

MLER Middle Level Education Research Special Interest Group

# The Chronicle of Middle Level Education Research



## Message from the Chair

Greetings MLER SIG members,

### Points of Interest:

- Message from the Chair
- Executive Advisor Report
- Member Publications and Presentations

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Welcome to the October issue of *The Chronicle*! I hope your fall semester is off to a great start!

We are looking forward to another productive year of SIG meetings, conferences, and activities. This year we will conduct an election for new officers and council members, introduce a new research award, feature some new items in the *Chronicle*, and, hopefully, welcome many new members.

Starting with this issue of *The Chronicle*, we are introducing a new column highlighting SIG members' publications and presentations focusing on middle level education research (p. 4). The new column, *Member Publications & Presentations*, will help the SIG document the important and influential work of our members and enable the SIG to develop a database of member research that can be added to the website for greater accessibility and wider dissemination.

Over the past few weeks, our executive advisor Dave Strahan, has been working on convening an *ad hoc* committee to begin work on the SIG's new strategic plan, based on input gathered from members through an online survey last spring. The survey was designed to solicit input concerning SIG members' interests and involvement in the SIG and future directions for the organization. Please see Dave's report on p. 2.

Chris Cook, our program chair, has been working on the program for next year's meeting in Philadelphia. Chris convened a very talented group of members to review this year's proposals. To view the list of presenters for AMLE, please see p. 9.

The *Middle Grades Research Journal* is currently seeking submissions for a special themed issue focusing on literacy, equity, and excellence in the middle



**Steve Mertens**

Illinois State University

grades. The call for manuscripts is found on page 12. The journal is currently under the editorship of SIG members, Fran Spielhagen, Mary Margaret Capraro, and Robert Capraro. Please feel free to contact one of them if you are interested.

The annual conference for the Association for Middle Level Education will be held on Nov 7-9 in Minneapolis, MN. In addition to the annual  
(Continued on page 3)

## RMLE Online Call for Manuscripts



The editor of *Research in Middle Level Education Online* is seeking manuscripts concerning quantitative and qualitative research studies, case studies, action research studies, as well as research syntheses.

*RMLE Online* is an international, peer-reviewed research journal published by the National Middle School Association.

Guidelines for contributors, a listing of the Editorial Review Board, and past issues

of *RMLE Online* are available at [www.amle.org](http://www.amle.org)

If you have questions, please contact [howmanc@amle.org](mailto:howmanc@amle.org), AMLE assistant editor and permissions manager

## NEWS FROM THE EXECUTIVE ADVISOR

Dave Strahan, Western Carolina University

### An invitation to participate in our strategic planning:

Talk of strategic planning does not always inspire a great deal of enthusiasm. Thinking back over my more than 30 years in higher education, it feels like strategic planning events have been almost continuous. Some of these plans have sparked meaningful initiatives. Others have not. One of the most engaging has been our recent round of planning at Western Carolina University. This time around, our leaders encouraged a series of dialogue sessions, starting campus-wide and then working into colleges and departments. My experience as a participant in these conversations gives me hope that our current effort to refresh our MLER SIG strategic plan will be engaging as well.

At our business meeting at AERA, we

reviewed the results of the survey distributed to members last spring (see the June 2013 edition of *The Chronicle of Middle Level Education Research* for details). A small group then volunteered to begin the process of updating our strategic plan. We are reviewing the data from this most recent survey as well as strategic planning reports from 2003, 2005, and 2008. We will compare notes in a conference call in early October and extend the discussion at AMLE in November.

One reason that our strategic planning at WCU has gone so well has been the emphasis on our mission. As stated on our SIG webpage, "Our purpose is to improve, promote, and disseminate educational research reflecting early adolescence and middle level education." In reflecting on our mission, I found it helpful to re-read the history of the SIG

(continued on page 3)  
(Continued from page 2)

## MLER SIG Officers

**Steve Mertens, Chair**  
Illinois State University  
[smerten@ilstu.edu](mailto:smerten@ilstu.edu)

**Christopher Cook, Chair-Elect & Program Chair**  
Northern Kentucky University  
[cookc2@nku.edu](mailto:cookc2@nku.edu)

