



Oregon Middle Level Association

September 2006

When the School Bell Rings

by Terri Hjelm, Teacher, George Middle School, Portland

The school bell is ringing. The air is cold and crisp signaling that fall is coming. My colleagues and I have already set up our classrooms, tweaking classroom floor plans here and there. Hoping for perfect children, but knowing they're not, we reach out to the hearts of the one's we see. Soon they belong to us. By now young and experienced teachers alike, reread new curriculum trying to look calm, but despite the experience we can't always still the trembling knees that threaten to signal our distress at feeling pulled in too many new ways. Then finally the preparation days are over. At last the students start to fill the desks, then sprawl out into the aisles, groaning over the school routines that require concentrated effort. It is an effort at odds with the summer's endless days of release, but there's no skipping this stage.

We are determined and send them a steady message that we won't reduce our expectations, after all, their future is at

stake. Once again it doesn't take long for our own focus to reign in on the familiar, calming our reactions to the stress of new challenges, staff, and changing children. Visible needs help us sharpen our sights on learners whose eagerness to engage is a loud and noisy clamor calling out, and pushing us away, all in the same breath.

We need to take those first deep breaths now, drawing in our own awareness that we are caring professionals who know how to use honed skills to help children ignite over learning as they dive into the excitement of middle school years. We can direct the calm. We can silence the loud cries of indifference that signals insecurity and un-readiness to take a risk. When we set the framework, without wavering, they will respond. If we're patient we'll see success sooner than later. But there isn't much time because the school bell is ringing.

Thoughts from a Great Speaker: Debbie Silver on Parents

"WHY DO PARENTS AVOID SCHOOL?"

- Over scheduled
- Have had bad experiences
- Not welcome
- Bored
- Intimidated
- Kids say "don't come to school"
- Transportation is a problem
- Single parents lack time
- Too many responsibilities
- Afraid of bad news
- Language barriers
- Disabilities
- Afraid their child will act out
- Don't know what to expect
- Don't know it's important
- Nothing to do when they volunteer
- Other parents are intimidating
- They are working (same reason most teachers can't volunteer in their own child's classroom!)
- Concerns about their clothing
- Not asked



"WHAT WORKS TO GET PARENTS TO SCHOOL?"

- Provide child care.
- Parent Tea – train the parents for centers in the classroom.
- Link parents of younger students in the school with more experienced parents.
- Parent University
- Allow parents to set up labs
- Monitor labs
- Research topics for teachers
- Newsletter/Graphics/Photos
- Student lead conferences bring parents to school
- Let parents provide after-school homework help
- Run the "accelerated reader" store
- Set up for dances
- Run copies and file
- Parents can help provide hallway supervision
- Ladies night out – an evening for moms (child care provided)
- Dinner with door prizes
- Parents walk through student schedule during "parent night"

Message from the OMLA President

by Glen Martz, Principal, Cascade Middle School, Bethel

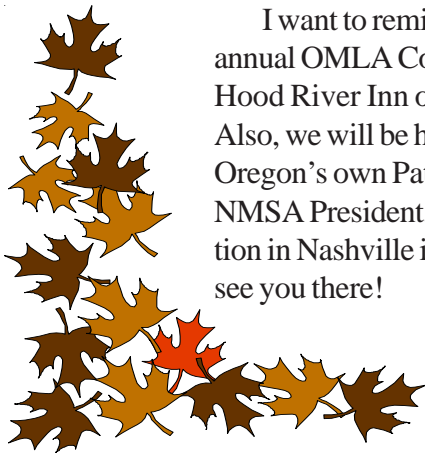
Recently the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) proposed that all math teachers in grades K-8 focus on basic skills development. In their report, "Curriculum Focal Points," they recommend three basic skills to be taught and developed at each grade level K-8.

Following this recommendation, we have analyzed our TESA data and our district's own math assessment tool (Bethel Math Assessment—BMA) for grade levels 6, 7, and 8. We found out that our students have basic deficiencies in computation and estimation with fractions, decimals, and percents. Although this should not surprise many folks, at Cascade Middle School we have implemented a Math Lab class at all three grade levels for those students who are in the "Nearly Meets" category for TESA. This class is in addition to their regular grade level math class, and we are using prescriptive materials to remedy the gaps in their basic skills.

