

MLER Middle Level Education Research Special Interest Group

# The Chronicle of Middle Level Education Research



## Message from the Chair

I hope you are all enjoying a happy and healthy start to 2014. Over the course of the past year the Middle Level Education Research SIG was very productive in its mission to improve, promote, and disseminate educational research on early adolescence and middle level education.

At the recent Association for Middle Level Education conference in Minneapolis, MN, the SIG had a very strong presence. Many of our SIG members presented their work and we enjoyed a strong turnout for our SIG business meeting (more than 50 attendees). The minutes from the businesses meeting can be found on page 17. As you will see from the AMLE business meeting notes, our officers, council members, and working groups have been very productive, focusing on expanding SIG awards and recognition, growing our leadership opportunities, and continuing an impressive publication agenda, among other tasks.

A special thanks to our Program Chair, Chris Cook, who has, once again, put together a very comprehensive program for the upcoming AERA meetings in Philadelphia (April 3-7). Chris has done an outstanding job assembling the review panel, managing the review process, and developing the program, which includes two paper sessions, three roundtables, one symposium, and our regular business meeting. Thanks are also due to the many reviewers who spent time thoughtfully critiquing proposals, the individuals who submitted their work for consideration, and those who offered to serve as chairs and discussants. A listing of all sessions for this year's meeting can be found on page 4.

The results of the recent SIG election can be found



**Steve Mertens**

**Illinois State University**

on page 5. We were seeking new officers (secretary, treasurer, and vice-chair) and three new council members. We had a large slate of candidates running for the various offices this year.

The SIG's Graduate Student Mentoring Initiative continues to link graduate students with veteran SIG members. Cheryl Ellerbrock and  
*(Continued on page 2)*

### Points of Interest:

- Message from the Chair
- Graduate Student Mentoring Initiative
- 2014 AERA MLER SIG Program

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## 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.nmsa.org](http://www.nmsa.org)

If you have questions, please contact Karen Swanson, Editor, at [SWANSON\\_KW@merc.edu](mailto:SWANSON_KW@merc.edu).

## Message from the Chair *(Continued from page 1)*

Bridget Mahoney reported during the AMLE business meeting that we currently have a large number of mentees and are seeking experienced SIG members to serve as mentors. Many thanks to our SIG members for providing their time and guidance to help our future colleagues. If you are interested in serving as a mentor, please contact Cheryl Ellerbrock at [Ellerbro@usf.edu](mailto:Ellerbro@usf.edu).

At the upcoming AERA meetings in Philadelphia, my tenure as Chair of the SIG will come to an end and Chris Cook, Chair-Elect and Program Chair, will be assuming the reins of the SIG leadership. It has been both a privilege and a pleasure to serve the SIG as the Chair. I was blessed with a very talented group of colleagues that served as officers and council members over the past two years. I

look forward to continuing to serve the SIG in the role as Past Chair. Lastly, please join me in thanking Pam Angelle and her colleagues at the University of Tennessee for putting together another great issue of *The Chronicle*.

I look forward to the upcoming year and to new and exciting opportunities for our SIG. Through our combined efforts, the MLER SIG will continue to serve as *the voice* in middle level education research. I look forward to seeing everyone in Philadelphia in April for the annual AERA meetings.

Best wishes,

Steve

### 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)

**Shawn Faulkner, Vice Chair**  
Northern Kentucky University  
[faulkners1@nku.edu](mailto:faulkners1@nku.edu)

**Kenneth Anderson, Treasurer**  
Howard University  
[kenanderson@howard.edu](mailto:kenanderson@howard.edu)

**Penny Howell, Secretary**  
University of Louisville  
[penny.howell@louisville.edu](mailto:penny.howell@louisville.edu)

**Penny Bishop, Immediate Past Chair**  
The University of Vermont  
[penny.bishop@uvm.edu](mailto:penny.bishop@uvm.edu)

**David Strahan, Executive Advisor**  
Western Carolina University  
[strahan@email.wcu.edu](mailto:strahan@email.wcu.edu)

**Pam Angelle, Newsletter Editor**  
University of Tennessee  
[pangelle@utk.edu](mailto:pangelle@utk.edu)

**Micki M. Caskey, Webmaster**  
Portland State University  
[caskeym@pdx.edu](mailto:caskeym@pdx.edu)

### 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



## 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 Council Member**  
**Mentoring Initiative Co-Lead**  
**University of South Florida**  
[ellerbro@usf.edu](mailto:ellerbro@usf.edu)



## 2014 AERA MLER SIG PROGRAM

The AERA 2014 Annual Meeting is scheduled for April 3-7 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and an exciting program has been developed. This year's program consists of seven sessions—3 roundtables, 2 paper sessions, 1 symposium, and 1 business meeting. The MLER SIG received 38 submissions and was allotted 21 slots for about a 55% acceptance rate. It is important to remember that the number of papers allotted to the SIG is based on both the number of members and the number of papers submitted. As such, it is critical to submit proposals and renew membership each year. The 2014 MLER SIG Program sessions are as follows:

**1. Thursday, April 3 – 2:15pm– 3:45pm –  
Convention Center, 400 Level, Terrace IV**  
Roundtable # 4 - *Current Issues in Middle-Level  
Education*

Chair: Nicole L. Thompson

- Attitudes and Beliefs Held by Teachers on Interdisciplinary Teams With Common Planning Time at a Highly Effective Middle School [Reynolds]
- Common Planning Time: What Are the Benefits and Barriers? [Owens, Key, & Seed]
- Multimodal Learning Clubs in the Middle School [Casey]
- Turning Around Low-Performing Middle Grades Schools: Emerging Research from a Nationally Funded Investing in Innovation (i3) Project [Flowers, Begum, Poes, Carpenter, & Mulhall]

**2. Thursday, April 3 – 6:15pm-7:45pm –  
Convention Center, 100 Level, 116**  
Middle Level Education Research SIG Business Meeting

**3. Friday, April 4 – 10:35am-12:05pm –  
Convention Center, 400 Level, Terrace IV**

Roundtable # 7 – *Issues in Middle Level Teacher Preparation*

Chair: Janet Stramel

- Learning to Teach at the Middle Level: Perceptions of Professional Growth in Early Courses and Internships [Strahan & Winter]
- Middle Grades Students as Teacher Educators [Downes, Nagle, & Bishop]
- “Redefining Literate Selves”: Middle Grades Preservice Teachers Using Digital Storytelling to Reflect on Personal Narratives [Reyes & Brinegar]

