to decrease their enrollment). The ATI initiative is just one example of the three entities having competing priorities and not working together towards a common goal. What was the intent of the IHEs in providing teacher preparation? Was it to authentically educate and train personnel so the ultimate goal could be achieved, and if so, what type of accountability was there to ensure this took place? The SEA and the LEAs had a high level of direct accountability from the federal government due to the EAHCA requirements and the day-to-day work that directly impact students. Was it the direct accountability that was missing for the IHEs, along with their primary focus on receiving enough money from enrollment that caused there to be separate functioning between the entities, as opposed to working collaboratively? Gray (1989) stated, "Collaboration establishes a give and take among the stakeholders that is designed to produce solutions that none working independently could achieve. In this way, they all depend on each other to produce mutually beneficial solutions." (p. 29) The SEA and the LEAs had to depend on each other so that the ultimate result could be

achieved and the mutual benefit to these entities was clear. However, the IHEs did not have to depend on the SEA or the LEA and, therefore, in some ways did not see a mutual benefit from being involved collaboratively. Reed (n.d.) supported this same understanding and explained the relationships that existed between the SEA, IHEs, and LEAs and why they may have been at odds with each other:

[O]rganizations such as SEAs, colleges, and local education agencies (LEAs), and professional organizations have little experience with such cooperative efforts.

Unfortunately, these constituencies are sometimes at odds with one another, and the atmosphere of trust that is necessary for collaborative planning is absent.

Conclusion 3: Developmental Nature of Partnerships

Padak et al. (1994) described partnerships as evolving and going through stages. After three years of implementing partnerships, informants “commented about smooth and successful functioning which they saw as due to greater cooperation and less protectionism of individual agendas and hard work among all key stakeholders to help the group identify common goals and learn to function together” (p.7). The findings from this study support the literature relative to the developmental nature of partnerships. According to Anderson (1993), partnerships look different at each stage of a change process. In Anderson’s model, partnerships would be seen as “one-shot” and supplemental during the Maintenance of the Old System Stage. The findings from this study suggested that in Florida the partnership mechanism was never viewed as one-shot or supplemental, although the Bureau only provided seed money during the beginning stages on implementation with the hope that they would eventually be institutionalized.

At the Awareness Stage, there is a realization that partnerships are needed and an integral part of the network. The system should see a long-term commitment and investment in

partnerships. The findings from the study showed that the state recognized that the partnership mechanism was needed and saw the concept of partnerships as an investment. This was reflected in the SEA providing continued and increased funding during the 11-year implementation period.

During the Exploration Stage, information sharing occurs and many entities would join forces to establish joint networks and new partners are added to already existing partnerships. The findings from this study showed that participants viewed the partnerships as a forum for both sharing and obtaining information. The partnerships have also seen the addition of new partners added over time (e.g., the Department of Health and regional early childhood agencies).

At the Transition Stage, partnerships are viewed as long-term features, discussion on how to best support networks occurs, and groups not associated with a partnership see the partnership as a source of empowerment. Participants in the study see the partnerships as long-term features, especially the state, since it has used the partnership mechanism for implementing initiatives such as the State Improvement Grant (SIG). The SEA has also increased the funding it provided to the partnerships substantially, signifying its support as a long-term feature. The SEA has also provided a leader who oversees the implementation of the partnerships that has been very involved in their work, which is another indication that the SEA not only views the partnerships as a long-term feature but as something for which a high level of support should be provided because of their importance.

At the Emergence of a New Infrastructure Stage, partnerships are seen as credible and a good source for obtaining information. Multiple partners have aligned and are moving towards the established vision. Findings from the study revealed that participants view partnerships as a good source for sharing as well as obtaining information and that multiple partners do come

together regionally to plan collaboratively however, a total alignment of all agencies within a region moving towards a common goal has not yet been realized. However, participants in the study did recognize that aligning regional resources and agencies as something that needs to happen in the future.

The last stage noted by Anderson is the Predominance of a New System. At this stage, people want to be a part of the established partnerships, which are the major source for acquiring relevant and needed information that they could not get anywhere else. They are also seen as a vehicle of communication throughout the system. Partnerships at this stage share in decision making and power. Findings from the study suggested that Florida's partnerships are a something people want to be involved in because they are seen as a major source for acquiring information, although some participants did mention a recent decline in membership participation. Future research will be needed to determine the cause of this and if it is related to the acquiring of relevant and needed information they could not get anywhere else. Participants in the study also stated that they did participate in shared decision making, although regional partnership coordinators were still viewed as ultimately responsible for the implementation of specific partnership activities.

When comparing the study's findings to Anderson's (1993) continuum of change, the partnership mechanism has made a change to the system of personnel development in Florida. The findings support the literature since, given enough time for partnerships to grow, there will be a predominance of a new system, one that includes an improvement in relationships, improved collaboration, new players and systems being involved, and a new way of work.

Conclusion 4: Readiness, Roles, and Responsibilities

According to Swan and Morgan (1993), five factors influence an initial collaborative effort: (1) local politics, (2) values and philosophy, (3) geography, (4) previous collaborative attempts, and (5) agency stability. In deciding the implement partnerships in Florida, the SEA, along with the CSPD Oversight Committee, may not have considered all five factors. This may have caused frustration for certain partners. The SEA assumed that, based on the information available at the time, this was the best approach to take in trying to create a statewide system of personnel development. The SEA also assumed that there was little, if any, partnering taking place between the different entities. What the state did not account for is that there may have been places in the state where some type of partnering was already taking place and between some of the regional partners and therefore these partners became frustrated with the initial planning processes and viewed them as a duplication of what they were already doing. The IHE participants, in particular, seemed to reflect more frustration with the processes and procedures than the other two groups. This appeared to be an issue of knowing that strategic planning was a good process, but finding it boring, laborious, and being “beyond that” in their practice.

The varying perspectives also reflect the differences in the roles and responsibilities each entity has in the overall process of ensuring an adequate supply of personnel to provide education and related services to students with disabilities. Frustration seemed to stem from partners grappling with the following questions, such as, what was each agency responsible for, how could they work together to meet the ultimate goal, and in doing so, what were the benefits each would receive from being a part of the partnership? In their study of 25 states engaged in collaboration, Hooper-Briar and Lawson (1991) described the importance of determining the readiness of the community before establishing collaborative partnerships. The findings from the

study support the literature in regard to determining not only the readiness to participate but also the importance in determining what relationships already exist that can be used to assist in building a collaborative partnership.

Conclusion 5: Benefits and Barriers

Jones (1998) stated, “Partnerships provide levers for change, reduce fragmentation, and create collective advocacy” (p. 142). Prior to partnerships, there was a one-size all approach to personnel development and the regional partnership mechanism was seen as a way for the state to consider regional needs, which they believed varied considerably. We can conclude from the findings that the use of regional PDPs as the mechanism for implementing Florida’s CSPD did improve communication and collaboration between the SEA, IHEs, and LEAs. We can also conclude that planning processes were also improved, although many participants still noted weak needs assessment and evaluation processes and duplication of efforts as barriers continued to exist, even after 11 years of implementation.

According to (Gray, 1989) in order for people to want to work together collaboratively, there must be a common goal, with each participating entity benefiting from the collaboration in some way. If there is no benefit, then there is no reason to be involved in a collaborative effort. We can conclude from the findings that members of the regional partnerships did not fully recognize the benefit of collaborating prior to and during the initial stages of partnership implementation. However, as appropriate leadership combined with a growing need, and support and funding was provided, they began to see the benefit gained from participating and have therefore continued their involvement over a period of time. This is consistent with the literature indicating that forming partnerships requires not only involving the right stakeholders (who have

a similar stake in outcomes) but also undergoing a lengthy trust-building period (Melaille & Blank, 1991).

The literature on barriers to the effective implementation of collaborative partnerships is described in terms of individual structural level barriers. Individual level barriers consist of changes to an individual as they move from working independently to working jointly.

According to Jones (1998), these barriers are reflected by individual feelings of fear, apathy, and cynicism. Barriers can include turf protection, negative attitudes, and philosophical differences.

Structural barriers consist of both the bureaucratic structures that each participating agency functions within and the actual collaborative processes used in a partnership.

Funding can also be viewed as a barrier. Several studies have found that funding was a major barrier to the effective implementation of collaborative partnerships (HHS, 1991).

Findings from this study support the literature on barriers to effective implementation of collaborative partnerships. Considerations for overcoming these barriers are noted in the Recommendations section of this chapter.

Conclusion 6: Importance of Institutional Memory and Active Involvement

The value of the partnerships was specifically described in terms of the change or impact the partnerships have had on the state's system of personnel development. We can conclude from these findings that participants thought partnerships served a purpose and over time they have evolved into a mechanism that is perceived as serving the purpose for which they were established.

Participants in the study noted that as long as current partnership members were involved in the work of the partnerships, they would continue, even without funding. However, participants thought that as time progressed, and partnership members changed, the institutional

memory of the partnerships and their importance would be lost and therefore people would not see the benefit from participating. This would therefore cause a drastic decline in membership. This finding supports the literature, in that unless a partner has a strong interest and has been an active member of a collaborative, it is unlikely that a future commitment will be made (Gardner, 1996).

Contributions of this Study

This study supports the literature in regard to the importance of leadership, relationships, between the SEA, IHE's, and LEAs; the developmental nature of partnerships; benefits and barriers of partnerships; and the importance of institutional memory and active involvement in implementing collaborative partnerships aimed at systems change. This study also adds to the literature by showing that when members of a partnership are provided with an environment that supports shared decision-making, contains facilitative leadership, values the contributions of all members, and provides enough time, relationships between an SEA, IHEs, and LEAs can improve.

However, even after 11 years of implementation, relationships between the SEA, IHEs, and LEAs can become weak if certain factors are not present. Factors include buy-in and support from top-level leadership, resources to support the work of the partnership, and valuing the collaborative way of work. While the regional PDPs provide a forum for the partners to come together on a consistent basis so relationships can continue, the fact that members from the different agencies change over time, causing a loss of institutional memory and the impact this has on the relationships that exist within a partnership will need to be examined further. This issue is especially important when there is a change in leadership personnel at the SEA or

regional partnership level. When change occurs in these positions, relationships have to be rebuilt.

