

**PORTRAITS OF SECONDARY PARTNER SCHOOLS
IN THE
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1996-1999**

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PARKWAY SOUTH ORIGINAL PORTRAIT:

Parkway South High School/Maryville University – A Year of Ripples and Waves: Expanding and Extending the Partnership

Kathe Rasch and the Parkway South Arthur Vining Davis Council –
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The Parkway South High School/Maryville University Partnership has evolved over several years, with its initial purposes coming from seemingly mutual benefits of pairing a Coalition of Essential Schools high school and a field-based teacher education program modeled on reflective practice. All members of the partnership have seen significant results this year as a variety of factors came together—some as a result of intense planning, others as we worked to “formalize” the partnership and explore how to have the partnership inform the work of all partners.

The Arthur Vining Davis (AVD) planning team had as its goal extension of our dialogue together and the involvement of more participants. The partnership’s proposal for the AVD grant from the Institute for Educational Inquiry highlighted four ways to accomplish this: through mentoring triads, through a seminar group that would engage faculty in reading and talking about teaching (sharing the energy), by extending the number of teachers who have some contact (not necessarily as supervising teachers) with student teachers/interns from Maryville, and by improving communication with all of those involved in light of the postulates to which the consortium has committed itself. This portrait will provide a snapshot of the progress that we (the partnership) have made due to the commitment of the partners and complemented by the outside memberships, financial resources, and critical friends who

have been of assistance.

The portrait is organized to chronicle our progress as it relates specifically to simultaneous renewal, focusing on three of the four moral dimensions of teaching as identified by Goodlad (1990, 1994), specifically: pedagogical nurturing, access to knowledge, and stewardship of the school. We, the members of both institutions as well as our students, believe that our work and progress this year specifically addresses three of the moral dimensions of teaching to which we have committed as part of the sixteenth setting of the National Network for Educational Renewal (NNER); this portrait specifically addresses those dimensions. At the same time, the partnership’s work reflects all four goals outlined in Clark’s document, *NNER Compact on Partner Schools* (1995), in that we (Maryville and Parkway collectively) have aspired to develop a partner school that has as its purposes education of children and youth, preparing educators, providing professional development, and engaging in inquiry. We have not, however, chosen to organize our portrait specifically around those purposes; the moral dimensions mentioned earlier have provided a “best fit” to describe our work.

One will find stories of Maryville faculty and students as well as Parkway faculty and students interwoven in the portrait in the same way that we (all members of the partnership) have found our work increasingly interwoven in the day-to-day

practice of partner members. It is increasingly difficult to speak of “we” and “they”. The “our” and “we” addressed in this partnership has become truly inclusive of both partners; the work described herein has involved all partners regularly and systematically. We believe that this is an important manifestation of years of partnership work. There is a new level of maturity for the partnership that is chronicled herein. This portrait will chronicle significant accomplishments for the partnership, including a year of new leadership at Parkway South and clear direction for the future of the partnership.

Parkway South High School

Parkway South High School is one of five ninth- through twelfth-grade secondary schools in the Parkway School District, a suburban district located in West St. Louis County. The district is one of the largest in the state (serving 22,000 students) and was consolidated in the 1950s when increasing numbers of families moved west from St. Louis City and the inner ring of older St. Louis County suburbs. The district may be described as “essentially” middle and upper middle class. A very small percentage of the student body who live in the district might be categorized as minority, although the English as a Second Language Program within the district is rapidly growing through enrollment of children from patrons involved in international business. The majority of minority students who attend school within the district (African-American) attend through the St. Louis Voluntary Interdistrict Desegregation Plan that provides transportation for the St. Louis City minority students who choose to attend St. Louis County Schools.

Parkway South High School currently enrolls almost 2,000 students, grades nine through twelve. Approximately 18 percent of these students are African-American. Few students receive free or reduced lunch and the mobility rate of Parkway students is

relatively low. The dropout rate at Parkway South is increasing from about 5 percent; staff members are studying for whom this figure actually accounts. Approximately 95 percent of the student body attends some form of higher education institution upon graduation from South High and parents are generally satisfied with the education that their children receive there. Indeed, one of the issues raised by parents at the time South High entered the Coalition of Essential Schools and began to consider some restructuring was, “Why fix something that isn’t broke?” The school employs 128 professional staff, most with master’s and doctoral degrees and more than twenty years of teaching experience, though recent retirements have provided opportunities for young, new staff members.