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Northern Kentucky University  
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**David Strahan, Executive Advisor**  
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**Micki M. Caskey, Webmaster**  
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### SIG Association Council Members

**Kathleen Brineger (2012-2014)**  
Johnson State College

**Cheryl Ellerbrock (2013-2015)**  
University of South Florida

**Nancy Flowers (2013-2015)**  
University of Illinois

**Bridget Mahoney (2012-2014)**  
University of South Florida

**Nicole Miller (2013-2015)**  
Mississippi State

**Frances Spielhagen (2012-2014)**  
Mount Saint Mary College

**Nicole Thompson (2011-2014)**  
The University of Memphis

## Message from the Chair

### News from the Executive Advisor

(Continued from page 1)  
conference, AMLE's Professional Preparation Advisory Committee is sponsoring *The Symposium on Excellence in Middle Level Teacher Preparation*, scheduled for Wednesday, November 6. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.amle.org/ServicesEvents/TeacherPreparationSymposium.aspx>

The semi-annual SIG business meeting will take place during the AMLE conference on Friday, Nov 8 from 5:30 – 7 pm in room 201-B. Our agenda will include reports from the executive advisor, treasurer, annual program

chair, and committee chairs (awards, communications, membership, elections). There will also time in the agenda for updates, announcements, and time to honor our colleague, Vince Anfara, who passed away in July. As we did last year at AMLE and AERA, we will plan an informal social gathering after the meeting at a nearby restaurant/pub. The MLER SIG Business meeting and social gathering are open to all that are interested.

Best wishes for a great semester.  
Hope to see you in Minneapolis!

Steve

posted on our website. Over the years, our SIG leadership has done a wonderful job of helping us keep our focus on that mission. It is exciting to see how efforts have flourished in the past and to think about new possibilities for the future. As we think ahead, I am reminded that the most important aspect of our planning at WCU has been the conversations prompted by the process. I hope we can experience a similar series of discussion sessions in our SIG, in virtual formats as well as face-to-face. If you would like to join our conversation, please send me an email and we will include you in the dialogue. You may reach me at [strahan@email.wcu.edu](mailto:strahan@email.wcu.edu)

### ***Call for Reviewers!***

If you are interested in reviewing manuscripts  
Volume 10  
*Handbook of Research in Middle Level Education:  
Research on Teaching and Learning with the Literacies of Young  
Adolescents*  
please contact:

Kathleen F. Malu at: [maluk@wpunj.edu](mailto:maluk@wpunj.edu)  
Mary Beth Schaefer at [schaefm1@stjohns.edu](mailto:schaefm1@stjohns.edu)



## Member Publications and Presentations

### Publications

**Ellerbrock, C. R., & Kiefer, S. M.** (Accepted). Supporting young adolescents' middle-to-high-school transition through creating a ninth-grade community of care: Implications for middle level educators. *Middle School Journal*.

**Description:** The purpose of this article is to help increase middle level educators' awareness of how one high school attempted to meet the needs of young adolescents by offering a transition program called Freshman Focus at the ninth-grade level as part of a small learning community that promotes a community of care, and to highlight ways that educators at the middle level can help support students' needs during this transition.

**Ellerbrock, C. R., & Kiefer, S. M.** (2013). The interplay between adolescent needs and secondary school structures: Fostering developmentally responsive middle and high school environments across the transition. *High School Journal*.

**Description:** This qualitative multi-site study investigated how students' needs are met within both structured and unstructured aspects of secondary school environments. Findings indicate interdisciplinary teaming and its interconnected structures may have served as a way to promote a developmentally responsive school environment whereas unstructured aspects may not have promoted a responsive environment. High school

scheduling and unstructured aspects of the school day may have both supported and hindered the promotion of a high school environment that met students' needs.

**Kiefer, S. M., & Ellerbrock, C. R.** (2012). *Caring and fun: Fostering an adolescent-centered community within an interdisciplinary team. Middle Grades Research Journal, 7* (3), 1-17.

**Description:** This qualitative study analyzed how one interdisciplinary team within a large middle school fostered a responsive adolescent-centered community for eighth-grade team students. Findings indicate developmentally responsive school organizational structures and team teacher characteristics and practices helped to promote an adolescent-centered community that met eighth-grade students' needs for care and fun, in addition to other basic and developmental needs.

