

Recommendation for Joan Jarrett for President-elect of National Middle School Association

January 31, 2009

To the Selection Committee:

I am writing to recommend Joan Jarrett as President-elect for the National Middle School Association. Few are as qualified as Joan for such a position.

There are four compelling characteristics of Joan that make her such a strong candidate for this office. First is her knowledge base. With 35 years teaching students, participating at local and national levels and still going strong, she's up to date with the latest research in middle level pedagogy, instructional technology, educational politics, and the everyday culture of young adolescents. Her wit and wisdom are quick and insightful. I'm always impressed with how aware Joan is of all that is happening in the profession as well as within her own classes and building. She has the macro and micro elements of the education world down to an art.

Second, Joan's passion for working with students and for middle level reform is among the strongest I've seen in the nation. If you've spent time with Joan, you know both her body and face energize when she talks about today's young adolescents and the education they need to thrive. You can tell middle level education is where she finds meaning and purpose professionally and personally. There's no sense from her that she's sacrificing something else while spinning her wheels in middle level education; this is where she wants to be. Her students benefit from this passion, of course, but our profession does as well: her energy is contagious. We can't help but want to take the journey with her if it's going to be this exciting and meaningful.

This speaks to the third attribute of Joan that makes her such a compelling candidate: Her advocacy for middle level education. Joan is an eloquent ambassador for middle level educators and students. She is well-spoken, visionary, and assertive. She retains decorum but is always ready with a friendly anecdote or bit of humor, and she is personally dedicated to her cause. Joan is driven in the positive sense of making deep, personal investments in middle level education, and she does so knowing this isn't for the faint-hearted. She has the courage to do what it takes, not just speak platitudes and hope everything works out. She's a tough educator, willing to do the grunt work as well as the polite, up front diplomacy needed to further NMSA's cause.

Given these qualities and the depth of her fourth compelling attribute, leadership experience, I'm not sure we could define a perfect candidate for the President-elect of NMSA any better than what we have in Joan. She's had ample experience at the state and national level as an East Region Trustee for NMSA, Chair person of several education initiatives, President of the Pennsylvania NMSA affiliate, and she has presented numerous times at professional conferences. Gosh, there's even a state-wide award given in her honor every year to a deserving student. We're getting darn close to Joan becoming Pennsylvania's John Lounsbury here.

For these reasons, I recommend Joan Jarrett for President-elect for NMSA without hesitation. We are fortunate to have someone of her caliber willing to serve NMSA.



Rick Wormeli

Author/Teacher Teacher

NMSA Cadre Member