



MIDDLE LEVEL EDUCATION RESEARCH
SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

The Chronicle of Middle Level Education Research

Message from the President

By Vincent A. Anfara, Jr.
University of Tennessee, Knoxville

As I write this last message for the MLER newsletter it seems to be an appropriate time to stop and reflect on the past five years. My initial thought is to wonder where the years have gone. The time has passed like a blink of the eye. Honestly, I can barely remember being elected as vice-president during the presidency of Rebecca Mills.

Beyond those initial reflections I think about my tenure as Program Chair (2000-2002) and President (2002-2004). The friendships established and the professional collaborations developed are most memorable and important to me. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve this organization and I hope that I have served you well. I am convinced that we have the finest group of individuals found anywhere.

In the past few years MLER has accomplished much. Highlights include:

1. creation of our book series, *The Handbook of Research in Middle Level Education*,
2. revitalization of the SIG's newsletter and website,

3. growth in membership and number of AERA sessions,
4. revisions of the Constitution and By-laws to reflect our organization's growth,
5. development of a strategic plan to guide our future work,
6. development of policy briefs to assist in our advocating for young adolescents and middle-level education,
7. documentation of the SIG's history,
8. development of a brochure and a display unit,
9. creation of SIG membership database and directory, and
10. creation of the MLER Graduate Student Award.

These accomplishments reflect the dedication and hard work of a number of our members. Particularly, I am indebted to Micki Caskey (website and display unit); Kathleen Brown, Kathleen Roney, Kathleen Malu, and Sue Thompson (newsletter); Ron Williamson (history); Barb Whinery (graduate student award); Steve Mertens (SIG database and membership directory); Gayle Andrews, Sandi Stacki, and Sue Thompson (Handbook series); and Jerry Valentine (policy brief). I would be remiss if I did not thank the Officers and Association Council for their dedication and the guidance they have given me.

We have an exciting program planned for AERA/San Diego. I hope that you are planning on

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- P. Gayle Andrews (2002-2005)
- Steven Mertens (2002-2005)
- Micki M. Caskey (2002-2004)
- Mickey Fenzel (2002-2004)
- Paul Deering (2002-2004)
- Richard Lipka (2002-2004)

participating and supporting the SIG by attending sessions and the business meeting. As has become customary, there will be special gifts for those in attendance at the business meeting.

A few important items need to be remembered:

1. Please vote in the SIG’s election for Treasurer, Secretary, Vice President, and Association Council members (4 positions). This election will occur prior to AERA.
2. A policy brief on the preparation of middle-level principal preparation and licensure is available for your review on the MLER website. Please review and forward any comments and/or revisions to me. You will be asked to vote for this policy brief as part of the election process.

As I move into the office of past president please know that I will continue to support the SIG in any possible way. I wish Kim Hartman much success as she assumes the office of president. I hope that she receives the support and guidance from SIG members that I have experienced. That is the most special gift of all. In addition to my responsibilities at the University of Tennessee and co-editing the *Encyclopedia of Middle Level Education* (with Gayle Andrews and Steve Mertens), I have agreed to serve NMSA as Chair of its Research Committee. This will keep me busy and out of trouble.

I conclude this message with a challenge to the new president and president-elect. Let’s keep the SIG growing and moving in positive directions. Let’s strengthen our role as an advocate for middle-level education research and young adolescents. Let’s never be satisfied with our accomplishments—there is more to do now than ever before.

See you in San Diego.
Vince

AERA Update

By Kimberly J. Hartman, Program Chair and President Elect

We are anticipating many informative MLER SIG presentations in San Diego. We were fortunate enough to have more than twice the number of submissions that we could accept this year. No doubt, our SIG has grown and many of our members are conducting important research. Please note the SIG has two roundtable sessions, four paper sessions, and our annual business meeting. I hope San Diego is ready for this powerful group!

I wish I could let you know the time, date, and location of your presentations, but AERA does not plan to have that information available until the first week of February. You can check online for your session information in early February.