This study is one of the only studies that has looked at the developmental nature of partnerships aimed at systems change over a lengthy period of time (i.e., 11 years). Berquist et al. (1995) stated the problems of maintaining a partnership and the changing nature of partnership have not received attention in most of the literature on collaboration and partnerships. Most partnerships are not together long enough or do not receive continued funding to have the ability to research what happens after the initial stages of implementation to maintenance and change (O'Brien-Libutti, 1997). Findings from this study in relation to the context during the initial stages of implementation from the perspective of those involved as well as the developing stages after initial implementation have added to the literature regarding how to support partnerships along the path of their maintenance, leading to the desired changes to the system.

Padgett et al. (2004) stated that most partnerships in the literature have been organized at the local level. Johnson, Zorn, Ta, Lamontagne, & Johnson (2003) also stated that little research exists in the literature that directly relates to interagency collaboration at the state level. This study has added to the literature as models of collaborative partnerships aimed at systems change at the state level have been described. Findings from the study will help to inform the work of federal, state and local education professionals as they seek ways to improve their state systems of personnel development.

Implications

This section will attempt to draw on some of the conclusions from a retrospective vantage point so Florida's 11-year experience with implementing partnerships as the mechanism for system change can provide valuable information to others considering this type of mechanism.

The hope is that the experience of these projects will enrich the understanding of partnerships for others considering implementation. The main conclusion is that, despite the growing pains Florida's regional PDPs experienced, the experience has allowed Florida (and hopefully others) to move forward toward a richer understanding of what these types of partnerships can accomplish.

1. It is important to define the system and its components prior to implementing partnerships so that any changes that are made to the system can be carefully monitored and evaluated. In Florida, the SEA knew that it needed to improve its system of personnel development and it knew what areas were in need of improvement, but it was unclear how the state defined this system and its components prior to implementing partnerships. The components that were described in relative isolation, lacking overall coordination.
2. Consider each smaller system's organizational structure that comprises the larger personnel development system to determine possible barriers to effective implementation of partnerships. In particular, there are organizational structures at both the SEA and IHE levels that were described in the study as being possible barriers to the implementation of partnerships. If barriers can be identified, strategies for overcoming them can be created.
3. Consider relationships that exist or do not exist but need to for creating a comprehensive system of personnel development. Consider benefits that each participating agency would receive from participating. If there is no benefit, then people will not participate. Also consider issues each partner may have in working with other partners. Prior to and during the initial stages of developing partnerships described in the study, relationships between the SEA, IHEs and LEAs were weak, lacking the essential skills of understanding, trust, respect, and value for one another. Consideration should also be given to only using

processes and procedures that are equitable and viewed as fair by all involved parties. In Florida, certain procedures of the original CSPD Oversight Committee, which did not allow for equal voting power by all involved parties, serve as an example of the unequal treatment of Committee members.

4. Consider top-level leaders who would be most effective in this type of work. Leaders who embrace the partnership concept and are facilitative (as opposed to being heavy-handed) seemed more effective in this type of work. Prior to partnerships, participants in the study found there to be a lack of leadership embracing these essential characteristics. However, when leaders emerged who had these skills, the system ultimately moved forward.
5. Consideration should be given to putting strategies in place to assist the partnerships when there is turnover in personnel, especially leadership personnel. Mentoring of new leadership personnel may be one strategy to consider. The importance of maintaining the institutional memory of the partnerships will be important to the overall sustainability. The findings from this study suggested that when there was turnover in leadership personnel, it had devastating effects on the partnership, since relationships that had been established had to be re-established, causing a partnership to lose focus and momentum. Along the same lines, consideration should be given to developing strategies that assist new members in becoming acclimated to the work of the partnership and to helping them to feel welcome and a part of the overall group.
6. The type and level of funding in regard to the intent of forming partnerships should be considered prior to implementing partnerships. In Florida, the SEA provided seed money to assist the partnerships with their initial implementation, with the hope that over time

they would become self-sustaining entities. However, it wasn't until the amount of funding was large enough that people began to take the work of the partnership seriously and therefore increased their involvement (i.e., money served as the impetus for agencies to want to participate). If the goal for the state is to sustain partnerships over time, consideration should be given to funding streams that provide funding consistently (i.e., general revenue dollars), as opposed to annual grant or grants that are competitive.

7. Thought should be given to the amount of time it will take to see actual results. The developmental nature of the partnership mechanism should be considered relative to this same issue.
8. When determining specific initiatives related to the system of personnel development, the state should consider how it can utilize the partnership mechanism as a resource and for implementation. It should also consider how the stakeholders involved in the work of the partnerships will perceive the initiative and/or how it might impact a specific agency involved in the partnerships. In Florida, prior to developing partnerships, the SEA implemented an initiative that was perceived by IHEs as negatively impacting their agency. This resulted in poor relationships between the SEA, IHE, and LEAs, which ultimately affected the initial forming of the partnerships.

Recommendations

In this section I provide recommendation for SEAs, IHEs, and LEAs based on the implications of this study.

SEA Recommendations

1. SEAs should consider how their own organizational structure enhances or impedes effective communication and collaboration. They should use this information to

- improve the communication and collaboration between the different Bureaus involved with personnel development so they are modeling coordination and collaboration, providing direction and information that is consistent.
2. SEAs should consider the skills and leadership style of the person who is responsible for the oversight of a state's CSPD. A leadership style that is facilitative and collaborative, rather than directive and top-down, appears to be more effective in this type of work.
 3. As SEAs consider using the partnerships as a mechanism for systems change, they should determine who the partners will be and assess the pre-partnership conditions (i.e., the level of collaboration that may already be occurring) prior to implementing any type of strategic planning process, so that members of a partnership do not have to participate in a process that does not move them forward.
 4. SEAs should consider new processes and procedures for increasing the timeliness of funding (and the type of funding) provided to sub-grantees so that partnership activities can begin and end on time, thereby making the continuation of activity implementation consistent over time.
 5. SEAs should consider using the partnership mechanism as the main forum for partners to obtain and share information as they consider the need for alignment of efforts in a region so that a truly coordinated comprehensive system of personnel development can exist.
 6. SEAs should consider putting into place mechanisms to help new leaders at the state, regional, and local levels to understand the important work of the partnerships.

- Therefore, when turnover occurs there is a way for new players to become acclimated quickly.
7. If an SEA values the partnership mechanism, as noted in the study's findings, then consideration should be given to providing funding through general revenue dollars that will allow for consistency, continuity, and sustainability over time.
 8. If an SEA considers involving parents in the work of the partnerships as a priority, then consideration should be given to how to more meaningfully involve parents in this type of work.
 9. If an SEA continues to use IHEs as the fiscal agents for the partnerships, thought should be given to giving direction on the importance of assigning the role of the partnership coordinator as a full-time responsibility, not as an added duty or a way to obtain tenure and promotion.
 10. Require a more rigorous process for using data to drive needs and for reporting outcomes. Provide feedback to all partners on the changes and impact they have made that the efforts of their work are revealed.

IHE Recommendations

1. Consider the existing structures within their institution that hinder the work of the partnerships, in particular, policies and procedures that are viewed as traditional, which do not allow non-traditional students to obtain degrees (i.e., only allowing students to attend full-time).
2. Consider the structural barriers that hinder collaboration between different departments or colleges (i.e., Arts and Sciences and the College of Education) if the

- goal of ensuring an adequate supply of highly qualified personnel is ever to be realized.
3. Re-examine their purpose for participating in the regional personnel development partnerships. This re-examination may include a discussion of how the focus on enrollment as the primary importance of the teacher preparation programs functions as a hindrance to effective implementation of partnership activities.
 4. If the IHEs continue to serve as the fiscal agents for the partnerships, consider providing a full-time faculty member who has responsibility only to the partnership as opposed to assigning this important leadership role to a faculty member as an added responsibility or so that he or she can obtain tenure and promotion.

LEA and Regional Recommendations

1. As leadership at the local school district level changes, LEA partnership members will need to help “carry the torch” so that those new to the way of work of the partnerships can become acclimated to their importance provide an institutional memory.
2. Regional PDPs will need to consider current processes and procedures for determining needs and re-acclimate current and new partners to the way of work of the partnership so that there is an understanding of equity with activity implementation.
3. Regional partnerships may also want to consider the distance that some partners must travel to participate in the work of the partnership as a possible barrier to decreased participation. Consideration should be given to technology that will enable members to participate from a distance. Prior to considering these tools for implementation,

they should be researched to ensure that they do not hinder the collaboration that is fostered during face-to-face meetings.

Ideas for Future Research

This study described regional professional development partnerships as the mechanism for systems change from the perspective of those involved prior to the forming of the partnerships and those more recently involved. The findings from this study point to a need for additional research. Future researchers are encouraged to replicate this study in order to determine if these types of partnerships are of value in other states with different contexts. Similar studies could be conducted with similar partnerships aimed at systems change that are not in the field of special education to determine if the information from this study applies to other fields, even those outside the field of education. Through this knowledge, we would be able to learn how different contexts affect the use of partnerships as a mechanism for systems change.

Future research is also needed to evaluate partnerships as a mechanism for systems change. An evaluation of partnerships involved in this type of work will assist organizations with implementing these types of structures and allow for improved partnership outcomes as well as the activities they implement.

Future research could also focus on the type of leadership involved in this type of work. This research could focus on leadership at all three levels (e.g., SEA, IHE, and LEA) and provide an understanding of the skills needed and the most effective leadership style for facilitating partnerships as the mechanism for systems change. This study found that leadership at all three levels was extremely important to implementing partnerships, although it did not study leadership specifically.

Future research is needed to better understand the competing priorities of each of the entities as hindrances to the work of the partnership. With this understanding, involved partners may be able to work together so that the competing priorities inhibit partnerships from fully serving as the mechanism for implementing a state's CSPD.

While this study looked at partnerships as the mechanism for system change from the perspectives of those involved prior to, during the initial, and most recently involved stages of implementation, there is a need for longitudinal research that studies partnership implementation over a period of time so that each stage of partnership development can be ascertained. This information will assist states and organizations as they work to implement this type of mechanism.

