

IN Transition

Journal of the New York State Middle School Association

Revised Essential Elements

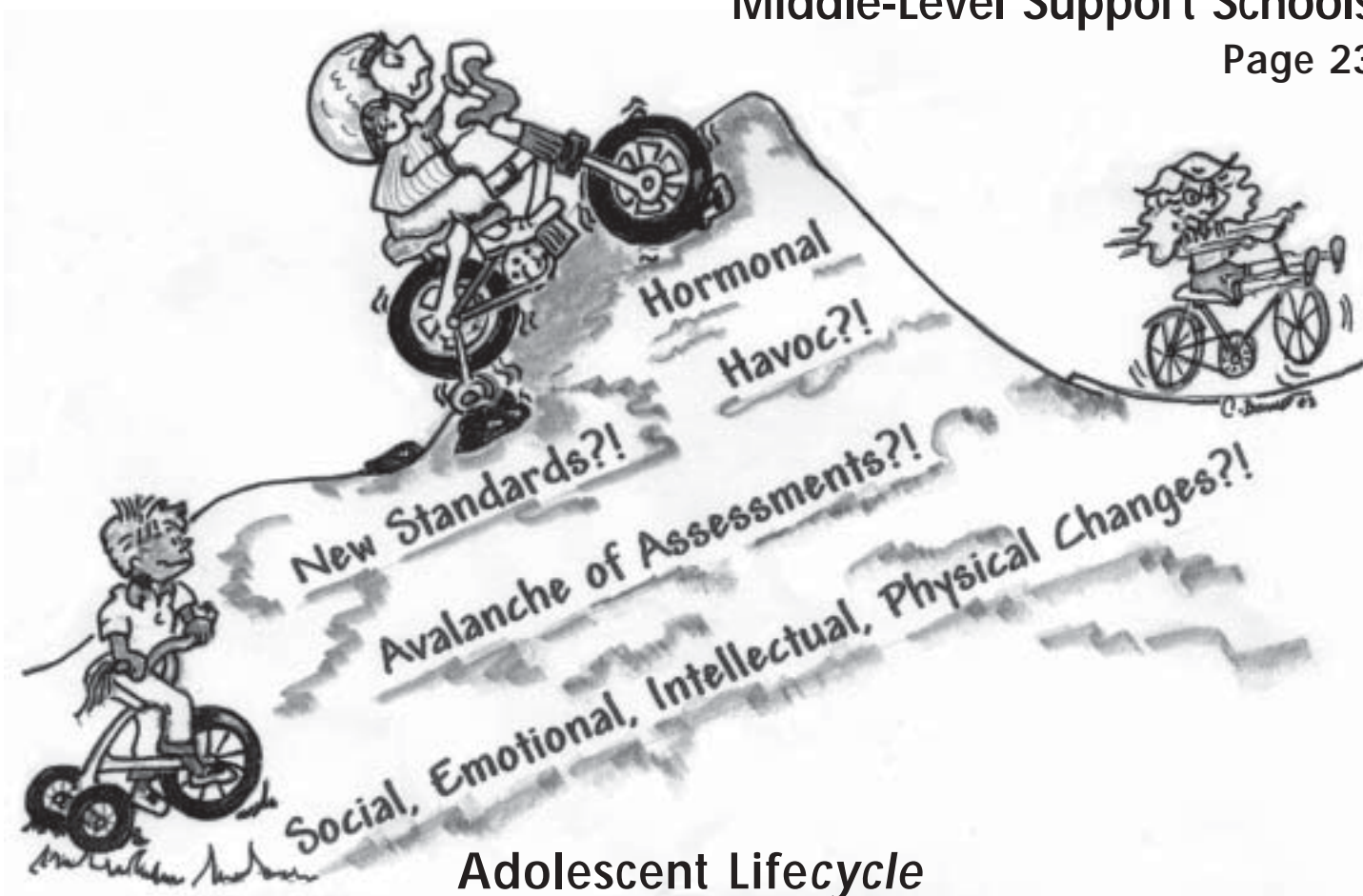
Page 5

Home and Career Skills

Page 15

Middle-Level Support Schools

Page 23



Adolescent Lifecycle

NYSMSA GOALS

The New York State Middle School Association (NYSMSA), representing the interests of those who serve the educational needs of young adolescents, recognized the uniqueness of middle-level students. NYSMSA is committed to helping to create and support educational programs in which all young adolescents can develop their natural capabilities to their fullest extent, building upon personal strengths and the richness of our state's culturally diverse population. The Association encourages both middle-level educators and community stakeholders to work collaboratively to meet the needs of emerging adolescents in developmentally-appropriate programs founded in academic rigor, but dealing with the intellectual, physical, emotional, and social needs of students of this age.

NYSMSA's goals are listed below. Taking into consideration current research and available resources, these goals will assist the Association in fostering the creation of new curricula in support of the NYS learning standards and, in general, supporting the improvement of instruction for middle-level students in New York State.

AWARENESS AND RESPONSIVENESS

NYSMSA believes that we must:

- Promote a climate of acceptance and understanding of young adolescents;
- Stimulate and promote the development of the middle level as a distinct educational structure for young adolescents;
- Promote middle-level education and be a significant advocate for the appropriate education of young adolescents;
- Offer a variety of professional development activities that positively impact the attitudes, performances, and practices of middle-level educators.
- Compile, maintain, and respond to current research and development initiatives.

SUPPORT

NYSMSA believes that we must:

- Be a significant source of information and resources on young adolescents and their schooling;
- Offer consultant support to schools and districts in refining and strengthening their middle-level programs;
- Provide a variety of resources (video, publication, teleconferences, position papers, etc.) in support of appropriate programs for young adolescents;
- Seek, secure, and provide grants and other financial resources to support planing and implementation of effective middle-level practices;
- Provide, throughout the year, member services to public and non-public urban, suburban, and rural schools;
- Engage regional directors who provide, assist, and support regional and state activities;
- Support the ongoing importance of communication and interaction between State Education Department personnel and members of the Association.

CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, & ASSESSMENT

NYSMSA believes that we must:

- Influence the quality and content of pre-service and in-service education for prospective and practicing middle-level educators;
- Support teachers, schools, and districts in refining and strengthening their middle-level programs;
- Work with constituent groups to identify effective models for curricular, instructional, and assessment issues;
- Disseminate position papers that provide guidance on appropriate curricula, instruction, and assessment issues;
- Monitor the implementation of the NYS learning standards at the intermediate level, promoting programs with strong academic rigor within the framework of good middle-level practice;
- Monitor the intermediate assessment results, seeking to ensure the results measure good middle-level practice and are developmentally appropriate in scope, content, and administration.

COLLABORATION

NYSMSA believes that we must:

- Work with other associations in sponsoring professional development activities;
- Implement a collaborative relationship with universities, departments of higher education, SED, SMSA, parent-teacher organizations, and other groups that impact on the lives of young adolescents;
- Develop and expand cooperative ventures and relationships with corporations and businesses;
- Create networks of educators, parents, and others involved in the lives of young adolescents;
- Serve on the boards of supportive organizations;
- Engage in continuous planning through participation and shared decision-making;
- Provide for internal assessment of all major Association functions with provisions for external audit where appropriate.

Feature Articles

- 5** Essential Elements of Standards-Focused Middle-Level Schools and Programs (Revised 2003)
- 13** The Stages of Bicycle Riding and Education: A Parallel
by Jeannette Stern, Ed.D.
- 15** Home and Career Skills Classes: Where “The Assessed Four” Are Put to the Test
by Ellen Carr
- 18** Middle-Level Educators Speak Out: The Op Ed Page
- 23** The Statewide Network of Middle-Level Education Support Schools
by David Payton, Ph.D.
- 27** Nuts and Bolts of an Integrative Curriculum
by Monica Kwiatkowski

In Every Issue

- 2 A few thoughts from the President...
- 4 Submission of Articles
- 20 Lea’s Lessons
- 30 The Executive Director’s Wrap-up

On The Cover

Adolescent Lifecycle — original artwork by Dr. Carl Bonuso, Superintendent, Wantagh Public Schools, and Mrs. Cristina Bonuso, teacher.



A few thoughts from the President...

Jeannette Stern, Ed.D.



Student learning is the ultimate goal for every middle-level program. As middle schools diligently work to increase the achievement of all students, research and best practice

make some very clear suggestions for what middle schools should be doing. Research tells us about effective instructional strategies, appropriate assessment application, and suggests the best approaches to positive youth development. Research and best practice also strongly conclude that the most effective programs for students include a deliberate, vibrant integration of the arts, exploration, and healthful life choices.

With the increased importance given to the Intermediate Assessments with results posted in local newspapers and state and local websites, many districts are concentrating on the “core academics” and slowly but surely cutting back on the exploratory or “non-assessed” courses. The thought here is that “more is better.” If more included different instructional techniques to meet multiple intelligences or different strategies that catch the interest of the reluctant learner, then this method of trying to improve scores would meet with success. Are we losing sight of the intrinsic value of the exploratory courses that were so readily apparent before the current “test value” thrust of curricula decision-making? What might we lose in the long run?

According to *The Modern Junior High School* by Gruhn and Douglass, published in 1947, it was determined even at that time that exploratory courses (here used to include art, music, family and consumer science, technology, foreign language, physical education and health) had been considered to be part of the curriculum for the 10-14 year-old. Part of the impetus for this type of instruction at that time was to identify a student’s aptitudes and abilities in terms of future study in high school where students were asked to make choices in terms of vocational or college-preparatory programs upon entering ninth grade.

Even though this early need for identification of specific work-related skills for future educational choices and employment is no longer as necessary as it might have been over fifty years ago, many educational organizations have identified these courses as a critical part of any middle-level program. The National Middle School Association publication, *This We Believe*, identifies three distinct purposes for exploratory courses. Since, in these courses, students have the opportunity to participate and discover abilities, interests, and talents that they might not ordinarily be able to identify without this exposure, NMSA believes that these experiences might well lead students to future job opportunities, avenues for hobbies and leisure activities, or participation in activities and organizations that have a positive impact on society.

Furthermore, in its research summary on the components of an exemplary program, NMSA professes that such a program contains an exploratory program that will “capitalize on the innate curiosity of young adolescents, exposing

them to a range of academic, vocational, and recreational subjects for career options, community service, enrichment, and enjoyment.”