**4. Friday, April 4 – 4:05pm-6:05pm – Convention Center, 100 Level, 111A**

Paper Session – *Developmentally Responsive Practice in Middle-Level Schools*

Chair: Virginia M. Jagla

- Developmentally Responsive Teacher Practices Across the Middle-to-High School Transition [Mahoney, DiCicco, & Ellerbrock]
- Middle School Teacher Willingness to Intervene in Bullying Situations: Efficacy, Concern, and Empathy for Victims [Hines & Perry]
- Spiritual Development in Developmentally Responsive Practice [Lingley]
- The Effects of Mindful Awareness Practices on the Executive Functions of Early Adolescents in an Urban Middle School [Hanich & Desmond]
- The Role of School Climate and Other Contextual Factors in Adolescent Test Anxiety [Imasa, Somers, Partridge, Robtoy, Habhab, & Yoon]

**5. Saturday, April 5 – 8:15am-10:15am –  
Convention Center, 100 Level, 112A**

Paper Session – *Curriculum in Middle-Level Education*

Chair: Jenny Denyer

- The Relationship Between Teacher-Student Interactions and Student Motivation in Middle School Science [Smart]

*(Continued on page 5)*



## 2014 AERA MLER SIG PROGRAM

(Continued from page 4)

A Phenomenological Study of Middle-Grade  
Female and Male Students' Single-Sex  
Mathematical Experiences [Simpson & Che]

Exploring the Narratively Constructed  
Mathematics Identities of Latina Bilingual  
Middle School Students [Kaplan]

Middle-Level Science Teacher Education Without  
Boundaries: Integration 6-16 Curriculum  
[Deneroff & Richards]

Middle School Social Studies Teachers'  
Enactment of Content-Area Literacy [Richey,  
Ramirez, Barber, Sturtevant, & Kidd]

Discussant: Mary F. Roe

### 6. Saturday, April 5 – 2:45pm-4:15pm – Convention Center, 400 Level, Terrace IV

Roundtable #15 – *Technology in Middle Grades  
Schools*

Chair: Heather Rogers Haverback

Technology-Integrated Middle School Program:  
Student Engagement and Success in Language  
Arts [Noel & MacGregor]

A Predictive Profile of Youths' Web 2.0 Outside-  
School Activities [Read, Jones, & Hughes]

Curriculum Integration in Middle School: Creating  
Music Videos [Cronenberg]

Digital Gameplay: Effects on Young Adolescents'  
Science Content Learning [Spires, Zheng, &  
Bartlett]

### 7. Sunday, April 6 – 10:35am-12:05pm – Conven- tion Center, 100 Level, 111A

Symposium – *Comprehensive and Critical Review of  
Current Middle-Level Research and Practice*

Chair: Frances R. Spielhagen

Historical Trends, Patterns, and Policies in the  
Middle School Movement (1963-2013)  
[Schaefer & Malu]

A Topical Analysis of Middle Grades Research  
from 2000 to the Present [Brinegar]

Theoretical Perspectives in the Field of Middle  
Grades Education [Reyes]

Critical Review of Research Methods in the Field  
of Middle-Level Education [Yoon]

Discussant: Micki M. Caskey

## 2014 MLER SIG Election Results

**Vice Chair:** Penny Howell, University of Louisville

**Secretary:** Nicole Thompson, University of Memphis

**Treasurer:** Lisa Harrison, Ohio University

**Council:** Dana Franz, Mississippi State University

**Council:** Bogum Yoon, Binghamton University

**Council:** Laurie Ramirez, Appalachian State University

**Graduate Student Representative:** Jennifer Denmon, University of South Florida

*All positions are for two years (2014-2016) and will begin at the end of the AERA meetings in Philadelphia.*

We would like to extend congratulations to all the newly elected officers and council members.

Middle Level Titles of Interest from: IAP-Information Age  
Publishing, Inc.  
www.infoagepub.com

**Book Series of Interest:**

**The Handbook of Research in Middle Level Education**

Editors: Steve B. Mertens, *Illinois State University* Micki M. Caskey, *Portland State University*

**The Handbook of Resources in Middle Level Education**

Editors: Steve B. Mertens, *Illinois State University* Micki M. Caskey, *Portland State University*

**Journal:**

**Middle Grades Research Journal Volume 8, Issue 2, Fall 2013**

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. A variety of articles are published quarterly in March, June, September, and December of each volume year.

**Featured Titles:**

**Middle Level Education and the Self-Enhancing School**

Editors: Kathleen Roney, *University of North Carolina Wilmington* and Richard P. Lipka, *St. Bonaventure University*

**Common Planning Time in Middle Level Schools:**

**Research Studies from the MLER SIG's National Project**

Edited by Steven B. Mertens, *Illinois State University*; Vincent A. Anfara, *The University of Tennessee*; Micki M. Caskey, *Portland State University* and Nancy Flowers, *CPRD / University of Illinois*

A volume in the series: *The Handbook of Research in Middle Level Education*

Editor: Vincent A. Anfara, *The University of Tennessee*

PB ISBN: 978-1-62396-102-2 HC ISBN: 978-1-62396-103-9

**Published 2013**

This volume, the ninth volume in the *Handbook of Research in Middle Level Education*, is a compilation of research studies focusing on the use and implementation of common planning time (CPT) in middle level schools. All of the studies were part of the Middle Level Education Research SIG's National Middle Grades Research Project (NMGRP) on Common Planning Time, which provides additional evidence about teachers' understandings, experiences, the benefits and barriers about CPT.

Since all researchers participating in the SIG-sponsored project utilized the same data collection protocols and followed the same protocols, the overall data collection was systematic and is highly reliable.

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Five research questions were generated to guide the development of the data collection protocols. While the authors were encouraged to use their data to address these project-level questions, they were not required to do so. The project consisted of both qualitative and quantitative data collection. Phase I (qualitative) consisted of observations of CPT meetings and structured interviews with teachers. Phase II (quantitative) was comprised of an online teacher survey. Within the chapters of this volume, a variety of relevant and meaningful research questions are examined utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

### **Adolescence in the 21st Century: Constants and Challenges**

Edited by Frances R. Spielhagen, *Mount Saint Mary College* and Paul D. Schwartz, *Mount Saint Mary College*

PB ISBN: 978-1-62396-496-2 HC ISBN: 9781623964979

#### **Published 2013**

What is wrong with young people today? This question has captured the concerns of the older generation about the habits and attitudes of the adolescents in their midst. The assumption is that there is indeed something wrong with young people. Even Plato must have rolled his eyes, as he relates his diatribe about the adolescents of Greece. Is the current generation of adolescents less motivated or less focused than their parents? How will they respond to the challenges facing them as they progress to adulthood? When, in fact, do they become adults? Although every generation draws upon their own unique and varied experiences, the speed of our current societal changes has created a very different adolescent passage for contemporary youth than ever before.

