

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

# Infusing Physical Activity Leadership Training in PETE Programs Through University–School Partnerships: Principals’ and Graduate Students’ Experiences

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## Abstract

*With the emerging trend of physical education teacher education (PETE) programs incorporating Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program (CSPAP) training to prepare preservice teachers and future teacher educators to be competent Physical Activity Leaders (PAL), little is known about the feasibility of such programs. Therefore, this study examined graduate students’ (future teacher educators) and principals’ experiences implementing CSPAPs through a university–school partnership model. Six graduate students served as PALs in elementary schools. Focus group discussions at 6 months and interviews at 1 year were conducted with the PALs, while 4 principals participated in individual interviews at the end of Year 1. The audio-recorded data were transcribed verbatim and analyzed inductively. Both PALs and principals experienced challenges in implementing*

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*other components of CSPAPs beyond physical education mainly due to time constraints. Collaboration and rapport building with school staff would aid in the implementation of CSPAPs. Continual feedback and supervision could improve the graduate students' skills in performing their roles as PALs in schools. As PETE programs across the United States are finding ways to prepare students to be competent PALs, this study provides valuable information for challenges and future considerations for CSPAP infusion in PETE programs.*

Many children do not meet physical activity (PA) guidelines. To increase the number of children who meet these guidelines, the Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE America, 2015) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2013) recommend a Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program (CSPAP), which includes five components: physical education (PE), PA during the school day, PA before/after school, staff involvement, and family engagement (Erwin, Beighle, Carson, & Castelli, 2013). PE teachers are often called upon to serve as Physical Activity Leaders (PAL) to champion CSPAPs and grow the support base needed for diffusing and maximizing PA promotion efforts (Carson, Castelli, Beighle, & Erwin, 2014). Because of the changing roles of PE teachers as PALs, professional development workshops that equip PE teachers (as well as other school professionals) with the knowledge and skills necessary to implement CSPAPs are provided (Carson et al., 2014). Karp, Scuggs, Brown, and Kelder (2014) suggest that physical education teacher education (PETE) programs are in an important position to educate undergraduate and graduate preservice PE teachers in coordinator and leaderships skills related to the implementation of CSPAPs in schools. PETE faculty across the United States are beginning to reimage and restructure undergraduate and graduate programs through social marketing, advocacy training, and theory-based program planning to assist teachers to develop skills to implement CSPAPs (Castelli, Carson, & Kulinna, 2017). In view of changing trends in PETE programs, Brusseau (2017) advocates for doctoral programs to also include CSPAP training through in-class learning and out-of-class practical experiences (i.e., CSPAP implementation and/or research experiences) to enhance graduate students' knowledge in supporting the implementation of CSPAPs in PETE programs in the future. Yet, with this emerging trend of

PETE programs infusing CSPAPs into teacher and teacher educator training, little is known about the feasibility or effectiveness of different strategies PETE programs use to prepare future PALs (Karp et al., 2014).

## Conceptual Framework

As an extension to the CSPAP conceptual framework, Webster, Beets, Weaver, Vazou, and Russ (2015) propose the use of a conceptual model for achieving effective and sustainable CSPAPs. The model focuses on internal–external partnerships via three strategies: community-based participatory research (CBPR), communities of practice (CoP), and service-learning (SL). Depicted with a moving wheel to signify program continuance, the framework denotes an external support system made up of university faculty, professional networks, and/or service providers who support an internal support system made up of PE teachers, classroom teachers, and/or school administrators in implementing sustainable CSPAPs. The wheel also includes three spokes that represent CBPR, CoP, and SL, which bridge the external and internal resources, helping them overcome barriers to implementing CSPAPs. CBPR relies on internal and external partners (i.e., school professionals and university researchers, respectively) working collaboratively to identify specific PA needs, design and implement PA programs, measure program outcomes, and set realistic goals for program improvement/maintenance. CoPs can involve face-to-face or Web-based learning tools that increase the networking capacity of school professionals and increase the availability of ideas and resources related to CSPAP implementation. Finally, SL relies on the external support system to implement CSPAP in schools. For example, preservice PE and classroom teachers can organize, lead, and/or support before, during, and after school PA opportunities (Webster et al., 2015).