Parkway South joined the Coalition of Essential Schools in 1986 and has struggled with the extent to which the school’s faculty as a whole embrace the CES principles and work. As of about two years ago, the faculty were split one-third, one-third, and one-third with support, opposition, and ambivalence about the Coalition focus. Two years ago, the principal of South moved to the area superintendent position. After one year with Mr. Gary Mazzola as a supportive interim principal, Dr. Wayne Mosher became principal of the school in July 1996. At this point (August 1997), the partnership is thriving, having witnessed two changes in high school leadership and a change in superintendent. Testimony to the systematization of this partnership is that we have not skipped a beat, progress has continued and grown stronger throughout changes in leadership.

Dr. Mosher has instituted several sets of planning activities and meetings designed to rekindle conversations in the school around issues of teaching and learning. He has long been known as an administrator who strongly supports the development of teachers and has also worked as an adjunct faculty member for Maryville for a long time. He was aware of the Maryville/Parkway South Partnership when he applied for the

principalship and knew that there was extensive teacher education going on in the building. During this past year, he has been present at partnership council meetings, contributed significantly to moving the thinking forward for all partners, and welcomed the Maryville partners into the inner operations of the school, while also thinking about how the school will interact with Maryville's programs and priorities.

The Maryville/Parkway South Partnership began when Maryville took an interest in Parkway South's work with Coalition of Essential Schools principles and began to place student teachers and practicum students at that site in 1992. In 1993, a grant allowed Maryville's School of Education, College of Arts and Sciences, and Parkway South to begin ground-up planning of an entirely new secondary program. During that fall, the partnership was part of Maryville's application to the NNER with Harris-Stowe and the St. Louis Public Schools. The partnership has operated with a history of participatory decision making and a commitment to joint responsibility for the preparation of teachers and the development and simultaneous renewal of Maryville and Parkway South. The 1996-97 year was one of great anticipation—the secondary program design that was so carefully crafted was to get its first trial. At the same time, the spirit of the design and its quite unique features would be apparent to the Parkway teachers working with Maryville students. Parkway South (and Maryville faculty) anxiously anticipated the arrival of a new leader, eager to see what vision and plans he had for the school. It is in this context that many "firsts" occurred. The partnership has extended its influence in ever-widening concentric circles. Sometimes the leap from one ripple to another was easy, at other times it was more treacherous. But we have much growth to document, and look toward next year with a proposal for a long-range set of goals for the partnership that have taken shape through "conversation" and action on the part of many courageous enough to jump into uncharted waters, believing that the work

will create ever wider concentric circles of influence.

Throughout this journey, our work has been guided by the attention to the aforementioned moral dimensions of teaching. Conversations among the members of the partnership have had increased focus and urgency. The following sections deal specifically with the results of this year's partnership efforts.

Exploring and Expanding Our Professional Lives

Goodlad and others (1995) have highlighted the importance of developing one's teaching by considering the moral aspects of the work that we do. He highlights four moral dimensions of a teacher's work as s/he engages students, specifically:

- a. Pedagogical nurturing (teachers continuing commitment and attention to pedagogy; the assurance that teachers' pedagogy is constantly under reflection and refinement);
- b. Access to knowledge (the assurance that all students will have access to the information and skills that they need to succeed in a democratic society);
- c. Enculturation into a social and political democracy (the day-to-day practice that reinforces the role of the teacher in helping students understand the processes, functions, and roles of each student's development in a democratic society); and
- d. Stewardship of the school (commitment of all in the school, including preservice teachers, so that all adults in the school are concerned with the care of the school community and its functioning within the larger community(ies) that it serves.

The expansion of our dialogue involved moving from about eight university faculty and ten to twelve Parkway South faculty to include five more Maryville faculty and, in one way or another, about twenty more Parkway South teachers and administrators.

But numbers only begin to convey the story. The specifics of this year's engagement follow, with reference to the initiatives undertaken by the partnership and the school with its new leadership as being essential elements that have complemented each other. "Students" refer to Parkway South High School students and preservice teacher education students pursuing a new post-baccalaureate program based at Parkway South High School.

Nurturing Pedagogy

Over and over again throughout the year, the participants' (school and university faculty, as well as preservice teachers) conversations returned to teaching. The partnership began because of a common interest to rethink and reexamine teaching practice in a large, comprehensive public high school as well as in the university.