The world as we know it has changed significantly and because of it, much of today's youth is decidedly different from their parents. Adolescence itself has shifted dramatically. Young children are displaying behaviors well before they are ready to act on or understand their meaning, and older adolescents are staying perpetual children. As one writer put it, "the conveyer belt that transported adolescents into adulthood has broken down". This book provides an interdisciplinary collection of research on the constants and challenges faced by young people today. Failure to launch? Social media? Economic stagnation? For the generation that is coming of age in a post-terrorist world and in the midst of economic upheaval, the challenges might seem insurmountable. However, in this book, scholars from across the academy, from sociology, psychology, education, philosophy, science, and business, explain how the young people today are responding to the constants of growth and change in adolescence and the unique challenges of life in the 21st century.

### **Middle Grades Curriculum: Voices and Visions of the Self-Enhancing School**

Edited by Kathleen Roney, *University of North Carolina Wilmington*  
and Richard P. Lipka, *St. Bonaventure University*

A volume in the series: Middle Level Education and the Self-Enhancing School

Editors: Kathleen Roney, *University of North Carolina Wilmington* and Richard P. Lipka, *St. Bonaventure University*

PB ISBN: 978-1-62396-227-2 HC ISBN: 978-1-62396-228-9

#### **Published 2013**

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High stakes testing, standards, and accountability politics is taking us away from the importance of the affective domain in curriculum development. This critical learning domain is often an unrecognized and infrequently considered topic in the literature. Through this book we extend the current knowledge base by addressing a curriculum model developed in the 1980s. We add a 2012 knowledge base as we delineate the role of self-perceptions in school-related learning, how middle level curriculum affects self-perceptions, and the type of curriculum planning which enhances self-perceptions and improves learning in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains.

The combination of sound psychological principles and practical teaching and curriculum suggestions with an empirical basis makes the book attractive to both higher education and local school professional libraries. In the former it will serve as the primary text in graduate and advanced undergraduate middle level education programs and practices courses. It might also be a primary text in courses or workshops in affective education or other experiences which emphasize affective, values, and self-concept. It also has potential as a supplementary text in undergraduate educational psychology courses. At the in-service level this book could be used as a workshop resource or as a professional reference for middle level teachers, administrators, curriculum workers, and supervisors.

Our interest in young adolescents and their school setting coincides with the fourth edition of *This We Believe* (NMSA, 2010). The selfenhancing school is characterized by “from-to” statements; for example, “from” avoiding parents “to” working with parents. Using theory and research we discuss the costs of staying in the “from” position and the benefits derived from moving to the “to” position. By combining educational psychology and curriculum development we make a unique contribution to middle grades curriculum developers.

### **Improving Urban Schools: Equity and Access in K-16 STEM Education**

Edited by Mary Margaret Capraro, *Texas A&M University*; Robert M. Capraro, *Texas A&M University* and Chance W. Lewis, Ph.D., *University of North Carolina at Charlotte*

A volume in the series: *Contemporary Perspectives on Access, Equity, and Achievement*

Editor: Chance W. Lewis, Ph.D., *University of North Carolina at Charlotte*

PB ISBN: 978-1-62396-230-2 HC ISBN: 978-1-62396-231-9

### **Published 2013**

Although STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) has been diversely defined by various researchers (e.g. Buck Institute, 2003; Capraro & Slough, 2009; Scott, 2009; Wolf, 2008), during the last decade, STEM education has gained an increasing presence on the national agenda through initiatives from the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Institute for Educational Sciences (IES). The rate of technological innovation and change has been tremendous over the past ten years, and this rapid increase will only continue. STEM literacy is the power to “identify, apply, and integrate concepts from science, technology, engineering, and mathematics to understand complex problems and to innovate to solve them” (Washington State STEM, 2011, Internet). In order for U.S. students to be on the forefront of this revolution, ALL of our schools need to be part of the STEM vision and guide students in acquiring STEM literacy.

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Understanding and addressing the challenge of achieving STEM literacy for ALL students begins with an understanding of its element and the connections between them. In order to remain competitive, the Committee on Prospering in the Global Economy has recommended that the US optimize “its knowledge-based resources, particularly in science and technology” (National Academies, 2007, p. 4). Optimizing knowledge-based resources needs to be the goal but is also a challenge for ALL educators (Scheurich & Huggins, 2009).

Regardless, there is little disagreement

that contemporary society is increasingly dependent on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics and thus comprehensive understandings are essential for those pursuing STEM careers. It is also generally agreed that PK-12 students do not do well in STEM areas, both in terms of national standards and in terms of international comparisons (Kuenzi, Matthews, & Mangan, 2006; Capraro, Capraro, Yetkiner, Corlu, Ozel, Ye, & Kim, 2011). The question then becomes what might PK-12 schools do to improve teachers’ and students’ STEM knowledge and skills? This book will look at equity and access issues in STEM education from PK-12, university, and administrative and policy lenses.

### **The Legacy of Middle School Leaders: In Their Own Words**

Edited by Tracy W. Smith, *Appalachian State University*

and C. Kenneth McEwin, *Professor Emeritus Appalachian State University*

A volume in the series: *The Handbook of Resources in Middle Level Education*

Editors: Steven B. Mertens, *Illinois State University* and Vincent A. Anfara, *The University of Tennessee*

PB ISBN: 978-1-61735-472-4 HC ISBN: 978-1-61735-473-1

### **Published 2011**

Sponsored by the Middle Level Education Research SIG of AERA, this inaugural volume in the new IAP book series, *The Handbook of Resources in Middle Level Education*, focuses on the contributions and impact of the leaders of the modern middle school movement. Contained with this volume are the edited transcripts from 20 extensive interviews of the most influential leaders of the middle level movement, including such notable figures as William Alexander, Donald Eichhorn, John Lounsbury, Conrad Toepfer, and Gordon Vars. This historic volume will be an invaluable resource to proponents, advocates, and students of the middle school concept and developmentally appropriate education for young adolescents.

