

Institute for Partnerships in Education (I-PiE)
Overview: October 20, 2019

THE SOCIETAL CHALLENGE

The academic and socio-emotional vibrancy of children rests at the heart of the mission of both schools/colleges of education and K-12 school districts. When school districts and universities engage in long-term partnerships that tackle the most challenging problems of practice, high-impact results of student learning and teacher preparation can be achieved.

Unfortunately, organization-wide and long-term partnership between K-12 school districts and universities is the exception rather than the norm, due to the challenges resulting from K-12 schools and universities having different organizational structures, funding models, and accountability systems. As a result of these challenges, universities and K-12 school districts tend to interact with one another through relatively short-term, transactional contexts such as placing student teachers in schools, or implementing an isolated grant within a small number of schools over a relatively short timeframe. Long-term organization-level partnerships between universities and school districts typically prove elusive. These obstacles to partnership between universities is experienced not only in North Carolina, but across the nation.

WE HAVE A SOLUTION

To address this societal challenge, the School of Education (SOE) seeks to launch the Institute for Partnerships in Education (I-PiE). I-PiE aims to change the transactional model typical of how universities work with school districts (e.g., the SOE contacts a school district with an urgent need to conduct a research grant in a school, or a school district contacts the SOE with an urgent need for teacher professional development in a particular area) to a model that is grounded in the SOE engaging school districts in an ongoing dialogue exploring the districts' greatest problems of practice and identifying long-term strategies of how we can jointly leverage our respective resources and expertise to partner in long-term plans for addressing these problems of practice. This long-term planning can include intentionally aligning faculty research to the needed areas, seeking grant funding in partnership, and planning the delivery of contracted services (e.g., professional development) to school districts.

To this end, I-PiE has two primary goals:

- 1. Expand Long-Term Partnerships.** I-PiE will provide the needed infrastructure and leadership to substantially expand the long-term partnerships between UNCG educational researchers, practitioners, and educational agencies (e.g., school districts and related community organizations) in North Carolina, particularly those in the Piedmont Triad region of North Carolina.

2. Recognized National Leader. I-PiE will be a recognized national leader in advancing knowledge and practice of university-school partnerships.

This Institute will be the ***first of its kind in North Carolina*** and is positioned to be a driving force in expanding sustained partnerships between universities and K-12 school districts across North Carolina and the nation.

FUNCTIONS OF I-PiE

I-PiE will achieve its goals through the following functions:

1. Identify Points of Intersection. I-PiE leadership will actively work with local educational agencies (e.g., school districts, related community organizations, etc.) to identify points of intersection between pressing needs of the educational agencies and potential capacity (expertise, research, etc.) of faculty.

2. Facilitating and Supporting Expanded Long-Term Partnerships. I-PiE will provide support to broker partnership matches between UNCG faculty and educational agencies to position us for timely partnerships as needs arise.

3. Facilitate and Support Collaborative Grant Proposals. I-PiE will support the development of grants, many of which will be in collaboration with local school districts, addressing pressing needs of schools.

4. Coordinate Contracted Service Delivery. I-PiE will coordinate contracted service delivery to local educational agencies.

5. Host Annual Conference. I-PiE will lead an annual conference with national scope focusing on the advancement of school-university partnerships.

BENEFITS AND IMPACTS OF I-PiE

The partnerships established and sustained by I-PiE will amplify and extend the SOE's impact on K-12 education, increase its visibility at the regional, state, and national levels, and build capacity for educational innovation among faculty, students, and practitioners. Specific impacts and benefits for the SOE and UNCG include:

1. Improved Educational Opportunities for Children in Our Community. By fostering and sustaining partnerships that value diverse and distributed expertise, I-PiE faculty will collaboratively develop solutions to problems of practice that are more robust, relevant, useful, and timely for partnering districts.

2. Expanding Grant Funding. I-PiE will expand external grant funding by developing infrastructure to support the complexities of collaborative research in educational settings.

3. Enhancing UNCG Student Learning. Through the partnerships and related activities supported by I-PiE, SOE undergraduate and graduate students will have broadened opportunities to engage in experiential learning embedded in K-12 and associated community settings.

4. Building UNCG Recognition As National Leader. I-PiE will help establish UNCG as a national leader in advancing research-based education partnerships.

BUILDING ON CURRENT STRENGTHS OF THE SOE

I-PiE will build from current strengths and assets of the SOE, including an established portfolio of educational research, an array of active community-based service projects, and social capital in the regional education space.

1. Research & Grants. Much of their work of SOE faculty is conducted in collaboration with local school districts. Over the past five years, SOE researchers have secured partnership-based grant funding on the order of \$20 million. Most recently, the SOE was awarded a \$6.1 million partnership grant in October of 2019.

2. Existing Partnerships. The SOE is currently leading numerous projects in partnership with schools and communities. Just a few of these partnerships include: (a) Moss Street Partnership School; (b) The PPERRS Project (a large partnership between the SOE and 11 rural school districts to improve principal preparation), and (c) serving as a regional site for the North Carolina New Teacher Support Program.

3. Current Connections with Educational Agencies. The SOE has extensive connections with school districts and related community organizations across the region: (a) our students and faculty provided over 370,000 hours of service to the community in 2017-18; (b) the Piedmont Triad Education Consortium (PTEC) resides in the SOE Building, and (c) the SOE has a multitude of alumni in school and district leadership positions across the region.

STRUCTURE AND LEADERSHIP OF I-PiE

I-PiE will be housed under the SOE and will be supported by the following administrative positions:

- (a) I-PiE Director
- (b) Grant writer and educational agency liaison
- (c) Administrative Assistant

I-PiE staff will report directly to the Director, and the Director will report to the Dean of the SOE.