

THE CHRONICLE OF RESEARCH IN MIDDLE LEVEL EDUCATION

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Special Points of

Interest:

- New Orleans Update
- Message from the President
- MLRON Mission Statement and Update
- Important By-Law Changes
- SIG Name Change

AERA 2002 UPDATE: NEW ORLEANS SCHEDULE

SESSION #1:

Focus on Middle Level
Teachers.

April 1, 2002

4:05 PM Marriott, Sec-
ond Floor, Suite 6

First Author Presenters:
Burkhalter, Hart, Lex-
mond, and Caskey. Dis-
cussant: Gayle Davis,
gdavis@coe.uga.edu
The University of
Georgia

Middle School Education
Program; Department of
Elementary Education;
427 Aderhold
Athens, GA 30602

SESSION #2

Middle Level Learning
Environments.

April 2, 2002 8:15 AM.

Sheraton, 3rd Floor,
Pontchartrain E.

First Author Presenters:
Roney, Weinles,
Weinberg, Wright. Dis-
cussant: Richard P.
Lipka,
rpipka@pittstate.edu

Pittsburg State Univer-
sity. Department of Spe-
cial Services and Lead-
ership Studies; 110
Hughes Hall, Pittsburg,
KS 66762-7578

BUSINESS MEETING

April 4, 2002, 6:15-
8:15, PM. Marriott, 3rd
Floor, Balcony M.

PAPER DISCUSSION

April 5, 2002 10:35-
11:15 AM. Sheraton,
Armstrong Ballroom, 8th
Floor. First Author Pre-
senter: Olafson,

Mikow-Porto, Green,
Wise, Fensel, and Hart-
man.

The first author is re-
sponsible for ensuring
that a copy of the paper
is sent to the session
discussant. One copy of
the paper MUST also be
sent to the RMLE-SIG
Program Chair, Vincent
Anfara. Papers are due
no later than March 12,
2002. Vincent Anfara,
Jr. Ph.D. Associate Pro-
fessor of Educational
Administration. The Uni-
versity of Tennessee,
Knoxville; College of
Education/Educational
Administration and Cul-
tural Studies, A321 Clax-
ton Complex, Knoxville,
Tennessee 37996-3400
vanfara@utk.edu (865)
974-4985.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As my term of office as
President of the Re-
search in Middle Level
Education winds down, I
would like to thank all
the Officers, Council
Members, Newsletter

Co-Editors, Website
Manager, Proposal Re-
viewers, and Members
for all their hard work
and contributions to the
organization. The RMLE
SIG has regained its

membership enrollment,
become actively in-
volved in the national
Middle Level Research
Organization Network,
increased member com-
munication, participa-

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

CONTINUED

tion and opportunities in the last two years.

Once again RMLE is looking at growth and development with elections of new officers, revisions of the By-Laws, increased membership, and expanded involvement in AERA with additional presentation opportunities by our SIG. There will be additional opportunities for SIG participation and increased opportunities for scholarly activities.

With all the positive accomplishments related to our SIG, we need to keep an ever-present eye on the

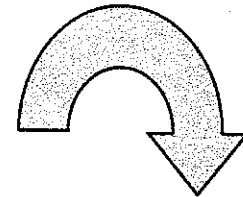
political forces and the implications of high stakes testing on the middle school movement.

Middle school educators are struggling to keep the concept moving forward with the pressures that are coming from high stakes testing, teacher shortages and reduced budgets. Additionally, programs that prepare middle level teachers are constantly defending the need to have a specialized focus to the preparation of teachers for the middle grades. Research to which our SIG is dedicated is desperately needed to support pro-

grams that are unique to early adolescents and middle level education.

I look forward to seeing all of you in New Orleans and to the excellent program that the Research in Middle Level Education is presenting. Thank you all for your support and leadership in the last two years.

*Barbara L. Whinery,
President, Research in
Middle Level Education*



"We need to keep an ever-present eye on the political forces and the implications of high stakes testing on the middle school movement."

Barbara Whinery

RMLE-SIG WEBSITE NEWS!

