

MLER Middle Level Education Research Special Interest Group

# The Chronicle of Middle Level Education Research

# MLER

MIDDLE LEVEL EDUCATION RESEARCH  
SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

## Message from the President

### Points of Interest:

- AERA 2007 Update
- Requests for Manuscripts
- Recent Publications
- Middle-Level Conferences
- Request for Policy Recommendations

Happy New Year, MLER SIG members! Be assured of my best wishes to you and your families for a healthy and prosperous 2007.

The last we met was in Nashville at the NMSA. It was very good to see so many of you at the conference. Thank you, also, for participating in our Business Meeting. I've included the notes in this newsletter for your review.

I'm sure by now you are busy pulling together your plans for the next conference---AERA/Chicago. I look forward to another fruitful time together. A BIG THANKS to Micki Caskey for her fantastic work

as Program Chair. As you know from her message in this edition of *The Chronicle*, we have a full roster of sessions. Your hard work and dedication truly embody one of the key aspects of the MLER SIG---presentations of research findings at annual conferences. Allow me to thank each of you for the proposals you submitted, the proposals you reviewed, the sessions you volunteered to chair, the papers you agreed to present, and/or the papers you agreed to discuss.

As usual, we have a full agenda for our Business Meeting in Chicago. It is always great to see you at our meeting, and word has it that the MLER SIG



**Kathleen Roney**

University of North Carolina Wilmington

logo will be on some useful give-away. But more importantly, one of the highlights of that meeting is the recognition of one of our up-and-coming researchers. As Chair of the Graduate Student Award committee,

(cont'd on Page 6)

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## RMLE Online Call for Manuscripts

National Middle School Association publishes *Research in Middle Level Education Online*, an international peer-reviewed research journal.

*RMLE Online* publishes quantitative and qualitative studies, case studies, action research studies, research syntheses, and interpretations of research literature. Current and past issues

of *RMLE Online* as well as information regarding the Editorial Review Board and Guidelines for Contributors are available at [www.nmsa.org](http://www.nmsa.org).

Please submit manuscripts and related documents via email to Micki M. Caskey, *RMLE Online* Editor, at [caskeym@pdx.edu](mailto:caskeym@pdx.edu).

**RMLE Online**  
Research in Middle Level Education

**For additional information about *RMLE Online*, please contact Dr. Micki M. Caskey at (503) 725-4749.**

## Report from the Program Chair

Micki M. Caskey, Portland State University

I am pleased to share very exciting news! The MLER-SIG will have more sessions at AERA's annual meeting than ever in the past. This year, our SIG will sponsor five paper sessions, two paper discussion sessions (formerly roundtables), two symposia, one interactive symposium, and a business meeting—a total of 12 sessions. Please see the full listing of accepted proposals in the section titled, *MLER SIG Sessions at AERA 2007*.

As you may recall, the MLER SIG received 53 proposals this past summer—49 paper or paper discussions and 4 symposia proposals. Certainly, the quantity and quality of submissions made a difference. Because of this excellent submission rate, we have an impressive slate of

sessions for AERA 2007. Many deserve our thanks. First, thanks to the authors for submitting high-quality and interesting proposals. Second, we need to extend our appreciations to the reviewers for their thoughtful and timely review. Over the course of several weeks, more than 30 reviewers participated in the blind review process. In addition, we should acknowledge those who have volunteered to serve as session chairs and discussants. On behalf of the MLER SIG, I extend my sincere thanks to all—the authors, the reviewers, session chairs, and discussants—for their contribution to middle grades education research.

In less than three months, researchers from around the world will gather at the 2007



### AERA 2007 in Chicago

April 9-13, 2007

<http://www.area.net/annualmeeting/>

annual meeting in Chicago from Monday April 9<sup>th</sup> through Friday April 13<sup>th</sup>. It is not too early to make your plans to attend—both the registration and housing reservation systems are now open ([www.aera.net](http://www.aera.net)). In February, the program will be available in electronic searchable and PDF formats. Please note that AERA has decided not to distribute the program in advance, though printed programs will be available on-site at the annual meeting.

