

PDS 2026 Spring to Fall Orientation

Millersville University
October 1, 2025

PDS INFORMATION

- 1) Orientation to MU's Program
- 2) Overview District Partners
- 3) Interview & Orientation process
- 4) Selecting your top three districts

SCHEDULE FOR PDS INTERNS

Spring 2026:

- Mondays & Tuesdays: MU Classes on Campus (strategies learned)
- Wednesday, Thursday, Friday: Full Placement Days (strategies implemented)

Fall 2026:

- Full-time Student Teaching Placement



THE PROCESS

1. Choose your top three districts (Not Guaranteed)
2. Virtually interview for approximately 10 minutes per teacher assigned - Notification in D2L
3. Teacher chooses an Intern (Good fit for classroom)
4. Final selection determined by PDS Faculty Committee/Approved - district administration
5. Intern notification/Classroom Orientation



PDS PARTNER DISTRICTS

EMEE PDS SPRING PARTNER SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Donegal School District <https://www.donegalsd.org/en-US>

Eastern York School District <https://sites.google.com/easternyork.net/eysd/district>

Ephrata Area School District <https://easdpa.org/>

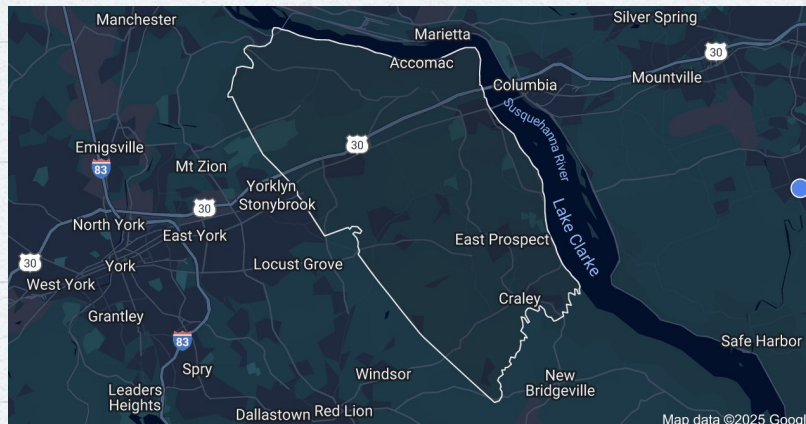
Manheim Central School District <https://www.manheimcentral.org/>

Palmyra Area School District <https://www.pasd.us/>

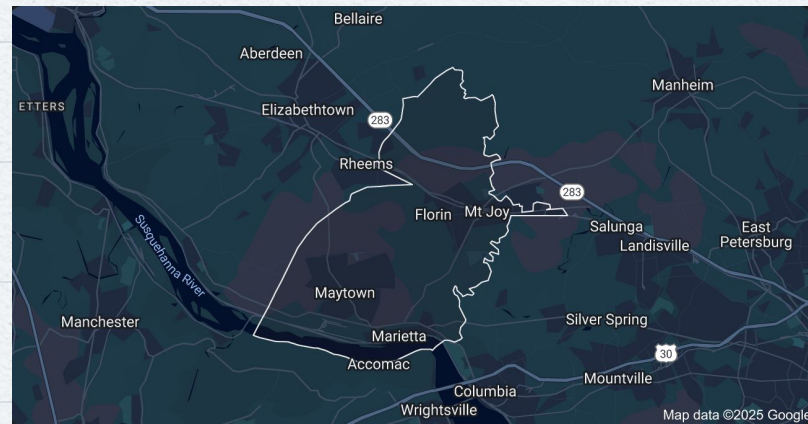
Pequea Valley School District <https://www.pequeavalley.org/>