The 1996-97 year was the first time that we implemented the new secondary program that had been collectively designed by PSH faculty, School of Education faculty, and Arts and Sciences faculty. The "we" referred to here is truly the collective "we" that has come about because of the partnership. This post-baccalaureate program was designed for fifteen months and followed the school calendar, not the university calendar, for two summer sessions and the entire school year. For all but October through December, our first cohort of nine preservice teachers spent their time at Parkway South. During the school year they were paired with a teacher from South, many of whom were new to involvement with Maryville.

Rather than separating the content methods study for these students, a mentoring triad of one arts and sciences faculty member, one School of Education faculty member, and a Parkway teacher met throughout the year with the students from their respective content areas. We have come to realize that this triad, unique in its structure and composition, is a powerful and innovative force for both the preservice

teachers and the triad participants. After first conducting admissions interviews and making the decisions as to whom they would accept into the program, the triad teams met throughout the year with the preservice students to assist them in understanding their role within the school, learning to teach their respective discipline, and assessing the learning of the secondary students. They also met collectively on a bimonthly basis to share what the triads were all learning and what issues all of the triads needed to address.

These teams, moving slowly and haltingly at first, met with preservice teacher education students to discuss what they were teaching, how they were teaching, and how to interpret their experiences at Parkway South. Students and faculty worked through issues such as selection of novels, how much time to spend teaching about waves in a physics class, whether history should be the overarching focus of all social studies classes, and how to evaluate the unit that the preservice students were teaching. Mentoring triads supported Maryville students, supervised teaching, and advised them on their action research projects. They also became confidants and counselors for the students as they were needed. In some cases, the students began to perceive the role of the teams only as confidants and purveyors of emotional support. This was not the original intent; the exploration of the roles and responsibility of these teams remains an area of emphasis for the next year. In addition, Dr. Mosher has indicated his interest in becoming more involved in working with the secondary students personally.

Also of importance was the deluge of communication among mentoring triad members, whether or not the preservice students were present to provoke the conversation. Much of this correspondence occurred through e-mail, copied to all of the triads so that the conversation was broadly shared. Mentoring triad members report increased understanding about each others' roles and perspectives, and the conversations about their own teaching have been rich,

lengthy and, at times, contentious. The teams begin their second year with increased understanding of their own pedagogy and about how to specifically help Maryville students think about their pedagogy as well. The importance of the liberal arts preparation of the Maryville students became quite clear after mentoring teams watched Maryville students struggle with even the beginning rudiments of planning. The liberal arts preparation of teacher education students is particularly important as it relates to post-baccalaureate students who, while having a major in content areas, do not have the skills to move from academic majors to teaching emphases. The Parkway teachers in the mentoring teams understand this as well as the Maryville faculty.

With the phasing out of the old, more traditional undergraduate teacher education program and the phasing in of the new program, twenty-one Maryville teacher education students (a record number) had experiences at Parkway South in the past year. In a rather unanticipated way, the sheer number of students to be placed pushed the agenda of simultaneous renewal forward. This record number of placements necessitated convincing, cajoling, or cheerfully recruiting new teachers who had never had experience working with Maryville students. Since the program is based upon a model that advocates reflective practice, those previously involved in the program spent a great deal of time helping new participants understand that involvement with the teacher education students would mean renewed reflection on their own practice as well. Some unfortunately placed snow days in January meant that this preparation was not as systematic as it should have been, and there will be a need for rebuilding a “big picture” understanding this fall. But the Partnership Council expanded those interested in the preparation of new teachers. These placements also expanded attention to the partnership and the possibilities beyond the placement of student teachers. These Parkway South teachers have also had many ideas and suggestions to help modify our

fledgling program design.

The conversation of all of these groups (mentoring triads, cooperating teachers, program planners, administrators) came together at a two-day retreat in April. One of the foci of the retreat was to review, together, how we were all helping beginners with pedagogy. What we learned in the process was that each participant was thinking more deeply about his/her own practice as a result of their reflection with the preservice teachers.

