

OMLA News



Oregon Middle Level Association

May 2002

It's Time to Join or Renew!

Membership Year Change

OMLA has changed its membership year to correspond with COSA. The membership year now runs from July 1st to June 30th. COSA handles our membership records and this change will make it easier for their bookkeeping. If you attended the winter conference at Salishan, OMLA membership was included in the fee. If you would like to renew or join OMLA, the membership form is enclosed in this newsletter and now is the time to do it.

Types of OMLA Membership

Everyone interested in middle-level education is invited to join. For individuals, the cost is \$35 for the year. The rate for full-time students is only \$20 per year, a real bargain. Schools and institutions can join for \$125 per year and that fee includes five members, all of whom receive individual benefits.

Why Join?

OMLA's motto is: "Together celebrating the uniqueness of the middle level experience through advocacy and professional support." As middle level educators, you know how special and unique it is to serve this population. With ever-increasing demands on schools, having association with other middle-level professionals is invaluable.

Membership benefits include:

- Reduced conference fees and discount book prices
- Regional activities, conferences and networking
- Influence in Oregon middle level education through cooperation with COSA, TSPC, ODE, Middle Level Consortium, and Northwest Affiliates Partnership
- Influence in National Middle School Association through Western Region Trustee

NMSA/OMLA Joint Membership

OMLA now has joint membership available for individuals with the National Middle School Association, the organization with which we are affiliated. A mailing with joint membership applications was sent to every middle level school in Oregon in April. It may be hanging on a bulletin board in your school right now. If you have not seen it and you are interested, look on the web at www.nmsa.org or www.omla.org, or contact COSA at 503-581-3141.

The cost of joint membership for an individual is \$89 per year.

Renew or Join NOW!



OMLA

"Together celebrating the uniqueness of the middle level experience through advocacy and professional support."

NMSA membership = reduced fee for the upcoming conference!

From OMLA President Mike Scott:

How's It Going through This Journey of Reform?

I was recently asked about how middle level reform was going across the State of Oregon. The question made me stop and think about where we are in this important journey. Although it was difficult to come up with many answers to this question, it did cause me to generate a number of questions that I believe middle level educators should be asking themselves.

Is my school, where I would like it to be regarding middle school reform? Many school call themselves middle schools. In too many instances, this is in name only. Do you remember how excited you were when the middle school movement began? The conversations that were held around issues such as advisory, schools within schools, community partnerships, service learning, common planning time and other middle school concepts were exciting and invigorating. Did your school reach the vision that was established at that time?

Many schools have implemented a number of the basic elements

necessary to a successful middle school, but there is still work to be done. Dave Krommer, President of the Ohio Middle School Association, states that, "For others, the basics are there, but something is still missing. They have common team planning time but they have little to say when they meet and so they often cancel their meetings. Or the meetings become only a forum to talk about the few students who are most difficult to handle. But others are moving way ahead. Interestingly, it is becoming clear that one test of middle school effectiveness is how far the school staff feels they need to go to become truly state of the art. In schools that have an excellent program, they know they have a long way to go. Less effective schools often see themselves as having arrived as some sort of middle school nirvana."

As the school year winds down, it is time to begin setting goals for 2002-03. Are you one of those

people that realize that there is still work to be done? I would like to suggest that as you participate in your goal setting activities for the next school year that you focus on one or two attainable items that will move you closer to that "middle school nirvana" that Mr. Krommer mentioned. Maybe your goal is to revamp your advisory program. Focus on this goal and work deliberately and purposefully to accomplish it. Building a quality middle school takes time.

I would like to thank you for your work with our middle level students over this past year. Your efforts to make middle schools developmentally responsive to the needs of our young adolescents are appreciated.

I hope that the summer months provide you with an opportunity to relax and to reflect about all that is important to you. I wish each of you the best, both personally and professionally.

"Building a quality middle school takes time."

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Ending the Year with Fun and Recognition

Perhaps more than at any other school level, middle schools and junior highs often do activities to celebrate the end of the year. Here are some of the many great activities that are done in Oregon during the last month of school:

