



April 2012 Newsletter

Hello friends. I hope this finds you well. As the semester flies by I would like to encourage us to take a minute to thank the principals, secretaries, teachers, and our colleagues for working with us this semester. I had my students make cards and attached them to NCMSA tee-shirts (thank you NCMSA) as “thank yous” for letting us invade their classrooms, advocate for them and their students, attempt to plan and deliver lessons, and reflect on the wonder and magic of middle level students and the world of teaching. I know I worked with amazing teachers and principals to plan and implement the activities and my students would not be as prepared had they not gotten to “live the magic” in our partner schools. I would also like to thank each of you for what you are doing, for who you are.

I have a few things to share. There is a middle school positions at Chicago State University. We have a few celebrations (retirement, promotion, new leadership roles) of our members. I attended AERA and enjoyed listening to research of colleagues on middle level education. I am sad to report the Memphis Symposium had to be cancelled but we are in the process of bringing the work people had planned to you electronically. And I have a few thoughts to consider regarding several of our goals. Whew... this may be a newsletter to read after brewing a pot of tea. (:

Faculty Position. Chyrese Wolf (Chicago State University) shared “we are searching for a tenure-track faculty member qualified to teach *science methods* in our elementary and middle level education department. Candidates may contact me cwolf@csu.edu or my chair, Dr. Rosemary Buteau rbuteau@csu.edu for further details.”

Let the Celebrations Begin.



Stuart Knapp is retiring from Wesley College where he is the department head. Congratulations and good luck Stuart!!!

Bob Ziegenfuss received tenure at Shippensburg. Congratulations Bob!!!

Gary Senn is taking over as the SCPOMLE president, replacing Chris Burkett. Congratulations Gary and thank you Chris.



AERA Middle Level SIG: Chris Cook (Northern Kentucky University) is taking over as the Middle Level SIG chair, replacing Penny Bishop (University of Vermont); and Dave Strahan (Western Carolina University) is the new executive director of the middle level AERA SIG. The meeting in Vancouver was laced with lots of middle level research (and great seafood). We (AERA SIG and NaPOMLE) have tried to build relationships and sustain our commitment to promoting middle level education

through research (with the SIG) and through research and best practice (with NaPOMLE). I would encourage you to consider adding the Middle Level SIG to your professional networking file. Congratulations SIG team.

Middle School Journal Editor. David Virtue (USC – Gamecocks) will be stepping down as the editor of the Middle School Journal next year. If you are interested in this position keep your eyes open for this possibility. We appreciate having worked closely with David and have enjoyed supporting his skills as the editor of this journal. Thanks David.

Memphis Symposium has been canceled. We were unable to secure enough participants to host a Professors Symposium in Memphis this year, so we need to be intentional about collaborating via technology this summer. I have invited the presenters to share their expertise in our May newsletter electronically. I think we should all thank the Tennessee group who were willing to commit to this adventure. There is the possibility of a symposium next summer in Pennsylvania. We will keep you updated.

As we continue to focus on the NaPOMLE 2011 Goals I am compelled to focus on three of them... ..

Goals 2: Disseminate middle level research and best practice in user-friendly ways to a variety of groups including adolescents, teachers, parents, legislators, and community groups.

While attending AERA, several of our members gave presentations on middle level topics. John Niska (Rhode Island College) updated us



on “the impact of professional development on middle level advisors” sharing that when middle level advisors receive support they have the potential to develop stronger advisory classrooms. Penny Bishop (The University of Vermont) shared a study addressing perceptions of digital natives on “thinking about how we use technology.”



The Middle Level SIG continues to sponsor research on the impact of common planning time. NaPOMLE members shared data and participated as leaders and discussants for sessions. Jan Carpenter (George Fox University) and Micki Caskey (Portland State University) presented data on the AERA SIG’s common planning time project. Dave Strahan (Western Carolina) was the chair and Ginny Jagla (National Louis University) was the discussant.