While this study did not address the outcomes of specific partnership activities, future research is needed to determine the link between the partnerships and educational outcomes.

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Appendix A

Commonly Used Acronyms

ATI = Alternative Training Initiative

BEESS = Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services

CSPD = Comprehensive System of Personnel Development

DOE = Department of Education

FAMU = Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University

FAU = Florida Atlantic University

FDLRS = Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System

FGCU = Florida Gulf Coast University

FIU = Florida International University

FSU = Florida State University

IDEA = Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

IHE = Institutions of Higher Education

LEA = Local Education Agency

NCLB = No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

PDP = Professional Development Partnership

SIG = State Improvement Grant

UCF = University of Central Florida

UNF = University of North Florida

USF = University of South Florida

UWF = University of West Florida

Appendix B

*Studies of Issues Surrounding How States Have Utilized Collaborative Partnerships as the
Mechanism for State-Level Systems Change in Education*

Table B1

Studies of Issues Surrounding How States Have Utilized Collaborative Partnerships as the Mechanism for State-level Systems Change in Education

Author(s)/Year

Danzberger, J. P. (1990). *Educational Partnerships Program: Analysis of project characteristics*. Washington D.C.: Institute for Educational Leadership. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED325534)

Purpose

Provide an eight-part descriptive analysis of 18 Education Partnerships Program projects funded through the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI).

Research Questions

1. What are the funding, target population and project focus, project objectives, project descriptions and activities, new products and materials to be developed, and the evaluation plan?
2. What are the major categories of common project elements?
3. What are the partnership structures?
4. What are common questions across partnerships in terms of development and operations of partnerships, project activities and project results?
5. What are the components of successful partnerships?

Method

Document Review

Sample

18 Education Partnership Program projects funded through the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI).

Results

Components of successful partnerships include the following:

1. Top-level leadership
2. Grounding in community needs
3. Effective public relations
4. Clear roles and responsibilities
5. Racial-ethnic involvement
6. Strategic planning
7. Effective management and staffing structure
8. Shared decision-making and interagency ownership
9. Shared credit and recognition
10. Appropriate, well-timed resources

11. Technical assistance
12. Formal agreements
13. Action and frequent success
14. Patience, vigilance, and increased involvement
15. Local ownership

Limitations with partnerships targeted at systems change include the following factors:

1. “Because of the interconnectedness of the system, a reform at any one level is often limited by problems that the change causes at a different level of the system.” (p.15)
 2. The time and labor connected with the task. (p.18)
 3. Partnerships often have diffuse, abstract, or unrealistic missions such that it becomes almost impossible to measure progress or recognize success. (p.22)
 4. The structure of such initiatives is often unwieldy, thereby making process more important than product and planning more important than implementation.
 5. Participants may lose sight of the clients; systems change is sought for its own sake rather than for the benefit of young people.
 6. “[The benefit] of this type of partnership is its potential impact on the education system as a whole, its potential for significant change.” (p.18)
-

Table B2

Studies of Issues Surrounding How States Have Utilized Collaborative Partnerships as the Mechanism for State-level Systems Change in Education

Author(s)/Year

Galligani, D. (1990). *Effective relationships for school college partnerships 1984-1987 and achieving academic excellence through school/college partnerships 1987-1990*. Qualitative Evaluations of the Curriculum Enhancement Projects Participating in the California Academic Partnership Program.

Purpose

To provide qualitative program evaluation information on California's Academic Partnership Program between 1984 and 1987. This evaluation accompanied a quantitative evaluation of the specific outcomes of the projects.

Research Questions

1. What is the best way to realize an effective partnership?
 - a. What is the best administrative structure?
 - b. What is the best way to promote postsecondary faculty cooperation with schools' faculty?
 - c. What are the best incentives for inter-institutional cooperation and how can interested faculty members be identified?
2. What is the best way to assist schools and school districts to enhance curriculum?
3. What is the best way to target academic preparation efforts for underrepresented students?
4. What is the best way to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs?
5. What is the best way to institutionalize (i.e., continue) the partnership effort?
6. What is the best way to disseminate information about the project, both within project institutions as well as to external audiences?
7. What is the extent to which the CAPP Advisory Board, director, or evaluator could be most helpful?
8. What unintended outcomes have occurred as a result of these projects?

Method

Each partnership provided a written report responding to the research questions. Representatives from institutions involved in each partnership project attended a day-long evaluation workshop session which focused on gaining further information about questions raised.

Sample

Partnerships from 20 California Curriculum Enhancement projects between 1984 and 1987.

Results

Characteristics that contribute to effective partnerships:

1. Clear establishment of goals.
 2. Mutual trust and respect.
 3. Sufficient time to develop and strengthen relationships.
 4. Quality and commitment of individuals involved.
 5. Continued and constant interaction between top management and involved staff and faculty.
 6. Willingness to recognize and understand different cycles and languages of various educational segments.
 7. Periodic formative evaluation.
 8. Shared responsibility and accountability.
 9. Crisp lines of communication.
 10. Recognition of the evolutionary process of change.
-

Table B3

Studies of Issues Surrounding How States Have Utilized Collaborative Partnerships as the Mechanism for State-level Systems Change in Education

Author(s)/Year

Jones, J. K. (1998). *Profiles in collaboration: A comprehensive report of the professional development partnership projects*. Washington D.C.: Academy for Educational Development. (ERIC Reproduction Document No. 434427).

Purpose

Determine the similarities and differences among 5 Professional Development Partnership projects funded in 1992 designed to form consortia or partnerships of public and private entities which were developed to provide opportunities for career advancement or competency-based training for current workers at public and private agencies that provide services to infants, children and youth with disabilities.

Research Questions

What are the similarities and differences among 5 Professional Development Partnership projects funded in 1992 designed to form consortia or partnerships of public and private entities which were developed to provide opportunities for career advancement or competency-based training for current workers at public and private agencies that provide services to infants, children and youth with disabilities?

Method

1. Analysis of individual case studies developed by each of the 5 projects.
2. Evaluation of the projects conducted by independent consultants.

Sample

Five Professional Development Partnership Projects funded in 1992 designed to form consortia or partnerships of public and private entities which were developed opportunities for career advancement or competency based training for current workers at public and private agencies that provide services to infants, children and youth with disabilities.

Results:

- I. Primary Impacts – diversity of projects reported made it difficult to compare projects' impact.
 - (A) All projects expanded professional development opportunities
 - (B) All 5 projects increased collaboration or strengthened existing working relationships among a number of agencies and organizations.

- (C) While the data provided important evidence of the degree to which individual projects met their goals, there is little evidence of direct impact on how effective the project has been in improving actual skills or performances of teachers and other direct service personnel.
- (D) Impact can also be measured by changes or revisions to structures within “a system.” The targeted system differed among projects
 - (1) The New York, Illinois and California projects all need top level buy-in and broad service support to effect the target system. This was accomplished through engaging highly placed administrators in the state higher education system.
 - (2) None of the projects chose exclusive horizontal or vertical systems change approaches.
 - (3) Various project activities supported across projects have affected individual participants; fostered development of collaborative groups; and resulted in new competencies credentials, coursework, and other personnel development initiatives.

II. Why Partnerships Were Created

- (A) Motivation for establishing a partnership can be complex and changes over time.
 - (1) Some chose to form partnerships more in order to maximize resources and opportunities than to systematically reduce fragmentation, produce change within cooperating organizations, or advocate for new structures (Illinois and North Carolina).
 - (2) Some chose to form partnerships in order to leverage change in existing training programs (California and Kansas).
- (B) Each project involved a variety of stakeholders who were initially central to meeting the locally established, individual projects goals. Due to political, fiscal and other circumstances, individuals and group members and their roles were modified although project goals never changed. In one partnership, the political climate dictated changes in key stakeholders.
- (C) During the proposal writing stage, initial partnerships were loosely formed. Additional partners were identified to include stakeholders who could respond to very specific training needs.
 - (1) Several project directors noted that the 90-day proposal writing period was not conducive to the identification of stakeholders or the formation of true partnerships.
 - (2) As motivation and need shifted, so too did the degree to which partnerships that were formed reflect collaboration versus cooperation or coordination.
- (D) Partnerships were influenced by project specific definitions or interpretation of what constitutes a partnership. Only 2 partnerships specifically defined a partnership. The definitions did not specify

the type of structural or organizational changes that the projects hoped to achieve among their partners. It is not clear whether there was a firm understanding across all 5 projects of what a collaborative partnership should look like or achieve.

III. Critical Features of Partnerships

(A) Shared Vision and Common Goals

- (1) All projects were stronger on establishing a shared set of goals among partners than on defining specific outcomes.
- (2) None of the projects described a process for developing a shared vision or common cross partner goals and none specified the outcomes related to a “partnership.”
- (3) Two of the projects mentioned political considerations (e.g., turf guarding) or other factors that impeded ongoing support or collaboration.
- (4) It was never clear what these projects expected of a partnership. (p. 148)
- (5) Overall, while each of the projects successfully networked, cooperated, and brokered arrangements that enabled them to meet critical personnel development goals, a larger vision of what the partnership should be was not entirely evident. Hence, there must be a focus on the processes involved with ‘partnership management’ in addition to processes needed to implement activities (i.e., process vs. product).

(B) Changing Governance Structures and Sharing Resources

- (1) Partnerships differed in terms of shared responsibility. Each had a project director that was the grant recipient.
- (2) Three of the projects were governed by an advisory committee that focused on the internal goals of the project. In most cases the advisory committee included a subset of entities engaged in the partnership.
- (3) In all projects, governance partners were involved in some goal setting as well as overseeing and developing implementation activities.
- (4) Responsibility for the project was vested in one place with one person, but some functions were distributed or shared. However, the degree of shared governance is not clear.
- (5) In the Illinois and North Carolina projects, core decision making groups were considered dynamic, changing as the needs of the projects changed or barriers were encountered.
- (6) Overall, flexibility appears to be an essential element of partnerships that support a professional development system that is responsive to changing personnel needs. (p.149)
- (7) In true collaborative partnerships, accountability, resources, and responsibility for meeting shared goals creates a climate of true collaboration. However, all the partnerships studied faced the challenge of how to foster shared accountability for each

one's ultimate success and impact. (All 5 projects were externally funded and the funding agency vested responsibility and accountability in one organization and one or two directors. These individuals maintained authority over the project (particularly the resources), but also maintained responsibility for timelines, products and ultimate outcomes.