- Cultural Arts Celebration to honor the diversity within the community.
- Leadership class prepares a slide show (taking pictures all year long) for the last day of school including all students. The student body watches the slides just before they receive their yearbooks.
- Talent show for all-school assembly requiring auditions and practices.
- Yearbook signing
- Awards assemblies
- Recognition activities for honor roll students
- Leadership class helps put on fabulous lunch activities: dunk tank, Karaoke on stage, field games like a water balloon toss, pie eating contests, sumo wrestling, a Velcro slide, or some other big deal. They must earn the activity by appropriate behavior during the day and at lunch for the event to take place.
- PE Field Day where student teams compete in a variety of activities, possibly with an Olympics theme and designated countries.
- Arts silent auction to support arts, music, and theater programs.
- Cabaret celebration of students' arts achievements in a variety show format. Bands, orchestras and choir do a few numbers each, upcoming spring play does a ten-minute preview; and student artwork of all kinds is displayed.
- "Together We Stand" assembly that focuses on diversity and supporting all students at the school.
- Recognition activities within each team
- All-school social
- Thank you notes to teachers and staff from students

Celebrating the 8th graders' last day is a big deal in many schools. Some activities done at middle schools include:

- Barbecue or picnic during school time with activities such as Velcro Man, sumo wrestling, dancing and eating, of course.
- Trip to an amusement place such as Oaks Park or Thrillville. A favorite activity for students may be to ride the bumpers cars with the teachers.
- Field trip to Honeyman State Park on the coast.
- Glitzy celebration/dance funded and orchestrated by an 8th grade parent group

Awards assemblies are popular and may include recognition for:

- Cumulative grade point average
- Being on the honor roll every term
- Citizenship
- President's Academic Awards
- Quarterly math facts test scores
- Highest scores on statewide tests
- Principal's awards
- Community service
- Fine arts achievement
- Fitness and athletic participation
- Significant improvement (academic or citizenship)
- Promotion certificates (with 8th grade pictures)



Transition to high school can be celebrated in special ways::

- After the schoolwide slide show and yearbook signing, 8th grade students at Lake Oswego Junior High have a symbolic transition to the high school. The students leave LOJH in a ceremonial walk across the street to the high school. We call this our balloon arch transition walk. As they cross the street and go through the arch, the parents and friends cheer them on as they approach for the first time in a move toward high school as the new incoming 9th grade class.
- Students at North Albany Middle School will go to one of two high schools on the other side of the river. To symbolize the transition, students walk across a "bridge" at a formal promotion ceremony decorated with balloons that have the colors of the two high schools.

Have an awesome summer!

Extensive Confusion Exists Regarding Middle Level Teaching Authorization

A Message from Maureen Musser, Willamette University OMLA Higher Education Representative

There appears to be extensive confusion regarding the assignment of teachers with a middle level authorization. A statewide survey of middle level principals (Oregon Research Report: Middle Level Licensure Study, April 2002) indicates the extent of the confusion. Of the 199 middle school principals in schools with grades 6-8 who were sent the survey, 127 responded for a response rate of 64%.

Two common employment scenarios were given in the survey. The majority (80%) of the principals incorrectly answered the first scenario and 36% responded incorrectly to the second scenario. The scenarios in the survey are included in those given below. Read them and answer the questions to see how your knowledge of the middle level authorization compares to principals from around the state. The correct answers and an explanation follow the questions.

This article addresses only a thin slice of the findings of the Middle Level Licensure Study conducted by the Oregon Quality Assurance in Teaching project. The survey instrument was developed by Michael Dalton (O-QAT staff and lead researcher), members of the Oregon Middle Level Consortium, William Greene (Southern Oregon U.), Maureen Musser (Willamette U.), Marilyn Olson (University of Oregon), Judie Rhoads (Western Oregon U.) and Linda Samek (TSPC). Complete data are available at: <http://www.ous.edu/aca/studies.htm>

The Questions

Scenario A

A teacher with middle level/high school authorization and an endorsement in a single “core” content area (e.g., social studies) has applied for a middle school teaching position not in their primary subject area (e.g., language arts).

1. According to your understanding of the TSPC rules, can this person be hired for this position without being “conditionally assigned” (misassigned)?

Yes No Don’t Know

Scenario B

A teacher with middle level/high school authorization and an endorsement in a “specialty” content area (e.g., art, music or physical education) but who has not passed the Multiple Subjects Assessment Test (MSAT) has applied for a middle school teaching position not in his/her primary subject area (e.g., language arts).

2. According to your understanding of the TSPC rules, can this person be hired for this position without being “conditionally assigned” (misassigned)?

Yes No Don’t Know

The following questions were not on the survey. I have included them to help you check your understanding of the regulations and to hopefully clear up other areas that may be a little confusing.

Scenario C

A teacher with a degree in history and a middle level authorization has applied for a middle school teaching position teaching science. The teacher has an endorsement to teach multiple subjects but does not have a science endorsement.

3. According to your understanding of the TSPC rules, can this person be hired for this position without being “conditionally assigned” (misassigned)?