Despite the potential benefits of this internal–external partnership approach to CSPAP implementation, little research has investigated the feasibility, effectiveness, or sustainability of efforts that align with such an approach. Most studies have focused on the use of an internal approach of schools leveraging internal resources to implement CSPAPs. Doolittle and Rukavina (2014) examined an urban school’s implementation of a CSPAP and found that administrators felt the primary purposes of the program were to enhance

students' well-being and school achievement, and to foster a positive school community, rather than to increase wellness and fitness. In another study, Centeio, Erwin, and Castelli (2014) reported that PE teachers trained as PALs used resources to implement CSPAPs differently depending on school context, and administrative support was important to program success. Other research indicated that principals had positive perceptions regarding school-based PA programs and felt such programs benefit students physically, mentally, and academically (Parks, Solmon, & Lee, 2007).

In tandem with Webster et al.'s (2015) conceptual model and the increasing focus on the role of PETE programs in preparing future educators for CSPAPs, the present study investigated an initiative in which graduate assistants from a university PETE program provided external support to local schools with the aim of implementing CSPAPs. As CSPAP preparation takes hold within PETE programs, research needs to examine the extent to which university support can become a viable strategy to leverage CSPAP implementation efforts. In particular, the perspectives and experiences of key individuals within the internal and external support systems, who partner to increase CSPAP implementation capacity, must be considered for the merits and challenges of such partnerships to be better understood. This study qualitatively examined the experiences of PETE graduate students and school principals in the first year of participation in a partnership implementing CSPAPs.

## Method

### Participants and Setting

A university in a Southwestern city in the U.S. collaborated with a school district to implement CSPAPs in six elementary schools for 3 years. Five of the six schools are Title 1 (i.e., low-income) public schools where the majority of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch. Six graduate students (four females and two males, ages 28 to 31; one master's student and five doctoral students) from the university were contracted (30 hr/week) as PALs at each of the six schools. Five of the six graduate students' responsibilities included implementing PE because five schools did not have PE teachers. All graduate students were also responsible for implementing other components of a CSPAP. Four principals (all female) who collaborated

with the university to implement the CSPAPs also participated in the study. They had 4 to 9 years of experience working as principals in elementary schools. We examined PALs' and principals' experiences of participating in the initiative. This study adds to the literature by examining principals' experiences of participation in a collaborated CSPAP project with a university.

### **Professional Learning**

A 2-hr professional learning workshop was provided for the PALs prior to the start of their contract in the schools. The PALs who were responsible for teaching PE had prior experience working as PE teachers in schools. Therefore, the focus of the professional learning was to equip the PALs to implement other CSPAP components. The research team, who had experience in PA programming in schools, conducted the workshop. They provided information about the health benefits of and the rationale for PA, followed by hands-on experiences conducting and participating in selected PA activities. Resources were provided for the PALs to implement PA programs, such as classroom and recess activities during the school day. The group brainstormed ideas to implement staff involvement, and family and community engagement programs in the schools. Throughout the yearlong contract, the PALs also communicated among themselves about PA opportunities that could be feasibly implemented in the schools. For program fidelity, the PALs reported and provided feedback to the research team periodically on the progress of CSPAP implementation in their respective schools.

### **Data Collection and Study Procedures**

The school district and principals gave approval for the research team to conduct the research. Informed consent forms with the PALs and principals were obtained in accordance with the university institutional review board. Data collection methods included (a) focus group discussion and semistructured interviews with the PALs and (b) semistructured interviews with the principals.

The PALs participated in a focus group discussion at 6 months into their contract. A follow-up individual semistructured interview was conducted with them at 1 year of the program implementation. Four female principals who collaborated with the university to implement CSPAP also participated in an individual semistructured interview

at the end of Year 1. The focus group discussion lasted approximately 1 hr, while each interview lasted approximately 30 min. The focus group discussion and interviews used a semistructured format with open-ended questions to facilitate follow-up questions to any of the open responses that were relevant to the study (Fontana & Frey, 2005). Main questions included “How did the implementation of the program go?” and “How easy was it to implement the CSPAP?” These were followed by probe questions (e.g., “What difficulties did you encounter in implementing the CSPAP?”) to elicit rich response from the participants.