Completed papers are due to me no later than February 27, 2004. Please email them as attachments to khartman@email.uncc.edu, or if you prefer to mail a copy, please send it to:

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Book Critique

Thoughts on *The War Against Excellence: The Rising Tide of Mediocrity in America's Middle Schools*, Cheri Pierson Yecke, (2003), Westport, CT: Praeger.

By
Vincent A. Anfara, Jr.

With an initial read, one could easily be impressed by what appears on the surface to be a well-reasoned, cogent, and evidence-based argument that there is a rising tide of mediocrity in America's middle schools. In the style of *A Nation at Risk*, the rhetoric of this book is intended to emotionally engage and incite the reader to action against radical middle school activists (i.e., Paul George, John Lounsbury, etc.). According to Yecke, these activists had non-academic and anti-intellectual

intentions as they viewed middle schools as laboratories for social experimentation. Their aims were to infuse in young adolescents the values of radical equity, group rights, and coercive egalitarianism. In writing this book, Yecke engages in the very Hegelian plot she accuses radical middle school activists of employing. She does this, though, utilizing poor research skills that result in over-exaggeration, misrepresentation, and faulty claims and conclusions.

A closer examination of Yecke's work reveals some very serious flaws in her logic and scholarship. Ranked first among these shortcomings is the fact that there are no data presented in this book. Her primary claim is that the middle school philosophy and practices (specifically cooperative learning, peer tutoring, and heterogeneous grouping) have had significant negative effects on gifted and talented students. But no data are presented to establish this as a fact. No data are presented on the effects of cooperative learning, peer tutoring, or heterogeneous grouping on the academic achievement of middle grades students. No data (beyond the opinion of one education professor at Virginia Wesleyan) are given to support the claim that preservice middle level teachers are an inferior lot when compared to those entering elementary or secondary education. The list of claims that are unsubstantiated with data seems to be endless.

Instead of trying to make her case with empirical data, she relies on: (1) the 1982 version of *This We Believe*, (b) the 1989 edition of *Turning Points*, (c) the content of NMSA program descriptions from 1974-2001 and *Middle School Journal* articles, (d) a very limited amount of anecdotal data, and (e) inappropriately using quotes, out of context, from middle level researchers to support her position. Using the 1982 version of *This We Believe*, Yecke constantly reminds her readers of the fact that the theory of brain periodization was once embraced by NMSA. Forget about the fact that subsequent versions of *This We Believe* have been published and that NMSA has changed its position on this matter. Yecke found something back in 1982 that aroused her interest and she relentlessly drives this point home. She attacks *Turning Points* (1989) for its anti-intellectual focus and for manufacturing a crisis that focused on young adolescents and their educational needs. *Turning Points 2000*, for all practical purposes, does not exist according to Yecke's research. There are two lines at the end of the book that reference it. Interestingly, one of these lines notes that while the focus of *Turning Points 2000* is more academic than the original *Turning Points*, this amounts to little more than lip service to academics. She holds NMSA responsible for the content of every session presented at its annual conferences and for the content of every article published in *MSJ*, as if NMSA officially

endorsed these. Interestingly, there are no references to *Research in Middle Level Education Quarterly, Annual, or Online*. References to September 11, 2001 and United Flight 93 are inexcusable. She implies that if passengers on that flight would have gone to middle schools they would not have had the competitiveness to overpower the hijackers (see p. 157) and the results would have been far different.

In addition to these flaws, Yecke relies on faulty assumptions. She assumes that all schools that have “middle school” as part of their name have adopted the middle school philosophy and are employing the practices she attacks as harmful to gifted students. She assumes that organizations like NMSA cannot learn and grow, thus changing their official positions on such issues like brain periodization. Yecke assumes that there is a singular purpose of schooling (purely academic) which everyone in America agrees upon, except, of course, those middle school radicals. She obviously has not been introduced to the fact that there are competing perspectives (functionalism, conflict/critical theory, interpretivist) on the purpose of schooling. She assumes that you cannot have developmental appropriateness and academic rigor linked; that parents across this nation do not agree with the middle school philosophy which has been imposed on them against their will; and that the effects of peer

tutoring, cooperative learning, and heterogeneous grouping are a zero-sum game when comparing gifted students to all other students.