Turning Points 2000 notes that the activities in exploratory courses pique student interest and provide impetus for consistent attendance and engagement. The different learning opportunities frequently associated with these courses often appeal to diverse learning styles and enable students to achieve success where they had not experienced so previously.

Clark and Clark, in *Restructuring the Middle Level School: Implications for School Leaders*, state that exploratory courses are essential to the curriculum at the middle level because they provide students with opportunities to learn about their talents, interests, and abilities. In addition, the authors contend, the focus of the exploratory as well as the core curriculum is to provide opportunities for every student in the school to excel and be successful. They also explain that exploratory opportunities allow students to apply many of the skills and learning from other courses in active, hands-on activities.

On the state level, curricula that form the basis of exploratory courses have long been identified as being a critical part of a sound program for educating the 10-14 year-old. In the original *Regents Policy Statement on Middle-Level Education and Schools with Middle-Level Grades* (1989) and again in the new statement of 2003, common requisites emerge that identify characteristics of a successful middle-level program: the instruction in knowledge and skills for success in middle school, high school, and in life; a program that encourages students to pursue personal interests, explore future career possibilities, and gather the skills needed to live a full and productive life; the opportunities to have students develop an appreciation for the arts; the need for students to develop positive health concepts and participate in healthful physical activities; and acquisition of the skills

needed to explore new subject areas. Indeed, as one looks at the different core curricula for the exploratories, each of these items specifically identified in the policy statement are included.

Students between the ages of 10-14 are at a critical time in their lives. In order to develop the skills needed for success in school and in later life, they need a myriad of experiences under the careful supervision of trained educators. Students need to have the opportunity to experiment with information and activities that they might not ever be exposed to during what has always been called their “academic” program, and for some, these “exploratory experiences” will form the basis of future employment

the activities in exploratory courses pique student interest

and happiness. In our NYSMSA publication, *Ten Years Later*, available on our web site, we explained that the charge given to educators today extends well beyond what is generally referred to as academic instruction. Our middle-level schools are required to develop in students the ability to work cooperatively with others, to understand the real world connections that lead to a successful life as a contributing adult, and to make socially appropriate decisions. Many would argue that these “non-academic” objectives carry more importance than the achievement of excellence in what we commonly refer to as the academic areas.

A strong middle-level exploratory program opens the world of physical and mental opportunities to all students, not just for those who seem to have an affinity or interest at that time. In addition, having the schools provide this instruction ensures that all students - not just those whose parents have the time, make the effort, or value the inclination - gain access to the arts. Once students are older and need to specialize, the time in the school day is no longer available. Therefore, exposure to art, music, family and consumer science, technology education, physical education, and health forms

the basis of life experiences as part of a profession, home life, or hobby, and must continue to be part of a comprehensive middle-level program. Not only are these subjects important for what they specifically bring to the educational experience for each child, they also provide the hands-on opportunities to put skills learned in

the core areas into practice. For these reasons, exploratory courses are essential for success, both in the assessments that the state seems to feel are critical; and for life, professions, happiness, and leisure, which is really why we educate students in the first place.

Submission of Articles

In Transition is now accepting manuscripts for publication consideration. Our journal is produced by the New York State Middle School Association and is dedicated to those teachers, counselors, administrators, parents, and others serving the needs of students aged 10-15. *In Transition* is a juried publication; all manuscripts are reviewed and approved for publication by a panel of members from the NYSMSA Board of Directors.

Manuscripts describing successful programs, stimulating projects, exemplary teaching techniques, unique team concepts, action research, and promising practices are welcome! We are particularly interested in articles on implementing the new Standards, teaming, interdisciplinary instruction, authentic assessment, flexible scheduling, integrating technology into instructional programs, and application of the *Essential Elements*.

Please note the changes in the following format guidelines:

- LENGTH: 400-2,000 words (two to eight pages)
- FORMAT: MS Word or compatible, double space, Times New Roman 12, 1-inch margins. Citations of referenced works should follow current MLA or APA standards.
- ILLUSTRATIONS: All illustrations, tables, charts, photographs, etc. must be high quality, black and white or grayscale. Photographs must be in JPEG format and include captions identifying subjects, activity, and source or photographer. All illustrations become the property of NYSMSA.
- COVER PAGE: Each article submitted must include a cover page with the following information: Title, Author, Position, School OR Home Address (please indicate which), Telephone Number/s, E-Mail Address, AND a brief synopsis of the content of the manuscript.
- SUBMIT TO: All documents must be submitted as e-mail attachments to:
editor@nysmsa.org
Please note: Only e-mail submissions will be considered; do not send fax or paper copies of manuscripts.
- DEADLINES: Manuscripts must be received by August 30 for the fall issue, December 30 for the winter issue, March 30 for the spring issue.

In July 2003, the Board of Regents unanimously adopted a new *Regents Policy Statement on Middle-Level Education*. The State Education Department then — with the help of the New York State Middle School Association, the Statewide Network of Middle-Level Education Liaisons, and the New York City Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform — revised the *Essential Elements of Standards-Focused Middle-Level Schools and Programs* to align fully with the new Regents Policy Statement. Following is the revised 2003 *Essential Elements* document. If you wish to compare it to the original, visit the NYSMSA website (www.nysmsa.org). The 2003 *Essential Elements* is followed by a bridge document that notes all additions, deletions, and changes to the original.

Essential Elements of Standards-Focused Middle-Level Schools and Programs

(Revised 2003)

developed by:

The New York State Education Department's
Middle-Level Education Program
in collaboration with

The New York State Middle School Association
The Statewide Network of Middle-Level Education Liaisons
The New York City Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform

The standards-focused middle level school or program is purposeful. It has two basic goals: **the intellectual development and academic achievement of all students**, and **the personal and social development of each student**.

In a standards-focused middle-level school or program these two goals are not in conflict or competition; rather, they are compatible, complementary, mutually supportive, and inextricably linked.

The seven essential elements of standards-focused middle-level school programs are:

- A philosophy and mission that reflect the intellectual and developmental needs and characteristics of young adolescents (youth 10-14 years of age).
- An educational program that is comprehensive, challenging, purposeful, integrated, relevant, and standards-based.
- An organization and structure that support both academic excellence and personal development.
- Classroom instruction appropriate to the needs and characteristics of young adolescents provided by skilled and knowledgeable teachers.
- Strong educational leadership and a building administration that encourage, facilitate, and sustain involvement, participation, and partnerships.
- A network of academic and personal support available for all students.
- Professional learning and staff development for all staff that are ongoing, planned, purposeful, and collaboratively developed.

Essential Element 1: Philosophy and Mission

A philosophy and mission that reflect the intellectual and developmental needs and characteristics of young adolescents (youth 10-14 years of age)

Every young adolescent deserves a school that values academic achievement and personal development and provides a supportive environment.

The middle-level educational program has a purpose beyond linking the elementary grades and the high school. Its basic aims are to educate and nurture. It has a culture of collective and shared responsibility. To be successful, it must attend to both the intellectual development and the personal needs of young adolescents. The philosophy and mission of a standards-focused middle-level school or program must reflect a set of shared beliefs.

The school and staff within the school must commit to:

- Developing the whole child, intellectually and academically, personally and socially, physically, emotionally, and ethically.
- Working together to ensure that all students achieve at high levels and, with appropriate guidance and structure, develop independence and responsibility.
- Accepting — individually and collectively — responsibility for the educational and personal development of each and every student.
- Ensuring for each student a safe, inviting, trusting, and mutually-respectful learning environment that offers both physical and psychological safety.
- Connecting each young adolescent in positive ways with the school and with caring adults within the school.
- Providing each student with a variety of learning experiences that are academically challenging, developmentally appropriate, and personally relevant in order for each of them to make informed educational and personal decisions.
- Providing a successful transition from the elementary grades to the middle grades to the high school grades and from childhood to adolescence.
- Establishing partnerships with the home and the community.

Essential Element 2: Educational Program

An educational program that is comprehensive, challenging, purposeful, integrated, relevant, and standards-based

Every young adolescent needs a challenging, standards-based course of study that is comprehensive, integrated, and relevant.

A standards-focused middle-level educational program:

- Emphasizes not only intellectual development but also personal, social, physical, and ethical development.
- Is challenging, rigorous, and purposeful.
- Is comprehensive and inclusive, embracing and encompassing all of the State's 28 learning standards.
- Reflects interdependence, emphasizes cross-program connections, and promotes shared responsibility.

- Is articulated vertically and horizontally, within and across the various curricular areas, learning standards, and grade levels.
- Has a set of learning skills (e.g., how to study, how to conduct research, how to read for understanding, how to take notes, etc.) that are common across all grades and subject areas and taught and reinforced in each grade and subject area.
- Emphasizes reading, writing, and mathematics (literacy and numeracy) across the subject areas with expectations for performance that are consistent across and within the disciplines and commonly understood by teachers, students, and parents.
- Has performance expectations that are common across all grades and subject areas (e.g., students must write in complete sentences).
- Is articulated with the elementary feeder schools and with the secondary receiving schools, building on the foundational knowledge and skills of the elementary grades and, in doing so, preparing students for success in high school.
- Has up-to-date written curricula (that are based on and aligned with the State’s learning standards), instructional support, and learning aids for all subject areas.
- Includes diagnostic assessments (similar in design to the State’s assessments) that regularly and routinely monitor the learning of each student relative to the State’s standards and community expectations.
- Offers opportunities for the development of personal responsibility and self direction.
- Encourages students to pursue personal interests, engage in school and community activities (e.g., sports, clubs, etc.), explore potential futures and careers, develop useful social, interpersonal, and life skills needed to live a full and productive life, and nurture a “love of learning.”
- Provides targeted and timely academic intervention services that are based upon a careful assessment of the academic, social, and emotional needs of students at risk of not meeting the State’s learning standards.
- Engages and involves the family, local community, and the world outside school in the education and personal development of young adolescents.

Essential Element 3: Organization and Structure

An organization and structure that support both academic excellence and personal development

Young adolescents learn and develop best in a school that is organized and structured to promote academic achievement and personal development.

Standards-focused schools with middle-level grades are organized to promote academic excellence and personal development, to establish within staff and students a feeling of belonging and a sense of personal identification with the school and its purposes, and to help young adolescents make a successful transition from the elementary grades to the high school grades and from childhood to adolescence.

