

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:

- MLER-SIG News
- Requests for Manuscripts
- Recent Publications
- Middle-Level Conferences
- AERA 2009 Call for Proposals

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As the 2007-08 academic year ends, it is a fitting time to reflect on the MLER SIG accomplishments. It is also an appropriate juncture to look ahead to the 2008-09 year.

The MLER SIG had a very good year. Notably, the SIG addressed one of our strategic priorities—to facilitate conversation about collaborative research among SIG members. Specifically, the SIG has launched the Common Planning Time Research Project, which is a major initiative of our National Middle Grades Research Program. The project leaders conducted two training sessions—one at the National Middle School Association

(NMSA) conference and another at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association. These sessions engaged more than 40 SIG members who will gather interview and observational data about common planning time. The SIG's progress on the goal of collaborative research is remarkable.

MLER SIG members also met to exchange research findings, share implications of findings with practitioners, and discuss ideas for future research. In November 2007, members conducted sessions and attended the SIG Business Meeting SIG at the NMSA Conference in Houston, TX. (Cont'd on page 6)

Micki M. Caskey
Portland State University



RMLE Online Call for Manuscripts

RMLE Online
Research in Middle Level Education

The editor of *Research in Middle Level Education Online* is seeking manuscripts concerning about quantitative and qualitative research studies, case studies, action research studies, as well as research syntheses.

RMLE Online is an international, peer-reviewed research journal published by the National Middle School Association.

Guidelines for Contributors, a listing of the Editorial Review Board, and issues of

RMLE Online are available at www.nmsa.org.

Please submit manuscripts and related documents via email to Micki M. Caskey, Editor, at caskeym@pdx.edu



Report from the AERA Program Chair

Sue C. Thompson, Ph.D.

University of Missouri-Kansas City

I hope your summer is going well but not too fast. This is a good time to reflect on the work that we have been doing over the last year and SUBMIT a proposal to our Middle Level Research in Education SIG Annual Conference in San Diego, CA, which will be held from Monday, April 13 to Friday, April 17, 2009.

We couldn't ask for a more attractive venue as many of

our members will just be digging out from winter.

The theme for the 2009 conference is Disciplined Inquiry: Educational Research in the Circle of Knowledge. As middle level researchers we have a long history of spanning boundaries between academic disciplines.

The more submissions our SIG has, the more opportunities our SIG will

have to present, so the key word is submit in order to share your research with other middle level educators.

Look on the www.aera.net <<http://www.aera.net/>>

website for more information about the conference, submitting proposals and participation limits. The next opportunity we have to meet as a SIG will be at the National Middle School Conference in Denver, CO., October 30 - November 1, 2008.

NEWS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Vincent A. Anfara, Jr., The University of Tennessee

A lot has happened since we were in New York for AERA. It was great seeing many of you and attending the multiple sessions sponsored by the MLER SIG. Since AERA and the close of the spring semester, I have had the opportunity to represent the MLER SIG at a number of meetings. Additionally, some interesting opportunities have presented themselves for the involvement of MLER SIG members.

Meetings: I have had the privilege of representing the MLER SIG at a number of recent meetings. From May 21-23, I attended and presented a session at the Southeast Regional Middle Level Teacher Education Symposium in Charleston, SC.

Thanks to David Virtue, President of the SCPOMLE, for this invitation and opportunity. This was a great opportunity to make NAPOMLE members aware of what has been happening in the MLER SIG regarding research and publication opportunities.

I also attended and presented at the National Forum's Schools to Watch Conference in Washington, DC from June 19-21, 2008. Our relationship with the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform continues to grow. In addition to representing the MLER SIG on the Forum, I am also a member of its Research Committee. We are working to involve the SIG in research opportunities as the Schools to Watch program works to develop a database and to have research conducted in

its schools.

In relation to AERA, I participated in a meeting in Washington, DC for the SIG Executive Committee from May 2-4. AERA is officially requiring all SIGs to rewrite their Bylaws. While this will not be a difficult task for the MLER SIG, there are some SIGs that cannot find or do not have bylaws. We are fortunate that we have kept on top of this matter. The AERA Program Committee also met in San Diego from May 30-June 1, 2008. As more information becomes available I will keep the MLER President, officers, and members informed.