### **Data Analysis and Trustworthiness**

The audio-recorded data were transcribed verbatim after completion of the focus group discussion and interviews. The transcripts were inductively analyzed for emergent themes (Kvale, 1996). The first author carried out initial data analysis through open-coding methodology, followed by focused coding to establish frequent or significant initial codes, and then built categories around these codes (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). Through these codes, themes that were pertinent to the study were generated. During open coding, the first author carefully read and reread the data and noted words or phrases that identify specific analytic dimensions and categories in the transcripts. Examples of open codes from the transcripts were “scheduling is a difficulty,” “build rapport,” and “time teaching PE.” During focused coding, the authors identified the most frequent and significant codes and built categories around them. Following which, they selected core themes by categorizing the codes. Priority was given to themes for which a substantial amount of codes had been identified or what seems significant to the participants (Emerson et al., 2011). After a set of core themes were identified, the transcripts were sorted on the basis of these themes and subthemes were generated.

Trustworthiness and credibility were established through peer debriefing and triangulation (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Credibility of analysis was enhanced through peer debriefing of the generated themes to reach an agreement on the themes. Furthermore, the research team discussed the study protocols prior to the start of the project to facilitate peer debriefing. Data were collected from multiple sources (i.e., focus group discussion and interviews with PALs

and principals) as a way of enhancing triangulation. Data were also analyzed through comparison of the results of this study with those of previous literature.

## Results

Results of the study generated several themes. This section describes these themes and supports them with quotations gathered from the transcribed interviews and focus group discussions. We organized the themes as principals' and PALs' experiences to richly highlight the perspectives of each group. To maintain participants' anonymity, we used pseudonyms.

### Principals' Experiences

**Benefits of program.** The principals consistently mentioned that having the PALs teach PE positively affected students' engagement in PA, compared with having paraprofessionals teach PE. For instance, Doreen said,

What a difference it makes to be able to have a certified teacher instructing PE . . . meaning no disrespect to anybody else, but having a mum off the street come in and try to teach PE is a joke. It's awful. For someone who tends not to have classroom management and teaching PE.

Dorothy agreed,

She [PAL] is so great and so dedicated and has taken this program to places that it's never been, because we were able to have a program that was not skills based and she was able to teach kids skills and rules and make their activity so much fun and meaningful.

She continued,

When I first arrive, we hired a lady who was just a college student and she didn't really know anything about teaching PE, we just kind of tried to send her to trainings to help her. The second lady is a mum who just stepped in to finish it because the first lady left in the middle of the year. But, neither one had much training in how to do anything.

Furthermore, the principals commented that children focused and behaved better when they participated in PA. Doreen commented, “The kids are really truly well behaved. They come out of that PE class, dripping in sweat, just dripping, but smiling and happy and they got good PE. And that is kind of unheard of.”

**Constraints.** Scheduling of the PALs’ time in the schools was challenging. The principals unanimously agreed that it was challenging for PALs to conduct other components of CSPAP (i.e., leading classroom and structured recess activities), because of time conflicts with the PE schedule. Jean commented, “Scheduling is a difficulty because I think most of the schools had only actually 20 hours of what we have to schedule with. So, you can’t do things effectively because of time.” Dorothy added,

We had hoped to be able to schedule [PAL] to be able to go into classrooms and help teachers with the PA and that just didn’t happen. She was really great at telling the teachers different things but we didn’t get her in the classroom doing them.

Furthermore, because of the limited contracted hours, PALs were not able to effectively implement the staff involvement and family/community engagement components of a CSPAP. Doreen described,

When you only have 30 hours, you know, the doctoral students have other things to do, too, they can’t live in school for goodness sake, so there needs to be reality in there, too. So, the community outreach didn’t really happen.

Dorothy concurred,

I think it’s hard for college students to come here and make a very meager amount of money and, you know, work basically, 30 hours a week between the 20 here and 10 for the university, and survive. That’s hard in this economy. So, we need to figure a way to make it so that it’s beneficial for the students, so that the student doesn’t get so financially strapped, cause it’s hard enough to be in college.

Finally, Jenny mentioned that university and school schedules did not align: “One other problem is we’re year-round. So, like right now,

[PAL] was done end of May (like traditional), so all through June, we have to have a substitute in there.”

**Suggestions for improvements.** Suggestions provided by the principals for successful CSPAP implementation included strengthening communication between the university and the schools, having PALs build rapport with other teachers, and having other university personnel (e.g., other graduate students or student teachers) help with the implementation. For instance, Doreen said,

I think there needs to be a lot clarification between our district and the university. As far as expectations, and what we can expect, and what it should look like, that’s going to be improved. But, that’s all work in progress . . . but they need to improve their communication.