The Bethel School District also has an Option Levy on the ballot in November for \$1.3 M and a large portion of this Levy is dedicated to math instruction, textbooks, and computer equipment. If the levy passes, we plan to hire a full-time math specialist next year at our building to implement more remedial and tutorial help for all students.

Since our reading program has been so successful, we also implemented a Reading Lab class for those "Nearly Meets" students. All students receive 50 minutes of reading instruction every day as well as 45 minutes of Language Arts. The Reading Lab is in addition to both of these classes.

We plan to offer the Math Lab and Reading Lab for the first semester. Students have given up one elective class to be in these classes. We're still working on exit strategies and progress monitoring, but we're off to a great start.



I want to remind all members that our annual OMLA Conference will be at the Hood River Inn on March 16-17, 2007. Also, we will be hosting a reception for Oregon's own Patti Kenney, the current NMSA President, at their annual convention in Nashville in November. We hope to see you there!



**"Kids learn 15-50%
more when they
are having fun."**

-Dr. Richard Ramsey,

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Last chance! Order Today!

My Early Autumn 2006 Walter Drake Catalog arrived today

by Jan Burgess, NMSA West Region Trustee

For some of you, August signals the return of the NFL. For others, it's the Back To School Sales, the Nordstrom Anniversary Sale or the Summer Clearance advertisements. August promises sunshine and beach picnics, concerts in the park, farmer's markets and lawn mowing.

For me, a team leader whose district's Welcome Back letter has yet to arrive, I have time to think over the past year as I sit on my back porch and watch the bees feasting on my lavender hedge. Plus, I still have \$100.00 of team leader money to spend. Thus my excitement when the Walter Drake catalog arrives in the mail.

If I were a city dweller, I could run over to Lippmann's Novelty Store for gadgets and what-nots. I could borrow the leadership teacher's summer Oriental Trading catalog and order, in very large quantities, the various and sundry props and toys that we use on our team for celebrations with our students and that I use with our team members during team and faculty meetings. But, Walter's is my inspiration. What else sits with me and let's me consider each object and how it might fit a teammate or a unit.

Why, page 7 highlights *Giant Calendars keep you on track all year*. It's 14 1/2" by 21 3/4". That size is bound to hold all our activities plus the various units we are trying to coordinate among the 4 core teachers. Page 6 has *Charming Pixie Face Stickers*, 144 for a price even our math teacher would approve. That *Self-Inking Stamp in Block Letters or Script* on page 13 would work well for our team name and our logo. It prints *Thousands of Crisp, Clear impressions*.

During our team days and our bridge building contests, we all need the *Portable Traveling Timer that hands around your neck* on a 36" cord. I found that on page 23. Then imagine having this bright yellow timer handy when I ask my classes for a 1 minute silent quick write. I could set the timer to ding two minutes before the end of class so project work would be put away. Oh the uses for this Traveling Timer are endless. Wow! *Plastic All Purpose Gloves*, a set of 100 for \$2.99, p. 43, those hold such possibilities, as does the *Gorilla Tape with double thick adhesive bond to repair and seal thing*, found on page 43.

I don't usually spend much time on the personal hygiene section though some of my students, come spring, could use some of these products. One product did catch my eye, though. Item A. Page # 68: *The Impressive Hearing Technology MagniEar lets you*

§ *Hear a whisper 100 ft. away*
§ *4 extra batteries included.*

Who hasn't wanted to be able to hear what's being whispered during standardized test taking or listen in on two girls, head to head, pointing in your direction.

However, *the Powerful Personal Megaphone (p. 76) lets you be heard above a crowd. Batteries not included*, might be my team leader favorite. I can see me now with my personal megaphone on our team field trip, leading the troops through the woods as we find our spots for our annual ivy pull. I'd not lose one student or team member. I'd be heard loud and clear!