A standards-focused school that enrolls young adolescents should:

- Have teacher teams sharing responsibility for the education and personal development of a common group of students.
- Have common planning time for those teachers and teacher teams sharing responsibility for a common group of students.

- Have schedules with flexible time assignments within blocks of time to encourage interdisciplinary programs and the creative use of time.
- Contain at least three of the four middle grades (the four middle grades being grades 5, 6, 7, and 8).
- Have comparatively small enrollments so that every student is viewed as an individual and receives personal attention. When the school population is large, have “houses” or schools-within-schools to promote a sense of family, to reduce the feeling of anonymity and isolation among students, and to engender within staff, students, and the community a feeling of belonging and personal identification with the school and with its purposes.
- Be structured to create close, sustained relationships between students and teachers.
- Ensure that all students, staff, parents, and families feel secure, valued and respected as significant contributors to the school community.
- Provide, for those students needing additional help to meet the State’s standards, opportunities for additional time, instruction, and personal support (e.g., after school, before school, summer school, reduced class size, tutoring, pupil personnel services, etc.).
- Provide a variety of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- Provide opportunities for students to participate in youth service, community service and/or service learning activities.
- Encourage active parent involvement through a variety of activities.
- Establish ties with the school community that strengthen connections between school/education and career opportunities.
- Promote and encourage appropriate participation of pupils with disabilities in all curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities.
- Have students with disabilities or other special needs, as well as their programs and services, integrated throughout the school building to ensure access to the same instruction as their peers.
- Provide support services such as guidance, counseling, and health-related services to all students.
- Integrate technology into the educational program so that it supports student learning in a purposeful way.
- Provide a gradual transition from the more self-contained classrooms of the elementary school to the more departmentalized structure of the high school, providing students with opportunities for increasingly independent learning experiences and responsibilities within a safe and structured environment.

Essential Element 4: Classroom Instruction

Classroom instruction appropriate to the needs and characteristics of young adolescents provided by skilled and knowledgeable teachers

Every young adolescent requires skilled and caring teachers who have a thorough understanding of their subject(s) and of the students they teach.

Teachers in middle-level classrooms understand and appreciate the emotional, intellectual, physical, psychological, and social changes that are occurring within their students and recognize the behaviors manifested by these changes. They use instructional techniques and processes that capitalize on the unique developmental characteristics and individual needs of early adolescents.

Successful middle-level teachers in a standards-focused school:

- Are caring and respectful in their interactions with students and with other adults.
- Provide instruction that is standards-based, challenging, rigorous, and purposeful.
- Know and understand the needs and developmental characteristics of young adolescents.
- Have a deep understanding of their subject matter, of different approaches to student learning, and of diverse teaching techniques.
- Know and understand each of the State's 28 learning standards and - when and where appropriate - reinforce them routinely during regular classroom instruction.
- Use a range of successful, research-based teaching strategies that are developmentally and cognitively appropriate, matching instruction to the students' varied learning styles and different intelligences.
- Involve students in their learning, encouraging them to contribute to their learning experiences, to make choices, to explore, to question, to experience, to learn, to grow, to develop social, interpersonal and leadership skills in addition to academic proficiency.
- Vary activities to maintain student interest.
- Use technology and other instructional resources purposefully to support and enhance learning.
- Focus instruction on thinking, reasoning, and problem solving and, at the same time ensure that students acquire necessary content and subject matter.
- Use interdisciplinary approaches to help students integrate their studies and meet learning standards.
- Use flexible grouping based upon student needs and interests to help each student achieve the learning standards, with students changing groups often, depending on individual needs and program purposes.
- Use classroom assessments that reflect the State's learning standards and are aligned with State assessments.
- Use classroom assessments that are instructionally useful indicators of individual student growth and performance not only to monitor each student's progress in meeting the State's learning standards but also to plan instruction.
- Use student data, both personal and achievement, to make curricular and instructional decisions.
- Use cooperative learning groups and peer-tutoring opportunities to develop social and interpersonal skills in addition to academic proficiency.
- Consult with each other and with other school personnel. Teachers with regular education assignments and those assigned to programs for students with special needs work closely together.
- Maintain performance expectations that are consistent and interrelated across and within subject areas.
- Inform and involve parents of middle-level students in their children's education by helping them understand the learning standards their children must meet, the instructional program, their children's progress, and how to help their children at home with schoolwork, school decisions, and successful development through adolescence.
- Are themselves learners who are constantly engaged in professional and intellectual growth activities.

- Recognize that they must work together cooperatively and collaboratively — rather than individually and in isolation — to ensure that all their students achieve at high levels and meet all the State’s learning standards.

Essential Element 5: Educational Leadership

Strong educational leadership and a building administration that encourage, facilitate, and sustain involvement, participation, and partnerships

Every young adolescent should be educated in schools that have knowledgeable, effective, and caring leaders.

Standards-focused middle-level schools and programs need purposeful leadership if they are to develop and prosper.

Those in positions of leadership must:

- Know and understand the needs and developmental characteristics of young adolescents.
- Know and understand the essential elements of a standards-focused, high performing middle-level school or middle-level program.
- Know and understand each of the 28 learning standards and how they interrelate.
- Know and understand the State’s assessment system.
- Have an understanding of the subject matter in the middle grades and its interconnections, of different approaches to student learning, and of diverse teaching strategies.
- Create, promote, and sustain a school culture of mutual support and collective responsibility for the educational and personal development of each and every young adolescent.
- Articulate and maintain high standards for classroom instruction and student performance.
- Have high expectations for students and staff.
- Know a range of successful, research-based teaching techniques that are developmentally and cognitively appropriate, matching instruction to the students’ varied learning styles and different intelligences.
- Involve staff and others in the operation of the school or program, empowering and encouraging them to contribute and to make decisions that benefit students.
- Provide students with opportunities to assume significant and meaningful leadership roles in the school.
- Support and encourage teachers, individually and collectively, to take risks, to explore, to question, to try new instructional approaches, to continue as learners, and to grow.
- Promote and facilitate inter-school cooperation, collaboration, and communication with feeder elementary schools and receiving high schools.
- Inform and involve parents of middle-level students in their children’s education by helping them understand the needs and developmental characteristics of young adolescents, the learning standards their children must meet, the instructional program, their children’ progress, and how to help their children at home with schoolwork, school decisions, and successful development through adolescence.
- Promote school/community partnerships and involve members of the community in school activities and initiatives, empowering and encouraging them to contribute and make decisions that benefit students.

Essential Element 6: A Network of Academic and Personal Support

A network of academic and personal support available for all students

Every young adolescent needs access to a system that supports both academic achievement and personal development.

Middle-level students need academic and personal support as they experience the changes associated with the transition from childhood to adolescence and from elementary school to high school.

Academic and personal support includes:

- Adults and older youths to provide positive role models and constant affirmation and recognition.
- Respect and caring to engender a feeling of self-worth, self-confidence, and personal efficacy.
- Opportunities to examine, explore, discuss, and understand the changes associated with early adolescence.
- Counseling and guidance services to assist students and their families in making life, career, and educational choices.
- A system of two-way communication between the school and the parents and families of its students.
- A process for informing parents, families, and community groups of the essential role they play in ensuring students attend school and access available services, in expanding and enhancing venues for significant learning, in promoting youth development, and in supporting positive school change.
- A network of trained professionals, special programs, and community resources available to assist those who have extraordinary needs and require additional services to cope with the changes of early adolescence and/or the academic demands of middle-level education. Schools need to collaborate and cooperate with other human service agencies in the community.
- An adult mentor in addition to a guidance counselor, either formally through a teacher/student, advisor/advisee program or informally through a school culture of caring in which teachers or other adults assume responsibility for individual students.

Essential Element 7: Professional Learning

Professional learning and staff development for all staff that are ongoing, planned, purposeful, and collaboratively developed

Every young adolescent deserves an educational setting that values continuous improvement and ongoing professional learning.

Teachers, administrators, and other school staff in a standards-focused middle-level school or program need regular, planned opportunities for professional and intellectual growth. Schools with middle-level grades need to be professional learning communities.

Teachers, administrators, and staff need to:

- Know the needs and characteristics of students in the middle grades and the instructional strategies and techniques that work best for these students.
- Understand the philosophy and mission of the standards-driven middle-level school.
- Understand and implement the Regents Policy Statement on Middle-Level Education and the Essential Elements of Standards-Focused Middle-Level Schools and Programs.

- Have high expectations for all students.
- Be familiar with each of the State's 28 learning standards and incorporate in their own classrooms and work spaces educational experiences that help all students achieve all the standards - including those that are outside their own area of content expertise.
- Know and understand their subject matter and course curriculum thoroughly.
- Know and understand the State's assessment system.
- Know and understand how to use data to make curricular and instructional decisions to improve students' academic performance and/or enhance personal development.
- Collaborate and cooperate in planning and providing professional learning opportunities.
- Routinely and systematically monitor and evaluate student learning to assess and improve instructional effectiveness.

Conclusion

The middle grades play a critical role in the educational continuum. Schools with middle-level grades that are standards-focused attend to the twin purposes of academic preparation and individual self-development for all young adolescents. They do this by:

- Accepting collective responsibility for ensuring that all students are successful and learning at high levels.
- Creating small communities for learning and providing comprehensive guidance and support services.
- Providing an academically excellent and developmentally responsive educational experience for every student.
- Establishing and maintaining a climate for learning that is respectful, purposeful, physically and psychologically safe, and personalized to ensure close, sustained relationships between students and teachers.
- Providing a comprehensive educational program that is standards-based — reflecting the State's 28 learning standards — challenging, integrative, and exploratory.
- Using flexible organizational structures and creative use of time.
- Using a variety of research-based, instructional strategies that are cognitively and developmentally appropriate and that respect individual experiences, learning styles, and learning needs.
- Employing knowledgeable and qualified personnel who are committed to the education of young adolescents.
- Creating within the school a vibrant professional learning community.
- Fostering each student's personal development, health, wellness, and safety.
- Engaging families in the education of young adolescents.
- Connecting schools with the larger community.

A high-performing, standards-focused middle-level school or program that successfully addresses both the intellectual and personal needs of young adolescents is profoundly different from many middle-level schools today. To create schools that are true standards-focused, middle-level schools will necessitate systemic change that will not be easy to accomplish. It will require leadership, persistence, additional resources, time, and a strong will to succeed. The task is challenging and daunting. However, it is necessary, and it can be done.