Check out the action on our RMLE-SIG website: <http://www.rmle.pdx.edu>

There is current information about our SIG's events at the 2002 AERA meeting in New Orleans including paper sessions, paper discussion, and business meeting.

Use our website to find dates, times, and locations of these SIG events.

Web pages for SIG members' research interests and publications are under development. We need YOUR input to complete these sections!

Please do not delay! Send your research interests and publication links today!

Remember, your ideas and suggestions for expanding our RMLE-SIG website are always welcome!

*Micki Caskey
caskeym@pdx.edu*

UPDATE ON MIDDLE LEVEL RESEARCH ORGANIZATION NETWORK (MLRON)

The Middle Level Research Organization Network (MLRON) held its second annual meeting on Friday, November 2, 2001, in Washington, DC, during the National Middle School Association conference. Approximately 35 representatives of the three organizations that comprise MLRON attended the meeting. MLRON includes all members of the American Educational Research Association's Special Interest Group on Research in Middle Level Education (RMLE SIG), the National Association for Professors of Middle Level Education (NaPOMLE), and the National Middle School Association's Research Committee.

Five of the six MLRON committees provided brief updates at the meeting. Summaries of those reports appear below.

1. Mission and Organization Committee (chair: Gayle Davis, The University of Georgia, gdavis@coe.uga.edu). The Mission and Organization Committee presented the revised version of the MLRON mission statement and distributed approval forms seeking endorsement or comment. The latest version of the mission statement states:

The mission of the Middle Level Research Organization Network (MLRON) is to encourage, sponsor, and disseminate research that improves the quality of schooling for young adolescents. MLRON is comprised of the National Middle School Association's Research Committee, the American Educational Research Association's Special Interest Group on Research in Middle Level Education, and the National Association of Professors of Middle Level Education.

To accomplish this mission, MLRON:

- *Encourages collaborative, multidisciplinary research sponsors networking among organizations that promote and/or conduct research related to young adolescents;

- *Disseminates research about young adolescents to practitioners, parents, and policymakers at local, state, and national levels.

The Mission and Organization Committee collected feedback on this draft and will present a final version for endorsement to the members of all three groups involved in MLRON in the coming months.

The Committee also led a discussion of their proposal for developing a governance structure for MLRON. The proposal included the following elements:

Establish a MLRON Coordinating Council. The Council would include six representatives, two from each of the three organizations involved in MLRON. One of the two representatives from each organization should be from that organization's leadership, either appointed, elected, or active.

Each member of the Coordinating Council would serve two-year terms, with odd and even-year appointments. One half of the initial group would serve one extra year to get the rotation of appointments started.

The Coordinating Council would meet quarterly, either by conference call or in person.

Each MLRON standing committee (currently five) would have a liaison on the Coordinating Council.

**Middle Level
MLRON
Research Organization Network**

The liaison would not necessarily serve on the standing committee, but would be responsible for staying in touch with the committee chair and communicating the work and requests of the standing committee to the Coordinating Council.

Based on the discussion at the MLRON meeting, Gayle Davis (NMSA Research Committee chair), Barbara Whinery (RMLE SIG President), and Deborah Thomas (NaPOMLE President) will take the lead in securing endorsement of the revised MLRON mission statement and drafting a letter to the leadership of the three organizations to establish a MLRON Coordinating Council.

2. Communications Committee (co-chairs: Micki M. Caskey, Portland State University, caskeym@pdx.edu; Kim K. Ruebel, Georgia Southern University, kruebel@gasou.edu). The Communications Committee presented the options they had developed for improving and increasing communication among the three groups involved in MLRON. Their recommendations and next steps include:

- Using multiple formats of communication to facilitate the connection among members of the network.

"The mission of the Middle Level Research Organization Network is to encourage, sponsor, and disseminate research that improves the quality of school for young adolescents."

