



an affiliate of the National Middle School Association

Oregon Middle Level Association

January 2006

OMLA Supports Storm Ravaged School in Mississippi

Within days after Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast, Jan Burgess the incoming Western Regional Representative to the National Middle School Association's (NMSA) Board of Directors, and a retired middle school principal from Lake Oswego, was on the phone to NMSA asking if there was anything folks in our area could do to help. NMSA had just received a plea for help from Pearl River Central Middle School's principal Dr. Joseph White.

Pearl River is in Carriere, Mississippi, located very close to Biloxi and New Orleans, and their enrollment grew overnight from 700 to 1,000 due to evacuees and homeless families. They have coordinated with FEMA to provide housing and portable classrooms for their families and students. NMSA put Jan in touch with Dr. White and the deal was struck. Dr. White sent us a list of needs for his school. They were gaining students at a steady rate and experiencing some unexpected deficits as a result. Their problems were compounded by the lack of open stores for miles around.

Jan contacted OMLA president Glen Martz, Executive Secretary Chris Brantley, and past Executive Secretary and long-time supporter Dave Putnam about how OMLA could help. Chris worked with John Smith at the Willamette ESD to provide a place to store donations as

they were collected and we were ready. We put the word out through this newsletter, our website, and an e-mail sent to all middle schools and OMLA members in the state.

The response was gratifying. Before long we'd heard from Matt Dunkel, a teacher at the Arbor

Jan and Friends,

The shipment just arrived to our school just in time for Christmas. The students were very excited to help in unloading the truck. We will begin to unpack and distribute the materials over the next several days. On behalf of Pearl River Central Middle School, thank you so much for your generous gifts. God Bless and keep each one of you, Joseph White, Principal

School of Arts & Sciences, an independent K-8 school in Tualatin. He and his students were looking for a more personal way to help out and thought this might be it. Not long after that, we heard from Eric Nesse, the assistant principal at Hazelbrook Middle School in Tualatin. They were already collecting supplies and money for hurricane victims and had decided to send those collections our way. Then we were contacted by Dawn Strong, the principal of Agnes Stewart Middle School. Her students had already collected in excess of \$2000 for hurricane relief and they had decided to send it to Carriere as well. We were also contacted by

Gena Fields, the Leadership Advisor from Neil Armstrong M.S. in Forest Grove. They had collections as well and wanted to send them our way.

When all these donations were pulled together, OMLA was able to ship almost 900 pounds of supplies which included school supplies, student back packs filled with both personal and school needs, and personal letters of support for the students in Carriere. Bullet Freight gave us 70% discount on shipping. We were also able to purchase three multi-media projectors through the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators (COSA) and the Oregon Educational Technology Consortium (OETC) and ship them straight to Mississippi.

If you are still interested in assisting the folks in Mississippi, it's not too late. Dr. White, their principal, says the large numbers of evacuees seem determined to stay in Carriere, Mississippi and attend his school, so several additional projectors would be most welcome. We would still gladly direct monetary donations from your school to Pearl River as shipping is very costly.

For more information about both the OMLA and the NMSA effort, go to www.omla.net and find the link under What's New on the main page.

Thanks!



From Your OMLA President Glen Martz

We hope you had an enjoyable holiday season with your family and friends. As we begin the new year the Oregon Middle Level Association renews its commitment to bring you the latest trends, information, and research on the best design, delivery, and instructional practices for all middle school students.

The article on the front page talks about OMLA’s direct effort to help Pearl River Central MS in Carriere, Mississippi. In assistance of this effort, Cascade Middle School in Eugene conducted a penny drive for Pearl River. The student leaders also

partnered with the Eugene Airport Rotary Club for a challenge match fund-raising effort. The result of these efforts produced a check for \$914.91 that was mailed to the school. I am proud to be the principal of this fine school. Kids helping kids, what a concept!

We are finalizing our plans for our annual conference that will be held in Newport at the Embarcadero Resort and Marina on March 10-11, 2006. The conference brochures have already been sent to all OMLA members thanks to the efforts of Beth Madison. We’re excited to have Jack

Berckemeyer, Assistant Executive Director of the National Middle School Association, as our keynote speaker. He will also be doing breakout sessions since he will be with us for the entire conference. For those who enjoyed Anita Archer at last year’s conference, we have her co-author, Mary Gleason, presenting this year. Our theme, “Making AYP: A Whale of a Show”, will have a timely focus since most of us will be in the middle of our TESA schedule at the same time. Please join us!