Dorothy added, “We just need to sit down with the university before school starts, the specialist with our principals, and talk about what the expectations are and what we need to have to make it successful.” In regard to building rapport with other teachers, Doreen also mentioned,

It kind of takes time to develop rapport with teachers. They are not going to let you come in and really, they are not going to invite you in because they’ve got things to do. But, she [PAL] managed to build enough of a relationship with a couple of teachers that she would go in and teach little brain breaks with 2nd grades.

Jean, who already had a PE teacher in her school, suggested that collaboration with other staff would improve the CSPAP implementation:

I got them [PE teacher and PAL] together earlier on and told them to work together. I hoped that they would collaborate, that when we have some spare time, the university person would go into the PE classes and help her with ideas and organization and tell her the things he would like the kids to learn to be able to play at the playground.

Jenny discussed also getting support from other university students. She said, “Also, the university, you know, they should be able to get more student teachers in PE helping and maybe more graduate

students that just need a few hours that could come and help do some training and work in classes.”

### **PALs’ Experiences**

**Conflicting roles.** The PALs consistently mentioned that they saw themselves primarily as PE teachers, rather than as PALs in their schools, because they spent most of their time teaching PE. Conflicting PE schedules with other PA opportunities, such as recess and classroom instruction times, made it challenging for the PALs to be physically present to promote PA at school beyond PE. Jasmine mentioned, “I think it depends on how many hours you teach PE, that if that’s all you’re doing then you can’t be outside doing recess and you can’t be doing before and after-school activities” (focus group). Another challenge was that the PALs were also graduate students who had to take classes in the evening. Maureen shared her experience:

We have classes after school but they don’t give us enough time. We have to drive so far and in bad weather. It’s extremely tough and so then we don’t have time to do an after-school activity and then make it back to class or the university” (focus group).

**Support from stakeholders.** Initially, it was not easy garnering support for implementing the CSPAPs from school staff. Dawn described her experience, speaking to the classroom teachers:

I have several that, after I talked about stuff I’m doing, not several but at least two, that hardly even talked to me, [would] completely avoid me because they don’t want anything to do with adding something else to their classroom. (focus group)

She continued,

I’ve talked to the recess aides. I’ve told them some of the stuff that we’re going to do. I tell them about the games that I teach the kids because I teach them recess games so that they can go out and do these different recess games and I’ve talked to them several times and they don’t want anything to do with new stuff . . . I don’t have the support at my school. (focus group)

Alice shared her similar experience:

Initially, there was a little bit of resistance, at least in my experience at [the school]. There was a little bit of resistance from the administration and from the teachers to have someone come in and implement a whole bunch of those things all at once. (interview)

The PALs unanimously agreed that support from the administration is the key to successful implementation of a CSPAP. For instance, Dawn commented,

I think you definitely have to have your administration on board to encourage the teachers and staff to do it as well, because just having [the PAL] come in and say, ‘This is what we should do and this is how we are going to do it’ – they’re already overwhelmed with everything else they have to do. Then, unless they have administration and that kind of support, that’s not going to work very well. (focus group)

Support for Kevin came from clear expectations provided from his administration: “The principal sometimes talked with me about the goals of the recess activities in the school. She really hoped that all the activities will be organized and the children will have fun and play together” (interview). During the follow-up interview, Dawn shared her experience of promoting her program through supportive teachers:

There’s at least two that would help me talk, one that’s very motivated . . . She’s very involved and active too. She’s been trying out a lot more in her class. And she’s very willing to be vocal about how much it’s helped.

Alice commented that student support is also important for the success of the program:

The students are the biggest thing that, early on, many of the students were still learning who I am as a teacher and stuff. As time goes on, they start to make more comments about wanting to wear the pedometers or wanting to know how

many more push-ups they need to do now, or wanting to come in after school and play a game or whatever. (interview)

**Building rapport and collaboration with the community.** The PALs felt that it was important to build rapport with all the staff at the beginning, as they were new to the job. Dawn said,

It's just getting to know people. Like you can't really go in and just say, 'Hey, you need to do this,' without knowing the people, because they don't trust you. They don't know what you're there for. The first year, the first few months was just, 'Who are these people and how would they feel and what are they willing to do? How can I show them that this is a good thing that is important for the kids.' It's really slow. I think, so far, for me, it's just been about trying to develop relationships in order to have them want to do this. (focus group)

Kevin concurred,

Try to get the teachers and the faculties on board as quickly as you can just because if you have the faculty and the teachers on board, you don't feel like you're doing this on your own, that you'll have a larger support foundation to influence the kids. (interview)

The PALs felt that they could not implement CSPAP all by themselves. Dawn commented,

You can't just go in and make it happen because you need the teachers, you need the recess aides, you need the before and after-school program, you need the community, you need PTA. There's so many aspects of it, you need so many people on board.

