



Alabama Association of Middle School Principals Fall Newsletter

November 2010

AAMSP promotes strength through collaboration

Letter from the AAMSP President

Dear Friends and Colleagues,



Farrell Seymore

It is my pleasure to serve in the capacity of AAMSP President for this year. It is my hope that your school year has started in a most positive way. As a middle level administrator, you are part of a powerful group of educators who are shaping the next generation of students.

Together, as a professional organization, we make each other stronger by the sharing of ideas, growing professionally, and providing input on policies and legislation that affect our students.

Last year was a great year for AAMSP. Our membership gained 46 new members statewide. We awarded four scholarships at the CLAS Summer Conference to participating members—two aspiring administrators and two practicing members. As wonderful as these events were, it is the beginning of another year in which much work must be done.

Our goals in AAMSP include encouraging positive educational leadership, providing a voice for middle school principals, to promote greater recognition of middle level professional practice, and to promote legislation that positively affects middle school students. I invite you to take a greater role in furthering these goals by participating in your district's meetings and networking with your colleagues.

I also encourage you to participate in our Fall Conference which is scheduled for November 7-10 at Perdido Beach Resort in Orange Beach. I have discovered past Fall Conferences have been most enriching. As an added incentive, I encourage you to attend the AAMSP affiliate meeting on November 7 for a chance to win door prizes.

I also challenge you to help AAMSP grow by inviting other professionals to join. If you know of any aspiring administrator in your school, please encourage them to become a member of AAMSP.

I wish the best as your year continues and hope to see you in Orange Beach.

Sincerely,
Farrell Seymore
AAMAP President

Middle School Principals
Get Involved by joining AAMSP

AAMSP Officers

Farrell Seymore - President
President Elect - Susan Patterson
Secretary - Terri Miles
Treasurer - Tamala Maddox

Group seeks district leaders

With the desire to provide every middle school administrator a voice, AAMSP currently is looking for volunteers to serve as district presidents.

Vacancies are as follows:

--**District 1** includes Mobile, Baldwin, Washington, Clarke, Choctaw, Monroe, Conecuh and Escambia counties.

--**District 2** includes Butler, Crenshaw, Pike, Barbour, Covington, Coffee, Dale, Henry, Geneva, and Houston counties.

--**District 7** includes Lauderdale, Colbert, Franklin, Lawrence, Marion, Winston, Lamar, Fayette, and Pickens counties.

--**District 8** includes Limestone, Madison, Jackson, Morgan, Marshall, DeKalb, Cullman, and Blount counties.

Contact Farrell Seymore (farrell.seymore@opelika schools.org) if you are interested in serving.

Presidents for Districts 3, 4, 5, and 6 are listed on Page 2.

Highlights from Alabama Middle Schools

For several years, a number of middle school administrators have mentioned the need for a statewide newsletter that would allow sharing ideas, best practices, and provide opportunities for middle level administrators to communicate with one another.

Last June, during the CLAS Convention, the AAMSP Board decided to give it a try. While this effort is only two pages, hopefully it will communicate some helpful information to middle school administrators throughout the state.

Special thanks to everyone who shared some of the positive things that are taking place in middle schools throughout Alabama. Here's a look at a few of the successful programs:

Davis-Emerson Middle School Tuscaloosa County

Davis-Emerson Middle School is beginning a new Positive Discipline Program Called **DEMS Dollars**. Each school employee (teachers, support personnel, including lunchroom workers and custodial staff) are given DEMS dollars to be awarded to students who are "caught" being respectful, responsible, and/or resourceful. A list of other ways students may be awarded DEMS dollars is below. The Positive Behavior Support Committee is responsible for the logistics of handling the dollars and printing and disseminating the reports.

Davis-Emerson Middle school is enlisting PTO parent volunteers to helping students with failing grades.

Each Tuesday and Thursday, parents provide **tutoring** for students in all core subject areas.

In order to assure all students are getting assistance, each teacher compiles a list of failing students and provides all handouts to assure students have an opportunity to be remediated in areas they have not mastered. The program began November 2.

Liberty Middle School Madison City

SWPBS (School Wide Positive Behavior System) is a crucial part of Liberty Middle School's approach to discipline. The same five rules are enforced in every classroom and non instructional setting. Tickets, which are turned in weekly, are given to students when teachers notice students exhibiting positive behaviors. Prizes include passes to the front of the lunch line, Brusters gift cards, and other donated items.

On the last Friday of each month all tickets are gathered for a drawing featuring two \$25 gift cards. Students who best represent the featured character trait are selected by teachers as **Students of the Month**. In addition, students vote on a **Teacher of the Month** based on the character trait.

According to school officials, discipline referrals have decreased drastically and school moral has improved.

Hankins Middle School Mobile County

A group of eighth grade students and teachers at Hankins Middle School had the opportunity to spend a week serving as interns in sev-

eral Mobile businesses to experience the importance of communication skills, mathematics, creativity, problem solving and teamwork.

The initiative, known as **Vital Link** is based on the theory that students are best motivated to learn if they understand the connection between skills learned in the class and those needed for success in the workplace.

Participants overwhelmingly agreed that the program has been successful in helping students make connections between learning objectives and potential career opportunities.

Oak Mountain Middle School Shelby County

Oak Mountain Middle School eighth grade teachers and students are celebrating the 10 anniversary of their acclaimed **High Flight** program.

Each of the three academic teams (approximately 140 students per team) takes an all-day field trip to the Alabama 4H Center in Columbiana. Students are then divided into smaller groups with an adult and spend half a day participating in activities on a small ropes course and another half of the day in three interactive classroom seminars.

Topics include bullying, avoiding drugs and alcohol, cliques, setting goals, and preparing for high school and beyond.

The program has tremendously impacted the attitudes and goals of the students in a positive way.

...Special thanks to each principal who shared a school program for the memo.

We hope you found our newsletter to be informative. Please contact Farrell Seymore (farrell.seymore@opelikaschools.org) or Larry Haynes (lhaynes@shelbyed.k12.al.us) if you have information to submit for a future newsletter.

Current Middle School District Presidents and CLAS Board Members

District Presidents

District 3 -- Janet Sherrod
District 4 -- Beverly Price
District 5 -- Larry Haynes
District 6 -- Gerald Douglas

CLAS Board Members

Martin Nails
Chris Hand
Cindy Praytor
Evelyn Nettles