While the teacher education program was going on, the new principal was also exploring the ways in which he and the teachers would begin to have conversations about teaching and learning. The co-coordinator of the Maryville program (a Maryville faculty member) began to participate in several school-wide initiatives, enabling the Maryville faculty to have representation at substantive discussions in the school. In the case of Parkway South, Maryville was invited to attend and participate in weekly administrative council meetings, department chair meetings discussing substantive issues of teaching and learning for Parkway South students, and meetings about North Central and the Strategic Planning Task Force which also involved PSH students, parents, feeder school teachers, and community members. This participation has resulted in an increased understanding of school issues for the Maryville faculty, but it has also sent a strong message that Maryville is committed to the work of Parkway South. South High faculty is now quite comfortable in approaching the Maryville coordinator to discuss any issues that are of interest to them.

Parkway South faculty also formally became Maryville faculty members. Two faculty members and the principal have taught both graduate courses and courses for preservice teacher education students. One PSH teacher was formally invited to all SOE meetings and the collective mentoring team meetings.

At the same time, the arts and sciences faculty has become a full partner in this

process as well. Their work in mentoring triads and with Parkway South faculty as graduate students in their classes has brought a new level of conversation about the role in arts and sciences in every aspect of teacher education. There has been substantive conversation on the role of each of their own pedagogy and that of their content area in the development of preservice secondary teachers.

Finally, Maryville and Parkway South formally established a council for the partnership that spent this year (1996-97) finding its way into our work and each institution's structures. Meeting once a month for two hours, this group (including the principal, the dean, program coordinators, and faculty from both institutions) struggled with how to best proceed to extend the partnership to become more involved in the renewal of Parkway South, Maryville University's teacher education programs, and the renewal work that we are attempting to deepen together. We tried to formulate some goals in the fall, advancing some ideas about how to position the partnership but, in the end, decided to move slowly and, to a certain extent, see what emerged throughout the year. We did, however, share long discussions about how all of us could help make the teaching and learning at Parkway South meaningful for all students and the respective faculties of both institutions. This council became a sounding board for many ideas, helping those of us who then move out in the broader "ripples" to try out ideas and coordinate our efforts to move forward. It became clear that there was an ever-expanding realization of commitment to simultaneous renewal and the benefits for all involved. This is the group that planned the retreat that has resulted in direction for our work in the 1997-98 school year.

Access to Knowledge

Conversations about the teaching and learning of Parkway South students have occurred on a daily basis with Maryville

students and cooperating teachers. As each and every one of us worked with Parkway South students, we spent much time talking about disengaged students and students who were not eager to pursue their schoolwork. Indeed, these conversations about learning and about initiative are the ones that cause all of us to pause. We still have much to do to help PSH students who are unengaged to connect schooling and learning to a meaningful life. Answers to these hard questions will come from a long-term commitment to addressing them together. For example, Maryville teacher education students raised significant questions about the tracking in classes at South and its relationship to the kind of learning experiences for PSH students. They have questioned and collected data about students' perceptions of honors classes, teaching in honors and non-honors classes, and student mobility in and out of the different tracks of classes. In the current Parkway South North Central plan, issues of student engagement will dovetail directly with the questions that the preservice teachers are raising.

Another aspect of "access to knowledge" that we explored together had to do with the knowledge that we assumed came with those teacher education students with baccalaureate degrees in a content area. The mentoring triads worked with Maryville students and experienced first hand the struggles to make sense of disciplinary knowledge as one tries to bring it into perspective for high school students. In reality, the faculties of PSH and Maryville (both education and arts and sciences) have done a great deal of collective rethinking about the development of the preservice teachers in such an intense program. In particular, the faculties have grappled with where one begins to help a preservice teacher think about the knowledge that they have, how it is structured and organized, and how one determines what knowledge will be of worth in helping Parkway South students during their high school careers. More simply, there has been the realization that questions about what one chooses to teach are

incredibly complex and value laden. These conversations will continue at a more sophisticated level in the next year as we have restructured the work of the triads. We learned a lot from the social studies mentoring triad that was able to couple their work with a traditional methods class taught by a PSH faculty member. This structure allowed this team to ask more questions earlier and at a more sophisticated level. This team has helped the rest of us think about our own beliefs and values pertaining to knowledge about teaching and content. We polarize (or dichotomize) them much less than we did in the past.