Hope to see YOU in Chicago at the AERA's 2007 Annual Meeting!

[scthompsn@sprintmail.com](mailto:scthompsn@sprintmail.com)

## A message from the Policy Subcommittee of the Executive Committee

Sue C. Thompson, University of Missouri-Kansas City

The Policy Subcommittee is interested in receiving policies from the membership. There are two dates that the Subcommittee must receive a policy from a member of the SIG in order to have it considered for adoption.

One date is two months before the semi-annual meeting held at the National Middle School Conference in the fall, and the other date is two months before the semi-

annual meeting held at the AERA conference in the spring.

After being reviewed by the Policy Subcommittee, the decision will be made as to whether the policy will be moved forward for a vote of the membership. The policy will be sent to the membership electronically in order to accept or reject the policy.

Please consider submitting a

policy to the Policy Subcommittee that will strengthen middle level research and the education of young adolescents.

### MLER SIG Officers

#### **Kathleen Roney, President**

University of North Carolina Wilmington  
[roneyk@uncw.edu](mailto:roneyk@uncw.edu)

#### **Micki M. Caskey, President-Elect / Program Chair**

Portland State University  
[caskeym@pdx.edu](mailto:caskeym@pdx.edu)

#### **Sue Thompson, Vice President**

University of Missouri-Kansas City  
[scthompsn@sprintmail.com](mailto:scthompsn@sprintmail.com)

#### **Nancy Mizelle, Treasurer**

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#### **Joan Lindgren, Secretary**

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#### **Jennifer Friend, Newsletter Editor**

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#### **SIG Association Council Members**

P. Gayle Andrews (2005-07)  
Steven Mertens (2005-07)  
Elizabeth Pate (2005-07)  
John Niska (2006-08)  
Richard Lipka (2006-08)  
Larry Daniel (2006-08)  
Penny Bishop (2006-08)  
Kathleen Brinegar (2006-07)

## MLER SIG Paper Sessions at AERA 2007

Micki M. Caskey, Portland State University

### PAPER SESSIONS

#### Examinations into the World of Young Adolescents

*A Longitudinal Study of Young Adolescents' Perceptions of Middle Grades Instruction*  
Audra Parker;  
Stacey Neuharth-Pritchett

*Identity in the Middle: A Longitudinal Investigation of Young Adolescents' Self-Concept across the Middle Grades*  
Audra Parker;  
Stacey Neuharth-Pritchett

*Having Our Say: Middle Grade Students' Perspectives on School, Technologies, and Academic Engagement*  
Hiller Spires, Kimberly Turner; Janet Johnson

*Social Functioning and Depression of Young Adolescents Who Have Been Retained*  
Angela Fiske;  
Stacey Neuharth-Pritchett

#### Excellence in Middle Grades Teacher Education

*Negotiating Differences: Early Preservice Field Experiences in a Diverse Middle School*  
Jane Arrington;  
Penny Howell

*Middle Level Teacher Education: Conceptualizing Developmentally Responsive Teaching Practices in Early Field Experiences*  
Penny Howell

*Personal and General Teaching Efficacy among Alternatively Licensed Middle Level Teachers*  
Kimberly Hartman

*Three Studies of Middle School Mathematics: Learnings from the Field*  
Deborah Jolly;  
Sheila Cassidy

#### Exemplary Curricula and Practice in Middle Grades Education

*Making Writing Visible: Using a Cognitive Model to Analyze Teacher Candidates Written Descriptions to Mathematical Tasks*  
David Pugalee;  
Patricia Douville

*New Literacies for New Middle School Teachers: An Ongoing Case Study*  
William Kist

*Literacy Motivation and School/Non-School Literacies among Students Enrolled in a Middle School ESOL Program*  
Elizabeth Sturtevant; Grace Kim; Constanza Loriz