IV. Implications for Sustainability and Future Partnerships

(A) External Funding and the Sustainability of the Project Initiatives

- (1) All projects acknowledge the importance of the PDP grant in their states and various institutions.
- (2) The PDP initiative enabled each project to address pre-existing conditions in innovative ways that would have been very difficult to carry out without federal grant funds.
- (3) Providing PDP funds for the activity of developing a proposal to establish a project was instrumental in bringing together key participants around a common topic and need.
- (4) State-level involvement increases the chance of sustainability. (p.167)
- (5) What is not clear is how sustainable the workshops, mentoring relationships and other direct training opportunities will be. Nor is it clear if they all need to be continued.
- (6) The Kansas Partnership is a part of an overall educational reform initiative and is therefore more likely to be sustained. It is also likely that the work of the partnership will result in crucial and permanent changes in structures and curriculum within some university departments.
- (7) One piece of information to glean from this study is the central importance of federal PDP funds in stimulating and focusing change as opposed to providing long term sustainability of a project.

(B) Implications for the Development of Similar PDPs in the Future

- (1) Know the system up front. The importance of establishing an operational definition of 'partnership' and specific expectations of the goals of partnership to include (a) anticipated partners; (b) shared goals; and (c) specific expectations regarding any changes in organizational structures, processes, and use of resources.
- (2) Realize that partnerships are flexible and dynamic, changing over time as specific professional development goals change or local contexts or political needs dictate (i.e., variability in project design and ability to accommodate changes over time).
- (3) The fact that a project must have a lead person, someone who is accountable for project management and resources, can complicate a true partnership. Projects that were part of a larger systemic initiative had to expend fewer efforts to engage other IHEs and state organizations or agencies. Without clearly

focused goals for a 'partnership,' state-level involvement with such an initiative risks diluting the projects' identity and impact diluted or subsuming it within a broad and amorphous set of state-level initiatives.

Table B4

Studies of Issues Surrounding How States Have Utilized Collaborative Partnerships as the Mechanism for State-level Systems Change in Education

Author(s)/Year

Kleinhammer-Tramill, P. J., Kelly, P. M. & Gallagher, K. S. (1996). Statewide systems change in teacher education: A formative evaluation of the Kansas Project Partnership. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 48th, Chicago, IL, February 21-24. (Eric Document Reproduction Service No. ED395925)

Purpose

Examine the implementation of the Kansas Project Partnership objectives to improve teacher education.

Research Question

To evaluate and facilitate the project or “to help move things along and find out if anything’s really happening.”

Method

1. Interviews of administrative and teaching faculty at the 8 Kansas colleges and universities which have participated in sub grant activities under Kansas Project Partnership.
2. Observation/participation in 11 meetings related to the Kansas Project Partnership activities.
3. Document review.

Sample

The sample consisted of 53 persons representing 8 participating institutions of higher education:

1. Deans of education
2. Chairs of teacher education programs
3. Acting Dean
4. Department chairs from colleges of schools of education
5. Special education and general education faculty members
6. K-12 educators

Results

The results are organized around common themes and issues related to the change process.

Theme 1: Preparation of general education personnel to teach students with diverse learning needs. 20 of the 25 sub-grant projects focused on this goal. Three types of strategies have been used to address this theme:

Strategy #1

1. Developing partnerships with the field

2. Using partnerships with the field to identify or validate a set of competencies for educating students with diverse learning needs.
3. Delivering competencies in general education classes.
4. Expanding delivery of competencies to other program areas such as administrator training.

Strategy #2 – Include efforts to stimulate collaboration between key general education and special education faculty.

Strategy #3 – Use divergent strategies to develop new courses or revise courses to deliver or field-test content.

Theme 2: Development or enhancement of projects with individual schools or school districts. (All projects included goals, objectives, or activities designed to promote relationships with the field.)

Theme 3: Preparation of related services personnel to work more effectively across disciplines in the school setting. Theme 1 strategies were utilized. All but one of the sub-grants funded under the related services competition involved development of partnerships in the field.

1. To deliver training
2. Provide professional development
3. Identify content
4. Improve course formats (practicum)

The following changes occurred in conjunction with Kansas Project Partnership after 3 years:

1. One faculty member described impact on prospective teachers, stating “Initially, when we start [the field experience], some will say, ‘Oh, give me a different child, give me different children,’ and I say, ‘We can work with these children.’”
2. Efforts to impact secondary content methods (techniques) courses have posed difficulties, due to the competency identification and infusion process being deeply ingrained in teacher education. Teacher education accountability and accreditation systems have traditionally been based largely on curriculum reviews consisting of inspection of course syllabi to determine that agreed upon competencies are displayed, rather than a holistic conception of teacher education. (p. 16)
3. Faculty view departmental relationships, configuration and physical location as having a major impact on communication and collaboration. *Barrier:* Partnership projects targeting efforts at secondary education, as well as the arts and sciences affiliation of faculty who teach secondary content methods, are frequently seen as barriers.
4. The most profound impact of the Kansas Project Partnership has been stimulating many ongoing conversations between faculty members. One person serves, either formally or informally, in the role of facilitator. This person is viewed as someone who brings people together, as a ‘trusted’ friend, and as a source of support. *Barrier:* Changes in key personnel during the early stages of partnership. Not able to determine which strategies lead to long-term change due to short implementation. (p.17)

Grassroots vs. Centralized Administrative Location

1. The more centralized the administrative location of several projects are, the more the projects themselves are progressing to encompass broader curricular issues and are

becoming more systemic in their efforts than can be effectively accomplished within one department. (p.20)

2. Most partnerships have reflected grassroots efforts by individual faculty, program areas, and/or departments. Most of these efforts have progressed toward expanded departmental or interdepartmental efforts.
-

Table B5

Studies of Issues Surrounding How States Have Utilized Collaborative Partnerships as the Mechanism for State-level Systems Change in Education

Author(s)/Year

Tushnet, N. C., Bodinger-de Uriate, C., Ito, D., Manual, D. M., & Clark, M. (1996). *Educational partnerships case studies*. (1996). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

Purpose

To determine the impact of funded partnerships.

Research Questions

Identify problems and successes in 5 of the 30 funded Educational Partnership Programs (EPP).

Method

Case study methodology. Document reviews to include project generated documents, including reports, local evaluations and products. Annual on-site visits involving observations of partnership events, as well as interviews with key participants and recipients of services (these same sources were used for a cross-case analysis).

Sample

5 of the 30 Educational Partnerships funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

Results

1. Outside funding stimulates action.
2. Each participating organization is challenged to change policies and procedures to accommodate a new way of working with others.
3. Partnership approaches require adaptation to fit each community, school district and school.
4. Organizational mavericks may be a source of creative and meaningful programs, but they need support to strengthen and improve the program.
5. A shared vision and a deep commitment among partners can overcome weakness in program design and implementation.
6. Even with confusion about how the partnership structure relates to the program, the partnership itself can be institutionalized.
7. Leadership is critical in a complex partnership.
8. Leaders who reflect commitment to particular programs and processes may be more successful than leaders who see themselves as facilitators.
9. Identifying and solving problems, as well as using adaptive planning, contributes to success.

10. Skilled and committed staff empowered to carry out partnership plans are an important element in project success.
 11. Breaking a complex partnership into components can strengthen it.
 12. When partnerships do not receive feedback regularly, their importance may dwindle.
 13. Partnerships that aim to change various parts of a system simultaneously can contribute to sustained education reform.
-

Table B6

Studies of Issues Surrounding how states have utilized collaborative partnerships as the mechanism of state-level systems change in education

Author(s)/Year

Padak, N., Shaklee, B. D., Peck, J., Barton, L. & Johnson, H. (1994). *A three year examination of participants' perspectives of educational partnerships*. Washington D.C.: Office of Educational Research and Improvement. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED374509)

Purpose

Provide a three-year view of participants' perspectives about the educational partnership in which they were involved.

Research Questions

Year 1: What are partners' initial perceptions of critical issues for success of a partnership gleaned from an interview study conducted after only a few months of participation?

Year 2: Data from interviews were added to Year 1 after 18 months of partnership participation and explored changes in persons' perspectives as they gained experience with project and each other.

Year 3: Adds data from a third year of interviews with the same individuals as years 1 and 2.

Method

Qualitative, semi-structured interviews were conducted by trained research assistants, at the convenience of the persons being interviewed. Interviews ranged from 30-60 minutes in length and were tape-recorded and transcribed. Questions focused on the informants' perceptions of project goals, their views of strengths and weaknesses of the partnership, and comments about their personal involvement in the project. Of particular importance were questions seeking ideas about key ingredients leading to barriers preventing success of the project.

Sample

Partnership participants involved in the U.S. DOE funded Cooperative Alliance which focuses on the development of effective partnerships to facilitate high quality educational programs for tomorrow's technology based communities. THREE agencies (Kent State University and Cleveland Public Schools' Center for School Improvement), International Business Machines, and the EdQuest Corporation, as well as multiple other partners from other partnerships were embedded within the project.

Results

Year 1

Three major domains were identified.

1. Definitions of partnership
2. Critical features for success

3. Potential results of the partnership effort

Four categories of factors associated with successful partnerships were identified.

1. People and relationships
2. Investment and understanding
3. Partnership framework
4. Resources

Year 2

Six domains were identified.

1. Partnership framework-smooth and successful functioning.
2. Evaluation of project success-importance of rigorous evaluation data for the project.
3. People-good partners, ways individuals interacted, methods for encouraging continued individual involvement.
4. Resources-fiscal restraints of participating agencies and desire to find additional resources.
5. Project goals-focus on project goals is critical; priorities shift over time(viewed as a strength).
6. Project impact-effect of unanticipated events or factors over which informants had no control and possible staffing changes.