**Ellerbrock, C. R.** (2012). Creating a family-like ninth-grade environment through interdisciplinary teaming. *Urban Education, 47*(1), 32-64. doi:10.1177/0042085911427736

**Description:** This qualitative multisite case study examined how three high schools within one large urban district supported ninth-grade students' needs through interdisciplinary teaming. Findings suggest teacher communication as a result of teaming may provide the

teacher support and individualized student attention necessary to foster a family-like ninth-grade environment that meets student and teacher needs. School personnel reported more benefits of teaming for teachers and students than students did. Issues with implementation limited how well teaming was able to meet student needs.

**Ellerbrock, C. R., & Kiefer, S. M.** (in press). The interplay between adolescent needs and secondary school structures: Fostering developmentally responsive middle and high school environments across the transition. *High School Journal*.

**Description:** Understanding the developmental responsiveness of secondary school environments may be an important factor in supporting students as they make the transition from one school to the next. There is a need for research that investigates students for an extended period of time across school contexts to gain a more detailed understanding of how their needs are met within structured and unstructured aspects of both environments. Listening to the voices of those intimately involved in the middle-to-high school transition (students, teachers, school administrators), may provide insight into how such environments respond to adolescents' needs. This qualitative, constructivist, multi-site case study focused on how students' needs are met within school



## Member Publications and Presentations

environments as they make the transition from middle school to high school.

**Ellerbrock, C. R., & Kiefer, S. M.** (in press). *Supporting young adolescents' middle-to-high-school transition through creating a ninth-grade community of care: Implications for middle level educators. Middle School Journal.*

**Description:** The purpose of this article is to help increase middle level educators' awareness of how one high school attempted to meet the needs of young adolescents by offering a transition program called Freshman Focus at the ninth-grade level as part of a small learning community that promotes a community of care, and to highlight ways that educators at the middle level can help support students' needs during this transition. Lessons learned include the importance of recruiting developmentally responsive teachers, encouraging a sense of cohesiveness, providing opportunities for students to practice academic and life skills, promoting a lasting community of care beyond the conclusion of the course, and realizing the significance of one innovative program may help create a caring community.

**Ellerbrock, C. R., & Kiefer, S. M.** (2013). Extending a community of care beyond the ninth grade: A follow up study. *The Journal of Educational Research, 106*(4), 319-331.

doi: 10.1080/ 00220671.2012.692728

**Description:** This qualitative within-site case study ( $N=10$ ) is a follow-up study to a 2006-2007 investigation that analyzed how one high school created a community of care for its ninth-grade students through the implementation of a transition program—Freshman Focus. All participants were interviewed again three years later during students' senior year to investigate how Freshman Focus may have fostered a long-lasting community of care that extended throughout students' high school years. Teacher-student and program-student relationships served as ways to foster a community of care that promoted a positive school experience for students. Although findings indicate Freshman Focus fostered a community of care that lasted throughout students' high school years, it is unclear whether this extended to the broader school community.

**Shim, S. S., Kiefer, S. M., & Wang, C.** (2013). Help-seeking amongst peers: The role of goal structure and peer climate. *The Journal of Educational Research, 106*(4), 290-300. doi:10.1080/00220671.2012.692733

**Description:** With a sample of 373 middle school students, the current longitudinal study examined the role of the classroom peer climate in mediating the relation between perceptions of classroom goal structures and academic help seeking

amongst peers. Classroom goal structures were measured in Fall and classroom peer climate and help-seeking amongst peers were assessed in Spring. Structural equation modeling indicated classroom mastery goal structure directly predicted desirable help seeking behavior amongst peers (i.e., high adaptive help seeking and low expedient and avoidant help seeking). A positive classroom peer climate mediated the effects of classroom mastery goal structure on expedient and avoidant help seeking. A negative classroom peer climate mediated the effects of classroom performance goal structure on avoidant help seeking.