The Stages of Bicycle Riding and Education: A Parallel

Jeannette Stern, Ed.D.



It has been said that education is a journey, not a destination. As in all journeys, some parts are easier, requiring little, if any, exertion and other parts are more difficult, requiring intense concentration and sometimes even some help from others.

Traveling the path of a K-12 education can be compared to bicycle riding. When a child is young, he or she is introduced to a tricycle — a cute, sturdy, balanced, three-wheeler that is close to the ground. While learning how to get onto and sit on the seat and then learning how to pedal and steer properly requires careful thought, coordination, and mastery that takes time and effort to learn, the tricycle was made to encourage success. Most are painted bright colors and have horns, bells, streamers, baskets, and other extras to make the bike appealing and enticing. Most importantly, the tricycle was designed so that it is almost impossible to tip over and rather quickly, most everyone achieves success. So it is with the elementary school structure. Most elementary schools look inviting and exciting whether looking from the inside out or the outside in. Rooms and even windows are brightly decorated. Extensive playgrounds entice students to come and play. Indeed, not only the physical structure, but also the entire program is created to be a safe, nurturing environment where students who are used to learning from their “mommy” and “daddy” in their own homes with constant supervision have that same constant monitoring and support. Students are walked to their classroom, not even allowed in



the hallways without an adult to supervise, and delivered to one teacher who takes on the role of “second parent,” providing each child with the key to reading, writing, art, music, and recess. Don’t for a minute assume that learning at this level is not hard, for it is. It also takes coordination, intense thought, and mastery of information. But, as with the tricycle, there is little chance to “tip over,” for there is a wealth of support at the elementary level. Most students leave their elementary school with all the tools and skills they need to pedal that tricycle wherever it needs to go, without fear of failure.

The second stage of education, that of middle school, is a much more difficult part of the journey, and for many, a critical turning point both in bicycle riding and learning in general. Students come to this level, flushed with the success of their “tricycle experience” of elementary school. They are coordinated, confident, and carefree. They have mastered basic reading, writing, and math skills along with social studies and science concepts. They know the layout of their elementary school and, in the upper elementary grades, have begun to taste the freedom of being able to walk the halls unaccompanied, usually with the responsibility to take information or pick up items from other classrooms or the main office. They are the “lead dogs” at the elementary level and they revel in their power and freedom as they participate in “graduation,” “moving up,” or some other ceremony signifying the end of elementary education and the beginning of that at the middle level.

Just when they may feel that they have all the skills they need for success, along comes puberty and a new middle-school structure, with more teachers, more work, and more challenges. Here the safe, close-to-the-ground tricycle is exchanged for a large two-wheeler with training wheels. In some cases, the two-wheeler with training wheels may still have some of the enticing features of the tricycle — the horn, bell, basket, and bright colors — but, regardless of the extras, this is a larger, more formidable structure. Everyone remembers the trepidation they felt the first time they put their leg over the bar that seemed so high off the ground. And who will not remember the unsteady feeling of trying to put a foot on each pedal, even when the training wheels were all the way down on the ground (giving you a four-wheeler, actually). Add to these new changes the fact that with the onset of puberty comes a lessening of the coordination that one once had, and a recipe for disaster is being formulated. Many children won't even attempt the two-wheeler with training wheels without the strong hand of an adult steadying the bike (and them). Many still won't attempt to ride without this same adult running alongside, hand firmly planted on the back of the seat. No one learns without scraped knees, shins, or sometimes even broken bones. At the middle school, usually a building larger than the elementary one with more rooms and different kinds of rooms, the fear and need for support may well be comparable. The training wheels here are the staff members: teachers and administrators certainly, but also the secretaries who smile when students frantically arrive needing to call home for forgotten assignments and lunch money, custodians who patiently open jammed lockers, the nurse who deals with the stomach-aches and headaches, real and imagined, and lunch aides who try to maintain order in chaos. At any one time during a typical school day, there may be three or four adult hands on the back of that bicycle seat, not including the parents who take over that role once the student returns home.

Eventually, as the student travels through middle school, the hands relax or begin to lessen in the intensity with which they hold on to the seat. Little by little, with the appropriate programs, support, and interaction with talented and caring adults, middle school students begin to lose the “wobbliness” that was present when they entered the middle school. Fear and instability are gradually replaced by confidence and security. They gradually are ready to forge their own path, making choices and taking electives. As the end of the middle-school years approach, everyone, including the students themselves, realizes that the training wheels are almost ready to come off completely. This part of the path has been successfully mastered, albeit with a few scars.

Upon leaving middle school and entering high school, the two-wheeler with training wheels becomes the larger, solo two-wheeler with the rider ready to tackle whatever appears on the road. Distance to the ground is no longer a concern as is any thought of not being able to negotiate difficult terrain. Coordination is at its peak, and sometimes these same students, who felt they could never ride the two-wheeler with training wheels, now try dirt bikes and other types of cycles that require even more dexterity. And they succeed...in large part, because there were adults at each step of the cycle-learning process who provided the skills, knowledge, support, encouragement, and caring that were necessary for success.

We at the middle level play a critical role in helping each student transform from a tricycle rider who learns minimal skills and makes few independent choices, to a two-wheel rider, confident and able to maneuver, whether it be on two wheels or two feet. We are the linchpin for success! Remember that when next you see a group of middle-schoolers wobbling down the hallways.

Jeannette Stern is the principal of Wantagh Middle School, Wantagh, NY and is the president of NYSMSA.

Home and Career Skills Classes: Where “The Assessed Four” Are Put to the Test

Ellen Carr



Proponents of middle-level policy changes seek to revise the current mandates in New York State’s middle schools. Such revisions could affect the future of technology education and home and career skills classes as well as some of the other “exploratory” courses. These changes, if enacted, would afford students extended periods of mathematics, science, language arts and social studies, also known as “The Assessed Four.” In essence, they will provide extended time for some students to remain frustrated and bewildered, wondering: “Why is this important?” and “When will I ever use the information?”

The *Regents Policy Statement on Middle-Level Education*, drafted in July 2003, lists seven essential elements that must be in place in standards-focused schools with middle-level grades, if students are to succeed academically and develop as individuals. The second Essential Element states: “An educational program that is comprehensive, challenging, purposeful, integrated, relevant, and standards-based.” The second Essential Element reads: “A philosophy and mission that reflect the intellectual and developmental needs and characteristics of young adolescents.” Where else, this author asks, but in the middle-level home and career skills curriculum are students afforded the opportunity to experience and benefit from content that is comprehensive, challenging, purposeful, integrated, relevant, and standards based? It is also within the home and career skills classes that the intellectually and developmentally diverse needs of young adolescents can be addressed. Yes, this author is a teacher and an advocate of home and career skills at the middle level.

Ms. Sally Minor, Director of Family and Consumer Sciences at Wantagh Middle School on Long Island, states: “Our mission is to prepare individuals to be competent, confident, and caring in managing their personal, family, and work lives.” This mission and philosophy are accomplished in the classroom by consistently addressing and aligning the New York State learning standards to the curriculum. The information and necessary skills that are presented and practiced in home and career skills classes are, for many students, the tools that will enable them to thrive in an increasingly competitive and technologically advanced society. It is in this practical, exploratory environment that skills and standards from other “assessed” subjects can be linked to real world applications.

Cooperative cooking groups incorporate fundamental aspects of nutrition, food safety, and principles of sanitation by preparing culinary selections that are balanced and nutritionally sound. Mathematics also plays a critical role within the culinary unit. Seventh grade students recently had the opportunity to see, first hand, the role and real-world application of fractions and mathematical operations while preparing pumpkin bread. Following a brief introduction building on their prior knowledge of quick breads, student groups were asked to modify a recipe that yielded 2 loaves of bread. Dividing $3\frac{1}{2}$ c. of flour, $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. of salt, $\frac{2}{3}$ c. water and 3 c. sugar by two, in addition to other ingredients, proved to be thought-provoking and stimulating to students. As one student commented, “So this is why we have to learn fractions,” other students enthusiastically shared their various methods of calculating the new amounts to be used in the recipe. Each student

group was then assigned a number representing the amount of loaves they would convert their recipe to yield for the following day. Each group was held accountable to share with the class its mathematical conversions. They also evaluated the quality of each other's baked products in the areas of appearance, texture, and flavor.

Standards 2 and 3 (World History and Geography) of the social studies curriculum are vital elements of countless lessons in home and career skills classes. As cultural contributions in the areas of food and customs arise, their origins and adaptations to the modern world are highlighted. Students actively share their knowledge and experiences as they relate to the topic.

Home and career skills students understand and apply scientific concepts when they study leavening agents (Standard 4: Science). An acid (molasses in brown sugar) and a base (baking soda) are combined with other ingredients to leaven a baked product. The requisite elements of heat, moisture, and food (needed to activate yeast) are first and foremost in a lesson on pretzels. Students learn that, once activated, the yeast dough ferments, producing carbon dioxide (the gas that raises the dough) and ethyl alcohol. These scientific principles stimulate the young adolescent mind while allowing the child within to play with pretzel dough. Students experience pleasure and success resulting in increased motivation and metacognition.

Machine and hand-constructed sewing projects kinesthetically test and hone a student's fine motor ability. Principles of measurement and spatial relationships are applied in the sewing units. Students of the sixth grade curriculum initially plot their sewing designs on graph paper. Following the completion of an embroidered bookmark, they construct hand-sewn puppets. Students exhibit a great sense of pride and accomplishment following this unit. These fine motor skills are again revisited in the seventh and eighth grades. Standard 1 of English Language Arts (requiring students to listen,

speak, read, and write for information and understanding) is addressed, as students must do more than simply decode directions included in their sewing projects. Students need to strategically read by activating prior knowledge, decide what is important in the text (directions), and sequentially synthesize the information. They attain a greater level of comprehension in visual/spatial relations once they've constructed an attractive pillow or garment. Here again, their pride and sense of accomplishment in their work fuel their intellectual and emotional growth, both of which will lead to their anticipated success in high school.

"Aside from all the aforementioned skills, it is here that students are taught the elements of parenting, getting along as human beings, personality traits, the difference between needs and wants, and other topics that put adolescents on the right path towards becoming productive citizens and humanistic members of society," comments Dr. Jeannette Stern, principal of Wantagh Middle School and president of NYSMSA. "Family and Consumer Science courses, as the title states, teach all students to work together harmoniously, toward becoming knowledgeable consumers of all that society has to offer, and to use a scientific method to learn. Clearly the value of this is beyond question."