Special Interest Group of AERA: Research in Middle Level

To Join, contact:
Nancy Mizelle
School of Education
Georgia College and State University
Milledgeville, GA 31061
nmizelle@mail.gcsu.edu

We're on the web!
<http://www.rmle.pdx.edu>



Multiple formats will strengthen the network and minimize issues related to access of information. The suggested formats are websites (already under development by David Quinn, University of Arizona), a listserv, and a MLRON column in each organization's newsletter, website, and/or bulletin board (e.g., Blackboard, WebCT)

- Supporting the efforts of David Quinn to establish, host, and maintain the MLRON website. Contacting our respective universities and colleges about access and costs related to an electronic bulletin board, and then use this information to determine whether a listserv or bulletin board is a better option.

3. **Research on Student Achievement Committee** (chair: Joanne Arhar, Kent State University, jarhar@kent.edu) The Research on Student Achievement Committee is exploring the various ways student achievement and learning have been constructed and assessed within both the measurement and constructivist paradigms both nationally and internationally. Currently, each committee member, in collaboration with another researcher, is developing a literature review/background paper on various issues related to how achievement and learning have been constructed and assessed. The Committee has also begun developing research questions and will, hopefully, be seeking funding to support research to address those questions. The Committee also hopes to develop policy statements about middle level student achievement and learning that reflect the vision statement of the National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform (www.mgforum.org). The National Forum's vision states that education for young adolescents should be academically challenging, developmentally responsive and socially equitable.

4. **Identifying Research Interests and Projects Committee** (chair: Vincent Anfara, University of Tennessee, vanfara@utk.edu). This Committee presented options and recommendations for identifying MLRON members' research interests and current or past research projects. Their first and preferred option was creating a MLRON website that would be linked to the NMSA, RMLE-SIG, and NaPOMLE websites. As noted above, David Quinn has already begun developing a MLRON website. This website would allow middle level researchers to create profiles that would include contact information, a selected list of recent and/or important publications, and current projects. Please note that this type of profile is much like the one that can be created on the "Community of Science" website. See <http://www.cos.com> for a better understanding of what is meant here. Researchers would be able to update their information whenever they choose. The website and profile opportunity would be advertised in the *Middle School Journal*, *Schools in The Middle*, *NASSP Bulletin* and on NMSA, SIG, and NaPOLME's websites, newsletters, etc. The Committee also pointed out that David Hough recently mailed out a survey pertaining to NMSA's *Research Agenda for the 21st Century*. Information from this survey could be compiled and a report written on what response this research agenda has received. Finally, this Committee suggested that a small subcommittee be created to review NMSA and AERA program books from the past four years and analyze what has been researched and presented. Additionally, electronic searches could be conducted in such databases as Dissertation Abstracts International, ERIC, etc. The Committee will be following up on the website/profile option by working with David Quinn, NMSA, the RMLE-SIG, and NaPOMLE to develop the profile form, advertise the website and the profile opportunity through various electronic and paper publications, and encourage members of the three organizations to submit a profile. Please contact Vincent Anfara (vanfara@utk.edu) if you would like to participate in this committee.

5. **Recognizing Distinguished Research Committee** (chair: George White, Lehigh University gpw1@lehigh.edu) This Committee had only convened once, by conference call, shortly before the NMSA conference and had not yet developed options or recommendations. The chair, George White, is seeking additional members who can help to:

- * Develop options for recognizing distinguished research, e.g., kinds of recognition and criteria;
- * Describe the implications for each option regarding budget, timing, staff needed - both initially and for maintenance of an ongoing process (e.g., annual award process, a standing recognition committee)
- * Assist in drafting a brief progress report outlining the options and the Committee's recommendations. Please contact George White (gpw1@lehigh.edu) if you would like to participate in this committee.

Finally, based on the discussion in Washington, DC, Barbara Whinery is currently compiling and prioritizing the next steps the meeting participants and MLRON Committees suggested. A report on those next steps will appear in the next RMLE-SIG newsletter. In the meantime, please contact any of the MLRON Committee chairs (contact information above) if you are interested in becoming involved in MLRON's important work to encourage and disseminate multidisciplinary research and to sponsor networking among researchers and organizations involved in middle grades education.