And so I while away a morning considering all things *Walter*. I dog ear some pages. *Last Chance*, the headline reads. Tomorrow is soon enough, I decide.

National Middle School Association

Nashville, November 2-4, 2006

Plan now to attend the largest and most comprehensive middle grades professional development opportunity in the world!



Ongoing professional development for teachers and administrators has never been more critical. If your work touches the lives of young people between the ages of 10 and 15, we invite you to join 8500 of your peers at NMSA's 33rd Annual Conference and Exhibit. We encourage you to bring your knowledge, expertise, stories, questions, interests and desires to grow professionally.

- Advisory
- Advocacy
- Assessment
- Classroom Management
- Differentiated Instruction
- Discipline
- Effective Leadership
- Fitness
- High Standards
- Language Arts
- Leadership
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Music Education
- Nutrition
- Quality Teachers
- Reading
- Research
- Safe Schools
- Science
- School Improvement
- Social Studies
- Student Participation
- Technology

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Oregon Association of Teacher Educators Tenth Anniversary Annual Conference

The Educational Landscape: Hope and Vision for Teachers, Learners, and Communities
February 23, 2007

The Kennedy School, Portland, Oregon

Dr. Thomas Sergiovanni is an internationally recognized author of many books on educational leadership, including *Strengthening the Heartbeat* (2005).

His keynote address

The Educational Landscape; Hope and Vision: Getting the Theory Right
will be thought-provoking and engaging.

The 10th annual anniversary ORATE conference invites participants to address the theme, *The Educational Landscape: Hope and Vision for Teachers, Learners, and Communities*, by sharing papers about research, practice, policy, theory, and model programs. Proposals are invited that align with one or more of the conference strands:

1. **Communities as Classrooms**
2. **Technology as a Tool**
3. **Role of Teacher as Change Agent**
4. **Collaborative Approaches in the Educational Landscape**
5. **Creating New Pathways to Teacher Excellence**
6. **Hope and Heart through Equity for All Learners**

Concurrent sessions at the 10th annual ORATE conference will be approximately 50 minutes in length. Colleges and universities are encouraged to submit proposals for a student poster session. Faculty may submit proposals for groups of students to present individual posters and computer-based projects.

Proposal Submissions: Complete and submit these **two** components:

1. **Cover Page** for all submissions consists of one page which must include the following:

- Title of Session
- Session Organizer: List name, title, institution, mailing address, home and office phone number, fax number, and e-mail.
- Additional presenter(s) address(es): List names, titles, institutions, addresses, including e-mail.
- Summary for Conference Program: Describe the session in 30 words or less for use in the conference program. Be precise in describing the content of the session to aid attendees in selecting topics relevant to their interests. Summary may be edited by the program committee prior to the conference.

2. **Proposal Description** for all submissions consists of one or two pages which must include the following:

- Title of Session
- Description of the presentation: The description needs to be typed, double spaced, and limited to 250 words. To ensure **blind peer review**, please do NOT include presenter names or institutions, or any other information that will identify you or your institution.
- Strand Identifier from Conference Strands (listed previously)

NOTE: ALL PRESENTERS MUST REGISTER FOR THE CONFERENCE.

* Acceptance of the proposal does not exempt presenters from paying conference registration.

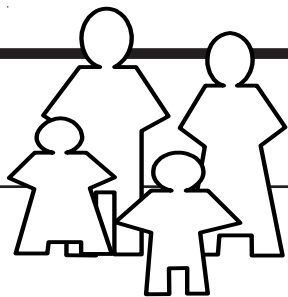
Due Date for Proposals: Friday, December 1, 2006.

Notification of acceptances will be emailed to the session organizer by December 23, 2006.

Send all proposal submissions electronically as an attachment (MS Word preferred) to: **Jacqueline Waggoner**

E-mail: waggoner@up.edu Telephone: 503.943.8012

* *Overhead projectors with screens will be provided at the conference. The Kennedy Center provides wireless internet access. Additional audio-visual or technology needs are the responsibility of the presenters.*



REPORT TO PARENTS

Bullying

Whether as direct as a punch or as subtle as a smirk, bullying is a serious problem in American schools, where many children have been bullied, and many children bully others. Bullying can leave permanent physical and emotional injuries.