Each preservice teacher education student from Maryville completed an action research project while at Parkway South. These projects were part of their master's degree requirements and required systematic data collection. The purpose of the project was to have preservice teacher education students engage in systematic inquiry into a topic that was of intense interest to them, emerging from their work with Parkway South students. Cooperating teachers and mentoring triads actively assisted the preservice teachers in identifying topics for inquiry and focusing their data collection work. While this action research requirement has been part of Maryville's teacher education program for a number of years, the number of students and, subsequently, the number of projects did influence departments at Parkway South more this year than it has in the past. Many of the projects were around issues of "access to knowledge," such as the perceived benefits of honors courses, the results of modifying mastery learning, students' perceptions of their ninth-grade experience, and the development of character education through the teaching of literature. This year, for the first time, the mentoring triads and other students heard the oral presentations of these projects. We will formalize the sharing of this data with the entire PSH community while also trying to get some Maryville and Parkway South faculty to participate in action research together during the 1997-98 school year.

Finally, the PSH schoolwide discussions about critical thinking were emphasized during the April retreat. Using a specific framework for critical thinking, we have begun to incorporate this framework into our plans for future work with South High students and Maryville teacher education students and faculty. The Partnership Council anticipates the adoption of our strategic goals, the development of an action plan, and its alignment with the schoolwide strategic planning process in the fall. Dr. Mosher intends to use critical thinking as the organizing idea for all Parkway South school discussions in the 1997-98 school year.

Stewardship of the School

In some ways, the previous benchmarks have all carried with them attention to an ongoing concern about how to make all of us part of the community that stewards the students at Parkway South. Tying the Maryville/Parkway South Partnership planning directly to the long-range plan of the school has required time, patience, and a willingness to wait on planning as other activities unfolded. This nonlinear approach to planning and consensus building is more comfortable for some of us (faculty and students) than for others. Many times this year, people have asked "Where are we going?" and "What does he or she want?" We have all learned that through communication, attention to relationships and even more communication, the collective faculties have forged progress in talking about teaching and learning while not always having the specifics of our plan laid out. Through our year of conversation, reading, exploration, and experimentation, many faculty from both institutions have begun to find their "niche" in the conversations about the partnership if not in the specifics of all that they will ultimately contribute. As yet, the voice of Parkway South students in this whole process of planning has been absent. We must explore how to incorporate high school student voices more carefully in the

1997-98 year. We will also need to expand the role of the preservice teacher education students in the Partnership Council.

With careful attention among the partners, it is safe to say that all involved have a better understanding of at least some aspects of what we are trying to do. As the university faculty spend the next year moving more into the life of Parkway South, examining the school's schedule, program, proficiencies, and goals, there will be new tensions. As the teacher education program expands, the number of Parkway South teachers needed to be involved will also grow. Other schools in the district have expressed some interest to be involved. Exploratory commitment from another Parkway School District high school will have to begin anew because the principal of that school resigned in June and it is unclear how much of that school's commitment was tied to the departing administrator.

In the process, all faculty members from both institutions have been extremely forthright about their commitment and their misgivings. Many misgivings are related to time and logistics; others come from the uneasiness of having to figure out how this simultaneous renewal will occur without a clear outline about how to proceed in the creation of the broader partnership. The leadership at Maryville and Parkway South provided incredible support, time, and resources for the work of the partnership. Their courage to "jump in and try" has made the partnership possible.

We begin the partnership's next year with specific plans for the preservice Maryville students, PSH students, and ourselves as faculties (including the arts and sciences faculty). The partnership's planning is now connected to the strategic planning process at both institutions and cuts across more departments at the high school than ever before. We continue to communicate, communicate, communicate.

Our membership in the National Network for Educational Renewal has helped us keep focus on what is important in the partnership through attention to simultaneous renewal and the moral

dimensions of our work together. We are now moving to attend collectively to the stewardship of Parkway South. The entering freshman class of the high school has many students with challenges. The personalization of the high school experience for students remains an important emphasis for Parkway South in the next years; there are now partners from Maryville committed to help with the experience. The strategic planning for the school, the university's teacher education programs, and the partnership are on course. We do believe that many adventures await us collectively, with strength in the depth of conversation and commitment for Parkway South High School. But we have enriched partnership experiences and a framework for future work that ensures the partnership will be focused on the work of ongoing renewal for all faculties and students involved.

PARKWAY SOUTH UPDATE:

Parkway South High School/Maryville University Partnership

Kathe Rasch, Maryville University

In yet another year of partnership, Parkway South High School and Maryville University have expanded significantly the number of individuals involved in the partnership. Our joint plan for 1998-99 substantively enhances the involvement of existing partners and includes new ones. At the same time, as more than another year has past, one wonders if students at Parkway South know much about the partnership or if they take it for granted. We will be working on this. This year of change and challenge has helped us to take stock and realize how extensive the work has been and how we will be looking to really new ideas and structures in the next year.