**Kiefer, S. M., Matthews, Y., Montesino, M., Arango, L., & Preece, K.** (2013). The effects of contextual and personal factors on young adolescents' social goals. *The Journal of Experimental Education, 81*(1), 1-24. doi:10.1080/00220973.2011.630046

**Description:** This study investigated the proposal that contextual and personal factors affect the endorsement of social goals during early adolescence, and that contextual factors and social goals change over time. Self-reports of classroom contextual factors (performance goals, social interaction, mutual respect) and gender were used to predict social goals (dominance, intimacy, popularity goals) in fifth grade (elementary school) and again in sixth grade (middle school;  $N=134$ ). Classroom contextual factors were



## Member Publications and Presentations

uniquely associated with social goals. There were gender differences in mean levels and the nature of the relations between perceptions of the classroom context and social goals. Perceptions of social interaction decreased and peer support increased following the middle school transition. Students' endorsement of dominance and popularity goals increased over time.

**Kiefer, S. M., & Ellerbrock, C. R.** (2012). *Caring and fun: Fostering an adolescent-centered community within an interdisciplinary team. Middle Grades Research Journal, 7* (3), 1-17.

**Description:** This qualitative case study analyzed how one interdisciplinary team within a large middle school fostered a responsive adolescent-centered community for eighth-grade team students. Data included observations, individual interviews, and focus group interviews with nine participants (four eighth-grade students, four eighth-grade team teachers, one middle school principal). Findings indicate developmentally responsive school organizational structures (interdisciplinary teaming, flexible scheduling, homeroom, common planning time) and team teacher characteristics and practices helped to promote an adolescent-centered community that met eighth-grade students' needs for care and fun, in

addition to other basic and developmental needs. Meeting eighth-grade students' needs for care and fun emerged as the major theme in the promotion of an adolescent-centered, developmentally responsive community within one interdisciplinary team at the middle level.

### National Presentations

**Ellerbrock, C. R., Kiefer, S. M., & Alley, K.** (2013). *Supporting young adolescents' school belonging in middle school: Setting the foundation through school-based interpersonal relationships.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), San Francisco, CA.

**Kiefer, S. M., Ellerbrock, C. R., & Alley, K.** (2013). *Supporting student motivation at the middle level: The role of responsive teacher-student relationships and classroom instruction.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), San Francisco, CA.

**Kiefer, S. M., & Shim, S. S.** (2013). *Navigating the costs and benefits of asking for help: Characteristics of peer helpers and implications for students' help-seeking behavior.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), San Francisco, CA.

**Ellerbrock, C. R., & Kiefer, S. M.** (2012). *Care and fun: Fostering an adolescent-centered community within an interdisciplinary team.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE), Portland, OR.

**Ellerbrock, C. R., & Kiefer, S. M.** (2012). *Help me belong: How teacher and peer relationships foster a sense of school belonging for middle school students.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE), Portland, OR.

**Ellerbrock, C. R., & Kiefer, S. M.** (2012). *Supporting young adolescent's motivation: The role of responsive relationships and classroom instruction.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE), Portland, OR.

**Mahoney, B., DiCicco, M., & Ellerbrock, C. R.** (2012). *What can we do?: Teacher practices that support the middle-to-high-school transition.* Concurrent session presented at the 2012 annual meeting of the Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE), Portland, OR.

**Mahoney, B., Denmon, J., Eisenbach, B., Owens, R., DiCicco, M., Boles-Haslup, S., Lindstrom, K., Ellerbrock, C. R.** (2012). *AVID: Fostering Community of Care that Eases the Middle-to-High-School Transition.* Roundtable paper presentation presented at the 2012



## Member Publications and Presentations

annual meeting of the Association for Middle Level Education, Portland, OR.

**Ellerbrock, C. R., Kiefer, S. M., & Alley, K.** (April, 2013). *Supporting young adolescents' school belonging in middle school: The role of interpersonal dimensions of perceived teachers and peers.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), San Francisco, CA.

**Description:** This qualitative case study ( $N=24$ ) analyzed how the interpersonal dimension of perceived school belongingness may foster students' sense of belonging within one diverse urban middle school. Eighteen students, five teachers, and one administrator were individually interviewed in the spring of 2011. Findings revealed two domains: teacher-student relationships and student-student relationships. Caring and connecting with students and serving as an adult advocate were key elements in the teacher-student domain. Being known and accepted by peers and being academically and emotionally supported by peers were key elements in the student-student domain. Emerging as the theme, young adolescent and teacher perceptions of teacher-student relationships and student-student relationships may set the foundation for students' needs to be met and foster school belonging.