While we can easily reveal flaws in logic, faulty assumptions, and bad research, it must not be forgotten that this book is part of a larger attack sponsored by ultra-right and ultra-conservative groups on colleges of education, NCATE, and the like. Yecke periodically takes time off from attacking NMSA and turns her attention to these other organizations. After all, according to Yecke colleges of education (filled with left-wing radicals) are in the business of training our next generation of middle school activists who will perpetuate the social experiment of middle schools that has resulted in an emphasis on radical equity, group rights, and coercive egalitarianism. One will note that the forward to the book has been written by William J. Bennett and that endorsements on the back cover are from Chester Finn, Lisa Graham Keegan, and Michael Poliakoff. We must not forget that these people are working in concert to achieve goals consistent with their ideological stance.

Writing this brief review was a struggle in the sense that responding to the ideas in this book seems to imply that they have some credibility and legitimacy. To respond or not to respond—that was the dilemma. I can only hope that readers will see *The War Against Excellence* for what it really is—bad

research filled with exaggerated and unsubstantiated claims and empty attacks.

MLER and Strategic Planning

As our organization continues to grow, the officers and council thought it appropriate to focus our attention for future organizational development. With that in mind, we have been involved in a strategic planning initiative since October 2003. Discussions were held at the Executive Committee meeting in Atlanta (NMSA) and via email. It is the consensus of the Executive Committee that the following items will become more central to the work of MLER:

1. Middle level advocacy at the local, state, and national levels.
2. Sponsor a middle school summit that includes representatives from other organizations that advocate for middle level education, i.e., ASCD, NMSA, NASSP, NAESP, National Forum, etc.
3. Survey the membership regarding their participation in MLER, needs, etc.
4. Facilitate research projects that would involve multiple SIG members. Projects that are national in scope and impact.

ACTION STEPS:

1. We are currently involved in the writing of policy briefs on

the topics of teacher preparation and licensure, middle-level principal preparation and licensure, high-stakes testing, and NCLB. I am optimistic that ALL of these briefs will be ready for a vote of the Executive Committee and the general membership prior to AERA. The draft of the brief on middle-level principal preparation and licensure is on the SIG's website for your review (<http://www.middlelevel.pdx.edu>). As other drafts of briefs become available they will also be placed on the MLER website for your review and comments. Anyone interested in working on a policy brief should contact Vince Anfara.

To assist in the achievement of the first item we are also developing a SIG brochure. The graphic artist is currently working on this. A galley will be forwarded when it is available.

2. Kathleen Roney, currently MLER Vice President, will take the lead on surveying our membership.
3. Items 2 and 3 from the above list will be the topic for future MLER Executive Committee discussions. Committees will be formed to address both of these items.

NMSA '04 ABSTRACTS

Professional Development and School Improvement through Action Research
by
Joanne Arhar

This presentation engaged participants in a process of school and professional improvement through collaborative action research. Action research is a process of inquiring into our practice for the purpose of improving it. It is a means of making informed decisions that will lead up on a path of professional development. At a time when there are so many conflicting demands on educators, action research puts the focus on educators working together to make the best possible decisions for early adolescents.



Leadership for Student Achievement: Sustaining Team Effectiveness.
by
Barbara R. Blackburn & Ron Williamson

Teaming is a crucial element for effective middle schools; however, building and sustaining teams that impact student achievement requires strong leadership. The session detailed phase two of a research study on effective leadership practices that sustain teams. Results from

surveys, interviews, and focus groups were presented, along with strategies for improving the sustainability of teams. Particularly, findings indicated that although teachers and administrators agree on the importance of key characteristics, *value does not necessarily translate into action.* An innovation configuration for effective teaming was also distributed.