The partnership continues to grow, involving more teachers from South and a slightly broader array of faculty from Maryville. It has been accepted as a pilot site in the NCATE Professional Development School standards project. In reality, the partnership has become even more visible while both institutions are undergoing tremendous changes and taking steps forward in their own individual history. Since writing the last portrait, the unified energy about the partnership has also moved forward, though much of the work has been of a more quiet kind. The next series of actions during the 1998-99 year are more challenging as we attempt to do even more to merge the two cultures and strengthen the partnership.

What follows is a description of the activities, significant accomplishments, and challenges that the partnership faced during the past year. Hopefully, the reader will notice that there is evidence of simultaneous

renewal. When one looks at the difficult issues tackled, the partnership realizes that many of them occur as we attempt to approach teaching as a moral endeavor.

Preservice Teacher Education

The partnership began with a focus on teacher education, and this focus has solidified during the second and third year of the redesigned secondary program. Having learned from the first year, teachers at both Maryville University and Parkway South High School made modifications in the master's level teacher education program to include more overt instruction in lesson and unit planning during the first summer. A small cohort of eight students began the second year (1997-98) of the Master of Education/Secondary Teaching and Inquiry, with the heaviest concentration in the science department. By the end of the summer, two of the interns dropped out, leaving six (three in science, two in social studies, and one in English). A second cohort of MA in Secondary Teaching and Inquiry interns spent the 1997-98 year at Parkway South and McCluer High Schools (McCluer is a diverse Coalition of Essential Schools high school in the inner suburbs of St. Louis). These interns (and a host of their personal and professional crises) would test all who worked with them.

As mentoring team members chose to admit these interns, there clearly were reservations about some of them. Each of the interns then had crises that left all questioning the intensity of the program and acknowledging the screening of candidates as

critical to the success of the program. In January, as the interns returned to Parkway South, there were concerns about specific aspects of several of the interns' work.

Mentoring teams and program co-coordinators worked to do systematic, three-way conferences with cooperating teachers, interns, program co-coordinators, and/or mentoring team members. Cooperating teachers, program co-coordinators, and mentoring team members spent much of January, February, and March troubleshooting these problems. This resulted in the removal of one intern, an alternate placement for a second, extensive counseling for a third (who was unable to communicate effectively with the cooperating teacher), and postponement of the internship for yet another intern who was subsequently dropped from the program. Without EXTENSIVE time spent with cooperating teachers, department chairs, and faculty, these events could have eroded the partnership. They did not. Ron Banfield's continued work with the cooperating teachers was essential. He was able to continue to help teachers understand that drawing the line, asking questions, and removing some of the interns was essential to safeguard the profession and hold the line on teacher candidate quality. The work at building relationships allowed for immediate action when necessary. At no time was there a question that the university or the school was taking action unilaterally. The program co-coordinators worked feverishly to ensure that all involved in the decision making about these problems were kept informed of the progress toward resolution. This paid off in the increased commitment to the program and the willingness of cooperating teachers to accept an intern again this year, even after a not-necessarily-smooth experience with an intern during the 1997-98 school year. These experiences solidified the communication among partners and made the "stewardship of the school" a very explicit and immediate concern. As Michael Fullan has said, "Problems are our friends." This is probably a bit overstated for these issues, but the problems have certainly made us reexamine

programs.

Changes in the Partnership

Another incredible strength in solidifying the partnership and expanding the partnership's activities has been the appointment of Ron Banfield as co-coordinator of the partnership. Building on Joe Regenbogen's strong work in supervision and identification of cooperating teachers, Ron has been able to understand the broader concepts of the partnership. During the past year, Ron has made a concerted effort to keep information flowing to the school faculty, to understand the workings of the university, and to be the eyes and ears of the partnership with the administration at Parkway South. Ron had experience working as a staff development resource teacher for the district and has also taught coursework at Maryville for the past two years. He had also become a founding member of the science mentoring team. As a result, he has truly been a boundary spanner. Ron and Kathe Rasch, dean of the School of Education at Maryville University and co-coordinator of the partnership with Ron, have had to take the very difficult position of championing the partnership and, at the same time, ensuring that the teacher education candidates are truly ready to assume their roles as stewards of the American schools.