Middle Level Schools Professional Development

February 14-May 8	WIDE World Online Courses, NMSA	online
May 11	Every Student Succeeds Conference	DesMoines, IL
June 11-June 14	Nuts & Bolts of Middle Level Education	Destin, FL
June 22-24	Schools to Watch Conference	Arlington, VA
June 27-June 30	US Conference on Educational Leadership	Beijing, China
June 28	NMSA Literacy Workshop	Lakeville, MN
July 9-12	Middle Level Leadership Institute	Charleston, SC
July 16-19	Middle Level Leadership Institute	Midway, UT
July 20-23	Nuts & Bolts of Middle Level Education	Boulder, CO
November 2-4	NMSA Annual Conference & Exhibit	Nashville, TN

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To be elected

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Sue Hukari, Hood River

Region 2 Director

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Region 3 Director

To be appointed

Region 4 Director

To be elected

Region 5 Director

To be elected

Region 6 Director

To be elected

Region 7 Director

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Micki Caskey, Portland State Univ.

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To be appointed

OASSA Representative

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Balancing

by Terri Hjelm, Teacher, George Middle School, Portland

I watch my teaching neighbor slowly saunter out into the hall as the first bell signals the end of winter break and the beginning of a new teaching season. A colleague from the science/math wing moves past us acknowledging and reconnecting the lines of support we hold on to so tightly with a casual greeting, "You look rested and tan. Did you have a nice break?" I see that her energy has rebounded easing the same scowl we all fought to control through the month of December. Soon another staff support staff member joins us at the edge of the hall intersection where we stand. We are not teachers, but visual reminders that this is school and hall behavior is expected to be safe, quiet, and friendly. I feel relaxed and ready to begin the real teaching season.

Glancing up and down the hall I am surprised to recognize that I am not mourning the end of vacation. Some time during the last night's sleep I became ready to begin my favorite teaching season. I am happy. My colleagues and I begin a friendly debate over the merits of resort vacations in warm foreign places versus rentals in quiet secluded places far from cities. December's conversations stressed

from the weight of parent/teacher conferences, Thanksgiving, midterms, and demands from holiday preparation are gone. Their passage is a reminder that the year is moving on.



Our students walk down the halls, a little subdued, as we greet them. "Oh no! I forgot my locker combination," frequently punctuates the growing hum of conversations and greetings in multiple languages dominating the hall. I see relaxed faces on students who are happy to be back in a safe haven and easy access to their friends. A young boy wearing new, white Adida basketball shoes shyly says, "Hey Mrs. Hjelm, I grew an inch. Can you help me open my locker? I don't see my locker partner yet." I take a deep breath and move forward into the growing crowd, warmly chatting, as they strip off heavy jackets, headbands, headphones, and stuff CD players, candy, and stuffed animals into their lockers, all cherished contraband not allowed in class, but needed expressions of their hope for freedom and independence. Then as the halls begin to clear, I realize that my favorite teaching season has really begun.

January begins my favorite teaching season because I see a growing image of my hard work. In January I

see a clear picture beginning to emerge. In June there will be more layers of detail added, but I am beginning to really like what I see. My students are ready to explore and share their voice. I have learned, and re-learned the value of the time I took to build community during the fall months. I do practice an old teaching guideline in tone, if not literally: don't smile before December. When my students come back through the door we are comfortable in our relationship. Holding to the routine isn't the battle it was earlier in the year. I am ready to be myself, a quirky guide eager to lead my students out into a universe filled with opportunities that allow us to discover who we are and where we're going. We are a team who reads, writes, and discusses literature, the state of the world, and what it means to be a middle school student or their teacher. Now we often laugh, but speak to each other with honesty.

January begins my favorite teaching time because my goals are in place, and the steps the students and I will take to get there are clearer. Fall's frenetic energy fueled by change, and the unknown, is passing. I am making time space in my week to read recipes and plan meals again, even work out at the gym. I can accept that time away from work won't really end in chaos or frustration. In fact, the more I balance my life, the more energizing teaching is.

