

Middle Level Education Month

..... March 2014

Activities and Ideas

We encourage you to celebrate your middle grades program not only during Middle Level Education Month, but throughout the year.

The following is a list of suggested activities for Middle Level Education Month that have been successful for middle grades educators. Read them over, select a few that are appropriate for your school and begin the celebration!

Get the Word Out

- Ask your mayor, city council, and/or school board to declare March 2014 as Middle Level Education Month in your community/district.
- Promote Middle Level Education Month in your school newsletter and/or webpage.
- Submit an article or guest column to your local newspaper or an online magazine about the importance of middle level education and young adolescents.
- Spread the word about Middle Level Education Month through social media- blogs, Facebook, Twitter, etc.
- Contact local radio stations and ask them to air a public service announcement (PSA) announcing March as Middle Level Education Month.
- Encourage students to write letters for publication on what it is like to be a student in the middle grades, i.e., letters to the editor, school/district website, parent newsletter, trusted online websites.

- Interview students for podcasts to let them share their thoughts on life at your middle school. Put them on your website or contact a local radio station for air time.
- Take video of school activities to be aired on local cable television and/or your school's morning news show.
- Create and send a Middle Level Education Month calendar to the mayor, city council, newspapers, and others in your area who may be interested in what you are doing throughout March to celebrate young adolescents.

Invite

- Invite local service clubs to hold a breakfast or luncheon meeting at your school.
- Invite parents and other community members to visit classrooms.
- Invite members of local youth service agencies to a meeting at your school to discuss ways in which you might work collaboratively to support young adolescents.
- Invite neighborhood police to stop by the school for coffee and an informal

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discussion about how you might support each other.

- Invite representatives from youth service agencies to address students and parents about the services available in your community.
- Invite representatives from youth service agencies to write a column for your parent newsletter.
- Invite members of the board of education, central office staff, state or federal elected representatives, and/or other community leaders to shadow you, a school administrator, a teacher or a student for a day.
- Invite parents/guardians and grandparents to spend a day at the school shadowing their student.
- Invite a local college or university to join your school in celebrating Middle Level Education Month.
- Invite senior citizens in your community to a back-to-school night for seniors. In addition to inviting the grandparents and neighbors of students, provide buses to pick up senior citizens at several retirement centers and bring them to school for an hour and a half of bingo, crafts, games, computer lessons, dancing, blood-pressure checks, and more.
- Invite the realtors in your area to breakfast. Give them a tour of the school and let students share stories of success with them. Agents are often asked about the quality of education in the local schools. Talk with them about middle level education and invite them to visit classrooms.
- Invite parents and community members to an open house, concert, or other evening event that showcases student talent.
- With your local high schools and elementary schools, host an evening meeting for parents and families to highlight the importance of successful transitions to and from the middle grades.

Celebrate

- Ask every teacher to call two or three parents/guardians per day to discuss the "good things" their student has done in school.
- Hold a Middle School Open Mic Night. Celebrate student talent by showcasing young adolescent songsters and poets at your school or a neighborhood café.
- Celebrate the luck of the Irish and the luck of being a middle level educator on March 17. Wear green and have each staff member finish this statement: "I'm lucky to work in the middle level because..." And then post their responses in your school.
- Display student artwork in local malls, city buildings, libraries, the central office, etc.
- Schedule celebrations of student work during this month; i.e., science fair, concert, drama production, etc.
- Honor individuals and organizations that are especially supportive of youth services in your community. Present them with an award and be sure to contact the local press.
- Host a "volunteer recognition breakfast" during which parents or community volunteers are honored for their time and efforts.
- Hold a "Family Night" potluck dinner at your school to bring families into the school. Exhibit student projects and offer entertainment by students.
- Hold a "Staff Appreciation Day" during which students host a breakfast or luncheon for the staff members. Students create greeting cards expressing their appreciation for the contributions teachers and others make on their behalf.

Volunteer

- Offer to hold a daytime school board meeting at your middle school and invite classes to attend the beginning of the meeting to ask questions and share their concerns with the board members.
- Contact local service clubs and offer yourself, a staff member, and/or a

student as a speaker to discuss middle level education and young adolescents.

- Volunteer to present at a meeting of your local school board. Better yet, have students make the presentation!
- Establish an annual "Community Clean-Up Day." Students and parents volunteer to clean up school campus sites as well as some of the community's parks and recreation areas.

Collaborate

- Ask your superintendent to plan a joint meeting between the local school board and the city council to discuss the needs of young adolescents.
- Plan a day or half-day community workshop on youth services. Invite representatives from local family service agencies, health care professionals, law enforcement, probation, YMCA/YWCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, and other community organizations from both the nonprofit and private sectors.
- Involve the student council from the high school(s) your students will attend:
 - Invite members to provide a leadership training or activity

workshop for middle grades student leaders.

- Have them invite 8th grade leaders to attend a high school council meeting.
- Ask them to prepare a handout or video to introduce middle level leaders to their council responsibilities.
- Suggest they plan and host a joint service project with your middle level council or leadership students.
- Partner with your feeder elementary and high schools to highlight transition activities that get elementary students ready for the middle and middle school students ready for high school.
- Do a presentation about life in the middle to the elementary PTA groups.
- Have your school nurse or psychologist present a parent workshop to increase their understanding of the changes their young adolescent is experiencing and share activities they can do at home to increase their child's success at school.