

2006 NANCY ZIMPHER AWARD for BEST PARTNERSHIP
Ball State University and Rhoades Elementary School:
A Professional Development School Partnership

Rhoades Elementary School was one of the first schools in Indiana to be identified through No Child Left Behind (NCLB) as a failing school in 2002. In an effort to improve teaching and learning on all levels, they initiated a professional development school partnership with Ball State University (BSU) in 1999-2000. In September, 2005, Rhoades was one of the recipients of the national 2005 NCLB Blue Ribbon Schools Award.

Rhoades is a pre-K through grade six urban school on the west side of Indianapolis, Indiana, in the Metropolitan School District of Wayne Township. Twenty-seven percent of the 750 students are minorities, with a growing population of English as a second language; 70% receive free or reduced lunch; and the school has a 44% mobility rate.

Ball State University is located 60 miles northeast of Indianapolis in Muncie, Indiana. Of the 20,000 students, approximately 1,750 are elementary education majors with an average of 225 student teachers per semester. The Teachers College has the reputation for building strong working relationships with schools and began developing PDS partnerships with schools in 1997-1998 when they joined the Holmes Partnership. The BSU Professional Development Schools Network includes 23 P-12 schools and educational sites.

Since becoming a PDS, Rhoades has mentored 102 teacher candidates. The district has hired 25 and 5 teach in Rhoades. They work with a cohort of 10-12 student teachers each semester and have created a unique supervision model in which each student teacher is assigned to a support team of three teachers. A Rhoades teacher has been hired by BSU to provide daily assistance to supervising teachers and preservice teachers.

Collaborative professional development has focused on integration of technology into teaching and learning, early literacy, language arts, understanding student data, and differentiating instruction. Teachers use an inquiry-based approach to improve their practice and each grade level team is involved in a year-long action research project on a targeted area of focus.

More information is available on the following Web sites:

Ball State University PDS Network www.bsu.edu/pds

Rhoades Elementary School www.wayne.k12.in.us/rhe

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