



## December 2011 Newsletter

Dear Colleagues,

As you finish assessing those papers and turning in grades, it is time to pack up this semester and begin to set your sights on 2012. There are opportunities awaiting each of us. My hope for you is that 2012 is a year of creativity and inspiration. I have three topics to help you plan next year: recognitions, updates, and resources. If you have been recognized for your leadership as middle level colleagues, have job openings, and or want to share other resources with the group, contact me.

### **Part I: NaPOMLE Recognitions**



Congratulations Micki Caskey of Portland State University who was selected as the William Alexander Memorial Lecturer at AMLE. Her talk was inspirational and speaks to our focus on collaboration and commitment. Here is the overview.

### **Important Work Ahead: Sustaining Our Vision and Momentum**

Most middle grades educators—teachers, counselors, principals, and other school personnel—work tirelessly to support the educational needs of young adolescents in their schools. These educators are well positioned to know and respond to the unique learning needs of students in their classrooms and schools. However, in recent times, many educators feel "caught in the middle" between the increasing demands of accountability measures and their central mission of providing academically-rich and appropriate learning experiences for all learners. These educators express frustrations and concerns about reductions in programs and practices that support young adolescents yet feel disempowered to effect positive change. Because this tension warrants attention, it is time to examine proactive approaches for educators to (a) tap their own professional knowledge; (b) invite multiple perspectives; and (c) advance a shared, context-specific vision of middle grades education. Together teachers, principals, parents, and other stakeholders can

engage in the important work to sustain vision and momentum in middle grades education. To get started, this critical work requires:

- Looking back, acknowledging current issues, and envisioning the future.
- Examining, embracing, and retaining innovations that work.
- Seeking and listening to multiple voices to reach shared goals.
- Exchanging ideas and sharing publicly what works in middle grades classrooms and schools.



Congratulations to Doyin Coker-Kolo, at Millersville University in Pennsylvania. She was elected as an East Region representative on the AMLE Board of Trustees. She is currently highlighted on the AMLE website. Doyin's willingness to serve provides the Board of Trustees with our voice. In addition, she along with Ashley Smith of Lee University in Tennessee (the South Region representative) provide insight into decisions that are being made. Both Doyin and Ashley are ensuring middle level professors are supporting the growth of AMLE. If you are interested in serving on the Board of Trustees, consider reading Doyin's testimony and advice at <http://www.amle.org/AboutAMLE/BoardofTrustees/AMLEElections/tabid/425/Default.aspx>. The call for nominations deadline is January 28, 2012 and can be found at <http://www.amle.org/AboutNMSA/BoardofTrustees/FirstSixMonths/tabid/2363/Default.aspx>



Dan Bauer, Georgia College and State University has been given a sabbatical to research a book called *Georgia's Own Booker T. Washington: Linton Stephens Ingraham's Visionary Push for Rural Black Education in the Segregated South*. His life in Hancock County (the next county east of Baldwin County, which contains Milledgeville) ran a very close parallel with Booker T. Washington's, except that Booker T. became very famous and Ingraham did not. But Ingraham's school which was basically one of hundreds of "franchise" models of Tuskegee. And not unlike Booker T., his most famous "disciple," Jean Toomer (parallel to George Washington Carver at Tuskegee) had huge fame, (except instead of his work in science he became one of the most important Harlem Renaissance writers).

## **Part II: Updates**

Milledgeville. In November we agreed to focus on several goals for NaPOMLE. One of those goals is to disseminate middle level research and best practice to a variety of groups. This past week I sat down with John Lounsbury, Nancy Mizelle, Dan Bauer, and Joann Previts to talk about the Milledgeville Symposium. It looks like the first "white paper" will be forth coming and addresses the notion of appropriate leadership in schools.

We have heard from Will Waidelich, Executive Director of AMLE, who is interested in sharing our thoughts with the AMLE Professional Preparation Advisory Committee about this topic. To that end if any of you have conducted research directly related to principal leadership we would love to gather articles you have published to share with our members, with the Symposium participants, and with the Professional Preparation Advisory Committee in January. If you are interested in sharing information contact [me](#).

Memphis. Our next symposium will be outside Memphis. As you begin to plan your next semester travels, don't forget the Memphis Symposium which will take place May 14-16. The committee is accepting proposals until March 1. See the attachment to this email.

New State POMLE Groups. Molly Mee and Heather Haverback are hoping to start a Maryland POMLE group. Professors in Texas are also starting their own group. Our bylaws state the following: A potential state affiliate shall:- have bylaws with provisions that parallel those of the National Association of Professors of Middle Level Education, and- meet the additional approval criteria of having elected officers, having a representative board, having regularly scheduled meetings, having yearly goals, submitting an annual report to the Association, which indicates continued compliance with approval criteria. We look forward to working with you.

## **Part III: Resources**

Finally, as you begin planning next semester's coursework consider using current and archived articles of *Current Issues in Middle Level Education* found on the

NaPOMLE website. [http://www.napomle.org/current\\_issue.html](http://www.napomle.org/current_issue.html). The most recent version of *Current Issues in Middle Level Education* is now available and features articles on using math manipulatives, how a middle school in Tennessee is forging towards implementing middle school concepts in an era of high-stakes testing, and an assessment model for preservice teachers. The next deadline is May 15, 2012 for the fall issue.

Two organizations have a Middle Level Specialty Interest Group you may be interested in joining. These organizations offer additional opportunities to share resources and collaborate with colleagues across the nation. The first is the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE). The ATE Middle Level SIG information can be found at <http://mseds.ate1.org/>

Second, the American Educational Research Association (AERA) has a middle level SIG. We are fortunate to have active leaders in both of these groups and invite you to submit research to their journals as well. The AERA Middle Level SIG website can be seen at <http://www.rmle.pdx.edu/>.

In addition to specialty interest groups, the National Association of Secondary School Principals has a section on their website devoted specifically to Middle Level Leadership. The link is <http://www.principals.org/resources-for/middle-level-leadership>. On this website are articles and survey tools to evaluate middle schools.

Another resource is a place for pre-service teachers and in-service teachers to blog. Kareen, Teaching Ambassador Fellow, located in Washington state, and Geneviève of Washington D.C. Teaching Ambassador Fellow, have written a blog based on the roundtables they have been conducting with middle level educators over the last few months (including roundtables held with STW after the October Forum Convening and at the AMLE conference). They asked me to share the website with you and invite you in-turn to share it with your networks and people. As middle grades teachers they are trying to increase the presence and awareness of middle grades so the more hits and comments it gets the better. This endeavor could be associated with Goal 1 to disseminate information to many constituents. You can view the blog highlights here <http://www.ed.gov/blog/2011/11/middle-grades-matter/>.

Have a wonderful break. I hope you can take a few days for your own renewal.

Peace,

Nancy Ruppert, President  
National Association of Professors of Middle Level Education