It is with great passion that this educator and other supporters of a successful middle-level program would regret to see any middle-level changes that would alter the current mandate for home and career skills, as the Board of Regents discusses and proposes new regulations in April 2004. Students at the middle level are still concrete in their style of learning. They need an environment that will allow them to experience and apply the content from "The Assessed Four." Home and career skills classes fulfill that need.

Ellen Carr
Wantagh Middle School
carre@wantaghschools.org

Start planning now for...

NYSMSA's 24th Annual Conference

"Reaching New Heights in Middle-Level Education"

Lake Placid, New York

October 21, 22 & 23, 2004

Thursday, October 21

- Middle School Visitations
- Pre-Conference Workshops
- Banquet with Keynote Speaker

Friday, October 22

- Complimentary Continental Breakfast
- Trade Exhibit
- Workshops
- General Assembly
- Featured Presentations

Saturday, October 23

- Complimentary Continental Breakfast
- Breakfast with Champions

Go to the NYSMSA website (www.nysmsa.org) now for

[Call for Presenters](#) and [Award Nomination](#) forms.

Registration materials and other details will be
posted as they become available.

E-mail questions to Conference Director Linda Ruest (ruest@nysmsa.org)
or Lake Placid Conference Chair Brian Sherman (sherman@nysmsa.org).



Middle-Level Educators Speak Out: The Op Ed Page

The following is a reaction to an article that appeared in the Albany Times Union on Tuesday, January 13, 2004. Rick Karlin, the staff writer, reported that the new regulations for middle-level education probably would not be approved by the April deadline. According to the article, there does not seem to be consensus on what a middle-level program should contain to ensure student success. Some of the Regents support a proposal emphasizing the “core” subjects, reducing or eliminating the “exploratories,” while another group sees the “exploratories” or enrichment courses (art, music, technology, or home and careers) as the key to student engagement in school and learning and thus critical for success in all subjects.

Since NYSMSA just published its position paper on the role of exploratories in a middle-level program, it seemed reasonable to publish the response to this article by Rob Clark, president of NYSTEA.

It's Not About Jobs — It's About Kids and Technological Literacy

My name is Rob Clark. I am president of the New York State Technology Education Association as well as a Technology Education teacher at Canandaigua Academy, a public high school in the western region of the Finger Lakes. This letter is in response to an article your paper ran on Tuesday, January 13, 2004. The article was written by staff reporter Rick Karlin and titled “Regents Tested in Search for Solutions”.

The article reflected the difficulty the Board of Regents is having in determining future regulations in our state's middle schools. I agree with Regent Johnson, who said “I really do not want to rush to judgment” regarding the future of our middle schools. They should take their time and look long and hard at the issue. The decision they are about to make will be regulation for the next 15 years and possibly beyond. Not only the Regents but also State Education Department officials seem split on what to do. I

commend those Regents who are speaking up. The days of rubber-stamping what some SED officials want is over. Some of the Regents are listening to the people. They want to make sure they do the right thing for kids.

There are some Regents and SED officials alike that believe the answer to the poor test scores at the Middle-Level is to give students more of the same. They want to give Middle School students more Math, Science, English, and Social Studies. They want to have current mandated classes (classes that are required for every student to take) such as Technology relieved, thus allowing for more time in the areas where the State requires exams. This approach would mean the reduction of such classes or possible elimination of Art, Music, Technology Education, Home and Careers, and Health. Superintendents and school administrators would cut these valuable programs before they cut a program their students have to perform well on a test in. This back-to-basics approach is not the answer. Spending more time on the “core” courses only means more of the same.

Regent Johnson suggests, “The kids who are failing our tests year after year need to have more focus on the skills that they need” (more Math, Science, Social studies, English, the tested subjects). This can't be farther from the truth. Students who are failing these exams need more application of these skills. The kids who are failing are kids who need Technology Education and the other non-tested disciplines. They need hands-on-learning. They need real life application for the Math, Science, English, and Social Studies they are learning. This approach to learning makes the subject matter real for

them and makes it come alive. They need learning to be meaningful. These are the links that classes like Technology Education make for kids. Let me give you a great example, and one we should learn from. New York City eliminated nearly all their Technology Education programs (as well as the other exploratory classes) in an attempt to save money. They wanted to focus on the so-called “core” classes. Look where they are now! Is this where we want to be in 15 years all across New York State?

What about the future of technological literacy for our children, our state, and our country? If the Regents and State Education Department eliminate this valuable subject we will continue the downward spiral our country has been experiencing in the area of world technological dominance. Take a look at our engineering graduate schools across the country. Who’s enrolled in them? Mostly foreign students that return to their homeland after graduation. Even though low-tech jobs have been shipped over seas for many years the United States has always enjoyed worldwide dominance in the area of high-tech. Well, even this trend is changing. More and more high-tech jobs and opportunities that we have always enjoyed here in the United States are being shipped overseas. What will happen in the future if we eliminate such programs as Technology Education from every student’s basic education? I think the answer is obvious.

New York State has always been a leader in education. We are the only state that currently has a requirement that all students take Technology Education. Do we want to take a step backward? We need to continue to lead the way. We not only need to maintain the existing requirement at the middle level but infuse Technology Education into every student’s basic education in New York State at all levels. Research will show you that in order to raise a technologically literate population you need to start at a young age.

Technology Education provides students with critical thinking skills, problem-solving

skills, and the application of Math, Science, Social Studies, and English. Technology Education can be a form of academic intervention (AIS) for students struggling in the core courses. Technology Education is a relatively young discipline that evolved from the Manual and Industrial Arts from years past. Technology Education is the study of the Human-Made world just like Science is the study of the natural world. In this competitive high-tech world we live in we cannot afford to eliminate such a valuable experience for kids. More of the same is not the answer, it doesn’t work, and we have tried that before in New York State with minimal improvement. We need to keep Technology Education in our schools.

On a closing note, Regent Johnson expressed frustration and concern with the letters he has been receiving. Indicating “The letters I get make me sick because the self-interest jumps off the page”. He is referring to the possible reduction of jobs in the areas of Art, Technology, Music, Health, and Home and Careers. This couldn’t be farther from the truth. I have made a number of contacts with the Regents and SED since my term in office. All contacts have been student centered and proactive for maintaining Technology Education in our schools. Those of us who teach Technology Education know and see every day the wonderful things our discipline has to offer for all students, especially those struggling with required tests. And besides, it’s not a job security issue as Regent Johnson suggests. Most of us that teach Technology Education have the skills and knowledge to walk away from our jobs today and find something that pays much more than we make in our schools. It’s bigger than that! We stay and fight for our jobs because we know what we do helps kids and is right for education in New York State and the country as a whole.

Rob Clark, President
NYS Technology Education Association
3160 Hickox Road
Canandaigua, NY 14424



Lea's Lessons

Lea Macdonald

All Aboard!

Preparing for a Differentiated Classroom

If we aspire to meet the challenge of leaving no child behind, we must provide diverse learners with diverging pathways that lead to their success.

Differentiation of instruction is a philosophy of teaching. It is a complex set of beliefs and practices that takes respectable, humane, flexible principles of learning into account. Differentiated instruction enriches the learning of all students by engaging multiple intelligences, the arts, emotions, and interdisciplinary connections and by building a community of learners in the classroom. In the last installment of *Lea's Lessons*, I talked about the meaning and characteristics of differentiated instruction. According to Carol Ann Tomlinson, professor at the University of Virginia and an expert on this topic, there are eight characteristics of a classroom that meets the needs of all learners. I would like to focus on two specific characteristics of a differentiated classroom in this second article on differentiated instruction:

- Students and teachers accept and respect one another's differences.
- Assessment is an ongoing diagnostic tool that guides instruction and students are assessed in multiple ways.

Caring is not just a way of acting; it's a way of thinking.

Students and Teachers Accept and Respect One Another's Differences

The children in our classrooms will be more successful if they know that we care about them.

I began greeting my students at the door before each class period last year and I noticed it made a difference. One day Amy commented, "Mrs. Macdonald, your welcoming smile makes me feel less anxious and more comfortable." Amy has cystic fibrosis and some days were difficult for her. Since that day, I'm always at my door when the bell rings to begin class. ASCD found, in a recent analysis of more than 100 studies, that the quality of teacher-student relationships is the keystone for all other aspects of classroom management. The studies suggest that teachers do the following to ensure effective teacher-student relationship:

- Establish clear expectations and consequences
- Establish clear learning goals
- Provide flexible learning goals
- Take a personal interest in students
- Model positive classroom behaviors

Community is central to a middle school classroom. The curriculum and a shared purpose for learning help create community and set the stage for a differentiated classroom. In the beginning of the school year, my students are engaged in team-building activities to lay the foundation for a cooperative, tolerant classroom. The purpose of this strategy is to show students that everyone is different: they all have varying talents, learning styles, readiness levels, and interests. For example, students work together in small groups to brainstorm the rules that will guide the class throughout the year. In advisory, students interview each other and introduce the students to the class. In social studies class, students take Multiple Intelligence and Learning Styles surveys to determine the makeup of the

class as well as their individual strengths or talents. In addition, each student completes a “Who Am I As A Learner” graph to plot their strengths and weaknesses in all the subject areas.

One of the most effective strategies I’ve used to clarify the importance of tolerance and respect for others is the “Jigsaw Puzzle with a Meaning.” I have the students work in groups of three. One student is blindfolded and two students are helpers. The goal is for the blindfolded student to put together a puzzle with only verbal help from the other two students. Although the puzzles have only 9-12 pieces, the task is challenging. When I read their self-reflections on this activity, the true meaning of cooperation rings clear and loud. It is an effective strategy to lay the foundation for respect and tolerance for all.

Lastly, our school focused on “Bullying” as our school-wide theme two years ago and introduced the topic through the *Don’t Laugh At Me* program. Peter Yarrow and Operation Respect have created a worthwhile curriculum that works well with middle school children. You can get information on this program at www.dontlaugh.org. To create classrooms where students can learn and feel safe and respected is the first step in creating a differentiated classroom. When young adolescents feel that their teachers and their peers accept them, motivation and performance increases. This foundation must first be established in order for a differentiated classroom to succeed.