Overall, informants valued communication and strong leadership and believed change to be a given for the partnership.

Year 3

1. Partnership framework-supported earlier findings: "Those closest to a partnership may have more ideas about its framework."
 - (a) Evolution
 - (b) Communication
 - (c) Collaboration
2. People-Four categories describing individual involvement
 - (a) Ownership
 - (b) Attendance
 - (c) Roles
 - (d) Activity

*The leadership role was specifically mentioned. "Effective leadership included organizational and planning skills along with the ability to recognize talents of others and facilitate their use."
(p.17)

3. Evaluation
 - (a) Findings
 - (b) Importance of disseminating findings, both internally and externally
4. Individual organizations

Potential barrier to success included the existence of multiple programs running simultaneously but with little or no coordination of effort and funding.

Table B7

Studies of Issues Surrounding How States Have Utilized Collaborative Partnerships as the Mechanism for State-level Systems Change in Education

Author(s)/Year

Russell, J. F. & Flynn, R. B. (2000). Commonalities across effective collaboratives. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 75(3), 196-204.

Purpose

To determine out of 26 variables of collaboration obtained from the broader literature, which ones were a factor in the success of their own collaborative effort.

Research Questions

1. Of the 26 variables of collaboration, which have contributed more to
2. the partnerships success?
3. Are there additional factors that have contributed that are not listed?
4. What one piece of advice would you share with someone about to
5. embark on a collaborative venture?
 - a) Strive for simultaneous reform
 - b) Clarify goals with the partners
 - c) Recognize the value of relationship building and the time it will take
 - d) Empower key internal and external participants
 - e) Provide adequate administrative support and resources
6. What should be avoided above all else?
 - a) Power struggles
 - b) Allowing any one individual or partner to control the agenda
 - c) Early failures
 - d) Being overly time-driven
 - e) Trying to accomplish too much, too fast
 - f) Involving people who are not respectful of different opinions

Method

1. Survey to obtain respondents' perceptions on factors affecting success of collaboration.
2. Open-ended questions were asked regarding any other important factors not included in the list of 26 variables.

Sample

One survey from 11 projects across the nation, from public and private colleges and universities, which were inclusive of partnerships with P-12 schools; other departments and units on campus; and business, government and community groups.

Results

Six factors receiving the most support for having greatly contributed to the effectiveness of the

collaboration included the following:

1. Willingness to listen to other partners.
2. Mutual respect.
3. Long-term commitment.
4. Frequent communication.
5. Flexibility in ways of working together.
6. Careful initial selection of partners.

Additional factors (not originally listed) included the following:

1. Trust building.
 2. Creating a broader collaborative vision.
 3. Demonstrating opportunities and rewards.
 4. Sustaining the project after initial funds are depleted.
-

Table B8

Studies of Issues Surrounding How States Have Utilized Collaborative Partnerships as the Mechanism for State-level Systems Change in Education

Author(s)/Year

Tafel, J. & Eberhart, N. (1999). Statewide School-College (K-16) Partnerships to Improve Student Performance. Retrieved March 30, 2005 from http://www.eplc.org/clearinghouse_p16.html

Purpose

Collect information on and examine state-level strategies that support student success through the linkage of K-12 and post secondary education systems.

Research Questions

- 1 How might K-16 systems be structured and implemented?
- 2 Cross-state networking support: What works and why?

Method

50-state survey of state higher education coordinating and governing boards. Site visits to 6 states (to gain a better understanding of the education linkages being developed). Investigated what states were doing (policies and initiatives), how they were doing it (process for achieving goals and the extent to which goals were being met).

Sample

K-16 Statewide Partnership Projects in Georgia, Maryland, and Ohio.

Results

1. Establish specific goals – All 3 states identified similar goals for their efforts based on mutual concerns of both K-12 and post-secondary education. Goals must not remain on paper, rather, they should be jointly promoted and implemented by committed leaders.
2. Create a statewide organizational framework – Common key ingredients in building a state K-16 agenda are the development and maintenance of partnerships among education organizations:
 - (a) The agenda starts with the firm commitment of state-level leadership
 - (b) It involves staff and others who may not have known each other previously.
 - (c) Efforts to share responsibility, build trust, and avoid turf struggles are essential to success.
 - (d) The effort must foster a ‘win-win’ attitude from *all* partners.
 - (e) Partners must be able to identify their particular roles and recognize how they would benefit by being part of the partnership.

Outside pressure leveraged agency commitment in each of the three states studied.

3. Find incentives to sustain the partnerships.

(f) Vision and commitment to the overriding goals must be strong enough to counteract the impulses to revert to old systems.

(g) Each state established a formal mechanism to link K-12 and higher education boards, thereby facilitating communication, trust, effective working relationships and the development of common agendas.

4. Develop comprehensive data systems to identify system gaps and inform of new policy.

In all 3 states, data germane to student progress and remediation were employed to highlight policy issues related to student transitions and mobility throughout the educational continuum. In Ohio, disconnect occurred between the K-12 and postsecondary data systems.

5. Establish a communication system to disseminate information and encourage public engagement.

In most states, such communication systems do not exist, or if they do, they are too narrowly based.

6. Identify substantive issues that require immediate attention.

In all 3 states, teacher preparation is central to K-12 educational improvement and to the K-16 system.

Appendix C

Letter from Florida Department of Education Granting Permission to Conduct the Study

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



John L. Winn
Commissioner of Education

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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November 22, 2005

Ms. Lori M. Massey
State Improvement Grant Technical Support Project
Edison College
Edison University Center
8099 College Pkwy., Bldg. Q, Room 120
Fort Myers, Florida 33919

Dear Ms. Massey:

This is to confirm my support of your proposal for the study on the Value of Partnerships as a Mechanism of Systemic Change. The questions you are asking are significant and timely. Participating in your study and reflecting on your findings will assist Florida in improving the processes involved in the implementation of partnerships for the state system of personnel development. My staff and I look forward to working with you in the coming months.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Ms. Lezlie Cline, Program Director, Exceptional Student Education Program Development and Services, by telephone at (850) 245-0478 or by electronic mail at lezlie.cline@fldoe.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bambi J. Lockman".

Bambi J. Lockman, Chief
Bureau of Exceptional Education
and Student Services

BJL/let

BAMBI J. LOCKMAN
Chief
Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services

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Appendix D

Interview Questions for Sample Group 1

Sample Group #1: Prior to the Implementation of Partnerships

1. How were you involved with the implementation of Florida's CSPD? (i.e., what was your role)? How did you become involved?
2. What was happening in Florida prior to the implementation of the CSPD regional professional development partnerships with regard to the development of personnel to serve students with disabilities? (Addresses research question #4: What did Florida's CSPD regional professional development partnership implementation look like prior to, during the initial, and most recent stages from the perspectives of those involved? In retrospect, what lessons can be learned from Florida's 11-year experience that might be helpful to other states involved in implementing partnerships targeting systemic change?)
3. How did Florida implement a CSPD prior to regional professional development partnerships? (Addresses research question #1: How did Florida implement a CSPD prior to regional professional development partnerships? Why was the regional partnership model selected to implement Florida's CSPD?)
4. Why was the regional professional development partnership model as the mechanism for implementing a Florida's CSPD adopted? What was the regional partnership mechanism supposed to fix? (Addresses research question #1: How did Florida implement a CSPD prior to regional professional development partnerships? Why was the regional partnership model selected to implement Florida's CSPD?)
5. What working relationships among the SEA, colleges and universities, and local education agencies existed (or did not exist but needed to) prior to the implementation of

regional professional development partnerships? (Addresses research question #3: Do those most recently involved with the implementation of Florida's regional professional development partnerships think that anything about the state's system of personnel development changed due to the implementation of regional professional development partnerships? In particular, have relationships among the people involved changed as a result?)

6. What did Florida CSPD regional professional development partnership collaboration look like during initial implementation stages? (Addresses research question #4: What did Florida's CSPD regional professional development partnership implementation look like prior to, during the initial, and most recent stages from the perspectives of those involved? In retrospect, what lessons can be learned from Florida's 11-year experience that might be helpful to other states involved in implementing partnerships targeting systems change?)
7. What planning processes did you experience during the initial development of regional professional development partnership collaboration? (Addresses research question #4: What did Florida's CSPD regional professional development partnership implementation look like prior to, during the initial, and most recent stages from the perspectives of those involved? In retrospect, what lessons can be learned from Florida's 11-year experience that might be helpful to other states involved in implementing partnerships targeting systems change?)
8. How would you characterize the initial stages of implementation? What seemed to work and what seemed to be missing? (Addresses research question #4: What did Florida's CSPD regional professional development partnership implementation look like prior to,

during the initial, and most recent stages from the perspectives of those involved? In retrospect, what lessons can be learned from Florida's 11-year experience that might be helpful to other states involved in implementing partnerships targeting systems change?)

9. What benefits did you derive from your participation in regional CSPD partnerships? (Addresses research question #2: What benefits did initial and most recent implementers of Florida's regional professional development partnerships believe they derived from their participation and what barriers existed? Based on the benefits and barriers, do initial and most recent implementers believe the partnerships were of any value?)
10. What barriers (internal or external) existed during your participation in a regional CSPD professional development partnership? (Addresses research question #2: What benefits did initial and most recent implementers of Florida's regional professional development partnerships believe they derived from their participation and what barriers existed? Based on the benefits and barriers, do initial and most recent implementers believe the partnerships were of any value?)
11. If funding for the regional CSPD partnerships were to cease, would you have continued to participate? If no, why not? If yes, why? (Addresses research question #2: What benefits did initial and most recent implementers of Florida's regional professional development partnerships believe they derived from their participation and what barriers existed? Based on the benefits and barriers, do initial and most recent implementers believe the partnerships were of any value?)
12. Looking back, what would you change about beginning stages of regional CSPD partnership implementation? (Addresses research question #4: What did Florida's CSPD regional professional development partnership implementation look like prior to, during

the initial, and most recent stages from the perspectives of those involved? In retrospect, what lessons can be learned from Florida's 11-year experience that might be helpful to other states involved in implementing partnerships targeting systems change?)