The PALs shared some successful experiences collaborating with the school community. For instance, Dawn described her experience collaborating with the Parent Teacher Association (PTA): "I've teamed up with the PTA, anytime the PTA does something. They did a family fiesta night and I taught the kids a dance and we did it with their parents at the fiesta" (focus group). Jasmine also described her experience using a school event to reach out to the staff:

They had nurses come in [the Wellness Fair] that take your blood pressure and stuff like that and then we did a ‘Take Ten’ [classroom PA] training. They had a nutritionist come in and show recipes and stuff like that. Then the teachers could choose to come. They have like drawings for prizes if the teachers came. (focus group)

Dawn shared: “I’m talking with the Wellness director at the school and we’re going to try and do something different for all of the staff starting in January” (focus group). During her follow-up interview, Dawn felt more successful at collaborating with the community to implement programs for the staff: “I was able to do more with the staff this time around. We did a healthy fitness challenge with the staff and I was able to hand out five discounted gym memberships from Anytime Fitness.”

**Professional development.** The PALs felt that continual training and mentoring would help them in their roles as PALs more effectively. Alice mentioned,

In the first semester that we went out to this school was probably the semester that we needed the most guidance. What I found was that in order for teachers to continue to learn, that the mentoring has to be continuous. You can’t teach a teacher something new and then expect them to go just implement it, but they have to be observed and the feedback given, those sort of things. (interview)

The PALs also felt that continual support and feedback from the university is needed, as Alice continued, “In order for this CSPAP program to be really successful, there needs to be support coming from the university. I mean that people from university need to come out and see what’s happening and give feedback” (interview). Kevin also commented that training had to be specific toward their roles in implementing a CSPAP:

With the district training, when I met with all the other PE teachers and met with the team, I didn’t think that was very useful personally. The reason I didn’t like the training was just because one, we were just kind of going over a few PE games. It’s like what games are acceptable, what games are

not acceptable . . . and all of that is kind of like, for me, a no-brainer. (interview)

Nonetheless, forming a community of practice among the PALs helped them learn new ideas to implement in the program, as Jasmine mentioned, “We’ll share with each other what we are doing” (focus group). She reiterated during her follow-up interview, “I think that just working with the other graduate students, using their ideas would help.”

## Discussion

This study qualitatively examined the experiences of PETE graduate assistants, contracted as PALs, and school principals in implementing CSPAPs. The CSPAP implementation approach examined in this study drew upon Webster et al.’s (2015) conceptual framework, which emphasizes the need for bridging resources within the internal (school-based) and external (e.g., university-based) support systems for increased program implementation capacity. This study broadens our understanding of the feasibility of one partnership approach consistent with Webster et al.’s model, wherein doctoral PETE preparation was centrally situated within an effort to provide external support to local elementary schools for CSPAP implementation.

In past research, principals were found to have limited understanding of the goals of PE and its curriculum (George & Curtner-Smith, 2017). However, the principals in the present study unanimously agreed that the elementary students benefited from PE lessons taught by the PALs, who were experienced PE teachers. They felt that the students were more engaged in PE and more physically active than before when individuals without PE certification taught PE. This finding supports the idea that the university can provide meaningful resources to increase the effectiveness of a CSPAP (Webster et al., 2015). Yet the PALs spent the majority of contracted time focusing on PE, and both PALs and principals felt that this placed constraints on implementing other CSPAP components. Future considerations could include having two PALs in one school to support each other and allocate time efficiently to successfully teach PE and implement other CSPAP components.

Another barrier experienced by the PALs in the study was the conflict between their roles as PALs in schools with their roles as graduate students at the university. Many of them returned to the university for late afternoon and evening classes after their work as PALs in the schools. As such, many PALs were unable to implement before and after school PA programs. PETE doctoral programs usually require extensive coursework for degree completion, and it may be unrealistic for such programs to remove certain requirements to increase the amount of time doctoral students spend in schools as PALs. Online doctoral programs could offer more flexibility as to when students can implement different CSPAP components. In such cases, students may already be employed as teachers at the school. Alternatively, PALs might be able to collaborate with after school staff and offer training for them to provide PA that students learn and enjoy in PE. After school staff might also collaborate with other school staff to lead PA clubs or intramural programs once or twice a week for an hour, which would require little time investment while providing multiple benefits for students (Beighle & Moore, 2012).