### **Other Recommended Titles:**

#### **An International Look at Educating Young Adolescents**

Edited by Steven B. Mertens, *Illinois State University*; Vincent A. Anfara, *The University of Tennessee*

and Kathleen Roney, *University of North Carolina Wilmington*

PB ISBN: 978-1-60752-041-2 HC: 978-1-60752-042-9

#### **The Young Adolescent and the Middle School**

Edited by Steven B. Mertens, *Illinois State University*; Vincent A. Anfara, *The University of Tennessee*

and Micki M. Caskey, *Portland State University*

PB ISBN: 978-1-59311-662-0 HC ISBN: 978-1-59311-663-7

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**The Encyclopedia of Middle Grades Education**

Edited by Vincent A. Anfara, *The University of Tennessee*; Gayle Andrews, *The University of Georgia* and Steven B. Mertens, *Illinois State University*

PB ISBN: 978-1-59311-172-X HC ISBN: 978-1-59311-173-1 Special Price: \$50 PB/ \$75 HC

**Research Supporting Middle Grades Practice**

Edited by David L. Hough, *Missouri State University*

PB ISBN: 978-1-61735-079-5 HC ISBN: 978-1-61735-080-1

**Reforming Middle Level Education: Considerations for Policymakers**

Edited by Sue C. Thompson, *University of Missouri, Kansas City* and Vincent A. Anfara, *The University of Tennessee*

PB ISBN: 1-59311-118-5 HC ISBN: 1-59311-119-3

**Middle School Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment**

Edited by Vincent A. Anfara, *The University of Tennessee* and Sandra L. Stacki, *Hofstra University*

PB ISBN: 1-93157-676-9 HC ISBN: 1-9357-677-7

**The Handbook of Research in Middle Level Education**

Edited by Vincent A. Anfara, *The University of Tennessee*

PB ISBN: 1-93060-873-X HC ISBN: 1-93060-872-1

**Middle Grades Research: Exemplary Studies Linking Theory to Practice**

Edited by David L. Hough, *Missouri State University*

PB ISBN: 978-1-60752-244-7 HC ISBN: 978-1-60752-245-4

**Voices from the Middle: Narrative Inquiry By, For and About the Middle Level Community**

Edited by Kathleen F. Malu, *William Paterson University of New Jersey*

PB ISBN: 978-1-61735-177-8 HC ISBN: 978-1-61735-178-5

**A Decade of Middle School Mathematics Curriculum Implementation:**

**Lessons Learned from the Show-Me Project**

Edited by Margaret R. Meyer, *University of Wisconsin–Madison* and Cynthia W. Langrall, *Illinois State University*

PB ISBN: 978-1-60752-012-2 HC ISBN: 978-1-60752-013-9

**Making a Difference: Action Research in Middle Level Education**

Edited by Micki M. Caskey, *Portland State University*

PB ISBN: 1-59311-356-0 HC ISBN: 1-59311-357-9

**Special Price:**

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## Descriptions for Legacy Videos: October 2013

**The Middle Level Legacy video series** documents the history of a major educational reform in American Education – the Middle School Movement. The Middle Level Education Legacy Project began in 2003 and included interviews with 18 prominent middle level leaders who provided their perspectives on issues such as critical incidents in the history of the Movement, important research and policy, curriculum, young adolescent development and identity, specialized middle level teacher preparation, significant debates, and challenges to the future of middle level education. These interviews were completed in 2009. *The Legacy of Middle School Leaders: In Their Own Words*, published in 2011, includes extensive documentation, analysis, and synthesis on the results of these interviews. This Middle Level Legacy video series, also based on these interviews, was released in 2013. This series is meant to provide a resource for middle level educators and leaders to learn about the rich past and legacy of middle school education so that its future and the future of young adolescents can be vibrant and promising.

### 1) Introduction to the Legacy Project (12:17)

This video, a digital text of the Introduction to the book, *The Legacy of Middle School Leaders: In Their Own Words*, by Tracy W. Smith and C. Kenneth McEwin, provides an historical view of the Middle School Movement as a social and educational reform movement that had its beginnings in the 1960s – an effort to raise awareness of and promote responsiveness to the needs of young adolescents by providing them schools and teachers appropriate for their particular and unique strengths and needs. Although a small number of middle schools existed before 1963, when William M. Alexander made his influential address at Cornell University which proposed middle schools, many credit this event as the beginning of the Middle School Movement. Video excerpts from interviews with Tom Gatewood and Conrad Toepfer are included in this clip as well as the words of Tom Erb, John Arnold, James Beane, Paul George, Tom Dickinson, and Joan Lipsitz. This video was first shared publicly as part of the

opening session at a special conference of Middle Level Professors held at Georgia College and State University in Milledgeville, Georgia, on May 12, 2011, when the first copies *The Legacy of Middle School Leaders: In Their Own Words* were released.

### 2) Founders of the American Middle School (25:40)

William Alexander, Don Eichhorn, John Lounsbury, Conrad Toepfer, and Gordon Vars are often referred to as the founding fathers of the Middle School Movement. Two of them, Drs. William Alexander and Don Eichhorn, unfortunately were deceased before the Middle Level Education Legacy project began; however, excerpts of their writings in the book and Legacy Video series are featured. John Lounsbury, Conrad Toepfer, and Gordon Vars are represented in this Founders Video, sharing their perspectives on critical incidents in the history of the Movement, important research and policy, curriculum, young adolescent development and identity, specialized middle level teacher preparation, significant debates, and challenges to the future of middle level education.

### The Middle School Movement Series

### 3) Ideology and Identity of Middle School Education (14:30)

Early middle level leaders were deeply committed to improving middle level education in ways that benefit all young adolescents. This dedication resulted in them leading reforms designed to address the shortcomings of junior high schools as well as other school organizations that include young adolescents. There was concern among some leaders that the early Middle School Movement did not have a clear ideology or identity. In retrospect, some leaders believed that too much emphasis in the early years was placed on the importance of puberty and structural changes in middle level schools, and that  
(Continued on page 13)

*(Continued from page 12)*

too little emphasis was focused on areas like middle level curriculum and democratic education. Other Legacy participants, however, believe that the Middle School Movement did have a clear ideology and identity--progressive education. Still other middle level leaders noted that the middle level ideology was not adequately shared with educators and others outside the leadership of the emerging Middle School Movement. Lipsitz pointed out that the Middle School Movement would have been more successful if early alliances had been formed among educators, policy makers, and others to advocate for middle level reforms. The creation of the landmark position paper, *This We Believe*, is also discussed in this video and the role this document played in helping define the middle level education is expanded upon.

Although prominent middle leaders interviewed expressed somewhat differing views about the identity and ideology of middle level education, there was a great deal of agreement among them that has helped shape middle level education today and offers insight into future efforts that need to occur. Their advocacy for developmentally responsive middle level programs and schools was described by one leader as a moral imperative, and another recalled that there was an almost spiritual dimension to advocating for middle level schools that serve young adolescents well. This video includes many valuable lessons to be learned from pioneering middle leaders who have left an indelible legacy regarding the identity and ideology of middle level education.

