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Finish line in sight!

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Spring/Summer 2018

Volume 8 • Number 2

New England League of Middle Schools

MidLines

2018 NELMS Annual Conference Highlights

by Jerry Frew, NELMS E.D.

Middle Level: The Hidden Treasure, Unlock the Magic” was the theme for the 37th Annual Conference of the New England League of Middle Schools on April 5 & 6, 2018 in Providence RI. Beginning with the energetic “Teach like a Pirate” keynote of Dave Burgess to kick off the program on Thursday morning, and continuing throughout the two day event, enthusiastic discussions, networking, and well received concurrent sessions featured how we can best address the varied needs of the young adolescent!

With over 600 attendees each day, educators experienced the inspirational words of Penny Kittle “Book Love: Building Reading Lives that Last” and over 100 sessions presented by practitioners, through the Conference Strands of: 21st Century Skills, Advisory and Personalized Learning, Assessment, Effective Leadership, Student Support Services, Rigorous and Relevant Curriculum, Safe and Healthy School Environments, Varied Instructional and Learning Strategies.

The attendees at the Awards reception on Wednesday evening enjoyed the entertainment provided by the Bay

State Quartet, prior to the recognitions awarded to Spotlight Schools, Promising Practitioner, Master in the Middle, A+ Administrator, and Superintendent.

Awards were presented to the following

- **A+ administrator Award**
Jason Roberts, Principal, Hudson Memorial School, Hudson, NH
- **Master in the Middle Award**
Melissa Bilentschuk, Teacher, Dorothy Beckwith Middle School, Rehoboth, MA
- **Promising Practitioner Award**
Christy Maerlinder, Teacher/Advisor Stoneleigh-Burnham School, Greenfield, MA
- **Superintendent Award**
James Erinakes II, Exeter-West Greenwich Regional School District, West Greenwich RI
- **Beane-Brodhagen Award**
Burke Town Middle School, “Project for Hope”
8th Grade Team, West Burke, VT
Norton Middle School, “Hollywood in Action”
Eric Beard and Christopher Cummings, Norton, MA

We are also grateful to a number of sponsors and exhibitors who supported our conference, and urge each of our readers, and members to reach out to these

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of Middle Schools

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www.nelms.org

The NELMS Mission: We are leaders in promoting middle level best practices by providing collaborative learning experiences that support students' academic, social, and emotional growth and success.

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MidLines welcomes your thoughts and suggestions as well as your editorial comments. Please send them to MidLines, c/o NELMS, 50 High St., Suite 10, North Andover, MA 01845

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The editors reserve the right to omit articles, activities or advertising not in keeping with NELMS philosophy.

The New England League of Middle Schools takes no financial responsibility for misprints or errors, but will reprint corrections in a later issue, if given notice two months prior to publication.

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ADVERTISING IN MIDLINES

Publications of the New England League of Middle Schools are read by thousands of middle level educators. We invite you to strive with NELMS to continuously refresh the learning experience for young adolescents. NELMS only advertises products and services which serve the professional and educational needs of our membership.

MidLines is e-published three times a year and circulated to 15,000 educators through their membership. Contact NELMS for current advertisement rates.

Deadlines:

November 1 for Winter issue
March 1 for Spring issue
July 1 for Fall issue



View from the Chair

Were you there? Did you feel it? Did you see it? Did you hear it? I am talking about the TREASURE TROVE of Middle Level best practices at the 2018 NELMS Annual Conference! The theme of “Middle Level: The Hidden Treasure, Unlock the Magic” was started off by Dave Burgess’s keynote, “Teach Like A Pirate.” His energy and stories were inspirational.

On Friday, Penny Kittle used her incredible literacy knowledge and down to Earth educational experience gave us so many strategies to help motivate young adolescents to better access learning through reading.

The Recognitions Reception on Wednesday night honored some of the best and brightest from the ranks of Middle Level education. Teachers, Administrators, Community/Parent groups, and Spotlight Schools were honored for consistently demonstrating the best practices for educating young adolescents. NELMS has a long tradition of recognizing and honoring these outstanding members of our Middle Level community.