13. Looking back, what would you change about the management during beginning stages of regional CSPD partnership implementation? (Addresses research question #4: What did Florida's CSPD regional professional development partnership implementation look like prior to, during the initial, and most recent stages from the perspectives of those involved? In retrospect, what lessons can be learned from Florida's 11-year experience that might be helpful to other states involved in implementing partnerships targeting systems change?)

Appendix E

Interview Questions for Sample Group 2

Sample Group 2: Recent Perspectives

1. How are you involved with the implementation of Florida's CSPD (i.e., what was your role)? How did you become involved?
2. What benefits do you believe you receive from your participation in the regional CSPD partnership? (Addresses research question #2: What benefits did initial and most recent implementers of Florida's regional professional development partnerships believe they derived from their participation and what barriers existed? Based on the benefits and barriers, do initial and most recent implementers believe the partnerships were of any value?)
3. What seems to be working and what seems to be missing? (Addresses research question #2: What benefits did initial and most recent implementers of Florida's regional professional development partnerships believe they derived from their participation and what barriers existed? Based on the benefits and barriers, do initial and most recent implementers believe the partnerships were of any value?)
4. What barriers (internal or external) existed during your participation in a regional CSPD professional development partnership? (Addresses research question #2: What benefits did initial and most recent implementers of Florida's regional professional development partnerships believe they derived from their participation and what barriers existed? Based on the benefits and barriers, do initial and most recent implementers believe the partnerships were of any value?)

5. Has anything about the personnel development system changed during the time of your participation in regional professional development partnerships? If so, has regional professional development partnership implementation in Florida contributed to this change? If so, how? In particular, have relationships between the people involved in the system changed? (Addresses research question #3: Do those most recently involved with the implementation of Florida's regional professional development partnerships think that anything about the state's system of personnel development changed due to the implementation of regional professional development partnerships? In particular, have relationships among the people involved changed as a result?)
6. Is the implementation of regional professional development partnerships different or the same compared to when they were initially implemented? (*This was a question for those who were originally involved and are still involved.) (Addresses research question #4: What did Florida's CSPD regional professional development partnership implementation look like prior to, during the initial, and most recent stages from the perspectives of those involved? In retrospect, what lessons can be learned from Florida's 11-year experience that might be helpful to other states involved in implementing partnerships targeting systems change?)
7. Should the regional professional development partnership model as the mechanism for implementing Florida's personnel development system be continued? Why or why not? (Addresses research question #2: What benefits did initial and most recent implementers of Florida's regional professional development partnerships believe they derived from their participation and what barriers existed? Based on the benefits and barriers, do initial and most recent implementers believe the partnerships were of any value?)

8. Do you think the regional CSPD partnerships are of value? If so, why? If not, why not?
(Addresses research question #2: What benefits did initial and most recent implementers of Florida's regional professional development partnerships believe they derived from their participation and what barriers existed? Based on the benefits and barriers, do initial and most recent implementers believe the partnerships were of any value?)
9. If funding for the regional CSPD partnerships were to cease, would you continue to participate? If no, why not? If yes, why? (Addresses research question #2: What benefits did initial and most recent implementers of Florida's regional professional development partnerships believe they derived from their participation and what barriers existed? Based on the benefits and barriers, do initial and most recent implementers believe the partnerships were of any value?)
10. What working relationships currently exist (or do not exist and need to) among SEAs, colleges and universities, and LEAs? (Addresses research question #3: Do those most recently involved with the implementation of Florida's regional professional development partnerships think that anything about the state's system of personnel development changed due to the implementation of regional professional development partnerships? In particular, have relationships among the people involved changed as a result?)
11. As a result of the efforts of regional CSPD partnerships, have working relationships between certain groups been enhanced (i.e., SEAs and colleges and universities, SEAs and LEAs, or colleges and universities and LEAs)? (Addresses research question #3: Do those most recently involved with the implementation of Florida's regional professional development partnerships think that anything about the state's system of personnel

development changed due to the implementation of regional professional development partnerships? In particular, have relationships among the people involved changed as a result?)

12. During your tenure with the regional CSPD partnership, what would you change about the partnership? (Addresses research question #4: What did Florida's CSPD regional professional development partnership implementation look like prior to, during the initial, and most recent stages from the perspectives of those involved? In retrospect, what lessons can be learned from Florida's 11-year experience that might be helpful to other states involved in implementing partnerships targeting systemic change?)
13. During your tenure with the regional CSPD partnership, what would you change about the management of the regional CSPD partnership? (Addresses research question #4: What did Florida's CSPD regional professional development partnership implementation look like prior to, during the initial, and most recent stages from the perspectives of those involved? In retrospect, what lessons can be learned from Florida's 11-year experience that might be helpful to other states involved in implementing partnerships targeting systemic change?)

Appendix F

Contact Summary Form

(Interviews)

Site: _____
With Whom: _____
Contact Date: _____
Today's Date: _____

1. What were the main issues or themes that struck me in this contact?

2. Summarize the information I got (or failed to get) on each of the target questions for this contact.

3. Was there anything else that struck me as salient, interesting, illuminating, or important in this contact?

4. What new or remaining target questions do I have in considering the next contacts to be made?

(*FILE WITH TRANSCRIPT AND/OR IN MEMO BINDER)

Appendix G

Instructions for Professional Transcriber

1. At the beginning of each transcript, please type the Code that is marked on the front of the CD-ROM and the date of the interview. Do not put the person's name anywhere on the transcript for purposes of confidentiality.
2. Please use Times New Roman, 12 point font. I use Microsoft Word 2003.
3. The first time I speak in the transcript, mark it as "Lori:" and then whatever I say. The subsequent times I speak, mark it as "L:" and then whatever I say. The first time the interviewee speaks, mark it as "Interviewee:" and then whatever they say. The subsequent times they speak, mark it as "I:" and then whatever they say.
4. The transcripts should be typed verbatim. Include all sentence fragments, stutters, grammar errors, etc. regardless of how silly people sound.
5. Use consistent notation for breaks in thought, either ellipsis (...) or dashes (---).
6. If there is something you have difficulty hearing, use brackets, questions marks, and the word "inaudible". If a proper noun or acronym is not understood, type what you think it is and I will make a change is needed.
7. Please send the transcript to me as an email attachment. Please return the CD-ROM and a hard copy of the transcribed interviews when you are finished with the transcription. I will include a return envelope when I send you each CD-ROM.
8. Commonly used acronyms:

CSPD = Comprehensive System of Personnel Development

PDP = Professional Development Partnership

SIG = State Improvement Grant

DOE = Department of Education

IHE = Institutions of Higher Education

UWF = University of West Florida

FSU = Florida State University

FAMU = Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University

UNF = University of North Florida

UCF = University of Central Florida

FAU = Florida Atlantic University

FIU = Florida International University

FGCU = Florida Gulf Coast University

USF = University of South Florida

9. General Information about the Study:

In Florida, regional professional development partnerships aimed at systemic change have been in existence for eleven years. I will be studying their implementation from the vantage point of those initially involved in the partnerships, as well as those who are currently involved.

The purpose of this study is to describe regional special education professional development partnerships as the mechanism for state-level systems change from the point of view of those who initiated the partnerships and those who are recently involved. The goal of the study is to understand if regional professional development partnerships as the mechanism for implementing the CSPD mandate in Florida were of any value to those involved and if they think partnerships influenced the state's system of personnel development.

Appendix H

Professional Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement

The purpose of this research study is to describe regional special education professional development partnership collaboration as the mechanism for state-level systems change from the point of view of those who initiated the change and those who are currently involved. The goal of the study is to understand if regional professional development partnerships as the mechanism for implementing the CSPD mandate in Florida were of any value to those involved and if they think partnerships influenced the state’s system of personnel development.

Title of Study: The Value of Partnerships as a Mechanism for Systemic Change:
The Florida Experience

I, _____, the Professional Transcriber, agree to:

1. keep all research information shared with me confidential by not discussing or sharing the research information in any form or format (e.g. disks, files, tapes, transcripts) with anyone other than the Researcher.
2. keep all research information in any form (e.g. disks, files, tapes, transcripts) secure while it is in my possession.
3. return all research information in any format (e.g. disks, files, tapes, transcripts) to the Researcher when I have completed the research tasks.
4. after consulting with the Researcher, erase or destroy all research information in any form or format regarding this research project that is not returnable to the Researcher (e.g., research stored on computer or hard drive).

Transcriber:

(Print Name)	(Signature)	(Date)
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Researcher:

(Print Name)	(Signature)	(Date)
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Should you have questions about this study, you can contact me at (239) 489-9276, lmmassey@stpt.usf.edu or my dissertation advisers, Dr. Jean Crockett at (352) 392-0701 Ext. 257, jcrockett@coe.ufl.edu, or Dr. Bonnie Billingsley, (540) 231-8335, bbilling@vt.edu

If you have questions about regarding participant’s rights and ethical conduct of research, you may contact David M. Moore, Chair, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, Office of Research Compliance - Research Division, 1880 Pratt Drive, Suite 2006, Blacksburg, Virginia 24061 at (540) 231-4991 or moored@vt.edu .

Appendix I

Informed Consent for Participants to Participate in the Study

Informed Consent Form

The following information is being presented to help you decide whether or not you want to take part in a minimal risk research study. Please read this carefully. If there is anything you do not understand, please ask the person in charge of the study.

Title of Study: The Value of Partnerships as a Mechanism for Systemic Change:

The Florida Experience

Principal Investigator: Lori M. Massey

Study Location(s): Florida

You are being asked to participate because you were a member of Florida's Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) State Advisory Council or you held a leadership position with the Florida Department of Education and were responsible for supervising the implementation of Florida's CSPD.

General Information about the Research Study

The purpose of this research study is to describe regional special education professional development partnership collaboration as the mechanism for state-level systems change from the point of view of those who initiated the change and those who are currently involved. The goal of the study is to understand if regional professional development partnerships as the mechanism for implementing the CSPD mandate in Florida were of any value to those involved and if they think partnerships influenced the state's system of personnel development.

Plan of Study

As a participant in this study you are being asked to participate in a semi-structured interview over the telephone or in person. The interview will last approximately 30-60 minutes, will be recorded using a digital voice recorder, and transcribed at a later time. The investigator conducting the interview will call or visit you at a time convenient to your schedule.