Opportunities: We have recently been invited to serve as reviewers for proposals (Middle and High School Reform) to be submitted to the Institute of *(Cont'd on page 4)*

MLER SIG Officers

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SIG Association Council Members

P. Gayle Andrews (2007-09)
Dave F. Brown (2007-09)
Christopher Cook (2008-10)
Cary Gillenwater (2007-09)
Richard Lipka (2008-10)
Kezia McNeal (2007-09)
Nancy Mizelle (2008-10)
Susan Trimble (2007-09)

AERA 2008 Annual Conference MLER-SIG Business Meeting Notes

Tuesday, March 24, 2008 6:15 PM New York City

Kathleen F. Malu, William Paterson University

MINUTES

1. Welcome/Introduction of Officers (Micki Caskey); Sue Thompson, President Elect and Program Chair; Kathleen Malu, Secretary; Steve Mertens, Treasurer; Vince Anfara, Past President; Kathleen Roney, Past President; Council Members: Larry Daniel, Kezia McNeal

2. Reports

- Election Results (Micki Caskey)

There were 7 nominees for the 3 Council seats open. Council Members will serve for the 2008-2010 term. Congratulations to:

Nancy Mizelle
Christopher Cook
Dick Lipka, re-Elected

- AERA 2008 Program (Sue Thompson)

16 papers were accepted and one symposium on common planning time was held.

- Membership Report (Vince Anfara)

Current members—
1 year members 30
2 year members 127

Vincent Anfara reached out to the “lapsed” members and encouraged them to rejoin; however, many of these are retired and/or no longer interested in AERA or the Middle Level SIG

- Membership Issues—A system will be put in place to recruit researchers from the graduate school programs and the SIG needs help with this and encourages all members to share the names of their students who are working on middle level issues with the SIG.

- Finance Report (Steve Mertens)

Beginning balance was

\$2,952; revenue was \$2,063; expenses were \$2,066; ending balance is \$2,949.

- History (Micki Caskey for Ron Williamson)
Ron is working on updating the history of the SIG. He may be contacting members for information that he needs to complete this assignment.

- *The Chronicle* Report (Micky Caskey)
The Chronicle needs and encourages members to contribute to this publication. The officers are considering the expansion of *The Chronicle* to include a peer reviewed section with an editorial review board composed of the SIG Council Members and Officers.

- Policy Briefs Report (Micki Caskey)
A position statement draft was created in response to the NCLB; a joint statement with

NMSA was written.

However, since the goal of the SIG is to conduct and disseminate research and not to develop policy, policy brief work will no longer be a priority. However, on the SIG website there will be links created to other policy statements that the SIG supports.

- Graduate Student Award (Kezia McNeal)

The award will go to Molly Lawrence at Western Washington University for her study of Teacher Identity of Middle Level Science Teachers.

Members are asked to encourage graduate students to apply for the award at all levels including the master’s and doctoral levels

- Handbook (Vince Anfara)

There is a call out for (*Cont’d on page 6*)

Call for Submissions: Middle School Journal

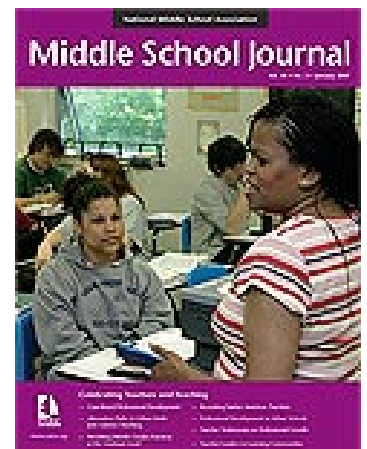
Deadline for submissions:
June 30, 2008

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:

- Effects of electronic communications on literacy
- Addressing standards in a developmentally responsive way
- Putting young adolescents ahead of test scores
- Socially equitable schools
- Literacy across the curriculum
- Assessing student performance
- Highly effective middle grades teachers
- Advocating for young adolescents
- Health and wellness
- Parental involvement
- Student safety in the cyberage

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



NEWS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Vincent A. Anfara, Jr., The University of Tennessee

(Cont'd from page 2)

Education Sciences of the U.S. Department of Education. In addition to serving as reviewers, MLER SIG members are invited to submit proposals which are due in June and again in October. As part of our efforts to make everyone aware of the MLER SIG and the fact that it is the largest group of researchers dedicated to middle grades issues, it would be great to have some MLER members volunteer to review. Please contact David Sweet at 202.219.1748 or David.Sweet@ed.gov Please identify yourself as a MLER member!

Before we know it, it will be time for NMSA annual meeting in Denver. I look forward to seeing many of you there. In the interim, please contact me if you have any issues you would like to discuss.

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Institute of Education Sciences News

The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) in the U.S. Department of Education is conducting a Middle and High School Reform research grant competition, as well as a number of other research competitions focused on other topics, e.g., mathematics & science education, teacher quality-reading and writing.