Here are things to consider about bullying:

Know what bullying looks like.

Most bullying is verbal, not physical, like teasing, mocking, name-calling, and spreading hurtful rumors. Boys do the majority of the bullying and are more physical. Girls tend to bully by using verbal abuse and by excluding others. This form of bullying can be equally devastating to physical bullying because it is quick and often invisible to others.

Bullies enjoy bullying.

Don't feel sorry for children who bully because they are "sad on the inside." New research shows that they enjoy the power of bullying and making other people suffer. Far from regretting their acts, they often rationalize them by saying the victims provoked them in some way.

Children "go along to get along."

Victims of bullying are often avoided and rarely defended by their classmates because they don't want to chance becoming the bully's next victim.

Victims keep mum.

Children who are bullied usually suffer in silence because they feel that nothing can be done to help them. Some become isolated and depressed, and may even resort to violence against themselves or others.

Never be a bully and don't allow your kids to be.

Bullying often begins at home. Parents who bully model behavior that may lead to children doing the same. If you observe your child being cruel to others, including siblings, explain why their actions were wrong and require change.

Schools are aware of bullying and are always looking for ways to reduce or eliminate it. There are ways for parents to help as well. Teach your children to:

Be assertive. Every child should be taught how to respond to malicious comments. It works better to tell bullies to stop than to just laugh like it is funny, a natural reaction from embarrassment. If telling the bully to stop does not work, ignoring it once or twice may be the key as they will see they are not getting the reaction they desire. If it still does not go away, they need to get help. Bullies thrive on the results they get by hurting others. Help your children to understand that they can deprive bullies of satisfaction by not openly reacting to their taunts and insults.

Be a friend in need. Stress to your children the importance of looking out for their friends and supporting students who are being bullied. Encourage them to notify a responsible adult when they know of a child who is being seriously bullied, either physically or verbally.

Have strong self-esteem. Children who feel good about themselves, and show it, aren't as likely to become victims of bullies, who prefer easier targets. Build children's self-esteem by genuine praise, unconditional love and character education to help them walk tall.



Finally, let your children know that you are always available to discuss problems such as bullying with them. Ask if they or their friends are experiencing it at school. Talk to them about how to cope with them and the dangers of letting bullies "get away with it." And don't hesitate to alert the school as well.

**Oregon Middle
Level Association**

Confederation of Oregon
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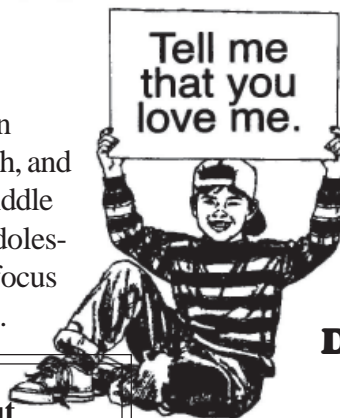
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Look us up!

Month of the Young Adolescent

October is the Month of the Young Adolescent, an annual national collaborative effort of education, health, and youth-oriented organizations. Initiated by National Middle School Association (NMSA), Month of the Young Adolescent brings together a wide range of organizations to focus on the needs of this important age range, ages 10- 15.



**Four key messages will be promoted throughout
the month of October:**

1. The importance of parents being knowledgeable about young adolescents and being actively involved in their lives;
2. The understanding that healthy bodies plus healthy minds equal healthy young adolescents;
3. The realization that the education young adolescents experience during this formative period of life will, in large measure, determine the future for all citizens; and
4. The knowledge that every young adolescent should have the opportunity to pursue his or her dreams and aspirations, and post-secondary education should be a possibility for all.

**Did you renew or
join OMLA
already? NOW is
the time!
Membership
applications are
enclosed.
Membership Year:
July 1, 2006 -
June 30, 2007
Together, we
stand for YOUNG
ADOLESCENTS!**