Yes No Don’t Know

4. According to your understanding of the TSPC rules, can the person in “Scenario C” be hired to teach in a self-contained classroom without being “conditionally assigned” (misassigned)?

Yes No Don’t Know

Extensive Confusion Exists Regarding Middle Level Teaching Authorization

Answers & Discussions

Question 1.

The correct answer is YES. Only 20% of the principals answered this question correctly. To have a middle level authorization, teachers must demonstrate knowledge in multiple subjects by passing the Multiple Subject Assessment Test (MSAT). In addition, they must also demonstrate in-depth content knowledge by having a degree in a content area taught at the middle level or by passing a PRAXIS content area test. By passing the MSAT they qualify for a Multiple Subject endorsement that allows them to teach any subject at the middle level except those “specialty” content areas (e.g., art, music or physical education). They do NOT need to have a content area endorsement to teach a subject all day or part of the day.

One reason that principals may have difficulty with this question is that the new regulations are different than those that were in force when most principals obtained their license. Under the old regulations (prior to 1999) the correct answer would have been “no”. Another possibility may be that they focused on the second authorization, in this case, high school. It is important to remember that the middle level stands alone. It does not matter if the other level of authorization is elementary or high school; the middle level authorization allows teachers to teach in single-subject, dual-subject, multiple-subject, or self-contained classrooms.

If you would like to go back now and change your other answers, it is OK. This test is not for a grade.

Question 2.

The correct answer is NO. Approximately 64% of the principals answered this question correctly. As discussed above, you cannot teach at the middle level unless you have demonstrated knowledge of multiple subjects by passing the MSAT, unless it is in one of the “specialty” content areas. It is possible that more principals answered this correctly because this is an example of an area of the regulations that did not change in 1999.

Question 3.

The correct answer is YES. As mentioned above, it does not matter if the second level of authorization is elementary or high school, the middle level stands alone. To have the middle level authorization, the teacher is required to pass the MSAT and thus can teach anything other than the “specialty” areas at the middle level. However, as a practical matter, it would be unlikely that a principal would hire someone to teach science without a strong background in the content area.

Question 4.

The correct answer is YES. They have demonstrated broad content knowledge by passing the MSAT. It is important to remember that new teachers with middle level authorizations have had experience in a practicum and/or student teaching at the middle level reflecting the varied organizational and instructional structures of middle level schools. Their student teaching experience may have been in a self-contained classroom, multiple-subject, dual-subject, or single-subject classroom.

The licensure regulations that went into effect in 1999 allow principals considerable leeway in assigning middle level teachers. Much of the confusion may be the result of principals applying concepts under the old regulations. Under the old regulations, a teacher had to have a content area endorsement to teach a single subject more than half of a day. This is no longer true. Under the old regulations, a teacher had to have an elementary authorization to teach multiple subjects, but this also is no longer true. The new middle level authorizes allows teachers to do both.

Middle Level Authorization = Multiple Subjects

As stated in OAR 584-060-0051, “(4) Middle level authorization is valid for any teaching assignment, except specializations requiring endorsement under OAR 584-060 0071, in grades five through ten of a school designated as a middle school or junior high school”. Administrators need to be aware of the regulations so that they do not unnecessarily restrict their candidate pool and understand their options for assigning middle-level authorized teachers.

Thanks for the Support!

These schools have donated \$50 to the Steering Committee for the upcoming NMSA Conference to help with postage, printing and other related costs. We appreciate their support!

Bend-LaPine School District	Ponderosa Junior High
Conestoga Middle School	Redmond School District
Evergreen Middle School	Rowe Middle School
French Prairie Middle School	Scappoose Middle School
Henly Middle School	Springfield Middle School
Highland Park PTG	Stoller Middle School
McLoughlin Middle School	Sunrise Middle School
Molalla River Middle School	Tigard-Tualatin School District
North Albany Middle School	Whitford Middle School
Parkrose Middle School	

If your school would like to contribute, checks can be written to "Local Steering Committee Funds" and sent to LOJH, 2500 Country Club Road, Lake Oswego, OR 97034. Thank you!!

Call to Writers

Do you like to write and have thoughts to share with other middle school educators? The *OMLA News*, published quarterly, welcomes contributions. Of course, the *OMLA News* reserves all publication rights, but we really would like to have entries from you!

Articles for consideration can be emailed as attachments to:

beth_madison@albany.k12.or.us

Job Seeking?

If you are in the market for a school position, don't forget COSA's website. Many school districts in Oregon use this easy-to-use site:

www.cosa.k12.or.us

Thoughts from a Conference

The National School Conference Institute held its annual Conference on Urban Education and Students At-Risk in Atlanta in April. Here are some thoughts from featured speakers.