Request For Applications (RFAs) provide all the information needed to apply, and can be downloaded from: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncer/funding/>. Applications will be accepted for two competition cycles this year; due dates are June 26, 2008 and October 2, 2008. For additional information and questions, contact Dr. David Sweet by e-mail at

David.Sweet@ed.gov or
by phone at 202-219-1748.

Researchers interested in serving as peer reviewers for any of the research grant competitions should send an e-mail expressing their interest, along with a current resume as an attached file, to Anne.Ricciuti@ed.gov.

Thank you for your interest and please share this information with other interested researchers.

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Save the Date!

**35th Annual
National Middle
School Association
Conference**

**October 30-November
1, 2008
Denver, Colorado**

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

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



NMSA 35th Annual Conference General Sessions

Alan November—The Challenges and
Successes of Technology

Jim Collins—Good to Great

Marlee Matlin—Courage Plus Dreams
Equals Success



Middle Grades Research Journal

Update

David Hough, Ph.D. Missouri State University

The Middle Grades Research Journal (MGRJ) is the only hard copy research journal currently in existence that publishes studies solely addressing middle grades issues. Our *MGRJ* Editorial & Review Board brings a combined 387 years of expertise in middle grades education research to the review process and meets semi-annually to review and establish policies that help maintain the highest quality publication possible.

All manuscripts submitted for consideration of publication in *MGRJ* are examined and rated by three different members of the Review Board. Our acceptance rate is currently 23 percent and 22 new reviewers were added the past spring, after a "call" during AERA.

Beginning with Volume 3, we have moved to a quarterly publication and will soon begin negotiations with a professional publisher to assume marketing and production responsibilities.

Following is information on our most recent issues and upcoming themed issues:

Recent Issues:

Volume 3, Number 1, Spring 2008 (Open; Released: March 17, 2008)

Volume 3, Number 2,

Summer 2008 (Open; Release Date: June 16, 2008)

Volume 3, Number 3, Fall 2008 (Themed: Literacy/ Reading & Writing – Hall & Falk-Ross Guest Editors)

Volume 3, Number 4, Winter 2008 (Open)

Volume 4, Number 1, Spring 2009 (Themed)

Upcoming Themed Issues:

English Language Learners: Policies & Practices in the Middle Grades – Friend, Guest Editor

Middle School Math – Capraro & Shih, Guest Editors

Peer Learning – Thurston, Guest Editor

Research Design & Analytic Methods for Middle Grades Researchers – Capraro & Waxman, Guest Editors

Alternative Schools, potential guest editors: Horton & Key, University of Memphis, Guest Editors

We would like to thank our university partners and the faculty who support *MGRJ* in a variety of ways. Whether it is financial support through subscriptions, travel to meetings, in-kind personnel costs or countless hours of

volunteer work involved in reviewing manuscripts and establishing policies and procedures, we are indebted to the many institutions and their faculties that have contributed to our success.

MGRJ University Participants & Supporters in 2008

Appalachian State University
Hofstra University
Kutztown University
Pittsburg State University
Portland State University
Temple University
University of North Carolina – Wilmington

American University
Bowling Green State University

Clemson University
Colorado State University
Florida A&M University
Georgia College & State University

Georgia State University
Iowa State University
Johns Hopkins University
Lenoir-Rhyne College
Mississippi State University
Monmouth College

Northern Illinois University
Northwood Elementary
Oklahoma State University
Purdue University
SEDL

Success for All Foundation
Texas A&M University

Texas Woman's University
The University of Georgia

University of Arizona
University of California – Berkeley

University of Dundee
University of Florida
University of Georgia
University of Houston at Clear Lake

University of Illinois
University of Kansas
University of Kentucky
University of Louisville
University of Missouri – Kansas City

University of Nebraska – Lincoln
University of Nevada – Las Vegas

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
University of Oklahoma
University of South Florida
University of Tennessee

University of Utah
University of Vermont
University of West Georgia
Virginia Tech
West Chester University
Western Carolina University

-David Hough, Ph.D.

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MissouriState.edu

Message from the President (cont'd)

In March 2008, numerous members of the MLER SIG came together in New York City for AERA's annual meeting. Our impressive program included paper sessions, paper discussions, symposia, a workshop, and a SIG Business Meeting.

With regard to our SIG Business Meetings, these are an ideal time for members to participate actively in the SIG. Be sure to attend these meetings when you are at the NMSA conference or AERA annual meeting. I think you will find these meetings are another venue for facilitating conversation about collaborative research. They are also a time for us to honor our graduate student research awardee, advance the SIG's strategic priorities, share SIG membership and financial information, and recognize

the service of SIG officers and councilors.