We consistently have some of the very best presenters at the Annual and this year was no exception! This conference is one of the few in which ALL content areas and specialties were included. There was truly something for everyone. Please consider submitting a proposal to present at next year’s conference. It is a great way to share that great unit, program, or project that had your students totally engaged. (Intent to Present 2019 applications will be available on nelms.org very soon.)

Don’t forget to take advantage of the support NELMS can give you and your school in implementing some of the programs, strategies, and ideas that inspired you at the conference.

Thank you to all of the Annual Conference attendees, presenters, and all who made this conference the Treasure it was. I hope to see you all in Providence next year (March 21 & 22, 2019). If you missed the conference this year, don’t make the same mistake in 2019!

Have an enjoyable and productive last few weeks of school. Rest, relax and make the most of your summer.!

Christina (Chris) deGross

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Editor's Desk



Whew! Almost to the finish line! The school year seems to go by in a flash, well, maybe not in a flash some days! The faces that were “new” in September have become part of the daily community of learners. Some have excelled, some have struggled, the daily flow of learning and growing. We, as educators, never give up on kids. In this ebb and flow of learning and growing, keeping kids afloat is such an essential part of our job. Much of what keeps kids

going is the undeniable concern and connection that each educator makes in supporting and encouraging their students. Some students need something extra and it has been your duty over this year to be their coach and their cheerleader. Some students are not there yet for many reasons. Sometimes we are the only hope. Our profession has incredible responsibilities and so we at NELMS want to thank you for the work you do for children. We want you to know that the work is not easy and the time spent with children at this developmental stage can be frustrating and tiring. Let it be known that, even on the hard days, you are making a difference in the lives of these children. Summer, coming soon, is for recharging and renewing. Even if we have a second employment, a change is good. Like the Phoenix, in June, we may feel like “crash and burn” but will “rise” ready to embrace those new faces in September.

Wishing you a successful end of the year and a great summer!!

Brenda

Feedback to: Brenda – bhoule@comcast.net

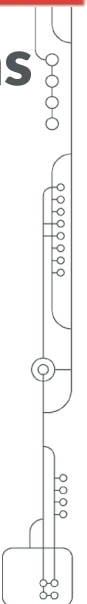
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These organizations are great resources for support, information about local events and issues, and advocacy opportunities.

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www.commle.org/

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Maine Association for Middle Level Education
www.mamleonline.org

New Hampshire Association for Middle Level Education
<http://www.nhamle.org/>

RI Middle Level Educators
www.rimle.net

VT Association for Middle Level Education
www.vamle.org



Tech Corner

Digital Devices for Students and Teachers

For many decades, school and technology leaders had few real choices when purchasing digital devices for their students and teachers to use. They could purchase desktop or laptop computers that had either the Macintosh operating system or Windows installed (or perhaps Linux) installed. The devices were generally priced between \$500 and \$1500, and that did not include the applications necessary to make them fully functional for users.

In the 21st century, several new types of computing devices have emerged, so school and technology leaders have interesting choices when purchasing devices for school users:

Internet-only notebooks (i.e. Chromebooks)—

These are inexpensive devices that are easy to manage, but that provide the least capacity and can be used to create the least sophisticated products. The only application installed on these devices is a web browser, and all “software” is really a web site that allows visitors to create documents, including multimedia files. These

Continued on page 5

New England League of Middle Schools James Garvin Distinguished Service Award

by Mary Ellen Arigo

Is presented to an outstanding educator who demonstrates that they excel in the following categories:

1. A record of service that reflects a high level of dedication and commitment to the cause of quality education for early adolescents.
2. A life that models the human qualities which, one day, we would want early adolescents to emulate.
3. A record of scholarship invested in helping others to better understand the unique needs of early adolescents.
4. A record of activities that clearly demonstrates a concern for those less fortunate, in need of special leadership.
5. A record of leadership in organizing and directing others to excellence in middle level education.

Who could be more passionate about middle level education than **Deborah Lachance**? Beginning as a Middle level mathematics teacher, team leader, and a member and past president of the NHAMLE board of directors are among the reasons why she is so deserving of this award!

