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## A Glance Inside

### **Special Section: Middle Level Education: The Long View**

In March 2013 Dr. Paul George delivered the John Van Hoose Memorial Lecture at the North Carolina Middle School Association Annual Conference. He titled his lecture “The Struggle for the Middle School in North Carolina: Taking the Long View.” Those of us in the auditorium were captivated and inspired and we knew immediately that we needed to make this speech available to a wider audience. Dr. George agreed to allow us to publish his speech in its entirety. We begin this Winter 2014 issue of *NCMSJ* with Dr. George’s speech..

Additionally, and thanks to Dr. John Harrison, NCMLE Executive Director, and Dr. David Strahan, NCMLE Publications Chair, we invited commentaries on key aspects of Dr. George’s speech. We asked our authors to address the *Long View* from their current work in middle level education research, theory, and practice.

In the midst of the test-driven age in which we live and in which teachers work hard at educating young adolescents, David Strahan starts us off with his answer to the question: what does the *Long View* mean for middle level students? Strahan convincingly presents his view that the middle school concept is the best pathway to higher test scores for young people in middle grades schools. Next we went to Nancy Ruppert and Kendra Jarvis with the question: what does the *Long View* mean for middle level teachers? Ruppert and Jarvis and five teachers reflected their answers in realistic and hopeful terms.

Howard Coleman and Kathleen Roney combine their experiences as former middle grades administrators with their current research interests in educational leadership to offer us their answer to the question, what does the *Long View* mean for middle level administrators? Coleman and Roney retain Dr. George’s optimism and offer four recommendations to those who want to commit to work for the success of every student in middle grades school. In her piece Laurie Ramirez zeroes in on Dr. George’s call to action and expands that to include a confirmation of the good work that is being done by countless middle grades practitioners. Ramirez uses her

experiences as a teacher educator in addressing the question: what does the *Long View* mean for middle level teacher educators?

We conclude this special section with Robert Houghton's reflections on what the *Long View* means for middle grades curriculum. Houghton asserts that the long view must involve us in global centers for self-directed learning and composition.

### **Winter 2014 Issue**

The *North Carolina Middle School Journal* publishes manuscripts on all topics related to the education of young adolescent learners. During 2013 we received a number of submissions and are pleased to publish three of those manuscripts for you. Allow me to highlight some of our reviewers' comments about the articles in this issue of *NCMSJ*.

In "A Teacher's Challenge: Moving Middle School Students from Apathy to Vitality" Rebecca Corwin set an optimistic tone in addressing issues related to working with young adolescents. Corwin encourages teachers to learn more about students as individuals. Once that relationship is established, Corwin urges teachers to consider engagement with lessons in a more comprehensive fashion.

While the topic of value-added assessments is relevant to current trends in education, its connection to the Common Core and Essential Standards is not entirely clear. Holly Thornton reviews current research concerning EVAAS and includes her research involving principals' views of EVAAS in her article entitled "Middle Level Teacher Quality in the Midst of the Rush to Common Core: What Do Principals Think of Test-based Teacher Quality?" The information collected by Thornton relates to middle level educators in that their evaluations will be impacted by EVAAS and administrators' use of it.

Middle grades teachers are facing many more students on the Autism spectrum and students who are identified as twice-gifted. "Through Jackson's Eyes: What Teachers May Want to Know about Asperger's Syndrome and Giftedness" allows Kristy Kowalske to present an important description of students who have Asperger's and AIG designations. Kowalske gives background information for educators and provides a very appropriate case study that teachers will recognize.

### **Continue the Dialogue**

With this publication of the journal we are optimistic that we will have a positive impact on teachers across the state, and around the world (we have readers from Canada to Australia). We encourage you to continue the dialogue with all of our authors. E-mail addresses are included at the end of each article.

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