

# Professional Development Communities

*PDCs are teacher-education and school-improvement networks committed to preparing inclusive educators*

## Who We Are ►

The UF College of Education partners with eight demographically unique elementary schools in Alachua County, creating a network of school- and university-based teacher educators committed to preparing the next generation of elementary teachers to teach diverse learners and pursue ongoing school improvement.

## Impact ►

- Each year at UF PDC schools, some 200 prospective teachers learn to teach alongside a mentor committed to linking the theory of “inclusive” teaching to practice, while simultaneously targeting the school-improvement goals of each PDC school.
- An exponentially increasing number of children, with a diversity of learning needs and abilities, benefit yearly from the teaching of professionals prepared to be inclusive educators.
  - Prospective teachers in the program provide extra hands to more than 2,200 children in the PDC school classrooms.
  - UF sends about 150 new elementary teachers each year into Florida schools, touching the lives of nearly 3,500 children.
  - Over the course of their teaching careers, each UF education graduate could touch the lives of nearly 700 children.
  - For every year of *powerful teacher preparation* at UF, 138,000 children will benefit.



## Key Activities ►

### Preparing prospective teachers to teach all children

With heightened accountability and attention to children with distinctive needs, prospective teachers face a myriad of challenges in meeting the diverse needs of students in the 21st century. PDC schools provide a ripe setting for experience and reflection on the skills necessary for succeeding in contemporary schools.

### Cultivating school-based teacher educators

Elementary classroom teachers collaborate with university partners to support and incite prospective teacher development. Monthly mentor gatherings foster exploration of their work as teacher educators and teacher researchers.

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### Creating teacher leaders for school improvement through teacher inquiry

Teacher educators and prospective and practicing teachers systematically study and document student learning in relationship to each targeted area for improvement.



### Networking schools share improvement efforts

Organized networking across the eight partner schools brings together teachers, principals and leadership teams. UF teacher educators work on-site to provide professional support in each school improvement area.

### Preparing the next generation of teacher educators

Across the nation, little attention has been given to preparing future university faculty for partnership work with schools. Hands-on experience at PDC schools prepares doctoral students to not only work closely with schools, but also to engage in related scholarship and research activities.

### The UF PDC network:

School of Teaching and Learning, UF College of Education  
Department of Special Education, UF College of Education  
Alachua Elementary School  
Foster Elementary School  
High Springs Community School  
Littlewood Elementary School  
Newberry Elementary Schools  
Terwilliger Elementary School  
Williams Elementary School  
PK Yonge Developmental Research School

The PDC program's approach is to embed mentoring and teacher education in professional development for teachers, rather than treating those as separate activities, removed from the classroom. The PDC's focus is to engage teachers in the work of overall school improvement.

### Diane Yendol-Hoppey

Assistant Professor  
School of Teaching and Learning  
University of Florida College of Education  
PO Box 117044 • Gainesville, FL 32611-7044  
Tel: (352) 392-9191, ext. 244  
E-mail: [dyhoppey@coe.ufl.edu](mailto:dyhoppey@coe.ufl.edu)

### Margaret Gaylord

Office of Development & Alumni Affairs  
University of Florida College of Education  
PO Box 117044 • Gainesville, FL 32611-7044  
Tel: (352) 392-0728  
E-mail: [mgaylord@coe.ufl.edu](mailto:mgaylord@coe.ufl.edu)  
Website: [www.coe.ufl.edu/dev/](http://www.coe.ufl.edu/dev/)

◀ PDC Schools

◀ Contact Information