



March 2012 Newsletter

Happy Spring. I hope your semester is beginning to wind down. Daffodils, tulips, forsythia, and crocuses are edging my yard. I hear it is snowing in Oregon this week. I heard from our colleagues in the middle of the country who were spared from the tornadoes that shattered lives near them this past month.

Last month the AMLE leaders asked for input regarding a middle level symposium attached to the AMLE conference similar to what we had a year ago. Thank you for your feedback. It appears people are interested in having a symposium. There were mixed reports as to whether the symposium should be on Wednesday or Saturday (the results were even). In talking with the leaders at AMLE, it appears they will begin planning for a middle level professors symposium for the Minneapolis conference (in 2013). We are very pleased AMLE has asked for our input and I assured them we would be willing to help plan it. Ashley Smith, South Region Representative, shared that we will have an update from AMLE in April. We look forward to hearing more.

I have three pieces of information and one piece of encouragement. First is a reminder from Al Seed about the May Symposium. Second, professors at Georgia College and State University unveiled the first in a series of publications that communicate middle level activities across the nation. Third, professors gathered at the ATE conference in February and will gather at the AERA conference in April. In March at least five states held professor group meetings in the past month. Some of the projects include considering creating a state middle school journal, sponsoring summer symposia, holding monthly conference calls to share information and updates, creating web pages for professors and CMLA groups. Fourth, I am here to encourage you to publish the good works you are doing!!

Part I: Meet Us in Memphis



The 2012 Professors of Middle Level Education Symposium is fast approaching. This year's event will be in Memphis, TN on May 14-16 hosted at **For the Kingdom Retreat and Conference Center**. The wooded site is perfect for reconnecting, recharging, relaxing, refreshing, and renewing. The format for this symposium is more relaxed than the typical events held in the past. The symposium will allow us the opportunity to continue and expand the work begun at the 2011 Legacy Symposium as well as plan for the future.

Presentations on best practice, writing and publishing, program development, article and book talks, among other experiences will engage and inform you. Tours of Memphis and musicians will entertain you. Make your plans now to meet us in Memphis! Contact aseed@memphis.edu for more information.

Part II: The Endeavor.



Georgia College professors are thrilled to share *The Endeavor* with attendees of the May Symposium as well as all members of NaPOMLE. We hope its regular appearance continues the conversations started ten months ago, and we seek to use it to build even further some of the enthusiasm stoked here on our campus. As so many top-down educational mandates divide the profession and communities, resulting in a focus away from rich inquiry-based discovery in favor of simple recall and singular emphasis on teaching over learning, we hope to see this publication instead unite us in the progressive pedagogies that we know embrace and nurture whole adolescents. If you are interested in participating in this experience, send information to John.Lounsbury@gcsu.edu. Twelve NaPOMLE members contributed to this publication including: Dan Bauer, GCSU; Susan Breck, ILSTU; Mickey Caskey, PDX; Gail Ingwolson, UND; Nancy Mizelle, GCSU; Joanne Previts, Al Seed, University of Memphis; GCSU; Tracy Smith, ASU; Dave Strahan, WCU; Chyrese Wolfe, CSU; and Bob Ziegenfuss, Shippensburg and me. There is a petition at www.ascd.org/signforwholechild relating to ASCD's petition to "make whole child education a national priority through the creation of a President's Council on the Whole Child." If you would like an electronic version of *The Endeavor* you may download it from www.gcsu.edu/education/index.htm Congratulations faculty members from GCSU and thank you NaPOMLE members for your contributions to this exciting publication.

Part III: NaPOMLE at ATE, AERA, and in State POMLEs

Association of Teacher Educators (ATE). The Middle Level SIG is the Chair of the ATE middle level SIG. At their session, Dave Strahan and Bob Houghton presented a session on teaming at the ATE conference.

American Educational Research Association (AERA). AERA Middle Level SIG leadership includes Penny Bishop, chair, Chris Cook, vice-chair, Shawn Faulkner, treasurer, and Micki Caskey, past chair. For those attending the AERA conference in Vancouver British Columbia, the AERA Middle Level SIG meeting is being held at 12:25 on Sunday afternoon in the Marriott Pinnacle Room Shaughnessy I. Four of our members are presenting research on middle level education

topics. They are Penny Howell, Chris Cook, and Shawn Faulconer sharing research on Middle School Principals' perceptions of effective middle-level teaching practices and preparation. John Niska is presenting on the impact of professional development for advisory. In addition Chris and Shawn are sharing research on the Common Planning Time project.

