

THE WEST VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION for MIDDLE LEVEL EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

May 2004

Dr Calvin Meyer, Editor

Issue 2, Volume 5

GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT

I am Denise White, your newly elected President of the West Virginia Association for Middle Level Education. I have taught sixth grade for 21 years, 26 years in the elementary setting and the last five at DuPont Middle School in Kanawha County. My content areas are Reading and Language Arts.

When I first came to the middle school I did not know if I would like it, but quickly learned to love it. Every day is an adventure as I move from crisis to crisis along with my students. As they say, "There is never a dull moment." You have to have a love for middle level content and middle level kids to keep coming to work every day.

As we look at the state of middle level education in West Virginia, we can see there is work to be done. Funding for new programs seems aimed at high schools or elementary schools. Often, the necessary staffing for middle schools is the first to be cut, thus making it hard to create an exemplary middle school. My vision for the WVAMLE is that it become an advocate for all middle level teachers, providing sustained and on-going staff development opportunities and speaking out on issues that would affect the quality of middle level teaching and learning.

My email is Dwhite925@aol.com

Have a great summer!

WVDE MIDDLE LEVEL CADRE WORKING HARD

The Middle Level Education Cadre, sponsored by the West Virginia Department of Education, is available to assist school with professional development. The following is a list of areas:

- Backward Design (Understanding by Design)
- Reading in the Content Area
- Writing in the Content Area

- Preparing Students for Success in College Preparatory English Courses
- Looking at Student Work
- Differentiated Instruction
- Teaming
- Advisory and Student-Led Conferencing

For information contact Carla Williamson, WVDE Coordinator for Middle Level Education at cljwilli@access.k12.wv.us or at 558-2691

Additionally, the WVDE Office of Middle Level Education, Special Education, Title I and the RESAs will be offering training in Differentiated Instruction. The initial training conference will be held in Charleston, June 20-24. Approximately 70 middle level, special education and Title I teacher will be involved. This is a 3-year initiative funded by Title I and Title II funds. Employees of the WVDE and RESAs will provide coaching and study groups to the participating teachers. Cadre members will participate in a two-day statewide follow-up training during the 2004-2005 school year. Cadre members will then be available to provide professional development in Differentiated Instruction throughout the state. This initiative is based on needs assessments from school teams throughout the state.

2005 WVAMLE CONFERENCE

The 24th Annual Conference will be April 22-24, 2005 at Stonewall Jackson Lake State Park. Details concerning keynote speakers and concurrent sessions will be posted on the website (www.marshall.edu/wvamle/) as they become available.

CONGRATULATIONS TO COUNTIES COMPLETING MIDDLE LEVEL TRAINING

The teachers in two major counties have completed the course work for Middle Level Endorsement. Raleigh County and Greenbrier County, working with Marshall University Graduate College, have supported their

teachers in making the conversion to Middle School Endorsement. This major endeavor involved approximately 200 teachers and includes four courses; EDF 502, "Psychology of the Middle Level Child," CI 501, "Middle Level Childhood Curriculum," CI 503, "Materials and Methods for Middle Level Childhood Education," and CI 672, "Middle Level Practicum." Marshall University Graduate College is available to work with the counties in providing the delivery system most convenient for the teachers. Please contact Dr. Calvin Meyer at meyer@marshall.edu or at 800 642-9842 ext 936.

ISSUES FACING MIDDLE SCHOOL EDUCATION

The May 19th issue of Education Week published a challenging article concerning Middle Level Education. The article *City Districts Embracing K-8 Schools* claims that in K-8 schools, as opposed to K-6 schools or middle schools, young teenagers don't act up as much, proficiency in reading and math is increasing and that suspension rates are decreasing. The charge is that this reconfiguration is heralded by families and will stem the tide of growth toward charter schools.

Unfortunately, there is no real research supporting this and the article acknowledges these beliefs are primarily anecdotal as well as political. Middle Level education continues to be the step child of the high school or elementary school. Middle Level educators must take the charge given us by Sue Swain at this spring's state WVAMLE Conference and begin to speak up for these kids in the middle as unique and thus needing a setting just for them, not an extension of the elementary school.

WEBSITES FOR MIDDLE LEVEL

West Virginia Assoc for Middle Level Ed
<http://www.marshall.edu/wvamle/>

National Middle School Association
<http://www.nmsa.org/>

Research in Middle Level Ed
<http://www.nmsa.org/research/rmle/rmel.html>

Middle School Hub.org

<http://middleschoolhub/school/school.cfm>

Mid-Continent Research for Ed & Learning
<http://www.mcrcel.org/about/sitemap/sitemap.asp>

Meridian
<http://www.ncsu.edu/meridian/about.html/>

Middle School Problem of the Week
<http://mathforum.org/midpow/>

HUMOR IN THE MIDDLE

You know it's going to be a bad day when your 13 year old son is disagreeable about washing the cat since the cat is so difficult to manage in water. So in exasperation you tell him to be creative. He does. He washes the cat in the toilet and tries to dry him in the microwave.

This newsletter produced in cooperation with The Marshall University Graduate School of Education and Professional Development.