“I’m always ready to learn, although I don’t always like being taught.”

— Winston Churchill

Assessment is an Ongoing Diagnostic Tool that Guides Instruction and Students are Assessed in Multiple Ways

Ongoing assessment is one of the most important aspects of a differentiated classroom. I believe that my students perform better on end-

of-the-unit tests because I am checking their progress on an ongoing basis during each unit. Assessment is divided into three sections: pre-assessment, process-assessment, and post-assessment.

Pre-assessment

This type of assessment is used to determine where a student is in relation to a concept, content, or skill before a unit of study begins. Many teachers use the KWL chart or pre-tests. One of my favorite strategies to use as a pre-assessment tool is *Circle of Knowledge*. It can also be used at the end of a unit for an informal post-assessment before the unit test. The directions are as follows:

Circle of Knowledge

1. Form teams of 4-5 students per team.
2. Each team has one sheet of chart paper and each student has a different color marker.
3. Each student writes his/her name on the back of the paper with his/her colored marker.
4. The teacher poses a brainstorming question to the class (*Ex.* What do you already know about the American Revolution?).
5. Students rotate around the circle writing down an idea in response to the question.
6. At any time a student may pass and choose not to respond.
7. No one may speak out of turn.
8. There is a set time limit depending on the complexity of the question.
9. The teacher will act as the moderator of the whole-class discussion as rotating teams offer their answers; the teacher will record the teams’ responses on a large sheet of chart paper.
10. The team with the most unique answers is the winner of today’s Circle of Knowledge.
11. The class poster will be displayed during the unit and students may add new ideas about the topic at any time.

12. The teacher can check each student's individual knowledge by comparing the name on the back of the sheet with the color of the marker.

Process-Assessment

This type of assessment is used throughout the unit to diagnose a student's understandings of key concepts, content and skills during the unit of study. This allows a teacher to know where students are before they get to an end-of-the-unit test and provides ongoing support. One of my most successful process-assessment strategies is *admit/exit slips*. During the unit, I need to assess how the students are faring so far in mastering the key concepts and skills necessary for understanding. For example, I will have the students participate in a "3-2-1" activity midway through the unit on the Clash of Cultures. They need to write down 3 new ideas on concepts that they have learned; 2 questions they have about this knowledge; and 1 new vocabulary term, defined and used in a sentence. These exit slips from class are dropped in the box at the door and I can read through them later to get a sense of where students are at this time. Do I need to re-teach? Do I need to provide guided practice? Do I need to offer enrichment tasks to some while I work on basic understandings with others? Exit slips have helped me to prepare students for success on the unit tests while helping me to better understand the needs of each learner.

Post-Assessment

These assessments are used at the end of the unit to evaluate student knowledge and application of new understandings. Some possible post-assessments are multiple choice tests, essays, projects, simulations, and oral presentations. It's important to offer students multiple ways of demonstrating what they have learned. I offer project rubrics giving students a choice based on multiple intelligences and interests. Students rally to the cause when they have a voice in how they will demonstrate their knowledge.

Research shows that the one-size-fits-all method of instruction fails to meet the needs of all learners. In the next *Lea's Lessons*, I will focus on instructional strategies that work in a differentiated classroom. Please email me if you have any questions or need more information about the topics discussed in this article. Middle schools are the gateways to the future foundation of our democracy and it's our responsibility to make each classroom "a place for all." Join me in this journey.

Lea Macdonald
Pleasantville Middle School
40 Romer Avenue
Pleasantville, New York 10570
leamiddle@att.net

Membership and Publication Information

In Transition is a benefit of both individual and building membership in the New York State Middle School Association. Annual membership dues are \$50 for individual membership and \$150 for building membership. Memberships are on an "anniversary date" basis; renewal invoices are mailed approximately one month prior to end of membership.

For any changes in membership information, please contact Julie Schwartz at the NYSMSA office by e-mail (schwartz@nysmsa.org) or phone/fax (914-747-9241).

Individual and Building Membership applications can be downloaded from our web site: www.nysmsa.org. Additionally, new membership applications paid via credit card can be completed online.

NYSMSA gives permission to its membership to reprint any portion of this publication.

The Statewide Network of Middle-Level Education Support Schools

David Payton, Ph.D.



The New York State Education Department has identified, as the first cohort, 28 schools for membership in the Statewide Network of Middle-Level Education Support Schools. This network and these schools have a very specific and focused purpose: to help other schools with middle-level grades increase student achievement and promote positive youth development – the dual purposes of middle-level education. Their primary function will be to serve as sites for showcasing “promising practices” and sources of consultants and presenters.

Support Schools are either high achieving schools in English language arts and mathematics in their specific Need/Resource Category or are able to demonstrate a positive trajectory in these areas. Support Schools were required, as part of the application process, to provide evidence that they:

- Are addressing the social, physical, and emotional needs of their students;

- Are implementing the seven *Essential Elements of Standards-Based Middle-Level Schools and Programs*; and
- Have the full and continued support of the school district to pursue the continued implementation of the Essential Elements.

Support Schools subscribe to the belief that, to be successful, they need to implement all of the Essential Elements with fidelity. Their applications indicated that, while they have implemented each of the Elements, they are committed to honing them even more. The Department and the field can — and will — learn a great deal as these Support Schools continue to refine and sharpen the implementation of the Essential Elements under real “field conditions.”

At the Department’s request, each of the Support Schools identified a maximum of two Essential Elements for which it will serve, “officially,” as a Support School.

The chart that follows lists the 28 Support Schools with their addresses, contact person and telephone number, and the Essential Element(s) that they feel most comfortable sharing with others.

Essential Elements of Standards-Focused Middle-Level Schools and Programs:

1. A **philosophy and mission** that reflect the needs and characteristics of young adolescents
2. An **educational program** that is comprehensive, challenging, purposeful, integrated, and standards-based
3. An **organization and structure** that support academic excellence and personal development
4. **Classroom instruction** appropriate to the needs and characteristics of young adolescents provided by skilled and knowledgeable teachers
5. Strong **educational leadership** and a building administration that encourages, facilitates, and sustains involvement, participation, and partnerships
6. A **network of academic and personal support** available for students
7. **Professional learning** and staff development that are ongoing, planned, purposeful, and collaboratively developed

First Cohort: Statewide Network of Middle-Level Education Support Schools

School	Essential Elements							N/RC Category*
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	
Algonquin MS 333 NY Route 351 Averill Park, NY 12018 Stephen Beebie: (518) 674-7100	X	X						5
Barker MS 1628 Quaker Road Barker, NY 14012 Cheryl Cardone: (716) 795-3203		X			X			5
Candlewood MS 1200 Carls Straight Path Dix Hills, NY 11746 Andrew Greene: (631) 592-3300		X	X					6
Clarence MS 10150 Greiner Road Clarence, NY 14031 Joel Weiss: (585) 407-9200	X	X						5
Cohoes MS 2 Tiger Way Cohoes, NY 14727 Joseph Dragone: (518) 237-4131		X	X					3
C.S. Driver MS (Marcellus) 2 Reed Parkway Marcellus, NY 13108 Patrick Collier: (315) 673-0219	X			X				5
Cuba-Rushford MS 5476 Route 305 Cuba, NY 14727 Nancy Sampson: (585) 968-2650	X		X					4
Dansville MS 31 Clara Barton Street Dansville, NY 14437 Amy Stahl; (585) 335-4020			X			X		5
Garden City MS 98 Cherry Valley Avenue Garden City, NY 11530 Peter Osroff: (516) 294-3065	X	X						6

School	Essential Elements							N/RC Category*
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	
Greene MS 40 South Canal Street Greene, NY 13778 Judy Gorton: (607) 656-4161					X			5
Hommocks MS 10 Hommocks Road Larchmont, NY 10538 Dr. Seth Weitzman: (914) 834-6550		X	X					6
Ichabod Crane MS 2910 Route 9 Valatie, NY 12184 Maureen Van Deusen: (518) 758-7676			X			X		5
Jamesville-DeWitt MS 6280 Randall Road Jamesville, NY 13078 Jeff Craig: (315) 445-8360	X		X					5
Jericho MS 99 Cedar Swamp Road Jericho, NY 11753 Cecile Wren: (516) 681-5820	X		X					6
Newfield MS 247 Main Street Newfield, NY 14867 Robert Ike: (607) 564-9955			X		X			5
Orville A. Todd MS 11 Croft Road Poughkeepsie, NY 12603 Steven Malkischer: (845) 463-7810		X			X			6
Oliver W. Winch MS 99 Hudson Street South Glens Falls, NY 12803 Mark E. Fish: (518) 792-5891			X			X		5
Onteora MS 4166 Route 28 Boiceville, NY 12412 Gayle Kavanaugh: (845) 657-1100				X				5
Owego-Apalachin MS 100 Elm Street Owego, NY 13827 Cynthia Bennett: (607) 687-6248			X			X		5

School	Essential Elements							N/RC Category*
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	
Parishville-Hopkinton JSHS 12 County Route 47 Parishville, NY 13672 Tom Burns: (315) 265-4742		X		X				4
Robert E. Bell MS 50 Senter Street Chappaqua, NY 10514 Martin Fitzgerald: (914) 238-6170		X		X				6
Romulus MS 5705 Route 96 Romulus, NY 14541 Mike Midey: (607) 238-6170				X				5
Sidney MS 13 Pearl Street Sidney, NY 13838 Allen Bilofsky: (607) 563-4225					X		X	5
Van Wyck JHS (Wappingers) 6 Hillside Lake Road Wappingers Falls, NY 12590 Steve Schuchat: (845) 227-1700		X	X					5
Victor JHS 953 High Street Victor, NY 14564 Miryam Matulick-Keller: (585) 924-3252			X					5
Wantagh MS 3299 Beltagh Avenue Wantagh, NY 11793 Dr. Jeannette Stern: (516) 679-6350			X			X		6
Warwick Valley MS 225 West Street Warwick, NY 10990 Ann Val: (845) 987-3100			X					5
West Hollow MS 250 Old East Neck Road Melville, NY 11747 Selena Smith: (631) 592-3400		X	X					6

* **Need/Resource Capacity (N/RC) Category:**

3 = Urban/Suburban High Need; 4 = Rural High Need; 5 = Average Need; 6 = Low Need

Nuts and Bolts of an Integrative Curriculum

Monica Kwiatkowski



With the ever short and glorious enlightenment era of the young adolescent, integrative curriculums are an essential, yet often times missing, link to the overall program of a middle school. The salient traits that should define a middle school curriculum are developmentally responsive and democratic in nature (Beane, *A Middle School Curriculum* 18-20). Establishing a learning community, rather than the teacher focal point of a traditional classroom setting, is a daunting yet accomplishable task if the right philosophy is in place. Creating an environment that is socially accepting of all, building on students' own knowledge and concerns, and promoting collaborative learning comprise the essential philosophy of an integrative curriculum.