Speaking of recognizing the service of SIG councilors, I extend my thanks to our two outgoing councilors, Larry Daniel and John Niska. On behalf of the SIG, I commend you for your two-year service to the SIG. I also am pleased to announce the election of two new SIG councilors, Christopher Cook (Northern Kentucky University) and Nancy Mizelle (Georgia College and State University), as well as the re-election of Dick Lipka (Pittsburg State University). Thank you for your willingness to serve the SIG!

Your MLER SIG officers have been quite busy this past academic year. Vince Anfara (SIG Executive Director) has represented the SIG in a

number of events. Please check out his report to learn about all his activities on behalf of the SIG. Sue Thompson (Program Chair) did an outstanding job with the SIG's sessions at AERA's 2007 annual meeting. Her report summarizes all the sessions. Similarly, the work of Penny Bishop (Vice-President), Kathleen Malu (Secretary), Steve Mertens (Treasurer), and Kathleen Roney (Past-President) has helped to ensure the SIG's success. My sincere thanks for your continued service.

Looking ahead, I encourage you to look for opportunities to become active in the SIG. As the current President, I urge you to consider submitting proposals for the 2008 AERA annual meeting. As you may recall, our session allocations are based

in part on the number of proposal submissions. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Sue Thompson, who continues as Program Chair for the 2008 annual meeting. The proposal submission system is open from June 1st to August 1st 2008. We appreciate and value your submissions!

I also solicit your support in working on other MLER SIG strategic priorities. My goals are: (a) to continue work to identify and recruit researchers from the graduate schools with middle grades programs, (b) to help develop a review board for a peer-reviewed section of *The Chronicle of Middle Level Education Research*, and (c) explore ways to increase networking opportunities for SIG members at conferences. Together, we can accomplish these goals!

-Micki M. Caskey

Business Meeting Minutes (Cont'd)

Notes submitted by Kathleen F. Malu

(Cont'd from page 3) chapters for Volume 7 of the Handbook. This Handbook will explore middle level issues and research at the international level. More than 20 chapters have been proposed that will report on countries on 5 different continents. In addition, this volume needs an editorial

review board. Interested members are asked to contact any of the co-editors, Vince

Anfara, Kathleen Roney or Steve Mertens.

- Executive Committee Report (Larry Daniel) Members are encouraged to read this report and offer feedback. One of the changes this committee is considering will be to create a review panel for AERA sessions that is more prestigious. SIGs may be required to increase the number of reviewers who evaluate proposals.

- National Middle Grades Research Report (Kathleen Roney, Steve Mertens and Vincent Anfara) Kathleen Roney, Steve

Mertens and Vince Anfara are working on a national research project about Common Planning Time. Members are encouraged to attend one of the training sessions that will be offered around the country so that as many researchers as possible will be able to participate and contribute data to this project.

- Other Business (Micki Caskey) Because benefits have been added to the SIG, such as the Executive Director position that allows the SIG to have a representative on other boards of importance to the SIG and the creation of a national research agenda, the SIG is exploring a dues

increase and will contact members about what will be an appropriate increase. The Officers have engaged in a team effort to work for the SIG including the exchange of emails, telephone and conference calls. Officers and Council Members are exploring ways to create additional networking venues. Perhaps, an informal social gathering after the SIG business meeting and/or hosting a social event at AERA. The goal is to facilitate conversations about collaborative research among SIG members. One initiative is the National Middle Grades Research Project.

Middle Level Education Research SIG National Middle Grades Research Project

By: Kathleen Roney

YOU ARE INVITED to join AN EXCITING, CHALLENGING, & TIMELY PROJECT.
The MLER SIG is developing a national middle grades research project.

• **WHAT IS the NMGRP?** Access the MLER SIG website. <http://www.rmle.pdx.edu/> and look for the National Middle Grades Research Project (NMGRP) on the menu. Information regarding **Project Development** is outlined as follows:

□ *White Paper*: contains the Proposal for Establishing a National Middle Level Research Project. Very detailed, with references to support the proposal.