In their roles as program co-coordinators, Ron and Kathe have worked to ensure that the partnership has a presence at key meetings at both institutions. Ron Banfield was one of the members of the Dean's Search Committee at Maryville University; Kathe has attended Administrative Council, Professional Development Committee, and Department Chair meetings at Parkway South.

Changes in Each Institution

Important events have moved each institution forward and, at the same time,

created new opportunities for the partnership. In fact, it is because of these important events that we are at a place to expand the partnership work even more.

Maryville University began the year searching for a new dean, with Mary Ellen Finch having announced her retirement (in May 1997) for June 1998 after twenty-four years at Maryville University. As dean, Mary Ellen had supported the partnership not only in principle but also through active involvement in the Partnership Council's activities. This became a time for faculty to reexamine priorities, and the position announcement emerged with a heavy emphasis upon the National Network for Educational Renewal work and partnerships. As has been the case for Maryville's School of Education in the past, faculty from partner schools participated in the process. Ron Banfield, program co-coordinator, served on the search committee. Just as the search began, Maryville experienced the sudden loss of a faculty member as a result of cancer. This was very traumatic for a small, close-knit family, and left a void that our faculty has been very slow to recover from. At the same time, a new science education faculty member proved to be absolutely indispensable as the partnership worked through some of the difficulties with the interns. Ultimately, the School of Education chose Kathe Rasch to be the new dean. For the partnership and for Maryville's commitment to the work of the National Network for Educational Renewal, this signaled continuity and renewed emphasis. Throughout these changes, key players in the Parkway South partnership remained concerned, supportive, and focused upon ensuring that there would be an ongoing commitment to the partnership.

Parkway South also spent a year consolidating plans and making a vision for the future of the school. Dr. Wayne Mosher, principal of Parkway South, expressed continued and committed interest in developing increasing opportunities for engagement and higher achievement for the students of Parkway South High School. Two A+ school proposals have been unsuccessful,

but the clarity of thinking in these proposals highlighted the importance of taking care of the non-college bound students as well as those predisposed to competitive, four-year college placement. Dr. Mosher expressed interest, from the very first of South's professional development school initiatives, in learning to live together again as a community. To him, this included a heavy dose of pedagogical nurturing. Wayne has provided numerous opportunities and staunch support for teachers who are willing to talk about their teaching and its relationship to student learning at Parkway South. To him, the partnership provides opportunities for Arts and Sciences as well as School of Education faculty to play a role in that process.

Dr. Mosher has extensive training in Richard Paul's approach to Critical Thinking. He has been articulate in his efforts to engage faculty, in a variety of forums, to consider ways to help Parkway South students engage in more thoughtful work. Wayne clearly believed that in order to provide opportunities for more extensive student engagement, a change in the students' schedule would be important. He charged Chris Lindquist, the newly appointed staff development coordinator (a teacher with full-time release), to reengage faculty in thinking about professional development in ways that included partnership activities. In fact, the discussions during several early release days centered on potential changes in the schedule.

It is difficult to describe how sensitive these schedule discussions were. Because of the history surrounding these discussions, they carried high stakes and were context laden. Earlier attempts to change the schedule in conjunction with participation in the Coalition of Essential Schools had been contentious. The faculty was waiting and watching with a great deal of suspicion to see if they would, in fact, have a voice in this decision. Throughout the 1997-98 school year, faculty visited schools with other schedules, studied other schedules, and eventually came up with three alternatives. Two more sets of conversation and polling

found that a four-block/four-block schedule that included an academic lab for teacher/student contact every other day was the model that made the most sense to Parkway South High School.

In reality, the interns from Maryville had experienced the block schedule during their fall placements. They became positive spokespersons for the alternate schedule and exerted influence in professional development debates that might not have occurred in other settings.

At the same time the Parkway South faculty as a whole was considering the change in schedule, Wayne convened the department leaders for long (three-hour) and sustained discussions about how to promote and assess quality learning experiences for students at Parkway South. Historically, discussions about proficiencies and graduation-related final assessments had their roots in Parkway South's work in the Coalition of Essential Schools. Two proficiencies, one in science and one in English, continue to be implemented in the school, but other planned proficiencies had not been discussed in the past three years due to changes in leadership at the school. Department leaders needed to create and recreate the circumstances surrounding the discussions. Discussions have not yet progressed, however, to the role of leaders in helping faculty consider issues of pedagogy, stewardship, or access to knowledge. The definition/role of department leaders remains ambiguous, especially as the change in schedule necessitated that all faculty (including department leaders) teach a full eight-period block. Consequently, there was uncertainty and ambiguity about the role of the leaders as the 1998-99 school year commenced.