She began working in the late 1970's as a mathematics teacher in a very typical

Junior High School in Rochester, New Hampshire. She taught there for 14 years and after attending and presenting at many NELMS Annual Conferences, helped move Rochester Jr. High to a truly great middle school. Professional Development was always important to her and she always encouraged her colleagues to join her and participate in as much PD as they could.

As a board of director of NHAMLE she jumped in with both feet when the group was struggling to find someone to replace the president. She was there offering to serve as the president-elect and learn the role. Then she became president and the group soared to new heights. In 2010, under her leadership the NHAMLE board of directors wrote and published a seminal document about middle level education in New Hampshire, **Soaring to New Heights in the Middle**, which was then copied and used by other NE states. Her organization of a Summit to launch “Soaring” was a huge success.

She then brought her expertise to Oyster River Middle School, a NELMS Spotlight School, in Durham, NH and served as a very successful Middle School mathematics teacher where she continued to engage her students in active learning.

Along the way we all have watched her

Continued on page 5



Teacher Tips!

Teacher to Teacher

Check out how teacher Jessica Solano engages families... with homework!

Check out Teacher2Teacher –

<https://www.teacher2teacher.education/>

embrace students, colleagues and the community. She willingly shares her love of young adolescents with anyone who asks or is willing to listen. Talk to the many teachers and students she has mentored along the way and they'll tell you about her love and commitment to staff, students and education.

As you can see **Deb Lachance** is totally devoted to young adolescent learners, committed to best practices and very deserving to be the recipient of the James Garvin Distinguished Service Award!



Spotlight Schools Midlines May 2018

As this school year winds down we are pleased to announce the addition of 2 new Spotlight Schools that join our cadre of Spotlights throughout New England. In September you will have an opportunity to learn more about each school. For now, we tip our hats to **Captain Nathan Hale Middle School, Coventry, CT. and Leicester Middle School, Leicester, MA.**

In September we will also unveil our newest Spotlight Program, the **Emerging Spotlight School Consultation**. Many of our members have expressed interest in our Spotlight Schools Program while experiencing concern for whether or not their school was ready for Spotlight status. This new program will give schools a **LOW STRESS** and **RISK FREE** opportunity to gauge their readiness for Spotlight distinction. The program will include consultation with the Spotlight Schools Coordinator about the process, assessment and inventory documents to use with staff, an on-site meeting with Administration to review assessment data and develop an action plan, and discounted rates for on-site professional development. We are excited to bring this new program to our members and to grow our Spotlight Schools family. Watch the NELMS website for more news about the Emerging Spotlight School Consultation coming soon!

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- Begin the work of revitalizing your schedule

For more info and/or to register for one of these events click here.

web sites are all configured to store files on the user's G Suite account.

Tablets (i.e. iPads)—

These are generally single-user devices that are very popular with some populations, but that have limitations, including the limited processing power and sophistication of the products that can be created with the installed apps. One of the most appealing aspects of using tablets is the haptic controls: users can tap and point with their fingers and use a stylus to input information. In addition, the devices have cameras that can be used to quickly and intuitively create input.

Computers with a full operating system—

Desktops and laptops are still available and provide the most capacity and can be used for the most sophisticated products. These are the most expensive and tend to require the most sophisticated management. To utilize the full capacity of these computers, school and technology leaders purchase productivity suites (such as Microsoft Office) and other applications. These can allow students and teachers to use the same tools as professionals.

"Dr. Gary Ackerman has been supporting technology-rich education for several decades. He blogs at <http://www.hackscience.net/blog> and is @garyackerman"phd on Twitter."

STEAM: An Educational Approach

By Dulcey Worth

STEAM is an educational approach to learning that uses Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Mathematics as access points for guiding student inquiry, dialogue, and critical thinking. The end results are students who take thoughtful risks, engage in experiential learning, persist in problem-solving, embrace collaboration, and work through the creative process. These are the innovators, educators, leaders, and learners of the 21st century. If the United States wants stay a global leader then students need to develop these skills. Yet today, few American students pursue expertise in STEAM fields—and many teachers are not skilled in those

subjects. That is why President Obama set a priority for increasing the number of students and teachers who are proficient in these essential fields. Schools are trying to offer their students these opportunities; however, funding prohibits schools from getting started and sustaining a program. One school is an exception. What follows is a description from a presentation given at the Annual Conference.