<http://www.rmle.pdx.edu/MLER%20Nat%271%20M-L%20Project%20White%20Paper.pdf>

□ *Steering Committee*: contains short bios on the 10 members of the Steering Committee for the NMGRP. <http://www.rmle.pdx.edu/SteeringCommitteeBios.pdf>

□ *Chicago 2006 Planning Session*: Synopsis of work accomplished by seven members of the Steering Committee. http://www.rmle.pdx.edu/Chicago%20meeting_synthesis.pdf

□ *Nashville 2006 Planning Session*: Synopsis concludes with summary of what the Steering Committee members agreed to regarding the project. Specifically, multiple methods would be encouraged, longitudinal design, national in scope, data are co-owned, and professional development would be provided to participant researchers.

http://www.rmle.pdx.edu/Nashville%20meeting_synthesis.pdf

□ *Chicago/AERA 2007 Planning Session*: Identifies the two directions of the NMGRP: (a) an empirical study of CPT, and (b) a theoretical study to explore the overarching theories that have guided middle grades research. <http://www.rmle.pdx.edu/AERA%20Chicago%20notes.pdf>

• **WHAT IS THE PROJECT on COMMON PLANNING TIME (CPT)?** Access <http://www.rmle.pdx.edu/> as follows:

□ *CPT Project overview*: covers major aspects of this research project and offers a timeline of activities. http://www.rmle.pdx.edu/NMGRP_project%20info.pdf

□ *CPT Key Research Findings*: includes research related to the impact of CPT and documents the positive effects of providing interdisciplinary team of teachers with common planning time.

<http://www.rmle.pdx.edu/Key%20CPT%20Research%20Findings.pdf>

□ *Chicago 2007 Planning Session*: four members of the Steering Committee met to create the protocols (interview and observation checklist) and identify “next steps” in the project. Five research questions were formulated to guide the analyses of data in the national database; researchers who join this project can establish their own additional research questions.

<http://www.rmle.pdx.edu/Common%20Planning%20Time%20Research%20Project.pdf>

• **HOW DO I GET INVOLVED in CPT?**

○ Kathy Roney is serving as Project Coordinator. Send her your contact information.
roneyk@uncw.edu

○ **ATTEND** a training workshop for CPT participant researchers. You will receive the protocols for data collection (interview protocol; observation checklist protocol) and -engage in professional development for use of protocols

-a review of literature in regard to CPT

-opportunities to submit for publication, e.g., Handbook of Research in Middle Level Education

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.

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

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



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.

2008 Middle Level Education Research Annual: *The 2008 Middle Level Education Research Annual: Middle Grades Teaching and Teacher Education* is a collection of articles from National Middle School Association's refereed journals—*Research in Middle Level Education Online* and *Middle School Journal*.

The *2008 Research Annual* includes 10 articles about what research in middle grades education says about teacher effectiveness, professional development, teachers' practice, and teacher preparation experiences. This convenient, portable, and concise compendium is invaluable resource for practitioners and principals, teacher educators and researchers, as well as policymakers and others interested in middle grades education. It is well-suited for university courses, professional development workshops, and self-study.

Graduate Student Award

Happy New Year Middle Level Educators!!

As you know, the work that we do on behalf of Middle Level Students affects ALL students so that they can be successful. One of the ways that we, as a SIG, highlight this work is through our Graduate Student Research Award. The application deadline will be in January 2009. Please, encourage those quality graduate students who are doing great work to apply. If you are one of those graduate students, GO FOR IT! Apply today! The recipient will have the opportunity to present his/her research at a national conference.

For more details, please visit www.rmle.pdx.edu under Graduate Student Award or contact Dr. Kezia

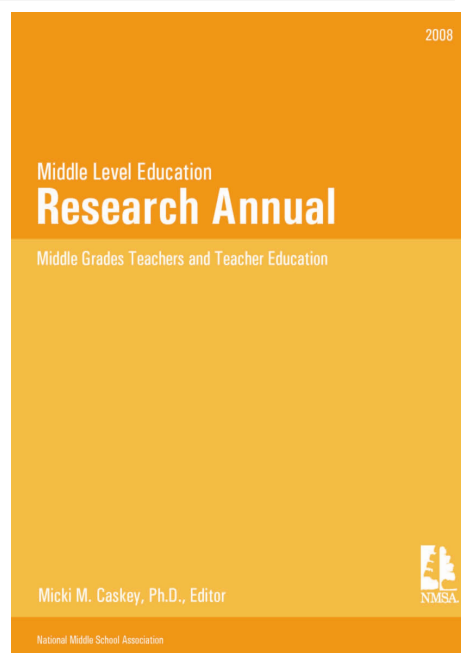
McNeal at kmcneal@gsu.edu.

We look forward to exciting work being done! Remember, when you're in the Middle, you're right on target!!

Best Regards,

Kezia McNeal

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ISBN 978-1-56090-205-8
Edited by Micki M. Caskey
Details 2008 • 144 pages
Published by NMSA
Available from NMSA Store at:
<http://www.nmsa.org/store/>