In a later session, Chris Cook (Northern Kentucky University) and Shawn Faulkner (Northern Kentucky University) on teachers' perceptions of CPT as addressed research including the SOAR program. Micki Caskey (University of Tennessee) gave an overview along (UT Knoxville) and they served as result of these studies will be published in a handbook sponsored by the AERA Middle Level Sig.



shared their findings well. Other topics impact of a Project (Portland State with Vince Anfara discussants. The

Are we doing enough to get the word out? Are there other ways to bring current research to our principals and others?

Goal 3: Address the global nature of adolescence by broadening the diversity of the NaPOMLE membership and meeting the needs of a more diverse adolescent community.



I am always inspired when faculty members choose to bring their candidates with them to state, national, and international conferences and I think we can do more to advocate for them. I know that many of you do this. Cheryl Ellerbrock (University of South Florida) brought four of her graduate students

Jennifer Denmon, Ph.D student in Curriculum and Instruction
Bridget Mahoney, Ph.D student in Curriculum and Instruction
Ruchelle Owens, Ph.D student in Curriculum and Instruction
Sarah Boles-Haslup, M.Ed student in Curriculum and Instruction

to AERA this spring. Cheryl shared a project that she, Penny Bishop (University of Vermont) and Nicole Miller (Mississippi State) started that involved mentoring. I asked her to share this with us.

“Myself, along with Nicole Miller from Mississippi State University and Penny Bishop from the University of Vermont co-lead this initiative. Nicole and I were one of the first mentor-mentee pairs! A little about the program...

In an effort to foster positive mentorship relationships that occur informally and conveniently, the Middle Level Education Research Special Interest Group (MLER SIG) offered a hybrid Graduate Student Mentoring Initiative (GSMI) mentorship program occurs throughout the year. The intent of this program is to connect graduate students in middle level education research with experienced researchers in their shared field without the demand of having to be in the same physical location (e.g., university, conference).”

Goal 3 addresses outreach. If each of us invited one person to join NaPOMLE, perhaps we could do more initiatives such as this one? [Joanne Previts](#) (GCSU), [Jennifer Roberts](#) (Williamette), [John Stroup](#) (Champlain), and [Cheryl](#) (USF) are interested in creating a “new faculty” advocacy group. If you would like to participate in this, please contact any of these professors.

Goal 5: Participate in political outreach. This group is looking to share “talking points” about middle level education and make them more readily available to professors and students including: Advocacy Information from the Forum, documents from NASSP, and communicating updates on current certification practices across the country. Several national groups have resources that they are willing to share.

AMLE and (AERA) Middle Level SIG have responded to the call to be politically active as well. AMLE has multiple resources under “advocacy” on their website at <http://www.amle.org/Advocacy/tabid/52/Default.aspx>. AERA has two “policy briefs” on the middle level SIG website. The first is on high stakes testing and the second policy brief is in support of the specialized preparation of middle-level administrators. You can view these briefs and other information about the AERA SIG at <http://www.rmle.pdx.edu/>. There are members of our organization who follow policy very closely. I would encourage those of you who do so to help guide us as we find ways to tell the story of middle level education.



Patti Kinney from The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) shared an entire section devoted to middle schools on their website www.nassp.org. On their website are policy briefs, articles, and resources to promote middle level education. On April 26 two middle school principals are being recognized. Dr Thomas Dodd is from Colorado and Dr Linda Scott is from Virginia. On behalf of NaPOMLE I am sending them a note of congratulations.

Are there principals we have worked with who deserve our recognition? If you have a principal or group of principals you could recognize, I would like to share a thank you from “us.” I have attached a note I am sending to Drs. Dodd and Scott.



Representatives of Schools To Watch meet in Washington, DC every June. As part of their agenda they visit legislators on Capitol Hill. On the www.schoolstowatch.org website you will find a “talking points” document under the “conference ⇒ legislative visits.” Deborah Kasak encouraged me to share the latest version of the talking points with you.