Full Steam Ahead. session #8, was one of the most inspiring sessions to attend during NELM's 37th Conference. Students from Our Sister's School in New Bedford, MA were the presenters for this session. The young women from this all girls' school showcased the 21st Century

STEAM learning that is taking place at their school. There were eight different stations set up around the room that attendees of the session could visit, experiment with and ask questions. A few of the stations were Littlebits, TinkerCad, Coding and Makey Makey. Each of these stations had one or two students from Our Sister's School who facilitated the activities and conversations. Tobey Eugenio, the school's STEAM Lab teacher, and Brandy Jackson, the STEAM consultant, took a backseat as students did the teaching. It was evident by the looks on their faces how incredibly proud they were. The poise and confidence of these students was amazing!! Hats off to an excellent session!!!

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Scholar Leader Dinners Spring, 2018

New Hampshire Scholar Leader Dinner by Deb Lachance

The Nineteenth Annual New Hampshire Scholar Leader Dinner was held on May 17, 2018. Seventy-four students were recognized for their achievements at the Center of New Hampshire in Manchester. Oyster River Middle School's Jazz Band under the direction of Dave Ervin provided music and centerpieces were constructed by Dona Boardman and her students at Hampton Academy. Congratulations and opening remarks were made by State Education Deputy Commissioner, Christine Brennan. It was a truly amazing evening dedicated to celebrating our special NH Scholar Leaders and middle level students.

Massachusetts Scholar Leader Dinner-by Brenda Houle

The Nineteenth Annual Massachusetts Scholar Leader Dinner was held on Wednesday, May 16, 2018 at the Best Western Royal Plaza in Marlborough, MA. Eighty-six students, accompanied by parents, teachers, administrators, were recognized for their achievements. Following a delicious dinner and with delightful centerpieces designed by the students at Dorothy L. Beckwith Middle School in Rehoboth, MA, Vincent M. Hayward, Principal of Norton Middle School, gave the opening remarks. Beth Crohan, from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Middle Level Educators (COMMLE) presented the Sullivan Award to Leslie Rafferty, Berkley Middle School, Berkley, MA. Randy Pierce, who became blind after college, was the keynote speaker, accompanied his very patient service dog. He gave an inspiring and uplifting message about facing obstacles, developing attitude and strategies to live a full life. He finished to a standing ovation.

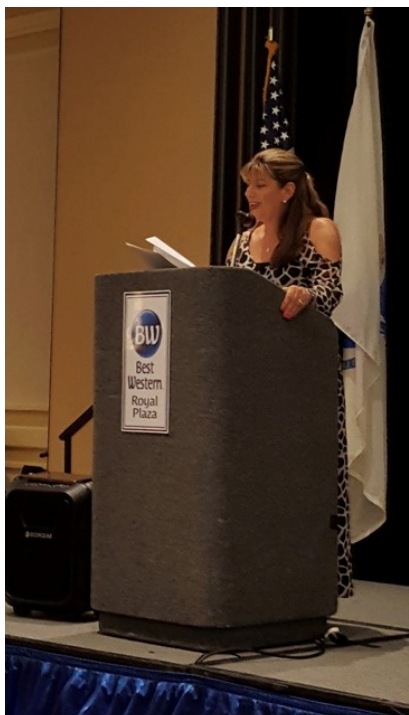
Jerry Frew, Executive Director of the New England League of Middle Schools (NELMS) welcomed the students and highlighted the Awards criteria. The evening ended with the students accepting their awards and posing for pictures, expertly handled by Lifetouch Studios. It was an impressive event in honoring young middle level students.

Maine Scholar Leader Dinner by Julie Gardner

On Thursday, May 10, 2018 the Maine Scholar Leader Dinner, held at the Augusta Civic Center was a huge success with attendance by students from 26 Maine schools! Both NELMS and MAMLE representatives were present to greet and welcome the young adults and their guests. As students and families entered, the Medway Middle School Rock Band performed a combination of classic and pop hits.