TEXAS. Congratulations to our Newest POMLE group: Professors of Middle Level Education in Texas (POMLET). Middle level professors from several universities in Texas met together at the Texas Middle School Association Conference in Galveston on March 2nd and officially formed a state affiliate of NaPOMLE, POMLET. Bylaws were approved, and the first group of officers and directors were elected. They are as follows:

Dr. Michelle Williams, Stephen F. Austin State University, President
Dr. Claudia Whitley, Stephen F. Austin State University, President, Elect
Dr. Lisa McNair, Texas A & M, Corpus Christi, Secretary
Dr. Laura Allen, Trinity University, Treasurer
Ms. Margaret Hale, University of Houston, Director
Dr. Bill Edgington, Sam Houston State University, Director

The group is currently recruiting new members and drafting a request for proposals for a state journal. For more information, contact Michelle Williams at williamsdm@sfasu.edu.

PENNSYLVANIA. Herb Steffy, current president of the Pennsylvania Professors of Middle Level Education, shared news from the **PaPOMLE** meeting in March. Their program featured input and information about two Schools To Watch (STW) middle schools in Pennsylvania describing how the STW process impacted their school.

Two main points came through clearly from both groups.

1. STW is a process that leads to school improvement no matter where the school is located, what the demographics of the student population are, and not matter the grade configuration of the building.
2. STW is effective because it allows the entire school to begin identifying what is happening at the school using the same vocabulary. This helps focus the entire school on the same issues, greatly enhancing the effectiveness of school improvement measures.

PaPOMLE will meet again at the all-day Spring Conference in May. We want this to be a time of informal professional discussion that should benefit all attendees. There will be a formal invitation for this meeting and an RSVP process in mid-April. But please put May 14 on your calendar now. New officers will be elected at the May 14 meeting at their POMLE spring Conference. The PaPOMLE members are looking to host a spring symposium in either 2013 or 2014. More to come on that.

SOUTH CAROLINA. South Carolina Professors of Middle Level Education. hold monthly telephone conference calls. They started doing this about two years ago. The phone conference is kept to one hour and people get updates from the Department of Education or Commission

on Higher Education, and they share activities in their respective institutions. Earlier this month, 27 members met in Myrtle Beach prior to the SCMSA Conference. They talked about Common Core and Literacy, and received updates from NaPOMLE, the State Department, Centers for Excellence, the Middle Level Teacher Education Initiative, the Reading Panel Recommendations, and received an AMLE teacher accreditation update. Ken McEwin shared news about the Center for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) conference, the new AMLE teacher preparation standards. He also shared information about *The Legacy Project*.

TENNESSEE. Tennessee Professors of Middle Level Education are gearing up for the spring symposium in May. Ashley Smith shared that professors have provided proposals for the symposium. In addition, Al Seed, Conference Coordinator, has created an update of what to expect. They held a meeting during the Tennessee Professors Meeting. Please see the attached flyer. For more information contact Al Seed at aseed@memphis.edu.

NORTH CAROLINA. North Carolina Professors of Middle Level Education held a luncheon meeting during the NCMSA conference. At the statewide annual NCMSA conference in Greensboro in March, 2012, members provided a strand of sessions focused on Common Core and Essential Standards, middle school leadership, research and best practices and a showcase of projects completed by pre-service teachers at five affiliated universities. Efforts are underway to design web pages for NCPOMLE and CMLA. Through online sites we will disseminate information and manage membership. Those pages will be accessed through the NCMSA website where we also have links to our refereed journal and e-monographs. Professors are teaming up with the state organization to support the Schools to Watch program and our middle level advocacy initiatives and to revise the goals and structure of the organization in a way that serves twenty-first century goals for the preparation of effective educators of young adolescents.

Part IV Submit your research and articles!

Along with spring cleaning, consider submitting proposals. There are many places to publish your work. We are hoping to increase awareness of middle level education by encouraging colleagues to publish research and articles in content area journals as well as in our own middle school journals. Middle level educators need to hear of the good works happening in our areas. The following are a few places to publish.

Current Issues in Middle Level Education www.napomle.org

The National Middle School Journal

<http://www.amle.org/Publications/MiddleSchoolJournal/tabid/435/Default.aspx>

Middle Ground <http://www.amle.org/Publications/MiddleGround/tabid/437/Default.aspx>

North Carolina Middle School Journal can be viewed at <http://www.ncmsa.net/journal/>

South Carolina Middle School Journal <http://www.scmsa.org/> (to publications to journal)

Tennessee Middle School Association Journal can be viewed at

<http://www.tams.net/page2/index.html>

John.Lounsbury@gcsu.edu is looking for research summaries and “happenings” about middle level education for the next issue of *The Endeavor*

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Looking Ahead:

If there are job postings in your area, please let me know. I will get them uploaded to our website. Also, those attending the AERA conference in Vancouver British Columbia, the AERA Middle Level SIG meeting is being held at 12:25 on Sunday afternoon in the Marriott Pinnacle Room Shaughnessy I

Congratulations to Kim Ruebel. She has accepted a position at Western Carolina University as the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the College of Education and Allied Professions.

Take care,

Nancy