#### **4) Reorganization of Middle Level Schools (7:08)**

This video documents a continued increase in the number of middle schools established in the nation since the early years of the Middle School Movement. The number of grades 5-8, 6-8, and 7-8 middle level schools has significantly increased while the number of grades 7-9 junior high schools has dramatically decreased. Many prominent middle level leaders interviewed observed that there is a substantial consensus among educators and others supporting the appropriateness of separately organized middle level

schools for young adolescents and that there is widespread agreement about the kinds of programs and practices that should be incorporated into these schools. Several Legacy participants noted that there is now a rather substantial research base that supports middle level school components like interdisciplinary team organization. They also pointed out that desired components and organizational features generally associated with successful middle level schools should be authentically implemented and not become a checklist of components.

Middle level educators have been able to accomplish much on behalf of young adolescents and their schools as many developmentally responsive programs and practices have been implemented. However, middle level leaders observed that middle level schools are not without controversy. Some critics believe that that middle level schools have been too preoccupied with organizational orthodoxy and that this has resulted in many schools not serving young adolescents well in areas like middle level curriculum. Some middle level leaders also observed that a more flexible conception of middle schools has evolved and adapted to changing conditions in recent years.

Legacy participants expressed their belief that the Middle School Movement has profoundly altered American education and that young adolescents have greatly benefited from efforts to transform their schools in ways that increase their learning and support their healthy development.

#### **5) Components of the Middle School Philosophy (11:14)**

Middle level leaders expressed their concern and disappointment regarding the lack of universal implementation of middle level components that have long been accepted as essential to the full success of middle level schools. Although there are numerous successful middle level schools in the nation, many middle level schools define themselves too narrowly and fail to implement all middle level components  
*(Continued on page 14)*

*(Continued from page 13)*

with fidelity. Middle level leaders observed that this problem has plagued middle level schools for decades, diminished their overall effectiveness, and lessened their ability to provide young adolescents with the level of educational excellence they need and deserve. Several middle level leaders pointed out that one contributing factor to the problem of partial implementation of middle level components has been that many leaders in middle schools have attempted to add various middle level components one at a time with their plan being full implementation over time. This has not worked well since middle level components are interrelated and designed to work together rather than function in isolation. Legacy participants agreed that middle level components must be more than a list of programs and practices adopted by middle level schools. They also noted that there is a growing research base that reveals that middle level schools that follow the middle school concept/philosophy with fidelity have more positive results including higher scores on standardized achievement tests than those that have only partially implemented the middle school model. Middle level leaders recommend that middle level components be implemented with sufficient flexibility to take into account the individual needs of students, teachers, and communities of these schools. They believe that wholehearted commitments to fully implementing proven middle level components are crucial to reaching the point in American education where all young adolescents are served well by their schools.

### **Foundational Beliefs Supporting Middle Level Education Series**

#### **6) Unique Needs of Young Adolescents (10:28)**

Legacy participants describe the benefits young adolescents have enjoyed as a result of the implementation of an approach to education that was specifically conceived to attend to their needs. Authentic middle schools are described as places of affiliation for young adolescents, places where young people feel connected to their schools and

communities, where they are achieving academically, and where they feel good about themselves. Middle level leaders agree that great strides have been made in efforts to provide a developmentally responsive and appropriate education for young adolescents and that all stakeholders must continue to fight the negative media portrayals of young adolescents and to emphasize the “wonderful, rich, beautiful, intellectual, philosophical, and spiritual side of [young adolescent] development” (Doda).

#### **7) Appropriate Curriculum for Young Adolescents (29:34)**

Four of the five original founders of the Middle School Movement had advanced graduate education in curriculum. It is, therefore, no surprise that issues related to curriculum were central to the original conversations and initiatives to implement middle schools. However, in spite of the rich curriculum heritage of the Middle School Movement, and perhaps because of it, many Legacy participants expressed disappointment about the implementation of an appropriate curriculum for young adolescents. Legacy participants describe the history of curriculum in middle grades, including the entrenchment of separate-subject approaches to curriculum and glimpses of curriculum innovation promise. They challenge contemporary middle level educators and leaders to continue working toward an ideal curriculum that is innovative and appropriate for young adolescents.

#### **8) Appropriate Teaching and Learning Practices (4:04)**

The Middle Level Legacy Project participants cite changes in teaching and learning practices as one of the successes of the Middle School Movement. They discuss changes in teaching practice and learning experiences that have occurred since the 1960s. For example, middle school teachers today are more collaborative and are more likely to engage students in hands-on, active learning than did their junior high predecessors. Doda affirms that the early principles and approaches of the Middle School Movement

*(Continued on page 15)*

*(Continued from page 14)*

offered relevance and affiliation to students—and challenges present-day middle level educators to return to those principles that are at the heart of an appropriate middle school educational experience for young adolescents.

### **Keys to Achieving Full Success in Middle Level Education Series**

#### **9) Substantial, Scholarly Knowledge Base (9:55)**

A substantial, scholarly research base is critical to documenting progress, success, and limitations of any educational innovation. The evolution of and milestones in middle level education research are discussed by middle level leaders. Erb and McEwin, for example, assert research that has shown that implementing middle school practices makes positive differences for young adolescents. Arnold speaks about the power of descriptive research to convey what powerful teaching and learning can look like in middle schools. Other participants discuss the importance of research in other fields such as medicine, sociology, and anthropology that can inform the work of middle level teachers and leaders. Middle level leaders call for middle level educators and researchers to develop well-designed and implemented studies about young adolescents, their schools, their teachers, their communities, and other aspects of their healthy development—and to communicate that research far and wide.

#### **10) Specialized Middle Level Professional Preparation and Development (11:44)**

Legacy leaders in this video are advocates of middle level teacher preparation that focuses directly and distinctly upon the specialized knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed by teachers of young adolescents. They note that middle level teachers should be knowledgeable about young adolescent development, subject matter content, middle level curriculum and instruction, middle level schooling, and other key areas before they begin their careers. Legacy

participants believe that middle level teachers should not have to learn to be highly effective *after* they begin teaching. It is unfortunate that the professional preparation many middle level teachers received was designed for those planning to teach young children or for those planning to be subject-matter specialists at the senior high school level. Middle level leaders noted that the lack of availability of sufficient numbers of teachers and other educators with specialized middle level professional preparation limited the success of early middle level schools and remains a barrier to full success today. Legacy participants acknowledged that progress has been made in many states and at the national level. However, malpractice continues in many states where almost anyone with some form of teaching license is allowed to teach at the middle level. Middle level leaders believe that the specialized professional preparation of middle level teachers, and licensure regulations that support this preparation, must become universal if full success is to be accomplished in the middle level schools of the nation.