Minutes from the November Research in Middle Level Education SIG

1. Our most recent SIG Business Meeting was held in November at the Hyatt Hotel in Washington, DC during the NMSA conference. SIG President, Barb Whinery, welcomed the group and gave an overview of the current year. Vince Anfara, Program Chair and President-Elect distributed Research in Middle Level Education SIG CD holders to audience members.
2. Treasurer, Nancy Mizelle, discussed membership issues. When people renew their AERA membership, they can pay SIG dues, but the information is not automatically forwarded to Nancy. When you renew using the AERA form, it would be helpful if you would let Nancy know that you have paid your SIG dues. (nmizelle@mail.gcsu.edu)
3. Vince Anfara discussed that the SIG had enough members for two paper sessions and paper discussions (formerly called roundtables) at the upcoming AERA meeting in New Orleans. The SIG still needs to encourage more people to join and to encourage more people to submit proposals to the SIG. Vince suggested that the SIG develop a recruitment plan and share the benefits of joining the SIG which include: the listserv, the handbook, publication opportunities, the newsletter, and being among advocates in middle level education. Vince also suggested that the SIG consider changing its name from Research in Middle Level Education SIG to Middle Level Research SIG. Some people have been unable to locate the SIG when they look under middle schools. The SIG will continue this discussion.
4. Dick Lipka is inviting book publishers to the SIG business meeting at AERA in New Orleans. Dick is widely published and his bringing publishers to our meeting is a good way to hear what publishers are looking for as well as an opportunity to discuss your research interests with them.
5. Kim Hartman, Secretary, announced the election results and noted that there was a 99% return rate on ballots. Elected to the SIG Advisory Board were: Joann Arhar, Gayle Davis, Steve Mertens, and Kathleen Roney. Congratulations!
6. Nora Alder, Vice President, discussed the \$100.00 scholarship for a graduate student to attend AERA. Due to a glitch, AERA did not have the information on their books; however, this problem has been resolved. Providing this stipend is a way to recognize promising young researchers and assist graduate students presenting at AERA. SIG members discussed increasing the stipend to \$200.
7. Since the SIG is not an affiliate of NMSA, our meetings are not listed in the NMSA Program. David Hough will take care of having our meetings listed in the program for the 2002 NMSA Conference. David is also conducting a survey on middle level education. Look for the upcoming results.
8. Kathleen Brown and Kathleen Malu, newsletter co-editors, encouraged people to submit materials to the newsletter. They are open to a variety of middle level issues and noted that there is no page limit on submissions. The newsletter is published in February, May and October.
9. Micki Caskey announced that the new website (www.rmle.pdx.edu) is up and ready. Thank you Micki! You can email Micki at (caskeym@pdx.edu) and send information regarding your research, articles, etc.
10. Brenda LeTendre has volunteered to publish the SIG proceedings. These can be listed as referee publications.
11. Vince Anfara announced that the *Handbook of Research in Middle Level Education* has been ordered and that NASSP is supporting this effort. Currently, Vince is working on a 2nd volume, *Middle Level Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment*. Vince welcomes your submissions.
12. The SIG has plans to hold a conference-within-a conference during an upcoming AERA meeting, possibly 2003 or 2004. This conference will be a way for middle level people to network and discuss middle level issues. Dick Lipka is interested in helping with the conference, but not taking the lead. Dick will mentor a junior faculty. This is a wonderful opportunity for a junior faculty and/or perhaps a team of people who would be interested in working on the conference. If you are interested, please contact one of the officers or Dick.
13. The SIG discussed the possibility of having a joint MLRON, NMSA, NaPOMLE, and RMLE SIG meeting. The purpose of this meeting would be to share ideas and purposes of each group and to network with others interested in the various aspects of middle level education.