Her advice is to use this document as a springboard to consider adding “points” relating to your individual state needs.

Publications. *CIMLE Journal*. As you know we are always hoping to find ways to help you share your story. Consider sending your articles to our Current Issues in Middle Level Education Editor, [Kim Ligon](#) (Kennesaw)



Middle School Journal. The editor of *Middle School Journal* is seeking manuscripts for upcoming issues. *Middle School Journal* publishes articles that promote middle level education and contribute to an

understanding of the educational and developmental needs of youth between the ages of 10 and 15. Article formats may include: reports of successful programs, descriptions of effective techniques, thought-provoking essays, and discussions of research applications. Articles submitted should specifically relate to the theory and practice of middle level education and should speak directly to practitioners in the field. Authors should connect submissions to at least one of the 16 characteristics of successful schools for young adolescents as discussed in *This We Believe: Keys to Educating Young Adolescents*. The following special themes have been selected for volume 44 (2012–2013):

The Common Core in the Middle Grades

Volume 44, Number 3 (January, 2013)

The Common Core State Standards Initiative has established standards in English language arts and mathematics that have been adopted by the school systems in nearly every state. Middle level schools and classrooms will be impacted as states implement these standards: states and districts will develop professional development so teachers understand the new standards, teachers will modify instruction and assessment to reflect the standards, and stakeholders at all levels will provide feedback regarding the implementation process and outcomes. Articles in this issue may include:

- Successful instructional strategies aligned with the Common Core.
- Analyses of Common Core implementation in states, districts, or schools.
- Conceptual discussions relating the Common Core to the middle school concept.

Submit by June 1, 2012

Middle Level Educator Preparation and Professional Development

Volume 44, Number 4 (March, 2013)

This We Believe: Keys to Educating Young Adolescents calls for middle level educators who “value young adolescents and are prepared to teach them.” Outstanding teacher education programs throughout the country prepare thousands of educators for middle grades classrooms each year, yet many middle level educators begin as elementary or secondary teachers or enter the middle grades through alternate route or lateral entry programs. Exemplary middle level schools have organizational structures that help new faculty and staff members adapt to the school culture and learn about the joys and challenges of working with young adolescents, and effective middle level educators continually seek out opportunities to learn and grow throughout the span of their careers. Articles in this issue will focus on the preparation and professional development of middle level educators and include:

- Descriptions of effective programs and practices focused on middle level teacher preparation and professional development.
- Analyses of issues related to middle level educator preparation, including teacher recruitment, retention, and certification policy.

- Descriptions of exemplary practices in schools that have implemented teaming, professional learning communities, and other structures to support teacher learning and development.

Submit by July 1, 2012

If you are submitting a manuscript for a themed issue, please specify the theme in your cover letter. As you prepare your manuscript, please consult our Editorial Policy & Guidelines for Authors located at: <http://www.amle.org/MSJguidelines>
Address inquiries to David Virtue, Editor at msjeditor1@gmail.com
All manuscripts must be submitted online at
<http://www.editorialmanager.com/msj>

A challenge. For the summer, I challenge each of us to find someone who has the same interest to engage in dialogue and promote middle level education in your community and in our specialty areas. If you are willing to do this, let me know who you are working with and what you are up to. If you are not working with someone but have an idea let me know and I will see what I can find for you!

- I will share that Deborah McMurtrie, Bridget Coleman, Gary Senn, and I are working on an “impact of service learning” piece.
- NC professors Tracy Smith, Dave Strahan and Kathy Roney are working with classroom teachers and other professors to publish exemplary interdisciplinary units.
- Penny Howell (Louisville University),-Chris Cook and Shawn Falkner (Northern Kentucky), and Penny Bishop (University of Vermont) are working on a principals study.

Good luck with all those final papers and exams!

Sincerely,

Nancy