Payment for Participation

You will not be paid for your participation in this study.

Benefits of Being a Part of this Research Study

By taking part in this research study, you may obtain information on the implementation of Florida's regional professional development partnerships. You may also obtain personal satisfaction from assisting a doctoral student by providing information that will help to complete a dissertation.

Risks of Being a Part of this Research Study

I do not know of any personal risk or discomfort you will have from participating in this study.

Confidentiality of Your Records

Your privacy and research records will be kept confidential to the extent of the law. Authorized research personnel, employees of the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University Institutional Review Board may inspect the records from this research project.

The results of this study may be published. However, the data obtained from you will be combined with data from others in the publication. The published results will not include your name or any other information that would personally identify you in any way.

In order to ensure confidentiality and privacy each participant will be assigned a study code for the purposes of recording and reporting data.

All interviews will be transcribed by a professional transcriber and saved as Microsoft Word documents. Notes will be headed with the unidentifiable participant study code, the date of the interview, and will be set up in paragraphs with lines numbered sequentially. Interviews will be typed verbatim. I will provide the transcriber with a list of instructions and information that would help in transcribing the interviews more accurately, such as the names of programs, acronyms, and names of documents discussed in the interview.

An electronic folder will be created and each digitally recorded and typed interview will be organized by date and assigned unidentifiable participant study code. This folder will also contain a file with information linking the participant names to their assigned study code.

A hard copy of each transcribed interview will be kept in a notebook behind a tab noting the date of the interview and the assigned unidentifiable participant study code. This notebook will be kept in a locked filing cabinet.

All documents obtained will be kept in file folders with the name of the file on the label of the folder as well as the complete reference for the item. Signed Consent Forms and all electronic mail correspondence will be kept in a separate file folder labeled with the assigned unidentifiable participant study code and kept in a locked filing cabinet.

Volunteering to Be Part of this Research Study

Your decision to participate in this research study is completely voluntary. You are free to participate in this research study or to withdraw at any time. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits you are entitled to receive, if you stop taking part in the study.

Questions and Contacts

- If you have any questions about this research study, contact Lori M. Massey at (239) 489-9276. You may also contact my dissertation advisers, Dr. Jean Crockett at (352) 392-0701 Ext. 257, jcrockett@coe.ufl.edu, or Dr. Bonnie Billingsley, (540) 231-8335, bbilling@vt.edu.

- If you have questions about your rights as a person who is taking part in a research study, you may contact David M. Moore, Chair, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, Office of Research Compliance - Research Division, 1880 Pratt Drive, Suite 2006, Blacksburg, Virginia 24061 at (540) 231-4991 or moored@vt.edu .

Consent to Take Part in This Research Study

By signing this form I agree that:

- I have fully read or have had read and explained to me this informed consent form describing this research project.
- I have had the opportunity to question one of the persons in charge of this research and have received satisfactory answers.
- I understand that I am being asked to participate in research. I understand the risks and benefits, and I freely give my consent to participate in the research project outlined in this form, under the conditions indicated in it.
- I have been given a signed copy of this informed consent form, which is mine to keep.

Signature of Participant

Printed Name of Participant

Date

Investigator Statement

I certify that participants have been provided with an informed consent form that has been approved by the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University Institutional Review Board and that explains the nature, demands, risks, and benefits involved in participating in this study. I further certify that a phone number has been provided in the event of additional questions.

Signature of Investigator

Printed Name of Investigator

Date

This Informed Consent Form is valid from _____ to _____.

[*NOTE: Subjects must be given a complete copy (or duplicate original) of the signed Informed Consent.]

Vita

- Compile an annual performance report for the State Personnel Development Grant for the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs.
- Coordinate and implement Florida's Weekends with the Experts program.
- Coordinate and implement Florida's Virtual ESE Program.
- Plan, coordinate, conduct, and evaluate training and support activities for program participants.
- Participate in state recruitment and retention of ESE personnel.
- Provide technical assistance to Personnel Development Partnerships on measurement of objectives.
- Compile data for Family Network on Disabilities (FND) participation with the Personnel Development Partnerships.
- Provide information to all stakeholders in a regular basis in order to maintain communication for effective implementation of program goals and objectives.
- Serve on state and interagency committees and councils as related to programs/projects.
- Serve as liaison among the Florida Department of Education and public/private agencies to ensure quality services and a common focus.
- Participate in meetings and workgroups that contribute to the Bureau's annual progress report to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs.

Program Evaluator

Florida State Improvement Grant Technical Support Project

Fiscal Agent: University of South Florida

Responsibilities Include:

- Provide technical support to statewide Professional Development Partnerships on measurement of project objectives.
- Manage data analysis for the Florida State Improvement Grant evaluation and reports
- Collaborate with the Personnel Development Management Team (PDMT) to write final State Improvement Grant report.
- Compile data on Family Network on Disabilities parent participation on Florida's Professional Development Partnership Regional Councils.
- Collaborate with the Personnel Development Management Team (PDMT) to write Florida's State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG).
- Compile annual performance report for the State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs.
- Participate in meetings and workgroups contributing to the Bureau's Annual Performance Report submitted to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs.
- Develop surveys, including needs assessment instruments to assist in data collection.
- Create Florida's Personnel Development Planning book.

Coordinator, Research and Program Development

Florida Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD)

Fiscal Agent: University of South Florida St. Petersburg

Responsibilities include:

- Develop in cooperation with Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) and the Florida Department of Education (DOE), a collaborative, integrative model of interdisciplinary pre-service and in-service professional preparation for special and general education, and related services personnel.

- Facilitate the development of recruitment strategies that target special education and related services personnel.
- Revise existing recruitment materials for use by Florida Speakers Bureau members to increase the awareness of careers in special education and related services.
- Collect statewide and national information on successful collaborative models of pre-service and in-service training for special and general education and related services personnel from the Regional CSPD Councils, Southeast Regional Resource Center (SERRC), the Office of Special Education Programs/Division of Personnel Preparation, National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) and the National Staff Development Council.
- Facilitate collaborative partnerships among the SEA, LEAs, and IHEs to recruit, prepare and retain qualified personnel from culturally diverse backgrounds and persons with disabilities.
- Coordinate with BEESS Grants Management staff and the Bureau Chief timelines and processes for management of the Regional CSPD Council/ ESE Professional Development Partnership grants.
- Provide technical assistance to the Regional CSPD Councils/ESE Professional Development Partnerships.
- Facilitate the development in collaboration with Regional CSPD Councils/ESE Professional Development Partnerships, professional preparation programs that combine general and special education to prepare teachers to work with all children, regardless of disability.
- Implement an Annual Florida CSPD Institute for Regional CSPD Council staff and stakeholders to share best practices including collaboration, planning, and accountability.
- Publish a quarterly Florida CSPD newsletter, *The Chronicle*, to serve as an information dissemination device that addresses professional development issues, strategies and successful programs in Florida and around the nation.
- Provide an annual summative evaluation (Report of Project Accomplishments) that documents implementation of project components and activities to define the extent to which the project has attained its goals.

1996 – 2001 PULASKI COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
PULASKI, VIRGINIA

Assistant Principal, Pulaski Middle School

12 month assistant principal in a school with 62 teachers, and 654 students

Responsibilities included:

- Assisted the Principal with all school processes.
- Served as the Child Study chairperson.
- Assisted the Principal with all school discipline issues.
- Served as the case manager for all 540 plans.
- Worked with teachers to provide quality instruction to students.
- Assisted the Principal with the writing of the School Improvement Plan.
- Wrote grants to receive funding for remediation programs.
- Created and supervised remediation programs.

Assistant Director of Special Education

Full-time coordinator in a public school system with 12 schools and over 100 special education teachers, para-educators, and related service personnel

Responsibilities included:

- Reviewed and monitored Individualized Education Plans with teachers.
- Assisted teachers with parent conferences and I.E.P. meetings.
- Supervised classroom instruction and work collaboratively with para-educators, teachers, and building level administrators to improve instruction.
- Provided information through training and staff development to teachers and administrators.
- Assisted Child Study Teams.
- Collaborated with School Psychologists on recommendations for instructional approaches.
- Coordinated services that take place as a part of the Teacher Resource Center.
- Developed, created, and disseminated a monthly newsletter to all special education teachers and building level administrators.
- Attended monthly meetings of the Southwest Virginia Directors of Special Education.
- Served as a member of the Pulaski County Parent Advisory Committee.
- Created, maintained, and updated the Pulaski County Special Education Manual.
- Served as a liaison between local universities and the school system.
- Served as a mentor for new special education teachers. Provide new special education teachers with orientation, on-going training, and follow-up.
- Assisted the Director of Special Education in writing grants.
- Served as chairperson for special education eligibility and manifestation determination review meetings.

Teacher of the Learning Disabled, Dublin Elementary School

Responsibilities included:

- Developed Individualized Education Programs for students with learning disabilities, developmental delays, and other health impairments in grades K-5.
- Developed and implemented a new service delivery model for students in grade K-5 that incorporated inclusion and maximized student achievement.
- Wrote a Goals 2000 Eisenhower Computer Technology Grant.
- Served on the Child Study Committee.
- Served on the Math Standards of Learning Committee.
- Team presenter of learning strategies at grade level meetings.

1994 – 1996 TROY CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
TROY, ALABAMA

Enrichment Coordinator, Charles Henderson Middle School

Responsibilities included:

- Served as the Enrichment Coordinator for a school that had adopted a philosophy of school-wide enrichment.
- Developed and implemented a variety of activities, field trips, projects, speakers, and programs for all students based on each individual student's interest.
- Taught advanced classes in Reading, American History, and World History to students in grades 6-8.
- Developed Individualized Education Programs for the Gifted and Talented.
- Served on the Child Study Team.
- Directed students on how to create, develop, and disseminate a school-wide newspaper.

- Served as a coordinator of service learning projects at the school level that encouraged community awareness and integrated with the curriculum.

