Chronicles of the Metro Atlanta P–20 Collaborative

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter is to capture and chronicle four years of intense work involving the Metro Atlanta P-20 Collaborative. One of nine groups carved out and designated in Georgia, the Metro Atlanta P-20 focused on effective educator preparation. It aimed to lead to quality instruction for P-12 students based on a mutually beneficial partnership between P-12 schools and the colleges and universities that prepare their teachers. This case study will be helpful for replication when examining innovative methodologies in bridging the gap between schools and institutions of higher learning, especially with respect to educator preparation. Additionally, the work occurred within a professional learning community framework. Therefore, it provides a case study modeling productivity within this protocol.

INTRODUCTION

Race to the Top, a $400 million initiative in Georgia, focused on teacher and leader quality (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Following this initiative, P-20 Collaboratives in Georgia were formed as sustainability scaffolding for school districts and preparation programs to ensure outcomes benefitting P-12 learning.

There are nine P-20 Collaboratives throughout Georgia (see Figure 1). The Metro Atlanta P-20 Collaborative is the largest in scope with respect to the number of students served in the respective Metro Atlanta P-12 school districts (see Table 1). Its reach encompasses more than 42% of the total Georgia public school

Figure 1. P-20 Map of Georgia (212 P-12s; 16 RESAs; 70 EPPs; 3 SEAs; 1.7 Million Students)

enrollment (see Figure 2). With the state's total student population of 1.7 million, and the immediate metropolitan school districts totaling over 700,000 students, the breadth and depth of the collective voice of the Metro Atlanta P-20 Collaborative as a professional learning community has been significant. This chapter gives insight into the success of a fruitful professional learning community engaged in meaningful work to breakdown traditional silos of institutions of higher education (IHEs) and P-12 school districts.

Statement of The Problem

The complexity of providing students with quality instruction by quality teachers has been a political topic discussed in the COLEMAN Report (2007), A Nation at Risk (1983), Clinton's political platform (Anderson, 1999), and No Child Left Behind (https://www2.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml). Under the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), the Georgia Department of Education (n.d.) was awarded Race to the Top monies to address improvements for P-12 learners in four areas across competing states: (1) teacher and principal quality; (2) standards for