



an affiliate of the National Middle School Association

Oregon Middle Level Association

April 2006

Our Conference Was GREAT!

Thanks to all of you who joined us as participants, presenters, awardees, exhibitors, board members, COSA staff, and guests at our OMLA/OASSA/OESPA winter conference at the Embarcadero in Newport. We had a great time, and it even snowed for us. A lot of work went into this conference and it showed. We are also grateful to the Embarcadero for such great hospitality.



Micki Caskey presented her wonderful session on *Motivating Masses in the Middle*



NMSA Asst. Executive Director Jack Berckemeyer was so funny even the cooks came out to listen!



Our award winners--Brook Wagner, Mark Wandell, Niki Sheldon, Jay Kosik, Front Row: Shannon Foxley, Audrey Bradshaw, Ron Anthony



President-Elect Jill O'Neill wants you to come to next year's conference also!

OMLA is endorsing Vincent Anfara for NMSA President-elect and Debra Melle for West Region.

OMLA Conference

March 16-17, 2007

Hood River Inn
Hood River, Oregon

The theme of our 2007 spring conference is "Reaching Diverse Learners in the Middle." Located on the beautiful Columbia River in the popular windsurfing town of Hood River, the conference will feature keynote and breakout speakers, a tour of the Full Sail Brewery, a hosted social, awards dinner, and brunch.

Are you interested in presenting an educational session for the benefit of your fellow middle school practitioners? The application form for presenters will be on our website at www.omla.net.

NMSA MEMBERS: VOTE!

NMSA Election--Look inside for info!

2006 Election Ballot National Middle School Association	
PLEASE NOTE: All ballots must be received by May 15, 2006, to be counted in the 2006 election.	
MEMBER NUMBER 71622	NMSA WEST REGION (Vote for one in each category.)
	President-elect <input checked="" type="radio"/> Vincent Anfara <input type="radio"/> Theresa Hinkle
	Trustee to Represent West Region <input checked="" type="radio"/> Debra Melle <input type="radio"/> Connie Weiner
	Trustee to Represent Diverse Cultures <input type="radio"/> Sharon Riley Ordu <input type="radio"/> Suwess Ricks
<small>You may also fax your ballot to 614-396-4210 by May 15, 2006.</small>	

Team Leadership: Helping to Make Team Leaders Effective

by Marcia Ross and Robert C. Spear Ed.D.

“Teamwork remains the ultimate competitive advantage, because it is so powerful and so rare”.

Patrick Lencioni in, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*

Middle level instructional teams that have a focus on coordinating the curriculum and improving teaching strategies to increase student learning are in the enviable position to harness the power and advantage identified so clearly by Lencioni in his leadership fable. Their ability to succeed at their multiple tasks hinges on a number of critical factors, not the least of which is ongoing development and support of team leaders.

Together with the principal, team leaders share the responsibility for transforming schools from educational organizations to true learning communities. Through schoolwide weekly team leader meetings and at other opportune times, team leaders should be co-leaders of the school involved in schoolwide goal setting and decisionmaking. As learning-centered leaders, they are potentially strong

collaborators in the creation of successful schools for young adolescents.

In the day-to-day operation of the teams, team leaders should act as facilitators responsible for maintaining the focus on team and school-level tasks related to the most important goal of improving teaching and learning. Due to the nature of a team and unlike some other school organizational models, their learning-centered leadership must be asserted without compromising the equal status nature of teachers as colleagues.

Simply put, in addition to subject matter knowledge, knowledge of the learners, and instructional skills, these teacher leaders require expertise in a variety of areas. These include, but are not limited to, communication, group decision-making, goal setting and evaluation, time management,

team building, problem solving and use of an inquiry process. Team leaders should also have a working knowledge of group norms and operating procedures that will enhance each team’s ability to function effectively.

The ability of team leaders to be effective is determined to a great extent by their opportunities to develop the skills necessary to their school-wide and team specific responsibilities and the support of school and district leaders. Team leader training must be an important part of the professional development plan of middle level schools. The middle school movement is a well-researched reform initiative. We need to continue to develop the learning-centered leaders needed to create and sustain successful schools for young adolescents.

Resources Cited:

- * Anfara, V.A. and others (2003). Research and resources: In support of This We Believe. NMSA.
- * Jackson, A.W. and Davis, G.A. (2000) Turning points 2000. New York: Teachers College Press.
- * Lencioni, P. (2002). The five dysfunctions of a team. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- * Sergiovanni, T.J. (1992). Moral leadership: Getting to the heart of school improvement. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

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Vote for VINCE!

As the higher education representative to the Oregon Middle Level Association's Board, I have the distinct honor of endorsing Vince Anfara for President-Elect of the National Middle School Association. The election ballot was mailed out recently and is due on May 15. So please vote! ---Micki Caskey, OMLA Higher Ed

Vince is an associate professor at The University of Tennessee who draws on 18 years in middle and high schools as a teacher and administrator. He is the chair of the NMSA Research Advisory Board and higher education representative of the Tennessee Association of Middle Schools. He is highly attuned to the needs of middle grades practitioners and collaborates with schools on issues ranging from administrative leadership to middle grades reform.

Vince is a person of vision and action. When Vince assumed leadership for the Middle Level Education Research Special Interest Group, the organization SIG flourished during his term as President-Elect and President. Specific examples include:

- (1) a noteworthy growth in membership (30 to 200 members)
- (2) the design and editorship of *The Handbook of Research in Middle Level Education* series
- (3) the development of a strategic plan to guide the revitalization of middle grades research
- (4) the composition of policy documents in support of young adolescents and middle grades education.

As Past-President, his service to middle grades education continued as exemplified by his co-editorship of *The Encyclopedia of Middle Level Education*, an important resource for all middle grades educators.

Vince's active leadership style is remarkable and enduring. As the Chair of the NMSA's Research Advisory Board, he personifies the Board's mission "to support National Middle School Association as a voice for middle grades education and young adolescents by advising the association regarding research-based, credible evidence."

Under his leadership, the Board authored:

- (1) the publication of *Research and Resources in Support of This We Believe*, a companion piece for NMSA's *This We Believe: Successful Schools for Young Adolescents*
- (2) a proposal for the National Data Base Project to further middle grades research
- (3) the content of *Middle Grades Education: Fundamentals and Research* project (the update *The Middle School Concept: Why It Works*)

Vince!



- (4) the design and organization of the research sessions at NMSA's annual conferences
 - (5) service in an advisory capacity to the editor of *Research in Middle Level Education Online*
 - (6) the development of a process for inviting, reviewing, revising, and updating NMSA's *Research Summaries*
- Vince's impressive record as Chair of the Research Advisory Board and former President of the Middle Level Education Research SIG characterizes his abilities to lead a national organization. For all of these reasons, I encourage you to vote for Vince Anfara as President-Elect of the National Middle School Association.

www.nmsa.org



National Forum

Schools to Watch

**Annual Conference
June 9-11, 2005 * Arlington, VA**

Presented by

**The National Forum to
Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform**



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. Students 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, spring play does a preview, and student artwork is displayed.
- "Together We Stand" assembly that focuses on diversity and supporting all students at the school
- Recognition activities within teams
- All-school social
- Thank you notes to teachers and staff from students
- Drive-through coffee for parents dropping off students, donated by local coffee kiosk owner



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. They 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.

Have an awesome spring!
Summer will be here soon and we will miss the kids!