Sixth Grade Teacher, Charles Henderson Middle School

Responsibilities included:

- Taught Math, Social Studies, and Reading to a diverse group of sixth grade students.
- Received training in Total Quality Management
- Coordinated Career Awareness Week
- Served as a member of the School-wide Intervention Team
- Coordinated peer education activities and training
- Designed and implemented organizational programs for students.

1993 – 1994 MONTGOMERY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA

Teacher of the Learning Disabled, Floyd Junior High School

Responsibilities included:

- Developed Individualized Education Programs for students with learning disabilities, developmental delays, and other health impairments in grades 6-9.
- Taught Math, Reading, and Social Studies to students with learning disabilities, developmental delays, and other health impairments.
- Implemented behavior modification techniques to meet individual and class expectations.
- Taught social skills to re-mediate problem behaviors for successful inclusion.
- Wrote and received a grant from the Montgomery Public School system.
- Directed students with disabilities on how to create, develop, and disseminate a school-wide newspaper.

MEMBERSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND OFFICES HELD

- Member of Phi Delta Kappa, Current
- Member of the Council for Exceptional Children, Current
- Member of the Division of Learning Disabilities, Current
- Member of the Teacher Education Division, Current
- Member of the Council of Administrators in Special Education, Current
- Member of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Current
- Member of the International Reading Association, 1996-2004
- Membership Chairman of the Florida Council on Learning Disabilities, 2003-2004
- Member of National Education Association, 1993 – 2000
- Member of the Virginia Education Association, 1996 – 2001
- Membership Chairman of the County Education Association, 1997-1998
- Building Representative of the County Education Association, 1998-2000
- Vice-President of the New River Valley Council for Exceptional Children, 1997
- Membership Chairman of the Pike County Reading Association, 1996
- Member of the Alabama Counseling Association, 1994-1996

COMMUNITY SERVICE ACTIVITIES

- Meal on Wheels Delivery, 2003

- Volunteer at the Pike County Nursing Home, Summer 1990
- Volunteer at Camp A.S.C.C.A., Helen Keller Weekend
- C.A.P.P. Peer Educator, Troy State University, 1991-1992

SPECIAL RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Systems Change
- Policy to Practice Issues
- Personnel Development
- Teacher/Administrator Professional Development
- Self-determination and Transition

CREATIVE PRODUCTS AND PUBLICATIONS

- Massey, Lori M. (Oct./Nov., 2000). Special delivery: Meeting Special needs- A sound idea, The Mailbox-Primary, The Education Center, Inc., pp 9.
- Massey, Lori M. (Feb./Mar., 1999). Special delivery: Meeting special needs- Making sense of place value, The Mailbox-Primary, The Education Center, Inc., pp.17.
- Massey, Lori M. (Oct./Nov., 1998). Special delivery: Meeting special needs-Practical profile sheets, The Mailbox-Primary, The Education Center, Inc., pp 35.

PAPERS PRESENTED AT PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS

- **Getting Excited About Data: Planning Your Work and Working Your Plan**, Presented by the Florida Diagnostic Learning Resource System (FDLRS) - NEFEC, District Exceptional Student Education Directors, and the Florida Inclusion Network, Summer Behavioral and Instructional Techniques for Success Conference, June 28-29, 2004.
- **Florida's Comprehensive System of Personnel Development**, Presentation at the U.S. – China Conference on Educating Children with Special Needs, Beijing, China, June 8 – 18, 2004.
- **Florida's Comprehensive System of Personnel Development**, Presentation at the National Summit Meeting: Families, Teachers and Teacher Educators Partnering for the Future, University of Central Florida, March 26, 2004.
- **Ensuring Competence through Alternate Routes to ESE K – 12 Certification**, Co-Presenter at the 2004 Office of Special Education Programs Joint Personnel Preparation/ State Improvement/ Comprehensive System of Personnel Development Conference, Arlington, Virginia, March 18, 2004.
- **The Florida Speaker's Bureau: Promoting Careers in Special Education**, the Florida Federation Council for Exceptional Children State Conference, October 16 – 18, 2003.
- **Florida's Regional Professional Development Partnerships**, Florida Department of Education, Pre/K – 20 Partnerships in Education Conference: Addressing the Need for More High Quality Teachers, May 9-10, 2003.
- **"Become the Captain of Your Own Ship"**, Presentation at the Florida Federation Council for Exceptional Children State Conference, October 2002.
- **"Florida's Personnel Recruitment and Retention Strategies and Resources"**, Presentation, Florida Federation Council for Exceptional Children Conference, October 2002.

- **“Self- Determination: Become the Captain of Your Own Ship”**, Presentation at the Third Regional Comprehensive System of Personnel Development Conference, August 2002.
- **“How to Build a Successful Remediation Program for the At-Risk Learner”**, Presentation to Various Teachers and Administrators employed by the Pulaski County Public Schools, Leadership Retreat, August 2000.
- **“Special Education 101: Meeting the Needs of Special Education Students in the Regular Classroom.”** Presentation to various Teachers and Administrators employed by Pulaski County Public Schools, August 3, 1999.
- **“Taking Risks with the At-Risk: A Counseling Approach.”** Paper presented at the Alabama Counseling Association-State Conference, Mobile, Alabama, 1995.

PROPOSALS WRITTEN AND FUNDED

- **Florida Department of Education at \$8.6 Million** (Summer, 2006), **State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG)**. To assist states in reforming and improving their personnel preparation and professional development systems for teachers, principals, administrators, related services personnel, paraprofessionals, and early intervention personnel. The intent of this grant is to improve educational results for children with disabilities through the delivery of high quality instruction and the recruitment, hiring, and retention of highly qualified special education teachers.
- **Florida Department of Education at \$75,000** (Summer, 2003), **Just Read, Florida!** Summer Reading Academies, reading training for K-3 teachers throughout the state of Florida.
- **Virginia Department of Education at \$20,000** (January-December, 1999), **Sliver Grant**, for staff development and training for teachers, and workshops for parents of preschool children.
- **Virginia Department of Education at \$1,000** (1998-1999 School Year), **Assistive Technology Grant**, provided hardware and software for students with disabilities in Pulaski County.
- **Troy City Public Schools Grant Recipient at \$500** (1995-1996 School Year), provided funding for an author of a famous children’s book to visit the Troy City School system.
- **Montgomery County Schools Grant Recipient at \$500** (1993-1994 School Year), Allowed students with learning disabilities to create and disseminate a school-wide newspaper.

AWARDS AND HONORS

- George C. Wallace Leadership Scholarship
- Beverly Beard Williamson Scholarship
- Dean’s List 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993
- Kappa Delta Pi Honor Society
- Gamma Beta Phi Honor Society
- ODK-National Leadership Honor Society
- Special Education Stipend Recipient

SPECIAL COMPETENCIES

- **Adjunct Professor**, ESE 470: Introduction to Exceptional Student Education, Barry University, Undergraduate course, spring 2006.
- **Online Learning Instructor**, Professional Development Alternative for Exceptional Student Educators (PDA-ESE), Florida Department of Education, online teaching of the Foundations of Exceptional Student Education course module, Spring and Summer 2004.
- **Professional Developer and Trainer**, Just Read, Florida! Statewide reading training for Kindergarten – Grade 3 teachers, Florida Department of Education, summer 2003.
- **Math- V.I.D.S. Trainer**, Received Training from the Virginia Department of Education during the 1999 school year. (*Math V.I.D.S. is a computer-based instructional design tool used to help teachers learn about effective learning strategies to use with students' with math disabilities. I was a part of a team that trained hundreds of teachers in southwest Virginia.)
- **Kansas Learning Strategies Training**, Scaffolding Student Learning, Provided by the Training and Technical Assistance Center at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 1998-1999.
- **Certified Wilson Language Teacher**, Received training during the summer of 1997.

CERTIFICATION STATUS

Florida Professional Educator Certification -

- Administration and Supervision
- Early Education (NK-3)
- Elementary Grades (3-6)
- Specific Learning Disabilities (NK-12)
- Elementary School Counselor
- Middle School Counselor
- Secondary School Counselor

OTHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

- 2006 OSEP Joint Personnel Preparation/State Improvement Grant/CSPD Conference, Washington, D.C., July 2006.
- 2005 OSEP Joint Personnel Preparation/State Improvement Grant/CSPD Conference, Washington, D.C., July 2005.
- Center for Improving Teacher Quality: National Invitational Forum, A forum for states to discuss improving the quality of teachers of students with disabilities, Charleston, South Carolina, September 19-21, 2005.
- International Council for Exceptional Children Convention and Expo, New Orleans, Louisiana, April, 2004.
- 2004 OSEP Joint Personnel Preparation/State Improvement Grant/CSPD Conference, Washington, D.C., March 2004.
- 2003 OSEP Joint Personnel Preparation/State Improvement Grant/CSPD Conference, Washington, D.C., February 2003.
- Self-Determination and Transition Workshop, Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services, Florida Department of Education, Orlando, 2002.
- International Council for Exceptional Children Convention and Expo, New York, NY, April 1 – 6 2002.

- 2002 OSEP Joint Personnel Preparation/State Improvement Grant/CSPD Conference, Washington, D.C., February 2002.
- National Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children Conference, November 2001 and 2002.
- Florida's Administrators' Management Meeting, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005.
- Special Education Law in Virginia, Richmond, Virginia, March 23, 2001.
- Virginia- Council for Exceptional Children Leadership Retreat, Virginia Beach, Virginia, February 2001.
- National Association of Special Education Directors Conference, Orlando, Florida, November 2000.
- Virginia School Board Association Law Conference, Charlottesville, Virginia, June 4, 1999.
- Workshop: How to Supervise People-For the Newly Appointed Supervisor and Manager, 1999.
- Virginia- Council for Exceptional Children State Conference; Roanoke, Virginia, February 19, 1999.
- Workshop: MAPS and PATHS, Radford University, January 19, 1999.
- Legal Training Sponsored by the Virginia Supreme Court and Virginia Department of Education, Charlottesville, Virginia, September 11, 1998.
- Workshop: The Inclusion Puzzle: Fitting Pieces Together-The Philosophy, Instructional Strategies, and Organizational Practices of Inclusive Education, Roanoke, Virginia, March 30-31, 1998.