*Making Middle Grades Work through Arts Integration*  
Howard Coleman

#### Explorations of Middle School Issues

*Teacher Affiliation, Academic Emphasis, and Collegial Leadership: Links to Student Achievement in Middle Schools*  
Kathleen Roney;  
Howard Coleman

*Parents' Relationships and Engagement: Effects on Students' School Engagement and Performance*  
Yun Mo; Kusum Singh

*Differences in Peer and Parent Encouragement and Mathematics Achievement*  
Kimberly Filer; Mido Chang

*Adolescents' Perceptions of Deviance When Using Technology*  
Annie Daniel

#### Social Equity in Middle Grades Education

*CRIIS-Cross: Culturally Relevant Interdisciplinary Instructional Strategies that Reach Across Content Barriers*  
Kezia McNeal

*Educating At-Risk Urban African American Children: The Effects of School Climate on Motivation and Academic Achievement*  
L. Mickey Fenzel,  
Lindsey O'Brennan

*African American Males Transition to Middle School*  
Patricia Larke

*Supports and Barriers to Resilience: A Case Study of a Low SES Middle School Student*  
Heather Sheridan-Thomas

#### AERA Paper Session:

In paper sessions, authors present abbreviated versions of their papers, followed by comments/critique by a discussant and audience discussion. A typical structure for a session with four or five papers is approximately 5 minutes for the chair's introduction to the session, 10 minutes per author presentation, 20 minutes of critique, and 15 minutes of discussion.



**Save the Date!**

**National Schools to Watch Conference  
June 21-23, 2007  
Washington, DC**

To attend, exhibit, or for more information, contact Marilyn Ludolph at [marilyn@comcast.net](mailto:marilyn@comcast.net) or (630) 792-9750

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**AERA 2007 Theme:  
The World of Educational Quality**

*"...this call refocuses our attention on the diverse aspects of educational quality."*

[www.aera.net/  
annualmeeting/?id=1399](http://www.aera.net/annualmeeting/?id=1399)

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## MLER SIG Sessions at AERA 2007 (cont'd)

Micki M. Caskey, Portland State University

### PAPER DISCUSSIONS

#### Investigations of Middle Grades Teachers and Students

*Professional growth toward adaptive expertise: Case studies in middle level teacher development*  
David Strahan;  
Russell Binkely

*A Matter of Semantics: Supporting Teachers' Language and Vocabulary Instruction for Diverse Middle Level Students*  
Francine Falk-Ross

*Discourse to Promote Understanding in Middle Grades Mathematics Classes*  
Mary Truxaw,  
Thomas DeFranco

*Relationships among Elementary School Students' Epistemological Beliefs, Metacognitive Skills and Constructivist Learning Environment Perceptions*  
Mustafa Topcu;  
Ozgul Yilmaz-Tuzun

*"America is Confusing": The Schooling Experiences Of Young Adolescent Immigrant and Refugee Students in One Small Town*  
Kathleen Brinegar

#### Perspectives and Possibilities in Middle Grades Education

*The 7th Grade Immersion Program: Adventure Education to Enhance Character Education*  
Ben Paul Dyson; Allen Seed;  
Bethany Stover;  
Molly Pickering; Lisa Willis

*Empowerment and Understanding through Service-Learning: An Inner City Professional Development School Leaves neither Children nor Preservice Teachers Behind*  
Virginia Jagla

*Middle School Students and Their Teachers on the Same Page When It Comes to Effective Practices*  
Mark Storz

*What's the Bottom Line? Middle School Single-sex Classes and Student Achievement*  
Frances Spielhagen

*Multiple Perspectives on the Teaching of Writing From Middle Level Teachers, Students and University Faculty*  
Kathleen Malu;  
Salika Lawrence

