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Collaboration in the Middle: Middle Grades to Higher Education Promoting, Advocating, Igniting Support for Middle Schools


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Collaboration in the Middle: Middle Grades to Higher Education Promoting, Advocating, Igniting Support for Middle Schools

Southeast Regional Professors of Middle Level Education Symposium, 2018

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On May 17-18, 2018, approximately fifty educators from 6 states convened for the Southeastern Professors of Middle Education Symposium with the goal of promoting collaborative efforts among state level POMLEs to advocate for Middle Level Education. Professors and Middle Level Education Leaders from across the Southeast joined with preservice educators and graduate students. From pre-service to long-term service, the variety provided lots of opportunities to learn from each other. Over the year prior, middle level education professors in the southeast organized the fifth Southeast Professors of Middle Level Education (POMLE) event.

Our first SEPOMLE events were back in 2006 and 2008 when we landed at the College of Charleston sharing ideas and best practices. For those two years we had around 30-35 participants. In 2010, we held our symposium in Boone, NC, with about 65 people, and in 2011 we convened in Milledgeville with approximately one hundred participants. The most popular SEPOMLE symposium to date was in Milledgeville. We had as a goal to write a white paper. Unfortunately, nothing came out of it. We had lots of ideas generated, but no follow up was disappointing.

This Symposium was the first time we intentionally included graduate students and teachers. We held it in Greenville, SC, where we got a tour of one of the Greenville County alternative middle schools. There were approximately 50 participants. We met in teams to share product-based ideas, had conversations, and brainstormed research. We had graduate students sharing their research with us and we even had a few preservice teachers.

The keynote address was given by Dr. David Vawter and was titled *Energizing Middle School Students: Motivation Theory into Practice*. There were sixteen sessions, the visit to Greenville Early College, and networking and collaborative partnerships. This issue of *Current Issues in Middle Level Education* presents proceedings from this Symposium. Presenters of sessions were invited to submit to this issue, and the articles here represent the ideas shared through the Symposium.

Several people contributed to the success of the Symposium.

State and National leaders including:

Nancy Ruppert, AMLE President (2017-2018)

Sarah Davis Powell, MLE author

Betty Dore, MLE author

David Strahan, AMLE Research Advisory Committee

David Virtue, Editor of *RMLE Online*

Gary Senn, NAPOMLE President-elect

David McDonald, AMLE's Educator of the Year (2017-2018), former SCAMLE President

Special thanks to the planning team:

Lienne Medford & Bridget Coleman (SC)– Event Coordinators

Gary Senn (NAPOMLE & SC)– Web Communication

Nancy Ruppert (AMLE & NC)

Betty Dore (VA)

Jeanneine Jones (NC)

Deborah McMurtrie (SC)

Dave Strahan (NC)

David Virtue (AL)

Amanda Wall (GA)

Special thanks to the sponsors:

South Carolina Professors of Middle Level Education (SCPOMLE)

South Carolina Association for Middle Level Education (SCAMLE)

The South Carolina Middle Grades Initiative (SCMGI)

National Association of Professors of Middle Level Education (NAPOMLE)

Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE)

POMLE Groups of SC, NC, GA, TN, and VA

Reflections / Survey Responses

Fourteen attendees submitted a post-conference survey.

Insights gained:

- comments about information sessions (e.g. loved gaining technology tools)
- the value and importance of the collaborative process and being with colleagues

- view of the experience as one that provided thoughts on how we move Middle Level Education forward
- an appreciation for sharing thoughts on a middle school mindset and a vision for our future
- this Symposium helped emphasize the important work of “gaining an educator’s perspective”
- insight gained into the role of Middle Level at the university level