



the
ADVOCATE
NEWS & VIEWS ON MIDDLE LEVEL EDUCATION

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Happy Summer to All GMSA Members!

Congratulations on the end of the 2016-2017 school year.

Georgia Middle School Association is a leader for continuous improvement in the education of middle grades students through promoting exemplary educational practices and offering support and resources to all Georgia middle grades educators.

<http://gamiddleschoolassociation.org>

In this issue...

Read about plans for the 2018 conference and highlights from the 2017 conference...

Mark your calendars for the

40th Annual GMSA Conference

February 25-27, 2018!

The 2018 conference will be held at the Rainwater Conference Center in Valdosta.

“THE MIDDLE” Marks the Spot:

Discovering the Hidden Treasures of Young Adolescents

We are excited to host keynote speaker, Dave Burgess, who will inspire us to

Teach Like A Pirate!

Think about how YOU can be part of the 2018 conference:

- **Apply for a Teacher Grant**
- **Apply with your colleagues to be Team of the Year**
- **Nominate yourself or a colleague as Educator of the Year**
- **Come learn and network with middle grades educators from across the state!**
- **Submit a proposal to present at the conference! We especially welcome teams to present together.**

Proposals for presentations can be on topics related to STEM/STEAM, school culture & climate, differentiation, PBIS, technology... *and more!*

We encourage you to consult the 16 characteristics of *This We Believe* for your proposal:

<http://www.amle.org/AboutAMLE/ThisWeBelieve/tabid/121/Default.aspx#122516-the-16-characteristics>

Presentations will be identified according to these AMLE Standards:

1. Young Adolescent Development
2. Middle Level Curriculum
3. Middle Level Philosophy and School Organization
4. Middle Level Instruction and Assessment
5. Middle Level Professional Roles

Find information about registration, submitting a proposal for a presentation, and awards on our website: <https://gamiddleschoolassociation.org/conference/>.

Keynote speaker Dave Burgess will inspire you to expand your teaching practice by teaching like a pirate! We are so excited to welcome Dave and hear from him.

There is more treasure in books than in all the pirate's loot on Treasure Island. -Walt Disney

One doesn't discover new lands without consenting to lose sight, for a very long time, of the shore. -Andre Gide

No thief, however skillful, can rob one of knowledge, and that is why knowledge is the best and safest treasure to acquire. – L. Frank Baum

2017 Conference Highlights



The 2017 GMSA conference was held at the Rainwater Center in Valdosta. Different sessions engaged attendees in discussion about best practices for middle schools. Several teams presented together.

At the opening session, our keynote speaker, Dr. Sharon Faber, reminded us of the many changes young adolescents are going through, and why preparation, understanding, caring, and humor are important for teaching at this level.

We also were joined at the opening session by Dr. Nancy Ruppert from UNC Asheville and Dr. Gayle Andrews from UGA. Dr. Ruppert is president-elect of the Board of Trustees of the Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE), and Dr. Andrews is a South Region Representative to the Board of Trustees.

During the luncheon, President Neal Tam and others presented awards for Teacher of the Year, Team of the Year, and Teacher Grant winners. Lighthouse Schools to Watch were also recognized. Georgia Teacher of the Year Casey Bethel spoke about the many roles that teachers play each day in the classroom.

Write for *The Advocate!*

Georgia middle school teachers create and teach dynamic, engaging, differentiated, motivating lessons throughout the school year. Now that it's summer and you are reflecting on the past year, what have been your successes? Share your great ideas with readers of *The Advocate!* Email editor Amanda Wall at awall@georgiasouthern.edu with your information for inclusion in a future issue.

Georgia Lighthouse Schools to Watch

A program of the National Forum to accelerate Middle Grades Reform



The National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform sponsors the Schools to Watch (STW) program. Georgia was one of the first three states to be a part of this prestigious program. Our STW program is called Georgia Lighthouse Schools to Watch.

A school is identified as a Lighthouse School to Watch (LSTW) based on its implementation of four domains:

- academic excellence
- developmental responsiveness
- social equity, and
- organizational structures and supports.

These domains are grounded in research-based best practices for middle schools.

After initial designation as a School to Watch, a school can apply for re-designation every three years.

Congratulations to Upson-Lee Middle and Waycross Middle!! Both of these Schools to Watch will be recognized at the national Schools to Watch conference this summer.

Further information about this program can be found on the National Forum website (www.mgforum.org) and the Georgia Middle School Association website (<https://gamiddleschoolassociation.org/lighthouse-schools-to-watch/>).

Solar Eclipse...coming in August!

A solar eclipse will take place on **Monday, August 21**. The last solar eclipse visible from parts of the continental United States was in 1979, according to NASA, and the next one will be in 2023. During the eclipse, the moon will cover the sun. In the **path of totality**, there will be a complete eclipse, while there will be a partial eclipse outside the path of

totality. Part of the path of totality will cover extreme northeast Georgia, and much of South Carolina will fall within the path of totality.

This NASA site will help you (and your students) prepare for the eclipse:

<https://eclipse2017.nasa.gov/>

Different parts of the page include resources for educators as well as information on how to safely view the eclipse.

The eclipse will take place on a school day, so make it a part of the learning!

Upcoming Events

The AMLE annual conference will be in Philadelphia this year from Monday 11/6 through Wednesday 11/8.

The Advocate is the newsletter of the Georgia Middle School Association. Amanda Wall is the Editor. The President of GMSA is Neal Tam. The editor welcomes submissions and notes from readers: awall@georgiasouthern.edu. Find GMSA online at <https://gamiddleschoolassociation.org/>