Discipline with Dignity: Basic Principles

- ❖ Long-term behavior changes, not quick fixes
- ❖ Dealing with student behavior is part of the job
- ❖ Rules must make sense
- ❖ Be a model of what you expect
- ❖ Always treat students with dignity
- ❖ Responsibility is more important than obedience
- ❖ Stop doing ineffective things
- ❖ You can be fair without always having to treat everyone the same

From As Tough As Necessary: A Discipline with Dignity Approach by Dr. Richard Curwin. According to Dr. Curwin, "The tougher you get with tough kids, the worse they get. They don't get better from punishment, they just get sneakier."

www.disciplineassociates.com

The 15 Most Effective Strategies for Dropout Prevention

1. Family involvement
2. Early childhood education
3. Reading and writing programs
4. Mentoring/tutoring
5. Service learning
6. Alternative schooling
7. Out-of-school enhancement
8. Professional development
9. Openness to diverse learning styles and multiple intelligences
10. Instructional technologies
11. Individualized learning
12. Systemic renewal
13. Community collaboration
14. Career education and workforce readiness
15. Conflict resolution and violence prevention

From Strategies to Help Solve Our School Dropout Problem, recently published in paperback by Franklin Schargel. Mr. Schargel bases his concepts on Total Quality Management principles. The book is laid out in a user-friendly fashion and has a wealth of references for websites and publications.

www.schargel.com





NMSA

CONFERENCE

The 2002 National Middle School Association Annual Conference: "Building Bridges to the Future," certain to be a most spectacular event, will be held right here in Oregon. Several thousand teachers, administrators, support staff, and parents will attend the most fabulous middle level professional development opportunity to land in the Northwest region for the past decade. If there is one event that your staff simply does not want to miss, this is it.

As you know, the National Middle School Association is today's leading voice in middle level education, and each year its annual conference attracts thousands of attendees who take part in hundreds of break-out sessions, keynote addresses, school visitations, and action labs, not to mention the food, fun, team building, and networking that takes place during hosted social events. In addition, hundreds of exhibits will be set up, offering hands-on views of exciting programs, products, and services that can enrich students' experiences at any middle school.

This fall, NMSA's 29th Annual Conference and Exhibit "Building Bridges to the Future" will take place at the Convention Center in Portland, Oregon. A feast of opportunities stretches from Thursday, October 31 through Saturday, November 2. For a more detailed look at the conference, registration brochures have been sent out recently to districts and buildings so be looking out for them if you've not yet seen one. Even more information can found by checking out this URL:
www.nmsa.org/annualconf2002/index.htm

The brochure and website include registration rates and hotel information. Please take advantage of special rates by registering early and sending a team from your school or district. For large groups of 50 or more, extraordinary discounts are available that you'll definitely want to consider. For example, whereas the base registration rate is \$175/NMSA member and \$220/non-member, you can send a team of five for the price of four. Even more significant savings can be achieved if you're sending a large group. For registration of 50 - 249 people, the fee is just \$99/person; for 250 - 499 people is \$89/person; and for 500+ it is just \$79/person. Try to find a comparable event for that amount!

Meanwhile, we could use your help in planning this extraordinary event. A contingent of middle level educators from Oregon is taking care of much of the planning. While these people are giving freely of their time, they need help with costs for printing, postage, publicity, etc. We wish to thank those of you who have already made a \$50 donation to help, and we ask that other middle schools and school districts do the same. Your check can be made out to Local Steering Committee Funds and sent to LOJH, 2500 Country Club Road, Lake Oswego, OR 97034.

We hope you'll join the thousands of educators from the Northwest and from all across the country who will be taking this opportunity to see and hear and share what's best and current in

www.nmsa.org/annualconf2002/index.htm



Confederation of Oregon

School Administrators

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**RENEW
or JOIN
NOW!**

Ballot for Election of Officers to the Board of Directors Oregon Middle Level Association

Please vote for one person to fill each of the following positions:

Treasurer: (two-year term)

____ Florence Richey, Assistant Principal, Lake Oswego Junior High School

Region 4 Director: Jackson, Josephine, Klamath and Lake Counties (three-year term)

Region 5 Director: Coos, Curry, Douglas and Lane Counties (three-year term)

____ Charlie Wilshire, MAT Student, University of Oregon

Region 6 Director: Benton, Lincoln, Marion and Polk Counties (three-year term)

____ Heitho Reuter, Assistant Principal, North Albany Middle School

Please send this ballot to:

OMLA, 707 13th Street SE, Salem, OR 97301-4035, by June 15, 2002

clip 'n' send

Thank you!