Jeff Rodman, principal at Middle School of the Kennebunks, served as master of ceremonies for the event. Dr. Katie Rybakova, the MAMLE Executive Director, and Representative Matthew

Continued on next page



2018 NELMS CONFERENCE

by Porter Dodge, Principal, Amherst MS, Amherst, NH

I really enjoy attending the New England League of Middle School Conference. Last year, due to scheduling conflicts, my Deans and I were unable to attend the entire two days, so this year I made sure I was there for the entire time.

Afforded the opportunity to attend conferences in many cities over the years, none feels more like home than Providence, Rhode Island. The combination of a beautiful nearby venue, quality presentations, and relevant topics makes for a successful experience for attendees.

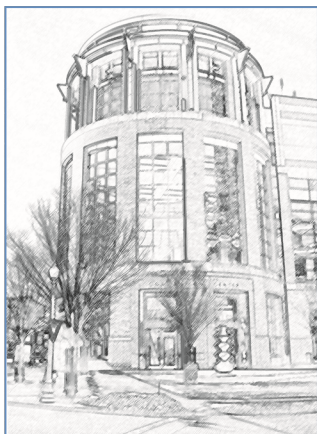
I had a great time seeing the NELMS staff, colleagues and friends. Dave Burgess, of Teach Like a Pirate fame, cracked me up at the keynote and the luncheon. The major focus of my personal workshop choices centered on STEAM, Makerspace, and Innovation and Design, but I also had the chance to attend timely presentations on growth mindset, concussion protocols, and mental health. I was very impressed with the speakers, and really enjoyed the conference!

2018 Annual Conference...cont. from page 1

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Plans for next year's 38th Annual Conference to be held March 21 & 22, 2019 in Providence are already underway. Thanks to the great feedback provided by conference attendees this year, next year promises to be bigger and better! Plan now to return and enjoy the new strands, speakers and enthusiasm generated by this group of adults who are committed to making the "Magic in the Middle" come alive each day. The call for presenters is now active from our website, and we count on YOU to deliver the variety of high quality and practical presentations that are the trademarks of our annual event.



Scholar Leader Dinners...cont. from previous page

G. Pouliot from Augusta shared words of wisdom about the scholar leaders making a difference both now and in the future.

After dinner, Gert Nesin, a member of the MAMLE Board of Directors, introduced the keynote speaker, Annabelle Muscatell, a junior at Old Town High School, who has already made a difference in her community. Jerry Frew, Executive Director for NELMS, congratulated the scholar leaders on their dedication to excellence, which led into each student receiving their award. Jeff Rodman concluded the evening by wishing everyone a safe journey home.

Vermont Scholar Leader Dinner by Betsy Memoe

The 21st annual Vermont Scholar Leader Dinner was held Wednesday, June 6th, at Norwich University in Northfield, Vermont. This beautiful Vermont setting was a perfect venue to celebrate the 86 Middle School Students who were honored across the state. The evening began with VAMLE president, Monica McEnery and Agency of Education representative, Jesse DeCarolis, welcoming the Vermont honorees and their families in a packed house. A delicious buffet dinner was served. Immediately following dinner, two Vermont graduating seniors and US Senate Ambassadors winners were introduced by middle school students from Northfield Middle School. Harrison Brushnell and Connor Solimano shared messages of encouragement with the students including advice on: moving outside of their comfort zones, taking academic risks, and spending time in reflection to stay true to themselves. Sue Gee, VAMLE executive director, shared the Scholar Leader award criteria and the 86 students were each announced and stepped up to the stage to receive their awards. Lindsey Halman, VAMLE President-Elect, concluding the evening challenging students to find their voices and be heard: including taking their rightful places in their respective communities as leaders.



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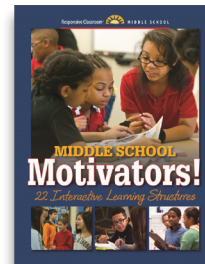
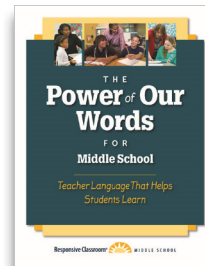
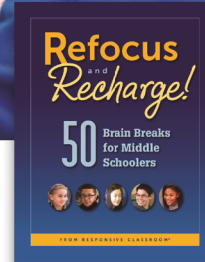




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