**Kiefer, S. M., Ellerbrock, C. R., & Alley, K.** (April, 2013). *Supporting student motivation at the middle level: The role of responsive teacher-student relationships and classroom instruction.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), San Francisco, CA.

**Description:** This qualitative case study ( $N=24$ ) analyzed how one large urban middle school fostered student motivation. Eighteen students, five teachers, and one administrator were individually interviewed in the spring of 2011. Findings indicate responsive teacher-student relationships and classroom instruction may promote student motivation. Warm demanding teachers who display acts of care and foster connections with students helped to promote teacher-student relationships that fostered motivation. Holding high academic and behavioral expectations, delivering rigorous and relevant learner-centered instruction, providing appropriate learning supports, and recognizing student success are instructional practices of warm demanding teachers that promoted motivation. Students' need for warm demanders who foster developmentally responsive teacher-student relationships and classroom instruction emerged as the major theme in this investigation.

**Kiefer, S. M., & Shim, S. S.** (April, 2013). *Navigating the costs and benefits of asking for help: Characteristics of peer helpers and*

*implications for students' help-seeking behavior.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), San Francisco, CA.

**Description:** This study examined individual characteristics (gender, academic and social self-efficacy, friendship) and peer helper characteristics (peer ratings of coolness and academic reputation) and their implications for students' help-seeking behavior in sixth grade ( $N=365$ ). Students selected peer helpers in ways that minimized their chances of procuring costs (feeling dumb). Students often choose a same-sex best friend or same-sex peer as a helper, and selected helpers with lower levels of self-efficacy and peer academic reputation. Academic efficacy was positively associated with adaptive help seeking and negatively associated with avoidant and expedient help seeking. Students who selected helpers low in peer rated academic reputation and high in coolness sought expedient help more than students who selected helpers low in academic reputation and coolness.



Middle Level Education Research  
 A Special Interest Group of the American Educational  
 Research Association

**Member Publications & Presentations**

If you have a recent publication or presentation pertaining to middle level education research, please complete the information below and your work will be presented in an upcoming issue of the SIG's newsletter, *The Chronicle of Middle Level Education Research*.

Submissions will be accepted for publications/presentations within the past 18 months. Please email your completed form(s) to Steve Mertens at [smertens@ilstu.edu](mailto:smertens@ilstu.edu).

<b>Name:</b>					
<b>Select one (X):</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Publication</b>		<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Presentation</b>		

APA Citation:

Description of work (Maximum of 120 words):



## Association for Middle Level Education Conference Minneapolis, MN November 7-9, 2013

The most valuable and comprehensive professional development opportunity in the world for *any* person working with students ages 10-15.

### MLER SIG Members Presenting at the AMLE Conference

Penny Bishop  
Dave Brown  
Jan Carpenter  
Micki M. Caskey  
Chris Cook  
Jennifer Denmon  
Michael DiCicco  
John Downes  
Cheryl Ellerbrock  
Francine Falk-Ross  
Shawn Faulkner  
Nancy Flowers

Melanie Greene  
Susan Hennessey  
Penny Howell  
Lenore Kinne  
Mark L'Esperance  
Bridget Mahoney  
Steve Mertens  
Nicole Miller  
Nancy Mizelle  
John Niska  
Ruchelle Owens  
David Pugalee

Amy Reynolds  
Mary Roe  
Kathleen Roney  
Nancy Rupert  
Mary Beth Schaefer  
David Strahan  
Janet Stramel  
Nicole Thompson  
Mark Vagle  
Jerry Valentine  
Amanda Wall  
Alicia Wenzel  
Claudia Whitley

### Travel and Hotels

Hilton Garden Inn—1101 4th Avenue South

Hilton Minneapolis—1001 Marquette Avenue South

Holiday Inn Express—225 South 11th Street

Hyatt Regency—1300 Nicollet Mall

Millennium Hotel—1313 Nicollet Mall

[Hotel Reservation Form](#)

[Housing Map](#)

(ctrl + click for links)