Special Interest Group of
AERA:
Research in Middle Level
Education

To Join, contact:
Nancy Mizelle
School of Education
Georgia College and State
University
Milledgeville, GA 31061
nmizelle@mail.gcsu.edu

We're on the web!
<http://www.rmle.pdx.edu>

14. The By-Laws of the SIG were discussed. Elected officers must be current members of AERA and SIG (dues paid). All offices are held for two years. Currently, we need to elect a Vice President, a Secretary and three Council Members. As a SIG, we need to elect people who are willing to work and carry their part of the load. Nomination forms are enclosed. Please feel free to nominate yourself for one of the positions or to nominate someone else (with their permission). Nominations need to be sent to Kim Hartman by March 4. Ballots will be mailed by March 11 and will need to be returned to Kim Hartman by March 25. Winners will be notified prior to AERA and will be announced at the SIG at the Business Meeting in New Orleans.

Respectfully submitted,
Kimberly J. Hartman, Ph.D.
Research in Middle Level Education
SIG Secretary

Become A Member Today!

Why join the Research in Middle Level Education SIG?

Membership in this organization will enable you to remain up-to-date on the most recent, cutting edge research available regarding middle level education. You will be able to network and converse with leading researchers and other professionals in the field of middle level education.

By joining you will ensure that the voices of middle level researchers and practitioners are heard within the American Educational Research Association community. As our membership increases we will receive additional convention timeslots and opportunities for presentations.

How Do I Join?

To join the SIG, simply contact Nancy Mizelle, SIG Treasurer, or the American Educational Research Association.

Write to:

Nancy Mizelle
School of Education
Georgia College and State University
Milledgeville, GA 31061
nmizelle@MAIL.GCSU.EDU

Or:

AERA Subscription Department
1230 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036-3078
Fax: (202) 775-1824

Be sure to note that you wish to join the SIG Research in Middle Level Education. Annual SIG dues are \$5. Further information is also available at: <http://area.net>

RESEARCH IN MIDDLE LEVEL EDUCATION SIG OFFICERS

*Barbara Whinery, President, University of Northern Colorado,

Barbara.whinery@unco.edu

*Vincent Anfara, Jr., Program Chair and President-Elect, University of Tennessee, Knoxville vanfara@utk.edu

*Nora Adler, Vice President, Virginia Commonwealth University,

nalder@EDUNET.COE.VCU.EDU

*Kimberly Hartman, Secretary, University of North Carolina, Charlotte

khartman@email.uncc.edu

*Nancy Mizelle, Treasurer, Georgia College and State University

nmizelle@mail.GCSU.EDU

*Rebecca Mills, Immediate Past-President, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Newsletter Co-Editors

Kathleen M. Brown, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Kathleen F. Malu, William Paterson University

SIG Council Members

Bob Mahar, Temple University

Joanne Arhar, Kent State University

Laura VanZandt, Trinity University

Tom Manderville, Southwest Texas State University

Dick Lipka, Pittsburg state University

Kathleen F. Malu, William Paterson University

Richard Powell, University of Colorado, Denver

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Elections:

March 4—Nominations due

March 25—Postmark Ballots!

New Orleans

April 1-5: AERA Meeting

For further information contact:

<http://aera.net>

How about joining the RMLE SIG Listserv?

Simply send an email message expressing your desire to join the listserv to Vincent Anfara: vanfara@utk.edu

SEND US YOUR NEWS!

Kathleen M. Brown at brownk@email.unc.edu

or

Kathleen F. Malu maluk@wpunj.edu



AERA/SIG Research in Middle Level Education By-Laws:

Proposed Changes

Article I: Name and Governing Authority

Section 1. The special interest group shall be known as the SIG: Research in Middle Level Education. **Proposed Change:** The special interest group shall be known as the SIG: Middle Level Education Research. **Rationale:** Persons interested in research in middle level education would more easily identify the SIG.

Section 3. The by-laws of the SIG are subject to being superseded by the by-laws and constitution of AERA. **Proposed Change:** The by-laws of the SIG are subject to the by-laws and constitution of AERA. **Rationale:** Clearer statement of the relationship of SIG by-laws to the AREA by-laws and constitution.

Article III: Membership

Section 1. Membership in the SIG, including the right to vote and hold elective office, shall be open to any person whose dues have been paid for the current year. **Proposed Change:** Membership in the SIG, including the right to vote and hold office, shall be open to any person whose AERA and SIG dues have been paid for the current year. **Rationale:** SIG officers should provide leadership and support for SIG presentation opportunities associated with memberships in both organizations. The AERA Handbook of policies and Procedures for Special Interest Groups (2001-2002) specifies that the SIG President and Vice President (Program Chair) hold current memberships in AERA and the SIG.