National Forum

Schools to Watch

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

Presented by

The National Forum to
Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform

Making a Difference

by Dr. Micki M. Caskey, Professor, Portland State University and OMLA Higher Education Representative

In July 2005, Information Age Press published *Making a Difference: Action Research in Middle Level Education*, which is the 5th volume in *The Handbook of Research in Middle Level Education* series. This volume examines the dynamic ways that preservice and inservice teachers, school administrators, university faculty, and educational consortia use action research to “make a difference” in middle level education.

In the opening chapter, Joanne Arhar, a professor at Kent State University, sets the stage for examining action research in middle level education. After describing research and action, she provides a brief history of action research and explains how this inquiry process can support middle grades reform efforts. She offers a definition action research and a model to guide practitioners.

In the next three chapters, middle grades teachers detail action research studies conducted in their classrooms. These are rich examples of how teachers investigate issues that exist in their specific contexts. Laila Sanguras, a seventh grade language arts teacher, examines what motivates her students to master vocabulary. Theresa Shrum, a seventh grade mathematics teacher, explores the effect of using manipulatives on student performance. Diane Stanton, a special ed teacher, considers the initial experience of inclusive teaching for both special and general education students in a middle school. Each teacher discloses the lessons learned and insights gained through their system-

atic inquiry as teacher-researchers.

Following these exemplars of action research by inservice teachers, the focus shifts to action research in preservice programs. Dr. Sandra Stacki, an associate professor at Hofstra University, describes how six preservice teachers experience action research as a collaborative team. Next, faculty from Eastern Kentucky University, Melinda Wilder, Dorie Combs, and Cynthia Resor, document an action research requirement in a middle level Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program. Then, Sue Thompson, associate professor at the University of Missouri Kansas City, and her colleagues, Larry Gregg and Loyce Caruthers, share how aspiring middle level administrators integrate action research projects with their practicum in a middle grades school.

In the next section, collaboration surfaces as a critical factor in educational action research. Holly Thornton, associate professor at University of North Carolina Greensboro, describes collaborative participatory research used to develop a process for master teacher selection. Heidi Barker and Carole Basile, faculty at Regis College and the University of Colorado Denver, respectively, share how action research became part of the schools’ culture in four middle schools. Another collaborative research team, Penny Bishop, Nicholas Boke, Susanna Pflaum, and Ned Kirsh discover how teachers can help students become strategic readers and improve reading instruction in a suburban middle school. Then, Dan

Saurino and Penelope Saurino, faculty from The University of West Georgia, and their colleague, Linda Crawford, report the growing interest in collaborative action research for school-based professional development

Subsequently, the text presents cases of more extensive partnerships. Kathleen Malu, an associate professor at William Paterson University, scrutinizes a five-year partnership between an urban middle school and university. Then, Pritha Gopalan, Teri West, Patrick Montesano, and Steve Hoelscher, a consortium of middle grades researchers examine the Middle Start comprehensive school improvement model.

The book ends with “Recommendations and Resources for Action Research,” to support the use of action research in middle grades education. This final chapter proposes how practitioners and researchers can endorse action research. It also includes an extensive list of resources including books, journals, and websites for both the novice and veteran action researcher.

Bear in mind that educational action research is a dynamic and context-specific process of inquiry. It compels educators to examine systematically their instructional and curricular choices. Furthermore, action research affords middle school teachers with opportunities to be the primary researchers of their own classrooms and to share their practice-based knowledge.

The book is available through Information Age Publish-

Also Available at www.infoagepub.com:

* *Reforming Middle Level Education Considerations for Policymakers, Volume 4, (2004)*

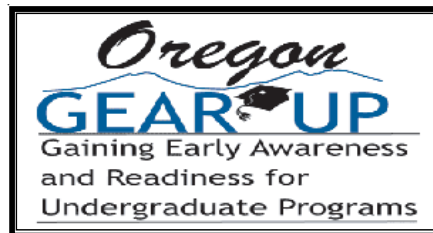
* *Leaders for a Movement: Professional Preparation and Development Middle Level Teachers and Administrators, Volume 3, (2003)*

* *Middle School Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, Volume 2, (2002)*