School District of Lancaster <https://sdlancaster.org/>

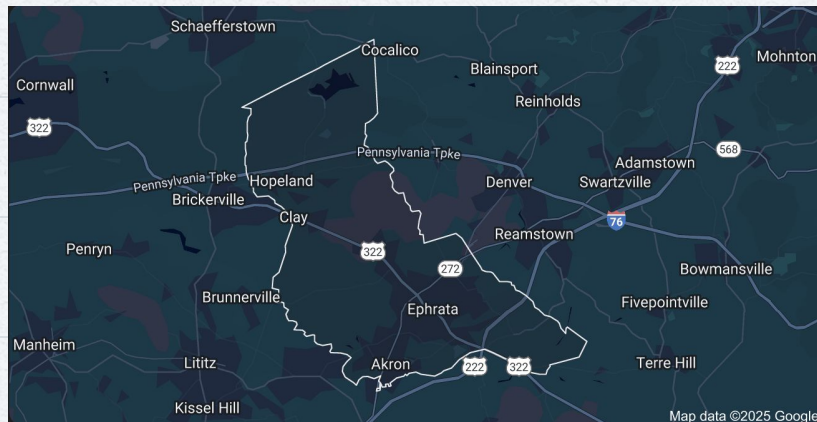
Eastern York School District



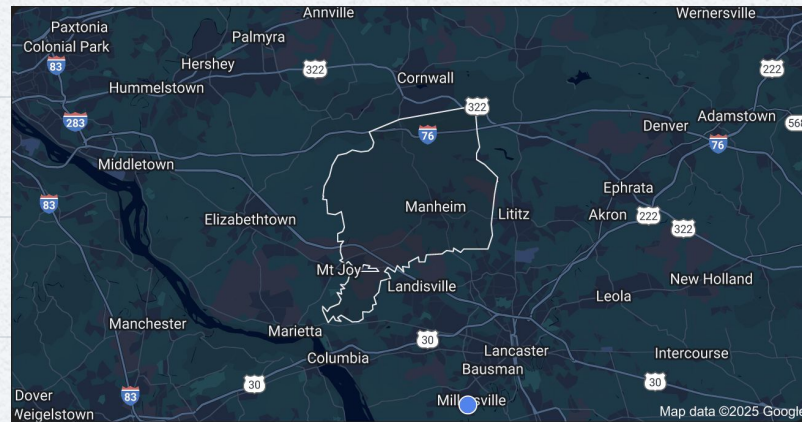
Donegal School District



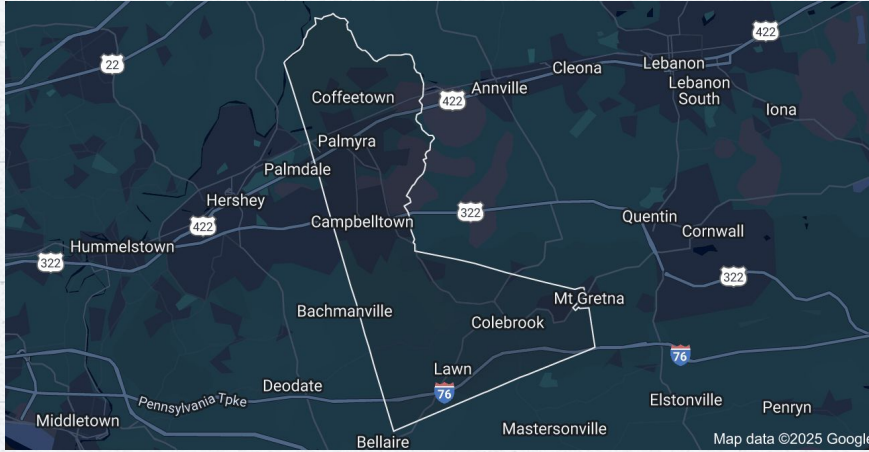
Ephrata Area School District



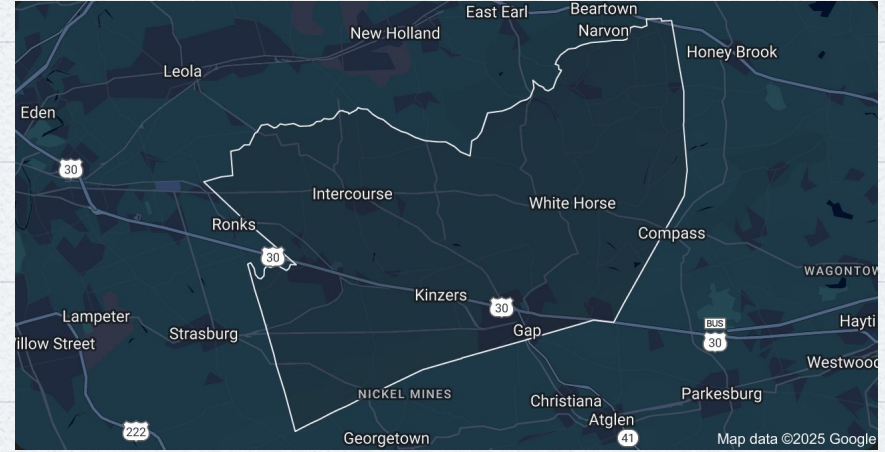
Manheim Central School District



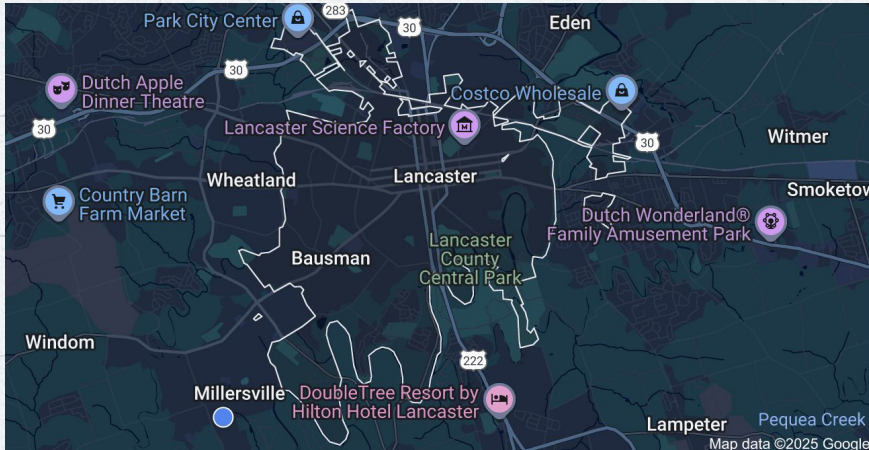
Palmyra Area School District



Pequea Valley School District



School District of Lancaster



PDS Partner
District Maps

PDS COMPONENTS

- Wise mentor/intern matches (interviews + mid spring checkpoint)
- Time to build strong relationships
- Deep immersion in the classroom and building culture
- Defined classroom experiences (PDS Mentor/Intern Handbook)
- Elimination of “start-up” time for student teaching
- Supportive MU faculty presence
- Co-teaching
- Action Research/Made in Millersville: towards end of PDS

Action Research Example

Engaging Students in Reading through Autonomy and the BHH Framework

Sarah Sambrick, Millersville University



Inquiry Question:

What effects will autonomy and the Book, Head, Heart framework have on student's reading motivation and ability to apply text to their lives?

Inquiry Purpose:

Through the participation of book clubs and mini lessons on the Book, Head, Heart framework (Beers and Probst, 2017) student's reading motivation and ability to make connections from the text to their real lives will increase. Readers will participate in discussions that scaffold their abilities to make connections from their past learning to the text. Additionally, teachers will stress the importance of reading by allowing students time in class to complete their weekly readings (Gallagher, 2003). They will also learn how to be more active readers as they practice annotating their text as they read using total participation annotation techniques (Himmele and Himmele, 2011). The students will complete several formative assessments but discussions will not be strictly graded to maintain a level of comfort and trust among group members (Daniels and Zemelman, 2014). The teacher will monitor and facilitate discussion, encouraging students to question the text and use their knowledge of the text to think beyond literal meaning to draw conclusions and make inferences (Tovani, 2004).

