

Annual Conference for Middle Level Education

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October 25-27, 2018 • Orlando, FL

Call for Presentations

Middle grades educators from around the world gather at the Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE) Annual Conference for Middle Level Education. This is the conference for dialogue, learning, and exploration of topics critical to schools, agencies, and individuals dedicated to the education, development, and growth of students ages 10-15 years old. We are interested in sessions that include practical, hands-on solutions and theoretical, research-based presentations. Our goal is to offer a varied program selection in which the professional middle grades educator can find what they need to support their professional learning goals. Session types include Concurrent Sessions, Speed Learning Sessions, and Spark and Tell Sessions.

Session Types

Concurrent Sessions

These are 60-minute sessions dealing with a variety of current topics appropriate to middle level education. Innovative instructional methods, trends, and special programs are featured. Each concurrent session is assigned to a session room. Podium, microphone, LCD projector, audio sound patch, Wi-Fi, and screen will be provided. Additional AV can be purchased for each session.

Deadlines: Completed proposals are accepted February 12–25. Applicants are notified via email of their selection status by March 9.

Speed Learning Sessions

These sessions are quickly becoming the most popular session format at our conference. They allow for collaboration and interaction between the presenter and attendees, in an energizing environment. Each session will run concurrently with other speed learning sessions, within the same room. Each speed learning session is assigned to a roundtable. The physical roundtable will hold 8 to 10 people. It is estimated that there will be 40 roundtables set up in the room for this event. There will be (3) session rotations within 60-minutes, so you present the same 15-minute session three times in a row, each to a different audience. Attendees will have an additional (5) minutes to move to their next table selection between session times. The AMLE session facilitator will signal the attendees and presenters when each session begins and ends. Wi-Fi is provided. Other AV is not available.

Deadlines: Completed proposals are accepted March 12–25. Applicants are notified via email of their selection status by March 30.

Spark & Tell Sessions

These sessions are designed to be fast-paced and informative. They should spark or ignite an idea and provide resources to help attendees dive deeper on their own. Each presentation will feature an innovative idea, inspiration, or initiative happening right now in classrooms and schools. Presenters will provide a 10-minute PowerPoint, which will be preloaded with other Spark & Tell sessions. They will run back to back within 60-minutes, with time for Q&A at the end where attendees can ask a follow-up of any of the presenters.

Deadlines: Completed proposals are accepted April 2–15. Applicants are notified via email of their selection status by April 20.

Proposal Review Process

Proposals are read as part of a juried process by the Program Review Committee. Applicants will be notified of their proposal's status after the Program Review Committee's evaluation of all entries.

Applicants must:

- Develop a proposal to represent the selected strand.
- Make sure the proposal is relevant and significant to middle level education.
- Clearly describe the goals and rationale for the proposed presentation.
- Indicate the intended audience (e.g., teachers, administrators, professors).
- Make sure the title reflects the content of the proposal.
- Avoid pejorative references and discriminatory comments.

The Program Review Committee chooses presenters from a broad spectrum of geographical, racial, ethnic, and professional groups. In addition to the guidelines listed, evaluations from previous AMLE Annual Conference presentations and the number of proposals submitted per presenter are taken into consideration. Presenters are not guaranteed continuing slots on the program, even though past sessions may have been well received. **Proposals are graded based on the rubric on page 4.**

Guidelines for Completing the Proposal

Presentation

Abstract content must be clear and contain the three listed requirements (goals, rationale, and activities). Presentations that contain negative references based on ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, or beliefs will not be considered. Please make sure the title reflects the content of the session. Please review the Conference Strands and Session Selection Grading Rubric located on pages 2-4 for additional details to help you with the proposal process.

Speaker Profile

The speaker profile is included with the proposal during the review process. Please update the contact information and biography online at

<http://www.amle.org/annual/Presenters/SpeakerProfile>.

Please note that if you are accepted to present at the conference, you serve on a contributing basis and are required to purchase registration. You will not be reimbursed for registration, lodging, travel, audiovisual equipment rental, or additional costs. All Presenters MUST be registered by August 10, 2018 or your session will be removed from the program and replaced.

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Conference Strands

Creating a Culture that Makes a Difference

Effective schools take responsibility for creating a culture that focuses on relationships, trust, and respect in addition to fostering the academic success of students. A successful school for young adolescents is an inviting and safe community that encourages learning. Teachers, staff, and students learn and put into practice the skills of direct feedback, healthy and appropriate confrontation, positive risk taking, and personal and collaborative goal setting. An emphasis on health, wellness, and safety permeates the entire school. Interactions among staff members and between students reflect democracy and fairness. Like young adolescents, the climate of developmentally responsive middle grades schools requires constant nurturing.

Topics appropriate for this strand include:

- Aligning all aspects of a middle grades school culture to student and adult learning
- Bullying prevention and intervention
- Closing the Achievement Gap
- Communicating with non-traditional family units
- Creating a college and career-ready culture
- Creating a school-wide climate of support and acceptance
- Developing and nurturing the learning community
- Developing student leaders
- Dropout prevention
- Family relationships, involvement, and programs
- Gender and middle level student achievement
- Healthy, supportive school climate
- Improving teacher working conditions
- Learning communities
- Parent liaisons
- Positive discipline and restorative justice
- Prevention programs and services
- School safety and security efforts
- Supporting parents of special education students
- Understanding cultural and language differences
- Advisory programs, services, and curriculum
- Equitable access to learning
- Student advocacy program

Principal and Teacher Leadership that Transforms

Courageous, collaborative middle grades leaders are knowledgeable about the characteristics and needs of young adolescents. Leaders understand the theory and best practice of middle level education. They strive to educate colleagues, parents, policymakers, and community members. Courageous, collaborative leadership empowers people to make difficult decisions addressing the education and well-being of each young adolescent.