Both PALs and principals discussed the importance of building rapport with the school staff to collaborate on CSPAP projects and activities. Of the five components, the PALs responded to implementing family and community involvement PA programs as most challenging. The data indicate that one reason for this could be that the PALs were new to the school and were still building rapport with the staff. Strategies that could increase family and community involvement include (a) using technology to increase communication with family members through social media (i.e., Twitter, Facebook) to inform them of PA programs in the schools, (b) creating active events such as “homework” that promotes children and their family members to be active together, and (c) establishing partnerships and sharing expertise where PA and nutrition professionals (e.g., yoga instructor, dietician) provide enrichment classes to the parents and children (Cipriani, Richardson, & Roberts, 2012). Some PALs experienced success collaborating with the PTA and the Wellness director to implement CSPAP activities in this study. The PALs all agreed that support from stakeholders (i.e., administration, teachers, and students) is the key to the successful implementation of a CSPAP. Collaboration with school staff could increase their engagement in

PA, which has been found to positively affect youth PA in previous research (Dinkel, Huberty, Beets, & Tibbits, 2014).

In collaborating with the university, the principals suggested having earlier and more frequent communication with the university on the progress on the CSPAP project implementation by the PALs. Also, the PALs remarked on the importance of continual professional training that equips them to be competent PALs in the schools. Ongoing mentoring through initial professional learning and follow-up on implementation has been found to be effective in PA programs in elementary schools in other studies (Miller et al., 2016; Miller, Christensen, Eather, & Lubans, 2015). The graduate students suggested that frequent observations and constant feedback could help them improve on their roles as PALs. Perhaps a structured supervision system, such as that often used in student teaching internships, could be incorporated for supervising PALs. In student teaching, a triad model is commonly used, both a cooperating teacher at the school and a university supervisor assess and evaluate the student teacher (Metzler, 1990). Future studies can also consider including systematic supervision (i.e., structured observations and formalized feedback) of the PALs by principals in the schools and university supervisors. Furthermore, the PALs in this study indicated some success in sharing ideas with each other at the beginning of the implementation. In the university–school model proposed by Webster et al. (2015), a support system through face-to-face or Web-based learning tools can provide a platform for the PALs to continually and sustainably share ideas and resources for CSPAP implementation. Classroom teachers' confidence in implementing classroom PA in schools increased over time as they gained more experience in one study (Goh, Hannon, Webster, & Podlog, 2017). Through continuous mentoring and experience, the graduate students' confidence in implementing CSPAPs and serving as PALs might also increase over time.

## Conclusions

As more PETE programs include professional developments to prepare preservice teachers to be competent PALs in schools in the future, it is important that training is given to future teacher educators who will have influence on their preservice teachers. This study examined the experiences of graduate students' (future teacher

educators) and principals' experiences in implementing CSPAPs in elementary schools. Through interviews and focus group discussions, results revealed that it is challenging for the graduate students (who served as PALs in this study) to successfully implement other components of CSPAPs beyond teaching PE due to the constraints of time and lack of rapport with school staff from being new to the school. Seeking collaborations within schools (i.e., other teachers and parents) eventually helped in the implementation of CSPAPs in the second half of the year. Continual feedback and systematic supervision could also enhance their roles as they serve as PALs in schools.

This is one of the first studies to examine the feasibility of a university-school partnership approach to implementing CSPAPs. The perspectives of the graduate student PALs and the school principals shed light on important considerations for future efforts aimed at harnessing school-university ties to build organizational capacity for CSPAP implementation and sustainability. This study demonstrates that graduate education in PETE offers a potential avenue for establishing and developing partnerships with schools to implement CSPAPs, but there are likely to be both successes and challenges involved with the early stages of program generation and delivery. The key issues identified in this study point to the need for university personnel (teacher educators and graduate students) to carefully consider relationship building with school professionals, role conflict (PAL vs. graduate student), and scheduling and resources to be able to implement more CSPAP components than just PE. Overall, the results of this study provide valuable information for PETE programs to incorporate PAL training to prepare future preservice teachers and future teacher educators.

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