



May 2011 Newsletter

Greetings Professors! Happy Summer!!!

Deadlines: We have just been notified-our Best Practice Session has been accepted for the NMSA conference. If you are interested in participating as a team and/or as an individual, consider submitting a proposal for the round table session. The following is the description of the session:

Roundtable sessions are 75-minute sessions broken into (3) 20-25 minute rotations. Each presenter is assigned a table in a room where participants can sit with them for a more one-on-one type discussion of your topic. After 20-25 minutes, a bell will ring and participants will move to the next table of interest to them. If you are interested in submitting a proposal, go to the following link:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Q8KLNJB>. The Deadline is June 15, 2011. The planning committee will notify you by the 30th.

June 1, 2011 is the deadline for submissions for the fall [CIMLE journal](#). We are looking forward to meeting in Milledgeville next week. The planning team at Georgia College and State University has done a terrific job putting it altogether. We will miss those of you who are not able to join us, but will take lots of notes and share our findings with you. Representatives of middle level education from 22 states will be in attendance including: Alabama, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Missouri, Montana, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, Wisconsin.

I have two other things to share. The first is to celebrate with our colleagues who are participating in international activities at this time. I hope we will be able to work with our international colleagues more. In addition, we have some insights and celebrations to share from across the regions. Finally, I have attached the next group of POMLE members for the directory. Our members are doing wonderful things in the US and are reaching out to colleagues in other lands. I am so impressed with the spirit and enthusiasm that is shared. Keep us posted.

Things going on around the world....

New Zealand: Sara Lindsey, associate professor middle grades education and Jody Fernandez, assistant professor, middle grades literacy and language arts, **Morehead State University**, are currently in New Zealand researching literacy education. NZ has long been noted in literacy education for its early intervention model, Reading Recovery. As we analyzed national testing results, we noticed the following: US students lead NZ students in literacy scores in 4th grade: we are tied in 8th grade, but NZ far outranks the US by 10th grade. We were interested in finding out why, and applied for a Morehead State University endowment and a Kentucky Collaborative Center for Literacy Development grant to fund this research. Throughout New Zealand, we will be visiting 14 schools and seven universities where we will observe classrooms, investigate policy, interview teachers and faculty, peruse syllabi and standards and observe university coursework. In addition, **the dean of the MSU College of Education**,

Cathy Gunn, has funded two undergraduate research assistants, **Brittany Campbell**, MSU elementary and special education, and **Kelli Hollenkamp**, middle grades education, who are traveling and researching with us. Left to right: Brittany, Sara, Kelli, Jody visiting the Manakua Lighthouse in NZ.



Poland: Melanie Greene, Appalachian State University, was invited to Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland, to introduce the concept of Product of Learning to the faculty and administration in May, 2011. While there, she and colleague, **Dr. Sara Zimmerman** conducted several seminars to explain how graduate students develop and present these portfolios as a graduation requirement in the Reich College of Education at Appalachian State University. She has co-authored a paper with Zimmerman entitled "The Product of Learning: A Viable Replacement for Written Comprehensive Examinations and/or the thesis Requirement in Graduate Education Programs" which will be published in a Polish Journal entitled Educational Studies in its Fall, 2011 issue. The following picture is of Sara, Melanie, the Rector, Vice-Rector, and a Faculty Member at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland.



New Zealand: Penny Bishop, professor of middle grades education at the University of Vermont, continues a six-year relationship with New Zealand educators in intermediate and middle

schools. She recently returned from a visit to the North Island, where she brought a group of US principals and teachers for two weeks, and she looks forward to hosting a NZ contingent in Vermont later this year. During the exchange and homestay opportunity, participants learn about commonalities and differences between the two cultures' approaches to educating young adolescents. This ongoing work stems from her Sir Ian Axford Public Policy Fellowship with the New Zealand Ministry of Education and her leadership on their Middle Years Steering Group. Hanna Kast is a graduate student participating in the research with Penny. She is shown here with children from Maori.