Once the decision about the schedule had been made, Parkway South faculty began to prepare for the transition. One of the districtwide opportunities to prepare became a joint venture between the two faculties. In the summer of 1998, Parkway and Maryville jointly planned and sponsored a week-long institute in critical thinking. Follow-up

sessions throughout the summer were organized by subject area teams that planned lessons implementing the principles of critical thinking. In the case of the Parkway South teachers, additional requirements allowed them to receive graduate credit for the experience.

As the semester progressed during the fall of 1998, the effect of the schedule was quite positive overall. Student attendance was up, faculty report satisfaction with the academic lab, and students were using the time well.

Time to Talk

The partnership continues to benefit from sustained time to talk and plan. Two off-site retreats, one in Fall 1997 and another in Fall 1998, have provided critical time to talk, plan, and work together. Each time, there was a goal for the group to include more faculty in conducting the actual retreat. The partnership has been successful in keeping a core of committed faculty from both institutions, but will also work this year to include teachers outside of the areas of certification for Maryville interns (math, science, English, social studies, and K-12 art). During these retreats, there was opportunity to pool thoughts and perceptions and reflect upon the work that has been done. Each time, there was a renewed sense of where the partnership fit into the broader agenda of both institutions. These retreats have also given time for the joint faculty to set specific goals and action plans. The plans made at these retreats have provided the benchmarks and priorities for the next year's work. In addition, these occasions have resulted in a recommitment of all to the partnership in the crowded agendas of both institutions.

A review of our goals from last year at the October retreat showed that we were successful in involving more people in the partnership in meaningful ways, though we did not achieve the scheduled time for joint professional development that we sought. Our preservice teachers did, in fact, engage in action research while at South. We have not

yet been successful in involving cooperating teachers or other South teachers in action research. Our commitment to helping Parkway South High School students demonstrate improved critical thinking and learning got a great deal of attention through the discussions about scheduling and the subsequent work done by each department throughout the summer. Participation of Maryville faculty in the critical thinking workshop has helped to provide a common framework and language for the partnership.

In addition to the monthly Partnership Council meetings and the mentoring team meetings, these retreats provided the opportunity for all faculty members to focus on the partnership. That continued focus is essential to keep the work on track.

Mentoring Teams as Boundary Spanners

One of the most tangible components of the partnership has been the work of the mentoring teams. These teams guide the secondary interns through a year-long experience intended to help all consider content and pedagogy together. This takes the place of the traditional strategies and methods classes and brings Arts and Sciences, School of Education, and Parkway South faculty members together to work with interns in the respective content areas. The teams are not only responsible for content/pedagogy discussions; they also serve as the support and “conscience” for each of the interns as they develop and modify portfolios, and conceive and implement their action research. The mentoring teams have learned so much from each other; they report changes in their own pedagogy as well as enriched perspectives on teaching by working with beginners. Interns understand that the mentors provide a variety of perspectives and are able to share them by meeting together.

Districtwide Direction

Parkway School District has several partnerships in various stages of development. As a district, it is also a member of the Metropolitan St. Louis Consortium for Educational Renewal. In the past year, Dr. Jackie Levy, Director of Community Relations, was charged with developing recommendations on university partnerships for the district. Parkway South’s partnership was studied carefully and had a strong voice in forming the districtwide recommendations.

Final Thoughts

As this is written, the partnership takes many things for granted (some very notable) that were not recorded. The report focuses upon new initiatives, all of which are possible through the continuing commitment of current partnership. One needs to do no more than come to a meeting, run into an intern and cooperating teacher in the hall, or see faculty members from the other institution who are involved in many ways to appreciate the depth and breadth of the partnership. We do not take the extraordinary trust that we have developed for granted. Instead, we are trying to use it to move the partnership even further. This coming semester, mentoring team members and cooperating teachers will meet together; cooperating teachers from both high schools will participate in mentoring workshops; faculty will again present about the partnership at the annual meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and other meetings; and we will incorporate new experiences with teachers outside of the areas we certify with our interns. The work continues to serve both the students at Parkway South and the interns of Maryville.