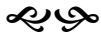


Deconstructing Middle Level Teacher Preparation
by
Marialice B. F. X. Curran

This case study documented the influence of teacher preparation programs on middle level teachers at Washington Middle School. The major purpose of the study was to gain an understanding of the ways in which teacher preparation informs how middle level teachers view themselves as educators of young adolescents. The teachers participating in this study spoke and wrote about three specific types of practices: intellectual, teacher preparation, and affective. Analysis of the data illustrated how these practices helped the teachers in developing an understanding of how to meet the needs of young adolescents.

The conclusion of the study was that state departments of education need to initiate and require mandatory middle level teaching licenses to reduce the

ongoing problems of the “out of field teaching” dilemma.



No Child Left Behind and Its Implications for Urban Middle Schools

by

Sue C. Thompson, Janet C. Saito-Furukawa, Thaddeus Dumas, Johnetta Hudson, Sonya Willis, Bernard Oliver, & Ed Underwood

The Urban Issues Task Force of the National Middle School Association sponsored an interactive session with urban middle school educators to share ways that practitioners and professors working in urban settings can provide urban educators ways to proactively address the challenges of *No Child Left Behind*. After developing a list of concerns and issues, educators identified some solutions to address the concerns and developed a strategy for communicating with the appropriate state policymakers to advance the participants’ ideas.



The Developmentally Responsive Middle Level Principal: A Model and an Instrument for Measuring It

by

Vincent A. Anfara, Jr., Kathleen Roney, & Claudia Smarkola

This presentation focused on the need for a new model of school leadership that specifically

targets the middle level principal. While educational administration research and preparation programs examine leadership models such as instructional leadership, transformational leadership, moral leadership, and participative leadership, little attention has been paid to developmentally responsive leadership. Based on the research of Brown, Anfara, and Gross (2002), the theoretical foundations for the model are grounded in three areas: (1) responsiveness to the needs of young adolescents, (2) responsiveness to the needs of middle level teachers, and (3) responsiveness to the needs of the school.

The Middle Level Leadership Questionnaire (MLLQ) is provided for principals to administer in their schools along with information on instrument development and scoring.



Middle Level Teacher Preparation Programs: Two Case Studies

by

Vincent A. Anfara, Jr. & Kathleen Roney

This presentation examined the development of two separate middle level teacher preparation programs in Pennsylvania. One of these programs was established by a large, research university. The other was developed at a private, liberal arts college. Both programs were established before the state

adopted middle level certification, applied for and received State Department of Education approval when certification was established, and survived to see Pennsylvania withdraw its middle level teacher licensure when No Child Left Behind began to impact state education policy. Lessons and recommendations for middle level teacher preparation program development and implementation are shared.



Possibilities in Preparing Middle Level Practitioners

by

Micki M. Caskey

A persistent problem in middle level education is reconciling the pressing need for specialized preparation of middle level teachers with limited resources of teacher education institutions. Middle level researchers, policy groups, and advocates recommend that colleges and universities provide specialized preparation of middle level teachers (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989; Jackson & Davis, 2000; McEwin & Dickinson, 1995; McEwin, Dickinson, & Hamilton, 2000; National Middle School Association, 1999). Recently, an urban university established a specialized middle level program within its existent graduate teacher education framework.



Sustaining Advocacy for Middle Level Education
by
Micki M. Caskey & Maureen Musser

A statewide consortium of middle level teacher educators is working deliberately to keep middle level teacher preparation and licensure as top priorities. The Consortium supports the National Middle School Association’s position statement and others who assert that middle level teachers need specialized professional preparation (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989; Jackson & Davis, 2000; McEwin & Dickinson, 1995; McEwin, Dickinson, & Hamilton, 2000; National Middle School Association, 1999). In Oregon, the Middle Level Consortium is a powerful vehicle for middle level advocacy. Findings from a recent study reveal how Oregon’s teacher educators have focused and sustained their attention on middle level issues.