### Registration Rates

**Individuals**—\$349/member, \$499/non member

**Teams**—\$279/member, \$399/non member

**Groups**—\$199/20 or more, \$149/100 or more

**Students**—\$99/member, \$139/non member

For more information regarding registration, please visit the following link: [AMLE 2013 REGISTRATION](#)

## Send In Your News!

Please send any items, announcements, or information you would like to have considered for publication in *The Chronicle of Middle Level Education Research* to:

**Pam Angelle, Ph.D.**

[pangelle@utk.edu](mailto:pangelle@utk.edu)

**David Lomascolo**

[dlomasco@utk.edu](mailto:dlomasco@utk.edu)

The Newsletter is published three times annually—Spring, Summer, & Fall

We're on the Web!  
[www.rmle.pdx.edu](http://www.rmle.pdx.edu)



The purpose of the MLER SIG is to improve, promote, and disseminate educational research reflecting early adolescence and middle level education.

Membership in the MLER-SIG connects AERA members who are committed to research issues related to young adolescents. SIG members exchange information and ideas through Annual Meeting presentations, newsletters, and informal gatherings.

Membership cost is \$10/year. The MLER-SIG (#88) is listed on the third page of the AERA Membership Application Form.



## MLER'S Graduate Student Mentoring Initiative

In an effort to foster positive mentorships informally and conveniently, the **Middle Level Education Research Special Interest Group** (MLER SIG) is pleased to offer a hybrid Graduate Student Mentoring Initiative (GSMI) mentorship program. The intent of this program is to connect graduate students in middle level education with experienced middle level teacher educators without the demand of having to be in the same physical location (e.g., university, conference). Mentors and mentees are matched according to similarities in teaching, research, and/or service interests.

We are in need of graduate-level mentees who have an interest in middle level education and additional mentors to add to our pool of exemplary mentors. Getting involved is very simple. Mentors need to complete a short questionnaire to aid the pairing process: <http://learnbydesign.net/MLER/index.php?sid=87275&lang=en>

Mentees also need to complete a questionnaire:

<http://learnbydesign.net/MLER/index.php?sid=92585&lang=en>

Once assigned, mentor and mentee will be encouraged to connect via technology (e.g., Skype, email, gchat) and in-person at middle level events/conferences, if both parties are in attendance.

Please contact Bridget Mahoney or Cheryl Ellerbrock if you are interested in contributing to this initiative either as a mentor, mentee, or GSMI committee member.

Bridget Mahoney  
MLER SIG Graduate Student Representative  
Mentoring Initiative Co-Lead  
University of South Florida

[bmmahone@mail.usf.edu](mailto:bmmahone@mail.usf.edu)

Cheryl Ellerbrock, Ph.D.  
MLER SIG Member  
Mentoring Initiative Co-Lead  
University of South Florida

[ellerbro@usf.edu](mailto:ellerbro@usf.edu)

## *In Memoriam*

**Dr. Vincent A. Anfara Jr.**

**Professor and Department Chair**

**The University of Tennessee Educational Leadership and Policy Studies**

### 1953-2013

On July 15, 2013, our friend, our colleague, and our mentor, Vincent A. Anfara, Jr. passed away. With great sadness, we share the news of Vince's untimely passing with the membership of the MLER SIG. As members of the MLER SIG have come to know, Vince was a tireless advocate for young adolescents, middle grades teachers, and scholars who engage in research into the multifaceted phenomena that constitute middle grades education.

Vince received a BS degree from the College of Santa Fe, an M.S. degree from Notre Dame University, and an MS degree from the University of South Florida during his Master's program. He earned his PhD from the University of New Orleans. Prior to entering higher education as a professor, Vince worked as a teacher and administrator for 23 years in middle and high schools in Louisiana and New Mexico. Upon completion of his doctoral degree, Vince began his academic career at Temple University in Philadelphia, PA. Subsequently, Vince accepted a position at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, TN. For the past five years, he was Professor and Department Head of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies in the College of Education. In both university settings, Vince championed middle grades education through his research, teaching, and

service.