Section 2. The membership year shall run from the first day of July until the last day of June.

Proposed Change: The membership year shall run concurrently with AERA membership. SIG members are to renew their membership at the same time they renew AERA memberships. If a SIG member is not affiliated with AERA, then the membership year shall run from July 1 to June 30. **Rationale:** This makes the by-law consistent with the new AERA policy of joining a SIG when renewing memberships. It also clarifies the membership cycle for non-AERA members and renewing memberships.

Article IV: Elected Officials

Section 2. Every two years the President shall automatically become the immediate Past President, the President-Elect the President, and Vice President shall become the President-Elect. **Proposed Change:** Every two years the President shall automatically become the Immediate Past President, the President-Elect assumes the office of President, and the Vice President shall become the President-Elect/Program Chair. **Rationale:** Clarifies the language of the previous by-law.

Section 3. All officers shall hold office for two years. **Proposed Change:** SIG officers must retain both SIG and AERA membership. Failure to do so will make the officer ineligible to hold the office. **Rationale:** This makes this section consistent with changes to Article III, Section 1.

Section 4. The term of office shall be from the closing of the annual meeting of AERA through the next annual meeting. **Proposed Change:** The term of office shall start at the closing of the annual meeting of AERA and continue for two years. **Rationale:** This makes this section consistent with the previous changes for the two-year terms of office.

Section 5. Only members whose dues are paid may be nominated and hold elective office. **Proposed Change:** Only members whose AERA and SIG dues are paid may be nominated and hold elective office. **Rationale:** This proposed change would make this section consistent with previous proposed section changes that require an officer to be a member of AERA and the SIG simultaneously.

Article V: Nominations and Elections

Section 2. The Nominating Committee will consist of the President-Elect, the President, and the Past President. The current President will serve as chair of the committee. **Proposed Change:** The Nominating Committee will consist of the President-Elect, the President, and the Immediate Past President. The current President will serve as chair of the committee. **Rationale:** Clarifies the language of the by-law.

Article VII: The SIG Association Council

Section 1. The SIG Association Council shall be made up of the Executive Committee and seven members of the organization who are to be elected in the same manner as the officers. **Proposed Change:** Council members must be current with both AERA and SIG membership dues. **Rationale:** This would make expectations for SIG Officers and Council members consistent. Supports leadership and SIG membership in AERA.

Article VIII: Committees

The Membership Committee will consist of one Association Counselor from each state and country represented on the Council and such persons the President-Elect appoints. **Proposed Change:** The Membership Committee will consist of one Association Counselor from each state and country represented on the Council and such persons the President or President-Elect appoints. **Rationale:** Allows both the President and President-Elect to appoint members to the Membership Committee.

RESEARCH IN MIDDLE LEVEL EDUCATION SIG: NOMINATION FORM

It is time for the SIG to elect a Vice-President, a Secretary, and three Council Members to replace those whose terms end in 2002. You may nominate yourself or someone else (with their permission) for any office. Please include your name or the nominee's name, affiliation, address, email, and a short bio. Mail or email nominations to Kim Hartman. All nominations must be received no later than March 4, 2002 in order to appear on the ballot. Election ballots will be mailed by March 11 and returned ballots will need to be postmarked by March 25. Nominees will be notified prior to AERA and will be announced at the SIG meeting in New Orleans.

Nomination for Vice-President

Name:

University:

Address:

Email:

Bio:

Nomination for Secretary

Name:

University:

Address:

Email:

Bio:

Nomination for Council Member(s)

You may nominate up to three people.

Name:

University:

Address:

Email:

Bio:

Mail or email your nominations to:

Kimberly J. Hartman, Ph.D.
UNC Charlotte, Department of Middle and Secondary Education
9201 University City Boulevard
Charlotte, NC 28223-0017
Email: khartman@email.uncc.edu Office: 704.687.3209