In the States

- **South:** **Cal Meyer** has accepted a position as Dean of the Education Department at Dalton College in Georgia.
- **East:** Stuart Knapp is collaborating with regional middle school principals by way of monthly meetings to accomplish the following two goals: 1) establish two Undergraduate MS courses which align with the principles of "This We Believe" and will feature significant input from (and possibly be taught by) a middle school principal; and 2) launch a CMLA chapter in conjunction with a neighboring IHE.
- The first PaPOMLE (Pennsylvania Professors of Middle Level Education) conference was held at the Langhorne Biblical University on May 9th. The workshop focused on reciprocity for newly certified teachers for hire in neighboring states. With certification agents representing five surrounding states, the agents discussed the impact Pennsylvania teaching certifications will have on the new graduates and their job-seeking process.
- Robert Ziegenfuss and Rebecca Overholt guided the new Shippensburg University Collegiate Middle Level Association to holding a conversation with middle level school administrators on April 4th at Shippensburg University. Five local school administrators from the region answered questions on hiring, lesson planning, what they consider quality teaching, what is important when working with middle level students, and many other questions. For one and a

half hours, former and current middle level principals, superintendents, field-based directors and newly appointed teachers answered questions. The Shippensburg University CMLA student board members and the student participants who attended guided the questioning resulting in a highly successful first activity by the CMLA.

- **West:** The following is an excerpt from a note when **Debbie Haskell** (Central Washington University) is talking about Advocating for Middle Level Education. It provides us with insight into how we must continue to advocate for middle level education and for one another.

“At this time there is no POMLE chapter in the state of Washington. Personally, I have done my advocacy work through our state affiliate, Washington Association for Middle Level Education (WAMLE). Like Texas, Washington is a geographically large state. At this time I am the only board member east of the Cascade Mountains. I have a colleague, Tariq Akmal, who teaches at Washington State and is an NMSA board member. He does his work through the Idaho affiliate, which meets closer to his institution.

One very beneficial activity WAMLE has initiated this year is meeting with top policy makers in Olympia. We have met with the state Superintendent of Education and his top level people, the policy analyst for the State Board of Education, the executive director of the state Professional Education Standards Board, the governor's liaison to education, the chairs of the house and senate education committees and our local state representatives. These initial visits were to present our 4 key areas of concern and to make these policy makers aware that we represent young adolescents and those who work with them.

One of our issues is related to your concerns in Texas. We currently have a lot of grade overlapping with our endorsements. Elementary is K-8, Middle Level 4-9, and Secondary 5-12. We want to narrow those grade ranges. During our meeting with the executive director of the standards board, we learned that only school district superintendents and human resource officers were at the table when the current grade levels were discussed. No one was there to represent middle level education. Now that we have made our presence known, when the endorsement levels come up for review, we have been promised a seat at the table. (We want K-6, 5-8, and 9-12).

A second meeting that we are doing follow-up work on was the meeting with the aides to the Senator who chairs the Senate education committee. They want to set up meetings with us to work with the Senator to draft a bill supporting middle level education. At this time our WAMLE board is narrowing our "wish list" into a workable policy package for the Senator.

We are a volunteer group, all with full time jobs, and WAMLE has very limited financial resources. What we do have is a group of dedicated professionals with a passion for middle level education.”

Good luck with your endeavors.

Debbie Haskell, WAMLE President

Ideas

It is always exciting to consider options and ideas for improving our organization and to share our experiences. As the months move toward November, we will be creating an agenda of topics to discuss at the NMSA conference. Four suggestions have been shared with me to talk about at the NMSA conference. A suggestion has been to consider having state POMLE meetings during the NMSA conference. I have put a request in to the planning committee to see if we can use rooms prior to the main conference. I will keep you posted. A second recommendation has been to consider raising the cost of "institutional membership" and/or limiting the number of professors who are a part of each institutions' members. We will bring this up at the board meeting in November. A third proposal has been to create a different process for electing officers of NaPOMLE. Currently nominations are taken, member profiles are shared, and nominees are invited to speak on their behalf at the NaPOMLE meeting. A fourth suggestion is to consider publishing electronic materials through NaPOMLE. If you have other suggestions, please pass them on to your regional representative.

Respectfully,

Nancy Ruppert, President, NaPOMLE

