



HAWAII ASSOCIATION OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS (HAMS)

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Nā Leo waena ~ The Message in the Middle

Spring 2016

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Welcome to Middle Level Education!

AMLE's held Institute for Middle Level Leadership, Hawaii ~ Feb. 2015

The Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE) in collaboration with the Hawaii Association of Middle Schools (HAMS), and hosted by Kamehameha Schools Kapālama held a three-day conference for over 60 local public and independent school educators focusing on the theme: "Energize Your Middle Level Leadership!"

Attendees had the opportunity to experience 20 workshops and hear from leading national middle school educators. Presenters included Dru Tomlin – AMLE's director of Middle Level Services, Dr. Nikki Woodson – superintendent of schools for the Metropolitan School District of Washington Township, and Paul Dunford – Middle School, Leadership and Special Education specialist with the Maryland Department of Education.

HAMS Executive Director, Gail Vannatta was instrumental in the coordination & facilitation for use of the beautiful campus' Ka'iwakīloumoku Hawaiian Cultural Center, as well as providing tours of the middle school's progressive "classrooms-without-walls" learning environment, and supporting parents' understanding of middle level learners' needs.

HAMS Vision

Lighting and sustaining the torch of middle level education through the spirit of 'ohana

HAMS Mission

To be Hawaii's middle level advocacy by promoting the vision and providing the knowledge and resources to those responsible for, and accountable to, each of our early adolescents.

To Middle or Not to Middle -

That is the question for many new teachers!

By: Sandy Cameli, EdD

Resources for Middle Level Educators



FREE Membership

www.amle.org

Beginning teachers are challenged with a multitude of responsibilities when they first join the profession: *How do I set up my classroom? How much homework should I give? When do I schedule unruly parents for conferences?* and *Where do I keep the "Freckles the hamster" who was just donated as the class pet?* However, few new educators are adequately prepared for the chaotic life of the *walking hormones* (not unlike the *Walking Dead*), or early adolescents when they are hired to teach 5th - 9th graders.

Some helpful tips to keep in mind when working with 10-to-14-year olds, for beginning and veteran teachers alike:

1. **Practice Empathy:** Early adolescents are experiencing the most cognitive, physical, social and emotional changes in their lives while navigating the middle school world. Their clumsiness, originality, risk-taking and insecurities play out like an individual with multiple-personalities. The highs and lows of middle school emotions can give any seasoned educator whiplash if unprepared for the daily turmoil. Teachers do best by being consistent and remaining calm (count to 10 if necessary), as these students **are** looking for control, since their own lives feel out of control during puberty!
2. **Offer Variety:** Students want to feel empowered by given ownership of their learning. They appreciate options in assignments, activities and projects. When given selections for report topics, the ability to use flexible timelines, or have the choice between individual, partner or team presentations, students engage more in learning as they feel their voice is important and valued. By incorporating choice into middle level programming, teachers will also benefit by witnessing growth and self-expression from their students in a variety of formats.
3. **Establish rituals & routines:** The transition to middle school from elementary settings can be intimidating even to the most successful of students. Therefore, setting up structures on a daily, weekly & monthly basis will assist learners as they juggle new responsibilities, schedules and "*Tween*" life. Spending extra time the first weeks of school setting up daily planners, using cooperative learning skills to collaborate with peers, being intentional with page headers or other labeling techniques for assignments, and practicing organizational strategies will build habits to benefit students and teachers for the whole school year.
4. **Share a sense of humor:** Middle schoolers can be the funniest human beings on the planet! Their clothing styles, fad-of-the-month obsessions, band-wagon matters, and of course drama-issues could put any TV reality show to shame! Expect the unexpected - various times of the day! Invest in a lame-joke book and prepare to be on the receiving-end of multiple knock-knock jokes, as well as exposed to a plethora of synonyms for every human body part imaginable!

These are just a sampling of ideas and best practices utilized by veteran educators who have a penchant for working with middle school students. And, although there will be those days where pulling out one's own hair or performing an at-home root canal may seem less painful than teaching algebraic expressions to 12-year olds, the long-term benefits of learning from and growing with these exuberant individuals far outweigh the side effects!



www.middleweb.com



www.edutopia.org



www.ascd.org



<http://pdk.sagepub.com>



Bright Spots & Shining Stars in Hawaii's Middle Schools

Kailua Intermediate's Science Team



Kailua Intermediate's Science and Engineering Department was recently named ***HIDOE's 2015 Team of the Year*** for their systematic and coordinated teaching approach. The team uses a uniform regimen that stresses information management, note taking and the use of interactive notebooks to teach 7th & 8th graders to be organized and effective in both learning and time management skills.