Review of Literature

- Beers, G. K., & Probst, R. E. (2017). *Disrupting thinking: Why how we read matters*. New York, NY: Scholastic.
- Daniels, H., & Zemelman, S. (2014). *Subjects Matter: Exceeding Standards through Powerful Content-Area Reading*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Gallagher, K. (2003). *Reading reasons: Motivational Mini-Lessons for Middle and High School*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.
- Himmele, P., & Himmele, W. (2017). *Total participation techniques: Making Every Student an Active Learner*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Pennsylvania Department of Education. (2019). *Academic standards for English Language Arts Grades 6-12*. Harrisburg, PA: Authors.
- Tovani, C. (2004). *Do I Really Have to Teach Reading?: Content Comprehension, Grades 6-12*. Portland: Stenhouse.

Research, Design, Participants, and Data Collection:

- This study was conducted over the course of four weeks in two different sixth grade English Language Arts classroom. Groups met on five separate occasions. During each meeting the teacher acted as a discussion facilitator as students answered a set of predetermined discussion questions in their book club groups.
- The context of the participants in the study were as follows: 39 sixth grade students - 16 females and 23 males; Suburban middle school; met over the course of four consecutive weeks for approximately 30 minutes during a 90 minute ELA block.
- Steps of data collection: 1) Anonymous surveys were administered at the end of the first week of book clubs and after the final book club meeting. 2) Observation of discussions during book club meetings. 3) Student written artifacts (Thought Logs, formative assessments).

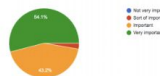
I have read a book recently that I learned a valuable life lesson from

27 responses



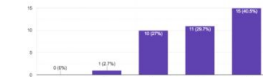
Knowing how to read well is

27 responses



I felt motivated to complete my reading each week

27 responses



I like to/would read multiple books by the same author

26 responses



When my teacher asks me a question about what I've read I

27 responses



Instructional Methods:

Book Choosing Day: The teacher presented several books to the students and read a short sample of each. Students ranked their book club choices from most to least desired and were placed into groups based on their preferences.

Pre-meeting: The students were given their "thought logs" and reading calendars. They established their reading schedule over the next four weeks in their groups. Additionally, students were taught several symbols from the Talking to the Text TPT to use in their logs. The "big questions" for week one were explained: What is the story about? Who is telling the story?

Meeting one: Students discussed the big questions for week one reading as well as three prewritten discussion questions in their book club groups. They were given "Conversation Moves" sentence starters to guide discussion. Students individually completed a worksheet centered around character development and tone. After discussion the big question for week two were explained: What is the main conflict of your story?

Meeting two: Students discussed the big questions for week two reading as well as three prewritten discussion questions in their book club groups. Students recorded their answers to the questions on a separate worksheet. After discussion the big question for week three were explained: What surprised me? What challenged, changed, or confirmed your thinking?

Meeting three: Students discussed big questions for week three reading as well as three prewritten discussion questions in their book club groups. After discussion the big questions for week four were explained: What did this book teach you about other people? What did this text teach you about yourself? How will your actions or feelings change as a result of reading this book? Students were instructed to record one "Aha Moment" in their thought logs for the following week.

Meeting four: Students discussed big questions for week four reading as well as three prewritten discussion questions in their book club groups. Students worked in their groups to identify the main theme of the book. The final writing project was explained and final surveys completed.

Data Analysis:

Analysis of Surveys

- When asked to rate their motivation to complete their readings each week for book clubs on a Likert scale of 1-5, approximately 70% of students indicated either a 4 or 5.
- When asked if they would like to read multiple books by the same author at the end of the book clubs, approx. 72% of students answered "yes" and of that percentage, 42% listed Jordan Sonnenblick as the author they would like to read multiple books by.
- When asked if they had read a book recently that taught them a valuable life lesson, approx. 78% of students indicated that they had and of that percentage, approx. 79% listed their book club books as the book that taught them a life lesson.
- Approx. 92% of students indicated that the amount of work required of them for book clubs was "just right."