* *The Handbook of Research in Middle Level Education, Volume 1, (2001)*

The Eleven Known Predictors of College Enrollment

1. Classroom and school atmosphere creates a goal of college attendance
2. Classroom and school atmosphere has the goal of awareness of and exposure to college
3. Students have opportunities for college tours, visits, fairs
4. Classroom and school atmosphere has a goal of promoting academic skills
5. Classroom and school atmosphere provides a parental involvement component
6. School atmosphere promotes rigorous course-taking
7. Parental college awareness is encouraged and supported
8. Parental FAFSA participation
9. SAT/ACT training promoted, encouraged, made available
10. Tuition or scholarship information made available
- 11. Begins by 8th grade and continues through high school**



School Support/Relief

The National Middle School Association Community joins together to make a difference:

NMSA expresses deepest sympathy to the individuals and families who have been affected by the hurricane and flooding in the Gulf Coast. Rebuilding lives and communities will take time, action, and resources, and we are committed to doing our part to help in the immediate, short- and long-term efforts.

In addition to participating with other education organizations through the Department of Education's Hurricane Help for Schools site, NMSA is coordinating the following, and invites your support.

NMSA members (schools and individuals) in the areas affected by the disaster will receive notice that their membership has been extended for a year at no additional cost.

Monetary contributions to relief agencies.

Make donations directly to relief agencies that are providing on-the-ground assistance through Network for Good.

NMSA School Support Fund.

NMSA has set a goal to raise \$100,000 by January 1 to provide \$2500 grants to schools who have been affected by the hurricane and flooding. NMSA guarantees that 100% of the funds will go to schools in need.

Stories to Share.

Stories build community. What better time to strengthen our community of learners than now? If you have a story about how your school or your students have reached out to help, have experienced the kindness of others, or are in need of support, please forward it to us. We will share these stories of strength, hope, and courage with the NMSA community through our Web site.

Resources for you.

We will continue to expand our list of resources, and invite you to share information that others might find helpful.



10 Simple Ways to Celebrate *No Name-Calling Week* in Your School January 23-27, 2006

1. Enter the *No Name-Calling Week* Student Expression Contest
2. Hold a poster contest
3. Spread the message in your morning announcements
4. Develop a classroom anti-slur policy
5. Write an article for the school newspapers
6. Create a library display
7. Discuss sportsmanship in physical education classes
8. Screen the *No Name-Calling Week* video
9. Share tips with parents and staff
10. Wear *No Name-Calling Week* stickers



www.nonamecallingweek.org

Board of Directors

Members of the OMLA Board of Directors have been attending the NMSA Affiliates' Summit for many years now. At these annual summer retreats, we talk to members of other states' boards and as a result, we have learned a lot about them and about ourselves. We are a tiny affiliate, as are many in states that have a large rural population and insufficient school funding. Our membership is generally a couple hundred Oregonians, a handful of institutions, and a dozen teams. We are pleased to have support of everyone who is interested in the education of young adolescents.

We exist first and foremost to join together as middle level educators, and to support the work of NMSA. By holding an annual conference, we enjoy camaraderie and learn about topics of interest. This newsletter serves to share information and connect us, and it is distributed to every middle level school in the state. Our relationship with the Middle Level Consortium through higher education allows us to lend support to efforts to improve teacher certification.

Who are the people that serve on the OMLA Board of Directors? We are a mix of middle school administrators, teachers and retirees. We meet four times a year, with other meetings as needed to plan and hold our annual conference. Our Board year begins in January and members currently leaving include secretary Lisa Spires, region directors Heitho Reuter, and Charlie Wilshire. They were with us for quite some time and we appreciate their contributions.

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:

Secretary:

___ Jill O'Neill, Principal, Meadow Park Middle School, Beaverton

Region 4 Director: SOUTHERN: Jackson, Josephine, Klamath and Lake Counties

___ Amy Tiger, Principal, McLoughlin Middle School, Medford

Region 5 Director: SOUTHWEST: Coos, Curry, Douglas and Lane Counties

___ Cydney Vandercar, Principal, Spencer Butte Middle School, Eugene

Region 6 Director: WESTERN: Benton, Lincoln, Linn, Marion and Polk Counties

___ Candidate needed. Interested? Contact Glen Martz at gmartz@bethel.k12.or.us

Please send this ballot by January 31, 2006 to:

OMLA/COSA, 707 13th Street SE, Salem, OR 97301-4035



Thank you!