The Science Dept.'s efforts have created a hands-on learning environment that gives students opportunities to develop their skills in science, technology, engineering and math. More than 60 students are members of the school's LEGO robotics team, 30 are part of the marine biology club and 18 female students recently spent a day at the University of Hawaii at Manoa's College of Engineering where they met with aeronautical and medical engineers and were introduced to medical robotics technology. Students are also participating in Malama Honua, the worldwide voyage of the Hokulea, with 7th graders tying topics of ecosystems and sustainability to the voyage and 8th graders learning about non-instrument navigation in the "Polynesian Voyaging: Science in the Pacific" curriculum.

As a result of the Science and Engineering Department's enthusiasm, Kailua Intermediate's science proficiency on the state assessment rocketed from 34 to 51 points in one year and the school earned state recognition at the Hawaii Science and Engineering Fair with four student projects advancing to the state level, one earning first place overall in computer sciences and one earning first place overall in physics and astronomy. The team is comprised of teachers Kimberly Tangaro, Douglas Howe, Emily Bayne, Catherine Walton, Ryan Kagami, and Steven "French" Clark.

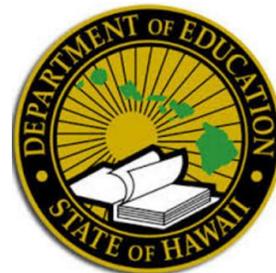
Middle Level Educators Honored

On October 16, 2015, the Hawaii Dept. of Education honored seven district teachers during its annual "**Teacher of the Year**" ceremony held at Washington Place in Honolulu. Of this year's honorees, three are middle level educators working with early adolescents across the State. HAMS joins the HIDOE, HIBOE, HSTA and the Governor's office by recognizing the following outstanding 2016

District level ***Teachers of the Year***:

- **David Paul Braun**, Waimea Canyon Middle School, Kauai District
- **Kathy Lin**, Highlands Intermediate School, Leeward District
- **Lynn Yoshioka**, Mililani Middle School, Central District

Congratulations also go out to Stephanie Mew named Hawaii's 2016 State Teacher of the Year, and to District Teachers: Alicia Chang, Liholoho Elementary; Joy Aulani Takatsuka, Kamehameha III Elementary; and Darryl Yagi, E.B. de Silva Elementary. Hawaii's keiki are lucky to have such dedicated educators serving in our communities!



Professional Development Opportunities

Spring 2016: The 3-credit course – “*Action Research & Journal Writing for Middle Level Educators*” will enable HIDOE teachers working with middle level students (5th-8th grades) to compose writing submissions based on action research projects, and for findings to be published in an inaugural Professional Journal through HAMS.

The course will be conducted 100% online via Google Hangouts on four Saturdays (Jan. 9; Feb. 6; Mar. 5; & Apr. 9, 2016). Course Information & Portfolio Requirements can be viewed at <https://pde3.k12.hi.us>, or for more information contact [Sandy Cameli@notes.k12.hi.us](mailto:Sandy_Cameli@notes.k12.hi.us).

Spring 2017: Annual HAMS Conference

The Hawaii Association of Middle Schools (HAMS) will hold it’s annual conference on Saturday, February 18, 2017. Location: TBA

Schools interested in hosting the 2017 HAMS Conference can contact HAMS President, Karen Frato-Hildebrant % Kailua Intermediate School 808-263-1500 or via email:

[Karen Frato-Hildebrant@notes.k12.hi.us](mailto:Karen_Frato-Hildebrant@notes.k12.hi.us)

Call for session proposals will be advertised in Fall 2016.

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Become a HAMS member! Annual dues: \$25/year

Mail form & payment to: (*Checks payable to: HAMS or DOE POs accepted;*)

Kathleen Nullet, HAMS Treasurer, % Kailua Intermediate, 145 S Kainalu Dr, Kailua, HI 96734

HAMS Membership Form - 2015-2016 SY

Name (first, last)

Position:

School/Office:

Preferred Mailing Address: (*select one: home work*)

Preferred Phone #:

Preferred Email:

(Optional) Feel free to share an example of “Bright Spot or Shining Star” from your school/office would you like to submit for a future HAMS Newsletter:

For HAMS Office use only:

Application Received: _____ Dues Paid: _____ Ck # _____