Listening to the Voices of Family Members, Teachers and Community Members: Partnerships at the Middle Level
by
P. Maureen Musser

This study investigates the interrelationships between and among family members, community members who work with middle level children, and middle level teachers from the perspectives of these

participants. All three groups are viewed as integral members, with equal standing, in a complex ecological system, the purpose of which is to support early adolescent's academic achievement and healthy development throughout school and life.

The findings provide insights to how family members, community members who work with middle level children, and teachers view their role in working with each other. How the participants view their roles and responsibilities with children shape how they see their roles in working with other adults.



Forming a Help Yourself, Yourself (HYY) Club: Teaching Development Theories to Your Students to Help Them Better Understand Their Own Adolescence and Take Responsibility for Their Futures
By

Candy Beal, Pat Dalton, Matt Ross, Elaine Jenkins, Amy Beal, & Lisa Grable

Help Yourself, Yourself is a university and middle grades program seeking to help preservice and practicing teachers learn, understand and teach development theories to their students thereby promoting student self knowledge and improving academic and social responsibility taking.



Middle School Counseling: An Increasing Role in Accountability
by
Patrick Akos

In addition to the increasing demands of accountability placed on middle schools, the new American School Counseling Association National Model also holds middle school counselors accountable for supporting student development. This presentation will focus on the contemporary research in middle school counseling and will offer a discussion on this research in relation to emerging trends in middle school and school counseling.



Middle-grades teacher certification: its effect on student learning and achievement
by
Steven B. Mertens & Nancy Flowers

Middle school advocates argue that specialized certification for middle-grade teachers is a necessity if we are to appropriately address the educational and developmental needs of young adolescents. This study focuses on the relationship between types of teacher certification and the levels of interdisciplinary team and classroom practices. The participants are classroom teachers in Michigan middle grades schools from which self-reported levels of practices were collected though a survey and are

reported as scale measures representing eleven different types of team and classroom practices. Teachers with elementary or middle grades certification were found to have higher levels of both team and classroom practices. Middle grades certified teachers engaged in teaming with high levels of common planning time had the highest levels of team and classroom practices. While it is not possible to directly link the effects of teacher certification to student achievement outcomes, this study provides evidence to support an indirect link through heightened levels of practices and school-level teaming implementation.



Research that supports high performing middle-grade schools
by
Steven B. Mertens & Nancy Flowers

How effective is the middle school philosophy? This is an issue of continual concern to many middle school teachers, principals, and advocates, as well as local, state, and federal policymakers. If we are to support the middle school philosophy as the best approach to educating young adolescents, then we must have a strong, well established, and ongoing research basis. This presentation will examine recent middle-grades school research within the context of the National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform vision and Schools-to-

Watch criteria. The Forum believes that high performing middle schools are developmentally responsive, social equitable, and academically excellent. The Schools-to-Watch (STW) criteria were created by the Forum and designed to identify high performing middle-grade schools. Participants in this session will learn about new research that supports this vision and the STW criteria. Research data will include results of recently published educational studies, self-study data analyses, and an analysis of standardized student achievement data. The results of these research studies and data analyses will be used to assess the effectiveness of the middle school philosophy.

President, Secretary, and Treasurer, and 4 council member positions. The total SIG membership has grown impressively in the past 3 years from 23 members to over 200 dues-paying members. When Steve Lucas resigned from his position as council member, Paul Deering was asked to replace him with the approval of the Executive Committee. Paul will be up for election in the spring of 2004.

Kim Hartman, Program Chair and President Elect, announced the sessions and presenters for the MLER SIG at AERA for next spring. Kim explained that there had been some difficulties with the “new” electronic proposal processing system of AERA and that they again will be revising the system for next year. The SIG has been allotted 13 round tables and 4 paper sessions at AERA.