#### **11) Influence of the Middle School on American Education (9:09)**

As part of the Middle Level Education Legacy Project, participants were asked, “What effect has the Middle School Movement had on American education?” This video provides a summary of their responses. They cite the significant contribution middle schools made to legitimizing a school in the middle that is deliberately different and focused on the needs of young adolescents. Arnold, Doda, and Johnston discuss how the Middle School Movement has influenced high school reform in American schools because middle schools, from the beginning, were focused on helping young people experience affiliation in small learning teams and communities. Participants also described challenges facing the Middle School Movement, including the lack of recognition in federal law, where middle schools are lumped into the secondary education category, even though the predominant schooling structure across America is a three-tiered system with elementary, *(Continued on page 16)*

(Continued from page 15)

middle, and secondary schools. Sue Swaim challenges middle level leaders to rise to the challenges of retrospection and introspection and to work collaboratively to rededicate themselves to present and future generations of young adolescents.

## 12) Influence of Policy, Politics, and Accountability Initiatives on Middle School Education (10:45)

Perhaps the two most influential elements of policy are related to teacher licensure and the curriculum, regulations that are generally set by state government. Many state policies acknowledge middle level schools as a legitimate level in a three-tiered system, by creating regulations for specialized middle level teacher preparation and licensure and by providing for a distinct curriculum for middle level learners.

Sue Swaim argues that the success of the NCLB Grades 3-8 testing mandate rests “squarely on the shoulders of middle school students and middle

recognized in the law. Middle level leaders further criticized the narrow, content-only focus of “highly qualified teacher” and student success as they are defined in national policy.

Middle level educators are challenged to work not only within the ranks of middle level educators but also to form alliances to protect teacher education and public education more generally. Emphatically, George ends this video, with a nod to Sam Houston’s famous quotation: “We’ve got to do right and damn the consequences!”

Legacy participants pointed out that policies at the federal level have not been inclusive of middle level education. They discuss how major national bills such as Title I and No Child Left Behind ignore students, teachers, and schools at the middle level. Toepfer calls the lumping of middle schools into the category of secondary an “anachronistic, misinformed stance” when the evidence is clear that a “middle school unit can better address the educational needs of young adolescents.”

**Legacy Project Video Information Chart**

Title	Video #	Length (mins)	Size (MB)
1) Introduction to the Legacy Project	1	12:17	34.6
2) Founders of the American Middle School	1	25:40	70.1
3) MSM: Ideology and Identity of Middle School Education	2	14:30	41.2
4) MSM: Reorganization of Middle Schools	2	7:08	20.0
5) MSM: Components of the Middle School Philosophy	2	11:14	29.5
6) FB: Unique Needs of Young Adolescents	3	10:28	27.8
7) FB: Appropriate Curriculum for Young Adolescents	3	29:34	80.3
8) FB: Appropriate Teaching and Learning Practices	3	4:04	10.6
9) KtA: Substantial, Scholarly Knowledge Base	4	9:55	28.0
10) KtA: Specialized Middle Level Professional Preparation and Development	4	11:44	32.2
11) KtA: Influence on the Middle School on American Education	4	9:09	22.3
12) KtA: Influence of Policy, Politics, and Accountability Initiatives on Middle School Education	4	10:45	29.1





**MLER SIG Business Meeting**  
**November 8, 2013, 5:30pm-7:00pm**  
**AMLE Annual Conference, Minneapolis**

Attendance—53

## MINUTES

### 1) Welcome & Introductions (Steve Mertens)

Steve Mertens welcomed everyone to the meeting and reviewed the financial report submitted by Kenneth Anderson.

Two expenditures this quarter:

- 1) \$250—honorarium for the graduate student award (April)
  - 2) \$225—AERA SIG management fee (August)
- Total expenditures is \$475  
 Current Balance \$5829.10

### 2) Program Chair Report (Chris Cook)

Chris Cook reported on the upcoming AERA program in Philadelphia, PA. We will have seven different sessions in the AERA program. One symposium, two paper sessions, three roundtable sessions and one business meeting.

#### Symposium session

Comprehensive and Critical Review of Current Middle Level Research and Practice

- o *Historical Trends, Patterns, and Policies in the Middle School Movement (1963-2013)* – Schaefer & Malu
- o *A Topical Analysis of Middle Grades Research from 2000-Present* – Brinegar
- o *Theoretical Perspectives in the Field of Middle Grades Education* – Reyes
- o *Critical Review of Research Methods in the Field of Middle Level Education* - Yoon

#### Paper Session 1

Curriculum in Middle Level Education  
*The Relationship Between Teacher-Student Interactions and Student Motivation in Middle School Science* – Smart

*A Phenomenological Study of Middle Grade Female*

*and Male Students' Single-Sex Mathematical Experiences* – Simpson & Che

*Exploring the Narratively-Constructed Mathematics Identities of Latina Bilingual Middle School Students* – Kaplan

*Middle Level Science Teacher Education Without Boundaries: Integration 6-16 Curriculum* – Deneroff & Richards

*Middle School Social Studies Teachers' Enactment of Content Area Literacy* – Richey, Ramirez, Barber, Sturtevant, & Kidd

#### Paper Session 2

Developmentally Responsive Practice in Middle Level Schools

*Developmentally Responsive Teacher Practices Across Middle-to-High-School Transition* – Mahoney, DiCicco, & Ellerbrock

*Middle School Teacher Willingness to Intervene in Bullying Situations: Efficacy, Concerns, and Empathy for Victims* – Hines & Perry

*Spiritual Development in Developmentally Responsive Practice* – Lingley

*The Effects of Mindful Awareness Practices on the Executive Functions of Early Adolescents in an Urban Middle School* – Hanich & Desmond

*The Role of School Climate and Other Contextual Factors in Adolescent Test Anxiety* – Imasa, Robtoy, Habhab, Partridge, Yoon, & Somers

#### Roundtable 1

Current Issues in Middle Level Education  
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## MINUTES *(Continued from page 17)*

*Attitudes and Beliefs Held by Teachers on Interdisciplinary Teams with Common Planning Time at a Highly Effective Middle School* – Reynolds