Topics appropriate for this strand include:

- Advocating for young adolescents and effective middle grades practice
- Aligning all aspects of a middle grades school culture to student and adult learning
- Building capacity within the school and district
- Leading and maintaining positive school climate
- Developing teachers as leaders
- Establishing a shared vision for the school and communicating it
- Establishing collaborative leadership
- Funding structures and sources
- Leading health and wellness programs
- Hiring and retaining quality middle grades teachers
- Leading and monitoring school improvement
- Providing opportunities for staff input and leadership development
- Reflective leadership practices
- School-community partnerships
- Teacher evaluation and merit pay
- Teacher morale
- Using school-wide data for decision making

High Impact Classroom Strategies

Middle school educators recognize that covering content and learning are not synonymous. The curriculum of a successful middle level school must also be relevant, challenging, integrative, and exploratory. Curriculum also must be integrative and coherent, must help students connect school experiences to their lives outside school, and must encourage students to reflect on the totality of their experiences. Educators serve their students well when they model inclusive, collaborative, and team-oriented approaches to learning. Continuous, authentic, and appropriate assessment and evaluation provide information and evidence about a student's learning progress. Such information and data help students, teachers, and family members select immediate learning goals, evaluate growth, and plan teaching and learning strategies.

Topics appropriate for this strand include:

- Active learning practices
- Brain-based teaching and learning
- Character education
- Cross-content and disciplinary literacy
- Curriculum and content standards and appropriate middle grades practices
- Differentiated instruction
- Exploratory/Essentials curriculum
- Interdisciplinary and integrated curriculum
- Authentic assessment methods and structures
- Balanced assessment systems—both formative and summative
- Developing appropriate assessments for middle grades students
- Portfolios, rubrics, and performance assessments
- Student peer review
- Multicultural education in the middle grades
- Project-based learning
- Service-learning projects
- Social emotional learning
- Standards-based curriculum
- STEM/STEAM in the middle grades
- Subject-specific curriculum (e.g., math, art, music, science, language arts, social studies, health, physical education, world language)
- Student-led conferencing
- Student goal-setting
- Student-directed learning
- Student engagement
- Student voice in developing and directing projects

Characteristics of High Performing Middle Schools

School structures and organization have a great impact on student learning. Teams are often considered the heart of an effective middle grades school. Effective teams lead to improved student achievement, increased parental contacts, and enhanced school climate and student attitudes. Successful schools for young adolescents also have carefully crafted transition programs for moving from elementary to middle and middle to high, as well as college and career-ready cultures, and flexibility in scheduling, grouping, and staffing.

Topics appropriate for this strand include:

- Advisory programs, services, and curriculum
- Alternate school structures (e.g., single-gender classrooms, uniforms)
- Alternate student grouping (e.g., looping, multiage grouping)
- Creating a college and career-ready culture
- School-wide climate of support and acceptance
- Integrating the arts
- Extended learning time models
- Family relationships, involvement, and programs
- Flexible school schedules and structures
- International Baccalaureate (IB) programs
- Online education programs
- Professional learning communities (PLCs)
- School-community partnerships
- School-within-a-school
- Social inclusion practices
- Student communities
- Teams and teaming
- Transitions (from elementary to middle and middle to high)
- Upside-down school models
- Vertical alignment of the curriculum: elementary, high school, and post-secondary efforts

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Session Selection Grading Rubric

The following scales will be used to determine if a presentation should be included at the annual conference. Each dimension is graded on a scale of 0-5.

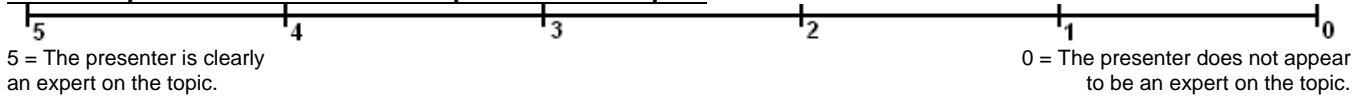
Is content important/relevant or innovative/new to middle level education?



Are learning objectives clear, relevant, and realistic?



Does the presenter demonstrate expertise in the topic?



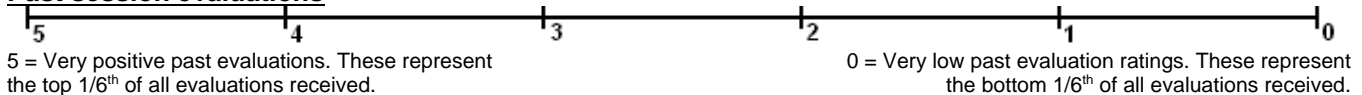
Is current technology being used to present the materials and engage/connect attendees?



Will the presenters demonstrate active engagement and effective educational practices in their session?



Past session evaluations



Expected session attendance