MINUTES
MLER SIG
(Middle Level Education
Research Special Interest
Group of AERA)
Fall Business Meeting
November 7, 2003

President Vince Anfara opened the meeting and hoped that all had received ‘presents’ from the SIG. He then introduced Barbara Whinery, Past President of the SIG, who introduced the officers and council members of the Executive Committee of the SIG. It was announced that the next elections would occur before the spring meeting at AERA. There will be elections for Vice

Display Board

Members were encouraged to examine the display board in the GWCC created by Micki Caskey. The display unit consists of interchangeable panels and is portable. Dick Lipka announced that in the future there would be a SIG brochure.

Membership Directory

Steve Mertens announced that the Membership Directory is now ready. If an address or some aspect of an entry is incorrect, contact Vince Anfara. The directory may not be complete as the newest members’ names may not yet be in the directory.

The Graduate Student Award.

A graduate student award of \$250 and free membership in the SIG is awarded annually. This award was first given in 2003. The award will be made at the 2004 AERA meeting in San Diego. The award is open to doctoral students, education specialists, and masters' degree students. Award applications must be in by January 15, 2004. The contact person for the award is Gayle Andrews and details of the award may be found on the website,

www.middlelevel.pdx.edu

SIG History Project

Ron Williamson reported on the progress made writing the history of the SIG. Some areas of the history have gaps that need to be filled. For instance, there is no record of all SIG officers from the mid-nineties. The story between the SIG and NMSA needs to be told as well as what happened to the Research in Middle Level Education Quarterly. Ron referred members to his address in the directory if anyone can provide information that would aid the history project. Info-Age Publishing will be printing the history.

Vince Anfara spoke of the SIG taking an advocacy position by writing position statements, i.e. on Teacher Preparation, NCLB, etc. For research updates, calls for papers, and manuscripts see www.middlelevel.pdx.edu

The Chronicle

Kathleen Roney announced that the newsletter is out and

everyone should have received a copy. *The Chronicle* in the future will be sent out on the listserv three times a year. *The Chronicle* will continue to be available on the SIG website. Past volumes of the newsletter are archived on the website. *The Chronicle* is looking for submission such as book reviews, projects that may be disseminated nationally, short articles, information for doctoral students. etc.

The Handbooks

The 3rd volume of the Handbook is out and available at NMSA. The 4th volume will be available in San Diego, and the 5th volume is on Action Research with Micki Caskey as editor. There has been good reception to the Handbook series, providing a vehicle for SIG membership to publish.

The Encyclopedia of Middle Level Education

Gayle Andrews announced the Encyclopedia and a handout was passed out re: the publication. There will be long entries of 2000 words and short entries of 500 words. These entries will be peer reviewed and due next summer (July 2004). A list of entries can bound on the website. The editors (Vince Anfara, Steve Mertens, Gayle Andrews) of the encyclopedia should be contacted if new entries are to be submitted.

The Strategic Plan

The Executive Committee (council members and officers) brainstormed issues and placed all ideas into 5 categories for

focus. Five issues within the total plan will be announced via the listserv, and these five issues will be what the Executive Committee focuses on in the future. It was noted that there are 67 people on the listserv but more than 200 in the SIG.

Dick Lipka

Dick Lipka announced that the Executive Committee had voted to move forward the terms of some council members so that all elections would be held prior to the spring AERA meeting. The Association Council members will have elections so that 4 members will be elected one spring, and the following year the remaining 3 members will be voted upon. This will add continuity to the council with a contingent of members continuing on.

Vince Anfara was recognized for the outstanding job he has done as SIG President. Vince spoke of the need for the hard work to continue as this is a fairly young organization and needs nurturing and caring.