*Common Planning Time: What are the Benefits and Barriers* – Owens, Key, & Seed

*Multimodal Learning Clubs in the Middle School* – Casey

*Turning Around Low-Performing Middle Grades Schools: Emerging Research from a Nationally Funded i3 Project* – Flowers, Begum, Poes, Carpenter, & Mulhall

### **Roundtable 2**

Issues in Middle Level Teacher Preparation

*Learning to Teach at the Middle-Level: Perceptions of Professional Growth in Early Courses and Internships* – Strahan & Ruebel

*Middle Grades Students as Teacher Educators* – Downes, Nagle, & Bishop

*“Re-Defining Literate Selves:” Middle Grades Pre-Service Teachers Using Digital Storytelling to Reflect on personal Narratives* – Reyes & Brinegar

### **Roundtable 3**

Technology in Middle Grades Schools

*Technology-Integrated Middle School Program: Student Engagement and Success in Language Arts* – Noel & MacGregor

*A Predictive Profile of Youths’ Web 2.0 Outside School Activities* – Reed, Jones, & Hughes

*Curriculum Integration in Middle Schools: Creating*

*Music Videos* – Cronenberg,  
*Digital Gameplay: Effects on Young Adolescents’ Science Content Learning* – Spires, Zheng, & Bartlett

The acceptance rate was approximately 55%. Chris also thanked the reviewers for this service to the SIG and reminded the membership that they could apply to be a reviewer in February. Special thanks to the following individuals who reviewed the proposals:

Pamela Angelle  
 Penny Bishop  
 Kathleen Brinegar  
 Micki Caskey  
 Jennifer Denmon  
 Francine Falk-Ross  
 Shawn Faulkner  
 Lenore Kinne  
 Bridget Mahonney  
 Nicole Miller  
 Sarah Pennington  
 Cynthia Reyes  
 Mary Beth Schaefer  
 Fran Spielhagen  
 Nicole Thompson  
 Amanda Wall  
 Stephanie Wormington

Penny Bishop acknowledged the time and energy Chris put into the program work. The membership thanked Chris for his service.

### **3) SIG Committee Reports**

#### **Leadership Development**

Upcoming Election (Penny Howell)  
 Penny Howell announced the process for building the election ballot is underway. She is currently soliciting nominations for the following 2-year  
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## MINUTES *(Continued from page 18)*

positions:

**Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Council Members(3 vacancies), Graduate Student Representative**—We need **two candidates for each position**; so we are in need of **14** nominations. If you would like to nominate someone for an officer or Council position, you must have their consent (Article XI, Section 3b) before submitting their name. We hope that you will not only encourage others to take advantage of this opportunity to contribute to the MLER SIG, but consider nominating yourself for one of the open positions.

To submit a nomination/self-nomination, please provide the following information to [penny.howell@louisville.edu](mailto:penny.howell@louisville.edu) :

The full name of the candidate;  
 The institutional affiliation of the candidate;  
 A biographical statement for the candidate (up to 250 words).

### **Graduate Student Mentoring Initiative (Cheryl Ellerbrock & Bridget Mahoney)**

Bridget Mahoney announced that there are 13 pairs of mentors and mentees. There is a need for more mentors. Please email Bridget if you are interested in being an mentor.

For the upcoming AERA meeting, Bridget is planning a social gathering for the graduate students in April. Bridget has contacted those students and several are planning to attend.

Cheryl provided an explanation of the program and encouraged faculty members to consider being a part of this initiative as a way to grow our membership.

**Awards & Recognition (Chair: Shawn Faulkner)**  
 Shawn Faulkner provided an overview of the approved awards for the SIG. The deadline for the awards is January 1, 2014 and should be submitted to him. All of the information is located on the SIG website.

Shawn will be forming a committee that will review the nominations and make decisions on who should receive those awards. If anyone is interested in being a part of that committee, they should contact Shawn.

Renaming of new award: *Vincent A. Anfara, Jr. Outstanding Research Award*

**Status and discussion of Graduate Student Award**  
 The decision was reached that there will be no changes in who can be nominated for this award. It was noted that with regard to the review process, there will be no distinction between the levels and that all award nominations will be reviewed by the same standards. Shawn noted that this would be clearly noted in the nomination information so everyone is aware of the review process.

The other decision that was announced was that the nominations must include a statement of how the nominated study is related to middle level education research. Before this was an option.

Shawn thanked all of the reviewers for their service to the SIG by participating in this committee.

### **Membership & Outreach (Chairs: Nicole Thompson & Kathleen Brinegar)**

Membership Numbers (174 as of 11/03/13; 107 lapsed) & Recruitment Efforts

Nicole Thompson reported on the membership and outreach work completed to this point. She and *(Continued on page 20)*



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Kathleen are planning to review various publications for authors to see who could be potential SIG members. They are also managing the Facebook page. They plan to get in touch with Bridget Mahoney to discuss creating a new faculty mentoring program similar to the Graduate Student Mentoring Program. This would help veteran faculty mentor and support new faculty as part of the SIG.

### **Publications**

**Chronicle (Pam Angelle)** – New annotated publication/presentation references. Pam was not able to be there, but the membership appreciates her time and energy on The Chronicle (SIG newsletter). If anyone has information they would like included in the newsletter, they should contact Pam (address on MLER SIG website)

### *Handbook series (Steve Mertens)*

Steve provided an update on the Handbook series (Handbook of Research and Handbook of Resources). IAP has provided a special price for the 9 volumes of the Handbook Research Series for SIG members. If you would like to purchase those volumes from IAP, please let them know that you are SIG member.

New volume is coming out. Authored by Mary Beth Schafer and Kathy Malu and dedicated to the memory of Vince Anfara.

If anyone is interested in proposing a volume, please check out the prospectus guidelines on IAP website. Please send to Micki Caskey

### *AMLE publications*

Karen Swanson provided an update on the developments with the AMLE publications. There is now an AMLE magazine that is replacing *Middle*

*Ground. RMLEO* editorship is open and anyone interested in applying for that should watch the AMLE website. Karen encouraged everyone to submit manuscripts for review *RMLEO*.

Karen Swanson also encouraged the SIG membership to support doctoral students or junior faculty to submit research summaries for the website. The Research Advisory Board is always looking for strong research summaries for publication on the website. 5-9 pages (2500 words), sent directly to Karen and they are peer reviewed.

Tariq Akmal brought greetings from the AMLE Board of Trustees. There is a focus on recruitment and desire to build the membership base. He encouraged the SIG membership to voice concerns and suggestions to Will and other board members.