### INTERACTIVE SYMPOSIUM

#### National Middle Grades Research Project

Kathleen Roney;  
Gayle Andrews,  
Micki Caskey, Kimberly Hartman, Richard Lipka,  
Steven Mertens,  
Elizabeth Pate

### SYMPOSIA

*Middle Grades and Middle Schools That Work: Research-Based Lessons from Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Trails*  
Stephen Brand

*The Impact of Middle Grade Structures, Organizations, and Practices on Student Outcomes: Moving Toward a Multivariate/Multi-Level Model*  
Steven Mertens

### Middle Level Education Research SIG Business Meeting



**Save the Date!**

**34th Annual  
National Middle  
School Association  
Conference**

**November 8-10, 2007  
Houston, Texas**

**Deadline for Proposals for  
Concurrent Sessions is  
January 31, 2007**

<http://www.nmsa.org/>

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**AERA 2007  
Advance Registration  
Closes March 2, 2007**

*Advance Fees:  
\$125 AERA Member  
\$50 AERA Student Member*

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#### **AERA Paper Discussion:**

Paper discussions allow maximum interaction with the presenters by eliminating the formal presentation. Individual presenters are assigned to numbered tables in a large meeting room where interested persons may gather for discussion with the presenter about his or her paper or project. This format is particularly appropriate for papers addressing topics best pursued through extensive discussion. Authors must bring copies of the full paper and should remain available for discussion throughout the 40-minute session.



## Middle School Journal—Call for Manuscripts

*Middle School Journal* is interested in manuscript submissions that address how the precepts of *This We Believe* are being addressed in your middle school. In addition to topics related to the 14 characteristics noted in *This We Believe* (2003), we encourage manuscripts dealing with the following issues:

- Parental involvement
- Literacy across the curriculum

- Assessing student performance
- Putting young adolescents ahead of tests
- Highly qualified middle grades teachers
- Advocating for young adolescents
- Health and wellness
- Integrating technology
- Developmentally responsibly addressing standards

- Socially equitable schools

*Manuscripts should be submitted to:*

**Cheri Howman,**  
**Assistant Editor**  
 National Middle School Association  
 4151 Executive Parkway,  
 Suite 300  
 Westerville, OH 43081  
 Address inquiries to  
 Cheri Howman at  
[howmanc@nmsa.org](mailto:howmanc@nmsa.org).



**Deadline for Submissions:**  
**March 1, 2007**

<http://www.nmsa.org/>

## Book Review

*The Land of Odds: Parenting the Teen Tornado*  
 By Linda Sirridge

Wanting a book on parenting with concrete information about the middle school environment--the challenges and triumphs in a typical school day of a 5th through 8th grader? You are in luck! Parents of middle schoolers now have a new resource available to them, *The Land of Odds: Parenting the Teen Tornado*, a conversational and user friendly book. The authors, Linda and Steve Sirridge and Jean Kasselman, combine the experience of a teacher, psychologist, and elementary principal.

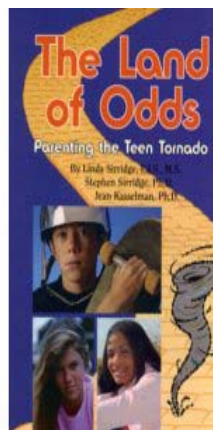
*The Land of Odds* provides a peek into the emotional and social changes of the 11-14-year-old adolescent. The book weaves the themes from the *Wizard of Oz* throughout the text, especially highlighting the similarities of Dorothy's journey with the transitions that

all young teens must pass through.

Particularly intriguing is the format of the book. The book is broken into nine chapters and is under one hundred pages in length. This format is easy for parents to finish reading in one sitting or leisurely browse one chapter at a time. Each author has an icon which designates when he/she is speaking throughout the chapter.

You will find this mixture of "voices" engaging as each professional offers a unique perspective. Linda brings her experience as a middle school teacher and counselor while Jean loans her insights as an administrator, and Steve offers his expertise as a psychologist and university professor.