Framing the MLER Website

www.middlelevel.pdx.edu

By Micki M. Caskey
caskeym@pdx.edu

Among the Middle Level Education Research (MLER) – Special Interest Group’s most valuable resources is the website. The MLER website is updated

continually to provide middle level researchers and educators with immediate and continual access to information. Features include organizational documents, current officers, membership information, publications, upcoming events, and archives of previous activities. Browse our website to view how it supports middle level education.

The most recent additions to the MLER website are *Policy Briefs* and *Encyclopedia* sections. Endorsed by members of the MLER-SIG, policy briefs focus on critical issues in middle level education. Please read our current policy brief entitled, "Middle-Level Principal Preparation and Licensure". Afterwards, follow the *Encyclopedia* link to learn about one of MLER-SIG's newest projects, *The Encyclopedia of Middle Level Education*. The project is described fully with links to a "Listing of Entries," "Example Entry", and "Guidelines for Formatting and Submission of Manuscripts".

In April, the SIG's 2004 Graduate Student Award Recipient and their research will be showcased in the *Graduate Student Award* section. The award promotes and recognized outstanding research in middle level education and is presented annually to a graduate student or recent graduate of masters, specialist, or doctoral program. Previous award winners are also listed in this section.

To find out about SIG sponsored and other middle level publications, read through the *Publications* section. This section houses the current and past issues of *The Chronicle of Middle Level Education Research*, book announcements, calls for manuscripts, and abstracts from recently presented papers. If you have a call for papers or a publication that you would like listed, send them to caskeym@pdx.edu.

When you need information about MLER-SIG's events, use the *Conferences and Meetings* section of the MLER website. Everything from deadlines for proposals to locations of the AERA's Annual Meeting and NMSA's Annual Conference are listed. Past events can be found in webpage archives.

To get a sense of the organization, please visit the *Constitution and Bylaws* section. The purpose of the MLER-SIG is conveyed as well as details about the structure of our organization. Additionally, the *Officers* section identifies the leaders of the MLER-SIG and provides contact information for each officer.

Other helpful sections are *Membership* that invites individuals to become members of MLER-SIG, *Position Announcements* that notes openings in the field, and *Related Web Sites* that identifies websites related to middle level education. A vital feature of the MLER website is *Research Interests*, which identifies middle level

researchers, their areas of expertise, and contact information for the researchers.

Behind the scenes of the MLER website, a new frameless format is under construction. This new format should make the website perform more efficiently. In the mean time, the current site will continue to function and serve the SIG.

To keep the current and future website vibrant and relevant, please contribute book announcements, calls for publications, position announcements, and your thoughts and ideas. Looking forward to hearing from YOU!