Analysis of Discussion

- Students frequently used academic vocabulary and knowledge of past lessons to discuss events in their books each week.
- Students shared their opinions/predictions about the book while engaging in conversations centered around character development, plot, conflict, tone, and point of view.
- Students remained on task during discussion time with minimal redirection from the teacher.

Analysis of Formative Assessment

- Students answered the Big Questions for each week with responses that indicated depth of thought and connection to their lives.
- Students demonstrated metacognitive while reading by recording their thoughts, questions, and connections using the TPT Talking to the Text in their weekly reflections.

Key Findings:

Students enjoyed sharing the experience of reading with their classmates.

- Students shared that they liked having the time to "talk about their thoughts with like-minded people."

- When asked how to improve book clubs, several students expressed that they wished they had more time in their groups to continue conversation about their books.

Students learned valuable life lessons and identified meaningful themes from their reading.

- Students wrote theme statements centered around family relationships, identity, forgiveness, loss, and many other valuable topics.

Students wished for even more autonomy.

- When asked how to improve book clubs, many students answered that a wider variety of books to choose from would have enhanced their experience.
- Several students also suggested that they would enjoy having time to talk about their reading without the guided questions.

Implications:

Creating opportunity for students to discuss common reading with their classmates in book clubs is extremely beneficial in the middle school classroom. Guided discussion about common reading helps students make deeper connections to the text and enhances their own reading experience. Students are motivated to complete readings and assignments in order to participate in book club meetings. The Book, Head, Heart framework serves as a helpful scaffold to getting students to make deeper connections with the text in order to allow for application to real life. Additionally, formative assessments are beneficial to increase student accountability.

TENTATIVE TIMETABLE FOR PDS STUDENTS

- **By October 19:** Complete Form – Top Three Site Preferences
- **Late October:** Interview Invitations (you will be notified via D2L; invitations will also appear under Assignments and in Feedback for upcoming interviews)
- **Late October – Early November:** Virtual Interviews
- **Mid-November:** Placement Notification (you will be informed where you are placed)
- **Early December:** Orientation with Mentor

TIPS FOR INTERVIEWING

- Dress appropriately/teacher attire
- Make sure your social media is private!
- Think about who you are as an educator - what makes you unique?
- Know your reasons for wanting to be an educator that go deeper than just liking children
- One of the most frequently asked questions is: What is your personal teaching philosophy?
- Be prepared to market your strengths
- If they ask about your weaknesses, what will you say?



SELECT YOUR TOP THREE DISTRICTS

Here is the link:

<https://forms.office.com/r/9WkfagFm9K>

Complete Form by **October 19, 2025** on EMEE Homepage Under Professional Development School

- Select your top 3 districts - First, Second, Third
- Note any special considerations

Note: Teachers know their own kids and classrooms. **Teacher choices** will be used to finalize placements.

- You need to be signed into your MU Office 365 account to be able to complete this survey.

Professional Development School Placement Informational Survey

Use the
QR Code
To Sign
Up &
Select
Your Top
Three
Districts
for Your
PDS
Interviews



Be sure to
check which
districts are
closest to you
so you can
hopefully be
placed in a
location with a
manageable
commute!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Can I pick a district outside of the seven PDS options?

Answer: Due to supervision for fieldwork and the established partnerships, the PDS districts are your only options.

- Can I select my mentor?

Answer: No, interns are selected through the PDS interview process by the mentor teachers determining who is a "good fit" for their classroom. All placements are contingent upon the availability of an educational partner-approved mentor teacher and the appropriateness for the student's major.

- Can I set up my own field placement?

Answer: No, the University is able to place interns within the appropriate educational settings in the region. This responsibility rests solely with the University.

- Will I have the exact same number of interviews as other PDS interns?

Answer: No, the number of interviews varies based on the availability of mentor teachers and major of interns.



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