*The Land of Odds* emphasizes certain themes



such as reinforcing the teen to become more of a problem solver and self advocate, establishing realistic boundaries, and looking at typical vs. nontypical behaviors. The authors also invite parents to continue to offer unconditional love, together with clear boundary setting and age appropriate expectations.

Particular attention is directed toward maintaining the child-parent relationship (the primary motivation and goal) even as these teens distance, rebel, and diminish a parent's importance.

*Authors:*

*Linda Sirridge, Ed.S.*  
*Stephen Sirridge, Ph.D.*  
*Jean Kasselman, Ph.D.*

*The Land of Odds* is a 96-page paperback from Leathers Publishers. The book costs \$14.95 and is available through on-line booksellers such as:

Amazon.com

Ingrams.com

Barnes & Noble.com

## Message from the President (cont'd)

Penny Bishop will announce this year's winner, and we will have a chance to hear of that research from the winner.

We have been so fortunate with the leadership in our SIG. Special thanks are owed to Nancy Mizelle, Secretary, and Joan Lindgren, Treasurer, for extending their time of service as officers of the SIG. I failed to notice, and they graciously neglected to remind me that their terms of office were up in 2006. Thanks, too, are in order for the service Gayle Andrews, Steve Mertens, and Elizabeth Pate provided the SIG as Council Members, but whose terms of service are up. Kathleen Brinegar, first graduate student member of the Council will be graduating in May, so her term is also up. Lastly, there is the Office of Vice President that will be vacant when Micki Caskey and Sue Thompson move into the positions of President and Program Chair/President-Elect respectively. Nominations for all of these positions (Vice President,

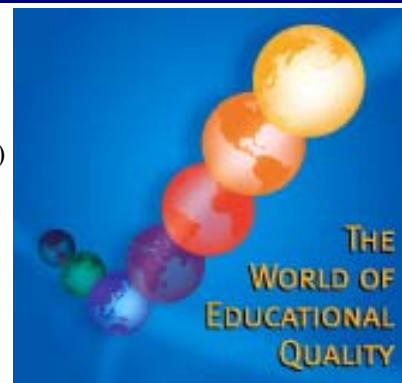
Secretary, Treasurer, and four Council Members, one of which is a graduate student) are open to all MLER SIG members. Please consider placing your name on the ballot for one of these leadership positions. We will hold an electronic vote in early March, and winners will be notified prior to the AERA/Chicago meeting where the official announcement will be made. Please send nominations, including a short bio and picture if that is available, to Joan Lindgren ([jlindgre@fau.edu](mailto:jlindgre@fau.edu)) no later than **February 14<sup>th</sup>**---a perfect Valentine gift for the SIG!!

As of this writing, the MLER SIG has a total membership of 177, thanks to the efforts of all of us, but especially, Vince Anfara. Under his leadership as President, Vince more than doubled the membership. And, for those of you who didn't know, Vince has continued his effort at building our membership. For example, Vince receives a list of the lapsed members (I found

myself in that category once!) and writes to everyone on the list to remind/encourage renewal. According to our Constitution and Bylaws, the Immediate Past President serves as chairperson of the Membership Committee and assists in maintaining the SIG's membership database. As I move into that position, I promise to keep up those efforts.

In closing, please allow me to thank each of you for the opportunity you gave me to work with you as a Council member and an officer. It is an honor to be in your company, working together for the purpose of the SIG, which is, "to improve, promote, and disseminate educational research reflecting early adolescence and middle level education." How fortunate it is that we will soon be in the wonderful hands of Micki Caskey as she accepts the role of President. Let us assure her of our continued dedication to the work of the MLER SIG.

*See you in Chicago,  
Kathy*



### **AERA 2007—Chicago**

Special AERA hotel rates can be guaranteed only if the request is accompanied by the Advance Registration Form and payment of the registration fee and received no later than **March 2, 2007**. During the advance registration period, the hotels **will not accept reservations directly**.