Knowledge, for middle school students, needs to be personally experienced; found, not given. To create lifelong learners, engagement on the part of the student is essential (NMSA, 2001). Addressing what matters to students and, at the same time, covering key content pieces is a balancing act. Because of the personalized learning experience needed for significant learning to occur, middle-level learners ought to have a say in what they learn and, in many instances, how they learn it (Beane, *Curriculum Integration*). Students need to have their voices heard and learning communities need to listen. This democratic piece to a middle-level integrative curriculum provides students with an essential openness and can break down communication barriers between student and teacher, hence establishing a collaborative learning environment (Beane, *A Middle School Curriculum*).

Teachers need to be more facilitators, rather than distributors, of knowledge to students; building on their prior knowledge base, and focusing students on where to find the information and skills they need as the need arises (Beane, *Curriculum Integration*), (Beane, *A Middle School Curriculum*). In that sense, it is okay that a teacher doesn't know everything there is to know about a particular subject when beginning on a learning journey, for the student and the teacher move on the learning continuum together. For teachers responsible for numbers that get officially reported, relinquishing that control of student learning can be one of the most difficult components of an integrative curriculum in the age of tightening state and national standards and accountability (Vars and Beane, June 2000).

With democratic principles in place in a middle school, the need for students to gain responsibility is a crucial component to making integrative curriculums effective, developing students' autonomy as active learners (NMSA, 2001, 63-65), (Smith, 1999), (Wheelock, 1998). The ultimate goal of integrative curriculum is to create a climate for actively engaged learners who thrive on their own accord. Expectations need to be established and clarified in order for students to assume responsibility and develop self-reliance. In the Alpha team multi-age, middle-level, and integrative classroom at Shelburne Community School in Vermont, Carol Smith implements various strategies that support collaborative planning, creating a responsive learning community. In her article, *Middle Level Curriculum That Is Challenging, Integrative, and Exploratory* (1999), she discusses various methods on how her students

take a more active role in decision making, establishing learning as an evolving progression rather than a knowledge race with a definite starting and ending point.

Students set weekly goals, plan the use of their time, outline theme studies, create expectations, define quality work, make decisions about team issues, solve real problems, assess their work, report their progress, and then set new goals based on the assessments they have made.

By treating learning skills and content as a progression rather than a set destination for mastery, the locus of control, power, and responsibility for the learning is assumed by the students and guided by the teacher. A learning evolution rather than a marathon can be attained in the classroom.

In order for learning evolutions to transpire, student accountability plays an essential part in the process. Authentic assessments, such as portfolios, become the catalyst for student growth (Burke, Forgaty, and Belgrad, 2001), (Lazear, 1998). Students exhibiting what they know in the manner in which they understand the material needs to take precedence over standardized assessment tools (Burke, 1999), (Lazear, 1998), (Vars and Beane, 2000). Reflection pieces, based on what and how students present, promote personal metacognition and establish a climate for quality work (Wheelock, 1998), (Burke, Fogarty, and Belgrad, 2001). Sensitivity to diverse learning styles and the use of multiple intelligences in planning lays the scaffolding for a more meaningful lesson, with the intent that students will take more away from the exercise for the long term.

With global concerns and the bombardment of popular culture that students carry, the logical progression of democratic ideals in the classroom is to promote good citizenship and community service outside of it (Wheelock, 1998, 80). In addition, cognitive development masters such as “Vygotsky (1962), Piaget (1963), and

Kohlberg (1963) have discovered that exposure to differences in style, thought patterns, experience, and opinion helps individuals make the cognitive adjustments necessary for growth” (Vermette, 1998, 17). Global social awareness is a heavy link to establishing crucial value systems and students making sense of self.

One way to assist students in creating meaning on their own is for a team to teach thematically based on issues that students are currently facing in popular culture (Beane, 1997). In using popular cultural issues as a springboard into traditional curriculum topics, students have their personal concerns validated while given a baseline standard of universal comparison. For example when discussing homelessness, comparing urban issues of today with that of the immigrants of the Gilded Age helps students cognitively construct meaning. Beane (1993) states that curriculum “ought to center on powerful themes that enlighten the search for self and social meaning.”(p. 20) To create social meaning, a curriculum that is thematic, paying attention to diversity, and involving real life puzzling situations is the best bet for deeper comprehension and life long learning values instilled into a middle-level population.

Teachers can facilitate democracy in the classroom by asking key opinion questions to students. Two highly effective general questions to direct collaborative planning according to Beane, (1997) are, “What questions or concerns do you have about yourself?” and “What questions or concerns do you have about the world?”(p. 51). Surveys, small group, or classroom discussions can establish a learning dialog that is imperative in meeting middle-level developmental needs.

Lastly there is a significant need for an integrative learning environment to pay close attention to the emotional needs of the ever-transitioning young adolescent (NMSA, 2001), (Jackson and Davis, 2000). Whether through a formal or informal advisory program, student

council, a helpful guidance counselor, or teachers willing to take the time to listen to a student, that every child in the middle school needs to feel wanted and validated is a key component to the evolving learning community.

Monica Kwiatkowski
Cuba-Rushford MS
5476 Route 305 N
Cuba, NY 14727

References

- Beane, J. A. *Curriculum Integration: Designing the Core of Democratic Education*. New York: Teachers College Press. 1997.
- . *A Middle School Curriculum: From Rhetoric to Reality*. 2nd ed. Westerville: National Middle School Association. 1993.
- Burke, K. *The Mindful School: How to Access Authentic Learning*. 3rd Ed. Arlington Heights, IL: IRI Skylight Training and Publishing, Inc. 1999.
- Burke, K., Fogarty, R., and Belgrad, S. *The Portfolio Connection: Student Work Linked to Standards*. 2nd Ed. Arlington Heights, IL: IRI Skylight Training and Publishing, Inc. 2002.
- Jackson, A.W., and Davis, G. D. *Turning Points 2000: Educating Adolescents in the 21st Century*. Carnegie Corporation of New York: Teachers College Press. 2000.
- Lazear, D. *The Rubrics Way: Using Multiple Intelligences to Access Understanding*. Tucson, AZ: Zephyr Press. 1998.
- National Middle School Association. *This We Believe and Now We Must Act*. Westerville: National Middle School Association. 2001.
- Smith, C. "Middle Level Curriculum That Is Challenging, Integrative, and Exploratory." *VAMLEfocus*: Vermont Association for Middle Level Education. www.vamle.org/home/learning/publications/focus/smith_6_99.htm. 1999.
- Vars, G. F. and Beane, J. A. *Integrative curriculum in a standards-based world*. ERIC Digest. 2000.
- Vermette, P. J. *Making Cooperative Learning Work: Student Teams in K-12 Classrooms*. Columbus: Merrill Prentice-Hall. 1998.
- Wheelock, A. *Safe to Be Smart: Building a Culture for Standards-based Reform in the Middle Grades*. Columbus: National Middle School Association. 1998.

Have you visited NYSMSA's website lately?

Go to www.nysmsa.org for...

- the latest information on what's new "in the middle"
- updates on State Education Department discussions
 - articles of particular interest
 - the NYSMSA book store
- ways to contact your local regional director
 - conference materials
- membership renewal and more



The Executive Director's Wrap-up

Dennis M. Tosetto



It is hard for me to believe that it is going on two years since I retired as a middle school principal. As with all things, one's perspective shifts over time, especially when your day-to-day sources of information change due to personal

circumstances such as retirement. More and more, I find myself looking in rather than looking out. The game always looks different to a person in the stands than it does to the player on the field.

I have found that there is a lot to learn from that old expression that speaks to not being able to see the trees for the forest or vice-versa. That kind of blindness or obfuscation of the facts seems to occur in different ways in and around our profession as it does in most every other. Over the past few years, I have attended innumerable meetings on the standards, the assessments, and on middle-level education in general. These meetings have taken place in school districts, regionally, in Albany, and at national forums. At these meetings, colleagues representing just about every facet of the profession were present, including SED and the Board of Regents. In my opinion, with very rare exception, I saw evidence that each representative present wanted to do the right thing – from his/her perspective.

Currently in New York State, some believe that the state assessments are inappropriate for a whole variety of reasons, while others confide that they believe that, in many cases, building-level educators actually choose not to learn how to use the results effectively to improve classroom instruction. Some talk about needing more time for the “important” subjects, while others see a need for more remedial time, or some magic bullet. To many of us, money always seems to be one of the most important issues that impacts the educational process. In fact, many times it may even trump quality instruction when push comes to shove; and that's where we seem to be again today as we work to determine the future of middle-level education in New York State.

Some seem to believe that if educators could only do more of the same, but harder and longer, we would get better test results. Consequently, they believe that all we need do is eliminate what is unimportant – some non-tested areas – and use that time to hammer away at the “real” academics. To me, that is a formula for long-term failure. I wrote in a recent NYSMSA E-Letter that one of the main disagreements in the profession seems to boil down to two opposing beliefs:

- Many New York State school districts are not doing what current regulations require, so change the regulations so that these school districts and others that are struggling to stay in compliance can be in compliance.
- Current regulations are both reasonable and good for kids and compliance issues should be enforced because allowing more

flexibility would surely encourage more school districts to reduce or drop non-tested subjects.

Perhaps there is a third point of view that we should consider. Could we not avoid many of the pitfalls and disagreements we are now facing by simply committing to support quality teaching by collectively focusing on what we know to be more effective instructional methodologies? By significantly improving instructional efficiency and thereby eliminating the questionable need for more instructional time for some subjects, we can avoid having to contemplate reducing the comprehensive instructional program currently guaranteed by regulation to all New York State students.

