

Middle School Research Steering Committee Minutes
Wednesday, December 13th, 2006

Meeting called to order at 3:15 PM by SHMS Principal, Chris Borsari.

Introduction of Committee members (see attached attendance sheet).

- An overall review of the committee's goal was presented by Chris Borsari. The committee is charged with "examining the research based recommendations of State and National organizations to assist our development of an exemplary Middle School program". Mr. Borsari emphasized the overall goal of the committee's work was "not to develop specifics at this time, but to create a framework for the District to use as a road map for the future of SHMS".
- The norms of behavior for the group were discussed:
 - 1 person speaks at a time
 - We will listen attentively
 - We will respect all opinions
 - We agree to respectfully disagree
 - No side conversations
- The group silently read the article, "When Children Turn into Cats" by Adair Lara. A brainstorming session regarding the article's important messages with regard to middle level children took place. Ideas volunteered are listed below:
 - Middle Level Children need: To be independent
 - Their parents to adapt
 - They still need their parent's help
 - Their parents to be available-
 - Their parents to not be demanding
 - Patience
 - Relationship structures
- A second brainstorming session focused upon what comes to mind when thinking of a middle-level child (characteristics):
 - they need to be different- yet belong
 - puberty
 - "pushing the envelope"
 - unpredictable behavior
 - spontaneous
 - happy yet sad
 - confused
 - self-centered

- self-conscious
- peer driven
- multiple personalities

Two core thoughts emerged:

1. Middle level students have an emerging identity
2. They are never developmentally the same all the time—in everything!

The brainstormed list was then compared to a handout entitled: *Characteristics of Middle-Level Children* which Mr. Borsari distributed and the implications for education which these lists presented were discussed.

-The New York State Middle School Association and the State Education Department have identified 7 Essential Elements of Standards-Focused Middle-level Schools and Programs (NY State). These elements focus on both the academic and personal growth concerns of the middle-level child. After a brief overview of the seven, the committee broke out into 7 groups. Each group was assigned one of the element topics and was given a pamphlet that corresponded with their element to assist them. The group members then discussed and prepared a visual representation of their group's element. The groups reconvened and shared their representations with the rest of the committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 5PM.

Each member was given the booklet "This We Believe" from the National Middle School Association and the assignment to read it before the next scheduled meeting, Jan. 8th, 2007, 3:15 PM-location to be determined.

Respectfully submitted:

Becky McGovern

**MS Research Steering Committee
Wednesday, December 13, 2006
Attendance**

Lisa Albuquerk
Jaime Begazzo
David Benedict, Sr.
Maribeth Bischof
Toni Bonifacio
Chris Borsari
Nichole Conjura
Kelly Deyo
Cara Doran
Rachel Gonzalez
Cheryl Greene
Lourdes Jimenez
Ellen Kaplan
Liz Kaplan
Gregory Large
Keith Lenn
Becky McGovern
Bridget McGraw
Paul Rode
Sheila Sullivan
Barbarann Tantillo
Brittney Trenczer
Tawn Turnesa
Nancy Zallo