### **Executive Advisor's Report (David Strahan)**

Dave facilitated the strategic plan for the SIG. He provided a brief summary for the membership. David Virtue and Heather Haverback help him analyze the responses to the survey.

The previous strategic plans focused on maintaining and growing membership, creating opportunities for collaboration and publications and providing high quality research reports to inform practice. It seems that strategic plans have been a helpful means to accomplish the aforementioned goals.

Survey was issued in the Winter and the results were compiled and analyze. 88% of respondents say their needs are met through the work of the SIG. 85% of respondents agree that there are opportunities for collaboration, publication and leadership. 85% of respondents agree that the SIG works effectively

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## MINUTES *(Continued from page 20)*

At this point it is important to begin thinking about the next 5 years and where we (as the SIG) would like to go. It is important for all SIG members to provide input.

*Dave asked that the SIG consider four questions:*

How do we extend efforts to invite more new members?

J. Jones—1) Start with folks in your own institutions. There are people there who do not belong to the SIG but would be great additions to the group. 2) Work with state affiliates to encourage members of those affiliates to become involved. 3) Checking state websites to see if there is a way the SIG website could be connected to the those websites—getting more visibility. Spotlight benefits.

Doc students—1) Getting doc students involved at AMLE and not just for AERA

Shawn Faulkner—1) Could the SIG consider ways to provide an electronic participation for those that cannot afford to travel to both AMLE and AERA (or either). Sykpe them into the meeting, etc.

How do we improve and promote and disseminate research? How do we continue to grow?

Provide an open access month (October—month of Young Adolescents)

Instead of downloading the pdfs as professors, we should actually send our students to the website to retrieve the pdf.

Increase the culture of research in the schools of education.

How can we do better with communications? (no responses given)

What new possibilities do we envision for the future? (no response given)

Practical suggestions for continuing this process? (no responses given)

### Updates & Announcements

NCES Middle Grades Longitudinal Study of 2016-17 Steve was contacted about this study. The two page summary was sent out through the MLER SIG listserv. The rep has been invited to the AERA SIG business meeting.

#### *Updates from Partner Organizations*

NaPOMLE—Bob Z. brought greetings from NaPOMLE. He has encouraged all to join NaPOMLE if interested.

Nat'l Forum—Gayle Andrews brought greetings for The Forum. If you are interested in becoming a member of the Forum as an advocate is \$25. STW conference in Crystal City, VA June 26-28.

Tracy Smith announced that the Legacy videos are now on You Tub and then AMLE. 12 short videos with Legacy Leaders will be useful in your classes.

Revisions to SIG web site (Micki Caskey). Please send all position announcement and publication calls to Micki Caskey and she will post on the website.

After the SIG meeting the membership adjourned to an Informal Social Gathering @ pub, *The Local*.

**Tribute to Vincent A. Anfara, Jr.** Micki Caskey & Richard Lipka provided a tribute to Vincent A. Anfara.

## 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.

## Middle Grades Longitudinal Study of 2016-2017

The Middle Grades Longitudinal Study of 2016–17 (MGLS:2017) will be the first study to follow a nationally-representative sample of students as they enter and move through the middle grades. The data collected through repeated measures of key constructs will provide a rich descriptive picture of the experiences and lives of all students during these critical years and will allow researchers to examine associations between contextual factors and student outcomes. Because mathematics and literacy skills are important for preparing students for high school and are associated with later education and career opportunities, the study is placing a focus on student growth in these areas and on their instruction. MGLS emphasis on inclusiveness involves oversampling students in several IDEA categories.

### *Sponsor*

National Center for Education Statistics, Institute for Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

### *Goals of MGLS:2017*

A key goal of the study is to better understand the supports students need for academic success, high school readiness, and positive life development such as high school graduation, college and career readiness, healthy lifestyles of all students. The study will track the progress students make in reading and math-

ematics and their developmental trajectories as they transition from elementary to high school and identify factors in their school, classroom, home and out-of-home experiences that may help to explain differences in achievement and development, and that may contribute to academic success and other outcomes both during the middle grade years and beyond.

### *Sample*

The student sample will be representative of students in the U.S. who are enrolled in grade 6 in the fall of the 2016–17 school year. A multi-stage probability sampling design will be used. Public, private, and charter schools will be sampled from the Common Core of Data and Private School Universe Survey. We anticipate that between 800 and 1,000 schools will be selected and asked to participate. Between 15,000 and 20,000 students will be sampled for the study. An additional sample of 3,600 students in five disability categories will be obtained in order to provide researchers with adequate power to analyze results for those groups.

### *Data Collection Schedule*

Baseline data (grade 6) will be collected in spring of 2017 with annual follow-up in spring 2018 and spring (Continued on page 23)

2019 when most of the students in the sample will be in

## Middle Grades Longitudinal Study of 2016-2017

(Continued from page 22)

grades 7 and 8, respectively.

### *Types of Data*

At each wave of data collection, students' reading and mathematics achievement, socioemotional development, and executive function will be assessed. Students will also complete a survey that asks about their engagement in school, out-of-school experiences, peer group, and identity development. Parents will be interviewed about their background, family resources, and parental involvement. Students' teachers will complete a two-part survey that asks about their background and classroom instruction and then asks teachers to report on each student's academic behaviors, mathematics performance, and conduct. School administrators will be asked to report on school supports and services, as well school climate. Student information will be abstracted from school records and field staff will complete an observation checklist on the school physical plant and resources. The teachers of special needs students for whom testing accommodations are not possible will report on student progress.

### *Data Collection Methods/Modes*

Modes include web-based assessments and surveys, computer-assisted interviews, and self-administered paper questionnaires.

### *Products*

Products may include descriptive reports and tabular presentations of the data, publicly available datasets and user documentation.

### MGLS:2017 Short Description

***Middle Grades Longitudinal Study of 2017.*** The first study to follow a nationally-representative sample of students as they enter and move through the middle grades. Repeated measures of key constructs will provide a rich descriptive picture of the academic progress, experiences and lives of students during these critical years and will allow researchers to examine

associations between contextual factors and student outcomes. Special focus on socioemotional and executive function measures, as well as successful transition to high school and later education and career outcomes. MGLS emphasis on inclusiveness involves oversampling students with disabilities. More information is at [nces.ed.gov/mgls](http://nces.ed.gov/mgls).

**Website:** <http://nces.ed.gov/mgls>

For more information contact:

Carolyn Fidelman, National Center for Education Statistics, Institute for Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education ([Carolyn.Fidelman@ed.gov](mailto:Carolyn.Fidelman@ed.gov))