At many of the state and regional meetings I've attended that are aimed at how we need to deal with the standards and update regulations at the middle-level, one of the key ingredients is frequently missing from the discussion: instructional methodology. Sure, the material is out there and it's presented in the Middle-Level Policy Statement and SED's Essential Elements but, unfortunately, it's a topic that is generally missing from the conversation. Consequently, it certainly isn't apparent that the use of cutting-edge instructional methodology will be driving the changes that are about to be made in middle-level regulation at the state level unless the conversation changes.

The fact is that we are about to change regulations without even having baseline information telling us what instructional methodologies are generating current results. Are we using more effective methods like interdisciplinary and differentiated instruction, or do most middle-level classrooms continue to resemble the classrooms we attended in our own junior high school years? The answer is that we may have an opinion about what's going on in

schools across the state, but no one knows for sure. The original Middle-Level Policy Statement was adopted in 1989. To what degree did schools around the state implement it? After ten years, were most middle-level teachers even aware that New York State had a middle-level policy? Again we don't know, so what have we learned?

I believe that there are a number of truths that must be considered. They include:

- All of the education-related stakeholder groups want to provide young adolescents with the best education possible.
- There is a great deal of dissidence between and among available funding, staffing needs, in-service opportunities, and what constitutes the traditional school day.
- SED is understaffed and cannot provide much of the support that will be needed to influence a successful transition at the middle-level.

At many of the state and regional meetings...one of the key ingredients is frequently missing from the discussion: instructional methodology.

Discussions among those involved relating to these points have resulted in more than a little distrust and insecurity. On the other hand, some common concerns have emerged and most of our colleagues from all areas of the educational spectrum have become strongly supportive of maintaining a complete and comprehensive educational program for all young people in all middle schools across the state.

Perhaps two of the most important but less publicized truths are that we can best meet the Standards by not cutting programs and that by ensuring that every teacher and every school utilizes the best teaching methodologies available today, we won't have to remediate our failures. None of us should tolerate anything less in our classrooms, in our schools, in our school district, and in New York State. So, understanding the parameters within which we

must work, how do we collectively move the ball forward?

I submit that if we fostered cooperative teaching (an adult version of cooperative learning), our students would have more time on task to learn and they would learn more effectively than they do in most schools today. When teachers use interdisciplinary methods to plan lessons beyond the confines of their subject curriculum and consciously incorporate what is being taught in other subjects, students will benefit greatly from the synergism that results. Not only will students be applying what is taught throughout the day, they will see the real world connections (i.e., the importance of what is being taught) and see the value it has for their future. After all, why would a student put a lot of effort in what the student doesn't see as having value? We need to make that connection.

I believe that differentiated instruction has not yet proven effective for most educators because we have not yet learned how to apply it in practical ways. Most of us have learned the hard way that it is ineffective and inefficient to attempt to teach skills and impart knowledge to a child when that child is not prepared to learn what is being taught. Yet that is exactly what we do each time we present a lesson to a classroom of students without differentiation. This typically results in at least two negatives. Learners with the greatest need predictably fail and feel inadequate. Then when they are sufficiently behind, they are required to be remediated through a program such as AIS. Does this process seem efficient or appropriate to you?

Appropriately differentiated instruction will result in each student moving forward at his/her own rate even though all students in a class will be spending the majority of their time collectively studying the same topics or standard areas. While not all students will gain the same depth or breadth of learning each day, each student should be expected to continuously move from success to success at a personally

challenging rate. Moreover, personal successes will likely serve to encourage each student to look forward to and work toward the gratification that comes from success. Isn't it better to build on success, rather than to attempt to build on failure?

It seems obvious that our success as educators is much more related to how well we teach to the needs of each student than it is to any of the other factors we hear discussed each day. Further, in most cases quality instruction can be accomplished without great additional expense. It is also obvious that if we ensure that our schools are organized properly and that we utilize the best methods, everything else will fall into place. Understanding that most everything we need do instructionally is presented in the 1989 Regents Policy Statement on Middle-Level Education and SED's Essential Elements of Standards-Focused Middle-Level Schools and Programs, all we need do is actually follow the plan that has been around for over ten years. To do otherwise is obfuscating the obvious.

Readers may submit Letters to the Editor and other opinion pieces for *Middle-Level Educators Speak Out: The Op Ed Page* for possible inclusion in future issues of *In Transition*. Use MS Word or a compatible word processor to create your document and send it as an e-mail attachment to editor@nysmsa.org. All letters and opinion pieces must include the author's name, address, and telephone number or e-mail address. NYSMSA will notify authors whose letters/pieces are chosen for publication and reserves the right to edit all submissions.

NYSMSA Board of Directors 2003-2004

Officers

President

Jeannette Stern
Wantagh Middle School
3299 Beltagh Avenue
Wantagh, NY 11793
(516) 679-6350
stern@nysmsa.org

Executive Director

Dennis Tosetto
NYSMSA West
2201 Pine Avenue
Niagara Falls, NY 14301
(716) 282-6511
tosetto@nysmsa.org

Vice President

Susan Allen
Hilton Central Schools
225 West Avenue
Hilton, NY 14468
(585) 392-1000
allen@nysmsa.org

Recording Secretary / Historian

Teal Abel
Indian River Middle School
32735A County Route 29
Philadelphia, NY 13673
(315) 642-0125
abel@nysmsa.org

Treasurer / Conference Director

Linda Ruest
WNY School Support Center
Erie 1 BOCES
1050 Maryvale Avenue
Cheektowaga, NY 14225
(716) 630-4200
ruest@nysmsa.org

Director of Professional Development

James Tobin
Palmyra-Macedon Central
Schools
151 Hyde Parkway
Palmyra, NY 14522
(315) 597-3401
tobin@nysmsa.org

SED Liaison

David Payton
NYSED 462 EBA
Albany, NY 12234
(518) 474-5923
payton@nysmsa.org

Regions & Directors

Region 1 BOCES

Monroe #1
Monroe 2-Orleans
Wayne-Finger Lakes
Steuben-Allegany
and ALL Livingston County

Region 1 Director

Jeff Craig
Jamesville-DeWitt Middle
School
6280 Randall Road
Jamesville, NY 13078
(315) 445-8360
craig@nysmsa.org

Region 2 BOCES

Cayuga-Onondaga
Madison-Oneida
Oneida-Herkimer-Madison
Onondaga-Cortland-Madison
Oswego

Region 2 Director

Kim Loucks
OCM BOCES
6820 Thompson Road
Syracuse, NY 13221
(315) 433-2662
loucks@nysmsa.org

Region 3 BOCES

Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery
Herkimer
Washington-Saratoga-Warren-
Hamilton-Essex

Region 3 Director

Chris Reed
Glens Falls Middle School
20 Quade Street
Glens Falls, NY 12801
(518) 793-3418
reed@nysmsa.org

Region 4 BOCES

Broome-Tioga
Delaware-Chenango-
Madison-Otsego (except
Delaware County; see
Region 5)
Schuyler-Chemung-Tioga
Tompkins-Seneca-Tioga

Region 4 Director

Tom Phillips
South Seneca Middle School
7263 Main Street
Ovid, NY 14521
(607) 869-9636
phillips@nysmsa.org

Region 5 BOCES

Capital Region
Otsego-Northern Catskills
Questar III
and ALL Delaware County

Region 5 Director

Randall Squier
Delhi Middle School
2 Sheldon Drive
Delhi, NY 13753
(607) 746-8775
squier@nysmsa.org

Region 6 BOCES

Dutchess
Orange-Ulster
Putnam-Northern Westchester
Rockland
Sullivan
Ulster
Southern Westchester

Region 6 Co-Directors

Janie Fitzgerald
Scarsdale Middle School
134 Mamaroneck Road
Scarsdale, NY 10583
(914) 721-2600
fitzgerald@nysmsa.org

Jim McIntyre

Crispell Middle School
PO Box 780
Pine Bush, NY 12566
(845) 744-2031
mcintyre@nysmsa.org

Region 7

ALL New York City Districts

Region 7 Co-Directors

Maria T. Esponda
Region One Learning Support
Center
One Fordham Plaza; Rm. 816
Bronx, NY 10458
(718) 741-7075
esponda@nysmsa.org

Philip Steinberg

IS 218 J.P. Sinnott
370 Fountain Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11208
(718) 847-9050
steinberg@nysmsa.org

Region 8 BOCES

Nassau
Eastern Suffolk
Western Suffolk

Region 8 Director

Maryann Fletcher
Hauppauge Middle School
600 Town Line Road
Hauppauge, NY 11788
(631) 761-8230
fletcher@nysmsa.org

Region 9 BOCES

Cattaraugus-Allegany
Erie #1
Erie #2-Chautauqua-
Cattaraugus
Genesee Valley (except
Livingston County; see
Region 1)
Orleans-Niagara

Region 9 Director

Nancy Sampson
Cuba-Rushford Middle/High
School
5476 Route 305 N
Cuba, NY 14727
(585) 968-2650
sampson@nysmsa.org

Region 10 BOCES

Champlain Valley
Franklin-Essex-Hamilton
Jefferson-Lewis
St. Lawrence-Lewis

Region 10 Director

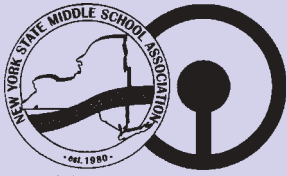
Brian Sherman
Indian River Middle School
32735A County Route 29
Philadelphia, NY 13673
(315) 642-0125
sherman@nysmsa.org

*Your region is determined by
your school's BOCES; for
retirees and businesses, it is
based on place of residence
or business location.*

NYSMSA Office

Administrative Assistant

Julie Schwartz
NYSMSA
P.O. Box 53
Pleasantville, NY 10570
(914) 747-9241
schwartz@nysmsa.org



Corning Middle-Level Institute

Save the dates:

Tuesday, June 29- Thursday, July 1, 2004

Plan to join us for our second annual NYSMSA/CMoG Middle-Level Institute to be held in Corning, NY at the Corning Museum of Glass' ultra modern facility. In addition to receiving 10 hours of intensive hands-on middle-level instruction, participants will be able to visit the glass exhibits and create their own works of glass.

Participants will choose one topic from several offerings for intensive study. Enrollment will be limited to ensure individualized attention.

Registration is \$320 a person and covers participation in the workshops and other events. Please see the NYSMSA website (www.nysmsa.org) for more information or watch for the mailing coming to each middle-level building in the near future.

Deadline for registration is June 4.



NYSMSA
P.O. Box 53
Pleasantville, NY 10570