MLER SIG Members Present at AERA

Sessions & Presenter/s	Topics & Titles
Paper Session	ISSUES IN MIDDLE LEVEL EDUCATION Chair: Micki Caskey Discussant: Kimberly J. Hartman
Steve Mertens & Nancy Flowers	<i>Assessing the Success of Turning Points in Boston Public Schools</i>
Joanne Arhar & Elizabeth Goldthwait	<i>Relationships Between Criteria for Admission to Middle Childhood Education, Program Completion, and Performance in Teaching</i>
Lillie Albert & Marialice B. F. Curran	<i>Middle School Teachers Talk about Their Teacher Preparation</i>
Shawn Glynn, K. Denise Muth, & Elizabeth Pate	<i>Preservice Education of Middle School Teachers: A Contextual Teaching and Learning Approach</i>
Paper Session	MAKING MIDDLE GRADES WORK Chair: Sandra Stacki Discussant: Richard P. Lipka
Ceil Daniels, Anne M. Chamberlin, Nancy Madden, & Robert Slavin	<i>Comprehensive Middle School Reform: Early Findings from the Success for All Middle School Evaluation</i>
Allen Ruby, Douglas J. Mac Iver, & Vaughn Byrnes	<i>Improving Reading Proficiency in High-Poverty Middle Schools</i>
Catherine Dunham	<i>A Report from the Southern Regional Education Board</i>
Paper Session	MIDDLE LEVEL TEACHERS, STUDENTS AND ADMINISTRATORS Chair: Maureen Musser Discussant: Nicole Torrence
Kathleen Roney, Vincent A. Anfara, Jr., Claudia Smarkola, & Joseph DuCette	<i>Developmentally Responsive Leadership: A Look at the Middle School Principal</i>
Stacey Neuharth-Pritchett	<i>Academic Competence of a Sample of Adolescents Retained in Grade Versus a Typically-Developing Sample</i>
Audra Parker & Stacey M. Neuharth-Pritchett	<i>Marginalized from School: Adolescents Perceptions of Teachers Prior to the Transition to Middle School</i>
Sara Powell	<i>Examining the Relationships Among Knowledge, Dispositions, and Performances in Novice Middle Level Teachers</i>
Jay Feldman & Monique Y. Ouimette	<i>Balancing the Integrity of a Comprehensive Design Model with Experimentation and Local Context</i>
Paper Session	Policy Issues in Middle Level Education Chair: Vincent A. Anfara, Jr. Discussant: Sue Thompson
Sue Thompson, Vincent A. Anfara, Jr., Dan French, Nancy Doda, Ronald Williamson, Nancy Ames, & David Payton	<i>Examining the realities of educational middle level reform, the findings of research, and how policymakers can support programs and practices that best meet the needs of young adolescents.</i>
Roundtable Session	Explorations of Middle Level Education
Leo Mickey Fenzel	<i>Predictors of Intrinsic Motivation Among Urban Middle School Students: The Mediating Role of Self-Worth</i>
Constance Baur	<i>Promoting Culturally Responsive Teaching as Enacting an Ethic of Care in Middle Level Education</i>
Patrick Akos, Timothy R. Konold, & Spencer Niles	<i>Career Readiness in Typology and Typal Membership in Middle School</i>
Robert Capraro	<i>The Effects of Curriculum Variation on Structure in Middle School Mathematics</i>
Doris Williams-Smith	<i>Learning from School Districts about Factors Related to Urban Middle School Teacher Effectiveness and Retention</i>
Michael Dalton, Mary Olson, P. Maureen Musser, Micki Caskey, William Greens, & Linda L. Samek	<i>Middle Schools: A Reform Movement at a Defining Moment</i>

MLER SIG Members Present at AERA (continued)

Sessions & Presenter/s	Topics & Titles
Roundtable Session	EXAMINATIONS OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS
Paul Deering	<i>Nurturing a State-Wide Middle Level Education Movement: The Case of Hawaii</i>
Weilin Dou, Zhengou Yuan, Shu-ling Lai, Tai-Shent, & Renmin Ye	<i>A Cross Cultural Study of Time Spent on Sports Activities</i>
Micki Caskey	<i>Capturing the Journey: A Case of Preparing Middle Level Teachers</i>
Tarik Akmal & Donald E. Larsen	<i>Aligning State Reform with Middle School Needs: Contextualizing Accountability Pressure for School Renewal</i>
Erika Daniels	<i>Exploring Motivation and Achievement in School Contexts: Sixth Graders Talk about Middle School Experiences</i>
Prudence Cooper & Hiller A. Spires	<i>Novel Readings: Exploring the Effects of Technology Enhanced Activities on Adolescent Literature Engagement and Social Learning</i>
Constance Baur	<i>Promoting Culturally Responsive Teaching as Enacting an Ethic of Care in Middle Level Education</i>
Robert Capraro	<i>The Effects of Curriculum Variation on Structure in Middle School Mathematics</i>
Business Meeting	Middle Level Education SIG
Vincent Anfara, President Kimberly Hartman, President-Elect and Program Chair Kathleen Roney, Vice President Nancy Mizelle, Treasurer Joan Lindgren, Secretary	
Symposium	
David Hough, Chair Vincent Anfara, P. Gayle Andrews, & Steven Mertens	<i>National Middle School Database Proposal</i>