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### **MLER SIG Election:**

***Vice President  
Secretary  
Treasurer***

### ***Council Members***

*"Please send nominations, including a short bio and picture...to Joan Lindgren no later than February 14th..."*

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## Business Meeting Minutes

Notes submitted by Kathy Roney and Micki Caskey

### Business Meeting Held at

NMSA ANNUAL  
CONFERENCE  
Nashville, TN

Friday 3 November 2006  
5:30-6:30 P.M.  
Presidential Ballroom B

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <p>1. Welcome: Kathy Roney</p> <p>2. Presentation: Sue Thompson</p> <p>(a) We presented a plaque with our thanks to Maureen Musser for her service as editor of <i>The Chronicle of Middle Level Education Research</i>.</p> <p>(b) Jennifer Friend has taken over as editor.</p> | <p>3. Elections (Kathy Roney)</p> <p>(a) We welcomed and congratulated Kathleen Brinegar as the newly elected Graduate Student member of the Association Council.</p> <p>(b) Announcement made for upcoming election of Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and four Councilors.</p> | <p>4. Reports</p> <p>(a) AERA 2007 Program (Micki Caskey). Official notification of acceptances will be forthcoming from AERA central headquarters.</p> <p>(b) Financial (Steve Mertens). Current balance of \$2717.08</p> |
|---|--|--|

## Send In Your News!

Please send any items you would like to have considered for publication in the *Chronicle of Middle Level Education Research* to Jennifer Friend at [friendji@umkc.edu](mailto:friendji@umkc.edu).

The Newsletter is published three times annually – January, June, & October.



## Middle Level Education Research **MLER**

The purpose of the

MLER SIG is to improve, promote, and disseminate educational research reflecting early adolescence and middle level education.

Membership in the MLER-SIG connects AERA members who are committed to research issues related to young adolescents. SIG members exchange information and ideas through Annual Meeting presentations, newsletters, and informal gatherings.

Membership cost is \$10/year. The MLER-SIG (#88) is listed on the third page of the AERA Membership Application Form.

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

## Business Meeting Minutes (cont'd)

### 4. Reports (cont'd)

(c) Web (Micki Caskey). We will investigate the possibility of using the MLER SIG as a publication outlet for its members.

(d) Newsletter (Sue Thompson & Jennifer Friend). Members were asked to consider submitting articles for the newsletter, e.g., current practice, book reviews...

(e) History (Ron Williamson). Members were asked to continue to send Ron information for the history document, which is housed on the MLER SIG website.

(f) Policy Briefs (Sue Thompson). Members were asked to review article by Sue Thompson in the January 2006 issue of *The Chronicle*. Sue Thompson, Kim Hartman, and David Payton serve on the Policy Subcommittee.

(g) Membership (Vince Anfa). Current membership is at 185.

(h) Handbook (Vince Anfa). The 6<sup>th</sup> volume of the handbook series is nearing completion.

(i) Graduate Student Award (Penny Bishop). Graduate students are encouraged to apply for this annual award. Winner will be announced at AERA/Chicago.

5. National Middle Level Research Project (Steering Committee). The Steering Committee includes Gayle Andrews, Vince Anfa, Penny Bishop, Micki Caskey, Kim Hartman, Dick Lipka, Steve Mertens, John Niska, Elizabeth Pate, and Kathy Roney. The Steering Committee met in July '06 (Chicago) and again in November '06 (Nashville) and will conduct an interactive symposium during AERA/

Chicago to begin to get the membership involved in the project. Members were encouraged to attend/participate in the symposium.

6. Middle Grades Research Journal (Kathy Roney). AERA does not permit SIGs or Divisions to sponsor journals. Kathy Roney and Larry Daniel will continue to pursue the idea with AERA.

7. Other Business (Kathy Roney). It was suggested that the MLER SIG add the position of Executive Director. Larry Daniel and Vince Anfa volunteered to investigate the idea.