Vince's research interests focused on middle school reform, school improvement planning, leadership in middle schools, and issues related to student achievement, especially in the middle grades. He was a prolific scholar, who authored more than 80 articles in journals including *Educational Researcher*, *Middle School Journal*, *Research in Middle Level Education Annual*, *Education and Urban Society*, *The Journal of School Leadership*, and the *NASSP Bulletin*. He was the author/editor of 14 books related to middle grades education and qualitative research. Notably, he founded, designed, and edited *The Handbook of Research in Middle Level Education* series and co-edited *The Encyclopedia of Middle Level Education*. He served for more than six years on the Association for Middle Level Education's Research Advisory Board, including three years as its chair, and was a member of the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform. Vince served on the editorial boards of several journals including the *Middle Grades Research Journal*, *Research in Middle Level Education Online*, and *NASSP Bulletin*; in addition, he served as an ERIC Content Expert in middle level education for 2007-2009.

Vince was an active member of the American Educational Research Association and the Middle Level Education Research Special Interest Group (SIG). During his tenure in the



SIG, Vince served as a council member, program chair, chair, past chair, and executive advisor. He was instrumental in revitalizing the SIG membership during his time as SIG Chair, increasing the membership from less than 25 to nearly 200 members. He also introduced several new SIG initiatives, awards, and book series. Additionally, Vince was elected by the general membership to serve on AERA's Special Interest Group Executive Committee.

In addition to his many professional accomplishments, Vince was a devoted colleague, mentor, and friend. He quietly and consistently mentored both young scholars and his colleagues. Through his leadership and support, the field of middle level research has grown and matured. We have only begun to imagine how greatly he will be missed. His legacy lives on in our efforts to support his vision of strong scholarship based on a commitment to the needs of young adolescents and middle grades schools.

## *Middle Grades Research Journal*

### **Call for Research Manuscripts for a Special Themed Issue: Literacy, Equity, and Excellence in the Middle Grades**

The *Middle Grades Research Journal* (MGRJ) is a refereed, peer reviewed journal that publishes original studies providing both empirical and theoretical frameworks that focus on middle grades education. The editorial team is happy to invite submissions for research-based manuscripts for an upcoming special issue of the journal focusing on literacy, equity, and excellence through middle grades lenses to be published in spring of 2014.

We seek submissions that contribute to integrating theory and best practices in

literacy education in the middle grades. Topics may include, but are not limited to literacy in the disciplines, motivation, engagement, assessment, diversity, as well as the special developmental literacy learning needs of early adolescents. We are particularly interested in submissions that present exemplars of equitable literacy instruction that meet the immediate and future needs of all learners, especially those populations at risk for literacy underachievement.

All manuscripts must adhere to APA

sixth edition format, include an abstract of 200-300 words, and range between 20 - 30 pages in length (including camera ready tables, charts, figures, and references). Only electronic submissions will be accepted until midnight EST, December 1, 2013. Please include title and abstract along with a letter of transmittal to Dr. Matt Hollibush or Dr. Janine Bixler, Co-Guest Editors of this special issue at [matthew.hollibush@msmc.edu](mailto:matthew.hollibush@msmc.edu) or [janine.bixler@msmc.edu](mailto:janine.bixler@msmc.edu).

## **MLER SIG Awards Recognition**

The Middle Level Education Research SIG is pleased to offer three awards to recognize the work of middle level education researchers. The SIG now has three AERA-sanctioned awards.

SIG members are encouraged to nominate deserving individuals for each of the SIG awards. Nomination forms and criteria are available on the SIG website (<http://www.rmle.pdx.edu/index.html>).

### [Graduate Student Award](#)

The MLER SIG Graduate Student Award is presented annually to a graduate student or recent graduate of a Masters, Specialist, or Doctoral Program. The goal of the award is to promote and recognize outstanding research in middle level education.

### [Richard "Dick" Lipka Lifetime Achievement Award](#)

The Richard "Dick" Lipka Lifetime Achievement Award is the highest honor that can be awarded by the MLER SIG. The award is given only when an individual has demonstrated a level of service and leadership in middle grades education that warrants this special recognition.

### [Outstanding Middle Level Education Research Award](#)

The MLER SIG Research Award is forthcoming. The criteria and selection process will be presented to the membership at AERA 2013 for consideration. With approval from the membership the first Research Award will be presented at the 2014 AERA meeting, presented to a researcher. Please check the website in May 2013 for updates.